



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Exploring the Impact of the 3-Minute Challenge and Voki Apps on ESL University Students' English Proficiency Through Project-Based Learning

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: Oct 19, 2024 Accepted: Dec 20, 2024	This study delves into the efficacy of the 3-Minute Challenge (3MC) and Voki Apps as pedagogical tools within a Project-Based Learning framework to augment English as a Second Language (ESL) proficiency among university students. Investigating the potential of these digital applications to bolster students' confidence in public speaking, the research specifically addresses the needs and interests of ESL learners in presentation skills. The research sample comprised 100 undergraduates from Malaysian public universities, divided into an experimental group (n=50) and a control group (n=50). Utilizing a quantitative research design, data were gathered through questionnaires, pre-tests, and post-tests. The findings revealed a significant enhancement in ESL English skills and a marked reduction in communication apprehension among students who utilized the 3MC and Voki Apps. The results suggest that these tools facilitate innovation and creativity in teaching methodologies that incorporate technology. The implications of this study are twofold, benefiting both educators and learners by demonstrating that the 3MC tools effectively improve English language skills, boost confidence, and alleviate anxiety associated with English presentations, while also enhancing pronunciation and fluency. The study concludes with a recommendation for educational programs to integrate essential 21st-century skills to advance students' English language proficiency, particularly to enhance teaching and learning within ESL classrooms.
Keywords Project-Based Learning English Skills Innovative Technology 21st Century	
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INTRODUCTION

Project-based learning (PjBL) is one of the different learning trends that are presently being used in the educational process. Furthermore, project-based learning is a popular teaching technique in the field of English instruction. Mastering English extends beyond mere communication skills, it establishes a foundation of confidence that enables individuals to participate in a variety of opportunities with enhanced poise and readiness. Speaking English fluently and confidently create opportunities in professional and personal realms that could providing individuals with the assurance required to engage effectively with a global audience. In the contemporary landscape, where English frequently acts as the common language in global communications, the ability to speak it with confidence is an invaluable asset that can influence career paths, enhance networking opportunities, and broaden access to information.

PjBL is one of the effective teaching approaches that promote the development of vital skills, such as speaking, by encouraging students to immerse themselves in practical and collaborative projects.

Through PjBL, students engage deeply with a specific subject while actively applying their knowledge in real-world contexts, where communication is essential (Pieratt, 2020). This educational method enables students to hone their speaking abilities in settings that mimic real-world professional and social interactions, fostering confidence, improving language fluency, and encouraging significant engagement with other students. Also, PjBL been applied in the classroom for different reasons in several studies (Sirisrimangkorn, 2018; Huang, Sun 2022; Yin, 2020; Bakar, Noordin, and Razali, 2019; Iriani, Abidin, and Safitri 2019).

In a standard PjBL setting, students are frequently organized into small groups where they must discuss ideas, assign roles, negotiate solutions, and present their work to their classmates or even broader audiences (Larmer et al., 2015). Every interaction provides students with the opportunity to engage in speaking that is both interactive and context-focused, aiding them in developing vocabulary, clarity, and expressiveness in their communication. These projects typically focus on a specific topic or issue that demands thorough investigation, encouraging students to articulate their thoughts in a clear and convincing manner (Başöz & Erten, 2019). This process helps them enhance both their speaking skills and their self-assurance in their capabilities.

In the current job market, effective speaking and communication abilities are crucial for achieving success in almost every profession. As industries grow increasingly interconnected and reliant on effective collaboration, employers seek candidates who can articulate ideas clearly, engage professionally, and navigate diverse situations with confidence. They need workers who are competent in English because currently in the globalization and online era, many institutions, companies, and other sectors need to exchange information not only from our country but also from foreign countries. This change emphasizes the importance for students to refine their speaking and communication skills to fulfill workplace requirements, demonstrate their capability in managing tasks, and adjust to the standards of professional settings. Fortunately, technology offers many tools that can be used in classrooms to improve teaching and learning quality, especially speaking skills (Srebnaja, 2020).

