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Autonomous learning of English pronunciation through vlogs: evidence from two Indonesian EFL students

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The growing popularity of Vlogs, particularly on platforms like YouTube, offers a valuable medium for English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners to autonomously improve their English pronunciation outside the classroom. This study aims to describe how students enhance their English pronunciation through English-language vlogs. A descriptive case study approach was utilized, involving two students majoring in English Education at a university in Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings indicate that the students employed several strategies to learn English pronunciation via vlogs, including (1) memorizing word pronunciation through repetition; (2) comprehending and applying English language skills from vlogs; (3) utilizing technological tools for assistance; and (4) engaging in English Communication with others as a means of practical application. The study concludes that students utilize a variety of strategies to improve their English pronunciation through vlogs. Applying these strategies appears to facilitate learning, and enhance their pronunciation.

Keywords: Pronunciation, EFL students, English pronunciation learning strategy, Vlog

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INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is a fundamental aspect of English language learning, as it plays pivotal role in effective oral communication. According to [Plailek & Essien \(2021\)](#), accurate pronunciation is essential for ensuring clear and effective communication. Proper pronunciation not only facilitates ease of understanding but also helps prevent miscommunication during verbal interactions. Despite potential errors in vocabulary, grammar, or pragmatics, a speaker with proficient pronunciation is generally comprehensible; conversely, poor pronunciation can significantly impede understanding, even if the speaker demonstrates accuracy in other linguistic domains ([Fraser, 2000](#)). Additionally, [Thornbury & Slade \(2006\)](#) stated that mispronunciations are a primary source of misunderstanding in communication. Thus, mastering pronunciation is a crucial aspect of language acquisition that warrants focused attention.

In Indonesia, where English is taught as a foreign language, university students often face challenges in mastering pronunciation. One contributing factor is the interference of the students' native language when learning English pronunciation, as noted by [Aulia \(2018\)](#)

Additionally, [Moedjito \(2016\)](#) explains that a significant cause of difficulty in pronouncing certain English sounds is their absence in the students' native languages. Consequently, there is a need for effective learning media that can assist students in interacting with native speakers and engaging with the target language to accurately produce words or sentences.

Technology has increasingly become a vital component in the field of education. [Putri & Sari \(2020\)](#) assert that advancement in technology positively influence various educational dimensions, including teaching, learning, and research, by providing teachers and students with diverse resources that facilitate autonomous learning. Additionally, students motivated to enhance their pronunciation can leverage technological innovations to support their independent learning efforts ([Aprianti & Ayu, 2020](#)). Further, [Taqwa & Sandi \(2019\)](#) highlight that vlogs represent a recent technological innovation that has gained substantial popularity. Defined as a blend of 'video' and 'blog,' vlogs allow users to create, upload, and view videos that often focus on lifestyle topics ([Anil, 2016](#)). Consequently, vlogs have emerged as valuable educational tool that students can utilize to improve their pronunciation skills.

In this research, several students from an English Education Department utilize YouTube vlogs as a medium for autonomous learning of English pronunciation outside the classroom. These students engage with their English vlogs created by native speakers or English vloggers to enhance their pronunciation skills. Through this process, students listen to and analyze pronunciation patterns, practicing and refining their own pronunciation to improve mastery. Despite the potential benefits, vlogs have not been widely adopted by students specifically for learning pronunciation as part of their speaking proficiency. [Taqwa and Sandi \(2019\)](#) investigated students' experiences with English learning through vlogs and found that vlogs significantly contribute to improvements in speaking confidence, digital literacy, and vocabulary acquisition. Similarly, [Mufidah and Roifah \(2020\)](#) reported that vlogs positively impact students by making the learning experience enjoyable, enhancing speaking skills, and increasing confidence. However, these studies primarily focus on the general effects of vlogs without specifically addressing how students learn English pronunciation through this medium. Consequently, the present study aims to explore how students utilize vlogs to learn and improve their English pronunciation.

Pronunciation

Pronunciation is a crucial element of English communication, essential for effective interaction with others. [Richards & Schmidt \(2002\)](#) define pronunciation as the manner in which specific sounds are produced, emphasizing the importance of how these sounds are recognized by listeners. Furthermore, [Prashant \(2018\)](#) characterizes pronunciation as the process of producing sounds that convey meaning. Thus, pronunciation can be understood as the precise articulation of words and sounds

to ensure that speech is clearly and easily understood by others.

English pronunciation learning strategy

Learning strategies are techniques employed by students to enhance their educational outcomes. By utilizing these strategies, students can take an active role in their learning process, thereby improving their language proficiency, motivation, and self-confidence ([Shi, 2017](#)). Specifically, [Peterson \(2000\)](#) defines Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) as the deliberate actions taken by students to improve their pronunciation skills. Consequently, the application of these strategies can significantly benefit students in their efforts to acquire accurate English pronunciation.

The framework of learning pronunciation is based on [Oxford \(1990\)](#), as cited in [Szyszka \(2017\)](#). This framework includes memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Through the lens of Pronunciation Learning Strategy (PLS) theory, this study explored how Indonesian EFL students use vlogs to improve their English pronunciation.

Vlog as Learning Media

Vlogs has emerged as a valuable recourse for language learning. Their integration into language education can significantly aid students in acquiring the target language ([Anil, 2016](#)). [Rakhmanina & Kusumaningrum \(2017\)](#) further highlight that vlogs offers comfortable and personal space for practicing the target language. Vlogs are accessible on various platforms that support video formats, including Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and others ([Fidan & Debbag, 2018](#)). [Mulyani & Sartika \(2019\)](#) note that YouTube-based videos allow students to see, hear and imitate native speakers, helping them closely replicate native pronunciation. Consequently, vlogs provide students with the opportunity to practice proper English pronunciation by observing and emulating English Vloggers. This practice can also facilitate the acquisition of English accent through consistent exposure to native speakers' pronunciations.

Previous studies on Vlog as a Learning Media to Improve English Skills

[Safitri & Khoiriyah \(2017\)](#) conducted a study exploring students' perceptions of using English vlogs to enhance speaking skills. Utilizing a qualitative research methodology, they gathered data through observation, interviews, and documentation from five students in the English Education Department at Universitas Islam Indonesia, the findings indicated that students had a positive perception of English Vlogs, viewing them as authentic media that rapidly improves speaking skills, develops listening abilities, enhances pronunciation, and increases vocabulary. The study also identified several techniques students used to improve their speaking skills with vlogs, including imitating native speakers, pausing the video to understand unfamiliar words and checking a dictionary practicing speaking in English, recording their own speech, and following along with conversations or words in English vlogs to communicate with peers. These strategies contributed significantly to students' improvement in speaking skills.

The other research investigated the effectiveness of using vlogs as a learning medium and their impact on students' learning outcomes, specifically focusing on students' fluency and public speaking skills. The study by [Mufidah and Roifah \(2020\)](#) examined the efficacy of vlogs as a pedagogical tool and their influence on students' learning outcomes, with particular emphasis on fluency and public speaking skills. Utilizing a qualitative research methodology, the researchers employed two data collection techniques: observation and a speaking assessment rubric. The study involved a cohort of students from the English-speaking course within the English Study Program at the University of Trunojoyo Madura. Data analysis was conducted using qualitative analytical methods. The results indicated that the use of Vlogs as an instructional medium substantially contributed to improvements in students' fluency and public speaking abilities. This enhancement is attributed to the engaging and enjoyable nature of Vlog-based learning, which fosters increased speaking practice and augments the quality of students' presentations.

In addition, [Lingga et al. \(2021\)](#) conducted a study examining the impacts of social media-based vlogs on the English speaking skills of EFL students. The study involved 65 participants from the Information Technology Department of Politeknik Negeri Tanah Laut. Data were collected through interview transcripts and classroom observations. The findings indicated that social media vlogs significantly enhanced students' English-speaking abilities. In the initial cycle, students' proficiency levels were average in vocabulary and pronunciation, and substandard in grammar, fluency, and content. By the second cycle, there was a marked improvement, with all proficiency criteria advancing to a good level.

[Ersan et al. \(2022\)](#) investigated the enhancement of speaking abilities among eleventh-grade SMK Negeri 1 Arjasa through the use of vlog media. This study employed a classroom action research design, incorporating pre- and post-tests alongside a questionnaire utilizing a Likert scale as research instruments. The questionnaire was developed based on a theoretical framework of perception. Data from the test were analyzed using descriptive statistics with SPSS version 26. The findings indicated a significant improvement in students' speaking abilities from the beginning to the conclusion of the second cycle. Specifically, the average score increased from 65.76, at the outset to 80.30 by the end of the investigation.

Furthermore, [Arifatin et al. \(2023\)](#) conducted a study employing a quantitative research design, utilizing pre- and post-test as data collection techniques. This study examined the speaking performance of 33 students from the Management Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Lamongan through the use of digital vlog media. The data collected from the pre- and post-test were analyzed using SPSS 25. The results showed that students' speaking performance improved with the use of digital vlog. Specifically, the pre-test scores ranged from a minimum of 47 to a maximum of 71, whereas, the post-test scores showed a notable improvement, with the minimum score

rising to 68 and the maximum reaching 98. Additionally, the study revealed that students were motivated to enhance their fluency and accuracy, particularly with respect to tenses and pronunciation. The aforementioned studies exhibit several differences, including variations in research context, theoretical frameworks, participant demographics, and methodologies. While these studies collectively explore the benefits of using Vlogs as educational media to enhance students' speaking skills, the present research uniquely focuses on how students acquire English pronunciation through Vlogs. According to [Syafitri et al. \(2018\)](#), pronunciation is a critical aspect of speaking, emphasizing the articulation of words and comprehension of sounds. They argue that accurate pronunciation is essential for effective oral communication and constitutes a key element of communicative competence. Consequently, this study aims to investigate how students in the English Education Department at a university in Tasikmalaya, Jawa Barat, independently use Vlogs outside the classroom to improve their English pronunciation, employing a distinct focus, participant group, and theoretical framework.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a qualitative approach, specifically a descriptive case study. [Yin \(2003\)](#) defines a case study as an empirical investigation designed to explore phenomena of interest to answer questions "how" or "why." The case study methodology was selected due to its efficacy in constructing a detailed, in-depth understanding of the subject under investigation. According to [Yin \(2018\)](#), a descriptive case study is utilized to describe a phenomenon or case within its real-world context. This methodological approach is particularly suitable for conducting a thorough examination of specific phenomena, leading to comprehensive analyses. Consequently, the descriptive case study method was employed to investigate how students learn English pronunciation through vlogs.

Context and Participants

The study was conducted at a university in Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia, where the research phenomenon was observed. At this institution, some students in the English Education Department utilized YouTube vlogs as a medium for learning English pronunciation. The vlogs viewed by students included various types such as school vlogs, campus/university vlogs, daily vlogs, and travel vlogs. Students selected vlogger accounts randomly from YouTube, ensuring that the chosen vlogs were produced native speakers and featured high-quality content.

The study involved two female students from the English Education Department, who were in their sixth and eighth semesters at the time of research. These participants actively engaged with English vlogs, utilizing them to learn English pronunciation and successfully completing their pronunciation courses. The first participant was 21 years old, and the second participant was 22 years old; they are

referred to as P1 and P2 (pseudonyms). Prior to selecting the participants, the researchers conducted a preliminary study through a short interview via WhatsApp. This initial interview aimed to gather information on the participants' experiences and perceptions of Vlogs as learning tool for English pronunciation. The participants were purposely chosen based on several criteria: their active engagement with English Vlogs (at least one video per day), over three years of experience with such vlogs, strong performance in pronunciation courses, and their willingness to participate in the study. Additionally, feedback from their teacher indicated that these two participants were notably unique in her classes. They were identified as kinesthetic learners with a strong preference for using videos to enhance their English skills. Following this, consent forms were provided to the participants to formalize their agreement to take part in the study.

Research Instrument

The instrument was constructed based on the theoretical framework of Partial Least Squares (PLS) to investigate how students acquire English pronunciation through vlogs. The instrument incorporates six constructs derived from PLS theory: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social.

In this study, interview served as the primary research instrument to explore how students learn English pronunciation through vlogs. A semi-structured interview format was employed to gather detailed insights into participants' experiences. The interviews were designed to allow participants to respond freely based on their personal experiences with vlogs and pronunciation learning. The interviews were scheduled according to the participants' availability and were conducted online via WhatsApp voice notes and chat. Each participant was interviewed for approximately one hour, with sessions held at different times. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian, the participants' native language, to facilitate more natural and restricted responses. To ensure comprehensive data collection and address any ambiguities, three interviews were conducted with two participants, as further clarification was needed for some of the information provided. The qualitative data from these interviews were analyzed to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences. In addition, the participants were asked to maintain reflective journals to document their experiences learning pronunciation through vlogs. The reflective journaling was guided by [Smyth's reflection model \(1993\)](#), which includes four sequential stages; describing (what did I do?), informing (what does it mean?), confronting (how did I come to be like this?), and reconstructing (how might I do things differently).

Data Collection

Data were collected using interviews and reflective journals. The semi-structured interviews followed the procedures outlined by Adams (2015), which include (1) selecting participants and scheduling interviews, (2) developing interview questions and guidelines, (3) conducting the interviews, (4) refining interview techniques, and (5)

analyzing and reporting the interview data. However, reflective journal was used as supplementary data to provide a comprehensive understanding of how students autonomously acquire English pronunciation through vlogs. Then, the interview data were transcribed and translated, and both the interview and journal data were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

The researchers employed thematic analysis as outlined by [Braun & Clarke \(2006\)](#) to analyze the data. Thematic analysis was chosen due to its effectiveness in identifying patterns and themes within qualitative data ([Braun & Clarke, 2006](#)). This method is particularly valued for its flexibility in handling diverse data sets. The analysis followed the six steps described by [Braun and Clarke \(2006\)](#): 1) familiarization with data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) searching for themes among codes, 4) reviewing themes, 5) defining and naming themes, and 6) producing the final report.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study encompass an examination of how students acquire English pronunciation through vlogs, along with a brief overview of the application of PLS theory as utilized by students.

Memorizing Pronunciation through Repetition

The participants demonstrated that repetition was a key strategy in memorizing the pronunciation of words while learning English through vlogs. They mentioned that they frequently engaged in repetitive practice to internalize new vocabulary and corresponding pronunciation patterns acquired from watching English vlogs.

eee I usually repeat the word or sentence to remember the new word, for example like the word "Hello mate" which is usually done by Australians, and I also sometimes use those words with my friends (P 1)

So actually, it was natural at first, so it was not intentional to learn, so watching it was just for refreshing at first, but it turned out that when I watched it, I reflexively followed what they said, so if there were words that were unfamiliar to my ears or I had just encountered at that time, or I just realized that I had been mispronounced the word like for example /'ar,karv/ /'ar,karv/ so it is arsip in Bahasa, well in the past I read it often eee I thought it was /archip/ because I followed the word achieve, like that, but after watching one of the Vlogs eeu a native it turns out that the correct pronunciation is /'ar,karv/ so I followed and repeated /'ar,karv/ /'ar,karv/ so that it sticks in the brain, like that, often like that anyway (P 2)

Comprehending and Using the English Language from Vlogs

The participants articulated various methods through which they learned English pronunciation via vlogs. Their approach involved multiple strategies to effectively comprehend and

apply the language they encountered. These strategies included: (1) concentrating on pronunciation while actively listening to the vlogs, which facilitated a focused understanding of phonetics nuances; (2) imitating the pronunciation of native speakers, thereby aligning their speech patterns with those demonstrated in the vlogs; (3) practicing pronunciation through repetition, a technique that reinforced memory and accuracy; and (4) recording their own voice to compare with the native pronunciation, allowing for self-assessment and improvement. These practices collectively contributed to their pronunciation learning process, as detailed further below.

1. Concentrating on Pronunciation While Listening to the Vlogs

The participants indicated that they employed specific strategies to focus on pronunciation while listening to the Vlogs. These tactics were aimed at enhancing their learning and improving their pronunciation skills.

Yes, I focus on pronunciation when listening. Because watching Vlogs is aimed at improving my pronunciation, so I focus on how the word or sentence is pronounced by the Vlogger (P 1)

I used the strategy of focusing on pronunciation while listening. I pay close attention to the intonation as well as the pronunciation that the Vlogger says so that I can pick up how the Vlogger says it and then imitate it well (P 2)

2. Imitating Native Pronunciation

The participants reported that imitating the pronunciation of the native speakers was a key method in their English pronunciation practice through Vlogs. They described how they closely mimicked the pronunciation patterns and intonation of, native speakers featured in the vlogs they watched and listened to, considering this imitation a crucial aspect of their learning process.

Yes, I also do imitation directly or indirectly. After watching, I follow the Vlogger's speech, or I mention the words that I really want to learn, usually, I imitate the Vlogger's speech so that my pronunciation is correct (P 1)

Euhh yes, so I always try to imitate what the natives say because their pronunciation is almost 100% correct because they were born with the language, so I follow them not only to be able to speak like a native but also so that my pronunciation is correct so that I don't get the wrong meaning of the word, like that (P 2)

3. Practice Pronunciation through Repetition

The participants engaged in both silent and vocal repetitions as part of their pronunciation practice. They reported that these repetitive exercises were essential for reinforcing correct pronunciation and improving their overall phonetic accuracy.

Yes, for strategies, I usually do the repetition, usually spoken softly, because I get new words or unique sentences from the Vlogs I watch. After that, I usually follow or repeat, sometimes silently sometimes loudly (P

1)

Yes, I used that strategy. I repeat the pronunciation in a low and loud voice to compare the difference. Usually, I will try it in a low voice first, and when I think my pronunciation is in line with how the Vlogger pronounces it, I will try to pronounce it in a loud voice. I do this to practice my pronunciation and intonation (P 2)

4. Recording Voice to Assess Pronunciation

The participants also utilized voice recording as a tool for evaluating their pronunciation in their English learning process through Vlogs. They indicated that recording their own pronunciation allowed them to assess the accuracy of their speech by comparing it to the native pronunciation demonstrated in the Vlogs, thereby facilitating self-correction and improvement.

Yes, when there is a difficult word that I hear from the Vlog, I follow how the Vlogger pronounces the word, then if I feel that my pronunciation is not correct, I just record my voice to listen to my pronunciation to also check whether my pronunciation is correct or not (P 1)

Or sometimes, if I have free time, but this is not too often, I like to record, not a video, my own voice on a cellphone, recording or on a WhatsApp voice note to check whether the pronunciation has improved; there is progress or not, whether it has even gotten worse or the same, like that. So, if it is recorded, it can be listened to over and over again; it is not listened to once when it is spoken at that time (P 2)

Using Technological Tools for Assistance

The participants indicated that they employed technological tools to support their English pronunciation learning through Vlogs. Specifically, they reported using resources such as Google Translate and Oxford Learner's Dictionaries online to assist with the pronunciation of challenging words encountered while listening to English vlogs. These tools provided additional guidance and clarification, enhancing their ability to accurately pronounce difficult terms.

Euu yes, I also usually watch using English subtitles, well so I can read and listen to it after that euu if, for example, I really don't hear it, so the way is, I usually pause the video and then repeat the video if, for example, I still don't hear how to pronounce it, I usually check the Oxford online dictionary euuu then check how to pronounce the word, if American how and if British how like that (P 1)

Euhh if the word is very difficult to pronounce, I usually check it on Google Translate to confirm what I heard (P 2)

Communicating in English with Others as Practice

The participant reported that she engaged in English communication with others as a means of practicing the pronunciation skills acquired from the Vlogs. She noted that using English in social interactions allowed her to apply and reinforce the pronunciation techniques learned from the Vlogs in real-life contexts.

For the practice itself, after I listen to the English Vlogs, I usually have conversations with my friends, and that also really helps me in practicing my pronunciation, and my intensity in practicing is not only once or twice to talk with friends but every day I am forced to talk in English so that I can get used to it too (P 1)

The purpose of this study is to investigate how students learn English pronunciation through Vlogs. The findings reveal that the participants employed a specific learning tactic: memorizing word pronunciation through repetition. This approach was utilized to remember new vocabulary and the correct pronunciation of word presented in native English vlogs. Moreover, Participants primarily utilized repetition as a memory strategy, which aligns with [Oxford's \(1990\)](#) definition of memory strategies as direct methods aimed at storing and retrieving new linguistic information. According to [Szyszka \(2017\)](#), repetition is a tactic that enhances the memorization of pronunciation and is integral to the memory strategies described by [Oxford \(1990\)](#). Thus, the participants effectively used repetition to internalize and reinforce the pronunciation skills acquired from the Vlogs.

The findings also showed that students comprehend and utilize the English language from vlogs through various strategies, including concentrating on pronunciation while listening, imitating native pronunciation, practicing pronunciation through repetition, and recording their own voice to assess pronunciation. These strategies align with the cognitive strategies described by [Oxford \(1990\)](#), which facilitate language learners' comprehension and application of the target language. [Szyszka \(2017\)](#) further emphasized that repetition (both silent and vocal), imitation of native speakers or teachers' pronunciation, focusing on pronunciation during listening and speaking, and recording one's voice to assess pronunciation are key elements of the cognitive strategy framework outlined by [Oxford \(1990\)](#). Additionally, the findings revealed that participants also employed technological tools to aid their English pronunciation learning through vlogs. This use of technology aligns with the compensation strategy. According to [Oxford \(1990\)](#), compensation strategies assist learner in overcoming limitations in their language knowledge by facilitating comprehension and production. [Szyszka \(2017\)](#) highlighted that compensation strategies include methods for addressing gaps in language competence, such as using electronic devices and other reference tools. The technological aids are integral to the compensation strategy, as outlined by [Oxford \(1990\)](#).

Furthermore, the findings showed that the participant engaged in English communication with others as a means of practicing pronunciation learned from vlogs. This approach, which involved using English in social interactions, aligns with the social strategy framework. According to [Oxford \(1990\)](#) social strategies encompass methods through which students acquire a language by interacting with native speakers or using the target language in social contexts. [Szyszka \(2017\)](#) further identified specific social strategies, such as requesting feedback on

pronunciation, practicing English with peers, and teaching pronunciation to others. These practices reflect the participant's use of social strategies to reinforce and apply the pronunciation skills acquired from Vlogs in her social life.

Based on the findings of this research, four key themes emerged concerning how students learn English pronunciation through vlogs. These themes are derived from the students' actions and strategies as they utilize vlogs as a learning medium, informed by their experiences. The strategies identified include memory, cognitive, compensation, and social strategies. The application of these strategies not only supports students in their pronunciation learning but also has the potential to enhance their pronunciation skills.

Additionally, the application of PLS in pronunciation learning can support students throughout the learning process and enhance their pronunciation. [Szyszka \(2015\)](#) found that effective English pronunciation learners often engaged in practices such as listening to recordings, TV, movies, or music, speaking aloud or silently, imitating native speakers, focusing on pronunciation during listening, seeking opportunities for English interaction, recognizing different English accents, mentally rehearsing pronunciation, and soliciting feedback on their pronunciation. Moreover, [Muhammed & Othman \(2018\)](#) investigated the impact of pronunciation learning tactics on the accuracy of Kurdish EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. Their study revealed that Kurdish students' use of PLS, including personal practice for achieving native-like pronunciation, silent repetition of difficult words, and recording and reviewing their own pronunciation, significantly improved their pronunciation accuracy. This aligns with the covert rehearsal model, which emphasizes the importance of internal practice and self-monitoring in language learning.

In addition, [Permatasari \(2019\)](#) conducted interviews EFL learners regarding their pronunciation strategies and discovered that imitation and the use of resources, such as dictionaries and movies, were among the most frequently employed methods. These strategies were found to be effective in aiding learners' pronunciation development. Moreover, [Baranyi-Dupák \(2022\)](#) utilized Partial Least Squares (PLS) in a shadowing study and reported that three students confirmed the effectiveness of this approach, demonstrating that repeated practice can significantly improve pronunciation. Therefore, the implementation of such strategies in students' learning processes has the potential to enhance their pronunciation skills.

CONCLUSION

This research addresses the question of how students learn English pronunciation through vlogs. The major findings illustrate that participants employed various methods to acquire pronunciation skills via vlogs. Specifically, students utilized repetition as a technique to memorize the pronunciation of new words encountered in English Vlogs, enhancing their ability to recall both vocabulary and correct

pronunciation. Then, students demonstrated strategies for comprehending and applying English pronunciation from vlogs, including concentrating on pronunciation while listening, imitating native pronunciation, practicing through repetition, and recording their own voice for self-assessment. Technological tools also played a supportive role; students utilized resources such as the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries online and Google Translate to assist with the pronunciation of challenging words encountered in vlogs. Lastly, participant practiced their pronunciation by engaging in English communication with others in their social environments, applying the pronunciation skills they developed from vlogs.

Further, this study recommends that learners utilize vlogs as a supplementary learning medium to improve their English pronunciation outside the classroom. By applying effective pronunciation learning strategies, learners can optimize their practice and achieve better results in enhancing their pronunciation skills.

The researchers acknowledge several limitations in this study, including the restricted generalizability of the findings and the reliance solely on interviews due to participants' availability. To address these limitations, future research should consider quantitative methodologies, particularly experimental designs, to facilitate broader generalization of results. Additionally, further investigation is needed into the specific aspects of English pronunciation that students learn from watching and listening to Vlogs. For instance, research could explore how Vlogs impact students' understanding of pronunciation elements such as stress, intonation, and connected speech, and assess how effectively Vlogs contribute to pronunciation improvement. Future studies should also incorporate a range of data collection techniques, such as observations and documentation, and involve a larger sample of participants to enhance the reliability of the data. Furthermore, since participants used randomly selected Vlogs for independent learning, it is crucial for educators to curate and recommend high-quality Vlogs as part of the curriculum to ensure effective pronunciation instruction in the classroom.

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Strategies-Based English Instruction as a Method for Enhancing Reading Comprehension Skills in Higher Education Students

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Reading comprehension skills are pivotal for the academic success and future careers of communication science students, making the use of effective teaching strategies essential for their development. This Classroom Action Research (CAR) investigates how Strategies-Based Instruction (SBI) improves students' reading comprehension and overall learning experiences. Data were collected through observation, tests, and interviews, with quantitative analysis conducted using SPSS and qualitative analysis performed thematically. The results indicate that the implementation of SBI in reading classes increases students' reading comprehension and positively influences aspects such as materials organization, student engagement, attitudes towards reading, and motivation to attend classes. Additionally, SBI promotes direct strategies that assist students master key skills, thereby better preparing them for their future careers. This study suggests that teachers should be equipped with both technological and pedagogical knowledge, through workshops or training, to improve their professionalism, particularly in teaching reading through the SBI framework.

Keywords: Communication Science students, language learning, reading comprehension, reading strategy, strategies-based instruction.

INTRODUCTION

In EFL learning, reading comprehension skills have been extensively studied across various educational levels, including higher education, due to their significance (Ghahari & Ebrahimi, 2018; Kavani & Amjadiparvar, 2018; Wong, 2022). These skills enable students to actively engage with written texts, comprehend contexts, and identify connections between ideas (Elleman & Oslund, 2019). Their importance has grown with the increasing demand for literacy proficiency (Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2017), as well as the frequent use of English in students' daily lives in the 21st century (Namaziandost et al., 2022). Additionally, reading comprehension are essential for passing English proficiency exams (Samiei & Ebadi, 2021), which are often required for college graduation and job applications, particularly in countries like Indonesia. Thus, mastering reading comprehension is a critical skill for college students to achieve academic success (Rianto, 2021) and to support their future careers by effectively understanding information from various texts and sources.

The Communication Science Program (CSP) is one of the higher education programs that requires students to develop strong reading comprehension skills. These skills are essential for engaging with newspapers, magazines, international articles, and other English texts related to their field (Lestari, 2020).

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To become effective readers, students must master fundamental reading strategies, such as integrating information from the text with prior knowledge, summarizing key details, drawing conclusions, and formulating questions to gain a deeper understanding of material (Kirmizi, 2010). Current technological advancement, which require significant time spent reading and communicating online, can also Enhance students' reading comprehension skills if managed and utilized appropriately (Marboot et al., 2020). Therefore, the integration of appropriate learning strategies and technology presents valuable opportunities for the improvement of students' reading comprehension skills.

Despite the extensive literature on the importance of reading and effective methods for improving reading skills, reading activities remain a significant challenge (Namaziandost et al., 2020). A study conducted in a CSP English class at a state universities in Yogyakarta identified two key issues (Dewi et al., 2023). First, although students had the potential to be actively engaged in the learning process, the organization of learning materials required improvement, as the materials were presented in separate files. Additionally, the integration of technology was not fully optimized. Second, CSP students struggled to comprehend information from English texts, attributing their difficulties to limited vocabulary and a lack of effective reading strategies. Another study found that students were dissatisfied with traditional teaching methods, which negatively affected their motivation in reading classes (Pradana, 2017). Likewise, Muhassin et al. (2021) reported that many senior high school students in Indonesia faced comparable challenges, with limited English vocabulary being the primary issue (Suryanto, 2017), followed by difficulties in understanding implied meaning in texts (Susanti & Lailiyah, 2021). Addressing these challenges requires the implementation of specific teaching strategies or techniques (Sholeh et al., 2019) combined with appropriate technologies and learning media.

