

## STUDENTS DIFFICULTIES IN PASSING LISTENING SECTION IN TOEFL PREDICTION TEST

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### ABSTRACT

The title of the research “students difficulties in passing listening section in Toelf prediction Test”, this research use qualitative method. The research need to obtain: what the students difficulties in passing listening section in toefl prediction test. There are twenty students as the respondents of the research. The instrument that used in this research is questioner. The result of the research found that there are several aspects of students difficulties, and the most difficulties things are : 1) Catch the speaker idea ,2) identify idiomatic expression,3) Identify the cohesive marker, 4) Assign a literal meaning to the utterance,5) Retain the important information.

Keywords: Students difficulties, listening, Toelf

### ABSTRAK

Judul penelitian ini adalah “kesulitan siswa dalam melewati bagian mendengarkan dalam Test prediksi Toelf”, penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat: apa kesulitan siswa dalam melewati bagian mendengar dalam tes prediksi toefl. Ada dua puluh siswa sebagai responden penelitian. Instrumen yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kuesioner. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa ada beberapa aspek kesulitan siswa, dan hal yang paling sulit adalah: 1) Menangkap ide pembicara, 2) mengidentifikasi ekspresi idiomatis, 3) Mengidentifikasi penanda kohesif, 4) Menetapkan arti harfiah untuk ucapan , 5) Simpan informasi penting.

Kata Kunci: Kesulitan siswa, mendengarkan, Toelf

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## INTRODUCTION

Now days English hold vary important place in every field and place. Almost all the kind of major needs English with difference purpose. For example, even English was not their major before apply the post graduation they must complete the Standard English score require. For professional reason, in business ask the English capability as the requirement. So much of company asks the English capability as the requirement to the job taker. That why English really important.

English as the international language has several differences position in each country. For the American, Britain, Australian English is native language, native language means that they use that language since firs time they know language in other words is known as first language, however Hornby (1984) asserts that native speaker is someone who speaks a language as his first language rather than learnt it as foreign language or person who born in certain country or place in other case English as second language ( ESI) is for Malaysia, India, Singapore. English as foreign language ( EFL ) is refer to all people around the world that admit English as foreign language. Moreover, Indonesia is one of them. For EFL they apply the TOEFL (Test of English as a foreign language) as the test to measure their English capability as the proficiency reason.

Beside to measure English capability as the proficiency reason, TOEFL is the requirement of several institution and university. Every institution and every university has certain score. For that applicant of the institution and university should achieve that score as well. For example, English students of Samudra State University (UNSAM) should get more than 425 to apply the graduation. For this reason, even student complete all the requirement of graduation or final

graduation test, without TOEFL it will not accepted to apply the graduation. However Eli Hinkel present that TOEFL is presented and administrated by the educational testing service (ETS) , a private company located in Princeton, new jersey. ETS handles all activities relate to the TOEFL, but it does not establish the scores necessary for admission to particular universities, colleges school or department .These decisions are made by the individual education institutional.

The TOEFL itself is kind of test that designed to measure the English ability in general and for every person no matter who she is. In general, the same four language skills are tested in all TOEFL programs. Listening structure, writing, reading are tested in the three separated sections there are section 1 (listening), section 2 (structure) and section 3 (reading). According Barron's since 1963 the TOEFL has been used by scholarship selection committees of governments, universities, and agencies such full bright, the agency for international development, AMIDEAST, Latin American scholarship program, and others as a standard measure of English proficiency of their candidates. Now some professional licensing and certification agencies also use TOEFL scores to evaluate English proficiency. Many universities use TOEFL scores to fulfill the foreign language requirement for doctoral candidates whose first language is not English.

Nowadays English proficiency test is very essence in everywhere. Especially in the education field, all English college student must complete their English proficiency test before apply their graduation and almost all-postgraduate use English proficiency test as the requirement as well. In this case English proficiency test is one of the standard competences that are supposed completed by everyone in every major.

All the universities in Indonesia or in the worldwide admit that English proficiency test is the important deal and one of the valid professionals English test

Specifically, Samudra University has deferent way to measure the English proficiency namely Local Test, that administered by Center Language (Upt .Bahasa). Local Test is referring to the UNSAM's students. Especially for English students, they must complete the score needed (460) in their last semester undergraduate before apply the graduation. However the students that would apply the post graduate should complete the score require (460), even English was not their major and background.

