

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English has become a compulsory subject in Indonesia curriculum. The government realises that learning English has an essential role in education, especially to achieve the international standard in Indonesian education. Moreover, English has been a part of the curriculum of various levels of school until higher levels of education (Mappiasse & Bin Sihes, 2014). In the higher level of education, English is essential for university students who want to go overseas and continue their studies or to apply for a job that needs English proficiency.

The most widely used proficiency test in the world is the TOEFL test. TOEFL is one of the essential tools to measure the ability of a person to use and understand English as an academic language nowadays. TOEFL is the abbreviation of "Test of English as a Foreign Language". It pertains to the scheme of evaluation means for testing the capability of non-English speaking candidates. TOEFL is related to language skills, such as listening, structure, and reading. TOEFL test can also be used to diagnose students' proficiency in English. The result of the TOEFL test can assist the students in reaching their desired destination after they graduate from university.

Students who want to join master degrees in Indonesian universities typically need to take an English-language proficiency exam, especially TOEFL as part of the application process. In Satya Wacana Christian University, for instance, the TOEFL score of 450 is required to join a master degree application (UKSW, 2018). This requirement is also used to apply master degree in other universities. In 2018, the Government of Indonesia also required a minimum TOEFL score of 500 for people who wish for applying for jobs as the

government employees, for instance, as teachers (Tim, 2018). Furthermore, several jobs also require TOEFL score as a requirement in Indonesia.

Apart from the admission and job application, a TOEFL score is required to apply for the scholarships. A TOEFL score also applied by Australia Awards Scholarship in Indonesia (AUSAID). AUSAID requires 525 on TOEFL PBT (Australia Awards Indonesia,2015). After that, this requirement is also required by Chevening, Fulbright, and LPDP. Realizing the importance of TOEFL scores as one requirement for apply jobs, admissions, and scholarship, the Faculty of Language and Arts in UNIKA Soegijapranata Semarang also requires the students to study TOEFL through six credits in semester 4 and 5: TOEFL preparation I (4 credits) and II (2 credits) as compulsory subjects. Students who want to graduate from the Faculty of Language and Arts are required to have a TOEFL score of 500 for minimum as one of the graduation requirements.

To conduct the research, the writer learned the previous study written by Antoni, (2014) His research concentrated on three sections TOEFL tests such as listening, structure, and reading. The participants of Antoni's research were the sixth-semester students of English Department of Lecturers training and education, Faculty of Pasir Pengaraian University. He investigated the students' experience in TOEFL and which skill was problematic for the students in the sixth semester. He used questionnaires, observation sheets, field notes, and interviews as the instruments to collect the data. The finding shows that most of the students did not have proper preparation in completing the test. In the listening part, the students got difficulties to understand the spoken language because the speaker spoke too fast. In the structure part, the students got difficulties in determining the subject and verb because of the limited knowledge that the students had on the strategies.

Apart from the listening section and structure section, students also had difficulties in the reading section. Students lacked vocabularies and knowledge about the topic of the

stories. These problems caused the students could not answer each question in the reading section correctly. It is unavoidable for students to make an error in the structure section of TOEFL. The research was devoted to comparing the mother tongue and the target language in order to predict or explain the errors made by learners (Corder, 1981). Error analysis is a significant part of applied linguistics. A study about error analysis has done by Munadia (2016).

Munadia was a student from State Islamic University of Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh (UIN Ar-Raniry). In her research, she found that many students faced the difficulties in responding to the structure section of TOEFL. Munadia's purpose study was to find out the most challenging element of the structure section that was faced by students in TOEFL test. The population was 90 active students batch 2012, but there were 18 students as the sample of her study. The result shows that students faced the difficulties in some elements of grammar section such as the reduced verb, the use of the verb, parallelism, subject-verb agreement, and relative clause.

Inspired by the two previous studies, the writer conducted the study in the Faculty of Language and Arts. Antoni (2014) investigated the difficulties in TOEFL sections: listening, structure and reading. He was curious about the students' experiences in doing the TOEFL test. Munadia (2016) stated that she wanted to investigate the students' errors on the TOEFL test with a mixed method, quantitative and qualitative methods (interview). Meanwhile, the writer of this study is interested in analysing the students' error in structure and written expression of TOEFL. A test of TOEFL is conducted in a TOEFL preparation class to identify and investigate the students' problems in the second section of the TOEFL. The students involved in this study were students from English Literature and Englishpreneurship in Faculty of Language and Arts Soegijapranata Catholic University batch 2016. It can be seen from the results of tests and examinations that the errors made by learners are mostly a

significant element in the feedback system of the process of language teaching and learning (Corder, 1981).

1.2 Field of the Study

The field of the study is related to Applied Linguistics because this study is about Language Testing.

1.3 Scope of the Study

The study concentrated on TOEFL as language testing specifically in the structure and written expression.

1.4 Problem Formulation

The writer formulated research question

- *What skills in the structure section of paper-based TOEFL were problematic for students?*

1.5 Objectives of the Study

From the problem formulation mentioned above, the writer identified and investigated structure skills that were difficult for students to answer structure and written expressions on the TOEFL test.

1.6 Significance of the Study

There are three significances: First, for the students, they would be more aware of their structural problems when answering the TOEFL test, and to help the students to get a better score on structure section. Second, for the teachers, the writer expected this study would help them to evaluate their teaching process. The findings also help them to find out the students' weakness in the structure section of TOEFL, and to create a suitable methodology of teaching in TOEFL Preparation I and II. The last, the writer hopes this study will give a reference for the future researcher who is interested

in the same topic. For instance, to investigate the difficult skills on listening or reading section faced by the students.

1.7 Definition of Term

- **Structure Section in TOEFL:** This section covers structure and written expression. The students must finish the 40 questions in 25 minutes. The first section is multiple choice. There is a single correct answer choice among four answer options. The second section is written expression. The students must decide which word or phrase to change in order to make the sentence correct.
- **Skills on structure:** The fundamental of language skills are Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking (Husain, 2015). This study focused on the structure part which belonged to writing skill. Based on Philip (2001) TOEFL guide book, There are sixty skills the students must study to implement the strategies in the Structure section of the TOEFL tests.
- **Error Analysis:** Error analysis is a kind of linguistic analysis that mainly studies the error occurrences made by a student or learner (Namkaew, 2015)