

**EXPLORING STUDENTS' PROBLEMS IN UNDERSTANDING
TOEFL® READING SECTION**

THESIS

Submitted by

NADA NAFISAH

NIM. 170203145

Students of *Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan*

Department of English Language Education



FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH

2023 M / 1445 H

THESIS

Submitted to *Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan*
Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Bachelor Degree of Education in English Language Teaching

By:

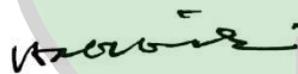
NADA NAFISAH
NIM. 170203145

Student of *Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan*
Department of English Language Education

Approved by:

Main Supervisor,

Co-Supervisor,



(Habiburrahim, M.Com., M.S., Ph.D)



(Drs. Amiruddin, M.Pd)

Date: 13 / 03 / 2023

Date: 13 / 03 / 2023

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 fulfilment of the requirements
for the Bachelor Degree of Education in English Language Teaching

On:
Friday, 22 Desember 2023
9 Jumadil Akhir 1445 H

In Darussalam, Banda Aceh

Board of Examiner,

Chairperson,



Prof. Habiburrahim, S.Ag., M.Com., Ph.D

Secretary,



Drs. Amiruddin, M.pd

Member,



Faishal, S.Pd.I., M.A., Ph.D

Member,



Rita Hermida, S.Pd.I., M.Pd.

Certified by:

The Dean of *Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan*
Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh




Prof. Saiful Mukluk, S.Ag., M.A., M.Ed., Ph.D
NIP. 197301021997031003



SURAT PERNYATAAN KEASLIAN

(Declaration of Originality)

Saya yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini:

Nama : Nada Nafisah

NIM : 170203145

Tempat/tanggal lahir : Gampong Asan, 08 September 1998

Alamat : Jl.Tgk Syik Diasan, Gp.asan, Kec. Kota Sigli, Kab.
Pidie

Menyatakan dengan sesungguhnya bahwa skripsi yang berjudul:

Exploring Students' Ability in Digesting TOEFL Reading Section

adalah benar-benar karya saya, kecuali semua kutipan dan referensi yang disebutkan sumbernya. Apabila terdapat kesalahan dan kekeliruan didalamnya, maka akan menjadi tanggung jawab saya.

Demikian surat pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sebenar-benarnya.

جامعة الرانري

Banda Aceh, 14 Desember 2023

Yang membuat surat pernyataan

AR - RANRY


Nada Nafisah

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Alhamdulillah rabbil ‘alamin, all praise to Allah SWT, who has given me blessing, chance, inspirations, and healthy to finish this thesis in the undergraduate program in the Department of English Language Education Ar-Raniry State Islamic University. Shalawat and salam to our beloved prophet Muhammad SAW, who has brought us to the right path.

First, the researcher greatly appreciate to my beloved parents, Ibrahim Udin and Faridah Hamid, who always prayed for me, supported me, and give me much love with all their heart. The researcher also gives special thanks to my dear brother, Dhani and Riky, for their love and support, which constantly inspire me to become a better person. May Allah grant my family with paradise for their sincere kindness.

Furthermore, my respect and sincere gratitude to the main supervisor Mr. Prof. Habiburrahim, S.Ag., M.Com., Ph.D and the co-supervisor Mr. Drs. Amiruddin, M.Pd, who has guided me and given advice, corrections, endless help and support in writing this thesis. The researcher also wants to express my sincere gratitude to all of the English Education lecturers and staff members who inspired, helped, and supported me throughout my time in this department.

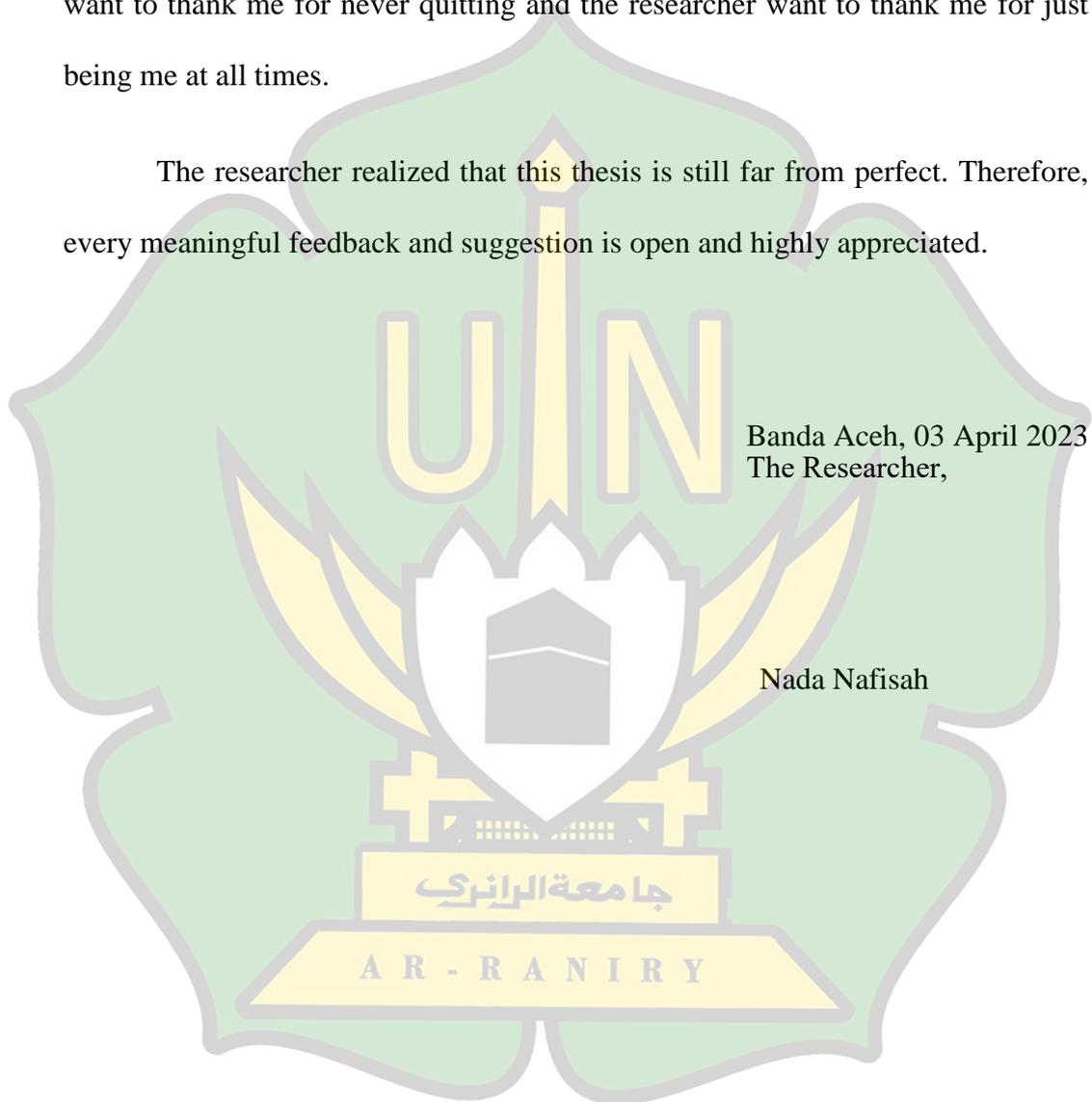
My sincere gratitude to my friends for always supporting me in good and bad times; especially Syaifa, Yucak, Nujul, Alvi, and Isyak. They have provided me with a lot of positive feedback, inspiration, happiness, and spirit to finish this

thesis. Last but not least, the researcher want to thank me, the researcher want to thank me for believing in me, the researcher want to thank me for doing all this hard work, the researcher want to thank me for having no days off, the researcher want to thank me for never quitting and the researcher want to thank me for just being me at all times.

