Reading Handbook Development Based on TOEIC For Balikpapan State Polytechnic Students (Research and Development Study)

Elisabeth Milaningrum[1], Masrul Huda[2]

[1,2]Balikpapan State Polytechnic, Balikpapan, East Kalimantan, Indonesia
elisabeth.milaningrum@poltekba.ac.id[1], masrul.huda@poltekba.ac.id[2]

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Reading Handbook;
Students' Need;
TOEIC;
Research and
Development.

This research aims to develop the existing reading handbook that is related to the students' needs and students' English proficiency at Balikpapan State Polytechnic. The research method used research and development (R & D) for developing a supplementary existing reading handbook based on TOEIC. The R & D study is divided into 2 stages: (1) exploration stage, consisting of library research, document analysis, and needs analysis. Based on the findings of the exploration stage, it can be concluded that: (a) the students have difficulty in analyzing the question pattern of completion and error recognition; (b) the students do not master the vocabularies of TOEIC reading comprehension ;(c) the students do not familiar with the context of TOEIC reading text; (d) the students have difficulty to analyze the pattern of TOEIC reading comprehension question; and (2) development stage, consisting of numerous steps aimed at designing the supplementary existing reading handbook based on TOEIC : (a) designing prototype based on the result of exploration stage; (b) experts' validation; (c) trying out the prototype; (d) final revision. The result shows that supplementary existing reading handbook based on TOEIC can help the students increase their TOEIC reading score and useful in their job field.

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A. INTRODUCTION

Along with globalization in the industrial revolution 4.0, every university and higher vocational education graduate is required to be able to compete in the competitive employment field. The stakeholders either national or multinational/international companies require some qualifications for job seekers to have good competency both hard and soft skills, as well as good English proficiency. The English proficiency of college graduates seems like one of the important criteria that must be fulfilled by job seekers. The parameters used as an evaluation tool to measure English proficiency are in the form of standardized tests. English competency tests like TOEIC, TOEFL, IELTS, GMAT, and others.

Testing is a method of assessment procedure used all over the world to evaluate or quantify the degree of a learner's skill, knowledge, or performance in a certain topic (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). Language tests are used to assess test-takers' achievement in term of language skills. The Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) has been one of the most widely used language tests and most reliable measures of English proficiency over a

decade (Educational Testing Services, 2005). The TOEIC test is an English-language proficiency test for people whose native languages are not English (Educational Testing Services, 2015). The TOEIC test is an English-language proficiency test measuring the everyday English skills and indicating how well people can communicate in English with others in real-life situations. TOEIC reading test shows a certain level of validity and reliability (Imsa-ard, 2019).

Moreover, the test agrees with authenticity as the language used is natural and somehow related to real-life situations. Preparing students for international standardized tests like TOEFL, TOEIC, and IELTS is often considered unethical because of concerns over the issues of narrowing the curriculum, overemphasizing test-strategy instruction and mechanical practice, neglecting high-order thinking skills, and causing test-wiseness, therefore it is needed a foundation in the metacognitively-based approach to offer lecturers a variety of activities dealing with how to both teach the TOEIC listening and reading test interactively and to prepare their students for success (Yi-Ching 2010). The students need appropriate material to make easier and familiar while doing the TOEIC test which is supported by relevance strategies in this material.

TOEIC test was first used in Japan in the late 1970s and then has spread rapidly throughout the world (Powers & Powers, 2015). The TOEIC test is administered by ETS. The TOEIC test is designed to measure daily English skills used in the business environment and workplace, therefore it does not demand specialized knowledge of English beyond what people know in their everyday lives. TOEIC has been widely used on an international scale because of its recognized validity and reliability internationally.

TOEIC has been chosen as a parameter to measure students' English proficiency at Balikpapan State Polytechnic, therefore the graduates' English proficiency at Balikpapan State Polytechnic can be measured by international standards. Balikpapan State Polytechnic chooses to use TOEIC because the question types in TOEIC are more equivalent to the abilities of higher vocational education students. Moreover, the material in TOEIC is more directed to the best practice of communication skills in the job field/industry. The TOEIC scores are mainly used for both educational and vocational purposes. To illustrate regarding educational purposes, many educational institutions, particularly those in non- native English-speaking countries, trust TOEIC scores to guide their screening decisions for prospective students (Bresnihan, 2012).

