

STUDENTS' STRATEGIES IN COMPREHENDING READING SECTION ON TOEFL AT ENGLISH HOME COMMUNITY AT THE FORT ORANJE TERNATE

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Abstract

The purpose of this research to know the students' strategies in comprehending reading section on TOEFL at the English Home Community. The researcher applied qualitative research to explore students' strategies in comprehending reading section on TOEFL at the English Home Community. The subjects were ten students at the English Home Community. The instrument were questionnaire and interview. It was found that reading comprehension on TOEFL section used by the English Home Community's students are: students of English Home Community read the question first, read the direction, find out the meaning of unfamiliar words by using context, do skimming and scanning reading strategy, guessing the meaning by using background knowledge, reading the key words and reading the text first.

Keywords: *TOEFL Reading, Comprehending Strategies*

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mencari tahu strategi siswa dalam menguasai soal TOEFL Reading sehingga mereka dapat menjawab pertanyaan tes TOEFL Reading di English Home Community di Benteng Oranje. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Subyek penelitian ini terdiri dari sepuluh peserta di English Home Community. Instrumen penelitian ini menggunakan questionnaire dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Reading comprehension on TOEFL section yang di gunakan oleh siswa English Home Community adalah: siswa English Home Community membaca soal terlebih dahulu, membaca petunjuk soal, mencari arti kata menggunakan konteks, menggunakan strategi membaca skimming dan scanning, menebak makna kata dengan menggunakan latar belakang pengetahuan, membaca kata kunci dan membaca teks terlebih dahulu.

Kata Kunci: *TOEFL Reading, Penguasaan Strategi*

INTRODUCTION

Since English is the most widely used language in the world and has played important roles in various fields of study, the ability to use English is extremely needed. Nowadays, having English ability either spoken or written has become one of the requirements in enrolling university and job placement. In testing the English ability, proficiency tests are employed. They can also show if a person is ready for certain kinds of schooling or work. Test of language proficiency can be divided into two board categories. First, English as a second language (ESL) tests measuring communication or language skill. Second, bilingual tests that show which of two languages a person is more skilled in.

As one of proficiency tests, test of English as a foreign language (TOEFL) is one of standardized test that measure students' proficiency level in English. Standardized test consist of different types of multiple-choice questions, given to a large number of people at the same time, graded by computer and timed. The purpose of TOEFL is indicating English proficiency of a person to colleges and university (primarily in U.S. and Canada) and to government and other agencies for placement of students in universities. Besides, TOEFL is used in work as one of employer recruitment mechanism nowadays.

To measure the comprehension ability of foreign language learner, it can be used a TOEFL test. TOEFL or Test of English as a Foreign Language is a standardized test to measure the English ability of non-native speakers. Nowadays, TOEFL is used to get scholarships in order to continue further study in English speaking countries. TOEFL is also used to apply for a job vacancy. The reliance of TOEFL has reached such a point that most domestic universities use this standardized set this precondition because they believe that TOEFL is able to evaluate students' ability and skills to understand English in academic tasks.

To have good score of TOEFL, a person needs more knowledge of English and appropriate strategies in taking the test. The strategies can be used to each students in answering the test. Every section of the test has different strategies to be employed.

The Reading Comprehension section of the TOEFL test consists of five reading passages, each followed by a number of reading comprehension and vocabulary questions. Topics of the reading passages are varied, but they are often informational subjects that might be studied in an American university: American history, literature, art, architecture, geology, geography, and astronomy, for example. Time is definitely a factor in the Reading Comprehension section. Many students who take the TOEFL test note that they are unable to finish all the questions in this section. Therefore, you need to make the most efficient use of your time in this section to get the highest score. The following method is the best way of attacking a reading passage to get the most questions correct in a limited amount of time. In reading section, the students are tested to understand, interpret and analyze reading passage. It also tested the knowledge of English vocabulary. The questions are about course, implied details, main idea, organization of ideas, reference, specific information, stated details, vocabulary and transition.

The researcher reason wants to conduct research to reading comprehension have found that in the study conducted by Samad, Jannah and Fitriani (2017) are the difficulties face by the students in answer TOEFL test, the limited of time, the long of passages, makes the students needs some strategies to overcome the difficulties that they facing in answer TOEFL question to reaching a correct answer reading text so that able to increase their chance for success and to answer the items correctly.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research applied qualitative research. Leo (2013) stated that qualitative research is the research based on the collecting, analyzing, and interpreting narrative form to get deep understanding from the particular phenomenon observer.

1. Technique of Data Analysis

In questionnaire the scoring is using 4 point Likert Scale namely always, often, seldom and never which is determine the strategies that students implement to deal with the reading comprehension difficulties. The result presented base on the data obtained from the questionnaire fulfilled by the students.

