

The TOEFL Listening Strategies Experienced by Nursing Students of POLTEKES-Banten

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Abstract

This study was executed to identify the strategies that students encountered when taking the TOEFL, particularly in the listening section. The descriptive qualitative technique was used in the study. It used the interview as a data collecting instrument. The research subjects were the seventh grade of Nursing students in POLTEKES Banten. The following strategies were used to examine the data: data collecting, data display, data reduction, and conclusion drafting. This study included 25 seventh semester students of Nursing Study Program who were chosen using random sample approaches. According to the findings of this study, it indicated the strategies of their listening test were concentrating, comprehend the listening instruction, having a good time management, predicting the questions, focusing on keywords and assigned in supportive environment.

Keywords: Strategies, Listening, Comprehension, Test, TOEFL

INTRODUCTION

Due to English is really important in today's world, various tests have been developed to assess English proficiency. TOEFL is one of them. TOEFL is a standardized test designed to assess students' knowledge and English language proficiency. According to Al-Rawashdeh (2011), non-native students or applicants who wish to continue their studies at American or English-speaking colleges or universities, whether through a scholarship program or a non-scholarship program, must take the TOEFL test as a prerequisite of the university. According to English Testing Service (2007), TOEFL results are accepted by over 6,000 institutions in over 100 countries The examination is also used for scholarships and exchange programs.

TOEFL has recently been taught in many places, including universities, in Indonesia, where English is a foreign language. Several universities in Indonesia, particularly in Jakarta and out of Jakarta, such as Banten require their students to have a TOEFL score of at least 500 for English program students and 475 for non-English program students, and they are expected to achieve the score as one of the requirements for graduation of undergraduate candidates. As a result of this phenomena, many colleges offer a TOEFL course or have even taught it in one semester of their classes, as occurred at POLTEKES Banten.

TOEFL has been taught in numerous faculties at POLTEKES Banten either through a course structure or through course credits (SKS) in a single semester. Students will be given some TOEFL components in general, such as listening comprehension, structure and written expression and reading comprehension. They will also study about a variety of topics and subtopics linked to those areas. Phillips (2004) wrote the book "Longman Introductory Course for the TOEFL Test," which was

utilized in the TOEFL course. The book is divided into three sections for listening: part A (brief dialogue), part B (conversation), and part C (talks). Reading comprehension, as well as structure and written expression. The TOEFL class lasts one semester and consists of seven meetings before to the midterm test (UTS) and seven meetings prior to the final test (UAS), and students will be tested in both the midterm and final tests. Because the TOEFL test questions are difficult, it is typical to have some issues after the test. The TOEFL test is divided into three sections: listening comprehension (Part I), structure and written expression (Part II), and reading comprehension (Part III).

In reality, many non-English Department students at POLTEKES Banten struggle to meet the TOEFL minimal score, particularly in the listening comprehension component. Some of them have already taken the test more than three times, yet their scores are still below the minimum required for graduation. This is supported by data from the Language Centre of POLTEKES Banten. This is clear to define that generally some difficulties encountered by students in doing listening test. It is strengthened by some previous studies. Romadhon (2022) conducted research in investigating problems faced by students in listening section. The problems cover the physical environment and audio distortion from a low-quality CD player. The other finding study shows that the duration of a spoken text is an important factor that has a detrimental impact on learners' listening comprehension. (Hamouda, 2013). Meanwhile, vocabulary plays essential part of listening. The findings of Rina and Tiarina (2021), who showed that the most common difficulty in the TOEFL listening section was a lack of vocabulary knowledge. From those problems above, it can be concluded that the problems refer to technical and intelligence thing which contribute to a succeed of comprehending listening.

Therefore, it needs some strategies to encounter students' problem related to TOEFL listening comprehension. Following a review of the previous similar studies mentioned above, the writer is interested to investigate a study based on the findings of the previous researchers above. The students' strategies used for taking the TOEFL listening part is the focus of the current research. Furthermore, the following research question might be formulated for this study: What strategies do Nursing students employ when taking the TOEFL Listening Comprehension test?

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. TOEFL Test

TOEFL, which stands for Test of English as a Foreign Language, is a standardized test used to assess students' English language proficiency. The TOEFL is a large-scale language examination. It is " the world's most well-known and widely used large-scale language evaluation."(Kunnan, 2008, p. 140). The TOEFL test is used to assess the degree of English ability of non-native English speakers. It is most likely the most commonly used examination in the admissions process for international students to institutions and universities. However, these colleges frequently do not take into account the student's past school grades or records from any intense English program in which the student was enrolled. All of this is determined by the school's entrance criteria. The score that is admissible to a given school is also determined by the school's regulations.

