

**PELATIHAN STRATEGI LISTENING TOEFL UNTUK MENINGKATKAN
KEMAMPUAN LISTENING COMPREHENSION MAHASISWA*****TOEFL LISTENING STRATEGIES TRAINING TO IMPROVE UNIVERSITY
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aniskomariah89@gmail.com✉**ABSTRAK**

Persiapan TOEFL telah menjadi salah satu kebutuhan penting bagi mahasiswa, khususnya dalam meningkatkan kemampuan listening bahasa Inggris yang diperlukan untuk kepentingan akademik dan profesional. Namun, masih banyak mahasiswa yang mengalami kesulitan dalam mengerjakan tugas-tugas TOEFL Listening karena keterbatasan paparan terhadap bahasa Inggris lisan, kurangnya kesadaran dalam menerapkan strategi, serta belum terbiasanya mahasiswa menggunakan pendekatan listening yang efektif. Program pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk mendukung mahasiswa dalam meningkatkan kemampuan listening comprehension melalui pelatihan strategi TOEFL Listening. Program dilaksanakan dengan menggunakan pendekatan pelatihan partisipatif yang melibatkan 25 mahasiswa dari UIN Sultan Aji Muhammad Idris Samarinda. Kegiatan terdiri atas identifikasi kebutuhan, pre-test TOEFL Listening, pengenalan karakteristik TOEFL Listening, pelatihan strategi listening, latihan terbimbing, diskusi kolaboratif, post-test, dan evaluasi program. Pelatihan difokuskan pada strategi listening praktis yang mencakup identifikasi kata kunci, prediksi, pengenalan parafrasa, interpretasi makna tersirat, identifikasi pengecoh, dan teknik pencatatan. Hasil evaluasi program menunjukkan peningkatan positif dalam kemampuan peserta menerapkan strategi listening setelah mengikuti kegiatan pelatihan. Nilai rata-rata peserta meningkat dari 61,0 pada pre-test menjadi 76,8 pada post-test, dengan peningkatan sebesar 15,8 poin. Peserta juga menunjukkan peningkatan kesadaran dan kepercayaan diri dalam menghadapi tugas-tugas TOEFL Listening secara strategis. Program pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini menunjukkan bahwa pelatihan strategi TOEFL Listening dapat memberikan dukungan praktis bagi mahasiswa dalam mempersiapkan diri menghadapi tugas-tugas TOEFL Listening dan meningkatkan kemampuan listening comprehension. Program selanjutnya dapat mempertimbangkan durasi pelatihan yang lebih panjang, materi persiapan TOEFL yang lebih luas, serta pendampingan berkelanjutan untuk mendukung peningkatan kemampuan listening comprehension mahasiswa secara berkesinambungan.

Kata kunci: pelatihan TOEFL, strategi listening, kemampuan listening comprehension, mahasiswa

ABSTRACT

TOEFL preparation has become an important requirement for university students, particularly in improving English listening skills needed for academic and professional purposes. However, many students still experience difficulties in TOEFL Listening tasks due to limited exposure to spoken English, insufficient strategic awareness, and unfamiliarity with effective listening approaches. This community service program aimed to support university students in improving their listening comprehension skills through TOEFL Listening strategies training. The program was conducted using a participatory training approach involving 25 university students from UIN Sultan Aji Muhammad Idris Samarinda. The activities consisted of needs identification, TOEFL Listening pre-test, introduction to TOEFL Listening characteristics, listening strategies training, guided practice, collaborative discussion, post-test, and program evaluation. The training focused on practical listening strategies, including keyword identification, prediction, paraphrase recognition, implied meaning interpretation, distractor identification, and note-taking techniques. The program evaluation indicated positive improvement in participants' ability to apply listening strategies after participating in the training activities. The average performance increased from 61.0 in the pre-test to 76.8 in the post-test, showing an improvement of 15.8 points. Participants also demonstrated greater awareness and confidence in approaching TOEFL Listening tasks strategically. This community service program highlights that TOEFL Listening strategies training can provide practical support for university students in preparing for TOEFL Listening tasks and improving their listening comprehension skills. Future programs may consider providing longer training periods, broader TOEFL preparation materials, and continuous mentoring to support sustained improvement in students' English listening comprehension skills.

