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**The Impact of an Online Learning Community
Project on Enhancing EFL Speaking Skills of
Secondary Stage Students and Their Motivation
towards Learning**

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The Impact of an Online Learning Community Project on Enhancing EFL Speaking Skills of Secondary Stage Students and Their Motivation towards Learning

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Abstract

The present research aimed at examining the impact of using an online learning community project on enhancing EFL speaking skills of secondary stage students and their motivation towards learning. The research adopted the quasi-experimental design using forty 2nd year secondary stage students to be the research participants. Intact classes of twenty (20) students were used for the experimental and control groups. The online learning community project was used in teaching the experimental group in the second term of the academic year (2022-2023). Two equivalent EFL speaking skills tests with a scoring rubric, and a motivation scale were administered to determine the pretest and post-test performance of the two groups. The data of the research were analyzed statistically. The results showed that the use of online learning community project had a significant impact on enhancing EFL students' speaking skills and their motivation to learn. In conclusion, the research recommended implementing the online learning community project inside the classroom.

Key words: An Online Learning Community Project, EFL Speaking Skills, Motivation, Egypt.

Introduction

According to the requirements of our lives, learning English has important utility values in all spheres. Speaking is one of the four skills needed to learn the English language. Lots of people suffer when talking due to different factors such as lack of general knowledge, lack of speaking practice, fear of mistakes, lack of words usage and grammar practice, low motivation, reading laziness, fear of criticism, and unfamiliar words pronunciation. This in turn eliminates their participation in oral classroom activities.

Speaking Skill

Many different definitions of speaking from many English language experts, such as Cornbleet and Carter (2001) contended that speaking is an

interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information. It is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving, but it is not completely unpredictable.

According to Cole et al. (2007), "speaking is essential a collaborative and interactive process. It is an exchange. We may finish each other's comments, interrupt, disagree with, or extend what is said" (p. 12). So, speaking serves many purposes that can help the process of learning be improved.

Additionally, El-Bassuony (2010, p. 24) defined speaking as the ability to express oneself in any situation appropriately using verbal and non-verbal symbols to convey a specific meaning. It is one of the productive skills in English, and it goes side by side with all the other language skills. Speech is considered one of the most important aims in language teaching (Aljadili, 2014).

Besides, Maharani (2016) defined speaking skill as an ability to produce speech or oral language by comprehending, expressing, and sharing ideas, opinions, or feelings depending on the context, the participants, the experience, the environment, and the purpose.

Without speech, communicating with others will be difficult, if not impossible. Thus, the importance of speaking skills is huge for learners of any language. Gillis (2013) assured that the ability to speak skillfully provides the speaker with many important advantages, such as the ability to inform, persuade, and direct; the ability to stand out from the rest; the ability to benefit derivatively; and career enhancement. He also emphasized that speaking skills are important for career success and can also enhance one's personal life.

Al Jamal (2014) also described difficulties faced by EFL undergraduates in speaking skills as those of high-intensity classes and a lack of time. Besides, Tuan and Mai (2015) conducted a study to find out students' problems speaking English. It indicated that topical knowledge, listening ability, confidence, and speaking activities are factors that have affected students' speaking performance.

Motivation

Motivation is usually understood to be the drive that initiates L2 learning and sustains L2 learning efforts (Cheng and Dörnyei, 2007). Likewise, Hoffman (2015:16) defined motivation as the degree of effort and intensity directed toward a goal.

Moreover, Hong and Ganapathy (2017) stated that motivation is a process that cannot be observed directly but can be inferred by behaviors,

such as effort, persistence, and verbalization. It involves an amount of energy from students to engage in action, to make more effort, and to always persist in action.

Motivation plays an important role in the process of learning. Positive psychology and positive emotions in foreign language education are important because instructors or teachers who have knowledge of positive psychology can understand their students more efficiently, and students in their classes can be motivated more professionally.

In the field of acquiring or learning a language, learners' success may vary since they have different characteristics. In relation to this, motivation is considered one of the crucial factors that can affect individual differences in acquiring a language (Crisfield & White, 2012).

There are different factors that can affect students' motivation during the learning process. According to (Abdul Rahman, Rajab, Abdul Wahab, Nor, Zakaria, and Badli, 2017), there are three main factors affecting motivation in language learning such as teacher influence, personal attitude, and parental influence.

