

Student's perception of the TOEFL preparation course proposal team

Novita Nurdiana¹, Gede Eka Putrawan², Rafista Deviyanti³, Khairun Nisa⁴

English Education Study Program, University of Lampung^{1,2,3,4}

Correspondence: novita.nurdiana@fkip.unila.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to explore students' perceptions about the TOEFL preparation class that has been held by the Language Center of the University of Lampung within a year, which later the results of this research can be used as material for future evaluations towards achieving better quality. This research is a type of qualitative research. In addition, observations and questionnaires will also be distributed to support interviews so that the data obtained are more valid. The subjects in this study were 11 students from various faculties who took the TOEFL class preparation course. Qualitative data related to student perceptions will be analyzed manually based on Descriptive and In-Vivo coding. As a result, from what the participants knew about the TOEFL class is they know it very well. The facilities provided are still lacking, the material provided was well packaged and quite easy to understand, the method used was still too simple and unattractive, the study schedule could be better arranged and learning could start on time. In this study, there were 5 students from various faculties who were involved as participants. Each of the students and students were interviewed. The questions asked cover several topics, namely what they know about the TOEFL class at the Lampung University language lab, the facilities provided, the material being taught, the teaching techniques used and the time management applied.

Keywords: *TOEFL preparation, course, student's perception*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization, the competition to get a decent job is quite difficult. Universities face a significant challenge in producing quality graduates who will be able to compete in an increasingly competitive global environment. According to the Directorate General of Learning and Student Affairs of the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia (2015), education must be able to cope with the growth of free market flows, particularly in terms of job acquisition. One of the job acquisition that we mostly find is TOEFL certificate. TOEFL is regarded by some as a useful tool for assessing English proficiency in writing and orally.

TOEFL (Test of English As Foreign Language) is a test intended for people who do not use English as their mother tongue. Generally, this test is used as one of the prerequisites for someone who wants to continue their study abroad or work in a country that uses English as the language for daily communication. This test was developed and issued by ETS (Educational Testing Service) based in New Jersey, USA. This test was first introduced in 1963. Currently there are 3 types of TOEFL tests issued by ETS namely TOEFL PBT (Paper Based Test), TOEFL CBT (Computer Based Test) and TOEFL IBT (Internet Based Test). Of the three types of TOEFL, the most frequently used are TOEFL PBT and IBT.

Paper Based Test (PBT) is a form of TOEFL Test that uses an answer sheet in the form of paper. This is the first test system issued by ETS. In PBT the tests carried out include Listening, Structure and Reading

while Computer-based Test (CBT) is one that does not require the use of paper. All tests are run on a computer with special software. This testing system first appeared in 1998. Listening, structure, reading, and writing are among the skills assessed. The test with the iBT system is the most popular and widely used test. This test system is also computer-based, it's just that this test is connected to the internet network, thus, the test is carried out online. This test system began to be published and used in 2005, but was only used in Indonesia in 2006. The skills tested include reading, listening, writing and speaking. Although this system is widely used, there are still some countries that use the PBT system.

This TOEFL preparation course intends to assist students in achieving a TOEFL ITP (Institutional Testing Program) score of 450, which is required for graduation at the University of Lampung. This TOEFL preparation course has been running for a year. However, based on the author's own experience while studying at the University of Lampung, many students are unable to acquire the required TOEFL score. Ma and Cheng (2015) investigated Chinese students' perceptions of TOEFL preparation classes at Canadian universities. From the results of the study, it is known that the quality of the TOEFL preparation class is determined by the teaching instructors, the content / material delivered, as well as the teaching instructions used in the classroom. Furthermore, the TOEFL preparation class is beneficial in terms of efficiency, TOEFL reorientation, and English language growth.

