

Special Features of Self-Access English Learning Pandemic Modules

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Abstract

In the Covid-19 pandemic, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture developed special English self-access learning modules for grade IX students. These modules are intended to facilitate the students in studying English at home by themselves. There are special features in these modules that are especially provided for the students. These special features are worth to be investigated. The aim of this research is to explain the special features provided by the writers in the self-access English learning modules. This research is a content analysis research. It is found that there are five special features in these modules. These special features include 1) detailed objectives of each unit, 2) roles of the teacher and parents table, 3) Indonesian translation for the instructions, 4) graded scaffolding activities, and 5) detailed answer keys. Hopefully, this research would give new insights upon self-access English learning materials especially for special nationwide conditions.

Keywords: English self-access learning materials; special features; content analysis.

1. Introduction

During the COVID-19 pandemic many things have changed in the education system in our country. One of them is that the students need to study independently at home. At that time, they needed the resources for studying optimally. Therefore, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture developed special English self-access learning materials for junior high school students. It is very crucial to provide such materials for the students so that the standard of the competence of the students from all over Indonesia is relatively the same. Having the same standard or parameter is important to keep the standard of our education good. One of the ways in keeping this standard is by providing self-access learning modules for the students. These self-access learning modules are specially developed to fulfill the needs of junior high school students who mostly must study at home because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Because the students study by themselves at home, the modules need to be designed to meet their needs. Thus, the self-access learning modules are different from typical English learning materials.

In the past many studies on self-access learning materials have been conducted by many researchers. Jessie Choi (2012) did research on the importance of needs analysis in developing self-access language learning materials. In his research it is found that the students' needs must be taken into account in developing the South access materials so that the materials really give good benefits for the students later on in the future. Following Jessie Choi, Song and Bong (2016) run a research to find out students' motivational aspects and self-directed learning aspects of informal online learning resources. The researchers found that students were motivated to study informal online learning resources because they have freedom and choice; and control. Moreover, the aspects that enhance self-directed learning are the interest and engagement. On the other hand, the big obstacles in accessing self-access online learning resources are the limitation of students' time and the subscription cost.

Soerjowardhana & Nugroho (2017) also conducted research on improving job interview skill by using self-access podcast-based language material. Their study employed action research to explore the enhancement of English job interview skills in an interviewee with an intermediate level of English. The focus was on improving the interviewee's ability to respond to the interviewer's questions. The findings indicate that after two sessions, the job seeker's English job interview skills improved. This improvement is evident in two areas: functional ability, where the interviewee's response style shifted from descriptive to narrative, and content, where the responses evolved from discussing daily routines to

providing professional rationales. Similarly, Afdillah and Arrasyid (2021) investigated autonomous learning self-access learning materials. Based on the findings it is found that the students preferred many kinds of self-access materials such as videos that can motivate them, dictionaries, videos from YouTube, books that can enhance their vocabularies and registers, curriculum-based textbooks novels and many more. This proves that students are aware that there are many kinds of South access learning materials that they can find in their daily lives.

Gimeno-Sanz (2021) mentioned the benefits in self-access language learning by using Language Massive Open Online Language Courses (LMOOCs). LMOOCs can be accessed by anyone in this world and can be taken by lots of language students at one time. It also provides communication possibilities through discussion forums. Therefore, language students can share their learning challenges or questions to other participants and the instructor. Meanwhile, LMOOCs bring some issues. The use of LMOOCs requires very good self-regulation. Many language students failed to complete the course due to the time constraints. In addition, LMOOCs as self-access language learning has limitations to facilitate the students practicing productive skills, such as speaking and writing. Furthermore, Mohamed et al., (2022) inspected the perceptions and behaviors of higher institutions students in Malaysia and Indonesia related to self-access language learning. They found that more than 50% of research participants were actively involved in online and remote learning. Even though most of the students were actively involved in the online learning process, they found that the students had difficulties in managing their stress, getting stable internet connection, and building a comfortable physical learning environment. Lastly, Mudling and Watkins (2023) conducted research for evaluating self-access video material in the English learning coursebook English M1 issued by Brazilian Government. They found that the self-access video material still lacks important items to help adult low-level students. Those missing items are related to the tasks to be done dealing with the video and the feedback for the students.

