Differences in Teaching Practices for TOEFL Reading: A Case Study of English and Non-English Major Teachers in China

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Abstract
Though teachers' backgrounds greatly impact classroom practice, relatively little research has been done on how TOEFL reading preparation is impacted by them. Emphasizing teaching tactics, textbook selection, and classroom activities, this article compares the approach to TOEFL reading of Chinese English teachers with non-English teachers. Five TOEFL preparation sites located in Zhengzhou, China completed a questionnaire survey revealing some quite significant differences in preferences and approaches to instruction. English teachers preferred didactic and interactive pedagogies to improve students' long-term language skills, whereas non-English teachers preferred task-based pedagogies to quickly improve students' language and test-taking skills. For non-English teachers, task-based learning was observed to be more successful in raising TOEFL scores. Second, whereas both sets of teachers gave official TOEFL resources and test-oriented materials top attention, English majors used a wider range of supplementary resources to aid general language development. Thirdly, different patterns of classroom activities emerged: non-English teachers generally employed mock tests and group discussions whereas English teachers focused on summary and rewriting tasks. While both sets of teachers applied interactive learning techniques quite effectively, student interaction was only rather low. These findings have important implications for programs aimed at teacher preparation since they show how the background knowledge of teachers influences TOEFL reading instruction, therefore affecting the distribution of professional teaching resources.
Keywords: TOEFL Preparation, Teacher Backgrounds, Pedagogical Approaches, Classroom Activities, Language Instruction

Introduction
The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is a globally recognized assessment designed to measure the English proficiency of non-native speakers (Suryani, 2021). Renowned for its credibility, the TOEFL is widely accepted by academic institutions and

professional organizations, underscoring its significance in evaluating language skills (Esfandiari et al., 2018; Adam & Magfirah, 2021). Among its various sections, the reading component holds particular importance (Pramesti, 2023), as it evaluates skills closely aligned with academic demands (Ismail & Fata, 2021). The TOEFL reading section assesses a range of critical skills, including the comprehension of academic vocabulary, identification of main ideas and supporting details, and the ability to infer information from texts (Herdi, 2016; Zhang, 2022; Jaelani et al., 2022). These skills are essential for students to engage with course materials, conduct academic research, and actively participate in academic discussions within English-medium settings (Kurniawati & Fitrawati, 2020; Fitria, 2022; Maspufah, 2022). The rigorous standards of the TOEFL reading section reflect the high linguistic and cognitive demands of academic environments, ensuring that candidates are well-prepared to face these challenges. This not only serves as a reliable benchmark for institutions (Mufidah, 2014) but also inspires candidates to enhance their reading proficiency (Samad et al., 2017), laying a strong foundation for their academic and professional success.

In the Chinese educational context, TOEFL preparation is primarily conducted within training institutions (Jiang, 2023). These institutions focus on enhancing students' test scores by emphasizing test-taking strategies and short-term improvement methods (Saif et al., 2021). Given the varied language proficiency levels of students, teachers must employ diverse teaching strategies to address the needs of learners at different skill levels (Zhang, 2022; Li, 2022). Notably, the TOEFL reading section poses significant challenges due to its complex text structures and academically oriented content (Fajri, 2019; Zalha et al., 2020; Jaelani et al., 2022), making reading instruction a central focus in TOEFL preparation courses (Pramesti, 2023). In addition, TOEFL teachers in China come from diverse educational backgrounds. On one hand, some teachers hold degrees in English or related fields (Jiang, 2020), having undergone systematic training in linguistics and education, which provides them with a solid theoretical foundation (Dewi & Kurniawan, 2024). On the other hand, some teachers lack formal professional education in English and instead rely on practical experience or short-term training to qualify as TOEFL instructors (Jiang, 2020). This variation in teachers' educational backgrounds may have significant implications for their teaching practices and outcomes.

Existing research on TOEFL teaching has predominantly focused on challenges faced by students (Girsang et al., 2019; Nuraini et al., 2022; Zhang, 2022; Pramesti, 2023), students' reading strategies (e.g., Kamil, 2020; Zarnis et al., 2021; Mawarni & Usman, 2022; Chen & Lin, 2023; Fitria, 2024), answering strategies (e.g., Zalha et al., 2020; Karimullah & Mukminatien, 2022; Pramesti, 2023; Wicaksono & Jatmiko, 2024), or the overall evaluation of teaching effectiveness (e.g., Rahmatillah, 2019; Jia, 2020; Putri & Syarif, 2021; Ristra et al., 2023). However, these macro-level studies often overlook the specific influence of teachers' educational backgrounds on their teaching practices. In China's TOEFL training market, significant diversity exists in the educational qualifications of teachers, particularly between those with an English major and those from non-English majors. This difference in background may directly affect teaching methods, the selection and use of instructional materials, and curriculum design, and ultimately play a crucial role in shaping students' learning outcomes. However, research on this phenomenon remains relatively scarce. This gap limits our comprehensive understanding of differences in teaching practices and their potential effects, while also hindering the optimization of TOEFL teaching methodologies. Consequently, there

is a pressing need for comparative studies examining the teaching practices of educators with diverse educational backgrounds. So, this study will use a descriptive research survey method to analyze the differences in TOEFL reading instruction practices between English-major and non-English-major teachers in Chinese TOEFL preparation centers. The research questions are: What are the specific teaching practices employed by non-English major teachers and English major teachers in TOEFL reading preparation? How do these practices differ in terms of methodologies, materials used, and classroom activities employed by non-English major teachers and English major teachers in TOEFL reading preparation?

Literature Review
Requirements of TOEFL Reading

The TOEFL reading section requires candidates to deeply comprehend complex academic texts. The reading materials, typically drawn from various academic disciplines, are characterized by diverse content and high linguistic complexity, featuring specialized terminology, lengthy and intricate sentences, and multi-layered paragraph structures (Ismail & Fata, 2021; Zhang, 2022). These passages assess not only candidates' ability to grasp surface-level information but also their skills in analyzing complex grammatical structures, inferring implicit meanings (Jaelani et al., 2022), and understanding logical relationships between paragraphs (Maspufah, 2022). To accurately interpret these texts, candidates must parse complex sentences to extract the deeper meanings conveyed in academic articles (Fajri, 2019; Badu, 2020; Jaelani et al., 2022). In addition, candidates are required to infer the meaning of unfamiliar terms from the context rather than relying solely on vocabulary memory, a requirement that reflects the high level of analysis and reasoning skills they need to possess in academic reading (Badu, 2020; Wathoni et al., 2022).

