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**Utilizing a Strategy Based on Voscreen Learning Application to
Develop Preparatory School Students' EFL Speaking Skills and
Reduce their Speaking Anxiety**

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المستخلص

إستراتيجية مقترحة قائمة على تطبيق Voscreen لتنمية مهارات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وخفض قلق التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية لدى تلاميذ المرحلة الإعدادية إعداد

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هدفت الدراسة الحالية بحث أثر استخدام استراتيجية قائمة على تطبيق Voscreen التعليمي لتنمية مهارات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وخفض قلق التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية لدى تلاميذ المرحلة الإعدادية ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة استخدمت الباحثة التصميم الشبه تجريبي وقد اشتملت عينة الدراسة على 60 طالبا وطالبة من طلاب الصف الثاني الإعدادي من مدرسة كفرابونجم الإعدادية المشتركة ، مركز ابوحمام محافظة الشرقية، مصر وقد تم تقسيمهم بالتساوي إلي مجموعتين : مجموعة ضابطة ومجموعة تجريبية. تم التدريس للمجموعة التجريبية باستخدام استراتيجية قائمة علي تطبيق Voscreen التعليمي بينما تلقت المجموعة الضابطة تدريسا بالطريقة التقليدية كما تم جمع البيانات من خلال اختبار المهارات الشفهية باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، وتم تطبيق هذه الأدوات قبليا وبعديا لكلا المجموعتين. وقد تم تصميم المادة الدراسية وتطبيقها خلال الفصل الدراسي الأول من العام الدراسي 2024-2025 وأظهرت النتائج أن (1) المجموعة التجريبية تفوقت علي المجموعة الضابطة نتيجة لتعرضها للتدريس باستخدام استراتيجية تطبيق Voscreen التعليمي(2) تحسين مهارات المجموعة التجريبية بعد تطبيق اختبارمهارات التحدث باللغة الانجليزية و مقياس خفض قلق التحدث باللغة الانجليزية مقارنة بالتطبيق القبلي وبناءا علي ذلك، يمكن استنتاج أن استخدام تطبيق Voscreen التعليمي فعال في تعزيز وتحسين مهارات التحدث باللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية وخفض قلق التحدث باللغة الانجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية : مهارات التحدث ، خفض قلق التحدث باللغة الانجليزية، تطبيق Voscreen التعليمي.

Abstract**Utilizing a Strategy Based on Voscreen Learning Application to Develop Preparatory School Students' EFL Speaking Skills and Reduce their Speaking Anxiety**

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The study aimed to investigate the effect of using a strategy based on the Voscreen APP on developing preparatory school students' EFL speaking skills and reducing their speaking anxiety. The participants were 60 students from Kafr Abo-Nejm preparatory school, Abo-Hamad, Sharkia Governorate, Egypt. They were equally divided into two groups, an experimental and a control group. The researcher adopted a quasi-experimental design. To achieve the aim of the research, the researcher designed four instruments: a speaking skills checklist, a pre-post test of speaking skills, a rubric, and a speaking anxiety scale. The experimental group was taught by using the Voscreen application while the control group received regular instruction. The results indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group due to the use of the assigned strategy. The results of the study revealed that the suggested strategy of using the Voscreen application was effective in developing speaking skills and reducing their speaking anxiety.

Keywords: Voscreen learning application, EFL speaking skills, speaking anxiety, preparatory school students.

Introduction

In daily life, speaking skills are a crucial ability. It's the capacity to use spoken language to communicate successfully. It is the capacity to speak to others, communicate ideas and concepts, express opinions with confidence, and influence others through speech. Thus, the pupils should work on their EFL speaking abilities. In this study, the speaking abilities of second-year preparatory school students will be developed through the use of the Voscreen application.

Speaking abilities are essential for EFL students because they help them speak, gain confidence, and become more proficient in the language. When studying a language, one's success in speaking classes is frequently based on their ability to communicate in the language. Helping people communicate their thoughts, feelings, and ideas in a variety of contexts is crucial (Manurung, 2015).

