

TOEFL ITP Readiness and Responses Among Vocational Engineering Students

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ABSTRACT

Students in Indonesian engineering-based vocational higher education generally have limited exposure to standardized English tests such as the TOEFL Institutional Testing Program (ITP), although scores are frequently required for graduation, scholarships, and internships. This study asks: what is vocational engineering students' initial readiness for TOEFL ITP, and how do they respond to a contextualized refreshment training? Using a descriptive qualitative case study design, data were collected through observation and informal feedback from 40 final-year Rollingstock Engineering students at Politeknik Negeri Madiun, all from one graduating cohort with heterogeneous prior English exposure, and analyzed thematically following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. Findings show limited initial familiarity with the test format, strong engagement during Listening, difficulty identifying structural errors, positive perceptions of contextualized Reading materials, and increased confidence after the practice simulation. The training highlights the value of ESP-based preparation for engineering vocational students, although further research with structured instruments is needed.

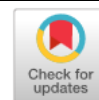
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INTRODUCTION

English proficiency has become an increasingly important supporting competence for graduates of vocational higher education, including students of engineering-based study programs such as Rollingstock Engineering. Various studies indicate that English proficiency in Indonesian higher education still faces considerable challenges and requires continuous strengthening for graduates to compete both nationally and internationally (Renandya et al., 2018).

One instrument commonly used by higher education institutions in Indonesia to measure students' English proficiency is the Test of English as a Foreign Language Institutional Testing Program (TOEFL ITP), which measures three components of language ability: Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading Comprehension, without productive components of speaking or writing (Taufiq, Santoso, & Fediyanto, 2018). TOEFL ITP Level 1 consists of 140 multiple-choice items with a total testing time of approximately 115 minutes, and the total score ranges from 310 to 677 (Service, 2026). TOEFL ITP scores are frequently required for graduation, scholarship selection, or internship selection, leading many institutions to organize TOEFL preparation classes or training for their students (Akmal et al., 2020).

In engineering-based vocational study programs, the need for English proficiency has distinctive characteristics. A needs analysis of English among mechanical engineering students in Indonesia shows that vocational students regard vocabulary and grammar mastery as important basic competencies, particularly for technical reading and TOEFL preparation, yet the existing curriculum has not been fully aligned with these needs due to limited contextual practice (Romadhon et al., 2025). Similar findings have also been reported among Rollingstock Engineering students at Politeknik Negeri Madiun, indicating that

English learning based on specific needs, or English for Specific Purposes (ESP), still needs to be strengthened so that students can develop communication skills and language knowledge relevant to their field of expertise (Wulandari et al., 2025). ESP is understood as a goal-oriented language-learning approach designed to tailor language instruction to learners' specific needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

This learner-centered orientation is echoed elsewhere in foundational ESP scholarship, which positions needs analysis as the starting point of course design (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Long, 2005) and stresses that ESP course design should systematically attend to the communicative demands of the target situation rather than following a generic syllabus (Basturkmen, 2006).

A number of previous studies have examined the effectiveness of TOEFL preparation programs in various contexts. Aprilliandari & Sugiharto (2023) reported that structured TOEFL preparation training can improve participants' understanding of test formats and answering strategies, while Febrina et al. (2025) found that a TOEFL course program for final-year polytechnic students had a positive impact on English proficiency, with the listening component showing the most significant improvement in comprehension. (Rosyidi et al., 2024) similarly reported positive outcomes from TOEFL training for students affiliated with a student organization. However, these studies were generally conducted with students from non-engineering study programs, or did not specifically examine how vocational engineering students, who typically have limited English exposure, respond to such training when the material is contextualized to their field of expertise. Unlike these studies, which examined general or non-engineering student populations using questionnaire-based or mixed-method designs (e.g., Damanik & Pasaribu, 2025), the present study is distinguished by its practitioner-based, single-session case design specific to an engineering vocational population, and by its focus on how ESP contextualization shapes engagement across the three TOEFL ITP components rather than on perceptions of delivery mode or general course satisfaction. This is the gap that the present study seeks to address. More recently, Damanik & Pasaribu (2025) found that Indonesian college students generally preferred face-to-face TOEFL ITP preparation classes for the sense of social presence they afforded, while Wijayati & Safitri (2025) demonstrated that ESP instruction grounded in authentic workplace communication tasks improved vocational students' engagement and perceived relevance of English learning.