Keywords: TOEFL training, listening strategies, listening comprehension skills, university students

INTRODUCTION

English proficiency has become an important skill for university students in supporting academic activities, professional preparation, and global communication. In higher education contexts, students are required to develop English skills to access academic information, participate in international communication, and fulfill language proficiency requirements. Therefore, providing English language support programs for university students is an important effort to strengthen their academic readiness (Agustin et al., 2021).

Among English language skills, listening comprehension is considered one of the most challenging abilities for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Listening requires learners to process spoken information quickly, identify important messages, interpret meaning, and construct understanding from continuous speech. Unlike reading activities, learners cannot control the speed of spoken input, making listening comprehension a complex process that requires linguistic knowledge and appropriate strategies (Field, 2010; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005).

University students often experience difficulties in listening activities due to limited exposure to spoken English, unfamiliar pronunciation, natural speech rate, and insufficient vocabulary knowledge. Listening comprehension involves complex processes in which learners need to recognize spoken language, interpret meaning, and construct understanding from auditory input (Richards, 2008). Vocabulary knowledge also plays an important role in listening comprehension because learners need adequate lexical knowledge to recognize spoken words and interpret information effectively (Nation, 2022). In addition, successful listening requires learners to actively process information by selecting, interpreting, and evaluating spoken messages rather than simply hearing the words (Rost, 2011; Vandergrift, 2004).

These challenges are also commonly experienced by students preparing for the TOEFL test, particularly in the Listening Section. TOEFL Listening tasks require learners to understand conversations and academic lectures, identify main ideas, recognize supporting details, interpret implied meanings, and determine appropriate answers based on spoken information (Chapelle et al., 2011). However, many students still approach TOEFL Listening exercises by focusing on translating individual words without applying effective strategies to manage the listening process.

Listening strategies provide practical support for learners in overcoming difficulties during listening activities. Strategies such as identifying keywords, predicting possible answers, recognizing paraphrased expressions, monitoring comprehension, and applying note-taking techniques can help learners become more active and strategic listeners. Language learning strategies enable learners to consciously select appropriate techniques to support successful language processing (Cohen, 1999). Furthermore, Oxford (2016) emphasizes that strategic learning encourages learners to regulate their learning activities through planning, monitoring, and evaluation.

The application of explicit listening strategy instruction can support students in improving their listening comprehension skills. Goh and Vandergrift (2021) explain that metacognitive approaches to listening help learners understand how they process spoken information and develop awareness of listening activities. Similarly, Graham (2017) highlights that explicit instruction of listening strategies can assist learners in dealing with common problems encountered in second language listening development. Therefore, TOEFL preparation activities need to provide not only listening practice materials but also practical guidance on how students can apply appropriate strategies when completing listening tasks.

Based on preliminary observations and the initial TOEFL Listening assessment, many university students still require structured assistance in TOEFL Listening preparation. The pre-test administered to 25 participants showed an average score of 61.0. Among the assessed components, understanding implied meanings obtained the lowest mean score of 58.9, followed

by predicting possible answers at 59.8 and recognizing synonyms and paraphrased expressions at 60.6. These initial findings provided quantitative evidence that participants still experienced difficulties in processing and interpreting spoken information, particularly in understanding implied meanings, predicting possible answers, and recognizing paraphrased expressions. Therefore, practical TOEFL Listening strategies training was needed to combine listening practice with systematic strategy instruction.

Community service programs in language education provide an appropriate approach to addressing these needs through training, mentoring, and practical learning activities. Previous community-based English assistance programs have shown that structured language training can support learners' skill development by providing contextual learning experiences (Komariah et al., 2026). Therefore, language training activities designed based on learners' needs can become an appropriate approach to supporting students' English skill development in academic contexts.

