Research Article

Enhancing the English Conversational Skills of Selected Grade 12 Students through Online Remediation

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to enhance the English conversational skills of selected Grade 12 students through online remediation in speaking, which provided them with more opportunities to speak using the English language. The study involved ten purposively selected Grade 12 Humanities and Social sciences students. They had undergone various online speaking activities following a speaking syllabus. Pre-interview and post-interview were administered to measure the level of English conversational skills of the students before and after the online remediation in speaking. Moreover, Cronbach's Alpha was utilized in measuring the reliability and consistency of the research instrument of the study. Mean and standard deviation statistical treatment was utilized for the descriptive analysis. At the same time, a paired t-test was used to determine the significant increase in the level of English conversational skills of the students. Based on the result, during the pre-interview, the students made good responses with minimal inconsistency; they offered good explanations of thinking with fair perceptions and interpretations; however, most of them used both the Filipino and English language (Taglish) in answering questions. After implementing the online remediation in speaking, the students made accurate responses, the answers provided were relevant and conformed to the given questions, they offered a sound explanation of thinking with accurate perceptions and interpretations, and most of them used the English language with few mistakes. It was found in this study that the online remediation in speaking offered a significant increase in the students' conversational skills.

INTRODUCTION

The English language is essential and widely used in today's modern world. People from around the world, whose native languages are different, recognize the English language as the lingua franca to communicate and connect to others either online or offline. English is adopted as a common language among speakers, enabling them to understand one another regardless of their racial or cultural background. Even so, according to Indrianti (2020), performing oral communication in English is seen as problematic, especially for non-native speakers of English. Thus,

it is more challenging than people may think. Sangaji (2019) cited that students are afraid of making mistakes (low self-confidence); they sometimes do not have anything to say (low ideas), and these make the students take no participation in the speaking learning process. Eventually, this leads the students to difficulty of speaking in the real context. Additionally, Suchona & Shorna (2019) indicated that in many cases, anxiety, fear, and hesitation, and performance pressure hinder the speaking of individuals. In contrast, if the speaking situation is friendly and provides a

platform for uninterrupted speaking with constructive feedback, it may facilitate learner's speaking ability.

As a result of the American colonization of the Philippines, the English language became part of the Philippine educational system. Moreover, English is considered the medium of instruction for almost all the subjects in school. However, even though Filipinos are exposed to the English language, learners may still need help developing their English language proficiency, especially in their oral proficiency (Pangket, 2019). In addition, The Philippines was reported to suffer a 7-spot drop in the English Proficiency Index according to a 2020 report released by the international education company, Education First (EF). It is now ranked 27th. The Philippines' ranking has declined over the past years, from 13th place in 2016, 15th place in 2017, 14th place in 2018, and 20th place in 2019 (ABS-CBN News, 2020).

The Department of Education (DepEd) designed a curriculum guide in English focusing on Communicative Competence and Multiliteracies. One of its objectives is to develop students' oral language and literacy through appropriately challenging learning. Department of Education Officials (DO No. 72, s. 2011), agreed that proficiency in the English language depends on the environment's nature and the language preference exposure of learners. Hence, having more advanced communication skills and being adept in technology-based materials can help students understand academic lessons (Lamo, 2018). In addition, DepEd provided training on English language proficiency for classroom teachers and school heads to address the challenge of enhancing teachers' pedagogical skills in motivating students to learn English and strengthen English language communication in the Philippine Classroom (DepEd Advisory, 2019).

Due to the minimal exposure of the students to the English Language, especially during this pandemic, they need more opportunities to use of the English language in communication. They need to gain more experience using English in everyday communication and minimal engagement and opportunity to practice speaking English. Consequently, students' low-level English conversational skills may hinder understanding and conveying information, leading to difficulty in expressing.

In many studies, English remedial instruction is effective and beneficial to low English achievers. During learning difficulties, it is advisable to immediately conduct a remediation program to address the challenges faced by the learners. As Maawa & Cruz (2019) stated, successful remedial instruction is a type of clinical teaching that allows for maximizing student learning. Remedial programs bridge the achievement gap among learners and maximize the effectiveness of the instruction (Hu & Hsu, 2020). However, very few studies have focused on developing a systematic remedial program.

Speaking is intuitively the most important of the four communication skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), as cited by Tan, Polong, Collates, & Torres (2020). Hence, the lack of speaking abilities hinders a student from sharing what he knows with a teacher or engaging in social conversations.

In relation to this, the researcher conducted an online remediation program as an intervention to enhance the English Conversational Skills of the students. The program aimed to provide intensive online remediation in speaking for two months to address the difficulties and challenges encountered by the students in conversation and offer more opportunities for the students to speak using the English language.

