

Effects of Using Online Resources by Undergraduate Students for Self-Directed Learning of English Speaking

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Abstract: This qualitative study aimed to investigate (1) what and how students used online resources to improve their speaking abilities and (2) whether those online resources affected their speaking fluency. For case students were third-year English major at Khon Kaen University. Three sets of data included pre and post-tests, a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. Data were analyzed and presented by using frequencies. The findings were firstly, proficient case students used Ryan Higa's channel on YouTube and online movies web site to practice speaking. They repeated after the conversation of the speakers from movies. Total hours from both students are 80 hours. In addition, one of them used online dictionary on website to find the new words for 8 hours within 2 months. Secondly, results from one of low English proficient students used YouTube to sing English songs with sub-title for practice. She has spent for 32 hours. Moreover, she also used online dictionary website for correcting her pronunciation problems (32 hours). One of them used "talkenglish.com" for practice speaking by reading the passage out loud for 2.40 hours within 2 months. Thirdly, the findings from pre and post-test were found that all students can reduce the filled pauses and dysfluencies after using the online resources within 2 months. The highest score student, Pang, did the longest runs as 140 words per minute after used online resources less mistakes. However, Pla from the proficient group is the highest progression from this study. Her speeches were increased 15 words, however; Pang increased only 7 words. Therefore, the proficient case students have advanced ways to learn a language by using online resources and they also spent more hours than another group.

Key Words: Online resources, learning, self-directed learning, english speaking, accuracy, fluency in speaking

1. Introduction

Language learning is not easy to learn. Wiriya (2012) found that in order to facilitate the learners to learn English autonomously and effectively by using Self-Access Language Learning center with teacher's control is successful. Likewise, Lamp and Rienders (2008) mentioned that even though students take their responsibility to learn, they cannot direct and learn lonely without teacher's direction. Therefore, learning outside classroom may promote students' motivation in order to be active learners and to facilitate students' affection in language learning. It will be a factor that can motivate a student to learn things effectively and actively. Moreover, he or she may take more responsibility and participation (Sheerin, 1997). There are many ways to learn English outside classroom such as going to Self-Access Learning Center (SALC) or they can access or using the online resources including accessing through the Internet at home. Rukietgumjorn, et. al., (1998) found that Students can design their own pace to reach the goal as a commitment because they can meet their different needs, different goals and the different level of English proficiency. Chongpensuklert (2011) found that four keys intrinsic motivation that Thai students at International College in Suan Sunandha Rajabath University promoted their speaking outside the classroom such as studying abroad, gaining a higher degree of education, surviving in overseas, getting a better job. Therefore, it is similar to the self-directed learning process, learners can start with identifying their learning

interests, setting their learning objectives, searching for learning materials, using the learning strategies to learn, and measuring the progress. It is a strategic approach for pedagogical study. Using online resources may be a possible way that students can achieve their objectives in language learning as well. This study aims to find out the students use online resources for improving their speaking and to study the fluency effects of using online resources from the students. It is more challenging to understand more about the effect of students' using the online resources for self-directed learning in which way and how. It may lead the researcher to see the way for developing the students' speaking performance, especially in speaking fluency in the near future. The next section will be described about reviewing the literature.

2. Literature Review

The scope of this chapter will be explained more as followings:

2.1 Speaking Ability

Speaking is a productive skill. Harmer (1998) stated that speaking skill is the productive skill. The speakers plan to produce speech before saying. Fulcher (2003) mentioned that speaking is the verbal use of language to communicate with others. It can be much more that, the learners need the knowledge to produce speech and learn it over and over again. The speaker needs to concentrate on accuracy and fluency. To teach speaking is not easy to do. Harmer (1998) claimed that good students need to step over the trouble when you speak discontinuously. The assessment of the speaking ability is very difficult because the teacher needs to have the high experience to give marks. Marking will be always given within 4 criteria such as fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range, and accuracy. In this study will focus on speaking fluency.

