

Investigating Target and Learning Needs of Senior High School Students for English Productive Material Development

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the target and learning needs of senior high school students to inform the development of effective English productive materials. Despite acknowledging the importance of English for future careers and academic success, many students face significant challenges in achieving functional fluency, particularly in speaking, due to a misalignment between standardized curriculum materials and their actual communicative requirements. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, this research surveyed 19 students to analyze their necessities, lacks, and wants. The findings reveal a strong consensus among students regarding the necessity of prioritizing oral communication skills. However, structural gaps in grammar and pronunciation hinder their confidence. Furthermore, the participants expressed a strong preference for interactive, video-based, and practical learning experiences over traditional textbook-centered instruction, emphasizing the value of peer-led collaborative practice in blended learning environments. These results indicate that current pedagogical approaches require a transition toward learner-centered modules that integrate digital media and authentic communication tasks. By bridging the gap between student aspirations and instructional delivery, this research provides a foundation for educators to design targeted English materials that foster both linguistic competence and engagement in secondary education..

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INTRODUCTION

English language proficiency has become a fundamental necessity in the modern era, particularly for senior high school students who are preparing for higher education and global communication. In the context of English Language Teaching (ELT), developing effective pedagogical frameworks must be grounded in a comprehensive understanding of learners' specific communicative profiles. This alignment ensures that the classroom environment is not merely a theoretical exercise, but a targeted preparation for the linguistic challenges students will face in their future academic and social environments. Therefore, instructional delivery in secondary education must be intentionally designed to equip students with practical skills that extend beyond basic classroom requirements.

To establish an effective language program, curriculum developers must rely on systematic frameworks that prioritize the learners' perspectives. Richards (2001) asserts that a thorough needs analysis is the essential starting point for curriculum design to collect reliable information on learner requirements, specifically concerning their necessities, lacks, and wants. Furthermore, Brown (2016) posits that understanding the subjective wants of students is vital for ensuring long-term classroom engagement and keeping learners invested in the material. Supporting this view, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) argue for a learning-centered approach that successfully bridges the gap between theoretical grammar knowledge and real-life usage. When these theoretical principles are applied, educators can design instruction that systematically addresses the concrete objectives of the learners.

However, the primary problem in many senior high school ELT settings is the persistent misalignment between standardized classroom materials and the students' actual communicative deficiencies. While students widely recognize English as a vital tool for their future, many find that standard instructional

content fails to address their specific linguistic gaps, such as difficulties in spontaneous speaking or listening comprehension. This disconnect is frequently exacerbated by the use of static, textbook-heavy methods that do not align with how modern teenagers naturally consume information or interact with the language in their daily lives. Consequently, the lack of contextualized content creates a barrier that prevents students from achieving functional fluency.

Addressing these pedagogical gaps is critical because the widening divide between student expectations and rigid instructional delivery can lead to a significant decline in learning motivation. Long (2005) emphasizes that language instruction completely loses its efficacy if it is not perceived by the learners as relevant to their real-life goals. When English lessons feel disconnected from real-world utility, such as international networking, academic traveling, or passing competitive university entrance exams, students become passive participants rather than active learners. In an increasingly connected global society, failing to provide targeted and responsive materials will leave high school students linguistically unprepared, effectively hindering their academic and personal potential.

The preliminary findings derived from initial observations indicate a strong consensus among high school students regarding the importance of English for their future career and academic pathways. The initial data reveal that while students acknowledge the necessity of mastering all core language competencies, receptive

and productive gaps remain a major hurdle, with confidence in oral communication being a primary concern. Additionally, the initial feedback highlights that modern learners express a strong preference for interactive, digital, and task-based learning experiences over traditional rote memorization. These insights demonstrate that students are looking for a communicative, practical, and highly engaging classroom dynamic.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the specific English learning needs, lacks, and wants of senior high school students. The focus of this research is to evaluate the relationship between the students' personal goals, their immediate language difficulties, and their preferred learning styles. By mapping these empirical observations onto language learning frameworks, this study intends to define the exact parameters required to design English learning materials that are both relevant and engaging. Ultimately, the insights gained from this study are expected to provide practical recommendations for educators to shift the instructional focus from passive consumption to active, real-world communication..

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the specific requirements for developing English teaching materials among the target learners. The qualitative framework was chosen to gain a deeper understanding of the students' underlying motivations and learning experiences beyond simple statistics. Data collection was conducted through a structured questionnaire designed to elicit detailed insights into the students' necessities, lacks, and wants regarding their language acquisition process.

The participants of this research consisted of 19 students who provided personal perspectives on their learning preferences and challenges. The data analysis focused on identifying patterns within several key areas: (1) target needs, including personal goals and academic necessities; (2) learning needs, covering preferred instructional media and ideal learning environments; and (3) subjective difficulties in mastering specific language skills.

