

Enhancing English Language Proficiency of SMKS Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Agung Students through TOEIC Coaching

Akhyar Rido

¹English Literature, Faculty of Arts and Education, Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia

e-mail: akhyar@teknokrat.ac.id

Heri Kuswoyo*

²English Literature, Faculty of Arts and Education, Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia

e-mail: hery@teknokrat.ac.id

*Corresponding Author

E. Ngestirosa Endang Woro Kasih

³English Literature, Faculty of Arts and Education, Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia

e-mail: ngestirosa@teknokrat.ac.id

Shavina Lestiani

⁴English Literature, Faculty of Arts and Education, Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia

e-mail: shavinalestiani2402@gmail.com

Rizma Amalia Sa'adah

⁵English Literature, Faculty of Arts and Education, Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia

e-mail: ameliarisma008@gmail.com

Sahat Parulian Prantinus Kaban

⁶English Literature, Faculty of Arts and Education, Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia

e-mail: sahat.tugas@gmail.com

Edho Anggara Doby Putra

⁷English Literature, Faculty of Arts and Education, Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia

e-mail: edho.adp@gmail.com

Abstrak

Di dunia global saat ini, kemahiran berbahasa Inggris telah menjadi hal yang penting untuk keberhasilan akademik dan profesional. Artikel ini berfokus pada peningkatan kemampuan berbahasa Inggris siswa SMKS Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Agung melalui pelatihan TOEIC. Kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berbahasa siswa, terutama dalam pemahaman mendengarkan dan membaca, yang penting untuk keberhasilan dalam bidang vokasi. Kegiatan ini terdiri dari dua sesi yang dilakukan di sekolah, melibatkan 25 siswa dari kelas X hingga XII. Tahapan pelatihan TOEIC mencakup memberikan pemahaman tentang materi TOEIC, latihan soal, menyelenggarakan tes TOEIC, memotivasi siswa, memperbaiki hasil tes, menyediakan sumber latihan, dan mengakui siswa yang berprestasi tinggi. Hasil temuan menunjukkan bahwa kegiatan pelatihan TOEIC secara efektif meningkatkan kemampuan berbahasa siswa, seperti yang terbukti

dengan kemampuan pemahaman mendengarkan dan membaca yang lebih baik. Selain itu, kegiatan ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan keterampilan lunak siswa dan mendapatkan umpan balik positif dari peserta. Temuan ini menekankan pentingnya melakukan kegiatan semacam ini untuk mempersiapkan siswa vokasional untuk kesempatan karier masa depan dan menghadapi pasar kerja global. Upaya yang berkelanjutan dalam menyediakan pelatihan TOEIC dan kegiatan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris menjadi penting untuk memastikan keberhasilan siswa vokasional dalam bidang yang dipilih dan untuk menjembatani kesenjangan bahasa dalam dunia yang terglobalisasi.

Kata Kunci: *Bahasa Inggris, Soft Skill, TOEIC, SMK*

Abstract

In today's globalized world, proficiency in English has become essential for academic and professional success. This paper focuses on enhancing the English language skills of vocational students at SMKS Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Agung through TOEIC training. This community service program aims to improve students' language proficiency, particularly in listening and reading comprehension, which are vital for success in vocational fields. This program consisted of two sessions conducted at the school, involving 25 students from classes X to XII. The stages of the TOEIC training included providing an understanding of TOEIC materials, practice questions, organizing the TOEIC test, motivating students, correcting test results, providing practice resources, and recognizing high-achieving students. The results demonstrated that the TOEIC training activities effectively enhanced students' language skills, as evidenced by their improved listening and reading comprehension abilities. Furthermore, the activities contributed to the development of students' soft skills and received positive feedback from the participants. The findings highlight the importance of conducting such activities to prepare vocational students for future career opportunities and to navigate the global job market. Continued efforts in providing TOEIC training and English learning activities are crucial to ensure the success of vocational students in their chosen fields and to bridge the language gap in a globalized world.

