

Investigating the Effectiveness of Self-Filming and Imitation on English Speaking Skills of Saudi EFL Learners

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Abstract—This study used a sequential explanatory mixed method to determine the efficacy of combined imitation and self-filming interventions in enhancing spoken English skills among Saudi EFL learners. There were 76 secondary government school students in Saudi Arabia who participated in this study. They were purposively assigned either to the experimental group (n=37) or the control group (n=39). Based on the IELTS framework, data before and after implementation were collected quantitatively using pre- and post-tests; subsequently, qualitative data from students' self-filming activities and semi-structured interviews followed. Quantitative data analysis was carried out by SPSS, while a thematic approach was used for the analysis of qualitative data. The results obtained quantitatively indicated that between these two groups, there is an experimentally significant improvement in spoken English skills among those participants who belong to this experimental group as compared with those participants who belong to a control group. Qualitatively, such results established positive impacts of imitation and self-filming on active learning, self-reflection, and confidence building. They copied different scenes from the movie and imitated native pronunciation and intonation, thus improving their speaking competence in English. In the same way, self-filming enabled the participants to realize and rectify mistakes in oral communication. Also, since those movie scenes were real, it added pragmatic competence for the learners to be able to use various types of communication more effectively. Lastly, since most of the participants enjoyed both imitations and self-filming, these interventions worked towards creating a learning setup that reduced anxiety, hence increased proficiency.

Index Terms—self-filming, imitation, speaking, EFL, language acquisition

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, digital tools have significantly impacted English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. Indeed, integrating digital tools into an EFL classroom has been highly productive in the teaching and learning of all four language skills (Lai, 2018; Saqlain et al., 2013); for example, in writing, learners can use these tools to identify and rectify surface errors, formulate essay prompts, and choose the right words. Similarly, digital tools can facilitate the learning of speaking English through pronunciation exercises, self-filming, speaking prompts, and virtual conversations (Al Mahmud, 2022; Al Mahmud & Saqlain, 2023). Likewise, an array of digital tools such as podcasts, YouTube videos, movie apps, and video recordings has greatly helped EFL learners improve their speaking and listening abilities (Soyoof et al., 2023). Moreover, digital tools facilitate language learning beyond the classroom too; this self-directed learning outside the classroom is known as the “digital wilds” (Liu & Darvin, 2023; Sauro & Zourou, 2019) and is a non-formal digital way of learning English (Dressman & Lee, 2021; Lee et al., 2024; Zhang & Liu, 2022). Overall, digital tools foster a dynamic and immersive learning environment both in and outside the classroom, providing learners with interactive platforms for practice, exposure to various native speakers, immediate feedback, and opportunities to refine their speaking proficiency.

Furthermore, in the sphere of applying language acquisition techniques, self-recording and imitation are described as very efficient approaches. Viewing English movies, documentaries, television series, and the like on YouTube and other video platforms is positively related to speaking performance among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners (Hamad et al., 2019). Native character imitation through English films has been found by Fauzi (2019) to be significantly more useful than any other method in improving the speaking abilities of EFL learners, and especially their pronunciation. Learners gain benefits from recording themselves while imitating scenes from English films because such practice helps in fine-tuning pronunciation, practicing various expressions and accents, and discovering their mistakes (Mann et al., 2020). The idea of self-filming to improve public speaking skills has been around for quite some time; however, it became even more popular with the invention of smartphones and webcams during the early to mid-2000s (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2023). Many studies conducted in EFL contexts have validated the effectiveness of self-filming as a pedagogical tool in developing the oral competencies of EFL learners (Ali, 2017; Ali & Bin-Hady, 2019; Wijaya, 2020; Ja'ashan, 2015). Self-videotaping performances helps EFL learners realize their mistakes and understand their strengths and weaknesses in spoken English performance. Recording material to review speeches usually promotes reflective thinking among learners, who more consciously and explicitly analyze improvement and weaknesses in oral communication (Li et al., 2018). Such

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introspection has been found to relate to important development regarding competence in speaking English (Sundqvist, 2019; Godwin-Jones, 2019; Shafirova & Cassany, 2024).

