

## University Students' Perception on TOEFL as a Graduation Requirement: A Case in UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta

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### ABSTRACT

This survey study aims to reveal the students' perceptions towards Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is one of graduation requirement policy in Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta. This study also investigates what challenges and gains the students get from taking the test. Forty students from different major and status (graduated and not graduated yet) in Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta, were chosen as the participants. The data was gathered through questionnaires and interviews. There are seventeen questionnaire items regarding students' perception of the policy were given to the participants. Moreover, the interview was also conducted to support the result of the data collected by asking some of the participants' opinion related to the implementation of the policy of TOEFL as one of the graduation requirements. The research findings showed that nearly all participants supported the policy of TOEFL as a graduation requirement. It indicated that most of the participants considered TOEFL as an essential requirement for graduation as this policy allowed them to enhance their English proficiency and motivate them to learn English. Furthermore, from the findings, it can also be seen that the challenges and gains encountered by the students are varied.

**Keywords:** TOEFL, Perception, Graduation Requirement.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is one of the standardized tests which is widely used by many institutions in EFL countries to measure students' English proficiency. Warfield et al., (2013) argue that TOEFL is sometimes used as an indicator of students' academic success and how well their performance is, during their study in the university. In Indonesia, TOEFL is used by most universities as a tool to measure students' English proficiency level and also as one of the graduation requirements. Every university has its own requirements which need to be fulfilled by the students before they finish their study.

In Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, TOEFL is used as one of the requirements for graduation. The university has set a minimum score for undergraduate-level of English Department as 500. Meanwhile, for non-English major, the minimum score is 450. The use of TOEFL score result as one of the graduation requirements is seen by students in both positive and negative ways. Some students considered that TOEFL might improve their English proficiency as stated by Murray (2016). Moreover, Murray stated that the students who possess good English proficiency would get a better opportunity in job hunting, promotion, get higher salaries, and school admission.

Meanwhile, despite its benefits, some students still have a negative perception towards TOEFL as it delays their graduation when they are unable to pass the minimum score set by the faculty. In her study, Mahmud (2014) stated some reasons from her participants as they did not pass the test, such as had no necessary skills in English, lack of TOEFL practice, lack of motivation for studying English, et cetera.

There are numerous related studies which have been conducted by many researchers to the students' perception of TOEFL. Bhakti and Marwanto (2013) investigated 178 "Diploma-IV" Accounting Study Program students of Samarinda State Polytechnic to see their perspective on the effectiveness of Polytechnic measures designed to enhance performance on Test of English as a Foreign language (TOEFL) – including a standard passing grade of TOEFL and how TOEFL influenced students learning. The study revealed that the participants gave more positive opinions than negative opinion regarding the effectiveness of TOEFL as a graduation requirement.

Susanti (2014) also concerned with the students' attitude with the influence of PBT on their learning and how the lecturers felt about the "washback or back-wash" towards their teaching. The findings revealed that, firstly, the majority of English Department students and lecturers agreed that the use of TOEFL gives positive wash-back effect to foster the English graduates quality. Secondly, there are lots of the students and lecturers felt that the materials provided during the three subjects help with the real PBT and have increased the average scores of English Department students in general.

Moreover, there is also a study conducted by Aziz (2016), which aims to reveal students' perspective on the requirements of having a minimum score in TOEFL to graduate in higher education. The study investigated that the students' perspective were classified into threefold, that is positive, negative, and neutral. The positive one is related to the advantages of TOEFL. Meanwhile, the negative one is related to academic reasons as it delays their graduation.

All of those studies have argued and revealed students' perception on TOEFL as a graduation requirement. Meanwhile, there are some gaps in this study with the previous studies. First, this study only concerned on students' perception of TOEFL as a graduation requirement, while one of the previous studies concerned on the perception of the students and figure out the attitude of the lecturers as well. The next distinction is that, in this study, the writers conducted a survey study and collected the data by utilizing questionnaires and short interview by meeting the respondents face to face, while in the previous studies, the researchers conducted the interview through telephone which means that the researcher did not meet the participants directly.

