

Students' Difficulties in Answering "Structure and Written Expression" TOEFL-like at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo

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Abstract. This study was conducted to investigate the types of questions which were difficult in TOEFL-like and to find the students' difficulties in answering the 'Structure and Written Expression' of TOEFL-like. The subjects of this study were the batch 5 students of Master of English Education (S2 MPBI) at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo who had TOEFL-like test as the placement test in taking master's degree. This research applied descriptive qualitative method. The instruments were students' results of the TOEFL-like Test and interview. The data were taken from Longman Complete Course for the TOEFL written by Deborah Phillips (2003). The results show that there are 18 items (45%) categorized 'difficult'. Meanwhile, there are 22 items (55%) categorized into 'very difficult'. There are several reasons of students' difficulties in answering the 'Structure and Written Expression' on the TOEFL-like done as the placement test. First, there was no preparation in advance. Second, students lack of vocabulary. Third, the test was considered difficult because the students took the TOEFL-like for the first time. Lastly, there was a limited time provided.

Keywords: students' difficulty, Structure and Written Expression, TOEFL-like

Abstrak. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan tujuan untuk mengetahui jenis-jenis soal yang sulit dalam TOEFL-like dan untuk mengetahui kesulitan mahasiswa dalam menjawab 'Structure and Written Expression' dari TOEFL-like. Subjek penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa Batch 5 program Magister Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris (S2 MPBI) STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo yang mengikuti tes TOEFL-like sebagai tes penempatan dalam mengambil gelar magister. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah Tes TOEFL-like dan wawancara. Pengumpulan data diambil dari Longman Complete Course untuk TOEFL yang ditulis oleh Deborah Phillips. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 18 soal (45%) yang dikategorikan 'sulit'. Sementara itu, terdapat 22 soal (55%) yang dikategorikan 'sangat sulit'. Ada beberapa alasan kesulitan mahasiswa dalam menjawab 'Structure and Written Expression' pada TOEFL-like seperti yang dilakukan saat tes penempatan. Pertama, tidak ada persiapan sebelumnya. Kedua, kurangnya penguasaan kosakata. Ketiga, tes dianggap sulit karena mahasiswa baru pertama kali mengikuti TOEFL-like. Terakhir, waktu yang disediakan terbatas.

Kata kunci: kesulitan mahasiswa, Structure and Written Expression, TOEFL-like

INTRODUCTION

The capability of mastering English language in global era is a significant thing regarding that English as an international language mostly used in many countries around the world.

Measuring the English proficiency of a non-native speaker of English, TOEFL is the internationally accepted standard of English being applied (Fanani, in Hajri, Jufrizal, & Wahyuni, 2018:93). TOEFL, Test of English as a Foreign Language, is undoubtedly known as the most used examination in the admission process of foreign students to college and university in the United States and it is also required by English-language colleges and universities. Moreover, TOEFL test has a very good reputation in the international levels because it is recognized by the top universities for its accuracy testing techniques covering Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, Reading Comprehension and Writing.

TOEFL provides students the opportunity to prove the capabilities in mastering English as well. The language used in the TOEFL reflects real-life English language usage in the university lectures, classes and laboratories (Mufidah, 2012:1). It means the language used in TOEFL is the same language applied by lecturers when they are in the teaching activities within learning concepts with students. Thus, by taking this kind of test, students can explore their English skills and measure the understanding in mastering the English in the international standard.

Concerning the TOEFL, as argued by Hajri, Jufrizal, & Wahyuni, (2018), there are some purposes why people and/or students take the TOEFL. First, people take TOEFL in order to ensure their ability as a second language or their foreign language. Second, they have to pass the graduation requirement in the university level which means that the requirement has become one of the obligations for the students who will pass the college study. Third, they have to apply for particular things such as by taking their master/doctoral's degree or applying particular jobs either abroad or inside the country.

Furthermore, there are three types of TOEFL namely (1) Paper Based Test (PBT), (2) Computer Based Test (CBT), and (3) the internet Based Test (iBT). The university may also administer a TOEFL-like or a TOEFL-equivalent test, or a TOEFL prediction, such as by the center of language studies or by the language laboratory within the university. This kind of TOEFL is locally administered by the university, and only used for internal usages in order to examine the students' English proficiency (Noviyenty, 2018:55). In TOEFL, there are several sections being examined, namely listening, speaking, grammar or structure, reading, and writing, depending on the type of TOEFL taken. Listening Comprehension measures the ability to understand English as it is spoken, Structure and Written Expression measures the ability to recognize language that is appropriate for standard written English, and Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension measures the ability to understand nontechnical reading matters. In Indonesia, the TOEFL test was originally conducted by English Language System (ELS), a specific institution for TOEFL Test, known as Institutional TOEFL.

