

Students' Perceptions and Understanding of TEIL-Based Teaching Materials

Noor Adzima Madiena^{1*}, Aidil Syah Putra¹, Zahratus Syifa¹, Noviyanti¹

¹English Education Department, Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang, Indonesia

*Corresponding Address: nmadiena@umt.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate students' perceptions and understanding of Teaching English as an International Language (TEIL)-based teaching materials in an EFL context. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach involving 15 English Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang who had experienced the use of TEIL-oriented materials in their learning process. Data were collected through classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. The findings reveal that students generally perceived TEIL-based teaching materials positively in terms of relevance, clarity, and usefulness. The materials helped students develop a broader understanding of English as a global means of communication and increased their awareness of diverse English varieties. Furthermore, students reported that TEIL-based materials enhanced their confidence in using English for international communication and reduced anxiety related to native-speaker norms. This study suggests that integrating TEIL principles into English teaching materials can contribute to more inclusive and contextually relevant English language learning in EFL settings.

Keywords: TEIL; teaching materials; student perception; EFL context; global English

BACKGROUND

The role of English has undergone a significant transformation from being a language primarily associated with native-speaker communities to becoming a global means of communication used by people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In contemporary international contexts, English frequently functions as a lingua franca among speakers who do not share the same first language, particularly in

domains such as education, business, technology, and intercultural exchange. This global use of English reflects the reality that the majority of English users today are non-native speakers. Consequently, the expanding global role of English has challenged traditional assumptions about language ownership and has prompted a re-evaluation of how English should be conceptualized and taught in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts (Kirkpatrick, 2020).

Despite these global changes, traditional English Language Teaching (ELT) practices have long been dominated by native-speaker norms, particularly British and American English. These norms are often presented as ideal linguistic targets, emphasizing native-like pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, and cultural appropriateness. Such an orientation may create unrealistic expectations for learners and contribute to feelings of inadequacy when students compare their language performance with native-speaker standards. Moreover, this approach does not accurately reflect real-world English use, where effective communication often occurs among non-native speakers with diverse linguistic backgrounds (Galloway & Numajiri, 2020).

In response to these limitations, Teaching English as an International Language (TEIL)

has emerged as an alternative pedagogical framework that views English as a shared international resource rather than the exclusive property of native-speaking countries. TEIL emphasizes the legitimacy of multiple English varieties and recognizes that English develops differently across sociocultural contexts. Instead of prioritizing native-speaker norms, TEIL encourages learners to focus on intelligibility, communicative effectiveness, and adaptability in international communication. This perspective supports learners in developing practical language competence aligned with their actual communicative needs (Kirkpatrick, 2020).

A key objective of TEIL is to prepare learners to communicate effectively with speakers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This preparation involves raising students' awareness of Global Englishes and fostering an understanding that variation in pronunciation, grammar, and discourse is a natural characteristic of international English use. Research has shown that exposure to Global Englishes-oriented instruction helps learners develop more inclusive attitudes toward English and reduces anxiety related to linguistic correctness. As a result, students tend to demonstrate greater confidence and willingness to use English in authentic communicative situations (Lee & Suzuki, 2020).

Teaching materials play a central role in implementing TEIL principles in classroom practice. Beyond providing linguistic input, teaching materials function as carriers of cultural values, communicative norms, and ideological perspectives. When materials predominantly represent native-speaker cultures and contexts, they may convey a narrow view of English and limit learners' understanding of its global nature. In contrast, materials that incorporate diverse cultural perspectives and authentic international communication contexts are more likely to support learners' engagement and meaningful learning experiences (Widodo & Savova, 2023; Tomlinson, 2021).

TEIL-based teaching materials are therefore expected to reflect real-world English use by incorporating international topics, multiple English varieties, and intercultural interaction scenarios. Such materials enable students to perceive English as a flexible and accessible tool for global communication rather than an abstract academic subject. Previous studies indicate that students respond positively to teaching materials that are relevant to their academic contexts and future professional needs, particularly when these materials emphasize practical communication skills and cultural diversity (Warda & Dalimunte, 2022).

Students' perceptions of teaching materials significantly influence the effectiveness of English language learning. Perception affects how students engage with learning content, interpret instructional input, and apply knowledge in communicative situations. Positive perceptions are associated with increased motivation, active participation, and deeper understanding of learning materials. In EFL contexts, students tend to value materials that are clearly organized, contextually relevant, and supportive of real communication rather than materials that focus exclusively on grammatical accuracy or examination-oriented learning (Baron & Masrin, 2024; Ginting et al., 2025).

