

# Exploring the Path of Applying Vlogs to Assist English Listening and Speaking Training for English Major Students

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## Abstract

Based on analyzing the problems in the process of applying Vlog to assist English listening and speaking training for English majors, the author of this paper discusses the feasible path for English majors to apply Vlog to assist English listening and speaking training. author of this paper discusses the feasible path for English majors to apply Vlog to assist English listening and speaking training. For listening training, the author suggests providing diversified speech materials, designing interactive exercises, using Vlog to assist English listening and speaking training. training, the author suggests providing diversified speech materials, designing interactive exercises, using subtitles and background descriptions, as well as establishing an effective and efficient listening and speaking training program for English majors. For listening training, the author suggests providing diversified speech materials, designing interactive exercises, using subtitles and background descriptions, as well as establishing an online Vlog learning platform to provide feedback; for speaking training, the author suggests using methods for speaking training, the author suggests using methods such as reading aloud and shadowing to follow along to improve fluency and pronunciation accuracy, setting up a specialized oral expression course, and for speaking training, the author suggests using methods such as reading aloud and shadowing to follow along to improve fluency and pronunciation accuracy, setting up a specialized oral expression course, and simulating real conversations through language exchange activities and virtual reality technology.

## Keywords

English Majors; Vlog; English Listening and Speaking Training; Path.

## 1. Introduction

In the present-day context, English majors are facing increasing learning pressure and challenges. They not only need to have a solid foundation in English, but also need to have good listening and speaking skills in order to adapt to the diversified needs of their future studies and careers. However, the traditional teaching mode often focuses too much on teaching grammar and vocabulary, while the cultivation of listening and speaking skills is relatively insufficient, which leads to many students feeling incompetent in actual English communication. The two forces, the deepening of education reform and the rapid development of new media technology, are jointly promoting the innovation and change of English listening and speaking teaching. Educational reform emphasizes student-centeredness and focuses on cultivating students' comprehensive language-using ability, rather than just staying in the inculcation of book knowledge. This reform-oriented approach has prompted teachers to start exploring teaching methods and tools that are more in line with students' actual needs. The development of new media technology, especially the emerging media form of Vlog, provides unprecedented opportunities for English listening and speaking teaching, which, with its real and vivid characteristics, breaks the limitations of traditional teaching and enables students to learn

English in a more close-to-actual context. By watching and imitating the English pronunciation and oral expressions in Vlogs, students can improve their listening and speaking skills in a relaxing and enjoyable atmosphere.

## 2. Literature Review

At the university level, Bliuc A.M. (2007) suggests that Blended Learning (BL) is widely studied and applied in higher education. It combines the advantages of online and offline instruction to enhance learning efficiency and engagement. Shih R.C. (2010) in his study emphasized the importance of information technology integration to enhance students' listening and speaking skills. He pointed out that students' opportunities for speaking practice can be greatly enriched and their listening comprehension can be effectively enhanced through the use of innovative pedagogical tools such as video blogs (Vlogs) and online discussions. These interactive learning methods can not only stimulate students' interest in learning, but also provide a more realistic language environment so that students can practice and improve their listening and speaking skills in a simulated context. Xu Shuoyan's (2020) study emphasized the importance of the Vlog video mode in the teaching of English speaking in higher vocational education and put forward specific suggestions for combining Vlog with higher vocational teaching. The study pointed out that the Vlog video teaching mode can improve students' listening and speaking skills and promote students' initiative, self-control and time regulation in learning. Zhao Qianqian (2021) pointed out that as the popularization of mobile Internet has had a far-reaching impact on the field of education, especially the teaching of English in universities, it is developing in a more intelligent direction. The introduction of smart teaching mode aims to improve teaching quality, meet individualized learning needs, and promote teaching reform. The smart classroom teaching mode can be applied to listening and speaking training, utilizing mobile Internet technology for full tracking and oral correction. Vlogs are used as the teaching medium and combined with the smart teaching platform to provide students with personalized listening and speaking training materials and feedback.