Besides the use of self-recording, imitation has also become a very popular teaching technique in EFL classrooms since the late 20th/early 21st centuries. Studies that have investigated the effectiveness of classroom imitation indicate that it provides truthful language models for learners to imitate (Matti, 2017). A student naturally speaks more accurately by imitating the pronunciation, intonation, and rhythmic patterns of native speakers. This method assists learners in reducing the effect of their first language on English pronunciation, so they sound clearer and more fluent (Wijaya, 2020). Imitation drills are utterances, sentences, or dialogs listened to and then repeated by the learner; therefore, they significantly improve listening comprehension for finding contextually appropriate answers and speaking abilities (Almurashi, 2016). Generally, imitation develops the ability of an EFL learner to catch and produce minor differences in sounds, which makes communication easier and more confident.

A. Reasons for the Study

Numerous studies have focused on various approaches and tools to improve the speaking skills of EFL learners (Al Mahmud & Khan, 2023); still, a review of the literature reveals that studies on the effectiveness of specific learning tools, such as self-filming and imitation, are sparse. Though several investigations have dwelled on digital tools that help different EFL learners improve their speaking abilities in English (Naseem et al., 2022; Cheng, 2018; Aryani & Rizkiyani, 2017), very few have directly tested the combined effects of self-filming and imitation on EFL learners' oral communication proficiency. The majority of earlier studies concentrated on how these tools could help students pronounce words clearly and confidently, speak fluently, and be motivated (Almurashi, 2016; Zerrougui & Taibi, 2018; Lengkoan & Hampp, 2022; Mardiyah & Santika, 2023; Palpanadan et al., 2021); hence, a huge research gap exists in understanding the integrated effect of self-filming and imitation on students' speaking abilities. Therefore, this study seeks to determine whether or not self-filming and imitation can serve as complementary strategies for improving spoken English language skills among EFL learners.

B. Significance of the Study

This paper discusses a progressively important aspect of EFL teaching: the use of digital tools, particularly self-filming and imitation, to improve spoken English proficiency. Over recent decades, digital tools have transformed language teaching by offering dynamic means for learning and practicing the language. An assessment of how self-filming and imitation generally affect language teaching will go a long way in repositioning the methodology of learning EFL and restructuring oral communication skills.

C. Research Objectives

The study will adequately discuss how self-filming and imitation contribute to the development of speaking competence among English as a Foreign Language learners. A detailed analysis of how effective self-filming and imitation are toward this end shall provide empirical evidence regarding their impact on language learning achievements. The research also assesses if and to what degree self-filming and imitation constitute functionally supplemental pedagogy in language teaching. Previous research considered self-filming and imitation as separate tools of instruction, concentrating mainly on one or the other at a time. This study compares results when both tools are used together for improving spoken English proficiency among EFL learners.

D. Research Questions

This study was guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent does video recording positively impact Saudi EFL learners' spoken English?
2. To what extent does the imitation technique positively influence Saudi EFL learners' spoken English?
3. What do Saudi EFL learners think about self-filming and imitation as language learning tools?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Impact of Self-Filming on the Enhancement of Spoken English

Naseem et al. (2022) investigated the effect of digital tools, like eBooks, audio-visual CDs, and other online materials, in teaching spoken English to Saudi undergraduates. After having administered a pre-test to 50 third-level male students at Al-Ghad International College for Applied Medical Sciences, the researchers divided them into two groups: a control group and an experimental group. Each group consisted of 25 students. The control group was taught spoken English using traditional methods, whereas the experimental group was taught using various digital tools. On the completion of the 15 weeks of teaching, a post-test was administered to both groups, and the data were analyzed employing a quantitative method. The results suggested that the intervention of digital tools in EFL classrooms enhanced the performance of the experimental group.

Additionally, Cheng (2018) selected English teachers at a Swedish secondary school to investigate how the integration of digital tools in classroom teaching impacted both EFL instructors and learners. The results showed that the use of digital tools made the class greatly interactive. For example, by using online dictionaries, teachers were able to correct

mispronunciations by students immediately. Some of these applications included YouTube, pronunciation applications, daily conversation applications, and video recording, which made learning to speak English easier, more effective, and interesting. However, the researcher found that some teachers faced problems because they lacked training in digital classroom tools.

