

## **TMS-Based TOEFL Training and Try-Out (TOEFL Strategy Module) for 2019 TMT Lecturers at Ambon State Polytechnic to Get Lecturer Certification**

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### **ABSTRACT**

One of the requirements to pass the lecturer certification exam is to attach a TOEFL score. TOEFL itself is an abbreviation of Test of English as a Foreign Language which is used to measure how far a person's English ability is. In the various findings and field observations made, almost all lecturers who will carry out the 2019 TMT lecturer certification at the Ambon State Polytechnic have the same difficulties when they want to face the TOEFL test. Therefore, the Ambon State Polytechnic Community Service Team took the initiative to conduct TOEFL training activities for TMT 2019 lecturers so that they could overcome their difficulties on the TOEFL test by using modules compiled by the team. The results of this service activity show that the English language skills possessed by the lecturers have increased after the training. This can be seen from their pre-test and post-test scores. It is hoped that after going through this activity, they can test their abilities by carrying out the TOEFL test and can penetrate lecturer certification.

**Keywords :** TOEFL, Strategy Module, Lecturer Certification

### **INTRODUCTION**

Today, the use of English as a global language is needed as an obligation both in the world of education and in the world of work. At the primary and secondary education levels, English is included in the learning curriculum, while at the tertiary level, English must be taken in certain semesters as a general course. It doesn't stop there, every university is competing to establish a Language Center Center as a forum to provide English language training both to students, staff, lecturers and even outsiders who want to deepen their English skills. In the world of work, English is a must-have requirement. applicants when you want to apply for a job in a company. This must be proven by the latest TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) certificate from an institution that has been validated and recognized. At certain universities, certificates of English proficiency such as TOIEC, TOEFL, IELTS issued by the language hall are required for students who will carry out graduation.

TOEFL stands for Test of English as a Foreign Language. According to Zuhryana, D (2018) TOEFL is a test used to measure English proficiency in countries where English is a foreign language. There are three things you need to know about the TOEFL, namely what is the meaning of TOEFL, for whom the TOEFL is held, what is the purpose of the TOEFL test. First, the TOEFL (Test of English as Foreign language) is a test designed to measure English language skills for non-English speakers. According to Pyle (2001) TOEFL is a test designed to measure whether non-English language students have a good enough ability in English to be able to follow the learning process in a country that uses English as a medium of communication.

Various studies related to the TOEFL challenge have been carried out several times by various groups. Some of them focus on the student's point of view in taking the test or preparing for the TOEFL test program. Halim and Ardiningtyas (2018) conducted a study that discussed the difficulties faced by students in answering the TOEFL test questions. They revealed that most of the students had difficulty in overcoming the test because most of them had low level of

language skills, lack of practice, little motivation and other differences in terms of language from other students. All the challenges faced by the students will be related to the teacher's experience in teaching the TOEFL. In order to build the competence of English teachers, Mastering teaching materials is mandatory before starting to teach students because it is very important in the TOEFL test, especially skills in genre-based texts (Mahfud, 2011). In addition, Permata and Hadiani (2018) also revealed that the application of training for English language skills can play an important role in developing the language skills of scholarship recipients.

In the TOEFL, of course, test takers or better known as people who take the TOEFL test will be faced with a variety of questions that will test listening comprehension, sentence understanding (written and structure expression) and the ability to understand a text (reading comprehension). Mahmud, M. (2014) The above description is the basis why TOEFL is considered an internationally applicable test, according to (Educational Testing Service, 2009) more than 180 countries and 22 million people have passed the TOEFL test to measure their English language skills.

Second, TOEFL is marketed or intended for those whose English is not their mother tongue. This is interpreted as English is not the native or native language of the speaker. This is also the basis for why the TOEFL has become a valid and certified tool to measure the ability of the English speaker. In Indonesia, the TOEFL test is officially administered by the English Language System (ELS). In addition, many campuses or universities have established language centers that collaborate with ELS so that it is easier for students to take the TOEFL test. Usually the TOEFL test becomes a main work agenda that must be carried out by language halls for students.

