

AN ANALYSIS OF THE THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS' ABILITY TO ANSWER STRUCTURE AND WRITTEN EXPRESSION OF TOEFL LIKE TEST AT THE DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER EDUCATION OF BUNG HATTA UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

TOEFL is one of the standardized tests for foreign language learners used to measure students' English proficiency. Therefore, at Bung Hatta University, a TOEFL Preparation Course is held for all students to carry out the TOEFL. The research about TOEFL had been conducted by previous researchers, while this research is related to the Structure and Written Expression of TOEFL-like test. Therefore, the present study aims to find out the third-year students' ability to answer structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test at the Department of Primary School Teacher Education of Bung Hatta University. The population of this research was the third-year students at the Department of Primary School Teacher Education of Bung Hatta University. The number of sample was 40 students taken by cluster random sampling technique. The instrument for this research was the structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test in the form of multiple choices to collect the data. The result of this research showed that the third-year students had low ability to answer structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test. It was proved that 0 student (0%) had excellent ability, 3 students (7.5%) had good ability, 1 student (2.5%) had moderate ability, and 36 students (90%) had low ability to answer structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test.

Keywords: ability, structure and written expression, TOEFL like

INTRODUCTION

One of the instruments used to measure English proficiency is the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). TOEFL is one of the standardized tests for foreign language learners used to measure students' English proficiency [1]. Generally, this test is used as a prerequisite for someone who want to study or work in a country that uses English in everyday communication [2]. Bung Hatta University requires a TOEFL test to assess students' English competence and as a requirement to complete their studies. Therefore, at Bung Hatta University, a TOEFL Preparation Course is held for all students including in the Primary School Teacher Education Department which is useful to help students in carrying out the TOEFL. To pass the TOEFL exam, students need to have a certain level of proficiency in grammar. Grammar is the study of phrasing that has a particular form in a proper sentence, and grammar can also be interpreted as the study of how to prepare some kind of English word so that it becomes a proper English sentence [3].

Structure and Written Expression is the second section of TOEFL that focuses on written English. In the Structure and Written Expression section, grammar is one of the components that is evaluated [4]. This section on the TOEFL test is designed to assess the test-takers' ability to identify errors in grammar usage. The students find that the second section which is the

structure and written expression is more difficult than listening [5]. The students had difficulty with the rules of English grammar in the structure and written expression section, they made errors in sentence construction, verb tense usage, and subject-verb agreement. It is supported by Etika (2020) who wrote "Investigating the Difficulties Faced by English Department Students in Structure and Written Expression Section of TOEFL at Bung Hatta University. Her research showed that the ability of English Department students in the Structure and Written Expression section of TOEFL was 41% in level C "Moderate." Additionally, her findings also represented that the most challenging part for the test taker's of TOEFL is structure and written expression.

Hence, this research only focuses on subject-verb agreement, object of preposition, present participle, and past participle of the structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test. Therefore, the researcher was interested in conducting the third-year students' ability to answer structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test at the Department of Primary School Teacher Education of Bung Hatta University.

METHOD

The researcher used the descriptive method. Descriptive research is a method used to describe existing phenomena in detail [3]. The population of this research was the third-year students of Primary School teacher

Education at Bung Hatta University. The number of sample was 40 students taken by cluster random sampling technique. The instrumentation for this research was the structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test in the form of the multiple-choice test. Then the researcher used content validity because they had the same materials. The reliability index of the test was 0.76 which was categorized as high correlation.

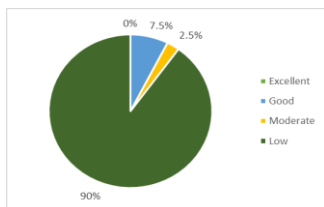
To collect the data, the researcher gave the grammar (structure) TOEFL test to students. The researcher gave the instruction to the students and inform them that they had been given 20 minutes to take the test. The researcher collected the students' answer sheets. The researcher checked the students' answers and gave the score. Score 1 for a correct answer and 0 for a wrong answer. Finally, the researcher counted the total score of each student.

