

## **The Effects of Drilling Technique on the EFL Students' Ability in Answering the Reading Section of TOEFL Test**

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### **Abstract**

*For students majoring in English Education at IAIN Parepare in the 2019–2020 academic year, the goal of this study is to ascertain whether or not the application of drilling techniques in reading might enhance reading scores on the TOEFL test. A quasi-experimental design was used in this investigation. In the 2019–2020 academic year, English Education majors at IAIN Parepare made up the study's population. A total of 70 students were involved in the study, divided into two sample groups of 35 students each for the experimental group and the control group.*

**Keywords:** *Drilling Technique, Perception, TOEFL Test, Reading, EFL Students.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The TOEFL is a standardised test used to assess the proficiency of English speakers who are not native English speakers (Philips, 2001). The three varieties are PBT, CBT, and IBT. The TOEFL exam gauges a student's proficiency in using and comprehending English in academic settings, including its hearing, structure, and reading comprehension. The content in the TOEFL reading part often covers subjects like history, science, economics, politics, and literature. A method for assisting pupils with their English is also reading (Bernhardt, 1991; Kern, 2000; Gunning, 2011; & Soemantri, 2011).

Students English Department of IAIN Parepare are required to take the TOEFL PBT/ITP as one of the requirements to take the Comprehensive Exam and take a Certificate of Degree. English students at IAIN Parepare must also obtain a minimum TOEFL score of 450, which will increase to 500 next year. However, for many students, the score is still less than 500. Furthermore, based on pre-observation and previous experience, most students struggle with the TOEFL reading section. This fact is related to some previous studies that discuss the difficulties

in the TOEFL reading section. First, Samad (2016) conducted a study to find out about undergraduate students' difficulties and their strategies in completing the TOEFL reading comprehension test. The result shows that there are five difficult reading aspects provided by the students. Next, Asrida & Fitrawati (2019) conducted a study at Universitas Negeri Padang to gain data on the students' difficulty skills in answering the reading section of TOEFL. By using quantitative research, the researcher explored that the students get difficult to mention the main idea questions, stated detail questions, transition questions, and context to determine the meaning of simple words and determine the tone of the passage. In addition, Riswanto (2019) studied the students' struggles in the TOEFL Reading section of the 2017 UIN Fourth Semester of the English Education Department Makassar Alauddin. It indicated that there were several difficulties encountered by students when answering the TOEFL reading section.

Based on these problems, lecturers are required to be able to overcome these problems by using appropriate methods and techniques. The researcher offered the drilling technique for overcoming students' reading problems. According to Richard & Schmidt (2002), the drill is a technique used in older language teaching methods, particularly the audiolingual method, to train sound or sentence patterns in the language through repetition or guided practice. Drilling often follows from the process, known as eliciting, of encouraging students to bring up a previously studied word, phrase, or structure. Next, Setyadi (2006) mentioned that drilling is a dialogue-based language teaching technique that emphasizes the formation of students' habits through repetition, memorizing grammatical structures, and tense transformations, while using the target language and the culture in which that language is spoken. It means that it is a key feature of the audio-lingual method approach to language teaching, which emphasizes the repetition of structural patterns through oral practice. In addition, drilling is potentially a good practice for beginning students to begin their English-speaking learning because it provides students with a rehearsal opportunity on the language practice pertaining to accuracy production (Malik et al., 2020).

According to Haycraft (2010), students can employ controlled exercises to pronounce helpful and proper sentence patterns along with the relevant terminology after the presentation and explanation of new structures. Oral exercises are the names for these patterns. They can be rigid; pupils frequently show during drilling that they have mastered structures but are then unable to apply them in other situations. Additionally, there are several sorts of exercises, including communicative drills, question-and-answer drills, transformation drills, chain drills, repetition drills, substitute drills, and drills for transformation and expansion.

The students are anticipated to become proficient in administering the TOEFL test using this manner. The drilling method is an audio-lingual approach that places an emphasis on spoken repetition of structural patterns. by instruction.