Secondly, the TOEFL reading section also assesses candidates' time management skills. Within a limited time frame, candidates must complete three academic passages, each approximately 700 words, along with their corresponding questions (Maizarah, 2019; Mawarni & Usman, 2022; Pramesti, 2023). This requires candidates to quickly skim the passages, extract key information, and locate relevant content using keywords from the questions (Zalha et al., 2020; Lubis & Siregar, 2022; Fatmawan et al., 2023). This not only tests their reading speed but also demands the ability to read and comprehend efficiently under time constraints. Such skills are essential for navigating the complex and diverse question types presented in the TOEFL test.

In addition, the TOEFL reading section includes a variety of question types, such as detail questions, inference questions, sentence simplification questions, vocabulary questions, and summary questions (Liao, 2018). Each type has its own unique characteristics and assesses different abilities of candidates (Putlack et al., 2020). For instance, detail questions require candidates to accurately identify specific information within the passage; inference questions test the ability to extract clues from the text and make logical inferences; sentence simplification questions assess the ability to restructure complex sentences and grasp their core meanings; vocabulary questions evaluate understanding of new words; and prose summary questions require candidates to synthesize key information from multiple paragraphs and analyze the author's main ideas or arguments (Putlack et al., 2020). This diversity in question types not only tests basic knowledge but also demands comprehensive

analytical and information integration skills, allowing candidates to understand and process academic content from multiple perspectives.

Common Strategies

The TOEFL reading section requires test takers to quickly and accurately comprehend highly academic texts within a limited timeframe. To succeed, candidates must master efficient reading strategies, which are essential for achieving excellent results. This section will explore the specific application of commonly used strategies in TOEFL reading and their internal logical connections from the perspective of understanding, analyzing, and responding to different question types.

Firstly, skimming and scanning are essential basic skills for candidates during the reading process. Skimming aims to quickly grasp the main idea and overall structure of the article, allowing candidates to quickly establish a general understanding of the topic by focusing on key information such as the title, the first paragraph, the first sentence of each paragraph, and the last sentence (Fitria, 2024). Meanwhile, scanning is primarily used to locate specific information, such as numbers, proper nouns, or particular terms, to quickly respond to detailed questions (Fatmawan et al., 2023; Karimullah & Mukminatien, 2022). These two strategies complement each other, with skimming providing an initial framework for understanding scanning and filling in the details (Setiawan, 2019; Zalha et al., 2020; Dhillon et al., 2020).

Secondly, inferring and predicting are particularly important when answering reasoning and vocabulary questions in the TOEFL reading section. Since TOEFL passages often include questions that require candidates to conclude from implicit information, they need to make logical inferences based on contextual clues (Kamal, 2018). This involves not only understanding vocabulary and sentence structures (Fajri, 2019; Badu, 2020) but also integrating background knowledge with the content of the article to form a reasonable explanation (Zalha et al., 2020). Additionally, when encountering new paragraphs or unfamiliar words, predicting potential content or meanings helps candidates maintain reading coherence and improves overall comprehension efficiency (Dharmawan & Desfitranita, 2018; Fitria, 2022).

In addition, paragraph analysis and information summarization are crucial methods for handling complex paragraphs in the TOEFL reading section. TOEFL passages are typically organized into logical sections (Maspufah, 2022), and the relationships between sentences within a paragraph are often clear, such as cause and effect, contrast, or illustration (Liao, 2018). Therefore, candidates need to quickly identify the core arguments and supporting details of a paragraph and summarize the key information based on this understanding (Maspufah, 2022). This strategy is particularly important for answering main idea questions, function questions, and organizational structure questions (Fajri, 2019).

Finally, time management and prioritization are essential components of an effective exam strategy. Candidates need to allocate their time wisely during the reading process to make the most of the limited test time available (Nurhayati & Nehe, 2016). For more challenging questions, it is advisable to mark them and move on, avoiding excessive time spent on individual questions that could impact overall performance (Dharmawan & Desfitranita, 2018;

Fitria, 2022). In short, these reading strategies do not exist independently but complement and promote each other. Candidates need to apply it flexibly based on actual conditions, from the overall framework to detailed understanding, from basic understanding to critical analysis, to achieve a comprehensive grasp of the TOEFL reading articles, thereby improving the accuracy and efficiency of answering questions.

Teaching Practices in EFL Contexts

Teaching practice is a systematic process of translating teaching principles into concrete teaching materials or activities, which involves various aspects, such as selecting teaching materials, employing teaching methods, managing the classroom, assessing students, and interacting with students (Buehl & Beck, 2014). This process is particularly crucial in TOEFL reading instruction, as it requires teachers to accurately design teaching methods, select appropriate materials, and plan effective classroom activities to meet specific reading needs. The following analysis will be conducted from three perspectives: teaching methods, material use, and classroom activities, to explain how scientific practice in TOEFL reading instruction can enhance students' reading comprehension and academic performance.

First of all, teaching methods are not merely technical tools but also key factors that shape the classroom structure and determine the achievement of teaching objectives (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Traditional lecture-based teaching is teacher-centered, with students primarily relying on the teacher's explanations to learn (Saeheng, 2017; Abdulbaki et al., 2018). This method is particularly effective for explaining basic knowledge and at the early stages of learning, as it provides students with a clear framework and structure (Emaliana, 2017). In TOEFL reading instruction, teachers systematically explain grammar rules, reading skills, and test-taking strategies to help students quickly grasp the core knowledge points required for the exam, thereby laying a solid foundation for deeper learning. However, its limitation is that student engagement can be low, potentially affecting the internalization and transfer of learning (Abdulbaki et al., 2018; Hafeez, 2021; Zhang et al., 2023).

