STUDENTS' BARRIERS IN ANSWERING READING SECTION OF TOEFL

THESIS

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BANDA ACEH

2022 M / 1444 H

THESIS

Submitted to *Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan*

Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements fot The Degree

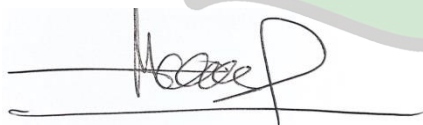Bachelor of Education in English Language Teaching

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Date :   25   / 07   / 2022   Date :   20 / 07   /2022

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It has been defended in *Sidang Munaqasyah*

in front of the board of the Examination for the working paper

and has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

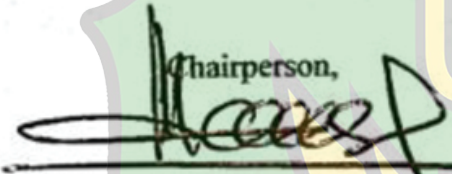for the Bachelor Degree of Education in English Language Teaching

On:

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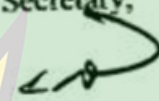
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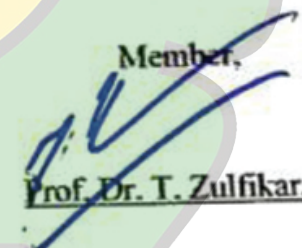Chairperson,

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SURAT PERNYATAAN KEASLIAN

(*Declaration of Originality*)

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Students Barrier in Answering Reading Section of TOEFL

adalah benar-benar karya saya, **kecuali semua kutipan dan referensi yang disebutkan sumbernya.** Apabila terdapat kesalahan dan kekeliruan didalamnya, maka akan sepenuhnya menjadi tanggung jawab saya. Demikianlah surat pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sesungguhnya.

Aceh Besar, 25/07/2022

Saya yang membuat pernyataan ,

Muna Raihana

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praises are due to Allah, the lord of the world and the creator of everything. Glory is to Allah, who created the stars and moon and then made them light and shining in the sky. Greetings and blessings may always be sent to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, who turned the era of ignorance into the era of complete knowledge. With Allah blessing and mercies upon the researcher, she could complete this thesis entitled "Students' barriers in Answering Reading Section of TOEFL."

For the achievement that has been achieved, the researcher would like to thank her advisors, Prof. Dr. Muhammad A.R, M. Ed and Habiburrahim, M.Com., M.S., Ph.D., for their guidance, time, encouragement, andpatience in helping her write the thesis. Besides, the researcher wants to thank all the English education lecturers and staff who have motivated and helped her during her studies in this department.

The researcher's gratitude is expressed to her parent, Tarmizi and Ermiati, for their support, prayers, and loves; she is motivated to reach the last level of the degree. Also, the researcher wants to thank the three younger siblings, Munadi, Qanita, and Faiqa.

Last but not least, the researcher would like to extend special thanks to her friends Maharah, Sultan, Ira, Dara Laina, Rahmi, Darayani, Geby, Rini, and Uti,

who have become good listeners when she is in despair and who always gives encouragement to the researcher. Thankfulness also goes to those who cannot be mentioned one by one, who have made small and significant contributions, also prayed for her to finish this thesis.

The researcher realizes there are still numerous mistakes that are both in content and grammar. Therefore, the researcher expects recommendations and helpful criticism from readers for better results. The researcher hopes this thesis is useful for all of us.
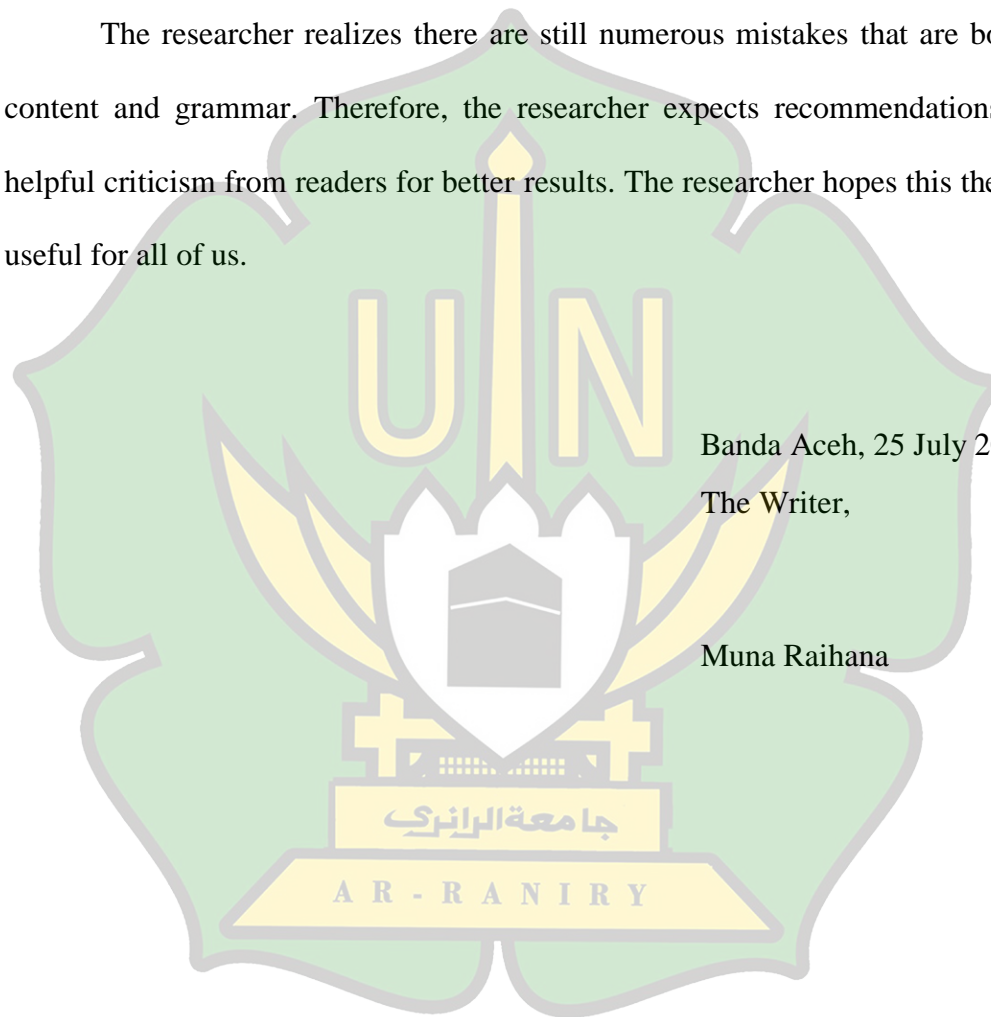
Banda Aceh, 25 July 2022
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ABSTRACT

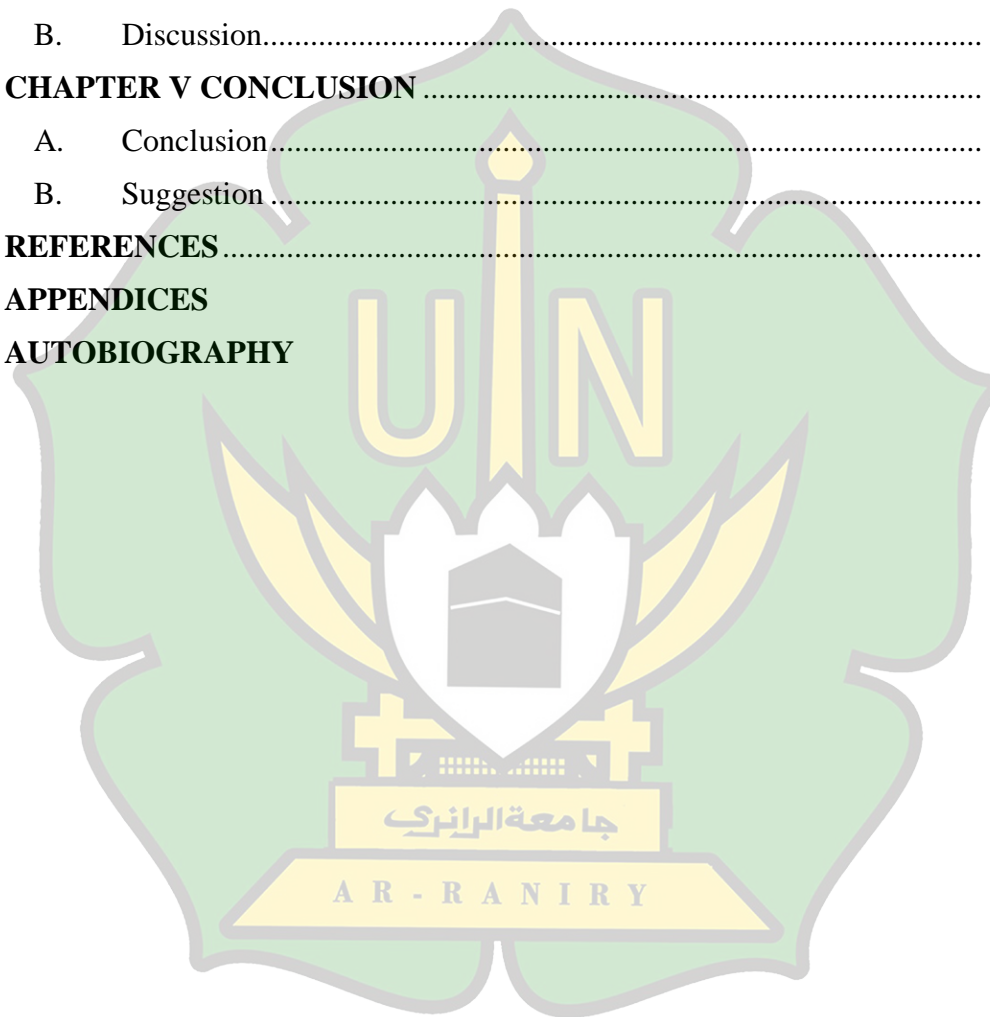Name   : Muna Raihana

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Thesis Working Title   : Students' Barriers in Answering Reading Section Of TOEFL

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Keywords   : TOEFL; Reading; Barrier; Strategy

This study aimed to determine the barriers students face in answering the reading section of TOEFL, to figure out the factors that influence the students to face difficulties in answering the reading section of TOEFL, and to investigate the strategies that students used in answering TOEFL in the reading section. To collect the data, the researcher used the interview instrument that was analyzed through a descriptive qualitative approach. Eight students from the English Education Department at UIN Ar-Raniry in the academic year 2018 were chosen as participants for this research. They were selected through a purposive sampling technique where the students took the TOEFL and achieved a score of 500 and above. The research finding showed that students often faced many barriers in finding unstated detail, identifying the main idea, finding the implied details, answering transition questions, finding pronoun referents, and identifying the meaning of difficult words used in the context. There are several main factors for this: Students' lack reading motivation, students' lack background knowledge, time management, inadequate vocabulary knowledge, and the complexity sentence. The researcher also found several strategies students often use to overcome some of their difficulties and classified them into two strategies. The reading strategy are skimming and scanning text, utilizing background knowledge while reading the text, and understanding unfamiliar word using context clues. Also, the test-taking strategy is to look at the questions before reading the text, to answer the easier questions first, and to eliminate erroneous options.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background of the study, research questions, the aims of the study, the significance of the study and the terminology.

