

Conference Paper

Bridging the Gap between the Students and Teachers' Perspectives on the Learners' Needs to Prepare the English Course Materials

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Abstract

This study aimed at identifying the students and teachers' perspectives on the learners' needs in order to prepare the English course materials. This study investigated their perspectives which focused on the learners' needs in relation to the language skills and content areas that should be learned in classes. This research adopted a quantitative method to investigate the learners' needs. The questionnaires used in this research was focused on learners' needs in term of the English course materials that are related to their requirements of English competency that should be mastered by the students. The samples of this study consisted of 30 Computer Engineering diploma students from the 3rd and 5th semester, and 5 English lecturers who have been working at School of Applied Science at Telkom University (SAS Tel U). The results showed that the significance value for language skills (LS) and language content areas (LCA) were 0.939 and 0.459 ($p > 0.05$). It showed that the two variances were not equal. Therefore, the use of variance to compare the average population (t-test for Equality of Means) in the t-test, should use the equal variance assumed based. At equal variance assumed based, it was obtained that the t value for LS was 10.821 and a significance level of $p = 0.000$. For LCA, the t value was 2,459 and a significance level of $p = 0.019$. All of the results showed that $p < 0.05$. It meant that there were significant differences in terms of the LS and LCA between the students and lecturers' perspectives. The level of LS and LCA between them were also fundamentally different.

Keywords: perspectives, learners' needs, English course materials.

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1. Introduction

In English course practice, the materials play an important role in teaching and learning activities. Well-selected and designed of English course materials can provide learners an opportunity to get acquainted with a variety of language examples to share, discuss,

write, scrutinize and use language structures and vocabulary that does not follow a rigid arrangement.

There are some challenges to prepare the English course materials, such as to investigate, identify, select, create, modify and develop the materials which are appropriate to the learners' needs. One of the most difficult problems concerning English course materials preparation is that the materials should be exclusively or primarily subject specific. It is also hard to identify the learners' needs, wants and interests to learn based on their knowledge and experiences they have. Most of them have different needs, wants, and interests and those things could influence their motivation in the learning process or activity. In other words, in preparing the English course materials, they should emphasize the awareness the learners' needs. As Basturkmen (2010) stated that all contributors should investigate the learners' needs as a prerequisite in order to develop an effective and successful teaching and learning syllabus in various fields of language learning. Therefore, the preparation of English language course is essential for facilitating the learners to improve the particular proficiency they need, and to be fully carrying out the performers in the perspectives they want.

By having the appropriate objectives based on the learners' needs in teaching and learning process, teachers can develop or select the English materials for the learners in order to achieve the objectives and fulfil the learners' needs. Moreover, English course materials could fulfill a students' need in applying the English language proficiency in their life and in their learning activities in order to reach a satisfactory level in their specialist subject studies in science and technology area. As Mansouri (2010) stated that the students who are learning English for the purposes of studying science and technology are expected to have a high degree of motivation if the materials they are using in their English language courses have a scientific and technological content and exhibit the distinctive features of science and technology. Wijayanto (2017) also said that the students need to learn English and gain adequate knowledge to practice it in their own subject areas and for their real life. It is hoped that if they have studied English during their universities years, it would be easy for them to adapt to their work conditions and would be easily employed in industries.

The students of School of Applied Science of Telkom University (SAS Tel U) are expected to have English proficiencies in relation to communication skills in a global standard. It is hoped that they can contribute to the development of the nation directly, and compete in the global marketplace. They learn English to gain and develop the appropriate knowledge and skills through English. This research aims to identify the Computer Engineering students and English lecturers' perspectives on the learners' needs in order to prepare the English course materials. The identification is done by

investigating their perspective which focused on the learners' needs in term of the English course materials. Hopefully, this research would help the learners to practice the theory of the course for their studies related to communication activities performance and in their real work context as IT specialists in the future. The findings of this research could also become "a grand design' for the English practitioners with a clearer view in preparing the English course materials.