Because of this, a lot of students base their assessment of their language learning achievement and the success of their English course on how much they think their spoken language ability has increased (Sayin, 2015). Speaking is considered a useful ability. According to Nirmawati (2015), in particular, students are mostly evaluated on their speaking skills in real-world scenarios. Speaking is a vital part of daily communication.

First impressions are sometimes based on a person's ability to communicate clearly and smoothly. Speaking is a complicated procedure where students convey their ideas through words. It requires several interrelated abilities, such as fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Effective communication also heavily relies on nonverbal clues like body language and facial expressions. It is challenging for primary students to practice speaking in the EFL classroom because of its complexity. Speaking abilities are implicit and are acquired via practice, imitation, and observation. Through collaborative learning, and speaking

interaction participants progressively create mental models of effective speaking techniques (Shafipour, 2018).

Speaking comprises the following: offering words, speaking and understanding a language, vocally expressing oneself, employing words in a natural voice, and making discourse, according to Hornby (1995:826). The ability to produce utterances, phrases, and sentences while conveying ideas for a variety of audiences by using suitable language and grammatical rules together with a confident and at ease manner is known as speaking talent, according to Ashour (2014). (200, p. 261). Hedge. Fluency (ease of speech), confidence, coherence, speed, and pronunciation (sounds), pragmatics (usage and its rules), topicality (themes and ideas), morphology and lexis (words and their parts), grammar and syntax (structure), semantics, and discourses (conversation and utterances) are all components of speaking, which is a linguistic activity.

In addition to the physical representation of an abstract system, the grammatical structure of a language, or the pronunciation of specific sounds, speaking is a process that involves many other components. Speaking is another ability that calls for three different kinds of knowledge: vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. It also calls for the use of the right words in the right context and with the right pronunciation. EFL learners still face several difficulties regardless of their level of English language proficiency (Zyoud, 2016).

There are five categories of classroom speaking, according to Adaba (2017) and Colle (2023). These are:

1. Imitative speaking: This is when students mimic the words and sentences that their teacher or computer programs demonstrate. Pronunciation is enhanced, self-assurance is increased, and proper grammar and vocabulary usage are internalized.

2. Intensive speaking: Refers to the use of a small number of words in a highly regulated manner, such as promptly responding to a straightforward question or participating in controlled dialogues. It emphasizes the proper use of specific words or language. This exercise improves fluency and makes students feel more at ease using the target language for self-expression.

3. Respondent speaking: This entails engaging in quick dialogues and discussions as part of interactive classroom activities. This allows students to answer inquiries from their peers. It facilitates the evaluation of students' capacity to have conversations with one or more classmates by EFL professors.

4. Interactive Speaking: Compared to responsive speaking, interactive speaking is longer and more intricate. Students benefit from this kind of speech as it fosters social interactions, role-playing, and dialogue. For elementary students since it improves their motivation, teamwork, and communication abilities.

5. Extensive Speaking: This includes oral presentations, speeches, and monologues such as storytelling. One prevalent form of anxiety may be a fear of other languages. From slight anxiety to severe panic and terror, it can vary widely. Anxiety related to learning a foreign language may affect students' performance, according to Chan and Wu (2004). It is common for anxious students to struggle to react appropriately to their own mistakes. The fear or concern that arises when a student is expected to perform in a second or foreign language is referred to as language anxiety. Speaking is often seen to create more anxiety than other language skills, and many language learners find it to be incredibly stressful. Some students reportedly had a greater dread of public speaking than they did of elevators, snakes, and heights. Speaking English in an EFL classroom is challenging since students need to be confident when speaking a foreign language. They can exhibit a high degree of proficiency in acquiring the FL by speaking

fluently. Students are generally nervous, uncertain, and worried. This is referred to as anxiety related to foreign languages (Matsuda & Gobel, 2004).

Speaking anxiety significantly affects students' self-confidence since it often makes them feel inadequate when they are unable to communicate and display what they have learned. They consequently lose the confidence to perform in front of others, which prevents a student from understanding the teacher's explanation in its entirety (Maulidiyah, 2021).

