TOEFL PREPARATION CLASS IN NON EFL CLASSROOM: HOW IS IT IMPACTFUL ON THE NON-EFL LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENT?

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Abstract: Having problem of reaching the tested aspects of TOEFL particularly on achieving target score of TOEFL set, participants needed to be provided an intervention with TOEFL preparation class before encountering the test. For that reason, this community service activity highlighted the impact of TOEFL preparation class on the non EFL learners' achievement. One class was used as the sample of this activity in which it consisted of twenty students coming from different major in one of private universities in Palembang, southern region of sumatera. Descriptive analysis with experimental design was used. A test was administered to see whether or not there was a significant improvement on the non EFL learners' TOEFL-like score achievement. The results revealed that achievement level of the participants were in the elementary and intermediate category. Besides, statistically there was a significant improvement on the EFL learners' TOEFL-like score intervened by the provision of TOEFL preparation class. Thus, it could be further concluded that TOEFL preparation class was impactful on the non EFL undergaduates' English achievement.

Keywords: TOEFL preparation class; Non EFL Classroom; Non EFL learners' achievement

Abstrak: Memiliki kendala dalam mencapai aspek-aspek TOEFL yang diujikan khususnya dalam mencapai target skor TOEFL yang ditetapkan, peserta perlu diberikan intervensi melalui kelas persiapan TOEFL sebelum menghadapi tes. Oleh karena itu, kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat ini menyoroti dampak kelas persiapan TOEFL terhadap prestasi pelajar non EFL. Satu kelas dijadikan sampel kegiatan ini, yang terdiri dari dua puluh mahasiswa yang berasal dari berbagai jurusan di salah satu perguruan tinggi swasta di Palembang, Sumatera Selatan. Analisis deskriptif dengan desain eksperimen digunakan. Sebuah tes diberikan untuk melihat ada atau tidaknya peningkatan yang signifikan terhadap pencapaian skor TOEFL pelajar non-EFL. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tingkat prestasi peserta berada pada kategori dasar dan menengah. Selain itu, secara statistik terdapat peningkatan yang signifikan terhadap skor TOEFL pelajar EFL yang diintervensi oleh penyediaan kelas persiapan TOEFL. Dengan demikian, dapat disimpulkan lebih lanjut bahwa kelas persiapan TOEFL berdampak pada prestasi bahasa Inggris mahasiswa non-EFL.

Kata kunci: kelas persiapan TOEFL; Ruang Kelas Non EFL; Prestasi pelajar non EFL

INTRODUCTION

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is a prominent test for Indonesian university students to continue their study abroad particularly to the country of which English is the language of instruction used in the teaching and learning environment. Indonesian universities, like those in other countries of Southeast Asian, have begun to seriously implement tests of English proficiency. As a country where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL), the English proficiency tests use, particularly the TOEFL, is widespread among students and lecturers. Program of TOEFL matriculation (Noviyenty, 2018) class of TOEFL preparation (Masfufah, 2018), course of TOEFL school with platform of online learning (Nimasari, Mufanti, &Gestanti, 2019), as well as graduation requirement are some of the applications (Aziz, 2016). Because of the widespread use of the TOEFL, the process of teaching and learning, syllabus development, and curriculum design are all heavily influenced by the desire to improve students' TOEFL scores. The international English provides English and its achievement tests, such as the TOEFL, becomes a part of the globalization phenomenon in the Asian context. This has paved the way for English to become more widely used and recognized as "Asian language" (Hamid & Nguyen, 2016). Having the same thought, one of the most popular English proficiency exams in Indonesia is the TOEFL, which is taken for requirements related to both work and school (Kusrini & Amalia, 2021; Supina, 2018). Additionally, the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is a globally recognized standardized test. It is intended to assess people's English language skills in order to determine whether they are prepared to enroll in a course at an English-speaking university or college. This exam is one of the requirements that must be fulfilled if a student wishes to continue his or her studies abroad. TOEFL tests are available in paper-based, computer-based, and internet-based formats. This kind of test is a standardised version of the English language intended to assess non-native speakers' proficiency. (Ang-Zie, 2016).