Based on the problems related to the students' perception of TOEFL as a graduation requirement, and in an attempt to get a deeper understanding of such issues, a survey study is conducted by the researchers. Therefore, the research questions of this study as follows:

1. Do university students consider TOEFL as an essential requirement for graduation?
2. What are the challenges experienced by students in having TOEFL as a graduation requirement?
3. What are the gains that the students achieved in having TOEFL as a graduation requirement?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Concept of Language Test

McNamara in Lemmetti (2015) describes testing in social life as a universal feature. They argued that tests have particular purposes, such as to establish identity. This has become an accepted part of many fields. Test also is interpreted as a tool of measuring someone's ability, knowledge, and performance (Fauziati et al., 2014). In language field, test is used to measure someone's abilities or competencies. In language test, learners need to know what is to be tested in the field. According to Glenn (2014), a language test is a procedure which provides language ability on tasks designed to prove someone's ability to use the language. Language admission tests, particularly English language tests for admission, the tests are intended to predict the test-takers' academic success in studying English (Ma & Cheng, 2015).

Meanwhile Annamaria (2017) defines language test as assessments which responsible socially toward learners' real-world language abilities. Hughes in Tanihardjo (2016) also added that in academic field, test is one of the main tools to obtain information and to know how well and how successful the students are in achieving the course objectives. The test can result in the form of score, or grade which can be valuable information to diagnose the students' strengths and weaknesses in the courses.

The most important reason learners should be tested is to find out how well learners have mastered the language areas and skills which they have just been taught. The use of language test can be different and it depends on the purpose when giving a test to the learners. McNamara in Lemmetti (2015) divides two terms of test purposes; Achievement and Proficiency. Achievement test, in general, is a formal test which is given to the students at the end of courses or at the end of the school year. Meanwhile, the Proficiency test is usually to measure how suitable the candidates will be performing following a specific course. The proficiency test covers the four language skills which are listening, speaking, reading, writing, and also a language component, which is grammar (Mahmud, 2014). In this way, a proficiency test looks forward to the actual ways in which candidates will use English in the future. Daller & Phelan (2013) states that language proficiency might be a key factor in their academic success and the proficiency test can measure how much a person knows or has learned a language. This test is intended to check the learners' language competence. People employ this test to try to be admitted to particular foreign

universities, to apply for certain get jobs, or obtain certain certificates. The most popular tests over the world are TOEFL and IELTS.

### **TOEFL as Proficiency Test**

According to Harris and Hughes in Susanti (2014) there are several types of test based on its purpose. They are the proficiency test, achievement test, diagnostic test, and placement test. The designation of proficiency test is to measure the certain language ability that the test takers are learning. This test has some specifications that the test takers need to perform in order to be admitted 'proficient' or to be considered as having sufficient skills of the target language. There are many kinds of a proficiency test in this world but one of the most popular is the TOEFL. TOEFL stands for "Test of English as a Foreign Language." Many experts have defined what TOEFL is. These experts have their own ways, words and also sentences to convey and express what TOEFL is. Despite the different ways, words and also sentences, these experts have come to one meaning to express the definition of TOEFL which is a standardized test designed to measure the English language capabilities of non-native English speakers. TOEFL has become one of the standardized tests which are administered, scored, and interpreted in a certain way (NCTE, 2014). As the purpose of language is to communicate, for non-native speakers, the TOEFL test is used to measures their ability to communicate in English, especially in academic setting. The TOEFL test is considered accurate to find out how well the non-native students use their English language skills in their college environment or in the classroom (ETS, 2016).

The TOEFL test is introduced by the National Council on the Testing English as a Foreign Language in 1963. Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is a test that is already internationally recognized. TOEFL test has three types of tests. They are The Paper-Based Test (PBT), The Computer-Based Test (CBT), and The Internet-Based Test (IBT).

The Paper-Based-Test (PBT) is a pencil-paper-used test. This type of TOEFL test is the first type and is still considered a traditional examination. Lots of Colleges or other institutions use PBT TOEFL test to test their students. Therefore, the score is not internationally valid. The score is only admitted or accepted in the colleges or institutions where the examinees took the test. Most of the PBT TOEFL test-takers are the students who are going take their thesis final examinations.

In most cases, the scores that they have to achieve are different based on their department policy. In Paper-Based TOEFL, the test consists of three time-separated sections which are listening comprehension, structure and written expression, and reading comprehension with multiple-choice questions. In an international journal Vu & Vu, (2013) revealed that the test takers only took this PBT TOEFL test until the Computer-Based-Test (CBT) was brought and introduced in 1998. These days, this PBT TOEFL test is only used in some countries where the Computer-Based-Test (CBT) and Internet-Based-Test (IBT) are not available and employed yet.

