PROJECT
(Professional Journal of English Education)
Volume 9, No. 6, November 2026
p–ISSN 2614-6320
e–ISSN 2614-6258

Developing Descriptive Materials Using the Gimkit Application for Teaching Listening Skills to Seventh-Grade Students

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Abstract

Despite the growing interest in technology-enhanced language learning, limited studies have explored game-based materials specifically designed to support EFL listening instruction at the junior high school level. This study aimed to develop descriptive listening materials using the Gimkit application for seventh-grade students at SMPIT Generasi Kreatif Batujajar. The study employed a Research and Development (R&D) method using the ADDIE model, consisting of Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation stages. The developed materials integrated descriptive audio, images, and interactive game-based activities through the Gimkit platform to enhance students' engagement in listening learning. Data were collected through expert validation, teacher validation, student response questionnaires, and field notes. The findings indicated that the developed materials were considered feasible and appropriate for classroom implementation and received positive responses from students. Furthermore, the use of Gimkit increased students' motivation, participation, and engagement during listening activities. These findings suggest that Gimkit-based descriptive listening materials can serve as an effective and innovative alternative for teaching listening skills in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: Descriptive Materials; Gimkit Application; Listening Skills; Gamification; EFL Learning

INTRODUCTION

Listening is one of the most fundamental skills in English language learning, as it serves as the primary channel through which learners receive comprehensible input that underpins the development of speaking, reading, and writing (Krashen, 1982, as cited in Alzamil, 2021). In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), listening enables students to process spoken language, construct meaning, and engage with authentic communication. However, scholars consistently identify listening as among the most cognitively demanding language skills: learners must simultaneously decode phonological features, manage vocabulary, interpret accents, and sustain attention under real-time processing conditions (Alzamil, 2021). Aybirdi, et al.,(2024) further argue that affective factors including anxiety and low self-confidence compound these cognitive challenges, creating a dual burden that significantly impedes EFL students' listening development. Taken together, these findings suggest that listening comprehension is not merely a technical challenge but a multidimensional one, requiring both cognitive support and motivational scaffolding.

In the junior high school English curriculum in Indonesia, descriptive texts are one of the core text types that students are expected to master both receptively and productively. When integrated into listening instruction, descriptive material offers unique pedagogical value it introduces students to detailed descriptions of people, places, animals, and objects, thereby fostering mental visualization, vocabulary acquisition, and attention to specific details. Kim and Maeng (2024) emphasize that effective listening instruction must incorporate materials within

a meaningful contextual framework to enhance students' comprehension and engagement a principle that positions descriptive texts as particularly well suited for developing listening skills. Despite this theoretical alignment, the design of listening materials remains an under explored dimension in EFL pedagogy, particularly regarding how materials can be created to be both linguistically appropriate and motivationally engaging for young learners.

Empirical research confirms that students' difficulties with listening cannot be attributed to a single factor. Permatasari et al., (2023) document the role of poor audio quality and excessive text length in hindering comprehension, while Ramadhianti (2021) distinguishes between internal factors such as low motivation and limited concentration and external factors, including poorly designed materials. Wardani (2021) adds that high speaking speed and unfamiliar vocabulary often lead to cognitive overload. Overall, these studies indicate a convergence of affective, linguistic, and instructional design challenges that must be addressed simultaneously, rather than in isolation. This synthesis suggests that instructional solutions should not focus solely on content or audio quality but must also consider learner engagement and instructional interactivity as integral components of effective listening instruction.

A critical review of the learning context at SMPIT Generasi Kreatif Batujajar reveals conditions consistent with the challenges that have been documented. Classroom observations and informal interviews with English teachers indicate that listening skills are currently taught using audio materials from textbooks and school modules, without the integration of interactive or game-based learning media. This approach appears to contribute to declining student concentration and limited enthusiasm during listening activities. More critically, the descriptive listening materials currently in use are not sufficiently differentiated to meet the diverse needs of students in terms of engagement and comprehension, reflecting a broader gap between the theoretical imperative for innovative media and actual classroom practice.