In contrast, task-based learning (TBLT) emphasizes the development of language skills through the completion of practical tasks (Motlagh et al., 2014; Nikolaieva, 2016; Ellis, 2017; Chua & Lin, 2020). For TOEFL reading, this can involve designing reading tasks based on TOEFL question types, which allows students to enhance their discourse comprehension and analytical skills through problem-solving activities. Additionally, interactive teaching focuses on dynamic interaction between teachers and students, and among students, fostering critical thinking and autonomous learning abilities through activities such as questioning, discussion, or role-playing (Kutbiddinova et al., 2016). This method is effective in boosting students' motivation and teamwork skills (Malikovna et al., 2022).

Secondly, the selection and integration of teaching materials is another critical aspect of teaching practice. In TOEFL reading instruction, the "TOEFL Official Guide" is widely utilized due to its rigorous content and high alignment with the exam format, providing students with a reliable learning framework (Saif et al., 2021). Additionally, the use of simulation exercises like TOEFL Practice Online can help students become familiar with the test format and consolidate their reading skills through repeated practice (Ma & Cheng, 2015; Zarnis et al., 2021; Pramesti, 2023).

However, relying solely on official materials and mock exams may limit students' knowledge. To address this, integrating authentic materials has become an effective supplementary approach. For example, selecting news articles, academic papers, or current social issues (Febrina, 2017) can expand students' vocabulary and cultural knowledge while enhancing their ability to process authentic academic texts (Rao, 2019; Jia, 2020; Joraboyev, 2021). Traditional teaching often relies on printed texts (Ristra et al., 2023), which may lack engagement and appear dull to students (Turan-Özpolat, 2020). With the rise of the digital age, students are more inclined to seek information online. Research shows that for TOEFL preparation, teaching through computer screens is more effective than traditional textbooks (Ristra et al., 2023). Furthermore, leveraging Internet resources, such as TOEFL preparation websites and instructional videos, can make the learning process more interesting and interactive (Nikolaieva, 2016; Putri & Syarif, 2021).

Finally, the design of classroom activities is directly linked to students' learning outcomes and the overall classroom dynamism (Buehl & Beck, 2014). Explanation of test skills is a key component of TOEFL reading instruction. Teachers guide students in developing problem-solving strategies by analyzing the characteristics of questions, problem-solving steps, and common pitfalls (Lestari & Syaifullah, 2017; Samad et al., 2017). Discourse analysis further deepens this process by examining complex sentence structures and paragraph logic, allowing students to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the article's organization and language use (Fajri, 2019; Zalha et al., 2020). Additionally, group work tasks in TOEFL reading classes embody the principles of task-based learning (Nikolaieva, 2016). For instance, students can be divided into groups to tackle tasks such as identifying the main idea or locating specific details within a reading passage (Wang, 2022). This approach not only enhances students' teamwork skills but also facilitates a dynamic exchange of knowledge through collaborative learning experiences (Liao, 2018).

To sum up, the implementation of EFL teaching practice in TOEFL reading teaching should comprehensively use a variety of teaching methods, select teaching materials, and design classroom activities that are both targeted and interactive. Through such a multi-level and comprehensive teaching design, students can not only improve their test-taking ability but also achieve long-term development in language ability and academic literacy.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, schema theory and teacher self-efficacy theory are combined as theoretical frameworks to provide a comprehensive theoretical foundation for examining the differences in teaching practices between TOEFL reading teachers with English majors and those without. This integration allows for an in-depth analysis of how these theoretical perspectives can help explain variations in instructional approaches, material selection, and classroom strategies among teachers with different educational backgrounds.

Schema theory, first proposed by psychologist Bartlett (1932) and further developed by scholars like Rumelhart (1980), emphasizes the importance of background knowledge in the cognitive process. It posits that individuals understand and organize new information through existing knowledge frameworks, known as schemas (Huyen & Trang, 2020). In the context of reading instruction, the teacher's role goes beyond teaching language skills; it also involves helping students activate their existing knowledge and construct new cognitive frameworks

(Yang, 2023). Teachers with different professional backgrounds may adopt distinct approaches due to their schemas. For instance, English major teachers might focus on helping students build academic schemas through in-depth text analysis, while non-English major teachers may prioritize test-taking strategies that assist students in quickly locating and extracting relevant information.

At the same time, teacher self-efficacy theory offers another lens for understanding these differences. Proposed by Bandura (1977), the theory suggests that teacher efficacy—their belief in their teaching ability—directly influences the innovativeness of teaching methods and the complexity of classroom activities (Han et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2019; Xiong et al., 2020; Zainal & Mohd Matore, 2021). Teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to employ innovative and diverse teaching strategies, such as task-based learning (TBLT), cooperative learning, and interactive teaching. These approaches enable teachers to effectively address classroom challenges and continuously refine their methods to better meet students' learning needs (Martin & Mulvihill, 2019; Wyatt, 2018). In contrast, teachers with low self-efficacy often rely on traditional methods like teacher-centered lecture-style instruction and textbook-based strategies such as cloze exercises and repetitive drills (Choi & Lee, 2018). While these methods help students grasp basic language rules, they may limit opportunities for student interaction, thereby hindering the development of critical thinking and language application skills (Bachtiar, 2024).

The combination of schema theory and teacher self-efficacy theory in this study provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing teachers' teaching practices from both cognitive and behavioral perspectives. Schema theory highlights how teachers can facilitate students' understanding of new information by building upon existing knowledge frameworks, while self-efficacy theory examines whether teachers have the confidence and capability to effectively implement these teaching methods. The two theories complement each other, offering a nuanced explanation of how a teacher's background influences their instructional behavior.

