

An Analysis of TEFL Textbook Used by Engineering Students

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Abstract

Textbooks are needed for the learner to improve and master their English proficiency. The book plays an essential part in the teaching-learning process. Engineering students in ITATS used the TEFL textbook, which ILC (ITATS Language Center) lecturers created. TEFL textbook has been used several times, and researchers would like to explore whether the alignment of the materials influences students' perceptions of the TEFL textbook. In this study, the researcher wanted to analyze Engineering students' TEFL to know students' reactions to the TEFL textbook so that the author can make updates in the future. This research used qualitative research, and the researcher collected the data using close-ended questionnaires and interviews with the 39 students who used this textbook. The questionnaire asked about the clarity of the explanation, material, strategy, and questions. The result showed that the students enjoyed understanding the explanations and tips written in the textbook. They could analyze the exercise while they applied the materials from the textbook. The structure part explained using some tables and helped the students conceive the materials. The students had difficulty understanding the listening part, but the lecturer could explain and give some tips. The tips given made the students grasp the listening materials. This textbook helped students to understand the material, supplemented by the lecturer's explanation.

Keywords: English Proficiency, Textbook, Engineering Students

A. Introduction

Ability building of human resources is an essential component of institutional development, particularly in the education sector, like universities. Proficiency in

English is crucial for students wishing to improve their academic performance and become university graduates, as it is considered a literary language. English proficiency score is a requirement used for students'

university graduation. Previous studies mentioned several universities which make English proficiency scores a need. TOEFL score is also one of the requirements for students who want to register for the script examination (Kasim, 2016). Similar researches were done in University of Lancang Kuning (Elvi & Simanjuntak, 2018), in Ganesha Polytechnic Medan (Afri & Harahap, 2019), in UIN Syarif Hidayatulloh Jakarta (Alek et al., 2019), 2019), in STKIP Setia Budhi (Nurhayati & Nehe, 2016), and Institut Teknologi Adhi Tama Surabaya (ITATS) (Wardhani et al., 2022).

In ITATS, the students get a certificate after getting a minimal score on the English proficiency test. The certificate must still be active when the student graduates from the university. The aim is that the campus wants to adjust to the advancement of the world of work. Almost all departments or offices require English language skills when applying for a job and continuing to study for a graduate degree. The English proficiency test in Indonesia measures a person's English language

skills. Many companies ask job applicants to attach English proficiency scores to prove their English skills because Indonesia is one of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) countries. This requirement is one way to compete to improve students' English ability (Agustini et al., 2018).

To improve students' English proficiency scores, students need to be prepared for the test, especially for students who are not English majors. Students will be more knowledgeable about the English Proficiency test and more comfortable with the exam questions, making them more adept at answering them. Students must take a preparation course before taking the test (Abdulloh et al., 2021). The students needed materials which will support them in understanding the materials of the English proficiency test.

TEFL textbook materials are essential sources which can facilitate the students and teachers to learn English Proficiency materials. English proficiency preparatory courses' teaching and learning environments heavily rely on the

TEFL textbook. An appropriate EFL textbook helps EFL teachers plan lessons and activities more efficiently and allows EFL students to successfully meet their learning objectives (Wuttisrisiriporn et al., 2020). That is why lecturers in the ITATS Language Centre created their textbook to support engineering students in ITATS to prepare themselves to face the English proficiency test named TEFL (Test of English Foreign Language) test. This textbook is used only for internal. This textbook was customized for engineering students who had never taken the English proficiency test.

This research analyzes the TEFL textbook used at ITATS based on students' perceptions. This textbook covers a broad range of study aids, self-study books, and classroom supplies, focusing on various components of the English proficiency test, such as reading, listening, structure, and writing expression. This study aimed to assess the benefits and drawbacks of the TEFL textbook used in ITATS while taking accessibility and content quality into account.

