

Designing an Interactive Digital Media to Support Higher Education Students' English Spoken Communication Skill

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ABSTRACT

English communication, which has become an essential skill for graduates of the university, has not been achieved because of the low performance in spoken English proficiency. Offering necessary circumstances to support English learning during the outbreak of covid-19 is a challenge for educators in this digital age. This study addressed the emerging issue of the availability of media in online learning. It specifically aimed at designing interactive digital media that would not only assist the students in gaining the language skills but also develop their self-learning through its flexibility and accessibility. Design-based research was employed in the present study that involved the first-grade students of higher education. The ASSURE Model was used as a guideline for the appropriateness of the media, and a need analysis was conducted to find out the target and learning needs of the students through interview and questionnaires. The result showed that the design of interactive digital media gave positive impacts on the higher education students' English communication skills and their independence in learning as well. The students' performance was improved through pre-test and post-test results. The designed media itself was considered very good (a score of 87) by the seven aspects namely organization, speaking activities, appearance, learner-centered, content, feedback availability, and

motivation impact.



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1. Introduction

21st-century skills are defined as new capabilities that society is increasingly demanding of the present workers and, in educational terms, the young generation needs to be prepared now for future professions and careers (Voogt and Roblin 2010, 2013 in Joynes et al., 2019) by acquiring the 6Cs (communication, critical thinking, collaboration, connectivity, citizenship, and creativity). Utilizing those skills, the young generation will not only focus on the content and knowledge but they will also learn how to employ the skills and attitudes. Among those skills, communication skill known as multidimensional

and involves a range of elements, including oral, written, listening, visual, intercultural, interdisciplinary and soon (Riemer, 2007) which is used to help to connect in the digital era that consists of ability in spoken, written, nonverbal and listening skill or oral communication skill Brown & Lee, 2015 having a good communication skill would build self-esteem and relationship. Students with good communication skills could demonstrate their ideas and thought while also forming relationships without encountering difficulties or discrimination based on religion, race or gender (Sabbah et al.). Thus, having poor communication is the root of obstacles, and communication is the solution to the problems.

In addition, communication skills (McPheat) involves acquiring information from one person to another. Hence, communicating is the art and process and sharing ideas. The richness of those ideas is essential to effective communication. Meanwhile, communication skills are an ability that we utilize to reduce the barriers to effective communication. (McPheat) also explains that communication involves multiple parts and stages of the communication process to gain effective communication. They are, namely; 1) source, 2) message, 3) encoding, 4) channel, 5) decoding, 6) receiver, 7) feedback, 8) context. The greatest approach to communicate globally is to use an international language which makes English widely used for most global communication. In a nutshell, the crucial reason for learning English is having the ability to communicate in any condition for effective communication that covers presentation skills, convincing and negotiation skills and interpersonal skills (Rini). The elements of communication cover; 1) tone of voice, 2) body language, and 3) verbal communication (McPheat). Considering the role of communication in English that affects social life, through ability in spoken communication. Thus, to cope with global demand the Indonesian government emphasizes that foreign language, specifically English, is essential to learn and use in global communication which is stated in regulation No. 32 issued in 2013.

Concerning Indonesian students' English proficiency, the findings by English First, 2020, Indonesia's English Proficiency Index (EPI) is on 74th position out of 100 countries in the world and 15th in Asia, and 6th in Southeast Asia which can be said that Indonesia has lower English ability than the nearby countries in that region. In other words, Indonesia's position decreased from 61st in 2019 to 74th position. Having good foreign language skills, specifically, English, is the way to enter the global society in this digital age (Santoso). The preliminary research involving learners of higher education in one of the universities in Yogyakarta encountered problems in mastering English, especially listening and speaking skills. More than 50% of the total students explained that they experienced verbal instructions by the lecturers which caused a misunderstanding for they failed to identify the words pronounced. The students also faced difficulties when they had to present or tell their ideas orally that mostly come from a lack of vocabulary, pronunciation, uncertainty and nervousness. They did not practice enough speaking correctly at school and the least widespread issues were difficulties understanding the questions (Diyora and Diloza). Meanwhile, anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence (Tuan and Mai) are possibly seen clearly in this skill while the learners practice speaking (Handayani et al.).

