Students' Perception on Studying TOEFL Using Yanto Tanjung's YouTube Channel

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the perceptions of English education students regarding their learning of the structure and written expression sections of the TOEFL test through Yanto Tanjung's YouTube channel. The increasing use of YouTube as a digital learning medium, particularly for autonomous TOEFL preparation, served as the primary motivation for this research. This study employed a descriptive qualitative design, involving four participants selected through purposive sampling, and the data were collected using semi-structured interviews, which were then analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that students held a positive perception of Yanto Tanjung's YouTube channel as a supplementary learning resource. The channel was perceived as beneficial in enhancing their understanding of complex grammar structures, improving test readiness, and fostering learning motivation. Participants appreciated the flexibility of self-paced learning, the clarity of explanations, and the relevance of examples provided in the videos. Furthermore, YouTube was regarded as an effective and accessible alternative for students who were unable to join formal TOEFL preparation courses. However, some challenges were also identified, including technical issues and limited access to exclusive content. In conclusion, Yanto Tanjung's YouTube channel serves as a valuable support in TOEFL preparation, particularly in mastering structure and written expression, and highlights the potential of digital platforms to enhance students' learning experiences and complement conventional instruction in the digital era.

Keywords*: Students' perception, TOEFL, Structure and Written Expression, YouTube, Yanto Tanjung*

Sari

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi persepsi mahasiswa pendidikan Bahasa Inggris terhadap pembelajaran bagian Structure and Written Expression dalam tes TOEFL melalui channel YouTube Yanto Tanjung. Meningkatnya penggunaan YouTube sebagai media pembelajaran digital, khususnya untuk persiapan TOEFL secara mandiri,

menjadi motivasi utama dalam penelitian ini. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain deskriptif kualitatif, dengan melibatkan empat partisipan yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dan dianalisis secara tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para mahasiswa memiliki persepsi positif terhadap channel YouTube Yanto Tanjung sebagai sumber belajar tambahan. Channel ini dianggap bermanfaat dalam meningkatkan pemahaman mereka terhadap struktur tata bahasa yang kompleks, meningkatkan kesiapan menghadapi tes, serta mendorong motivasi belajar. Para partisipan mengapresiasi fleksibilitas pembelajaran mandiri, kejelasan penjelasan, dan relevansi contoh-contoh yang diberikan dalam video. Selain itu, YouTube juga dipandang sebagai alternatif pembelajaran yang efektif dan mudah diakses bagi mahasiswa yang tidak dapat mengikuti kursus persiapan TOEFL secara formal. Namun, beberapa tantangan juga diidentifikasi, seperti kendala teknis dan akses terbatas terhadap konten eksklusif. Sebagai kesimpulan, channel YouTube Yanto Tanjung berperan sebagai dukungan yang berharga dalam persiapan TOEFL, khususnya dalam penguasaan Structure and Written Expression, serta menyoroti potensi platform digital dalam meningkatkan pengalaman belajar mahasiswa dan melengkapi pembelajaran konvensional di era digital ini.

Kata kunci: *Persepsi mahasiswa, TOEFL, Structure and Written Expression, YouTube, Yanto Tanjung*

Introduction

In English learning, students often find it challenging to master the Structure and Written Expression section of the TOEFL, especially for English Education students at Jambi University. Many students struggle with complex grammatical topics such as subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, sentence patterns, and error identification. This challenge often leads to low performance in this section, which in turn causes anxiety when taking the TOEFL and hinders the achievement of the scores needed for academic and professional goals. As Phillips (2004) and Sharpe (2020) state the Structure and Written Expression section of the TOEFL is designed to evaluate mastery of formal grammar and sentence construction, two key aspects of academic communication and writing.

