

ANALYZING LEARNER NEEDS FOR DEVELOPING TASK-BASED ENGLISH TEACHING MATERIALS WITH CHARACTER EDUCATION VALUES FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: June 2025 Revised: August 2025 Accepted: September 2025 Published: October 2025	<i>This study investigates young learners' needs in developing task-based English teaching materials that embed character education values. Although task-based language teaching (TBLT) has gained broad recognition, limited research in the Indonesian context has examined how character education values can be systematically integrated into TBLT materials for primary school students. To address this gap, a mixed-methods design was employed, combining quantitative data from student questionnaires with qualitative insights from teacher and principal interviews. This methodological triangulation ensured a more valid and comprehensive understanding of learners' personal and instructional needs. Participants included 424 elementary students, three English teachers, and three principals from Muhammadiyah schools in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The findings indicate that students' personal needs are influenced by age, gender, cultural background, and attitudes toward English learning, while their learning needs reflect preferences in learning styles, teaching media, instructional techniques, thematic choices, language proficiency, and the inclusion of character-related content. The study provides empirically grounded insights to guide English curriculum design in Muhammadiyah schools, fostering the integration of moral and linguistic goals within task-based instruction, and offering a transferable framework for English language education in Indonesia and comparable contexts.</i>
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INTRODUCTION

Students' speaking competence is one of the key indicators of their English language ability. They are expected to communicate fluently and meaningfully, not merely memorize vocabulary lists or isolated expressions. However, many primary school students still face significant challenges in speaking English (Nikmah & Anwar, 2021). These difficulties include limited vocabulary, pronunciation problems, lack of speaking partners, low self-confidence, and unsupportive classroom environments (Boutheyna & Oumayma, 2024). These issues reflect the complex nature of developing speaking competence among young learners.

Given these challenges, appropriate English teaching materials are needed to help young learners build their speaking competence effectively. English teaching materials for primary students should be aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) level

A1, which emphasizes basic communication in familiar contexts using simple expressions and structures. The materials should enable learners to introduce themselves, describe everyday objects, ask and answer simple questions, and participate in short conversations relevant to their daily life. Furthermore, the content must be developmentally appropriate and scaffolded to support gradual progress in speaking skills.

In developing such materials, selecting an appropriate instructional approach becomes crucial to ensure that both linguistic and character education goals are achieved effectively. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has been widely recognized as an effective approach for engaging young learners in meaningful language use through real-life tasks (Inawati et al., 2022; Timpe-Laughlin et al., 2024). For children, learning is more impactful when it is embedded in activities that resemble their natural way of acquiring knowledge—through doing, interacting, and playing. Task-based teaching materials designed for young learners should therefore be age-appropriate, contextual, and interactive, allowing them to develop their English skills while also fostering cognitive and social development. When integrated with character education values, these materials not only build linguistic competence but also nurture essential life values (Puspitasari et al., 2025).

Integrating character education into task-based materials can be done through stories, role-plays, problem-solving tasks, and collaborative projects that reflect moral dilemmas or promote positive behaviors (Kartakusumah et al., 2022). For instance, a storytelling task that emphasizes kindness or a group project that encourages teamwork can serve dual purposes: language learning and value formation. This dual-focus approach supports the holistic development of young learners, aligning with the broader goals of education beyond academic achievement. As shown by Tan et al., (2018) content analysis of Malaysian moral education textbooks reveals that values such as responsibility, respect, helpfulness, hard-working, and caring are dominant; embedding similar values into TBLT materials can therefore strengthen both character formation and citizenship.

Building upon these theoretical insights, the present study represents the initial stage of integrating moral and linguistic goals into the design of task-based teaching materials with character education values. It refers to a set of instructional materials designed to engage students in performing language tasks based on stories that incorporate moral values (Inawati et al., 2022). These materials aim not only to develop students' speaking competence through meaningful interaction in English but also to cultivate positive character traits. The character values are intended to be delivered explicitly after the storytelling activity, allowing students to reflect on the moral message conveyed. Additionally, the integration of these values can be facilitated through discussions conducted in the students' first language, while the linguistic input—such as dialogues or expressions—is presented in English. This approach supports language learning while simultaneously fostering character development in a way that is accessible and relevant for young learners.

To achieve this, a comprehensive needs analysis is essential. This analysis will serve as the foundation for the development of a set of task-based teaching materials with character education values specifically tailored to Muhammadiyah primary schools—ensuring that it meets both linguistic and character-building objectives in harmony with the institution's vision and mission. Although several previous studies on needs analysis in the context of young learners have been conducted (Amalia & Albiansyah, 2023; Kurniasih, 2022; Sukarno & Jinabe, 2024; Teko Patanduk et al., 2023; Wati & Ramadhan, 2023), research focusing specifically on needs analysis for developing materials in Muhammadiyah primary schools remains scarce. For this reason, the present study is conducted to fill that gap. It also represents the initial stage in a broader process of the materials development.