One techniques that employs specific strategies aligned with the intended learning objectives is Strategies-Based Instruction (SBI). SBI offers a learner-centred approach that enhances both English language lessons and the overall development of learners' skills (Gu, 2007). It equips students with targeted strategies to overcome reading challenges and achieve their learning goals by introducing strategic approaches and offering additional practice opportunities in tasks that address their immediate learning needs (Chinpakdee & Gu, 2024). Hence, SBI can be an effective method for enhancing learners' reading performance as well as their metacognitive control over the reading process.

SBI focuses on three key areas: declarative knowledge (awareness of reading strategies), procedural knowledge (how to apply these strategies), and situational knowledge (when to use the strategies) (Akkakoson, 2011). These components foster self-regulated learning,

helping students become proficient readers by understanding how, why, and when to use specific strategies (Chinpakdee & Gu, 2024; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2024). Chamot et al. (1999) proposed a five-stage SBI framework that addresses these challenges: activation of background knowledge, teacher explanation and modelling of strategies, practice of strategies, evaluation of strategies effectiveness, and implementation of strategies in new tasks. SBI is widely used due to its proven effectiveness in addressing reading challenges, enhancing specific skills, and its efficiency in organizing lessons.

The positive impacts of SBI on reading comprehension have been well-documented in previous research, particularly in adult education settings across various global contexts, including North America and Asia (Wong, 2022). For instance, SBI has been shown to significantly enhances the intrapersonal, reading comprehension, and inferential skills of Iranian English language and literature students (Ghahari & Ebrahimi, 2018). Additionally, university students in Vietnam (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2024), Thailand (Akkakoson, 2011), Iran (Hosseini & Amirkhani, 2024; Kavani & Amjadiparvar, 2018), and Azerbaijan (Kashef et al., 2012), as well as high school students in Thailand (Chinpakdee & Gu, 2024) and Jordan (Alkhawaldeh, 2015) reported improvements in both reading comprehension and their ability to independently manage the reading process as a result of SBI. These findings suggest that SBI is effective in enhancing students' reading comprehension skills.

Existing literature indicates that SBI has primarily been implemented in higher education settings, particularly in fields such as English (Ghahari & Ebrahimi, 2018; Kavani & Amjadiparvar, 2018; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2024; Sholihah et al., 2024), medicine (Hosseini & Amirkhani, 2024), management (Kashef et al., 2012), and science (Akkakoson, 2011). However, little is known about the implementation of SBI in CSP, despite preliminary findings (Dewi et al., 2023) revealing that CSP students face significant reading challenges in their English courses. The organization of reading classes also requires improvement, as it has contributed to students' negative attitudes towards the subject. Therefore, SBI is recommended as a solution to address these issues, helping students not only achieve academic success and proficiency in the Pro-TEFL (Proficiency Test of English as a Foreign Language) but also advance their careers.

The current study seeks to enhance CSP students' reading comprehension skills through SBI by addressing the following research questions:

- 1) How does the application of SBI improve the students' reading comprehension skills?
- 2) How does the application of SBI improve the reading comprehension learning process?

METHODS

Participants and Context

This study was conducted in collaboration with a lecturer from the CSP at a state university in the Special Region of Yogyakarta during the 2022-2023 academic year. The lecturer, who has been teaching English for over five years, has been instructing within the program for approximately two years. A total of 52 students participated in the study, 34 of whom were female (65.4%) and 18 were male (34.6%), with ages ranging from 17 to 20 years old. This group was selected based on the following criteria: (1) they were currently studying basic English materials relevant to their major; (2) they experienced difficulties with reading skills; (3) passing the English proficiency test was a graduation requirement; and (4) their class schedule aligned well with the research timeline.

Research Design

CAR was conducted to investigate how SBI could assist students improve their reading comprehension skills. It was selected because it allows teachers to address classroom issues systematically and effectively (Sadimin et al., 2017). By implementing CAR, teachers can resolve problems and generate solutions that lead to more favourable outcomes (Cohen et al., 2018). It also allows teachers to identify the most effective approaches for their specific classroom context, thereby making informed decisions about their instructional practices (Mettetal, 2002). CAR is particularly appropriate for this study as it focuses on enhancing classroom practices to help students achieve better learning outcomes.

This study employed the Classroom Action Research (CAR) cycle proposed by Coghlan and Brannick (2014). A pre-step was conducted to identify the context and define the desired future state. Following this, four key stages were implemented: (1) diagnosing, which involved identifying the core issues; (2) planning; (3) taking action; and (4) evaluating the action, where interventions were projected and implemented to assess their outcomes. The cycle is illustrated in Figure 1, and the detailed CAR procedures will be further discussed in the CAR Procedure subsection. Ideally, the cycle should be repeated continuously until the desired outcomes are achieved. However, due to time constraints, only one cycle was completed.

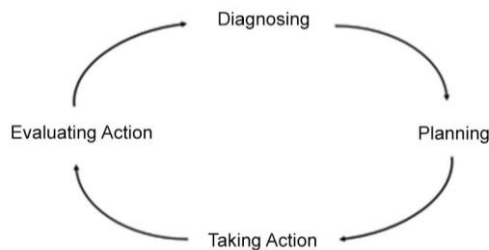


Figure 1 | CAR cycle

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through observations, tests, and interviews. First, a permission letter was submitted to the CSP representative. Following this, a form was provided to the lecturer, which included (1) a consent form and (2) a section for background information such as personal details, educational background, and teaching experience, to gather relevant data on the lecturer involved in the study. Subsequently, an initial classroom observation was conducted in one of the classes.

The observation format was adapted from teaching observation guides developed by London Business School (2018) and re-validated through expert judgment. The guides encompassed three key stages: pre-observation, classroom observation, and post-observations. The pre-observation stage included questions about the session's topic, learning objectives, instructional methods, and technical preparations for the main observation. The classroom observation focused on what happened during the lesson, covering areas such as the lesson's opening, main content delivery, closing, assessment methods, classroom setting, organization of the content, student participation, and technology integration. The post-observation involved the lecturer's reflection on the teaching-learning process, which also served as an informal follow-up interview to validate the observation results. The researchers completed the observation forms independently and then reached a consensus with the lecturer on which aspects of the lesson required improvement.

Before the implementation of CAR, students were provided with a consent form and a demographic information form similar to the one given to the lecturer. This form collected details such as gender, age, and English learning experiences. The forms were distributed during the same week as the initial observation and were followed up in the first CAR meeting to ensure that all students had completed them. Primary data were then collected through two reading tests and classroom observations. Reading Test 1 was administered prior to the implementation of CAR, while Reading Test 2 was given after the CAR cycle was fully completed. Each reading test consisted of 20 questions to be completed within 30 minutes via Google Forms. Additionally, classroom observations were conducted independently by two researchers throughout the CAR process. The observation format was similar to the initial guide but focused specifically on classroom dynamics, content organization, student participation, and technology integration.

In addition to the post-observation questions completed by the observers during the initial observation, the same questions were answered by the lecturer and audio recorded. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were conducted with four students—two males and two females—selected to represent gender diversity and based on their consistent attendance in either offline or online classes. These interviews were used to support the data gathered from the observations.

The questions were constructed around observed aspects (Antoni, 2010), including classroom conditions, technology integration, strategies, assessments, and suggestions. Additionally, the interviews addressed students' opinions on (1) their feelings, (2) their participation in the research, and (3) the strategies they found most relevant and valuable (Torres & Constain, 2009). The interview questions were validated through a pilot interview with one student from the same program who had experienced the same teaching-learning process using SBI. As a result of the pilot, two new questions were added, focusing on blended learning and assessment.

CAR Procedures

Once the areas for improvement were identified during the diagnosing stage, preparations were made in the planning stage by reviewing relevant literature on SBI to address the issues effectively. Following the completion of these preparations, SBI was implemented in the action stage across four meetings. Evaluation was conducted at the end of each meeting to identify the additional areas for improvement. Table 1 summarizes the six strategies that were taught over the four meetings, along with the corresponding stages designed according to the SBI framework proposed by Chamot et al. (1999).

TABLE 1 | Course plan and reading strategies

Meetings	Reading Strategies	Stages
1	Identifying the main idea of a passage (summarizing skill)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Preparation: discussing warming-up questions; b. Presentation: providing a video, explaining how to use the strategy, and giving examples; c. Practice: completing group practice; d. Evaluation: assessing the effectiveness of the strategy; e. Expansion: completing individual homework.
2	Identifying the unfamiliar vocabulary (contextual guessing skill)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Preparation: guessing words without contexts; b. Presentation: explaining how to use the strategy and giving examples; c. Practice: engaging in group practice using Bamboozle games;
	Recognizing the organization of ideas in passages (sequencing skill)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Preparation: arranging pictures in the correct order; b. Presentation: explaining how to use the strategy and providing examples; c. Practice: engaging the class in answering questions collectively.; d. Evaluation: assessing the effectiveness of strategies; e. Expansion: completing a paired homework assignment that integrates both strategies using Live Worksheet.
3	Answering transition questions correctly (sequencing skill)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Preparation: guessing preceding and following pictures from a sequence; b. Presentation: providing a video, explaining how to use the strategy, and giving examples; c. Practicing: answering questions in a large group;
	Answering stated detailed questions (skimming skill)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Preparation: identifying stated information from a picture; b. Presentation: explaining how to use the strategy and providing relevant examples; c. Practice: engaging the class in answering questions collectively.; d. Evaluation: assessing the effectiveness of the strategies implemented; e. Expansion: completing a paired assignment through Kahoot.
4	Answering implied/inferential questions (inferencing skill)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Preparation: finding implied information from a graph; b. Presentation: providing a video, explaining how to use the strategy, and giving examples; c. Practice: engaging in group practice using games; d. Evaluation: assessing the effectiveness of the strategy; e. Review: practicing using all strategies.

In the first meeting, Reading Test 1 was administered to evaluate students' reading comprehension skills. The questions, adapted from TOEFL materials (Phillips, 2001), were designed to promote the use of target strategies. Following the test, the first strategy related to summarizing skills was introduced. During the preparation stage, students engaged in a discussion about their reading habits and comprehension strategies to activate their prior knowledge.

A relevant YouTube video was then shown to engage students and illustrate how the strategy works. Subsequently, students participated in a group practice using LiveWorksheet to apply their new skills. The evaluation stage aimed to assess students' difficulties with comprehension and their responses to the questions. Following this, individual homework was assigned as the expansion stage to provide further practice. Finally, an evaluation was conducted to identify necessary adjustments for the subsequent meeting

Moreover, the second and third strategies, which focused on contextual guessing and sequencing skills, were emphasized. As two strategies were highlighted, the evaluation and expansion stages were conducted only once at the end of the session to allow students to practice using both strategies concurrently. To prevent overwhelming students with excessive reading practice, this meeting included fewer reading exercises. Additionally, the selected passages were more closely aligned with students' major, incorporating topics such as cameras, journalism, and photography, as the preceding topic had been too broad

Subsequently, strategies 4 and 5 were introduced, focusing on sequencing and skimming skills. In contrast to the previous lesson, which did not utilize any videos, this session incorporated a variety of instructional inputs, including videos and games. YouTube videos were used to elucidate the fourth strategy, while the Kahoot game facilitated reading practice of both strategies in smaller

of Reading Test 2, which consisted of the same questions as Reading Test 1. Finally, the main evaluation stage of the CAR cycle was conducted after the fourth meeting by arranging an informal interview with the lecturer to validate the observation results.

Data Analysis

The primary data were collected through Reading Tests 1 and 2, classroom observations, and interviews, and were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. First, the quantitative data were analysed with SPSS software version 22 employing a paired samples t-test to evaluate the improvement in students' reading scores between Tests 1 and 2. Additionally, the qualitative data from observations, student interviews, and the lecturer's reflections were analysed thematically. Following the framework outlined by Miles et al. (2018), the analysis involved three key stages: (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing. This process began with focusing on, selecting, and simplifying the data, followed by organizing the information into condensed, categorized formats. The final stage involved interpreting and concluding by identifying patterns, assertions, proportions, explanations, and causal flows. Verification was an integral part of the process, as the researchers engaged in extensive discussions to reach an intersubjective consensus.

To enhance the validity of the analysis, the first and second researchers independently co-coded the data and subsequently compared and contrasted their results (Busetto et al., 2020) to ensure consistency in the findings.

TABLE 2 | Paired samples test

		Paired Differences								
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Mean	Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
						Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Reading test 1 & 2	-256976	21.2855	3.24601		2.24839	-19.14696	-7.917	42	.000

groups. In the final meeting, the sixth strategy was taught using a format similar to that of the third meeting, with the Baamboozle game being reused due to its popularity among students. The class concluded with administration

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' Reading Score Increase

A paired samples t-test was conducted to assess the effect of SBI on the reading comprehension scores of students in the CSP. The results indicate a significant difference between the scores of Reading Test 1, administered before the intervention (M=52.91; SD=14.02) and Reading Test 2, administered after the intervention (M=78.60; SD=17.77); [t (42) = -7.917, p = .000]. This finding shows that the scores from Reading Tests 1 and 2 are significantly different, indicating that the intervention positively impacted the students' reading comprehension outcomes.

To answer the first research question regarding the aspects of the class affected by the SBI, the results of the 95% confidence interval for the difference between the means ranges from [-32.25 to -19.15], indicating a significant difference between the sample means. Therefore, there is a notable difference between the students' reading scores of Tests 1 and 2. This suggests that SBI has a positive effect on the reading comprehension scores of communication science students, as evidenced by increase in their reading scores following the implementation of SBI in the classroom.

Improvement of Students' Reading Comprehension and Engagement through Learning Stages in SBI

The implementation of SBI in reading classes has significantly enhanced the teaching-learning process, making it more engaging for students. This approach has led to noticeable improvements in both students' reading comprehension and their overall engagement in the learning activities. A summary of these improvements can be found in [Table 4](#). The subsequent paragraphs provide a detailed explanation of each identified enhancement.

TABLE 3 | The first emerging theme

Codes	Efficiency of the organization of learning materials
	SBI creating an exciting class with a variety of activities
	Students' active participation through warming-up questions
	Student engagement in discussing and presenting their opinions
	Incorporation of videos and games to attract students' attention and foster innovative ELT engagement of student in watching and discussing YouTube videos
	Enhanced engagement through the use of games for strategies practice
	Student participation in discussing answers to given questions
	Use of technology to improve students' reading comprehension

- Lecturer's encouragement for students participation
- Increased opportunities for students to ask questions, practice, and engage
- Students' willingness to express their understanding and difficulties
- Receiving direct feedback from the lecturer
- Effective use of specific topics in passages for further practice
- Utilization of technology for flexible and independent learning (e.g., LiveWorksheet)
- Effective review and drilling of strategies, particularly the first one

The analysis results indicated that the learning stages and materials were effectively organized, particularly due to their alignment with the SBI framework. A diverse range of activities was incorporated, including warming-up questions, reviews, explanations, discussions, and practice sessions. The warming-up questions, as part of the preparation stage, facilitated active student participation right from the beginning. During the first meeting, two groups expressed their willingness to present their opinions on the questions posed. Additionally, the explanation stage was led by the lecturer, supported by YouTube videos, especially for strategies 1, 4, 5, and 6. This incorporation significantly enhanced student engagement, as evidenced by their active involvement in watching and discussing the content presented in the videos.

For the practice stage, a variety of media were utilized, including PowerPoint, Liveworksheet, Baamboozle, and Kahoot. While PowerPoint was a familiar tool for the students, the other media were more innovative, having been recently introduced in their English class. Despite this, an evaluation was conducted that led to the exclusion of the Kahoot game in subsequent meetings due to its ineffectiveness for reading practice. However, the remaining media were effectively employed to facilitate the application of the strategies. As a result, students demonstrated a greater willingness to participate in discussions aimed at finding correct answers, indicating a significant step toward improved comprehension. These findings suggest that the integration of technology—particularly videos and interactive games—successfully captured students' attention, engaged them in the learning process, fostered a more innovative educational environment, and ultimately enhanced their reading comprehension skills.

Furthermore, the lecturer implemented an evaluation stage to assess the effectiveness of the strategies used in the class. By providing numerous opportunities for students to ask questions, practice, and engage throughout the lesson, students felt empowered to express their learning difficulties, particularly with the strategy of "finding the meaning of difficult words from context clues." The lecturer also offered direct feedback and solutions, enabling students to practice independently.

For the expansion stage, students were assigned individual or pair-work tasks to answer reading questions on Liveworksheet. The reading passages were specifically chosen to focus on topics relevant to the field of communication, with an appropriate number of exercises provided for further practice. This approach demonstrates that technology was effectively integrated to support flexible and independent learning, thereby facilitating the transfer of their understanding into applicable skills. In the subsequent meeting, a review was intentionally included as part of the drilling practice, helping to reinforce their memory of the strategies they had learned.

Students' Positive Attitudes towards the Utilization of Reading Strategies

The implementation of SBI in reading classes positively influenced students' learning performances. The direct strategies provided by the SBI not only assisted students effectively answering questions related to reading comprehension skills but also fostered a more positive attitude towards reading

TABLE 4 | The second emerging theme

Codes	Getting useful tips to answer reading questions effectively SBI helps students comprehend and answer reading questions Students are becoming more confident in answering questions Increasing motivation for students to attend class High attendance rate among students Students' motivation (due to answering zero questions correctly) to engage in the review session Positive attitude towards utilizing the strategies through games
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Table 5 shows that SBI provided students with direct strategies and useful tips to achieve their learning goals. Students were given six reading strategies that assisted them in answering reading questions effectively. This aligns with the students' interview results, which indicated that answering reading comprehension questions was no longer as difficult as it used to be. Their reading comprehension skills were also reflected in their ability to complete the reading task games and respond to the lecturer's questions

related to the strategies. Therefore, SBI has the advantage of effectively assisting students in improving their reading comprehension skills and answering questions from the passages.

Moreover, SBI increased students' confidence in completing tasks and discussing answers. They gained more insight related to the materials, which positively affected their willingness to participate in class discussions. Additionally, students showed high enthusiasm for implementing the strategies while competing in games. They claimed that their competitiveness and motivation to learn had increased. They also optimized their use of strategies when completing homework to avoid providing incorrect answers that would be reviewed together in the next meeting. The integration of engaging activities into SBI further motivated them to attend class, as indicated by a higher attendance rate. As a result, SBI contributed the development of students' positive attitudes toward reading and their reading comprehension strategies.

Real-life Relevancies Affected by Reading Strategies

The observation results indicated that the first and second strategies were significant in helping students comprehend and answer reading comprehension questions. These strategies were also crucial for their academic performance.

TABLE 5 | The third emerging theme

Codes	"Identifying main idea of a passage" as the most relevant strategy "Finding the meaning of unfamiliar words" as the second relevant but challenging strategy The first strategy for comprehending reading materials in the field The first strategy for writing an essay
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The data indicated that identifying the main idea of a passage was the most frequently used and reviewed strategy throughout the lessons. This was further supported by students' interviews, which affirmed that it was indeed the first and most relevant strategy for their academic success. Its relevance stemmed from the necessity of reading various resources in the field of communication, such as English newspapers, articles, and books. Consequently, this strategy would be beneficial in helping them comprehend written materials relevant to their studies, in addition to enhancing their reading lessons in English class. Furthermore, the ability to identify main ideas proved to be useful for essay writing, as crafting topic sentences is an essential component of this task.

Furthermore, the second strategy that was deemed relevant was finding the meaning of unfamiliar words using context clues. Its real-life relevance emerged from the frequent encounter of unfamiliar words in daily life.

Thus, understanding explicit strategies for deciphering these words can significantly aid students in comprehending reading passages and other texts. However, despite recognizing its importance and benefits, students still struggled to apply this strategy effectively. This challenge became apparent during classroom observations and was corroborated by the interview results. Consequently, additional practice is necessary for students to become more comfortable using this strategy.

Follow-up Action for An Improved Learning Environment

The observation results signified that several follow-up actions needed to be taken to create a better learning environment. These conclusions were drawn from both observations and interviews. However, as the students did not fully understand the SBI framework, their suggestions primarily focused on the overall teaching and learning process (see [Table 6](#)).

TABLE 6 | The fourth emerging theme

Codes	Creating classroom regulation for a more conducive teaching-learning process
	Improving time management and lesson delivery
	Maintaining and incorporating engaging learning media
	Providing prompted questions to encourage greater students' participation

Firstly, classroom rules and regulations should be established to make the teaching-learning process more conducive. Observations indicated that no rules were provided prior to reading tests 1 and 2, nor were any established for other activities. Implementing these rules could help inform students about the classroom's code of conduct. Secondly, due to the high number of passages presented at the beginning, adjustments need to be made to manage classroom time effectively. The interviews revealed that slowing down the lesson delivery pace is essential, considering the students' ability to follow along. Additionally, conclusions should be re-emphasized to reinforce understanding. Furthermore, the current integration of technology and a variety of media should be maintained and further optimized to create interactive learning experiences. Lastly, although students participated well due to the opportunities provided, prompted questions should be utilized to initiate further discussions and enhance students' confidence throughout the process.

The implementation of SBI in reading classes has positively contributed to students' improvement in reading comprehension skills. The majority of students scored better after the SBI implementation.

This finding aligns with previous research, which has also reported positive results, as students significantly improved their scores on the reading comprehension tests ([Ghahari & Ebrahimi, 2018](#); [Hosseini & Amirkhani, 2024](#)). SBI is more effective in improving students' reading comprehension skills than traditional teaching methods ([Sari, 2020](#)). These findings suggest that students are supported by explicit strategies in understanding the information contained in passages, as well as in answering comprehension questions. Students also reported that answering these questions become easier after participating in the SBI class, compared to before the intervention. However, this study found that a few students did not experience an improvement in their reading test scores. The decrease in performance was likely due to their inconsistent attendance in both online and offline classes. Interview revealed that the online component was less effective in enhancing their understanding of the material due to personal distractions, signal interferences, and other technical issues. As these factors are external to SBI, the overall implementation of SBI in reading classes has been shown to optimally improve the reading comprehension skills of most students.

The improvement of such skills is also consistent with existing literature, which indicates that SBI positively affects students' reading comprehension ([Akkakoson, 2011](#); [Alkhalwaldeh, 2015](#); [Kavani & Amjadiparvar, 2018](#); [Nguyen & Nguyen, 2024](#)). This improvement occurs because SBI provides students with a direct approach to answering questions quickly and accurately, rather than reading the entire. SBI encourages students to use their prior knowledge in combination with the newly taught strategies to maximize benefits. The results are consistent with those of [Kashef et al. \(2012\)](#), who found that SBI assists students in overcoming reading challenges and becoming strategic readers. Thus, implementing SBI in reading instruction is advantageous for improving students' reading scores and overall comprehension skills.

Moreover, these stages have contributed to the educational process in multiple ways. Firstly, they enhance the organization of the materials, ensuring that they are well comprehended as they are systematically structured. The phases can also be revisited and adjusted based on classroom conditions. Given that they are designed to achieve three objectives - content, language, and learning strategy ([Akkakoson, 2011](#)) -the study reveals that the lessons do not solely focus on the content and language, but also emphasize the teaching of transferable skills. It is important to note that throughout this process, students are gradually equipped with effective strategies to reduce and resolve comprehension difficulties ([Kavani & Amjadiparvar, 2018](#)). As the strategies are continuously reiterated through systematic processes, students are adequately prepared to apply them when completing specific reading tasks.

The observed improvement can be attributed to the integration of technology within the context of SBI This integration fosters engaging learning activities that enhance students' motivation and engagement. These results are in line with the previous studies that indicate technology

integration (Ahmed, 2019; Momani, 2020) and SBI (Akkakoson, 2011; Ghahari & Ebrahimi, 2018; Kavani & Amjadiparvar, 2018), significantly enhance the motivation and reading comprehension skills of EFL college students. Such an environment, coupled with the explicit strategies they have learned, instils greater confidence in students' ability to comprehend texts and respond to inquiries, thereby motivating them to actively participate in the learning process. Consequently, SBI emerges as an effective approach for improving reading comprehension while simultaneously enhancing students' motivation and engagement in learning.

Furthermore, students' motivation to effectively employ strategies appears to be closely linked to their relevance in real-life situations. The current academic demands necessitate that students engage with numerous academic articles, which heightens their awareness of the importance of utilizing these strategies. This awareness is particularly significant as the strategies not only facilitate success in reading classes but also contribute to their overall academic achievement. This context illustrates that students' intrinsic motivation plays a critical role in influencing their effort in learning, the frequency with which they apply the targeted strategies, and their subsequent skill development and achievements (Kavani & Amjadiparvar, 2018). Additionally, these findings are supported by Kashef et al. (2012), who assert that, in the long term, students who utilize strategies will recognize the importance of flexibility in applying different reading strategies to successfully complete various tasks.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the implementation of the SBI framework in EFL classrooms significantly enhances students' learning experiences and supports the development of their reading comprehension skills. Further, it contributes to their professional growth, positioning SBI as a valuable pedagogical approach in English language teaching. By improving reading proficiency, SBI also prepares students for career opportunities in a globalized world, especially within the context of CSP.

Key implications for improving English reading classes through SBI include the integration of technology to foster a more interactive and engaging learning environment, which also supports the development of students' 21st-century skills. To facilitate this process, it is essential that teachers possess both technological and pedagogical expertise, which can be achieved through ongoing workshops and training programs. Future research could focus on designing reading materials specifically tailored to CSP topics, considering students' language proficiency levels and the time constraints for learning, while ensuring that ample opportunities for independent practice are provided. Moreover, exploring the application of SBI across various fields may yield further insights to reinforce these findings.

Despite the positive outcomes observed in students' reading comprehension, this study has several limitations. First, the implementation of only six reading strategies over a relatively short duration may restrict the depth of insights obtained. Future research could benefit from adjusting the number of strategies based on the specific classroom context and exploring additional strategies to achieve more comprehensive findings. Second, the reading assessments were administered through Google Forms, which lacked an exam mode and may have compromised the accuracy of responses. Future studies should consider utilizing more secure assessment platforms to mitigate such risks. If technological limitations continue to pose challenges, converting the online assessments into a paper-based format may serve as a practical alternative.

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Literary genres in English textbooks for Senior High School

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While the potential of literary works in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education is often discussed, limited research exist on their integration into Indonesian senior high schools English textbooks. The present study investigates how literary genres are incorporated into English textbooks in Indonesian senior high schools by investigating (1) the literary genre described in the textbooks and (2) the tasks that describe the language skills and the literary-specific knowledge to recognize the critical role of such content in fostering students' language development, cultural and intercultural awareness, and engagement in EFL education. The data sources of this study were three levels of senior high school English student textbooks published by the Indonesian government. The study combined a quantitative approach to examine the presence of literary works with qualitative content analysis to unpack the language skills and literary-specific knowledge included in the textbooks. The framework utilized literary genre terms and literary-specific knowledge. Among the 31 chapters in the textbooks, 12 chapters (39%) addressed literary works from various cultures, with 53% of the texts derived from the Indonesian context. In addition to language skills activities and tasks, there were literary knowledge activities. These findings implied that improving students' cultural and intercultural awareness may pose challenges. Moreover, these results highlight the importance of incorporating more authentic English literary works into English textbooks to prepare students for real-world English cultures.

Keywords: literary genres, EFL textbooks, authentic issue

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INTRODUCTION

English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers may strive to motivate teenage students to learn the language in more enjoyable ways. While various interesting resources such as videos, pictures, and genre-based texts, are available, literature can serve as an appealing alternative to capture the attention of adolescents in the EFL classroom. Furthermore, research has indicated that literary genres in EFL/ESL contexts offer significant contributions to the teaching-learning process. These genres provide authenticity, which is essential for developing communicative competence (Al-Saeed & Alenezi, 2021; Kaowiwattanakul, 2021; Laşcu, 2023; Nozen et al., 2017), enhance student motivation (Abdallahman, 2021; Zakaria & Aziz, 2019) and promote cultural and intercultural awareness (Floris, 2004; Summer, 2019). However, the discourse surrounding teacher and student perceptions of using literature in EFL classrooms has been a persistent issue for the past four decades. Belete & Mussa (2021) found in their study of teacher perceptions regarding the use literary texts for reading instruction that, although the teachers surveyed recognized the benefits of literary texts, they did not implement them meaningfully due to certain limitation, such as the length of the text and a lack of familiarity with the culture contexts presented in the materials.

Despite the variety of definitions, literary works can be understood as the complete body of writing produced by humanity; as well as the body of writing specific to a particular language or culture, and individual pieces of writing.

