

An Analysis the Vocational High School Students' Problem in Answering TOEIC Reading and Listening Test

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Abstract

Test of English for International Communication TOEIC is a test of English communication skills developed by The Educational Testing Service (ETS). Currently, the Ministry of Education and Culture, through the Directorate of Vocational High Schools (DSMK), has opened opportunities for SMK throughout Indonesia to obtain international certification assistance through the SMK English Challenge 2020 program or facilitation of English language proficiency certification exams with TOEIC. This study investigates the problems of SMKN 3 Seluma students in answering the TOEIC reading and listening test. The Aims of this study was to investigate out and provide solutions related to students' problem in answering TOEIC reading and listening test. To analyze these problems, this study used descriptive qualitative approach and interview as a data collecting technique. The results of this study indicate that there were two factors that become students' problem in answering TOEIC reading and listening test, namely internal and external factors. Internal factors occur in students themselves where students did not understand the questions, vocabulary, or material being tested. While external factors occur beyond the ability of students, such as the facilities needed by students to take the test are still minimal. A good solution to overcome this problem is to prepare everything needed to take the TOEIC test in the form of learning resources, teaching staff, learning facilities and the most important is the mentality of the students who will take the test.

Keywords: TOEIC, Reading and Listening Test

A. Introduction

TOEIC is one of the tests issued and developed by the educational testing service (ETS). ETS on its official website states that The TOEIC test is an English-language proficiency test for people whose native language is not English. It measures the everyday skills of people working in an international environment. The scores indicate how well people can communicate in English with others in business, commerce, and industry (ETS: 2008 Retrieved on November 29th, 2020). It means that TOEIC is an English test for all non-native English speakers. TOEIC is a measure of daily ability for people who work in an international work environment. The TOEIC score will show that a person is able to communicate with other people in the world of business, commerce and industry.

The TOEIC for vocational high school has been carried out since 2016 with the quota coverage for program recipients increasing from year to year. The government provides a quota of assistance of 75,000 TOEIC tests in 2020 with the hope that more vocational students in Indonesia will be certified internationally and will be able to benefit when they enter the world of work (SMK.Kemdikbud.go.id Retrieved on November 29th, 2020). In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, of course there will be

challenges that must be faced when implementing the program so that the main focus is related to the quality of output of SMK graduates to be maintained and improved. Adjustments in various aspects of the implementation will be made during this program by utilizing the Computer Based Test (CBT) and Distance Learning technology which is currently being implemented by many educational institutions in Indonesia. The distribution of TOEIC International certification exam assistance for vocational students will go through the selection stage to ensure vocational students who have English language excellence.

On the 2nd November, 2020 a preliminary research was conducted through an open interview to the teachers of SMKN 3 Seluma. The researcher did a preliminary research because SMKN 3 Seluma is the first school from Seluma regency in Bengkulu province to implement the TOEIC program. The teacher said on July 17th, 2020 she received a letter issued by the Directorate General of Vocational Education regarding Foreign Language Competency Improvement Examinations for Vocational School Students using TOEIC (Liza Mahalia Interview was conducted on November 2nd, 2020). It means that with the receipt of an official invitation from the directorate general of vocational education, the government truly believes in giving SMKN 3 Seluma the opportunity to become the first school from Seluma regency in Bengkulu province to implement TOEIC in 2020. The TOEIC in this school was conducted online by using CBT (UBK Standard). Before taking the TOEIC test students were asked to take the VIERA selection first, there were 63 students from class XII with different majors in participating in the VIERA selection on Tuesday 20th October 2020. Students who passed the VIERA selection were students whose abilities had already reached the intermediate level. Based on the selection results showed that there were 11 students who passed and could take the TOEIC test. It means that the students must be prepared themselves to take the actual TOEIC.

B. Research Methodology

This research was conducted by using descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive research is research which focuses on describing situation and condition to be explained in research report (Arikunto, 2010). According to Cevilla (1993: 3) qualitative descriptive research is a method in researching the status of group of humans, in order to create an object, the picture or painting, descriptive in a systematic, factual and accurate regarding the facts or phenomena are investigated. Moreover, Creswell (2009) said qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Therefore, descriptive qualitative is measurable, actual and very accurate research methods because the results are described in great detail then, the results are presented in form of research reports base on the fact. In this study, this method used to find out and analyze the vocational high school students' problem in answering TOEIC on reading and listening test at SMKN 3 Seluma.