Numerous forms of anxiety can be categorized as follows:

1. Trait anxiety:

The propensity to experience anxiety even in settings that don't pose a threat is known as trait anxiety. These individuals are more worried than most others and believe that several environmental factors are posing an unwarranted threat to them. It is a chronic illness that is a component of an individual's character. Trait anxiety can occasionally be severe and persistent. Trait anxiety is influenced by situational circumstances, intensity, and length (Aydin & Odaci, 2020).

2. Facilitating and debilitating anxiety:

Facilitative anxiety has a favorable impact on a learner's ability to complete a task, according to Brown (1994). Being a little nervous, he continued, encourages one to keep doing the deed. There has been disagreement among scholars on the concept of facilitative anxiety.

3. State anxiety:

State anxiety is a transient annoyance brought on by a potentially dangerous circumstance. It is a type of worry that usually has a definite trigger and happens in a particular circumstance. Accordingly, state anxiety is a feeling of anxiety that

people only experience when they are quickly faced with a certain situation (Englert & Bertrams, 2013).

The following strategies can help reduce foreign language speaking anxiety:

Cooperative learning:

In EFL, cooperative learning is a technique used to reduce students' nervousness. Working in small groups rather than alone can make them feel more at ease. They can participate with their peers if they don't understand the lesson and won't be worried about making errors while learning (Duxbury & Tsai, 2010).

Teacher-learner interaction:

An essential element of establishing a supportive learning environment for students is teacher-student interaction. Their emotions are released through their relationships and discussions with teachers. Teachers should establish an atmosphere where students like studying while they are being taught the content. By giving them feedback or incentives for their involvement, they should refrain from making them feel anxious during the learning process (Ahmad, Shaharim & Abdullah, 2017).

Instructional practices:

The degree of anxiety that students experience can be determined by the way professors give tests or assign tasks. Quizzes, interviews, and speaking aloud in front of the class are just a few of the ways that students might be tested. Teachers ought to know what kinds of assessments are easiest to conduct as well. To encourage students to explore their abilities and feel less anxious about taking a test, teachers should have the ability to select a theme for each test that piques their interest and background knowledge (Liu, 2006).

A recent, cutting-edge technology that helps pupils become more proficient in whatever language they choose to learn—not just English—is the Voscreen app. Students' reading, writing, and listening skills are enhanced, and they can watch

films to help them choose the right sentence with the right translation. Students' vocabulary grows and their speaking performance improves as a result. According to Taylan (2018), VoScreen is a mobile and web application used in foreign language training. The Voscreen app was selected due to its important role in the development of oral performance. As everyone knows, speaking is a talent that we must develop through social contact.

However, without assistance with grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, or pronunciation, the pupils are unable to participate in class discussions. Voscreen exposes students to a native speaker performance model, which boosts their confidence when interacting with others and gets them ready for conversations in the real world. Students should understand how easy it is to speak English and that they may eventually become native speakers (A. Alhawad & S. Almunif, 2020).

Context of the problem:

The problem of the present study has been emphasized in the following ways:

- a) Reviewing some previous studies related to EFL speaking skills and speaking anxiety (Manurung, 2015; Shafipour, 2018; Chan and Wu (2004); Englert&Bertrams,2013; Zyoud, 2016). These studies revealed that there is a profound weakness in EFL speaking skills and speaking anxiety among EFL Learners.
- b) Working as an EFL teacher in the preparatory stage, the researcher observed a low level of speaking skills and speaking anxiety among preparatory school students.
- c) Conducting a pilot study on a group of 30 students, enrolled in the 2nd-year, Kafr Abo-Nejm preparatory school, Sharkia Governorate, Egypt.

- d) Interviewing some EFL teachers in some preparatory schools showed that most students have a low level of speaking skills and have speaking anxiety among preparatory stage students.

Results of the test, illustrated in Table (1), indicated that the majority of the piloted speaking skills were poor.

