

“VLOG”: An Innovation in Collaborative ESL Learning

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Technology has always been an important part of the teaching and learning environment. Today's era of digital technology has provided teachers and educators with more chances to be innovative with their teaching sessions in the classroom. However, regardless of the waves of technology flooded into the education, teachers still have trouble getting learners interested in learning English language. Learners tend to be unmotivated and not fond of learning English language in the classroom. Thus, it is believed that there is a need for an innovation on the type of materials used in the classroom. One such material is the video blog or 'vlog' and is developed to provide learners with more meaningful and authentic materials and help learners to be more interested in learning English language in the classroom. It is hoped this innovation will be able to assist both learners and educators in their future.

Key words: *ESL Learning, technology, video blog.*

Introduction

Learning and teaching English language in a classroom can be a challenging situation and the process is to be considered as one of the toughest tasks for both teachers and students (Iyer, 2019). Learning English language takes practice and effort. The English language subject is one of the most important subjects and elements in Malaysian Education Curriculum and school syllabus (Thirusanku & Yunus, 2014). Learners are exposed to English language at an early stage of their education and English language is widely used in Malaysia. English language is to be considered as a second language and the language is mainly used not only in primary and secondary levels of education, but also in tertiary levels of education. Many educators and teachers have stepped up their game in making sure their lessons in the

classroom are as interesting as possible in order for learners to be able to acquire the language. Many alternatives and approaches have been taken into consideration, including the use of technology and collaborative learning in the classroom. Current global development has also provided more chances and opportunities to help learners be more independent in their language learning (Rodrigues & Vethamani, 2015). However, regardless of all these efforts being taken into consideration, most ESL learners tend to not be able to acquire good English language acquisition due to a few reasons. One of the reasons that lead to this issue is the lack of interest in learning English language among the learners. Many learners have the tendency to lose interest in learning English language because they find that English language is hard and they are not able to understand the lessons in the classroom. In conjunction with this, it is believed that an innovation is needed to improve learners' interest in learning in the classroom. Since the use of technology is pretty close to learners' hearts in today's era, an innovation of learning and teaching materials consists of Video Blog, or as also known as 'vlog' are developed to help learners be more collaborative in their ESL learning.

The Use of Video Blog (Vlog) Technology to Promote Students' Interest in ESL Learning

Technology plays an important role in today's world of globalisation and many changes in language learning have been brought by computer technology (Zhou & Wei, 2018, Yaacob & Yunus, 2019). There has been a lot of previous research that has studied the impact of technology in language learning, especially in ESL learning (Yunus et al., 2012). In a study done by Gunuc and Babacan (2017), it was stated that the integration of technology in the process of ESL teaching and learning helps in the development of learners' basic English language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Yunus (2018) study of Innovation in Education and Language Learning in the 21st century believed that authentic online materials, technology and digital platforms are some of the major innovations in today's era of globalisation. She also believed that these major innovations are able to help learners develop good critical thinking skills that could help them to acquire language beyond the classroom. Hashim (2018) believe that there is a need to promote technology in the classroom and take advantage of social media among today's digital learners. Pazilah and Hashim (2018) also figured that the use of technology in the classroom will help increase a learners' motivation for learning.

There are many mediums and platforms of technology that can be used as part of education. One of them is a video blog also commonly known as a 'vlog'. A vlog is a kind of blog that combines both audio and visual. Watkins and Wilkins (2011) stated that a vlog is a personal diary in a form of video and audio that is shared on social media. In a study done by Noviya and Aisyah (2017), they figured out some educational benefits of a vlog. They mentioned that

video blogging helps to develop learners' communication skills through storytelling and helps learners be exposed to real life situations. Noviya and Aisyah (2017) also stated that they have figured that the use of video blog managed to help Indonesian learners be more autonomous in their learning, especially in the way of giving them exposure outside the classroom to improve their speaking skills. Tafsiruddin (2019) later in his study agreed on the benefits of using vlog in ESL learning. He believed that the use of vlog is able to attract learners' interest in learning English language in the classroom by maximising the advantage of using technology in today's era. Hashim et al (2019) studied the use of 'FlipGrid' in combating learner's speaking. They figured out that the use of such digital platforms helped learners to be more interested in learning English language and eventually made learners more motivated in the use the language. Their findings are parallel to a study done by Pazilah and Hashim (2018) on how the use of visual tools is able to provide learners with a more authentic learning environment.

