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THE ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' NECESSITIES IN ENGLISH AT SMA 5 MAROS

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Abstract

This study examines the English language necessities of students at SMA 5 Maros, Indonesia, employing a quantitative approach through an online questionnaire distributed to 59 11th-grade students. The research aims to give teaching strategies by understanding students' perceived language needs. Findings indicate that students primarily learn English to support future careers (49.2%) and communicate with native speakers (40.7%). Speaking emerges as the most valued skill (66.1%), followed by listening (18.6%). Students show a strong preference for music-based learning activities, with 45.8% favoring listening to English songs and singing in English. For reading, short texts like quotes (37.3%) and song lyrics (35.6%) are preferred. In writing, students favor composing simple sentences about themselves (49.2%). The research contributes to the broader understanding of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in Indonesian secondary education, highlighting the importance of needs analysis in creating relevant and motivating language learning experiences.

Keywords: *English for Specific Purposes, a quantitative approach, Need Analysis, Senior High School*

INTRODUCTION

English has become an essential skill in the modern globalized world, impacting academic, professional, and personal domains. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language across various educational levels, including senior high schools. Understanding the specific necessities of students in learning English is crucial for designing effective curricula and instructional strategies. This article aims to analyze the necessities of students at Senior High School 5 Maros in their English learning journey, highlighting the key areas that require attention to enhance their language proficiency.

Language education experts emphasize the importance of needs analysis in curriculum development. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) define needs analysis as a process that identifies the gap between what learners know and what they need to know. They argue that understanding students' needs is fundamental to the creation of relevant and engaging language programs. This perspective is supported by Richards (2001), who suggests that a needs-based approach helps in aligning instructional content with students' real-world requirements, thus making language learning more purposeful and effective.

Senior high school students in Indonesia face unique challenges in learning English. The challenges are shaped by various factors, including limited exposure to the language outside the classroom, diverse linguistic backgrounds, and differing levels of motivation

and proficiency. According to Mustika (2019), the effectiveness of English language instruction in Indonesian schools often hinges on how well educators can tailor their teaching methods to address the diverse student needs. For instance, students may require more focused instruction in certain language skills such as listening or speaking, which are often less emphasized in traditional classroom settings.

Furthermore, the educational context of SMA 5 Maros presents specific considerations. As a public high school in Maros Regency, South Sulawesi, the institution caters to a diverse student population with varying levels of English proficiency and educational aspirations. Rahman and Dalimunte (2020) highlight that schools in such regions often struggle with limited resources and access to contemporary teaching materials, which can impede the learning process. Therefore, a thorough analysis of students' necessities can provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers to improve English education in this context.

Previous studies have shown that addressing students' needs in English education can lead to significant improvements in their language skills and overall academic performance. For instance, Nugroho and Suryana (2018) found that implementing a needs-based curriculum in Indonesian high schools resulted in higher student engagement and better learning outcomes. This underscores the importance of conducting a detailed needs analysis to identify the specific requirements of students at Senior High School 5 Maros, which can inform the development of targeted instructional strategies and resources.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has emerged as a significant area within the field of English language teaching, focusing on meeting the specific language needs of learners in various academic and professional contexts. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) define ESP as an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning. This learner-centered approach emphasizes the importance of understanding and addressing the specific needs of students in their particular learning contexts. Central to the concept of ESP is the process of needs analysis. As Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) argue, needs analysis is the cornerstone of ESP, providing the foundation for all subsequent decisions regarding course design, materials development, and teaching methodologies. Needs analysis in ESP contexts aims to identify the specific reasons for which a learner is learning English, allowing educators to tailor their instruction to meet these specific requirements.

Robinson (1991) further elaborates that needs analysis in ESP involves gathering information about learners' current language proficiency, their target language needs, and the gap between the two. This process helps in determining the most effective ways to bridge this gap through appropriate course design and instructional strategies.

In recent years, the importance of needs analysis in ESP has been further emphasized by researchers. For instance, Boroujeni and Fard (2013) conducted a study on ESP needs analysis in Iran, highlighting how understanding learners' specific needs can significantly enhance the effectiveness of ESP courses. The research underscored the importance of considering both present and future needs of learners in designing ESP curricula.

