

A STUDY OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AT THE TERTIARY LEVEL OF EDUCATION BASED ON CEFR

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ABSTRACT

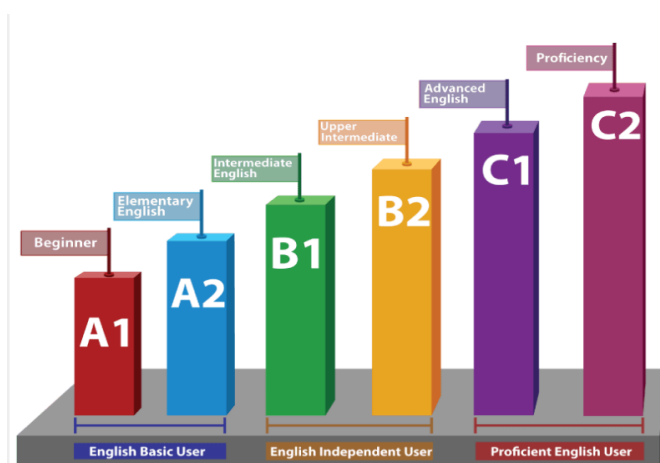
CEFR has become a very significant framework for the design of language curricula and the assessment of language learning outcomes. The purpose of the study is to know the CEFR level of the graduate candidate at the Tertiary Level of Education. This research used descriptive qualitative method. The researchers took the data from Computer Science Faculty graduate candidates Universitas Duta Bangsa Surakarta in the academic year 2021/2022. There were 359 participants, 346 participants took the test, and 13 participants did not take test. The participant took TOEIC-Like test written by Shin's book (2015) titled Pre-Intermediate Level Taking the TOEIC: Skills and Strategies, practice test one. The study showed that the highest TOEIC score was 930, and the participant was from the Technical Information study program. Based on TOEIC Test Mapping on the CEFR, the participant was at C1 level or mastery level. There were 12 participants at the B2 level or Vantage Level, and there were 35 participants at the B1 Level. Most participants were at the A2 level or Basic user because 241 participants got a 225-545 TOEIC score (A2) and there were 57 participants at the A1 level.

Keywords: CEFR, TOEIC, English Competence.

INTRODUCTION

Realizing the importance of the English Language, the writer studied CEFR because CEFR *has* become a very significant framework for the design of language curricula and the assessment of language learning outcomes not only in its home continent but around the world, in the last 15 years (Read, 2019) in Sulistyningrum and Purnawati (2021)¹. Some scholars in Indonesia had studied CEFR for Indonesian English Competence. Sudaryanto and Widodo (2020)², studied about Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) dan Implikasinya bagi Buku Ajar BIPA. Sulistyningrum and Purnawati (2021)¹ studied Incorporating CEFR bands and ICT competencies in grammar syllabuses of the English Language Education Study Program in Indonesia. Maryo (2021)³ stated that several issues may become obstacles or considerations in implementing the CEFR as a model of learning English in Indonesia.

Although in Indonesia, there are some issues for implementing CEFR, based on the Introductory Guide to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for English Language Teachers, The CEFR makes it easier for all of us to talk about language levels reliably and with shared understanding. Even among teachers of the same language in similar contexts, there can be a lot of variety in what is meant by terms like ‘beginner’, ‘intermediate’, or ‘advanced’, this variability increases significantly across different languages, in various countries, with some age ranges of learners, etc. Here is Advanced Vocabulary Level (CEFR)



Sources: Sources: Advanced Vocabulary Level (CEFR)⁴ – Vocab Level
<https://vlews.com/advanced-vocabulary-level-cefr/>

TOEIC Score conversion to CEFR

CEFR Level	TOEIC Score (Tannenbaum & Wylie, 2008)		TOEIC Score (Damayanti & Gafur, 2020).
	Listening section	Reading section	Overall score
C2	-	-	-
C1	490	455	945-990
B2	400	385	785-940
B1	275	275	550-780
A2	110	115	225-545
A1	60	60	120-220

Sources: TOEIC SCORE VS CEFR⁵ <https://yourenglishtest.com/article/index/art/54>

Besides the Advanced Vocabulary Level (CEFR), You will find the Global Scale or General CEFR Level description is a meaningful starting point:

