

## “WATCHING ENGLISH MOVIE HELPS ME!”: LANGUAGE EXPOSURE AND METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS ON TOEFL

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### ABSTRACT

*This research was conducted to investigate the correlation between metacognitive and language exposure to TOEFL of reading section. The framework of metacognitive was promoted by Veenman et al. and the model of language exposure was promoted by Magno et al. (2009). This research implemented a descriptive qualitative study. The questionnaire and rubric of metacognitive were applied as research instruments respectively. Furthermore, ten freshmen at Syiah Kuala University from various majors considered as strategic readers whose TOEFL score ranges of 400 above. It is prominently revealed that language exposures have a contribution for strategic readers in answering TOEFL in the reading section, in particular, media exposure. The respondents have a tendency to seek out the media availability as the major side on mastering reading TOEFL meanwhile language exposure at home is the lowest impact on students. In addition, metacognitive awareness has an impact on students' performance in answering reading test of TOEFL the metacognition implementation, the students are eventually categorized on knowledge regulation in which the students relate the knowledge of TOEFL into planning, implementing strategies or information management, monitoring, correcting/debugging, and evaluating comprehension. It is assumed that this study has weakness on informants taken therefore as further studies, the researcher trigger to probe students of 500 TOEFL score above to investigate their learning strategy and language exposures accordingly.*

**Keywords:** language exposure, metacognitive, TOEFL, reading section

### INTRODUCTION

TOEFL, Test of English as a Foreign Language, is an English standard test for non-native speakers of English (Phillips, 2001). This test gauges English proficiency level of non-native English speakers. The mastery of this test is profoundly important for not only students but also for job seekers for the following reasons. First, to mention, TOEFL has been around for decades as a measuring test since numbers of universities, both local and international, insist on having their applicants reach a certain score in the test to be admitted (Ananda, 2016). As now we figured that a large number Indonesian students of Indonesian University tend to try hard to master each of the TOEFL question test item as a real venture to reach a certain score, or even higher, to apply to the desired local/international university to pursue their study. Later to that fact, most prominent universities in Indonesia oblige their students to bear at least 450-500 TOEFL score as a vital requirement for both their admission and graduation.

TOEFL Test was firstly produced by Education Testing Service (ETS). The test is mostly used to test the

English proficiency average ability for those who intend to pursue their study or career since both educational institutions and Business Corporation require a standard score for their applicants (Ananda, 2016). In addition, Brown (2004) asserts that in North American context, the TOEFL administrators allocate approximately 80.000 candidates from more than 200 countries worldwide each year. The registers are those who are in an attempt to seek admission in more than 2.400 English-universities, government agencies, scholarship programs, and licensing/certification agencies.

There are three kinds of TOEFL test; they are Paper-Based Test (PBT), Computer-Based Test (CBT), and Internet-Based Test (iBT). In PBT test, there are only three sections named Listening Section, Structure and Written Expression Section, and Reading Section. Both CBT and iBT also have these sections, in addition, there are also speaking and writing sections, as well as integrated sections (Brown, 2004).

To be more specific, the mastery of English comprehension, especially in Reading Section of TOEFL, must correlate to language capacity, most of which is

acquired through language exposures. Each kind of contact between a person and a language is considered as a language exposure, including exposures at home, with friends, at school, or through media (Magno et al., 2009).

Magno, et al. (2009) referred language exposure as any contact which occurs between a language and an individual. According to this definition, any kinds of language contact can be considered as exposure whether it is through communication, books, songs and many more. Thus, a language learner may not only get exposures in the class through formal learning, but also from random media such as internet, multimedia, newspaper, and any other source in form of the target language.

The exposure of English as a foreign language in Indonesian society is considered to be rare (Nurhidayati et al., 2016). It is mainly because English is not used as the official language of the country and thus, people use Indonesian or their mother tongue language to exchange information. However, students have a great opportunity since their school provide the exposure of English during classes, especially for students in dormitory school where they can practice the language among friends. The vast development of technology and media also help students to get inputs anytime and anywhere. Hence, Magno et al. (2009) argued that students can get exposures from varied sources which can be classified into four main categories; home (bilingualism), dormitory (friends), school (formal and informal) and media.

Bilingual family means that the family members speak more than one language at home and thus the children are exposed to both majority (societal) language and minority (e.g. parents' mother tongue) language (Unsworth, 2015). The sources of exposure at home may come from parents and other family members.

