Development of Web-mediated Audio-Visual Listening Book to Boost the Understanding of Implicatures in the TOEFL Short Dialogues

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Article Info

ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study: Understanding implicatures in TOEFL Short Dialogues is difficult. It is essential to develop web-based media to boost implicature understanding. This current study *aimed at* testing the implicature inference-making ability of English teachers, identifying the factors that affect listening difficulties and developing web-mediated audio-visual books for the TOEFL.

Methodology: This is a three-phase R & D model: 1) 'Research Phase' (Testing the English teachers listening ability; Examining factors affecting implicatures understanding; and Profiling the English teachers listening abilities); 2) 'Development Phase' (Constructing the test instrument; Formulating Learning Objectives; Selecting Audio-visual materials, Designing the web-mediated audio-visual book; Validating and revising the book) and 'Production Phase' (Dissemination and Mass Production).

Main Finding: The products of the 'Research phase': 1) Listening ability, 2) Factors affecting listening, 3) Profile of the English teachers' pragmatic ability. There are five primary causes of difficulty, 'Speech Rate Delivery,' 'Voice,' 'Sentence Complexity,' 'Mishearing,' and 'Colloquial.' The product of the 'Development Phase' is a 'Web-based audiovisual book for the TOEFL Short Dialogues.' All lessons are aided with online links to audio and videos. Finally, the product of 'Production Phase' is a massed published book.

Novelty/Originality of the Study: No single study has ever been reported that focused on developing a web-mediated audio-visual listening book to boost the understanding of implicatures in the TOEFL Short Dialogues.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, English is a compulsory subject in schools, even in elementary schools. English could be included in the primary school curriculum as a compulsory local content subject (No.1702/I04/M/94/SK). So, English teachers and the students of English education in universities have learned English for thirteen years. They intensively learned English. Currently, many English-medium audio-visual entertainments and TOEFL preparation books are available and unlimited, free online TOEFL practices with audio-visual media are easily accessible. In order to determine the effectiveness of the media, or multimedia, in teaching and learning language, listening in particular, some studies have been conducted in Indonesian schools.

For example, the use of the media, more specifically, multimedia, is effective for teaching listening. The use of media could make students more active and focused in the learning process [1] which results in an effective listening [2, 3]. More specifically, the use of audio-visual media facilitates students' macro skills, while

audio media supports their micro skills of listening [4]. Similarly, the use of audio-visual media in lecturing activates the students' background knowledge and attention, which improves their listening abilities [5]. Besides, the use of audio and text through YouTube video in listening practices enhances students' positive attitude to English [6] and increases active listening [7]. All studies indicate that the use of the media is effective for teaching and/or learning listening.

As a result, a variety of media have been used, for example, 'powtoon.' Based on a study, it shows that powtoon totally (100%) improves listening ability [8]. Overall, the use a variety of media, for example, animated videos [9], songs [10, 11], music video lyrics [12] and mobile-based learning can be a solution to the problems in teaching and learning listening [13]. As a comparison, in some countries, it is also reported that report that beliefs, autonomy and learning strategies affect the Thai EFL learners' English proficiency in overall and in specific skills [14]. In Pakistan, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) enhances students' motivation in language learning [15]. Regarding implicature inference-making ability, [16] found that teachers' and students' lack of pragmatic competence leads to low listening ability and communication breakdown. However, no single study, ever reported, that focused on the development of web-mediated audio-visual listening book to boost the understanding of implicatures in the TOEFL Short Dialogues. This is the 'gap' or 'novelty' of this current study.

This Research and Development aimed at testing teachers' ability in understanding of conversational implicatures in the TOEFL Listening sections, identifying factors affecting listening difficulties and developing web-mediated audio-visual listening book for TOEFL listening practices. Accordingly, this current study provides solutions for the following questions: 1) What is wrong with the media and how about validity of the research findings? 2) What factors affect the teachers' and students' listening abilities? 3) How do the teachers teach listening and how do the students learn listening? 4) Are the audio-visuals that they used appropriate with their needs in their attempt to improve their TOEFL scores?

