

**“STUDENTS’ PROBLEM IN ANSWERING TOEFL TEST”
(A Case Study of English Department Students at STAIN
Zawiyah Cot Kala Langsa)**

Thesis

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Langsa, October, 27 2014

The Writer,

WENI ISMALIA

ABSTRACT

The focus of this paper is to explore the students' problems in answering the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). TOEFL is a type of language testing to reveal the students' English proficiency. This is a descriptive study based on in-depth semi-structured interview and documentation. The data source was taken from students of English Department that had failed or had done TOEFL test more than twice. The writer used purposive sampling, total of test takers that had done TOEFL test more than twice is 14 test takers as sample. To gain data, the writer had conducted interview to respondents and one of Language Development Center staff. Findings showed that the implementation of TOEFL at STAIN Zawiyah Cot Kala Langsa in 2014 is not well, because many students cannot get standard score yet so they must repeat the test several times. The study also showed that the main problems of the students in answering the TOEFL test were due to several conflicting reasons, such as fewer basic skills, lack of practice, lack of motivation, and students' individual differences such as age and social status. Thus, the study showed that the students' efforts to get standard score in TOEFL test is low.

Key words: English Test, TOEFL Test, Problem in Answering TOEFL Test.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Foreign language skills in this age of globalization is very important. All areas of life today require the mastery of foreign languages, including the education sector. As Brown said, “English has become a tool for international communication in transportation, commerce, banking, tourism, technology, diplomacy and scientific research”.¹ English proficiency is needed in the globalization era. TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is one of the measurements for English proficiency. TOEFL is a kind of English test internationally created and developed by ETS (Educational Testing Service) in New Jersey. Nowadays, TOEFL is used in many occasions such as, continuing study at university and get scholarships and getting a job both national and international companies. TOEFL is the requirements for knowing their English proficiency.

TOEFL test is one of the proficiency tests, designed to measure people’s ability in a language regardless of any training learners may have had in that language. TOEFL tests are often used in as a testing tool.² The reliance on TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) for various testing purposes of English proficiency have reached such a point that most universities and colleges both

¹ H. Douglas Brown, et.al. *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*, (America: Longman, 2007), p. 284.

² Irham Ali Saifuddin, dkk, *Buku Pintar TOEFL*, (Jogjakarta: DIVA Press, 2012), p. 20.

overseas and domestic adopt this standardized test as a part of graduation requirements.

As an English proficiency test with international standard, TOEFL has difficulty level, demands good English mastery and students should apply good strategy in answering the test. TOEFL test has three sections; Listening Comprehension, Structure & Written Expression, and Reading Comprehension. In Listening Comprehension, timing is about 0.7 minute for one item. Students must listen to the conversation, read the answer, analyze the answer, then choose the answer. In Structure & Written Expression, timing is only 0,6 minute for item. In Reading Comprehension, timing is about 1 minute for one item. In other words, to get high score in TOEFL test requires the combination of good English mastery and strategy to analyze the questions.³

TOEFL test at some universities also is used to students who will submit their thesis. For example, STAIN Zawiyah Cot Kala Langsa makes TOEFL Test compulsory for students who will submit their thesis. English Education students must have at least 400 TOEFL score. The writer, herself has done the TOEFL Test. In doing the TOEFL Test, writer faced some problems. Many students have failed and must repeat the TOEFL Test until pass.

Many students think that TOEFL test is extremely difficult particularly for students who have never done the test before.⁴ Students of English Education should answer all TOEFL tests correctly, get good scores and pass the test. many

³ I Made Sujana, Edy Syahrial, & Eka Fitriana, *English Proficiency of English Department Students of FKIP UNRAM in Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)*, http://www.imadesujana.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=71:toeflprofile&catid=36:tefl&Itemid=56 accessed on October, 27 2014 at 10:32 WIB

⁴ Irham Ali Saifuddin, dkk, *Buku Pintar TOEFL*, p.23.

students fail in attempting the TOEFL test even though, prior to this test, the students have studied the strategies in answering TOEFL test. Because of that, the writer wants to do a research on the problems faced by the test takers.

Based on the description above, the writer is interested in conducting a research entitled “**Students’ Problem in Answering TOEFL Test (A Case Study of English Department Students at STAIN Zawiyah Cot Kala Langsa)**”.

B. The Problem of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the writer states some problems to be studied are as follows:

1. What are the students’ problems faced in answering TOEFL test in English Education at STAIN Zawiyah Cot Kala Langsa?
2. What are students’ efforts to get standard score in TOEFL test?

C. The Purposes of the Study

The purpose of study is to:

1. Investigate the students’ problems in answering TOEFL test.
2. Investigate the students’ efforts to get standard score in TOEFL test.

D. The Significance of the Study

The writer wishes that this research result can be significant not only for the writer but also for the lecturer and the students.

1. For the Lecturer

The writer hopes that this research will give more benefit for the lecturers of English Education about the students' problem in answering TOEFL test.

2. For the Students

This study is expected to provide information about students' mistake in answering TOEFL test and never give up because TOEFL test is very important for students who will finish their study in university.

3. For the Writer

This research can increase the writer knowledge about TOEFL test, and get experience in conducting this research.

E. Terminology

Terminology is explanation of key words. In this part, the writer would explain some terminologies which in the title of this thesis.

1. Students' Problem

The students are a group of people that places the central position in teaching-learning process.⁵ Next, problem is a thing that is difficult to deal with or

⁵ A.M Sardiman, *Interaksi dan Motivasi Belajar Mengajar*, (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2007), p.113.

to understand.⁶ Finally, students' problem is a thing that is difficult to deal in teaching-learning process.

2. TOEFL Test

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is tests that measure the English language skills important for effective communication in an academic setting.⁷

TOEFL is probably the most often used examination in the admission process of foreign students to colleges and universities in United States.⁸ Students who want to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language, or TOEFL should consider that it is important for students to be prepared well before students take the test.⁹

⁶ AS Horby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, (New York, 2000), p. 1049.

⁷ Educational Testing Service, *TOEFL Test Prep Planner*, p.11, http://www.ets.org/s/toefl/pdf/toefl_student_test_prep_planner.pdf accessed on October, 23 2014 at 19.42 WIB.

⁸ Pyle and Page, *Cliffs TOEFL Preparation Guide*, (India: Wiley-dreamleach, 2004), p.4.

⁹ Huda Al Rawashdeh, *Difficulties that Face Graduate Students During their TOEFL Preparation Program at Jordanian Universities*, (Yarmouk University, 2011).