

DEVELOPING MAGNETIC BOARD GAME TO HELP 8th GRADERS IMPROVE THEIR LISTENING SKILL ON DESCRIPTIVE TEXT: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

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Abstract: *The study is aimed to develop a non-electronic instructional media called Magnetic Board Game which used descriptive text to help 8th graders improve their listening skill. The product is originally created by Maria Taselin, an English teacher from Pasuruan, East Java. This study used Research and Development as the research design which is developed by Borg and Gall (1989) and Latief (2017). Three instruments were used throughout the study namely, questionnaire, expert validation sheet, and interview. The final product of this research is an instructional media in the form of a game. There are three main components of the game, the board, magnetic objects, and descriptive text. The product comes with two different sets of topics; Living Room and Bedroom. Different topics have different descriptive texts and magnetic objects. The classroom teacher also said that he was satisfied with the application of the Magnetic Board Game. The researcher suggested for English teachers who are interested in using this media to read carefully the instruction of the game as it includes the tips and recommendation about the media, so that they can utilize the game better.*

Keywords: *Listening skills, descriptive text, non-electronic media*

INTRODUCTION

Listening is the first skill someone masters when learning a new language. Cahyono & Widiati (2009) stated that in order to internalize linguistic input, a newborn baby will first listen to the voices and sounds in his/her environment before he/she eventually begins to speak and learn to read and write. The process of learning a language naturally begins with listening, then speaking, then reading, and the last is writing. Therefore, listening is a valuable source of input in language learning (Krashen, 1982). Listening skills are one of the most complex skills that affect other language skills. In addition to that, over 40% of our daily communication time is spent on listening, 35% on speaking, 16% on reading, and only 9% on writing (Burely-Allen 1995).

Due to the increasing demand of English in daily life and with the fast-growing technology, nowadays, English language practitioners, instructional media makers, or even English language teachers create various kinds of electronic teaching media in helping English language teachers in teaching English, especially in teaching listening. Pun (2013) writes on his paper that the rapid growth in science and technology has created a new trend for the use of digital technologies in language teaching such as the use of visual, audio, and animation in English classrooms.

Based on the aforementioned phenomena, the researcher views this as an “easy escape” for English language teachers in providing listening material to teach students. Studies show that due to the effectiveness of using electronic media in teaching English language, especially in teaching listening, and with the help of the Internet, several English language teachers, having thought that electronic media are more effective and practical, often blindly grab materials without thoroughly previewing them first. Some teachers add unnecessary components such as music, video, and animation objects that do not actually represent the core material (Liu & Long, 2014). Subjects such as plagiarism, piracy, and redundant use of copy paste activity may also be caused by inappropriate use of electronic media (Abaidoo and Arkorful, 2015). In addition to that, Pun (2013) mentions on his paper that if the teachers depend entirely on multimedia devices for their teaching, they may turn into ‘technology slaves’ that the teachers’ role as the students’ facilitators are being dysfunctional.

The use of electronic media often evokes problems that are relatively uneasy to solve such as power failure, inadequate equipment, and oftentimes teachers’ incapability in solving computer technical problems which sometimes taken over by the students instead such as, connecting the laptop to the LCD projector, setting up the audio system, and solving a pop-up error message appearing in the laptop, etc. Wang and Chan (1995) state that teachers who are about to implement technology in their teaching should have the proper knowledge and skill related to the technology.

Furthermore, the excessive use of technology can possibly create a barrier between teachers and

students which then leads to the lack of communication between teachers and students. Therefore, “multimedia technology should be used as an assisting tool for language teaching and should not replace the dominant role of teachers” (Pun, 2013). However, this argument created by the researcher is not necessarily against the idea of using electronic media in teaching English language as beneficial. Instead, the researcher wants to create “balance” in this modern era by introducing a new non-electronic media for English language teachers.

With the mass ever-growing technology in this century, it is indeed always good to have technology around us, especially for English language teachers as it provides a better tool to discover new teaching methods and media. However, with several disadvantages to the use of technology in English language teaching mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the researcher wants to introduce a new non-electronic teaching media as a means to create a balance in the middle of this fast-growing technology era. *Magnetic Board Game* is a relatively new and original instructional media that has never been studied before. Therefore, the main goal of this study is to develop the mentioned media and see whether or not the media is capable of increasing students’ listening skill through an interactive and fun way.

