

Using Video Blogging (Vlog) to Enhance English Language Speaking Skills in A Malaysian Secondary School

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Abstract

Technology offers various means to enhance teaching and learning. In this study, Video Blogging (VLOG) was implemented as a tool for second language learning. The study aimed to investigate the use of VLOG to enhance the speaking skills of Malaysian secondary school students and to explore their experiences of using VLOG. The participants consisted of 80 Form 2 students who were enrolled in a Malaysian public school. This study employed a qualitative research design and data collection was done through open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Data collected from the questionnaire and interview were analysed using thematic analysis. Based on the findings, the study demonstrated that the use of VLOG contributed positively to the student's speaking skills by improving their fluency, motivating them to speak in English, and enhancing their vocabulary. Considering the findings, it is recommended for teachers and practitioners to incorporate VLOG in the teaching and learning of speaking in the second language classroom.

Keywords: video blogging, VLOG, ESL, speaking skills.

INTRODUCTION

English has played a significant role in Malaysia since gaining independence, even though Malay remains the country's official language. The term "English as a Second Language" (ESL) is employed when non-native speakers use or study the English language in an environment where English is the

primary language. This concept also encompasses specialized language instruction methods designed for individuals whose native language is not English, as observed in countries like Malaysia and the Philippines (Nordquist, 2019). In Malaysia, English is taught as a subject from primary to secondary level education.

In the process of learning and acquiring a new language, mastering speaking is considered one of the fundamental and crucial skills. Socheath (2018) stated that speaking is the ability essential for effective communication. In the current global context, successful communication through speech is recognized as the most critical among the four language abilities (Rao, 2019). The necessity for Malaysian graduates to speak English fluently has become imperative when seeking employment, as highlighted by Kashinatan and Azlina (2021).

The Malaysian Ministry of Education (MoE) recognises the importance of English and has initiated programs aimed at elevating the English proficiency of the upcoming generation to world-class standards (Abdullah & Mohamad, 2020). Highly Immersive Programme was implemented in Malaysian schools to enhance pupils' English language mastery at an early stage (Jiew, 2017). Additionally, the ProELT, a one-year service training program for English language instructors in primary and secondary schools, was sponsored by the Malaysian government to enhance their English language proficiency, as well as their teaching and learning skills (Hiew & Murray, 2021). The MoE aspires to fulfil the ambitions of the country to make Malaysia's workforce and future generations competitive on a global scale (Chong & Yamat, 2021). Nevertheless, Malaysian secondary school pupils encounter numerous psychological challenges when utilizing English in the classroom, as highlighted by Nadesan and Shah (2020). English language learners may experience difficulty speaking the language, particularly if they lack fluency.

Learning to speak English might be difficult for those who lack self-confidence (Nadesan & Shah, 2020). This lack of confidence, coupled with deficiencies in vocabulary mastery, poor grammar, and inaccurate pronunciation, often leads students to prefer being silent in the classroom (Nadila et al., 2021). Compounding the issue, educators sometimes push students to speak before they feel adequately prepared, which can hinder their ability to communicate effectively in the target language (Kashinatan & Azlina, 2021).

As highlighted by Adil (2023), shyness poses hindrance to the development of speaking skills and represents a notable challenge in language learning. It is important to note that educators might not always be aware of their students' shyness issues, and addressing shyness is a crucial aspect of teaching English as a second language. Another significant factor to consider is the lack of motivation. When students lack the motivation to learn and acquire a language, it has a pervasive impact on the entire learning process, as learning and motivation are intricately connected (Kasinathan & Azlina, 2021).

Research has demonstrated the impact of using Video Blogging (VLOG) in the realm of teaching and learning (Baran, 2007). The use of VLOG served as a good strategy to enhance students' speaking

skills (Lestari, 2019). Given this, educators should consider integrating VLOG into the second language classroom, leveraging videos and graphics to stimulate oral communication in English within the Malaysian educational setting.

This study aims to employ VLOG as a tool to enhance the speaking skills of students in a public school in Malaysia. The following are the research questions and objectives of this study:

Research Questions

1. What are the experiences of ESL secondary school students in using Video Blogging (VLOG) as a technique to improve speaking skills?
2. How does the use of Video Blogging (VLOG) enhance the speaking skills of Malaysian secondary school students?