B. Research Method

The data in this study were analyzed using qualitative research method. The research employed a descriptive qualitative methodology. The study examined the TEFL textbook used by engineering students in ITATS. The lecturers of the ITATS Language Center (ILC) wrote the textbook. The institution uses the TEFL (Test of English Foreign Language) to measure students' English proficiency. This textbook has 80 pages. While analyzing the TEFL textbook, the researchers gathered data using a close-ended questionnaire, interview, and notepad to write down the findings. The questionnaire was filled out by 39 students who joined the TEFL course program. Close-ended questionnaires obtained reactions from students. The questionnaire asked about the clarity of the explanation, material, strategy, and questions. Then, we continued with randomly interviewing the students. Then, the TEFL textbook and the students' responses served as the data.

C. Result and Discussion

TEFL score is one of the requirements for ITATS students who will have thesis examination and graduation. The students have minimal scores to get a TEFL certificate. To help the students improve, introduce, and pass the minimal score, the ITATS Language Centre (ILC) organizes a TEFL course for ITATS students every semester. The students must have twelve meetings before they get the TEFL test. The students get material in the form of a TEFL textbook, which contains 12 units and includes three skills tested in the TEFL Test: structure and written expression, reading, and listening. This textbook explained each skill, strategies or tips and tricks on how to do the test, many exercises for each material, and exercises for test simulation. The students must learn all of the materials in the textbook. They must finish it in the twelve meetings. The students learn structure and written expression in seven meetings, reading in three meetings, and listening in two meetings. The TEFL course was conducted in the offline class. In a

week, the students had two meetings, a ninety-minute meeting. Based on this explanation and the questionnaire given to the students, it is clear that they have read and done the exercises in this textbook. The students said this textbook was appropriate for engineering students who wanted to take English proficiency tests because this book contained all of the materials needed by engineering students unfamiliar with English proficiency tests.

Three points will be explained in this part. The researchers would explain students' perceptions of the TEFL textbook. The students gave their perception of each skill: structure and error correction, reading, and listening.

Students' Perception of Structure in TEFL Textbook

Structure and written expression were taught in the first to fifth meeting. In the textbook, there were materials and exercises based on the materials. The exercises were around 10 to 20 numbers. There were multiple-choice and written expression exercises. There were nine

units to explain structure and written expression. A unit consists of one to two kinds of structures. The students learned one to two units in ninety minutes in a meeting.

The students enjoyed learning structure and written expression, although, at the beginning of the lesson, they were confused about working on reported expression problems. The students learn basic

TOEFL while joining a common support class, especially in English 2. The students said the structure was the most challenging skill they had to understand. The students could not understand several materials which were explained in the textbook (Figure 1). The students needed the lecturer's explanation to understand the materials better.

1. COMPOUND SENTENCE

A compound sentence consists of two independent clauses of equal importance, joined together with a conjunction.

A. By using Cumulative Conjunctions: *and, not only...but also, both and, as far as, etc.*

SIMPLE	COMPOUND
Taking off his clothes, he jumped into the river.	He took off his clothes and jumped into the river.
In addition to useful advice, he gave me financial help.	He gave me not only a useful advice but also a financial help.

B. By using Adversative Conjunctions: *but, still, yet, nevertheless, however etc.*

SIMPLE	COMPOUND
In spite of very bad weather, they succeeded in conquering Mt. Everest.	The weather was very bad, still they succeeded in conquering Mt. Everest.
He had every qualification for the post except sincerity.	He had every qualification for the post, but he was not sincere.

Figure 1.

The compound sentence (Figure 1) was one of the examples that were hard to understand by the students. There were several phrases which the students, such as compound sentences, independent clauses, and cumulative conjunctions, could not understand. Some students did not understand how to change simple

sentences into compound sentences. They also confused the use of appropriate conjunctions for compound sentences. To face this problem, the students needed a lecturer's explanation to help the students understand how to use this material. The students said the lecturer gave many tips and tricks to

solve the problems and understand the materials.

The authors of the TEFL textbook created various tables that could make the students understand the structured materials more efficiently. It was evident from what students said that they understood what was described in the TEFL

textbook even though the lecturer did not explain. However, with the explanation from the lecturer, students better understood the materials that would be used for the TEFL test. The lecturer's explanation is two ways of communication, and it helped the students understand the meaning of the textbook's content.

