



## **Vlog Portfolio as a Technique of Speaking Assessment in Islamic Boarding School**

Educalingua,  
Vol. 2 No. 2, 2024, pp. 93-105  
DOI [10.26877/educalingua.v2i2.1184](https://doi.org/10.26877/educalingua.v2i2.1184)

**Received** November 4, 2024  
**Revised** November 18, 2024  
**Accepted** November 25, 2024

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### **ABSTRACT**

English holds great significance in Indonesia, particularly within Islamic boarding schools (Pesantren). Despite its introduction in primary schools, surveys reveal that the majority of graduates face common communication issues, such as inadequate speaking abilities and a dearth of interaction skills. Communicating in English for a second language speaker is a difficult task due to a variety of reasons associated with the fear of speaking English, such as language anxiety, restricted vocabulary, and a lack of exposure to the language, as argued by the researcher. This paper aims to offer an elaboration of vlog portfolio as a technique in teaching and assessing speaking in Islamic boarding schools. Close-Reading method was used to gain further data and understanding due to the issue. In conclusion, A vlog portfolio can be an alternate strategy for students in promoting their progress of speaking performance.

**Keywords:** Vlog Portfolio, Speaking Skills, Islamic Boarding School

### **Introduction**

Teaching English becomes a crucial issue when it is taught as a foreign language. Teaching English as a foreign language is a demanding task when it comes to the places where English serves limited exposure (Intakhab & Khan, 2004). English is taught and used

as a foreign language in Indonesia. The fact that English is one of the most essential international languages for communication has been acknowledged by the Indonesian government since its independence; therefore, the government has recommended that English become a compulsory subject in secondary schools. Furthermore, Lie (2007) also argues that “the maintenance of English as a foreign language has been steady as it is officially taught throughout the secondary schools” (p. 2). Lie (2007) also stated that there has been a tendency in several big cities in Indonesia to teach English starting from the lower grades of primary schools and even from kindergarten. However, these aims have never been satisfactorily achieved. Although English is officially taught throughout secondary schools, competence and proficiency in this foreign language among high schools are generally low. The education industry has realized the importance of the role of English language in Indonesia as having been applied by Islamic boarding schools (Pesantren). Islamic boarding schools drill students tougher rather than public schools Hidayat (2007). Various efforts were made by the institutions to create graduates who are fluent in foreign languages. One of them is the application of language regulations, various kinds of activities, and some teaching strategies are applied in the classroom to boost students' language skills, especially speaking. Some studies proved that applying English in Islamic boarding school significantly improves students speaking skill. As a study which has been conducted by Fahrudin (2017), the result showed that English use in daily for students of Islamic boarding school contributed their English-speaking performance and self-confidence. Furthermore, the investigation of Nurcholilah (2018) due to the implementation of English day in Pesantren improved santri's (students who study in Islamic boarding school) speaking ability for 63.08%.

The rapid progress of technology affects the students' learning strategies in the current period. This phenomenon is also shifting the way students acquire English in Islamic boarding schools. The widespread use of smartphones and tablet computers with internet connectivity has enabled every individual to communicate via mobile gadgets, normalizing interactions in the vast linguistically compelling realms of the internet and social network. Moreover, great numbers of innovations in the field of Information Communication Technology (ICT) have given rise to many social media applications. Among the most preferred social networking sites of the internet are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, Whatsapp and others Abdelraheem & Ahmed (2018). Virtual platforms have become one of the most notable phenomena that have afforded seamless mass communication. Inadvertently, the use of e-portfolios has also become more increasingly apparent among digital natives today Lim (2013). In the recent years, the use of digital media and technology has become increasingly popular in education, offering new opportunities to engage students and enhance their skills. The youths especially, have been taking part in global communication addressing myriad topics ranging from societal to global issues by video blogging (vlogging) their ideas and opinions. The concept of vlogging, which involves creating and sharing video blogs online, has gained significant traction among young people, including students. Unlike other media tools, video blog uniquely paves the opportunities for network and conversation between the video blogger (vlogger) or the author and the

viewers. Viewers can comment on vlogs and vloggers can comment on each other's profiles which lead to interactions (Theses & Warmbrodt, 2007).