Therefore, this current study that focused on the development of appropriate, effective audio-visual media for learning listening, as an innovation in pragmatic-based independent learning, is urgent. As a type of teaching and learning strategy, the use of web-mediated audio-visual Listening book potentially improves the users' listening abilities, the understanding of implicatures in the TOEFL Short Dialogues in particular.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Understanding conversational implicature in TOEFL Listening sections

The quality of English language teachers in Indonesia is inseparable from their educational background. [17] found that English language proficiency of higher education teachers is low, and they do not have good command of English language. A great many English language teachers and even some lecturers show 'insufficient' proficiency. The mean TOEFL scores of English language lecturers in Indonesia is only 390.50, far lower than those of the third year Senior High School students, 435. Among the three sections, listening section is the most difficult one. This finding is consistent with the one reported by ETS [18]. Based on the data summary, means scores of Listening section, Structure and Written Expression and Reading Comprehension are 63.7, 69.7 and 69.1 respectively. Such a similar condition also appears in Japan. [19] found that in Japan, many secondary school English language teachers show low English proficiency on the TOEFL.

According to [17], there are a plenty of English language undergraduates who do not show good command of English language. They are not qualified as models in English language teaching. A similar situation occured at other English education in Indonesia. TOEFL-like studies conducted by [20] and [21] showed that mean scores of English proficiency of the 'senior' students of English Education Program at University of Mataram (henceforth EEPUM) is 437, lower intermediate level, far lower than the minimum standard TOEFL-like score of 500 required for graduation. This is 'unique.' Interestingly, their mean score of Listening section is 462, higher than the other two sections. They could only answer correctly 46% of 50 items of listening section involving Short Conversation (Part A) 30 items, Longer Conversation (Part B) 8 items and Monolog/Talk (Part C) 12 items. So, the contribution of Short Conversation (Part A) which assesses pragmatic meanings, implicature in particular, might be high to the low score of both Listening section Parts A and B and TOEFL as a whole. It is probable that one of the causes of low total English proficiency could be low ability in implicature inference from short conversations. Blight [3] states that understanding pragmatics or implicatures is still problematic for EFL learners and it hinders proficiency. As a proficiency test, TOEFL generally contains pragmatics. Unfortunately, TOEFL publishers and ETS never explicitly inform about common barriers of listening comprehension in Paper-based TOEFL.

Such conditions may be related to two main problems of learning English nationally, namely: a) limited competence and b) the lack of innovative learning media 'technology' which hinders increasing proficiency and TOEFL scores. In addition, there are no books with effective audio-visual media written based on comprehensive studies on the difficulties in inference-making of conversational implicatures implied in the short conversations or dialogues in the TOEFL listening sections. Rakhmadi and Nurrohmah [23] note that it is

predicted that in the next few decades, more than 50% of the student population will learn to use web-based or online learning media or technologies.

2.2 Portrait of Indonesian English teachers and students' English proficiency

In the 'Visiting Lecture' held at the State University of Surabaya on November 20, 2010, Saukah states that there appears to be a critical problem with language proficiency of the English Language Education Program in Indonesia. Saukah [17] found that the English language proficiency of higher education teachers, including lecturers, is low. They attained low English proficiency as indicated by their mean TOEFL scores in the English language, only 390.50, far lower than those of the third year Senior High School students, 435. Among the three sections, the listening section is the most difficult. The relatively same result was reported by Sujana, et al. [21] and Arifuddin and Sujana [20] that the mean of the TOEFL scores of the senior students of the English Education Program at the University of Mataram was only 437. The listening section, which measures pragmatic ability, contributes to the difficulty of the test. Blight (3) states that understanding pragmatics is still problematic for EFL learners and it hinders proficiency. There is a positive correlation between the participants' pragmatic competence and language proficiency [16], [23], [24]. As an aspect of pragmatic competence, idiomatic expressions are difficult for Indonesian students [31]). As a comparison, in Thailand, the students of graduation level lack of pragmatic competence during English learning process [26].

