

A NEEDS ANALYSIS OF BASIC READING INSTRUCTION FOR UNIVERSITY-LEVEL EFL STUDENTS

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: May 2025 Revised: August 2025 Accepted: September 2025 Published: October 2025	<i>Essential for EFL students are basic reading skills, including letter recognition, word decoding, and comprehension of phrases. Learners struggle with more difficult materials and participate actively in class discussions without honing these abilities. This study aims to investigate EFL students' needs analysis of basic reading instruction. This descriptive qualitative research design was used with the 2nd semester students of the English Language Education Study Program of Universitas Cenderawasih as the subjects of this research, using in-depth interviews and non-participant observation as data collection tools, and having 19 students as the respondents. Based on the interviews with 19 EFL students, most of them find textbook-based reading materials repetitious and devoid of visual aids, with culture, education, health, and sport. They were interesting, relevant materials that they enjoyed more. Particularly in science and academic writing, students find difficulty with longer passages, foreign vocabulary, and challenging books. They said they prefer digital resources to help understanding, including interactive exercises, audiobooks, and vocabulary lists. These findings underline the importance of level-appropriate, interesting reading materials as well as the usage of multimedia tools to assist different learning requirements. This study concludes that EFL students find challenges with standard, textbook-based reading materials, which emphasize the need for analysis for more relevant, interactive, and visually accompanied content to better fit their interests and improve reading comprehension and enthusiasm. The study recommends utilizing various reading materials, contextualized subjects, and needs-based scaffolding to improve engagement and understanding in curriculum development. EFL programmes can help learners improve their language skills.</i>
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INTRODUCTION

The foundation of English language growth is essentially basic reading skills for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. Those are fundamental skills such as letter and sound recognition, word decoding, phrase construction awareness, and primary concept identification (Perfetti & Stafura, 2014). Learners who lack mastery of these fundamental skills find it difficult to access more complex books or engage actively in class discussions. Therefore, the first step in reaching general language competency is acquiring a strong basic reading ability (Ganie et al., 2019). In the classroom, reading is a portal to grasp subject matter, follow classroom rules, and finish tests. EFL students are supposed to interact with textual resources covering textbooks and articles, as well as test questions and project

instructions. Learners without sufficient reading skills could find it challenging to understand important material or keep up with academic assignments, therefore impeding their educational development and reducing their involvement in higher-order learning opportunities (Boakye & Mbong, 2016).

Outside the classroom, reading helps EFL students operate in settings where written communication is somewhat common. From reading public signs and completing paperwork to negotiating websites and deciphering social media messages, good reading improves daily communication (Yang & Qian, 2017). Moreover, digital literacy sometimes relies on reading comprehension; this ability is more and more important in the technologically advanced globalized culture of today (Wahid et al., 2025). Although reading is important, teaching strategies sometimes may not match the real requirements of EFL students. Many programs depend on consistent teaching strategies and standardized books that do not fit students' interests, learning style, or degree of skill. Engagement, uncertainty, and a lack of drive can all result from this misfit.

Several elements help to explain the gap between student needs and instruction. Teachers can have restricted access to varied, level-appropriate resources or lack knowledge about differentiated reading instruction (Salam, 2017). Rigid syllabi or test-driven courses are among the institutional limitations that sometimes stifle creativity in instructional strategies. Furthermore, the lack of regular needs assessments could cause teachers to ignore the real difficulties of their students, therefore leading to a one-size-fits-all solution that ignores customized development. Instruction needs to get more flexible and student-centred if we are to improve EFL reading results (Oktarina et al., 2022). Needs studies, student comments, and a range of books reflecting students' backgrounds and interests help one to do this. Teachers should use scaffolded reading techniques, include technology when suitable, and support projects encouraging critical thinking and involvement (Graesser et al., 2019).

Reading involves combining the reader's knowledge with the text's features to form a mental image (Cockerill et al., 2023). Reading comprehension can include top-down, bottom-up, or interactive processing. Additionally, readers can use several methods to improve text comprehension (Sasabone et al., 2022; 2023). Reading strategies are often used in foreign language learning to address knowledge gaps (Rinantanti et al., 2024). Unlike the L1 setting, L1 reading instruction begins before learners have sufficient linguistic comprehension. An Iranian study indicated that EFL students mostly used assisted reading practices (Hatami & Asl, 2017).