Listening and speaking skills are defined as interrelated in communicative language courses, and are frequently combined as "oral communication skills" (Brown and Lee). In speaking (Brown and Abeywickrama) there are five types that would be utilized to support communication, namely; 1) Imitative, known as activity in which the learners are able to simply imitate a word or phrase or possibly a sentence, intonation,

rhythm, lexical, and grammatical properties; 2) Intensive, an assessment context which demonstrates proficiency of grammatical, phrasal, lexical, or phonological relationship through directed response tasks, reading aloud, sentence and dialogue completion, limited picture-cued tasks including simple sequences, and translation up to the simple sentence level; 3) Responsive, which interaction and test comprehension are included in responsive learning outcomes of very short conversations, small talk, standard greetings and responses; 4) Interactive, are broken down into two types: transactional language to exchange the specific information, and interpersonal exchanges to maintain the social relationship which become pragmatically complex; 5) Extensive (monologues) well known to assess the learners including speeches, oral presentation, and story-telling. Meanwhile, the principle of teaching speaking skills emphasizes both fluency and accuracy, ensure that techniques' complexity is appropriate, provide a technique that sparks the interest of students, encourage the use of authentic language in meaningful contexts, provide appropriate feedback, capitalize in the natural link between speaking and listening, give students opportunities to initiate oral communication, encourage the development of speaking strategies (Brown and Lee).

The communication purposes have not been achieved since in the university English is given for reading purposes where students should struggle to get the information by comprehending the English sources (Rini) and be more aware of the strategies to be used in English reading to help them gather the information about the text (Abrar et al.). Speaking (and listening) becomes the crucial aspect that should be developed and mastered by the higher education students due to its an essential skill in communication, creating situations that can encourage learners to produce English oral communication that provides learners with opportunities to explain concepts and help them to vocalize concrete meaning, by vocalizing concrete meaning, (Diyora and Diloza) become a consideration of this study.

A technology-based media is believed to play a significant part in succeeding the language learning process and a way to solve the higher education students' problem by making learning English skills more interesting and enjoyable. The utilization of technology is crucial to assist self-understanding (Ahmadi), advantageous to the development of students' receptive abilities than their expressive skills (Ngo and Eichelberger) in learning English skills, the majority of the college students enjoyed learning by using mobile applications. Learning media is exploited as a media to enhance students' experience in studying so that the materials presented are easier to understand and might be used to encourage independence. Due to the characteristics of the higher education students, generally, they need some tools to assist them in the learning process so they can obtain and achieve the learning objectives. As stated by (Shoffa et al.) learning media is a tool to deliver messages or points to the receiver in the communication process. By utilizing the media, it not only supports the learners in increasing their ability and knowledge but also supports the educators in delivering the materials easier and clearer in any kind of context, and gives the opportunity of evaluation in media technology. Some advantages of using digital media in education are making the learners more enthusiastic in learning, assisting the educators in conveying the concept accurately, providing visual experiences that are more interesting than conventional media (Shoffa et al.). Meanwhile selecting digital media that would be used for teaching should be based on certain considerations that involve some criteria: the appropriateness of learning outcome, suitable with the learning process, the content and

learning materials are both extremely beneficial, ease of acquiring media, accessible, efficient, appropriate with the way students' think, suitable with the environment and its criteria, ability of educators and effective towards learning environment (Supriyanto in Shoffa et al., 2021)). Moreover, supported by the research finding done by (Praheto et al.) the results of the study showed that the used of interactive multimedia is more effective in learning language skills. Furthermore, interactive multimedia could be utilized to learn independently outside of the classroom.