Social Constructivism Theory by Vygotsky

The underpinning theory of this study is Social Constructivism Theory by Vygotsky (1978) which explains how the ESL learning and teaching process happens through learners' social interaction with their environment (Kaufman, 2004). Kaufman (2004) also believed that children's or learners' learning is supported by their peers, teachers, parents and also people around them. Constructivists believed that ESL learning involves real and meaningful interactions with surrounding people in order to acquire language. Mvududu (2012) in his paper on the practice of constructivism in language learning stated that constructivism suggests that learners should be given the materials that they can relate to and that are personally relevant to them in order for them to be able to have a deeper understanding of the language. This study highlighted the importance of using a video blog as part of the materials in the classroom which makes them stand side-by-side with the theory of constructivism by Vygotsky (1978). It is no doubt that meaningful and authentic materials will help to attract learners' interest in learning the language.

Methodology

ADDIE Model as Research Guidance

The researchers used and adapted the ADDIE model to build and design the innovation. The ADDIE model is the conventional procedure customarily utilized by instructional designers and developers. The five stages; Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation refers to a dynamic, adaptable rule for preparing effective training and performance support tools.

In the ADDIE model, each step has a result that feeds into the consequent step. As this is a preliminary study, researchers focused on the first three steps to develop the collaborative learning material. The first stage is called the Analysis stage, it is also a stage for defining the learning theories used in this research. Apart from that, instructional issue is also determined, the instructional objectives and goals are built up and the learning condition and student's current knowledge and abilities are recognised. The factors and components for viable collaborative learning have also been determined in this stage via needs analysis.

Needs Analysis (NA)

Needs Analysis (NA) which is used to recognise students' needs, is a necessary step in building up suitable content. It is the method used to assess the how and what of a course. NA has been viewed as the most suitable technique as it can inform researchers about the nature and content of the students' objective language needs (Cai,2017). A well-led NA can enable the course's intent to guarantee that students will acquire absolutely what they need.

As cited by Nurmalingda et al (2019), Hutchinson and Waters (1987) portray needs analysis as the characteristic highlight of English for Specific Purposes course structure. It is also agreed that NA is the beginning stage for a syllabus or course structure. It is a part of curriculum planning and is required before building a course. Therefore, the data assembled from a NA can be utilised to characterise the program objectives or in some cases to choose the most important material for the language programs.

The First Stage: Analysis

The researchers set up a meeting with 30 students from a rural public secondary school in Semenyih. The students are between 13 and 15 years old. The researchers interviewed the students about their perceptions and personal experiences in learning English, their goals and challenges and also their needs on mastering the language (see Figure 1). Based on the Needs Analysis conducted, we found out that the students had issues in understanding English language as their proficiency was quite low. They also had less interest in learning the subject as they felt that English was very hard to learn and they were not having fun in their learning. Most of the students also revealed that they had difficulties passing the subject in school examinations.

The Second Stage: Design

The researchers came up with 3 vlogs that are targeted to be used as collaborative learning materials for teaching English. The vlogs can also be used at home as self-learning materials for students. The researchers recognised the importance of the students in conquering basic

skills in learning English, so we designed each vlog according to i) Listening and speaking skills ii) Grammar and iii) Reading skills. The main ideas are to create interesting and fun vlogs that can attract the students' attention and are also designed based on real-life situations. This is to ensure the students can make use of the vlogs to help them in real-life communications.

The Third Stage: Development

The researchers create and assemble the content and resources that were made in the previous stages. The researchers shoot the vlogs at several locations for several days and they also participated as the actors in the vlogs. The vlogs were recorded using a camera and later were edited using video editing software.

Findings and Discussion

The findings, which are the products of this study are then later categorised into different skills of English as a Secondary Language (ESL) learning, namely: listening and speaking vlog, grammar vlog and reading vlog.

Listening and Speaking Vlog

This vlog is a teaching and learning aid to help both teachers and students improve students' listening and speaking skills. The vlog can be used in the classroom as the course materials and students can gain advantages in terms of flexibility of vlogs and visibility of vlogs that can maintain the level of students' interest in learning. Vlogs enable students to learn English from other places that are comfortable for them. Students may feel less pressure when they are able to replay and revisit the materials as many times as they want. Students may concentrate better at various times of the day or in a different condition than in a school setting (Rahmawati et al., 2018).

