ANALYZING STUDENTS' NEEDS AND PREFERENCES FOR DIGITAL EFL LEARNING MATERIALS IN SAMBAS

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ABSTRAK: Meskipun penelitian mengenai materi pembelajaran bahasa digital telah mendapat banyak perhatian, terdapat sedikit penelitian yang berfokus pada lokasi tertentu, seperti Sambas di Kalimantan Barat, Indonesia. Terletak di dekat perbatasan Indonesia dan Malaysia, Sambas memiliki lingkungan belajar EFL yang unik yang dipengaruhi oleh lokasi geografis dan latar belakang sosial ekonomi yang beragam. Memahami kebutuhan dan preferensi siswa dalam konteks lokal sangat penting dalam merancang bahan ajar yang relevan dengan budaya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menilai kebutuhan dan preferensi siswa di Sambas dan memberikan wawasan berharga dalam mengoptimalkan pemanfaatan bahan ajar digital untuk pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian survei untuk memperoleh informasi tentang materi terkini, kebutuhan, persepsi, dan preferensi siswa mengenai materi digital dalam kebutuhan dan preferensi siswa bahasa Inggris, dan sumber daya teknologi. Partisipan penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas satu SMP (20 siswa) di Sambas. Temuannya mengungkapkan bahwa siswa membutuhkan video, film, dan lagu dengan subtitle bahasa Inggris sebagai bahan pembelajaran. Selain itu, penelitian ini dapat membentuk penelitian di masa depan dalam mengembangkan dan menerapkan materi EFL digital yang disesuaikan dengan konteks budaya Sambas, termasuk bahasa, adat istiadat, dan tradisi lokal, serta efektivitasnya dalam melibatkan siswa dan meningkatkan penguasaan bahasa Inggris.

Kata Kunci: Materi Digital, EFL, Materi Pembelajaran, Analisis Kebutuhan, Sambas

ABSTRACT: *While research on digital language learning materials has received lots of attention, there was a scarcity of studies focusing on specific locations, like Sambas in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Located near the border of Indonesia and Malaysia, Sambas has a unique EFL learning environment influenced by its geographical location and diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Understanding students' needs and preferences in local contexts is crucial in designing culturally relevant teaching materials. This study aimed to assess the needs and preferences of students in Sambas and provided valuable insights into optimizing the utilization of digital teaching materials for English language learning. This study employed a survey research design to elicit information about current materials, the student's needs, perceptions, and preferences concerning digital materials in English students' needs and preferences, and technological resources. The participants of this study were first-year students of junior secondary school (20 students) in Sambas. The findings revealed that students need videos, movies, and songs with English subtitles as learning materials. Furthermore, the study might shape future research in developing and implementing digital EFL materials customized to the Sambas' cultural context, including local language, customs, and traditions, and their effectiveness in engaging students and improving English language acquisition.*

INTRODUCTION

Conducting a comprehensive needs analysis has impact on EFL learners' motivation and sustainability. Teachers can examine the EFL learner's motivation, goal, and settings to help designing language learning materials to promote language proficiency. Consequently, learners will be more motivated by the importance of acquiring English proficiency for handling global concerns rather than merely studying English.

While research on digital language learning materials has received lots of attention, there is a scarcity of studies focusing on students' needs analysis in specific locations. Understanding needs and preferences in local contexts is crucial in designing culturally relevant teaching materials. Teachers can foster student engagement and motivation in the learning process by including practical activities and culturally relevant themes and aligning materials with students' interests. The need analysis findings can also ensure that the materials cater to students' specific linguistic needs, making English learning more meaningful and applicable to their lives.

Located near the border of Indonesia and Malaysia, Sambas has a unique EFL learning environment shaped by its geographical location and diverse socio-economic backgrounds. The region is situated along the South China Sea, so people live near the coastline. The location provides several advantages, including access to marine resources and prospects for economic activities like fishing and tourism. The student's parents are mostly farmers (more than 50%). Additionally, due to the closeness to a country border, many parents are engaged in cross-border work opportunities with better income, such as working in palm plantations, construction, domestic care, house-keeping, timber industries, travel agents, and more. This situation may affect students' language exposure and learning experiences. It shapes the students' perception that learning English is insignificant. They learn English because it is required in the curriculum as a compulsory subject.

