

The Impact of YouTube, Skype and WhatsApp in improving EFL Learners' Speaking Skill

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Abstract

The present study attempts to investigate the impact of YouTube, Skype and WhatsApp in improving the EFL learners' speaking skill, and to draw the attention of the teachers, students and educationists toward the importance of Skype, YouTube and WhatsApp in improving English language speaking skill. The aim of this study is to come out with constructive recommendations for students, teachers and educationists in order to improve the processes of teaching and learning spoken English. In addition, it attempts to draw the attention toward learning speaking skills via modern technology. The instrument of this study was a speaking test for (22) beginners students from Arab Open University, Riyadh branch, in the year 2017. The pre-test and post-test were given to students in their formal class schedule, every student in isolation. After two months training a post test was given to the same students within the same questions in their pre-test. Data was statistically analyzed by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program. The findings of the study indicate that social media networking has a great impact on speaking. It also suggests that the teacher who wishes to improve his students' speaking skill have to consider these applications toward the learning process. Finally, the study points out that YouTube, WhatsApp and Skype have a great role in improving EFL learners' oral communication skill.

1. Introduction

In Sudan and some other non-native countries, the process of speaking a foreign language, especially English, has been a constant headache to the concerned governmental bodies, teachers, parents and students. In spite of the great efforts, energy, and money for changing the syllabus and teachers' training that have been spent, still some learners fail to speak the language because of many reasons. One of these reasons is that English language is not part of their daily social life. However, using the modern social media apps such as Skype, YouTube and WhatsApp help to fulfill the lack of the target language environment. Therefore, this paper points out that using social media is the way to improve our English oral communication skills.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Effect of Social Media Networks on the Academic Performance of Students

The social media engages students and have to be examined as entrepreneurs of understanding. The medium of internet is marketing with increase in its programs. The interactive character of online conditions has extended with social media networking. Hooking up through social networking began as being a niche activity, though time it's a phenomenon. The web sites are employed in many ways like developing metropolitan areas, speaking, blogging, etc. Additionally different institutions even nowadays are developing groups on several Websites (Mehmood:2013).

According to the researcher, when referring to alternative ways of improving students' English learning, social media must be mentioned. Just like any website can be used as an effective learning tool and students can surely find something very useful. For example, Skype has a number of channels where students can communicate orally with the person behind and ask questions. Therefore, they will get practical benefits of learning a second language like actually communicating in that language much faster and thus are motivated to learn more and become a fluent speaker.

Accordingly to many studies conducted regarding the use of chat for language learning, chat conversations for one hour a day can improve speaking proficiency to a significant extent (Warschauer, 1996; Chun, 1994; Kern, 1995).

Alfaki and Alharthy (2014) state in their study that technology is an increasingly influential factor in people's life in general and in the field of education in particular. Digital devices are used both to complement established education aids and develop new ways of learning. Technologies are a diverse set of tools and resources used to communicate, create, disseminate, store, and process information. They namely include computers, the internet, broadcasting devices and cell phones. The introduction of new technology into schools has determined changes in pedagogy where teachers are adopting new methods of teaching facilitated by the new technology. Technology offers powerful learning and teaching tools that demand new skills and understandings both from learners and teachers. This may provide better results of teaching effectiveness compared to traditional teaching methods. It creates a healthy environment regardless of time, place and pace which lead to self-study autonomous learning where language is always described as a self-study subject. The internet has created an effective new teaching context by means of Web-based collaboration which promotes classroom interaction so as to increase opportunities for students to offer English an authentic use and to create a learner-centered learning environment. Many social networks and means such as Wiggio, Blogs, Wikis, Facebook, Twitter, Skype, YouTube and many others are now used for various purposes. Of course such tools are also used by tutors to serve as a platform for teacher-student and student-student communication inside and outside classroom. They live in a digital era. Alfaki and Alharthy both attempt to examine in their study the impact of the use of these digital devices on learners' English language. These tools and many others, are means to enhance language learning generally, and the oral communication skills in particular.

2.2 Effect of YouTube on the Academic Performance of Students:

According to the researcher, YouTube is considered as one of the largest Website in the world, and there are too many visitors each month. YouTube has dedicated a special channel for education called Teacher Tube for teachers to upload instructional materials and share with other educator. It provides great resources for both teachers and students. Furthermore, YouTube released another education related site, YouTube EDU, which develop the student oral communication skill.

