

The Effect of Web-Quest-Based Program on Developing Iranian University EFL Student's Speaking Skill.

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Abstract

This study is designed to examine the result of a Web Quest-Based Program (WQBP) on developing EFL speaking skills at the university level. For this purpose, 40 EFL students were selected from Science and Art University of Yazd. The participants who were selected randomly were assigned to experimental and control groups. In each group there were 20 learners. The classes were conducted for a period of six sessions. Experimental group was given web quest treatment. The control group followed the paper pencil assignment. The teacher who taught the participants for both groups was the same. The researcher employed a variety of equipment to gather data: speaking pre and posttest and a speaking assessment rubric, to evaluate each Web Quest of the program. The study results revealed a significant difference between the control and experimental groups. The score of the experimental group surpassed the control group in the posttest. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence it can be concluded that the use of the Web Quest had a positive effect on the learners. The study recommends using Web Quest to teach EFL skills and as a training approach in professional development programs for EFL teachers.

Keywords: EFL learners, speaking, Web quest

Introduction

According to Cameron (2001), speech is the active use of language to communicate meanings so that other people may understand them. She says paying close attention to linguistic nuances is necessary while speaking a foreign language to communicate with others. To express meaning clearly and precisely and to ensure that the audience comprehend, a speaker must use best words and the correct syntax.

Thonburry (2005), another expert, defines speaking or oral communication as an activity involving two or more persons in which listeners and speakers must respond to what they hear and contribute at a high degree of speed. Each person in the contact has a goal or aim that they wish to accomplish. Speaking is the process of creating and exchanging meaning in various circumstances via verbal and nonverbal symbols (Chaney (1998) ; Kayi (2006). Due to its importance and use in communication, speaking is one of the fundamental language skills that English learners from other countries need to acquire. English is the most widely acknowledged language in the world, therefore being able to speak, it is vital to speak for those who can also increase their knowledge and abilities and

get jobs. Furthermore, it would be effortless for them to converse and interact with people throughout the world when they travel (Gard & Gautam, 2015). Moreover, speaking is a type of communication in which the speaker's words must be conveyed effectively, according to Jones (1989).

Kush defined effective speech as a voiced utterance that is comprehended by another person. Following this definition Kush defined effective speaking as an utterance in a set of voice spoken by someone and understood by another person, following this definition (Kushartanti et al., 2005). It implies that speaking involves more than just expressing things; instead, it implies that speaking involves more than just expressing things; rather, it involves creating meaning for others to comprehend what we are saying. In addition, Brown mentioned that creating, receiving, and digesting information are all part of creating meaning (Florez, 1999).

A productive skill is speaking, just like writing. It entails communicating with others through speech (Spratt et al. (2005:). Speaking, however, differs from writing in a few ways. Weigle (2002) quotes Brown (1994), who lists several qualities that set written language apart from spoken language. The qualities are permanence, production time, distance, orthography, complexity, formality, and vocabulary. Speaking is the initial stage in determining someone's language proficiency. UR (1996) emphasized that speaking seems intuitively to be the most crucial language skill and that many, if not most, foreign language learners are primarily interested in learning to speak. People who know a language are referred to as "speakers" of that language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing.

Teaching speaking skills can be done in a variety of ways. The ability of students in schools and universities to learn to speak in TL (Target Language) still has to be improved. Therefore, today influence of the technology on our lives must be recognized, particularly the Internet. consequently, it is impossible to deny the impact of technology on modern life. Technology, particularly the Internet, has long been a fixture in people's lives and is inseparable from them. Therefore, it is hard to ignore the influence of technology on our lives today, particularly the Internet. Nowadays, having a website or an email address is equivalent to owning a phone; ELT is widespread. We use it constantly to learn more about the topics that interest us, and it allows us to quickly travel to the farthest reaches of the globe for entertainment, download music or videos, or even conduct banking transactions without physically visiting a bank. Schools, which serve as the second-largest community where children participate after their families, must offer instruction encouraging learners to use technology wisely and positively for societal advancement.

