



The Effect of Independent Speaking Practice with a Digital Application on EFL Learners' Speaking

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Abstract

Exposing foreign language learners to independent speaking practice through digital applications and technological tools allows for additional hours of exposure and practice in foreign languages. The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of independent speaking practice in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) using a digital application, compared to guided, teacher-led practice, on students' speaking performance. Thirty-seven adult Arabic-speaking college students (30 women and 7 men) participated in the study. All participants were enrolled in four groups of English for Purposes of International Communication (EPIC) courses at the B1 level. The courses included four face-to-face hours and two asynchronous hours per week. Data were collected through pre- and post-intervention online computerized tests assessing students' speaking performance in terms of fluency, pronunciation, and articulation. A quantitative quasi-experimental research design was employed. The results indicated a cumulative percentage increase in all participants' overall speech level, their speaking fluency, pronunciation, and articulation. Yet, participants of the four groups did not demonstrate progress in the reading for fluency component. The study provides valuable insights for English lectures and researchers regarding technology-mediated speaking instruction in the EPIC courses.

Keywords: EAP courses; EFL speech application; EPIC courses; online digital speaking practice