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**STUDENTS' PROBLEM OF TAKING TOEFL TEST AT STMIK ROYAL  
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**Abstract:** *in the TOEFL by International Language Training Center or ILTC. The type of this This study was aimed at finding out the factors of taking the TOEFL test and found that cause the students' problem in TOEFL learning faced by college students at STMIK Royal in Kisaran. The purposes of the study were (1) to know skills are most answered incorrectly in the TOEFL by International Language Training Center (ILTC) (2) to describe how to prepare the students for TOEFL; (3) to analyze the student's reasons toward their problems research was qualitative in nature. The data was taken from the document records and interview. This study addressed to students of STMIK Royal especially for semester 7 (strata 1) and semester 5 for diploma. In here, the writer focused to take the class SI 7E. This TOEFL took by online and this activity can be supported to them because they were information technology and computer management and always used the computer in the classroom. Therefore, it was effective to use the computer for students. The result of this interview show that there are some problems coming up during taking TOEFL test and investigated their frequency in participation of TOEFL and score they got. Interview was used to identify the student's difficulties and preparation to face the TOEFL. The finding of this study shows some points as follows: (1) areas of most incorrect answers such as Listening section and Written Expression; the problems of subject-verb agreement, tenses, nouns, and they didn't catch what the speaker say. (2) the problems of preparation shortages and incapability of understanding several grammars area were common found, (3) the reasons behind students' difficulties in the TOEFL were underestimate attitude toward the test and their poor English mastery.*

**Keywords:** *Students Problem, TOEFL Test, STMIK Royal*

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui faktor-faktor pengambilan ujian TOEFL dan menemukan penyebab permasalahan mahasiswa dalam pembelajaran TOEFL yang dihadapi oleh mahasiswa STMIK Royal di Kisaran. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah (1) untuk mengetahui keterampilan yang paling banyak dijawab salah dalam TOEFL oleh International Language Training Center (ILTC) (2) untuk mendeskripsikan bagaimana mempersiapkan siswa untuk TOEFL; (3) untuk menganalisis alasan mahasiswa terhadap masalah mereka dalam TOEFL oleh International Language Training Center atau ILTC. Jenis penelitian ini adalah kualitatif. Data diambil dari dokumen rekam dan wawancara. Penelitian ini ditujukan kepada mahasiswa STMIK Royal khususnya untuk semester 7 (strata 1) dan semester 5 untuk diploma. Disini, penulis focus pakas kelas SI 7 E. TOEFL ini dilaksanakan secara online dan kegiatan ini dapat didukung kepada mereka karena mereka mengambil jurusan teknologi informasi dan manajemen komputer dan selalu menggunakan komputer di dalam kelas. Oleh karena itu, penggunaan komputer bagi siswa sangatlah efektif. Hasil wawancara ini menunjukkan bahwa ada beberapa kendala yang muncul selama mengikuti tes TOEFL dan dilihat dari frekuensi keikutsertaan TOEFL dan skor yang mereka peroleh. Wawancara digunakan untuk mengidentifikasi kesulitan siswa dan persiapan menghadapi TOEFL. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan beberapa poin sebagai berikut: (1) bidang jawaban yang paling salah seperti bagian Mendengarkan dan Ekspresi Tertulis; masalah kesepakatan subjek-verba, tenses, kata benda, dan mereka tidak menangkap apa yang

dikatakan pembicara. (2) masalah kekurangan persiapan dan ketidakmampuan memahami beberapa bidang tata bahasa sering ditemukan, (3) alasan di balik kesulitan siswa dalam TOEFL adalah sikap meremehkan ujian dan penguasaan bahasa Inggris mereka yang buruk.