This encompasses both prose (unmetered language) or verse (meter language) that are considered worthy of study and preservation within the global literacy language. [Turco \(2020\)](#) categorized the literary genre in [table 1](#) as follows:

TABLE 1 | Genres of Literature According to [Turco \(2020\)](#)

Fiction	Drama	Nonfiction	Poetry
Novel	Tragedy	Autobiography	Lyric
Novella	Comedy	Biography	Verse Narrative
Novelette (long story)	Tragicomedy	Essay	Verse Drama
Short story	Melodrama	Discourse	
Short-short story	Skit (a brief dramatic presentation with a humorous or satirical twist)		
Episode (a single incident or event in a longer work of fiction)			
Anecdote (a brief account often humorous)			

Furthermore, [Baetens \(2008\)](#) asserts that a literary genre serves a dual purpose: it not only imparts knowledge but also capture the readers' attention. It never diverts without also persuading, nor does it persuade without diverting; if a work is fictional, it invariably possesses some documentary value, while if it is primarily a document, it remains engaging in its own right. Literary works are considered valuable in EFL contexts because they are authentic ([Arens & Swaffar, 2000](#); [Floris, 2004](#); [Khatib et al., 2011](#); [Sari, 2016](#)), motivating ([Abdallahman, 2021](#); [Khatib et al., 2011](#); [Sari, 2016](#); [Tevdovska, 2016](#); [Zakaria & Aziz, 2019](#)), and enriching in terms of cultural awareness ([Calafato & Paran, 2019](#); [Floris, 2004](#); [Khan & Alasmari, 2018](#)). Therefore, literary genres, as materials for learning, can engage students' human and evoke the subtleties of their emotions. This assertion is supported by research indicating that literary genres in foreign language learning can enhance students' engagement with the target language, critical thinking skills, understanding of grammar and vocabulary, and pragmatic competence ([Bloemert et al., 2019](#); [Calafato & Paran, 2019](#)).

Furthermore, the use of literary genres in EFL classrooms to improve students' language skills in listening, reading, speaking, and writing has been extensively researched and found to be beneficial. Students' listening skills can be developed through exposure to diverse speech qualities and dialects, either by listening to native speakers ([McKay, 2001](#)) or through the teacher's oral reading of stories or other literary text transcripts ([Khan & Alasmari, 2018](#)). Furthermore, [Khatib et al., \(2011\)](#) assert that literary reading includes both readings for pleasure and reading for information, thereby filling gaps that non-literary texts may leave. This approach can significantly aid students in developing and achieving their reading skills ([Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014](#); [Khan & Alasmari, 2018](#)).

Topics and themes from poems, short stories, or novels can serve as discussion material, allowing students to express and convey their creative ideas through speaking activities ([Khatib et al., 2011](#)). Furthermore, [Calafato and Gudim \(2022\)](#) found that using literary texts enhance

students' writing skills, particularly in creative writing activities. Moreover, relevant topics within literary works significantly contribute to students' interest and engagement ([Tevdovska, 2016](#)). However, the use literary genres or the teaching of them as content knowledge in senior high schools in Indonesia remains controversial. [Floris \(2004\)](#) articulates those challenges such as incomprehensible literary language, cultural background differences, and the length of the texts may explain why literature is not widely embraced

Although, there is a wealth of research on incorporating literature into senior high school curricula, both within and outside the Indonesian context, challenges remain. [Alwasilah \(2006\)](#) states, "Most curriculum developers, textbook writers, and teachers believe that English literature is too difficult to be appreciated by Indonesian EFL students." Similarly, in the context of Swedish primary education, [Dodou \(2024\)](#) demonstrated that the inclusion of literary works in English textbooks remains insufficient and often marginalized. Meanwhile, in research on Iraqi English textbooks, [Nader Sharhan and Janfeshan \(2024\)](#) found that although language teachers had a positive perception of using literature in English language teaching, its presence in textbooks was lacking both in quantity and quality.

Given the issues mentioned above, research on Indonesia's EFL curriculum for senior high schools, specifically concerning the use of literary genres, remains largely unexplored. This study aims to examine the presence of literature in English textbooks for students, as well as the literary elements they contain. To achieve this, the following research questions (RQ) were posed:

1. What literary genres are discussed in the textbooks?
2. How are language skills and literary elements addressed through the tasks in the textbooks?

The finding of this study aims to provide insights for EFL textbook authors and stakeholders regarding the integration of literary genres to enrich teaching materials, media, and instructional strategies. Furthermore, this research will illustrate the representation of literary works in

Indonesian senior high school English textbooks, thereby reflecting the broader curriculum.

METHODS

This study examines the use of literary works in the 2013 National Curriculum English textbooks for senior high school students in Indonesia.

It employs a mixed-method approach, combining a quantitative assessment of the literary works included in the textbooks with a qualitative analysis of how these works are

used in tasks related to language skills and the study of literary itself. The textbooks were analyzed and interpreted using content analysis to uncover the meaning embedded within the text (Drisko & Maschi, 2016; Krippendorff, 2018; Neuendorf, 2017; Weber, 1990). The sample for this study consists of English textbooks for senior high school students in Indonesia chosen as the data source (Krippendorff, 2018) because they are widely used in public schools. The selected textbooks were published by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia and written by some well-recognized EFL professors and teachers from various Indonesian universities and schools.

TABLE 2 | Textbook Description

Senior High School Grade	Title	Year of Publication	Publisher
X	Bahasa Inggris Untuk SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas X	2017 Revision Edition	The Ministry of Education
XI	Bahasa Inggris Tingkat Lanjut Untuk SMA Kelas XI	2021	The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology
XII	Bahasa Inggris: Buku Siswa Untuk SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas XII	2018 Revision Edition	The Ministry of Education and Culture

All the textbooks listed in Table 2 are available in PDF format for free download at <https://buku.kemdikbud.go.id/katalog/>. Each book contains chapters or units featuring various genre texts accompanied by a range of EFL activities. The Bahasa Inggris Untuk SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas X (English for Senior High School Grade 10) textbook is 240 pages long and divided into fifteen chapters. The Bahasa Inggris Tingkat Lanjut Untuk SMA Kelas XI (Advanced English for Senior High School Grade 11) textbook, 232 pages long, is organized into five units and two concluding sections. Furthermore, The Bahasa Inggris: Buku Siswa Untuk SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas XII (English: Student Textbook for Senior High School Grade 12) textbook is 184 pages long and divided into eleven chapters. These textbooks contained seven genres: descriptive, recount, narrative, analytical exposition, explanation, news item, and procedure.

A rigorous content analysis should confirm the variables using scholarly literature and applied research, while also using theory as a guiding framework (Neuendorf, 2017). To address the first research question, the textbooks were examined using Turco’s (2020) literary framework (see Table 1). For the second research question, the analysis was based on a framework of student-centered literary tasks and activities, including role-play, improvisation, creative writing, discussions, questionnaires, visual aids, and other interactive exercises.

Research Question 1 was addressed by identifying the literary works included at each level of the textbooks. The data were presented using simple statistics to illustrate the

number, forms, and locations of literary texts in each textbook. A systematic scan of each textbook was conducted to identify literary works, and all texts that met the literary genre classification (Turco, 2020) were coded, regardless of whether they were English authentic literary works or translated texts. NVivo was used to organize and code the data effectively. For Research Question 2, tasks related to language skills and literary works were examined. All tasks and activities associated with the identified literary texts were analyzed. Qualitative content analysis (Drisko & Maschi, 2016) was employed to answer Research Question 2.

Triangulation was essential before presenting the data as academic research findings. Two experts in language teaching research were consulted to review the data and provide feedback on its validity and reliability. A detailed description of the research design, research questions, data collection process, and data analysis methods was shared with them. A confirmation phase was conducted to ensure the accuracy of their feedback. Their professional expertise helped establish the trustworthiness of the research data (Lindheim, 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study examined literary genres, tasks, and the alignment of tasks with language skills across all levels of senior high school English textbooks published by the Indonesian government. Since the textbooks did not explicitly mention literary genre terms, the researchers aligned the genres found in the textbooks with established literary text classification (see [Table 1](#)).

An analysis of the English for Senior High School Grade 10 textbook revealed that eight of the fifteen chapters focus on literary works. These chapters cover text with structures such as recounts, narratives, and songs. Recount texts primarily depict past events, including personal experiences, historical accounts, and biographies of famous figures. Folktales, a type of narrative text, are also featured (See [Figure 1](#)). In Advanced English for Senior High School Grade 11, three out of five chapters are dedicated to literary genres. In contrast, the English: Student Textbook for Senior High School Grade 12 dedicates only one out of eleven to literary genres.

Literary genres are predominantly discussed in the Grade 11 textbook, which contains more than half of the total chapters dedicated to this topic, followed by the Grade 10 and Grade 12 textbooks. However, despite the inclusion of literary works, these books do not explicitly use the terms "literary works," "literary genres," or even "sastra" (the Indonesian term for literature). Instead, the authors refer to genres using terms such as "recount" and "narrative." Nevertheless, this is not entirely detrimental, as students still gain valuable experience engaging with literary texts ([Abdalrahman, 2021](#); [Calafato & Paran, 2019](#)). Such exposure allows students to utilize literary texts for EFL activities, enhancing their creativity by exploring concrete and abstract meanings, developing critical thinking skills, and improving other language competencies ([Bloemert et al., 2019](#); [Calafato & Gudim, 2022](#); [Calafato & Paran, 2019](#)).

TABLE 3 | The Number of Chapters Discussing Literary Genres

Textbooks	Chapters discussing Literary Genres	Total Chapters
English for Senior High School Grade 10	8	15
Advanced English for Senior High School Grade 11	3	5
English: Students Textbook for Senior High School Grade 12	1	11
Total	12	31

The data presented in [Table 3](#) indicate that very few chapters engage with and discuss literary genres. Overall, of the 31 chapters across all textbooks, only twelve chapters—representing 39% of the total—cover literary works. However, the Grade 11 textbook allocates a significant

portion to literary elements, with three out of five chapters (60%) containing literary texts. In contrast, the Grade 10 textbook includes literary texts in eight of its fifteen chapters, which accounts for more than half of the total. The Grade 12 textbook contains only one chapter (9%) dedicated to literary genres.

These findings reveal a moderate integration of genres within the topics and texts. Nevertheless, a more in-depth analysis of the literary texts employed and the types of student activities that demonstrate language proficiency and literary comprehension is necessary. Such an analysis will aid in addressing the research questions outlined above.

Literary Genres

The analysis identified three literary genre classifications present in all the textbooks: fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Fiction is represented through narratives or narrative texts, which appear in both the Grade 10 and Grade 11 textbooks, both of which refer to the term "story." Nonfiction is characterized by the recount text structure. The Grade 10 textbook includes folktales (4 texts), stories about past events (1 text), biographies (2 texts), and historical recounts (1 text). In contrast, the Grade 11 textbook features fairy tales (2 texts), fantasy stories (2 texts), and legends (2 texts). Additionally, song lyrics from the Grade 10 and Grade 12 textbooks are utilized to illustrate the poetry genre, with each book focusing on a single song lyric. [Figure 1](#) provides a summary of the literary genres found in the textbooks.

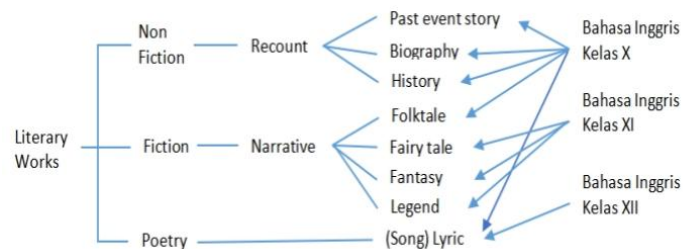


FIGURE 1 | Literary Genres in Senior High School English Textbooks Published by the Indonesian Government

The literary genres in the textbooks include nonfiction, fiction, and poetry. The Grade 10 textbook encompasses various nonfiction categories, such as past event stories, biographies, and historical accounts. One past event story features a teen's encounter with their idol, an Indonesian pop singer. The biography section includes texts about an Indonesian female hero and a former Indonesian president. Meanwhile, the history section contains a text entitled "The Battle of Surabaya" with all these nonfiction texts contextualized within Indonesia.

In contrast, the fiction genre presents a more diverse array of narrative texts. The Grade 11 textbook includes three folktales: "Issumboshi" from Japan, "Kanchil" and "Malin Kundang" from Indonesia, and "Strong Wind" from the United States. Furthermore, this textbook features a popular German fairy tale, "The Goose Girl," and an Italian fairy tale, "Puss in Boots." The Grade 11 textbook also contains three fantasy texts: a summarized adaptation of the children's fantasy novel *The Chronicles of Narnia* titled "[The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe](#)" (2024); the English

allegorical novella "Animal Farm"; and the Indonesian fantasy tale "Bawang Merah and Bawang Putih." The poetry genre is represented through song lyrics in the Grade 10 and Grade 12 textbooks. The Grade 10 textbook includes the English song "You've Got a Friend," while the Grade 12 textbook features "Heal the World."

All fiction genre terms in the Grade 11 textbook were clearly labeled under the literary genre of fiction, including folktale, fairy tale, legend, and fantasy. In contrast, the grade 10 textbook does not explicitly mention the term "literary genre" opting instead, for genre-based terminology such as "recount" and "narrative text". Furthermore, the poetry genre was mentioned only once in the Grade 12 textbook.

All nonfiction and fiction texts in the studied textbooks are short to medium in length, which is beneficial for speaking students' interest and motivation in learning EFL. Stories can enhance students' reading motivation in EFL/ESL classrooms, as their concise length allows readers to focus on the content, plot, and language of the narratives (Ceylan, 2016; Tevdovska, 2016). Furthermore, the brevity and straightforward plots of these stories can cultivate students' appreciation for literature, encouraging them to explore more short stories (Ceylan, 2016).

The poetry genre was presented through song lyrics in both the Grade 10 and the Grade 12 textbooks. These lyrics possess evocative imagery and appeal to emotions and personal experiences, making them engaging and enjoyable for second or foreign language learners (Llach, 2007). Moreover, as teenagers often listen to music, leveraging their interest in music can serve as an effective motivator for their English studies (Lems, 2018). Songs and music can aid students in learning English vocabulary (Al-efeshat & Baniabdelrahman, 2020), understanding language patterns and grammar (Vishnevskaja & Zhou, 2019), and improving their pronunciation and listening skills while fostering a fun and enjoyable learning environment (Chen et al., 2024; Kumar et al., 2022; Putri et al., 2022).

Issue of Authenticity, Cultural and Intercultural Awareness

The textbooks examined contain a limited number of original or authentic English literary texts. Many researchers have found that authentic literary texts are more effective for enhancing students' cultural and intercultural awareness (Arens & Swaffar, 2000; Collie & Slater, 1987; Floris, 2004; Khatib et al., 2011; Sari, 2016; Swaffar, 1999). Consequently, the students' exposure to authentic language (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014) and their understanding of authentic texts (Sari, 2016) are not fully realized. Most of the literary texts in the studied textbooks are rooted in Indonesian context and culture. While all Indonesian stories and texts are well translated, they do not provide students with a genuine sense of the English language. For instance, all nonfiction texts are set within an Indonesian context. Although some Western stories are included in the fiction genre, they are outweighed by the number of Indonesian stories. The only genre featuring original English texts is poetry.

TABLE 4 | Title and Country of Origin Literary Genre in Textbooks

Literary Genre		Text Title	Country of Origin
Non-Fiction	Biography	Cut Nyak Dien	Indonesia
		B.J. Habibie	Indonesia
Fiction	History	The Battle of Surabaya	Indonesia
	Past Event Story	Meeting My Idol	Indonesia
	Legend	The Legend of The Holy Stone	Indonesia
		The Legend of N'daung Snake	Indonesia
		The Legend of Black Sea (recent kid story)	Bulgaria
		The Legend of Crying Stone	Indonesia
	Folktale	Issumboshi	Japan
		Kanchil	Indonesia
		Malin Kundang	Indonesia
		Strong Wind	USA
Fantasy		The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe	USA
		Animal Farm	UK
		Bawang Merah and Bawang Putih	Indonesia
	Fairy Tale	The Goose Girl	German
		Puss in Boots	Italian
Poetry	Song Lyrics	You've Got a Friend	USA
		Heal The World	USA

Table 4 shows that a total of nineteen literary texts are utilized across all textbooks, with ten texts (approximately 53%) derived from the Indonesian context. This aligns with Tomlinson's (2023) argument that textbooks should be humanized by incorporating engaging topics and themes relevant to students' home countries. However, the goal of enhancing students' cultural and intercultural awareness through literary works (Van, 2009) is challenging to achieve with the English textbooks studied.

Most themes and topics related to Indonesian culture are already familiar to senior high school students, who may have encountered and understood them in their native language. Consequently, without the inclusion of a more diverse range of literary texts originating from English-speaking countries, it becomes difficult to fulfill the cultural model proposed by Beach et al. (2021), which emphasizes the importance of understanding the historical background, authors, cultural trends, and specific periods of English literary texts.

Furthermore, the limited exposure to diverse cultural backgrounds restricts students' opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of literary works or to motivate them to recognize and appreciate cultural differences and ideologies

compared to their own. This aligns with the content or cultural approach model suggested by [Divsar and Tahriri \(2009\)](#). Additionally, the lack of exposure to varied cultural narratives diminishes the potential for cultural enrichment, as indicated by [Collie and Slater \(1987\)](#), who argue "literature is perhaps best seen as a complement to other materials used to increase the foreign learner's insight into the country whose language is being learned."

Research has shown that the use of authentic literary texts in EFL classrooms was more appealing and engaging for university-level students in Aceh, Indonesia ([Sari, 2016](#)). Authentic literary texts enhance students' learning motivation compared to non-literary authentic texts, as they provide significant opportunities for communicative use and are recommended for inclusion in course books ([Al-Saeed & Alenezi, 2021](#)). However, the potential benefit of learning from authentic literary texts may not be fully realized due to the fact that the English textbooks studied contain more than half of literary content derived from the local or Indonesian context.

Literary Activities and Tasks

Like other sections of the English for Senior High School student textbooks in Indonesia, the chapters addressing literary genres also include a variety of related activities and tasks. These encompass common EFL activities such as pronunciation, vocabulary development, and language skills, alongside more specialized tasks focusing on literary works. Each textbook level presents a unique number and arrangement of activities. The Grade 10 and Grade 11 textbooks categorize activities into social functions, text structures, language features, topic-related activities, and skill focus, as outlined in the content mapping of the textbooks. Notably, both textbooks were authored by the same writer. Furthermore, the content mapping in the Grade 11 textbook delineates two main components: linguistic elements, which include vocabulary and grammar, and skill focus, which encompasses rereading, listening, writing, and speaking.

The chapters of the textbooks include elaborated activities subdivided into specific sub-activities. The Grade 10 textbook comprises ten to eleven activities, sub-activities, and tasks, typically categorized as follows: Warmer, Vocabulary Builder, Pronunciation Practice, Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary Exercise, Text Structure, Grammar Review, Speaking, Writing, and Reflection. Each chapter in the Grade 11 textbook is structured into seven parts: My Initial Understanding, Reading, Listening, Grammar Focus, Writing, Speaking, and Reflection. Additionally, the Grade 12 textbook features activities such as Warmer, Listening, Vocabulary Builder, Pronunciation, Vocabulary Exercise, Writing, Speaking, and Reflection.

Overall, the activities and tasks in the studied textbooks reflect the advantages of incorporating literary works into language instruction. A diverse array of engaging activities can serve as an effective means of engaging learners who may lack expertise in literary analysis or have yet to develop an interest in reading literary texts in the target language independently. Furthermore, the activities associated with

language skills—such as Reading (Comprehension), Speaking, Writing, and Listening—underscore the benefits of utilizing literary works in EFL classrooms to enhance students' language proficiency ([Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014](#); [Khan & Alasmari, 2018](#); [Khatib et al., 2011](#)). The advantages of incorporating literary texts into the curriculum are evident, as they introduce greater variety into the classroom and provide teachers with opportunities to prevent monotony while offering students a taste of an author's distinctive style ([Collie & Slater, 1987](#)).

Listening activities

The structured listening activities begin with the final chapter of the Grade 10 textbook, where they are presented in the context of a song discussion. In contrast, the Grade 11 textbook incorporates listening activities in all chapters, including three chapters focused on literary genres. Moreover, the final chapter of the Grade 12 textbook also includes a listening section that features a song, which is beneficial for increasing students' motivation to learn English ([Al-efeshat & Baniabdelrahman, 2020](#); [Chen et al., 2024](#); [Kumar et al., 2022](#); [Putri et al., 2022](#); [Vishnevskaja & Zhou, 2019](#)). These findings corroborate [McKay's \(2001\)](#) assertion that literary works provide an ideal context for improving listening skills, as they expose students to a variety of speech qualities and dialects. However, this benefit is most apparent when students listen to native English speakers. Therefore, combining listening with reading song lyrics seems to be the most activity approach.

Regardless, having a teacher read aloud during storytelling can be highly beneficial for listening activities. The textbooks indicate that most listening activities involve the teacher reading aloud, with transcripts provided in the teacher's guide. [Stephens and Brown \(2000\)](#) suggest that listening to a teacher read aloud can help students develop an appreciation for the beauty of language, particularly its rhythm and tone, while also aiding their ability to visualize the story's characters, setting, mood, and situation. The analysis revealed that all textbooks studied rely heavily on reading aloud for listening activities.

Reading Comprehension Activities

Reading comprehension exercises are included in each chapter that addresses literary texts. These activities involve various tasks. In the Grade 10 textbook, the reading exercises are relatively simple, requiring students to read texts and answer questions to demonstrate comprehension. In contrast, the Grade 11 textbook provides more comprehensive reading tasks, focusing on text structure, comprehension, identification and understanding of expression, and analysis of characters and setting in a story. Several activities specifically address literary elements such as characters, setting, and plot. As a result, these activities help students broaden their perspectives, encouraging them to think critically about causes rather than just outcomes. They also expose students to diverse lifestyles, promote cross-cultural, foster greater respect for literature, and motivate them to read more short stories ([Ceylan, 2016](#)).

The reading activity is not included in the chapter on songs (Chapter 11) in the Grade 12 textbook. As mentioned earlier, songs in this study are classified under the poetry genre. However, the engaging and inspiring nature of texts like song lyrics can stimulate students' interest, helping them achieve the dual goals of reading for pleasure and reading for information (Khatib et al., 2011).

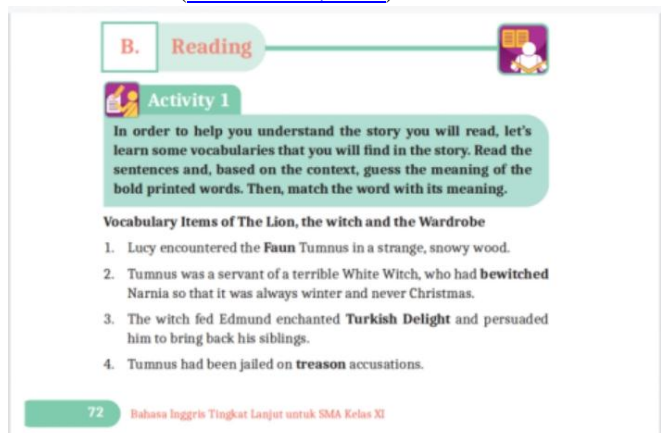


FIGURE 2 | A Reading Activities in Bahasa Inggris XI

Speaking and Writing Activities

All textbooks studied include both speaking and writing activities. The Grade 10 textbook, speaking activities take the form of dialogues, discussions, and role-plays. Group projects for role-plays involve processes such as selecting scenes, writing scripts, casting roles, and performing. The Grade 11 textbook introduces story presentations, story analysis, storytelling, inside-outside circle story sharing, and discussions. The grade 12 textbook includes activities such as explaining and discussing song lyrics with peers. These speaking activities effectively promote students' speaking skills. This finding aligns with Maley (2001), who noted that role play, improvisation, creative writing, discussion, questionnaires, and visuals can serve similar purposes when teaching literature. In addition, Khan & Alasmari (2018) concluded that role play, when approached as drama, engaging students in the learning process and encourages them to express themselves using the language of the characters they portray.

In the writing activities, the Grade 10 textbook includes tasks such as rewriting, independent writing, and collaborative writing. In the Grade 11 textbook, the writing activities are more comprehensive, covering drafting, creating a story layout and planner, proofreading, revising, refining, and publishing. The Grade 12 textbook also includes writing activities; however, with only one song lyric, the activities do not represent a complete writing process. The task primarily involves rewriting the lyrics, and another writing activity focuses more on reading comprehension—answering questions and discussing the lyrics—rather than developing writing skills. Nonetheless, these activities still encourage students to write by imitating the original work's theme, content, and style, and they also foster original thinking through the analysis and interpretation of texts (Khan & Alasmari, 2018).

Literary-Specific Knowledge

Other activities and tasks in the studied textbooks also support students in enhancing their linguistic skills and literary knowledge. These activities include pronunciation practice, vocabulary building, text structure analysis, grammar review, and reflective exercises. Literary-specific activities are integrated into the main tasks as well. For instance, in the Grade 10 textbook, literary knowledge is included as part of the "Text Structure" in Chapter 14, which covers the story Strong Wind as an example of narrative text. Students are asked to identify the structure of the story, which includes elements such as characters, setting, conflict, plot (action), climax, and falling action. They are also required to analyze the purpose and details of each section. Additionally, the textbook's final chapter includes a literary-specific activity titled "You've Got a Friend."

There is a paraphrasing activity where students are asked to paraphrase the lyrics of a song. In this task, students first interpret the meaning of the verses before rewriting them in their own words. Additionally, the Making Poems activity in the textbook, which requires students to write based given topics, also qualifies as a literary exercise. However, a PDF search of the textbook reveals that the word "literary" is not mentioned even once.

The Grade 11 textbook, which dedicates more than half of its content to literary genres, includes activities and sub-activities that promote literacy skills, as mentioned in the second research question. This book features three literary genres: legend, fairy tale, and fantasy. Despite the extensive focus on literary genres, the term "literary" appears only once, in a reading activity in Unit 1 about legends. All literary genres in this textbook are referred to as narrative texts, described as imaginative works meant to entertain or amuse readers. In contrast, the Grade 12 textbook lacks activities specifically designed to promote students' literary knowledge.

CONCLUSION

Despite challenges such as difficulty, length, and potential boredom (Belete, (2021); Floris, 2004), the use of literary works in EFL classrooms is essential for enhancing students' motivation, providing authentic language experiences, promoting cultural and intercultural awareness, and improving language skills (Ghosn, 2002; Khatib et al., 2011; Van, 2009). The author Advanced English for Senior High School Grade 11 recognize the significance of integrating literary works into language learning, with 60% of the textbook's contents comprising literary texts. This is followed by 53% in English for Senior High School Grade 10 and 9% in English: Student Book for Senior High School Grade 12. The literary genres represented in these textbooks include fiction, nonfiction, and poetry.

However, the authors of the analyzed textbooks predominantly utilized the term "genre-based text", including narrative and recount texts, without introducing the term "literary" or "sastra". Consequently, it is recommended that the educators offer additional explanations regarding the literary works presented in the

chapters. Furthermore, a more comprehensive discussion of literary genres, such as fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, is warranted. This approach could enhance students' literacy knowledge and skills.

Conversely, the issues of authenticity and intercultural awareness present challenges across all levels of textbooks. Over 53% of the literary content in these textbooks consists of texts or stories in an Indonesian context. Although all the texts in well-written in English, students require increased exposure to Western culture. To address this deficiency in authentic content, educators should incorporate learning materials featuring original literary works. This initiative expose students to authentic literary works can enhance their intercultural awareness and foster a more authentic understanding of English language nuances and accent.

Moreover, the roles of teachers, policymakers, and textbook authors are crucial in addressing this issue. It is recommended that these stakeholders incorporate discussions of literary terms into learning activities, syllabi, and future English textbooks. While in inclusion of literary genres in these textbooks is believed to enhance students' language skills, this study did not assess the impact of authentic literary works on students' language proficiency, literary knowledge, and cultural and intercultural awareness. Future studies should evaluate textbooks from broader perspectives, focusing on the appropriateness of the literary works included in senior high school English curricula.

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English as a second language for health sciences undergraduates: Preferred activities and motivational factors

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Fluency in English is vital for non-native speakers in Allied Health Sciences. However, undergraduates in English-medium health programs often struggle with oral communication skills. To address this, faculty administrations have implemented various initiatives, though participation rates remain low. This study aimed to explore students' preferred activities and whether their motivation to improve English speaking skills was driven by intrinsic or extrinsic factors. A cross-sectional survey was conducted among first to final-year students in Pharmacy, Nursing, and Medical Laboratory Science (MLS) programs, who are native Sinhala or Tamil speakers. Data were collected through a validated online questionnaire, pilot tested for reliability. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivators were analyzed using a paired sample t-test. Among 277 respondents (Pharmacy 33.2%, Nursing 45.8%, MLS 20.9%), intrinsic motivation was predominant ($p < 0.001$, 95% CI), with future job prospects, personal development, and confidence being key motivators. Common barriers included fear of mistakes, nervousness, and grammar difficulties. Students favored constructive feedback and supportive classroom environments. Preferred activities included presentations during lectures (60.8%) and participation in speaker clubs, with or without resource persons (55.7%). The study recommends more flexible, interactive opportunities like weekly speaker clubs, certification programs, and integrating both informal and professional topics into the curriculum. These findings offer practical strategies for improving language programs in similar educational contexts.