Results of the scale, illustrated in Table (2), indicated that students have speaking anxiety.

Table (1)

The pilot study results of the EFL speaking skills test

Speaking Skills	Frequency of errors
fluency	0% 7
Pronunciation	0% 6
vocabulary	0% 7
Grammar	0% 6
Nonverbal communication	70%

Table (2)

EFL speaking anxiety scale results

Statement	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
1- Speaking in English in front of the entire class makes me nervous.	23	3	4
2- I feel relaxed while speaking English.	28	0	2
3-Because I'm shy, I don't talk as much.	19	5	6

4- I sometimes become so anxious in a speaking lesson that I forget stuff I know.	20	5	5
5-Instead of participating verbally in class, I would rather be quiet to prevent any awkward situations.	25	2	3
6-The other students usually seem to speak English more fluently than I do.	22	2	6
7-My confusion increases with the number of speaking assessments I take.	27	1	2
8-When speaking in English, I have trouble looking the audience in the eyes.	24	3	3

- The test score showed that most students have a low level of speaking skills.
- Students have speaking anxiety.

Statement of the problem:

In light of previous discussion, and the researcher's experience in EFL teaching, the problem of the current study showed that most students have a low level of speaking skills and have speaking anxiety among the EFL second-year preparatory stage students. Therefore, this study is an attempt to develop these skills among the EFL second-year preparatory stage students through the Voscreen learning application.

Questions of the study:

The present research attempted to answer the following main question:

What is the effect of a strategy based on Voscreen learning applications on developing preparatory school students' EFL speaking skills and reducing speaking anxiety?

The following sub-questions were derived from the above mentioned one :

- 1)** What are the speaking skills required for 2nd-**year** preparatory stage students?
- 2)** What is the actual level of 2nd-**year** preparatory stage students in EFL speaking skills?
- 3)** How can the Voscreen learning application strategy be designed to develop the EFL speaking skills of 2nd-**year** preparatory stage students?
- 4)** What is the students' actual level of speaking anxiety?
- 5)** To what extent is the strategy effective in reducing the students' speaking anxiety?

Significance of the study

The study would hopefully be significant to :

- 1) EFL Students,** as it may
 - Improve their EFL speaking skills.
 - Reduce students' speaking anxiety towards speaking skills.
- 2) EFL Teachers :**
 - It may provide them with a list of EFL speaking skills necessary for second-grade language preparatory school students to be taken into consideration while teaching the listening and speaking activities.
 - It may provide them with guidelines for using the Voscreen learning application as a strategy in teaching.

3) EFL Curriculum designers:

It may help them to take into consideration the principles and propositions of the voscreen learning application strategy while designing and preparing EFL textbooks.

4) EFL researchers:

It may guide other researchers to conduct further studies on developing EFL skills through using the strategy.

Hypotheses of the study:

1-There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in the post-administration of the EFL speaking skills test results, in favor of the experimental group.

2-There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre and post-administrations of the EFL speaking skills test results, in favor of the post-administration.

3- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in the post-administration of the EFL speaking anxiety scale results, in favor of the experimental group.

4- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre- and post-administration of the EFL speaking anxiety scale results, in favor of the post-administration.

5- The Voscreen learning application strategy has a large effect on improving EFL speaking skills.

6- The Voscreen Learning application strategy has a large effect on developing 2nd-year preparatory stage students' speaking anxiety.

Procedures of the study:

1. To answer the study questions, the researcher will adopt the following procedures:

2. Reviewing literature and previous studies related to:

3. Speaking skills to determine the skills required for the participants.

4. Speaking anxiety to design a speaking anxiety scale.

The use of Voscreen learning applications in developing speaking skills.

5. Designing a checklist of speaking skills and judging it by a panel of specialists.

6. Designing a pre and post-speaking skills test to submit it to a jury of specialists to determine their validity and reliability.

7. Preparing a speaking anxiety scale questionnaire and presenting it to a panel of specialists.

8. Designing the study material on the basis of the Voscreen learning application strategy to develop the identified EFL speaking skills for the second-grade language preparatory school students.