Research Objectives

1. To explore the experiences of ESL secondary school students in using Video Blogging (VLOG) as a technique to improve speaking skills.
2. To investigate the use of Video Blogging (VLOG) in enhancing the speaking skills of Malaysian secondary school students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking Skills

Speaking is undeniably one of the most pivotal skills in language acquisition. It constitutes a productive ability and holds a critical position in the process of learning a second language. Recognized as an essential component of communication, speaking is considered a fundamental aspect of mastering English abilities. The significance of this skill lies in its capacity to enable individuals to effectively communicate, articulate ideas, express purposes, and convey opinions, ultimately allowing them to persuade and engage with others (Monika, 2018).

Functions of Speaking

Many language experts studied the purpose of speaking skills as a primary source within the relationship and connection between people. Brown and Yule (1983) proposed the three functions of speaking namely, talk as interaction, talk as transaction, and talk as performance. Firstly, talk as interaction is when people regularly communicate with others. This is also known as "conversation" and is a spontaneous participatory dialogue between two or more people. Secondly, talk as a transaction in a conversation is when the emphasis is on the message that is communicated and on having others comprehend the message by speaking clearly and precisely. Lastly, talk as performance

pertains to speaking in a more formalized setting, often in front of an audience. This includes instances such as school presentations, public announcements, and speeches, where the speaker is expected to engage with and address a larger group.

Types of Speaking

According to Brown (2004), there are five types of speaking: imitative, intensive, responsive, and lastly is extensive also called monologue. Imitative means the capacity to copy (parrot back) a word, phrase, or even a sentence is referred to as imitative speaking. Intensive speaking extends beyond imitation to encompass any speaking performance that is intended to practice some phonological or grammatical component of the language. Responsive refers to the students' speech consisting of brief responses to questions or comments posed by the instructor or other pupils in the classroom. The fourth one is interactive, this implies the duration and complexity of the engagement, which may encompass many exchanges and/or multiple participants, is what distinguishes responsive and interactive speaking. Lastly, monologues are when intermediate to advanced students perform extensive monologues in the form of oral reports, summaries, or brief speeches. The register is more formal and deliberate in this case and might be prepared or spontaneous.

Components of Speaking

In Hughes's theory of speech, there are five (5) components involved which are: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The production of sounds that humans utilise to convey meaning, according to Prashant (2018), is called pronunciation. Repeating sounds and correcting them when they are made wrong are two ways to learn how to pronounce them correctly. When it comes to accounting for and anticipating the linguistic knowledge of an ideal speaker or listener, grammar is regarded as a methodical process. Grammar is a set of principles that determines how words are typically arranged and related in sentences. Meanwhile, vocabulary is a vital building block in the process of learning a foreign language. Being able to communicate quickly, fluidly, and with the appropriate words without having to think too much is known as fluency (Annisa, 2021). Students must be able to comprehend words, their meanings, how they are spelled, and how they are pronounced. It is commonly used to describe the capacity to express spoken words quickly and without interruption, as opposed to speed. Lastly, comprehension is the capacity to pay attention to and comprehend long sections of dialogue, as well as to construct mental representations of sentence meaning. When speaking, comprehension refers to the speaker's understanding of the information they are conveying to the audience to avoid misunderstanding information.

Video Blogging (VLOG)

Video Blogging, also commonly known as VLOG, is similar to Blogging. Blogging refers to information and ideas uploaded onto a specific website. VLOG is delivered through videos and vocals, whereas Blogging is delivered through text. Maulidah (2017) elaborates on the concept of VLOG as a

continuous series of videocast that allows anyone to create and distribute the content of the video. By referring to this meaning, the collection and creation of video series can be considered as a means of communication with other people.