In response to these challenges, many students have begun to utilize alternative learning resources, especially through digital platforms. One increasingly popular platform is YouTube, which offers flexibility, accessibility, and visual presentation of

content. Students can watch educational videos at their own pace, pause and repeat parts that are difficult to understand, and take notes on key points. This supports a more interactive and personalized learning process (Godwin-Jones, 2018; Kelsen, 2009). This approach is in line with Krashen's (1982) theory on the importance of comprehensible input in language acquisition, which can be effectively provided through multimodal content on YouTube.

One educational YouTube channel that has received considerable attention among TOEFL learners is Yanto Tanjung. This channel offers structured and concise TOEFL learning videos, with a special focus on the Structure and Written Expression section. The videos presented are about 10-15 minutes long, equipped with visual slides, practical strategy explanations, and practice questions accompanied by discussions. This content is considered very helpful for students who do not have access to formal TOEFL courses. Based on initial observations, many students at Jambi University have made this channel their main reference in TOEFL preparation. They appreciate the systematic explanations and appropriate exercises, which make grammar topics easier to understand.

Support for the use of YouTube as a learning medium is also reinforced by research. Weng et al. (2020) stated that YouTube, as a digital learning medium, can significantly improve learners' grammar and writing skills because it combines audio, visual, and text elements, thus improving comprehension and retention of the material. In this digital era, the use of YouTube reflects the shift from teacher-centred learning to student-centred learning. Hafner et al (2015) emphasize that platforms like YouTube support learning autonomy, allowing students to control their own pace, time, and place of learning, which is particularly effective in developing practice-based skills such as grammar and writing.

The TOEFL remains an important benchmark for assessing English language proficiency, particularly in the context of higher education and international employment opportunities. Among all the sections in TOEFL, Structure and Written Expression is often considered the most challenging as it not only demands an understanding of grammar rules but also the skill to apply them appropriately in an academic context. Brown (2004) emphasizes that grammar is the foundation of

productive skills in language, so the use of effective learning resources, such as well-designed YouTube videos, is crucial to improving students' proficiency in this area.

However, despite the widespread use of YouTube, not many studies have specifically explored students' perceptions of the effectiveness of learning through specific channels, such as YouTube. Understanding students' perceptions is crucial to assessing whether YouTube-based learning media can truly be a supplement or even an alternative to conventional teaching. Richards (2015) states that technology-based approaches support blended learning, which is a combination of traditional and digital learning methods to improve learning outcomes. Thus, research examining student perceptions of Yanto Tanjung's YouTube channel is relevant and important.

Yanto Tanjung's own YouTube channel has shown significant popularity. He has been actively producing content for the last few years and has gained more than 200,000 subscribers with over 10 million views. The channel has uploaded 511 videos, including 70 specialized videos that discuss structures in TOEFL. The explanations are delivered using PowerPoint, complete with sample questions and answering strategies, making the content easy to understand. In each video, Yanto Tanjung explains the core material, gives examples, and then discusses the practice questions in depth, which makes the learning process more focused and efficient (Tanjung, 2013)

The effectiveness of this channel has also been recognized in various media. Kompas.com recommends Yanto Tanjung's channel as one of the best for learning TOEFL, with clear explanations and content suitable for beginners. The channel has also gone viral and trended multiple times on social media platforms, including Twitter. The popularity and positive feedback from students suggest that this channel has the potential to be an effective medium for TOEFL learning, particularly for those who prefer independent learning without formal courses.

Some previous studies also support the use of YouTube as a TOEFL learning medium. Research by Melinda (2024) entitled "Exploring Students' Perception in Learning Structure & Written Expression in TOEFL through YouTube Channels in English Literature Students of Pamulang University" shows that students have a positive perception of YouTube. They feel more motivated, like visual explanations,

and are helped in understanding difficult grammar. The ability to rewatch videos at their own pace is also an advantage that students feel improves their understanding.

Another study by Suriyah (2022) also corroborated similar findings. In her research entitled "Student Perceptions of TOEFL Structure and Written Expression Learning Using YouTube and Instagram Videos", it was found that students found the material delivered through these digital platforms easy to understand and interesting. The learning process, which involved accessing videos from Instagram to YouTube and then answering questions through comments, provided a fun and interactive learning experience. This study concludes that YouTube and Instagram are effective in improving students' understanding and engagement in learning TOEFL Structure and Written Expression.

