CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter explains about the theories which become the foundation of this research. It discusses about standardized test of language, the impact of test, and previous studies related to the implementation of the TOEFL test.

2.1 Standardized Test of Language

2.1.1 The Concept of Language Test

Test is interpreted as a tool of measuring someone’s ability, knowledge, and performance (Fauziati et al., 2014). It means that 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 McNamara (2000), language test is a procedure which provides language ability on tasks designed to prove someone’s ability to use the language. Meanwhile Reynolds (2010) defines language test as assessments which responsible socially toward learners’ real-world language abilities. 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 (Heaton, 1990).

The use of language test can be different and it depends on the purpose when giving a test to the learners. McNamara (2000) divides two terms of test purposes; Achievement and Proficiency. Achievement test is usually a formal examination which is given at the end of the school year or at the end of the course. Meanwhile,
Proficiency test is usually to measure how suitable the candidates will be performing following a specific course (Heaton, 1990). In this way, a proficiency test looks forward to the actual ways in which candidates will use English in the future.

Otherwise, Harmer (2007) has different statement with McNamara. According to Harmer (2007), there are four main reasons for testing:

a. **Placement test.** It is a test that places the students at an appropriate level in a program or a course. This test is designed and given in order to use the information of the student’s knowledge for putting the students into groups according to their level of the language.

b. **Diagnostic test.** It is used to expose learner difficulties, gaps in their knowledge and skill deficiency during a course. This test is meant to provide a documentation of the students’ general knowledge at the beginning of the study year for the teachers to plan further work and design an appropriate syllabus for their students.

c. **Progress or achievement test.** This test is designed to measure learners’ language and skill progress in relation to the syllabus that they have been following. Achievement or progress test is often written by teachers and given to students every few weeks to see how well they are doing.

d. **Proficiency test.** It is a test which measures how much a person knows or has learnt a language. This test is intended to check the learners’ language competence. People use this test if they want to be admitted to a foreign university, get a job or obtain some kind of certificate. The most popular tests over the world are TOEFL and IELTS.
By looking at these kinds of test, it can be conclude that, there are different types of tests that serve for different purposes.

2.1.2 TOEFL as Proficiency Test

Most elementary and secondary school around the world have the standardized test to measure students’ mastery of the standards or competencies for specific grade levels, exit requirement, and enter to further levels (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). As researcher mentioned, Language proficiency is one kind of language competencies which has been familiar in language testing. There are many kinds of proficiency test in this world but one of the most popular is the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) test.

TOEFL has become one of the standardized tests which are “administered, scored, and interpreted in a certain way “(NCTE, 2014). This test measures the ability of non-native English speakers to communicate in English in academic setting. It accurately measures how well students can use their English language skills in the college or university classroom (ETS, 2016). The TOEFL test is introduced by the National Council on the Testing English as a Foreign Language in 1963. Since that time, Hill & Liu (2012) clarify that TOEFL test has evolved in three formats, from a paper-based test (PBT) to a computer-based test (CBT) and to internet-based test (IBT). Currently (Alderson, 2009), there are two formats of TOEFL test that offered by ETS: Paper-Based Test (PBT) and Internet-Based Test (IBT).

In Indonesia, the TOEFL test is originally conducted by English Language System (ELS), a specific institution for TOEFL test, known as Institutional TOEFL.
The university may also administer a TOEFL-like or a TOEFL-equivalent test, or a TOEFL prediction, such as by the center of language studies or by the laboratory within the university. This kind of TOEFL test is locally administered by the university, and only used for internal usage in order to examine the students’ English proficiency (Mahmud, 2014). The following diagram shows the types of TOEFL tests.

Note. Adapted from “The Effect of Assessment Techniques on EFL Learners’ achievement in TOEFL test by Shahad Hatim Kadham Al-taie, University of Baghdad”.

Many colleges and universities in Indonesia use TOEFL test as one of requirement for enter or exit in graduate program. One of universities which used TOEFL test for exit requirement before comprehensive examination is University of Sriwijaya (Depdiknas Unseri, 2009). 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 is belongs to all graduate programs.

