


The Use of TED Talks to Enhance EFL Students' Public Speaking Skills: English-Majored Seniors' Practices and Perceptions

Tran Ngoc Kim Cuong¹, Nguyen Thi Thu Hang^{1*}

¹ Faculty of Foreign Languages, Van Lang University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

*Corresponding author's email: hang.ntt@vlu.edu.vn

*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7696-1882>

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: TED Talks, public speaking, perceptions, practices

The integration of technology in language education is now standard in the era of industry 4.0, with TED Talks aligning seamlessly with this trend. This study investigates how EFL students at Van Lang University use the TED Talks platform to enhance their public speaking. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods—online questionnaires and interviews—the study involved sixty-one senior EFL students. Results reveal that these students regularly turn to TED Talks as a learning tool to refine their speaking skills. Beyond aiding learning, students perceive TED Talks as crucial in enhancing their public speaking performance. The research suggests further exploration into EFL teachers' perspectives on integrating TED Talks, the platform's effectiveness in enhancing various language skills, and the factors contributing to its optimal use in EFL classrooms.

Introduction

It is undeniable that globalization entails the growing demand for effective communication in multiple languages. Consequently, speaking English fluently has rapidly become an indispensable skill for individuals (Graddol, 2006). Reportedly, speaking is a vital communication skill that students should acquire. Public speaking, which involves verbal and nonverbal signs, combines information arrangement and exchange (Chaney & Burk, 1998) and has been proven to give students a great advantage over their opponents in a competitive labor market. Public speaking abilities are valued not just by teachers and students (Zappa-Hollman, 2007), but also by employers and workers viewing these abilities as "very crucial" for job success (Gallo, 2014). Most businesses employ individuals with strong English communication abilities since being assertive and able to speak clearly in front of an audience impresses potential partners and employers (Robles, 2012). As mentioned above, the capacity for public speaking is essential for students' academic and professional success from an early age (Johnson & Szczupakiewicz, 1987).

According to Ahn and Lee (2016), speaking may be the most challenging ability for students.

Due to their lack of confidence, many students experienced fear when speaking in English. Students also have issues with body language, proper English letter pronunciation, intonation, beliefs, and word usage (Hamad et al., 2019). Additionally, they frequently check their grammar while speaking to ensure that it is proper or not, which reduces their fluency and causes them to lose their ideas. Additionally, Nguyen and Tong (2024) affirmed that students considered delivering a speech in front of the audience the most challenging task since they were afraid of making mistakes and being observed, which eroded their confidence. Skehan (1996) posited that in order to speak well, the speaker should not have pauses or hesitations. In essence, students' speaking skills still need improvement (Heriansyah, 2012). Consistently, the researcher found that the majority of EFL students at Van Lang University perceived speaking as a challenging skill. In addition, based on the Speaking 4 Course's Grade Point Average (GPA) in the academic year 2021-2022, it is clear that nearly sixty-five percent of English majors struggled with this subject. Consequently, an innovative learning approach is urgently needed to improve students' speaking abilities.

Technological advances have paved new avenues for second language learning and teaching. Accordingly, there have been varied learning methods and diverse applications or tools supporting speaking abilities. The utilization of smart platforms using videos such as TED Talks, Youtube, TikTok, and Instagram is perceived to impact students' emotions and their thinking processes (Berk, 2009). The research conducted by Nguyen and Pham (2022) concluded that students can enhance their speaking and listening skills by incorporating technological resources like films and YouTube into education. Specifically, TED Talks are beneficial to students and cover a wide range of topics, from entertainment to language instruction (Nurmukhamedov, 2017). Additionally, TED Talks allow viewers to regulate expressions such as images, gestures, voice, and space (Pinar & Aránzazu, 2019), focus on the emphasis, intonation, and rhythm of language, and simultaneously observe facial and body language (Bello, 1999).

In the current literature, various studies have explored the application of TED Talks in enhancing EFL students' language skills. However, there is a dearth of research examining students' experiences and perspectives regarding the incorporation of TED Talks in EFL classrooms. The topic of using this platform to improve students' speaking skills is even scarce. Therefore, the study has been carried out to discover how seniors utilize TED Talks to better their public speaking performance and how they perceive the effectiveness of this platform in improving their public speaking skills.

Literature review

What are TED Talks?

TED (Technology, Entertainment, and Design) was established in 1984 by American Richard Saul Wurman (History of TED, n.d.). The platform's official website describes TED as a non-profit media organization and a place where speakers can share insights. Moreover, there is a collection of TED lectures totaling more than 1800 speeches, along with a sizable library of 35,000 tracks that are widely accessible in many languages throughout the world (Taibi et al.,

2015). Therefore, it is a terrific option for people who are enthusiastic about learning many languages. In addition, the website is a great and incredibly insightful source of information, providing diverse topics for personalized demand. Nurmukhamedov (2017) asserted that TED Talk videos cover a wide range of topics, including technology, entertainment, design, business, science, and current world affairs, which offer specified knowledge of various subjects and help to enhance their social understanding.

Reportedly, TED Talks are 18-minute talks that are very lightly edited to avoid distorting the speaker's message (History of TED, n.d.). Furthermore, all TED Talks videos come with complete subtitles. Although they appear to be products that have not been content-tested by any of the manufacturers, the speakers in these videos have been explicitly instructed and urged to abide by the principles of presentation with optimal storyboards and accents that are strong in drawing viewers (Romanelli et al., 2015).

The diversity and popularity of TED Talks

TED Talks videos are increasingly spreading around the world, have been trending since 2007, and hit 1 billion views in 2012 (History of TED, n.d.). The TED website offers talks and presentations delivered by both native and non-native English speakers, whose transcripts are available for download in over 40 languages (Aleles & Hall, 2016), with a wide range of topics, such as sports, culture, fashion, politics, and technology. This diversity provides a valuable resource for English classes, as it exposes students to various accents, words, and expressions (Maria et al., 2018). Consequently, it is highly recommended that non-native English speakers utilize these talks to improve their listening and speaking skills, as well as to provide a contextual foundation for future presentations.