In the fast developing 21st century, various innovative technologies are being introduced to teach speaking skills in the classrooms. Nowadays, there are so many creative and great ways to improve English as a Second Language (ESL) speaking skills among learners especially using innovative and fun approaches. These advancements enable students to learn and enhance their abilities at their own pace, facilitating the development of strong speaking skills crucial for academic and professional success (Genç & Koksal, 2021). Maarof and Abdul Rahman (2018) stated that using these techniques helped the students to improve their communication skills and lower their speaking anxieties. The present study was conducted to examine the effectiveness of using 3MC in improving ESL speaking among learners. Moreover, this study investigated the use of this technique to improve ESL speaking skills. The study is important in identifying the ability of this innovative speaking skill technique (3MC) in helping to reduce communication apprehension among learners.

It is hoped that the findings of the study could contribute to a better understanding of the implementation of one of the effective innovative speaking skill tools using 3MC to enhance learners' speaking skills. The use of the 3MC technique will help both learners and educators to speak in English and they will understand them without any problem at the same time learners will understand the educators' instructions. In conclusion, the use of new technologies in the learning process is the best option to obtain a quality education. (Calderón, 2020).

The use of 3MC has been a great help to motivate learners to practice and gain confidence in speaking. Therefore, the objective of this study was to find the best way to encourage learners to have speaking practice as much as possible. The quantitative research method has been employed in this study which involved data collection via a questionnaire, experimental pre-test, and post-test method. The main objective of this study is to investigate the effect of innovative speaking skill tools using the 3MC

technique in teaching ESL speaking skills. A Communication Apprehension (CA) test in the form of a questionnaire has been used to identify the effect of the activities on communication apprehension.

Problem Statement

Despite years of language instruction, many students continue to struggle with speaking English confidently and fluently, hindering their capacity to engage actively in discussions, articulate their ideas clearly, and adapt to environments where English predominates. Traditional teaching methods frequently emphasize grammar, reading, and writing, resulting in insufficient opportunities for students to engage in speaking and practical application (Ratna, 2019). As a result, they may struggle to utilize English fluently in conversational or public speaking scenarios, which are essential competencies in both educational and professional settings.

Also, the presence of anxiety and the apprehension of making errors affect a person's ability to communicate well in social and work situations such as in meetings, public speaking, and group discussions. Communicating in a foreign language can be daunting, particularly when students worry about being judged by their classmates or instructors (Rahman & Maarof, 2016). This anxiety may hinder students from engaging actively in class, resulting in restricted practice and reinforcement of their speaking skills. As time goes on, this reluctance can diminish students' confidence further, leading to a cycle of avoidance in speaking that results in missed opportunities for improvement.

Despite the feeling of being judged, students find it difficult to practise speaking because of their limited vocabulary and inadequate knowledge of conversational phrases. Students often find it challenging to articulate their thoughts clearly when they lack a sufficient range of words and expressions (Dunifa, 2023). It leads to feelings of frustration when the right words elude them. This may lead to conversations feeling contrived or inauthentic, which can further dissuade students from participating. Additionally, in spontaneous conversations, a restricted vocabulary can impede the flow, leading students to pause often or switch back to their native language to communicate more easily.

All the problems with weak speaking skills being mentioned, it is associated particularly in the engineering domain, where effective communication is often overlooked in favor of technical expertise. Engineering programs often focus on technical subjects like mathematics, physics, and computer science, necessitating a strong concentration on specialized knowledge and problem-solving abilities. Consequently, the enhancement of language skills, particularly spoken English, frequently becomes a lesser priority in the academic pursuits of students. Although students may need to read and write technical reports in English, they might not prioritize conversational fluency or presentation skills in the language, which are crucial for effective communication in global workplaces.

It is hoped that this research could help address the gap in understanding the problem of communicative apprehension, specifically in the domain of engineering education, and thus eventually provide instructors teaching English with guidelines and activities that could assist ESL learners in improving their confidence to communicate in the English language and to further improve their ESL speaking skills. The overall purpose of this study is to examine the effect of communication apprehension among learners. In particular, the study investigates the effects of innovative speaking skills using the Voki and 3MC techniques on the learners' communication apprehension.

LITERATURE REVIEW

PjBL is an educational method in which students work together to solve complex issues, devise solutions, and produce projects over a significant duration. According to Stanley (2021), PjBL is a model that emphasizes inquiry-based learning rooted in real-world experiences, promoting

teamwork and creating an open-ended learning environment. This method focuses on the students, frequently necessitating tailored projects for each group. This enables learners to participate actively in the process, enhance their critical thinking abilities, and utilize theoretical knowledge in real-world situations.

