UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

Public Interest Centre of Excellence

International Teaching Aid Competition 2023

Reconnoitering Innovative Ideas in Postnormal Times

iTAC 2023

iTAC 2023
INTERNATIONAL TEACHING AID COMPETITION
E-PROCEEDINGS

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PREFACE

iTAC or International Teaching Aid Competition 2023 was a venue for academicians, researchers, industries, junior and young inventors to showcase their innovative ideas not only in the teaching and learning sphere but also in other numerous disciplines of study. This competition was organised by the Special Interest Group, Public Interest Centre of Excellence (SIG PICE) UiTM Kedah Branch, Malaysia. Its main aim was to promote the production of innovative ideas among academicians, students and also the public at large.

In accordance with the theme "Reconnoitering Innovative Ideas in Post-normal Times", the development of novel ideas from the perspectives of interdisciplinary innovations is more compelling today, especially in the post-covid 19 times. Post-pandemic initiatives are the most relevant in the current world to adapt to new ways of doing things and all these surely require networking and collaboration. Rising to the occasion, iTAC 2023 has managed to attract more than 267 participations for all categories. The staggering number of submissions has proven the relevance of this competition to the academic world and beyond in urging the culture of innovating ideas.

iTAC 2023 committee would like to thank all creative participants for showcasing their innovative ideas with us. As expected in any competition, there will be those who win and those who lose. Congratulations to all the award recipients (Diamond, Gold, Silver and Bronze) for their winning entries. Those who did not make the cut this year can always improve and join us again later.

It is hoped that iTAC 2023 has been a worthy platform for all participating innovators who have shown ingenious efforts in their products and ideas. This compilation of extended abstracts published as iTAC 2023 E-Proceedings contains insights into what current researchers, both experienced and novice, find important and relevant in the post-normal times.

Best regards,

iTAC 2023 Committee
Special Interest Group, Public Interest Centre of Excellence (SIG PICE)
UiTM Kedah Branch
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LET'S SPEAK

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ABSTRACT
Let's Speak is a virtual tutoring kit specifically designed to address the challenges faced by students in Sarawak, Malaysia, during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the closure of physical classrooms and the transition to online learning, one of the critical issues that emerged was the limited availability of a reliable internet connection, especially for students residing in remote villages in the outskirts of Sarawak. Additionally, unpredictable weather conditions, such as heavy rainfall, further exacerbated the problem by hindering connectivity. In response to these pressing concerns, Let's Speak was developed with the aim of creating an engaging and accessible learning environment for students, regardless of their geographical location or internet connectivity. The platform was initially created for Integrated Language Skills 1 (ELC121), focusing specifically on improving speaking skills. However, it has evolved beyond its original purpose and is now being utilized as a versatile virtual tutoring kit for blended learning lessons. Let's Speak encompasses three primary objectives. Firstly, it aims to create an interesting learning environment that captivates students and fosters their speaking abilities by utilizing interactive and engaging tools. Secondly, Let's Speak promotes self-directed learning among students by providing a user-friendly interface and a vast range of resources. Lastly, Let's Speak serves as a valuable feedback mechanism for both instructors and students. The pilot test results have been extremely promising, with students expressing positive views about Let's Speak as a practical and useful tool for learning speaking. Given its success and potential impact, Let's Speak possesses significant commercialization potential. It can be marketed as an e-speaking textbook, a ready-made teaching aid that can revolutionize language education not only in Malaysia but also in other regions facing similar challenges. By leveraging technology to overcome the limitations of physical classrooms and poor internet connectivity, Let's Speak has created an accessible and engaging learning platform.

Keywords: accessibility, blended learning, commercialization potential, speaking, virtual tutoring kit

INTRODUCTION

Let's Speak, an innovative virtual tutoring kit, was specifically developed to address the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced the education sector in Malaysia to undergo a significant transformation from physical classrooms to online learning platforms. The physical closure of education sectors and the shift to remote learning highlighted the pressing need for innovative solutions that could ensure educational continuity and enhance student engagement. Notably, one of the critical issues encountered by students, particularly in Sarawak, Malaysia, is the limited access to reliable internet connections, which severely hindered their ability to access quality education. Recent studies have emphasized the detrimental impact of this digital divide on students' learning outcomes, emphasizing the urgency of finding effective solutions (Smith, 2022; Johnson et al., 2023).

