

Impact of Vlogging on Beginner Learners' English as an International Language (EIL) Competency during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

With the turbulence in the learning environment brought by COVID-19, multitudes of teaching modalities and pedagogies have been heavily studied and some of them tested. This study aimed to explore the effectiveness of vlogging on students' English as an International Language (EIL) competency in the context of Covid-19-induced online courses at an international university in Bangkok, Thailand. This quasi-experimental research method utilized two course assessments, the final presentation and final listening and speaking exam, to determine students' EIL competency. The sampling consists of Beginner English level learners enrolled in a language program and divided into a controlled group and an experimental group, with the latter using vlogging as a learning tool. The data collected were analyzed through a T-test and one-way ANOVA. The results showed a significant difference in the experimental and controlled groups' EIL competency, suggesting that vlogging can have a significant positive effect on students' performance. These findings may contribute to adapting more contemporary teaching tools in the 21st-century pedagogy.

Keywords: Vlogging, English as an International Language (EIL) Competency, Beginner English Level Learners

1. Introduction

According to Mendelson (1994), the listening, and speaking skills of a learner of English as a Second-Language (ESL) almost amount to 50% of the four language skills required to communicate (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). This implies that these two skills lie at the heart of English language teaching, which aims in part to enable students to communicate or interact fluently in English. Yet, as the authors, two ESL teachers at an international University, can vouch, many ESL students remain unsuccessful in their attempts to do so. This begs the question of why. In their research conducted in Taiwan, Shen and Chiu (2019) found that non-native English learners' speaking difficulties stem from nervousness, fear of making mistakes, a lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, and a lack of contextual comprehension on how to use English expressions learned in class. As to listening skills, research conducted in Indonesia by Sari and Fithriyana (2019) revealed that many foreign language students have low confidence, weak concentration, and generally have a difficult time comprehending the spoken words they hear during class. This often results in negative remarks from teachers or fellow learners in the classroom that cause low motivation and affect student willingness to learn a new language.

In addition, non-native English learners exhibit a high level of anxiety that further alters their learning environment. Asyisyifa, Handayani, and Rizkiani (2019) identified five reasons that make students feel anxious speaking English, namely, a lack of preparation, the fear of being left behind in understanding the material, the fear of committing mistakes, the embarrassment of being laughed at by their friends, and a lack of confidence in their pronunciation. Another significant factor hindering ESL students' listening and speaking English proficiency is the insufficient time, most notably for Beginner English level learners, to practice English in various contexts outside the classroom. This continues to be a real challenge to most ESL teachers since a large majority of students are likely to revert to speaking in their native tongues once an ESL class has ended. Also compounding these difficulties is the learning environment, i.e., the class size and the various nationalities of students. All these factors undeniably have negative repercussions on the oral communication performance of non-native English learners and decrease their self-confidence and motivation to participate in language learning. Given all these difficulties in the classroom, whether online or face-to-face, contemporary English language teaching and learning methods clearly need to be explored and novel digital language educational tools adopted.

Having said that, it is important to note that the majority of contemporary English language teachers are now actively incorporating technological tools and virtual activities designed to maximize the students' positive learning experience in their teaching (Alqahtani, 2019). In short, today, technology is taking center stage. This is especially the case today in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. As Dhawan (2020) aptly observed, given the digital orientation of students nowadays, many educators support online learning platforms, which are associated with an educational technology medium best known to them. According to a recent study conducted in Spain by Hervas, Medina, and Sandin (2020), the use of video recordings in teaching and learning for college students often result in the development of students' self-reflection and in positive perceptions of distance learning education. One such dynamic teaching tool that has been reported to boost students' speaking time, confidence level, and knowledge of grammar, and help them overcome their shyness, at least in part, is "vlogging," which in a nutshell may be described as an online video journal (Mufidah & Roifah, 2020). As a teaching tool, vlogging can help foreign language educators and educators in general incorporate varied social media applications or online platforms in their online teaching methods and strategies to strengthen students' engagement and motivation to learn. In short, a strong link might be drawn between vlogging and the improvement of the communication skills of English learners, which is precisely what this study seeks to determine.

