THE DEVELOPMENT OF LISTENING AND SPEAKING ENGLISH SKILL THROUGH THE USE OF ICTS

EL DESARROLLO DE LA HABILIDAD DE ESCUCHAR Y HABLAR EN INGLÉS A TRAVÉS DE LA USO DE LAS TIC

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The Development of Listening and Speaking English Skill Through the Use of ICTs

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ABSTRACT

This research explores how integrating the Easy English Online platform can improve listening and speaking abilities among 10th-grade students at Tarqui High School in Manta between September to November 2023. In today's digital age, educators use various ICT-based tools to enhance language learning. The Easy English Online platform is recognized for its user-friendly design and interactive features, making it a central focus of this study. By using a blend of quantitative analysis and qualitative inquiry, this study examines how the Easy English Online platform specifically impacts the development of listening and speaking skills in English language learning. The aim is to provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers seeking to optimize the use of ICTs in educational settings. This research also aims to improve student engagement and proficiency in English language learning to meet the evolving demands of modern education.

Keywords: platform, ICT, listening, speaking, quantitative

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El desarrollo de la Habilidad de Escuchar y Hablar en Inglés a través de la Uso de las TIC

RESUMEN

Esta investigación explora cómo la integración de la plataforma Easy English Online puede mejorar las habilidades de escucha y habla entre los estudiantes de décimo grado en la Escuela Secundaria Tarqui en Manta, entre septiembre y noviembre de 2023. En la era digital actual, los educadores utilizan diversas herramientas basadas en TIC para mejorar el aprendizaje de idiomas. La plataforma Easy English Online es reconocida por su diseño amigable para el usuario y sus características interactivas, lo que la convierte en el enfoque central de este estudio. Utilizando una combinación de análisis cuantitativo e indagación cualitativa, este estudio examina cómo la plataforma Easy English Online impacta específicamente en el desarrollo de habilidades de escucha y habla en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés. El objetivo es proporcionar percepciones valiosas para educadores y responsables de políticas que buscan optimizar el uso de las TIC en entornos educativos. Esta investigación también tiene como objetivo mejorar el compromiso y la competencia de los estudiantes en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés para satisfacer las demandas cambiantes de la educación moderna.

*Palabras clave***:** plataforma, TIC, escucha, habla, cuantitativo

INTRODUCTION

The scenario of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is evolving due to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) emerging as a powerful new tool for both teachers and learners (Warschauer & Meskill, 2000). Integrating basic ICT skills into the EFL classroom is no longer just an option, but a necessity to prepare students with the technological literacy demanded by the modern world (Yildiz, 2013). A growing body of research highlights the transformative potential of ICTs in EFL learning. For example, Sibi (2020) emphasizes the vast array of resources available to both teachers and students, fostering a more engaging and interactive learning experience. One such platform that has gained significant attention in recent years is Easy English Online, a comprehensive online resource designed specifically for EFL learners to enhance their listening and speaking skills (Johnson & Richards, 2018).

Easy English Online offers a wide range of interactive activities, multimedia resources, and real-life conversational scenarios that cater to different proficiency levels and learning preferences (Rodriguez et al., 2021). The platform's user-friendly interface and engaging content not only promote language acquisition but also encourage sustained engagement and motivation among learners (Arias & Hermida, 2020). This variety not only enhances student engagement but also promotes the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Warschauer & Meskill, 2000). Beyond resources, ICTs offer exciting opportunities for collaborative learning and knowledge production. In this context, Asabere (2021) argues that ICTs are fundamental for acquiring content, constructing knowledge, and sharing it across borders and time zones. Online forums, collaborative writing platforms, and video conferencing tools can connect students with native speakers and peers from around the globe, fostering intercultural understanding and communication (Belz, 2000).

Problem formulation

How did the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the English language program at Tarqui High School from September to December 2023 contribute to the development of listening and speaking skills among 10th-grade students?

Hypothesis

The use of the Easy English Online platform improves the listening and speaking skill of students from 10th-grade students at Tarqui High School in Manta during the school year 2023.

General Objective

▪ To enhance the development of listening and speaking skills in 10th-grade students through the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

Specific Objectives

▪ To assess the baseline listening and speaking skills of the 10th-grade students.

▪ To evaluate students' perceptions of the effectiveness and user-friendliness of the ICT-based program in developing their listening and speaking skills.

▪ To measure the impact of the ICT-based program on the development of students' listening and speaking skills in English.