Understanding project-based learning requires an understanding of its characteristics. According to Stanley (2021), project-based learning has some characteristics such as being inquiry-based, student-centred and directed, typically involving collaboration in small groups (3-5 students) or large groups (8-12 students), involving end products that are different for each group or student, open-ended learning, based on real-world experiences, involving students as experts, and the teacher providing students with nearly every component of the project.

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) serves as an exceptionally effective method for cultivating a wide range of language skills, encompassing listening, reading, writing, and speaking. This model promotes active learning through collaborative projects that necessitate the application of skills in real-world contexts, enhancing its relevance to language acquisition and mastery. The emphasis of PjBL on practical tasks enables students to cultivate critical thinking and communication skills, which are vital for language acquisition (Mudiono, 2024).

PjBL has demonstrated notable effectiveness in the realm of speaking. Research shows that students enhance their speaking skills when engaged in projects that involve frequent presentations, discussions, or dialogues, as they practice language in genuine and relevant situations (We, 2020; Dewi, 2016; Gulsanam, 2024). This engaging setting provides students with numerous chances to communicate, negotiate understanding, and express language creatively while working alongside their peers. Through the planning and delivery of spoken content, students enhance their confidence and competence in communication apprehension. As defined by McCroskey, communication apprehension is cognitive-based anxiety which is exhibited when one encounters real or anticipated communication with another person or persons. Communication apprehension (CA) is defined as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey). Lucas and McCroskey contend that some level of fear (nervousness) that we experience in speeches is a normal one that could be experienced by everyone, yet it may harm or help the communicator. (Cited in Molnar & Crnjak, 2020).

To develop and improve speaking production, it was necessary to find an innovative speaking skill tool that could be used in education/classroom. It is an educational tool that allows users to create their very own talking character, which can then be incorporated into a variety of topics and activities in the classroom. In simple words, it is a fun, free and interactive way to learn. An example of a project-based learning (PjBL) tool that effectively enhances speaking skills is the Voki app. Voki, a tool that enables users to create personalized talking characters, combined with the 3-minute challenge activities, offers a fun, free, and interactive method to enhance English speaking skills through diverse classroom topics and assessments. (Manidaki & Zafiri, 2021).

It can be seen how there are benefits to the use of innovative speaking skill tools to teach a language. Learners are highly motivated to learn languages if they do it by using tools on the web. There are more specific Innovative speaking skill tools that can be used particularly for teaching speaking. Voki app is a fun tool that allows users to create their talking character which is also known as an avatar. This avatar can then be imported into the classroom blog, website, email, or profile. Using avatars in language learning can motivate students' participation. The Voki app serves as an innovative English learning tool that motivates students by allowing them to create and use personalized avatars for speaking practice, which can be integrated into various digital platforms to enhance language learning engagement (Malinee & Senthamarai, 2020).

Thus, more participation from students will result in positive traits in teaching. The website Voki.com provides a great Innovative speaking skill for people to use as they best see fit. Furthermore, "Voki is an educational tool for all educators and learners. It allows users to create their very own talking character." (Voki, 2015, para. 1). In other words, it allows its users to use the tools a variety of uses. In Voki, we can record our voices by using a microphone, typing text, or uploading an audio file (Voki, 2015).

The innovative speaking skill using the Voki technique in the communicative classroom certainly supports the concept of 21st-century learning. This approach is fun and interesting and the learners can learn a lot by self-discovering. From this approach, learners can use this free animated speaking avatar to present a short speech and summarize their assignments. Voki stands out as an innovative English learning tool that aligns with 21st-century educational practices, engaging learners in a fun and interactive manner by allowing them to create animated speaking avatars for presenting speeches and summarizing assignments. (Tamayo, 2024).