As mentioned above, the TED website offers a vast knowledge base, primarily in English, with high-quality information that is simple for students to access. These speeches serve as a resource for learning languages (Taibi et al., 2015). In addition, the majority of TED Talks videos have complete subtitles, preventing viewers from being confused if the speaker speaks too rapidly or with various accents. Al-Jarf (2021) asserted that students are motivated to study English when they view real videos with subtitles. Consistently, it could be the ideal choice for those who want to learn English as a foreign language. More importantly, TED Talks are an essential teaching tool for the four English skills since these videos could improve students' vocabulary and listening abilities (Rudneva et al., 2019), useful for reading skills (Borras & Lafayette, 1994; Winke et al., 2010), and developing oral skills (Kusuma, L.A., 2017).

Public speaking skills

Public speaking is defined as a speaking action used to instruct, persuade, or amuse an audience (Liu, 2011). Therefore, speakers must be aware of their tone, tempo, stress, pitch, and voice clarity (Lamerton, 2001). Besides, they also have to interact with the audience using body movement and keep an eye on any crowd indifference during the performance (O "Hair, Rubenstein, and Stewart 2010), which enables them to attract listeners' interest, arouse their attention, and hinder interruption. Hamilton (2012) strengthened the idea with a statement that the goal of language is to elicit feelings and a response from the listener.

Public speaking is perceived as one of the key abilities that necessitate success. Wang and Zou

(2018) posited that regardless of the style of speech, there were a lot of thought leaders and organizations influencing the world via the power of language and ideas. Additionally, Gunadi (1998) asserted that the goal of public speaking was to teach, educate, enlighten, and influence certain audiences in a particular setting.

The importance of public speaking skills in today's society

Speaking is considered an ability that EFL learners need to master (Ur, 1996; Khamkhien, 2010). Supporting this view, Chollet et al. (2015) affirmed that effective communication skills had several advantages, including personal development, job progress, and great leadership. Since one's initial impression of someone is formed by how they present themselves, most people believe that individuals who are good at public speaking are often those who speak English well. Shyam and Joy (2016) stated that people with good public speaking skills were constantly in demand for job possibilities and higher career prospects. In addition, numerous organizations utilize speaking in front of other people during speeches and other forms of presentations. As people grow at work, they are certainly more likely to advance in their careers thanks to public speaking skills since they are more likely to express their thoughts at meetings, seminars, and conferences (Raja, 2017).

Factors that contribute to good public speaking skills

Speaking encompasses a wide range of communication-related aspects and categories, as noted by Harmer (2007), emphasizing the significance of using accurate grammar and pronunciation. In support of this notion, Penny (2006) suggests that individuals aspiring to become fluent and effective speakers engage in six key elements of speaking ability: comprehension, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and intonation. This can be attributed to the fact that frequent mispronunciation of words by the speaker can result in the audience either missing the intended message or experiencing unnecessary confusion.

Effective public speaking necessitates simultaneous planning and organizing of the subject or materials. This is because public speaking is a process that involves thoughtful preparation and delivery of the message to the audience, as highlighted by Wrench et al. (2012). Ivanova, T., Gubanova, N., Shakirova, and Masitoh (2020) further explained that a speaker must thoroughly prepare, completely understand the topic, anticipate potential audience questions, and provide supporting arguments. This allows the speaker to anticipate and plan for potential scenarios that may arise during their presentation.

Secondly, confidence plays a crucial role in effective communication, particularly in the realm of public speaking. This entails adopting a pragmatic perspective, maintaining a robust belief in one's capabilities, and self-evaluating one's work (Indrawati et al., 2018). Confidence enables a speaker to adeptly handle potential challenges on the stage, fostering trust in the audience regarding the conveyed message. Corroborating this viewpoint, Salim (2015) contended that students endowed with articulate and assured speaking skills fulfill assessment criteria and exhibit enhanced performance in various speaking assignments within their academic coursework.

Thirdly, speakers are expected to utilize a combination of verbal and nonverbal strategies when addressing an audience. Attentiveness to verbal communication is crucial as students might

experience nervousness, leading to unclear and confusing speech characterized by ambiguous words or sentences (Mandal, 2014). Conversely, nonverbal communication significantly enhances the impact of a speech. Gestures, such as eye contact and body language, hold significant value when someone is delivering a speech in front of an audience. According to Hilbram Dunar's work, maintaining eye contact is imperative to engage the audience and retain their focus on the speaker, as highlighted by Mandal (2014). Hence, incorporating nonverbal cues is essential for enhancing the appeal of a speech. Shay McConnon (2002) posited that our gestures, appearance, tone of voice, and attire collectively contributed to our success, emphasizing that we did not have a second chance to create a first impression in front of others.

The advantages of using TED Talks in the learning process

It is not a new practice to utilize TED Talks as a supplementary tool in second language acquisition (Salaberry, 2001; Stempleski, 1992). The platform's popularity lies in its ability to provide a valuable resource (Ziebell, 2019) that covers a wide range of themes, from entertainment to language instruction (Nurmukhamedov, 2017). Consequently, students have opportunities to comprehend diverse topics and gain insights into various cultures, traditions, and English language usage in different countries. Furthermore, according to Hsu (2020), TED Talks emphasize the development of skills and language, particularly vocabulary acquisition.

Reportedly, the diverse array of lexical items found in TED Talks successfully facilitates vocabulary acquisition and retention (Nguyen & Boers, 2019). Accordingly, when utilizing TED Talks, students can opt for talks that incorporate a wide range of lexis. If a video includes terms that students may not comprehend, there is no need for concern since most TED Talks videos provide transcripts (History of TED, n.d.). Moreover, Anderson (2016) discovered that listening is the most effective approach for improving speaking skills compared to other strategies. Consequently, incorporating videos as a learning approach can be beneficial in aiding students' speaking proficiency.

