

Manuscript Publication

**Challenges Faced by EFL students on the Structure and Written Expression of
PBT TOEFL**

A Skripsi

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Abstract

TOEFL is a test to measure student's ability in understanding English. At one private university in Yogyakarta, the score of TOEFL test was used as one of the requirements before graduating from the university. This study aimed to find out the challenges in doing PBT TOEFL test. There was a question formulated in this study which was "what are the challenges faced by EFL students on the Structure and Written Expression of PBT TOEFL?". The researcher used qualitative research design. The data of this study were collected by interviewing three students of ELED at one private university in Yogyakarta who had taken ILT class and had experiences about the issue that they got low score on the Structure and Written Expression of PBT TOEFL. The researcher chose open ended interview in order to make the participants relaxed. The data from the interview were analyzed by using content analysis named coding. There were four types of analysis process such as open, analytical, axial and selective coding. The result of this study showed that there were seven challenges faced by EFL students on the Structure and Written Expression of PBT TOEFL. The challenges were understanding part of speech, fill in the blank, identifying clauses, limitation of vocabulary, understanding inversion, understanding tenses, identifying parallel structure.

***Keywords:** TOEFL, PBT TOEFL, Challenges*

Introduction

English is the most widely used language in the world. Nowadays, having English ability in speaking, listening, reading and writing has become requirements in

some universities and job fields. In testing English ability, proficiency tests are employed. There are some English proficiency tests that are used to measure ability in mastering English level. One of them is Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). TOEFL is a test to measure the level of English foreign language students of English (Phillips, 2001). There are several reasons for students taking the TOEFL test. Some students admit they take the TOEFL because they have to apply for a job and the job that they want to apply requires a TOEFL score. Another student wants to study abroad or to get scholarship when taking the TOEFL test. According to Abe, Matsuzaki, Wakita, and Koizumi (2018) the result of TOEFL is used in various situations for example to enter university and join a company. In addition, in some universities in Indonesia, TOEFL test also becomes one of the requirements for the students to graduate. Hambali (2008) stated that TOEFL has become requirements in some universities, educational institutions, and some companies in Indonesia.

There are three types of the TOEFL test. First is Paper Based Test TOEFL (PBT), second is Computer Based Test TOEFL (CBT), and third is Internet Based Test TOEFL (IBT). Based on the types of the TOEFL stated above, only one type is often used to measure student's ability in using English called PBT TOEFL. PBT TOEFL is one of the tests that are used to examine students' ability in mastering Listening, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading comprehension. Out of the three, Structure and Written Expression section is admitted by EFL students to be the most challenging section. The researcher and some students consider that Structure and Written Expression has become the most challenging part in the PBT TOEFL. According to Hambali (2008) structure and written expression is the hardest section in

the PBT TOEFL. The researcher has done a preliminary survey on the students about the most challenging part and it revealed that 98 percent of 20 students admitted the Structure and Written Expression to be the most challenging part in PBT TOEFL while in the Listening and Reading are only one.

Literature Review

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

TOEFL is the most frequently used test to measure students' ability in learning English. Phillips (2001) said that TOEFL is a test used to measure the students' level of English as a foreign language. It means that TOEFL becomes the measurement for people's mastery level of English. In the Indonesian higher education institutions, TOEFL test is one of the measurements of admission for non-native students. It is in line with Abboud and Hussein (2011) who stated that TOEFL has become a standardized test in measuring students' English proficiency of non-native English

According to Ang-Zie (2015), there are three types of TOEFL test such as PBT (Paper Based Test), CBT (Computer Based Test), and iBT (internet Based Test). The PBT TOEFL consists of three sections, named as Listening, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading. The first section is listening comprehension. It examines students' comprehension of spoken English. In the listening comprehension section, there are three parts of group test named as part A, B and C which consist of 50 question items. The second section is structure and written expression, it examines the students' comprehension of grammar, structure and formal written English. Structure and written expression has two parts of group test which are part A and B. It consists

of 40 question items. The third section is reading comprehension. English Test Service (ETS) mentioned that reading comprehension examines the students' ability in comprehending short passage in English. It has 50 multiple choice questions.

Structure and Written Expression

Structure and written expression is the second section of the PBT TOEFL. This section measures students' ability in understanding structure and grammar with the standard of English writing (Phillips, 2004). Structure and written expression has two parts. Part A consists of 15 sentences in which part of the sentences has been replaced with a blank. Each question is followed by four answer choices. Then, the test-takers must fill the blank with the correct answer. Part B consists of 25 sentences in which four words or groups of words have been underlined. Then, the students choose the underlined word or group of words that is incorrect. (Pyle & Page, 2005). There are some skills tested in the structure and written expression namely subject, verb, object, independent and dependent clause, phrases and modifier, prepositions, part of speech, verbs, regular verbs, irregular verbs, auxiliary verb, subjunctive mood, subject-verb agreement, gerund and infinitives, nouns, pronouns, adjective, and comparison (Ang-Zie, 2015).

