UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

PICE
Public Interest Centre of Excellence

International Teaching Aid
Competition 2023
Reconnoitering Innovative Ideas in Postnormal Times

iTAC 2023

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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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# ESL SPEAK AND SMILE: E-KIT VERSION 2.0

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**ABSTRACT**
Blended learning, combining online and face-to-face instruction, has become the norm in the current educational landscape. As students undergo a return of traditional classrooms apart from the virtual ones, non-native speakers experience speaking anxiety when delivering oral presentations. The fear of speaking in front of audiences can cause nervousness and adversely affect their performance. To address this concern, an e-kit has been developed with the aim of bolstering the confidence of second language learners and equipping them with strategies to alleviate speaking anxiety. The comprehensive e-kit encompasses an array of valuable resources tailored to support students in their oral presentations. The e-kit offers commonly used phrases for delivering effective oral presentations, detailed presentation criteria to provide guidance, samples of public speaking videos that exemplify best practices, and the invaluable opportunity for students to receive expert feedback. Notably, this interactive e-kit enables students to upload their videos for instant comments from qualified instructors. Alternatively, they can engage in peer-review activities facilitated by a comprehensive checklist. Educators and instructors who have incorporated the e-kit into their teaching methodologies have reported notable improvements in students' presentation skills. Students who have utilized the e-kit demonstrate greater ease and confidence when delivering their presentations, ultimately leading to higher academic performance compared to their counterparts without access to this

valuable resource. This e-kit is highly recommended for tertiary students aiming to overcome speaking anxiety in English. It can be easily purchased by scanning a QR code. Its value and effectiveness suggest it should be widely commercialized and introduced to schools in the future. The targeted audiences are hoped to empower themselves by overcoming their speaking anxiety, especially in English Language.

## INTRODUCTION

If students were given the choice between bungee jumping and giving a presentation in front of an audience, it is likely that most of them would prefer the former. This illustrates how presentations or public speaking can be perceived as frightening. The existence of various terms, such as 'stage fright', 'communication apprehension', and 'glossophobia', indicates the prevalence of this issue among people. Despite the fear associated with it, assessing students' speaking abilities is necessary to evaluate their capability to express and convey ideas effectively to the intended audience.

Public speaking and oral presentation skills are considered crucial elements of communicative ability and are also recognized as transferable skills that can enhance employability. According to a survey conducted by Clokie and Fourie (2016) among employers, communication skills are highly valued in new graduates. Consequently, it becomes important to address the barriers that hinder students' ability to deliver effective presentations.

There are several reasons why learners experience speaking anxiety. A thematic analysis and discussion conducted by Grieve et al. (2021) involving undergraduates and postgraduates from the University of the West of England (UWE) identified the following themes: fear of judgment, physical symptoms, uncertainty about the topic, and negative impact on the university experience. Specifically, the fear of being judged leads presenters to feel nervous, resulting in physical manifestations such as sweating, blushing, difficulty speaking, and trembling, which are visible signs of internal turmoil. These manifestations undermine students' confidence and prevent them from unleashing their true potential in delivering effective presentations.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the significant emphasis on speaking skills and the presence of various speaking assessments, it has been observed that students in higher education who speak English as a second language often experience speaking anxiety. This anxiety has a negative impact on their speaking performance both inside and outside the classroom (Ahmed et al., 2017; Elaldi, 2016; Mohammad et al., 2016; Saranraj & Meenakshi, 2016, as cited in Badrasawi, Kamal & Solihu, Abdulateef & Ahmad, Tunku, 2020).

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Speaking anxiety affects individuals across different types of presentations they are required to deliver. Even in an English course where students are tasked with giving a commentary on a movie of their choosing, the presence of fear and anxiety persists, despite the expectation that watching movies is enjoyable and sharing movie reviews should be straightforward. It is commonly believed that students would perform better when presenting on a topic they enjoy and feel comfortable with. However, this assumption is often proven false. Oral presentations continue to make students nervous, evident in their tendency to rely on notes, avoid eye contact, and experience physical symptoms such as sweating and trembling. Consequently, the ESL Speak and Smile: E-Kit 2.0 is introduced as a method to alleviate students' speaking anxiety.