Context of Video Blogging (VLOG)

There are four contexts of video blogging namely solo VLOG, collaborative VLOG, gaming video, and live video (Lee, 2017), Solo VLOG is when an individual expresses his or her ideas in front of the camera. The basic goal of a solo VLOG is to make oneself a visual object. To relate it to this research, solo VLOG could be done by one student talking and discussing the topic given as the content of the VLOG. Collaborative VLOG, also called “to collab” refers to when a VLOGger invites another VLOGger or to VLOG together. Gaming video is a type of VLOG that is quite popular nowadays, the VLOGger will create content for instance regarding a game called “Mobile Legend or PUBG”. The VLOGger will provide comments and reactions to that specific game. Finally, live video in VLOG is when celebrities and VLOGgers go live on a social media platform and wait for the audience to view, comment, and react to their live video (Wati, 2021).

Advantages of VLOG for Students

According to a study by Rahmawati et al. (2018), there are eight advantages of VLOG for students.

1. VLOG allows users to express concepts that would be difficult to convey through writing or print.
2. VLOG can help children who are visual learners relate to and understand material.
3. Teachers can discuss topics such as pressure in speaking class, but it may assist students in grasping the issue if they can watch their teachers exhibit the idea through the VLOG. When using a VLOG to teach an idea, students can view and listen to the video as many times as they like.
4. Students can learn from VLOGs created by other experts or classmates, and they can also create VLOGs to share with others. This allows students to collaborate not just with their peers, but also with people from all around the world.
5. Students can use VLOG to convey ideas and demonstrate expertise without the constraints of writing. Not all students are excellent writers and enabling them to utilize a VLOG for a project can increase their capacity to convey what they know as well as their confidence to do so in the most comfortable manner.
6. Students may utilise VLOG to create a portfolio that showcases their work over time. Their greatest work or a specific task might be showcased in their portfolio.
7. VLOGs allow students to learn at their own pace and in their environment. Students may be more focused at different times of day or in other environments than in a school setting.
8. Some students may be accustomed to using VLOGs since it is a similar media source they use for leisure purposes.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this study, a qualitative method was employed. Individuals' experiences, opinions, and actions can be collected using qualitative research design, which dives deeper into real-world concerns (Tenny et al., 2021). An open-ended questionnaire was employed to investigate the experiences of the students after creating a VLOG whereas an interview was utilized to investigate the effectiveness of using VLOG.

Each participant was given a topic for the VLOG assignment. The topic was based on the Malaysian English syllabus and curriculum, which is the School-Based English Language Curriculum for Secondary Schools (SBELC). The researcher taught topics from Units 6 and 7 of the Form 2 Pulse textbook about Money and Journey to all the participants and then asked them to create their own VLOG based on any of the topics learned. Most of the students chose to create their VLOG about the journey; as mentioned in their VLOG, they loved to travel and they had a lot to talk about concerning the topic. Each VLOG was 3 to 5 minutes long and students must speak English throughout the whole video. The participants were given 2 weeks to finish their VLOG.

Sample

The participants in this study comprised 80 ESL learners studying at a secondary school in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. All 80 participants were requested to respond to an open-ended questionnaire aimed at investigating their user experiences in creating VLOGs. Subsequently, four participants voluntarily participated in interviews.

Data Collection Method

An open-ended question is a form of survey question that does not limit responders to already-provided response possibilities and it encourages the responder to completely express himself or herself when they offer responses to inquiries (Dossetto, 2021). In this study, an open-ended questionnaire was distributed to all the participants to investigate their students after creating a VLOG.

An interview is a planned engagement when one person asks one or more people for information. A semi-structured interview has standardised and open-ended questions in both the structured and unstructured phases (Sahoo, 2022). In a one-on-one interview, the respondent is spoken to face-to-face as the interviewer records their responses. In this study, each participant was interviewed for 15-20 minutes using semi-structured questions. The interview was conducted at the school library which was quiet and comfortable for the participants. The participants were briefed about the nature of the study and their consent was acquired before audio-recording the interview.

Data Analysis Method

Data analysis is the systematic application of statistical and logical techniques to describe the data scope, modularise the data structure, condense the data representation, illustrate via images, tables, and graphs, evaluate statistical inclinations, and probability data, and derive meaningful conclusions (Arora,2020). The data collected from the open-ended questionnaire and interview in this study were examined qualitatively using thematic content analysis and reported descriptively.

