

Students' Ability in Answering Questions of Each Section in the TOEFL

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Abstract: This research is based on the needs analysis as well as to evaluate the students' ability in answering the questions in TOEFL. This is done because the score of TOEFL is used as one of the requirement to join thesis exam at English Education Department, Faculty of Teachers Training and Education University of Lancang Kuning. This research aims at analyzing the students' ability in answering TOEFL test. The method employed in this research was quantitative method with descriptive quantitative research design. The population of this research were the students at the 7th semester which were consisted of 55 students. All the population became the sample of this research. In this research, the researcher collected the data by using the TOEFL test. Then, the result of the test was analyzed by using scoring guideline in TOEFL, then the scores were categorized into some levels of ability. The result of the test showed that the scores obtained by the students were mostly under 450 and categorized into low level ability (Extremely Limited User). It can be concluded that the students' ability in taking TOEFL test is categorized into low level ability.

Keywords: Students' ability, TOEFL, Extremely Limited User

1. Introduction

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is one of the test which is set to measure English proficiency of people in which English is not their mother tongue (Philips, 2000:xiii;). Based on Educational Testing Service (1997:11) the TOEFL test stimulates certain institution or organization to require the score of TOEFL as the requirement to apply some program offered. Therefore, the score of TOEFL has been used by several universities in Indonesia, especially in Pekanbaru-Riau.

University of Lancang Kuning (hereafter UNILAK), particularly English Education Department at the Faculty of Teachers Training and Education require the score of TOEFL to the students as one of the requirements to join the thesis exam. Therefore, the students should fulfill the standard score decided by the faculty that is 450. The score obtained will describe the students' level of English proficiency.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher interested to conduct research in order to analyze the students' ability in answering questions of each section in the TOEFL test. Then, the result of this research will be used as an evaluation for English Education Department to make better improvement in the future time. Therefore, this study sees the research question can be formulated as "How is the students' ability in answering questions in each section of the TOEFL test?". The purpose of this research is to analyze the students' ability in answering questions of each section in the TOEFL test. This research is expected to give positive contribution for the lecturer, the students, the

chairperson of English Education Department, and the future researchers.

2. Definition of TOEFL

TOEFL is one of the test that is used to measure English proficiency. English proficiency here covers the ability to listen conversation or talks from native speakers, ability to apply correct sentence structure and written expression, and ability to read the English passage.

2.1 Kinds of TOEFL

Educational Testing Service (ETS) in www.ets.org state there are 2 kinds of of TOEFL: TOEFL IBT (Internet Based Test) and TOEFL PBT (Paper Based Test). In the TOEFL IBT, there are 4 sections covering Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Score of the TOEFL IBT is 0-120. Each section has score 0-30. Then, TOEFL PBT consists of 3 sections covering Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading Comprehension. Score of the TOEFL PBT is 310-677. In this research, the format of the test used is taken from TOEFL PBT. Moreover, the explanation of TOEFL PBT format and each sections in the TOEFL PBT can be seen below.

2.2 Format of the TOEFL PBT

Pyle dan Page (2002:3) state that the format of the TOEFL PBT consists of 3 sections covering Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading Comprehension with different amount of questions and time allocation between on setion and others. Further explanation can be seen in the Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1
Format of the TOEFL PBT

Sections	Times Allotment	Number of Questions
Listening Comprehension	30 minutes	50
Structure and Written Expression	25 minutes	40
Reading Comprehension	55 minutes	50
Total	110 minutes	140 questions

Section 1: Listening Comprehension

This section consists of Part A, Part B, and Part C. Part A is short conversation between 2 speakers. After conversation completed, the narrator gives question about what was said. Part B covers long conversation between 2 speakers. After the long conversation completed, the narrator ask about what was said. The last, in Part C consist of lecture or longer talk about particular subject or field. In this section, the narrator ask 3-5 questions about what was talked.

Section 2: Structure and Written Expression

This section consists of Part A and Part B. in Part A, there are some questions with 4 possible answers (A, B, C, and D). In this part, the test takers are asked to answer the correct answer from the available choice. Part B is about sentences which already underlined with A, B, C, and D as possible answers. Then, the test takers are asked to answer the wrong or incorrect answer.

