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Examining Student Perceptions of Genially-Based Learning Media Integrated with Problem-Based Learning to Enhance English Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

Background: In the digital age, English language instruction requires innovative approaches to improve student engagement and outcomes. Traditional teaching methods often fail to foster motivation and active participation, particularly in reading comprehension.
Aims: This study focuses on students' feedback on the developed product an interactive learning medium using the Genially platform, integrated with a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach, without covering the full product development process or evaluating its impact on reading comprehension.
Methods: A qualitative descriptive method was employed, focusing on student perceptions of the developed media. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and open-ended responses from students at SMP Negeri 3 Pantai Labu. The analysis used descriptive statistics and thematic categorization to evaluate aspects such as content quality, usability, design, and interactivity.
Result: Findings showed consistently high ratings across all evaluation aspects, with an overall average score of 0.94. Students reported increased motivation, better comprehension, and a more enjoyable learning experience. The Genially-based media was perceived as visually appealing, user-friendly, and effective in facilitating independent and collaborative learning through real-world problem contexts.
Conclusion: The integration of Genially and PBL in English instruction proved to be feasible, practical, and positively received by students. It offers a promising alternative to conventional methods and supports a more engaging, student-centered learning environment.

A. Introduction

The advancement of education in the 21st century demands continuous innovation, particularly in teaching methods and media, to meet students' diverse and evolving needs (Gruzdeva et al., 2020; Sebu, 2023). Globally, the integration of digital technology into learning has become a critical component of modern education systems. As highlighted by the Robertson (2021), digital transformation in education is pivotal to ensuring inclusive, equitable, and high-quality learning. In Indonesia, this shift is reflected in the government's efforts to digitalize classrooms and promote active learning methodologies; however, challenges in implementation remain widespread, particularly in rural and under-resourced regions (Almén & Bagga-Gupta, 2023).

The situation presents notable challenges in the context of English language learning, which is considered a fundamental skill for global communication and competitiveness (Alakrash & Razak, 2021;

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Rintaningrum, 2023). At the junior high school level, many students still struggle to master English, especially in reading comprehension and oral communication (Jaelani & Zabidi, 2020; Yu et al., 2023). A national survey by the Ministry of Education and Culture Nanda et al. (2019) revealed that more than 60% of students have difficulty understanding English texts, significantly affecting their academic performance and motivation to learn. These difficulties are often rooted in outdated pedagogical methods, limited access to engaging learning materials, and a lack of teacher training in the use of digital tools (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016; Yuhua, 2024).

A specific case is observed at SMP Negeri 3 Pantai Labu, where traditional teacher-centered instruction and reliance on textbooks persist as dominant strategies. Such methods have been found to contribute to low student engagement and passive learning attitudes. The limited integration of technology and innovative approaches like Problem-Based Learning (PBL) further exacerbates the issue. In interviews and field observations, teachers reported challenges in designing contextual learning activities, while students expressed a lack of interest and enjoyment in English lessons.

To address these issues, various educational strategies have been proposed. One promising solution is using interactive learning media, which can transform abstract and complex content into accessible and engaging formats. According to Sriadhi et al. (2022), multimedia learning environments incorporating verbal and visual elements can enhance learners' comprehension and retention. Complementarily, PBL has gained recognition as an effective pedagogical approach that fosters active learning, collaboration, and critical thinking (Dita et al., 2021). When combined, interactive media and PBL can offer a rich learning experience that aligns with the needs of modern learners (Rohmatulloh et al., 2022).

Several previous studies support this integrative approach Reinita et al. (2023) demonstrated that using digital media integrated with PBL increased students' intrinsic motivation by 35% and improved their academic performance by 25%. Similarly, Rahim (2023) showed that Genially, a user-friendly web-based platform, can effectively create interactive visual content such as quizzes, simulations, and animated explanations that support student-centered learning.

