

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the problems faced by students in university of Pasir Pengaraian. This chapter consists of a background of the problems, setting of the problems, limitation of the problems, formulation of the research, purpose of the research, significance of the research, and definition of the key terms.

#### **A. Background of the problem**

TOEFL test is a standard test used to measure English language proficiency. At present the TOEFL score has become one of the requirements to get a scholarship abroad. so many people who have taken the TOEFL test. In Indonesia, the TOEFL certified internationally is held by the English Language System (ETS) (Mahmud, 2014).

Previous research conducted by Febriani et.al (2019) this research said that the problems faced by eighth semester students were lack of students' understanding of the text, lack of student background, lack of student reading strategies, which caused students to fail in answering reading comprehension questions on the TOEFL test.

TOEFL is one of the requirements to take a thesis examination for the final semester, and the score that must be achieved in English and other majors is different. English majors with a score of 450 while other majors with a score of 400. For students who cannot reach the score, it will repeat again until the score is reached.

In University of Pasir Pangaraian , many students failed to reach the standard passing score. From was observation by the researcher and the informal talks with the students. The difficulty to reach the standard minimum score due to the listening section and also there structure that they had not yet mastered. Taking TOEFL test is considered difficult for them.

Based on my observations on February 25, 2020 at the English language student at University of Pasir Pangraian, the researcher made observations using interviews with questionnaires to eighth semester students and researchers encountered problems in their classrooms. Of the 10 students at the eighth semester English Department University of Pasir Pangaraian, researchers observed in 6 questions that giving them as questionnaires, students really have problems in doing the TOEFL test. All the questions the researcher gave to them and the many problems the researcher found in the student's difficulties. but most of the problems are time limitations, lazy reading, lack of vocabulary and lack of confidence.

First, students found it difficult to work on TOEFL due to lack of time. Because in the listening section it takes time for students to understand the question and some students need a lot of time in the listening section, because the factors from the speakers are not good, there is also because of the rain during the exam, and the translation is not fluent.

Second, students was difficulty in completing the TOEFL due to lack of interest in reading, and students are more focused on asking questions, and some are not focused on the answer sheets and the problem is because of their

lack of understanding, it could also be because the student is sleepy, hungry, and others.

Third, lack of vocabulary lazy to study before the exam, not paying too much attention to the questions, and just take it for granted and so on.

The final problem is less confidence in one's own answers, and more confidence in other people's answers. So many students fail their exams.

Difficulties of students in working on TOEFL found in three categories of understanding, first understanding Listening, Structure and Reading. In Listening students must have the ability to do 'Structure for Restatements', understand type of conversation and understand 'Topics for Mini talks'. At the Structure and Written level Expression, there is a discussion about grammar in detail and thoroughly begins with discussion of verbs to vocabulary. This part is as difficult as the third category namely regarding Reading. In Reading, students must be able to master vocabulary, whereas in Reading Comprehension, students must be able to analyze through stages 'previewing, Reading for Main Ideas, Scanning, Differencing, Restating, and Factors the other.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher wants to do research on analyzing student difficulties in the TOEFL test. This research is entitled: "**An Analysis of Student Difficulties in Completing TOEFL Test at the Eight semester English Department University Pasir Pengaraian** ", which takes located in the Department of English Education University of Pasir Pengaraian.

## **B. Setting Of The Problem**

Based on the background of the problem stated above, the research identified difficulties faced by students' in TOEFL test in university of Pasir Pengaraian. Difficulties of students in working on TOEFL found in three categories of understanding, first understanding Listening students must have the ability to do 'Structure for Restatements', understand type of conversation and understand 'Topics for Mini talks'. At the Structure and Written level Expression, there is a discussion about grammar in detail and thorough begins with discussion of verbs to vocabulary. In Reading, students must be able to master vocabulary, whereas in Reading Comprehension, students must be able to analyze through stages 'previewing, Reading for Main Ideas, Scanning, Restating, and Factors the other.

### **C. Limitation Of The Problem**

Based on the setting on the problem above, it was very important for the researcher to limit the students because their scores in TOEFL were low, and it was difficult to meet the exam requirements.

### **D. Formulation Of The Problem**

Based on the limitation of the problem above, the formulation of the problem can be stated as follows; What are the cause students' difficulties in completing the TOEFL test at English department University of Pasir Pengaraian?

### **E. Purpose Of The Problem**

The purpose of this the research are: To found the factors that cause English students to experience difficulties in completing the TOEFL test at University of Pasir Pangaraian.

#### **F. Significance Of The Problem**

By doing this research, there are there are significance: for students, future teacher or lecturer and researcher.

1. For students, researchers hope this research can help students evaluate their abilities in TOEFL and find out and be aware of the difficulties in answering written structures and expressions. Through this research, researchers expect students to be aware of it difficulties and trying to improve themselves.
2. For teachers or lecturer, the findings of this study can be used as a guide to find out students difficulty in structure and written expression. Therefore, the results can be used to develop or design better teaching methodologies in Indonesia grammar. Lecturers can also direct students to overcome difficulties through a new teaching methodology.
3. For other researchers, they can use the findings as one of the valuable references in conducting further research related to this aspect. For example, in the other two parts; listen reading comprehension and comprehension.

#### **G. Definition Of Key Terms**

1. Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

TOEFL is a standardized test to measure the English language ability of non-native speakers to enroll in American universities. The test is developed and established by ETS (Educational Testing Service) in 1964. The TOEFL score has been used as the requirement for non-native applicants in America and English speaker colleagues and universities, so do to obtain scholarship in those countries ( Sharpe, 2013).

## 2. Difficulty TOEFL Test

Chawwang (2008) states that the most critical problems are in identifying difficult words, topic, the main idea of the passage, and lack of vocabulary. Similar research has been conducted by Nezami (2012) in EFL Saudi learners. In her research, she finds that their students are difficult to comprehend the text due to limited knowledge and skills.

Halim (2008) discuss that in general, difficulty participants answer the TOEFL question because biased. Bias in languages that are used in TOEFL questions which contains negative bias Implicative conversation, conversation idiomatic, metaphorical.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

This the chapter discusses about review of related theories of the research. The review of related theories was very important to discuss. Because of that the research interested to explain more in this chapter to make clear in understanding reading comprehension. This chapter consists of review of related theories, definition of TOEFL test, difficulties of TOEFL test, factors difficulties of TOEFL, review of related findings, and conceptual framework.