Section 3: Reading Comprehension

In this section, the test takers are given the passage about certain topic. Then, the test taker are asked to answer the questions based on the information obtained from the passage.

2.3 Scoring Guideline of the TOEFL PBT

According to Philips (2002:394-395), the scoring guideline of the TOEFL PBT is based on the correct answer obtained. It can be explained as follows.

- 1) Count correct answer in each section
- 2) Convert the correct answer based on the converted table available (see at appendix)
- 3) Use formula of calculating the score

For further explanation, it can be seen in the Table 2.2.

Table 2.2
Correct Answer and its Conversion

	SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3
Correct answer	30	28	43
Converted score	51	52	58

From the Table 2.2 above, the final score can be calculated by using the formula below.

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Multiple the converted score} \times \frac{10}{3} \\ & = 51 + 52 + 58 \times \frac{10}{3} \\ & = 161 \times \frac{10}{3} = 536 \end{aligned}$$

2.4 Categories of the Final Scores of the TOFL PBT

According to ETS in the authorized website, the final scores of TOEFL PBT can be categorized based on its level. The level of the score categories can be explained as follows.

1). Below 400 (Non User)

In this score, the test takers who gained this score are not able to use English in every kind of topic, context, or situation.

2). 400-449 (Extremely Limited User)

The test takers who got this score are able to communicate in basic level with the support from their addressee.

3). 450-489 (Marginal User)

The test takers who obtained this score are considered as medium level language user. It means that, the test takers can apply simple sentence in the field, topic, context, or situation that they have already known.

4). 490-529 (Modest User)

The test takers who achieved this score are able to catch the message delivered in general. This is because there are few mistakes done by the test takers.

5). 530-559 (Competent User)

In this score, the test takers who achieved this score are categorized into competent language users. It means that, the test takers are able to use English in

spoken and written bravely in every single topic, context, or situation, eventhough there are few mistakes done by the test takers.

6). 560-609 (Good User)

In this score, the test takers who got this score are categorized into good user. It means that, the test takers are able to use English in spoken and written effectively in every single topic, context, or situation with very little errors done.

7). 610-644 (Perfect User)

In this score, the test takers who gained this score are categorized into perfect user. It means that, the test takers are able to use English correctly, effectively, and perfectly in any kinds of topic, context, or situation.

8). 645-677 (User like Native Speaker)

In this score, the test takers who obtained this score are categorized into user like native speakers. It means that, the test takers are able to use English like English native speakers perfectly.

3. Research Method

In this research, the research method was quantitative method with descriptive quantitative research design. This is because the data obtained were calculated by using scoring guideline and its formula. Then, the scores calculated were analyzed and explained decriptively.

Population in this research was the students in the fourth year at English Education Department Faculty of Teachers Training and Education UNILAK with the total amount was 55 students. Further infromation can be seen in the Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1

Population of the Fourth Year Students

No	Class	Total
1	VII A	20 Students
2	VII B	13 Students
3	VII C	22 Students
Amount		55 Students

From the total number of population above, the technique of sample election can be done. According to Arikunto (2010:134), if the population is more than 100, the sample can be taken between 10-15% atau 20-25% or more. However, if the population is less than 100, all population should be the sample of the research. Therefore, the technique or sampling procedure used in this research was

total sampling. It means that, all population was the sample of the research [5].

Procedures of this research can be seen as follows.

- 1) The students were given question and answer sheet of the TOEFL test
- 2) The students were asked to answer question of each sections in the TOEFL test
- 3) The researcher calculated and analyzed the result of the students test
- 4) The researcher concluded the result of the students test

In this research, the researcher collected the data by using tes. The tes was obtained from the TOEFL PBT. Then, the students were asked to answer question of each sections in the TOEFL test. After that, the researcher analyzed the result of the students test

The data obtained from the test were analyzed by using scoring guideline and its formula.. After calculating and analyzing the scores, the students scores were categorized into some levels as the previous explanation.