**Kata kunci:** Masalah Mahasiswa, Ujian TOEFL, STMIK Royal

## INTRODUCTION

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is a test administered to measure the English proficiency of non-native speakers of English. As Phillips (2001) declare that the TOEFL is a test to measure the level of English ability of non-native speakers of English. Likewise, Abboud and Hussein (2011) contend that as a test of English as a foreign language, TOEFL test has become a standardized test used throughout the world to measure the English proficiency of non-native English speakers. The two statements above are congruent with Sulisty (2009) who states that, for more than half a century,

TOEFL has been viewed as a standardized test widely employed all around the world in more than one hundred countries. In relation to this, Abboud and Hussein (2011,) further say, more than 5,000 colleges, universities, and licensing agencies in 90 countries accept the TOEFL scores. From the purposes mentioned above, it can be understood that mastery of TOEFL is very important because it enables learners to show that they have a good proficiency in English and opens a great deal of access to continue study abroad and also to continue studying in Indonesia. TOEFL has difficulty level, demands good English mastery and students should apply good strategy in answering the test. TOEFL has three sections; Listening Comprehension, Structure & Written Expression, and Reading Comprehension. In Listening Comprehension, timing is about 0.7 minute for one item. Students must listen to the conversation, read the answer, analyze the answer, and then choose the answer. In Structure & Written Expression, timing is only 0,6 minute for item. In Reading Comprehension, timing

is about 1 minute for one item. In other words, to get high score in TOEFL, the combination of good English mastery and strategy to analyze the questions is a must ([https://www.ets.org/s/toefl\\_itp/pdf/itp-practice-test-level-1-volume-3-ebook.pdf](https://www.ets.org/s/toefl_itp/pdf/itp-practice-test-level-1-volume-3-ebook.pdf)). TOEFL has become one of the most popular language proficiency tests that most people use in Indonesia. It can be proved that more institutions such as enterprises use TOEFL as one of the requisites in recruiting their new employees and universities use it as the requisite for graduating. TOEFL in some universities is also used for students who will submit their thesis. For example, STMIK Royal Kisaran, is one of the information and computer management colleges that strongly demands its students to achieve a TOEFL passing grade as a graduation requirement.

TOEFL in STMIK Royal is developed by ILTC Indonesia, which had network to give information about TOEFL test or how to increased the competence, in English especially for school, academic and university. ILTC is More than 5700 participants have received a nationally valid TOEFL certificate from ILTC.

In here, the TOEFL test is used the Computer Based TOEFL. The format, the number, and types of questions, which can be seen in the Computer Based TOEFL are shown in the following table (Gear and Robert, 2002)

Table. 1 The Computer-Based TOEFL Test (CBT) Format

Listening:	Number of Passages	Number of questions per passage	Total number of questions	Time
Short	11-17	1		

Dialogues				40-60 Minutes
Short conversation	2-3	2-3	30-59	
Lectures and Discussion	4-6	3-6		
<b>Structure:</b>		<b>Number of items</b>	<b>Total number of questions</b>	<b>Time</b>
Completing Sentences Correctly		10-15	20-25	70-90 Minutes
Identifying Errors		10-15		
<b>Reading Comprehension:</b>	<b>Number of Passages</b>	<b>Number of questions per passage</b>	<b>Total number of questions</b>	<b>Time</b>
	4-5	10-12	44-45	70-90 Minutes
<b>Writing:</b>	<b>Number of essays:</b>			<b>Time</b>
	1			30 Minutes

Before they did the TOEFL test, the students had to followed the workshop and simulation for students which found the strategy and trick how to got the best score of this test especially for seventh semester and fifth semester at STMIK Royal in Kisaran. However, in fact there are still many students of STMIK Royal for seventh semester (strata 1) and fifth semester (Diploma 3) who fail to achieve the minimum score. the level of students is in the category of user with the average TOEFL score is 350. This means that students' English proficiency is still low. According to Mahmud, M. (2014) added that many students think that TOEFL is extremely difficult particularly for students who have never done the test before. Therefore, that was interested in investigating the problems or difficulties

in answering TOEFL faced by students

## METHOD

This method uses qualitative research approach. The research design of this study using qualitative because according to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) qualitative research is multi methods in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials - case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts - that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives.