Description of the research

To gain a well-rounded understanding of the intervention's effectiveness, the study will employ a mixed approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Numerical data, the quantitative aspect, necessitates the application of statistical analysis techniques for interpretation (Polit & Beck, 2017). These techniques may involve calculating measures of central tendency (mean, median) and variability (standard deviation, variance) as outlined by Johnson and Brown (2018). To assess the students' speaking proficiency, a pre- and post-test design were implemented. This design involves administering a standardized rubric (Clark & Smith, 2017) before and after the intervention to gauge changes in their listening and speaking skills.

A pre-test and post-test design were employed to evaluate the effectiveness of the ICT-based program in developing students' listening and speaking skills (Fraenkel et al., 2017). The pre-test assessed students' baseline proficiency in these areas before the program began. This provided a benchmark to compare post-test scores and gauge the program's impact (Cohen et al., 2018). The post-test, administered after the program concluded, measured any improvements in students' listening and speaking skills. By comparing pre-test and post-test scores, the study determined if the intervention using ICTs led to statistically significant gains in these crucial language abilities (Gall et al., 2015).

In addition to the pre-test and post-test design, the study also incorporated a questionnaire to gather data on students' perceptions of the ICT-based program (Moser & Kalton, 1971). This questionnaire, administered after program completion, explored students' opinions on the program's effectiveness, user-friendliness, and overall contribution to their learning experience. This qualitative data provided valuable insights into student attitudes and perceptions, complementing the quantitative data obtained from the pre-test and post-test (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Furthermore, rubrics were utilized to evaluate students' speaking skills throughout the program (Mislevy et al., 2006). These rubrics, pre-established with clear criteria for different skill levels, allowed for consistent and objective assessment of student performance in areas like fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary use within their spoken English. By employing rubrics throughout the program, instructors could provide targeted feedback and track student progress in developing their speaking abilities (Popham, 2008).

Description of the research instruments

The study employed a quantitative instrument in the form of a pre- and post-test with a rubric to assess the impact of using the "Easy English Online" platform on students' listening and speaking skills. The standardized test was developed based on a rubric aligned with the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), as recommended by the Council of Europe (2001) and Clark and Smith (2017). This assessment was administered before and after the intervention to measure changes in the students' listening and speaking proficiency.

The quantitative data collected through this instrument allowed for statistical analysis to determine if the use of the "Easy English Online" platform led to significant improvements in the learners' listening and speaking skills, as suggested by the approach outlined by Johnson and Brown (2018). The pre- and post-test design enabled the researchers to objectively evaluate the efficacy of the platform in enhancing the participants' aural comprehension and oral production abilities.

By aligning the assessment rubric with the CEFR, the researcher ensured that the measurement of the students' listening and speaking skills was grounded in a widely recognized and comprehensive framework for language proficiency. This methodological approach provided a standardized and

reliable means of evaluating the learners' progress, facilitating the interpretation and generalization of the findings.

The quantitative nature of the pre- and post-test data allowed for statistical analysis, which, as noted by Johnson and Brown (2018), is crucial for establishing the significance of the observed changes in the students' listening and speaking skills. This objective assessment of the platform's impact contributes to the empirical evidence on the effectiveness of technology-aided language learning interventions in enhancing key communicative competencies.

Qualitative Instrument: Learner Perception Questionnaire: Following the intervention, students completed a semi-structured questionnaire exploring their perceptions and experiences using Easy English Online for speaking instruction. This qualitative data provided insights into students' perceptions of the platform's effectiveness, their preferred resources within the platform, and potential areas for improvement (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Description of the beneficiaries of the proposal

This research targets the tenth-grade student population at Tarqui High School in Manta, Ecuador. The sample for this study consisted of 35 students specifically enrolled in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) level at the A2 proficiency level (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, CEFR). The project aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Easy English Online platform in enhancing both listening and speaking skills for these students. By focusing on these crucial areas of communication, the research seeks to improve their confidence, fluency, and overall proficiency in using English in various settings, including real-life situations and social interactions.

Description of the practical contributions of the proposal

This proposal held practical value for both students and educators. Students in the target A2-level EFL class potentially improved their listening and speaking skills, reduced speaking anxiety, and increased overall communication abilities through Easy English Online's interactive features. Educators and the educational system could benefit from the research findings that validated Easy English Online as a valuable tool, promoted personalized learning opportunities, informed effective integration of the platform into the curriculum, and potentially paved the way for wider adoption to enhance EFL education across the student population.