Why is listening still difficult for English teachers and students in the English department? Why are their TOEFL scores low?" Ideally, they do not encounter listening difficulties anymore, and, as a result, they can achieve high TOEFL scores. Until recently, there is no accurate solution to the listening difficulties and low TOEFL scores attained by English teachers and students in Indonesia. Optimistically, this 'Pragmatic-based listening for the TOEFL' book' is an accurate solution. This digital book is a product of continuing innovation. A question, "Why is this book prospective and \/or promising for the improvement of listening ability and TOEFL scores?" The development of the content materials and the selection of media suggested in this book are based on intensive Research and Development' on the causes of listening difficulties faced by the students of English departments and the English language teachers in Indonesia. So, this book is a solution to the listening difficulties in the Listening section of the TOEFL encountered not only by the Indonesian English teachers and students, but also by other learners of English worldwide.

2.3 Factors affecting listening difficulties

There are three major variables significantly influenced pragmatic understanding of the Pre-TOEFL listening: negation, cognitive process and pattern of utterances [27]. TOEFL listening comprehension is also affected by vocabulary, syntactic complexity, the rhetorical structure, or repetition [28, 29]. TOEFL contains test items which assess inferential skill in listening [30] and teaching L2 pragmatics in language classes is urgent [31].

Referring to [32] order of factors affecting listening, the research questions are as follows: 1) What are the primary factors affecting listening? 2) Is there any different orders between: a) Males' order, b) females' order, and c) Mixed-gender (Males and females)? 3) Which of the three orders formulated based on the findings of the present study is the same as the one proposed by van Duzer [32]? The formulation of the research questions indicates the 'novelty' of the present study. Definitely, determining the order of factors affecting listening is really important in language teaching, especially in teaching English for Public Schools and Islamic School Boarding Houses. Until recently, English language teaching in both types of schools, including listening, applies the same approaches/strategies, materials and assessment, ignoring the role sex pragmatic understanding. The order of the nine factors affecting the *male-test takers'* failure: Pronunciation, Sentence Complexity, Cultural Value, Colloquial, Context, Discourse Marker, Mishearing, Speech Delivery and Sex. Pronunciation is in the top, while Mishearing, Speech Rate Delivery and Sex are the lowest. Besides, Sentence Complexity is important in understanding the speaker meanings.

2.4 The use of media for teaching listening in Indonesia

In the last few decades, we have witnessed the development of information and communication technology. The use of internet networks (worldwide web) in education and learning is very dominant. It's just that not much is known about the effectiveness of using learning media and internet technology [33]. However, it is said that technology, such as information and communication technology, can be used as a medium or an important learning tool [34]. For example, Information and Communication Technology can provide teachers and students with resources to collect and analyze data, design presentations and acquire broad and important knowledge [35].

Research proves that web-based learning can replace the role of conventional classroom learning [36]. Concretely, for example, Computer-assisted Language Learning (CALL) has proven to be effective and profitable, so it needs to be integrated into language learning in the classroom. The advantages of using CALL include: a) being able to learn more, b) providing more time to solve problems/difficulties, c) getting quick

feedback, d) being able to review the material being studied as much as possible [37]. Other research shows that web-based interactive learning systems enrich students' abilities in structure and written expression. This research also proves that web-based learning can replace the role of conventional classroom learning for structure and written expression skills. According to experts, it is predicted that in the next few decades, more than 50% of the student population will learn to use digital media technology and online learning [22]. Difficulties in TOEFL Listening Comprehension are often caused by the absence digital media [38].

In attempt to verify whether the use of media improves listening abilities, a plenty of studies using a variety of media have been done in Indonesia. Among others, the use of *LCD projector*, *audio speaker, whiteboard and board marker*, and *mobile phone* [39], mobile phone, laptop, internet, digital projector, Microsoft Power Point, book, poster, real object, speaker active, video and YouTube [1], animation videos [9], music video lyric [12], audio-visual aids [5], mobile-based media [13], video [40], songs [11], audio-visual [41], audio-visual [42], multimedia [2], audio media [7], Powtoon media [8] and songs [10]. In summary, these studies show that the use of media is effective in teaching and/or learning English.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This Research and Development Model employed three phases: 1) Research Phase; 2) Development Phase; and 3) Publication and Production Phase. In the Research Phase, the participants were the four masters' degree program in the University of Mataram, Indonesia who had just attended TOEFL training in the 'matriculation' program. And in the Development Phase, the participants were 275 English language teachers in 10 regencies in West Nusa Tenggara province Indonesia. Both those who have and have not ever taken TOEFL test participated in this Research and Development.

