

BOOSTING INTERSUBJECTIVITY BY DIGITAL VIDEO RECORDING PROJECT IN EFL CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

One challenge that modern English teachers face is the how effectively design an interface that monitors output, notices weaknesses, and provides accurate feedback. The ephemeral nature of speech obstructs assessment, peer review, and self-reflection of L2 spoken output for both students and teachers. This study sought to determine if the use of video recording would help solve this problem that offers direct benefits to learners. This study collected data for one academic semester from undergraduate students at two universities; 48 South Korean university students and 37 Pakistani university students. The data was analyzed using a mixed method approach and was collected in the form of participants' speech recordings, feedback comments to their peers, self-reflection, and responses from interviews. A meticulous comparison was also provided between all of the university students' attitudes and performances in speech classes using video recording as a pedagogical tool for peer-feedback, self-reflection, and assessment. Additionally, a comprehensive description was also provided that revealed the students' perceptions towards recording as a tool to enhance speech skills, the effects of video-recorded in-class speeches, reflection tasks, and online peer feedback. The results concluded that learners had their speaking production skills advanced from using video-recorded speeches.

Keywords: video recorded speeches, digitization, online feedback, peer assessment, self-reflection

ABSTRAK

Salah satu tantangan yang dihadapi guru bahasa Inggris di era modern adalah seberapa efektif merancang media yang memantau keluaran, memperhatikan kelemahan, dan memberikan umpan balik yang akurat. Karakteristik belajar menunjukkan adanya hambatan dalam penilaian, penilaian sejawat dan refleksi diri dari output L2 yang diucapkan oleh mahasiswa dan guru. Penelitian ini berusaha untuk menentukan apakah penggunaan perekaman video akan membantu memecahkan masalah yang menawarkan manfaat langsung kepada mahasiswa. Studi ini mengumpulkan data untuk satu semester akademik dari mahasiswa sarjana di dua universitas; 48 mahasiswa Korea Selatan dan 37 mahasiswa Pakistan. Data dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran dan dikumpulkan dalam bentuk rekaman

tanggapan dari wawancara. Perbandingan juga disediakan antara semua sikap dan penampilan mahasiswa di kelas bicara menggunakan rekaman video sebagai alat pedagogis untuk umpan balik teman, refleksi diri, dan penilaian. Selain itu, deskripsi komprehensif juga disediakan yang mengungkapkan persepsi mahasiswa terhadap perekaman sebagai alat untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara, efek dari rekaman video di kelas yang direkam, tugas refleksi, dan umpan balik teman online. Hasilnya menyimpulkan bahwa mahasiswa memiliki keterampilan berbicara yang lebih baik dari menggunakan pidato yang direkam dengan video. siswa aktif sebesar 94%, kreatif sebesar 94% dan kooperatif sebanyak 100%. Rata-rata nilai siswa pada siklus kedua mengalami peningkatan dan mencapai target Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM).

Kata kunci: rekaman video pidato, digitalisasi, umpan balik online, penilaian sejawat, refleksi diri

INTRODUCTION

The exponentially rising rate of availability to the internet to every corner of the world and the digitization of video recording tools have enormously improved the viability of integrating these tools in language instruction. Recently, digital technological tools allow learners to video record their verbal output and transmit video files for assessment, correction, and further review. Video recordings of their verbal productions proved to be a great tool that offered multiple advantages to learners, such as providing an accurate record of what was said, being a great opportunity for peers to be rewatch the video for detailed student-to-student assessment and online feedback, and allowing students to contemplate on how their skills are developing. This is also supported by well-researched studies which demonstrate the correlation between the various applicabilities of video-recorded speeches in content-based instruction (Gimeno-Sanz, 2015).

Furthermore, Brown (2012) researched speech and self-assessment with video recording devices. Post project questionnaire results strongly indicated that learners enhanced their intelligibility, attitudes, and perceptions

of improvement through recording as a tool for speaking and self-assessment. Aoki (2014) argued that learners showed high interest in asynchronous speech recording exercises. This engagement helps them to focus more on negotiation of meaning which in turn encourages their peers to take more risks. In terms of grammatical accuracy in oral output, learners generally performed better after self-reflection (Cooke, 2013).