Reading and comprehension are essential for navigating the 21st-century information landscape. Reading skills can help students grow personally and intellectually, especially at university. Students need good reading skills to write well in school (Rinantanti & Suhirman, 2017). Several university students, especially first-year students, struggle to read academic materials (Rinantanti et al., 2017), particularly in reading. Limited vocabulary, sentence construction, contextual meaning, and unsuitable classroom activities are the most significant obstacles students face, especially in EFL classes (Pranita, 2021). Reading and understanding scientific, social, language, and other academic texts and materials are essential for pupils. Learning to use textual structure to make brain connections and improve knowledge retention can improve reading comprehension (Wijekumar et al., 2017).

Reading helps students learn languages and gain experience (Wibowo, & Syafrizal, 2021). The essential information and ideas will be obtained. Additionally, people will learn new things. Reading comprehension involves actively engaging with written language to extract and construct meaning (Talwar et al., 2023). Reading is vital to language acquisition and is integrated with other abilities (Samangun et al., 2024). Reading comprehension helps children understand written language. Proficient readers assess their comprehension and use

techniques to understand complicated materials (Nurdianingsih, 2021). Doing so helps them understand and develop implications from their reading.

Designing successful learning opportunities in reading education depends on knowing the kinds of needs involved. Target needs are those that students must be able to perform in particular reading contexts, such as academic reading or reading for communication, including skills such as comprehension of main ideas, making inferences, and applying skimming or scanning techniques (Thamrin et al., 2019). Emphasizing the requirement of methods and preferred learning approaches, such as employing context clues, interacting with real-world books, or engaging in group reading activities, learning demands attention on how learners could reach those objectives. The present scenario demands relate to learners' current reading skills and the tactics they already employ, often exposing difficulties such as restricted vocabulary, sluggish reading pace, or lack of confidence while handling English texts (Dua et al., 2019).

Identification of the distinction between students' present reading competency and the skills they need to reach their learning objectives depends critically on needs analysis in reading teaching. Within an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, this approach includes knowing students' initial reading competency, difficulties, and particular reading goals, whether they be for academic, communicative, or personal growth. Examining these demands helps teachers create more relevant, efficient reading lessons for their particular settings. The results of a reading needs analysis provide insightful information for creating instructional resources, selecting suitable teaching tactics, and modifying pedagogical approaches to fit students' real demands (Boakye & Mbong, 2016). Teachers can increase engagement, raise motivation, and generally increase the efficacy of EFL reading instruction by centring students' needs at the heart of their instructional planning (Salam, 2017).

Some previous studies supported this study and indicated that the needs analysis of students revealed reading obstacles encompassing cognitive, linguistic, and affective issues (Boakye & Mbong, 2016). The findings from the needs analysis in the textbook evaluation indicated that, while all language skills and components were deemed significant by most students (Rashidi & Kehtarfard, 2014). The outcomes of the needs analysis in the chosen texts were deemed the most critical factor affecting students' reading proficiency in English; hence, educators should select texts that align with students' levels and interests (Wutthisingchai & Stopps, 2018). The significance of the issues of the needs of both teachers and students in the process of determining and analyzing the requirements for language education (Sönmez, 2019).

However, despite these contributions, there is still a dearth of research concentrating exclusively on fundamental reading teaching as the cornerstone of English language development, especially within the under-researched setting of EFL learners at Universitas Cenderawasih. Students face unique challenges, including multilingual home environments, restricted access to varied learning resources, and disparities in prior exposure to English literacy practices, distinguishing their circumstances from other EFL populations previously examined. These circumstances frequently result in deficiencies in acquiring essential reading competencies, including decoding, vocabulary enhancement, and comprehension of scholarly texts. This study fills that gaps by doing a thorough needs analysis of basic reading training for EFL students. It offers a new contribution by finding out what their individual problems are, what materials they want to learn with, and what kinds of teaching supports work best for them. By placing the inquiry in this distinctive educational context, the study not only enhances the current literature on EFL reading needs but also produces practical implications for curriculum development and pedagogical approaches suited to multilingual, resource-limited, and culturally varied classrooms. This study aims to investigate a needs analysis of basic reading instruction for university-level EFL Students.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study used a descriptive qualitative method. A qualitative technique was selected to elucidate the lived experiences and subjective perspectives of pupils, which cannot be sufficiently represented through numerical data alone. A qualitative descriptive method enables a more nuanced examination of students' voices, facilitating the identification of patterns, themes, and underlying meanings in their responses, in contrast to quantitative designs that prioritize measurement. This method is quite similar to what a needs analysis is supposed to do, which is not just to find out what abilities are missing but also to find out how learners see their own problems, what resources they value, and what teaching aids they think work. The study gives a clear picture of what students need to learn by focusing on rich, descriptive narratives. This information can be used to improve the curriculum and teaching methods (Mezmir, 2020).