A number of universities in Indonesia determine TOEFL score as the graduation standard requirement for students and those who want to continue study in higher level (Munaida, 2016:1). In the English Department of Master of English Education (S2 MPBI) at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo, the students get the placement test as the requirement in taking the master-degree. Since the "test is measuring English proficiency covering many skills and aspects such as listening, reading, and structure and written expression, the students find difficulties to do the test involved" (Mahmud, 2014:2). Based on these facts, the researchers believe it is essential to know the mastery of English Department students in TOEFL-like at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo and to know the types of questions which are considered difficult by the students. Based on the description above, the researchers formulated the problems of the

study as follows: (1) What are the types of questions in TOEFL of Structure and Written Expression dealing with very difficult and difficult for students to answer? and (2) What are the students' difficulties in answering the TOEFL (Structure-Written Expression) at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo?

Achieving a high score of the TOEFL test is not easy. This fact is proven by two related studies which were reviewed in this study. First, the work of Samad, Jannah, & Fitriani, (2017) find that most students fail to achieve a required score to graduate from their study. They found that thirty students of English Education Department of Syiah Kuala University who were involved had difficulties in answering the TOEFL test and this result has shown that most students still could not achieve the TOEFL score requirement. Another study was written by Halim & Ardiningtyas (2018) which was aimed at identifying the difficulties in answering TOEFL test questions. The findings of this research show that the thirty students of English department students at the seventh-semester in STKIP YPUP Makassar had difficulties in answering the TOEFL test questions. This study has similar discussion focusing on the TOEFL test and its difficulties in answering the questions. However, this study is an expansion of those previous studies which focused on the students' difficulties in answering the Structure and Written Expression of the TOEFL-like test' section. It is expected that the results of this study will be useful to 1) test-makers to provide the TOEFL-like test and preparation for the students who will take the TOEFL-like test in future, 2) students to have more preparation before taking the TOEFL-like test, 3) other researchers to develop and to conduct the similar research by exploring the methodology used and materials in TOEFL.

TOEFL, Test of English as a Foreign Language, is a standardized test evaluating the English proficiency of people whose native language is not English. This kind of test is primarily required among the colleges and universities. According to Mufidah (2012:3), "The TOEFL evaluates the potential success of an individual to use and understand standard American English at a college level which is required for non-native applicants at many US and other English-speaking colleges and universities. Moreover, it becomes the product of the Educational Testing Service (ETS) contracted by the private, non-profit firm, the College Board to administer the test in institutions in the US.

There are several sections being examined, namely listening comprehension, structure and written expression, reading comprehension, and test of written English depending on the TOEFL types involved. TOEFL PBT, known as TOEFL Paper Based Test, has three sections namely listening section, structure and written expression section, and reading section. In the structure and written expression section, the knowledge of English grammar is being tested. Structure and grammar are two things different, but they are similar and related to each other.

On the TOEFL Test, there are three kinds of test classifications as mentioned by Mufidah (2012). First, the Internet-based Test (IBT). The TOEFL IBT is well-known as a test that assesses students' proficiency in the type of English in an academic environment which is administered on the internet. The exam takes about four hours to complete and integrates four essential skills covering reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Second, the Computer-Based Tests (CBT). This kind of test, firstly introduced in July 1998, became the first critical step toward a long-term goal of enhancing assessments by using electronic technology to test more complex skills. A primary goal of the TOEFL program is to provide more general information than it has in the past about applicants' English proficiency. New types of questions were added to the Listening and Reading sections; these new question

types moved beyond multiple-choice questions. In the test, the computer was programmed to continuously find questions of an appropriate difficulty for test takers of all performance levels (ETS Team, Princeton, 2007:8; cited in Mufidah, 2012). Third, PBT is the most conventional one regarding it uses paper. It still becomes favorite among the students because TOEFL PBT is made-up as the easier and the cheapest one. Moreover, the local institutions or companies in Indonesia still accept the certificate of TOEFL PBT as long as the institutions which held TOEFL are legally reliable.