#### **A. Review Of The Related Theory**

##### **A. Definition Of TOEFL Test**

Some definitions are given by experts related to the TOEFL. TOEFL test is a standardized test to measure the English language ability of non-native speakers to enroll in American universities. The test is developed and established by ETS (Educational Testing Service) in 1964. The TOEFL score has been used as the requirement for non-native applicants in America and English speaker collage and universities, so do to obtain scholarship in those countries ( Sharpe, 2013).

TOEFL test is a standard test used to measure English language proficiency. At present the TOEFL score has become one of the requirements to get a scholarship abroad. so many people who have taken the TOEFL test. In Indonesia, the TOEFL certified internationally is held by the English Language System (ETS) (Mahmud, 2014).).

Even now all universities in Indonesia have a TOEFL score to pass and even to get a job TOEFL score has become one of the requirements. The authority of universities set this precondition because they believe that TOEFL is able to evaluate students' ability and skills to understand English in academic tasks (Aliponga, 2013).

Next is Heni Kartikasari et al (2014) explain that TOEFL is a test that does not have a relationship with the results study. In line with Brown's theory (2010) who said that TOEFL is a test proficiency which has no relationship directly with learning outcomes. This test measure English skills at least 3 skills include Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading Comprehension. These three skills are praised in PBT (Paper Based TOEFL).

TOEFL is a kind of English test in the world. It is only addressed to people who are not using English as their native language but as a second or a foreign language. It is a model used for academic purposes to measure an English foreign language learner's English skill (Deborah,2001). TOEFL is highly recognized language testing in English which is internationally recognized and respected (Warfield, Laribee & Geyer, 2013). TOEFL is used to evaluate the English proficiency of foreign language learners (ETS, 2006).

TOEFL test, one could know the English proficiency of students whose English is not their native language. Nowadays, TOEFL is used in many occasions, for instance, those applying for scholarships to continue their study in the English spoken countries. Furthermore, this test is also needed by those



who want to apply for a job both in home country and overseas. Even, this test is obliged by universities in Indonesia as a requirement to complete their study and obtain their bachelor certificate (Samad, 2016).

The TOEFL has extremely been recognized as a model test and have-take test for our students, graduate and postgraduate, as well as our teachers and researchers in universities and higher education institutions wishing to read for higher degrees and develop further their research potential in North American universities. Kunnan (2008 : 141) notes that, “Over the years, the TOEFL became mandatory for non-American and non-Canadian native speakers of English applicants to undergraduate and graduate programs in U.S. and Canadian English-medium universities”. The TOEFL score have been used as the requirements for non-native applicants in American and English speaker colleges and universities, to obtain scholarship in those countries.

The test of English as a foreign language (TOEFL) is probably the most often used examination in the admission process of foreign students to colleges and universities the United States. There are three kinds of TOEFL. They are paper-based TOFL (PBT), computer based TOEFL (CBT) and internet-based TOEFL (IBT). There are three sections in paper-based and computer-based test. They are listening comprehension, structure and written expression and reading comprehension. In addition, in paper-based test, test of written English (TWE) can be added. The score is not incorporated into TOEFL score but is included as a separate score on the report sent to the institutions receiving your score report. In this test, the examinee is given one topic on which to write an

essay using standard English. While in IBT, the test has the following order: reading, listening, speaking and writing. Structure section is excluded since it has been included in speaking and writing section.

Based on the opinions of the experts above, it can be concluded that the TOEFL test is one of the international languages, and the TOEFL test is a measure of a person's ability to master English, the TOEFL test is also used as a graduation requirement, job applicants and also to get a scholarship.

#### **a. TOEFL Test Design**

The official TOEFL Test is currently administered around the world in different types (Abboud, 2011) :

- 1) The Paper-Based TOEFL (PBT)
- 2) The Computer-Based TOEFL (CBT)
- 3) The Internet-Based TOEFL (IBT)

The explanation about four types of TOEFL currently administered around the world:

##### **1) The Paper-Based TOEFL (PBT)**

According to Philips (2003) the Paper Based Test is one of the International Testing Programs. TOEFL is a type of test TOEFL that is often used on several campuses, universities, and institutions. The TOEFL PBT test, administered in a papered-pencil format, measured test takers' ability to use and understand English in a classroom setting at the college or university level.<sup>23</sup> This test is still using a paper format where the test

taker will work on the answers on the paper sheet, although using a paper test format is valid to test the English proficiency test taker.

The Paper-Based TOEFL has three sections: Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading. In addition, the TWE is required essay that provides a writing score. The PBT is a linear test, which means that everyone who takes the TOEFL during the same administration will see and answer the same questions. The total score is based on a scale of 310-677.

Each form of TOEFL PBT consist of three separately timed sections; the questions in each section are multiple-choice, with four possible answers or options per question.<sup>25</sup> It means, to answer in each section the test taker simply chooses the most appropriate multiple choice. Brief descriptions of the Paper-Based Test there are three sections of the test follow:

a) Listening Comprehension

The test-takers must listen to different types of recorded passages and answer multiple choice questions about these passages. It is used to evaluate the test-takers' ability to understand spoken English.

b) Structure and Written Expression

In this section, they have to choose the correct answer to complete sentences and to identify grammatical errors in sentences. It is used to evaluate the test-takers' ability to recognize grammatically correct English sentences.

### c) Reading Comprehension

In this section the test-takers' must answer multiple choice questions concerning the ideas and the meaning of words in those reading passages. It is used to measure the test takers' ability to understand written English passages.

### d) Test of Written English (TWE):

The examinees must write a certain essay on a given topic in only thirty minutes. It is used to evaluate the test-takers' ability to write correct, organized and meaningful English essays.

The format of these four sections, the number of items for each of them, and the time which is assigned for each of them can be clarified in the following table (Gear and Robert, 2002 : 8)

## **2) The Computer-Based TOEFL (CBT)**

The Computer-Based TOEFL Program comprises four sections: Listening, Structure, Writing and Reading. The writing section in this test is equivalent to the Test of Written English (TWE) in the Paper- Based TOEFL Test. In addition, everyone who takes the TOEFL during the same administration may not see or answer the same questions. These questions are selected according to the level of the student's proficiency. In this test, there are three sub-scores:

Listening, Structure, Writing, and Reading. Actually, the total score is limited on a scale of (0–300) (Sharpe, 2009 : 11). The format, the

number, and types of questions, that can be seen in the Computer- Based TOEFL Test, are shown in the following table(Gear and Robert, 2002 : 2)

CBT is one of the TOEFL test types discussed by ETS. In July 1998, Educational Testing Service (ETS) introduced the computer-based TOEFL test in the United States, Canada, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and selected Asian countries. According to ETS, the computer-based test will eventually completely replace the paper test. Some parts of the TOEFL will be a linear computerized test, which is scored the same way as a paper test. Other parts of the TOEFL will be a computer-adaptive test (CAT). It means CBT and PBT are not too different if PBT uses a paper format while CBT uses a computer format.

