

Local Culture-Based Multimodal E-Book in ESP Classroom: Learners' Voices at Hindu Higher Education

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Abstract

Previous studies have acknowledged that non-English Majors learners (ESP learners) remained in low category of English proficiency level. Hence, some scholars agreed that developing teaching materials that closely related to the learners' real life could be one of alternative solution to cater this problem. This present study aimed at exploring the needs, wants, and difficulties in learning English, particularly to ESP classroom. This preliminary stage was done in order to develop a multimodal e-book which is oriented to the local culture as for the representation of the learners' real life. The qualitative design with a content analysis was employed in this study. The data were accumulated through interview and questionnaire. The data of this study were analyzed descriptively. The result showed that the learners perceived that the multimodal e-book-oriented topics on local culture could help them easier learning English and would lead them to improve their English proficiency level. Then, based on the learners' needs, wants, and difficulties, it showed that the learners required a multimodal book that could represent their discipline or specific field which presented through various modes of learning media which is supported by various learning methods.

Keywords: Digital literacy; ESP learners' voices; Local culture; Multimodal e-book

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1. Introduction

Teaching English in higher education presents a variety of obstacles particularly to non-English Study Program students. An inadequate narrative about English language instruction utilizing the ESP method was found in an Indonesian investigation. The result demonstrated that many students only attain a minimal level of English competence (Poedjiastutie & Oliver, 2017). Based on the data of English First (EF) on English Proficiency Index (EPI) recently has pointed that Indonesia is on 79th position out of 113 countries in 2023. It means that Indonesia is still in the low category of English language proficiency level. Of course, this become big problems for Indonesia government in which the proficiency of English language has been a crucial element in preparing Indonesia's Golden Era in 2045. Luckily, the Indonesia government has taken various positive steps to tackle this situation, one of them is by improving the quality of higher education institution.

The positive step realization of the Indonesian government in the improvement of education quality at tertiary level must be supported by all parties in education such as stakeholders, educators, staffs, and students. All these parties must support each other in achieving the goal of education. In fact, teachers as educators have the biggest part of the student's successfulness. Hence, teachers are demanded to enhance themselves toward professional development so as not to be left behind. Fortunately, the outbreak of Covid-19 has changed the education systems almost all over the world, as well as Indonesia, in which teachers are led from the very conventional classroom activities to the more modern system, namely online interaction (Puspitasari et al., 2021; Kholis & Azmi, (2023). According to

Lestari (2022), developing digital literacy is a must and a key area of teachers today. It means that teachers must gradually equip themselves by the technology advancement. Providing materials in digital form or online materials to facilitate learners in comprehending the lessons could become one of the activities of teacher's innovation and improvement.

Meaningful education process can be attained when teachers provided various materials which are closely related to real life of the learners. As language and culture are inseparably intertwined, learning a language also means studying its culture Khan 2014 cited in (Ratri et al., 2024). The environment created by humans is called as culture. It may involve the living habits, clothes, the variation of culinary, local traditions, folklore, and many others. Many scholars have discussed language pedagogy in integrating the cultural issue. The weaknesses of learning materials nowadays was no insertion of local-culture (Asnawi et al., 2023). In line with this, the English educators should insert the local culture in their EFL classroom in order to raise the attention of the students as well as to release the learners' burden during learning two foreign elements: culture and language (Khan, 2016); Mahabadi cited in Aminullah et al. (2019) discovered the local-content has become bridges to learning foreign languages with the aid of elements taken from their own native language. Aminullah et al., (2019) clarified that since English as international language is used for communication between non-native speakers within various culture, it is very crucial to insert local culture materials into the teaching and learning English in EFL context.

The insertion of local-content English materials can help learners understand their own culture and finally they can use English to share their culture to the world. Thus, it is imperative to consider the cultural dimension when developing EFL materials. By integrating local culture elements into the curriculum, educators can create a more meaningful and engaging language learning experience. These culture-based materials can serve as bridge between the abstract concepts of language and the students' live experiences, making language acquisition more accessible and relatable. Hence, along with the technological development, teachers' creativity in presenting the materials is absolutely needed.