## **METHOD**

In this study, the researcher employed a quasi-experimental design. The experimental group will receive treatment, and the researcher utilized a pretest and posttest strategy. The research's participants were IAN Parepare students enrolled in Tadris Bahasa Inggris during the 2019–2020 academic year. The drilling method was the independent variable, and the dependent variable was the EFL students' scores on the TOEFL reading exam.

The research's target audience was IAIN Parepare's English Education Department students throughout the 2019–2020 school year. For this study, the researcher employed two classes. In this instance, the sample was chosen by the researcher using cluster random sampling. This indicates that class A was employed in the research. An example of

Table 1. Students' TOEFL Reading Score classification

Score Range	CEFR Skill Level	Category
21-30	A1	Beginner
31-47	A2	Elementary
48-55	B1	Intermediate
56-62	B2	Upper Intermediate
63-67	C1	Advanced

Source: (ETS, 2022)

## FINDINGS

### Students' Reading Test Scores

The table below presents the TOEFL reading scores of the students from the experimental and control group. It provides a detailed overview of their performance in the reading section of the TOEFL test. The scores can be used to analyze the effectiveness of the drilling technique in improving their reading abilities.

The frequency distribution of the students' reading scores is presented in the following data table. This table provides a detailed overview of the distribution of scores among the students, allowing for a more in-depth analysis of their performance. By examining the frequency distribution, it is possible to gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of the drilling technique in improving the student's reading abilities.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Pre-Test Score

Score Range	Skill Level	Category	Experimental Class		Control Class	
			Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
21-30	A1	Beginner	7	20	4	11.4
31-47	A2	Elementary	28	80	31	88.6
48-55	B1	Intermediate	0	0	0	0
56-62	B2	Upper Intermediate	0	0	0	0
63-67	C1	Advanced	0	0	0	0

Table 2 displays the pretest and posttest scores of both the control and experimental groups, each consisting of 35 students. Table 2 presents the frequency distribution of the pretest scores. In the experimental group, 28 students (80%) achieved an A2 level score, indicating have elementary category reading skills, while 7 students had beginner skills. None of the students in the experimental group reached intermediate, upper intermediate, or advanced reading skills. In the control group, 31 out of 35 students (88.6%) had A2 reading skills or were in the elementary category, while the remaining 4 students (11.4%) had beginner-level skills. None of the students in the control group reached intermediate, upper intermediate, or advanced reading skills.

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Post-Test Score

Score Range	Skill Level	Category	Experimental Class		Control Class	
			Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
21-30	A1	Beginner	0	0	6	17.1
31-47	A2	Elementary	31	88.6	28	80
48-55	B1	Intermediate	4	11.4	1	2.9
56-62	B2	Upper Intermediate	0	0	0	0
63-67	C1	Advanced	0	0	0	0

Table 3 shows the frequency distribution of post-test scores of both group experimental and control groups. The post-test of the experimental group that had been given the treatment shows a little improvement 31 students reached the A2 level or elementary reading skill category while students who get the intermediate level increase to 4 students, none students still in beginner reading skill in this post-test for the experimental group, but still no one reached the upper intermediate and advanced reading skill. Meanwhile, in post-test of the control group that had not been given the treatment shows 28 students have the elementary reading skill and only 6 students have beginner reading skill while there is 1 student got the intermediate reading skill, and also no one gets the upper intermediate and advanced reading skill.

#### Students' Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the Pretest and Posttest

The mean scores of the pretest and posttest results for both the experimental and control groups are presented in Table 4.4 below. This table provides a detailed overview of the average performance of the students in both groups. By comparing the mean scores, it is possible to analyze the effectiveness of the drilling technique in improving the students' reading abilities.

Table 4. Students' Mean Score and Standard Deviation

No	Variable	Experimental Class		Control Class	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Pre-Test	35.71	4.932	35.66	4.372
2	Post-Test	40.74	4.773	36.46	4.925
	Difference	5.03		0.80	

Table 4 above explains the differences of mean score in pretest and posttest to the experimental and control group. The result of data analysis shows that the mean score of both groups were hardly same in the pretest before the drilling reading technique conducting. The mean score of students in experimental group in pretest was 35.71 and the mean score of control group was 35.66 with. It means that the differences score both of groups in pretest was only 0.05. But, after the treatment was conducted, the students' score in posttest of both groups showed differences of mean score which is 4.28.