However, a critical gap remains. Most prior research has either focused on digital media development or the application of PBL independently (Castillo-Cuesta, 2022). Few have specifically explored the integration of PBL with Genially-based media in the context of English instruction for junior high school students. Moreover, the practical implementation and evaluation of such media within the real classroom context, particularly in schools like SMP Negeri 3 Pantai Labu, has received limited scholarly attention. This study aims to address this gap by developing an interactive learning media using Genially, integrated with the principles of Problem-Based Learning. Specifically designed for seventh-grade English language instruction, the product focuses on enhancing students' reading comprehension and cognitive learning outcomes, as perceived by the students. The research explores students' perceptions of the content quality, usability, and accessibility of the developed media and the impact of interactive media on student motivation and engagement in English learning.

B. Research Methods

This research employed a descriptive qualitative method to gain an in-depth understanding of students' perceptions and experiences with the Genially-based learning media integrated with Problem-Based Learning (PBL). This approach is well-suited to explore subjective views. It provides rich, detailed descriptions of how students interact with and respond to the learning tool, aligning with the research's goal of understanding the impact on content quality, usability, and engagement (Fu & Zhang, 2020). The aim was to explore the practicality and user reception of the developed media in the context of English language instruction. The research subjects were seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Pantai Labu, with 31 samples who had experienced the learning process using the developed media. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who had directly engaged with the media during classroom activities. The selection ensured that feedback was obtained from learners with sufficient exposure to the tool and learning approach being studied.

The research was conducted over two weeks during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, specifically in April 2025 at SMP Negeri 3 Pantai Labu. During this time, students participated in English learning sessions incorporating interactive Genially media within a PBL framework, focusing on reading comprehension materials. The procedure began with introducing the learning media in a real classroom setting. Students were presented with problem-based tasks delivered through Genially presentations

containing interactive elements such as quizzes, clickable scenarios, embedded animations, and learning instructions aligned with PBL principles. After completing the sessions, students were asked to provide feedback regarding their experiences using the media.

Data were collected through a student response questionnaire consisting of open-ended and closed-ended items, as illustrated in the flowchart in Figure 1 below.

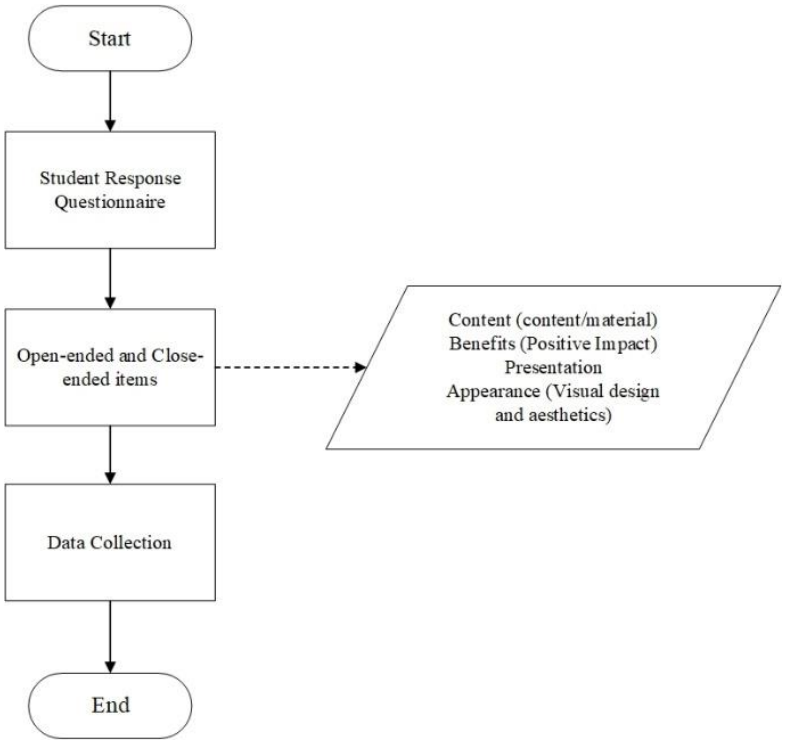

Figure 1. Genially English Media

The questionnaire was designed to gather detailed perceptions of visual appeal, ease of use, interactivity, learning motivation, and overall engagement. Additionally, informal student interviews were conducted to enrich the data with more personal insights and reflections. The primary research instrument was the student feedback questionnaire, which was structured to capture both qualitative descriptions and Likert-scale ratings.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical techniques for the quantitative portion, where Likert-scale responses were tabulated and presented in percentages to summarize trends in perception. For the qualitative portion, students' written and spoken responses were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns, sentiments, and suggestions using IBM SPSS 21. The scope of this research was limited to evaluating student perceptions of the developed learning media in a single school and a specific subject area—English reading comprehension. As such, the study does not claim to generalize findings to broader populations or other subject areas.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Results