4. Findings

Based on the data collected through test, it was found that the students score was generally below 450. This score was categorized into **Extremely Limited User**. It means that, the score achieved by the students was below the standard determined by the English Education Department. Therefore, the researcher stated that the students' ability in answering question of each section in the TOEFL test was low. Furthermore, the students score can be seen at the Table below.

Table 4.1

The Students TOEFL Scores

Sample	Scores	Categories
Sampel 1	563	Good user
Sampel 2	509	Modest user
Sampel 3	493	Modest user
Sampel 4	475	Marginal user
Sampel 5	451	Marginal user
Sampel 6	449	Extremely limited user
Sampel 7	447	Extremely limited user
Sampel 8	443	Extremely limited user
Sampel 9	443	Extremely limited user
Sampel 10	437	Extremely limited user
Sampel 11	437	Extremely limited user
Sampel 12	437	Extremely limited user
Sampel 13	433	Extremely limited user
Sampel 14	433	Extremely limited user
Sampel 15	427	Extremely limited user
Sampel 16	423	Extremely limited user
Sampel 17	423	Extremely limited user
Sampel 18	421	Extremely limited user

Sampel 19	420	Extremely limited user
Sampel 20	417	Extremely limited user
Sampel 21	413	Extremely limited user
Sampel 22	413	Extremely limited user
Sampel 23	411	Extremely limited user
Sampel 24	410	Extremely limited user
Sampel 25	409	Extremely limited user
Sampel 26	408	Extremely limited user
Sampel 27	407	Extremely limited user
Sampel 28	403	Extremely limited user
Sampel 29	403	Extremely limited user
Sampel 30	403	Extremely limited user
Sampel 31	401	Extremely limited user
Sampel 32	400	Extremely limited user
Sampel 33	400	Extremely limited user
Sampel 34	400	Extremely limited user
Sampel 35	399	Non user
Sampel 36	398	Non user
Sampel 37	398	Non user
Sampel 38	395	Non user
Sampel 39	393	Non user
Sampel 40	393	Non user
Sampel 41	385	Non user
Sampel 42	380	Non user
Sampel 43	378	Non user
Sampel 44	377	Non user
Sampel 45	377	Non user
Sampel 46	373	Non user
Sampel 47	369	Non user
Sampel 48	364	Non user
Sampel 49	363	Non user
Sampel 50	360	Non user
Sampel 51	350	Non user
Sampel 52	350	Non user
Sampel 53	344	Non user
Sampel 54	340	Non user
Sampel 55	335	Non user

Based on the Table 4.1 above, it can be seen that from 55 samples took the TOEFL test only 5 students who achieved the score above 450, they are: sample 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Sample 1 got the score 563 and it was categorized into **Good User**. Sample 2 obtained the score 509 and it was categorized into **Modest User**. Sample 3 gained the score 493 and it was categorized into **Modest User**. Sample 4 achieved the score 475 and it was categorized into **Marginal User**. And, sample 5 got the score 451, it was categorized into **Marginal User**. Moreover, there were 29 students who obtained the score 400-449 (**Extremely Limited User**) and 21 students gained the score below 400 (**Non User**).

5. Discussion

Based on the findings of this research, it can be stated that most the students' ability in answering questions of each section in the TOEFL is low. It leads them to have low score even under the standard passing score determined by the English Education Department. This findings are in line with the ETS which states that the score in the

Extremely Limited User category are categorized into low level ability.

This is because the students are only able to communicate in basic level with the support from their addressee.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings and the research question made, this research can be concluded that the students' ability in answering questions of each section in the TOEFL is low. This is because the scores that the students obtained are categorized into **Extremely Limited User**. It means that the students are only able to use English with very limited capability.

7. Suggestion

From the above conclusion, there are some suggestion made. The suggestion are as follows.

- The chairperson of English Education Department can provide an extra training or preparation to ease students in answering the questions in the TOEFL test.
- The lecturer or instructor can give additional material such as tips or strategies in answering the questions in the TOEFL test.
- The students are suggested to read, learn, and practice in answering the questions in the TOEFL test from various sources.

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