

ANALYZING ENGLISH LEARNING NEEDS FOR VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN PROGRAM IN VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the English language learning needs of students in the Visual Communication Design (VCD) program in one of the vocational high schools in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Utilizing a mixed-method approach, both quantitative data from questionnaires and qualitative data from an interview with the teacher were gathered to identify the target needs and learning needs. In the target needs, the findings reveal that all students (100%) consider English proficiency as a necessity for their field, since English is commonly found in their field-specific materials. The students further reported deficiencies in their speaking skills (92%), which makes them want to prioritize communicative skills (speaking and listening) in their English learning. For their learning needs, the students favor flexible classroom dynamics, preferring individual, pair, or small group work (maximum four members). Furthermore, they indicated clear preferences for learning inputs of each language skill, such as podcasts (65%) for listening and guided tasks (85%) for writing. Lastly, when integrating technology, the students show a strong preference for bite-sized content in social media (96%) and competitive educational games (73%). Ultimately, these findings provide insights for educators to design a highly tailored, engaging, and digitally relevant ESP learning experience for the VCD students.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Needs analysis, Visual Communication Design (VCD), Vocational High School (VHS)

A. INTRODUCTION

Within the Visual Communication Design (VCD) field, English plays an important role in communication with clients and project coordination with the team. For graphic designers, a good proficiency in English significantly enhances their ability to express ideas, understand design briefs, and engage in effective collaboration both on a national and international scale.

English allows designers to articulate their ideas to clients and stakeholders across countries. This international accessibility supports connection with professional designers and opens doors to opportunities such as international exhibitions and collaborative projects. Echoing this, Roshid et al. (2022) emphasize the huge importance of English in business-related communication to expand their career prospects in design and beyond. Consequently, Akther (2022) suggests that educational approaches should be designed to equip learners with the English skills needed for real-world professional environments.

In Indonesia, Vocational High Schools (VHS) are the primary educational institutions that aim to cultivate skilled professionals for the industrial sector. This is because vocational education not only equips students with necessary theoretical knowledge but also emphasizes practical skills to ensure preparedness for the workforce (Wibawanto et al., 2021; Yoto, 2018). However, in the current globalized economy, technical proficiency alone is insufficient. For Indonesian VHS graduates to remain competitive, mastery of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has become a prerequisite for professional advancement, especially in multinational job sectors. This requirement arises since English, being a *lingua franca*, commonly serves as the primary medium for technical manuals, international safety standards, and cross-border professional collaboration (Hodges & Seawright, 2023; Judijanto & Nurhayati, 2026).

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a specialized area within language education. It is built around the idea of developing learning programs that are specifically designed for the particular communication needs of students (Nunan, 2004). Paltridge and Starfield (2014) define ESP as a purposeful teaching and learning of English with the aim of helping learners to communicate smoothly within their particular fields. This approach emerged because of the demand for better communication in specialized areas such as commerce and technology. Effective ESP materials require a comprehensive needs analysis and the integration of authentic materials that match the professional context. Mao and Zhou (2024) advocates that needs analysis has to pinpoint specific language competencies for more effective curriculum design. The alignment between materials and professional expectations is crucial for boosting learners' motivation and achieving meaningful, applicable learning.

Needs analysis is a core methodology in ESP. It is aligning learning directly with students and industry demands. ESP systematically identifies the target needs and learning needs of the learners. Target needs are the language skills learners require for the fields, while learning needs are how educational experiences should be structured (Hutchinson & Waters, 2008). This dual focus ensures that the curriculum is relevant and effective in achieving professional outcomes. It helps teachers to pinpoint the specific language and communication skills students need for their future careers (Wulandari, 2019). By understanding the gap between the current and desired competencies, teachers can design courses based on the materials and strategies that are suitable for the real-world professional context (Farah, 2021). This process is particularly important for students in the VCD program, as their professional environment often requires good English mastery to interpret design briefs, navigate industry-standard software, and articulate their visual concepts to international clients (Indeed, 2025).

However, the current English materials cannot fully meet the VCD-specific communication needs. General English materials often fail to cater to VCD students' unique requirements, because the traditional approaches focus on broad English language skills and neglect the

specific vocabulary related to graphic design. Wulandari (2019) emphasizes that vocational education demands specialized English materials, not general ones. The gaps between English learning that students have at school and the workplace requirements create a barrier for the students to apply their skills effectively (Rofik & Ariyani, 2023). Addressing these gaps through targeted needs analysis is crucial for preparing VCD students for their future careers.

VCD students deal with technology on a daily basis as they have to use various design software for their work. Innovative integration of Information Communication Technology (ICT) is not only suitable but also crucial for their future career in the graphic design industry. Technology integration also supports diverse teaching methodologies to accommodate various learning styles of VCD Students. There is a critical need for integrating educational technologies to create interactive learning environments that suitable for students' digital experiences (Hartanto et al., 2022). The statement is aligned with Zhao's (2023) views on the effectiveness of collaborative and technology-assisted learning frameworks that enhance knowledge transfer from theory to practice to prepare students for real-world challenges.

