



A VIRTUAL CLASS BASED PROGRAM FOR DEVELOPING SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' EFL ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Salah Mohamed Youssef^{1*}, Eman Mohamed Abd-Elhaq², Sahar El Sayed Alshura¹

Article History: Received: 19-12-2022 Accepted: 30-12-2022 Published online: 28-05-2023

ABSTRACT

The present study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of a virtual class based program (VCP) for developing secondary school students' EFL oral communication skills. The study participants were sixty second-year secondary school students chosen randomly from Martyr Ahmed AL-Dardery Experimental Language School, 10th of Ramadan Educational directorate, Sharkia governorate, Egypt. They were divided into two groups: experimental group (N30) and a control one (N-30). The researcher prepared an oral communication check list to identify the appropriate EFL oral communication skills required for the participants. A pre post EFL oral communication test was administered to both groups to measure their EFL oral communication performance before and after implementing the program. The virtual class based program (VCP) was implemented to the experimental group for seven weeks while the control group studied at regular instruction. The results of the study showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the EFL oral communication test. Comparing between the experimental group pre- and post-administrations indicated the positive effect of the program (VCP) on developing the participants' EFL oral communication skills.

Keywords: Virtual Class, EFL oral communication skills, Secondary School Students

¹Curriculum and Instruction (TEFL), Faculty of Education, Zagazig University, Egypt.

²Curriculum and Instruction (TEFL), Faculty of Education, Benha University, Egypt.

***Corresponding Author:** Salah Mohamed Youssef,

*Curriculum and Instruction (TEFL), Faculty of Education, Zagazig University, Egypt.,

Email: salahmohamedyoussef2000@gmail.com

DOI: 10.53555/ecb/2023.12.Si13.293

Introduction:

Oral communication is a verbal exchange of information, emotions, and thoughts. It includes speeches, presentations, conversations, and discussions. Body language and tone of voice play an outstanding role in how oral communication is perceived. Oral communication is the process of expressing ideas, thoughts and information that plays a decisive role in the life of students. Oral or verbal communication can take many forms, ranging from informal conversation that occurs spontaneously during which the content is not planned, to participation in meetings that occurs in a structured environment, usually with a set plan (1).

El-Besh (2) identifies oral communication skills as follows: Listening ,Questioning ,Confidence ,Clarifying and Discussing. Khattak (3) describes the process of communication as a messenger that has an urge, a need that requires being satisfied. Samantaray (4) pointed out that teaching English as a foreign language falls short of fulfilling its goals. Even after years of English teaching, learners do not gain confidence in using the language in and outside the class. He added that real communication involves ideas, emotions, feelings, appropriateness, and adaptability. The traditional English class hardly allows learners to use language in this manner and develops fluency in it.

Al Hosni (5) pointed out that most EFL students share a common problem with organizing and communicating their thoughts and ideas orally. This may be owing to the fact that more learners do not benefit from sufficient practice and opportunities to speak in EFL classroom. First, learning to speak is a complex process not readily known to the learners; learners are not familiar with the skills and strategies they can use to develop their speaking ability. Second, EFL learners have little opportunity to develop the skills for arranging their ideas cohesively and coherently while communicating. Third, EFL learners are not familiar with the criteria by which their oral performances are assessed.

Zheng (6) showed that a part of the problem is that foreign language learners can feel anxious about learning it. As well as, the fear of being chosen during classroom discussions or looking foolish in front of classmates leads some students to hesitate about asking questions. Therefore, it is important to investigate new methods for EFL teaching and learning to use effectively. Yates and Chisari stated that there are some factors influencing communication in a situation such as the level of familiarity with interlocutors. The number of

speakers, the formality of the situation and the topics being discussed. Thus, as communication inevitably happens when two or more speaking and responding to each other, successful communication needs interaction and collaboration (7).

Griffiths (8) stated that human communication requires active collaboration from the listener to guess what the speaker intends to convey. He asserted that whenever the speaker's intention is recognized, the message will be communicated. Luchini and Rosello (9) supposed that engaging learners in collaborative oral tasks which necessitate exchange of ideas and conversational interactions enables them to take on responsibility for their own leaning process, which is crucial for foreign language acquisition to happen.

