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Analysis and Evaluation of a TOEIC Textbook: Focusing on Grammar and Vocabulary Questions

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This paper analyzes grammar and vocabulary questions in the *'new eye of the toeic'* book published by Lee Ik-hyoon in 2011 in terms of methodology, views of second language acquisition, teachers' and students' roles, teaching-learning environment, culture and assessment. The analysis has been done due to our doubt on whether the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) book properly fulfills its function. The purpose of the TOEIC is to evaluate practical English ability needed for international business or everyday life, focusing on communicative ability for people whose mother tongue is not English. As a result of the analysis, the TOEIC book mainly uses grammar translation method, focus on forms, teacher-centered method and multiple choice assessment, which are inappropriate to measure test takers' communicative ability. This paper concludes that for a more useful TOEIC book, it should contain focus on form method, learner-centered and task-based instruction, and more cultural factors. This paper is meaningful in that TOEIC questions were analyzed in terms of constituents questions should contain to evaluate test takers' communicative ability more properly in the situation where studies on analyzing TOEIC questions are very few. Moreover, this paper can contribute to developing TOEIC questions more appropriately.

[focus on form/student-centered/task-based/communicative ability]

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I. INTRODUCTION

TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) is the test for evaluating practical English ability needed for international business or everyday life, focusing on communicative ability for people whose mother tongue is not English. TOEIC was developed by ETS (Educational Testing Service) in America in 1979 and it is being used in about 65 countries for the purpose of mainly selecting personnel for promotion or overseas working.

In South Korea, it was introduced in 1982 and it has been forming about 90% of formal English test markets. The annual number of TOEIC applicants is over 2 million and its market size reaches over $700 billion because of test availability and accessibility. Other formal English tests such as TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and IELTS International English Language Testing System) can be taken in big cities such as Seoul and Busan and the fee is expensive whereas TOEIC can be taken in any city and the fee is relatively cheap. Furthermore, TOEIC consists of a multiple choice method, which Korean people are familiar with and they can have access to TOEIC without much fear. In particular, TOEIC has been used as various requirements such as getting a scholarship or job promotion, graduating from a college and entering a graduate school or a good company. Therefore, a lot of Korean people have the experiences to take TOEIC.

TOEIC is a test to evaluate English four skills such as listening, reading, writing and speaking in a multiple-choice method. TOEIC is mainly composed of two parts: listening (100 questions) and reading (100 questions). In the case of listening, it consists of part 1 (picture), part 2 (question - response), part 3 (short conversations) and part 4 (short talks). In the case of reading, it consists of part 5 (incomplete short sentences focusing on grammar and vocabulary), part 6 (incomplete long sentences focusing on grammar and vocabulary) and part 7 (reading comprehension). The test time is 45 minutes in listening and 75 minutes in reading.

However, the test has been criticized because it cannot evaluate test takers' English ability properly. As an example, people who have a high score in a TOEIC test are not good at speaking and writing in proportion to the high score. To address the problem, ETS revised TOEIC by adding authentic materials such as various English pronunciations in listening and long texts in reading, and introduced TOEIC speaking and writing in 2006. However, TOEIC speaking and writing have not been popular because of test availability and cost. Their access is limited to big cities and their fees are expensive. What is more, most companies and schools do not request TOEIC speaking and writing scores. Meanwhile, the revised TOEIC has also been criticized because the TOEIC score cannot reflect test takers' communicative ability. To explore the problem,

analyzing whether TOEIC questions can assess test takers' communicative ability properly can be meaningful. However, it is impossible to analyze authentic TOEIC questions because they are not released. Therefore, in this paper, the 'new eye of the toeic' book published by Lee Ik-hyoon in 2011, which we taught for about two years from 2012 to 2014 in a foreign language institute in a local college and is considered to have the similar questions to authentic TOEIC ones, was chosen to analyze. The reason why grammar and vocabulary questions in part 5 & 6 (hereafter, part 5 & 6 questions) were chosen for analysis is that while teaching TOEIC, the questions in particular were regarded as question types of whether test takers recognize tricks of the questions or not rather than those of whether they have English communicative ability or not. Therefore, in this paper, part 5 & 6 of the 'new eye of the toeic' book published by Lee Ik-hyoon in 2011 will be analyzed in terms of constituents for having more validity such as methodology, views of second language acquisition, teacher and student roles, teaching-learning environment, culture and assessment.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies on TOEIC have not been conducted in both internal and external areas even though TOEIC is a certified English proficiency test internationally. Therefore, some representative studies on TOEIC will be mentioned.