Considering that there has never been a comprehensive study of student perceptions of the implementation of TOEFL preparation classes in the University of Lampung area, this research is significant because the findings can be used as a guideline for evaluating weak points and bolstering strengths that the University of Lampung's language hall can use in the implementation of future TOEFL preparation classes. In addition, this research is different from previous studies which only discussed how students' perceptions related to the TOEFL preparation class in this study will also discuss what obstacles might arise in facing the TOEFL test and how to overcome them.

II. METHODS

This research used a qualitative method. McLaughlin, Robert & Eric (2012) define qualitative research as an approach that uses methodologies designed to provide a rich, contextualized picture of an educational or social phenomenon.

Participants

The subjects in this study were 11 students from various faculties who took the TOEFL class preparation course.

Instruments

The data in this study were collected using 3 instruments, namely questionnaire, interview protocol, and observation. This research is planned with the several stages.

The following stages were follows:

1. The research preparation stage consists of several stages such as arranging the instrument, instrument analysis, and instrument used.
2. The researcher conducts the implementation stage. The implementation stage is a qualitative data. First is an interview (recorder) and sup, second is transcribing, third is coding or analysis, fourth is findings (qualitative).

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data in this study was grouped into 4 discussions: Analysis of student perceptions of the weaknesses of the TOEFL preparation class, analysis of student perceptions of the strengths of the TOEFL preparation class, analysis of student perceptions of the difficulties/obstacles faced, and analysis of student perceptions of the solutions offered (interview).

Data Interview Analysis

Qualitative data related to student perceptions will be analyzed manually based on Descriptive and In-Vivo coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldana, 2009). According to Saldana (2009) Descriptive coding is a summary or essence of a statement, while In-Vivo is a direct quote from a statement.

Dissemination of Research Results

Dissemination of research results was carried out with several media. The first is to organize a seminar on the results of this research by inviting all lecturers of the English Education Study Program. The second is submitting research reports to related units such as the English Language Education Study Program, the Department of Language and Arts Education, the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, the Institute for Research and Community Service at the University of Lampung, and the Higher Education. The third is to present articles based on the results of this research in international seminars, and the last is to send manuscripts to be published in international journals.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Result

In this study, there were 5 students from various faculties who were involved as participants (research subjects). They consist of 4 female students and 1 student who has taken the TOEFL class organized by the language laboratory of the University of Lampung. The students and students are Eka (Faculty of Agriculture), Dona (Faculty of Law), Rizky (FKIP), Layla (FISIP) and Dauri (Faculty of Engineering). Each of these students were interviewed quite in depth to obtain the required information. Several questions related to the TOEFL class held at the language laboratory of the University of Lampung were asked to each of them. The questions asked cover several topics, namely what they know about the TOEFL class at the Lampung University language lab, the facilities provided, the materials taught, the teaching techniques used and the time management applied. Each subject will be described as follows:

A. What do they know about the TOEFL course at the Language Center of the University of Lampung

From the five students and college students who were interviewed, they had almost the same answers regarding what they knew about the TOEFL class. The first participant, on behalf of Eka from the faculty of agriculture, stated that the TOEFL class at the language center was a tutoring place for students who did not pass the TOEFL test 3 times. Dona, who is the second participant from the law faculty, stated that the TOEFL class is a class that is attended by students who take the TOEFL test within one week in 6 meetings. Dauri from the faculty of engineering also stated the same thing, who explained that the TOEFL class organized by the Language Center of the University of Lampung was a class that was attended by students who took TOEFL lessons because they failed the TOEFL test which was carried out for 3 tests. The other two participants also stated almost the same explanation. So what is meant by the TOEFL class in this case is not a preparatory class but a class provided to provide intensive training for Lampung University students who were previously declared unsuccessful 3 times in a row in the TOEFL

Test organized by the Language Center. They are considered to need intensive training because they are not able to achieve the minimum score set at 450.

