

The Implementation of TOEIC Preparation to Improve TOEIC Scores of Semester VI at Polytechnic Alkon Kalimantan

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A B S T R A C T

TOEIC is one of the tests that is used in many universities and according to the director's decree at the Alkon Kalimantan polytechnic campus, the graduation requirements for students who will take the final exam and oral defense must obtain a minimum score of 500. The institution that conducts the test independently is International Testing The program or ITP appointed as the program supervisor for testing on our campus. To make graduates exceed the minimum standard competency score, we hold preparation classes. We held it for a month with a total of 12 meetings. With this minimum standard for graduation, it is hoped that it can become a benchmark so that graduates are expected to have adequate English language skills. By holding preparation classes, it is hoped that when facing tests held by other institutions or official institutions that is appointed, all graduates will be able to exceed a score above 500. This study used qualitative method in which to find out students' preparation when taking the TOEIC test using books and audio that are available and sold in the bookstore market, to find out whether with this preparation their scores can increase as expected. The results of the research show that the scores of students who will be graduating have increased drastically compared to the previous year, where in the previous year there were several students who failed and after this activity was held, the number of students failing to achieve a minimum score of 500 could be reduced.

Introduction

TOEIC is a test held by ETS or English testing service where the aim is to find out a person's score in English communication skills, especially in the field of work. When compared with TOEFL, there is a difference, namely that the TOEFL test is to measure students' English language skills in the academic field. Meanwhile, the TOEIC test consists of 200 questions in the form of listening and reading, namely 100 questions for listening and 100 questions for reading. This test is held within 2 hours.

Students who have taken semester VI at Alkon Kalimantan Polytechnic have been taught English since semester 1 when they started studying at this polytechnic campus. The main problem is because the input from students who have been accepted have very minimal English language skills so when they study for almost 3 years their abilities to develop English skill is still low, but it is compared with the input received by students at state campuses it will be different from what is experienced at private campuses where student admissions are also tested but with minimal English language skills compared to those accepted by state campuses. Students' abilities have actually developed from their previous situation when they started to enter the DIII education level in the English program at the Alkon Balikpapan polytechnic campus.

The students who are accepted on campus in this English program are actually high school graduates whose English language skills are not evenly distributed in the total number of students accepted. Some have minimal English skills, others are students with very low English skills. When they follow English language learning in the courses presented on campus they have experienced significant improvement. Otherwise in reality there are still those who are not able to complete a score of up to 500. There are still some students who, as graduates, still have abilities below than that.

Therefore, the policy on campus is that if a student has not achieved a passing standard of 500 then they are required to repeat the test until the result reaches 500 then they will be given a pass and allowed to attend the graduation ceremony. Every year there are always students who do not pass and do not reach a score of 500, they still have to repeat the test, some even repeat it more than three times to get a passing score of 500. Because this is an obstacle where the lecturer will continue to give study again and repeat the questions that they have already done so that they are able to achieve the desired score, this makes it an additional task for English lecturers, especially lecturers appointed to administer this competency test.

Testing is a method of assessment procedure used all over the world to evaluate or quantify the degree of a learner's skill, knowledge, or performance in a certain topic (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). Language tests are used to assess test-takers' achievement in term of language skills. The Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) has been one of the most widely used language tests and most reliable measures of English proficiency over a decade (Educational Testing Services, 2005). The TOEIC test is an English-language proficiency test for people whose native languages are not English (Educational Testing Services, 2015). The TOEIC test is an English-language proficiency test measuring the everyday English skills and indicating how well people can communicate in English with others in real-life situations. TOEIC reading test shows a certain level of validity and reliability (Imsa-ard, 2019).

An English language competence test for non-English speaker is called the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication). It assesses a person's proficiency in spoken English on a daily basis in a global setting. The results demonstrate a person's proficiency in business, industrial, and commerce English communication. The TOEIC exam is a two-hour multiple-choice exam with 200 questions divided into two sections: listening (100 questions, total time: 45 minutes) and reading (100 questions, total time: 40 minutes) (100 questions, total time: 75 minutes).

The questions held at the Alkon Kalimantan Polytechnic for TOEIC are 100 questions for listening in the form of MP3 audio played via computer through active audio speakers and text questions for understanding in the form of reading also contain 100 questions in total for around 2 hours. This test is usually carried out before final semester students carry out the oral defense test or final assignment exam

CEFR level	TOEIC SCORE (Tannenbaum & Wylie, 2008)		TOEIC SCORE (Damayanti & Gafur, 2020)
	Listening Section	Reading Section	Overall Score
C2	-	-	-
C1	490	455	945-990
B2	400	385	785-940
B1	275	275	550-780

A2	110	115	225-545
A1	60	60	120-220

Table 1. Scores classification of TOEIC results / TOEIC score conversion to CEFR

Based on table 1 above, The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is an internationally recognized standard for describing language proficiency. CEFR is widely recognized throughout Europe, and is becoming increasingly common throughout the world. Currently, the EF SET is the only standardized English test that accurately measures all levels of proficiency, from beginner to advanced, in accordance with the CEFR. Other standardized English tests can assess some level of proficiency, but not the entire CEFR scale.

