



Improving the EFL Students' Oral Communication through the Implementation of Business Meetings Project Using a Digital Pocket Presentation Guide

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to implement a Business Meetings Project using a Digital Pocket Presentation Guide to improve EFL students' oral communication. Therefore, the action research design was implemented to match the purpose of the study. The data collection techniques were started by asking students to do a pretest, implement the model, do observations during the activities, distribute a questionnaire and do interviews to see the students' improvement by asking students to do the post-test. The result of the research showed that the student's progress sustainably improved from the first evaluation, which was 48,75, to the second evaluation, which was 53,760 and to the third evaluation, which was 56,25 for the mean. The score continuously improved from the first evaluation to the third evaluation. The results of the research show that the students gave good attitudes and responses during the process of implementing the model. Questionnaire and interview reports show that students agreed on the implemented model as it motivated and improved their self-confidence and capability in oral communication skills. In conclusion, implementing the business meeting projects through a digital pocket presentation guide enhanced students' verbal communication skills.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Background of the Study

One of the goals of teaching English to EFL students is to push the students to have confidence to express their ideas in the form of oral communication. Oral communication has a role that is used as a means of communication, either in a working environment or in academic settings. Employees are expected to give oral presentations in occasions in their offices using English. Having a well command in using the language offers a wider opportunity for these types of employees which make them easily promoted. It is in line with Crosling and Ward (2002: 42) that mentioned oral communication is valued as an important aspect in the professional setting which undeniably is a required skill for men and women to be successful in pursuing a business career. Focusing on oral communication and fostering this ability enable the students to sharpen their skills and better prepare them to face the future life in the working field which is considered essential. Considering how important oral communication is for the success of the students, the researchers offered the students of Accounting Department-State Polytechnic of Malang - Indonesia Business Meeting presentations as a way of performing a real-life example of oral communication.

Conducting Business Meetings presentations in an EFL classroom gives important opportunities for students to practice oral communication in expressing ideas and also letting them know other students' expectations,

needs, and will. By administering the challenge of conducting business meetings to students, students are required to practice following instructions, listening skills, conversational skills, negotiating skills, public and colleagues' communication, meeting skills, handling complaints and conflict resolution skills, and many more.

The authenticity of the real-life activity here also becomes one of the considerations that underlies ESP classes requirements that can help students nurture their English skills to be used in a professional setting in the future. Anastasiia (2019), mentioned that one of the characteristics of ESP is that it is designed to meet the learners' needs and should relate the content to a particular discipline, occupation, or activities. This highlights the importance of learning material and also the media to support the learning for Accounting Department students which are preferably covered on the Accounting-related issues which in this study for the third semester students of Accounting Department, State Polytechnic of Malang on Business Meetings Project.

Hasanah (2013) stated that built-autonomous learning media aimed at assisting the learning process to be more effective, engaging, interactive, and also fun, and they should be developed based on the needs of the students in each meeting. This will surely enhance the chance to better increase and facilitate the learning achievement objectives. This, in turn, will also help improve students' motivation in learning, and in the end, the students' achievement will accordingly improve. Further, the researchers mentioned that through the student's pocketbook, the students can obtain necessary and required information in a time-friendly manner for learning resources. These finding are then become the basic reflection in developing a digital pocket guide for presentations entitled "Business Meeting Presentation in A Nutshell."

Octoberlina (2021) mentioned that any course should be based on the learner's needs analysis. A preliminary study was conducted to find out the learners' needs. The needs analysis was done in the form of an in-person interview which involved the English lecturer, the analysis of the Course Outline, observation of students made business meeting project through the implementation of digital pocket guide for the Accounting Department of State Polytechnic of Malang. The English for Business Course is offered for the third Semester for the Accounting Department students of State Polytechnic of Malang. The materials covered for the course are talk show, telephoning, negotiation, and business meeting presentations. The course aimed at providing the students with the knowledge and skills required to conduct talk show, business telephoning, connecting the telephone to the extension, receiving the wrong number, inquiring for prices and discounts, making and confirming arrangement, changing appointments, making and receiving complaints, handling complaints, establishing a good company image, negotiating, understand the role of the chairperson, the treasurer's responsible, and the duties of secretary, set the arrangement of chairs and a table for a meeting, write the agenda and the minutes of meeting, understand the advantages and disadvantages of a meeting, understand the business terms, and many more.