Based on the studies above, none of them studied English self-access materials or modules. Therefore, this brings a gap to the studies. Therefore, investigating the special features of these materials are worth to be done. The aim of this current research is to investigate the special features of English self-access learning modules used during the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Method

This research is a content analysis. Krippendorff (2004:18) states that content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contents of their use. In this research, the researchers analysed the content of the self-access English materials. There were two modules analysed. The modules are the first and second/even semester modules. They were analysed unit by unit. The analysis of each unit were based on 5 points which are 1) detailed objectives of each unit, 2) roles of the teacher and parents table, 3) Indonesian translation for the instructions, 4) graded scaffolding activities, and 5) detailed answer keys. In analysing the data from the reflective journal, the researchers adapted thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Firstly, the researchers read the students' reflective journal to be familiarized with them. Then, the researchers generated initial codes from the journals. After that, recurring themes were noted down, reviewed, and named.

3. Findings and Discussion

Based on the data analysis, the result of this study is categorized into five aspects. Those aspects include 1) detailed objectives of each unit, 2) roles of the teacher and parents table, 3) Indonesian translation for the instructions, 4) graded scaffolding activities, and 5) detailed answer keys.

Detailed objectives of each unit

Based on the data analysis, each unit begins with detailed objectives. The objectives provided in the modules are more detailed than the objectives that are usually provided in regular English course books. Figure 1 represents the detailed objectives of each unit in the module.


 Tujuan Pembelajaran	
Pembelajaran ke-	Tujuan Pembelajaran
1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Melalui kegiatan membaca teks tentang bakteri, siswa dapat menentukan apakah sejumlah pernyataan tentang teks tersebut benar atau salah dengan tepat. Melalui kegiatan membaca teks tentang jamur, siswa dapat menentukan arti kosakata dalam bahasa Indonesia dengan tepat. Melalui kegiatan membaca teks yang sama, siswa dapat menjawab pertanyaan-pertanyaan dengan benar. Melalui kegiatan mendengarkan guru yang berbicara tentang tungau, siswa dapat menentukan arti kosakata dalam bahasa Indonesia dengan tepat. Melalui kegiatan mendengarkan teks yang sama, siswa dapat menyebutkan lima fakta tentang tungau dengan benar. Melalui berbagai kegiatan pembelajaran, siswa dapat menunjukkan perilaku kerjasama, tanggung jawab, dan percaya diri dengan baik. Melalui berbagai kegiatan pembelajaran, siswa dapat menunjukkan kemampuan berliterasi dengan baik. Melalui berbagai kegiatan pembelajaran, siswa dapat menunjukkan kemampuan berpikir kritis, berkolaborasi, dan berkomunikasi dengan baik.
2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Melalui kegiatan membaca teks tentang semut, siswa dapat menjawab pertanyaan-pertanyaan dengan benar. Melalui kegiatan membaca teks yang sama dan penjelasan tentang bagian teks <i>information report</i>, siswa dapat menentukan bagian-bagian teks <i>information report</i> dengan benar. Melalui kegiatan membaca teks tentang rayap, siswa dapat memberi label pada bagian teks dan menjawab pertanyaan-pertanyaan dengan benar.
Pembelajaran ke-	Tujuan Pembelajaran
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Melalui kegiatan membaca penjelasan tentang tata bahasa dan kosakata teks <i>information report</i>, siswa dapat menentukan tata bahasa dan kosakata yang sesuai untuk teks <i>information report</i> dengan benar. Setelah membaca teks tentang kumbang, siswa dapat menjawab pertanyaan-pertanyaan dengan benar. Setelah membaca teks tentang semut dan kumbang, siswa dapat membandingkan kesamaan kedua teks tersebut berdasarkan elemen tujuan, bagian, tata bahasa, dan kosakatanya dengan benar. Setelah menyaksikan video tentang nematoda, siswa dapat melengkapi skrip videonya dengan tepat. Setelah menyaksikan video yang sama, siswa dapat menemukan kesimpulan dari diskusi dengan guru, teman, atau keluarga dengan benar. Setelah menyaksikan video yang sama, siswa dapat mengucapkan berbagai kosakata dari video tersebut dengan tepat. Setelah menyaksikan video tentang semut, siswa dapat melengkapi tabel dengan benar. Setelah menyaksikan video tentang semut, siswa dapat mengucapkan berbagai kosakata dari video tersebut dengan tepat. Setelah menyaksikan video tentang nematoda dan semut, siswa dapat membandingkan kesamaan kedua video tersebut berdasarkan elemen tujuan, bagian, tata bahasa, kosakata, dan pengucapan dengan benar. Setelah membaca teks yang sama dan video yang sama, siswa dapat membandingkan kesamaan antara teks dan videonya berdasarkan elemen tujuan, bagian, tata bahasa, kosakata dengan tepat. Melalui berbagai kegiatan pembelajaran, siswa dapat menunjukkan perilaku kerjasama, tanggung jawab, dan percaya diri dengan baik. Melalui berbagai kegiatan pembelajaran, siswa dapat menunjukkan kemampuan berliterasi dengan baik.

