Vocabulary test Strategies used by the Students to answer Vocabulary Test the Reading Comprehension of TOEFL

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Abstract: Test of English as a foreign Language or TOEFL is a standardized test of English for non-native speaker. It consists of three parts or three sections of tests. In Reading Comprehension test, it consists of vocabulary test. To get better result of score, it needs strategies. The purposes of this study are to know the strategies used by the students to answer the vocabulary test on reading section of TOEFL, to know the most strategy used by the students, to know the least strategy used by the students and to know the distribution of strategies used by the students to answer the Vocabulary test of Reading Comprehension of the TOEFL. The researcher used descriptive qualitative research. The subject was twelve students. The instrument was questionnaire that consisted of thirty questions. Data analyzes technique was by using mean score. The result of the research showed that; (1) students used all strategies to answer the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. (2) the most strategies used by the students was 'Looking for contextual clues to the meaning of unknown words.(3) the least strategy used by the students to answer vocabulary test was 'Developing a new vocabulary study system, and (4) the distribution of the strategy number 1 was 3.88,strategy number 2 was 3.61, number 3 was 2.94, number four was 2.91, strategy number 5 was3.88, strategy number six was 3.47, strategy number seven was 3.69, strategy number eight was 3.02, strategy number nine was 3.00 and the last strategy was 3.13.
Keywords: Vocabulary test Strategies, Reading Comprehension, TOEFL

INTRODUCTION

English is used as a measurement for a person who wants to continue his study to overseas where the countries' main language is English. The person should master English in a certain level that is measured by an international standardized of test that is called 'Test of English as a Foreign Language or known in society as TOEFL. The TOEFL consists of three parts materials or three section. They are Listening section, Writing section and Reading Comprehension section. Each of the three section has different limited and separated time where each time can not be integrated with the other (Shape, 2007). The Reading section consists of Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary. In Reading Comprehension consists of passages and questions about the contents of the passages (Brasell, 2008). Participants of the test should read the passages in order to find out new clues that are helpful in answering the questions. For Vocabulary questions, participants must complete the vocabulary items very quickly in order to save as much as possible the time. In this case, generally, re-reading does not help, so either they know the answer immediately or they do not know it at all.(Carol King and Nancy stanley, 2002). The students of English Department of Mulawarman University should master of English in listening, speaking reading and writing in order to practice it in daily communication, and one of the identities about it, they should also pass the Test of English as a Foreign language or TOEFL by the passing grade of four hundred and fifty before they get final examination of their theses. In order to be a success in getting the passing grade of TOEFL from language laboratory of English Department, they need strategies in doing the test, especially on Vocabulary test of reading section. So it is necessary to know the strategies that they use to answer the vocabulary test of a Reading section of the TOEFL. The researcher formulates the research questions as follows: What are the strategies used by the students to answer the vocabulary test in reading section of TOEFL? Which strategy is the most used by the students to answer the vocabulary test in Reading section? Which strategy is the least used by the students to answer the vocabulary test in reading section? How is the distribution of the strategies used by the students to answer the vocabulary test in reading section of TOEFL?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research is intended to analyze the strategies used by students to answer vocabulary test in reading a section of TOEFL. Therefore the researcher applied descriptive qualitative as the research design. (W.Creswell, 2008) defines qualitative as a research process which aimed to analyze social issues based on the observation and presented in details description formed by words.

Qualitative research is conducted to describe and understand social episodes from the stance of participants (P.D., Leedy & Ormond, 2001). Thus in relation to this research, the researcher focused on observation of the data with the purpose to describe the types of strategies in answering the vocabulary test in reading a section of TOEFL. The kinds of strategies are strategies that are stated by Carol King and Nancy Stanley in their book of 'Building Skills for TOEFL.

Research Subject

The subject in this research was the group students in English Department of Mulawarman University who had studied the material of Reading Comprehension for the Test of English as a foreign Language or TOEFL. The students had followed TOEFL as requirements before they face final examination of their thesis. The total number of the subjects was twelve students. They had passed Seminar one and seminar two for their thesis. They entered in English Department of Mulawarman University in the year of 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012.