The subject of the research was conducted on students of SMKN 3 Seluma. The respondent can be seen as the following table:

SELECTION EXAMINATION RESULTS REPORT (VIERA)
Direktorat SMK, Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Vokasi, Kemendikbud
In Academic Year 2020 Periode: 20 Juli - 30 September 2020
SMKN 3 Seluma Provinsi Bengkulu, NPSN: 10703205

Count of NISN	Column Labels		
Row Labels	(blank)	Funding Receiver	Grand Total
Intermediate 2		5	5
Intermediate 1	4	6	10
Basic 3	46		46
Basic 2	2		2
Grand Total	52	11	63

(Table 1 Selection Examination Results Report (Viera))

The table above shows that there were 11 students in Intermediate Level who can take the TOEIC Test. They were the subject of analysis in this research. The researcher would analyze them in order to know about their problem in answering TOEIC reading and listening test. The data collection technique in this research was carried out descriptively where the data collected were in the form of words and pictures, not numbers. The data comes from observations, interviews and documentation studies. This is in line with Sugiono's opinion which states that there are four data collection techniques, namely observation, interview, questionnaires, documentation and triangulation (Sugiono 2012b: 63).

1) Observation

Observation is the right technique for collecting the data when the researcher witnesses it directly through observation. This is similarly stated by Asmami (2011: 123) "observation is a systematic observation and recording of the symptoms that appear on the object of research". The form of observation in this research is frank or disguised observation where the researcher in collecting data states frankly that he is doing research. So, those who were studied had known from beginning to the end about the activities of researchers (Sugiono 2012c: 312).

2) Interview

The researchers used *face to face interview*. It is known that interview is a dialog done by interviewer to get information from the interview. Interviews were conducted to find out something more in-depth from respondents. Interviews are divided into two, namely structured and unstructured (Sugiono 2012d: 194-197). A structured interview is a technique for collecting data carried out by the researcher if the researcher knows what information would be obtained so that the data collector has prepared answers to the written questions, while unstructured interviews are data collection techniques that prepare questions in the form of outlines of the problems to be asked. One way of using this

technique is to get more detailed information about respondents. The researcher does not know exactly what data will be obtained, so the researcher must listen to the answers of the respondents in order to be able to get information and can conclude these answers. In this research, researcher used unstructured interviews because researcher wanted to know in-depth information about respondents because researcher did not know exactly what data or information would be obtained from the students' problem in answering TOEIC on reading and listening test. In addition, this interview gave the respondents the freedom to express their opinions on the object that the researcher examining. They express their own opinions by not filling in the answer options that must be determined by the researcher. So, the researcher concluded that the interview conducted in this study used unstructured interventions.

3) Documentation

The researcher needed documentation for all documents that are related for supporting data to describe authenticity of the data in the research. In this research, documents referred to a wide range of written, physical, and visual materials. They could be in form of interview result, personal writing and the materials that related to the students' problem in answering TOEIC on reading and listening test. In addition, the pictures would be also as secondary data of documentation. All the documents and Photographs used to support the primary data from observation and interview. Finally, the researcher used documentation to complete the research report. In this case Bogdan states that "In most tradition of qualitative research, the phrase personal document is used broadly to refer to any first person narrative produced by an individual which describes his or her own actions, experience and belief"(Sugiono 2012e: 329).