Despite extensive evidence supporting the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in enhancing learners' linguistic competence, motivation, and engagement,

most studies remain focused on language outcomes rather than holistic character formation. While recent works (Marlinton et al., 2023; Ramadhan et al., 2023; Soongpankhao & Yuxin, 2025) demonstrate improvements in responsibility and communication skills through TBLT, limited research has explored how specific character values—such as honesty, empathy, cooperation, and responsibility—can be systematically embedded in TBLT materials for young learners. In particular, learners' personal and learning needs have rarely been examined as the basis for developing such materials. To fill this gap, the present study investigates the needs of Muhammadiyah primary school students in Yogyakarta as a foundation for designing task-based English teaching materials that integrate character education values. This study aims to answer the research question: *What are the personal and learning needs of Muhammadiyah primary school students regarding the development of task-based English teaching materials with character education values?*

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods design (Ivankova & Clark, 2023) to comprehensively investigate the English language needs of Muhammadiyah primary school students in Yogyakarta. The integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches was considered appropriate because language needs encompass both measurable patterns and complex contextual understandings that cannot be fully captured through a single method. Quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire to identify students' personal and learning needs, offering a broad overview of trends and priorities. Meanwhile, qualitative data were gathered through interviews with four teachers and three principals to explore pedagogical practices, contextual challenges, and expectations regarding English instruction. The combination of both data types allowed for triangulation and complementarity, thereby enhancing the validity and credibility of the findings while providing a more comprehensive understanding of students' language learning needs.

Research Participants

The respondents of this study consisted of 424 students from grades one to six at three Muhammadiyah primary schools in Yogyakarta, aged between six and 12 years old. This range was selected to represent young learners across different developmental stages in primary education. Including multiple grade levels allowed the researcher to capture a comprehensive picture of language learning needs across early and middle childhood. In addition, three English teachers and three principals were interviewed to gain pedagogical perspectives and contextual insights into the learners' challenges and expectations, ensuring that the textbook development would align with both learners' characteristics and teachers' instructional realities. Among the three English teachers, two had more than three years of teaching experience, indicating their status as experienced teachers rather than novices, while one teacher had one year of teaching experience. The three principals also varied in their professional backgrounds: two had served for more than ten years, and one had over eighteen years of experience in school leadership.

Instruments

A set of questionnaires was developed to collect data (Li & Zhou, 2017) on students' needs, consisting of two main sections: students' personal needs and students' learning needs. The section on personal needs included basic demographic information such as name, grade, and ethnic background, as well as a question regarding the students' attitude toward learning English. Meanwhile, the section on learning needs was adapted from (Masuhara, 1998) and adjusted to suit the context of developing task-based teaching materials integrated with character education values for young learners. This section comprised six components: students' learning styles, students' preferences toward teachers' teaching media, students' preferences toward teaching techniques, students' preferences toward learning themes,

students' self-perceived English proficiency, and students' preferences toward character education values in English learning materials. To ensure clarity and accessibility, the questionnaire was written in Indonesian. The format required students to respond by ticking either "Yes" or "No" for each item.

Interviews with English teachers and school principals were conducted to gain deeper insights into the students' needs. As interviews are a powerful method for uncovering what is on participants' minds — how they think, feel, and interpret educational experiences in their own words (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). The interview questions were designed to explore two main areas: students' personal needs and students' learning needs. These questions were adapted from Masuhara's (1998) Framework of needs analysis, which offers a comprehensive lens for examining various aspects of learner needs, including preferences in learning styles, instructional media, teaching techniques, learning themes, self-perceived language proficiency, and the integration of character education values.

Data Analysis

The data from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically percentage analysis, to identify trends and patterns in students' responses. This approach allowed the researcher to quantify the distribution of answers across various items related to students' personal and learning needs. Meanwhile, the data from the interviews were analyzed simultaneously during and after the data collection stage. All interview responses were transcribed and subsequently categorized and interpreted into a condensed body of information (Nascimento & Steinbruch, 2019). Following (Rubin & Rubin, 2011), the analysis process involved iterative reading and coding of the transcripts to identify emerging themes and patterns. The researcher compared participants' responses across interviews to refine categories and uncover the underlying meanings behind their statements. This interpretive process emphasized understanding participants' perspectives within their specific educational contexts rather than merely summarizing their answers. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the integration of quantitative findings from the questionnaires and qualitative insights from the interviews.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

The analysis revealed three particularly significant dimensions that shaped learners' needs. First, cultural identity emerged as a central factor influencing learners' motivation and sense of belonging, with students expressing a preference for materials that reflect Islamic and Indonesian cultural contexts. Second, age differences were found to affect learning preferences and task engagement: younger learners tended to enjoy singing and highly playful activities that involve movement and immediate feedback, while older learners demonstrated greater interest in technology-integrated and project-based tasks, such as using digital media or online exercises that promote autonomy and creativity. These findings therefore represent the most meaningful insights for textbook development, linking linguistic goals with moral, cultural, and developmental dimensions of young learner education.

Students' Personal Needs

Personal needs refer to aspects of students' individual characteristics that may indirectly affect the learning process (Masuhara, 1998). These include personal information that shapes how students engage with and respond to learning activities, namely: *age, gender, cultural background, and attitude*. The information about the students' personal needs were gathered from the result of questionnaires and interview with teachers and principals and also supported by the documents.

Age

The result of Questionnaire showed that 49% of the 424 students were in the lower grade group (ages 6–8), while 51% were in the upper grade group (ages 9–12). This balanced distribution suggests the importance of designing level-appropriate teaching materials. Therefore, six books will be developed, one for each grade from Grade 1 to Grade 6, to address the specific language learning needs at each developmental stage.