Keywords: Education, English Oral Competence, English programs, Motivation, Pharmacy, Second-Language Speaker

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INTRODUCTION

Fluency in spoken English is critically important for non-native English speakers across various fields of education and employment ([Alkhuzae et al., 2019](#); [Pabodha & Abeywickrama, 2021](#)). In contexts where English is the medium of instruction, fluency in the language significantly enhances students' academic performance ([AlMously et al., 2013](#); [Hayes & Farnill, 1993](#)). Numerous studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between English fluency and immediate post-graduation employment opportunities ([Sadeghi et al., 2013](#); [Salamonson et al., 2008](#)). Despite this, many students continue to face challenges in communicating effectively in English for several reasons ([Salamonson et al., 2008](#); [Wazeema & Kareema, 2017](#)). A lack of motivation ([Sorayyaei Azar & Tanggaraju, 2020](#)) and reluctance to practice speaking skills are among the primary obstacles.

Additionally, sedentary behaviour, inadequate soft skills and limited career prospects have been linked to poor language proficiency ([Pabodha & Abeywickrama, 2021](#)).

The Faculty of Allied Health Sciences at the University of Ruhuna comprises three Departments: Pharmacy, Nursing, and Medical Laboratory Science (MLS). It currently offers four-year undergraduate programs in Bachelor of Pharmacy, B.Sc. Nursing, and B.Sc. Medical Laboratory Science. All degree programs are delivered and assessed in the English medium. To graduate, students must complete an individual research project and produce a dissertation in English, with the proposal presentation and thesis defense are also conducted in English. However, student selection for these programs is based on their performance in the General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.) Advanced Level examination in the science stream, which most students complete in their native languages, Sinhala or Tamil ([Weerakkody & Dharmadasa, 2015](#)). Only a small number of students take the examination in English ([Weerakkody & Dharmadasa, 2015](#)).

Due to limited exposure to English-speaking environments, many students exhibit a significant gap in language skills upon entering university ([Doskovskaya & Oparina, 2022](#)). The sudden transition to English as the medium of instruction is a major factor contributing to student underperformance in their university studies ([Pabodha & Abeywickrama, 2021](#)). This often leads to academic failures and, in some cases, extends time required to complete their degrees ([Aluwihare & De Silva, 2016](#); [Hill, 2009](#); [Weerakkody & Dharmadasa, 2015](#)). While all Pharmacy and health sciences degree programs in Sri Lanka include English courses, either for credit or non-credit offerings, the faculty administration has implemented several initiatives to further enhance students' English language proficiency. Unfortunately, these efforts are frequently undermined by low student attendance and passive engagement, with limits their effectiveness.

Several studies have highlighted these challenges among undergraduates enrolled in professional degree programs in Sri Lanka. For instance, [Seefa \(2017\)](#) analyzed the primary difficulties students face in learning English, though limited attention was given to identifying teaching methodologies preferred by students ([Weerasooriya, 2021](#)). [Vidanapathirana and Gamini \(2009\)](#), in their examination of issues faced by Sri Lankan students admitted to English-medium bachelor's programs, noted that enrolment is highly selective, with students from urban areas predominantly joining these programs. Furthermore, student performance was closely linked to their level of English proficiency ([Vidanapathirana & Gamini, 2009](#)). [Rameez \(2019\)](#) proposed that fostering positive student attitudes, motivation to practice, and self-confidence could help address the passive behavior often observed in language learning.

The socio-cultural environment significantly influences the development of English-speaking skill, as it affects learner motivation and engagement ([Chen, 2022](#)). As [Aysha Khan \(2024\)](#) notes, in contexts such as Pakistan, students are often motivated to learn and speak English due to its

association with social benefits, including improved academic performance and enhanced social standing among peers and teachers. However, while students may acknowledge the global importance of English for a deeper understanding of the world, they may inadvertently maintain connections to their native cultures, which can hinder fully integrative motivation for English acquisition ([Aysha Khan, 2024](#); [Saragih & Subekti, 2023](#)). These cultural dynamics suggest that the motivation to learn English is not solely grounded in academic aspirations; rather, it is intricately linked to broader socio-cultural influences, resulting in challenges that extend beyond the classroom ([Gearing, 2024](#)). Therefore, re-evaluating pedagogical approaches that emphasize the cultures of native English speakers may be necessary to create more inclusive learning environments that resonate with students' own socio-cultural contexts.

A motivated student is generally believed to learn more effectively and maintain long-lasting enthusiasm for their studies. Understanding the intrinsic and extrinsic factors of motivation is essential for designing appropriate strategies that encourage students' participation in engaging developmental activities ([Menggo, 2018](#)). However, there exists a research gap in identifying the motivational factors specific to health sciences undergraduates who are non-native English speakers and whose native languages are either Sinhala or Tamil, as well as their preferred activities for enhancing English-speaking proficiency. Given this, the present study aims to address the enhancement of learner motivation as a critical challenge.

METHODS

This study aims to identify the factors that motivate health sciences undergraduates who are native speakers of Sinhala and Tamil (Sri Lankans) and to determine their preferred activities for improving English-speaking proficiency.

At the University of Ruhuna in Sri Lanka, a cross-sectional survey was conducted among undergraduates enrolled in the Pharmacy, Nursing, and MLS programs. All learners from the first to the fourth years in these three Departments were considered for the investigation, while graduates and students who had completed the final year of academic work were excluded. Of the 466 undergraduates in the faculty (112 from Pharmacy, 251 from Nursing, and 103 from MLS), a convenient sample of 277 was included in this survey. The minimum sample size ($n=211$) was calculated using the formula outlined by [Krejcie et al. \(1996\)](#).

$$n = \frac{X^2 \times N \times P \times (1-P)}{(ME^2 \times (N-1)) + X^2 \times P \times (1-P)}$$

Notes: n = sample size; X^2 = Chi-square value for the specified confidence level (95%) with 1 degree of freedom; N = Population size (466); P = Population proportion (assumed to be 0.5); ME = Desired margin of error (5%).

Study Instrument

Data were collected using a self-administered online survey questionnaire, which was created in simple English via Google forms. The questionnaire was designed by the authors after reviewing relevant published literature ([Aggouni, 2015](#); [Bensoussan, 2015](#); [Gardner, 2005](#); [Ihsan, 2016](#); [Krishnan et al., 2013](#)) to investigate intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors in practicing English speaking skills, as well as to identify the activities students were willing to engage in to enhance their speaking proficiency. The questionnaire comprised three sections; Part I (demographic information of the participants); Part II (a 5-point Likert scale to assess the undergraduate’s level of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation); and Part III (questions on preferred English-speaking activities). The questionnaire was pilot tested for reliability using 10% (n=21) of the minimum sample size. Reliability for the sections on motivation, demotivation, and preferred activities was confirmed, with Cronbach’s Alpha values exceeding 0.7 for all sections. Data from the pilot test were excluded from the final analysis.

An online survey was selected over traditional paper-based questionnaires for several key reasons. First, it allowed students to complete the survey at their convenience, providing ample time for thoughtful and reflective responses, which is particularly important for health sciences students for whom English is an additional subject. These methods encourage more authentic responses, as students are not rushed between classes. Additionally, online distribution was expected to improve the response rate, as physical questionnaires are often not returned. The online format also facilitated rapid dissemination of the survey, minimized logistical challenges such as the distribution and collection of paper forms, and reduced the time required for data processing. Further, the online format offered greater anonymity and confidentiality ([Joinson, 1999](#)), which may encourage more honest responses. To enhance participation among less engaged or passive students, the survey was distributed via batch coordinators, with soft reminders sent every three days following the initial delivery. Clear instructions were provided at the outset, emphasizing the importance of student input in improving English-speaking programs at the faculty, thereby encouraging students to recognize the potential impact of their responses on faculty program design.

Data collection

The questionnaire was distributed via email to all the undergraduates in the three departments (n=466) through the batch coordinators to ensure comprehensive coverage. The questionnaire included a brief explanation of the study, along with an option for participants to provide informed consent. No personal information, such as email addresses or other identifying details, was collected; only the data requested in the questionnaire was recorded. One week after the questionnaire was distributed, 277 responses were received. Since the number of responses exceeded the minimum sample size requirement, all 277 were included in the data analysis. Any unanswered questions were treated as missing values during the analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 20.0. A paired sample t-test was employed to examine the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators and demotivators. Descriptive statistics were used to report the results. Statistical significance was indicated by a p-value of ≤ 0.05 at a 95% confidence interval (CI). Additionally, participants' comments were thematically analyzed and categorized into three overarching themes: facilitators, barriers, and suggestions.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this study was granted by the Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, and administrative approval was obtained from the Heads of the three departments involved.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 277 responses were collected, with 78.8% of respondents being female and 21.2% male). The distribution of responses across the three departments was as follows: 33.2% (n=92) from Pharmacy, 45.8% (n=127) from Nursing, and 20.9% (n=58) from MLS. The largest proportion of responses (40.8%, n=113) came from first-year undergraduates, followed by 31% (n=86) from the second-year students, 20.6% (n=57) from the third-year students, and 7.6% (n=21) from the fourth-year students. The majority of the respondents (94.2%, n= 261) had completed their schooling in the Sinhala medium. Only 3.2% (n=9) had been educated exclusively in the English medium, while 2.5% (n=7) had studied in the Tamil medium.

[Table 1](#) and [Table 2](#) below present the grades obtained by the respondents for English in the G.C.E. Advanced Level and G.C.E. Ordinary Level examinations, respectively.

TABLE 1 | G.C.E. Advanced Level English Results (n=277)

Grade	No. of students	Percentage
A	39	14.1%
B	47	17.0%
C	76	27.5%
S	94	34.1%
F	20	7.2%

TABLE 2 | G.C.E. Ordinary Level English results (n=277)

Grade	No. of students	Percentage
A	141	50.9%
B	67	24.2%
C	59	21.3%
S	9	3.2%
W	1	0.4%

Among the study participants, 236 (87.7%) indicated that speaking was the most challenging skill to improve. The difficulty of developing other language skills was reported as follows: writing (46.5%, n=125), listening (36.1%, n=97),

and reading (11.2%, n=30). A majority of students (83%, n=229) focused more on improving their speaking skills, followed by writing (55.1%, n=152), listening (42%, n=116), and reading (35.5%, n=98). Fewer than 4.8% (n=13) rated their speaking ability as "very good," while 22.8% (n=62) identified as "beginners," and the majority (72.4%, n=197) rated themselves as "intermediate."

[Figure 1](#) illustrates the factors motivating students to improve their English-speaking proficiency. More than three-quarters of the participants cited future job opportunities (86.3%), personal development (78.3%), and increased confidence (76.2%) as key motivators for becoming fluent in English.

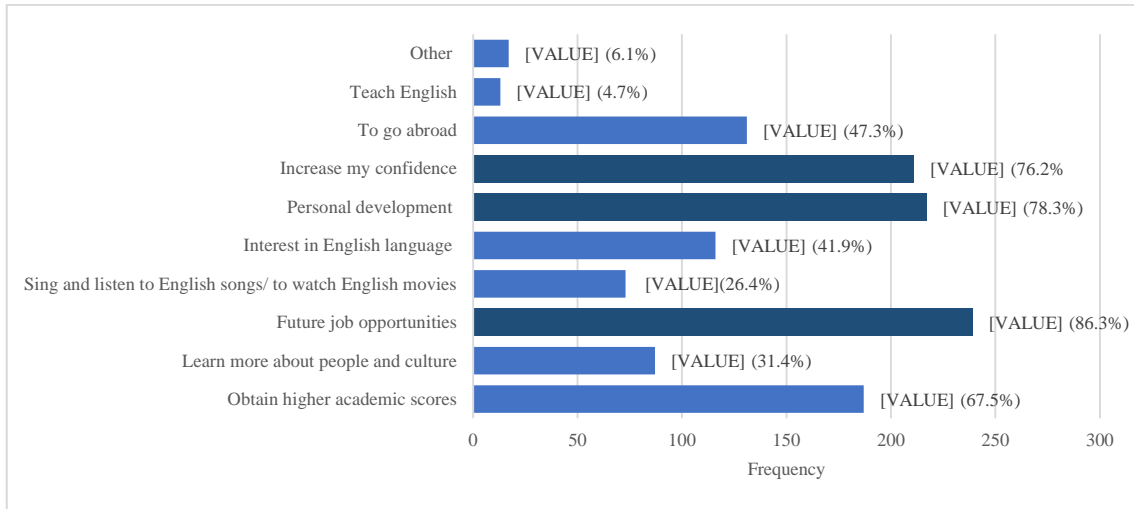


FIGURE 1 | Reasons for Improving English speaking

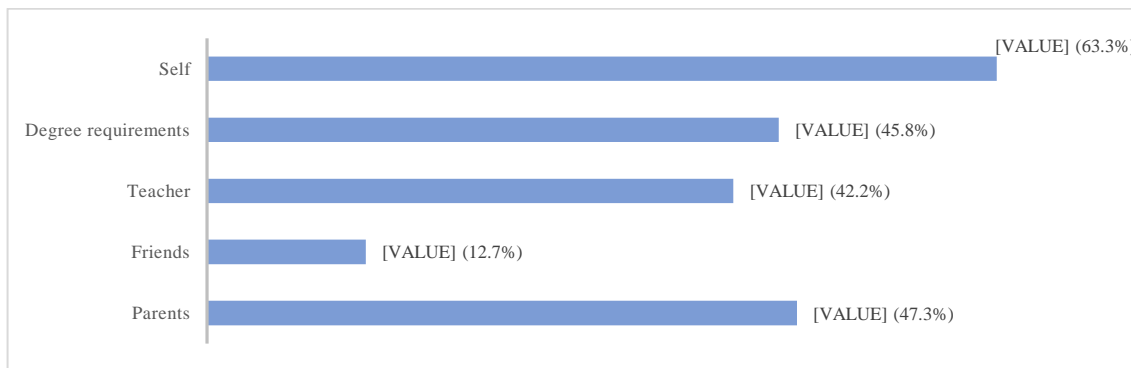


FIGURE 2 | Sources of motivation

[Figure 2](#) illustrates the sources of motivation influencing students to enhance their English-speaking proficiency. The majority of students (63.3%) reported being self-motivated, followed by parental encouragement (47.3%), degree requirements (45.8%), and positive influences from teachers (42.2%). In contrast, motivation from peers was relatively low, at 12.7%.

[Table 3](#) highlights that, despite students' motivation, several key structural and psychological barriers must be addressed to enhance English-speaking proficiency. A significant proportion of students (n=277) express a strong desire to become proficient English speakers and demonstrate high interest in developing effective communication skills (n=276). However, opportunities to practice speaking English remain limited, with many students reporting that they only occasionally speak English when given the chance (n=277). External motivation plays a crucial role for these students, as a substantial number prefer

encouragement from teachers (n=275) and structured opportunities (n=277), such as compulsory English-speaking courses (n=276) or regulations promoting the use of English (n=274).

Despite their motivation, students encounter several barriers to speaking English. Concerns about making mistakes (n=277), feeling of nervousness (n=274), and difficulties with grammar (n=275) are prominent challenges, along with issues related to pronunciation (n=272) and sentence formation (n=275). While teacher (n=274) and peer criticism (n=275) are less significant barriers, students still report that these factors moderately impact their willingness to speak in English. Additionally, time constraints (n=276), lack of opportunities (n=275), and financial limitations (n=273) further inhibit students' progress in mastering English-speaking skills.

The analysis of motivation levels among the participants reveals a significant difference between intrinsic and

extrinsic motivation. The mean score for intrinsic motivation is notably high at 4.16, indicating that students are primarily driven by internal factors such as personal satisfaction and the inherent enjoyment of learning. This level of intrinsic motivation is further supported by a relatively low standard deviation of 0.66, indicating that most students share similar motivational levels in this regard. In contrast, the mean score for extrinsic motivation is lower at 3.73, indicating that external factors -such as grades or recognition -play a less significant role in motivating students to improve their English-speaking skills.

TABLE 3 | Factors that Motivate/Demotivate Students in Speaking English (n=277)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
It is my goal to be a good English speaker	277	4.58	.793
I am very interested in learning effective English communication	276	4.51	.798
Every time I get a chance, I speak in English	277	3.41	.972
I prefer if the teacher motivates me to deliver speeches.	275	3.83	.987
I would like a compulsory English-speaking course.	276	3.68	1.151
I would like to have a regulation to speak only in English.	274	3.70	1.037
I like to receive marks/certificates when I deliver speeches.	275	3.75	1.031
I do not speak because I am worried about making mistakes.	277	3.39	1.316
I do not speak because I am nervous.	274	3.36	1.295
I am not fluent in English grammar.	275	3.37	1.050
I do not speak because of teachers' negative comments.	274	2.28	1.200
I do not speak because of other students' negative comments.	277	2.43	1.224
I do not speak because of negative peer pressure.	275	2.76	1.226
I cannot find words to make sentences.	275	3.05	1.197
I do not have a good accent/pronunciation.	272	3.05	1.072
I do not have time to spend learning English.	276	2.84	1.099
I do not have enough money.	273	3.10	1.181
I do not have an opportunity to talk in English.	275	2.80	1.046

Statistical analysis in [Table 3](#) shows that intrinsic motivation significantly impacts students' speaking skills (p

< 0.001, 95% CI), underscoring the importance of nurturing an internal desire to learn. Furthermore, a notable difference exists between intrinsic and extrinsic demotivation, with the mean score for intrinsic demotivation measured at 3.16, compared to a mean score of 2.56 for extrinsic demotivation. This finding suggests that students encounter greater internal challenges in their efforts to speak English than external barriers. Consequently, it highlights the necessity of addressing these intrinsic factors to enhance overall speaking proficiency.

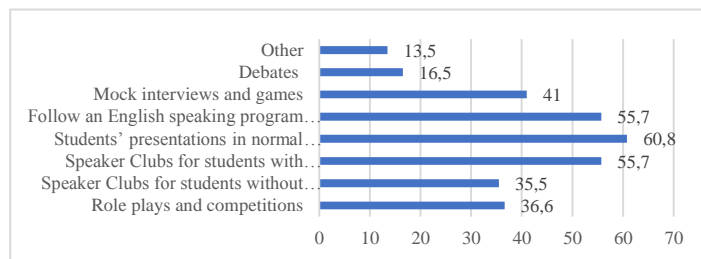


FIGURE 3 | Preferred Activities to Improve English Speaking Skills

[Figure 3](#) illustrates the activities students consider beneficial for enhancing their English-speaking proficiency. The most favored activity is student presentations during informal academic lectures, with 60.8% of participants indicating their support. This suggests that students value opportunities to engage in real-world discussions and presentations as a means to practice and refine their English skills. Following closely, 55.7% of participants favor the implementation of speaker clubs that include resource persons, reflecting a desire for structured guidance and mentorship in their learning process. An equal percentage (55.7%) also supports the establishment of speaker clubs without resource persons, highlighting the need for accessible platforms where students can practice speaking independently. Additionally, the survey underscores the potential value of structured programs, with 55.7% of students expressing interest in participating in an English-speaking program that culminates in certification. Furthermore, 41% of participants exhibited enthusiasm for engaging activities such as mock interviews and games, indicating a preference for interactive learning methods.

Less popular activities include debates (16.5%) and other unspecified methods (13.5%), suggesting that students may not view these as effective means for enhancing their English proficiency. Overall, the findings emphasize a strong inclination toward interactive and supportive learning environments, underscoring specific preferences that could guide the design of future English-speaking programs.

[Figure 4](#) illustrates students' preferred topics for English-speaking sessions, with lighthearted and professional themes ranking highest. Among these, humorous or cheerful topics are the most popular (72.5%), closely followed by stories or movies (71.7%) and professional needs (71.7%). Day-to-day needs also score highly at 68.8%. Other favored themes include recent news or events (55.8%) and science fiction (54.3%). While poetry, songs, and dramas attract interest from 47.8% of students, historical incidents or speeches were chosen by 37.3%. Only 10.5% of students opted for

"other" topics, indicating that the majority of key interest areas were well-represented in the provided categories.

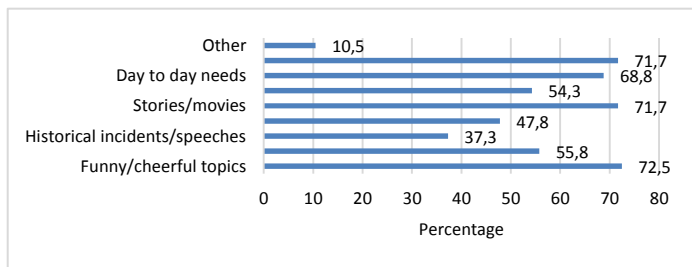


FIGURE 4 | Topics of Interest to Discuss in Speaking Practice Sessions

Table 4 outlines students' preferences and attitudes toward opportunities for improving their English-speaking skills, revealing a strong desire for supportive learning environments and resources. A dedicated club for English-speaking practice emerged as a favored option, reflecting students' interest in collaborative learning experiences. Additionally, students expressed a preference for participating in English-speaking practice sessions, highlighting their commitment to developing their communication skills.

The importance of constructive feedback from teachers was also evident, as students valued guidance that enables them to identify and correct their mistakes. The positive attributes of teachers—such as enthusiasm and support—significantly enhance the learning experience, fostering a welcoming classroom environment where students feel free to speak without fear of judgment. Overall, student feedback underscores the need for interactive, engaging, and constructive spaces to effectively foster English-speaking proficiency.

TABLE 4 | Preferred Learning Styles and Activities (n=277)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I prefer having a dedicated club for English-speaking practice	277	3.94	.907
I would like to participate in English-speaking practice sessions.	277	4.09	.890
I would appreciate opportunity to read English newspapers.	277	4.12	.919
I would appreciate the opportunity to read English novels.	277	4.18	.972
I would prefer if the teacher pointed out my mistakes and helped me improve.	277	4.43	.825
I value teachers' enthusiasm, helpfulness, and friendliness.	276	4.55	.796
I would like a pleasant classroom environment where everyone can speak freely without fear.	274	4.63	.760

Students' willingness to attend English-speaking practice sessions varied across the study population. The majority

(40%) expressed interest in attending weekly sessions, while 26.3% preferred attending twice a month. Monthly attendance was favored by 24.9%, reflecting a significant portion of students who are open to less frequent practice. A small percentage (6.7%) was willing to attend daily sessions, highlighting a highly motivated minority. Only 2.1% indicated they would never attend, indicating that the vast majority are interested in improving their English-speaking skills through regular practice.

Seventy-nine participants provided comments at the end of the questionnaire. Table 5 below lists the broader themes identified from the comments, categorized as facilitators, barriers, and suggestions to improve the English-speaking skills of Pharmacy and Health Sciences undergraduates who participated in the study.

TABLE 5 | Comments by Respondents

Comment	No of respondents
Facilitators	
Need to improve speaking skills	16
Need to talk with students in other countries to improve English-speaking skills	4
Barriers	
Speaking in English is a main problem for undergraduates	16
Having English exams create extra stress for students	8
Lack of self-confidence, fear, and anxiety	8
Academic workloads leave no time to practice English	3
Suggestions	
Do not make compulsory English courses	7
Having a club that can speak freely in English	5
Having English programs without disturbing academic program	5
Organizing English drama/practical sessions	5
Create a culture where everyone speaks English	5
Having student presentations during lectures	4
Provide interesting novels to the library	2
Having a compulsory English program	2
Having monthly speaking clubs	2
Conduct lectures, practical only in English	2
Having an external English diploma course on the weekend	1

This study examined the factors influencing motivation, demotivation, and preferred activities among Pharmacy and other health sciences undergraduates regarding the

improvement of English-speaking skills. The results revealed a significant difference ($p < 0.001$, 95% CI) between the internal and external motivation in learners striving to enhance their English-speaking competence. The majority of the students ($n = 277$, $SD = 0.66$) demonstrated high levels of intrinsic motivation. Similarly, intrinsic demotivation was found to be more pronounced than demotivation stemming from external factors. Furthermore, the findings indicated that students prefer free, relaxed learning experiences over compulsory, administrative, and examination-oriented English-speaking programs. Identifying the sources of inspiration and discouragement will facilitate the design of support programs tailored to students in similar contexts, where proficiency in a second language is highly valued in professional practice and career advancement. It is essential that learning and practice sessions are integral to enhancing self-motivation and the willingness to develop English speaking skills.

Social and Academic Importance of English Proficiency

It is widely recognized that proficiency in English as a second language elevates one's social status and esteem. The necessity of acquiring multiple languages to prepare for life and employment in the twenty-first century has been reflected among the participants in this study ([Sorayyaei Azar & Tanggaraju, 2020](#)). The majority of respondents rated their current English-speaking abilities as "intermediate," yet all expressed a desire to improve their English-speaking skills. Students perceived English speaking as the most challenging yet exciting skill compared to reading, writing, and listening. This significant self-drive was attributed to various factors, including preparation for future job opportunities, personal development, enhancement of self-confidence, and the pursuit of higher academic scores.

A separate study conducted in Sri Lanka among science students learning in English indicated that most participants recognized the importance of language proficiency for effective lecture comprehension and classroom interaction ([Navaz, 2013](#)). In addition to intrinsic motivation, external factors such as degree requirements and encouragement from parents and teachers played a crucial role in motivating undergraduates to engage in English speaking. However, external sources of motivation were more pronounced among schoolchildren learning English as a foreign language. [Krishnan et al. \(2013\)](#) reported that the most significant motivational factor for these schoolchildren was parental encouragement, followed by social motivations.

Psychological Barriers in English Language Speaking

Speaking in a second language often triggers feeling of unease ([Pabodha & Abeywickrama, 2021](#)). Psychological factors such as anxiety, fear, and negative attitudes significantly impede the learning process ([Seefa, 2017](#)). Among the study population, self-driven demotivation was notably high and primarily attributed to apprehension. Most students expressed concerns about making mistakes while speaking, with nervousness, limited vocabulary, and inadequate grammar further contributing to their fear of speaking in public settings.

To enhance their confidence, measures such as activating passive vocabulary, engaging in practical sessions like micro-dialogs, memorizing scripts, and utilizing authentic audio materials could be beneficial ([Doskovskaya & Oparina, 2022](#)). The research findings indicate that language anxiety may persist beyond undergraduate life. A study conducted among Sri Lankan students studying overseas revealed that many participants perceived themselves as weak in oral communication skills ([Fazeena et al., 2012](#)). Furthermore, negative attitudes toward the target language can create a barrier between the learner and the language ([Pabodha & Abeywickrama, 2021](#)). This study identified negative attitudes, including a lack of interest in participating in practice sessions, among some respondents. Although this was not the majority view, the researchers argue that fostering a positive attitude towards English should begin early in the learning process. Therefore, addressing students' fears, anxiety, and negative attitudes toward English should be a primary focus in practice sessions ([Seefa, 2017](#)).

Cultural and institutional barriers significantly influence students' experiences in learning English. Cultural attitudes toward language use can affect students' willingness to engage in speaking activities. For instance, in some contexts, a strong emphasis on linguistic perfection may deter students from speaking due to the fear of making mistakes ([Pabodha & Abeywickrama, 2021](#)). This cultural mindset can hinder learners from practicing English in a supportive environment. Additionally, institutional barriers, such as inadequate resources, insufficient training for teachers, and lack of structured speaking opportunities, further complicate the learning landscape ([Weerasooriya, 2021](#)). Many students reported limited access to environments conducive to practicing English outside the classroom, reflecting broader systemic issues within educational institutions ([Seefa, 2017](#)). Addressing these barriers requires a concerted effort to foster an inclusive culture that values communication and to provide adequate institutional support that encourages student engagement in English-speaking activities.

Influence of Ragging and Peer Pressure on Language Learning

Local literature indicates that culturally embedded behaviors, such as ragging (bullying), shyness, and fear of speaking in public, contribute to passive behavior among students in classrooms ([Navaz, 2013](#)). However, this study revealed that the study population was not significantly affected by negative peer pressure or by negative comments from teachers. By the time this study commenced, ragging had been eliminated from the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences. Further, respondents expressed neutrality regarding the impact of adopting an English accent and time constraints as limiting factors in improving their English-speaking skills. Consequently, social pressure, traditional ideologies, and time limitations did not emerge as barriers to mastering English speaking among Health Sciences undergraduates.

External Challenges in Language Learning

Published research in Sri Lanka identifies inadequate opportunities to use English and practice outside the classroom as significant barriers to developing English communication skills ([Pabodha & Abeywickrama, 2021](#);

[Seefa, 2017](#); [Weerasooriya, 2021](#)). Furthermore, students face various external challenges, including a lack of resources, insufficient facilities, unqualified teachers, ineffective teaching methods, and poor-quality teaching materials ([Qian & Hu, 2022](#)). Economic constraints also contribute to these difficulties ([Seefa, 2017](#)). Additionally, the predominant use of the native language for an extended period relative to the target language has been recognized as a barrier to language acquisition ([Weerasooriya, 2021](#)). Nevertheless, the majority of participants in the present study did not agree that a lack of opportunities, financial resources, or materials hindered their ability to practice speaking English.

To enhance students' opportunities for engaging in English practice outside the classroom, faculty should consider facilitating conversation clubs, language exchange programs, and workshops led by qualified instructors ([Pabodha & Abeywickrama, 2021](#)). Furthermore, investing in resources such as updated materials and access to technology will contribute to creating a more effective learning environment ([Cao, 2022](#); [Chen, 2022](#); [Seefa, 2017](#); [Shaan, 2024](#)). Faculty involvement is essential, as trained educators can foster a more interactive and supportive classroom atmosphere that encourage students to practice speaking without fear of judgment. Moreover, providing regular feedback from instructors will help students build confidence and enhance their language skills over time.