The computer-based TOEFL test (CBT) is offered year-round at institutional sites such as colleges and universities and at testing centers operated by Prometric, a division of Thomson Learning. The CBT is a computer-adaptive test that is offered as an official standard for language proficiency worldwide. A primary goal of the TOEFL program is to provide more extensive information than it has in the past about candidates' English proficiency. We know that CBT is also used on campuses and universities as well as PBT, but CBT is intended to provide more extensive information than before.

The Computer-Based TOEFL has four sections:<sup>49</sup> At CBT this has 4 sections as well as PBT but CBT directly provides writing packages

unlike PBT. Where writing is a separate package, and usually the test taker only takes 3 sections. Here is the explanation:

**a. Listening**

This section includes various stimuli, such as dialogues, short conversations, academic discussions, and mini lectures, and poses questions that test comprehension of main ideas, the order of a process, supporting ideas, important details, and inferences, as well as the ability to categorize topics/objects. The section consists of 30-50 questions and is 40-60 minutes in length.<sup>50</sup> The listening section has 30 to 50 questions and only has a response time of 40 to 60 minutes. Test takers will choose multiple choice answers.

According to Philip Deborah this test aims to demonstrate their ability to understand spoken English, examinees must first listen to passages on headphones as they see pictures on a computer screen and then answer various types of questions about the passages that they just heard. It means that unlike PBT tests where test takers must be occupied with sheets of paper, the CBT test makes it easier for test takers because they have been provided with headphones and immediately answer on the computer without having to be occupied with paper sheets.

According to Michael Pyle to score well in the Listening section, you must have a thorough knowledge of English and a strong ability to interpret what you hear. It means the ability to hear in this section is very

important to interpret what is being heard by the test taker to answer correctly.

### **b. Structure**

On the structure section questions there are 20-25 questions in this section, which is 15-20 minutes long.<sup>53</sup> Unlike the PBT which has 40 questions; the CBT test taker will only be given 20 to 25 questions with a response time of 15 to 20 minutes.

According to Deborah Philip this test was intended to demonstrate their ability to recognize grammatically correct English, examinees must look at sentences on a computer screen and either choose the correct way to complete the sentences or identify errors in the sentences. Based on the statement, we can find out this test aims to see the correct taker to recognize grammatical test ability English or identify errors sentences on screen.

To get a good score according to Michael Pyle you need to know Standard English grammar. So, understanding Standard English grammar will make it easier for the test taker to know the correct grammar and understand the errors sentences in the sentence.

### **c. Reading**

The third section or better known as reading comprehension section. The Reading section include 44-55 questions and is 70-90 minutes long. The section consist of four to five passages of 250-350 words, with 11 questions per passage. So, in CBT this reading comprehension section

only has 44 to 55 questions and has a response time of 70 reaching 90 minutes.

According to Deborah Philip this test was used to demonstrate their ability to understand written English, examinees must read passages on a computer screen and answer various types of questions about the ideas and meaning of words in the passages. It means test takers must know English writing and are able to answer various types of questions such as main idea and also meaning of words in the passage.

To succeed in this section there are many ways, one of them according to Michael Pyle to success in this section, you need to be able to read and understand English. It means not only enough to read but the test taker is able to copy and understand the meaning of passages.

#### **d. Writing**

Fourth section or often known as writing section. In this section, you are given a specific topic, and you are asked to write an answer to the question. You have thirty minutes either to type your answer on the computer only or to write your answer on a lined sheet of paper. So, the test taker will be given a specific topic and told to answer questions that have been given then the time given to the test taker is around 30 minutes.

The purpose of this test is according to Philip Deborah, to demonstrate their ability to produce meaningful, organized, and correct English, examinees must write an essay on a given topic in thirty minutes, either on the computer or by hand. So, test takers must make essays with



the right sentence structure in accordance with standard grammar standards.

To succeed well in this section there are several ways one of them according to Michael Pyle to perform well on this section of the TOEFL test, you must be able to write clearly and convincingly, and you must organize the essay well and provide sufficient details and examples. It means it is very important to organize the essay meaningful and also in accordance with the standard grammar.

It can be concluded that CBT has 4 sections which have used a computer system and no longer use paper. CBT is also used as a Standard English proficiency worldwide.

### **1) The Internet-Based TOEFL (IBT)**

IBT test is delivered insecure testing centers around the world. In IBT test is described as a new version of the TOEFL Test. It replaces the Computer-Based TOEFL Test and the Paper-Based TOEFL Test. Its main concern is to measure the test-taker's ability to communicate successfully in an academic setting (Alderson, 2009). It includes a new section which is the speaking section. This section is used to evaluate the test takers' ability to Speak English. Moreover, there are new integrated Writing and Speaking tasks. These tasks are used to evaluate the test takers' ability to combine and communicate information which is from different sources. To sum up, this test consists of four sections: reading, listening, speaking and writing. It tests all the four skills that are influential

for effective and successful communication, listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The number of questions for each of them, the format of these sections, , and the time which is allotted for each of them can be seen in the following table (Abboud and Hussein, 2011 : 8)

**a. Reading Section**

The reading section tests your ability to understand reading passages like those in college textbooks. There are three passages on the short format and five passages on the long format. After each passage, you will answer 12-14 questions about it.

**b. Listening sections**

The listening section tests your ability to understand spoken English that is typical of interactions and academic speech on college campuses. During the test, you will listen to conversations and lectures questions about them. There are two conversations and four lectures on the short format and three conversations and six lectures on the long format.

**c. Speaking Section**

The Speaking section tests your ability to communicate in English in academic setting. During the test, you will be presented with six speaking questions. The questions ask for a response to a single question, a conversation, a talk, or a lecture.

