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ENHANCING TVET LEARNERS' 21st CENTURY SKILLS THROUGH INNOVATIVE SPEAKING SKILL TECHNIQUE

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ABSTRACT

In the fast developing 21st century, various innovative technologies are being introduced to teach speaking skills in the classrooms. The present study was conducted to examine the effectiveness of using 21st century skills on improving ESL speaking among TVET learners. Moreover, this study investigated the use of this technique to improve ESL speaking skills. The respondents included 100 TVET learners enrolled in a Communicative English course in Polytechnic. The pre-tests and post-tests were administered for ascertaining polytechnic' performance in speaking skills. These results presented the positive effects of the 21st century skills. Therefore, this study attempted to reveal TVET learners' needs and interests towards ESL speaking skills. Findings of this study revealed that using 21st century skills allow the educators to be more innovative and more creative in their teaching. The impact of this study can be beneficial for both educators and learners. The outcomes of this study indicated that the innovative speaking skill using Voki technique enhanced their ESL speaking skills. It was recommended that technical educational programmes should provide the TVET learners with important skills needed in 21st century and improve TVET learners' mastery of English speaking in ESL classroom.

Keywords: TVET; Technique; ESL Speaking Skills; & 21st Century

ABSTRAK

Dalam abad ke-21 yang berkembang pesat, pelbagai teknologi inovatif diperkenalkan untuk mengajar kemahiran berbahasa di dalam kelas. Kajian ini dijalankan untuk mengkaji keberkesanan kemahiran abad ke-21 dalam meningkatkan keberkesanan bahasa Inggeris di kalangan pelajar TVET. Selain itu, kajian ini juga menggunakan teknik untuk meningkatkan kemahiran berbahasa Inggeris. Responden termasuk 100 pelajar TVET yang mendaftar dalam kursus Bahasa Inggeris Komunikatif di Politeknik. Pra ujian dan ujian pasca dilaksanakan untuk menentukan dalam kemahiran bercakap. Hasil ini memberikan kesan positif bagi kemahiran abad ke-21. Oleh itu, kajian ini juga cuba mendedahkan keperluan dan minat pelajar TVET ke arah kemahiran berbahasa Inggeris. Penemuan kajian ini mendedahkan bahawa dengan menggunakan kemahiran abad ke-21, ia membolehkan para pendidik menjadi lebih inovatif dan lebih kreatif dalam pengajaran mereka. Impak kajian ini boleh memberi manfaat kepada pendidik dan pelajar. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan kemahiran inovatif yang menggunakan teknik Voki meningkatkan kemahiran berbahasa Inggeris mereka. Ia telah dicadangkan bahawa program pendidikan teknikal harus menyediakan para pelajar TVET dengan kemahiran penting yang diperlukan pada abad ke-21 dan meningkatkan penguasaan pelajar TVET dalam penguasaan berkomunikasi bahasa Inggeris dalam kelas bahasa.

Kata kunci: TVET; Teknik; Kemahiran Berbahasa Inggeris; & Abad Ke-21

INTRODUCTION

Lack of speech ability is one of the explanations why companies are reluctant to recruit career candidates. Many managers are worried with the willingness of workers to participate in collective groups, to attend sessions, in public and for specific reasons. Communication skills are considered to be one of the essential skills that TVET undergraduate learners need to acquire in today's business and education environment in order to achieve job opportunities in government and commercial industries. The article in Malaysia Today (2005) illustrates the downside of weak communication ability, low command of English and lack of job experience as factors that impact performance. Lack of ESL speech skills is usually attributed to apprehension, insecurity and low confidence as people interact with each other (Rahman & Maarof, 2016).

The educators build competency-based real-world educational plans to provide their learners with the expertise, abilities and behaviors required to fulfill the career they are actually learning in top-quality TVET classes. Nevertheless, TVET learners must always be fitted with 21st Century Skills that will help them pursue healthier life and job in the workplace. 21st Century Skills exceed the curriculum and techniques learned in the traditional TVET system as they incorporate the strengths and abilities required to assess and suit the 21st Century.

Nowadays, there are so many imaginative and fantastic ways to improve the capacity of TVET learners to speak ESL, particularly through a pleasant and inventive approach. Maarof and Abdul Rahman (2018) have reported that the usage of such methods has allowed scholars to develop their speaking abilities and that their speech anxieties. In line with Oliver, Osa, and Walker (2012), groundbreaking speech skills training lets learners become more imaginative consumers of communication resources, communicators, and partners. In fact, creative speech communication training has a beneficial impact on learning for learners.