In this digital age, learning requires constant innovation. The need of innovation in learning is absolutely necessary in face of the era of digital progress (Aminullah et al., 2019). The ability that should encounter both by teachers and students in the 21st century learning is the digital literacy. Learning process based-multimedia has great potential in changing the way of learning today. Although printed materials are still suitable and valuable for facilitating in classroom learning, their limited content and bulk make them antiquated to students in current digital era. Then, to grow multimodal digital English learning materials (e-books) will be one of the alternative ways to present a new situation and learning atmosphere, particularly in ESP classroom. The development of digital multimodal book is underpinned by the literacy pedagogy concept in which it is comprised in six component of meaning, namely language, gestures, audio, images, and multimodal interaction (Lotherington & Jenson, 2011). According to Bonsignori (2018) communication is multimodal since it involves a number of semiotic resources that work together to help the process of making sense of a specific situational context and ultimately interpreting the messages. Multimodal learning is an embodied learning context covering various sensory system and the action systems of the learners (Lustyantie & Arung, 2020).

The term multimodality has a connection with the use of two or more modes dealing with transferring information and making meaning (The New London Group, 1996). Kress (2010) argues that the multimodal modes are those all-semiotic resources which are used in communication. The modes include linguistic, imagery, auditory, gestural, and spatial. Jewitt (2008) has illustrated the linguistic mode into three, namely vocabulary, structure and the grammar of oral and written language. Whereas, the imagery mode refers to the utilization of colours, vectors, sites, and points of view are used in both static and moving images. The

auditory mode refers to sound effect and music. Gestural mode includes a physical act that reflects a variety of movements and sign language. The spatial mode comprises architectural, environmental, and geographical meanings such as, something relates to direction, layout position, and object arrangement. Furthermore, Jewitt et al.(2016) described multimodality as meld of various modes as the effort of building experience, depicting social relations, and manipulating meaning. Multimodality in this study refers to the use of linguistic, visual and auditory modes in designing multimodal digital learning materials.

Liana et al. (2023) argued that digital technology development has changed the printed materials into various communicative modes, such as visual texts by insertion of images, video, audio, and three-dimensional objects to create meaning. Some investigations have done by previous scholars, such as the usefulness of multimodal digital teaching materials in enhancing the learning experiences and processes of students and also in boosting the educators' inventiveness when creating educational materials (Setyo et al., 2023). Furthermore, Kholis & Azmi (2023) discovered the use of multimodal e-book to mediate the learners in virtual activities through interactive multimodal information such as written materials, soundtrack, visuals and animations and so forth. Meanwhile, Kustini et al. (2020) found that there was improvement on learners' digital literacy through a multimodal-based instruction along with group-based project in which each group utilized online application such as *canva.com*, *sway.com* and other applications available online on their own choices in doing multiliteracies projects, namely e-MiniMagz and digital video presentation. Whereas, aforementioned studies on the utilization of local culture had provided information on the needs and benefits of designing and developing locally-English learning materials for elementary up to tertiary students. As Asi et al. (2022) conducted a study on designing instructional materials for Indonesian EFL classroom which focused on local culture oriented to eco-linguistics provided benefits information for developing main module of Intensive course in writing skills for the freshman learners of English Education in Central Kalimantan and encouraged the teachers in modifying their teaching materials that could cover the national standard (KKNI) as well as to strengthened and promoted the local culture. Other studies on the local culture development have been investigated by scholars, such as Wulandari et al. (2020) explored the needs of integrating local wisdom into ELT materials for secondary school learners provided some benefits in which their presence would support the process of learning, enrich the learners about the local cultures, and also help the students to understand to comprehend the reading texts. Moreover, Dewi & Wiedarti (2020) conducted a study on developing local-content materials integrated with performance assessment showed that the material developed was appropriate. Muhammad et al.(2022) analyzed the local culture used in Indonesian High Schools English textbooks found that the txt-books have been dominated by local content but they were still lack of attractiveness. In addition, following the development of technology, some studies on local culture which are integrated with the technology literacy have been investigated, such as (Asnawi et al., 2023) analyzed the learners' needs in developing local culture with augmented reality, Masayu et al.(2022) developing local-culture reading materials based on TPACK framework in which it was the combination of using technology in developing English materials for senior high school students.