Moreover, Alsamadani (2017) explored the English language needs of Saudi engineering students, demonstrating how needs analysis can reveal disparities between learners' perceived needs and the actual requirements of their academic and professional contexts. This research emphasized the importance of aligning ESP courses with both learner perceptions and realworld demands. In the Indonesian context, Poedjiastutie and

Oliver (2017) conducted a needs analysis of English learning at Islamic universities in Indonesia. Their research revealed the complex interplay between students' language needs, institutional policies, and societal expectations, highlighting the importance of context-specific needs analysis in ESP course development.

The process of needs analysis typically involves various data collection methods. Long (2005) advocates for a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative tools such as surveys with qualitative methods like interviews and observations. This comprehensive approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of learners' needs, taking into account multiple perspectives and sources of information.

Furthermore, Basturkmen (2010) emphasizes the dynamic nature of needs analysis, suggesting that it should be an ongoing process rather than a one-time event. This continuous assessment allows ESP practitioners to adapt their courses to evolving learner needs and changing target situation requirements.

Ultimately, understanding the necessities of students in learning English at SMA 5 Maros is a vital step towards enhancing their language proficiency and academic success. By drawing on the insights from needs analysis research and considering the unique challenges faced by the students, educators can develop more effective and relevant English language programs. This article will delve into the specific needs of the students, examining various factors that influence their English learning experiences and proposing recommendations for addressing the needs in the educational setting of SMA 5 Maros.

METHOD

This research employed a quantitative research approach to analyze the English language necessities of students at SMA 5 Maros. Data collection was conducted using an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The questionnaire was designed to gather information about students' perceived necessities in English language learning, covering various aspects of language skills and usage.

The participants in this research of 59 students from grade 11 at SMA 5 Maros. The students were drawn from three different classes within the same grade level. The first class contributed 23 participants, while the second and third classes each provided 18 participants. This sample represents the entire population of grade 11 students at the school, ensuring a comprehensive representation of student perspectives across different class compositions.

The questionnaire was structured to elicit specific information about the students' English language necessities. It included questions related to the four main language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). The items in the questionnaire were carefully formulated to capture the students' perceptions of their current language necessities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research project gathered information on student requirements through a questionnaire, examining their necessities, lacks, and wants. However, the current paper will concentrate solely on discussing the findings related to students' necessities. The research posed 10 questions to assess the English language requirements of students at SMA 5 Maros, which are outlined as follows:

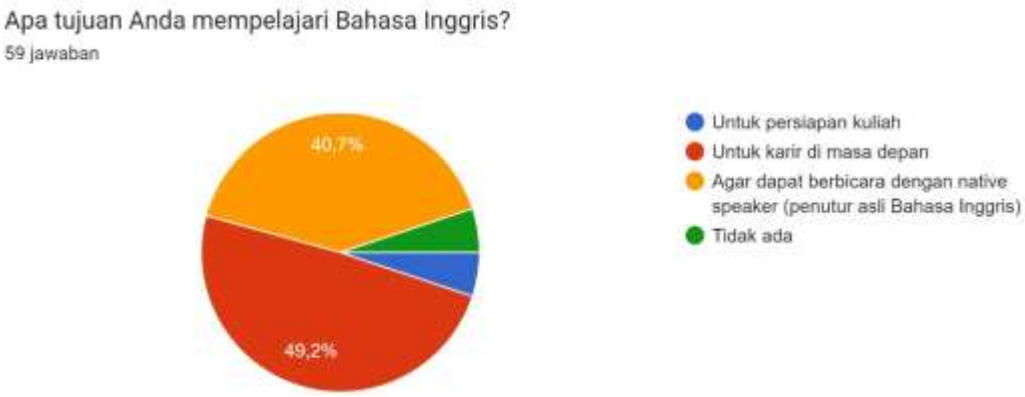


Figure 1. The Result of the First question about purpose in learning English

The first question is "What is your purpose in learning English?". The data shows that the majority of students 49,2% learn English to support their future careers. This indicates a strong instrumental motivation among students, who consider English as an important skill for their professional development. The second most common reason 40,7% was to be able to communicate with native speakers, findings highlight the practical and social motivations that drive students' English learning at SMA 5 Maros.

