

## THE ANALYSIS OF APPLYING QUESTION-MAKING TASK TO COMPREHEND TOEFL SUBJECTS

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**Abstract:** *TOEFL (Test of English as Foreign Language) is widely used to measure one's ability in English. In fact, learning TOEFL is always by answering questions. Whatever the subjects (listening, structure, error analysis or reading), students will be faced on a lot of questions. In many cases, students were tired and bored of answering questions. They even did not comprehend the subjects. To solve that problem, applying question-making task can be a solution. This study explained how the task improved students' comprehension on TOEFL subjects. Furthermore, the task would build students' motivation to involve in teaching-learning process. This study was also focused on exploring the result of applying question-making task as a TOEFL teaching tool. The aim of this study is to introduce TOEFL teaching technique that could enable students to comprehend TOEFL subjects. In addition, by making their own questions would motivate them to be involved in learning process.*

**Keywords:** *task, question-making, task-based learning, TOEFL*

**Abstrak:** *TOEFL (Test of English as Foreign Language) merupakan tes yang sering digunakan untuk mengukur kemampuan berbahasa Inggris seseorang. Padahal, belajar TOEFL selalu dengan menjawab pertanyaan. Apapun subjek (listening, structure, error analysis atau reading), siswa akan dihadapkan dengan banyak pertanyaan. Dalam banyak kasus, siswa sudah bosan dan bosan menjawab pertanyaan. Mereka bahkan tidak memahami pokok bahasan. Untuk mengatasi masalah itu, mengaplikasikan task making task bisa menjadi solusi. Studi ini menjelaskan bagaimana meningkatkan pemahaman siswa tentang mata pelajaran TOEFL. Selain itu, tugasnya adalah untuk mengembangkan motivasi belajar siswa ke dalam proses belajar belajar. Penelitian ini juga difokuskan untuk mengeksplorasi hasil penerapan tugas pengajian sebagai alat pengajaran TOEFL. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengenalkan teknik pengajaran TOEFL yang memungkinkan siswa untuk memahami mata pelajaran TOEFL. Selain itu, dengan mengajukan pertanyaan sendiri, mereka akan memotivasi mereka untuk terlibat dalam proses pembelajaran.*

**Kata Kunci:** *tugas, pembuatan soal, pembelajaran berbasis tugas, TOEFL*

### INTRODUCTION

Teaching TOEFL is different from teaching another subject in English, since the subject itself is a test. A large number of questions cannot be avoided by the students in studying TOEFL that makes them boring and confused to answer questions. For some cases, the more questions they answer, the more formulas they forget. Sometimes, they do exercises without comprehend the subject. Many questions are answered and discussed without making sense. Specifically, task-based learning is done to practice student-centered learning.

Teaching is not only how perfect a teacher explained the lesson, but also how good students comprehend the lesson. Harmer (1998:3) describes that good teachers care more about their students' learning than they do about their own teaching. This approach leads to student-centered teaching where students are the point of the process. Mastering TOEFL subjects cannot be achieved without comprehend each subjects. Answering many questions without comprehension means nothing to improve students' score in the real test. Furthermore, building students' motivation to study is also vital.

One of the greatest enemies of successful teaching is students' boredom (Harmer, 1998:5). Harmer (2001:51) stated that at its most basic level, motivation is some kind of internal drive which pushed someone to do things in order to achieve something. It can be internal (comes from within) or external (comes from outside) motivation. A cognitive view of motivation includes factors such as the need for exploration, activity, stimulation, new knowledge, and ego enhancement (Brown, 2000:160-166). Teaching TOEFL by explaining the formulas and answering all questions does not fulfill the mentioned factors.

In other cases, applying question-making task can fulfill the needs. By doing the task, students will explore the subject with new activity. They will also stimulate through their own questions and get new knowledge and experience. Applying question-making task is also a strategy to build students' motivation to learn. The strategy is done by asking students to make their own questions related to them as original as possible. The questions can be about their hobby, favorite things, family, or even their pets or anything they like to be the subject of their questions.

This study focused on the application of question-making task in comprehending TOEFL subjects. The ability to answer TOEFL questions is analyzed as they comprehend each formula. The writer wishes to describe the application of question-making task on TOEFL subjects. By doing the task, it is expected that students master TOEFL subjects well. Furthermore, by doing the task is also expected to build their motivation, since they are involved in the subject. Their experiences are involved in the subject. The subject, then, is closer to them personally.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Question-Making Task**

Question-making task is a task that asked students to make their own questions for certain subjects. While making the task, students comprehend the subject more than ever. It is because they involved directly in the subjects. For same reason, doing the task builds their motivation to study. Hammer (2001:87) mentions that one way for looking at Task-based learning is seeing it as a kind of 'deep-end' strategy or 'like a sort of PPP (Presentation, Practice, and Production) upside down'. In other words, the students are given a task to perform and only when the task has been completed, the teacher discussed the language used, making corrections and adjustments which the students' performance of the task has shown desirability.