Gender

The questionnaire findings reveal a relatively balanced gender representation among the students, with a slightly higher number of female students. The results of the questionnaire indicate that out of 424 students, 52% are female and 48% are male. This shows a relatively balanced gender distribution among the respondents, suggesting that the development of English teaching materials should be inclusive and considerate of both boys' and girls' learning interests and preferences.

Cultural background

The results of the questionnaire show that the majority of students (85%) are Javanese, followed by Sundanese (5%), Padangese (4%), and others (6%). This demographic information provides insight into the cultural context of the learners, which is important for developing relevant and relatable teaching materials.

Attitude toward English lesson

This result indicates that the majority of young learners have a positive attitude toward learning English, which is a promising foundation for the development of engaging and motivating teaching materials. Based on the findings, 90% of the 424 students stated that they like learning English, while only 10% reported that they do not enjoy it at school.

Students' Learning needs

Learning needs includes seven points, namely: *first*, students' learning style; *second*, students' preference toward teachers' teaching media; *third*, students preference toward teaching techniques; *fourth*, students preference toward theme; *fifth*, students' English capability; and *sixth*, students' preference toward character education values in ELT materials.

Students' Learning style

The result of the questionnaire indicates that there is no dominant learning style—visual, auditory, or kinaesthetic—among the primary school students surveyed. In this study, visual learning style are represented by using picture book and watching video; auditory is represented by listening to song and story; while kinaesthetic is represented by doing activities such as colouring, drawing, games and practice speaking English. The data can be seen in Figure 1.

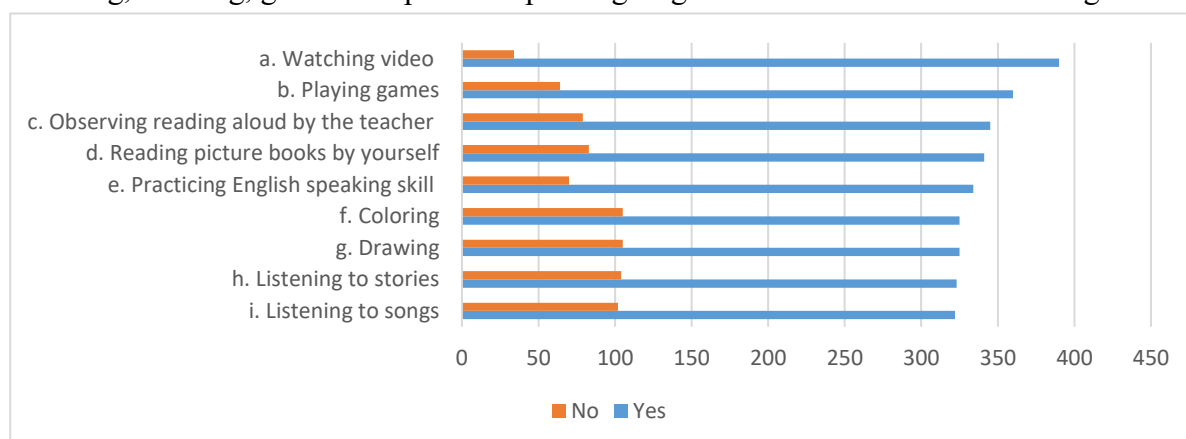


Figure 1. Students Learning Style

Figure 1 shows that approximately 77% to 80% of the students enjoy activities such as listening to songs, listening to stories, drawing, and speaking English. These activities represent auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles. The data also indicate that a high percentage (82%-92%) of students enjoy reading picture books and watching video, which also reflects characteristics of visual learning, particularly when these activities are supported by images and multimedia elements.

Based on the interviews with three English teachers, students demonstrated varying preferences in learning media and techniques depending on their age group. *"All of my students like learning English through games. They don't really enjoy stories, perhaps because I rarely use them in class."* (T1).

This suggests that while games are highly engaging, exposure and familiarity with other techniques, such as storytelling, might influence student preferences. T2 and T3 explained that their older students prefer using videos while the younger students prefer using song.

"My older students prefer using videos. It shows that they are drawn to more challenging media. They are no longer interested in songs, unlike the younger students who still enjoy them." (T2)

"All of my students enjoy various techniques. The younger ones prefer songs, while the older ones lean more toward videos." (T3).

This reinforces the idea that songs are particularly effective and appealing for younger learners. Overall, the interviews reveal a consistent pattern: Younger students (early grades) show strong preferences for songs and games, which align with their developmental needs for rhythm, repetition, and play. Older students (upper elementary or secondary levels) tend to favour videos, which offer more complex and visually stimulating content. Games appear to be universally liked across age groups, although their use may vary in intensity depending on the teacher's strategy.

Students' Preference toward teachers' teaching media

As reflected in the questionnaire results, students expressed enjoyment when the teacher used various teaching media such as flashcards, hand puppets, posters, videos, picture storybooks, realia, worksheets, and textbooks. A significant majority of students, approximately 91%, reported a strong preference for textbooks and worksheets as the primary instructional media used by their English teacher. Storybooks with picture were the least preferred media among students, with 320 students (75.5%) indicating a lack of interest in using them. While flash cards, hand puppet, poster, video, and realia were preferred by the 77.5 % to 78.5% students or 330-333 students from 424 students. This indicates that, in fact, there is no teaching media that is completely disliked by the students, as all teaching media were liked by 75% to 92% of them. The data can be observed in Figure 2.