According to Snape and Spancer (2003) define qualitative research based on its objectives, that "... aims which are directed at providing an in- depth learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories." Based on the definition above, the writer looked for data and information from the research subject and then analyzed qualitatively".

The aims of the study are to analyze and find out the difficulties faced by students at STMIK Royal especially for seventh semester (strata 1) and fifth semester (Diploma 3) in the TOEFL test also which language elements most answered incorrectly by the test takers. in this case, declare that case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in depth data collection, involving multiple sources of information(e.g. observation, interviews, audiovisual materials, and documents and reports) and reports a case description and case-based themes. (Corbin J, Morse JM. 2003). By the statements above, that was

actual phenomenon about what happened or to explain why something happened by looking at a process. That meant the writer found the difficulties of TOEFL faced by English students by documentation and interview.

Technique of collecting data as follows: 1) Documentation. It is refer to technique of collecting data by gathering and analyzing documents. A valuable source of information in qualitative research can be documentation. According to Sugiyono (2008) stated that documentation can be written and picture by someone that can be used to obtain information. In conducting documentation method, the researcher can provide magazines, books, documents, etc. The function of documentation method is to make the result of observation or interview credible. The documentation used from the Indonesian Language Development Unit (ILTC) as the organizer of the TOEFL test at STMIK Royal to find data about respondents who took the TOEFL and also to ask questions about language elements that were answered incorrectly in the TOEFL. 2) Interview. It was conducted data collection by interviewing the students. Type of interview used by the writer was a face to face interview. It is stated by Creswell (2014) that a qualitative interview is when the researcher conducts face-to-face interviews with participants, interviews participants by telephone, or engages in focus group interviews, with six to eight interviewees in each group. Interview is activity that involves interviewer and interviewee where the interviewer was given some questions to be answered by interviewee. According to Corbin J, Morse JM. (2003) stated that in qualitative research, interview activity allow respondents to let them express in their own ways and pace, with minimal hold on respondents' responses

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of this TOEFL test activity by using the documentation and

interview with total population 30 students. The authors selected with purposive sampling and chosen to be 10 respondents with some criteria and by using documentation and interview which found if many students have not passed the TOEFL test and students must follows TOEFL test three times after that, they passed the TOEFL test. In here, the table: 2 showed the score of students took the remedial especially for class SI 7 E in academic years 2020 and 2021

Table 2 The TOEFL scores were taken from ILTC Indonesia as follows

No	Na me	Number of students	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3
1	AC	17220141	310 (Fail)	328 (Fail)	480 (Pass)
2	AA	17220142	310 (Fail)	320 (Fail)	450 (Pass)
3	AI	17220143	310 (Fail)	325 (Fail)	450 (Pass)
4	BA	17220149	310 (Fail)	327 (Fail)	450 (Pass)
5	FS	17220154	315 (Fail)	320 (Fail)	480 (Pass)
6	F W	17220155	310 (Fail)	325 (Fail)	480 (Pass)
7	R K	17220132	320 (Fail)	320 (Fail)	480 (Pass)
8	M S	17220162	320 (Fail)	325 (Fail)	480 (Pass)
9	NN	17220166	310 (Fail)	325 (Fail)	480 (Pass)
10	R H	17220132	320 (Fail)	320 (Fail)	480 (Pass)

The table illustrates the TOEFL scores of 10 (ten) participants who took three times of the test in the period year of 2020 and 2021. first the author wanted to use sample of students SI 7 E, but it is constrained the existing data and the complete data, the writer finally decided to choose the students in academic years 2020 and 2021 as the respondents. The results of the purposive sample show those students who have not passed