Even though the mean score both groups show the improvement in posttest, the improvement on the experimental group was higher than in control group. The mean score in experimental group posttest was 40.74, whereas the mean score in control group posttest was 36.46. It means that, the differences of pretest and posttest in control group was not so high, it

was 0.8 only. Meanwhile in experimental group, the difference of pretest and posttest was higher than in control group. The difference of the mean score of pretest and posttest in experimental group was 5.03. From this result, it indicates that drilling reading technique has an effect to improve the students' reading score in TOEFL test based on the mean score.

Next, for more information, it can be seen on the figure 1 about the comparison of mean score of experimental and control group both in pretest and posttest. The comparison of experimental and control group mean score can be seen in chart above.

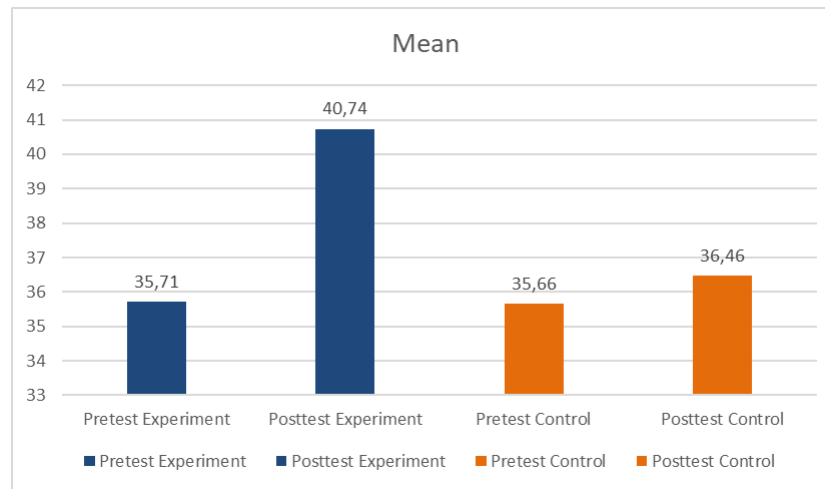


Figure 1. The Mean Score the Students' Pretest and Posttest

The figure 1 shows that the students' mean score in pretest and posttest were different. Both groups have improved of their mean score in posttest. However, the improvement in experimental group was higher than in control group. In experimental group the mean score in pretest was 35.71 improve to 40.74. Therefore, it can be said that the group which is given the treatment about the use of drilling technique is better than the group which is not given. It proves that reading drilling technique can improve the students score in reading section.

### Hypothesis Testing

Inferential analysis was used to test the result of hypotheses. The researcher used t-test (test of significance) for independent sample test. This is a test to know the significant difference between the result of students' mean scores in post-test in control and experimental group after being treatment.

Before conducting t-test (test of significance) independent sample test, the researcher analyzed test significance of normality and homogeneity as a prerequisite to analyze t-test in pre-test of both groups. Normality test is a test of the distribution of data in a group or variable to find out whether the data distribution is normally distributed or not. The normality test in this study used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. While homogeneity testing is a method used to determine whether data collected originates from the same population. The primary objective of homogeneity testing is to ensure that a number of populations to be measured are homogeneous.

These tests were intended to know the normality and homogeneity distribution of results pre-test so that implementation treatment either using conventional strategy or drilling strategy.

Based on the results of calculations using SPSS media with an alpha value of 5%, the following results are obtained.

Table 5. Test of Normality and Homogeneity

Pre-Test	Significance	
	Normality	Homogeneity
Experimental Group	0.200	0.834
Control Group	0.200	

Table 5 indicates that the significance of pre-test normality in control group (0.200), experimental group (0.200) and the significance of pre-test homogeneity (0.834). If the significance of normality and homogeneity are higher than the level of significance ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.05, thus this research was reasonable to done. In this case, the researcher could continue the process of conducting the treatment and analyze the result of research.