There are evidences in education that YouTube has been used for the following purposes:

- . Class videos have been provided for flexible learning.

- . Use videos as visual aids to help students improve their oral communication skill.
- . Use videos as research resources.
- . Students can produce videos for projects.

2.3 Effect of Skype on the Academic Performance of Students:

On the other hand, Skype provides audio-visual form of communication, where learners and teachers can exchange and express opinions. Therefore, it also plays a great role in developing students' oral communication skill.

Sheppard (2006) reminds us that Skype is a free computer program you can use to make telephone calls over the internet and that you can also use it to make conference calls and video calls, to chat, and to transfer files. Furthermore, Abdulezer, Abdulezer, and Dammond (2007) affirm that "Skype" can dramatically alter how you exchange information, how you meet new people, and how you interact with friends, family, and colleagues.

Chen and Cordier (2008), maintain that Skype offers one of the most popular voice-over internet protocol services and with a computer, an internet connection, and a few simple steps, foreign language speakers and learners can connect with and call one another across time zones. Chen and Cordier also point out that with Skype you can dial a contact (provided the person you are calling has also downloaded Skype) and talk to and from any country, using a headset and a microphone plugged into your computer.

According to the researcher, there are many different things that can be done through Skype nowadays, for the purpose of this study, the main Skype features is for making oral communication calls.

Buffardi and Campell (2008) pointed out that having a web presence and being in touch with a large number of individuals via SNSs has become part of the daily routine of people, many of whom are higher education students.

According to many studies conducted regarding the use of chat for language learning, chat conversations for one hour a day can improve speaking proficiency to a significant extent (Warschauer, 1996; Chun, 1994; Kern, 1995).

Coverdale (2000) observed both advantages and disadvantages to using video-conferencing as form of communication for language learning. The advantages include (a) ability to communicate with people from other parts of the world, (b) cheaper than travelling overseas to seek language practice opportunities, (c) more interactive and personal than e-mail/chat, (d) easy to see who you are talking to and establish a rapport, (e) ability to see the other party making it more personal than fax, telephone, and e-mail.

Pollara and Zhu (2011) showed that a majority of EFL learners learned more than before because of using social networking websites and joining to a social networking group. They claimed that students were interested in using social networking for academic purposes in school. Additionally, students are glad to receive other students' responses about their posts on the net.

According to the researcher, most learners use the social media net working for chatting and wasting time instead of using it for developing their oral communication skill. Therefore, using the social media networking in particular, Skype, Free conversation call and YouTube improve the students' English speaking skill. In addition, social media network learning can facilitate oral communication skill, reduce anxiety and encourage oral discussion. The researcher also stated that social network makes communication faster and more convenient. Moreover, teaching and learning through Social Networks learning to speak English Language can be one of the most exciting and effective tool of learning and teaching English as Foreign language.

2.4. Using Technology in Learning Language

According to the researcher, technology now a day is unable to be avoided. It is the most powerful tool in almost every aspect of human's daily life. Technology is regarded as a major revolution and this has a significant impact on education. The use of Information Technology (IT) and the internet are the new ways of learning now days. These technological advancements allow people to access, gather, analyze, and share, transfer data and knowledge. Now the students are Net Generation or digital natives. These digital natives bring new challenges to the teaching and learning environment. In the last eight years, the social media technology becomes more popular characterization of websites that allowed digital users to interact with each other as contributors to a website. Therefore, we need to make use of this new technology widely here in Sudan.

Ybarra and Green (2003) state that students need further language support to learn English as a second language in order to develop their oral communication skill. For doing such tasks, they are in need of using various tools which can help them speak the language easily and effectively.

According to Davies and Hewer (2012), the term New Technology includes communication techniques for language teaching in which the personal computer plays a central role. However, there are other technological tools that can be utilized in language learning besides computers. Each technological tool has its specific benefits and application with one of the four language parts (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). However, in order to use these techniques successfully, the EFL learners should be familiar with using computers and internet, and capable of interacting with these techniques.

Sharma (2009) states that the effect of technology has become huge in teaching and learning the language in addition to the instructor's role. In other words, the role of the instructor together with the role of the technology can lead to advance learning results.