2. Literature Review

Focusing on the students' needs in preparing and designing the English course materials is a challenging job. Hutchinson and Waters (2010) have classified needs into *necessities, wants and lacks*. In their classification, *necessities* are focused on the demands of the target situations. Then, *lacks* that refer to the gap between learner's existing language proficiency and the needed target situation language needs, and *wants* that are related to learners' view on what their needs are.

Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2010) suggested that when designing the English language course, the teachers should take into consideration learners' needs by focusing on all the language skills, especially in speaking and listening. Then, the syllabus should also match what the students learn in their academic with what they will face in professional domains. Then, Nour El-Imane (2013) stated that the appropriate materials will help students enhance their level and as an attempt on facing the challenge to prepare the tailor-made subject-specific materials for them. Related to the materials' appropriateness, Nawangsari (2014) stated that the materials should fulfil four aspects of appropriateness namely appropriateness of the content, the language, the presentation, and layout. Therefore, observation and needs analysis should be conducted before developing appropriate materials for students in order to identify the students target needs and learning needs as needs analysis is an important element in material development. Lesiak-Bielawska (2015) contended that well-prepared materials will be a vital component of English course practice. He also stated that designing them from scratch is the best view if all else fails, and making an endeavor at the choice of appropriate materials is essential.

3. Research Method

This study adopted a quantitative method to investigate the learners' needs viewed from the students and lecturers' perspectives to prepare the English course materials for the Computer Engineering students at Telkom University. Cohen et al. (2011)

recommended the purpose of quantitative research is to test a theory or check a claim. In order to be as objective as possible, this research tries to minimize any effect that their own particular beliefs, values, and opinions might have on the information. In this research, the questionnaires used in this research was focused on learners' needs in term of the English course materials that are related to their requirements of English competency that should be mastered by the Computer Engineering students. The samples of this study consisted of 30 Computer Engineering diploma students from the 3rd and 5th semester, and 5 English lecturers who have been working at SAS Tel U for 2 years or more.

This research also used *t-test* analysis Levene's Test for Equality of Variances to determine the gap perspectives between the Computer Engineering students and lecturers on language skills (LS) and language content areas (LCA). The used of *t-test* analysis of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was for determining the gap between the Computer Engineering students and lecturers' perspectives on language skills and language content areas. The author used the questions on the list of the questionnaire to review the data processing quantitative and comparative test data. The lists of questions related to the learners' information of English proficiency in term of the LS & LCA. To review the data processing quantitative and comparative test data, the author used the questions on the list of the questionnaire related to the learners' information of English skills that the learners most likely to use now, and want or need to study. Then the author also identified the similarities and differences between the students and lecturers' perspectives in term of the learners' needs of English course materials.

4. Discussion

There were several gaps between the Computer Engineering Students and English Lecturers related to the learners' needs of English proficiency in term of the English language skills (LS) and content areas (LCA). The below tables showed the different perspectives between the students and lecturers related to the learners' information of English skills and content areas that the learners most likely to use now, and want or need to study.

4.1. T-test of language skills

For language skills, based on the calculations results of the different test of the two average data presented in table 2 above, it could be seen that in the column Levene's Test for Equality of Variances had a significance value of 0.939 ($p > 0.05$). It showed

TABLE 1: Group Statistic of the Computer Engineering Students and English Lecturers.

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Mark	English Lecturers	5	101.8000	4.76445	2.13073
	Computer Engineering Students	30	77.1667	4.70571	.85914

TABLE 2: Independent Samples T-Test for Equality of Means of the Computer Engineering Students and English Lecturers’ Perspectives on the Learners’ Needs in relation to the language skills.

Mark		Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
	Equal variances assumed	.006	.939	10.821	33	.000	24.63333	2.27653	20.00170	29.26497
	Equal variances not assumed			10.722	5.387	.000	24.63333	2.29742	18.85292	30.41375

that the two variances were not equal. Therefore, the use of variance to compare the average population (*t-test for Equality of Means*) in the *t-test* testing, should use *the equal variance assumed* based. At *equal variance assumed*, it was obtained that the *t* value was 10.821 and a significance level of $p = 0.000$. The results showed that $p < 0.05$, it meant that there were the differences perspectives in language skills (LS) between the English Lecturers and Computer Engineering Students. It could be said that the level of LS between the English Lecturers and Computer Engineering Students were fundamentally different.