There are two versions of the TOEFL, namely the paper-based exam, and the more common internet-based exam. The paper-based test is now given only where the internet-based version of the test is unavailable. The internet based TOEFL has four sections that consist of reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The paper-based TOEFL has a test of structure and written expression instead of a speaking section. There are 140 numbers of questions administered in 115 minutes and the score scale is 310 – 677 covering the three categories of tests. First, Listening Comprehension is used in order to measure the ability to understand English including short and long conversations and short talks or lectures. Second, Structure and Written Expression, mainly focuses on the ability to recognize standard written English. Lastly, Reading Comprehension is concerned to the ability to read and understand short passages at the university level (Mufidah, 2012).

METHOD

This study was conducted by using descriptive qualitative research. It is lined by Fraenkel & Wallen (2006:430), “Qualitative data of the research are collected in the form of words, phrases, and sentences by using description forms them rather than numbers”. Moreover, this study applied a descriptive research which describes the situation to gain information focusing on the current status of the issues and it is pointed to determining of the nature of situation as it exists at the time of study (Ary. D., et.al., 2010). This study was aimed to find out the types of question which are categorized into very difficult and difficult in the TOEFL-like and to analyze the students’ difficulties in answering the Structure and Written Expression section of TOEFL-like. It was done at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo. The researchers conducted the study on September 7th, 2020. The results of the students’ TOEFL-like test were analyzed by using Microsoft Excel.

Subjects

In qualitative research, a subject is identified as a number of people who have a similar characteristic (Creswell, 2012: 142). The subjects of this research were the batch students 5 of Master of English Education degree (S2 MPBI) at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo who were having TOEFL-like test as the placement test in master’s degree program. There were 20 students who were classified as the subjects of this study. They were 10 males and 10 females whose age ranged from 26-50 years old.

Instruments

The researchers used two instruments. First, a standardized test of ‘Structure and Written Expression’ of TOEFL taken from TOEFL books of Longman Complete Course for the TOEFL written by Deborah Phillips (2003) and second, interview guideline to find out the students’ difficulties in answering the TOEFL test.

The first instrument was used to answer the first question consisting the types of questions which classify into very difficult and difficult categories. Then, the second instrument was interview in order to get the detail information about the students' difficulties in answering the TOEFL as proposed by Arikunto (2013:270). In line with Gay & Diehl (Munaida, 2016:29), for descriptive research the sample of research should be 10% or more. The researchers decided 4 students to participate in interview session which means it was 20% of the total sample. There were two questions asked by researchers in the interview:

1. Why do you choose the alternative answers in your test?
2. What are your problems or difficulties in structure and written expression section in the TOEFL?

Data Collection Procedure

The data were collected through test answering the first problem, supported by Longman Complete Course for the TOEFL written by Deborah Phillips (2003). The students were tested in a provided time. TOEFL test consists of one section called Structure and Written Expression (40 questions for 25 minutes). In analyzing the interview data, the researchers transcribed the interview recording of the 4 selected students in order to gain detailed information answering the second problem of the study. Then, the answers of the interview were classified to be interpreted. Lastly, the researchers drew the conclusion based on the data examined in the study.

Data Analysis Procedure

After all of the data were collected, the researchers examined the data by using descriptive qualitative method. It was done to allow the researchers to give information on how the research was done and analyzed the data through the description forms. Then, the interpretation of data was needed to describe the significant meaning of data concerning the data findings. To interpret the difficulty level of the questions in TOEFL, the researchers modified the theory of Robert L. Thorndike and Elizabeth Hagen who originally divided the category into four namely: (1) very difficult category, (2) difficult category, (3) fair category and (4) easy category as follows:

$$P = \frac{B}{Js}$$

Adopted from: Mufidah (2012)

P = Proportion (difficulty Index)

B = Number of correspondents who have correct answer

Js = Number of correspondents

Table 1 Interpretation of the Difficulty Level of the Questions in TOEFL (Adapted from Mufidah, 2012)

The Number of P	Interpretation
0.00 < 0.29	Very difficult
0.30 < 0.49	Difficult
0.50 – 0.69	Fair
> 0.70	Easy

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted by the aims to answer two problems: (1) the types of questions which were very difficult and difficult for the students and (2) the students' difficulties in answering the 'Structure and Written Expression' of TOEFL-like. The test was done as a placement test among the batch 5 students of Master of English Education at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo.