For this study, the researcher had collected data in order to identify the target needs, which are 8th grade students. There were two kinds of data in this research, the data from the students’ perspective and also the class teacher’s perspective. The researcher used a questionnaire to get the data from the students and conducted an interview to get the data from the class teacher. Conclusion based on the data shows that the majority of the students prefer to exercise the listening skills using games and also the teacher states that he has been having difficulty in teaching listening as he always has to set up the equipment manually.

Since the target students were highly interested in doing the listening activity through live games, and the teacher’s main problem was related to the availability of the facility, *Magnetic Board Game* would be suitable in solving the classroom problems. This study aims to develop a medium in the form of a board game to aid 8th grade students to improve their listening skill on descriptive text. This teaching and learning media is expected to help English language teachers in teaching in the listening class using non-electronic media and also help students to learn listening skills in a more interactive and fun way.

This study is focused on developing the media called *Magnetic Board Game* which is applied to 23 8th grade students in SMPIT Bina Insan Cendekia Pasuruan. Aspects such as the media development process, media component, media try-out, and media try-out result are covered in this study. The researcher also limits the subject of this study to only 8th grade students as the materials in the media are required to be adjusted in order to be applied to different levels of students. The main focus of this study is also narrowed to only improving the target’s listening skill and not the other skills.

Magnetic Board Game was first created by a junior high school English teacher in Pasuruan, East Java. Her name is Maria Taselin. She has been an English teacher for around 30 years (at the moment this study is conducted). She often creates her own instructional media for her materials and this *Magnetic Board Game* is one of them. She has been using this instructional media on her daily teaching and according to her, she has succeeded in helping her students learn English better with this instructional media.

Magnetic Board Game is a non-electronic instructional media aimed to improve students’ listening capability on descriptive text. The researcher here tries to develop a game because it attracts students’ attention better than any other form of non-electronic instructional media. Educational games are also a great way to involve students to the lesson better as well as provide a break from the dull work of the textbook. Pannese & Carlesi (2007) say that students need to be more involved and positioned as the center of the learning process in order to move from ‘passive vessel’ to ‘active participant’.

Magnetic Board Game is an interactive non-electronic instructional media to improve 8th graders’ listening skill on descriptive text. This instructional media is called *Magnetic Board Game* because it is a puzzle-like game that has magnetic pieces on it. The magnetic pieces are meant to be put on the board according to the descriptive text. The topic of this game can be anything as long as it involves descriptive text. There are two or more students participating in one Magnetic Board Game. Student A becomes the descriptor who reads aloud the descriptive text and student B is the listener who has the duty to solve the puzzle according to the student A’s description. One package of *Magnetic Board Game* consists of: one board (with one side having a background picture on it), several magnetic objects (depending on the teacher’s need), and one description text.

METHOD

Educational Research and Development or often referred to as R&D is a research design aimed at developing educational products, such as curriculum, syllabus, textbooks, instructional media, modules, assessment instruments, etc. Latief (2017) states that there are several steps in conducting R&D, (1)

identifying the problems that need to be solved by educational product (preliminary study), (2) studying the recent theories related to the result of the preliminary study and educational product, (3) developing the educational product, (4) consulting and validating the product to the related experts, (5) conduct a field test in order to make the educational products more reliable, and finally, the last step is (6) revising the product into a product that is ready to be published.

Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) explain that Educational R&D is an industry-development process in which research results are used to design new products and practices, which are then reviewed, validated and perfected in the field (tried out) until they meet standards criteria. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003), there are 10 steps in conducting Research and Development, those are (1) evaluating the needs to identify the goal, (2) performing instructional analysis, (3) examining learners and context, (4) writing performance targets, (5) developing assessment tools, (6) developing instructional strategy, (7) developing and choosing instructional materials, (8) designing and conducting formative evaluation of instruction, (9) revising instruction, (10) designing and conducting summative evaluation.