The research subjects were students of the English Education Study Program of Universitas Cenderawasih Jayapura. This study examined the needs analysis of basic reading instruction utilized 19 EFL students. The researchers deliberately chose 19 informants to make a sufficiently small group that would enable researchers to observe students' variations while being large enough to investigate initial patterns throughout the entire group of informants. Furthermore, proficient readers exhibit more suitable techniques when completing reading assignments. The students exhibit greater proficiency in comprehending the text in the basic reading class. 19 participants agreed on non-participatory observation that the students had exceptional proficiency in comprehending written textbooks.

Data Sources and Procedures

Nineteen EFL students registered in the English Education Study Program at Universitas Cenderawasih, Jayapura, were the main data sources for this project. The respondents were purposefully chosen depending on their enrollment in a basic reading course and their eagerness to complete in-depth interviews and observation. The choice was to guarantee reasonable data collection and processing while capturing a spectrum of student points of view. Two primary methods of data collection were in-depth interviews and non-participatory observation. Students' self-perceptions of their reading skills, difficulties comprehending academic texts, preferred learning strategies, and opinions of classroom reading teaching were the main emphasis of non-participatory observation. Follow-up interviews were done to let participants explain their experiences, clarify their answers, and offer context-specific data on their reading practices and instructional needs, thus deepening the insights obtained from the observation.

Over many weeks, the data were gathered such that individuals had enough time to consider their experiences. Every interview was in person, audio-recorded with participant permission, then transcribed for study. The data were classified and arranged thematically to spot trends, individual variances, and areas of basic reading instructional need. These processes helped to clarify the demands of the students and guide the study of discrepancies between present teaching and real learner needs.

Data Collection and Instrument

Two main instruments were in-depth interviews and non-participatory observation, were used in data collection for this study. These instruments were meant to compile rich qualitative information about the participants' basic reading competency, educational background, preferred learning style, and apparent difficulties reading English texts. Based on important elements of needs analysis—present situation needs, target needs, and learning needs—an observation sheet was created. Participants were invited to consider their

reading habits, text comprehension, vocabulary use, classroom participation, and so forth by open-ended items.

Each of the nineteen EFL students who answered the in-depth interview. Each of the 30 to 45-minute interviews took place in a calm, cozy environment. With permission, all of the interviews were audio-recorded; subsequently, they were transcribed exactly for the study. Combining non-participatory observation with interviews produced triangulated data that enhanced the validity and depth of the study's conclusions. The interview guide was meticulously crafted, drawing from themes identified in prior studies on EFL reading needs and tailored to the context of Universitas Cenderawasih in Papua. Two prominent English education academics looked over the draft questions to make sure they were genuine and in line with the goals of the study. Then, a pilot interview with three students who were not taking part was done to see how clear, ordered, and understandable the questions were. Feedback from both experts and pilot participants led to changes that made the phrasing clearer and got rid of any confusion.

The observation checklist was also based on recognized frameworks for classroom observation and was built around signs of reading engagement and strategy use. Experts checked this checklist, and it was tested in two preliminary classroom visits to make sure that the elements were useful, observable, and relevant to the situation. The processes used in development, validation, and piloting made the instruments clearer and reliable, which helped make the data collection process more trustworthy.

Data analysis

This study used qualitative descriptive analysis to identify themes and patterns related to basic reading education students' needs. Researchers investigated non-participatory observation and in-depth interview data using theme analysis to determine participants' perspectives and meanings. The study began with interview transcription, then carefully reviewed the transcripts and questionnaire answers to acquaint oneself with the topic. Open coding began with researchers assigning codes to important phrases, concepts, and expressions relevant to the investigation. These codes were categorised by need: learning, goal, and present context.

The qualitative data analysis process consists of four distinct stages: 1) familiarization (researchers should acquaint themselves with the diversity and heterogeneity of the collected materials), 2) data reduction (which involves reducing the potential universe of data using a conceptual framework, research objectives, cases, and tools), 3) data display (using textual representations of information to identify segments that most effectively exemplify themes of interest), and 4) report writing (which involves making significant affirmations about how the data represents the topic of interest) (Huberman, 2014). The last study revealed subtleties about how effectively basic reading instruction meets the needs of EFL students of Universitas Cenderawasih.