Figure 1. Detailed Objectives of Each Unit Representation

Detailed objectives are very important to be included in the beginning of each unit because they will be the guide for students, teachers, and parents in doing the activities in the unit. The direction and purpose of the learning will also be clear. Clear objectives will provide specific language skills competencies and learning outcomes that should be achieved by the students within every unit. Clear objectives will help students, teachers, and parents understand what the students are expected to achieve the end of the unit.

In addition, having clear objectives has many benefits. First, clear objectives enable students to set meaningful and achievable goals for their language learning endeavours. By knowing precisely what they are working towards in each unit, students can track their progress, stay motivated, and celebrate their achievements along the way. Secondly, detailed objectives will promote personalization and autonomy: Self-access modules are designed to empower students with autonomy over their learning process. Detailed objectives allow students to personalize their learning experience by selecting units that align with their interests, needs, and proficiency levels. Lastly, regarding assessment and evaluation, detailed objectives provide a basis for assessing student progress and evaluating the effectiveness of the self-access module. Teachers, parents, and students can use these objectives as criteria for measuring proficiency gains, identifying areas for improvement, and adjusting learning strategies as needed.

Based on the analysis above it can be understood that detailed objectives play an important role in guiding students through an English self-access module, providing clarity, direction, and purpose to their language learning endeavours. By setting clear expectations, empowering students with autonomy, and facilitating meaningful engagement, detailed objectives contribute to the effectiveness and success of self-access language learning initiatives.

Roles of the teacher and parents table

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, where remote and online learning have become the norm, the roles of teachers and parents in a self-access learning English module take on even greater significance. This is proven by the existence of a table containing their roles. Figure 2 depicts the roles form both teachers and parents.

Peran Guru & Orang Tua		
Pembelajaran ke-	Peran Guru	Peran Orang Tua
1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Menyediakan bahan ajar utama dan bahan ajar pendukung 2. Membacakan teks tentang bakteri, jamur, dan tungau jika harus disimak siswa dan apabila siswa tidak memiliki fasilitas untuk mendengarkan 3. Berdiskusi dan membahas jawaban-jawaban siswa pada aktivitas-aktivitas di pembelajaran ini 4. Memberikan bantuan teknis apabila siswa mengalami kendala 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Memastikan ketersediaan bahan ajar 2. Memberikan bantuan teknis apabila anak mengalami kendala 3. Menjabatani komunikasi antara guru dengan anak
2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Menyediakan bahan ajar utama dan bahan ajar pendukung 2. Membacakan teks tentang semut, rayap, kumbang, dan nematode jika harus disimak siswa dan apabila siswa tidak memiliki fasilitas untuk mendengarkan 3. Berdiskusi dan membahas jawaban-jawaban siswa di aktivitas-aktivitas pada pembelajaran ini 4. Memberikan bantuan teknis apabila siswa mengalami kendala 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Memastikan ketersediaan bahan ajar 2. Memberikan bantuan teknis apabila anak mengalami kendala 3. Menjabatani komunikasi antara guru dengan anak
3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Menyediakan bahan ajar utama dan bahan ajar pendukung 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Memastikan ketersediaan bahan ajar 2. Menyediakan fasilitas untuk anak mencari informasi tentang cacing
Pembelajaran ke-	Peran Guru	Peran Orang Tua
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Berdiskusi dan membahas informasi tentang cacing tanah, cacing, liung, lipan, dan lintah 3. Berdiskusi dan membahas tulisan-tulisan siswa pada aktivitas-aktivitas pada pembelajaran ini 4. Memberikan bantuan teknis apabila siswa mengalami kendala 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> tanah, cacing, liung, lipan, dan lintah 3. Memberikan bantuan teknis apabila anak mengalami kendala 4. Menjabatani komunikasi antara guru dengan anak
4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Menyediakan bahan ajar utama dan bahan ajar pendukung 2. Berdiskusi dan membahas informasi tentang kelinci, tikus mondok, laba-laba tanah, dan celurut 3. Berdiskusi dan membahas tulisan-tulisan siswa di aktivitas-aktivitas pada pembelajaran ini 4. Memberikan bantuan teknis apabila siswa mengalami kendala 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Memastikan ketersediaan bahan ajar 2. Menyediakan fasilitas untuk anak mencari informasi tentang kelinci, tikus mondok, laba-laba tanah, dan celurut 3. Memberikan bantuan teknis apabila anak mengalami kendala 4. Menjabatani komunikasi antara guru dengan anak