This present study aims at exploring the needs of students on developing multimodal e-book oriented to local culture materials. Leveraging the local culture is in line with the curriculum employed by the institutions, according to article 36 of year 2003 *UU Sisdiknas* "Constitution on National Education systems" there are three elements that should be taken into account while constructing the curriculum. It concerns on the national standardized education, differentiation on the level of learners and potential local areas, and should be underpinned by the frame of "*Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia*" through character

building, improvement of students understanding toward national unity, national values, potential local areas and local development.

This study is the initial stage to design and develop the multimodal e-book for non-English major students, particularly in Institut Agama Hindu Negeri Tampung Penyang (IAHN-TP) Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia through the local culture integration. It does, in fact, it alludes to articulating the demand of the present for the creation of approachable and relevant works. The needs of students in learning English effectively and fluently should be covered throughout the book. Hopefully, this analysis of needs can result in a well-structured multimodal English E-book by understanding their perspectives, needs, wishes, and the difficulties in learning English. Hence, the result of this study addressed to answer the following questions: 1). How do learners perceive the English language learning at IAHN TP Palangka Raya? and 2) What are the needs of integrating local culture in developing multimodal e-book for Hindu higher education?

2. Method

The objective of this study was to describe, investigate and analyze the demands of ESP learners' need as the preliminary stage in integrating local culture materials to the development of multimodal e-book. Hence, a qualitative approach with a content analysis design was employed in this study. Five majors in Faculty of Dharma Duta and Brahma Widya of Institut Agama Hindu Negeri Tampung Penyang (IAHN-TP) Palangka Raya were decided as the respondents of this study. It was done due to considerable reasons for which it was more convenient for collecting samples and distributing the questionnaire, as well as the initial object to be defined.

Since the researchers employed qualitative study, the participants were chosen purposefully. In order to enrich the information related to their perceptions and needs toward English course learning at IAHN-TP Palangka Raya as the fundamental information in developing local culture-based multimodal English learning materials, there were 25 sophomore students who have passed the English course in academic year 2023/2024 of Dharma Duta and Brahma Widya Faculty were involved in responding the questionnaires and five sophomore students of Hindu Philosophy Study Program were involved as interviewees in this study, since the multimodal English learning materials was designed for Hindu Philosophy students.

The data collection techniques used in this study were interview and questionnaire. Numerous questions about the requirements for development multimodal e-book which contained three aspects namely students' necessities, wants, and challenges in learning English were raised in this study. As (Creswell, 2014) mentioned three ways can be employed by researchers with regard to the research instruments, namely by developing a new instrument for a research study, locating the study, and modifying an existing instrument.

In this study, the researcher modified the existing instrument used referred to the existing instrument (questionnaire) of need analysis study on developing multimodal e-book was adapted in this study, since the all the items were closely appropriate for the research questions and the research objectives. Then, the questionnaires developed by (Kholis & Azmi, 2023) were used in this study. It was conducted and distributed to cover five majors' students of Dharma Duta and Brahma Widya Faculty. Moreover, several English books used by teachers were also examined as well as supplementary data. All the data collected were analyzed descriptively.

3. Findings and Discussion

Findings

This section discussed findings on the students' voices in relation with the need on developing local culture-based multimodal learning materials in ESP context at tertiary level. The quantitative data in this study were the results of questionnaire toward the student's voices on English language learning in ESP classroom in Dharma Duta and Brahma Widya Faculty of IAHN TP Palangka Raya including the students' needs, wants, and difficulties in developing local culture-based multimodal e-book.

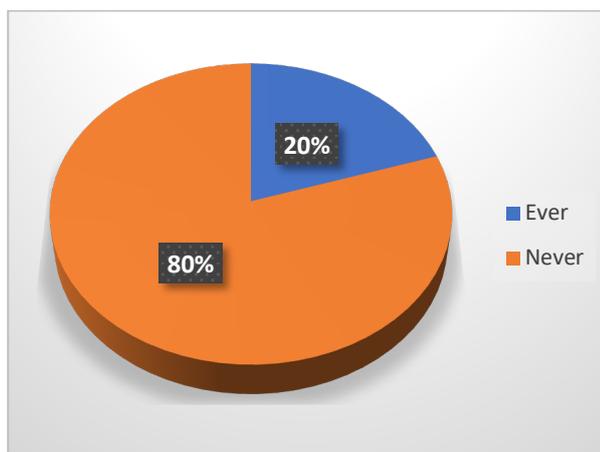
The first data accumulated was the profile of the learners to acquire the demographic data included the learners' age, gender, school graduate, parent's education, and parent's occupation as well as the learners' experiences on English professional development, the level of English proficiency, and the learners' daily English use. Details information in the following table was the information on the learners' demographic data.