Keywords: *English language, Soft Skills, TOEIC, Vocational School*

How to Cite: Rido, A. et al. 2023. Enhancing English Language Proficiency of SMKS Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Agung Students through TOEIC Coaching. *INCOME: Indonesian Journal of Community Service and Engagement*. Vol. 2 (2): pp. 149-159, <https://doi.org/10.56855/income.v2i2.407>



This is an open access article under the [CC BY](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license.

Introduction

Situation Analysis

In today's globalized world, the ability to communicate effectively in English is essential for academic and professional success. English is widely recognized as a universal language of communication, and it is used in various fields such as business, education, and international relations (Li, 2017). According to Crystal (2003), a renowned linguist, language is a tool for communication. It is not the communication itself. This statement highlights the importance of language proficiency as a means of effective communication. Proficiency in English can lead to increased academic and professional opportunities, as well as better communication with people from different cultures. By this, a successful English spoken and written which functions effectively in professional settings is important in today's globalized and highly competitive world (Al-Issa & Al-Qubtan, 2010; Živković,

2015). Unfortunately, many students in Indonesia, face challenges in improving their English language skills due to various factors such as limited exposure to English in their daily lives and insufficient opportunities for English language practice.

Students who are non-native speakers (NNS) of English may sometimes find difficulties with language as well as with the psychological challenge, and lack of confidence (Kuswoyo et al, 2020; Li, 2017; Nunan, 2003). Furthermore, factors such as limited access to high-quality English language instruction, a lack of exposure to English-speaking environments, and socio-economic barriers can all contribute to lower levels of English proficiency among Indonesian students. This is particularly happened at SMKS Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Agung, a vocational high school in Lampung Province. Despite the school's commitment to providing English language instruction, students often face limited opportunities to practice and develop their English language skills (Biggs, 1996; Brown, 2007; Gardner, 1985). As a result, their performance on standardized English language tests, such as the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), may fall short of their potential.

Solution and Target

The TOEIC is a widely recognized standardized test of English language proficiency that is used by many companies and institutions to assess the English language skills of job applicants, employees, and students (Test of English for International Communication, 2023). The test measures four language skills, namely reading, listening, speaking, and writing, but its main focus is on reading and listening comprehension. It is an important tool for students and professionals who need to demonstrate their English language proficiency for academic or professional purposes. That is, bearing in mind that the focus of vocational high school is to produce graduates who are competent and able to compete in the industrial world, TOEIC competition is an important skill. Therefore, increasing the ability of students in the TOEIC test is a significant instrument. Thus, this community service program aims to map the extent to which students have absorbed the given TOIEC coaching.

Method

The community service was conducted in two meetings at SMKS Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Agung on February 4 and March 1, 2023. The selection of this school was based on the situation of the school which had limited knowledge, abilities and skills in English. The participants in this activity were 25 students ranging from class X to class XII in SMKS Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Agung.

The stages carried out in the TOEIC training at SMKS Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Agung are as follows:

1. Providing an understanding of TOEIC materials, types of TOEIC questions, and tips for answering TOEIC questions to the students.
2. Providing TOEIC practice questions, training the students to answer TOEIC questions, and evaluating the students' answers after they have completed the given TOEIC questions.
3. Organizing the TOEIC test and assisting the students in taking the test.
4. Motivating the students to continue practicing TOEIC questions.
5. Correcting the results of the TOEIC test.
6. Providing TOEIC practice facilities by giving TOEIC pocketbooks to the students.
7. Appreciating the students who achieve the highest scores in the TOEIC test by giving them a tumbler as a reward.

Results and Discussion

The aim of this activity was to enhance the SMKS Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Agung students on their knowledge of both English and TOEIC. Students developed their English knowledge by learning tips and tricks on solving TOEIC listening questions and then conducting TOEIC practices by thoroughly listening to the conversations that were played, analyzing the question that is being asked, and ascertaining the potential right answers. The activity consisted of 20 – 25 students with 2 lecturer and 2 university students as the facilitators.

