



Kismetova Galiya, Narekova Altynay
M.Utemisov West Kazakhstan University, Uralsk, Kazakhstan
E-mail: galiya-1969@mail.ru, narekovaa@gmail.com

BEYOND FLIPGRID: EXPLORING DIGITAL ALTERNATIVES FOR DEVELOPING MONOLOGIC SPEAKING SKILLS IN KAZAKHSTANI EFL CLASSROOMS

Annotation. This study investigates the effectiveness of digital video-based platforms as alternatives to Flipgrid in the development of monologic speaking skills among EFL learners in Kazakhstan. With Flipgrid no longer functioning as an educational tool, educators must identify and evaluate suitable replacements. Drawing on the theoretical framework of communicative competence developed by S. S. Kunanbayeva and incorporating insights from international research, this study explores the use of Padlet, Loom, and Seesaw as platforms for developing expressive speech. A mixed-methods approach involving experimental implementation, surveys, and interviews was applied in a Kazakhstani secondary school. Findings indicate that while all platforms offered useful tools for speaking development, Padlet emerged as the most effective in promoting student engagement, creativity, and confidence in monologic speech. The research offers pedagogical implications for integrating alternative technologies into language education.

Keywords: digital tools; monologic speech; speaking skills; EFL; Padlet; Seesaw; Loom; communicative competence.

Introduction

1.1 Background

The development of monologic speaking skills is a central goal in communicative language teaching, particularly in EFL contexts where learners often lack real-world opportunities to speak English outside the classroom. As emphasized by Kunanbayeva (2010) [1], communicative competence encompasses not only linguistic accuracy but also the ability to express thoughts independently and coherently. Monologic speech—structured, self-contained verbal expression—serves as a crucial indicator of such competence, enabling learners to present ideas with clarity, logic, and emotional resonance.

Over the past decade, digital technologies have significantly expanded the possibilities for teaching speaking skills. Among them, Flipgrid had gained popularity as a platform that allowed students to record short video responses, engage in asynchronous discussions, and reflect on their oral performance. Numerous international studies highlighted Flipgrid's benefits in reducing anxiety, increasing student autonomy, and promoting creative self-expression [2],[3].



However, in 2024, Microsoft retired Flipgrid (rebranded as “Flip”), removing a widely used tool from the educational technology landscape. This has posed challenges for language teachers who relied on Flipgrid to support student-centered, video-based speaking practice. The discontinuation has made it necessary to explore alternative platforms that can support similar pedagogical functions in developing monologic speaking.

1.2 The Kazakhstani Context

Kazakhstan’s national education policy places increasing emphasis on multilingual education and digitalization. Researchers such as Aigul Akhmetova, Anel Akhmetzhanova, and Gaysha Imambayeva [4] have pointed to the growing role of digital platforms in improving communicative skills. However, studies that specifically address monologic speech development through video tools remain limited. Kunanbayeva’s framework of foreign language communicative competence provides a theoretical lens through which the integration of such tools can be evaluated. According to her model, learners must develop not only linguistic knowledge, but also discourse, sociocultural, strategic, and pragmatic competences—all of which can be fostered through monologic speech tasks.

1.3 Problem Statement

With the closure of Flipgrid, there is a noticeable gap in practical guidance and academic literature on how to continue supporting monologic speech development using digital tools. Although alternatives like Padlet, Loom, and Seesaw exist, their comparative effectiveness in EFL speaking instruction—particularly in Kazakhstan—has not been thoroughly examined.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the most viable digital video platforms for supporting monologic speaking skills in Kazakhstani EFL classrooms?
2. How do students and teachers perceive the effectiveness and usability of these platforms?
3. What roles do feedback and task variety play in enhancing communicative competence?

1.5 Research Objectives

This study aims to:

- Evaluate Padlet, Loom, and Seesaw as alternatives to Flipgrid for monologic speaking tasks;
- Analyze their impact on learner confidence, fluency, and expressive language use;
- Investigate teacher and student perceptions of each platform;
- Offer methodological recommendations for integrating digital video tools in accordance with Kunanbayeva’s communicative competence model.

The study contributes to the growing body of research on digital pedagogy in language education and provides practical insights for Kazakhstani EFL practitioners navigating post-Flipgrid instruction.