The third is the purpose and benefits of the TOEFL test. TOEFL briefly aims to measure a person's English proficiency. According to Pyle (2001) TOEFL is a test designed to measure whether non-English language students have good enough proficiency in English to be able to follow the learning process in countries that use English as a medium of communication. In the TOEFL, of course, test takers or better known as those who take the TOEFL test will be faced with a variety of questions that will test listening comprehension, sentence understanding (written and structure expression) and the ability to understand a text (reading comprehension). TOEFL certificate with predetermined score criteria, namely Elementary Level: 310 to 420, Lower Intermediate Level (Low Intermediate): 420 to 480, High Intermediate Level (High Intermediate): 480 to 520, Advanced Level (Advanced): 525 to 677. This category serves as a reference and description of a person's English ability based on the ETS TOEFL IPT (2016). Many campuses provide requirements for students to take the TOEFL test with a score above 500 as a graduation requirement.

In Indonesia, especially for lecturers, TOEFL is a mandatory requirement to pass the lecturer certification test (serdos). Many of them have difficulties in doing the TOEFL questions on the grounds that English is not their field of knowledge. TOEFL as one of the requirements to pass the certification is listed in the Serdos Guidebook (2019:1), namely the ability to speak English of a lecturer based on the results of tests organized by various English language institutions that have received wide recognition, especially by international language institutions, such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), International English Language Test System (IELTS), or The Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia (TEFLIN).

Ambon State Polytechnic is one of the State Universities that currently has several lecturers who will soon take the lecturer certification test. From these facts, there are several problems that occur in the field. First, according to staffing data from February 2021, there are 21 2019 TMT lecturers who will apply for certification. This became the full attention of the institution so that the 2019 TMT Polnam lecturer group was formed which was guided by 1 mentor from staffing as an information center related to serdos and data. The second problem is the number of complaints from TMT 2019 lecturers who will take the TOEFL test. They have

difficulty in doing the TOEFL questions on the grounds that English is not their field of knowledge.

### IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This community service activity is held offline and online. Offline and online activities are combined in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The intended offline activities are activities that are directly carried out without the help of an internet connection between the participants and the TOEFL instructor, while during the time it is carried out due to the pandemic, the training is carried out through online meetings. The participants of this community service activity are the 2019 TMT lecturers who will take part in the Ambon State Polytechnic lecturer certification process. The materials presented in this training activity are Listening, Structure and Written Expression and Reading; which material is the core of the TOEFL test that participants will face.

The stages of this community service activity are: 1) Conduct pre-test or TOEFL exam simulation to all participants in order to get an initial evaluation value or scientific data to what extent the level of mastery of TOEFL material and classify the most difficult skills in TOEFL questions. 2) Phase I training is an explanation of the strategy for discussing TOEFL questions. Training 1 includes a general explanation of what the TOEFL is, the type of TOEFL test and the procedure for implementing it. Furthermore, in stage 1 training, listening comprehension discussion strategies will be given by sharing strategies for answering short conversations, long conversations and monologues. 3) Phase II training is a strategy for mastering the structure material which is of course short without having to memorize and master written expressions. 4) Phase III training, namely discussing reading questions and eliminating the paradigm that low vocabulary mastery is not the reason for having a low TOEFL score, especially in the reading comprehension section. 5) Provide Post-test which is a valid evaluation measurement tool to see the improvement and comparison of TOEFL scores (Pre-test vs Post-test).

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### TOEFL Pre-test Results

Below are the results of the training with the modules given to test-takers. First, a pre-test or TOEFL exam simulation is carried out for all participants in order to get an initial evaluation value or scientific data on the extent of mastery of TOEFL material and classifying the most difficult skills in TOEFL questions.

