

Digital Media in English Learning for Tourism in Majene: An Applied Linguistics Study

*Andi Mega Januarti Putri¹, Nurul Imansari²

^{1,2} Universitas Sulawesi Barat, Indonesia

(*andimegajanuartiputri@gmail.com)

First Received: 06-04-2024

Final Proof Received: 30-05-2024

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of digital media, particularly AI Fully Fluent and Instagram, on enhancing Speaking skills for tourism in the English Education program at Universitas Sulawesi Barat. Recognizing the crucial role of English proficiency in maximizing tourism potential, especially in culturally rich regions like Majene, this research addresses the need to improve human resource competencies. The study employs descriptive quantitative approach from applied linguistic perspective, with a sample of 25 students selected through convenience sampling. Data collection involved tests to assess the improvement in Speaking ability after the application of digital media, paired sample t-test with SPSS was utilized in data analysis. Findings reveal positive impact of digital media, with a two-tailed significance value of less than 0.05. Comprehension showed the highest improvement, followed by pronunciation, grammar, and fluency. Interactive features of AI Fully Fluent and Instagram provide a supportive environment for students to practice English, build confidence, and engage in meaningful language use, aligning with interactionist theory in linguistics, which emphasizes the importance of interaction, feedback, and practice in linguistic acquisition. The study offers insightful perspective into the role of digital media in enhancing language learning and tourism, with implications for developing human resources and promoting Majene as tourist destination.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Majene; Social Media; Speaking Skill; Tourism.

In the current era of globalization, numerous adjustments are required in terms of technology due to its rapid development (Putri, 2020), which happens as well to the rapidly evolving landscape of travel and tourism sector. With this rapid growth, English has become the *lingua franca* in cross-cultural communication within the tourism sector, making English language skills increasingly

important (Katili et al., 2021). Indonesia is a country rich in beautiful and attractive tourist destinations in various regions, including West Sulawesi. West Sulawesi, particularly Majene, has many potential tourist destinations worth visiting, especially the white sandy beaches with stunning views (Putri et al., 2024). However, many of these tourist spots remain unknown to visitors or tourists (Parenreng, 2020). The

tourists who do visit are predominantly local, with foreign tourists being quite rare. Studies on foreign visitors or tourists from 2011 to 2018 show a decline of 0.11% to 31% (Bahasoan et al., 2020). The latest data from the Central Statistics Agency of West Sulawesi province does not clearly present the number of foreign tourists visiting West Sulawesi, but it does provide data on the average length of stay (for foreign guests), which also shows a decline from 2022 to 2023, from 1.49 to 0.84 (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Sulawesi Barat, 2024).

One potential factor contributing to this situation is the lack of English language proficiency among tour guides and professionals in the tourism sector (Damayanti, 2019) or the limited promotion of Majene's tourist destinations in English through digital media (Pandaleke & Mananeke, 2019) (Raharjana & Putra, 2020). In English language education, whether in schools or higher education institutions, conventional approaches are considered inadequate in preparing students for industry needs, including those in the tourism sector (Gadu et al., 2020). Moreover, teaching English language skills in the context of tourism receives insufficient attention. In other words, the problem at hand is the lack of English language skills among tourism professionals in Majene, which hinders their ability to attract foreign tourists and impacts the development of tourism in Majene. Additionally, conventional and irrelevant English education fails to adequately prepare students for the specific needs of the tourism industry.

The advancement of technology and digital media has generated a major revolution in various fields, including education. Digital media implementation in education has proven effective in enhancing student engagement (Jiang, 2022), facilitating independent learning (Muharom et al., 2022), and providing a more interactive and enjoyable learning experience (Liansari & Azizah, 2022). In this regard, the objective of this study is to explore the influence of using digital media, incorporating

artificial intelligence technology in the form of chatbots such as the Fully Fluent app, combined with social media implementation, in teaching English for tourism sector. Through an applied linguistics approach, this study examined how effective digital media can improve English proficiency with a focus on the specific needs of the tourism industry. By leveraging this technology, it is hoped that students will acquire relevant and useful English language skills to achieve success in their careers in the tourism sector, which has the potential for further growth.