TOEIC Test Mapping on the CEFR

CEFR level	TOEIC Listening & Reading Score	General CEFR Level description
C2	Mastery	a. Understand almost everything read or heard with ease. b. Summarize information from a variety of sources into a coherent presentation. c. Express themselves using precise meaning in complex scenarios highly proficient – can use English very fluently, precisely and sensitively in most contexts
C1	945-990 (Effective Operational Proficiency)	a. Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning b. Can express his/her fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions c. Can use language flexibility and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes d. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices. e. Able to use English fluently and flexibly in a wide range of contexts
B2	785-940 (Vantage)	a. Can understand the main ideas of complex text both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussion in her/her field of specialization b. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. c. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options. d. Can use English effectively, with some fluency, in a range of contexts
B1	550-780 (Threshold)	a. Can understand the main point of clear standard input of familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. b. Can deal with most situational likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language spoken c. Can produce simply connected text topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest. d. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambition and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. e. Can communicate essential points and ideas in familiar contexts
A2	225-545 (Waystage)	a. Can understand sentences and fluently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography and employment). b. Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. c. Can describe simple term aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matter in areas of immediate need. d. Can communicate in English within a limited range of contexts
A1	120-220 (Breakthrough)	a. Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. b. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has c. Can interact in a simple way providing the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help d. Can communicate in basic English with help from the listener

Sources: TOEIC SCORE VS CEFR⁵ <https://yourenglishtest.com/article/index/art/54>⁵
& Introductory Guide to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for
English Language Teachers Cambridge University Press 2013⁶

CEFR is needed in Indonesia, due to the importance of English Competence for graduates. Nowadays, University graduates in Indonesia compete not only with Indonesian but also with other people around the world, they must be ready for facing competitive employment at the national and international levels as well. The educational institution should prepare highly educated and well-trained graduates. According to Poedjiastutie *et al* (2018)⁷, one of the indicators of qualified human resources for nowadays global competition is the citizens' possession of a high level of language of networking that is English. Facing this situation, there are questions, Is Indonesia ready for facing global competitiveness? Is an Indonesian graduate good at English? Poedjiastutie *et al* (2018)⁷ gave a detailed explanation that English in Indonesia ranked below other Asian countries had been reported by English Proficiency Index (EPI) in 2017. Eighty countries were surveyed, Indonesia ranked 39 falling behind Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam. Based on this rank, Indonesia was considered to have a low English proficiency level with other Asian countries such as Vietnam and Thailand. This study clearly shows that the development of English teaching in Indonesia is still low and unsatisfactory. In line with Poedjiastutie *et al* (2018)⁷, Saputra (2019)⁸ explained that based on data from English First (EF) an educational institution that runs English Courses all over Indonesia, English proficiency in Indonesian is still low. Indonesia is ranked a lowly 51 out of 88 countries in English proficiency, lagging far behind Singapore (3), the Philippines (14), Malaysia (22), and Vietnam (41). Facing this situation, educational institution should struggle to up graduate English communicative competence, it is a great way to gain job-ready skills that prepare the graduates for a fulfilling career. Therefore, the researchers are interested in studying graduate candidate English competence based on CEFR level at Tertiary Level of Education. What are their levels and are they ready for facing this industrial revolution 4.0?

RESEARCH METHODS

Nassaji (2015)⁹ stated that Qualitative and descriptive research is well suited to the study of L2 classroom teaching, where conducting tightly controlled experimental research is hardly possible, and even if controlled experimental research is conducted in such settings, the generalizability of its findings to real classroom contexts are questionable. Therefore, Language Teaching Research receives many manuscripts that report qualitative or descriptive research therefore the research design in this study was descriptive qualitative approach.

The research is conducted at the Computer Science Faculty of Universitas Duta Bangsa Surakarta in the academic year 2021/ 2022. The research sample is graduate candidates of the faculty, there are 359 participants. 346 participants took the test and 13 participants didn't take the test for no reason. To get the data, the researchers used TOEIC Test-Like, the test is taken from Shin (2015)¹⁰ titled: "Pre-Intermediate Level. Taking the TOEIC: Skills and Strategies" it is published in

Indonesia by PT. ASTRA ILMU SUKSES. It is the third reprint of 2015 and the ISBN of the book is 978- 59966-188-9. The test uses practice one test. The technique of data analysis used by the researcher was descriptive qualitative. This technique was used to prove the research questions based on the researcher mentioned previously.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

