



The Students' Perception toward TOEFL Test (a Study on Cognitive Component)

Silfia Rahmi

A Lecturer at English Education Department at IAIN Batusangkar, Indonesia

E-mail: silfiarahmi@iainbatusangkar.ac.id

Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: 2022-08-11 Revised: 2022-09-22 Published: 2022-11-05 Keywords: Perception; TOEFL; Test; Cognitive Component.	<i>The current study aims at investigating the students perception on cognitive component toward TOEFL test at IAIN Batusangkar. This research used a mixed method. The participants of this research were 373 (three hundred and seventy three) students who graduated at IAIN Batusangkar in July 2020 for getting quantitative data. Meanwhile, there were 37 (thirty seven) students participated on getting qualitative data. The instruments used to collect the data was questionnaire together with interview guide. The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed based on formula suggested by Heaton and Djemari and Arikunto. Meanwhile, the data got from interview guide were analyzed based on the theory suggested by Miles and Huberman. The research findings indicate that most of students have strongly positive perception on cognitive component toward TOEFL test at IAIN Batusangkar. It was 76,47 %. Then, there were two common reasons why the students have positive perception on cognitive component toward TOEFL test. Thus, it can be concluded that the regulation of providing TOEFL test is useful and be good to be continued by UPB since there was positive opinion of students' toward TOEFL test. However, it will be required to give the training to help them to get the better score since the low ability they have. A good opinion is only one of the factors to get the better score.</i>
Artikel Info	Abstrak
Sejarah Artikel Diterima: 2022-08-11 Direvisi: 2022-09-22 Dipublikasi: 2022-11-05 Kata kunci: Persepsi; TOEFL; Uji; Komponen Kognitif.	Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui persepsi mahasiswa tentang komponen kognitif terhadap tes TOEFL di IAIN Batusangkar. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode campuran. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini adalah 373 (tiga ratus tujuh puluh tiga) mahasiswa lulusan IAIN Batusangkar Juli 2020 untuk mendapatkan data kuantitatif. Sedangkan untuk pengambilan data kualitatif ada 37 (tiga puluh tujuh) siswa. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data adalah angket beserta pedoman wawancara. Data yang diperoleh dari kuesioner dianalisis berdasarkan rumus yang disarankan oleh Heaton dan Djemari dan Arikunto. Sedangkan data yang diperoleh dari pedoman wawancara dianalisis berdasarkan teori yang dikemukakan oleh Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar mahasiswa memiliki persepsi yang sangat positif terhadap komponen kognitif terhadap tes TOEFL di IAIN Batusangkar. Itu 76,47%. Kemudian, ada dua alasan umum mengapa siswa memiliki persepsi positif pada komponen kognitif terhadap tes TOEFL. Dengan demikian dapat disimpulkan bahwa peraturan pemberian tes TOEFL ini bermanfaat dan baik untuk dilanjutkan oleh UPB karena adanya opini positif mahasiswa terhadap tes TOEFL. Namun, perlu diberikan pelatihan untuk membantu mereka mendapatkan nilai yang lebih baik karena kemampuan yang mereka miliki masih rendah. Pendapat yang baik hanyalah salah satu faktor untuk mendapatkan skor yang lebih baik.

I. INTRODUCTION

It is a fact that having a certificate of TOEFL test had been a necessity in this era. The score on that certificate indicates the quality of students' performance in performing English (Botswana Examinations Council, 2013) since it is to test English development. It becomes the standardized test which measures a test taker's mastery of the English language. The TOEFL score is employed as a requirement for graduation, where it also becomes a trend in the academic world besides IELTS (Nurhayati & Giri, 2015). It

is to measure someone's ability in a language (Huges, 2003). Then, it is also to measure someone English ability who are not an English native speaker where it is required in the institution or universities (Phillip, 2000). Then, it becomes frequently used in an academic setting; those tests are taken by students, teachers, or researchers for certain purposes regarding their needs (Erfani (2012). It is sometimes used as an indicator of students' success (Warfield et.al, 2013). It is very necessary, especially for university students. It is whether for fulfilling the

requirement for getting a scholarship or a requirement for getting the job if they have sufficient score such as CPNS or to a private company Bhakti and Marwanto (2014). It is because most of companies require the applicants to have TOEFL test certificate with a sufficient score. They prefer to hire employees who have high scores. Then, the result of the test can be used to fulfill a certain requirement of scholarship or job fulfillment (Then, Johan & Juwita, 2011:10), (Ermawan & Arifin, 2013). This test is regarding listening comprehension, structure and written expression and reading comprehension (Alderson, 2009). The lowest score that achieved on PBT TOEFL test is 217 while the highest score is 667 (Philips, 2001).