English Proficiency for Tourism

English proficiency has a significant role in the sector of tourism, it serves as a link between diverse cultures and facilitating communication in a globally connected environment (Parise et al., 2023). The significance of English as the *lingua franca* of international tourism cannot be overstated, given that it is often the default language used by tourists and service providers alike in cross-cultural interactions.

The idea of English as a *lingua franca* (ELF) pertains to its function as a shared language among individuals who speak various native languages. In the tourism sector, ELF is crucial for ensuring effective communication between tourists from various linguistic backgrounds and local service providers, including hotel staff, tour guides, and transportation personnel (Astawa & Wijaya, 2024). The ability to communicate in English not only enhances the tourist experience but also contributes to the overall satisfaction and safety of travelers (Chu & Hsu, 2024). Moreover, it enables service providers to cater to a wider international market, thereby increasing their competitive advantage.

English proficiency is directly connected to the quality of service provided in the tourism industry (Zahedpisheh et al., 2017). This is particularly true in contexts where clear and accurate communication is essential especially employees who need to

directly interact with foreign tourists, such as in the provision of travel information, customer service, and emergency response (Afraz, 2017). Inadequate English proficiency among tourism professionals can lead to misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and dissatisfaction, ultimately impacting the reputation of a destination.

In the increasingly globalized tourism market, English proficiency is considered a key professional competency. Employees with strong English skills are better equipped to handle the diverse needs of international tourists, negotiate contracts with foreign partners, and participate in global tourism networks. Consequently, English language training has become an integral component of professional development programs within the tourism sector (Thongphut & Kaur, 2023). Organizations that invest in enhancing the English proficiency of their staff are likely to see improvements in customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and market reach.

Digital Media for English Speaking in Tourism

Digital media refers to a broad spectrum of digital platforms and technologies, encompassing a diverse range of tools and systems, which is any media that are encoded in a machine-readable format and can be created, distributed, and consumed through digital devices (Plantin & Punathambekar, 2019). Among which AI (Artificial Intelligence) and social media are key components.

In the context of language learning, AI can power tools like chatbots, virtual tutors, speech recognition systems, and personalized learning platforms (Fitria, 2021), all of which contribute to the improvement of speaking competence. One example of Artificial Intelligence for learning language is Fully Fluent App.

Fully Fluent application is available in application store like Apple Store or Play Store, and its main features include AI-driven conversational practice, where users engage in virtual dialogues that adjust to their skill

level. Real-time feedback on pronunciation and fluency helps users improve their speaking abilities. Fully Fluent also offers customized learning pathways, interactive exercises, and expert-designed content that align with each user's specific needs and goals. Cultural context is integrated into lessons, aiding learners in developing both language and social communication skills. The app uses gamification, with challenges and rewards, to keep users engaged, and includes community interaction for global speaking practice (Softonic, 2024). A progress tracking system and offline learning mode add further flexibility.

Social Media is a specific type of digital media that involves platforms where users can be engaged in content creation, sharing, or participating in social networking activities can be done through platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, among many others. Social media platforms like Instagram can provide opportunities for real-time interaction, language practice, and exposure to different language varieties, making them valuable for improving speaking skills (Çakmak, 2020).

Instagram is a powerful tool for practicing English speaking (Devana & Afifah, 2020) while simultaneously promoting tourism (Mele et al., 2021). Through features like video posts, Stories, and live sessions, users can create and share content that showcases travel destinations, cultural experiences, and local attractions, all while speaking in English. This not only helps users improve their fluency and confidence in real-world contexts but also engages a global audience. Interactive elements such as Q&A sessions, commenting, and direct messaging provide further opportunities for conversational practice, allowing users to refine their language skills in a dynamic, responsive environment. Collaborating with English-speaking influencers and using relevant hashtags and geotags amplifies reach, connecting users with a wider community interested in travel and tourism. Additionally, joining or creating language exchange groups

on Instagram fosters a supportive community where users can practice English while exchanging travel insights, thereby enhancing both their language proficiency and their ability to promote tourism effectively.

