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INNOVATIVE TECHNIQUES FOR IMPROVING SPEAKING SKILLS OF EFL STUDENTS IN ENGLISH CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

In today's contemporary world, students have access to various learning resources through the use of advanced technologies to improve their language skills. Both teachers and students apply modern information technologies in the field of language teaching and learning, as these devices can help develop their skills. This paper includes information about the potential benefits of online advanced information technologies, such as online platforms, language learning apps, audio and video materials, and others, to enhance English as Foreign Language (EFL) students' speaking skills. To elaborate, the implementation of various technology sources, including podcasts, online dictionaries, and online videos available on social media, and different online applications play a pivotal role in improving EFL students speaking skills, since they can foster an interactive and integrated learning environment. This paper aims to provide detailed information about language learning applications, online platforms, and other innovative techniques, and their effects on speaking skills of EFL students. The findings of this study reveal that many of the advanced technologies helped students increase their fluency and accuracy, diminish sense of anxiety and fear, and build confidence among students. Obviously, the study discovered that speaking instructions using technology can be line with communicative approach to education, enabling students to communicate in a proficient and skilled manner.

Key words: *advanced technologies, innovative techniques, speaking skills, communicative skills, fluency, accuracy, language learning.*

INTRODUCTION

In today's modern era, advanced technologies have a profound effect on delivering education to students. Many researchers suggest that using information technologies in the field of education can play an important role in supporting teachers, students, and the language learning process more broadly in order to master their subject matter. Today's advanced technologies can provide us with numerous technology-based tools to improve our communicative skills. Many students prefer to enhance their speaking skills by using different online sources, such as online platforms, language learning applications, which can provide several videos, audio materials, or podcasts, and others. Since mastering communicative skills is very important for EFL students, the use of technology in the language learning sphere has increased rapidly. Many studies showed that the use of innovative techniques in speaking classes is being put forward to improve students' oral performance. The main aim of this article is to provide some sources through which EFL students can develop their speaking skills, boost their confidence while speaking in English, and diminish their sense of anxiety. Speaking is defined as creating and conveying meaning and thoughts with the use of both verbal and non-verbal signals in a range of contexts. (Chaney, 1998, p. 13) Therefore, EFL students need to improve their speaking skills in order to share their thoughts and ideas and convey their messages to others without too much effort. However, it is undeniable that enhancing communicative skills takes lots of time and effort. Nevertheless, modern technologies can create such a conducive and engaging learning environment that EFL students are likely to participate in the lessons with great passion and interest. During the language acquisition process, several digital artifacts, objects, and images that represent the target culture are used as examples. (Paulomi Rahman Nisha, 2020, p. 28) Hence, many EFL students can engage in classes without boredom from English classes, as the technology makes them feel interested in the lesson with authentic materials.

METHODS

Both qualitative and secondary data analysis methodologies were used in this research in order to identify the advantages of innovative techniques in terms of improving EFL students' communicative skills. Many studies and research were investigated in order to analyze the potential benefits of using information technologies in the field of education. Applying CMC (computer-mediated communication) to teaching pronunciation and conversation aims to improve EFL students' oral skills. (Thao, 2003) Many studies suggest that utilizing technologies in English classes can help teachers increase their students speaking skills by offering numerous opportunities. The researcher, Thao, claims that the use of information technologies as an example of innovative techniques in English classes is a change in how languages are taught today at schools that focuses on the use of language communication. Besides, the use of technological tools, such as videos, podcasts, interviews, online applications, and speech recognition software, is determined to be the underlying reason for improving EFL students' oral performance. There are some language-learning apps that can help students be involved in language learning, especially speaking lessons, without feeling overwhelmed.

- **Hello Talk.** This is one of the most efficient language-learning apps for improving speaking skills. By using this app, EFL students can post audio messages and get instant and constructive feedback. This application uses an effective approach to enhance oral skills by connecting users of this app with native speakers of English. Users can exchange ideas with native speakers via texting, voice messaging or video chats.
- **Duolingo.** Duolingo is one of the most widespread language learning apps, offering various opportunities to master English. This app offers interactive lessons with a gamified approach for capturing users' attention to the lessons easily. This app's structured lessons can help EFL students enrich their vocabulary, build grammar, and improve pronunciation, which are the main aspects of speaking skills.

- **FluentU.** This online language learning application includes interactive exercises to enhance users' listening, speaking, and comprehension skills through imitating native speakers. To elaborate, this app includes English language videos from the real world, including news, music, commercials, movie trailers, and others, to help students develop their language skills.
- **Busuu.** Busuu is an impressive tool in terms of improving speaking skills and learning conversational vocabulary. There are detailed explanations of vocabulary, grammar, and culture. Users have access to receive feedback from native speakers.

Except from language learning apps, there are numerous other innovative techniques, such as platform Zoom, Oxford Advanced Dictionary, BBC Learning English, different online lessons available on the You Tube platform, and other technologies that have a pivotal role in the education system. According to the findings of several studies, speaking is considered one of the most challenging aspects of language learning, which requires coherence and fluency, grammatical range and pronunciation, lexical resources and accuracy. And some researchers claim that most EFL students are unable to speak English because they have problems with the requirements mentioned above. Therefore, educational technologies are used in the classrooms and outside the classrooms to eliminate this problem by offering more engaging approaches. According to Nunan (2003), fluency in speaking is the use of language effectively and quickly without long and unusual pauses. It means that EFL students are in charge of investigating the factors, components, and conditions that contribute to the effectiveness of speech. In this case, modern technical methods and innovative techniques should be used for effective language learning and teaching speaking skills. (Paulomi Rahman Nisha, 2020, p. 32) For example, the utilization of video applications for conferencing is also considered an important computer-mediated communication tool for improving speaking fluency and accuracy. The particular reason is that it

can cater to social interaction purposes, and it serves as oral performance reinforcement for both speaking fluency and accuracy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

VR (virtual reality) and AR (augmented reality) technologies create immersive environments where EFL students can engage in realistic conversations with virtual characters or explore simulated scenarios. This hands-on approach helps students build confidence in their speaking skills by providing a safe space to practice. Tools like speech recognition software help students improve their pronunciation and fluency by providing instant feedback on their spoken language. By analyzing spoken input, these tools can identify errors and suggest corrections, allowing students to refine their speaking skills. When it comes to online platforms, platforms that connect students with native speakers worldwide facilitate language practice in a natural setting. Advanced technologies make it easier for students to find language exchange partners, engage in conversations, and receive valuable feedback on their speaking skills. Advanced technologies provide interactive platforms that stimulate real-life conversations. These platforms offer students opportunities to practice speaking in a variety of contexts, receive instant feedback, and track their progress over time. Cutting-edge technologies enable personalized learning experiences tailored to individual students' needs. Adaptive learning systems can provide targeted speaking practice based on students' proficiency levels, learning styles, and areas of improvement, making the learning process more effective and engaging. Taking everything into account, by incorporating innovative techniques into language learning, educators can create dynamic and engaging experiences that allow students to develop their speaking skills in a more interactive and effective manner. These advanced tools not only enhance traditional classroom activities but also provide students with additional resources to practice and refine their speaking abilities outside of school hours.

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