In response to these challenges, researchers are increasingly turning to gamification as a pedagogical strategy to enhance motivation and learning outcomes in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. Recent studies have demonstrated that gamification in EFL instruction positively influences learner motivation, participation, and language achievement across various language skills (Zhang & Hasim, 2023). Gamification defined as the application of game design principles to educational settings operates on the basis of well-established theories of motivation, including Self-Determination Theory, by fostering a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000, as cited in Agustina et al., 2024). Among the gamification platforms gaining popularity in educational research is Gimkit, a quiz-based application that integrates competitive and collaborative features into learning tasks. Agustina et al.,(2024) found that Gimkit significantly increased student engagement and learning outcomes through interactive activities. These findings demonstrate Gimkit's potential as a motivator in the context of language learning. Similar findings have been reported in other gamified language learning environments, where game elements such as points, leaderboards, and rewards significantly enhanced students' listening performance and classroom engagement (Rosyidah et al., 2023; Susiawati et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, a critical review of existing research on Gimkit reveals significant limitations. Most studies focus on its application in general classroom activities, vocabulary acquisition, reading skills, or formative assessment. None of them directly address the development of structured listening materials. More specifically, to date, no research has examined the design and development of descriptive listening materials specifically tailored for junior high school

students using the Gimkit platform. This gap is quite significant given the specific demands of listening instruction, which requires not only engaging delivery but also audio content that is progressively designed and aligned with students' proficiency levels and curriculum objectives. Therefore, this study aims to develop Gimkit based descriptive listening materials for EFL students at SMPIT Generasi Kreatif Batujajar. The uniqueness of this study lies in the integration of game based media design with listening material development a combination that has not been widely explored in the literature which contributes theoretically to the framework for material development and offers practical value for EFL classrooms in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach to design, develop, and evaluate descriptive teaching materials aimed at improving the listening skills of seventh-grade students at SMPIT Generasi Kreatif. R&D is a systematic research method used to produce a specific educational product and validate its effectiveness in real learning contexts (Hamzah, 2021). The development process in this study followed the ADDIE model, which consists of five sequential and iterative stages: (1) Analysis, (2) Design, (3) Development, (4) Implementation, and (5) Evaluation.

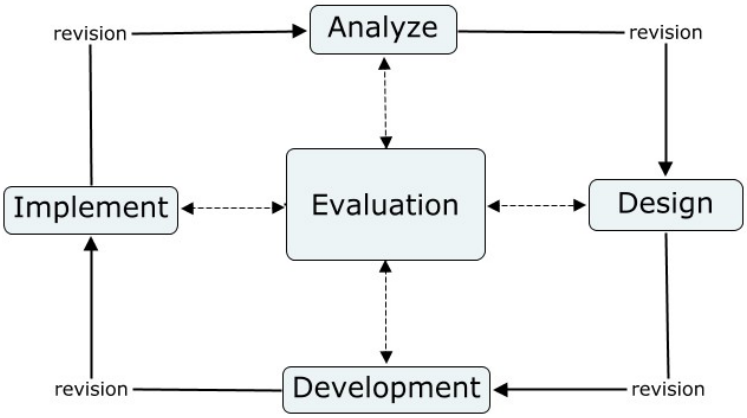

Figure 1. ADDIE Development Procedures

Research Participants

Participants in this study were seventh-grade students at SMPIT Generasi Kreatif. The study was conducted in two phases: a limited trial involving 8 purposively selected students representing diverse learning profiles, and an extensive trial involving 26 students from a seventh-grade class. Purposive sampling was applied in the limited trial to obtain early feedback from students with varying levels of listening comprehension ability. The extensive trial involved the full class to assess the product's effectiveness in a naturalistic classroom setting

ADDIE Development Stages :

a. Analysis Phase

In this phase, the researcher conducted a needs analysis at SMPIT Generasi Kreatif through classroom observation and informal interviews with the English teacher. The analysis focused on identifying students' current listening skill challenges, learning

characteristics, and the availability of existing teaching materials. The findings revealed that students lacked engaging, structured materials to support listening comprehension of descriptive texts. These findings informed the decision to develop teaching materials that integrate content, activities, and audio components using a discovery-based learning approach.

b. Design Phase

Based on the analysis results, the researcher designed the instructional framework and material layout. The teaching materials were structured to guide students through discovery-based listening activities, incorporating descriptive texts, a series of contextual images, and audio listening clips. The design was created using the Canva application to ensure the materials were visually engaging and accessible. Audio materials were developed with the support of the Elephas website to produce clear and appropriately levelled listening input. The designed product was planned in both digital and print formats to accommodate varied classroom conditions.

