Effectiveness Of TOEIC-Based English Correspondence Learning Model Toward Students' English Competence

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Abstract. This research was aimed at developing a learning model that is applicable and effective for teaching TOEIC-Based English Correspondence at Accounting department, Bali State Polytechnic so that students' English proficiency, especially in the aspects of Reading and Grammar can be increased reflected by students' TOEIC Score. English Correspondence is one of the subjects given to students of the Accounting Department in semester 4 and was designed in accordance with the curriculum applied. The topics provide students a lot of time to practice their English both orally and written, especially those related to correspondence. This study is qualitative research conducted through Class-Action Research at class IVF Accounting Managerial, Accounting department, Bali State Polytechnic consisting of 31 students and was planned in two (2) cycles, two (2) meetings each. Authentic Reading Section Pre-test of TOEIC was given first to students to know their TOEIC score in Reading Section. The students' answer sheets were then tabulated, analyzed, and evaluated by which a lesson Plan for Cycle 1 was developed. The Reading Section TOEIC contents were inserted to the teaching materials. Observation was carried out during the learning process in two meetings. At the end of each cycle, a questioner was distributed to students to find out their perceptions on this learning model. Reflection was conducted by analyzing and evaluating both the results of the questioner and observation. Reflection results were used as feedback to design cycles two. A descriptive analysis carried out to both students' TOEIC scores and students' perception on the model shows that TOEIC-Based English Correspondence Learning Model is able to increase students' TOEIC score and their perceptions on the teaching model is very good. As long as TOEIC score is used to measure the student English Competence, the result of this study has very positive implications. Implementing this model will save time and costs as there is no need to hold 'TOEIC-Preparation Test' for a large number of students which is relatively time consuming and expensive.

Keywords: Learning Model, English Correspondence, TOEIC Test, Classroom Research

1. Introduction

One indicator of the success of learning English is communicative competence, namely one's ability to use the target language well. Communicative competence includes

several components, such as grammatical competence, pragmatic competence, discourse, strategy, and organizational competence {1} Hymes, 1972; {2} Canale, 1983; {3} Bachman, 1990; {4} Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrel, 1995. The higher the level of communicative competence of students, the more competent they are considered to be in English. Pragmatic competence is divided into two, that is pragma-linguistic abilities (mastery of English grammar) and socio-pragmatics (use of English according to the context) {5} Leech, 1983. The negligence of pragmatic competence, especially socio-pragmatics, in English results in: (1) the English used becomes unnatural; (2) it might trigger misinterpretation in communicating with native speakers, (3) communication breakdown occurs and (4) can cause failure in standard English tests such as TOEFL and TOEIC.

Bali State Polytechnic (PNB) is a higher education institution in the vocational field that prioritizes practice rather than theory. Learning process at PNB applies a pattern of practice according to industry demands (60%-70%) and theory (30%-40%) so that graduates are expected to be able to fill industry needs both domestically and abroad. Bali State Polytechnic starting from 2022 has decided the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) as a means of measuring student English competence. This policy is very relevant to one of the visions of the PNB institution, namely to produce internationally competitive graduates. TOEIC is specifically designed to measure the everyday English skills of people working in an international environment. The TOEIC test results of PNB graduates in 2022 was not good. This is due to the fact that they were not so familiar with the test model. Besides that, TOEIC learning at the Bali State Polytechnic is currently experiencing difficulties due to the difficulty in inserting TOEIC contents into English materials that have been designed according to the curriculum. Learning English at Polytechnic is Vocational English which emphasizes the ability to communicate and write actively and is not at all related to TOEIC learning.

One of the Study Programs at Accounting Department PNB is the D4 Accounting Managerial Study Program. In this Study Program, English subjects are given to students for six semesters from semester one until semester six. It consists of English 1, English 2, English 3, English Correspondence, Accounting English 1 and Accounting English 2. Each subjects have two credits and is given once a week, 2x50 minutes each. The English learning process applies communicative approach that emphasizes on the aspect of communication. Students are taught and trained to be able to speak English actively both written and orally. The topics taught are 'Functional'. As in English Correspondence Subject which is taught in semester IV has seven topics, those are: Inquiry letter, Reply to Inquiry, Sales letter, Placing Order, Handling Order, Complaint letter and Handling Complaint. Grammar and Reading Comprehension aspects are not taught specifically or explicitly. It is quite reasonable that students' TOEIC test score was unsatisfactory as the questions in TOEIC Test, especially in Reading Section, require a good understanding on Grammar and Reading Comprehension.