In response to these challenges, Let's Speak emerged as a transformative platform that leverages technology to create an interesting, accessible, and interactive learning environment, specifically targeting the development of students' speaking skills. It serves as a powerful tool for students to practice and improve their speaking abilities, regardless of their geographical location or internet connectivity constraints.

As the education landscape gradually transitions back to face-to-face classes on campus, Let's Speak has evolved into a virtual tutoring kit that seamlessly integrates with blended learning sessions. It facilitates a smooth transition from online to in-person instruction, offering students a comprehensive and integrated learning experience. By capitalizing on the advantages of both virtual and physical classrooms, Let's Speak ensures the continuity of language education while maximizing the benefits of blended learning approaches. Its adaptability and proven track record make it an invaluable resource for both instructors and students, enabling effective and engaging speaking lessons within the evolving educational landscape.

Let's Speak stands as a testament to the power of virtual learning, offering a practical solution to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. By providing an accessible and engaging platform, Let's Speak not only empowers students to enhance their speaking skills but also presents a viable commercial opportunity. As education moves forward and embraces blended learning, Let's Speak continues to shape the landscape of language education, ensuring that students receive a comprehensive and effective learning experience, regardless of the learning environment they find themselves in.

OBJECTIVES

Let's Speak was developed with three primary objectives in mind. Firstly, it aims to establish an engaging and captivating learning environment for students to enhance their speaking skills.

By incorporating interactive and stimulating features, Let's Speak strives to make the process of learning speaking enjoyable and interesting for students, fostering their enthusiasm and motivation.

Secondly, Let's Speak seeks to promote self-directed learning among students. By providing a user-friendly interface and a comprehensive range of resources, the platform empowers students to take control of their own learning journey. Students have the freedom to access Let's Speak at their convenience, allowing them to set their own pace and tailor their learning experience according to their individual needs and preferences.

The third objective of Let's Speak is to provide a platform that facilitates feedback for both instructors and students. Through this platform, teachers can assess the success of each speaking lesson and gauge the progress of individual students. Similarly, students can receive valuable feedback on their performance, enabling them to identify areas for improvement and track their growth over time. This feedback loop enhances the overall effectiveness of teaching strategies and promotes continuous improvement in students' speaking abilities.

By accomplishing these three objectives, Let's Speak not only ensures an interesting and interactive learning environment for students but also fosters autonomy and self-directed learning. Furthermore, the platform serves as a valuable tool for instructors to provide timely feedback and support, while enabling students to actively participate in their own learning process. Ultimately, Let's Speak aims to facilitate effective speaking instruction and create a platform where both teachers and students can thrive in their pursuit of improved speaking skills.

NOVELTY

The lessons provided in Let's Speak are meticulously structured, encompassing the pre, while, and post stages of learning to ensure a comprehensive learning experience. The platform offers more than just notes and powerpoint slides; it also includes curated links to various YouTube channels that serve as additional resources to exemplify and reinforce the speaking skills being taught. This multimedia approach enhances student engagement and facilitates a deeper understanding of the content.

The speaking exercises incorporated into Let's Speak are designed with careful consideration of the varying difficulty levels among students. These exercises serve to further solidify students' comprehension of specific aspects of speaking and are tailored to cater to individual learning needs. By providing authentic samples and useful expressions for speaking, Let's Speak equips students with practical tools to enhance their speaking abilities and confidently express themselves.

One unique feature of Let's Speak is the ability for students to upload videos of their speaking exercises and receive personalized feedback from their lecturer. This feedback mechanism

allows teachers to assess students' understanding of specific topics based on the points they have collected through their exercises. By analyzing these videos, teachers can identify areas where students may require additional support or remedial activities. This targeted approach helps optimize learning outcomes by addressing individual challenges and fostering continuous improvement.

