

Bridging Perception and Performance: Malaysian ESL Students' Self-Assessment of Communication Competence in Pre-Recorded Informative Speeches

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ABSTRACT

Digital transformation in higher education has increased the adoption of technology-mediated assessment methods, yet students' perception of video-based speech assessment in the ESL classroom remains understudied. This study investigated Malaysian ESL students' perceptions of pre-recorded informative speeches and examined their perceived impact on communication competence development. Grounded by Spitzberg and Cupach's (1984) communication competence model, this exploratory mixed-methods study examined forty-two LCC400 (English for Informative Speech) students' perceptions of pre-recorded speeches and the perceived impact on communication competence development across three dimensions: knowledge (content organisation and clarity), skills (verbal and non-verbal delivery), and motivation (confidence and engagement). Data were collected via an online questionnaire assessing perceived communication competence across three dimensions. Open-ended responses were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The findings identified positive student perceptions of communication competence development, particularly in non-verbal delivery and self-feedback mechanisms, alongside thematic patterns regarding (1) reflective learning and self-assessment benefits; (2) psychological impacts (confidence, anxiety, motivation); (3) technical and digital barriers; and (4) skill development specificity, with particular attention to alignment with Spitzberg & Cupach's three communication competence dimensions. This study provided insights into how Malaysian ESL learners perceive their development of communication competence through a pre-recorded speech assessment and identified practical considerations for educators implementing video-based communication assignments in Malaysian higher education.

Keywords: ESL learners, communication competence, pre-recorded speeches, video-based assessment, informative speeches

INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

The rapid digitalisation of higher education has transformed how educators assess student learning. Video-based assessment has become mainstream in university classrooms, post-pandemic. In 2024, 88% of educators were reported to be using video technology in their teaching practice, with more than 50% increasing their use of video-based assessments in 2023 (Screenpal, 2024). This transformation has impacted English as a Second Language (ESL) education, where communication competence traditionally relied solely on live classroom presentations and oral assessments. Pre-recorded speech assessments offer some potential benefits, such as extra time for reflection, access to their own performance record and managing presentation anxiety through controlled

recording. However, in the Malaysian context, despite years of learning English in the classroom, students were reported to still struggle with confident and fluent speech production (Kho & Ting, 2023; Permatasari, 2024). There is a significant gap between the use of video-based assessment and students' actual communication competence development. This particular phenomenon suggests that understanding how students perceive this assessment method in the language classroom is crucial.

While research focused on the effectiveness of video-based assessment for ESL students' communication competence, significant gaps remain in understanding how they perceive this method. Existing literature focuses on measuring learning outcomes rather than students' perceptions of the learning process itself. Furthermore, despite growing adoption in Malaysian universities, research on pre-recorded speech assessment in the Malaysian context remains limited. Other than that, while qualitative studies measure communication competence development, there is a lack of research that combines quantitative perception data with qualitative exploration of the effectiveness of the video-based assessment.

This exploratory mixed-methods study addresses these gaps by investigating Malaysian ESL university students' perceptions of pre-recorded informative speech assessment and its impact on their development of communication competence. Using the Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) communication framework, the study examines competence across three dimensions (knowledge, skills, and motivation). Combining quantitative perception data with qualitative exploration, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are LCC400 students' overall perceptions of pre-recorded informative speeches?
2. What are the perceived benefits and challenges of pre-recorded presentations among LCC400 students?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Spitzberg and Cupach' Communication Competence Model

