

UNDERSTANDING LEARNER PERSPECTIVES ON E-LEARNING TOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF THE MYINTEGRATED READING COMPANION

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Abstract

This study investigates students' perceptions of the *MyIntegrated Reading Companion Website* as a digital tool for enhancing English language learning. Employing a quantitative descriptive research design, data were collected from 37 students through a 15-item Likert-scale questionnaire. The study aimed to evaluate the website's usability, content organisation, and effectiveness in supporting self-directed learning and motivation. Results show an overall positive response, with an average score percentage of 77.3%. Students particularly appreciated the platform's support for autonomous learning, helpful multimedia features, and the motivation it provided for continued e-learning. The highest-rated items reflected satisfaction with explainer videos and independent learning opportunities. However, slightly lower ratings in areas related to long-term engagement and language improvement suggest a need for more dynamic and adaptive learning content. The findings underscore the potential of the *MyIntegrated Reading Companion Website* as a useful supplementary tool in English language instruction. Recommendations are made for further content enhancement and continued integration of digital platforms in language education to foster learner motivation and effectiveness.

Keywords: student perception, e-learning, language learning, reading website, digital education, MyIntegrated Reading Companion

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Introduction

In the age of digital transformation, technology has been integrated into education, transforming the way students learn and interact with teaching materials. Among the emerging technologies, web-based learning systems have become the latest models of educational technology, offering flexibility, accessibility, and interactivity to enhance student learning. These teaching methods can be leveraged for learning through the internet, especially in language learning, where learners utilise these learning media for reading, vocabulary, grammar, and the entire language to enhance their language proficiency (Shanthi et al., 2025). Technology has become an inseparable part of education, driven by the growing demand for digital transformation. This movement has indeed reconstructed classical room dynamics to actualise the interactive, student-centred learning experience, promoting students' autonomy and expanding learning resources greatly without restraint on space and time (Shanthi & Xavierine, 2024). Language learning, especially for second language learners, such as English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners (Shanthi et al., 2021), has been significantly supported by digital tools, including Learning Management Systems (LMS), digital reading platforms, and web-based instructional tools.

Digital literacy has become increasingly crucial for academic and career success in today's knowledge-based society. Higher education institutions are recognising the need to integrate digital literacy into their curricula, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic (Murray et al., 2022). A study of top global universities revealed growing efforts to incorporate digital literacy initiatives and requirements, though more systematic approaches are needed (Murray et al., 2022). In India, there is a push to transform higher education curricula to better prepare students for 21st-century challenges by integrating digital literacy skills and technological intelligence (Varghese & Musthafa, 2022). This requires updating pedagogical approaches to align with modern learning styles and demands. Both studies emphasise the importance of reimagining digital literacy education to ensure students, faculty, and citizens at large develop the necessary competencies to thrive in an increasingly digitally reliant world (Murray et al., 2022; Varghese & Musthafa, 2022).

As such, this study explores the My Integrated Reading Companion Website (MyEC), which was developed by two lecturers from Universiti Teknologi MARA and was iteratively implemented and evaluated with a group of students from Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara in this study. MyEC is a digital resource of this type that aims to help second language learners of English develop their reading skills and comprehension through the use of packaged materials. The site features various elements, including explainer videos, grammar support, and self-paced exercises, to help bolster language learning both inside and outside the classroom. However, the effectiveness of these tools is determined not only by their form and function, but also by how learners perceive and utilise them.

Understanding the students' opinions is essential when evaluating the effectiveness and usefulness of any educational system. Positive user attitudes are closely linked to increased motivation, sustained use, and enhanced learning outcomes. In contrast, barriers to engagement and the realisation of potential tool benefits can result from negative experiences (Shanthi et al., 2024). It is then imperative to investigate how users perceive the usability, accessibility, and educational impact of the MyEC, but through the lens of users from a different country, in this case, Medan, Indonesia. The purpose of this study is to examine students' perceptions of the MyIntegrated Reading Companion Website, with an emphasis on ease of use, navigation, effectiveness in improving English proficiency, and overall value as a supplemental learning resource. By analysing the responses from a group of learners using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire, the study seeks to provide insights that can inform future improvements in e-learning platform design and implementation in English language education.

The integration of digital technologies into education has prompted a shift in traditional teaching methods, especially in the realm of language learning. Numerous studies have highlighted the benefits of web-based platforms in enhancing learner autonomy, engagement, and academic performance (Aliyah Hassan et al., 2023; Shanthi et al., 2021; Purwarno et al., 2023). E-learning tools, such as MyIntegrated Reading Companion websites, provide learners with opportunities to practice language skills at their own pace, repeat exercises as needed, and access diverse materials tailored to individual proficiency levels.