Research Questions

This research examines the effectiveness of online remediation in enhancing students' English conversational skills.

Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. What was the status of the English conversational skills of the students before the implementation of online remediation in speaking?
2. What was the status of the English conversational skills of the students after the implementation of online remediation in speaking?
3. Was there a significant increase in the level of the English conversational skills of the students after the implementation of online remediation in speaking?
4. What course of action can be proposed to strengthen the result of the study

Theoretical Framework

Learning the English Language can help an individual have wide connections to people worldwide. This study can be associated with the nativist theory proposed by Krashen, which states that humans are born with the potential to acquire a language and that all humans have a universal phenomenon regarding language development.

The environmental theory also supports this study which holds that an individual's nurture or experience is more significant to language development than its nature or inborn contributions. Yet, they do not completely reject the innate factors. In addition, the environment includes everything the language learner hears and sees in the new language. Hence, the more exposure to the language, the better the acquisition process.

Significance of the Study

This study sought to enhance the English conversational skills of students through online remediation in speaking, which could be beneficial to the following:

Students. To enhance their English conversational skills, they can use to communicate and connect to the world.

Teachers. To be able to spend focused time with a group of students who need additional support in speaking the language.

Famy National Integrated High School. To be able to provide speaking activities for students that would equip them with the necessary oral communication skills using the English language.

Future Researchers. To provide a reference for fu-

ture research that will be conducted.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research utilized quasi-experimental research, which evaluated the causal impact of online remediation in speaking as an intervention to the target participants.

Participants

The participants of the study were 10 purposively selected Grade 12 students of Famy National Integrated High School, who were chosen based on their grades in Oral Communication subject, their availability, and access to the internet.

Sources of Data

Data were gathered using a 10-item standard questionnaire modeled from The Internet TESL Journal that asked them to talk about themselves, their plans, hobbies, family, ideal work environment, and interests. It was administered through a structured online interview, and based on the conducted interviews, students' level of conversational skills was assessed through a research-made checklist comprising scoring rubrics of 0-4 data analysis in terms of responsiveness, clarity of thought, and ability to use the English language in responding to the questions during the interviews as shown below.

Scale	Description
Responsiveness	
4	Make accurate responses and the answer provided is relevant and conforms to the given question.
3	Make good responses and the answer is quite pertinent to the question with minimal inconsistency.
2	Attempt responses, although many are inaccurate.
1	Make inaccurate responses and the answer given is irrelevant to the question.
0	No response
Clarity of thought	
4	Give a sound explanation of thinking and there are accurate perceptions and interpretations where ideas are shared clearly.
3	Offer a good explanation of thinking in answering the question with fair perceptions and interpretations.
2	Offer little explanation of ideas and there is not much clarity and understanding.
1	Offer no explanation of thinking and the answer is unclear and confusing.
0	Task not attempted.
Ability to use the English language	
4	Use the English Language with no mistakes.
3	Use the English Language with few mistakes.
2	Use both Filipino and English language.
1	Use the Filipino Language.
0	Task not attempted.

Data Gathering Methods

Online pre-interviews and post-interviews were given to the participants to assess their conversational skills. An online pre-interview was also administered before the implementation of the remediation in speaking and was assessed using scoring rubrics. Then, the participants underwent 6 sessions of one-on-one online speaking activities following a speaking syllabus modeled from the book of David Bohlke and Jack C. Richards entitled "Speak Now 2", and after the full implementation of the online remediation,

a post-interview was given to the participants, and the results were gathered using paired t-test statistical tool. Moreover, a normality test was also utilized using Shapiro-Wilk to test the normal distribution of the variables with a p-value of greater than 0.05 (5%) or a reference value of 0.842.

Data Analysis

Results of quantitative and qualitative methods were analyzed by statistical treatments:

Problems	Data Analysis
1. Status of the English conversational skills of the students before the implementation of online remediation in speaking	Mean, Standard Deviation
2. Status of the English conversational skills of the students after the implementation of online remediation in speaking	Mean, Standard Deviation
3. Significant difference in the level of English conversational skills of the students before and after the implementation of online remediation in speaking	Paired t-test
4. Course of action that can be proposed to strengthen the result of the study	Textual Analysis

Ethical Considerations

Participants of the study were informed about the objectives of the study and that all data gathered will be used for the research alone and any information that the participants gave will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. In addition, consent forms were also distributed to the target students before administering the online interviews and remediation. Voluntary participation was also considered, and all research participants were free to participate without pressure or coercion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was participated by 10 purposively selected Grade 12 students who underwent online remediation speaking sessions following a speaking syllabus where students were exposed to various speaking activities to enhance their vocabulary, pronunciation, and level of comfort in using the language. The students' conversational English status was interpreted using the following range of scales.