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

The research design employs an experimental approach, utilizing a pre-test and post-test framework. Through the use of this design, researchers are able to compare the performance of students both before and after they were exposed to the 3MC technique. This allows them to isolate the impact that the technique has on students' language skills and their ability to communicate with others. This is because the primary objective of this research is to evaluate the impact of incorporating 3MC-based tools into ESL instruction on enhancing students' communicative competence, particularly in addressing communication anxiety and fostering oral proficiency. The utilization of a control group, which is comprised of individuals who participate in traditional speaking activities, helps to guarantee that any improvements that are observed in the experimental group can be attributed to the 3MC intervention rather than to other factors.

Research Context

This research is set within Selangor Polytechnic, concentrating on first-semester students who are taking the required Communicative English 1 course (DUE 1012). This particular educational environment, in which students must cultivate solid communicative abilities, serves as an excellent platform for evaluating an innovative instructional method such as the 3MC technique. The students, aged 18 to 20 and enrolled in a foundational English course, they likely possess a range of prior English-speaking skills, creating a realistic testing ground for evaluating a new approach to communication skill-building.

Participants

The participants in this study are 100 first-year ESL learners between 18 and 20 years old and all of whom are enrolled in the compulsory Communicative English course. The participants were separated into two distinct groups which are one group engaged in the 3MC intervention, while the other group persisted with conventional speaking activities. The sample size of 50 students per group is practical and statistically adequate, allowing for meaningful comparisons in a controlled setting while maintaining diversity in English language proficiency levels and personal backgrounds within the sample. This age range and sample size create a diverse yet practical group that accurately reflects young adult learners in a polytechnic environment. The study incorporates a randomized sample, which guarantees that the results are generalizable to similar student populations and helps mitigate any selection bias.

Data Collection

Data collection tools include the Personal Report on Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) developed by McCroskey (1985), which measures levels of communication apprehension across various contexts. This instrument is commonly utilized in this study to measure students' comfort and anxiety levels in speaking situations, thereby making it appropriate for evaluating the impact of the 3MC activities on students' confidence and speaking ability. Alongside PRCA-24, pre- and post-test assessments are utilized to evaluate skill enhancement, enabling researchers to analyze performance metrics prior to and following the intervention.

Data Collection Process

To achieve the prospective objectives of the study, the researcher prepared the study material for the social studies course in a suitable method for the communicative activities. In this study, the researcher introduced and demonstrated 3MC to the respondents (experimental group). All the respondents (experimental group) registered for their own Voki account and created their avatars. Each session took 45 minutes. The researcher gave learning resources and guidelines through Voki. The respondents had to complete their tasks and give opinions through Voki. The researcher gave a lot of interesting activities and tasks using Voki. After 14 weeks, the respondents had to give comments through avatars regarding their perceptions of using Voki.

Several processes are required when adopting project-based learning: planning, implementing, presenting the finished result, and assessing. First, students should consider creating a project title, entry event, and driving question. In this step, the teacher and students will discuss the project's concept by offering some questions. Following that, the students will create the project title for each group. The events that will occur will then be inputted. Second, students work in groups with their classmates to construct the project based on the chosen theme. During this step, the instructor will monitor the progress of the students. The students will then interact with one another while working on their assigned tasks. Third, they will receive the end product once the project is completed. Each group should give a class presentation on their final project. Finally, their instructor will grade the students' work and the process of creating the project.

3MC is a technique that the students need to give a speech or deliver their presentation in just 3 minutes with 1 single static slide only. 3MC technique is fast, effective, deliverable, and understandable. Figure 1 shows the template to create one single static slide.