A. Background of Study

Recently, there has been an increase in English as an International Language (EIL) use in various industries worldwide. It is demonstrated by the use of English standardized testing in several institutions. The use of English Proficiency test (TOEFL and IELTS) in standardized testing as the requirement for scholarships and other recruitment processes. According to Madsen (1983), proficiency tests demonstrate overall language skills and determine a person's capability in a given area. They can also indicate whether or not a person is prepared for particular types of schooling or employment.

TOEFL is a test intended to evaluate students' proficiency in English to determine the competency of people who do not speak English as a first language or are learning English as a second language (Collins English Dictionary, 2022). As one of the proficiency tests, TOEFL is a standardized academic English test used by students applying to American colleges. In addition, some universities outside the United States also recognize the TOEFL as proof of English proficiency (Maizarah, 2019). This test evaluates the fundamental skills of English competence in reading, listening, speaking, structure and written

expressions, which are divided into different sections. Therefore, to achieve a good score in this test, the students need to have a combination of these skills.

In order to graduate from UIN Ar-Raniry, students must demonstrate their English competence by the TOEFL predicted score. The TOEFL score for each study program is different. According to Zalha, Alfiatunnur, and Kamil (2020), students must get a minimum score of 500, which is especially important for English language learners. However, some students appear to have difficulty achieving this score. They appear to be attempting to achieve the requisite minimum score with difficulty. In her study of EFL students at UIN Ar-Raniry, Fadhilla (2019) mentioned that achieving a 500 TOEFL score is still difficult for students. As a result, students must retake the test numerous times before achieving the required score.

The reading section is the third part of the TOEFL which consists of five passages and fifty questions. The type of questions in the reading section test is multiple-choice. This question requires the test taker to choose the best answer based on the information provided. Anjomshoa and Zamanian (2014) stated that reading comprehension is the most important section among the three language skills examined in the TOEFL. They found that vocabulary is very influential in reading comprehension. According to Freedle and Kostin (1993), "Some difficulties were found in TOEFL reading comprehension by focusing on three different types of items: main idea, conclusion, and supporting idea" (p.25).

According to Elfiondri, Kasim, Mustafa, and Putra (2020), the problems in reading comprehension are inadequate vocabulary, slow reading, and lack of

strategy, background knowledge, and grammar. Their finding show that in reading comprehension, the most challenging sub-skill was vocabulary, and vocabulary influenced the difficulty of most other sub-skills. These findings suggest that students need to be given more vocabulary and encouraged to practice using it to gain a better understanding of an academic text.

Dahliana (2016) claimed that despites the fact that most Indonesian students have acquired English, they still struggle to comprehend varied English texts. Jayanti (2016) agreed that EFL students still struggle with reading English text. One of the most common reasons is a lack of vocabulary, which makes it difficult to comprehend the text. They frequently do not understand what the texts are trying to say to them, despite their ability to extract and understand text details (Syahabuddin, Yusni, & Zahara, 2019)

To support this research, the researcher reviews the previous research on TOEFL reading section issues. The first study was conducted by Febriani, Elfrida, and Fernandita (2019). It took place at Bengkulu University in the English Education Department. The result indicated that the issues found in reading section of TOEFL are due to reading comprehension, motivation, lack of background knowledge, lack of reading strategies, and lack of language knowledge.

Another relevant study was conducted by Antoni (2014) at Pasir Pengaraian University. The result showed that students get difficulties understanding the meaning of written English. It happened because they had limited vocabulary and some phrases. Moreover, the time available for the section

is limited for them. This has an effect on students' ability to answer questions in the TOEFL reading comprehension part.

In the preliminary research, the researcher found students in the English Education Department struggled to answer the reading section of the TOEFL test for certain reasons. Even though they had completed all of the reading courses and had passed the English language proficiency subjects, they were still having difficulty in reading. As a result of this issue, study must be conducted to determine why English students continue to struggle with the TOEFL test, particularly in the reading section. Although the current research stated above was useful, it largely focused on the general issues.

Based on this phenomenon, the researcher is challenged to find the barriers experienced by students in reading section of the TOEFL. A study was carried out by the researcher with the following title: *"Students' Barriers in Answering Reading Section of TOEFL in English Education Department UIN Ar-Raniry."*

B. Research Question

Based on the previous explanation, this research focuses on three research questions:

1. What are the barriers faced by students in answering the reading section of TOEFL in English Education Department UIN Ar-Raniry?

2. What are the factors that influence the students face difficulties in answering the reading section of TOEFL in English Education Department UIN Ar-Raniry?

3. What are the strategies used by students in answering the reading section of the TOEFL test?

C. Objective of the Research

Based on the research question above, the objective of the research are:

1. To find out the barriers faced by students in answering the reading section of TOEFL in English Education Department UIN Ar-Raniry.

2. To figure out the factors that influence the students face difficulties in answering the reading section of TOEFL in English Education Department UIN Ar-Raniry

3. To investigate the strategies that the students used in answering TOEFL in reading section.

D. Significance of Study

This research aims to inform students about the barriers in answering the reading section of the TOEFL to encourage them to predict the type of reading question that is challenging, so they can use an accurate strategy when completing TOEFL Reading. The researcher hopes that this research will assist lecturers in developing reading materials that are appropriate for the needs of students in reading TOEFL. In addition, it is intended that this study would serve as a resource for future researchers who want to do similar studies on the TOEFL reading section.

E. Limitation of the study

The focus of this study was on student barriers, the factors that determine such barriers, and the strategies used by students in answering the reading section of the TOEFL test at English Education Department, UIN Ar-Raniry. This survey

sample is likewise restricted to English Education Department students at UIN Ar-Raniry, particularly students in academic year of 2018 who had taken TOEFL and the score is 500 and above.

F. Terminology

To understand this research, the reader needs to be familiar with some terminologies used in the title. There are as follows:

1. Barrier

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2022), barrier is an issue, rule, or situation that prevents someone from accomplishing something or makes something impossible. The barriers that are intended by researcher in this research are the obstacles and challenges faced by UIN Ar-Raniry students, especially the English Education Department in answering the reading section of the TOEFL prediction test.

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

TOEFL is a standardized test used to evaluate the proficiency of non-native English speakers. According to Phillips (2001), "Many educational institutions in Indonesia have implemented it to assess the English-language abilities of those who do not speak English as their first language and plan to enroll in colleges and universities as undergraduate or graduate students" (p. xiii). In this study, the researcher means the TOEFL prediction test, which is one of the requirements for all UIN Ar-Raniry students, particularly those in English Education Department, to participate in the thesis trial and to attend graduation ceremonies and receive certificates.

3. Reading section

According to Rombot, Boeriswati, and Suparman (2020), reading is an interactive process for determining and comprehending the meanings of written materials. In the TOEFL test, this section provides five texts with fifty questions and each question has a varied level of difficulty. All of the questions of this research focused on the reading section of TOEFL. The Reading section that the researcher means is the reading comprehension test in the TOEFL prediction test.
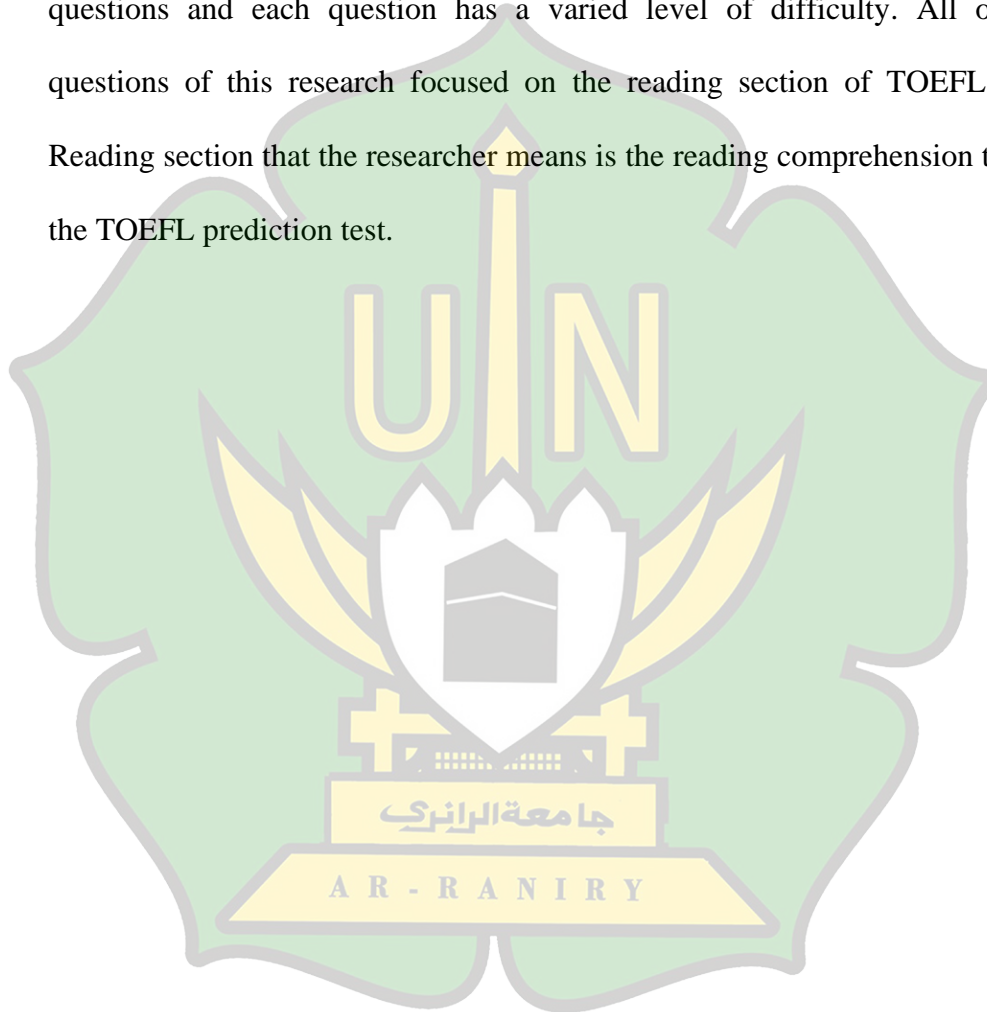
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explains the theory used in the research. It covers a brief discussion of the TOEFL and Reading section.

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

1. Definition of TOEFL

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is a standardized language test for people who are learning a foreign language. The TOEFL test can be used to determine the English competence of students who do not speak English as their first language. According to Farooq (2015) "The TOEFL test is a standard English language test that students who plan to study in a foreign nation where English is the primary language must take, and the results are valid for two years from the date of the test" (p.3).

TOEFL is now utilized in a variety of situations, such as by students asking for scholarships to continue their education in English-speaking countries. This test is also required for those who want to apply for jobs both in their native country and abroad. The colleges in Indonesia demand this test as a requirement for students to complete their studies and get their bachelor's degree (Samad, 2016).