Local test is the model test that in one way with proficiency test common that tested in worldwide. The test covers the listening, writing, reading section that tested in other English proficiency test as well. This test is same length and difficulties with the other English proficiency test. Local test is issued for Samudra University (UNSAM) institution only; it cannot be used for admission purpose in other university. However, other proficiency English test such Institutional TOEFL Program (ITP) is available to apply in this institution.

In fact there are a number students cannot complete their test upon once time. Some of that get failure in their first test and will success over several times. However, For English students, they have past several subject relatively local tests including listening, reading structure, and writing in several levels each subject. The recently data show that from 45 students are take this test only 10 students could get the standard score and 35 students get failure in the that test( Upt. Bahasa 2017). It is mean only 22 % the number of test taker who success on once test and 78% number students should take another test.

Base on the fact above the writer strongly believe that it must be any reason why some students cannot complete their test less then two times. what is the main problem that influence to the students failure in getting standard score of English proficiency test. Therefore writer assumes that it is extremely very important to figure out the problem of what are the students difficulties in passing the listening section test. In this case the writer formulate the title follows "Students' Difficulties in Passing Listening Section in Toefl Prediction Test". To explore deeply the problem that probably occurs in this study.

#### **METHOD OF RESEARCH**

Basically this study use qualitative research and the procedure of technique of data collection by using questionnaire to figure out the problem that common happen to the students when they testing their English proficiency trough local test and the other English proficiency test especially to listening section in toefl prediction test. To support this study and to find out the information deeply, writer use focus group technique.

Twenty English students would be involved in this study. The student mentioned are include the students that have past the English proficiency test. The students are separated to the students who are have been getting standard score only once test and the students have take more then once test

The Questionnaire used in this research. The questionnaire contains needs analysis, students experience, difficulties and another problem that probably could be support this study. Focus group and In-depth interview will take from voluntary participant students. The voluntary participants are the students who participate and fill out the questionnaire provided. The goal of this approach is to

explore the relevant information and the particular issues in local test. Several questions would be provided to guide the interview process. In the result writer would like to explore information comprehensively as much as possible. However spontaneously question would be assigned as long as appropriate to the relevant issues, in order to cover the missing and the important points of focus group

### FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This research finding is guided by the questionnaire and the interview of the source (students). However in this chapter would be presented all the problem of this research follows “The students’ difficulties in getting standard score of English proficiency test”. The finding of this research is based on the

students experience attitude feelings and problem that covered in the questionnaire guide. Interview used to get more deep explanation about the problem that did not covered in the questionnaire guide. The findings of this research are would be very important consideration to the students ability in getting standard score of English proficiency test.

#### 3.1 preparations

Basically Preparation would affect to the result of the test. Preparations include the things that supposed to do before the test. However the table below would explain every single of the aspects in preparations

Table 1. Preparations aspect I

No	Item	Level				
		Strongly agree	agree	neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Always prepare before test	(5) 25%	(7) 35%	(3) 15%	(4) 20%	(1) .5%
2	Know that must prepare the test, but have no time. So did not prepare the test	(2) 10%	(8) 40%	(5) 25%	(4) .20%	(1) 5%
3	Keep body in fit before test	(10) 50%	(4) 20%	(5) 25%	(1) 5%	
4	English proficiency test is strongly very hard		(7) 35%	(7) 35%	(5) 20%	(1) 5%
5	Know how to deal with the test		(8) 40%	(5) 25%	(2) 10%	(5) 20%

The data above shows that generally student consider to prepare their self before take test. It is proved by 60 % students prepare before the test. However 20% respondents disagree that they prepare their self before the test. It is show around 20% students did not consider that preparation before the test is big matter. In the item number 2, about 40% students agree that they

realize that preparation is very important but they have not enough time to set up their preparation time. From interview this case is caused by their own business related to the academic issues. That why they have no time to make it up.

The body fit issues is take very important thing that test taker should be considered, it is supported by findings data that 50% correspondents completely

agree that before the test they must keep their body in fit.

