



A Needs Analysis of English for Graphic Design Students: A Case Study at Vocation High School

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Received: 2026-04-13 Revised: 2026 04-27 Accepted: 2026 05-08</p> <p>Keywords: <i>English for Specific Purposes, Needs Analysis, Graphic Design, Target Needs, Learning Needs</i></p> <p>DOI: 10.24256/ideasv14i1.10163</p> <p>Corresponding Author: Yulin Rabaiya rabaiyayulin@gmail.com English Language Education Study Program Faculty of Letters and Culture Universitas Negeri Gorontalo</p>	<p><i>This study aims to analyze the English learning needs of graphic design students at SMK Negeri 1 Dungaliyo, focusing on target needs and learning needs within the framework of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This research employed a mixed methods design with an exploratory sequential approach. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires, while qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The findings reveal that students need English primarily for professional communication, understanding design-related materials, and presenting their work. However, current learning practices still emphasize General English rather than ESP-based instruction. Students also face challenges such as limited mastery of technical vocabulary, low confidence in speaking, and lack of contextual learning materials. In addition, teaching strategies are still dominated by teacher-centered methods with limited use of interactive and contextual approaches. Therefore, this study suggests the need to develop English learning materials and strategies that are more relevant to the field of graphic design to better support students' academic and professional needs.</i></p>

1. Introduction

English has become the dominant international language in various fields, including in industries such as graphic design. In the era of globalization and rapid development of information technology, English proficiency has become increasingly important for professionals in the field of graphic design. Many resources, software, and literature related to graphic design are available in English, so mastery of this language is key to accessing information and communicating effectively at the global level (Huang, 2021).

The basis of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching is the fulfillment of the language and learning needs of specific groups of learners. Thus, the ESP approach emphasizes that the language being learned must be in line with the needs of a particular field, such as science, tourism, medicine, or economics (Asrifan et al., 2020). In addition, ESP is designed to meet the needs of adult learners who must master a foreign language to support their work in specific fields. The application of ESP also helps students understand the position of their studies in a global perspective. The materials presented, whether in the form of reading texts, videos, or other learning activities, should be tailored to the students' major (Idriani & Amna, 2019).

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is an English language learning approach widely implemented in vocational schools in Indonesia. ESP is designed to meet the needs of more contextualized English learning, tailored to students' areas of expertise, eliminating the focus solely on general English. In vocational schools, the implementation of ESP is particularly relevant, given that the primary goal of vocational education is to prepare graduates who are ready to enter the workforce in their respective fields.

Graphic design students in Indonesia often face challenges in mastering English relevant to their field. This is due to a lack of learning materials tailored to the graphic design context, as well as teaching methods that do not fully accommodate their specific needs. Agustina et al. (2023) showed that graphic design students require English materials directly related to their field, such as design terminology, client communication, and project presentations. Graphic design is a highly dynamic and constantly evolving field, where new trends and techniques are frequently introduced through international publications and online platforms. Therefore, students in graphic design vocational schools need to have adequate English language skills to be able to understand instructions, tutorials and literature related to graphic design (Shah, 2020). In addition, English language skills are also important to communicate with clients and coworkers in a multicultural work environment (Baker, 2019).

SMK Negeri 1 Dungaliyo offers a variety of study programs, including Graphic Design. In this major, English language learning should be directed towards mastering language skills that support students' professional competencies, such as understanding design literature, following instructions for graphic software that

generally use English, and communicating with clients or colleagues in the global creative industry. The rapid development of the creative industry, especially in the field of graphic design, requires professionals to have not only technical skills, but also effective communication abilities. English, as an international language, plays an important role in supporting cross-cultural communication, understanding global design literature, and interacting with international clients and teams.

Based on preliminary observations conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Dungaliyo, English language learning in several vocational programs, including the graphic design department, still tends to use general materials that do not fully address the specific needs related to the vocational field. In addition, the learning process still focuses heavily on basic exercises and material comprehension, while contextual learning activities related to the world of work still need to be strengthened. This condition shows that English learning in vocational schools needs to be designed to be more relevant to students' fields of expertise.