The power of social networking is great due to the notion that over 1 billion people are now online worldwide. They are often referred to as 'netizens' or the 'digital natives'. Now, people are more open to share their lives across the Internet than ever before (Malita & Martin, 2010).

Although English has been given since early education level, surveys still show that a common problem in communication among graduates includes poor speaking skills and lack of interaction skills (Alias et al. (2013); Shahariah Saleh & Murtaza (2018)). Scholars suggested that communicating in English for a second language speaker is a challenging feat due to many factors attributed with to the fear of speaking English such as language anxiety, limited vocabulary, and lack of exposure to communicate in the language (Darmi & Albion (2013); Slater & Barker (2002); Tanveer (2008) and Hassan & Selamat (2002) argued that learners do not receive enough support for their learning especially in nurturing listening and speaking to improve communication in the second language (L2), hence there is minimal exposure to practice with a meaningful communicative context. In order to reduce this problem, both educators and scholars need to explore the alternative approaches to improve teaching and learning especially for communication skills in EFL classrooms. Many studies have investigated the potentials of using Web 4.0 tools such as blogs and social media to enhance language learning (Gromik (2015); Hussain et al. (2018); Sukri et al. (2018)); Currently, studies on how 21st century learning tools could be utilised to maximise learning outcomes is mostly on teaching writing skills e.g., Ab & Abu Bakar (2009); Yunus et al. (2013) that outnumber speaking skills. This paper aims to offer an elaboration of vlog portfolio as a technique in teaching and assessing speaking in Islamic boarding schools.

### **The Notion of Speaking**

Speaking is a complex skill because at least it is concerned with components of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency. The researcher recognizes that there is a difference between knowledge of language and skills. Sumardi et al. (2021) states that there is a fundamental difference between knowledge and skills. Both can be understood and memorized, but only skills can be imitated and practiced. He clarifies that skills can be seen in two basic ways. Firstly, it is a motor receptive skill or passive skill which involves perceiving, recalling, and articulating in the correct order sounds and structured by the language. Secondly, interacting skills involve making decisions about communication, such as what to say, how to say, or whether to develop them. Interaction skills are involved in making decisions about how to communicate. On the other hand, Herrera Gómez & Cortés (2013) mentioned that an oral activity with an interactive process which involves several skills: using grammatical word classes, producing correct English pronunciation, producing fluent speech, and using an adequate number of words can be defined as speaking. He believes that this activity is aimed at:

1. Express oneself intelligibly
2. Convey intended meaning accurately in sufficient vocabulary
3. Use appropriate language in every context.

#### 4. Interact or communicate with others fluently

He also rates oral into four areas: interactive communication for fluent effect on the listener, vocabulary resources, appropriateness in pragmatic or register competence, and intelligibility for pronunciation. It means that speaking demands intelligibility, appropriateness, fluency, and accuracy. Based on the overviewed definitions, it can be concluded that speaking is a complex cognitive skill with many features inside of it. Other opinion defines that speaking as delivering or sending a message means that uses verbal language, accuracy, and understanding the meaning of both speakers will decide the success of communication (Nuraini, 2016). English speaking is not an easy skill because speakers should know a lot of significant components like pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Students should have enough English speaking ability to communicate with other people easily and effectively. Students can express their feelings, ideas; say stories; request; talk, discuss, and show the various functions of language. (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, improving communication skill is a challenge for students to get a good English speaking proficiency. Speaking is a most difficult skill for most learners who learn it as a foreign language due to their low proficiency (Al Hosni, 2014; Alharbi, 2015; Alonso Alonso, 2014; Zhang, 2009) of some following features like contractions, vowel reductions and elision; the use of slang and idioms; stress, rhythm and intonation; and the need to interact with at least one other speaker.