After conducting treatment and post-test, the researcher analyzed t-test (test of significance) independent sample test. As it was fore explained in Procedure of Collecting Data at Chapter III that the purpose of t-test was to Null Hypotheses (H0) and Alternative Hypotheses (H1) were accepted. It had been known that the level of significance ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.05 with degree of freedom (df) = (n1 + n2) – 2, where n = number of subject (35), (df) = (35 + 35) – 2 = 68.

To know there is significant between control and experimental class, t-test need to be higher than t-table. To see the significant between pretest and posttest in experimental class, the researcher used SPSS 25 to calculate the t-value of the score of pretest and posttest. The result displays in table below.

Table 6. T-Test of the Students' Pre-Test and Post Test

Df	Variable	T-Table Value	T-Test Value	Probability Value
68	<b>Pre-Test</b> (Experiment and Control Group)	1.997	0.051	0.959
	<b>Post-Test</b> (Experiment and Control Group)	1.997	3.697	0.000

The result of data analysis as summarized in table 6 on pre-test of control and experimental groups. The researcher found that t-table (1,997) was higher than t-count (0.051) and probability value (0.959) was higher than the level of significance at ( $\alpha$ ) = (0.05) so Null Hypotheses (H0) was accepted and in contrast if t-table < t-count and probability value < ( $\alpha$ ) so Null Hypotheses (H0) was rejected. Furthermore, aftertreatment, in the post-test the researcher found that the Probability value (0.000) was smaller than the level of significance at ( $\alpha$ ) = (0.05). The data also showed that the t-count value was higher than t-table (3.697 > 1.997). It indicated that the

Alternative Hypotheses (H1) was accepted and the Null Hypotheses (H0) was rejected. In the other word, drilling technique can improve the students Reading score in post-test after giving the treatment through the use of reading drilling technique. It means that the use of drilling technique could improve the students' Reading score in TEOFL Reading Section.

In conclusion, based on the research hypothesis, it was predicted that the implementation of drilling technique in reading would have a significant impact on reading score in TOEFL test. The hypothesis posited that the intervention would lead to an increase in reading scores compared to the pretest measurements. The obtained t-values from the pretest-posttest analysis were examined to test this hypothesis. The pretest t-value of 0.051 indicated no significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores, suggesting that the initial levels of reading score were similar. However, the posttest t-value of 3.697 revealed a statistically significant difference between the posttest scores and the null hypothesis, providing support for the hypothesis that drilling technique has an effect on TOEFL reading score. These findings suggest that the use of drilling technique in reading led to a meaningful change in increasing TOEFL reading scores.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

Relating to collected data through the pre-test and post-test, the comparison of the improvement of students' reading score of experimental and control class can be proved by analyzing the result of post-test. It was concluded that after giving treatment by using drilling technique, the result of post-test of experimental class was increased. There were no students still in beginner category (A1 level). 31 (88.6 %) students have reached elementary level category or A2 reading skill level and 4 students (17.1%) reached the intermediate level (B1) but there were no students still in beginner category (A1 level) after the treatment. Meanwhile in pretest, there were 28 students which in the elementary category (A2 level) but the students in A1 level or beginner were 7. The score of students which were in A2 level in pretest improved slightly and reached the A2 level after applying drilling reading strategy. Although most of the students still in A2 level after given the treatment there were improvement in score. The students still struggling achieving the upper intermediate (B2 level) and advance level (C2 level). The drilling technique can improve students in beginner level. To reach the intermediate and advance level the students need time and others technique for improving their score.

This research proved that the use of reading drilling technique can improve the students reading score in Reading section of the TOEFL test. The study shows there is a significance level of improvement in mean score of pretest and posttest. The mean score of pretests is 35.71 while after given treatment with drilling Reading strategy the posttest increases to 40.74. It also supported by the research of Rofi'ah, (2019) that the drilling mostly improved student's vocabulary for better reading comprehension. In addition, Rashid et al. (2021) proposed that effective reading strategies for improving performance in reading tests include the utilization of drilling techniques. These drilling techniques involve practicing specific reading skills repeatedly to enhance comprehension and speed. The researchers emphasized that drilling techniques, such as repeated reading exercises or timed reading sessions, can significantly contribute to better performance in reading assessments. By engaging in drilling activities, students can develop their reading fluency, accuracy, and overall reading comprehension abilities.

