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VLOGSCAPE SHOWDOWN CHALLENGE: LEVERAGING TIKTOK AND PADLET TO ALLEVIATE SPEAKING ANXIETY AMONG POLITEKNIK MERSING ENGINEERING STUDENTS

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Abstract:

The Vlogscape Showdown Challenge is an innovative web-based platform that engages students in video blogging, enhancing their creativity and storytelling skills. Utilizing Padlets for peer reviews and anonymous reflections, this innovation examines its impact on students' ability to express ideas through video, while also addressing speaking anxiety. By fostering a supportive environment, the platform boosts self-expression and confidence in public speaking. Findings indicate that participation improves video blogging skills and significantly reduces speaking anxiety, promoting inclusive learning and personal development. Future research can further explore long-term studies to assess the sustained impact of the Vlogscape Showdown Challenge on speaking skills over an extended period.

Keywords:

Vlogscape Showdown Challenge, Speaking Skills, ESL Learners

Introduction

In the digital age, social media platforms have become integral to daily life and have increasingly been harnessed as educational tools, particularly in language learning. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube offer unique opportunities to address educational challenges, such as speaking anxiety, which is prevalent among tertiary-level students (Rahmawati et al., 2023). Speaking anxiety, often fueled by fear of judgment and mistakes, can significantly hinder language acquisition and oral fluency, particularly in non-native English speakers (Krashen, 2020).

Social media platforms provide a versatile and engaging environment for students to practice language skills autonomously, offering features that allow for creative expression and peer interaction. These platforms encourage a low-pressure approach to language practice, enabling students to record, edit, and share their speaking exercises at their own pace. The collaborative and interactive nature of social media fosters a community of practice where students can receive constructive feedback in a supportive setting, thus reducing their affective filters (Nguyen & Tran, 2022).

TikTok is chosen as the main platform in this innovation due to its popularity among Gen Z, who are also known as digital natives due to their preference for engaging, short-form social media content. Gen Z, typically defined as individuals born after 1995 and before 2012, has been described as having shorter attention spans, around 8 seconds, which is one second less than a goldfish, according to Average Human Attention Span Statistics (2024). This has led to the necessity for new teaching strategies to engage them effectively in educational settings.

Furthermore, polytechnic students—particularly those in technical fields—are often underrepresented in research focusing on language learning. Unlike students in conventional academic classrooms, technical students are more focused on practical, task-based learning, which typically offers fewer opportunities for verbal communication practice. This lack of engagement in discussions can lead to increased speaking anxiety, especially when students are required to communicate in English. Therefore, by incorporating social media tools like TikTok, which align with their preference for hands-on learning, this study aims to bridge the gap in verbal interaction, enabling polytechnic students to develop and refine their speaking skills in a more familiar and comfortable environment.

The integration of social media tools, such as TikTok, with task-based learning provides a relevant and engaging platform for polytechnic students to practice speaking in a low-pressure environment. This method is designed to engage students in ways that align with their natural learning preferences, making it a more effective approach for improving their English language proficiency. By choosing polytechnic students for this research, the study not only addresses a gap in their speaking practice but also explores how digital tools can enhance their learning experience in ways that are often overlooked in traditional research focused on more academically inclined students.

The objectives of 'Vlogscape Showdown Challenge' project are to:

1. assess the impact of a Vlogscape Showdown Challenge on reducing speaking anxiety among Diploma in Engineering students at Politeknik in Mersing, Johor.
2. examine the effectiveness of peer feedback via Padlet in fostering a supportive environment for improving oral fluency and building confidence.

Literature Review

The integration of social media into educational paradigms, particularly language learning, has gained significant attention in recent years. Social media platforms offer diverse functionalities that can be leveraged to enhance the learning experience, providing learners with opportunities to practice language skills in innovative, engaging, and low-pressure environments (Zheng & Heydarnejad, 2023). These platforms, including TikTok, Instagram, and Telegram, are reshaping how language is taught and learned by facilitating a more interactive and student-centered approach.

