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Research Article

## Student's Perception of TOEFL during Online Learning in Pandemic Outbreak

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### KEYWORDS

Perception;  
TOEFL;  
Online Learning.

### ABSTRACT

This research aims to investigate the students' perceptions towards Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) during online learning of the pandemic outbreak in Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika. This research used qualitative descriptive method. The researchers gave several questions in the form of questionnaire through google form. Seventy students from different major and status (graduated and not graduated yet) in Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika were chosen as participants. The data were gathered through questionnaires. There were ten questionnaires regarding to students' perception of the given policy to the participants; and three questionnaires regarding to improve TOEFL competence skill. The result shows that 70,4% of participants prefer to choose Computer Based Test, and 45,1% of participants study TOEFL mainly to have Scholarship. Related to the most difficult part of TOEFL test, there are 36,6% of participants percept Listening Comprehension. Furthermore, in improving TOEFL competence, 43,7% of participants mostly like to watching movie. It indicates that most of the participants considered TOEFL as an essential thing to scale their English proficiency test and as the difficult test in English Proficiency. Furthermore, from the findings, it can also be seen that the challenges and gains encountered by the students are varied.

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## INTRODUCTION

Students need to be aware that English proficiency is necessary. It is regarded as an essential basic ability for those who wish to be inquisitive and knowledgeable (Muhtarom & Maghfiroh, 2022). The present study examined whether students' ratings of difficulties related to required learning activities varied significantly depending on their English proficiency (Alharbi, 2021). People who like to test their English proficiency skills to measure their ability and see how far they understand TOEFL have made the English proficiency skill necessary, such as TOEFL, a

priority in recent years. (Alek, Farkhan, Nurlia, & Haucsa, 2019) explain that the standardization exam of English proficiency Test, also known as the TOEFL is used extensively in countries where English is not the native language to evaluate students' English language skills. It will be a substantial course to develop learner skills to understand all aspects of English, one of which is TOEFL (Galikyan, Madyarov, & Gasparyan, 2019).

It is not easy to deliver TOEFL as well. Added to the pandemic, Covid-19 can affect a learner's mood changed instantly. As is widely known, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on all sectors, including the

educational sector, since mid-2020. All learning activities that were typically conducted in-person had to be completed online at home. This rapid transformation in the learning process will undoubtedly affect college students (Wang, Riyu, Xiaoyang, Yilin, Linkang, Cyrus, & C.H, 2020). TOEFL delivered in the institution or on campus will build a strong desire to learn, practice, and examine English learner skills (Warfield, Laribee, & Geyer, 2013). Another said by (Schunk, 2012) described learning as a process that results in long-lasting behavioral change, which from training or other types of experience, naturally creates a variety of behaviors in certain ways and certain capacities, defined learning as a process that results in long-lasting behavioral change.

The student taking the TOEFL course will eventually encounter obstacles and intensive and structured help is needed so that participants do not get lost and understand each question (Magson, Freeman, Rapee, Richardson, Oar, & Fardouly, 2021). TOEFL would be a nightmare for those who are unfamiliar with it and a weakness when confronting competition to obtain the desired result (Halim, Ypup Makassar, Yulianti, Stkip, & Makassar, 2018). In addition, students may experience difficulty answering questions on the TOEFL exam, which requires listening, structure, and written expression skills. (Kristiyanti, 2018) It has been stated that the grammar section remains the most difficult examination section taken by pupils. Students are incapable of comprehending grammar principles. Test-taker feedback can be used to help understand how the test elicits language knowledge and skills, as well as whether they actually measure the intended structure, thus There is a correlation between the requirements and the test objectives (Lee, 2022). Students' difficulties with the TOEFL stem from a combination of factors, including a lack of foundational knowledge, insufficient preparation, a lack of drive, and demographic variables like age and socio economic standing (Desheng, 2013).