Therefore, this community service program was designed to implement TOEFL Listening Strategies Training to Improve University Students' Listening Comprehension Skills. The program aimed to provide practical TOEFL Listening training, introduce effective listening strategies, and support university students in improving their listening comprehension skills while developing greater awareness, confidence, and readiness in completing TOEFL Listening tasks.

METHOD

This community service program was conducted as an English language training activity aimed at improving university students' listening comprehension skills through TOEFL training using listening strategies. The program involved 25 university students from UIN Sultan Aji Muhammad Idris Samarinda who required additional preparation for TOEFL Listening Section tasks. The training was designed to address participants' difficulties in processing spoken English, identifying important information, and applying appropriate strategies when completing TOEFL Listening exercises.

The program implemented a participatory training approach involving active interaction between the implementation team and participants throughout the program. The implementation team was responsible for preparing learning materials, delivering listening strategy instruction, guiding practice activities, and conducting program evaluation. Meanwhile, participants actively engaged in listening practices, discussions, strategy application activities, and reflection sessions during the training process.

The community service program was implemented through four main stages:

1. Partner Needs Identification

The initial stage focused on identifying participants' learning needs and difficulties related to TOEFL Listening activities. This stage was conducted through preliminary observation and discussion regarding students' experiences in completing TOEFL Listening tasks. The results of the needs identification indicated that participants experienced several challenges, including difficulties in understanding spoken English delivered at natural speed, identifying key information, recognizing paraphrased expressions, and determining appropriate answers in TOEFL Listening questions. These conditions indicated the need for structured training that introduced practical listening strategies.

2. Program Preparation

Based on the results of the needs identification, the implementation team prepared the training components and learning materials required for the program. The preparation stage included developing TOEFL Listening materials, designing listening strategy activities, preparing evaluation procedures, and organizing the implementation process. The instructional materials were developed based on common TOEFL Listening Section tasks and focused on several strategic components, including keyword identification, answer prediction,

paraphrase recognition, interpretation of implied meanings, distractor identification, and note-taking strategies.

3. Implementation of TOEFL Listening Strategy Training

The training activities were conducted through several structured learning activities, including:

- a. Administering a TOEFL Listening pre-test to identify participants' initial listening skills;
- b. Introducing the characteristics of the TOEFL Listening Section and common challenges encountered by learners;
- c. Providing explanations and demonstrations of listening strategies, including keyword identification, prediction, paraphrase recognition, implied meaning interpretation, distractor identification, and note-taking techniques;
- d. Conducting guided TOEFL Listening exercises by applying the introduced strategies;
- e. Conducting collaborative discussions where participants identified answers, shared interpretations, and received feedback from instructors; and
- f. Administering a TOEFL Listening post-test to observe participants' improvement after completing the training activities.

Throughout the implementation process, participants were encouraged to actively engage in listening practices, group discussions, and strategy application activities. The interactive learning environment was designed to support students in developing greater awareness and confidence when approaching TOEFL Listening tasks.

4. Program Evaluation

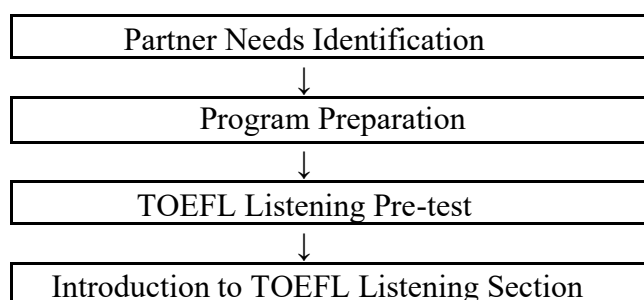
Evaluation was conducted to review the achievement of the community service program. The evaluation consisted of process evaluation and outcome evaluation. Process evaluation was conducted through observation of participants' involvement, participation, and engagement during the training activities. This evaluation aimed to identify participants' responses to the training process, including their active participation during listening practices and discussions.