Ignoring technology's significance and numerous implications on our daily lives and refusing to take steps to use it to advance society are not good decisions. One of the main reasons why many educators are attempting to integrate information technology into their practice is to provide students with the skills they need to survive in the real world. The "education" that students receive in our classrooms should be logically related to the contribution that they will make to society once they graduate. Teachers can use information technology to facilitate learning (Sen & Neufeld, 2006). Web Quest is one of these resources.

The Web Quest teaching model was developed by Bernie Dodge and Tom March (1995) and has attracted a lot of attention. Dodge (2001) asserts that it is essential to recognize the distinctive features of English language learning that set it apart from other fields when applying the Web Quest approach to academic English language instruction. Students' listening skills are developed by the implanted audio and video components through news or narrative and situational dialogues.

Scaffolding can help improve student progress and support student performance by creating a temporary framework. Beyond their capacity while completing a Web Quest (March., 2003). Constructivist teaching approaches, according to Dodge (2001), offer the opportunity for learning. It's an organic process wherein cognitive negotiation and reflection lead to beneficial learning. Students who are taught constructive methods are able to reflect on various solutions and draw genuine connections between what they are learning in the classroom and real-world learning. He added that Web Quests encourage cooperation and teamwork among participants as they generate information, and they are self-validating.

Web Quest is "an inquiry-oriented activity in which the majority or all of the information used by learners is drawn from the Web, (Dodge,1995). Web quests are made to make efficient use of students' time, emphasize on using information rather than searching for it, and to aid students' analysis, synthesis, and evaluation-level thinking. Since then, the idea has gained a lot of attraction in academia. Web Quests may be created for numerous topic areas at various educational levels, according to Ezell et al., (2003). According to Kundu and Bain (2006), web quest is an effective tool to enhance constructivist principles in language teaching. Web quests are typically teacher-guided and student-focused. In the teaching process, the students are directed through guided discovery as

part of the learning process to develop cooperative learning. Web quests are typically group projects to assemble, summarize, and synthesize the data acquired. According to Chen (2011), The Web Quest is designed around an authentic topic related to the daily life of students. We can find some articles that describe the accomplishment of successful implementation of Web Quests in a classroom.

This useful teaching tool has spread worldwide since Dodge and March established it in 1998. The San Diego Micro Worlds Project, a project created by Dodge and Muñoz, served as the basis for the WQ.

According to the constructivist theory of learning, the learners are placed in an atypical position where they decide how and in what direction learning will take place depending on what they see, hear, or do concerning what they already know. A tool that directs students to their optimal learning environment is called a web quest. If we take Dodge's definition (1995) into account, the WQ should have at least the following components:

- (a) Introduction: The introduction's goal is to inspire the student. The motivational component's goal is to deliver the subject in a way that is visually appealing and connected to the learner's future experiences and goals so that it will be enjoyable and advantageous for them. (Dodge, 1995).
- (b) Task: This section stresses the assignment the student is supposed to do; typically, it identifies a specific issue or place that has to be fixed. Additionally, a well-designed assignment can be attainable and appealing and evoke learners thinking beyond habit comprehension (Dodge, 2002).
- (c) Process: The teacher directs the students in this section in various methods to help them reach the learning objective. This stage may be broken down into smaller jobs to make it easier for students to follow along. Students come first at this point. When considering WQ for L2, it may include advice, such as scaffolding, group management, some techniques for collaborative work, or language reinforcement. Any suggestions for improving the learning or interpersonal processes are welcome. Of course, another crucial component of the directions should be their brevity, clarity, and language usage.
- (d) Resources: Resources include a list of websites the teacher has prepared in advance and made available to the class so that students can get additional material to finish their assignments. They incorporated websites and other materials, such as videos, songs, maps, Etc.
- (e) Scaffolding: This improvised framework pushes students to perform tasks more expertly than they are (Dodge, 2001). Scaffolding comes in three different varieties (Dodge, 2001): Reception enables learners to manage their studies better and comprehend what they are studying. Timelines, glossaries, organizational charts, and observation guides are a few examples of reception scaffolds. With techniques like comparing, contrasting, and reasoning, transformation is the manual for assisting pupils in transforming information into new knowledge. Production instructs students to produce a final product; it can be scaffolded by offering them templates, writing prompts, and presentational requirements. For learners to complete the work, the teacher must provide scaffolding as part of the design of the web quest.
- (f) Evaluation: Although this section of the online quest appears at the end of the task, it must be acknowledged from the outset of the Project. Students are evaluated using a variety of factors. The most well-known assessment tool is the rubric, which promotes thinking critically due to its self-evaluation and self-improvement pattern (Stevens & Levi, 2011).
- (g) Conclusion: This sector is meant to let students reflect on what they have learned so far and to inspire them to keep learning and researching the topic. Teachers might encourage the students to improve their upcoming Web quests during this section.