Table 1. Learners' Demographic Data

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	< 20 years old	21	84
	> 20 years old	4	16
Gender	Male	11	44
	Female	14	56
School Graduate	SMA	19	76
	SMK	6	24
Parent's education	SD	9	36
	SMP	10	40
	SMA	0	0
	Diploma	1	4
	Bachelor	2	8
	Master	0	0
	Doctor	0	0
Others	3	12	
Parent's work	Farmer	23	92
	Civil servant	0	0
	Merchant	0	0
	Self-Employed	0	0
	Others	2	8

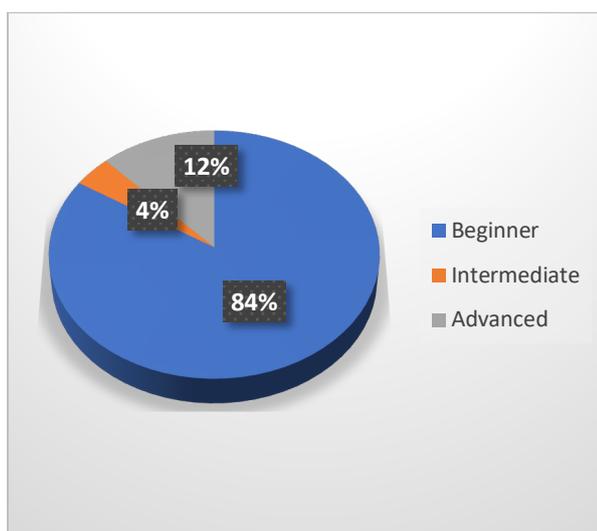
The learners' experience on joining any English programs demonstrated in the following Figure 1. The figure showed that totally the learners almost never experienced in a course or program that could support their English skills. It was 80% learners confessed never join any activity to improve their English skills.

Figure 1. The learners' Experiences on English Program



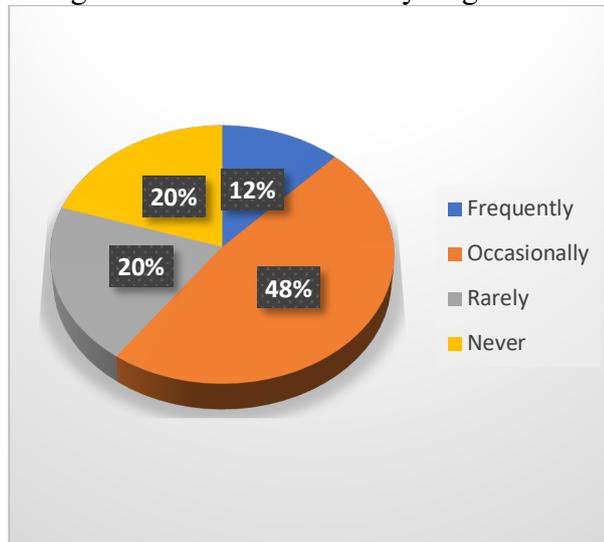
Furthermore, figure two indicated the results pertained to the learners' English proficiency level. It showed that the learners were at the lowest level, in which the learners who were in the level of beginner in the range of 80%, followed by 12% were in advanced, and 4% learners were in intermediate levels.