4.2. T-test of language content areas

TABLE 3: Group Statistic of the Computer Engineering Students and English Lecturers.

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Mark	English Lecturers	5	10.6000	1.67332	.74833
	Computer Engineering Students	30	7.9667	2.28161	.41656

For language content areas, based on the calculations results of the different test of the two average data presented in the table above, it could be seen that in the column Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances had a significance value of 0,459 ($p > 0,05$). It

TABLE 4: Independent Samples T-Test for Equality of Means of the Computer Engineering Students and English Lecturers' Perspectives on the Learners' Needs in relation to the language content areas.

Mark		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
	Equal variances assumed	.562	.459	2.459	33	.019	2.63333	1.07081	.45476	4.81191
	Equal variances not assumed			3.075	6.773	.019	2.63333	.85646	.59430	4.67236

showed that the two variances are not equal. Therefore, the use of variance to compare the average population (*t-test for Equality of Means*) in the *t-test* testing, should use *the equal variance assumed* based. At *equal variance assumed*, it was obtained that the *t* value was 2,459 and a significance level of $p = 0.019$. The results showed that $p < 0.05$, it meant that there were the differences perspectives in language content areas (LCA) between the English Lecturers and Computer Engineering Students. It could be said that the level of language content areas (LCA) between the English Lecturers and Computer Engineering Students were fundamentally different.

4.3. English language skills that the learners most likely to use now

In English language skills that the learners most likely to use, there were similarities and differences perspectives between the students and lecturers'. The explanation of the range numbers of the choices is explained as the frequency of the language skills which are given in the classroom. It is noted that 1: rarely, 2: sometimes, and 3: often. The similarities and differences were explained as follow.

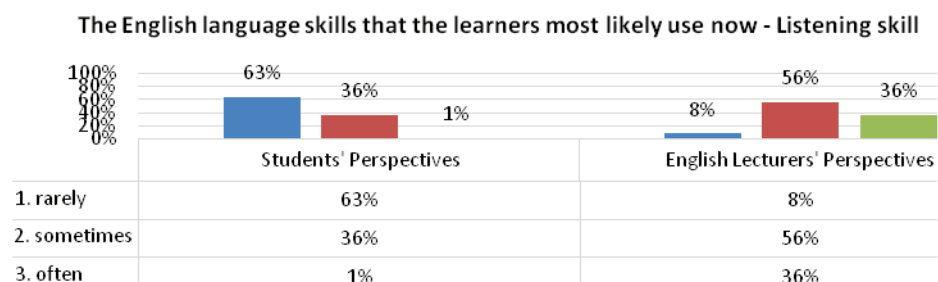


Figure 1: The students and lecturers' perspectives on the listening skill that most likely to use now.

Based on Figure 1 above, the students and lectures had different perspectives on the listening activities that most likely to use. The students stated that they rarely use the listening activities in class. However, the lecturers stated that the sometimes give those activities to the students. It could be said that the perspectives between the lecturers and students related to the listening skill that the learners most likely to use were significantly different.

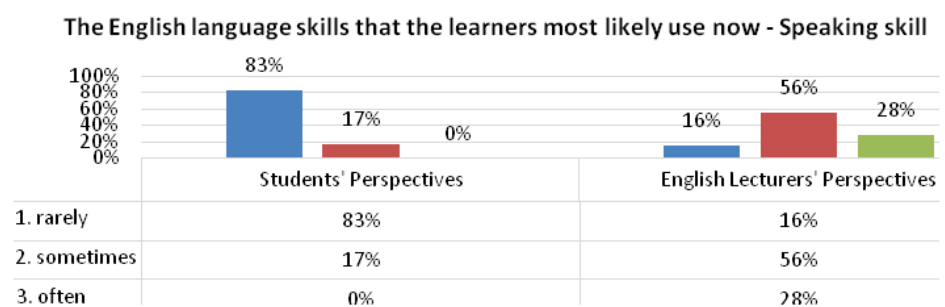


Figure 2: The students and perspectives on the speaking skill that most likely to use now.