Although English becomes a foreign language in Indonesia, parents can deliberately decide to purposefully bring English to the child's environment. Whether getting involved actively or passively, the children have a good chance to acquire the language used within the parental interaction. The interaction itself provides exposure causing the children to be familiar with the language. Moreover, home of bilingual family is the most important and influential source of language exposure for the growth of language development either in the acquisition of morph syntax or vocabulary (Unsworth, 2015).

Siblings may also provide language exposure. Other family members should also be considered as important source of language exposure, even though children use language more with parents rather than siblings (Jean, 2011). If the children have a big family then there are also possibilities to get language exposures from grandparents, cousins, and relatives who occasionally use the target language within familial interaction.

Even though students may have some exposures from home, there are exceptional conditions that hinder the students to achieve sufficient and proper exposure of the target language. Mainly, it is due to the low proficiency level of the language usage by the parents or other family members (Unsworth, 2015). Such situation cannot bring much benefit in one's language ability. The other reason is because the children growing up with more than one language usually obtain their input from different sources. This can lead them to favor one language and neglect the other. It may also happen due to their social preference.

Since the exposures at home are not the definite factor of one's language competence, Jean (2011) concluded

that the exposures at home, even though it is influential; is not dominant. As children would get more exposures on the society, other aspects such as social, linguistics, and educational background also matter.

According to Palermo & Mikulski (2014), friends can be important sources since they may provide some opportunities to English exposures and practices. Magno et al. (2009) stated that exposures to the second language can influence one's motivation to learn the language itself. In this regard, students of dormitory school may interact with each other very often since they live in the same environment. It brings opportunity to improve the students' awareness or motivation to practice English more (Ningsih & Fata, 2015). This is why many dormitory schools instruct the students to use the target language within school and dormitory so they can practice using English in the real life situation. It also impacts to the more exposures students receive. The sources of the language exposure within the dormitory are students' roommates and peers.

In learning English as a second language (ESL) or as a foreign language (EFL), language learners need to have exposure access whether it takes formal or informal setting after obtaining the language input (Bahrani & Sim, 2012). Thus, the language acquisition should be conducted by forming sufficient language exposures.

Formal language setting can be considered when the target language is being taught in class. Thus the students focus on the language itself. By means, students learn English as the target language or second language in formal or classroom-based situation with structured and purposeful management.

Bahrani et al. (2014) pointed out that formal language learning needs classroom-based and highly structured situation. Moreover, the learning content is directed by teacher. On the other hand, informal language learning may happen inside or outside of classroom, become unstructured and focus on the meaning of the language instead of the language meaning.

It can be concluded that in informal setting, students do not even realize that they learn the language since it is without purposes. When the students read, they intend to understand what they read and not to learn the grammar. By means, the focus is on the meaning of the language. While in formal setting however, the concentration is more on the language aspects. In other words, the focus of formal setting is the language itself. Here are the sources of exposures at school; (1) the interaction with English teachers, (2) the interaction with non-English teachers, (3) the activities in English class, (4) the activities in non-English class and (5) the interaction with classmates.

The exposures from media may be a matter of preference due to one's hobby. For instance, students who like to watch television tend to get most of the exposures from television programs such as movies and shows. Thus, these are the exposure sources from media, such as online chatting, sending and receiving text messages, browsing web pages from the internet, listening to English songs, watching movies and TV shows in English, reading magazines written in English, and also reading newspapers, books and any kinds of information written in English.

Since technology brings impressive developments in audio, video, and computer-mediated communication program, it can give possibility for teachers to conduct English-based activities such as listening or watching English program, and holding English conversation with natives in reality. The use of different technology such as

watching a movie, or listening to the music, can conduct the informal setting of language learning (Bahrani et al., 2014). By getting involved in the activities of watching a movie or listening to the music, students try to understand the meaning of the current language, thus these activities can lead the students to retain implicitly the information of the target language aspects.

Metacognition is the ability of thinking how the thinking process is performed. It is simply the thinking of thinking (Coskun, 2010). The dichotomy of issue is knowledge and knowledge regulation. The former, metacognitive knowledge corresponds to students' information about themselves, strategies they frequently use, and conditions where the strategies work well. The classification is subbed into three components, namely declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge. While the latter, knowledge regulation or better known as metacognitive skills or strategies, relates to knowledge of planning, implementing strategies or information management, monitoring, correcting/debugging, and evaluating comprehension.