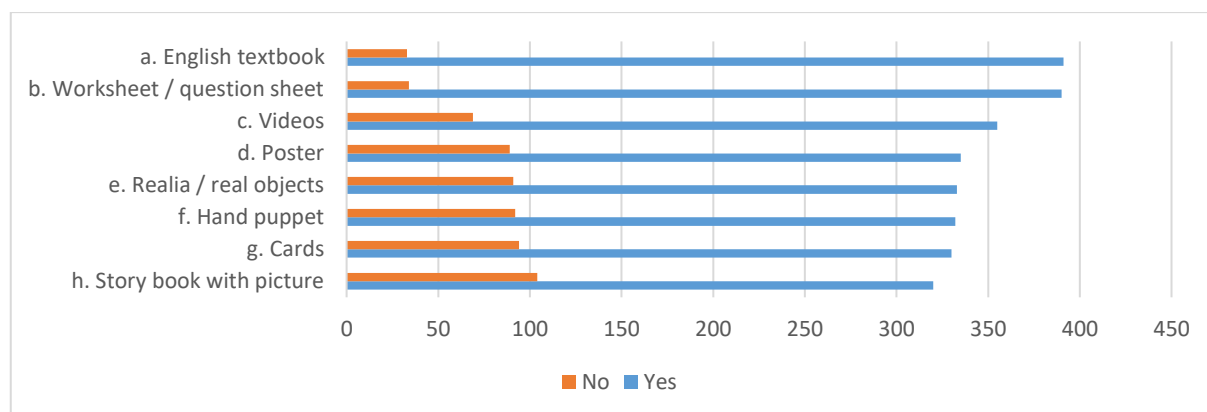


Figure 2. Students' Preference Regarding Teaching Media Used

The interviews revealed varying preferences among students toward the types of teaching media used in the English classroom. Overall, visual and interactive media were favoured by the majority of students.

“All my students like all teaching media, but they like cards the most.” (T1)

“Based on my observation My students like it when I use worksheets and also videos.” (T2)

“The students enjoy it when I tell them stories.” (T3)

Students' preference toward teachers' teaching techniques

The data gathered from questionnaire suggests that playing games and working on textbook were the most preferred teaching techniques enjoyed by the students, followed by Total Physical Response and storytelling. While singing was the students least preferred teachers' teaching techniques. The collected data show that from 424 students, 395 students (93%) enjoy playing games and 392 students (92%) enjoy working on textbook. Whereas Total Physical Responses, telling story and singing were the teachers' teaching techniques preferred by the 340 and 334 students. Singing was the least preferred activity among the students, as only around 24.5% showed no interest, while 75.5% favour them. The data can be seen in Figure 3.

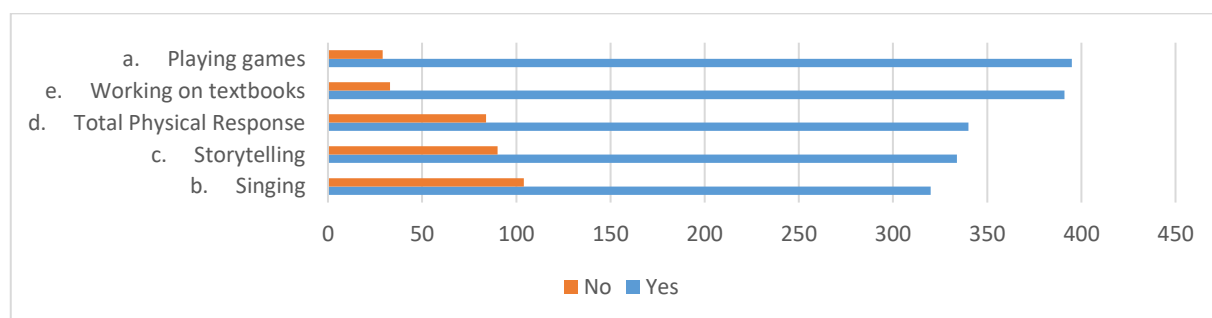


Figure 3. Students' Preference toward Teachers' Teaching Techniques

The data collected from teacher interviews indicate that students respond positively to various teaching techniques, particularly those that are interactive and engaging. However, teachers' choices of methods are also influenced by their own confidence and competence in using specific approaches.

“The students like it when I use games and singing activities. However, I rarely use storytelling because I don't feel confident using it, especially for lower-grade students. (T1)

“My students enjoy songs, especially those in the lower-grade group. Meanwhile, the upper-grade students prefer it when I use videos in class. (T2)

Overall, the findings highlight that students at different grade levels may have different preferences, with younger learners enjoying musical and playful methods, while older students show more interest in audiovisual materials. The data also underscore the importance of teacher readiness in implementing certain techniques, such as storytelling.