At the primary and secondary levels, learning Jeremy Harmer (2000) suggests that at the secondary level, listening and speaking skills in English are regarded as fundamental and key to effective communication. He also suggests that a communicative approach should be used in listening and speaking teaching to improve students' practical language application skills by designing various communicative activities. He also proposed six principles of listening training, including the use of sophisticated speech equipment, pre-listening warm-up, and repeated drills, in order to improve students' listening comprehension. Liu Xuan (2022) discussed the factors affecting students' listening and speaking ability, including learning attitudes, motivation, and cultural factors, and proposed strategies to improve listening and speaking ability, such as rationally designing learning programs, creating an atmosphere for listening and speaking training, cultivating students' standard pronunciation, conducting listening and speaking training with role-playing, and practicing language in communicative situations. Long Xingzhen (2023) discussed the application of information technology in elementary school English listening and speaking teaching, emphasized the necessity of realizing deep learning, and proposed strategies for realizing deep learning in listening and speaking activities. Fu Yun (2021) discusses the current situation of English listening and speaking training in elementary school under the information technology environment, and proposes a method of listening and speaking training by using presentation courseware and the cell phone APP "Homework Together".

### 3. Application of Vlogs to Assist English Listening and Speaking Training for English Majors of Current Situation

#### 3.1. Listening

On the positive side, Vlogs, an innovative and increasingly popular educational tool, have emerged as a veritable gold mine of listening resources for English majors. With their diverse array of accents, ranging from British Received Pronunciation to American General American, Vlogs provide an immersive audio experience that mirrors the real-life linguistic diversity students are likely to encounter. This broad exposure to different accents is essential for developing a well-rounded understanding of the global nature of English, preparing students for international communication where understanding various accents is paramount. The spectrum of speech paces in Vlogs caters to learners at all levels. Whether it's the rapid-fire delivery of a TED Talk or the slower, more deliberate pace of a documentary narration, students can find content that challenges them without overwhelming them. This flexibility allows them to gradually acclimate to different speeds, ultimately enhancing their ability to understand spoken English in various contexts. The rich tapestry of topics covered in Vlogs is another boon for English majors. From science and technology to arts and culture, Vlogs provide a platform for exploring a wide range of subjects, often presented in a way that is both informative and engaging. This exposure to diverse topics not only expands students' vocabulary but also helps them make connections between different fields of knowledge, fostering a holistic approach to learning. The content of Vlogs is carefully curated to be not only informative but also engaging, with an eye towards stimulating students' interest and fostering a love for learning. The creators of Vlogs often use storytelling techniques and captivating visuals to draw viewers in, making the learning process enjoyable and memorable. This aspect of Vlogs is particularly beneficial for students who may otherwise find traditional text-based learning to be dry and uninspiring. The visual and auditory elements of Vlogs work in tandem to create an appealing and memorable learning experience. For instance, a Vlog about the Great Wall of China might include dramatic footage accompanied by an informative voiceover. The visual impact of seeing the wall's grandeur while hearing about its historical significance can create a lasting impression on students, aiding in long-term retention of information. In terms of cultural understanding, Vlogs often delve into the core elements of the cultures of English-speaking countries, offering students a window into the social and cultural fabric of these regions. A Vlog about the history of jazz music, for example, not only provides an opportunity to hear the genre's evolution through different eras but also explores the cultural influences that shaped its development. This cultural insight is invaluable, as it not only enriches students' listening experiences but also deepens their understanding of the cultural context in which the English language is used. One of the most significant advantages of Vlogs as an educational tool is the personalized learning experience they offer. Students can select content that aligns with their current level of listening proficiency and their specific interests, allowing them to tailor their learning to their individual needs. This personalized approach not only aids in the development of listening skills but also fosters the growth of independent learning abilities, a crucial component of lifelong learning. For instance, a student interested in environmental issues might choose to follow Vlogs that focus on sustainability and climate change, while another student interested in fashion might opt for Vlogs that cover the latest trends and industry insights.