Results

By conducting the study, the researchers formulated the two statements of problem containing (1) the types of questions categorized into 'very difficult' and 'difficult' to be answered and (2) the students' difficulties in answering the 'Structure and Written Expression' through the test done. After analyzing the data examined in this study, the researchers found some findings as follows:

Table 2 Index of difficulty of Structure and Written Expression Items

No.	No. of Items	TCA	TIA	ID	Category
1	1	15	5	0.38	Difficult
2	2	15	5	0.38	Difficult
3	3	10	10	0.25	Very Difficult
4	4	15	5	0.38	Difficult
5	5	11	9	0.28	Very Difficult
6	6	14	6	0.35	Difficult
7	7	7	13	0.18	Very Difficult
8	8	15	5	0.38	Difficult
9	9	14	6	0.35	Difficult
10	10	17	3	0.43	Difficult
11	11	8	12	0.20	Very Difficult
12	12	5	15	0.13	Very Difficult
13	13	4	16	0.10	Very Difficult
14	14	3	17	0.08	Very Difficult
15	15	5	15	0.13	Very Difficult
16	16	17	3	0.43	Difficult
17	17	17	3	0.43	Difficult
18	18	13	7	0.33	Difficult
19	19	10	10	0.25	Very Difficult
20	20	6	14	0.15	Very Difficult
21	21	6	14	0.15	Very Difficult
22	22	17	3	0.43	Difficult

23	23	6	14	0.15	Very Difficult
24	24	15	5	0.38	Difficult
25	25	14	6	0.35	Difficult
26	26	13	7	0.33	Difficult
27	27	8	12	0.20	Very Difficult
28	28	8	12	0.20	Very Difficult
29	29	7	23	0.18	Very Difficult
30	30	12	8	0.30	Very Difficult
31	31	4	16	0.10	Very Difficult
32	32	11	9	0.28	Very Difficult
33	33	13	7	0.33	Difficult
34	34	12	8	0.30	Difficult
35	35	8	12	0.20	Very Difficult
36	36	4	16	0.10	Very Difficult
37	37	12	8	0.30	Difficult
38	38	10	10	0.25	Very Difficult
39	39	12	8	0.30	Difficult
40	40	4	16	0.10	Very Difficult

Note: **TCA** is total number of correct answers, **TIA** is total number of incorrect answers, **ID** is index of difficulty

Based on the result findings in Table 2, there are 40 questions in ‘Structure and Written Expression’ section on the TOEFL test. It can be described that the questions are considered difficult if the index of difficulty less than 0.30. Therefore, questions number 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 22, 24, 25, 26, 33, 34, 37 and 39 are in difficult category. Thus, the category of ‘difficult question’ consists 18 items. Meanwhile, questions number 5, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 35, 36, 38 and 40 are categorized as ‘very difficult question’. The ‘very difficult’ questions contain 22 items. Concerning to the result findings of the study, it can be figured out that all of the students had the same difficulties in answering the questions in the TOEFL test.

In order to answer the first statement of the study about the types of question consisting the difficult and very difficult categories, the researchers provided the following table to classify the types of difficult questions based on the index of difficulty:

Table 3 Item Number and Type of difficult and very difficult questions of Structure and Written Expression

No.	Item Number	Types of Questions
1	1	Appositive
2	2	Subject + Verb
3	3	Coordinate conjunction
4	4, 40	Past participle
5	5	Preposition
6	6	Parallel Structure (with coordinator)
7	7	Identifying the Main Verb
8	8	Expression of Quantity
9	9	Inverted subject verb (with the question word)
10	10	Present Participle after the Preposition
11	11	Reduced Adjective Clause
12	12, 38	Active and Passive Meaning

13	13	Object of Preposition
14	14	Inverted Subject Verb (negative expression)
15	15	Adjective Clause
16	16	Base Verb after Modal
17	17	Uncountable Noun
18	18, 19	The Correct Tense
19	20	The Correct Form of Superlative Degree
20	21	The Correct Form of Adjective
21	22	Base Verb after “to”
22	23	Use the Correct Possessive Pronoun Reference
23	24	The Use of Adverb Form correctly
24	25	Adjective after linking verbs
25	26	The use of Correct Form of Passive
26	27	Parallel Structure (with the correlative conjunction)
27	28	The use of Superlative Degree Correctly
28	29, 31	Singular and Plural Noun
29	30	The Correct Use of Other, the other, and another
30	32	The Use of Article
31	33	The correct use of like, unlike, likely
32	34	The Use of Have and Had Correctly
33	35	The Correct Use of Preposition
34	36	Irregular Plural Noun
35	37	Distinguish the person from the thing
36	38	The Passive Meaning
37	39	The correct use “live” “alive” and “living”