The researcher realized that this thesis is still far from perfect. Therefore, every meaningful feedback and suggestion is open and highly appreciated.

Banda Aceh, 03 April 2023
The Researcher,

Nada Nafisah



ABSTRACT

Name : Nada Nafisah
NIM : 170203145
Faculty : Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan
Major : Department of English Language Education
Thesis Working Title : Exploring Students' Problems in Understanding TOEFL[®] Reading Section
Main supervisor : Prof. Habiburrahim, S. Ag., M.Com., Ph.D
Co-supervisor : Drs. Amiruddin, M.Pd
Keywords : TOEFL; Reading Comprehension; Students' Problem

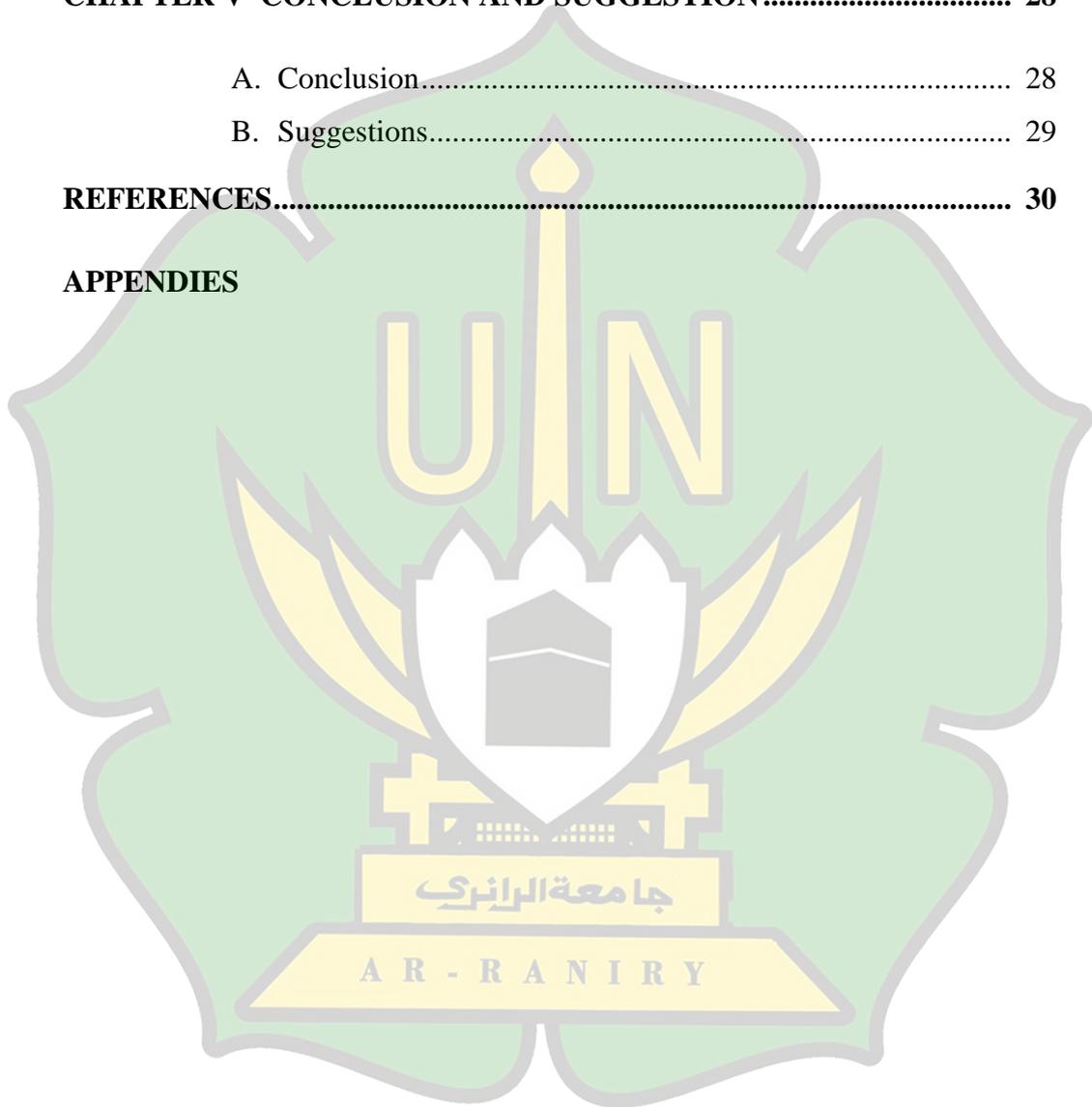
This study focuses on the problems that students' encountered in the TOEFL[®] reading section and how they overcame them. This study was conducted qualitatively, with interviews serving as the primary data. Six students from the English department of UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh participated. They were chosen using purposive sampling and they had taken the TOEFL[®] exam multiple times. Students struggled with time management, unfamiliar vocabulary mastery, and lengthy texts on the TOEFL[®] reading section. In the TOEFL[®] test's reading section, students used two strategies to solve these problems: skimming and scanning, and reading the questions before reading the text.