TOEFL has a difficulty level as an English proficiency test. The TOEFL test has three sections, Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading Comprehension. One item in Listening Comprehension

takes roughly 0.7 minutes to complete. Students must listen to the dialogue, read the response, assess the response, and finally choose one of the options. One item in Structure and Written Expression takes only 0.06 minutes to complete. In Reading Comprehension, one item takes roughly one minute to complete (Sharpe, 2020). To summarize, a high TOEFL score requires a combination of the three. However, the researcher focuses on the reading comprehension test, which is one of three components assessed in this study.

2. Types of TOEFL

TOEFL is a test that people must take to determine their English ability. TOEFL is classified into three types: paper-based tests (PBT), computer-based tests (CBT), and internet-based tests (IBT). Each test has its own peculiarities, particularly in terms of the competency that is to be assessed.

a. Paper-Based Tests (PBT)

This type of test is used to determine whether or not the test taker has the necessary academic skills to succeed in college or university. Listening, structure, and reading are the language components and skills to be examined in the context of academic or campus life.

All of the questions in the structure, listening, and reading sections are multiple choice questions with four options. This test takes about two hours to complete. If the test taker also has to write, the duration is increased by thirty minutes. Between 310 and 677 is the overall score for listening, reading, and structure. This is a discrete-point test, which means that each component or language skill is assessed individually (Sharpe, 2020)

b. Computer-Based Tests (CBT)

This test is divided into four sections: Listening, Structure, and Reading with multiple-choice questions, and Writing with a 30-minute essay. Moreover, everyone who takes this test at the same time may not see the same questions or answer. This test is almost the same as the Paper-Based Test (PBT), but the people taking it use a computer. The problem with CBT is that test-takers cannot go back to the questions they already answered correctly. The people taking the test cannot skip questions or go back to the ones they have already done. This test takes around four hours, including the time required to read the instructions. The CBT score is a number between 0 and 300 (Sullivan, 2005)

c. Internet-Based Tests (IBT)

This test is divided into four sections: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. There is no structure and grammar section in this test. Internet-Based Test (IBT) duration is around 4.5 hours, including a 15-minute break. This TOEFL score is limited to a range between 61 and 120 (Sudarmono, 2013)

B. Brief Discussion of Reading

1. Definition of Reading

Hadley (2022) described reading as a form of communication since it connects the author and the reader. According to Thompson and Vaugh (2007) "Reading comprehension is a complicated, active process of generating meaning from text that entails learning how to read words effectively and automatically,

accessing prior knowledge, recognizing vocabulary and concepts, making inferences, and connecting key ideas in an academic context" (p.114).

In the reading process, readers use their prior knowledge and experience to construct meaning from the text. In order to comprehend the text, readers relate the ideas in the text to what they already know in this process. Furthermore, most people can understand the content they read after reading it word by word and repeating the difficult terms several times (Razali & Razali, 2013).

Moriyanti, Muna, and Ismail (2019) stated that there are a few perspectives that are related to one another. There aremain ideas, details, vocabulary, and inference in reading comprehension. These frames of view are intimately connected to reading comprehension and are tested in English tests. According to Mikulecky and Jeffries (2003), the main idea is the author's idea about the point. The ability to recognize the main idea and supporting ideas is an important aspect of reading skills. Reading tests are used to determine if students can locate the main ideas of written texts and determine the information in them.

Andini, Hadriana, and Delfi (2017) stated that there is a significant correlation between grammar mastery and reading comprehension. This research identifies that grammar mastery is important in reading comprehension. It is important for students because it improves their ability to make connections from one paragraph to the next. It also assists students in discovering the section of the text.

The reading section of TOEFL is the focus of this study. The reading section consists of fifty questions with a time limit of fifty-five minutes. Reading

is a skill that allows someone to understand what they are reading. This section of the TOEFL assesses students' ability to read and comprehend college-level materials. There are five or six reading passages with four to seven questions after each. To read and answer the questions, the test takers were given a variety of short passages on academic topics. Therefore, students must be able to work fast and effectively.

2. Skills in Reading Section

There are numerous components and skills required to comprehend in the reading section of the TOEFL. According to Phillips (2001), the reading section is divided into five components, each of which comprises 13 skills. The first is identifying main ideas of the passage. This section comprises of two skills:

a. Answering Main Idea Questions Correctly

On the TOEFL test, almost every reading passage has a question regarding the main idea of the paragraph. A question like this might be phrased in several ways, such as determining the topic, title, or main idea. As a result, all of these questions attempt to determine the main idea of the passage. Studying the topic sentences, which are most likely present at the beginning of each paragraph, makes it reasonably straightforward to find the main ideas.

b. Recognizing the Organization of Ideas.

There are questions about the organization of ideas in a passage on the TOEFL reading section from time to time. As a result, this question aims to discover how the ideas in one paragraph relate to those in another. Usually, to answer this question, it is required to look at main idea of each paragraph.

The second component is directly answered questions. This component is divided into three skills:

c. Answering the Stated Detail Questions Appropriately

Several of the questions in the TOEFL reading section need answers that are mentioned directly in the passage. It should be able to find the solution without requiring a conclusion. A stated detail inquiry focuses on a specific piece of information rather than the entire paragraph.

The correct answer is frequently a repeat of the passage, and the answers to these questions are generally presented in the order in which they appear. Because the correct response often reflects the same thoughts as what is mentioned in the text but with different words or phrases that are not the same, comprehending the content passage is crucial to select the proper answer.

d. Identifying Unstated Details Question

On the reading test, the test taker may be asked to identify an answer that is not stated, mentioned, or true in the passage. As a result, three of the responses are stated, mentioned, or true in the passage, while one is not. It must find three possible answers to the passage and select the incorrect one.

e. Finding Pronoun Referents

On the TOEFL reading test, a few questions ask the test taker to figure out which noun a pronoun refers to. As a result, it is critical to remember that in most passages, a noun comes first, followed by the pronoun that refers to it.So, when a pronoun is asked to refer to a noun, it should look for the noun before the pronoun.

The third component in the reading section is indirectly answered questions. This component is composed of two skills:

f. Finding Answers Implied Detail Questions

Some questions on the TOEFL reading test need responses that are not directly stated in the passage. Therefore test takers should respond by drawing a conclusion from a specific detail in the passage. As a result, implied, inferred, likely, or probably are used in questions to indicate that the answer to the question is not directly stated. In this type of question, it is critical to comprehend some of the information presented in the passage and to make conclusions from it.

g. Answering Transition Questions

Deciding what will appear before or after the preceding paragraph is necessary. Of course, it does not explicitly indicate what is expected in these passages, and one must infer this from the context. As a result, this type of inquiry demonstrates that good writing includes transitions between paragraphs. To connect the concepts in the two paragraphs, it may begin with an idea from the previous paragraph. A paragraph may also end with a concept that will discuss later in the paragraph.

The fourth component is vocabulary questions, which are divided into four categories:

h. Identifying Definitions from Structural Clues

There will be a lot of vocabulary questions on the TOEFL reading test. Although knowing the definition of the word being tested is beneficial, it is not always necessary. Finding definitions from structural clues is one technique for determining a word's meaning. This type of reading question is asked to determine the meaning of a word. The passage may contain structural clues indicating that the definition of a word is included in the paragraph.

i. Determining the meaning from Word Parts

In the reading section test, when a test-taker is asked to identify the meaning of a long word he does not know, it is occasionally possible to do so by studying the word part.

j. Identifying the Meanings of Difficult Words Using Context

On the TOEFL reading test, test takers may be asked to figure out the meaning of a difficult word they are not expected to know. However, the passage most likely explains what the word means.

k. Identifying the Meanings of Simple Words Using Context

The purpose of this question was to determine the meaning of a simple word that is frequently used in ordinary English. It should not give the usual, everyday meaning of the word in this type of question; rather, a secondary meaning of the word is being assessed. Therefore it must decide the meaning of the word.

The last component is overall review questions. This aspect is composed of:

l. Find out Where Specific Information is found

Sometimes, Reading test questions will require test-takers to determine where a certain piece of information is located in the passage. The answer choice will provide a list of possible locations for this information. The first step to finding answers to these questions is to identify the question's keyword and idea. Then, scan the appropriate section of the passage for the keyword or idea. Choose the response that contains the keyword or idea.

m. Identifying the Tone, Purpose, or Course

In the Reading Comprehension section of the TOEFL, there are sometimes other types of overall review questions. This type of question could ask about:

a) The tone of the passage

A tone question asks if the author is expressing any emotion in his or her writing. The majority of passages on the TOEFL test are factual passages with little emotion: the tone of these types of passages could simply be informational, explanatory, or factual. On the TOEFL, the author sometimes shows emotion, and if there is a question about tone, readers have to be able to recognize that emotion to answer it correctly. The tone might be sarcastic if the author tries to be funny.

b) The author's purpose in writing the passage

A question about purpose asks what the author is trying to do in the passage. Readers can figure out what the author intended to say by looking at the main idea and the organization of details in the passage.

c) The course which the passage might be used

A course question aimed to identify which university course could require this paragraph as assigned reading. By referring to the topic of the passages and the organization of details, the test taker should reach a conclusion about the course.

3. **Test-Taking Strategies in Answering Reading Section**

To overcome the challenges, several reading tips are widely employed to comprehend the information provided in the text. To comprehend the materials, language learners might apply several strategies. Philips (2001) claimed that there are five TOEFL reading comprehension strategies:

a) Skim the reading passage to figure out what the main idea is and how the ideas are organized. To correctly answer the questions, the test taker does not need to understand every detail in each chapter. As a result, reading the material with the goal of fully comprehending every aspect before attempting to answer the questions is a waste of time.

b) Look at the first line of each paragraph for main idea questions.

c) Select a keyword from the question and skim the passage to find that keyword or a related idea for directly and indirectly answered detailed questions.

d) For questions about pronouns, the questions will tell the test taker where the pronoun is in the passage.

e) For transition questions, the test taker should read the beginning or end of the passage.

f) For vocabulary questions, the question will show where in the passage the word is located.

g) The answer choices for where-in-the-passage questions provide four possible locations for the correct response.

h) Review the first line of each paragraph for clues about the tone, purpose, and course.

i) Take a close look at the section of the text where the answer is found. Sometimes, the answer will be in the same sentence as the keyword, main idea or one sentence before or after.

j) From the four options listed in the test book, choose the best answer to each question. The test taker can select the best answer based on the information provided in the relevant area of the passage, eliminate obviously incorrect options, and write the best guess on the answer sheet.

Meanwhile, Dooden (2015) also recommended time management, scanning all questions before responding, tackling easy questions first, and removing erroneous options as examples of test-taking strategies. Those are that test taker might employ to overcome comprehension problems.