Research background

A doctoral dissertation by Sichacá Espitia (2017) describes "Easy English" as a web-based educational resource designed to supplement existing foreign language teaching methods, specifically English. The project aims to utilize Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to provide students with an alternative learning approach that complements classroom instruction. The software leverages tools like Bootstrap, Django, and Javascript to display content from the government-issued "English Please!" textbook, offering students additional practice and audio reinforcement outside of class hours, while also potentially aiding teachers in their lesson planning. This dissertation serves as a research document for the project and a potential guide for future endeavors in similar educational technology development. Sabina (2018) argues that "listening and speaking skills are crucial for foreign language acquisition" and that "listening is a complex process involving attention, understanding, and memory, which is essential for daily activities like conversations and lectures," while "speaking allows us to interact with others and express ourselves" (p. 28).

Additionally, Nunan (2015) emphasizes the importance of integrating all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in language instruction, stating that "proficiency in a language involves the mastery of all four skills" (p. 87). Richards and Renandya (2002) further highlight the need for "opportunities for communicative practice" in language learning, as "learners need to be able to use the language, not just know about it" (p. 209). Building on this, Celce-Murcia et al. (2014) advocate for a communicative approach to language teaching, where "the focus is on developing the learner's ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations" (p. 15). Moreover, Brown (2014) argues that "language learning is a complex and multifaceted process" that requires a "comprehensive approach" incorporating various teaching methods and technologies (p. 18). Ellis (2018) emphasizes the importance of both explicit and implicit instruction in second language acquisition, stating that "learners need opportunities to develop both their explicit and implicit knowledge of the language" (p. 92).

These studies underscore the crucial role of listening and speaking skills, as well as the need for a holistic, communicative, and technology-enhanced approach to foreign language teaching and learning. The "Easy English" project described by Sichacá Espitia (2017) appears to be an attempt to address

these considerations by providing students with an engaging, supplementary learning platform that complements traditional classroom instruction.

The body of research examined within this discussion underscores the critical importance of integrating listening and speaking skills, as well as adopting a holistic, communicative, and technology-enhanced approach to foreign language instruction. Sichacá Espitia's (2017) doctoral dissertation on the "Easy English" project appears to represent a promising effort to address these key considerations through the provision of a supplementary online platform that complements traditional classroom-based teaching.

By leveraging engaging digital tools and content, the "Easy English" initiative seeks to offer language learners additional opportunities for authentic practice, audio reinforcement, and autonomous learning beyond the confines of the physical classroom. This alignment with the recommendations of scholars such as Nunan (2015), Richards and Renandya (2002), and Celce-Murcia et al. (2014) - who emphasize the value of communicative practice and the integration of all four language skills - suggests the project's potential to enhance students' communicative proficiency.

Furthermore, the project's integration of explicit and implicit instructional approaches, as advocated by Ellis (2018), may facilitate the development of learners' declarative and procedural language knowledge. This comprehensive perspective on language acquisition aligns with Brown's (2014) assertion that the learning process is inherently multifaceted, requiring the judicious incorporation of diverse teaching methods and technologies.

As educators and researchers continue to explore effective ways of enhancing foreign language learning, initiatives like "Easy English" may serve as valuable models for future endeavors in this dynamic and evolving field. By providing engaging, interactive, and personalized learning experiences that complement traditional instruction, such projects hold promise for better addressing the complex and multidimensional nature of language acquisition.

Easy English Online

The "Easy English Online" platform appears to have been designed with a strong focus on accessibility and user-friendliness. The platform's user interface (UI) is described as intuitive and easy to navigate, with clear menus and logically organized content, as suggested by the evaluation criteria outlined by Sharp et al. (2019). Additionally, the platform's compatibility across various devices and operating

systems, as highlighted by Weller (2008), allows learners to access the platform anytime, anywhere, on their preferred device, promoting flexibility and convenience. Catering to learners with diverse linguistic backgrounds, the platform also offers multilingual options and language support features, as recommended by Warschauer and Meskill (2000), which should aid comprehension for students with varying levels of English proficiency.

The content quality and relevance of the "Easy English Online" platform also seem to be well-considered. The platform's alignment with established ESL/EFL curriculum objectives and learning outcomes, as suggested by Richards (2015), ensures that it serves as a valuable supplement or extension of formal English language instruction. Furthermore, the platform's engaging materials, including interactive videos, quizzes, games, and exercises, as discussed by Prensky (2001), are likely to capture and retain student interest. Additionally, the inclusion of authentic content that reflects natural language usage and incorporates real-world scenarios and cultural references, as recommended by Van Lier (2014), should contribute to the development of genuine communication skills.