Students' preference toward theme

The findings from the data indicate that all themes included in the questionnaire—such as parts of the body, animals, vehicles, food, drinks, family, classroom objects, professions, public places, and folklores—were selected by 75,7% to 92% students. While the theme “countries in the world” was chosen by 68,8% as the theme that least preferred by the students. Among these themes, “food and drinks” was the most favoured by the students. However, from thirteen themes asked in questionnaire, twelve themes are chosen by more than 75,5% students as themes they like when they are learning English. It indicates that almost students like the theme that are familiar with their daily life. The data can be seen in Figure 4.

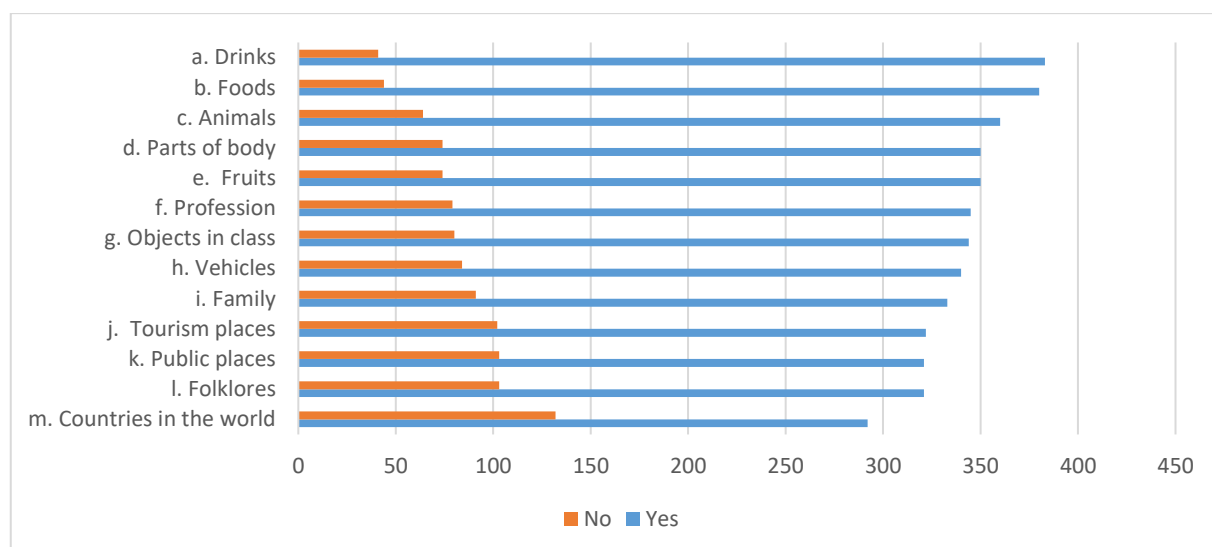


Figure 4. Students' Preference toward Theme

Teachers reported various thematic preferences among students, which appeared to be influenced by their age group and grade level. Themes related to everyday life and animals were found to be particularly engaging for young learners.

"The most prevalent theme among my students is animals, because I teach first-grade students." (T1)

"My students enjoy discussing topics such as food and drinks, professions, and folklore." (T2)

"For my lower-grade students, they really like to talk about animals, food, and drinks." (T3)

The data show that themes related to animals, food, and daily experiences were the most preferred among early-grade students. This suggests that familiar and concrete topics are more suitable and engaging for young English learners. Although topics related to other countries received the lowest number of favorable responses in the questionnaire, they remain important to include in the teaching materials. Such topics play a crucial role in broadening students' perspectives and helping them develop as global citizens.

Students' capability in doing task

From the data, it can be seen that answer questions briefly, naming objects, and self-introduction are three tasks that can be done by 82%, 76% and 71% of the students. It means that more than 300 students can do those activities.

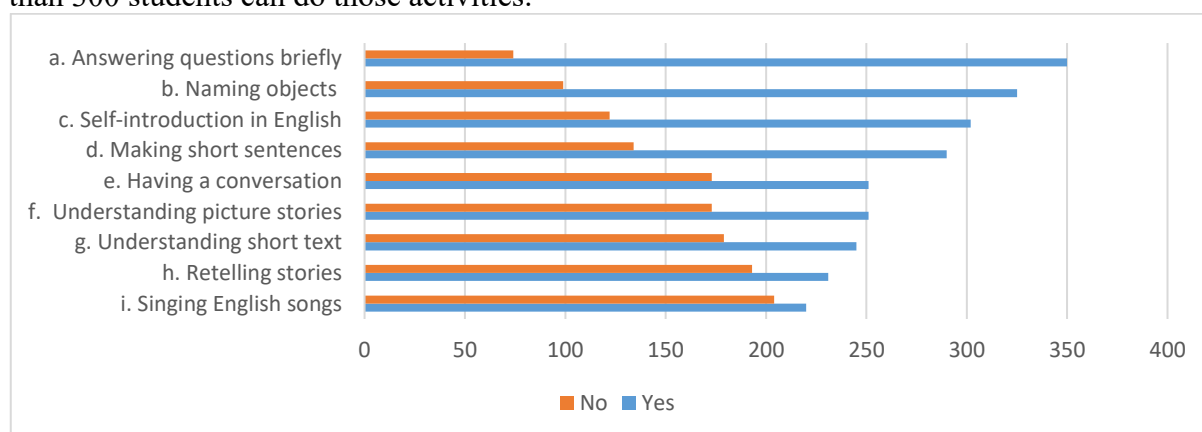


Figure 5. Students' Capability in Doing Task

The teachers shared their observations regarding students' speaking abilities in English. While students in general are capable of producing simple spoken English, their performance is often influenced by the level of teacher support and their self-confidence.