Interactionist Theory and Its Application in Digital Media for Improving Speaking Ability

Interactionist theory in language acquisition, particularly associated with scholars like Stephen Krashen and Michael Long, said that language learning is significantly enhanced through interaction (Krashen, 1985) (Long, 1980). The core idea is that learners acquire language more effectively when they engage in meaningful communication, where they receive input (language exposure) that is slightly above their current proficiency level (comprehensible input), and they are also required to produce output (language use) that challenges them. Interaction provides opportunities for negotiation of meaning, error correction, and feedback, all of which are critical for developing speaking skills.

AI and social media platforms, when integrated into language learning, align closely with the principles of interactionist theory, offering dynamic, interactive environments where learners can actively engage in speaking practice.

Interactionist theory emphasizes the importance of meaningful communication and feedback in language acquisition. AI and social media platforms embody this theory by providing dynamic environments where learners can actively engage in speaking practice. AI tools, such as chatbots and virtual assistants, offer real-time interaction and immediate feedback, allowing learners to correct errors and refine their speaking skills in a structured way. Social media platforms facilitate authentic communication with native speakers and other learners, providing opportunities for negotiation of meaning and exposure to varied language inputs. These interactions, both simulated and real, help learners build confidence and improve their

speaking abilities in a low-pressure, adaptive environment. Together, AI and social media create effective platforms for enhancing speaking skills, aligned with the principles of interactionist theory.

Result and Discussion

This study is a Quasi Experimental research aimed at determining the impact of digital media usage on English speaking proficiency for tourism. It involved the collection of data on digital media usage and learners' English language outcomes from an applied linguistics perspective.

This study was conducted from June to July 2024 at the University of West Sulawesi, specifically in Study Program of English Education. The population in this study consisted of all English Language Education students from the 2023 cohort, totaling 114 students. The sample for this study was Class E, selected using the Convenience Sampling technique, where the sample was chosen based on availability and ease of access, comprising 25 students. Data collection in this study was designed to gather information about digital media application in English learning for tourism and also students' English proficiency.

The instrument used was an English proficiency test, particularly assessing speaking skills such as fluency, pronunciation, grammar and comprehension which administered before and after the integration of digital media in English language learning for tourism. Direct observation was also conducted to gain insights into the process of implementing digital media, such as artificial intelligence technology like Fully Fluent, in English language learning for tourism. The researcher focused on students' engagement during the learning process and the effective language styles used in the tourism context on social media. The study utilized descriptive analysis to offer a comprehensive summary of the key characteristics of digital media usage in English language learning for tourism and students' English proficiency. This included calculating

paired t-tests and normality tests using SPSS to determine whether there is a statistically significant impact of integrating digital media on English speaking proficiency, in this study there were two hypothesis, Null Hypothesis (H_0), there is no significant impact of digital media implementation on English speaking competence, and Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) there is a significant impact of digital media implementation on English speaking competence. The results of these calculations were interpreted to assess the impact of digital media implementation in English learning for tourism and students' English proficiency.

Result and Discussion

After the implementation process of digital media in English training specifically in speaking skill for tourism industry, the test had been given to the students of Universitas Sulawesi Barat before and after the digital media integration. The data obtained from test results was calculated with paired sample t-test and, findings showed that there was a major or significant improvement of Speaking skill for tourism among the students after using digital media in the form of AI chatbots Fully Fluent application and social media Instagram.

Before conducting paired sample t-test, a normality test was conducted using SPSS to identify whether the scores of both pre-test and post-test were distributed normally. Results of the normality test are presented below:

Table 1. Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-Test	0.153	25	0.136	0.955	25	0.329
Post-Test	0.183	25	0.031	0.928	25	0.077

From the table, the sig. value of both pretest and posttest were 0.329 and 0.077, both were larger than 0.05, which means the data for pretest and posttest in this study were normally distributed. Hence, the assumption

of normality required for the application of the paired sample t-test has been met.