The results of this study present an in-depth analysis of students' perceptions regarding the use of Genially-based interactive learning media integrated with the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach for English language instruction at the junior high school level. Data were collected through structured questionnaires, including Likert-scale and open-ended items. The responses were organized into several key dimensions: content quality, usefulness, ease of use, visual design, and interactivity. The following media have been developed as shown in Figure 2.

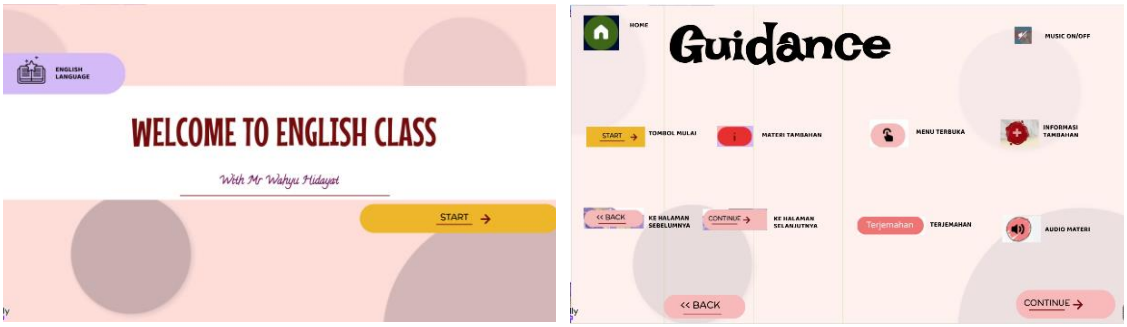

Figure 2. Genially English Media

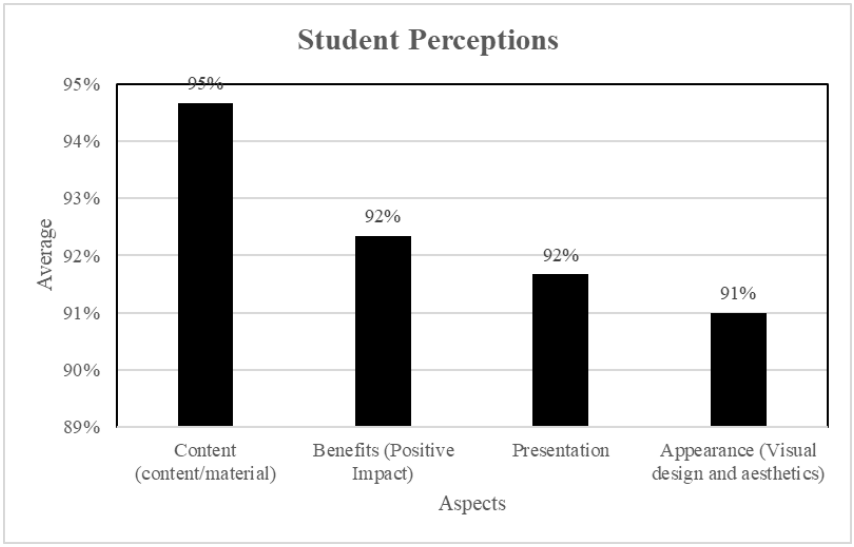

Figure 3. Research Result

Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of average scores across all evaluated aspects. It is evident that all aspects received very high ratings, with the highest being content quality (0.95), followed closely by usefulness (0.93), ease of use (0.92), and interactivity (0.91). These results provide strong empirical support for the practicality and user-friendliness of the developed media.