### 3.2. Listening Section

Table 2. Speaker orientation

No	Item	Level (%)				
		Very difficult	Difficult	standard	easy	Very easy
1	Catch the speaker idea	(3) 15%	(5) 25%	(7) 35%	(4) 20%	(1) 5%
2	Conclude the main topic of speaker said		(6) 30%	(11) 55%	(2) 10%	(1) 5%
3	Understand the speakers talk about	(1) 5%	(5) 25%	(8) 40%	(4) 20%	(2) 10%
4	Determine the variant of English Varian	(3) 15%	(5) 25%	(7) 35%	(4) 20%	(1) 5%
5	Understand what speakers have already said		(5) 25%	(9) 45%	(5) 25%	(1) 5%
6	Understand the situation of speaking taking place	(2) 10%	(3) 15%	(7) 5%	(6) 30%	(2) 10%
7	<b>Determine predictions</b>	<b>(2) 10%</b>	<b>(5) 25%</b>	<b>(7) 35%</b>	<b>(4) 20%</b>	<b>(2) 10%</b>

Basically to get speaker idea is not the real problem of the correspondents. The 40 correspondents choose in the standard option was give enough evidence that students did not get difficulties in catching the general idea of the speaker. However in interview correspondents state that they got problem in the detail of speaker talk about. Even 55% students did not believe that conclude the speaker topic as big matter, there are 30 % students still had problem in generalize the conclusion of the topic. To understand the speaker talk about is not big mater for English student; it is evidenced by statically data that shows 40% students understand to the speaker. Surprisingly

there are only 1 (5%) that understand the native is still difficult. The statistical data says that there are 15% correspondents able to determine the variant of speaker in other hand only 5% students assume that differentiates the Varian is big issues. Variant mean the way speaker talk. It is include the accent and speak style. For example American and British have different way in speak English. However, commonly English proficiency test using American standard. The peculiarity of listening task is that the speakers use American variant of the English and most students study British variant. The two are different in pronunciation as well as in the vocabulary. If test taker overall level of

English is not very high, it would be useful to take up some courses that are taught by the American teachers. Moreover, attending a speech club, news program CNN or American movies may be a valuable experience.

The problem in the long conversation and talks is to memorize the general and details idea of the speaker already said. However nearly all the English students able to do that. This thing supported by the previous data that there are no correspondents states that understand the detail of speaker is completely very hard. In other said to understand the speaker situation will very helpful to get the more details of the listening section. In this section the question about the speaking take place is commonly occur. From the observation on this research show that there are 30% student able ton identify the situation and the speaking take place. From interview, correspondents assert that basically they

able catch the details of the information in this section.

When speaker currently in conversation or talk, test taker should able to predicts what speaker going to say or if they have no idea about the talks, they could predict the speaker talk about from the keyword that they understood. It is would help tom answer the question rapidly. A prediction is guess the future based on the evidence from the presents. In some short conversation, test taker will be asked to make predictions about the future activities of the speaker involved,

In the listening section the implied statement would be asked. This statement have average point 3 that means students are in the standard level in predicting speaker talk about or it would be good to say that mostly of the students able to predict what the speaker talk about.

*Table 3. Determine the details of conversation and talks 1*

No	Item	Level (%)				
		Very difficult	Difficult	standard	Easy	Very easy
1	Answer the question rapidly	(2) 10%	(6) 30%	(6) 30%	(5) 25%	(1) 5%
2	Answer the specific content of conversation	(1) 5%	(6) 30%	(8) 40%	(4) 20%	(1) 5%
3	Discerning sound discrimination	(2) 10%	(7) 35%	(6) 30%	(5) 20%	(1) 5%
4	Interpreting emphasis stress and tone		(10) 50%	(4) 20%	(5) 25%	(1) 5%
5	Understanding comparisons	(1) 5%	(7) 35%	(6) 30%	(5) 25%	(1) 5%
6	<b>Understanding inferred information</b>	(1) 5%	(8) 40%	(7) 35%	(4) 20%	

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Time range provided in the listening section is 10 second each question, include to mark then correct answer. That's why to answer question faster is will affect in the result o test. If test taker miss one question they wild influence in the next question, the way to overcome this case is they most strict on the time. Mostly, students' ability in answering question rapidly is still in the standard level. However there are 30% correspondents stated that answering question rapidly is still big matter.

In conversation part of listening section provide the more specific information that should be covered by listener, the specific content of the question is mostly asked in the listening section and test taker need to answer the problem correctly. The key way in this case is test taker must remember the details that were stated. Data show that only 20% students able to cover the specific contents of the conversation. In other hand 35% students able to discerning the sound discrimination, discerning sound discrimination means to identify the speaker sound differences. For example the differences sound /I/ in the word "milk" would be different in the longer /I:/ sound in the word "beef" word milk

Interpret the stressing and tone is hold very important role in the listening section. Stressing give many definition depend on the situation, for example

Speaker A: "As students we have to complete all assignment "

Speaker B: "No kidding!"