Additionally, using TED Talks as instructional materials can support students in refining their opinions on a range of subjects and boost their confidence and willingness to speak in public in the future. The videos give students various advantages, including knowledge of effective communication techniques, critical thinking, accent and dialect, pronunciation, fluency, and other topics (Choirunnisa & Sari, 2021). Obviously, TED Talks are a fantastic learning resource that should be implemented in public speaking courses (Nursafira, 2020).

Related Research

Numerous investigations have been carried out to explore students' viewpoints regarding the utilization of TED Talks in public speaking courses. Li, Gao, and Zhang (2016) conducted a study on incorporating TED videos as learning resources in an English public speaking course in China with 100 students. The findings revealed that this innovative method of training was well-received by the students, who expressed satisfaction with the progress they made in improving their English language proficiency. Instead of simply being passive learners, they began actively engaging in the learning process. Their ability to listen comprehensively and think critically showed significant growth. As a result, their cognitive functions improved, enabling them to reason logically and ultimately enhance their fluency in speaking.

Another research by Farid (2019) demonstrated that students held positive attitudes toward using TED Talks in public speaking courses, and TED Talks Videos were useful in enhancing students' public speaking skills. The findings were obtained from the detailed analysis of the data collected through a one-group pre-test and post-test and a questionnaire administered to 34 high school students. Reportedly, the participants voiced agreement on the implementation of TED Talks videos in public speaking classes since they found the approach practical, easy to use, and helpful in improving their public speaking. However, students also expressed concerns about comprehending certain kinds of videos. In addition, the results from the pre-test and post-test proved substantial progress in students' public speaking skills.

The study conducted by Adeles and Hall (2016) concluded that the implication of TED Talks videos in public speaking learning could increase students' enthusiasm and self-assurance, cultivate soft skills, and strengthen their presentational abilities. TED Talks videos boost students' critical thinking abilities (Taibi et al., 2015). Furthermore, the study's findings by Utami & Noviana (2021) showed that most of the students favored the implementation of TED Talks videos in speaking lessons. The results gathered from the survey revealed that students enjoyed watching TED Talks in speaking classes and perceived these videos as highly effective in supporting their English language learning.

Numerous well-organized studies have examined students' perspectives on the use of TED Talks videos in speaking classes. However, these studies have not delved deeply and comprehensively into this notion. There is a notable gap in exploring students' opinions regarding their motivation for learning, improvement in comprehension, and challenges encountered during the integration of TED Talks. Additionally, most researchers have not employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain a more comprehensive understanding. This is because students' explanations for their views on using TED Talks videos in public speaking courses require investigation through questionnaires and interviews for thorough comprehension. Consequently, the present study was undertaken to uncover and clarify the patterns of using TED Talks in the speaking learning of senior EFL students at Van Lang University and to ascertain how they assess the effectiveness of these videos in enhancing their public speaking skills. Based on the research findings, EFL teachers at Van Lang University can gain clear insights into the impact of TED Talks videos on students' speaking performance, potentially leading them to consider developing plans for integrating these videos into their speaking classes.

Research Questions

In order to achieve the above purposes, the study focuses on these research notions:

1. What are EFL university seniors' practices in using TED Talks to enhance their public speaking skills?
2. What are EFL university seniors' perceptions of using TED Talks to enhance their public speaking skills?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

Van Lang University, which was founded in 1995, has accomplished many educational achievements and has become one of the leading private universities in Vietnam to be acknowledged internationally for its academic research. In accordance with Decision No.109/QĐ/VL-HĐT on August 18, 2020, which was released by the Chairman of the Van Lang University's Council about Educational Philosophy, the educational institution's philosophy of education consists of a holistic, lifelong, ethical, and impactful learning experience.

The Purposive Sampling method was used to choose samples for the research since it could attain the goal of investigating the perspectives of students who have used TED Talks videos to improve their speaking skills and have finished all speaking courses in the curriculum. The research was conducted in the second semester of the 2022-2023 academic year with the participation of sixty-one EFL students who had completed Speaking 4 and Public Speaking courses at Van Lang University and had already employed TED Talks videos in learning speaking. The samples were supposed to have sufficient literacy related to TED Talks and possess intensive experience gained from different speaking classes. Sixty-one EFL seniors completed an online questionnaire on Google Forms. Subsequently, eight out of sixty-one participants were chosen to attend a structured interview based on the total scores gained in the Advanced Public Speaking Course that the participants studied in the previous semester. Eight samples in which two achieved excellent, two got good, three got mediocre, and one had poor scores, were asked to share experiences using TED Talks videos in speaking classes and express their attitudes towards its efficacy in enhancing public speaking skills.

Design of the Study

This study employed a mixed method, which implies that both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered and analyzed to achieve the study's goals. Combining these approaches is preferable since it may highlight each approach's advantages and balance out its disadvantages (Spratt et al., 2004). To gather quantitative data, an online questionnaire was given to EFL students to investigate their practices and perceptions towards using TED Talks to enhance their public speaking skills. In order to acquire qualitative data, eight participants were selected to attend a structured interview to further clarify their opinions on preferences, effectiveness, and challenges encountered using TED Talks videos and especially their notions of applying this platform to Advanced Public Speaking courses at Van Lang University.

Data collection & analysis

Questionnaire

An online survey created on Google Forms and distributed to sixty-one EFL seniors at the Faculty of Foreign Languages at Van Lang University served as the initial step in the data-gathering process. The questionnaire consists of 32 questions that are divided into three parts. The first part, with two questions, explores the participant's genders and speaking abilities. The second part, consisting of fourteen questions (1 – 14), investigates students' experiences

utilizing TED Talks videos to hone their public speaking abilities. The third section has sixteen questions (15 –30) that address students' perspectives on the effectiveness of using TED Talks to enhance public speaking skills in three aspects: feelings, skill improvement, and comprehension enhancement. The questionnaire items were adapted from Abdulrahman (2017), who had already tested and affirmed the validity of these question items.

The online survey was accessible to participants for a week via the Faculty of Foreign Languages Facebook group, and it took them roughly five minutes to answer all the questions. In an attempt to maintain the confidentiality of the collected data, participants may choose to use pseudonyms or omit their identities when responding. Hinchey (2008) states that the quantitative approach is valuable because it is "an effective means of obtaining larger volumes of data". Besides, Wright (2005) also emphasizes that conducting a survey saves the researcher time and effort because the data is collected automatically and continuously.