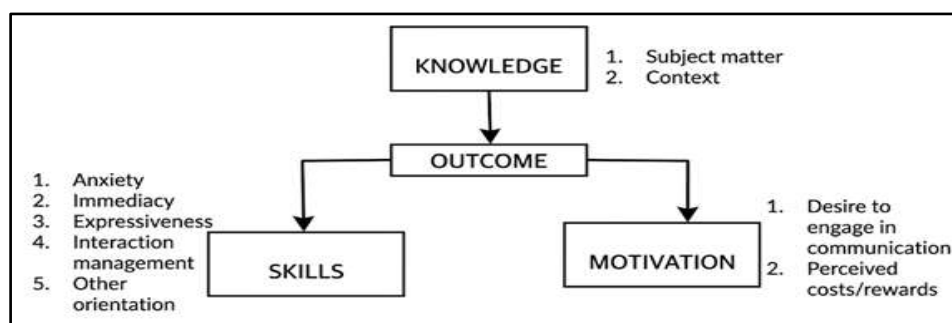


Figure 1: The Communicative Competence Model (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984)

Communication competence is defined as the knowledge, skills and motivation to communicate effectively (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984) and is essential for ESL learners' academic success. The theoretical framework for this study is illustrated in Figure 1, is anchored in Spitzberg and Cupach's (1984) model, which conceptualises communication competence through the interaction of three dimensions; knowledge, skills, and motivation. In this framework, knowledge relates to the cognitive understanding of subject matter and the specific situational context of the interaction. Concurrently, skills represent the behavioural manifestations of communication, such as anxiety, immediacy, expressiveness, interaction management, and other orientation. Finally, motivation serves as the affective component, reflecting the learner's drive to engage in communicative acts and their internal evaluation of potential outcomes.

Numerous studies have been conducted using this framework as it shows that the competence appears from the dynamic interaction of knowledge, skills and motivation. Under this theoretical lens, it is suggested that ESL

learners' self-assessment of communication competence is fundamentally shaped by psychological dimensions such as motivation and anxiety (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018; Tsang, 2020), cognitive understanding of presentation conventions (Sato & Ballinger, 2016), and the behavioral manifestation of observable speaking skills (Hung & Huang, 2021).

In Asian ESL contexts, recent studies such as Fairuz et al. (2020) and Rahmat (2021) further demonstrate that learners' self-assessments are influenced by cultural and educational norms, often resulting in inconsistencies between perceived and actual performance. As this model suggests, communication competence in ESL oral settings emerges from the dynamic interaction of knowledge, skills, and motivation. Therefore, this study examines Malaysian ESL students' self-assessment of communication competence in pre-recorded informative speeches, emphasising the critical relationship between perceived competence and communicative performance.

Past Studies

Pre-recorded Video in ESL Classrooms

Pre-recorded video presentations have increasingly been incorporated into ESL classrooms as an alternative approach to assess learners' speaking abilities. Research has shown that pre-recorded presentations could serve as a powerful pedagogical tool that supports the development of multimodal communicative competence in ESL classrooms (Indriani, 2020; Yusof et al., 2025). Learners can integrate verbal and nonverbal features such as gestures, eye contact, and tone which are essential components of effective communication (Indriani, 2020). This could provide learners with opportunities to manage delivery elements such as pacing, clarity, and audience engagement. Most importantly, such exposure aligns with real-world communication practices where digital presentation skills are increasingly required (Tugrul, 2012; Tukan, 2024). However, unlike live presentations, pre-recorded formats may limit spontaneous interaction and real-time audience negotiation (Zaki & Nasharudin, 2025). In a live presentation, speakers are required to respond to audience cues (e.g. facial expressions, nods, and questions) forcing them to negotiate meaning in real time, adjust tones, clarify points or expand explanations. Such dynamic interaction is largely absent in pre-recorded presentations. Learners may tend to focus heavily on technical production like editing and visuals which "risks undermining spontaneity and authentic communication skills" (Yusof et al., 2025, p. 309). This suggests that, although pre-recorded presentations offer important pedagogical values, their role in fostering authentic interactions remains unclear.