As a study on analyzing a TOEIC textbook, Shin (2008) analyzes TOEIC textbooks to investigate their problems from the perspective of a multiple choice test method. She concludes that TOEIC as a multiple choice method cannot evaluate test taker's English ability and may ask test takers to develop strategies for choosing a correct answer. However, she did not analyze TOEIC textbooks specifically considering constituents they should have to be more valuable textbooks for evaluating test taker's English communicative ability.

As studies on the correlation between TOEIC scores and English communicative ability, Ryoo (2009) shows that TOEIC has limitations in evaluating English production skills through the correlation between analysis of TOEIC scores and the error correction ability in English essays with about 160 college students. Cunningham (2002) points out that TOEIC cannot evaluate English communicative ability through the correlation analysis of TOEIC scores with listening, reading and speaking ability with 50 college students. Pedersen (2014) claims the significant discrepancy between the applicants' TOEIC test scores and their English proficiency with about 800 college students. That is, low TOEIC scores do not equate with low communicative ability and nor higher TOEIC

scores with higher communicative ability. Hirai (2002) points out that TOEIC scores cannot predict test takers' English communicative ability.

As studies on college students' perception of TOEIC, Kim (2014) highlights that most college students do not relate the improvement of scores in TOEIC to that of English ability, and they do not regard TOEIC as a means for improving their speaking and writing ability. Likewise, Jun and Rah (2015) investigates the validity of TOEIC and the degree of contributing role TOEIC plays in helping study English with 225 Korean Air Force Academy cadets, and shows that cadets perceived them to be low. Seung (2012) indicates that college students regard TOEIC as a means for entering a good company but not as a means for evaluating English ability.

III. METHODOLOGY

The TOEIC writer seems to suggest grammar translation method and focus on forms because part 5 & 6 of TOEIC consist of grammar, vocabulary and semantic questions. Furthermore, students should choose a correct answer among four choices within a limited time. Therefore, accurate grammar explanations are required. The writer also knows that learners want to get a high TOEIC score as fast as possible. To this end, the writer seems to judge grammar translation method and focus on forms as the best ones to achieve students' goals as quickly as possible.

According to Howatt (1984), the feature of the grammar translation method is to explain grammar rules, give grammar questions related to the grammar explanation and practice translation of sentences. Grammar rules are explained deductively by mother tongue and the unit of learning is a decontextualised sentence focusing on accuracy. According to Stern (1983), this method contributes to helping develop mental discipline because it requires learners to memorize grammar rules, choose a correct answer using the learned grammar rules and infer abstract things while reading. Furthermore, based on accurate knowledge of grammar, learners can analyze and understand other materials by themselves.

The examples of grammar translation method are shown in the book. Grammar rules on verbs are written in Korean, using decontextualized sentences. In addition, their examples are provided and their translations are given in Korean. After that, grammar questions using learned grammar knowledge on verbs are given.

- Key Point 2. Choose bare infinitives after auxiliary verbs
- will/would, may/might, must, can/could, should + bare infinitives
- Mr. Sanderson **will** soon **have** the opportunity to visit the new office in Germany.

(샌더슨씨는 곧 독일에 있는 새 지사를 방문할 기회를 가질 것이다.)
(new eye of the toeic, p.18)

- Design entries must (be, are) received before the March 14 deadline.
  (check questions, new eye of the toeic, p. 19)
- Revamping the company logo and image will surely _____ sales in the coming months.
  (A) stimulating (B) stimulated (C) to stimulate (D) stimulate
  (sample questions, new eye of the toeic, p. 26)
- The internet may not _____ everything, but it has revolutionized the traditional concepts of marketing.
  (A) changed (B) changes (C) has changed (D) have changed
  (actual questions, new eye of the toeic, p. 43)

Besides grammar translation method, focus on forms is used in the book. According to Long (2001), focus on forms is that in textbooks, grammar is often presented out of context. Learners are given isolated sentences, which they are expected to internalize through exercises involving repetition, manipulation and grammatical transformation.