To enhance methodological rigor, the emerging themes were thoroughly validated through several methodologies. First, triangulation was used to make sure that the themes were consistent and reliable by verifying them against data from interviews, non-participant observations, and questionnaire responses. Second, peer debriefing took place as two researchers classified the transcripts separately, talked about any differences, and revised the categories until they all agreed on them. Third, member checking was used by sharing early results with a small group of student participants so they could confirm that the themes appropriately reflected their points of view. These validation steps made the results more reliable and made people surer that the themes found really showed the reading demands of EFL students at Universitas Cenderawasih.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

The findings of the study, derived from qualitative data gathered from in-depth interviews with EFL students, are presented in this part. The purpose of this study was to investigate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' actual needs, preferences, obstacles, and opinions of learners on basic reading instruction. The replies on the questionnaire gave an overview of students' reading practices, perceived obstacles, and degree of satisfaction with the present teaching resources. These findings allowed one to spot shared trends within the larger student group. The in-depth interviews provide a more thorough and sophisticated knowledge of particular student experiences, motives, and recommendations for development. Based on important criteria such as types of reading materials experienced, perceived reading ability, common problems, vocabulary tactics, learner motivation, and preferred instructional practices, the results are arranged thematically.

Selected EFL students received in-depth interviews to better understand their experiences and needs in basic reading training. The interviews looked at their opinions on reading resources, difficulties they have, techniques they apply, and recommendations for more successful reading instruction. The answers expose a spectrum of personal experiences that underline crucial elements sometimes neglected in classroom education.

Q1: What kinds of English reading assignments do you usually come across in class?

"Mostly in class, we refer to the textbook that contains culture, education, health, and sport. Its short passages consist of straightforward descriptive paragraphs or talk. Though they are from the same book or comparable framework, the teacher occasionally assigns extra worksheets." (Participant 1)

Participant 1 said that classroom reading mostly employs textbooks that contain culture, education, health, and sport with short, straightforward descriptive passages. Little variance in occasional extra worksheets results in repetitive learning experiences.

"In class, I frequently study narrative books, including culture, education, health and sport. They're good, yet occasionally I feel as though I have again encountered the same kinds of stories." (Participant 6).

Participant 6 said that narrative books, such as contain culture, education, health, and sport, often feature in classroom reading. Usually, in terms of structure, these books are fun and familiar. The participant, though, believed the items provided insufficient variation over time and were repetitive.

"Mostly comprehension sections with questions follow the reading materials. Usually printed, they lack much colour or images to assist me in understanding." (Participant 5).

Participant 15 said that comprehension questions usually follow most classroom readings. Usually, the materials are printed in a basic style. Their understanding of the material suffers when there are no visual components or colour. Participant 17 said they find the online brief news pieces on subjects including culture, education, health, and sport more fascinating than the textbook. Reading becomes more interesting from these practical subjects. They value it when the teacher incorporates such resources into the lessons.

"I find the textbook more fascinating than the textbook when our teacher occasionally brings online brief news items containing culture, education, health and sport." (Participant 17).

Q2: In what way do you view your present level of English reading ability?

"I find short, straightforward books to be fine. I begin to feel overwhelmed, though, when the paragraph gets longer or features numerous new terms." (Participant 2)

Participant 2 said they feel overwhelmed by lengthier portions with many foreign words, even if they are at ease with short and basic books. Reading confidence and comprehension of texts depend on their complexity in language and length of treatment. This emphasizes the requirement of level-appropriate content.

“The subject determines this as well. If the issue is daily life or interests, with which I am familiar, I can follow it. But I lose fast when it comes to science or anything intellectual.” (Participant 14).

Participant 14 said the issue determines whether or not they can grasp English writings. They struggle with scientific or cerebral topics yet follow readings connected to daily life or familiar interests. This implies that reading comprehension is much influenced by topic familiarity.

“Reading English materials makes me anxious. I have to translate practically every word since I usually find complete sentences difficult.” (Participant 17).

Participant 17 admitted that reading English materials, especially on subjects, causes students to worry. They find whole phrases difficult to grasp, hence they sometimes need to interpret almost every word. This suggests problems with sentence construction and vocabulary.

“Particularly in terms of grasping the central notion, I think I have developed somewhat. Still, I have trouble grasping supporting information.” (Participant 19).

Participant 19 struggles to grasp the supporting elements even if she feels somewhat confident in knowing the major notion. This implies partial development in reading comprehension given continuous challenges with greater understanding.

Q3: Why do you experience particular difficulty reading some types of books?

“Because of their too many technical terms I have never heard of before, I find books about science or technology difficult to grasp.” (Participant 3).