Regarding the ESP for VCD students, the researchers found a notable gap in research specifically addressing the unique needs of VCD students learning English, despite the increasing focus on ESP across various study programs of VHS (Wijayanto et al., 2023). The research highlights notable inequalities between the current curriculum and the actual needs of students. There is a gap between learning materials; several studies discovered that the students need content that aligns with experiential learning and student engagement (Arifin et al., 2023; Rosina et al., 2021). English for Specific Purposes (ESP) should be prioritized as a main component in VHS education, as research has shown that language learning materials designed specifically for specific disciplines can enhance learning outcomes and professional engagement (Puspitaloka, et al., 2024). However, the existing research on ESP primarily centers around other study programs, such as hospitality or general vocational education, thereby leaving VCD students' needs relatively under-explored (Pratiwi, 2022). The ESP needs analysis is supposed to be relevant to various vocational settings, yet VCD remains underrepresented in this discourse (Wijayanto et al., 2023).

Thus, this study aims to explore the learning needs of Visual Communication Design (VCD) students at a vocational high school in Yogyakarta. Using a mixed methods approach, it identifies the gaps between current language learning and the language demands of the professional graphic design field. The goal is to help shape more effective curricula and teaching strategies that better prepare students for their future careers. It also examines the current integration and preference of ICT in the vocational high school. It analyzes both the target and learning needs of the students to ensure that the language instruction is in line with the language skills that are needed in the practical workplace. The goal is to address the mismatch between the curriculum and students' needs that can limit learning outcomes. From the findings, the study offers recommendations for adapting the curriculum to meet the graphic design industry's expectations.

The findings of this study offer valuable implications for course design in ESP for vocational education to inform curriculum policy decisions to create materials with industry-relevant vocabulary and practice. It also provides tactical guidance for English teachers, especially

in graphic design fields, to increase students' engagement and better match students' preferences in English language learning. By addressing the gaps in the English language learning course for VCD students in Vocational High School, this research supports the development of more relevant courses for their future careers.

B. METHOD

This study used a mixed-method approach as noted by Creswell (2012), which combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigate students' needs in learning English in one of the Vocational High Schools in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The utilization of this approach enabled a more comprehensive understanding of the problem in the study by triangulating data from multiple sources. For quantitative data, this study obtained the data through questionnaires, while qualitative data were gathered from interviews. The use of both data collection methods had previously been proven effective by Wijayanto et al. (2023) and Jubhari et al. (2022). Combining qualitative interviews and quantitative questionnaires can show students' diverse and complex needs, which can be used to further inform curriculum development and improve teaching practice to further align them with professional contexts (Hendren et al., 2023). The participants of the study were one English teacher and 32 students. The students consist of 10 males and 22 females aged between 15 and 17 years. A purposive sampling technique was used to choose the participants, as it enabled the researcher to get in-depth information based on the aim of the research. The chosen students were considered to represent the target population according to their gender, age, and learning experience, while the English teacher gave insightful information about the students' learning needs.

The instruments utilized in this study are questionnaires (distributed to the students) and semi-structured interviews (the data were gathered from the English teacher). The questionnaire was adopted based on the frameworks stated by Basturkmen (2010) and Hutchinson and Waters (1987), and it consisted of 33 questions divided into two sections: target needs (necessities, lacks, and wants) and learning needs. To decrease anxiety and highlight honest responses, the questionnaire was done anonymously. It was distributed to the 32 students involved in the study. Additionally, a semi-structured interview was implemented with the English teacher to get deeper insights into the students' English learning needs. The interview was conducted in Indonesian and English around 35 to 45 minutes, and was recorded for analysis purposes and transcription. Then, the data were analyzed in two ways. First, the data gathered from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods by calculating the frequency and percentage of each item. The aim is to identify patterns in students' perceived needs. Meanwhile, the qualitative data obtained from the interview were analyzed utilizing a thematic analysis approach. The researchers transcribed, coded, and categorized to explore key themes relevant to the research questions. Lastly, the researchers interpreted, compared with previous studies, and drew the conclusions from both quantitative and qualitative data.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the needs analysis conducted to identify the ESP learning needs of Visual Communication Design students in one of the vocational high schools in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The data were gained through dual approaches of quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (interviews) methods. The findings are divided

into two main areas: target needs, which refer to what students need to achieve with English in their specific field, and learning needs, which reveal how students prefer to learn and what they need during the learning process.

1. Target Needs

Based on the findings, the researchers categorized the target needs into three main aspects: students' necessities, lacks, and wants. These aspects are categorized based on the target needs framework by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). The following are the findings on the VCD students' target needs.