Social Media and Language Learning

In recent years, the integration of social media into educational frameworks, particularly in the domain of language learning, has garnered significant attention. Social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Telegram are transforming how language learning occurs by offering learners opportunities to engage with content in innovative, interactive, and student-centered environments (Zheng & Heydarnejad, 2023). These platforms not only facilitate peer interaction and content creation but also encourage self-directed learning, empowering students to practice language skills at their own pace. This aligns with Vygotsky's Social Development Theory (1978), which emphasizes the role of social interaction in cognitive development. By creating a learning environment that fosters both collaboration and independent practice, social media has become a tool that enhances language acquisition outside traditional classroom settings.

Research has indicated that platforms like TikTok and Instagram provide an effective means of enhancing language learning through dynamic and interactive media. The ability to create, share, and receive feedback on user-generated content encourages engagement and supports fluency development. Manca (2020) suggests that the affordances of social media, such as video sharing, live interactions, and multimedia, make language practice more engaging and less intimidating compared to traditional classroom settings, which are often associated with high levels of speaking anxiety (Rahmawati et al., 2023). According to the Affective Filter Hypothesis proposed by Krashen (1982), anxiety can impede language acquisition by creating a barrier to processing new language input. Therefore, the informal, supportive, and low-pressure environment provided by social media platforms serves to lower this affective filter, thereby promoting more effective language learning.

Addressing Language Anxiety

One of the central advantages of using social media in language learning is its potential to address language anxiety, a common issue among students, particularly in speaking activities. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982) posits that anxiety, stress, and low motivation can act as "filters" that block language acquisition by preventing learners from engaging with input. Social media platforms offer students an alternative to the traditional, high-stakes classroom environment. These platforms allow students to engage with the language in an

asynchronous manner, providing them with time to think, edit, and rehearse before sharing their content, thus reducing the anxiety often experienced during real-time speaking tasks (Krashen, 2020).

Research on platforms like Telegram highlights how these tools can reduce foreign language anxiety (FLA) by providing opportunities for peer support and asynchronous communication. Zhao et al. (2022) demonstrated that the use of Telegram for instructional purposes helped students engage in risk-taking behaviors, such as sharing language samples or participating in discussions, without the immediate pressure of face-to-face evaluation. This aligns with Zheng & Heydarnejad (2023) findings, which suggest that platforms like Telegram foster a supportive learning environment, where academic buoyancy and emotion regulation can be enhanced. These findings suggest that using social media platforms can mitigate anxiety and create more positive attitudes toward language learning, particularly for students who struggle with speaking anxiety.

Challenges

Despite the numerous benefits, the use of social media for language learning also presents several challenges. One of the most significant concerns is the potential for distraction. Social media platforms are primarily designed for social interaction and entertainment, which can divert learners' attention away from focused language practice. Bachmair & Pachler (2020) highlight this as a major drawback of using social media in educational contexts, as students may find themselves distracted by irrelevant content, reducing their overall learning efficiency.

Furthermore, the informal nature of communication on social media platforms, especially platforms like TikTok and Instagram, may encourage the adoption of colloquial or non-standard language forms. This can present challenges in contexts where more formal or academic language is required, potentially hindering the development of formal writing and speaking skills (Miller, 2021). This issue is particularly relevant in educational settings where students need to be able to communicate effectively in both formal and informal contexts.

Another significant challenge is privacy and data security concerns. Social media platforms often require users to share personal information, which may be inadvertently exposed to the broader public or other users. Livingstone (2021) discusses how students, particularly minors, may not fully understand the privacy risks associated with sharing content online. Additionally, not all students have equal access to the technology necessary to engage with these platforms, leading to disparities in learning opportunities (Rettie, 2020). This digital divide could create inequities in how effectively students can use social media for language learning.