The next type is the IBT TOEFL. In the study conducted by Nikolaieva (2016), it is clear enough that IBT TOEFL is the most popular type of TOEFL all over the world, particularly in non-English speaking countries. This IBT TOEFL test has been employed

since 1964. Internet-Based Test (IBT) is also the newest type of TOEFL. Even though PBT and CBT TOEFL are still employed in several countries, IBT TOEFL has replaced the position of others. USA, Canada, France, Germany, and Italy in 2005, are countries that have employed this test. Then, the IBT TOEFL was introduced to other countries in 2006 while CBT TOEFL is terminated in the same year (Sudarmono, 2013). IBT TOEFL test concerns on the test-takers' ability to communicate. IBT TOEFL test consists of four sections, which are reading, listening, speaking, and writing the test. The speaking section in this test type is designed to measure the test-takers' ability to communicate. In IBT TOEFL test there is no structure or grammatical section. However, although there is no grammatical section, it does not mean that the test-takers do not need to learn or master grammar since the mastery of structure also determines other sections. Without mastering grammar, it will not be easy for the test-takers to do the test well.

Another type is the Computer-Based Test (CBT). Computer-Based Test (CBT) was introduced in 1998. CBT TOEFL is almost similar to the Paper-Based Test (PBT). The difference lays in the use of computers in taking the exam. In CBT TOEFL tests, the test-takers are facilitated with headphones in listening section to enable them to listen well. The instructions to answer the questions are given in the beginning.

Moreover, the test-takers are able to see the computer to know how much time left to answer the rest questions. However, CBT also has the weakness that the test-takers cannot back to the passed questions since they use a computer. During the test, they cannot skip or pass the questions or even return to the previous questions. In general, CBT TOEFL test lasts for about four hours including the time to read the instructions. In CBT TOEFL, there are minimum and maximum scores. The minimum score that the test-takers have to reach is 173, while the maximum is 300 (Sudarmono, 2013). In addition, the score will be valid for two years. In taking CBT TOEFL test, test takers may not take the test more than once in a month. Hence, if they do not pass the exam, they have to wait for next test. Lots of people have to wait for the test again after two years in case they apply for the next two years' CBT-needed-programs. According to Sudarmono (2013), there are four sections in CBT TOEFL, which are listening, structure, reading comprehension, and writing.

In Indonesia, the TOEFL test is originally conducted by the English Language System (ELS), a specific institution for TOEFL test, known as Institutional TOEFL. Universities in Indonesia may also employ a test similar with TOEFL or we call it as TOEFL like or a TOEFL equivalent test, or also TOEFL prediction. These TOEFL like tests such can be administered by the center of language studies or by the language laboratory within the university. This TOEFL like tests are usually administered by the university and are used for internal usage to examine the students' English proficiency (Mahmud, 2014). As a comparison, O'Loughlin (2013) reveals that in Australian universities, English proficiency is mostly based on a single standardized test score. The test-types accepted at many Australian universities now include four standardized tests, The International English Language Testing System (IELTS), the Pearson Test of English - Academic (PTE-A), Cambridge English Advanced Exam (CAE), and Test of English as a Foreign Language internet-Based Test (TOEFL IBT). In the United States and Canada, TOEFL is a test designed to decide whether non-native English students have a good skill in English to

understand the courses at colleges or universities. Most of the American universities require international students for either undergraduate or graduate programs to take the TOEFL test. They do not have to take the exam only in the United States (USA), but they can perform the test in other countries as well as the result will be internationally accepted.

### **The Importance of TOEFL**

The policy of having TOEFL as a graduation requirement is seen by many institutions and people as a good thing. Aziz (2016) defines the importance of TOEFL which is often used to determine a person's ability to speak English. The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is a major indicator of non-native speakers' English ability. It is used worldwide to measure the English language aptitude of students who apply to universities and colleges in countries where English is the language of instruction. Scores on the TOEFL are required by more than 4,400 universities and colleges around the world at the graduate and undergraduate levels. The TOEFL test is a necessary test for some non-English speaking countries (and in a larger context, Asian) university students wishing to study at a university in the United States, Canada, or any other country where English is the language of instruction. The results of the measurement typically used by many international universities to determine the extent to which new students can speak English and, therefore, to follow the material presented during the study. Further, Bhakti and Marwanto (2014) state that another importance of TOEFL is that TOEFL can be used as one of the requirements of job admission in the government institutions as well as in the government and private companies. It also can be used as one of school admission as well as the graduation requirements

