Enhancing English Proficiency Skills Through Workshop

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Abstract - This study applied descriptive methods to determine the extent improvement of English Proficiency Test (EPT) score which was equivalent with TOEFL. The preparation workshop included skills and strategies workshop regarding to the TOEFL experience. This research purposed to describe the improvement as the result of workshop. The data collection techniques were (1) observation, (2) training, and (3) document analysis. The participants were assisted to discover of how to deal with TOEFL test type of questions. The sample is the training participants from 209 students came from several different major. The results of the data analysis showed that broadly speaking, there was a significant correlation between the preparation workshops and score achievement of EPT. The results indicated that the hardest part or section experienced by the students was structure and written expression 41%, while in the part of listening was 33%, meanwhile the easiest part assumed by the student was reading comprehension 26%. Based on the result, it was proved by the EPT score achieved by the students. The average score was 443, and the best score reached by the student was in the section of reading comprehension. It was in line with the result of the workshop described the ability of mastering the skills in TOEFL section.

1.   Introduction

TOEFL or known as the Test of English as a Foreign Language is kind of English test used to measure the level of language acquisition. The test has several sections, listening comprehension, structure and written expression, and reading comprehension. TOEFL is a type of standard test to comprehend English proficiency as an absolute prerequisite for continuing education to a higher level in almost all universities in the world, including in Indonesia (Sukur, 2013; Giraldo, 2019). The advantage of TOEFL is a language proficiency test English that is reliable, than just to know one's inner strength mastery of English to important goals such as enrolling the program education and applying for jobs.

Organizing language acquisition measurements for the students is an important step before they intend to enroll major in universities in Indonesia (Sugeng, et al., 2012). The term for someone's TOEFL is divided into several types, for example (1) PBT which is the most conventional form of TOEFL. The test system is commonly using a sheet of question and answer paper that must be filled in with a 2B pencil. The material tested is listening, structure, and reading. (2) Computer Based Test (CBT) is a more practical form of Paper Based Test (PBT). Test system TOEFL CBT is no longer using paper, but using a computer. All questions displayed on the screen using interactive software. Participants can be direct working on a computer. The material tested is listening, structure, reading, and writing. (3) Internet Based Test (iBT) is the newest form that uses computers and the internet as the medium. The test material being tested is reading, listening, writing and speaking. The material structure doesn't disappear, but dissolves inward four other materials. The questions being tested are not only independent tests (individual tests), but also an integrated test (test combination). Combination test means in one question there is more than one material. For example a paragraph (reading) followed by an explanation someone about the paragraph (listening). The test duration is 4 hours.

TOEFL is a standardized test that was first introduced in 1964 to measure English language skills. From the past until now, TOEFL has been officially held by an institution called ETS, based in The USA. Types of TOEFL tests In general, they are divided into several types, including: official TOEFL (IBT, PBT, CBT), Institutional (ITP), and Prediction.
In addition, the form of the test on the TOEFL is divided into three tests, they are:

(1) Listening Comprehension, this test aims to demonstrate ability in understanding English speech, the person being tested must listen to various types of speech on a recording and responds by selecting multiple choice provided.

(2) Structure and Written Expressions. This test aims to demonstrate the ability to recognize the English language grammatically correct, the person being tested must choose the correct answer for complete a sentence or find mistakes in a sentence.

(3)Reading Comprehension; This test purposes to demonstrate the ability to understand language in sincere English, the test person must answer multiple choice questions about an idea and the meanings of the words found in the article (Philips, 2001).

Commonly, English education in Indonesia has not achieve the expected target, due to the fact that Indonesian education generally still oriented to results as measured by values very nice. This made things worse because of the process automatic learning activities will not pay attention to the learning objectives itself, which is actually more essential, namely the process of how to master English along with the four skills there is.

Based on the observations conducted by researchers showed that, the results of English Proficiency of students at SMK Negeri 5 Bandung led to a very dominant skill, reading comprehension. Yet, the rest of the skills (listening and structure) are still in an average level, because there were significant obstacles. Commonly, the students had not mastered English language skills, especially in the aspect of listening skills. It was caused by disability students in understanding the audio explanation and instructions, or when answering questions based on the stories that had been read. This situation turned students to be passive when learning process occurred through workshop. The listening aspect is one of the most difficult aspects to be carried out by students. This is caused when students listen to words or sentences in English conversation are influenced by accents from the instructor as well as the learning media used. Students already accustomed to accents that are usual pronounced by teachers or people at the surroundings. The facts found were due to the limitation of the number and understanding of English vocabularies.

One of the causes for someone to feel confused when working on TOEFL questions is the lack of thorough preparation and not guessing what kind of questions they will face. Therefore, it is very important to do as many exercises as possible and pay attention to the TOEFL format according to the type to be taken.