In addition, many previously works and research were related to the TOEFL intervention. Noviyenty (2018) examines the English competency of PAI STAIN Curup students using TOEFL Score data in the Unit of Language Development and discovers that the average score was still in low category, unable to achieve the standard, despite the fact that the facilities or infrastructure provided to students are adequate. Another study related to the current study is by Salam (2017) about Toefl between Importance and Frustration: Tanjungpura University's "Toefl" Policy Analysis. The results show that students' scores are still low. In this case, three factors are to blame: (1) the lack of a continuous program of English learning; (2) the process of learning does not use English at all in the classroom, instead relying on textbooks; as well as (3) the lack of learning facilities as well as resources of English, such as libraries. Beside that, a number of factors contribute to students' failure to achieve the minimum TOEFL score, according to a prior study on their struggles to obtain the required score (Rahman et al., 2021). Less practise prior to the exam, a lack of motivation to study the four skills of the TOEFL test—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—as well as fewer fundamental skills are needed to answer the test (Manan et al., 2020; Syakur & Sabat, 2020).

In Indonesian, the TOEFL test taking is pondered difficult especially in Palembang. As consequent, test takers got failed to reach the passing grade set up by the university policy maker. In 2014, for the undergraduate program, at any faculty, of University of Indo Global Mandiri, TOEFL test taking is a compulsory requirement for the university students to go through the thesis examination and to take the academic certificate and transcript. The standard passing grade for the TOEFL are set up differently, for instance, >450 is for non English major students and >500 is for English major students. As the matter of fact, on the basis of the informal interview with the English lecturers at the concerned university, it was found out that many students failed to achieve the target score especially for the non English major students. In addition, students may encounter difficulties in answering the TOEFL test's 3 parts of such as (a) listening comprehension, (b) structure and written expression, as well as (c) reading comprehension. Depending on a variety of factors, each section necessitates a unique set of skills in order to achieve the preferred TOEFL score. To cope with this problem, the researchers would like to provide training and assistance in conjunction with the provision of TOEFL preparation class training for the university students of Indo Global Mandiri in an effort to familiarize the learners with the TOEFL test taking strategies. Besides, learners are also getting benefited as this give test taking strategies and exercises in TOEFL aspects which tend to let them familiar with various test items.

METHOD

The activity of community service was performed in the form of TOEFL preparation class. One class was used as the sample of this activity in which it consisted of twenty students coming from different major in one of private universities in Palembang, southern region of sumatera. The students were given pretest before joining the class and posttest afterward. The pretest was done to see the TOEFL achievement level of the participant. The intervention was employed in the form of TOEFL preparation class in which it comprised of the exposure of the strategy of taking the test and test practice in each strategy explained. This community service provided 14 meetings as the intervention in the classroom, excluding pretestting and posttesting.

In addition, to collect the data of the participants' score, pretest and posttest in the form of TOEFL like administration in which the test consisted of listening comprehension (50 questions), structure and written expression (40 questions), and reading comprehension (50 questions). The TOEFL that was used was not the Institutional TOEFL. Instead, the TOEFL-like or TOEFL Prediction was used, with materials taken out from TOEFL Preparation Book. Then the results of participants' score were calculated and analyzed quantitatively through SPSS Program in order to see their achievement level before and after the intevention given (see the recap in table 1). The score gained were analyzed based on the category of the participants' TOEFL score achievement level (see table 2).

