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STUDENTS' LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND PERCEIVED SPEAKING DEVELOPMENT THROUGH VLOG-BASED PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman belajar siswa sekolah menengah pertama serta persepsi mereka terhadap perkembangan kemampuan berbicara selama penerapan Project-Based Learning (PjBL) berbasis vlog dalam kelas Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL). Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data utama dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur terhadap enam siswa kelas sembilan yang dipilih melalui purposive sampling, terdiri atas dua siswa berkemampuan tinggi, dua siswa berkemampuan sedang, dan dua siswa berkemampuan rendah yang berpartisipasi dalam proyek vlog bertema "Traveling with Your Friends" di sebuah SMP negeri di Garut, Jawa Barat. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik berdasarkan Braun dan Clarke (2006). Temuan menunjukkan bahwa siswa mengalami proses belajar yang melibatkan keterlibatan aktif, partisipasi di berbagai tahap proyek, kolaborasi dengan anggota kelompok, serta berbagai tantangan seperti kesulitan pelafalan, keterbatasan kosakata, dan kecemasan berbicara di depan kamera. Meskipun demikian, siswa melaporkan penurunan kecemasan dan peningkatan motivasi sepanjang proyek berlangsung. Terkait persepsi perkembangan kemampuan berbicara, siswa merasakan peningkatan dalam kelancaran, kepercayaan diri, kemauan untuk berkomunikasi, serta penguasaan pelafalan dan kosakata, meskipun tingkat peningkatan tersebut bervariasi antara siswa berkemampuan tinggi, sedang, dan rendah. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa pembelajaran berbasis proyek melalui vlog dapat menjadi strategi yang bermakna untuk mendukung perkembangan kemampuan berbicara siswa sekolah menengah pertama, sekaligus menyoroti pentingnya dukungan emosional dan kolaboratif sepanjang proses pembelajaran.

Kata Kunci: *Pembelajaran Berbasis Proyek, vlog, perkembangan kemampuan berbicara, pengalaman belajar, EFL*

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore junior high school students' learning experiences and their perceived speaking development during the implementation of vlog-based Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. The primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with six ninth-grade students selected through purposive sampling, consisting of two high-achieving, two middle-achieving, and two low-achieving students who participated in a vlog project themed “Traveling with Your Friends” at a public junior high school in Garut, West Java. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke (2006). The findings reveal that students experienced a learning process involving active engagement, participation across project stages, collaboration with group members, and various challenges such as pronunciation difficulties, limited vocabulary, and speaking anxiety in front of the camera. Nonetheless, students reported decreasing anxiety and increasing motivation

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throughout the project. Regarding their perceived speaking development, students perceived improvements in fluency, confidence, willingness to communicate, and mastery of pronunciation and vocabulary, although the extent of improvement varied among high-, middle-, and low-achieving students. These findings confirm that vlog-based project learning can serve as a meaningful strategy to support junior high school students' speaking development, while highlighting the importance of emotional and collaborative support throughout the learning process.

Keywords: *Project-Based Learning, vlog, speaking development, learning experience, EFL*

INTRODUCTION

In the Indonesian context, improving students' speaking ability continues to be a major concern in English language education. Although English has been taught at the junior high school level, many students still experience difficulties in expressing their ideas orally. Recent research on Indonesian junior high school learners shows that speaking anxiety may be triggered by limited vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, fear of mispronunciation, and the pressure of speaking in front of others. These difficulties can make students hesitant to participate actively in speaking activities and may limit their opportunities to practice English orally (Prameswari et al., 2025). In addition, empirical findings indicate that students' speaking development can be effectively supported through structured learning activities that provide ample opportunities for active participation, rehearsal, and meaningful target language communication (Alfatihah et al., 2022).

