

Developing TOEFL-Based Vocabulary Building Materials for The Students of IAIN Palangka Raya

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Abstract

This research aimed to design and develop TOEFL-based vocabulary-building materials for students at IAIN Palangka Raya. The research addresses the need for specialized English instructional materials for TOEFL preparation. Existing TOEFL preparation resources are often generic and not tailored to the specific needs of Indonesian students. The purpose of this research is to create materials grounded in the KKNI framework to enhance students' proficiency in reading, writing, listening, speaking, vocabulary, and grammar. Data were gathered through needs analysis, reference studies, material development, expert validation, and tryouts using observations, questionnaires, and interviews. The developed materials include sequences of tasks designed to incrementally build the language skills required for the TOEFL. Expert validation and empirical try-outs confirmed that the materials effectively address students' needs and support TOEFL preparation. This research demonstrates a systematic approach to developing targeted instructional materials that fill a gap in available TOEFL resources. Using these materials is expected to improve students' lexical knowledge and lead to higher TOEFL scores, providing a model for data-driven development of instructional materials based on local contexts.

Keywords: TOEFL Vocabulary Building; Instructional Materials; Needs Analysis; Material Development; Language Skills

INTRODUCTION

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is a high-stakes English proficiency exam widely recognized by universities worldwide as a critical factor in admission decisions. As a standardized assessment, TOEFL offers a convenient, valid, and reliable measure of non-native English speakers' language skills. In Indonesia, TOEFL scores play a crucial role in university entrance procedures, particularly at institutions like IAIN Palangka Raya. Here, satisfactory TOEFL performance is mandatory for students to progress through academic milestones such as undergraduate thesis examinations. Minimum score requirements are set at 500 for English Department students and 450 for others. However, achieving these passing TOEFL scores presents a significant challenge for many IAIN Palangka Raya students, hindering their academic progress. A specific area of difficulty identified is the advanced vocabulary encountered in TOEFL sections, particularly reading comprehension. This advanced vocabulary surpasses the current proficiency levels of many students (Tim Penyusun KTSP TBI IAIN Palangka Raya, 2006). Preliminary observations suggest that the current English curriculum may not be adequately equipping students with the lexical skills needed for TOEFL success. Course materials, syllabi, and learning objectives likely require a more in-depth needs analysis and potentially rely heavily on lecturer perceptions rather than data-driven approaches. Additionally, the curriculum's focus on general English may not be sufficiently tailored to address the specific vocabulary tested on the TOEFL. The recurring issue of students failing the TOEFL further highlights the existing vocabulary gap.

This research aims to address this critical need by conducting a comprehensive needs analysis to guide the development of targeted TOEFL vocabulary-building materials specifically for the English Education Research Program at IAIN Palangka Raya. This approach will involve surveying students to identify their specific vocabulary deficiencies within the context of TOEFL reading comprehension. The collected data will then be used to create targeted TOEFL vocabulary-building materials tailored to the identified needs of IAIN Palangka Raya learners. This data-driven approach will ensure that the materials are directly relevant to the challenges faced by students and address the specific vocabulary required for TOEFL success.

By improving students' mastery of TOEFL vocabulary, these materials have the potential to significantly enhance their test performance. They will bridge the gap in existing Indonesian-focused TOEFL preparation resources, offering much-needed, localized support specifically designed for IAIN Palangka Raya students' exclamation. Furthermore, if the needs analysis methodology proves successful, it can be applied to inform future materials development across all faculties within IAIN Palangka Raya, offering a replicable framework for addressing language learning needs in a targeted manner.

The importance of well-designed instructional materials in language learning is widely recognized. A quality textbook functions as an effective learning tool, encompassing essential content for successful language acquisition. These materials play a vital role in any classroom setting, serving as a bridge between teachers and students (Esseff, 1980). Crucially, creating appropriate instructional materials requires careful tailoring to the specific needs of the student population, ensuring alignment with their subject areas and learning objectives. Utilizing materials directly related to student's academic fields is believed to enhance motivation for learning English as the content becomes inherently relevant to their overall academic goals.