Intrinsic Motivation and English-speaking Practice

Intrinsic motivation is a crucial factor influencing students' achievement and proficiency in speaking ([Ihsan, 2016](#)). A notable finding of this study is that most students are primarily intrinsically motivated, which presents an opportunity to design English practice sessions that align with their expectations. However, researchers argue that high motivation does not always correlate with language achievement ([Chen, 2022](#)). Due to the rigorous academic curricula of Health Sciences degrees, students express a preference for opportunities to engage in oral presentations in English during routine academic activities. Additionally, a significant number of students favor weekly speaker clubs featuring resource personnel, focusing on both professional and everyday needs. Topics such as humor, stories, films, current events, and scientific fiction are likely to increase student interest in attending speaking sessions. Many students also prefer certificate-driven English-speaking programs, mock interviews, and interactive games. Selecting appropriate approaches and teaching styles within a relaxed and upbeat classroom atmosphere may further foster interest in learning ([Mansor & Ishak Badarudin, 2011](#); [Soravyaei Azar & Tanggaraju, 2020](#)). The results of this investigation indicate that students appreciate it when teachers point out their mistakes. The majority also value opportunities to read English newspapers and novels, as well as the presence of friendly, helpful teachers and a welcoming classroom environment where everyone can speak freely.

Generalizability and Future Research Directions

While English has become the predominant medium of instruction in nearly all Health Sciences faculties in Sri Lanka, this study was limited to a convenience sample of

students from the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences at the University of Ruhuna. Consequently, there may be sampling bias, as characteristics of participating students may differ from those who did not take part in the study. Additionally, the online survey could face potential challenges related to non-response and self-selection bias. Although the university provides robust internet coverage for all students, there remains a slight possibility that it may not effectively reach those who are less comfortable with technology.

To enhance the generalizability of these findings, it is advisable to extend similar research to other Health Sciences faculties. Implementing a stratified random sampling method could further improve the representativeness of the sample. Future intervention research focusing on English-speaking practice sessions will be valuable for designing study programs that motivate and engage learners. Furthermore, additional studies are encouraged to explore the underlying causes of the apprehension reported by students regarding English speaking. Evidence-based approaches to managing these triggers will contribute significantly to increasing student participation in English-speaking practice sessions.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to identify the factors that motivate health sciences undergraduates who are native speakers of Sinhala and Tamil in Sri Lankans, as well as to determine their preferred activities for enhancing English-speaking proficiency. The results indicated that self-motivation serves as the primary driver for most students, with key motivators including future job opportunities, personal development, and increased confidence. Although barriers such as fear of making mistakes, nervousness, and difficulties with grammar were prevalent, students demonstrated a strong preference for constructive feedback from teachers and a supportive classroom environment. Based on these insights, faculty should consider the implementation of compulsory and authoritative English-speaking programs and develop strategies that align with students' intrinsic motivations and interests.

Practical recommendations include providing more flexible, interactive learning opportunities, such as weekly speaker clubs, presentations during academic sessions, and certification-driven programs. These findings also underscore the importance of incorporating lighthearted and professional topics, such as cheerful stories, movies, and professional needs, which received strong preference from the majority of students. By focusing on the creation of relaxed and supportive environments with targeted learning activities, educators can enhance student engagement and effectively address barriers to English-speaking proficiency. The insights derived from this research possess significant transferable value, offering actionable strategies for the enhancement of language programs in similar educational contexts..

The findings of this study hold broader relevance for educational contexts that share similar linguistic and cultural characteristics, particularly for health sciences students learning in English as non-native speakers. Strategies such as implementing flexible learning activities, establishing conversation clubs, and organizing workshops – alongside

fostering a supportive classroom environment that prioritizes constructive feedback - can significantly enhance student engagement and confidence.

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Affective and cognitive correlates of reading comprehension: A structural analysis

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This study investigated the impact of reading motivation, dictation, vocabulary, and socioeconomic status on students' reading comprehension. A quantitative research methodology was employed, with data collected over four sessions involving tenth-grade students from SMA Yadika Bandar Lampung. The data were gathered through multiple-choice tests, questionnaires, and dictation assessments. The results demonstrated a strong positive correlation between decoding skills and vocabulary in relation to reading comprehension. Statistically significant p-values of 0.000 were found for the relationships between decoding and English reading comprehension (DEC->ERC), decoding and vocabulary (DEC -> VOC), vocabulary and reading comprehension (VOC->ERC), as well as the combined effects of dictation and vocabulary on English reading comprehension (DEC->VOC ->ERC). The findings highlight that both dictation skills and vocabulary development play a crucial role in enhancing reading comprehension. In contrast, the study found no significant relationship reading motivation or socioeconomic status and reading comprehension. The correlations between extrinsic motivation and English reading comprehension (EM->ERC), intrinsic motivation and English reading comprehension (IM->ERC), and family income and English reading comprehension (INC->ERC) were not statistically significant. These results suggest that while dictation and vocabulary skills are essential for reading comprehension, factors such as reading motivation and socioeconomic status did not exert a significant influence in the study. The findings underscore the importance of focusing on vocabulary and dictation skills to improve students' reading comprehension, suggesting that targeted educational interventions in these areas could lead to enhanced academic performance for all students.

Keywords: decoding skills, English reading comprehension, reading motivation, socio-economic status, vocabulary development

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INTRODUCTION

Language is crucial for human communication, enabling the transfer of ideas, dissemination of information, and social interaction among communities (Schomaker & Zaheer, 2014). It encompasses components such as semantics, syntax, and grammar, which facilitate the creation of well-structured sentences and meaningful communication. In learning a language, particularly English, achieving proficiency requires the development several core skills, namely reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Reading, a highly complex cognitive process, allows individuals to derive meaning from written texts (Dey, 2021). Moreover, reading comprehension is influenced by various cognitive and affective factors, including reasoning abilities, prior knowledge, strategic competence, decoding skills, and motivation (Ahsani and Budairi, 2022; Schaffner and Schiefele, 2013).

The educational field acknowledges intrinsic and extrinsic incentives as crucial for enhancing students' engagement and interest in reading, which in turn contributes to the development of their comprehension skills ([Rogiers et al., 2020](#)).

Various factors have been identified as crucial for understanding the differences in students' reading comprehension. Socioeconomic status (SES) is a significant determinant, often linked to disparities in academic performance. Students from higher (SES) backgrounds generally have greater access to educational resources, participate in enriched learning experiences, and receive additional support to enhance their reading skills ([Chen et al., 2018](#)). However, research on the influence of SES on academic achievements remains inconclusive. While some studies suggest a substantial impact, others report only minor effects ([Bradley & Corwyn, 2002](#); [Rech & Stevens, 1996](#)). Furthermore, the ability to decode information and understand language plays a key role in overall comprehension of both written texts and spoken materials, as noted by [Gough and Tunmer \(1986\)](#). A strong vocabulary is also crucial for reading comprehending, as it allows readers to better grasp and analyze content ([Mar et al., 2021](#)). Given the importance of these factors, this study explores the complex interconnections among cognitive abilities, affective characteristics, socioeconomic status, decoding skills, vocabulary knowledge, and their collective influence on students' reading comprehension.

Several studies such as [Anggia et al. \(2023\)](#); [Chen et al., 2018](#); [Michael and Kyriakides \(2023\)](#); [Wawire and Zuilkowski \(2021\)](#) have examined the complex influence of SES, cognitive and linguistic characteristics, and motivation on reading comprehension. Most of these studies have focused on the direct impact of SES on reading achievement, as well as the indirect effects mediated by factors such as student motivation and parent-child relationships. Additionally, they have investigated the roles of decoding abilities and lexical comprehension at various stages of reading development. By adopting a holistic approach, this body of research seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of how these variables interact and contribute to reading comprehension outcomes. Thus, this investigation aims to identify the primary factors influencing variations in students' reading abilities. Overall, the study provides valuable insights into the ways cognitive, linguistic, and social factors contribute to the achievement of reading proficiency.

This research focuses on two primary objectives related to English reading competency, building on insights from previous studies. The first objective is to evaluate the reliability of instruments used to measure English reading comprehension, vocabulary proficiency, and decoding skills. This evaluation seeks to ensure that these tools generate consistent and accurate results across different administrations and conditions, thus validating their long-term effectiveness. The second objective is to examine the relationships among critical factors such as reading motivation, vocabulary acquisition, decoding skills, and

socioeconomic status, and to determine how these elements collectively impact reading comprehension. By exploring the interplay between intrinsic motivation, foundational language skills, and socioeconomic background, the study aims to uncover the complex relationships that contribute to the development of reading proficiency. This thorough investigation not only sheds light on the cognitive and socioeconomic factors influencing reading skills but also offers valuable insights for educators and policymakers. Understanding these dynamics is essential for improving reading instruction and fostering literacy development, particularly among diverse student populations. By addressing both the reliability of assessment tools and the interrelated factors affecting reading competency, this research contributes to a more holistic approach to enhancing literacy outcomes.

Reading Comprehension Overview

Language acquisition involves mastering the core skills of listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Reading, as a cognitive activity, requires individuals to interpret written symbols to derive meaning, a process closely linked to comprehension. Comprehension becomes particularly crucial as readers move from understanding individual words to phrases and entire paragraphs ([Smith et al., 2021](#)). If a reader can decode words but fails to grasp their meaning, true comprehension has not been achieved. [Elleman and Oslund \(2019\)](#) describe reading comprehension as a multifaceted process involving active reader engagement, the text itself, and the specific reading task, all within a broader sociocultural framework. Developing strong reading comprehension is essential not only for understanding academic material but also for fostering the ability to express concepts, ideas, and emotions proficiently. This, in turn, prepares students to actively participate in society.

Instruction in reading comprehension employs a variety of strategies aimed at improving students' comprehension and communication skills. For instance, decoding skills contribute to vocabulary expansion, while integrating technology can boost students' enthusiasm for reading. Comprehension involves a range of cognitive processes, including problem-solving and critical thinking, as well as affective factors such as interests and attitudes ([Rosalina, 2019](#)). These components are interdependent and exert a complex, reciprocal influence on one another ([Zaccoletti et al., 2020](#)). Recognizing the complexity of reading comprehension as one of the most sophisticated cognitive processes ([Elleman & Oslund, 2019](#)), teachers continuously seek effective methods to teach and assess it. The use of diverse instructional approaches, which include techniques for enhancing comprehension and applying various cognitive frameworks, is vital for developing students' reading skills and fostering their overall cognitive development.

Reading comprehension aspects

Understanding the information in a text is essential for readers to fully grasp its subject matter. Several key variables, each serving a specific function, contribute to reading comprehension: identifying the main idea, locating

supporting details, recognizing references, making inferences, and understanding language. At the outset, identifying the main idea requires readers to discern the central topic or focus of a paragraph, which is supported by a solid grasp of syntax, vocabulary, and discourse structure (Stutz et al., 2016). The main idea represents the core message or viewpoint the author intends to convey, whether stated directly or implied. Additionally, obtaining supporting details involves identifying specific elements within the text that clarify or provide evidence for the main idea, aiding in comprehension (Stutz et al., 2016). Recognizing references, such as pronouns, play a crucial role in linking antecedents and enhancing clarity, thus improving understanding of explicit details within the text (Stutz et al., 2016). Furthermore, making inferences requires readers to draw conclusions or insights not directly stated, relying on cognitive abilities such as reasoning and language comprehension (Silagi et al., 2021). Finally, a robust vocabulary is critical, as it enables readers to extract meaning from words and terms, contributing significantly to overall comprehension (Stutz et al., 2016). Mastery of these skills equips readers with the necessary tools to efficiently interpret and understand written content.

Cognitive Factors of Reading Comprehension

Ostojić (2023) emphasizes that reading comprehension is a complex cognitive process that depends on a range of skills and strategies. Among the key cognitive components, vocabulary and decoding abilities are fundamental for effective comprehension. Vocabulary, defined as the body of words in a language, plays a crucial role in reading comprehension. According to Samuelson (2021), research consistently demonstrates a strong relationship between vocabulary breadth and the ability to understand written texts. A robust vocabulary enables students to better grasp and interpret the meaning of texts (Suk, 2021). Moreover, the depth and range of vocabulary knowledge significantly affect overall language proficiency and comprehension abilities (Röthlisberger et al., 2023). In addition, educators stress the importance of vocabulary instruction, not only for acquiring new words but also for enhancing students' ability to extract meaning from texts (Jonathans et al., 2021). Therefore, building vocabulary is a critical component of developing students' reading comprehension skills.

As Wawire & Zuilkowski (2021) explain, decoding skills enable readers to convert written symbols into spoken language. Effective decoding relies on phonological awareness and phonics, which are critical for accurately pronouncing and identifying words (Genelza, 2022). Mastery of decoding enhances the pace and precision of reading, allowing readers to focus on understanding the text rather than laboriously deciphering each word (Aro et al., 2018). However, decoding goes beyond mere word identification; it also involves understanding words meanings and sentence structures, thereby contributing to overall cognitive abilities and academic success (Levesque et al., 2021).

Vocabulary and decoding play interrelated roles in reading comprehension. Foorman et al. (2018) emphasize the importance of a strong connection between decoding proficiency and vocabulary understanding for the development of comprehensive reading skills. In dictation, where individuals transcribe spoken texts, the link between decoding and language expression becomes evident, as this technique assesses language competency (Kazazoğlu, 2013). Proficient decoding enables accurate transcription, while weak decoding hinders effective communication. Thus, for advanced reading comprehension, both strong vocabulary and decoding skills are essential. This aligns with educational goals aimed at enhancing students' linguistic proficiency and fostering cognitive growth.

Affective Factors of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is influenced not only by cognitive factors but also by affective components, with motivation playing a crucial role in the latter (Kim, 2020). Motivation, encompassing both intrinsic and extrinsic elements, significantly impacts students' engagement with texts and their ability to comprehend (Efriza et al., 2023). Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal drive to engage in reading for its inherent rewards, such as enjoyment and personal interest (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Readers who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to persist in their reading efforts, explore texts in depth, and integrate new material into their existing knowledge base (Kurnaz and Kurnaz, 2021).

On the other hand, extrinsic motivation involves reading to achieve external rewards or meet external expectations, such as earning good grades or receiving recognition (Ryan & Deci, 2020). While extrinsic motivators can initially encourage students to engage with reading, they may not sustain long-term interest or promote deep comprehension unless paired with intrinsic motivation (Yang et al., 2023). Self-efficacy, a key aspect of reading motivation, refers to an individual's confidence in their ability to successfully complete reading tasks (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021). According to Anggia et al. (2023), students with strong self-efficacy are more likely to persevere through challenging reading tasks, monitor their comprehension effectively, and employ specific strategies to enhance understanding. This belief in one's reading capabilities is critical for maintaining motivation and achieving higher levels of reading comprehension.

Teachers play a crucial role in nurturing and sustaining students' motivation to read by creating classroom environments that encourage both intrinsic and extrinsic incentives (Alvarado and Adriatico, 2019). By providing meaningful feedback and recognizing students' efforts, teachers can enhance students' self-efficacy and overall motivation to engage with reading (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021). Understanding and applying motivational strategies allows educators to cultivate strong reading comprehension skills in their students, which in turn supports their academic success and promotes lifelong learning.

METHODS

Research Design

As defined by [Creswell \(2014\)](#), quantitative research is a methodological approach that involves the collection and analysis of numerical data to understand phenomena within individuals or group and to address specific research questions. This study adopts a quantitative methodology, focusing on evaluating students' reading comprehension and decoding abilities through standardized assessments, which play a crucial role in measuring learning outcomes ([Hamilton et al., 2021](#)). The study employed online reading comprehension assessments via Google Forms, complemented by offline dictation assessments to evaluate students' decoding skills.

Additionally, students completed a questionnaire designed to measure their enthusiasm for reading and their socioeconomic background. To ensure clarity and minimize potential misunderstandings, the researcher provided detailed instructions for both online and offline assessments prior to their administration. Anonymity was guaranteed in the questionnaire to protect participants' confidentiality, with the collected data securely stored. During the assessments, participants adhered to strict time constraints under the supervision of the research teacher. After completing the assessments, each participant received an automated email confirming their submission and granting them access to their test results.

Participants

The participants in this study were tenth-grade students from SMA Yadika Bandar Lampung. The sample comprised 87 female and 58 male students across four classes, with each class averaging between 35 and 38 students. SMA Yadika Bandar Lampung was chosen for the study due to the students' widespread difficulties in reading comprehension, particularly among those with limited English proficiency after transitioning from junior high school. These challenges have significantly impacted the students' ability to understand and interpret texts. The school offers two distinct English learning environments: the LBI (English Lab) which focuses on enhancing listening and speaking skills, and conventional classrooms aimed at developing reading and writing competencies. The students come from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, which may contribute to varying levels of English reading comprehension. These contextual factors are crucial in assessing and understanding students' reading comprehension abilities.

Materials

This study employed multiple instruments to assess key factors related to reading comprehension, reading motivation, SES, and decoding skills. The primary instrument was a modified multiple-choice reading comprehension assessment, consisting of nine vocabulary questions and 23 comprehension questions ([Shakir & Ahmad, 2020](#)). The tool assessed students' proficiency by assessing their vocabulary knowledge and their ability to comprehend main ideas, draw inferences, and interpret details from provided texts. The Motivations for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) was used to assess self-efficacy (SE),

intrinsic motivation (IM), and extrinsic motivation (EM) for reading. This questionnaire utilized a four-point Likert scale to gauge students' confidence in overcoming reading challenges, their enjoyment of reading, and their motivation driven by external factors such as grades. As [Coloma et al. \(2020\)](#) explain, decoding skills were assessed using the "letter-word identification" subtest, which measured students' ability to accurately and fluently identify and read familiar words. Each correct response was awarded five points, with the total score reflecting the students' decoding competency. Finally, the SES questionnaire, developed by [Rogelberg et al. \(2021\)](#), concisely assessed family income as an indicator of socioeconomic status. Jointly, these instruments provided a comprehensive assessment for the factors influencing students' reading comprehension and related abilities.

Data Analysis

This study explores the complex effects of reading motivation and socioeconomic status on students' reading comprehension skills. To thoroughly analyze the relationships among socioeconomic status, reading motivation, vocabulary knowledge, decoding ability, and reading comprehension outcomes, researchers utilized structural equation modeling (SEM) with Smart-PLS version 4 software. SEM is widely recognized for its ability to examine intricate, multidimensional relationships and causal pathways in empirical research ([Fan et al., 2016](#)). In addition to SEM, the study employed SPSS version 23 software to enhance data processing and ensure the accuracy of statistical analyses. The combined use of these methods provided a robust framework for investigating the influence of various factors on students' reading comprehension, offering valuable insights into how cognitive, motivational, and socioeconomic factors interact to shape their reading abilities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics

[Table 1](#) provides a detailed summary of the descriptive statistics for the latent variables, which represent underlying constructs inferred from observable data. These variables were measured using a four-point Likert scale, where higher values reflect stronger agreement or positive responses. The mean values for all variables exceeded 2.00, indicating that participants generally expressed higher levels of engagement both emotionally and behaviorally. The standard deviations for these variables ranged from 0.57 to 6.65. Despite the relatively broad range, the low standard deviation values for most variables suggest that the responses were closely clustered around the mean, demonstrating consistent levels of active participation among students. This consistency reinforces the favorable overall average scores observed across the variables.

TABLE 1 | Descriptive Statistics of the Study Construct

Variables	Mean	SD
English Reading Comprehension	15.29	6.65
Vocabulary	6.16	2.51
Decoding	11.14	4.68
Intrinsic Motivation	2.89	0.57
Extrinsic Motivation	2.75	0.82

Evaluation of the Measurement Model

In accordance with methodological guidelines outlined by [Hair et al. \(2019\)](#), the study used a reflective measurement approach to assess latent variables. This method involved evaluating key elements such as item loading factors, construct internal consistency, and both convergent and discriminant validity. [Hair et al. \(2019\)](#) suggest that loading factors should exceed 0.70 to confirm significant relationships between items and their respective constructs. As shown in Table 2, all items demonstrated strong loading factors, ranging from 0.764 to 0.946, which fall well within the recommended range. For assessing internal reliability, composite reliability was employed instead of Cronbach’s alpha, as composite reliability provides a more accurate assessment of construct reliability. The composite reliability scores ranged from 0.849 to 0.892, surpassing both the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70 and the minimum benchmark of 0.60, often considered acceptable for construct reliability. Convergent validity was evaluated using the average variance extracted (AVE). A score of 0.50 or higher indicates that constructs adequately reflect their associated measures. As indicated in [Table 2](#), all latent variables met this criterion, as their AVE coefficients exceeded 0.50. This comprehensive approach to validation underscores the robustness and reliability of the measurement model used in this study.

TABLE 2 | Convergent Validity of the Construct

Latent Variables	Item	Factor Loading	Average Variance Extracted	Composite Reliability
Intrinsic Motivation			0.74	0.849
	RCU	0.946		
	RI	0.764		
Extrinsic Motivation			0.805	0.892
	RFG	0.879		
	RFR	0.914		

In this study, data on Intrinsic Motivation (IM) and Extrinsic Motivation (EM) presents notable correlation coefficients that warrant further examination. Specifically, IM demonstrates a strong negative correlation of -0.86, indicating an inverse relationship with other variables. EM shows a strong positive correlation of 0.907 with IM, indicating a direct and robust relationship between these two motivational constructs. Additionally, EM exhibits a strong negative correlation of -0.897 with another variable, which

could be another aspect of motivation, potentially extrinsic

motivation itself, though the data may require further clarification.

In line with [\(Fornell & Larcker, 1981\)](#) method for assessing discriminant validity, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct should be greater than the correlation between that construct and others. However, in this case, the square root of the AVE for both motivation constructs appears to be lower than the correlation between them, indicating higher shared variance between these constructs than with their individual measures. This suggests an issue of multicollinearity, which occurs when two or more independent variables are highly correlated. High multicollinearity makes it difficult to determine the unique contribution of each variable because they overlap significantly in the information they provide. In this context, the high correlations between IM and EM raise concerns about their distinctiveness and discriminant validity, meaning the constructs may not be sufficiently separate to assess their individual effects accurately. Addressing this multicollinearity is crucial to ensure that the constructs in this study can be meaningfully distinguished and analyzed.

Hypothesis testing

Key statistical assessments in hypothesis testing involve calculating coefficients of determination (R^2), assessing cross-validated redundancy through blindfolding (Q^2), and analyzing the statistical significance and relevance of path coefficients. Data were analyzed according to the proposed model ([Figure 1](#)). The endogenous construct, English Reading Comprehension (ERC), was conceptualized as being influenced by several exogenous variables: Extrinsic Motivation (EM), Intrinsic Motivation (IM), Income (INC), Decoding (DEC), and Vocabulary (VOC). Collectively, these factors explain 69.1% of the variation in ERC, as evidenced by the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.691$).

In addition, the study investigated the relationships between Extrinsic Motivation (EM) and Intrinsic Motivation (IM) in relation to English Reading Comprehension (ERC). The findings indicate that EM accounts for 2.2% ($R^2 = 0.022$) of the variation in ERC, whereas IM accounts for 3.7% ($R^2 = 0.037$). These results suggest that both EM and IM make relatively small contributions to ERC. The model’s predictive accuracy was evaluated using blindfolding procedures and the Q^2 statistic ([Hair et al., 2019](#)). For an endogenous construct to demonstrate predictive significance, the Q^2 value must exceed zero. Q^2 values range from low (0 to 0.25), to medium (0.25 to 0.5), to high (above 0.5) prediction accuracy. The study found that the predictive accuracy for ERC was strong, with a Q^2 value of 0.640, indicating that the combined influence of DEC, VOC, INC, EM, and IM on ERC is substantial. In contrast, the Q^2 value for predicting DEC using VOC was lower, at 0.218, suggesting a relatively low to moderate accuracy level in predicting the association between VOC and DEC. These results highlight the varying degrees of impact that these factors have on ERC within the context of the study model.

This study conducted comprehensive evaluation of the statistical significance of path coefficients to gain a clear understanding of both direct and indirect relationships between different factors and English Reading Comprehension (ERC). Figure 1 presents the model, with standardized path coefficients (β) representing the strength and direction of these relationships. The results revealed strong positive correlations among several variables.

For instance, there was a significant positive correlation between Decoding (DEC) and English Reading Comprehension (ERC) ($\beta = 0.123, p = 0.000$), indicating that higher decoding skills are associated with improved reading comprehension.

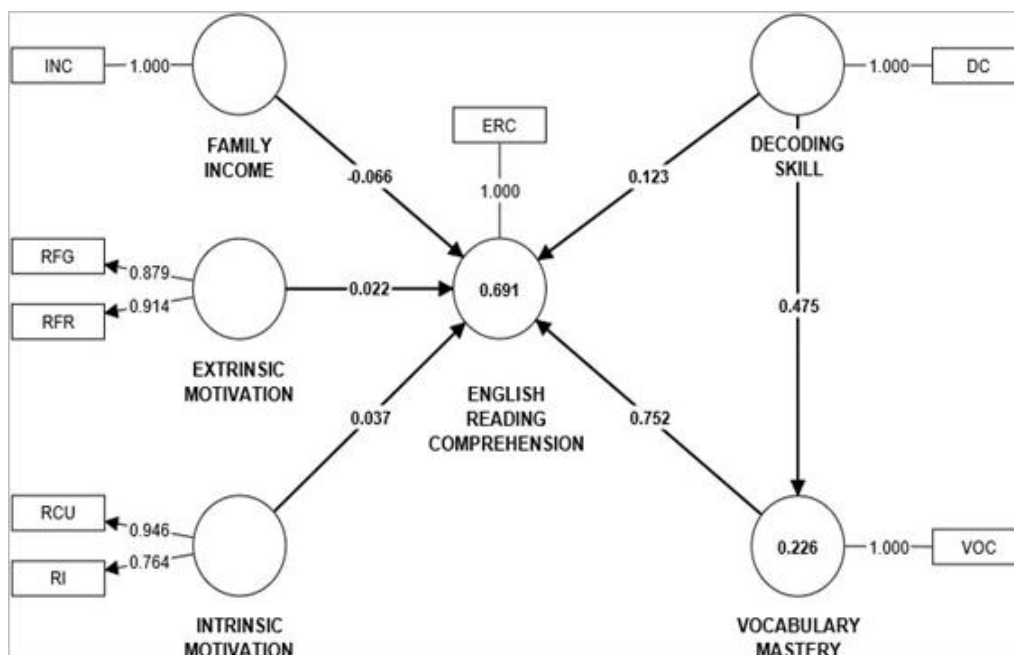


FIGURE 1 | The standardized relationship between the factors

Additionally, a significant positive correlation was found between DEC and Vocabulary (VOC) ($\beta = 0.475, p = 0.000$), suggesting that enhanced decoding abilities contribute to the improvement of vocabulary. The study also revealed a large positive correlation between VOC and ERC ($\beta = 0.752, p = 0.000$), suggesting that strong vocabulary skills greatly enhance reading comprehension. DEC indirectly influenced ERC through VOC, with VOC acting as a mediator in this relationship ($\beta = 0.357, p = 0.000$). This finding underscores the importance of vocabulary as a mediating factor through which decoding skills impact reading comprehension.

In contrast, this investigation did not corroborate certain hypothesized associations. For example, Income (INC) did not have a statistically significant effect on English Reading Comprehension (ERC) ($\beta = -0.066, p = 0.353$), indicating that financial incentives did not directly contribute to improvements in reading comprehension. Similarly, no significant relationship was found between Extrinsic Motivation (EM) and ERC ($\beta = 0.022, p = 0.731$). Additionally, Intrinsic Motivation (IM) did not positively influence ERC; in fact, it had a slightly negative effect that was not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.0037, p = 0.547$). These findings suggest that, within this model, income, extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation do not substantially impact reading comprehension. Table 4 provides a comprehensive overview of the statistical

findings, highlighting the complex interactions and influences of various parameters on ERC.

TABLE 4 | Results of the hypothesis test

Path	Estimate	t- value	p- value	Result
DEC -> ERC	0.123	6.277	0	Supported
DEC -> VOC	0.475	5.985	0	Supported
EM -> ERC	0.022	0.344	0.731	Not
INC -> ERC	-0.066			Supported
IM -> ERC	0.037	0.929	0.353	Not
VOC -> ERC	0.752			Supported
		0.602	0.547	Not
				Supported
				Not
				Supported
DEC -> VOC	0.357	12.414	0	Supported
VOC -> ERC		5.689	0	Supported

This study investigated the intricate interplay between emotional and cognitive factors in reading comprehension, expanding on the Simple View of Reading (SVR) theory. SVR emphasizes the significance of decoding skills and vocabulary mastery for English reading comprehension. According to SVR, decoding skills have a dual effect: first, they directly influence vocabulary acquisition, and second, through vocabulary mastery, they indirectly enhance reading comprehension. The study's empirical results confirmed these relationships, demonstrating strong positive correlations between decoding skills and vocabulary knowledge. Decoding skills accounted for 12.3% of the variation in reading comprehension and 47.5% of the variation in vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary proficiency, in turn, was responsible for a substantial 75.2% of the differences in reading comprehension, underscoring its critical role in improving reading ability. These results support the alternative hypothesis, suggesting a significant relationship between decoding, vocabulary mastery, and reading comprehension. Furthermore, the findings align with previous research, which highlights that the combination of decoding and vocabulary skills plays a crucial role in enhancing English reading comprehension, particularly among early readers in multilingual contexts such as Kenya ([Wawire & Zuilkowski, 2021](#)).