One instructional approach that has received increasing attention in English language teaching is Project-Based Learning (PjBL). Project-Based Learning emphasizes student-centered learning through meaningful projects that require learners to investigate problems, collaborate with peers, solve problems, and produce authentic learning products. In speaking instruction, this approach provides opportunities for students to use English throughout different stages of project completion rather than only during a single speaking performance. Research with junior high school students has reported that PjBL can support speaking development and can also create more enjoyable learning activities for learners (Alfatihah et al., 2022). More recent research has similarly found that PjBL can contribute to students' speaking confidence, fluency, motivation, and willingness to communicate, particularly when projects involve realistic communication tasks and collaboration (Kaharuddin, 2025).

The integration of digital technology into language learning has further expanded the implementation of Project-Based Learning in EFL classrooms. One digital medium that has become increasingly relevant is the video blog (*vlog*). Vlogs allow students to create video-based presentations in which they communicate information, share experiences, or describe particular topics using English. Within a vlog-based Project-Based Learning environment, students can be involved in generating ideas, preparing scripts, rehearsing their speaking performance, recording videos, reviewing their recordings, and revising their performance. These activities provide repeated opportunities for speaking practice and can encourage students to become more independent in monitoring their own learning. A qualitative study by Yusuf et al. (2023), for example, found that Indonesian EFL students who participated in a food-vlog project experienced improvements in self-efficacy, vocabulary mastery, learning autonomy, technological skills, and confidence in speaking English.

Vlog-based learning can also provide opportunities for students to practice particular aspects of speaking through repetition and self-directed learning. Fatimah et al. (2024), for instance, found that Indonesian EFL students used repetition, technological tools, and social

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interaction as strategies for developing English pronunciation through vlogs. Their findings suggest that vlog-based activities can provide learners with opportunities to repeatedly practice pronunciation and apply what they learn through communication with others. In a broader context, mobile-assisted Project-Based Learning has also been found to support speaking development in areas such as fluency, lexical resources, grammatical accuracy, and pronunciation, while students reported positive attitudes toward the learning process (Benlaghrissi & Ouahidi, 2024).

Previous studies have therefore provided substantial evidence that Project-Based Learning and technology-supported activities foster students' speaking development and learning engagement. Studies at the junior high school level have reported positive effects of PjBL on speaking performance, while other studies have highlighted improvements in confidence, fluency, motivation, and collaboration (Alfatihah et al., 2022; Kaharuddin, 2025). Research involving Indonesian EFL learners has also shown that vlog-based projects can support speaking practice, confidence, autonomy, and vocabulary development (Yusuf et al., 2023). Together, these empirical findings demonstrate that integrating collaborative project work with digital media creation offers promising pedagogical pathways for developing communicative competence.

Despite these findings, the existing literature still leaves room for further investigation. Much of the recent research has examined the effectiveness or outcomes of Project-Based Learning through speaking tests, experimental designs, or quantitative achievement measures (Alfatihah et al., 2022; Kaharuddin, 2025). Similarly, Yusuf et al. (2023) explored students' experiences with a vlog project, but the participants were university students rather than junior high school learners. This difference is important because younger EFL learners may experience speaking activities differently, particularly in relation to anxiety, confidence, peer interaction, and learning support. Recent research specifically focusing on junior high school speaking anxiety has shown that fear of mistakes, limited vocabulary, mispronunciation, and performing in front of the class remain acute challenges for this age group (Prameswari et al., 2025).

Therefore, there is a clear need for a more in-depth qualitative investigation of how junior high school students experience vlog-based Project-Based Learning and how they perceive their speaking development through the learning process. Rather than focusing only on whether students' speaking scores improve, examining their experiences can reveal the emotional, social, and learning processes that occur during project implementation. These may include students' initial reactions, repeated speaking practice, collaboration with peers, difficulties during recording, self-reflection, and changes in confidence. Such aspects are difficult to capture through quantitative achievement measures alone. The existing qualitative evidence on vlog-based speaking projects also suggests the value of examining learners' voices, particularly because students may perceive changes in confidence, autonomy, and speaking ability in ways that are not fully reflected in formal speaking scores (Yusuf et al., 2023).