Beyond their pedagogical value, pre-recorded presentations also reshape the assessment of speaking by enabling more flexible, observable, and reviewable evaluation of learners' performance. Using recorded tasks, instructors or class lecturers can review learners' performance multiple times which promote more detailed and consistent assessment (Syahriar & Susanti, 2025). Since recordings can be revisited, they can support peer review and moderation among instructors hence reducing discrepancies in grading. Learners could also be benefitting from reviewability as they can critically view and evaluate their own speaking tasks, encouraging self-correction and monitoring learning progress (Indriani, 2020). Additionally, pre-recorded presentations allow asynchronous evaluation which addresses issues related to time constraints and logistical challenges which are common in large ESL classrooms. With recorded videos, instructors can review performances at their own pace, during non-class hours, rather than dedicating extensive class time to live evaluations (Indriani, 2020). While pre-recorded presentations offer greater flexibility and opportunities for review, they also allow learners to rehearse, edit, revise and adjust the recordings. As a result, the authenticity of the assessment is compromised because it may not reflect real-time performance (Alumalai & Paramasivam, 2023). Additionally, concerns related to academic integrity may arise, as learners may rely on external assistance, such as peer coaching or AI tools. While these issues have been acknowledged, how these concerns are perceived by learners themselves remains underexplored.

It is also important to note that the effectiveness of pre-recorded presentations is also influenced by contextual and technological factors that affect learners' engagement and performance. Studies have consistently shown that students may see recorded tasks as empowering because they reduce anxiety and allow rehearsal (Alumalai & Paramasivam, 2023; Ngadiran et al., 2024; Yusof et al., 2025). Yusof et al. (2025) also note that recorded oral presentations are frequently associated with enhanced motivation. Learners report "greater enjoyment, effort,

and satisfaction” because they perceive autonomy and control over the process (Yusof et al., p.309). On technological factors, Alimalai and Parasivam (2023) observe positive perception among third year Bachelor of English students towards the technological aspect of online speaking assessments. Learners felt that technology helped them to prepare the recording presentations using various software like Canva, Capcut and Filmora (Alimalai & Paramasivam, 2023). Furthermore, students, particularly those often described as “digital natives,” are generally more comfortable with technology-based learning, which may support greater engagement with content (Yusof et al., 2025). It can be said that learners with strong digital literacy may benefit from the chance to polish their delivery, while those with limited access to devices and stable internet connection may struggle. This can lead to uneven outcomes (Alimalai & Paramasivam, 2023), eventually affecting quality performance and confidence.

Self-efficacy, Anxiety and Motivation in Speaking

Technology-mediated assessment has been widely integrated in assessments related to English language courses. Pre-recorded speeches, podcasts, and videos are among the types of speaking assessments utilised by language instructors in assessing students’ speaking skills. It is equally important for students in the twenty-first century to be equipped with effective oral communication skills. They should be able to deliver ideas either in online and face-to-face modes of communication. When students are equipped with the necessary presentation skills, they will be well prepared to perform effectively in both academic and professional settings. A growing body of research had investigated the effectiveness of technology-mediated assessment towards students’ communicative competence (Algouzie et al, 2023, Rahayu et al., 2022, Kho et al., 2024, Liao, 2025, & Nurizah Md. Ngadiran et al., 2025). While video-based assessment allowed students to self-evaluate their presentations and serve as practice sessions which benefits them (Algouzi et al., 2023), some students still experience delivery-related challenges that affect their communicative competence (Norfarhana Fadilla Mohd Zaki & Sharifah Nadia Syed Nasharuddin, 2025 & Kho et al., 2024). Similarly, Rahayu Pipit et al. (2022) found that while students demonstrated strong content knowledge and vocabulary, they still grappled with the delivery aspects of presentations. This suggests that shifting to technology-mediated assessment alone does not necessarily lead to improved students’ performance, as other underlying factors also influence their communicative competence.

