

Improving Students' Speaking Ability through Vlogging

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Abstract—The potential use of social media-supported learning in educational context, especially in English learning, is very great due to the massive number of social media users among the youth. Young people now tend to become very active users of social media and spend much of their time using social media. One of the social media actively used by them is video blog or Vlog. Educators should see this condition as an excellent opportunity to apply this media for improving students' speaking skill. It is expected that by employing this media, students will be more active in practicing their skill in English. Based on that consideration, this article will discuss about how Vlog can help students to improve their oral communication skill. This paper will explore about (1) Vlog description, (2) The significances of vlog for improving students' speaking skill, (3) How to apply this media in teaching and learning process, (4) Related research. By employing this media intelligently in English classroom, it is expected that the students' speaking ability will be improved.

Keywords—vlog, teaching media, improving speaking skill

I. INTRODUCTION

Technology is one of the keywords that should be put in mind by teachers to help students improving their ability in English. This should be the case since young people nowadays are very attached to it. When teachers can make use of technology intelligently in language learning process then students will feel more comfortable to study the language and will be more active to improve their language skill.

One of the skills that should be mastered in language learning is the speaking skill. In this skill students must pay attention to intonation, pronunciation, diction, and other aspects related to it to make the communication runs smoothly. Students need to train and use this skill actively in order to achieve good mastery in speaking skill.

The problem arises when students are reluctant to speak due to some reasons. They feel afraid of making mistakes and feel unconfident when they have to speak in front of people. They tend to become passive learners and feel difficult to express their ideas. This condition leads to the fact that it will make their speaking skill cannot be improved significantly.

To solve this problem, teachers should be able to find interesting media to attract students and make them more confident in speaking English. Technology can be employed to achieve this goal. Technology can be really helpful to motivate the students and decrease the burden that they face when they have to use English as a means of communication. Vlogging is

one of the advancement in technology that can be used as an interesting media to improve students' ability in speaking because this media focuses on speaking for its way of communication and this media also used widely nowadays.

II. RELATED RESEARCH

Many researches had been conducted about vlogging project and they already proved the effectiveness of vlogging activity to improve students' speaking skill. Some of them are:

- A research entitled "Increasing Students' Talk Time through Vlogging". This research was conducted by Jon Watkins from Kwansei Gakuin, Hyogo, Japan. It was held in two universities in Japan. The result showed that vlogging can increase students' talk time.
- "Top-Up Students Second Language Talk Time through Vlogs", a study conducted by Dr. Beena Anil, an Assistant Professor from Dept of English, SDNB Vaishnav College for Women, Chromepet, Chennai, India. The results concluded that Vlog helped students to study within their own pace. It also made students enjoy learning English, and feedback from the teachers enabled them to improve their speaking competency.
- Vlog is suitable to be implemented in English for Specific Purposes class in regards to its ability to share a positive attitude for students' learning development in speaking skill in a fun learning atmosphere. This conclusion is taken from a research with a title of "Stepping Up the English Speaking Proficiency of Hospitality Students through Video Blogs (Vlogs)" done by Maldin, Siska Amelia et al., from Batam Tourism Polytechnics, in 2017.

III. DISCUSSION

A. What is Vlog?

Vlog is a word which is familiar for young people today. With the advancement of mobile technology, the youths now can easily create video recordings of themselves. They can share about their daily activities, their personal life, their interests, and many other aspects of their life that they think will attract people to watch and then post them online. By doing this they can also get some financial benefits and many are successful to become famous celebrities. This fact really attracts the youths to "aggressively" create their vlogs to share.

A vlog, used as a way of communicating with a wide audience, is the end result of a video creation process [7]. It

stands for video and blog. These two applications are used for sharing ideas online. If blog focuses on writing the ideas, video focuses on speaking up the ideas. Combining those two means combining voice and written ideas and it can be done digitally [1]. As compared to text blogging, video blogging offers a richer environment due to its nature that it also uses video as medium. This will make the media more attractive for the users and also for the viewers. Some effects such as music or animated designs can be added to make the vlogs more attractive.

When students have finished creating the vlog, then it can be posted and shared online via some possible websites such as Youtube, Facebook, Instagram, or others. Youtube and Instagram are the media hosting that are very popular among young people now. Students can choose any media hosting that they think will be suitable for the content they want to share in their vlogs. After posting and sharing the vlog, then teachers and friends can give some feedbacks regarding their vlogs. To make sure that this media works effectively, viewers, especially the teachers and the students' friends, should be encouraged to give positive comments that can motivate the students to produce better results to train their communication skill.

B. How Vlog Improves Speaking Skill

The implementation of vlogging project in teaching and learning process has proven that active learning exercises should be created by both teachers and students. It will be able to provide multiple benefits by giving chances to construct their own activities to master subject content [5]. But still, teachers should give clear time limit so that the students will be aware of when to submit or post their work. Time constraint will encourage them to do in a better and comparative way, too.

As a one of advancement in technology, vlog has become a rising trend among the youths. Many have also become celebrities due to their ability to create interesting vlogs that can attract viewers to become their what so called as "subscribers". The more subscribers they have the more famous they will become. This is also what makes vlogging becomes so popular nowadays since when someone becomes a famous vlogger then they will get lots of wonderful opportunities ahead. We can also see that recently more teachers are now asking the students to create Vlog and this condition can facilitate students' learning in English [4].