Methodology

This innovation employs the ADDIE Instructional Model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation) to develop and assess the Vlogscape Showdown Challenge. This instructional activity, designed with the students at the center, was created to explore its impact on speaking anxiety among diploma-level engineering students at Politeknik Mersing in Johor. Data was gathered through student reflections, observations, and peer feedback to provide insights into the effectiveness of the activity in reducing speaking anxiety.

The participants of this study were 30 students from Diploma-level engineering students at Politeknik Mersing, Johor. These students were selected because of their need to build

confidence in English-speaking skills, particularly in academic and social contexts where anxiety often hinders their performance. A purposive sampling approach was used to select participants actively engaged in the Vlogscape Showdown challenge.
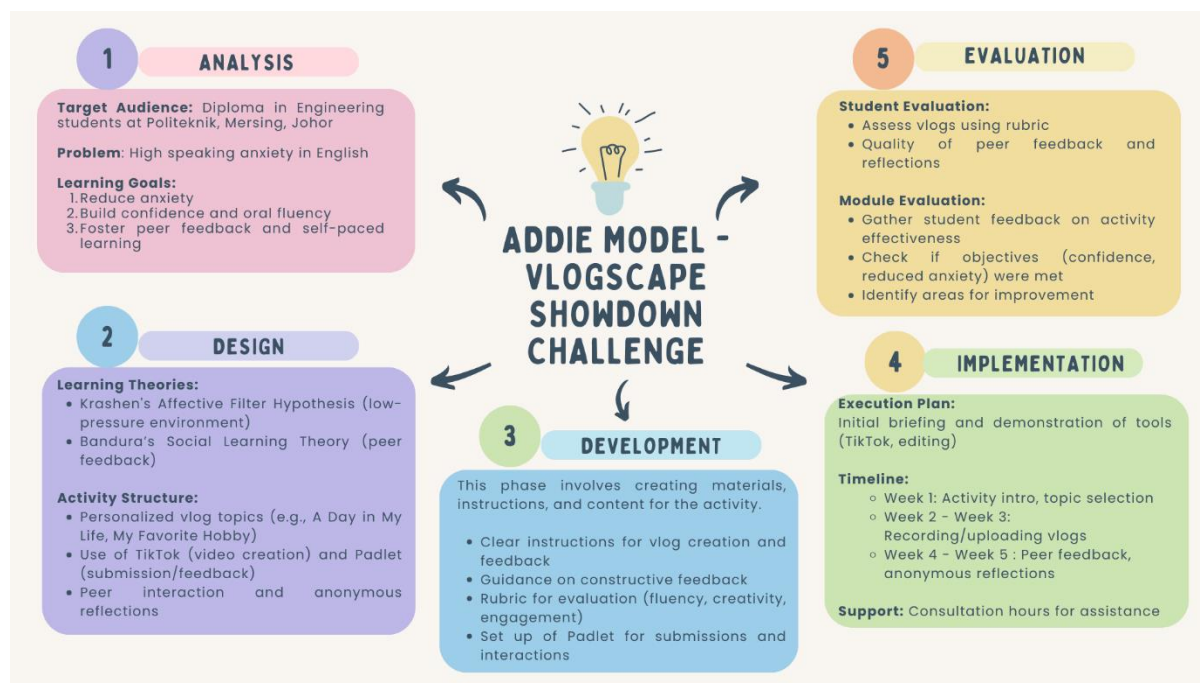

Figure 1: Utilising the ADDIE Model in Vlogscape Showdown Challenge

The diagram illustrates a detailed view of the ADDIE Model applied to the Vlogscape Showdown Challenge, an activity for speaking. This educational framework unfolds through five distinct and impactful phases which are analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation. The analysis phase identifies the primary issue and establishes learning goals to reduce anxiety, enhance oral fluency and promote peer feedback. The second phase incorporates the related learning theory and the structure of the activity. The third phase focuses on creating clear instructions, providing guidance for peer feedback, developing evaluation rubrics and setting up Padlet for interactive engagement. The fourth phase involves a timeline for the activity and the consultation support available throughout the weeks. Lastly, the evaluation phase measures students' performance through rubrics, assesses the quality of feedback and evaluates the model's effectiveness in achieving goals while identifying areas for improvement.