Achieving communicative competence is closely linked to other aspects such as learners’ self-efficacy, anxiety and motivation. Bandura (1977) describes “self-efficacy” as learners’ belief in their own capacity to perform specific tasks or skills. In a study by Liao (2025), a group of students were required to self-assess their recorded speeches on VoiceThread for one year, as they had limited opportunities participating in authentic speaking practice. The finding showed a significant improvement in overall speaking confidence, particularly in their interlocutory self-efficacy. As opposed to Liao (2025) who focused on voice recordings that may overlook non-verbal aspects of delivery, Sharma (2022) utilised digital video recording and YouTube platform as innovative assessment tools. His study revealed that this technology-mediated approach enhanced students’ self-efficacy in digital oratory. Additionally, in relation to anxiety in recorded presentations, Mimihayu Md Yusof et al. (2025) found that such assessments alleviate students' anxiety. Students readily embrace this nature of assessment and the opportunity to review their presentation alleviates their anxiety compared to delivering face-to-face presentations.

Similarly, in another study, students were assigned to produce a 10-minute video documentary. They reported that this task increased their confidence in presenting as they had sufficient time to edit the videos, and the editing process served as a form of self-assessment (Nurizah Md. Ngadiran et al., 2025). This finding is consistent with Mimihayu Md Yusof et al. (2025), who reported that opportunities for rehearsal and self-correction help lower performance pressure while still enabling authentic practice. In the same vein, Kho and Ting (2021) found that face-to-face presentation may make students feel nervous. Hence, video presentation is one of the ways to increase students’ confidence. Nonetheless, it cannot be denied, it is equally important for students to demonstrate good delivery in both contexts, face-to-face and online platforms to prepare for their future careers. Nurizah Md. Ngadiran et al., (2025) also further suggested that video recording activity can be used to overcome anxiety in oral presentation. Recorded presentations assist students in improving the communicative competence, which in turn may enhance their performance in face-to-face presentation. Ahmad Goodarzi and Ehsan Namaziandost (2025) and Mimihayu Md Yusof et al. (2025) asserted that anxiety level is reduced when having

a recorded presentation assessment; it contributes to the increase in motivation when performing recorded presentations.

Research Gap

Although pre-recorded video presentations are widely recognised for their flexibility and pedagogical potential, their effectiveness remains context-dependent and not uniformly experienced. Despite growing research on pre-recorded presentations in ESL contexts, significant gaps remain. While previous studies have investigated the effectiveness of pre-recorded presentations on learning outcomes (Syahriar & Susanti, 2025; Yusof et al., 2025) and their impact on self-efficacy and anxiety reduction (Liao, 2025; Ngadiran et al., 2025), limited research has focused on learners' perceptions particularly in the Malaysian context. Few studies comprehensively examine both the benefits and challenges identified by learners. This study therefore seeks to address this gap by examining Malaysian ESL students' perceptions of pre-recorded informative speech assessment using the Spitzberg & Cupach (1984) framework.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed an exploratory mixed-methods research design, using a quantitative survey to identify patterns in perceived communication competence and qualitative thematic analysis to explain students' perceptions. The quantitative data were collected using a survey based on Spitzberg's (1983) three-component model to identify patterns in perceived communication competence. Additionally, the qualitative component employed thematic analysis to explain students' perceptions. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provides a more complete understanding of the phenomenon than either method alone.

Research Sample

The study was conducted at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) and involved 42 Malaysian undergraduate students enrolled in the LCC400 (English for Informative Speeches) course. As part of the course requirements, students recorded individual 5–7-minute informative speeches on self-selected topics using recording technology that was available to them (e.g., smartphones, laptops). The participants were Malaysian ESL learners from various proficiency levels, reflecting the linguistic diversity among university students in this course. As an exploratory study, findings are specific to this sample and context and are not intended for generalisation to other populations.