The calculation of paired sample statistics with SPSS for tests was displayed below:

Table 2. Paired Samples Statistics

Pair		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1	Pre-Test	58.4000	25	13.51851	2.70370
	Post-Test	70.0000	25	9.68246	1.93649

The table above demonstrated the summary of descriptive statistics result of tests conducted in this study, the mean score for pretests and posttest were 58.40 and 70, that indicated descriptively, there was a difference for mean score between both tests. The significance of the difference or improvement was shown in the following:

Table 3. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	Pre-Test	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Post-Test	11.60000	6.07591	1.21518	14.10801	9.09199	9.546	0.000	

As shown in the table above, the two-tailed significance value is under 0.05. This supports the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_1), demonstrating that digital media, specifically AI Fully Fluent and Instagram, had an essential effect on improving students' English-speaking skills in the context of tourism.

More specifically, the results of the English speaking test with 25 participants generally show improvements across all components of speaking assessment, namely fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and comprehension. Among these four components, comprehension exhibited the highest increase, with an average score rising from 3.24 to 3.92, a gain of 0.68 from pretest

to posttest. The next highest improvement was in pronunciation, which increased by 0.6, with the average score rising from 2.88 to 3.48. Both fluency and grammar saw equal improvements of 0.52, with the average fluency score increasing from 2.84 in the to 3.36, and the average grammar score rising from 2.72 to 3.24.

The tests results which indicated the significance impact of digital media on training and improving English language skills for tourism, particularly speaking, can be linked to interactionist theory in linguistics. The interactionist theory, which emphasizes the importance of interaction in learning, particularly in language acquisition, aligns with the principles of AI Fully Fluent. Its voice chatbot feature can be used by students to practice English conversation in tourism contexts. During the observation process, the researchers noted that the application of digital media, specifically Fully Fluent, provided a comfortable environment for students. The AI, functioning like a personal tutor, served as an interaction partner in English within desired contexts, without the fear of making mistakes or feeling embarrassed. In this study, Fully Fluent AI allowed students to practice English according to their individual needs and proficiency levels. The feedback, including suggestions and corrections provided by the AI, facilitated rapid learning and reinforced the pronunciation and vocabulary required for tourism-related contexts in this study. A study by Fathi (Fathi et al., 2024) shows results similar to this study, demonstrating that AI-supported English speaking interactions can significantly improve English speaking skills. Additionally, students responded positively and had favorable perceptions of using AI in learning English. Another study from Hapsari (Hapsari & Wu, 2022) also showed that AI chatbots can help and improve speaking skill, the study demonstrates that AI can help reduce anxiety in learning English and provide a supportive and enjoyable environment for practicing English speaking skills.

The observations from this study also demonstrate how Instagram helps students practice their English skills. Content such as vlogs, reviews, or live streams about tourist sites in Majene provided a platform for them to improve their English speaking abilities and boost their confidence. Instagram's interactive nature, fostering engagement among users and between content creators and their audience, encourages students to use and engage in English language in more contextual ways, which can also aid in promoting tourist sites in Majene. This also illustrates the role of interactionist theory in helping students enhance their English language skills, particularly in speaking. Similar study (Wulandari, 2019) demonstrates that instagram implementation gave positive effect on speaking competence of participants, particularly in terms of fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and confidence. This finding is supported by experimental research conducted by Qisthi (Qisthi & Arifani, 2020) which shows that using Instagram significantly enhances English speaking skills.

With the completion of this study, it is hoped that digital media, whether AI or social media, can be considered as viable alternatives for improving English language skills, especially for specific purposes such as tourism. The researchers also hope to raise awareness that the integration of technology has become both common and essential in today's era, provided it is used wisely and proportionally. Additionally, utilizing technology such as digital media can aid in promoting the development of tourism in areas with potential that have yet to be fully explored, such as Majene, by enhancing human resource skills and facilitating global promotion.