To elaborate in terms of vocational purposes, obtaining a TOEIC qualification will be beneficial because many companies are increasingly using TOEIC scores as a gatekeeper to make hiring decision for prospective employees whose scores meet the pre-determined requirement, as well as when considering employee promotion (Oliveri & Tannenbaum, 2017). TOEIC has been adopted as a high-stakes test by many companies in the world, openness about its validity will facilitate establishment of ethics for the shake of its test-users and test -takers (Daza & Suzuki, 2004). TOEIC has been chosen as a parameter for achieving English proficiency for Balikpapan State Polytechnic graduates with a passing standard of 450 following the minimum standards required by stakeholders for the Diploma degree, therefore hopefully they can pass the selection for the job recruitment administration.

Tian, as cited in (Cohen, 2006) reported that most test-takers do not understand the format of the test and lack skills in reading. According to Liu (2013) , TOEIC test is a multiple-choice test and comprises 200 questions divided into two sections: Listening section and Reading section. Each part contains 100 questions. Scores range from 5-495 marks in each part, and 990 marks altogether. In the Listening section, test-takers are tested on how well they understand spoken English. The test-takers will need to answer the questions based on a variety statements, questions, conversations, and talks recorded in English. In the Reading section, test-takers will

be tested on how well they understand written English including three parts: Incomplete Sentence, Text Completion, and Reading Comprehension. In the TOEIC Reading section, there are three major parts.

For the first part contains 40 multiple-choice questions of discrete sentence-length gap-filling exercises. In this part, recognition of grammatical rules and vocabulary are tested. In the second part, there will be texts with gaps to be filled. In each text, there are 3 to 4 multiple-choice questions. Both grammar and vocabulary are also tested in this part. In the final part, there are 48 questions on several texts testing reading comprehension. For Single passages, there are 28 questions with 7 to 10 reading texts and 2 to 5 questions each. For Double passages, there are 20 questions with 4 pairs of reading texts with 5 questions per pair. The sample test indicates that the test-takers will read a variety of texts and answer several different types of reading comprehension. For time allocation, the entire reading section will last 75 minutes (Educational Testing Services, 2016). In short, test-takers will be evaluated in their ability to use English grammar and vocabulary in a relatively formal manner (Trew, 2006). Business letters, short news items, and advertisements are used as stimuli in the reading, as TOEIC is claimed to be used in the business environment and workplace.

For the first time in 2019, TOEIC has been used as a reference for English proficiency for Balikpapan State Polytechnic graduates, and of course, it is not an easy thing for Balikpapan State Polytechnic students to get a minimum score of 450. Before using TOEIC to measure the student's English proficiency, Balikpapan State Polytechnic used TOEFL from 2011 until 2018 to measure the student's English proficiency. However, based on the researcher's preliminary research and the requirement from industry stated that TOEIC is more suitable for the higher vocational education because the consideration is the context or content aspect. TOEIC is designed to measure the ability to communicate in everyday life.

This is reflected in the choice of text to listen and read, which is more related to the world of business, such as schedules, advertising, meetings, writing letters, and so forth. The reading text further describes the world of business, however in contrast, TOEFL designed for academic needs, so the context is also about the world of college. This is seen in texts taken from biological texts, history, phrases, astronomy, and so forth. In addition, the topics in the listening also about conversations between student-lecturers or public lectures. Therefore, TOEIC is relevance and more appropriate used as the English proficiency tool for the world of business or company because of its context and practicality according to the initial design. When speaking skills of the employee are required, it is proposed that there is an additional test of the oral interview that to detect the speaking skill.

