ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF MALAYSIAN ESL UNDERGRADUATES TOWARDS THE USAGE OF VLOGGING IN ENHANCING THEIR SPEAKING SKILLS

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The aim of this research is to find out the attitudes and the perceptions of the undergraduate students in a private higher institution in Malaysia, towards making video recording specifically video blogging (vlogging) to enhance their speaking skill in the target language – English. This research is also carried out to determine the advantage(s) and disadvantage(s) of using vlog for similar purpose. A quantitative design was employed in this study where a questionnaire was used to elicit data. The questionnaire touched on students' attitudes and perceptions towards the use of vlogging in enhancing their speaking skills. The overall findings showed that the university students agreed that using vlogging can improve their English-speaking skills to a certain extent.

INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus 19 or better known as Covid-19 had hit us worldwide last year – 2020. First discovered in Wuhan, China in December 2019, the virus spread out as epidemic. This was later brought to the Director-General of World Health Organization (WHO) who declared the virus outbreak as a pandemic (WHO, 2020). This pandemic has resulted in major sectors being affected heavily around the world. Amongst all sectors, one major sector being education has been afflicted extremely hard. At least 290.5 million students around the world were disrupted

due to many schools closed as reported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ABC News, 2020).

Greater disruptions happened here in Malaysia when the Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin issued a Movement Control Order (MCO) to be imposed starting 18th of March 2020 (The Star, 2020). Due to that, all educational levels were closed until the pandemic is resolved or impeded. The decision, even though it was deemed substantial, has taken a great toll on the educators but more so on the students. This is due to the teaching and learning being switched from conventional to mostly online within a short amount of time regardless the level of education (from kindergarten to tertiary) making it almost impossible to get both the educators and students fully ready for this.

In one of the private higher institutions located in the northern part of Malaysia, the learning community is in no exception. Beginning of March 18th, 2020, all teaching and learning platforms were converted to online mode using various online platforms and tools in just overnight. Educators were in turmoil at deciding which was the best medium to deliver their teaching lessons without any physical contact at a sudden pace and the preferred assessments to evaluate their students' work, skills and ability in accordance with their respective course program. Some of the courses or specifically assessments require students to perform the skills of practicality instead of theories and comprehension, in a way that oral presentation is much needed. The skill of speaking is one of the most important skills, especially in language learning. In general, the nature of the assessment for speaking skills is to see whether the students can speak spontaneously and confidently without the aids of their notes in the target language. In addition to that, it is also to see how much vocabulary phrases they can acquire while talking and conducting their presentations. Richard and Renandya (2002, p. 204) stated that the essential oral communication requires the ability to use the language appropriately in social interactions that involves not only verbal communication but also paralinguistic elements of speech such as pitch, stress, and intonation.

Due to the current situation – pandemic, in order to ensure that students can continue with their speaking assessments even at home or wherever they are, educators need to decide on what tools best to evaluate their students' speaking ability in the target language away from the normal physical classroom. The current advancement of technology gives learners a prospect to engage themselves in self-paced interactions, having their own privacy, and a secure environment in which errors get corrected and specific feedback is given. As stated by Chanthiramathi (2011), technology involves the usage and knowledge of tools, techniques, systems, and methods. Thus, the use of technology is helpful for students in English language teaching and learning, specifically speaking skill. Therefore, video recording has been chosen as one of the preferred ways if not the easiest way to guarantee that students have their speaking practices even when they are at home, and as a method for the educators to assess their students' speaking ability. For this kind of approach, students are required to record themselves speaking or perform oral presentation in the target language in front of a camera device according to the criteria of the tasks which they were given to complete. In addition, they also need to do some final editing before submitting their work.

Hence, the aim of this research is to find out what are the attitudes and the perceptions of the Malaysian ESL undergraduates towards the usage of vlogging in enhancing their speaking skill of the target language – English. Besides, this paper also aims to identify the advantage(s) and disadvantage(s) of using vlog for similar purpose.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this era where Education 4.0 is being emphasized upon every aspect in teaching and learning, the use of technology-based tools is considered significant in providing drive to the educators to opt for education in non-traditional ways. In fact, learners of this generation are more familiar and prone to utilise technology in their means for the education as it eases them and facilitates them in gaining the knowledge and the skills to meet the demands of 21st century skills. There is no doubt that with the help of the technology-based tools, teachers and most importantly students will be able to collectively relate to their current lifestyles and

situation towards the learning session. For instance, the use of mobile devices is said to provide positive outcomes to the students' performance in the language classroom as it promotes collaborative classroom activities and most importantly giving plenty of variety of activities during the lessons through the mobile apps or the online sites (Godwin- Jones, 2018). When it comes to today's generation of learners, it is safe to assume that they are in the possession of the most advanced mobile devices. Hence, making use of the accessibility of technology and platforms provided could help to engage the students better with the lessons (Costley, 2014).