Regarding vlog as one of the possible media to be used in improving English speaking skill, there are some possible advantages that can be achieved by employing this media. First, vlogging will train students to work in a team [2]. They will learn how to cooperate and collaborate with others to create a certain product. Secondly, it also gives freedom for students to self-monitor their own work before submitting the product [1]. By doing this they will feel that they can manage their own work more freely and will be more confident with the result of their work.

Reference [3] states that creating vlogs will encourage digital literacy and speaking skill of the students. Not only that, it can also give opportunity for the language users to

negotiate foreign language vocabularies. Developing those capacities on students will improve the students' confidence, creativity, vocabularies, critical thinking, and many other aspects that will support the development of their speaking skill, especially in English as their foreign language.

It can also be seen that vlogging can increase students' talk time significantly due to its nature that it can make students talk, explore, and develop their ideas freely without any burden. After the vlogging process has been conducted, teacher and even fellow students can give feedback to improve the vlog [8]. A lively discussion is expectedly to occur when this condition can be created in teaching and learning process and it will be an added value for improving students' speaking skill.

Aside from the advantages, there are also some limitations regarding the use of vlog as a teaching media, but of course there are some alternatives to deal with them. Possible problems include poor or even the unavailability of internet connection, especially in remote areas. This problem can be solved by playing the vlog offline. Another one is about production time. Students tend to spend too much time on it. As teachers, we should give clear time limit so that the students will be aware of when to submit or post their vlogs.

C. Vlogging Steps in Teaching and Learning Process

To ensure that vlogging procedure can really be fruitful and effective to achieve the goal of improving students' speaking ability, teachers can apply some steps when assigning students with vlogging project. The steps may include preparation, production, editing, sharing, and feedback. Following those steps can help both the teachers and students to manage their ideas and keep the vlog in control so that it will still give the expected result to improve speaking skill.

In preparation step, teachers can give a grand theme to the students and discuss topics or ideas that the students want to have for their vlogs. Some ideas include about talking about students' personal life, health management, hobbies, etc. They can discuss what they will present in the vlog, the roles of each student, the design of the vlog, and other relating matters about the vlog production. During this step, students can consult to the teacher anytime about the script or plan that they make.

After finishing the preparation step, students can start the vlog production. Teacher can still give monitoring during this step but should let the students explore their creativity and express their ideas. This should be done so that the students can go through this step without feeling any burden.

When the vlog has been recorded, an editing step must be done to make sure that the content is suitable with the requirements. In this step, students can add some effects and filters to make the vlog more attractive. There are so many free applications available online that the students can use to enrich their vlogs.

If the vlog is ready, then it can be posted online to be viewed by the teacher. It is also possible to play the vlog in class and watched by classmates too. After that, the teacher can give feedback based on speaking rubrics to improve the

students' speaking skill. Their friends can also give feedback as well.

When there is no internet connection, the vlog can still be played offline in class. This condition will not reduce the excitement and the positive encouragement created from this activity. Students will still get positive result and get opportunities to explore and exchange ideas with each other. It makes the learning atmosphere fun and enjoyable and students will be more encouraged to practice their speaking skill in English.

Finally, when assigning this project to students, teachers should give some considerations on the following aspects to make the assignment really give positive encouragement to the students. Those are:

- Make sure to give/offer topics or themes that are suitable with students' interest and the objective of the lesson
- Give clear time limitation for finishing the vlogging project
- Address and discuss possible problems and solutions that may occur during vlogging process
- Encourage the students to free their minds and explore their capabilities.

IV. CONCLUSION

Vlogging as an alternative oral communication strategy for improving English speaking skill is proven to be a fun and an easy-to-access media. It also offers opportunities for digital literacy skills and multilingual peer learning. It encourages autonomous learning and provides authentic environment to get exposure in speaking. The nature of young people today as digital native generation who likes to "perform" and "share" everything online makes vlogging becomes one of the best alternative for English speaking practice.

In this strategy, teachers should only facilitate and mentor the students. Meanwhile, the students are given full freedom to train their communication skill to improve their language skill, starting from the preparation step to the feedback session. Autonomous learning and team work are being facilitated in this process, too.

Since this strategy creates enjoyable learning atmosphere, students will feel more comfortable and relaxed while studying and using the language. Students will not feel anxious to produce the language. So, more and more ideas and creativities will emerge from the students.

If teachers can create this kind of situation in teaching and learning process, then there will be no doubt that the result of learning will be as expected. Students will be more motivated and active in using the language to improve their speaking

skill. The more they use the language, the better mastery they will have in speaking skill.

To support this learning process, it is recommended that teachers should be able to give necessary feedback to improve students' speaking accuracy. Teachers should also keep up with the advancement of technology so that they will not be left behind as compared to the students. Staying abreast with the students is important to ensure that the way of teaching will really "touch" the students and can give learning outcomes as targeted.

As conclusion, teachers and students should work hand in hand with the help of technology to improve students' communication skill. The media should be employed intelligently to make sure that the target of improving speaking skill will be achieved. When a harmonious correlation can be maintained among them then the objective of the strategy will be successfully achieved.

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