Figure 2. The Depiction of the Roles of Teacher and Parents Table

The teacher and parents’ role table provides support for remote learning. With traditional classroom settings disrupted due to the pandemic, self-access learning modules provide continuity in education. Teachers and parents play crucial roles in supporting students’ remote learning efforts by providing guidance, resources, and assistance as they navigate the module from home. Parents and teachers must ensure accessibility and equity. Teachers and parents help bridge the digital divide by ensuring that all students have access to the necessary technology, resources, and support to engage effectively with the self-access module, regardless of their socio-economic status.

In the absence of face-to-face interactions, effective communication between teachers, parents, and students becomes paramount. Teachers and parents serve as liaisons between students and educational institutions, facilitating virtual communication channels, such as email, messaging platforms, and video conferencing, to address questions, concerns, and provide ongoing support. Both teachers and parents also play a crucial role in providing emotional support. The uncertainty and stress caused by the pandemic can take a toll on students’ emotional well-being. Teachers and parents offer emotional support and encouragement, creating a supportive and nurturing environment where students feel safe to express their feelings, seek help when needed, and cope with challenges effectively.

By having teacher and parents’ role table, both parties can monitor the student’s progress. With students studying remotely, monitoring progress and engagement in the self-access module becomes more challenging. Teachers and parents track students’ participation, completion of activities, and proficiency gains, providing timely feedback and intervention to ensure continued progress and motivation.

In conclusion, the roles of teachers and parents in a self-access learning English module are indispensable in the COVID-19 pandemic context. By providing support, guidance, encouragement, and fostering a sense of community, teachers and parents help students navigate the challenges of remote learning, maximize their potential, and achieve their language learning goals despite the unprecedented circumstances. Therefore, it’s essential to have dedicated roles for teachers and parents within the module to ensure the holistic development and success of students during the pandemic.

Indonesian translation for the instructions

Indonesian translations for the instructions are provided in the module. Figure 3 is an example of the translation found in the module.

