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Design of the "ECO-ELT" Social Community Logo as a Brand Identity

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Abstract

The ECO ELT (Ecological English Language Teaching) community is a global platform dedicated to addressing environmental challenges through English language education. Despite its growing membership of 567 members across multiple countries as of 2025, the community lacks a formal visual identity, particularly a logo, which limits its ability to establish a professional and recognizable presence in comparison to similar communities. This gap represents a significant limitation in branding and community communication. This study aims to design the ECO ELT community logo as part of a comprehensive visual identity system to strengthen its brand recognition. A qualitative research method was employed, collecting data through non-participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The Design Thinking methodology was applied across five stages: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test. The results include the ECO ELT logo, a Graphic Standards Manual (GSM), and application across supporting media including t-shirts, tote bags, letterheads, and employee ID cards. The visual identity produced offers a distinctive and consistent representation of the community's values and educational mission.

Keywords: Logo Design, ECO-ELT, Visual Identity.

1 INTRODUCTION

A community is a group of members united by a shared vision, mission, and common goals. According to Rogers [1], within the field of communication, a community is based on organizational communication among individuals, with a structure and division of labor designed to achieve specific goals. These specific goals serve as a key factor in the formation of a community. Thus, communities that exist around us are founded on the commonalities they share, such as shared hobbies, leading to the formation of motorcycle communities, nature-loving communities, and other similar groups. The growing prevalence of social communities stems from those formed on the basis of a strong sense of social understanding. A social community is a non-profit organization in which members collectively formulate their vision, mission, and goals, translating them into concrete actions. With these objectives, social communities typically work to foster social awareness within society by conducting activities in the areas of environment, education, culture, history, and related fields.

The social community known as Ecological English Language Teaching, or ECO ELT, is a community focused on global environmental issues. The ECO ELT community was established as a platform for researchers and educators from around the world who are interested in addressing global environmental challenges through English language education. The term ECO ELT was introduced in 2014 and gained broader traction in 2023. ECO ELT was initiated by Jefri Ali Syaiful, Ph.D. As of 2025, the community has grown to 567 members from various countries, operating primarily through the Facebook social media platform.

However, a critical issue facing the ECO ELT community is the absence of a visual identity necessary to distinguish it from other communities. The form of communication that creates a brand and facilitates the presentation of a professional image is known as a visual identity. Visual identity consists of elements that must convey a symbolic meaning that is difficult to articulate in words [2]. Examples of such elements include logos, icons, typography, and color.

A visual identity, in the form of a logo, serves as a unifying element across promotional media, ensuring consistency across platforms. A logo is an integral part of a community's identity, and its primary purpose is to serve as a distinctive symbol that is easily recognizable, as well as a means of communication that reflects the

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community's core values. Additionally, a logo plays a vital role in building public awareness of the brand or organization (Anggoro, as cited in Januariansyah, 2017). Therefore, this study was motivated by the need to design a logo for the ECO ELT community, aimed at establishing a distinctive identity, creating a unique impression compared to similar communities, and making it more easily recognizable to the general public interested in joining ECO ELT.

In designing the logo for ECO ELT, the authors focused on visual identity elements such as typography, color, icons, and the logo itself. These elements will primarily consist of images and illustrations intended to serve as the distinctive features and character of the ECO ELT community. The design is guided by the Design Thinking methodology to ensure the final output reflects the community's actual needs and identity values.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Visual Identity and Brand Identity

Visual identity is a set of visual elements used by an organization to represent and communicate its values, mission, and character to its audience. According to Landa [2], visual identity consists of elements that convey a symbolic meaning that is difficult to articulate in words alone. These elements include logos, icons, typography, color palettes, and graphic patterns. Together, they form a coherent system that enables an organization to communicate a consistent image across various platforms and media.

Brand identity, a broader concept, encompasses both visual and non-visual elements that define how an organization presents itself. For communities and non-profit organizations, brand identity is particularly important because it builds credibility and distinguishes the organization from others operating in the same field. A consistent visual identity across digital and physical media contributes directly to brand recognition and audience trust [12].