Based on the preliminary observation on the Business Meetings Class on December 2022, low achiever students tend to read the PowerPoint slides or any visual aids that can help them in any way during the meeting, and since they do not have the skills and little knowledge in conducting a meeting which apparently also affect their confidence in using the language to communicate orally, they tend to be passive in the business meeting presentation. Moreover, they tend to memorize what needs to be done in a business meeting presentation. On the other hand, the high achiever students usually have enough confidence to lead and follow any role they have in a business meeting presentation. They confidently gave and followed instructions with enough knowledge to basically engage in conversations, although producing some errors while using the common expressions in a business meeting presentation.

In addition, although the presence of a textbook may help the students to practice English through various activities that challenge the students, the absence of a teaching media, in this case, a digital pocketbook is seen as an opportunity to help the students enrich their learning experience in the classroom autonomously, in a more engaging and fun way since the millennial are technology savvy.

Based on the preliminary study, the writers proposed a digital pocket guide for presentations entitled "Business Meeting Presentation in A Nutshell" as a means that is used as a guide to improve students' oral communication. This digital pocketbook prototype is expected to be an assistance for Accounting Department students to learn the proper and better way of conducting business meetings and practice their communication skills.

As an alternating media, a pocketbook is considered a proper option since it is small in the dimension and also practical in use since it is designed in a concise manner for the sole purpose of supporting the teaching and learning process. The images, charts, and figures used in the pocketbook are also equipped in such a way for a more engaging and fun learning experience. It is indeed a mediator that is designed to offer and encourage the students to build their motivation upon learning English.

In relation to the background of the study, the objective of the study was formulated to improve the EFL students' oral communication through the implementation of Business Meetings Project by using a digital pocket presentation guide.

2. Literature Review

These past years have been showing that to become qualified human resources, higher education graduates are required not only mastering their field of work professionally but also mastering English language skills since there is no doubt that having a good command of English has become one of the requirements in most job applications. English mastery for professions in fact is supported Crosling and Ward (2002: 42) that mentioned oral communication is valued as an important aspect in the professional setting which undeniably is a required skill for men and women to be successful in pursuing a business career. Focusing on oral communication and fostering this ability help students to sharp their skills and prepare to face the life in the working field which is considered essential. This statement also means that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is required to help students nurture their English skills to be used in a professional setting for future needs.

In line with the role of ESP in providing students with materials that support them to face future real-life challenges, Agustina (2014) mentions that authenticity is the key concept in the communicative approach and is closely related to ESP which means that the goals, the tasks, and also the materials selected should reflect the students' role in the future, in this case, the Accounting Department graduates. Therefore, every single thing that will be applied in the classroom should be taken into consideration in fulfilling the future goal. Meaningful and effective learning, and more importantly rewarding can be reached when the language is applied in authentic communication.

Qurrota'Aini & Sukirno (2013) mentioned that independence learning is effective in helping students in the process of learning as it will be interactive and fun. A digital pocketbook would motivate students to be independence learner that effect on the students' achievement. The researchers recommend this media as it is hoped students will get the right information and save the time.

3. Method

3.1 Design

This study implemented an Action Research, as defined by O'Leary (2007) as "Research strategies that tackle real-world problems in participatory, collaborative, and cyclical ways in order to produce both knowledge and action." It refers to a type of research methodology which works toward a kind of change (whether social or professional). Because its goals are oriented toward change rather than knowledge-gathering alone, active research studies are often based in everyday issues, and concern themselves with the creation of practical solutions to these problems. O'Leary (2007) define the action research into some elements, and those are: 1) Identify a problem, 2) Research the problem and its probable causes, 3) Develop a response to the problem, 4) Implement the proposed solution, 5) Observe the implementation of the solution, and 6) Reflect on the results (and start over, if necessary)

There are 4 dynamic process in Action research. They are planning, action, observation and reflection. In this study, the processes are:

Planning

The Activities of the Planning covers the following steps:

- 1) Preparing the assigned material, the project designed and the steps in doing the action.
- 2) Preparing the list of the students' group (the class was divided into group of 4)
- 3) Preparing the sheets for classroom research to process the observation
- 4) Preparing the pre-test

Action

In the Action, the steps covered are:

- 1) The researchers administer the pre-test
- 2) The researchers assign the project of business meetings guided by a pocketbook to the students
- 3) Every group is asked to get the sources to be used to realize the project
- 4) Every group do the consultation
- 5) Every group do the presentation of business meeting project

- 6) The researchers do the evaluation
- 7) The teacher administered the post-test

Observation

Observation is an instrument which is used to collect the data. It is used to note the phenomena investigated such as the students feeling, thinking and creating in the process of the model implemented which is called a classroom observation.