Based on the data analysis of the TOEIC scores of graduates in 2019 and 2020, many students had lower TOEIC scores in the reading section than in the listening section and they had some difficulties in the TOEIC reading section. Then, the researchers conducted a needs analysis of the students through interviews and distributing questionnaires. Based on the result of students needs analysis, there are some problems faced by the students during doing the TOEIC reading test, such as: 1) the students have difficulties in analyzing the question pattern of completion and error recognition; 2) the students do not master the vocabularies of TOEIC; 3) the students are not familiar with the context of reading text in reading comprehension of TOEIC; 4) the students have difficulty to analyze the pattern of reading comprehension question of TOEIC. Reading is an important part of understanding as test-takers. Reading includes grammar which is quite complicated. According to (Saaristo, 2015), grammar is the heart of language: grammar and its role in language learning among university students. It means that grammar is

a foundation in language as a structure and reading is a key to understand a language. The test-takers of English should understand the structure and vocabularies related to the TOEIC test.

Reading comprehension is not merely a process of recognizing and understanding words and their meanings. It involves a more complex cognitive process where students could understand the meaning of written language, link it to their prior knowledge, and build up a mental representation of the information that they have read (Keenan et al., 2008). The indicators that denote the success of students' reading comprehension are their ability to respond and convert the information that is presented in the text. Nuttall (1982) suggests that there are five reading aspects that must be mastered by the students such as: determine the main idea of the text, find specific information provided in the text, make reference, identify reference, and understand the detailed information. Further aspects of reading by categorizing decoding, vocabulary knowledge, syntactic processing, text-structure knowledge, main idea detection, background knowledge, and comprehension strategies as the aspects of reading comprehension (Ridge, 2011).

Based on the results of the needs analysis showed that Balikpapan State Polytechnic students needed a specific reading handbook related to the TOEIC to review some materials of TOEIC reading questions as well as some strategies for answering these TOEIC reading question to make students easier to do the TOEIC test and hopefully, it can increase the TOEIC students' scores, especially in TOEIC reading section. However, based on the result of pre-observation of the existing reading handbook for Balikpapan State Polytechnic students shows : 1) the teaching material existing reading handbook only discuss the strategy of TOEFL reading comprehension; 2) the activities on existing reading handbook did not include to discuss grammar related to the reading text; 3) the materials on existing reading handbook only discuss about academic purposes better than functional text, which is more best practice that will be used in job field/industries; 4) There was only limited exercise and discussion in each strategy in reading. Therefore, it can be concluded that the existing reading handbook is not suitable for the students to prepare them to do the TOEIC test in the last semester before they graduate from the Balikpapan State Polytechnic.

To overcome those problems, the researcher conducted R & D study to develop reading handbook based on TOEIC for Balikpapan State Polytechnic students as one of the media in the teaching-learning process. Teaching materials should be useful for students, relevant to the students' need, stimulate students' curiosity to learn, and consist of activities and tasks, which worth to them (Ellis & Johnson, 2007). The researchers will develop the reading handbook based on TOEIC, which is following the pre-observation results, which stated that the reading comprehension score is quite low compared with the TOEIC listening section.

The researchers reviewed the material and specific strategies for TOEIC reading questions in this developing TOEIC reading handbook for Balikpapan State Polytechnic students, so that the results of the development of this handbook could help the difficulty of Balikpapan State Polytechnic students in solving TOEIC reading test questions, which later are also expected to increase their TOEIC scores to pass the minimum standards of the qualifications required by stakeholders. This current research was intended to find out the students' target needs of reading handbook for Balikpapan State Polytechnic and then developed a supplementary reading handbook based on TOEIC. The study aims of this study are 1) to investigate the quality of reading handbook used to teach Balikpapan State Polytechnic students based on an analysis of students' needs and students' difficulty to do TOEIC reading test, and 2) describe how to develop reading handbook based on TOEIC for Balikpapan State Polytechnic students.

B. METHODS

The subject of this research was the sixth semester of Balikpapan State Polytechnic students. Since the outcome of this research is supplementary reading handbook based on TOEIC, therefore the research methodology used research and development study. Borg & Gall (1983) add that R & D is an industry-based development model which used to design new products and procedures, which they are systematically field-tested or tried out, evaluated, revised, and refined until they meet specified criteria of effectiveness, quality, or similar standard. Therefore, it can be concluded that R & D is a process of research to design new products and procedures through systematic steps to achieve the specified criteria and quality. The systematical process is field tested or tries out, evaluating, revising, and refining.