This study would address the emerging issues as an effort to provide effective instructional media to support the learning of English as a medium of global communication. The objectives of this study covered; 1) analyze the needs of higher education students, 2) present the design of the interactive digital media and 3) discover the higher education students' progress after learning by utilizing the interactive digital media. Exclusively it is specifically aimed at designing an interactive digital media that would assist the learners in acquiring speaking skills and develop their self-learning through it with its flexibility and accessibility. An interactive digital media was chosen in this study because it is computer-driven that accommodates two-way conversation between the users and the system through the instructions and the response tool (Griffey) and consists of texts, graphics, pictures, audios, videos and animations which is integrated (Fikri and Madona). The interactive media to support students gaining communication skills independently would take the form of a mobile application by using i-spring 9 to provide interactive tools which include photos, videos, animations, quizzes and answer keys. It is worth being used as an alternative media in online learning during the covid-19 outbreak (Fadillah et al.). Fundamentally, the interactive digital media was chosen to assist the students in gaining the skills by providing some activities and its feature based on the needs; provide the video to explain the content of the materials, brainstorming by employing the audio and some quizzes to make more interactive gather the students' attention, and provide the activities related with the indicators.

2. Method

This study was classified as design-based research (DBR) which focused on designing interactive digital media using the ASSURE Model as an instructional media and implemented in six stages: analyze learners, state standards and objectives, select strategies, technology, media and materials, utilize technology, media and materials, require learners participation, evaluate and revise. It was conducted in two faculties namely; the Faculty of Economy and the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education in one of the private universities in Yogyakarta which involved students as participants who have taken the "Bahasa Inggris 1" course in the academic year of 2020/2021.

The data were obtained through some instruments: tests, questionnaires, interviews, and observation. The questionnaire which consisted of 30 Likert scale questions was employed to obtain the need analysis of the students and the problems which were encountered by the students. Then, open-ended interviews were used to gain the data related to students' behavior, problems, and learning skills during the learning process. Afterwards, convening the pre-test and post-test was also used to acquire the students' competencies.

3. Finding and Discussion

As stated, ASSURE MODEL was utilized as an instructional design media for this study. The data gained would be discussed in Need Analysis, Media Development, Expert Judgment and Revision, and The Usage of the Designed Interactive Media.

Need Analysis

The need analysis was aimed to analyze the characteristics of the learners, competencies and learning skills. First, this study conducted the interview session with the lecturer virtually by Zoom Meeting to obtain information about the students (characteristics, English proficiency) and problems encountered. It was discovered that only a few of the students responded to the lecturers during the learning process and discussion; while others remained silent. In contrast, when the lecturers used Bahasa Indonesia, most of them responded as well and looked comfortable expressing their ideas in Bahasa Indonesia. Regarding the students' English proficiency, they could be classified as a post beginner or elementary group as well-known as an A2 level related to (CEFR) Common European Framework of Reference (Little) based on the midterm-final exam result and observation during the learning process. This group were considered as those who could communicate in English within a limited range of contexts; verbally and written but were not aware of the grammatical form.

Further, students were categorized as visual and kinesthetic learners. 54,9% of the students prefer utilizing the visual contents; pictures, maps, videos, graphs, diagrams and posters. They enjoyed learning by watching the lecturer or the materials presented, memorizing written things and when processing or retaining the information, they had a tendency to glance upwards. 38,7 % of them belonged to kinesthetic that they understood better when actively learning through doing activities and usually preferred group work more than others (Pritchard). Following that, the data of the need analysis would be summarized in table 1.

Table 1. Need Analysis Result

Aspects	Descriptors	Results
Need	Competence	The ability to communicate using English spoken and written correctly and confidently
	Media	Students learn better by using visual media; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● video: 93% ● audio: 91% ● pictures: 86,5%
Want	English Skills	The skills need to develop; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● listening: 74% ● speaking: 72%
	Attitude	Students behavior toward learning process; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● not enthusiastic in class 75% ● used first language- <i>bahasa</i> Indonesia: 71%
Lack	Proficiency	Post Beginner (A2) Level
	Performance	Students encountered the obstacles; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● verbal instructions: 54,8% ● discovered the meaning: 77,5% ● express the ideas orally: 70,9% ● pronounce the words: 45,2%

Media Development

The process of designing media involved the second, third, and fourth stages of ASSURE: state standards and objectives, select strategies. It was started by designing the blueprint of the English syllabus and materials, storyboard of the media, flowchart, design user interface (UI) and user experience (UX).