Therefore, a needs analysis that includes target needs and learning needs is required so that English learning can be tailored to the needs of students in the fields of expertise they are studying. However, many students still struggle to comprehend technical instructions in design software, such as Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator, which primarily use English in their interfaces. Currently, the English material taught in class is still focused on General English and does not even have an appropriate textbook. In fact, the material taught does not fully cover the technical vocabulary and communication skills needed in the field of graphic design.

This mismatch between the lesson plans and students' professional needs creates a gap that may hinder their preparation for the workforce. Necessities refer to the skills, competencies, or forms of language knowledge that a person must possess to perform roles and tasks in the target situation. These needs are usually guided by the demands of authentic, real-world tasks, such as understanding work instructions, reading and interpreting technical documents, writing reports, participating in presentations or professional discussions, and responding to instructions or requests in specific contexts. From a linguistic perspective, necessities encompass not only technical vocabulary relevant to a particular field, but also concise sentence structure, coherent text organization, and pragmatic aspects, such as the use of polite tone, clarification strategies, and persuasive communication skills.

Thus, necessities can be considered a "minimal map" of language competencies that must be mastered for a language user to work effectively, safely, and professionally. Lacks refer to the gap between a learner's actual abilities and the skills required by the target situation. Analyzing lacks helps identify areas of student weakness, such as when they already have a basic understanding of general English but are unable to use technical vocabulary or comprehend more complex authentic texts. Thus, lacks serve as indicators of gaps that need to be bridged

through the learning process. Wants to refer to the desires, hopes, or priorities that the learner perceives as important. This section focuses not solely on external demands but also on the student's internal aspirations. For example, students may assess that they need oral communication skills (speaking) more than writing skills, or vice versa. Wants provide insight into students' learning motivation and preferences, thus helping teachers balance the demands of the target situation with the learner's affective needs.

Learning needs are "what the learner needs to do in order to learn," namely everything that supports successful learning, from methods, strategies, classroom activities, to learning styles (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). Methods and strategies refer to the most appropriate ways to help students learn a language effectively. For example, some students learn more effectively with task-based learning, while others understand better through lectures or scaffolding. Classroom activities are an important part of learning. Some students feel more comfortable with collaborative learning such as group discussions, role-plays, and simulations, while others benefit from individual practice, independent reading, or reflective writing. Learning Styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or a combination) significantly influence learning effectiveness (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the English learning needs of Graphic Design students at SMK Negeri 1 Dungaliyo by focusing on target needs and learning needs within the framework of ESP. This study contributes by providing a context-specific ESP needs analysis in graphic design vocational education, particularly in a local school context where English learning is still largely general rather than field-oriented.

2. Method

This study employed a mixed-methods research design with an explanatory sequential approach (Sugiyono, 2019), (Gay & Mills, 2019). This design was used because quantitative data were collected first, followed by qualitative data to explain and deepen the quantitative findings. Quantitative data were collected first by distributing questionnaires to all 27 students majoring in Graphic Design at SMK Negeri 1 Dungaliyo. The questionnaire instrument was designed to identify students' target needs and learning needs, which included aspects of necessities, lacks, and wants in learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Qualitative data were then collected through semi-structured interviews with 10 students selected purposively based on the questionnaire results.

These interviews aimed to explore in greater depth the reasons behind the quantitative findings, particularly regarding the need for English in the graphic design industry, students' learning experiences, and their perceptions of the relevance of the learning materials and methods applied at school. The semi-structured approach allowed researchers to adhere to interview guidelines while providing space for respondents to express their views and experiences more

broadly and deeply.

Participants

The participants of this study were 27 tenth-grade Graphic Design students at SMK Negeri 1 Dungaliyo. They were involved because the Graphic Design major consisted of only one class and did not have any parallel classes. Therefore, all 27 students were included as questionnaire respondents through total sampling. From these 27 students, 10 students were selected purposively to participate in semi-structured interviews. The selection was based on their questionnaire responses, willingness to participate, and ability to provide detailed information about their English learning experiences, difficulties, and expectations.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study were a questionnaire and semi-structured interview guidelines. The questionnaire was developed based on the framework of target needs and learning needs in English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The questionnaire consisted of 22 items covering aspects of necessities, lacks, wants, language skills, technical vocabulary, learning methods, classroom activities, assessment preferences, and learning challenges. The semi-structured interview guidelines were used to obtain deeper information about students' English learning experiences, difficulties, learning preferences, and expectations of English materials relevant to the graphic design field. The interview guidelines consisted of 10 questions designed to explore students' responses in more detail and to support the findings obtained from the questionnaire.