Based on the two experts' explanation, the researcher modifies and simplifies the steps into 4 steps in order to shorten the time needed for this research to be conducted as the researcher has a limited time conducting the research. (1) needs analysis, (2) development of the product, (3) expert validation, and (4) field testing. These steps are drawn in Figure 1.

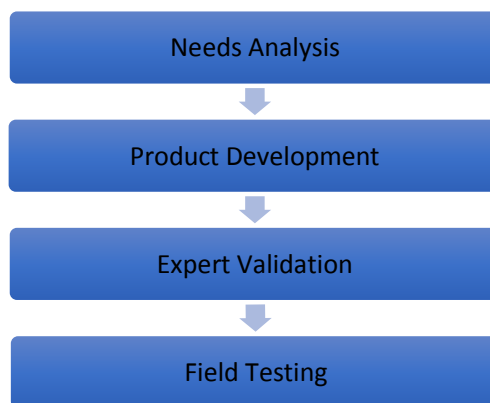


Figure 1. The modified design of Research and Development adapted from Latief (2017) and Gall, Gall, & Borg (2003)

In the needs analysis step, the researcher tried to identify the problems found in the classroom in order to eventually go further into developing the product later. In this case, the researcher performed needs analysis over two targets, the learners and the teacher. The two targets were chosen in order to get accurate data regarding the problems found in the classroom.

First, the researcher conducted an interview with the classroom teacher. The purpose of doing the interview was to understand the classroom condition from the teacher's perspective. This could be important as students' opinion only might not be enough and reliable for the researcher to develop the *Magnetic Board Game* later. The classroom teacher also might be the only person who knows about the classroom condition better than anyone.

Second, after conducting the interview, the researcher also obtained the data about the classroom condition from the students' perspective. This was also necessary as both perspectives might differ from one another in several aspects which help the researcher enrich the data to develop the product later on. Therefore, students were asked to answer a questionnaire regarding their listening activity.

After the needs analysis step is done, the next step is product development. The development of the product is a step in which the product is being planned, designed, and developed. The plan, design, and development of the product were based on the data collected from the result of the needs analysis. The product was planned and designed for improving the listening skill of 8th graders through *Magnetic Board Game*. The researcher chose this instructional media mainly because the researcher wanted to overcome the students' needs of doing listening activity via games and because *Magnetic Board Game* is a non-electronic media, the researcher also wanted to help the teacher's difficulty related to the media availability when using electronic media. Moreover, by using this instructional media it could also encourage learners to work with their pairs and transfer information with each other to create an interactive listening activity.

The next step is expert validation. In this step the product was checked and validated by the experts in order to know which part of the product could still be improved. The first expert was a lecturer from

Universitas Negeri Malang who had a track record of teaching Instructional Media and Activities in Language Teaching course and the second expert was a senior English teacher from Pasuruan that had a teaching experience around 20 years. In this step, the experts were expected to examine the product using evaluation instruments ranging from several aspects namely the aim of the product, design, context, content, product manual, and product supporting package. The following paragraph explains further about the aspects that need to be examined by the experts.

The first aspect was about the aim of the media. As the media's purpose was to help students improve their listening skill, therefore, the expert should check whether or not the media was suitable in improving the listening skill of the students. As the media contains pictures, therefore the second aspect was about the media's design. This aspect mainly talked about the media's physical appearance. It included its shape, picture used in the media, and also the font used in the texts contained inside of the media. The third aspect was about the content of the media. This aspect discussed the topic used in the media. Since this media was aimed for 8th graders, the experts examined whether the topic used in this media was suitable for the subject or not. The fourth one was about the media's context. This aspect concerned the media's materials. Therefore, the experts checked if the materials in the media were appropriate with students in 8th grade or not. Since the media also came with the manual, the fifth aspect was about the media's manual (guide). It was about whether or not the manual was easy enough to understand or not. This media also comes with the supporting components, therefore the last aspect was about the support of the media. This aspect made sure whether or not the media package was well supported or not. The word support here meant whether or not the media came with the appropriate and suitable additional package such as teacher assessment instrument and student worksheet.

After receiving the feedback from the experts, the researcher revised the product into the updated version. Any weaknesses of the product were fixed according to the feedback given by the experts. This was done for several times until the product received a satisfying score and was ready for the next step.