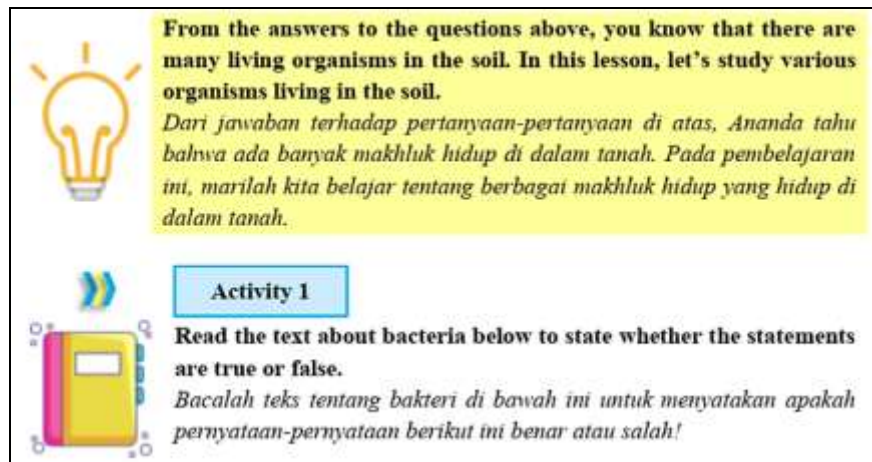


Figure 3. An Example of the Translation Found in the Module

Providing Indonesian translations for the instructions in an English self-access learning in the module especially covid-19 pandemic is crucial. Not all students are proficient in English. Having instructions in Indonesian ensures that they understand the tasks and materials, reducing the risk of misinterpretation. In addition, clear instructions in their native language can boost students' confidence and willingness to engage with the module, leading to better learning outcomes. Students can also have improved engagement in reading the translations. When students can easily understand the instructions, they are more likely to engage with the content actively. This can lead to a more interactive and enjoyable learning experience. Furthermore, clear instructions help students understand how to complete assessments and provide accurate feedback, which is critical for their progress and development.

Therefore, providing Indonesian translations for the instructions in an English self-access learning module significantly enhances comprehension, accessibility, engagement, cultural relevance, and practical application. It ensures that students can effectively navigate and benefit from the educational content, leading to improved learning outcomes and overall satisfaction.

Graded scaffolding activities

The module provided numerous graded scaffolding activities. Graded scaffolding activities are essential in an English self-access learning module for several key reasons.

Scaffolding activities start simple and become more complex. Scaffolding is a form of assistance given by more capable people to the learner that enables the learner to solve a problem, vary out a task, or achieve a goal that would be beyond the learner's unassisted efforts (Daniels, 2003). Scaffolding activities allow students to build their skills step by step. This step-by-step approach helps students get basic concepts before moving on to more challenging tasks. Early activities give a strong foundation, making it easier for students to understand and integrate more advanced language concepts later on. Starting with simpler tasks allows students to experience success early in the process, which can boost their confidence and motivation to continue learning.

Scaffolding activities can be designed to adapt to individual student's pace and ability, providing personalized support. Students can spend more time on areas where they need improvement and move quickly through areas they find easier. In a self-access modules, students can control their own progress, revisiting simpler activities if needed and moving on to more complex ones when they feel ready. Graded activities often involve practicing the same concepts in different contexts and with increasing complexity. This repetition with variation reinforces learning and aids retention. Even in a self-access context, graded scaffolding provides a sense of guidance and structure, which can be particularly beneficial for students who need more support. Students can see a clear pathway from basic to advanced levels, making it easier to set goals and track their own progress.

Graded scaffolding activities in an English self-access learning module provide a structured, supportive, and adaptive learning environment that promotes gradual skill development, confidence, and independent learning. By managing cognitive load and reinforcing concepts progressively, these activities help students achieve better outcomes and maintain motivation throughout their learning journey.

Detailed answer keys

Having detailed answer keys in an English self-access learning module is especially important in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia for several reasons:

Lets' Get Ready
Sample Answer
 1. The animals in the picture are earthworms.
 2. Yes, I have seen them before.
 3. I can find them in the soil.
 4. They do not have any bones.
 5. Not yet

Activity 1
Text model
Earthworms
 Earthworms are also called angleworms. There are more than 1,800 species of earthworms in the world. They are **invertebrates**. This means that they do not have a backbone. They belong to the **Annelida** phylum.
 Earthworms live in **the soil**. They usually remain near the soil surface, but they can make tunnels as deep as 2 meters. Earthworms can be up to **14 inches (35.56 cm)** in length. They can be **reddish brown or reddish grey** in color. The earthworm body is **divided into ring like segments**. Earthworms cannot see or hear, but they are sensitive to both light and vibrations. Their food consists of **decaying plants and other organisms**. As they eat, however, earthworms also ingest large amounts of soil, sand, and tiny pebbles.
 (Adapted from <https://www.britannica.com/animal/earthworm> and <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/invertebrates/c/common-earthworm/>)