Usability and Learner Perception

Usability is a critical factor in the adoption and effectiveness of educational technology. According to Shanthi et al. (2025), usability encompasses the ease with which users can learn, navigate, and interact with a system. In the context of language learning websites, studies have shown that intuitive interfaces, clear content organisation, and engaging features contribute significantly to a positive user experience (Zaharias & Poylymenakou, 2009). When students find a platform easy to use and helpful, they are more likely to use it regularly and benefit from its features (Al-Khresheh et al. (2025). Moreover, usability directly influences learner motivation and engagement, especially in digital environments where frustration due to poor design can quickly discourage continued use (Hornbæk, 2006). In well-designed platforms, learners can focus on the content rather than struggling with technical difficulties, thereby fostering deeper interaction with learning materials and improving learning outcomes (Hassenzahl, 2008).

Additionally, research in human-computer interaction suggests that educational technologies perceived as user-friendly and aesthetically pleasing are more likely to be integrated into learners' study routines, resulting in higher satisfaction levels (Alsumait & Al-Osaimi, 2009). Therefore, a high level of usability is not merely a technical consideration—it is a pedagogical imperative for ensuring that digital platforms are practical, inclusive, and supportive of learner autonomy.

E-learning and Language Acquisition

Web-based learning platforms play a vital role in supporting language acquisition, particularly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Research indicates that Web 2.0 platforms develop linguistic proficiency while cultivating digital literacy, cross-cultural communication, and problem-solving competencies, making them highly relevant to modern EFL instruction (Al-Khresheh et al. (2025). Studies have identified computers, mobile devices, printed materials, audio players, and multimedia technologies as key tools supporting vocabulary, listening, reading, and grammar development (Hasumi & Chiu, 2024). Additionally, the multimodal approach of combining text, audio, video, and images in digital tools aligns with cognitive theories of multimedia learning and could potentially enhance vocabulary retention. Further research has emphasized that learner autonomy plays a crucial role in successful language learning, particularly in online settings where its role may be even more significant (Qu, 2025). AI-powered adaptive learning platforms foster academic engagement by tailoring content to EFL students' needs, proficiency levels, and learning styles (Qu, 2025). For EFL learners, this adaptability supports differentiated instruction, enabling students to focus on areas where they need the most improvement, such as pronunciation, listening comprehension, or reading fluency. Overall, the integration of web-based tools in EFL contexts enables a more interactive, personalized, and culturally rich learning experience that supports both formal instruction and self-directed study.

Student Motivation and Autonomy

Motivation is another essential element in language learning. Learners who perceive digital tools as beneficial and enjoyable are more likely to be motivated and take ownership of their learning (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The flexibility offered by e-learning environments enables students to engage in self-directed learning, which is particularly important in language education, where continuous exposure and practice are crucial to proficiency (Shanti et al., 2025). Websites like the MyIntegrated Reading Companion aim to foster such motivation by providing relevant and accessible content. Moreover, intrinsic motivation—the desire to learn for its own sake—is strongly influenced by learners' sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, all of which can be supported through digital platforms (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Web-based tools often allow learners to set personal goals, track their own progress, and select materials that align with their interests and proficiency levels, which enhances a sense of control and achievement (Qu, 2025). When students feel that their learning experiences are meaningful and personalised, their level of engagement and persistence increases (Ushioda, 2011).

Additionally, gamified elements, multimedia interaction, and real-world relevance in digital learning environments can create positive emotional experiences, which are known to be highly influential in sustaining motivation over time (Reinhardt & Sykes, 2014). In language learning, where long-term commitment is required, digital platforms that combine cognitive stimulation with emotional satisfaction help learners maintain consistent practice and overcome plateaus. Therefore, fostering motivation through thoughtful design and relevant content is not just a technical feature of digital tools, it is a fundamental pedagogical strategy that enhances learner autonomy, perseverance, and ultimately, language proficiency.

Effectiveness of Reading Companion Websites

Specific studies on reading companion tools have demonstrated that these platforms can significantly enhance students' comprehension skills and vocabulary development. For instance, Chen and Chen (2004) found that students who used digital reading tools demonstrated higher retention and engagement compared to those relying solely on textbooks. These tools often incorporate scaffolding techniques, such as glossaries, guiding questions, and contextual examples, which support more profound understanding and learning (Reinking, 1998). In addition, reading companion platforms

typically provide interactive and adaptive features that personalise the reading experience based on students' language levels and progress. These features can include real-time vocabulary assistance, pop-up grammar explanations, and immediate comprehension feedback, which not only facilitate reading but also promote metacognitive awareness (Jung, 2010). This awareness helps learners monitor their own understanding and apply strategies such as summarising, questioning, and predicting to improve reading outcomes (Grabe, 2009).