The ITP TOEFL test is divided into three parts, they are Listening consists of 50 questions with a duration of 35 minutes, structure and written expression, 40 questions with a duration of 25 minutes, and reading comprehension by a total of 50 questions with a duration of time 55 minutes. The whole test lasts 115 minutes, all TOEFL ITP are presented in multiple choice with a total of 140 questions. The lowest question that can be obtained is 310 and the highest is 677.

Within the scope of English subjects, components language skills include aspects of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Those fourth aspects are commonly referred to as the four language skills. The thing that the most important thing to be able to understand is listening. The skill should be mastered properly and accurately to produce appropriate pronunciation as for speaking skill. Listening skills cannot be obtained only through theory, method lectures or reading and writing, but the need for practice repeated and continuous which is done by the students themselves assisted by the teacher. As for that support in enhancing English proficiency, the student must also master grammatical ability, or in this part, student must cover the ability to solve the questions in structure and written expression part. This would be matter because grammar plays an important role in almost all parts of the language. Grammar is deep ability English is how a phrase spoken, where it resides in sentence what it means, and how it affects social context (Aulia, et al., 2013).

Some of students conveyed that learning grammar is the same as learning math that must memorize formulas. Some others said that too a lot of material in the Grammar course must be mastered. The rest said the way the lecturer is conveyed too fast in depth explain and have that understanding less against this course. Furthermore it can be identified that problems that students find in understanding English Grammar in the subject is caused by several things. First, grammar in English is difficult because it is a lot formula that must be memorized, such as formulas on math. Second, there is too much material which had to be mastered in a very short period. Third, how to convey the material by the teachers tends to be fast, so it comes with less understanding. Fourth, students do not know how to learn English Grammar can add to their understanding. From the four things above resulted in the low their understanding of English grammar. This can be seen from the not maximum score obtained during quizzes and exams. And at this point, the students' ability to comprehend English proficiency is affected by the background of their knowledge in English, and even the environment. The impact is broadly wide; there are still many students who do not able to produce good work inside writing (writing) and translating (translating).

In the testing program, tips and strategies are required to be successful in answering all the questions. There are six ways to be successful on the TOEFL, try to understand the direction, remember the path, learn grammar, practice *skimming* and *scanning*, build vocabulary and commit attention to the test (Stafford-Yilmaz & Zwier, 2005). In addition, for investigating students' language skills, a test is needed; and TOEFL could map and determine the level in learning English (Saafin, 2014). Students have problems in achieving TOEFL scores with the average grade point is 397 which is still categorized as basic (elementary). It happened because the biggest obstacle for students in doing the TOEFL is the listening section and structure section (Sucahyo, 2016).

To find out the perceptions of related students with scores from the TOEFL preparation test training students need to earn an changes in perceptions regarding values and the need for language skills improvement English in general and maintains a focused instrumental perception on attaining insufficient scores on research selection via test preparation courses.

Related to this test, many people think that the TOEFL is difficult to be done. In fact, on some campuses, TOEFL is almost never taught and do not carry out the TOEFL. Besides that, most of the students had never been take the TOEFL so that it makes them confused and don't understand how to do TOEFL questions (Cheng & Ma, 2015). By that reason, the instructor from Widyatama University conducted some training and testing to the students in order to recall and get the information regarding to the background of their English proficiency.

2.   Literature review

Understanding language theories is one of the important aspects that must be owned by a teacher (especially for language teacher) since the understanding will determine what kind of materials will be shared to the students. Moreover, language has a systematic meaning, a collection of arbitrary symbols that can be in the form of vocals or visuals, as a medium of communication and applied in a speech or cultural context. Language as also a tool to express functional meaning and meaning is realized through grammar and vocabulary structures. According to functional point of view, language is related to social and representative behavior intentions of the user (Brown, 2000).

In a traditional grammar, it isn't just related by determining the principles of the composition of words, phrases and sentences, but also the principles governing their interpretation. In addition, grammar learns about the principles how the language can be used properly. In studying or mastering a language, one should learn grammar from the language you want to learn. However, learning grammar is not an easy thing for some students. The ability to understand grammar can be measured by giving a test. Several techniques for composing the exam are proposed, they are gap filling, paraphrasing, completing and multiple-choice understanding. Gap filling (filling in the dots) is a form of exam that students fill out the blank with the correct answer on a sentence. Paraphrase (paraphrase) is rewriting a sentence with intent the same one. Completion (completing sentences) that is, students are asked to fill in the inner dots a text. Multiple-choice (multiple choice), students are asked to choose one of the answers correct one of the several options given (Hughes, 2001).

To check the validity of the data, this study uses five types of validity; democratic validity, product validity, process validity, catalytic validity, and dialogical validity. Democratic validity is exercised by provide opportunities for collaborators to express opinions, ideas, as well expectations during the research process (Burn, 1999). Validity the program was compared with the method applied to the classes researched with the collaborator class, whether to give the same results.