In accordance with focus on forms, the writer suggests necessary strategies focusing on forms without translation when answering part 5 questions of TOEIC. First strategy is, ‘don’t translate at first because most of part 5 questions can be solved without translation.’ Second, ‘learn what type the question is through examples of multiple choices.’ Learners can catch the question is about grammar, vocabulary or structure through the examples of multiple choice. Third, ‘focus on parts of speech before or after the blank.’ Learners can select a correct answer by focusing on parts of speech before or after the blank. For example, if the adjective form comes before the blank, the noun form is likely to be the correct answer (new eye of the toeic, p. 17).

- After a poor _____ during the first half of the year, the second half of 2008 showed much-improved results.
  (A) perform (B) performance (C) performing (D) performed
  (new eye of the toeic, p. 76)

However, both grammar translation method and focus on forms disregard communicative ability because they focus on grammar rules and forms. In addition, learners lack exposure to authentic language materials, and this teacher-centered teaching method leads to student’s passive attitude.

Nunan (2001) argues against grammar translation method. According to him, in the case that learners are not provided with opportunities to explore grammatical structures in context, learners do not know the systematic relationships between form, meaning and use (Nunan, 2001). In order to use grammatical knowledge in communicative context, he suggests that appropriate tasks should be given such as the activity of combining two pieces of information with co-ordination or subordination depending on the degree of importance of the information (Nunan, 2001).

IV. VIEW OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION (SLA)

Natural order hypothesis, input and affective filter hypothesis, learning-acquisition hypothesis and monitor hypothesis are implied in the book and classroom roles related to the hypotheses are suggested.

According to Krashen (1985), grammatical structures are acquired in a predictable order. In other words, some grammatical structures are acquired early while others late. The example of natural order hypothesis is shown in the introduction of the book. In the introduction, the layout of the book, which is presented step by step in difficult order, is explained (new eye of the toeic, p. 5). Another example of the hypothesis can be seen in the contents of the book.

- unit 1. Verb Types, • unit 2. Verb Tense, • unit 3. Passive Voice,
- unit 4. To Infinitive, • unit 5. Participles, • unit 6. Gerunds, • unit 7. Pronouns,
- unit 8. Nouns, Articles, • unit 9. Adjectives, • unit10. Adverbs,
- unit 11. Prepositions, • unit 12. Conjunctions, • unit13. Relative Pronouns,
- unit14. Subjunctives, • unit 15. Comparatives, Superlatives,
- unit 16. Ellipsis, Inversion.

(new eye of the toeic, p. 10)

The writer seems to assume that grammar rules on comparatives, superlatives and inversion are appropriate to learn late after other easier grammar rules such as verbs, to infinitives and gerunds are learned.

In line with natural order hypothesis, learners tend to listen carefully to what the teacher explains and review each unit so that they can understand more difficult grammar rules later. In this situation, learning grammar may be compared to “brickwall” (Nunan, 2001, p. 191). Furthermore, they may study in groups for more effective learning.

Input hypothesis and affective filter hypothesis are implied in the book. According to Krashen (1985), optimal input, one level higher input than learners' current ability, is important to make language learning more efficient. The input hypothesis is related to Krashen (1985)'s affective filter hypothesis, which means learning effect can increase when learners lower their affective filter. When optimal input congruent with learners' level is given, learners' affective filter can be lowered. The example of input hypothesis can be seen clearly in part 6. To suggest an example, 'tomato toeic basic' book (published by 2 authors including Lee Bo-young in 2011), which aims to target beginners, is compared with 'new eye of the toeic' book.