Furthermore, research has shown that multimodal input is a hallmark of many digital reading tools that supports dual coding processes, where both verbal and visual channels work together to enhance memory and comprehension (Mayer, 2009). By combining text with images, audio narration, and video content, reading companion websites offer rich contextualisation, which is especially beneficial for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners who often struggle with abstract vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. Overall, digital reading tools like the *MyIntegrated Reading Companion* not only aid in comprehension but also promote engagement, strategy use, and learner confidence, ultimately contributing to more effective and enjoyable reading experiences.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to investigate students' perceptions of the MyIntegrated Reading Companion Website. As this approach revealed the numbers (reflecting participants' perceptions of the use of MyEC) collected through an online survey, it will facilitate an objective understanding of participants' satisfaction and perception of MyEC (Taherdoost, 2022). A structured survey method was used to collect data on students' experiences and attitudes toward the website's usability, organisation, and its effectiveness in supporting English language learning.

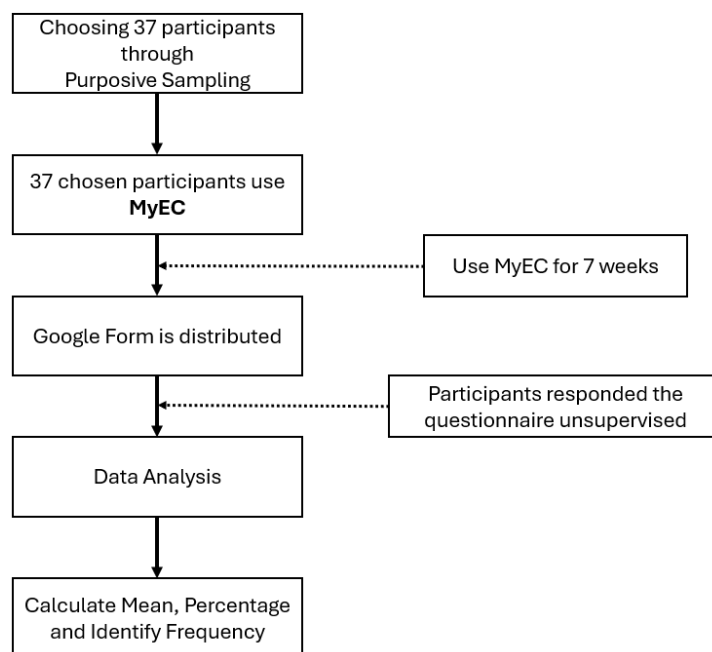


Figure 1. Steps in Collecting and Analysing the Data

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 37 students from Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara who had experience using the MyIntegrated Reading Companion Website as part of their English language learning activities for seven weeks. The participants were selected through a purposive sampling technique (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024), which targeted students enrolled in English language courses that incorporated the use of the platform, meeting several specific requirements. All respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and participated voluntarily. The requirements set are:

1. Students of Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara
2. Students had enrolled in an English language course by the time this study was conducted.
3. Students have been using MyEC for 7 weeks.

Instrument

Data was collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire consisting of 15 items, each reflecting a specific aspect of the website such as usability, navigation, organisation of content, helpfulness of learning materials, and impact on language proficiency. Respondents rated each item on a 5-point Likert scale: 5 = Very Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = No Comment, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Very Disagree

The questionnaire items were adapted to reflect core principles of effective e-learning and were validated by a panel of English language teaching professionals prior to distribution. There are fifteen questions/items in the Google Form that are listed below:

1. The website is easy to use.
2. It is easy to find the learning materials I want to use.
3. The website is easy to navigate.
4. The learning materials are well organised.
5. The learning materials enable me to learn English better.
6. The learning materials help me to understand English grammar better.
7. I would use the learning materials in class.
8. With the learning materials, I can better understand the lessons.
9. I can use the learning materials independently.
10. The explainer videos are helpful.
11. I can reinforce my learning with materials on the website.
12. I can utilise the learning materials to further enhance my skills.
13. The learning materials help me to improve my language proficiency.
14. I want to keep using the learning materials on the website to improve myself.
15. I want to improve myself via e-learning.

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms and completed by students after they used the MyIntegrated Reading Companion Website for 7 weeks, encompassing both classroom integration and self-directed learning. Participants completed the survey independently without guidance from instructors to minimise bias.

Data Analysis

The responses were compiled and analysed using descriptive statistical methods, including the calculation of means, frequency, and percentages for each item. The analysis aimed to identify general trends in students' attitudes and levels of agreement toward various aspects of the website. Interpretation of the results focused on identifying strengths and potential areas for improvement in the platform. Two formulas were used to analyse the data collected which are Equation 1 to calculate the mean and Equation 2 to calculate the percentage.