**OBJECTIVES**

Effective communication, especially oral communication, is an essential aspect of interaction, particularly for ESL learners. To facilitate continuous interaction and improve speaking skills, it is vital to provide tailored learning materials and lessons that cater to the needs of effective oral production. Goh and Burns (2012) highlighted three key factors that contribute to learners' performance in their target language: teachers, materials, and learners themselves. With this in mind, the goal of this project is to enhance students' confidence and provide strategies for oral presentations to alleviate their speaking anxiety. The project specifically targets Malaysian tertiary students who are required to speak or present in front of a general audience. The aim is to offer practical support and serve as a learning aid in English teaching, capturing students' attention and facilitating significant learning outcomes.

**NOVELTY**

The ESL Speak and Smile: E-Kit 2.0 is specifically designed for ESL tertiary students in the Malaysian university setting, aligning with the UiTM syllabus. The simulations provided in this kit offer an authentic academic context, which enhances students' learning experiences in their target language. One notable feature of this product is its online flipbook format, allowing users to navigate through the content as they would with printed pages. The content is also presented in infographic form, making it easily comprehensible for users. Moreover, the incorporation of audio-visual materials adds to the effectiveness of the product in reducing speaking anxiety. Additionally, the kit includes a checklist for users to self-evaluate their performance before engaging in real speaking assessments. This feature enables students to assess their own skills and make improvements accordingly. The latest interactive functionality of this product allows users to upload their speaking videos to Google Drive and receive immediate feedback from experts.

## USEFULNESS

The primary beneficiaries of this e-kit are the students, and educators would certainly welcome this product as a valuable supplementary learning aid. This e-kit has the potential to become a driving force for students to enhance their speaking skills, particularly in English. By providing step-by-step instructions, the e-kit helps students overcome psychological barriers associated with language learning, such as anxiety, nervousness, hesitation, or shyness when it comes to oral presentations. This product is crucial in developing presentation skills among university students, as the skills acquired through its use will prove valuable for graduates entering the corporate world. In professional settings, graduates are often required to deliver presentations, reports, demonstrations, and voice their ideas in front of employers. The effectiveness of this product can contribute to graduates reaching higher standards of quality, preparing them well for the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR 4.0).

## COMMERCIALIZATION POTENTIAL

The content of this e-kit is highly beneficial for both students and educators as it provides comprehensive strategies for developing speaking skills and enhances their understanding of oral communication in English. It has been successfully introduced in UiTM Kelantan Branch as a learning aid, aligning well with the current syllabus in English courses. This product can also be extended to other areas such as Final Year Project (FYP) presentations or PhD thesis VIVA presentations. Although initially targeted at a niche market, this product's relevance to presentation skills extends beyond English courses, making it applicable to various disciplines such as Fundamental of Islam, Principles of Economics, Fundamentals of Entrepreneurship, Human Resource Development, and more. This opens up opportunities for a wider range of users and expands the potential target market in the future.

To access the e-kit, potential users can simply scan the provided QR code to fill in the order form. Once payment is made, they will receive the access link via email or WhatsApp, according to their preference. This convenient process allows users to access the product on any device with an internet connection. Satisfied users may also recommend the e-kit to their friends, further expanding its reach and potential customer base.

## IMAGES OF THE PRODUCT

Figure 1 shows the cover page of the ESL Speak and Smile: E-Kit. Users can flip the page with just a click of a mouse to view the next page.

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**Figure 1:** Cover page

Figure 2 below shows the welcome page for the users to build trust in our product and retain their attention to proceed with the content.