Research Instrument

An instrument is a means that allows the researcher to measure, examine, or record data (W.Creswell, 2008). The instrument of the research was vocabulary test strategies and questionnaire. Vocabulary Test strategies were given to the participant not to measure the achievement of vocabulary, but only to know the strategies used by them. Thus, related to this study, the researcher used himself as the key instrument with the combination between conceptual and theoretical knowledge of the researcher about the vocabulary test strategies used by the students in answering the vocabulary part in reading comprehension of TOEFL. The researcher gave the vocabulary test and questionnaire. Vocabulary test consisted of twenty items in the form of multiple choice test. This test was not scored but it was only to see what strategies that they used to answer. After the students answered each item, they should choose what number of strategies they used. The second instrument was

Questionnaire. Questionnaires refer to a series of questions asked to individuals to obtain statistically useful information about a given topic (Saris, W.E and Gallhofer, 2014). The content of questionnaire was taken from the book of Building Skills for TOEFL by Carol King and Nancy Stanley. There were ten strategies that should be chosen by students. Each of the strategies was enlarged into three questions that were used in the questionnaire. So the questionnaire consisted of thirty questions. It was a closed-ended question Likert-type scale measure test that examined the frequency with 'Always the score was five. 'Usually', the score was four. 'Sometimes', the score was three. 'Ever or occasionally' the score was two, and 'Never' the score was one (L.Wuensch, 2005)

Data Collection Techniques

In doing the data collection, the researcher conducted several steps as the following: In collecting the data, the researcher gave vocabulary test to the students. Then the researcher also gave the questionnaire to the students. The researcher asked the students to answer the vocabulary test. The students were also asked to choose the strategy used to answer the number of the vocabulary test at the end of each number. The researcher collected the results of the test and the questionnaire. The researcher constructed the data and tabulated it. Finally, the researcher analyzed the data.

Data Analysis

The data in this thesis was analyzed based on the flow model diagram by (Miles, 1994). They defined analysis as consisting of three concurrent flows activity; data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction is processing of selecting, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming raw data from writing notes. The way of data analysis in this study is to find out the Vocabulary test strategies used by the students by finding out the result of the questionnaire.

FINDINGS

In researching the object, the researcher found the vocabulary test strategies used by the students to answer vocabulary test on the reading comprehension of TOEFL by using a questionnaire that consists of thirty questions that should be answered by the subjects. Thirty questions were enlarged from ten statements of Vocabulary test strategies adopted from the book of Building Skill of TOEFL by Carol King and Nancy Stanley. The ten strategies are : looking for contextual clues to the meaning of unknown words, Noticing the grammatical function of the words, Learning the meaning of common stems and affixes, Looking up the unknown words in dictionary, Developing a new vocabulary study system, Focusing on the

underlined word(s) and the four possible answers, Looking for the most exact synonym, Remembering the trick that the TOEFL writers might employ, Guessing because of no sure of an answer and Working quickly because of using time wisely. To answer the research question, the researcher used five types of Likert Scale to score the students' answer in the questionnaire. In administrating the questionnaire, the researcher used scale one until five. The scale represented, Always, usually, sometimes, occasionally and never. Based on the responded questionnaire, the students used all strategies in answering Vocabulary Test of Reading Comprehension in the TOEFL.

Students' Vocabulary Test Strategies

The researcher used the questionnaire based on the Building Skills for the TOEFL by(Carol King and Nancy stanley, 2002). The questionnaire consisted of ten items question and each item of the question was enlarged into three identities of the question. So there was thirty question in the questionnaire. Based on the responses of the questionnaire, the students used all strategies in answering vocabulary test of Reading comprehension. The distribution of strategies are as follows:

Strategies Of Looking For Contextual Clues To The Meaning Of Unknown Words

Questions on this strategy were constructed on the item number one, two, and three. Question number one is asking about determining the meaning of unknown words when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number two is asking about expanding vocabulary efficiently when the students are answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number three is asking about the knowledge of when and where the word should be used when the students are answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. The average result of question number one, number two and number three that asking about looking for contextual clues to the meaning of unknown word showed that the students usually used it. The average mean score was 3.88 (M= 3.88) and it refers to the second choice of a questionnaire that said 'usually' by the score of four.