Recent research has increasingly examined the implementation of Global Englishes and TEIL-oriented materials in various educational contexts. These studies consistently report that learners develop greater awareness of English as an international language and demonstrate more inclusive attitudes toward linguistic diversity after engaging with such materials. Additionally, students often report increased confidence and readiness to use

English in diverse communicative contexts, highlighting the pedagogical potential of TEIL-based materials in fostering inclusive learning environments (Marlina & Giri, 2022; Suminar & Gunawan, 2024).

However, despite the growing body of literature on TEIL and Global Englishes, empirical research that specifically investigates students' perceptions and understanding of TEIL-based teaching materials remains limited, particularly in EFL higher education contexts. Many existing studies focus on teachers' beliefs, curriculum design, or textbook analysis, while learners' direct experiences and interpretations of TEIL-informed materials receive comparatively less attention. This gap indicates a need for learner-centered research that foregrounds students' voices in evaluating how TEIL principles are understood and experienced in actual classroom settings (Galloway & Ruegg, 2022).

Therefore, this study aims to investigate students' perceptions and understanding of TEIL-based teaching materials in an EFL context. Specifically, it explores how students perceive the relevance, clarity, and usefulness of TEIL-oriented materials and how these materials contribute to their understanding of English as an international language. By focusing on learners' perspectives, this study seeks to provide empirical insights that can inform the development of more inclusive, contextually appropriate, and pedagogically effective TEIL-based teaching materials for EFL classrooms.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to explore students' perceptions and understanding of TEIL-based teaching materials in an EFL context. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows an in-depth examination of learners' experiences, interpretations, and perspectives toward instructional materials. This design is appropriate for capturing subjective views and meanings constructed by participants in natural learning settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study focused on describing how TEIL principles were implemented through teaching materials and how students perceived their relevance, clarity, and usefulness.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of undergraduate students enrolled in the English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, as the study required participants who had been exposed to TEIL-oriented or globally oriented English teaching materials during their coursework. A total of 15 students participated in this study. This number was considered sufficient to obtain rich qualitative data and to represent diverse student perspectives regarding the use of TEIL-based materials in the learning process (Guest et al., 2014).

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Data were collected using two primary instruments: classroom observation and semi-

structured interviews. Classroom observation was conducted to examine how TEIL- based teaching materials were implemented during instructional activities and to observe students' engagement, interaction, and responses to the materials. An observation checklist was used to guide the observation process, focusing on indicators such as material relevance, student participation, and communicative practices in the classroom.

Semi-structured interviews were employed to gain deeper insights into students' perceptions and understanding of TEIL-based teaching materials. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions that allowed participants to express their opinions freely while enabling the researcher to ask follow-up questions for clarification. This technique is widely used in qualitative research to capture participants' authentic experiences and perspectives (Kallio et al., 2016).

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved identifying, organizing, and interpreting patterns within the qualitative data. The analysis process followed several stages: data familiarization, initial coding, theme identification, theme review, and interpretation. Data from classroom observations and interviews were triangulated to enhance the credibility of the findings. Thematic analysis was chosen because it allows flexibility in analyzing qualitative data while maintaining systematic procedures (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Context and Data Collection Process

This study was conducted at the English Education Study Program, Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang, involving students who had experienced the use of TEIL-based teaching materials in their English learning process. Data collection took place over a period of one academic semester during regular classroom instruction. The research setting allowed the researcher to observe authentic classroom interactions and students' responses to the teaching materials in a natural learning environment.

Data were collected through classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. Classroom observations focused on how TEIL-based materials were implemented by the lecturer and how students engaged with the materials during learning activities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted after the observation sessions to explore students' perceptions and understanding of the materials more deeply. The combination of these data collection techniques enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive and credible data regarding students' experiences with TEIL- based teaching materials.