Applying question-making task is part of task-based learning. Harmer (2001:87) stated that task-based learning implied a shift away from some traditional teacher roles. He added Nunan(1989:10) who said that we cannot always be acting as a controller if we want

students to 'manipulate, comprehend and interact' with a task. To be able to comprehend any subject, teacher should choose the right task. In this case, scoring is not the aim, but student's comprehension and their involvement in the class instead.

The task, then, should be related to learning and teaching process as a whole. It does not stand for itself, but relates to three elements of *ESA* (Engage, Study, and Activate). Harmer (1998:25-26) explained the three elements of *ESA*. *Engage* is the point in a teaching sequence where teachers try to arouse the students' interest, thus involving their emotions. *Study* activities are those where the students are asked to focus in on language (or information) and how it is constructed. *Activate* describes exercises and activities which are designed to get students using language as freely and communicatively as they can. In teaching TOEFL, the three elements of *ESA* can be modified to suit the subject as follows:

1. *Engage*: students and teacher look at a task done by certain students about one TOEFL subject on various topics. They give their opinion about the topic or ask some questions to the question-maker students.
2. *Study*: the teacher shows students an underlined words or sentences as the main topic. Students are introduced to particular formula of TOEFL subject. The teacher tries to make sure the formulas are understood correctly and that students use accurate formula.
3. *Activate*: students work in groups and answer questions of the current subject. They make a presentation to the class explaining why they have their answers. In addition, they are asked to explain why the rest choices are wrong.

## TOEFL Subjects

TOEFL is the Test of English as a Foreign Language. Since 1963, the TOEFL has been used by scholarship selection committees of governments, universities, and agencies as a standard measure of the English proficiency of their candidates (Sharpe, 2002:9). In general, the same four language skills are tested in all TOEFL programs. Listening, structure, writing, and reading are tested in three separate sections. Section one is listening, section two is structure/writing, and section three is reading (Sharpe, 2002:11).

Sharpe (2002:9) shares the reasons some students do not pass the TOEFL. It can be because they do not understand enough English or because they do not understand the examination. Andrei Zakhareuski stated in his article that there are top ten tips that work to teach TOEFL, as follows:

1. *Preparation*. Give your students a feel for what they are aiming for a **practice test is a good idea**. This should set the tone for the remainder of the course and show them that the TOEFL test is not a walk in the park. You should tell your students that learning TOEFL is not easy.
2. *Plan your lesson backwards*. Plan your lesson backwards that you can effectively go through the class, work from the aims, and then work the necessary steps, activities and exercises in order for the students to reach those aims and objectives.

3. *Know your subject.* Try to take a few practices of TOEFL tests on either the internet or even your language center that you can use in a demo mode. This allows you to get an understanding as to **how the test is structured** and learn the different steps involved.
4. *Record the students when they speak.* When you get your students to complete a spoken activity, for example, where they must speak for 45 seconds on a given topic, **record them!** The recording places the additional pressure on the student that they will find during the exam, as well as giving you and the student the chance to review and look for errors with their work.
5. *Note taking.* Successful TOEFL students are good note takers. They shouldn't need to write down everything they hear, but **only take down what's relevant**.
6. *Integrated Mayhem.* This is a unique point for both teacher and student, as English language training is generally broken down into the four parts of speaking, reading, writing and listening. **The TOEFL examination is unique as it forces the students to use multiple skills when answering a single question.**
7. *Structure is king.* Like all English proficiency examinations, students must be aware of the structure that must be given in their answers. For example, in terms of the TOEFL writing, they must know to include all the essential tidbits that an examiner looks for, such as a thesis statement, topic sentences and the supporting sentences.
8. *Focus on the time aspect.* No matter whether it's reading, writing, speaking or listening – all of these are strongly bound by time restrictions. If they can't finish the tasks within the required period of time, then this is something that you, as a teacher, must begin to focus on to give the students the best chances at achieving their goal for the TOEFL examination.
9. *Teach them to use their psychic abilities.* One nifty tip for making the most of the timing of the TOEFL test is to **get the students to use their power of prediction**.
10. *Practice, Practice, Practice.* The teacher should give writing tasks to be completed for homework. Homework doesn't always need to be TOEFL related, but it should be done within a time limit and submitted to the teacher, with appropriate feedback given(<http://busyteacher.org/4792-how-to-teach-toefl-top-10-tips-that-work.html>).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

Here are some tasks done by the students of University of Potensi Utama. Not all students made the task originally. Some of them, even most of them copy articles or even TOEFL questions itself. Students are asked to make questions for three sections, they are listening, structure and reading. The division is four questions for listening, three questions for structure, and three questions for reading. The first section is listening, where students make their own conversation, then make questions from it. There are many mistakes found in the task that can be topics for discussion. Students learn more from their mistakes that they share and explain each other. The type of questions students made in the task are as followed, including the examples as original as they wrote.