This TOEIC-Based English Correspondence Learning Model is one of the solutions to solve this problem. This model was designed by introducing TOEIC and inserting TOEIC contents, especially Reading Section materials, into the existing topics. As this Classroom Action research was designed for only two cycles, two meetings each, only two topics were chosen, namely Sales Letters and Complaint Letters. The selection of this topic was based on availability and the suitability of the teaching schedule in the

selected class. This model is expected to improve students' English language skills, especially in the aspects of Reading and Grammar so that their TOEIC test score increase.

2.   Literature Reviews

TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) is an English proficiency test for people whose native language is not English. This test is specifically designed to measure English proficiency in an international work environment. TOEIC score shows how well a person communicates using English in business, commerce and industry. The TOEIC test consists of two parts, namely the Listening Section (45 minutes) and the Reading Section (75 minutes), each consisting of 100 questions. Especially for the Reading Section, the questions consist of: Incomplete Sentences 30 questions, Text Completion 16 questions, Reading Comprehension, single passage 29 questions and double passage 25 questions. The TOEIC score is determined by converting the correct answers for each section to a standardized score conversion table and then adding them up so that the highest score is 990 and the lowest score is 10. {6} ETS TOEIC (2015)".

Classroom action research is a controlled investigative process that is recyclable and self-reflective in nature. It aims at improving systems, work methods, processes, content, competencies or situations. Classroom action research has three main characteristics, namely: reflective, collaborative and reflective inquiry. (Raka Joni in {7} Tantra, 2004:7). Classroom action research is generally intended to: 1) improve and increase the quality of learning, 2) develop and encourage lecturers to be more proactive in finding out solutions of learning problems, 3) grow and increase the lecturer productivity, especially in finding solutions of learning problems in higher education context, and 4) improve lecturer-student collaboration in solving learning problems.

Several studies on TOEIC-based learning have been carried out by many people. {8}Astawa Manik et al. in the e-Journal of the Postgraduate Program, University of Education, Ganesha (2013) examined the effect of TOEIC content-based English learning on English achievement in terms of linguistic intelligence. The results of the study showed that learning based on TOEIC contents in terms of linguistic intelligence influenced student achievement. {9} Alexander Darmawan etal.in the Electro Nuceal journal (2022) developed an android-based application in the form of TOEIC learning media that students can use anywhere to improve their English skills. {10} Juliana et al in the Independent Society Journal (2021) provides TOEIC training through the delivery of material, discussions, and simulations of the TOEIC test to 20 teachers of Harapan 3 High School, Deli Serdang. The results of the activity showed an increase in teacher knowledge and competence on the TOEIC test.

The success of the TOEIC test training to increase understanding of TOEIC, implementing appropriate strategies in taking the TOEIC test, and students' English language skills was also reported by {11}Alfi Miqawati et al in the Progressive Community Service Journal (2021). Meanwhile {12} Endang Fauziati (2016) in the Humanities Research Journal examined a number of aspects related to the items on the TOEIC test such as the pattern of questions on Completion and Error Recognition questions on TOEIC Reading, reading context and question patterns on comprehension questions TOEIC Reading, and the frequency of each type of question in the text comprehension questions on Reading. The results of the study concluded that the

linguistic components asked in the Completion and Error recognition sections included Vocabulary, Class of words, verbs tense, Determiner, conjunction, degree of comparison, and conditional sentence. The reading context on Reading Comprehension items includes Business, Manufacturing, Business and Finance, offices, personnel, purchasing, housing/corporate property, travel, dining out, entertainment, and health. The pattern of questions in Reading includes the main ideas and appropriate alternative titles, explicit and implied information in the text, and the purpose of writing. Furthermore, it was concluded that success in the TOEIC test is largely determined by mastery of vocab.

From the several studies above, it can be seen that the study of TOEIC is something interesting to do and can be divided into two types of studies, namely the first is in the form of studies or research conducted to find out the effectiveness of learning based on TOEIC contents in terms of linguistic intelligence and other studies analyze questions on the TOEC test. Second, this is more commonly found, in the form of community service activities in the form of providing TOEIC test training.

The present Study is quite different with the previous ones as it focused on developing learning model by inserting TOEIC-content, Grammar and Reading aspects into the existing topics that has been designed according to the curriculum so that it does not require special time to provide students with TOEIC-preparation test.