Researchers in the field of EFL have assessed the use of different approaches, strategies, models, and techniques to improve the English speaking skills and motivation. The online learning community is one of the recommended ways for enhancing students' speaking skills and their motivation to learn.

Online Learning Community

An online learning community refers to a paradigm shift in learning and teaching from a more instruction-based and teacher-centered approach to a more interactive and learner-centered approach, and from an instructor to a facilitator of learning. Palloff and Pratt (2007) defined an online learning community as a virtual environment for participants in which these elements "honesty, responsiveness, relevance, respect, openness, and empowerment" are present. Group members can feel safe in expressing themselves without fear of how they will be perceived, allowing for active, rich discussion" (p. 22).

In the area of teachers' professional development, learning communities are seen as offering valuable opportunities for authentic and personalized learning (Duncan-Howell, 2010), informal exchange of good practice, and peer learning (Avalos, 2011).

González- Lloret (2020) asserted that online collaborative learning has great benefits when students are provided with equal participation chances, more time for interaction, and more constructive feedback.

Abdullah (2013) conducted research to determine how community language learning improves speaking ability and increases students' interest in speaking English in speaking class. This research applied a quasi-experimental method. A test and a questionnaire were used to collect research data. The study concluded that: (1) community language learning improved the first-semester students of Negeri 19 Makassar's ability to speak English significantly better than the conventional method, and (2) the participants were highly interested in speaking English through community language learning.

Anggraeni (2014) conducted a study to investigate the effect of virtual learning environments on EFL learners' speaking. The speaking pretest and post-test were administered to 60 third-semester non-English major undergraduate students. They were involved in virtual learning environments, e-learning recording analysis, student questionnaires, and student interviews, constituting data collection. Results showed that virtual learning environments and e-learning have positive effects on improving students' speaking in terms of language quality and the improvement of vocabulary.

Beluce & Oliveira (2015) investigated students' motivation in virtual learning environments. It used a teaching and learning strategy and a motivation scale to learn in virtual learning environments. The participants were 572 students from the Brazilian state of Paraná enrolled in higher education courses. The results revealed significant rates of autonomous motivational behavior that virtual learning environments contribute to increasing and stimulating.

Miyake & Yoshida (2017) measured the effect of using the English language to participate in such an online learning community had on EFL Japanese learners' English language abilities and discovered how this community affected the learners' motivation to learn on their own. The study was conducted with 25 first-year university students at a Japanese national university. The results indicated that by participating in the online community, the English language abilities of the learners had increased, raising the motivation levels of over half of the learners in addition to increasing learner engagement in the weekly discussions.

Background of the Problem

This research problem arose from two sources. Firstly, Malek Mahran students cannot speak English fluently and confidently due to a lack of speaking practice, fear of making a mistake, a lack of word usage and grammar practice, low motivation, low participation, and shyness. Secondly,

they do not prioritize English as a school subject in general or speaking in English in particular. Thus, this research is an attempt to enhance EFL speaking skills and their motivation to learn through an online learning community project.

A pilot study was conducted to assess EFL students' speaking skills and their motivation. An EFL speaking skills test and a motivation scale were designed and applied to two groups of students (N = 40). The maximum score of the items of the test was (25) marks and the motivation scale was (30) marks. The speaking skills test consisted of one question, divided into ten items, to assess five sub-skills: pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehensibility. The motivation scale was six items. The results of the pilot study are presented in Table (1&2):

Table (1)

Results of the EFL Speaking Skills Pilot Study Test

| Speaking Sub-Skills | Maximum Score | Mean Score | Percentage |
|---------------------|---------------|------------|------------|
| Pronunciation | 5 | 1.7 | 34% |
| Vocabs | 5 | 2 | 40% |
| Grammar | 5 | 2 | 40% |
| Fluency | 5 | 1.9 | 38% |
| Comprehensibility | 5 | 1.6 | 32% |
| Total | 25 | 9.2 | 36.8% |

Results in Table (1) show that the students' mean score in each speaking sub-skill was low. This indicates that the students' EFL speaking ability was low and needed improvement; as the mean (m = 9.2) and the total percentage of the skills (36, 8%).