Considering the limited exposure to English outside the classroom, lack of parental support, and the perception that English is not important for their future, students may view English learning as irrelevant in their daily lives. In such situations, the teacher can hardly stimulate students' motivation to study English**.** This assumption highlights the importance of

conducting a need analysis study on digital EFL learning materials. Understanding students' needs and preferences can shape the development of materials that connect classroom learning and real-life language use.

Junior secondary students today belong to Generation Z. This generation opts for visual learning styles. Digital learning materials can provide more visual content appealing to visual learners. Digital EFL learning materials offer innovative and flexible solutions that align with the goals of educational reform to create sustainable and effective learning environments. These materials can bridge the gap between students in remote or underserved areas and quality language education, allowing more students to access language learning opportunities. It also represents adaptive learning technologies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Need Analysis

Needs analysis is a crucial stage in developing a syllabus or course. It determines the learners' needs and learning expectations. Based on the Indonesian national curriculum, the students formally learn English for the first time in junior secondary school (Albari & Yamin, 2020). The primary English language Teaching (ELT) materials are textbooks provided by the government and utilized nationally. However, regarding the local cultural values and the nature of students family background, teacher-made materials are much preferable due to its flexibility and suitability. Based on the findings from Akil et al. (cited in (Nur Fitria, 2022), most students considered the teacher-made coursebook relevant to their needs, detailed, the topics were compelling and applicable, easy to follow, and engaging.

Producing personalized learning materials based on the learners' needs can enhance the learning experience. When knowledge is constructed based on the student's experiences, culture, and beliefs, they are more likely to relate to it (Nur Fitria, 2022).

Needs analysis is an important procedure to obtain comprehensive information about needs before implementing a project or developing a product, including developing language learning material (Ikhsanudin, 2020). A need analysis is performed to determine which language points students must acquire. Moreover, the selection of a teaching method, materials, and objectives is based on a needs analysis (Gonzalez, 2020).

A needs analysis is a way to assess what students need to learn and the most efficient way to teach it (Parker, 2023). It links student's current knowledge to the materials they will be studying. It also assists teachers in establishing a direction for their instruction and connecting the students' actual needs to the lesson plan.

Need analysis assists instructors in identifying students' future goals and responsibilities and modifying the curriculum to match the learners' specific requirements, what the students understand, and what they need to learn to achieve these needs (Graves as cited in Lapele, 2019). Data collection approaches include interviews, observations, conversations, assessments, and surveys (Lapele, 2019).(Desi Rizma Yanti, 2019)

In her study about need analysis on developing ESP Speaking material, Lapele, (2019) cited the work of Borg and suggested that teachers conduct a needs analysis to identify and address students' needs that are correlated with acquiring the learning objectives in the process of developing materials, aligning with Tomlinson's (2011) concept of conducting a comprehensive analysis of students' needs. For developing the materials, Lapele mentioned that the teachers used four types of needs analysis: Target Situation Analysis, Wants, Means, Subjective Needs Analysis, Present Situation Analysis, and Lack Analysis.

Muthmainnah et al., (2021) underlines the importance of needs analysis in designing ICT-based EFL learning materials. The findings revealed that students from various nations require materials relevant to current situations, easy to communicate, and accessible via the students' technological devices, with content delivered in both L2 and L1. Most of the participants wanted to use ICT in their learning process.

Needs analysis involves asking questions about the demands, deficiencies, and requirements of the target learners and presenting inquiries concerning the circumstances and context where learning occurs (Salmani-Nodoushan, 2020).

English proficiency and effective communication are crucial in sustainability education development to deal with global challenges. However, many EFL students, particularly children, study English out of need rather than interest or imminent necessities. They feel they do not need it, as they believe they will not use English in the future (Desi Rizma Yanti, 2019). Therefore, students' perception is also important to support the need analysis.

EFL Learning Materials

Ikhsanudin (2020) stated that language learning materials (LLMs) are representations of language that serve as resources for language activities to provide language experiences for language learners. He proposes LLMs examples like labels or product information, such as noodle packaging, boxes for household appliances, and instructions for using electronic devices.

