



### TOEFL TEACHING STRATEGIES : EFL TEACHERS IMPLEMENTATION

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#### ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to develop the theoretical foundations of the study of TOEFL teaching strategies and methodologies in universities. With a specific objective, a description of knowledge regarding the competency-based TOEFL teaching technique was obtained, followed by the identification of the most appropriate competency-based TOEFL learning model or pattern in higher education. The research approach is qualitative in nature and is assessed in light of a phenomenographic investigation. Three TOEFL teachers at LDC UMP were chosen as subjects for this study, as LDC served as an organizer of TOEFL training and testing in universities. In-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGD), and a review of the literature were used to collect data. The data analysis was carried out thematically in accordance with qualitative research principles. The research concluded that most of the instructors had implemented competency-based TOEFL learning strategies. On average, they provide training according to student competence rather than using the lecturing method. The method used to support this strategy is usually in the form of cooperative learning.

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## 1. Introduction

An English proficiency test is one method of determining success in English. Among the numerous tests of English proficiency, the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is the most widely used and is used to determine a foreign speaker's level of English proficiency (Akmal et al., 2020). Additionally, this test serves as a benchmark for ongoing education both domestically and internationally. Recently, TOEFL has become a generally accepted standard for evaluating prospective employees' English skills (Roza, 2019).

Numerous language course providers offer open training to help students improve their TOEFL skills through a variety of existing methodologies and methods. Language institutes frequently organize training for students and professors in order to prepare them to achieve the maximum TOEFL score (Abdulloh et al., 2021; Akmal et al., 2020). However, it is frequently discovered, particularly in universities that lack specific teaching requirements for TOEFL training. As a result, it is fairly uncommon to discover that individuals have not obtained their optimum score after obtaining TOEFL instruction (Madya et al., 2020).

This failure is the result of a variety of reasons, one of which is learning that is not centered on students' ability (Wang & Huang, 2020). The learning that has occurred thus far has been limited to the material that must be completed by students regardless of their current competencies (Yoestara & Putri, 2019). This competency-based TOEFL learning is critical

in order to develop learning programs and models that are appropriate for students' skills (Llosa & Malone, 2019; Roza, 2019).

This research was done to know the teachers strategies in teaching TOEFL to improve the students competence in TOEFL

## METHODOLOGY

This research used a qualitative descriptive method, which is a type of research that is based on data gathered during systematic research on the facts and properties of the object under study by combining the relationships between the variables involved and then interpreted in light of theories and literature. This study was taken at the Language Development Center Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto in Banyumas Regency, Central Java, using a sample of three TOEFL teachers.

In-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and documentary studies was used to collect data. Interviews were used to ascertain the results of data analysis. The data was gathered through interviews with five instructors that lasted approximately 30-60 minutes for each class. Semi-structured focus group discussions (FGDs) lasting around 30-60 minutes were also undertaken to corroborate the findings of the interviews.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research gained the data by doing interview with the two respondents. The interview was done through Whatsapp application. The researcher communicated twice with the respondents in different time.

### 1. Teacher 1

The first interview took place on June 30, 2020. The following results are included in the transcript:

*Interviewer: "How long have you been an instructor at LDC teaching TOEFL preparation classes?"*

*Interviewee: "At LDC since... I began working at UMP in 2010, but prior to that, sir, I took numerous TOEFL tests. Because I tutored students until I graduated in semester 5 or 6, and because I tutored students at that time, there was even experience taking lessons from lecturers."*

*Interviewer: "Was that when you were a student, sir?"*

*Interviewee: "Yes, I am still a student, and coincidentally, the TOEFL requirement was increasing at the time, and Alhamdulillah, it was reinstated on campus."*

*Interviewer: "When you first came to LDC, did you teach TOEFL classes directly to students or to the general public?"*

*Interviewee: "It's a necessary evil; we're generally here." Therefore, if a request is made by students or lecturers, we will analyze it from the perspective of the field's leader to determine whether it is possible and viable to meet the needs. Typically, we have a passing grade, such as the teacher's TOEFL score of 550. Then he possesses teaching ability, for example, two years. Later, I'll consider teaching."*

*Interviewer: "Have you ever taken the TOEFL or any comparable proficiency examinations, sir?"*

*Interviewee: "It's happened a few times." Thus, from the time I was a bachelor's student until 2015, I took ITP three times and IELTS once."*