AR - RANIRY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

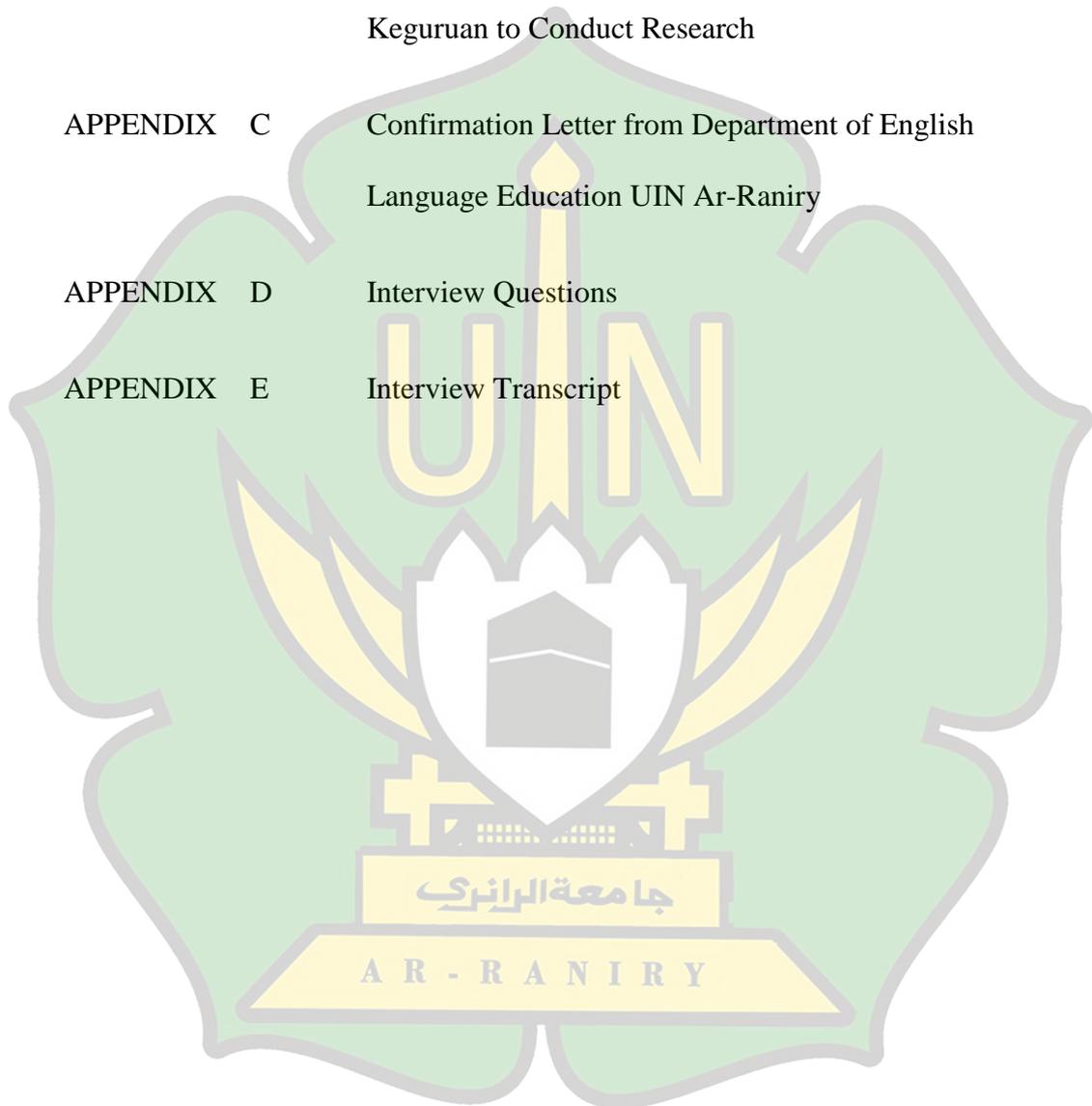
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	i
ABSTRACT.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENT.....	iv
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	vi
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. Background of Study.....	1
B. Research Question.....	5
C. The Aims of Study.....	6
D. Significance of Study.....	6
E. Terminology.....	7
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
A. Test of English As a Foreign Language.....	8
1. The History of TOEFL.....	8
2. Types of TOEFL.....	9
B. Reading.....	11
1. The Definition of Reading.....	11
2. TOEFL Reading Section.....	13
3. Types of Reading TOEFL.....	14
4. The Problem of Reading TOEFL Test.....	15
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	17
A. Research Design.....	17
B. Research Participants.....	18
C. Method Of Data Collection.....	19
D. Method Of Data Analysis.....	19

CHAPTER IV RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION.....	21
A. Findings.....	21
B. Discussion	26
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION.....	28
A. Conclusion.....	28
B. Suggestions.....	29
REFERENCES.....	30
APPENDIES	



LIST OF APPENDICES

- APPENDIX A Appointment Letter of Supervisor
- APPENDIX B Recommendation Letter from Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan to Conduct Research
- APPENDIX C Confirmation Letter from Department of English Language Education UIN Ar-Raniry
- APPENDIX D Interview Questions
- APPENDIX E Interview Transcript



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher discuss about background of the study, research question, aims of study, significance of study and terminology.

A. Background of Study

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL[®]) is a test conducted to measure students' ability to master English, and it is an important test for EFL learners. TOEFL[®] is necessary for speakers for whom English is not their native language. Today, the TOEFL[®] is used for a variety of purposes, including getting scholarships, continuing education at a university, and employment with both national and international companies. Some universities require students to take the TOEFL[®] as part of their graduation requirements.

Rahmah (2019) said that the TOEFL[®] test is one of the language proficiency tests created to assess a person's language proficiency, regardless of any previous language learning. The popularity of the TOEFL[®] for testing English proficiency has grown to the point where most universities have included it as a requirement for graduation. TOEFL[®] is also used as a requirement for undergraduate thesis examinations, especially in UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. The students must get the specified minimum TOEFL[®] score in order to take their thesis test. The TOEFL[®] test has four different formats: paper-based test (PBT), computer-based test (CBT), and internet-based test (IBT).

PBT TOEFL[®] or paper-based test is one of the types of TOEFL[®] tests that are familiar and are run in every institute, including courses, specialized language institutes, etc. This paper-and-pencil test is designed to assess test takers' ability to use and understand English in a classroom setting at the college or university level. It carefully measured how well the takers could listen, , and read in English while performing academic tasks. In the PBT TOEFL[®] test, there are three types of abilities tested: listening, structure, and reading. The maximum score that must be achieved is 450–550.

The CBT TOEFL[®] is a form of the TOEFL that was released following the PBT TOEFL[®] this TOEFL[®] system uses a computer rather than paper. Each question's processing system is managed and completed entirely on a computer, with a lengthy test lasting between two and five hours. There are four types of abilities in this TOEFL[®] computer-based test: listening, structuring, reading, and writing. The maximum score that must be achieved is 0–300.

The IBT TOEFL[®], commonly known as the TOEFL[®] Next Generation (NG), is a test that evaluates English language proficiency using only the internet as the test system. As a result, test-takers directly respond to questions from the site, notably ETS online, for a total of four hours. There are four types of abilities in this IBT TOEFL[®] test, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The maximum score that must be achieved is 0–120.

In the PBT TOEFL[®], the reading section is one part of the test that measures students' ability in reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is

the ability to read, process, and understand the meaning of text. When assessing academic reading comprehension, TOEFL® should focus on four main aspects: reading for information, reading for basic comprehension, reading to learn, and reading to integrate information from various sources.

Reading comprehension is defined as the outcome of a complex interaction between the text and the reader's background knowledge. It is a method and process for connecting concepts in a text with the student's thinking. Muawanah (2014) said that reading comprehension is one of the important factors based on student achievement. It can be concluded that a learner who gives their full attention to reading will achieve more success.

Many EFL learners believe that the TOEFL® reading comprehension test is very difficult for those who have never taken it before. Due to the problems of the reading section test, many students give up on taking the TOEFL®. EFL learners find reading difficult because of several factors, one of which is their inability to understand a particular text. Their limited vocabulary and understanding of some phrases may make it difficult for them to understand the meaning of English texts. This impacts the students' ability to answer questions in the TOEFL® reading comprehension section. According to Alghail and Mahfoodh (2016), EFL students in Malaysian universities face a variety of difficulties. The difficulties are managing the time for the reading test as well as paraphrasing, taking notes, and supporting ideas. According to Chawwang (2008), the most significant problems include finding difficult words, the passage's main idea, and a lack of vocabulary. To overcome the difficulties, some reading strategies such as

summarizing, question-generating, skimming, and scanning are frequently used to get around the difficulties and understand the information given in the text. Any method could be used by language learners to understand the texts. Reading methods are important for comprehending the content and overcoming any reading difficulties.

However, some students have problems with reading comprehension because they cannot understand the whole text and do not have a lot of vocabulary. In addition, the students are not motivated and do not actively participate in reading class activities. In fact, students have difficulty understanding what they read. This happens because students lack motivation to read and teachers do not use media to improve students' reading comprehension.