Similar dynamics have been reported at other Indonesian vocational institutions. A needs analysis at a maritime vocational institute, for instance, found that a high mandatory TOEFL passing score was perceived by many stakeholders, including students, alumni, and employers, as difficult to attain and warranted institution-specific calibration rather than a uniform threshold (Anggraini & Sari, 2023), while benchmark data collected from TOEFL ITP administrations elsewhere similarly show substantial score variation across cohorts and preparation levels (Warfield et al., 2013).

With regard to scoring guidelines, each section of the TOEFL ITP is scored separately. The number of correct answers (raw score) in each section is converted to a scaled score using a statistical procedure established by ETS to ensure consistency and fairness across test administrations, since item difficulty may vary across test forms. The Listening Comprehension scaled score ranges from 31 to 68, the Structure and Written Expression scaled score ranges from 31 to 68, and the Reading Comprehension scaled score ranges from 31 to 67. The ITP Level 1 total score is derived from a further conversion of the combined scaled scores, with a total score range of 310 to 677 (Service, 2026). TOEFL ITP score reports are valid for two years from the test date, and since June 2023, ETS has provided a table mapping ITP scores to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to facilitate the interpretation of test takers' English proficiency levels globally. This alignment effort reflects the broader influence of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages as a shared metalanguage for describing proficiency across different tests and contexts (Europe, 2001).

Within the framework of language assessment theory, validity and reliability are two core principles used as benchmarks for instrument quality. Reliability refers to the consistency

of measurement, that is, the extent to which scores remain relatively stable when an equivalent test is administered at a different time, whereas validity refers to the extent to which a test actually measures what it is intended to measure [Brown \(2004\)](#). In the context of TOEFL ITP, reliability is considered relatively high because the standardized multiple-choice format allows for consistent, objective scoring that does not depend on a rater's subjective judgment, unlike tests of productive skills. However, the validity of TOEFL ITP in representing overall English communicative competence should be interpreted cautiously, given that speaking and writing, which are important components of communicative competence, are not measured by this test ([Taufiq et al., 2018](#)).

The concept of washback, or the effect of a test on the teaching and learning process, is also relevant to consider in the context of TOEFL preparation training. Washback can be positive when the existence of a standardized test encourages learners and teachers to engage more seriously with relevant language skills, but it can also be negative when the learning process becomes narrowly focused on test-taking strategies without a corresponding strengthening of genuine language competence. This suggests that TOEFL ITP refreshment training should not be designed merely around test-taking tricks or shortcuts, but should also strengthen the underlying language competencies, such as academic vocabulary, standard sentence structure, and comprehension strategies for spoken and written discourse, so that the resulting washback is positive and sustainable for participants' overall English proficiency. This distinction between positive and negative washback was first systematically articulated by [Alderson & Wall \(1993\)](#), who cautioned that the influence of a test on teaching cannot be assumed and must be examined empirically rather than taken for granted.

The growth of the national rolling stock sector, including the development of high-speed rail, urban rail transit, and other rail-based transportation projects, involves collaboration with various technology suppliers, consultants, and experts from abroad, a pattern well documented in the case of Indonesian railway development itself ([Putranto et al., 2003](#)) and consistent with broader evidence that technology transfer in the railway sector depends heavily on effective cross-border communication and workforce capability-building ([Putranto et al., 2003](#)). In this context, Rollingstock Engineering graduates who can communicate in English have greater opportunities to participate in national and international collaborative projects, both as technical staff on project implementation and as participants in overseas internship and training programs, consistent with evidence that English communication skills materially expand engineering graduates' access to cross-border employment and collaborative opportunities ([Clement & Murugavel, 2015](#)). Strengthening English proficiency through activities such as TOEFL ITP refreshment training is therefore not only beneficial for meeting administrative graduation requirements but also part of preparing students to meet the increasingly cross-border demands of the workforce ([Clement & Murugavel, 2015](#)).

At the policy level, Indonesian vocational higher education has increasingly emphasized graduate employability and industry linkage as key performance indicators ([Permendikbud No. 3 Tahun 2020 Tentang Standar Nasional Pendidikan Tinggi, 2020](#)), which indirectly places pressure on study programs to ensure that graduates possess adequate English proficiency alongside their technical competencies. Within engineering-based vocational programs, however, English instruction is often confined to general-purpose courses delivered in the early semesters, with limited continuation or reinforcement as students approach graduation ([Romadhon et al., 2025](#)). This structural gap between early, generic English instruction and the specific, high-stakes English demands that emerge near graduation, such as TOEFL ITP requirements for scholarships or internships, provides part of the rationale for short, targeted interventions such as the refreshment training examined in this study ([Indonesia, 2020; Romadhon et al., 2025](#)).