Table (2)

Results of the Motivation Pilot Study Scale

| | العبارة | Maximum Score | Mean Score | Percentage |
|---|---|---------------|------------|------------|
| 1 | I really like studying English. حقاً أحب دراسة اللغة الإنجليزية | 5 | 1.8 | 36% |
| 2 | I just study English to pass tests. أدرس اللغة الإنجليزية لاجتياز الاختبارات فحسب. | 5 | 2.9 | 50% |
| 3 | I'm studying English for my future career. أدرس اللغة الإنجليزية من أجل مستقبلي المهني. | 5 | 2 | 40% |
| 4 | I'm interested in English to find a job. أنا أهتم باللغة الإنجليزية للحصول على وظيفة | 5 | 2 | 40% |
| 5 | Everyone studies English, and so do I. أدرس اللغة الإنجليزية مثل الجميع. | 5 | 2 | 40% |
| 6 | I wish we could get additional lessons. أتمنى أن نحصل على دروس إضافية في اللغة الإنجليزية. | 5 | 1.7 | 34% |
| | Total | 30 | 12.4 | 41,6% |

The students' responses in Table (2) showed that they experienced a low state of motivation while practicing speaking tasks.

Statement of the Problem

Based on the results of the pilot study and the review of related literature, it was noticed that 2nd year secondary stage students needed to improve their speaking skills and motivation towards learning. Thus, the current research suggested using an Online Learning Community Project to enhance Malek Mahran students' speaking skills besides their motivation level.

Questions of the Research

The researcher posed the following questions:

1. What are the features of an online learning community project to enhance EFL speaking skills of secondary stage students and their motivation?
2. What is the impact of the OLC on enhancing secondary stage students' EFL speaking skills?
3. What is the impact of the OLC on enhancing secondary stage students' EFL motivation?

Purpose of the Research

This research attempted to achieve the following objectives:

1. Identify the EFL speaking skills necessary for Malek Mahran secondary stage students.
2. Examine the impact of an online learning community project on enhancing EFL speaking skills of second year secondary stage students and their motivation level.

Significance of the Research

The research investigates the importance of using an online learning community project on enhancing EFL secondary stage students' speaking skills (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehensibility) and their motivation level.

Delimitations of the Research

This research was delimited to:

1. The research participants: Second-year secondary stage students (40 male students at Malek Mahran, the experimental group consisted of 20 students, and the control group consisted of 20 students, East Al-Mehala Directorate, Gharbia Governorate).
2. Some EFL speaking skills identified through the content of "New Hello! English for Secondary Schools" represented in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehensibility.

Hypotheses of the Research

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. There is a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level between the mean ranks of the control and experimental group in EFL speaking skills test in favour of the experimental group.
2. There is statistically significant difference between the experimental group's pre-post administrations of the EFL speaking skills test in favour of the post-administration.
3. There is a statistically significant difference at (0.05) level between the mean ranks of experimental group and that of the control group on the post administration of the motivation scale in favor of the experimental group.
4. There is a statistically significant difference at (0.05) level between the mean ranks of experimental group on the pre and post administrations of the motivation scale in favor of the post administration.

Methodology

Participants

The participants of the research were a group of Malek Mahran Students (N=40) selected from the Second Year Students at Malek Mahran school for boys, East Al-Mehala Directorate, Al-Gharbia. Those participants were divided into two groups: the experimental group and the control group.

Design

The research adopted the quasi-experimental design in terms of dividing the participants of the research into two groups: experimental and control. The experimental group was trained using the proposed online learning community project (OLC) while the control group used the regular method. The adopted quasi-experimental design (see figure 1) in this research (pre-post-tests) was as follows:

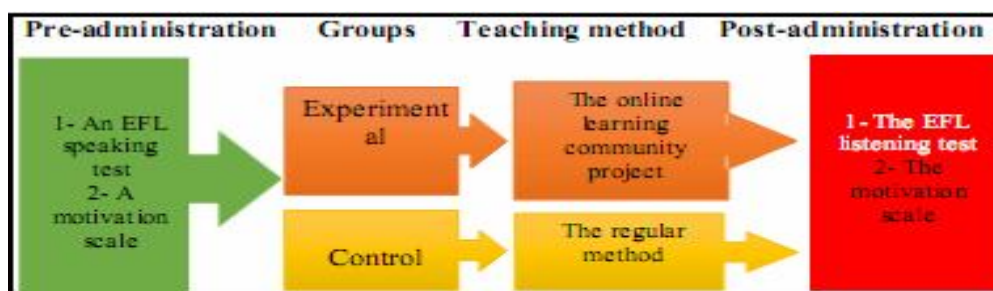


Figure (1): OLC Experimental Design

Instruments

The present research employed the following instrument:

Two equivalent EFL speaking skills tests and to measure students' speaking skills on the pre- and post-EFL speaking skills tests and a motivation scale to measure students' motivation level towards learning English before and after the treatment.

Definition of Terms

Speaking Skill

Kayi (2006: 1) defined speaking as the crucial part of second language learning and teaching. Without speaking, oral communication between people cannot occur. Purnamawati et al. (2015) also defined speaking as an interactive oral communication process to express an idea, feel, and share information with others.

Speaking is operationally defined in the present research as a language ability that enables students in the classroom to produce oral language with fluency, accuracy, and proper pronunciation.

Motivation

Motivation was defined by Koff and Mullis (2011) as a student's intention or desire to participate in and make efforts in learning, which was based on the student's choice of a specific learning activity and the efforts made for such activity. According to Xiao (2013), motivation is used to define phenomena that can cause action, direct action instructions, follow up on the action and live it, and direct in choosing certain actions.

Motivation is operationally defined in the present research as a language a as an internal state of the learner that prompts him to pay attention to learning situations and to be eager to learn.

Online Learning Community

The online learning community was defined as "ensembles of agents who share a common language, world, and values in terms of pedagogical approach and knowledge to be acquired." They pursue a common learning goal by communicating and cooperating through electronic media in the learning process. The common interest of this type of community is the common interest in learning." (Seufert, Lechner, & Stanoevska, 2002, p. 47)

Online learning communities might include students from dispersed geographical locations, such as via teleconferencing or online collaboration on a common project with students from another school or country (Linn, Clark, & Slotta, 2003).

Online Learning Community is operationally defined in the present research as a study group that employs different online tools such as

Facebook, Zoom, and YouTube videos, an online dictionary, and internet links to motivate their learning in addition to providing the opportunity to pose questions, have discussions, exchange ideas, guess solutions, and provide opportunities to work together to create things.

Statistical Analysis and Results

The results of the research are discussed in light of the statistical analysis of each instrument. A discussion of the results is provided after each statistical analysis as well as a discussion of the overall results.

Establishing the Homogeneity of the Groups

To establish the homogeneity of both the experimental and the control group, a pre (u) test was administered. The following table (3) shows the results of the pre (u) test concerning the speaking skills:

Table (3): Comparing the Mean Ranks of students' Performance in the Speaking Skills Pre-Test in Both Groups

| <i>Skills</i> | <i>The group</i> | <i>N.of cases</i> | <i>Mean Rank</i> | <i>Sum of Ranks</i> | <i>Z.Value</i> | <i>Sig.</i> |
|----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| <i>Pronunciation</i> | Control | 20 | 19.25 | 385.00 | 0.703 | 0.482 Not Sig. |
| | Experimental | 20 | 21.75 | 435.00 | | |
| <i>Vocabulary</i> | Control | 20 | 19.23 | 384.50 | 0.738 | 0.461 Not Sig. |
| | Experimental | 20 | 21.78 | 435.50 | | |
| <i>Grammar</i> | Control | 20 | 19.38 | 387.50 | 0.642 | 0.521 Not Sig. |
| | Experimental | 20 | 21.63 | 432.50 | | |
| <i>Fluency</i> | Control | 20 | 19.05 | 381.00 | 0.813 | 0.416 Not Sig. |
| | Experimental | 20 | 21.95 | 439.00 | | |
| <i>Comprehensibility</i> | Control | 20 | 18.58 | 371.50 | 1.081 | 0.280 Not Sig. |
| | Experimental | 20 | 22.43 | 448.50 | | |
| <i>Total Score of Test</i> | Control | 20 | 17.13 | 342.50 | 1.843 | 0.065 Not Sig. |
| | Experimental | 20 | 23.88 | 477.50 | | |

It is clear from the results in Table (3) that there are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the students of the experimental and control groups in the sub-skills of the speaking test and in the total score of the test in the pre-measurement, where all the “z” values were not statistically significant, and this indicates the homogeneity between the two groups.