4. How to Improve English Reading Skill

The most common concern faced by English learners is their inability to comprehend the text they are reading. As a result, the question of how to improve a learner's reading skills is becoming increasingly popular.Mikulecky and Jeffries (2003) proposed efficient and effective reading comprehension strategies for students' basic academic reading needs.

a. Skimming

Skimming is a strategy that can use to read effectively. Skimming is the technique of focusing only on the general or main ideas in a text. Because the reader does not read the entire text, skimming reduces overall comprehension. The reader only reads what is essential to accomplishing the goal. Skimming requires the ability to read quickly to determine the main idea. The benefit of this strategy is that it can facilitate familiarization with a text. There are numerous techniques to skim a text; skimming the first line of the paragraph, the first and last paragraphs, and the section headings.

b. Scanning

Scanning is the practice of carefully reading and identifying important words or phrases. In addition, scanning allows for the quick identification of specifics and other kinds of information. There are a few chosen to implement a scan; identifying the purpose, locating the appropriate material, and before beginning to scan, it is important to understanding how the information is organized. In addition, Brown (2003) explained that scanning is the quick search for specific information in a text or passage. In light of this definition, scanning aims to capture detailed information without reading the entire text. It also makes efficient use of time.

c. Making Connections

Making connections is a strategy that can employ in the reading. Students can activate their prior knowledge and connect the ideas in the text to their personal experiences by making connections. Reading becomes more

meaningful when a reader relates the concepts in a text to their own experiences and views.

d. Make inference

Reading between the lines is what inferring is all about. When readers can connect their personal experiences with knowledge received from reading, they can draw inferences. As a result, they create new meanings or draw conclusions not mentioned clearly in the text (Zwiers, 2005). According to Mikulecky and Jeffries (2003), successful readers continuously draw conclusions when they read. In other words, they think like a detective and search for clues in the text. After that, students guess the text and the writer's viewpoints using these clues. It is crucial when some ideas are not clearly stated.

In addition, there are several ideas offered by Yang (2014) regarding how to improve English reading skill.

a. Enlarged vocabulary improves comprehension

The key to mastering English is to have a large vocabulary. Students can be reading more effectively if they have a wide vocabulary. It does not imply that they should always carry a dictionary with them. Increasing the vocabulary demands the students to collect and use words daily. A simple way to improve the vocabulary is to read every day and use modern tools like English-language newspapers. Writing down new words in a notepad and making up new sentences with them assures practice and comprehension. It is

critical to review new terms to ensure that they are remembered. When reviewing the new terms, remember how they are used in context.

b. Improve the understanding by guessing the meaning based on the context

The context assists learners in guessing unfamiliar terminology. The context can provide useful information in determining the meaning of unknown words. The context provides various clues for readers to deduce the unknown words. Definition, synonym, antonym, example, and cause-effect relationship are the most important contextual signals.

c. Identify the main idea of a passage

a) Searching for the main idea

The essential idea that the author wishes to communicate is the main idea of a piece of writing. The main idea is not always displayed properly in many cases. When the main idea is inferred or hinted at, it is more difficult to recognize. The main idea can be identified by summarizing the information in the section. Summarizing reduces large amounts of text to their essentials: main ideas and main points worth remembering. The main ideas and key details are captured in summaries.

b) Critical thinking

Critical thinking is a useful tool for improving reading skill. Few writers ever tell readers what to think; instead, they aim to provide enough information for readers to come to their own conclusions. The goal of critical thinking in reading is to have the reader more involved in the reading process.

d. Activate background knowledge

Reading comprehension can be improved using prior knowledge, especially when dealing with unfamiliar topics. Here are some ideas for the students when they need to use their background knowledge. Consider any previous understanding of the topic before beginning to read. Activate other memories, personal experiences, and any other types of knowledge relevant to the reading material's details while reading.

e. Improve comprehension by understanding references and making inferences

Making inferences is when someone hears part of a conversation and tries to figure out what it is about. The topic of a text may not be stated directly anywhere in the reading, so the reader has to look for clues to figure out what the paragraph is about. Authors of books, stories, and plays often do not describe characters or settings fully. The meaning of the author must figure out from the descriptions or dialogues.

f. Improve comprehension by forming good reading habits

Most people would prefer to read more because it helps them learn more and thrive in several fields. These suggestions will assist them in enhancing their reading abilities. Always have reading materials close at hand. Set a reading target for yourself. Determine the number of times students can commit to reading and the number of books they can read in a particular period. Discussions, reading groups and book clubs can help individuals meet their reading goals.

Most of the students experience the problem of limited vocabulary when reading a text. Hence, Razali and Razali (2013) provided suggestions to improve students' English reading skills by acquiring vocabulary. The four most popular strategies include the following:

a) Figuring out the meaning from the words in the sentence or paragraph that readers are familiar with.

b) The dictionary has become into a useful reference book that benefits everyone, not just new language learners. The dictionary is seen to be beneficial to language learners. As a result, it proposed using a bilingual dictionary. Also, since a monolingual dictionary is a popular alternative to carrying a bilingual dictionary, students should look it up in a monolingual dictionary.

c) The method of having an English notebook was utilized to assist students in learning the meaning of vocabulary while reading. As a result, it is recommended that students write down new words in their English notebooks.
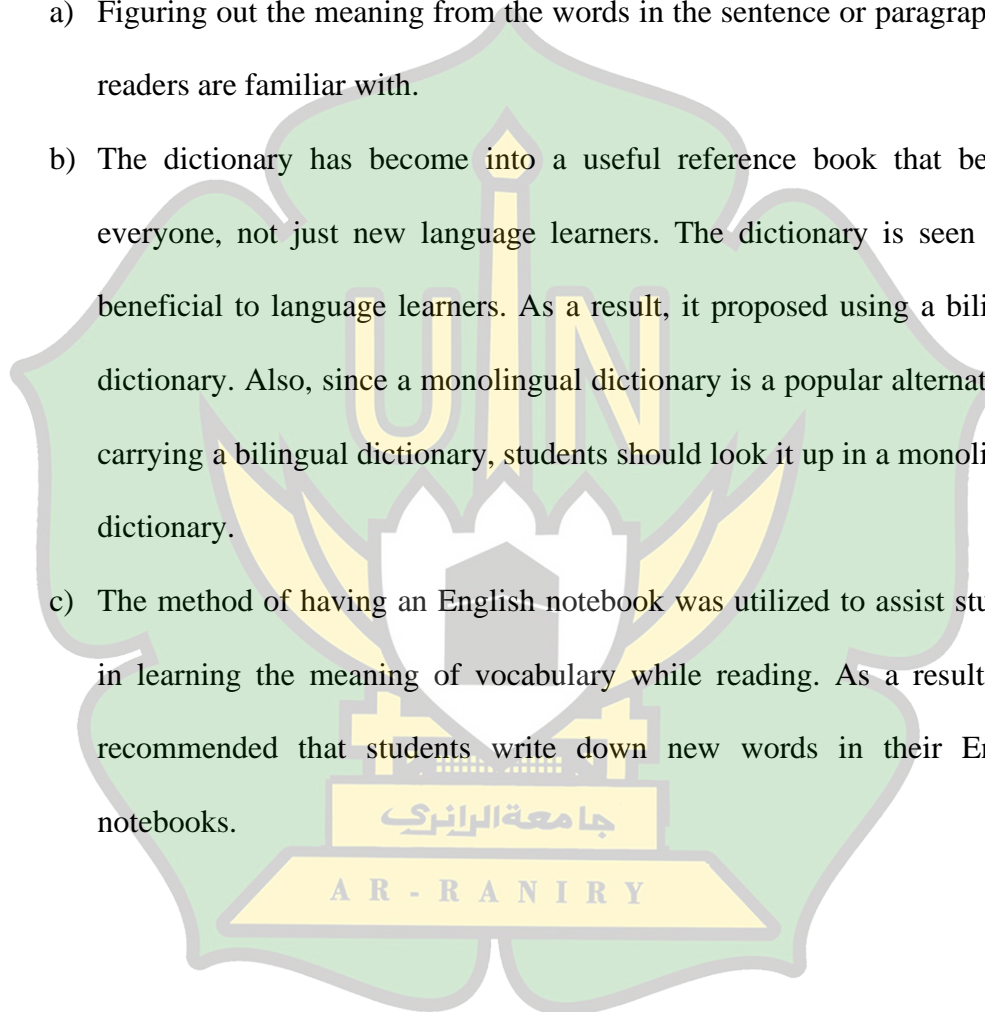
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method used in this study is discussed in this chapter. It focuses on the research design, research participants, data collection, and data analysis.

A. Research Design

This research used descriptive qualitative research. Qualitative research is concerned with qualitative phenomena, such as those involving or relating to characteristics. Descriptive qualitative research can describe the situation that would be observed in the field more specifically, transparently and in-depth.

According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is a means of investigating and evaluating the significance of a social or human issue that impacts individuals or communities. This study seeks to describe in detail the phenomenon that cannot be answered if the informant only fills out the questionnaire. It requires an intense approach from the researcher to dig deeper into this problem so the researcher can get detailed and accurate information directly from the source. This method was designed to discover more about the issues that were identified when taking the TOEFL Reading section.

B. Research Location

This study was conducted in the English Education Department, UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. Furthermore, the researcher is an English Education student at UIN Ar-Raniry; hence the researcher is familiar with the place.

C. Research Sample

A sample is a collection of people, things, or items selected for assessment from a larger population (Oxford dictionary,2022). To ensure that the findings from the research sample can be applied to the entire population, the sample should be representative of the population. According to Sudjana and Ibrahim (2010), the sample is part of the population that can be reached and has the same characteristics as the population that was sampled.

Purposive sampling was used in this research. It is a sampling technique to select a sample according to the researcher's need by setting unique characteristics or special requirements to answer the research questions. Because the researcher specified the participants' criteria, this study used a purposive sample. The researcher chose only students in the academic year 2018 that had taken TOEFL and had a TOEFL score of 500 and above. As a result, the participants in this study were eight students from the English Education Department at UIN Ar-Raniry.

D. Data Collection

The sample students were subjected to an interview to get accurate data. To collect data for this research, the researcher utilized an interview. Mason (2018) claims that interview is one of the most well-known qualitative research methods. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), the assumption for using interviews as a data-gathering approach is that the participants' perspectives are significant, knowable, and able to be made explicit and that their perspectives have an impact on the project's success. The interviewee consisted of eight

students from the English Education Department. In addition, the data was gathered through a semi-structured interview. As a result, more questions about the investigated topic could be asked during the interview. It was utilized to give the participants more freedom and encourage them to speak openly about their barriers and strategy for reading the text and answering the questions.

E. Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the researcher used a qualitative data analysis technique. The data analysis is the process of systematically analyzing data that has been collected. The goal is to convert unprocessed data into conclusions or outcomes. In analyzing the data, the researcher used a qualitative method developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) to make sense of the data obtained. The processes in performing the analysis are:

1. Data Condensation

Data condensation is the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming data from written field notes, transcripts, interviews, documents and other empirical materials. The first step in analysis the data is selecting. The researcher assigned a numerical code to each piece of information in the interview transcript. In addition, interview-collected data were picked by the researcher. The data selection is accomplished by highlighting each barrier, factor, and strategy. Any information regarding these three components will be preserved and utilized to support research findings. After completing the data selection procedure, the researcher moves on to the focusing step.

In the focusing step, the researcher limited the data depending on the research question. Data unrelated to the research question of the topic will not be used as research data and will be eliminated. Afterward, the researcher marked each data related to each research questions using a different color mark. After completing the sorting of data by giving color to each meaningful data for research, the researcher continued to the abstracting step.

In this abstracting step, the data collected to the focusing stage is evaluated by researcher, especially those related to the quality and adequacy of the data. If the data showing the barriers, factors, and strategies are felt to be good, and the amount of data is sufficient, then the information is used to answer the research question. The next step are simplifying and transforming. Data that has reached the abstracting step will be simplified and transformed in various ways, including strict selection, summaries, or brief descriptions.