c. Development Phase

In this phase, the designed materials were produced and then subjected to expert validation before being trialled with students. Validation was conducted by two experts: a content/material expert and a media/design expert, using structured validation sheets. The validation sheets assessed aspects such as content accuracy, clarity of instructions, appropriateness of audio materials, visual design, and alignment with the discovery learning stages. Expert feedback was used to revise and refine the product before the limited trial.

d. Implementation Phase

The revised materials were implemented in two stages. The limited trial was conducted with eight selected students who engaged with the digital version of the teaching materials, including listening activities via Gimkit. After collecting and analysing student responses and observational data, further revisions were made. The extensive trial then took place with twenty six seventh-grade students. To manage technical limitations, the class was divided into smaller groups of eight students during the Gimkit-based activities. Student engagement and learning response data were collected through questionnaire responses during this phase.

e. Evaluation Phase

Evaluation was conducted throughout the development process (formative) and at the end of implementation (summative). Formative evaluation was embedded within each ADDIE stage through expert validation and limited trial feedback. Summative evaluation was based on students' responses during the extensive trial, focusing on the usability, engagement, and effectiveness of the materials for listening skill development. Technical issues identified during the limited trial, such as audio length and device performance during Gimkit sessions, were addressed prior to the extensive trial.

Research Instruments

Three types of instruments were used in this study. First, expert validation sheets were used to assess the quality of the developed materials from content and media perspectives. Each sheet consisted of rated criteria with a Likert-scale response format. Second, student response questionnaires were administered after the implementation phase to measure students' perceptions of the materials' clarity, engagement, and usefulness for improving their listening skills. Third, observational notes were recorded during both trial phases to

document student behaviour, participation, and any technical issues encountered during implementation.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from expert validation sheets and student response questionnaires were analysed using descriptive percentage calculations, following the formula proposed by Arikunto (2010,-) as cited in Maharani et al., (2023):

$$P = (\Sigma X / \Sigma Xi) \times 100\%$$

Where *P* is the percentage score, ΣX is the total score obtained, and ΣXi is the maximum idealscore. The resulting percentages were interpreted using a categorical scale: 0-20% (very poor), 21-40% (poor), 41-60% (sufficient), 61-80% (good), and 81-100% (very good). This scale was used to determine the feasibility and quality of the developed materials. Qualitative data from expert comments and observational notes were analysed descriptively to inform product revisions at each stage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

1. Expert Validation

Expert validation was conducted by two supervisors to assess the feasibility of the Gimkit-based listening module. The validation covered three aspects: content suitability, design and media, and language and instructions. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Expert Validation Results

No.	Validation Aspect	Average (%)	Classification
1.	Content Suitability	78.13%	Good
2.	Design and Media	91.67%	Very Good
3.	Language and Instructions	84.38%	Very Good
Total Average		84.09%	Very Good

Expert validation was conducted by two supervisors to assess the feasibility of the Gimkit-based listening module. The validation covered three aspects: content suitability, design and media, and language and instructions. Content suitability obtained 78.13% (Good), design and media achieved 91.67% (Very Good), and language and instructions reached 84.38% (Very Good). The overall validation score was 84.09%, calculated based on the total score across all validation items. Therefore, the developed materials were categorized as "Very Good" and considered feasible for implementation.

2. Expert Teacher Validation

Validation by expert teachers evaluated the module across three aspects: quality, media, and effectiveness. Table 2 shows that the total average reached 84.03%, also categorized as "Very Good."

Table 2. Expert Teacher Validation Results

No.	Validation Aspect	Average (%)	Classification
1.	Quality	81.25%	Very Good
2.	Media	83.33%	Very Good
3.	Effective	87.50%	Very Good
Total Average		84.03%	Very Good

Validation by expert teachers evaluated the developed materials across three aspects: quality, media, and effectiveness. As presented in Table 2, the overall average score reached 84.03%, which falls into the Very Good category, indicating that the developed materials are highly feasible for classroom implementation.

3. Student Response (Large-Scale Trial)

Following validation, the module was tested in two sequential trials. The small-scale trial (n = 8 students) yielded an average response score of 81.42%. The large-scale trial (n = 26 students) produced an overall average of 83.50%, classified as "Good," indicating a positive increase in student response as the sample size expanded.