Based on the discussion and findings, this study aims to explore the perceptions of English Education students at Jambi University in utilizing Yanto Tanjung's YouTube channel to learn Structure and Written Expression in TOEFL. This research is expected to contribute to the development of digital-based learning strategies that are relevant and effective and can support independent learning in the digital era.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to explore students' perceptions of using the Yanto Tanjung YouTube channel in learning Structure and Written Expression for TOEFL preparation. A qualitative approach was considered suitable because it seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of students' opinions, feelings, and experiences. According to Miles et al (2014), qualitative research allows researchers to explore phenomena in natural settings and interpret meanings derived from participants' perspectives.

The research was conducted at one of the universities in Jambi, specifically in the English Education Study Program, which provided an academic environment relevant to the focus of the study. The research took place in 2025 and involved English Education students who had prior experience using YouTube, particularly Yanto Tanjung's channel, as a learning resource for TOEFL preparation.

The participants of this study were selected through purposive sampling, which is commonly used in qualitative research to obtain rich and relevant data (Etikan et al., 2016). The inclusion criteria were: (1) active students in the English Education Study Program at a university in Jambi, (2) students who had watched and used Yanto Tanjung's TOEFL Structure and Written Expression videos, and (3) students willing to participate in the study and provide open responses. Based on these criteria, four students agreed to participate in the interviews. This number was considered sufficient to gain in-depth data for qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2014).

The data collection procedure consisted of semi-structured interviews, which allowed flexibility for participants to share experiences while enabling the researcher to explore emerging themes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or via video calls depending on participants' availability, lasting about 20–30 minutes each. With the participants' consent, the interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy in transcription. Before the interviews, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and obtained informed consent. Ethical principles such as confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation were strictly maintained (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research instrument used was a semi-structured interview guide consisting of open-ended questions that explored students' experiences, perceptions, benefits, and challenges in using Yanto Tanjung's YouTube channel to learn TOEFL Structure and Written Expression.

The data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's (2014) interactive model, which includes three stages: (1) **data reduction**—selecting and simplifying interview transcripts to focus only on relevant responses; (2) **data display**—organizing the reduced data in narrative descriptions, direct quotations, and tables to identify categories and patterns; and (3) **conclusion drawing and verification**—interpreting students' perceptions while continuously checking the validity of findings.

To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria. **Credibility** was enhanced through triangulation by gathering information from multiple participants and conducting member checking. **Transferability** was addressed by providing detailed contextual descriptions of participants and the setting.

Dependability was ensured through systematic documentation of research procedures, while **confirmability** was maintained by relying on participants' actual data rather than the researcher's assumptions.

Bias management was also considered. Researcher bias was minimized by excluding personal opinions and consistently using an interview protocol. Participant bias was reduced by assuring anonymity, confidentiality, and creating a supportive environment for honest responses. Selection bias was controlled through purposive sampling to ensure that only participants with relevant experience were included.

Through this systematic process, the study ensured that the research design, data collection, and analysis were conducted rigorously, thereby producing trustworthy findings that reflect students' genuine perceptions of learning TOEFL Structure and Written Expression through Yanto Tanjung's YouTube channel.

Results and Discussion

The findings of this study revealed six major themes regarding students' perceptions of using Yanto Tanjung's YouTube channel in learning TOEFL grammar, particularly in the Structure and Written Expression section.

