

**ANALYSING THE LEVEL OF DIFFICULTIES IN LISTENING
QUESTION AND RESPONSES ON “Taking the TOEIC: Skills
and Strategies” written by Wendi Shin**

Karta Atmaja

SEKOLAH TINGGI BAHASA ASING CIPTO HADI PRANOTO

mr.atmaja06@gmail.com

ABSTRAK

Tujuan penelitian mengetahui tingkat kesukaran dalam Listening Questions and Responses pada buku “Taking the TOEIC: Skills and Strategies” ditulis oleh Wendi Shin. Metode yang dipakai dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif deskriptif. Penelitian membuktikan bahwa tingkat kesukaran atas pertanyaan yang tidak ada WH-Questions sebesar 31.75% yang terdiri dari 23.81% untuk tingkat kesukaran sedang, dan 7.94% untuk tingkat kesukaran sulit. Kesukaran 7.94% berasal dari aspek masalah “*Be - verb Question*” menanyakan tentang jawaban ya atau tidak dari sebuah situasi, “*Do - verb Question*” menanyakan tentang jawaban Yes/No, tentang sebuah kebiasaan “*Auxiliary Verbs*” seperti “*Could*” menanyakan suatu permohonan, “*Have*” menanyakan tentang sebuah peristiwa yang telah dilakukan atau belum dilakukan. Tingkat kesukaran dari pertanyaan yang menggunakan WH-Questions sebesar 30.61% yang terdiri dari 3.63% untuk tingkat kesukaran mudah, 14.06% untuk tingkat kesukaran sedang, dan 12.93% untuk tingkat kesukaran sulit. Tingkat kesukaran sulit dari 12.93% berasal dari aspek masalah bagaimana mengenali kata-kata yang dipakai dalam pertanyaan atau question words. Tingkat kesukaran terhadap bentuk pertanyaan lain sebesar 47.62% yang terdiri dari 14.06% untuk tingkat kesukaran mudah, 31.52% untuk tingkat kesukaran sedang, dan 2.04% untuk tingkat kesukaran sulit. Tingkat kesukaran sulit dari 2.04% berasal dari aspek masalah bagaimana mengenali bentuk-bentuk pertanyaan lain seperti “*Indirect Question*” serta “*Alternative Questions*” yang menggunakan kata penghubung berpasangan untuk bentuk negative seperti “*Neither*” – “*nor*”.

Kata Kunci: Tingkat Kesukaran, Listening Questions and Responses, TOEIC: Skills and Strategies

INTRODUCTION

The Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) was first developed in 1979 by ETS to assess the English language skills of people working in multinational companies, schools, and government organizations around the world. Since English is one of the most

commonly used languages for International commerce, employers saw the need to have common measure of the language skills of their employees and perspective employees (Lin, 2008:4). The TOEIC is a test of International English that is taken away every year by 45 million students and business professionals in

different countries around the world. The two - hours test includes 200 multiple – choice questions and is divided into two sections: Listening and Reading. There are 100 questions on each sections: Listening (45 Questions) consists of Part 1: Picture Identification, Part 2: Questions and Responses, Part 3: Short Conversation, Part 4: Short Talks. Reading (1 hour 15 minutes) consists of Part 5: Incomplete Sentence, Part 6: Text Completion. Part 7: Reading Comprehension. (Charles, 2007:7).

TOEIC course is one of a compulsory subject taken by the fifth semester students at Akpindo Jakarta Tourism High School. Akpindo Tourism High School has responsibilities to develop the students' mastery and skills in Professional English especially for the global industries. Therefore, to obtain information about the level of their mastery of English, the researcher conducted pre research for the most problematic sections faced by the fifth semester students of the Academic Year 2018/2019 as they completed test from section 1: Listening and section 2: Reading Comprehension. The test of TOEIC test model is taken from "*Taking the TOEIC*" course book written by Wendi Shin. The test consists of Listening and Reading. There are 120 questions given in the test 60 questions for Listening and 60 questions for Reading. The result of the test shows that the most problematic sections is Listening. It's proven that 23% of the 42 respondents can answer 60 questions of the Listening Test. The most problematic aspect in Listening test is in Part 2: Questions and Responses. Meanwhile, 28% of the 42 respondents can answer 60 question of the Reading Test. Therefore, based on the data the