Data Collection Technique

Data were collected in two stages. First, questionnaires were distributed to all 27 tenth-grade Graphic Design students at SMK Negeri 1 Dungaliyo to identify their target needs and learning needs in learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Before completing the questionnaire, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and asked the students to answer the items based on their learning experiences and needs.

Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 students selected purposively from the questionnaire respondents. The interviews were used to obtain deeper information about students' difficulties, learning preferences, and expectations of English materials related to the graphic design field. The interview data were used to explain and enrich the questionnaire findings.

Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed using quantitative descriptive analysis and qualitative thematic analysis. The questionnaire data were analyzed using frequency and percentage to identify the dominant English learning needs of the students.

The interview data were analyzed using the interactive model of (Miles et al., 2014), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The students' responses were coded and categorized into themes related to target needs, including necessities, lacks, and wants, and learning needs, including learning methods, classroom activities, assessment preferences, and learning challenges. The qualitative findings were then used to clarify and strengthen the quantitative results in accordance with the explanatory sequential mixed-method design.

3. Results

The researchers' findings are based on the research questions. The purpose of this study is to identify the target needs and learning needs of students majoring in Graphic Design at SMK Negeri 1 Dungaliyo in learning English and to identify learning needs analysis this study aims to understand how students should learn include learning material that are considered appropriate and effective in supporting English mastery in a vocational context.

Target Needs

Based on the classification of target needs, this study categorizes target needs into three main components, namely necessities, lacks, and wants. These components are employed to identify the language skills that students need to master, the gaps between their current competencies and the demands of language use, as well as students' preferences toward English language learning.

Necessities

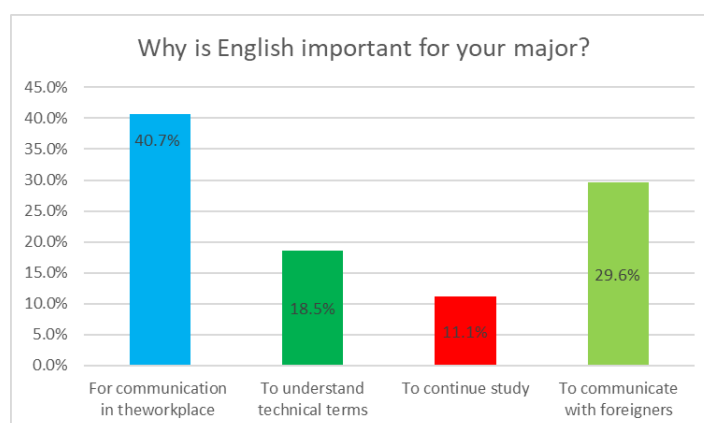


Figure 1. Students' Reasons for Learning English in the Graphic Design Major

The data shows that the English language needs of Graphic Design students at SMK Negeri 1 Dungaliyo are dominated by the demands of professional communication and understanding of technical terms directly related to work in

the creative industry. The majority of 11 students (40.7%) stated that English was important for workplace communication. while the majority of 6 students (29.6%) stated that consider it crucial for interacting with foreigners, reflecting the need for cross-cultural communication in a global context.

Additionally, most students 6 students (18.5%) stated that English emphasize the importance of mastering technical terminology to understand software, guides, and design references, while another the majority of 3 students (11.1%) stated that view English as important for continuing their studies. Overall, these findings confirm that English language learning should be directed toward developing professional communication skills and mastering technical vocabulary as the primary focus of students' target needs.

The questionnaire results are strongly supported by interview data. The results of the questionnaire study showed that students' primary need for learning English was dominated by professional communication in the workplace (40.7%). This finding was consistently reinforced by interview data. *Student 1 explicitly stated that English was needed to be communicating with outsiders and speaking in front of the class.*

This statement confirms that students already have an initial awareness of the function of English as a tool for cross-cultural and professional communication. Based on the interview results, it can be concluded that students' main needs in learning English focus on mastering professional communication, both in academic and work contexts. Students' statements show an initial awareness of the function of English as a tool for cross-cultural communication, which is necessary for interacting with external parties and for conveying ideas orally in public.