Thirty online survey questions, including two multiple-choice questions and twenty-eight five-point Likert scale questions, were administered to gather data for two research questions. The five-point Likert scale was employed to examine how totally students disagree or agree (1 = totally disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = totally agree) with each questionnaire item. Subsequently, the researcher applied a program called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 20 (SPSS 20) to analyze the collected data. The results were then presented through figures and percentages (%).

Reliability Statistics

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha (N=61)

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.814	.827	28
Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
Participants' experiences	.823	12
Participants' perspectives	.871	16

The reliability of the Likert Scale used to collect data for two research questions was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The findings presented in Table 1 indicate that the overall Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is .814, indicating the consistency in participants' responses across the twenty-eight-question survey. Each section of the survey demonstrated Cronbach's Alpha higher than .7, which is a recognized benchmark for determining response reliability. Specifically, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the participants' perspectives variable, comprising 16 items, is .871. The second highest reliability score is observed for the participants' practices variable, which consists of twelve items, with a Cronbach's Alpha of .823. Overall, these Cronbach's Alpha results affirm the high reliability of the questionnaire items for practical research purposes, falling within the range of 0.6 to 1.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data were obtained through a structured interview with eight participants chosen in accordance with their speaking abilities. The eight samples, in which two achieved excellent, two had good, three got mediocre, and one had poor scores, were asked six questions regarding the use of TED Talks videos in their learning process and their perceptions on the efficacy of these videos in enhancing their Public Speaking skills. Every student was personally invited to participate in a 10-minute online interview via Microsoft Teams. They were clearly informed that the interviews would be recorded, but the recordings were exclusively used for research purposes and were not shared or divulged to anyone outside of the study environment. The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese, the native language of both the participants and the researcher, to ensure accurate and comprehensive information and to prevent any potential misunderstandings during the interview process. Subsequently, the ideas expressed during the interviews were translated into English for analysis purposes.

The qualitative data collected from the interviews underwent thematic analysis, which involved the use of open coding and axial coding (Ary et al., 2010). The writer utilized open coding to identify prominent patterns relating to the participants' experiences and perspectives on using TED Talks videos to improve public speaking skills. Subsequently, axial coding was employed to establish connections between these patterns, develop themes, and generalize key points pertaining to these matters.

Results/Findings

Results of the online questionnaire

The quantitative data acquired from the online questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics from SPSS 20 for the mean, minimum, maximum, frequency, percentages, and standard deviation. The findings were organized under the following headings: demographic information, participants' practices, and participants' perspectives.

Demographic information

Table 2. Demographic information (SPSS 20)

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Genders	Male	13	21.3
	Female	48	78.7
English speaking ability	Low	2	3.3
	Average	38	62.3
	Good	18	29.5
	Excellent	3	4.9

The data collected in Table 2 demonstrates that most of the participants were female (N=48, 78.7%) compared with 21.3% of male students (N=13). Additionally, the table revealed that more than half of the surveyed students (62.3%) rated their speaking ability at an average level (N=38) while the proportion of seniors who had good speaking ability made up 29.5% of the total samples (N=18). Only three students excelled at speaking skills, accounting for 4.9% of the total responses. The percentage of under-average respondents was the lowest, contributing

3.3% to the total responses. In a nutshell, most seniors participating in the research had average speaking ability.

Students practice on using TED Talks to learn public speaking

The collected data investigated the participants' practices of using TED Talks videos in their learning into four aspects: frequency, purposes, popular topics, and time spent on this platform.

Table 3. Seniors' frequency of using the TED Talks platform

1. How often do you use the TED Talks platform to enhance your public speaking?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Daily	2	3.3
Twice a week	8	13.1
Once a week	19	31.1
Once a month	24	39.3
Once a year	8	13.1

As shown in Table 3, nearly half of the participants (47.5%) frequently utilized TED Talks as a supporting tool for learning public speaking. Specifically, more than 30% of the EFL students watched TED Talks videos weekly, compared with 13.1% of the total responses that confirmed they used TED Talks to learn public speaking two times a week. Two students viewed TED Talks videos on a daily basis, contributing 3.3% to the total sample. The percentage of participants who watched TED Talks monthly was the highest, approximately 40%, while there were eight students (13.1%) who showed reluctance in implementing TED Talks in their learning when admitting that they only watched these videos rarely, just once a year.

Table 4. Participants' purposes of watching TED Talks videos (SPSS 20)

Items	Questionnaire	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
2	I watch TED Talks videos to refresh myself.	61	2	5	3.79	.755
3	I watch TED Talks videos to acquire social knowledge.	61	2	5	4.18	.785
4	I watch TED Talks videos to widen my lexical resources and learn phrases and idioms.	61	3	5	4.20	.654
5	I watch TED Talks videos to understand other people's viewpoints.	61	1	5	3.87	.957
6	I watch TED Talks videos to improve my listening and speaking skills.	61	2	5	4.28	.710

As shown in Table 4, the majority of participants asserted that they were obliged to utilize TED Talks in their speaking learning because of the benefits they provided ($M=3.79 - 4.28$). The primary purpose of most students' watching TED Talks videos was to improve their listening and speaking skills ($M=4.28$). They also agreed with the purpose of using the platform to expand their lexical resources ($M=4.20$) and widen their social knowledge ($M=4.18$). Subsequent purposes of their practices included understanding the other person's point of view and renewing themselves at 3.87 and 3.79, respectively.