B. Provided Facilities

Regarding the facilities provided, Eka, a student from law, stated that the facilities provided were inadequate, the class was hot, there was no internet/wifi connection. Dona from the law school also stated the same thing. According to her, the facilities provided were inadequate because the room was small and hot. With a capacity of 15 students in one class, the room provided is considered inadequate and even seems cramped. This was also expressed by Dauri, a participant from the engineering faculty. She stated that the facilities provided in the implementation of TOEFL tutoring were inadequate, this was evidenced by the heat of the class and the narrowness of the room. The other two participants also added that the audio equipment used for listening did not sound so clear. From all participant statements, it shows that the facilities provided are still lacking.

C. The Material Being Taught

Regarding the material being taught, Eka, a student from law, stated that the material presented was appropriate and understandable. In addition, more than 25% of the material provided is almost the same as the questions they face in the actual TOEFL test. Dona from the law school also stated the same thing. According to Dona, the material she received was quite helpful in understanding the procedure for answering questions. Meanwhile, Dauri explained that the material given was quite good, but sometimes the material given in the TOEFL class was too easy so that when he was faced with questions on the TOEFL test, he actually admitted that he had difficulties. Meanwhile, according to Risky and Laila, they stated that the material provided was well packaged and quite easy to understand. The five participants stated that they received a module that made it easier for them to repeat the material that had been explained at home.

D. Teaching Technique

According to Eka, a student from law stated that the teaching techniques used were appropriate and understandable. Dona from the law school also stated the same thing. According to Dona, the teaching technique used to deliver the material is very interesting. The tutors are able to explain the material well and clearly. Meanwhile, Dauri explained that his method was too easy, this had an impact on the actual test. Dauri hopes that the material presented will have the same level of difficulty as that given during the TOEFL test and the method used should not be too simple so that it will have a big impact on increasing the TOEFL scores of students who take the TOEFL test. According to Risky from FKIP stated that the method used to explain the material given was well packaged and interesting enough not monotonous so that the material was easy to understand. In contrast to Risky, Laila from FISIP stated that the teaching techniques used were less interesting and tended to be boring. This opinion is different from what was explained by other participants. Of the five participants, there were two participants, namely Dauri from the engineering faculty and Laila from FISIP who stated that the method used was still too simple and unattractive, while the other 3 participants felt it was quite good, interesting and not boring.

E. Time Management

Regarding time management, Eka partisan from law stated that much needs to be evaluated. Because as long as he took the TOEFL course at the language hall, he often found the time was not punctual. Classes

that were supposed to start at 9 am were often delayed and only started at 10. According to him, this was of course very detrimental because a lot of time was wasted. In addition, management regarding registration time and the start of learning is also considered quite long, namely 3 weeks. This is considered quite an obstacle because the average student who takes this TOEFL class is a student who wants to catch up with graduation. The same thing was also expressed by Dauri, a participant from the engineering faculty. According to him, the time management of teaching in the TOEFL class was deemed less effective because it was too dense so it was difficult to absorb the material properly. The other three participants also felt the same way. They stated that time management related to implementation, the start of learning and scheduling management must also be evaluated properly. This of course greatly affects the effectiveness and efficiency of time. The participants hoped that the study schedule could be better arranged and learning could start on time.

Discussion

If it is associated with other research, of course, the research discussed today has several elements of difference. For example, research conducted by Mahmud (2014) focused on students' perceptions of the TOEFL preparation class they had taken. Meanwhile, the current research focuses on the Intensive TOEFL class which is intended for students who fail to achieve a minimum TOEFL score. With regard to the research design used, there are similarities between the research conducted by Mahmud and the research discussed today, both using a qualitative design where data were taken from structured interviews. In Mahmud's research, the researcher used content and thematic analysis. Participants involved in this study were 11 first semester students drawn from a total of 108 who took the TOEFL preparation class. The researcher gave questions to participants who got the lowest score from the TOEFL ITP pre-test practice given to get data about their perceptions related to the TOEFL preparation class they took. The researcher took 100 minutes to interview them. The participants involved in this study ranged in age from 18 to 23. They consisted of 10 female participants and one male participant. Five of them have a side job while the others do not. Similar to the research discussed today, it also involved several participants who were given structured interviews, the difference in this study was that the number of participants was much smaller and the researchers did not focus on the age range of participants. In addition, the types of TOEFL discussed are also different, the previous research discussed was the TOEFL ITP while the current research focused on the TOEFL PBT.