Methodology

This study used a descriptive research survey method to analyze the differences in TOEFL reading instruction practices between English-major and non-English-major teachers in Chinese TOEFL preparation centers. TOEFL reading teachers from five qualified TOEFL preparation centers in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China participated in the survey. A total of 25 questionnaires were distributed, and the response rate was 20, which is 80%. The questionnaire survey was based on literature research and covered diversity factors, aiming to dig deeper into the characteristics and differences beneath the surface (Hoa & Tuyen, 2021; Rupeika-Apoga et al., 2022). To obtain data, a questionnaire survey was conducted. Teachers of English majors accounted for 65% of the survey results, and teachers of non-English majors accounted for 35% of the survey results. The specific details are shown in Figure 1.
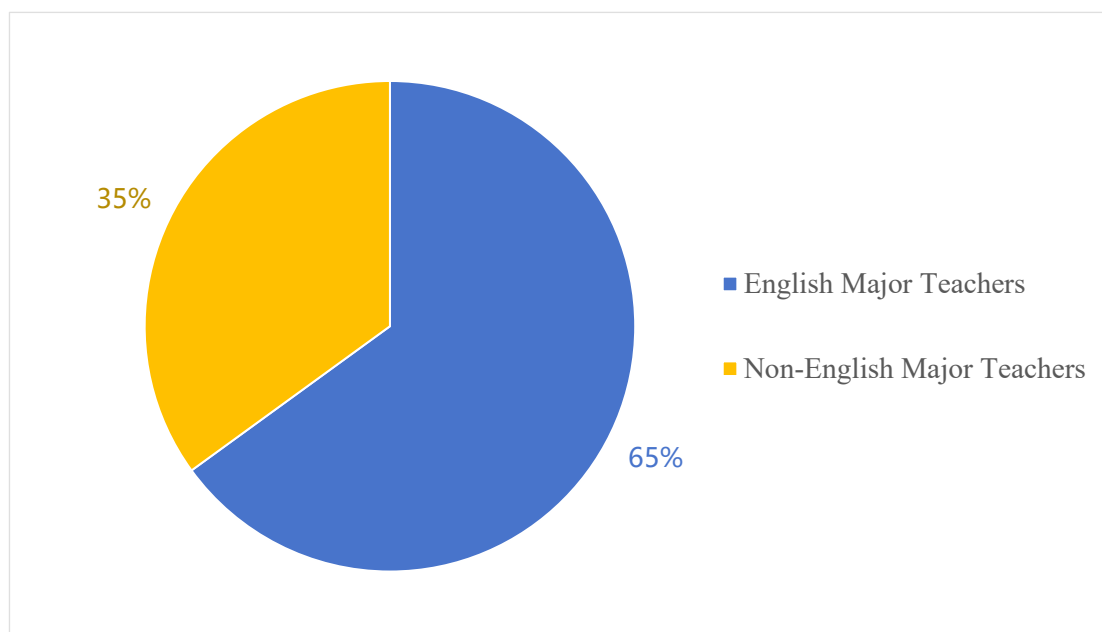
Figure 1 The Background of Participants

This anonymous survey was conducted online in November 2024 with the support of five qualified TOEFL test preparation centers in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China. The questionnaire consists of five parts, including teacher background information, Methodology, material used, classroom activities, and teaching effectiveness, with a total of 11 questions. The detailed information on questionnaires is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

The Questionnaires on the Differences in Teaching Practices for TOEFL Reading

Items	Questions	Answers
Teachers' background	● What is your major?	❖ English major ❖ Non-English major
Methodologies	● What teaching methods do you usually adopt when teaching TOEFL reading?	❖ Lecture-based teaching ❖ Task-based language teaching ❖ Interactive teaching ❖ Others:
	● Which teaching method do you think is most helpful in improving students' TOEFL reading scores?	❖ Lecture-based teaching ❖ Task-based teaching ❖ Interactive teaching ❖ Others:
	● What materials do you mainly use for TOEFL reading instruction?	❖ 《TOEFL Official Guide》 ❖ Online resources (such as online courses, etc.) ❖ Self-compiled materials ❖ TOEFL Practice Online ❖ Extracurricular reading materials (e.g. novels, journal articles, etc.) ❖ Authentic academic materials (such as news articles, academic papers, etc.)

Materials		❖ Others：
	● What factors do you consider most when choosing TOEFL reading materials?	❖ Matching of materials with TOEFL test questions ❖ The academic and complexity of the material ❖ Timeliness of materials ❖ The cultural context or interdisciplinary nature of the material ❖ Others:
Classroom activities	● What classroom activities do you adopt in your TOEFL reading classes?	❖ Explanation of reading skills and test strategies ❖ Paragraph analysis ❖ Vocabulary expansion exercises ❖ Group discussion and collaborative tasks ❖ Mock test ❖ Article summary or paraphrase activity ❖ Others:
	● How do you balance student engagement with the achievement of teaching objectives in the design of classroom activities?	❖ Low student engagement; teacher-centered explanations ❖ Moderate student engagement; emphasis on interaction and discussion ❖ High student engagement; student-centered classroom activities ❖ Others：
Teaching Effectiveness	● What do you think is the impact of a teacher's educational background on teaching practices?	❖ Influence on the choice of teaching method ❖ Influence on the selection and use of teaching materials ❖ Influence the design of classroom activities ❖ Others:
	● How do you assess the effectiveness of your TOEFL reading teaching?	❖ Student class participation ❖ Student learning outcomes (such as mock exam scores) ❖ Student feedback ❖ Others:
	● What aspects do you think need improvement in future TOEFL reading teaching?	❖ Innovation and diversification of teaching methods ❖ Updating and enriching teaching content ❖ Enhancing the interactivity of classroom activities ❖ Increasing student learning engagement ❖ Others:
	● Which aspects of TOEFL reading instruction would you like to see receive more support and resources?	❖ Providing more high-quality teaching materials and exercises ❖ Providing more teacher training and professional development opportunities ❖ Providing more interactive teaching platforms ❖ Others:

Findings and Discussion

Teaching Methodologies

In the process of TOEFL reading instruction, this study discovered that the teaching practices of English majors and non-English majors teachers have many similarities as well as great differences. The data in Figure 2 show that there are some similarities and differences in the choice of teaching methods between English major teachers and non-English major teachers. First, lecture-based teaching is widely used by both types of teachers. Although both rely heavily on lecture-based teaching, the proportion of its use by English major teachers is slightly higher. Secondly, the proportion of non-English majors using task-based teaching is slightly higher, reaching 57.14%, while the proportion of English majors is 53.85%. This shows that non-English majors are slightly more likely to use task-based teaching. Regarding interactive teaching, 61.54% of English major teachers adopt this method, while the proportion among non-English major teachers is 71.43%. Non-English major teachers showed a higher rate of using interactive teaching, which may be related to their greater emphasis on students' classroom participation. Finally, neither type of teacher used other teaching methods, which indicates that their teaching methods mainly focused on three methods: lecture-based teaching, task-based teaching, and interactive teaching.
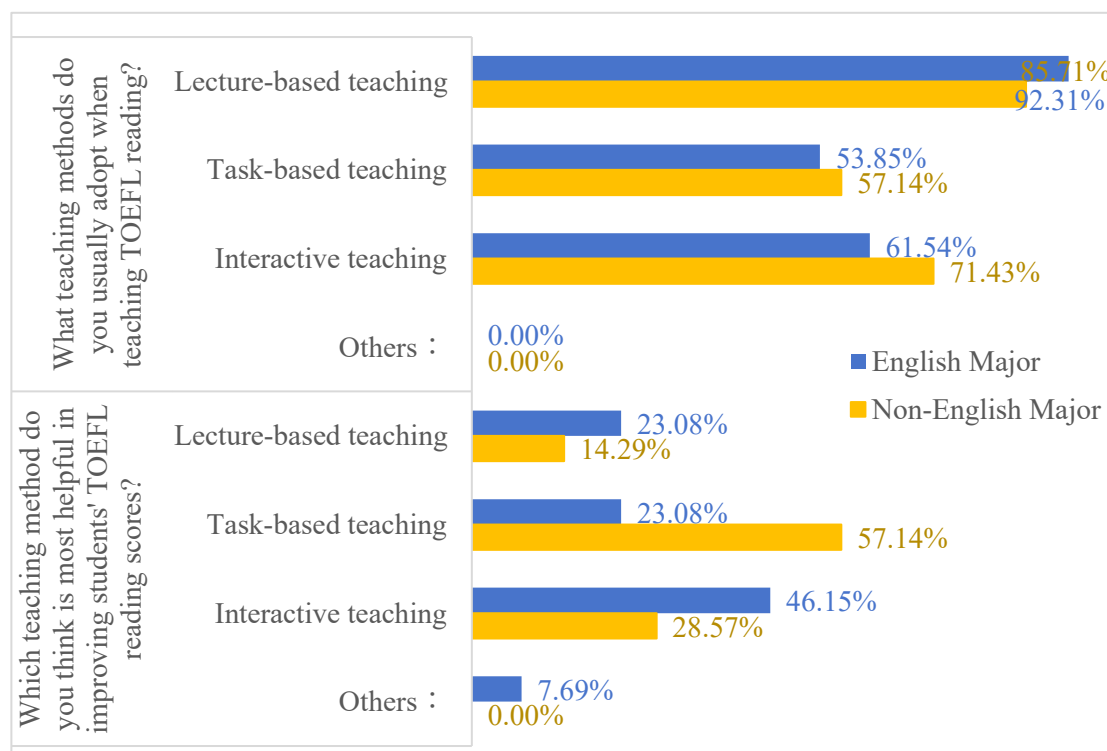

Figure 2 Teaching Methodology

In terms of effective teaching methods to improve students' TOEFL reading scores, lecture-based teaching has not been widely recognized by both types of teachers. Only 23.08% of English major teachers and 14.29% of non-English major teachers believe that it is the most effective, indicating that its improvement effect is limited. Task-based teaching is more recognized by non-English major teachers, with 57.14% of non-English major teachers believing it to be the most effective, compared with 23.08% of English major teachers. Interactive teaching is more popular among English major teachers, with 46.15% of them believing it to be the most effective, far higher than the 28.57% of non-English major teachers.

Finally, only one English major teacher thinks that a combination of the three methods is the most effective, while non-English major teachers do not mention other methods.

In short, English major teachers, because they have a stronger theoretical foundation in linguistics (Dewi & Kurniawan, 2024), tend to prefer to develop students' language skills through lecture-based and interactive teaching. Non-English major teachers focus more on practicality and test-taking ability (Jiang, 2020), and task-based teaching may be more suitable for helping students improve their language proficiency and test-taking ability in the short term (Motlagh et al., 2014). In terms of the effectiveness of improving students' TOEFL reading scores, English major teachers attach more importance to the role of interactive teaching, while non-English major teachers believe that task-based teaching is more effective. Both types of teachers have a more conservative attitude toward lecture-based teaching, indicating that the effectiveness of this traditional teaching method in improving students' TOEFL scores is generally questioned.

