

THE IMPACT OF IMMERSIVE STRATEGY WITH ENGLISH VIDEO CLIPS ON EFL STUDENTS' SPEAKING PERFORMANCE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY AT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the effects of an immersive strategy using English video clips on students' speaking performance. A quasi-experimental design was employed in this study. The study comprised 45 students; 23 in the experimental group (EG) class using English video clips and 22 in the alternative group (AG) class using English audio CD's. All teaching materials used in this study were selected from YouTube. A pre-test and a post-test were implemented in each of the groups. Data were analyzed statistically using SPSS to obtain the mean, standard deviation, and undertake t-tests. The results showed that the students participating in the immersive strategy through English video clips group outperformed the students subjected to the immersive strategy through English audio. The findings have pedagogical impacts for EFL teachers, teacher trainees, practitioners and policy makers to employ English video clips to improve students' speaking performance.

Keywords: Immersive Strategy; English video clips; EFL; students' speaking performances

1. Introduction

The development of education and technology in the contemporary world is increasing rapidly (Saeedi & Biri, 2016), and mastering the English language has become a necessity in this era of globalization. Rapid growth in both the transportation and information sectors have enabled people to interact with others without any limitations in terms of time, distance and place. Unfortunately, a good understanding of this international language as required for these interactions is still an obstacle for many people in Indonesia (Lie, 2007). English lessons have been taught in Indonesia from junior high school up to university level. Over the past two

decades the teaching-learning of EFL speaking skills in schools for non-native language learners has become a potential area of research (Göktürk, 2016). Speaking is one of the most important skills in EFL that should be acquired well by students. However, this ability becomes a problem for students to master for various reasons (Bozatli, 2003; Feng, 2007). Firstly, it consists of a complex cognitive processing task that is difficult for EFL learners to accomplish. In this case, it requires students to employ linguistic, non-linguistic and contextual parameters such as body language, mimicry and gestures as well as nuances of spoken English to construct meaning through producing utterances (Brisk, 2006; Bygate, 2006; Bygate 2009 in Seidhofer & Knapp; Saint-Leger, 2009). Psychological factors, such as anxiety and self-confidence, can also affect EFL learners' oral performance. It is common for such students to be affected by these factors when learning speaking skills (Woodrow, 2006; Tanveer, 2007). Various methods have been employed by teachers to improve students' speaking performance such as the Communicative Approach, Communicative Language Teaching, co-operative learning, Task-based Teaching and so forth. However, students' competence to speak the language for communication with foreigners and others still remains low (Lie, 2007; Muslem & Abbas, 2017). Multimedia technology can be used to enhance students' oral language skills (Christianson, Hoskins, & Watanabe, 2009; Hsu, Wang & Comac, 2008).

Recognising the aforementioned concerns, implementing a suitable strategy for teaching-learning speaking needs to be considered. Alberta Education (2010) has proposed the immersive strategy as one possible approach that can be applied in the instructional process to improve EFL speaking skills. Immersive programs with native teachers of the target language were already undertaken in Montreal, Canada, in 1965 (Genesee et al., 2005). Two effective ways to improve EFL students' speaking performances are living abroad in an English speaking country and learning EFL through an immersive multimedia strategy (Muslem & Abbas, 2017).

Therefore, this research investigates whether the use of an immersive strategy with English video clips can have an effect on increased students' speaking performances at a Private Senior High School in North Aceh in comparison to learning EFL speaking in other ways. This is a new strategy for students in this country, where English is a foreign language, and it is perceived that this method can enhance students' speaking performance.

2. Literature review

2.1. Concepts of immersive learning

Various types of learning can take place with the purpose of enhancing students' achievements in general, and language skills in particular. Immersive learning, for instance, provides opportunities for students to learn a second language in the same way that they learned their first language (Day and Shapson, 1991; Alberta Education, 2010). Genesee (1985) also asserts that immersive learning is a communicative learning method that imitates the important features of first language learning and meets the special needs of second language learners.