2. Data Display

The data display was carried out to the researcher can proceed to the next step with a better understanding of the problem. The data display is a compilation of information that has been condensed so the conclusion can be reached. After collecting data regarding barriers, factors, and strategies in answering TOEFL reading questions, the researcher classified the interview results for presentation and discussion.

At this point, the researcher provided the data through a brief description of each participant based on the research question to get the information acquired as an analysis of the barriers faced by students in answering the

TOEFL reading section. All participant identities are displayed using initials that are subsequently translated into code to ensure the privacy of participant identities. The presentation of data that provides an overview of the barriers students face in answering the reading section of the TOEFL is organized to be easily understandable.

3. Conclusion Drawing or Verification

The researcher interpreted the data from the beginning of the collection and explains part of the conclusion. Conclusions are proof of the conducted research. At this step, after presenting data relating to the student barrier in answering the reading section of the TOEFL, the researcher concludes the students' barrier in answering the reading section of the TOEFL based on information submitted by participants
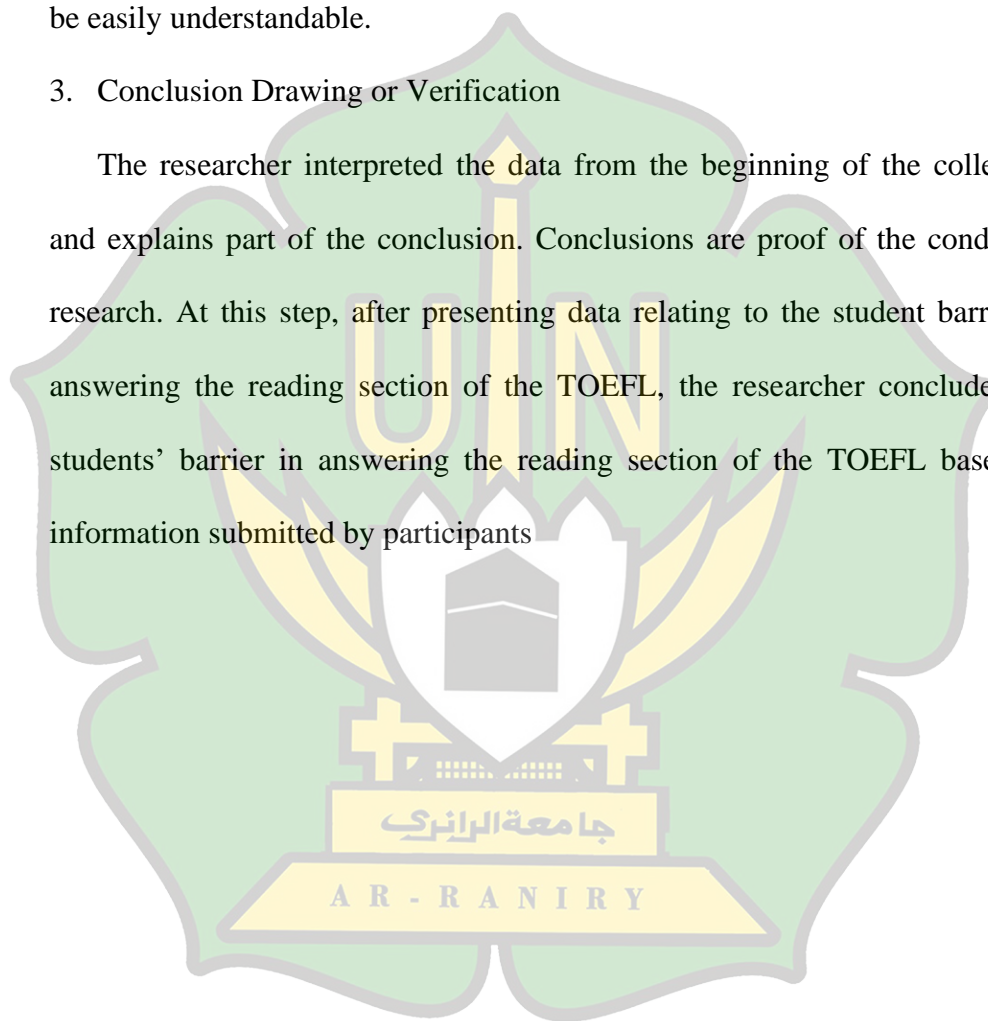
CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The findings and the discussion are covered in this chapter. It includes the results of the research as well as a discussion on the challenges faced by students, the factors that affected their performance and strategies for TOEFL reading comprehension questions. This chapter focused into the findings from the information gained from the eight students in the English Education Department who were interviewed.

A. Research Finding

In this research, the researcher used a variety of techniques, including interview transcript analysis, interview-based coding, and theme-based grouping of each response. Following the process, the researcher received a number of findings that focused on students' barriers in answering reading section of TOEFL, factors that influence the students to face difficulties in answering the reading section of TOEFL, and the strategies used by students in answering the reading section of the TOEFL test in accordance with the research questions.

1. The students' barriers in answering reading section of TOEFL

This section covered the findings of the interview, which had eight students as participants. The research question, which investigated students' barriers in answering to the TOEFL reading comprehension section, was answered using the interviews. Participants who gave responses with similar opinions were lined up together to strengthen one another's opinion. However, the interview

findings showed that there were a number of challenges that students faced while answering the TOEFL Reading section.

a. Finding Unstated Details Questions

Most participants believed that finding stated details questions were very difficult. Six of eight participants responded to the most challenging question during the reading section test, asking participants to provide an answer when the text did not state the explanation clearly. The participant's response, which claims that finding unstated details is a challenge for them when answering the reading section, is as follows:

> The most difficult reading question for me is the question that is asked to answer unstated details questions. As for this type of question, the part that is being asked is not mentioned, so I have to analyze it myself, wondering what is not mentioned here. [HR]

She believed that the difficulties in answering the questions are finding unstated details because it necessitates a deeper understanding of each word. She would not be able to understand the details that are not addressed in the text if she did not read the text properly. Furthermore, the other participant also expressed the same viewpoint:

> I find it very difficult to find unstated details in reading questions. Here, I have to search for specific information that is contained in a statement; occasionally, this information is mentioned but not in the same way, and other times it is not stated, so I have to read more carefully and it is really a waste of my time.[KA]

> The participant YA supported her viewpoint, which was as follows:

> Finding unstated details in a reading question is a challenge for me. This kind of question makes it necessary for me to think, be really analytical, and comprehend in order to come up with the right response, as the four possibilities are frequently quite confusing.[YA]

The other three participants, RA, PA, and IF also agreed, claiming that they felt difficult to answer the reading questions on the TOEFL when they found unstated details in the reading question. This barrier also made students spend a lot of time.

b. Answering Main Idea Questions

Based on the findings, four participants believed that it was very difficult to find the main idea from a paragraph. This was stated by the participant by following:

> Since I have to read the material in its entirety, I find it challenging to identify the main idea. In situations such as this, I typically read the entire paragraph and still unclear as to what is being stated because the sentence used is very complicated so I cannot comprehend it well. [SF]

> Finding the main idea of a text is the test question that I find to be the most challenging. For questions of this nature, I have to read the entire paragraph in order to understand what is being asked. Since the essential point might be found in the center or at the end of the paragraph, I am unable to understand it just reading the first sentence in this context. [RA]

The other participant continued by providing the same explanation, "Finding the main idea in a paragraph is another challenge for me because some of the sentences I read are rather confusing, making it difficult to identify the main idea." [KA]

As supported by participant PZ, she also added:

> Finding the main idea in the text is a challenge for me since I find it challenging to comprehend the text's contents accurately. The main idea also cannot be found by looking in the first sentence of the paragraph because it can also be found in the middle or at the end of the paragraph. [PZ]

In this case, they believed that it is difficult to identify the main idea of a paragraph because it is hard for them to comprehend the content of the text,

since it is difficult to determine where the main idea is located in a text, forcing them to read the entire paragraph.

c. Answering Implied Detail Questions

The findings demonstrated that four of eight students found answering the implied detail questions challenging. The participant HR said, "Well, I also find it difficult to answer the implied detail questions about a passage that is not mentioned in the text, which here requires me to draw specific conclusions about the text" This also supported by the participants:

I think twice about having to answer the implied detail question because, on occasion, it can be challenging to understand the provided material, particularly when it is necessary for me to draw conclusions from the inferred meaning. [SF]

I think it will be challenging for me to answer the question regarding a passage that is not mentioned in the text, in addition to the fact that I must make particular inferences from it. I have to read several times and draw the appropriate conclusions, also with unfamiliar words that I find in the text which makes itdifficult to comprehend the text. [RA]

Both of them believed that this skill is challenging since the question asks about answers that are not explicitly stated in the reading text. To answer this question correctly, they have to make inferences from the information provided in the reading text and sometimes the text of the question is very complicated. Also, unfamiliar vocabularies they found in the text make them failed to understand the content of the text. Consequently, they find it difficult to comprehend. Furthermore, the participant PA also agreed with both opinions by stated:

The most difficult type of question is about a part that is not mentioned in the text. Here I have to really understand the text and have to draw conclusions from the part of the text that is asked. However, this is very difficult because it is asked to draw conclusions from the implied meaning. [PA]

d. Answering Transition Questions.

Three participants agreed that the answer transition question is one of the challenging skills in the reading section based on research information obtained through interviews. As said by participant HR, "It was challenging to answer the questions about what might come before or after the preceding paragraph because I had to really comprehend how it was read" The participant YA agreed with this statement by following:

I find this question to be quite challenging because I have to read and comprehend each sentence in the preceding paragraph in order to know what will be covered in the following one. I do not always pay attention to specifics, which makes it difficult for me to predict what will be talked about next. [YA]

They contend that it is quite difficult to answer a question that asks about what might appear before the reading text (at the start of the paragraph) or after it (at the next paragraph). They should come to a conclusion to identify the paragraph because the topic that starts the paragraph or becomes the next paragraph in the reading text is almost definitely not directly addressed in the reading text. They still struggle to come up with an answer, even though they have already predicted it by reading the beginning or ending of the text.

The participant IF expressed the following:

Even though I have read the previous paragraph more than once, I am still experiencing difficulties answering this question because it is very difficult for me to understand the content and predict what will be covered previously from the text. [IF]

e. Finding Pronoun Referents Questions

According to the interview transcriptions, a participant thought that difficulty in finding the referent pronoun prevented her from answering the reading, as she stated as follows:

> I feel it is difficult to answer questions about which noun is being referred to by a pronoun because there are frequently numerous subjects or nouns that are difficult to discern. I feel confused and it is tricky to determine the correct answer to this. [PZ]

f. Determining the Meaning of Difficult Word Questions

According to the findings of the study, one in eight participants felt that having to figure out the meaning of difficult words in the reading text was another barrier that was commonly faced. Thus, according participant KA:

> For this type of question, I think it is challenging for me to determine the meaning of the difficult words based on context. Sometimes, there are words that are complex, and I am also unclear what the paragraph is discussing. [KA]

In this circumstance, the reading text will usually give clear instructions regarding the meaning of the word in the text, but it is challenging to understand the meaning due to the unfamiliar word for the student.

