CHAPTER 15

SPEAK UP, MR. PIRATE! AN INTERACTIVE GAME-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCE TO ENHANCE RURAL PUPILS' CONFIDENCE AND FLUENCY IN SPEAKING ENGLISH

Shereen Wong, Stacey Audrey Anak Rakey & Melor Md Yunus

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

shereenwong2310@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The ability to speak fluently in a language is dictated by one's capability to speak continuously without frequent gaps and pauses but this could pose as a threat in an English-poor environment. Pupils in the rural areas of Sarawak have an insignificant exposure to the English language, resulting in their lack of confidence and inability to speak fluently in the language. Pertaining to the fact that pupils these days are accustomed to technology and games, this study explores the employment of gamified learning theory in the teaching and learning of English speaking skill. Mission-based interactive slides are utilised to enhance the rural pupils' English fluency and boost their confidence. This innovation promotes Communicative Approach as pupils get to practice speaking in a real-life environment whilst the gamified elements cultivate their problem-solving skills. It is highly practical and costs nothing as it was produced solely via power point slides. It has also proven to kindle pupils' language ability by enhancing their enthusiasm and contribution during lessons, making them think creatively and critically. It is our main goal that the innovation may profit pupils and fellow teachers in the rural areas in assisting to resolve fluency related issues.

Keywords: Speaking, fluency, confidence, gamification, rural

1. INTRODUCTION

Yemini, M., Goren, H. and Maxwell, C. (2018) asserted that a transnational flow in a globalised society is greatly shaped and affected by the needs and aspirations of the pupils, further proving the need to give light on the pupils' ability to have a good verbal command of English. In Malaysia, English is considered a vital international language to aid in gaining abundance of information crucial for the advancement of mankind. In this era, there is a crucial need for pupils to be proficient in both the Malay language and English to cope with the increasing need of the globalised society. As a result, a poor command of English has been listed out as one of the five main reasons underlying unemployment among graduates in Malaysia. Zazali (2017) in his writing asserted that Malaysian pupils, prominently in the rural areas are facing hitches conversing in English. These affect the pupils' performance and resulted in them exhibiting the lack of confidence in conversing in the language. Nevertheless, to put the blame solely on the pupils' anxiety and lack of confidence in using the language is overgeneralizing the issue. Overuse of traditional teaching methods during speaking lessons could have also inevitably led to this conclusion. A study by Nor Hani Misbah, Maslawati Mohamad, Melor Md Yunus and Azizah Ya'acob (2017) demonstrated that one of the main causes that demotivates pupils in learning how to speak in English is indeed due to the monotonous, unexciting speaking lessons; further reinforcing the statement made. Therefore, to impede this issue from deteriorating, the application of technology has a big potential in assisting the teaching and learning of English speaking skill. As an output, English teachers turn to teaching methods like gamification with the inclusion of technological tools as part of the 21st century pedagogical skills in yielding fluent English speakers.

Picture 1: Innovation Implementation

Picture 2: Feedbacks

2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

2.1. The Gamified Learning Theory

The Gamified Learning theory as perceived by Ohn et al. (2018) is a theory underlying the attribution of gamification as a teaching and learning technique. This learning theory is often proposed as an underlying framework to support the active learning process of the pupils. It follows an Input-Process-Outcome that demonstrate an innovative solution as it works to bridge the gap in difference between learning and learner satisfaction. The application of gamification in learning has proven to be able to further engage the pupils' attention and thinking skills. In this context, gaming elements are applied in a non-game context to improve the relationship between the pupils and learning. As of recent, multiple methodologies have been designed under this Gamified Learning Theory to aid in the teaching and learning of English; speaking skill is no exception. The application of gamification activities with hope to create a friendly class ecology has helped to boost the pupils' self-confidence and participation during speaking skill tasks, which then indirectly resulted in the development of their oral production.