In addition, University of Jambi, students are stated as Bachelor if they pass 400 score from TOEFL test (Peraturan Rektor Universitas Jambi, 2013). For Medical study program, Medical students have to have a minimum 450 TOEFL score before thesis examination (Darmawan & Aryanty, 2011). The kind of TOEFL test that is used for this requirement is TOEFL ITP test. If looking at the facilities and the condition in University of Jambi, TOEFL iBT test is inadequate for students who are taking the TOEFL test. According to Educational Testing Service (2016), TOEFL ITP test is paper based and uses 100 percent academic content to evaluate the English language proficiency of non-native English speakers. This kind of test has the same format as TOEFL PBT test. This test evaluates skills in three areas; Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, Reading Comprehension. All questions in this test are in multiple-choice format, with four answer choices per question.

From this information, it can be concluded that the TOEFL test has been recognized all over the world. By establishing the score based on the format of the test. 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 and
ETS has been appointed IIEF (Indonesian International Education Foundation) as its representation in Indonesia (LC Kampung Inggris, 2016).

2.2 The Impact of Test

Tests are usually used as a component of teaching processes and regarded as predictors of the consequences of the classrooms. It is assumed that test affect teaching and learning. This effect is referred to as washback (Rashidi & Javanmardi, 2011). According to Cheng (2005), washback or the impact of testing on teaching and learning is based on the idea that test should drive teaching and hence learning. This term is similar to McNamara (2000) statement as “the positive or negative effects of assessment on both teaching and learning”. Meanwhile, Cheng (2005) states that the positive or negative effect of washback depends on what the examination measures.

The concept of washback is therefore part of what Messick (1989) calls as consequential validity (cited in Rizi & Tavakoli, 2015). As part of consequential validity, Messick (1996) says that:

“Washback refers to the extent to which the introduction and use of a test influences language teachers and learners to do things that they would not otherwise do that promote or inhibit language learning”.

According to Giovanni (2015), many students in Technological Institute of Sepuluh November should be canceled from commencement list. The reason is the TOEFL score that students have are still under pass standard. Meanwhile, students have to pass in 450 for this test. One of the students in University of Riau (Wedhaswary, 2011) feel difficult to get 450 score for TOEFL test. This student has
tried 18 times for the test but failed in Listening comprehension. This student feels being unsuccessful in finishing his study because of the test and he complains that the difficulties of TOEFL test is due to the lack of practices and the high pass standard from the regulation. The existence of test such as TOEFL has effects beyond the classroom (McNamara, 2000). This test has been used in terms of educational policy, such as exit requirement in the college life or enter to the further levels.

From these perspectives, it can be inferred that washback is the impact of what the test takers get from the test whether positive or negative effects, in this case is language testing. All theories and summaries above are used to describe and understand how TOEFL can affect students’ social life especially for Medical students in University of Jambi where this research focus on students’ perception and readiness toward the implementation of the TOEFL test as a requirement before thesis examination.

2.3 Previous Research

To support this study, the researcher provides some previous related researches. The first, a study was conducted by Pan (2013) entitled “Student Washback from Tertiary Standardized English Proficiency Exit Requirements in Taiwan”. This study investigate how exit requirements such as TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication), GEPT (General English Proficiency Test), TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), and IELTS (International English Language Testing System) have impacted Taiwan’s tertiary educational framework. She uses survey phase and structured interview phase in her study. There are 1415 of
students’ sample of this research. For survey phase, she distributes questionnaire to 737 students from 8 tertiary institutions in Taiwan with English proficiency exam exit requirements (called as ECER schools) and 678 students from 9 schools without such requirements (called as non-ECER schools). For structured interview phase, she interviews 71 respondents (38 respondents are 8 ECER schools and 33 respondents are 6 non-ECER schools) from the survey sample who indicated their willingness to be interviewed.

