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# I-RoLE 2023

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF  
RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE EDUCATION 2023

**EMBRACING CHANGE:  
EMANCIPATING THE LANDSCAPE  
OF RESEARCH IN LINGUISTIC,  
LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

**13 - 14 MARCH 2023**

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## BEYOND THE CROWDED SPACE

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### ABSTRACT:

In a world where everyone is struggling to be heard over the din of constant conversation, communication is more vital than ever. *Beyond the Crowded Space* is a podcast project that aims to provide a platform that may discuss pertinent topics without fear of being ridiculed. This podcast is an effort to encourage and support those in need to find their voices and appreciate the fact that others' perspectives may differ from their own. This platform also aspires to uplift people in need and, in turn, shed light on alternative worldviews for those who are open to hearing them. The podcast leverages services like Buzzsprout and Spotify to facilitate the development of a community in which everyone is not subjected to judgement. A Gantt chart was used to map out the podcast's production and after several stages of planning, an episode was released on Spotify where it is available to a wider audience.

**Keywords:** podcast, psychological well-being, communication, freedom of speech

### 1. INTRODUCTION

It is extremely difficult to open up about our own thoughts in this day and age for a multitude of reasons such as embarrassment, trauma, and so on. *Beyond the Crowded Space* is a podcast with the intention of having open conversations about life, providing a neutral ground for listeners to engage with the hosts over the chosen episode's topic. Titled "Beyond the Crowded Space," the podcast encourages listeners to remove from the constant bustle of the outside world in order to focus on their own internal voice and, eventually, to give voice to their thoughts.

The first episode, "Into the Rabbit Hole" focuses on the significance of maintaining good mental health as students. The primary focus of the first episode was on students due to the challenges they confront in their academic pursuits. Hence, opening up about experiences may help them create their own safe space to talk about anything. The podcast not only discussed the need of learning from one's mistakes, but it also provided examples of effective ways for students to deal with stress, which can make those in need feel lonely. Diehl et al. (2018) noted that university students frequently experience feelings of isolation. Such emotions may result in a variety of negative outcomes from the students, which is why it is crucial that not just students, but also society as a whole, recognise the importance of good mental health.

One of the most fundamental human interactions is communication, the intentional or unintentional exchange of information (Gamble & Gamble, 2014). The ability to convey one's thoughts and feelings to others is paramount, which is why communication is so essential. A student's psychological wellbeing increases when he or she shares imprinted memories using a recording device (Lyubomirsky et al., 2006). Studies have also shown that communicating concerns and negative feelings with a trusted source may be incredibly therapeutic, decreasing

anxiety, supporting the immune system, and alleviating both physical and psychological distress (Pennebaker et al., 1988). One should not rely solely on interpersonal interactions to maintain emotional wellbeing; a healthy dose of self-talk can go a long way. This is echoed by Morris (2016) who stated that self-talk can boost confidence and lead to more favourable views of oneself. As a result, it is evident that the capacity for positive mental health can be greatly enhanced through communication.

### **1.1. Project Objective / Purpose**

This project is intended to meet the final requirement for the ELS304 subject, Professional Communication Exercise. The objective is to leverage open lines of communication and a widely used platform like Spotify to explore the concept of free speech, with the hope of convincing listeners that it is in everyone's best interest to express themselves freely. The aim of this podcast is to use Buzzsprout and Spotify to pave the way for the creation of a space where one may feel safe from prejudice and discrimination. This podcast is an attempt to help individuals who feel invisible find their voices and learn to respect the validity of viewpoints that are different from our own. In addition to providing a voice for individuals who have been marginalised, this platform will also help those with an open mind to learn about new perspectives.

### **1.2. Entrepreneurial Opportunities**

The podcast is relatively new, thus there is no revenue yet. However, if users subscribe to Buzzsprout's premium and are able to reach a minimum of 1,000 monthly downloads, they will include adverts into their podcasts. Meanwhile, Spotify will allow listeners to subscribe to any podcast, which will result in creators receiving payments. Nonetheless, with persistent credibility and an ongoing audience-building effort, this podcast may attract sponsors, affiliate links, advertisers, and so forth. The key to generating opportunities for oneself is to build up one's personal and professional networks until one is in a position to establish their own branding as a benefit. Saraswati (2022) believed that networking and podcasting go in tandem and that podcasting may be utilised as a networking strategy to engage with various other podcasters, resulting in mutually beneficial interaction. As a result, building connections through networking is essential to establish a brand for oneself, which in turn can open doors to many opportunities. Successful people often have extensive networks, which may be used to learn new skills and advance in their careers (Ghalumyan, 2020).