Research Instruments

The quantitative survey consisted of a 31-item Likert-scale questionnaire developed by adapting validated communication competence components. The items were organised according to the three dimensions of Spitzberg & Cupach's (1984) communication competence model (knowledge, skills and motivation): Knowledge (6 items assessing content organization and clarity), Verbal Delivery (6 items assessing pace, clarity, pronunciation), Non-Verbal Delivery (7 items assessing body language, gestures, eye contact), Confidence (6 items assessing self-assurance and anxiety management), and Audience Engagement (6 items assessing audience connection and responsiveness).

In addition, the qualitative instrument consists of four open-ended reflection questions: (1) "What benefits did you experience from recording your speech on video?" (2) "What did you learn from watching your own recording?" (3) "What challenges or barriers did you face when recording your informative speech?", and (4) "What would you recommend to improve the use of video recording for teaching communication skills in future courses?" These questions are aligned with the second research question and enable students to provide more detailed insights into their experiences with the pre-recorded video presentations.

Data Collection

Data were collected in February 2026, after students had completed their pre-recorded informative speeches. The questionnaire was distributed via Google Form, taking approximately 15 minutes to complete. Responses were anonymous and confidential where students were identified only by assigned ID numbers (S1-S24). Informed consent was obtained verbally in class, prior to data collection.

Data Analysis

The quantitative analysis for this exploratory study was conducted using Microsoft Excel. For each communication competence dimension, means (M), standard deviations (SD), minimum and maximum scores and frequency distributions were calculated. Means were calculated for both individual items and dimension totals (6-7 items per dimension). Standard deviations were calculated to assess the consistency of responses. Additionally, dimensions were ranked by mean scores to identify which areas of communication competence students perceived as the most/ least developed based on the assessment. The qualitative data, on the other hand, were analysed using Braun & Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach to identify the themes across the three communication competence dimensions.

Finally, data from both quantitative and qualitative findings were then triangulated. Being an exploratory study, the emphasis was on rich description and pattern identification rather than just making statistical generalisations. As mentioned by Asogawa et al. (2023), combining quantitative and qualitative data allows researchers to collect a deeper understanding of educational phenomena and to improve the validity and reliability of research findings. By combining these data, this research identified both the benefits and challenges of pre-recorded informative speeches and gained a richer understanding of the impact on students' communicative competence development.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study in relation to the two research questions mentioned earlier.

Overall Perceptions of Pre-recorded Informative Speeches

This section addresses the first RQ: *What are LCC400 students' overall perceptions of pre-recorded informative speeches?* This part reports quantitative findings from the 31 Likert-scale items completed by the 42 participants. Students rated their perceptions of communication competence development on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) across the dimensions based on Spitzberg & Cupach's (1984) framework. Perception scores are illustrated in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Overall perceptions of pre-recorded informative speeches

Dimensions	Components	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Knowledge	Knowledge	42	3.86	0.59	2.83	5.00
Skills	Verbal	42	3.62	0.70	2.33	5.00
	Non-verbal	42	3.78	0.70	2.33	5.00
Motivation	Confidence	42	3.79	0.58	2.40	5.00
	Engagement	42	3.63	0.60	2.67	5.00
Overall		42	3.75	0.58	2.73	5.00

Overall, students reported an overall moderate-to-good range of development in communication competence from the pre-recorded informative speeches assessment. The overall mean was 3.75 (SD=0.58) indicating that on average, students rated their development at approximately 75%. This finding aligns with study done by Yusof et al. (2025) and Ngadiran et al. (2025) that students recognise meaningful benefits from pre-recorded assessment while also experiencing difficulties. Individual scores range from 2.73 to 5.00 which shows a wide range of responses with some students perceived little benefit while others reported remarkable improvement from the assessment.

