



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**EXPLORING THE USE OF VLOG-PORTFOLIO TO DEVELOP ORAL  
FLUENCY AND ACTIVE LISTENING THROUGH PEER- SCAFFOLDING**

**MUHAMMAD ASYRAF BIN SHUIB**

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By

**MUHAMMAD ASYRAF BIN SHUIB**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

**June 2020**

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## **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to my family and friends, who always humble me with lessons in life and remind me to not give up no matter how difficult it gets.



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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in  
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**June 2020**

**Chairman : Lilliati Ismail, PhD**  
**Faculty : Educational Studies**

With the upsurge of technological advancement, the internet and social media, many studies on instructional practices in ESL classrooms with the use of technology have been carried out to match the 21st century learning climate. Practitioners, curriculum designers and scholars continue to explore the potentials of using various media tools that can support teaching and learning.

Today, frequent engagement with social media and the internet has allowed learners to sharpen their English language communication skills. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development Theory which emphasizes the use of scaffolding for language learning, and Siemen's Theory of Connectivism which gives emphasis on network and learning underpin the current study. This study explored the potentials of using video blogging portfolio to improve speaking fluency among ESL learners at a higher learning institution in Malaysia.

The current study employed an exploratory single case study approach to mitigate the existing gap that is linked to the limited opportunity and exposure Malaysian ESL learners have to communicate using the L2. In the effort of encouraging communication using the L2 beyond the confinement of a classroom, the researchers employed the use of the social media platform, Instagram as an e-portfolio – redefined as the vlog-portfolio to systematically compile learners' communicative activities. A learner centered approach was applied where participants of the study engaged in a weekly video-blogging assignment about varying themes and topics for 10 weeks.

An instructional module was designed and incorporated into an existing curriculum as a project-based learning assessment. This video blog project was conducted in pairs. Episodic interviews were carried out to identify the scaffolding techniques employed by the learners in completing each task. Fluency and pause rates were also measured.

The findings revealed that learners showed developmental patterns in their speech fluency rates. A focused group interview showed that learners were able to practice English extensively with the vlog-portfolio project. Besides producing speech, they were also encouraged to partake in assessing their spoken language performance through peer-reviewing sessions using a qualitative case study document which encouraged self-assessment, peer-assessment and reflective practices among learners.

It can be concluded that the vlog-portfolio is beneficial as a learning tool as it adds novelty to instructional practices, encourages scaffolding, active listening, helps learners improve on fluency, and encourages learners to practice speaking using a social media platform.

Keywords : English as a Second Language, e-learning, instructional strategy, peer-scaffolding, teaching speaking, video blogging

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**MENEROKA PENGGUNAAN PORTFOLIO VLOG BAGI MENDORONG KEFASIHAN BERTUTUR DAN KEMAHIRAN MENDENGAR DENGAN AKTIF MELALUI SOKONGAN RAKAN SEBAYA**

Oleh

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Seiring dengan kemajuan teknologi, internet, dan media sosial, pelbagai kajian mengenai amalan pengajaran di dalam kelas ESL dengan penggunaan teknologi telah dijalankan untuk mengikuti iklim pembelajaran abad ke-21. Pengamal, penggubal kurikulum dan ahli akademik terus meneroka potensi menggunakan pelbagai alat media yang boleh menyokong pengajaran dan pembelajaran.

Hari ini, interaksi di media sosial yang meluas dan internet dipercayai dapat membantu pelajar untuk mengasah kemahiran komunikasi Bahasa Inggeris mereka. Zon teori pembangunan proximal (ZPD) oleh Vygotsky yang menekankan penggunaan sokongan untuk pembelajaran bahasa, dan Teori Siemens, Connectivism yang memberikan penekanan kepada rangkaian dan pembelajaran menyangga kajian semasa. Kajian ini meneroka potensi menggunakan portfolio videoblogging untuk meningkatkan kefasihan dalam bertutur di kalangan pelajar ESL di sebuah institusi pengajian tinggi di Malaysia.

Penyelidikan ini menggunakan pendekatan kajian kes penerokaan untuk mengurangkan jurang sedia ada yang dikaitkan dengan peluang yang terhad serta pendedahan pelajar ESL Malaysia terhadap penggunaan Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa kedua (L2) untuk berkomunikasi. Dalam usaha menggalakkan komunikasi menggunakan (L2) di luar batasan keupayaan kelas, penyelidik menggunakan platform media sosial, Instagram sebagai e-portfolio – yang juga didefinisikan sebagai vlog-portfolio sebagai alat pengdokumentasian yang sistematik berupaya menyusun aktiviti komunikatif pelajar. Pendekatan berpusatkan pelajar telah digunakan di mana peserta kajian yang terlibat dalam tugas video-blog mingguan mengenai pelbagai tema dan topik selama 10 minggu sepanjang tempoh kajian dijalankan.