It has been demonstrated that paying attention to web quests while learning a language increases language proficiency, particularly in reading and writing. Laborda (2010) provides the following advantages of adopting Web quests for language learning: First, it offers reading-based opportunities for lexical and linguistic user input that can be utilized to either directly generate concepts and sentences or to reinforce previously taught language. Furthermore, it provides opportunities for experiential learning because it requires students to actively seek information to create meaning and develop higher-order thinking abilities. Third, it combines written and vocal components.

These days, using the Internet and technology play a significant role in the life of every human being, education in particular. Given this role, an attempt was made to use a web application to teach both skills to university students. A significant amount of research has investigated the role of Web Quest in various skills.

However, so far, few studies in Iran have examined the effect of the Web program on students' listening and speaking skills. More research in this area is necessary because new studies provide more significant evidence of possible positive effects of this program on listening and speaking skills. Therefore, additional studies can allow us to draw a more definitive conclusion. This study investigates the impact of web quests on improving students' listening and speaking.

Method

The study used the Quantitative method. Quantitative research is, which involves gathering and evaluating numerical data to do statistical analysis. It may be applied to provide fresh research ideas or obtain in-depth understanding of an issue.

Participants and Sampling

The study was carried out at Art and Science University Yazd. Forty EFL students were selected after the OPT test. The participants' ages range were from 18 to 22 and their first language was Persian. The participants were both male and female. The participants were selected using the non-probability convenience sampling approach.

Table1-demografic information of participants

	Male	Female
Participants	20	20
First language	Persian	Persian
Level	Intermediate	Intermediate
Age	21-25	21-25

3.4. Instrumentation

The Instrument employed for collecting Data were a pretest and posttest. The pre-test, and post-test speaking, were used to collect the Quantitative data at the beginning and end of the study. The content of the test was related to the Top notch book 2.

Pre-test and Post-test

A speaking pre-study exam was given at the start of the course to address the first and second research question. The speaking pre-posttest, which was prepared before was used at the beginning and end of the treatment course and each participant was interviewed separately and the time allotted was 15-20 minute. The test layout included questions related to course book. Open-ended questions were present. The post-study speaking test followed the same format and covered the same subjects as the pre-study test, lasting 15 to 20 minutes for each student. Nine questions were asked from each individual. The same vocabulary and grammatical items were included in both pre and post-test to compare the students' development. Lastly, the IELTS speaking band descriptions were used to grade elicited responses, which were audio recorded.

Procedure

Speaking test was administered before and after the study for the experimental and control groups to address the first and second research topics. The experiment involved the researcher creating a webpage on which the Web Quest-Based Program (WQBP) would be uploaded for the study. While the experimental group received instruction using the WQBP on different times, the control group received instruction using the daily traditional or usual method of teaching during the daily sessions.

The Treatment Process

The researcher created a website which is upload the Web Quest-Based Program (WQBP) for the study. This website is <http://zunal.com/webquest.php?w=787480>). The researcher taught both groups. The

control group was taught using the daily traditional or regular way of teaching through the daily sessions whereas the experimental group was taught using the WQBP on different dates.