In learning a second language, immersive learning is used both as an educational module for content and as a tool for instruction (Pacific Policy Study Center, 2010). Immersive learning offers a direct book in the target language where the learning material is also taught in the target language (Brisk, 2006). The goal is achieved through exposure to linguistic learning materials such as books, videos, CDs, posters, visuals, web-sites, songs and dramatizations (Alberta Education, 2010). Many studies also show that immersive learning produces significant improvements in language proficiency. Genesee (1985), for instance, reports that immersion students achieved significantly higher levels of proficiency in all aspects of the second language in comparison to non-immersion students.

Immersive learning applied in other countries, such as Canada, uses native English speakers as the teachers. In those programs, ESL/EFL students learn, interact and communicate directly with their native English-speaker teachers. Another alternative suggestion to improve students' language skills is travelling to and staying in an English speaking country, where students will have the opportunity to interact and communicate directly with native speakers.

Unfortunately, both enrolling students in an immersive program and going to and staying in an English speaking country is very costly and, therefore, not an option for many Indonesian students. However, by utilizing accessible technology, students can actually gain the opportunity to learn and acquire speaking skills easily and naturally without living their country. Mehr and Assadi (2013) argue that the involvement of technology in the instructional process of language learning can still create new ways for instruction.

2.2. Immersive learning strategy through technology to improve speaking

One of the most effective ways to improve students' EFL speaking quality is going abroad to a country in which the English language is used (Muslem & Abbas, 2017). In line with this, Shih and Yang (2008) state that the most effective way to learn a language is to participate in a

community in which the target language is used to communicate in a real-life context. Learners are encouraged to think, speak and write in the target language. By doing such activities, they can improve their English due to the input from the native speaker community into which they are immersed, in meaningful contexts, which enable them to use the target language spontaneously, without mediation of their native language. However, learning the target language in this way is very expensive. Therefore, the use of technology will help students to learn and acquire the target language naturally and spontaneously at a low cost. Thus, by adopting the way of improving students' speaking used when living in the country in which the target language is used, the use of the immersive language learning strategy with English video clips will hopefully produce high quality second language learning skills amongst the students. In this way, students should watch and listen to the video clips used (Hyland, 2004; Ramirez & Alonso Belmonte, 2007) and be immersed in the English learning materials from the English video clips every day. Students can play the clips repeatedly as often as they like until they acquire the pattern of the target language correctly and appropriately. Therefore, technology can, at least partially, substitute the staying abroad strategy while striving to improve students' speaking performance. This claim is based on the Comprehensible Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982).

Technology enables ESL language teachers, instructors and other practitioners to obtain teaching-learning materials for their students' learning activities (Chinnery, 2006; Herrington and Kervin, 2007). As a technology product, video clips are part of a multimedia and multi-channel technology. Video clips offer a variety of advantages in language learning as their content is easy to comprehend through the combination of audio and visual input. Ilin, Kutlu, and Kutluay (2013) believe that videos provide many advantages for language learning when used appropriately. One of the most essential advantages is providing useful input and resources for learning languages (Shih and Yang, 2008). Videos provide appropriate visual and audio input that help EFL learners to acquire the language (Herrington and Kervin, 2007; Gezegin, 2014).

2.3. Previous studies in language learning through technology

Many researchers have conducted research in the fields of teaching-learning English by using technology such as computers, the Internet, compact discs, DVDs, English videos and other audiovisual aids (AbuSeileek, 2007; Chang & Lehman, 2002; Chinnery, 2006; Herrington and Kervin, 2007; Ismaili, 2013; Kavaliauskiene, 2012; Liu & Chu, 2010; Nguyen, 2008; Savas, 2012; Sirmandi & Sardareh, 2016; Shahrina Md Nordin, 2010; Sidman-Taveau, 2005; Sihem,

2013; Voogt, Fisser, Pareja Roblin, Tondeur, & van Braak, 2013; Yang, Chen, & Chang Jeng, 2010). Diyyab et al. (2013) reported that the use of a multimedia-based program improved students' oral fluency skills. Murat (2012) also reported that the use of Internet-based video lessons for teaching English word stress to Turkish EFL students resulted in improved students' fluency and oral production skills.