Table (4): Comparing the Mean Ranks in the Pre-Measurement of the Motivation Scale towards Learning in Both Groups

| <i>Skills</i> | <i>The group</i> | <i>N.of cases</i> | <i>Mean Rank</i> | <i>Sum of Ranks</i> | <i>Z.Value</i> | <i>Sig.</i> |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| <i>Total Score of the Scale</i> | Control | 20 | 19.80 | 396.00 | 0.382 | 0.702 Not Sig. |
| | Experimental | 20 | 21.20 | 424.00 | | |

It is clear from the results in Table (4) that there are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the students of the experimental and control groups in the total score of the motivation towards learning scale in the pre-measurement, where all the “z” values were not statistically significant, and this indicates the homogeneity between the two groups.

Results of the Statistical Treatment

To investigate the change fostered by the implementation of the proposed project “Online Learning Community Project” on the target students’ performance in the speaking skills tests and their motivation level, the hypotheses of the research were tested. The following section tests each hypothesis individually.

Testing the Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

“There is a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level between the mean ranks of the control and experimental group in EFL speaking skills test in favour of the experimental group”.

To investigate the change fostered by the implementation of the proposed online learning community project on the experimental students’ performance in speaking skills and to compare their post level of skills performance developed by the proposed learning project, a u-test for the paired sample was used to determine any statistical differences between the students’ mean ranks on the post test. These findings are presented in table (5).

Table (5): Comparing the Mean Ranks of Students' Performance in the Speaking Skills Post Test in Both Groups

| <i>Skills</i> | <i>The group</i> | <i>N.of cases</i> | <i>Mean Rank</i> | <i>Sum of Ranks</i> | <i>Z.Value</i> | <i>Sig.</i> |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------|
| <i>Pronunciation</i> | Control | 20 | 10.50 | 210.00 | 5.465 | 0.01 Sig. |
| | Experimental | 20 | 30.50 | 610.00 | | |
| <i>Vocabulary</i> | Control | 20 | 10.50 | 210.00 | 5.488 | 0.01 Sig. |
| | Experimental | 20 | 30.50 | 610.00 | | |
| <i>Grammar</i> | Control | 20 | 10.50 | 210.00 | 5.472 | 0.01 Sig. |
| | Experimental | 20 | 30.50 | 610.00 | | |
| <i>Fluency</i> | Control | 20 | 10.50 | 210.00 | 5.497 | 0.01 Sig. |
| | Experimental | 20 | 30.50 | 610.00 | | |
| <i>Comprehensibility</i> | Control | 20 | 10.50 | 210.00 | 5.495 | 0.01 Sig. |
| | Experimental | 20 | 30.50 | 610.00 | | |
| <i>Total Score of the Test</i> | Control | 20 | 10.50 | 210.00 | 5.431 | 0.01 Sig. |
| | Experimental | 20 | 30.50 | 610.00 | | |

It is clear from the results in Table (5) that there are statistically significant differences between the mean ranks of the students of the experimental and control groups in the sub-skills of the speaking test and in the total score of the post-measurement test in favor of the experimental group (higher average ranks), where all the values of "z" are statistically significant at the (0.01) level. These results are consistent with the third hypothesis or confirm its validity. These differences could be ascribed to the implementation of the online learning community project (OLC). Therefore, the first hypothesis of the research was verified and accepted.

Hypothesis Two

“There is statistically significant difference between the experimental group’s pre-post administrations of the EFL speaking skills test in favour of the post-administration”.

To investigate the change fostered by the implementation of the proposed online learning community project on the experimental students’ performance in the speaking skills and to compare their post level of skill performance developed by the proposed learning project, a u-test for the paired sample was used to determine any statistical differences between the students’ mean ranks on the pre-post tests. These findings are presented in table (6).

