

Effects of Using Technology to Support Students in Developing Speaking Skills

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Technology, social media, technological tools, speaking skills

The present study attempts to investigate the effects of using technology to support the development of speaking skills for high school students and the attitude of students when being employed with technological devices in learning foreign languages. The purpose of this study is to develop beneficial suggestions for educators, students, and teachers to enhance the teaching and learning of spoken English. Additionally, it aims to highlight the need to use technology to learn English skills. The research was conducted in a high school in Kien Giang province with the participation of 100 students giving the answers to the questionnaire with items about using technological devices to enhance students' speaking skills. Besides, the involvement of six teachers of English in the interview gives insights into teachers' beliefs about using technology to support students in developing speaking skills. Statistical Package statistically analyzed data for Social Sciences (SPSS) program. The study's conclusions show that speaking is significantly impacted by technology. According to the study, technology tools like PowerPoint, YouTube, Speech Recognition Software, and films can substantially enhance oral communication skills in EFL learners.

Introduction

Hussain (2018) stated that the main function of language is to communicate, and English is considered an international language used in conferences, meetings, cultural exchanges, forums, etc. People in interaction mainly use speech to transmit information, so the function of speaking plays an important role in language acquisition. Moreover, according to Nguyen (2022), education makes extensive use of technology instead of commerce and transactions. Technology is a means of communication. While learning English, students must develop their speaking abilities in order to communicate. Therefore, communication skills have received a lot of attention in foreign language instruction programs. The Industrial Revolution 4.0 has had a significant impact on foreign language teaching and learning thanks to advancements in multimedia technology, helping to diversify and improve the efficiency of transferring foreign language knowledge and skills through the application of information technology achievements, particularly in the teaching of speaking skills. Khan (2015), however, stated that

a lot of students struggle to translate their thoughts verbally into a second or foreign language. It necessitates that students master a sizable amount of vocabulary and comprehend the basics of grammar. A confident speech also requires good pronunciation. Furthermore, communicating clearly is speaking's primary purpose. Due to these difficulties, teaching and learning speaking has drawn much attention from educators and students.

Linguistic Difficulties

According to Zhang (2009), some factors affect speakers' pronunciation. The first factor is the age element that has been debated in SLA that the younger, the better for learners who want to acquire a second language. A child at an early age will imitate to pronounce sounds easily and naturally rather than an adult who feels restricted due to psychological elements. Medically, the brain is also considered the second factor that influences much on how well learners utter their speech. The function of the left and right hemispheres will have difficulty in proceeding with sounds to approach native-like speakers when the brain grows up. In terms of lexical factors, learners who acquire a foreign language often encounter the difficulty of lacking vocabulary, which interrupts them from expressing their ideas in speaking. Indeed, learners have good ideas in their minds, they want to speak out, but they do not know how to use them in the target language. Moreover, when making the conversation, students can not keep up with what word meaning their partners are using. This will be an obstacle in practicing language speaking.

Lack of Topical Knowledge

Namaziandost & Nasri (2019, p. 203) claimed that it is a usual issue students have when engaging in speaking activities. Students do not know what to speak. That means some fields they do not have enough knowledge to talk about. For example, some students feel confused when discussing topics about geography, history, culture, religion, etc., because they have little understanding of these domains. Therefore, teachers play important roles in making up a language environment in which teachers provide various linguistic contexts or social contexts so that students can participate in practicing speaking.

Inhibition

Inhibition is also an influential factor in the learning language process in speaking skills. Amoah and Yeboah (2021, p. 59) said that learners feel shy, ashamed, or fearful because they think they make mistakes while expressing their ideas which influences the flow of conveying thinking. Afifah et al. (2020, p. 95) reported that some of them are afraid of being criticized by friends or teachers. When they feel more anxious, the inhibition affects their speaking performance more. Therefore, students choose to keep silent all the time or not participation in the speaking classroom for safe.

Literature review

Jalaluddin (2016) reported that technological advancement has always been with language teaching supplying teachers with technological devices to English teaching classrooms that make the content of the lesson more meaningful and interesting. Teachers should make full use of the available sources on the Internet.

Speech Recognition Software

Learners are usually afraid of making mistakes in pronunciation. Speech recognition software will help them to adjust and develop their pronunciation in speaking. According to Bahadorfar and Omidvar (2014, p. 11) said that the device can evaluate exactly how speech is uttered, and it can give an encouraging compliment. Otherwise, it allows the speaking to repeat. “ELSA”- a typical speech recognition software that records what speakers speak out and announce what sounds are pronounced correctly and what needs to be repeated. Especially this device will be very useful for learners practicing at home.