**Figure 2:** Welcome page

This e-kit consists of six (6) parts which can be seen from table of content as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3:** Table of content

Figure 4, 5, 6 and 7 below are to illustrate clearly the novelty of this product as well as its commercialization potential.
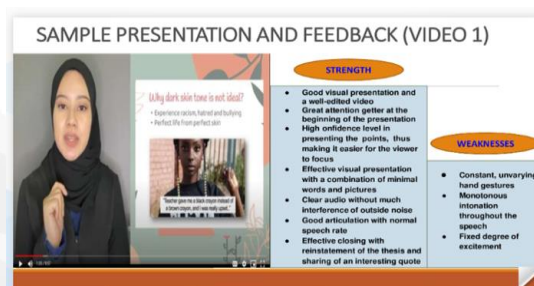
**Figure 4**: Sample presentation and feedback



**Figure 5:** Tips to reduce speaking anxiety



**Figure 6**: A checklist of a good presentation criteria



**Figure 7**: QR Code (at the back cover)

Figure 8 shows the new feature of this product whereby the students can upload their video of performance to be evaluated and get instant feedback from the experts.

**Figure 8**: New interactive feature (Google Drive link)

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Data was collected from 45 respondents who purchased and used the ESL Speak and Smile: E-Kit 2.0 to enhance their presentation skills. The respondents had various academic backgrounds, ranging from pre-university to postgraduate levels. To assess the effectiveness of the e-kit, a pre-test and post-test survey were conducted using a Likert Scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree) with five questions:

1. The arrangement of notes/e-kit content is well-organised and comprehensible.
2. The notes/content is interestingly designed based on real academic context.
3. The features are user-friendly and suitable for independent learning.
4. The simulations provided can boost my interest in subject matter.
5. Overall, I am satisfied with the product.

Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire before using the e-kit and after using it. Figure 8 presents the findings for both the pre-test and post-test. In the pre-test survey, only 32% to 38% of respondents agreed with all aspects of the questionnaire, indicating that they were not familiar with interactive ways of learning speaking skills, particularly in relation to presentations. However, the post-test survey showed a significant change, with 83% to 86% of respondents agreeing that the e-kit is well-organized and comprehensible, designed based on real academic context, user-friendly for independent learning, and capable of boosting their interest in the subject matter. Furthermore, 86% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the product. Overall, respondents agreed and strongly agreed that this e-kit facilitated their presentation preparation and reduced their anxiety about speaking in front of an audience, thanks to its engaging features.
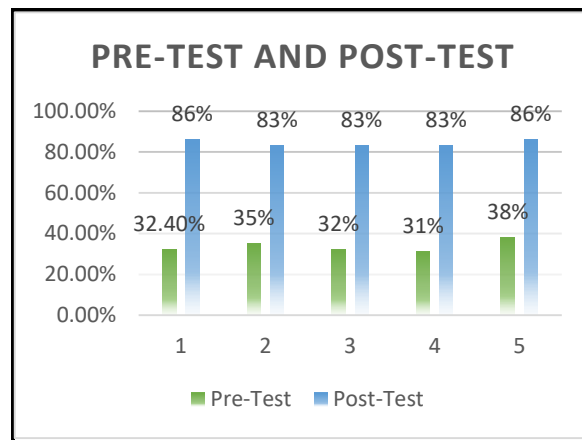
**Figure 8:** Pre-test and Post-test marks

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the ESL Speak and Smile: E-Kit 2.0 proves to be an innovative tool for teaching and learning that effectively supports L2 learners in improving their speaking skills. By utilizing this e-kit, learners become better prepared, experience reduced anxiety, and ultimately gain more confidence in speaking activities and assessments. The easy accessibility of the e-kit makes it suitable for both language learners and instructors in various learning environments, including physical classrooms, online settings, and flipped classrooms. Overall, this product can be an effective approach to reduce speaking anxiety by providing students with the opportunity for self-paced learning, increased preparation time, and a supportive learning environment. Given the importance of mobile learning in language acquisition, it is recommended to design and develop more tailored mobile applications that create interactive and anxiety-reducing environments for language learners. This will further enhance their language learning experiences and outcomes.

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