Table (6): Comparing the Mean Ranks of the Experimental Group Students' Performance in the Speaking Skills Pre/Post Test

| <i>Skills</i> | <i>Rank</i> | <i>N.of cases</i> | <i>Mean Rank</i> | <i>Sum of Ranks</i> | <i>Z.Value</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | η^2 | <i>Effect size</i> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------|----------|--------------------|
| <i>Pronunciation</i> | <i>Negative Ranks</i> | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 3.954 | 0.01 | 88.4% | High |
| | <i>Positive Ranks</i> | 20 | 10.50 | 210.00 | | | | |
| | <i>Ties</i> | 0 | | | | | | |
| | <i>Total</i> | 20 | | | | | | |
| <i>Vocabulary</i> | <i>Negative Ranks</i> | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 3.948 | 0.01 | 88.3% | High |
| | <i>Positive Ranks</i> | 20 | 10.50 | 210.00 | | | | |
| | <i>Ties</i> | 0 | | | | | | |
| | <i>Total</i> | 20 | | | | | | |
| <i>Grammar</i> | <i>Negative Ranks</i> | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 3.940 | 0.01 | 88.1% | High |
| | <i>Positive Ranks</i> | 20 | 10.50 | 210.00 | | | | |
| | <i>Ties</i> | 0 | | | | | | |
| | <i>Total</i> | 20 | | | | | | |
| <i>Fluency</i> | <i>Negative Ranks</i> | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 3.953 | 0.01 | 88.4% | High |
| | <i>Positive Ranks</i> | 20 | 10.50 | 210.00 | | | | |
| | <i>Ties</i> | 0 | | | | | | |
| | <i>Total</i> | 20 | | | | | | |
| <i>Comprehensibility</i> | <i>Negative Ranks</i> | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 3.955 | 0.01 | 88.4% | High |
| | <i>Positive Ranks</i> | 20 | 10.50 | 210.00 | | | | |
| | <i>Ties</i> | 0 | | | | | | |
| | <i>Total</i> | 20 | | | | | | |
| <i>Total Score of the Test</i> | <i>Negative Ranks</i> | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 3.925 | 0.01 | 87.8% | High |
| | <i>Positive Ranks</i> | 20 | 10.50 | 210.00 | | | | |
| | <i>Ties</i> | 0 | | | | | | |
| | <i>Total</i> | 20 | | | | | | |

As shown from the results in Table (6), there are statistically significant differences between the mean ranks of the experimental group students in the pre and post-test in all speaking test skills and the overall score in favor of the post-one. All the values of (z) are statistically significant at the (0.01) level. These results validate the fourth hypothesis and indicate the effectiveness of the online learning community project to improve speaking skills.

Estimating the Effect Size (η^2)

To calculate the effect size, the researcher used the effect size scale (η^2) as shown in table (7).

Table (7): The Effect Size of the Treatment on the Speaking Skills

| <i>Skills</i> | η^2 | <i>Effect Size</i> |
|--------------------------------|----------|--------------------|
| <i>Pronunciation</i> | 88.4% | High |
| <i>Vocabulary</i> | 88.3% | High |
| <i>Grammar</i> | 88.1% | High |
| <i>Fluency</i> | 88.4% | High |
| <i>Comprehensibility</i> | 88.4% | High |
| <i>Total Score of the Test</i> | 87.8% | High |

Table (7) points to the high effect of the proposed online learning community project on enhancing speaking skills ($\eta^2 = 88.4; 88.3; 88.1; 88.4; \text{ and } 88.4$, respectively). This means that the treatment effect on improving speaking skills ranged from 88.1% to 88.4%. This high impact was evident by the total η^2 for the EFL speaking test score ($\eta^2 = 87.8\%$).

Therefore, it is evident that the OLC project made a significant difference in the use of the EFL speaking skills of the experimental group. Consequently, the second hypothesis was verified and accepted.

Hypothesis Three

“There is a statistically significant difference at (0.05) level between the mean ranks of experimental group and that of the control group on the post administration of the motivation scale in favor of the experimental group”.