The validity of the process is carried out if the method is applied achieved the expected things. Catalistic validity manifested by when the activity of writing paragraphs using daily communication media make students more motivated and improve learning achievement, the researcher does not only apply this method in the related class with research but also in other classes. Dialogic validity is carried out by asking collaborators to share their opinions, ideas against the opinions and ideas of researchers.

Instructors must be able to provide motivation to learners that it is very important to build the context that is heard connected with real life context. The instructors must also be able to provide a stimulus to learners to find the meaning of vocabulary according to the context, speak and participate actively in doing listening assignments in class.

3.   Method
A.   Research Methodology

The research method used in this study was qualitative research. It leads to multi-methods on the focus of research that is owned, involving an interpretation, naturalistic approach to research subjects. It is meant that qualitative study of things in a natural way. Furthermore, qualitative research refers to a study that aims to comprehend the phenomenon that the research subject is experiencing, such as attitudes, beliefs, motives, and acts, holistically and through detailed explanations in the form of words or language, in a natural setting, using a variety of scientific methods. As for the place of carrying out this research is the campus of SMK Negeri 5 (vocational high school), Bandung, West Java (Moleong, 2014).

This study uses data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews, and document analysis. At the observation stage, it was carried out by means of non-participant observation. In participating the observation, the researcher did not involve and only as independent observers. Researchers record, analyze and conclude about the strategy of the students in doing TOEFL questions (Sugiyono, 2013).

Data reduction is intended to summarize data, select the main issue, and focus on important issues, and finding shapes and reducing nonessential issues. By therefore, the reduced data will provide clear picture easier researchers to collect further data, and search for it when needed. Once reduced, the next step is to present the data. Qualitative data presentation (data display) in research can take the form of a brief summary, maps, category relationships, flowcharts, and other visual aids. The preliminary findings are only temporary, and they can be changed if no clear evidence is found to justify the next step of data collection.

Bottom-up processing and top-down processing are the two types of information processing. The method of interpreting knowledge through sound analysis, word sense, and grammar is referred to as bottom-up processing. Top-down processing, on the other hand, refers to the use of schemata or prior experience to comprehend the data obtained. The listener's everyday experience is linked to schema. (Gebhard, 2000).

There are five basic principles of teaching listening, (1) teaching students two ways of processing information (Bottom-Up and Top-Down processing), (2) teaching students different styles of listening, (3) teaching different activities, (4) considering the level of difficulty and authentic text, and (5) teaching different types of listening techniques or strategies such as guessing, taking conclusions, monitor, clarify, respond to, and evaluate. From several strategies and basic principles of teaching listening, learners top-down and bottom-up strategies can be given. When combining the two methods, the most successful approach is to improve Listening Comprehension by developing learners' awareness from daily experience, and then to try to grasp the context of each word and its grammar. (Hegelsen, 2003).

B. Research Procedure
There are several procedures or steps (Arikunto, 2009) which were implemented in this research;
1. Find problems with holding initial observation and literature study;
2. Identify and formulate problem;
3. Formulate term limits, restrictions variables, hypotheses, and theory support;
4. Develop an experimental plan:
a. Identify all non-experimental variables that if possible interfere with experimental results and determine how to control these variables.
b. Choose an experimental design.
c. Choose a representative sample and trusted from that subject included in the population.
d. Group the subject into two groups; experimental group and comparison group.
e. Select or arranging an instrument right to measure the results of giving treatment.
f. Outline the procedure collecting data and conducting tests try the instrument.
g. Formulate null hypothesis and hypothesis statistics.
5. Carry out experiments;
6. Choose the data in such a way only data collected describe the pure results of the group both the experiment and the comparison group.
7. Use the right technique for testing the significance so that it can be known carefully how the results of the activities experimentation.

C. Participants
Students from a vocational high school took part in this report. Since of one the research variables was grammar then students who became participants taking the grammar course on odd semester (semester 1) or even semester (semester 2). At the time it had been taken data. There was one workshop session consisting of 200 students who were focusing in TOEFL preparation course.

4.   Result

The research data is in the form of a pre-test conducted in a workshop to determine the students' English proficiency background; and post tests taken from the group the experimental and control groups. The students joined a general class of TOEFL preparation program held by the department. The pre-test form is the simple EPT test by the questions of standard TOEFL. The test material adapted to the course of grammar subject for the second grader. After the pre-test was given to each student, treatment was given to the students by doing exercises.

The TOEFL test that was administered during the workshop yielded an average score of 443. According to the distribution of student mastery levels, 41% of students were unable to master structure and written expression part, 33% students couldn't handle the listening section, and 26% couldn't deal with reading comprehension part in TOEFL.