The situation given in the created vlog is a situation of checking in at the hotel. A person acts as the hotel receptionist and another person acts as a hotel customer who wanted to check into the hotel. So, the sentence patterns are provided for the students to follow and they can also use the sentence patterns as guidance for classroom activities and also for future reference. With the sentence patterns, low proficiency students will be able to listen to the correct pronunciation of the words and learning the correct intonation in speech. Role-play exercises were also given in the vlog so students can use the vlog as reference for the activity.

Moreover, vlogs are seen as a potential instructional medium by numerous educationalists for their appropriateness to be a teaching instrument for the generation who grew up during the rise of the World Wide Web and other technological innovations (Santosa & Absari, 2018). Vlog assignments give chances to the students to learn responsive and expressive skills of a language easily and increase the use of the English language utilised during the teaching and learning process. The utilisation of vlog to Generation Z is the correct decision that can be chosen by the teacher in order to improve the students' listening and speaking abilities. Furthermore, this is also supported by Rahmawati et al (2018) where their findings showed that the after-effect of vlogs used demonstrated an improvement of the students' activeness and interest. The students are becoming progressively more dynamic and confident in using English for speaking and listening activities.

Grammar Vlog

This particular vlog will be explaining about simple present tense. Students will learn the basic rules of Simple Present Tense with given notes and explanations. There are also some exercises that are included in the video. Students can make use of the questions given to further polish their understanding on simple present tense. The setting of the vlog is at a bus stop where two people are engaging in a conversation. The theme of their conversation is on holiday and the participants are speaking in simple present tense. From the vlog, students can understand the correct use of grammar in real life situations and also able to identify how to use grammar in their daily conversations. Vlogs are one of numerous strategies that help in building students' responsibility in their daily lives. It is great in preparing information, communication, develop thinking, material review and also testing students' prior knowledge.

Furthermore, students can adapt best when teachers shift their instructional approaches regularly and utilise creative ways to give the students an engaging platform for learning. It is crucial for the language teachers to be flexible and versatile in terms of teaching ideas. For students who are visual students, vlogs can also be beneficial for them to relate and comprehend language. This is also supported by Rakhmanina & Kusumaningrum (2017) who stated that there was an association between teaching strategies and motivation. The teaching strategies utilised by the teachers in the class gave a major impact for the achievement of the teaching and learning process. Great teaching strategies in the classroom challenge students to show improvements and thus increase students' motivation. Students are more motivated to learn when they are interested in the approaches used.

Other than that, the positive benefits of using vlogs in the English classroom is also supported by Kartikasari (2018) where they stated that the utilisation of vlogs has numerous preferences contrasted with its inconveniences, concerning some difficulties could be solved by the students. Vlogs can advance students' knowledge on grammar, language structure,

articulation, and cultures. With vlogs, students can keep on practicing their grammar by watching the vlogs until they meet their satisfied requirements.

Reading Vlog

The reading vlog is aimed to help the students to learn reading skills with given subtitles as the guidelines to help students to read. The vlog showed a narrator telling a story about holiday activities which also included some comprehension questions for the students. The vlog was recorded using a green screen and edited to have a library-themed background to fit the story-telling vlog. Students are asked to read along with the narrator with the correct pronunciation and intonation. Moreover, the reading vlogs can help the students to have prominent review of the reading functions and more prominent acknowledgment and recall of the word meanings in context. The captivating visuals enable students to grasp the language input for reading skills.

Moreover, vlog is additionally useful for students as they can be urged to express their views on the topic openly. With vlogs, teachers can make fascinating content or relevant inquiries to trigger the students to speak about it in the given time. Teachers can use vlogs to encourage students to expand their reading skills and also learn many new vocabularies in a fun way. Vlogs advance students' imagination in learning as they are engaging and collaborating with other students in classroom activities.

Next, vlogs may update students to think at higher level which is seen from the procedure where students have to organise the information received from reading the vlogs and transferring them into the exercises given. Also, the positive part of integrating vlogs was enabling the teachers and students to have more discussion together. This was particularly valuable and empowering for students to rehearse their language use (Maldin & Rezeki, 2017).