Innovative speech abilities are an excellent help to improve the engagement of learners to successful learning (Costley, 2014). Kurt (2010) concluded that creative speech abilities through technologies are sometimes used as a method to carry out practical tasks and connect with problem-solving and critical learning learners. In addition, creative speech skills allow learners to recognize their desires and capabilities. In line with the speed of teaching, learners get up-to-date details and expertise and interact with their communities (Zamani Farahani, Bahamiryan & Sadeghi, 2015).

The effects of technology incorporation in learning have been documented in various studies. Through technology, the application of advanced communication techniques will boost the academic performance of learners. This was endorsed by Riasati, Allahyar, and Tan (2012) who claimed that the usage of advanced technologies improves the language abilities of learners and their academic skills. Innovative speech abilities promote learning for learners and are the instructional framework that allows learning to take place (Rodinadze & Zarbazoia, 2012).

In fact, interactive tools helps teachers to design audio-visual plot styles, including the direct involvement of the learner. In addition, learners will have the ability

to expand their access to language in an highly relevant way and to improve their own specific understanding through creative communication skills in the classroom (Parvin & Salam, 2015). Baytak, Tarman, and Ayas (2011) applied the opposite analysis to the effect of utilizing technology on learning.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

While English is a medium of instruction in colleges and universities, many TVET learners (including final year graduates) still struggle to engage in English for academic purposes (Devi & Feroz 2008). Azrizal (2014) published a study on the degree of oral communication anxiety among first-year engineering students of TVET at University Malaysia Perlis [UMP]. Statistics showed that 24.2 percent of TVET learners have a high degree of communicative distress, with 81.6 percent experiencing discomfort of public speaking. He said that many graduate TVET learners employed in engineering at Malaysian educational institutions have a high degree of communication apprehension and an even higher level of public-speaking apprehension. Speech skills are considered to be one of the main qualities that undergraduate TVET learners need to develop. Anxiety in conversation can cause a significant issue for many people.

Fear and anxiety have an influence on an individual's willingness to communicate successfully in social and job settings, such as meetings, public speaking, interpersonal and community interactions. Those feelings have an impact on the intent and propensity of a individual to engage in contact contexts. It is hoped that this study may help to address the gap in understanding the issue of communicative anxieties, especially in the field of engineering education, and will eventually provide guidance and exercises to advise English teachers that may enable ESL TVET learners to increase their confidence in English-language communication and to further improve their ESL-speaking level.

Apprehension and lack of self-confidence are two reasons that discourage learners from engaging in the target language (Fung & Min, 2016). There are several explanations why learners are apprehensive and less able to communicate in English. In the first place, all teachers and TVET learners in Malaysia are subject to scrutiny by means of an educational system that emphasizes examination (Lee, 2016; Christopher, 2016). According to Lee (2016), Malaysia's education system lacks innovation, which makes TVET learners feel frustrated and horrid. It is hoped that revolutionary speaking skills using technologies would have a positive effect on learners' learning, especially by improving the capacity of ESL to communicate. A study of recent literature showed that there is still a shortage of English-language teaching research among TVET learners in Malaysia, which could be related to or mirrored by local English-language teachers and practitioners with respect to the teaching of English-language teaching activities in technical education institutions. Restricted knowledge on teaching methods in individual educational institutions is said to affect only bad impressions of the TVET sector (Kim & Hassan, 2018).

The overarching purpose of this paper is to explore the influence of contact apprehension among TVET learners at Polytechnics. In specific, the research explores the impact of innovative speaking skills using the Voki methodology on the contact apprehension of TVET learners.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives are:

1. To identify the level of communication apprehension among first-year TVET learners in Polytechnic.
2. To examine the effect of the innovative speaking skill using Voki as techniques to enhance the ability of TVET learners in ESL speaking skills.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The research is important in recognizing novel speech skills (Voki) approaches that can help to minimize the apprehension of contact between TVET learners. It is hoped that the results of the study will lead to a deeper understanding of the application of appropriate creative speech skills resources using Voki to improve the speaking skills of TVET learners. New techniques, such as revolutionary speech skills software like the Voki method, are used in speech training classrooms as it can make learning foreign languages simpler and more enjoyable, as well as allowing them to overcome some of the challenges of speaking English correctly by intonation, grammar and fluency.

The use of advanced speech skills software (Voki) would allow both TVET learners and educators to speak English and understand them without any difficulties, while at the same time allowing TVET learners to understand the directions of the educators. In addition, the only way to achieve better education is to use emerging innovations in the learning process.