Syllabus is a reference to establish the appropriate content of the materials. This study used a competency-based syllabus which is designed to emphasize more on the concept of competency and tends to focus on the outcomes or outputs of learning. (Richards and Rodgers). Hence, instead of their knowledge of the language, the emphasis is on how the students could use it by providing a list of competencies that would be covered in the course; and these are typically required of students in real world situations. The competencies consist of a description of the essential skills, knowledge, attitude and behaviors required for effective performance of an authentic task or activity. Subsequently, the syllabus was designed for students which are required to demonstrate specific language skills that they have already learned during the course (Richards and Rodgers).

Instead, selecting a topic and designing the material or activity to be taught, followed by selecting concepts, knowledge and skills that comprise that field of knowledge. The learning background would be about the academic field and some based on real life. Subsequently, the higher education students are supposed to be able to communicate in English through spoken and written well and confidently as stated as core competence. The topics that should be learnt covers self-identification, describing people, describing things, substances and conditions, comparing and contrasting, telling future, forming questions, telling procedures or instruction, telling reportage, giving advice and solution, and the last is cause and effect. Since they are higher education students, the topics accommodate the global expectation and personal awareness; and the materials that contain language components grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, pronunciation and task (Brown and Abeywickrama) and are given in the pre intermediate level.

Among those topics, the main goal in this study, students would learn one topic in a single meeting and were expected to be able to introduce themselves using personal branding both orally and written. It was aided by the availability of activities to assist students to meet the learning objectives. The activities such as; identify the personal branding by analyzing the personal qualities, demonstrate how to do self-introduction by practising the imitative speaking activities, and describing their branding by utilizing the self-introduction through email format and extensive speaking as well-known as a monologue to introduce themselves by explaining their personal qualities.

The designed Interactive Digital Media was named as ECOM (English Communication Materials) Application and it consisted of some sections of each unit: Materials, brainstorming and activities. It presented; 1) a welcoming section as the opening and provides the competencies to achieve including the basic competence and indicators; 2) a menu of materials in which students could choose the menu instead of personal branding and self-introduction consists of explainer video and interactive brainstorming in each; 3) Activities menus such as identifying the personal branding through analyzing the strengths and weaknesses in a written way, practicing self-introduction professionally to emphasize in explaining the personal qualities through email format; 4) Speaking activities, the media provided warming up through imitative, and extensive speaking. Students could imitate the language expressions so they practice pronouncing them correctly. The imitative speaking activities could also be used for improving students' listening skills. Another activity was given in a monologue by

performing how to do self-introduction by implementing the personal qualities they have learnt.

This designed interactive media was made to assist the students in enhancing their language skills and grow themselves more professional. As found out in the questionnaire result, students' reasons for learning English are to prepare themselves in boosting their quality after graduation to obtain a brighter future through a good job. The visual of the ECOM Application would be presented as shown in figure 1.

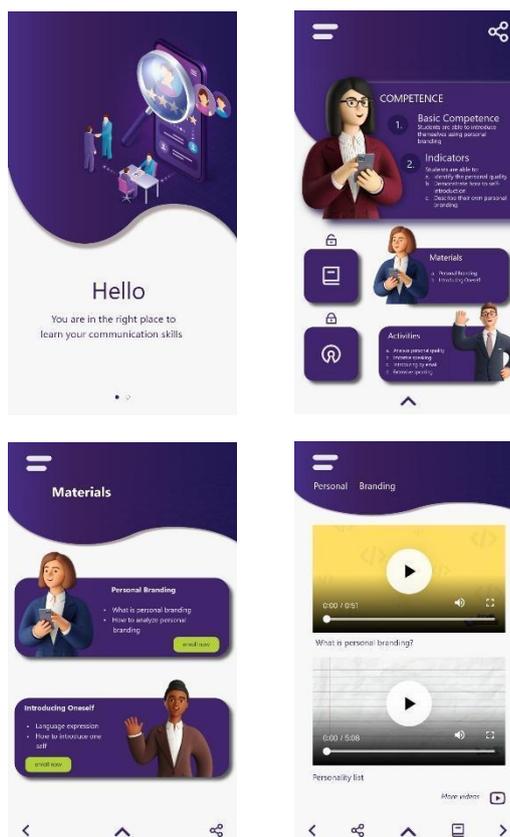


Figure 1. The layout of ECOM Application

Expert Judgment

After the development of the media was completed, an expert judgment needed to be conducted to seek-search the appropriateness and validity of the learning media whether it is appropriate to be used or not. The validation of the English materials/content covered learning objectives, material selection, accurate and current information, content validity, sources, activity, interest level engagement, effectiveness rating, the practice of relevant skills (speaking), ease to use and cognitive learning aids. Meanwhile, media design validation covers user guide and direction, multisensory experiences, colour, communicative, visual appeal, and stimulates creativity adapted from (Smaldino et al.)