Noticing The Grammatical Function Of Words

Questions on this strategy were constructed on the item number four, five, and six. Question number **four** was asking about the Grammatical function of the word when the students are answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number **five** was asking about Differentiating among the class of word as noun, adjective, verb or adverb when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading

comprehension of TOEFL. Question number **six** was asking about the Simple form, Past form, and Past Participle form when the students are answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. The average result of question number **four**, number **five** and number **six** that asking about looking for contextual clues to the meaning of unknown word showed that the students usually used it. The average mean score was 3.61 (M= 3.61) and it refers to the second choice of a questionnaire that said 'usually' by the score of four.

Learning The Meaning Of Common Stems And Affixes

Questions on this strategy were constructed on the item number seven, eight, and nine. Question number **seven** was asking about recognizing the morpheme of words when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number **eight** was asking about seeing free morpheme and bound morpheme when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number **nine** was asking about seeing root, prefix, and suffix when the students are answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. The average result of question number **seven**, number **eight** and number **nine** that asking about looking for contextual clues to the meaning of unknown word showed that the students sometimes used it. The average mean score was 2.94 (M= 2.94) and it refers to the **third** choice of a questionnaire that said 'sometimes' by the score of three.

Looking Up The Unknown Words In College Dictionary

Questions on this strategy were constructed on the item number ten, eleven, and twelve. Question number **ten** was asking about Looking up the unknown words in Dictionaries when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number **eleven** was asking about using a pocket dictionary when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number **twelve** was asking about looking up in the online dictionary when the students are answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. The average result of question number **ten**, number **eleven** and number **twelve** that asking about looking for an unknown word in College dictionaries showed that the students sometimes used it. The average mean score was 2.91 (M= 2.94) and it refers to the **third** choice of a questionnaire that said 'sometimes' by the score of three.

Developing A New Vocabulary Study System

Questions on this strategy were constructed on the item number thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen. Question number **thirteen** was asking about several kinds of suffixes in different words when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number **fourteen** was asking about the changing the class or words when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number **fifteen** was asking about making the definition of the word of vocabulary when the students are answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. The average result of question number **thirteen**, number **fourteen** and number **fifteen** that asking about Developing a new vocabulary Study System showed that the students sometimes used it. The average mean score was 2.88 (M= 2.88) and it refers to the **third** choice of a questionnaire that said 'sometimes' by the score of three.

Focusing On The Underlined Words And The Possible Answer

Questions on this strategy were constructed on the item number sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen. Question number **sixteen** was asking about Relating the underlined word with the answer when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number **seventeen** was asking about thinking to replace the underlined word with one of the answers when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number **eighteen** was asking about eliminating one vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. The average result of question number **sixteen**, number **seventeen** and number **eighteen** that asking about showed that the students sometimes used it. The average mean score was 3.47 (M= 3.47) and it refers to the **second** choice of a questionnaire that said 'usually,' by the score of four.

Looking For The Most Exact Synonym

Questions on this strategy were constructed on the item number nineteen, twenty, and twenty-one. Question number **nineteen** was asking about understanding the underlined word and the four answer when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number **twenty** was asking about reading all the answer before determining the choice when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number tw**enty-one** was asking about choosing the closest meaning of the underlined word when the students are answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. The average result of question number **nineteen**, number **twenty** and number **twenty-one** that asking about choosing the closest meaning of the underlined words showed that the students **always** used it. The average mean score was

3.69 (M= 3.69) and it refers to the **first** choice of a questionnaire that said **'always'** by the score of **five**.

Reminding the Tricks that TOEFL Writer Might Employ

Questions on this strategy were constructed on the item number twenty-two, twenty-three, and twenty-four. Question number **twenty-two** was asking about keeping eyes on the questions and answer sheet only when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number **twenty-three** was asking about looking around the room or other people when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number tw**enty-four** was asking about marking first when getting difficult question when the students are answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. The average result of question number **twenty-two**, number **twenty-three** and number **twenty-four** that asking about reminding the tricks that TOEF writers might employ showed that the students **usually** used it. The average mean score was 3.69 (M= 3.92) and it refers to **second** choice of questionnaire that said **'usually'** by the score of **four**.