Students' Necessities

In designing a learning program for ESP students, knowledge of the students' necessities to learn English is important. Students' necessities are best described as what the students are required to know to be able to function effectively in the target situation (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Sabarun & Qodir, 2022). This emphasizes that language learning should not be generalized, but closely aligned with the specific demands of the students' field.

In this finding on VCD students, the students themselves show a profound awareness of these necessities. When asked about their opinion whether being able to interact in English is useful for their major or program, they answered unanimously (100%) with agreement (see Figure 1). This indicates that students recognize the importance of the English language in their academic activities, such as understanding software interfaces, as well as in their future professional context, where communication in English might be required when interacting with global clients or collaborators (Nasihin & Oktarini, 2022; Roshid, et.al., 2022; Royyani & Gozali, 2021).

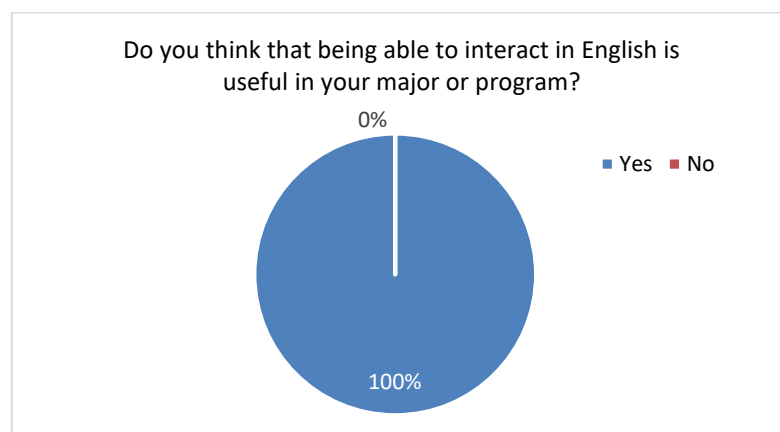


Figure 1. English interaction in the VCD program

To further confirm these occupational necessities, students were asked about their active engagements with their field-specific English texts. As shown in Figure 2, the majority of students (54%) have experienced reading professional documents such as user manuals and design briefs that are written in English, while the rest of them (46%) indicated they do not. In the VCD profession, comprehending technical guidelines, navigating industry-standard software, and understanding the global client briefs are unavoidable daily requirements (Indeed, 2025). This data highlights a critical necessity, proving that the ability to read and comprehend the VCD field's authentic materials is a fundamental workplace competency

rather than a mere academic exercise (Saidova, 2022). Thus, the implementation of the ESP curriculum is crucial in supporting these students in their future careers by equipping them with the reading skills to comprehend their field-specific texts.

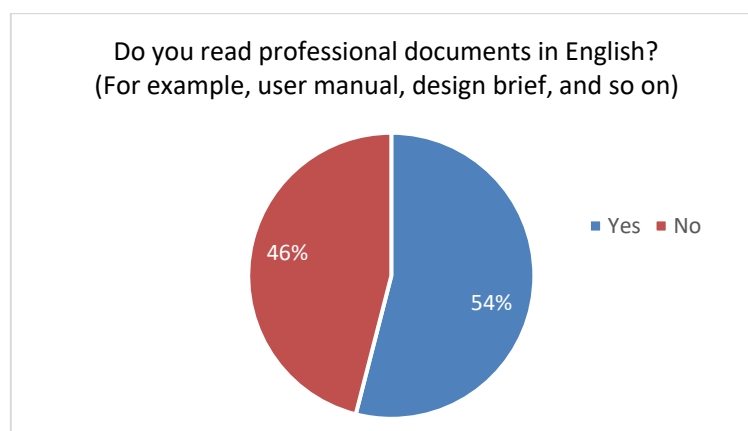


Figure 2. Students' engagement with field-specific reading materials

Overall, the findings on the necessities provide a strong basis for the implementation of ESP, specifically for these VCD students. The unanimous agreement among the students on the importance of having the ability to interact in English for their major reflects a high level of awareness of the target situation. This is aligned with the notion that ESP for vocational students should focus on specific workplace communication needs rather than general proficiency (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Royyani & Gozali, 2021). Moreover, the fact that many students already engage with VCD field authentic materials (e.g., software user manuals and design briefs) confirms that the ability to read and comprehend field-specific text is a crucial professional requirement. This reinforces the argument that ESP instruction must prioritize practical, industry-aligned skills to better prepare students for real-world tasks (Saidova, 2022; Q. Zhang, 2025). In line with this, the previous study by Nasihin and Oktarini (2022) concluded that ESP for vocational students is more effective and beneficial for both students and the hiring companies. Therefore, implementing ESP for the VCD students is more beneficial as it can prepare the students to meet the industry demands than general English, which can be insufficient to equip them for their professional career (Terra Dewanto et al., 2024).