To investigate the change fostered by the implementation of the proposed online learning community project on the experimental students’ performance in the pre measurement of the motivation scale towards learning and to compare their post level of skills performance developed by the proposed learning project, a u-test for the paired sample was used to determine any statistical differences between the students’ mean ranks on the post test. These findings are presented in table (8).

| <i>Skills</i> | <i>The group</i> | <i>N.of cases</i> | <i>Mean Rank</i> | <i>Sum of Ranks</i> | <i>Z.Value</i> | <i>Sig.</i> |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| <i>Total Score of the Scale</i> | Control | 20 | 19.80 | 396.00 | 0.382 | 0.702 Not Sig. |
| | Experimental | 20 | 21.20 | 424.00 | | |

It is clear from the results in Table (8) that there are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the students of the experimental and control groups in the total score of the motivation towards learning scale in the pre-measurement, where all the “z” values were not statistically significant, and this indicates the homogeneity between the two groups.

These results are consistent with or confirm the validity of the third hypothesis. These differences could be ascribed to the implementation of the online learning community project (OLC). Therefore, the third hypothesis of the research was verified and accepted.

Hypothesis Four

“There is a statistically significant difference at (0.05) level between the mean ranks of experimental group on the pre and post administrations of the motivation scale in favor of the post administration”.

To investigate the change fostered by the implementation of the proposed online learning community project on the experimental students’ performance in in the pre measurement of the motivation scale towards learning and to compare their post level of skill performance developed by the proposed learning project, a u-test for the paired sample was used to determine any statistical differences between the students’ mean ranks on the pre-post tests. These findings are presented in table (9).

Table (9): Comparing the Mean Ranks of the Experimental Group Level on the Pre and Post-Administrations of the Motivation Scale

| <i>Skills</i> | <i>Rank</i> | <i>N.of cases</i> | <i>Mean Rank</i> | <i>Sum of Ranks</i> | <i>Z.Value</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | η^2 | <i>Effect size</i> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------|
| <i>Total Score of the Scale</i> | <i>Negative Ranks</i> | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 3.930 | 0.01 | 87.9% | High |
| | <i>Positive Ranks</i> | 20 | 10.50 | 210.00 | | | | |
| | <i>Ties</i> | 0 | | | | | | |
| | <i>Total</i> | 20 | | | | | | |

Table (9) indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the mean ranks of the experimental group in the pre- and post-administrations in the total score of the motivation scale towards learning in favor of the post administration. A closer look at the results shows that (z) = “3.930,” which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. These results validate the fourth hypothesis, and as a result, they indicate the effectiveness of the online learning community project to improve students’ motivation level.

Estimating the Effect Size (η^2)

To calculate the effect size, the researcher used the effect size scale (η^2) as shown in table (10).

Table (10): The Effect Size of the Treatment on the Students' Motivation Level

| <i>Skills</i> | η^2 | <i>Effect size</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------|--------------------|
| <i>Total Score of the Scale</i> | 87.9% | High |

Table (10) points to the high impact of the proposed online learning community project on enhancing the participants' motivation. This high impact was evident by the total η^2 for the EFL motivation score ($\eta^2 = 87.9$). Therefore, it is evident that the OLC project made a significant difference in enhancing the EFL motivation of the experimental group. Consequently, the fourth hypothesis was verified and accepted.

Discussion of Results

The experimental group students' post-test results exceeded their pretest results in all the EFL speaking skills. Furthermore, the effect size of the OLC project was significantly high (%87.8). It was noticed that the most improved skills were "pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension". On top of the list, the implementation of the OLC project enabled students to work in groups, participate in class discussions, and interact with each other. Additionally, they learned to think well before speaking and to understand the topic they were talking about. The researcher's feedback after each speaking activity led to greater accuracy and fluency.

On the other hand, the least improved skill was "grammar". This is according to the students' interest in the other speaking skills. However, all the skills, including "grammar," were much more developed compared to the results of the pretest. This indicates that the OLC project was remarkably effective in developing the experimental group students' EFL speaking skills.

The statistical analysis of the motivation scale hypotheses revealed that the experimental group students' motivation scale was developed compared to the control group students' in all the scale dimensions, and the z-values were significant at the 0.01 level. Besides, the experimental group's post-motivation scale results were much better than the pretest results, and the effect size was high (%87.9). These findings implied that the

online learning community project was effective in enhancing the participants' motivation, as they evidently enjoyed the experience of being a part of this OLC project. They were excited and fully engaged in the audio and spoken activities. This is because students felt that they really understood what they were required to do and worked cooperatively within their groups. This made them feel that they had a high degree of control over the activities they performed, whether audio or spoken.