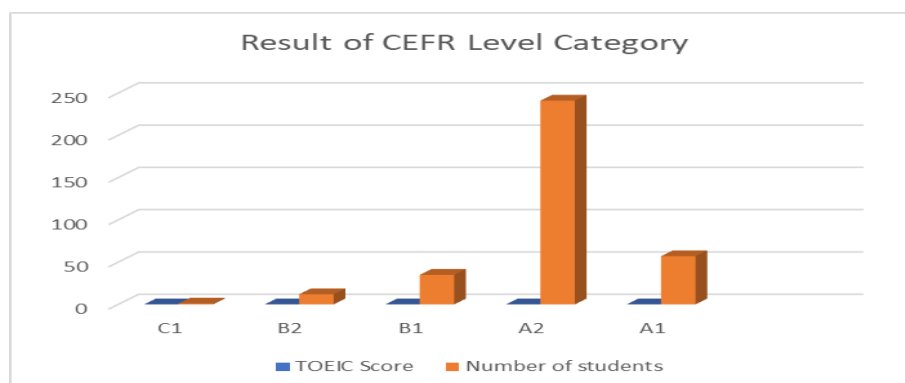
Based on the introductory Guide to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for English Language Teachers by Cambridge University Press 2013 6, The CEFR has three broad bands -A, B, and C. Very loosely, you can see these as similar to Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced – though the CEFR levels are more precise than these terms (and calls them Basic, Independent, and Proficient). Each of those bands is divided into two, giving us six main levels. Each of those bands is divided into two, giving us six main levels.

Sulistyaningrum and Purnawati (2021)¹ explained in their studies that there were some explanations about the level alike as the Council of Europe (2011) divides language ability into six levels they are A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2 that represent ascending language ability from the lower to advanced. According to Ying Zheng, Zhang, and Yan (2016), there are three proficiency ranks of CEFR levels, the ranks are A1 and A2 belong to the beginner that is called Basic User, B1 and B2 are attributed to the intermediate level called Independent User while C1 and C2 levels are classified as advanced levels and called as Proficient User. Harrison cited in O’Keeffe and Mark (2017) claimed that these ranks are in detailed operation the understanding the lower level is critical before continuing to the further ones.

Based on Advanced Vocabulary Level (CEFR) – Vocab Level <https://vlevs.com/advanced-vocabulary-level-cefr/>, the Basic user or A1 and A2 level is kindergarten (beginner) and elementary students (elementary) while B1 is for junior high school or intermediate, B2 for senior high school (upper Intermediate), C1 for a pre-graduate program (Advanced) and C2 for postgraduate or Doctorate program (Proficient).

This study examined the English competence of graduate candidates at Computer Science Faculty Universitas Duta Bangsa Surakarta in the academic year 2021/2022. There are 4 study programs: they are information Systems, Technical Information, Informatics Management, and Computer Engineering study program. There were 359 participants, 346 participants took the test and 13 participants did not take the test. Before taking the test, the participants had gotten 6-time meeting to improve their English competence as well. The graduate took the test last January 2022.

Here is the result of the study:



The highest TOEIC score is 930 for Technical Information graduate candidates. It shows that based on TOEIC Test Mapping on the CEFR, the participant is at C1 level because TOEIC Score 940-990 is C1 Level (Effective Operational Proficiency level). At this level the participant can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning, can express his/her fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions, can use language flexibility and effectively for social, academic, and professional purposes, can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors, and cohesive devices and can use English fluently and flexibly in a wide range of contexts.

There were 12 participants who got TOEIC Score 785-940, the score that they are at the B2 level (at Vantage Level). The level indicates that the students are able to understand main ideas of complex texts either concrete or abstract topics, able to interact fluently and spontaneity, able to make regular interaction with native speakers, able to produce clear, detailed text, and able to explain a viewpoint on a topical issue. They can use English effectively, with some fluency, in a range of context.

Participants who are at B1 Level were 35 get a 550-780 TOEIC Score. This level indicates that the participants are at the Threshold level. At the Threshold level, the participants can understand the main point of clear standard input of familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. They can deal with most situational such as travelling in an area where the language is spoken, can produce simply connected text topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest, can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes, and ambition and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. They can communicate essential points and ideas in familiar contexts.

Most of the participants are at A2 level or Basic users because 241 participants get 225-545 TOEIC scores. It shows that they are at the Waystage level. They have to improve their English if they want to compete in this era. The Waystage level shows that the participants can understand sentences and fluently use expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, and employment). They can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters, can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matter in areas of immediate need. It means that they can communicate in English within a limited range of contexts.

TOEIC score 120-220 is for the A1 Level, it is a Basic user level. There are 57 participants are at the level. It means that if they are keen on competing in this era, they

need more time and energy to improve their English. They can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type and can introduce themselves and others. They can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows, and things he/she has. They can interact in a simple way providing the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help

CONCLUSION

The study shows that most the participants are at Basic user or A2 and A1 levels. There are 241 participants at the A2 level and 57 participants at the A1 Level. Their English competence has not been good so that they can communicate in English within a limited range of contexts and can interact in simple way to provide the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help. The participants have not been ready to face this industrial revolution 4.0.

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