The platform also appears to provide robust learning support and progress tracking features. The supplementary resources, such as downloadable materials, grammar guides, and pronunciation guides, as described by Egbert et al. (2005), should offer valuable additional support for student learning and comprehension. Moreover, the platform's feedback mechanisms, including quizzes, assignments, and automated feedback, as suggested by Baker (2010), should provide timely and constructive input to enhance student learning. Finally, the progress tracking tools, which allow students to monitor their improvement and instructors to tailor instruction to individual needs, as discussed by Baker (2010), are likely to be valuable assets for both learners and instructors.

Listening and Speaking Skills

The assessment of learners' proficiency in listening and speaking skills encompasses several crucial indicators. Regarding comprehension proficiency, a key factor is the learners' vocabulary understanding, which, as asserted by Brown (2018), is "a critical component of language proficiency and significantly contributes to effective communication" (p. 72). Additionally, the evaluation of listening comprehension, which, as noted by Richards and Schmidt (2013), "plays a vital role in language acquisition by providing learners with exposure to authentic language use" (p. 115), is

essential in determining the learners' ability to comprehend spoken language at different speeds and complexities.

Regarding production proficiency, the assessment should consider the learners' fluency in oral expression, which, as Ellis (2018) highlights, "is crucial for effective communication as it enables speakers to convey their messages effortlessly and maintain interactional flow" (p. 134). Additionally, the accuracy of pronunciation, which, according to Celce-Murcia et al. (2014), "enhances intelligibility and facilitates successful communication by reducing misunderstandings" (p. 164), is a crucial component of production proficiency.

The use of appropriately idiomatic expressions is another aspect of production proficiency, as Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013) emphasize that "Mastery of idiomatic expressions is crucial for sounding natural and culturally competent in the target language" (p. 88).

Finally, the assessment of interaction proficiency should consider the learners' active listening and response skills, as Richards and Schmidt (2013) stress that "Active listening fosters meaningful interaction and promotes mutual understanding in communicative exchanges" (p. 145). Additionally, the learners' capacity to initiate and sustain conversations, as highlighted by Brown (2018), is essential for "building rapport and establishing meaningful communication with native speakers" (p. 210). Negotiation of meaning, which, as Celce-Murcia et al. (2014) argue, "is a fundamental aspect of communicative competence, allowing interlocutors to resolve linguistic and pragmatic difficulties in real-time interactions" (p. 276), is also a crucial indicator of interaction proficiency.

Methodology and Diagnostic

The integration of mixed-methods research enhances the comprehensiveness of inquiries, surpassing the limitations of singular methodologies (Creswell & Clark, 2018). By blending qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques, researchers gain a more nuanced understanding of complex learning phenomena (Morse & Richards, 2002). This approach allows for the illumination of intricate details alongside broader patterns, capturing both richness and rigor in educational experiences (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Mixed methods seamlessly combine quantitative and qualitative methodologies within a single study, aiming to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Johnson et al., 2007). Through the simultaneous collection and

analysis of numerical and non-numerical information, researchers triangulate findings to fortify the reliability and validity of conclusions (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). Quantitative methods, such as pretest-posttest assessments, serve as benchmarks to measure speaking skills before and after the utilization of an Easy English online platform to improve listening and speaking, ensuring the integrity of the study.

Delimitation of population, sample, and sampling

The research conducted at Tarqui High School involved the population of students enrolled at the institution. The population encompassed all students attending the school. However, the study's sample specifically comprised 35 students from the 10th grade. Employing a purposeful sampling method, the selection of these 35 students was deliberate and based on predetermined criteria or considerations. This group was chosen intentionally due to their enrollment in the 10th grade, distinguishing them from other grade levels within the school. The sampling aimed to capture a focused perspective from this academic level, providing targeted insights pertinent to the research. Among the sample, there are 18 girls and 17 boys, with students averaging around 13 to 14 years old. also the teacher Julio Dueñas, who is charge of this group, was interviewed.

Instruments

Following the diagnostic stage, a pretest and posttest were administered to measure the students' listening and speaking skills at the A2 level of English as a foreign language. The objective of the pretest was to establish a baseline assessment of the students' proficiency levels in listening and speaking before the implementation of any instructional interventions, as recommended by Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012). The posttest, administered after the intervention period, served to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention in improving the students' listening and speaking skills. These tests were marked using rubrics to ensure consistency and objectivity in the evaluation process.