In analyzing the data, the researcher followed several procedures. First, the researcher presented raw scores. Second, the researcher converted the raw scores into converted scores by using the formula. Third, the researcher classified the students' abilities based on the criteria of Bung Hatta University. Fourth, the researcher calculated the percentage of students who get excellent, good, moderate, and low ability by using the formula. Fifth, the researcher interpreted the findings and concluded.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The researcher found that 0 student (0%) had excellent ability, 3 students (7.5%) had good ability, 1 student (2.5%) had moderate ability, and 36 students (90%) had low ability to answer structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test as shown in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1
Students' Ability to Answer Structure and Written Expression of TOEFL Like test



Based on the findings, the students' ability to answer structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test was low. It means that the students were not familiar with the material, lacked practice, did not understand about the learning materials, and lacked the motivation to answer structure and written expressions of TOEFL-like test. The result finding of this research is in line with

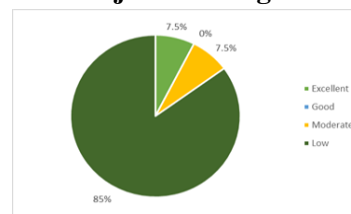
Hajri (2018) who stated that the students do not have a good understanding of any material in structure and written expression of TOEFL, then the students did not answer the questions carefully, and they did not pay attention to all components in structure and written expression of TOEFL.

More specific findings as the answers to research questions are presented below.

1. Students' Ability to Answer Structure and Written Expression of TOEFL-like Test in Subject-verb Agreement

Based on the result analysis, the researcher found that the students' ability to answer structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test in subject-verb agreement was low (85%). It was proven by the fact that there were 3 (7.5%) students who had excellent ability, 0 (0%) student who had good ability, 3 (7.5%) students who had moderate ability, and 34 (85%) students who had low ability. In order to be clear, see the Diagram 2.

Diagram 2
Students' Ability to Answer Structure and Written Expression of TOEFL Like Test in Subject-verb Agreement



Based on the findings, the students' ability to answer structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test in subject-verb agreement was low. It means that the students did not have a good understanding, and lack of practice to answer structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test in subject-verb agreement. The result of this research is similar to the previous research conducted by Putri, et al (2023) entitled EFL Students' Difficulties in Using Subject-verb Agreement. Based on her research showed that the EFLI students had low ability in subject-verb agreement. In addition, the factors that cause their ability to be low are that some of the students continue to use subject-verb agreement carelessly, they have difficulty understanding the patterns in subject-verb agreement and have not practiced establishing the correct agreement patterns.

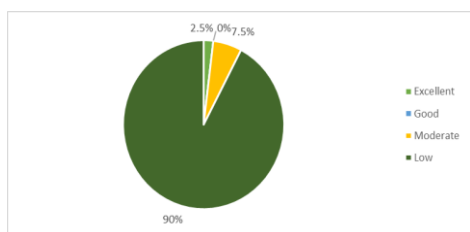
2. Students' Ability to Answer Structure and Written Expression of TOEFL-like Test in Object of Preposition

Based on the result analysis, the researcher

found that students' ability to answer structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test in object of preposition was low (90%). There were 1 (2.5%) student who had excellent ability, 0 (0%) student had good ability, 3 (7.5%) students had moderate ability, and 36 (90%) students had low ability to answer structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test in object of preposition. In order to be clear, see the Diagram 3 below.