Students' preference toward character education value in teaching materials

The questionnaire results show that character education values in the content of English teaching materials are interesting in the students' views. From eleven-character education values asked in questionnaire, such as: *fair, honest, forgiving, happy to share, independent, be patient, keeping promises, enjoy studying, think positively, tolerance, try and trust*, all were chosen by more than 321 (75,7%) from 424 students. Fair and honest were the character education values that become the most preferred by the students as from 424 students, there were 354 students (83%). However, the value of "try and trust" as the least preferred values chosen by the students (75,7%). The data can be seen in Figure 10.

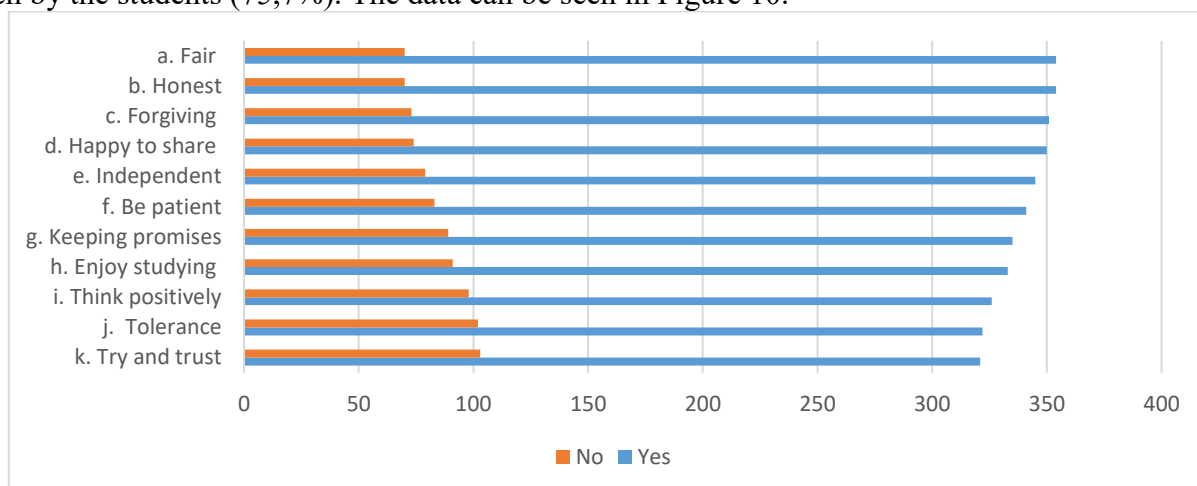


Figure 6. Students' Preference toward Character Education Value in Teaching Materials

Teachers were asked to share their views on the inclusion of character education values in English teaching materials. Their responses consistently reflected a positive attitude and a strong desire to see such values integrated meaningfully into teaching materials and classroom resources.

"If there are moral values in the materials, it will be very good. But today, It is difficult to find materials or textbooks that directly include character education values in English teaching. (T1)

"It would be very good if there were teaching materials that delivered character education values." (T2)

"I really agree if there are English books that have character education values in them." (T3)

The data indicate that the teachers strongly support the integration of character education into English language teaching. However, they expressed concern over the current lack of readily available materials that explicitly incorporate these values. This suggests a clear need for the development of English teaching resources that are not only linguistically appropriate but also promote moral and character development.

Discussion

This section discusses the findings of the study in relation to students' *personal needs* and *learning needs* as essential components in designing effective English learning materials. Drawing from the data and supported by relevant theories, the discussion highlights how personal needs (understanding students' individual characteristics) and learning needs (classroom-oriented requirements) contributes to more meaningful and engaging instruction.

Students' Personal Needs

Understanding students' personal needs is essential in the development of effective English teaching materials, especially for young learners whose developmental stages,

backgrounds, and preferences vary widely. Personal needs refer to individual learner characteristics that influence how they engage with learning—such as age, gender, cultural background, and attitudes toward language learning (Masuhara, 1998; B. Tomlinson, 2010). Identifying these aspects allows materials developers and educators to create content that is both relevant and motivating. The following discussion elaborates on key findings related to students' age, gender, cultural background (tribe), and attitudes toward learning English, with reference to relevant theories and previous studies.

The nearly balanced distribution between lower and upper grade respondents underscores the pedagogical importance of age-appropriate English teaching materials. Younger learners (ages 6–8) prefer sensory and playful activities such as songs and games, reflecting their need for concrete, experience-based learning (Pinter, 2017; Wang, 2023). In contrast, older learners (ages 9–12) demonstrate growing interest in technology-enhanced and task-based learning, indicating readiness for more abstract and independent engagement (Haerudin et al., 2024). This distinction highlights that learning preferences evolve alongside cognitive and socio-emotional development, which must be addressed through differentiated instruction (Astuti & Afendi, 2022; Hasanah et al., 2023). Theoretically, this finding reinforces Masuhara's (1998) framework on learner needs by extending it to show how developmental stages influence learning motivation and material engagement. Consequently, the development of six textbooks—one for each grade—should be carefully designed to match learners' cognitive maturity and learning styles, ensuring both accessibility and sustained engagement across grade levels.