Specifically, applying a quasi-experimental research method that involves one controlled and one experimental group, this study aims to assess the impact of vlogging on the English International Language (EIL) competency of ESL beginner students in terms of listening and speaking skills. As a practice used by the authors in their respective classes at Stamford International University, located in Bangkok, Thailand, vlogging is a teaching method that supports the university's core values of making students life-long learners. Under the university English program, this study's proposed vlogging model can be utilized and customized for different courses and serve as an innovative teaching tool, as well as a teaching assessment instrument in the future. The experimental group used vlogging whereas the controlled group used the conventional teaching method and the course assessments scores of both groups compared. This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of traditional teaching on the EIL competency of the controlled group in terms of listening and speaking skills as measured by their scores on the final presentation and the final exam?

2. Is there a significant difference in the controlled group's EIL competency based on a comparison of their scores on the final presentation and the final exam?
3. What is the impact of vlogging on the experimental group's EIL competency as measured by their scores on the final presentation and the final exam?
4. Is there a significant difference in the experimental group's EIL competency based on a comparison of their scores on the final presentation and the final exam?
5. Is there a significant difference in the EIL competency of the controlled and experimental groups based on their scores on the final presentation and the final exam?

This study is significant in a number of ways. It is the authors' hope that its results will contribute in several ways to the ongoing search for effective curricular delivery in addressing teaching and learning challenges, not only during but also post COVID-19 as the online modality is likely to continue even after this unprecedented health crisis comes under control. The findings could also be beneficial in the quest to keep learning meaningful, student-centered, and hones 21st century graduates' autonomy, creativity, critical thinking skills, and other job-related skills. Lastly, they may contribute to having a well-informed and better performing workforce.

2. Review of Related Literature

- *Vlogging*

The term "VLOG" is a portmanteau of two words, "video" and "blog" (blog stands for web and log). Baker (2019) defined vlog as video records about a person's thoughts, opinions, and interests published on varied online video platforms. In short, Vlogging is an online video journal where individuals record, edit and upload a video about their lives. According to Sanchez (2019), the first vlog recorded was Adam Kontras' 15 seconds video of himself sneaking a cat into his apartment building. He was documenting his journey in Los Angeles for his friends as he tried his luck in Hollywood show business. But what made vlogging uniquely interesting when it started was the first-person storytelling, which attracted viewers from all walks of life (Joseph, 2019). Thanks to the rise of YouTube in the mid-2000s, vlogging became popular. But it was not until the smartphone opened the door by putting a camera within the reach of most people that vlogging became truly accessible. Vlogging, made it simple for anybody to record a video and upload that video directly to YouTube or other free online video platforms. In the context of education, Mufidah and Roifah (2020) argued that vlog activities can maximize students' fluency as well as their public speaking skills. They can also lessen students' stress or pressure when speaking in English. Moreover, Taqwa and Sandi (2019) found that doing vlogs enable students to gain confidence and improve their vocabulary range when speaking in English. As discussed next, vlogging also creates opportunities for students to practice and enhance their English listening and speaking outside school premises through the regular maintenance of their own vlogs.

- *Vlogs as Educational Tools*

Nowadays, the majority of students get most of their information through online videos (YouTube) and online audios (podcasts), which are their primary sources of knowledge whether these are vlogs, educational videos, or news articles. As advocated by Robertson (2019), an exciting way of engaging a learner in mastering a new language outside the classroom is through vlogging as it involves more senses, making language learning in the classroom alive through images and musical effects. According to Benkada and Mocozet (2017), utilizing interactive media tools, such as vlogs, can increase students' motivations for language learning. It also makes linguistic lessons more interesting and fun especially for non-native English learners as vlogs or video blogging make content dynamic and relatable. Dressman and Sadler's (2019) handbook of informal language learning further highlights the