2.2. Games in improving fluency in speaking and enhancing confidence

Multiple studies had been conducted to study the theory underlying the use of games to improve the acquisition of English and obliquely fluency in English. As teachers conduct speaking activities that requires the pupils to provide their opinions, justifications and discuss their thoughts, the pupils could express their personal opinions verbally. This provides pupils with the chance to practice speaking in English in front of other people. Quoting from, Amalia, R. (2017), such an activity involves a lot of real-life interaction among pupils, making them used to expressing their feelings whilst lessening their stress on learning the language. Pertaining to that, by organising game-based speaking activities in the classroom, the teachers could implement the speaking activity in a fun but meaningful and purposeful way. Furthermore, through the gamified discussion-based activity, pupils could showcase their understanding of the topics learnt. As the gamified activities tend to have clues or lifelines to aid the pupils, it would pose as a new challenge for the higher proficiency pupils but would not demotivate the lower proficiency pupils as help are still provided. The topics chosen are also based on the pupils' schemata. Hence, they would know enough about the subject to enthusiastically talk about it.

In addition, such activity stipulates the rural pupils' confidence to learn the language as it is engaging. The pupils are not compelled to memorise and regurgitate word by word sentence structures provided by the teachers, instead, they are provided with ample chances to work together to complete the task, provided they have to speak in English while doing so. Quoting from a study conducted by Teguh Hadi Saputro, Ibnu Choirin Tafsirudin and Rafika Rabba Farah (2020), speaking tasks conducted through gamification method has proven to be successful in evoking the pupils' enthusiasm to learn to speak the language as pupils would be able to collaborate with their fellow friends and complete the speaking activity within a time frame given by the teachers. By doing so, pupils could observe and confide in their friends, resulting in the pupils feeling less pressured; increasing in their oral performance levels.

3. METHODOLOGY

In today's dynamic 21st century information setting, it is crucial for educators to pursue new and innovative alternatives to grasp pupils' attentiveness during lessons in order to ensure full participation among the pupils. The ADDIE model was deemed suitable for this research as it is a structured model incorporating organized arrangements of tasks catered to solve distinguished learning problems related to learning resources that are in line with the pupils' needs. There are five steps in the model as shown in Figure 1.
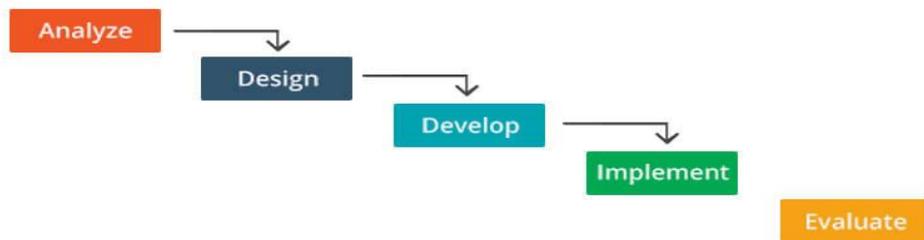

Figure 3: ADDIE Model

3.1. Analysis

At this first step, data were collected to analyze our pupils' competencies in speaking English fluently. These data were obtained through Pentaksiran Bilik Darjah (PBD) document analysis which initiated that the pupils were mostly at level 2 and 3. To further understand the pupils' characteristics, knowledge and attitudes during English lessons, interview sessions were carried out with three of the English teachers in the schools. These sessions were able to validate the issue regarding speaking fluency among rural pupils. Rural pupils are less exposed to the English language thus they possessed minimal confidence to attain the language, particularly in speaking the language. At this stage, relevant materials were also analyzed and deducted in accordance to the innovation idea and desired achievements among the pupils.

3.2. Design

This second step emphasizes on three undertakings that need to be done which are distinguishing suitable learning materials for the targeted pupils, learning strategies and the assessment forms and methods for the evaluation. Based on the undertakings mentioned, PowerPoint was employed as the learning tool with gamified-learning theory as the learning strategy. Based on the analysis carried out in the first step, a prototype was designed as a rough draft which was then presented among colleagues for further improvements to suit the pupils' needs and the study's objectives.