Educational materials play a crucial role in language instruction, influencing the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes. Nikoopour and Amini (2011) as cited in Rohimajaya et al., (2021) highlight that these materials encompass a wide range of resources drawn from literature, music, news media, and educational programs. The selection of these materials is pivotal, requiring careful consideration to ensure they are suitable for both learners and educators alike. Effective educational materials are characterized by several key attributes. Firstly, they should offer engaging learning activities that capture learners' interest and motivation. This engagement not only sustains learners' attention but also enhances their active participation in the learning process. Secondly, these materials should support the organization of teaching and learning activities, providing clear structures and frameworks that facilitate comprehension and retention of language content. Moreover, educational materials should embody a specific language learning approach or methodology, aligning with the pedagogical goals and objectives of the curriculum. Whether focusing on communicative language teaching, task-based learning, or other methodologies, the materials should reflect these principles in their design and content. Additionally, they should serve as models for accurate and appropriate language use, demonstrating correct grammar, vocabulary usage, and discourse patterns relevant to the learners' proficiency level (Cunningsworth & Tomlinson, 1984). By adhering to these criteria, educational materials not only enhance the instructional process but also contribute to the overall quality of language learning outcomes. They empower educators to create dynamic and effective learning environments that cater to diverse learner needs and promote continuous improvement in language proficiency. Thus, the careful selection and implementation of educational materials are essential components of successful language instruction strategies (Hutchinson & Waters, 1991). While the studies mentioned above demonstrate the effectiveness of tailored materials in general language learning contexts, the present research focuses specifically on the development of materials designed to address the unique needs of students preparing for the TOEFL exam. Several studies have explored this specific area, recognizing the importance of targeted preparation materials for success in the TOEFL.

Sacko (2016) conducted research aimed at developing self-directed listening tasks specifically tailored for TOEFL preparation. The study targeted learners at the independent language learning center at Yogyakarta State University, focusing on both beginners and intermediate learners. The self-directed listening tasks were designed to enhance essential listening skills necessary for success in the TOEFL exam. The research emphasized the importance of autonomy in learning, enabling students to take charge of their learning process through self-directed activities. These activities were structured to simulate TOEFL listening tasks, thereby preparing learners to effectively comprehend and respond to various types of listening materials encountered in the exam. Sacko's approach underscored the significance of aligning instructional materials with the specific requirements and challenges posed by standardized tests like the TOEFL. By developing tasks that catered to different proficiency levels and integrated relevant TOEFL topics, the study aimed to empower learners to improve their listening abilities autonomously. This approach not only enhanced learners' readiness for the TOEFL but also fostered self-confidence and motivation in their language learning journey. However, a gap remains in the availability of targeted TOEFL vocabulary-building materials specifically designed for Indonesian university students, particularly those attending IAIN Palangka Raya. Existing resources often lack focus on the specific linguistic and cultural context of Indonesian learners. This lack of localization can hinder their effectiveness and student engagement. Furthermore, current resources may not address the specific vocabulary demands of the TOEFL reading comprehension section. The present research offers several key contributions to the field of English language teaching and TOEFL preparation. Firstly, it emphasizes the importance of data-driven needs analysis in developing effective learning materials. By conducting a comprehensive student survey specifically focused on TOEFL reading comprehension vocabulary, the research ensures that the created materials are directly relevant to the lexical challenges faced by IAIN Palangka Raya students. Secondly, the research focuses on the development of targeted TOEFL vocabulary-building materials for Indonesian university students, a currently under-served population in existing resources. These localized materials will address the specific linguistic and cultural context of Indonesian learners, further enhancing their effectiveness. Finally, the success of the needs analysis methodology has the potential to be replicated across various faculties within IAIN Palangka Raya, offering a framework for developing targeted learning materials across diverse disciplines. In conclusion, this research aims to conduct a comprehensive needs analysis to identify the specific vocabulary challenges faced by IAIN Palangka Raya students in the TOEFL reading comprehension section and develop targeted TOEFL vocabulary-building materials based on the identified student needs, evaluate the effectiveness of the developed materials in improving students' TOEFL vocabulary mastery and test performance and explore the potential for applying the needs analysis methodology to inform the development of targeted learning materials across other faculties within IAIN Palangka Raya. By addressing the critical need for targeted vocabulary support specifically designed for Indonesian university students preparing for the TOEFL, this research has the potential to significantly enhance the test performance of IAIN Palangka Raya students. Furthermore, the development of localized materials and the exploration of a replicable needs analysis methodology offer valuable contributions to the field of English language teaching for TOEFL preparation.