Alshumaimeri (10) asserted that virtual learning is a comparatively new method of gaining distinguished education in all subjects and, as with most things, it has its pros and cons .A virtual classroom enables students to keep in touch with qualified teachers anywhere as long as they both have an internet connection. This can break down a lot of the common barriers to coincided learning: cost, distance and timing. In recent years, virtual learning tools have changed the way educators teach. Not only do these tools simplify lesson plan creation, they also facilitate oral communication and social interaction between teachers and students. Distance learning technology continues to grow at a rapid rate and helps teachers to teach online effectively. Some tools make it easy for teachers and students to stay connected, create interactive lessons and build secure campuses. No matter what skills you're teaching, there are multiple tools to suit your individual needs (11).

Alam et al. (12) stated that virtual classrooms are becoming one of the most significant and inevitable elements of today's learning platform. That is why today's education has moved way far from one-sided teacher lectures to interacting learning sessions, Virtual classrooms are becoming one of the most significant and inevitable elements of today's learning platform. Therefore, today's education has moved away from one-sided teacher lectures to interacting learning session-classrooms. There have been many phases of virtual classrooms and the development of technology is in the progress now and then. Synchronous learning with interactive sessions, recording a class lecture for future reference, and whiteboard for visually explaining concepts all have changed the phase of today's learning, (13).

Some virtual class effective applications, including:

1. Google Classroom:

Bui & Kim. (14) stated that anyone with a personal Google account can make use of this awesome application free of cost to have virtual classroom experience. With this application, setting up classes, communicating, distributing assignments, as well as staying organized are much easy than ever before (15).

2. Zoom gained a great popularity during the period of pandemic for its versatility as a presentation tool and distinguished webinar platform while students learned online. Its security, live video class functionality and chat feature for social interaction make Zoom a useful distance learning tool. EFL learning. Educators must create or take advantage of the abundant number of online applications that can support the learning process to achieve the effectiveness of EFL learning (16).

3. Live Board Interactive Whiteboard: This new generation interactive whiteboard app is considered a great aid for virtual classroom learning with its intuitive visual collaboration features. Real-time cooperation is possible in spite of the location of students and teachers thus breaking the traditional type of teaching. The communication is easy with instant messaging with built-in features (17).

During his work as an EFL expert teacher of English at Martyr Ahmed AL Dardery Experimental Language School, 10th of Ramadan educational directorate, the researcher noticed that it is quite hard to get all students to have an active role in discussions and conversations in English. Even though many students have excellent English skills, they are quiet in class during practicing oral communication. It is a great challenge for an EFL teacher to motivate and encourage all students to be orally active in an English foreign language class. The researcher looked deeply and found that the problem could be solved through a virtual class based program to develop EFL oral communication skills.

The context of the problem could be identified through the researcher's personal experience, the results of the previous studies, and finally the results of a pilot study. Hence, the problem of the current study is manifested in Second year secondary school students' weakness in their EFL oral communication skills.

The problem of the study could be identified in the weak performance of EFL second year secondary school students in oral communication, which badly affects their oral interaction. Therefore, they

become unable to use English to achieve real communicative purposes and communicate together or with their teachers. Due to the important role of virtual class applications and the facilities they provide through different platforms; google classroom, zoom, interactive whiteboard, many aspects could be taught for developing EFL oral communication. Hence, the current study investigated the effect of a virtual class-based program on developing second-year secondary school students' EFL oral communication.

Greene (18) listed some oral communication skills related to oral production or speaking. He noted that a person has to possess the skill to produce intelligible and fluent discourse using correct enunciation, working vocabulary, grammar and correct accent. Furthermore, there are some skills such as topic management, interaction initiation and termination, and especially, turn-taking. Also, there some skills related to social interaction goals such as presentation of self, presentation of one's view of the other (e.g., his/her knowledge and experience, interests, etc.), presentation of one's interpretation of the relationship that exists between self and other (e.g., friends, lovers, opponents, etc.) and presentation of one's interpretation of the nature of the social setting.

The current study adopted the quasi-experimental design as a method for data collection in which participants were divided into two groups (control and experimental). The experimental group was taught through the virtual class based program while the control group was taught through regular instruction.

Instruments of the study

The instruments of the current study were designed in the light of the dependent variables: 1.Oral Communication Skills: An EFL oral communication questionnaire to identify the suitable oral communication sub-skills for 2nd year secondary school students.

