

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The research is about the effort of English proficiency test high score achievers experiences when they have prepared and learnt English in achieving high score in English proficiency test. This chapter explains the background of the study, the research questions, the research objectives, the scopes and limitations of the study, and the definition of key terms.

### **A. Background of the Study**

English is the language used in various parts of the world to communicate with each other. Not only in the field of communication, but English is also used in various sectors of life, including the education sector, the business sector, the tourism sector, and the political sector. Rintaningrum (2015) stated that English is the native language of five countries: the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. Therefore, there are several countries that already use English as a national second language for daily life, such as Singapore and the Philippines. Feng & Liu (2021) emphasize that English currently occupies an important role in public relations in industrial and office environments and is used by scientists.

As already mentioned above, English also contributes to education. For example, in Indonesia, English is a compulsory subject in schools and even up to university level. On the other hand, English is used as a medium to provide instruction for teaching in international schools. Nishanthi (2018) underlined

that learning English can empower people who learn it to keep growing and following developments. But on the other hand, learning English also often encounters difficulties. Kurniawati (2016) mentioned several difficulties in learning English, including the health factors of students, a lack of in-depth training, and a lack of motivation to explore parts of the English language.

English itself has various abilities that must be mastered. Among his abilities are reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Reading skills in English can be improved by reading English textbooks, newspapers, and social media. Brantmierer (2002) asserts that the use of reading strategies cannot be equated between those who are proficient and those who are not yet proficient in reading. On the other hand, Purba (2020) stated that listening skills spend more time communicating every day and forming communication patterns. Finally, the ability to write and to speak is a productive skill where someone produces a product in the form of writing or audio.

After deepening language skills, one needs to take a language proficiency test depending on the language being studied. An example is the English proficiency test. The English Proficiency Test itself is a standardized test that people take to assess their ability to understand, speak, and construct comprehensive and understandable thoughts through English. In a test, there will be a passing score that must be achieved by someone to master a language. There are three primary uses for English proficiency tests: study, work, and immigration. Many English proficiency tests are available with different structures, fees, objectives, and passing grades. All these English

proficiency tests aim to measure a person's level of English proficiency. Among these tests are IELTS (International English Language Testing System), TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication), GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test), SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) and others.

The English Proficiency Test is not regarded as a challenging exam. It is because it only measures English abilities and skills, and it will provide an overview of the proficiency level. For example, education in Indonesia applies an English proficiency test in the form of TOEFL with a passing score of 450-480. Purba (2020) added that the TOEFL score is the minimum score as a prerequisite for graduation for undergraduate students. Furthermore, if students want to apply for international scholarships, the English proficiency test is one of the prerequisites for graduating from the scholarship. For example, the Fulbright scholarship requires applicants to have a TOEFL ITP score of 550 or a TOEFL IBT score of 80 or an IELTS score of 6.5 or Duolingo score of 105.

Furthermore, talking about English proficiency tests will always be related to the abilities mastered by EFL learners. EFL learners' abilities include literacy skills, understanding of English textbooks, and using proper and correct English. Bautista and Gonzalez (2006) emphasized that the main purpose of learning English is that someone is expected to understand the headlines of information or news written in English. In addition, Charles (2004) stated that EFL learners' motivation was an important factor for

students because it has a strong influence on the learning process and student success. The achievement of the results of the English proficiency test will require continuous effort, and it should not stop just because it has reached the target score.

Furthermore, using narrative inquiry to explore the experiences of participants in achieving high scores on the English proficiency test allows researchers to provide participants with a platform to turn their personal knowledge into professional knowledge and become a source of knowledge for EFL teachers and learners. Narrative inquiry also empowers participants as someone who has experiences that deserve to be told. Departing from the previous explanation, the researcher would like to investigate the effort of English proficiency test high score achievers. This research entitled “*The Efforts of Non-English Department Graduates in Achieving English Proficiency Tests High Score: A Narrative Inquiry*”

## **B. Research Questions**

Based on the above description and explanation, the present study is to probe one research question followed by sub-questions. The research question is “*What are the efforts of participants to achieve high score in English Proficiency tests?*” and the sub-questions are:

1. What did participants experience in preparing English proficiency tests?
2. What did participants experience in taking English proficiency tests?
3. What did participants find about the benefit of achieving high score in English proficiency tests?

4. What are participants hope about future model of English proficiency tests?

### **C. Research Objectives**

Referring to the research questions, the present study is expected to reveal how participants experienced, engaged with, and made meaning of their efforts in achieving high score in English proficiency tests.

By recollecting participants' crucial experiences, the study provides rich description on the first time participants prepared English proficiency tests, on the way participants took English proficiency tests, in the benefit participants achieved high score in English proficiency test and on the aspirations participants had for future model of English proficiency tests.

### **D. Scope of the study**

The present study focuses on participants' important experiences in achieving high score through English proficiency tests. The prime experiences were taken from the first time participants prepared English proficiency tests, on the way participants took English proficiency tests, in the benefit participants achieved high score in English proficiency test and on the aspirations participants had for future model of English proficiency tests. The participants should not be an English education or literature students. The participants should get TOEFL ITP score 500 or IELTS score 6.5

### **E. Significant of the Study**

Theoretically, as the study aims to explore of participants' experiences in achieving high score in English proficiency tests, the findings of this study

can provide a more comprehensive preparation of taking official English proficiency test, of some unique or specific ways in preparing and taking English proficiency test, and of the personal or professional benefit from achieving high score in English proficiency tests.

Practically, the findings of the study are expected to be some use of EFL learners or teachers. Learners can achieve effective ways to prepare their official English proficiency tests by considering their abilities in English. Meanwhile, teachers who teach language testing class can find the ways to enrich the learning strategy in English skills.

#### **F. Definition of Key Terms**

To avoid misunderstanding on some key words and the content of the study, it is necessary to define the following terms below:

- a. The effort is physical or mental activity needed to achieve something, or an attempt to do something. In this research, the efforts mean the participants experiences in achieving high score in English proficiency tests. The participants retell the steps to achieve the score starting from preparing and taking an official English proficiency tests then taking benefit after took the English proficiency test and giving aspiration of future model of English proficiency test.
- b. Narrative is a compilation of story consisting of participants preparing, taking, finding benefit and giving aspiration future model of English proficiency tests.

- c. English proficiency tests are standardized exams that people take to assess their ability to understand, speak and construct comprehensive and understandable thoughts through the English language. In this research, English proficiency tests are the test that has been taken by the participants to measure their proficiency in English. In this study, participants have taken IELTS and TOEFL tests.
- d. The high score is the English proficiency test score obtained by the participants. The lowest is 500 for TOEFL ITP and 6.5 for IELTS.