Wants

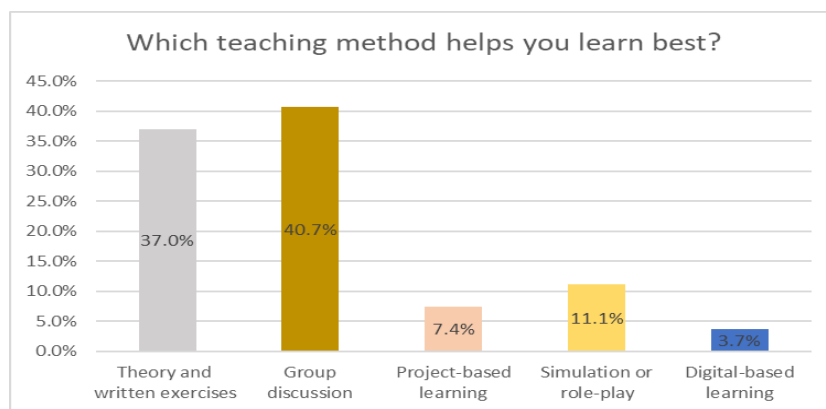


Figure 2. Students' Preferred Teaching Methods in Learning English

The data shows that Graphic Design students have a strong preference for collaborative and interactive learning methods. The majority of 11 students (40.7%) stated that English choosing group discussions as the most effective way to understand English material. These findings confirm that social interaction and the exchange of ideas help them process information more deeply. In addition, the majority of 10 students (37.0%) stated that English of students consider theory and written exercises to be methods that are still necessary to strengthen their understanding of language structure and technical vocabulary relevant to the field of graphic design, indicating a need for a balance between collaborative learning and structured exercises.

Meanwhile, the majority of 4 students (11.1%) stated that English chose simulations or role-plays, indicating that some students need learning experiences that resemble real professional situations. The majority of 1 student only (7.4%) stated that English chose project-based learning and the majority of 1 student only (3.7%) chose digital-based learning, showing that even though they are accustomed to working with digital media, students do not consider these methods as the main means of learning English. Overall, these findings confirm that ESP learning for Graphic Design Students needs to prioritize group discussions, written exercises, and interactive activities as the main strategies, while project-based and digital methods serve as complementary tools to support their learning needs.

The findings from the questionnaire, supported by interview data, indicate that group discussions are the most preferred learning method, with a percentage of 40.7%. This indicates a tendency for students to prefer interactive learning, which provides space for them to be actively involved and exchange ideas. This tendency is in line with the interview results, where students 1 and 5 stated that direct speaking practice, discussions, and interactive activities made it easier for them to understand. Thus, it can be concluded that students have a strong preference for interactive and collaborative learning methods, especially through group discussions and direct speaking practice.

Lacks

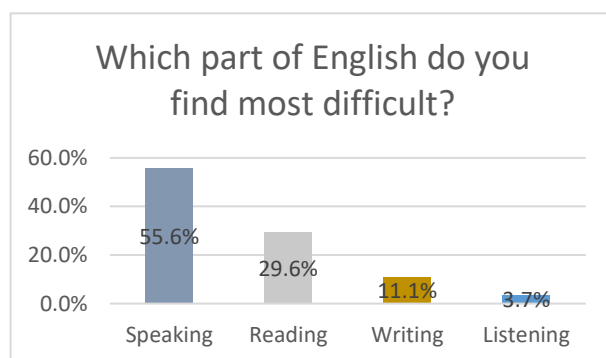


Figure 3. Frequency Connecting the most difficult Language Lessons

The questionnaire results show that the majority of 15 student (55.6%) stated that speaking was the most difficult part of learning English. This shows that students face obstacles in expressing ideas orally, conveying opinions, or explaining design processes using English. In addition, the majority of 8 students (29.6%) stated that reading was the most challenging skill. This indicates that most students have difficulty understanding English texts, including design articles, software instructions, or digital references that they often encounter in the learning process.

Furthermore, the majority of 3 students (11.1%) stated that consider writing to be a difficult skill. This shows that some students still experience difficulties in writing design descriptions, project reports, or explanations of work processes in English. These writing difficulties reflect the need for more focused learning on technical sentence structure, appropriate vocabulary use, and the ability to compose texts systematically in the context of graphic design. Meanwhile, the lowest percentage the majority of 1 student (3.7%), came from students who stated that listening was the most difficult skill. This finding shows that only a small number of students experience significant obstacles in understanding verbal instructions, video tutorials, or audio explanations in English.