In speaking skill activities, there were also the significant different in the students and lecturers’ perspectives. Most of the students stated that they rarely practice those kinds of activities, while the lectures stated that they sometimes or even often ask the students to practice those speaking activities.

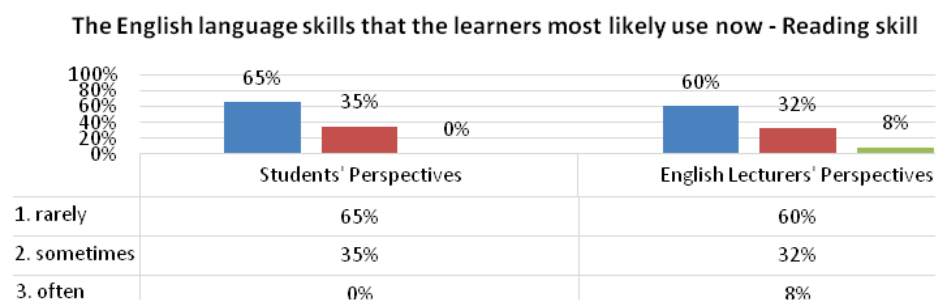


Figure 3: The students and lecturers’ perspectives on the reading skill that most likely to use now.

In reading skill, as illustrated in Figure 3 above, both of the students and lecturers had the similar perspectives related to the frequency of the reading activities. They sometimes do those activities in the classroom.

The students and lecturers had the similar perspectives related to the frequency of the writing activities most likely to use. They stated that they rarely do those kinds of activities.

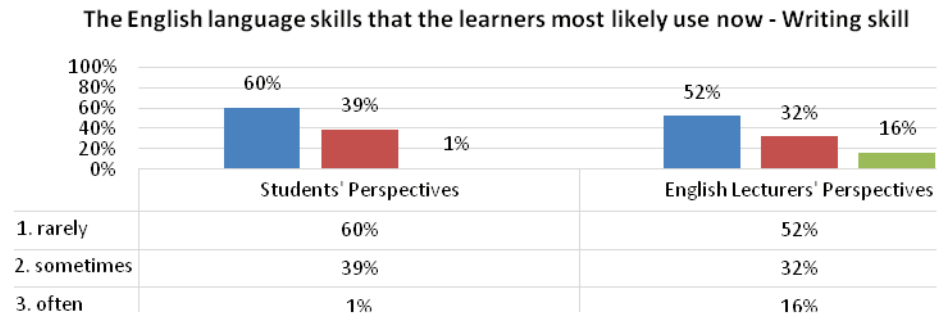


Figure 4: The students and lecturers' perspectives on the writing skill most likely to use now.

4.4. English language skills that the learners want or need to study

In English language skills that the learners want or need to study, there were also similarities and differences perspectives between the students and lecturers. The explanation of the range number of the choices is explained as the necessity to conduct the training course related to the language skills which are given in the classroom. It is noted that 1: need a lot of training, 2: need training, and 3: no training needed. The similarities and differences were explained as follow.

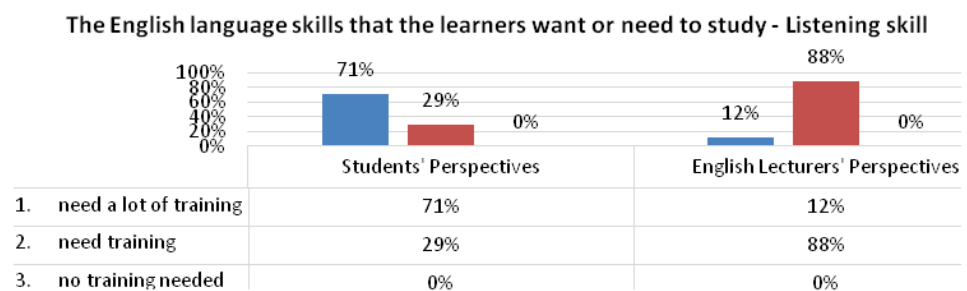


Figure 5: The students and lecturers' perspectives on the listening skill want or need to study.