Students' Perceptions of TEIL-Based Teaching Materials

Overall Perceptions of Material Relevance

The findings from classroom observations and interviews indicate that most students had positive perceptions of the TEIL-based teaching materials. Students perceived the materials as relevant to their learning needs because they presented English as a tool for international communication rather than focusing solely on native-speaker norms. Many participants

reported that the materials helped them understand that English can be used flexibly in diverse global contexts. This finding aligns with previous studies suggesting that globally oriented materials enhance learners' engagement and motivation in EFL classrooms (Marlina & Giri, 2022).

a. Perceived Clarity and Accessibility

Students generally found the TEIL-based materials to be clear and accessible. The materials were considered easy to understand because they included familiar topics and real-life communication contexts. Students noted that examples of English use from different countries helped them grasp the main ideas of the lessons without feeling pressured to imitate native-speaker models. This supports earlier findings that students value materials that are well-structured and comprehensible, as clarity plays a crucial role in shaping positive learning perceptions (Ginting et al., 2025).

b. Engagement and Classroom Participation

Observation data revealed that students were more actively involved during lessons that used TEIL-based materials. Students participated more frequently in discussions and were more willing to express their opinions in English. This increased participation suggests that TEIL-oriented materials can create a more inclusive learning atmosphere where students feel confident using English despite linguistic variation. Similar outcomes were reported by Baron and Masrin (2024), who found that authentic and contextually relevant materials support active learner engagement.

Students' Understanding of English as an International Language

Awareness of English Variety and Global Use

Interview findings show that students developed a better understanding of English as an international language after being exposed to TEIL-based materials. Many students acknowledged that English is used by speakers from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds and that differences in pronunciation or expression are natural. This awareness reduced students' anxiety about making mistakes and encouraged them to focus on intelligibility rather than native-like accuracy. These findings are consistent with research emphasizing the role of Global Englishes-oriented instruction in fostering inclusive views of English use (Galloway & Ruegg, 2022).

Shift from Native-Speaker Orientation

Several students reported a shift in their perspectives on English learning. Instead of viewing native speakers as the sole standard of correctness, students began to value effective communication and mutual understanding. This shift reflects the core principles of TEIL, which emphasize communicative effectiveness over conformity to native-speaker norms. Such changes in learners' understanding have also been observed in previous studies on TEIL and Global Englishes pedagogy (Suminar & Gunawan, 2024).

Relationship Between Findings and TEIL Theoretical Framework

Alignment with TEIL Principles

The results of this study demonstrate a strong alignment between students' experiences

and the theoretical principles of TEIL discussed in the theoretical framework. The positive perceptions and enhanced understanding reported by students indicate that TEIL-based teaching materials effectively operationalize concepts such as linguistic diversity, intelligibility, and intercultural communication. These findings support the argument that TEIL-oriented materials can bridge the gap between theoretical perspectives and classroom practice (Kirkpatrick, 2020).

Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this study are consistent with earlier research that highlights students' positive responses to globally oriented English materials. For instance, studies by Marlina and Giri (2022) and Sung (2018) reported that exposure to World Englishes and Global Englishes materials contributes to greater learner confidence and awareness. However, this study adds to the literature by providing empirical evidence from an EFL context in Indonesia, focusing specifically on students' perceptions and understanding of TEIL-based teaching materials.

Implications of the Findings

Theoretical Implications

The findings contribute to the growing body of research on TEIL by reinforcing the importance of learner-centered perspectives in evaluating teaching materials. This study highlights that students' perceptions and understanding are essential indicators of the effectiveness of TEIL-based materials. The results support theoretical claims that English should be presented as a global and inclusive language in EFL education.

Practical Implications

Practically, the findings suggest that English lecturers and material developers should consider incorporating TEIL principles into teaching materials. Materials that reflect diverse English use and international communication contexts can help students develop confidence and readiness for real-world communication. This approach can also support more inclusive and motivating English learning environments in EFL contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate students' perceptions and understanding of TEIL-based teaching materials in an EFL context. The findings indicate that students generally hold positive perceptions toward the use of TEIL-based materials, particularly in terms of relevance, clarity, and usefulness for learning English as an international language. The materials helped students develop a broader understanding of English as a global means of communication and reduced their reliance on native-speaker norms. Students demonstrated increased confidence and willingness to use English in diverse communicative contexts, suggesting that TEIL-oriented materials effectively support the development of communicative competence aligned with international communication needs.

In addition, the study reveals that exposure to TEIL-based teaching materials enhances students' awareness of linguistic diversity and the legitimacy of multiple English varieties. This understanding contributes to more inclusive attitudes toward English use and encourages

students to focus on intelligibility and meaning rather than linguistic accuracy alone. The results support the theoretical assumptions of TEIL and Global Englishes that emphasize communicative effectiveness, contextual relevance, and intercultural awareness in English language teaching. However, the findings should be interpreted cautiously, as they are based on a limited number of participants from a single institutional context.

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