Syifa (2023) studied the effectiveness of video recording in teaching spoken English, which resulted in significantly improving oral communication skills for EFL learners. She had 34 seventh-grade Indonesian students from SMPN 29 Bandar Lampung participate in her study, with all having received equal amounts and types of language training among them. The present study adopted a quantitative research methodology under an experimental design to test how effective the use of video recording would be within a traditional English classroom setting. Results indicated that the speaking ability of these learners improved markedly after practicing self-video recording (SVR). Confidence levels were positively influenced by the frequent practice of self-filming different tasks.

Alkhelifi and Alaudan (2024) also explored perceptions of university educators on the impact of self-video recording on improving the English speaking proficiency of EFL learners. The study was quantitative and, therefore, responded systematically to statistically significant insights at the levels of agreement by the instructors. Participants were expert EFL/ESL teachers from King Saud University, who often assessed students' speaking performance. More specifically, results indicated that most participants strongly agreed that self-video recording significantly improved speaking proficiency in learners. Moreover, it was found that self-video recording increased confidence among learners as well as lexico-grammatical resources and pronunciation improvements.

B. The Impact of the Imitation Technique on the Enhancement of Spoken English

Besides the use of video recording as a tool in learning the language, many researchers have studied how effective the imitation methodology could be in teaching and learning spoken English. For example, Zerrougui and Taibi (2018) ran an experiment using a control group and an experimental group to determine the impact of watching movies with imitations on learners' connected speech. The control group received training in oral communication by traditional means, whereas the experimental group's training included watching movies and learning imitation techniques. In the end, the experimental group outscored the control group, although the performance of the control group in terms of pronunciation, stress, situational conversations, facial expressions, and gestures improved.

In a related study, Lengkoan and Hampp (2022) investigated students at Universitas Negeri Manado in Indonesia and found that the application of the imitation technique in an advanced listening class refined the learners' pronunciation. Before treatment, the researchers administered a pretest. They provided the students with various lists of words and asked them to pronounce those words. In the post-test, the students were provided with the same list of words. Findings indicated that the learners made significant improvements in pronunciation. Additionally, short videos were played in the classroom, and the learners were asked to imitate the dialogues, facial expressions, and postures of the actors. By continually watching videos of numerous situational conversations, the learners were exposed to standard pronunciation, natural speech patterns, and contextual use of words. Moreover, implementing active learning in the classroom noticeably elevated the students' level of motivation.

A recent study on the effectiveness of imitation techniques in a spoken English class by Mardiyah and Santika (2023) found that EFL learners imitating characters from short English films produced very good results. This is also backed up by a quasi-experimental study where it was found that the mean score of the experimental group was significantly higher than that of the control group. More particularly, concerning pronunciation, significant improvements were realized by the experimental group learners in phrase imitation, pausing, assimilation, elision, and intonation. The imitation technique also improved students' fluency and grammatical accuracy.

Furthermore, Palpanadan et al. (2021) carried out a study on the problems of oral communication faced by EFL learners. To understand students' perceptions of the effectiveness of imitation as an activity that would improve their spoken English, this study included 51 engineering undergraduates from a technical university in Malaysia. The results showed that the majority of students expressed concern about mispronunciations that they could not sustain for long when speaking in public. About 90% of participants indicated that the imitation technique could help improve their pronunciation and reduce glossophobia; thus, results indicated that this technique helps in increasing the pronunciation of respondents regarding intonation about mispronunciation. Moreover, the results also showed that 41.2% of students had problems with pronouncing final sounds because voiced and voiceless sounds were not differentiated.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Methods

A mixed-methods study was applied to determine the perceptions of the English-speaking performance of Saudi learners of English as a foreign language. The first phase included an IELTS speaking test administered to the students to acquire some quantitative results on their speaking abilities. In another phase, self-filmed video material from the students was analyzed, adding more depth and providing a better idea of their skills and behavior in different contexts. Qualitative data through face-to-face interviews were also collected for deeper exploration based on the thoughts and experiences of the respondents. Therefore, this implies that such a methodological approach will result in balanced quantitative and qualitative data that would somewhat fully explain how well or badly the student speaks English.

B. Participants

Participants in the study included 76 students between 16 and 18 years old under the English as a Foreign Language context at a public secondary school in Saudi Arabia. All students had different levels of speaking proficiency and were non-native speakers of English. The students were divided randomly into two groups: a control group of 39 students and an experimental group of 37 students. The control group received instruction only through traditional teaching methods, whereas the experimental group was exposed to imitation as well as self-filming interventions. All participants voluntarily signed written consent forms before participating in any activity relating to this study and were also assured that confidentiality would be maintained regarding their responses. Some qualified IELTS instructors from a Saudi Arabian university willingly volunteered to help conduct and mark pre- and post-tests.