The choice of Rollingstock Engineering students as the focal population is significant for two reasons. First, this study program has been identified as having an underdeveloped ESP provision relative to its disciplinary English needs ([Wulandari et al., 2025](#)), yet, to the authors' knowledge, no prior study has examined how students in this specific engineering field respond to TOEFL ITP preparation, in contrast to the comparatively better-studied fields of

mechanical or general engineering (Romadhon et al., 2025). Second, the rapid expansion of Indonesia's rolling stock and rail transportation sectors, discussed further below, makes English-proficient rolling stock engineering graduates an increasingly relevant yet understudied population for ESP and language assessment research.

Based on the foregoing, this study aims to describe the initial readiness and responses of final-year students of the Rollingstock Engineering study program at Politeknik Negeri Madiun toward a TOEFL ITP refreshment training contextualized to the field of railway engineering. Specifically, this study seeks to answer two research questions: (1) what is students' initial familiarity and readiness regarding the TOEFL ITP format and strategies prior to the training; and (2) how do students engage with and respond to the training on each component of the test. This study is expected to provide preliminary insight useful for designing ESP-based TOEFL ITP preparation programs for vocational engineering students, while also contributing to the still relatively limited literature on ESP implementation in engineering study program contexts in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative case study design, an approach that allows the researcher to explore a phenomenon in depth within a clearly bounded context, or bounded system (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A case study design was chosen because this study focuses on a single, clearly bounded case: the implementation of a TOEFL ITP refreshment training session for final-year Rollingstock Engineering students. Case study approaches are also commonly used in applied linguistics research to gain an in-depth understanding of individuals' or small groups' language learning experiences within a particular instructional context (Duff, 2008). This design was considered the most appropriate fit for the study's exploratory "what" and "how" research questions, which called for a rich, contextualized account of a bounded instructional event rather than for testing a predefined hypothesis across a representative sample (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The single-session design of the training reflects common practice in campus-based, community-service-oriented English training in Indonesia, which is typically constrained by students' academic schedules and the voluntary, extracurricular nature of participation. While this constraint limits the depth of intervention that can be studied, it also reflects a realistic and commonly encountered context that many English lecturers in vocational institutions face when asked to provide short-notice, high-impact language support for student organizations.

Respondents

The case in this study is the implementation of a TOEFL Refreshment activity for final-year students of the Rollingstock Engineering study program at Politeknik Negeri Madiun who were affiliated with the Rollingstock Engineering Student Association (HIMA TKA). The training was conducted in a single four-hour face-to-face session on Saturday, 6 June 2026, at the Building C Hall of Politeknik Negeri Madiun, and was attended by 40 final-year students. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, namely all final-year students registered to attend the activity on the initiative of HIMA TKA, given that this group was in the period of preparing for graduation, making TOEFL ITP preparation most relevant for them. This purposive approach to participant selection is consistent with common practice in small-scale qualitative inquiry, where information-rich cases are deliberately selected rather than randomly sampled (Patton, 2015). The 40 participants constituted the entire self-selected cohort of final-year students who registered for the activity through HIMA TKA, rather than a sample drawn probabilistically from a larger population; as such, the case captures this specific cohort's experience and is not claimed to be statistically representative of Rollingstock Engineering students, or vocational engineering students more broadly, at other institutions or cohorts.

Instruments

Data were collected using two main instruments. The first was field notes taken by the researcher during participant observation, documenting participants' level of engagement, the types and frequencies of questions raised, and participants' responses in each test component (Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading Comprehension). The second instrument was informal verbal feedback gathered through a reflective question-and-answer session at the closing of the activity, exploring participants' experiences, difficulties, and impressions of the training they had just completed. All observations were conducted solely by the researcher, who followed a simple, self-designed observation focus list covering the three test components in the order they were delivered (Listening, Structure and Written Expression, Reading), to help maintain consistent coverage across the session; field notes were written or expanded immediately after each component rather than during instruction, to avoid disrupting the training, and were later checked against the session agenda to confirm that no component had been under-documented relative to the others.