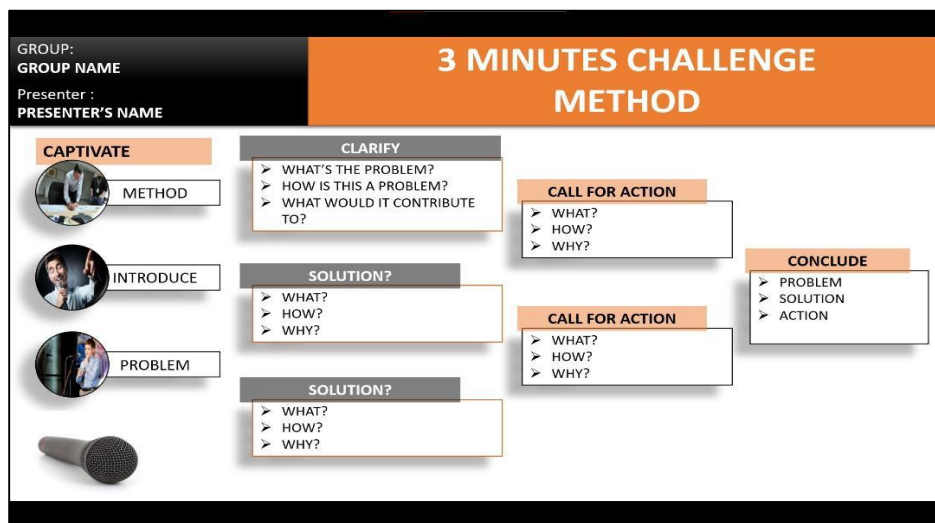


Figure 1. 3MC Template

Data Analysis

Data analysis entails the comparison of pre- and post-test scores both within and across groups to assess the effectiveness of the 3MC technique. Descriptive and inferential statistics are utilized to evaluate variations in communication apprehension levels and speaking proficiency. Statistical tests, including paired t-tests, are employed to analyze significant differences in pre- and post-intervention scores for the experimental group, potentially highlighting improvements linked to the 3MC method. The study seeks to analyze this data to determine if the 3MC technique can effectively reduce anxiety and improve speaking skills, suggesting possible applications for enhancing ESL instruction in comparable educational environments.

FINDINGS

Table 1 indicates the overall communication apprehension of the 100 learners who completed the PRCA-24 in pre-test and post-test which are 50 learners in the 3MC technique group and 50 learners in the traditional activities group. The highest was 93 and the lowest was 30.

As the table demonstrates, the level of communication apprehension (CA) among the first-year learners was very high. It shows that 52% of learners obtained scores above 80, representing those with high levels of trait CA. Several factors may contribute to the large number of learners with high CA. For example, many learners disliked participating in public speaking. They reported feeling tense and nervous when engaging with new people in group discussions. Secondly, the findings indicate that fifteen learners (30%) have a medium level of communication apprehension and nine learners (18%) experienced very low CA. Those obtaining scores below 51 were comfortable when communicating in English. These learners may have very low CA because of factors such as comfort when using English during class discussions. However, in the traditional activities group, half of the group has high communication apprehension which is twenty-four learners (48%) and they will attempt to avoid as much communication as possible, to the extent that they will avoid meeting with peers or teachers to talk about the subject matter (McCroskey). Eighteen learners (37%) have a medium level of communication apprehension and eight (15%) have low communication apprehension. Table 1 is as follows:

Table 1. Percentages of Pre-Test and Post-Test

Group	Pre-Test	Post-Test
3MCVA technique (Experimental Group)	High: 52% Average: 30% Low: 18%	High:14% Average: 30% Low: 56%
	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Traditional activities (Traditional Group)	High:51% Average:37% Low:15%	High: 50% Average:35% Low:20%

Figure 2 shows a bar plots that illustrates the pre-test and post-test performance for both the 3MCVA Technique Group and the Traditional Activities Group. Each group's performance is categorized into High, Average, and Low percentages (refer Figure 2). For the 3MCVA Technique Group, you can observe a notable shift from the pre-test to the post-test, particularly in the "High" and "Low" categories. Similarly, for the Traditional Activities Group, while the changes are less dramatic, there are still some variations in the percentages across the High, Average, and Low categories between the pre-test and post-test.