For perception scores by dimension (Table 1), the knowledge dimension recorded the highest perception ($M=3.86$, $SD=0.59$) indicating that students recognised improvements in their understanding of the content and organisation of their speech through pre-recorded video. This finding supports the study by Indriani (2020) on the effectiveness of video observation in recognising content organisation. Meanwhile, verbal delivery recorded the lowest ($M=3.62$, $SD=0.70$). This suggests that the students perceived verbal delivery including pace, vocal clarity and natural expression to be the greatest challenge in pre-recorded video. Confidence, non-verbal delivery and audience engagement showed moderate perception with scores of $M=3.79$, $M=3.78$ and $M=3.63$ respectively. These quantitative findings provide an overview of how LCC400 students generally perceive their communication competence development across different dimensions. The following section presents qualitative findings exploring the benefits and challenges the students identified in pre-recorded informative speech presentations.

Perceived Benefits and Challenges of Pre-Recorded Presentations

To understand what contributes to the overall perception score, this section presents qualitative findings from thematic analysis of open-ended questionnaire responses that address RQ2: *What are the perceived benefits and challenges of pre-recorded presentations among LCC400 students?* The findings revealed 3 benefits and 3 challenges as identified by the students.

Benefits of Pre-recorded Presentations

Benefit 1: Reflective Learning & Self-Awareness

From the pre-recorded presentation, students identified reflection of their own performance as the primary benefit of this assessment method. The ability to observe themselves provides an opportunity to recognise their strengths and weaknesses. As explained by (S14), *"Recording my speech helped me evaluate my presentation skills more clearly. I was able to observe my tone, body language, and confidence level. It also helped me identify areas that need improvement."* (S41) also reported that *"I was able to spot areas that needed improvement, like speaking too fast, using filler words like 'um,' 'uh' or having awkward pauses."* This self-observation of a pre-recorded presentation provided feedback that would be difficult to obtain in a live presentation, supporting the findings by Syahriar and Susanti (2025) on the benefit of assessment review.

Moreover, students also gained awareness of their observable behaviours through a video presentation. As reported by (S25), *"I can see my Body Language it allows for me to analysis of non-verbal sign, ensuring that facial expressions, posture, and gestures."* Similarly, (S41) mentioned that *"I noticed how often I moved my hands, shifted my weight, or avoided eye contact. Some gestures helped emphasize my points but others made me look nervous."* In a similar vein, (S28) also noted that *"It can helped me evaluate my delivery, improve my confidence and identify mispronunciation and body languages."* These detailed observations of non-verbal behaviours were made possible by the ability to pause and review their own recorded presentations. This reflective learning benefit supports the knowledge dimension ($M=3.86$) and non-verbal dimensions ($M=3.78$) of the communication competence framework as students can observe content organisation and body language in their pre-recorded presentation.

Benefit 2: Confidence Building & Reduced Anxiety

The second benefit of pre-recorded presentations is that students were able to increase confidence and reduce anxiety levels through the opportunity to practice multiple times. This finding is similar to those of Ngadiran et al. (2025) and Yusof et al. (2025) who found that opportunities for rehearsal lower performance pressure. Recording their presentation in a private environment created a sense of safety among the students, thus increasing their confidence in presentations. As reported by (S5), *"Felt less nervous because just me and camera and I can prepared very well."* (S35) also mentioned *"Help me become confident because i could practice my speech many times so it helps me speak more clearly."* Similarly, other students also explicitly mentioned confidence building from their experience: *"i learn to be more confident"* (S2), *"Gain Confident"* (S4), *"Watching myself speak helped reduce nervousness. I felt more prepared for the actual presentation."* (S11), *"I can talk comfortably and confidently"* (S40). These insights highlight the key advantage students identified from

multiple practices until they felt fully prepared, which supports the confidence dimension ($M=3.79$). This suggests that pre-recorded video served as a bridge to eventual live presentations in which students developed communicative competence and confidence.

Benefit 3: Skill Development & Specific Competence Awareness

From their experience engaging with pre-recorded speech presentations, students mentioned that they gained knowledge of presentation techniques and awareness of specific communication skills that needed improvement. This exact skill awareness supports research by Panadero (2016) on effective feedback, which highlights that learners benefit from concrete information about observable behaviours. Students identified concrete skills they could improve in presentations, rather than general feedback.