This Research and Development employed the materials or instruments, namely: 1) Pre-test and Post-test recording containing short conversations in the TOEFL Listening sections; 2) Draft of the prototype book; 3) Google form and written Questionnaire (Evaluation of the book) and 4) Table of Corrections. The data were collected with a test, survey (written questionnaire and Google Form) and interview. The test was employed to determine the teachers' implicature understanding tested in Part A TOEFL. The test consists of 50 items weighing 2 per item, so the total score is 100. The test was attended by 200 teachers. Meanwhile, the questionnaire and interview were used to collect data about the causes of difficulty in implicature understanding or pragmatic failure. The procedures of using the questionnaire: 1) Developing the questionnaire (Content validity and reliability were based on the Scope of Pragmatic understanding and expert judgment; 2) Administering the questionnaire sheets by sharing it to all participants via Google Form. In addition, the interview guide was developed by the researchers and it was applied to get further obstacles and difficulties in understanding pragmatic meanings. Seven questions were formulated and referred to the items asked in the questionnaire. Expert judgment was applied for reliability and validity assurance. 45 interviewees were selected purposively, and the interviews was recorded.

The test results were analysed as follows: 1) Count the correct answers of the test-takers; 2) Totalize the scores of each test taker; 3) Use the criteria of the levels of pragmatic understanding (95–100 = very high; 75–94 = high; 65–74 = medium; 45–64 = low; and 0–44 = very low) prepared in advanced. Based on the calculations of the total scores, the average score of pragmatic understanding of the students is 57.94. Thus, the students pragmatic understanding is "low."

The data collected with the questionnaire were analyzed as follows: 1) Recapitulating the participants' responses, and 4) Scoring with Likert Scale scoring system, 3) Using the criteria of levels of pragmatic understanding. Then, the recorded data collected with the interview were transcribed, reduced, classified, described and inferred. The results of the analysis of the two types of narrative data were integrated.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
4.1 Understanding pragmatic meanings in the TOEFL Listening section

The results of the pre-test that has just been done by teachers, even by lecturers, in English in this research activity [43] shows that the problems in achieving TOEFL scores, listening in particular, have not changed. Based on the test results, using a simple scoring system, not the TOEFL scoring system, an average score of 57.94 is obtained, with the 'Low' category. So, listening is still difficult. This finding is in line with [44] reporting that even the English language teachers who are undertaking the master's degree in English education show low pragmatic understanding. Therefore, this book is definitely important to help the English language teachers in particular, and the public in general. Making books with practical digital media is urgent because the use has great potential to improve TOEFL skills, listening in particular.

4.2   Factors affecting listening difficulties

Findings showing the low TOEFL scores of English teachers and lecturers have been reported by many researchers, such as [20] [21]. This finding is consistent with the one found in Makassar showing that the test takers still find the TOEFL difficult, so they find it difficult to obtain the required minimum TOEFL score [45]. The difficulty in answering TOEFL questions and the low TOEFL scores could be due to their limited experience in TOEFL training.

One of the causes of difficulties is 'vocabulary', including a high level of language which may be due to their lack of practice (exposure). This finding is in line with Kostin [46] who emphasizes that the lack of exposure or direct practice which causes a lack of familiarity with various aspects of the sound of a foreign language leads to the difficulty understanding foreigner conversations. The difficulty in understanding conversation is related to pronunciation, intonation, dialect, concentration and speed of speech, context, topics, and others which are aspects of listening difficulties. Another study conducted by Butt et al. [47] also supports the finding of the current study that reports that the causes of listening comprehension difficulties were accent, dialect, variety of language, colloquial, pronunciation, stuttering, hearing loss, acoustics, short time and grammatical aspects. The results of the pre-test given to English teachers, even lecturers, in this research activity [70] shows that the TOEFL is still difficult. With 10 items in the Listening Test part A with a score of 10 per item followed by 93 participants with a total score of 100, an average score of 57.63 was obtained, with the 'Low' category. So, listening is still difficult.