Table 5. Participants’ popular topics for TED Talks videos (SPSS 20)

Items	Questionnaire	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
7	I'm more interested in TED Talks videos in English than in videos in other languages.	61	2	5	3.70	.989
8	I would rather listen to TED Talks videos than other audio materials.	61	1	5	3.18	.940
9	I prefer to watch educational videos rather than natural ones.	61	1	5	3.07	1.047
10	I prefer to watch entertaining videos more than the environment.	61	1	5	3.52	.976

Statistics in Table 5 illustrate the favorable topics that the participants regularly searched on TED Talks videos. The seniors participating in the survey agreed that they preferred watching TED Talks videos in English over videos in other languages (M=3.70). The respondents were also in agreement that they had a preference for watching entertaining videos rather than those of the environment (M=3.52). With a mean score of 3.18, the participants were neutral about being more interested in listening to TED Talks videos than other audio materials. The respondents also held a neutral idea that education-related topics were favored more than natural ones (M=3.07).

Table 6. Participants’ time spent watching TED Talks (SPSS 20)

Items	Questionnaire	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
11	I watch TED Talks for 30 minutes to 1 hour every day.	61	1	5	3.65	1.067
12	I watch TED Talks for 1 hour to 2 hours every day.	61	1	5	2.51	1.135
13	I watch TED Talks for 2 hours to 3 hours every day.	61	1	5	2.30	1.188

The results in Table 6 demonstrate that most EFL seniors are willing to spend half an hour to an hour watching TED Talks videos on a daily basis (M=3.65) while they remain neutral about spending longer time watching daily. With a mean score of 2.51, the participants expressed their neutral ideas about spending one to two hours on TED Talks videos. The lowest mean score of item 12 (M=2.30) determined that students rarely spent more than 2 hours a day watching this platform.

Table 7. Participants’ frequency of studying Public Speaking courses with TED Talks.

14. How often does your teacher use TED Talks videos to teach Advanced Public Speaking?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Every lesson	1	1.6
Most lessons	11	18
A few lessons	17	27.9
Only 1-2 lessons	16	26.2
Never	16	26.2

Table 7 shows how often the participants’ teachers utilized TED Talks in their Advanced Public Speaking classrooms. As shown in the table, nearly 20% of the respondents were frequently allowed to watch TED Talks videos in Public Speaking lessons. The percentage of students who confirmed that their teachers had implemented TED Talks in teaching several lessons of the course Public Speaking was the highest, at nearly 28%. In addition, sixteen participants admitted that their teachers seldom applied TED Talks in the class of public speaking,

contributing 26.2% of the total responses, which equals the number of students who never watched TED Talks videos in Public Speaking classes.

Students' perceptions towards using TED Talks to enhance public speaking skills

Table 8. Participants' feelings when using TED Talks (SPSS 20)

Items	Questionnaire	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
15	TED Talks videos are interesting and useful.	61	2	5	3.87	.806
16	I enjoy public speaking, thanks to TED Talks videos.	61	1	5	3.8	.865
17	I feel more confident when I present my opinion in public speaking, thanks to the TED Talks video.	61	1	5	3.64	.932
18	Thanks to TED Talks videos, I confidently make eye contact with people when speaking in public.	61	1	5	3.70	.972
19	I can be flexible about the time I spend watching TED Talks videos.	61	3	5	4.11	.798

As Table 8 displayed, a vast number of participants agreed that they could watch TED Talks videos whenever they wanted because of its convenience ($M=4.11$). They also expressed their agreement that this platform was interesting and excessively useful ($M=3.87$) since this platform could enhance their learning motivation, enabling them to enjoy the lesson of the Public Speaking course ($M=3.8$). Additionally, the students asserted that TED Talks videos were effective in helping them easily make eye contact with their audience ($M=3.70$) and felt extremely confident when presenting their point of view in front of a crowd ($M=3.64$).

Table 9. Participants' opinions on their public speaking skills improvement (SPSS 20)

Items	Questionnaire	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
20	I pronounce words more accurately, thanks to watching TED Talks videos.	61	1	5	3.64	.895
21	I can increase my critical thinking via enjoying TED Talks videos.	61	1	5	3.70	.901
22	I can speak more fluently via watching TED Talks videos.	61	1	5	3.62	1.003
23	I can learn about posture, gesture, and movement via TED Talks videos.	61	2	5	3.89	1.018
24	I can introduce my speech with interesting stories to engage the audience thanks to watching TED Talks videos.	61	1	5	3.67	1.012
25	I can imitate the speaker's accent to increase my ability to speak naturally like a native by watching TED Talks videos.	61	2	5	3.72	.951

The statistics in Table 9 demonstrated most of the participants agreed that their public speaking skills were improved through the use of TED Talks videos ($M=3.89-3.72$). Particularly, a large number of seniors showed their agreement that TED Talks benefited them in learning about posture, gestures, and movement ($M=3.89$) when delivering a speech in front of an audience. They were also in favor of the idea that they could more readily mimic the accents of native speakers ($M=3.72$) and simultaneously develop critical thinking skills ($M=3.70$) by frequently watching TED Talks videos. With mean scores of 3.67 and 3.64, respectively, the respondents firmly agreed that they could acquire the technique of attracting the audience's attention to their talks by utilizing compelling stories and could have accurate pronunciation through watching

TED Talks videos. Additionally, the vast majority of the population (75%) affirmed their strong consensus on the role of TED Talks videos in improving their speaking fluency (M=3.62).

It can be seen clearly in Table 10 that a huge number of students agreed that they could learn numerous new sentences and vocabulary words (M=3.87) via watching TED Talks videos. The respondents continued to show their agreement with the idea that they could grasp the information that speakers wanted to convey and recognized various English accents with scores of 3.75 and 3.62, respectively. However, the seniors expressed their neutral ideas by mentioning that they still fully caught up with the speakers even when they swallowed or linked sounds (M=3.43).

Table 10. Participants' opinions on their English comprehension enhancement (SPSS 20)

Items	Questionnaire	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
26	I can distinguish different types of English accents via TED Talks videos.	61	1	5	3.62	1.003
27	I can learn a lot of new sentence patterns and vocabulary to support my speaking skills via TED Talks videos.	61	1	5	3.87	.846
28	I can understand the information that the speaker wants to convey via TED Talks videos in English.	61	1	5	3.75	.830
29	I can understand when the speakers swallow or connect sounds via TED Talks videos.	61	1	5	3.43	.884
30	I can keep up with the speakers' speaking speed via TED Talks videos.	61	1	5	3.43	.921

Qualitative analysis

Results of the structured interview

Interview question 1: Why are you interested in watching TED Talks?