researcher intends to find out the most problematic aspects and the level of difficulties in Listening especially Part 2: Questions and Responses. The problematic aspects consist of the kinds of questions. The kinds of question given by the test model comprise of questions with an interrogative, questions with no interrogative, and other types of questions, and this study also intends to find out 1). The levels of difficulties of the questions with no interrogative (questions without question words or WH-Questions), 2). The levels of difficulties of questions with an interrogative (questions with question words or WH- Questions), and 3). The levels of difficulties of other types of questions (indirect questions, tag questions, negative questions, alternative question, and suggestive questions) from the "*Taking the TOEIC: Skills and Strategies*" written by Wendi Shin since the book is used by the fifth semester students as the TOEIC course book at Akpindo Tourism High School.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) was first developed in 1979 by ETS to assess the English language skills of people working in multinational companies, schools, and government organizations around the world. Since English is one of the most commonly used languages for International commerce, employers saw the need to have common measure of the language skills of their employees and perspective employees (Lin, 2008:4). The TOEIC is a test of International English that is taken away every year by 45 million students and business professionals in different countries around the world. The two - hours test includes 200 multiple –

choice questions and is divided into two sections: Listening and Reading. There are 100 questions on each sections: Listening (45 Questions) consists of Part 1: Picture Identification, Part 2: Questions and Responses, Part 3: Short Conversation, Part 4: Short Talks. Reading (1 hour 15 minutes) consists of Part 5: Incomplete Sentence, Part 6: Text Completion. Part 7: Reading Comprehension. (Charles, 2007:7). The TOEIC test measures your proficiency in the type of English used in business settings around the world. The test does not evaluate your knowledge of English language. Rather, it measures your ability to use English in a variety of business setting. The TOIEC test is divided into two smaller, timed test: Listening and Reading, and Speaking and Writing. The Listening and Reading Test is a paper and pencil test. The Speaking and Writing test is administered on a computer. (Collins UK, Harpercollins 2012:5).

Before the fifth semester students are taking the real TOEIC test, they need the preparation for the test. Therefore, the course book used at Akpindo Tourism High School is *“Taking the TOIEC Skills and Strategies”* by Wendi Shin. This book is intended for pre-intermediate students of English who need to start for the TOEIC Listening and Reading Test. This book is designed to assist students through focused practice while developing familiarity with the format of the TOEIC. This book consists of four chapter. The chapters are as follows:

Chapter 1: Listening Practice

Each unit within the Listening Practice chapter features sample questions and answer and provides helpful hints for developing strategies to recognize relevant

information in listening passages. Part 1 introduces common themes featured in Part 1 of the TOEIC, such as the home, the workplace, and public places. Part 2 focuses on commonly tested question types and provides assistance in identifying appropriate answers for each type. Part 3 and 4 give sample short conversations and talks and focus on how to identify key points in order to answer the questions. Each part features a mini-test to provide practice of the strategies introduced in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Grammar Practice

Units within the Grammar Practice chapter outline fundamental grammar points frequently tested on the TOEIC. Each unit begins with a brief explanation of the grammar target including key point and particular structure of interest in the TOEIC. The Units also provide short exercises based on the format of TOEIC grammar questions, which allow students to practice their understanding of the grammar point. These exercises include incomplete sentence exercises and word from exercises. Additional practice is provided in mini-tests at the end of each unit. These mini-test take the format of questions found in Part 5 and 6 of the TOEIC, combining grammar and vocabulary practice. After every three units, students may measure their progress with review tests.

Chapter 3: Reading Practice

The Reading Practice chapter introduces sample texts to familiarize students with the kinds of materials they will encounter on the TOEIC – such as, letters, brochures, tables, articles, and reports – together with examples of the kinds of questions students may expect to find in this part of

the test. The mini-test section provides extensive test practice with the format of question found in Part 7 of the TOEIC.

Chapter 4: Practice Test

The Practise Test chapter provides students with a full-length practice test including 100 listening test questions and 100 reading test questions. (Shin, 2013: 5)

This study intends to find out the most problematic aspects in Listening Part 2: Questions and Responses. The problematic *aspects* consist of the kinds of questions. The kinds of question given by the test model comprise of questions with an interrogative, questions with no interrogative, and other types of questions, and this study also intends to find out the levels of difficulties of the questions with an interrogative (questions using question words or WH-Questions), questions with no interrogative (questions without question words or WH- Questions), and other types of questions (indirect questions, tag questions, negative questions, alternative question, and suggestive questions) from the *“Taking the TOEIC: Skills and Strategies”* written by Wendi Shin.