Rezkiani's [48] study is also relevant to the finding of this current study. Rezkiani reports that TOEFL difficulties, including Listening, were related to clustering, redundancy, reduced form, rate of delivery, incomplete rule application, determining main idea, locating reference, making inference, and detailed information. Listening difficulties are caused by understanding vocabulary, grammar, context, accent, pronunciation, and so on.

Especially for Short Conversations Part A of Listening Comprehension, the focus is on understanding the use of language according to the context, namely understanding pragmatic meaning. This pragmatic meaning is synonymous with the implied meaning. Part A measures understanding of general intentions, specific implied meanings, goals and attitudes towards objects or people. This is in line with Garcia [49] who lists several goals for understanding pragmatic meaning in conversation, namely: 1) understanding the 'intent' of interpreting feelings or attitudes; 3) capture the meaning of speech acts; 4) evaluate the meaning of suggestions, warnings or orders; 5) recognize sarcasm and implicit behavior; and 6) be able to respond appropriately. This set of abilities requires critical thinking skills and higher order thinking, one of which is 'inference'. That's why not a few TOEFL test takers have difficulty, especially in Listening Part A.

4.3   Designing and developing pragmatic-based media for TOEFL listening

As a Research and Development with 4-D model, the research findings are presented based on the two phases, Research Phase and Development Phase.

4.3.1 Research Phase

Pragmatic-based TOEFL Listening book: An innovation in independent learning. This book is a prototype product of a 'Research & Development' study entitled "Pragmatic Competence of the Students of the Diverse Masters' Degrees Tested in Listening Part A TOEFL" which was innovated through a further Research Development' entitled "Digital Pragmatic-based TOEFL Listening.' The State of the Art of the study present study is summarized in the following Road Map of the 'Research Phase.'
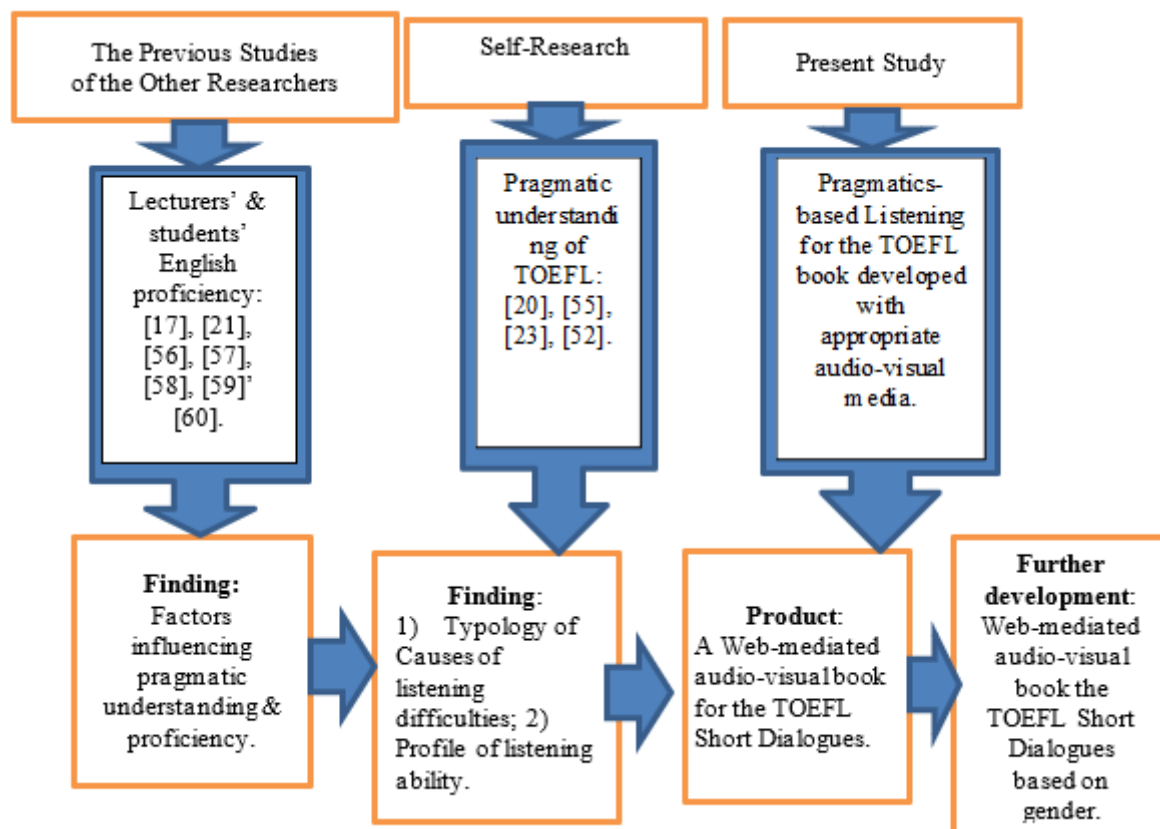
Figure 1. Road Map