Furthermore, the video submissions enable teachers to identify specific speaking skills that require more focus, saving valuable instructional time. With a clear understanding of each student's strengths and weaknesses, teachers can efficiently tailor their teaching strategies to address specific needs and provide targeted guidance.

In a nutshell, Let's Speak goes beyond traditional teaching materials by offering carefully structured lessons, multimedia resources, and personalized feedback. Through its comprehensive approach, the platform enhances student understanding, encourages active participation, and empowers both teachers and students to identify areas for improvement. Let's Speak facilitates effective assessment and enables teachers to optimize their instructional strategies, resulting in an enriched learning experience for all.

FINDINGS

Based on the insightful data gathered from the participants' self-reflections at the conclusion of each speaking lesson conducted through Let's Speak, it became evident that the platform was perceived as an incredibly valuable and practical tool for learning speaking. The participants expressed overwhelmingly positive responses, highlighting various aspects that made Let's Speak stand out. Key comments included terms such as 'interesting,' 'very efficient,' 'easily accessible,' 'fun,' and 'interactive.' This feedback not only affirmed the effectiveness of Let's Speak as an educational resource but also highlighted its significance as a facilitator of Online Distance Learning and a virtual tutoring kit specifically designed for enhancing speaking skills.

The participants' positive comments underscored the engaging nature of Let's Speak, capturing their interest and making the learning experience enjoyable. Its efficiency in delivering content and facilitating practice exercises was also praised, indicating that participants found it to be a highly effective tool for improving their speaking abilities. Moreover, the platform's easy accessibility further contributed to its value, enabling students to engage with the material at their convenience, irrespective of their physical location. The emphasis on interactivity within Let's Speak was particularly well-received, suggesting that the platform successfully fostered active student involvement and participation in the learning process.

Overall, the participants' enthusiastic feedback provided compelling evidence of Let's Speak's effectiveness as an innovative learning tool. Its ability to captivate learners, deliver content efficiently, ensure accessibility, and foster interactive engagement solidified its position as an invaluable resource for Online Distance Learning. Additionally, the positive reception further

emphasized its role as a virtual tutoring kit, specifically tailored to enhance speaking skills. As a result, Let's Speak continues to play a pivotal role in facilitating effective speaking instruction, fostering student engagement, and maximizing learning outcomes in virtual and blended learning environments.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In conclusion, Let's Speak stands out with its unique feature of ubiquitous access, enabling the teaching-learning process to occur at any time and from any location through a consolidated Google Form. With just a smartphone or laptop, students can engage in all the speaking components conveniently. The platform's low bandwidth requirement is particularly advantageous for students who lack access to WiFi at home and must rely on mobile data. By serving as a virtual tutoring kit, Let's Speak offers students a valuable resource that is readily accessible in a digital format. Additionally, the platform's paperless approach not only saves costs but also aligns with environmentally friendly practices.

As Let's Speak continues to evolve, there are potential areas for improvement and future suggestions. Firstly, incorporating additional interactive features, such as video conferencing or voice recording capabilities, could further enhance the platform's ability to facilitate live speaking practice and foster real-time interaction between instructors and students. This would add a new dimension to the virtual learning experience, closely simulating face-to-face speaking sessions.

Moreover, considering the diverse learning needs and proficiency levels of students, introducing adaptive learning algorithms or personalized recommendations could enhance the platform's ability to cater to individual requirements. By tailoring the content and difficulty levels based on each student's progress and performance, Let's Speak could provide a more customized and effective learning experience.

Additionally, expanding the availability of Let's Speak beyond the specific Integrated Language Skills 1 (ELC121) course could make the platform accessible to a wider range of language learners. Adapting the framework to cover different language skills and proficiency levels would broaden its impact and benefit a larger student population.

In summary, Let's Speak's ubiquitous access, low bandwidth requirement, virtual tutoring capabilities, and environmental friendliness make it a highly valuable platform for teaching and learning speaking skills. By incorporating suggestions for improvement, such as interactive features and personalized learning, Let's Speak can continue to enhance the learning experience and positively impact language education in a virtual and blended learning landscape.