METHOD

This method is qualitative research. Bogdan and Biklen defines qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and researcher is the key instrument, qualitative research is descriptive. The data collected is in the form of words of pictures rather than number. Qualitative research is concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products. Qualitative research tends to analyze their data inductively (Sugiyono, 2016:13). Bogdan and Taylor defines that qualitative research is as a procedure of research that produces

descriptive data of written words or oral from people and behavior that can be observed (Moleong, 2017:4) Arikunto argues that researchers don't use number to collect data to describe the interpretation towards the result. The researcher may use number to describe the data in qualitative research (Arikunto, 2006:12). Based on the theory above, the research used was a test as an instrument to collect data to find out the problematic aspects and level of difficulties of TOEIC Part 2: Questions and Responses in Listening Comprehension encountered by students at Akpindo Jakarta Tourism High School. The problematic aspects and level of difficulties are analyzed by the item analysis formula $P \frac{C}{T}$ P is difficult index, C is the number of students who answer item correctly, T is the number of total students who answer item. Arikunto stated that if proportion of item is 0.000 to 0.30 the item is categorized difficult, 0.31 to 0.70 the item is moderate, and 0.71 to 1.00 is easy (Arikunto, 2012:224). The problematic aspects and level of difficulties of the research are viewed from *“Taking the TOEIC: Skills and Strategies”* written by Wendi Shin to collect data. The research was conducted at Akademi Pariwisata Indonesia Jakarta. Lofland and Lofland (1984:47) defined that data source in qualitative research is words, and actions, supported by additional data such as documents and others (Moleong, 2017:157). Based on the theory, the data source is taken from *“Taking the TOEIC: Skills and Strategies”* written by Wendi Shin, TOEIC course book. Patton (1980:138) states that what is being observed depends on the kinds and variety of the approach of observation done by the observer

(Moleong, 2017:179). Based on the theory, The kinds of data focused and observed in this research is Listening Part 2: Questions and Responses from “*Taking the TOEIC: Skills and Strategies*” written by Wendi Shin, TOEIC course book as the data source. Therefore, the kinds of data the reseacher intends to find out are the most problematic aspects and the level of difficulties in Listening Part 2 Questions and Responses. The instrument used in this study is a test to collect data. The pre test given is to find out the most difficult sections of the toEIC test and then post test given to find out the most problematic aspects in listening skills espeacilly part 2. The pre test and post post were given to 42 students as a sample calculated from Slovin formula from 47 students deriving from 37 Hotel students and 10 Travel students at the the fifth semester students of the odd semester of the academic year 2018-19.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research assured that the fifth semester students’ ability in understanding to “*Taking the TOEIC: Skills and Strategies*” written by Wendi Shin, TOEIC course book at Akademi Pariwisata Indonesia Jakarta show that the level of difficulties in Listening Part 2: Questions and Responses are as follows:

1). The level of difficulties of the questions with no introgative (questions without question words or WH-Questions) is 31.75% comprising from 23.81% moderate, and 7.94% difficult. The finding shows that 7.94% is difficult deriving from questions using question words from question number 5, 7, 8, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, and 18 described as follows:

5. Pardon me. **Is this seat taken?**
 (A) Yes, that is yours.
 (B) No, I took it
 (C) No, it’s free.
7. **Is Mr. Kim managing** the Seoul sales office now?
 (A) Yes, he’s been promoted
 (B) No, he managed to finish it
 (C) Yes, he’d like another office
8. **Could you lower** your price?
 (A) No, I will pay full price
 (B) Maybe. Let me ask my boss
 (C) Yes, I’ll lower the picture
9. **Do we need** to make a copy for the files?
 (A) No, the copies were sent yesterday
 (B) The photocopier has been turned off
 (C) I’m not sure, but make one, just in case
13. **Shall we take** another look at the resumes?
 (A) All the applications are in order.
 (B) No, we will resume in 10 minutes.
 (C) Yes, we should review them again.
15. **Do you have** a double room available for this Friday?
 (A) The single rooms are smaller.
 (B) Sorry, we’re fully booked.
 (C) They cost exactly the same.
16. **Could you help** me with these calculations?
 (A) That’s OK. I don’t need help.
 (B) We calculated a loss.
 (C) Let me just finish this first.
17. **Do you know** if Mr. Lee received my email?
 (A) He is head of the Beijing department.
 (B) Yes, he called the office a few minutes ago.
 (C) Sure, email is very efficient.

