

Improving Students' TOEIC Score through Cooperative Learning in “Sekolah TOEIC”

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Abstract—One of the pre-requisites for IISMAVO 2022 (Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards for Vocational Students) mobility grants for Indonesia Vocational Higher Education (VHE) students is having minimum TOEIC scores of 560 or equivalent. However, only a small number of State Polytechnic of Bengkalis students had the required TOEIC score and were qualified to enroll in the program. Moreover, students in language department, English study programs, for example, still struggle to achieve the minimum score required by the program. The majority of students' levels of English proficiency were at elementary and lower intermediate. The research tried to improve students' TOEIC score through cooperative learning in “Sekolah TOEIC” program. The classroom action research was conducted in two cycles treatment. The results found that students' TOEIC scores increased significantly after the treatment. The pretest average score was 442, then it increased to be 562,6 in the cycle 1 and slightly decline 560,4 in cycle 2 and became 583,4 in the post test at the end of the program. It means that using Cooperative Learning in “Sekolah TOEIC” program could improve the students' TOEIC score.

Keywords—Improving, Cooperative Learning, Sekolah TOEIC

I. INTRODUCTION

TOEIC, an ETS trademark test, is one of commonly used English proficiency tests used by educational institutions and companies. For education institutions, it is used as a requirement for entrance, graduation, training, short course, while companies require this for recruitment, job promotion purposes and, etc.

As vocational higher education that train ready-work force, students' proficiency in English is one of main focuses of State Polytechnic of Bengkalis. Therefore, it provides a variety of programs, including the TOEIC Clinic and TOEIC certification, to help students enhance their English proficiency. Additionally, it specifies in its academic regulations a minimum English proficiency score as a graduation requirement. However, most of students' English proficiency scores were at elementary level as it was found by [2]. There was only 5% of the students had English Proficiency score of greater than 351. While, 95% of fifth semester students of State Polytechnic of Bengkalis had the English Proficiency score of less than 350.

Students of Language Department, English Study programs also face similar problem. Based on the TOEIC pre-test done for the selection of the IISMA for Vocational (IISMAVO) program, which was done at the end of April, it was found that the majority of them

were in intermediate level or in the range of 350 – 500. While the minimum score required for IISMAVO program is 560. It means that most of the students need to improve their TOEIC scores to be eligible to join such program.

Several researches dealing with improving English proficiency test score using cooperative learning were conducted. [7] found that Cooperative Learning can 1) improve students' TOEIC score, 2) attract the students to join TOEIC class, and 3) push the students to actively participate in the class. Moreover, [3] found that though the TOEIC training course did not effectively increase the subjects' English proficiency as much as the researchers expected; the participants did make good progress. Overall, it is still worth providing students similar training programs to enhance students' English proficiency. Another finding by [9] found that *STAD (one of cooperative learning methods)*, was effective in improving students' TOEFL-like score. Overall, the researches done indicated that students' score can be improved with proper training program.

An interesting “Sekolah TOEFL” program to solve the problem dealing with TOEFL proficiency was established by Budi Waluyo in 2015. It is a massive open online course (MOOC), a free and online course which can accommodate huge participants to learn TOEFL. A finding related to this program found by [11]. She found that there was an increase in students' TOEFL scores after attending Sekolah TOEFL lessons for six months. This can be seen from the students' scores on posttest was higher than the pretest. In the pretest 8,712 while in the posttest it increased by 9,765 with the increase value starting from 10 to 85 points.

The success of Sekolah TOEFL inspire educator to adapt similar kind of training. The researchers applied cooperative learning in conducting “Sekolah TOEIC”. Therefore, the study focused on improving students' TOEIC score through cooperative learning in “Sekolah TOEIC” program at language department of state polytechnic of Bengkalis.

A. TOEIC

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).

Table 1. Criteria for the interpretation of TOEIC scores as English proficiency

TOEIC Score Range	Proficiency level	Proficiency description	Position
200-395	Elementary Proficiency	Able to satisfy basic survival requirements	Hotel room-service order taker, hotel waiter/waitress/bartender.
400-595	Intermediate Proficiency	Can initiate and maintain face-to-face conversations; satisfy limited social demands.	Airport information clerk, bookkeeper, business service center agent, customs agent, hotel service representative, operations officer, head waiter, customer shipping and receiving clerk.
600-795	Working proficiency	Able to satisfy limited work requirements and routine social demands.	Accountant, assistant hotel manager, cooperate secretary officer, coordinator, engineer, flight attendant, logistics engineer, sales manager, system analyst.
800-990	Advanced working Proficiency	Able to satisfy most work requirements with acceptable and effective language usage.	Executive manager, executive secretary, general manager, logistics coordinator, marketing manager, senior accountant.