METHOD

Developing a reading textbook model will be classified as research and development (R&D). According to Borg and Gall (1983), educational research R&D is taken for its point of view; for this research, design is a process used to develop and validate educational products. This

process is usually referred to as the R&D cycle, which consists of researching research findings, field testing it in the setting where it will be used eventually, and revising it to correct the deficiencies found in the field-testing stage. In more rigorous programs of R&D, this cycle is repeated until the field-test data indicate that the product meets its behaviourally defined objectives (Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 772).

Table 1. Types of Data will be collected using the instruments

Data	Instrument	Content	Subject/Respondent
Need Assessments	Questionnaire	Students demand on toefl-based vocabulary building materials	English lecturer of IAIN Palangka Raya
		Students' needs on toefl-based vocabulary boulding materials	Students of IAIN Palangka Raya
Expert Validation	Questionnaire	Evaluation of the draft	Expert in Materials Development
Try-Out	Interview	The applicability of the developed toefl-based vocabulary building materials from student's and lecturer's perception	The students and the English lecuturers of IAIN alangka Raya

According to Latief (2008), the term 'research' does not only refer to the need assessment before developing the product. This 'research' is also needed in the data collection and analysis for interpreting the feedback given by the expert in the expert validation steps and feedback obtained from the try-out. Regarding Research and Development design (R&D), the two research and development concepts need to be explained. The research covers the need assessment, the data collection, and analysis in expert validation and trying out. Besides that, the validating step includes expert validation, not only trying out the product. Therefore, the research design used for the research is adapting Borg and Gall's (1983) procedures (Latief, 2008, pp. 2-3). The subjects of this research include English lecturers and all students enrolled in the English Education Research Program at IAIN Palangka Raya. Participants were selected using purposive sampling. The initial step in this research design was to analyze the students' needs for TOEFL-based vocabulary-building materials. Subsequent steps included reviewing relevant research findings, developing the product based on these findings, conducting field tests, and then evaluating and revising the product. The research employed questionnaires and interviews as instruments. Data were collected from student questionnaires and interviews, as well as from English teachers and experts who provided feedback on the appropriateness and effectiveness of the materials. This data was then identified, organized, calculated, classified, and evaluated. The instruments used in the research are outlined as follows: This research employed two primary instruments: questionnaires (both open-ended and closed-ended) and unstructured interviews. Open-ended questionnaires aimed to explore subjects' experiences, interests, motivations, and needs, while closed-ended questionnaires facilitated data analysis. Unstructured interviews were conducted with lecturers to gain insights into TOEFL-based vocabulary-building materials tailored to student interests and needs.

Various models for developing educational materials under the Research and Development (R&D) approach have been proposed by experts. While these models share common goals, their procedures vary depending on educational contexts. For this study, the researcher chose to utilize the ADDIE Model. This model is designed to ensure that learning objectives are achieved and provides a framework for ongoing evaluation of student needs.

Research and Development Procedures

1. Analysis

In the analysis phase, the researcher identifies and comprehensively understands students' needs. Goals and objectives for the course are also identified based on the existing syllabus. Consideration is given to the timeline and budget required for the research. This phase parallels needs analysis, which involves a set of procedures for gathering information about students' needs (Richards, 2003, as cited in Sukirman, 2012).

2. Design

In this phase, the researcher designs English materials for students by defining the learning goals and objectives, creating a blueprint or framework for the materials, specifying the target population, selecting appropriate delivery methods, and identifying relevant resources.

3. Development

This phase builds upon the preceding analysis and design phases. It involves several key steps. First, researchers list activities that support student learning of the materials. Second, they select suitable methods based on students' learning styles. Third, they develop and produce English materials that address both student needs and course objectives. Next, they organize the materials and validate them with experts to ensure alignment with student needs and course goals. Finally, the finalized materials are ready for implementation.