18. **Have the prices** on all winter coats **been reduced**?

- (A) No, only the women's coats.
- (B) No, the winter sale is all week.
- (C) Yes, we shortened all the coats.

The finding of the research revealed that there are nine (9) difficult questions out of the twenty (20) questions given from Part 2 Questions and Responses listening of TOEIC test. Therefore, it's proved that the fifth semester students find difficulties to identify the questions with no interrogative words such as *Be/Do, and Auxiliary Verbs*. Therefore, it is suggested that for the lecturers who intends to teach Part 2: Questions and Responses in Listening using "*Taking the TOEIC: Skills and Strategies*" written by Wendi Shin, as TOEIC course book. They should emphasize the problematic aspects of question with no interrogative words discussed above. For instance, the lecturers or tutors should emphasize 1). *Be - verb Question* asking about affirmative or negative information about status or situation, 2). *Do - verb Question* asking about Yes/No, Sure/Of course, or information about habit or action. 3). *Auxiliary Verbs* such as "*Could*" asking for request, "*Have*" describing or asking about experience or things that have or haven't done. They should drill the students frequently.

2). The level of difficulties of the questions with an interrogative (questions using question words or WH-Questions) is 30.61% comprising from 3.63% easy, 14.06% moderate, and 12.93% difficult. The finding shows that 12.93% is difficult deriving from questions using question words or WH-Questions from question

number 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 31, 34, 35, 37, 38, and 40 described as follows:

21. **Who** is in charge of purchasing office supplies?

- (A) Alice supplies the coffee
- (B) That would be our office manager, Alice
- (C) The supplies are in the main office.

22. **Which** brand is the best?

- (A) I recommend him.
- (B) Why do you think so?
- (C) This is my favorite.

23. **When** did Johansson say the meeting was at?

- (A) He didn't say what time.
- (B) He did an excellent job.
- (C) The meeting was cut short.

25. Where can I ask for directions?

- (A) At the information booth
- (B) That's why I brought a map
- (C) I never noticed that sign

27. **Why** did Ms. Anderson not sign the contract?

- (A) She didn't finish yet.
- (B) The terminal was empty.
- (C) She never gave a reason.

28. **What time** does your flight arrive?

- (A) I'm not sure.
- (B) It hasn't left.
- (C) They're not going.

31. **Where** is the Saudi report?

- (A) The Saudis produce oil.
- (B) It takes about 8 hours.
- (C) I left it on your desk.

34. **How much** more time do you need on the proposal?

- (A) I've almost finished it.
- (B) But I'm working on the proposal.
- (C) I'm not sure it was submitted.

35. **When** was the package sent out?
 (A) The courier picked it up this morning.
 (B) The mail arrives early in the morning.
 (C) We send out only complete shipments.
37. **When** do we have to use the voucher by?
 (A) It expires next week.
 (B) It's for dinner at the airport.
 (C) Use it at the hotel.
38. **Which** division earned the most money last year?
 (A) They earned the CEO's praise.
 (B) The money was divided evenly.
 (C) The Australian sales office.
40. **Where** do we submit travel expenses?
 (A) It is expensive in Hawaii.
 (B) In the accounts office on the 3rd floor.
 (C) You have to submit it by Friday.

The finding of the research revealed that there are eleven (11) difficult WH-questions out of the twenty (20) questions given from Part 2 Questions and Responses listening of TOEIC test. Therefore, it's proved that the fifth semester students find difficulties to identify the question words such as *Who, Which, When, Where, Why, What time, and How much*. Therefore, it is suggested that for the lecturers who intends to teach Part 2: Questions and Responses in Listening using "*Taking the TOEIC: Skills and Strategies*" written by Wendi Shin, as TOEIC course book. They should emphasize the problematic aspects of question words discussed above. For instance, the lecturers or tutors should emphasize *Who asking about people, Which asking about choices, When asking about time, Where asking about place, Why asking about reasons, What time asking about time, and How much asking*

about price and they should drill the students frequently.