From the table 1 above, can be defined as of the minimum target score of 500 means the maximum score from the A2 category which means that prospective graduates or prospective graduates must graduate by achieving a minimum score of 500 or the maximum A2 score based on English language proficiency standards in Europe.

Previous Research Review; The Efforts to Increase the TOEIC Scores of Semester V Students Based on Information Technology at Polytechnic LP3I Bekasi by Setiawan, et al (2023). The research is in the form of quantitative research with the result that using technology before the TOEIC test is carried out, students at LP3I Bekasi have their scores increase significantly. Based on this study, technology is very useful for increasing scores because they use applications obtained from Playstore, namely in the form of training applications using tests for practical English before carrying out the actual test.

From the study it was found that in its implementation the instructor explains the trick on how to answer the test, then pays attention to the main idea of the picture or object in the test, then gives the most appropriate answer. Here the instructor explains the differences in the sounds of different words or pictures and the participants pay attention to these strategies to run trial tests in the application. For the second session, the participants were given questions and answers, which contained two types of questions with the answer being yes no and the answer being WH questions and the instructors applied the importance of understanding these two questions and also gave the right answer by analyzing the answer as a distractor, some sounds could be similar. similar then the instructors explain clearly on how a word becomes a distractor. The result was that the cooperative's score increased by 28 points from previously getting a score of 367, finally it rose to 395 from the participants, namely 32 people who took part in the training. This result was 38% in total.

Another study comes from a study entitled Improving Students' TOEIC Score through Cooperative Learning in "TOEIC Schools", Saputra, B., Rionaldi (2022). This study uses cooperative learning as a tool to increase the Tower score with cooperative learning held at the TOEIC school which is adapted from the TOEFL school created by Budi Waluyo. task by the instructor, secondly, the instructors create a learning management system using Zoom and Google Classroom, then provide a schedule for learning and discussion. Thirdly, each group is given questions every day which is termed the question of the day which relates to TOEC material which they must answer and they complete the task here is where cooperative learning takes places. The fourth stage, the lecturers give practical questions TOEIC which are done individually which they have done previously through cooperative learning. Lastly, fifth, the lecturers communicate, namely a combination of group and individual activities, then they are the lecturers. evaluate learning outcomes and implement and conclude learning outcomes.

The methodology used in this study is classroom action research, where using problem solutions in an action research classroom is a process where educators learn a method that they practice systematically and carefully use research techniques. This study uses two cooperative learning cycles and produces an average value added in the second cycle.

From the results of this study, cooperative learning turns out to be an effective strategy that can increase student scores in the TOEIC test and the scores average can increase in each cycle, especially the second cycle is better because the results are significant compared to the first cycle. The average value obtained for the first cycle is 560.4, finally in the second cycle it became 583.4, which means that in the post test there was an increase that cooperative learning at this school could actually improve English language skills and solve students' problems in English mastery.

Research Method

The method used in this study is qualitative with descriptive design and writing. As many as 32 students participated in this study, they first carried out a pretest before preparation was held. The score used in the pretest is the first milestone to see the first stage before they carry out the actual test because later the results will be compared with the post test scores qualitatively from the number of students who took part to see the increase in the average score. The results of average score will increase or did they go down after preparation class.

In the preparation class, it is structured to explain tricks on how to answer questions, namely in listening, for example, how to look at pictures and provide vocabulary that sounds the same. It also provides tricks on how to answer in listening, namely in the form of this trick, distinguishing the same sounds and quick responses, then finally providing strategies for answering. reading comprehension, where participants must understand the main idea of the text and also the part of the reading question being asked. Then in the final stage, the participants, namely final semester students, after their training, will take the actual TOEIC test through an off-campus institution, namely the one held by the International Testing Program and here is the final score or posttest.

ITP is an English language testing institute which has been collaborating with the Balikpapan Foreign Language Academy since 2018 with an English study program and currently the name of the campus has changed to Alkon Kalimantan Polytechnic but in the same department the ITP's task is to provide tests independently so that the results obtained can objectively without being influenced by the results of project assessments from the campus itself.

The results of the scores are compared with the results of the pretest scores and post test scores that have been carried out by the institution, namely ITP compared with the pretest scores carried out by the lecturer. Before carrying out the preparation class of TOEIC, there was pretest score to be the milestone comparison.

Results and Discussion

The first thing that was done was that the 32 students were asked to do a pretest. Meetings were held 12 times, and there is a total of 14 because the pretest and posttest are added which are counted as two meetings. For the first day, the lecturers or instructors involved practice questions on how to answer Photograph questions. There are 10 Photographs with statements that are almost identical to the sound of the statement in the multiple choice and the lecturer will explain that the sounds are the same in the statement. Sometimes they are so similar that they become a distractor.