Scale	Range	Interpretation
4	3.21 – 4.00	Very High Level
3	2.41 – 3.20	High Level
2	1.61 – 2.40	Moderate Level
1	0.81 – 1.60	Low Level
0	0.00 – 0.80	Very Low Level

Status of the English conversational skills of the students before the implementation of online remediation in speaking

The table shows the status of the English conversational skills of the students before the implementation of online remediation in speaking which was assessed through an online interview. It can be gleaned from the results that the students responded with minimal inconsistency, and they offered good explanations of thinking with fair perceptions and interpretations; however, some of them used both Filipino and English language (Taglish) in answering the questions.

According to Esquivel (2019), Filipinos have been using English as their second language and have been accustomed to using the language alongside local languages. Furthermore, the results also show that the level of responsiveness of the participants is very high, and they attained high scores regarding clarity of thought. The level of their ability to use the English language is moderate. In a recent roundtable discussion organized by the British Council, the stakeholders agreed that the Philippines needs to step up its efforts in improving the teaching and learning of English, developing it as a vital skill of the workforce (Cabigon, 2015).

Table 1. Status of the English Conversational Skills of the students before the Implementation of Online Remediation in Speaking

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Responsiveness	3.29	0.33	Very High Level
Clarity of thought	3	0.23	High Level
Ability to use the English Language	2.22	0.17	Moderate Level

Status of the English conversational skills of the students after the implementation of online remediation in speaking

Table 3 reflects the level of conversational skills of the students after the implementation of online remediation in speaking. It shows that regarding responsiveness, the students responded accurately, and the answers provided were relevant and conformed to the given questions. As to clarity of thought, they offered a sound explanation of thinking with accurate perceptions and interpretations. Moreover, in terms of the ability to use the English language, most of them used it with few mistakes in answering the questions.

It can be gleaned that after the online remediation in speaking, the participants' English conversational skills are at a very high level. According to Sive (2021), for learners to be proficient and productive, they need various opportunities to interact and use the English Language in communication.

Table 2. Status of the English Conversational Skills of the students after the Implementation of Online Remediation in Speaking

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Responsiveness	3.72	0.10	Very High Level
Clarity of thought	3.53	0.08	Very High Level
Ability to use the English Language	3.33	0.10	Very High Level

The increase in the level of English conversational skills of the students after the implementation of online remediation in speaking

It can be gleaned from Table 4 that there is a significant increase in the level of English Conversational skills of the students after the online remediation in speaking in terms of responsiveness, clarity of thought, and ability to use the English language. These signify that the null hypothesis of this study was rejected. It implies that the online remediation in speaking is effective in enhancing the conversational skills of the respondents. Thus, they could understand and respond to the questions and express themselves using English during the post-interview.

Based on the results, the mean scores of the pre-interview and post-interview regarding responsiveness, clarity of thought, and ability to use the English language have significant differences since the probability values are smaller than or equal to 0.05. According

to Wang (2021), blended learning supported the learning of English conversation, while some instructors indicated that the online course had helped the students learn English conversation to some extent. It is visible in the result that the conducted online remediation in speaking brought a significant difference in the level of the conversational skills of the respondents.

Moreover, the participants of the study belonged to the average level of learners who more likely understood the questions, yet, they had difficulty constructing their answers using the English language. The results also infer that most of them used English and Filipino (Taglish) to answer the questions before the online remediation in speaking. On the other hand, after the online speaking remediation, they could answer the questions using the English language, though with few mistakes. A remedial program goes a long way in improving learners' proficiency in English as a Second Language (Agnes, Thembelike, Sive, 2021); thus, it is beneficial for the learners to undergo remediation in English to address their appropriate needs.

Table 3. Increase in the level of English conversational skills of the students after the implementation of online remediation in speaking

Interview	Variable	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Pre Post	Responsiveness	-2.928	0.017	Significant
	Clarity of thought	-2.231	0.05	Significant
	Ability to use the English Language	-4.431	0.002	Significant

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since this study revealed a significant increase in the level of the English Conversational skills of the students in terms of responsiveness, clarity of

thought, and ability to use the English language after the implementation of online remediation in speaking, this study suggests offering remediation in speaking focusing on the ability of the students to respond, construct and use the English language in responding to conversation. The study recommends engaging low-level learners in speaking remediation to know the level of their English conversational skills. Doing so will enable the teachers to respond to the learning needs of the students.

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