Students' Lacks

Students' lacks in need analysis is the investigation done to determine the gap between what needs to be known by students in the target situation and what they actually know so far (Basturkmen, 2010; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). In other words, the lacks represented what the students already know compared to what they are deficient in, which in this case can be the English skills they currently cannot perform. Consequently, these lacks constitute the critical gaps between the students' initial language proficiency and the professional proficiency they are required to have after finishing the English learning (Nasihin & Oktarini, 2022; Sabarun & Qodir, 2022).

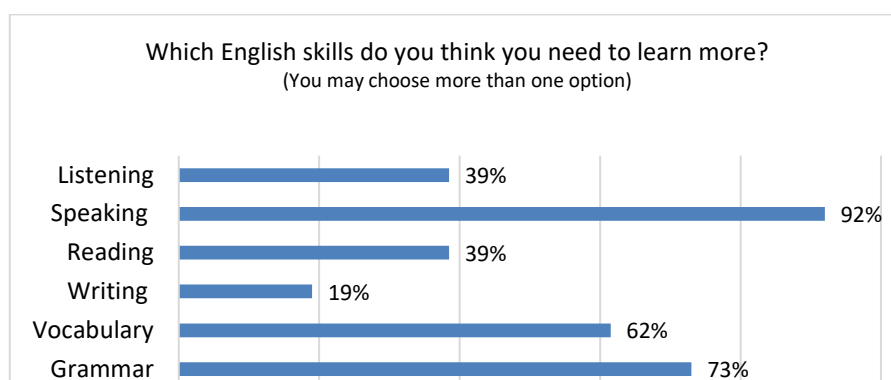


Figure 3. English skills to be improved

In identifying the specific gap in the VCD students' English proficiency, they were asked to evaluate their own deficiencies. From Figure 3, the most significant skill gap is in speaking, with 92% of students identifying it as an area necessary for improvement. Grammar (73%) and vocabulary (62%) are also investigated as weaknesses, showing difficulties in sentence structure and word usage. On the other hand, receptive skills such as listening and reading are perceived as less urgent skills to be mastered, with each accounting for 39%, while writing (19%) was perceived as the least deficient skill. Their concern about communication skills shows that they are fully aware of how communication matters in professional fields. This notion seems to be highly agreed upon by most ESP students as it conforms with the study in ESP on other fields, such as Agriculture (Hajar & Triastuti, 2021), Communication and Islamic broadcasting (Hartina & Syahrir, 2021), Physical education (Pranoto & Suprayogi, 2020), Pharmacy (Terra Dewanto et al., 2024), and Software engineering (Puspitaloka et al., 2024).

Table 1. Students' Frequency of English Skills Usage in Learning

Skills	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Listening	0%	15%	46%	39%
Reading	0%	12%	42%	46%
Speaking	4%	50%	42%	4%
Writing	0%	19%	46%	35%
Grammar	11%	39%	42%	8%
Vocabulary	0%	46%	39%	15%

The perceived lacks are supported by the students' reported engagement with these core language components, and these findings mirror their reported deficiencies. In Table 1 above, more than half of the students (54%) admitted that they "rarely" or even "never" practice speaking, with only 4% admitting to practice it "often". Similarly, language mechanics, grammar, and vocabulary were also found to be severely lacking in practice, with half of the students (50%) admitting to "rarely" or "never" practicing grammar, and almost half of them (46%) admitted to "rarely" practicing vocabulary.

In contrast, the receptive skills (i.e., listening and reading), which are identified as less urgent to learn, are practiced at a higher frequency, with 85% and 88% of the students engaging with them "sometimes" or "often" respectively. Writing as a productive skill was practiced considerably, with students practicing it "sometimes" (46%) and "often" (35%), totaling in

81% of positive engagement. When the engagement frequency with receptive skills (i.e., listening and reading) is compared to the engagement frequency with productive skills (i.e., speaking and writing), it can be seen that the receptive skills are more preferred in the actual English learning activities. The act of practicing more receptive skills compared to productive skills, in line with previous studies by Bogale (2023) and Hamad and Dafaallah (2023).

The findings on lacks of productive skills engagement were further supported by the actual situation stated by the English teacher during the interview. The teacher estimated that the students' general proficiency was at the A1 or A2 level in the CEFR framework (Council of Europe, 2020). In addition, the teacher also affirms the students' perceived lacks in speaking as productive skills, the teacher noted, “...kemampuan anak-anak vocabulary-nya itu juga terbatas. Kemampuan kosa katanya, juga speaking-nya itu mereka juga masih, untuk pronunciation-nya itu juga masih ya” (...the students' vocabulary capacity is limited. Their vocabulary (in speaking) and speaking are still lacking, their pronunciation is also still lacking). This triangulated data further confirms the gap between the students' current level of English proficiency and the required active communication to function effectively in their future careers.