In order to have a far better and reliable product, the researcher had to field test the product. In this step, the product was tried out in the field and used as it is meant to be. Throughout the field testing, the researcher recorded users' experience. The data collected were then used as the guidance for further revision. After going through the whole process of field-testing, the product was revised for the last time. The revision was based on the data obtained after the field test. Feedbacks from students, teachers, and an assessment instrument were used as a guide to improve the product.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Based on the interview with the class teacher, the researcher found that the biggest obstacle the teacher faced in the listening activity was about the class facility. The teacher has always used electronic media such as LCD projector and speaker in the listening activity, yet he had to borrow it first and see whether the equipment is currently available or is still being used by another class that then he could set it all up manually every time before beginning the activity.

Based on the result from the questionnaire gathered from the students, 65.2% of the students chose to agree that they would like it if the listening activity was to be done live (not just using sources such as digital audio or video). However, the other 34.8% said otherwise. The next one disclosed that almost every student would love it if the listening activity was to be done via games to the point where 95.7% of the students said that and only one of them or 4.3% said otherwise.



Figure 1. Students' Preferences of Learning Style for Listening Activity

There were two experts chosen to help the researcher throughout the process of developing the product. The first expert was a lecturer from English Department at Universitas Negeri Malang named Dr. Mirjam Anugerahwati, M.A. The second expert was an English teacher from SMPN 1 Kota Pasuruan named Krisnawati A., S. Pd. An instrument of validation sheet was administered to the experts.

There were five aspects covered in the validation sheet, the product's aim, design, content, manual, and supports. Those aspects were represented by twenty items. There were four types of scores in the validation sheet. 1 meant that the product needed major improvement, 2 meant that the product needed moderate improvement, 3 meant that the product needed little improvement, and 4 meant that the product did not need any improvement. Based on the validation sheet, the product's score was ranging from 20 to 80 with 20 being the lowest and 80 being the highest. Because the range was from 20 to 80, therefore, the total accumulated score would be 60. The result was described as poor if the product received a score around 20-34, fair if the product received a score around 35-49, good if the product received a score around 50-64, and excellent if the product received a score around 65-80.

Table 1. Lecturer's Validation Result

No.	Aspect	Maximum Score	Score Received
1.	Aim	8	8
2.	Design	36	36
3.	Content	12	11
4.	Manual	16	16
5.	Supports	8	8
	Total Score	80	79

Table 1 shows that based on the lecturer's validation result, the media received the score 8 from the aim aspect, 36 from the design aspect, 11 from the content aspect, 16 from the manual aspect, and 8 from the supports aspect.

Table 2. English Teacher's Validation Result

No.	Aspect	Maximum Score	Score Received
1.	Aim	8	8
2.	Design	36	34
3.	Content	12	12
4.	Manual	16	14
5.	Supports	8	8
	Total Score	80	76

Table 2 shows that based on the English teacher's validation result, the media received the score 8 from the aim aspect, 34 from the design aspect, 12 from the content aspect, 14 from the manual aspect, and 8 from the supports aspect.

The revisions were done according to the data obtained from the expert's evaluation by the lecturer and English teacher. There were several aspects that still needed improvements.

The first one was about the product's content. This revision was based on the lecturer's examination. The addressed flaw was related to the product's content, specifically the choice of words in the descriptive texts. She commented that there were some misused words namely above, over, on top of, and on as those words were not identical. Therefore, the researcher tried to change several misused words into the correct ones.

The second revision came from the English teacher's evaluation. This revision was related to the product's design, specifically the font style and size used in the product. There was no comment from the English teacher regarding this flaw. Therefore, the researcher changed the font size of the descriptive text from 12-14 to 16-18 and also the font style from using Comic Sans MS to Averia Sans.

The last aspect that needed revision was about the product's manual, specifically the clarity of the game's instruction. This was also addressed by the English teacher. She commented that the instruction of the game should be addressed to the students twice or more. This probably because she wanted to avoid any students being confused upon applying the game that she suggested the researcher give the

instruction to the students not just once, but twice or more. Therefore, in the game recommendation section, the researcher wrote one more suggestion for the game that says "It is also highly recommended that the teacher repeats the game instruction twice or more to make the students fully understand the game's instruction."