The official TOEFL Test is currently administered in several formats around the world such as The Paper-Based TOEFL, The Computer-Based TOEFL, The Internet-Based TOEFL, and Institutional Testing Program (ITP) (English Testing Service, 2007).

The first edition of the test, TOEFL PBT, is still offered at select facilities that do not have internet connectivity (Pierce, et al, 2015). Finally, in 2005, ETS released the most recent version of the TOEFL test, known as the Internet-Based TOEFL Test or TOEFL IBT (English Testing Service, 2007). According to Higby and Hudon (2014), this type of test does not use discrete-point testing. The TOEFL IBT has several key elements, including the investigation of all four language abilities (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) and the use of integrated tasks to assess in a true academic situation. TOEFL CBT was ended today as a result of the emergence of TOEFL IBT, and its most recent administration was in September 2006. (English Testing Service, 2007). Even though the TOEFL PBT is still used today, TOEFL test takers are strongly advised to take the TOEFL IBT since it provides a more comprehensive assessment of English language ability and is more widely accepted around the world (Pierce et al, 2015).

2 Listening Comprehension

The TOEFL PBT Listening section assesses examinees' listening comprehension at the sentence, dialog, extended conversation, and mini-talk. (Sulistyo, 2009). There are three parts assessed in the listening section: Part A (brief conversations), which consists of 30 questions, Part B (longer dialogues), which consists of 8 questions, and Part C (lecture or talks), which consists of 12 questions (Ananda, 2016).

The first section is short dialogue in the form of 2-4 sentences between two people, followed by one question. Synonyms of the keywords stated in the listening, specific vocabulary, idioms, phrasal verbs, conditionals, wishes, causatives, modals, negative expressions, inferring meaning from intonation, and listening for language functions are the points tested in this section (Dang, 2016).

The second part is longer conversations. The dialogs presented in extended conversations are substantially longer, ranging from 16-20 sentences performed by two people, followed by 4-5 questions (Hartono, 2009). This section's questions include recognizing the core idea and issue, as well as identifying detail facts (Dang, 2016).

The last section consists of lectures or presentations. It takes the form of a single speaker narrating history, geography, science, art and culture, or education. This section consists of 10-15 complicated sentences followed by 4-5 sentences. This portion's testing criteria are comparable to those in the extended conversation section, namely recognizing the core idea and topic, as well as identifying detail information (Dang, 2016).

3. Strategies in Answering Listening Section

Many solutions have been presented in order to answer problems in the TOEFL Listening section. Phillips (2001) proposes numerous strategies that can be used in the TOEFL Listening portion, specifically in each component of the Listening section. Part A (short dialogues) strategies include focusing on the last line of the dialogue, choosing answers with synonyms of the words or phrases stated in the dialogue, avoiding answers that provide words that sound similar to the words stated in the dialogue, and attempting to glean specific information about who, where, and when from the dialogue.

Next, in parts B and C (long conversations and talks), the tactics that can be used are to anticipate the topic, anticipate the questions, determine the topic, make

conclusions about specific information (who, what, when, where), and listen for replies (Phillips, 2001).

Furthermore, Higby and Hudon (2014) present some general ways to achieve a high score in listening, as indicated in their remark, "There are several things you need to do to perform well on the TOEFL Listening section. You must be familiar with the many types of questions, practice active listening, take good notes, and avoid giving errors replies."

The strategies above refer to the technical strategies which comprehend the ability to use neat preparation. Besides, the other strategies which are also essential to know is about classification system strategy proposed by Huy (2015), there are six strategies included:

- a. Cognitive strategies. Cognitive methods were utilized to assist learners in gaining knowledge and understanding of the linguistics system; for example, learners may comprehend the meaning of words based on context.
- b. Memory strategies. It is employed to help learners link one L2 item or concept with another by storing new information in memory and retrieving it.
- c. Metacognitive strategies. It covers concentrating your learning, planning your strategy, as well as assessing your progress"
- d. Affective strategies. It is used by listeners to engage with others, confirm knowledge, or reduce fear." As a result, affective methods can assist listeners in managing their moods, emotions, motivation, or attitudes while learning to listen.
- e. Compensation strategies. They could employ hints to figure out the meaning of words or bits of information" (2015, p.25). As a result, listeners can utilize some of the clues to assist them guess the meaning of a specific sentence or information.
- f. Social strategies. It can assist listeners in working together and understanding both the target language and the language Individual action is less significant in language learning than communal activity. Learners should practice with others so that they can share ideas or knowledge.

