



Investigating The Fifth Semester Student's Ability Of STMIK Pelita Nusantara In Toefl

Ersika Puspita Dani

Program Studi Teknik Informatika STMIK Pelita Nusantara, Jl. Iskandar Muda No. 1 Medan, Sumatera Utara 20154, Indonesia

Email: ersikapuspitadani@gmail.com

Abstract- The objectives of this descriptive qualitative study were (1) to find out the student's ability in TOEFL and (2) to identify the TOEFL sub skills which were required in the improvement. Twenty three students of class MI V Regular and Executive Class in STMIK Pelita Nusantara Lubuk Pakam were conducted as participants. To examine students' TOEFL scores, a paper-based TOEFL test was used. The test scores were used to find out the students' ability at the beginning of the study. Then, the results were analyzed to identify the students' problem in sub-skills of TOEFL. The data were identified and sub-skill was identified based on Phillips (2003). The findings of the study showed that: (1) the fifth semester students' ability of STMIK Pelita Nusantara in doing TOEFL test is at Poor level with the most dominant score is below 400, consists of 21 students in that level with 91.30%. Then, there were only a few students, 2 persons with the percentage 8.69%. (2) the fifth semester students' of STMIK Pelita Nusantara Nusantara is considered as the most difficult for them with the average of 5.28 is the listening, while reading section is considered as the easiest one for the fifth semester students of STMIK Pelita Nusantara, with the average of 6.94. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that overall all of the students in this study required further training to improve their TOEFL scores; therefore, it recommended the development of module and training plans according to the outcomes of this analysis study.

Keywords: Student's Ability, TOEFL, Tes

1. INTRODUCTION

TOEFL test is a dominant type of international language test which is designed to measure language abilities. It is so important for EFL learners to achieve and to pass this test with the best score.

Informatics Engineering of STMIK Pelita Nusantara also provide TOEFL course in the fifth semester. The course prepares them in taking TOEFL test. By doing that, the students will be able to familiarize themselves with TOEFL test, identify their language skill tested in a paper based TOEFL test which includes Listening Comprehension, Structure and Writing Expression, and reading Comprehension.

However, the fact does not occur that way. Based on the writer's observation during her teaching in STMIK Pelita Nusantara last year, many students have problems and feel unfamiliar in doing the TOEFL test. When the students are asked to do the TOEFL test, they are still confused how to answer the questions. They face the difficulties in the three part of TOEFL.

Yet, the most dominant is in the Listening Comprehension Section, it may be caused by question given from CD/ DVD. Therefore, they fail to get the best score in the test. It is proved that TOEFL test is so difficult.

As previously phenomenon mentioned, it becomes better and efficient if before taking the TOEFL test the students must have more knowledge and skills to pass the test by taking TOEFL course. There were so many previous studies, such as the issues of items difficulty [1] some factors which is affecting the performance [2]–[4], the test taking strategies [5] the relationship between a certain variable and TOEFL performance [5], [6]

Therefore, they can fill this gap by presenting some information about the students' ability and the kinds of sub-skills that will be taken into in the development of module process and the development of teaching strategies prior to the delivery of the TOEFL training program.

This study is part of study involving a three year long project where its first year is aimed at collecting information or data with the students' ability. The second and third year are used to implementation; seek to carry out an intensive training program incorporating teaching strategies that are of students' interest and the module designed according to the results of this current analysis work. The researcher argues that effective training should be accompanied by a well-developed module and effective teaching strategies. Through this TOEFL course in the next semester, the students are expected to improve their TOEFL scores significantly[7].

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher formulates the problems as in the following: (1) How is the fifth semester students' ability of STMIK Pelita Nusantara in TOEFL? (2) What sub-skills (reading, listening, and grammar) are commonly required in TOEFL test?[8][9]



2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study conducted STMIK Pelita Nusantara from September 2018 to January 2019. In taking the data, the researcher chose a sample by using random sampling technique and MI Regular and Executive Class Sore was chosen as a sample of this study. The data was identified and analyzed by measuring the students' ability in conducting TOEFL test. To facilitate this process, the researcher adopted the sub-skills' name(s) formulated by Phillips (2003). Then, the participants' test results were analyzed to identify the sub-skills that the students found to be problematic. For this reason, the percentage of correct and incorrect answers from each item will be displayed to identify the total number of participants who could get it correct or wrong[8], [10].

2.1. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

a. Overview of a Paper Based TOEFL

According to Phillips (2001), the TOEFL test has several parts such as Listening Comprehension section, Structure Comprehension section and Reading Comprehension section. It can be completed in two hours.