Participant 3 finds difficulty with science and technology texts due of the many technical phrases she encounters not familiar. This difficulty implies that specialized vocabulary is rather complex and makes it difficult to completely grasp the material. When introducing such information to students, it also suggests a need for extra support or scaffolding.

“The toughest for me are newspaper pieces. They are long; the terminology is challenging; occasionally the phrases are convoluted.” (Participant 10).

Participant 10 states that because of their length, demanding language, and occasionally complex sentence structures, He finds newspaper stories the most difficult to read. These elements can deter reading involvement and complicate understanding.

“Usually, I find old-style or poetic works difficult. The terms are unusual and hardly used in speech.” (Participant 13).

Participant 13 finds difficulty with old-style or lyrical works since their vocabulary and archaic idioms differ greatly from modern, daily English. These unknowns slow down reading and make comprehension difficult. Such books need more aid or clarification to enable pupils to really understand their message.

“I find academic reading, such as formal reports or essays, difficult. The organisation is unclear, hence I'm not sure what to pay attention to.” (Participant 18).

Participant 18 finds academic materials such as essays or reports challenging as their structure is confusing and makes it difficult to pinpoint the key ideas. This uncertainty calls for direction to properly negotiate and compromises understanding.

Q4: Do the reading materials your class uses pique your curiosity or relate to your life or aspirations?

“Yes, most of the reading materials come from textbooks related to my hobbies, such as culture, education, and sport. I wish we had more readings on subjects like travel or culture, health ones I find important.” (Participant 3).

While most reading materials are textbook-based and fit for their interests in culture, education, and sports, participant 3 expresses a desire for more varied subjects, including travel and health. From their own interests and learning objectives, these disciplines seem more pertinent and significant. This emphasizes the requirement of reading materials that more accurately depict students' actual experiences and goals to increase involvement and drive.

“Some books are good for me, particularly if the subject is about young people or daily life in culture and education. Many, meantime, find themselves either bored or overly detached from the actual world.” (Participant 8).

Participant 8 finds some books interesting, particularly those concerning daily life in culture and education or young people. Many other resources, meanwhile, look dull or unrelated to actual life, which makes students less interested.

Q5: When reading, how do you typically approach understanding new words or phrases?

“When I come across a new word, student 1 always consults Google Translate. It's quick, hence using paper dictionaries bothers me since it takes too much time.” (Participant 5).

Participant 5 finds it more practical than paper dictionaries, which they regard as time-consuming and difficult; instead, they would rather quickly grasp new words using Google Translate. This captures students' inclination to rely on digital tools for better reading flow and faster understanding. Such preferences draw attention to the need to include easily available, technologically advanced help in language learning materials.

“Initially, I try to deduce the message from the surroundings. Should I still find difficulty, I use a dictionary or ask a friend.” (Participant 13).

Participant 13 first looks to deduce from the context the meaning of new terms. Should it not be working, they consult a dictionary or contact a friend for assistance. This method combines seeking social help in learning with individual problem-solving.

Q6: Which techniques have enabled you to raise your English reading level?

“I've found great benefit from reading some sources like education or cultural passages. Reading them helps one to identify the terms since I observe their usage in sentences.” (Participant 4).

Because it lets participants acquire new terminology by seeing how concepts are employed in phrases, participant 4 finds reading the cultural and educational sections most helpful. Their grasp and memory of words gets better from this contextual learning. Talking about subjects they enjoy, such as culture and education, inspires them to read more, therefore improving their general English ability.

“Second student: Reading sports and health in my leisure time helps me. I love them from websites or apps matching my level more than from textbook readings. I utilise applications with basic reading materials like Duolingo or English reading programs. They increase the enjoyment and interaction of learning.” (Participant 16).

In their free time, participant 16 considers reading sports and health materials useful and more fun than class readings. They enjoy using applications like Duolingo with level-appropriate information, as well as webpages. These instruments help students find learning more interesting and interactive.

Q7: Reading English books either at home or in class presents difficulties for you?

"I lose focus easily in long text. Particularly if I don't know the subject, I feel bored or exhausted fast. Since I concentrate so much on trying to grasp every word, I often find it difficult to know the major idea." (Participant 4).

This implies that novel information and text length help to cause cognitive overload, therefore lowering involvement and understanding. The student's inclination to obsess on every word could make it difficult for them to discern the passage's general point of view. It underlines the requirement of scaffolding techniques to enable students to concentrate on important concepts instead of decoding every word.

"When I have questions at home, nobody is available to assist me. I therefore quit reading if it gets too difficult." (Participant 15).