Several studies on digesting the TOEFL reading section have been carried out. This is following with previous research (Zalha et al., 2020) which raised the topic of strategies for dealing with the reading section of TOEFL prediction. This study shows that students used five strategies in contending with the TOEFL reading section, which can be divided into two categories: reading strategy and test-taking strategy. The reading strategies consist of skimming and scanning the passages, using context to understand the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary, and utilizing background knowledge. It can be concluded that this study focused on exploring EFL learners' strategies in dealing with the reading comprehension section of the TOEFL prediction test, both in reading the texts and answering the questions.

Based on the findings of the research by Helena (2020) on students' abilities in reading TOEFL, this study analyzes the students' abilities in reading TOEFL according to Philips' theory of TOEFL reading skills. The result of this study shows that the students have a high percentage of pronoun referents. Finding definition from structural clues is the most difficult. It can be concluded that many students in an English study program still have difficulty taking the TOEFL test, which finally has an impact on their scores.

Referring to the description of the previous studies, it is important to explore the ability of students to digest the TOEFL reading section to know the students' level of achievement in their English reading skills. The present study is hoped to be useful for improving students' reading skills in the TOEFL section. This research study intends to explore students' ability to digest the TOEFL reading section at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.

B. Research Question

After going through some relevant literatures, the researcher conducts the following research questions:

1. What are the problems encountered by students in understanding TOEFL[®] reading section?
2. How do the students overcome the problems in understanding TOEFL[®] reading section?

C. The Aims of Study

The aims of the study are:

1. To identify the problems encountered by students in understanding TOEFL® reading section
2. To identify how they overcome the problems in understanding TOEFL® reading section

D. Significance of Study

1. For the students

The result of this study can help the students improve their English in reading comprehension of TOEFL® test. Through this study, the students will become aware of that problem and try to look for solutions to improve their reading ability.

2. For the teacher

The researcher hopes that this study will provide more benefit for English teachers by informing them of the problems that students are having with the reading section of the TOEFL® test. In order for teachers to choose which teaching methods can be used to help students do well on the reading section of the TOEFL® test, they must be aware of the causes, contributing factors, and solutions used to solve the problem.

3. For Other Researchers

This study is hoped to be of use for future researchers who are interested in doing research in this field.

E. Terminology

a. Students' Problem

Students' problem in this study refers to the problems encountered by the English education department students' of UIN Ar-Raniry in understanding the reading section of the TOEFL® test.

b. Reading TOEFL®

The reading section is designed to simulate the types of reading assignments that are expected of students in university-level academic settings. The process of reading comprehension involves the reader's cognitive interaction. In this case, the researcher examines the English department students' reading TOEFL® scores to determine what difficulties students have in reading PBT TOEFL®.

c. TOEFL Test

The PBT TOEFL® test in this study refers to the Test of English as a Foreign Language given to English education department students' of UIN Ar-Raniry based on the standard test issued by The Princeton, New Jersey the United State of America.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the researcher explains the literature that is relevant to the study.

A. Test of English As a Foreign Language

1. The History of TOEFL[®]

TOEFL[®] known as Test of English as a Foreign Language is a test of an individual's ability to use and understand English in an academic setting. The TOEFL[®] is a large-scale language assessment. It is "perhaps the most well-known and widely used large-scale language assessment in the world" (Kunnan, 2008, p. 140). According to Pierce and Kimsell (2007), the TOEFL[®] is a test that evaluates students' proficiency in the style of English used in an academic setting. Additionally, the TOEFL[®] measures a person's potential to utilize and comprehend English at the college level, which is necessary for people who do not speak English as their first language. The TOEFL[®] test is used to assess non-native English speakers' level of English proficiency. It is likely the test that is used the most when foreign students are applying to colleges and universities. However, people take the TOEFL[®] exam for a many of reasons, including the reasons for studying abroad where the test is the main criterion for native speakers. The other reason is that TOEFL is a must for anyone who wants to continue a Master's or Doctoral degree in Indonesia. A person who wants to study

in a short course program offered by a foundation, institution, or organization abroad in a particular field must also take the TOEFL® exam.

Since 1963, various government organizations in the United States and internationally have used the TOEFL® test as a standard for prospective applicants to these related to organizational their command of the English language. These organizations include the Ford Foundation, Fulbright, The Agency of International Development, Latin America Scholarship Program, The Colombo Plan, and numerous others. According to ETS Since the test's launch, more than 27 million people from all around the world have applied to take it.

2. Types of TOEFL®

Currently, there are several ways to take the official TOEFL® test around the world:

- 1) The Paper-Based Test (PBT)
- 2) The Computer-Based Test (CBT)
- 3) The Interned-Based Test (IBT)

The following provides details on the TOEFL® test types:

1) The Paper-Based Test (PBT)

The PBT TOEFL® exam is conducted using a paper and pencil format and is often provided by the ETS (Educational Testing Service). This test includes the following four sections:

- a. Listening Comprehension

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

b. Structure and Written Expression

It is used to measure the ability to identify grammatically correct English sentences. They must choose the correct answer to complete sentences in this section, as well as identify grammatical errors in sentences.

c. Reading Comprehension

It is used to measure the ability to understand written English passages. They then answer to multiple choice questions about the idea and word meaning in those reading passages.

d. Test of Written English

The Test of Written English (TWE) is intended to measure a student's proficiency in writing in English. The test takers have only 30 minutes to complete a specific essay on a certain subject.

2) The Computer-Based Test (CBT)

The four sections of the computer-based test include listening, structure, writing, and reading. The writing in this section is equivalent to the paper-based test's Test of Written English (TWE). Additionally, it's possible that test takers who take the TOEFL® at the same time don't see or answer to the same question.

These questions were chosen based on the students' level of proficiency. The total score for this test is limited to a range of (0-300).

3) The Internet-Based Test (IBT)

The IBT test is referred to be a new TOEFL® test. It replaces the use of the paper-based and computer-based tests. Its main goal is to measure the participants' ability to communicate effectively academic communication. There are four sections in this test: reading, listening, writing, and speaking. It tests each of the four abilities that are essential for successful communication.

B. Reading

1. The Definition of Reading

Reading is one of the most important factors that students should consider. They can improve their English vocabulary, get a lot of information, and learn a lot through reading. Reading is a linguistic process connected to thinking and to all other types of communication, including speaking, writing, and listening. The process of reconstructing meaning from written words on a page and the author's intended meaning is known as reading.

Grabe (2002) defines reading as the ability to get information from a written page and interpret it effectively. Anderson (2003) states that reading is the process of combining information from a text with the reader's prior knowledge to derive meaning. Yukselir (2014) argues that, reading is beneficial because it allows students to learn new information and get new experiences through reading

texts that explain everything about the environment. Reading becomes one option that encourages students to gain more written English exposure.

The ability to read is one that people learn through schooling and develop over time. Both an individual's academic and social lives benefit from the timely learning of this skill. Nowadays, reading is defined as a meaning-building activity that depends on prior knowledge is based on successful author-reader interaction, and is carried out in line with a suitable method and goal in a structured environment. Fluency, strategy, motivation, continuity, and meaning development are all important components of successful reading. Mikulecky and Jennifer in Wijaya (2013) said Reading helps students learn to think in a new language, improve their vocabulary, and their writing skills. Reading is one of the communicative skills, although the process is quite complicated. Reading can be defined as a process in which a reader finds out information from a written source. Reading might be called an interactive activity in this context.