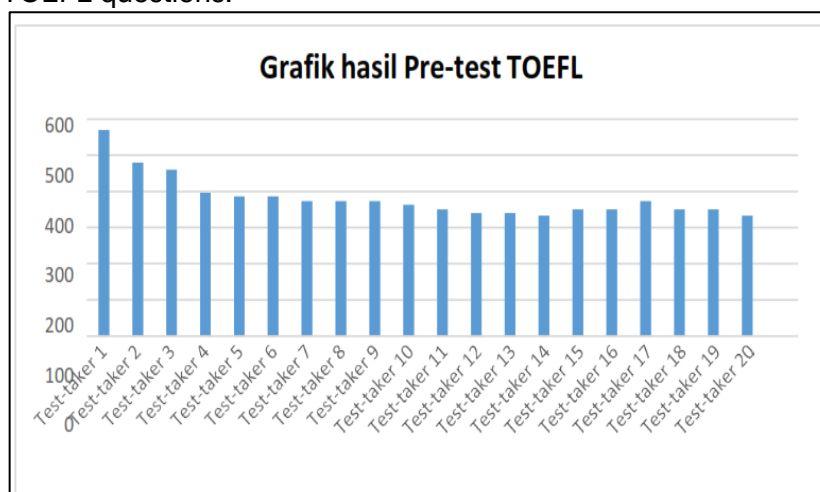
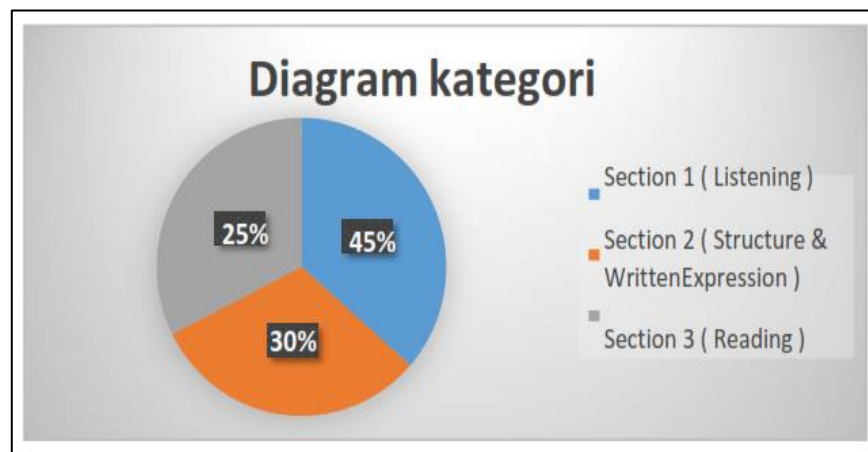


Figure 1. TOEFL pre-test results graph

From the graph above, it can be seen that there were 20 TOEFL pre-test participants who were conducted on May 10, 2021. If you look at the scores, there were only three TOEFL test participants who met the standards above 450. While the other seventeen participants were

below the score of 450. The pre-test results This test is archived and distributed to participants as an initial description of the TOEFL test that is carried out.



**Figure 2.** TOEFL section difficulty level

The category and difficulty level of the TOEFL can be seen from Figure 2 above that the sections that are considered difficult by the trainees are Listening, then Structure and Written Expression, then Reading section.

**Table. 1.** TOEFL section difficulty level

No	Results	Frequency	Percentage
1	Listening Comprehension	9	45%
2	Structure and Written Expression	6	30%
3	Reading Comprehension	5	25%
Total		20	100%

The following is the difficulty level of the 3 TOEFL sections from the TOEFL Pre-Test results conducted at the Ambon State Polytechnic when viewed from the data in table 1 and the Pie diagram. Based on the data, 9 out of 20 test takers or almost half of the participants chose that Listening Comprehension was the most difficult part of the TOEFL question, which was 45%. Furthermore, structure and written expression are the second hardest part of the TOEFL question with 30%, and the part that is considered the easiest is reading comprehension with 25%.