multimodal quality of vlogging activities. They enable learners to practice their listening and speaking skills while developing an autonomous learning style since YouTube enables peer learning in an accessible and flexible environment. Despite its popularity, it is reported that vlogging is still not widely used in the educational setting. There is thus great potential to harness it to provide a real-world learning experience via visual communication. Using vlogs as a language teaching tool can, among other benefits, help to develop the learner's ESL speaking skills since they are students' first skills when vlogging. Several notable vlogs have emerged on YouTube and students worldwide can be directed to them for extensive listening practice. Creating vlogs as a video-portfolio-based output can help to support the Beginner English level learners' oral communication skills. Of even greater use is students' regular maintenance of their own vlogs as it entails having them speak before a web-camera for an unlimited period, watch and evaluate their recorded statements before deciding to post them, and then watch and listen to the vlog replies of their classmates or teachers (Kahler et al., 2017). This way, vlogs can increase learners' self-confidence in a gradual and definitive manner.

- *Vlogging Underlying Learning Theories*

It is important to develop some understanding of the basic principles of vlogging underlying learning theories, which highlight the teaching and learning process. Two learning theories serve as a beacon of light to the 21st teaching practice; the mobile learning theory and the zone of proximal development theory. They motivate educators to design a dynamic and meaningful learning environment, during the Covid-19 pandemic in particular.

- *The Mobile Learning Theory*

Dudeny and Hockly (2007) described mobile learning as a means to integrate course content with real-life situations outside the classroom space. In this study, digital media tools are of great importance as an alternative teaching and learning tool for many language teachers, including the authors of this research study. Using digital media encourages students to actually speak longer using the desired target language even outside the classroom and using their own mobile gadgets as a medium. Despite the fact that technology such as mobile phones has been transforming educational pedagogy, Dudeny and Hockly (2007) argued that based on their observations, it is probable that there is no real significant difference in terms of academic performance of learners utilizing their smartphones. In other words, the application of technology in language teaching does not automatically increase the academic performance of students. As a follow-up on Dudeny and Hockly's (2007) argument, this research study refutes their assumptions and would like to argue that vlogging can be a teaching tool that can help Beginner level ESL learners to improve their listening and speaking skills and therefore improve their academic performance in English.

- *The Zone of Proximal Development Theory*

Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) pertains to the learning process of children through social and environmental influences. As explained by Esteban-Guitart (2018), children who are in the zone of proximal development can almost perform any task independently, but are not quite there yet. In short, children as learners need some help, in order to perform the tasks assigned successfully. This shows that getting instructions from someone is of immense importance in skill development. When a task is modelled clearly, learners can organize the new information in their existing memories. In turn, they use this information as a guide on how to perform the activity properly and eventually doing it independently. This is most likely the same with the vlogging process. Language learners need assistance drafting, practicing and processing speaking material. This is especially true for Beginner English learners who are unfamiliar with the steps involved in creating a vlog.

Moreover, instructions have to be clearly modelled and repeated for students to follow step-by-step the vlogging procedure. Vygotsky's (1978) theory also highlights student's active role in the language learning process. Learning becomes a reciprocal experience for students and teachers. One example of a dynamic teaching tool that provides meaningful lessons is educational media teaching aids. Educational media tools include television shows, radio shows, internet websites and vlogs (Glencoe, 2006). As an educational media tool used during the online learning modality, vlog is composed of moving pictures, sounds, visual effects, and texts which stimulate students' interest during the learning process as they speak in front of the camera. Hence, it has commonly been assumed that vlogging is an ideal teaching aid for any language learner.

- English as an International Language (EIL) Competency

Looking at Thailand's English language teaching, both British English and General American English are taught in Thai schools as is the case in most other ASEAN countries. While these two English varieties are taught to most Thai English learners by native British and Americans, it is worth noting that there is an increasing number of Filipinos, Thais, and other non-native English-speaking teachers (NNEST) teaching English in Thailand as compared to native English-speaking teachers (NEST) (Ayuthaya, 2018). In light of this development, McKay's (2018) defines EIL competency as using English as a default language by non-native speakers to communicate with other non-native English speakers who do not share a common mother tongue. Taking into consideration the fact that English as a lingua franca is being used by many non-native English users surpassing that of native speakers, learners are not expected to follow native English norms as long as their communicative goals are achieved (Vodopija- Krstanovic & Marinac, 2019). In line with the use of vlogs to improve EIL competency of non-native English learners, a previous study from Kartikasari (2018) shows that vlogs by Indonesian Intermediate English level students in groups can facilitate autonomous learning and enhance the learners' EIL competency mainly their speaking skills. Moreover, research conducted at Sunandha Rajabhat University in Thailand by Wongsuthorn et al. (2019) reports that there is a growing use of innovative media tools such as vlogging in English language teaching as an international language for graduate studies.