The results discussed above reveal that there is an obvious improvement in the identified listening skills of the experimental group on the post administration of the proposed project; the Online learning Community Project as follows:

1. There is a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level between the mean ranks of the control and experimental group in EFL speaking skills test in favour of the experimental group.
2. There is statistically significant difference between the experimental group's pre-post administrations of the EFL speaking skills test in favour of the post-administration.
3. There is a statistically significant difference at (0.05) level between the mean ranks of experimental group and that of the control group on the post administration of the motivation scale in favor of the experimental group.
4. There is a statistically significant difference at (0.05) level between the mean ranks of experimental group on the pre and post administrations of the motivation scale in favor of the post administration.

It is worth mentioning here that the collaborative environment helped the students participate in the proposed project through their constructive discussion. Additionally, it was concluded that the proposed project was effective in developing the speaking skills and motivation level for the participants. For this reason, the research adds to the other studies that have investigated similar approaches for developing various aspects of learning and a variety of skills.

Furthermore, discussing the obtained results of this research revealed that they are in line with the studies of Abdullah (2013) & Anggraeni (2014), Beluce & Oliveira (2015), and Miyake & Yoshida (2017), which revealed the positive impact of online learning communities (OLCs) on improving students' English speaking skills and motivation level.

Moreover, the participants liked the overall project because of the clarity of the goals and objectives and the explanation of their roles. Besides, the friendly, encouraging attitude of the teacher, handling errors

tactfully and encouraging errors to be corrected after providing constructive feedback.

In addition, the participants provided a sense of responsibility and self-evaluation when working online, participating in cooperative work, and interacting with peers during class sessions, besides participating in gathering information related to the targeted projects, which helped them learn how to use the internet in a useful way and to be self-confident learners.

To sum up, the previous discussion revealed that all hypotheses of this research were accepted and proved that online learning community project was effective in enhancing the EFL students' speaking skills and motivation level.

Conclusions

With reference to the research results, the following points were concluded:

- The current research provided evidence of the effectiveness of using the online learning community project in enhancing EFL speaking skills of second-year secondary stage students.
- Also, it asserted the impact of using the online learning community project on enhancing the students' motivation while immersing them in speaking skills activities.
- Furthermore, it shed light on the bright side of surfing the internet to find useful resources and relevant information. In addition to chatting for educational purposes through social networking sites (Facebook groups), they also post their educational activities or products.
- Finally, it clarified the important role of learning within online learning communities by helping students exchange ideas, make decisions, organize the roles inside the group, and help each other within their groups to set out their goals and solve problems.

Recommendations of the Research

With reference to the experimental evidence provided throughout the present research and its conclusions, the following recommendations are suggested:

- EFL Teachers should evaluate students' speaking skills appropriately according to clear and rigid criteria like the indicators utilized in this research (the rubric) and provide the students with necessary feedback about their speaking problems and how to overcome them.

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- EFL teachers should master the ability to design remedial projects systemically and to apply them effectively in real classroom situations, following the guidelines derived from the online learning community project used in this research for developing speaking and motivation.
 - They should also train their students on how to make the best use of language development projects like the one used in this research and encourage them to participate actively in such projects.
 - Additionally, they should help students enhance their skills by making the best use of the internet and social networking sites.
 - Students should know that mistakes are part of the learning process. Without making mistakes, they cannot make any progress.
 - They should also change their attitude towards learning English in general and their speaking skills in particular.
 - Curriculum Designers should provide teachers with training so they may use the online learning community projects in the classroom.
 - Also, they should train teachers on how to select appropriate resources and activities based on certain criteria.
 - Above this, the teacher's guide should be enriched with more useful projects, strategies, and techniques as a tool to help teachers teach speaking and boost students' motivation.
 - Furthermore, speaking skills should receive appropriate attention so as to be developed, especially at the primary and preparatory stages.

Suggestions for Further Research

In the light of the previous recommendation, the following can be considered for future research:

- Using the online learning community project to teach other EFL skills, such as reading and writing.
- Using the online learning community project at different school levels and on larger samples.

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