Modul pengajaran telah direka dan diaplikasikan ke dalam kurikulum yang sedia ada sebagai penilaian pembelajaran berasaskan projek. Projek videoblog ini telah dijalankan secara berpasangan. Wawancara berkala telah dijalankan untuk mengenal pasti teknik sokongan yang digunakan oleh pelajar dalam menyelesaikan setiap tugas. Kefasihan dan kadar jeda juga diukur untuk melihat peningkatan prestasi pelajar dalam kefasihan berkomunikasi.

Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa pelajar menunjukkan peningkatan dari aspek kefasihan pertuturan mereka melalui dapatan kajian. Sekumpulan temubual fokus menunjukkan bahawa pelajar dapat mengamalkan Bahasa Inggeris secara meluas dengan projek vlog-portfolio. Selain mepertingkatkan kemahiran bertutur, mereka juga digalakkan untuk mengambil bahagian dalam menilai prestasi bahasa pertuturan mereka melalui sesi menilai menggunakan dokumen kajian kes kualitatif yang menggalakkan penilaian sendiri, penilaian rakan sebaya dan amalan reflektif di kalangan pelajar.

Dapatan kajian dapat merumuskan bahawa vlog-portfolio bermanfaat sebagai alat pembelajaran kerana ia menambah sesuatu yang baru kepada amalan pengajaran, menggalakkan amalan sokongan, mendengar secara aktif, membantu pelajar meningkatkan kefasihan, dan menggalakkan pelajar untuk berinteraksi menggunakan platform media sosial.

Kata Kunci : Amalan Sokongan Rakan Sebaya, Bahasa Inggeris Sebagai Bahasa Kedua, Blog Pembelajaran Video, Pembelajaran Elektronik, Pengajaran Kemahiran Lisan, Strategi Pengajaran



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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ELT	English Language Teaching
ICT	Information Communication Technology
VLOG	Video-blog
VLOGGING	Video-blogging
VLOGGER	Video-blogger
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
L1	First language
L2	Second language
FL	Foreign language
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development
SCT	Sociocultural Theory
E-PORTFOLIO	Electronic-portfolio
VLOG-PORTFOLIO	Vlog-portfolio
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
MUET	Malaysian University English Test
SPM	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
PS	Pilot Study / Preliminary Study
EDTECH	Educational Technology

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

The 21<sup>st</sup> century learning compels English language as the means of global interaction as it is the international language; a major language used to communicate (Ers, Stitutio, and Lee, 2008). The use of English for communication has become a need for countries worldwide to advance both socially and economically. This interaction trend thus demands every world citizen who intends to take part in global communication to master the language besides being able to operate technological devices. For this reason, the first in anticipating globalisation is to acknowledge the role of technology that is significant of this age (Lowell and Thakkar, 2013).

However, the era of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning is far from realising its milestones. One of the prevalent issues is the expectations placed on students of the present where their acquisition of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills has been mooted by scholars and practitioners alike. Banking the fact that they are the ‘digital natives’, and with the digital environment that the current generation is growing in, there are still those who demonstrate difficulties to engage in discussions effectively and lack interactions with their peers. This is prominently observed in Generation Y & Z who are born in the digital age. Albeit these generations are accustomed to the use of technology as digital natives, they still face challenges in communicating effectively. With the invention of advanced digital tools, it is still unknown why learners’ communicative competence is still lacking especially in the English Language – the language of Science and Technology. The background of the study shed light on the current scenes of the English language proficiency in Malaysia.

### 1.1 Background of The Study

#### 1.1.1 Malaysia’s Place in the World English Proficiency Index (EPI)

Malaysia is one of the countries that recognises English as its official second language (L2). Owing to its place of importance in the new knowledge economy, English as a second language continues to be a compulsory subject taught across levels in every Malaysian schools and higher educational institutions. It is eminent that having the proficiency in English is considered an asset in the context of the global economy in a country (Su-Hie, Ernisa, Kee-Man, Jecky, and Collin, 2017). It is further supported that the English language plays an important role in the country as Malaysia’s English Proficiency Index score was at the 26<sup>th</sup> place among 100 countries and across regions in 2019. In Asia its EPI score placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in Asia which indicates a high level of proficiency scores across the globe (English Proficiency Index Report, 2019). Malaysia’s EPI trend has deteriorated since 2016 from being placed 12<sup>th</sup> in the EPI ranking to 26<sup>th</sup> place in 2019.