3.   Method

This research is qualitative research with a classroom action research design that aims to develop a TOEIC-Based English Correspondence Learning Model to improve students' English proficiency which is reflected in their increased TOEIC scores. This TOEIC-Based English Correspondence learning model was designed to be implemented in class IVF D4 Accounting Managerial Study Program, Department of Accounting at the Bali State Polytechnic which consists of 31 students. This classroom action research was conducted in two cycles, each cycle was executed in two meetings (2 x 100 minutes). The research was started by giving a Pre-test, Authentic TOEIC Test, especially the Reading Section to know students prior TOEIC test score. The students' responses were tabulated first and then analyzed to identify students' problems and difficulties in answering the test. The analysis results were then used as the basis to plan cycle 1 learning. The first step in planning this cycle 1 learning was designing a TOEIC-based English Correspondence Lesson Plan with the topic of Sales Letters. The Lesson-Plan was designed by inserting TOEIC contents into the existing Sales Letter materials. This Lesson Plan was validated first and then implemented. During implementation, continuous observation was carried out to identify obstacles and problems occurred and then followed by reflection. At the end of cycle 1, questionnaires were distributed to students to find out students' perceptions on the learning model. The results of both observation during the implementation and reflection were then used as the basis to plan cycle 2 learning. As in cycle 1, a TOEIC-Based English Correspondence Lesson Plan with the topic of Complaint Letter was designed first, and then validated. This Lesson Plan was then implemented, observed, and ends with a Reflection activity. At the end of cycle 2, questionnaires were also distributed to students to find out students' perceptions on the learning model. Finally, a Post-test, Authentic TOEIC Test, especially the Reading Section was given to students. The effectiveness of the TOEIC-Based Correspondence English Learning

Model was obtained by comparing the results of the Pre-test with the Post-test. The performance indicator used was an increase in students' TOEIC scores. In addition, student perceptions on this TOEIC-Based English Correspondence Learning Model was assessed using a 4-level Likert scale. The collected data were then tabulated, and analyzed using descriptive qualitative techniques. Performance indicators for the quality of learning and student perceptions are at least good.

4.   Discussion

Pre-test results showed that the correct answers of the thirty-one (31) students who took the test were 1185 (average 38.23). This means that a student is only able to answer 38.23 correctly out of 100 questions. After being converted to a table, the correct answers are in the range of 36 – 40 and the TOEIC scores are in the range of 120 – 170. The results of direct observation and questioning of students show that this type of TOEIC test is still new to them. Analysis of student answers also showed that there were some problems or difficulties in answering these questions including: on Grammar aspects such as Sentence Structure, S+P+O especially Passive Voice, distinguishing Noun Phrase – Past Participle, recognizing Subject from complex sentences, using relative pronouns: that, which, who, use of 'to infinitive' and 'Gerund', Words forms, phrasal Verbs, Vocab in context, Parts of Speech, comprehending the main idea of a text, answering for 'NOT' questions, and strategies to manage time as the time allocated is limited. These problems were prioritized to be discussed and practiced during the implementation of first and second cycles.

The main obstacle faced during the learning process was the very limited time. Apart from discussing the existing materials on each topic (Sales and Complaint letters), TOEIC contents, especially the Reading section that has been inserted in the Lesson Plan, has to be intensively analyzed, discussed and practiced. That's why the discussion of teaching materials regarding Sales Letters and Complaint Letters, besides discussing concepts and 'how to write' the letters, is focused on points that are closely related to the problems students faced when working on the Pre-test, especially when discussing 'Language used' (Grammar and Vocab), Understanding the contents of the Letters (getting to know main ideas and details as well as vocab in context) by providing examples of relevant letters. Furthermore, students are given homework in the form of: one, Practice writing letters, Sales and Complaint letters to be presented and discussed at the next meeting and two, Hand Out to be read for material enrichment. The discussion on the TOEIC materials inserted in the Lesson Plan was carried out intensively by discussing all the questions given in the Pre-test.

The learning process of cycle one and cycle two ran well. Observations made during the learning process show that students were very enthusiastic and motivated to take part in learning. This was inseparable from the learning method used, in addition to interesting teaching materials, students were motivated to be active, get involved in every discussion of the material. Discussion of the questions on the TOEIC test also became easier and smoother because basically they have already got these materials from semester one to semester 3, but not explicitly or specifically. The success of this Learning Model was demonstrated by an increase in students' 'Correct' answers for the Post-test by 43%, namely from 1185 (average 38.23) in the range 36 - 40 to 1693 (average 54.61). and is in the range 51 – 55. Meanwhile, student TOEIC scores increased by 62%, namely from the range 120 – 170 to the range 210-260. Besides

that, student perceptions on the TOEIC-Based English Correspondence Learning Model were very positive. This is shown by the results of the questionnaires distributed to students.

5.   Conclusion

Based on the discussion above and the results of the analysis it can be concluded that the TOEIC-Based English Correspondence Learning Model can improve students' English language skills which is reflected by an increase in their TOEIC scores by 62% particularly in Reading Section. Besides that, students' perception on this Learning Model was very positive. These positive results encouraged us to implement this Model to every topic in the English Correspondence subject and even encourage other lecturers to apply this Learning Model to all English subjects which are taught at Accounting Department, Bali State Polytechnic.

6.   Acknowledgment

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