The first skill identified as a concern for the students is their speaking pace. Students reported: *"I learned that I tend to speak faster when I feel nervous. This made parts unclear and harder to understand"* (S14, S16). Similarly, (S38) also mentioned *"I learned that I speak too fast and need more eye contact"*. The awareness of pace is significant because students understood the consequences of their delivery issues. Eye contact and body language awareness is the second skill area identified as needing improvement. (S41) observed: *"I noticed how often I moved my hands, shifted my weight, or avoided eye contact"*, and *"I need to improve my eye contact, reduce filler words, and control my speaking pace"* (S28). This awareness of non-verbal behaviours supports the development of the non-verbal delivery dimension ($M = 3.78$). Other than that, students were also aware of their pronunciation and vocabulary usage, which needed improvement. (S3) reflected: *"I realised the limited amount of vocabulary I have when giving these presentations"*, while (S7) noted *"I check whether my speech is clear in terms of word pronunciation"*, indicating purposeful monitoring of speech-clarity.

Interestingly, in addition to areas that need improvement, students also recognised content strengths, demonstrating balanced self-awareness. A student mentioned that: *"My content was well-organised and clear"* (S14). These responses demonstrate that pre-recorded video presentations provided detailed, specific feedback, with students identifying concrete skills for improvement.

Challenges of Pre-recorded Presentations

Challenge 1: Camera Anxiety and Self-Consciousness

Despite the confidence-building benefits, students also experienced challenges created by camera awareness. This finding extends research by Yusof et al. (2025) who identified that pre-recorded assessment reduces general speaking anxiety. This current study, however, reveals that the challenge was related to camera-specific anxiety. 26 students reported having performance anxiety specifically due to being recorded. They reported nervousness directly related to being recorded: *"A little bit gagap and kind of nervous plus scared"* (S4), *"I was nervous and embarrassed,"* (S12), *"I felt nervous and self-conscious in front of the camera."* (S14), *"Feeling nervous and struggling with pronunciation."* (S27), *"Feeling nervous in front of the camera. Sometimes i forgot my points and had to record again."* (S35), suggesting that the psychological discomfort affected the students' natural delivery and the quality of their performance.

Students also mentioned the need to manage their anxiety. As described by (S42), *"I have to control my nervous and anxiety to make sure my video looks good and presentable"*. This response indicates that anxiety management was a concern during recording, adding emotional demand to the assessment. This challenge particularly contributes to the lowest perception score (verbal delivery dimension; $M=3.62$) as being anxious directly affects vocal delivery quality.

Challenge 2: Technical & Environmental Barriers

Another challenge students faced involved environmental barriers, equipment quality and technical skills. These obstacles limited their ability to improve video recordings effectively. Twenty-five students identified technical barriers as a major obstacle affecting their presentation. This finding aligns with Alumalai & Parasivam (2023) on unequal outcomes due to technology and digital skills.

Environmental barriers were significant for the students, especially those staying in hostels. (S11) mentioned: *"My main challenge is Place to record my informative speech. Its hard to find a peaceful and quite environment. Since I am staying at a college hostel with my housemates, it was challenging to find a quiet place to record my speech because there were often background noises and interruptions."* Similarly, other also noted: *"Needed time and space, sometimes the room college is too loud and noisy"* (S19), *"If im recording in my hostel there's a bit of distraction"* (S24), *"I don't have a nice place to record a video. There are many noises around me"* (S32), and *"my surrounding area is not appropriate because there is a lot of noise"* (S33). There is consistency in responses across multiple students, indicating that the environmental barrier is a common issue for hostel residents.