The statistic draws much concerns from academicians and practitioners alike. The World Bank (2017), revealed that Malaysians on average penetrated the internet by 80%, and its education spending is 20.7% in per annum. In spite of these investment, learners' proficiency level has significantly dropped in its language proficiency scores. As internet becomes the major hub for communication and information exchange, it is perplexing to see the depleting EPI ranking notwithstanding the participation average of digital natives from the country. English is the main medium of communication when World Wide Web domains are concerned, yet there are still a majority of Malaysians who are not able to communicate effectively using the language.

The EPI report (2019) reinstated that technology is a double-edged sword that both catalyze and solve the problem. By merely providing gadgets to children is demonstrably ineffective, only through digitalization — which includes teacher training on using the new media tools — has enormous promise in the English-language classroom. Ed-tech can connect students to authentic source materials and practice modules, allowing teachers to personalize instruction. For instance, *Chatbots* applications now exist to allow students to practice conversation without waiting their turn in a large class. Teachers also can attain subject specific support, coaching, and professional development more consistently.

The EPI report has also shed light on the myth circulating the internet. The internet is said to be littered with blog posts offering unrealistic easy ways anyone can do to learn English. If it was as unembellished as broadcasted by popular beliefs on the web, there would be devoid of demand for English speakers because everyone would already be one through total immersion of technology alone. Commentators prescribed that adults who do not speak English will need at least 600 hours of high-quality instruction and 600 hours of speaking practice to master English well enough for the average workplace (EPI, 2019). People whose native language is distinct from English, would require more intensive approach in order to advance their English skills, similarly those who have no experience learning foreign languages will need more extensive time to acquire or even master the language. This is evident in demonstrating that the mastery of English language requires more efforts than just a cram school.

The myth of quick and easy language learning can be frustrating for individual learners when their progress does not reflect their expectations. Many would opt an English course with minimal contact hour of classes per week, thinking it will be enough. Many quit before completing the course. The myth also derails employers and governments from investing in extensive English training programs. They would rather opt for rudimentary programs and programs that offer participants no opportunities to actually speak English. The smaller price tag is only attractive until their results are shown. Busting the myth that a language can be learned without lots of time and practice is important to improve the efficiency of both public and private investments.

### **1.1.2 The Trends of English Language Teaching in Malaysia**

In Malaysia, our education landscape consolidates communication in ESL as an on-going highlight among ELT stakeholders especially among fresh graduates and workforce. Both teachers and students were given the required attention and efforts to improve their language proficiency levels. Essentially, a proficient English language learner is perceived to be well versed in all aspects of the fundamental language skills; reading, writing, listening and speaking.

However, scholars posited that the skills that proven to be a challenge to teach or master are speaking and listening (Hassan and Selamat, 2002; Samuel and Bakar, 2008). One reason is classroom practices are claimed to be mainly characterised by answering reading comprehension questions and essay writing with limited listening and speaking exercises (Section, Musa, Lie, and Azman, 2012). Speaking is a productive skill necessary to be incorporated in the development of effective communication (Boonkit, 2010). Listening skill on the other hand, is paramount to receiving messages effectively. It is a combination of hearing what another person says and psychological involvement with the person who is talking (Tyagi, 2013).

To achieve communicative competence, it is necessary to incorporate these two skills. Salam (2006), reported that communicative skill is also measured based on several components which are accuracy, fluency, appropriateness, coherence and cohesion, use of language functions, managing discussions and task fulfilment. These elements are essential for spoken language to be developed and will be delved further in the current study. Notably, communicating in English is proven to be a daunting task especially for ESL learners in a non-native environment. It is not easy for learners to achieve mastery of the skill, and arduous for teachers to garner support, or to utilise the appropriate methods to facilitate learning. Hence, a small leap needs to be taken to understand the problem and the challenges faced by teachers and learners.

### **1.1.3 The 21st Century Learning Skills**

Besides listening and speaking as the core components of communicative competence, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Skills are another set of skills needed to be acquired by learners. Based on the analysis of a number of key synthesis studies (Voogt and Roblin, 2010, 2012; Scott, 2015; Chalkiadaki, 2018), clear set of skills, competencies and attributes that are referenced in some form by the majority of literature banking on the 21st Century Skills. These skills are crucial in propelling education in realizing the missions to produce skilled labor force that are knowledgeable and capable of meeting the demands of the present globalization trends. The findings can be consolidated into five key areas associated with primarily professional attributes:

1. Communication skills, including language and presentation of ideas.
2. Collaborative skills, including management of group activities and social interaction.
3. Individual learning approaches, including critical thinking, metacognition and new skills acquisition.
4. Individual autonomy, including flexibility, adaptability and entrepreneurship.
5. ICT and digital literacy, including use of technology as tools for learning, communication and collaboration.

While there is a broad range of documented interventions employed around the world, many scholars concurred that there is currently minimal to no substantial evidence available on the most effective tools and approaches in delivering those skills. Brown et al. (2015) also noted that more than half of the available evidence is drawn from studies of pilot interventions or experimental projects rather than comprehensive programs without the available impact evaluation studies looking at the effectiveness of policies on outcomes related to 21st Century Skills.