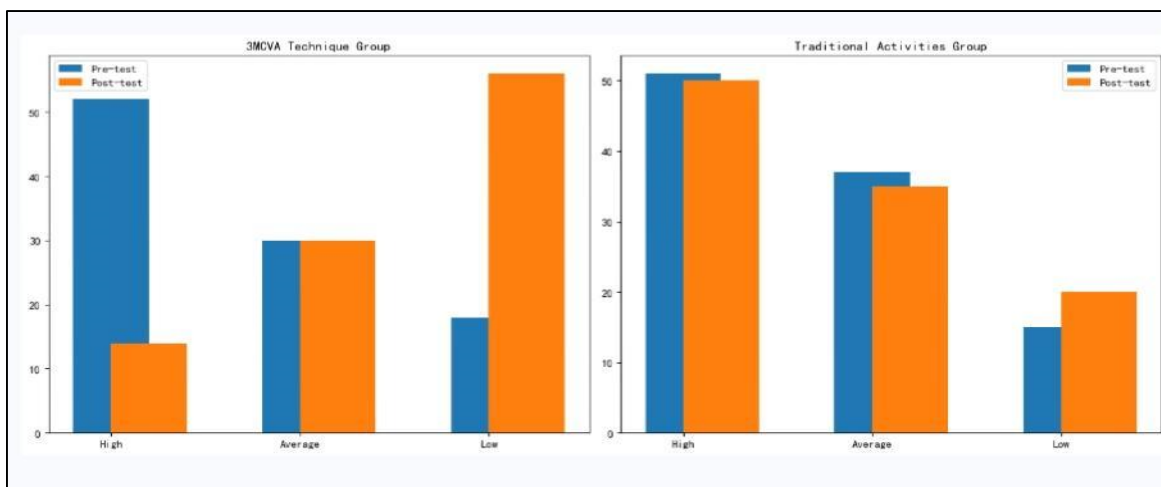


Figure 2. Plots of Comparison

For the post-test, the group that has the treatment for the 3MC technique showed differences compared to the result from the traditional activities group. In the 3MC technique group, it showed that only seven out of fifty learners (14%) have high communication apprehension. Fifteen learners (30%) have a medium level of communication apprehension and twenty-eight (56%) have low communication apprehension. It reflects that almost half of the group has low communication apprehension. Ordinarily, this group of learners has no fear when engaging in conversations, and they feel very relaxed when giving speeches. Apart from these findings, the study also suggests that learners with very low CA are not afraid to express themselves in meetings, even when conversing in English with new acquaintances.

However, in traditional activities group, almost half of the group still has high communication apprehension which is twenty-five learners (50%) and they will attempt to avoid as much communication as possible, to the extent that they will avoid meeting with peers or teachers to talk about the subject matter (McCroskey). Seventeen learners (35%) have a medium level of communication apprehension and ten learners (20%) have low communication apprehension.

Table 2. Table 2 T-Test Comparison for pre and post tests

	T-Test Value	P Value
Pre-Test	1.533	0.127
Post-Test	3.401	0.004

The t-test analysis revealed a t-value of 1.533 and a p-value of 0.127 for the pre-test, indicating no significant difference between the 3MCVA Technique Group and the Traditional Activities Group. However, the post-test results showed a more pronounced difference, with a t-value of 3.401 and a significant p-value of 0.004, suggesting that there is a statistically significant difference in the post-test performance between the two groups (refer Table 2).

The outcomes from this study presented the positive effects of innovative speaking skills using the 3MC technique to reduce communication apprehension among learners. This study revealed that learners can benefit from innovative speaking skill technology activities if they are related to their needs and interests. In addition, the findings of this paper represented that innovative speaking skill technology allows educators to be more creative and more effective in their teaching and it motivates learners to be engaged in the 21st century classroom activities. The impact of these studies can be beneficial for both educators and learners. The results of this study showed that learners considerably improved their ESL speaking skills and reduced their communication apprehension.

Apart from that, 3MC can improve their pronunciation and fluency in speaking English. learners feel motivated and confident to speak in English because they can record their voices and practice speaking interestingly.

These results presented the positive effects of the 21st century skills. Therefore, this study attempted to reveal learners' needs and interests towards ESL speaking skills. The findings of this study revealed that using 21st-century skills allows 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 technique enhanced their ESL speaking skills.

It was recommended that technical educational programmes should provide the learners with important skills needed in the 21st century and improve learners' mastery of English speaking in ESL classrooms. The 3MC technique can help learners to become better communicators as it meets industry needs. Overall, it is believed that the strengths of 3MC have enhanced learners' oral communicative competence, preparing them with the desired quality of Malaysian graduates in the long run, which will ultimately result in improved employability of these graduates. Hence, considerably more empirical work needs to be done in the future by employing a randomly selected and much larger sample size to enable the generalizability of the research findings.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that integrating the 3MC and Voki Apps into PjBL significantly enhances speaking skills and reduces communication apprehension (CA) among ESL learners. The results demonstrate how innovative approaches can address the persistent challenges of traditional ESL instruction, which often emphasize grammar and writing at the expense of speaking practice. The key findings of this study and its implications for ESL instruction are discussed below.