Reportedly, most interviewed seniors (around 90%) prefer to learn public speaking through TED Talks since these videos offer them considerable benefits. They explained that TED Talks videos inspired knowledge to viewers by providing diverse topics through concise content and vivid demonstration. As a result, watching TED Talks could broaden their access to knowledge sources. The second merit of watching these videos was that students could acquire and master public speaking techniques. The interviewer affirmed that this platform taught them how to become more professional by showing a vivid demonstration of using postures and gestures and keeping eye contact while delivering speeches. Moreover, by watching TED Talks videos, the seniors could acquire effective techniques to keep an audience's attention and to get them to engage in their talks. Another plus point of TED Talks videos that was raised in the interviews was that TED Talks videos were handy and available whenever they needed.

I am fond of learning public speaking through TED Talks because I can improve my knowledge following topical subjects at an appropriate pace. (Student 1, 2, interview extract)

I like it for a reason: the performances are all very professional and realistic by qualified public speakers. (Student 3, 4, interview extract)

The videos are interesting and informative. Presenters are professional and good

speakers, making learning less boring. Presenters are inspiring; that's why I love TED Talks. (Student 5, 6, interview extract)

Interview question 2: What topics are you interested in when watching videos on TED Talks? Why?

The collected data reported that 50% of the respondents prefer TED Talks videos on educational issues rather than other topics. They contended that instructional films aided in their quest to increase their knowledge of the subject matter relating to their studies. Twenty-five percent of the interviewees have a preference for videos on motivational subjects. They explained that these videos could help to enhance their spirits and inspire them to be positive learners. The remaining 25% of the responses were for videos concerning scientific and technological issues. The seniors supported these videos since they were interested in specified knowledge.

Most of the time, I will focus on educational topics as I major in teaching English. Those videos with topics relating to education can help me widen my horizon in this field. (Student 1, 2, interview extract)

Most of my attention will be directed towards educational content since my major is teaching English. Videos related to education, in my view, have the potential to broaden my understanding of this field. (Student 3, 4)

When I watch videos on Ted Talk, I often like to watch about motivational and self-development topics because the content of these videos is very close, mainly from the experiences and lessons that experts have gained and every time I watch their videos, not only do I learn English, but I also get great inspiration to help me study and work better. (Student 5, 6, 7, 8 interview extract)

Interview question 3: If you were busy with other activities, would you make time to watch TED Talks every day? Why?

When asked about their willingness to watch TED Talks videos in a hectic learning schedule, five interviewees (65.5%) firmly agreed that they would make time to enjoy TED Talks every day even though they were busy with other learning tasks. They explained that watching TED Talks had become their daily routine, which helped to broaden their knowledge and served as a spiritual food for their refreshment. The other 25% of respondents stated that when they were busy preparing for tests and exams, they just had time to watch TED Talks on the weekends. They asserted that they watched these videos to search for topics related to the exams. Additionally, if they had some intermission break, they would view TED Talks for updated news or relaxation. One interviewed senior (12.5%) admitted that he would not be willing to watch TED Talks if he was busy. He explained that they needed time to focus on more important things and would spend the rest of their day using other social networks.

Of course, I would. Ted talks have a large number of videos and topics I'm interested in, so it's like a way for me to entertain and learn simultaneously. Thus, I would spend time watching at least 1 video a day. (Student 1, interview extract)

Sure, I'd be up for it. Ted talks cover a bunch of videos and topics I'm into, making it a way for me to have fun and learn together. So, I plan to spend some time watching at least

one video every day. (Student 2, 3)

If I were busy doing other activities, I wouldn't spend my time watching TED Talks every day. Instead of watching TED Talks, I prefer watching TikTok and programs on Netflix and YouTube that are visible and attractive to me (animations, actors, actresses). Moreover, the content on TikTok and YouTube varies, such as cartoons, science fiction films, documentaries, etc., while the content on TED Talks makes me bored, except for the content on education and languages. (Students 4, 5, 6)

If I had a lot going on with other stuff, I wouldn't dedicate my time to watching TED Talks daily. I'd rather go for TikTok. Plus, TikTok and YouTube offer diverse content, like cartoons, sci-fi movies, documentaries, etc. I find TED Talks a bit dull, except for the ones about education and languages. (students 7, 8)

Interview question 4: Do you think lecturers should use TED Talks in Public Speaking courses? Why?

The researcher surveyed students' perspectives on the usage of TED Talks as a teaching aid to determine if it is suggested that lecturers offer a reference to develop an innovative teaching model for public speaking skills teaching. Interestingly, the majority of participants (100%) concurred that lecturers at Van Lang University should use this strategy in conjunction with Public Speaking Courses. Seventy-five percent of respondents affirmed that they concurred with implementing these videos in public speaking courses since they could acquire useful skills for speaking performance from speakers. Furthermore, the interviewees expressed their favorable impressions about the use of TED Talks in public speaking classes with a statement that these videos could greatly facilitate their learning due to the advantages of time savings, strength, and a practical approach (12.5%). Last but not least, the other 12.5% of the participants agreed that the application of TED Talks videos in speaking classes would increase their perceptual skills and cultural awareness. They believed that they gained a deeper understanding of cultures from around the world that are not included in textbooks.

Yes, I do. Video TED Talks will make the lesson more interesting, make it easier to attract students' attention, or help students have more choices in acquiring knowledge in different ways. (Students 3, 4)

Absolutely! TED Talks videos add an interesting twist to lessons, making them more captivating and drawing students' attention. It also provides students with diverse options to acquire knowledge through different approaches. (Students 5, 6)

Coursework should integrate TED talks into speaking courses because learners can broaden their horizons about (1) perceptual ability: what conversations in the real world are like, what terms are often used, and what taboos they should avoid; (2) body language, postures and gestures, facial expressions...; (3) cultural awareness from different countries that are hardly instructed in the syllabus fully. (Students 7,8 interview extract)

Interview question 5: What challenges do you face when learning Public Speaking through TED Talks?