There are two steps in the R & D process that consist of exploration stage and development stage. The exploration stage consists of some activities, such as: library research, needs analysis, and book analysis. Meanwhile, the activities in the development stage consists of designing the prototype, expert validation, trying out the prototype, and final revision. In the exploration stage, the researcher took the data to know about the students' needs and the quality of the existing reading handbook. Meanwhile, the development stage consists of some activities such as: developing draft or prototype, evaluating by expert judgment, and revising the draft of the prototype. During the exploration stage, the researcher collected the data to determine the quality of the draft or prototype whether the draft or prototype has met with students needs or not.

A technique of collecting data is a process of gaining data to find the answer or the result of the research. In the exploration stage, the researcher collected the data taken from interviews, document analysis, and questionnaire. In document analysis, the researchers analyzed the existing reading handbook to find the quality of that reading handbook. Then, the researchers delivered a questionnaire to sixth semester students after conducting the placement test to gain a deep information related to students' needs. Whereas, in the development stage, the researchers started to develop a prototype or draft. That prototype or draft was evaluated by the expert judgment to find the quality of it and to find out whether the prototype or draft met the specific needs. The prototype or draft was also tried out at the collage.

There are several ways of collecting data from the data sources, they are: interviews, observations, questionnaire, virtual Forum Group Discussion (FGD), and expert judgment sheets. The researchers did interview to know the quality of supplementary reading handbook based on TOEIC. Then, the observation was done by the researchers to observe the implementation of proposed reading handbook in virtual classroom and make field notes. The questionnaire was delivered to sixth semester students after conducting try out. It was aimed to know the students' perspective towards proposed TOEIC reading handbook materials. Then, virtual Forum Group Discussion (FGD) was done after conducting try out. The participants of virtual FGD were some sixth semester students, English lecturers, the researchers, and ELT and TOEIC experts.

The purpose is to know the quality of the proposed TOEIC reading handbook. While conducting virtual Forum Group Discussion (FGD) and interviews used a list question for FGD and interview as an instrument, and the virtual classroom observation used documentation. The last step of collecting the data in development stage was an expert judgment sheet. After developing a draft or prototype, evaluating draft or prototype were judged by some experts to know whether the draft or prototype has met with students needs or not. The instrument used in developing the final draft or prototype was a quantitative questionnaire and for evaluating

the result of the prototype used questionnaire either test or non-test to know the progress result of developing the reading handbook based on TOEIC.

For analyzing the data, the researchers used the Interactive Model. In the exploration stage, the process includes the following steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion/ verification. The result of data analysis was presented in the form of describing existing problems and interpreting them into general conclusion. In the development stage, the quantitative and qualitative method was used to analyze the data. The data taken from observations, interviews, and virtual FGD were analyzed by using a qualitative method. The process includes three steps, they are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Then, the quantitative method was used to analyze the result of the questionnaire. The researcher used descriptive technique analyzing which means that the way of analyzing the data is to know the percentage only(Miles et al., 2014).

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of previous analysis of existing reading handbook show: 1) the teaching material existing reading handbook only discuss the strategy of TOEFL reading comprehension. Since there are some different formats of reading comprehension between TOEFL and TOEIC; 2) the activities on existing reading handbook do not include to discuss grammar related to the reading text. Many students face difficulties to analyze the question related to verb tense, class of words, preposition, degree of comparison in adjective, adverb of frequency, conjunction, conditional sentence, and determiner; 3) the materials on existing reading handbook only discuss about academic purposes better than functional text which is best practice that will be used in job field/industries. Since many industries that use reading material which is more related to the world of business, such as schedules, advertising, meetings, writing letters, and so forth, however in contrast, the existing reading handbook only designed for academic needs; 4) There is only limited exercise and discussion in each strategy in reading. Students need detail discussion in each strategy in reading section related to TOEIC. Moreover, the results of needs analysis show: 1) the students have difficulty in analyzing the question pattern of completion and error recognition; 2) the students do not master the vocabularies of TOEIC reading comprehension; 3) the students do not familiar with the context of reading text in reading comprehension of TOEIC; 4) the students have difficulty to analyze the pattern of reading comprehension question of TOEIC.