Activity

TOEIC stands for Test of English for International Communication, and it is a standardized test that measures the English proficiency of non-native English speakers in a professional or work-related context. TOEIC exams serve as a tool for examining the English proficiency of an individual that consists of 200 questions and is categorized into 2 sections: reading (100 questions) and listening (100 questions). According to the Educational Testing Service, the TOEIC Listening and Reading test assesses your English-language listening and reading skills for the workplace. Test questions simulate real-life situations that are relevant to the global workplace. This can be especially beneficial for vocational students in finding future jobs in an international scale.

In this session, students were introduced to the concept of TOEIC such as the meaning, purpose, and importance of TOEIC for individuals are aiming to be in the working industry on an international scale. Facilitators also explained the personal urgency of learning and practicing TOEIC for vocational students as soft skills are essential ability to possess. This activity was divided into 3 sessions: pre-activity, main activity, and post-activity. Pre-activity consisted of students completing TOEIC listening and reading questions through google form as a pretest with the students current understanding of English. Following into the main activity, where facilitators provide tips and tricks in how to solve TOEIC reading and listening questions correctly and efficiently. Once the students had a grasp of the tips and tricks material, students were then in structed to complete the same reading and listening questions on Google Form, as it serves as a measurement of their understanding in comprehending the materials.



Fig. 1 After doing TOEIC practice



Fig. 2 TOEIC Test explanation

After the session, a questionnaire was provided to the students to gather their feedback on the activity. This helped the facilitators to determine the effectiveness of the session and the extent to which the students comprehended the materials. The questionnaire consisted of seven sections, each with seven questions, and the students were required to indicate their level of agreement by selecting one of the following options: 'Disagree', 'Slightly Disagree', 'Slightly Agree', 'Agree', or 'Strongly Agree'. The findings of the questionnaire are outlined below.

Question 1

The given pie chart represents the results of a survey conducted on the perceived benefits of the TOEIC activity among 17 respondents from SMKS Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Agung. The responses were categorized into two options: Agree and Strongly Agree.

Among the respondents, 76.5% voted in favor of the activity, indicating that they found it beneficial. This group comprised those who chose the Agree option. On the other hand, 23.5% of respondents selected the Strongly Agree option, indicating that the rest of the participants had a stronger approval for the activity. It is noteworthy that none of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the activity, and there were no neutral responses. This suggests that the activity was well received by the respondents.

In conclusion, the pie chart shows that a significant proportion of the respondents perceive the activity to be advantageous, with more than three-quarters expressing agreement or strong agreement. The results indicate that the activity is generally perceived as a positive experience by the respondents.

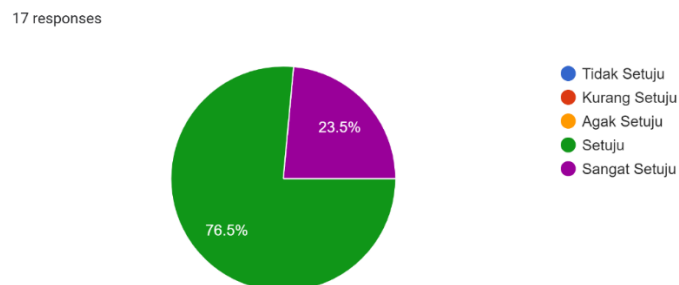


Fig. 3 Pie chart of the survey conducted on the perceived benefits of the TOEIC activity

Question 2

The pie chart represents the results of a survey conducted on the effectiveness of a TOEIC activity in enhancing English language proficiency among 17 respondents. The survey question was, "With this TOEIC activity, I learned about one of the English Proficiency Tests?" The respondents' answers consisted of two parts: Agree and Strongly Agree.

According to the results, 82.4% of the respondents voted in favor of the TOEIC activity, indicating that it was effective in enhancing their knowledge about Test English Proficiency. This group comprised of those who selected the Agree option. Additionally, 17.6% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement, indicating a high level of confidence in the effectiveness of the

activity. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement which suggests that the activity was generally perceived positively by the respondents.