Reflection

Reflection is a self-evaluation which is based on the observation to find the weaknesses of the activities that already carried out to improve students' oral communication skill. In conducting the evaluation, the researcher also gives pre-test before he starts to teach speaking by Implementing business meeting project guided by a digital pocketbook in a nutshell. The post-test is going to be administered at the end of the action in the cycle. Based on the data's evaluation, the researcher could make a self- reflection in doing the action. The data from the test also show whether the students 'oral communication skill is improved. In this research, the researcher used two kinds of research instrument that is a test and non-test instruments.

1) Test. The instrument that used to measure students' oral communication skill through the business meeting project guided by using a digital pocketbook in a nutshell in the cycle and collect the data consists of one set pre-test item and another one is a set of post-tests. Every single student will be selected to be administered to do the pre-test which is summarizing an article talking about *"an advertisement"* before implementing the project and the next step is doing the evaluation by administering the post-test, it is responding the case of *"unsuccessful marketing strategy"*.

2) Non-test (observation). To assess the situation while the research is going to conduct, the researcher uses an observation sheet and observe it.

The population of the study is the Accounting Department students of the second semester of Diploma 3 Program –State Polytechnic of Malang. The samples are 32 students.

3.1 Data Collection Technique

The data were the students score and collected from test. The scores were classified based on following grades:

Table 1. Scores Interval Criteria

85-100	Excellent
71-84	Very good
60-70	Good
40-59	Low
0-39	Failed

Description:

- a) 1: failed = 0%-39%. This means the students are scored 1 or very low: students are passive
- b) 2: low = 40%-59% which means the students are scored 2 or low: students are active, the capability on English is low, having no creativity and innovation
- c) 3: good = 60%-70% which means the students are scored 3 or enough: students are active, the capability on English is good, but only having small creativity and innovation
- d) 4: very good = 71%-84%. This means the students are scored 4 or good: students are active, the capability on English is very good, having creativity and innovation
- e) 5: excellent = 85%-100%. Students are scored 5 or excellent: Students are having excellent capability in English, well creativity and well innovation

The document that is used in this research is the document of score evaluation of the students of as the proof.

3.3 Technique of Analyzing the Data

Pre-test and post-tests are utilized by the researchers to measure how well the students comprehend the project's assignment. The pre-test and post-test used to determine the variations in students' oral communication skill between the two times.

The researcher is going to use the t-test technique to compare and calculate the mean of the pretest and posttest scores as follows:

The mean is the average obtained by dividing the sums of the scores of all the respondents. The study's findings later are implemented as follows:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

$$\bar{X} = \text{mean}$$

X = score

$\sum$ = sum or add

N = Subject

$$t \text{ test} = \frac{\sum D}{\sqrt{\frac{N \sum D^2 - (\sum D)^2}{N - 1}}}$$

The implementation of the the T-test dependent is used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the before and after the project-based speaking skill-training program for the 3rd semester of Accounting Department – State Polytechnic of Malang.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Projects' Evaluation

During the research, the students' score kept on having a promising progress which was increased from the first project's evaluation to the third project's evaluation. It can be said that the implementation of the model improved significantly. The range of the score improvement can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. The Score Improvement as seen in Range

The score improvement	Number of students
5	2
8	4
9	3
10	14
12	7
15	2
Total	32

As seen in the table 4, only 2 students who got the score improvement of 5, which was from the score of the pre-test 60 to the post test of 65, while 4 students got the score improvement of 8, from 60 to 68 and the score improvement of 9 was from the score of 65 to 74. The score improvement of 10 was achieved by 14 students, which makes it the top crowd in the number students achieving improvement, and the score was ranging from 70 to 80. Another 7 students got the score improvement of 12 and the highest improvement score was 15 was reached by 2 students.

The improvement of students' score in each project evaluation can be seen in the following table.

Table 3. Comparison Score of Students' Project Evaluation

	Evaluation on Project 1	Evaluation on Project 2	Evaluation on Project 3
Lowest Score	65	70	80
Highest Score	80	85	90
Number of students	32	32	32

It could be seen that the students' score was increase significantly. In the evaluation on Project 1, the lowest score was 65 and the highest score was 80, while the evaluation on project 2, the lowest score was 70 and the

highest score was 85 whereas on the evaluation on project 3, the lowest score was 80 and the highest score was 90.