The questionnaire results were strongly supported by the interview results. The questionnaire result was 55.6%. This finding indicates that more than half of the students had difficulty expressing ideas orally, conveying opinions, and explaining the design process in English. *Student 1 stated that speaking English was necessary for communicating with foreigners and presenting in class, but he still felt that his English-speaking ability was limited and needed more practice. Similarly, students 4, 5, 6, 9, and 10 emphasized that speaking skills were very important for presentations and communicating with clients, but they often experienced difficulties in pronunciation, confidence, and lack of speaking opportunities.*

Based on the interview results, it can be concluded that speaking skills are an important requirement and a major challenge for students in learning English. Student statements indicate that although they recognize the importance of speaking skills for academic presentations and professional communication with clients, most of them still experience difficulties in pronunciation, confidence, and fluency. This finding confirms that limited opportunities for practice are a major factor hindering the development of speaking skills. Therefore, ESP learning needs to provide more intensive and structured speaking practice so that students can gradually improve their oral communication skills contextually according to the field of graphic design.

Learning Needs

The findings on learning needs, this study categorizes learning needs into three main components, namely methods and strategies learning, learning styles, and classroom activities. These components are employed to identify appropriate instructional approaches, students' preferred ways of learning, and effective

classroom practices that support the development of English language skills in the context of Graphic Design.

Methods and Strategies Learning

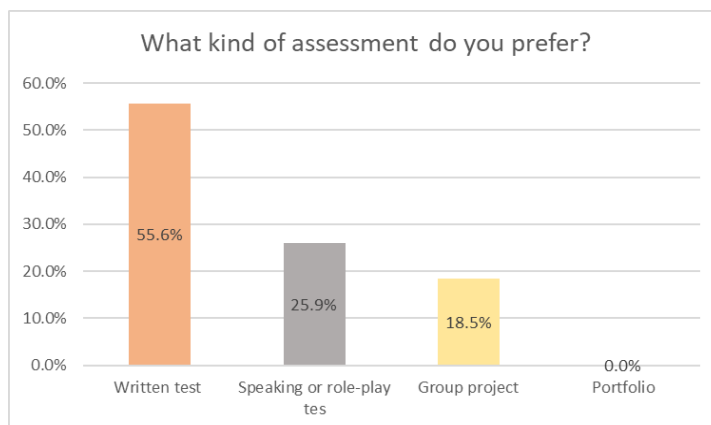


Figure 4. Students' Preferred Types of English Assessment

The questionnaire results show the majority of student of 15 student that (55.6%) stated that prefer written tests as a form of assessment. This dominant preference for written tests indicates that students tend to feel more comfortable with learning strategies that are structural, focused, and provide clarity in the assessment format. This may also reflect that learning approaches based on text analysis, written exercises, and explicit concept understanding are the most appropriate strategies for the learning styles of most students.

On the other hand, the majority of 8 student (25.9%) stated that chose speaking tests or role-plays, indicating that although students recognize the importance of oral communication skills, they still need a more supportive learning environment to build confidence and speaking skills. The majority of 5 student (18.5%) student that prefer group projects as a form of assessment. This relatively low percentage indicates that collaborative learning strategies have not yet become part of students' main preferences, possibly due to previous ineffective experiences or differences in participation levels among group members.

This low preference may reflect that performative learning models, such as simulations, role-plays, or active discussions, are not yet the dominant strategy used or are not yet fully comfortable for students. This indicates a need to gradually strengthen the use of learning strategies that encourage verbal interaction and real communication practice.

The questionnaire results supported by interview data showed that 55.6% of students preferred written tests as a form of assessment. This preference indicates that students tend to feel more comfortable with structured, clear, and

predictable evaluation formats that emphasize reading comprehension, written responses, and explicit mastery of concepts. This is in line with the interview results, particularly from Students 2 and 3 stated that they emphasize the importance of reading skills for understanding written information, instructions, and design-related texts.

This statement indicates that written assessments align with students' learning habits and their ability to express understanding more confidently through text-based tasks. Therefore, it can be concluded that students perceive written assessments as the form of evaluation most relevant to their abilities and learning habits, particularly in the context of English language learning.