2.2 Logo Design

A logo is the cornerstone of any visual identity system. According to Rustan [9], a logo must align with the concept and characteristics of the entity it represents, and must meet three key criteria: uniqueness, simplicity, and flexibility. Uniqueness means the logo has a distinct meaning and is unlike any other. Simplicity ensures the logo is easy to understand and not overly complex. Flexibility means the logo can be applied across various media and contexts without losing its integrity.

Wheeler [8] adds that one important criterion for a good logo is its ability to function effectively in black and white, so that it remains legible when reproduced via photocopying or other monochrome processes. This principle ensures the logo's practicality across a range of real-world applications. The logo design process typically moves from conceptualization—through brainstorming, keyword mapping, and sketching—to digital refinement and final selection.

2.3 Color in Logo and Visual Identity Design

Color is one of the most powerful elements in visual identity design. According to Adams et al. [10], different colors carry distinct psychological associations that influence audience perception. For example, black is associated with seriousness, strength, authority, elegance, and timelessness. Green evokes nature, health, and sustainability—associations particularly relevant for environmentally oriented communities such as ECO ELT. Blue conveys trust, stability, and professionalism. The deliberate selection of color in logo design is therefore a strategic decision that shapes the audience's emotional and cognitive response to a brand.

2.4 Supergraphics

Supergraphics are a component of visual identity that helps the audience recall a brand's identity without necessarily seeing the logo directly. According to Olins [11], supergraphics can be derived from elements within the logo itself, taking any form—typography, patterns, or geometric shapes. In practice, supergraphics serve as versatile background patterns or decorative elements that reinforce brand recognition across physical and digital media.

2.5 Design Thinking

Design Thinking is a human-centered problem-solving methodology widely applied in the field of visual communication and product design. It consists of five interconnected stages: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test. The empathize stage involves understanding the needs and context of the target community. The define stage synthesizes research findings into a clear problem statement. The ideate stage encourages the generation of diverse design concepts through brainstorming. The prototype stage involves creating tangible design outputs for evaluation. The test stage validates the design with stakeholders and refines it based on feedback. This iterative process ensures that the resulting design is both contextually appropriate and functionally effective [3].

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative research approach. According to Creswell [13], qualitative research is a model that explores and delves into the meaning attributed by individuals or groups to a social problem.

This approach was selected because the design of a visual identity is inherently contextual and interpretive, requiring in-depth engagement with the community's values and needs. The design process followed the Design Thinking methodology, structured across five stages, empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test—as illustrated in Figure 1.

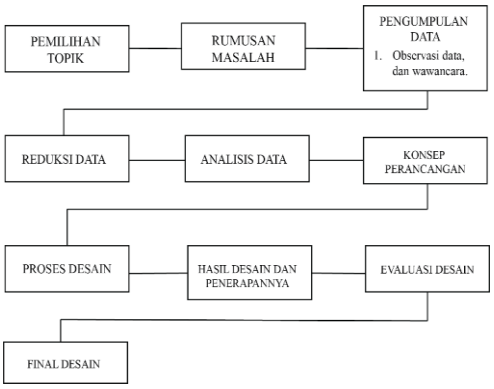


Figure 1. Design Process Flowchart

3.1 Data Collection Techniques

Data collection in this study was guided by three primary techniques: non-participant observation, interviews, and documentation.

3.1.1 Observation

The researcher conducted non-participant observation, meaning they did not directly participate in the activities of the ECO ELT community. Observation was carried out over three weeks through the ECO ELT Facebook group to document community interactions, member behavior, and the visual materials currently in use. This method provided contextual data relevant to the empathize and define stages of Design Thinking. Figure 2 shows the ECO ELT Facebook group that served as the primary observation site.

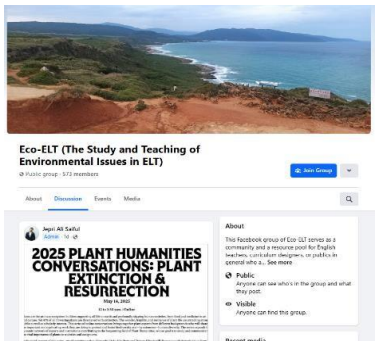


Figure 2. ECO-ELT Community Facebook Group

3.1.2 Interview

An in-depth interview was conducted with Jefri Ali Syaiful, Ph.D., the founder of ECO ELT. The interview was conducted face-to-face, lasted approximately 60 minutes, and covered topics including the community's history, vision and mission, target audience, values, and visual identity preferences. Open-ended questions were used to allow the informant to elaborate freely on each topic. The interview data informed the define and ideate stages of the Design Thinking process, providing the conceptual foundation for the logo design. Figure 3 documents this interview session.