The sources of qualitative data could be derived from: observation, face to face interview, and documentation. Therefore, the researcher used interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) in miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) to analyze the data. The procedures can be seen as follows:

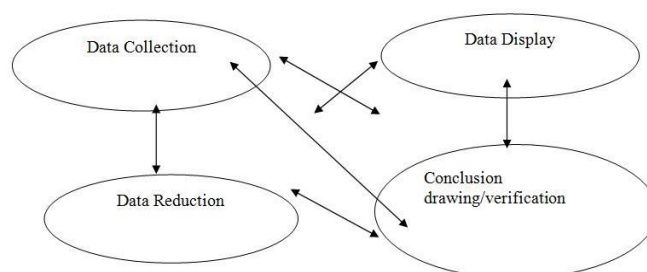


Figure 1: Interactive Model of Data Analysis

The figure above shows that the data analysis followed three steps of procedures, namely:

1. Data Reduction

Data reduction aims to facilitate understanding of the data collected from the results of field notes by summarizing and clarify according to the problem under study. In this study, reduced

aspects were the problems that occur to students when answering the TOEIC Reading and Listening Test.

2. Data Display

Presentation of data in the form of narrative text, to see an overview of the data obtained as a whole or a certain part, then classification is carried out. The display of arranged data in a brief, clear, detailed and comprehensive manner will make it easier to understand the description of the aspects being studied. The presentation of the data in this study was more in the form of descriptions in accordance with the results of the research obtained.

3. Drawing and verifying conclusion

The third step was an effort to find meaning. An explanation was made of the data that had been analyzed by looking for important things. This conclusion was arranged in the form of a summary statement and easy to understand with reference to the research objectives.

C. Result and Discussion

This research was conducted on 1st March 2021 at SMKN 3 Seluma students. The research was conducted through observation, interviews and documentation with the research subjects. The research results were analyzed by researchers using descriptive qualitative techniques, it means that the researcher described, and interpreted all the data collected so that they were able to obtain a general and comprehensive situation.

1. Result

After the researchers conducted research using the method observations, interviews and documentation related to the title of the research, namely "An Analysis of the Vocational High School Students" Problem in Answering TOEIC Reading and Listening Test". The researcher briefly described the research findings that had been carried out by the researcher. Based on the results of the research, it shows that in formal education institutions, namely SMKN 3 Seluma, especially students of class XII have actually taken the TOEIC test in 2020, but not all students could take the test because only students who have passed the VIERA selection could take the TOEIC test. Therefore, based on the data that the researchers found when conducting preliminary research, there were only 11 students out of 63 students who successfully passed the VIERA selection, meaning that there were problems that made it difficult for them to answer the questions tested in the VIERA selection. After the researcher conducted interviews with 11 students who were the subjects of this research, the researcher found that this problem also occurred when they answered the TOEIC Reading and Listening test. The same thing could be seen from the TOEIC scores they got after completing the test. The students' TOEIC scores could be seen in the following table:

No	Name of Participant	Reading Test Score	Listening Test Score	Total Score
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1	Ahmad Holil	170	255	425
2	Andrianita	135	215	350
3	Galuh Jayatri	135	145	280
4	Adriansyah Akbar R.	85	180	265
5	Seftika Putri	120	130	250
6	Revita Anggia Putri	100	135	235
7	M. Faiz Jordan	90	140	230
8	Maulana Pensi Ega S.	95	130	225
9	Maharani	105	95	200
10	Yuli	80	110	190
11	Meiliza Tri Aprilia	80	95	175

(Table 2 Students' Score in TOEIC)

Based on the acquisition of scores obtained on 11 students who became participants in this research, the researcher knew that there were 9 students who score at the Intermediate in English level where the scores were still in the range of 220-465 and it was assumed that the brown color was the differentiating level on the test. There were 2 students whose scores were still at the beginning level in English, which meant that the total score ranges from 10-215 and it was assumed that orange was the lowest level in the TOEIC test. Based on the reading and listening questions, it could be seen that listening questions were the easiest questions for them to do because it could be seen from the table that all participants got high scores on the listening compared to the reading test.

2. Discussion

Based on the results of this study, the researcher found that the dominant problems faced by students when answering the TOEIC reading and listening test were in **Reading Test**, students did not understand the material being tested. Besides, students did not understand the vocabulary used in the text and the questions tested in the reading test. Next, students felt insecure about the answers they filled. It made them thought the answer too long and came back repeatedly in reading the questions, texts and also the answers on the test. Next, because they did not understand the material and vocabulary on the questions, students made more guesses than analyze the questions and answers. Furthermore, of the three types of questions tested in the reading test, error recognition type questions were difficult for them to do because in answering these questions they must really understand the meaning of the questions and also the grammar.