4. Implementation

This phase involves the product trial, where the developed materials are implemented in the teaching-learning process.

5. Evaluation

This phase is designed to assess the quality of the implemented materials. It involves evaluating the content of the developed materials, with input from an expert to validate the quality.

Identification of the Students' Interests, Motivation, and Needs

Ideally, the developed materials should align closely with the specific English learning needs of students. Given that students vary in their requirements, the content taught should be tailored accordingly, focusing solely on what is essential for them. Identifying students' needs is crucial as it directly impacts the success of the program. Therefore, the development of TOEFL-based vocabulary-building materials in this study will be informed by the outcomes of the needs assessment, ensuring they meet the identified needs of the students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

A questionnaire was distributed to 253 students and lecturers involved in teaching vocabulary at Tadris Bahasa Inggris IAIN Palangka Raya to gather data on students' specific learning needs, particularly in preparation for the TOEFL test. Using this data, the initial draft of the materials was developed.

To collect information regarding the suitability of vocabulary learning materials for TOEFL preparation including aspects such as difficulty level, effectiveness, attractiveness, usefulness, topics, design, skills, exercises, teaching methods, and comparison with existing books—a questionnaire (Appendix 1) was administered to the vocabulary course lecturer teaching in the first grade during the academic year 2019/2020. The data gathered from the questionnaire have been identified and analyzed as follows:

1. The Objectives and Topics

Based on the questionnaire completed by the lecturer, it was found that the current textbook aligns with the established syllabus. However, each study program needs to develop materials that are tailored to meet the specific needs of its students. These materials must fulfill two primary criteria: (1) they should align with educational objectives and (2) they should address the specific needs of the students they are intended for. Moreover, the materials should resonate with the study program's overall philosophy regarding English vocabulary learning and be appropriate for the course or grade level.

For instance, materials may be selected because they reflect the study program's emphasis on fostering critical thinking about controversial issues and perspectives. Alternatively, they may be chosen because they align with curriculum goals of presenting diverse voices from various historical periods or cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, materials may be included to support specific learning outcomes aimed at preparing students for the TOEFL examination.

2. The Design

The lecturer emphasized that materials featuring colorful photos, pictures, graphs, charts, maps, and illustrations are preferred by students. It has been shown that students comprehend and retain information better when visual aids and other supportive materials are used, instead of relying solely on technical jargon. These visual and spatial representations are particularly effective for conveying complex ideas that require simultaneous consideration.

3. The Skills

Regarding skills, the students require proficiency in four key areas: listening, speaking, reading, and writing within the materials. The lecturer highlighted the importance of integrating all these language skills, as doing so enhances lesson variety and expands the scope of activities. This comprehensive approach not only enriches the learning experience but also boosts students' motivation to learn English.

4. The Questionnaire about the students' needs for TOEFL-based materials for English vocabulary learning

253 students from the TBI program at IAIN Palangka Raya, in their second and third years, completed a questionnaire distributed to and filled out by the students. The researcher then identified and tabulated the data. Each component was evaluated using percentages, which were categorized as follows: 100% (all), 90-99% (mostly), 80-88% (a lot of), 50-79% (many), 30-49% (some), 1-29% (few), and 0% (none).

The interpretation of the data revealed that a significant majority of students (90-100%) indicated strong agreement or preference across various aspects of the questionnaire. This high percentage suggests a clear consensus among students regarding their preferences and needs in the context of English language materials. In contrast, a smaller proportion of students (1-29%) expressed minimal agreement or preference in certain areas, indicating areas where improvements or modifications may be beneficial to better align with student expectations and requirements.

5. Design of the Book

The questionnaire focused on different types of illustrations or visuals preferred by students in English vocabulary learning, aiming to identify key factors in designing TOEFL-based materials. All students (100%) emphasized the importance of instructional material design, highlighting the need for it to be engaging. Similarly, all students (100%) expressed a preference for colorful pictures, with more than half (53%) indicating that colorful visuals enhance their motivation and comprehension of English vocabulary learning. Conversely, none of the students (0%) showed interest in black-and-white pictures or photographs. These findings underscore the critical role of visuals in the learning process.

