



VISION JOURNAL

<http://jurnaltarbiyah.uinsu.ac.id/vision>

E-ISSN 2745-7982



IS TOEFL SUBJECT NECESSARY FOR ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM? LECTURERS' PERSPECTIVE

Benni Ichsanda Rahman Hz

Email: benni.ichsanda@uinsu.ac.id

Department of English Education, State Islamic University of North Sumatera Medan

Keywords	Abstract
<i>Keywords: TOEFL, perspective, test, assessment</i>	<p>This study attempts to investigate the lecturer's perspective, whether TOEFL subject is necessary for English education study program or not. This study is a case study approach that is naturally qualitative. The study involved three lecturers of English Education Study Program as participants.. This study was conducted at one State University on North Sumatera, Indonesia, majoring in English Education. The participants were interviewed through interview via telephone. The lecturers were asked and interviewed about their opinions about the existence and the implementation of TOEFL subjects in the study program. The data were analyzed by using percentage calculation. After the participants answered the interview, the data were then classified according to its origin. The respondents have different perspective on this study. Two respondents stated that TOEFL should not be included as a subject to be studied by the English Education students in case TOEFL is tips and trick skill based, not knowledge base. In contrary, one of the respondent stated that TOEFL is required to be added to the curriculum, in case the students have not understood all aspects in reading which then TOEFL should be learned by students in specific credit subject.</p>

Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, 1st Floor
Jalan Willem Iskandar Psr V Medan, 20731
Telp. 061- 6622925 – Fax. 061 – 6615685

INTRODUCTION

TOEFL which is an acronym for Test of English as a Foreign Language, is one of the measuring tools to measure each individual's English proficiency. TOEFL however, aims to measure the ability of non-native speakers of English to use and understand English as it is spoken, written and heard in academic setting (Alderson, 2009).

The history of TOEFL was began at 1961 (Alderson, 2009). Since 1965, TOEFL has been administered and designed by Educational Testing Service (ETS), the institution that administers and designs the assessments. The TOEFL test was created by an American commission in 1962 as a foreign language on English testing. TOEFL was created by Dr. Charles A. Ferguson, a linguistics professor at Stanford University's Center for Applied Linguistics, under the auspices of Stanford University's Center for Applied Linguistics. The Modern Language Association initially used the TOEFL test in 1964, with funding from the Ford Foundation and the Danforth Foundation.

Moreover, The TOEFL is a standardized test that assesses non-native English speakers' English abilities. In the early years of 1962, an American Council established this exam for the goal of assessing English as a foreign language (Sulistyo, 2009). Since its conception, TOEFL has developed into many variations because to differing ideas on the nature of language (Ananda, 2016).

The variation of TOEFL test has developed periodically. Nowadays, there are three kinds of TOEFL: Paper Based Test, Computer Based Test, and Internet Based Test. The first is Paper Based Test (PBT). PBT is kind of TOEFL that being focused in this study. Listening, structure and written expression, and reading are the three elements of the paper-based test (Ismail & Wahyuni, 2018). The Test of Written English (TWE) is used at several colleges to assess writing abilities, although it is still uncommon in Indonesia (Ismail & Wahyuni, 2018). The computer-based and internet-based examinations, on the other hand, offer more complex test instructions since they include all skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Ismail & Wahyuni, 2018). In addition, in these two forms of TOEFL examinations, integrated teaching models are used (Ismail & Wahyuni, 2018).

Furthermore, According to Silviyanti et al (2014), who made the TOEFL score a primary requirement, standardization of English competence is tested in phases by a TOEFL score. According to Silviyanti et al (2017), students who will graduate must pass the TOEFL prediction exam with a score of 450. This policy applies to all students, regardless of their major. Because they are majoring in English, students in the English Department at the Teacher

Training Faculty should get a better score. Furthermore, students in Indonesia must have a minimum TOEFL score of 475. This requirement has been in place for students since 2010. Because the school wants students to be prepared to face a globalized world where English is the most generally spoken language and technical complexity is rising by the day, students are required to be fluent in English (Silviyanti, et. el, 2020).