Figure 2. The learners' English proficiency level



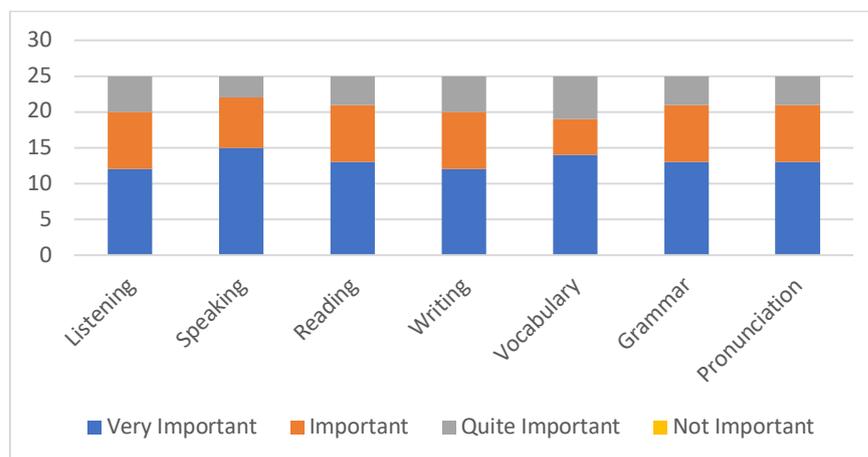
The learners' English profile also demonstrated by the learners' English daily use. The results showed that the frequency of learners using English in their daily lives were varies. Some of the learners had already practiced frequently in range of 12%. While there were the same in range within the learners who almost never used and those who never used English in their daily activities, some of the learners had been experienced it in their daily lives. It figured out by the total 48% learners who said occasionally used English.

Figure 3. The learners' Daily English Use



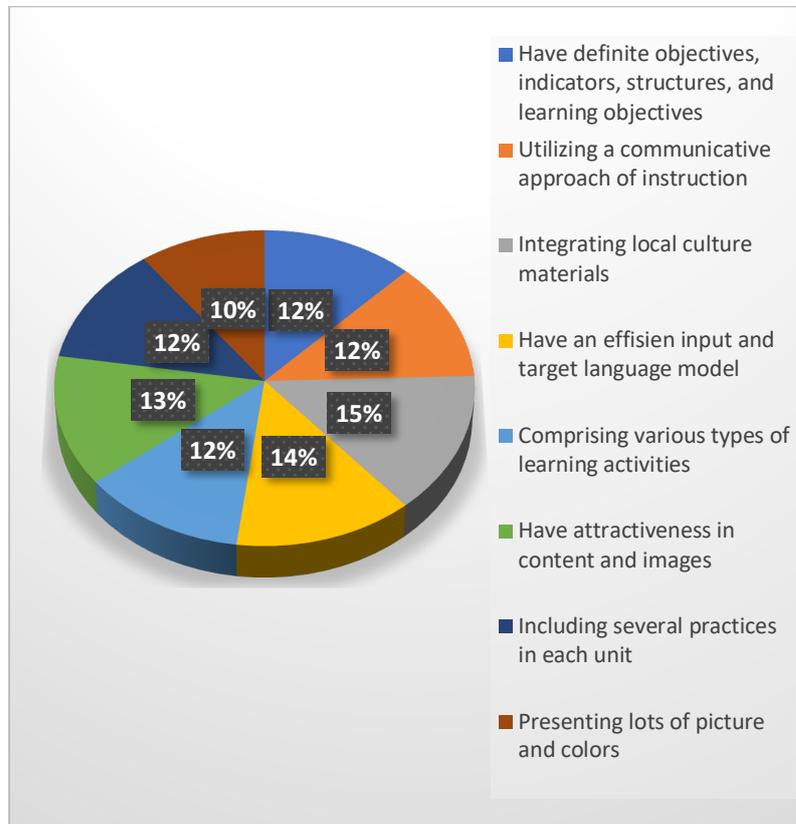
Furthermore, the learners' information on the important of English language skills in supporting their studies were categorized as very important, important, quite important, and not important. The results showed that speaking was one of the skills concerned more by the learners. It was followed by vocabulary, reading, grammar, pronunciation, writing and listening. It was demonstrated in figure four as follows.