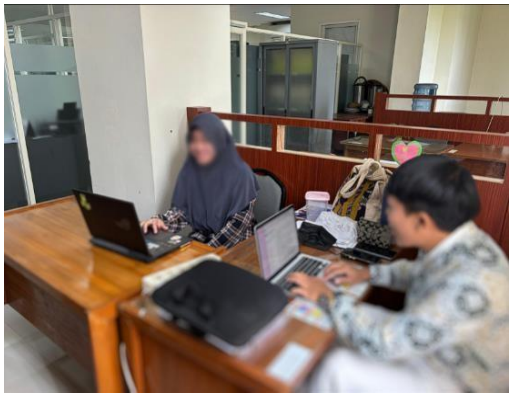


Figure 3. Documentation of the Interview with the ECO ELT Founder

3.1.3 Documentation

Documentation was collected from archival sources including existing visual materials, community announcements, and digital assets used by ECO ELT. This technique, as defined by Forman et al. [5], involves the use of evidence from non-human sources and provides contextual grounding for the design decisions.

3.2 Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study followed a qualitative descriptive approach [7]. The analysis process began with data reduction: the researcher reviewed all collected data—observation notes, interview transcripts, and documentation—and systematically filtered out irrelevant information, retaining only the elements most pertinent to the visual identity design. According to Sugiyono et al. [6], data reduction involves collecting and sorting key elements, focusing on important aspects, identifying themes and patterns, and ultimately providing a clearer basis for design decisions.

Following data reduction, the distilled findings were applied within the Design Thinking framework. The empathize and define stages drew directly from the interview and observation data to establish the

community's design requirements. The ideate stage used these requirements to generate brainstorming keywords and initial sketch concepts. The prototype stage produced digital logo alternatives, which were then evaluated with the community founder in the test stage. In the test stage, the founder reviewed both digital alternatives against the criteria established in the define stage: the logo must communicate ecology, English language education, and global community membership. Feedback from this session was documented and directly informed the selection of the final design. Revisions to form and color were made before the final prototype was confirmed. This iterative process ensured that design decisions were grounded in the community's actual identity and communicative needs.

To ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative findings, this study applied two validity strategies. First, data triangulation was used: findings from the interview were cross-checked against observation data and documentation to confirm consistency. Second, member checking was conducted by returning key design requirements derived from the interview to the community founder for verification before the ideate stage began. These strategies reduce the risk of researcher bias and strengthen the credibility of design decisions grounded in the data [7].

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Basic Design Concept

Based on the findings from the empathize and define stages, the author developed a keyword map to guide the conceptualization of the ECO ELT logo. Keywords were drawn from the community's core identity: ecology, education, environment, global, English language, and community. From these, a brainstorming session generated visual associations including the sun, teacher figure, woman, leaf, globe, and the concept of learning and growth. Figure 4 presents the brainstorming diagram developed for the ECO ELT logo.

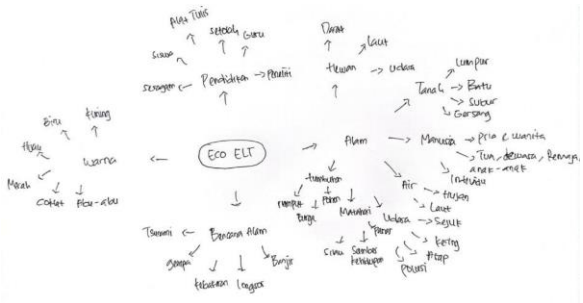


Figure 4. Brainstorming Keywords for ECO ELT

4.1.2 Sketches and Ideation

Based on the brainstorming outcomes, the author produced multiple initial sketches exploring different visual directions for the ECO ELT logo. Three primary sketch concepts were developed, as shown in Figures 5, 6, and 7. Each sketch explored a different arrangement of symbolic elements—combining natural imagery with typographic elements—to reflect the community's dual focus on ecology and English language teaching.