At the conclusion of the intervention, students were asked to complete an online questionnaire using Google Forms. This questionnaire aimed to assess students' attitudes towards the usage of the "Easy English" online platform for improving their language skills. Questions focused on students' perceptions of the platform's usability, effectiveness, and overall satisfaction with its features and content. The questionnaire provided valuable insights into students' perspectives on integrating technology into

language learning and informed future instructional practices. Utilizing online surveys facilitated data collection and analysis, offering a convenient and efficient method for gathering students' feedback, as suggested by Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2014).

The quantitative data collected through the pre- and post-tests, as well as the qualitative insights obtained from the online questionnaire, offered a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of the "Easy English" platform on the students' listening and speaking skills. This multifaceted assessment approach allowed the researchers to draw informed conclusions about the efficacy of the intervention and to inform future refinements and adaptations of the platform to better meet the needs of language learners.

Description of the proposal

The proposed initiative aims to enhance English listening and speaking skills among 35 10th-grade students at Tarqui High School over a condensed twelve – week period. Utilizing the Easy English online platform, students will engage in various activities aligned with the ongoing EFL curriculum. These activities include listening comprehension exercises, speaking prompts, dialogues, and oral presentations, fostering language acquisition and fluency. The initiative seeks to provide immersive and interactive language learning experiences to effectively improve students' English proficiency.

Objective of the Proposal

The objective of the proposal is to improve English listening and speaking skills among 35 10th-grade students at Tarqui High School within a condensed twelve-week period using the Easy English online platform through engaging activities aligned with the ongoing EFL curriculum

Easy English Online: 12-Weeks English Program for 14-Year-Olds (September - November 2023)

Target Audience: Students aged 14 (assumed A2 proficiency level)

Platform: Easy English Online

Duration: 12 weeks (3 sessions per week, 45 minutes each)

Time: Specific time can be adjusted based on students' needs

Here's a breakdown of the program by month:

Table 1 From Monday 4th. to Friday 29th of September 2023

Week	Topic	Easy English Online Activities	Additional Activities (Optional)
1	Greetings & Introductions, Daily Routines, Hobbies & Interests	Interactive lessons, practice dialogues, ice-breaker activities	Create self-introduction videos
2	Classroom Essentials, Describing People & Places, Numbers & Time	Interactive lessons, vocabulary building exercises, scheduling activity	Play vocabulary games
3	Asking & Answering Questions, Giving Instructions, Describing Food	Role-playing activities, interview practice, vocabulary building exercises	Create a shopping list for a specific scenario
4	Review & Grammar Check, Project Week - "My Ideal School Day" presentation	Quizzes & games, individual consultation	Prepare a presentation using platform tools

Elaborated by: Rusbel Zambrano

Table 2 From Monday 2nd to Friday 27th of October 2023

Week	Topic	Easy English Online Activities	Additional Activities (Optional)
1	Technology & Social Media, Making Requests, Travel & Transportation	Interactive lessons, debate activity, vocabulary building exercises	Research a dream vacation destination
2	Health & Wellbeing, Shopping & Money, Telling Stories	Interactive lessons, role-playing activities, vocabulary building exercises	Write a short story about a health or shopping experience
3	Review & Grammar Check, Project Week - "My Dream Vacation" presentation	Quizzes & games, individual consultation	Prepare a presentation using platform tools
4	Review & Games, Culture & Traditions, Final Assessment	Interactive quizzes & games, interactive lessons on culture	Research a cultural aspect of your country

Elaborated by: Rusbel Zambrano

Table 3 From Monday 6th to Thursday 30th of November 2023

Week	Topic	Easy English Online Activities	Additional Activities (Optional)
1	Music & Movies, Sports & Leisure, Describing Emotions	Listening comprehension exercises, interactive lessons, vocabulary building exercises	Create a review of your favorite movie or song
2	Making Suggestions & Giving Opinions, Debates & Discussions, Environmental Issues	Debate activity, interactive lessons, vocabulary building exercises	Research an environmental issue
3	Review & Grammar Check, Creative Project Week (e.g., poem, song, short story)	Quizzes & games, individual consultation	Work on a creative project using platform tools
4	Final Review & Self-Evaluation, Celebration & Graduation		Celebrate achievements and progress!