The curriculum included six Web Quests that were based on the topics that the participants' textbook addressed. The researcher started the experiment with an orientation session to show the participants how to use the website and assist them in understanding how it functions. The Web Quest courses included several online and offline learning activities in addition to the introduction, task, procedure, resources, assessment, and conclusion of the Web Quest components.

The Web Quest in Developing L2 Speaking Skills

In order to address the topic of the research question, both at the start of the study (pre-test) and at the end of the study (post-test), the speaking abilities of both groups were assessed. Speaking difference scores were computed for both groups. (Appendix H, G). Table 4.3 displays the descriptive statistics of the speaking pre- and post-test outcomes for each of the two student groups.

The Independent Sample T-Test was used to compare the difference between the experimental and Control group scores between the two groups to see if there was a statistically significant difference between the speaking scores. As It is observed in Table 4.3 the scores for the control and experimental groups are not the same. Statistics revealed a statistically significant difference between the scores for the control and experimental group.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics (speaking)

	Test	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
Experimental	Pre-test	20	.5111	.06647
	Post-test	20	.8056	.07959
Control	Pre-test	20	.5167	.06524
	Post-test	20	.6556	.09469

An independent sample t-test was then used to compare the speaking scores between the two Groups. As can be seen in Table 4.3 in the pre-test, the mean was the same for the control group and the experimental group. The result showed for Experimental group ($M=.5111$, $SD=.06647$) and for control group ($M=.5167$, $SD=.06524$). The mean and standard deviation of scores for the posttest for the Experimental group and Control group are also displayed in the Table 4.3. It is evident from the Table that, overall participant's knowledge of the experimental group increased from the pretest to the posttest. The difference scores the control and experimental were statistically significantly different for the experimental group ($M=.8056$, $SD=.07959$), and for the control group ($M=.6556$, $SD=.09469$).

Apart from the aforementioned study, a mandatory context analysis (Brown, 1973) was conducted. The number of times a participant (s) is required to utilize a specific structure/item and the number of mistakes the participant(s) makes must be identified and counted in order to perform this analytic approach. The speaking test question in this study required each group of participants to utilize the intended object or structure once during the test. It was computed by dividing the percentage of students who done mistakes by the total number of test takers. This was done to determine each item's mistake percentage. To determine the students' development concerning some of the main vocabulary and grammatical targets for both groups, the researcher evaluated students' speaking test recordings.

Some of the target grammatical structures are as follows: (*e.g., conditional sentence, present perfect + a past form, would like*) and vocabulary items (*picturesque, cosmopolitan, stunning, fascinating, Predictable, unoriginal, unbelievable, emotionless, fully booked, a shuttle service*) in both groups Table 4.4 shows the mistake rates for both groups and each target item.

Table 3 Error Rate (Both groups).

Item	Test	Experimental	Control
Conditional	Pre-test	70%	42.8%
	Post-test	33%	33.3%
Past form	Pre-test	66%	28.5%
	Post-test	22.2%	16.6%
Vocabulary	Pre-test	80%	57%
	Post-test	44.4%	28.5
Present perfect	Pre-test	80%	57%
	Post-test	22.2%	28.5%

According to the findings, both groups performed better regarding vocabulary utilization and grammatical structures. With the exception of the vocabulary items, a significant decrease in the mistake percentage between the pre- and post-tests suggests that the experimental group participants after the treatment significantly improved their use of phrasal verbs and grammar structures. Furthermore, it may be deduced that the improvement was less marked than in the experimental according to the shift in the control group's grammatical structural mistake percentage.