Current scenario of English language mastery among students in Malaysia context highlighted issues pertaining to their lack of ability to speak in English fluently be it ESL (English as a second language) or EFL (English as a foreign language) learners. Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is one of the ways to help realising a new experience of teaching and learning session for the students as an alternative to chalk and talk method utilised in the traditional classroom lesson. This method is said to be effective and useful when carrying out activities outside the classroom (Miangah & Nezarat, 2012). According to Kukulska- Hulme (2009), it enables learning through a device where learner's free time can also be exploited beneficially in improving their learning skills since the learning can continue to take place even when they are on the move. MALL offers different platforms and accessibility to learning materials as well as in interacting with teachers and peers despite the place and the time barriers. Besides, with this generation's familiarity with the use of gadgets in their lifestyle, utilizing what they use the most into teaching and learning session will make the process more interesting and most importantly engaging.

One of the MALL methods that is believed to help improve students' ability to speak is through the creation of vlog. Vlog is a type of blog where the user utilizes video as the mean to express contents. According to Taqwa and Sandi (2019), vlog is a term that refers to video blog which also known as videocast or vodcast. The use of vlog is not new in the education field however the novelty of its effectiveness is yet to be explored extensively in Malaysia. Multiple studies have explored the effectiveness of vlogging on students' speaking performance. One of the studies is by Safitri and Khoiriyah (2017) which reported that the use of vlog indeed helped

the students to enhance their speaking skills as its advantages outweigh the weaknesses of the method. In another study by Maulidah (2018), the vlog method appeared to be effective in increasing learners' speaking ability. The method is said to boost student's encouragement to learn as vlogging was deemed more fun and it was reflected in their speaking performance where they managed to carry out good oral presentations. Besides, vlogging also provides the chance for the students to practice autonomous learning which in return helps to improve their speaking ability (Maulidah, 2018, p.15). This is also in parallel with previous study by Sun (2009) and a later one by Wulandari (2019) which found that vlogging promotes positive outcomes in students' independent learning as it provides students spaces for them to do their own self-evaluation which helped them to be more alert with their own fluency and accuracy in speaking skill. Providing a safe environment with spaces for the students to identify their own mistakes in using the language and eventually correct them through multiple retakes is crucial in helping the students to acquire the target language at their own pace. Besides, with the help of technology, students will be more at ease with their learning process and might actually enjoy the learning experience.

Watkins (2012) also found vlogging to be useful for language learning as it increases student talk time. Prioritising students' practices during speaking class is important because it will help the students to master "new vocabulary and grammar, decrease shyness while bolstering confidence, and develop fluency" (Watkins, 2012; 197). Sari (2017) and Rahmawati, Harmanto and Indriastuti (2018) are also in agreement with the statement as they found that involving vlogging in the classroom lesson help to improve students' engagement and their confidence in using the language.

Hung (2011) reported that with vlogging, English learners will be able to practice freely without being judged for the progress that they had as it can be quite demotivating for the students if they were monitored closely. He also stated that creating vlog requires students to develop a detailed guideline firsthand to ensure that they are well prepared and versed with the contents' sequences or the sentences that they want to put in the vlog. This will indirectly increase their vocabularies and word choices as they have to read up first in order to prepare for their contents draft.

Creating vlog is not as simple as pressing the record button and upload it. It requires them to do editing to ensure that a good video can be produced. Students claimed that while creating the vlog, it is a good practice for them to enhance their editing skills as they have to consider elements like the flow of the video, the transition and the duration of the effects reflected in the vlog (Hung, 2011). However, Zahro (2020) found that if students have limited skill in editing the vlog, it could bring disturbance to the whole teaching and learning process.

Therefore, it is important to investigate the possible outcomes that the method could bring to the teaching and learning session in improving students' performance specifically in language learning. Besides, this method is yet to be extensively explored amongst the Malaysian ESL learners in which is considered necessary in providing better outcomes on students' performance.