Methodology

This research discussed about the challenges in the structure and written expression in doing PBT TOEFL at one private university in Yogyakarta. This research used qualitative research since qualitative provides detail and in-depth information about participants' experiences. Cresswell (2012) explained that

“qualitative methods explored a problem and developed a detail understanding of central phenomenon” (p.567). Hence, by using qualitative research design, the researcher got deeper information and knowledge about challenges in the structure and written expression when they did the PBT TOEFL.

In this study, the researcher chose three students at one private university in Yogyakarta. It is because the numbers of participants do not have minimum standards in qualitative research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). There were some reasons why the participants were chosen. First, the researcher knew that the participants had taken the PBT TOEFL. Second, the researcher knew that ILT course had been offered to this batch. Third, the researcher chose those three participants because they had experiences about the issue that they got low score on the Structure and Written Expression part in the PBT TOEFL. In addition, the participants of this study were two female students and one male student who faced challenges on the Structure and Written Expression in doing PBT TOEFL. The researcher used pseudonym, and it means that the participant’s identities were concealed. Then, the researcher used the name of flowers as their pseudonym such as Krisan for the first participant, Dahlia for the second participant and Mawar for the third participant.

After doing the interview, the researcher analyzed the data. To analyze the data, the researcher took some processes namely transcribing the data, member checking, and coding. After recording the voice of the participants, the first step was the researcher transcribes the audio recorded into written text. After that, the researcher did member checking to the participants in order to check the validity of the transcription. Cresswell (2012) stated that member checking is used to prove the

validity of the data. The researcher returned the transcription to the participants to check that it was in line with the participants' responses, and it could be the information that they stated in the interview which was unclear.

In order to analyze the data, coding analysis was used to capture the information in the interview process. Coding is “the process of segmenting and labeling text form descriptions and broad themes in data” (Cresswell, 2012). In the coding analysis process, there are some steps namely open coding, analytical coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The researcher recorded interview in the smartphone and transcribe the data into written text. The first step done was open coding. The researcher categorized the statement of the participants which answered the question. According to Omar, Hamid, Alias and Islam (2010), open coding is when the researcher makes a category of the statement which answers the question based on similarities and differences in a theme. The second step was the researcher continued the result of open coding to analytical coding. Gibbs (2007) said that an analytical coding is from the theme or topic of the research. The third step was the researcher did the axial coding in which the results from open coding and analytical coding were categorized. In axial coding, the researcher found relation between the classification (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). The last coding was selective coding. The researcher made a category of text data to form a theory (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Last, in this step, the researcher reported the result and made conclusion related to the study.

Finding

The researcher had gathered the data from the participants by conducting the interview. The three students at the department reported that they faced challenges in doing PBT TOEFL, and they said that the challenging section of PBT TOEFL was Structure and Written Expression section. According to the interview, the three participants said that they had been taken PBT TOEFL test, and they explained that they faced challenges in doing PBT TOEFL, especially in the Structure and Written Expression. The researcher found that there are six challenges faced by EFL students on the structure and written expression of PBT TOEFL. They were difficult in understanding part of speech, identifying clauses, limitation of vocabularies, understanding inversion, understanding tenses and identifying parallel structure.

Conclusion

This research was conducted in order to find out the challenges by EFL students in doing PBT TOEFL especially in the structure and written expression section. There is some reason why the researcher chooses the topic. First is ILT is become the subject in this department. Second is TOEFL has become requirements in this department before they graduate. Third is there are some students still faced the challenges in doing PBT TOEFL. Therefore, it was also attempted to find out the challenges in doing PBT TOEFL at one private university in Yogyakarta.

The result of this study showed that there were six challenges faced by EFL students on the structure and written expression of PBT TOEFL. They are were categorized into five major challenges namely understanding part of speech,

identifying clause, limitation of vocabulary, understanding inversion, understanding tenses, parallel structure.

Recommendation

Based on the research finding, this study also provides suggestion regarding to the challenges faced by EFL students on the Structure and Written Expression of PBT TOEFL. Thus, the recommendation is for the English teacher, students, Institution, and also other researcher who wants to conduct the same topic. **For English teachers**, the teachers who teach the ILT class are suggested to keep using the TOEFL book, because it provides detail materials in Listening, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading. In addition, in regards to the teaching strategies, teachers can employed the teaching strategies that they normally used like give simulation in TOEFL, more practice. However, maybe the teacher can give longer time to discuss about the Structure and Written Expression. **For students**, students understand that they faced challenge in doing the Structure and Written Expression that is why the students are suggested to do more practices especially on the challenges parts of speech, doing more practice on the use of tenses, identifying clause, understanding inversion, and identifying parallel structure. **For researchers**, the researcher welcomes to other researchers who want conduct the similar research. This study also can be as references for other researchers who conduct the PBT TOEFL especially in the structure and written expression section. Then, the other researcher can explore more information about the reading challenges or strategies in doing PBT TOEFL.

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