This answer draws attention to the student's restricted access to outside-of-the-classroom academic support. When confronted with difficulty, kids often give up on reading without direction, therefore impeding individual learning and drive. It implies a demand for easily available support tools, such as digital assistance or peer groups.

Q8: Which kind of reading tools or support would enable you to improve?

"I would want a vocabulary list next to the work. In this sense, I am free from stopping and looking every time." (Participant 6).

Participant 6 said it would be beneficial to have a vocabulary list next to the reading materials. It would enable better reading by lessening the need to stop often to find unknown words.

"Audio versions of the books would be quite useful. Reading and listening together enable me to grasp better." (Participant 10).

Participant ten underlined the need to include audio versions of the reading materials. They say that listening while reading helps one stay focused and strengthens knowledge. This combo helps them understand, particularly when reading challenging or foreign books.

Q9: Do you believe your teacher knows your reading requirements? For what reason or why not?

"I do not agree either. Often, the reading assignments are either too easy or too challenging. For me, they fall short in level. The second student wants to help, but it's difficult to concentrate on each one of us, given the overcrowding in the classroom." (Participant 1).

Participant 1 complained about the reading materials, saying they often mismatch their level of proficiency, either too easy or too challenging. They also pointed out that the instructor's capacity to properly handle individual needs is limited by classroom crowding.

"Sometimes I feel as though the teacher selects books based more on completion of the syllabus than on what the students truly need." (Participant 5).

Participant five believes that rather than selecting books to suit the actual learning requirements of the students, the instructor usually chooses books to only finish the syllabus.

"There isn't much flexibility since the English class supplies the resources, but I believe the teacher understands." (Participant 17).

Participant 17 notes that although the school controls the reading materials, restricting flexibility, the instructor strives to adapt and choose resources that best meet the learning needs of the students whenever possible.

Q10: Which subjects or exercises would you incorporate into your reading courses if you could design them?

“Subjects on sports and education, well-known sites, and foreign cultures would be among my choices. That would inspire me to pick up additional reading.” (Participant 3).

Participant 3 believes reading resources on sports, education, popular websites, and foreign cultures will inspire them to read more; thus, they choose these subjects.

“I appreciate themes regarding social media in health and culture. Also, I’d include conversation activities after reading to make it engaging.” (Participant 16).

Participant 16 advises including discussion activities after reading to make learning more interesting. She enjoys themes about social media connected to health and culture. To clearly summarize key themes or responses in a structured manner would substantially enhance readability and quickly convey critical insights in Table 1.

Table 1
Key themes or responses of EFL learners

Theme	Challenges Identified	Students’ Preferences & Needs	Suggested Supports
Types of Reading Materials	Over-reliance on textbooks, repetitive content, and lack of visuals	More variety: online news, cultural texts, science, and daily life	Multimedia texts; magazine-style visuals
Reading Ability	Struggle with long passages, new vocabulary, and academic texts	Comfortable with short, familiar topics	Level-appropriate texts; scaffolding
Vocabulary Strategies	Heavy reliance on Google Translate; anxiety over unknown words	Context clues, peer help, vocabulary lists	Glossaries, digital tools, word banks
Motivation & Engagement	Boredom with repetitive/irrelevant topics; anxiety with difficult texts	Interest in culture, sports, health, and social media	Interactive tasks, group discussions
Teacher Awareness	The perception that teachers follow the syllabus more than the student needs	Desire for flexible, needs-based material selection	More student-centered material design
Preferred Supports	Lack of guidance at home; frustration with complex texts	Audiobooks, interactive quizzes, reading games, visuals	Digital resources; scaffolding activities

Discussion

This study investigated EFL students' requirements, preferences, obstacles, and recommendations about basic reading instruction through needs analysis. Combining in-depth interviews with questionnaire data, therefore providing both breadth and depth in knowledge of students' reading experiences. As will be covered below, the outcomes fall under numerous main topics.

Reading Material Types and Student Involvement

The findings showed that textbook-based comprehension activities and short, descriptive paragraphs define most of the classroom reading assignments. A smaller number

of students said they found these exercises valuable for honing their fundamental reading skills, while more said they were bored by their repetitiveness. Reduced engagement resulted from an overreliance on conventional textbooks, together with a lack of visual assistance or interactive aspects. Many times, students felt the contents were repetitive and unconnected from their daily experiences, which reduced their drive to read carefully or analytically.