The study also examined socioeconomic and motivational factors, focusing on family wealth, intrinsic motivation, and extrinsic motivation. The coefficient value for motivation items exceeded 0.70, indicating a strong correlation between motivational factors and external influences on reading comprehension. The high factor loading also suggests a significant association between items related to reading motivation and extrinsic motivation. Surprisingly, the study revealed negative correlation between family income and reading comprehension, with specific impact measured at -6%. Contrary to previous studies, which often links higher SES with stronger reading abilities, this study revealed that increased family wealth does not necessarily lead to improved reading comprehension skills. This supports the null hypothesis, indicating no significant influence or relationship between family income and reading comprehension. This finding aligns with earlier research, such as [Michael and Kyriakides \(2023\)](#), which emphasized that while SES is often considered an important variable, its indicators can be inconsistent and irrelevant in certain contexts.

The study also investigated the complexities of how motivation influences reading comprehension. Extrinsic motivation showed a small but positive association with reading comprehension, accounting 2% of the variation, while intrinsic motivation had a slightly stronger impact, contributing 3.7%. An AVE metric, which exceeded 0.5, confirmed the convergent validity of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation components. Additionally, the scales demonstrated strong composite reliability, surpassing the 0.7 threshold. However, discriminant validity was not established, as the AVE values were lower than the correlations observed between these components. This indicates that the assessment items for intrinsic and extrinsic

motivation may not be sufficiently distinct from one another. These findings support the alternative hypothesis, suggesting a significant relationship between motivations and reading comprehension. As previously noted by [Baba and Aydogmus \(2021\)](#), students with high levels of motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation, tend to make deeper connections with texts. They immerse themselves in narratives, empathize with characters, and engage creatively, which helps them use reading strategies more effectively and successfully.

To summarize, this study highlights the complex nature of reading comprehension, emphasizing the significant contributions of cognitive elements such as decoding abilities and vocabulary proficiency, alongside socioeconomic and motivational factors. While decoding abilities and vocabulary mastery were shown to strongly predict high levels of reading comprehension, the study also revealed intricate connections between socioeconomic status and motivation, both of which play pivotal roles in either enhancing or limiting reading competence. These findings challenge certain traditional assumptions and underscore the importance of adopting a comprehensive instructional approach that integrates a diverse range of cognitive, socioeconomic, and motivational strategies to effectively foster reading comprehension skills.

This study highlights several important limitations that warrant consideration in future research. First, the assessment of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation relied on questions that, while adequate for measuring general agreement, lacked the precision to clearly differentiate between these constructs. This suggests the need for more refined instruments that can better distinguish and accurately measure different motivational factors. Additionally, the study was limited to a single educational institution, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Future studies should involve larger, more diverse samples to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between the variables studied and to strengthen the relevance of the findings across various educational settings. Furthermore, despite the common assumption that higher income levels and greater parental involvement contribute to a more enriched literacy environment, this study found only a modest connection between socioeconomic status (SES) and students' reading comprehension. This suggests that SES alone is not the primary determinant of differences in reading comprehension. Particularly, children from certain ethnic backgrounds may continue to struggle with reading comprehension despite adjustments for SES. These findings underscore the importance of further research into the underlying causes of disparities in reading comprehension and highlight the need for the development of targeted instructional strategies to support all learners, regardless of socioeconomic or ethnic background.

CONCLUSION

This study investigates the intricate relationship between cognitive and affective factors and their impact on students' reading comprehension. The findings reveal that while decoding ability has both direct and indirect positive effects, its overall contribution to reading comprehension is only moderately significant. Students with strong decoding skills generally exhibit better comprehension, particularly when these skills are paired with a rich vocabulary. There is a robust, direct relationship between decoding ability and vocabulary acquisition, indicating that as students improve their ability to decode words, their vocabulary expands, further enhancing their reading comprehension. Furthermore, the acquisition of a broad and diverse vocabulary is crucial for achieving high levels of reading competence. Children with a wide range of vocabulary are better equipped to comprehend complex texts. These findings emphasize the importance of vocabulary development as a key component of reading success, suggesting that students who acquire an extensive vocabulary are more capable of understanding intricate literature and are likely to perform better in reading tasks.

These findings have significant implications for educational programs and policies. Emphasizing the development of cognitive abilities—particularly decoding skills and vocabulary mastery—should be a central focus of reading curricula. Given the limited or nonexistent correlations between reading comprehension and factors such as extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and family income, it appears that concentrating on these aspects may not substantially improve reading outcomes. Therefore, it is essential to prioritize educational initiatives aimed at enhancing students' decoding skills and expanding their vocabulary to foster more robust reading comprehension. Implementing such strategies could potentially improve reading interventions and contribute to closing the literacy gap, especially in diverse school environments where the development of cognitive skills plays a crucial role in academic achievement. By focusing on these foundational skills, educators can create a more effective learning framework that supports students in achieving higher levels of reading proficiency.

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English for Administration: Enhancing Government Employees' Communication Skills

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Excellent public service requires government employees to possess professional skills, one of which is proficiency in English communication. This study explores how tourism and hospitality training can enhance employees' ability to interact with foreign visitors at tourism destinations. The study utilizes observation, role-playing, and focus group discussion as primary methods, involving 40 government employees in a program designed to develop effective communication skills for interacting with tourists. The findings highlight communication challenges faced by the community as it aims to establish itself as an international tourism destination. The findings indicate that role-playing is particularly effective in simulating real-world interactions, helping participants understand how to communicate in practical situations. Furthermore, focus group discussions provide insight into the participants' views on the training program. The study concludes that English for administration enhances the employees' communication with visitors, equipping them with effective and appropriate techniques for welcoming and guiding tourists. This contributes to improved service quality and better understanding of hospitality practices, enabling the community to become more skilled and professional. The study also suggests that improving speaking skills requires multiple approaches, including teaching methods tailored to the participant's needs and the use of authentic materials. Future research should investigate the government employees' competencies in reading, listening, and writing skills. Furthermore, the study underscores the correlation between public service excellence and the quality of the workforce.

Keywords: English for administration; public service; tourism and hospitality training; government employees; tourism destinations.

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INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in English can enhance relationships among colleagues and a wider range of individuals in our increasingly interconnected world (Tuncer & Karataş, 2022). Moreover, the ability to speak English significantly boosts the workers' job prospects and career advancement, as many employers consider it a key requirement for various positions (Xie & Chen, 2019). Research has shown that language learning plays a crucial role in career survival and success (Lehtonen et al., 2022). In this context, providing public service, tourism, and hospitality speaking training serves as an effective approach to improving the English-speaking skills of government employees (Martínez-Vázquez, Milán-García & de Pablo Valenciano, 2021). One particular tourism site, which attracts many international visitors, serves as an example of how a former landfill has been transformed into a naturally appealing tourist destination, offering valuable insights for study as well as aesthetic enjoyment

However, many workers lack the necessary vocabulary and speaking skills to adequately explain the site to foreign visitors. Only a few employees can communicate fluently in English, and many struggle to respond to simple greetings and engage in basic conversations.

A notable research gap lies in the fact that these challenges are not addressed in the same way as promoting tourist attractions on social media, which targets foreign visitors. Therefore, government employees require specialized speaking training focused on practical communication with foreign tourists in real-world situations (Xie & Chen, 2019; Wagner, 2019). Another challenge is the integration of excellent public service with foreign language acquisition. Many workers lack necessary skills to provide high-quality service because they have not received adequate training on how to properly welcome tourists, communicate effectively, or convey accurate information to foreign visitors. The study aims to address this gap by exploring teaching techniques that can enhance the communication skills of government employees in tourism contexts.

Public service plays a critical role in shaping government operations and delivering services to citizen (Kareva, 2013). It involves addressing societal needs while adapting to evolving public expectations. However, inadequate professional development and training can result in outdated public service practices and skill gaps, a phenomenon often referred to as limited training and development. In this context, enhancing communication skills in English for government employees is essential for fostering effective communication behaviors (Bezusa & Samoylyukovich, 2020). Particular attention should be given to government employees in coastal areas, where educational development is often lacking. The use of local language is sometimes conveyed in impolite manners, negatively impacting communication, relationships, and learning. This also reflects the economic status of the surrounding community, where laborers and fishermen contribute to the region's low welfare. These socioeconomic challenges create issues within families, society, and education, highlighting the need for targeted training programs to enhance government employees' skills, thereby influencing the broader community. Tourism and hospitality training programs are designed to address these challenges by equipping government employees with the skills needed to provide high-quality services to visitors and communicate effectively in English within real-world contexts (Karimian Shirejini & Derakhshan, 2020).

One of the notable tourist attractions in East Java is Setigi, which offers a unique blend of natural beauty and historical artifacts (Isurupremarathna, 2021). Located in Gresik, this site was previously used as a waste disposal area by local residents from 2003 to 2017. However, in 2018, the community, in collaboration with local residents, began efforts to clean and transform the area into a tourist destination. The development of Setigi as a tourism site is intended to enhance public service quality by equipping workers with the necessary skills to provide high-quality services.

The innovation arose from a combination of local issues and environmental potential (Afzal & Hussain, 2020). This study addresses these challenges by transforming them into unique learning opportunities, aiming to create effective and innovative language learning approaches to enhance speaking skills in tourism and hospitality training programs. Accordingly, the study explores the following: (1) the results of observations that identify specific challenges in English language acquisition among government employees, (2) the application of practical learning methods, such as role-playing, in tourism and hospitality training, and (3) government employees' perspectives on English learning as a means to deliver excellent public service.

METHODS

This qualitative study explores the implementation of English for administration learning through tourism and hospitality training, utilizing three methods: community observation, role-playing, and focus group discussions. Observations were conducted at the Setigi tourism destination to assess public service practices. This initial step is crucial for understanding the workers' backgrounds, language proficiency, and challenges in using conversational English. The observations reveal how hospitality is typically delivered by local workers in the tourism sector and provide insight into the quality of public services offered (Tomaszewski, Zarestky, & Gonzalez, 2020). The second phase of the study involves identifying specific problems that arise in the provision of hospitality services, building on the findings from the initial observations.

These issues typically arise from complaints submitted by visitors at tourist sites. Consequently, the information gathered through observation informs the decision to implement the second method, which involves role-playing. This technique offers a practical approach to learning how to communicate effectively with foreign visitors (Chan, 2019). Role-playing was selected because it allows workers to engage in direct practice based on real-world scenarios, making it appropriate method for enhancing speaking skills (Cheng, Lam and Kong, 2019). The third method, focus group discussion, facilitates further consultation and dialogue aimed at addressing challenges related to improving English communication skills. This method is essential as it serves as a forum for discussing strategies to enhance learning outcomes. As a result, forty workers in Setigi tourism site are participating in the English for administration-learning program. They are selected based on the analysis of their needs to enhance the quality of public service in tourism destinations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Observation Results

The observation results reveal several challenges in mastering English for professional communication. The identified problems are as follows. (1) communication is ineffective (16%); (2) the working environment is not highly supportive (14%); (3) communication in English lacks engagement (47%); (4) public servants exhibit insufficient comprehensive improvement in their duties (23%). These findings indicate that 47% of the workers require practical English training based on real-world situations. As a result, innovative learning methods in English for administration are necessary to equip government employees with the skills to communicate effectively in English for professional purposes related to their roles and responsibilities. The field observations also highlight the need for tourism and hospitality training to improve how local workers manage tourism, particularly in communication, information services, and facility management. Since the tourist destination attracts both national and international visitors, continual changes and improvements are essential. Given the demand of practical learning, role-playing has been selected as the next phase of research to explore how to enhance government employees' communication skills. Below is a chart summarizing the observation results.

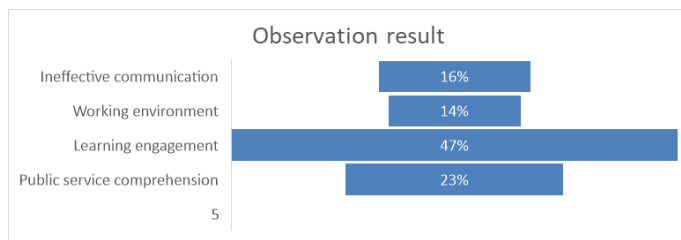


Figure 1. Observation result

A learning environment is created to simulate real-world contexts, fostering speaking activities that align with the subjects being studied and the specific learning objectives (Escobar Fandiño, Muñoz & Silva Velandia, 2019). The environment mirrors the tasks typically performed by public servants, with an emphasis on real-life scenarios. Dialogue exercises are used to provide participants with government-related conversations, incorporating correct pronunciation and vocabulary mastery. Participants practice these conversations with one another to gain thorough understanding of the content. Specialized terminology related to public administration and English for administration is emphasized (Kareva, 2013; Chan, 2021). Additionally, to enhance participants' comprehension of vocabulary and sentence structure, it is crucial to create a supportive atmosphere. Incorporating visual aids, such as images in dialogues or slide presentations, helps participants grasp the meaning of conversations more effectively.

The primary issue identified is communication, specifically language barriers. Many employees predominantly use local languages, making it difficult for them to understand and use English without assistance. Consequently, there is a need for workers to develop their skills in using appropriate English phrases, particularly those relevant to tourism and hospitality interactions. To address this, employees receive additional training focused on learning and practicing simple English expressions to facilitate effective communication and engage in dialogue with foreign visitors.

Given the objectives of English for administration training provided to government employees, developing speaking skills is crucial to enhancing tourism destinations in East Java, which offer unique attractions for visiting tourists. The region's natural beauty and available facilities make it appealing to visitors. However, communication challenges with foreign tourists must be addressed through the improvement of public service quality for workers at these destinations (Wahyuni & Raharja, 2021). Based on observation results, several issues need guidance and solutions. In this regard, providing practical, real-world training is essential to ensure workers understand how to deliver excellent public service through tourism and hospitality practices that align with real-world scenarios.

As part of public service language training, employees are also taught techniques for addressing customer complaints with proper etiquette. These techniques are drawn from the hospitality training handbook and reinforced through role-play exercises, which provide practical examples of how to manage visitor complaints or issues. Scenarios include resolving issues related to accommodation facilities, addressing concerns about food quality, and providing clear explanations to visitors. The training aims to help employees master several key skills: greeting and welcoming foreign tourists using simple and appropriate English, providing directions within Setigi to foreign visitors, handling issues related to public facilities and explaining their proper use, responding to requests for local dish menus with accurate English communication, and describing the beauty of tourist attractions using suitable vocabulary and phrases. These skills are crucial for enhancing the overall experience of foreign visitors and improving the quality of public service.

Role-playing

In terms of service quality, government employees are still not fully trained to deliver excellent service, particularly because they lack techniques specific to the hospitality sector. Role-playing has proven to be highly effective in providing tourism and hospitality training, teaching employees how to serve guests or visitors more effectively by answering questions, offering guidance, receiving hotel guests, and assisting visitors at Setigi. The training method involves detailed explanations of hospitality theories, followed by direct practice using role-playing exercises. Each employee practices how to

serve guests, including serving food, providing directions to tourist attractions, and answering visitors' questions, thereby enhancing their practical skills in real-world scenarios.

Role-playing has been employed as a practical method to equip government employees with not only theoretical knowledge but also real-world application, ensuring they understand how to implement these skills in public services (Cheng, Lam & Kong, 2019). The goal is for role-playing to improve how employees serve customers at tourism destinations by enhancing their communication methods, making interactions more effective and friendly. This shift is particularly important in areas where employees previously lacked sufficient skills. Through role-playing, workers can improve how they respond to customer inquiries and provide more appropriate and effective communication in tourism services, including at hotels and restaurants (Geduld, 2017; Martínez-Vázquez, Milán-García & de Pablo Valenciano, 2021).

This approach aligns with the goal of empowering the community and utilizing surrounding natural resources to enhance the skill sets of workers. Role-playing is particularly suited to this objective, as it addresses the specific needs of employees in Setigi. As an effective and practical technique, role-playing complements tourism and hospitality training by providing a hands-on method for improving English-speaking skills. Direct practice is essential for reinforcing the theoretical explanations provided, making role-playing a highly recommended teaching approach across various fields (Setiyo Wahyuni & Wahyuni, 2023). Through this method, government workers can observe and apply real-world examples of the skills and activities being taught.

The implementation of English for administration offers several recommendations for future activities. Specifically, tourism and hospitality training can be most effective and appropriate when tailored to the need's workers in tourism areas. It is evident that residents require both types of training to enhance their skills. The resulting impact is an improvement in the promotion of and visitation to tourist attractions. In addition, role-playing plays a crucial role in these activities, as it is a highly effective technique for developing the necessary skills of workers in tourism sectors. Tourism can become a major destination on both national and international scales if human resources are well-developed, particularly in terms of public service and hospitality. Additionally, improving English communication skills is essential for achieving the goal of establishing nature-based tourism with international recognition (Isaacs, 2017; Demir & Zaimoglu, 2021).

Focus Group Discussion

The results of the tourism and hospitality training indicate a successful enhancement of knowledge and skills among the workers regarding the quality of public service. This is supported by feedback from focus group discussions, where many workers expressed an improved understanding of how to deliver excellent service quality for the advancement of tourism destinations in Setigi. It is evident that workers require training in excellent public service from academic sources to further enhance their English-speaking skills and

hospitality training. Proficiency in English is instrumental in improving communication with visitors, ensuring that tourists feel welcomed through high-quality service (Cholifah, Asib, & Suparno, 2020). Moreover, the tourism and hospitality training provide the community with tangible examples of best practices and procedures for delivering outstanding tourism and accommodation services.



Figure 2. Focus Group Discussion

Hospitality training focused on communication is implemented through role playing activities. Workers first receive a comprehensive explanation and examples of communication practices in English dialogue, drawn from the hotel training handbook provided. Following this theoretical instruction, a question-and-answer session allows for consultation regarding hospitality topics. This interactive session revealed that participants were highly interested in learning English for tourism and hospitality, a subject many had not previously explored. Questions primarily centered on how to apply tourism and hospitality materials effectively, such as providing directions to visitors, offering tourism services, and communicating appropriately when serving local dishes.

Several questions also arose regarding speaking training when visitors to Setigi requested directions to specific tourist destinations. These inquiries were addressed during a focus group discussion. The findings indicate that the primary objective of hospitality training practices is to equip the community with practical skills and knowledge, enabling workers to deliver effective public services through hospitality in their workplaces. This hands-on approach allows them to engage meaningfully with visitors, enhancing their language communication and hospitality skills. In summary, the focus group discussion reflects the community's positive opinions regarding the learning program.

Table 1 | Focus Group Discussion Results

The Workers' Opinions
<i>"I would like to practice more as long as there is consistency in the program and English skills should be practiced too"</i>
<i>"I have never tried to speak English in a such practical way before, so I like to participate in it more"</i>
<i>"It should be given not only to government employees but also all the graduate students who want to improve their speaking skills"</i>
<i>"I can understand all the dialogues easily as I am assisted with clear explanations and pictures"</i>
<i>"I think I can apply it during the meeting with foreigners. The speaking practice seems acceptable to me"</i>
<i>"I like it when I can practice it with my colleagues"</i>

The results of the focus group discussion, presented in [Table 1](#), indicate that role-playing significantly enhances the learning achievements of the workers. This training program was deemed successful as each activity was tailored to meet the community's specific needs. Several key evaluations can be summarized: first, conducting field observations prior to the hospitality training program is essential to identify existing challenges, ensuring that the training is aligned with the community's goals and learning objectives. Second, continuous planning and the provision of practical, applicable training are crucial for sustaining these practices over time.

Future research could explore the sustainability impact of learning English for administration. For instance, it would be valuable to investigate changes in attitudes following the completion of a hospitality training program, as this could provide insights into the long-term effects on government employees and the broader community. Conducting effective long-term studies can enhance understanding of how such training influences societal dynamics over time. Participating in English for administration activities, particularly those incorporating hospitality training techniques, offers numerous benefits. Individuals gain satisfaction from recognizing their capacity to positively influence others and the community at large. Additionally, they enhance their ability to communicate effectively in English, particularly with terminology specific to tourism and hospitality. Moreover, this engagement motivates the community to develop both natural and human resources, fostering the knowledge and skills necessary for international recognition ([Albino, 2017](#); [Tuncer and Karatas, 2022](#)). ([Albino, 2017](#); [Tuncer and Karatas, 2022](#)).

The innovation of teaching English for administration, with a focus on hospitality skills and language communication—particularly English fluency—has led to recommended future approaches for enhancing speaking skills ([Labrador and Ramón, 2020](#); [Suganda, Zuraida, and Kurniawan, 2020](#)). Setigi, as a key player in the tourism and

hospitality sector in Gresik, has significantly benefited from training activities aimed at its workers. By improving customer service and communication skills, Setigi is poised to attract a larger number of visitors, establishing itself as a leading international tourist destination in Gresik. The area boasts natural beauty and unique characteristics that appeal to both local and international tourists. Therefore, enhancing the skills and expertise of the local community through hospitality and English communication training programs is essential for sustained growth ([Wiraharja, Putri & Adyatma, 2023](#)).

CONCLUSION

English for administration-learning activities, integrated with tourism and hospitality training and effective learning techniques, aim to fulfil e community expectations for success in the hospitality and tourism sectors. This objective can be achieved through practical instruction in English communication and comprehensive hospitality training, primarily focused on transforming substandard services into high-quality offerings that can enhance promotion and attract foreign visitors. The creation of real-world scenarios, combined with role-playing, supports effective communication methods and improves English-speaking skills, allowing workers to practice appropriate communication strategies with both international and local visitors. Hospitality training actively engages government workers in essential service areas, including guiding visitors on tours, serving dishes, and providing thoughtful responses to inquiries and feedback from guests.

Tourist destinations in Gresik are likely to attract more local and international visitors if they possess quality natural resources and well-developed human capital. Achieving this requires collaborative efforts among various stakeholders, including the Gresik regional government, local communities, tourism managers, and higher education institutions. Such cooperation must be mutually supportive to foster harmony and ensure the sustainability of tourism activities. Consequently, this study recommends future research focused on enhancing reading, listening, and writing skills as part of the professional development of government employees in the tourism sector.

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Paradigm Shift of Online English Language Platforms as Standardized Assessment Systems

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Monitoring mechanisms are critical to the success of online English language learning programs, particularly where self-directed learning poses challenges to maintaining quality outcomes. This conceptual article introduces a paradigm shift in online language learning by proposing a standardized assessment framework to monitor learners' progress. Through a theoretical analysis of existing online learning models, the article integrates insights from both humanistic technology and linguistic performance metrics to develop a new monitoring system. The proposed framework ensures consistent evaluation of learners' knowledge, skills, and behaviors, tailored to the specific demands of online environments. The implications of this approach suggest that by incorporating standardized monitoring can significantly enhance learner engagement, accountability, and proficiency in online English platforms, thereby improving the overall quality of distance learning experiences.

Keywords: online platform, language assessment, online English learning, monitoring, higher education.

INTRODUCTION

The shift to the New Normal Era following the pandemic necessitates the development of thoughtful “post-pandemic pedagogies” in English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly for online learning. The abrupt transition to online instruction during the pandemic posed significant challenges for both teachers and students, many of whom were unprepared for such a shift (Zhang & Wu, 2022). This era signifies a transformation in how people live, work, learn, and interact driven by the pandemic's impact. It entails adapting to new circumstances, especially in education, where delivery methods and engagement have evolved in response to health, safety, and technological advancements. The term “new normal,” as defined by the Urban Dictionary (2009), refers to the state that emerges following a significant change, replacing the previously accepted or habitual conditions.

In other words, the challenges we currently face have necessitated a shift in educational settings, particularly in post-pandemic pedagogies, toward e-learning via compatible online language platforms. Post-pandemic pedagogies emphasize the reshaping and optimization of educational approaches, especially within online or hybrid learning environments. These pedagogies may involve the adaptation of new technologies, the implementation of innovative teaching methods, enhanced student support systems, and strategies tailored to the evolving educational landscape. However, criticisms of online learning in ELT, particularly during the pandemic, highlight the misuse of technology. This includes a predominantly unidirectional learning process from teachers to students, often centered around task assignment without providing clear and measurable assessments. Such assessments are frequently limited to objective questions (Gautam, 2021; Mukhtar et al., 2020; Maatuk et al., 2021).

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The integration of technology in education has transformed the paradigm of language teaching and learning from traditional face-to-face methods to digital platforms. This significant shift compels policymakers to reconsider and re-evaluate the methods and approaches used in educational practices, particularly in higher education's ELT. The authors emphasize monitoring as the central focus of this discussion, defining it as a key aspect of the paradigm shift in online English language platforms – from older, more limited functionalities to newer, more comprehensive ones. Traditionally, these platforms were restricted to hosting learning materials and facilitating quizzes, exams, and assignments (Sensuse et al., 2017). However, the authors contend that such functionalities are now insufficient for enhancing the effectiveness of online English language platforms in the current educational landscape. Consequently, the effectiveness of e-learning technologies has become a critical factor in selecting and utilizing these tools.

The authors discuss a shift in monitoring, drawing on a report by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization, Innovation, and Technology (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2015). The report highlights a deliberate transition from Assessment of Learning (AoL) to Assessment for Learning (AfL) and Assessment as Learning (AaL) across ten countries, including Indonesia. These reforms aim to establish holistic assessment systems that integrate assessment directly into the teaching and learning process, incorporating strategies such as peer and self-assessment (p. 34).

Hence, based on the aforementioned statements, the authors observed that the previous paradigm of monitoring in ELT primarily emphasized traditional in-class observations, periodic assessments, and teacher-centric evaluations (see Brown et al., 2009; Brown et al., 2011; Berry, 2011; Brown & Gao, 2015; Fulmer et al., 2017). This approach primarily involved:

1. **Teacher-Centric Observations:** Monitoring was predominantly teacher-driven with educators observing students' performance and comprehension during classroom activities, relying heavily on their personal judgment and evaluations.
2. **Periodic Assessments:** Assessments were sporadically, focusing on specific milestones or exams to gauge student performance at predetermined intervals, such as mid-term or final examinations.
3. **Limited Technological Integration:** Technology played a minimal role, if any, in monitoring student progress. Learning and assessment were predominantly paper-based or dependent on face-to-face interactions.
4. **Static Learning Environment:** The learning environment was confined to physical classrooms, restricting opportunities for diverse learning experiences beyond the traditional classroom setting.

In contrast, the new paradigm in post-pandemic pedagogies has introduced significant shifts in monitoring approaches within ELT (see Colak & Glendinning, 2021; Puad & Ashton, 2021; Alobaid, 2020):

1. **Technology-Integrated Monitoring:** There is an increased reliance on technology-assisted learning platforms, allowing for continuous monitoring through digital tools, real-time assessments, and data-driven insights into student progress.
2. **Individualized and Continuous Assessment:** Emphasis has shifted toward continuous assessment and feedback, replacing periodic evaluations. Teachers employ diverse methods to continuously track and support individual student development.
3. **Flexible Learning Environments:** ELT has expanded beyond traditional classrooms, with hybrid or fully online models offering flexibility, allowing students to learn from various locations and access a wider range of resources.
4. **Student-Centric Approaches:** The focus has shifted toward student-centered learning, promoting active participation, collaboration, and self-directed learning. Monitoring now includes empowering students to self-assess and reflect on their own progress.
5. **Adaptive Teaching Strategies:** Teachers now dynamically adjust their methodologies based on real-time monitoring data, providing personalized learning experiences tailored to students' individual needs.

Overall, the new paradigm emphasizes the integration of technology, continuous and personalized assessment, flexibility in learning environments, and a shift towards student-centered approaches. This represents a more dynamic, adaptable, and inclusive framework for monitoring in ELT compared to older, more traditional methods.

Moreover, Zhou & Zhang (2022) define online language learning as the process by which students acquire a language online, supported by various technological tools. They elaborate on measuring its effectiveness, emphasizing that it is primarily gauged through student achievement. Improvements in students' language proficiency or skills serve as confirmation of this effectiveness (p. 2). The correlation between student achievement and the assessment process is particularly evident in online English learning environments. However, addressing the methodology for assessment and evaluation in online classes raises a critical question: "What platforms are available for conducting assessment and evaluation, particularly in online English classes?" The authors emphasize that the primary concern in transitioning to online English language learning is the quality of learning outcomes, specifically the lack of well-structured and widely disseminated benchmarks, which presents a significant challenge.