Classroom Activities

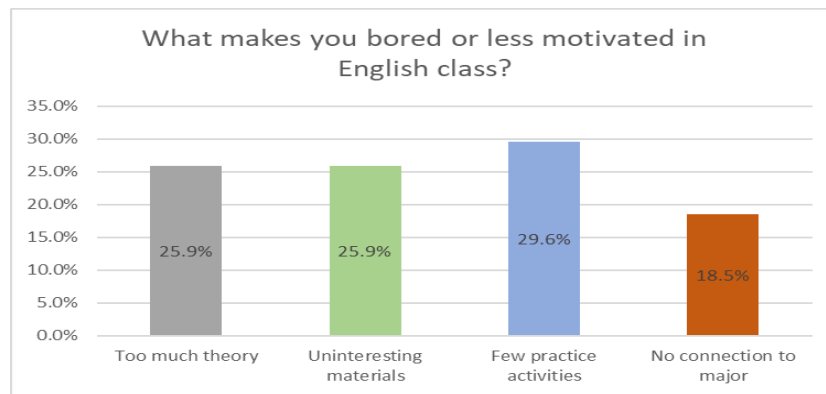


Figure 5. Factors Reducing Students' Motivation in English Class

The questionnaire results showed the majority of 9 students that few practice activities (29.6%) stated that indicated that students felt the learning provided too few opportunities to use the language directly. Furthermore, two factors with similar percentages were cited too much theory the majority of 6 students (25.9%) and uninteresting material the majority of 7 student (25.9%). This indicates that learning tends to focus on delivering theory and lacks variety in the methods and materials used. Meanwhile, the majority of 5 students (18.5%) stated that they lacked motivation due to a lack of connection to their major, indicating that the learning material was not fully relevant to the needs of their field of expertise.

The interim results of the questionnaire data, reinforced by the interview results, indicated a strong correlation in explaining the phenomenon under study. Students felt unmotivated due to the lack of practical activities, which aligns with their statements in the interviews. Student 1 revealed that he needed more speaking and listening practice because he found it difficult to improve his speaking skills through theoretical explanations alone. He emphasized the importance of

direct practice to familiarize himself with using English in real-life contexts.

This statement indicates that learning strategies that do not provide sufficient space for practice directly impact student motivation and skill development. This finding was further reinforced by Student 7 stated the teacher's method of simply reading from a textbook and then explaining makes students bored quickly and emphasized the importance of varying learning methods to make them more engaging. Student 6 echoed this sentiment stating Learning so far has tended to be repetitive and does not provide direct experience in using English orally. Based on these interview results, it can be concluded that students' low learning motivation is influenced by the lack of practical activities and the limited variety of learning methods used.

Learning Styles

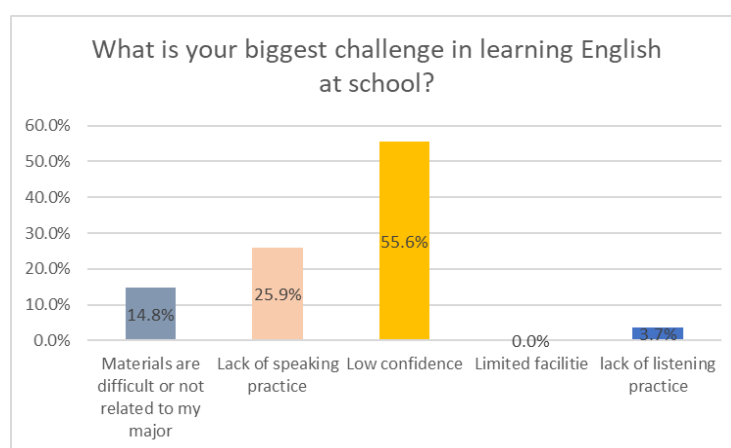


Figure 6. Students' Main Challenges in Learning English at School

The questionnaire results show that the majority of 15 students (55.6%) stated that of respondents experienced learning difficulties due to a lack of self-confidence. These findings indicate that students' learning styles tend to require a supportive, psychologically safe learning environment that allows them to participate without fear of making mistakes. In addition, the majority of 7 students (25.9%) stated that they had difficulty due to a lack of speaking practice, which confirms that some students have a learning style that requires direct oral practice to strengthen their understanding and language skills.