Analysis Phase
The ADDIE model analysis phase is to identify the primary issue and establish learning goals tailored to students' needs. This primary challenge addressed is the high level of speaking anxiety among students, which limits the students' oral communication. The target audience is Diploma in Engineering students, and this activity is meant to reduce anxiety, enhance confidence and foster a supportive learning environment. The learning objectives for this activity are chosen to foster opportunities for peer feedback, promoting self-paced learning and encouraging active participation in speaking tasks among the students.

Design Phase

In the design phase, learning theories and activities are tailored to address the identified needs of the students. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982) underpins a conducive and stress-free learning environment, while reducing barriers to language acquisition. Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), on the other hand, emphasized the role of observation and peer feedback in skill development. Students are guided to create vlogs on topics of their choice to boost their intrinsic motivation. Additionally, by integrating TikTok for video production and Padlet for sharing and feedback enables the creation of interactive and technology-driven learning experiences that can bridge the gap between traditional learning and modern practices.

Development Phase

This phase involves preparing instructional materials and setting up necessary tools to facilitate the challenge effectively. Clear and detailed instructions are created for the vlog production process, including technical guidance on recording and editing the videos. To enhance the collaborative learning experience, guidelines for constructive feedback are also provided. An evaluation rubric is developed which focuses on fluency, creativity and language usage. Furthermore, Padlet serves as the central platform for sharing vlogs, to enable peer interaction and feedback during the process.

Implementation Phase

The challenge is executed according to a structured planning with clear milestones to monitor progress effectively. An initial briefing was conducted to ensure clear understanding of the activity, familiarizes students with the tools and addresses any related concerns. A 5-week timeline given for topic selection, video recording, uploading, feedback and reflection on the process. To support students throughout the process, consultation hours and online forums are set up to ensure continuous guidance, ensuring the students feel supported throughout the learning experience. A poster was distributed to the students as a helpful reference tool to guide them in completing the assigned task. It contains essential information and examples that they can use to better understand the requirements and expectations.

Figure 2: Instructions for Students' Reference

Evaluation Phase

The evaluation phase focuses on three aspects which are students' performance, reflective learning and overall effectiveness of the module. Vlogs produced by students are assessed using the rubric, while peer feedback quality is also reviewed. Students are able to reflect on their progress, identifying areas of growth and challenges that occur during the process. Additionally, feedback from participants is gathered to evaluate the impact of the module in achieving the objectives. This feedback plays an important role in improving the module and ensuring the relevance and effectiveness in future iterations.

Results and Discussion

Reduction in Speaking Anxiety
The findings from this study indicate a significant reduction in speaking anxiety among participants as a result of engaging in the *Vlogscape Showdown Challenge*. Speaking anxiety, often linked to the fear of making mistakes or being judged, is a common barrier for language learners, particularly in oral communication tasks. Participants reported that the asynchronous nature of video blogging provided a stress-free environment where they could practice speaking without the immediate pressure of real-time evaluation. This aligns with Krashen's

Affective Filter Hypothesis, which emphasizes the importance of minimizing stress to optimize language acquisition (Krashen, 2020). The reduction in anxiety was further supported by the collaborative and constructive feedback provided by peers through Padlet, which fostered a sense of community and emotional safety. Research has shown that digital platforms, particularly those allowing asynchronous interaction, provide an ideal space for language learners to experiment and grow without fear of failure (Zheng & Heydarnejad, 2023).

Moreover, peer feedback was instrumental in alleviating anxiety, as students reported feeling more supported and motivated. Nguyen and Tran (2022) observed similar outcomes, noting that positive and constructive peer interactions can bolster self-efficacy and reduce emotional barriers in language learning contexts. Collectively, these findings suggest that digital platforms like video blogs and peer-supported environments play a crucial role in mitigating anxiety and fostering confidence among learners.