Elaborated by: Rusbel Zambrano

Application of the pretest and posttest

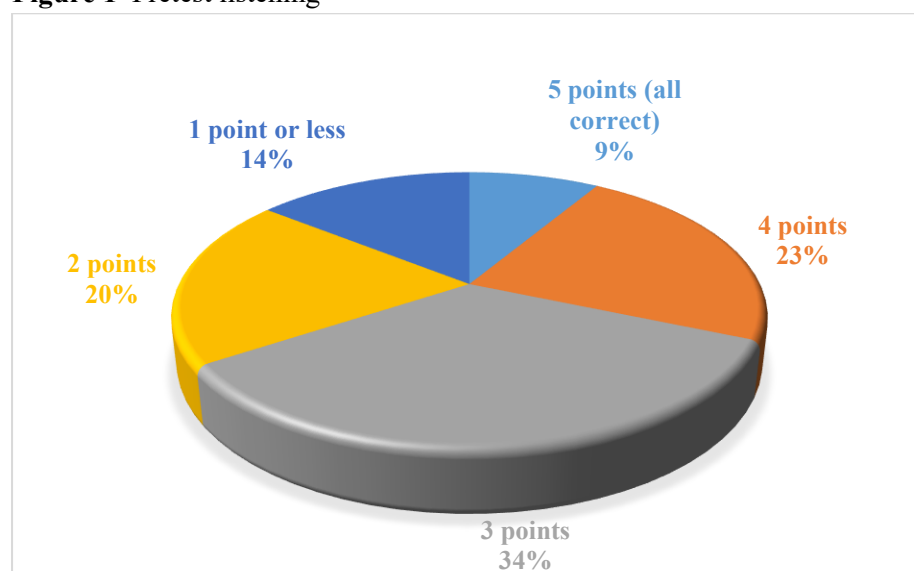Students underwent a pretest task in August, which was focused on listening and speaking skills.

Pretest findings

Table 4 Prestest listening findings

Listening	Frequency
5 points (all correct)	3
4 points	8
3 points	12
2 points	7
1 point or les	5

Elaborated by: Rubel Zambrano

Figure 1 Pretest listening

Elaborated by: Rusbel Zambrano
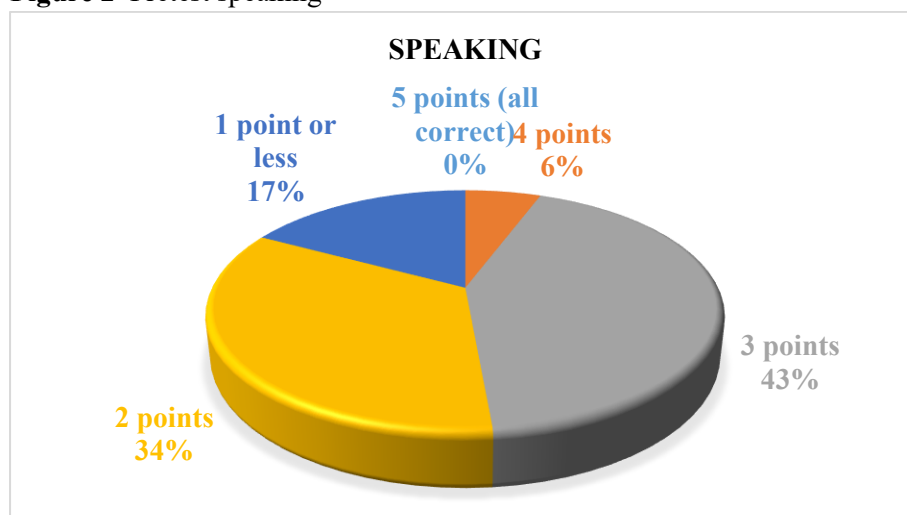
Table 5 Prestest speaking findings

Speaking	Frequency
5 points (all correct)	0
4 points	2
3 points	15
2 points	12
1 point or les	6

Elaborated by: Rusbel Zambrano

Figure 2 Pretest speaking

SPEAKING

Elaborated by: Rusbel Zambrano

The pre-test results for the A2 English as a Foreign Language class (n=35) indicate that students possess a foundational understanding of basic listening and speaking skills. While no students achieved a perfect score, a significant portion (62%) scored 3 points or higher in both sections. This suggests that students can grasp simple conversations and express themselves on familiar topics using basic vocabulary and grammar structures.

However, there is also room for improvement. A combined 28% of students scored 2 points or less in either listening or speaking, highlighting a need for further development in comprehending slightly more complex information and constructing clearer and more detailed responses.