Oral presentation skills are considered an essential component in the workplace (Omar et al., 2012) where workers are often asked to deliver progress-reports, present proposals, elucidate the output of projects, explain product descriptions to vendors, and conduct oral briefings (Devi, Amir & Krish, 2014). Therefore, in order to maintain a sustainable business, employers look for diligent graduates with sound academic backgrounds and exceptional oratory and presentation skills in English (Devi, Amir & Krish, 2014; Singh & Singh, 2008). At the university education level, oral presentations are an important part of class throughout the world (Alwi & Sidhu, 2013; Campbell, et. al., 2001). It is quite common in EFL classrooms for teachers to ask for live oral

presentations in front of the whole class in order to help learners enhance their English public speaking skills (Hinkelman, Rian & McGarthy, 2012). Public speeches enhance communicative competence, assist learners to observe, investigate, arrange, and build new knowledge as well as help them to gain autonomy in class (King, 2002).

However, in-class speeches are the least volunteered in activities in class because of the difficulty associated with them (King, 2002). Most EFL learners consider in-class speech activities to be the most feared and daunting tasks (Guo, 2013). A majority of Asian students, who are timid and tend to stay quiet in class (Kim, 2006), perceive public speech activities as the most intimidating tasks in class (Tajizan et al., 2012). The main reasons for EFL learners' avoidance of in-class speeches include the fear of public speaking, conducting mistakes, being ridiculed by others, and their lack of confidence in making English speeches (Guo, 2013). Besides the many challenges for EFL students associated to in-class speeches, assessment of oral presentations remains an issue for instructors (Yang & Scharff, 2013). The subjective judgment in the absence of any concrete proof makes assessment a bigger challenge for instructors (Yamkate & Intrat, 2012). The instructors face challenges assessing EFL learners' in-class speeches, and the students also struggle to identify their own weaknesses and mistakes in their speeches (Guo, 2013).

In order to address the above mentioned issues, it is important to develop more sustainable methods that offer a creative environment for EFL students to improve on their in-class speeches, get reflection on their oral

production, provide peers constructive feedback, and reduce the constraints faced by instructor to perform transparent assessment and to provide feedback to learners. Video recording of in-class speeches helps learners to get more useful feedback, provide chances for self-reflection, give more accurate teachers' assessments, and generate feelings of achievement (Balakrishnan & Puteh, 2014).

Discussion Questions

1. Does video recording of EFL learners' speeches improve their oral skills?
2. What are the learners' perceptions towards in-class video recording of their speeches?

According to Bennett (2011), 98% of East Asian students at the university level have access to some sort of digital devices. Most of them own a smartphone or a computer, the rest of them have reliable access to computers or other digital devices at their school library. With the surging popularity of online resources (e.g. Social Networking Sites, Chat apps, online discussion boards), the number of internet users is now in the billions (Smith, 2011). Among all of the various types of technologies, micro-blogging has most rapidly made its way into education (Bennett, 2011). Online discussion boards are increasingly present in language classrooms as well. Therefore, some studies (Junco et al., 2010) have examined the effect of online resources on language learning pedagogies in the classroom, especially on the learners' linguistic ability, attitude, or content acquisition in an EFL context.

Due to the internet revolution, electronic devices such as smartphones, tablet PCs, and laptop computers are a ubiquitous part of human lifestyles across the globe. Data from the

International Telecommunication Union (2014) showed that the rate of using mobile phones in South Korea in 2014 was 111%, which means there are more mobile phones than there are people. Despite this, the penetration rate for smartphones among mobile-phone users in the whole country was 82.3% at the end of June 2015, while more than 97% Korean university students possessed smart phones (Choi & Kim, 2015). Similarly, in Pakistan, one of the fastest developing countries, the use of digital devices is on the rise. Javed (2012) reported that a majority of Pakistani university students possess a digital device of some sort, the rest of the students access the internet at the school library. This shows that, in this global cellular phone market, the smartphone is gaining momentum and becoming more and more of an essential part of human life, especially for college students.