There are some purposes of reading, such as reading to find the main idea; one of the most common goals for teaching is to obtain a general understanding of a topic. This is normally accomplished through an evicition reading. Reading to Answer Questions: One of the most typical goals for reading in school is to find the answer to another question. Even in high school and college, as well as in life outside of school, when the questions are phrased in the exact words of the writer, the answers are generally straightforward to find reading to summarize and organize, to effectively summarize or organize what has been read. It is not enough for the reader to understand the main idea and important details. The

reader must also be able to identify the connections between the main points and the details, as well as the relationships between the details. He also needs to know how to explain these relationships to others or how to write them down for later reference. The last, "Reading and Evaluating Critically," means that critical evaluation does not mean that every statement read is false. Reading skills are related to reading styles. The following are some reading suggestions for skimming and scanning.

It can be concluded that reading is a basic skill that is closely related to other skills such as writing, speaking, and listening. Students are required to read a lot and understand the reading material in order to achieve better results in the learning process. It means reading can help students get information and knowledge in the educational process.

2. TOEFL® Reading Section

The TOEFL® PBT test, reading section test your comprehension of the reading will be tested in terms of how well you can comprehend different kinds of scientific reading that are related to subjects, main ideas, reading content, meaning of words or groups of words, and detailed information about the reading.

The third section of the TOEFL® PBT is reading comprehension. Participants have 55 minutes to finish this section, which consists of 50 multiple-choice questions. PBT reading comprehension consists of 5 - 6 reading passages, each of which may have 6 to 12 questions about the facts stated or implied in the passages as well as the definition of a specific word or phrase. Topics for reading

passages may be academic or of general interest, but they all include the data necessary to answer to all questions. The average reading section has between 25 and 5 lines of text and ranges in length from 200 to 450 words.

There are two types of reading comprehension questions: those that ask about the content of the passage and those that ask about the significance of specific words or phrases in the passage's overall context. The text of the questions is generally easy to understand and common format include “the passage primarily discusses...” and “word x is closest meaning to...”. For some questions, students must choose the correct passage line number to identify the location of specific information. Each reading comprehension question on the PBT has four possible answers and only single correct answer.

3. Types of Reading TOEFL®

In TOEFL PBT there are 50 multiple-choice questions in the reading comprehension section, which are given 55 minutes to finish. PBT reading comprehension includes 5-6 reading passages, each of which can have from 6-12 questions. The questions vary, but they usually focus on the main idea, stated or unstated details, vocabulary, pronouns, and inference. In order to avoid showing favoritism for certain issues, the topics in each passage are different.

- 1) Main Idea Question, it is the most significant component that defined the author's aim and may be isolated throughout the entire passage. The "topic," "title," and "main idea" are the three key areas of question on the PBT TOEFL®.

- 2) State Detail, instead of defining every item of information in a passage, the examiners are asked to identify a specific piece of information.
- 3) Unstated Detail, the task for the examiners is to uncover information that is implicit in the passage. According to the passage, the correct answer to questions of this type includes incorrect information.
- 4) Pronoun Referent Questions, the designated pronoun for a given noun must be found by the examiners. For this type of question, transition and connecting words might be used as clues.
- 5) Inference Questions, in this type of question you must draw conclusions from the information presented in the passage.
- 6) Vocabulary Question, in this question you are asked what a word or phrase is closest in meaning to and are given 4 answer options. You need to be able to understand the meaning of the word as it is used in the passage.

On the reading section of the PBT TOEFL[®], there are many task question types. It will take a lot of time and probably result in a lower score if you do them all in the same way. You should have a plan in place for each of the many question types instead of approaching every question in the same way without understanding the question type.

4. The Problem of Reading TOEFL[®] Test

According to Richard (as cited in Wahab, 2012) a difficulty is something that requires complexity. In actuality, many students often find it difficult with reading comprehension. Due to these issues, the student performed poorly on the reading test. There are two categories of factors that cause students' problems:

Physics, intellect, and psychology are examples of internal factors. While external factors such as the family and school environments by Rahim (2006). There are some internal factors that affect students' reading comprehension that are typically found by the reader during reading. These include difficulty with understanding long sentences and texts, challenges caused on by a lack of background knowledge, challenges with applying reading strategies, and challenges with concentration by Fajar, (2009).

1) Difficulty in understanding long sentence

Most students have trouble understanding long sentences with complex structures, which is a common issue. It is supported by a study by Barfield (1999), which found that 20% of academic texts and almost 12% of graded stories had long sentences that were difficult for students to understand. The result of this problem is that students who have difficulty comprehending long sentences are unable to understand the text's main idea.

2) Difficulty in Using Reading Strategies

Students who lack reading strategies usually have difficulty understanding the text. Students that don't use reading strategies often show specific characteristics. First, the students read the text word by word while relying heavily on their visual information, which greatly slows down their reading speed and hampers their understanding. Second, because they focused so much attention on the details, the students often missed the text's main idea. Thirdly, they did give the expense form too much attention.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the procedures used in this study to answer the research questions presented in the previous chapter. This chapter includes research design, research participants, data collection techniques, and data analysis techniques.

A. Research Design

A research design is a way to find out something. It could be qualitative, quantitative, or a combination of the two. This study uses descriptive qualitative research, because the researcher wants to describe the students' problems in understanding TOEFL® reading section. According to Leavy (2017), qualitative research is a set of rules for analyzing human perception by focusing on the social in nature, complicated, and culture that has developed in society.

Qualitative research is a type of research that uses non-numerical data to analyze, describe, or explain anything. A qualitative technique is used to examine, learn about, and understand social phenomena to unravel the meanings individuals attach to activities, situations, events, or to get a better understanding of a particular aspect of social life. Qualitative research often collects data from a smaller group of people rather than a broad group of people.

The purpose of qualitative descriptive research is to provide a complete explanation of specific events that individuals or groups of individuals encounter on a daily basis. There is no such thing as a qualitative design category, according

to some researchers. Unfortunately, this has motivated other researchers, particularly those who are new to qualitative research methods, to feel compelled to explain their methods in order to gain "epistemological credibility." The researcher creates a rich, full picture by assessing language, reporting on several informant opinions, and conducting the study in a natural setting. The research method includes data collection in the participant environment, inductive data analysis that progresses from specifics to a broad topic, and the researcher's interpretation of the findings

B. Research Participants

In this study, the researcher used purposive sampling technique to get the participants. Bryman (2012) said purposive sampling is a technique used by to choose people, organizations, papers, departments and others who are closely relevant to the study issues. The participants in this study were students' of English Department at UIN Ar-Raniry who has taken the TOEFL® test.

The data of the participants who have taken the TOEFL® test can be seen in the table below:

Table 1. PBI Students'

No	Students' Number	Students' Initial
1	180203017	MF
2	180203005	NB
3	180203055	HN
4	180203144	NJ

5	180203060	FJ
6	180203053	AG

C. Method of Data Collection

The aim of data collection was to learn more about the research questions. In this study, the researcher use interview to collect the data. According to Creswell (2012), an interview is used when a researcher asks participants for in-depth information about their thoughts, knowledge, beliefs, opinions, and feelings about a topic and records their responses. When two people meet face to face to talk about a certain issue and collect information and ideas through questions and responses, this is known as an interview. To collect data for this study, the researcher chose some students to interview for this research and conducts a semi-structured interview.