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{(f_1 \times 1) + (f_2 \times 2) + (f_3 \times 3) + (f_4 \times 4) + (f_5 \times 5)}{N} \dots\dots(1)$$

Where:

f_1 = Frequency of Strongly Disagree response

f_2 = Frequency of Disagree response

f_3 = Frequency of Neutral/No Comments response

f_4 = Frequency of Agree response

f_5 = Frequency of Strongly Agree response

N = total number of responses for that item

$$\text{Percentage} = \left(\frac{\text{Mean}}{5} \right) \times 100 \quad \dots\dots(2)$$

Results and Discussion

The data collected from 37 respondents reveals students' perceptions of the *MyIntegrated Reading Companion* Website based on 15 survey questions. Each question is rated on a Likert scale from 1 (Very Disagree) to 5 (Very Agree). The results are summarised through total scores, percentages, and average scores for each respondent and each question.

Table 1. Mean and Percentage for each item

Item	Mean	Title 2
Item 1	3.92	78.46%
Item 2	3.89	77.84%
Item 3	3.86	77.30%
Item 4	3.81	76.22%
Item 5	4.22	84.32%
Item 6	4.24	84.86%
Item 7	4.00	80.00%
Item 8	3.87	77.38%
Item 9	3.89	77.84%
Item 10	3.89	76.22%
Item 11	3.84	76.76%
Item 12	3.97	79.46%
Item 13	3.81	76.22%
Item 14	3.89	77.84%
Item 15	3.81	76.22%

Overall Perception:

- The average percentage of score across all respondents is 78.5%, indicating a generally positive perception of the website.
- Individual respondent scores range from a Mean of 3.81 to 4.24 (76.22% to 84.86%), suggesting that while most students have a favourable view, a small number of participants expressed dissatisfaction or lack of engagement.
- The descriptive analysis of the questionnaire revealed that participants have shown a positive perception towards the use of MyEC in their English development. All 15 items of the questionnaire were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (very agree), and the means ranged from 3.81 to 4.24.

Highest Rated Items:

The highest mean was recorded for Item 6 “*The learning materials help me to understand the English grammar better*” (M = 4.24, 84.86%), indicating strong agreement among participants regarding the effectiveness of understanding and learning English Grammar through MyEC. The second-highest item rated by the participants is Item 5, “*The learning materials enable me to learn English better*” (M = 4.22, 84.32%). Item 12 “*I can use the learning materials to improve myself further*” (M = 3.97, 79.46%). When these three items are combined, they demonstrate that MyEC's contents are well-planned, designed, and developed to support participants' language improvement.

Lowest Rated Items:

The lowest mean score observed on the Likert scale is shared by four items, with a mean of 3.81 (equivalent to 76.22%). These items are:

Table 2. Items that scored the lowest had the lowest mean.

Item	Description
Item 4	The learning materials are well organised.
Item 10	The explainer videos are helpful.
Item 13	The learning materials help me to improve my language proficiency
Item 15	I will now want to improve myself via e-learning.

The score for Item 4 reflected that some participants might find the materials not well-organised, which is likely to have caused some trouble navigating through the MyEC. Next, Items 4, 10, and 13 are closely related to students' motivation in learning the English language and their perception of how much MyEC has enhanced their motivation.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore students' perceptions of the *MyIntegrated Reading Companion Website* as a tool for enhancing English language learning. Based on the responses from 37 students and a 15-item Likert-scale questionnaire, the findings indicate a generally positive attitude toward the website. The overall average score percentage of 78.5% indicates that most students find the website helpful, easy to use, and effective in learning the English language. The highest-rated items suggest that the platform effectively supports independent learning and building confidence in learning English. Some areas scored slightly lower, such as the organisation of the learning materials and video. It is safe to assume that some participants found the videos in MyEC non-interactive, which caused them to struggle with comprehending the content, resulting in lower scores for this aspect. As this feature is essential in modern digital education, particularly in language learning contexts, some enhancements are necessary to address this issue. This suggests that while the platform excels in usability and initial engagement, there is room to enhance the depth and variety of learning content to sustain long-term motivation and cater to individual learning needs. While it is undeniably better to do some additional adjustments on the MyEC website to address these issues, it is important to note that all of the items, including the lowest rated, all surpass the neutral standpoint; hence, it is safe to assume that these items are not majorly concerned or affected by the students. In conclusion, the *My Integrated Reading Companion Website* is a valuable educational tool with significant potential to enhance students' learning experiences. To maximise its impact, further enhancements in content adaptability, interactivity, and long-term learning pathways are recommended. Future studies could also include a broader and more diverse group of learners to validate these findings further.

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Author Contribution

S Ekalestari – conceptualization, literature review, and drafting of the initial sections, ensuring content coherence; A Shanthi – methodology and data analysis, providing critical insights and revising the manuscript for clarity and support; NAF Jumaat – the writing process, edited the final manuscript, and integrated feedback to enhance overall quality.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest in completing this study. All authors declare that they have no financial, personal, or professional relationships that could be perceived as influencing the research outcomes. We affirm that the integrity of this study has been maintained throughout the research process.

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