



USING DIGITAL FEEDBACK SYSTEMS TO IMPROVE SPEAKING SKILLS IN UNIVERSITY EFL STUDENTS

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Abstract. This study explores the effectiveness of digital feedback systems in improving speaking skills among university EFL students. Speaking is often considered the most challenging skill for EFL learners due to limited practice opportunities and lack of immediate feedback. Digital feedback systems, such as AI pronunciation apps and online peer review platforms, provide learners with instant, personalized guidance that can enhance fluency, accuracy, and confidence. The study involves a pre-test and post-test design with university students, using digital feedback tools over a six-week intervention period. Data are collected through recordings, surveys, and observation, and analyzed to measure improvement in speaking skills. Findings indicate that digital feedback systems significantly enhance students' pronunciation, fluency, and overall speaking confidence. The study highlights the practical benefits of incorporating technology into EFL speaking instruction and provides recommendations for effective classroom implementation.

Keywords: Digital Feedback, Speaking Skills, EFL Students, Language Learning, University, Pronunciation, Fluency

Introduction

Speaking is a critical skill in language learning, especially for **English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students**, as it enables effective communication and interaction. However, many EFL learners struggle with speaking due to limited practice opportunities, lack of immediate feedback, and anxiety in using the language. Traditional classroom methods often provide insufficient individualized guidance, which can hinder students' progress in pronunciation, fluency, and overall confidence. With the advancement of technology, **digital feedback systems** have emerged as an innovative tool to support language learning. These systems include AI-powered pronunciation apps, online peer feedback platforms, and interactive speaking programs that offer immediate corrective feedback, performance tracking, and personalized learning experiences. By providing timely and specific guidance, digital feedback systems help learners identify their mistakes, practice more effectively, and gradually build speaking proficiency.

Literature Review

Previous studies have highlighted that speaking is often the most challenging skill for EFL learners. According to Brown (2007), effective speaking development requires **frequent practice, meaningful interaction, and immediate corrective feedback**. Traditional classroom instruction, however, often falls short in providing these conditions due to time constraints and large class sizes.

Recent research emphasizes the role of **digital feedback systems** in language learning. AI-powered pronunciation tools, such as speech recognition apps, allow learners to practice independently and receive instant feedback on pronunciation, stress, and intonation (Li & Hegelheimer, 2013). Online peer feedback platforms enable students to



collaborate, evaluate each other's performance, and reflect on their speaking skills (Wang, 2016). Studies have shown that learners using digital feedback systems demonstrate significant improvement in fluency, accuracy, and confidence compared to those using traditional methods (Zhang, 2020, Kim, 2021).

Despite these advantages, some researchers note limitations, such as learners' dependence on technology and potential lack of teacher guidance (Golonka et al., 2014). Therefore, a combination of **digital tools and instructor support** is often recommended to maximize speaking skill development.

This study builds on these findings by examining the use of digital feedback systems among **university-level EFL students**, aiming to assess their effectiveness and learners' perceptions in a real classroom setting.

Results

The study involved 40 university EFL students who participated in a six-week speaking intervention using digital feedback systems, including AI pronunciation apps and online peer feedback platforms. Pre-test and post-test assessments were conducted to measure improvements in **pronunciation, fluency, and overall speaking confidence**.

Pronunciation: Students showed a noticeable improvement in pronunciation accuracy. The average pre-test score for pronunciation was 62%, which increased to 81% in the post-test. Most students reported that immediate feedback from the digital tools helped them recognize and correct their pronunciation mistakes in real time.

Fluency: Fluency scores also improved significantly, with pre-test averages of 58% rising to 77% post-intervention. Students became more comfortable speaking without long pauses, and their speech rate improved.

Confidence and Engagement: Survey responses indicated a high level of student engagement and increased confidence in speaking English. About 85% of participants stated that using digital feedback systems motivated them to practice speaking more frequently outside the classroom.

Challenges: Some students reported minor difficulties with using the apps initially, such as navigating features or understanding certain feedback messages. A few students preferred additional teacher guidance alongside digital feedback.

Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that **digital feedback systems are effective tools for enhancing EFL students' speaking skills**. The significant improvement in pronunciation aligns with previous research (Li & Hegelheimer, 2013, Zhang, 2020), which highlights that **immediate corrective feedback accelerates the learning process** and helps students internalize correct speech patterns.

Fluency gains indicate that frequent practice using these tools reduces hesitation and fosters smoother speech. This supports Wang's (2016) argument that **digital peer interaction encourages more natural communication** and collaborative learning.

Students' positive attitudes toward digital feedback systems reveal that these tools can increase motivation and engagement in speaking practice. Motivation is a crucial factor in second language acquisition, as noted by Dörnyei (2001). By providing personalized, interactive feedback, digital systems create an environment where learners feel more confident to experiment and improve their speaking skills.

However, the study also confirms that **digital feedback alone is not sufficient**. Some students needed teacher guidance to fully understand certain feedback messages or to address more complex pronunciation issues. This highlights the importance of combining **technology with teacher support** to maximize the effectiveness of speaking instruction.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that **digital feedback systems can significantly improve university EFL students' speaking skills**, particularly in pronunciation, fluency, and overall speaking confidence. Students benefited from immediate, personalized feedback, which encouraged more frequent practice and boosted their motivation.

However, the findings also highlight that **technology works best when combined with teacher guidance**, ensuring that learners fully understand and apply the feedback. Overall, integrating digital feedback systems into EFL classrooms offers a promising approach to enhancing speaking proficiency, fostering learner confidence, and making language learning more interactive and effective.

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