9. Selecting the participants of the study from the second-year preparatory school students at Kafr Abo-Nejm preparatory school and dividing them into two groups.

10. The first is the experimental group (will be taught through the Voscreen learning application strategy), and the second is the control group (will be taught traditionally).

11. Pre-administering the EFL speaking test to both groups to identify the speaking skills.

12. Pre-administering the speaking anxiety scale to both groups.

Implementing the Voscreen learning applications strategy sessions for the experimental group.

13. Post administering the speaking test to both groups to investigate the effect of the Voscreen learning application strategy.

14. Post administering the speaking anxiety scale of both groups.

Comparing the results of both administrations to the two groups to conclude the results.

15. Analyzing and treating data statistically.

16. Discussing and interpreting the results of the study.

Delimitations of the study:

The current study would be delimited to the following:

- 1) Second-year preparatory stage students at Kafr Abo-Nejm Preparatory School, Abo-Hamad, Sharkia Governorate, Egypt, as they lack speaking skills and have speaking anxiety.
- 2) A questionnaire for EFL speaking skills.
- 3) Some speaking skills which will be approved by the jury members and suitable for the targeted students, and match the Ministry's Directions.
- 4) Speaking anxiety scale.

Method of the study:

Design of the study

The participants were 60 students from Kafr Abo-Nejm preparatory school, Abo-Hamad, Sharkia Governorate, Egypt. They were equally divided into two groups, an experimental and a control group. The researcher adopted a quasi-experimental design. The experimental group was taught by using the Voscreen application while the control group received regular instruction. An EFL speaking skills pre-post test was administered to the two groups before and after the experiment.

Participants of The Study

The participants included 60 students in Kafr Abo-Nejm preparatory school, Abo-Hamad, Sharkia Governorate, Egypt. They were assigned to two groups, experimental and control. It was assumed that the participants formed a homogeneous group. So they were expected to have a lot in common and wouldn't differ much regarding the quality of experience or their age.

To make sure that the development of some of the students' EFL speaking skills and reducing speaking anxiety were attributed only to the effect of the Voscreen learning application strategy, the researcher attempted to control some variables to make sure that both the experimental and control groups were equivalent.

These variables were: Age: all students ' ages ranged from 13 -14 years. Grade: All students were in the second-year preparatory school.

The EFL speaking skills targeted in the current study were also controlled before the study experiment, as follows:

Table (1)

Independent samples test for the study groups of the pre-EFL Speaking Skills Test.

Group	Number of Participants	Mean scores	Standard Deviation	t-Value
Control	30	13.8	2.13	3.4
Experimental	30	13.3	1.9	

Table (1) shows that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups, t being (3.4). This shows homogeneity between the two groups. That is to say, the two groups were at almost the same level of performance in the EFL speaking skills. Thus, any variance between the two groups that might happen after the experiment could be attributed to the effect of the experiment. The pre-test scores revealed that the participants had an average low proficiency in EFL speaking skills.

Table (2)

t-test for Comparing the Treatment and the Control Groups in the Speaking anxiety pre-test.

Group	Number of Participants	Mean Scores	Standard Deviation	t-value
control	30	31.4	4.9	10.7
Experimental	30	31.8	6.04	

Table (2) shows that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group, t being (10.7). This

shows homogeneity between the two groups. That is to say, the two groups were at almost the same level of speaking anxiety. Thus, any variance between the two groups that might happen after the experiment could be attributed to the effect of the experiment. The pre-test scores revealed that the participants had speaking anxiety.

The instruments of the study:

Four instruments were used as follows: "For EFL speaking skills " variable:

- a- An EFL speaking skills checklist.
- b- A pre-post EFL speaking skills test.
- c- A Rubric for scoring an EFL speaking Skills test.

"For speaking anxiety" variable:

- d - Speaking anxiety Scale.