Outcome evaluation was conducted by comparing the TOEFL Listening pre-test and post test results. The evaluation focused on participants' improvement in applying listening strategies and completing TOEFL Listening tasks after participating in the training program. The success indicators of the program were determined based on:

- a. Improvement in participants' performance between pre-test and post-test results;
- b. Increased awareness in applying listening strategies;
- c. Active participation during training activities; and
- d. Increased confidence in completing TOEFL Listening exercises.

Community Service Program Flow

The overall flow of the community service program is presented in Figure 1.



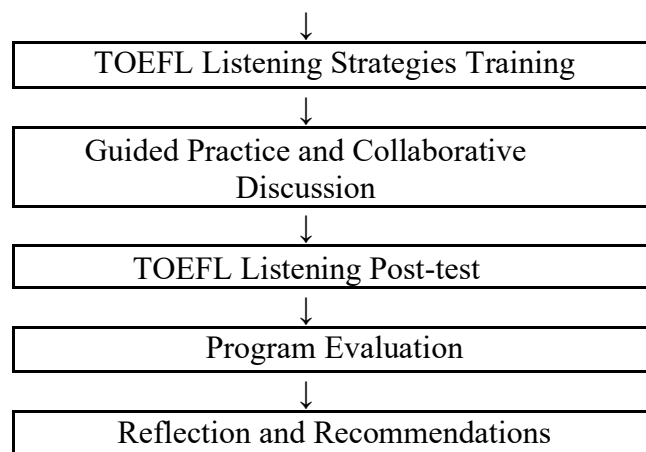


Figure 1. Flow of the Community Service Program

The program flow illustrates the systematic implementation of the community service activities, starting from identifying participants' learning needs, preparing training materials, implementing TOEFL Listening strategies training, and evaluating participants' improvement after the program.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

RESULTS

The TOEFL Listening Strategies Training program was implemented to support university students in improving their listening comprehension skills through structured TOEFL Listening activities. The results of the program are presented based on the implementation process, participants' initial conditions, training activities, and evaluation results.

1. Activity Implementation

The TOEFL Listening Strategies Training program involved 25 university students through a series of structured activities consisting of TOEFL Listening orientation, introduction to listening strategies, guided listening practice, collaborative discussion, and individual exercises.

During the implementation process, participants were introduced to the characteristics of the TOEFL Listening Section and common challenges encountered when completing listening tasks. The training emphasized that successful listening performance requires not only the ability to understand spoken English but also the ability to apply appropriate strategies to identify important information, predict possible answers, recognize paraphrased expressions, and interpret implied meanings.

The training activities encouraged participants to actively engage in listening practices through explanation, demonstration, strategy application, and feedback sessions. Through these activities, participants were guided to apply listening strategies when completing TOEFL Listening tasks and develop greater awareness of how strategic approaches can support their listening process.



Figure 2. Participants Listening to TOEFL Audio Materials During the Training Session

Figure 2 shows participants engaging in TOEFL Listening practice activities during the training session. The activity provided opportunities for participants to practice understanding spoken English while applying the listening strategies introduced by the instructors. This activity aimed to familiarize participants with TOEFL Listening materials and support their ability to identify important information from spoken texts.

2. Pre-Test Results

Before participating in the TOEFL Listening Strategies Training program, participants completed a TOEFL Listening pre-test to identify their initial ability in applying listening strategies. The assessment focused on six strategic components, including identifying keywords and important information, predicting possible answers, recognizing synonyms and paraphrased expressions, understanding implied meanings, identifying distractors, and applying note-taking strategies.