Lee (2000) states that the use of computers in language teaching dates back to 1960's and since that time, it has been seen the shift of the role of computer from a mechanical tutor used primarily for drills into a real usage of language in an authentic context by students self-discoveries and developments. When microcomputers entered in the daily life in 1970's, the era of computer assisted language learning has begun at schools and computers were used primarily for drilling activities in language classes with maintain of using text-based materials in language classes in general. Then, internet delivery changed the language learning from being text-based to more interactive ones.

According to Seale and Rius (2001), social media networking can encourage student participation, improve student-student and student-tutor interaction and facilitate independent learning and peer learning. Web-based communication tools are also an excellent means of supporting group work, project work and reflective task. Still in early development for education, these tools can facilitate tutorial support in real time or be used to invite "external experts" into a session. A web camera is needed, and a limited number of people from each location can participate in the session, and that is known as video-conferencing.

Conole and Alevizou (2010) see problems with collaborative activities. They found that the learning perception of students constructing knowledge with collaborative assignments was lower than students adopting a traditional knowledge acquisition model. Such problems with collaborative work are acknowledged but the positive online and in-class atmosphere that resulted from collaborative exercises was seen to increase motivation and improve willingness for learning. Accordingly, using technology in language learning provides authentic materials to increase student motivation (Arnold, 2007) and benefit from it to create a learning environment with a combination of video, graphic, audio and other interactive properties (Muehleisen, 1997).

According to the researcher, technology is the way to add excitement to your lessons and the only way to hold your students' attention and improve their English speaking skills.

Lacina (2004) and Lin (2009) state that utilizing and combining graphics, video, and audio can address varied styles of learning in a more effective way and be a tremendous support to English language learners. They also say that finding a way to infuse technology into instruction not only helps English language learners acquire a second language, but also enhances motivation and confidence which affect their oral performance.

3. Methods

The measuring instrument used for collecting data for the present study was a student pre-test and post-test from Arab Open University, Saudi Arabia, Riyadh branch, (22 subjects). Pre-test and post-test took about three hours to examine (22) students. Each student attended the speaking test in isolation for 10 to 15 minutes including the warm up questions, general questions, and students' opinions as well. There were two major questions (A) and (B), and each student assessed on four categories: content, vocabulary, grammar, (pronunciation and fluency). Then, the collected data was statistically analyzed by (SPSS) Statistic Package for the Social Sciences program.

Students practiced English oral communication inside and outside the classroom with the researcher via different apps such as YouTube, Skype, WhatsApp and other online calls. The researcher made Skype conversations with native speakers from South Africa, United States and United Kingdom about the importance of English language and internet in improving English language. Another session was about the advantages and disadvantages of living in cities and villages. Another topic was about what do you want to be in the future. Moreover,

about what the world will be like after 20 years. In addition to, general topics. The students found that more interesting and were able to participate during all session. Therefore, they were able to avoid the rigid formal classroom. These sessions took about (30) hours via Skype inside the classroom. The classroom was well set with internet connection, and smart board. Another (60) hours session took place inside the classroom. The students watched and listened to video conversations related to their curriculum (Headway Plus for beginners). These videos were about different topics related to the book modules. The students found that interesting. Therefore, they were able to watch and listen to videos in a relaxed atmosphere inside the classroom using the smart board. The researcher send some videos and audios via WhatsApp, and arranged classroom discussions about the topics. In addition, the researcher communicated with his students via WhatsApp, and urged them to record an audio about a certain topic. Then played these audios inside the classroom, and discussions took place. All these activities took about (20) hours discussions inside the classroom. Another (10) hours were scheduled outside the classroom via free online calls such as Imo, and Skype using smart phones.

4. Results

4.1 Pre and post speaking Test

The test is conducted before and after to check if there is a progress within the students' performance. Through the usage of this test, the researcher aims to find answers to the following question:

To what extent do YouTube, Skype and WhatsApp improve students' oral communication skills?

The table and figure below describe the analysis of the pre and post speaking test.