The research phase focused on measuring listening ability, exploring listening difficulties and factors affecting listening abilities, and profiling the English teachers' pragmatic understanding the pragmatic meanings (or implicatures) tested in the Short Dialogues (Conversations) in Part A of the TOEFL Listening section.

Result/Product of Research Phase. The results and/or products of the research phase: 1) Listening ability, 2) Causes of listening difficulties, and 3) Profile of the English teachers' pragmatic ability. It shows that there are five primary causes of difficulty, namely, 'Speech Rate Delivery' (SRD), 'Voice' (Voice), 'Sentence Complexity' (SC), 'Mishearing' (MisH) and 'Colloquials' (Col). These causes of listening difficulties are used as the basis for the 'Development phase' of the prototype product.

4.3.2 Development Phase: Innovation Stage

Objective of the Development. This development phase aims at: 1) Evaluating the draft (or prototype book) using some instruments, Validating and simulating in limited situation**,** 2) Revising the book, 3) Trying-out the first revised draft of the book in limited samples, 4) Testing effectiveness of the book in the larger samples, 5) Producing book.

The 'prototype' product of the Research phase was further 'innovated' in the *'*Development phase' using applied *Mixed-methods*. Data were collected TOEFL Listening and Focused Group Discussion. Quantitative data were used to measure listening ability and qualitative data were descriptive analysis and were validated by expert judgment. The first year: Needs analysis and validation of the draft of the book; the second year: Preparing the highly validated book; and the third year: Production of an 'innovated' digital pragmatic-based TOEFL Listening book.

4.3.3 Production Phase

The Production Phase Involve*s:* 1) Dissemination & seminar for the draft of the web-based audio-visual book for the TOEFL Short Dialogues; 2) Revision of the web-mediated audio-visual book; 3) Mass production of the web-mediated book for TOEFL Short Dialogues.

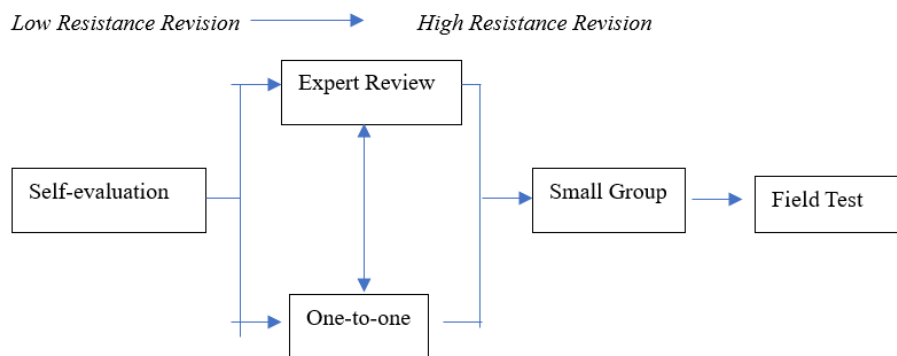The procedures of the Research and Development [50].