The findings of her research showed that more than half of the ECER students in the survey phase indicated that they did not believe that EFL exit exams enhanced their incentive to study. However, nearly 65% of the 38 interview ECER informants indicated that the tests pushed them to study. It means that the exit exams had effects on motivation. Pan also found that 51% of the survey respondents claimed to spend less than an hour of English study per week. It indicated that the exit exam did not significantly affect the amount of time most respondents studied. Both groups (ECER & non-ECER) tended to rely on traditional test cramming methods. However, 10% students at ECER schools claimed to spend more time reading magazines, listening to English CDs or radios or practicing conversations than their peers and they also claimed that they often or sometimes use their school self-access centers test practice websites. It seems to indicate that the exit requirements may have encouraged a modest number of learning through communicatively-oriented and test-prep approaches.

The second previous research is “The EFL Students’ Problems in Answering the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL): A Study in Indonesia Context”
by Mahmud (2014). The focus of his study is to explore the students’ problem in answering the TOEFL test for Graduate Program who took TOEFL test as the requirement for finishing their study in one of the state universities in Makassar.

Three classes are taken as sample: one from English department and two from non-English department (social science class and natural science class). He observed the three classes and interviewed 12 respondents of those classes.

Mahmud found that the main problems of the students in answering the TOEFL test were due to several reasons. The first important factor is due to the less English proficiency among the students. It was influenced by the low level of English skills. Many participants said they had to study English because they must whereas they never studied it before. In other word, they had no Basic English. Therefore, there should be awareness for students to increase their English skills before enrolling the Graduate Program. Students should keep in mind that mastering English proficiency is not only for requirements for individual competence, but also for their self-development. The second problem is less practice. It was caused much by the less time committed to learn TOEFL. In this case, it is important for students to join a class to prepare them for the test.

Less motivation is the third important problem for the students. This motivation was caused by many factors. One of them was their limited time committed to the learning process. If the students had committed to the course and studied well, the results of the tests may be improved. In addition, students were not highly motivated due to different perceptions of the students towards the learning process. They had different perceptions about the test and the course. They wanted to
join the test not to learn but only taken for granted as a requirement. They expected that after joining the course, they can be considered to be helped in the test by upgrading their scores until reaching the passing grades. The last factor was from the students’ individual differences. Students sometimes made their age and their social status as barriers to learn hard. Respondent stated that they were too old to learn English which was difficult for them. In addition, because of their high social status outside the campus (not only as students), they sometimes felt that learning is not required anymore. It can be stated that students’ individual differences could make great influence on students’ achievement. From the finding of Mahmud research, it shows that problems occurred in the students’ achievement in answering the TOEFL test were actually due to the ways the learners learn or their learning strategies.

Another previous study, Ermawan et al (2014) had conducted a research about “An Analysis on Graduates’ Perceptions towards Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). This study aims to know the graduates’ perceptions towards the test and also gathers data about the graduates’ TOEFL score attainment in academic year 2012 and 2013 in Tanjungpura University. There were 10 respondents were involved in this study. Ermawan et al designed a case study for this research and the data were collected through interviews and documentary methods.

The research findings show that graduates with below the standard of English department reached 26.92% in 2012 and 23.40% in 2013. Meanwhile, those who were below the standard of university reached 7.69% in 2012 and only 2.12% in 2013. These indicated that there was a development of graduates’ attainment in TOEFL score from 2012 to 2013. There were more than 70% graduates passed the
standard of English Education Study Program. 596 was the highest score graduates could achieve in 2012 and the highest in 2013 was increased became 653. The average score that graduates were able to achieve was 488 in 2012 and 498 in 2013. It means the graduates had score above the standard. One of the main points that found from the respondents about their perception about TOEFL as a requirement to have thesis examination was TOEFL motivates students to learn and even master English well in order to prepare themselves to pass the test. Of course, it will affect the level of their mastery towards English. Based on the data, one of the benefits of TOEFL was revealed that students will feel motivated to learn English more and give a different point of view for students in regarding TOEFL.

Generally, this study has a quite similar topic with these three previous related researches that is about students’ perception toward the TOEFL test. However, the difference between the present study and other studies is researcher tries to find out the readiness of the students about the implementation of the TOEFL test.