While, in **listening test, the problems were** (1) students did not understand the content of the audio being played; (2) students did not focus on listening to the audio being played. (3) of the four types of listening test questions, the short conversation questions were questions that they thought were difficult to work on because when they listened to the audio, they dominant did not understand what was being discussed in the audio.

Not only the questions on the test were the problems of the students, the researchers also found other problems that also made it difficult for students to do the test, such as

students lack of learning resources to focus more on studying the types of questions, materials and how to answer the TOEIC test. Because based on the English learning curriculum, students in each department only learn English in general, not specifically according to their majors. Next, the limitations of student facilities, such as the electric current used by the school to conduct online-based tests, were minimal because based on the results of the interview they also stated that they had a blackout in the middle of the test. Not only during the TOEIC test, during the VIERA selection, the electricity used had dropped in several times. The researchers found this problem when conducting research at school because when they used the lab simultaneously several times the electricity went out. In this case, there were several computers and earphones were used did not work, this is also a problem for students to do the listening test.

From these problems it could be concluded that the dominant problems occur in students because of two factors, namely internal Factors and external factors. Internal factor is the factor that occur within students such as they cannot understand the material, students did not know the existing vocabulary and students did not prepare themselves to take the TOEIC test. Then, external factor is the factor that occur outside the ability of students, such as the lack of existing facilities to support students' fluency in taking tests.

To minimize the problems that students got related to answering the TOEIC Reading and Listening test, researchers conclude and provide the best solutions are as follows: (1) To reduce the students' problem from the internal factors such as the strategy of students who often guessed the answers on the test without understanding the meaning of the questions. The teacher should be able to add the learning materials related to selection and the TOEIC test. Not only that, it is better if the English learning curriculum they use is more specialized for example for students majoring in accounting should be taught more about English specifically for accounting. It means that in order to provide proper teaching, the teacher must understand what English learning needs are needed by accounting graduates. (2) To increase student scores on the TOEIC test students really have to prepare themselves well in preparing their knowledge, vocabulary and mentality to get a satisfactory score on the upcoming TOEIC test. (3) To solve the students' problem from the external problems such as the electricity and non-functioning computers and earphones. The school must repair all existing facilities because with good facilities it can support students in taking the TOEIC test. So that the problems that have occurred in the TOEIC 2020 test do not occur again in the next TOEIC test.

D. Conclusion And Suggestion

1. Conclusion

Based on the data obtained during this Research, it can be concluded that the ability of SMKN 3 Seluma students in taking the test are still low, because it can be seen from the total score that there were no students who have reached a score of 470 where the level was already in Working Proficiency in English. As the first school from Seluma Regency that implemented the TOEIC, the researcher considered this to be natural because there was no experience either from school exam coordinators, students or agencies in taking the TOEIC test. Therefore, in this research, the researcher described the problems that occurred to students in completing the TOEIC test at SMKN 3 Seluma. There were two factors that became obstacles for students in answering the questions in TOEIC namely internal and external factors. The internal factor occurred in students themselves where the students did not understand the questions, vocabulary, or material being tested. Meanwhile, external factors occurred beyond the ability of students, such as the facilities needed by students to take the test were still minimal, a real example was the power suddenly went out and some computers and earphones were not functioning. Therefore, a good solution to overcome this problem is to prepare everything needed to take the TOEIC test in the form of learning resources, teaching staff, learning facilities and the most important is the mentality of the students who will take the test.

2. Suggestion

Based on the conclusion above the suggestion that can be given are as follows:

1. For the teachers, if the TOEIC test will be held again in 2021, the researcher hope that teachers can provide more learning resources to students, especially those related to the TOEIC test to support and prepare students themselves better.
2. For the school, the researcher hopes that the results of this research can help the institution to overcome students' problem in answering the TOEIC reading and listening tests.
3. For the students, the researcher hopes with the experience of their seniors who have taken the TOEIC test, they can provide an overview and motivation to study even harder to prepare themselves for the next TOEIC test until their get a satisfactory score.

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