Firstly, Listening comprehension section is the first skill tested in a paper-based TOEFL. In this case, it is used to measure the participant's ability in understanding spoken English in academic setting. The participants must listen the recorder audio materials and answer the questions relates to they heard. Besides that, it consists of three kinds of listening; a short conversation or dialogue, a long conversation/ dialogue, and a short lecture/ talk). In the other hand, the participants must answer 50 multiple-test items within 30-40 minutes.

Secondly, it is structure and written expression. In this part, it measures the recognition of correct and incorrect sentence structure in standard written English. Then, the participants must choose the correct answer choice to produce a grammatically correct sentence by reading a sentence. Then, in written expression part, they must select the underlined word or phrase that is grammatically incorrect. And to complete this section, they must answer 40 multiple-test items within 25 minutes.

And finally, the last skill is reading section which contains 50 multiple-test items in 55 minutes. This section measures the student's ability in understanding academic reading passages in English. The topic and complexity of the passages are similar to what is typical of academic textbooks. The participants must read various sections on academic subjects and answer questions about each section. The questions ask about information that is stated in or implied in the passage, and about the meaning of specific words used in the passage.

According to ETS (2015b) stated that the test results of TOEFL test should be reported in numeric scores. In this case, a score gets 31 to 68, meanwhile gets 31 to 67 for reading score. Finally, it will get 310 (the lowest possible score) to 677 (the highest score).

TOEFL test is very important for EFL students. Every university has to introduce the strategies of test preparation to help them in achieving their best score. [11] stated that there were six strategies in taking TOEFL test especially for multiple-choice comprehension questions. (1) The general approaches in completing the TOEFL comprehension tests, such as reading the passages first or the multiple-choice questions first, (2) The identification of the important information by the discourse structure. In this part, the students must explore their knowledge in analyzing how the text was organized, (3) The vocabulary/ sentence in context approaches when the participants made conclusions about the unknown vocabulary words or sentences from the semantic or syntactic clues in context. (4) The multiple choice test management strategies involved how the participants answered the comprehension questions by using clues given by the questions or the options, (5) The using of background knowledge involved the using of background knowledge about content in the passage as the basis of comprehension and selection of the answers.

In summary, the students are facing difficulties in copying and understanding techniques and strategies from the TOEFL guide book. The students need to come out with their own strategies concerning the preparation for their final test. The strategies can be very various, from pre-test trial, placement test, taking notes from their teacher advice, or even come out with their own understanding of strategies. Therefore, understanding the students' ability is so important to do so that the students can pass in TOEFL test.

b. Needs Analysis

Identifying a learning area or sub-skill of the student is the important thing done by a teacher/ lecturer. It will give much information in developing a training module, technique, and methods of learning in the upcoming intensive

program. Therefore, teacher or lecturer must do the needs analysis or needs assessment in defining as activities performed aimed to identify areas that require improvement. Long (2015: 1) stated that a careful needs analysis is important to be done as it is “the prerequisite for effective course design in the context of foreign and second language learning”. In other words, teaching a language without knowing students’ learning need will result in inefficient outcome. Then, needs analysis is a good way in identifying reliable information about what students need to learn. In this case, teacher/ lecturer must develop curriculum in doing the process of needs analysis because need analysis can collect valid information about their learners’ learning need (Grier (2005)).

Besides that, Brown (1995) also stated that needs analysis is an integral part of a language education program and it plays a crucial role as it determines the success of this language program implementation. It is performed in order to find the learning objectives, the design of learning materials and the planning of teaching strategies. The learning activities carried out should be then evaluated for measuring their effectiveness. In the other words, needs analysis is a process that has to be undertaken to ascertain that if learners can meet their learning needs and improve language learning performance.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

After analyzing TOEFL test results of the fifth students’ of STMIK Pelita Nusantara, it is prior to the intensive preparation program. It is caused by the result indicated still far below the desired level. It can be seen in this table below.

Table 1. Student’s TOEFL Scores

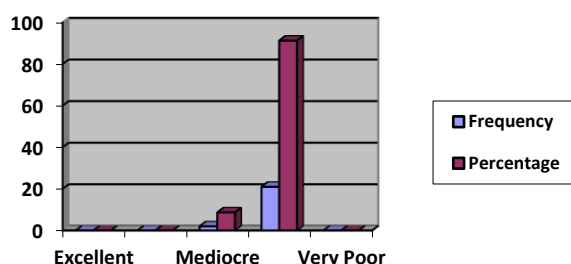
No	Student's Initials	Raw Score			TS
		L	S	R	
1	ASAS	12	11	9	333
2	APTS	10	15	20	373
3	CAS	13	15	30	410
4	CMS	11	12	12	343
5	DHH	13	10	14	350
6	DUH	11	10	13	340
7	FG	14	15	12	363
8	IR	10	11	10	326
9	IAP	9	13	15	347
10	KE	8	9	13	323
11	LMH	13	12	13	353
12	MS	9	16	15	357
13	PM	14	11	12	350
14	PHP	13	11	19	370
15	PR	12	10	15	350
16	RM	9	14	19	363
17	RFN	10	9	13	330
18	RS	10	15	17	363
19	SKD	10	14	13	347
20	SU	9	6	16	323
21	TBB	13	5	12	306
22	VA	16	14	15	376
23	VY	15	18	20	403
TOTAL		264	276	347	
AVERAGE		5.28	6.9	6.94	Level: Poor

Based on the results above, the writer make a classification relates to students’ ability in completing TOEFL test into five categories. It will present in table 4.2 below.