Certainly, despite the clear advantages of online language learning, both teachers and students continue to encounter several challenges ([Zhou & Zhang, 2022](#)). For instance, during the EdTech Workshop held on October 23, 2023, at the Department of Cooperatives for Small, Medium Enterprises, Trade, and Industry in Cirebon City, educators expressed their concerns regarding students' learning outcomes in online English learning. The workshop was centered on the theme "Introduction to Online English Learning through the 'Elingway' Digital Platform in Post-Pandemic Pedagogies." Participants included English teachers from both Senior High Schools and Vocational Schools in Cirebon City and Regency. Among the educators, a recurring concern emerged: uncertainty regarding whether students' assignment results authentically reflect their competencies. The primary issue revolves around the assessment of online learning quality as evidenced by their inquiries, including, "How can we ensure the credibility of submitted tasks or assignments and effectively assess students' responses?"

Acknowledging the inevitability of online learning, the teachers collectively emphasized the urgency for the advancement of e-learning tools that meet assessment requirements. This situation highlights the necessity for specifically tailored tools within online English language platforms to facilitate effective English learning. Despite these advancements, there remains an ongoing quest to identify the most impactful e-learning tools within the ELT context. The subsequent inquiry focuses on two crucial aspects: "Which e-learning tools effectively facilitate the assessment of English language learning?" and "Which online English language platform is equipped for comprehensive language learning assessment?"

[Martyushev et al. \(2021\)](#) explore the use of communication and educational management platforms such as Zoom, Moodle, Google, and others. The selection of these platforms is contingent upon the educational institution's technical and financial capabilities, teachers' preferences, and the requirements for facilitating lessons and related tasks. In educational settings, the adoption of e-learning tools by numerous universities significantly involves integrating these tools into their online learning infrastructure, often through proprietary Learning Management Systems (LMS), with platforms like Moodle frequently serving as the foundation. However, a persistent challenge persists due to the lack of essential personal interactions among students, as well as between students and teachers ([Somayeh et al., 2016](#)). Hence, a crucial discussion emerges regarding how online English language platforms can align with standardization, presenting a substantial and relevant issue that warrants thorough examination.

The authors identify three primary challenges associated with selecting online English language platforms: technical, operational, and substantive.

While technical and operational obstacles can often be resolved with relative ease once identified, substantive issues are notably more complex as they are closely linked to paradigm shifts. [Kuhn's concept of "paradigm shift" \(1970\)](#) refers to a periodic and dramatic transformation, akin to a sudden revolution in perspective. Such shifts are generally perceived as jarring. This article aims to identify the substantive challenges and highlight critical factors related to the incorporation of online English language platforms in higher education. The authors will demonstrate how prioritizing monitoring mechanisms within these platforms empowers educators to effectively drive a transition toward a more efficient and standardized assessment system. Implementing abrupt changes in the online English language learning process—particularly regarding the direction of specific online platforms—often leads to conflicts and may result in uncontrollable situations. Such circumstances can indicate a crisis, requiring significant financial resources and incurring high implementation costs. Nevertheless, it is essential to transition from the traditional usage of online English language platforms to a new paradigm that functions as a standardized assessment system.

Consequently, the research question arising from this context is: How can the paradigm shift towards a standardized monitoring mechanism within online English language platforms address the substantive challenges of assessment and evaluation in higher education, while minimizing conflicts and enhancing the quality of learning outcomes? This inquiry seeks to explore the integration of monitoring mechanisms within online platforms, addressing the complex and transformative challenges associated with adopting such systems for English language learning. It focuses on strategies to overcome substantive obstacles, manage potential conflicts, and ensure a seamless transition toward improved assessment practices and enhanced learning quality.

METHODS

For explaining a conceptual article, aligned with theory development and synthesis—such as theoretical elaboration, literature review, concept mapping, or comparative analysis of theories—were most appropriate. In addressing the article's aim of identifying substantive issues in incorporating online English language platforms in higher education and illustrating how prioritizing monitoring mechanisms empowered teachers to establish a more efficient assessment system, a literature review served as an effective method. A comprehensive review of the literature (see Fig. 1) identified substantive challenges and critical factors relevant to online English language platforms in higher education. It explored existing research on platform adoption, the challenges educators faced, and the factors influencing successful implementation.

This review established a foundation for understanding the complexities and opportunities associated with these platforms. To deliver a credible and justified explanation of the issue, the arguments presented in this conceptual article were not derived from empirical data in the traditional sense but were retrieved from various databases. These arguments involved the assimilation and integration of evidence in the form of pre-existing concepts and theories ([Hirschheim, 2008](#)). In essence, the article focused on the concept of monitoring as it related to language assessment in online language learning, particularly within English Language Teaching (ELT). The primary objective was to explore how these monitoring concepts could enhance the quality of language assessments in online education, ensuring more effective learning outcomes.

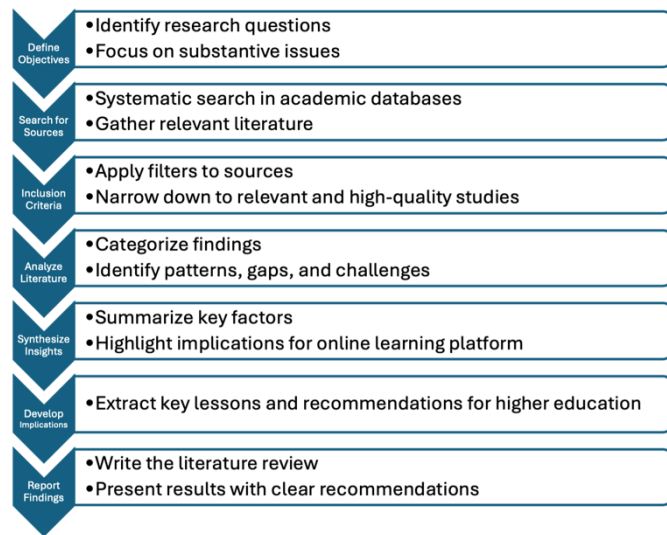


Figure 1. Comprehensive Review Flowchart

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Applying the monitoring ideas in online English learning highlights the challenges and strategies that emerge in the online language learning and teaching context. [Choi & Chung \(2021\)](#) explored strategies employed by English as a foreign language (EFL) instructor with limited experience in online teaching to create a sustainable and authentic technology-mediated learning environments. They examined how these instructors motivated language learners to actively engage in sustainable language development and use. Their findings revealed that online language teaching presents numerous challenges for both teachers and students. These challenges include the absence platforms that facilitate authentic language interactions, the difficulty in monitoring individual student progress and assignments, and a general lack of student motivation to engage in virtual environments. The complexity of managing these challenges requires instructors to adopt innovative approaches to foster participation and to track learning outcomes effectively in a less structured online setting.

Based on this case, the authors acknowledged that the concept of the monitoring mechanism presented in this paper could offer valuable solutions to enhance the effectiveness of online English learning. The statement underscores the importance of prioritizing monitoring mechanisms within online English language platforms to empower teachers. This emphasis suggests that these mechanisms are integral to strengthening the role and influence of educators in digital learning environments by addressing two pivotal aspects: the integration of monitoring and the Challenges to successful monitoring. The article highlights how effective monitoring mechanisms can ensure the success and effectiveness of the selected online English language platforms in educational settings. These mechanisms not only allow for real-time tracking of student progress but also provide educators with data-driven insights that can inform adaptive teaching strategies. Additionally, such mechanisms can address existing challenges by offering continuous assessment, ensuring accountability, and creating a more engaging learning environment that enhances student motivation and outcomes.

Integration of Monitoring

The authors suggest that by emphasizing monitoring mechanisms, teachers can significantly contribute to a shift, likely toward a more efficient and standardized assessment system. This implies that the authors view monitoring mechanisms as pivotal in driving positive changes in how assessments are conducted within the context of online English language learning. The shift described refers to the optimization of assessment processes, making them more streamlined, effective and consistent. This perspective suggests that online English language platforms offer an opportunity to enhance assessment practices by improving their efficiency and reliability. [Huda & Eiten \(2022\)](#) state that the effectiveness of online English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses depends largely on the careful selection of appropriate technology. Their findings further suggest that the monitoring of EFL courses requires a distinct approach compared to other subjects. Additionally, they emphasize that EFL teachers should be empowered and actively involved in the decision-making process regarding central monitoring and feedback systems. Thus, this article aims to provide an in-depth exploration of challenges related to the integration of online English language platforms in higher education, with particular emphasis on the role of monitoring mechanisms in empowering teachers. By focusing on monitoring, the article highlights how teachers can drive a positive transformation in the assessment system, promoting greater efficiency and standardization in the online learning environment.

Examining the substantive challenges and critical factors associated with incorporating online English language platforms in higher education reveals a complex landscape that requires careful consideration. First, the authors introduce the concept of an online English language platform as a standardized assessment system, incorporating a monitoring mechanism rooted in assessment and evaluation. The practical implementation of monitoring in online English language learning serves as a reference point for an e-learning paradigm shift aimed at establishing a standardized assessment system. The essence of assessment and evaluation theory lies in understanding the concept of monitoring through the establishment of benchmarks. These benchmarks provide a structured framework for evaluating student performance and progress in a digital learning environment.

[Secolsky & Denison \(2018\)](#) highlight a critical distinction between assessment and evaluation. While these terms are often used interchangeably by many universities ([Mislevy, 2018](#)), they serve different purposes. Assessment involves the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data related to specific issues or outcomes. It focuses on measuring and understanding student performance or other targeted metrics. Conversely, evaluation seeks to determine the overall value and effectiveness of something, typically at the program or institutional level. Evaluation may incorporate assessment findings to make informed decisions about the quality and success of a program, with the goal of improving or validating its effectiveness.

To truly comprehend the monitoring process, the authors emphasize the distinction between assessment and evaluation, as these terms play distinct roles in monitoring learning success. Monitoring begins with a series of assessments and ultimately leads to an evaluation. The distinction is critical: while evaluation involves decision-making based on the learning outcomes of a program over a defined period, it inherently depends on assessments. Assessment serves as the foundation for evaluation, providing the necessary data to inform and guide evaluative decisions. Therefore, understanding assessment procedures is essential before engaging in the evaluation of an English language learning program, as it directly influences the accuracy and effectiveness of the final evaluation.

Second, the authors highlight the significant hurdles and essential considerations that must be addressed when integrating online English language platforms into higher education. The statement identifies both substantive challenges and critical factors relevant to this integration process. Substantive challenges may include technological barriers, resistance to adopting new methods, and concerns regarding the overall effectiveness of online tools in achieving desired learning outcomes. Critical factors, on the other hand, refer to key elements that determine the success or failure of such integration. These factors might include the design and usability of the platforms, the level of support and training provided to educators, the technology's adaptability to various learning styles, and its alignment with overarching educational goals ([Colak & Glendinning, 2021](#)). Addressing both challenges and critical factors is essential for ensuring that online English language platforms effectively support the learning process in higher education contexts.

These considerations serve as a comprehensive framework, linking substantive challenges and critical factors to guide the integration of online English language platforms in higher education. The authors outline five key facets –policy, definition, responsibilities and roles, procedures, and resources –as a strategic roadmap for institutions to navigate challenges, define effective platforms, and ensure successful adoption and sustained use.

The following explains each facet:

1. **Policy:** Establishing clear guidelines and directives is essential to guide the integration of digital platforms into English language learning within educational institutions. These policies should address institutional goals, compliance with educational standards, and the broader integration of digital tools into the learning ecosystem.
2. **Definition:** Defining the criteria and characteristics of an effective digital platform for online English language learning is necessary. This involves setting benchmarks for functionality, user engagement, adaptability to different teaching methods, and alignment with educational objectives.
3. **Responsibilities and Roles:** The successful adoption of digital platforms requires the clear allocation and delineation of responsibilities among stakeholders. Teachers, administrators, technical staff, and students need clearly defined roles in using and supporting the digital platforms to ensure smooth integration and active engagement.
4. **Procedures:** Implementing standardized procedures and methodologies is crucial for ensuring that digital platforms are used effectively within the English language learning framework. This includes creating protocols for training, regular assessments, and continuous platform evaluation to maintain high standards of learning.
5. **Resources:** Adequate resources must be committed to the adoption and ongoing use of the online English language platform. This includes financial investment, technological infrastructure, professional development for educators, and ongoing technical support to sustain the platform's effectiveness in enhancing language learning outcomes.

These factors serve as the foundation for fostering collaborative efforts among stakeholders in the ELT context. Formulating policies involves clearly defining the identity of compatible digital platforms that align with educational goals. Challenges often arise when distributing responsibilities and roles among stakeholders, as it requires coordinated efforts and clear communication. Following standardized procedures is essential for the successful integration of these platforms into the learning process.

Additionally, a strong commitment to allocating resources both financial and technical—is vital to ensure effective implementation and sustained success in the adoption of digital platforms. Drawing on these considerations, recent studies by [Li \(2021\)](#) and [Tang \(2021\)](#) offer valuable insights into the practical implications of integrating online English language platforms in higher education. Li's study, which utilized questionnaires, data analysis, and case studies, indicates that students generally found online English learning platforms beneficial for their studies.

However, Tang presents a contrasting viewpoint, noting that during the pandemic, some universities observed a lack of student initiative, resulting in low learning efficiency. This issue was further compounded by students struggling to manage their study time effectively and feeling overwhelmed by the demands of online education. To address these challenges, universities must analyze these issues to enhance the application of online learning models, striving for standardized and more effective online learning experiences while simultaneously monitoring learning success and rectifying existing problems.

Finally, the authors contend that monitoring mechanisms serve as the eyes and ears of educators, allowing them to track students' performance, identify areas of strength and weakness, and facilitate timely interventions. This real-time insight into individual student progress is particularly invaluable in the context of micro-evaluation, where the focus shifts to assessing and grading each student's language proficiency. As [Bachman \(1990\)](#) and [Bachman & Palmer \(1996, cited in Schoonen, 2011\)](#) assert, the evaluation of language skills involves multifaceted tasks, including selection, placement, diagnosis, and progress assessment, and grading. According to [Bachman \(1981, in Bachman, 1990\)](#), the overarching goal is to provide decision-making information within the learning process, which can be categorized into two types: decisions regarding individual students (micro-evaluation) and decisions concerning the overall program (macro-evaluation).

In the intricate process of micro-evaluation, monitoring mechanisms seamlessly align with the criteria outlined by language assessment scholars, namely: selection, screening, placement, prognosis, diagnosis, research, program evaluation, accountability, and achievement. The continuous feedback provided by monitoring tools not only facilitates ongoing assessment but also aids educators in grading students based on their evolving language proficiency. Providing relevant feedback is a crucial element in the success of every EFL course. The adequacy of feedback is determined not only by the grammatical accuracy but also by how the approach is perceived by both teachers and the students ([Huda & Eiten, 2022](#)). This dynamic approach to progress and grading ensures that evaluations are not static, allowing for adjustments and interventions tailored to the unique needs of each learner. In essence, the integration of monitoring mechanisms into the evaluation

process reinforces a personalized and effective online English language learning experience, where assessments align closely with the evolving language skills of individual students.

Moreover, [Huda and Eiten \(2022\)](#) identified that the monitoring system was significantly impactful in various domains, including the assurance of teaching quality and the enhancement of the teaching-learning process within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes, as reported by the educators. According to the findings, a substantial majority of teachers (exceeding 70% in both instances) expressed support for the existing monitoring and feedback system. However, they recommended that both the objectives and monitoring criteria be redefined and updated to better align with current educational needs.

[Shenoy et al. \(2020\)](#) offer valuable insights into the concept of monitoring by linking it to technological tools designed to track students' skill development or progress in specific learning areas. They reference specialized tools utilized in the United States, such as the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and Curriculum-Based Measurement (easyCBM), which are particularly in assessing language proficiency and literacy skills in English.

DIBELS primarily evaluates children's development literacy skills essential for reading in English. In contrast, easyCBM, as explained by Deno (2003) and [Keller-Margulis, Shapiro, & Hintze \(2008\)](#), functions as a curriculum-based measure that assesses students' mastery of skills pertinent to their grade level. Originally designed for universal screening and ongoing progress monitoring throughout the academic year, easyCBM captures incremental changes in performance over time.

The authors draw a parallel between these tools and the contextual understanding of monitoring, positing that the concept as operationalized in practice closely aligns with its practical interpretation. Consequently, the authors assert that monitoring mechanisms fulfill several critical functions:

1. **Progress Tracking:** Monitoring enables educators to systematically track both individual and collective progress in English language acquisition. This involves the meticulous observation of students' comprehension, application, and advancement of language skills over time.
2. **Identifying Learning Gaps:** Through continuous observation, educators can discern specific areas where students encounter challenges or require additional support. This identification facilitates the tailoring of instructional methods or interventions to address targeted gaps in English language proficiency.

3. **Assessment of Learning Strategies:** Educators can evaluate the efficacy of various English learning strategies implemented for individual learners or the class at large. Such assessments are instrumental in refining pedagogical approaches to better align with students' diverse learning needs.

4. **Formative Feedback:** Ongoing monitoring empowers educators to deliver timely and constructive feedback. This feedback is vital for assisting students in recognizing their strengths, weaknesses, and areas requiring further development in language acquisition.

5. **Adjusting Teaching Methods:** Based on the insights gained from monitoring outcomes, educators can adapt their instructional methodologies, materials, or pacing to optimize learning outcomes for their students.

6. **Student Engagement:** Monitoring facilitates the assessment and enhancement of student engagement levels during English language teaching (ELT) sessions. This process is crucial for fostering an interactive and participatory learning environment, which is essential for effective language instruction.

The monitoring mechanism frequently encompasses a range of techniques, including classroom observations, both formative and summative assessments, quizzes, student-teacher interactions, peer evaluations, and the integration of technology-assisted learning platforms. Ultimately, the primary objective of monitoring within ELT is to facilitate effective language acquisition by proactively evaluating and addressing students' learning needs and progress. This comprehensive approach ensures that instruction is responsive to the diverse requirements of learners, thereby enhancing the overall educational experience.

Li (2022) emphasizes the substantial impact of monitoring on the quality of learning, proposing a model that encompasses several key aspects. Firstly, it is imperative to establish a clear learning goal to ensure that the learning trajectory aligns with the intended objectives. Secondly, quality standards must be defined for various components of the learning process. Given that learning consists of multiple interconnected stages, it is crucial to ensure that each phase meets the established standards. Li advocates for a comprehensive and continuous monitoring system that encompasses all dimensions of learning quality. Such a system facilitates improvement toward the set goals, addresses identified deficiencies, and fosters efficient, high-quality learning experiences. The authors underscore the necessity for online English language platforms to integrate monitoring mechanisms that prioritize humanistic technology and language-driven performance. Our argument highlights the crisis stemming from the abrupt shift to online learning, emphasizing the importance of addressing substantive considerations rather than merely focusing on technical aspects during this transition.

Integrating monitoring into an online English language platform necessitates the incorporation of humanistic technology mechanisms and linguistically driven performance to oversee and enhance the learning experience. The authors articulate that a humanistic technology mechanism involves embedding elements within the platform that prioritize the human experience of learning. This approach encompasses designing features that are user-friendly, interactive, and responsive to individual needs. For instance, personalized feedback mechanisms, empathetic communication tools, and adaptive learning paths can be implemented to effectively engage learners.

This concept resonates with Humanism Learning Theory, which posits that meaningful learning encompasses four key features: (1) engaging the whole person—cognitively and emotionally—in learning activities; (2) fostering learners' initiative to explore and discover driven by their inherent desires; (3) promoting the holistic development of learners' behavior, attitudes, and personalities; and (4) enabling learners to assess the attainability of their learning goals (Nye, 2000). The authors propose several principles that are often associated with humanistic technology mechanisms in the context of ELT:

1. **User-Centred Design in ELT:** This principle emphasizes the importance of designing online platforms and tools that address the specific needs and learning styles of English language learners. This may involve incorporating adaptive learning features, personalized content, and intuitive interfaces that cater to varying proficiency levels (Santoso et al. 2021; MoEC, 2015; MoEC, 2017).

2. **Ethical Considerations in ELT Technology:** It is essential to ensure that online learning tools and platforms in ELT prioritize the privacy of learners' data, uphold autonomy in learning choices, and respect cultural sensitivities in content delivery (Colak & Glendinning, 2021).

3. **Accessibility and Inclusivity in ELT Technology:** This principle advocates for the creation of ELT platforms that are accessible to all learners, including those with disabilities. This can be achieved by implementing features such as screen readers, subtitles, and alternative navigation options that accommodate diverse learners (Alobaid, 2020).

4. **Empathy in ELT Platform Design:** Understanding the emotions and challenges faced by English language learners, particularly in an online environment, is critical. Developing tools that foster engagement, motivation, and a supportive learning atmosphere is essential for effective learning (Wang et al. 2023).

5. **Sustainability in ELT Technology:** This principle calls for adoption eco-friendly practices in the development and deployment of ELT technology, aiming to reduce environmental impact. For example, promoting the use of digital materials over printed resources can contribute to sustainability ([Brown, 2024](#)).

6. **Continuous Improvement and Feedback in ELT Platforms:** Encouraging ongoing feedback from learners and educators is vital for enhancing ELT tools, content, and methodologies. This principle fosters an environment of continuous improvement, ensuring that the tools remain effective and relevant ([Huda & Eiten, 2022](#)).

7. **Cultural Sensitivity in ELT Tools:** Acknowledging the diverse cultural backgrounds of language learners is crucial. Ensuring that the content and examples used in ELT platforms are culturally sensitive and inclusive helps avoid biases or stereotypes ([Idrus & Sohid, 2023](#)).

The integration of monitoring mechanisms is closely aligned with these principles, as it facilitates tailored user experiences, ethical data usage, and support for diverse learners. Together, these principles—along with a commitment to continuous improvement and cultural sensitivity—contribute to the development of more effective, inclusive, and engaging English Language Teaching (ELT) platforms. The feedback-driven nature of monitoring mechanisms ensures that technology in ELT remains responsive and supportive, thereby fostering an environment of ongoing enhancement in language education. This alignment not only improves individual learning outcomes but also enriches the overall educational experience for all learners.

The authors define linguistic-driven performance as the application of language or linguistic elements to enhance or improve various aspects of performance across different domains. This concept often involves leveraging linguistic techniques and understanding language patterns to achieve superior outcomes. Linguistic-driven performance specifically pertains to the language-specific aspects or proficiency demonstrated by an individual within each context. In the realm of online English language learning platforms, this term may signify a focus on the linguistic capabilities and achievements of students, encompassing their language comprehension, communication skills, vocabulary, grammar, and overall language proficiency as manifested within the online learning environment ([Tao et al., 2020](#)). Educators employ linguistic-driven approaches to enhance learning experiences, which may include tailoring teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning styles, incorporating language-rich activities, and adapting materials for improved comprehension. By integrating these approaches, the platform can effectively monitor students' progress, provide personalized support, and offer insights into linguistic performance, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of online English language learning.

This comprehensive strategy not only facilitates individual learner development but also promotes a more engaging and responsive educational experience.

The authors emphasize the importance of monitoring success in online English language learning by closely observing students' linguistic behavior throughout their learning journey. By employing a humanistic technology mechanism and focusing on linguistic-driven performance within this monitoring framework, the approach seeks to establish a standardized and systematic assessment system on the online English language platform. This integration not only facilitates the tracking of student progress but also enhances the overall learning experience by providing tailored support and feedback, ultimately contributing to more effective language acquisition and proficiency development.

Challenges to Successful Monitoring

[Li \(2022\)](#) highlights the evolution of online English language learning in universities, emphasizing the critical role of quality assurance in English education. Citing the work of Xiong and Ling (2010), he underscores that this quality must adhere to scientific principles, which encompass achievement, process, and continuous development. To maintain high-quality online English language learning, it is essential to integrate emerging innovations and advancements into its framework. However, this endeavor presents several challenges that must be addressed to ensure effective monitoring and assessment.

The authors identify a critical issue concerning the oversight and administration of institutions offering English language programs. This highlights a significant challenge that requires attention and resolution in the context of managing educational institutions that provide English language-related courses or programs, particularly in the New Normal Era. As educational landscapes evolve due to advancements in technology and shifts in pedagogical approaches, institutions must navigate various complexities to ensure effective program delivery and quality assurance.

In contemporary education, the monitoring abilities of teachers are of paramount importance. According to Akbari and Allvar (2010, as cited in [Nik Hashim et al., 2014](#)), effective monitoring of student progress extends beyond mere adherence to syllabi and instructional strategies; it is essential for ensuring student advancement and achieving learning outcomes. The authors define learning outcomes as the knowledge, skills, and competencies that students are expected to acquire by the end of a course or program. Monitoring student progress enables educators to assess whether these intended outcomes are being met. It provides a framework for evaluating students' adherence to the established standards and goals of the curriculum.

This process also allows teachers to transition into the role of digital learning support facilitators, emphasizing the provision of formative feedback and the enhancement of the overall learning experience. Regular monitoring facilitates the early identification of students who may be experiencing academic challenges or falling behind in their studies. With timely interventions, educators can offer additional support, resources, or alternative learning opportunities to mitigate further difficulties. Furthermore, teachers can provide formative feedback that guides students in identifying areas for improvement while reinforcing their strengths. This feedback loop is instrumental in supporting students throughout their learning journey and contributes to their continuous improvement and development.

Despite the increasing significance of monitoring mechanisms in online English language platforms, several challenges hinder their effective implementation. A critical factor in this regard is the need to carefully evaluate the readiness of these platforms, alongside proactively anticipating potential barriers that may arise. The depiction of seven barriers, adapted from [Mungania \(2003\)](#), elucidates these challenges as follows:

1. **Personal Barriers:** These encompass issues related to time management, language proficiency, and individual attitudes toward e-learning. Such barriers can affect learners' motivation and engagement in online environments.
2. **Learning Style Barriers:** Different learners have varied study preferences and learning styles, which can influence their interaction with online platforms. The lack of adaptability to diverse learning styles may hinder effective learning outcomes.
3. **Situational Barriers:** Factors such as the duration of learning sessions and external distractions or interruptions can significantly impact the learning experience. Situational barriers can detract from students' focus and commitment to their studies.
4. **Organizational Barriers:** These include issues related to organizational culture, insufficient time allocated for study, interpersonal barriers among stakeholders, limited availability of online courses, registration challenges, lack of awareness about available resources, and failure to involve all relevant parties in the planning and decision-making processes.
5. **Technological Barriers:** Challenges related to the quality of Learning Management Systems (LMS), connectivity issues, inadequate training for users, navigation difficulties, limited technical support, data loss, and problems associated with data transfer can severely hinder the functionality and usability of online platforms.
6. **Content Barriers:** These barriers encompass misaligned student expectations regarding lessons, the relevance of the content to learners' needs, the specificity of content, poor quality of educational materials, and deficiencies in scoring and evaluation systems.

7. **Instructional Barriers:** This category includes limitations such as the lack of progress reports and constructive feedback, inadequate student engagement strategies, subpar instructional design, limited reference materials, access and navigation challenges, insufficient use of multimedia resources, inconsistent instructional quality, information overload, lack of instructor presence or interaction, and poor coordination among instructional elements.

To effectively address the aforementioned barriers, the strategic integration of monitoring mechanisms becomes crucial. These monitoring tools can systematically track learners' progress, adapt to diverse learning styles, and deliver real-time feedback, thereby overcoming personal, situational, organizational, technological, content, and instructional challenges. By leveraging monitoring mechanisms, educators can promptly identify potential challenges faced by learners, enabling them to tailor interventions to meet individual needs. This proactive approach fosters a more responsive and effective online English language learning environment, enhancing student engagement and facilitating personalized learning experiences. In essence, monitoring mechanisms function as a dynamic solution to mitigate these barriers, ultimately contributing to the overall success of online English language learning platforms. By establishing a framework for continuous assessment and feedback, educators can create a supportive learning atmosphere that promotes student achievement and fosters a culture of ongoing improvement in language proficiency.

CONCLUSION

The digital transformation of education offers both significant opportunities and challenges for language teachers, requiring a reconceptualization of online English language learning environments. As educators adapt to this paradigm shift, the integration of robust monitoring mechanisms becomes imperative. These mechanisms must be not only user-friendly but also meticulously aligned with pedagogical objectives, ensuring a more streamlined and effective assessment process.

The adoption of online English platforms in higher education highlights the pressing need for standardized assessment systems and a shift in pedagogical approaches. Prioritizing monitoring enables educators to address the complexities of diverse teaching practices more effectively, fostering a more equitable and personalized learning environment. Through systematic monitoring, educators can provide timely feedback and implement targeted interventions, thereby enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes.

Additionally, the integration of humanistic technology with linguistics-driven performance fosters continuous improvement in teaching methodologies.

This transformation cultivates a dynamic and inclusive educational landscape where assessment practices are closely aligned with learning objectives. Ultimately, the incorporation these mechanisms can drive a paradigm shift in (ELT, promoting greater standardization, efficiency, and student-centered learning in higher education. Such a deliberate approach holds the potential to revolutionize online language learning and significantly enhance the quality of education in ELT.