Figure 5. Sketch of the ECO ELT Logo – Concept 1

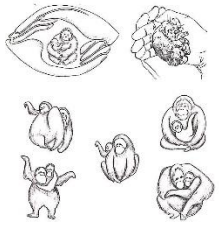


Figure 6. Sketch of the ECO ELT Logo – Concept 2

4.1.3 Selected Concept and Form Philosophy

Following evaluation of the three sketch concepts against the defined design criteria, one concept was selected for further development, as shown in Figure 8. The selected design integrates typographic and iconographic elements that reflect the ECO ELT community's identity. The logo incorporates organic, curved forms to evoke nature and fluidity, avoiding rigidity. The arrangement of elements symbolizes connection, collaboration, and growth—key values expressed by the community founder during the interview. The form philosophy of this logo deliberately communicates that ECO ELT is an open, welcoming, and globally oriented community.



Figure 7. Selected Sketch of the ECO ELT Logo

4.1.4 Digital Logo Alternatives

The selected sketch was then digitized using graphic design software to produce two refined alternatives for review. The first alternative (Figure 9) and the second alternative (Figure 10) were presented to the ECO ELT founder for evaluation. Both alternatives were rendered in black and white in the initial phase to assess their structural integrity before the application of color, in accordance with the principle that a good logo must be effective in monochrome [8].



Figure 9. ECO ELT Digital Logo – First Alternative



Figure 10. ECO ELT Digital Logo – Second Alternative

After the review session, the first alternative was selected as the final logo design. Color was then applied to the finalized form. The final color palette, shown in Figure 11, uses three primary tones: green (reflecting ecology and sustainability), blue (reflecting trust and professionalism), and white (providing visual balance and legibility). The primary typeface used in the logo is [INSERT FONT NAME], selected for its readability across digital and print applications. These choices are consistent with the community's dual mission in environmental education and academic communication.

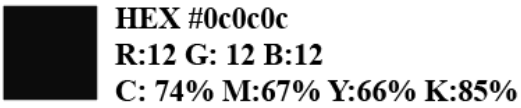


Figure 11. Color Palette of the ECO ELT Logo

4.1.5 Supporting Media Application

The ECO ELT visual identity was applied to four supporting media to demonstrate its versatility: a t-shirt (Figure 13), a tote bag (Figure 14), a letterhead (Figure 15), and an employee ID card (Figure 16). Each application integrates the ECO ELT logo and supergraphic in a manner consistent with the overall brand standards. [NOTE TO AUTHORS: Figures 15 and 16 showing the letterhead and ID card designs must be inserted here before final submission, as these outputs are cited in the abstract and conclusion.]



Figure 13. T-Shirt Design



Figure 14. Tote Bag Design

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Design Thinking methodology provides an effective framework for developing a community logo that is both visually coherent and contextually meaningful. Each stage of the process produced tangible outputs that directly informed subsequent design decisions. This section discusses the significance of those decisions in relation to the theoretical framework established in the literature review.

4.2.1 Design Thinking as a Methodological Framework

The application of Design Thinking in this study was not merely procedural. It was instrumental in ensuring the final design aligned with the real needs of the ECO ELT community. The empathize stage, conducted through direct observation of the Facebook group and an in-depth interview with the community founder, revealed that ECO ELT's primary challenge

was not just the absence of a logo, but the absence of a coherent identity that could communicate its dual mission: ecology and English language education. This insight shaped the entire design direction and would not have been accessible through a more conventional research approach.

The define stage consolidated these insights into specific design requirements: the logo needed to convey environmental awareness, educational purpose, and global community. The ideate stage then operationalized these requirements through keyword mapping and sketching, resulting in three concept directions. The iterative nature of Design Thinking—particularly the test stage, in which the founder evaluated two digital alternatives, ensured that the final logo reflected the community's identity from an insider perspective rather than solely from the designer's aesthetic judgment.

4.2.2 Logo Form and Philosophy in Context

The selected logo design employs curved, organic forms that communicate the ECO ELT community's connection to nature and its collaborative ethos. This aligns with Rustan's [9] three criteria: uniqueness, simplicity, and flexibility. By integrating ecological and typographic elements specific to ECO ELT, the logo avoids generic conventions common in community logos, remains legible at small scales, and functions effectively across digital and print media. For a community operating across multiple countries, this visual differentiation supports recognition and credibility.