Diagram 3

Students' Ability to Answer Structure and Written Expression of TOEFL Like Test in Object of Preposition

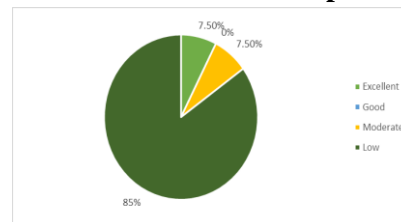


Based on the findings, the students' ability to answer structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test in object of preposition was low. It means that it means that the students did not have a clear understanding, lacked practice, which caused them had low ability to answer the object of preposition. The finding of this study is in line with Anjayani and Suprpto (2016) who conducted the research entitled Error Analysis on the Use of Preposition in Students' Writing of the Eleventh Grade Students of SMA Negeri 9 Semarang. They found that the students have problems in understanding and using the object of preposition. In addition, they found that there was 66.67% of students have problems with the object of preposition. Moreover, they say some of the students know about prepositions, and the general functions of object of preposition but they are still confused about choosing the appropriate preposition for the context.

3. **Students' Ability to Answer Structure and Written Expression of TOEFL-like Test in Present Participle**

Based on the result of data analysis, the researcher found that the students' ability to answer structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test in present participle was low. It was proven by the fact that there were 3 (7.5%) students who had excellent ability, 0 (0%) student who had good ability, 3 (7.5%) students who had moderate ability, and 34 (85%) who students had low ability. In order to be clear, see the Diagram 4

Diagram 4
Students' Ability to Answer Structure and Written Expression of TOEFL Like Test in Present Participle

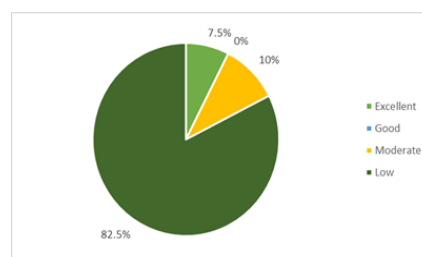


Based on the findings, the students' ability to answer structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test in present participle was low. It means that the students did not have a good understanding, they did not understand about the grammatical rules, and they lacked practice to answer present participle. This study is similar to the previous study conducted by Khan, et al (2023) entitled An Analysis of the Problem in the Use of English Participle by Undergraduate Students at Hazara University Mansehra. Basen on the study, they found that Undergraduate students at Hazara University Mansehra, Pakistan had low ability to understand present participle. They also found that there was 56% of the students could not identify the correct uses of the present participle.

4. **Students' Ability to Answer Structure and Written Expression of TOEFL-like Test in Past Participle**

Based on the result of the data analysis, the researcher found that the students' ability to answer structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test in Past Participle was low (82.5%). There were 3 (7.5%) students who had excellent ability, 0 (0%) student had good ability, 4 (10%) students had moderate ability, and 33 (82.5%) students had low ability. In order to be clear, see the Diagram 5

Diagram 5
Students' Ability, to Answer Structure and Written Expression of TOEFL Like Test in Past Participle



Based on the findings, the students' ability to answer structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test in past participle was low. It means that the students still did not have a good understanding about past participle. The result of this research is similar to the previous research conducted by Khan, et al (2023) entitled An Analysis of the Problems in the Use of English Participle by Undergraduate Students at Hazara University Mansehra. Basen on their research, they found that Undergraduate Students at Hazara University Mansehra, Pakistan had low ability to understand past participle. The percentage of their research showed that 73% students had low ability to understand the past participle.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of data analysis that have been discussed, the third-year students at the Department of Primary School Teacher Education of Bung Hatta University had low ability to answer structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test in subject-verb agreement, object of preposition, present participle, and past participle. Based on the conclusions above, the researcher would like to give several suggestions. The lectures should focus on boosting the students' motivation and bridging language gaps by incorporating culturally relevant materials, and provide more examples when teaching structure and written expression of TOEFL. Then they also provide more exercises to students at least twice a month, so that the students are familiar with the structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test. The students are expected to enhance their motivation by achieving goals in taking the TOEFL, and consistently practicing the TOEFL test. Then they should pay attention to the lecturers' explanation about structure and written expression of TOEFL-like test in subject-verb agreement, object of preposition, present participle, and past participle. Last, future researchers are suggested to find out the cause of the students' problems in any sections of TOEFL test and conduct a related study to overcome the students' problems in any section of the TOEFL test.

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