- Beginner English Level Learners

According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2018), as ESL learners, students in Foundation or FND level course present the following characteristics:

- a. Can deliver very short, rehearsed announcements of predictable learnt content, which are intelligible to listeners who are prepared to concentrate.
- b. Can give a short, rehearsed presentation on a topic pertinent to his/her everyday life, briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions, plans and actions.
- c. Can cope with a limited number of straightforward follow-up questions.
- d. Can give a short, rehearsed, basic presentation on a familiar subject.
- e. Can answer straightforward follow-up questions if he/she can ask for repetition and if some help with the formulation of his/her reply is possible.
- f. Can read a short, rehearsed statement, for example, introducing a speaker or proposing a toast.

Out of all the body of related literature reviewed, not a single article focuses on the promising value of vlogs as a teaching tool for enhancing the listening and speaking skills of online Beginner English level students of diverse nationalities. While some instructors are already applying vlogging to high school and college students with Intermediate English proficiency levels in a face-to-face learning modality, no one has used it yet with Beginner English level learners, who are struggling to communicate in basic English. The authors have

been interested in applying vlogs to Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Thai Beginner English level students, who have a minimal understanding of the English language and are enrolled at an international university in Thailand and have had to switch to an online modality as a result of COVID-19. Studying the possible effects of vlogging on the EIL competency of Beginner English level learners is significant and timely because vlogging allows students to share ideas and demonstrate knowledge without a conventional text. This supports Maulidah's (2018) assertion that vlogging helps students participate in meaningful dialogues within and beyond the classroom. Not many students are good English speakers. Allowing students to use a vlog for a project can develop their ability to showcase what they know about the target language.

3. Methodology

This study used a quasi-experimental research design wherein two groups were being compared and analyzed, as illustrated in Figure 1. One was a *controlled* group, while the other was an *experimental* group. As a teaching tool, vlogging was applied to the experimental group while the conventional teaching method was implemented in the controlled group. Furthermore, the data collected from the online course assessments – the Final Presentation and the Final listening and Speaking Exam – were used to identify any significant differences in English language competency (listening and speaking skills) between the two groups.

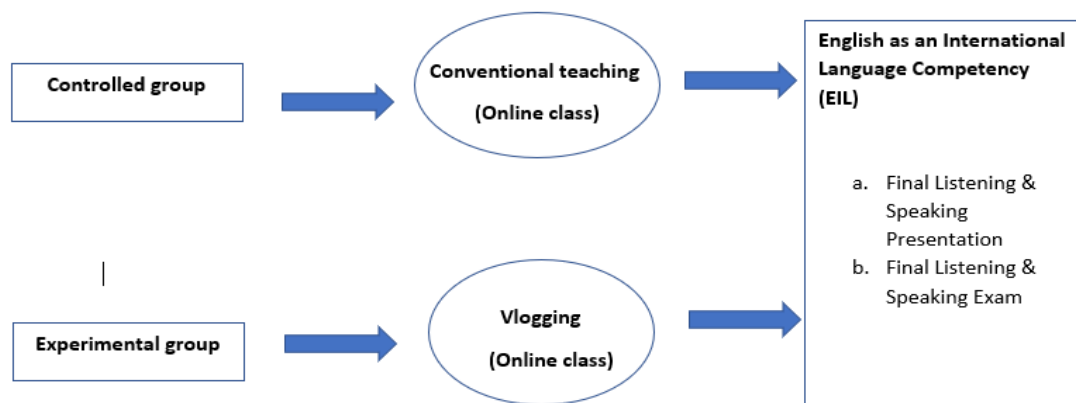


Figure 1: Two-Group Experiment

- Population and Sampling Procedure

The purposive sampling in this study used the enumeration method. The sample population consisted of students enrolled at Stamford International University English Language Program. Specifically, both the controlled and experimental groups were composed of Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Thai nationals, both females and males, aged 17 to 24. The selected classes were two Foundation 200 (FND 200) sections, which the researchers taught for one semester at Stamford International University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Table 1: Respondents in the Study