After revising the product based on the feedback given by the two experts, the researcher tried out the product to 23 students of 8E at SMPIT Bina Insan Cendekia. There were five duplicates of the product used in the try-out process. The try-out was held on September 9th, 2020.

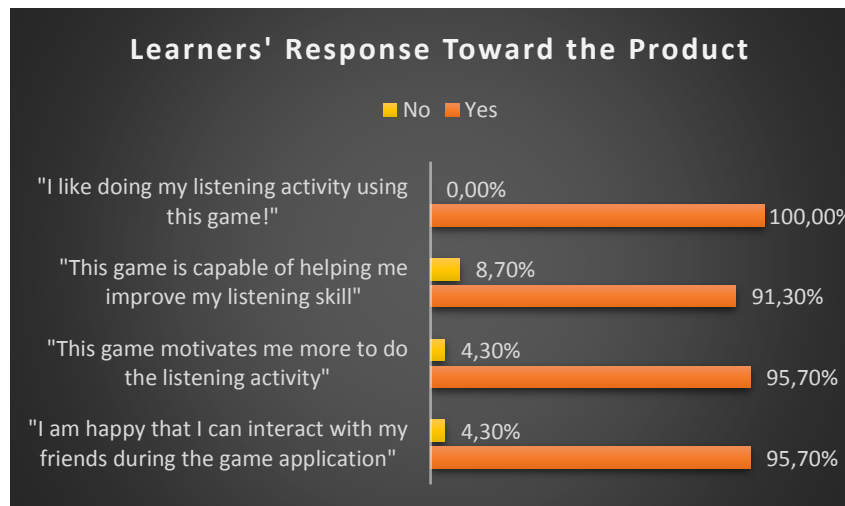


Figure 2. Learners' Response toward the Product

Based on the figure above, the first aspect evaluated by the students was their response toward the product. The result showed that most students (91.3%) agreed and the rest (8.7%) said otherwise. The third item's statement was whether or not the students agreed that this product was capable of increasing their motivation in the listening activity and it turned out that twenty-two students (95.7%) agreed to that and one student (4.3%) said otherwise. The fourth item's statement was whether or not the students felt happy that they were able to interact with their friends during the application of the product. The questionnaire result stated that the majority of the students (95.7%) said yes and the one student (4.3%) said the other way around.

The second aspect evaluated by the students was about the product's design and was represented in one question. It was about students' opinion regarding the product's design attractiveness. The result said that all students thought that the product was already attractive enough to them.

The third aspect evaluated by the students was regarding the language used in the product. This aspect was represented in one question. The response from the students showed that most of them (87%) thought that the language used in the product was already easy enough to be understood while the rest (13%) said the other way around.



Figure 3. Product's Application

The fourth aspect was about the product's application. This aspect was represented in two items. The first item's statement was whether or not the game was easy to play. The majority of the students (95.7%) agreed to that while the other one had the opposite answer. The second item's statement was whether or not the instruction of the game was easy enough to understand. The result exposed that every student thought so. They thought that the game's instruction was already easy enough for them to digest.

Discussion

The aim of this study is to develop a media in the form of a board game to aid 8th grade students in improving their listening skill on descriptive text. The final product of this study is an interactive game called *Magnetic Board Game* that is used to help students in their listening activity. The development of this product was based on the basic competence 3.6 and 4.6 of 8th grade from the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia.

According to the results of the needs analysis, the students had several problems in their listening activity. They stated that they agreed with the idea that having good listening skill is important yet, their teacher rarely did the listening activity through activity that increases their motivation or makes them excited toward the lesson. Some of them even stated that their teacher had never done listening activity through any interesting activity. Because of that, the researcher tried to develop *Magnetic Board Game* as a learning media for the students.

After trying out the media, the results showed that the students' score had met the instructional objective that is to help students of 8th grade improve their listening skill on descriptive text. Dick & Carey (1978:154) state that in developing materials, we should state the instructional goal behaviorally in order to match the students' needs. The students were put into groups when the researcher conducted the tryout. The score they got was out of 23 students, only 4 or one group of students got the score 90 and the rest of the group got the perfect score 100. With that, the product is suitable to be used in a listening activity for 8th graders.