Figure 4. The learners' Preference language skills



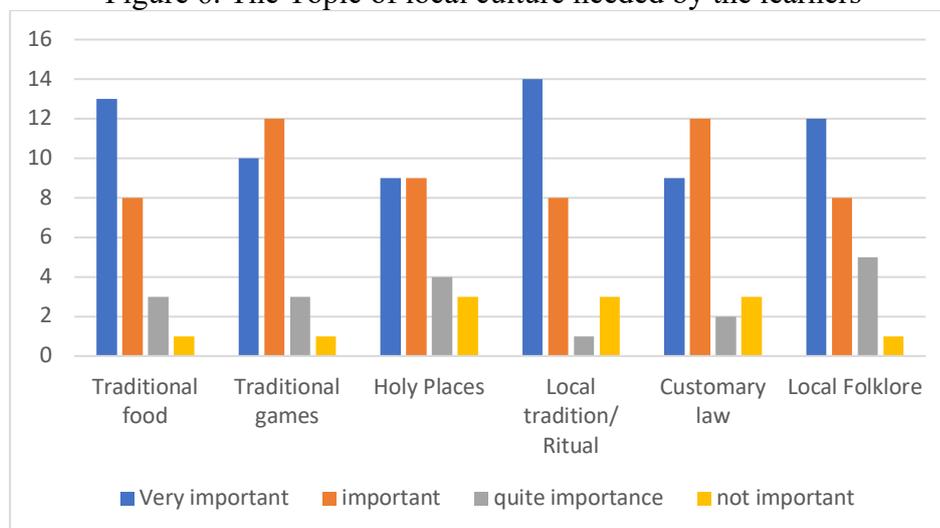
Then, the results of figure five indicated the criteria of learning materials for developing multimodal e-book at tertiary level indicated the eight criteria in average of 12,5%. The learning materials criteria needed by learners were represented below.

Figure 5. The criteria of learning materials needed by the learners



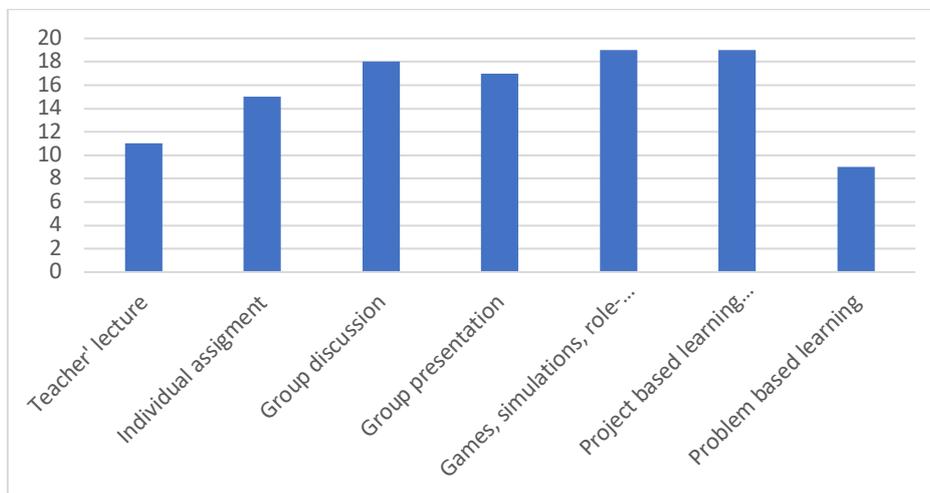
Furthermore, the other things to consider on the learners' need in developing multimodal e-book oriented to local culture were the themes or topics chosen for the materials. Based on the results, it showed that from the sixth topics offered to the learners, local tradition or ritual was the favorable topic, or the learners liked best. It was followed by the topic on traditional food, local folklore, traditional games, holy places, and customary law.