3.3. Development

The learning material and learning strategy was then further improved and developed into a full scale gamified interactive slides, utilising the PowerPoint as PowerPoint presentations enable pupils to be engrossed during lessons apart from establishing more opportunities for them to attain information visually (Patesan, Balagu & Alibec 2018). "Speak Up, Mr Pirate!" is an activity that can be carried out as a revision or remedial for pupils to acquire confidence and better enhance their fluency in speaking. This gamified interactive slides consisted of speaking missions acting as tasks that pupils need to accomplish in order to receive rewards. The reward system is able to influence pupils' positive behavior (Karmila, Fetylyana, Goh, Melor & Harwati 2020) as it can act as a catalyst to encourage pupils' active participation during the activity. The activity was carried out in groups, thus promoting pupils-centred learning. The interactive slides were developed by incorporating captivating images as employing visuals can enrich language teaching (Patesan, Balagu & Alibec 2018) apart from keeping the pupils' engaged throughout the lessons. A pilot test was carried out beforehand to make sure the flow of the interactive slides was on point.

3.4. Implementation

The innovation was implemented on ten Year Three pupils via Google Meet. The pupils' reactions and participation on the innovation were observed and collected during this stage to be evaluated in the next stage. Three Google Meet sessions were conducted in the span of two weeks in order to further improve the "Speak Up, Mr Pirate!" innovation. The pupils were introduced to the innovation and was given a brief explanation on how to navigate through the game during the first session. Any shortcomings were then improved for the second session and were then implemented on the same pupils again. The third session was carried out to enhance our data on the influence of the "Speak Up, Mr Pirate!" in order to tackle pupils' confidence and fluency in speaking.

3.5. Evaluation

Evaluations are carried out on the data collected during the implementation. The data were processed to be further discussed, interpret and understood. The data were collected through observation checklists and field notes. Based on the findings, deductions can be made to analyze how far the "Speak Up, Mr Pirate!" innovation managed to

influence rural pupils' learning outcomes and quality of learning particularly gaining motivation and fluency in speaking. Moreover, improvements can still be formulated on the innovation if any shortcomings still persist.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Findings analysis

	Implementation of the Innovation					
Date	13/9		22/9		25/9	
Criteria(s)	Observation Checklist	Field Notes	Observation Checklist	Field Notes	Observation Checklist	Field Notes
Pupils are able to speak with lesser gaps and pauses.	No	Pupils still had problems communicating their ideas. They still speak with gaps and pauses.	Yes	Pupils showed improvements in communicating their ideas. They still will lesser gaps and pauses.	Yes	Pupils were able to communicate their ideas without much stuttering with support from all the elements provided by the innovation.
Pupils were able to complete the speaking activity within the time frame without struggling.	No	The pupils were unable to complete the speaking activity within the time frame without struggling.	No	The pupils barely made it in time to complete the speaking activity.	Yes	Pupils could finish the activity in the time frame provided.
Pupils were able to conduct the speaking activity without guidance.	No	Some lower proficiency pupils seemed to struggle to use the language to speak.	Yes	Lifelines, working as clues were added into the slides to aid the lower proficiency pupils. Some pupils came up with grammatical errors while speaking.	Yes	The lifelines worked well as guidance in aiding the lower proficiency pupils. The sample answers enlighten the pupils in terms of the proper and correct grammatical structures.
Pupils made the effort to speak in English.	Yes		Yes	Pupils made the effort to speak in the language to complete the missions.	Yes	
Pupils showed great enthusiasm to complete the speaking activity.	No	Pupils are excited to complete the speaking missions.	Yes		Yes	
Pupils appeared to be interested in the speaking lesson.	Yes	Pupils seemed to be interested in the speaking lessons due to the charming pictures and animations used.	Yes	Pupils seemed to be more interested in the speaking lessons due to the charming pictures and animations used.	Yes	Pupils are more interested and motivated during the speaking lesson due to the charming pictures, animations and sound effects used.