**d. Writing Section**

The Writing section tests your ability to write essays in English similar to those that you would write in college courses. During the test, you will write one essay about an academic topic and one essay about a familiar topic. Each of the four sections of TOEFL IBT is scored on a scale of 0 to 30. The four sections scores are then added together for a total test score of 0 to 120.

In addition to the section scores and total score, you will receive score descriptions as part of your result. These descriptors are brief explanations of what the numeric scores mean in terms of language skills and proficiency.

The researchers concluded that there are three types of TOEFL test that can be taken by the test takers. Each type has the same test only difference when doing test. CBT and IBT test have almost the same test that is using the computer to perform the test is still, PBT test is still manual and the test taker must do the test on the worksheets that have been provided.

However, in Indonesia alone, especially in universities, colleges, and high schools are still using various types of TOEFL PBT tests, because there are several factors that do not allow an institution to run TOEFL tests such as CBT and IBT. As in some areas that are still unreachable by internets and some regions that do not have an adequate number of computers, in some areas they still use the PBT TOEFL type.

#### **B. Difficulties TOEFL test**

In a study conducted by Alghail and Mahfoodh (2016), there is a number of difficulties encountered by foreign students in a Malaysian university. The difficulties are in paraphrasing, note-taking, supporting ideas and managing the time for the reading test.

Chawwang (2008) states that the most critical problems are in identifying difficult words, topic, the main idea of the passage, and lack of vocabulary. Similar research has been conducted by Nezami (2012) in EFL Saudi learners. In her research, she finds that their students are difficult to comprehend the text due to limited knowledge and skills.

Octarina (2018) in this research many questions were asked from Deborah Philips TOEFL book. that is, difficulty in finding the main idea, Implied Detail Question, Unstated Detail, Stated Detail Question and Vocabulary question. In this research said that the most difficulty faced by students is when they have to find the main ideas of the text, because of the lack of student vocabulary. then the thing that is most important is to increase the vocabulary.

Halim (2008) discuss that in general, difficulty participants answer the TOEFL question because biased. Bias in languages that are used in TOEFL questions which contains negative bias Implicative conversation, conversation idiomatic, metaphorical, and deisis.

Other studies are proprietary Kurniawati (2015) concluded that the factors are causing difficulties in listening on the TOEFL is; a condition or health ailment declining, difficult to understand material, lack of support,

lack of training to improve listen to good English with their classmates or with native speakers. The literature has reported many students find reading difficult because of several factors, one of them is their lack of ability to understand a particular text (Ali, 2012, p.5).

According to Anita Girsang (December 2019), difficulty in answering reading comprehension questions on the TOEFL test is due to lack of interest in participants reading, meaning and purpose the text in reading comprehension questions is difficult to understand, lacking practice and time are one of the difficulties for each participant who follows TOEFL test.

Hardin (2014) concluded that time management, missing keywords, unfamiliar vocabulary and getting caught up in details are common TOEFL reading difficulties. Al-Rawashdeh (2010) concluded that there are real difficulties face graduate students during their preparation for the TOEFL test, and the most important of it was that related to students themselves as course and test tuition fees. The researcher recommends that each university should work with the High Ministry of Education to overcome these difficulties so that they do not hindrance students' preparation for the TOEFL test.

According to Nurfitriah Halim, Various difficulties faced by the students in answering TOEFL test questions prove that there are many difficulties found. It does not rule out the possibility that there are still

many problems that caused students to feel difficult in answering the TOEFL test.

Based on the experts above, the researcher concludes that the difficulty in answering reading comprehension questions on the TOEFL test is due to the lack of participants' interest in reading, the meaning and purpose of the text in reading comprehension questions are difficult to understand, lack of practice, lack of vocabulary and time are one of the difficulties for each participants who took the TOEFL test.

### **C. Factor-factor difficulties**

As Hamouda (2013) states that the factors that cause students' listening comprehension problems are categorized into different sources including problems related to listening texts, listening problems related to tasks and activities, listener problems related to listeners and teacher methodology.

The problems that take part in students' learning process are caused by many factors that come from inside and outside the students. Those factors can be broadly categorized as internal and external factors (Slameto, 2010). Internal factors are factors which come from inside the students. While external factors are factors which come from outside the student. Learning English requires students to consider not only the external factors but also internal factors.

Johnson (2006) stated that, it is increasingly obvious that the internal factors can overtake the externals in their realm of influence. Even

when the externals are at the perfect position, internal factors can alter success. In this study, the internal factors consist of anxiety, demotivation, negative attitude, and low self-esteem. While the external factors consist of lack of family support and unsupportive school environment factor. Those factors might exist in English class which can affect negatively to students' learning process. For example, many students are passive and shy to participate in classroom activities. One of the reasons to take into consideration might be their anxiety about making mistakes.

As what Riasti (2011) stated that students may feel anxious due to problems related to negative evaluation such as fear of correction and fear of making mistake. Senior high school students really care about how they are viewed by teachers and classmates and they are not willing to be laughed at by others in the class. Therefore, they will see mistakes in English learning as threats to them. As the result, they will try to protect themselves by avoiding answering questions or giving their ideas in class.

The second is entitled Analysis of EFL Students' Difficulty in The TOEFL Structure and Written Expression Section. This thesis is written by Munadia (2016). The result of the study is the researcher found that the students faced the difficulties in some elements of grammar in the structure and written expression : reduced verb, the use of verb parallelism, subject verb agreement, and relative clause. The factor influencing the difficulties come from four factors : lack of grammar skill, lack of vocabulary mastery, easily distracted, and less practices.

Based on the explanation above, it can be possible that the cause of the difficulty of 8th semester students in doing the test of the test can be thought to originate from internal factors and external factors. Internal factors that are suspected to be the cause of difficulty working on the test are physical and psychological factors. Whereas the external factor that is suspected to be the cause of students' difficulties in doing the test is coming from the surrounding environment.

#### **D. How to get higher score in TOEFL test**

According to kayla: jul,23<sup>rd</sup>,2018 Unlike most exams or tests, when it comes to the TOEFL there is no passing or failing. What you do get is a score for each section and the test as a whole. You can then compare it to the basic entry requirements of any colleges or universities you are applying to. If you are trying to apply to multiple colleges/universities, then it is advised to strive for the highest required TOEFL score.

The following guide can help you achieve a higher TOEFL score.