Man : This flower for you  
Woman : What's for?  
Man : This is the prove that I like you  
What are they discussing?

- a. Feeling
- b. Hobby
- c. Hatter
- d. Best friend

Uky : I'm bored with math; I always failed to complete the task of learning it.  
Comet : I like the lessons.  
What did comet say?

- a. He didn't agree with opinion of Uky
- b. He agreed with the opinion of Uky
- c. He hesitated with the opinion of Uky
- d. He was disappointed with the opinion of Uky

Santi : Hy Ali  
Aly : Hy...  
Santi : When you will play football  
Aly : I will play football tomorrow  
When will Aly play football?

- a. Tomorrow
- b. Last week
- c. Wednesday
- d. Thursday

A : I have a new mobile phone  
B : Do you want to show me?  
A : Yes, of course  
B : Wow, what's your mobile brand?  
A : Samsung phone  
What's a new in this conversation?

- a. Mobile phone
- b. Plate
- c. Glass
- d. House

Dion : I want to tell you about something.  
Andini : what is it?  
Dion : Do you want to be my girlfriend?  
Andini : Oh, I am sorry, I can't. Because I don't like you.  
What did dion say,while he was talking with andini?

- a. Dion wants andini
- b. Dion hate andini
- c. Andini wants Dion
- d. Andini really loves Dion

Niall : Selena, would you have dinner with me?

Selena : I'am sorry Niall, I must go with my family. Maybe next time.

Niall : oh really? Ok, no problem

What Selena said?

- a. Ok, I will.
- b. I'am sorry, I can't.
- c. Wait a minute, I'll be back
- d. Of course, I'll be waiting for you.

Teacher : Rio, please, introduce yourself to your classmates!

Rio : Yes, sir

Well, Good morning, everybody!

I would like to introduce myself. I am Rio Ariawan. You can call me Rio.

Fatah : where are you from, Rio?

Rio : I come from east Java. We move here because my father works in this town nowadays.

Indra : Welcome in our nicest class, Rio. It's nice to meet you.

Rio : Thank you. Nice to meet you,too.

What is Rio doing?

- a. He is introducing himself to the class

Where does Rio come from?

- a. He comes from east Java

Why does Rio move to new school?

- c. He follows his father who moves to the new place of work

Man : please massage the food menu what you want?

Women : I message spaghetti

Narrator : what does the woman mean?

- a. In the hospital
- b. In salon
- c. At the mall
- d. Home meal

Man : Excuse me, here is the menu. What would you like to order Mam?

Woman : I order sate.

Narrator : Who is the Man?

- A. A bank teller.
- B. An accountant.
- C. A waitress.
- D. A store clerk.

Nia : I want to cook fried rice. Do you want to taste it?

Gio : Yes, of course, wow your fried rice is delicious.

Nia : Thank you.

What are they talking about?

- A. Candy
- B. Nuts
- C. Fried rice
- D. Donut

The second section is structure. In this section, students are asked to make three incomplete sentences with blank. They have to make four choices to be chosen as the answer. They have to know the answer for each question and able to explain the reason. Here are the examples.

The fish \_\_\_\_\_ by cat yesterday

- a. eat
- b. is eat
- c. was eaten
- d. was ate

Udin and Dimas \_\_\_\_\_ playing football game in laptop fahriza tomorrow evening.

- a. is
- b. it
- c. he
- d. are

My beloved mother \_\_\_\_\_ home while my stomach \_\_\_\_\_ full.

- a. come, feel
- b. came, was feeling
- c. came, feel
- d. was coming, felt

The third section is reading comprehension. In this section, students are asked to make a passage. They have to make three questions from the passage with four choices to be chosen as the answer. They have to know the answer for each question and able to explain the reason. Here are the examples.