Apart from that, according to Sime and Themelis (2018), vlogs can enable the students to gain trust with the substance of the video dependent on four components: Influence (the similarity with the speaker), Mimicry (duplicating of emotions), Activity (increased movement showing interest and excitement) and Voice (clear articulate discourse upgrades the validity of the speaker). Vlogs could also facilitate thinking and critical thinking. The vlog integration can also assist students with active learning in terms of upgrading learning experiences, raising attention span in reading, building up the potential for more profound learning, creating student autonomy, upgrading group collaboration and communication amongst peers.



Conclusion and Recommendations

Vlog is a part of an instructional strategy which can be advantageous for ESL learning. The role of vlogs is limitless for language acquisition. A vlog can be a fun and interesting teaching and learning material for the students to make use of whether in the forms of notes, exercises, explanations or visual images. Vlogs help to keep students' interest and increase their motivation and confidence levels. It is crucial for the students, especially the low proficiency students to have engaging and collaborative activities to ease their negative perception towards learning English. Vlogs can enable teachers to be creative and innovative in terms of creating contents and urging them to instil new teaching approaches to be on par with the new generation students. Therefore, in this paper, the authors have designed and created three vlogs that can be the tools for learning for reading skills, listening and speaking skills and grammar. These vlogs encourage teachers to facilitate their students to learn basic skills in English in order to gain improvement to a further level. For future reference, it is highly suggested to research on the possibilities of using vlogs for other English skills such as writing skills and literatures. Speaking skills have always been a popular focus for educationalists to research the use of vlogs, but other skills could also benefit from the same technology. Technology has done a lot to encourage students' interactions and vlogs can add to the current initiatives. There's no compelling reason to use costly equipment to venture into the vlogging world for education. A simple smartphone or tablet ought to work sufficiently. In fact, editing software can also be utilised for both teachers and students to learn basic video editing skills. All in all, vlogs can add some sparks to the language classroom. Both teachers and students can enjoy the assignment, enabling deeper associations among peers and significantly more profound connections with their language learning.

