

THE EFFECT OF PEER-CORRECTION THROUGH PODCAST ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF SPEAKING SKILL OF IRANIAN IELTS STUDENTS (THE INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTING SYSTEM)

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined the effectiveness of peer-correction through podcast on the improvement of speaking skills of Iranian IELTS students (The International English Language Testing System). A quasi-experimental intact group design was adopted. Participating of 40 Iranian IELTS learners in Advanced level proved that peer-correction via voice recording led to improve speaking skills. The findings indicated that peer-feedback via podcast and voice recording assisted students to enrich their overall speaking skills. Studying various journals and theses to determine the effects of peer-feedback via podcast on Iranian IELTS learners indicated that peer-correction through podcast greatly support speaking skills.

Keywords: peer-correction; podcast; improvement; speaking skill; IELTS

INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of thinking and transferring culture from one generation to another as well as from one nation to another. It is also a means of communication among people. Hence, many countries emphasize teaching languages other than the native language to their citizens [1]. For learners who are studying English in a non-English speaking setting, it is vital to experience real communicative situations in which they learn how to express their own views and opinions, and to develop their oral fluency and accuracy which are very essential for the success of communication. Peer-correction through podcast then, is necessary and useful as an educational strategy to enhance speaking as one of the staple skills in learning English.

Success in learning a language is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the target language. Therefore, speaking is probably a priority for most learners of English [2]. Speaking is one of the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking)[3]. It is the means through which learners can communicate with others to achieve certain goals or to express their opinions,

intentions, hopes and viewpoints. Speaking is used twice as much as reading and writing in our communication [4]. Fundamentally, communicative tasks through voice recording can have a positive effect on teaching speaking [5].

The concept of peer-correction through podcast plays a significant role in the process of second language learning. Peer feedback has an impact on increasing motivation through the sense of personal responsibility and improving self-confidence [6]. Interaction between students is beneficial to language development [7]. As far as the speaking skill is concerned, we tried to shed some light on this skill which is considered the most desirable skill to be mastered by the vast majority of Iranian IELTS (International English Language Testing System) learners. One more significant issue of classroom teaching comes up with peer correction. It is now acknowledged by most of the scholars that giving feedback to each other's performance leads in learning enhancement and involvement increase [8]. Also, peer feedback takes the focus away from the teacher and thus initiates a role transfer from the teacher to the learners. Finally, since peer correction offers opportunities to the students to be responsible for their own learning, it is also advocated by the practitioners who believe in learner autonomy [9].

METHODOLOGY

Participants

40 Iranian IELTS students have been selected from Iran-Canada language institute in Tehran to participate in the present study. All of the participants were learning English as a foreign language at Advanced level and at the average age of 25. Both female (n= 22) and male (n=18) learners participated in this research. Nearly all participants have already received an average of 2 years of English instruction in Iran-Canada institute. All of them had passed "Top Notch, Summit, and Tactics for Listening" book series before they reached "Complete IELTS" courses. They were all Persian native speakers and they were preparing themselves for Academic IELTS. They were divided into two groups: experimental group (N=20) and control group (N=20).

Procedure

At the beginning of the study, a mock Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was held to homogenize students based on their general English proficiency. A pretest of Speaking Module (parts 1, 2, 3) was taken from two groups by the examiner, who is the principal of Iran-Canada institute. The scores were recorded to determine the level of their speaking skill.

After taking pretests, all of the participants were separated into two groups; Experimental and Control group and a 10-session instructional course has been commenced.

In the experimental group, the students (12 females and 8 males) were given a topic by the teacher to talk and practice at home. In this case the learner should draw a bubble-mind map to brainstorm the ideas and take notes. After thinking for one minute, he was supposed to record his voice with a cell phone and sent it then to his peer. Corresponding to peer-correction, the recorded voice was revised by the aspect of collocation and grammatical errors by the peer and it was sent to the first speaker again.

Finally, the last corrected version would have been transmitted to the teacher via cell phone in order to correct any remaining errors.

On the other hand, in the control group there was no peer-correction. In this case, the students (10 females and 10 males) were given a topic by the teacher to talk and practice at home. The learner should think for one minute and talk about two minutes. Next, he recorded his voice and sent it to his teacher via a cell phone. The teacher then corrected and gave feedback.

Data analysis

The collected data had been entered in SPSS and analyzed. Then a number of descriptive statistical analyses were applied to determine the final results of the study:

Independent sample t-test (between-group design): was used to compare the speaking skill of experimental and control group before and after the treatment to compare the results of pre/post- test of each case.

Paired sample t-test (within-group design): was conducted on scores before and after the treatment in both groups separately to examine the possible effect of peer-correction via podcast on speaking improvement.

Inter-rater reliability: scoring is one of the vital factors which influences the reliability. As IELTS Speaking Module is a subjectively scored-test, measurement error will influence the reliability of the scores due to fluctuations in the scorer judgments. Hence, to minimize these kinds of measurement errors, the correlation between the three raters' scores has been done to have inter-rater reliability.

RESULTS

According to Iran-Canada English language institute, Independent sample t-test (between-group design) was used to compare the overall speaking results of pre and post-tests of experimental and control group before and after the treatment. It is shown in table 1:

Table 1. Independent Samples Test

	t-test	Degree of freedom	Significance (2-tailed)	Mean	Standard deviation
Overall speaking pretest	8.414	37.051	.673	6.1750	.65444
Overall speaking posttest	12.108	29.412	.007	7.5500	.45595

According to the data analysis, the t-test results show t statistic of 8.414 with 37.051 degrees of freedom in pretest and 12.108 with 29.412 degrees of freedom in posttest. The corresponding two-tailed p-value is less than 0.05 in both. Thus we can reject the null hypothesis at 5% significance level and conclude that the efficiency of peer-correction through podcast in overall speaking scores was significant. Overall, the mean of posttest has been improved after incorporating the treatment. Of the total surveys

analyzed in this research, it was concluded that using peer-correction via podcast had a positive effect on the overall speaking skills of Iranian IELTS students.

Paired sample t-test (within-group design) was conducted on scores before and after the treatment in both groups separately to examine the possible effect of peer-correction via podcast on speaking improvement. The results are shown in table 2:

Table 2. Paired Samples Test

	Mean	Number of students	Standard deviation	Standard error mean
Overall speaking pretest	5.2250	40	1.19266	.18858
Overall speaking posttest	6.2625	40	1.46317	.23135

According to the table, descriptive statistics (means, standard deviation and standard error of mean) are calculated. Considerably, the mean of posttest has been improved which means that the overall speaking through peer-correction via podcast has indeed altered after incorporating the treatment.

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