This issue prompted the researcher to investigate TOEFL courses that students take from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, as TOEFL is not only for English language learners but also for those who wish to improve their English proficiency through TOEFL. The researcher would like to determine the students' perception of TOEFL from the student's point of view. (Qiong, 2017) explains how students interpret and comprehend their educational experiences is what is meant by student perception. It is an individual's subjective interpretation of their educational experiences, including their ideas, emotions, and attitudes towards school and their own learning. Student perspective can encompass a variety of factors, including their level of engagement, motivation, self-assurance, interest, contentment, and academic achievement (Zubaidi & Nasihah, 2022).

As stated by (Walgito, 2010), he said that perception will process before delivering some perception made by people or learners who are still learning about something. The actualization of some perceptions must fit the issue or cases discussed. This process provides any perception that would come up in the responses act. Another definition comes from (Démuth, 2012) that he claimed that verbally articulated perception is a response based on an evaluation directed at an object, whereas perception is a view based on an evaluation of an object that occurs at any time, in any place, as a result of the stimulus affecting it. The cognitive process of perception includes interpreting objects, signals, and people from the perspective of the experience in question (Magson et al., 2021).

The previous research (Alek et al., 2019) have been discussed about student's perception on how will they achieve the passing grade of TOEFL as graduation requirements. Another research conducted by (Mousave, Sayyed Ahmad, Saleh Arizavi, & Namdar, 2018) their research investigates the effect of test performance in TOEFL iBT reading section to student. Their research focused to reading test only to figure out the effect will come out. The other one from (Iqbal & Zurriyati, 2020) discuss about student's perception of TOEFL as examination requirements. This research will not only cover one skill of TOEFL but all skills of TOEFL, such as listening comprehension, structure, and written expression, and reading comprehension. The three skills of TOEFL will determine learner perception, and they will set some perceptions about the TOEFL they learned (Galikyan et al., 2019).

(Qiong, 2017) divided the process of seeing into three steps:

### 1. Selection

It is usually the first step in the process of perceiving something. This first stage turns the environmental cues into an experience that has value. It means that a problem or case should come to mind first when it needs to be fixed. This mind will look at all the possible questions or comments.

### 2. Organization

Due to the fact that information is obtained from external sources, it must be organized in specific phases in order to be meaningful. This stage is characterized by two characteristics. In the first place, it provides the framework for human perception. It refers to the transformation of external stimuli into meaningful human experiences. The process also suggests that human perception is stable or consistent. After selecting a trigger and categorizing it, the chosen stimulus becomes more enduring.

### 3. Interpretation

It refers to the process of adding significance to the stimulus's selected meaning. Despite having a similar impulse, however, everyone will have a unique interpretation. Everyone would have a unique perception or opinion regarding this interpretation. People with varying experiences and backgrounds will attribute different meanings to the same stimulus; therefore, perception diversity appears to exist.

From the background have been explained above, the researchers formulate some questions to be analyzed through this paper; (1) what are the student's perception of learning TOEFL during pandemic outbreak, and (2) how do students improve TOEFL during pandemic outbreak.

### METHOD

This research implemented descriptive analysis. The descriptive study described the student perception of learning TOEFL during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on (Hardani et al., 2020) the steps to descriptive analysis are as follow; the respondent of this research comes from English Literature student of the Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika. The number of respondents is about 70 students who are involved in this research are called as respondents. The questionnaires are given during the Semester Ganjil 2022-2023. The research is using a questionnaire (Sugiyono, 2015). The researcher observes the respondent students' perception of learning TOEFL during the COVID-19 pandemic and how they improve their English skills for TOEFL. The questionnaire given covers to student's perception to learn TOEFL and how will the improve English skill for the TOEFL. Furthermore, the questionnaires were collected. Then, the data will be conducted by means of tabulation. The tabulation is performed by reducing the responses of the students. Students with identical responses are tallied. After all responses are tallied, then the researcher makes data presentation in the form of charts.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this part, the researcher will show the result regarding student perception of TOEFL learning. It is very important to know how they feel when they learn TOEFL; instead, they have known it before or gotten TOEFL for the first time. The researcher is interested in describing this issue of their perception without any force. It comes from their perception when the researcher raises these questions and asks several questions about TOEFL. Thus, it would make students try to adapt to their learning situation just like the situation they face in the pandemic. Certainly, this situation could make students perceive that they must learn independently and use online methods. The researcher

would like to analyze this situation where students must keep learning, especially when they have TOEFL.