Figure 1: Interview Session



Figure 2: Screenshot of the listening and speaking vlog



Figure 3: The sentence patterns

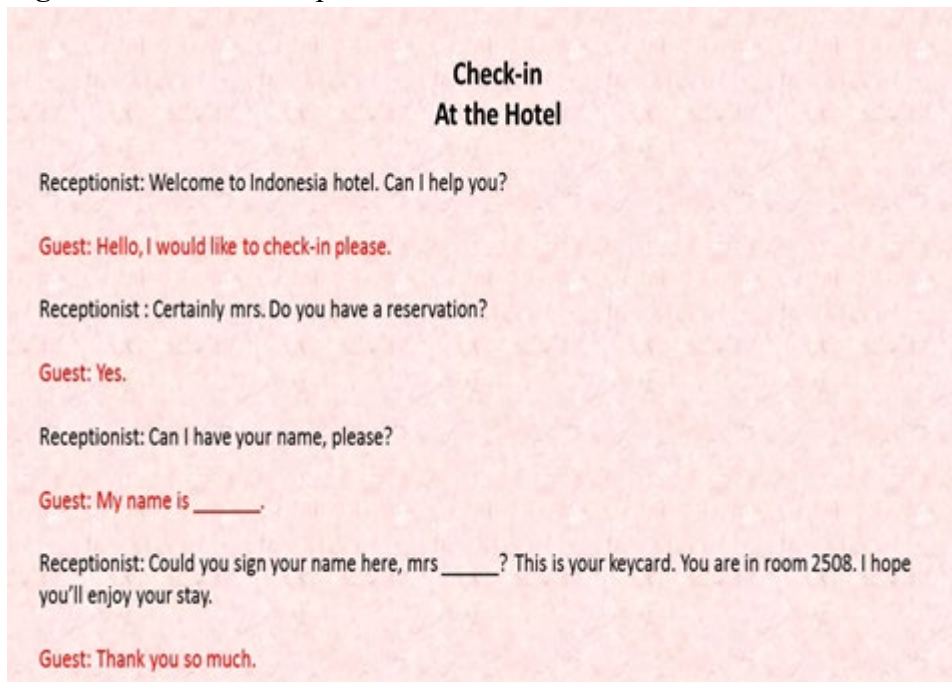


Figure 4: The role-play exercise



Figure 5: Screenshot of the grammar vlog



Figure 6: The grammar exercise

Exercise

A - Put in the correct verb forms.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1) Andy _____ the family car. a) wash b) washes c) washs | 6) His friend _____ to school. a) gos b) go c) goes |
| 2) Every morning my mother _____ at 6 o'clock. a) get up b) get ups c) gets up | 7) Do you _____ milk in your tea? a) like b) likes c) likes |
| 3) Mr. Black _____ e-mails in the evenings. a) write b) writes c) writs | 8) _____ I correct? a) Are b) Be c) Am d) Is |
| 4) The girls _____ the shopping. a) dos b) does c) do | 9) It _____ a beautiful day today. a) am b) are c) be d) is |
| 5) Mandy and Susan _____ films every weekend. a) watches b) watch | 10) John often _____ handball. a) play b) plays c) playes |

Figure 7: The grammar notes



Figure 8: Screenshot of reading vlog

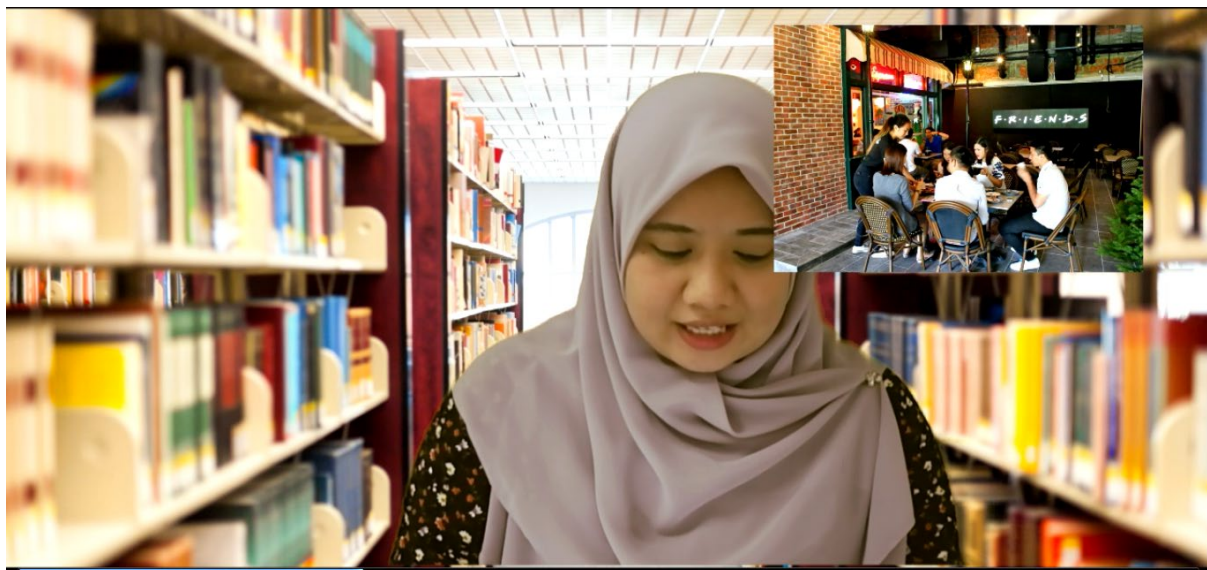


Figure 9: The comprehension exercises

Instruction : Please match these words with its pictures.











| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
|  |  |  |  |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Museum • Hang out with friends • Concert • Café |  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painting • Surf the internet • Beverages • Desserts • Window shopping |

Figure 10: Mix and match activity

Instruction : Please match these words with its meaning.

| Vocabulary | Meaning |
|-----------------------|---|
| Museum | A musical performance in public |
| Concert | A drink other than water. |
| Hang out with friends | Cook food typically in an oven. |
| Cafe | A building of which historical objects are stored. |
| Beverages | Spending time with friends |
| Desserts | Spend time visiting online websites. |
| Window shopping | The action or skill of using paint to create pictures. |
| Bake a cake | A small restaurant selling light meals and drinks. |
| Surf the internet | Activity of looking at products displayed in the shop windows without buying anything |



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