METHODOLOGY

This research serves the purpose to find out how the students feel and behave towards using video blogging (vlogging) to enhance their ability to speak in English. It is a study that shows on how people behave, feels, or having opinions towards a certain product or method of performance. As defined by Hogg and Vaughan (2005, p.150), attitude is a collection of beliefs, feelings, and behavioural impulse towards any significant items, groups of people, events, or symbols. It was posited that attitude of individuals are strongly influenced by social roles and social norms (McGuire, 1969; Hockenbury & Hockkenbury, 2007; Smith & Mackie, 2007). Aside from exploring the students' attitudes, the research also supplies the information of the advantage(s) and disadvantage(s) of using vlogging as a method to increase the students' ability in the target language.

Research Design and Instrument

A quantitative design was employed in this study where questionnaire was used as the instrument to provide the data regarding students' attitudes and perceptions towards the use of vlogging looking into its advantage(s) and disadvantage(s) in enhancing their speaking skill. The questionnaire consisted of two sections:

1. Section A covers students' demographic details.

2. Section B contains questions related to students' attitudes and perceptions towards the use of vlogging in enhancing their speaking skills.

There were 30 items using Five-Point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree) asked in Section B. All the items underwent reliability test for its pilot study where its internal consistency was measured, and the values of its Cronbach's Alpha was 0.844. This suggested that all the items have relatively high internal consistency as the minimum acceptable value for Cronbach's alpha is 0.7.

Sample

The respondents consisted of 147 students who undertook English for Professional Communication course in Semester I 2020/2021. All respondents were diploma students who were from different programme of study at a private higher institution located in the northern part of Malaysia.

Research Procedures

Prior to data collection, the respondents have experienced creating vlogs through their assessments during the semester via various types of projects and tasks assigned to them for them to complete the subject requirement. For the present study, students undertook English for Professional Communication course were required to create a vlog as one of their summative assessments. They had to work in a group of 4 and they were given 4 weeks to plan and develop their vlog, guided by their respective lecturers. The total mark awarded for the vlog project is 40% out of their overall grade for the subject. Once they had submitted their vlogs, data collection commenced. The questionnaire was distributed online via Google Form and all the responses were recorded. Analysis of the results were carried out using SPSS version 26.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Respondents' Background Information

147 questionnaires were collected electronically using Google Form as all the classes were conducted online due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. All

questionnaires were recorded and analyzed using SPSS v26 for both descriptive and inferential statistics. Out of 147 respondents, 52 (35.4%) were male students and the remaining 95 (64.6%) were female students.

Table 1: Students' Demographic (Gender)

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	52	35.4
Female	95	64.6
Total	147	100

Students' perceived computer literacy were also recorded which showed that majority of the respondents see themselves as average in computer literacy (67.3%) and only 1 respondent regarded oneself as a poor user while the remaining respondents categorized themselves as average (29.3%) and proficient (4%) users as depicted in Table 2.

Table 2: Students' Demographic (Computer Literacy)

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor	1	0.7
Average	43	29.3
Good	99	67.3
Proficient	4	2.7
Total	147	100

Respondents were also asked on their perceived English language proficiency and 75 respondents (51%) perceived themselves as good, 65 respondents (44.2%) viewed themselves as average, 4 respondents (2.7%) considered themselves as poor user and the remaining 3 respondents (2%) categorized themselves as proficient. The details were illustrated in Table 3 as follows:

Table 3: Students' Demographic (Language Proficiency)

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor	4	2.7
Average	65	44.2
Good	75	51
Proficient	3	2
Total	147	100

Items Analysis

A descriptive statistical analysis was carried out for all the items where means for each of the items measured were calculated and ranked in descending manner in order to illustrate the ranking of the items clearly. Items with a value of mean of 3.5 or more represent the tendency of the group towards the "agree" and "strongly agree" stances while items with a value of mean that is lower than 3.5 were considered inclining towards the "disagree" and "strongly disagree" stances. The present study used the aforementioned indicators as a measure to interpret the results of the data analysis. The items were illustrated in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Items Ranking for Student's Perception Towards the Usage of Vlogging in Enhancing Speaking Skills

Items		I		M	S D	
6	Ç	Vlogging motivates me to speak English more	47	4.02	.815	
30	Ç	Overall,I think vlogging does improve my English speaking skill.	47	4.02	.806	
4	Ç	I can learn how to speak English better through vlogging	47	3.88	.767	
7	Ç	Vlogging boosts my confidence to speak English	47	3.88	.810	
2	Ç	I can improve my fluency in speaking English through vlogging	47	3.84	.731	
9	Ç	Vlogging encourages me to be brave in speaking English outside with the community	47	3.83	.780	
20	Ç	Vlogging increases my computer skills in creating vlogs	47	3.83	.924	Strongly Agree/ Agree Stances
18	Ç	Vlogging allows me to have my own safe and comfort zone to speak English.	47	3.82	.819	
28	Ç	I like vlogging because it promotes self-assessment learning style.	47	3.82	.844	
19	Ç	Vlogging increases my creativity on how to make interesting vlogs in English.	47	3.81	.822	
25	Ç	I can watch my classmates' performances through vlogging	47	3.80	.873	
8	Ç	Vlogging encourages me to use English to communicate with my classmates.	47	3.80	.852	
1	Ç	I can improve my English pronunciation through vlogging	47	3.80	.749	