The literature suggested the potential of ICT for enhancing 21st Century Skills, primarily through components that enhance the capacities for communication, collaboration, critical analysis and creative use of knowledge and information-finding (Lewin McNicol, 2015; McNulty 2016, 2017, 2018). Although a number of cases outline steps that can be undertaken to address these barriers, much of the literature surmised that the use of educational technology (edtech) does not address what many see as the fundamental underlying issues associated with the teaching of 21st Century Skills (Care et al., 2019). This points towards the need to focus instead on other elements of the education system.

More essentially, scholars argued that gaining a clear understanding of how progression and attainment of individual 21st Century Skills and then reflecting these in an alignment between curriculum, assessment and teacher training for classroom practices are prevalent for maximum 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills acquisition (Kim, Care Ruscelli, 2019a; Kim, Care Vista, 2019b; Vista, Kim Care, 2018b), which may or may not entirely include the use of edtech. The lack of evidence associated with the effective delivery of 21st Century Skills also points towards a need to develop clear models for mapping progression in the acquisition of 21st Century Skills, and based on that, to gather evidence on the impact of the range of system-wide interventions associated with their delivery.

The 21st century learning skills have been introduced to highlight the critical skills required by learners of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Among the skills are Communication, Collaboration, Critical thinking and Creativity (4 C's). Despite these skills being given much emphasis as literature suggested, there is still a gap on how they can be attained by learners as more substantial findings from studies need to be gathered to identify the efficacy of those methods. Language learning has also evolved with the emergence



of ICT and new media tools, which demands teachers to be knowledgeable and adept to the use of these assistive tools, as it is deemed to possess the prowess of enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. There are so many spectrums needed to be delved by scholars and researchers to observe the possible methods of acquiring the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills using ICT and new media. This study intends to pave the possibility by looking at the use of a language learning tool that could help fulfill the needs in today's education trends, and highlight the possible challenges that may be the hindering factors to achieve the goals in educating 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.

#### **1.1.4 Speaking Anxiety: A challenge for ESL and EFL learners**

One of the main challenges is learners' inherent learning traits such as speaking anxiety that potentially can inhibit communication. Communication is one of the 4 crucial 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills besides collaboration and ICT literacy. In reality, giving speeches in front of a large audience causes speaking-anxiety upon learners which hinders them from attempting any English conversations in improbeu or face-to-face interactions especially among English Second Language (ESL) and English as Foreign Learners (EFL) learners (Pertaub, Slater, Barker 2002; Woodrow, 2006; Tanveer, 2007).

Webster (1998) defines anxiety as apprehensive situations, feeling of discomfort or nervousness, usually over impending or anticipated problems: a state of being anxious. This is common among language learners especially when attempting language productions. These feelings are unequivocally expressed by ESL or EFL language learners in learning to speak a second or foreign language and considered to exert a potentially negative and detrimental effect on communication in the target language (Tanveer, 2007). Tanveer in his study constructed two approaches of categorising language anxiety; (1) Language anxiety in general relates to basic human emotions that may be motivated by some factors (McIntyre, 1995; McIntyre and Gardner, 1989: cited in Tittle, 1997: 11). For example, a shy or introverted student may feel anxious when asked to give a speech in front of the class; (2) Language anxiety is a combination of other anxieties that merge into a specific form of anxiety intrinsic to language learning (Horwitz et al., 1986: 128). His study shed light on the concept of language anxiety that it stems from psycholinguistic factors, socio-cultural factors and behavioural factors.

On the other hand, Pertaub et al. (2002) believed that public speaking anxiety is commonly found among people who suffer from social phobia. These people are said to have a strong fear towards one or more social situations. The fear of humiliating or embarrassing oneself and receive criticisms could derail learners from attempting speaking. Despite the fear, people generally still experience extreme discomfort and anxiety when in the feared situation and would rather avoid the social encounter whenever possible. Thus, making fear of public speaking as a very common form of social phobia, with great social significance. Both researches have different views on speaking anxiety, yet both share the similarity that it is a common problem among language learners particularly in speaking a new language. This adds further challenge

to teach communication to language learners.