Groups	Classes	Number of Students	Total Number of Respondents
Control group	FND 200 Sec A	20	40
Experimental group	FND 200 Sec B	20	

- Research Instruments

The two research instruments used in this study include a final presentation and a final listening and speaking exam. Table 2 shows the weighing system used.

Table 2: EIL Course Assessment

Assessment	Data Collection	Weighting
Final Presentation	Week 11	20%
Final Listening and Speaking Exam	Week 12	30%

(i) *Final Presentation:* There were five evaluation criteria used in this assessment. The maximum score for each criterion was five points. Students could lose up to five points if they used a language other than English during the presentation. Each team could receive up to three extra points for asking grammatically correct questions after the presentations. Students were graded individually based on the length of the presentation, use of the past tense, vocabulary utilized, pronunciation, and task completion.

Each team member had to talk individually about his/her chosen topic using the simple past tense and comparative adjectives. Each group had to listen to all groups and were encouraged to ask questions to the presenters for additional points, provided that they used the correct grammatical form.

(ii) *Final Listening and Speaking Exam:* As indicated in Table 3, the exam consisted of two speaking parts. Table 4 shows the speaking assessment rubrics.

Table 3: Final Listening and Speaking Exam

Exam Parts	Time	Score
Listening	20 minutes	/20
Speaking Part 1	-----	/15
Speaking Part 2	-----	/15
Total		/50

For the listening part, the audio tool, listening test paper, and speaking prompts were adapted from Cambridge Learning Management System, A2 Listening Competency Test. For the Speaking part, the rubrics were derived from IELTS Speaking Assessment Criteria (<https://www.ielts.org/-/media/pdfs/speaking-band-descriptors.ashx?la=en>).

Table 4: IELTS Speaking Assessment Rubrics

	Fluency & Coherence	Lexical resource	Grammatical range & accuracy	Pronunciation
4	*Cannot respond without noticeable pauses and speaks slowly with frequent repetitions and self-corrections	*Is able to talk about familiar topics but can only convey basic meanings on unfamiliar topics and makes frequent errors in word choice •Rarely attempts paraphrase	•Produces basic sentence forms and some correct simple sentences but subordinate structures are rare •Errors are frequent and may lead to misunderstanding	•Uses a limited range of pronunciation features •Mispronunciation is frequent and causes some difficulty for the listener
3	*Speaks with long pauses, has limited ability to link simple sentences and gives only simple responses	*Uses simple vocabulary to convey personal information •Has insufficient vocabulary for less familiar topics	*Attempts basic sentence forms but makes numerous errors except for memorized expressions	*Shows some of the features of Band 2 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 4
2	•Pauses lengthily before most words	*Only produces isolated words or memorized utterances	*Cannot produce basic sentence forms	*Speech is often unintelligible
1	•No rateable language	•No rateable language	•No rateable language	•no rateable language

- Data Gathering

Table 5 shows when the data were to be collected from both the controlled and experimental groups.

Table 5: Data Collection Procedures for Beginner English learners

Group	Vlogging	Final Presentation	Final Listening & Speaking Exam
Control	No Vlogs	Week 11	Week 12
Experimental	Weeks 2-5 & weeks 7-10 only	Week 11	Week 12

- Data Analysis Techniques and Statistical Tools

The data collected from the academic scores describing the EIL competency of Foundation 200 students or Beginner English level students was compared and analyzed using statistical tools such as one-way ANOVA and T-Test as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Statistical Tools

SOP	Statistical Tool
RQ1	Frequency & Mean scores
RQ2	Frequency & Mean scores
RQ3	T-test
RQ4	T-test
RQ5	One-Way ANOVA

4. Results and Discussion

This section addresses each of the research questions articulated in the introduction to this study and discuss the findings in light of the relevant previous studies.