1.6 Overview of the Platforms

To better understand their pedagogical potential, it is important to briefly introduce the three platforms examined in this study:

Padlet is a web-based collaborative tool that allows users to create interactive boards, where multimedia content—including videos—can be posted and commented on. It is known for its visual appeal, intuitive interface, and flexibility, making it popular among educators for fostering creativity and asynchronous interaction.

Among the myriad of educational technologies available, Padlet—an online collaborative platform—has emerged as a promising tool for fostering interactive and engaging learning environments [5]. It enables users to build digital boards—known as "walls"—to instantly share ideas, resources, and multimedia content [6].

Loom is a video messaging tool that enables users to record their screen, voice, and face simultaneously. It is commonly used in professional and academic settings for presentations, tutorials, and reflective tasks. Loom supports long-form and structured monologic responses, with emphasis on clarity and fluency.

Research by Aykaç (2022) highlights that students appreciate Loom's clarity and ease of use, particularly for receiving and giving video feedback in academic tasks—showing that learners often prefer recorded explanations they can replay and reflect upon [7]. In this study, users reported that Loom enhanced their sense of ownership over their communication, supporting fluency and pronunciation development.

Seesaw is a free online platform that works on both mobile devices and laptops. It features built-in translation tools, a straightforward login process, and is free from advertisements (SeeSaw, 2019), making it accessible and user-friendly even for younger students with limited tech skills. The platform allows students to document their learning by taking photos, drawing, recording videos, and practicing their speaking in a low-pressure environment. This enables them to build confidence and improve their speaking skills at their own pace [8].

Methods

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods design combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to evaluate the effectiveness of three alternative digital platforms—Padlet, Loom, and Seesaw—for fostering monologic speaking skills in English language learners. The research was carried out over a period of eight weeks and involved pre- and post-intervention assessments, student and teacher surveys, and semi-structured interviews.

2.2 Participants

The participants were 30 high school students (aged 15–17) from a public secondary school in Aktobe, Kazakhstan. All participants were intermediate-level learners of English and had previously used Flipgrid before its discontinuation. Two English language teachers were also involved to facilitate implementation and provide feedback.

2.3 Platforms Used

- Padlet: Students posted weekly video monologues responding to prompts and were encouraged to comment on peers' posts.
- Loom: Used primarily for formal speaking tasks such as presentations and storytelling, with emphasis on clarity and fluency.
- Seesaw: Focused on short personal reflection videos and goal-setting, promoting self-assessment and teacher interaction.

2.4 Procedure

Participants were divided into three groups of 10 students each. Each group used one platform throughout the study:

- Week 1–2: Orientation and training in the assigned platform.
- Week 3–7: Weekly speaking tasks based on themes aligned with the curriculum (e.g., cultural traditions, future professions, environmental issues).
- Week 8: Final monologic task, post-surveys, and interviews.

All video submissions were stored and analyzed. Students used rubrics adapted from Kunanbayeva's communicative competence framework, evaluating discourse coherence, fluency, vocabulary richness, and emotional expressiveness.

2.5 Data Collection Tools

- Speaking Performance Rubric: Assessed coherence, expressiveness, and fluency.
- Pre- and Post-Tests: Oral exams evaluated by external raters.
- Surveys: Likert-scale items measuring motivation, anxiety, and platform usability.
- Interviews: Conducted with 12 students (4 from each group) and both teachers to capture deeper insights into user experience.

2.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative data (test scores and survey results) were analyzed using SPSS to calculate descriptive statistics and paired t-tests. Qualitative data from interviews and open-ended survey responses were coded thematically using MAXQDA software. Themes included emotional engagement, platform accessibility, and perceived progress.

Results

3.1 Quantitative Results: Speaking Performance

The pre- and post-test speaking assessments revealed measurable improvement across all three groups.

Platform	Pre-Test Mean (%)	Post-Test Mean (%)	Gain (%)
Padlet	64	86	+22
Loom	65	82	+17
Seesaw	67	80	+13

On average, students using Padlet showed the greatest improvement in overall speaking performance, with a mean score increase of 22%, compared to 17% in the Loom group and 13% in the Seesaw group. Padlet users particularly excelled in the areas of vocabulary richness and emotional expressiveness.