### **TOEFL as Graduation Requirement**

Many colleges and universities in Indonesia use the TOEFL test as one of requirement for entering or exit in the graduate program. In Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, TOEFL is used as one of requirements for graduation. The university has set a minimum score for undergraduate-level of English Department as 500. Meanwhile, for non-English major the minimum score is 450. In University of Sriwijaya the range for minimum TOEFL score that students have to achieve is 375 to 500. In this case, Medical students are in 450. University of Airlangga and State University of Surabaya (Prima, 2016; Musahadah, 2015) also take a decision for students who are going to do thesis examination, have to pass in 425 (S1) and 375 (D3) TOEFL score. Technological Institute of Sepuluh November and University of Riau have the same rule as University of Sriwijaya that is 450 TOEFL score for exit requirement but it belongs to all graduate programs. From this information, it can be concluded that the TOEFL test has been recognized all over the world. Therefore, colleges and universities in Indonesia also take a decision to place the TOEFL test as an indicator of people who are able to use and understand English.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

Forty students from different majors in Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta were chosen as the participants of this study. The students were chosen as the participants because the university used TOEFL as one of the graduation requirements. Furthermore, the participants were not only the students who have not completed their



study, but also the students who have already completed their study at the university. It is expected that there will be various perceptions about this policy which come from various majors and different status of the students.

The instruments used in this study included a questionnaire and interview which were modified from Hsieh (2017) and Bhakti (2013). The questionnaire was developed to obtain information about the students' perception of TOEFL as a graduation requirement. The items of the questionnaires were divided into several categories in order to know whether the participants have a positive or a negative perception towards TOEFL as a graduation requirement. The questionnaire employed 4-point Likert scale (from 1=strongly disagree to 4= strongly agree) in order to obtain students' perception. 17 questionnaire items were shared to the participants through WhatsApp in a link form.

Another instrument to collect the data is the interview. The interview is used in order to get more useful information and to avoid misleading answers from the questionnaire. The interview was carried out face to face in the form of open-ended questions, in order to give chance to the participants to answer a question with a statement. 10 students were interviewed and the data collected from interview were analyzed narratively. The writers gathered the data or answers from the participants, analyzed each answer, and look for insights and meanings. Each answer was compared and contrasted to look for interpretations to elicit meanings.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned in the previous section that this study employed two instruments to gather data; questionnaire and interview. The data collected from questionnaire and interview were analyzed. Therefore, this chapter has three main points describing the analyzed data. The first point is related to students' perception of TOEFL as graduation requirement, in both positive and negative, whether they consider TOEFL as an important requirement for graduation. The second point is related to the challenges experienced by students in having TOEFL as a graduation requirement, and the last point described the gains that the students achieved in having TOEFL as a graduation requirement.

### *Students' Perception of TOEFL as a Graduation Requirement*

In order to get general understanding related to the policy of TOEFL as one of the graduation requirements, forty students from different major and status (graduated and not graduated yet) were asked to fill out the questionnaire which employed 4 points Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, and 4=Strongly Agree). The general perception of the students can be seen from the results of the questionnaire as described in Appendix 3. The data showed that the majority of students (85%) agreed that TOEFL should be used as one of graduation requirement where 65% students chose "agree" and the other 20% chose "strongly agree". Furthermore, most of them (95%) agreed that the policy of using TOEFL as one of graduation requirements gives many benefits. Many students (70%) seemed to feel more motivated to learn English in order to pass the test and get high score. Besides increasing their motivation, the policy of using TOEFL as one of graduation requirements is also seen as a way to measure and enhance English

proficiency of the students. This policy is believed to be able to enhance students' English proficiency and motivates them to learn English as well (Bhakti, 2013).

However, despite its benefits, 50% of them are still considering that TOEFL is a hard test even for English-major students. The students argued that since they did not have knowledge related to some topics in the reading section, both English major and non-English major students stated that it was difficult for them to answer some questions. Another difficulty they encountered is also in the listening section where half of the students got confused about what the speakers were saying, especially when they didn't focus or lost their concentration. Also in addition, non-English major students stated that since they do not really learn English which means that they only learn it in only one semester, English and TOEFL test is hard for them. Some of them also stated that they had to take TOEFL test more than three times to get passed.