Based on the results of the study, the game developed by the researcher has shown several positive results. The eighth graders seemed to be enthusiastic in doing the listening activity via game. Uberman (1998:87) stated "games encourage, entertain, teach, and promote fluency. If not for any of these reasons, they should be used just because they help students see beauty in a foreign language and not just problems that at times seem overwhelming." The eighth graders also enjoyed doing listening activities with *Magnetic Board Game* and the class teacher proved to be satisfied with the students' score after applying the media. There are at least four reasons for this. First, the students feel more motivated in doing the listening activity and they are introduced to the descriptive text all at the same time which may save time for the teacher by explaining two different lessons in one activity. Second, the students have a more interactive activity as they are needed to interact and cooperate with their friends in order to complete the game. Third, with the product being a non-electronic media, the teacher is capable of conducting listening activity even without the need of electricity. Fourth, the class teacher becomes more creative and not too dependent on using electronic media when it comes to listening activity.

However, despite the strength of this media, there were several difficulties experienced by the researcher in the process of developing the media. The first was regarding the duplication of the media. It was because the try-out was done by several groups of students at once and the process of duplicating the media took quite a long time. The researcher had to manually print out the background pictures, magnetic objects, and the descriptive text and also laminated all of them one by one. This limitation, however, can still be overcome by making gradual progress little by little, day by day and not doing everything all at the same time. The lamination of the magnetic objects, which take the longest to do, will be a lot easier and faster if done using a laminating machine. It means that if the class teacher wants to use this media, it is important to keep in mind that he/she should take account of the number of copies of the media.

It can be concluded that *Magnetic Board Game* is recommended to be used in listening activity for 8th graders. The overall result of this study shows that the media is capable of helping the students improve their listening skill in a more interactive and fun way as the students seem enthusiastic in the process of the application of the media. The class teacher says that with the application of this media, the students are not only getting a better listening score, but also giving them an opportunity to interact with each other. There are, unfortunately, several difficulties found in the process of developing the media. The components such as the magnetic objects and descriptive text are the ones that take the longest to prepare. The teacher needs to print and laminate them one by one so that those components will be easily broken and last longer. These difficulties however, can still be overcome by doing well-preparation weeks before the application of the media.

CONCLUSIONS

Magnetic Board Game is a non-electronic media that has the purpose to aid 8th grade students to improve their listening skill through descriptive text. The media is originally created by an English teacher from Pasuruan named Maria Taselin and the researcher is interested in using this media as a research object. There are two topics covered in the media, first is the living room and second is the bedroom.

There were two experts chosen to evaluate the media, lecturer and English teacher. According to the lecturer's examination, the media received the score 79 out of 80 and based on the examination by the English teacher, the media received the score 76 out of 80 which means that the media got an excellent score from both experts. Furthermore, based on the try-out, the media has shown satisfying results. This can be seen by the class teacher who agreed to the idea that the media is suitable to be used to help 8th graders in improving their listening skill, and also by the result of the students' questionnaire which showed that 91.3% of the students said that they like it if the listening activity is done using *Magnetic Board Game*.

All in all, *Magnetic Board Game*, based on the result of the study, is capable of helping 8th graders improve their listening skill as the scores obtained by the students after conducting the media are above the expected threshold. This media is also proved to be capable of helping class teachers in conducting listening activity in a more fun and interactive way as the students give the impression to be excited throughout the game application.

SUGGESTION

For the English teachers, if they want to use this media in their teaching and modify the materials, it is highly recommended to just use the template in the soft file provided by the researcher as it is. It is because the page setting in the soft file has been matched to the size of the board. Furthermore, the English teachers also need to make sure that the students have already understood the game's instruction well to avoid any questions regarding the game's instruction in the middle of the game. Lastly, it is also highly recommended for the English teachers to read the suggestions and tips section in the guide of the game as the researcher has already pointed out things that will utilize the game better.

Furthermore, for the future researchers who are interested in developing the media, the researcher suggests that in making the board, it is better to ask the help from a carpenter or an expert in woodworking. It is because the making of the board is the hardest part of the media development state. The researcher was lucky because the researcher got several boards from the original creator.

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