

Exploring English for Specific Purpose Students' Perceptions of Digital Materials in English Language Learning: Benefits, Challenges, and Recommendations

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Abstract *This study aimed to discover how English for Specific Purposes (ESP) students perceived the utilization of digital resources during their language-learning process. A questionnaire with 20 statements divided into categories like usability, engagement, problems, and recommendations was completed by 28 study participants. According to a Likert scale that ranged from highly agree to strongly disagree, the participants gave their answers. The research found that ESP students generally had favourable opinions of digital resources. They thought the resources were easy to use, available on a variety of platforms and devices, and offered flexibility in their study. The participants acknowledged the motivating qualities of digital resources as well as their role in motivation and the growth of English language proficiency. They did, nonetheless, draw attention to several difficulties, such as the need for more help and technical problems. These opinions of ESP students toward digital materials are revealed, and this knowledge aids teachers and curriculum writers in creating resources for language acquisition that are beneficial. Future studies can concentrate on resolving the issues found and improving the advantages of digital resources in ESP scenarios.*

Keywords ESP students, Digital materials, EFL

INTRODUCTION

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses are designed to provide learners with language skills tailored to their professional needs (Agustina, 2014). In the digital age, the integration of digital media in ESP classrooms has gained significant attention to enhance language learning experiences. Digital media encompasses various forms, such as online articles, videos, podcasts, interactive exercises, and simulations, which offer learners authentic and contextually relevant materials (Konoplianyk, 2018). Understanding ESP students' perceptions of digital media and its impact on their learning outcomes is crucial for educators and curriculum developers aiming to optimize its integration in English for Business courses.

The use of digital media in language learning has emerged as a valuable resource due to its potential to provide learners with a wide range of interactive resources and immediate access to up-to-date information (Blin & Munro, 2008). In the context of English for Business, digital media offers learners authentic materials that reflect real-world business scenarios, enabling the development of industry-specific vocabulary and improved understanding of business concepts (Knihova, n.d.). Moreover, digital media platforms facilitate self-paced learning, allowing learners to access materials at their convenience and revisit content as needed, catering to the specific needs of ESP students (Haleem et al., 2022).

ESP students' perceptions of digital media significantly influence their engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes (Ramadhani et al., 2022). Previous studies have reported positive attitudes towards the use of digital media in language learning, with learners perceiving it as engaging, motivating, and beneficial (Abubakar & Tsuraya, 2021; Hoesny et al., 2020; Listari & Rozimela, 2022; Triristina & Khabib, 2021). Learners appreciate the authenticity and relevance of digital media resources as they expose them to real-life business contexts, enhancing their ability to communicate effectively in professional settings (Vaičiūnienė & Užpalienė, 2012). However, individual differences in learners' perceptions exist, influenced by factors such as technological competence, prior experience, and personal learning preferences (Kaid Mohammed Ali et al., 2019).

The effectiveness of digital media in ESP instruction has been widely explored in the literature. Research has shown that the integration of digital media positively impacts language learning outcomes, including improved language proficiency, enhanced communicative competence, and increased motivation (Abubakar & Tsuraya, 2021; Hoesny et al., 2020; Ramadhani et al., 2022; Triristina & Khabib, 2021). Digital media provides learners with authentic materials that bridge the gap between classroom instruction and real-world business communication, enabling learners to practice language skills in relevant contexts (Vaičiūnienė & Užpalienė, 2012). Furthermore, the interactive nature of digital media promotes active learning, as learners engage in simulations, discussions, and collaborative tasks, fostering their language development and critical thinking skills (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008).

Despite the growing body of research on digital media in language learning, there is a need for further investigation, particularly within the context of ESP and English for Business. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring ESP students' perceptions of digital media used in English for Business courses. By examining students' attitudes, preferences, and beliefs regarding the use of digital media, this study will provide valuable insights into how digital media can be effectively integrated into ESP classrooms to meet the specific needs and expectations of learners.

METHOD

This study was a descriptive case-study investigation. The purpose of this study is to determine how students at Politeknik Piksi Input Serang perceive digital media for English course material. This study focused on 28 students of class AK21A accounting major in the fourth semester of the academic year 2022-2023 at Politeknik Piksi Input Serang. The questionnaire was used by the researcher to collect data. The questionnaire selected by the researcher was adapted from A. Buzzetto-More's (2008) study on Student Perceptions of Different E-Learning Components. The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions divided into four categories, each of them had a distinct goal in evaluating how

students perceived digital materials used in English language instruction. The "Usefulness of Digital Materials" category attempted to measure the perceived influence of digital resources on linguistic abilities and overall competency. The second category "Ease of Use and Accessibility" looked at how students felt about resource use, device compatibility, and ease of resource access. The "Motivational Impact" category looked at how using digital resources affected students' engagement, motivation, and desire to explore resources. The "Challenges" category was aimed at recognizing potential roadblocks, such as technological difficulties and the requirement for further assistance. The research intended to completely capture students' perceptions across many aspects by categorizing the questions. During data collection, the researcher took several actions. The first step was producing the instrument (questionnaire), and the second was to let the respondent complete a questionnaire that was readily accessible via the Google Forms application. On a scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," respondents were then asked to designate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each item by placing a checkmark next to their response. The responses of the subjects were scored as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The third step involved analyzing the questionnaire results. The investigation results were then analyzed and conclusions were drawn from the information collected. The researcher analyzed the data using descriptive analysis. The summary of the mean score for student perception is provided below.