The findings were interpreted descriptively to provide a comprehensive and objective overview of the students' requirements. This qualitative procedure ensures that the resulting teaching materials are built upon a rich foundation of empirical evidence, justifying the selection of specific pedagogical strategies to better meet student expectations..

RESULT

A systematic need analysis was strictly conducted prior to developing the English teaching materials. This diagnostic process ensures that the structural design of the new module precisely accommodates the target high school learners' real profiles. Following the curriculum framework established by Hutchinson and Waters, the empirical data gathered from the 15-item questionnaire is classified into Target Needs (comprising Necessities, Lacks, and Wants) and Learning Needs.

Target Needs: Necessities

Necessities refer to the type of language skills and objective goals that learners must acquire to function effectively in their academic environments and regular social circles.

Table 1: The Questionnaire Results of Students' Necessities

Aspect	Answers	<i>f</i>	Percentage
Necessities	Speaking	15	78.95%
	Listening	3	15.79%
	Reading	1	5.26%
	Students often use English	2	10.53%
	Students sometimes use English	13	68.42%
	Students rarely use English	4	21.05%
	To communicate in their daily life	8	42.11%
	To support their studies	4	21.05%
	For their future career	7	36.84%

The baseline metrics in Table 1 highlight the clear objective requirements of the student cohort. When identifying their most critical linguistic skill, a substantial majority of the students (78.95%) explicitly select speaking. Regarding their practical immersion routines, 68.42% note that they "sometimes" utilize English in their daily lives. Furthermore, their target motivations are centered heavily on practical oral interaction, with 42.11% aiming to communicate fluidly in daily life and 36.84% planning to use the language for their future careers. These insights confirm that high school material development must shift from rote written tasks to dynamic spoken production.

Target Needs: Lacks

Lacks identify the current gap between the students' actual proficiency levels and the desired target situations, pointing out their core linguistic struggles..

Table 2: The Questionnaire Results of Students' Lacks

Aspect	Answers	<i>f</i>	Percentage
Lacks	Vocabulary	1	5,26%
	Grammar	7	36,84%
	Pronunciation	6	31,58%
	Understanding Meaning	4	21,05%
	Speaking	8	42,11%
	Writing	3	15,79%
	Listening	7	36,84%
	Reading	1	5,26%

Table 2 addresses the exact language deficiencies that hinder students' communicative performance. On a structural level, the primary root causes of their learning difficulties are grammar (36.84%) and pronunciation barriers (31.58%). These micro-skill weaknesses relate closely to their macro-skill struggles, where 42.11% of the students explicitly experience the most difficulty during speaking activities, followed by 36.84% who struggle during listening tasks. Therefore, instructional developers must embed structural and phonetic scaffolding within the learning materials to help students overcome these production errors.

Target Needs: Wants

Wants represent the learners' subjective views and personal desires regarding what they hope to achieve from the language learning process, which heavily affects their engagement.

Table 3: The Questionnaire Results of Students' Wants

Aspect	Answers	<i>f</i>	Percentage
Wants	To speak fluently	12	63.16%
	For future job	5	26.32%
	To understand movies/music	1	5.26%
	For school/exams	1	5.26%
	Students quite confident	12	63.16%
	Students not confident	4	21.05%
	Students very confident	2	10.53%
	Students very not confident	1	5.26%
	Very important	16	84.21%
	Important	3	15.79%
	Less important	0	0%

The data detailed in Table 3 uncovers a powerful internal drive for oral fluency among the high school participants. A resounding 63.16% of the student cohort explicitly state that their personal reason for wanting to learn English is to speak fluently. This personal goal is reinforced by their belief in the language, with 84.21% considering English as "very important" for their future. Although 63.16% feel "quite confident," a combined 26.31% express low self-confidence when using the language. Consequently, teaching materials should be intentionally designed to promote low-anxiety speaking tasks that honor their subjective aspirations.

Learning Needs: Input and Expectations

Learning needs explore how the students prefer to acquire the language. This section analyzes their specific expectations for learning materials, preferred presentation formats, and media inputs.