There are still some problems when using Vlogs for English listening training. First of all, students often face difficulties in speech recognition and comprehension. Speakers in Vlogs may come from different regions and have different accents and pronunciation habits, which is a great challenge for non-native speakers. For example, British English and American English have significant differences in pronunciation, while Indian and Australian accents have their

own characteristics, and these diverse accents increase the difficulty of listening. Secondly, the speed of speech in Vlogs is often faster than that of formal teaching materials and is accompanied by improvisation, which puts higher demands on students' listening reaction speed. In addition, the interference of background noise, music or other sound elements can also affect students' capture and understanding of the content, especially when watching Vlogs in a noisy environment. Second, Vlogs are rich and diverse in content, covering all aspects of daily life, which requires students to have a broad vocabulary and flexible contextual adaptation. However, English majors may have some challenges in this regard. They have accumulated a rich vocabulary in their academic English studies, but may feel a lack of vocabulary in informal, colloquial expressions. For example, informal linguistic phenomena such as slang, idioms and acronyms, which are common in Vlogs, may be a completely new field for students, and without sufficient background knowledge and cultural understanding, they may feel confused. In addition, topics in vlogs are often very specific and personal, which requires students to have appropriate background knowledge. If students lack knowledge about a topic, they may struggle to understand the content of the video or even misunderstand it. For example, a Vlog about local popular culture may be difficult to understand for students who are not familiar with that culture. Finally, in traditional listening instruction, teachers usually provide immediate feedback and guidance to help students correct errors and improve their listening skills. However, when using Vlogs for self-study, students often lack this effective feedback mechanism. They may not be able to accurately determine whether their listening comprehension is correct or not, nor do they know how to seek help when they encounter difficulties. Although some vlog creators provide subtitles or explain certain difficult points at the end of the video, this is not always enough. Students may persist in their misinterpretations because they don't receive timely feedback, which will be crucial to their listening progress.

### 3.2. Speaking

On the positive side, Through the act of creating Vlogs, students embark on a transformative journey that not only hones their oral expression abilities but also serves as a potent antidote to the paralyzing effects of stage fright. This process of filming and editing provides them with a safe space to experiment and refine their verbal skills, allowing them to gradually shed their inhibitions and embrace the challenge of real-time communication with increasing confidence. In the meticulous process of producing Vlogs, students meticulously observe and emulate the nuances of pronunciation, intonation, and the rhythmic patterns of spoken English as exemplified in the Vlogs they watch. This mimicry extends beyond mere imitation; it involves a deep-rooted absorption of the language's idiomatic expressions and its fluidity, striving to achieve a level of authenticity that mirrors that of native speakers. Moreover, the creative process demands that students articulate their thoughts and opinions in English, a task that is both demanding and rewarding. It compels them to grapple with the intricacies of constructing coherent sentences and organizing their ideas logically. This rigorous mental exercise not only sharpens their linguistic creativity but also cultivates their critical thinking skills, endowing them with the ability to express their thoughts with clarity and persuasive force. As the students persist in their Vlog production, their repeated exposure to the act of speaking English in front of a camera leads to a gradual accumulation of experience. This experience is akin to a snowball effect, with each Vlog serving as a stepping stone in a continuous upward trajectory of linguistic mastery. Their once tentative steps in English give way to a confident and assured stride, as evidenced by their improved pronunciation, more natural intonation, and an enhanced overall fluency. Ultimately, the culmination of this dedicated practice and persistent challenge results in students who are not just competent speakers of English but also individuals who exude confidence and poise in their verbal interactions. They have evolved from novices to seasoned communicators, capable of navigating the complexities of English conversation with ease and grace. Their transformation is a testament to the power of Vlogs as an educational tool and to

the unwavering commitment of students who embrace the challenge of mastering a foreign language.