C. Instruments

Three tools were used in this study to collect both quantitative and qualitative data: a pre-test and a post-test were used as the quantitative tools for measuring improvement in speaking proficiency, thus offering fairly organized and unbiased benchmarks for evaluation. Additionally, video recordings were used as a qualitative tool for the comprehensive analysis of speaking performance, as some aspects could be vividly expressed in text. In addition, semi-structured interviews with ten students were conducted, which took about 30-40 minutes each and provided detailed insight regarding experience and perception.

D. Procedures

This study was designed as an investigation into the effects of imitation and self-filming in enhancing speaking proficiency among EFL learners. A 12-week study was carried out involving 76 students from a government high school in Saudi Arabia. All 76 respondents took a pre-test before being treated and were then divided into two groups: one control group containing 39 respondents and one experimental group containing 37 respondents. All respondents were informed about the aim of the study prior to its beginning, and all of them consented to participate in the study. The experimental group received a treatment of imitation and self-filming activities outside of class, while the control group continued learning by traditional means. The respondents in the experimental group undertook several self-filming activities with imitations that were later followed by a post-test for both groups at the intervention period. Results were analyzed to determine the difference in progress between the two groups. Three IELTS-certified examiners associated with a university in Saudi Arabia facilitated and supervised the administration and marking of both the pre-test and post-test. Qualitative data were also collected through semi-structured interviews. In addition, 10 students from the experimental group were purposively selected for interviews. Interview protocols were distributed to them before the interviews, which were then conducted, and transcripts were thematically analyzed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The interviews aimed to identify self-filming and imitation as language learning strategies that can alter students' perceptions and attitudes toward treatments. This procedure ensured gaining comprehensive insights into the effects that influence speaking proficiency among EFL students.

E. Data Analysis

The data analysis of this study employed both quantitative and qualitative orientations. The quantitative data were pre-tests and post-tests, so statistics were run to see if the change had taken place in the variables of interest. In this case, it would show if a significant difference between before and after intervention performances and results existed. Qualitative data included semi-structured interviews; therefore, thematic analysis was utilized. Coding led to themes, recurring patterns, and insights that facilitated understanding at a deeper level of experience and behavior of the participants: something that complements and helps elucidate quantitative findings. Student-recorded video analysis, plus feedback from participants on their experiences with self-filming and imitation, qualitatively gives added insight into whether these methods could be considered educational tools. The integrated data can comprehensively describe how these interventions work toward achieving spoken language development.

IV. RESULTS

A. Quantitative Findings

The study involved 76 student candidates ages 16 to 18 sampled from two classes at a public secondary school. The candidates were exposed to either control or experimental environments. Table 1 below shows the mean, standard deviation, and t-test for two independent samples to acknowledge the presence of statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the control group and the experimental group in speaking skills on the pre-test stage.

TABLE 1
THE MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION, AND T-TEST IN SPEAKING SKILLS IN THE PRE-MEASUREMENT

Test	Group	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test	p-value
Pre-Test Speaking Skills	Experimental Group	37	2.891	0.890	0.09	0.929
	Control Group	39	2.910	0.887		

Table 1 above emphasizes that the value of the t-test to test speaking skills is statistically insignificant, since the p-value associated with the test is higher than the level of statistical significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). As a result, we should accept the null hypothesis that there are no statistically significant differences between the average scores of the candidates of both the control and experimental groups on the pre-test. Thus, the researchers conclude that the scores of the control and experimental groups are equal before our intervention, which means our variables of movie making and imitation will be the only differences between the two groups.

Furthermore, the mean, standard deviation, and two independent t-tests were performed to investigate whether or not there are significant differences between the mean scores of the control group and experimental group in speaking skills in the post-measurement. Table 2 below shows these results.

TABLE 2
THE MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION, AND T-TEST IN SPEAKING SKILLS IN THE POST-MEASUREMENT

Test	Group	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test	p-value	Eta Square
Post-Test Speaking Skills	Experimental Group	37	3.88	0.78	5.95	<0.001	0.637
	Control Group	39	2.74	0.87			

Table 2 shows that there is a statistically significant difference at the level of significance ($\alpha = 0.01$) between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups in speaking skills.