In addition, the use of technical resources such as creative speech skills (Voki) has been a great benefit in motivating TVET learners to practice and develop confidence in speaking. The goal of this research was therefore to find the best way to enable TVET learners to practice speaking as much as possible. In summary, TVET learners need to be equipped to face the 21st century (Scott, 2015) and improve their speech skills. They must develop confidence to speak English, raise their knowledge of vocabulary, and have a high degree of commitment and encouragement to enhance their ability to speak English.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication apprehension, as described by McCroskey, is cognitive-based anxiety that arises when one experiences actual or expected contact with another person or individual. Communication apprehension (CA) is characterized as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with actual or expected contact with another person or entity" (McCroskey). Lucas and McCroskey argue that any degree of anxiety (nervousness) that we feel in speech is a natural one that should be felt by anyone, and it could hurt or benefit the communicator.

In order to build and increase speech production, it was important to find an Creative Speech Training Resource that could be used in the classroom / education. This is an interactive resource that encourages users to create their own talking character, which can then be integrated into a number of subjects and tasks (assessments) in the

classroom. Simply put, it's a convenient, free and engaging way to read. Belloch (2012) claimed that Web 1.0 is focused on the Digital System, entertainment and passive consumer newspapers (traditional newspapers, radio, TV, email). Those can be considered the first tools available online, although ground breaking speech skills are more recent and have more engagement. In reality, Motteram and Sharma (2009) concluded that this could be accomplished with platforms such as blogs and wikis or collaborative writing applications such as Google Docs.

It can be shown how benefits can be gained from the use of creative speech devices to teach a language. In reality, Villalba (2007-2008) concluded that TVET learners are highly encouraged to learn languages by using web-based resources. There are more common Creative speech education resources that can be used to teach speech in particular. Ramírez (2009), for example, clarified the act:

If teachers wish their TVET learners to speak and to focus on their grammar, the following exercise will fulfill their needs. This exercise shows the TVET learners a dialogue that they have to record. First, they have to pick whether to report a man's line or a woman's line. After that, the machine demonstrates how to capture any single line of conversation. Once done, the student will listen to the talk. For the following lesson, TVET learners must provide a microphone and speakers so that they can record themselves and listen to the conversation (p. 114).

Voki.com's website offers a wonderful Creative Speech capability for people to use as they see fit. "Voki is also an instructional resource for both educators and TVET learners. It helps users to create their own talking character." (Voki, 2015, para. 1). In other words, it helps its consumers to use a range of resources. In Voki, we can record our voices using a microphone, form text, or upload an audio file (About Voki, 2014).

A previous research on the usage of VOKI by Eggleton (2012) showed that the lack of encouragement of TVET learners to deliver speeches improved when they were given the chance to make their speeches using this kind of interactive device. In his study, the best researcher summed up the effectiveness of this experiment and said, "I enjoyed interacting with VOKI. It's basically brainwashing you to keep chatting. The finding shows that the use of VOKI in language learning increases the ability of TVET learners to communicate better than before.

The idea of 21st century learning is definitely backed by creative communication skills using the Voki methodology in communicative classrooms. This approach is enjoyable and engaging, and learners will learn a lot from self-discovery. From this approach, learners will use this free animated speech avatar to deliver a short speech and outline their assignments.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The quantitative analysis approach used in this study included the collection of data through questionnaire, experimental pre-test and post-test procedures. The key purpose of this research is to examine the effect of the revolutionary speech skills method used by the Voki methodology on the teaching of ESL speech skills. The Communication

Apprehension [CA] test in the form of a questionnaire was used to determine the effect of the behaviours on communication apprehension. The instrument is known as the Personal Study on Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) developed by McCroskey (1985). The sample in the study consists of the first year, semester one of the TVET learners in Selangor Polytechnic, enrolled in the mandatory Core Course Communicative English 1 (DUE 1012) for the experimental research. The age of the TVET learners is between 18 and 20 years.

The number of respondents is 100 TVET learners who are 50 TVET learners in the Voki Technique group and 50 TVET learners in the traditional activities group. It lasts for one semester, consisting of 14 weeks of lectures. The key goal of the course is to overcome the shortcomings of TVET learners in the use of English and to improve their level of proficiency. Such TVET learners were selected because they were introduced to communication courses and were supposed to graduate soon. It was therefore important to evaluate their level of speech apprehension and to figure out if they possessed the requisite speaking skills. In addition, we tried to assess if they were equipped to meet the difficulties of engaging with confidence.

An experimental pre-test and post-test research was performed at Selangor Polytechnic. The research sample number amounted to (100) male and female TVET learners split into two divisions of the engineering department that were selected deliberately. The study used random selection to classify experimental and control groups: the experimental section was exposed to the Voki procedure and the control section was taught using the conventional approach.