This relatively balanced gender distribution suggests the importance of developing English teaching materials that are inclusive and appealing to both male and female students. Research in early language education emphasizes the need to consider learners' interests, which may vary across gender, in order to enhance engagement and motivation (Salsabila et al., 2024). Designing activities and themes that are gender-responsive—neither stereotypically masculine nor feminine—can support equal participation and ensure that all students feel represented in the learning materials (Štěpánová, 2021). Therefore, this finding reinforces the need for balanced content that accommodates diverse interests and promotes gender equity in the language classroom.

The predominance of Javanese students highlights the critical role of integrating local culture into English teaching materials. Integrating familiar cultural elements not only enhances relevance but also boosts motivation and engagement among young learners (Nambiar et al., 2020). Empirical study supports that ELT materials embedding local culture foster stronger student identity and motivation (Ratri et al., 2025). While another study demonstrates that including local cultural products and practices in English materials strengthens learners' intercultural awareness and engagement (Hasnah et al., 2024). Therefore, while local cultural references can enrich the main content, it remains equally important to include diverse examples reflecting the minority groups in the classroom. Such an approach not only affirms students' cultural identities but also promotes intercultural understanding, aligning with global ELT priorities and supporting inclusive language education.

The overwhelmingly positive attitude toward English among young learners—shown by 90% of students in this study—reflects a strong intrinsic motivation, which is crucial for successful early language acquisition (Hafizah & Fithriani, 2023). Recent evidence from young learners across cultures further supports this finding. For instance study in Turkey revealed that primary school children exhibited overwhelmingly positive attitudes towards learning English, driven by engaging classroom environments and supportive activities (Demirbulak & Zeyrek, 2022). In line with this, Liu et al., (2021) emphasized the effectiveness of using games in promoting young learners' willingness to communicate in English, noting that playful and

interactive methods not only enhanced motivation but also positively influenced teachers' attitudes toward communicative language teaching.

Students' Learning Needs

In addition to understanding who the learners are, it is also important to explore how they learn best. Students' *learning needs* encompass their preferred styles of learning, favorite teaching media and techniques, preferred topics or themes, as well as their ability to engage with various language tasks. These aspects are crucial in informing the design of English teaching materials that are not only age-appropriate and culturally relevant but also engaging, accessible, and pedagogically sound. The following discussion elaborates on key findings related to learning needs includes seven points, namely: *first*, students' learning style; *second*, students' preference toward teachers' teaching media; *third*, students preference toward teaching techniques; *fourth*, students preference toward theme; *fifth*, students' English capability; and *sixth*, students' preference toward character education values in ELT materials.

Students' learning styles are crucial factors to consider in the English teaching and learning process. Rather than emphasizing a single mode of instruction, materials should integrate a balanced combination of visual (e.g., colourful illustrations, diagrams), auditory (e.g., songs, dialogues, listening tasks), and kinaesthetic elements (e.g., hands-on tasks, games, and role plays). Such an inclusive design accommodates the diverse learning styles present in the classroom, thereby enhancing engagement and learning outcomes. This aligns with Reynaldi & Refnaldi, (2024), who highlight the importance of developing textbooks that address varied learning preferences to foster engagement and inclusivity in accordance with differentiated learning practices.

The present study further highlights students' preferences for teaching media used in English classrooms, emphasizing the value of multimodal resources to meet diverse learner needs. The findings reveal that students particularly favor textbook-based learning and worksheet completion, supporting Soltanpour et al., (2021), who argue that worksheets can create a relaxed, challenging, and enjoyable learning environment. Beyond printed materials, interactive media also play a significant pedagogical role. For example, Aridasarie & Rohmah, (2024) emphasize that puppets not only support English-speaking skill development but also enhance multimodal literacy by integrating visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic modes in meaningful communicative contexts. Similarly, Khasanah & Burhan (2022) report that puppets help reduce boredom, encourage active participation, and aid vocabulary retention through interactive experiences.

Audiovisual media such as videos are likewise increasingly recognized for their pedagogical value. Videos promote student engagement, motivation, and comprehension (Kurniawan, 2024), a view reinforced by Teng (2025), who demonstrated their effectiveness in teaching vocabulary form, meaning, and use. This study confirms this trend, with 355 students expressing interest in video-based learning. Students' attraction to visual media also extends to picture cards, which remain a staple in early English instruction. Hamdani (2020) underscores the simplicity and effectiveness of using picture cards to elicit vocabulary recognition—an approach mirrored in the current findings, where all students reported enjoyment when using them.

Lastly, picture books continue to serve as essential resources in early language education, supporting vocabulary acquisition and expressive language development (Ramsey et al., 2021). Collectively, these findings underscore the importance of addressing diverse learning styles in developing English language teaching (ELT) materials for young learners. The preference for a variety of media—from textbooks and worksheets to puppets, videos, picture cards, and picture books—demonstrates that no single instructional mode can meet all learners' needs. Instead, materials should be designed as multimodal learning environments that

flexibly integrate visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic components to align with differentiated learning preferences and sustain long-term learner engagement.