Patterns:

➤ **Active voice:**

General pattern: **Subject + do/does + Verb**

Subject Singular : He, She, It, a thing/person

Subject Plural : I, You, They, We, more than a thing/person

Affirmative (+)	Subject Singular + V ₂ Subject Plural V ₁	Subject Plural are A : Adjective Subject Singular + is + N : Noun I am A : Adverb
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I enjoy math. Sarah enjoys math. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are Marine engineering students. Paul is smart enough to pass the exam.
Negative (-)	Subject Singular + doesn't + V ₁ Subject Plural don't	Subject Plural are A : Adjective Subject Singular + is not + N : Noun I am A : Adverb
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You don't want to be an engineer. Sarah doesn't want to be an engineer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The civil engineering students are not at campus on weekends. IT Support Technician is not the best paid job.
Interrogative (?)	Does + Subject Singular + V ₁ Do Subject Plural	are Subject Plural A : Adjective is + Subject Singular + N : Noun am I A : Adverb
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you like the proposal? Does Paul like the proposal? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the students in the class on Sunday? Is an IT Support Technician the best paid job?

➤ **Passive voice:**

General pattern: S + is/am/are + V₃

Subject Plural : You, They, We

Figure 2

Figure 2 explained the material clearly and helped the students understand the materials, but the materials have not yet been completed. We can see this in the affirmative column. For the subject singular, the verb was only added with

s. The authors must add with es. We found many verbs with es in the exercise, and some students were confused. They obscured the differences between s and es. Some students stated that the explanation of the TEFL textbook was incomplete

because many explanations were still lacking. It was difficult for students to understand the materials. Fortunately, it was covered by the lecturer's description so that students could better master the materials in the TEFL textbook.

In addition, many students were still confused about distinguishing between the middle and rightmost tables. Even though there was already a difference in the table, it was still not understood by students if the lecturer did not explain it. Students learned six tenses and subject-verb agreement in structure and written expression materials. It confused them about distinguishing them even though the TEFL textbook has been reported in detail about the subject, auxiliary, and verb used. If these six

tenses were poured into questions randomly, students would be confused about the answer choice and why they chose that answer. With this condition, the role of lecturers was needed to help students understand the characteristics and types of questions so they could answer correctly. Lecturers could also provide tips, tricks, and keywords that made it easier for students to work on problems.

Explain a material; it should also be given an example related to the material described. In the TEFL textbook, the authors of the TEFL textbook provided an example question for each material that has been described. The sample questions can be seen in Figure 3.

Example :

If I had known her address, Iher.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| a. could see | c. would have visited |
| b. would visit | d. will visit |

The best answer is **C** because from the first sentence, we know that the sentence uses type 3.

Figure 3

Figure 3 is one example that exists in the TEFL textbook. From the example, we knew that the answer's explanation was not too detailed and

precise. It was only stated that the first sentence used type 3, but the description did not explain which part showed type 3, and the authors should

explain it in detail. There were some examples where the explanation was incomplete, but there were also some examples where the explanation was very complete. So, the reader could easily understand the reason for the answer. The whole explanation was also straightforward to understand for readers, especially engineering students who still think English is difficult.

In other examples, the authors explained the model in more detail than this example. The students knew why they should choose the answer given to the example question. Unfortunately, the authors did not provide example questions and explanations on some of the material that has been explained. Some students find it difficult because there are no example questions, especially in the tenses section. It happened when the lecturer asked students to understand the material and answer the questions before the class. Students also said, "It is better if the formulas are given next to the questions so we know what part of the question we can work on. Because structure and written expression have

various formulas, we are confused about which one to use". But with the tips given by lecturers when teaching, students feel helped, making it easier for students to understand the questions. For example, when there is in + year, it must be followed by a past verb. It is beneficial for students to understand the problem and shorten the processing time.

Upon closer inspection, several questions did not match the material that had been described. For example, Unit 6 discusses gerunds and infinitives. Researchers found two queries in the structure and written expression section that did not match gerunds and infinitives. The bottom line placement is inappropriate, confusing the course participants to work on it. It caused the question to be ambiguous. In addition, some questions did not have answers. Thus, during the teaching and learning process, the lecturer in the class had to revise the answers. From the textbook used by the lecturer, the researcher can see and read the notes in the textbook if the answer to the question is incorrect.