### Difficulty level in TOEFL

Furthermore, in the table below, there are several reasons that make listening comprehension the most difficult problem. This data was obtained from the results of questionnaires and interviews during the TOEFL training.

**Table. 2.** Difficulties encountered in listening comprehension

No	Difficulty	Agree	Do not agree
		Frequency	Frequency
1	Sound system is bad	11 (55%)	9 (45%)
2	Lack of grammar understanding	16 (80%)	4 (20%)
3	Lack of vocabulary	16 (80%)	4 (20%)
4	Lack of idiom knowing	18 (90%)	2 (10%)
5	Don't get the implied meaning	18 (90%)	2 (10%)
6	Don't know the accent of speaker	14 (70%)	6 (30%)
7	Topic is not appropriate for	13 (65%)	7 (35%)

	students	
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Based on the data above, the researcher concludes that the difficulties faced by test takers in the TOEFL questions. There are 2 main reasons for the difficulty level of the TOEFL. The first reason is "Lack of idiom knowing" and the second "Don't get the implied meaning". There were 18 (90%) of the 20 test takers who considered "Lack of idiom knowing" to be the most difficult obstacle in listening comprehension. Likewise with "Don't get the implied meaning" 18 (90%) of the 20 test takers thought they could not understand the meaning of what they heard in listening comprehension. "Lack of grammar understanding" and "Lack of vocabulary" as many as 16 (80%) of the 20 test takers who had difficulties related to grammar and vocabulary were heard from 50 questions contained in listening comprehension. Furthermore, 70% or 14 of the 20 test takers have difficulty in "Don't know the accent of speaker". The test-takers could not understand the speaking accents of the speakers or the narrator in the TOEFL questions so that the test-takers could not answer the questions. When viewed from the topic of discussion "Topic is not appropriate for students" there are 13 (65%) of the test-takers who feel the topic given is very difficult because the test-takers feel that the topic is foreign. In the last position "Sound system is bad" the problem is related to equipment when the TOEFL test is carried out. When viewed from the topic of discussion "Topic is not appropriate for students" there are 13 (65%) of the test-takers who feel the topic given is very difficult because the test-takers feel that the topic is foreign. In the last position "Sound system is bad" the problem is related to equipment when the TOEFL test is carried out. When viewed from the topic of discussion "Topic is not appropriate for students" there are 13 (65%) of the test-takers who feel the topic given is very difficult because the test-takers feel that the topic is foreign. In the last position "Sound system is bad" the problem is related to equipment when the TOEFL test is carried out.

The 1st training carried out to provide solutions to the difficulties encountered includes a general explanation of what TOEFL is, types of TOEFL test and implementation procedures. Furthermore, in phase 1 training, listening comprehension discussion strategies will be given by sharing strategies for answering short conversations, long conversations and monologues with strategies for solving the 50 existing listening questions. For Structure and Written Expression the data obtained can be seen in the table below.

**Table 3.** Difficulties encountered in Structure and Written Expression

No	Difficulty	Agree	Do not agree
		Frequency	Frequency
1	Part A	17	85%
2	Part B	3	15%
Total		20	100%

The table above shows the challenges of participants in Structure and Written Expression. Most of the test-takers said that they got more challenges because of the grammar. They do not understand grammar. That's the reason they get

challenges in answering the TOEFL Structure and Written Expression questions. This part is evident from the data in the table above, where as many as 17 out of 20 test takers (85%) think that the reason they get a challenge in answering this section is because of grammar. The most difficult Structure and Written Expression part for test-takers is part A which is about written expressions that we have to identify grammatical errors in sentences. Furthermore, there were 3 out of 20 participants who agreed that part B was the most difficult when it came to error analysis.

Furthermore, training stages 2 and 3 were carried out to provide strategies in terms of Structure and Written Expression in accordance with the results of the questionnaire covering several more specific sections, namely; main verb, subject and verb agreement, infinitive, -ing form, conditional, past custom, auxiliary verb, comparison, preposition, correlative conjunction, and negative emphasis.