However, there are also still some problems in utilizing Vlogs for English speaking training. First of all, when imitating oral expressions in Vlogs, students do face the problem of balancing between pronunciation accuracy and fluency. This is because pronunciation and fluency are two core elements of English speaking ability, but there is a certain trade-off between them. In order to achieve the standard of pronunciation, students need to focus on the pronunciation accuracy of each word. However, excessive focus on the pronunciation of individual words may result in slower overall speech and affect fluency. In addition, students may ignore changes in intonation during imitation, making the language sound unnatural. On the other hand, if students pursue fluency too much, they may neglect the accuracy of pronunciation, leading to misunderstandings when communicating. For example, some students may say words quickly, but due to inaccurate pronunciation, the other party may not be able to understand the meaning. Secondly, as a form of personal expression, Vlog puts higher demands on students' English speaking ability and self-confidence. Many English majors feel shy or nervous when facing the camera, which not only affects their language performance but also limits their natural flow. In order to overcome this obstacle, students need to actively participate in classroom discussions, improve their oral expression, and gradually adapt to the environment in front of the camera through simulated filming and practical exercises. Finally, Vlogging also involves a certain amount of acting ability. Students need to learn how to use body language, facial expressions and emotional expressions to enhance the infectiousness of the video. This includes controlling the speed of speech, adjusting intonation and using the right tone of voice to convey different emotions. These skills are less commonly addressed in traditional English language instruction, so students may need additional training and practice to improve. Although Vlogs provide a platform to simulate oral communication, it still cannot completely replace the interaction and feedback in real conversations. In Vlogs, students are usually practicing alone in a preset situation and lack immediate interaction and response. Authentic conversational environments require students to be able to instantly respond to each other's words and adjust their language strategies, which is difficult to achieve in Vlog. As a result, even if students are able to express themselves skillfully in Vlogs, they may still feel uncomfortable or unable to communicate effectively in face-to-face interactions.

## **4. The Effective Path of Applying Vlog to Assist English Listening and Speaking Training for English Major Students**

### **4.1. Listening Training**

First of all, in order to effectively address the challenges of speech recognition and comprehension, teachers should focus on providing diverse listening materials in their teaching strategies to enhance students' accent adaptation. Selecting Vlogs containing a variety of accent features as teaching resources can expose students to the authentic pronunciation of English in different geographical and cultural contexts, thus broadening their listening horizons. For example, Vlogs from different countries such as the UK, the US and Canada are selected to let students feel the diversity of English. In the classroom, teachers can design a series of interactive listening exercises, such as "Accent Guessing" or "Imitation Challenge", to encourage students to actively participate and improve their ability to recognize and imitate accents through practice. These activities can stimulate students' interest and allow them to learn in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere. Using the reduced speed playback function is a progressive training method that allows students to understand the content at a slower speed first and then gradually increase to the normal speed of speech. This method helps students overcome their fear of fast speech speeds and builds up their listening confidence. For example, reduce the

speed of the Vlog to 60% at first, gradually increase it to 80% as students become more adaptable, and finally return to 100%. Providing clear subtitles not only helps students to gain assistance in listening comprehension, but also promotes their reading skills, especially when dealing with complex sentence patterns and out-of-the-way vocabulary. Subtitles can serve as a temporary reliance for students to help them keep up with the content in the early stages of listening, gradually reducing their reliance on subtitles as their listening skills improve. Background notes are equally important in helping students understand the cultural and contextual background of the Vlog content, so that they can grasp the use of language more deeply. For example, before introducing a Vlog about London, UK, students are briefly introduced to the geographical location, historical background and local cultural features of London, so that they can understand the content more easily when watching the Vlog. Through these comprehensive measures, students will not only be able to improve their listening skills, but also have a more comprehensive understanding of the global diversity of the English language. They will learn how to understand and use English in different accents and cultural contexts, laying a solid foundation for future international communication and career development.