In conclusion, the pie chart shows that a large proportion of the respondents found the TOEIC activity to be beneficial in enhancing their knowledge of Test English Proficiency, with more than four-fifths expressing agreement or strong agreement.

17 responses

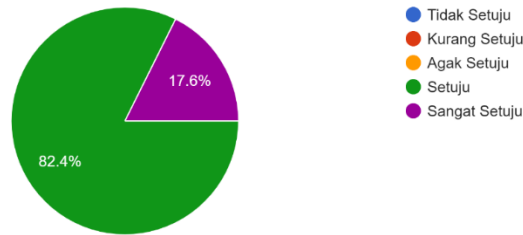


Fig. 4 Pie chart of survey conducted on the effectiveness of a TOEIC activity in enhancing English language proficiency

Question 3

The pie chart below depicts the results of a survey regarding the reaction of the SMKS Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Agung students who participated in the TOEIC activity. The survey question was, "This activity was easy to follow." The responses were classified into three categories: Agree, Strongly Agree, and Kinda Agree.

Based on the findings, the majority of respondents, 88.2%, agreed that the activity was easy to follow. Additionally, 5.9% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement, indicating that the activity was exceptionally easy to understand and follow. Interestingly, another 5.9% of respondents selected the Kinda Agree option, which suggests that they did not find the activity too difficult to follow, but they were not entirely comfortable with it either.

It can be concluded from the pie chart that the majority of respondents found the activity to be easy to follow, with more than four-fifths expressing agreement or strong agreement. Although a small proportion of respondents selected the Slightly Agree option, the results suggest that the activity was overall well-received by the respondents. The low exposure to English may have influenced some respondents' responses.

17 responses

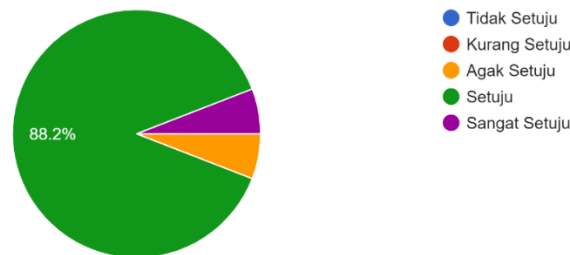


Fig. 4 Pie chart of the survey regarding the reaction of the SMKS Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Agung students who participated in the TOEIC activity

Question 4

The chart below shows the result of the survey question, "I can clearly understand the material activity." The responses consisted of SMKS Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Agung students and were then divided into three categories: Agree, Kinda Agree, and Not Really Agree.

82.4% of the respondents agreed that they could clearly understand the material activity. Additionally, 11.98% of respondents selected the Kinda Agree option, indicating that they found the material activity somewhat understandable. Interestingly, 5.9% of respondents did not really agree with the statement, suggesting that they found the material activity somewhat unclear. It can be seen that none of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. However, it is possible that the respondents' limited exposure to TOEIC or their relatively lower proficiency in English may have contributed to some of the Kinda Agree or Not Really Agree responses.

To summarize, the pie chart shows that the majority of respondents found the material activity to be clear and understandable, with more than four-fifths expressing agreement. Although a small proportion of respondents selected the Slightly Agree or Slightly Disagree options, the overall results suggest that the material activity was generally well-received by the respondents. The limited exposure to TOEIC or relatively lower proficiency in English may have influenced some of the respondents' responses.

17 responses

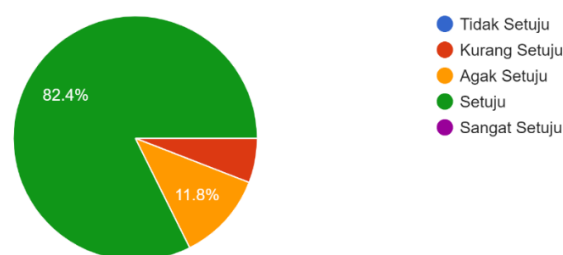


Fig.5 Pie chart of results regarding the respondents that they could clearly understand the material activity.