Owing to the importance of having a certificate as an enclosure for the students besides a certificate, IAIN Batusangkar through UPB (Language service Unit) facilitates all students from all departments who want to graduate their study by providing TOEFL Test program. It becomes one of the graduation policies. This policy had done since 2012. They must have that certificate before having a graduation party. The government through UPB allocated the fund for that. So that the students are free to get this test. It is hoped that it can ease them to test their English test without paying and finding the other language center to get it. Furthermore, by getting this test, they will get TOEFL with a sufficient score which they can use for many purposes. This policy had done since 2012. On that test, the students are tested regarding their ability in listening, reading, structure and written expression for two hours. The standard score which is expected is 400 hundred for Non-English department students and 450 for the English department. However, the result of preliminary observation revealed that the students are not too serious to do that test. Most of them were lazy in doing that. Then, they came late for many reasons. Moreover, it seems that they did not use these opportunities well by using the time maximally. They were two hours allocated to finish that test. In fact, most of them finish that less than one hour. It discloses that they did not care about the score they will get. It seems that they did this test seriously. It was assumed that there were lack of students' awareness toward the importance of having this test together with its advantages. Thus, the test result was not satisfactory. Most of them get a score under 400. As a result, the students can not use this certificate for many purposes such as for

getting a job or for continuing their study to a higher level. It indicated that the purpose of the students to give this test was not successful yet. The success of TOEFL test was influenced by many factors. One of them was students' knowledge, opinion and belief in this case called by cognitive component as one of perception component toward TOEFL test.

A cognitive component means a component which related to someone's knowledge, opinion, and belief toward attitude's object (Masbow, 2009). It related to act of being aware of one's environment through physical sensation, which denotes an individual's capacity to understand which related to how is the student thinks to that (Sapre, 2014:2). Besides, it is also regarding the interpretation of the information received, (Wiiting, A.F, 2001, Masbow, 2009 & Walgito, 2002). Students' opinion affects the students' willingness to participate actively in question and answer sessions (Cole, 1994:18) besides the other factors such as IQ, anxiety, etc. The precise or wrong perception on cognitive component, in this case, students' opinion, knowledge, and belief towards the test will influence the students whether they will prepare themselves and pass the test well or not. If they have a positive perception, they will have a big effort to do their best in doing that test. On contrary, if they have a negative perceptions on cognitive component, they will not be serious to do that test. In line with the importance of perception on cognitive test toward the students' success of TOEFL test, the research regarding students' perception on cognitive component is needed to be conducted. It is to avoid useless fund allocation. It is to know-how the students' respond and think regarding the implementation of TOEFL test as one of TOEFL Test at IAIN Batusangkar. All this time, most of them prefer to research the students' ability in TOEFL test. Meanwhile, the research deal with the students' perception especially on cognitive component is rarely to be conducted. Moreover, the institution is only focused on how to implement that program. Meanwhile, the students' responses and opinions on that program more tend to be ignored. For that reason the writer is interested to investigate the students' perception on cognitive component of the TOEFL test at IAIN Batusangkar. It will be the information for UPB for continuation and evaluation toward this program, whether it can be continued or not.

The method of this research belongs to mixed method. The researcher tries to identify the

students' perception on cognitive component toward the TOEFL test together with their reasons why they have such kind of that perception on cognitive component toward TOEFL test at IAIN Batusangkar. Then, the participant of this research involved all of the students who graduated at IAIN Batusangkar in July 2020. There were 373 (three hundred and seventy three) students participated in filling the questionnaire. Then, there were 37 (thirty seven) students were interviewed. The instrument used to gather that data were the questionnaire and interview guide. The questionnaire was used to get the quanti-tative data. It was to know the information related to the students' perception on cognitive compo-nent toward TOEFL test. It used five choices of Linker Scale *sangat setuju* (strongly agree), *setuju* (agree), *ragu-ragu* (neutral) *tidak setuju* (disagree) dan *sangat tidak setuju*, (strongly disagree).

ment items of the questionnaire administered statements given. Those were compiled in Indonesian language in order that the respondents or the students could answer the items easily. Both of those instruments were constructed based on the indicators and sub-indicators that are in the review of related literature. That questionnaire was used to know students' perception on cognitive component toward TOEFL Test. The score for each items of the questionnaire was explained as follows:

II. METODE PENELITIAN

This research used a mixed method. The participants of this research were 373 (three hundred and seventy three) students who gradua-ted at IAIN Batusangkar in July 2020 for getting quantitative data. Meanwhile, there were 37 (thirty seven) students participated on getting qualitative data. The instruments used to collect the data was questionnaire together with interview guide. The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed based on formula suggested by Heaton and Djemari and Arikunto. Meanwhile, the data got from interview guide were analyzed based on the theory suggested by Miles and Huberman. The research findings indicate that most of students have strongly positive perception on cognitive component toward TOEFL test at IAIN Batuankgar.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Result

After administering the questionnaire, it can be gotten that the total score of students'

perception on cognitive component toward TOEFL test. The maximal and minimal score were 120 and 42. Then, the mean score of students' perception on cognitive component toward TOEFL test was 3.73. Then, for positive statement, most of students tended to choose agree and strongly agree. Meanwhile, for negative statement, most of students chose disagree and strongly disagree. It implied that most of them had positive perception on cognitive component toward TOEFL test. It was 76,47 %%. It can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. The Table of Interpretation of Students' Perception on Cognitive Component toward TOEFL Test

Class Interval	Interpretation	Fre-quency	Percen-tage
$\geq (0.80 \times 279) \geq 223,2$	Strongly Positive	75	20,05%
$(0.60 \times 279) - (0.80 \times 279)$ 167,4- 223,2	Positive	286	76,47 %
111,6-167,4	Negative	7	1,87 %
$\geq (0.40 \times 279) \geq 116,6$	Strongly Negative	6	1,60 %

The table above revealed that most of students have positive perception on cognitive component toward TOEFL Test. It was 76,47 % percent. Then, there were 20,05% students have strongly positive. Meanwhile, it is only 8,02 % and 1,87 % had strongly negative and negative perception on cognitive component. It discloses that most students believed that the TOEFL test has advan-tages or benefit to help them to get a scholarship or to get the job. Besides, most of them gave a good response toward TOEFL test held by UPB. For more illustration, it can be described in the following histogram:

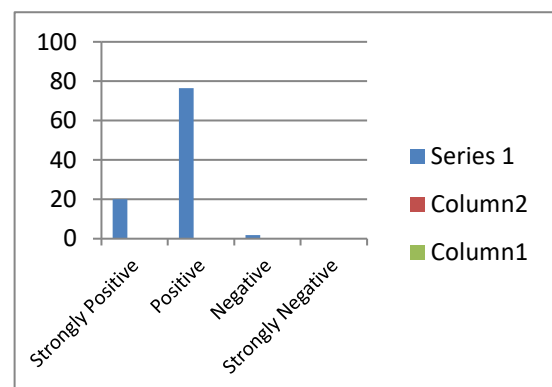


Figure 1. The Graph Interpretation of Students' Perception on Cognitive Component toward TOEFL Test

Then, from the data analysis from it related to students' opinions, beliefs, on TOEFL Test. The data analysis shows that generally, there are two common reasons why the students had a very positive perception on cognitive component. The first reason was the students believed that TOEFL test helped them to inform their English ability. Through this test, they will know on what grade their English are even though they perceived that they didn't have enough English ability. Then, the second reason was their awareness of the importance of TOEFL test. It is as a medium to get the certificate which they can use to continue their study to the higher level especially to get the scholarship ever to fulfill a requirement to apply for the job in a private or public company such as CPNS etc.

B. Discussion

The finding of this research shows that most students have a very positive perception on cognitive component toward TOEFL Test. It revealed that there is a good response toward that test. The finding of this research is the same as the finding of Hartati Surya Ningsih (2014). She also found that most of students had a very positive perception on cognitive component toward TOEFL test. Moreover, this finding is also the same as another previous study. It is Ermawan et al (2014). Related to that, Horowitz, 1988; Sakui and Gaies, 1999; Victori and Lockhart, 1995 in Navarro and Thornton, (2011: 291) state that students' opinion toward TOEFL test becomes the most important factor since affects the students' action in doing TOEFL test. It discloses that if the students have a positive perception on cognitive component toward TOEFL test, it will make the students have the big effort to do that test based on their ability. The result of this research also indicated that there is two common reasons why the students have a very positive perception on cognitive component toward TOEFL Test held by IAIN Batusangkar. They are the students' awareness that it can be a medium to know their English ability. The result of this research is the same as the finding of Ermawan (2013). He found that TOEFL test can motivate students to learn English more. It is to improve their ability and their TOEFL test. By taking the test, the students could know their grades. If they were still lacking, they would be able to try to improve it. It indicates that

there is a good response of the students toward TOEFL test held by UPB IAIN Batusangkar. Students' perception toward the test will influence their action in dealing with it (Horowitz et al, 1988) Then, on this finding also found that the students had a very positive perception since they realized that it will be beneficial for them in getting jobs, continuing. It means that there is a good response from the students.