3). The levels of difficulties of other types of questions (indirect questions, tag questions, negative questions, alternative question, and suggestive questions) is 47.62% comprising from 14.06% easy, 31.52% moderate, and 2.04% difficult. The finding shows that 2.04% is difficult deriving from other types of questions from question number 53 and 57 described as follows:

53. **Do you know when they are leaving** for Berlin?
 (A) Berlin is a nice city.
 (B) I will leave it for later.
 (C) At 10 o'clock.
57. **Neither** Tim **nor** Santana can go to the conference.
 (A) I'm sure either of them will do.
 (B) That's too bad. I'm sorry to hear that.
 (C) They really enjoyed it as well.

The finding of the research revealed that there are two (2) difficult questions out of the twenty (20) questions given from Part 2 Questions and Responses listening of TOEIC test. Therefore, it's proved that the fifth semester students find difficulties to identify the other types of question such as a). Indirect Question "**Do you know when they are leaving?**" b).Alternative Questions using pairs of conjunctions in negative such as "**Neither Tim nor Santana can go to the conference**". Therefore, it is suggested that for the lecturers who intends to teach Part 2: Questions and Responses in Listening using "*Taking the TOEIC: Skills and Strategies*" written by Wendi Shin, as TOEIC course book. They should emphasize the problematic aspects of

question with other types of questions discussed above. For instance, the lecturers or tutors should emphasize a). *Indirect Questions relating the noun clauses*. And b). *Alternative Questions using Pairs of conjunctions* such as “*neither*” and “*nor*”. The lecturers should drill the problematic aspects to the students continuously as they use the “*Taking the TOEIC: Skills and Strategies*” written by Wendi Shin, as TOEIC course book. However, the lecturers should also use other references such as “*Building TOEIC Test-taking Skills – STARTER TOEIC*” written by Anne Taylor to overcome the handicaps faced by the students.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Divulged from this research, the students’ ability in understanding Part 2: Questions and Responses to “*Taking the TOEIC: Skills and Strategies*” written by Wendi Shin, TOEIC course book at AKPINDO JAKARTA show that 1). The level of difficulties of the questions with no interrogative (questions without question words or WH-Questions) is 31.75% comprising from 23.81% moderate, and 7.94% difficult. The difficulties of 7.94% derive from “*Be - verb Question*” asking about affirmative or negative information about status or situation, “*Do – verb Question*” asking about Yes/No, Sure/Of course, or information about habit or action, “*Auxiliary Verbs*” such as “*Could*” asking for request, “*Have*” describing or asking about experience or things that have or haven’t done in Present Perfect Tense. 2). The level of difficulties of the questions with an interrogative (questions using question words or WH-Questions) is

30.61% comprising from 3.63% easy, 14.06% moderate, and 12.93% difficult. The difficulties of 12.93% derive from the difficulties to identify the question words such as *Who, Which, When, Where, Why, What time, and How much*. 3). The levels of difficulties of other types of questions (indirect questions, tag questions, negative questions, alternative question, and suggestive questions) is 47.62% comprising from 14.06% easy, 31.52% moderate, and 2.04% difficult. The finding shows that 2.04% is difficult deriving from other types of questions from difficulties to identify the other types of question such as “*Indirect Question*” and “*Alternative Questions using pairs of conjunctions in negative such as “Neither” – “nor.”*”

Suggestion

In order to improve the students’ listening section I Part 2: Questions and Responses in, “*Taking the TOEIC: Skills and Strategies*” written by Wendi Shin, TOEIC course book. The lecturers or teachers may need to pay more attention to the problematic aspects such as “*Be - verb Question*” asking about affirmative or negative information about status or situation, “*Do – verb Question*” asking about Yes/No, Sure/Of course, or information about habit or action, “*Auxiliary Verbs*” such as “*Could*” asking for request, “*Have*” describing or asking about experience or things that have or haven’t done in Present Perfect Tense, and they should emphasize the question words such as *Who, Which, When, Where, Why, What time, and How much*, and they should guide the students to identify the other types of question such as “*Indirect Question*” and “*Alternative Questions using pairs of conjunctions in negative by*

drilling the problematic aspects to the students continuously and the lecturers should use other sources to overcome the most problematic aspects.

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