Materials
The selection preferences and criteria of the two types of teachers are shown in Figure 3. In terms of preference for using TOEFL reading teaching materials, teachers generally rely heavily on authoritative official resources, such as the TOEFL Official Guide and TOEFL Practice Online (TPO), with the usage rate of English major teachers being 92.31% and non-English major teachers reaching 100%. This trend shows that such resources have become the first choice for teachers because of their pertinence and reliability (Ma & Cheng, 2015). At the same time, English major teachers perform better in terms of the diversity of material sources, with 30.77% using online resources, while non-English major teachers only have 14.29%. In addition, the use of self-compiled materials was common among both types of teachers, with 46.15% of English majors and 42.86% of non-English majors using them, reflecting that teachers tailor teaching content according to the specific needs of their students. In terms of the use of extracurricular reading materials and authentic academic materials, the usage rate of English major teachers is 15.38%, while non-English major teachers are more inclined to use authentic academic materials (28.57%). Using authentic materials allows learners to truly engage with the target language (Rao, 2019; Joraboyev, 2021). Through these materials, students can not only learn a lot of professional knowledge and authentic native language expressions but also enhance their ability to handle authentic academic texts (Jia, 2020). It is noteworthy that 15.38% of English major teachers used other materials, while non-English major teachers did not mention such resources. In general, both types of teachers attach importance to official resources, but English majors pay more attention to the diversity of material sources.
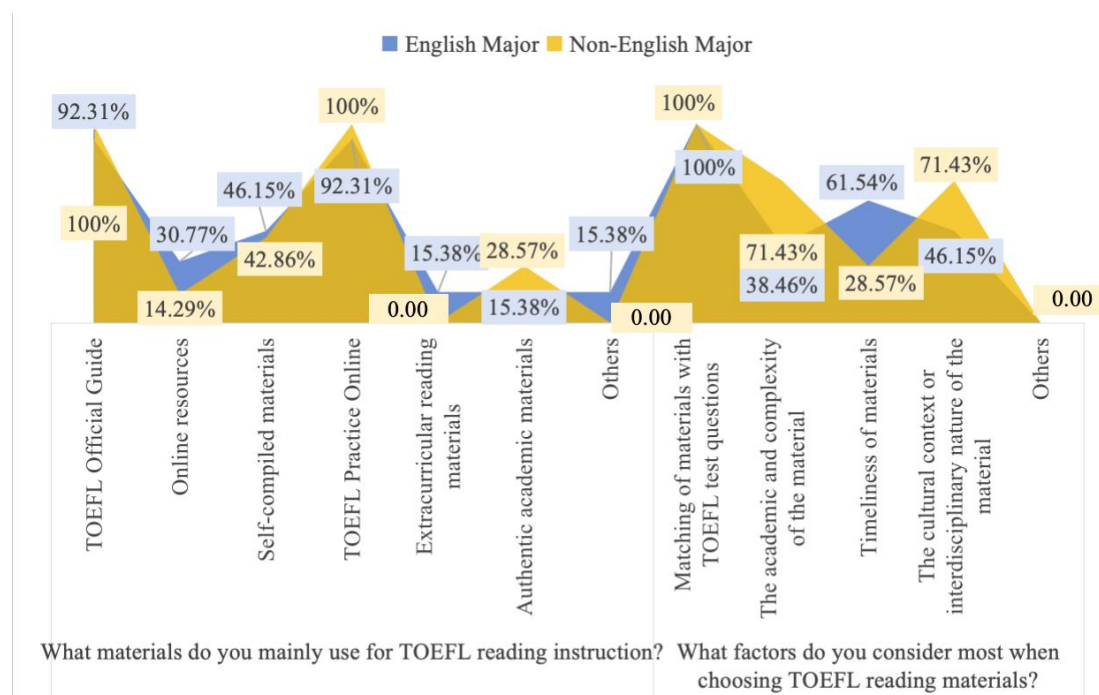
Figure 3 Materials

When selecting TOEFL reading materials, all teachers (100%) consider the matching degree between the materials and the test questions as the primary consideration, reflecting that both types of teachers are guided by the test needs. Non-English major teachers pay more attention to the academic and complexity of the materials, reaching 71.43%, which is significantly higher than the 38.46% of English major teachers, indicating that they are more inclined to choose high-difficulty materials to help students adapt to the examination requirements. In contrast, English major teachers are more concerned about the timeliness of materials, with 61.54% emphasizing this point, while non-English major teachers only have 28.57%, indicating that English major teachers are more inclined to choose materials that reflect the latest language trends. In addition, 71.43% of non-English major teachers pay attention to the cultural background or interdisciplinary nature of the materials, which is significantly higher than the 46.15% of English major teachers. This may be related to the fact that non-English major teachers pay more attention to the integration of diverse backgrounds in teaching. It is noteworthy that no teacher mentions other selection factors. In general, both groups of teachers give priority to the matching of materials with the exam when selecting materials, but non-English major teachers pay more attention to the academic nature, complexity, and cultural background of the materials, while English major teachers pay more attention to the timeliness of the materials.

Classroom Activities
Based on the data collected in Figure 4, it is found that there are similarities and differences between English major teachers and non-English major teachers in the use of classroom activities. First, explanation of reading skills test strategies and paragraph analysis are activities adopted by both types of teachers 100%, emphasizing basic teaching. Secondly, vocabulary expansion exercises are widely used by both types of teachers, 84.62% for English major teachers and 85.71% for non-English major teachers, with a small difference. In terms of group discussions and collaborative tasks, non-English major teachers (42.86%) are slightly

higher than English major teachers (30.77%), indicating that they pay more attention to student participation. The use of mock exams is significantly higher among non-English major teachers (71.43%) than among English major teachers (53.85%), indicating that they pay more attention to exam adaptability training. The percentage of English major teachers (53.85%) who participate in article summarization or rewriting is slightly higher than that of non-English major teachers (42.86%), and both types of teachers believed that this activity is important for improving students' comprehension and expression skills. Finally, other activities are not adopted, indicating that classroom activities mainly focus on the above methods.

In terms of the balance between student engagement and teaching objectives, English major teachers and non-English major teachers also show certain similarities and differences. First, 61.54% of English major teachers and 57.14% of non-English major teachers tend to adopt a low-student-involvement, teacher-centered teaching style, showing the dominance of the traditional lecture model. Secondly, 84.62% of English major teachers and 85.71% of non-English major teachers choose a medium-level participation approach that emphasizes interaction and discussion, reflecting that both types of teachers attach importance to student participation. However, 30.77% of English major teachers and 14.29% of non-English major teachers adopt high student engagement and student-centered classroom activities, indicating that this strategy is less used. Finally, no teacher adopted other balancing methods, indicating that the classroom design mainly focuses on these three modes.
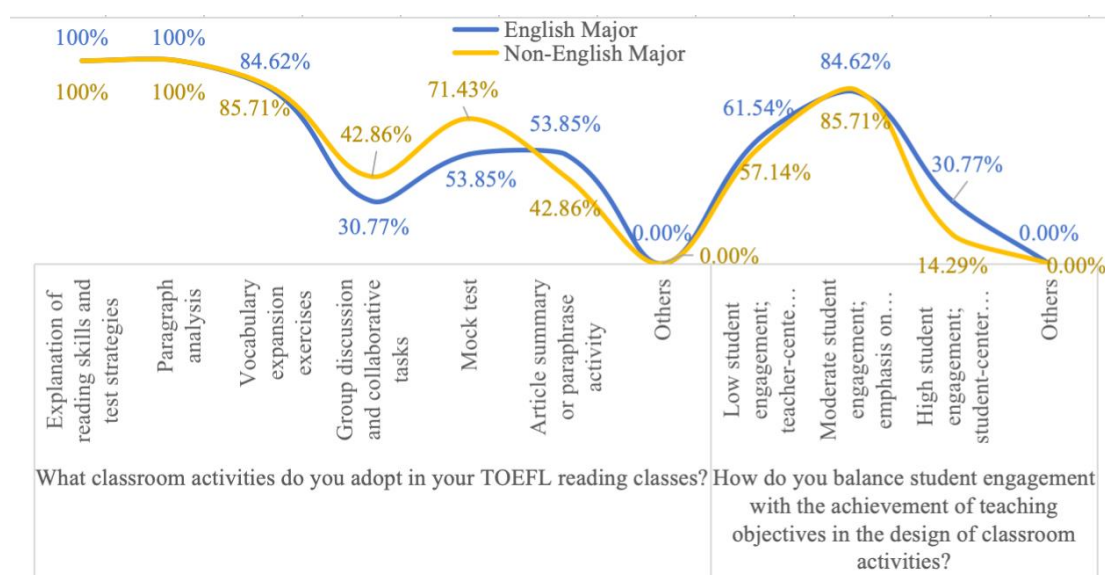