2.2 Fluency in Speaking

There are numerous definitions of fluency in speaking according to the characteristic of speakers' speech. "Fluency" refers to the speakers' proficiency which can be described features as followings: Lehtonen et. al. (1977) cited that fluency in speaking refers to the advanced learners in foreign language learning. They can produce the target language without unconfident and pauses, how long in sentences, wrong grammatical and pronounce, and speed (Kopnen, 1995; Freed, 1995; Freed, So and Lazar; 2003, Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2009). In this study, the researcher tries to analyze the temporal aspect such as speech rate, speech pause relationships, and frequency of dysfluency markers such as hesitations, repetitions, and self-corrections. The fluent speaker refers to the one who can use fewer pauses and hesitations in speech with the explanation below:

- Speech Rate: The speech rate of it is calculated by dividing the total number of the words produced in a given speech sample by amount of time (includes pause time), however; the rate of speech will be calculated on the number of the words without repetition within minute (word/minutes). For example, I would like to to go to Starbuck. 7 words (7 divided by 60 seconds = 0.11 w/m)
- Frequency of *unfilled* pauses: it will be counted on silent pauses longer than 0.4 seconds in the duration per minutes (excludes filler).
- Frequency of *filled* pauses: it will be counted on filler sounds, draws, sound stretches or the filler L1 words such as like, or, okay, and yeah (includes filler).

- Length of speed runs: it will be calculated on the number of words produced between pauses as the longest fluent speech run. It is not containing any silent or filled dysfluencies (e.g. um, ah).
- Frequency of repairs: it will be calculated by counting the repaired words produced.
- Repetitions: it is calculated by the number of repetitive words produced per minute.

2.3 Self-Directed Learning Definition

Self-directed learning is derived from adult education. This approach is described in terms of types of learners and their roles for becoming self-directed learners. There are many concepts from many educators as follows: Knowles (1975) defined that self-directed learning is a particular way to direct learners' learning with encouragement or discouragement. Dickinson (1987) defined self-directed learning as the attitude towards learning individually; he or she is prepared to take responsibility for his or her own learning. A self-directed learner is the one who has responsibility for the management of his or her own learning for goal setting, monitoring their development of the course, assessing their performance, and taking an active role in learning. Brookfield (1995) mentioned that self-directed learning emphasis on the mechanism of adult learners direct their own learning such as setting the objectives of their learning, find the suitable resources, choose their learning processes to use and assess their development.

2.4 Online Resources

Technology is important for our daily life. Likewise, using computer plays an important role in language learning and teaching. Levy (1997) defined that Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is using the benefit of the computer in language learning and teaching. It includes the Interactive tutorial program, websites, electronics communication tools and linguistics aids. Students are motivated to learn; for example, using the internet to learn to speak. Students can choose their own preferences in practicing speaking using online resources including websites, applications or software in other gadgets. It may encourage them to map their interests with the way they want to learn individually. Moreover, learning English outside classroom online resources (e.g., web or software) supports students to achieve their learning objectives. It has a potential for resource access any time, any place, any path, or any pace (Hiemstra, 2009).

3. Research Questions

1. What online resources do students use to practice English speaking ability?
2. How do students use online resources?
3. To what extent do online resources affect students' speaking fluency?

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Participants

There were 4 participants in this pilot study. They were third-year English major, studying in the course of English Conversation and Discussion at Khon Kaen University. The criteria for choosing this group of students, the researcher considered with the sum of 2 speaking task scores and the midterm test scores. They also held on the floor in a Midterm examination from

a random topic. The highest group had 2 students such as Pla and Pang. The lowest score had 2 students such as Kae and Chompu. The researcher used the alias in order to avoid the information in this study.

4.2 Method

The students were assigned to speak with the persuasive topics which were prepared by the teacher in order to avoid the unrelated topics. The students picked up from the teacher preparation. The researcher collected the data, decoded and transcribed from two videos. Time one home video recording has 4 minutes length and time 2 has 5 minutes length from the same topic and uploaded on Facebook. From time 1 and time 2, the duration was approximately 2 months.

5. Data Collection and Data Analysis

(1) Oral Fluency Measurement Coding Scheme: The students were given the persuasive topics in time one (pre-test) and time two (post-test) which are the same area, however; they are not exactly the same test (parallel test). (2) Questionnaires: Rating scales and with open-ended questions. (3) Interview: The questions were clarified from the answers of the participants and the further information of questionnaires.

Even though the two tasks took 4 or 5 minutes, in this study the researcher analyzed only a minute in oral performance which the researcher considered that the students felt more confident in within 60 seconds because this pilot study will be limited in time-consuming. The data from the task performance (time 1 and time 2) were decoded and transcribed. Other sets of data from questioners and the interviews were described in a report.