2. A pre-post EFL oral communication test.

3. A rubric for correcting the oral communication test.

A Virtual Class based program

The program aimed to develop Secondary School Students' EFL Oral Communication. The participants were mainly engaged in the integrative program based on some virtual class applications according to the oral skills provided through some interesting and familiar topics explained, discussed and evaluated during face to face sessions or virtually.

The instructor's role: The researcher carried out different roles: pre-, during and post the implementation of the program.

EFL Students' roles: The participants in this program assumed different roles. They were active participants who negotiated meaning, discovered the rules and analyzed the reasons.

Statistical analysis:

Pre-test statistics: before experimentation, both groups (control and experimental) were pre-tested to make sure that they were equal in the EFL oral communication skills.

Post-test statistics: to determine whether students' EFL oral communication skills improved after implementing the experimental treatment using the Virtual class based program, the hypotheses of the study were tested by using SPSS v26 Program.

Results and Discussion:

The first hypothesis states that there is a statistically significant difference at (0.01) between the mean scores of the experimental and the control group participants in the post administration of the EFL oral communication skills test, in favor of the experimental group.

The second hypothesis states that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre and post administrations of the overall EFL oral communication skills test and its subskills in favor of the post administration.

The third hypothesis states that "The Virtual class-based program has a positive effect on developing EFL oral communication skills (Figure 1,2).

The impact of technological creation on teaching methodologies has always been a subject of interest owing to its elegance to substitute face-to-face EFL teaching-learning contexts with a virtual learning environment (19). Mosquera (20) asserted that virtual learning environment (VLE) is a platform wherein teachers and students interact and share resources. Many research topics have examined the role of technology-driven media for EFL language learning. Brahma (21), i.e., investigated the use of zoom application as media to conduct e-learning. Fauziah (22) pointed to students' perception and motivation on online learning via Zoom.

Albashtawi (23) investigated the effect of using Google Classroom on the reading and writing performance of diploma students with English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Jordan. It intended to investigate the attitudes of EFL learners toward using Google Classroom as a creative online platform. As a device, one piece of technology usually cited in the literature to enhance active learning is the virtual whiteboard (24). A virtual whiteboard is considered an interactive screen display which enables users to write, draw, and present media, audio, pictures, or other information to enhance collaboration.

Figure (1): EFL oral Communication Skills.