4

RQ 1: *EIL Competency of the Controlled Group as Measured by their Scores on the Final Assessments*

The overall mean scores of the controlled group based on their two course assessments were 82.55 for their Final Presentation and 85.60 for their Final Exam. These scores negate previous assumptions that the EIL competency of non-native English language learners can be determined based on their gender or their nationality. They disprove the claim made by Shakouri and Saligheh (2012) that in terms of verbal abilities, females are usually better at articulating vocabulary and mastering grammar than males. Neither the men nor the women in the controlled group were better at speaking and listening. In addition, the mean scores support the finding that a person's country of origin is not outcome determinative when it comes to achieving a higher level of English language competency. Similarly, the mean scores from each course assessments are inconsistent with Amirian and Komeshe's (2018) study, which concluded that the nationalities of Persian, Turk, and Arab EFL learners affected their level of academic performance in English. According to them, Persians are highly motivated and display excellent communication abilities compared to the less motivated Arabs and Turks. A learner's English language competency will instead be impacted by his/her level of motivation using English as a means of communication (Modiano, 1999). Language proficiency is not only not gender-based, it is also not based on nationality. In this study, neither Chinese nor Thai nor Vietnamese students in the controlled group received a lower or higher grades because of their nationalities.

RQ2. *Differences in the EIL Competency of the Controlled Group Based on a Comparison of their Scores on the Final Presentation and the Final Exam*

An independent samples t-test was conducted to investigate the EIL competency of students in the controlled group by comparing their final listening and speaking presentation scores and final listening and speaking exam scores (see Table 7). The t-statistic of $-.60$ indicates that the mean of the listening and speaking presentation scores is less than the mean of the listening and speaking exam scores. There is no significant difference in the final listening and speaking presentation scores and final listening and speaking exam scores of students in the controlled group ($t(38) = -.60, p = .554$).

Table 7: T-Test (Controlled Group)

EIL competency of Controlled Group	t	Sig.	Remarks	Decision
Two Course Assessments	-.60	.554	Not Significantly Different	Accept Null Hypothesis

That the controlled group's performance on the two assessments on Week 11 and Week 12, respectively, yielded a "not significantly different" result suggests that the teaching style and learning environment implemented may have molded their generic language competency results. It is also noteworthy to remember that according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages or CEFR (2018), the respondents in this study are at the Foundation level and as such characterized as Beginner English level learners who can deliver very short, rehearsed announcements or repetitive sentences understandable to the listeners. Moreover, these Foundation level students can only give short rehearsed presentations on topics about their everyday life. These linguistic limitations, together with internet connectivity problems, could have affected their academic performance online. Accepting the null hypothesis in the controlled group may be due to the following: limited collaborative learning among students online, absence of actual field work for students to interact and practice their communication skills in English, and low motivation level to actually use and expound their communication skills outside of their two-to-four-hour online classes. A research study conducted by Tudy and Villas (2017) in the Philippines concluded that there is a moderately positive relationship between students' attitudes toward English language learning and students' low or high academic grades in English courses. All these factors may apply to one degree or another to the controlled group in this study as knowledge and exposure to the language are still fairly limited, thus, making sense of its "not significantly different."

RQ3: *Impact of Vlogging on the Experimental Group's Competency as Measured by their Scores on the Final Assessments*

The experimental group's overall mean scores from both the Final presentation and the Final Exam are higher than the total mean scores from the controlled group who did not utilize vlogging in learning English. This suggests that students who creates vlogs are likely to have a higher academic performance than those using a conventional teaching method. This result also further supports the notion that EIL competency is irrelevant if there is no communicative practice involved. The high mean scores of the experimental group indicate that the role of vlogging as a communication technology instrument can be significant in terms of fostering a positive learning attitude in Beginner English learners. They make it patently clear that learners must use vlogging for communication purposes to interact with their communities, friends, families and school mates.