1.1. Content Quality

Students rated the content delivered through the Genially media as highly effective, with an average score of 0.95, categorized as "Very Good." The content was considered curriculum-relevant, clearly structured, and appropriately leveled for seventh-grade learners. Students reported that the material helped them more easily understand abstract concepts, such as textual interpretation, inference, and vocabulary usage. Moreover, integrating problem-based tasks within the media was seen as a way to contextualize the content, making learning more authentic and goal-oriented. Qualitative feedback further indicated that students appreciated the logical sequence of the learning material. Several students noted that the problems embedded in the lessons were “realistic” and “challenging,” which motivated them to think critically and apply English in simulated real-life scenarios.

1.2. Usefulness and Impact on Learning

Regarding practical usefulness, the media received an average rating of 0.93. Students overwhelmingly felt that the media contributed to increased motivation, better retention, and a more enjoyable learning experience. One of the notable responses from students was the perception that they became more autonomous in learning, as the media allowed for self-paced exploration without the constant need for teacher guidance. Combining PBL with multimedia elements enabled students to engage in collaborative problem-solving, particularly when activities were done in groups. It led to improved classroom dynamics, more active discussions, and higher levels of participation, especially from students who previously exhibited low confidence in English class.

1.3. Ease of Use and Accessibility

The average rating for ease of use was 0.92, which suggests that the interface of the Genially media was broadly accessible, even to students with limited technological experience. Students reported that instructions were clear, navigation was intuitive, and loading times were reasonable. It is significant because one of the concerns in media-based learning is the potential for cognitive overload due to technical complexity. However, in this case, the design choices effectively minimized that risk. Moreover, the embedded tools—such as clickable links, tooltips, and simple animations, were easy to operate and guided learning by drawing attention to key points. These elements helped sustain concentration and supported differentiated learning among students with varied proficiency levels.

1.4. Visual Design and Aesthetic Appeal

The visual presentation of the media received an average score of 0.91. Students consistently appreciated the attractive colour schemes, the use of icons and images, and the aesthetic coherence throughout the lessons. They described the media as "not boring" and "fun to look at," indicating that visual appeal played a key role in maintaining attention. A few students also highlighted that the clean layout helped reduce confusion, especially compared to traditional worksheets or textbook-based activities. It is important to note that while design alone cannot guarantee learning success, it supports cognitive engagement, especially in the digital generation of learners.

1.5. Interactivity and Student Engagement

The interactive features of the Genially media were also positively received, with a mean score of 0.91. These features included drag-and-drop quizzes, interactive buttons, animation-triggered feedback, and mini-games that reinforced reading comprehension. Students found the gamification aspects particularly helpful in reviewing lessons and self-assessing their progress. The responsive nature of the media allowed them to receive instant feedback, which is critical for formative learning. Furthermore, students noted that interactivity provided a sense of agency, allowing them to control their learning journey. It aligns with the principles of constructivist learning, where learners actively build knowledge through experience and reflection.

2. Discussion

Based on the findings, this study presents several essential reflections on using Genially-based learning media integrated with Problem-Based Learning (PBL) for English instruction. The consistent positive feedback from students reveals the media's potential to foster meaningful learning experiences. The relevance of this research is emphasized through its connection with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which indicates that students' perceptions of the ease of use and perceived usefulness of the media play a crucial role in their acceptance of the learning tool. Additionally, the study is discussed within the framework of Constructivist Learning Theory, where the media is shown to support active learning, problem-solving, and critical thinking, encouraging students to take ownership of their learning process. Furthermore, a systematic comparison with similar research highlights how this study builds upon or differs from previous findings, offering new insights into the application of interactive media in education. To elaborate on the position of this research in the broader educational landscape, this section is structured into four parts: implications, research contributions, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

2.1. Implications

The results of this study carry practical and pedagogical implications for both teachers and curriculum developers. The strong student approval across dimensions such as content quality, ease of use, and interactivity suggests that technology-based instruction can significantly enhance student engagement and comprehension when aligned with constructivist methods like PBL. These findings are consistent with Mayer & Schwemmle (2023), who emphasized the importance of technology-mediated learning in supporting student autonomy and personalization. For teachers, the findings imply that integrating Genially into lesson planning is not only feasible but also impactful, even in contexts with limited exposure to digital tools. It allows for the creation of contextualized, problem-driven scenarios that can activate higher-order thinking skills, particularly in language learning where context is crucial (Wiyaka et al., 2020). Furthermore, schools and educational policymakers should consider providing structured training and support for educators to adopt such platforms effectively.