##### **a) Speaking**

Unlike most exams or tests, when it comes to the TOEFL there is no passing or failing. What you do get is a score for each section and the test as a whole. You can then compare it to the basic entry requirements of any colleges or universities you are applying to. If you are trying to apply to multiple colleges/universities, then it is advised to strive for the highest required TOEFL score.



**a. Pronunciation and tone of choice**

A student seems to be having issues with their pronunciation and/or tone when speaking in English. A TOEFL iBT pronunciation specialist can listen to the student speaking to determine what the student needs to work on most. The speaking specialist will then provide specific lessons for the student to follow.

**b. Grammar and vocabulary**

If you struggle with your grammar and vocabulary, then you should complete both an independent and integrated speaking practice test, daily. Once you complete enough of these tests, your speaking responses should be evaluated by a TOEFL iBT speaking specialist. This is so the speaking specialist can determine what you need the most help in.

For example:

A student completes a few independent speaking practice tests. The speaking specialist begins to notice that the student is avoiding or misusing adjective clauses. The specialist will then help the student learn how to rephrase the sentence to be more complex and accurate.

A TOEFL speaking specialist notices that the student is using mainly basic English vocabulary or is struggling to find the right word to say. The speaking specialist will then give recommendations for alternative synonyms. This is so the student will learn more English vocabulary and score higher on the TOEFL speaking section.

In both cases, the TOEFL iBT speaking specialist will recommend a variety of specific grammar and vocabulary lessons. These lessons will help the student achieve a higher score for the speaking section of the TOEFL.

**c. Communication and topic development**

If you need to improve your topic development and communication, you will need to complete an independent and integrated speaking practice test. This is so a TOEFL iBT speaking specialist can determine whether or not you are having problems organizing and developing ideas.

You will need to learn how to coherently organize your ideas. Knowing how to coherently organize your thoughts and idea is so your audience can distinguish between your most important and least important ideas.

Example:

A student is unable to create sharply-focused topic statements, or the details they are trying to use are not specific enough to strongly support the generalizations. A TOEFL speaking specialist will determine what the student is missing or needs to correct. The specialist will then be able to help teach the student how to organize their ideas more effectively, as well as how to provide more relevant supporting details.

**b) Listening**

Listen for the main idea(s) in the lecture

Expect the first question after almost every lecture to be a question about the main idea of the lecture. These types of questions are very common, so it is important to listen for the main idea. At the beginning of every listening passage, the professor usually mentions what the main topic of the lecture will be about. However, sometimes the topic might be branched into something more specific.

Make sure you pay attention to the main idea of the lecture at the beginning and be mindful when the topic changes!

Sample question: What was the lecture mainly about?

- a. A comparison of two types of detective novels
- b. Ways in which detective novels have changed over time
- c. The Moonstone as a model for later detective novels
- d. Flaws that can be found in the plot of The Moonstone

**a. Listen to the speaker's tone of voice or changes in intonation**

Sometimes you will encounter questions that are about the speaker's attitude or opinion. To answer these questions correctly, you need to pay attention to the speaker's tone of voice.

For example, does the speaker sound excited, confused, or sad?

Sample question:

Q. What can be inferred about the professor when he says this: "Uh, it's hard at this juncture to read this novel and realize that no one had ever done that before because it all seems so strikingly familiar."

- a. He is impressed by the novel's originality.
- b. He is concerned that students may find the novel difficult to read.
- c. He is bored by the novel's descriptions of ordinary events.
- d. He is eager to write a book about a less familiar subject

**b. Listen to how the ideas are connected throughout the lecture**

When listening to the lectures, make sure you take lots of notes about the way the ideas in the lectures are connected. Pay attention to how the professor organized the lecture. Taking these notes will help you in case you encounter a question asking about how the lecture is organized. You can then refer back to your notes for the answer.

Some of the main relations between ideas include cause and effect, compare and contrast, and steps in a process.

**c. Listen for the key points of the lecture instead of specific details**

TOEFL listening questions are not going to test you on the specific or small details. You won't see any questions that are about a specific year, name, or location. Instead, you may see questions that will test your understanding of various key points mentioned in the lectures.

Sample questions:

Q. In what way is *The Moonstone* different from earlier works featuring

- a. detectivea. In its unusual ending
- b. In its unique characters
- c. In its focus on a serious crime

d. In its greater length

Q. According to the professor, what do the roses in *The Moonstone* represent?

a. A key clue that leads to the solving of the mystery

b. A relief and comfort to the detective

c. A romance between the main characters

d. Brilliant ideas that occur to the detective

**d. Listen for any and all signal words that indicate different parts of the lecture**

To help you capture the various key points in the lectures, you need to learn how to listen for specific signal words or transition words. These signal words are like the road signs that tell you what is about to come next in the lecture. Signal words can tell you the beginning or the ending of a topic. They can also help you move through the middle of the lecture by introducing other topics.

**e. Useful study methods to help you improve your TOEFL listening score**

When it comes to passing the listening section of the TOEFL, you are most likely not going to benefit much from watching movies/ TV shows or listening to music in English.

The most effective way to prepare for the TOEFL listening section is to listen to various types of academic English material. Since this will be what you encounter on the official TOEFL listening portion of the test. A

great example of academic English is listening to English documentaries or listening to audible recordings of academic literature in English.

Once you have all of your TOEFL listening practice materials at hand, you will then need a systematic studying method to achieve your desired score for this section of the TOEFL.

### **c) Writing**

Being able to express yourself clearly in writing is an essential skill, both inside and outside the classroom. It is a skill you will definitely need to have if you want to attend an English-speaking university. Most universities and colleges require students to write multiple academic essays and/or other academic-related works such as case-studies or a thesis. If your writing isn't well-structured and fluent, then your grades will suffer.

This is the main point of the TOEFL writing section. The TOEFL writing section's main goal is to ensure that you are well equipped to flourish in an academic environment.

It can be hard to write in a language that is not your first language, but you don't need to worry as many people struggle with this too.

The key to scoring well on the writing section of the TOEFL is to understand what the TOEFL requires. Once you determine the TOEFL writing rubric and standards you can then hone your academic writing skills. If you want to score high on the writing section of the TOEFL

then you will need to spend time perfecting your English academic writing.

Unsure of how to improve your writing? Here we provide you with five basic writing tips that can help you perfect your academic writing skills:

Learn how to properly structure your essay

All of your answers in the written section of the TOEFL will be in essay format. A decently written essay breaks down into three essential parts:

The introduction – a brief paragraph consisting of two or five sentences that introduce the main topic. It should also present a thesis that is a direct response to the question asked. You should also include two to three main ideas that will be discussed in the body of the essay.