D. Method of Data Analysis

In this study, the data were analyzed based on the findings of interviews. The researcher used qualitative approach in analyzing the data. Thematic analysis was employed when analyzing the data. Thematic analysis is a technique for data analysis that aims to find patterns or themes in the data that researchers have gathered (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

1. Organizing the data

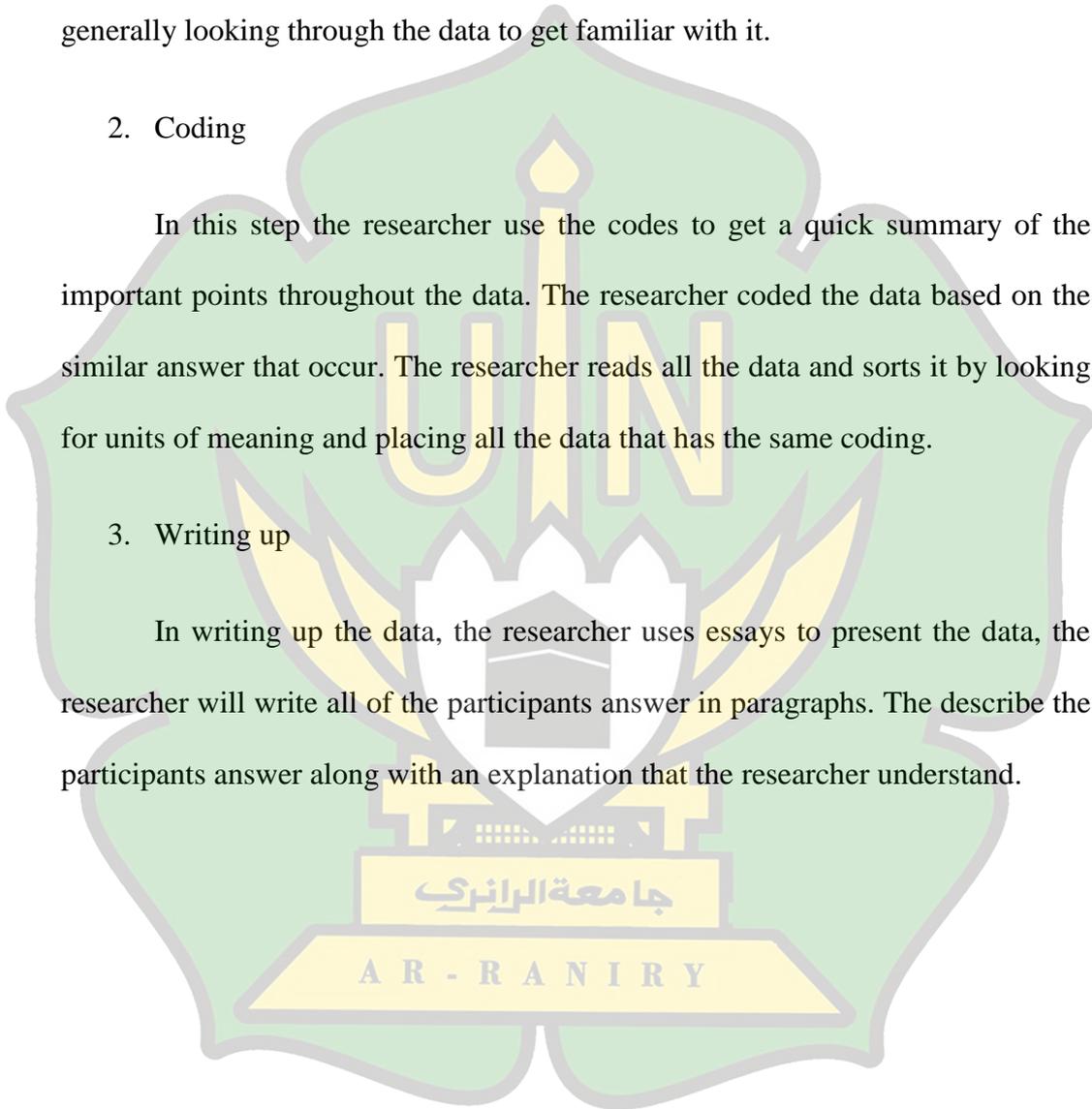
In this step to get a through overview of all the data, the researcher might involve transcribing audio, reading through the text and taking initial notes, and generally looking through the data to get familiar with it.

2. Coding

In this step the researcher use the codes to get a quick summary of the important points throughout the data. The researcher coded the data based on the similar answer that occur. The researcher reads all the data and sorts it by looking for units of meaning and placing all the data that has the same coding.

3. Writing up

In writing up the data, the researcher uses essays to present the data, the researcher will write all of the participants answer in paragraphs. The describe the participants answer along with an explanation that the researcher understand.



CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presented the finding of the research. The main source of data is the result of the interview with English students of UIN Ar-Raniry University. The finding and discussion would be explained as follow:

A. Findings

This research aims to explore students' problems in understanding TOEFL[®] reading section. This research was conducted with six students who had taken the TOEFL[®] test to know the problems faced by students and how they overcome them in reading the TOEFL[®] section. This research finding are divided into two parts, the problems that students encountered in TOEFL[®] reading section and how they overcome the problems .

1. The problems encountered by students' understanding TOEFL[®] reading section

a) Time management

Time management is a one of the problem that students face in the TOEFL[®] reading section. HN said, "I believe I have a difficulty with the TOEFL[®] reading section, specifically with the time, because I did not have a lot of time, I did not answer questions as well as I could." AG also said, "Time management became my first problem in answering the reading section."

b) Unfamiliar vocabulary

In general, students have difficulty in the reading section of TOEFL® due to their low vocabulary which when students read the text they find new words that they don't know the meaning of the word. Three of six participants stated they had difficulty in reading section of TOEFL® due to a lack of vocabulary. According to MF, "I have problems with reading section of TOEFL® section because I don't have a lot of vocabulary, and some words in the text are hard for me to understand because there are words that are unfamiliar to me." NB added, "There were several words in the TOEFL® reading section that I didn't know which made it difficult for me to answer reading questions." HN also said, "I believe the problem I have in the reading section of the TOEFL® is academic words, as I don't have a lot of academic vocabulary."

Another difficulty students' encounter during the reading section is lack of knowing synonyms and antonyms because they face problems when they read unknown words in the text without being aware of their meanings, synonyms, or antonyms. As stated by FJ, "Knowing the synonym and antonym of the word is one of the problems I face in the reading section because there are several words that I don't know the meaning of, and that makes it difficult for me to answer reading TOEFL® questions," and supported by MF, "Knowing synonyms and antonyms is one of the problems I found in the reading section because there are several words that I don't know the meaning of, and that makes it difficult."

c) Long text

One of the problems that students find in the reading section of the TOEFL® is long texts. Students don't have enough time to read the whole text because it is too long. NB said "in my opinion, the length of the text and sometimes incorrect word usage in the reading section are the main issues. In addition, I have problems with vocabulary gaps and unfamiliar words in the text". NJ added, "Long texts are a big problem for me because it takes a lot of time to read them repeatedly in order to answer a few questions".