This is consistent with Hung's (2011) study of the relevance of vlogging as a motivation booster. The study concluded that it can be a major factor in helping to develop Beginner learners' ESL speaking skills since they are the first skills used by the students when vlogging. Another factor that might have contributed to the higher EIL competency scores of the experimental group is the students' positive attitude in learning through the use of vlogs. This positive perception is echoed in previous studies from Somdee and Suppasetsee (2012) and Deerajviset and Harbon (2014) in which multimedia materials in learning English such as vlogs is discussed. They all show that vlogging can have a positive effect on a student's engagement, self-confidence, motivation and creativity. In addition, the vlog activities conducted by students from the experimental group provided them with a valuable additional learning platform to actually practice English beyond their classroom sessions. This is in keeping with Aquino's (2018) study that found a link between vlogging and students' English performance at a Catholic school in Tarlac, Philippines, and with Aldukhayel's (2019) research that shows the vital role of vlogs on improving the listening skills of foreign language learners.

RQ4. Differences in the EIL competency of the Experimental Group Based on a Comparison of their Scores on the Final Presentation and the Final Exam

An independent sample t-test was conducted to investigate the EIL competency of students in the experimental group by comparing their final listening and speaking presentation scores and final listening and speaking exam scores. The t-statistic of 1.03 indicates that the mean of the listening and speaking presentation scores is higher than the mean of the listening and speaking exam scores. As Table 11 shows, the results further suggest that there is no significant difference in the final listening and speaking presentation scores and final listening and speaking exam scores of students in the experimental group ($t(38) = 1.03, p = .311$).

Table 8: T-Test (Experimental Group)

EIL competency of Experimental Group	t (38)	Sig.	Remarks	Decision
Two Course Assessments	1.03	.311	Not Significantly Different	Accept Null Hypothesis

The vlog activities conducted by students from the experimental group provided them an additional learning platform to practice English beyond the classroom online sessions. This is consistent with Sime and Themelis' (2018) research study that determined that video apps and vlogs are vital in enhancing non-native English learners' speaking skills. This is also supported by La Caze's (2019) conclusion that vlogs improve students' engagement and motivate them to produce outstanding speaking outputs. Of great import here, the finding that the two online assessments in the experimental group are "not significantly different" negates Nurviyani and Rahayu's (2018) conclusion that vlogs can only successfully work with intermediate or upper-level university students. Further contradicting their conclusion, there were positive changes in terms of the experimental learners' fluency, lexicon range, and grammatical comprehension skills as shown by the IELTS rubrics used in grading students' online final presentations and final exams. Moreover, Tanjung's (2020) experiment supports the conclusion that vlogging is not explicitly instrumental in making students' English exam scores higher (in this case, during their face-to-face English classes) but that instead it is students' attitudes that directly affects their academic performance.

This conclusion ties up with Dudeney and Hockly's (2007) mobile learning theory according to which the sheer use of vlogging through technological tools does not necessarily translate into a direct increase of the scores of students. Instead, vlogging appears to be instrumental in integrating real-life situation to contextualize the language learned by beginner English level learners and make it more meaningful and relevant to their experiences. While this also implies that vlogs to a certain extent are capable of aiding foreign language learners from the experimental group reinforce their communication skills in English, it does not guarantee that a student will automatically get higher grades from one course assessment to the other. In line with this, it is probable that due to the regular weekly vlog exercises done before weeks 11 and 12, during which the two assessments were conducted, most of the Beginner English learners in the experimental team showed gradual improvements in how they responded without long pauses and could connect basic sentences to express their ideas thoroughly. During the online final exams and final online presentations in class, some exhibited confidence using appropriate words or expressions when talking about their favorite topic. Others were able to produce correct basic short sentences with minimal grammatical errors. In other words, vlogging gradually improved the experimental group's listening and speaking skills. This was reflected in their performance on the online final presentation and the final exam, which were "not significantly different."