This quasi-experimental analysis was accompanied by a pre-test post-test nonequivalent community design with a 14-week treatment period. Prior to the trial, both groups were tested for their level of speech anxiety using communication apprehension. The study group was taught using the Voki technique and the control group was taught using the current teaching system. Immediately after completion of the treatment, the two groups were tested for their speech anxiety using the same instrument for 14 weeks. The pre-test and post-test scores were related to the disparity in the communication apprehension of the study.

In order to achieve the prospective goals of the study, the researcher arranged the study material for the English Course in an effective manner for communicative tasks. In this study, the researcher presented and illustrated Voki to the respondents (experimental group). Both respondents (experimental group) registered for their own Voki account and built their avatars. It took 45 minutes for each session. The researcher has provided educational tools and advice through Voki. Respondents had to complete their tasks and gave their opinion through Voki. The researcher has carried out a lot of fascinating experiments and projects using Voki. After 14 weeks, respondents had to make remarks via avatars on their experiences while using Voki.

First, the researcher checked the validity and efficacy of the oral speech apprehension scale (PRCA-24) using the experimental pre-test and post-test process. Two parts were randomly assigned to two groups: the experimental group that taught the Voki method, and the control group that taught the conventional method.

Data Collection Methods

The data was obtained using a closed ended questionnaire to be answered independently by TVET learners. The aim of the questionnaire is to disclose the degree of apprehension of TVET learners ranging from low to moderately low, mild to moderately high and strong. The 24 items were classified using the 5-point Likert-scale of (1) Strongly Agree (2) Agree (3) Undecided (4) Disagree and (5) Strongly Disagree. The lowest attainable ranking is 24 and the highest is 120 for the PRCA (P'Rayan & Shetty).

Data Analysis

The data processing will be carried out after all the respondents have completed the questionnaire. The Likert scale item has been measured for the overall PRCA score and recorded as pre and post test results. Such analyzes is intended to evaluate the general condition of first year learners of TVET engineering with regard to their level of English communication and the efficacy of the Voki technique in the communication anxiety of learners of TVET engineering.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 revealed the cumulative communication anxiety of 100 TVET learners who completed the PRCA-24 in pre-test and post-test, who are 50 TVET learners in the Voki method group and 50 TVET learners in the traditional method group. The highest was 93, the lowest was 30. As the table showed the degree of CA among TVET learners in the first year of engineering was very high. This reveals that 52% of TVET learners scored above 80, reflecting those with a high CA characteristic. Many variables will contribute to a large number of high-level CA TVET learners. For instance, many TVET learners did not like engaging in public speaking. They mentioned feeling anxious and uncomfortable while they were talking to new people in group discussions. Second, results showed that 15 TVET learners (30 percent) had a medium level of speech apprehension and 9 TVET learners (18 percent) had a very low level of CA.

Those receiving ratings below 51 felt confident talking in English. Such TVET learners may have very low CA due to factors such as ease when using English during class discussions. However, in the typical activity group, half of the population has a high degree of speech anxiety of 24 TVET learners (48 percent) and may seek to prevent as much contact as possible, to the point that they avoid talking to peers or instructors about the subject matter (McCroskey). Meanwhile, 18 TVET learners (37 percent) have a medium level of communication apprehension and 8 (15%) have a low level of speech anxiety.

Table 1: Percentages Pre-test and Post-test

GROUP	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST
VOKI METHOD		
(Experimental Group)	High : 52 percent	High : 14 percent
	Average: 30 percent	Average: 30 percent
	Low : 18 percent	Low : 56 percent
	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST
Traditional Method	High : 51 percent	High: 50 percent
(Control Group)	Average: 37 percent	Average: 35 percent
	Low : 15 percent	Low: 20 percent

In the post-test, the experimental group in Voki reported variations relative to the findings of the control group. The Voki method group found that only seven of the fifty TVET learners (14 percent) had a high degree of speech anxiety. Meanwhile, 15 TVET learners (30 percent) have a medium level of CA and 28 TVET learners (56 percent) have a moderate level of CA. It illustrates that almost half of the party has a low degree of CA. Usually, this community of TVET learners is not fear to engage in conversation, and they feel very relaxed while chatting. Apart from these results, the research also indicates that TVET learners with very low CA are not unable to express themselves at sessions, particularly while talking to new friends in English.