To summarize, studying listening strategy is really beneficial in learning listening or taking a listening test. According to Vandergrift (2014, p.2), "Strategy building is vital for listening training because strategies are conscious mechanisms through which learners may lead and evaluate their own comprehension and responses."

RESEARCH METHOD

The qualitative research approach was used in this study to investigate the strategies of POLTEKES Nursing students in answering listening comprehension questions on the TOEFL test. The interview was used to collect the data. The subjects of the study were seventh grade of Nursing Students in POLTEKES Banten. To analyse the data, the following approaches were used: data collecting, data display, data reduction, and conclusion drafting. This study included 25 seventh semester of Nursing Study Program in POLTEKES Banten. They were chosen using random sample approaches. With the procedure of gathering data through interviews related to the strategies they encountered in answering the TOEFL listening section.

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Finding

The researcher obtained the response to the research question, "What are the strategies encountered by students in answering the TOEFL listening section?"

The researcher discovered certain strategies that students have when answering the listening TOEFL during the interview. The questions in the listening phase are divided into three sections: part A brief dialogues, part B extensive chats, and part C long talks. The issues discovered are as follows:

1. Concentrate on the audio listening

Student 2

"Saya konsentrasi penuh pada audio yang diperdengarkan"

Student 5

"Kalau dalam soal listening TOEFL, konsentrasi sangat dibutuhkan"

Student 6

"Saya berusaha untuk focus mendengarkan para pembicara"

2. Comprehend the listening instruction

Student 10

"Saya mendengarkan instruksi dari soal, baru saya bisa menjawab pertanyaannya"

Student 13

"Instruksi dari soal listening sangat membantu saya dalam menjawab soal"

3. Good time management

Student 15

"memaksimalkan waktu menjawab dari tiap sesi listening"

Student 16

"Saya harus mengoptimalkan waktu dalam menjawab soal"

4. Predict the questions

Student 20

"Saya mencoba menebak pertanyaan dari isi percakapan"

5. Focus on keywords

Student 21

"Saya langsung tertuju pada kata kunci soal di tiap sesinya"

Student 22

"Tiap clue dari soal listening saya sangat focus"

Students 23

"Pada Sesi A listening, saya focus ke orang kedua, dan pada Sesi B Listening, saya focus pada orang pertama."

6. Assigned in supporting environment

Student 24

"Jika saya berada dalam situasi yang hening, dapat membantu saya dalam menjawab soal listening"

Student 25

"Saya sangat terganggu bila mengerjakan soal listening dalam situasi yang berisik"

2. DISCUSSIONS

Based on the interview data, the researchers discovered that there were various strategies of students to struggle when answering the TOEFL test of listening comprehension.

The first, concentration is a key of comprehending the listening questions. The more focus of listening, the more detail that will be understood by the students. Because listening will be succeeded if only, they can focus on the speakers.

The second, after concentrating on the speakers, the students can get the listening instruction very well. The instruction will ease the students to get to do with the questions and relate it to the answers.

The third, to manage the time is essential to accomplish TOEFL listening. Once they listen to the instructions, it is better to answer it immediately, without thinking longer and wasting time. Time is so priceless in the listening section. Even they are not sure about the answers, the only thing they can do is answering directly, without leaving any blanks.

The fourth, predicting the questions is a proper way to figure out the conversation gist because it is to minimize the mistake that might happen. When they try to predict, they will possibly to get the right answers.

The fifth, the keywords are comprehended. Each listening section has its clue to figure out the answers. Once they know each clue, they will absolutely answer in correct way. It helps a lot to recognize what each question is referred to. The more they know the keywords, the easier the listening questions will become.

The last, being in supportive environment is other important consideration of doing listening section. It will help the students to concentrate on the TOEFL listening questions and it will give benefits for them to figure out the answers. Avoiding a noise situation and providing quiet atmosphere will enhance the conducive listening session and it is expected to the examiners to handle this thing.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

As a result of the findings and discussions, the researcher arrived to the following conclusions: there are six strategies that students used to struggle with the TOEFL listening comprehension test. Those are concentrating, comprehending, having good time management, predicting the questions, focusing on keywords and being in supportive environment. These six strategies are possible to increase TOEFL listening test.

Finally, the researcher hopes that the findings would be beneficial to test takers and teachers. It is critical to provide TOEFL training to strengthen the insights of each TOEFL session, especially for Listening session. Furthermore, the researcher recommends that the next researchers will extend the topic of TOEFL test in wide range for the better contribution of study field.

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