Here the lecturer explains tricks on how to answer them and explains the sound similarities of the statements in multiple choices.

At the next meeting the lecturer will explain question and response where there are 30 questions containing questions with answers that must be in sync with the question. Here also the question sounds almost the same as the answer in the multiple choice given so the lecturer or instructor will explain the sound similarities from the multiple choices available so that students can distinguish that the correct answer to the question is as explained by the lecturer.

In part 3 there is a conversation. here there is a short conversation and it is followed by three questions. Students must be able to remember the short conversation because after that there will be three questions related to the short conversation. Here the lecturer will explain tricks on how to remember, namely in the second part of the question sentence. Usually, the questions that arise are related to part of the dialogue in the second part. the fifth part here the instructor will explain How an incomplete sentence is called an incomplete sentence and students must complete it with the most correct answer available in the multiple choice here is the grammar ability of the student in the test.

Meanwhile in the reading section there is a section for completing a text and also understanding the text. Here the lecturer will explain how to understand a text looking at the topic and main idea as well as the paragraphs requested according to the questions and multiple choices that have been provided as answers.

No	Number of participants	Average Score	Greater than to 500	Equal	%
1	32	350	12		37

Table 2. The result before the TOEIC Preparation Class

In this preparation class, all students come from one department, namely English Department contain of 32 participants from sixth semester. Judging from the pretest results, the average score is 350, while what is expected in table 2 is a number greater than or equal to 500. Because only 12 people got a score above 500, it can be concluded that only 37% of the total 32 participants could pass the competency test. As explained above in the introduction, they do experience problems in inputting students on campus in English.

Student admissions do carry out English language tests in the form of interviews and also written tests, but because the campus is a private campus, not a state campus, students are tested with an English language test which is not too difficult because it makes it easier for them to enter the campus environment as students.

The entrance test which is carried out for student admissions is somewhat easier so that there is more candidate of the students can be accepted as students. This also affects the quality of the test and also the assessment which is made easier during the implementation of the entrance test.

By planning the curriculum and learning those are implemented on campus, students who actually have a lack of English language skills can actually improve, but this is still far from being compared to campuses that are popular campuses or those with lots of applicants. The progress obtained from the development of their lectures is actually very significant, but to obtain the expected TOEIC score, there is still a need for training such as this preparation class.

Under these conditions, the decision of the campus leadership was correct, namely to give another preparation class which provided additional tips and tricks on how to answer the TOEIC questions which were tested as competency requirements for prospective graduates.

No	Number of participants	Average Score	Greater than Equal to 500	%
1	32	512	27	84

Table 3. The result after the TOEIC Preparation Class

Seen from the second table where in an implementation of the preparation class the figures were obtained from 32 students as participants getting an average score of 512 where the total of students who got a score above 500 was 27 people. This can be concluded means the number has increased to 84%.

It can be said that in fact the test scores that are carried out are sometimes a scourge for students because students become worried about carrying out the tests so that the results are low. Students become less confident when they encounter listening tests even though they are in the curriculum and throughout their period of study on campus in the English language program. Many of them were still surprised by the listening questions given even though they had taken listening courses 1, 2 and 3.

Most of the TOEIC questions that are held are actually listening towards conversations in the world of work and conditions, which is means the conversation in the world of work which are sometimes different from the material provided by the lecturers when carrying out lectures in the listening course.

Coupled with students' distrust, they do not believe in themselves or unconfident so they are sometimes still shackled by having to achieve high scores otherwise they worry because they will not be able to take part in the graduation ceremony or be graduated by their campus.

by holding a preparation class, they will know what a test store is really like and also by holding a preparation class they will get tips and tricks so that they gain confidence. Therefore, that they know to the students that the test is the same as what they have studied so far in the courses on their campus. With the preparation class they will know how to manage time management so that they can complete the test on time and also, they can answer more precisely the questions presented. This can be seen from the score percentage which increased drastically from 32% to 84%.

Conclusion

From the data that has been discussed, it can be concluded that several facts have increased in TOEIC test results due to the presence of preparation classes and also pretest provided. From these results it was found that out of the 32 student participants who took the test TOEIC and also the preparation class, it turned out that at the beginning before the implementation of the preparation class they got an average score of 350 where there were 12 students who had achieved the expected score, meaning there were 20 people who had still not achieved it. a score of 500 is what is expected for the campus's needs to graduate the students.

The test results after the posttest turned out to get an average score of 512 from 32 students where there were 27 students who got a score of 500 and above, meaning there was 84% and an increase obtained is 20%.

After carrying out the pretest and also giving 12 meetings during the implementation of the program in the preparation class, they gained new knowledge and input about the test, even though it was held by party outside the campus, the TOEIC test became more familiar to them and created a form of confidence for them to answer the test and also, they can manage the time during answering the test. This can be concluded that it turns out that the preparation class gives students more confidence and time management so that they are able to answer the questions correctly and not miss a part of the question that is not answered because all the questions will be answered in full based on test provided.

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