The improvement of students' score in the Business Meeting Project using a digital pocket guide Business Meeting in A nutshell can be seen from the mean of the students' score in every project's evaluation. The mean of students' score can be seen below:

$$\begin{aligned} Xp1 &= \frac{1560}{32} \cdot 100\% = 48,75 \\ Xp2 &= \frac{1680}{32} \cdot 100\% = 53,760 \\ Xp3 &= \frac{1800}{32} \cdot 100\% = 56,25 \end{aligned}$$

Table 4. The Improvement of the Mean Scores of the Students' Project

Project's Evaluation	Total Score	Mean
Project's Evaluation 1	1560	48,75
Project's Evaluation 2	1680	53,760
Project's Evaluation 3	1800	56,25

As seen from Table 5, the mean of the students' score in the first project was 48,75 and it increased in the second project, it was 53,760 and in the last project was also improved into 56,25, it means the students' oral communication skill was improved well.

In this study, achieving a score of 70 is considered as the highest score which means having the ability of 'good'. The result in the first project, students there were 25 students who got scored 70 and above, while students who got scored 80 and above were 12 students. In the last project, students who got above the score of 85 were 19 students in total, and it was shown that the model was successfully implemented.

Table 5. Number of students who got the score above 70, 80 and 85

Students' Project Evaluation	Students who got the score	No. of students
Project 1	above 70	was reached by 25 students from 32 students
Project 2	above 80	was reached by 12 students from 32 students
Project 3	Above 85	was reached by 19 students from 32 students

4.2 Observation, Questionnaire, interview

When the questionnaire was administered, it was found out that the implementation of Business Meeting Presentations using digital pocketbook Business Meeting in A Nutshell application could improve the achievement of the students as expected by the researchers.

Almost all students strongly agree for the whole performance of the digital pocketbook was very good, interesting and able to help the students to learn the materials and the project's assignment. The contents and exercises are easier to be understood and comprehended, therefore, the pocketbook can be said effective and efficient to be used as a guidance to learn the skills of the language autonomously in a fun way.

The instructions and the choice of materials needed to be learnt are explained clearly and easy to comprehend, and also the choice of fonts and the appearance in general was clear to be read, those question was responded strongly agreed by 12 students and the rest of 20 students stated agreed.

In significantly, from the data that was taken from the questionnaire sheet, the language was very communicative, the examples given was clear, the instruction also clear, easy to bring as the application system was kept in the mobile phone, could be operated in anywhere and anytime. The responds were sounded strongly agreed by all respondents.

Besides that, from the data that was taken from the questionnaire sheet, it was stated that the digital pocketbook could be used as an alternative strategy that was used as the sources teaching learning since the language was easy to be comprehended and it could avoid the students' boredom. Those questions were responded positively agreed.

The students stated that the digital pocket guidance could motivate the students learning on the language since they could consult to the digital pocketbook when they have problems without feeling afraid or even shy to make mistakes.

From all the questionnaire data, it could be concluded that the students were enjoyed the model implemented and improved their achievement in learning English and also their responsibility, teamwork and self-confidence.

During the implementation of the model, the researchers found out that the atmosphere created was motivating because the researchers played the role as a mediator, a consultant, and a facilitator. Students enjoyed the atmosphere, they felt free from the feeling of worry and shy. The teamwork was done well since the students were divided their responsible evenly and every single student had to submit the assignment to finish and complete the project, consequently, tolerance and understanding between one and another was needed. Those characters were clearly needed in the working field in the future. The model of the learning was certainly helping the students' future life to be a good employee.

From the interview data, it was found that students were happy with the project' assignments even though it was hard and took a lot of energy, effort, and even their time, however, they enjoyed doing the project since the great motivation covered their hard work, students kept improving their active, creative and innovative energy in doing the project which might caused by the warm atmosphere created.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of the data that have been written on the previous chapter; it was found out that there was a significant improvement on the students' achievement in implementing the Business Meeting Project using the digital pocketbook entitled Business Meeting in A Nutshell. It could be seen from the improvement of the mean of the students' score from the first evaluation it was written 48,75, followed by second evaluation, the mean was 53,760 and the third evaluation was 56,25. Further, the questionnaire and interview results shown that students agreed that they enjoy, feeling motivated, and saw the digital pocketbook as a fun and user-friendly alternative media to be used in the implementation of the project assigned.

In order to further improve students' oral communication skill, the English teachers are suggested to use the model to stimulate the students' learning oral communication skill. For the readers who are interested in further study related to this research should explore the knowledge to enlarge the understanding about how to improve students' achievement in oral communication and search another reference.

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