The book's shortcomings above did not discourage students from learning using TEFL textbooks. Most of the students said that the content of this TEFL textbook was easy to understand, and the questions presented in this book were easy to accept after students understood the material and learned from the lecturers. The font used in the TEFL textbook was clear, making students comfortable reading it and in the book. The space used was ample so students could add important notes when discussing the exercises in the book. The students enjoyed learning structure and written expression.

Students' Perception of Reading

Skill in TEFL Textbook

Reading skill was only having two units in the TEFL textbook. The first unit, unit 10, was the reading and exercise review materials. This unit had the most pages among structure and listening skills. In the materials part, the authors wrote the skills that would come out in the TEFL Test. The authors also wrote the strategies for how to do each skill. Several ways and examples were given in the

reading unit. All of the explanations of strategies were written in English; the students were too lazy to understand the strategy and were too confused to digest English. They were always relying on explanations from lecturers who were simpler. The lecturers explained bilingual, so the students were more apparent.

Reading materials were written in a structure. It was organized well, from the easiest to the most difficult. The authors wrote about topic sentences in the first part. They explained clearly. Starting from the meaning, the type of questions about the main idea, the strategies used for the topic in a passage and paragraph, and the last example in question forms. The authors wrote the strategies to answer the reading question. The strategy of answering reading questions was presented in a language easily understood by engineering students who consider English difficult because students felt that they only had a little vocabulary in English. In addition, the strategies written were also to the point and precise (Figure 4). The authors wrote the word strategies into a sub-chapter

and bold (Figure 4). The aim is to make it easier for readers to locate

strategies when they practice working on review questions.

Strategies:

• **Main idea/ Topic of a passage:**

1. Read first sentence of each paragraph. A paragraph is a distinct section of a piece of writing, usually indicated by a new line, and indentation.
2. Find out and notice some repeated words (keyword) that mostly occur in those sentences. Those words may be different but have similar meaning/ similar in context, such as: distributing / distributed / to distribute /.

After the students had learned about the materials, the TEFL textbook reviewed reading skill questions. The exercise reviews of reading skills were in the same unit as the materials. The students could apply the strategies the lecturer taught in the textbook. Understanding reading questions was easier than structure, but many students struggled to find the answers in the passages. The students also said that the texts were too long, making them feel bored to read. The numbers which showed lines of the passages helped the students to read.

Students' Perception of Listening Skill in TEFL Textbook

Listening skill has three parts in the TOEFL test. The authors of TEFL textbook menyesuaikan dengan ketentuan yang ada di TOEFL. The

first part has thirty questions, and the first section is a short conversation between two people. The second part is a long conversation between two people, with four questions for a lengthy discussion. The last part is a long monologue, which is used to answer four questions. The TEFL textbook explained the rules, gave examples of the questions, provided the strategies to respond to each part of the listening skill, and exercises for each part. The textbook explained the rules and strategies clearly. The lecturer also added the explanation of the strategies clearly and used bilinguals to make the students more understand.

Listening was one of the easiest and hardest skills for the engineering students. Part A was the easiest part for the students. Based on the strategies given by the textbook and

lecturer, the students paid attention to the second speaker for part A. Then, the students said, "Although we did not know the meaning of what the speakers said, we applied the tips and tricks given. We did not choose the words which have been said or similar pronounce". This part was the easiest for the students. They paid more attention to part A, and this was their way to boost their listening score. It differed from parts B and C. Those two parts were the hardest for the students because they did not understand the speaker's meaning, and it was too long. The students could not focus on the speaker's words because it was too long. Then they stated that the speakers' voice was too fast for them and the audio was not good enough. The audio was good, but the sound was unclear in one or two numbers.

D. Conclusion

Engineering students who want to do English proficiency tests need to have courses. Many engineering students were unfamiliar with the English proficiency test and thought that an English proficiency score

would not be required for them to apply for a job. So, that is why this textbook was good enough for engineering students. This textbook contained the materials needed by engineering students, such as the explanation of each skill (number of questions, time arrangement, etc.), strategies for doing the questions, exercises, and test simulation. However, several parts of this textbook must be revised to make it more acceptable for the reader.

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