#### *Teaching Speaking*

During the last forty, fifty years, the notion of language proficiency has shifted from focus on language as a linguistic system towards language as a means of communication. At the same time, the teaching of languages has moved from teaching language as a grammatical system to teaching language as communication (communicative language teaching, CLT). Pedagogical developments were made possible by theoretical insights in the 1980s, when Canale and Swain's model of communication competence has presented (Canale & Swain, 1980). In addition to the linguistic component, grammatical competence, the model contained sociolinguistic and strategic competences. In more recent models of communicative competence, strategic competence has an important role as an executive, metacognitive or metalinguistic component in message creation, monitoring and repair. The most recent model of communicative competence is The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment (Council of Europe, 2001), which was recently complemented by an update with new descriptors: The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment. Companion volume with new descriptors. Council of Europe (2018) In the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001), communicative language competence consists of linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. Linguistic competence comprises the language user's knowledge and skills of language as a system, sociolinguistic competence refers to its variations, comprising "rules of politeness, norms governing relations between generations, sexes, classes and social groups, linguistic

codification of certain fundamental rituals in the functioning of a community” (Council of Europe, 2001), and communication between participants from different cultures. Pragmatic competence refers to ‘the functional use of linguistic resources (production of language functions, speech acts), drawing on scenarios or scripts of interactional exchanges. It also concerns the mastery of discourse, cohesion and coherence, the identification of text types and forms, irony, and parody” (Council of Europe, 2001). The Common European Framework has adopted an action-oriented approach to language use, in which language learners as ‘social agents’ carries out tasks defined as ‘actions performed by one or more individuals strategically using their own specific competences to achieve a given result.” (Council of Europe, 2001) This approach to language learning, teaching and assessment is a general one (Council of Europe, 2001) and so is the approach to language teaching methodology, which ‘has to be comprehensive, presenting all options in an explicit and transparent way and avoiding advocacy or dogmatism.” (Council of Europe, 2001). The present discussion focuses on how speaking proficiency is defined in the Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2001) and its Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018) and how speaking can be taught in the foreign language classrooms to enable learners to become competent speakers of the language/s studied. The discussion does not attempt to be comprehensive, but instead it purports to illustrate and suggest instructional approaches and pedagogical applications that have been shown to promote the learning of spoken skills.

### *Authentic Assessment for Speaking Skill*

Zaim et al. (2020) stated that an authentic assessment is a procedure in which teachers acquire information about their students' progress and learning accomplishment using a variety of ways. This type of evaluation can describe, prove, or demonstrate precisely what learning objectives have been completely overcome and attained. The assessment is no longer merely assessing the achievement of learning objectives. However, it is an attempt to obtain a variety of information regularly, a continuous and thorough process, and students' learning outcomes.

When it comes to evaluating students' speaking skills, authentic assessment emerges as the most accurate and effective method. This approach focuses on measuring the learners' ability to effectively communicate in the target language through oral means. Unlike traditional forms of assessment that may rely solely on written exams or multiple-choice questions, authentic assessment provides a more comprehensive evaluation by assessing students' performance in real-life situations.

By using authentic assessment, students' learning achievements are demonstrated through their practical application of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in context-specific scenarios. This method goes beyond assessing mere memorization of vocabulary or grammar rules. Instead, it emphasizes the students' ability to actively engage in meaningful conversations, express their ideas coherently, and comprehend and respond appropriately to different communication situations.

Authentic assessment allows students to showcase their language proficiency by completing tasks that mirror real-world language use. These tasks may include participating in discussions, delivering presentations, engaging in role-plays or simulations, or even engaging in authentic communication with native speakers or other learners.

By employing authentic assessment, educators can gain a more accurate understanding of students' true language abilities, as it provides a holistic view of their communicative competence. This method not only evaluates the students' command of vocabulary and grammar but also takes into account their fluency, pronunciation, intonation, and ability to use appropriate language functions and discourse strategies.

Furthermore, authentic assessment promotes a learner-centered approach, encouraging students to actively apply what they have learned in a practical and meaningful way. It helps develop their confidence in using the language and prepares them for real-life communication situations they may encounter beyond the classroom.

### *Grammar*

Test takers are assessed on how to control its usage within sentences, to construct, to use it appropriately and accurately and to avoid grammatical errors in speaking.

### *Vocabulary*

The range, precision, and the usage of vocabulary features in a conversation used by test takers indicate the level of how proficient they are.

### *Comprehension*

Understanding the context of the conversation and able to give appropriate response according to the question.