Question 5

In the survey, the participants were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the practice towards their knowledge of TOEIC. The question asked was, "This activity added to my knowledge about tips on working on the TOEIC Reading and Listening questions." The participants were given five options to choose from, but only three options were selected by the respondents.

Out of the 17 participants who responded, the majority of them, accounting for 88.2%, chose "agree" as their response, which indicated that they found the activity helpful in enhancing their knowledge about the TOEIC Reading and Listening questions. 5.9% of the participants selected "strongly agree," indicating that they believed that the practice significantly increased their knowledge of the TOEIC Reading and Listening questions. The remaining 5.9% of the participants chose "Slightly Agree," which suggests that they found the activity somewhat useful in enhancing their knowledge of the TOEIC Reading and Listening questions. Overall, the majority of the participants felt that the practice was effective in improving their understanding of TOEIC, which indicates that it was a beneficial activity for them.

17 responses

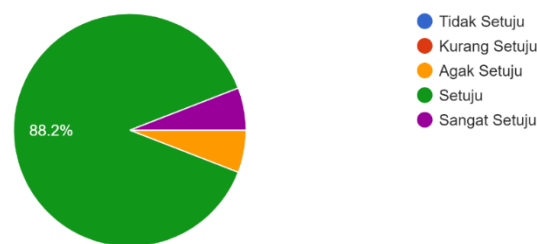


Fig.5 Pie chart of the results of effectiveness of the practice towards their knowledge of TOEIC

Question 6

The 6th survey question aimed to gauge the effectiveness of the activity in enhancing the participants' knowledge of various types of text in reading and listening, particularly in English.

The participants were asked to choose from five options, and out of the 17 respondents, the majority, accounting for 82.4%, selected "agree" as their response. This suggests that the activity helped improve the participants' understanding of various types of texts in reading and listening, particularly in the English language. Furthermore, 11.8% of the participants selected "strongly agree," indicating that they believed that the activity significantly enhanced their knowledge of different types of text in reading and listening. The remaining 5.9% of the participants chose "Slightly Agree," suggesting that they found the activity somewhat useful in enhancing their knowledge of various types of text in reading and listening.

Overall, the majority of the participants believed that the activity was effective in improving their understanding of different text types in reading and listening, particularly in the English language, which indicates that it was a helpful activity for them.

17 responses

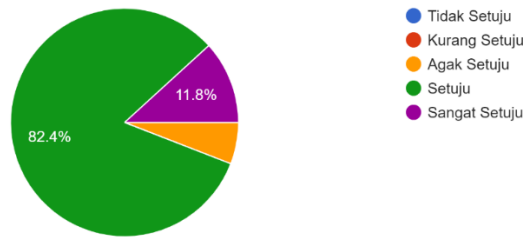


Fig.7 Pie chart of the results of the effectiveness of the activity in enhancing the participants' knowledge

Question 7

The final survey question aimed to determine the relevance of the activity to the activity goal, and participants were asked to choose from five options. Out of the 17 participants who responded, the majority, accounting for 76.5%, selected "agree" as their response, indicating that they believed that the activity was relevant to the activity goal. Moreover, both "Strongly Agree" and "Slightly Agree" received the same percentage of votes from the participants, which amounted to 11.8%. Above all, none of the participants voted for "Disagree" or "Slightly Disagree," indicating that the activity successfully enlightened the students on TOEIC material and was relevant to the activity goal.

Overall, the results indicate that the activity was successful in achieving its intended purpose and was well-received by the participants, who believed that it was relevant to the activity goal. This suggests that the activity was effective in helping the students improve their knowledge and skills related to the TOEIC exam, which can be beneficial for their future academic and career pursuits.