Veenman et al. (2014) further describe that there is a clear cutting line between metacognitive knowledge and skills. Metacognitive strategies refer to individual interactions, tasks, and characteristics of strategies which is entirely built-in as beliefs. One's metacognitive knowledge can be successful or not successful; for instance, when a student thinks he prepares very well for an exam but later fails, he may incorrectly presume that his awareness upon the strategies he used is already excellent despite a paradox he faced in the exam.

This knowledge seems resistant to change somehow. On the other hand, metacognitive regulation or metacognitive skill actualizes one's ability in regulating problem-solving and learning activities. It is built in the form of inner feedback mechanisms. It deals with whether or not you are able to plan your actions ahead the performances and gain smooth progress or you get confused with what to do and go astray. Metacognitive skill depends on metacognitive knowledge as much as it affects metacognitive knowledge. Luckily, through certain times and hard effort, these skills can still be acquired. Anderson (2002) exhibits that learners with metacognitive skills have bigger chance in achieving learning objectives in general since they are more strategic, they have faster pace during learning, they obtain accurate self-assessment, their judgments match their tactics, and they find clear partitions among inaccuracies and misattributions. Shortly, they are good at managing their plans before approaching the tasks, monitoring their understanding and soon fixing-up impaired information intake, and evaluating their thinking after the task completion (TEAL Center Staff, 2010). The elaboration about the confines between metacognitive knowledge and its regulation are as described in the following.

Declarative knowledge merely is the knowledge acquired through presentations, discussions, and demonstrations. This is a master plan that a student needs to know before processing the information in the tasks or learning materials. Then, it also refers to the information a student has about his or her ability. The student needs to know about *what*.

Procedural knowledge mainly is that acquired during discovery, cooperative learning, and problem solving. This is the application of the initial knowledge above in where a student needs to know *how* to implement it.

Conditional knowledge is the knowledge of *what*

*to do, why* and *when* (Desoete & Roeyers, 2003). It is the process of determination an appropriate strategy to use in various learning situation. This is the integration of implementing declarative and procedural knowledge together.

Planning is the process of goal setting and allocating resources prior to learning. Information management is the sequenced use of skills and strategies in processing information.

In contrast, the teaching realm has shown paradoxical facts concerning the TOEFL mastery, especially in Reading Section. Generally, most of low level of EFL University students informed that they frequently tend not to answer this section thoroughly for some reasons, such as lack of vocabulary, time deficiency, being panic, and so forth. This condition is completely supported by (Farrell, 2001) mentioning that most L2 (second language) learners still use basic reading strategies, namely (1) word for word reading and (2) translation strategy. Both of these strategies are automatically inhibited by the limit of vocabulary. Specifically for good readers, the writers are curious in finding out whether there is an imprint from language exposures left in them to own such ability of comprehension.

There have been numerous studies conducted on TOEFL, such as the first previous study which was piloted by Ananda (2016). He examined the second section of TOEFL which is Structure and Written Expression Section to figure out which topics believed to be the most difficult ones by 26 college students of Islamic State University Ar-Raniry and Syiah Kuala University. The result showed that there are seven topics considered to be difficult, which are; (1) Inversion, (2) Subject-Verb Agreement, (3) Clause Connectors, (4) Passive Voice, (5) Reduced Adjective Clause, (6) Parallel Structures, and (7) Use of Verb. Meanwhile in the current study, the researchers searched for the students' ability in answering TOEFL Reading Section in its relation to language exposure and metacognitive awareness.

Furthermore, a study by Sungatullina et al. (2016) researching on the effect of metacognitive awareness (Clue Reading Strategy) exposure to three group students of Management, Economics, and Finance students enrolled in an academic ESL program in a university in Russia. The result showed that the group which was trained using the metacognitive strategy, in this study it is Clue Reading Strategy, has gained higher score result compared to the other two group. Besides, the training is beneficial for the students in understanding words and inference the lexis. In 2001, a study by Cunningham & Stavonich (2001) discussed that language exposures play an important role in determining one's general quotient, including reading ability. The study promoted that language exposure in language acquisition process are taken into consideration, besides, written language corpora give more vocabulary expansion compared to oral language resources.

Thus, there are no further studies currently investigating language exposures and metacognitive awareness on TOEFL Reading in EFL context, therefore this study would fill in this gap. Conclusively, this study firstly subjected and addressed the questions on whether language exposures have prominent contribution for strategic readers in answering TOEFL in Reading Section; and secondly, to seek if metacognitive awareness has an impact of students' performance in answering Reading test of TOEFL.