Based on the data provided above regarding the emergence of digital devices in Korea and Pakistan, it seems as though bringing these digital devices into the EFL context by educating students about their potential usefulness is a realistic pedagogical strategy as opposed to offering resistance towards the use of smartphones, considering them distractions to learning. Choi and Kim (2015) suggested that an average Korean university student spends 3~4 hours per day using a smartphone for different purposes like browsing the internet, reading news, or accessing social media. On the other hand, a majority of Pakistani university students spend an average of 90 minutes to two hours per day using digital devices (Javed, 2012). With this greater investment of time associated to smartphones, social scientists in the EFL field (e.g. Warschauer, 2013) are

convinced that EFL students need to be encouraged to utilize digital devices, considering their potential to enhance EFL learning. This study attempted to provide EFL students a perspective, away from the traditional approach, in which they can use digital resources as a part of their EFL learning. This will not only facilitate EFL students' oral skills enhancement, but also learners can integrate these digital resources into their overall learning.

METHOD

A mixed method approach was used for the data analysis that was collected through a 16-week academic semester. Data was collected from 48 Korean and 37 Pakistani university sophomore EFL learners registered for a presentation course. Learners ages ranged from 20 to 22 years. Their average English proficiency level was intermediate mid, according to the ACTFL guidelines (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages). All learners possessed an elementary understanding of how to use computers and the internet. Quantitative data was collected in the form of learners' speech recordings and their feedback comments. Whereas, qualitative data was gathered through self-reflection, and interviews were conducted with 10 randomly selected participants at each university.

A quantitative research methodology was used to analyze learners' speech recording data by using a comparison approach. Their speech scores were compared with their previous speeches and examined to see if there was any improvement. The feedback comments provided by their peers were also analyzed and determined if the speakers had addressed the feedback comments in their speeches. Self-reflection and

interview responses were used to qualitatively analyze participants' feelings and attitude towards video-recording as a tool to enhance speech production.

As mentioned above, the initial part of this pilot study was designed to reveal students' attitudes and perceptions towards the video-recording of their speeches. It also evaluated the effects of in-class video-recorded speeches, usefulness of the reflection tasks, the practicality of peer assessment, and the effectiveness of online peer feedback. The effect of video recording as a tool for EFL learners' public speaking skills development was analyzed using seven variables including: speech duration, fluency, confidence (eye-contact, gestures, and posture), pronunciation, preparedness, audience engagement, and responses to audience's questions.

The findings were used to analyze if/how the video-recorded speeches helped learners increase their speaking skills. The second part of this study outlined practical techniques and activities for setting up a video-recording infrastructure for speech classes. This approach further provided support that the above-mentioned strategies could likely be expanded to all conversation based classes in general English and content based learning programs from elementary schools to universities.

A four-speech project was the main part of the credit course for a semester in addition to the regular class instruction for learners' speech skill development. For each speech, students were able to choose the topic following the guidelines and parameters for each speech provided by the teacher. The length for each speech was from 4 to 6 minutes. Through a systematic approach, they prepared their speeches

in class and outside of class. They were asked to bring their recording devices (e.g. smartphone) on the speech day and set their smartphone/tablet on the tripod provided by the researcher before their speech. Those students, who did not have a functional device or complained about low battery power, were asked to borrow their peer's smartphone for the recording.

After completing their speeches, they had to upload their recorded speech to class website on the same day. Each student was required to provide 2 other students feedback within 2 days of the speech session. Therefore, they visited the class website and watched two videos to comment on them after the class. They were required to provide both complements and constructive feedback. Compliments helped speakers to see what amused or impressed the audience, whereas the constructive comments pointed out their weaknesses and guided them toward future improvements.

