Teaching TOEIC Online in State Polytechnic of Medan

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Abstract – Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) is an eligible tool to measure students' communication skills in vocational education. Politeknik Negeri Medan therefore uses this proficiency test to certify students' English communication competence. During English classes, it is believed that teaching English language skills to students will be the same as preparing students to take TOEIC. During pandemic, English class is conducted online using SIPADI, a LMS managed by Politeknik Negeri Medan. This paper aims at investigating the practices of teaching TOEIC online in Politeknik Negeri Medan. It applied mixed methods. The objects of this research are students of four classes in Computer and Informatics Engineering, State Polytechnic of Medan. The finding of this research is that teaching TOEIC online does not significantly improve students' communication skills but still the score was slightly increasing. Then, some practices of teaching TOEIC online needs some improvement and better support system to have a better result. This result is expected can help teachers and lecturers in vocational education to consider better way to teach TOEIC as well as preparing students for TOEIC test.

Keywords: TOEIC, vocational, communication skills

1. Introduction

As part of teaching processes, assessment becomes an important factor in achieving English learning objectives. From all kinds of assessment, standardized test is one of the most reliable assessments in measuring students' competence and the teaching and learning success. One of standardized tests used to measure the communication skills is TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication).

Brown (2003) defines that test is a set of techniques to measure someone's ability, knowledge or performance in a certain domain. Meanwhile, assessment is a process of measuring someone's achievement in learning process. Therefore, test is part of assessment and assessment is part of teaching process. Not only for measurement, assessment in teaching and learning is actually also for learning's improvement. Stiggns (2002) mentioned that assessment in learning would boost students' confidence and motivation in learning.

TOEIC is a standardized test of English proficiency to measure a test taker's ability to communicate in English in the global workplace (ETS: 2017). The forms of TOEIC exam are TOEIC Listening and Reading, TOEIC Speaking and Writing and TOEIC Bridge. This kind of test has been used for more than 35 years. However, Im and Cheng (2019) argue that TOEIC needs to expand the constructs for fitting the current real world of global workplace that might be changed from time to time.

Vocational education and training is an applied-science program in Indonesian high education to prepare students to be a skilful worker. In UU No. 12 year 2012, paragraph 2, Section 21, diploma program is determined to prepare students become skilful practitioners to work in their areas of expertise.

Teaching English in vocational education is different from university because it concerns with preparing students to be skilful workers. English subject is focused to get students to be able to communicate in English. Therefore, the common English proficiency test used to certify the graduates is TOEIC.

In State Polytechnic of Medan, TOEIC is usually taken by the students twice during the study namely TOEIC Mapping and TOEIC Exit. TOEIC Mapping is taken by new students in their first semester. The result will map students' English competence level and let the English lecturers know and prepare the most suitable materials and method for the class. Meanwhile, TOEIC Exit is taken as one of graduation terms. The certificate can be used for applying jobs after they graduate. Both TOEIC Mapping and TOEIC Exit use form of TOEIC Listening and Reading.

Teaching TOEIC in Politeknik Negeri Medan is basically introduction on how to carry on TOEIC. It is believed that teaching English language skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) in the classroom actually prepares the

students in taking TOEIC because competences tested in TOEIC actually are those taught in the classroom. In addition, the test taking strategies might also be given to students to help them to be self-confident and motivated.

With online learning, internet is believed to have great potentials in teaching English (Cahyono and Widiati, 2011). Online instruction is defined as teaching and learning process using devices and internet access in synchronous and asynchronous environment. (Singh and Thurman: 2019).

In March 2020, teaching and learning process was conducted online due to COVID-19. The students of Politeknik Negeri Medan learned using learning platform SIPADI and other applications. SIPADI (Sistem Pembelajaran Digital) is learning platform provided and managed by Politeknik Negeri Medan to support online learning, especially during the pandemic. Dhawan (2020) argue that online teaching during COVID-19 crisis is not an option anymore; it is a necessity.

