

Socialization of the Benefits and Tips for Facing TOEFL Listening for Tamsis Senior High School Students

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ABSTRACT

This outreach program was designed to enhance the awareness, understanding, and motivation of Grade XI students at Tamsis Senior High School in facing the TOEFL Listening section. As English becomes increasingly vital in global academic and professional environments, improving students' listening proficiency is a critical step toward success. The program introduced the concept of the TOEFL, its purposes, benefits, and different types (iBT, ITP, Prediction). It also focused on common listening challenges and specific strategies to address them. These included concentrating on the second speaker's response, recognizing paraphrased or synonymous vocabulary, and avoiding answer choices based on similar-sounding words. The implementation phase featured interactive presentations, audio-based simulations, and group discussions. Students practiced answering real TOEFL-style questions and received immediate feedback. The use of PowerPoint, Google Forms, and authentic audio materials fostered engagement and improved comprehension. During the evaluation phase, students reported increased confidence and a stronger motivation to continue practicing. They also demonstrated a clearer understanding of TOEFL Listening expectations and test structure. The interactive format allowed for active participation, peer learning, and personalized strategy application. As a result, the outreach program proved effective in equipping students with the necessary tools to approach TOEFL Listening tasks with greater competence and self-assurance. It is recommended that similar initiatives be replicated in other schools to help students prepare early for English proficiency tests. By combining strategic instruction, real-world materials, and motivational support, this program offers a practical model for developing listening skills that are essential for academic and professional advancement.

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INTRODUCTION

In this era of globalization, education plays a crucial role in preparing the younger generation to compete and collaborate on an international stage. Mastery of English, as the global lingua franca, is increasingly vital for gaining access to information, higher education opportunities, and global career prospects. At the senior high school level, there is a significant responsibility to equip students with adequate English language proficiency. One effective approach is by introducing international

standardized English language assessments, such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). TOEFL is widely recognized as a reliable measure of English proficiency for non-native speakers, particularly for those intending to pursue higher education or employment in international settings.

According to (Harmer, J, 2007), English functions as a 'lingua franca' in international communication, making its mastery a valuable asset for students preparing for global opportunities. The integration of media and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in English language teaching has been shown to enhance learning effectiveness (Crystal, 2003). Various online platforms, applications, and audiovisual resources provide interactive and engaging materials, which can boost student motivation and effectively aid in developing listening skills.

(Phillips, 2001), in his book *Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL Test*, asserts that understanding TOEFL listening strategies—such as focusing on the second speaker, recognizing synonyms, and avoiding similar-sounding answer choices—can significantly improve student performance (pp. 227–229). One of the main challenges faced by senior high school students is preparing for the TOEFL test, particularly the listening section. TOEFL Listening assesses students' ability to comprehend conversations and lectures in academic English, which often include complex vocabulary and sentence structures. Many students struggle with the fast speech of native speakers, varying accents, and background noise in recordings (Rahmawati, 2020). Consequently, students' TOEFL Listening scores often fall below those of other sections. Insufficient preparation and ineffective strategies are among the primary factors contributing to this issue.

The outreach program implemented at Tamsis Senior High School was designed to address these challenges. This program aimed to enhance students' understanding of the TOEFL test, particularly the listening section, by introducing the test format, offering practical tips and strategies, and providing simulated TOEFL listening practice. The materials covered key topics, including the benefits of taking the TOEFL, the different types of TOEFL (iBT, ITP, and Prediction), and effective listening strategies. This initiative aligns with the communicative approach advocated by (Brown, 2001), which emphasizes interaction, motivation, and real-life language use as essential elements in successful language learning. Furthermore, the use of authentic materials and test simulations is consistent with the theory proposed by (Richards, 2010), which suggests that language learning is more effective when students can relate it to real-life experiences.

At the conclusion of the outreach program, students demonstrated increased motivation, greater awareness of the importance of the TOEFL, and improved comprehension of listening tasks. As explained by (Rost, 2010), listening skills involve complex cognitive processes such as prediction, inference, and understanding speaker intent—all of which can be improved through regular practice and guided strategy training.