6. Topics of material

Regarding the topic, in question four, all students (100%) agreed that it should be engaging. A majority (90%) indicated that they find topics interesting when they relate to their background or prior knowledge. Additionally, more than half of the students (60%) expressed a preference for topics that cover new information they wish to learn, while the vast majority (93%) favored topics related to daily life.

7. Skills

Regarding skills, many students (76%) identified speaking skills as essential for learning English vocabulary. Following closely, many students (73%) prioritized reading skills. Writing skills were chosen by half of the students (50%), while listening skills were ranked last, selected by 43% of the students, in mastering English vocabulary learning.

8. The Selection of The First Draft of the Material

In terms of skills, most students (76%) emphasized the importance of speaking skills for learning English vocabulary. Following closely, many students (73%) prioritized reading skills. Writing skills were chosen by half of the students (50%), while listening skills were ranked last, selected by 43% of the students, in their efforts to master English vocabulary learning.

Analysis of the Development of Instructional Materials

Development of Instructional Materials

The objectives of developing these TOEFL-based materials for English vocabulary learning are:

- 1) To offer students intellectually stimulating TOEFL preparation materials that align with their interests and needs, ensuring they are within their lexical and grammatical comprehension.
- 2) To create activities that facilitate easier comprehension of the instructional materials.
- 3) To provide students with topics and tasks that enhance their knowledge, skills, and proficiency in English vocabulary specifically for the TOEFL exam.

Based on the preceding discussion, both the lecturer and the primary content subject instructor serve as consultants in the selection, explanation, clarification, and application of TOEFL-based materials for English vocabulary learning development. The materials for TBI students were developed following adapted criteria derived from the needs analysis, focusing on objectives, design, and material selection, as previously outlined through questionnaires and interviews.

Validation of the Developed Instructional Materials

The materials were subsequently reviewed and assessed by an expert. After developing three sections of instructional materials, the initial draft underwent consultation sessions, during which feedback for improving the draft was gathered.

The researcher created an evaluation form for experts and vocabulary course lecturers to assess the draft. The form was designed without specific limitations on questions, aiming to gather

comprehensive feedback. The evaluation revealed both strengths and weaknesses identified in the draft.

Discussion

The Positive Points of the Draft

The evaluation underscored several positive aspects of the instructional materials:

1. The cover design was unanimously praised as attractive and appealing, with clear, appropriate, and consistent typography that was easy to read. The text was presented in a clean, neat, and well-formatted manner.
2. The materials were acknowledged for their attractive unit arrangement and logical organization of sections.
3. Clear objectives were set for the materials, and the topics were aligned with students' needs and interests. The topics covered were diverse, relevant to students' subject content, and kept up-to-date.
4. In terms of grammar review, the tasks were found to be pertinent and communicative, allowing students to work through them quickly either individually or in groups. These tasks effectively integrated students' knowledge with the topics and language they were studying, supported by clear and understandable instructions.
5. The content coverage was deemed appropriate and responsive to student's needs and interests. It was well-structured to directly support instructional objectives, ensuring student comprehension.
6. Additionally, the instructional materials were noted for effectively addressing language aspects, employing grammatical structures that served as accurate models for meaningful language use.

In conclusion, the evaluation of the instructional materials highlighted several positive attributes that underscore their potential effectiveness in English language education. The materials were praised for their attractive and clear design, well-organized structure, and alignment with students' interests and educational needs. Additionally, they were noted for their communicative and integrated approach to grammar review, comprehensive content coverage, and effective use of language models. These strengths collectively suggest that the instructional materials are well-positioned to enhance learning outcomes and support engaging and effective English language instruction.

The Negative Points of the Draft

The initial critique focused on several aspects of the instructional materials. Firstly, there were concerns about the physical appearance due to inconsistent letter spacing, which could potentially distract students. Secondly, the grammar reviews were found lacking in representing the underlying grammar rules accurately, prompting suggestions for improvement.

Thirdly, inconsistencies and lack of clarity were noted in the examples provided. These examples were considered inappropriate and unclear, requiring a better definition of concepts for student comprehension. Lastly, the language complexity occasionally exceeded the students' proficiency level, making it difficult for them to understand.