The researcher applied some questions to the student by giving them a questionnaire about the student perception of the TOEFL they learned. The questions that the researcher presents here are questions to determine their point of view regarding TOEFL. There are 13 questions the researcher gives to the student. Those questions have been filtered into ten questions representing student perception of learning TOEFL, dan three questions are representing improving student ability in TOEFL. The researcher will present these questions' results, data percentages, and the resulting diagram.

#### *Students' perception of Learning TOEFL during the Pandemic Covid-19*

##### 1. Student Likes TOEFL

The first question the researcher gave the student about their interest in TOEFL. This question aims to get to know the respondent and how many students prefer to learn TOEFL. There are 70 responses to these questions, where 64,8% of respondents answer that the student likes to learn TOEFL whether they already know about TOEFL or are getting TOEFL for the first time. 32,4% of the respondents sometimes show when they realize to learn TOEFL. And last, 2,8% of respondents answered no to the TOEFL learning.

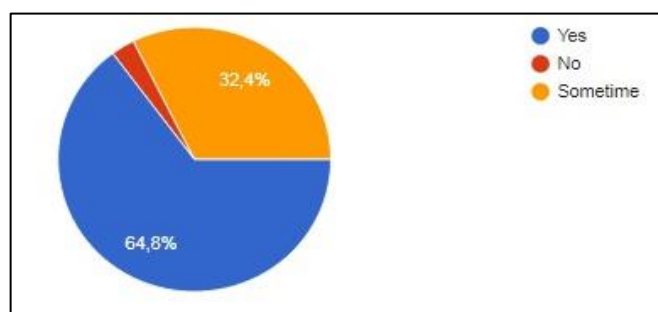


Figure 1. Student Likes TOEFL

##### 2. Student studies TOEFL

The second question the researcher asks the student is about learning TOEFL. The result shows that 28,2% of respondents always learn TOEFL, while 57% say that they sometimes learn TOEFL, and the last 14,1% show that the student did not learn TOEFL.

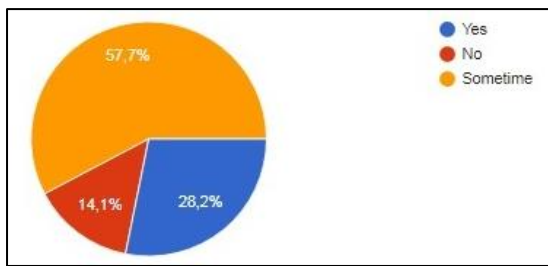


Figure 2. Learning TOEFL

### 3. Types of TOEFL Test Taken

This question means knowing their perception of the type of TOEFL test they will choose. As we know, TOEFL has three types, and are Computer Test Based, Paper Based, and Internet Based Test. The result shows that the respondent or student prefers to choose the Computer Based Test. 70,4% of students prefer CBT as their test rather than Paper Based test or Institutional Test program, with 18,3% of respondents who have responded to it. The last, 11,3% of respondents choose iBT.

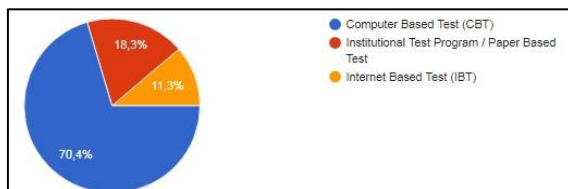


Figure 3. Types of TOEFL Taken

### 4. Purpose of Studying TOEFL

This perception would like to figure out from students their goal in learning TOEFL during the learning process. Many responses show that students have a plan for their achievement when they finish learning TOEFL. Most students responded to getting a scholarship, with 45,1% of respondents preferring to choose it. Another goal from the student response is that students will use this TOEFL to promote themselves for job promotion in their workplace. The data shows that 28,2% respond that their goal is to learn TOEFL to get a job promotion. The next respondent shows that 22,5% of student uses TOEFL as a graduation researcher. On the other hand, the data 2,8% says that student uses TOEFL to complete the requirements to apply as a civil servant. Lastly, the data shows that 1,4% of students prefer TOEFL to complete their own resume or CV.