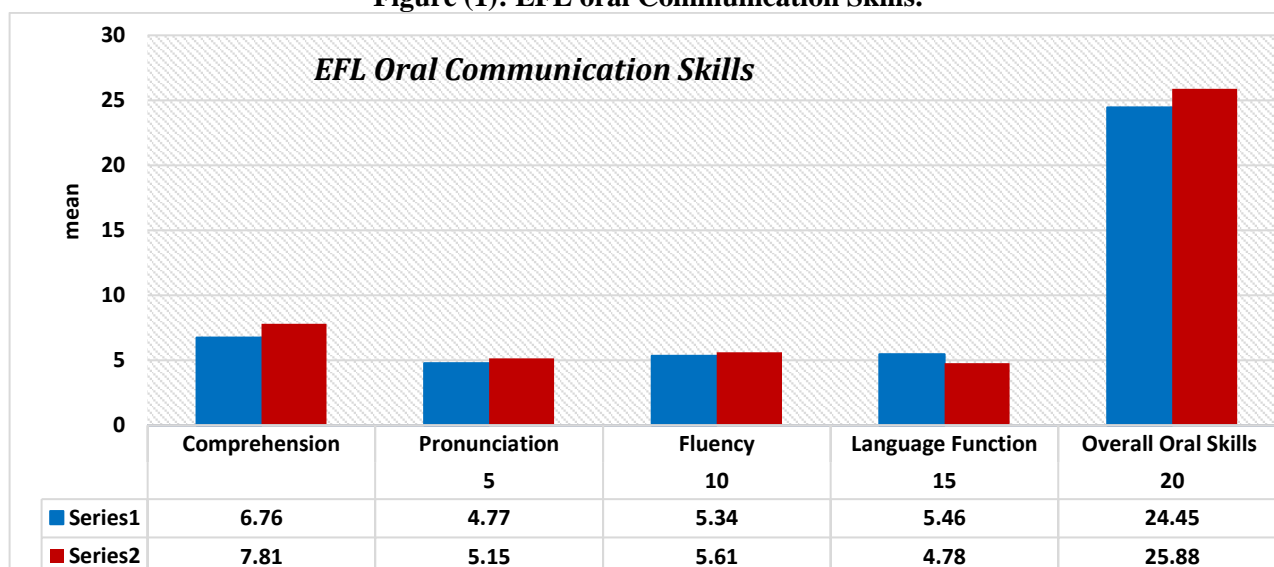
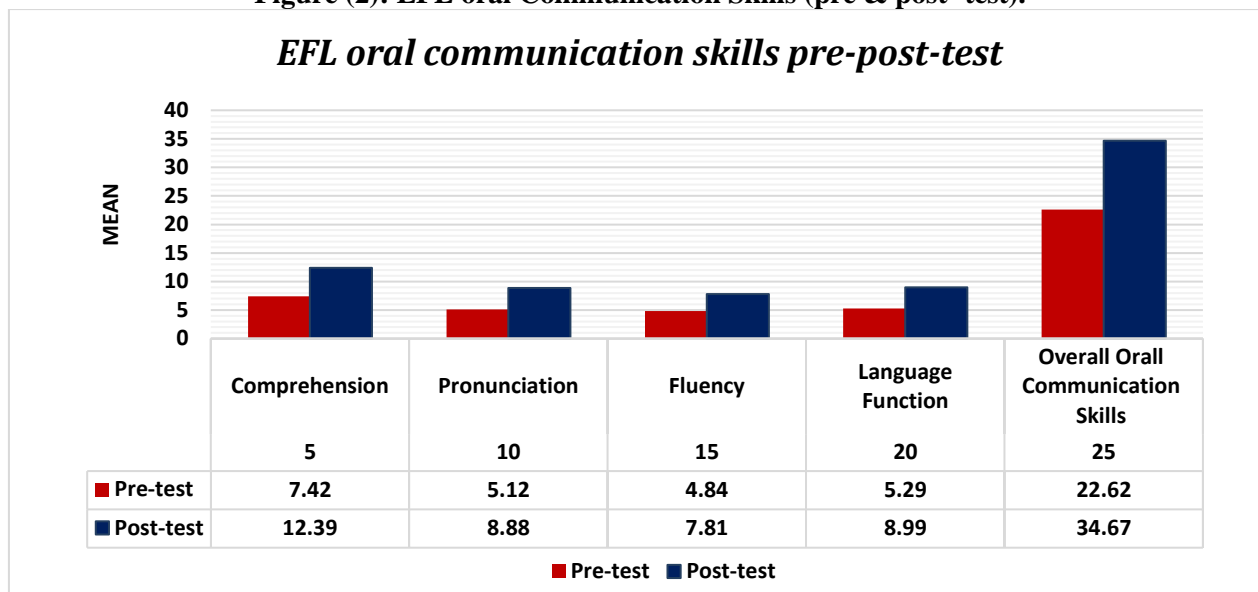


Figure (2): EFL oral Communication Skills (pre & post -test).



The previous figures shows that the mean scores of the post administration are higher than those of the pre administration in the EFL oral communication skills test and its sub-skills. The findings of the study revealed that the experimental group participants outperformed the control group participants in the post-application of the EFL oral communication test. Furthermore, it was proved that the mean scores of experimental group participants in the post-application of the EFL oral communication test were higher than their mean scores in the pre administration.

Therefore, this study was concerned with using a virtual class-based program for developing EFL oral communication skills. Based on the above-mentioned results and conclusions, the following areas and ideas could help other researchers develop further future research; investigating the effectiveness of using the program instruction in developing oral communication in different educational stages and also exploring the effect of using the program for developing other skills in university or in other educational stages.

Conflict of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Sources of funding: This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Author contribution: Authors contributed equally in the study.

References:

1- Young, K. S., & Travis, H. P. (2017). Oral Communication: Skills, Choices, and Consequences. Waveland Press.