One of the most critical outcomes of this study is the marked reduction in communication apprehension (CA) among students in the experimental group. Before the intervention, 52% of learners in this group exhibited high CA levels, characterized by fear and anxiety during public speaking or group discussions. However, the post-test results revealed a significant decline, with only 14% of students reporting high CA levels, while 56% transitioned to low CA. This contrasted significantly with the control group, where high CA levels remained almost unchanged (50%).

These findings are consistent with prior research that highlights how innovative tools and interactive methodologies can ease learner anxiety (Wang, 2024). The structured yet low-pressure nature of the 3MC approach where students present using one static slide within three minutes has helped ESL learners to focus on delivering concise and clear messages. Similarly, the Voki App's ability to create personalized avatars allowed students to practice speaking in a fun and engaging environment, mitigating the fear of judgment.

The study also found that learners using 3MC and Voki Apps exhibited notable improvements in their speaking skills, particularly in pronunciation, fluency, and confidence. The experimental group benefited from repeated opportunities to practice and refine their oral presentations, which aligns with Mudiono (2024) assertion that frequent, real-world speaking tasks foster fluency and communication competence. The concise 3MC format encouraged learners to organize their thoughts and deliver impactful messages, which are essential skills in academic and professional settings.

The role of the Voki App in enhancing speaking skills cannot be overlooked. By providing a platform for recording and reviewing their speech, learners could identify areas for improvement, practice at their own pace, and build confidence in their abilities. These findings support the growing body of evidence advocating for the use of digital tools to enhance ESL instruction (Sim & Ismail, 2023; Vardhini, 2023). The combination of 3MC and Voki Apps significantly increased ESL learners'

motivation and engagement. Traditional ESL classrooms often struggle to sustain student interest, particularly in speaking activities (Kashinathan & Aziz, 2021). However, the integration of these tools introduced a gamified and interactive element, making learning enjoyable and relatable to the students' digital literacy.

The personalized avatars created in Voki Apps have allowed learners to express their creativity, while the time-bound nature of 3MC presentations added an element of challenge and focus. This aligns with the findings of Sim and Ismail (2023) who noted that digital tools do not only enhance language proficiency, but it also creates a dynamic learning environment that fosters active participation. The study underscores the relevance of integrating 3MC and Voki Apps in preparing students for 21st-century challenges. These tools not only enhance language proficiency but also promote critical thinking, time management, and presentation skills. Employers increasingly value these competencies, particularly in globalized workplaces where English proficiency and effective communication are indispensable. By bridging the gap between theoretical instruction and practical application, the 3MC approach exemplifies PjBL's emphasis on real-world learning. The technique's focus on concise and impactful communication is particularly relevant for professional contexts, such as meetings and presentations, where clarity and confidence are paramount.

While the results are overwhelmingly positive, the study highlights certain challenges. For instance, weaker students often required additional support to master the 3MC technique and overcome their anxiety. Yildiz (2024) contend that low confidence learners may feel less inadequate when speaking languages other than their native language. This suggests the need for tailored interventions, such as special support sessions, to ensure inclusivity and equity in learning outcomes.

Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of thorough preparation for 3MC presentations. Students must research and organize their content effectively to maximize the impact of their three-minute speeches. Md. Ngadiran et al. (2023) stress that well-prepared presentations not only enhance learning outcomes but also build confidence and professionalism in learners.

The findings of this study have significant implications for ESL educators and institutions. First, educators are encouraged to adopt tools like 3MC and Voki Apps to create engaging, student-centred learning environments. In a study conducted by Uaidullakzy et al. (2024), it was suggested that learning through technology should be increased by providing students with training on how to use the interactive technologies and making it available in all course content. These tools enable learners to practice speaking in meaningful, real-world contexts, fostering both language proficiency and confidence.

Second, institutions should consider integrating these methods into their curricula to better align with industry expectations. Collaborations with industries to organize competitions or workshops using the 3MC technique can further enhance students' employability by equipping them with essential soft skills. Moreover, this study highlights the potential for broader application of the 3MC and Voki techniques beyond ESL classrooms. For instance, these tools could be used to enhance communication skills in other domains, such as engineering and business, where presentation skills are equally critical. Additionally, expanding the implementation of these methods to rural and underserved areas could democratize access to innovative language-learning tools.