The evaluation given by the experts stated that the designed interactive media was appropriate being used but it needed some revisions. There were some points related

to product revisions covered; materials, activities, layout, and design. The materials were considered incomplete and monotonous so that the experts suggested adding more presentations on the language expressions, examples of each point that could guide the students comprehending the materials given. Further, the activities provided in the designed media were said to be unmatched with the learning objectives; it was suggested to change the activities that accommodate the focused skill, speaking. Moreover, some of the buttons of the designed media did not work well. The buttons did not give a reaction when they were pressed by the users.

Table 2. Average Score of Expert Judgments

	Expert Judgment for the Designed Interactive Digital Media			
	Evaluation on English Content		Evaluation on Media	
	Materials/ Content	Category	Media Design	Category
Expert A	3,5	Adequate	3,1	Adequate
Expert B	4,3	Good	4,4	Good
Expert C	3,9	Adequate	4,4	Good
<i>Average</i>	<i>3,9</i>	<i>Adequate</i>	<i>4,0</i>	<i>Good</i>

Table. 2 shows the average score of expert judgment both on English materials or content and media design. From the total score of 5, the media was said to be good with a score of 4,0; whereas the materials or content presented in the designed media were categorized as sufficient with a score of 3,9 which was very close to 4. However, it seems that the content needs some revisions in order to be more appropriate for the students.

Implementation

Considering the result of expert judgment which the media was ready to use. Hence, the implementation was carried out to present the media contents and demonstrated how to utilize the ECOM Application as a learning tool. It was conducted virtually by zoom meetings which were carried out in 45 minutes and attended by the 15 students. In the first instance, the students were informed about the result of the pre-test which most of the students still did self-introduction incorrectly and unprofessionally. Subsequently, they got explanations about what personal branding is, how to analyze personal branding and the importance of having personal branding. Afterwards, the discussion on how to do self-introduction professionally through using personal qualities as well-known as personal branding was carried out.

As a result of the fact that some of them still did not understand how to do self-introduction, providing examples was the best choice to make them catch up and imagine to practice. Hence, the limited time that we had for having implementation, we directly demonstrated how to operate the ECOM Application. The students needed to install it on their Android smartphones which took no less than 2 minutes. Later on, the students encountered the welcoming page on the application, continued with the competencies page, and the materials menus. After students caught up with the instruction, they

operated the application by choosing the materials page of “Personal Branding” and “Introducing Oneself”. Thereafter, students could play the videos provided there to acquire definition, function, examples and the vocabulary list used for describing the personal branding. Then, they dealt with brainstorming by 1) matching the adjectives and their meaning, 2) filling the blank based on the audio played. Moreover, students practiced analyzing personal branding and self-introduction based on the examples provided through written and audio on it. They even improved their pronunciation and speaking by doing the imitative activity provided which related to practicing the language expressions used for doing self-introduction. Eventually, the students had opportunities to practice how to do self -introduction by doing the activities on that media by clicking the button to record their speaking and submit to the submit button. During implementation, it could be seen that the students were enthusiastic about using the application since it supported their speaking skill through the activities provided.

The Utilization of The Designed Interactive Digital Media

In order to discover the impact of the media, this study carried out the pre-test and post-test to measure the English proficiency of the learners before and after implanting the media. To assess the learners’ ability in speaking, it utilized Oral Proficiency Scoring Categories adapted from (Brown and Abeywickrama). It was employed to assess in any kind of spoken aspects including the grammar, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation and task, which 20 is the score maximum in each.