In spite of the circumstances, Darmi and Albion (2013) in their study opined that the extent to which language learners participate actively in the language learning process is determined by their attitudes and anxiety level. Feeling positively towards teaching and learning of the language reveals the learner's positive attitude and consequently influences their achievement in English language as well as successful acquisition. For this reason, the current study is proposed to explore the potential of implementing a method anchored on technology and blended based learning such as the video blog tool that could foster positive attitudes towards teaching and learning of English to minimise the speaking anxiety normally faced by second language (L2) speakers and facilitate the acquisition of essential communication skills such as negotiations and conveying ideas effectively.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

Being articulate and competent in communicating using a language depends on how much we wield the language in a meaningful context. Having high proficiency in English is considered an important asset in the context of the global economy especially in a rapidly developing country such as Malaysia (Su-Hie et al., 2017). Surveys still show that common problems in communication during interviews among graduates include poor speaking skills, inability to comprehend questions, and lack of interaction skills (Shahariah Saleh Murtaza, 2018; Alias, Sidhu, and Chan, 2013). The Malaysian Government conducted a survey on Malaysian graduates and it was discovered that about 60,000 Malaysian Graduates were unemployed due to a lack of experience, poor English, and poor communication skills (Singh and Singh, 2008). Similarly, scholars have suggested that communicating in English for a second language speaker is a challenging feat.

There are many factors attributed to the difficulty in speaking English, such as language anxiety, limited vocabulary, and lack of exposure to communicate in the language (Pertaub et al., 2002; Tanveer, 2007). In schools, previous studies also suggested students were found to be rather passive when they have to speak English in the classroom (Kaur, 2015). Educators play a crucial responsibility for taking active roles to improve learning environment for learners. Hon (2018), rightly pointed out that most educators in Malaysia are still exhausting the classroom practices that are inapplicable to current classroom settings that are very much teacher centred. Likewise, (Darmi and Albion, 2013; Hassan and Selamat, 2002) perceptively state that learners are not given enough support for their learning especially in nurturing listening and speaking to improve communication in the L2, hence there is minimal exposure to practice the language within a meaningful communicative context. In order to ease this problem, both educators and scholars need to explore the alternative approaches to improve teaching and learning especially communication in ESL classrooms. As Hon (2018) posited, if learners are given tasks that are meaningful and relatable to their own experiences, they will consequently be more engaged. Teaching will then be more effective if tasks provided are authentic with a relative purpose to

learners, so learning would then be more constructive to complete these purposeful tasks. Thus, challenges faced by learners in giving speech, lack of exposure and current pedagogical practices that are seen as the interrelating factors of learners' inability to communicate well in L2.

In theory learning should pave ways for learners to not only receive knowledge and skills, but also allow them to impart what they have learned in meaningful manners by reflecting and improving concurrently. Corresponding to this notion, technology is one way to consider as a learning tool for its countless potentials for network and student centred learning through a collaborative project (Astorga, 2015; Alawdat, 2013; Mohammadi, Ghorbani, and Hamidi, 2011). In this study, video blogging is proposed as a technological tool to address the problem of having limited exposure for practicing English in communication. It is a tool that allows learners to participate in exercising the language regularly in addition to using only summative assessment such as presentation based oral tests, role-playing and other in-class communicative activities – moreover, it also opens the door for them to participate in collaborative blended learning with their peers beyond the four walls of their classroom (Hung, 2011; Lim, 2013; Shih, 2010). However, Sharples and Domingue (2016) argued that although it is possible to attend different courses and seminars on public speaking, opportunities to practice and receive feedback from tutors or peers under realistic conditions are limited. This notion then evoked the researcher to devise an instructional strategy merging the principles of peer scaffolding and connectivism theories that is able to maximise learner to learner interactions to exercise their L2.

These underpinning theories concentrate on peer-feedback in hope to minimise the anxiety that is believed to hinder fluency when attempting L2 communication. It is then hypothesised to assist learners in developing oral fluency and active listening through peer-scaffolding parallel to the concepts of blended learning and student-centred learning (SCL). The vlog-portfolio in this study served as a learning tool between learners, peers and knowledgeable others such as teachers. Socio-constructive instructional design and teaching methods that are incorporated with technology that are able to support learning are at the heart of this study. As both theories focus on learner inclusiveness to exercise knowledge, evaluate performance, and provide sufficient feedback, they underpin the current study. This is assented through peer-evaluation and self-reflection to explore the ways to improve learning in a constructive manner.

In summary, the tool, theories, and research method were chosen because of findings from scholars (Astorga, 2015; Fidan, 2018; Gromik, 2013; Hung, 2011). Lim, (2013) also brace the significant use of videos in advocating diverse issues across the globe among youth in Malaysia. This resonates further to the researcher's intention in this study to explore the possibilities of using video blogs on a social media platform as the means of exposure to L2 learners, and observe their participation in English communication while improving their aural oral skills.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to:

- i. explore the use of vlog-portfolio in developing oral fluency
- ii. determine the scaffolding techniques employed by learners during peer reviewing
- iii. identify the degrees of active listening employed by learners through peer scaffolding
- iv. incorporate vlogging portfolio module in an ESL speaking curriculum

### **1.4 Research QUESTIONS**

This study was conducted with the aim to answer and to analyse the following questions:

1. To what extent does the vlog portfolio develop oral fluency?
2. What are the types of scaffolding employed by learners during peer reviewing of the vlog portfolio?
3. What are the degrees of active listening employed by the learners during peer-scaffolding?
4. How can a vlogging portfolio module be incorporated in an ESL speaking curriculum?