In response to these issues, several recommendations were made for refining the first draft of the materials. Firstly, example texts were advised to be shortened to maintain student engagement and interest. Secondly, visuals such as pictures should directly relate to the topics discussed to enhance relevance and understanding. Additionally, technical elements like proper nouns and connectors need clearer indications, such as underlining or highlighting. Lastly, it was suggested to split subunits into multiple sessions to improve learning outcomes and

engagement. Overall, these refinements aim to address the identified weaknesses and improve the instructional materials' suitability and effectiveness for first-year TBI students at IAIN Palangka Raya.

The preliminary evaluation of the instructional materials identified several areas requiring improvement. One notable issue was the inconsistent letter spacing, which had the potential to distract students. Another critical concern was related to the grammar reviews, which were noted for their lack of accurate representation of underlying grammar rules and therefore required significant enhancement. These findings underscore the importance of refining these aspects to optimize the overall quality and effectiveness of the instructional materials.

Furthermore, there were inconsistencies and lack of clarity noted in the examples provided. These examples were deemed inappropriate and unclear, requiring a better definition of concepts to ensure student comprehension. Additionally, the complexity of the language used sometimes surpasses the students' proficiency level, making it challenging for them to grasp. To address these shortcomings, several recommendations were proposed for refining the first draft of the materials. Firstly, it was advised to shorten the example texts to maintain student engagement. Secondly, visuals such as pictures should be directly relevant to the topics covered to enhance relevance and understanding. Moreover, technical elements like proper nouns and connectors need clearer indications, such as underlining or highlighting. Lastly, splitting subunits into multiple sessions was suggested to improve learning outcomes and maintain student interest.

These modifications aim to rectify the identified weaknesses and enhance the suitability and effectiveness of the instructional materials for first-year TBI students at IAIN Palangka Raya.

The evaluation of the instructional materials revealed both positive aspects and areas needing improvement. Regarding instructional clarity, experts found the instructions clear, appropriate, and easily understandable for students. Additionally, the materials were deemed relevant to students' needs and interests, effectively demonstrating language skills with correct grammatical structures.

However, several weaknesses were identified. Firstly, there were issues with inconsistent letter spacing, which could potentially distract students. Secondly, some grammar reviews did not accurately reflect underlying grammar rules. Thirdly, the examples provided were inconsistent and unclear, requiring better clarity and definition of concepts. Lastly, the language complexity occasionally exceeded students' proficiency levels, posing comprehension challenges.

In response to these findings, experts and English lecturers provided recommendations for revising the first draft. They advised adapting content and removing less relevant details to enhance engagement. Specific suggestions included ensuring visuals are directly relevant to topics, clearly highlighting technical elements like proper nouns, and connectors, and structuring subunits into multiple sessions for improved learning outcomes.

Following the revision process based on validation and tryouts, the instructional materials are expected to better suit the needs of first-year TBI students at IAIN Palangka Raya. It is important to note that this study focused exclusively on developing English instructional materials aligned with KTSP for TBI first-year students, and therefore its applicability to other programs of the same grade may vary.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research underscores several key recommendations to enhance English instructional materials. Firstly, there is a critical need to develop materials that closely align with student needs, institutional objectives, and the curriculum of the study program. Lecturers need to revise and effectively integrate these materials into their teaching practices. Additionally, fostering an interactive learning environment is crucial to enhance student

engagement, whether through the inclusion of real-world objects in classrooms or the use of simulations.

Moreover, future development of materials should be tailored to the specific majors of students, such as natural science, social science, and language studies. This approach ensures that content and activities are finely tuned to meet disciplinary requirements and enhance relevance. These recommendations collectively aim to optimize the effectiveness and applicability of English language education across all educational levels.

Specific suggestions from this study include the imperative for English instructional materials to be developed with meticulous attention to student needs, aligned with institutional goals and the study program's curriculum. Lecturers are urged to integrate these materials effectively into their teaching methodologies. Creating an environment that fosters active student participation, whether using simulated or real-world objects, is crucial.

Furthermore, ongoing material development should be informed by the specific majors of students, such as natural science, social science, and language studies. This targeted approach ensures that the content and activities within the materials are tailored to the unique demands of each academic discipline, thereby enhancing their utility and relevance.

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