Conclusion

This study reveals that digital media significantly enhances English speaking skills for tourism, as shown by the results of pre and posttest using a paired sample t-test with SPSS. The two-tailed significance value which

was smaller than 0.05 supports the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, confirming the significant impact of digital media on English speaking skill improvement.

Among the skills assessed, comprehension improved the most, followed by pronunciation, grammar, and fluency. AI Fully Fluent offers interactive tools like voice chatbots, role-play, and feedback, while Instagram provides an engaging environment for students to practice and build confidence through content creation related to tourism.

The study underscores the importance of interaction, feedback, and practice in language learning, aligning with interactionist theory. It advocates for the use of technology in language acquisition, especially for the tourism industry. It also can be used to support the development of the tourism sector in its promotion and human resources. It also calls for further exploration of digital media's role in developing other language skills, such as writing, reading, and listening.

Acknowledgment

This research was funded and supported by Indonesia's Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology.

References

- Afraz, S., & Alipour, A. (2017). The Impact of English speaking proficiency of hotel's staff on attracting tourists in Qeshm Island. *Journal of Tourism Hospitality Research*, 5(2), 59-73.
- Astawa, I. G., & Wijaya, E. A. (2024). English Proficiency and Cultural Competence for Tourism Professionals in The Globalized Tourism Industry. *Jurnal Kajian Dan Terapan Pariwisata*, 4(2), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.53356/diparojs.v4i2.87>
- Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Sulawesi Barat. (2024). *Rata-rata Lama Menginap (Tamu Asing) (Hari)*. <https://sulbar.bps.go.id/subject/16/pariwisata.html#subjekViewTab3>
- Bahasoan, A. N., Rahmat, A., & Ayuandiani, W. (2020). Analisis Kunjungan Wisatawan Mancanegara Di Sulawesi Barat. *MANDAR: Management Development and Applied Research Journal*, 2(2), 7-13.
- Çakmak, F. (2020). Social Networking and Language Learning: Use of Instagram (IG) for evaluating oral communication skill. In *Recent tools for computer- and mobile-assisted foreign language learning* (pp. 110-131). *IGI Global*. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-1097-1.ch005>
- Chu, C., & Hsu, L. (2024). English Ability, Cultural Intelligence (CQ), Personality Traits and Service Quality-The Structural Relationship. *Journal of Ecohumanism*, 3(4), 42-56. <https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v3i4.3486>
- Damayanti, L. (2019). Peranan Keterampilan Berbahasa Inggris Dalam Industri Pariwisata. *Journey : Journal of Tourismpreneurship, Culinary, Hospitality, Convention and Event Management*, 2(1), 71-82. <https://doi.org/10.46837/journey.v2i1.42>
- Devana, T., & Afifah, N., (2021, January 2). Enhancing Students' Speaking Skill and Motivation Through Instagram Vlog. *Proceedings of the 4th Sriwijaya University Learning and Education International Conference (SULE-IC 2020)*, 358-363. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.201230.131>
- Fathi, J., Rahimi, M., & Derakhshan, A. (2024). Improving EFL learners' speaking skills and willingness to communicate via artificial intelligence-mediated interactions. *System*, 121, 103-254. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2024.103254>
- Fitria, T. N. (2021). Artificial Intelligence (AI) In Education: Using AI Tools For Teaching And Learning Process. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional & Call*