Teaching EFL/ESL has also been conducted for a long time through immersion programs with the involvement of native speakers or teachers of the target language such as in Canada and the USA (Alberta Education, 2010; Ballinger, 2013; Chamot, 1999; Clark, 2009; Cummins, 2000; Fortune, 2000; Genesee, 1985; Lenker & Rhodes, 2007; Pease-Pretty, 2004; Stein & Schools, 1999; Genesee et al., 2005). According to Er and Mirici (2015), immersion programs enable students to understand the form of the English language and know how to use it for communication. In immersive learning, students learn a second language as they learn their first language (Alberta Education, 2010); therefore, immersion programs are the best way to enhance students' speaking. They offer a similar form of education to that implemented in an English speaking country without staying in the country and without involving students' families (Genesee, 1985). These programs can be facilitated by a native speaker or teacher of the target language. However, the present study employs the immersive strategy with English video clips to improve students' speaking performance without a native speaker. This strategy also uses the teacher as a role model. The teacher acts to facilitate the process of teaching-learning English in the class. This approach motivates the students to learn because they have authentic native learning resources through the English video clips. This immersive strategy with English video clips enables the students to learn not only the target language but also the context of the culture of the language (Ranjbar and Ghonsooly, 2017). Therefore, the current research aims to assess if this approach to EFL learning increases students' competency, skills and knowledge of the English language.

3. The present study

3.1. Research question

The objective of this study is to investigate whether there is a significant difference between the performance of students who are taught by using English video clips and those students who are taught by using only audio compact discs.

3.2. Participants

Fourty five students of English from the existing classes of Senior High School Students from Raudhatul Fuqara, Paya Bakong, North Aceh, were selected randomly for this study to investigate the effects of the immersive strategy through English video clips on their speaking performance. This initial group was split into two groups (an immersive strategy using video clips, or an immersive strategy using audio CDs) and students were assigned for experimental teaching using two different treatments. The groups consisted of 23 and 22 students respectively. They were selected using random sampling techniques from those existing classes. The researchers checked for equivalence in the students' speaking proficiency by referring to study reports used at the school and through summative tests. The results showed that initially there were no significant differences between the students' English language proficiency between the two classes.

3.3. Design and procedure

This study employed a descriptive quantitative method. A quasi-experimental study with a pre-test/post-test design was employed in this study. The immersive strategy using English video clips and audio compact discs were the independent variables, whereas students' speaking performance was the dependent variable. The authors could freely choose the group of students to give either of the treatments; the immersive strategy with video or the one with audio CDs. The first group was taught with the immersive strategy through English video clips and the other group was taught using immersive strategy through English audio compact discs.

In order to obtain objective data, the authors prepared a set of rules to be followed by the students and made sure all students followed these throughout the experiment. This was done to prevent both groups from undertaking the same activities during the process of teaching-learning through the immersive activities and from interacting with each other until the treatments and post-tests had been completed.

The learning materials used in the present study were downloaded from YouTube. The authors selected video clips that were performed by native speakers of the target language (English). The topics of the learning materials covered (1) making and cancelling an appointment, (2) expressions of making, accepting and declining an invitation and (3) expressions of congratulations and compliments. Before using the materials, the authors sent them to the senior English teachers at the school to ensure that these learning materials were suitable for the students' level and the school's curriculum. Those teachers stated that these learning materials were matched to the students' needs and their level of skills.

