DEVELOPING A PROTOTYPE SPEAKING GAME FOR ENGINEERING STUDENTS AT POLYTECHNIC IN MALAYSIA

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Proficiency in English speaking skills in the engineering profession has become an unspoken concern among employers lately. Students of engineering who sit for the Malaysian University English Test (MUET) often face anxiety due to their inability to perform well in the speaking component. The objective of this study is to develop a prototype speaking game incorporating MUET speaking skills as a novel strategy to assist the engineering students in improving their speaking skills. The study also looks at the benefits engineering students gained while using the prototype developed to improve their speaking skills. A survey design was employed to carry out the study. The findings of this study revealed a significant agreement from the students on using the prototype which helped them to improve in terms of using new words, grammar and vocabulary. Thus, it can be concluded that polytechnic engineering students need guidance in the form of a prototype speaking game to assist them to practice their speaking skills in order to perform in the MUET. As a result, a novel strategy in the form of a prototype speaking game which includes all the sub-skills of speaking skill should be introduced to the polytechnic curriculum in Malaysian polytechnics.

Keywords: Malaysian polytechnic, Engineering polytechnic students, Speaking skill, Prototype speaking game

1. Introduction

Engineering students in Malaysia are expected to showcase good speaking skills in order to function well at the workplace. For this purpose, engineering students who are able to speak confidently at the workplace will be employed to fulfil the needs of the current job market. Thus, technical institutions are responsible for developing a novel strategy to assist the engineering students to master speaking skills that would enable them to secure jobs after graduation. In fact, the purpose of developing such a prototype speaking game is to improve the engineering students' speaking skills. This is further supported by Bonk, Imhoff, and Cheng (2002) on the importance of being able to communicate confidently in both spoken and written English for success in the engineering profession. Furthermore, various technical institutions have taken the initiative to prepare their students to learn English as a course and not as a language (Isnin, Mustapha, & Othman, 2018).

Students who enrolled in the Malaysian polytechnics specifically in the three different engineering departments namely, electrical, mechanical and civil engineering are allowed to take the Malaysian