- 2- El Besh, M. (2015). The effectiveness of using authentic materials in developing oral communication skills of the students studying in English at faculties of commerce. Unpublished master's thesis, Faculty of Education, Damietta University.
- 3- Khattak, Z. I., Jamshed, T., Ahmad, A. & Baig, M. N. (2011). An Investigation into the Causes of English Language Learning Anxiety in Students at AWKUM. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 15 (2011),pp.1600-1604.
- 4- Samantaray, P. (2014). Dramatization as a Method of Developing Spoken English Skill .*International Journal of Language & Linguistics*, 1, 70.
- 5- Al Hosni, S. (2014). Speaking Difficulties Encountered by Young EFL Learners. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)*, 2(6), 22-30.
- 6- Zheng, Ying. (2008). Anxiety and Second Foreign Language Learning Revisited. *The Canadian Journal of New Scholars in Education*. 1.
- 7- Yates, L. & Chisari, M. (2013). Fact sheet 1: Building confidence in the language classroom. Series: Building confidence in the classroom and beyond AMEP longitudinal study. Retrieved 25 September, 2019 from <https://www.neas.org.au/building-confidence-fact-sheet-1/>.
- 8- Griffiths, P. (2006). An introduction to English semantics and pragmatics. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press.
- 9- Luchini, P.& Rosello, A. (2007). Developing learners' oral communicative language

- abilities: A collaborative action research project in Argentina. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 4 (4), 245-271.
- 10- Alshumaimeri, Yousif & Alhumud, Abeer. (2021). EFL Students' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Virtual Classrooms in Enhancing Communication Skills. *English Language Teaching*, 14, 80. [10.5539/elt.v14n11p80](https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v14n11p80).
- 11- Melanie Arden (August 16, 2021). The 20 Best Tools for Virtual and Distance Learning (Prodigy), Retrieved from <https://www.prodigygame.com/main-en/blog/virtual-learning-tools/>
- 12- Alam, et al.(2022). Online vs. traditional learning: A comparative analysis of student's responses during COVID-19. *Work*, 74, 1-9. [10.3233/WOR-220082](https://doi.org/10.3233/WOR-220082).
- 13- Hussein, E. T. (2016). The effectiveness of using Blackboard in improving the English listening and speaking skills of the female students at the University of Hail. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 3(12), 81-93. <https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.312.2379>
- 14- Bui D. & Kim T. (2022). EFL Learners' Perceptions of Google Classroom Application in Speaking Classes. *European Journal of Applied Linguistics Studies*, 5. [10.46827/ejals.v5i1.360](https://doi.org/10.46827/ejals.v5i1.360).
- 15- Van Batenburg, et al (2019). Oral Interaction in the EFL Classroom: The Effects of Instructional Focus and Task Type on Learner Affect. *The Modern Language Journal*, 103. [10.1111/modl.12545](https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12545).
- 16- Baron, R. (2020). Students ' Perception on Online Application in Speaking Skill. *Journal of VELES Voices of English Language Education Society*, 4(2), 213–221. <https://doi.org/10.29408/veles.v4i2.2543>
- 17- Alsaleem, Basmah. (2021). The Interactive Whiteboard in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Classroom. *European Scientific Journal*, 8, 1857-7881.
- 18- Greene, J. (2016). Oral communication skills. In A. Rocci & L. Saussure (Eds.), *Verbal Communication* (pp.549-566). Boston, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- 19- Mathew, N. G., Sreehari, P., & Al-Rubaat, A. M. (2019). Challenges and implications of virtual e-learning platform in EFL context: Perceptions of teachers. *International Journal of English Language Teaching*, 7(2), 100-116.
- 20- Mosquera, L. H. (2017). Impact of Implementing a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) in the EFL Classroom. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 22(3), 479-498. [doi:10.17533/udea.ikala.v22n03a07](https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.v22n03a07)
- 21- Brahma, I. A. (2020). Penggunaan zoom sebagai pembelajaran berbasis online dalam mata kuliah sosiologi dan antropologi pada mahasiswa PPKN di STKIP Kusumanegara Jakarta. *Aksara: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Nonformal*, 6(2), 97-102.
- 22- Fauziah, N. (2021). Students' perception and motivation in English online learning through zoom apps (A descriptive qualitative study at the twelfth grade students of SMA Kartika III-I Banyubiru in Academic Year 2020/2021).
- 23- Albashtawi, A., & Al Bataineh, K. (2020). The effectiveness of google classroom among EFL students in Jordan: An innovative teaching and learning online platform. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (iJET)*, 15(11), 78-88.
- 24- Ivone, F. M., Jacobs, G. M., & Renandya, W. A. (2020). Far apart, yet close together: Cooperative learning in online education. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 7(2), pp. 271-289. <https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v7i2.17285>