

Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter presents the brief explanation about basic consideration, research question, research objective, research delimitation, and also research significances in terms of theoretical and practical contribution.

Basic Consideration

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is a standardized test that require to measure the students english proficiency. According to Warfield et al (2013, p.196), this test is highly recognized as a standard language testing in English language and had been “internationally recognized and respected”. Furthermore, TOEFL is developed to be the standard of English proficiency for English native and non-native speakers. TOEFL is applied in Indonesia as the standard of English proficiency. Furthermore, TOEFL is used to be recommendation for students who want to continue their study in higher level of University and to apply some particular jobs. Many universities in Indonesia including Universitas Negeri Gorontalo decide TOEFL as the requirement for undergraduate thesis examination especially for students of English Department. The students require to pass the standart minimum score of TOEFL which is 500.

However, passing the TOEFL test is not a big problem especially for English Department students by considering their knowledge about English that they have got during the college. For instance, the students of English Department at Universtas Negeri Gorontalo has several subjects on their curriculum that prepare the students for the TOEFL test. The subjects such as Basic English Grammar, Advance English

Grammar, Listening for Academic Purposes, and Reading for Academic Purposes and many more supporting learning subjects. Then, students of English Department especially those who passed 8 semesters is expected to pass the TOEFL easily.

Nonetheless, based pre-observation in English Department Universitas Negeri Gorontalo especially final year students' academic year 2014 identified that most of them take long time to finish their study at English Department because failed to get the standard score of TOEFL. Based on the data, there are only 9 students of academic year 2014 has completed their study on time. However, the rest of the students still try to get standard score of TOEFL as the requirement of graduation.

The students get difficulty to pass the standard score of TOEFL because of some facts, such as lack of vocabulary, less practice, and anxiety that makes them cannot focus, fear and unconfident during the test. The presentage of students who pass the TOEFL during 1-3 times test and got the standard score is less than 10%. The rest of students pass the test in 5-6 times and even there are some students get the minimum standard score when they take the test more than 10 times. The students in English Department agree that one of their biggest obstacle in passing TOEFL is the stucture and written expression which is one of three sections of TOEFL test. The section consist of 40 questions that have to be completed in 25 minutes. The structure and written expression section become so challenges for English students because some variables are less likely used in daily academic process such as redundancy, parallel structure and infinitives. Furthermore, the students have limited time to analyze the questions carefully. The students still get low score particularly in structure and written expression even they learn and practice before the test. Most of

the students got 44-45 scores in structure and written expression comparing with their Reading and Listening scores around 49-50. Meanwhile, to get the standard score of TOEFL the students have to earn Listening scores: 49, Structure and Written Expression score: 46, and Reading score: 50. Therefore, the Structure and Written Expression indicated as the difficult part of the TOEFL test faced by students of English Department.

Moreover, according to ETS official website as cited in Hajri, Jufriзал, and Wahyuni (2018, p.94) that “structure and written expression section contains sentences that test examinees’ knowledge of important structural and grammatical elements of standard written English”. This section divides into two part, which are structure’s part (sentences completion) and written expression’s part (error analysis). Sentence completion is about how the test-takers find the best answer to fill in the blank sentence to make it correct. Meanwhile, in error analysis, the test-takers are asked to identify the error which the part of sentence is incorrect. There are several variables in Structure and written expression, such as verbs, auxiliary verbs, nouns, pronouns, modifiers, comparative, connectors, sentences and clauses, point of view, agreement, introductory verbal modifier, parallel structure, redundancy and word choice. Those types of question named as variable in structure and written expression.

However, there is a research about TOEFL structure and written expression that was conducted by Munadia in 2016. The result of the research is the students found difficulties in some variables in structure and written expression of TOEFL. The students failed the test in reduce clause (100%), the use of verb (81%), parallelism (64%), subject verb agreement (59%) and relative clause (56%).

Furthermore, based on the result of interview, the students faced some problem in answering the structure and written expression test which are lack of grammar skill, lack of vocabulary mastery, distracted or lost the focus, and less practice. The difficulties become the main reason of students' failure in passing TOEFL test successfully. Similar with her research, the researcher want to identify the difficult variables and elaborate the factors influencing the students' difficulty in answering the TOEFL structure and written expression test.

Despite this problem, the researcher want to analyze the students' difficulties in TOEFL structure and written expression test faced by English Department students in Universitas Negeri Gorontalo. This reasearch is also intended to identify the difficult variables in sturcture and written expression. Therefore, the aim of this study is to elaborate the students' difficulties in answering TOEFL test especially structure and written expression section. The research is conducted to be guideline for lecturers to develop the teaching and learning that related to structure and written expression.

Questions of Study

Based on the basic consideration above, this research is focused on the problem which is faced by students of English Department, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo in passing standard score of TOEFL structure and written expression. Therefore, the research questions are formulated:

1. What are the difficult variables faced by English Department students during their TOEFL test in the Structure and Written Expression section?

2. What are the factors influencing the students' difficulties in answering the TOEFL test in the Structure and Written Expression section?

Aims of Study

Based on research questions, this research has two aims, they are:

1. To identify the difficult variables faced by English department students in TOEFL test especially structure and written expression section.
2. To elaborate the factors that influence the students' difficulty in answering the TOEFL test in structure and written expression section.

Delimitation of Study

This study is concerned on the TOEFL test particularly on structure and written expression section. This study focuses on students of English Department, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo in academic year 2014.

Significances of Study

The study is expected to give contribution to Grammar subject lecturers, students and further researcher.

First, this research can be used as a guideline for the lecturers in order to know the student's difficulties in answering the TOEFL test particularly on structure and written expression section. By identifying the factors that makes the students felt difficult in the section, the lecturers can consider to add the material about structure and written expression of TOEFL. However, the lecturers also can make some preparation of TOEFL practice and developed the teaching strategy in learning grammar.

Second, for the students, this research can be used to minimize the difficulties and evaluate their ability in TOEFL test especially in structure and written expression section. Besides, the students know how to overcome their difficulty well.

Third, this research can be used as reference and expand the new perspective for further researcher who is interested in same point.