Politeknik Negeri Medan has administered the online learning for almost two years now. It was uneasy but really pushes lecturers, students and administrators to learn and develop new adaptive competences to cope with it. This paper was aimed at sharing how teaching TOEIC was administered online during the pandemic in Politeknik Negeri Medan. From this writing, it is also expected that some lessons would be learned, especially for English language lecturers in vocational education.

2. Method

This research applied mixed methods both qualitative and quantitative studies. This research was conducted online in 2020. This involved 3 English lecturers and 105 students of Politeknik Negeri Medan. The qualitative data were collected by using google form (for students) and tele-interview (for lecturers). The quantitative data were students' score of before and after online TOEIC class in SIPADI.

The TOEIC class was conducted in four weeks. The first meeting was used to have TOEIC orientation using Google Meet. The second and third meeting was used to guided-simulation. In addition, the last meeting was used as independent simulation.

3. Results and Discussion

Teaching TOEIC in Politeknik Negeri Medan is conducted differently from one department to another. Some set it as a subject and some others make it as part of materials in English class curriculum. However, the learning objectives in both classes are same that is "to prepare students to be able to communicate in English fluently and correctly".

When pandemic of COVID-19 crisis came in March 2020, most of lecturers and students in Politeknik Negeri Medan were not ready to change drastically. Luckily, the Directors, the vices of director, and team were quickly responsive and adaptive. They took some weeks of hiatus to get the online learning system work well. Activating the Learning Management System SIPADI (Sistem Pembelajaran Digital) brought good effects in online teaching and learning process. Using this Moodle means that lecturers had to learn many new things in e-learning. Using all the useful applications and websites like Zoom, Google Meet, Kahoot, You Tube Channel, OBS Studio and so on is new things for most of them.

So, teaching TOEIC online in Politeknik Negeri Medan consisted of a short introduction in the beginning of lesson and some simulations in taking the test afterward. The lecturers must prepare the materials and questions for quiz more than usual. They needed extra time and energy for preparing, teaching and assessing the class. Although some various online learning activities were also applied like teaching using You Tube and Kahoot., preparing the 200 questions for every simulation was quite hard.

The students argue that it was difficult for them to do the simulation because they need real guidance in taking TOEIC. They were happy that the materials are complete and can be learned anytime and anywhere. However, they often feel unmotivated and lazy, especially because there were too many questions in the simulation.

In teaching TOEIC, pre-test and post-test were given to see the progress and students' competence improvement. As the highest TOEIC Listening and Reading score is 990, TOEIC scored displayed in Table 1 was converted to 100 points as the maximum.

Table 1 The improvement of Students' TOEIC class average scores

No.	Class	Pre-test	Post-Test	Difference	Conclusion
1	A	53.75	60.84	7.09	slightly improved
2	B	62.33	73.80	11.47	slightly improved
3	C	62.62	70.68	8.06	slightly improved
4	D	63.67	65.67	2	Very slightly improved

From the table, it can be seen that teaching TOEIC online did not significantly improve students' achievement. The average scores of four classes showed slight improvement from 11 points to 2 points. Although they are not significant, they might have been better if lecturers have better prepared materials and test and students have learned the materials and skill more frequently and better motivated.

From this, it can be learned that class preparation is very crucial in teaching TOEIC online. Finding the materials, developing a test, uploading two hundred questions for simulation are hard for the lecturers. But, once it is done well, the students will learn them well and have improved TOEIC scores.

4. Conclusion
Teaching TOEIC was conducted online in Politeknik Negeri Medan during COVID-19 outbreak. Using SIPADI, both lecturers and students tried hard to achieve learning objectives in English class. However, this teaching also needs extra energy and time to prepare the materials and questions for simulation. Moreover, students' also have to learn materials and do the simulation as many time as possible. Although the last scores showed insignificant improvement, it is expected to be better by providing students' assistance and better preparation.

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