The body – two to three paragraphs that support your thesis statement. Each paragraph should cover one main idea.

The conclusion – a short paragraph of three to five sentences that summarizes your thesis and draws conclusions and readdressed the key points of your essay.

If you want to do well on the TOEFL, you must be able to organize your thoughts quickly and structure them well in an essay so that what you have written is easy to understand and read. It is advised to create an outline first and then write your essay using the outline as a guide.

## **2.) Get used to picking sides on an issue**

TOEFL essays often require students to pick a side on a particular issue, articulate a thesis, and then support the thesis with clear writing.

One of the best ways to prepare for the written portion of the exam is to learn how to evaluate a topic. You should try to pick the argument that will give you the best chance of writing a compelling essay. What often surprises many students is that they do not have to agree with the thesis they are proposing.

Once you pick the topic you want to write about, you can then brainstorm a few ideas for each side of the issue. Then you pick the side that you feel has the most compelling arguments.

If you are unsure about what topics are given on the TOEFL, you can easily find lists of typical TOEFL topics online and use them to practice. The more you practice writing about various topics the higher the chance is that you will score well in this section of the exam.

## **3.) Focus on the quality of the writing rather than quantity of words**

Writing a long essay is not necessary. The quality of your writing shouldn't suffer as a result of writing a long response. You will be better off keeping your written responses short so as to assure a quality essay. The structure and clarity of your written responses will determine your TOEFL writing score.



As you prepare for the written portion of the exam, your main goal should be to get as comfortable as you can with the process of writing. You should strive for a clear and compelling essay that supports your main argument. It is not unheard of for short essays to get a higher score than the longer essays.

#### **4.) Practice writing different sentence structures**

Academic writing must be clear, but it shouldn't be too simple either. If you have read any well-written essay, you will notice that the sentence structure varies. Some sentences are short and straightforward, while others can be long and more complex.

You don't have to know all the ways to structure a sentence, but it is a good idea to study sentences and have a few structures that you can easily use correctly.

#### **5.) Learn how to proofread and edit your own writing**

If you have a few minutes after you finish writing an essay, use that remaining time to read over your essay and edit it as needed. It is fairly common, even for native English speakers, to make mistakes as they write. Sometimes we think faster than we can write. This can result in using improper grammar, poor punctuation, poor sentence structure or vocabulary.

Some of the most common writing mistakes to look for are:

1. Spelling errors, including improper use of homonyms
2. Punctuation errors

3. Subject/verb agreement
4. Repetitive words or phrases
5. Poor sentence structure or run on sentences
6. Improper use of a vocabulary word

Make sure you read slowly and carefully over what you have written. This will help you catch any mistakes and allow you to correct as much as you can within the remaining time that you have. Attention to detail can make a huge difference in your final writing score.

In addition to these five tips, you should always try to write in English every day. Keeping a journal or diary can help you with your writing. All you need to do is spend at least five minutes writing about your day before you go to bed.

The more ways you apply your English grammar and vocabulary, the better your writing skills will be.

#### **d) Reading**

##### **a. Improve your reading speed**

Time is of the essence when it comes to the TOEFL. In fact, having good timing and the ability to pace yourself well can make or break your TOEFL score. In other sections of the exam, time is specifically called out. For example, when you are speaking, you will have 15 seconds to prepare an answer and 45 seconds to record

it. In the Listening section, you can only hear the dialogue when it is played out to you.

The reading section, however, is where having a sense of time and pace will be left up to you. You will need to judge how much time you have left to complete the required readings and answer the questions. This can be a bit tricky because you will be dealing with three to four difficult texts that may be difficult to understand.

The TOEFL reading section can have up to 56 questions for 3 to 4 passages, and the maximum time given for the whole section is 80 minutes. What this basically means is you will only have 5 minutes to read each text and approximately 1 minute to answer each question. If you want to have more time to answer the questions, then you will need read each passage in just 3 to 4 minutes. Also, you will probably want to read each passage multiple times to adequately answer the questions given.

To do well on the TOEFL reading section, you will need to improve your reading speed. As you study and practice, try to time yourself. Take note of how long it takes you to go through a given passage. You may notice that you slow down when your level of comprehension drops down. Don't worry this is perfectly normal and fixable!

When you understand less, you end up needing to slow down and read more carefully. Everyone reads at a different pace even native English speakers. What you will need to do is to make your reading pace slightly faster for this specific test-taking situation. This is so you can get through the reading section and have enough time to answer the questions for each passage.

In order to improve your reading comprehension, you should try to read from various sources. The TOEFL-style academic passages are just one source you can use. Other sources for English language material are English literature, newspapers, and magazines. When you read a variety of English writing styles you become more comfortable with the English language and you will improve your reading speed too.

**b. Work on your reading comprehension speed**

Once you have worked on your reading speed and are comfortable with reading a variety of complex English passages in less than 4 minutes, you can now move on to reading comprehension.

An important test-taking strategy is to teach yourself to remain calm and avoid stressing out when you come across a word you don't know. The reading section will be full of unfamiliar words. The TOEFL puts in these unfamiliar words on purpose.

The reading section will ask you to determine the meaning of a word or use context clues to determine the unfamiliar words meaning. This is what the TOEFL reading section is mainly testing for. The TOEFL is not testing your ability to memorize a thesaurus. It is instead testing your skill at dealing with vocabulary words that you do not know.

Not knowing a word is normal, and is often expected from non-native English speakers. When you come across a word you don't understand, you might try to check an online translating tool, translating app or consult a dictionary. These types of tools are not always available. You also waste time when you panic or get hung up on an unfamiliar word.

When this happens you need to relax, skip the unknown word and continue reading. More often than not, you will find the meaning of the whole text to be fairly easy to understand, even if you were unable not understand a few of the words.

**c. Learn specific vocabulary by making a variety of vocabulary lists**

You should always strive to broaden your vocabulary. This will help you to lessen the chances of stumbling over unfamiliar words. As you study for the reading section of the TOEFL, whether you are at home, on a work break or in class, go ahead and try to look up any words you don't understand.

While you practice for the reading section of the TOEFL, try to read each and every passage completely without having to look up any words. Once you have read the whole text and tried to understand everything on your own, then you may look up any unfamiliar words. This is similar to the actual TOEFL reading section of the test.