Source: [8]

B. Cooperative Learning in the Classroom

According to [12], cooperative learning is a broad category of instructional strategies in which pupils collaborate in small groups to learn academic material. Students are required to assist one another, engage in debate and discussion, evaluate one another's present knowledge, and fill in any gaps in one another's understanding in cooperative learning environments.

The effectiveness of cooperative learning as a teaching technique has been demonstrated by both teachers and students. Through a variety of settings and delivery methods, students have numerous opportunities to interact with the subject they are studying. For students to improve their English-speaking skills, cooperative learning promotes a supportive learning atmosphere. Students' motivation to learn can be increased, and it can aid in the development of communication skills. Additionally improving student relationships, academic performance, and self-esteem are all benefits of cooperative learning [1].

Cooperative learning techniques come in a variety and have been extensively researched. Examples of cooperative learning techniques include Jigsaw, Team Accelerated Instruction (TAI), Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC), Number Heads Together, Student Team Achievement Division (STAD), and Partnership.

[4] claims that STAD is made up of five interwoven components: group tasks, tests, evaluations of individual development, and team rewards.

The following is a description of these parts:

1) Class Presentations.

The teacher conducts a lecture-discussion in class to introduce the material. it may also involve audio-visual presentations.

2) Teams.

Teams are made up of four or five students who, in terms of academic standing, sex, and race or ethnicity, represent a cross-section of the class. The team's primary responsibility is to get each member ready to do well on the tests. The team meets to review worksheets or the subject after the teacher has finished.

3) Quizzes.

The tests are designed to evaluate the knowledge that students have learned during in-class presentations and team training. During the quizzes, students are not allowed to assist one another.

4) Scoring Individual Improvement.

Students also earn an improvement score each week, which shows how well they are doing in comparison to their previous performance level.

5) Team Appreciation.

Teams are given recognition for the total of their team members' improvement scores each week.

C. Sekolah TOEIC

The Sekolah TOEIC concept adapts the Sekolah TOEFL concept created by Budi Waluyo. Sekolah TOEFL facilitates those who want to study TOEFL but are constrained by time and cost.

[10] found that the teaching-learning process at the Sekolah TOEFL are: student participation and online learning content. It uses LMS (Learning management System) as its online learning system. The LMS at Sekolah TOEFL includes the following components: uploading and sharing materials, forums and chats, and quizzes. However, there are some difficulties experienced by students: to communicate directly with tutors, to download video materials with poor internet connection.

As a result, the steps of Cooperative Learning in Sekolah TOEIC

1) The instructor invites students into a class group on WhatsApp. Beside WhatsApp class group, the students also have their own WhatsApp group assigned by the instructor, consisting of 4 students who have various abilities (the ability data is taken from the results of the pretest)

2) instructors create LMS (Learning Management System) accounts. LMS used are zoom and google classroom. The instructors schedule the zoom class. The instructors then present the materials via zoom and do some discussions about the topic discussed. Students learn from instructor's explanation and are asked to actively involved in discussion. For materials and quizzes, google classroom are used. Students are given one handbook along with the exercises.

3) Each group is given a group task or Questions of the Day (QOTD) related to the TOEIC material and must be done by every member of the group. Members who have completed the task is expected to be able to explain it to other members until all members in the group understand the material. Here, cooperative learning takes place.

4) The lecturer gives TOEIC practice questions that are done by individuals related to the TOEIC material that have been studied previously. At this stage, each group member may not help each other. They have to work on the TOEIC questions individually.

5) The lecturer combined the individual scores of group members to be group score. the groups which get the highest total score are the best group. The lecturer evaluates the teaching and learning activities that have been implemented and conclude the learning material.

II. Research Methodology

C. Research Design

This research was conducted through Classroom Action Research (CAR) design as suitable method. The researcher

used this method to solve the problems in his classroom. It can also help the researcher to improve his teaching in his own classroom.

Action Research is a process in which educators examine their own practice systematically and carefully using the techniques of research [5]. It involves four broad phases in a research process that forms a continuing cycle or spiral of research and action:

- 1) Planning: a problem or issue is identified and a plan of action is developed in order to bring about improvements in specific areas of the research context;
- 2) Action: the plan is put into action over an agreed period of time;
- 3) Observation: the effects of the action are observed and data are collected;
- 4) Reflection: the effects of the action are evaluated and become the basis for further cycles of research [6]

D. Participants

The participants of the research were 24 students of Language Department of State Polytechnic of Bengkalis in academic year 2021/2022.