Activity 2
Sample Answer
 I would like to tell you some information about earthworms. Earthworms are invertebrates. They belong to the Annelida phylum. Earthworms live in the soil. Earthworms can be up to 14 inches (35.56 cm) in length. They can be reddish brown

Listening Script
Activity 3
 Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWb6HlBklfQ&feature=youtu.be>
 My-my-my... Hey there! How's it going? Today, I'm doing some gardening at home. It'll turn out just great. But wait. What's this? Look! It's an earthworm! So cool! Hey buddy! Don't be shy. Say hi! Well, that reminds me I have to tell you about this group of invertebrates. The worms! Do you know what kind of animals worms are? I'll explain it to you. Worms have long soft bodies. Their skin is moist. They breathe through their skin. Interesting right?
 As you can see, they don't have legs. That's why they crawl. Thanks to their body muscles and their setae. These are tiny bristles that worm use to grip on the soil they move. Worms can live on land like earthworms or in the water like leeches. Be careful if you ever come across them.
 Do you want me to tell you some interesting facts about worms? Did you know that earthworms are really important for soil health? They dig up burrows helping to oxygenate the soil and to transport nutrients and minerals as they tunnel along. How long would you say the longest worm ever found measures? One foot? Two? Five? Nope. The largest worm ever found measured 180 feet. Longer than an Olympic sized swimming pool.
 You are a bit smaller. I'm letting you be. So you can grow.
 Well guys, I'm going back to my garden see you around.
 Did you like the video about worms?
 Leave a comment below and tell us all about it.
 Oh click on the seal and subscribe to our YouTube channel to stay tuned with new adventures.
 (Adapted from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWb6HlBklfQ&feature=youtu.be>)

Activity 7
 Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Qlu5Kw6b54>
 Living among the soil are slaters they are also known as woodlice, sow bugs, and pill bugs. Slaters are crustaceans that have adapted to living on land.

Figure 4. Detailed Answer Keys

Detailed answer keys enable students to assess their own work accurately, identifying mistakes and understanding the correct answers without immediate teacher intervention. In the absence of face-to-face instruction, students can use answer keys as a guide to navigate through the material, ensuring they are on the right track. With limited access to teachers and peer support, detailed answer keys serve as an additional resource that students can rely on to clarify doubts and enhance understanding. They help maintain continuity in learning, even when students are studying from home, ensuring that their education is not disrupted by the pandemic.

Detailed answer keys often provide explanations for why certain answers are correct or incorrect, helping students grasp underlying concepts rather than just memorizing answers. This approach helps students understand their mistakes, encouraging deeper learning and retention of concepts. When students can check their answers and understand their mistakes, they become more autonomous and confident in their ability to learn independently. Successfully finding and understanding correct answers can be motivating, especially during challenging times when students might feel isolated or demotivated.

During the pandemic, teacher availability might be limited due to increased demands or health concerns. Detailed answer keys help fill the gap, allowing students to get timely feedback. Teachers can focus on more complex queries and personalized support rather than spending time on routine corrections, which can be efficiently handled by detailed answer keys. Detailed answer keys help maintain a consistent standard of education by ensuring that all students have access to the same high-quality explanations and solutions. They provide a benchmark for students to gauge their progress and understanding, which is essential in an environment where traditional assessment methods might be disrupted.

In summary, detailed answer keys in an English self-access learning module are vital during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. They support independent learning, enhance understanding, encourage autonomy, bridge gaps in teacher availability, accommodate diverse learning paces, ensure inclusivity, and maintain educational standards. These benefits are crucial for sustaining effective education during challenging times.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research provides valuable insights into the special features of English self-access materials used in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those special features include 1) detailed objectives of each unit, 2) roles of the teacher and parents table, 3) Indonesian translation for the instructions, 4) graded scaffolding activities, and

5) detailed answer keys. By analyzing those special features, educators, policymakers, and material developers can identify strategies to enhance the effectiveness of the self-access English module in crisis contexts. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies and comparative analyses to further explain the long-term impact of special features on language learning outcomes and educational equity in Indonesia and beyond.

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