Materials refer to any resources with educational objectives or pedagogic purposes that teachers and students use to assist in language acquisition (Mishan & Timmis, 2015). In short, materials are any resources that enable learners to acquire or learn a language efficiently thrugh meaningful and purposeful tasks. Tomlinson (cited in Mishan & Timmis, 2015) refers to materials as anything

that students and teachers use to aid language learning. Materials include emails, videos, YouTube, grammar books, dictionaries, readers, workbooks, and printout work. They might also be newspapers, food cartons, pictures, talkshow with native speakers, teacher instructions, written assignments on cards, or students' conversations. Based on the definition above, Mishan specifies the materials as digital media, conventional paper-based material, realia, and processes. Furthermore, Mishan & Timmis (2015) argue that materials are those resources that can expose students to the language.

In EFL, the use of authentic materials in the classroom is highly encouraged (Nur Fitria, 2022) mentioned many benefits of using authentic materials in EFL. It helps students to understand their culture, gets students familiar with various text genres, and provide reaal context of language use. Authentic materials also aid students in acquiring language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), grammar, vocabularies, etc. Teachers are supposed to teach real text like cooking recipes and advertisements in the newspapers or magazines, product labels, or procedures for using certain electronic devices as mentioned by Ikhsanudin (2020). Those texts are produced not for instructional purposes but for functional purposes. These authentic materials are real-world resources featuring language that occurs naturally in communication in native-speaker settings of practice, or rather those circumstances where common English is standard. Authentic materials are crucial to the language learning process, as it provides exposure to real language use.

Although the use of authentic materials is highly encouraged for language learning, teachers should not overlook the disadvantages as well. According to Basuki et al. (2018), there are some disadvantages to authentic materials. First, the presence of non-essential words in the text. Second, there will be cultural bias which can make students confused. Next is the level of difficulty with the materials. Authentic materials may contain many unfamiliar words and teachers should work harder to adapt them, especially for low students. Nur Fitria (2022) underlined the complexity of language and the long prepation time when using the authentic materials. She suggests that teacher should carefully selected the material that is suitable with the students' level. Teachers can adjust the level of dfficulty and delete inappropriate items.

The present study focuses on need analysis for junior secondary students who are considered children and early teenagers (11-13 years old). Children are more energetic than adults, have a short span of attention, and acquire language at certain phases of development. Teachers use singing a song, drilling, story-telling, reading aloud, dictation to teach English to young learners, demonstration and presentation practice, producing activities, and using games (Avezova, 2022). Demonstration and presentation practice, producing activities, and using games as the most successful ways. Avezova also emphasized the importance of active learner participation, fostering collaboration and supportive learning groups, incorporating activities related to bodily movement and responsibilities, using

connected exercises and many different vocabularies, focusing on meaningful tasks with clear learning objectives, providing scaffolding and encouraging learner-generated materials, implementing thematic lessons with familiar content, and integrating fun activities. Avezova believed that having native speakers in the classroom is a good activity.

In Avezova's view, to enhance engagement and joy in vocabulary learning, several techniques can be employed. These include using songs, demonstrating unfamiliar words with visualization, using mnemonic methods with grammatical rules, having spontaneous discussions during the lesson, and using games and role-play to refresh vocabulary.

Developing Digital Learning Materials

Why digital? Textbooks are important resources of exposure to English and the vocabulary that is worth learning in EFL situations (Yang & Coxhead, 2022). However, with the recent technological advancement, a teacher cannot only rely on existing printed textbooks. Integration of technology is needed to match the student's needs. That is why teacher needs to consider the use of digital materials.

The production of teaching materials is a process of preparing for learning (Ikhsanudin, 2020). Ikhsanudin asserts that the creation of materials resulted in two types of products: (1) theoretical designs with specific or general material; and (2) original or prototype instructional materials using such designs.

Basuki et al., (2018) claimed that no vocabulary book meets all students' needs and qualifications of the coursebook perfectly. Therefore, it is a good idea that teachers design personalized ELT materials to accommodate the syllabus requirements and their students' characteristics and needs as well.

A study proved that making e-books can facilitate the acquisition of digital literacy and technological pedagogical content knowledge among teacher candidates (Ikpeze, 2018). The results of this qualitative case study show that creating e-books does help teacher candidates gain knowledge of technical pedagogical material and digital literacy. The project also supported the personalization of instruction with the knowledge of instructional design.