In the meantime, the researchers in this study are involved in an English language education study program. In this study program, during their studies, students must take 74 courses, include English language courses, teaching methodology courses, as well as religious-based courses (as the university is a religion-based university). However, even though the study program focuses on English language study, TOEFL is not included in the curriculum as a subject that must be taken by students. TOEFL is only used as a test instrument at the end of the study which is used to measure the English language skills of the students of this study program. The components in the TOEFL exam are taught indirectly and not binding in a series of different courses, where listening comprehension is learnt in basic listening, intermediate listening, and advanced listening courses. The components of structure and written expression are taught indirectly in the basic structure, intermediate structure, and advanced structure courses. Meanwhile, the reading comprehension component is also taught in intensive reading, extensive reading, and advanced reading courses.

Meanwhile, based on data from the language development center at the faculty, the average TOEFL prediction test score of students of this study program in the last three test periods is shown in the table below:

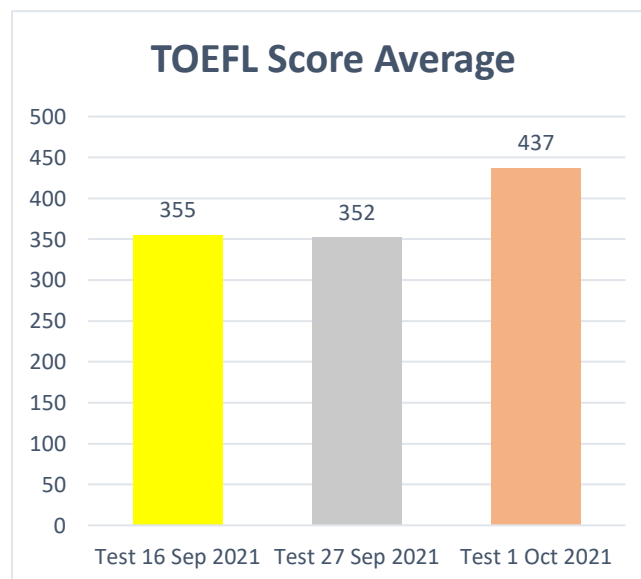


Figure 1. Students' TOEFL Score Average

Based on the data, it can be concluded that the TOEFL test ability of students can be said to be not too high, considering that these students are students of the English language education study program. It is expected that the average student should be able to score above 500. But in reality, only a few students are able to score above 500.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether TOEFL must be included in the curriculum of the English language education study program, as a subject that must be taught during the study period, based on the lecturers' point of view.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a case study approach that is naturally qualitative. The study involved the lecturers of English Education Study Program. This study was conducted at one State University on North Sumatera, Indonesia, majoring in English Education. The participants were interviewed through interview via telephone. The lecturers were asked and interviewed about their opinions about the existence and the implementation of TOEFL subjects in the study program.

The interview was conducted to assemble the data related to participants' opinion and experiences in teaching TOEFL Subject. In the intervening time, the observation was handled to achieve the data concerning lecturers' participation in teaching and learning activities on their own subjects, Listening, Structure, and Reading. The data collected in this study then were inspected out by using two methods; statistical count for quantitative data related lecturers' experiences and involvement in teaching their own subjects, and particular substances analysis for qualitative data related to lecturers' perspective on the existence of TOEFL Subject.

Participants

Three lecturers from one university participated. Each of the participants are teaching Listening, Structure, and Reading Subjects. All of the participants are very experienced on their own subject fields.

Table 1. Participants

No	Initial	Subject of Teaching
1	DSA	Listening
2	MRS	Structure
3	ESD	Reading

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by using percentage calculation. After the participants answered the interview, the data were then classified according to its origin. The data was converted into chart and table. The data then being explained and elaborated.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Did the lecturers teach the materials that are related to TOEFL?