While in interviews, according to Miles and Huberman (1994:10), analysis can be defined as consisting as three current flows of activity that is data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. In this research, the researcher used Miles and Huberman's theory in analyzing the data, so there are three steps to do, they are:

a. Data Reduction

Data reduction become the first steps to do in analyzing the data in this research. According to Miles (1994:10), data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data in written up field note or transcript. In this research the

data is in the form of voice recording of the interview, in this step the researcher firstly analyzing the data by listen carefully and checking the data by listening the voice recording to see the context. Next, the researcher selecting the sentences which is to be analyzed. After that, the researcher categorizes the data based on focus of the research which were questionnaire and interview.

b. Data Display

The second steps data display. According to Miles (1994:11) in (Alhojailan, 2012), generally a display is an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action.

c. Conclusion Drawing

After finished doing data reduction and data display, the last steps to analyze the data in this research is drawing conclusion. In this step the researcher concludes the result of the research based on questionnaire and interview.

DISCUSSION

Finally, after analyzing all the results of data which is collected, it was found that this research can be a reference for students how to answer reading comprehension on TOEFL section. Based on the data obtained during the research, the researcher has answered research questions as follow: The research question is “what strategies are used by the students at English Home Community in comprehending reading section on TOEFL questions”?.

As stated Heinle & Heinle TOEFL Book (1995) Be familiar with the direction. The direction on every paper TOEFL test are the same, so it is not necessary to spend time reading the direction carefully when you take the test. You should completely familiar with the directions before the day of the test.

Do not spend too much time reading the passage. You do not have time to read each passage in dept, and it is quite possible to answer the question correctly without first reading the passage in dept.

Do not worry if a reading passage is on a topic you are familiar with. All of the information that you need to answer the questions is included in the passage. You do not need any background knowledge to answer the question. Do not spend too much time on a question you are unsure of. If you do not know the answer to the question, simply guess and go on. You can return to this question later in the section if you have time.

Guess to complete the section before time is up. There is no penalty for guessing, so it can only increase your score to guess the answers to questions that you do not have time to complete.

This research in line with *Alvi & Bordbar (2012)* carried out research study entitled “*A Closer Look at Reading Strategy Use in Reading Section of TOEFL iBT*”. This paper investigates any difference in employing Reading strategies, relates them to various item types of reading comprehension in TOEFL iBT (copyrighted by ETS, 2005). Sixty-six respondents (26 males and 40 females) participated in the present study. A list of reading strategies (adopted from Cohen & Upton, 2006), followed by a test of reading comprehension that took forty-five minutes to complete were used. Before the test begun, the participants were instructed how to specify the strategies that they employed during taking the test.

To address the research question, the analyses of the results revealed that the difference is significant in the use of Reading strategies for various item types. On the basis of the findings language teachers are recommended to teach different Reading strategies in order to help TOEFL applicants to use them related to different item types more efficiently and effectively.

Samad, Jannah, & Fitriani, (2017), carried out research entitle “*EFL Students’ Strategies dealing with Common Difficulties in TOEFL Reading Comprehension Section*”. Toefl has been used as a requirement for non-native English students to pursue further study overseas, to get an appropriate job and to graduate from university. Students often encounter difficulties completing TOEFL reading test. This quantitative study investigates the undergraduate students’ difficulties and their strategies in completing TOEFL reading comprehension test. The data was obtained by collecting students’ worksheets of the TOEFL test and distributing questionnaires related to test taking strategies used by the students. Thirty students of English Education Department of Syiah Kuala University were involved as participants. The results indicate five difficult reading aspects encountered by the students. In addition, their strategies to complete the reading comprehension section of the TOEFL test are also found. These findings are further discussed in this paper.

In the this research, the researcher would like to conduct a research on English Home Community’s members entitled “What strategies are used by the students comprehending reading section on TOEFL questions”

CONCLUSION

From the previous chapter it can be concluded that reading comprehension on TOEFL section strategies used by the English Home Community’s students are: the students of English Home Community read the question first, read the direction, find out the meaning of unfamiliar words by using context, do skimming and scanning reading strategy and guessing the meaning by using background knowledge. From students interviewed also indicated that they use strategies such as reading the key words and reading the text first.

The result obtained from this research brings a series of following suggestions including:

1. The students should learn and keep improving their ability and skill in answering TOEFL test. By always learning and practicing in answering TOEFL and also the using of strategy they could be more mastery and confidence.
2. The tutor of English Home Community should more motivate and giving more practice for the students to learn about TOEFL strategies and the tutor would not be stuck only in some particular teaching strategy.

The result of this study can be used as references for other researcher to conduct a further research. Finally, the researcher realizes that there are still many shortages in her thesis, so the researcher really expects the criticism and suggestions for the improvements. Thus, the researcher also hopes this thesis can be meaningful contribution for the lecturer, the students and further researcher.

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