Despite the evident advantages of TED Talks, students still encounter many difficulties while learning public speaking through these videos. The collected data showed that nearly 70% of the respondents admitted that sometimes it was hard for them to comprehend video content completely. Seniors claimed that when confronted with videos whose speakers talk too quickly or the videos are currently inappropriate for their level; it was difficult for them to comprehend what they were hearing. Besides, over 30% of the remainder believed that distraction was their main issue. Some students confirmed that many of the presentations were too long, which distracted them and made them unable to concentrate on viewing. Also, respondents said that the lack of face-to-face connection left them bored while viewing TED Talks videos.

Sometimes, because of my own preferences, choosing a video is not suitable for my English level, so I have many difficulties and take a long time to fully understand that video. (Student 3)

Sometimes, I cannot understand what speakers want to convey information because they speak too fast or their accents so strange that I can't understand (Student 8)

Some speeches may be too long, so I cannot fully pay attention to them. (Student 2)

Interview question 6: Have you found using TED Talks videos to improve public speaking skills effectively, and if so, what specific skills have you improved and why?

Interestingly, 100% of students agreed that TED Talks are effective for improving their public speaking skills. Specifically, fifty percent of the interviewed seniors affirmed that TED Talks efficiently developed their listening, pronunciation, and vocabulary skills. They explained that TED Talks videos feature numerous presenters from various nations with diverse accents, allowing them to become accustomed to a range of dialects from all over the world. Moreover, they claimed that well-known speakers had strongly influenced them in the way they pronounce words and how they deliver speeches. They also could widen their lexical resources by watching videos on varied topics ranging from education to entertainment. The other 25% of the interviewees believed that they had learned how to use their postures and gestures effectively by imitating influential speakers, while the remaining 25% said that watching TED Talks has given them more confidence when speaking in front of groups.

I have improved my public speaking skills through the TED Talks video, especially my gestures. I imitate the way the speakers stand and use their hands and facial expressions while presenting. Different presenters use body language in many ways, and I can notice them clearly through videos. (Students 1, 2)

Yes, I've definitely noticed an improvement in my public speaking skills through the use of TED Talks videos. One key aspect that has improved is my ability to articulate ideas clearly. Watching skilled speakers on TED Talks has helped me understand how to structure and express my thoughts effectively. Additionally, I've become more aware of nonverbal communication, such as body language and eye contact, by observing how proficient speakers utilize these techniques. Overall, TED Talks have been a valuable

resource in honing my public speaking skills by providing real-life examples and insights from accomplished speakers. (Students 3, 4)

Yes, using TED Talks has been effective in enhancing my public speaking skills. I've improved my clarity in expressing ideas and learned valuable insights into nonverbal communication from skilled speakers. (Students 5, 6)

Of course, yes. Most TED talkers are fluent in English, so I can improve my pronunciation a lot. Listening to their talks can help me realize some sounds that I usually pronounce incorrectly. They may have many accents, but they surely have good pronunciation. (Students 7,8)

Discussion

RQ 1: What are EFL university seniors' practices in using TED Talks to enhance their public speaking skills?

The present study discovered how EFL students at Van Lang University utilized TED Talks videos to improve their public speaking skills in four aspects: viewers' purposes, popular topics, frequency of the integration, and time spent on these videos. The research findings revealed that EFL students' primary goal when watching TED Talks was to enhance their speaking and listening abilities (M=4.28). Additionally, the aims of widening lexical resources and learning more expressions and idioms were also the common purposes of watching TED Talks (M=4.20). From the interview data, the respondents asserted that watching TED Talks videos had increased their access to information resources and provided them with practical instructions on how to deliver speeches in public. EFL seniors also have the goal of viewing TED Talks videos to increase their social awareness (M=4.18). The findings of this research completely match the results of the study by Farid (2019), who asserted that the primary purpose of watching TED Talks videos was to enhance public speaking performance, improve listening skills, and gain ideas for topic development.

Regarding the favored topics in TED Talks videos, the findings presented that EFL students at Van Lang University preferred watching English-language TED Talks videos to those in other languages (M=3.70). In addition, 50% of interviewees said they were more interested in TED Talks on educational subjects than those on other subjects, while the other 25% of the seniors had a preference for entertaining videos. They explained that these videos helped them better understand the subject matter related to their studies and inspired them to be positive. The findings of the recent study were supported by the conclusion of the research by Rohmah (2022), which confirmed that education topics were the most popular, followed by culture, entertainment, and others.

Relating to the frequency of utilizing TED Talks in learning public speaking skills, the findings of the research revealed that nearly half of the sixty-one participants watched TED Talks regularly to improve their public speaking performance. From the interview data, the students gave detailed explanations for the frequency of watching these videos. They mentioned that viewing TED Talks had become a daily practice for them, which helped them increase their

knowledge and acted as spiritual nourishment for their rejuvenation. The other 39.3 % of the respondents watched TED Talks monthly since they were stuck with assignments and exams. Students were also in favor of the idea that lectures should integrate TED Talks in teaching public speaking classes. Most of the respondents affirmed that the use of TED Talks was efficient in helping them improve their speaking performance since they could acquire useful skills from speakers. Additionally, these videos provided them with ideas and lexis for topics. The research findings matched the study's conclusion by Abdulrahman (2016), who stated that TED Talks videos were efficient in stimulating critical thinking and questions in classroom discussions and eliciting ideas for topic elaboration.

In terms of time spent on TED Talks videos, the survey discovered that fourth-year students frequently spend 30 to 1 hour every day watching videos on TED Talks. Supporting the survey data, the interview results demonstrated that five out of eight respondents claimed that despite their hectic schedules, they still find time each day to watch TED Talks since these videos became their acquaintance, providing them with knowledge and inspiring them to be more positive.

RQ 2. What are EFL university seniors' perceptions of using TED Talks to enhance their public speaking skills?