After analyzing the existing reading handbook and students' need, the researchers designed a prototype product to get a better result and to know whether the prototype has met with the students need and can be tried out or not. The prototype is validated by the experts of ELT and TOEIC trainer. The result shows the prototype can be tried out to sixth semester students to get feasibility of the prototype. At the end of each tryout, virtual focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted to get the detailed information towards the prototype and questionnaires were delivered at the end of try out to know the responses from students after learning by using the prototype. The results of try out show that the aims and contents of prototype correspond to students' need and it can be used as supplementary reading handbook based on TOEIC.

Some of the preliminary research have some similar result with this research. One of the studies on TOEIC conducted by (Fauziati, 2016) who stated that mastery of vocabulary is essential for success in the TOEIC test since it occupies 50% of the test. She got a complete description and explanation of several aspects related to the items in TOIEC reading, especially structure and reading comprehension taken from several TOEIC   preparation   books that

published by Barron's Educational Series, Prentice Hall, and Longman showed that: 1) the linguistic components asked in the Completion and Error recognition section included questions about vocabulary mastery (54.34%), class of words (15%) (verb, noun, adjective), verb tense (11.33%), determiner (5.33%), preposition (4%), conjunction (3.67%), degree of comparison in adjective (3.33%), and conditional sentence (3%); 2) the reading context in the reading comprehension questions includes business, manufacturing, finance and budgeting, offices, personnel, purchasing, housing/corporate property, travel, dining out, entertainment, and health; 3) the pattern of reading comprehension questions includes: a) main ideas and the possibility of the right title, b) explicit information in the text, c) implied information, and d) and the purpose of writing so that it can be concluded that vocabulary mastery is very important for success in the TOEIC test because 50% of it is in the form of vocabulary mastery. Meanwhile, (Tokunaga, 2008) stated that many of the TOEIC teachings at the school are not recognized by the legally held TOEIC test. It found that most test-takers did not have experience in doing TOEIC before the actual test. Therefore, it is important in supplementary reading handbook to review in detail the component part and questions in TOEIC.

Reading handbook based on TOEIC is designed as a supplementary handbook for Balikpapan State Polytechnic students. To get feasibility of the draft prototype, it was evaluated by the ELT experts, tried out to students, and revised stage. The final draft becomes the supplementary reading handbook based on TOEIC which is used by students of Balikpapan State Polytechnic. The study tries to answer the research questions as follow: 1) the quality of existing handbook, and 2) the development of reading handbook based on TOEIC as supplementary reading handbook for Balikpapan State Polytechnic students. To develop the reading handbook based on TOEIC, the researchers did the R & D process that consist of exploration stage and development stage. In the exploration stage the researchers did library research about TOEIC and R&D study. Then, the researchers did needs analysis by using delivering a questionnaire to sixth semester students after conducting the placement test to gain a deep information related to students' needs. Based on the result of that questionnaire, it can be concluded that 80% students have lower score in TOEIC reading section.

There are some problems faced by students during doing the TOEIC reading test, such as: 1) the students have difficulties in analyzing the question pattern of completion and error recognition; 2) the students do not master the vocabularies of TOEIC; 3) the students are not familiar with the context of reading text in reading comprehension of TOEIC; 4) the students have difficulty to analyze the pattern of reading comprehension question of TOEIC. To solve those problem, therefore the researchers made document analysis from the existing reading handbook to find the quality of that reading handbook. Based on the result of document analysis, it can be stated that: 1) the teaching material existing reading handbook only discuss the strategy of TOEFL reading comprehension; 2) the activities on existing reading handbook did not include to discuss grammar related to the reading text; 3) the materials on existing reading handbook only discuss about academic purposes better than functional text, which is more best practice that will be used in job field/industries; 4) There was only limited exercise and discussion in each strategy in reading. Therefore, it can be concluded that the existing reading handbook is not suitable for the students to prepare them to do the TOEIC.