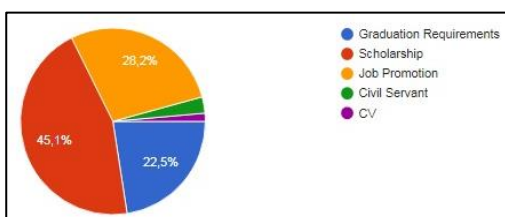


Figure 4. Purpose of Studying TOEFL

### 5. Difficult Part in TOEFL

This perception through this question would like to figure out student point of view about the most difficult skill they ever faced in TOEFL. Based on the data have been collected shows that student finds difficulties in the skill of listening with 62% of respondent. The second position was placed by Structure and Written Expression with 28,2% of respondents, and 9,9% of students responded to reading comprehension.

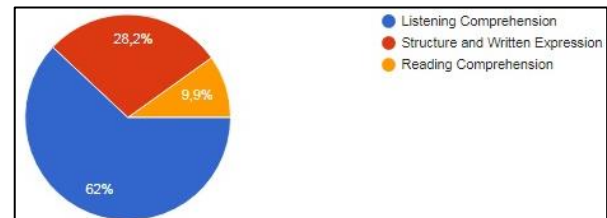


Figure 5. Difficult Part in TOEFL

### 6. Place they studying TOEFL

The next question is where did you learn TOEFL. This question will explore the answers of respondents related to TOEFL that they already know. From the data that has been collected, it can be analyzed that 42,3% answered that they learned TOEFL from online media, 36,6% said they learned TOEFL from courses, followed by 16,9% choosing to study in class, and 4,2% learning TOEFL from modules.

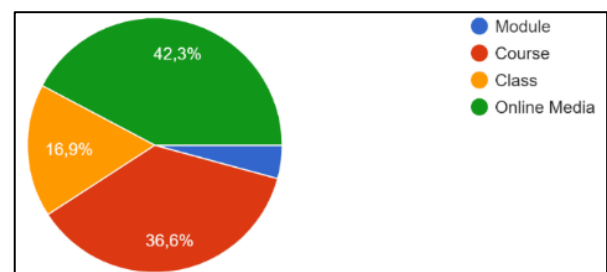


Figure 6. Place Student Studying TOEFL

### 7. All questions in TOEFL

The next question that the researcher asked the respondent was the respondent's opinion regarding the overall questions in the TOEFL questions. The data collected is that 59,2% of respondents answered that the TOEFL questions were difficult. While respondents who gave the answer that the TOEFL questions were medium, namely there were 39,4%, and respondents who answered the TOEFL questions were mediocre, namely 1,4%.

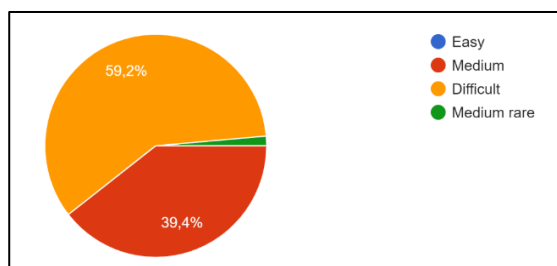


Figure 7. All questions in TOEFL

## 8. Difficult Part in Listening TOEFL

This perception will bring the data to indicate the student has faced the TOEFL listening during their learning. The data shows that 66,2% of difficult students learn or answer TOEFL listening at Part B, Long Conversation. While Part C Talks in TOEFL listening shows 23,9% of students have difficulty answering this part. The last data shows that students had difficulty answering short conversations with 9,9%.