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

In an effort to make the podcast a success, it went through three different stages. The first stage is preparation and research, which includes the brainstorming process that led to the decision to produce a podcast, which then needed clarification whether it was relevant to the subject. In addition, this phase was used as a foundation to generate ideas on topics for future episodes; there are plans for more than one, but they will not be aired until after the final year project has been successfully accomplished. Further research was then carried out to ascertain the topic's applicability and credibility before the podcast was recorded and a Gantt chart was developed to help with scheduling at the end. The second phase consisted of the creation of the illustration and surveys, such as the artwork for the podcast cover and a Google Forms survey which was distributed via Instagram and WhatsApp. The first episode's topic was addressed in the survey in order to gauge the level of familiarity the audience has with the topic, and an inquiry section was also included to foster audience interaction with the speaker. The survey



managed to gather 40 respondents. Finally, the last phase of the project is the publishing of the podcast on Buzzsprout and Spotify. It had been planned that the project would be completed in the span of 13 weeks, beginning in Week Two of the current semester and continuing through Week 14.



Figure 1. Project's Gantt chart

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Buzzsprout and Spotify both reported positive reception to the first episode. In the first episode, we learn why it is crucial for students to have a clear understanding of mental health. Those who struggle mentally to make the transition from high school to college are given the coping mechanism tools they need to see that the standards of society are flawed. Consequently, this helps encourage them to acquire their own voice in communicating concerning issues that are significant to them. Following the airing of the podcast, a total of 20 downloads were made, the vast majority of which originated in Asia.

#### 3.1. Statistics from Buzzsprout

Buzzsprout is a platform that may also utilise Spotify as a directory; hence, the data presented here will also contain records from Spotify. Figure 2 is a chart displaying the number of downloads received throughout the course of the previous ten days, with a total of seven downloads on the day of release.



Figure 2: Statistics of the total downloads for the last 10 days

The demographic information displayed in Figure 3 indicates which platform the vast majority of podcast listeners use to download the episode. There was a total of 19 downloads obtained through Spotify, whereas there was only one download obtained from Buzzsprout.

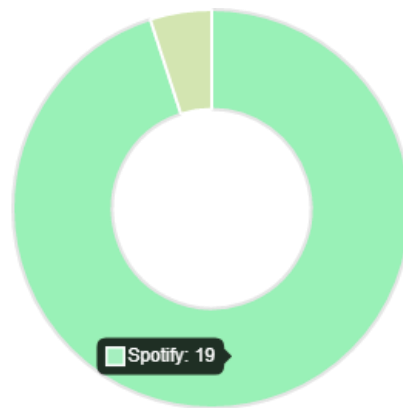


Figure 3: Downloads demographic of the podcast's listeners

The geographical distribution of the listeners is depicted in figure 4, which can be found below. It appears that all twenty downloads originated in Asia which in figure 5 shows that 95% came from Malaysia and 5% from Singapore. Figure 4 also depicts a geographical breakdown of where downloads originated in Malaysia, with 42% coming from Kuala Lumpur, 15% from Petaling Jaya, 10% each from Johor Bahru and Seri Kembangan, and 5% each from Shah Alam, Batu Caves, Seremban, and Cyberjaya.



Figure 4: Geographical distribution of the podcast’s listeners



Figure 5: Cumulative downloads by country and cities

### 3.2. Limitations

There were multiple complications that happened during the entire process of the podcast in which the initial plan did not reach its full credibility, it had to be scrapped several times, throwing off the original timeframe that was supposed to make project management more efficient. Since the location where the podcasts were recorded was not soundproof, there were several distractions during the recording process, leading to multiple takes. This resulted in multiple delays as a result of the need of a noiseless background during the recording and editing processes.

### 4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this project has a significant benefit in terms of reaching out to individuals in the expectation that they will reach back. The promotion of the podcast through Instagram has resulted in the gain of several new audiences, all of whom are keen on hearing more about the experiences and viewpoints of other individuals in relation to a variety of subjects. On Instagram, a few people commented on the podcast by stating that they had experienced a sense of calm while listening to it. The comments made have been instrumental in improving future podcast episodes that are planned to be released in the future.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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