

A Study of English Proficiency Test among the First Year University Students

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Abstract

The study aims at analyzing the English skills in an English Proficiency Test (EPT) shown by students at tertiary level or university students, particularly the first year university students (freshmen). The study centers around the students' English skills represented in English Proficiency Test, which are then related to the students' common problems investigated in this study. The three sections in English Proficiency Test analyzed in this study including listening, structure and written expressions, and reading. This study revealed reading skill was the major problems faced by the first year of university students, particularly, in reviewing overall reading text. To solve this problem, the cognitive strategies, particularly the top-down reading strategies are suggested to anticipate the author's purpose, preview the text, think about what one already knows about the topic, skim for main points, etc. An effective reading strategies training which is more focused and explicit should be regularly practiced and enhanced since it can significantly boost reading proficiency and language acquisition.

Keywords: *English Proficiency Test, university student*

Introduction

In recent years, an increasing use of English as International Language (EIL) has been significantly proved in many fields around the world. This is proved by the use of English standardized testing employed in companies and institutions. They employ English Proficiency (TOEFL and IELTS) as one of the requirements in the recruitment process, such as scholarship programs. Particularly, in Indonesian educational institutions, a lot of educational institutions have been implementing TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) to measure the English-language ability of people who do not speak English as their first language and who plan to study at colleges and universities, either as undergraduate or graduate students (Phillips, 2003: xiii). Additionally, institutions such as government agencies, business, or scholarship programs may require this test

(Phillips, 2003: xiii). English language proficiency is utilized as a scale to measure the degree of an individual's relation in the fields of economy, business, politics, society, and education (Nallaya, 2012, cited in Bekdas, 2015: 14).

Like other developing countries, Indonesia is profoundly controlled by international business for its economic growth. English is deemed to be a prerequisite tool for success in any aspects of life. Both the government and the community in general recognize that a high level of English language ability among the workforce is essential (Hsu, 2010: 13). In the last few decades, there has been a growing concern for national standards of educational achievement in a competitive global economy. This concern has been reflected in tertiary institutions, the use of English Proficiency Test for the graduation requirement is then taken into account. To be

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