Table 1. Participants' Initial Performance in Applying Listening Strategies

No.	Listening Strategy Components	Mean Score
1	Identifying keywords and important information	62.4
2	Predicting possible answers before listening	59.8
3	Recognizing synonyms and paraphrased expressions	60.6
4	Understanding implied meanings	58.9
5	Identifying distractors in TOEFL Listening tasks	61.2
6	Applying note-taking strategies	63.1
Average Score		61.0

The pre-test results indicated that participants had a moderate initial ability in applying listening strategies. The highest score was found in note-taking strategies (63.1), indicating that participants had relatively better awareness of recording important information during listening activities. Meanwhile, understanding implied meanings obtained the lowest score (58.9), suggesting that participants still experienced difficulties in interpreting information beyond explicitly stated messages.

These findings indicated that participants needed structured guidance to improve their approaches to completing TOEFL Listening tasks. Therefore, the training program focused on introducing practical strategies that could assist students in managing different types of listening challenges.

3. Implementation of TOEFL Listening Strategies Training

Following the pre-test assessment, the TOEFL Listening Strategies Training was conducted to provide participants with practical techniques for approaching listening tasks more effectively. The training activities focused on several strategy components:

a. Keyword Identification Strategy

Participants were trained to identify important words and key information that could assist them in determining correct answers during TOEFL Listening activities.

b. Prediction Strategy

Participants practiced predicting possible answers by using contextual information, background knowledge, and clues provided before and during listening activities.

c. Paraphrase Recognition Strategy

Participants learned to recognize alternative expressions, synonyms, and paraphrased information commonly found in TOEFL Listening questions.

d. Implied Meaning Interpretation Strategy

Participants practiced understanding messages that were not directly stated in conversations or academic talks.

e. Distractor Identification Strategy

Participants learned to recognize misleading information commonly used in TOEFL Listening questions.

f. Note-Taking Strategy

Participants practiced recording important information while listening to longer conversations and academic discussions.



Figure 3. Participants Identifying Answers and Discussing Listening Strategies

Figure 3 illustrates participants working collaboratively to identify answers and discuss the application of listening strategies during TOEFL exercises. Through collaborative discussion, students compared their interpretations, explained their reasoning, and received feedback from instructors. This activity encouraged active participation and supported participants in applying listening strategies more effectively.

4. Post-Test Results

After completing the TOEFL Listening Strategies Training, participants completed a post-test to observe their improvement after receiving strategy instruction and guided practice.

Table 2. Participants' Performance After Applying Listening Strategies

No.	Listening Strategy Components	Mean Score
1	Identifying keywords and important information	78.6
2	Predicting possible answers before listening	76.4
3	Recognizing synonyms and paraphrased expressions	75.8
4	Understanding implied meanings	73.6
5	Identifying distractors in TOEFL Listening tasks	77.2
6	Applying note-taking strategies	79.0
Average Score		76.8

The post-test results indicated positive improvement across all listening strategy components. Participants showed better ability to identify important information, predict possible answers, recognize paraphrased expressions, and apply appropriate strategies when completing TOEFL Listening tasks.

Compared with the initial assessment, participants demonstrated greater awareness in approaching listening activities strategically. The results suggest that structured TOEFL Listening strategies training provided practical support for participants in managing listening challenges more effectively.

5. Program Evaluation

The overall evaluation of the program was conducted by considering participants' improvement based on assessment results and their involvement throughout the training activities.

Table 3. Overall Improvement in TOEFL Listening Performance

Assessment	Average Score
Pre-test	61.0
Post-test	76.8
Improvement	+15.8

The evaluation results indicate that participants experienced positive improvement after participating in the TOEFL Listening Strategies Training program. The average performance increased from 61.0 in the pre-test to 76.8 in the post-test, showing an improvement of 15.8 points. In addition to the increase in scores, participants demonstrated greater confidence, active participation, and increased awareness of how to approach TOEFL Listening tasks by applying appropriate strategies rather than depending only on direct translation.