1. Benefits of Using YouTube Channel

Participants acknowledged significant benefits from the channel, such as clearer understanding of grammar rules, improved ability to construct sentences, and the provision of analogies that made complex topics easier to grasp. For instance, P3 stated, *"I now understand how to construct correct sentences in English, especially those frequently encountered in the TOEFL."* Similarly, P2 emphasized, *"The explanations are simple, detailed, and easy to understand, especially for complex grammar topics."* The channel also supported self-directed learning and exam preparation. As P1 explained, *"I study independently through YouTube, not through formal classes."* Moreover, participants reported increased motivation and confidence, as P4 stated, *"I feel very helpful and more confident facing the TOEFL test."*

2. Students' Perceptions of Video Content

The majority of participants described the video content as simple, detailed, and beginner-friendly. P1 noted, *"The channel is very comprehensive and suitable for beginners. There are many tips, ways to solve problems, and the explanations are also easy to understand."* Likewise, P2 agreed, *"The explanations are straightforward to understand, especially for beginners who are not yet very proficient in English."* In addition, participants found the teaching style engaging and non-intimidating. P3 expressed, *"The content is good, and the teaching style is relaxed, not boring. What I like is that he often gives practical tips as well."*

3. Impact on Learning Outcomes

Participants reported improved grammar comprehension, stronger exam readiness, and even direct benefits when facing real TOEFL questions. P1 shared, *"Many of the sample questions turned out to be similar to the questions on my TOEFL test. That was very helpful."* Similarly, P2 remarked, *"It really helped me, especially in preparing for the TOEFL test by giving a clear picture of the types of questions."* P3 added, *"I used to be confused about tenses or parallel structure, but after watching several videos, I understood the patterns better."*

4. Flexibility of Learning

Students emphasized the flexibility of learning via YouTube, allowing them to study anytime and anywhere, revisit difficult topics, and learn at their own pace. P3 explained, *"YouTube can really be used as a learning medium. It's flexible, free, and easier to understand than books."* Similarly, P4 said, *"I prefer learning independently through YouTube rather than attending formal classes because I am free to study anytime and anywhere."*

5. The Role of YouTube

All participants agreed that YouTube, especially Yanto Tanjung's channel, served as a supplementary learning tool rather than a replacement for formal classes. As P1 emphasized, *"It may not be able to fully replace a classroom, but YouTube can be a great supplement, especially for those who are not taking a course."* Likewise, P3 highlighted, *"YouTube can be a great complement, especially for visual learners. But as a complete replacement, you might still need a teacher or mentor."*

6.   Challenges in Using YouTube

Despite the positive outcomes, students reported several challenges, including poor internet connection, lengthy videos, less creative visuals, advertisement interruptions, and limitations on accessing some paid content. P2 commented, *"The video could be made more creative, for example, by adding animations to make it more interesting."* Meanwhile, P3 mentioned, *"The challenge might be a poor signal or connection sometimes. Also, some videos are quite long, so you have to stay focused."* In addition, P4 pointed out, *"Some videos cannot be accessed because they are paid content".* Additionally, the ads that appear are somewhat distracting.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight that the use of Yanto Tanjung's YouTube channel provides significant benefits for students in learning TOEFL grammar, particularly in the structure and written expression sections. Participants reported that the channel's clear, rational, and concise explanations improved their comprehension of grammar rules and enhanced their confidence in approaching TOEFL questions. This finding aligns with Philips (2004) and Sharpe (2020), who emphasized the importance of mastering sentence structure for success in TOEFL, as well as Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis, which suggests that comprehensible input is crucial for accelerating second language acquisition. In this regard, Yanto Tanjung's videos provide intelligible, systematic, and accessible material suitable for learners' needs.

The students' positive perceptions of the video content further reinforce the channel's effectiveness. They described the materials as well-structured, easy to follow, and directly relevant to TOEFL preparation. The engaging presentation style, combined with practice questions that resemble real TOEFL items, made the learning process more interesting and motivating. This result resonates with multimodal learning theory (Alhamami, 2013), which asserts that integrating text, audio, and visuals enhances comprehension. Similarly, Melinda (2024) also found that YouTube videos help learners grasp complex grammar and adapt to their personal learning styles, thereby improving the perceived quality of digital media learning.