Regrettably, none of the students in this study were classified as advanced level since the average score achieved by them was in the middle range of TOEFL score.
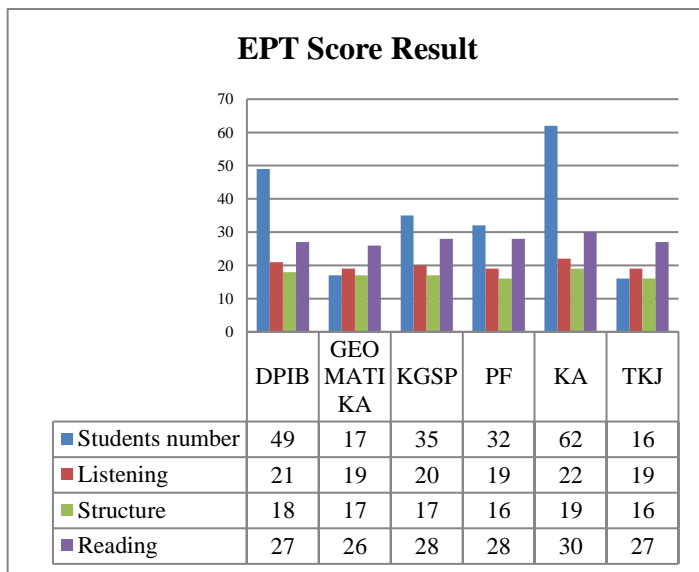

	DPIB	GEO MATI KA	KGSP	PF	KA	TKJ
■ Students number	49	17	35	32	62	16
■ Listening	21	19	20	19	22	19
■ Structure	18	17	17	16	19	16
■ Reading	27	26	28	28	30	27

Image 1. EPT score result

Based on the chart, it can be described that the total students joined the workshop were 211 students by different majors. There were at least six majors of students who followed the workshop and the test. Based on the data, the students from DPIB and KA got the highest average of score, 450 and 447.
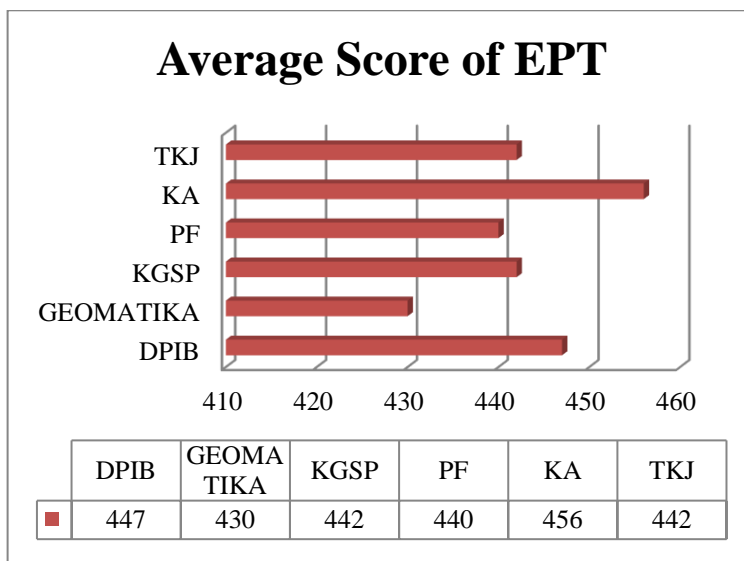

	DPIB	GEOMA TIKA	KGSP	PF	KA	TKJ
■	447	430	442	440	456	442

Image 2. Average score

5.   Conclusion

Analysis of the data obtained during the research process was directly conducted by workshop. Researchers got the information regarding to the TOEFL score map for the student at vocational high school by several different major involved in the activity. In this case, there were several important points underlined in this research. The first point was the highest TOEFL score that can be achieved by students were 490 and the lowest point was 397 with an average score of 443. This condition proved that the majority of students still have the TOEFL score at the elementary to middle level.

The second point shows that the structure and listening sections of the TOEFL are the most difficult for students to complete. Despite this, students' mastery of the content was still poor in other parts such as reading comprehension. Students found lengthy conversations and talks to be the most challenging part of section listening. Other pieces, however, were also noteworthy.

The section on structure and written expression tended to be the most difficult for students, particularly written expression (considering the wrong part). The low student achievement in this segment, as well as the questionnaire distributed during the workshop, demonstrate this. Overall, it was concluded that students were still having difficulty with the structure section. The instructors from English department of Widyatama university supported students to achieve the best score of all test held.

During the workshop, students were assisted to familiarize themselves with questions and how to analyze and answer them.

Future studies may follow up the results of this study better, especially by an expansion of the aspects studied, the type of TOEFL, or the type of proficiency test of other English, IELTS and TOEIC to get more information about English type of testing.

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