Figure 2. Research and Development

The more specific procedures in the three stages of the Research and Development are presented in the following flow chart.
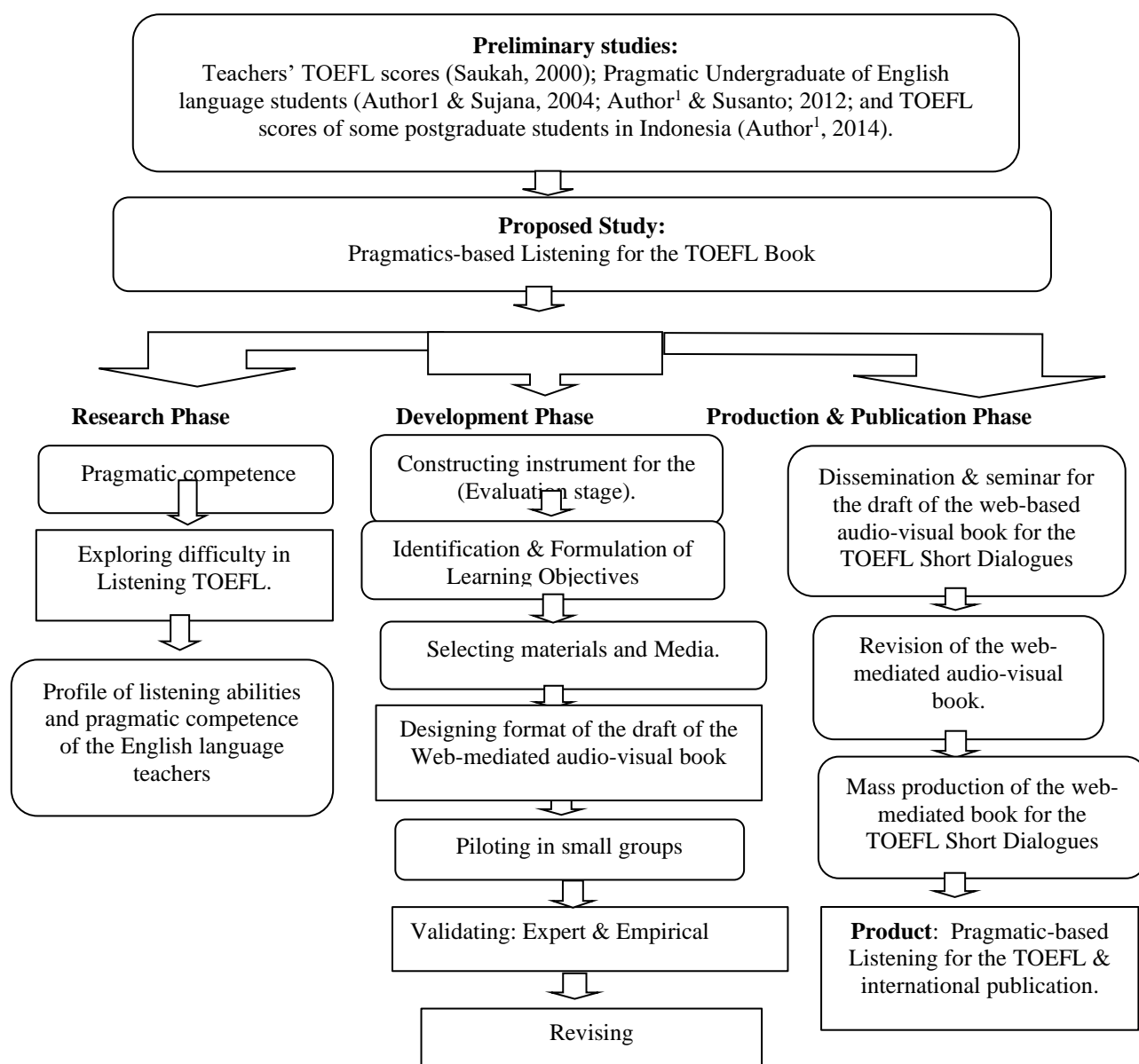

Figure 3. Flow Chart

Result/Product of Development Phase. The product of the Development Phase is an innovated 'Web-mediated audiovisual book for TOEFL Short Dialogues'. The organization of the book: Cover, Table of Contents, Empirical Evidence, Preface, Manuals, Lesson 1 (Speed Delivery), Lesson 3 (Sentence Complexity), Lesson 4 (Mishearing), Lesson 2 (Voice), and Lesson 5 (Colloquials and Idioms), References, Glossary, Index, and Biography. All lessons are aided with online links of audios and videos. The users can benefit the direct, free access of the media.