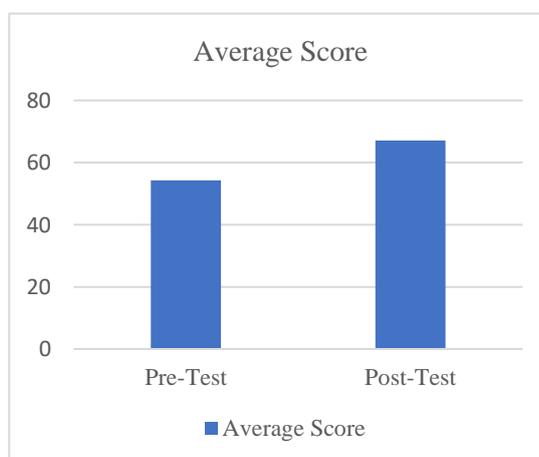


Figure 2. Students’ Test Score

Figure 2 informed the improvements of the students after having implementation using the ECOM Application. For the pre-test, the students obtained an average score of around 54,3 and after implementation, the score of the post-test increased to 67,1. It could be conveyed the successful improvement of pre-test and post-test conducted around +12,8 in only having one meeting. It means by considering the outcome, the media could be claimed to support students in acquiring language abilities and competencies.

Students' Feedback on the Designed Media

After the implementation of using the designed interactive media in teaching, a Likert-scale questionnaire (Creswell) which was adopted by (Leow) and (Cunningswort) was distributed to students to get their feedback. Based on the questionnaire distributed to figure out the students' feedback after implementing the media. The data presented showed positive results about students' judgment toward the interactive digital media used in this study.

Table 3. Students' Feedback

Aspects	Score	
	Score (%)	Category
Learners-Centered Environment	87%	Very Good
Use of Media	85,2 %	Very Good
Understanding the Content	88,2%	Very Good
Motivation	91%	Very Good
Content Organization	86%	Very Good
Availability of Feedback	90%	Very Good
Speaking Skill	85%	Very Good
Total Score	612,4%	
Average Score	87, %	Very Good

It was seen from table 3 that all of the aspects of the media were considered very good by the students by gaining a score of 87%. Students admitted that the designed media was well organized and easy to use (85%) which helped them in practicing their speaking (85%) that would boost their spoken communication skill. Further, since the materials were designed by considering the level of difficulties, students gave high scores between 86-88 for three aspects: layout, learners-centered, and content. They also appreciated that the instructions and examples provided in each task made the learning easier. The highest score (90%) was given to the availability of feedback and motivation. The feedback provided as the follow-up activity could successfully increase the students' motivation for learning English. In short, the designed media known as ECOM application was said to be satisfactory suitable for being used as an alternative learning media to improve the spoken English communication skill.

Conclusion

Education during the pandemic of a covid-19 outbreak is one of the most affected sectors that forces us to adapt by changing face-to-face learning patterns into distance learning which is carried out online. This condition needs awareness from all parties, especially teachers, to switch and substitute the teaching-learning process from the traditional media into a more student-centered digital media that promotes digital and self-learning.

This study tried to answer such a situation by designing interactive digital media to support higher education students to enrich their English spoken communication skill to meet the global demand. The designed media that offers interactive activities, audio,

visual content such as videos, pictures, and games is constructed to establish the English materials and learning environment more enjoyable, interesting, and motivated. Meanwhile, the interactive activities promote independence in learning while the feedback helps students to practice speaking and boosts their spoken communication skill that becomes the concern of this study. Through this study, the issue of how interactive digital media is believed as an appropriate learning tool that could assist the students in gaining knowledge and boosting their English skills is proven.

Fundamentally, the advantages of the designed interactive digital media named as ECOM Application encompasses the availability that can be accessed via smartphones owned by all the students, the execution of various assigned tasks which could encourage students' enthusiasm in learning, as well as improve learning outcomes and facilitate attempts to accomplish learning objectives. For this reason, it was supported by the students' feedback that interactive digital media successfully helped them in practicing English spoken communication skills more confidently and accurately. Consequently, utilizing digital media in the learning environment as well as in online learning is strongly suggested. Therefore, teachers and also the related parties must consider this for the betterment of the teaching-learning process and the improvement of the education quality.

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