Figure 4 Classroom activities

In general, the two types of teachers are relatively consistent in their application of basic teaching activities, but there are also some differences. Non-English major teachers tend to use mock tests and group discussions, while English major teachers use more article summarization and rewriting activities, which shows that the two types of teachers have different emphases in their choice of activities. As for the balance between student engagement and teaching objectives, most teachers adopt an interactive teaching method with moderate engagement, emphasizing interaction and discussion to promote student engagement. However, low-engagement teacher-led teaching still accounts for a large proportion, indicating the continued influence of the traditional lecture model. High-

engagement student-led teaching methods are less used by both types of teachers, indicating that the adoption of this teaching strategy is still limited.

Teaching Effectiveness

The impact of teachers' educational background on teaching practice shows certain differences in different aspects. Figure 5 shows the teaching effectiveness of the two types of teachers. All English major teachers (100%) believe that their educational background influences their choice of teaching methods, while this proportion is 85.71% among non-English major teachers, indicating that English major teachers are more inclined to emphasize the importance of professional background in teaching methods. In terms of the selection and use of teaching materials, only 38.46% of English major teachers and 42.86% of non-English major teachers think that they are influenced by their educational background. This proportion is relatively low, indicating that the selection of teaching materials is more based on actual needs rather than professional background. Regarding classroom activity design, 85.71% of non-English major teachers claim that their professional background has an impact, while this proportion is 53.85% among English major teachers, indicating that non-English major teachers may rely more on their professional background to design classroom activities. It is noteworthy that neither type of teacher mentions the impact of educational background on other aspects. In general, English major teachers attach more importance to the impact of educational background on teaching methods, while non-English major teachers pay more attention to their role in the design of classroom activities.
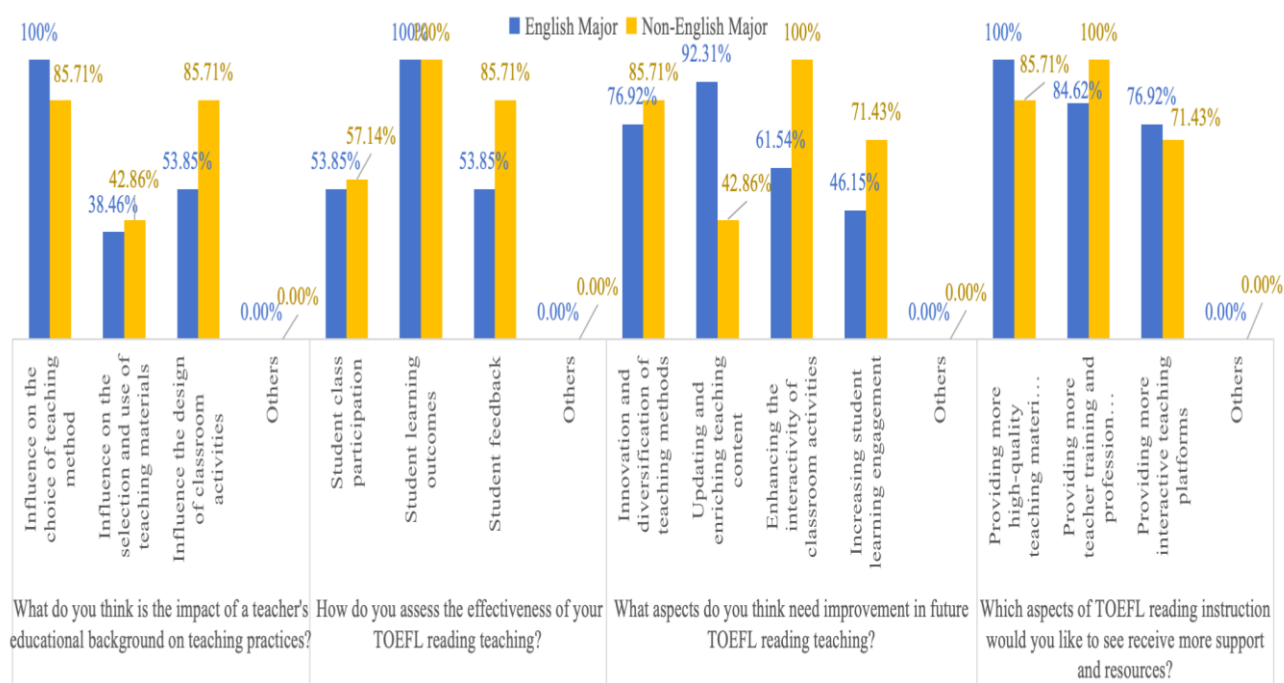
Figure 5 Teaching Effectiveness

Evaluation is a process of providing feedback on teaching effectiveness and student learning (Afrianto, 2017). When evaluating the effectiveness of TOEFL reading teaching, the two types of teachers have both similarities and differences in the selection of evaluation criteria. This reflects the diversity and pertinence of evaluation methods, each of which has its own unique application purpose (Saefurrohman, 2017). Student learning outcomes are the main evaluation criteria that all teachers unanimously agreed on, with 100% of both English

and non-English major teachers considering this indicator to be the most important. Student classroom participation is also adopted by some teachers, among which the proportion of English major teachers is 53.85%, while the proportion of non-English major teachers is slightly higher, at 57.14%. In terms of student feedback, non-English major teachers show greater concern, with 85.71% of teachers using it as a basis for evaluation, while the proportion of English major teachers is 53.85%, indicating that non-English major teachers are more inclined to adjust their teaching strategies based on student feedback. In addition, neither type of teacher mentioned other evaluation methods. In general, although teachers generally attach importance to students' learning outcomes, non-English major teachers attach more importance to the role of students' feedback.