### *Fluency*

The language fluency indicates that the production of speech in a conversation is well delivered. Have confidence in delivering the speech and able to responds specific theme without many hesitations in choosing words.

### *Pronunciation*

Pronunciation deals with how often errors in pronunciation occur and how the pronunciation aspect interfere the communication are the criteria of the assessment.

### *Task*

Task deals with finishing the command given during the speaking test. Like all test scores, speaking scores must be dependable, fair, and above all useful for the intended



purposes (Luoma, 2003). To ensure speaking skill assessment is trustworthy, there are factors that should come into consideration (Hughes, 2003; Luoma, 2003):

1. Practicality

The first principle of making language assessment is practicality. Before deciding a test, we need to analyze how practical the test is to be used considering the time constraint of running and interpreting the scoring of the test, budget limitation, and facilities.

2. Validity

Consistently accurate measurement must be provided to assign a valid test. It has to measure what should be measured by excluding all irrelevant variables to be tested. When speaking skill is tested, making essay is not a valid test as it fails to provide information of the test takers speech production. In result, it may not bring about the real test takers' ability.

In accordance to types of speaking, test designer should decide what kind of speaking types would be tested as it will influence the design of assessment. Using interview test for imitative speaking may lead to invalidity of assessment.

3. Reliability

The need of consistent scoring measurement is very important to make a test reliable. In addition, clear rubric and scoring criteria is also a must. Sometimes a reliable test may not be a valid test. However, a test designer should struggle to keep a reliable test as valid as possible.

As a need of reliable scoring system is unavoidable in speaking test, before conducting speaking test, test takers must prepare a standard scoring system. The items on it should represent all aspects of what are to be assessed from the students. The weight of the score must be printed clearly on the form as well to make sure each student's ability is well presented. During the test, the standard scoring system will be used to record students' work. Without a good scoring system, it is hardly possible to have a reliable result of the test.

4. Authenticity

It refers to a contextual language or language in use. Students are asked to represent something related to their values. In that case, the language produced is authentic.

One goal of language testing is its backwash effect. It tells both teacher and learners of the effect of the learning and teaching (Hughes, 2003). As it is important, therefore, this issue should also be explored in designing a test

## Methodology

This research paper explains the potential benefits of vlog portfolio in promoting speaking skills, especially for students who stay in Islamic boarding school. Close-Reading method is used to gain further data and deep understanding through review to related literatures of vlog, portfolio, speaking skills, and students in Islamic boarding schools. As it is stated Greenham (2018) that through Close-Reading, the deep and intensive understanding will be obtained within long texts.

## Findings

### *Vlog Portfolio as Technology Involvement of Current Teaching Speaking in Islamic Boarding School*

Studies have shown evidence that social network can provide people with many affordances when used in educational settings (Abdelraheem & Ahmed, 2018; Ferdig et al., 2016). Scholars have investigated how convenient personalized and collaborative learning with mobile social network applications are besides increasing students' motivation (Alvarez et al., 2011). However, there is a dearth of studies on the use of social media as a learning tool to teach speaking in the Indonesian context.

Verbert et al. (2016) argued that although it is possible to attend different courses and seminars on public speaking, opportunities to practice and receive feedback from tutors or peers under realistic conditions are limited. The study conducted by Gorkaltseva et al. (2015) also argued that oral fluency was severely hindered because of the learners' low motivation for verbal interaction, which is due to learners' lack of pragmatic competence and lack of linguistic competence. In a similar vein, Gromik (2015) and Chen (2005) found that EFL learners do not have adequate opportunity to use the target language during class time.

Therefore, through vlog portfolio which is task-based project in teaching speaking, students will not be bounded by the time and space of classroom activities session. Speaking activities will be done under the teacher's guidance and technology flexibility. Feedback is given through live or delayed interaction from the teacher so students will keep drilled even they learn it autonomously.