Each speaker wrote out a reflection form after watching their speech video. Both the peer feedback and the self-reflection helped them to reflect upon their work. The instructor assessed the speech roughly in class while the speaker was presenting. However, the instructor also watched the speech video again for a comprehensive assessment of each speech. This helped the instructor to give a more accurate in evaluation. Besides the peer feedback that included complements and constructive feedback, learners were asked to complete an assessment form for the speakers who they had previous given feedback. This helped learners to examine the assessment criteria carefully and to overcome their own weaknesses as well.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicated that most Korean and Pakistani participants showed minuscule amounts of hesitation towards recording their own speeches in the beginning of the course. However, they changed their perception and showed positive attitudes towards video recording as a tool for their public speech skill improvement. In addition, the data suggested that learners enhanced their public speaking skills gradually based on peer assessment, peer feedback comments, self-reflection, and instructor's feedback.

Digital video recording gave an opportunity for EFL students to experience verbal and mental progress when giving a speech or presentation. Oral feedback from the instructor, written comments from peers, and self-reflection on video recorded speeches helped learners to make simple changes in their speeches for gradual improvement throughout one academic semester. Offering learners a chance to be an evaluator for others' speeches helped them to reflect on their own speech style, quality, language use, and preparedness.

Having such an opportunity to evaluate and offer constructive feedback to their peers led students to express a sense of inclusiveness and fairness regarding the evaluation process. Peer evaluations were a major source of scaffolding and skill development throughout the course. Subsequently, students were open in evaluating their peer's speeches by justifying their comments with the reasons for their assessment scores within the categories and ranges from the approved rubric. Through this process, students' evaluations of peer speeches became more aligned to those of the instructor's as the semester progressed, and yet they still were able to maintain their identity

and uniqueness in their feedback comments.

With the emergence of internet technologies around the world and the digitization of video recording tools, EFL classroom instructions are going through a phase of transformation. The results of this study suggested that learners improved in-class speeches through a comparison approach using video recording as a tool for their public speaking improvement. The results also revealed that both Korean and Pakistani EFL learners showed positive responses towards the use of video recording for in-class speeches. These findings correspond with the findings of Balakrishnan & Puteh (2014) that suggested video recordings helped learners to get more useful feedback that helped them to plan for their future speeches more carefully and thoughtfully.

The result of the second research question showed that Korean and Pakistani EFL learners showed positive responses towards the use of video recording as a tool for the improvement of their speech skills. This supported Watkins (2012) who proposed that video recording for speech classes could offer EFL learners feelings of improvement. Following the benefits of video recording for in-class speeches that this study examined, learners realized the importance of constructive peer-feedback that they received after their speeches. Aoki (2014) claimed that EFL learners show high engagement in asynchronous speech recording that helped them watch recorded speeches of their peers carefully for constructive feedback. This helps them to focus more on the negotiation of meaning, which in turn encourages their peers to take more risks.

The most important aspect that was discussed in this study was assessment. Instructors' feelings of satisfaction in terms of transparent assessment through the use of video recording was recorded. This relates to the research of Watkins (2012) that claimed more accuracy in instructor's assessments resulted through watching learners' video-recorded speeches. The results also supported the idea that learners gained grammatical accuracy in oral output through self-reflection (Cooke, 2013).

CONCLUSION

Digital video recording of speech classes can be a mandatory part of the assessment of speech classes. This helped learners to be more precise and effective while providing peer feedback and completing the self-reflection sheets. This tool would be valuable not only in speech classes, but it could also be included into daily classroom applications. Then learners could experience immediate benefits. When coupled with peer feedback and self-reflection strategies, presentation techniques can be improved drastically through video recordings within a very short period of time. Peer-to-peer assessment and offering constructive feedback after watching recorded videos not only helped participants reflect upon their oral skills but also provide learners autonomy in class. Peer assessment provided them with a chance to closely look into the assessment criteria and plan their future speeches carefully based on the evaluation requirements. Video-recording proved to be a great tool that not only to enhance learners' performance, but also it gave instructors a chance to watch the video again and evaluate students' speeches with a higher degree of accurately.

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