The skills or aspects that being tested on TOEFL are related to the subjects the respondents teach. In TOEFL Listening section, there are short conversation, long conversation, and mini talk. In TOEFL Structure section, there are test about grammar, tenses, and vocabulary. Moreover, in TOEFL reading comprehension, the test includes topic of the paragraph, stated detailed questions, unstated detailed questions, synonym, and others.

Related to those materials, the listening lecturer stated that she did not include short conversation, long conversation, and mini talk on her teaching. She taught listening generally in wider context, and also taught the students how to teach listening. Furthermore, the structure lecturer explained that she taught structure subjects without relate it to any kind of TOEFL Structure and Written Expression Test. She did not specify her materials into TOEFL. In addition, the reading lecturers included some materials on TOEFL reading comprehension test into her teaching materials. The materials which are included in TOEFL reading comprehension session such as topic of sentences, main ideas and supporting paragraph, and synonym in sentences, were involved in her teaching materials although in indirect ways. In short, the involvement of TOEFL materials they taught is explained in chart below.

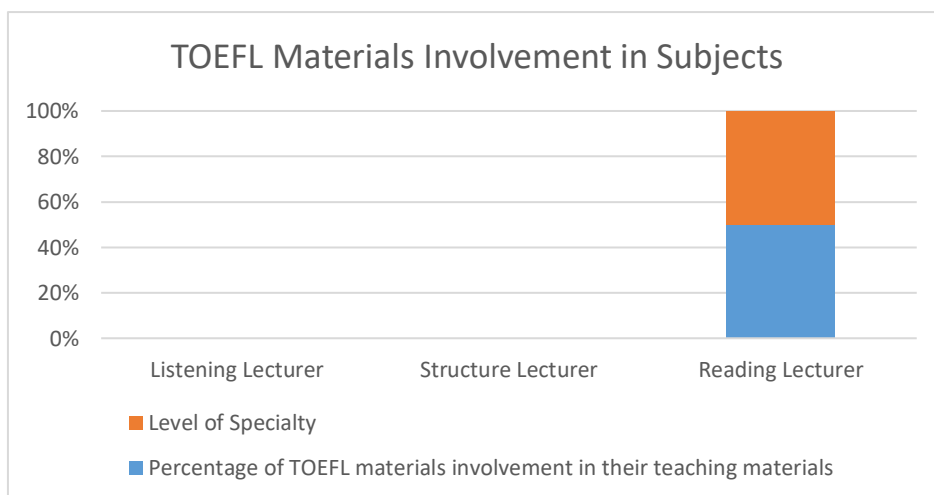


Figure 2. TOEFL Materials Involvement in Subjects

Is TOEFL Subject necessary for English Education Study Program?

For this matter, the three respondents had different opinions. The table below shows the perspectives of the lecturers.

Table 2. Participants' Responses

Respondent Number	Initial	Subject of Teaching	Necessary/Not
1	DSA	Listening	Necessary
N	MRS	Structure	Necessary
3	ESD	Reading	Not Necessary

Respondent Number 1: Teaching Subject: Listening

This lecturer did not include any TOEFL teaching materials in her subject of teaching and her teaching-learning process. The sub-category of test in listening: short conversation, long conversation, and mini talk are not even discussed during her teaching in ruining semester. Generally, what she teaches is in context “what is listening” and “how to teach listening” in case her students are the students of English Education Department who will be the English teachers.

“TOEFL I think is not necessary to be added to the curriculum as a specific subject for a semester. TOEFL is only an instrument test for students as their requirement to pass the study. It is same like us when we were in magister degree study. On our magister degree level, we even did not have any TOEFL subject, but the university made this test as the requirement for passing the study. In my opinion, in bachelor degree level, TOEFL is only needed to be added as additional study. It can be taught in kind of workshop or training. When I had my bachelor degree back in one decade, we had TOEFL subject in our credits. But I think it was not really effective. We were taught how to answer the questions. But it was more like a training in a special short course. In the end of our study, we were required to have a TOEFL test. At that time (on my period of test), there were only two students passed the minimum score. In the next period of test, there were less than ten students who passed the minimum score. So the TOEFL subject did not bring any benefits to us, although we had studied it for one semester. in addition, I think TOEFL subject should be taught by someone who had achieved 600 score or above to make it more effective to be taught to the students.”