Table 3. Large-Scale Trial Results (Student Response)

No.	Aspect	Average (%)	Classification
1.	Motivation & Engagement	85.90%	Very Good
2.	Concentration & Ease of Use	84.14%	Very Good
3.	Instructional Quality	81.74%	Very Good
4.	Feasibility & Impact	82.21%	Very Good
Total Average		83.50%	Very Good

Motivation and engagement recorded the highest score (85.90%, Very Good), reflecting students' positive affective response to the Gimkit platform. The remaining three aspects — concentration and ease of use, instructional quality, and feasibility and impact — each received scores above 80%, all classified as Good. These findings consistently support the overall feasibility of the developed module across both validation and trial stages.

Discussion

This study aimed to develop descriptive listening materials integrated with the Gimkit application for seventh-grade EFL students. The findings demonstrate that the developed materials were not only technically feasible but also pedagogically effective in fostering student engagement, comprehension, and motivation. Rather than simply reporting these outcomes, this

discussion seeks to critically interpret what these results signify within the broader landscape of gamified language learning and EFL listening instruction.

The "Motivation and Engagement" aspect received the highest score among all the dimensions evaluated, indicating that Gimkit's game-based features including the point system, competitive quizzes, and real time feedback play a crucial role in sustaining learners' interest. These results can be understood through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which states that intrinsic motivation grows when students experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Gimkit's reward mechanisms appear to meet students' need for competence by providing immediate recognition for correct answers, while the competitive elements foster a sense of relatedness through peer interaction. This aligns with the argument by Qiu and Luo (2022) that technology supported listening environments reduce students' anxiety and encourage active participation; however, this study expands on those findings by suggesting that the competitive dimension of gamification rather than the general use of technology is particularly influential in motivating EFL learners during listening tasks. Similarly, although Alharbi and Al-Ahdal (2022) emphasize the reduction of communication barriers in interactive EFL environments, this study reveals that structured game-based competition can serve as an additional catalyst for engagement beyond what conventional digital tools can offer. These findings are also supported by systematic reviews indicating that gamification promotes learner autonomy, motivation, and sustained participation in EFL classrooms (Zhang & Hasim, 2023; Alabbasi, 2023). Chan and Lo (2024) further confirmed that gamification strategies consistently improve learner engagement and participation across EFL and ESL learning environments. Similarly, Zhou (2024) found that digital game-based learning positively affected students' motivation and participation in EFL classrooms.

The "Concentration and Ease of Use" aspect also demonstrated strong performance, indicating that students could follow the learning activities without significant cognitive overload. This result is consistent with Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988), which emphasizes that effective instructional media should manage the intrinsic and extraneous load placed on learners. Gimkit's intuitive interface and structured task format appear to have reduced extraneous cognitive load, allowing students to allocate more mental resources to processing listening input. This interpretation extends the findings of Hidayah and Asari (2022), who noted that online platforms enhance listening interest through interactive features. The present study provides a more specific explanation: it is not merely interactivity, but the simplicity and responsiveness of Gimkit's design that enables students to maintain focus during listening tasks. Manurung et al. (2024) similarly found that technology-assisted listening improved comprehension through contextual input; the current findings suggest that platform usability is an equally important, though often overlooked, variable in such outcomes. The effectiveness of digital game-based learning environments has also been associated with improved language acquisition outcomes due to increased learner interaction and immediate feedback mechanisms (Jia et al., 2024).

The "Teaching Quality" dimension, although scoring slightly lower than other aspects, still indicates that the materials are easy to understand and appropriate for the target learners. The descriptive text topics used in the materials which focus on familiar objects, places, and people were strategically selected to activate students' prior knowledge and schemas. Schema Theory (Bartlett, 1932; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983) suggests that listening comprehension is greatly enhanced when students can connect the auditory input they receive with their existing cognitive frameworks. The materials developed in this study intentionally align the audio content with topics encountered in students' daily lives a design principle supported by Sulistina

et al. (2024), who found that digitally presented materials relevant to students' experiences yield better listening comprehension outcomes. Sihombing and Simanjuntak (2023) similarly reported that digital audio resources contribute positively to EFL learners' listening proficiency by providing authentic and accessible listening input. Furthermore, Kim's (2024) study on modified read-aloud activities indicates that meaningful, progressively structured input enhances comprehension a principle underpinning the combination of audio, simple written instructions, and game-based exercises in this material. However, slightly lower scores on this dimension suggest that further refinements to audio clarity and task sequencing could strengthen the instructional design in future iterations.