From the interview result, it was revealed that some participants felt TOEFL is a hard test. Although they are English-major students, they were still arguing that there is a part that even English major students might have no idea about. It is probably due to the unfamiliarity to the topic of the reading. Some of the students from non-English major also argued that TOEFL also could burden them since they have a less course, less exposure, and less knowledge than English-major students.

Meanwhile, related to the minimum score in passing TOEFL, 60% of students disagreed that the minimum score set by the faculty is too high. Based on the interview result, it can be seen that some participants have no objections against the minimum score in passing TOEFL as set by the faculty. The minimum score set by the faculty is seen as a good policy by the students. Most of the students agreed that the score is appropriate and not too high to be achieved.

*"Nowadays, I think we have to be competitive if we want to be accepted to the world. And I think, one of the requirements is to master English as English is an international language which is used and learned by people all over the world. So, for me, the minimum score of TOEFL in our university is not very high and I think it won't be too hard for the students to pass it if they have prepared themselves well before taking the test."*(Interview)

From the interview, some of the participants argued that the policy actually encourages the students to learn English because of some reasons, such as TOEFL is able to make students become a competitive person and it also enables the students to know their ability. Moreover, this policy may help students to know their current English proficiency so they can take corrective measures for the future (Aziz, 2016). Furthermore, it can be concluded that most of students considered TOEFL as an important requirement for graduation as it gives many benefits. Through this test, the students will be able to measure and enhance their English proficiency. For the students who want to either pass the test or get high score, this policy will surely motivate them to learn English more so that they will be able to achieve their goal.

### ***Challenges Experienced by Students in Having TOEFL as a Graduation Requirement***

Most of the students found some difficulties in answering the TOEFL and therefore failed the tests. Some of them had to repeat the tests for many times but failed (Mahmud,



2014). There are many challenges that the students might have faced when they were taking TOEFL tests. According to the survey that had been conducted by the researchers, the challenges were related to listening comprehension, structure, and reading comprehension.

Based on the survey that the researchers had conducted, it was found that most of students faced challenges in listening because of the bad quality of the sound system (70%), and the accent of the speaker which is hard to understand (60%). Moreover, some of them (60%) also considered that the implied meaning in this section was difficult to understand. Meanwhile, students' challenges in structure section were related to lack of vocabulary (75%), and lack of grammar understanding (85%). However, the challenges in reading comprehension were related to lack of idiom knowing (75%) and not too familiar with the topic (85%).

The challenges in listening comprehension were not merely related to vocabulary. In short dialogues part of listening comprehension, there are also other problems experienced by the students, such as sound and word confusion, time, quantity, and comparison. Some students also stated that understanding the implied meaning in the dialogue that was being said by the speakers was quite hard and challenging, as they sometimes failed to comprehend what the speakers were talking about. As a result, they were not able to answer the questions correctly.

*"For me, it is quite hard, the listening section. I sometimes couldn't understand what the speakers are saying. Understanding the real meaning of the speakers is hard. If I was not focused, I won't be able to understand what the speakers intended to say. It is important to understand the implied meaning that the speakers wanted to say, but it is not easy."* (Interview)

*"Listening section is not so hard for me, as I have much knowledge about English, and I get many exposures to English. But, the score of my listening section was not that high. The problem was not related to the knowledge, but it was because the quality of the sound system when I was taking the test was really bad. I couldn't hear the voice of the speakers clearly as the sound system in the room was bad."* (Interview)

Some of the students especially the students from non-English major stated in the interview session that the part 2 of the test, which is structure section, is also difficult as they have low capabilities in understanding English grammar. They considered that the options were confusing as they did not have enough knowledge related to English grammar. Few students said that they did not really like learning English so they never tried to learn English grammar. As a result, they had difficulties when they were taking the test, especially in the structure section. Mahmud (2014) stated that many students were still facing some problems and challenges in this section due to lack of grammar understanding. It is stated that the issues existed since, in the TOEFL materials, the students were expected to know more about more complicated issues such as subject and verb agreements, parallel structures, etc. Thus, it is not enough for the students to only remember the fundamental level of grammar, such as subject pronoun, object pronoun, verb forms, etc.

According to the data (in appendix 3), the percentage of questionnaire results related to students' challenges in reading section is quite high. The data showed that many students were still facing some difficulties in reading section. Besides the lack of idiom knowing and

being not too familiar with the topic, the most critical problems were actually in identifying difficult words, topic, the main idea of the passage, and lack of vocabulary. These problems make students unable to guess the meaning and to understand a text (Samad, 2017). Besides those problems, lacking strategies, such as the ability to do scanning and skimming, leads to significant issues in comprehending reading text as stated by Nezami in Samad (2017).