Purpose of the study

This study aimed at:

Developing speaking skills and reducing speaking anxiety for second-year preparatory stage students by using the Voscreen learning application strategy.

Definitions of the research

Some terms were repeatedly used in the present study. These are :

Speaking skills:

Speaking, according to Aad Ahmed (2020) and Ahmed (2020), is the process of creating and conveying meaning through the use of both spoken and non-spoken symbols in a range of situations. Speaking entails students expressing themselves orally, logically, and intelligently. Speaking abilities are defined as having the ability to converse, articulate ideas, and use language effectively for sincere communication Koran (2015), Shakti (2019), and Astorga (2015). The present study defined "speaking skills" as the capacity of second-year preparatory-stage students to express their ideas and opinions in a fluid and spontaneous manner.

Speaking anxiety:

According to Sşoimu (2007), it is a form of gloss-phobia, which is the dread of speaking or trying to talk in public. This fear might result in tension, perspiration, freezing, or reddening. It can also be described as a person's anxiety or worry related to existing or planned oral EFL communication in a foreign language with another person or people (He, 2018: p 4). The researcher's operational definition of speaking anxiety in this study was a condition of stress, worry, and fear that prevents students from speaking in EFL classes both before and while speaking.

Voscreen Learning Application:

A recent, cutting-edge technology that helps pupils become more proficient in whatever language they choose to learn—not just English—is the Voscreen app. According to Taylan (2018), VoScreen is a mobile and web application used in foreign language training.

In the current study, this software allows students to practice their pronunciation by using brief snippets from films or videos. Students repeat the same brief video clip while listening to actual native speakers conversing with one another. Their spoken language can be improved. The Voscreen learning application is a type of digital learning that uses wireless communication devices to deliver instructional content and learning support materials to second-year preparatory stage students.

Summary of the study:

Despite the importance of EFL speaking skills, they are neglected in general and at the preparatory stage in particular. So, the current study was an attempt to indicate the role of a strategy based on the Voscreen learning application to develop

EFL preparatory school students' speaking skills and reduce speaking anxiety to communicate in English.

Results of the study:

Based on the study findings, discussion, and interpretation, it is possible to conclude that:

- The use of the Voscreen learning application strategy has been proven to be effective in improving EFL second-year preparatory school students' EFL speaking skills and reducing speaking anxiety to communicate in English.
- Applying the Voscreen learning application strategy has improved the understanding of conversations and dialogues, and increased the experimental participants' creativity in composing them.
- Teaching can be learner-centered, with the teacher acting as a facilitator and supporter while engaging in the Voscreen learning application strategy.
- Using the Voscreen learning application strategy has encouraged collaborative learning and allowed the experimental participants to interact with each other.
- Appreciating the efforts of the experimental participants and giving positive feedback encouraged them to speak and perform freely without inhibition and hesitation.
- Using the Voscreen learning application strategy helped the experimental participants overcome some of their speaking performance difficulties and weaknesses.
- The experimental participants were able to speak freely, ask questions, express feelings and opinions, and take control of the speaking process without fear.
- During the sessions of implementing the speaking activities, the experimental participants were active in speaking English.

Recommendations of the study:

Based on the results of the current study, the following recommendations should be considered when teaching EFL:

- EFL teachers should be encouraged to adopt the Voscreen learning application strategy for teaching speaking skills.
- Curriculum designers should integrate Voscreen learning application strategy procedures for teaching EFL speaking skills.
- Students should be trained to use the Voscreen learning application strategy.
- EFL teachers should be equipped with the necessary knowledge to incorporate the Voscreen learning application into the classroom, enabling students to utilize these resources effectively for their education.
- EFL teachers should give students instant feedback during the speaking process.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. Investigating the effect of using a Voscreen learning application strategy on students' achievement at preparatory and secondary schools in English.
2. Voscreen learning application strategy for disabled students' various language skills.
3. Investigating EFL students' speaking anxiety using a smartphone learning application strategy in teaching.
4. Using the Voscreen learning applications strategy to develop students' EFL writing, listening, and reading skills.

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