

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses background of the study encompassing background of this study, research questions, purposes of the study, significance of the study, definition of key terms and organization of the thesis. It ends with a concluding remark.

1.1 Background of the study

TOEFL is designed and administered by Educational Testing Service (Hinkel, 2005; p. ii; Riyanto, 2007, 2008, p. v; Johan & Anne, 2009, p. 9; Educational Testing Service, 2012). It is developed for ensuring English language proficiency for non-native speakers who want to study in American universities. It has become an admission requirement for non-native English speakers of many English-speaking colleges and universities. In addition, TOEFL certificate is also used to apply the job, continue the study abroad and graduating from the university.

Therefore, many educational institutions put English ability as one of the requirements for graduating from the institutions. One of the institution, the state universities in Bandung, obligates all of the learners to take TOEFL test and reach the required score in order to graduate. However, they got some difficulties in passing the required TOEFL score, especially for non-English learners. At that university, the standard score of TOEFL for non English learners are 425 to 450. As the early interview data revealed, most of learners admitted that it was difficult to reach the required score. They also stated that the most difficult section was listening. It is in line with the findings of Gunawan (2008) and Abboud and Hussein (2011) that listening was the most difficult section in TOEFL. It was also proved by the listening average score of 109 learners of non-English majors that was 44.752 (Balai Bahasa, 2012). It means that the learners get 20 correct answers out of 50 questions in general.

These data were taken from eight-time test conducted from December 17th to December 21st in 2012.

As matter of facts, those learners of non-English majors argued that listening section was difficult because they listened to the text only once (King and Stanley, 1989, p. 2) and it was not repeated and not be printed on the test book. They had to focus on and listened to the text, and then answered the questions in three seconds. Once they got lost, it was hard for them to get the idea of the text and answer the question.

In addition, those learners said the conversations were not clear and sometimes too fast. It is in line with the findings of this research that 58.33% of the participants thought so. It is because they are not familiar with spoken English texts and get difficulties in understanding them. Additionally, the learners also did not know the strategies yet so they could not answer the questions correctly. They did not know the appropriate strategies in answering the questions.

From the problems explained above, it is clear that TOEFL listening section is the most difficult section, especially for the learners of non-English majors. It might be resulted from the learners' incapability in using appropriate strategies. They need to know the proper strategies to answer TOEFL listening questions. Because of that reason, the learners necessitate to join the strategy training. Strategy training is the process of teaching the learning strategy to the learners in order to improve the learners' listening ability and comprehension. It has been used in some other research as the way to improve listening ability of the learners (Chang, 2001, p. 151; Jou, 2009, p. 1; Abdullah, 2010, p. 35; Zang, 2012, p. 625; Malik et al., 2013, p. 57; Movahed, 2014, p. 88). Furthermore, one language center in Bandung provides the class conducting strategy training in order to help learners in reaching the required score and it is called TOEFL preparation class.

There is no research found in examining the implementation of strategy training in answering TOEFL listening questions, especially in Indonesia. Thus, this study aims to investigate the strategy training implemented by the instructor in one language center in Bandung, the stages of conducting the strategy training and the effects of the strategy on the learners' listening ability. This research was done in one language center in Bandung that involved one instructor and 25 non-English University learners.

1.2 Purpose of the study

As indicated in the background of the study, the purposes of this study are to investigate the strategy trained by the instructor in answering TOEFL listening section, to know the stages in conducting strategy training by the instructor, and to reveal the effects of the strategy training to the learners' listening skill.

1.3 Research questions

Regarding the background of the study above, the following are the research questions:

1. What are the strategies trained by the instructor in answering TOEFL listening section?
2. How is the strategy training implemented?
3. What are the effects of the strategy on the learner's listening skill?

1.4 Significance of the study

This research is expected to be useful for the readers who are concerned with the strategy training in answering TOEFL listening questions. The research findings can give contributions on three aspects; theoretically, practically, and professionally.

Theoretically, the study adds an empirical support to the existing theories of teaching TOEFL, especially the TOEFL listening section for learners of non-English majors. This can be the reference for others instructors in the future to conduct the kind of advance research related to this topic

Practically, the result of the study helps to clarify and define more precisely on what strategy trained, how the strategy training conducted and the effects on the learners' listening ability. Professionally, this study enriches the understanding about the way of implementing the strategy training for TOEFL listening section.

1.5 Definition of the key terms

Key terms used in this research are as follows:

TOEFL listening section : TOEFL section that tests the listening ability of the learners and contain 50 questions.

Listening skill : the ability of understanding conversation and long talk.

Strategy Training : the teaching of the learning strategies in answering TOEFL listening questions.

TOEFL Listening Strategies : the strategies trained by the instructor that started from stating the name, explaining the supporting theories, and evaluating the strategy.

Teaching steps : the steps conducted by the instructor in teaching each of the strategies.

Teaching stages : the stages of teaching conducted by the instructor in every meeting.

- Part A : the first part of TOEFL listening section contained 30 short conversations and questions, and can be answered by using 17 specific strategies.
- Part B : the second part in TOEFL listening section contained 8 questions, and can be answered by using 5 strategies training.
- Part C : the third part in TOEFL listening section contained 12 questions, and can be answered by using 5 strategies training.
- Instructor : the one who taught the strategies of TOEFL listening section for 8 meetings.

1.6 Organization of the thesis

The organization of the forward chapters is conducted at the following. Chapter 2 explores the perspectives of this research on its relevance to the theories which are related to listening, TOEFL and strategy training. It includes the nature of listening, nature of TOEFL, nature of teaching listening, nature of strategy training and related previous research. Moreover, chapter 3 outlines the methodology of the research, including the description of research design, setting and participants of the research, data collection techniques and data analysis. Furthermore, chapter 4 contains findings and discussion of the research. It also shows the justification of the data found. Finally, chapter 5 consists of a conclusion and suggestion for further research.

1.7 Concluding remark

This chapter has discussed the introduction part of the study. It provided the background of the study, research questions, purposes, significance, definition of key terms and organization of the thesis. Finally, the details of the literature review will be discussed in great detail in the next chapter.