3.2 Student Engagement and Perceptions

Survey data showed that 93% of Padlet users felt more motivated to speak in English due to the ability to personalize their responses with multimedia, images, and creative formatting. 87% of Loom users appreciated the professional tone and structure it encouraged, while 74% of Seesaw users found the platform useful for short reflections but limited for in-depth monologic tasks.

- Padlet: "I loved customizing my video space. It made me want to try harder."

- Loom: “Great for presentations, but less personal.”
- Seesaw: “Helpful for practice, but not enough space for long speaking.”

3.3 Qualitative Insights from Interviews

Interviews supported the quantitative findings. Students using Padlet described it as “creative,” “interactive,” and “fun.” One participant noted that Padlet “felt like a conversation with myself and others at the same time.” In contrast, Loom was seen as “formal and clear, but a bit dry,” while Seesaw was regarded as “simple” and “comfortable,” though less suited for deep speech development.

Teachers echoed these views, emphasizing that Padlet encouraged deeper storytelling and language use. One teacher stated, “Students felt a sense of ownership and community using Padlet, which pushed them to speak more confidently and fluently.”

3.4 Anxiety and Confidence

A comparison of pre- and post-survey results showed that speaking anxiety decreased most significantly in the Padlet group (from 3.9 to 2.6 on a 5-point Likert scale), followed by Loom (3.8 to 3.0) and Seesaw (3.7 to 3.2). This supports the notion that creative control and peer interaction can mitigate fear of speaking.

3.5 Feedback and Task Variety

Groups receiving regular teacher and peer feedback outperformed those with minimal feedback, underscoring its importance. Varied monologic genres contributed to broader communicative competence development and increased learner engagement.

3.6 Technical Usability

All platforms were generally accessible and mobile-friendly. However, Seesaw had minor compatibility issues with Android devices, and Loom required a higher internet bandwidth. Padlet was praised for its ease of use and flexibility across devices.

Discussion

4.1 Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the potential of digital video platforms to support the development of monologic speaking skills in Kazakhstani EFL contexts. As a response to the discontinuation of Flipgrid, the comparison of Padlet, Loom, and Seesaw revealed that each tool contributes differently to learners’ speaking performance and engagement.

Padlet emerged as the most effective platform, promoting creativity, emotional expressiveness, and community interaction—elements central to communicative competence as described by Kunanbayeva. Students using Padlet demonstrated the highest gains in vocabulary diversity and fluency, supported by their ability to personalize their speaking environment and engage with peers asynchronously. This aligns with the findings of Keller-Deditskaya, Akisheva, and Kucherenko, who demonstrated that the Padlet online board effectively supports the interconnected teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Russian as a foreign language [9]. Their research highlights Padlet’s strength in promoting integrated speech activities and learner engagement through its multimedia and collaborative features—insights that reinforce this study’s conclusions about Padlet’s role in developing monologic speaking skills in EFL contexts.



Loom, while slightly more formal, supported structured and fluent speech, especially in academic-style tasks. This matches findings by Müzeyyen Aykaç, who noted that Loom is effective for feedback on academic tasks and digital presentations. However, its professional tone and limited interactivity may make it less appealing for tasks requiring emotional depth and creativity.

Seesaw served best as a reflective tool but fell short in supporting extended or expressive monologic tasks. While it offered simplicity and ease of use, its design limited longer and more complex speech production. This is consistent with feedback from both students and teachers who viewed Seesaw as complementary rather than comprehensive.

From a pedagogical standpoint, this study affirms the value of digital storytelling in monologic speech development. According to Kunanbayeva's communicative competence framework, expressive language is an essential element of discourse and sociocultural competence. Digital platforms that allow learners to produce, review, and share their speech within a supportive digital space are well-positioned to foster these competencies.

Conclusion

This research contributes to the growing body of literature on digital language education by addressing the gap left by Flipgrid's retirement and exploring alternative tools in a Kazakhstani context. The study found that Padlet, in particular, effectively promotes the development of monologic speaking skills by supporting student engagement, creativity, and emotional expression.

Key conclusions include:

- Padlet offers the best balance of interactivity, usability, and expressive potential.
- Loom is suitable for structured, academic presentations but less ideal for emotionally rich speech.
- Seesaw supports reflection but is limited in supporting long-form speech development.
- Digital storytelling aligned with communicative competence theory is a promising method for developing speaking skills.