- Dick,
  I have great news! I've discovered some changes that will make our assembly line production run much more _____. The details are in the file attached to this email.
  (A) nearly (B) smoothly (C) noisily (D) firmly
  (tomato toeic basic, p. 42)
- Dear Customer:
  Prices for copper, brass and steel have risen sharply on the world market over the first year. At present there is no end in sight in regard to increasing costs for alloying component materials. Despite all our efforts to cope with this reality, we are now forced to _____ our prices, too.
  (A) reduce (B) define (C) notify (D) adjust
  (new eye of the toeic, P. 391)

The question type is similar because learners should choose a right answer considering meaning of the context. However, the question of 'new eye of the toeic' book is more difficult in terms of sentence length and structure, and vocabulary. Moreover, in the introduction of the book, the writer stated that explanations on grammar rules were given in a user-friendly way (new eye of the toeic, p. 5). In other words, the explanation is provided easily without technical terms. The book with optimal input is helpful in achieving learners' goals as soon as possible because of both increasing learners' motivation and lowering affective filters. Some scholars mentioned the importance of learner affect in learning because affective factors are related to positive attitudes towards learning (Arnold, 1999; Schumann, 1999; Tomlinson, 1998).

Learning-acquisition hypothesis is also implied in the book. According to Krashen (1982), language acquisition is a subconscious process while language learning is the conscious process. The writer knows that most learners using the book are adolescents or adults, who cannot acquire language the way children learn language. Therefore, there are no interesting pictures and the book consists of questions and study points tailored to

learners' needs after analyzing real TOEIC questions (new eye of the toeic, p. 4). Accordingly, learners learn, memorize and apply grammar rules when answering questions. For example, learners learn that some transitive verbs come with particular prepositions after objectives (e.g. 'exchange' and 'compensate' come with preposition 'for,' while 'prevent' and 'prohibit' come with preposition 'from,' new eye of the toeic, p. 22-23). Learners memorize consciously and apply the rule when selecting an appropriate answer.

• Hikers in Grand State Park are prohibited _____ picking any wildflowers or plant species.
(A) by (B) from (C) under (D) away
(new eye of the toeic, p. 27)

The monitor model is implied in the book. According to Krashen (1982), the rules learned consciously act as a monitor in the situation of a grammar test. In the book, teachers play a role as a monitor when checking student answers. Students also play the role of monitor, using learning strategy when answering questions. They select appropriate answers based on what they have learned. For example, learners can choose an appropriate verb form by themselves , monitoring on the basis of knowledge of causative verbs such as 'have' and 'let,' which require bare infinitives in the position of object complement (new eye of the toeic, p.24).

• Timothy Zawyer will have his assistant _____ the recorded interviews as soon as they are all completed.
(A) transcribe (B) transcribed (C) be transcribing (D) to be transcribed
(new eye of the toeic, p. 26)

V. TEACHER AND STUDENT ROLES

Teachers should control explanation and feedback in accordance with question types and examination ratio because the book suggests that in the case of parts of speech questions, nouns, adjectives and pronouns show the most frequent examination ratio, and in the case of grammar questions, conjunctions, prepositions and relative pronouns show the most frequent examination ratio (new eye of the toeic, p. 16). Furthermore, the book does not give any grammatical explanation or translation of questions except for correct answers. Therefore, students expect teachers to explain grammatical rules clearly and

students should practice solving questions on the basis of learned grammar rules because there are plenty of questions in the book.

For more effective teaching, teachers should analyze questions in accordance with the "problem-solving model" (Ellis, 2001, p. 62). Based on the analysis, teachers should preplan the degree of explanation according to questions types. For example, in the case of parts of speech questions, strategies of how to solve those questions should be given while in the case of semantic questions, more comprehensible explanations should be planned with time allocation strategy. In the case of part 5, one question should be solved within 23 seconds (new eye of the toeic, p. 17).

Teachers should control the order of instruction or tasks to attract more learner attention because there is no advice about the sequence of instruction or tasks in the book. For example, teachers can solve questions after explaining all grammar rules of unit 1 or they can solve check questions, sample questions and actual questions related to the point after explaining each point.

The teachers' role to give feedback explicitly such as explicit correction, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation and repetition is implied in the book because the book requires students to extract an accurate answer. Particularly, correct answers can be found by some clues within a sentence. Therefore, metalingustic feedback, which means the teacher tries to elicit the correct form from the student by giving a clue in the form of either grammatical metalanguage or a word definition in the case of a lexical error, can be used (Davies, 2006, p. 844).

- Please note that all incoming orders _____ with a supplement for high material costs.
  (A) charge (B) are charged (C) will charge (D) will be charged
  (new eye of the toeic, p. 391)

In the case that students answer 'charge,' teachers emphasize 'incoming' with high tone to elicit correct tense. After this teacher's response, in the case that students answer 'will charge,' teachers emphasize 'with' to elicit correct passive voice.