*Interviewer: "As a TOEFL instructor, do you like to lecture or practice, sir?"*

*Interviewee: "If the processes are typically in this order, the goal orientation is determined, correct?" Thus, we do a pre-test and then examine the results. After that, we can range. Thus, the TOEFL is classified. Thus, if we examine later that he is weak in this area (grammar), we will reinforce that section (grammar). However, that is only the highlight. However, we continue to employ the training plan, specifically the training package, here. As a result, we will continue to assess the needs of these people. Thus, if he has a problem in listening, for example, we will provide him with exercise."*

*Interviewer: "And the practice, sir, is to ask questions?"*

*Interviewee: "Indeed, the fundamentals are questions and practice based on the questions."*

*"Are you familiar with standard taxonomy words such as presentation, discovery, enquiry, and cooperative learning?"*

*Interviewee: "From a linguistic standpoint, I have studied it. It's simply that we don't use everything in TOEFL learning, so discovery is similar to traditional learning. As a result, the process feels slightly different. in that taxonomy, because we emphasize skills."*

*Interviewer: "Does it mean you're more concerned with practice questions than with providing material, sir?"*

*Interviewee: "That is correct; that is more accurate."*

*Interviewer: "Then, are you familiar with the term 'strategy' when it comes to answering questions that include keywords and contextual inquiries?"*

*Interviewee: " To my knowledge, the keywords for this are, indeed, listening and reading. Thus, we concentrate on the conversation's keywords, as there are various commitments. That is all I am aware of in terms of keywords. It can be utilized for reading, and it can assist in the scanning and skimming processes."*

*Interviewer: "Based on the two classifications I described previously, sir, have you executed a strategy that does not fall into one of the two classes?"*

*Interviewee: "In fact, if there is no strategy in place, it is more about utilizing media, as there are numerous applications or educational materials available at the moment. For instance, there is a type of mini-lyrics to fill in the gaps, as well as written lyrics. Thus, it is primarily about utilizing the media and assessing the participants' flaws."*

According to the interview, the teacher administered a pre-test and then conducted the analysis. The teacher then strengthens the sparkling grammar portion as a training highlight by identifying deficiencies such as the majority of students have listening problems and are deficient in terms of grammar. Additionally, teachers employ training schemes, particularly customized training packages based on the needs of students.

The teacher concentrated on the conversation's essential terms. It can be utilized for reading in context; it can aid in the scanning and skimming processes. Teacher 1 does not outline a specific approach for offering TOEFL training; instead, he emphasizes the usage of media; this is owing to current application trends or available teaching resources. For instance, there

is a type of mini-lyric to fill in the blanks, as well as written ones. Thus, a greater emphasis will be placed on media use, as well as an examination of the participants' vulnerabilities.

## **Teacher 2**

On June 2, 2020, instructor 2 conducted an interview. The interview's outcome is as follows:

*Interviewer: "How long have you been teaching TOEFL preparation classes?"*

*Interviewee: "Of course, I began learning specifically in 2012; we were then provided class sessions, and the participants were directly lecturers at UMP."*

*Interviewer: "Have you ever taken the TOEFL or a comparable competence test?"*

*Interviewee: "Yes, there was an ITP at the time when we partnered with an institution that was invited here, and I participated."*

*Interviewer: "Do you like to lecture or conduct exercises in your TOEFL preparation class?"*

*Interviewee: "Of course, if you're teaching the TOEFL, the technique will be different, as it's a test of practiced skills, and there will be strategies to keep the class from becoming bored. While it is true that lecturing is a method, there are variants. Additionally, exercises must be used in class to determine how well TOEFL training participants comprehend the subject being taught."*

*Interviewer: "So far, sir, is it more prevalent in speaking or practicing?"*

*Interviewee: "The practice, but I also incorporate gaming elements, such as when we're about to go into reading, because teaching alone is uninteresting."*

*Interviewer: "Are you familiar with the term classic taxonomies strategies?"*

*Interviewee: "Yes, I also read the technique or method used in teaching theoretically. One of the principles I teach is that discovery and cooperative learning are absolutes in higher education, because we are dealing with adult learners and the propensity of traditional teaching is to miss the mark."*

*Interviewer: "How about the TOEFL preparation class with more precise learning objectives; did you use any of the tactics I described previously, sir?"*

*Interviewee: "Of course, the portions vary. For instance, while we are in a TOEFL training program, we can apply discovery learning to our reading skills. Thus, before we learn about reading skills, we examine current texts. It could also be that participants are requested to discuss during cooperative learning. Vocabulary development is critical for reading proficiency, correct?"*

*Interviewer: "Isn't it true that any learning approach can be utilized in class by modifying the skills to be learnt, sir?"*