Figure 6. The Topic of local culture needed by the learners



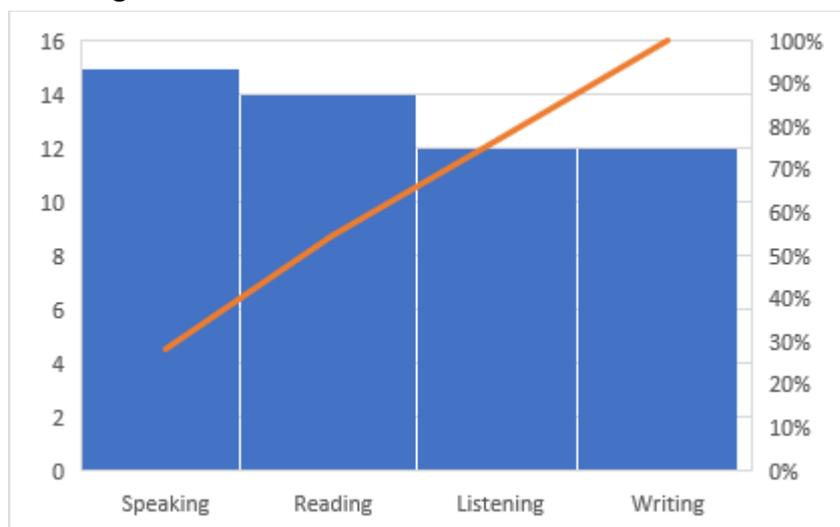
The next finding was the method of learning preferences. The data of this study showed that the learners' method preference was dominated by games, simulation, and role-plays, project-based learning, followed by group discussion, group presentation, individual assignment, teacher lecture, and problem-based learning.

Figure 7. The Learners' Learning Preferences



While the data on the learners' necessities and wants were presented, the drawbacks of the learners in learning English were also voiced by the learners. The difficulties were concerned with the language skills, both receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing). In figure eight, it demonstrated the most challenges skill for the learners to learn was speaking. Then, it was followed by reading skills to be hard experienced by the learners. Meanwhile, both listening and writing skills showed balance difficulties for IAHN TP learners.

Figure 8. The Learners' difficulties level on each skill



The data from the questionnaires have been elucidated. Then, it came to describe the qualitative data from the interview. Five main topics were used as interview guidance, namely the learners' motivation in studying English, the difficulties of learning English, the learning materials criteria to learn, the media employed in learning and the method utilized in learning.

The first learners' voices about their English learning motivation in the classroom, as the students reported:

“English was quite hard to learn, since some words sometimes differed from the utterances, I was doubt to pronounce the words, and finally I felt not confidence in learning”.

Student 1

“I think English was difficult course out of other courses I studied. I felt struggling whenever I found some uncommon vocabularies. I did not get the point when the teachers used the words in spoken”.

Student 2

“For me, English was the most difficult course I studied in my class. It was hard for me to comprehend the text because the materials were too heavy”.

Student 3

“I found my English class was not really interesting.

Student 4

“I like studying English when the teachers organized the group activities”

Student 5

The second results of interview were the learners’ difficulties in learning English, as follows.

“I think my challenges in learning English was in reading and writing. I found myself difficult to comprehend the text and it was difficult for me to develop ideas during writing class”.

Student 1

“For me, understanding some reading texts was quite hard for me. So, I was difficult to respond critically. Besides, I also found problem in listening.”

Student 2

“To be honest, speaking was the most challenges skills for me. It’s too hard for me to say quickly what ideas I want to convey”

Student 3

“I struggled and felt worried about making mistakes when speaking English”.

Student 4

“It’s quite challenges for me to participate in a group discussion, it was difficult for me to sound the words in English correctly”.

Student 5

The learners acknowledged that their drawbacks in learning English were caused by some factors, such as never joining any English program that can improve their performance in English, such as joining English Club, English course, training, or others activities that could positively enhance them enhance their English skills. As the five students voiced that they almost never practiced English in their daily lives. The only in classroom activity was a place for them to practice English.

The third exploration was the learning criteria need by the learners in order to make English become interesting to learn. Related to this, the students said that they need learning materials which were relevant to their discipline and need to be combine with local culture, because they felt that it was easier for them to understanding the reading text when the teacher use local content materials, since these topics were closer with their characteristics.

The fourth part was the media used by teachers in teaching. The learners said that the teachers have utilized the modern media such as projector as supporting media and presented

the materials through slides presentation, but it was still monotonous since the teachers did not modify the types of media in classroom. The excerpts were as follows.

“To be honest, my teachers usually gave lectures while presenting the ppt materials and completed with some exercises at the end of the session”.

Student 1

“My teacher usually used power point in teaching, but it still not interesting enough since the teachers did not employ various modes to make us more enthusiastic in learning”

Student 2

“Sometimes my teacher showed a short video, then she asked the class to watch and remain us to write down the ideas based on the video.”