Although there might be other challenges that the students might have faced during TOEFL, the main weaknesses so far, of the students in listening comprehension, structure, and reading comprehension are not only caused by their poor vocabulary and structures but also the failure to understand relation between tenses, sentences, as well as between paragraphs and longer discourses (Kasim, 2016). Moreover, there are also other problems which are not related to the students' knowledge, but related to, such as the quality of the sound system which is not supporting.

### ***Gains that the Students Achieved in Having TOEFL as Graduation Requirement***

All of the participants had the same opinion that TOEFL could benefit students in many ways. The participants said that TOEFL helped them in measuring ability, becoming a competitive person, and fulfilling the requirement to conduct thesis examination. Previous studies conducted by some researches such as Yu(2012), Doe & Fox(2011), and Ma&Cheng(2015), actually support this finding. In these studies, students who were doing preparation for taking test such as TOEFL had their motivation increased as they expected to meet their certain expectations for taking the test. TOEFL can assist people especially students for overseas education. There is much flexibility in performing a TOEFL test because the students will be offered practice tools and feedback and more alternatives to study abroad than any other English-language test in the world. The result of the studies even showed that the participants desire to learn English skills increased, and as they prepared a lot for taking the TOEFL test, they can learn how to reduce anxiety.

*"I think when we talk about TOEFL, we talk about English proficiency. TOEFL is one of the measurements and if you've already passed the measurement like TOEFL it means that you've already been at a certain level of English mastery."* (Interview)

*"I think when we take a TOEFL test and we have known our TOEFL score, we would be able know our ability. So, if we think that we are still lacking, we can prepare ourselves more to improve our ability or our English proficiency."*(Interview)

*"For me, the test, English proficiency is about challenging our own limit and our own ability."* (Interview)

*"Although I am not that good in English, I felt like TOEFL is an important test that we as university students need to take. From taking this test, everybody will know his or her ability in English. For students who are still lacking, they will be more motivated to learn English in order to improve their ability and also to pass the test. I myself, feel motivated to learn English since I was still lacking. And now, I am feeling like my English ability has improved".* (Interview)

Indeed, what actually benefits the students is English mastery, whereas TOEFL is an English proficiency test that measures and proves their ability. TOEFL helped them to measure their ability of English so that the students knew what grade they could achieve representing their ability. Further, TOEFL test completely has academic English skills

which make it necessary to demonstrate the English language skills which were learned in classroom level, both for English major students or non-English major students. In TOEFL test, test-takers will be asked to read a passage, listen to the lecture, and provide response also from reading and writing. All these reflect the classroom environment which tests students' academic skills. To add more, other participants also argued that TOEFL enables them various amenities such as listening to lectures, view films, read textbooks, speaks with other students in target language, write academic papers, reports, or emails, and more. In preparing to take the TOEFL test they eventually got used to doing the things above. Therefore, the TOEFL test seemed like a challenge for them. This test (TOEFL) can motivate students to learn English more in order to improve their ability and their English proficiency (Ermawan, 2013). By taking the test, the students could know their grade, and if they were still lacking, they would be able to try to improve it.

## CONCLUSION

This article has discussed the perception of university students related to the policy of TOEFL as a graduation requirement. Based on the survey and interview which have been conducted by the researchers, it can be concluded that nearly all participants support the faculty policy where TOEFL is used as one of graduation requirement. Almost all of the participants even think that TOEFL gives many benefits to them. However, the fact that many participants still considered that TOEFL is difficult cannot be denied. From the data collected, it is found that many students still faced difficulties and challenges in taking the test. Challenges that the participants encountered related to listening and reading comprehension, lack of vocabulary and grammar mastery, and little knowledge of the topic discussed in the test.

However, despite the challenges and difficulties they encountered, this policy had a good impact on every student. Most of the students stated that they were encouraged to learn English in order to pass the test. Moreover, TOEFL also enables them to become competitive person and they are also able to know their ability by taking the test. Indeed, there were also some students argued that the requirement was supposed to be for English students only because they thought TOEFL is hard. Above all, TOEFL is not just about a requirement that has to be passed. Behind this policy, there is a purpose that the university means to the students. The purpose is certainly encouragement for students in order to make them learn English more and improve their English proficiency.

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