In conclusion, the TOEFL outreach program at Tamsis Senior High School represents a significant step in enhancing students' readiness to face academic and global challenges. This program not only develops TOEFL listening skills but also fosters students' confidence and motivation to pursue higher aspirations.

METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION

This mini-research employed a structured and comprehensive community service-based implementation model (Program Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat/PKM), which consisted of three main phases: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. The activity was designed to introduce the importance of TOEFL Listening, its benefits, and effective strategies to eleventh-grade students at Tamsis Senior High School. The goal of this socialization activity was to emphasize the significance of the TOEFL test for the students at the school. This social activity was conducted on May 10, 2025, at Tamsis Senior High School by a team of student facilitators, namely Tri Indah, Jenny Nur Idill Rohan Damanik, Titin Marpaung, and Juliana Tifani. The participants of the socialization activity consisted of 26 eleventh-grade students from the same school. During the preparation stage, materials related to TOEFL Listening—such as test formats, common challenges, and strategic approaches—were carefully selected and developed.

The implementation phase involved delivering interactive sessions that included presentations, strategy workshops, and listening simulations. Lastly, the evaluation phase aimed to assess students' understanding and motivation before and after the activity through feedback and reflective discussions. This mini research project used a community-based implementation model consisting of three main stages: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. The activity was conducted at Tamsis Senior High School and aimed to introduce the importance of TOEFL Listening, its benefits, and effective strategies to students in Grade XI.



Figure 1. Stages of Method Implementation

Phase 1: Preparation

In the preparation phase, the research team coordinated with the course lecturer and the English teacher of Tamsis Senior High School to plan the TOEFL socialization session. We identified the class, secured permission from the school principal, and prepared materials for delivery. These materials included PowerPoint slides, TOEFL listening practice audio, worksheets, and a session schedule. The socialization team also designed a structure that divided tasks among team members to ensure smooth delivery during the session.

Phase 2: Implementation

During this phase, the research team carried out the socialization activity involving 26 students from Grade XI. The session was divided into six segments:

1. Introduction to the program and its objectives.
2. Explanation of what TOEFL is and its academic/professional benefits and Overview of different TOEFL test types (iBT, ITP, Prediction).
3. Presentation of strategies for tackling TOEFL listening questions.
4. Simulation of TOEFL listening section, using real sample questions and audio.
5. Open discussion and Q&A session to clarify misunderstandings and reinforce strategies.

Throughout the implementation, students actively participated, practiced answering listening questions, and discussed their challenges. The interactive format helped students remain engaged and allowed them to apply techniques such as focusing on the second line, identifying synonyms, and avoiding distractor sounds.

Phase 3: Evaluation

The final stage involved collecting feedback through discussion and observations. Students were encouraged to express their opinions about the TOEFL and the challenges they faced in understanding listening sections. The team evaluated student engagement and understanding based on their participation and responses during simulation and discussions. The results indicated that the activity increased awareness, motivation, and understanding of TOEFL Listening among the participants.

This structured method ensured the effectiveness of the socialization program and provided a basis for continuous improvement in preparing students for TOEFL tests.

RESULTS

Socialization activities regarding the introduction of TOEFL Listening and its benefits to Grade XI students of Tamsis Seniornya High School were conducted to increase students' understanding, motivation, and preparedness in facing TOEFL listening tasks. The activity began with a short opening and introductions from the socialization team. Students were then given information about the importance of TOEFL, especially in relation to higher education, scholarships, and job opportunities. The session also covered different TOEFL types (iBT, ITP, Prediction) and

focused on introducing listening strategies such as: Focusing on the second line of the conversation, Identifying synonyms or paraphrased answers, and Avoiding distractors with similar sounds.

In addition to explanation and discussion, the activity included a simulation session of the TOEFL Listening section, allowing students to apply the strategies in a controlled environment. They were given sample audio recordings followed by multiple-choice questions.

This simulation helped students understand the test structure and common traps, while the discussion and Q&A session enabled them to clarify their doubts and reinforce their understanding.