During the first implementation, pupils seemed to be interested in the "Speak Up, Mr Pirate!" speaking activity due to the charming pictures and animations used in the interactive slides. Even so, it was prominent that some of the lower proficiency pupils were experiencing some struggles to use the language to speak. The lower proficiency pupils tend to speak with gaps and pauses often. Overall, during the first implementation, pupils' enthusiasm was affected when they had difficulties in completing the speaking tasks.

Based on the data collected on the first implementation, improvements were made to the "Speak Up, Mr Pirate!" activity. New features such as sound support and the lifeline feature were included into the gamified interactive slides. Teachers' voices were recorded to read the missions and sample answers in order to aid the pupils with auditory learning styles. Moreover, the lifeline feature was included as a measure to benefit the lower proficiency pupils that struggled while answering the missions. As a result, the lower proficiency pupils' fluency in speaking improved even though grammatical errors were produced. During the second implementation, the pupils displayed more enthusiasm and confidence in completing the speaking tasks due to the concocted improvements.

After the second implementation, the data collected were then further analysed to improve the innovation. The main focus of the innovation was to highlight pupils' confidence and fluency in speaking in English. Due to the grammatical errors that surfaced during the second implementation, the sample answers feature was added in order to indirectly enlighten the pupils in terms of the proper and correct grammatical structures for the missions. During the third implementation, the pupils seemed more confident in the

speaking lesson due to the charming pictures, animations and sound effects used. Moreover, during this session, the pupils managed to complete the activity without much stuttering.

4.1. Notable improvement in fluency among the pupils

Along with the implementation of gamification through the interactive slides during speaking lessons in a period of two weeks, it was noted that the quantity and quality of language practice among the pupils have noticeably increased. This stipulated that the pupils have had the opportunity to communicate in the language during speaking lessons. Through gamified activities typically conducted through interactive slides and employed under the Communicative Approach, pupils are able to showcase their understanding of the lesson by providing academic and social support in developing each other's English speaking skills. While completing this speaking tasks, pupils could practice to use the language in an authentic environment. This process not only promotes communicative learning among the pupils but it indirectly presents them with the opportunity to undergo collaborative learning. This exposes the pupils to fun ways of utilising the language learnt. The pupils stop feeling forced to speak. Instead, they would willingly attempt to utilise the language as they communicate their feelings and opinions to complete the speaking task with aids from their friends.

4.2. Increase in confidence rate among the pupils

As quoted from Malebese and Tlali (2020), most English teachers from schools in Malaysia particularly in the rural area received disappointing reaction from the pupils when it comes to the teaching of speaking. This is partially the consequence of the restricted mentality of these pupils as they could yet see the benefit of learning the language. This gamified approach of learning has provided abundance opportunity for the pupils to explore the principles underlying communication which includes turn taking, attention and consistency. Eka Fajar Rahmani (2020) asserted that pupils do feel compelled to speak when gamification is used as one of the teaching methods to teach English in the classroom, proving that it indeed involved behaviouristic-based-learning aside from cognitive learning. In short, this method of learning speaking skill permits the pupils to learn by actually communicating and socialising with one another, developing their positive outlook on the acquisition of the English language.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In a nutshell, this innovation was able to attain positive outcomes in enhancing the rural pupils' confidence and fluency in English speaking activities. This innovation which featured the gamified-learning theory was deemed beneficial as it possessed the potential to turn dull and dry speaking activities in the classroom into an exciting and meaningful learning experience for the pupils. The "Speak Up, Mr Pirate!" possessed interesting features such as charming visuals, animations, sounds and game elements that managed to grasp the pupils' attention throughout the sessions. The features mentioned cover a wide

range of multiple intelligences that pupils mostly acquired thus why after continuous improvements, managed to showcase evolving outcomes. Moreover, this innovation activity has played an important role in developing positive communication among the teachers, as well as the pupils themselves. This innovation focused on pupil-centred learning where pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively among themselves. Presented with autonomy during the "Speak Up, Mr Pirate!", the pupils managed to exert lesser anxiety that could cause stuttering and pausing throughout the activity. Hence, it is highly recommended to apply this gamified interactive slides in order to tackle pupils' confidence and fluency in speaking English. Future research can explore the possibility of utilising this innovation and gamified-learning theory for other English skills such as writing.

