

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Research

English Proficiency Test (EPT) is a paper-based test that assesses the student's ability in listening, structure and reading. The test, conducted by English Department, consists of 50 listening, 40 structure and 50 reading questions. In order to pass the test, the minimum score of 500 is required. In a case when a student cannot get the minimum score, he/she must retake the test again in the next semester.

Regarding on EPT score, the number of the students who pass the test in every round is usually low. Result from EPT test conducted at 27th of March 2018 showed only 26 out of 109 (24%) are considered as EPT-high achievers (students who got equal to, or more than 500). From total of 109 students, 61 (56%) of students were in the score range of 400 – 500, and 22 (20%) of them got below 400. Moreover, data from EPT test conducted at 12th of May 2018 showed only 14 out of 197 (7%) of students got more than 500, in which 136 (69%) of them are in the score range of 400 – 500, and 47 (24%) of the students got below 400. Thus, it can be concluded that only less than 30% of the students got EPT score equal to, or more than 500, or in other word, less than 30% of students are considered as EPT-high achievers.

To help the student pass the test, the English Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto conducts preparation class which runs for about a

month that consists of 12 meeting. After 2 batch of preparation class, only 40 from 306 (13%) students are able to pass the test, which can be declared as “not satisfactory”. Some reasons are believed as the reasons for the high level of failure. First, the participants did not fully attend the class. Second, the, majority of the students has a low entry point with the score less than 450 , and the third is the amount of materials and activity that should be accomplished in very short time.

Despite the high percentage of failure in the test, EPT-high achievers do exist, although the number is still low (less than 30%). The EPT-high achievers, actually, they get the same lecturer, book, material, and also same learning process in the class, but they were able to pass the test, when most of other students were failed. Moreover, it becomes more interesting because among EPT-high achievers’, some of them are still in the early semester, or have no record in joining EPT preparation class, and even some of them are able to pass the test at the first attempt.

The fact that EPT-high achievers can pass the test when they have had same treatment in the learning process compared to those who were failed, raising a question about how they have conducted their learning strategy. It will be interesting to investigate what are their learning strategies that make them become EPT-high achievers. So, this research will be investigating the learning strategy of the EPT-high achievers’, a group of students who were able to pass the EPT test by scoring equal to or more than 500.

1.2 The Reason for Choosing the Topic

By knowing the learning strategy from the EPT-high achievers, this research can be a very good resource for the other one to prepare their upcoming EPT test. As the learning strategy is unveiled, any student can observe, and then implement it in their upcoming EPT test preparation. A student can also make a slight modification of the strategy to match their learning style or resource(s) they have. Those actions, copying the learning strategy straight away, or make a slight modification, are fine, and still shows the importance of this research as a proven guidance on how to design a learning strategy in order to pass the EPT test.

1.3 The Problem of the Research

It is clear that when it comes to learning process in class, the EPT-high achievers have had the same learning process like other students who have gotten low EPT score. By knowing that all students have gotten the same material, the difference between the EPT-high achievers and EPT-low achievers lies in the learning strategy. So, the problem of this research is EPT-high achievers' learning strategy.

1.4 The Aim of the Research

The aim of this research is to uncover and describe in detail about the EPT-high achievers' learning strategy.

1.5 The Contribution of the Research

This research was in the hope of giving benefits for some parties, including:

1. The students and reader, they will get valuable information about learning strategy to help them prepare the upcoming EPT test.

2. Lecturers, they will get valuable information about learning method related to EPT/TOEFL test preparation that can be passed along to the students.
3. English Department of UMP, as they will get information about learning strategy from the successful students, the Department can employ the strategy as one of the base to construct the curriculum for the next EPT preparation class.

1.6 Limitation of the Research

This research is conducted to only investigate the learning strategy from EPT-high achievers who attended the test in 2018, and get equal to or higher than 500.

1.7 Clarification of Terms

There are some terminologies used in this research. The description of each terms are :

1. English Proficiency Test (EPT) is a compulsory test conducts by English Education Department of UMP to measure students' ability in listening, structure and reading. The minimum score in order to pass the test is 500. The students that successfully passes the test will get a certificate which valid for two years. The certificate is also act as a graduation requirement.
2. Learning strategy is described as “an individual’s approach to a task. It includes how a person thinks and acts when planning, executing and

evaluating performance on a task and its outcomes” (Schumaker and Deshler, 2006).