The activities conducted during the session are presented in the table below.

Table 1. List of the Activities

NO.	Time	Material Description
1.	10.00 – 10.05	Introduction and opening by the socialization team.
2.	10.05 – 10.15	Explanation of the meaning, tips and trick to answer questions listening skill in TOEFL.
3.	10.16 – 10.25	Explanation of the types of TOEFL (iBT, ITP, Prediction).
4.	10.25 – 10.40	Presentation of TOEFL Listening strategies.
5.	10.40 – 11.10	Simulation of Listening section and answering questions.
6.	11.10 – 11.25	Open discussion and Q&A with students.

Phase 1. Preparation

Before to the implementation of the socialization activity, a coordination meeting was conducted with the school to determine the appropriate class for the program. As a result of this coordination, one eleventh-grade class was selected as the target group. A total of 20 students from this class participated in the activity on the day of implementation.

To support the effective delivery of material, the content was carefully prepared in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. This visual aid was designed to enhance students' comprehension by providing structured and engaging explanations of the TOEFL Listening section.

In addition, the team developed a short TOEFL test using Google Form, tailored to the listening strategies introduced during the session. The use of Google Form aimed to facilitate online assessment and allow students to directly apply the strategies they had learned. This form was utilized during the session to encourage active student participation and provide an opportunity for hands-on practice with the presented material.

Phase 2. Implementation

In the implementation phase, the socialization team organized the activity into five structured sessions designed to maximize student understanding and engagement. The material was tailored to the needs of Tamsis Senior High School students and focused specifically on the listening section of the TOEFL test.

The first session began with an introduction by the socialization team to all participants. This served as an opening to build rapport and clearly communicate the objectives of the activity. The team explained the importance of the TOEFL test—especially the Listening section—and outlined how the session would help students understand the structure, strategies, and common challenges faced in this component.



Figure 2. Introduction by the socialization team to all participants

The second session began with an initial presentation of core material covering the definition of TOEFL, its objectives, benefits, and the different types of TOEFL tests. This foundational explanation was intended to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of what the TOEFL entails and why it is important in both academic and professional settings.

Students were introduced to the TOEFL test as a global standard for measuring English proficiency, particularly in the context of higher education and international career opportunities. The team highlighted how TOEFL scores are widely accepted by universities and institutions around the world, making the test an essential tool for students who aspire to study or work abroad.

This session aimed to increase students' awareness of the test's relevance and prepare them mentally and strategically to engage with listening materials effectively.

A. Explanation of initial material such as the definition of TOEFL, its Purpose, and the different types of TOEFL tests.

Definition Of Toefl (Test Of English As A Foreign Language)

TOEFL is an international standardized test designed to measure a person's English language proficiency, particularly in academic and higher education contexts. The test was developed by ETS (Educational Testing Service) and is widely used by various institutions around the world, such as universities, scholarship organizations, companies, and government agencies.

Purpose Of Toefl

TOEFL aims to assess how well a person can understand, use, and analyze English in academic contexts, particularly for individuals whose native language is not English. Therefore, TOEFL is often a primary requirement for the admission of international students to English-speaking universities.

The Benefits of The TOEFL

Students were then introduced to the benefits of taking the TOEFL, which include:

- Fulfilling university entrance requirements.
- Increasing opportunities for scholarships.
- Enhancing employment prospects in international contexts.
- Measuring personal English proficiency.
- Supporting immigration or study abroad processes.

Types of TOEFL Tests

The presentation then moved to describe the three major types of TOEFL tests:

1. TOEFL iBT (Internet-Based Test): the most common version, covering four skills—reading, listening, speaking, and writing, with scores ranging from 0–120.

2. TOEFL ITP (Institutional Testing Program): used internally by educational institutions in Indonesia; it does not qualify for international university applications and has a score range of 310–677.
3. TOEFL Prediction Test: a simulation test designed to estimate a student's TOEFL ITP score, often used for internal academic selection.