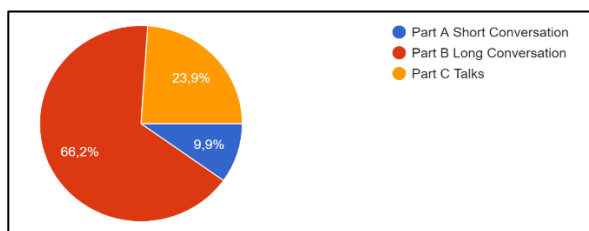


Figure 8. Difficult Part in Listening TOEFL

## 9. Difficult Part in Structure TOEFL

The data indicated that this perception indicates the student must face the TOEFL Structure and Written Expression. The data shows that 50,7% of students are difficult to answer Structure, which begins from 1 to 15. In addition, Written Expression shows 49,3% of students find it difficult to answer this part.

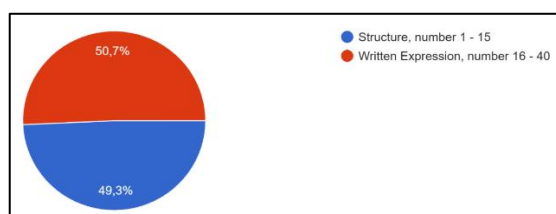


Figure 9. Difficult Part in Structure TOEFL

## 10. Difficult Part in Reading TOEFL

The data indicated that this perception about reading represents the student having to face the TOEFL Reading. There are four parts of TOEFL reading to be tested or learned. Those are the main idea, detailed questions, vocabulary in context, and reference words. The data shows that 40,8% of students have difficulty answering vocabulary. For 26,8% of students, difficult to answer

reference words. The other view shows that 16,9% of students have difficulty with detailed questions, and the last 15,5% have problems answering the main idea in TOEFL reading.

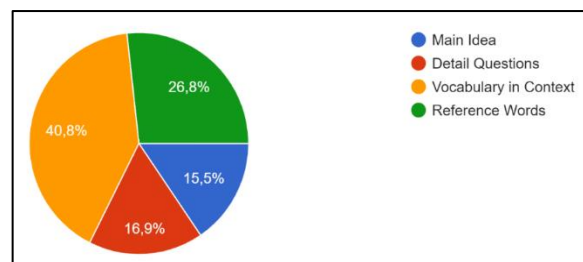


Figure 10. Difficult Part in Reading TOEFL

## How do students improve TOEFL during the pandemic outbreak.

### 1. Listening Comprehension

The researcher gave three numbers of questions to seventy respondents on how they improved their TOEFL skill during online learning of pandemic outbreak. This perception shows that the student wants to boost their listening level in TOEFL. The random data can prove this that researcher took from the student as a respondent. The data says that to improve listening skills in TOEFL, the student can learn from watching western movies with 27 respondents or 38%. On the other side, 25 respondents, or 35,2%, show that they like to listen to western songs. Thus, 12 respondents, or 16,9%, say they like to watch and listen to western news. The last, there are six respondents, 9,9%, say they listen to the radio to improve their listening skills.

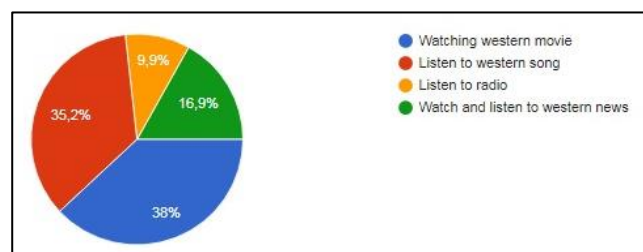


Figure 11. Improving Listening TOEFL

### 2. Improving Structure and Written Expression

One of the hardest parts of the TOEFL student faced was structure and written expression. Besides, they must race to the time, 25 minutes; they must go all out to finish 40 questions on it. Hence, they want to level up their Structure and written expression skill in TOEFL. The data the researcher must declare that 26 respondents, or 36,6% say they want to improve their Structure and written expression by studying grammar books in class or learning independently. Next, data show that there are 24 respondents, or 33,8%, who says they like to practicing about grammar, while 20 respondents, or 28,2%, show that

students like to study by reading English journal or newspaper.