Regarding "Feasibility and Impact," the materials were deemed practical and applicable in real classroom settings. Despite technical challenges including unstable internet connections and occasional device slowdowns student participation remained consistently high throughout the pilot phase. This finding warrants critical reflection the persistence in participation despite technical disruptions may indicate that the motivational appeal of game-based learning is strong enough to overcome environmental barriers. This contrasts with some literature on technology integration, which treats technical issues as significant barriers to learning (Heliyon, 2024). This study suggests that student motivation and task design can serve as protective factors against such barriers, although it is important to acknowledge that these disruptions may have introduced measurement "noise" into the results. In a context with more reliable infrastructure, the results might be even more pronounced. Khattab and Al-Fuqara (2024) also observed improved listening performance despite technical limitations in an online environment, further supporting the view that well designed tasks can partially compensate for technological shortcomings. Previous studies similarly reported that gamified listening environments remain effective even when implemented under technological constraints, provided that instructional design and learner engagement are adequately maintained (Susiawati et al., 2025). Consistent with these findings, Bularafa et al. (2024) reported that gamification methods significantly improved students' listening skills and classroom participation in English learning contexts.

A broader theoretical Implication of this study concerns the transformation of listening instruction from a teacher centered to a student centered model. Traditional listening activities often position students as passive recipients of audio input, with limited opportunities for active meaning-making. In contrast, Gimkit's structural features quizzes, scoring, and competition repositioned students as active agents who interacted with listening content rather than merely receiving it. This is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural perspective, which holds that learning is most effective when it occurs through social interaction and collaborative challenge within the Zone of Proximal Development. The peer competition embedded in Gimkit activities created a dynamic form of social scaffolding, pushing students to process listening input more attentively. This finding adds nuance to the systematic review by Silvia and Santosa (2023), who concluded that digital audio applications positively influence EFL skills; the present study specifically identifies the competitive social structure of game-based platforms as a key mechanism through which such influence operates.

Classroom observation data further corroborated the quantitative findings. Students who initially struggled with listening comprehension showed progressive improvement across sessions, which aligns with research demonstrating that repeated, low-stakes exposure to listening input gradually builds comprehension capacity (Kacetl & Klimova, 2019). In traditional settings, repeated listening is often perceived as monotonous; however, within Gimkit's gamified environment, repetition was naturalized through the game loop — students

were willing to attempt tasks multiple times not because they were instructed to, but because the competitive format created intrinsic incentives to improve. This behavioral pattern reflects what Csikszentmihalyi (1990) describes as a "flow" state, where the challenge level of an activity is well-matched to the learner's current ability, producing sustained, effortless attention. The observation that students adapted to listening tasks over time, rather than disengaging, suggests that Gimkit was effective in creating this balance.

From a pedagogical perspective, this study has several practical implications for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and curriculum designers. First, Gimkit should not be viewed merely as a teaching aid, but rather as an integral component of a systematic listening curriculum, especially for adolescent learners who are highly responsive to game-based incentives. Teachers should design descriptive listening materials that leverage Gimkit's competitive features while ensuring that audio input is presented gradually and is contextually meaningful. Second, the technical challenges encountered in this study highlight the importance of school infrastructure readiness: schools implementing digital learning tools must ensure reliable internet access and the availability of devices to maximize teaching effectiveness. Third, the success of descriptive text materials as a thematic foundation for listening tasks demonstrates that content topics that activate schemas and are rooted in students' life experiences should be prioritized when designing technology-mediated listening tasks.

CONCLUSION

This is study contributes to the literature on gamification in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education by demonstrating that Gimkit-based descriptive listening materials are valid, feasible, and motivating for seventh-grade students in the context of junior high schools in Indonesia. The developed materials received high validation scores from experts and teachers, and their implementation effectively increased students' motivation, engagement, and active participation in listening tasks. These findings expand upon previous frameworks regarding interactive digital learning (Alharbi & Al-Ahdal, 2022) and digital audio in language education (Silvia & Santosa, 2023) by emphasizing that pedagogical coherence between game mechanics and target language skills is central to effective gamified instruction. Despite technical challenges such as unstable internet connections and device limitations, student enthusiasm remained consistently positive, indicating that the material holds practical value for technology-supported EFL classrooms. However, the study's design—which involved only one school and a limited sample size—restricts the generalizability of these findings. Further research is recommended using a larger sample with a comparative design, as well as exploring the application of Gimkit-based materials to other English language skills, in order to broaden the scope of gamification research in the EFL context.

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