Nonetheless, in the typical activity group, nearly half of the population also has a high degree of speech anxiety of 25 TVET learners (50 percent) and will seek to prevent as much contact as possible, to the point that they avoid talking to peers or instructors about the topic (McCroskey). Meanwhile, 17 TVET learners (35 percent) have a medium level of CA and 10 TVET learners (20 percent) have a weak level of CA.

This is backed by evidence from a research report undertaken by Rosniah Mustafa and Siti Norfishah (2009) with 61 Malaysian ESL learners participating in the English Special Purposes 1 (ESP1) course at University Malaysia Sarawak. They noticed that most TVET learners had strong CA. Another research conducted by Devi and Feroz Farah Shahnaz (2008) on CA and communication skills of ESL electrical engineering TVET learners at the Public University of Malaysia revealed similar findings in that TVET learners had moderate rates of CA and mild communication skills in communication contexts such as school, community and mates.

This conclusion is supported by the results of Albert P'Rayan and Ramakrishna T. Shetty (2008), who suggested that the plurality of TVET learners had a high degree of CA and that 60% of them had no communication skills. The results were also compatible with the research conducted by Noor Raha Mohd Radzuan and Sarjit K (2010) who conducted a report on 193 final year TVET chemical engineering students at the University of Malaysia Pahang. The findings revealed that most of the engineering TVET learners (70.7 percent) were considered to have mild speech anxiety and 10.7 percent had a strong CA standard of speech in English.

Findings suggested that there is CA among TVET learners. One fourth of the respondents showed a strong degree of speech anxiety. The research was compatible with the observations of Osman, et. Al. (2010) has demonstrated that there has been an increase in the expression abilities of the study population and a substantial decline in the participant's degree of post-treatment speech anxiety. Findings were backed by the Sarriff et al. report, which showed that most TVET learners (73.1 percent) had mild contact apprehension. About 60-70% of all people who have completed the PRCA scale have ratings varying from 50 to 80 (Sarriff & Gillani 2011).

It is called the natural spectrum which appears to behave very differently in various conditions. We can be quite nervous in one situation, but very calm in another situation (McCroskey, 2004). Nonetheless, CA was a significant indicator of classroom attendance. On a related note, the study agrees with Thaher (2005) which found that most TVET learners were either scared or uncomfortable regarding their learning experience, which hampered the language learning cycle.

The findings of this study revealed that the positive effects of advanced speech skills utilizing Voki technology decrease speech anxiety among TVET learners. This research has demonstrated that learners will benefit from creative speech skills training practices such that they are linked to their needs and desires. In fact, the results of this paper indicate that revolutionary speech skills development helps educators to be more imaginative and successful in teaching and inspires learners to participate in educational practices in the 21st century. All educators and TVET learners will benefit from the effects of these studies. The findings of this analysis revealed that TVET learners greatly strengthened their ESL speech abilities and developing their speech anxiety. Apart from this, Voki has the potential to develop their grammar and fluency in speaking English. TVET learners feel inspired and comfortable to talk in English as they have the ability to capture their speech and practice communicating in an fascinating way.

CONCLUSIONS

This study addressed the influence of the VOKI method, as an creative speech skills device is an important instructional resource that is valuable for both educators and TVET learners in teaching and speaking learning. It offers audio and visual assistance the pleasant to use. It is necessary for educators to build the teaching learning cycle in an efficient manner, whereas for TVET learners, VOKI is becoming a fresh and exciting way to enhance their ESL speaking skills. They will practice acting positively to boost their confidence.

In addition, it was addressed in the paper that it is important to obtain TVET learners 'personal report on their speech anxiety and steps should be taken to support TVET learners resolve CA. The Voki methodology used in this study was used to support TVET learners battle their CA and was found to be successful. In addition, the application of this technique, which focuses on improving the pronunciation of TVET learners, may help to alleviate their fear of being unable to pronounce foreign terms.

In comparison, the usage of enjoyable speech exercises, such as the Voki method, enables TVET learners to chat, which may decrease their distress rates. In addition, it is assumed that the abilities of advanced speech training have improved the oral communication capabilities of TVET learners and would boost the employability of these students in the future. The outcome of this study indicated that the use of Voki in teaching and learning English may increase the capacity of TVET learners to communicate.

Voki Methodology will enable learners become effective communicators because it addresses the needs of the industry. Generally, it is assumed that the capabilities of Voki have improved the oral communication abilities of TVET learners, providing them for the optimal level of Malaysian students in the long run, which would eventually contribute to an increase in the employability of these students. As a consequence, much more observational analysis needs to be performed in the future by utilizing a randomly chosen and even broader sampling scale to render the results of the study more comprehensive.

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