Table 4.1 Descriptive analysis for pre and post speaking test

Part	Pre			Post		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Result	Mean	Std. Deviation	Result
Content	1.590	0.734		2.955	0.950	

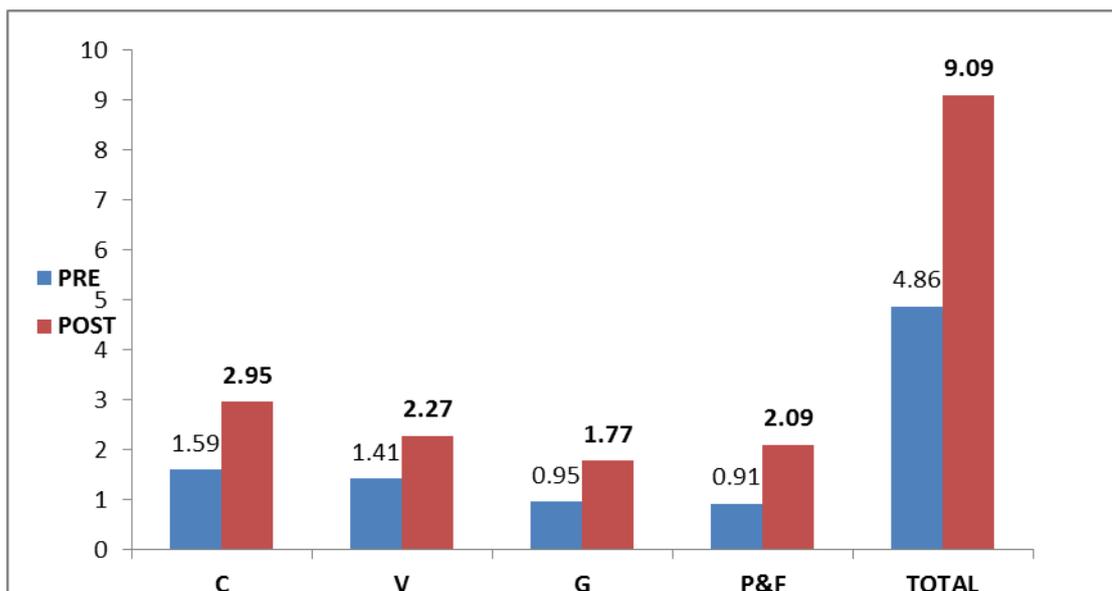
Vocabulary	1.410	0.590		2.227	0.752	
Grammar	0.950	0.375		1.773	0.813	
Pronunciation & fluency	0.910	0.294		2.091	0.811	

Source: The researcher from applied study, 2018

Table 4.2 Comparing Mean Results of Pre and Post Speaking Test

Part	Pre	Post
Content	1.59	2.95
Vocabulary	1.41	2.27
Grammar	0.95	1.77
Pronunciation & Fluency	0.91	2.09
Total	4.86	9.09

Figure 4.1 Comparing Mean Results of Pre and Post Speaking Test



The above table and figure show that there is a remarkable difference in all test components. In the content, the mean was 1.59 while it jumps to 2.95 in the post test. In vocabulary, the

mean was 1.410 in the pre-test while it increases to 2.27 in the post test. In grammar, the mean was 0.95 in the pre-test but it goes up to 1.77 in the post test. In Pronunciation and fluency, the mean was 0.91 while in the post-test it rises to 2.09.

Generally, there is a difference between the performance of the students in the pre-test and the post-test, and that can be seen through the total results. In the pre-test the mean was 4.86, while it increases to 9.09 in the post-test which means the students benefit from the training.

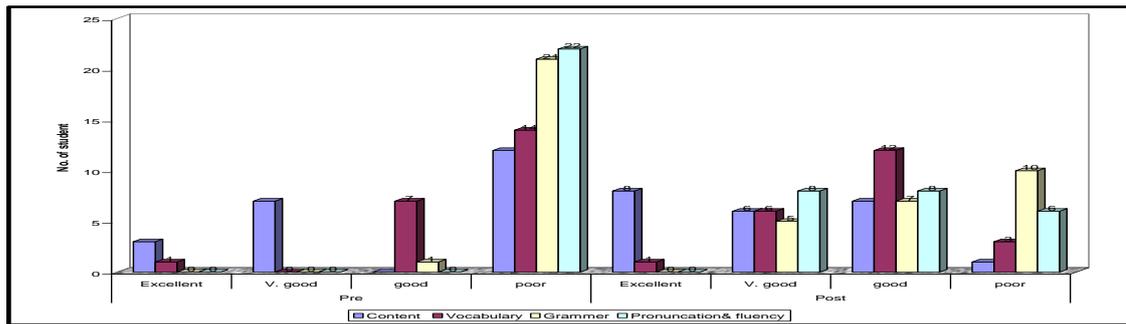
The researcher documented the performance of the participants to compare it with their performance in the pre-test and post-test to see if there is a significant progress or not, and that can be seen through the below table and graph.