Figure 3. Explanation of initial core material

The third session focused on practical strategies for approaching TOEFL Listening questions. Emphasis was placed on three key techniques that can significantly improve students' accuracy and confidence when answering listening items:

1. Focusing on the second line in short conversations

Students were trained to pay close attention to the second speaker's response in short dialogue sections. This line often contains the most critical information needed to determine the correct answer, as it may clarify, correct, or respond directly to the first speaker's statement. Recognizing this pattern helps students quickly identify the speaker's intent and the implied meaning behind the exchange.

2. Choosing synonyms instead of looking for exact word matches

This strategy encouraged students to develop their ability to recognize paraphrased ideas and synonymous vocabulary in answer choices. Since TOEFL listening questions rarely use the exact wording from the audio, students were taught to focus on understanding meaning rather than matching words. This technique enhances listening comprehension and prepares students for the variety of vocabulary they may encounter.

3. Avoiding traps with similar-sounding words by paying attention to context

Students were also warned about common distractors that involve words sounding similar to those in the conversation. To avoid falling into these traps, they were advised to always interpret words and phrases within the broader context of the conversation. Practicing this skill sharpens their analytical listening and reduces the chances of selecting incorrect answers based on sound alone.

These strategies were demonstrated through examples and short practice questions to help students apply the techniques in real-time listening scenarios.

B. Explanation of TOEFL Listening Section

Following the general overview, the session focused specifically on the TOEFL Listening Section, which measures the ability to understand spoken English in conversations and lectures. The presentation emphasized that this section requires intense concentration and quick comprehension of context. To help students succeed in this section, two key strategies (skills) were introduced:

Skill 1: Focus on the Second Line

Students were taught that in short conversations (Listening Part A), the answer to the question is often found in the second speaker's response. Therefore, listening carefully to the second line is crucial. An example was provided:

Dialogue:

Man: "Billy really made a big mistake this time."

Woman: "Yes, he forgot to turn in his research paper."

Question: What does the woman say about Billy?

Correct Answer: (D) He didn't remember to submit his assignment.

This example highlighted how the correct answer is based directly on the second line.

Skill 2: Avoid Similar Sounds

Students were warned about common traps in TOEFL listening questions, where incorrect answer choices include words that sound similar to the actual words spoken in the audio. Recognizing context and not relying on sound alone is essential. An example was:

Dialogue:

Man: "Why couldn't Mark come with us?"

Woman: "He was searching for a new apartment."

Question: What does the woman say about Mark?

Correct Answer: (B) He was looking for a place to live.

Distractor choices like "department," "research," and "church" were designed to confuse test-takers who rely on sound rather than meaning.

In addition to the explanation, each skill was followed by practice questions to test student understanding.



Figure 4. Explanation of TOEFL Listening Section

In the fourth session, students participated in a listening simulation where they practiced answering real TOEFL-style questions based on audio clips. This gave them a chance to apply the strategies in a test-like environment and build confidence. Additionally, they were encouraged to take notes while listening, identify key information such as main ideas, supporting details, and

speaker attitudes, and manage their time effectively. The session concluded with a group discussion where students shared their answers and reasoning, allowing them to learn from one another and further enhance their critical listening skills.



Figure 5. Participation of class XI students for the Simulation TOEFL Test

The final (fifth) session concluded with a Q&A and open discussion, where students asked various questions about the TOEFL test, shared their personal challenges in understanding English listening materials, and received constructive feedback and practical tips from the presenters. The open forum allowed for a deeper understanding of the students' needs and encouraged peer-to-peer learning.

Throughout the implementation, the socialization team utilized PowerPoint slides, interactive worksheets via Google Forms, and authentic TOEFL listening materials to foster an engaging and interactive learning environment. The students demonstrated great enthusiasm, actively participated in simulations and discussions, and expressed a stronger motivation and interest in preparing for the TOEFL after the session.



Figure 6. The conclusion of the presentation

Phase 3. Evaluation

The final phase of this activity was an evaluation session, where students who attended the socialization were given the opportunity to reflect on the material delivered. This was conducted through an open discussion and question-and-answer session, allowing students to express their

thoughts, ask for clarification, and share their challenges in understanding the TOEFL Listening section.