Future research should aim to replicate this study with larger, more diverse samples to validate the findings and explore their generalizability. Investigating the long-term impact of these techniques on language proficiency and employability would also provide valuable insights.

The findings of this study affirm the transformative potential of the 3MC and Voki Apps in ESL instruction. By reducing CA, enhancing speaking skills, and fostering engagement, these tools address key challenges faced by traditional teaching methods. Moreover, their alignment with 21st-century learning goals highlights their relevance in preparing students for academic and professional success.

The study advocates for the widespread adoption of these innovative tools, emphasizing their capacity to revolutionize ESL education and bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world application.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result, this research has covered a variety of research areas relevant to Project Based Learning, notably in English Language Teaching, such as oral communicative competence and critical thinking skills. Overall, the 3 Minutes Challenge (3MC) and Voki Apps enhance English skills among ESL university students which improves speaking and writing skills. This study demonstrates that integrating the 3 Minutes Challenge and Voki Apps into Project Based Learning activities effectively scaffolds English language acquisition, particularly in oral communicative competence and critical thinking skills, among ESL university students. (Iskandar et al., 2024).

There are four elements which should be taken into consideration as steps for continuous improvement for this 3MC innovation to achieve the best results.

Special Slot for Weak Students

The 3MC is an innovation which assumes the students have no difficulties in completing the slides using the 3MC technique. Hence, if there are students who face challenges in following the technique it is suggested that there should be a special slot for weak students who need further clarification and guidance in completing the slides. It is hoped that the students will further improve without any hurdles. The 3MC innovation aims to reduce anxiety and boredom in learning by streamlining the process, with the understanding that a dedicated support slot for struggling students will ensure they can master the technique without obstacles, thereby enhancing their overall educational experience. (Li & Wei, 2023).

Preparation

To ensure 3MC is applied effectively, the students need to master their presentation by having a well-prepared slide and complete with all important information to be delivered to the audience. Therefore, it is recommended the students conduct complete research on the background of their project to have in-depth data which can be combined into the slides and delivered effectively and efficiently. To effectively apply 3MC, students should thoroughly research their project's background and compile comprehensive, well-organized slides in English, ensuring all vital information is efficiently conveyed to the audience in three minute time. (Fang & Liu, 2020).

Further Collaboration with Industries

For further continuous improvement, it is hoped that the higher education institution can collaborate with industries to have more competition in delivering the final year project using 3MC. Thus, this can enhance the student's experience and knowledge as well as increase their employability in the industries. This is because industries are more prompt in looking for potential employees who have soft skills which include critical thinking, organization and time management. To foster continuous improvement and enhance employability, it is envisioned that higher education institutions will partner with industries to promote competitions in delivering final year projects using 3MC in English, thereby refining students' soft skills and preparing them for the professional world as well as the engagement in the active use of English. (Qiu & Jiang, 2021).

To Get a Wider Perspective

For further improvement, it is hoped that this innovation can reach a wider perspective which includes educators' participation in applying 3MC. The educators can up-skill their self in using this innovation for various purposes such as disseminating knowledge to learners, working in a larger team of educators to build a network to continue the innovation in rural areas, to implement a

corporate social responsibility by having a session to share the ideas in a bigger number of audiences in a particular context. It is anticipated that this innovation will gain broader traction with educators actively adopting 3MC to enhance their teaching, collaborate across networks, and extend its reach into rural areas, thereby creatively utilizing English to engage diverse audiences and fulfil corporate social responsibilities. (Yang et al., 2022).

NOTE ON ETHICAL ISSUES

The authors confirm that ethical approval was obtained from Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia (Approval Date: 11/07/2024).

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

NABR conceived the idea of the study, designed the research framework, and wrote the manuscript. GYS was responsible for data collection, data collection analysis and interpretation, particularly focusing on the quantitative aspects and statistical validation. NFR contribute to the design of the study, the selection of pedagogical tools (3MC and Voki Apps), and the development of materials tailored to the PjBL framework. NNA provided critical insights on integrating the findings into broader educational contexts, reviewed the manuscript for intellectual content, and coordinated the final revisions. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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