Table 1. Recapitulation of Community Service Activities

No	Items	Description

1	Content	Listening comprehension test taking strategies
		Structure and Written Expression test taking strategies
		Reading Comprehension test taking strategies
2	Implementation	TOEFL Preparation Class for 14 meetings
3	Learning Souce	Longman Complete Course for the TOEFL Test by Deborah Philip
4	Participants	Non English Major Undergraduates
5	Evaluation	Pretest and posttest

Table 2. Score range of TOEFL-like score

TOEFL Score	CEFR Level
310-459	A2: Waystage/Elementary Level
460-542	B1: Threshold/Intermediate
543-626	B2: Vantage/Upper Intermediate
627-677	C1: Effective Operational Proficiency/Advanced)

DISCUSSION

This community service activity used experimental design with one group which comprises of twenty participants in which they were from non English majors. This activity discussed the implementation of TOEFL preparation course to see the TOEFL achievement of undergraduates as the requirement of graduation and taking graduation certificate. It lasted for 16 teaching sessions including pretest and posttest administration. After these activities were done then the analysis of data was computed with SPSS program.

On the basis of the test results particularly on the prestest result, before being given the intervention the lowest score of the participant was 337 and the highest attainment was 416. The median score was 388 and the mode score was 390. Additionally, there were 20 students (100%) achieved elementary level (A2) with the mean score (380.75) and standard deviation (25.77). However, after learning the strategies of answering each TOEFL section the lowest score of the participant was 383 and the highest attainment was 473. The median score was 453 and the mode score was 450. Besides, there were 13 students (65%) and 7 students (35%) achieved elementary (A2) and intermediate level (B1) with the mean score (448.05) and standard deviation (23.97). The results of pretest and posttest could be vividly seen in the table 1. Thus, it could be concluded that the achievement level of the participants were in the elementary and intermediate level.

In addition, to see whether or not there was a significant improvement on the EFL learners' achievement after being given intervention with TOEFL preparation class. This could be clearly viewed from the mean score (67.30) and the t obtained (10.363). Since t obtained score was higher and t table as well as p value was less than .05. it could be fur-

ther revealed that there was a statistically significant improvement towards non EFL learners' TOEFL-like score inter- vened by the provision of TOEFL prepa- ration class.

Table 3. The Results of Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Achievement Level	Pretest Experimental Group Frequency and Percentage (%)	Posttest Experimental Group Frequency and Percentage (%)
TOEFL-like score	Advanced (C1) 627-677	-	-
	Upper Intermediate (C2) 543-626	-	-
	Intermediate (B1) 460-542	-	7 (35%)
	Elementary (A2) 310-459	20 (100)	13 (65%)
Total		**20 (100%)**	**20 (100%)**

Table 4. The Results of Paired Samples T Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	67,300	29,043	6,494	80,892	53,708	10,363	19	,000

After having calculated and analyzed the data of the pretest and posttest of the participants form non English major graduates, there was an improvement on the achievement level and also a significant improvement on the non EFL learners' achievements. This was caused by the TOEFL preparation class particularly on exposure of learning the TOEFL strategies of listening comprehension, structure and written expression, and reading comprehension. It lasted for 14 meetings with two hours of each teaching session.

Apart from that, more exercises of each section of TOEFL test taking strategies were provided accordingly. This was also be triggered by the student-teacher interaction due to the difficulties of the participants in answering the question of each section. In addition, this was also due to the interaction with various test taking materials and direct preparation so that there were able to recall the strategies learnt pertaining to answering TOEFL test. Being well prepared also affected their readiness and confidence to face the test. Regarding the findings and description above, it could be stated that TOEFL preparation class was impactful on the non EFL undergaduates' English achievement.

CONCLUSION

The findings statistically confirmed that test preparation activities especially on the learning the TOEFL strategies was impactful on the participants' English achievement. They can upgrade their TOEFL-like score after learning those. This pedagogical implications provided good prior knowledge for the participants to come across the test taking. It is very clear that the provision of TOEFL preparation class give significant TOEFL like score improvement. It is strongly recommended the future instructors to provide more exposure on the test taking strategies. Besides, it is also suggested for the participants to join the TOEFL preparation class more intensively in order to grasp the more types of exercises of each TOEFL section. For future researchers, it is recommended to conduct similar community service activities with different TOEFL statistical calculation for each section, to attain the participants' feedback towards the implementation of TOEFL class preparation, and to further analyze the participant's problems for each TOEFL section.

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