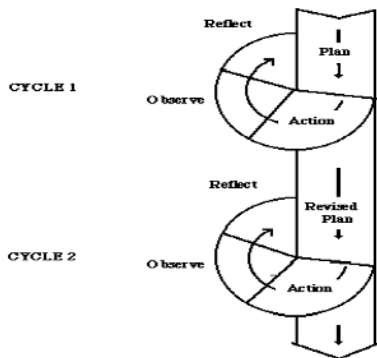
E. Instrumentation

In this research, The TOEIC test was used by the researcher to gather data for this study. There were 200 questions on the exam. It is used to assess students' TOEIC performance. The multiple-choice test was conducted at the end of every cycle.

F. Procedure of the research

The research was conducted in two cycles and four steps for each as stated by [6]. They were planning, action, observation and reflection.

Figure 1. The procedures of the research are figured out as follows;



(Kemmis and Taggart, 1988: 11)

E. Technique of Collecting and Analyzing the Data

The TOEIC test was utilized by the researcher to get the data. The assessment was used to determine whether the STAD approach could raise students' TOEIC scores. In order to analyze the test data for this research's results, the researcher used mean score quantitative analysis. The data are examined using the procedure below to determine the mean score.

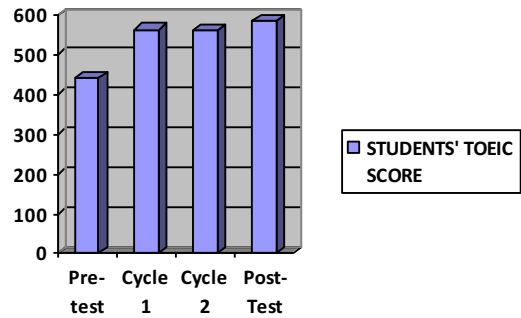
$$\bar{x} = \sqrt{\frac{\sum x}{n}} \quad \text{and} \quad y = \sqrt{\frac{\sum y}{n}}$$

These are to find the average TOEIC score in the pretest and posttest, in which:

x is the students' score of pretest
 \bar{x} is the students' average score of pretest
 y is the students' score of posttest
 \bar{y} is the students' average of posttest
 n is the number of the students

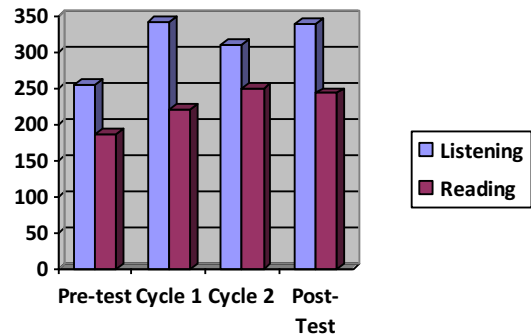
II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The extent to which STAD method can improve students' TOEIC score



Graph 1. The comparison between Students' Average Score of TOEIC Test in Cycle I and Cycle II

The results of the research data analysis show the average score gained by the students. The average score of TOEIC pretests was 442, After having cycle 1, the score was significantly improved up to 562,6. However there was a slight decline about 2 points in cycle 2, finally after whole treatments conducted the students' average final score was 583,4. The data indicated that the average score of students' TOEIC has improved above the target score for the requirement of IISMAVO.



Graph 2. Improvement of students' TOEIC Score for each aspect
 The graphs above show that cycle one and cycle two of cooperative learning resulted in higher average TOEIC test scores for the students than cycle one and cycle two of STAD technique. Between cycle one

and cycle two, there was a noticeable improvement. It implied that the technique might enhance pupils' TOEIC test results.

The research's conclusions are consistent with those of [7], [3], and [9]. Cooperative learning can raise students' TOEIC scores, motivation to attend class and actively participate in discussions [7], participants made good progress [3], and it is successful in raising TOEFL-like scores for students [9].

Related to Sekolah TOEIC Program, it is similar to [11]. She found that there was an increase in students' TOEFL scores after attending Sekolah TOEFL lessons for six months. This can be seen from the students' scores on posttest was higher than the pretest. In the pretest 8,712 while in the posttest it increased by 9,765 with the increase value starting from 10 to 85 points.

III. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Cooperative learning is an effective strategy to improve students' TOEIC score. the average score of the students' TOEIC test after using method in cycle one and two were better than before applying STAD method. There was a significant improvement from cycle one up to cycle two. The average score of students' TOEIC score before applying STAD method was 442 then it increased to 562,6 in the cycle 1 yet it slightly decreased to 560,4 in the cycle 2 and became 583,4 in the post-test. It meant that STAD method could improve the students' TOEIC test. Applying cooperative in Sekolah TOEIC program is a smart solution to solve the students' English proficiency problem.

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