Based on Table 3, it can be identified that all of the questions in the TOEFL as the placement test are categorized into ‘difficult’ and ‘very difficult’ questions. It means that all of the questions on the TOEFL through the ‘Structure and Written Expression’ were difficult to be answered. The types of question contain: Appositive, Subject + Verb, Coordinate Conjunction, Past Participle, Preposition, Parallel Structure (with coordinator), Identifying the Main Verb, Expression of Quantity, Inverted Subject Verb (with the question word), Present Participle after the Preposition, Reduced Adjective Clause, Active and Passive Meaning, Object of Preposition, Inverted Subject Verb (negative expression), Adjective Clause, Base Verb After Modal, Uncountable Noun, The Correct Tense, The Correct Form of Superlative Degree, The Correct Form of Adjective, Base Verb after “to”, Use the Correct Possessive Pronoun Reference, The Use of Adverb Form Correctly, Adjective after Linking Verbs, The Use of Correct Form of Passive, Parallel Structure (with the correlative conjunction), The Use of Superlative Degree Correctly, Singular and Plural Noun, The Correct Use of “Other, the other, and another”, The Use of Article, The correct use of “like, unlike, likely”, The Use of Have and Had Correctly, The Correct Use of Preposition, Irregular Plural Noun, Distinguish the Person from the Thing, The Passive Meaning, and The Correct Use “live” “alive” and “living”.

Discussion

Answering the first formulated problem in this study, the researchers examined the data through the result of the TOEFL-like test done by the batch 5 of master’s degree students (S2 MPBI) at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo. There were 22 items in the ‘Structure and Written Expression’ which were categorized into ‘very difficult’ question. Meanwhile, 18 items were classified into ‘difficult’ question. In line with Arikunto (2013), the four categories of index difficult consist of easy, fair, difficult and very difficult. These are classified into the easy category in range of > 0.70, the fair category in range of 0.50 – 0.69, the difficult category

in range of 0.30 – 0.49 and the very difficult category $0.00 < 0.29$. Focusing on the research findings in the study, the 40 items of the ‘Structure and Written Expression’ in the TOEFL-like test were classified into ‘difficult’ and ‘very difficult’ questions. As viewed from Table 1, it seems that the range of index as the category ‘difficult’ is 0.10 – 0.28 containing 18 items (45%). Meanwhile, the range of index as the category ‘very difficult’ is 0.30 – 0.43 containing 22 items (55%).

There were 37 kinds of questions in the ‘Structure and Written Expression’ on the TOEFL-like. They are Appositive, Subject + Verb, Coordinate Conjunction, Past Participle, Preposition, Parallel Structure (with coordinator), Identifying the Main Verb, Expression of Quantity, Inverted Subject Verb (with the question word), Present Participle after the Preposition, Reduced Adjective Clause, Active and Passive Meaning, Object of Preposition, Inverted Subject Verb (negative expression), Adjective Clause, Base Verb After Modal, Uncountable Noun, The Correct Tense, The Correct Form of Superlative Degree, The Correct Form of Adjective, Base Verb after “to”, Use the Correct Possessive Pronoun Reference, The Use of Adverb Form Correctly, Adjective after Linking Verbs, The Use of Correct Form of Passive, Parallel Structure (with the correlative conjunction), The Use of Superlative Degree Correctly, Singular and Plural Noun, The Correct Use of “Other, the other, and another”, The Use of Article, The correct use of “like, unlike, likely”, The Use of Have and Had Correctly, The Correct Use of Preposition, Irregular Plural Noun, Distinguish the Person from the Thing, The Passive Meaning, and The Correct Use “live” “alive” and “living”.

The second research question is related to the students’ difficulties in answering the ‘Structure and Written Expression’. In order to answer this statement, the researchers conducted the interview as the second instrument of the study. Among 40 items assessed in ‘Structure and Written Expression’, most of the students had difficulties in answering the TOEFL-like test. There were several reasons that made them do not do well. Based on the interview conducted by the researchers, the reasons are first, they did not know the rules because they never learned the material of TOEFL before; second, they have learned it but they might forget what kinds of grammar are applied. Concerning to the reasons, it was possibly because it has been more than years for the students since they studied their last grammar subjects in strata-1 (S1). The students also did not practice the lessons when they had the placement test in master’s degree. Therefore, students forgot the lessons when they were taking TOEFL-like test. This also supports the explanation of Winkel (in Hajri, Jufriзал, & Wahyuni, 2018:102), they argue “Insensibleness is incapability to dig what has been noticed, processed, and inserted into mind.” It means that ‘forgetfulness’ might happen because of some factors such as lack of practice, interference of materials they learn in other courses after structure courses, and lack of interest. It can happen because it was not used for a long time. However, the main reasons why the items become difficult were, first the students do not have a well understanding about the sentences’ structure, format; second the students do not have a well understanding about the form of the questions in ‘Structure and Written Expression’.