TOEFL test 1 and 2 but they are tried again and passed TOEFL test 3 so there were three times to do this activity for class SI 7 E and lowest score: AA, AI and BA (Name of Students), they got were 450 in third of the test, then the highest score AC, FS, FW, RK, MS, NN, and RH, they got were 480 in third of the test. the authors knew which skills are most answered incorrectly in the TOEFL test also found how students prepare themselves and the students' reasons toward their difficulties in faced the TOEFL test. Interviews were carried out using purposive techniques 10 key informants' conducted. The TOEFL test and then were interviewed intensively by name using initials, namely: AC, AA, AI, BA, FS, FW, RK, MS, NN and RH

Table 3. The tabulation of interview result

Name	Preparation	Method	Students Problem	Students Answered
AC	The preparation on one night before the test.	Usually self-study also never learns or read	Have problems in Structure and Written Expressions	Just guess the answer and also looking for strange word
	Usually study three days before the test, study the collection of questions from TOEFL training	Always self-study, study from Barron and Longman book, but most of the time used to be Longman	The big problems are Structure and Written Expressions. Because confused in grammar and tenses.	Just use feeling which is right in her opinion so she choose that answer

AI	Usually study one day before the test.	Read Longman book and never read the Barron book. Always self Studying	Have Problem in Listening skills lacked pronunciation	Looking for similar word from what she hear and use instinct
BA	Study one day before the test	Never try group study always self studying. Also never Read Learn Longman and Barron book.	Have problems in Structure and Written Expression and also Reading Skill.	Just cross it when listening, reading, while in the structure answer carefully

Name	Preparation	Method	Students Problem	Students Answered
FS	Has never studied before the TOEFL second training	Read and learn about Longman book never tries Barron book and always self-studying	The most problems in TOEFL is Structure and Written Expression.	Focus on the content especially about reading comprehension
FW	Usually study and read the day before the test	Has learned from the application Genius TOEFL.	Has problem in Listening and Structure and Written Expressions	Usually try remembering the answers from what she learned
RK	Read and study about the set of questions the preparation is two weeks before the test	Read grammar books, but Longman and Barron books have never been studied.	Confused about the structure and listening skills.	Read the question and what she think is strange and there is no connection with other words
MS	Rarely studied, but after the second training	Read only Longman book and from internet	problem for Listening and Structure and Written Expression	Looking for similar word from her heard. For Structure and Written
NN	The preparation is one day before the test its only two hours until three hours	Usually study group and read the Longman book only	Has a difficulty in Structure and Written Expression Skill.	Just use feeling and instinct also do the difficulties
RH	Prepare two or three days before the test	learn from application and internet.	Has a difficulty in Structure and Written Expression Skill. The factors are lack of tenses and	Just use feeling and instinct also do the difficulties

## CONCLUSION

Test of STMIK Royal especially for class SI 7 E. It can be seen from the result of test and got the highest score, the initials After analyzed the data of using the TOEFL name: AC, FS, FW, RK, MS, NN, and RH, and they got were 480 in third of the test, so they have done to do this test about three times. After that, they passed the TOEFL test. And the lowest score, initials name: AA, AI and BA, they got were 450 in third of the test. In here, it was absolutely to gave the information

especially for class SI 7 E which found that the weakness of the first and second test, after that they passed for the third test. in using the procedure of ILTC showed that the rate of the score, from the 310 score to 600 score. The under 350 scores, the students would be failed. and they did to take the remedial but they are needed three times to do this activity for them. All participants got the lowest score or failed in first and second of the TOEFL test so they would be continued in third of the test and fortunately, they passed and finished as the learning activity at STMIK Royal Kisaran and it is related about as a college graduation requirement.

The authors have done interview to all participants and got the information from 10 (ten) students. They gave with the different opinion. They often answered and used feeling to choose the right answer of the TOEFL test. But other hand, they have looked similar word from her heard especially about Structure and Written. The result showed that the problematic section. It was Structure and Written Expression skill, the students have difficult in grammar especially about tenses.

The results show that prior to the TOEFL, most students usually prepare themselves one week or even one day ahead. They admitted that the TOEFL training helped them to prepare themselves better.

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