To address this gap, the present study explores junior high school students' learning experiences and their perceived speaking development during the implementation of vlog-based Project-Based Learning in an Indonesian junior high school. Employing a qualitative case study design, this study uses classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation to obtain an in-depth understanding of students' experiences throughout the project. Rather than focusing solely on the statistical effectiveness of vlog-based PjBL, this study seeks to understand how students experience the learning process and how they perceive changes in their speaking ability after participating in the project. By highlighting students'

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perspectives, the study is expected to contribute to research on technology-supported EFL learning, particularly in the context of junior high school speaking instruction. Accordingly, this study addresses two main research questions regarding how students experience the project implementation and how they perceive their speaking development.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a case study design to explore junior high school students' learning experiences and perceived speaking development during the implementation of vlog-based Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The case study design was considered appropriate because the study focused on understanding students' experiences, responses, and perceptions within a specific classroom context rather than measuring their speaking achievement statistically. The research was conducted at a public junior high school in Garut, West Java, Indonesia, involving class IX K, which consisted of 44 students who participated in vlog-based Project-Based Learning activities. From this class, six students were selected as interview participants through purposive sampling based on their involvement in the project and willingness to participate. The six participants represented different levels of speaking achievement, including two high-achieving students, two middle-achieving students, and two low-achieving students, in order to obtain diverse perspectives regarding their learning experiences and perceived speaking development.

The primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted after the completion of the vlog-based Project-Based Learning activities. The interview questions were open-ended and focused on students' learning experiences, challenges, collaboration, speaking confidence, speaking anxiety, reflection on their performance, and perceived speaking development. The interviews were conducted in *Bahasa Indonesia* to allow students to express their thoughts and experiences more comfortably and clearly. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for comprehensive qualitative analysis. Documentation related to the learning activities, lesson plans, and students' final vlog products was also analyzed to enrich and triangulate the interview data.

The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the six-phase framework established by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis began with repeated reading of the interview transcripts to achieve deep data familiarization. Meaningful statements directly related to the research questions were subsequently identified and assigned initial codes. Similar codes were grouped to develop broader categories and overarching themes, which were then systematically reviewed, refined, and verified against the complete data set. Through this iterative process, the analysis focused on two main areas: students' learning experiences during vlog-based Project-Based Learning and their perceived speaking development.

Vlog-based Project-Based Learning activities were conducted during the researcher's teaching practicum in the English classroom. The project used the theme "Traveling with Your Friends" and required students to work collaboratively in groups to create a travel vlog based on their exploration of local tourist destinations in Garut. At the beginning of the activity, students were introduced to the project objectives, worked collaboratively to plan the vlog content, prepared speaking scripts, divided group responsibilities, and practiced target language expressions. During the production stage, students recorded their videos and repeated scenes when necessary to ensure clear communication in English while introducing destinations and describing their activities. Afterward, the students edited and submitted their vlog products through digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, or TikTok for teacher feedback.

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To maintain participants' confidentiality, the six interview participants are referred to using code names according to their speaking achievement level. The participants are designated as HP1 and HP2 for high-achieving participants, MP1 and MP2 for middle-achieving participants, and LP1 and LP2 for low-achieving participants. This coding scheme ensured ethical anonymity while allowing the researchers to track how students with differing initial proficiency levels navigated the project. Consequently, all direct excerpts and analytical interpretations throughout this paper utilize these designated identifiers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Thematic analysis of the interview transcripts, guided by the procedures of Braun and Clarke (2006), generated nine primary themes that address the two research questions of this study. The first five themes capture students' learning experiences during the implementation of vlog-based Project-Based Learning, whereas the remaining four themes describe students' perceived speaking development. These themes emerged consistently across the six participants, although the intensity and nuances varied according to their prior speaking proficiency levels. To present a clear structural overview of the qualitative data, the distribution and categorization of these themes are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Emerging Themes from Thematic Analysis