Improvement in Oral Fluency
The study also highlighted noticeable improvements in oral fluency among participants. Consistent practice through repeated video recordings allowed learners to organize their thoughts more effectively and express themselves with greater coherence and fluidity. Participants attributed their improvement to the iterative process of recording and reviewing their videos, which aligns with Miller's (2021) findings that regular speaking practice in low-pressure environments significantly enhances fluency over time. Additionally, feedback from peers further refined participants' speaking skills by identifying specific areas for improvement, which echoes findings from Zheng and Heydarnejad (2023), who highlighted the role of constructive feedback in improving fluency.

Fluency improvements were not limited to linguistic aspects but extended to participants' confidence in speaking across various contexts. This reflects findings by Rahmawati et al. (2023), who demonstrated that sustained engagement in creative speaking tasks fosters long-term adaptability and confidence. The study's results also resonate with social constructivist theories, which emphasize the importance of collaboration and community in learning (Nguyen & Tran, 2022). By integrating self-paced practice with peer feedback, the *Vlogscape Showdown Challenge* provided a robust framework for participants to develop and refine their oral communication skills.

Overall Improvement in Speaking Proficiency
The findings revealed an impressive 70% overall improvement in speaking proficiency among participants, encompassing reductions in anxiety, enhanced fluency, and increased confidence. This holistic improvement was consistently highlighted in participants' feedback, with many

emphasizing how the structured yet flexible nature of the *Vlogscape Showdown Challenge* facilitated meaningful practice. Students reported feeling more confident when expressing their ideas and noted a significant boost in their ability to articulate thoughts with clarity and coherence. These self-reported improvements correlate with quantitative assessments of fluency and accuracy, demonstrating that the intervention was effective in addressing multiple dimensions of speaking proficiency.

Participants also credited the supportive learning environment, citing how the combination of asynchronous video blogging and peer interaction fostered a sense of ownership over their learning process. One participant mentioned, *"I felt more comfortable practicing speaking because I could take my time and learn from my mistakes without feeling judged,"* reflecting the importance of psychological safety in language acquisition. This is consistent with Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, which suggests that low-anxiety environments enhance language acquisition (Krashen, 2020; Zheng & Heydarnejad, 2023). Another participant highlighted the motivational impact of receiving constructive feedback, stating, *"My classmates' feedback helped me see what I needed to work on, and it made me want to do better each time."* This aligns with research emphasizing the role of collaborative and reflective learning in language development (Nguyen & Tran, 2022).

Overall, the findings underscore the transformative potential of integrating technology-driven tasks with peer feedback to create an engaging, low-anxiety environment for language learners. The 70% improvement rate is a testament to the effectiveness of this approach in addressing key challenges in developing speaking skills (Zhao et al., 2022; Rahmawati et al., 2023).

Ethical Considerations
Participants will provide informed consent, and their anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study. Students will have the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

This methodology aims to assess how structured social media activities can facilitate language learning and reduce speaking anxiety, providing a platform for skill development and peer interaction.

Conclusion
The novelty of this innovation lies in the integration of Padlet feedback and reflection platform within the challenge. The use of Padlet not only facilitated the submission of student vlogs but also served as a dynamic space for peer interaction, feedback, and community building. This dynamic platform encourages students to share their experiences, insights, and challenges encountered while creating their vlogs. Peers can leave thoughtful comments and feedback, facilitating a two-way communication channel that nurtures learning and growth.

The integration of social media tools such as TikTok, Instagram, and Telegram into language learning offers promising avenues to alleviate speaking anxiety and enhance oral proficiency. By fostering a supportive and interactive environment, these platforms help buffer the affective barriers to language learning, facilitating improved academic outcomes and learner confidence. However, addressing the potential limitations is crucial to maximizing the benefits of social media in educational settings.

Acknowledgement

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