Table 4: Students' Preferences on Learning Input and Expectations

Aspect	Answers	<i>f</i>	Percentage
Input and Expectations	Should be easy to understand	4	21.05%
	Should be interesting and fun	9	47.37%
	Should be useful for real life	6	31.58%

With videos (movies, etc)	13	68,42%
With audio (song/ podcast)	4	21,05%
With interactive apps/ games	2	10,53%
Presentation with pictures/visuals	4	21.05%
Presentation with text only	1	5.26%
Presentation with combination of text and video	12	63,16%
Presentation with real life examples	2	10,53%

Table 4 offers valuable parameters for establishing effective pedagogical inputs. When detailing their material expectations, 47.37% of the high school students demand "interesting and fun" materials, while 31.58% emphasize utility for real-life application. In terms of media inputs, 68.42% of the students firmly report that videos help them understand English better, completely sidelining traditional textbooks (0%). This visual orientation is confirmed by their presentation preferences, with 63.16% selecting a combination of text and video. Therefore, material developers should focus on creating video-based modules with integrated text to improve cognitive comprehension.

Learning Needs: Setting, Practice, and Response

The final component of learning needs outlines the optimal learning setting, specific ways of practice, and the students' overall emotional responses to classroom activities.

Table 5: Students' Preferences on Settings, Practice, and Responses

Aspect	Answers	<i>f</i>	Percentage
Setting, Practice, and Response	Material with examples	2	10.53%
	Material with exercises	4	21.05%
	Material with explanation	4	21.05%
	Material with practice activities	9	47.37%
	Practice with friends	9	47.37%
	Practice with teacher	4	21.05%
	Practice in front of class	1	5.26%
	Practice individually	5	26.32%
	Learn in classroom	4	21.05%
	Learn outside classroom	1	5.26%
	Learn combination	14	73.68%
	Very enthusiastic	10	52.63%
	Quite interested	9	47.37%
	Less interested	0	0%
	Not interested	0	0%

As illustrated in Table 5, the data provides clear procedural directions for the classroom syllabus. For task procedures, 47.37% of respondents state that

hands-on practice activities help them the most. When practicing oral production, the students heavily prefer cooperative setups, with 47.37% choosing to practice with friends over isolating performance in front of the class (5.26%). Additionally, a major 73.68% choose a combination of settings (blended/flexible learning spaces) rather than being limited to just inside the classroom. Finally, their high learning receptivity is proven by their initial responses, where 52.63% describe themselves as very enthusiastic and 47.37% as quite interested. These positive results suggest that utilizing peer-led, mobile/blended practice activities will optimize their natural classroom enthusiasm.

DISCUSSION

The data shows a clear gap between what students need and what they lack. For necessities, the majority of students prioritize speaking skills because they want to use English for real-life communication and future careers, not just for passing exams. However, looking at their lacks, students face major difficulties in grammar and pronunciation, which makes speaking their hardest challenge. This implies that while students have high motivation to speak, they lack the linguistic foundation. This problem usually happens because high school lessons focus too much on textbook memorization rather than oral practice.

Regarding learning preferences, traditional textbook-heavy methods are largely unpopular. Instead, students expect materials that are practical and visually engaging. A large percentage of students explicitly state that video-based media and a combination of text and visuals help them understand English better. This preference aligns with their daily digital habits. Using dry, text-only materials will only decrease their motivation. Therefore, material developers should integrate video content and visual aids to make complex language rules more accessible.

For classroom activities, students prefer hands-on practice over teacher-centered lectures. Interestingly, during speaking practice, most students prefer working in groups or pairs with their peers, while very few like to speak individually in front of the class. This indicates that individual public speaking triggers high anxiety, whereas peer practice provides a safer, low-stress environment. Additionally, students prefer a blended learning setting (inside and outside the classroom). Since their general enthusiasm toward English is already high, teachers should utilize this by designing flexible, interactive group tasks.

Overall, the findings indicate that standardized English textbooks are insufficient for meeting students' specific goals. Material developers need to create targeted modules that bridge the gap between students' communicative needs and their linguistic lacks. By understanding these factors, educators and material developers can intentionally design engaging, video-scaffolded lessons that prioritize peer collaboration and practical communication. This shift ensures the English classroom becomes an active space that effectively prepares students for real-world interaction.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that there is a mismatch between the English learning materials commonly used in senior high schools and the actual needs of students. The findings

reveal that students consider speaking as the most important skill for achieving their academic, social, and future career goals. However, they continue to face significant difficulties in grammar, pronunciation, and oral communication, which limit their ability to use English confidently in real-life situations.

The analysis also demonstrates that students prefer engaging, practical, and technology-supported learning experiences. Video-based materials, visual presentations, collaborative activities, and opportunities for hands-on practice are perceived as more effective than traditional textbook-centered instruction. These preferences indicate that students learn more effectively when language learning is connected to authentic communication and supported by interactive media.

The implications of these findings suggest that English material development should move beyond standardized and text-focused approaches toward learner-centered materials that emphasize speaking practice, communicative competence, and digital integration. By aligning instructional materials with students' target needs and learning preferences, educators can create more meaningful learning experiences that better prepare learners for real-world communication and future academic and professional demands.

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