Respondent Number 2: Teaching Subject: Structure

This lecturer did not include any TOEFL structure teaching materials in her subject of teaching and her teaching-learning process. The sub-category of test in structure was not taught in specific to TOEFL. She taught the structure materials for general purposes, without any

specification to TOEFL. Generally, what she teaches is in context “what is listening” and “how to teach listening” in case her students are the students of English Education Department who will be the English teachers.

“I did not include ‘findings unsuitable word in sentences’ in my teaching. Previously, several years ago, TOEFL Subject was included in our curriculum, but currently it is not applied. Let me explain the history in short. When we were being accredited couple years ago, the assessor stated that TOEFL cannot be included as a subject, in case TOEFL is not a subject to be taught in English Education study program. Moreover, it is same like what forum of University English Lecturers under Religion Affairs claimed, that TOEFL should not be included into curriculum.”

“Furthermore, according to me, TOEFL is not a knowledge. TOEFL is a tips and trick skill-based. You can achieve higher score in TOEFL if you know the tips and the fast tricks. People who are not studying English Education, can achieve higher score than English Education students, if they know the tricks. In contrary, what being taught for English Education study program is not how to pass TOEFL test. Students are taught how to teach English to students. TOEFL is only a standardization of English proficiency. So if the students want to achieve high score in TOEFL, they have to study outside or train personally.”

Respondent Number 3: Teaching Subject: Reading

This lecturer included some TOEFL reading comprehension teaching materials in her subject of teaching and her teaching-learning process. The sub-category of test in reading comprehension such as topic of the paragraph, main idea, and supporting paragraph were taught generally, but not in specific to TOEFL test. She taught the reading materials for general purposes, without any specification to TOEFL. Even, she teaches “main ideas” in paragraph by using critical reading approach: cognitive strategy. But, in session of quiz or assessment, she made the evaluation instrument that its’ form similar to reading TOEFL test.

“I think TOEFL is needed to be added to the curriculum. The materials of reading should not be taught only in reading subject. It should be also taught in TOEFL subject, in order to make student understand more comprehensively.”

CONCLUSION

The respondents have different perspective on this study. Two respondents stated that TOEFL should not be included as a subject to be studied by the English Education students in case TOEFL is tips and trick skill based, not knowledge base. In contrary, one of the respondent stated that TOEFL is required to be added to the curriculum, in case the students have not understood all aspects in reading. Therefore TOEFL should be learned by students in specific credit subject.

In case the respondents on this study are only three, the perspective cannot be set as the criterion. Further study which investigates another perspective from another lecturers are needed to inquire deepest explanation.

REFERENCES

Alderson, J. C. (2009). Test review: Test of English as a foreign language™: Internet-based test (TOEFL iBT®). *Language Testing*, 26 (4), 621-631.

Ananda, R. (2016). Problems with section two ITP TOEFL test. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 3(1), 35-49.

Ismail, N. M., & Wahyuni, S. (2018). Peer-Discussion in TOEFL preparation class. *IJEE (Indonesian Journal of English Education)*, 4(1), 63-70.

Silviyanti, T. M. (2014). Looking into EFL students' perceptions in listening by using English movie videos on YouTube. *Studies in English language and Education*, 1(1), 42-58.

Silviyanti, T. M., Samad, I. A., & Rahmadhani, R. (2017, November). The students' problems in listening to paper-based TOEFL test. In *National Conference on Teachers' Professional Conference (Vol. 1, pp. 198-205)*.

Silviyanti, T. M., Ramadhani, R., & Samad, I. A. (2020). EFL students' strategies in answering the Listening Section of the Longman TOEFL. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 7(1), 237-246.

Sulistyo, G. H. (2009). TOEFL in a brief historical overview from PBT to IBT. *Bahasa dan Seni*, 37(2), 116-127