Second, in order to enhance students' vocabulary and contextual adaptation, educators should adopt a variety of teaching strategies to achieve comprehensive language learning. First of all, teachers should encourage students to actively participate in capturing and recording slang and idioms in Vlogs because these forms of expression often contain rich cultural information and are key to understanding the deeper meanings of the English language. To help students better grasp new vocabulary, teachers can guide them to use vocabulary cards. Such cards can list in detail the spelling, pronunciation, word meaning and related example sentences of each word. Through repeated review and practice, students can memorize the vocabulary more firmly, thus improving their language expression ability. In addition, teachers can utilize online dictionaries and language applications to enrich students' vocabulary resources. These tools often include pronunciation, example sentences, and many other features that can help students get more support in their self-learning process. Teachers can guide students in developing individualized learning plans to ensure that they are able to use these resources effectively. Cultural workshops are another important part of deepening language learning. In this segment, students can use the workshop to delve into cultural phenomena covered in the Vlog, such as holiday customs and social events. This not only helps students build up background knowledge of vocabulary, but also enhances their understanding of the cultures of English-speaking countries. For example, when discussing Christmas customs, students can not only learn vocabulary related to them, but also understand the meanings of these words in a specific cultural context.

Finally, in order to solve the problem of lack of effective feedback in traditional teaching, it is especially crucial to establish a Vlog online learning platform or community. This platform not only provides a space for students to upload their own listening practice videos, but also encourages them to actively watch their peers' videos and give constructive comments. This mutual evaluation mechanism not only enriches the sources of feedback and enables students to understand the listening materials from multiple perspectives, but also cultivates the spirit of cooperation and critical thinking skills among students, so that they learn how to objectively analyze and evaluate the performance of others, as well as reflect on their own learning methods. Teachers play a crucial role on this platform. They can upload professional listening analysis videos on a regular basis, provide students with standardized answers and detailed explanations of listening skills, and help students better understand the difficulties and key points of listening materials. In addition, teachers can also participate in student interactions and give personalized guidance to students' specific problems to ensure that each student receives targeted help, thus improving learning outcomes. Self-assessment is another effective

learning method. Students can self-test their listening level and comprehension by recording their listening responses and playing them back. This self-feedback mechanism helps students to identify their weaknesses, such as pronunciation, intonation, speed of speech, etc., so as to provide targeted training. Meanwhile, by comparing their past videos, students can visualize their progress and growth, which will undoubtedly enhance their learning motivation and self-confidence. Overall, by establishing a Vlog online learning platform or community, combined with teachers' professional guidance and self-assessment mechanism, we can build an all-around, highly interactive learning environment, which not only provides personalized learning paths, but also promotes communication and cooperation among students, and ultimately achieves the goal of improving listening proficiency. Such a learning model can not only effectively solve the feedback problem in traditional teaching, but also stimulate students' interest in learning, cultivate their independent learning ability, and lay a solid foundation for their lifelong learning.

#### 4.2. Speaking Training

First of all, in order to help students find the right balance between pronunciation accuracy and fluency, teachers can adopt a series of well-targeted training methods. Reading aloud practice is an effective means to improve fluency. Teachers can provide diversified reading materials, including news reports, short stories, poems and so on, so that students can choose what they are interested in to practice. When reading aloud, students should pay attention to the rhythm, pause and stress of speech, which are important factors constituting fluent expression. Through continuous practice of reading aloud, students can gradually improve their speed and fluency and make their speech more natural. Shadow following is a training method of synchronized reading aloud by imitating the original audio, which requires students to imitate the speed, intonation and voice changes of the original audio as much as possible. This kind of practice helps students feel and master the rhythm of the language, and at the same time exercises their immediate reaction ability and language imitation ability. Teachers can select some standard pronunciation recording materials, such as BBC English News, TED Talks and so on, for students to follow and practice, as a way to improve their fluency and the natural variation of speech. Teachers can also organize some oral communication activities, such as group discussion and role-playing, so that students can practice their pronunciation and fluency in actual communication. In the activities, students can hear English with different accents and try to imitate and communicate, which helps them adapt to different pronunciation environments. For example, in role-playing activities, students can play different roles and simulate real conversation scenarios, and such exercises can not only improve their pronunciation accuracy, but also exercise their oral resilience. Teachers can also use modern technology, such as speech analysis software, to help students analyze their pronunciation problems and provide targeted suggestions for improvement. Students can record their own pronunciation through the software and then compare it with the standard pronunciation to find out their own pronunciation errors and carry out targeted practice. Through these training methods, students can gradually improve their pronunciation accuracy and fluency, and better master their oral English expression skills, laying a solid foundation for future international communication and career development.