Youtube

According to researchers, YouTube is one of the most worldwide Websites from which teachers and learners can get various available sources to support their teaching and learning. According to (Jalaluddin, 2016), in organizing language classroom activities, teachers use videos, video clips, films, music clips, and trailers as available materials to provide information and language contexts that are necessary for speaking practice. Additionally, Jalaluddin (2016, p. 1) stated that students can upload their products of making conversations or dialogue on YouTube where they can see the comments, which will make them feel more and more confident and avoid making mistakes in speaking learning. More importantly, YouTube is an unlimited source that learners can take advantage of to get materials for their projects when they make the presentation (Mustafa, 2018).

Films

It is undeniable that using films in teaching foreign languages, in general, brings many dramatic effects. According to Khan (Khan, 2015, p. 47), teachers use this technological tool to attract learners to engage in language learning purposes. Films displayed with color, sound, and action will hold the attention of the viewers and lead them to the content of the lessons easily. Another function of films is that they can provide viewers with authentic language contexts and real situations that are practical and real-life in communication. For example, in some films, characters expose the cultural aspects of life. They even use spoken or slang words. Moreover, teachers can use films for different teaching purposes, such as developing listening skills for students, supplying more materials for students' presentations, doing their projects, etc. In teaching procedures, teachers can flexibly use films in different lesson stages, making it easy for teachers to use technology in teaching. By watching films that help students learn how to pronounce new words correctly, they can know more new words, idioms, or expressions. Then they can imitate to reproduce what they have seen on the screen to speak out in their language.

Technological Devices

Today with the advent of the technology 4.0 era, able learners afford mobile phones, iPad, or tablets are more easily updated online learning. Besides being learned in the classroom, learners with technological devices can learn whatever they are interested in from the Internet. For example, If they want to practice English speaking, but they can not face to face because of distance, they can make calls with their partners to talk about the topics. In English-speaking classes, some students who are not confident in speaking in front of the class because they are afraid of making mistakes or they feel ashamed of the teacher's or classmates' comments can

video clips and send their products to teachers. In short, Kusmaryani et al. (2019, p. 2) concluded that there are some benefits that technological devices bring to both teachers and learners, including supplying many features such as instant communication, website browsing, video player, recording, etc., with which learners and teachers will achieve good results in learning and teaching methods such as inquiring learning, self-directed learning, and formative assessment.

Powerpoint

All of the common technological devices PowerPoint is widely used in teaching subjects because it is useful and easy to fulfill. Nur Aziz and Ani Setyo Dewi (2020) stated that the main function of PowerPoint is to perform what teachers want to teach to their students through the TV screen. Moreover, it can be used more in presentations where students can take advantage of functions to improve their performance. With technological advancement, the functions are upgraded frequently, which helps teachers and students update the new functions for their work. For example, the class point application in ppt is used to test some quizzes while teaching or performing. Furthermore, PowerPoint was really useful for teaching online during the outbreak of the Covid epidemic when teachers had to teach through the screen with the support of PowerPoint, other tools, and applications. Last but not least, the role in the presentation of PowerPoint is highly appreciated due to its convenience and effectiveness.

Research Questions

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the survey seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the effects of technology on students' speaking skills?
2. What are the attitudes of students towards the effects of technology?

Research Methodology

Participants

English is gradually becoming more concerned than ever, and speaking skill is required for communication in school and in daily life. The current study was conducted from the beginning to the end of the first academic semester to investigate how effective technology is used in developing speaking skills for students in Vinh Thuan high school, which is located in a remote area of Kien Giang province.

The participants involved in the study are the EFL students of grade 12 (100 persons) in Vinh Thuan High school. They gave their answer to the questionnaire designed on a google form. Then the researcher collected the data for analysis.

Questionnaire

In any scientific research, the attempt is made to find out the answers to the questions systemically. However, the most popular method is questionnaires of different kinds, which attract the worldwide concern of many researchers using to collect data (Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019). The questionnaire was sent to EFL students to identify to what extent technology impact

students' speaking skill and the attitudes of students towards using technology in learning English to improve their speaking skill. And the questionnaire is designed with the Likert scale respectively from "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree", and "strongly disagree".