It is important to make a list of unfamiliar words and translate them using an English-to-English dictionary. You must avoid any temptation to use a dictionary which translates words from the English language into your native language. Using these dictionaries too much can cause you to become too reliant and hinder your ability to expand your vocabulary.

The English-to-English dictionary can be very helpful. It gives you a clear English explanation for the word you do not understand and will help you familiarize yourself with synonyms (words that are similar in meaning) and antonyms (words that have opposite meanings).

Being able to recognize these types of words will come in handy for the TOEFL reading section and improve your English language skills too. Your vocabulary will grow and so will your confidence. By the time you get to your test day, you will have a much larger English vocabulary to help you out.

**d. You must keep moving, don't stop!**

The TOEFL is a test after all, so timing is extremely important.

When it comes to the reading section of the exam, you must remember that you will not have more than 4 minutes per passage. Do not get hung up on every passage. Avoid stopping as much as possible. You have to keep moving no matter what!

There are 3 to 4 passages in the TOEFL reading section, and you will most likely feel more comfortable with some of the reading passages over others.

Some passages will seem harder and some will seem easier. Skim each passage, note keywords in the sentences and remember to leave the unfamiliar terms behind. Bear in mind that the TOEFL reading passages may contain words that even native English speakers don't typically know. Also, the TOEFL is can be very specific.

You may see questions on the TOEFL that look like this: "The word X on line Y is closest in meaning to..." with four choices of words following. Most of the choices will either sound similar or have very similar meanings. You will need to read the text carefully in order to identify the correct answer.

**e. Use the line numbering provided on the TOEFL**

The TOEFL numbers every fifth line in each of the passages. This is meant to help you navigate quickly to the words or sentences referred to in the questions. Practice locating specific

lines by the numbers provided. This will help prevent you from wasting time on the exam.

When starting the actual TOEFL, make sure you take a deep breath and remain calm throughout the reading section of the test. With all these tips, lessons, practice and so on provided in this guide, you are bound to get the high TOEFL score you worked hard for!

## **B. Review Of The Related Findings**

There are related studies which have been done by the other researchers. Santi Wardana in 2017, conducted research entitled “Students’ Strategies in Answering Reading Comprehension of TOEFL”. This study investigated students’ strategies in answering reading comprehension of TOEFL test. After doing so many steps and processes in her study, she concluded that, the strategy is the most dominant used by the students in answering reading comprehension at seventh semester of English Study Program in STAIN Curup and the students use all strategy in answering reading comprehension of TOEFL test.

Previous research conducted by Febriani et.al (2019) this research said that the problems faced by eighth semester students were lack of students' understanding of the text, lack of student background, lack of student reading strategies, which caused students to fail in answering reading comprehension questions on the TOEFL test. Antoni (2014) also said the difficulties



experienced by students in interpreting texts, vocabulary restrictions, and time constraints

The last previous related research conducted by Tomi and friends (2017). This previous research aimed to identify which sub-skills in reading comprehension pose the greatest challenges for the students in order to focus practice on those sub skills. With the sample size was 20 advanced EFL undergraduate students at Syiah Kuala University, Indonesia, who were asked to sit a PBT TOEFL reading comprehension test. The result showed that vocabulary (50% correct answers in average) and inference (52%) are the most difficult sub-skills for the respondents, followed by detail information (60% and 62%). Therefore, this previous research suggested that university needs to dedicate more time in Reading Comprehension courses for difficult reading comprehension sub-skills.

Another research was conducted by Octarina (2018) in this research many questions were asked from Deborah Philips TOEFL book. that is, difficulty in finding the main idea, Implied Detail Question, Unstated Detail, Stated Detail Question and Vocabulary question. in this research said that the most difficulty faced by students is when they have to find the main ideas of the text, because of the lack of student vocabulary. then the thing that is most important is to increase the vocabulary.

Previous related research conducted by Huda (2009) with aim of this previous study was to determine the most important difficulties that face graduate students at Jordanian universities during their TOEFL preparation program. This study involved (179) graduate students (73 male, 106 female), who studied TOEFL class level (2). The researcher used a self-developed questionnaire to collect the data. The results pointed out that the most important difficulties were that students do not believe that they should take the TOEFL, it should be just for students specialized in English language, the second one was that students are not convinced by the benefits of the TOEFL, and it is for materialistic purpose only.

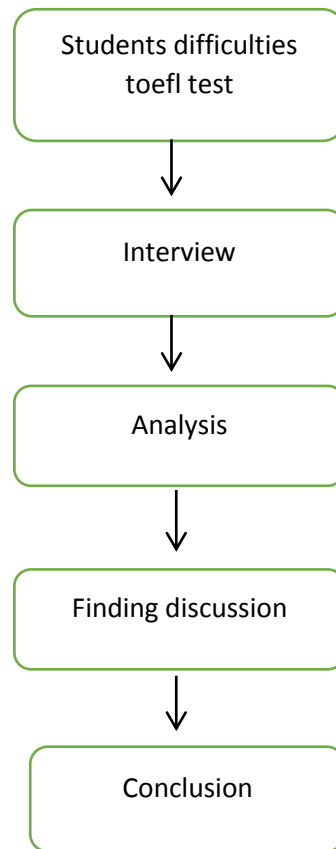
Furthermore , there is a research which was constructed by Iskandar Abdul Samad, Miftahul Jannah, and Siti Sarah Fitriani in 2017, a research entitled “EFL students’ strategies dealing with common difficulties in TOEFL reading comprehension section”. This study investigates the undergraduate students’ difficulties and their strategies in completing TOEFL reading comprehension test. The result of this study is indicates five difficult reading aspects encountered by the students. In addition, their strategies to complete the reading comprehension section of the TOEFL test are also found.

The third previous study is written by Aini Ainur Rohmah (2004), entitled *An Analysis on The Students' Grammatical Errors in The TOEFL Test*. This thesis is about students' difficulties to complete structure section of the TOEFL. The result show that on the average is more than 40% of students made error in the nine skills of structure and written expression areas, where the highest frequency of error is made in the verb agreement, tense, and form item (22, 22%). It means that word form is the most difficult item than others which needs more emphasis and attention in teaching learning process.

Based on the research above, the researcher find the differences between the researchers postulated earlier with this research. The differences are this researcher hopefully more gives contribution then both of them. Therefore, this study will provide awareness for students in knowing difficult skills in the section and knowing the strategies used to overcome difficulties in answering the TOEFL section.