Table 1. Mean Score Interval Summary

| No | Interval | Interpretation |
|----|------------|----------------|
| 1 | 1.00 –1.79 | Very Low |
| 2 | 1.80 –2.59 | Low |
| 3 | 2.00 –3.39 | Medium |
| 4 | 3.40 –4.19 | High |
| 5 | 4.20 –5.00 | Very High |

Source: Educational Planning and Research Division, MOE, 2006

RESULT & DISCUSSION

RESULT

A questionnaire was distributed to 28 students as part of the study using the Google Forms and there was a 100% response rate. Twenty questions were included in the survey, and they were divided into four groups according to the Usefulness of Digital Materials, Ease of Use and Accessibility, Motivational Impact, and Challenges. The goal of the questionnaire was to collect information on how students felt about these important features of digital materials in the context of learning the English language. Tables were used to show and analyze the acquired data, enabling a concise and organized presentation of the results. The results are presented below:

A. Category 1: Usefulness of Digital Materials

Results from the first category, which examines the usefulness and effectiveness of digital materials for enhancing English language proficiency, show positive perceptions among the respondents. The mean scores for the questions ranged from 3.21 to 3.71, suggesting a moderate to high level of agreement with the statements. The majority of participants agreed that digital materials are improving their English language skills (mean score: 3.64) and enhancing their understanding of English grammar and pronunciation (mean score: 3.21). They also acknowledged that digital materials have expanded their vocabulary in English (mean score: 3.39) and believe that these materials contribute to improving their overall language skills (mean score: 3.61). Furthermore, participants expressed that digital materials have met their expectations in terms of improving their English language skills (mean score: 3.71). These findings indicate that the use of digital materials is perceived positively by the respondents, suggesting their potential in supporting language learning and skill development (Suganda, 2022).

Table 2. Category 1: Usefulness of Digital Materials

| No | Question | SA | A | N | D | SD | Mean | Int |
|----|--|----|----|---|---|----|------|------|
| 1 | Digital materials are improving my English language skills | 10 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 3.64 | High |
| 2 | Digital materials enhance my understanding of English grammar and pronunciation. | 7 | 10 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 3.21 | Med |
| 3 | Digital materials Have expanded my vocabulary in English. | 9 | 11 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3.39 | Med |
| 4 | I believe that digital materials contribute to improving my overall language skills. | 12 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3.61 | High |
| 5 | Digital materials have met my expectations in terms of improving my English language skills. | 8 | 13 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3.71 | High |

B. Category 2: Ease of Use and Accessibility

The results from this category indicate positive perceptions regarding the ease of use and accessibility of digital materials for language learning. The mean scores for the questions ranged from 3.64 to 3.89, suggesting a high level of agreement among the respondents. The majority of participants agreed that digital materials are user-friendly and easy to navigate (mean score: 3.89) and can be accessed across different devices and platforms (mean score: 3.75). They also expressed that digital materials provide them with the flexibility to learn English at their own pace (mean score: 3.68) and are compatible with the devices they use for language learning (mean score: 3.68). Additionally, participants indicated that they have reliable internet connectivity to access digital materials without interruptions (mean score: 3.64). These findings highlight the positive experiences (Zaim, 2016) of learners in terms of accessibility and convenience when using digital materials, suggesting their effectiveness in accommodating individual learning preferences and facilitating uninterrupted access to learning resources (Erlam et al., 2021).

Table 3. Category 2: Ease of Use and Accessibility

| No | Question | SA | A | N | D | SD | Mean | Int |
|----|--|----|----|---|---|----|------|------|
| 6 | Digital materials are user-friendly and easy to navigate. | 11 | 10 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3.89 | High |
| 7 | I find digital materials can be accessible across different devices and platforms. | 9 | 12 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3.75 | High |
| 8 | Digital materials provide me with the flexibility to learn English at my own pace. | 12 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 3.68 | High |
| 9 | Digital materials are compatible with the devices I use for language learning. | 10 | 11 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 3.68 | High |
| 10 | I have reliable internet connectivity to access digital materials without interruptions. | 7 | 13 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 3.64 | High |

C. Category 3: Motivational Impact

The results from the motivational category reveal the positive perceptions and experiences of learners regarding the use of digital materials for language learning. The mean scores for the questions ranged from 3.82 to 4.07, indicating a high level of agreement among the respondents. Participants expressed that they find digital materials engaging and interesting for language learning purposes (mean score: 4.07), which suggests that these materials effectively capture their attention and maintain their interest. They also agreed that digital materials increased their overall motivation to study English (mean score: 3.96) and that the interactive features of these materials enhance their engagement in language learning activities (mean score: 3.86). Additionally, participants indicated that they are motivated to explore digital materials for learning English outside of formal study settings (mean score: 3.82) and that these materials contribute to their confidence in using English (mean score: 3.89). These findings highlight the significant role of digital materials in

promoting learner engagement, motivation, and confidence, which are essential factors in successful language learning experiences (Nasution, 2022).

