

TOEFL PREPARATION TRAINING PROGRAM TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' TOEFL SCORE

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ABSTRAK

TOEFL is one method of measuring English competence and serving as a standard for anyone studying or speaking English as a foreign language. Because the TOEFL is a globally renowned language test that certifies one's English ability, there is a minimum score to achieve in order to complete a certain requirement, such as a support document to apply for a job, institution, or study abroad. It is challenging for almost all Indonesians to attain a minimum TOEFL score. The purpose of this article was to figure out the effectiveness of the TOEFL preparation training program in enhancing students' TOEFL score. This paper gathered information using action research, which consists of four steps: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The TOEFL training program was carried out four times a week for a month, including eight meetings for listening comprehension, ten meetings for structure and written expression, and ten meetings for reading comprehension. The class divided into three classes for each class consisting of 32 students. From the result, it can be seen that there is a significant improvement after the students participated in the TOEFL training program. It showed the students who reach score ≤ 400 in post-test more than in pre-test and the score increased as expected. On the pre-test, the students who got scores 400-500 was only 3% and after the training was given it increased became 13%. It can be concluded that TOEFL training program not only helps the students to improve their scores but also their comprehension of the TOEFL test

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1. INTRODUCTION

English ability is one of the international languages to be mastered in this global era. And being an international language, English is spoken in most international events and it is used as the medium of information on science, technology, and culture (Suhardiman et al., 2021). Nowadays, the importance of being able to master English can be seen by taking a language proficiency test. There are a lot of methods that can be used as a way to measure a person's English proficiency. One of those is the TOEFL test. A high score on the TOEFL test will be

an indication of a person's ability in English acquisition. And also become one of the plus points for not only applying for jobs but also continuing study domestically or abroad. The TOEFL certificate currently becomes a mandatory requirement as a supporting document. Almost all universities insist their graduates have a certain English proficiency score before graduation (Saputra, 2019). Furthermore, the TOEFL certificate is not only for students but also some companies enforce the same conditions on new employees.

Universitas Muhammadiyah Bangka Belitung is also one of the universities in which TOEFL certificates become a requirement when the students register for undergraduate thesis final defense. Because the TOEFL is a benchmark in a person's ability to speak English as a foreign language, all the study programs both the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education and Faculty of Technic and Science of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bangka Belitung, also apply the same conditions to the students. The minimum score of TOEFL for English Education Study Program's students is 450 while the non-English Education Study Program is 400. The students were pushed to reach a good score whenever they had a test. In fact, not only non-English Education but also English Education study program students got a low scores and even the score was not reached 400. Most Indonesian students are unsuccessful in developing English proficiency despite learning English for many years from elementary or even in kindergarten to university (Maruf et al., 2020). More than 50% of graduate students in the magister program need to take the TOEFL course provided by the university after they enroll in the university (As'ad, 2017). It is proven that all the levels of students were not prepared well to have their English proficiency test. The level of English proficiency in Indonesia is caused by the poor environment of English (Maruf et al., 2020). It was caused by some factors such as students' attitude, motivation, anxiety, facilities, preparation, and so on (Komariah et al., 2019).

Therefore, to improve students' TOEFL scores, the Language Centre of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bangka Belitung opens a TOEFL preparation training program. TOEFL preparation program is a learning program to improve students' reading, structure, and listening skills in the academic English language (Sakurai, 2020). Taking a test preparation course is the most time-efficient method of preparing for the TOEFL test (Ma & Cheng, 2016). There are factors why the TOEFL training program is held by the Language Center of Universitas Muhammadiyah. First, this is to improve the students' ability in understanding the questions contained in the TOEFL test and also to help them to enhance their scores. So it can be concluded that the effectiveness of the TOEFL training program is that the program can solve the problem of the students towards the TOEFL Test.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was an Action Research which focused on the TOEFL training program to enhance students' scores. This research aims to find out the significance of the TOEFL training program towards the students' scores before and after the training was given. The object of this research was the students from four of the program studies in the Teacher Training and Education Faculty. There were 64

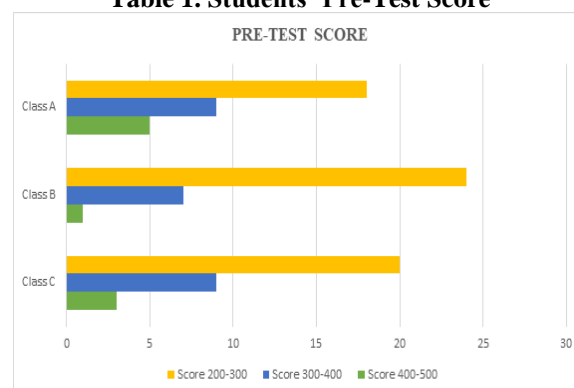
students of 7-8 semesters in two classes and each class consisted of 32 students.

