

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

1.1 Background of the Research

The industrial revolution 4.0 has had a significant impact on human existence, one of which is the intellectual aspect. Students are expected to improve and highlight the uniqueness or differentiation that they have brought to the table. Further, the international interacts is set up through the presence of international languages. English language has been used in worldwide communication. Because of that, for enhancing college students' English skill ability, most universities in Indonesia follow the TOEFL test as one of the graduation necessities.

Every university has a different standard score as demand for graduation. Some universities use the TOEFL test to measure the potential of their college students in English. Some universities use the TOEFL test to measure the ability of their students in English (Soali & Pujiani, 2020). The English of UPT Bahasa Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember is responsible for developing students' mastery of English by equipping students with English language skills for all faculties. The English department, nursing faculty, and economics faculty all have standard scores that are higher than 450, and the other faculty is 400. This prerequisite was established by university administrators because they feel that the TOEFL can assess students' proficiency and aptitude for understanding English in academic contexts.

Reading comprehension, according to (Elfiondri, et al., 2020) is the most important section of the three language skills tested in the TOEFL. The TOEFL test reading section score will influence the overall TOEFL test score. In other words, having good comprehension of reading skills, as tested in the TOEFL reading section is required in order to achieve a good TOEFL score. However, reading is one of the test problems for students. Reading is a complex process of human functions that takes time. Reading in a foreign language is a difficult activity due to the complexity of the process. According to Samad (2017), the most difficult skills in the TOEFL reading section were correctly answering implied detail questions, correctly answering stated detail questions, correctly using context to give meanings of difficult words, correctly answering main idea questions, and correctly determining meanings from word parts. According to Girsang (2019), reading is one of the skills in English, so every learner must grasp reading and comprehension. In addition to the TOEFL test, which includes comprehension reading questions, there are still numerous hurdles that students have in understanding the procedures for answering reading comprehension problems on the TOEFL test.

Therefore, the strategy is needed in working on the reading section on the TOEFL. With a careful strategy, it will be easier for TOEFL takers to work on the reading section. In this study, it will identify what difficulties are usually encountered by TOEFL test-takers in the reading section, and what are the strategies while working on the reading section. The purpose of this study is to ease the TOEFL takers in working on the TOEFL reading section by knowing the strategy.

There is a relevant study related to this research. The research is from Sunayana Manoj and Shadi Hijazi (2018) entitled “Test Preparation Strategies for The TOEFL Can Be Diverse and Effective”. The objectives of the study were to enhance the academic performance of students taking a standardized examination such as the TOEFL test. The different of the previous research from the present research is in the research design. The previous research used correlation research and experimental research. In the other hand, the present research using mixed-method. Also, the previous research used TOEFL test to measure all of aspect and skill, listening, writing, structure, and reading for enhancing the academic performance of students. However, this research focused on the strategies and the difficulties in facing TOEFL reading section that experienced by students, especially at Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember.

1.2 Problem of the research

Based on the research background and rationale, the formulation of the research problem is as follows:

1. What is the most difficult aspect faced by students in TOEFL reading section?
2. What are strategies used by student in TOEFL reading section?

1.3 Focus of the research

The research focused on the difficulties and the strategies of the TOEFL reading section faced by students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember.

1.4 Purpose of the research

Based on the research questions, the objectives of the research are:

1. To know what students' difficulties in facing TOEFL reading section.
2. To know what strategies used by students in facing TOEFL reading section.

1.5 Significance of the research

1 Theoretically

To increase knowledge about the difficulties and the strategies in facing TOEFL reading section.

2 Practically

To provide the strategy to overcome students' difficulties in working on the reading section.

1.6 Assumption of the research

1. TOEFL reading section strategies that will assist students in completing the TOEFL reading sections more easily are:
 - a. Strengthen vocabulary mastery
 - b. Manage the time carefully
2. The kind of TOEFL reading section difficulties experienced by Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember's students are:
 - a. Identifying difficult words, topic, the main idea of the passage, and lack of vocabulary
 - b. Managing the time for the reading section
 - c. Test taker's motivation

1.7 Scope of the research

The research focused on the difficulties and the strategies that experienced by students from all faculties who have taken the TOEFL test at Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember. With the procedure of data collection are interview and questionnaire.

1.8 Definition of Key Term

In this research, TOEFL refers to the instrument to measure students' English proficiency. Reading difficulty refers to students' difficulties interpreting the contents of various reading texts on the TOEFL test. Meanwhile, strategy in this study refers to the students' strategy facing TOEFL reading section difficulties.

