

THE EVOLUTION OF ENGLISH SPEAKING INSTRUCTION: A COMPARISON OF DIGITAL AND TRADITIONAL METHODS

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the evolution of English speaking instruction by examining both traditional teaching methods and digital tools. The study provides an in-depth comparison between the conventional classroom-based approaches, including face-to-face interaction, role-playing, and drills, and modern digital methods, such as language learning apps, online platforms, and virtual reality. The aim of the research is to identify the advantages and limitations of each approach, as well as the potential for their integration in the context of enhancing English speaking proficiency among learners. Through an analysis of current educational practices and technological innovations, the study seeks to determine the most effective strategies for improving English speaking skills in diverse learning environments.

Keywords: English speaking instruction, traditional methods, digital methods, language learning apps, virtual reality, blended learning, speaking proficiency, education technology

INTRODUCTION

The teaching of spoken English has undergone significant transformations over the years, from traditional face-to-face methods to the integration of modern technology in the classroom. The primary objective of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) is to develop students' ability to communicate effectively in both

written and spoken forms. While traditional methods have long dominated language instruction, advancements in technology have introduced new tools that offer diverse opportunities for language practice.

Historically, traditional speaking instruction focused on classroom-based activities such as oral presentations, pair and group discussions, and teacher-student dialogues. These methods emphasized interaction, verbal fluency, and real-time feedback. However, with the advent of digital technologies, language instruction has become more flexible, interactive, and accessible. Tools such as language learning apps, online communication platforms, and virtual reality environments have revolutionized how speaking skills are developed outside of the traditional classroom setting.

This research examines how both traditional and digital methods contribute to English speaking instruction, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. By comparing these two methods, the study aims to explore their complementary roles in language development and determine which strategies are most effective in enhancing speaking proficiency.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. Data was gathered through surveys, interviews, and classroom observations, involving both teachers and students. The participants were selected from a variety of educational institutions, including high schools, universities, and language learning centers.

A survey was distributed to language instructors, gathering their opinions on the effectiveness of traditional and digital methods in improving students' speaking skills. The survey also aimed to assess the frequency and context of each method's use in language teaching. In addition, interviews were conducted with students to gain insight into their experiences with different instructional methods. These interviews focused

on their preferences, perceived benefits, and challenges in using both traditional and digital tools for improving their spoken English.

Classroom observations were conducted to analyze how traditional and digital methods were applied in real teaching contexts. These observations focused on student engagement, participation, and the opportunities provided for speaking practice.

Secondary data was obtained from academic literature, which was reviewed to understand the theoretical underpinnings of both teaching approaches and to compare current trends in language instruction. This review helped contextualize the findings from primary data sources.

RESULTS

The research findings reveal that both traditional and digital methods have a significant impact on the development of English speaking proficiency, but they serve different functions. Traditional methods were found to be particularly effective in fostering real-time interaction and developing students' ability to speak spontaneously. Activities such as role-plays, debates, and direct conversations with peers and instructors were highlighted as essential for building fluency, confidence, and accuracy in speaking.

Teachers noted that traditional methods allowed for immediate feedback and correction, which helped students refine their language skills in a social and interactive environment. The physical presence of a teacher and peers created a motivating atmosphere, encouraging learners to engage in meaningful communication. Furthermore, these methods helped students understand the cultural context of language use, which is essential for effective communication in real-life situations.

On the other hand, digital methods provided students with valuable opportunities to practice speaking outside the classroom. Language learning apps such as Duolingo and Babbel were frequently mentioned as useful tools for enhancing vocabulary,

pronunciation, and grammar. These apps allow students to practice speaking at their own pace, providing personalized feedback and progress tracking.

Virtual reality (VR) platforms, such as immersive language simulations, were found to be particularly effective in creating realistic environments where students could practice speaking in different contexts, such as ordering food at a restaurant or conducting a job interview. These digital tools allowed students to practice without the pressure of immediate face-to-face interaction, which was especially beneficial for shy or introverted learners.

Students also reported enjoying the flexibility that digital tools offered. Online platforms such as Zoom and Skype enabled them to engage in speaking practice with native speakers or fellow learners from different countries, giving them exposure to diverse accents and dialects. However, students expressed concerns about the lack of personalized feedback and the challenges of staying focused during online lessons, which sometimes hindered their speaking development.

Discussion

The comparison of traditional and digital methods reveals that both approaches offer unique benefits for English speaking instruction. Traditional methods excel in providing students with direct interaction, cultural insights, and immediate feedback, which are essential for the development of practical speaking skills. These methods create a dynamic and social environment where learners can practice language in context and receive corrections that help improve their accuracy and fluency.

However, digital methods offer several advantages, including the ability to practice speaking anytime and anywhere, personalized feedback, and access to diverse linguistic resources. The integration of technology allows learners to engage with content in an interactive and immersive way, which can complement traditional classroom instruction. For example, VR and augmented reality (AR) can create immersive speaking environments where learners interact with virtual characters or

practice dialogues in real-life scenarios, enhancing their speaking skills in a more engaging manner.

One challenge associated with digital methods is the potential lack of real-time interaction, which can make it difficult for students to receive immediate feedback or engage in authentic communication. Traditional methods, in contrast, provide more direct communication and allow teachers to offer corrections on the spot. Therefore, while digital methods are valuable for independent practice, they cannot fully replace the interaction and feedback that traditional methods provide.

The integration of both methods, known as blended learning, appears to be the most effective approach for enhancing English speaking proficiency. Teachers can use digital tools to supplement traditional activities, providing students with additional opportunities to practice speaking outside the classroom. For example, after conducting a classroom discussion or role-play, teachers could assign an online speaking task that allows students to practice similar content in a different context. This combination allows learners to build confidence in speaking while receiving both independent and guided practice.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, both traditional and digital methods play important roles in the development of English speaking proficiency. Traditional methods foster real-time communication, immediate feedback, and cultural understanding, all of which are essential for effective language use. Digital methods, on the other hand, offer flexibility, personalized learning, and immersive experiences that allow learners to practice speaking outside the classroom and engage with a global community.

The key to successful language instruction lies in the integration of both approaches. By combining the strengths of traditional face-to-face interactions with the

innovative features of digital tools, teachers can provide learners with a well-rounded and dynamic language learning experience that enhances their speaking skills.

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