According to the responses of several participants above, students generally find it difficult with the reading section of tests because they lack vocabulary knowledge with the synonyms and antonyms of some words, have texts that are too long, and short of the time. Because they believe they have a limited amount of time, students do not answer reading questions as well as they could.

2. The solution for those problems

According to the findings of the interviews, some of participants had different ways for resolving the problem they faced during the reading section of TOEFL. Some of them used strategies such as skimming, scanning, reviewing the question and guess at the meanings of unfamiliar words.

a. Skimming and Scanning

Reading strategies include skimming and scanning. The two speed-reading strategies of skimming and scanning are different from each other and are used for different purposes. Skimming is the strategy of reading only the main idea in a passage of text. Scanning is the strategy that you use when you want to read something quickly and locate a specific item of information. Two of six participants used skimming and scanning to answer the question, according to HN “the first thing I did to overcome the difficulty I found in the reading section of TOEFL was to read more of the text. Because the text is long, I used skimming and scanning to make it easier to find the main idea and the purpose of the text. I also think logically to resolve the difficulty.” NB also said “It's too boring to read a long passage, so I'm trying to read it quickly. I will skim and scan the passage to look for the text's main idea”. Based on the answers, it shows that skimming and scanning are strategies that help students answer the questions on the reading section of the TOEFL, especially when it comes to identifying the main idea of the text.

b. Reading the question before reading the text

The participants agreed that reviewing the questions before going with the reading process was helpful when doing the reading section. MF said “Usually, I read about what has to be read to answer the question after I have a look at the question. We know the reading section's text is long, so if we read it all, we won't have enough time to finish.” NJ also supported the statement “I just read the

question first and looked up the keyword before reading the text. Because if we read the whole text before reading the question, we will have to read it again.”

Another participant has a different way to solve the difficulty that they find in the reading section of the TOEFL. According to AG, "Because the text is quite long, I need extra time to read the text and answer the question." If I have 20 minutes to complete the reading section, I will try to complete it within 16–17 minutes so that I have a few more minutes to recheck the answer, and for the vocabulary that I did not know, I should guess the possible meaning for those vocabulary words." FJ also said, "In my experience, the way I overcome the reading section of the TOEFL test is to read more text, memorize vocabulary, and also practice more." Without practice, I think it is very difficult for us as students to take the test.

According to the participants' answers, it can be concluded that each participant has a different way of resolving the difficulties they face during the reading section of TOEFL. For example, some participants indicated that they needed more time to read the text repeatedly in order to find the answers to their questions. Following that, they will recall the vocabulary and speculate on its possible meanings before applying logic to arrive at a solution.

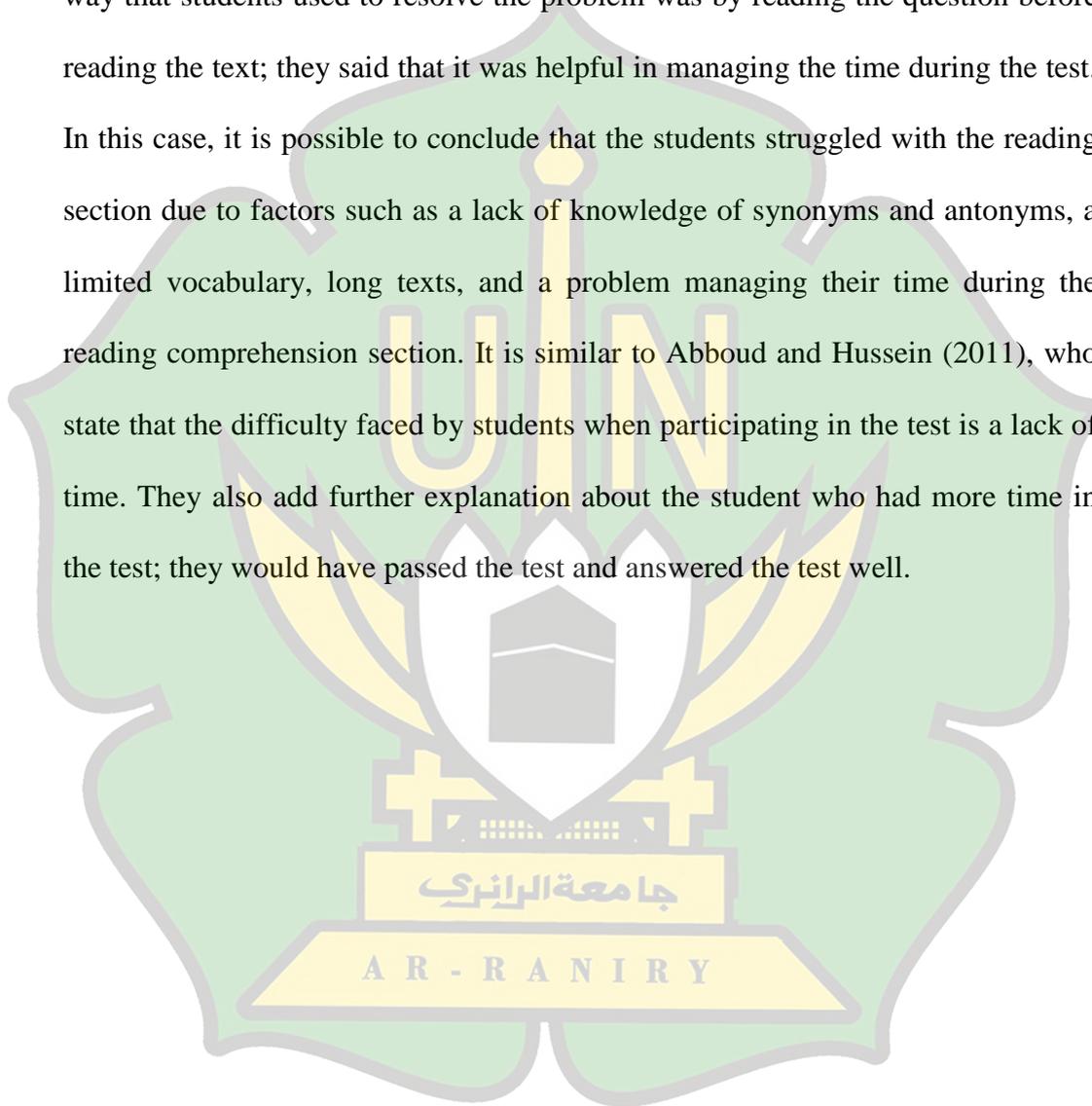
B. Discussion

The discussion of the research's findings is presented in this section. This research proposes two research questions. The first question is about the problems that students faced in understanding TOEFL reading section. The second session, meanwhile, focuses on how students overcome their problems in the reading section of the TOEFL.

This research found that the students struggled with the TOEFL reading section, which is in line with the first research question. According to Oakhill's (1993), there were three types of difficulties that students could encounter. First, it was difficult to infer information that was only implicit in a text that included the implied main idea. The second was to make inferences to connect the ideas in a text. The third was inferring the meaning of particular words from context. Therefore, the reading section was really difficult for the students.