DISCUSSION

The results of the community service program indicate that TOEFL Listening Strategies Training provided practical support for university students in improving their listening comprehension skills. The increase in the average score from 61.0 in the pre-test to 76.8 in the post-test suggests that participants demonstrated better ability to comprehend spoken information and apply appropriate listening strategies after participating in the training activities. Several supporting factors may have contributed to this improvement, including explicit strategy

instruction, guided and repeated TOEFL Listening practice, collaborative discussion, active participation, and direct feedback from instructors. These activities provided participants with opportunities to identify key information, predict possible answers, recognize paraphrased expressions, interpret implied meanings, and monitor their understanding during listening tasks.

These observations are consistent with Goh and Vandergrift (2021), who emphasize the role of metacognitive listening instruction in planning, monitoring, and evaluating comprehension, and Graham (2017), who highlights the importance of explicit strategy instruction and guided practice in addressing second language listening difficulties. Therefore, the improvement in participants' listening comprehension skills may have been supported by the combination of systematic strategy instruction, repeated practice, collaborative learning, and instructor feedback throughout the training process.

The improvement across all listening strategy components also indicates that systematic training and repeated practice supported participants' ability to manage different listening challenges. The highest post-test score was found in note-taking strategies (79.0), followed by identifying keywords and important information (78.6), suggesting that participants became more capable of selecting and organizing relevant information during listening activities. Meanwhile, understanding implied meanings remained the lowest component (73.6), indicating that inferential listening continued to be a challenging aspect because it requires deeper contextual understanding and interpretation of spoken messages (Rost, 2011).

Vocabulary knowledge also contributes to students' listening comprehension skills. Limited vocabulary may prevent learners from recognizing spoken words and interpreting meaning effectively during listening activities. Nation (2022) emphasizes that adequate vocabulary knowledge supports learners in processing language input more efficiently. Therefore, TOEFL Listening preparation should consider both strategic listening instruction and vocabulary development to support students' listening comprehension.

The findings also support the importance of language learning strategies in improving students' awareness and confidence. Cohen (1999) explains that strategy-based learning enables learners to consciously select appropriate techniques for completing language tasks, while Oxford (2016) emphasizes that learning strategies help learners regulate their own learning processes. In this program, participants were not only provided with TOEFL Listening practice but were also guided to understand how and when specific strategies could be applied.

From the perspective of community service, this program indicates that structured language training based on participants' needs can provide meaningful support for university students preparing for TOEFL Listening tasks. The participatory approach allowed students to practice listening strategies, discuss their understanding, and receive feedback throughout the learning process. These activities strengthened the practical orientation of the program by providing participants with direct opportunities to apply the strategies introduced during the training.

However, this program has several limitations. The training was conducted within a limited period, and the evaluation focused on participants' performance during TOEFL Listening activities. Future community service programs are recommended to provide longer training periods, broader TOEFL preparation materials, and continuous mentoring to support sustained improvement in students' English listening comprehension skills.

CONCLUSION

The TOEFL Listening Strategies Training community service program provided a practical approach to supporting university students in improving their listening comprehension skills. The program addressed participants' difficulties in TOEFL Listening tasks by introducing practical listening strategies, including keyword identification, prediction, paraphrase recognition, implied meaning interpretation, distractor identification, and note-taking techniques.

The program evaluation indicated positive improvement in participants' ability to apply listening strategies after participating in the training activities. The increase from the pre-test

average score of 61.0 to the post-test average score of 76.8 suggests that participants improved their ability to approach TOEFL Listening tasks strategically while demonstrating greater awareness and confidence. Furthermore, participants showed active involvement during listening practices and collaborative discussions.

This community service program highlights the importance of providing structured English training that responds to students' learning needs. Integrating TOEFL Listening preparation with systematic listening strategy instruction can serve as an alternative approach to supporting university students' readiness in completing TOEFL Listening tasks and improving their listening comprehension skills.

Future community service programs may consider providing longer training periods, broader TOEFL preparation materials, and continuous mentoring activities to support sustained improvement in students' English listening comprehension skills.

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