Many researchers have undertaken studies on the development of digital EFL materials. Hardiyanto (2020) created an e-book for pre-intermediate grammar with the Research and Development approach. The findings revealed that, in terms of content, language use, and medium, the expert agreed that the e-book was appropriate for use. Hence, the use of the e-book is recommended for pre-intermediate grammar classes. He used a questionnaire to investigate the students' perceptions of the e-book. The students perceived the e-book as excellent.

Other digital media is song. Songs have always been perfect ways to express feelings, thoughts, and ideas. They are a universal language that everyone on the earth understands. Songs have been effective as educational tools for a wide range of vocabulary items relating to almost every element of

life. (Rusmanayanti, 2019) explored YouTube music in English learning as a media innovation. The findings revealed that students learned numerous new terms, as well as the meaning and pronunciation of the lyrics. Similarly, an action research study was conducted at Dharma Karya UT Junior High School class VII, with 25 children as participants, demonstrating a notable improvement in English language abilities through song (Hadi, 2019).

Abdul Syakur et al., (2020) also conducted a study employing the research and development (R&D) method to produce digital textbooks in D3 Pharmacy departments. The questionnaire answers suggested that students had positive responses to the digital textbooks. This finding is in line with the result of previous study conducted by Hardiyanto.

Another study of a content analysis on the sixth-grade English textbook "Grow with English" by using the Ellis-proposed list of 10 SLA principles (2005) also demonstrated that game-based activities and consciousness-raising tasks in e-book helped aid L2 acquisition, as it taught explicit and implicit knowledge (Nida, 2021).

The students of lower secondary schools nowadays are referred to as the digital native (Prensky in Jati, 2020)/net generation (Oblinger in Jati, 2020) /Gen Z (Lapele, 2019), where they use technology, connect, communicate, and share actively through internet connection 24/7. Several suggested activities will connect these students with their interests and learning materials like watching videos or movies on YouTube or TV with English subtitles, online quizzes, and games, using PPT, listening to English songs, projects with other students, conversation with a native speaker, social media project, find related texts on the internet, and use IELTS questions for practice.

Hutauruk (2020) supports these findings by highlighting the reliance of Gen Z students on digital tools and the internet, indicating the need to integrate these tools into the English curriculum to enhance students' language learning experiences at school. The participants in this study were 105 senior high school students and utilized a questionnaire with ten questions to gather data. The questionnaire responses revealed that these students enhance their English skills by watching TV, listening to songs, reading books, engaging with social media, playing online games, and attending IELTS classes.

Digital learning materials/sources

Based on the studies mentioned earlier, there are several types of digital learning materials.

1.   Ebook (Ikpeze, 2018), Hardiyanto (2020), Abdul Syakur et al., (2020), (Nida, 2021).

2.   Texts on the internet (Lapele, 2019)

3.   Videos with English subtitles (Lapele, 2019)

4.   TV with English subtitles (Lapele, 2019)

5.   Movies (Lapele, 2019)

6.   Online quizzes (Lapele, 2019)

7.   Online Games (Hutauruk, 2020 and Lapele, 2019)

8.   Ppt (Lapele, 2019)

9.   Online songs (Hutauruk, 2020 and Lapele, 2019)

10.   Social media/social media project (Hutauruk, 2020 and Lapele, 2019)

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a survey research design to explore the students' needs for digital EFL learning materials. The researcher collected the data at a junior secondary school in Jawai Selatan Sambas (West Kalimantan-Indonesia). 20 students (10 female and 10 male, aged 11 to 15) participated in this study. They were selected using purposive sampling technique. A questionnaire was utilized as the data collection instrument. The participants filled out the questionnaire anonymously for their convenience. The researcher provided assistance and guidance for the participants. The researcher then evaluated the data from the questionnaire descriptively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

The questionnaire's reliability was tested and measured by using Cronbach Alpha. The score obtained was 0.70 means it is a reliable instrument. The questionnaires consists of 68 statement items.

$$\alpha = \left(\frac{k}{k-1}\right)\left(\frac{s_r^2 - \sum s_i^2}{s_x^2}\right)$$

Table 1. Student Questionnaire Reliability

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
.757	68

Table 2. Blueprint Of Students Questionnaire

No	Aspect	Number of Questions	Questions

1	Means	Digital materials used	11	1-11
		The most useful digital materials	11	12-22
		The most useful aspect	10	23-32
2	Target-Situation Analysis	The main purpose of using digital materials	11	33-43
3	Present Situation Analysis	Prior learning experience in using digital material	2	44-45
4	Wants	Learner's learning expectation when using digital material	9	46-54
5	Lack Analysis	Learner's difficulty	8	55-62
		Learner's preference	6	63-68