On the other hand, the students' role is to learn question patterns by practicing solving grammar questions continuously (new eye of the toeic, p. 17) because a lot of practice questions which are related to the same grammatical rule are provided in a difficult order such as check questions, sample questions and actual questions (new eye of the toeic, p. 6).

Students should use learning strategy when answering questions. At first, they should identify question type to facilitate question solving. Moreover, students should confirm question types through repeated question solving. Accordingly, students need

participative competence, which means the ability to respond appropriately to class demands and the procedural rules for accomplishing them when asked by teachers, and academic competence, which means the ability to acquire new skills, assimilate new information, and construct new concepts, when solving questions by themselves (Richards, 2001).

Ⅵ. TEACHING-LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The writer seems to assume that the book is used in the classroom but not the real world because he writes that the book was produced through scientific and systematic analysis of TOEIC tests (new eye of the toeic, p. 4). The writer knows that learners have strong instrumental motivation to get a high TOEIC score for a bright future because he writes that 16 units are divided on the basis of structures and grammar rules which have appeared in TOEIC tests, and real TOEIC tests can be prepared through actual questions which are made after thoroughly analyzing real TOEIC questions (new eye of the toeic, p. 6). Accordingly, classroom is “asymmetrical” (Breen, 2001, p. 131) because students want to listen to teachers’ explanation on grammatical rules and solve as many questions as possible within a set time. As a result, teachers talk a lot compared to students, who talk when they want to ask questions or they are asked to choose appropriate answers by teachers. It means IRF (Initiation, Response, Feedback) happens in the classroom (Van Lier, 2001). In other words, teachers set the topic to teach and give some questions in order to check that students know previous learned rules and emphasize certain question types and structures to all students in the class. Students answer the questions and teachers give feedback. Moreover, among three types of scaffolding such as reformulation, extension and modeling, modeling dominates in the classroom in which grammar is taught because teachers as a model correct wrong answers (Walsh, 2006). In order to satisfy students’ needs, product-oriented teaching or rigid curriculum are conducted rather than process-oriented teaching or flexible curriculum (Walsh, 2006). This teaching-learning environment is similar to more topic-orientation, less activity-orientation because one –way interaction occurs when information is provided in a lecture (Walsh, 2006). In addition, this environment can be compared to form and accuracy contexts because the focus is on linguistic form and accuracy, and turn-taking is controlled by the teacher (Walsh, 2006).

This environment is not concerned with the effect on social identities, groups and relationships of the multitude of intercultural interactions which take place every day because there is no dialogue in real life within the book (Roberts, 2001). In this formal instruction situation, contingency and peers interactions are disregarded.

Ⅶ. CULTURE

Rivers (1981) stated that language learning is culture learning. In other words, understanding English culture is necessary to use English well. However, part 5 & 6 seem not to be concerned about culture education a lot because they consist of mostly grammar questions. However, through some letter forms of part 6, students can know how to write letters in English along with English culture. For example, unlike the Korean letter style, personal names should be written down first and then from small to large units when writing addresses. In addition, in the case of writing names, given names come first. This style of writing addresses and names seems to reflect the individualism of English speakers, which is opposite to Korean people's ways of thinking (Klopf & Park, 1982). Korean people put emphasis on the group. Another example is that in the case of English, 'dear' comes before the name (Dear Ms. Edwin, new eye of the toeic, p. 391) whereas in the case of Korean, many expressions can come before the name such as 'dear,' 'respected' and 'admirable,' depending on the level of friendliness. It reflects that English speakers less care about people's age or social position than Korean people (Klopf & Park, 1982). The book contains the letter of a company giving the notice of raising product prices (new eye of the toeic, p. 391). Through the letter, students learn how to organize the content. First, reasons for raising product prices should come. Second, notice of charging supplement prices follows. Finally, customers should be asked to understand the measure and continue a business relationship.

Through English letters of part 6, students learn the culture of English and English speakers as well as how to write English letters.