Table 4. Category 3: Motivational Impact

| No | Question | SA | A | N | D | SD | Mean | Int |
|----|--|----|----|---|---|----|------|------|
| 11 | I find digital materials engaging and interesting for language learning purposes. | 14 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 4.07 | High |
| 12 | Digital materials increased my overall motivation to study English. | 13 | 10 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3.96 | High |
| 13 | Interactive features of digital materials enhance my engagement in language learning activities. | 10 | 12 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 3.86 | High |
| 14 | I am motivated to explore digital materials for learning English outside of formal study settings. | 12 | 11 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3.82 | High |
| 15 | Digital materials contribute to my confidence in using English. | 11 | 11 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 3.89 | High |

D. Category 4: Challenges

The results from the Challenges category provide insights into the difficulties and recommendations associated with the use of digital materials for English language learning. The mean scores for the questions ranged from 2.82 to 3.82, indicating varying levels of agreement among the respondents. Participants expressed that digital materials can be challenging for them (mean score: 3.75), suggesting that some aspects of these materials may require additional effort or present difficulties in utilization of digital materials. Additionally, some participants reported encountering technical problems when using digital materials (mean score: 2.82), which highlights the need for reliable technology infrastructure and support to ensure a seamless learning experience. On the other hand, participants indicated that they would

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recommend the use of digital materials to other English language learners (mean score: 3.82), emphasizing the perceived benefits and value of these resources. They also expressed a need for additional support or guidance when using digital materials for English language learning (mean score: 3.64), indicating the importance of providing learners with appropriate instructions and assistance. Furthermore, participants expressed a moderate level of confidence in their ability to effectively use digital materials for English language learning (mean score: 3.68). These findings highlight the mixed experiences and challenges encountered by learners when using digital materials (Safitri et al., 2022), emphasizing the significance of technical support and guidance to maximize the potential benefits of these resources (Nofianto et al., 2020).

Table 5. Category 4: Challenges

| No | Question | SA | A | N | D | SD | Mean | Int |
|----|---|----|----|----|---|----|------|------|
| 16 | Digital materials are challenging for me. | 12 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 3.75 | High |
| 17 | I encountered technical problems when using digital materials. | 6 | 8 | 10 | 3 | 1 | 2.82 | Med |
| 18 | I will recommend the use of digital materials to other English language learners. | 12 | 10 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 3.82 | High |
| 19 | I feel that I need additional support or guidance when using digital materials for English language learning. | 8 | 11 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 3.64 | High |
| 20 | I am confident with my ability to effectively use digital materials for English language learning. | 10 | 10 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 3.68 | High |

DISCUSSION

The results of the questionnaire on students' perception of the use of digital materials in learning English reveal interesting findings across the four categories. Among the categories, the highest mean score was observed in the Motivational Impact category, with a score of 4.07. This indicates that students perceived digital materials as highly engaging, interesting, and motivating for

their language learning journey. The high mean score suggests that digital materials have the potential to inspire and sustain students' motivation in studying English (Idaryani & Fidyati, 2021).

On the other hand, the lowest mean score was found in the Challenges category, with a score of 2.82. This indicates that many students remain neutral in the presence of certain technical difficulties when using digital materials, this finding is in line with (Manalu, 2019) which found that students were still in high motivation even when facing technical disruption. While the score is relatively lower compared to other categories, it still suggests a moderate level of agreement among students. It also implies that there are areas that need improvement in terms of addressing technical challenges and ensuring a seamless experience with digital materials (Pinto da Mota Matos et al., 2016).

The highest mean score in the Motivational Impact category suggests that digital materials have a positive influence on students' motivation. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that well-designed digital materials can enhance students' engagement and enthusiasm in language learning (Erbaaggio et al., 2012). However, the presence of challenges highlights the importance of providing adequate technical support and troubleshooting resources to minimize disruptions in the learning process (Bergdahl et al., 2018).

Overall, the results indicate a generally positive perception of digital materials among students. The highest mean score in the Motivational Impact category suggests the potential of digital materials to inspire and engage students, while the lowest mean score in the Challenges category highlights the need for continuous improvement in addressing technical issues. These findings provide valuable insights for educators and curriculum developers to optimize the use of digital materials and enhance the overall language learning experience for students.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that students have high perceptions regarding the use of digital materials for learning English. The results highlight the accessibility and usability of digital materials, with participants expressing

that these materials are user-friendly, accessible across different devices, and provide flexibility in learning. Furthermore, the motivational category revealed that digital materials are seen as engaging, motivating, and contributing to learners' confidence in using English. Some of the participants also acknowledged some challenges, such as technical issues and the need for additional support but most of them remain neutral when facing technical difficulties. Overall, the study suggests that digital materials have the potential to enhance language learning experiences, providing opportunities for active engagement, and fostering motivation among students. These findings underscore the importance of incorporating digital materials effectively in English language teaching to maximize their benefits and address any challenges that may arise.

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