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Blending process and genre approaches in teaching academic writing to first-year English as a second language students

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The article aims to provide a comparative analysis of the approaches employed by lecturers to teach academic writing to first-year English as a second language (ESL) students at the university level. Lecturers are typically expected to adopt either the genre-based or process-oriented approach when instructing students from diverse multilingual and multicultural backgrounds, who possess varying levels of English proficiency. The process-genre approach is recommended by the researcher as it effectively enhances students' academic writing abilities. The study utilized pre-and post-tests to evaluate the academic writing skills of first-year students. The pre-test served as an initial evaluation of the participants' writing proficiency, providing a baseline for improvement, while the post-test measured progress after several weeks of instruction. Additionally, a questionnaire was administered to gather students' perspectives on academic writing. The findings indicate that many ESL students face challenges of managing course content while simultaneously grappling with the grammatical, lexical, and syntactic complexities of the target language. Consequently, lecturers are encouraged to apply the process-genre approach to support students in improving their academic writing skills and bridging the gap between secondary and tertiary education.

Keywords: English grammar; language proficiency; translanguaging; process-genre approach; academic writing

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INTRODUCTION

Research on teaching academic writing to undergraduate multilingual and multicultural university students is gaining significant traction globally (Carstens, 2016; Mhlongo, du Plessis & Weidemann, 2021). The importance of teaching academic writing is understood by the fact that English is frequently employed as the academic lingua franca in many institutions (Baker, 2016). Nevertheless, numerous researchers express concern regarding the low levels of academic writing proficiency demonstrated by students across various texts (Fouche, van Dyke & Butler, 2017; Pfeiffer and van der Walt, 2019), prompting the development of models and theories aimed at addressing this issue (Pfeiffer and van der Walt, 2016). In South African higher education, several studies have focused on teaching writing to multilingual and multicultural students (Dalvit & De Klerk, 2005; Webb, 2007), highlighting the challenges of effectively implementing the Language Policy for Higher Education (2002). For instance, the University of KwaZulu-Natal has introduced vocation-specific isiZulu instruction to first-year health science undergraduate to facilitate knowledge conceptualization and improve patient communication in their mother tongue (Matthew & Gakool, 2018). This initiative is yielding positive outcomes, as both students and lecturers

recognize the beneficial role African languages can play in an academic context. Despite these advancements, English remains the primary academic lingua franca in nearly all South African universities. Consequently, this article advocates for the adoptions of the process-genre approach, which integrates both process and genre-based methodologies, as a strategy to enhance students' English writing proficiency ([Huang & Zhang, 2020](#); [Recelis and Matsuda, 2013](#)), while fostering a deeper understanding of writing across various genres.

The globalization of education has prompted a paradigm shift, transforming many universities worldwide from being monolingual to multilingual institutions ([Smith, 2018](#)). This shift has also diversified the student body, moving from traditionally monoculture to increasingly multicultural demographics. However, the situation in South Africa remains contentious despite having one of the most liberal language policies, which allows the use of African languages in higher education institutions ([Madadzhe, 2019](#)). [Heugh \(1999\)](#) defines multilingualism as the ability to utilize two or three languages as mediums of instruction to enhance both students' academic and linguistic performance. Alternatively, multilingualism can be understood as "a phenomenon that denotes the use of more than one language or a multitude of languages by an individual or community or country" ([Mutasa, 2014](#)). Despite this inclusive language policy, the hegemonic dominance of English has made it difficult for the nine indigenous African languages to achieve equal status with English as languages of instruction. As an alternative, translanguaging - using two or more languages simultaneously - has been implemented in classrooms to help students broaden their linguistic repertoires and improve comprehension of the content ([Adamson, 2020](#), [Heugh, 2015](#), [Makalela, 2015](#)). [Probyn \(2015\)](#) support this approach, emphasizing that translanguaging is effective in helping students utilize two languages when sharing and processing information.

Another significant factor is the changes in admission policies and the merger of universities in South Africa, which have transformed many institutions into multilingual and multicultural centers ([Webb, 2012](#)). [Antia \(2014\)](#) commends the University of the Western Cape as the first to implement an open admission policy, allowing students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds to gain admission provided they meet the academic requirements. Consequently, universities must be adequately prepared to accommodate students from various cultural backgrounds. [Lestinen, Petrucijová, and Spinthourakis \(2004\)](#) point out that "multiculturalism allows individuals to belong to several cultures and still retain authentic membership of their own culture" (p.1). Students who maintain their cultural identity often experience greater pride and motivation to learn within a multicultural environment.

When teaching academic writing, lecturers must be highly attuned to the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of their students ([Zhang, 2018](#)). It is essential for lecturers to demonstrate respect for these diverse languages and

cultures, as universities play a critical role in fostering human values and promoting tolerance. [Canagarajah \(2002\)](#) conducted an in-depth study of various writing instruction models and emphasized that multilingual writers should incorporate elements of their vernacular to enhance their writing. Multiculturalism provides students with the opportunity to transfer knowledge between their first and second languages. [Gao, Jia, and Zhou \(2014\)](#) further argue that identity plays a significant role in helping English as a Second/Foreign Language students develop proficiency in English. In this context, students' native languages are regarded as valuable resources that can support the improvement of their academic writing skills.

The Medium of Instruction in a South African University

Although South African universities are permitted to select their medium of instruction from the country's eleven official languages, most institutions prefer to use English ([Madiba, 2012](#)). This preference is often attributed to the status of English as a global language, with little consideration given to students' perspectives in the development of language policies ([Mayaba, 2018](#)). [Lekgotla and Ramoupi \(2014\)](#) argue that language is a powerful determinant of societal power relations, and the role of African languages has not been adequately addressed even after 20 years of post-apartheid freedom. A significant number of black students continue to learn through English as a second language, which negatively affects student completion rates. In contrast, the inclusion of African languages alongside English could serve as a catalyst for meaningful change ([Mthombeni & Ogunnubi, 2020](#)).

The South African government has taken a significant step by recognizing eleven languages as official, yet English remains the dominant language of instruction in most tertiary education institutions. This presents a challenge, as the majority of students admitted to South African universities have limited proficiency in English, making it difficult for them to comprehend and process information from academic texts. Many of these students are underprepared for the demands of higher education ([Tewari & Ilesanmi, 2020](#)). Consequently, some researchers argue that indigenous South African languages should be further developed to play a more effective role in teaching and learning, rather than being restricted to conversational use ([Mthombeni & Ogunnubi, 2020](#); [Hlatshwayo & Siziba, 2013](#)). The integration of indigenous languages alongside English is critical for supporting students with low English proficiency and improving their academic performance.

For the Department of Higher Education to successfully achieve its goal of fostering multilingual in universities, there must be a concerted effort to promote the use of African languages alongside English ([Pillay and Yu 2015](#)). Although current policy ensures parity of esteem for all official languages, English and Afrikaans continue to be the primary languages of instruction. Notably, English has gained significant prominence at the expense of Afrikaans, as many speakers of African language perceive English as a more neutral and acceptable, particularly in contrast to Afrikaans, which is historically associated with the apartheid

regime's e oppressive education policies (Desai, 2016). Mzangwa (2019) suggests that to improve access and create equal opportunities for all students, South African universities should maintain English as a medium of instruction. Given, the country's eleven official languages, English is often regarded as a neutral language within most institutions, as it bridges the linguistic diversity of students.

The adoption of English as a medium of instruction in most universities has a detrimental effect on the promotion of multilingualism, necessitating urgent measures to support African languages (Mkhize & Balfour, 2017). This promotion of African languages is further undermined by students' attitudes, as many perceive English to be a unifying lingua franca that accommodates individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Banda and Peck (2016) lament the prevalent misconception that 'English plays the powerful role of being a prestigious language' (p. 286) when used as the medium of instruction. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that students attribute symbolic and cultural value to languages beyond English. Furthermore, the preference for English in higher education is reinforced by the tendency of black politicians and affluent business leaders to undermine indigenous languages, viewing them as underdeveloped and inadequate for addressing contemporary political and economic challenges.

Makalela and McCabe (2013) eloquently outline the underlying reasons that led the University of Limpopo to adopt English as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) despite the availability of multiple languages. The authors conclude by urging language policy planners to conduct comprehensive research on the role of African languages in higher education. The implementation of a monolingual policy without thorough investigation possesses significant challenges for students with only basic proficiency in English. At the University of Western Cape, where Afrikaans served as the medium of instruction during the apartheid era, the introduction of an identity-building initiative has elevated the status of English above that of Afrikaans and isiXhosa (Antia, 2015). Banda and Peck (2016) approach the language policy issue at UWC from a different perspective, suggesting that the contestation and contradictions within the policy create fertile ground for diverse discourses among students from varying linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Huang and Zhang (2020) conducted a quasi-experimental study involving two groups of university students tasked with writing an argumentative essay. The intervention group received instruction on the process-genre approach, while the comparison group used the commonly practiced conventional approach. The results indicated that the intervention group significantly outperformed the control group, thereby supporting the assertion that the hybrid process-genre approach is crucial for enhancing student performance. Moreover, writing instructors should strive to maintain a balance when implementing the process-genre approach by providing implicit instructions on genre knowledge while adhering to the recursive nature of the

writing process (Huang & Zhang, 2020). Students tend to improve their performance when they possess a balanced understanding of both the process and genre approaches.

The teaching of academic writing to ESL students is a challenging endeavor that cannot be effectively achieved through a singular approach (Badger & White, 2000; Deng, Chen, & Zhang, 2015). As a lecturer responsible for teaching English communication skills, I have observed that first-year students face numerous challenges in their academic writing. This realization underscores the necessity of conducting a study focused on enhancing students' academic writing proficiency by evaluating various methods employed in institutions both locally and globally. In this study, I examined three approaches: the product, process, and genre approaches, to determine which method could be most effective in helping students at a South African university improve their academic writing skills. The product approach is not included in this study, as it primarily emphasizes the imitation of model texts, with grading based on the final product. Therefore, this study focuses on the integration of the process and genre approaches in writing instruction. The genre approach is rooted in Systemic Functional Linguistics, as proposed by Halliday (1978), and emphasizes the relationship between linguistic systems and social structures. This approach is vital in writing education, as it provides students with explicit and systematic explanations of how language functions within social and cultural contexts (Hyland, 2003). More importantly, the genre approach empowers ESL instructors to assist their students in producing well-structured texts (Hyland, 2007). It elucidates the relationship between text genres and their contexts, thereby aiding students in enhancing their writing proficiency.

The study aims to evaluate the writing abilities of students prior to their instruction in the process and genre approaches and to assess the impact of these two approaches in their writing performance. Furthermore, the study could determine whether the integration of the process and genre approaches leads to greater improvements in students' writing abilities compared to the use of either approach in isolation. The results of the study are anticipated to provide insights into the challenges faced by ESL students when writing essays.

METHODS

The study adopted a mixed method design, employing both quantitative and qualitative research methods to collect data. Quantitative data collected via a questionnaire were interpreted using basic numerical calculations, while qualitative data derived from written texts were analyzed through textual analysis. The focus of the study was on students enrolled in an English Communication Skills (ECS) course at a South African university, specifically designed for first-year students who are adapting to university life. The study aimed to explore the performance and perceptions of first-year students as they learn to write essays that meet

university-level standards. To achieve this objective, the researcher evaluated various techniques and models suitable for teaching academic writing skills to multilingual and multicultural students at the university level. This evaluation sought to assess the effectiveness of each technique or model and determine their applicability in supporting students at a South African university.

Participants

A sample of 48 participants was selected from a total population of 483 students enrolled in the English Communication Skills (ECS) course for natural and agricultural sciences. An ethical clearance certificate was obtained from the university's ethical clearance committee, and all selected participants signed an informed consent form prior to commencement of data collection. To ensure anonymity, each participant was assigned a code that replaced their real name. Simple random sampling was employed to obtain a manageable sample, in accordance with [Creswell's \(2012\)](#) guidance that researchers must determine the appropriate number of participants for their studies (p. 609). The demographic distribution of the participants' native languages was as follows: Tshivenda (17), Xitsonga (11), Sepedi (8), isiNdebele (5), isiZulu (4), and Shona (3). All participants completed both the pre-test and post-test and engaged in all activities associated with the study. The selection of a manageable sample facilitated a thorough analysis of the collected data, enabling the researcher to draw sound conclusion.

Writing tasks

Participants were evaluated through the composition of two short essays (pre-test and post-test), which allowed the raters to assess their performance effectively. Four raters, all lecturers in the Department of English with experience ranging from 11 to 23 years, were responsible for marking and rating the essays. To ensure consistency in marking, all raters attended a four-hours training session on establishing interrater reliability and fairness. During this session, they were trained to use a five-point rubric that encompassed the following criteria: planning and organization, relevance, coherence and cohesion, lexical resources, and linguistic accuracy.

In the pre-test, participants were required to write essays using the five-paragraph structure, written in clear and unambiguous language. At this stage, all participants were familiar with the five-paragraph style and were expected to produce well-developed essay. This approach enabled the researcher to assess the students' strengths and weaknesses, thereby facilitating the recommendation of an appropriate model for teaching academic writing. The first essay (pre-test) was administered during the second week of the first semester, wherein students were expected to use their prior knowledge to write an argumentative essay. The second essay (post-test) was administered in the tenth week of the same semester to evaluate any improvements in the students' writing abilities. A rubric served to evaluate any improvements in the students' writing abilities. A rubric

served as the marking guide for both the pre- and post-test. During the eight-week interval between the pre- and post-test, students received instruction on blending the process and genre approaches in their writing. The intervention strategies employed were designed to help students comprehend the relationship between the communicative functions and language forms inherent in the genre approach. Additionally, these strategies aimed to enhance their texts by applying the necessary steps outlined in the process approach.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was administered to the sampled participants in the middle of the semester, with the aim of gathering data regarding their language and cultural backgrounds. This timing was chosen to allow participants to acclimate to the academic writing style. The questionnaire comprised twenty open-ended questions designed to elicit their experiences with academic writing. [Dörnyei \(2003\)](#) notes that questionnaires are valuable instruments, as they can yield "factual, behavioral, and attitudinal information" (p. 8) about respondents. A secondary objective was to evaluate the participants' responses, which would inform the researchers about effective strategies for teaching academic writing. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data collected from the questionnaire, focusing on students' writing abilities, their awareness of writing theories, and their commitment to adhering to the necessary writing processes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pre-test and post-test

The results obtained from the pre-test essays revealed that students experience numerous challenges in writing coherent, logical, and grammatically correct essays. The analysis indicated that participants were capable of composing well-structured paragraphs; however, they often failed to fully develop the ideas presented within each paragraph. In certain instances, the essays exhibited a low level of academic writing proficiency. The evaluation was conducted using a five-point rubric assessing planning and organization, relevance, coherence and cohesion, lexical resources, and linguistic accuracy.

A comprehensive analysis of the pre-test essays revealed that approximately 80% of the participants lacked grammatical complexity and demonstrated instances of circumlocution. An example illustrating this issue is presented below, taken from a student essay:

Covid-19 was a very dangerous disease that people in my community have never seen for so many years. We still feel the impact of Covid-19 as it has killed many people in our village and those who live in other villages. In my family alone, Covid-19 kill my mother and my father, and also kill my only brother and one of my three sisters which is very bad. To stop the death of many people, the government started this lockdown to stop people from moving from place to place.

The paragraph above exemplifies a common issue faced by students who translate sentences from their first language into English, as they often do not adhere to the grammatical structure of the English language. Indigenous languages such as Xitsonga and Tshivenda possess different syntactical frameworks compared to English, resulting in grammatically incorrect sentences. The following example further illustrates how some students struggle to compose texts that contain well-developed ideas.

Covid-19 is a very strange disease and dangerous disease. Covid-19 came to South Africa because of people who visited Europe and come back. Covid-19 was discovered in March 2020 and it started affecting many people all over the country. The government implemented this lockdown to stop the disease to kill people.

The two examples indicate that students expressed their ideas primarily through short, simple sentences that lacked the appropriate syntax and register expected at the academic level. Only 20% of the participants show the ability to utilize formal discourse and effectively combine of simple, complex and compound sentences.

Results from the post-test essay indicated a modest improvement in the areas of relevance, coherence, cohesion, and lexical resources.

Notably, participants exhibited significant advancement in linguistic accuracy, particularly regarding grammatical errors.

This improvement can be attributed to the lecturer’s integration of the genre approach model alongside the process approach utilized in composing the pre-test essays. Furthermore, participants demonstrated enhanced vocabulary usage, which is critical for effective academic writing.

The post-test essays demonstrated a marked improvement in academic style compared to the pre-test, as students actively engaged in peer discussions regarding the feedback provided by their lecturer and assisted each other during joint construction of their essays. Approximately 60% of the participants effectively employed discourse markers and sentence connectors, such as 'therefore,' 'moreover,' and 'consequently,' which were notably absent in their pre-test essays. This engagement fostered critical thinking as students questioned their word choices and contemplated the ideas they presented while preparing their final drafts. Furthermore, incorporating social, cultural, and linguistic aspects into the feedback and editing sessions enabled participants to better recognize genre conventions and produce relevant texts. Figure 1 illustrates a comparison of students' performance between the pre-and post-tests.

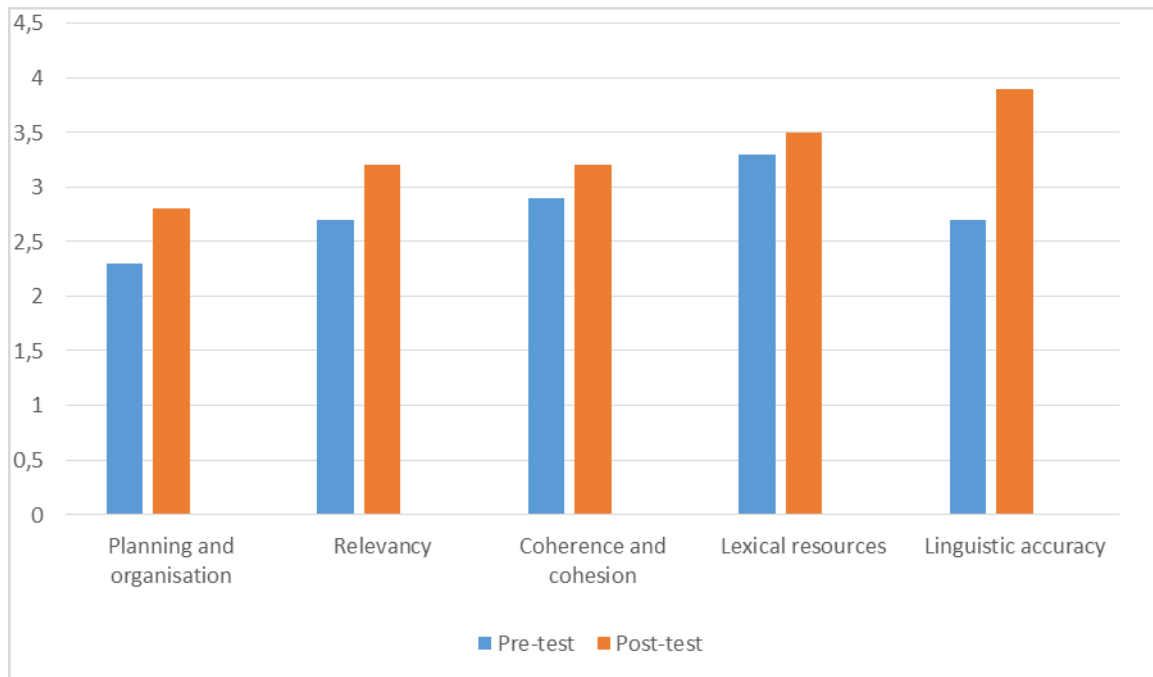


FIGURE 1 | Comparison of Students’ Performance in Pre-and Post-tests Using a Five-Point Rubric

Figure 1 illustrates that students demonstrated improvement across all five evaluated areas in their post-test essays. Notably, linguistic accuracy—which is often overlooked in the process approach but emphasized in the genre approach—exhibited the most significant enhancement. Genre-based instruction is crucial for enabling students to gain mastery over text creation, select

appropriate vocabulary, and develop a better understanding of grammatical usage, all of which are essential for achieving linguistic accuracy. The post-test essays clearly reflect that participant acquired a certain level of content knowledge, which they effectively demonstrated in their writing. Despite the overall improvement in writing performance among most students, it is essential to assess

their language proficiency from multiple perspectives (Hulstijn, 2011). The language proficiency levels of students significantly influence their performance enhancement (Desai, 2016).

Questionnaire

All participants returned the completed questionnaires to the researcher, along with four lecturers from the Department of English, to ensure the trustworthiness of the collected data. The results from the questionnaire indicated that students experience numerous challenges in writing texts, highlighting the need for intervention to enhance their performance. The question aimed to ascertain whether students had received any training in academic writing, their familiarity with various writing models, their understanding of genre, and the significance of the different stages in the writing process. The results were meticulously analyzed under the following five themes: (1) background knowledge of students regarding the process approach; (2) the necessity of grammar instruction; (3) the effectiveness of editing essays prior to submitting the final draft; (4) the influence of social and cultural factors on students' written texts; and (5) evaluating whether there was any improvement in the post-test compared to the pre-test.

The first theme focused on students' background knowledge of utilizing the process approach in writing. A significant majority of the students (83%) reported having some understanding of the various stages of the process approach, although they often encountered difficulties due to limited knowledge of the topic. One participant noted that their English teacher in secondary school mentioned, "The process approach has five stages, but he preferred the traditional way of assigning essays in a controlled environment." During the pre-test, students were not provided sufficient time to write multiple drafts, resulting in essays that fell short of academic standards. These findings align with Racelis and Matsuda (2013), who indicated that integrating the process approach into the genre framework significantly enhances students' writing standards. The second theme addressed the necessity of grammar instruction. All participants concurred that dedicated sessions on grammar should be included, as such instruction would help them better comprehend the language in which knowledge is communicated.

Furthermore, they recognized their low levels of academic writing proficiency, expressing that grammar teaching could facilitate improvements in their current abilities. Another participant pointed out that:

As students, we expect lecturers to have several sessions on grammar teaching to help us cope with the expected standard at university. I come from a rural village where the school have few resources and under qualified teachers who failed to equip us to cope at university level.

During the intervention period, grammar lessons were integrated into almost all contact sessions in an interactive manner, encouraging full participation from the students.

This aligns with Hinkel (2013) recommendation that targeted grammar instruction can help struggling students enhance their writing performance. The third theme explored the effectiveness of editing essays before submitting the final draft. Participants expressed differing opinions on this issue. A slightly majority (54%) expressed concerns, noting that many of their peers lacked sufficient linguistic accuracy to provide helpful feedback. On the other hand, 46% of the participants found peer editing beneficial for improving the quality of their essays. One participant remarked, "During the peer editing stage, we are expected to read thoroughly and give comments but some of us were clueless on what to do and end up indicating spelling mistakes only". After engaging in a thorough discussion, participants reached a consensus, agreeing that peer feedback could be beneficial. They recognized that despite the challenges, peer editing provided an opportunity to learn from one another and acknowledged the value of having their essays reviewed by peers to enhance their editing process and receive constructive comments.

The fourth theme examined the influence of social and cultural factors on students' written texts. Approximately 90% of the participants agreed that incorporating familiar social and cultural aspects when teaching genre-based approaches significantly helped them understand what to include in their essays. They mentioned that comparing the symbolic and cultural values embedded in different languages enabled them to use that information effectively in their writing. Hyland (2003) supports this notion, emphasizing that students should be guided to consciously engage with target genres, which helps them comprehend how language creates meaning within specific contexts. After receiving instruction on blending the process and genre approaches, participants were able to make noticeable improvements in their post-test essays. One participant, reflecting on their experience after the post-test, shared their motivation:

The information that we received from our lecturers on process and genre approaches helped us to understand the importance of different stages. This helped us to improve the quality of the essays we write for summative evaluation.

The above quotation confirms that students began to recognize the similarities between the process and genre approaches. This awareness allowed them to critically evaluate the stages involved in both approaches, helping them identify the steps that contributed to the improvement of their essays.

The final theme focused on whether students showed improvement in composing their essays after receiving instruction. All participants agreed that through a combination of lectures, student/lecturer engagement, and peer collaboration, they gained a better understanding of how to write essays. One participant highlighted that "teachers at secondary school promote memorization rather than encouraging critical thinking and peer collaboration," emphasizing the gap between secondary education and

university-level academic writing. Students also acknowledged the improvement in their writing skills, attributing it to the inclusion of cultural, social, and textual practices in the teaching process. These elements helped them connect academic writing to their everyday realities, making it more relatable and enhancing their engagement. Importantly, participants recognized that explicit instruction in language use and knowledge of genre conventions significantly improved the quality of their essays. Based on these findings, the researcher evaluated both the process and genre approaches, concluding that the blended process-genre approach holds promise for enhancing students' writing abilities by addressing both linguistic accuracy and genre awareness.

The process-genre approach offers significant benefits for ESL students by integrating both cognitive and cultural aspects, while guiding them through all the essential stages of essay writing. [Ferris and Eckstein \(2020\)](#) assert that "writing requires a great deal of explicit and implicit linguistic knowledge," which many first-year students often lack. During the interval between the pre-test and post-test, lecturers provided instruction on various writing approaches, enabling students to shape their essays with attention to both micro (e.g., grammar, vocabulary) and macro-level (e.g., organization, coherence) writing skills. Furthermore, interactive grammar teaching, which encouraged active student participation, was incorporated, resulting in improved linguistic accuracy. Post-test essays demonstrated enhanced language usage, including better vocabulary and more complex sentence structures, which had been problematic in the pre-test. The integration of the process-genre approach allowed students to understand the social purpose of language, equipping them to write essays that meet university-level standards. This aligns with the findings of [Huang and Zhang \(2020\)](#), who emphasized that the process-genre approach improves L2 students' performance in writing argumentative essays.

The pre-test results clearly show that students have varying levels of writing proficiency due to their diverse educational backgrounds, leading the researcher to recommend the process-genre approach. The isolated use of either the process or genre approach alone may not be sufficient to address all the writing challenges faced by ESL students. Despite slight differences between the two approaches, both are critical in helping students develop academic writing skills. [Yan \(2005\)](#) highlights that "this approach allows students to study the relationship between purpose and form for a particular genre as they use the recursive processes of prewriting, drafting, revision, and editing" (p. 20). The post-test results revealed significant improvements as students successfully integrated steps from the genre approach into the writing process. [Hayes \(2012\)](#) emphasizes that modeling writing is a crucial component for helping students improve their texts. The hybrid process-genre model, therefore, offers flexibility for writing teachers, allowing them to select the most effective elements from each approach to scaffold students' academic writing development more effectively.

The findings of the study indicate that students significantly improved their academic writing proficiency by following the six steps as suggested by [Yan \(2005\)](#), which include: preparation, modeling and reinforcing, planning, joint constructing, independent constructing, and revision. In the post-tests, students demonstrated notable progress on vocabulary use and sentence construction, showcasing their ability to provide clear examples based on discussion held during the joint construction phase – an ability that was lacking in the pre-test. [Mauludin \(2020\)](#) supports the notion that joint construction is particularly effective in refining students' written texts. Through this method, students are paired with a peer to collaboratively revise their work, focusing on improving both organizational structure and linguistic features.

The restructured process-genre approach, as expounded by [Huang and Zhaug \(2020\)](#), allowed students greater flexibility to integrate both models effectively. This approach not only facilitated the development of essential academic writing skills but also emphasized the transferability of genre knowledge from the students' native languages to English, the medium of instruction. This transfer plays a crucial role in enhancing students' ability to compose well-structured texts in English. Furthermore, the focus on revisiting and editing during the independent construction phase enabled students to recognize the importance of thorough self-evaluation. By revising their essays before submission, they gained a deeper understanding of how to refine their writing, improving both the content and linguistic accuracy. This iterative process empowers students to produce more polished and academically sound essays, which are key skills in higher education.

CONCLUSION

Drawing from the data sources, it becomes evident that lecturers must prioritize teaching the fundamental of academic writing, rather than assuming that all students entering university possess effective writing skills. As [Green \(2013\)](#) highlighted, academic writing is a complex process that requires consistent and extended practice to perfect. This is particularly important for students who come from diverse linguistic and educational backgrounds, as their writing proficiency varies significantly. The integration of both the process and genre approaches addresses this challenge by framing writing as a social practice embedded in the cultural contexts in which it is produced, as [Hyland \(2016\)](#) suggests. This approach allows students to engage meaningfully with the social and communicative functions of writing, rather than merely focusing on mechanics. Additionally, attaining a sufficient level of academic writing proficiency can only be achieved by applying teaching methods and theories tailored to the specific needs of each student group.

This article has effectively illustrated the academic writing challenges faced by many students at a South African university, where English is predominantly learned as a second language. These students often struggle with essay writing, compounded by their limited proficiency in the grammatical, lexical, and syntactic aspects of English. As a response, the process-genre approach emerges as a suitable solution to improve their writing skills. This approach actively engages students in the drafting and revision process, encouraging a thorough focus on both the development of ideas and the final product. The hybrid model, as recommended by [Badger and White \(2000\)](#), is particularly beneficial in addressing these issues. It combines the strengths of both the process and genre approaches, allowing students to develop a deeper understanding of the social and cultural contexts of writing while methodically following the stages of the writing process. By employing this approach, the university can enhance students' academic writing proficiency, which in turn can positively impact the degree completion rates. Students who have stronger writing skills are more likely to succeed in their academic endeavors, leading to higher retention and graduation rates.

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