4.2.3 Color Choice and Psychological Associations

The color palette applied to the ECO ELT logo was selected based on both theoretical grounding and community-specific considerations. Adams et al. [10] established that color carries potent psychological associations that shape audience perception. For ECO ELT, the selected color tones were chosen to evoke ecological values and educational professionalism. The use of nature-referencing tones communicates the community's environmental focus, while the overall palette maintains a professional quality appropriate for an academic community.

Importantly, as established by Wheeler [8], the logo was first evaluated in black and white before color was applied. This sequence ensures that the logo's structural integrity is independent of color—a critical consideration for reproduction across different media and technologies. The black-and-white version remains fully legible and expressive, confirming the logo's fundamental design soundness. Color is therefore an enhancement rather than a structural dependency.

4.2.4 Supergraphics and Brand Consistency

The development of a supergraphic system constitutes a significant contribution of this study beyond the logo itself. As noted by Olins [11], supergraphics allow audiences to recall a brand's identity without needing to see the full logo. For ECO ELT, which operates primarily on digital platforms and through community events, the supergraphic provides a versatile visual shorthand that can appear across backgrounds, patterns, and decorative elements without redundantly replicating the main logo.

The ECO ELT supergraphic was derived directly from geometric and organic elements within the logo, maintaining visual coherence with the overall system. Its application across supporting media—t-shirts, tote bags, letterheads, and ID cards—demonstrates that a single coherent visual language can be adapted across diverse physical and digital formats. This consistency is important for community branding because it reinforces the community's identity every time a member or stakeholder interacts with any piece of ECO ELT material [12].

4.2.5 Supporting Media and Communication Strategy

The four supporting media produced in this study, t-shirt, tote bag, letterhead, and employee ID card serve as a strategic communication toolkit for the ECO ELT community. These media function to inform, identify, disseminate, and attract audiences, as noted by [12]. Their design demonstrates that the ECO ELT visual identity is not merely theoretical but functional across tangible media that the community is likely to use in real-world contexts.

The t-shirt and tote bag designs position the ECO ELT logo and supergraphic in high-visibility locations, ensuring that community members who wear or carry these items act as mobile brand ambassadors. The letterhead design establishes ECO ELT's professional identity in written communication, reinforcing its credibility as an academic community. The ID card design ensures consistent representation of members when participating in events or conferences. Together, these applications constitute a Graphic Standards Manual that guides future design production for the community.

4.2.6 Contribution and Implications

This study contributes to the field of visual communication design by demonstrating how Design Thinking can be systematically applied to the logo design process for a non-profit academic community. The resulting visual identity system addresses a practical communication gap identified in the ECO ELT

community and provides a replicable model for similar communities seeking to establish visual identities. The study also reinforces the importance of grounding design decisions in empirical community research rather than relying solely on aesthetic judgment, a point well established in the design research literature.

The limitation of this study lies in its reliance on a single informant—the community founder—for interview data. Future research could broaden participant representation to include ECO ELT members from multiple countries, thereby capturing a more diverse range of identity perspectives. Additionally, the testing stage of this study was limited to an evaluation session with the founder; further usability testing with the broader community would provide stronger validation of the design outcomes

5 CONCLUSION

This study successfully designed the ECO ELT community logo as part of a comprehensive visual identity system. Using the Design Thinking methodology, the research moved through five structured stages, empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test, to produce a logo that reflects the community's ecological values and educational mission. The final logo integrates organic, curved forms with a strategic color palette derived from nature-referencing tones, meeting the criteria of uniqueness, simplicity, and flexibility established in the logo design literature.

In addition to the primary logo, the study produced a supergraphic system and its application across four supporting media: a t-shirt, tote bag, letterhead, and employee ID card. These outputs constitute a Graphic Standards Manual that provides ECO ELT with a coherent and actionable brand identity framework. The visual identity system developed here enables ECO ELT to present a professional, consistent, and distinctive image to its growing international membership.

The contribution of this study to visual communication design lies in its demonstration that community-specific, research-grounded design processes produce more contextually meaningful outcomes than purely aesthetic approaches. Future research should expand participant representation in the data collection phase and conduct broader usability testing of the visual identity system to further validate its effectiveness across the community's diverse international membership.

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