Student 3

“Our English teachers used some resources from the internet in teaching, but the materials they used not represented the specific topic that related to our discipline.”

Student 4

“My teacher mostly used textbooks to convey the lesson, and a bit online media was used”.

Student 5

The last finding was the method used by teachers in classroom. The students said that the teachers not employed various teaching method. The results of the interview as follows. As student 1 said, “Sometimes my teachers used presentation slides in presenting the materials, but the teachers did not mix with other variety of teaching media”. The other view was stated by student 2, “My teacher had involved us in such a fun learning like learning through games, but the games utilized were still traditional, no online games were employed during the classroom”. Whereas, student 3 perceived that project-based learning was of her favourite method, unfortunately, it was very rarely employed by the teacher”. While the other two students said that group activities along with solving the problems, and individual presentation was really help them in learning.

Discussion

This section analyzed the results related to the learners’ needs, wants, and also difficulties on developing multimodal e-book oriented to local culture materials. The results of questionnaire showed some information on the condition of the learners in order to find out the needs of the learners. Based on figure 1, namely the learners’ experiences on English program, it had been known that the students of Dharma Duta and Brahma and Brahma Widya Faculty at IAHN TP Palangka Raya almost never joined any English program in their study. It was seen from the questionnaire results in which there were 80 % of the learners never involved themselves in English program, such as English course, English club, training, and others. It was in line with the interview that they were some factors influences of learning English was lack of motivation toward leaning English. It was influenced by the level of English mastery of the learners were varies, and some of them felt English as hard subject to learn.

The second finding of this study was drawn in figure 2, in which the learner’s English proficiency levels were in the beginner in range of 84%, and 12% for advanced, and 4% for intermediate. It could be concluded that the leaners were still found English as the difficult course to enroll. Since, they were at tertiary level, it was assumed that the learners should at least at the intermediate level. This unequal level of the students related to the previous research conducted by Nguyen et al. (2014) that the learners’ unequal level has become the factors affecting the English learning at higher education.

Furthermore, figure 3 was visualized the learners’ English daily use. Based on the figure, it was occasionally practicing English in daily. Speaking had been one of difficulties in

learning English, as Lapele (2019) found that non- English major students faced some difficulties in speaking on their specific field. This finding was the same with the result in this study that showed 48% students occasionally used English for communication. It is, therefore, based on the answer, it was stated that speaking was the most important skill to support the learners' specific discipline of the study, as it was drawn in figure 4. It was relevant to the result of interview with the students. The most challenging of skills they learn was speaking, in which they were pushed to be able to said some ideas, make utterances, and developing sentences in an oral communication.

The result of figure 5 indicated the needs on learning materials performances of multimodal e-book materials, it consisted of eight criteria, included preparing the clear objectives, using local culture theme that relate to their discipline as to make the learners learn from authentic materials through the attractive activities and displays. Besides, the use of communicative approach and also variety of learning activities also needed by the learners.

The next figure, namely figure 6 visualized about the most favorable topic in local culture studies. The figure showed that there were six topics of local culture material that could be adopted since the learners' assumed that local content could be associated to the context of materials use by the teacher.

Meanwhile, figure 7 revealed the learning methods preferences of the learners. It was known that the data of this study showed that the learners' method preference was dominated by games, simulation, and role-plays, project-based learning, followed by group discussion, group presentation, individual assignment, teacher lecture, and problem-based learning.

Finally, the results of the learners' difficulties in learning four English language skills were dominated in speaking and reading. It means that learner's ability in oral presentation and groups was needed. Besides, teacher also need to develop reading materials that really met the learners' need in order to minimize the difficulties face in learning English.

4. Conclusion and suggestion

This study has visualized clearly that there were lots of needs, wants, and drawbacks of the learners in learning English particularly at tertiary level. The key findings have revealed several information on the sake of developing multimodal e-book based on local culture materials. The results of this study would become the illustration for the teachers to develop multimodal e-book materials. Based on the discussion, it can be concluded: 1) The ESP learners, particularly IAHN TP students required light materials that closer to their characteristics; 2) The really needed an attractive material with various modes of learning using multimodal approach. It is; therefore, the results of this study have become consideration for teachers to create an innovative teaching material underpinning the multimodal approach by integrating local culture materials.

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