Regarding the areas that need improvement in TOEFL reading instruction, English major teachers and non-English major teachers show different focuses. Innovation and diversification of teaching methods are improvement needs generally recognized by both types of teachers, among which the proportion of English major teachers is 76.92%, while the proportion of non-English major teachers is slightly higher, at 85.71%. In terms of updating and enriching teaching content, 92.31% of English major teachers put forward this demand, while the proportion of non-English major teachers is only 42.86%, indicating that English major teachers attach more importance to the updating of teaching content. Regarding the interactivity of classroom activities, all non-English major teachers (100%) hope to enhance interactivity, while the proportion among English major teachers is 61.54%, reflecting that non-English major teachers have greater expectations for improving classroom participation. In terms of improving students' learning engagement, non-English major teachers (71.43%) pay more attention to this issue than English major teachers (46.15%). In addition, neither type of teacher mentioned other areas for improvement. In general, English major teachers are more concerned with updating teaching content, while non-English major teachers pay more attention to improving classroom interactivity and student participation.

In terms of the teaching aspects that require more support and resources, the needs of English major teachers and non-English major teachers have different focuses. All English major teachers (100%) hope to have more high-quality teaching materials and exercises, while this proportion is 85.71% among non-English major teachers, indicating that high-quality teaching materials are a consistent demand of both types of teachers. Regarding teacher training and professional development opportunities, the demand for non-English major teachers is particularly prominent, reaching 100%, while the demand for English major teachers is 84.62%. In addition, regarding the demand for more interactive teaching platforms, the proportion of English major teachers is 76.92%, while the proportion of non-English major teachers is slightly lower, at 71.43%. It is worth noting that neither group of teachers mentions other support needs. Overall, high-quality teaching materials and teacher training are the most important areas of support for both groups of teachers, especially non-English major teachers, who have a particularly urgent need for teacher training.

In general, there are significant differences in the impact of teachers' educational background on their teaching methods and classroom activity design. English major teachers focus more on the theoretical nature of teaching methods, while non-English major teachers emphasize more on the practical design of classroom activities. In the evaluation of teaching effectiveness, student learning outcomes are consistently regarded as core indicators by both

types of teachers, but non-English major teachers pay more attention to the role of student feedback. In terms of teaching improvement needs, the focus is on innovation in teaching methods, updating and enriching content, and enhancing classroom interaction. Among them, English major teachers pay more attention to content updating, while non-English major teachers emphasize classroom interaction and improving student participation. Regarding teaching support and resources, both types of teachers believe that high-quality teaching materials and teacher training are key needs, while non-English major teachers show a more urgent need for teacher training.

Conclusion, Limitation, and Recommendations

This study explores the differences in practice between English and non-English major teachers in TOEFL reading instruction, revealing the profound influence of teachers' educational backgrounds on teaching methods, material selection, and classroom activities. Although the study has some limitations, it provides valuable insights for improving teachers' instructional practices. Future research can further expand the sample scope and explore more factors that affect teaching practice to promote the continuous optimization of TOEFL reading instruction. The limitations of this study are the geographic and size limitations of its sample. The study is conducted in five TOEFL preparation centers in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China, and the sample size and geographic scope are relatively limited, which may not represent teaching practices across the country. In addition, the questionnaire method used in this study mainly relies on teachers' self-reports, which may have certain subjective biases. Therefore, future research could expand the sample to cover more regions and different types of TOEFL preparation centers to enhance the representativeness of the results.

According to the research results, the teacher's educational background has a profound impact on all aspects of TOEFL reading teaching. There are obvious differences between English majors and non-English majors in TOEFL reading teaching. Based on these differences, first, it is recommended that training institutions provide teachers with training that integrates the three teaching methods to help them flexibly choose teaching methods according to different learning objectives. Secondly, training institutions should optimize teaching materials. In addition to providing high-quality official resources, they should also supplement them with diversified materials. In particular, teaching content should be updated regularly to keep the material current and reflect the latest language and examination trends.

In addition, training institutions should focus on optimizing the design of classroom activities, provide resources for teachers, and help teachers design classroom activities with medium to high participation levels, avoiding a single lecture-style teaching model to promote students' full participation. Finally, in order to improve teacher support and training, training institutions should regularly organize workshops to improve teaching skills and academic abilities, especially for non-English major teachers. At the same time, institutions should introduce more technical support tools, such as online collaboration software and mock examination systems, to meet teachers' needs for interactive teaching platforms and enhance teaching effectiveness. In addition, institutions should provide targeted support for different groups of teachers. For non-English major teachers, specific classroom activity design cases should be provided, while for English major teachers, the combination of teaching method theory and practical application should be strengthened.

Contribution

This study makes significant contributions at both theoretical and practical levels. Theoretically, it enriches the research literature on the relationship between teachers' backgrounds and their teaching practices, particularly in the context of TOEFL reading preparation. By comparing the teaching methods of English-major and non-English-major teachers, the study highlights differences in teaching strategies, material selection, and classroom activity design based on teachers' academic backgrounds. These findings provide empirical evidence for understanding how teacher backgrounds influence language test preparation, addressing a gap in existing research. Contextually, the study focuses on the specific environment of Chinese TOEFL preparation classrooms, analyzing how teachers' backgrounds shape their teaching practices within this setting. The results offer practical recommendations for enhancing the quality of TOEFL preparation instruction and serve as a foundation for educational institutions to allocate teaching resources more effectively and optimize teacher training programs. Overall, this study not only enriches existing theoretical knowledge but also offers practical insights for enhancing TOEFL preparation teaching practices. Additionally, it provides valuable guidance for the development and refinement of teacher training programs, highlighting its substantial academic and practical significance.

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