Procedures

The researcher held a dual role in this study, serving as both the training instructor/facilitator and the researcher (practitioner research or insider research). This dual position enabled direct and in-depth access to the ongoing learning process, but also carried the potential for observational and interpretive bias. To mitigate this, the researcher recorded observations descriptively and as soon as possible after the activity, distinguished descriptive notes from reflective or interpretive notes, and explicitly acknowledged this dual position as a limitation of the study, further elaborated in the limitations section below.

With respect to ethical considerations, participation in the training was voluntary and organized on the initiative of HIMA TKA. Participants were informed at the outset that the session would also be documented for reporting and research purposes. No personally identifying information beyond participants' general status as final-year Rollingstock Engineering students is reported in this study, and no individual participant is identifiable from the findings presented.

Data Analysis

Field notes and feedback data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the stages proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006), comprising: (1) familiarization with the data through repeated readings of the field notes and feedback records; (2) initial coding of data units relevant to the research questions; (3) searching for themes by grouping related codes; (4) reviewing themes to ensure internal coherence within each theme and clear distinctions between themes; and (5) defining and naming themes, which are subsequently presented in the findings section.

This study has a number of limitations that should be explicitly acknowledged. First, the data originate from a single four-hour training session, without a structured instrument such as a written questionnaire, an achievement test (pretest-posttest), or recorded and transcribed in-depth interviews, so the depth of the data is more limited than case studies with richer multi-source data. Second, the researcher's dual position as instructor and researcher carries the potential for subjective bias in observation and interpretation, despite the mitigation efforts described above. Third, as a single case study with a limited number of participants from one study program and one institution, the findings are exploratory and contextual, and are not intended to be generalized to the broader population of vocational engineering students, but rather to provide preliminary insight that may inform further research with more comprehensive designs. These acknowledgements are consistent with long-standing criteria for establishing trustworthiness in naturalistic, practitioner-situated inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Initial Readiness and Familiarity with the TOEFL ITP Format (Research Question 1)

Thematic analysis of the field notes and participant feedback yielded five main themes describing students' initial readiness and their responses during the TOEFL ITP refreshment training. These themes are presented below, organized according to the two research questions.

In the opening session, when participants were asked to share their prior experience with TOEFL ITP, the majority stated that they had never taken a full ITP practice test before, and were unfamiliar with the item format, time allocation, or scoring system for each test component. This was consistent with the field notes, which documented a number of basic questions raised by participants at the beginning of the session, such as the number of items, the duration of each section, and how scores were calculated, indicating that orientation to the test structure itself was an urgent initial need before moving on to more specific answering strategies. This finding is consistent with the challenges commonly reported among vocational students, namely, limited exposure to standardized English test formats despite the pressing need for such scores (Akmal et al., 2020). It is also consistent with the needs analysis, which shows a gap between the existing curriculum and vocational engineering students' need for more contextualized English practice (Romadhon et al., 2025). To illustrate, one participant's comment was paraphrased in the field notes as follows: he had heard of TOEFL ITP from senior students but had never seen an actual test booklet or timed himself on a practice section before this training. As no interviews in this study were audio-recorded or transcribed, such illustrative examples are reconstructed from field notes rather than presented as verbatim quotations; this constraint is discussed further in the limitations below.

Beyond general unfamiliarity with the test as a whole, the field notes further indicate that participants' baseline knowledge varied noticeably across the three test components even before any instruction was given. When asked informally which component they expected to find easiest, most participants pointed to listening, citing prior exposure to English audio and video content in everyday life, whereas very few identified structure and written expression as an area of existing confidence. This uneven baseline suggests that participants' readiness was not uniformly low across components, but rather shaped by differences in informal exposure outside the classroom, a pattern that instructors designing similar refreshment sessions may need to anticipate when allocating time across components.

Engagement and Responses during the Training (Research Question 2)

The field notes indicate that the Listening Comprehension session generated a high level of engagement, reflected in the number of questions participants asked about techniques for noting important information while the audio was playing, as well as in participants' enthusiasm while working on the practice items in this section. Several participants spontaneously raised follow-up questions about strategies for anticipating answers from keywords and from speaker intonation, indicating a stronger interest in this component than in the other two. This pattern is consistent with Febrina et al. (2025), who reported that the listening component showed the most significant improvement in comprehension following TOEFL training among final-year polytechnic students, suggesting that more receptive, context-rich material is more accessible to students with limited prior English exposure than material requiring explicit grammatical analysis. This pattern of engagement is consistent with the broader listening research literature, which identifies metacognitive strategies such as prediction and selective attention to key words as central to successful second-language listening (Vandergrift, 2007).