2. The factors that influence the students to face the difficulties

Based on the findings of the interview that was conducted, it explored the factors that influence the difficulty in comprehending TOEFL Reading text. The findings showed that there were factors that influenced how difficult it was for students to understand TOEFL Reading text. According to the findings of the student interviews, most of them share a similar perspective about this issue.

a) Lack of the students' motivation to read English text

Five participants agreed that their assignments are what motivate them to read English-language texts. For instance, the participant RA said "I do not really like reading English text because it is very boring. I do not read it as a hobby; but I did it if I have assignment to complete." The participant PA also said "I am not used to reading things in English as a hobby. I usually still read because of the demands of something like an assignment given by the lecturer." They felt that reading English texts only when a situation required them to read the texts. The participant HR also provided the same reason by stating, "I like reading a lot but reading English is not my hobby. I encourage reading some English text because of assignments or because it appears in my social media with a unique topic." She believed that he will only read in English when it is necessary and when an interesting topic is offered. According to the participant IF:

> I like to read but do not like it when the topic is scientific knowledge. When it comes to the reading section of the TOEFL, most of the texts are about science or history. Like some of the text I have ever found there, it's mostly about American history, and I have no idea what's going on as I read. Also, because reading is the last part of the TOEFL, it makes me bored and sleepy so I do not concentrate too much on reading. [IF]

It also supported by participant SF "I feel lack of motivation in reading. Especially in terms of TOEFL, reading is the third part so I am already bored." It can be inferred that the participants usually read English when given an assignment or when they found an interesting topic. It can also be claimed that some students were bored and fell asleep while reading the questions in the reading section because the reading section was at the end of the test where

the test was about history and something scientific that was very boring to read.

b) Time Management

Six participants believed that they have limited time in answering reading question. During the interview the participant RA said, "I have difficulty in managing time, when answering reading questions I always have to rush with time so that it makes me feel anxiety in reading the text and makes a lot of time wasted." The participant PZ and SF also agreed because the time allotted is limited, causing them to lack concentration because they are in a rush. The participant HR also stated, "Because the text is mostly unfamiliar, sometimes I have to read a few times to understand what it means and it is really a waste of my time while answering the question." The participant KA supported the reason by stating, "I have to read the material for more than five minutes because it is long. Furthermore, the text uses complex words and sentences, causing it to take more time to understand the meaning that is implied." This also supported by participant IF:

> I am having trouble managing my time. I realized that my poor reading skills made it difficult to manage my time. Because the text is mainly unfamiliar, sometimes I have to read it a few times to understand what it means. [IF]

It can be concluded that most of them took longer than five minutes to complete reading comprehension problems because of a variety of reasons, including the use of complex words and sentences that make it challenging to understand. Although the other participants tried to read quickly, most of the

students failed to understand the texts. Additionally, they had to read the texts

out several times.

c) Students' lack of vocabulary mastery and the complexity of sentence

All participants agreed that one of the factors that influence the students

who faced difficulties in answering the reading section of TOEFL is lack of

vocabulary mastery. Reading text in the TOEFL was often quite challenging

because they used academic vocabulary that they were not familiar with. As

stated by participants:

> I have difficulty dealing with difficult texts, which I have never read
> before and usually, these texts use a high level of vocabulary which makes
> guessing the answer difficult for me. [YA]

> In terms of reading, the words that are used are academic words, not the
> words that we used in our daily life. Therefore, with all the limited words
> that I have, it makes me confused and has difficulty in comprehending the
> text. [RA]

The participant HR also added:

> In reading texts, many academic words are used which I myself rarely
> hear. Moreover, in scientific texts which I have never read before, this
> makes it very difficult for me to understand the meaning. However, if the
> text is easy, then I can guess the answer. [HR]

The participant KA, PZ, PA, SF, and IF also agreed with the statement.

They believed their vocabulary was poor, making it difficult to comprehend

the unfamiliar meaning of the academic words used in TOEFL questions and

texts. Furthermore, six participants agreed that the reading text in the TOEFL

test was difficult to understand. The sentences used in the text are very

complicated, and sometimes they must read again to comprehend it. The other

participants, KA, SF, YA, and IF agreed with the statement which presented

by the following opinion:

Due to the complex sentences used in the reading text, some questions make me confused of which of the four possible answers is the right one. Other times, the four options may appear to be similar but actually differ. Also it is difficult for me to determine what the pronoun refers to because there are multiple nouns before it. [PZ]

Some sentences are complicated to understand, which makes me not understand the content of the text. The word order in the test is very complex, which makes it difficult for me. The word order is tricky, and sometimes you have to read it repeatedly to understand. [PA]

d) Students' lack of background Knowledge

Eight participants assumed that the text in the reading section of TOEFL was not familiar to them.The participants HR, RA, PZ, PA, YA, and IF believed that one of the factors of the barriers in answering reading section was because students' lack background knowledge. As represented by participants KA:

Reading is not my hobby and I usually read texts in English when needed. So, I really find it very difficult when I find the scientific texts in the reading section of TOEFL or another text that I have never read before because I am lack background knowledge of the text. [KA]

She believed that her lack of background knowledge makes it challenging for her to understand the content of the text, especially if that topic is about science where she is really not familiar with it.The participant SF supported, she said, "Due to my lack of background, it is difficult for me to understand the text, which takes a lot of time because I have to focus on each word properly."

She found that lack of background not only makes it difficult to understand the contents of text but also affects how quickly students can respond to questions about what they read.

3. The strategies used by the students in answering the reading section of TOEFL

The result of the interview, which included eight students as participants, is described in this section. Furthermore, the interview was used to address the research question, which examined students' strategies for the reading comprehension section in the TOEFL. The findings of the study can be categorized into two: reading strategies and test-taking strategies.

a. Reading Strategies

The purpose of the interview was to gain more knowledge about the students' strategies for the reading comprehension section questions of the TOEFL. According to the results of the interview, the participants employed three reading strategies as their preferred method of response in the reading section of TOEFL. The three strategies were skimming, scanning and skipping a text to look for the main idea, utilizing the context clue to figure out what words with which students were not familiar, and using prior knowledge.

1) Skimming, scanning and skipping the passages

Some participants argued that the main strategy for completing the reading section questions involved skimming and scanning the passage to look for the passage's main idea. Eight participants claimed to already have used skimming and scanning when responding to questions focusing on the main idea. The participant YA said, "With the limited time I have, I often use the skimming and scanning strategy to get the main idea so I do not have to read the entire text again." She claimed that through scanning

and skimming, she was able to identify the main idea. She can minimize wasting so much time by not getting to read the entire paragraph by employing this strategy. Other four participants, HR, PZ, PA, and IF were also in line with this, they agreed that skimming and scanning strategies help them in saving much time when answering the reading section. The participant RA also stated, "In answering reading questions, I use skimming and scanning strategies because this makes it easier for me tofind the main idea of the text."

The participant KA also added:

> I commonly utilize skimming and scanning strategies while responding to reading questions; these strategies are designed to make it easier for me to identify the main idea of the paragraph. [KA]

She thought that by using a skimming and scanning strategy allowed her to identify the answer fast. When she employed skimming and scanning as her strategy, she could find the main idea of the text easily.

The participant SF also said:

> In answering reading questions, I usually use three skills, namely skimming to answer questions about the main idea, secondly there is scanning to answer questions such as synonyms of a word and skipping to answer questions such as questions that ask which part of the sentence is not true, here i read the text skipping by looking for only important information. [SF]

Skimming, scanning, and skipping were the reading strategies that the majority of participants used to answer the main idea question on the TOEFL test. Based on the results, they stated that using a reading strategy allowed them to skim the passage without reading each paragraph in its entirety and helped them to answer the main idea question.

2) Using context to identify the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary

According to the findings of the study, students' inability to answers the questions because of their limited vocabulary mastery was the most prevalent issue. The participants claimed that some of the vocabulary they found in their reading texts already used academic terms that were extremely foreign for them; therefore a strategy was required to reduce this issue. One of the participants provided the following response to the issue:

> In reading text, I believe that numerous academic phrases are employed that I myself actually rarely hear. In this situation, I usually rely on context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. First, I will read at the back of the word. Then, I will consider how one sentence will relate to the next, and it will be easier for me if I learn some new words. [HR]

She assumed that the words used in the reading section of TOEFL were, making it difficult for her to understand the meaning. This is supported by another participants, RA, PA, SF, and IF who believed that comprehending the context is the only way for them to deal with unfamiliar vocabularies. The two participants also provided the following perspectives regarding this issue:

> Only a few words in the reading section look simple to me, and there are not many simple words that I can find. I read that section and adjusted it in accordance with the context of the text because I usually utilize context clues to help me answer questions regarding words I am unfamiliar with. [PZ]

> Usually, if I find a question where I ask for a word or its synonym, where I am not familiar with the word, I will read the sentence before or after it, I understand the meaning according to the context, about which word is related to the content of the text. [YA]

Acquiring sufficient vocabulary in English eases the student while responding to the questions. It assists in improving comprehension of each

individual word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, and whole passage. However, there are situations when students find an unfamiliar word or phrase that limits the comprehension of the piece in the reading section of TOEFL. Based on the findings, seven participants claimed that even though they did not know the correct definitions of the words, the context of the text could help them understand the unfamiliar vocabulary. By implementing this strategy, they assumed that unfamiliar vocabulary were connected to the context of the text, they could be easy to understand. Additionally, this strategy assists students in answering questions that require them to identify the synonym of a word in the text.

3) Using the background knowledge

In order to obtain upcoming information, students' prior knowledge must be activated, which involves asking them what they already know and building on that knowledge. Students can draw conclusions with the assistance of background knowledge, which helps in the growth of critical thinking abilities and increases the enjoyment of reading. By using this strategy, they can capture material and connect it to their prior knowledge or experience. The participant HR responded to this strategy, "If I find a text or the topics of reading that I have ever read before, I usually build on my prior knowledge to make this easier for me to understand the text's content." The participant PZ also stated, "I also use my background knowledge when answering reading questions to connect something I have understood before with the text I am reading now." The participant YA

and KA also agreed with the opinion. They also added that the use of background knowledge when given a topic they are already familiar helps them in drawing inferences.

According to the findings of the interview, four of eight participants agreed that background knowledge helped students comprehend the material more fully and respond to questions more easily. When a student has the background knowledge necessary for supporting a thorough comprehension of the content being presented, these students can easily summarize the text.

b. Test-Taking Strategies

The test taking strategy is very influential in overcoming difficulties in answering reading as noted by Dooden (2015), these techniques assist students in increasing their scores as much as their knowledge level and they preparation before the test. Additionally, employing effective test-taking techniques influences factors including minimizing test anxiety and enhancing students' attitudes toward tests. The research revealed that the students' strategies included surveying or reading the questions before the reading the text, answering to the easiest questions first, and removing erroneous options.