Prior to experimentation, students in both groups were given speaking pretests through interviews to assess their competence levels. The treatments lasted for ninety hours. Students in both groups were given the materials to immerse in during the process of teaching-learning. Students were asked to watch and listen to the materials as instructed by the teachers, every day for a minimum of 10-15 minutes until they covered 90 hours. If they wished so, students could learn for more than 15 minutes each day. Watching and listening to materials could be done at any time inside or outside the classroom, as chosen by students themselves. Within the classroom, students could practice together, in their assigned groups. In the classroom, teachers observed the activities and at the end of each activity, students were given comments and input for improving the quality of their English speaking skills. It was hoped that in this way students could improve their speaking automatically and spontaneously without mediation of their native language.

All activities were undertaken in their respective groups. There was time each day for students to discuss matters in their respective groups with their teacher. After the treatment was completed, the two groups were given a post-test to see which group displayed higher achievements in their speaking performance. The post-test was conducted through face to face interviews with each of the participating students. While undertaking the interviews, the authors recorded the students' speeches to ensure their scores can be assessed objectively and precisely.

3.4. Data collection and analysis

The primary source of data was from the students' speaking performances. The students' speaking skills were tested through face to face interviews. These interviews were recorded to enable the assessors to mark them objectively. The data were analyzed based on an assessment rubric developed to assess the students' oral proficiency, broken down into the components of pronunciation, accuracy, intonation, fluency and integration. They were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistical methods using the Mann-Whitney independent sample t-test, Wilcoxon paired independent sample t-test and Friedman paired independent sample t-test. They were analyzed through statistical procedures which consisted of the means, standard deviations and the T-tests. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the SPSS computer program to process and analyze the data.

4. Results

The results from this study showed that the immersive strategy with English video clips improved the students' speaking performance the most. Table 1 shows the results from both the pre-tests and the post-tests for both the video and the audio groups. The mean of the pre-test scores for the video group was 57 and 58 for the audio group. The difference was only 1 (one) point, which was not significant. Meanwhile, the mean score from the post-test for the video class was 76 and the mean score for the audio class was 67. The difference was 9 points which was quite considerable. In general, it can be concluded that the use of the immersive strategy with English video clips improved the students' speaking performance significantly, as evidenced in Table 1.

Table 1. Results from pre-tests and Post-tests for both video and audio groups

Test	Group	N	Median	Min	Max	Mean±SD	P
Pre-test	Video	23	55	50	70	56.82±6.46	0.669
	Audio	22	55	50	70	57.95±6.11	
Post-test	Video	23	75	70	85	75.68±5.41	0.000
	Audio	22	70	60	75	67.05±5.49	

Table 1 reports the results from the pre-tests and the post-tests for both the video and the audio groups on various aspects of speaking: *pronunciation, accuracy, intonation, fluency, and integration*. It shows from the comparison of the scores from the video and the audio classes using the Friedman paired independent sample t-test that the p value from the pre-test as compared to the post-test scores was lower than the degree of significance (0.05) for both the video and the audio classes in all aspects of speaking measured. Hence, it can be concluded that the students' speaking proficiency in both the video and the audio classes improved significantly in all the aspects of speaking measured after they were taught by using the immersive strategies with English video clips or with audio CDs.

Table 2 shows that the p values for each aspect in both classes were different. The students' speaking proficiency in both classes improved significantly in all aspects. However, the improvement was different for each aspect. The students in the video group displayed higher results in terms of pronunciation, accuracy, fluency and integration. The intonation aspect also improved significantly in the video class. Additionally, the students in the audio group obtained their highest results in terms of fluency whilst the lowest improvement was visible in the aspect of pronunciation for the audio group. Hence, it can be concluded that the

use of the immersive strategy with either English video clips or with English audio CDs significantly improved the students' speaking in all aspects.