### **1.5 Significance of Study**

This study serves to benefit instructional designers, English Language Teaching (ELT) practitioners and English Second Language (ESL) learners in particular. Typically, portfolios are paper based and known to assess writing skill instead of speaking skill. Therefore, from this research findings teachers may try a different instructional practice by learning how portfolio can be applied using social media as a tool that can be adopted in their learning institutions to develop learners' communicative skills. This research is not only important for pedagogical and methodological development of teachers who are teaching English courses, particularly speaking, but will also gauge on the importance of language learning strategies for learners, integrating interactive medias in the 21st century learning in order to achieve oral fluency and exercise active listening.

Substantially, learners should benefit from this study. The researcher intends to provide a guideline to practice communication skill using the vlog-portfolio. The findings of this research should reflect the study's ability to help learners to prepare for future instances in which communication in English will be a required skill – for example, job interviews, college assignments or even workplace requirements.

Through a systematic record of speeches, assessment and re-evaluation of speaking skill development with peers and knowledgeable others, learners will be equipped with a learning strategy throughout the study. Furthermore, this study is designed to encourage learners to become independent or autonomous as they learn to practice with minimal reliance on the teacher by practicing video-blogging. Finally, it hopes to augment learning using the social media as an educational platform contrary to its primary use, which is for entertainment or leisure.

Moreover, the study hopes to be able to assist parents, administrators, or even employers with a method to monitor and receive feedback of how much learners are exposed to speaking English by reviewing documentations of conversational practices in the vlog-portfolio. If learners can have an academic documentation of their learning progress in a digital form, it becomes more accessible and could be used conveniently for reference to evaluate learners' learning progress. This study suggests an approach that addresses the learning process and uses the social media as a personal learning archive. In brief, this study hopes to yield results that could answer the academic queries on how technology can provisionally supplement learning.

## **1.6 Research Limitations**

The findings on this research will only be limited to Malaysian ESL learners of average-high proficiency (lower intermediate – higher intermediate) in the tertiary level. The researcher initially set the criteria specifically for the samples to only possess English scores in MUET with a minimum band 3 or equivalent in any other recognised testing instruments. However, due to availability and accessibility of the sampling ground the researcher had to improvise the method used in the study. For instance, although the participants were sampled using a purposive method, homogeneity of the samples were not achieved and this may not result to the outcome that the researcher expected due to the samples' mixed abilities.

Consequently, scaffoldings and input received by each participant may vary due to existing extraneous factors. These factors will not be addressed in the study and are acknowledged as the major limitations of a qualitative case study. This study will only be feasible with the presence of Internet, and gadgets, thus it is a high-tech setting research involving educational technology in instructional methods. If the research is to be conducted, it will be limited to institutions equipped with IT facilities or samples who are IT literate with sufficient knowledge and skills in operating technological devices. Furthermore, the limitation to this study will only focus on speaking fluency, active listening, and scaffolding using the vlog-portfolio.

Other components of communications that are not addressed in the research should not be included in the data analysis. Absence of advance recorder and advanced speech analysis software are also seen as the limitation in this study. By this means, the intricacies of speech analysis were compensated with the acoustic data manually transcribed through individuals' perceived judgement using a qualitative document

and oral responses in a series of non-structured interviews to help the researcher make qualitative field notes. The findings do not represent any institutional practices and samples shall be subjected to anonymity. The product of this exploratory study aims to only explore the outcomes over the effectiveness of the studied case.

It is therefore recognised that any results of this research are limited in terms of reliability because they are only limited to the samples, the tools used by the researcher. The findings can neither represent nor be generalised to any other educational institutions, communities or individuals to imply their accountability of the study. Each finding is unique to individual sample and is only used to help answer the academic queries of the research of the case study.

## **1.7 Definitions of Key Terms**

### **1.7.1 Vlogging**

Video blogs are special tools for language learning because they could document both verbal development and non-verbal cues, which are crucial for language communication (Hung, 2011). Using online video storing websites seems to be an effective approach for students to share their videos with peers and teacher (Gromik, 2013; 2015).

### **1.7.2 Portfolio**

Portfolio assessment is a learner-centered assessment and it is also an assessment for learning (Huang, 2012). The portfolio allows students to participate in learning, directing contents and involves purposeful collection of student works that document and assess the student's efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas over a period of time. Portfolios are typically used to show students' achievement in classroom teaching (Safari and Koosha, 2016; Valencia, 1990). In classrooms context it may focus on progress, formal products, and rating learners' performance considering specific objectives. It is a practical way to accumulate work of learners and to evaluate their progress regarding the objectives of the curriculum. Traditionally, portfolio uses papers and recorded in hard copies such as albums and write-up folio according to Safari and Koosha (2016).