1) Surveying or reading the questions before the reading the text

The results of the study revealed that all participants agreed when answering reading questions, starting by focusing on the questions first. Before beginning to read the text, students should carefully read the question. The participant YA conveyed, "In order to avoid reading the

same passage twice when answering reading questions, I usually read the questions first before reading the text." She thought that by reading the text first, part of the information she read will be forgotten. Hence, she will have to read it again. The other participant also gave an explanation of why she read the question first by saying:

> Usually, I read the question first before the text because if I read the text first, I tend to forget the information and have to repeat it. The first time I complete the TOEFL reading section questions, I read the text first before looking at the questions, which really is a total waste of time. [RA]

The participant believed that reading the questions first can make her remember the information she reads better. She agreed that by adopting this strategy, she could save time by avoiding the need to repeatedly read the text. The participants HR, KA, PZ, PA, SF, and IF agreed, stating that reading the questions first prevent them from reading repeatedly. This might be inferred from their statements that this strategy not only helped them answer the reading section in the TOEFL test but also allowed the students to allocate their time efficiently.

2) Answering the easier questions first.

Seven participants argued that it is preferred to leave a challenging question and answer the easier one if they are unable to comprehend it, as stated by the participant PZ, "If there is a question in the response that I do not understand, I will skip it and move on to an easier question." The participant YA agreed with the participant's viewpoint that she should answer simple questions first.

Two participants stated that they frequently choose to respond to questions that they feel to be simple, such as "Find out Where Specific Information." The statement represented by participant RA, "Usually I work on easy questions first, such as questions about finding the location of a word from a text where the answer is easy to find in the text." The participant HR also stated the same reason, "It is the question about finding the location of a word from a text where the answer is easy to see in the text."

The responses provided by the students when they were asked those questions indicated that they did not perceive the questions as challenging because it was simple to easily identify the answer in the passage. Some participants also claimed that this strategy has an impact on time management. The participant SF said, "I usually begin with simple questions to save time. If I spend too much time answering a challenging question, I will not have time to respond to other questions." The participant PA also assumed, "Since I am in a bit of a rush due to a time-related issue, I respond to simple questions first that I can comprehend, such as those that ask for references or words with similar meanings."

The participant IF also added by the following:

> I prefer to respond to questions with pronoun references first, such as "*they in line 8 refer to*..." I usually just read the context from the preceding line after locating the word in the appropriate line and I think this question is quite easy for me. [IF]

They figured that since they ran out of time while trying to respond to the questions, it would be better to take the simpler ones since the answers

could be found by reading references of the text to the relevant material. According to the findings of interviews conducted on this topic, they frequently employed this strategy to answer the questions. The participants believed that questions involving locating specific information in the text, referent pronouns, and similar meanings of words are simple since they ask for information that is already there in the text.

3) Removing erroneous options

Eight participants agreed that if they cannot answer a question, then they will not leave it either. Therefore they will remove the erroneous options from the answer, as the participant PZ said, "If there is a question that I cannot answer, I will mark it then in the rest of the time, I will review it and choose one of the four options by eliminating the erroneous option."

She believed that even if she does not know the answer to a question, she will mark it. Also, if there is still time she will eliminate the option to find the best correct answer. While other participants agreed with his view that eliminating erroneous options could make it easier for students to select responses.

B. Discussion

The discussion of the collected data is described in this section. The interviews' findings identified several barriers, the factors influence the barriers, and the strategies in answering the reading section of TOEFL. According to the research findings used to address the first research question about the challenges

faced by students, several barriers frequently caused students to fail to respond to reading comprehension questions. According to the interview findings, students had trouble with six out of the 13 skills in the reading section. The students' most barrier in answering reading questions of TOEFL is looking for unstated details in the reading text. This type of question means that the answer is stated, mentioned, or correct in a reading text, and one answer is not correct. According to Mahendra, Sartika, and Saptarina (2020) stated that 23 of 30 students in the English Education Department of the Islamic University of Ogan Komering Ilir Kayu Agung in the fourth, sixth, and eight semesters had difficulties with unstated detail questions. Based on the result to the interview, this question required a lot of time. Therefore, they should read the text carefully because it needs a deeper comprehension of each word. Then, identify which aspect of the text was not true.

The second barrier is in answering the main idea correctly. Ekorini (2020) stated that identifying the main idea is crucial for reading comprehension. The main idea is what the author intends to communicate in the text. Understanding the main idea is important because it serves as the text's key, making it easier for readers to take in the information from the entire text. Based on the interview result, the researcher found that students have difficulty determining where the main idea is located in a text. The main idea of a paragraph can be found in several different places by the author. According to Vener (2002), the main idea is usually described in one sentence, which is commonly the first but may also be the middle or the last. Then, the author uses the rest of the paragraph to support the main idea. Thus, it makes the students read the entire paragraph. Moreover, it

is hard for them to comprehend the content of the text because of the complex sentences. Similar to the statement of Satriani (2018), the students' unfamiliarity with the reading material and the use of complex sentences in the text also contributed to their failure to comprehend it well. Furthermore, having a low interest in reading text is the problem students' faced in finding the main idea. Telee (2004) stated that since reading habits can assist students in overcoming reading comprehension challenges, the lack of reading motivation significantly impacts the students' reading behavior. In addition, the repetition of the text makes students spend a lot of time reading.

The third barrier is in answering implied detail questions. The question asks about answers not directly stated in the reading text. The student must infer conclusions from the reading text to correctly answer this question. From the interview, the researcher found that students struggle to understand the text and draw conclusions from information that is not stated. However, the unfamiliarity of the students with the vocabulary and the complex sentences made it more difficult for them to understand the material in reading the text. Mahendra, Sartika, and Saptarina (2020) mentioned that 25 of the 30 students felt it was challenging to understand the material since some of the vocabularies was unfamiliar.

The fourth barrier is answering transition questions. This question was, "*The paragraph preceding this passage most probably discussed...*" It is quite difficult for the students to answer a question asking about what might appear before or after the reading text. Devira(2017) found that the most common

problem faced by English Education department students in English education department at Syiah Kuala University was the transition question. Again, it was more challenging for the students to comprehend the information in the reading text because of their familiarity with the vocabulary and the complicated sentences. Because this question requires students to read the passage numerous times, students will spend more time working on the questions.

The Fifth barrier is pronoun referent. The question asks to determine which noun refers to a pronoun. To answer this question is important to understand the nouns generally used in a reading text first, and usually, the pronoun that refers to it will come after it. The finding showed that the students experience difficulties in this question because many subjects or nouns are often difficult to distinguish. According to Sutarsyah (2015), many EFL students struggle to accurately identify pronoun referents. This occurs because the pronoun frequently appears in lengthy, complex sentences, making it difficult to determine its referent.

The sixth barrier is to use context to determine the meaning of the difficult word. Students experience obstacles in understanding the meaning of the word even though they have tried to understand the context; sometimes, most of the texts are difficult to understand because the students do not like reading English texts, especially about history or science-related themes. The text already uses academic words and sentences that are complicated to understand. When a scientific text is given in the questions, it makes it difficult for students to understand it; they have no background about the text. Similar to Febriani,

Elfrida, and Jayanti (2019), they found that the fifth-semester students in the English Education Department at Galuh University lack of background knowledge. The problem is related to linking the content to prior knowledge related to the topic; some culture-loaded words and phrases will mislead reading comprehension and limited background knowledge.

In order to minimize the difficulties faced by students, several strategies were required for overcoming all of these issues. The first strategy is skimming and scanning the passage. According to the findings of the study, most students found it challenging to identify the main idea of the text, and they mostly agreed that skimming and scanning are effective ways to help them. This strategy also assisted students in answering the question efficiently. By avoiding reading the entire text, this strategy not only makes it easy but also saves students' time. In similar to Zalha, Alfiatunnur, and Kamil (2020), many students utilized scanning and skimming as their reading approaches. Many of them mentioned using this to make the passages more understandable. Some students are tired of reading long texts. As supported by Djuharie (2008), skimming means reading a text fast to get the main idea. It might be true that skimming allows readers to skip parts of the text. They only need to skim the material quickly to determine the main idea. According to Haryadi as cited in Abidin (2014) "the skipping technique is a method for locating the main idea through quick reading. Skipping can be perceived as a reading technique known as jumping reading. The skipping method refers to reading by moving one's eye from one essential part or topic to another" (p.166). Hence, they would not waste their time reading the material.

Abdelrahman and Bsharah (2014) presented concepts about speed reading techniques like people who can skim and scan is flexible readers. They read for the intended goal and acquire the necessary knowledge without wasting time. To read more quickly, they do not always need to read everything. This strategy helps students overcome the barriers perceived by the students in finding main ideas, making inferences and unstated details questions.

The second strategy is using context to identify the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. The finding of the study indicated that every participant had trouble mastering vocabulary because many of the words they found while reading texts were unfamiliar. Students usually try to understand the meaning in context while facing this challenge. Students assumed that comprehending the context is the only way to deal with unfamiliar vocabulary. Using context clues helped the student master the vocabulary because it led them to understand the underlying meaning of a difficult word. In line with this research, Fitaloka, Marbun, and Arifin (2015) stated that the students were interested in using context clues to identify the possible meaning of unfamiliar words by examining how one word relates to another. This strategy almost helped students overcome the barrier in terms of reference and vocabulary context.

The third strategy was activating background knowledge. Students could understand the topic better and answer questions more quickly with background knowledge of the text. According to Hasan, Gushendra, and Yonantha (2017), EFL learners can more fully understand the texts they read if they have previous related knowledge. This strategy usually helps students in answering the main

idea, details question and inferences questions. As stated by Zalha, Alfiatunnur, and Kamil (2020), students utilized their prior knowledge to gain a deeper understanding of the topic discussed in the passages discussed in the text. Most students felt that their past personal knowledge was hugely helpful in answering detailed questions quickly.

For the learner to achieve a maximum score on the TOEFL test, the test-taking strategies that the students use are important for their success on the test. Time management skills are also essential and can help students become more efficient test takers, as most modern tests, including the TEOFL test, provide additional time. Furthermore, test-taking strategies familiarize students with numerous testing elements, such as the time limit and answer selection. Test-preparation training could improve students' confidence when preparing for tests (Green, 2007).

The first strategy is surveying questions before reading the text. Students commonly made the mistake of reading the text first while answering the reading question. Due to the fact that the student did not know what the questions were, everything they had previously read was rendered meaningless, consuming a lot of time. As a result, students will forget what they have read when they want to answer the question. Therefore, reading the questions first helped students know what needs to be found in the text. Thus, the students can easily get the paragraph they need.

The second test-taking strategy is answering the easiest questions. There are 55 minutes provided for students to finish the reading questions, but they

should not waste that time by focusing only on one text. Students did not realize that they could work on it for several minutes. Students can solve this by managing their time as efficiently as possible by skimming the questions first. The student can skip the question if they feel it is challenging and requires a lot of time to find the answer. After completing easy ones, students may be more eager to attempt difficult questions. This strategy assisted students in managing their time while answering the question. As stated by Dooden (2015), these techniques help students improve their test scores by effectively using their time, effort, and testing environment.