Interview

What are interviews? List types of interviews and WHY you will choose semi-structured interviews. HOW MUCH will time be spent interviewing each participant? WHERE will the interview be conducted? Why? [Benefits]

Interviews will be conducted with six teachers who have been observed from the sample. This research instrument aims to give insights into teachers' beliefs about using technology to support students in developing speaking skills. The researcher, therefore, will ask questions in the interview.

Results/Findings and discussion

Results of questionnaire

Table 1. Effects of using technology to support students in developing speaking skills

| No | Questions | Total number of students | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----|---|--------------------------|----------------|----------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | Students often use Social media in daily life | 100 | 90 (90%) | 8 (8%) | 2 (2%) | 0 (0%) |
| 2 | Students are often taught with technological devices speaking skills by the teacher | 100 | 35 (35%) | 40 (40%) | 20 (20%) | 5 (5%) |
| 3 | Students often use technological devices when practicing speaking. | 100 | 13 (13%) | 65 (65%) | 18 (18%) | 4 (4%) |
| 4 | Students are interested in learning by using technological tools | 100 | 45 (45%) | 47 (47%) | 5 (5%) | 3 (3%) |
| 5 | Students advance in speaking skills after learning with the support of social media | 100 | 35 (35%) | 58 (58%) | 7 (7%) | 0 (0%) |

Results of interview

According to the responses of six teachers who were concerned about the role of technology in teaching, speaking gave the answers that thanks to the application of technology in their teaching, they got higher results after taking time in teaching to improve their speaking skills. Moreover, they appreciated the numerous available sources that social media have provided. Last but not least, technology's effects on both teachers and learners. With the variety and availability of social media provision, learners can also practice themselves, and teachers have many choices in their selection of materials.

Discussion

The first question was given to identify how often learners use social media in their daily life. Generally, due to the development of technology information, using technology is very popular in life. A large number of students (98%) use social media such as the Internet, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter... for their entertainment or communication. Academically, teachers used technological devices such as films, video clips, and PowerPoint to support teaching speaking skills so that they could enhance their competencies. The majority of students (75%) claimed that they were introduced to get information or knowledge at the early stage of the lesson. However, some of them did not frequently learn with social media (25%) because the teacher might not choose a suitable application for their teaching the lesson. More importantly, by the third question, the researcher received the answer that many students (78%) could use social media in their performance while learning speaking skills. They could use Powerpoint in presentations to illustrate their speaking performance with beautifully decorated slides. Even they could conduct the interviews by using a recorder or through the period of learning online because of the Covid pandemic, students videoed their conversations about the topics they chose, then sent them to the teacher for evaluation. More interestingly, the number of students is highly increased (92%), which means the shift from the traditional teaching method to the new one being supported by technology brought significant effects. Most importantly, students could improve their speaking skills dramatically after learning with the equipment of technological devices.

The study was conducted at the beginning of the first semester. The researcher gave an oral test to check students' speaking. Mistakes have been recognized in pronunciation, grammar points, and vocabulary. After using technological devices to support students in speaking skills, the researcher used a rubric including content, vocabulary, pronunciation, accuracy & fluency to evaluate the progress of using technological tools to improve students' speaking skills. Students could avoid the mistakes in pronunciation and grammar points; they also used vocabulary and expressions they learned from films and YouTube to apply in their speaking. Additionally, learners felt confident when speaking in class and communicating with their friends. For further application, students could record clips for their role play, presentation, conversation, etc. A short survey was made to answer the students' attitudes toward learning with the support of technology. Students felt excited and willing to enlarge knowledge from sources of advanced technology instead of the traditional ones.

Conclusion

In conclusion, as we can see from the result of the survey, most students agreed the use of technology in learning speaking skills would help them develop their speaking ability. By using technological tools such as films and YouTube in education, students can improve their speaking and listening skills. With the functions of video recorder and PowerPoint, students can perform what they learn with speaking skills. Therefore, to have a good result, the teacher has to choose a suitable kind of social media to design their lesson plan to bring the best effects in teaching. Moreover, the excitement of using technology with beautiful and colorful pictures, sounds, and actions would attract students involved in learning much more than the traditional

method. Besides, the advancement of technology would make it easy for students to practice and perform in both classroom and online learning.

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Biodata

Nguyen Thi Doan Trinh is a graduate student at Tra Vinh University. She has been teaching English at a high school in Kien Giang province for more than 20 years. She chose this profession for her desire and passion. She encountered some difficulties of lacking teaching experience, but later she gradually had experience through involving some workshops and methodology courses. Now Trinh feels confident and interested in her teaching, and she decided to pursue a Master's course that would help her to have deep insight into her teaching career.

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