Table 4.3 Frequency distribution of the students' pre and post-speaking test.

Skills	Pre-test				Post-test			
	Excellent	V. good	good	poor	Excellent	V. good	good	Poor
Content	3	7	0	12	8	6	7	1
Vocabulary	1	0	7	14	1	6	12	3
Grammar	0	0	1	21	0	5	7	10
Pronunciation & fluency	0	0	0	22	0	8	8	6

Source: The researcher from applied study, 2018

Table 4.2 General Frequency distribution graph of the students' pre and post speaking test



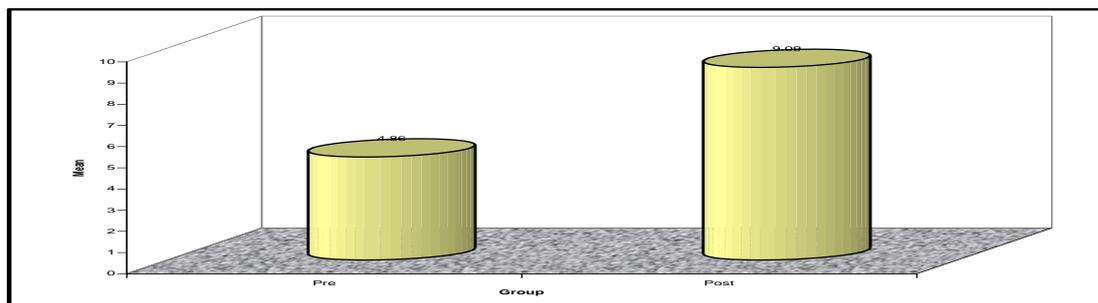
The above table and figure show the performance of the pre and post speaking test. There is a considerable difference between the score of the students in the pre-test and post-test. The speaking skills of participants score increase to some extent which means that there is a progress.

The results of the study can be summarized in the following table and figure.

Table 4.4 Differences between pre & post speaking test

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-value	P-value
Pre	4.86	1.642	-9.693	0.000
Post	9.09	2.959		

Figure 4.3 Difference between pre and post speaking test



From the above table and figure, it is clear that the P-value of T-test (0.000) is less than significant level (0.05), that mean there is statistical difference between the pre-test and the post-test, and that indicate that there is a progress in the students' oral performance. Therefore, it is clear to say that YouTube, Skype and WhatsApp have a great impact in improving the students' oral communication skill.

5. Conclusions

To fulfill the lack of the target language environment in improving students' English oral communication skills that should be through several online calls via Skype, YouTube, WhatsApp. The present paper investigated on these three areas. Referring to the aim of the study:

1. It can be concluded that students can improve their English spoken language through Skype, YouTube and WhatsApp.
2. It can be seen that the YouTube depends on watching and listening to videos while WhatsApp depends on sending videos and audio and communicating through recording your voice and sending it as an audio. Skype is considered as one of the effective social media network that can improve our students' speaking skills because students will be able to practice real conversations. Therefore, when using YouTube we don't speak but we just listen although it is considered as one of the effective means that can improve our students' speaking skill.

6. Recommendations

In the light of the results of this paper, the researcher would like to make the following recommendations to improve EFL learners' oral communication skills.

1. English language tutors should try to arrange English oral communication inside classroom with native speakers and non-native speakers through Skype.
2. Smart boards inside classrooms must be set with internet connection.
3. English language tutors should be in touch with their students via WhatsApp to improve their English spoken language.
4. Using an effective smart board inside classrooms encourages students to improve their English speaking skills through watching and listening to video conversations.
5. Sending English conversation videos to students through WhatsApp help to improve their English speaking skills.
6. Students should try to record and send an audio to WhatsApp group about any topic to practice speaking English.

All the above mentioned recommendations have emphasized the importance of YouTube, Skype and WhatsApp in improving English language speaking skills.

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