Through the result inquired in this study, it is expected that, first of all, the facilitators/lecturers might thoughtfully take into consideration the presentation of reading materials

or lesson through media exposure. And second of all, it is also suggested that they create the learning atmosphere to a level of the autonomous learning accordingly.

Based on the importance of writing and the problems found in the real situation, the researcher intends to conduct a research on “The Effectiveness of Collaborative Writing Strategy (CWS) (Compared with Metacognitive Writing Strategy (MWS)) in writing lesson regarded to the Students’ Creativity.

## METHODS

This research used qualitative inquiry-based methods which involved researchers’ observations and interpretations. This study was conducted at one of University in Aceh involving ten first year students to be the participants. It focused on the factors that influence high level readers’ ability in doing reading tasks provided in Reading Section of TOEFL. The respondents of this study were ten freshmen at Syiah Kuala University from various majors considered as strategic readers whose TOEFL score ranges within 400 above. The first factor was language exposure and the second was metacognition utilization.

Based on the result of the placement test that had been administered earlier, using 50 question items of Reading Section TOEFL which were developed by Gear & Gear (1996), the interest in investigating the students’ metacognition and language exposure rose. Ten students whose score was above 400 were given two questionnaire sets, each of which was associated with either the first or second research question formulated previously. In the first set, there were 20 questions in the questionnaire about language exposure of which the students needed to answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’. In addition, the other questionnaire was Metacognitive Awareness Inventory provided by Harford Community College Learning Center. These questionnaires were also given—only—to the students whose TOEFL score in Reading Section is 400 or above. This rubric was also administered to those with good score in Reading Section of TOEFL in order to examine what kind of strategies the good readers frequently attempt in answering the questions. There are 52 questions in this rubric which have been adopted from (Schraw & Dennison, 1994). They had to answer these questions in true or false condition.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In order to obtain the data of the questionnaire examining the impacts of language exposure on good readers in comprehending the TOEFL Reading Section texts, the researchers found the following description, as presented in Figure 1.

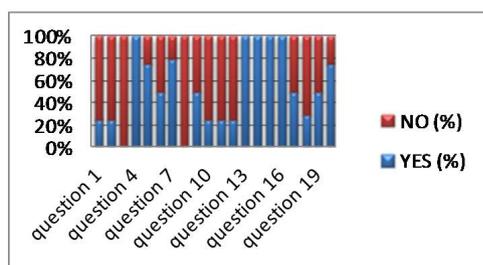


Figure 1 Language Exposure on Reading Ability, Adopted from Veenman et al. (2014).

It is evidenced that the most interfering type of exposure is media exposure since all students agree for 100% that internet webpages, English songs, English movies, and English TV shows have a lot to do with their English acquisition; meanwhile the least influencing is exposure at home. This data supports the statement from Magno et al. (2009) saying that internet media exposure had major impact to language mastery. It is evidenced on English language mastery that people has to mediate it through technology. As Magno et al. (2009) believed that exposures to the target language may reinforce one’s motivation to learn the language itself, this provides good benefits on students’ language development, especially in reading TOEFL section since not only they could use and receive exposures, but they could also get feedbacks from their language learning exposure.

In addition, this finding is partly supported by Durrant & Schmitt’s (2010) statement which investigated the process of acquiring collocations through language exposure. The researchers divided 84 non-native English speakers to have different exposure of collocations. The three conditions were; (1) single exposure in which the collocations were exposed once, (2) verbatim repetition in which the collocations were exposed twice and (3) varied repetition in which the same collocations were put within some different sentences in a text. The result showed the participants gained some information about word pairings or chunks in the text they read. In other words, learners might study unconsciously the appearing of some words that usually go together by getting exposed to inputs containing collocations. Since their study carefully controlled the exposure to the participants, the inputs of language students received were restricted to reading and listening media.

In question 1 and 2, which brought up the exposure at home either by parents or other family members, it was found only two students or 20% of them who got exposed to English in family interactions. Question 3 and 4 shed lights on the exposure they have with their friends, either with roommates or peers. All students claimed 100% certainty that they have not been exposed to English by their roommates. Nevertheless, some peers, who were presumably considered close friends, did give exposure to them and all students confirmed to this adjustment. Students can practice much since they spent most of their free time in the same room and they had to share the room as well. Since it is believed that richer language environment helps students to have better exposure of the language, roommates may be one of the essential exposure sources.