6. Results

From table 1, the progression can be seen from time 2 of every group. The students will reduce the filled pauses and dysfluencies. The more they can produce the language, the more we can see the fluency of language produced. From Pang, she did the longest runs and less mistakes. She had the high fluency in oral performance in this group. On the other hand, Kae had the same score in a mean. It meant that she had no progression on fluency. From the table 2, we can see the frequency use of online resources that the proficient students and the activities that they used to improve their speaking abilities. They chose video clips from YouTube and movies to practice speaking. They repeated after the conversation of the speakers from movies. Total hours from both students are 80 hours. In addition, Pang has spent for 8 hours within 2 months. She used online dictionary on website to find the new words. The table 3, we can see the students' self-reflection of the use of the online resources that the low proficient students used. It also has been shown about that the web-site to improve their speaking skill, it can be seen the results from one of low English proficient students used online resources for practice speaking by reading the passage out loud for 2.40 hours within 2 months. Chompu used YouTube to sing English songs with sub-title for practice. She has spent for 32 hours. Moreover, she also used online dictionary website for correcting her pronunciation problems (32 hours).

Table 1: Raw scores of pre-test and post-test oral performance between high speaking score students and lower speaking score students in KKU (within one minute)

Speech Measurement Items	High Speaking Score Ss (N =2)			
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
	Pang	Pang	Pla	Pla
Speech Rate:	133w/m =2.21	140w/m =2.33	127w/m =2.11	142 w/m =2.31
Frequency of unfilled pauses	3	3	4	3
Frequency of filled pauses	4	3	3	3
Length of speed runs	28	31	24	26
Frequency of repairs	1	1	1	1
Repetitions	0	0	0	0
Speech Measurement Items	Lower Speaking Score Ss (N =2)			
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
	Kae	Kae	Choompu	Choompu
Speech Rate:	91 w/m =1.51	94w/m =1.53	108w/m =1.66	113w/m =1.88
Frequency of unfilled pauses	12	9	5	5
Frequency of filled pauses	4	3	3	2
Length of speed runs	14	16	22	24
Frequency of repairs	2	2	0	1
Repetitions	4	3	1	0

Table 2: The use of online resources (Higher Speaking Score Students)

The name of the student/The name of online resources	How to practice	How long/day	How many time/week	How many hours	What have you learnt from the web?
Pla / Ryan Higa's channel on YouTube	-Try to listen and try to repeat (without sub-title).	1 hour/day	7times /week	60	I have learnt speaking in any situations
Pang 1/ http://www.itvmovie.eu/	-Try to understand what people said -Try to repeat (with and without sub-title)	2-3 hr/day	1time /week	20	I have learnt the way people speak natural.
Pang 2/ http://www.ldoceonline.com/	-Find new words	1/day	5times /week	8	I have learnt new word

Table 3: The use of online resources (Lower Speaking Score Students)

The name of the student/The name of online resources	How to practice	How long/day	How many time/week	How many hours	What have you learnt from the web?
Chompu 1/ http://www.talkenglish.com/mom/	Read the suggestion about speaking and follow ex. Read the passage out loud	20 mins	1 time /week	2.40	I get a tips to speak well
Chompu 2/ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8Hgp150Enom/watch?v=h8Hgp150Eno	Try to practice by sing along English song with sub-title	1 hour	4 times/ week	32	Get more vocabulary and pronunciation.
Kae/ http://th.w3dictionary.org/index.php?q=say	Find out the meaning of the vocab for doing homework and try to pronounce	1hour	4-5 times /week	32	I got new vocab, its meaning, and how to pronounce it correctly.

7. Conclusion

This case study found that the proficient case students had more difficult ways to practice their speaking ability. Speaking fluency development by using online resources is the choice that can match learners' satisfaction with activities. Although students need or do not need someone who can facilitate them for the achievement, responsibility is also needed for self-directed learning. We can see from the evidence of the duration that all students used. The proficient students spent more time to practice speaking.

8. Discussion

Motivation is a key term of self-directed learning (Dickinson, 1987). Likewise, Mat Daud, Abdul Rahman and Samsudin (2013) found that online self-directed learning on students' motivation can have a positive impact on the enhancement of students' motivation. It means that there is an increasing in the level of students' motivation after implementing this approach. Rafiee, Pazhakh and Gorjian (2014) claimed that self-directed learning ability of Iran students increases in speaking that means they also have high motivation in learning. To compare with this study, some case participants have high motivation, we can see from the activities that they did (repeat after the conversation), however; they need the activity which is providing speaking assessment and receiving feedback. They also can start to write their plan and progression on the paper (a learner contract). It can remind them to know what they have learned and see their weak points.

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