Many students showed a great felt in more dynamic and realistic content, such as sports, culture, health, current news items in education, or visually improved materials reflecting real-world settings. For developing vocabulary and understanding, these kinds of books were seen to be more relevant, exciting, and efficient (Rashidi & Kehtarfard, 2014). The results underline the need for teachers to diversify reading sources outside the prescribed curriculum and include materials that not only fit their interests but also advance deeper knowledge and enjoyment of reading (Asrifan & Octaberlina, 2021). The chosen texts were deemed the most significant factor in affecting students' proficiency in reading English; hence, educators should select texts that align with students' levels and interests (Wutthisingchai & Stopps, 2018).

Students' Appreciation of Reading Capacity

This study found that EFL students struggle greatly in basic reading instruction, particularly when working with long books, foreign terminology, and abstract or intellectual subjects. Learners typically struggled with texts lacking contextual help or difficult language, even while they exhibited some confidence when reading items relevant to everyday life or personal interests. These challenges often caused annoyance, a lack of drive, and lower reading involvement (Maala & Mkandawire, 2022). The differences in student reading ability and topic familiarity draw attention to the need to include personal learner backgrounds and interests in reading education. Using scaffolded, varied materials that are both linguistically and thematically suitable will help to meet these difficulties. Including interactive components, multimedia support, and real-world material, such as menus, blogs, or culturally relevant stories, can improve understanding and involvement (Maduabuchi & Vivian, 2016; Gutiérrez-Colón et al., 2023). Teachers are urged to strike a balance between learner-centred strategies, including vocabulary guidance, listening aids, and chances for discussion and group projects, against curriculum demands. These changes not only help to raise reading performance but also encourage more learner confidence, autonomy, and drive (Rachmawati, 2020).

Textual Challenge and Vocabulary Connections

Particularly for genres like scientific books, artistic or literary works, and news pieces, language complexity became a big obstacle. These challenges were mostly ascribed to unusual organizational structures, idioms, or strong vocabulary. When too many unknown terms surfaced, students said they felt overwhelmed and were frustrated, unmotivated. This result emphasizes the requirement of explicit vocabulary support to reduce cognitive load: pre-reading word lists, glossaries, or comments.

Students used several techniques to grasp new words. While some sought to deduce meaning from context or asked peers, others turned to computerized translation tools like Google Translate. Some wanted to underline unfamiliar terms and look them up later. A few said they skipped challenging words as long as they could understand their overall meaning. These answers highlight the need to teach flexible vocabulary-learning tactics and include digital literacy into reading education, since they expose a preference for effective, low-disruption strategies (Duncan et al., 2016). Comprehension was the primary barrier; however, several specific areas, including vocabulary, text length, language, and affective factors such as motivation and interest, were also noted (Boakye & Mbong, 2016).

Relevance and Passion

Many students said the reading materials given in class did not fit their interests or actual objectives. Most books, they complained, were too intellectual and distant from issues that appeal to young culture, including social media, music, travel, or regular communication. This supposed lack of relevance resulted in less intrinsic drive and a mechanical attitude to reading assignments. Learners thus sometimes struggled to stay interested or to appreciate the importance of reading as a tool for either practical language use or personal development. These results fit earlier studies stressing the need for meaningful and personally relevant content in language acquisition. Those who have long maintained that exposure to materials reflecting students' interests and lived experiences greatly increases their motivation (Devitriana & Wijirahayu, 2025). This increased motivation is vital in EFL learning, since sustaining interest and effort over time is crucial for language proficiency (Aminah et al., 2024). Thus, reading teaching should not only aim for language competency but also include themes and strategies that relate to students' identities, aspirations, and changing reality of their social and cultural surroundings (Cruz & Tantia, 2017).

Strategies Promoting Reading Enhancement and Challenges

Students claimed that non-traditional approaches raised their reading level. These included reading short tales for fun, utilizing Duolingo, viewing English movies with subtitles, and reading aloud, followed by summarizing. These techniques not only helped to clarify but also made reading fun. These results show the need for multimodal and learner-centred strategies that support contextualized learning outside of the classroom, autonomy, and engagement.

Common challenges to good reading were trouble focusing on long books, lack of help at home, and annoyance brought on by regular breaks to check vocabulary. In line with another study state that several students encountered difficulties in reading comprehension due to illiteracy, inadequate understanding, restricted fluency, aliteracy, a deficient reading culture, limited vocabulary, insufficient motivation, constrained reading time in class relative to lengthy passages, ineffective teaching methods employed by the instructor, and a lack of educational resources (Maala & Mkandawire, 2022). These challenges influenced the drive as well as the understanding. Students underlined the requirement of reasonable text lengths, constant support, and techniques to keep concentration (Le et al., 2024). Particularly for homework-based reading assignments, the existence of such challenges indicates the requirement of organized reading strategies and maybe peer or teacher support systems.