Within the dormitory, interaction also happens with peers who live closely in the school environment. This socialization is important in which students can get the language exposure of real life experience.

The varied occurrence of language exposure can be distinguished based on its setting which is divided into two types, formal and informal. While formal language learning happens in structured, purposeful and school setting, informal language learning happens in unstructured and purposeful setting (Bahrani & Sim, 2012). Regarding informal language, Rogers (2004), as cited by Bahrani & Sim (2012), added that informal language learning takes real life situation which becomes the most extensive and most important part of learning. It is because after gaining a current input language, students need to apply the function of its language and develop their language ability which requires real environments.

In the next five questions to which they were

concerned to was about formal interaction exposure. Eight students revealed that they developed English through their interaction with English teachers as well as activities in English classes. These five questions also considered that both students' interaction with non-English teachers and activities in non-English classes lead them to gain English exposure. No students approved getting English exposure through interaction with classmates.

The last eleven questions were relevant to media exposure. Only two students corresponded to the fact that they gain English exposure from online chatting, sending and receiving messages. On the other hand, every student consented on the fact that browsing internet web-pages, listening to English songs, watching movies and TV shows in English established their English proficiency. Five students believed that reading English magazines and English books encouraged them to practice their English ability. Three students stated that reading English newspaper is exposing them to English. Lastly, eight of them were assured that they got English exposure from reading information in English contexts. This data were supported by the statement from Bahrani & Sim (2012) which considered that media has positive impacts in developing reading ability respectively.

To see the metacognition possessed by these good readers, the rubrics identifying their use of both metacognitive knowledge and skill were analyzed. The description is presented in Figure 2.

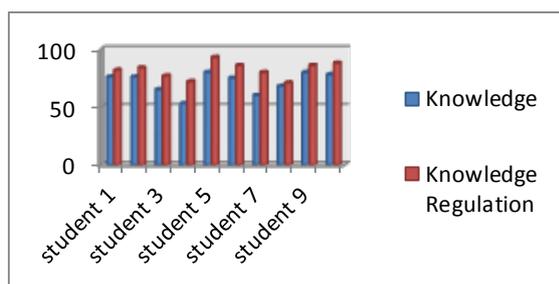


Figure 2 Comparison between the use of Knowledge and Knowledge Regulation, Adapted from Magno et al. (2009).

It is claimed that each student is properly enhanced in employing their metacognitive skills in resolving the problems they might have in Reading Section of TOEFL. Although the results cause the researchers to concede so, Figure 2 also displays that the students' metacognitive knowledge is only slightly lower compared to their metacognitive regulation. It is clear that all students achieved more than half of the knowledge. Despite facing some obstacles in answering the questions, good readers are able to employ certain strategies in tackling down the setbacks, which are known as metacognitive strategies. Most strategic readers are aware of the problems they face at the time of their performance and at once examine their weaknesses, for which they find the solutions. Moreover, Cardenas (2009) affirmed that the significance of having competent readers is that they can use their own strategies in comprehending the TOEFL texts and become autonomous learners which in much deliberation would be advantageous for them in the long run.

Figure 2 precisely denotes that student 1 used 76% of the knowledge and 82% of the regulation or skill. Student 2 also used 76% of the knowledge but increasingly used

84% of the knowledge regulation. Student 3 and 4 used their knowledge for 65% and 53%, and their knowledge regulation for 77% and 72%, respectively. Student 5 employed 80% in knowledge and 93% in knowledge regulation, which is the highest percentage altogether. Next, student 6 used 75% of knowledge and 86% of knowledge regulation; students 7 used 60% and 80%; students 8 used 68% and 71%; student 9 used 80% and 86%; and student 10 used 78% and 88%. These finding turns out to be totally not in line with Schraw & Dennison (1994) which eventually claimed that knowledge of metacognitive awareness dominates more than knowledge regulation does. It is an expansion of students' employment to gain reading distinctive achievement.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study brings into play on exposing language exposure to reading ability, it is evidenced that technology of internet or media (e.g. watching English movie and listening to English songs) takes higher impacts on students reading ability of TOEFL. It is likely that the access of internet might provide TOEFL test sample easily. The media is convinced to impact the students' comprehension ability in the reading section of the TOEFL test. Furthermore, regarding the metacognitive awareness in teaching students' metacognitive knowledge and how to employ their metacognitive regulations or skills, it is considered prominently important to university students who become freshmen in the transition phase after senior high school.

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