In a previous study conducted by Mahmud, the researcher called participants one by one to be given an interview during the specified time period. Interviews that have been conducted were recorded using an audio recorder from a mobile phone. If the participants did not agree, the researcher did not record. The researcher also used google – form to record the responses from the participants. The participants were allowed to see what the researcher had written on the google form so that there was no misinterpretation and the participants could also clarify it. After the interview was conducted, the responses were collected on the internet (Google Drive). This is also similar to the current study where the participants were given interviews one by one within a certain period of time..

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In this study, there were 5 students from various faculties who were involved as participants (research subjects). They consist of 4 female students and 1 student who has taken the TOEFL class organized by the language laboratory of the University of Lampung. The students and students are Eka (Faculty of

Agriculture), Dona (Faculty of Law), Rizky (FKIP), Layla (FISIP) and Dauri (Faculty of Engineering). Each - each of the students and students were interviewed in depth enough to get the information needed. Several questions related to the TOEFL class which was held at the language laboratory of the University of Lampung were asked to each of them. The questions asked cover several topics, namely what they know about the TOEFL class at the Lampung University language lab, the facilities provided, the material being taught, the teaching techniques used and the time management applied. Each subject will be described as follows:

A. What do they know about the TOEFL course at the Language Center of the University of Lampung

From the five students and college students who were interviewed, they had almost the same answers regarding what they knew about the TOEFL class. The first participant, on behalf of Eka from the faculty of agriculture, stated that the TOEFL class at the language center was a tutoring place for students who did not pass the TOEFL test 3 times. Dona, who is the second participant from the law faculty, stated that the TOEFL class is a class that is attended by students who take the TOEFL test within one week in 6 meetings. Dauri from the faculty of engineering also stated the same thing, who explained that the TOEFL class organized by the Language Center of the University of Lampung was a class that was attended by students who took TOEFL lessons because they failed the TOEFL test which was carried out for 3 tests. The other two participants also stated almost the same explanation. So what is meant by the TOEFL class in this case is not a preparatory class but a class provided to provide intensive training for Lampung University students who were previously declared unsuccessful 3 times in a row in the TOEFL Test organized by the Language Center. They are considered to need intensive training because they are not able to achieve the minimum score set at 450.

REFERENCES

- Direktorat Jendral Pembelajaran dan Kemahasiswaan Kementerian Riset, Teknologi, dan Pendidikan Tinggi Republik Indonesia. (2015). Kerangka kualifikasi nasional indonesia. Retrieved from http://kknikemenristekdikti.org/asset/pdf/001-dokumen_kkni.pdf
- Ma, J., & Cheng, L. (2015). Chinese students' perceptions of the value of test preparation courses for the TOEFL iBT: Merit, worth, and signifiacne. *TESL Canada Journal/Revue TESL Du Canada*, 33(1), 58-79. Retrieved From <http://www.teslcanadajournal.ca/index.php/tesl/article/view/1227>
- Masfufah, S (2018). Indonesian college students' perceptions of TOEFL Preparation Class. *Journal of English Education, Literature and Culture*, 3(1), 66-78. Retrieved From <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.3.1.66-78>
- Mahmud, M. (2014). The EFL students' problems in answering the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL): A study in Indonesian context. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 4(12), 2581-2587. doi:10.4304/tpis.4.12.2581-2587
- Mousavi, S. A., Arizavi, S., & Namdari, N. (2014). The effect of test preparation on the test performance the case of the IELTS and TOEFL iBT reading tests. *International Journal of English and Education*, 3(2), 10-22. Retrieved

from http://ijee.org/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/2.83201219.pdf

Saldana, J., (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. London: SAGE.