Technical equipment limitation is the second barrier identified in the responses. As reported by (S6), *"my camera is not very hd and sometimes when i want to edit the videos, it will have an wifi issues"*. (S5) and (S14) identified lighting problems: *"To find a good lighting and background"* and *"Setting up proper lighting and camera position was also slightly challenging"*. In the same vein, another student suggested: *"To have basic technical skills, a short lesson on lighting, camera angle, and audio quality can dramatically improve results. Students should not lose points because their room lighting turns them into a silhouette."* (S22). Other than that, device storage was also mentioned as one of the technical equipment challenges: *"Then, to clear my storage phone to make sure I can delivered my ideas successfully."* (S5).

Finally, editing skills were also presented as a challenge related to a technical issue. One student highlighted: *"Another challenge i had was editing. I'm not a tech savvy person, so when it comes to editing i fall short and in my opinion it made my video quite bland."* (S3). This response reveals that students with technical skills can produce higher-quality videos than those without. This technical barrier indicates that it affects students, suggesting that institutional support is necessary which aligns with the findings from Yusof et al. (2025) on the importance of considering students with different levels of literacy skills.

Challenge 3: Pronunciation & Linguistics Barriers

In addition to the two challenges mentioned above, students also faced challenges related to language competency. Students reported that they struggled with English pronunciation, vocabulary limitations and language accuracy. These linguistic challenges were difficult to overcome through video recording alone as they required students to develop their language skills beyond the assessment. Pronunciation was reported to be the main challenge across the responses. (S25) reported struggling with the pronunciation of difficult English words: *"Some of the words that I can't pronounce clearly."* Others also reported similar difficulty: *"Feeling nervous and struggling with pronunciation."* (S27), *"I wasn't very good at pronouncing those difficult words."* (S12)

Vocabulary limitation represents another linguistic barrier. Students reflected that limited English vocabulary constrained their ability to express ideas effectively. As highlighted by (S3): *"Other than that, i also realised the limited amount of vocabulary i have when giving these presentations. I feel like there are different words that i could've used as a substitute to make the presentation a whole lot interesting."* Students were aware that their vocabulary limitations affected the effectiveness of their communication. This finding suggests that while a pre-recorded assessment can reveal linguistic gaps, it cannot substitute for explicit language instruction.

Overall, students' moderate-to-good perception score of communication competence development (M=3.75) reflects a meaningful balance between significant benefits and challenges. The reflective learning benefit explains the highest knowledge dimension score (M=3.86). The specific skills awareness contributed to the moderate scores for confidence (M=3.79) and the non-verbal delivery dimension (M=3.78). Meanwhile, camera anxiety is a significant constraint of verbal delivery, contributing to the lowest dimension score (M=3.62). These findings suggest that while pre-recorded speech presentations offer meaningful pedagogical benefits, their effectiveness remains context-dependent.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that pre-recorded video presentations serve as valuable pedagogical and assessment tools in supporting ESL learners' speaking development, especially in enhancing self-awareness, confidence, and

specific communicative competencies. The moderate-to-good overall perceptions suggest that learners acknowledge the benefits of possibilities for repeated practice, reflection, and autonomous learning. Nevertheless, the results also suggest several limitations. Verbal delivery remains the most challenging aspect, indicating that the ability to rehearse and edit recordings does not necessarily translate into improved real-time communicative performance. Additionally, learners face challenges related to camera anxiety, technical and environmental constraints, and linguistic limitations. These show that video-based assessment alone is insufficient to address all dimensions of speaking proficiency and a more balanced approach of both live speaking tasks and pre-recorded video presentations is needed.

Future research should address several significant limitations. Firstly, studies across multiple Malaysian universities and different ESL contexts should be conducted to reflect broader patterns in Malaysian ESL education. Other than that, it also suggested that future research could examine individual differences (e.g. proficiency levels, digital literacy skills or personality factors) in shaping students' experiences. Future research also would also benefit the field by including evaluation of students' performance to complement their perception of their performance during the video-recorded speech. These future research directions may provide more comprehensive evidence in optimising pre-recorded assessment in Malaysian education contexts thus contributing to a broader literature on technology-mediated assessment in language learning.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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