			Mean	SD	
Ç 23	I get positive impact on my English-speaking ability by vlogging	47	3.75	.835	
Ç 5	Vlogging increases my English vocabulary	47	3.75	.775	
Ç 27	I can focus learning English at my own pace through vlogging.	47	3.73	.788	
Ç 29	I like vlogging because it made the learning process much easier	47	3.71	.893	
Ç 24	Vlogging allowed me to share my works with my classmates	47	3.66	.872	
Ç 22	I feel more comfortable learning English by creating vlogs.	47	3.66	.840	
Ç 3	I can learn English grammar better while doing vlogs.	47	3.63	.786	
Ç 26	I can express in English better through vlogging	47	3.62	.847	
Ç 21	I can speak English freely without being watched through vlogging.	47	3.44	.884	**Strongly Disagree/ Disagree Stances**
Ç 15	Vlogging is not as interactive as physical English classroom activity.	47	3.28	.985	
Ç 10	I find creating vlogs in English is intimidating	47	3.28	.912	
Ç 11	Vlogging is hard because I am too shy to speak English in front of the camera	47	3.07	1.108	
Ç 14	Vlogging is tough as I do not have the proper tools to create it.	47	3.03	1.043	
Ç 17	Vlogging does not allow me to have discussion orally with my classmates	47	2.97	1.125	
Ç 12	Vlogging is difficult because I do not know how to create it.	47	2.92	1.044	
Ç 16	Vlogging does not encourage me to use English effectively.	47	2.82	1.054	
Ç 13	Vlogging is hard because I am not familiar with technology	47	2.78	1.140	

Table 4 above illustrates the item rankings according to the students' perspectives. The items were ranked in a descending manner of their mean values. It was found that 21 out of 30 items showed a mean value of more than 3.5 while the remaining 9 items scored a mean value of lesser than 3.5. In general, it appeared that most of the negative statements pertaining to the usage of vlogging scored a mean value of lesser than 3.5 which could be an indicator that the respondents viewed the method as a positive input towards their speaking performance.

However, a thorough discussion on each item was needed to explore both the strength and weakness of utilising the vlogging method to enhance their speaking skill.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Vlogging in Enhancing Speaking Skill

Motivation, Confidence and Participation

The item which ranked first in the ranking of items (Item Q6 – Vlogging motivates me to speak English more) reported that this method of learning motivated the students to speak English more (Q6, M=4.02). Motivation is important in language learning especially in learning a language which is not of the learners' mother tongue (Alizadeh, 2016).

Besides, the findings also showed that the students were able to learn to speak English and participate in the lesson better with the integration of vlog into their learning (Q4, M=3.88). Studies by Sari (2017) and Rahmawati, Harmanto and Indrastuti (2018) supported this finding as they claimed that the use of vlog increases students' motivation and encourage participation with the lesson much better. This could be attributed to the sense of familiarity towards the method used as they were able to relate to it as they experienced it in their daily lives either through watching the vlog or through creating it outside the classroom. According to Dvorak and Burchanan (2002), students found the approach of using technology in lessons as thrilling as it is a "new tool" that they can explore and experiment with for their own learning.

Students also reported that vlogging boosted their confidence to speak English (Q7, M=3.88) and motivated them to use the English language to communicate with their classmates (Q8, M = 3.80) which is a good practice in improving their speaking skill among their peers. It was also reported that the method encouraged them to be brave in speaking English within the community (Q9, M=3.88). This showed that the method could help them not to only improve their participation with the lesson inside the classroom but to also encourage them to be confident in using the language outside the classroom. The emphasize on 'lifelong education' is important to enhance the learning of English language and it

should not be limited to the classroom context only, but but to be utilised in the real-life setting (Hyland, 2004).

Respondents also believed that the utilization of the method was making the learning process much easier (Q29, M= 3.73) and made them feel more comfortable with the learning process (Q22, M = 3.66) which encouraged them to express themselves in the English language better (Q26, M= 3.62). It is important to ensure that students' preferences especially in providing comfort during the learning process is catered. According to Bada and Okan (2000), to achieve a successful language teaching and learning, teachers must make sure that their learners' needs, capabilities, potentials, and preferences are addressed and catered accordingly.