Table 2. The Classification of the Students' Scores

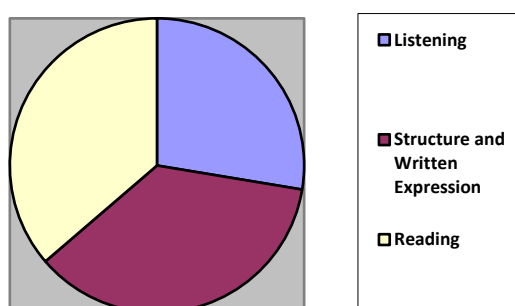
No.	Score	FQ	%	Ability
1	551– 670	0	0 %	Excellent
2	501 – 550	0	0 %	Good
3	401 – 500	2	8.69 %	Mediocre
4	311 – 400	21	91.30 %	Poor
5	223 – 310	0	0 %	Very poor

The percentage of the students' score classification above can be presented in a graph, as follow:

**Graph 1.** The Classification of Students' Ability in Competing TOEFL Test

Based on the two tables and a graph above, we can see that the most dominant score is below 400, and there are 21 students in that level with 91.30%. The data also showed that there were only a few students, 2 persons with the percentage 8.69% who could achieve the scores of equal or above 400 but still below 450. Overall, the findings of this study indicate that the student's ability of fifth semester in STMIK Pelita Nusantara is still at poor level.

Besides that, it can be analyzed that the student's ability in TOEFL can be classified based on the sub-skills as mentioned in the instrument. It can be presented in the graph below.

**Graph 2.** The Sub-skills Classification of the Students' Ability in TOEFL Test

Based on the graph above and related to the result of students' score in table 4.2 above, it can be seen clearly that the fifth students' of STMIK Pelita Nusantara Nusantara is considered as the most difficult for them with the average of 5.28 is the listening. The next is the structure and written expression section, with the average of 6.9, while reading section is considered as the easiest one for the fifth semester students of STMIK Pelita Nusantara, with the average of 6.94.

Based on the presentation above, we can see that the fifth semester students' ability of STMIK Pelita Nusantara in doing TOEFL test is at Poor level with the most dominant score is below 400, consists of 21 students in that level with 91.30%. This case can be proved that their English was still far below the desired level. In fact, there are so many companies and government offices in our country usually set a minimum score, 450. This is inversely proportional to the



purpose of work because having a score will not be considered at all in the work. In addition, the poor score will give difficulties for them to be able work with companies overseas or when they want to continue their education abroad. The data also showed that there were only a few students, 2 persons with the percentage 8.69% who could achieve the scores of equal or above 400 but still below 450.

Besides that, the fifth semester students' of STMIK Pelita Nusantara Nusantara is considered as the most difficult for them with the average of 5.28 is the listening, while reading section is considered as the easiest one for the fifth semester students of STMIK Pelita Nusantara, with the average of 6.94. Overall, the findings of this study indicate that the student's ability of fifth semester in STMIK Pelita Nusantara is still at low level.

Therefore, it is very important to get more information about students' ability in conducting TOEFL test. Besides that, it is expected to be able to carry out an intensive training program that combines teaching strategies which is attractive and interactive, and design modules that are effective with the results of the current analytical work. By that way, it is expected, they can improve their TOEFL score significantly.

4. CONCLUSION

After finding the result of the study, it comes to the conclusions that can be seen that: (1) The ability of the fifth semester students of STMIK Pelita Nusantara in conducting TOEFL test is at Poor level with the most dominant score is below 400, consists of 21 students in that level with 91.30%. Then, there are only a few students, 2 persons with the percentage 8.69% who could achieve the scores of equal or above 400 but still below 450, and (2) The fifth semester students' of STMIK Pelita Nusantara Nusantara is considered as the most difficult for them with the average of 5.28 is the listening, while reading section is considered as the easiest one for the fifth semester students of STMIK Pelita Nusantara, with the average of 6.94.

Beside that, looking at the result of this study about TOEFL test, the writer would like to give some suggestions as follows: In teaching TOEFL test, lecturer should work hard in giving more explanation about the rules, giving forms of grammar in TOEFL, and doing more exercises in listening and reading and so on to the students. Therefore, students can answer the best one in conducting TOEFL test.

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