The data gathered from the questionnaire indicate that students strongly preferred interactive and student-centered teaching techniques, particularly playing games and working on textbooks. These techniques were followed in popularity by Total Physical Response (TPR) and storytelling. Singing was the least preferred but still well-received by the majority. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), these findings emphasize the importance of employing teaching techniques that are engaging, physical, and cognitively stimulating. Teaching techniques that are interactive and student-centered, such as games and collaborative tasks, are more appealing to young learners. These preferences should guide instructional planning to increase students' involvement and engagement (Hikmawan et al., 2023). Furthermore, the popularity of games and storytelling supports the idea that young EFL learners benefit from learning experiences that combine language input with movement, narrative, and play—methods which help reduce anxiety and make language acquisition more natural and enjoyable (Kiaer et al., 2021).

The strong preference for games and storytelling further reinforces the idea that young learners acquire language most effectively through experiential learning—where movement, narrative, and play converge to create meaningful and low-anxiety contexts for communication. From a theoretical standpoint, these findings align with the core principles of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which emphasize authentic, engaging, and purposeful tasks that promote both language use and learner involvement. Consequently, English teaching materials for young learners should be designed to accommodate teachers' diverse preferred techniques—such as games, storytelling, TPR, singing, and textbook-based exercises—rather than relying on a single approach. Such variety ensures that instruction remains dynamic, responsive to both teacher and learner needs, and aligned with the experiential and task-oriented nature of early language learning in faith-based school contexts.

Topics that are concrete, familiar, and visually engaging are more likely to capture children's attention and sustain their interest in learning (Hidayatullah et al., 2025; Suryanto & Brawijaya, 2024). Animals, colors, and numbers are not only developmentally appropriate but also provide rich opportunities for multisensory learning, which is essential at the early childhood level. For instance, animals can be incorporated into songs, movements, and storytelling, while colors and numbers can be taught through games, flashcards, and classroom objects—activities that support vocabulary acquisition and language use in meaningful contexts ((Gunawan, 2025). Robingatin et al., (2025) found that teachers perceive thematic units—particularly those based on familiar contexts—as highly beneficial in engaging students, facilitating comprehension, and promoting meaningful learning experiences. Familiar themes help bridge learners' prior knowledge with new language input, making it easier for them to relate to the content and use the language in real-life situations.

Therefore, English materials for young learners should be designed with varied, age-appropriate themes that reflect children's developmental stages and real-world experiences. Abstract or complex topics are not recommended, especially for younger learners who rely heavily on concrete and contextualized input to build understanding. A diverse yet developmentally suitable range of themes will better support engagement, comprehension, and long-term language retention.

Naming objects is typically introduced at the early stage of English learning for young learners. To advance beyond this phase, students need opportunities to use English meaningfully in various communicative contexts. The findings of this study show that most students were able to name objects, answer short questions, and perform simple self-introductions—skills that indicate foundational communicative competence. Such early

abilities develop effectively when children engage in contextual and interactive tasks that connect language to their immediate environment (Hidayat & Rohmah, 2022).

The results of the current study support the view that young learners benefit most from concrete and familiar language use—such as naming, identifying, and describing—before progressing to more abstract communication. These activities reduce anxiety and foster confidence, providing a bridge from receptive to productive skills (Hafizah & Fithriani, 2023). Therefore, textbook design and classroom instruction should reinforce these communicative foundations through task-based activities that simulate authentic, age-appropriate interactions.

Students' preference toward character education values in texts include moral and affective dimensions. These findings emphasize that moral and affective dimensions are not only relevant but also engaging for young learners. According to Birhan et al., (2021), character education plays a vital role in shaping students' moral reasoning, behavior, and sense of responsibility. Embedding such values within language learning texts—through relatable stories, dialogues, and social scenarios—can foster both linguistic competence and moral development, rendering language learning more meaningful and holistic. In the Indonesian context, integration of moral values in English textbooks has been increasingly scrutinized. (Sulistiyo et al., 2020) found that national primary-level English textbooks frequently emphasize values such as helping others, politeness, and caring through both lexical choices and illustrative content. Meanwhile, Sugirin (2018) emphasized that character education can be integrated through written texts in English textbooks, such as dialogues, reading passages, and writing tasks.

CONCLUSION

Guided by Masuhara's (1998) framework of Needs Analysis, which distinguishes between *personal needs* and *learning needs*, this study sought to explore the English learning needs of young learners within a specific educational and cultural context. The respondents consisted of elementary students, teachers, and school principals from Muhammadiyah primary schools in Yogyakarta—an Islamic education setting that blends national curriculum goals with strong moral and religious values. The findings reveal that students' *personal needs*, such as age, gender, cultural background, and attitudes toward English, play a significant role in shaping their engagement and motivation. These dimensions point to the necessity of materials that are developmentally appropriate, culturally affirming, inclusive, and intrinsically motivating.

In addition, students' *learning needs*—including their learning styles, students' preference toward teachers' teaching techniques and media, students' preference toward themes, students' capability in doing task, and students' preference toward character education values—highlight the importance of designing English materials that accommodate students' learning style, teachers' teaching techniques and media, include local and global themes, facilitate scaffolding for students to completing task gradually, integrate character education values. Overall, the insights gained from this context-specific analysis offer valuable direction for developing task-based teaching materials with character education values that are contextually grounded, pedagogically robust, and responsive to the holistic needs of young learners in faith-based schools like Muhammadiyah.

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