Thematic content analysis is a type of inductive method for analysing an interview transcript. Thematic analysis is an effective method for obtaining information about people's ideas, opinions, knowledge, experiences, or values from qualitative data, such as interview transcripts, social media profiles, or survey replies (Caulfield, 2019). To employ thematic content analysis in this study, the data that were obtained from the open-ended questionnaire interview were analysed by following the approaches to thematic analysis namely, familiarisation, coding, and writing up the final data. In the familiarisation stage, the researcher studied and examined all the data collected. In the next stage of coding, the information was categorised based on themes that arose such as “improved fluency in speaking”, “motivation to speak English” and “enhanced vocabulary”. After familiarising and coding the data, the researcher then reported and described the analysis of the data obtained in this research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1

The aim of Research Question 1 was to explore the experiences of ESL Secondary school students in using Video Blogging (VLOG) as a tool to improve speaking skills. The findings revealed the following:

Challenges of VLOG

The findings revealed that the students encountered challenges in terms of Internet connection, shyness, and fear of making mistakes when speaking.

The challenge that I have to face when creating the VLOG is my internet connection. Sometimes I try to use a filter to make the VLOG nicer, but it keeps on loading and needs to wait very long so I don't use the filter and just continue my VLOG without any filter.

-R5

The greatest challenge I can say is my internet connection, it took me almost a week just to send my video to the teacher because I was in my hometown at that time and my phone does not have large memory to store my VLOG, so I need to send my VLOG as soon as possible.

-R35

The challenges that I faced were that I felt so shy and felt like a little embarrassed because I was doing my VLOG in an open place, and I was afraid that people would laugh at me when I was talking while taking videos, but I just tried to put myself up and try to believe in myself.

-R10

For me, the challenge I faced was when I was phrasing long sentences when shooting the VLOG, but I overcame it by talking slowly phrase by phrase, and by saying the long sentences slowly.

-R16

I think the only serious challenge I faced when creating the VLOG is trying to pronounce the word right but as a matter of fact, I managed to overcome it by practicing that word again and again before saying it in my VLOG.

-R1

For me, the challenge I faced was when I was speaking English, I was afraid that I might have grammar mistakes in pronouncing the words but what I did was I spoke calmly and slowly and just confident with my English.

-R13

Similarly, in another study conducted by Safitri and Khoiriyah (2017), internet connection issues were identified as one of the challenges faced by students when using VLOG. However, the challenges of shyness and fear of making language errors were not reported in that study.

Strengths of VLOG

The findings revealed that after creating VLOGs, students were more confident in using English and showed interest in utilizing VLOGs more frequently.

I rate my confidence level of 8 out of 10 because the first time I shot my video it was a mess since I was not confident enough and afraid of making mistakes but as the moment went by, I realised that I just needed to be confident and be brave speaking English in my VLOG.

-R12

After I watched my friend's VLOG that they sent to our Telegram group, that is where I got the confidence that I can also create my VLOG and I am confident with my grammar and pronunciation which is why I was able to complete my VLOG.

-R7

After the teacher changed the topic for the VLOG, that is where I gained the confidence to create my VLOG because the topic was familiar to me, which means I had a lot to talk about when creating my video even though deep inside I was very nervous but my friends who have done their VLOGs have encouraged me that I can do it too.

-R14

According to the responses from three respondents (R12, R7, and R14), the use of VLOG improved the confidence of students in speaking the English language. Abdullah et al. (2019) have highlighted self-confidence as one of the factors influencing student achievement.

In addition, the findings indicated that VLOG was perceived as a valuable tool for sustaining interest and enhancing the overall appeal of learning English in the classroom.

According to my experience after creating a VLOG, I agree that VLOG improves my speaking skills and the more we will be asked to create more VLOGs the more we can practice and gets better as you do it again and again and rewatch your VLOG and notice your mistakes and correct it.

-R11

R11 suggested that continuous use of VLOG can lead to increased practice of speaking skills. A recent study by Nur Faizah (2021) similarly emphasized the importance of practice in the use of VLOG. In explaining the teaching of speaking skills, Hussain (2018) advocated the importance of practice to improve one's speaking ability. In this study, VLOG served as an alternative method to enhance student's speaking skills, providing them with the opportunity to talk freely and express themselves while creating a VLOG.