I was going on vacation when I had finished final Exam when I class 3 high school I went to Banda Aceh with my friends are Rozi, Riduwan and Zulfikar at 20.00 am . When we were go out the Bus we met old my friend, his name Bambang. We were talking with him about purpose go there. When we arrived at 14:00 am o'clock in Banda Aceh , we were rest in my brother's house at Darussalam, blangseuke alley and staying there, we were holiday about 3 days when we were staying. Tomorrow morning we went to LHOKNGA Beach, when zulfikar took a tripod and camera for photo in their. We arrived in lhoknga beach, we were shocked about one of heaven earth, and this place is amazed for our tour.

How long they holiday in Banda Aceh?

- a. 4 days
- b. 2 days
- c. 3 days
- d. 4 days

Where the recreation areas they visited?

- a. Lampuuk
- b. Lhoknga
- c. Tsunami Museum
- d. Uleekareng

Where in the passage does the author discuss the arrive in bandaaceh

- a. Line 1-2
- b. Line 2-4
- c. 4-6
- d. 6-8

One direction (1D abbreviated) is a male pop vocal group british-Irish that formed in London in 2010. This group consists of Niall Horan, Liam Payne, Harry Styles, Louis Tomlinson, and Zaynmalik. The group signed with simoncowell's record label syco records after forming and finishing third in the seventh series the british televised singing competition the X FACTOR in 2010. Propelled to international success by social media, one direction's four album's, up all night (2011) Take me home (2012), midnight memories (2013), and four (2014) topped chart in most major markets, and generated hit Singles including "What makes you beautiful", Live while were young" and "Story of my life", their fifth Studio album, made in the AM, was released in november 2015.

What is one direction?

- A. One direction is a female pop vocal group of british-Irish that formed in london in 2010
- B. One direction have singles including "my love, and blank space
- C. One direction is a male pop vocal group of british-irish that formed in london in 2010
- D. One direction is consists of morgan, rangga, rafael, bisma and ilham.

How many person in one direction?

- a. Five person
- b. Four person
- c. Three person
- d. Six person

Where and when did one direction form?

- a. In marelan city
- b. One direction formed in London in 2010
- c. In new york in 2010
- d. One direction form in London in 2011

#### Late for school

I am always on time for school. I have never been late for my lesson. But this morning, I was very late. Let me tell you why.

At seven thirty this morning, I was looking for my shoe. My right shoe was in my room. But my left shoe was missing. At seven forty I was still looking for it. I was all ready, but but my shoe was still missing at eight o'clock. My little sister was past my door, look! What was on her foot? My shoe! She was playing with it.

I was half an hour late, but my teacher was not angry with me. She told me to hand in my exercise book. She looked very seriously and asked me, why did you draw such a picture in your exercise book?



I hung down my head, and did not say a word. My little sister gave me much trouble.

What was her little sister doing with her shoe?

- a. She uses it
- b. She banish in dustbin
- c. She was playing it
- d. She was hiding it

Why did you come late to school yesterday?

- a. Because my little sister took my left shoe
- b. Because I was sick
- c. Because I forgot to school
- d. Because I woke up late

The Hawaiian language is a melodious language in which all words are derived from an alphabet of only twelve letters. The five vowels a, e, i, o, u and the seven consonants h, k, l, m, n, p, w each syllable in the language ends in a vowel, and two consonants never appear together, so vowel have much higher frequency in the Hawaiian language than they do in English.

Which of the following is probably not a Hawaiian word?

- a. Manaho
- b. Mahi-mahi
- c. Meklea
- d. Moana

Answer: c. Meklea

## Discussion

Teaching TOEFL is different from teaching another subject in English. It is because TOEFL is a test where all subjects are demonstrated in exercises. Facing many exercises every meeting is kind of boredom cause for some students. To solve the problem, teacher has to build their motivation and bring them closer to the subject. One way can be applied is by giving question-making task. The task asked students to make their own questions by understanding the subject first. Making questions also give an impression that they are question-maker, at least for their friends. They feel superior for doing the task and being question-maker.

The task was given after at least six meetings, where they have learned listening, structure (and written expression), and reading. The first section is listening, where students make conversation, then make questions from them. The second section is structure, where students make incomplete sentences, then make questions from them. The third section is reading, where students make a passage, then make questions from it. There are many mistakes found in the task that can be topics for discussion. Students learn more from their mistakes that they share and explain each other.

All mistakes can be seen clearly in the sentences they made. The most common mistakes students made in their task are related to grammar. Another mistakes related to the use of incorrect vocabularies. They also made a lot of mistakes related to writing system, especially when writing capital letter.