Based on Figure 5, the students and lecturers had the similar perspectives on the listening skill activities that should be trained. The students need a lot of training on those activities. However, the lecturers said that the students just need the training on all of those activities in listening.

In speaking activities, the students and lecturers had the different perspectives on the training needed for the learners. The students said that they need a lot of training on speaking in the class and outside the class. However, the lecturers said that the students just need the training on all of those activities.

Also in reading activities, the students and lecturers had the different perspectives on the training needed for the learners. The students said that they need a lot of

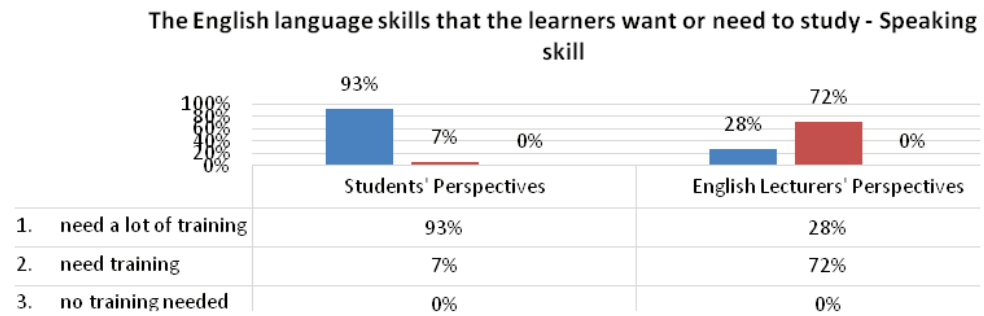


Figure 6: The students and lecturers' perspectives on the speaking skill want or need to study.

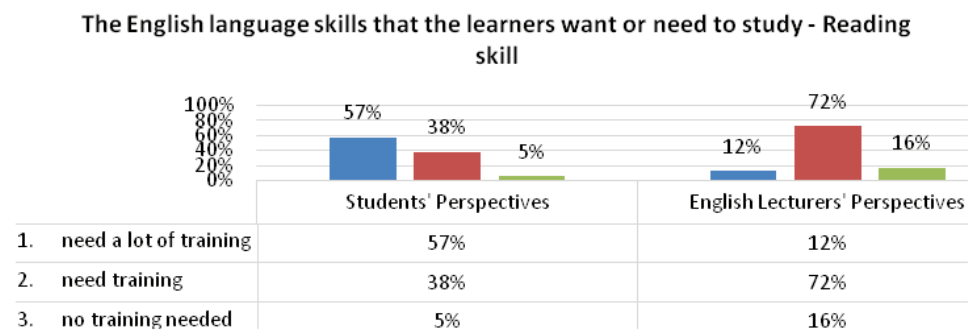


Figure 7: The students and lecturers' perspectives on the reading skill want or need to study.

training on reading. However, the lecturers said that the students just need the training on all of those activities.

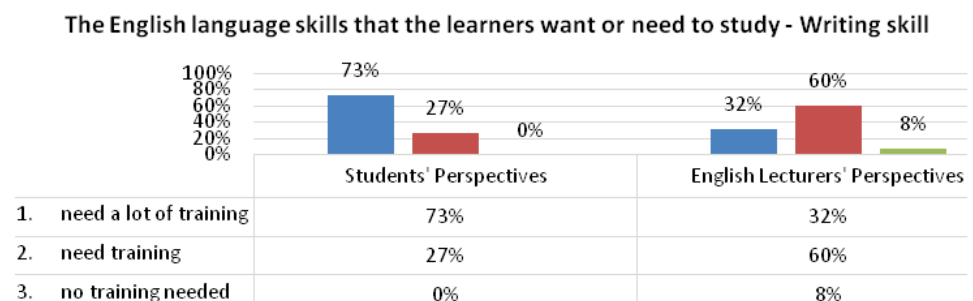


Figure 8: The students and lecturers' perspectives on the writing skill want or need to study.

As illustrated in Figure 8, for most of the writing skills activities, the students and lecturers had the different perspectives between them. The students said that they need a lot of training on it, but the lecturers just said that the students just need training.