REFERENCES

Amalia, R. (2017). Improving listening and speaking skills by using animation videos and discussion method. *Pedagogy: Journal of English Language Teaching*, *2*(1), 30-36. Retrieved from https://www.repository.metrouniv.ac.id/index.php/pedagogy/ article/download/652/632/

Eka Fajar Rahmani. (2020.) The Benefits of Gamification in the English Learning Context. *Indonesian Journal of English Education (IJEE),* 7 (1): 37-47. Retrieved from 10.15408/ijee.v7i1.17054

Karmila Rafiqah M. Rafiq, Fetylyana Nor Pazilah, Goh Ying Tong, Melor Md Yunus & Harwati Hashim. (2020). Game On! Development and Evaluation of Computer Games for ESL Classroom. *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research 9*(2), 1976- 1980. Retrieved from http://www.ijstr.org/final-print/feb2020/Game-On-Development-And-Evaluation-Of-Computer-Games-For-Esl-Classroom.pdf

Malebese, M. Elisi L. & Tlali, M. F. (2020). Teaching of English first additional language in rural learning environments: a case for problem-based learning. *International Journal of Inclusive Education 24*(14): 1540–1551. Retrieved from 10.1080/1360311 6.2018.1544300

Matsuda, A. (2019). World Englishes and pedagogy. *The handbook of world Englishes*. 686–702. Retrieved from 10.1002/9781119147282.ch38

Nor Hani Misbah, Maslawati Mohamad, Melor Md Yunus & Azizah Ya'acob. (2017). Identifying the Factors Contributing to Students' Difficulties in the English Language Learning. Creative Education, 8(13), 1999-2008. DOI:10.4236/ce.2017.813136

Ohn, May Honey, Shahril Yusof, Meryl Grace Lansing, Bareth Ravindran, Kashif Nisar, Issa Mchucha, Zamhar Iswandono, Ng Pey Luen & Khin Maung Ohn. (2018). Gamified Online Active Learning Theory. *IEEE International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Engineering and Technology (IICAIET)*, 1-4. Retrieved from 10.1109/IICAIET.2018.8638463

Patesan, M., Balagiu, A. & Alibec, C. (2018). Visual Aids in Language Education. *International Conference Knowledge-Based Organization 24*(2), 356-351. Retrieved from 10.1515/kbo-2018-0115

Rozana Sani. (2019). *Addressing The Challenges in Teaching English*. Retrieved from: https://www.nst.com.my/education/2019/09/520502/addressing-challenges-teaching-english on 26th September 2021.

Teguh Hadi Saputro, Ibnu Choirin Tafsirudin and Rafika Rabba Farah (2020). The Use of Vlog in Improving Students' Oral Language Production: A Case Study. *English Education: Jurnal Tadris Bahasa Inggris*, *13*(1), 135-158. Retrieved from https://DOI.org/10.24 042/ee-jtbi.v13i1.5298

Yemini, M., Goren, H., & Maxwell, C. 2018. Global citizenship education in the era of mobility, conflict and globalisation. British Journal of Educational Studies, 66(4), 423-432. DOI: 10.1080/00071005.2018.1533103

Zazali Musa. 2017. Students Must Overcome Fear of Speaking English, Says Mahdzir. Retrieved from: https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2017/10/02/students-must-overcome-fear-of-speaking-english-says-mahdzir. [23rd May 2021].