*"Indeed, that is more effective."*

*Interviewer: "Are you then familiar with test-taking strategies that incorporate keywords and contextual information?"*

*Interviewee: "Yes, I've heard of it but am unfamiliar with it." What I do in the preparatory class must include an exercise, a practice, that is contextualized to the lesson."*

*Interviewer: "Do you employ keyword and contextual tactics throughout all TOEFL sections?"*

*Interviewee: "Yes, that is entirely possible in terms of reading, listening, and structuring."*

*Interviewer: "Did you apply a plan that differs from the one I stated previously, sir?"*

*Interviewee: "Indeed, when I teach, it is not a textbook; rather, it is a combination of theories and approaches; what is clear is that there are always combinations, and the approach I use is not overly compartmentalized, and I was unaware of which strategy it belonged to, but I am well aware that cooperative learning and discovery strategies are adequate for use in the TOEFL class."*

The results of this interview indicate that when teaching the TOEFL, the instructor employs a variety of tactics. Because the test is concerned with practiced abilities, the instructor employs a variety of strategies to ensure that the class does not get saturated. The occasional technique is used by varying the learning process and requiring students to do tasks in class to determine how well the TOEFL training participants understand the content being taught.

Additionally, the Practicing technique is utilized in conjunction with games, such as when the instructor educates pupils on reading, while lecturing is typically dull for students.

In terms of teaching methods, instructors use exploration and cooperative approaches because they are working with adult learners and their proclivity for traditional instruction means that the teaching objective is not reached.

### **Teacher 3**

On June 3, 2020, an interview with Instructor 3 was conducted. The following transcript represents the results:

*Interviewer: "How long have you been a TOEFL instructor?"*

*Interviewee: "I initially did that at UNSOED, sir. 2000 students enrolled in the PIC course. Finally I transferred to PBI and then to LDC in 2008."*

*Interviewer: "Have you ever taken the TOEFL or a comparable proficiency exam?"*

*Interviewee: "True. iBT is offered entirely on its own; TOEIC and IELTS are also available. That is the correct one."*

*Interviewer: "Do you prefer lecturing or exercise?"*

*Interviewee: "I exercise frequently, sir. Thus, the TOEFL assesses three abilities, correct? For instance, if they are reading, they will simply answer the questions since they are bored. I make an effort to keep them active. For instance, they are quite passionate in junior high school. For instance, I said in the introduction, "Let's race to identify synonyms." Even inside the framework, I have a game"*

*Interviewer: "Are you familiar with the types of learning processes contained in classical taxonomies, such as presentation, discovery, inquiry, and cooperative learning?"*

*Interviewee: "In fact, sir, I make use of it. I immediately proceeded to practice. For instance, what I described previously. They arrived first, then I enquired about them, and then they made discovery."*

*Interviewer: "And, ma'am, have all those strategies been implemented?"*

*Interviewee: "Yes, my structure is different in reading, but I use it. For instance, you will learn about participles, which look like this and form their own sentences."*

*Interviewer: "In a way, ma'am, the tactics employed for each portion or skill on the TOEFL are likewise unique."*

*Interviewee: " Indeed, and for a variety of distinct classes. For instance, if I teach lecturers, I will undoubtedly perform a great deal of lecturing; I cannot be provided with games. If junior high school students are engaged in lectures, they will perceive themselves to be bored. I place a premium on structure out of the three abilities. Additionally, I discuss the TOEFL scoring system. Because we're still learning the tricks."*

*Interviewer: "Can cooperative learning be used with student participants, ma'am?"*

*Interviewee: "You certainly can. Participants correct one another, indicating who is working on it and who is inspecting it."*

*Interviewer: "Are you familiar with the term 'keyword and contextual' test-taking strategies?"*

*Interviewee: "In fact, I'm not sure I understand, but we're still learning about tricks, so perhaps via experience." I'm considering applying."*

*Interviewer: "Then, did you use a different method from the one I outlined earlier?"*

*Interviewee: "That is it. It varies according to the class."*

According to the interview results, when an instructor conducts a learning process that is exercise-based, such as reading, students focus exclusively on questions. This is accomplished by pushing students to engage in a variety of activities. For instance, in junior high school, a great deal is accomplished through the use of games. Instructor 5 is more apt to engage in inquiry-based learning.

## CONCLUSION

Because of previous research, it has been determined that the majority of teachers have utilized competency-based TOEFL learning strategies in their classrooms. In most cases, rather than employing the lecture style, they provide training based on the abilities of the students involved. When supporting this concept, cooperative learning is frequently employed as a means of implementation.

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