Question: What does speaker B mean?

However from the example above, we can cover that the speaker B is agree about the man statement. Even he did not mention the agreement statements. There, in fact. 50% correspondents get

difficulties in interpreting emphasize the stress and tone. In other hand only 5% correspondent able interpreting emphasize the stress and tone

There are 35% correspondents consider that understand the comparison in the listening section, 30% neutral and only 5% they state that understand the comparison is easy. In comparison issues test taker asked to analyze the mentioned data that stated by speaker and then compare related data in the question. Inferred information in the listening section is common asked. Inferred information mean the information tat did not mention in the statements. In understanding inferred information need certain skill follows The language ability, culture understanding, speaker orientation, background and the other factors. Data shows that understanding inferred information is still the big matter; it is evidenced by 40% correspondents stated that they got difficulties in understanding the inferred information. Moreover there are not any correspondents state that understanding the inferred information is easy.

Problem in listening section

The following table is the common issues that always occur in the listening section it is include implication, detail, idiomatic expression and assumption,. Implied mean suggested but not stated. In many ways, implied conversation are like prediction conversation In some short conversation, words and phrases or intonation that would be suggested how the speaker felt, what kind of work or activity they where involved, or where the conversation take place.

Table 4 Problem in listening section

No	Item	Level (%)				
		Very difficult	difficult	standard	Easy	Very easy
1	Discerning implications	(2) 10%	(5) 25%	(11) 55%	(2) 10%	
2	Determine details	(2) 10%	(9) 45%	(5) 25%	(3) 15%	(1) 5%
3	Identify idiomatic expression	(3) 15%	(8) 40%	(5) 25%	(3) 15%	(1) 5%
4	<b>Identify assumption</b>	<b>(2) 10%</b>	<b>(9) 45%</b>	<b>(5) 25%</b>	<b>(3) 15%</b>	<b>(1) 5%</b>

Data highlights that even identify implied is not too easy (0% choose very easy), yet, they did not assumes that identify implied information is very difficult, however they states that the difficulties in identify implication is in standard line. In other case there are 45% correspondents consider that determine detail is big matter in listening section. Details mean the special facts that stated in the conversation and talks. In several conversation test taker need to underline the mention statement without consider the inferred information of conversation.

Idiomatic expression arte words and phrases that are characteristic of particular language with meaning that are usually different from the meaning of the each words used alone. For example “to kill me” means “to wait” (Sharpe: 2005: 48). In this case test taker expected to recognize the idiom expression b and restate the idiom or identify the feelings or attitude of the speaker in this research, data shows 40% correspondent assumed that they have problem in identify the idiomatic expression. Naturally they did not know much about the idioms that common used by native,

only 1 (5%) correspondent stated that they able to determine the idiomatic expression easily. In other case, there are 45% correspondent contended that they have problem regarding the assumption issues. Any way there are 2 (10%) correspondents stated that identify the assumption is very difficult. An assumption is a statement accepted as true without proof or demonstration. In short conversations, an assumption is proven false, and speaker who had made the assumption express surprise. In this case tats taker must be able to recognize remarks that register surprise, and draw conclusions about the assumption that the speaker may have made. Now please consider the following example about assumption that mentioned by Sharpe (2005:49).

Women : let’s just e-mail our response to Larry instead of calling.

Man : Larry has an e-mail address

Narrator : What had the man assumed about the Larry?

Answer : He would not have e-mail address



Table 5. Other common issues in listening section

No	Item	Level (%)				
		Very difficult	difficult	standard	Easy	Very easy
1	Determine speaker attitude and orientation	(3) 15%	(6) 30%	(7) 35%	(4) 20%	
2	Determine the type of speech event	(3) 15%	(5) 25%	(8) 40%	(3) 15%	(1) 5%
3	Identify the cohesive marker	(3) 15%	(9) 45%	(5) 25%	(2) 10%	(1) 5%
4	Understand the speaker intonation	(2) 10%	(7) 35%	(7) 35%	(2) 10%	(2) 10%
5	<b>Infers the objective of speaker</b>	(3) 15%	(5) 25%	(7) 35%	(5) 25%	

It says that mostly (30%) student consider that determine speaker attitude and orientation is big matter. Even there are 35% correspondent's states that the statement is in the neutral level. However there are not any correspondents agree that determine the speaker attitude and orientation is quite easy. In the second item show that determine the type of speech event is not to hard and also not to easy. In other words, data lead us to conclude that correspondent ability in differentiate the type of speech invent is in the standard level. Statements number 3 explain us that correspondents still have difficulties in identify the cohesive marker in the listening section. Moreover, It is supported by preview data that there are 15% is very difficult and 45% difficult in identify cohesive marker.