### **1.7.3 E-Learning Platform**

E-learning stands for any learning activities which is connected to electronic media and with internet connectivity; it is also regarded as online learning (Barrett, 2010). Learning online is one of the fastest moving trends in higher education. In language learning and teaching context, e-learning is available to learners in two basic ways: learners can make use of it individually based on their personal needs and interests as an alternative to formal education or it is also common that e-learning can be used as

a way to enhance formal education; that is, it is used as a supplementary learning input embedded into formal instruction (Eararslan and Topkaya, 2015).

#### **1.7.4 Oral Fluency**

One of the major characteristics of communicative competence is fluency. Oral fluency is a specific feature characterizing the level of speaking skills, which manifests itself in the learner's ability to speak freely, without unnecessary pausing and with the prosody of speech, syntax and vocabulary range comparable with those characteristic of the speech of a native speaker as stated by Polyakov Tormyshova (2014, p. 168). The quantitative criteria include pause rate and position, speech rate (or word density), the skill of dividing speech into sense-groups, the skills of shortening and filling in pauses (Boonkit, 2010; Gorkaltseva, Gozhin, Nagel, 2015). The qualitative criteria refer to the characteristics of the language means, such as correctness of pronunciation and grammar, vocabulary richness, diversity and complexity, precision in the choice of vocabulary, complexity of syntax, coherence, idiomaticity, and the absence of unnecessary repetitions (Gorkaltseva et al., 2015).

#### **1.7.5 Active listening**

Active listening is a way of paying attention and responding to others to achieve mutual understanding (Press, 2014; Samuel and Bakar, 2008). Many believe that hearing is the same as listening, yet they are distinctly different. 'Hearing' is a physical yet passive act involving the process and function of perceiving sound. 'Listening' is hearing the sounds with deliberate intention. Unlike hearing, listening is a skill that improves through conscious effort and practice. In active listening, the listener is genuinely interested in understanding what the other person is thinking, feeling, wanting or what the message means (Tyagi, 2013).

#### **1.7.6 Scaffolding**

Scaffolding is defined as: "the mediator's adjusting the complexity and maturity of the teaching interaction to facilitate the child mastery of the task; providing support when necessary and providing encouragements and probes to the child to move ahead when ready" (Ranjbar Ghonsooly, 2017; Lidz 1991, p. 80). In a wide sense, scaffolding has been interpreted as "a form of support for the development and learning of children and young people" (Pishar., 2017; Verenikina, 2008; Rasmussen 2001;). The term can be used as an umbrella metaphor to describe the way that "teachers or peers supply students with the tools they need in order to learn" (Jacobs 2001, pg125). In short, scaffolding is giving the student a more active role in their learning as opposed to teacher directed learning. Since the aim of scaffolding is to move learners through stages of other-regulation to self-regulation (Ranjbar Ghonsooly, 2017), it can lead the way for learner's self-regulation and autonomy.

## 1.8 Operational Definitions

### 1.8.1 Vlogging

Vlogging or video-blogging in this study is operationalised as learners' activity to practice speaking using video recordings. The study participants vlog on various topics and compile them in a digital platform – Instagram. Topics in the module were based on the existing thematic units (for example; Greetings and Introduction, Workplace Expressions, Social Issues, Language of Commerce and Trades) in the syllabus used by the samples. The module was designed and incorporated to supplement the course and acted as a manual for the tasks.

### 1.8.2 Portfolio

In this study, portfolio is operationalised as a display portfolio using an electronic platform. The portfolio used Instagram account created to compile video blog entries. Because the portfolio used an online platform, it was then viewed as an e-portfolio. Learners were assigned to record their speech in a video and published the video in the account. The e-portfolio also served as a reflective journal, where users wrote reflection entries in the caption of each video. This account was set to private for ethical reasons discussed in Chapter 3, and to protect the participant's identity. The portfolio was a joint account made accessible only to the participants of the study and the researcher. This means that one e-portfolio account is only accessible to three users – two participants in the same group, and the researcher.

### 1.8.3 E-Learning Platform

In this study e-learning platform is operationalised as the **vlog-portfolio**, and the vlog-portfolio was the social media platform Instagram. It is an interactive social media, which allows its users to post photos, videos, video blog, post a short caption of their experiences and also interact with others of similar interest commonly installed in smartphones or tablets. This study viewed this application as an e-learning platform, and it was used by ESL learners who were the participants to document their speaking activities. The vlog-portfolio also served as a display portfolio in digital format.