There are many mistakes related to grammar, as in the sentence “This flower for you” that it should be “This flower is for you.” Another incorrect sentence is “One direction have singles” that it should be “One direction has singles.” Another incorrect sentence is “...in laptop fahriza tomorrow evening” that it should be “...in Fahriza’s laptop tomorrow evening.” From such mistakes, they master the basic formula in making a sentence. It is that every sentence should have at least subject and predicate. They also learn that one direction as a group is considered as one. Another lesson they learned is the way to express ownership.

There are many mistakes related to writing system, as in the sentence “...was released in november 2015” that it should be “...was released in November 2015”. Another sentence is “...vocal group of british-irish that formed in London” that it should be “...vocal group of British-Irish that formed in London”. Another sentence is “...hit Singles including “What makes you beautiful”, Live while were young” and “Story of my life” that it should be “...hit singles including “What Makes You Beautiful”, “Live While We’re Young” and “Story of My Life”. From such mistakes, they master the basic formula in using capital letter. Another lesson they learned is when to mark quote unquote, a comma, and a full stop.

There are many mistakes related to using incorrect vocabularies, as in the sentence “please massage the food menu what you want?” that it should be “Please order the food you want.” Another incorrect sentence is “I message spaghetti” that it should be “I want spaghetti.” All mistakes teach them lessons that they understand well through experience.

Discussing the topic that students like motivates them to involve in teaching-learning process. Harmer (2001:51) states that at its most basic level, motivation is some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something. It can be internal (comes from within) or external (comes from outside) motivation. A cognitive view of motivation includes factors such as the need for exploration, activity, stimulation, new knowledge, and ego enhancement (Brown, 2000:160-166). Teaching TOEFL by explaining the formulas and answering all questions does not fulfill the mentioned factors.

In other case, applying question-making task can fulfill the needs. Doing the task, students will explore the subject with new activity. They will also stimulate through their own questions and get new knowledge and experience. In addition, they will feel superior as a question-maker for their friends. Doing the task, students made their own questions. In this case, they know the questions more than others. They know the correct answers and the reasons of each answer. They can explain the reasons, since they master the subject by doing the task.

The task fulfilled the need for exploration. Doing question-making task, students should explore TOEFL subject. They have to comprehend the subject, its formula and the type of question. They have to explore their information, to make it as a question. They have to make four options as the questions are in multiple choices. They also have to know the answers of all questions. Furthermore, they must be able to explain the reason of choosing it as an answer.

The task also fulfilled the need for activity because they are active while doing the task. They make questions, answers, and reasons themselves. They do study to finish the task. Although some of the students copy an article from certain sources, they need to make

questions from the text and answer them with reasons. Also for those who take TOEFL questions as their task, they still need to give reasons for the answers they knew from the textbook. Students with original source have more activity, but the rest with copied source still have activities. And for sure, the more original the source they have, the better they comprehend the subject.

The task also includes stimulation where the students stimulate to explain the subject. The stimulation was done in front of the class or even since while making it. They know the what, why and how of completing their task. They can relate the subject with certain information to make the questions (*how*). They also know the correct answer for each question (*what*). And the main point is that they know what makes a choice the correct one (*why*).

The task includes new knowledge for sure, because they learn many things while doing the task. Specifically, they learn making conversation for listening questions, making a sentence for structure questions, and writing a text for reading questions. The most important thing is that the task fulfilled the need for ego enhancement. The task enhances their ego as they feel superior for being question-makers. Also that they can share their original information to the class.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusions**

With reference to literature review and writer's experience, it is concluded that question-making task can be applied to comprehend TOEFL subject. It affected not only students' comprehension but also motivation. Question-making task is an individual task given by the teacher after at least six meetings. The result of giving a task showed that students can answer the questions with correct reasons. In addition, many of them were more motivated to study and tend to be involved in the discussion. Finally, it can be concluded that applying question-making task improved students' comprehension on TOEFL subjects and motivated them to learn. Giving a task and analyzing the result, teacher will know students' ability in English. Furthermore, teacher knows what to teach or to pay more attention while teaching.

### **Suggestions**

Teaching TOEFL as a test requires ability to explain formulas and to avoid students from boredom. These aims can be achieved through applying question-making task. Therefore, when the purpose of giving a task is to avoid their boredom, they should do a task on as original topic as possible. The case study showed that the process of making questions has significant effect on students' comprehension. It was because they made the questions and should have the answers with reasons. Making and discussing the questions improved their motivation to learn. Since not all students were interested in making original questions, teacher can motivate them by giving high score for the original. Finally, the task is suggested for English teachers, especially those who teach TOEFL as a way to improve students' comprehension of the subjects and their involvement in learning process. Furthermore, it is also suggested for everyone who wishes to comprehend TOEFL subjects and to build self-motivation to learn.

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