Research Question 2

The main purpose of Research Question 2 was to investigate whether Video Blogging (VLOG) enhanced the students' speaking skills. In general, the responses from the four interview respondents were positive, revealing that VLOG improved their speaking skills in three key aspects: improved fluency in speaking, increased motivation to speak English, and enhanced vocabulary.

Improved Fluency in Speaking

Below are excerpts taken from the interview:

I think VLOGging helps me improve my speaking skills in English and as well as I learn how to express myself while talking about myself and the things I love in the camera.

-S2

For me, other than improving my speaking in the English language, when I did my VLOG, we could learn more vocabulary and forget about grammar errors by learning from our mistakes.

-S4

I think the VLOG is effective since it has an alternative to improving my fluency when we talk in the English language. I am quite shy talking to others but during and after doing the VLOG it helps me more to understand the language and be more fluent in speaking the language.

-S3

Based on the responses from the participants, creating VLOG improved their speaking skills since they could talk freely through the video compared to when they were inside the classroom. According to a study by Lestari (2019), Video Blogging is an effective learning medium to improve the students' speaking skills and VLOGging also enables the students to improve their pronunciation, grammar, accent as well and fluency in the language. The more the students create more VLOG the more they can practice their speaking skills for excellent improvement.

Increased Motivation to Speak in English

The participants revealed that creating VLOG provided them with a comfortable method of learning English. The participants stated that by creating VLOG, they felt more motivated to learn and speak. The following includes some of the interview excerpts:

It is quite effective because it not only improves the way I speak in English but also motivates me to speak more freely and talk more without thinking of any grammatical mistakes.

-S3

I did not think of other things except for the fact that I just talk freely in English and that is how I think it is effective because while we're doing it we feel more motivated to speak more.

-S4

The findings showed that VLOG not only served as a tool to enhance the students' speaking abilities but also motivated them to learn more since VLOG is a popular trend and has interesting and fun features for users to create VLOG creatively. In this study, the use of VLOG also served as a source of motivation in language learning. Chilingaryan & Gorbatenko (2015) stated that students' commitment to and interest in language study can be boosted through motivation.

Enhanced Vocabulary

Another aspect that improved after using VLOG was vocabulary because the creation of video content led them to learn and use more words to impress the viewers.

For me, other than it improves my speaking in the English language when I did my VLOG, I did not think of other things except for the fact that I just talk freely in English and that is how I think it is effective because while we're doing it, we can learn more vocabularies and forget about grammar errors by learning from our mistake.

-S4

In another study conducted by Lestari (2019), VLOG enabled students to develop more in terms of their vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and accent.

The findings in this study share similarities with the data collected by Mohamad and Saidalvi (2020). Their study likewise revealed that VLOG improved the students' speaking abilities and motivated them to use English. Furthermore, their study showed that the use of VLOG enabled the students to improve their vocabulary and pronunciation. In another study by Wati (2021), a majority of student participants indicated that watching VLOG helped them to learn new things and enhanced their speaking skills and vocabulary.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the use of Video Blogging (VLOG) to enhance the speaking skills of Malaysian secondary school students and to explore the experiences of the students in using VLOG to improve speaking skills. The findings demonstrated that despite encountering challenges such as poor Internet connection, shyness, and fear of making mistakes when speaking, the participants in this study benefitted from the use of VLOG because their confidence to speak in English increased. Furthermore, the use of VLOG contributed to an improvement in the participants' speaking skills in terms of fluency, motivation to speak in English, and enhanced vocabulary. All in all, the findings proved that VLOG was a useful tool for the teaching and learning of speaking skills in the classroom.

One of the limitations encountered in this was time constraints since the researcher only had eight weeks to teach the two topics and implement the use of VLOG. With more time, students could have created more VLOG and practiced their speaking skills accordingly. Future research can expand the use of VLOG to focus beyond just speaking skills but also on other language skills such as writing. This study proved that alternative teaching and learning tools such as VLOG can bring tremendous impact to an otherwise difficult skill to teach in a second language classroom.

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