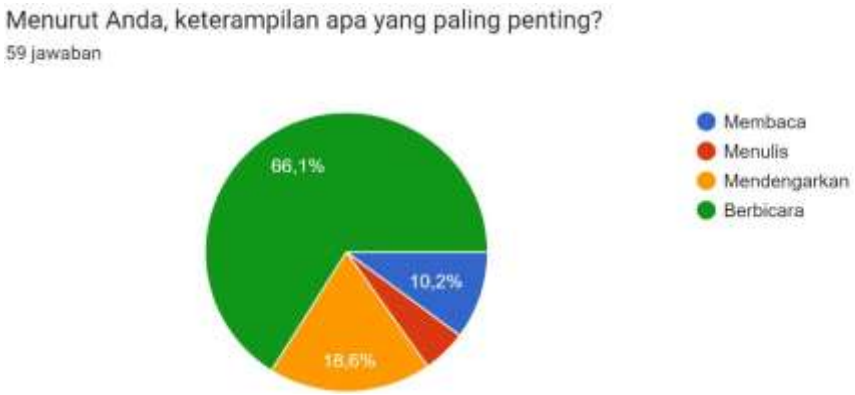


Figure 2. The Result of the results from the second question regarding what skills they think are important

The second question is "What skills do you think are most important?". Speaking emerged as the most important skill according to 66,1% of students, followed by listening at 18,6%. This preference for oral communication skills suggests that students prioritize the ability to engage in verbal interactions in English. The lower emphasis on reading 10,2% and writing may indicate that students see a less pressing need for these skills or find them less challenging. This information is crucial for curriculum developers and teachers to ensure a balanced approach while giving proper emphasis to speaking and listening activities in the classroom.



Figure 3. The Result of the Third Question on the importance of reading English texts for them

The third question is "Is the ability to read texts in English important to you?". Most students 39% considered the ability to read texts in English quite important, while 33,9% considered it important and 25,4% considered it very important. This indicates a high awareness among students about the value of reading skills in English language learning. This finding emphasizes the need to give sufficient attention to the development of reading skills in the curriculum, even though it is not considered the most important skill by the majority of students.



Figure 4. The Result of the Fourth Question on understanding the meaning of English movies/videos/songs is important for them

The fourth question is "Is understanding the meaning of English movies/videos/songs important to you?". The data shows that 44,1% of students considered the ability to understand English media content quite important, while 30,5% considered it important and 20,3% considered it very important. This finding reflects the high interest among students in English language media and the recognition of the important role this skill plays in improving their language comprehension. This suggests that the use of authentic materials such as movies, videos, and songs in English language teaching can be an effective strategy to increase student engagement and motivation.



Figure 5. The Result of the Fifth Question on the important of speaking English

The fifth question is "Is being able to speak English important to you?". The majority of students 45,8% considered English speaking skills to be important, while 27,1% considered them quite important and 25,4% considered them very important. There were no students who considered this skill unimportant. This finding is in line with previous data showing speaking as the skill considered most important. This confirms the need to provide more opportunities for students to practice and develop their speaking skills in the context of English language learning.

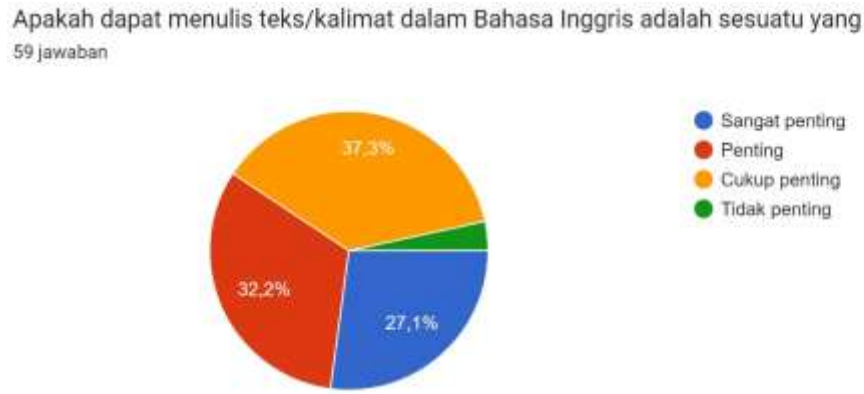


Figure 6. The Result of the Sixth Question on the important of texts/sentences in English

The sixth question is "Is being able to write texts/sentences in English important to you?". The data shows that 37,3% of students considered writing skills in English quite important, while 32,2% consider them important and 27,1% considered it very important. This may reflect students' perception of a lower need for writing skills in the context of their daily use of English.