17 responses

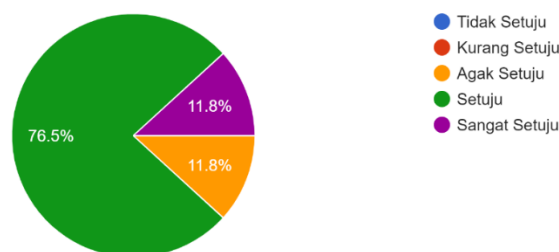


Fig.7 Pie chart of the results of the relevance of the activity to the activity goal

In conclusion, the TOEIC activity was effective in enhancing the English language proficiency of the SMKS Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Agung students. The activity was aimed to provide knowledge in answering and solving TOEIC reading and listening questions efficiently with tips and tricks. The session consisted of three sessions: pre-activity, main activity, and post-activity. The pre-activity involved students completing TOEIC listening and reading questions through a Google Form as a

pretest, while the main activity focused on providing tips and tricks on how to solve TOEIC reading and listening questions correctly and efficiently. The post-activity involved a questionnaire to gather feedback from the students.

The feedback gathered from the students through the questionnaire suggests that the TOEIC activity was generally well-received and effective in enhancing the students' knowledge of English proficiency tests, specifically TOEIC. The majority of the respondents found the activity to be beneficial and easy to follow, and they agreed that the material was clear and understandable. TOEIC is an essential tool that can serve as a stepping stop for individuals who aim to work at an international scale, especially vocational students. Therefore, vocational students are heavily urged to enhance their English skills and understanding. This TOEIC activity offered a chance for learners to improve their English proficiency and gain more knowledge about TOEIC and other similar language proficiency tests. The favorable outcome of the session and the encouraging feedback prove that such activities are highly effective in improving students' skills and getting them ready for their future professions

Conclusion

With globalization becoming a worldwide phenomenon, English has become a tool to connect people from different backgrounds. Countries across the world work together, creating new employments for those who are in the workforce. TOEIC serves as a stepping stone for those individuals who wish to attain a job abroad. However due to the lack of exposure, vocational students in SMKS Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Agung face. Therefore, conducting English learning activities like TOEIC training is essential for enhancing their English skills. By providing the proper training, it will improve students' language skills, particularly in the areas of listening and reading comprehension, which are critical for success in vocational fields such as engineering, hospitality, and aviation.

After conducting various social activities to train vocational students in TOEIC, the findings indicate that these activities are crucial in helping students enhance their language skills, especially in listening and reading comprehension, which are vital for success in their fields. These activities also enable students to improve their soft skills, including communication, which can increase their employability and improve their future prospects. The positive feedback received from the students reinforces the effectiveness of these social activities in preparing students for their future careers. Overall, it is essential to continue providing such activities to help vocational students succeed in their chosen fields and navigate the global job market.

Acknowledgements

The present writers would like to thank Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia for the community service funding and Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat (LPPM) Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia for the administrative support.

References

- Al-Issa, A. S., & Al-Qubtan, K. A. (2010). The significance of English language proficiency in enhancing the career prospects of Saudi graduates. *International Education Studies*, 3(1), 85-92. doi: 10.5539/ies.v3n1p85
- Biggs, J. B. (1996). Enhancing teaching through constructive alignment. *Higher Education*, 32(3), 347-364. doi: 10.1007/BF00138871
- Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (5th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. Edward Arnold.
- Kuswoyo, H., Sujatna, E.T.S., Indrayani, L.M., & Rido, A. (2020). Schematic Structure and Lexico-grammatical Features of Aerospace Engineering English Lectures: A Systemic Functional Linguistic Approach. *Asian EFL Journal* 27 (4.6), 171-203.
- Li, J. (2017). A study on the English language learning strategies employed by Chinese non-English major undergraduate students. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 8(5), 1117-1126. doi: 10.17507/jltr.0805.03
- Nunan, D. (2003). *Practical English language teaching*. McGraw-Hill.
- Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). (2023). Educational Testing Service. Retrieved from <https://www.ets.org/toEIC>
- Živković, M. (2015). English language proficiency and career prospects of students at the University of Niš Faculty of Economics. *Ekonomске teme*, 53(1), 75-86.