Table 3. Categories of Students Needs in Digital EFL Materials

No	Score of Needs Aspects	Interpretation
1	0-5	Not Needed
2	6-10	Rather Needed
3	11-15	Needed
4	16-20	Highly Needed

There were 68 statements with 0.757 reliability score which consist of means analysis, target situation analysis, wants analysis, and lack analysis.

The instruments were distributed to 20 students who were the first grade of junior secondary schools. There were 10 female and 10 male students participated in this study whose age between 11 and 15 years.

Table 4. Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics of Respondents		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	10	50
	Male	10	50
	Sum	30	100
Age	11 years	1	5
	12 years	4	20
	13 years	12	60
	14 years	2	10
	15 years	1	5
	Sum	20	100

Based on the participants' responses, the researcher describes the needed digital material in the following table.
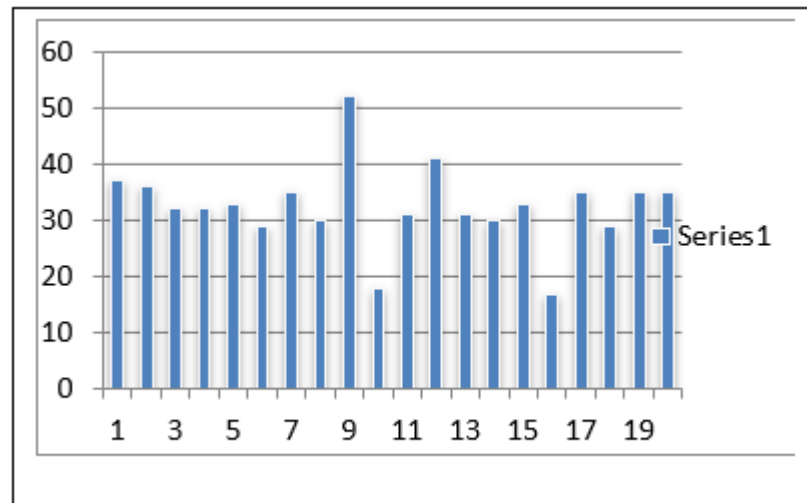

Figure 1. Questionnaire Result

Based on the result, there is an observable significant result of questionnaire by one of the respondents. He scored 52 in the questionnaire, which is the maximum score as we can see in the statistic descriptive below.

Table 5 Statistic Descriptive

Mean	32.31579
Standard Error	1.694595
Median	32
Mode	35
Standard Deviation	7.386569
Sample Variance	54.5614
Kurtosis	3.036782
Skewness	0.274388
Range	35
Minimum	17
Maximum	52
Sum	614
Count	20

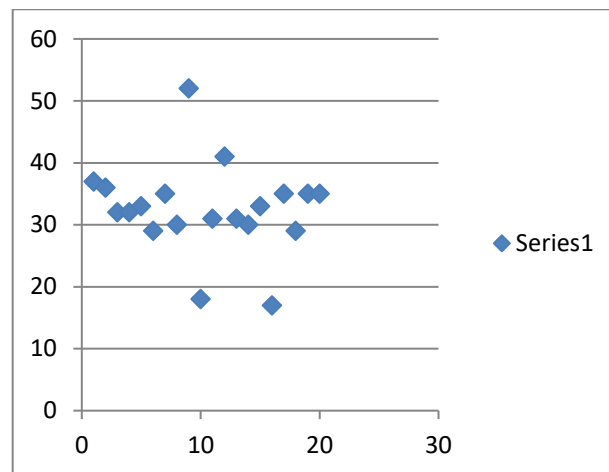From the table, the mean score is 32.316.

Figure 2 Standard Deviation Diagram

The standard deviation score is 7.387, which is between 9.07 and 4.8, indicates that the data are well spread out.