Several factors plausibly contribute to this persistent difficulty. Structure and Written Expression items require test-takers to consciously apply explicit grammatical rules under time pressure, a form of controlled, analytic processing that contrasts with the more implicit, meaning-focused processing supported by everyday exposure to English audio and video content, which several participants cited as their main source of informal listening practice. In addition, because grammar instruction in the general-purpose English courses typically taken earlier in the curriculum is rarely revisited or applied to error-identification tasks in later semesters, participants may simply have had fewer recent opportunities to practice this

specific test-taking skill than they did with listening, which they could rehearse informally outside class.

In the Structure and Written Expression session, the field notes documented that most participants had difficulty quickly identifying structural errors within the time constraints, particularly patterns involving subject-predicate agreement and the use of connecting words. A number of participants openly acknowledged being unfamiliar with this type of exercise, in contrast to the Listening session, which they approached with greater confidence. This pattern was consistently observed across nearly all groups of participants during the practice session, reaffirming [Akmal et al.'s\(2020\)](#) finding that mastery of sentence structure is one of the main challenges for learners preparing for the TOEFL. From the perspective of TOEFL ITP as an assessment instrument, this component demands explicit grammatical analysis skills that typically require structured, repeated practice, so a single short training session is likely insufficient to build the automaticity needed to identify error patterns quickly ([Taufiq et al., 2018](#)). The brief, whole-group error-identification practice used in this session can be viewed as a form of corrective feedback, a pedagogical tool whose value for grammatical development, while debated, is widely recognized when delivered with sufficient clarity and follow-up opportunity ([Ellis, 2009](#)).

In the Reading Comprehension session, part of the reading material was linked to technical topics relevant to participants' field of expertise. Participants' verbal feedback during the closing session indicated appreciation for this approach, with several noting that material on engineering topics felt more relevant and helped them see the direct benefit of English proficiency for their field of study and future careers, compared to the general English material they had previously received. This finding reinforces the ESP principle that emphasizes the relevance of language-learning materials to learners' real needs ([Hutchinson & Waters, 1987](#)) and provides preliminary support for [Wulandari et al.'s \(2025\)](#) recommendation to strengthen specific-purpose English learning among Rollingstock Engineering students. Contextualization of the material appears to play an important role in shaping participants' perception that English proficiency is directly relevant to their field of expertise and career, rather than merely general material detached from an engineering context. The skimming and scanning strategies introduced in this session reflect well-established approaches in the second-language reading literature for handling academic and technical texts under time pressure ([Grabe & Stoller, 2019](#)).

During the reflective question-and-answer session at the end of the activity, most participants reported that the experience of directly working on practice items, despite its brevity, helped reduce their anxiety about facing the actual TOEFL ITP test. Several participants explicitly mentioned that knowing the format and having a sense of the difficulty level of the items made them feel more prepared than before the training, although they also recognized that a single training session was not sufficient to master the entire material in depth. This is consistent with the principle that familiarity with test format is one of the factors influencing performance on standardized tests ([Brown, 2004](#)). However, this finding should be interpreted cautiously: an evaluation of a similar TOEFL program using the CIRO (Context, Input, Reaction, Outcome) model showed that while participants' reactions to and satisfaction with the training process were generally favorable, outcome-level score gains did not always increase significantly when training was held over a short duration ([Maharani & Putro, 2021](#)). The increased confidence observed in this study should therefore be understood as an indicator of participants' initial reaction, rather than as evidence of substantive improvement in English proficiency, since this study did not measure score changes using a standardized instrument. This reduction in reported anxiety is noteworthy given that test-related anxiety has been documented as a common experience among Indonesian EFL students taking the TOEFL, with the majority of test-takers in one study reporting at least moderate anxiety before and during testing ([Muliawati et al., 2020](#)); familiarity-building activities such as this training may therefore also serve an affective, confidence-building function alongside their cognitive, skill-building one ([Dörnyei, 2005](#)). In a representative paraphrased example, one participant remarked that simply seeing what a real listening passage and question set looked like made

the test feel less abstract and intimidating than he had expected, even though he still felt underprepared for the structure section.