### 1.8.4 Oral Fluency

Oral fluency was operationalised into two constructs **(i) Speed Fluency** – the number of words uttered in the speech over the time of response by the speaker with acceptable pronunciation and grammatical accuracy comprehensible to other L2 speakers; **(ii) Breakdown Fluency** – the number of fillers or pauses within the time of response. In this study, the researcher determined to analyse oral fluency development by comparing a set of transcriptions from the speech in the video-blog. The transcribed speech was analysed using a formula adapted from literature (see Chapter 2). Oral



fluency in this study was also demonstrated with learners gradually minimalizing their reliance on scripts as they go through the process of video blogging. Their performance was reported in the observation form during peer-reviewing. Oral fluency was operationally defined as, learners' vocabulary count in speech, fillers committed in speech, the ability to engage in discussions during peer-reviewing, and minimal reliance on scripts while attempting to communicate in the L2/target language.

### **1.8.5 Active listening**

In this study active listening is operationalised as the listening activities involving the three stages – repeating, paraphrasing and reflecting. The three stages were chosen as there were minimal activities for listening provided in the workbook. A guided activity was then designed to capture this process using the qualitative document as a guideline based on a rubric subscribed by the curriculum used in the college where the research took place. The rubric was developed by the college and was adapted from the TOEFL scoring rubric.

The process begins with repeating, where learners repeat listening to identify main ideas and to record the lexical count by transcribing the speech of their peers, recording fillers, and analyse the total time of response. Second is paraphrasing encoded messages through listening. This process of listening involves a restatement of the information given by the speaker in one's own words while maintaining the intended message based on individual comprehension. The use of paraphrasing demonstrates that the speaker's message is conveyed to the listener. It also enables learners to ensure that their interpretation and their understanding of the ideas is correct. Lastly, reflecting is when the listener is able to reflect, infer and generate feedback for improvement to the speaker. This definition guides the researcher when designing a speech evaluation form the Speech Reviewing Report (SRR) form that learners use during peer reviewing to exercise their active listening in a guided structure.

### **1.8.6 Scaffolding**

Scaffolding in this research is operationalised as peer reviewing or peer scaffolding. As learners engage during peer reviewing, they were expected to generate several types of feedback, in which are regarded as different techniques of scaffolding. However, in this study, the major themes anticipated in the video-blog project are (i) sensory scaffolding and (ii) interactive scaffolding. Sensory scaffolding is any observable feedback from the learners such as linguistic support during individual peer reviewing recorded using the speech-review-report (SRR) form. Learners listen and analyse the technical parts of speech such as fillers, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary using this form. Secondly, interactive scaffolding is defined based on the regulated speech reviewing interviews. After filling up the report, feedback for the learners will be given by their peers in an interactive discussion. During this discussion, the researcher will observe, monitor and record the discussion with minimal interruptions. Necessary probes will be given if they are required to further substantiate the respondents' feedback. Scaffolding was also analysed through

learners' peer-feedback through their reflection entry in their e-portfolio and also their feedback during the focus group interview.

## **1.9 Summary**

This chapter has covered the introduction to the present scene in the world of ELT; why technology and language learning should be incorporated to improve pedagogical practice among ELT practitioners. As for researchers, challenges to test out a plethora of learning tools in the technological sphere to design a method for ESL learners to gain the most benefits. The chapter then moved into the background of study reemphasising the English language as the language of technology and is vital for learners of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to partake in a network of communication with other digital natives in order to mobilise. Next, it introduced the statement of problem that in certain groups of people particularly in a non-native English setting such as Malaysia who face the main challenge to exercise the language both inside and outside of an ESL classroom. Therefore, teachers and researchers need to work hand in hand to pave ways for learners to be able to partake in global interactions by equipping them with communicative competence. In order for this to be realised, learners need to gain more exposures, learn the strategies and gain as much opportunities to practice beyond the constraints existing within the four walls of their classroom. Technology has been discussed in literature to be an alternative tool that could provide a solution. The chapter then explained the research objectives and research questions, followed by the significance of studies and its limitations. Lastly, the chapter ends with the definition of key terms related to the variables and important terms in this research which are video-blogging or vlogging, portfolio, e-learning platform, oral fluency, active listening and scaffolding means by constitutive definitions followed by operational definitions. This chapter ended with a summary of the study purpose on the base of its background, elaborate problem statement, objectives, and research questions.

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## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

- Shuib, A. & Ismail, L. (2020). Developing and Assessing Oral Fluency through Self-Assessment, Peer Assessment and Reflective Practices Using Vlog Portfolio in an ESL Classroom. Proceedings of the 10th MELTA International Conference in English Language Education (MIRCELE) 2020. Malaysian English Language Teaching Association, MELTA.
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