Secondly, in order to significantly improve students' self-confidence and performance skills, it is particularly important to offer specialized oral expression courses. The aim of such courses is to teach students how to express themselves and their emotions in a natural and confident way in front of the public, especially in front of a camera. In order to achieve this goal, the course design should include a series of interactive activities, such as mock interviews, which will not only hone students' immediate reaction and language organization skills, but also get them accustomed to the pressure of facing the camera, so that they will be more comfortable in actual

performances. Inviting professional speech coaches or actors to provide guidance is another effective way to enhance students' performance skills. These professionals have rich performing and teaching experience and can teach students professional skills on body language, facial expressions and emotional expressions, helping them to better control their body language and harmonize it with their verbal expressions, so as to convey messages and emotions more effectively. Through these practical activities, students will not only make progress in oral expression, but also gradually build up their self-confidence in the learning process. With improved performance skills, students will be more comfortable in dealing with a variety of public speaking and expression occasions, whether it is academic presentations, job interviews or social interactions, they will be able to show their best performance, give full play to their potential, and become confident and talented performers.

Finally, in order to make up for the shortcomings of Vlogs in terms of authentic conversation opportunities, we can take a series of innovative measures. First, online language exchange events can be organized regularly, inviting native speakers or other learners to participate and providing students with the opportunity to interact with real conversation partners. These activities could be regular language exchange sessions or seminars on specific topics, allowing students to practise their speaking skills in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere, while also being exposed to different accents and expressions and improving their listening comprehension. Utilizing virtual reality (VR) technology is also an innovative approach. We can create immersive simulated conversation scenarios that allow students to practice listening and speaking in a near-real environment. Through VR glasses, students can enter simulated stores, restaurants and other scenes to practice conversations with virtual characters. This immersive experience helps to improve students' listening comprehension and speaking skills, and makes them feel more confident and comfortable when facing real conversations. Teachers can also design various situational dialog tasks for students to role-play in groups. For example, simulate conversations during a trip, business meetings and other scenarios, and ask students to complete the conversation tasks within a specified time. Such activities can not only exercise students' ability to speak extemporaneously, but also improve their ability to adjust their language strategies in different situations, so that they can be more flexible and adaptive to changes in actual communication. The implementation of these innovative measures will greatly enrich students' learning experience, make up for the shortcomings of Vlog in terms of real conversation opportunities, and help students rapidly improve their listening and speaking skills in diverse language environments.

## 5. Summary

As an auxiliary tool for English teaching, Vlog attracts students with its vivid and interesting form, and effectively enhances students' perception and understanding of the language through the combination of audio and visual. However, Vlog is not perfect. It contains content that may be culturally biased and a huge amount of information that students may face difficulties in filtering and digesting. In addition, over-reliance on Vlogs may cause students to neglect traditional listening and speaking training, thus affecting the development of basic skills. Therefore, when using Vlogs to assist English teaching, teachers should carefully select Vlog content that is suitable for students' level and interest, and combine it with traditional teaching methods, such as classroom lectures, listening practice and speaking dialogues, to form complementary advantages. With the advancement of technology and the updating of educational concepts, Vlogs will play a more important role in English education, and more high-quality and content-rich Vlog resources will be developed to cover a wider range of topics and cultural backgrounds to meet the needs of students of different age groups and levels. Meanwhile, with the application of artificial intelligence and big data technology, the Vlog

platform is expected to realize personalized learning path recommendation, tailoring the most suitable learning content and progress for each student.

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