No.	Research Question	Emerging Theme
1	RQ1	Students' engagement and active participation during the learning process
2	RQ1	Students' interaction and collaboration with peers
3	RQ1	Challenges encountered during vlog-based tasks
4	RQ1	Speaking anxiety before and during vlog-based activities
5	RQ1	Motivation during the vlog project
6	RQ2	Perceived improvement in speaking fluency
7	RQ2	Perceived confidence and willingness to communicate in English
8	RQ2	Self-assessment of pronunciation and vocabulary mastery
9	RQ2	Emotional readiness and comfort in speaking English after the project

As outlined in Table 1, the thematic findings delineate a comprehensive picture of both the pedagogical experiences and the self-perceived linguistic gains reported by the participants. The five themes categorized under the first research question illustrate how active engagement, peer collaboration, and motivational shifts helped students manage recurring linguistic and logistical hurdles. Meanwhile, the four themes under the second research question demonstrate distinct developmental milestones in fluency, communicative confidence, lexical expansion, and emotional comfort. Each theme displayed in Table 1 is elaborated below alongside representative excerpts from the student interviews.

Students' Engagement and Active Participation during the Learning Process

All participants described a distinct emotional entry point into the project, typically a mixture of surprise, curiosity, and nervousness, followed by growing engagement as the project progressed. HP1 recalled feeling quite surprised, curious, and happy because the task was perceived as more creative, while HP2 admitted to feeling confused yet intrigued to discover this novel learning method. For LP2, who described herself as shy in front of the camera and inexperienced in making serious vlogs, the initial reaction was dominated by apprehension.

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Once the project commenced, students across achievement levels took on multiple productive roles across its stages. HP1 explained that their group actively planned locations, filmed, memorized scripts, edited, and submitted the video, while LP2 reported shared responsibilities in filming and speaking on camera. This pattern indicates that vlog-based PjBL positioned students as active learning agents throughout the entire production cycle rather than passive recipients of isolated speaking drills.

Students' Interaction and Collaboration with Peers

Collaboration emerged as a pervasive feature of the vlog-making process across all working groups. Students divided tasks according to their respective strengths, including scriptwriting, filming, speaking, and video editing, while relying on group discussions to resolve disagreements. HP1 noted that the group worked together constructively, edited together, and used voting to establish the concept of the vlog whenever differences arose. MP1 described a similar problem-solving process, noting that continuous discussions with peers helped the group overcome indecision regarding filming locations. Peer support also served as an essential emotional resource, as exemplified by LP1 who felt encouraged when peers cheered her up during moments of nervousness. These collaborative dynamics demonstrate that the group structure of vlog-based PjBL successfully distributed both the technical workload and the emotional demands of speaking in English.

Challenges Encountered during Vlog-Based Tasks

Despite their high engagement, all six participants encountered various linguistic and logistical difficulties during project completion. Linguistic challenges primarily centered on pronunciation accuracy, limited vocabulary, script memorization, and grammar uncertainty. HP1 explained that memorizing the spoken English script was challenging, while LP1 admitted to struggling with unfamiliar vocabulary and sentence formulation. Consequently, these linguistic hurdles frequently required students to repeat their recordings multiple times to achieve acceptable results. LP2 reported that her group had to repeat a single scene up to ten times due to mispronunciation and spoken errors. Additionally, logistical issues such as scheduling group filming sessions and managing smartphone storage constraints represented shared challenges across all achievement levels.

Speaking Anxiety before and during Vlog-Based Activities

Speaking anxiety was consistently reported at the outset of the project and tended to peak during recording sessions. LP2 described her feelings as a mix between panic and embarrassment, while MP2 explained that speaking directly in front of the camera and an open environment triggered intense fear of making mistakes. HP2 similarly recalled experiencing significant nervousness when first facing the camera. However, participants across all achievement levels affirmed that this anxiety diminished substantially through repeated recording attempts. MP2 noted that after several takes, initial apprehension gradually transformed into excitement and enjoyment. The repeatable nature of vlog recording provided a low-stakes environment that allowed students to become desensitized to speaking anxiety over time.