Based on the results of the interview which involved 4 students as the samples, the 4 students were chosen randomly based on the research findings. The interview section concerned on the structure and written expression questions in which most students had made error through the items of TOEFL questions. The first question of the interview stated, “*Why do you choose the alternative answer in your test?*” the respondent 1 said “*I don’t even know what kind of the question is... So, I chose that answer randomly but at least I guess it can be the*

correct answer”. It can be said that the student did not know well the type of questions in the TOEFL regarding that they had no preparation before taking the test. Meanwhile, it is supported by result of the interview, as said by Respondent 3 *“I have lack of mastering vocabulary, thus I don’t know which the correct answer is... I have never got test of TOEFL when I was in S1. It was the first time for me I did the TOEFL”*. Therefore, it can be said that the student had no preparation, so he did not know how to solve the difficulties in answering the items in the ‘Structure and Written Expression’ of TOEFL-like.

The second question is related to the students’ difficulties in answering the test. It is stated *“What are your problems or difficulties in structure and written expression section in the TOEFL-like?”* Based on the results of the interview, as said by Respondent 4 *“I couldn’t recognize the types of questions and I don’t have any preparation for the test. So, I think it is difficult to do the test with no preparation before.”* Meanwhile, Respondent 2 said *“I think I forget the grammar because it was already long time I learned about grammar. Second, I don’t know how to answer and choose the correct answer because the questions were very difficult to me. And it was my first time taking TOEFL-like.”* Then, Respondent 1 said *“The time is very quick, it makes me confused”*. Many students fail in grammar section of TOEFL-like because of their time management (King & Stanley; in Hajri, Jufri, & Wahyuni, 2018:103). It can be assumed that the students did not read the questions carefully and they had to finish in a hurry. Concerning the results of the interview, the main reasons of students’ difficulties in answering the test are that there was no preparation before taking the test, students lacked of vocabulary, TOEFL is difficult for them as it is the first time for them taking the test, lastly it can be said that time of test is limited. It can be argued that a strategy in completing a TOEFL test is needed. Antoni (2014) reveals that most of students agree that strategies on completing TOEFL are very important to succeed in the test.

CONCLUSION

There were 40 questions in ‘Structure and Written Expression’ section on the TOEFL-like test as the placement test for the batch 5 of master’s degree students at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo (S2 MPBI). All of the items were considered as ‘difficult’ regarding the index of difficulty in range of $0.30 < 0.49$ and ‘very difficult’ regarding the index of difficulty in range of $0.00 < 0.29$. There were 18 items (45%) categorized ‘difficult’. Meanwhile, there were 22 items (55%) categorized into ‘very difficult’.

There were several reasons of students’ difficulties in answering the ‘Structure and Written Expression’ on the TOEFL taken as the placement test. First, there was no preparation in advance. Second, students had lack of vocabulary. Third, the TOEFL-like test was assumed as a difficult test since it was the students’ first time taking the test. Lastly, the time provided was very limited.

TOEFL becomes one of the requirements for English students in the bachelor’s degree and master’s degree or even doctoral degree. It means they are projected to get a high score in the test. However, many students take TOEFL and they have minimum scores which are not expected by them because of some reasons. As the result of this study, it is directly suggested to English students that they have to practice more and be careful in answering the test. The students need to understand well in the grammar materials of the TOEFL. Lecturers have to explain the grammar materials deeply. It is because there are some topics that are hard for the students to answer and they do not know the types of questions given. By explaining the grammar and material in TOEFL clearly, students will have more knowledge and more

preparation to do the next test they are going to take. This study limited the discussion on the “Structure and Written Expression” section in analyzing the students’ difficulties answering the TOEFL-like test held by STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo. Therefore, it is suggested to other researchers who will conduct a similar research to explore the topics or skills in TOEFL-like test being discussed such as conducting the research in reading comprehension, structure and written expression, and listening comprehension. As a result, it covers all of the skills in the TOEFL-like test.

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