Based on this quantitative data, the use of video in all Lessons is 'Appropriate', and the use of audio in all lessons is 'In Accordance' with the Learning Objectives or Materials, and the scope of the Learning Objectives of each Lesson is 'Extensive', even Lesson 2 and Lesson 5 are 'Very Broad'. For all Lessons, the material coverage is in the 'Broad' category. All assessments are 'relevant' to the Learning Objectives and Materials. In terms of material, all the material was found to be 'understood' by the participants, relevant to the high level of 'readability' of the material in all lessons, even though there was still vocabulary that caused 'difficulties'.

The learning materials including the media or web-based audio-visuals have followed systematic mechanisms in each stage of research, design, development and production, in order to ensure that students have high quality pragmatic-based listening for the TOEFL, as an independent learning book. This mechanism is relevant to the procedures in the design and development of learning materials which include: 1) Analysing potential lesson content and identifying how to transform into teaching resource, 2) Identifying linguistic goals and 3) Developing instructional tasks as basis for the lesson [51].

Understanding the pragmatic meaning is one of the purposes of Listening Comprehension [52]. It is possible to check that the pragmatic aspects in TOEFL listening section help students to improve pragmatic competence [53]. Despite the fact that the test aims to assess language proficiency, and the priority is not to assess pragmatic knowledge, listening skill has been regarded as a source for improving pragmatic competence, and is expected to be present in EILTS, as found in TOEFL [54]. Strategy-based listening is potentially capable of enhancing pragmatic comprehension.

In relation to strategies, the web-based media and learning materials were carefully selected. Two types of web media are supplemented in the draft: the researcher-made media and the adopted web audio and video media. The content of the media is based on the characteristics of each cause of pragmatic difficulty. Besides, the users can access directly the media directly from the internet because the links to audios and videos are inserted both in the materials and in Listening Practice and Assessment. This is an innovation in language learning in the 'mobile' era.

5. CONCLUSION

The results of the pre-test given to English teachers and lecturers in this research activity that focused on implicature inference-making ability show that the problems in achieving TOEFL scores, Listening in particular, have not changed. Based on the test results, using a simple scoring system, not the TOEFL scoring system, an average score of 57.63 is obtained, with the 'Low' category. So, listening is still difficult. This low listening ability is affected by some factors, namely, negation, cognitive process and pattern of utterances, vocabulary, syntactic complexity, the rhetorical structure, or repetition, learning strategies. The fact that English teachers have applied a variety of media in teaching and learning English and researchers found that the use of the media is effective in teaching and learning English does not impact on reducing listening difficulties and improving TOEFL scores trigger a question. Accordingly, designing an innovated book to teach listening for the TOEFL is urgent. As a protype product of intensive Research and Development, this 'Web-mediated audio-visual listening book for TOEFL Short Dialogues is a prospective solution to boosting listening abilities and TOEFL scores. As this book use 'online' audio-visual media, this is a flexible independent way of learning listening and actualizing learner-centred perspective. In comparison with the media used in teaching and studies on the effects of the media on the listening abilities of Indonesian English teachers and students, the use of the media and the selection of materials based on the factors or causes of listening difficulties is the 'novelty' of this current Research and Development. Implicationally, the determination of the media which are appropriate with the topics, the materials and the online media; potentially overcomes listening difficulties encountered by the Indonesian English teachers and students in doing TOEFL tests, particularly the understanding of implicatures in the TOEFL Short Dialogues. Thus, this pragmatic-based book as media for TOEFL listening is prospective. Nevertheless, despite its potential effect, gender has not been involved as a variable in the current study. This is the 'limitation' of the current study.

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