Identify speaker intonation is very important to be consider in deal with the listening section of the English proficiency test. There are several question need speaker intonation to get

the correct answer. Basically from speaker intonation, there are the unmentioned statement that should captured by test taker. However data shows that there are 20% stated it as very difficult, 35% stated difficult and 35% stated standard. In the result we can conclude that in generally student still have problem in differentiate speaker intonation.

In infer the objective of speaker correspondent decided that they mapped it as in the standard level of difficulties. It supported by evidence data that shows there are 35% said infer the objective of speaker in the standard level. Even there arte 15% they stake that infer the objective of the speaker, yet, there are not any correspondent mentioned that it is very easy. In certain cases speaker tasked listener to analyze the aims of the speaker follow topics that they mentioned in the listening section. The objective of the speaker usually not stated, but test taker should get the inferred purpose.

Table 6 Other common Issues in Listening Section

No	Item	Level (%)				
		Very difficult	difficult	standard	easy	Very easy
1	Assign and intended meaning of the utterance	(2) 10%	(9) 45%	(7) 35%	(1) 5%	(1) 5%
2	Determine the respond of the information	(2) 10%	(8) 40%	(7) 35%	(3) 15%	
3	Assign a literal meaning to the utterance	(3) 15%	(7) 35%	(7) 35%	(3) 15%	
4	<b>Retain the important information</b>	<b>(3) 15%</b>	<b>(7) 35%</b>	<b>(7) 35%</b>	<b>(3) 15%</b>	

There are only 1 (5%) correspondent able easily to assign and intended meaning of utterance. The other correspondents consider that assign and intended meaning is the strongly big matter. Moreover there are 45% correspondents got difficulties in determine the meaning of the idioms. From interview correspondents explain that basically they able to identify the utterance, yet they did have enough knowledge to understand the exactly meaning of those idiom. The only way to face this case, they way to understand the contextual situation regarding the speaker attitude and orientation.

Responding the information is the item of question that commonly asked in the listening section. Test takers were asked to underline the responded information that state in the conversation or talks. Moreover the respond information directly stated. There are 40% correspondents have problem in identify the respond information. However there are not any students agree

that determine the respond information is quite easy. Correspondents had good confidence in stating that identify the literal meaning of the utterance. Even nobody said that it is too easy; yet, correspondents did not have big problem in understanding the literal meaning. The stated data show that there are 15% stated very difficult, 35% stated difficult, 35% standard and 15% easy.

In the long conversation and talks, Test takers are asked to catch the important information. In this part each conversation and talks are followed by several question. That why test taker supposed to be keep in main all the important information that sated during the talk and talks. However test taker not must pick every single details of information. Because basically the general information are asked in this part. Questioner data show that the range of correspondents' ability in retain the important information is in the standard level.

## CONCLUSION

1. In Preparation Test , The student consider to prepare their self before take test. It is proved by 60 % students prepare before the test. However 20% respondents disagree that they prepare their self before the test. It is show around 20% students did not consider that preparation before the test is big matter. In the item number 2, about 40% students agree that they realize that preparation is very important but they have not enough time to set up their preparation time. From interview this case is caused by their own business related to the academic issues.
2. In listening Section, The 40 correspondents choose in the standard option was give enough evidence that students did not get difficulties in catching the general idea of the speaker. However in interview correspondents state that they got problem in the detail of speaker talk about. Even 55% students did not believe that conclude the speaker topic as big matter, there are 30 % students still had problem in generalize the conclusion of the topic. To understand the speaker talk about is not big mater for English student; it is evidenced by statically data that shows 40% students understand to the speaker. Surprisingly there are only 1 (5%) that understand the native is still difficult. The statistical data says that there are 15% correspondents able to determine the variant of speaker in other hand only 5% students assume that differentiates the Varian is big issues.
3. The most difficulties that occurs by the test taker are : 1) Catch the speaker idea ,2) identify idiomatic expression,3) Identify the cohesive marker, 4) Assign a literal meaning

to the utterance,5) Retain the important information.

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