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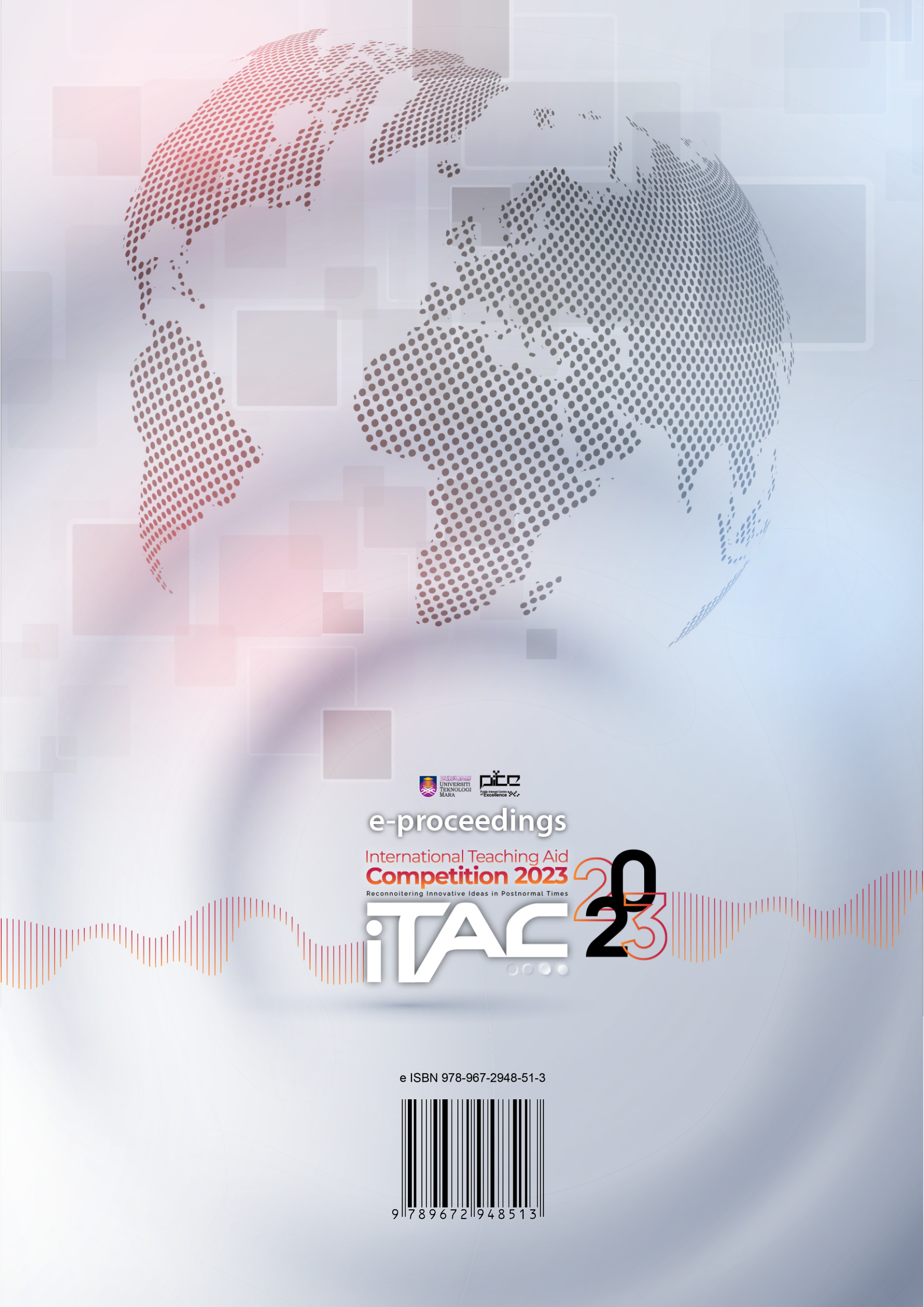

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