## Discussion

Some studies have investigated about this issue such as Shuib et al. (2020) who focused on building students' speaking skill through vlog portfolio in the context of English as Second Language (ESL) classroom. It resulted that vlog portfolio contributed students in gaining their motivation to speak and drilling themselves to practice speaking independently. By developing creativity and self-expression, vlog provide a platform for students to showcase their creativity and express their individuality. By creating vlog,



students can explore different topics, experiment with storytelling techniques, and develop their own unique voice. Another research which was conducted by Fidan & Debbağ (2018) showed that video blog (vlog) activities activated creativities of pre-service teachers in constructing strategies to deliver materials or topic and supervise the students' oral performance by seeing the processes and progress of vlog project. Those above studies have obviously stated that vlog portfolio significantly improve the speaking skill of students. However, none of existed studies investigated vlog portfolio in the context of English as Foreign Language (EFL) and is concerning to students of Islamic boarding school.

Islamic boarding school or Pesantren as educational institution which covers overall period of students' activities plays important role in constructing the skillful graduates who will be the part of global society. Thus, most of Pesantrens now apply English and Arabic as the medium to communicate among students and also teachers. The students can incorporate Islamic values and teachings into the vlogs. This allows students to express their faith, share their perspectives on Islamic principles, and explore topics related to their religious and cultural identity in the vlog. Involving technology to drill santris in speaking English will engage their motivation to speak since they get new way to learn, develop creativity and self-expression by exploring different topics, encourage critical thinking skills as the evaluate different perspectives, promote self-reflection and self-assessment by reviewing their own videos, identifying areas for improvement, and reflecting on their progress over time, develop a growth mindset and take ownership of their learning journey, and they have flexible time and place to do it. This is going to assist much students because the solid timetable they have in Pesantren will be impossible to practice only during the class session. So, vlog portfolio allows santris to do the project by practicing independently after school periods and submit the video to the teacher periodically. They will get feedback from the teacher which can be as input to improve the upcoming vlog activities.

### *The Notion of Speaking Future Research and Implications for Application*

#### *The Procedure of Vlog Portfolio*

According to Srikaew et al. (2015), the speaking portfolio procedure included of seven steps, which include planning, preparation for students, evidence collecting, progress monitoring, improvement of performance, reflection and displaying the works. Students should be provided with age-appropriate, hands-on assignments for assessment.



Figure 1. Procedure of Vlog Portfolio

1. **Planning:** Teachers need to plan and design the overall structure and requirements of the Vlog Portfolio. This includes determining the learning objectives, the specific topics or tasks, the guideline how do the vlog portfolio, and the assessment criteria. The planning phase ensures alignment with the curriculum and sets clear expectations for students.
2. **Preparation for Students:** The students are actively involved in designing, preparing the contents, setting the place, time, and situation of their vlogs. This means they have the responsibility to plan, create, and curate the material they will present in their vlogs.
3. **Evidence Collecting:** Students have done the task of making their vlogs and following the guidelines provided and then they submit their vlogs to the teacher.
4. **Progress Monitoring:** Throughout the Vlog Portfolio project, teachers monitor students' progress to provide timely support and guidance. Teachers may give feedback sessions to assess students' understanding of the task, offer suggestions for improvement. The feedback is used to improve content that has been made in previous vlog.
5. **Improvement of Performance:** As students work on their vlogs, they receive feedback from teachers to help them enhance their performance. Teachers may provide constructive criticism, highlight areas for improvement, and offer strategies or resources for further development. This iterative process encourages students to refine their vlogging skills and incorporate feedback to produce higher-quality vlogs.
6. **Reflection:** Reflection is an essential component of the Vlog Portfolio. The results of the last video will be reflected upon, and the final outcome will be displayed or posted.

7. Displaying the Works: The final step involves showcasing the completed vlogs. Teachers may organize a presentation session where students have the opportunity to share their vlogs.

## Conclusion

A Vlog Portfolio can serve as an alternative technique to promote teaching and assessment intensively, going beyond the confines of traditional classroom activities. The students are given the opportunity to create vlogs on specific topics or tasks related to their learning objectives. They can research, plan, and record their vlogs independently, allowing them to take ownership of their learning process. This autonomy fosters a sense of responsibility and self-direction among students, as they actively participate in the creation of their educational content.

Moreover, the Vlog Portfolio approach stimulates students' creativity. They can experiment with different storytelling techniques, visual aids, and editing styles to make their vlogs engaging and informative. This creative aspect of vlogging encourages students to think critically, problem-solve, and express their ideas in unique ways.

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