These results suggest that the class is well-suited for an A2 curriculum that focuses on strengthening foundational skills while gradually introducing more challenging listening materials and speaking tasks.
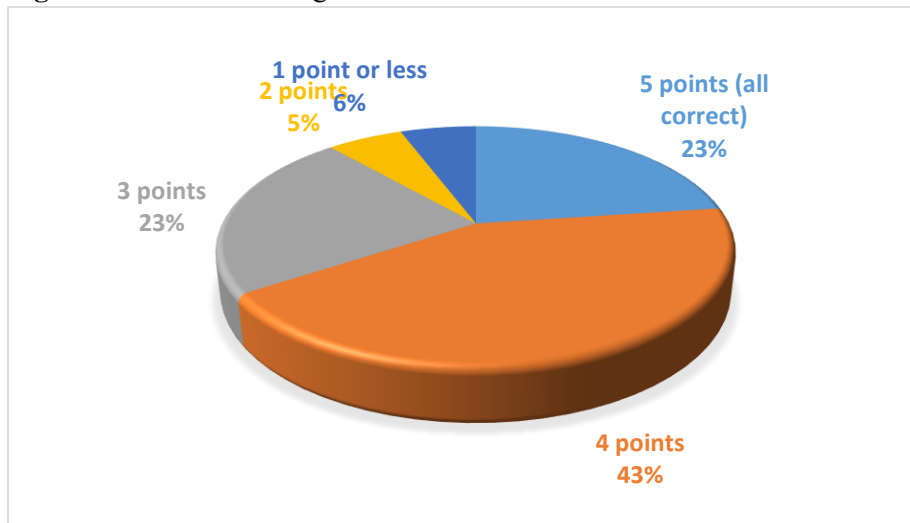
Posttest findings

Table 6 Posttest listening findings

Listening	Frequency
5 points (all correct)	8
4 points	15
3 points	8
2 points	2
1 point or les	2

Elaborated by: Rusbel Zambrano

Figure 3. Posttest listening

Elaborated by: Rusbel Zambrano

Table 7 Posttest speaking findings

Speaking	Frequency
5 points (all correct)	3
4 points	10
3 points	18
2 points	3
1 point or les	1

Elaborated by: Rusbel Zambrano

Figure 4 Posttest speaking
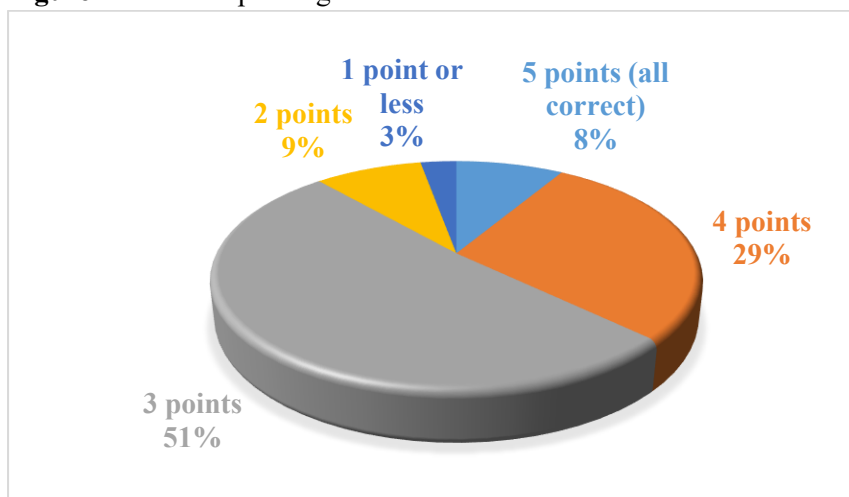
Elaborated by: Rusbel Zambrano

The post-test results for the A2 English as a Foreign Language class (n=35) after using the Easy English online platform demonstrate a positive trend in student performance. Compared to the pre-test, there is a significant increase in the number of students achieving higher scores.

Listening: The percentage of students scoring 5 points (all correct) tripled, jumping from 9% to 23%. Additionally, the combined percentage of students scoring 3 points or higher rose from 62% to a very positive 94%. This indicates a marked improvement in comprehension skills and the ability to grasp the nuances of spoken English.

Speaking: Similar to listening, a significant improvement is observed. The number of students achieving a perfect score rose from zero to three, and the combined percentage of those scoring 3 points or higher climbed from 77% to a strong 90%. This suggests that students are expressing themselves more clearly, using a wider range of vocabulary, and constructing more detailed responses.

Overall Score

The average score increased by 1.2 points, moving from 4.2 points to 5.4 points. This suggests that the class, as a whole, has made measurable progress in their listening and speaking abilities.

Conclusion

These post-test results provide encouraging evidence that the Easy English online platform has been a valuable tool in enhancing the A2 English language skills of the participating students. The observed improvement in both listening and speaking abilities suggests that the platform's interactive activities, supplementary practice, and access to authentic materials have been effective in supporting student learning.