Students' Wants

In the framework of need analysis, the aspect of “wants” depicts the students' personal expectations on what they will be able to do after completing the learning activities (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Sabarun & Qodir, 2022). While necessities are commonly based on the targeted industry demands, wants are typically driven by students' own interests, motivations, and perceived future career needs. For VCD students, the “wants” may reflect their desire to bridge the gap between general English in their academic settings and the practical English needed by the design industry.

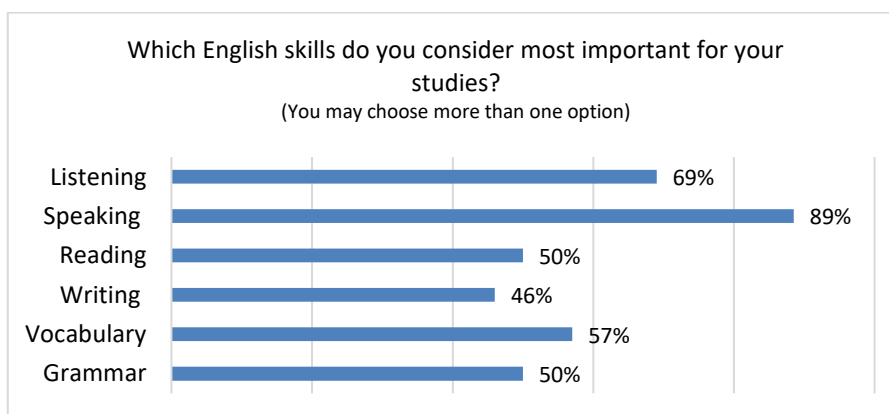


Figure 4. The most important English skills

To better capture students' wants in relation to English learning, the students were asked which specific English skills they considered the most important for their studies as VCD students. Figure 4 displays that there is a clear agreement to prioritize communicative skills. This is shown by a huge percentage (89%) that identified speaking as the most crucial skill the students wish to master, followed by listening with 69%. Next, text-based skills, along with the language mechanics, were less prioritized by the students, with vocabulary at 57%, reading and grammar both at 50%, and writing as the least prioritized at 46%. Interestingly, these findings greatly align with the above findings on students' self-reported lacks. This

indicates that the students have quite high self-awareness, in which they recognize they are lacking in speaking skills, and consequently, it becomes the skill they desire to improve the most. A similar desire to improve speaking skills is also observed in students majoring in Broadcasting, who similarly prioritize improving their speaking skills, followed by listening, reading, and writing (Hartina & Syahrir, 2021).

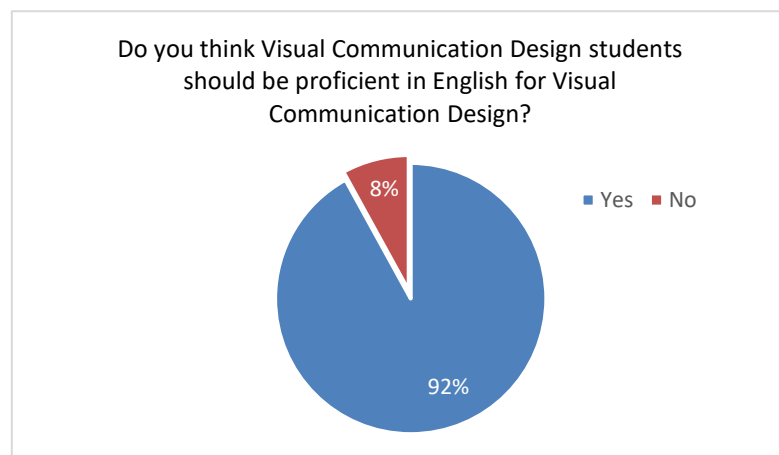


Figure 5. English Proficiency for VCD students

Furthermore, regardless of the specific English skills, the students almost unanimously hold the same expectation for specialized language instruction, in this case, ESP. From Figure 5, it can be seen that most of the students (92%) agree that, as VCD students, they need to have good proficiency in English related to their field. This indicates that the vast majority of the students undoubtedly desired an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curriculum. Instead of passively accepting General English, the students express their expectation and desire for English instruction that features their field-specific terminology. This also happens in a previous study by Pranoto and Suprayogi (2020), where students specifically requested to learn ESP for sport journalism and sport practitioners (e.g., athletes, referees, and coaches). Moreover, the desire for specific instruction is also reflected during the actual learning process. The teacher reveals that the students often ask questions regarding the meaning of certain vocabulary related to their field, noting: “*Mereka kadang pakai istilah-istilahnya, ‘Ibu ini bahasa Inggrisnya apa?’*” (They sometimes use [design] terms and ask, ‘Ma’am, what is this in English?’).