Table 2. Results from pre-tests and post-tests for the video and the audio groups for all aspects of speaking

Groups	Aspects	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Video	Pronunciation	0.000
	Accuracy	0.000
	Intonation	0.001
	Fluency	0.000
	Integration	0.000
Audio	Pronunciation	0.025
	Accuracy	0.014
	Intonation	0.005
	Fluency	0.000
	Integration	0.005

5. Discussion

The implementation of an immersive strategy through English video clips significantly improved the students' oral proficiency for pronunciation, accuracy, intonation, fluency and integration. Therefore, we can see that all these aspects of speaking can be improved due to immersion in English video clips (Ismaili, 2013; Sihem, 2013). Learners played the English video clips repeatedly as they wished to improve their speaking performance by both watching and listening to the video (Sirmandi & Sardareh, 2016). Additionally, the English video clips were spoken by native speakers, allowing students to watch the clips in a naturally spoken context (Nguyet & Mai, 2012; Savas, 2012). As a result, they improved their speaking naturally. These findings are consistent with those of Genesee (1985), who claims that immersion students attain significantly higher levels of proficiency in all aspects of the second language in comparison to non-immersion students. Muslem and Abbas (2017) also state that using immersive multimedia learning with peer support significantly improved students' performances in all measures of oral production in speaking skills. Sulaiman, Muhammad, Ganapathy, Khairuddin, and Othman (2017) prove that students achieve higher scores in language skills when using video input compared to the audio-only input. Allou (2013) also notices that using audio-visual materials will improve students' speaking skills. Using audio-visual input in an EFL classroom reveals positive effects for the instructional process (Gezegin, 2014; Mathew and Alidmat, 2013; Muslem & Abbas, 2017; Muslem, Mustafa, Usman, & Rahman, 2017; Ramirez & Alonso Belmonte, 2007; Rania, 2016).

This improvement may occur for the following reasons. Firstly, the use of the English videos with native speakers as the teaching-learning media can have impact on students' performance (Kavaliauskiene, 2012; Savas, 2012). For instance, the students could view the video repeatedly as much as they wanted so that they could obtain the nuances spoken in English, naturally, since they can watch the speaking presented in the video directly, in comparison to only listening to the CD without seeing the person in the video (Sirmandi & Sardareh, 2016; Muslem & Abbas, 2017). Secondly, they can practice with their friends after watching the English video, autonomously and in contextualized situations (Hyland, 2004; Ismaili, 2013; Sihem, 2013). Thirdly, they could assess one another when practicing speaking. In this case, they could help one another during the practice sessions. For example, when one student speaks and another student listens, they can check whether the sentence being said by his interlocutor was correct or not (Muslem & Abbas, 2017). Finally, if they had problems pronouncing words correctly, fluently and with proper intonation, they could replay the video so as to work on their selected speaking aspects (Choe & Seong, 2016; Hyland, 2004; Sabouri, Zohrabi & Osbouei, 2015). Thus, the use of immersive strategy with English video clips was able to enhance the students' speaking performances.

6. Conclusions, limitations and suggestions for further studies

The implementation of an immersive strategy through English video clips improved the students' speaking skills in terms of pronunciation, accuracy, intonation, fluency and integration. In short, the group of students who were taught by using the immersive strategy with English video clips achieved higher scores than those students from the audio CDs group. Yet, this finding is limited to the aspects of speaking in terms of pronunciation, accuracy, intonation, fluency and integration through immersive strategies with English video clips and audio Compact Discs. Additionally, this study took place in a rural area, where students only used English during the immersion program. Lack of exposure to English among students in the school became a problem after finishing this immersion program. Students did not have any opportunities to use English with their friends or others outside the classroom. However, this study has contributed to improvement of students' speaking performance through using immersive technology via English video clips, especially for those students in this rural area. The use of this strategy has also proved to be cheap and enjoyable. EFL teachers, policy makers, curriculum designers, and material designers are recommended to incorporate this technology strategy in teaching English both at schools and at higher education levels. It is also suggested that students use English video clips from YouTube as a media platform to enhance

their English competence for various communication purposes. Further research should also be conducted that would engage a large number of students and focus on other aspects of speaking, including rate, gestures, body language and cultural values of the target language, to enable students to speak English automatically and spontaneously.

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