Motivation during the Vlog Project

Most participants, particularly high- and middle-achieving students, reported heightened motivation to learn speaking as a result of the project. HP1 stated that the activity made him much more interested in practicing speaking because the tasks were engaging and creative. MP2 similarly observed that creating travel vlogs deepened her enthusiasm for developing oral English competence. This motivational boost was closely linked to the collaborative and authentic nature of the assignment, which contrasted sharply with

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conventional teacher-centered drills. Students felt motivated because they produced a tangible digital product that documented their shared real-world experiences.

Perceived Improvement in Speaking Fluency

In relation to the second research question, all participants perceived noticeable improvements in their spoken fluency, though the extent varied according to proficiency levels. HP1 reported that consistent practice during vlog production enabled him to speak English more smoothly and fluently. MP1 described her speech as having become more natural and spontaneous when expressing ideas in English. LP1 similarly noted feeling braver and experiencing fewer pauses compared to previous classroom performances. Nonetheless, lower-achieving students still acknowledged residual limitations, such as difficulties in formulating complete complex sentences without hesitation. These responses suggest that while the project enhanced speech flow for all learners, full structural fluency requires sustained long-term intervention.

Perceived Confidence and Willingness to Communicate in English

Closely linked to fluency, participants across all achievement tiers reported enhanced self-confidence and a stronger willingness to communicate in English. HP1 explained that he felt substantially bolder in speaking English and was no longer paralyzed by the fear of making errors. MP1 shared that participating in the project helped group members overcome stiffness and shed their initial shyness. Interestingly, this newfound confidence transferred positively into broader classroom situations beyond the vlog project. LP1 affirmed that she became noticeably braver during regular classroom presentations and when responding to teacher inquiries.

Self-Assessment of Pronunciation and Vocabulary Mastery

Participants also reflected on specific linguistic gains in English pronunciation and lexical acquisition. HP1 highlighted that multi-syllabic words such as "comfortable," "probably," and "specific" became much easier to pronounce correctly after repeated practice. MP2 explained that the process of composing scripts and searching for appropriate descriptive phrases enriched her active vocabulary. Even LP1, who had a limited initial lexicon, recognized that she acquired several useful terms related to travel and personal activities. Nevertheless, lower-achieving learners remained cognizant of their ongoing vocabulary deficits, demonstrating balanced self-awareness regarding their linguistic development.

Emotional Readiness and Comfort in Speaking English after the Project

Finally, participants described a positive shift in their emotional relationship with spoken English upon completing the project. HP1 and LP1 both expressed enthusiasm to participate in similar video-based collaborative projects in future English classes. MP2 reported that she no longer experienced paralyzing dread when confronted with spoken performance tasks. This affective readiness indicates that the project fostered a supportive environment that mitigated long-standing speaking phobias. Consequently, vlog-based project learning helped cultivate a durable and constructive mindset toward foreign language communication.

Discussion

The findings of this study extend and nuance the existing literature on Project-Based Learning and vlog-based speaking instruction among Indonesian EFL learners. The themes of active engagement, role division, and collaboration observed in this study align with prior research showing that PjBL enhances junior high school speaking competence and creates engaging learning environments (Alfatihah et al., 2022; Kaharuddin, 2025). However, whereas earlier investigations primarily inferred student engagement from pre- and post-test score differences, the present findings provide qualitative insights into how collaborative processes

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actually unfold. Students navigated tasks dynamically by dividing responsibilities, resolving disagreements through democratic discussions, and providing reciprocal emotional encouragement. These observations confirm that the social structure of PjBL serves as a vital pedagogical scaffold for adolescent language learners (Paradowski et al., 2022; Tampipi & Bermillo, 2025; Yong & Saad, 2023).

The challenges reported by participants, particularly limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, and performance anxiety, mirror the speaking obstacles identified by Prameswari et al. (2025). Importantly, the present study demonstrates that speaking anxiety is not a static barrier, as participants across all proficiency levels experienced a gradual reduction in nervousness through iterative recordings. This finding supports Fatimah et al. (2024), who emphasized that EFL students rely heavily on repetition as a core strategy for mastering spoken English during vlog production. The repeatable and self-paced nature of digital video recording provides a safe, low-stakes rehearsal space compared to high-pressure real-time classroom performances. By allowing students to review and refine their speech before submission, vlog tasks successfully mitigate the threat of public failure.