However, again it was also caused by their low ability to understand the question soon. They are seldom to listen English. Finally, they didn't know the correct answer. As a result, they only guessed the answer. Then, the finding of this research also shows that there were 7 (seven) students which have negative and strongly negative perception on cognitive component toward TOEFL test. They think that test become useless whether it is to get the job or to continue their study especially in applying for the scholarship study to the higher level. Then, they also thought that TOEFL is also quite difficult to be tested. It seems that, it needs to give such kind of training regarding how to be easier to answers the TOEFL Test study especially in applying for the scholarship, measuring ability. It is the same as what Ermawan (2013) found. Moreover, based on the interview, it also shows that the students realized that they have a low ability in doing that test. It was caused by the limited time to learn English. It seems that it will be a consideration for IAIN Batusangkar to held training for the students before having TOEFL test. Then, on this finding also find that the students have a very positive perception on cognitive component since they realized that besides measuring their ability, this test also will be beneficial for them in getting jobs, continuing study, applying for the scholarship. It is the same as what Ermawan (2013) found. The result of this research shows that most of students had a very positive perception on cognitive component of TOEFL Test. They realized that there are many benefits of taking TOEFL tests. It is like knowing their ability and to continue their study and to get the job. It indicated that there is a good response from the students. The other part which was asked in the interview is related to the difficulties of this test. Data show that they realized that the difficulties of this test are standard for University students. However, for them, it is so difficult because of

the lack of ability they have. They are seldom to learn English.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

Based on the research finding and discussion, it can be concluded that most of students have a very positive perception on cognitive component toward TOEFL Test. It can be interpreted that the regulation of providing TOEFL test is useful and be good to be continued by UPB. However, it needs to provide the training to help them to get the better score since the low ability they have. A good perception is only one of the factors to get the better score.

B. Suggestion

This related discussion is still very limited and requires input, suggestions for the next writer is to study more deeply and comprehensively about The Students' Perception toward TOEFL Test (a Study on Cognitive Component).

REFERENCES

- Alderson, J. C. (2009). Test of English as a foreign language: Internet-based test (TOEFL IBT). *Language Testing*, 26(4), 621-631. doi:10.1177/026553220934637
- Bimo Walgito. (2002). *Pengantar Psikologi Umum*. Yogyakarta: Andi Offset
- Botswana Examinations Council. (2013). TOEFL — BEC - Botswana Examinations Council. Retrieved 2013, from Botswana Examinations Council: <http://www.bec.co.bw/external-exams/toefl>.
- Ermawan & Zainal Arifin, (2013). *An Analysis on Graduates' Perceptions towards Test of English as a Foreign Language (toefl)*. English Education Study Program, Languages and Arts Education Department, Teacher Training and Educations Faculty. Tanjung Pura University
- Hartati Surya Ningsih (2014). *Students' Perceptions of International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Test*
- H.F. Johan & Anne Juwita. (2011). *Smart Way to TOEFL*. Jakarta: Generasi Cerdas.
- Horwitz, E.K. (1988) The Beliefs about Language Learning of Beginning University Foreign Language Students. *Modern Language Journal*, 72, 283-294. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1988.tb04190.x>
- Hughes, A. (2003) *Testing for Language Teachers*. 2nd Edition, Arthur Hughes, Cambridge. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511732980>
- Masbow. 2009. Apa itu Persepsi. Available: www.masbow.com/2009/08/apaitu-Persepsi.html. Retrieved February 25 2017
- Navarro, Diego., & Thornton, Katherine. (2011). *Investigating The Relationship Between Belief and Action in Self-Directed Language Learning*. Elsevier, 291
- Phillips, Deborah. (2001). *Longman complete course for the TOEFL test*. Addison Wesley Longman Inc
- Sakui and Gaies, 1999; Victori and Lockhart, 1995 in Navarro and Thornton, 2011: 291
- Sapre and Pawar. 2014. *Cognitive Component : Perception and its Nature* Kolhapur: Department of Education Shivaji University
- Sharpe, Pamela J. 2000. *How to Prepare for the TOEFL*, 9th Edition. New York: Baron's Educational Series, Inc
- Suryaningsih, Hartati. *Students' Perceptions of International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Tests*. Dissertation. Indiana University of Pennsylvania
- Walgito, Bimo. (2004). *Pengantar Psikologi Umum*. Yogyakarta: Andi Offset