The strong inclination for specialized language instruction is also in line with the English teacher’s professional expectation for the VCD program. While recognizing the limitations of the current curriculum, the teacher expressed strong preferences for an ESP approach. In the interview, the teacher stated, “*Memang pinginnya sih setiap jurusan itu mereka spesifik itu diajarkan Bahasa Inggris yang spesifik kayak ESP gitu ya. Jadi nanti diharapkan mereka kerja itu mereka sudah menguasai bidangnya*” (Ideally, each major would be taught specific English, like ESP. So, hopefully, when they work, they have mastered [the English for] their field). This shared expectation between students and the teacher strengthens the need for a tailored curriculum, especially given the recognition that the current curriculum is still focused on general English (Handayani et al., 2025; Pranoto & Suprayogi, 2020). By centering the learning experience around the students’ wants and expectations, specifically prioritizing speaking within the design context, educators can significantly boost students’

intrinsic motivation and fulfill their ultimate goal of achieving readiness in the global industry (Conesa et al., 2022; Nasihin & Oktarini, 2022).

2. Learning Needs

Learning needs in the context of need analysis refer to the ways the learning should be delivered to the students in order to help them achieve the targeted situation (Basturkmen, 2010; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Sabarun & Qodir, 2022). Basically, this aspect focuses on the “how” of language acquisition by mapping the learners’ preferred methodologies, classroom dynamics, and study habits to ensure the instruction is engaging and accessible (Rizqiani & Elida, 2025). Drawing from the findings, the researchers identified several key components of the students’ learning needs: the learning settings and the learning input.

Learning Settings

Understanding the students’ preferred learning settings is important in designing an ESP curriculum. In this context, learning settings can encompass the schedule, group size, and delivery mode (Basturkmen, 2010; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Mohd Fisal & Mohd Said, 2023; Rizqiani & Elida, 2025). The investigation on these learning settings can help the teacher to deliver the appropriate learning instruction that can maximize the students’ engagement and mirror the collaborative nature of their future careers. Consequently, the current study investigated the specific classroom dynamics preferred by the VCD students to match their learning needs.

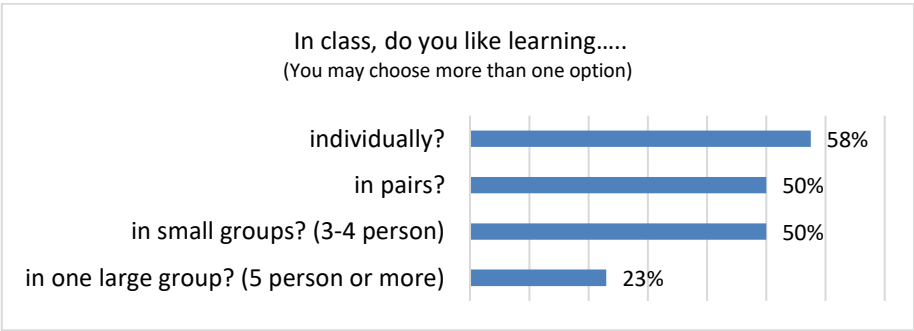


Figure 6. Students’ Preferred Learning Settings

In Figure 6 above, the VCD students reveal their preferred learning situations. They mostly prefer doing the learning task individually (57.50%), in pairs (50%), or in small groups (50%). On the contrary, learning in one large group was the least preferred approach, as it was chosen by only 23% of the students. Such preferences reflect how self-autonomy and independence are crucial in fostering creativity (Rabello-Mestre et al., 2025). Thus, it is not surprising that the VCD students, as the students specialized in creative fields, desired a learning setting that provided them with more autonomy, which is in line with the common characteristics of creative workers (Marčeta et al., 2024).

This inclination to flexibility complements the English teacher’s current pedagogical approach, which utilizes Project-based Learning (PBL). Revealing how this method is applied to accommodate the students’ situations, the teacher noted, “*Lebih ke proyek, karena kalau mereka disuruh menulis, bikin cerita, bikin paragraf itu agak sulit ya... Lebih grup proyeknya*” (The learning [and assessment] leans more towards projects because if they are asked to write, create stories, or write paragraphs, it is quite difficult... The projects are more group-based). This practice is aligned with broader educational studies on PBL effectiveness

in improving vocational students' English learning or ESP (Hidayati et al., 2023; Safitry et al., 2026). Moreover, the projects in PBL can be tailored to suit students' preferences, whether they want to do it in groups or even individually (Duke et al., 2021). It also helps them to apply English in practical contexts that can be useful in their future careers (Eckardt & Kraemer, 2020). PBL facilitates the students in using English as required in real-life situations that they might face in their future career, such as presenting design concepts, discussing client briefings, explaining creative decisions, and analyzing visual elements. Hence, PBL can be a well-suited learning method for these students.