This drilling method has been proven provided several advantages that contributed to enhanced knowledge acquisition and reading skill development. Drilling uses the advantage of repetition practice based on behaviorism theory and mental process based on cognitivism theory. The behaviorism focuses on how repeated practice and feedback shape behavior and learning (Skinner, 1953). The behaviorist theory of learning which emphasizes the importance of repetition and reinforcement in learning. The theory suggests that learners acquire new behaviors through the process of stimulus-response-reinforcement. Drilling method based on this idea by making learners do specific tasks or exercises over and over to make them faster and more accurate. Repetitive practice through drilling reinforces information, leading to improved retention and recall (Lee & Yoon, 2017). Drilling facilitates the automation of skills, allowing learners to perform tasks more efficiently and accurately. Furthermore, drilling also can improve cognitive aspect. Cognitivism adds to behaviorism by stressing the role of mental processes, such as attention, memory, and problem-solving (Ausubel, 1968). According to this view, drilling can be improved by using cognitive strategies that help learners understand, organize, and connect the information they are learning. Dunlosky et al. (2013) found that repetition is good for memorization and skill development, but cognitive strategies can boost learning outcomes.

Furthermore, Karim et al. (2015) highlighted that drilling techniques are particularly advantageous when applied to the reading section of the TOEFL test. The use of drilling methods helps students to familiarize themselves with the test format, time constraints, and the types of questions commonly encountered. Through consistent practice and exposure to similar reading passages, students can enhance their ability to quickly identify key information, make accurate inferences, and effectively answer the reading comprehension questions within the allocated time.

Although the drilling had improved students' TOEFL Reading score, the students still not have a high reading skill based on CEFR level. The students mostly only have elementary level reading ability. It shows many students do not have a good enough comprehension in reading. The students do not really acquire the skills or topics assessed in reading section of TOEFL. The fact also emphasizes that, no matter they are English Department students and learn English every day in college; it cannot guarantee that they will have a good score of Reading in TOEFL. Some factor could affect the ability to read like the vocabulary of the students and the difficulty of the test. This opinion is supported by Qarqez & Radzuwan (2017) state that the ability to read is highly valued and important for the reading comprehension and understanding high context of the text. Asrida & Fitrawati (2019) mentioned that There were five most difficult items; main idea questions, stated detail questions, transition questions, context to determine meaning of simple words, and determine the tone of the passage. It means that the students got some problems in answering the TOEFL test of Reading test.

In summary, it emphasized the significance of drilling techniques as effective reading strategies for improving performance in reading tests, including the TOEFL exam. Incorporating drilling exercises into the preparation process enables students to enhance their reading skills, including fluency, accuracy, and comprehension. By practicing specific reading skills repeatedly, students become better equipped to tackle the challenges presented in reading assessments, leading to improved overall performance.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the finding and discussion, this research is concluded that the drilling technique can affect the ability of EFL students the reading section of TOEFL test. It was found that the score of the pretest and posttest had increased significantly. It significantly improved students Reading abilities from A1 level to A2 level.

In addition, there are three suggestions. First, the students of the English Education Department may consider the strategies found in this study to help them in facing TOEFL to answer the reading section. Since one of the most difficult factors for TOEFL test takers is time; how they can manage the time during the test effectively to increase their score, therefore, using the strategies proposed by this study can at least reduce to consumption lot of time. Second, the lecturers can propose the finding of this research to the students to try some strategies. The lecturer should develop and use any other strategies that also can be used by the students to make the students confident enough and successful in the test. Finally, for the other researchers, this study has some limitations and weaknesses. Firstly, the participants taken were limited. Thus, the researcher suggests that other researchers conduct the further study involving a large number of samples so that the findings will be more objective. Secondly, this study does not cover all topics or aspects in reading comprehension section. Therefore, further research is expected to analyze other strategies in Reading comprehension section of TOEFL test.

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