Ⅷ. ASSESSMENT

The assessment method of part 5 & 6 is multiple choice. It cannot measure learners' ability accurately because learners can select a correct answer by means of a guess. It is outcome-centered and cannot evaluate learners' creative and imaginative knowledge (Tomlinson, 2003; Kim, 2014; Chang, 2015). Oller (1983) says that multiple choice cannot reflect authentic language use because it focuses on formal language knowledge system.

As examples of part 5 and 6 are given, the book focuses on answering questions correctly in accordance with real TOEIC questions. To this end, learners can be exposed to TOEIC-related vocabularies through necessary memorization sections, and appropriate types of TOEIC questions. Therefore, the book seems to be suitable for the

teaching context and students could get a high score within short time period. In the case that part 5 and 6 are evaluated on the basis of the standard of material appraisal of Tomlinson (2003), the book is suitable for short-term learning such as tests and examinations but not long-term learning such as language and communication skills. In addition, the book is not suitable for the social context of South Korea because South Korea puts an emphasis on English communicative ability. The book does not focus on improving communicative ability but getting a high score in the TOEIC test. As a result, TOEIC books including the book mentioned have been criticized because people who get a high score in the TOEIC tests cannot speak, listen to, write and read English well. Furthermore, students who are accustomed to TOEIC questions in part 5 and 6 are likely to be confused in terms of grammar. For example, the book explains that causative verbs such as 'have' and 'let' require bare infinitives in the position of object complement (new eye of the toeic, p. 24). However, particularly in the case of 'have,' meaning between object and object complement decides which form is appropriate in the position of object complement. For example, in the case that the meaning between object and object complement is passive, past participles come in the position of object complement (e.g., We're having our car repaired).

Some of the side effects caused by the book are that the book is multiple choice, not related to authentic materials, and does not give opportunities to use grammar knowledge in the real world. Therefore, many tasks where grammar knowledge can be used in writing, speaking, listening and reading, using authentic language materials should be developed. For example, Nunan (2001) asks students to take photographs of grammar errors around campus, correct them while discussing with peers and write letters about that to the university. This kind of task contributes to learners developing the four English skills as well as grammar.

On the basis of the standard of material appraisal of Tomlinson (2003), part 5 and 6 have the problem of validity of the materials. Although part 5 and 6 require students to choose appropriate answers in terms of grammatical and semantic knowledge, the book cannot provide valid evaluation for the knowledge because the book focuses on how to get a high score with decontextualized sentences. On the other hand, in terms of reliability, the book is reliable because their multiple choice type can measure consistently the learners' ability.

IX. CONCLUSION

TOEIC is the test for evaluating practical English ability, focusing on communicative ability for people who have not used English as a mother tongue. However, the test has

been criticized because high scores in TOEIC do not equate with good English communicative ability. To address the problem, investigating whether TOEIC questions contain ones which can measure test takers' English communicative ability may be meaningful. In this paper, part 5 & 6 of the 'new eye of the toeic' book published by Lee Ik-hyoon in 2011 was chosen for analysis because it was considered to have the similar questions to authentic TOEIC ones, The textbook was analyzed in terms of constituents to measure test takers' communicative ability more properly such as methodology, views of second language acquisition, teacher and student roles, teaching-learning environment, culture and assessment.

As a result of the analysis, the book mainly uses grammar translation method, focus on forms, teacher-centered method and multiple choice assessment, which are inappropriate to meet the purpose of the TOEIC test evaluating practical English ability. For a more useful TOEIC book, focus on form which targets form while doing communicative activities, is desirable (Long, 1997). To this end, the materials related to learners' real life such as newspapers, magazines, broadcasting, literature and movies should be used. In addition, TOEIC books should be written considering more learner-centered and task-based instruction so that learners can use a language actively. Furthermore, TOEIC books should contain more cultural factors and their assessment method should be changed to reflect the learners' four skills accurately.

This paper is meaningful in that TOEIC questions were analyzed in terms of constituents questions should contain to measure test takers' communicative ability more properly in the situation where studies on analyzing TOEIC questions are very few. Moreover, this paper can contribute to developing TOEIC questions for fulfilling their functions more appropriately.

However, the limitation of this paper is that only one TOEIC book and part 5 & 6 of seven parts were analyzed. Therefore, in the future, studies on analyzing more TOEIC books and parts should be conducted so that test takers' English communicative ability can be evaluated more properly.

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Examples in English: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: University

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