Learning Input

Learning input, in its essence, is the way learners are exposed to the target language (R. Zhang et al., 2021). When applied to the context of need analysis, the learning input refers to the instructional materials, tasks, and media that the learner prefers to engage with during language learning to be able to learn optimally (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Rizqiani & Elida, 2025; Sabarun & Qodir, 2022). In light of this, the current study investigated the specific learning input preferred by the VCD students, encompassing their preferred ways to acquire each major language skill and their preferences regarding technology integration.

Table 2. Students' preferred learning input

Skills	Learning Input	Percentage*
Listening	Podcasts	65%
	Audio recordings	35%
	Live conversations	50%
Reading	Textbooks	46%
	Articles (from newspapers or magazines)	35%
	Online articles (from websites or blogs)	89%
Speaking	Group discussions	62%
	Peer pair practice	73%
	Online speaking platforms (such as Duolingo, Babbel, Elsa, and Memrise)	39%
Writing	Practice assignment (from textbooks or exercise books)	69%
	Peer reviews	19%
	Guided writing tasks	85%

*The percentage represents how many students prefer to use each method; the full percentage of each method in each skill is 100%

The students' preferences in the way they receive the learning input vary depending on the specific language skills being targeted (see Table 2). This reveals strong demands for authentic, digital, and highly scaffolded materials. For receptive skills, there is a clear rejection of the traditional academic format while favoring the more modern and dynamic input. To learn listening skills, the majority of the students (65%) prefer to learn through podcasts compared to traditional audio recordings (35%). This shows the students' desire to obtain authentic conversational English rather than scripted textbook dialogues (Priyatmojo

et al., 2026; Putri et al., 2025). In the same vein, the learning of reading skills is more preferred through online articles (89%), which significantly overshadows the traditional printed materials like textbooks (46%) and articles from newspapers or magazines (35%). The heavy reliance on digital resources from the internet is logical for the VCD students since their field is inherently visual and constantly evolving. Consequently, they need more digital inputs, such as design blogs or more visual online articles, rather than static text. This is in line with previous studies on students' preference for digital reading materials over printed ones (Kharisma et al., 2022; Nurfaizah et al., 2024).

On the contrary, the students preferred inputs that rely on more traditional input that highlights structured human interaction and explicit guidance for learning the productive skills. For the VCD students, peer pair practice is the most preferred way to learn speaking skills (73%), and closely followed by group discussion (62%). Both ways of learning speaking skills are really a good choice for beginner learners, as they obtain the peer support that can boost their confidence when practicing speaking skills (Ayu et al., 2026). The need for scaffolding and explicit guidance is more preferred in learning writing, as the students chose guided writing tasks (85%) as their most preferred input. The high demand shows that the students require explicit guidance, such as writing templates or guided examples, before feeling comfortable to produce their text independently (Chairinkam & Yawiloeng, 2024). This also correlated with the English teacher's previous statement, which explains the reasons for delivering the learning through PBL.

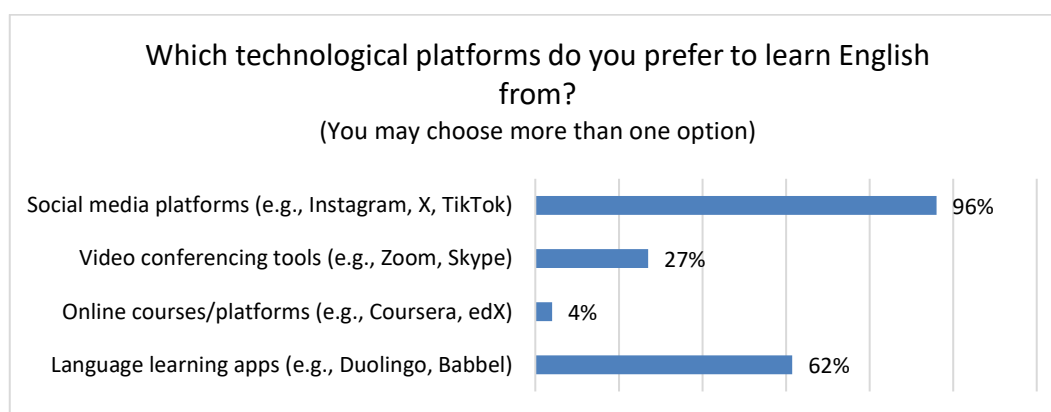


Figure 7. Students' preferred technological platforms for English learning

Beyond the specific language skills, the needs analysis also explored the preferences for the use of technology platforms in enhancing the learning input. Figure 7 illustrates the massive preference for informal digital platforms with their bite-sized content. An overwhelming majority of the students (96%) prefer using social media platforms (such as Instagram, X, and TikTok) to consume English content, which is actually in line with the many EFL students' preferences in Indonesia (Iswahyuni, 2021; Salam et al., 2025). Next, language learning applications are also fairly preferred by the students, with 62%. In stark contrast, formal digital learning environments are greatly unpopular with the students, as only 4% of them are interested in traditional online courses like Coursera or edX. This suggests that VCD students favor highly visual and easily digestible microlearning over rigid digital courses, aligned with the findings by previous researchers on microlearning effectiveness in learning English (Gohar, 2023; Prasittichok & Smithsarakarn, 2024).