The researcher found that students may have difficulty reading the TOEFL section based on student responses during interviews. The researcher has an opinion about students' reading problems. The first is unfamiliar vocabulary with lack of knowing synonym and antonym, followed by time limits and lengthy of the text. As a result, students clearly struggle with vocabulary; they are pressed for time as they read long texts and try to understand new words.

In answer to the second research question, students have different ways to resolve the problems; some of them used skimming and scanning the text to answer the question, which helped them find the main idea in the text. Another way that students used to resolve the problem was by reading the question before reading the text; they said that it was helpful in managing the time during the test. In this case, it is possible to conclude that the students struggled with the reading section due to factors such as a lack of knowledge of synonyms and antonyms, a limited vocabulary, long texts, and a problem managing their time during the reading comprehension section. It is similar to Abboud and Hussein (2011), who state that the difficulty faced by students when participating in the test is a lack of time. They also add further explanation about the student who had more time in the test; they would have passed the test and answered the test well.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This last chapter presents the conclusion of this research. The conclusion is based on the research findings and discussion stated in the previous chapter.

A. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to determine students' problems in understanding TOEFL reading section for UIN Ar-Raniry students who have taken the TOEFL test. Based on the findings and discussion in the previous chapters, the researcher conducted research on students' problems and how they overcame them in the TOEFL reading section.

From the result of the interview, it can be concluded that the students' problems in TOEFL reading section include; unfamiliar vocabulary with lack of knowing synonym and antonym, several long texts, and time management. Because the TOEFL reading section includes a number of long texts, it is obvious that effective strategies are important to succeed on the section. Furthermore, all of the students interviewed said that the time was incredibly limited. The students could not manage the time wisely to answer 50 questions in 55 minutes. To save time, students used these strategies to overcome their problems in the TOEFL reading section. They were skimming and scanning the text, and reading the question before reading the text.

B. Suggestions

Based on the previous result, some suggestions were made based on the students' ability to understand the TOEFL reading section. Although this research only involved a small number of participants and was completed quickly, the findings show a lot of information that will be helpful and can be used. For lectures, this research has focused on the problems that students found in the TOEFL reading section; therefore, it is expected that it will be a resource for lectures as they help their students get ready for the test. For students', the findings of this research show that students need to be aware of reading section problems and gain a better understanding of reading section strategies. Hopefully, knowing these strategies will help students pass the TOEFL reading section. It is hoped that students will be able to use these strategies and successfully achieve their best TOEFL score. The last for researcher, the problem of students in understanding the TOEFL reading section is the main focus of this study. To help students get their targeted TOEFL score, it is hoped that the other researcher would look into how well students can understand the TOEFL reading section.

REFERENCES

- Akyol, H., & Boyaci-Altinay, Y. (2019). Reading difficulty and its remediation: A Case Study. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 8(4), 1269-1286. <https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.8.4.1269>.
- Alghail, A.A.A., & Mahfoodh, O.H.A. (2016). Academic reading difficulties encountered by international graduate students in a Malaysian university. *Issues in Educational Research*, 26(3), 369-386.
- Anastasiou, D., Griva, E. (2009). *Awareness of reading strategy use and reading comprehension among poor and good readers*. *Elementary Education Online*, 8(2). 283-297.
- Badu, H. (2020). Students' ability in reading TOEFL. *Jambura Journal Of English Teaching and Literature*. 1(2). 89-100.
- Beare, K. (2016). *Improving reading skill*. Retrieved from <http://esl.about.com/od/englishreadingskill.htm>[April, 27th2016].
- Braun, V., Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. Retrieved from http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/11735/2/thematic_analysis_revised_-_final.pdf
- Chawwang, N. (2008). *An investigation of English reading problems of Thai 12th grade students in Nakhonratchasima educational region 1,2,3, and 7* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation) Srinakharinwirot University Bangkok.
- Creswell, John W. (2012). *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- Dahlia, S. (2016). Partnership activity in EFL reading. *Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities*, 3(2), 83-90.

Elfiondri, Kasim, U., Mustafa, F., & Putra, T.M. (2020). Reading Comprehension in the TOEFL PBT; Which Sub-Skill Deserves More Intensive Training?. *TESOL International Journal*, 15(1), 2094-3938

Fajar, S. (2009). *The difficulties faced by students in reading comprehension section of national examination*. (Unpublished). Banda Aceh: Universitas Syiah Kuala.

Grabe, W., & Stoller, F.I. (2002). *Teaching and researching reading*. Britain: Pearson Education.

Guntur, L.M.F., & Rahimi, S.P. (2019). Exploring the challenges of reading comprehension teaching for English Proficiency Test Preparation Class in Indonesia. *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 2(3), 321–330.

Khairulman. (2020). *Exploring students' obstacles inn reading comprehension (A Case Study at English Department of Muhammadiyah Aceh University)*. [Thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry].

Kunnan, A. J. (2008). *Large-scale language assessment*. In E., Shohamy & N. Homburger (Eds), *Encyclopedia of language and education*, (2nd ed), *Language testing and assessment*. Amsterdam; Springer.

Leavy, P. (2017). [Research Design](#): Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods, Arts-Based, and Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches. The Guilford Press: New York, London

Muawanah, S. (2014). *The relationship between students' reading habit and their reading comprehension (A correlational study at the second grade students of SMA Dua Mei Ciputat)*. Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University. Retrieved from

<http://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/32720>

- Nanda, D.W., & Azmy, K. (2020). Poor reading comprehension issue in EFL classroom among Indonesia secondary school students: Scrutinizing the causes, impacts and possible solution. *Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities*, 8(1), 12-24, <https://doi.org/10.22373/ej.v8i1.6771>
- Netta. A., Trisnawati, I. K. (2019). Acehnese undergraduate students' strategies in preparing for TOEFL prediction; A preliminary study. *Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities*, 7(1), 41-52. doi:10.22373/ej.v7i1.5779
- Rahmah, S. (2019). *The students' problem in listening comprehension of TOEFL test*. [Thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry].
- Razali, K. & Razali, I. (2013). Strategies in improving reading comprehension through vocabulary acquisition. *Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities*, 1(1), 1-16.
- Sadirman, A. M. (2007). *Interaksi dan motivasi belajar mengajar*. Jakarta: Grafindo Persada.
- Samad, I. A., Jannah, M., & Fitriani, S. S. (2017). EFL students' strategies dealing with common difficulties in TOEFL reading comprehension section. *International Journal of Language Education*, 1(1), 29-36
- Stuckey, H. L. (2013). Three types of interviews: Qualitative research methods in social health. *Journal of Social Health and Diabetes*, 1(2), 56-59. <https://doi.org/10.4103/2321-0656.115294>
- Wahab, W. (2012). *A descriptive study of students' difficulties in using word order of adjective*. Gorontalo: Universitas Negeri Gorontalo (UNG).
- Woolley, G. (2011). *Reading comprehension: Assisting children with learning difficulties*. Springer science + Business media B.V.

Yukselir, C. (2014). *An investigation into the reading strategy use of EFL pre-class students. Procedia-social and behavioral sciences 158*, 65-72. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.12.034.

Zalha F.B., Alfiatunnur., Kamil., C.A. (2020). Strategies in dealing with the reading section of TOEFL prediction": A case of Aceh EFL learners. *IJEE (Indonesian Journal of English Education)*, 7(2), 159-171. doi:10.17622/ijee.v7i2.17622.