However, it remains important to ensure that writing skills are not neglected in the curriculum.

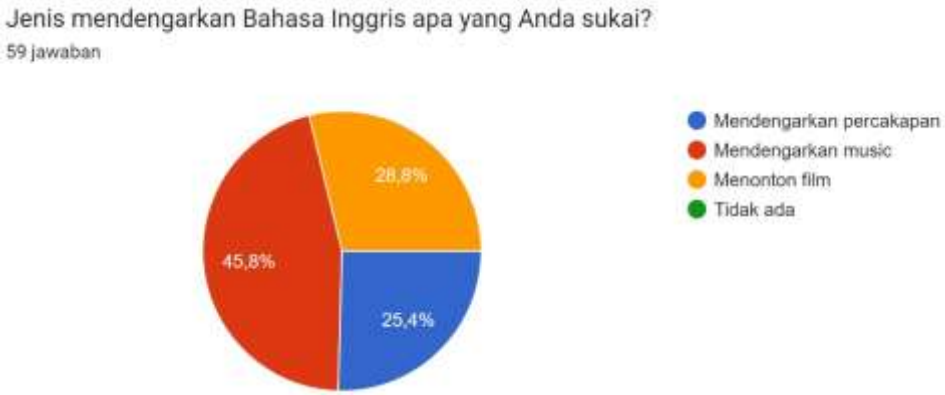


Figure 7. The Result of the Seventh Question on preferred listening types

The seventh question is "What type of English listening do you prefer?". Listening to English songs emerged as the most preferred activity 45,8%, followed by watching English movies 28.8% and listening to conversation 25.4%. The preferences suggest that students tend to favor listening activities that involve entertainment and authentic communication contexts. The findings can be used to design more engaging and relevant learning activities, utilizing resources such as songs to improve students' listening skills.



Figure 8. The Result of the Eighth Question on type of English-speaking activities

The eighth question is "What type of English-speaking activities do you prefer?". The data showed that students most preferred speaking activities in the form of singing in English 45,8%, followed by practicing the dialog in the movie 23.7%, talking with friends 22%, and none 8,5%. This preference reflects students' desire to engage in singing activities using English and conversation-like activities allow students to practice in situations that are more similar to everyday language use.

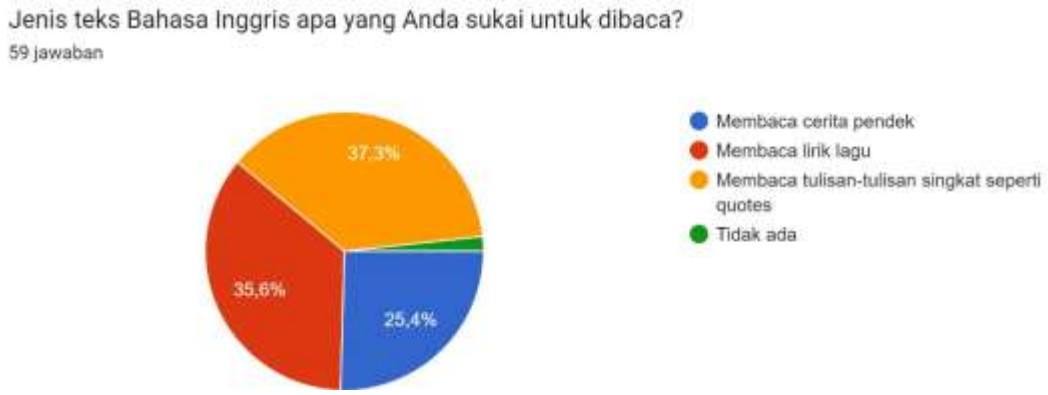


Figure 9. The Result of the Ninth Question on type of English text

The ninth question is "What type of English text do you prefer?". Read short writings such as quotes emerged as the most preferred text type to read by 37,3%, followed by reading songs lyrics 35.6% and reading short stories 25.4%. This can guide teachers in selecting reading materials that match students' interests, while still ensuring exposure to a variety of text types for comprehensive reading skills development.