During this session, the students of Tamsis Seniornya High School actively engaged with the presenters. Many participants showed increased curiosity and asked insightful questions related to the TOEFL test particularly about test-taking strategies, available test locations, and free practice resources. Their questions demonstrated a growing awareness of the importance of TOEFL for future academic and career opportunities.

Several sample questions raised by the students included:

Questions 1 : “Where can we take the TOEFL test in our city?”

Students were informed about local test centers and advised to consult official ETS partners or local educational institutions.

Questions 2 : “Is the TOEFL Listening section really that difficult?”

The presenters explained that while it is often considered challenging, proper practice and strategy such as focusing on the second line and avoiding similar sounds can greatly improve performance.

Questions 3 : “Can we practice for free?”

Students were introduced to various online platforms offering free TOEFL listening practice, such as YouTube, test simulators, and ETS’s own website.

The socialization team also encouraged students to apply the listening strategies demonstrated during the simulation session and to create a consistent study habit.



Figure 7. Documentation with students after socialization

DISCUSSION

The implementation of this socialization program reflects the growing need for structured preparatory activities to improve students' TOEFL listening comprehension. The integration of strategies such as focusing on the second speaker, identifying synonyms, and avoiding traps with similar-sounding words is aligned with (Phillips, 2001) findings on effective TOEFL preparation techniques. These methods help students decode listening materials more critically and improve their test-taking accuracy.

According to (Rost, 2010), listening comprehension is a complex cognitive process involving prediction, inferencing, and meaning construction. Through repeated practice and strategic guidance, these cognitive processes can be strengthened. The use of real test simulations and authentic materials

supports this cognitive development and aligns with the communicative teaching approach as advocated by (Brown, 2001), emphasizing meaningful interaction and contextualized learning.

Furthermore, the delivery of materials via interactive PowerPoint presentations and the inclusion of student worksheets facilitated active learning. This approach is supported by (Wulandari, 2022), who found that blended and interactive learning environments significantly enhance students' understanding in listening tasks. Similarly, (Kurniawan, 2020) emphasizes that visual and digital media, when used appropriately, contribute to greater student engagement and retention in language learning, particularly in listening skills.

The use of Google Forms to assess students' listening performance in real-time not only made the session interactive but also provided immediate feedback, which is crucial for formative assessment. This approach corresponds with the argument by (Nicol, 2006) that effective feedback helps learners close the gap between current and desired performance.

Additionally, the program's positive outcome in raising students' awareness and motivation echoes (Harmer, J, 2007) statement that English serves as a 'lingua franca' in global communication, and thus learning English with clear goals—like succeeding in TOEFL—can significantly increase student motivation and long-term commitment. (Fitriani, 2021) also underscore that motivation plays a critical role in the development of listening competence, and that technological media can bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world listening demands.

Ultimately, the success of this socialization lies in its comprehensive approach, which combines strategic instruction, authentic practice, and motivational elements. It also exemplifies the application of communicative language teaching principles in a contextually meaningful manner, preparing students not only for TOEFL but for real-life communication in academic and professional domains.

CONCLUSION

The socialization program on the introduction of TOEFL at SMA Tamsis successfully increased students' understanding of the importance of English proficiency, especially in listening skills, as preparation for academic and global challenges. Through well-organized activities such as material presentations and interactive discussions, students received essential information about TOEFL, including the types of tests, functions, benefits, and strategies to achieve optimal results.

Although the program initially faced some obstacles, such as limited student knowledge and motivation, it proved that with proper guidance, engaging learning media, and strong support from teachers and school staff, students were able to better understand TOEFL and recognize the importance of English skills for their academic future.

This program demonstrates that early exposure to TOEFL can have a positive impact on students' mindset and encourage them to continuously improve their English abilities. Therefore, it is recommended that similar activities be conducted regularly and supported by schools to help students prepare for international educational opportunities and enhance their academic competitiveness.

Thank You Note

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