The current study investigated how fourth-year students perceived utilizing TED Talks to improve their public speaking abilities in three areas: students' learning motivations, skills improvement, and listening comprehension. Discussing how students felt when watching TED Talks to learn public speaking, the findings of the research confirmed that most EFL students considered watching TED Talks videos as an interesting and useful activity (M=3.87). They explained that these videos could efficiently increase their learning motivation, making them interested in the public speaking course classes (M=3.8). Additionally, the students affirmed that watching TED Talks videos considerably increased their confidence in delivering speeches in public (M=3.64) since they could imitate speakers' gestures, postures, and how to make eye contact with the audience (M=3.7). These findings confirmed the conclusion in the study by Ahluwalia (2018), which presented that TED Talks could be utilized to spice up and make language education more fun.

In terms of public speaking skills enhancement, the students asserted that watching TED Talks improved the way they used their body language and eye contact (M=3.89) when presenting topics in public. In addition, their pronunciation was better since they were affected by native speakers (M=3.72). They also affirmed that they could elaborate ideas more easily and deliver speeches more fluently (M=3.62) because their critical thinking skills were developed (M=3.7). The results of the interview supported the findings of the online survey. Fifty percent of the interviewed students posited that watching TED Talks videos frequently made them familiar with various speakers, acquiring their styles in presenting topics. Therefore, they could be confident in using posture, gestures, and eye contact when delivering speeches. Furthermore, the interviewees confirmed their vocabulary and listening skills were enhanced since they were absorbed in a wide range of topics, including education, science, and entertainment. The finding of the study was consistent with that of a study by Li (2015), who agreed that TED Talks may be used to teach students how to interact with an audience, how to deliver a formal speech, and

how to hone their public speaking skills.

Regarding the impact of frequently watching TED Talks videos on listening comprehension, the participants consistently expressed their agreement with the notion that they could comprehend the information conveyed by speakers ($M=3.75$) and identified different English accents ($M=3.62$). Watching TED Talks videos regularly could enable them to become well acquainted with English sounds, and consequently, they could grasp the contents of these videos effortlessly. The results of the research aligned with those of a study conducted by Nur (2022), who affirmed the efficiency of watching TED Talks in improving students' listening comprehension.

Conclusion

The study examining the experiences and perceptions of EFL students at Van Lang University towards the use of TED Talks videos to improve their public speaking abilities involved a combination of quantitative and qualitative data analysis obtained through an online survey and a structured interview. The study findings demonstrate that nearly half of the participants frequently (47%) watched TED Talks videos to enhance their speaking performance. They also affirmed that their primary purpose of viewing TED Talks videos was to enhance their speaking and listening abilities ($M=4.28$) since these videos provided them with a wide range of lexical resources, a good demonstration of how to deliver speeches, and a variety of accents from different parts of the world. The respondents also asserted that watching TED Talks videos became their daily routine, which could increase their spirit status and inspire them to be more positive. Additionally, participants showed greater interest in English language TED Talks videos ($M=3.70$) discussing educational and entertainment topics.

The results derived from the thorough examination of data gathered through the online questionnaire and the structured interview indicate that EFL students at Van Lang University hold a favorable view regarding the implementation of TED Talks in public speaking classes. The participants found watching these videos both intriguing and valuable ($M= 3.87$) since they effectively enhanced their learning motivation and generated interest in the public speaking course ($M= 3.8$). Additionally, students confirmed that watching TED Talks substantially increased their confidence in delivering public speeches ($M=3.64$) as they could mimic speakers' gestures, postures, and manners for keeping eye contact with the audience ($M = 3.7$). The beneficial effect of TED Talks videos led to a strong consensus among the participants that lecturers should implement these videos in public speaking classes. The interviewed students posited that TED Talks could significantly enhance their learning by offering benefits such as time efficiency, effectiveness, and hands-on practice. Furthermore, the application of TED Talks videos in speaking classes would increase their perceptual skills and cultural awareness, which helped them gain extensive knowledge of the world that is not included in textbooks.

Implications/Recommendations for practical solutions

Further investigation can examine educators' viewpoints regarding the incorporation of TED Talks in speaking classes to gain deeper insights into their experiences, viewpoints, and recommendations for enhancement. This information can contribute to refining the utilization

of TED Talks in classrooms and identifying potential challenges hindering their effective implementation. The findings can also inform the development of best practices and guidelines for integrating TED Talks into speaking lessons. Moreover, comprehending instructors' perspectives on TED Talks usage is crucial for ongoing efforts to improve language teaching and learning outcomes.

Furthermore, given students' current inadequacy in listening skills, upcoming research should focus on assessing the efficacy of TED Talks in enhancing listening skills. It is essential to explore diverse listening approaches, enabling educators to employ effective strategies that aid students in developing proficient listening skills. Additionally, future studies should delve into the factors contributing to students' poor listening skills, paving the way for more targeted and effective interventions to enhance this crucial ability.

Limitations

The current investigation still has some existing constraints. Firstly, the sample only included sixty-one EFL seniors at Van Lang University who had already finished the advanced public speaking course and had used TED Talks for their learning, leading to a limited number of participants. As a result, the findings cannot definitively generalize the experiences and perceptions regarding the utilization of TED Talks to improve speaking skills to the broader population. Secondly, the participants came from different majors and took speaking courses with many different teachers, so to some extent, a small number of participants could have biases towards the integration of TED Talks in speaking classes.

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Ziebell, B. (2019, June 6). Teaching English with TED talks: Create your own ESL materials (full guide). *Connections*. Retrieved from <https://eltabjournal.com/teaching-english-with-ted-talks> skills effectively, and if so, what specific skills have you improved and why?

Biodata

Ms. Nguyen Thi Thu Hang, M.A. is a lecturer at Van Lang University, Ho Chi Minh City. She has had more than 10 years of teaching English-majored students. Her main interests include Language Teaching Methodology, Learner Autonomy, and Language Assessment.

Ms. Tran Ngoc Kim Cuong is a senior at Van Lang University's Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. She is majoring in the English teaching. As a curious and detail-oriented individual, she enjoys conducting research and analyzing various topics related to English language and literature.