The action research consists of the cycle (s) in which each cycle consists of four stages namely; planning, implementation, observation, and reflection (Muslimin, 2014). The researchers assisted by the head of the Language Center gave the students a pre-test to know the students' scores before the training was given and also as a first step to planned and designed the appropriate materials.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The pre-test was given to the students before the training program was implemented to determine the participants' ability towards the TOEFL test.

Table 1. Students' Pre-Test Score



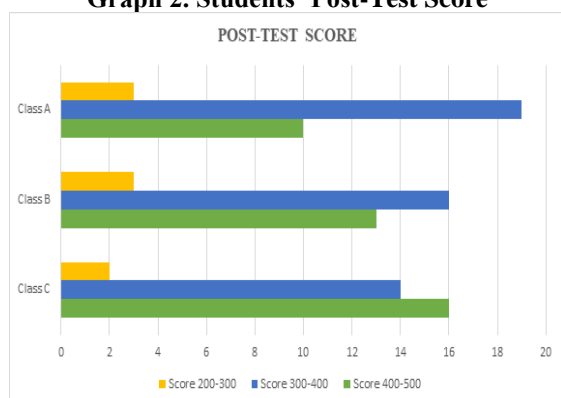
From the diagram above shows that the comprehension of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bangka Belitung's students about the TOEFL test is still below and only several students achieved above 400. The information that has been obtained from the results of the students' pre-test, then the learning materials were considered based on the students' needs. And afterward, the researchers are assisted by the staff of the Language Centre of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bangka Belitung to arrange the schedule and required instruments.

The program was done based on the schedule and materials that have been designed. The students were in the 7th-8th semester of the Primary Education Study Program and Physics, Health, and Recreation Education study program and each of the classes consists of 32 students. While the tutors of the TOEFL Training Program were English Education Study Programs' Lecturers of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bangka Belitung who mastered the field. Both offline and online classes were supervised by the researchers and the tutors. Longman's book entitled *Preparation Course For The TOEFL Test* by Deborah Phillips was used as a guidebook. The book consists of 3 skills that become core exercises in TOEFL namely listening, structure and written expressions, and reading comprehension. Listening session was given in 8 meetings, structure and written expression in 10 meetings, and reading comprehension session also 10 meetings. All sessions were documented well and followed the rules step by step. Since the TOEFL test in Universitas

Muhammadiyah Bangka Belitung is a PBT, on the spot tests were needed.

The training program was done and the data was collected during the activities. All the skills were guided by expert tutors and the program was implemented offline and online. However, there were some problems during online classes due to connections but overall the classes were handled well by the tutors. Furthermore, it not only saw the participants' improvement in TOEFL scores but also investigated their perceptions. The participants took a post-test in the last meeting to see the improvement after the training. And almost all the participants showed a good impression toward the post-test.

Graph 2. Students' Post-Test Score



From the diagram above, the improvement showed significantly in the result of the student's TOEFL score. Almost all the students in each class who got 200-300 in the pre-test were increased in post-test after the training was given. And the number of students who got 300-400 also increased, and even only two students almost hit 460.

Table 1. Score Before & After TOEFL Training Program

No.	Value	TOEFL SCORE	
		Pre-Test	Post-Test
1.	Smallest Score	290	353
2.	Biggest Score	407	456
3.	Score ≥ 400	21	49
4.	Score ≤ 400	9	39

Table 2. Percentage Before & After TOEFL Training Program

	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Score 200-300	20,7%	3%
Score 300-400	8,3%	16,3%
Score 400-500	3%	13%

From table 1, it can be concluded that the score improved after the TOEFL training program was given. The method and materials became the core element of this training program and were helped by the tutors who gave new insights to the students about the TOEFL test. It can be seen in table 1 that the improvement score from pre-test and post-test is quite significant. Although none of the students reached 500, the overall scores of all the students improved after they had intense training. From table 2 it showed that the students who got TOEFL score 200-300 in the pre-test 20,7% and in the post-test 3% which indicates a decrease in

students who got the lowest score. While the students who got score 400-500 increased by a percentage of 13%. It was indicated that the TOEFL Training Program has succeeded in increasing student understanding of doing the TOEFL test.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, there was a good improvement in the students' results. In order to enhance the TOEFL scores effectively, the student must attempt to master their English skills continuously. By following the TOEFL training program, the student can understand the materials well to get a high score. Moreover, the motivation factors from the tutors and students themselves was also an important thing in achieving good scores. This individual motivation and experiences proved to be a determining factor to have desirable results (Akmal, et al: 2020). Antoni (2014) in his study stated that good preparation includes the knowledge of what the test looks like and what strategies can be used during the test. So, learning goes well, carried out according to good learning procedures. This training program has implemented the applicable standard.

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