Overall, the findings indicate that vocational engineering students' responses to the TOEFL ITP refreshment training varied across test components, with more receptive and contextualized components (listening and contextualized reading) receiving more positive responses than the component requiring explicit grammatical analysis (structure and written expression). This pattern has practical implications: TOEFL ITP preparation programs for vocational engineering students should allocate more intensive, repeated practice to the structure component, while maintaining and expanding contextualization of material in the listening and reading components to build motivation and learning relevance. Read through the lens of the engagement literature, the behavioral engagement observed during listening and reading activities, evidenced through active questioning and task involvement, appears markedly stronger than the engagement observed during the more analytically demanding structure component, a pattern broadly consistent with the view that engagement is a multifaceted, task-sensitive construct rather than a fixed learner trait (Fredricks et al., 2004). Compared with Damanik & Pasaribu's (2025) finding that Indonesian college students generally favored face-to-face TOEFL ITP preparation for its social presence, the present case did not directly examine delivery mode, but the high engagement observed in the face-to-face listening and reading segments is broadly consistent with a preference for immediate, socially present instruction in this test-preparation context; unlike that questionnaire-based study, however, the present findings are grounded in direct observation of a single, contextualized session rather than retrospective self-report across a general course.

These findings also offer several practical lessons for designing similar language-outreach activities in the future. First, the four-hour time constraint required the instructor to select only the most essential material and strategies for each test component, so not every item type could be addressed in depth. Second, the varying levels of participants' initial English proficiency required the instructor to use a fairly foundational level of explanation so that it could be followed by participants with diverse ability levels, while still providing sufficient challenge for higher-proficiency participants. Third, the active involvement of HIMA TKA officers in the coordination process helped ensure the smooth technical operation of the activity, from venue preparation to participant mobilization, and this appears to have been one of the factors supporting the overall success of the training.

From the standpoint of alignment with study program needs, this training also represents a concrete application of the English for Specific Purposes approach for Rollingstock Engineering students, who have been identified as needing more contextualized English learning relevant to their field of expertise (Wulandari et al., 2025). The involvement of the Rollingstock Engineering Student Association as the initiator and implementation partner of the activity further reflects students' heightened awareness of the importance of English proficiency as preparation for the workforce and the railway industry, which is increasingly connected to international standards and partners.

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings contribute to the small but growing body of literature situating TOEFL preparation within an ESP framework for engineering-based vocational education. Whereas prior TOEFL training studies have largely treated test preparation as a generic skill independent of learners' disciplinary background (Aprilliandari & Sugiharto, 2023; Febrina et al., 2025), the present case suggests that disciplinary contextualization, particularly in the reading component, may function not only as a comprehension aid but also as a motivational device that helps vocational students see relevance in what might otherwise be perceived as a generic English requirement. This observation aligns with, and adds a classroom-level illustration to, P(Wulandari et al., 2025) call for stronger ESP integration in Rollingstock Engineering English instruction at the same institution.

It is also worth situating these findings within the broader methodological discussion on the value of single-case, practitioner-conducted studies in language education research. Duff (2008) argues that case studies, even when limited in scope, retain value not because their

findings can be statistically generalized, but because they offer naturalistic, particularistic insight that can inform practitioners facing similar circumstances and can generate hypotheses for larger-scale inquiry. Read in this light, the present case does not claim to establish how vocational engineering students in general respond to TOEFL ITP training, but it does offer a detailed, contextually grounded account of one such training that other lecturers designing comparable interventions may find informative, particularly regarding the uneven distribution of readiness and engagement across test components observed here.

CONCLUSIONS

This case study examined 40 vocational engineering students' initial TOEFL ITP readiness and responses to contextualized refresher training. The findings revealed uneven readiness across test components, with stronger familiarity with receptive skills and greater difficulty with grammatical analysis. Participants also demonstrated favorable engagement with professionally relevant materials and reported increased confidence following training. These findings suggest that TOEFL ITP readiness is component-specific and shaped partly by informal learning experiences. However, the single-cohort, single-institution sample, one-session design, absence of comparison and follow-up measures, and reliance on field notes and informal feedback limit transferability and prevent conclusions about objectively measured improvement. Future preparation should incorporate sustained practice, periodic mock tests, and targeted grammatical instruction. English lecturers should conduct brief needs assessments to identify component-specific weaknesses and integrate engineering-related materials into TOEFL ITP practice. At the institutional level, collaboration between English and engineering programs could facilitate discipline-specific preparation. Although exploratory, this case illustrates the potential value of accessible, contextualized refresher training within vocational education.

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