After doing the exploration stage, then the researchers did the development stage that consists developing draft or prototype, evaluating by expert judgment, and revising the draft of the prototype. The researchers started to develop draft of reading handbook based on TOEIC. Then, the draft of reading handbook was evaluated by the expert judgment which consist ELT

expert, and TOEIC trainer in order to find the quality of it and based on the result of the judgment expert, it is stated that the reading handbook based on TOEIC met the specific needs, therefore the researcher tried out this reading handbook in collage. After conducting try out, the researchers analyzed the quality of supplementary reading handbook based on TOEIC by using interview, delivered questionnaire, observation in virtual classroom and virtual Forum Group Discussion (FGD)in order to observe the implementation of proposed reading handbook and also to know the students' perspective towards proposed TOEIC reading handbook materials. The last step of collecting the data in development stage was an expert judgment sheet. After developing a draft or prototype, evaluating draft or prototype were judged by some experts to know whether the draft or prototype has met with students needs or not.

After being tried out, the strength and weaknesses of the draft prototype are found. The strength will be explained as follows: 1) reading handbook based on TOEIC is completed with explanation in each strategy in TOEIC reading section such as : completion and recognition(that showed explanation about mastering vocabulary , class of words (verb, noun, adjective), verb tense, determiner, preposition , conjunction , degree of comparison in adjective , and conditional sentence) and reading comprehension text related to the world of business, such as schedules, advertising, meetings, writing letters. Moreover, this module also giving introduction text about business, manufacturing, finance and budgeting, offices, personnel, purchasing, housing/corporate property, travel, dining out, entertainment, and health to make the students familiar about this topic on reading text on TOEIC; 2) reading handbook contains materials which are suitable to student's need and students' difficulty to do TOEIC test and based on the result of the try out this handbook, the TOEIC scores of the students can increase; 3) this reading handbook discuss about the context and format question of TOEIC which completed with exercise in each strategy. However, the draft prototype still has some weaknesses that is explained as follows: 1) vocabulary is still a crucial problem for students which is equivalent problems in reading are the difficulties to answer and understanding the problem. Therefore, it is needed for the student to be autonomous learner to practice TOEIC examine from some applications either hard copy (book) or soft copy from some application in internet or other media like phone to install the TOEIC exercise that have completed with the discussion; 2) this reading handbook still needs more exercise in each part of strategy of reading TOEIC.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

After conducting research, it can be drawn the conclusion as follows: 1) the result of the exploration stage shows that the quality of the existing reading handbook is not suitable for the students in Balikpapan State Polytechnic do the TOEIC test. Therefore, the researchers decide to design the reading handbook based on TOEIC for Balikpapan State Polytechnic students; 2) at the development stage, there are several steps that have been conducted by the researchers. The result of the development stage shows that the proposed reading handbook based on TOEIC can be used as a supplementary reading handbook for Balikpapan State Polytechnic students. There are some differences between the existing reading handbook and the proposed handbook. The biggest differences are the content of the handbook. The existing reading handbook consists of reading for TOEFL preparation only while the proposed handbook consists of specific materials related to reading TOEIC and job field material. Therefore, the supplementary reading handbook based on TOEIC for Balikpapan State Polytechnic students can be used as supplementary reading handbook for the students.

However, there are some suggestions based on the result of the study as follows: 1) because

vocabulary is still a crucial problem for students which is equivalent problems in reading, therefore the students need more practice not only form this handbook but also from another TOEIC exercise from some digital applications that completed with the answer and explanation; 2)The lecturer should more focus to teach about linguistics component in reading (part of speech, subject-verb agreement, phrasal verb, tenses, conjunction, and preposition). The reading text material related to the world of business to find out the main idea of the text, explicit and implicit information, etc.

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