RQ5: Differences in EIL Competency of the Experimental and the Controlled groups Based on the Two Final Course Assessments

One-way ANOVA was used as a data analysis tool to determine whether vlogging had a significant effect on the experimental team’s course assessments. As shown in Tables 12 and 13, the scores were lower for the controlled team who did not do any vlogs as an alternative means to develop their pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and fluency in English outside the online class sessions. Vlogging somehow helped students in the experimental group to obtain higher scores than those in the controlled team in their online pandemic-induced classes. These findings support previous studies on vlogs as an educational tool, which determined that vlogging provides opportunities for non-native English learners to extend their communicative practice time beyond the classroom. For one thing, they are consistent with previous research asserting that vlogs are instrumental in developing self-awareness and autonomous learning and fosters positive motivation in honing the learners’ English listening and speaking skills (Aquino, 2018; Torres, 2018). Moreover, they are in keeping with Poramathikul et al. (2020) who explored vlogging efficiency as a learning platform utilized by both bilingual and multicultural learners at a Thai university and found an improvement in students’ English fluency in oral communication. Similarly, Zahro’s (2020) findings show that the use of vlogs is instrumental in decreasing the students’ hesitancy in speaking using English. They also show that integrating vlogs into speaking classes can lead to a positive learning environment for students with mixed English proficiency levels (good, average, and below-average).

All these findings echo the theory of Zone of Proximal Development (Esteban-Guitart, 2018) according to which, as we saw earlier, proper scaffolding and modelling from the teacher is vital in cultivating students’ sense of ownership of their work and self-monitoring skills, something which vlogging can achieve as part of their online language learning. In addition, the significant difference recorded in Tables 12 and 13 between the experimental and controlled groups show congruency with Junio and Bandala’s (2019) study on the use of video blogging and with their conclusion that it is a critical tool for improving the ESL oral communication proficiency of high school students in the Philippines in terms of their pronunciation, fluency, syntax, lexical range and general use of English. Finally, as Safitri and Khoiriyah (2017) have argued, creating vlogs improves college senior students’ engagement and motivates them to produce very good quality speaking outputs. Needless to say, all the much-improved performances reported in these studies sharply contrast with those of the controlled group students who could not count on vlogs as an alternative means to develop their pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency and grammar in English outside the online class sessions.

Table 12: EIL Competency Based on Final Exam

			Remarks	Decision
EIL competency of Controlled & Experimental Groups	F (1, 38)	Sig.	Significantly different	Reject Null hypothesis
Final Exam	28.70	.000		

Table 13: EIL Competency Based on Final Presentation

			Remarks	Decision
EIL competency of Controlled & Experimental Groups	F (1, 38)	Sig.	Significantly different	Reject Null Hypothesis
Final Presentation	9.87	.003		

In sum, while previous studies on the impact of vlogging focus on students at higher English levels as their target population, this study focuses on Beginner English level online students, whose linguistic abilities were by definition much more limited at the start of the semester. In spite of these limitations, the experimental group still had a stronger performance on the online Final Exam and Final Presentation as compared to the controlled group.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings in this study strongly suggest that vlogging works effectively in honing ESL beginner learners' listening and speaking skills in Covid-19-induced online classes. There was no significant difference in the EIL competency of the experimental group based on the two course assessments (the final listening and speaking presentation and the final listening and speaking exam). There was, however, a significant difference in the EIL competency of the controlled group and the experimental group as measured by their presentations and final exam assessments. Their scores were higher than those of the controlled group. In sum, vlogging is an innovative way to solve the challenging task of motivating non-native English learners to practice communicating in English. In line with these findings, a proposed vlogging teaching model will be recommended by the authors to be implemented by Stamford's English Language Program in the upcoming semesters to accommodate students with varying English proficiency levels and further adapt contemporary pedagogy to 21st century teaching and learning.

In addition, it is recommended that future studies include a greater range of English learning students. They may, for example, include high school students or graduate students or even professionals using English for practical purposes. They will help to explore how vlogs can impact language learning at different English proficiency levels and different contexts. Moreover, future research should investigate both students and teachers' attitudes towards the use of vlogs in learning, teaching, and in terms of assessment. This would help to determine the effectiveness of creating vlogs in language distance learning. Future studies should also incorporate the four English macro-skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) in determining the effectiveness of vlogging with regard to the English language competency of Beginner English level students.

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