Table 4. Comparison of speaking post-test

	Number	Mean	S.D	S.E
EXP	20	7.25	.716	.160
CON	20	5.90	.788	.176

Independent Samples Test

	F	Sig	t	df	Sig(2tailed)	Mean	Std.Error	lower	upper
difference									
Equal variances assumed	.517	.476	5.669	38	.000	1.350	.238	.868	1.832
Equal variances not assumed			5.669	37.659	.000	1.350	.238	.868	1.832

The results of the EFL speaking post-test for the control and experimental groups were compared using an independent-sample T-test. Table 4.5 displays the t-test findings, mean scores, and standard deviations.

The speaking post-test results for the experimental and control groups showed a statistically significant difference. As the Table illustrates, Group 1 (experimental group) ($M = 7.25$ $SD = .716$) was higher than Group 2 (control) ($M = 5.90$, $SD = .788$); $t(38) = 5.669$, $p = .000$ two-tailed) The magnitude differences in the means (mean difference = 1.3500 95% CI: .868 to 1.832 was very large 1.

Examining the Research Question

The findings indicated that speaking improvement occurred in the experimental group, with a considerably higher improvement rate than in the control group. The focus of the study was to examine whether the Web Quest could enhance the speaking abilities of EFL students. The result of the study shows that using Web Quests have a significant effect on development of student's speaking.

According to the findings, practically every experimental group member could correctly employ the grammar and vocabulary they had been practicing with the Web Quest. The study's findings were similar to those of earlier investigations into Web Quests and speaking ability (Laborda, 2009, 2010), the process and benefits of using webquests as a way to promote professional oral communication in training contexts, as well as those into Web Quests and self-regulation (Gowen, 2010; Hsiao et al., 2012;). The findings concur with Li & Yue (2011), who looked at a Web Quest metacognitive speaking method, and English Kitsantas (2013), who explored the students' self-regulated learning in a project-based learning environment.

The study showed that Web Quests had a significant impact on the students' speaking abilities. Additionally, this study highlighted Web Quest's usefulness, particularly in terms of students critically analyzing and subsequently improving their speaking performances. Last but not least, the experimental group members' usage of the present perfect and the target grammar had much improved, according to the mistake analysis; nevertheless, there had been no noticeable shift in the vocabulary items.

Conclusion

Taking from the prior examination of the research findings and the conversations, it may be claimed that technology is very important in enabling students to improve their different skills in English as a foreign language. The students were able to use the internet. They were given reputable information sources from which to gain answers to research questions on contentious issues chosen based on the student's interests. In addition to addressing themes regarding gaining language skills, they understand the functional abilities of the language to be acquired. The study demonstrated that Web Quests help improve speaking skill.

The results of this investigation suggest that the Web quest is beneficial in developing the speaking abilities of EFL students. Furthermore, the results indicate that this program successfully enhances using specific language features such as grammar and vocabulary.

The implication of the use of this tool not only develops communicative competence, but also increases the motivation in students, contributes to the development of critical thinking and allows differentiated training. The proposed web quest program can be adopted by university teachers for teaching English in general skills in particular. So in the classrooms teachers must create positive atmosphere while teaching foreign languages. This study has several limitations that must be noted. First and foremost, it is crucial to recognize this study still has certain limitations. And also the study's limitation is its small sample size, making it unable to generalize the results to other language structures or forms. Considering the findings of the research, when teaching EFL, the following suggestions should be kept in mind.: First, considering that the study's focus was on speaking future research on how this program affects other abilities and sub-skills would be intriguing. Second teachers at other levels can use the Web Quest program's suggested exercises to teach speaking skills and English in general. Third, teachers should use various teaching methods and resources that can satisfy their students' needs and learning preferences. Using a Web Quest may be the most practical approach in this case.

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Appendix

Summer Vocation

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1zuoDh4Lp_qLSWgD9CVRvyhHFK51tQm5bicx0jAEpM2c/edit?usp=sharing

Movie <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1d2ybesvV0YKDrTs0RlO9jzVpYCMgZrEQ9UR5dNtU7jc/edit?usp=sharing>

Hotel

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1iLrmdMhs4HWtAZy31nec4UCMPT7V1z5U9sIeSy0NWY/edit?usp=sharing>