4.5. Learners’ needs of English course materials

The researchers also identified the similarities and differences between the students and lecturer’s perspectives in term of the learners’ needs of English course materials.

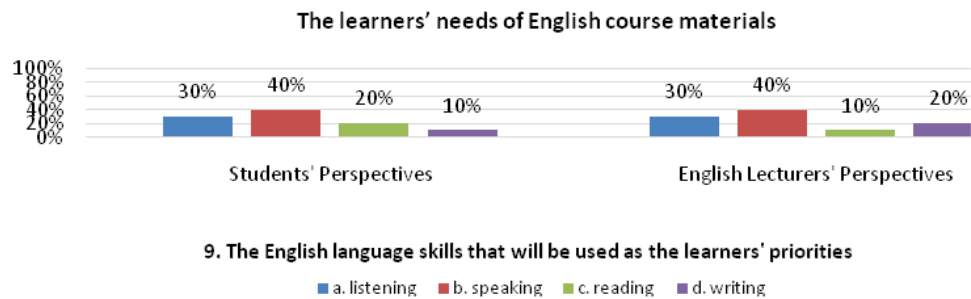


Figure 9: The students’ and English lecturers’ perspectives on the Purposes of the Learners’ needs to learn English Course.

According to the figure, the similar perspectives from the students and lecturers related to the language skills was they agreed that speaking would be the main priority to learn followed by listening skill. However, they had the different perspectives on the reading and writing skill priority to learn. According to the students, reading should be placed as the thirds priority, while the lecturers had the reading skill the last priority.

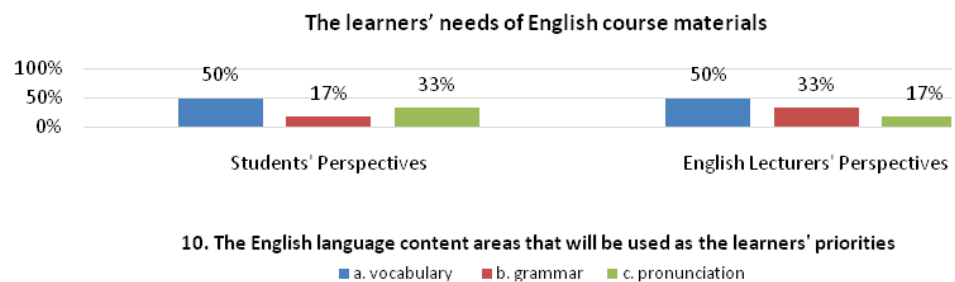


Figure 10: The students and lecturers’ perspectives on the English language be used in term of language content areas.

The students and lecturers also had different perspectives on the language content area that should be learned related to the grammar. The students choose grammar as the last priority, meanwhile, the lecturers chose it as the second priority after vocabulary.

5. Conclusions

According to the calculations results of the different test of the two average data presented, it could be seen that in the column Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances, in

term of the English language skills (LS) and content areas (LCA), they had a significance value of 0.939 and 0,459 ($p > 0.05$). It showed that the two variances were not equal. Therefore, the use of variance to compare the average population (*t-test for Equality of Means*) in the *t-test*, should use *the equal variance assumed* based. At *equal variance assumed*, it was obtained that in the LS, the *t* value was 10.821 and a significance level of $p = 0.000$. Meanwhile, in LCA *t* value was 2,459 and a significance level of $p = 0.019$. Both of the results showed that $p < 0.05$, it meant that there were the differences perspectives and the level of LS and LCA between the Computer Engineering students and English lecturers of School of Applied Science of Telkom University (SAS Tel U).

In term of the learners' needs of English course materials, the difference perspectives between the students and lecturers were the *English language skills that the learners most likely to use now*, and *the English language skills that the learners want or need to study*. Then, they also had the different perspectives on *the learners' needs of English course materials in terms of the priority of the reading and writing skills*, and *the grammar and phonology areas*. For further researchers, it is better to conduct the qualitative interviews as the follow-up to explore the quantitative results in this research. In short, the qualitative findings would be used to describe, explain, refine, clarify, extend or argue quantitative results.

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