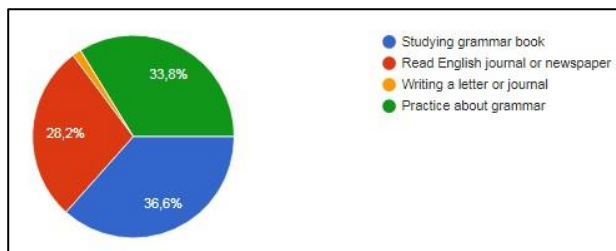


Figure 12. Improving Structure in TOEFL

### 3. Reading Comprehension

The researcher presents three options to offer these options to the student to be answered. The options include reading English papers such as journals, newspapers, and magazines, watching western movies, and reading English books. The result of this question about improving reading comprehension of TOEFL shows that 31 respondents, or 43.7% prefer to watch western movies to improve their reading skills in TOEFL. On the other hand, show that 22 respondents, or 31%, prefer to read English papers such as journals, newspapers, and magazines. The rest show that 17 respondents, or 25.4%, prefer reading English books.

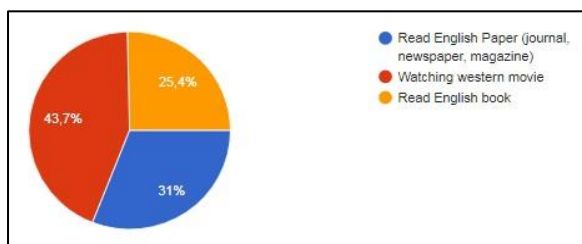


Figure 13. Improving Reading in TOEFL

As explained earlier, that in previous research by (Alek et al., 2019) stated that the focus of the research they discussed was centered only on students' perceptions of TOEFL as a graduation requirement, while in other research by (Mousave et al., 2018) focused on reading questions in TOEFL iBT along with the influence that will arise in improving TOEFL reading skills. And other research from (Iqbal & Zurriyati, 2020) focuses on TOEFL as a requirement to take the exam.

Therefore, in this study, researchers explain students' perceptions of TOEFL which consists of listening comprehension, structure and written expression, and reading comprehension. Students' perceptions of TOEFL will produce a concrete perception that TOEFL is indeed a very difficult student competency test tool.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the observations to seventy participants, the researchers can conclude that students really like TOEFL (64.8%) in order to enrich their English proficiency. Regarding the type of TOEFL that is mostly chosen by respondents, namely Computer Based Test (70.4%). For the purpose of respondents studying TOEFL, namely obtaining scholarships (45.1%). Listening Comprehension (62%) is a difficult test choice for respondents, compared to Structure and Written Expression and Reading Comprehension. Online media (36.6%) is the main choice of respondents to study TOEFL to increase knowledge about TOEFL. From the weight of the TOEFL question questions, respondents stated that the questions were still difficult to test (59.2%). In the aspect of Listening Comprehension questions, respondents stated that Part B Long Conversation was a difficult part (66.2%). As for Structure and Written Expression, 50.7% of respondents stated that Written Expression or Error Analysis was a difficult part of the question. And for Reading Comprehension, respondents stated that questions themed about Vocabulary were the difficult part (40.8%).

To improve TOEFL Listening skills, respondents stated that watching western films (38%) was a tip in improving TOEFL Listening skills. For Structure and Written Expression, respondents stated that studying grammar books (36.6%) is a concrete choice to enrich grammar knowledge. As for Reading Comprehension, respondents stated that watching western films with English subtitles (43.7%) can improve reading comprehension skills.

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