Part The last of the TOEFL questions is reading comprehension. Based on the initial data this section is the easiest section with 25% compared to other sections. Only 5 people think reading comprehension is the most difficult part with difficulty as shown in the following table.

**Table 4.** Difficulties encountered in Reading Comprehension

No	Difficulty	Easy	Difficult
		Frequency	Frequency
1	Play ideas	12 (60%)	8 (40%)
2	Synonym	12 (60%)	8 (40%)
3	References	17 (85%)	3 (15%)
4	restatement	18 (90%)	2 (10%)
5	Inferences	10 (50%)	10 (50%)
6	Opinion	14 (70%)	6 (30%)
7	True, False, Exception and Mentioned words	16 (80%)	4 (20%)

Based on the data above, it can be concluded that for reading comprehension the hardest part is when the questions are related to restatement with 90%. While the easiest part lies in Inferences, which is 50%. In the reading section, training 4 is carried out with the topics of main ideas, synonyms, references, restatements, inferences, opinions and true, false, exceptions and mentioned words.

Besides that, the background knowledge possessed by test takers will greatly influence in solving all the difficulties encountered in answering reading questions. This is because reading questions are generally related to technology, literature, politics, economics, culture, education and others. In the end, test takers must have broad insight and follow world developments related to the above topics.

#### **TOEFL Post-test Results**

The TOEFL post-test was conducted to see the extent to which the test takers' TOEFL scores had increased after receiving training through the interactive modules provided.

**Table 5.** TOEFL Post-test results compared to Pre-test results

No	Name	Post-test Score	Pre-test Score
1	Test taker 1	580	570
2	Test taker 2	525	480
3	Test taker 3	480	460
4	Test taker 4	527	396
5	Test taker 5	500	386
6	Test taker 6	493	386
7	Test taker 7	490	373
8	Test taker 8	487	373
9	Test taker 9	487	373
10	Test taker 10	483	363
11	Test taker 11	477	350
12	Test taker 12	415	340
13	Test taker 13	450	340
14	Test taker 14	450	333
15	Test taker 15	575	350
16	Test taker 16	533	350
17	Test taker 17	450	373

18	Test taker 18	333	350
19	Test taker 19	450	350
20	Test taker 20	373	333

From the table above, it is very clear that the score increases after training with the interactive module. Judging from the 20 test-takers, there are 17 test-takers who passed with grades assessed 450 while at the time of the pre-test only 3 people scored 450. There are test takers whose scores are below the passing limit, namely test takers 12, 18 and 20. Test takers 12, 18, and 20 have the lowest scores for different reasons. Some did not attend training on listening comprehension and reading comprehension, namely the test -takers 18 and 20. Meanwhile, test-takers 12 had problems during the exam with the time of the exam at the same time as other activities which caused test-takers 12 not to take the exam as much as possible. The highest score at the post-test was 580 and the lowest was 333 (test-taker 1 and test-taker 18) compared to the highest score at pre-test was 570 for test-taker 1 and the lowest was 333 for test-taker 20.

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

At the pre-test, there were 17 test takers who scored below 450 while at the post-test only 3 test takers scored below 450. The highest score at the post-test was 580 and the lowest was 333 (test taker 1 and test-taker 18 ) compared to the highest score at pre-test was 570 for test-taker 1 and the lowest was 333 for test-taker 20. At the time of training and the results of the questionnaire it can be concluded that there were 9 out of 20 test takers or almost half of the participants chose that Listening Comprehension is the most difficult part of the TOEF question, which is 45%. Furthermore, structure and written expression are the second hardest part of the TOEFL question with 30%, and the part that is considered the easiest is reading comprehension with 25%. In the end, it can be concluded that the TOEFL training with interactive modules provided a very effective impact, seen from the comparison of TOEFL scores during pre-test and post-test. The author suggests that before taking the TOEFL test, test participants should be able to take part in various exercises and tryouts so that TOEFL results and scores are maximized.

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