Language Proficiency

The findings also reported on the students' gain in their language proficiency through the utilisation of vlogging. Most of the respondents agreed that they were able to improve their fluency in speaking English when they used vlog (Q2, M= 3.85). They also stated that their English pronunciation had improved through vlogging (Q1, M= 3.80). Creating vlogs gave them space to do retakes as many as they can unlike live presentation in classroom. This gave them the opportunity to monitor and self-reflect on their own speaking skill by reviewing the vlog that they created. Students were able to practice their pronunciation and consequently improve their fluency before presenting their final performance in using the language to their instructor. Besides, it was also reported that this method helped them to increase their English vocabulary (Q5, M= 3.75). Watkins (2012) claimed that students can build up their proficiency, fluency, and vocabulary if students' talk time is provided through the integration of activities in the lesson. However, in the present study, the students appeared to be partially agreed when it comes to learning grammar through this method (Q3, M= 3.63). Since this method focuses more on speaking skills hence it is foreseeable that it appeared as an unfitting platform to learn grammar to the students.

Computer Literacy and Soft Skills

As mentioned previously, creating vlogs requires the user to use a certain set of skills in completing the whole process of vlogging. One of the important skills

is the computer skills. Based on the survey, it was reported that the respondents were in agreement that the process of creating vlogs helped them to increase their computer skills (Q20, M = 3.83). Besides, the respondents also agreed that through this method, it pressured them to be creative in creating the vlogs to ensure that their vlogs are interesting (Q19, M = 3.81). One of the trigger factors that pressured them to be creative could be to ensure that they secured high marks for the subject. The finding is consistent with Hung's study (2011) which reported that creating vlog requires a lot of editing skills that help students to improve their computer literacy.

New Learning Environment

On a personal level when it comes to learning environment, vlogging seems to be a safe and comfortable method for the students to use to practice speaking and the respondents of the present study seemed to agree with it (Q18, M = 3.82 and Q22, M= 3.66). Having controls to the situation will help the students to be confident as they will be able to manoeuvre the situation on their own without being judged by others. Students also agreed that they were able to focus on learning the English language as they can do it at their own pace through this method (Q27, M =3.73). Besides, the method also promotes self-assessment learning style (Q28, M = 3.82) which thus far is not yet a common practice in a classroom. Opportunity to pinpoint what is wrong and what needs to be improved on their own is important for the students to grow and continue improving their proficiency level. Promoting independent learning to the students through trial and errors will help them improve their speaking performance (Sun, 2009; Maulidah, 2018; Wulandari, 2019).

With regards to sharing space during the learning process, students stated that this method allows them to share their work with their classmates (Q24, M =3.66) and they were also able to watch their classmates' performances (Q25, M = 3.80). This indirectly promotes peer learning as the students can learn with and from each other. Peer learning is important as it encourages a meaningful learning where it focuses on interdependent learning between the students in sharing of ideas, knowledge and experiences (Boud, 2011).

Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that students appeared to disagree that they were able to speak freely without being watched even through the use of vlog (Q21, M=3.44). Internal factor like low self-efficacy could be one of the reasons why this method limits the students' freedom to speak. This is probably due to their high expectation of their own abilities when it comes to producing vlogs which led them to feel unsatisfied with the outcomes. This could be attributed to the pressure of getting good marks even though they were not being watched or judged.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Summing up this research on finding out the attitudes and perceptions of university students on using vlog to enhance their English-speaking skill, the researchers found out that overall students agreed that using vlog has helped them made improvements in their English-speaking skill (Q30, M = 4.02). This was reflected through a series of skills needed to produce a video presentation. On top of that, vlogging has provided a 'safe-space' for the students to carry out their presentations for the English language class especially for the students who were more introverted. Conducting a presentation face to face in the classroom could be overwhelming for some students and most of the time, the students ended up reading their slides or notes throughout their presentations, which defeated the purpose. With vlogging, students only have to speak in front of the camera while having their personal space as much as they needed with the fear of being judged.

The present study revealed that enhancing students speaking skill through vlog brings the joy of learning while exploring the soft skills such as editing, using appropriate tools and space to develop a wonderful presentation. This allows the students to boost up their confidence in delivering their presentations in English language within their own field of study. Discovering the advanced technology nowadays and the excessive used of social media platforms, it can be a good alternative to encourage students to use vlog as a way to get them to practice speaking in English language at their own expenses besides having fun doing it.

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