The third is removing erroneous options. In the reading section of TOEFL, the score will not be affected if the students choose the incorrect answer. Thus, the students should not panic if they still have some time to answer the questions. Students can mark questions for further review if they are confused about the answer. All of the numbers, whether it is correct or incorrect, must be filled in by the student. If there is still time to think, try guessing based on a short scan. Alternatively, students can use the elimination technique by eliminating answers that do not make sense and are incorrect, then selecting the first answer from the options left that may be correct. Dooden (2015) suggested this strategy to manage time effectively in answering the question.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

A. Conclusion

This research aimed to identify the barriers students found while understanding TOEFL Reading passages identify the factors that contribute to this difficulty, and determine the strategies students employed in answering the questions. After the completion of the research and the analysis of all the data, the researcher would like to draw the following conclusions:

a. The students of the English Education Department faced barriers in unstated detail questions, main idea questions, the implied details questions, transition questions, pronoun referents questions and identifying the meaning of difficult words using the context.

b. The factors that influence the students to difficulties in understanding the TOEFL reading text were students' lack motivation, time management, students' lack vocabulary, the complexity of the sentences, also the students' lack background knowledge.

c. The strategies for solving students' perceived barriers are divided into two categories. The first category is reading strategies which include skimming, scanning and skipping the passages, using context clues to identify unfamiliar vocabularies, and utilizing background knowledge while reading the text. The second category is test-taking strategies which

include surveying the question before reading the text, solving easy questions first, and eliminating wrong options.

B. Suggestion

Based on the results of the interview conducted, the researcher gives the following suggestions:

a. The students of the English Education Department must be aware of a variety of reading questions so that the students can decide which strategies are most effective for the question. It is also important for the students to always practice reading English texts and master new vocabulary through various techniques.

b. The lecturer should expand and improve the student's mastery of vocabulary, specifically the academic words commonly found in the reading section of TOEFL. Also, the lecturer may encourage the students to read academic texts or articles often because it will assist in their development of academic vocabulary comprehension. After that, they can suggest strategies based on the findings of the study or other useful strategies to the students to help them succeed on the test.

c. For the further researcher, this thesis may not even be perfect, but it will serve as one of the references for their research on the TOEFL Reading text and other reading-related topics.

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APPENDICES

1. Appendix A : Appointment Letter of Supervisor

SURAT KEPUTUSAN DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY

Nomor : B-5696/UN.08/FTK/KP.07.6/04/2022

TENTANG

PENGANGKATAN PEMBIMBING SKRIPSI MAHASISWA FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY

DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY

Menimbang	:	a.	bahwa untuk kelancaran bimbingan skripsi dan ujian munaqasyah mahasiswa pada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, maka dipandang perlu menunjuk pembimbing skripsi tersebut yang dituangkan dalam Surat Keputusan Dekan;
		b.	bahwa saudara yang tersebut namanya dalam surat keputusan ini dipandang cakap dan memenuhi syarat untuk diangkat sebagai pembimbing skripsi.

Mengingat	:	1.	Undang-undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003, tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional;
		2.	Undang-undang Nomor 14 Tahun 2005, tentang Guru dan Dosen;
		3.	Undang-undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2012, tentang Pendidikan Tinggi;
		4.	Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 74 Tahun 2012 tentang Perubahan atas Peraturan Pemerintah RI Nomor 23 Tahun 2005 tentang Pengelolaan Keuangan Badan Layanan Umum;
		5.	Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 4 Tahun 2014, tentang Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Tinggi dan Pengelolaan Perguruan Tinggi;
		6.	Peraturan Presiden RI Nomor 64 Tahun 2013; tentang Perubahan IAIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Menjadi UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
		7.	Peraturan Menteri Agama RI Nomor 12 Tahun 2014, tentang Organisasi dan Tata Kerja UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
		8.	Peraturan Menteri Republik Indonesia No. 21 Tahun 2015, tentang Statuta UIN Ar-Raniry;
		9.	Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 492 Tahun 2003, tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang, Pengangkatan, Pemindahan dan Pemberhentian PNS di Lingkungan Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia;
		10.	Keputusan Menteri Keuangan Nomor 293/KMK.05/2011 tentang Penetapan Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh pada Kementerian Agama sebagai Instansi Pemerintah yang Menerapkan Pengelolaan Badan Layanan Umum;
		11.	Keputusan Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Nomor 01 Tahun 2015, tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang kepada Dekan dan Direktur Pascasarjana di Lingkungan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;

Memperhatikan	:	Keputusan Sidang/Seminar Proposal Skripsi Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Tanggal 28 Maret 2022

MEMUTUSKAN

Menetapkan	:	

PERTAMA

Menunjuk Saudara:
1. Dr. Muhammad AR, M.Ed. — Sebagai Pembimbing Pertama
2. Habiburrahim, Ph.D — Sebagai Pembimbing Kedua

Untuk membimbing Skripsi :

Nama	:	**Muna Raihana**
NIM	:	180203068
Program Studi	:	Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
Judul Skripsi	:	Students' Barriers in Answering Reading Section of TOEFL (A Study In English Study Program Islamic University of Ar-Raniry)

KEDUA	:	Pembiayaan honorarium pembimbing pertama dan kedua tersebut diatas dibebankan pada DIPA UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor: SP DIPA. 025.04.2.423925/2022, tanggal 17 November 2021.
KETIGA	:	Surat keputusan ini berlaku sampai akhir semester Ganjil Tahun Akademik 2022/2023
KEEMPAT	:	Surat Keputusan ini berlaku sejak tanggal ditetapkan dengan ketentuan segala sesuatu akan diubah dan diperbaiki kembali sebagaimana mestinya apabila kemudian hari ternyata terdapat kekeliruan dalam penetapan ini.

Ditetapkan di: Banda Aceh
Pada Tanggal: 25 April 2022
Dekan,

Muslim Razali

Tembusan
1. Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry (sebagai laporan);
2. Ketua Prodi PBI Fak. Tarbiyah dan Keguruan;
3. Pembimbing yang bersangkutan untuk dimaklumi dan dilaksanakan;
4. Mahasiswa yang bersangkutan;
5. Arsip.

2. Appendix B : Interview Questions

Project   : Students' Barriers in Answering Reading Section of TOEFL

Time of interview   :

Date   :

Place   :

Interviewer   : Muna Raihana

This research describes students' barriers, the factor that influence the students face the barriers, and the strategy used by students in answering reading section of TOEFL. The sources were obtained through interviews. The interview lasted approximately 20 minutes for each interview. The researcher will record the interviewee as data to be inputted into the research result. All participants' personal information is classified and kept confidential.

List of interview questions:

1. Do you like reading English Text?
2. In your opinion, since you took the TOEFL test, among the three skills those are tested in TOEFL, such as Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression and Reading Comprehension, which of the skills is more difficult?
3. From your experience, is that reading section of TOEFL test is difficult for you? Why do you think it difficult?
4. When you answered the reading question in TOEFL, which type of questions do you think is difficult to answer?
5. Do you find it difficult to comprehend the material in the reading question?
6. Do you have problems in managing time to answer reading section of TOEFL?
7. Do you have problems in terms of vocabulary when understanding the meaning of the text?
8. Are the sentences used in the text complicated for you?
9. What are the strategies do you use in answering reading question?

a. Do you use skimming and scanning strategy in answering reading question?
b. Do you use context of the text to understand unfamiliar words?
c. Do you use background knowledge when you find familiar text?
10. Are there any strategies for taking tests that help you save time answering reading questions?
a. Do you read the questions or read the text first?
b. Which question did you do first?
c. Did you eliminate erroneous option when answering questions?
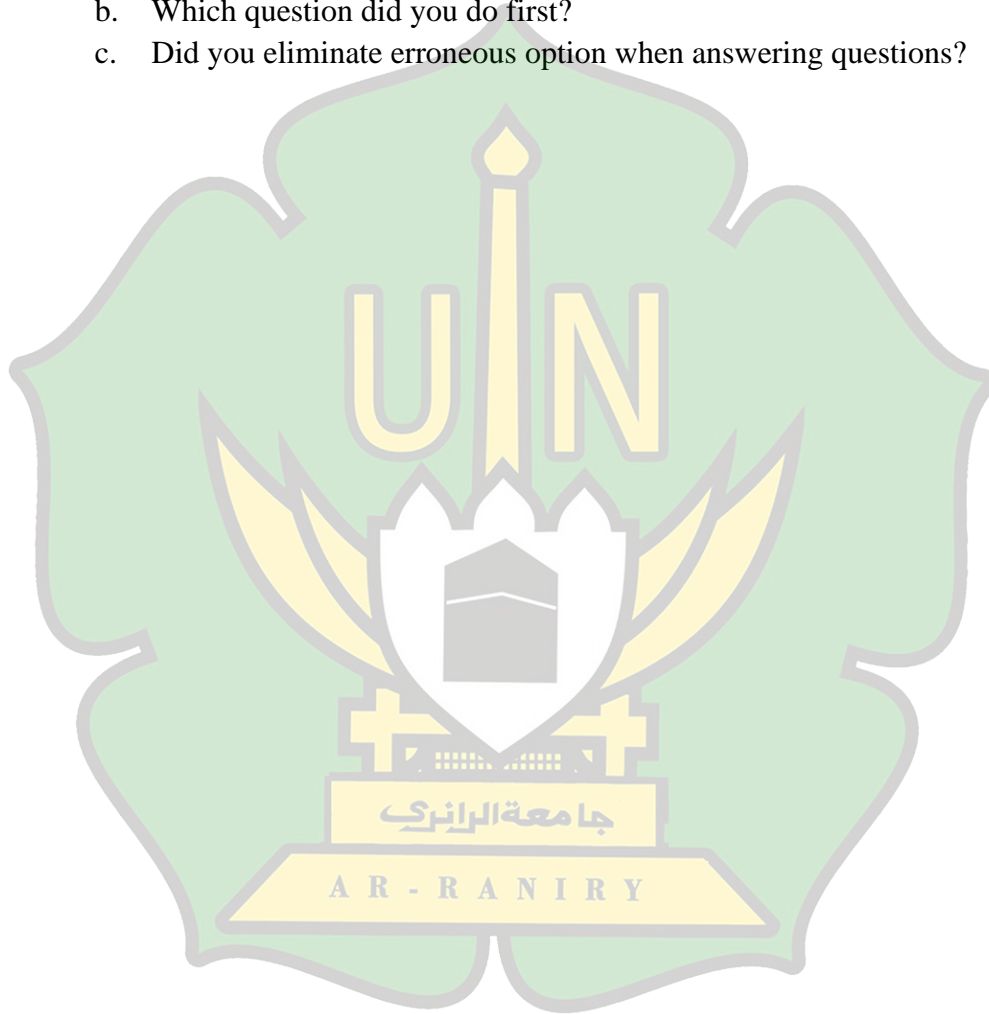
AUTOBIOGRAPHY

1. Name : Muna Raihana

2. Place/Date of Birth : Aceh Besar/04th September 2000

3. Address : Gp. Durung, Kec. Mesjid Raya, Kab. Aceh Besar

4. Sex : Female

5. Religion : Islam

6. Nationality : Aceh/Indonesia

7. Marital Status : Single

8. Occupation : Student

9. Educational Background

    a. MIN 34 Aceh Besar : Graduated in 2012

    b. MTsSDarulIhsan : Graduated in 2015

    c. MAS DarulIhsan : Graduated in 2018

    d. UIN Ar-Raniry : Graduated in 2023

10. Parents' Name

    a. Father : Tarmizi

    b. Mother : Ermiati

    c. Address : Gp. Durung, Kec. Mesjid Raya, Kab. Aceh Besar