Recommended Supportive Reading Materials

Participants underlined that their reading experience would be much improved by side-by-side vocabulary lists, audio versions of books, aesthetically pleasing page layouts, and interactive components, including games or quizzes. These instruments were considered not just as aids for understanding but also as motivators that might turn reading from a passive chore into an interesting, multisensory pastime. Incorporating such tools would let students access books in ways more suited to their learning style and needs. These recommendations capture the fundamental ideas that support offering several ways of expression, involvement, and representation. Including multimodal aids and flexible learning technologies in reading lessons helps teachers create a more inclusive and responsive classroom (Maduabuchi & Vivian I, 2016). This strategy not only enables different learners to be accommodated but also promotes more autonomy and motivation, enabling better reading results at several degrees of proficiency.

Students' Suggestions for Curriculum Development

Students advised including topics such as travel, culture, social media, and humor, along with discussion exercises, blogs, menus, and dramatizations, when asked to rethink

reading education. These recommendations expose a tremendous need for real-world, interactive, and hands-on learning possibilities. To encourage involvement and ownership, they also underline the need to involve students' opinions in the choice and design of learning resources.

Furthermore, the questionnaire results show that although students understand the need for reading education, they are looking for more pertinent, interesting, and encouraging experiences. Their voices demand more variation in resources, level-appropriate content, engaging activities, and teacher knowledge of individual needs. Especially in basic EFL environments where student confidence and interest significantly influence language development, addressing these observations might help design more inclusive, engaging, and successful reading instruction. Students can improve their reading skills by reading authentic literature, especially in primary ideas, supporting information, factual interactions, topic-related vocabulary, pronunciation references, and word meaning recognition (Sasabone et al., 2023).

While some students thought their teachers knew their challenges, others cited things like big classes, strict syllabi, and improper difficulty levels. Some thought that rather than considering students' actual needs, curriculum criteria were followed in choosing the instructional tools. These findings imply, even under institutional limitations, that more student-centred planning and more freedom in material choice are needed. In contrast with other studies found that the methods of English instruction appeared ineffective as they did not align with the learners' expectations concerning their target and learning needs (Mahbub, 2018).

This study is unique in that it uses a learner-centred approach of inquiry into actual requirements, preferences, obstacles, and recommendations about basic reading instruction for Indonesian EFL learners. Although a lot of current studies concentrate on reading competency or textbook-based assessments, this study especially combines students' voices to expose undiscovered emotional, motivating, and contextual elements affecting their involvement. By stressing learners' inclination for relevant, customized, and visually rich materials, their autonomous use of digital tools, and their pragmatic recommendations for more interactive and meaningful reading activities, such as including culture, health, sports, and education, it adds original insights. By doing this, the research offers a context-specific knowledge of basic reading instruction in Indonesia and advocates a change toward more flexible, interest-driven, learner-responsive pedagogies that fit students' actual goals and affective experiences.

CONCLUSION

From unfamiliar vocabulary and a lack of topic interest to limited access to supporting reading aids, this study has shown that EFL students struggle with different aspects of basic reading instruction. Though many students find textbook-based materials repetitious, boring, and detached from their real-life aspirations, they are nonetheless widely used. The study underlined students' varied preferences, such as interest in subjects including education, culture, health, and sports, as well as their need for interactive activities, visual aids, and digital tools supporting understanding. Students regularly said that the reading materials they utilised in class sometimes had little bearing on their interests or aspirations in life. For their present level of expertise, many felt the material was either too easy or too challenging, or too inflexible and outdated. More adaptable, aesthetically pleasing, and level-appropriate books appealed to them. These kinds of resources, they think, would enable reading to be more relevant, inspiring, and fun. The results need more student-centred learning, varied strategies for reading education that take learners' voices into account, increase involvement, and eventually help their reading growth in a significant and inspiring manner. The study applies that curriculum designs incorporate a variety of reading resources, contextualized subjects, and needs-based scaffolding, while teaching practices should emphasize guided vocabulary

learning, collaborative reading, and authentic texts. By meeting these basic needs, EFL programs can help students do better in school and acquire a language that will last a lifetime. As a recommendation for EFL reading programs should incorporate resources related to students' interests. While promoting self-regulated learning, instruction should be scaffolded and differentiated to fit students' degrees of competency. Teachers should also compile student comments to make sure resources are pertinent and efficient.

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