The perceived gains in fluency, confidence, and communicative willingness correspond with broader evidence highlighting the benefits of technology-supported project learning (Huang, 2021; Jaelani et al., 2026; Pratama, 2025; Yürük & Yılmaz, 2025; Zhang et al., 2023). These results also corroborate the findings of Yusuf et al. (2023), who observed enhanced self-efficacy, vocabulary expansion, and speaking confidence among Indonesian EFL students completing vlog projects. The present study expands this knowledge base by showing that these affective and communicative benefits can be effectively cultivated among younger learners at the junior high school level. Furthermore, the qualitative data reveal an encouraging transfer effect, wherein confidence gained during video production extended into conventional classroom speaking situations. This positive transfer underscores the potential of digital storytelling in bridging the gap between guided language rehearsal and spontaneous classroom communication (Du et al., 2024; Noman & Abbas, 2025; Tú & Nhi, 2026).

A critical insight emerging from this research is the differentiation in speaking development across different achievement tiers. While high- and middle-achieving students experienced noticeable improvements across both affective and structural dimensions of speaking, low-achieving students showed a more nuanced progression (Cha & Zhang, 2023; Ding & Yusof, 2025; Ngamsom & Huttayavilaiphan, 2025; Sulistyowati et al., 2022; Wilde, 2026; Wilde & Lowie, 2024). Lower-achieving participants achieved substantial gains in bravery, willingness to speak, and basic vocabulary, but continued to struggle with complete sentence construction and spontaneous grammar. This finding addresses a significant gap in prior literature that frequently relied on aggregate quantitative metrics (Alfatihah et al., 2022; Kaharuddin, 2025). Aggregate scores often mask such nuanced disparities, demonstrating that while vlog-based PjBL builds vital communicative confidence, targeted linguistic scaffolding remains indispensable for weaker learners.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the primary pedagogical value of vlog-based PjBL lies in the social and emotional mechanisms that underpin language acquisition. Peer collaboration, authentic communicative purpose, and repetitive low-stakes practice collectively establish a secure environment for language experimentation. This process-oriented understanding complements existing quantitative literature by clarifying the precise stages through which adolescent learners overcome speaking inhibitions. Consequently, language educators obtain practical insights into how project-based tasks can be structured to support diverse student capabilities.

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CONCLUSION

This study explored junior high school students' learning experiences and their perceived speaking development during the implementation of vlog-based Project-Based Learning in an Indonesian EFL classroom. The findings reveal that students experienced an active, collaborative learning process characterized by functional role division, peer support, and initial speaking anxiety that progressively diminished through iterative video takes. In terms of perceived speaking development, participants across all achievement tiers reported meaningful improvements in speaking fluency, confidence, willingness to communicate, and vocabulary acquisition. However, while high- and middle-achieving students achieved balanced progress, low-achieving students experienced substantial gains in affective readiness but continued to encounter structural challenges in sentence-level fluency. These results successfully address the research objective by demonstrating that vlog-based projects foster oral competence through interconnected social, emotional, and linguistic processes.

Pedagogically, these findings imply that teachers should not view vlog-based PjBL as a stand-alone method, but rather integrate it with targeted linguistic scaffolding such as structured sentence frames and pronunciation checkpoints to assist struggling learners. Additionally, educators must foster safe collaborative spaces that leverage peer feedback to alleviate speaking anxiety in front of the camera. Future research should consider employing mixed-method designs with longitudinal speaking assessments to evaluate whether affective growth directly translates into statistically measurable linguistic gains over time. Investigating diverse project themes, larger cohorts, and multi-school settings is also recommended to examine the broader applicability of vlog-based language learning across varied educational contexts.

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