Meanwhile, the majority of 4 students (14.8%) students stated that difficult or irrelevant material was a challenge, indicating that they needed contextual learning approaches relevant to their academic backgrounds. Only 2 students (3.7%) of respondents experienced difficulties due to a lack of listening practice, and no respondents mentioned limited facilities as an obstacle, suggesting that internal factors were more dominant than external factors.

The questionnaire data, supported by interview findings, revealed a consistent pattern regarding the factors influencing students' low motivation in learning English. The questionnaire results indicated that the main cause was a lack of practical activities (29.6%), which aligns with students' responses in the interviews. Student 1 stated that he needed more speaking and listening practice because he found it difficult to improve his speaking skills only through theoretical explanations.

Furthermore, 25.9% of students reported that the learning was dominated by too much theory, which is supported by Student 7's statement that the teacher's method of simply reading from the textbook and then explaining it made students quickly bored. Similarly, another 25.9% indicated that the material was not interesting, which is in line with Student 6's statement that the learning so far has tended to be repetitive and does not provide direct experience in using English orally, indicating that monotonous and repetitive teaching reduces engagement. Meanwhile, 18.5% of students felt less motivated due to a lack of relevance to their majors, indicating that general learning content that is not aligned with students' fields of study also contributes to the lack of engagement.

4. Discussion

This study confirms that students' English language learning needs in the context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) are strongly linked to a needs analysis framework that integrates target needs (necessities, lacks, and wants) with learning needs (methods and strategies, learning style, and classroom activities). The findings indicate that students' needs are not only oriented toward mastering linguistic aspects but also toward the ability to use English contextually in the graphic design workplace, particularly in professional communication and the understanding of technical terminology.

These results align with the theories of (Basturkmen (2010) and Hutchinson and Waters (1987), are reinforced by the importance of affective factors such as self-confidence in supporting ESP learning success. The consistency of these findings with previous research, such as that by Agustina et al. (2023) and (Mao & Zhou, 2024), indicates that the need for technical and professional English proficiency is a common characteristic in the design field, while the gap in speaking and reading skills reinforces Richards (2001), view on the importance of identifying competency gaps.

Furthermore, students' preference for interactive learning supports learner-centered, communicative, and task-based learning approaches as effective strategies in the ESP context. Consequently, English language instruction should be designed in a communicative, contextual, and task-based manner by integrating activities such as discussions, presentations, work simulations, and role-plays, supported by the use of visual media and a supportive learning environment. This study contributes to providing an empirical basis for the development of ESP curricula, materials, and

learning strategies that are more relevant to students' vocational needs, while enriching the literature on the importance of integrating language needs, work contexts, and affective factors.

However, the limitations of this study lie in the potential for bias in questionnaire responses due to student conditions, differences in understanding of the instruments, the use of self-reports, and the limited research context, which only covers one school. Nevertheless, the use of data triangulation through questionnaires and interviews has helped enhance the validity of the findings. Thus, the results of this study can serve as a significant reference in the development of ESP instruction that is more adaptive, contextual, and oriented toward students' real needs.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that the English language learning needs of Graphic Design students at SMK Negeri 1 Dungaliyo, within the framework of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), are predominantly oriented toward the development of workplace-relevant oral communication skills, as evidenced by the strong convergence between target needs and learning needs. The findings reveal that professional communication (40.7%), significant speaking difficulties (55.6%), and a strong preference for engaging instructional approaches (55.6%) collectively indicate that speaking competence is the most critical skill required by students to function effectively in the creative industry.

Simultaneously, the analysis of learning needs highlights the importance of addressing affective factors, particularly low self-confidence (55.6%), alongside the preference for communication-based learning strategies (51.9%) and interactive classroom activities such as discussions, presentations (40.7%), and simulations (33.3%).

These integrated findings suggest that effective English instruction for Graphic Design students should not only emphasize communicative competence in authentic workplace contexts but also incorporate task-based, interactive, and visually enriched learning activities within a supportive and low-anxiety environment. Therefore, the study provides a clear empirical foundation for designing ESP-oriented curricula and instructional practices that are contextually relevant, communicatively driven, and affectively responsive, ultimately aiming to enhance students' readiness to meet the linguistic demands of the professional graphic design field.

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