Figure 10. The Result of the Tenth Question on type of writing in English

The tenth question is "What type of writing do you prefer in English writing?". Writing simple sentences about oneself or other activities emerged as the most preferred type of writing 49,2%, followed by writing photo captions 20.3% writing sentences using new vocabulary 18,6%, and none 11,9%. The preferences indicate students' interest in more creative and expressive forms of writing, as well as more informal forms of written communication such as messages or chats. The findings can assist teachers in designing more engaging and relevant writing tasks for students, while still ensuring the development of academic writing skills through essay writing.

The analysis of students' necessities in English at Senior High School 5 Maros reveals several key insights that have important implications for curriculum design and teaching approaches.

Firstly, the strong instrumental motivation among students, with nearly half (49.2%) viewing English as crucial for their future careers, aligns with the growing importance of English in the global job market. This finding echoes the observations of Mustika (2019), who highlighted the need for English education in Indonesia to address real-world

requirements. It suggests that incorporating more career-oriented language tasks and materials could enhance student engagement and motivation.

The overwhelming preference for speaking skills (66.1%) as the most important, followed by listening (18.6%), indicates a strong desire among students to develop oral communication abilities. This preference for productive skills over receptive ones (reading and writing) may reflect the students' perception of English as a tool for direct communication, particularly in future professional contexts. This finding supports Rahman and Dalimunte's (2020) assertion about the need for more interactive and communicative approaches in English teaching, especially in regions with limited exposure to the language outside the classroom.

Interestingly, while speaking is prioritized, students also recognize the importance of other skills. The majority of students consider reading English texts and understanding English media content as important or very important. This balanced perspective suggests an awareness of the interconnected nature of language skills and the need for a comprehensive approach to language learning. It aligns with the recommendations of Nugroho and Suryana (2018) for a needs-based curriculum that addresses multiple language competencies.

The students' preferences for specific learning activities provide valuable insights for instructional design. The high preference for listening to English songs (45.8%) and singing in English (45.8%) as speaking activities suggests a strong inclination towards music-based learning. This preference could be leveraged to create more engaging and effective learning experiences, as suggested by Poedjiastutie and Oliver (2017) in their study on context-specific needs analysis in Indonesian universities.

The preference for reading short texts like quotes (37.3%) and song lyrics (35.6%) over longer texts indicates a need for more accessible and immediately engaging reading materials. This finding could inform the selection of reading materials that match students' interests while gradually introducing more complex texts to develop comprehensive reading skills.

In terms of writing, the preference for simple, personal writing tasks (49.2%) over more formal academic writing suggests a need to build confidence in basic writing skills before progressing to more complex tasks. This approach aligns with Basturkmen's (2010) recommendation for a dynamic needs analysis that adapts to evolving learner needs.

However, it's important to note that while addressing students' perceived needs is crucial, the curriculum should also prepare them for future academic and professional requirements that they may not yet anticipate. This balance between immediate preferences and long-term needs is a key challenge in ESP curriculum design, as highlighted by Boroujeni and Fard (2013).

CONCLUSION

The analysis of students' English needs at SMA 5 Maros reveals strong instrumental motivation, with 49.2% viewing English as vital for future careers, suggesting the need for a more professionally oriented curriculum. A high preference for speaking (66.1%) and listening (18.6%) reflects a focus on oral communication, while the recognition of other skills points to the importance of a balanced approach. Students' interest in music-based activities and short, engaging texts indicates a desire for interactive and enjoyable learning.

While addressing current preferences is important, the curriculum should also prepare students for future academic and professional challenges. This study highlights the value of needs analysis in shaping relevant, adaptive English instruction through a dynamic and responsive ESP-based curriculum.

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