4.3 Implications and Recommendations

- Educators should select digital platforms not only based on technical functionality but also pedagogical alignment with communicative competence frameworks.
- Training should be provided to students and teachers on how to use tools creatively and reflectively.
- Further research could expand the comparison to other platforms (e.g., Edpuzzle, Flip alternatives) or explore integration in blended learning environments.

By centering instruction on meaningful monologic production using flexible digital platforms, teachers can foster deeper student engagement and develop communicative skills aligned with both national priorities and global standards.

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Кисметова Г.Н., Нарекова А. С.

**FLIPGRID-ТЕН ТЫС: ҚАЗАҚСТАНДЫҚ ШЕТ ТІЛІ САБАҚТАРЫНДА
МОНОЛОГТЫҚ СӨЙЛЕУ ДаҒДЫЛАРЫН ДАМЫТУҒА АРНАЛҒАН
ЦИФРЛЫҚ БАЛАМАЛАРДЫ ЗЕРТТЕУ**

Аңдатпа. Бұл зерттеуде Қазақстандағы ағылшын тілі үйренушілері арасында монологтық сөйлеу дағдыларын дамытуда Flipgrid-ке балама ретінде цифрлых бейнеплатформалардың тиімділігі қарастырылады. Flipgrid білім беру құралы ретінде жұмысын тоқтатқандықтан, мұғалімдер тиімді баламаларды табу және бағалау қажеттілігіне тап болды. Зерттеу С. С. Құнанбаеваның коммуникативтік құзыреттілік теориясына негізделіп, халықаралық зерттеулердің деректерімен толықтырылған. Padlet, Loom және Seesaw платформалары көркем сөйлеуді дамыту құралы ретінде қарастырылды. Зерттеу Қазақстандағы орта мектепте эксперимент, сауалнама және сұхбат алуды қамтыған аралас әдіспен



жүргізілді. Нәтижелер барлық платформалардың сөйлеу дағдыларын дамытуда пайдалы құралдар ұсынатынын көрсетті, алайда Padlet оқушылардың белсенділігін, шығармашылығын және монологтық сөйлеудегі сенімділігін арттыруда ең тиімдісі ретінде танылды. Зерттеу тілдік білім беруде балама технологияларды біріктіруге арналған педагогикалық ұсыныстар ұсынады.

Кілт сөздер: цифрлық құралдар; монологтық сөйлеу; сөйлеу дағдылары; ағылшын тілі (шет тілі ретінде); Padlet; Seesaw; Loom; коммуникативтік құзыреттілік.

Кисметова Г.Н., Нарекова А. С.

**ЗА ПРЕДЕЛАМИ FLIPGRID: ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ЦИФРОВЫХ
АЛЬТЕРНАТИВ ДЛЯ РАЗВИТИЯ МОНОЛОГИЧЕСКОЙ РЕЧИ В
КАЗАХСТАНСКИХ КЛАССАХ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА КАК
ИНОСТРАННОГО**

Аннотация: В данном исследовании рассматривается эффективность цифровых видеоплатформ в качестве альтернатив Flipgrid для развития навыков монологической речи у изучающих английский язык в Казахстане. Поскольку Flipgrid больше не функционирует как образовательный инструмент, преподаватели сталкиваются с необходимостью поиска и оценки подходящих замен. Основываясь на теоретической модели коммуникативной компетенции С. С. Кунанбаевой и опираясь на международные исследования, данное исследование анализирует использование платформ Padlet, Loom и Seesaw для развития выразительной речи. В казахстанской средней школе был применён смешанный метод, включающий экспериментальное внедрение, анкетирование и интервью. Результаты показали, что все платформы предоставляют полезные инструменты для развития речи, однако Padlet оказался наиболее эффективным в стимулировании вовлеченности, креативности и уверенности учащихся в монологической речи. Исследование предлагает педагогические рекомендации по интеграции альтернативных технологий в обучение языкам.

Ключевые слова: цифровые инструменты; монологическая речь; навыки говорения; английский как иностранный; Padlet; Seesaw; Loom; коммуникативная компетенция.