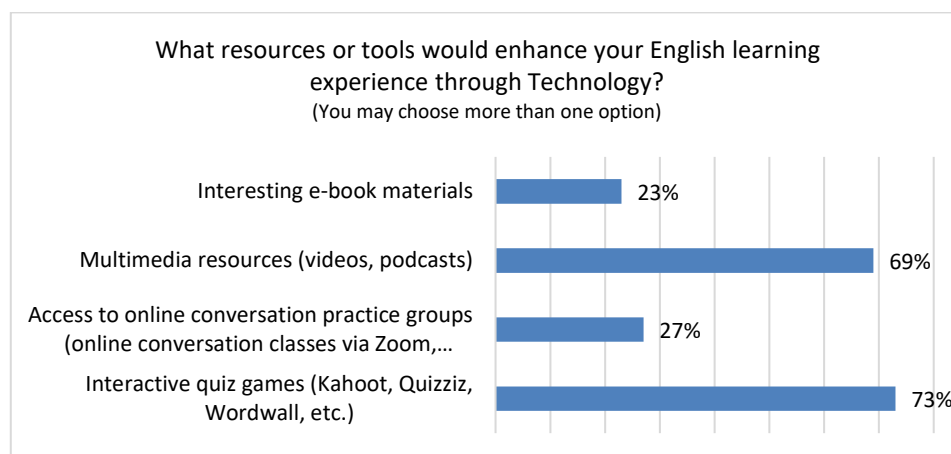


Figure 8. Students' preferred format of technological resources for English learning

In addition, when asked which format of digital supplementary resources would enhance their learning experience (see Figure 8), the students showed strong demands for the gamification approach. Interactive quiz games become their most preferred resources or tools chosen by 73% of the students, followed by multimedia resources with 69%. The quantitative demand for gamified inputs is perfectly aligned with the English teachers' current instructional practice. The teacher reported her active utilization of platforms like Quizizz for gamified learning to increase classroom engagement, highlighting its value to bring forth a competitive digital environment. The teacher noted, "*Mungkin dikasih game... ada kompetisi, biasanya di Quizizz kan ada kompetisi. Jadi mereka lebih, 'wah, asik nih' gitu ya*" (Maybe giving them games...there are competitions, usually in Quizizz there are competitions. So, they feel it is more fun, like 'wow, this is exciting'). The connection between gamification and students' motivation in learning English has also been affirmed by several studies (Akhyar & Roslaini, 2025; Pham et al., 2025). All in all, to conform to the students' learning needs, the instructor or educator should be able to deliver inputs that integrate authentic digital media, explicit guided instructions, as well as gamified interactive supplementary materials.

D. CONCLUSION

The results of this needs analysis provide insights into English learning among VCD students in vocational schools. The target needs findings indicate that learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a necessity for VCD students, not only based on their perspective but also based on the fact that English can be found in many aspects of their field or major. The students also reveal that speaking skills are the skill they lack the most and rarely engage with. Consequently, the English they expect and desire to learn becomes ESP for VCD, with the focus on oral communication skills. Further, they express how they want the English learning to be delivered in the learning needs analysis. For the learning setting, they exhibit their flexibility for wanting the learning task to be either individual, pair, or small group (3-4 students) work. For the learning input, the students prefer a more dynamic and modern input for receptive skills, such as using podcasts for listening skills, and a more traditional input for productive skills, such as guided writing tasks for writing skills. With the high demands on learning that align with the real-life professional situations, the curriculum of English in vocational school should consider incorporating a project-based learning approach. This approach can bridge the gap between academic learning and the professional

communication skills needed by students. The adjustments will ensure that the vocational high school students, especially in the VCD program, are not only competent English users but also confident in using it to communicate effectively in the increasingly global professional environments.

Despite the valuable insights gained from the need analysis, this study also has its limitations. The needs analysis was conducted within a specific and localized context, which may limit its generalizability for the overall Indonesian VCD program in VHS. Furthermore, the current study only identifies the targeted linguistic needs and does not evaluate any pedagogical efficacy of their implementation. Thus, future research could focus on the actual design, application, and empirical evaluation of the recommended project-based ESP syllabus for VCD students. Lastly, the later studies could expand the demographic scope to include a wider array of industry professionals to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant to the rapidly changing demands in the global VCD field.

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