2.2. Research Contribution

This study contributes to the growing literature on interactive digital learning and innovative pedagogical models in English language teaching. While prior studies such as Yasseen Shukr & Adnan Jameel (2022) and (Shandu-Omukunyi, 2023) have explored either the effectiveness of digital media or the pedagogical power of PBL, few have examined their integration, especially using Genially as a development platform for middle school learners. By applying a descriptive qualitative lens to student perception, this research provides a context-specific insight into how digital innovation can be adopted within Indonesian secondary schools, an area underrepresented in global literature. The novelty lies in its examination of Genially within a PBL framework for reading comprehension, providing practical design implications for other educators and researchers developing content-rich, problem-oriented digital learning tools.

2.3. Limitations

Despite its strengths, this study has several limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the data collection focused exclusively on student perceptions. It did not include pre-test/post-test measurements, making it difficult to quantitatively assess cognitive gains or improvements in academic achievement. Future studies should complement perception data with performance-based evidence to provide a more balanced evaluation of media effectiveness. Second, the study was conducted in a single school with a small sample, limiting the findings' generalizability. Variability in student digital literacy levels, infrastructure access, or teacher readiness in other schools might yield different outcomes. In addition, only the reading skill component of English was targeted, meaning the results cannot necessarily be extrapolated to listening, speaking, or writing competencies. Finally, the scope of evaluation did not involve longitudinal observation, so the sustainability of motivation and engagement over time remains unknown.

2.4. Suggestions

Given the promising results, several suggestions are proposed for educators, researchers, and policymakers:

a. For teachers and instructional designers, it is recommended to continue exploring Genially as a content delivery tool and as a medium for active learning through problem-solving, storytelling, and gamification.
b. For researchers, future studies should adopt mixed-method or experimental designs that integrate both perception-based data and performance outcomes. Additionally, expanding the sample size across different schools and regions can enhance the robustness of the findings.
c. Curriculum planners and education stakeholders should consider investing in digital literacy training for teachers and students alike and ensuring equitable access to technology, particularly in under-resourced schools where digital transformation remains slow.

Future research can build a more comprehensive understanding of how interactive, student-centered technologies such as Genially can be systematically integrated into language education across diverse learning environments by addressing these areas.

D. Conclusion

This study aimed to evaluate the development and use of Genially-based interactive learning media integrated with Problem-Based Learning (PBL) for teaching English reading comprehension in junior high school. Based on student responses and analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn: First, the developed media is highly feasible for classroom use. Students consistently rated the content quality as clear, relevant, and well-structured, with an average rating of 0.95. The integration of PBL within the media allowed students to engage with real-life contextual problems, enhancing their understanding and interest in English learning. Second, the media demonstrated strong practicality in terms of usability and accessibility. Students found the platform easy to navigate and visually engaging. The Genially interface supported student autonomy and reduced cognitive load, making it suitable even for learners with limited digital skills. Third, while this study did not include formal testing of academic outcomes, student feedback suggests that the media was perceived as effective in increasing motivation, engagement, and comprehension. The interactive and gamified features of the media contributed positively to students' learning experiences, particularly in making reading tasks more enjoyable and meaningful. In summary, the Genially-based media integrated with PBL offers a promising alternative to conventional teaching methods in the English language. It is feasible and practical, and has the potential to improve student engagement and learning outcomes when implemented thoughtfully in real classroom settings.

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F. Author Contribution Statement

WH was responsible for designing the research framework, developing the Genially-based learning media, and collecting data in the field. EN contributed to the data analysis process and assisted in interpreting the results about relevant theories and previous studies. NS participated in drafting the manuscript, editing the academic language, and organizing the final structure of the article. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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