Table 6 Highly Needed Aspects

No	Aspect	Frequency	Interpretation
3	Means	19	Highly needed
4	Means	20	Highly needed
5	Means	17	Highly needed
6	Means	16	Highly needed
24	Target situation	17	Highly needed
43	Target situation	18	Highly needed
52	Target situation	16	Highly needed
55	Lack Analysis	19	Highly needed
56	Lack Analysis	16	Highly needed
59	Lack Analysis	17	Highly needed
65	Lack Analysis	16	Highly needed
68	Lack Analysis	16	Highly needed

Based on the table, 12 items out of 68 items show the aspects the students need most. There are four items of students' need related to the means aspect of digital EFL learning materials. They are videos, movies, and online songs with English subtitles. They also utilize online texts available on the internet. The highest frequency (20) in the means aspect is video with English subtitles.

The next item that students most frequently need is item 55, about the students' need for compatible gadgets to access digital EFL learning materials. Item number 59 is where the students can access the digital materials. It scores high in frequency in the Lack aspect. Item

65 (lack aspect) scores 16 is about the price of digital learning materials. Item 68 (lack aspect) score 16 is the student's need for compelling materials.

Table 7. Needed Aspects

No	Aspects	Score	Interpretation
10	Means	12	Needed
14	Means	11	Needed
21	Target situation	11	Needed
25	Target situation	11	Needed
28	Target situation	11	Needed
34	Present Situation	14	Needed
35	Present Situation	15	Needed
41	Present Situation	13	Needed
44	Wants	15	Needed
53	Lacks	12	Needed
57	Lacks	13	Needed
60	Lacks	12	Needed
61	Lacks	14	Needed
63	Lacks	13	Needed
64	Lacks	15	Needed

From the table above, there are 15 items out of 68 items interpreted as needed.

Discussion

Based on the findings, it can be inferred that the students mostly need videos as the source of EFL learning. It is found that students mainly utilize videos as the English learning resources. They also actively use online songs, English movies and TV broadcast for EFL learning. This is in line with the previous research results which considered students nowaday as digital native and that this generation use videos as learning media (Hutauruk, 2020; Lapele, 2019). However, although these students are really familiar with digital materials Surprisingly, the students do not considered online dictionary, ebook, and social media as the English learning resources. Digital contents of native speakers and group work are not their preferences. They have no idea that Instagram, Tiktok, and Facebook can be beneficial resources for learning English. They also use digital English text on the internet and watch English films on TV. They like these means because it is easy to use. They also considered learning English as important, so they do not merely just attend the class for nothing. They need a clear learning purpose.

The findings also indicate that the students considered digital materials interesting. It reveals that students have the necessary and compatible gadgets to learn English with digital materials. The students know where to access the materials. It also shows that the students considered learning English through digital materials at a reasonable price.

Students consider online songs and text on the internet as valuable learning resources. This is in line with the studies by (Hadi, 2019) and (Rusmanayanti, 2019) which pointed the benefits of using Youtube music and songs. As the researches suggested, songs have many benefits for English language acquisition. These materials are free and easy to access. Moreover, need analysis can determine the specific language points students need to acquire. The findings reveal that the students want to improve their speaking and reading skills.

Need analysis (target situation specifically) also identifies the purpose of learning. The questionnaire result shows that the students learn so they can get good scores. They consider digital materials as beneficial in English language acquisition. They utilize digital media for learning.

In addition, students do not use online dictionary, social media and ebook for some reason. First, since they are new students, they have just learned English a few days so that they do not know that social media have such contents for English language learning. They also have not installed online dictionary. None of them have ever been introduced to ebook. Therefore, these three digital sources can be useful when the students know them.

One notable finding is that one respondent gets the highest score based on the descriptive statistics which means he is so determined about his needs in English language learning.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, students consider the most needed digital EFL learning materials to be videos with English subtitles. Movies with English subtitles and online songs are also their choices. In addition, they also prefer to use texts from the internet. They like materials that are easy to use and access.

Furthermore, the students consider learning English crucial, so they attend the class. They need clear learning objectives when they learn English by using digital materials. Their purpose of using digital materials is to improve speaking and reading skills. Based on their experience, the students believe digital materials can help them to understand English lessons.

They consider digital materials to be easy to find and use and also have reasonable prices. They know where to find them, and they have compatible gadgets for them.

The limitation of this research is that the number of participants was only 20, regarding the large number of junior secondary students in Sambas. Additionally, the research did not cover cultural aspects. Therefore, further studies can explore more on this topic.

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