The impact on learning outcomes was also notable. Participants reported improvements in their grammar understanding, motivation, and even practice test performance. They felt more familiar with TOEFL question formats, which contributed to reduced anxiety and increased readiness for the exam. These findings support Sari and Yuliani (2023), who demonstrated that instructional videos enhance both motivation and grammar comprehension, and Brown's (2004) assertion that motivation and confidence are central to effective language learning. Thus, the channel not only improves academic achievement but also strengthens learners' psychological preparation for the test.

Flexibility emerged as another key advantage of using YouTube for TOEFL preparation. Students appreciated the ability to learn at their own pace, review difficult material, and adjust study schedules according to their needs. This autonomy aligns with Hafner and Miller's (2011) view that YouTube encourages learning independence and Siemens' (2005) connectivism theory, which emphasizes the role of digital networks in shaping modern learning practices. The strategies reported by participants such as pausing, note-taking, and re-watching videos illustrate how flexibility enhances learning comfort and efficiency.

Moreover, participants acknowledged the role of YouTube as a valuable supplement rather than a replacement for traditional instruction. While classroom teaching and textbooks remain important, YouTube serves as an effective complementary tool that bridges gaps in formal education. This reflects the blended learning approach described by Richards (2015), where technology-based resources strengthen traditional methods. For some participants, YouTube also provided an affordable alternative to costly TOEFL courses, supporting findings by Suriyah (2022) and Nadara (2024) that highlight YouTube's role as a cost-effective and accessible learning medium.

Despite the many benefits, participants also encountered challenges in using YouTube. The main issues included unstable internet connections, intrusive advertisements, and limited access to premium content. Another limitation was the absence of real-time interaction, which prevented students from directly clarifying doubts. These challenges are consistent with Benson and Chik's (2010) argument that

digital literacy and access to technology significantly influence the effectiveness of YouTube as a learning platform, as well as Latifah and Prastowo's (2020) claim that educators need to supervise and regulate online content use. Nevertheless, participants agreed that these challenges were relatively minor compared to the overall advantages, and could be managed with appropriate learning strategies.

In conclusion, the findings demonstrate that Yanto Tanjung's YouTube channel positively influences EFL students' preparation for TOEFL grammar. It enhances comprehension, motivation, flexibility, and confidence, while serving as an accessible and affordable learning supplement. Although technical and interactive limitations exist, the overall advantages far outweigh the drawbacks, reaffirming the role of YouTube as an effective digital tool for language learning in the 21st century.

Conclusion & Recommendation

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that students have a positive perception of the channel. They found the videos informative, easy to understand, and helpful in improving their understanding of grammar. The channel's systematic explanation style, supported by visual and practical examples, makes abstract grammatical concepts more accessible.

Students perceived that Yanto Tanjung's YouTube content was especially effective in helping them understand common TOEFL question types and structures. The content was not only aligned with the TOEFL format but also offered clear strategies and tips, which the students considered useful for both practice and actual test preparation. Moreover, the presentation style was relaxed and motivating.

Another significant finding is that students experienced increased motivation and self-confidence in their learning process. Many of them preferred this form of learning because it offered flexibility in terms of time and pace, allowing them to revisit difficult material whenever necessary. This self-directed learning habit was fostered through the accessibility and practicality of the YouTube platform, which is consistent with the principles of independent learning in the digital age.

Despite its many benefits, students also noted several challenges. Some mentioned internet limitations, distracting advertisements, and the presence of paid

content that restricted full access. Others felt that while the YouTube channel was helpful, it could not completely replace direct interaction with instructors in a formal setting. This indicates that YouTube functions best as a complementary resource rather than a substitute for classroom learning.

In conclusion, Yanto Tanjung's YouTube channel plays a valuable role in supporting students' preparation for the TOEFL, particularly in the grammar sections. The positive perceptions expressed by the participants suggest that YouTube can be an effective, flexible, and student-friendly learning medium. It encourages autonomy, increases motivation, and helps students feel better prepared to face standardized English tests, such as the TOEFL.

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Conflict of Interest

Potential conflict of interest, if any, should be reported here during data collection.

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