Guessing Because of Not Sure Of an Answer

Questions on this strategy were constructed on the item number was asking about leaving the answer the answer blank when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number **twenty-six** was asking about guessing immediately because they don't know the answer when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number tw**enty-seven** was asking about Having the smallest hunch about the correct answer when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. The average result of question number **twenty-five**, number **twenty-six** and number **twenty-seven** that asking about reminding the tricks that TOEF writers might employ showed that the students **usually** used it. The average mean score was 3.00 (M= 3.00) and it refers to **second** choice of questionnaire that said **'sometimes'** by the score of **three**.

Guessing Because Of Not Sure Of An Answer

Questions on this strategy were constructed on the item number twenty-five, twenty-six, and twenty-seven. Question number **twenty-five** was asking about leaving the answer the answer blank when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL.

Question number **twenty-six** was asking about guessing immediately because they don't know the answer when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number tw**enty-seven** was asking about Having the smallest hunch about the correct answer when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. The average result of question number **twenty-five**, number twenty-six and number twenty-seven that asking about guessing because of not sure of an answer showed that the students **sometimes** used it. The average mean score was 3.00 (M= 3.00) and it refers to **second** choice of questionnaire that said **'sometimes'** by the score of **three**.

Working Quickly Because Of Using Time Wisely

Questions on this strategy were constructed on the item number twenty-eight, twenty-nine, and thirty. Question number **twenty-eight** was asking about focusing on the easier answer when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number **twenty-nine** was asking about thinking carefully and needing more time when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. Question number thirty was asking about completing on one item less than twenty-second when the students were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. The average result of question number **twenty-eight**, number **twenty-nine** and number **thirty** that asking about working quickly because of using time wisely showed that the students **usually** used it. The average mean score was 3.13 (M= 3.13) and it refers to **second** choice of questionnaire that said **'usually'** by the score of **four**.

DISCUSSION

After researcher presented data finding in previous discussion, found that all respondents stated that they used all strategies in answering vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL. This statement was proved by their answer of questionnaire that the average score of each item of strategy more than 2.00 it meant that at least they sometimes used the strategy in answering the vocabulary test. From the distribution the above data, it can be shown that the strategy most used by the respondent was strategy number one that discussed about 'Looking for contextual clues to the meaning of unknown words' that were resulted from questionnaire number one, two and three. It got the highest score that is 140, by the average result was 3.88, that was belongs to high level. The lowest score was got by strategy number 5 by the score was 104 with the average result was 2.88 and belongs to moderate result. So the least strategy that was used by the students when they

were answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension was 'Developing a new vocabulary study system' that include question number thirteen, fourteen and fifteen that were discussing about understanding suffixes in di different words, thinking about the class of words and making definition of the word of vocabulary. Relating the result of previous research and the result of this research, it could be concluded that vocabulary is the basic knowledge of a language and especially English. The user of English will be able to apply the English if he or she has enough vocabulary, and they will be easier to carry out the English in the language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The vocabulary that consists of content words and function words and all kinds of words also consisted in reading passages of books. To reach enough vocabulary, it needs some strategies. Strategies are also needed in vocabulary test in reading comprehension or reading section of Test of English as Foreign language or TOEFL.

CONCLUSION

Relying upon the research questions, research findings, and discussion; the conclusion of this research are as follows: Students used all strategies of vocabulary test in answering the reading comprehension of TOEFL, The most strategy used by the students in answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL was 'Looking for clues the meaning of unknown words, The least strategy used by the students in answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL was 'Developing a new vocabulary study system, The distribution of students' strategies in answering the vocabulary test of reading comprehension of TOEFL were: Strategy number one was 3.88, strategy number two was 3.61, strategy number three was 2.94, strategy number four was 2.91, strategy number five was 2.88, strategy number six was 3.47, strategy number seven was 3.69, strategy number eight was 3.02, strategy number nine was 3.00, strategy number nine was 3.00, and the last strategy was 3.13.

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