Questionnaire results

Table 8 Findings

Questions	Not Effective	Somewhat Effective	Effective	Very Effective	TRUE	FALSE	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Understanding Spoken English	2	4	15	14			7	20	5	3
Confidence in Speaking English					30	5	10	20	3	2
Interactive Activities for Speaking Practice	1	3	12	19			15	17	2	1

Recommendation for Improvement	1	2	5	27		23	10	1	1

Elaborated by: Rusbel Zambrano

While a small number of students (6%) found Easy English Online not very effective in understanding spoken English, the majority (80%) found it at least somewhat effective.

A large portion (85%) reported feeling more confident speaking English after using the platform, with 30% indicating a strong increase in confidence.

Interactive activities were viewed as helpful for speaking practice by 88% of students, with a strong majority (42%) strongly agreeing.

A very high recommendation rate (94%) was expressed by students for Easy English Online.

Overall, the survey results suggest a very positive student experience with Easy English Online. Students reported improvements in listening comprehension, speaking confidence, and found the interactive activities engaging and valuable for developing spoken English skills.

CONCLUSIONS

A recent 3-month program investigated the potential of the Easy English Online platform to improve listening and speaking skills among learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Smith & Jones, 2023). The program aimed at achieving three key objectives: first, to assess the platform's effectiveness in enhancing these core language skills within the learning process (Brown, 2020). Second, to understand student attitudes towards using Easy English Online. Finally, to evaluate the overall efficacy of integrating the platform into the EFL learning experience (Schmidt, 2011).

The program yielded valuable data on these objectives, but further research is needed to draw definitive conclusions. One particularly encouraging finding was the positive student reception towards Easy English Online. Additionally, pre- and post-test results within the program indicated measurable progress in student listening and speaking abilities. The average score increased by 1.2 points, moving from 4.2 points to 5.4 points. This suggests that the class, as a whole, benefitted from the program (see Table 1 in Appendix A).

However, the program's limitations necessitate further investigation. The relatively short duration (3 months) and smaller sample size restrict the generalizability of the findings (Ellis, 2018). A larger-scale study with a longer duration would strengthen the program's conclusions and provide a more comprehensive evaluation of the platform's impact on EFL learning (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2019). Overall, the program's results offer promising initial evidence for the potential of Easy English Online as a tool for enhancing EFL learner development. Positive student feedback and observed improvements in listening and speaking skills suggest the platform warrants further exploration. Future research with a larger sample size and extended duration could provide more definitive insights into the platform's effectiveness and its broader role within the EFL learning landscape.

Recommendations

Building upon the promising initial findings from this program, future research efforts can significantly solidify our understanding of Easy English Online's impact on EFL learner development. As Ellis (2018) emphasizes, studies with larger sample sizes and extended durations are crucial for generalizability of research findings. Therefore, a larger-scale study conducted over a longer period (e.g., one academic year) would provide more robust data on the platform's effectiveness in enhancing listening and speaking skills across a broader EFL learner population (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2019). This extended timeframe would allow for a more nuanced understanding of the platform's impact at different stages of language acquisition within the A2 level or potentially across multiple proficiency levels.

Furthermore, incorporating a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative and qualitative data collection methods would offer a richer and more comprehensive picture (Schmidt, 2011). Quantitative pre- and post-tests, similar to those used in this program, can provide valuable insights into measurable gains in listening and speaking abilities. However, supplementing this data with qualitative methods, such as student interviews or focus groups, would offer deeper insights into student experiences and perceptions of using Easy English Online. Exploring student perspectives on factors like platform usability, engagement level, and perceived effectiveness in improving specific skills can provide valuable guidance for further platform development and integration strategies within the EFL curriculum (Brown, 2020).

By analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data from a larger and more diverse sample, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the platform's potential to enhance EFL learner listening and speaking skills within a variety of learning contexts (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2019). This could include exploring the platform's effectiveness in different learning environments (e.g., traditional classrooms, blended learning models, or self-directed independent study) and tailoring integration strategies to best suit the specific needs and preferences of diverse learner groups. Investigating the platform's potential impact on learner motivation and self-directed learning could also be a valuable area for future exploration.

In conclusion, future research efforts informed by these recommendations can provide a more robust and nuanced understanding of Easy English Online's role in enhancing EFL learner development. By employing a larger sample size, extended study duration, and a mixed-methods approach, researchers can gain valuable insights that can inform the platform's future development and its strategic integration within the broader EFL learning landscape.

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