### **C. Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework is a concept that writer use planning the research. It is used to make a conceptual distinction and organized ideas. The researcher conducted to research base on this conceptual framework.



**Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the research**

From the conceptual framework above, researchers get the factors that influence students' difficulties in the test test. The researcher chose one student to be interviewed. And then, students will be asked questions. From these answers, researchers obtain research findings and will make conclusions about this study.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter discusses about the research design methodology of the research. It consisted of research design. The researcher uses the descriptive qualitative method. This research also discusses about setting of the research, instrument of the of the research. This chapter also discusses about technique of collecting data and technique of analyzing data.

#### **A. Research Design**

According to Sugiyono (2015, pp. 8-9) "Qualitative research methods are frequent Called the naturalistic research method because the research was conducted on Natural conditions (natural settings); also called the ethnographic method because at first this method was more widely used for field research Cultural anthropology; referred to as a qualitative method, because of data Collected and the analysis is more qualitative. Qualitative research methods Is a research method based on the philosophy of post positivism, Used to examine the condition of natural objects, (as opposed to Is an experiment) where the researcher as a key instrument, technique Data collection is done by triangulation (combined), data analysis is Inductive or qualitative, and qualitative research results emphasize more meaning Rather than generalizing.

#### **B. Setting Of the Research**

The research was conducted at University of Pasir Pangaraian in March 2020. It is located at Jl. Tuanku Tambusai, Kumu Desa Rambah.

**a. The Population and Sample**

**1) Population**

Population is the group of interest to the group of interest to the researcher, the group to which she or he would like of the study to be generalizable. Sugiyono in Purwanto defines population as the general area consists of subject or object which has particular quantity or characteristic that was determined by the researcher which he would like to investigate in depth and take the conclusions. In this research, the population was all eighth semester students of English Study Program in University of Pasir Pangaraian. The population consisted of two classes ( A and B). The number of population is given in table 1.

No	Class	Number of Class
1	Regular	12
2	Non Regular	12
Total		24

Based on the table above in this study researchers chose the population at University of Pasir Pangaraian, where researchers took the English study program as the study population. The population in the English study program at University of Pasir Pangaraian has 2 classes A and B.

The a regular class has A total of 12 students while the non-regular B class has 12 students, so a total of class A and B is 24.

## **2) Sample**

According to Ary (2002: 163) the sample is a group of populations. This means that a good sample must represent the whole as possible, so that a generalization of this study sample. Researchers eight semester English department as a sample. In the researcher, the researcher took regular and non-regular class of population as the sample. The researcher took 10 students randomly in all classes at the eighth semester in University of Pasir Pangaraian. So, the samples are going to take from those are 10 samples.

### **C. Instrument of the Research**

Some instruments are needed to collect the data. Based on Louis Cohan cites that “the observer as participant is known as a researcher to the group, and maybe has less extensive contact with the group. From the definition, the writer concludes that position of the researcher known by the other participant. As a strengthening of the data, the writer conducts the interview and questioner and document from students about their difficulties completing when they do the tests.

In this research, the researcher used some instruments:

#### **1. Documentation of TOEFL scores.**

According to Sugiyono (2013: 240) the document is a record of events that have passed. Documents can take the form of writings, drawings, or monumental works of a person The researcher used documentation of TOEFL score to know the level of English Department students TOEFL score.

## **2. Questionnaire**

According to Sugiono (2014: 142), the questionnaire is a collection technique efficient data if the researcher knows with whom the variable will be measured and knows what can be expected from respondents. Questionnaire can be closed or open questions can be given to respondent directly or sent via post or internet. The researcher used questionnaire to get information about student's difficulties in the TOEFL test. There were 15 questions for the questionnaire

## **3. Interview**

Merriam (1988:71) says that the most common form interview is the person to person encounter which one person elicits information from another. In this study, interviewed one by one in order to gain their expression, thoughts, feelings, opinions, or perspective on the topic being studied, (Merriam, 1988:76). The interview was recorded to keep the data well. The interview was recorded to keep the data well. The researcher gave 5 questions to find out the cause of students' difficulties in working on the topic.

### **D. Technique of Collecting the Data**

The technique collecting data employed in this study and the individual instruments used to gather the data. In qualitative research, data collection approach includes in-depth interview, document analysis, observation, and audiovisual materials analysis (Creswell, 2012). Data of



this research came from document, questioner, and interview, which was gathered through several techniques of data collection.

The researcher will make an interview open for the students VIII semester English department in University of Pasir Pengaraian. The purpose of this technique is to know factors students' difficulties of students in mastering English vocabularies. The researcher gave a questionnaire to the student. It was to know their TOEFL score, difficulties and their strategy in answering TOEFL test.

In the research conducted, the source of documentation obtained from data in the form of reports on the results of student examinations that have followed the TOEFL test. Other documentary evidence was obtained from the results of the divided interview in the interview tape.

#### **E. Technique of Analysis the Data**

In this research, the researcher used mix method to analyze the result of this research. The researcher used quantitative method to analyze the mean score of the students. The researcher also described the result of this research by using percentage to make the result clear and understandable.

The researcher used qualitative method to analyze the difficulties that the students faced and the potential solution about theirs. the researcher did some steps as follow:

- 1) The researcher collected the students TOEFL score and found out the student's means score.

2) Classifying students' TOEFL scores

**Table.2 (Blanc 2012)**

No	Classification	Score
1	Excellent	525-677
2	Very Good	480-520
3	Good	420-480
4	Fairly Good	310-420

3) The researcher identified student's difficulties in the TOEFL test for each skill from the questionnaire by using liker scale. Liker scale consist of the five strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. Each of the response categories is given a score from 1 to 5 (Santoso 2003).

**Table 3.1 (liker scale )**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Positive (+)	5	4	3	2	1
Negative(-)	1	2	3	4	5

4) The researcher converted the questionnaire result into percentage

**Table 3.2 ( percentage)**

No	Level of Difficulties	Scale
1	Very High	80%-100%
2	High	60%-79.99%
3	Moderate	40%-59.99%
4	Low	20%-39.99%
5	Very Low	0%-19.99%

Total score: total statement x 100% ( habibi 2013)

Index percentage : total score : y x 100 ( Habibi 2017)

- 5) The researchers transcribed the interview results to find out the potential difficulties of students in facing the TOEFL test.