- for Paper STIE AAS, 4(1), 134–147. <https://www.blackboard.com/teaching-learning/learning->
- Gadu, P., Mahsun, M., & Jumail, M. (2020). Model Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Pariwisata pada Program Diploma Tiga Perjalanan Wisata Sekolah Tinggi Pariwisata Mataram. *Media Bina Ilmiah*, 15(1), 3789–3798.
- Hapsari, I. P., & Wu, T.-T. (2022). AI Chatbots Learning Model in English Speaking Skill: Alleviating Speaking Anxiety, Boosting Enjoyment, and Fostering Critical Thinking. *International Conference on Innovative Technologies and Learning*, 444–453. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-15273-3_49
- Jiang, L. (2022). Facilitating EFL students' civic participation through digital multimodal composing. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 35(1), 102–117.
- Katili, Y. A. H., Sahabi, A., Arsana, I. K. S., & Sulasmi, S. (2021). Analisis Kemanfaatan Budaya Berbahasa Inggris Pada Sektor Pariwisata Berkelanjutan di Era Industri 4.0. *Equilibrium: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 9(3), 373–380.
- Krashen, S. D. . (1985). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon.
- Liansari, V., & Azizah, N. L. (2022). The Relationship between the Use of Active, Innovative, Creative, and Fun Learning Techniques and Online English Learning by Multidisciplinary Students. *KnE Social Sciences*, 18–23. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v7i10.11205>
- Long, M. H. (1980). *Input, interaction, and second language acquisition*. University of California.
- Mele, E., Kerkhof, P., & Cantoni, L. (2021). Analyzing cultural tourism promotion on Instagram: a cross-cultural perspective. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 38(3), 326–340. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2021.1906382>
- Muharom, F., Nugroho, A., & Putra, H. R. P. (2022). Self-directed Use of Digital Devices for Out-of-class English Learning. *International Journal of Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology*, 10(1), 257–271. <https://doi.org/10.46328/ijemst.2245>
- Pandaleke, C. J., & Mananeke, L. (2019). Faktor-Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Tingkat Kunjungan Wisatawan Di Kabupaten Minahasa Tenggara. *5476 Jurnal EMBA*, 7(Oktober), 5476–5484.
- Parenreng, J. M. (2020). Pengembangan Aplikasi Pariwisata Sulawesi Barat Berbasis Android. *Journal of Embedded Systems, Security and Intelligent Systems*, 47–55.
- Parise, I., Cogo, A., & Popova, G. (2023). *English as a Lingua Franca for Tourism: A Pragmatic Study in the Italian Context [Doctoral Dissertation]*. University of London.
- Plantin, J.-C., & Punathambekar, A. (2019). Digital media infrastructures: pipes, platforms, and politics. *Media, Culture & Society*, 41(2), 163–174. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443718818376>
- Putri, A. M. J. (2020). Optimization of Online Learning Method Application through Google Classroom in English Education Department of Sulawesi Barat University. *EDUVELOP*, 4(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.31605/eduvelop.v4i1.754>
- Putri, A. M. J., & Imansari, N. (2024). Innovative Approaches to Teach English Speaking for Tourism: The Impact of AI and Social Media. *Eduvelop: Journal of English Education and Development*, 8(1), 52–66. <https://doi.org/10.31605/eduvelop.v8i1.4095>
- Qisthi, N., & Arifani, Y. (2020). The application of project based learning via Instagram to improve efl students

- speaking skill. *In Proceedings of the Borneo International Conference on Education and Social Sciences (BICESS 2018)* (pp. 201-209). <https://doi.org/10.5220/0009018802010209>
- Raharjana, D. T., & Putra, H. S. A. (2020). Penguatan SDM dalam e-Marketing untuk Promosi Desa Wisata di Kabupaten Malang. *Jurnal Nasional Pariwisata*, 12(2), 140–151.
- Softonic, R. (2024). *Become Fluent Fast with Fully Fluent*. <https://fully-fluent.en.softonic.com/android>
- Thongphut, A., & Kaur, J. (2023). “Doing Explicit” in hospitality and tourism service encounters in English as a lingua franca. *English for Specific Purposes*, 70, 224–236. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2023.01.003>
- Wulandari, M. (2019). Improving EFL Learners’ Speaking Proficiency Through Instagram Vlog. *Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching*, 22(1). <https://doi.org/10.24071/lt.2019.220111>
- Zahedpisheh, N., B Abu Bakar, Z., & Saffari, N. (2017). English for Tourism and Hospitality Purposes (ETP). *English Language Teaching*, 10(9), 86. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n9p86>