Speaking skills tests and differences support the experimental group over the control group, where the mean of the experimental group's speaking skills tests (3.88) was higher than that of the control group (2.74); moreover, it was also statistically significant ($t = 5.95$, $p < 0.001$), implying the statistical significance of the effectiveness of introducing movie making and imitation to enhance speaking skills. The effect size (eta square η^2) for using movie making and imitation as learning methods encompassing speaking skills was 0.637. This means that 64% of the variance in speaking skills is attributed to the use of movie-making and imitation in speaking skills.

B. Qualitative Findings

This study investigated the effects of two major interventions, self-filming and imitation, on the Saudi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' speaking skills, followed by semi-structured interviews to enhance our understanding. The quantitative findings revealed that students from the experimental group significantly outscored their counterparts from the control group when skill enhancement was considered. Qualitative findings yielded information whereby these learners indicated that, apart from improving their speaking abilities, new insights were gained regarding learning experiences. Analysis of self-filmed videos made evident more active participation, conscious assessment, and critical thinking among the students themselves. Thematic evidence gathered from interviews opened up four major themes: first, visual and auditory feedback provided through self-filmed videos helped learners who had pronunciation problems; second, imitating English movie scenes was found to be fruitful in enhancing fluency; third, confidence was built up by monitoring their improvement; and finally, fourth, recording oneself applying language pragmatically and contextually makes a difference. These qualitative results offer a solid ground for understanding quantitative discoveries through intervention as an agent of transformation in boosting speaking proficiency.

(a). Contribution of Imitation and Self-Filming

The captured videos gained very important perceptions regarding the impact of imitation on developing proficiency in English speaking among Saudi EFL learners. It was evaluated under the parameters of pronunciation, fluency, and speaking ability. The major findings are:

1. Pronunciation

Video evaluations indicated improvement of pronunciation accuracy over time, mostly by the degree to which learners imitated native speakers. For example, in the first set of self-filmed videos, researchers discovered that these learners were having problems with certain English consonant sound productions. They regularly imitated native speakers from scenes in English films to overcome their problems with articulation and pronunciation. Imitation familiarized learners not only with the pronunciation and articulation of twenty vowel sounds (long, short, and diphthongs) but also removed their misconception that there are only five vowels in English.

2. Fluency

Fluency is another area that saw improvement. Learners made good progress there. In the earlier recorded clips, the learners struggled to speak for an extended time due to an inadequate range of vocabulary, limited pragmatic understanding of words, phrases, and sentences, and substantial grammatical structures. Over the course of time, the learners developed the ability to deliver long sentences smoothly, with increased natural cadence, approximating the speech of characters they imitated. Those who regularly practiced various phrases, sentences, and idiomatic expressions used by movie characters displayed evident enhancement. For example, in the initial videos, some learners were hindered by frequent pauses, slow speech rate, filler words, and anxiety. However, their subsequent videos demonstrated a noticeable decrease in pauses, improved speech rate, and enhanced confidence.

3. Intonation and Oratory

The third area of progress for Saudi EFL learners was their quick familiarization with various tones and their smooth delivery. In early recordings, learners were unable to use various tones of the English language, although their sentence construction and word usage were acceptable. For example, they often used a flat or monotone delivery when a rising tone was required. Also, they were not aware of when to stress a word and when not. By imitating English characters from various movies, they developed the ability to place proper accents within words and sentences and use different tones relevant to the mood of those sentences. One learner, for example, delivered sentences either in monotone or in inappropriate tones in his initial videos. However, in later videos, he became aware of various types of tones and their corresponding moods, understanding which tone would conform to the mood of a sentence.

4. *Imitation to Spontaneity*

The imitation approach proved highly effective in augmenting Saudi learners' ability to speak spontaneously. Regular practice of imitating native speakers in movies helped the learners overcome their fear and achieve spontaneity in their speech. At the start, they concentrated on duplicating the sentence patterns, word choice, and pronunciation of English letters, but with practice, their brains assimilated the grammatical structure of sentences, the arrangement of dependent and independent clauses, idiomatic expressions, and other conversational cues. This regular exercise moved them from conscious mimicry to effortless recall. For example, two learners who repeatedly imitated the conversations of movie characters celebrating a birthday in a restaurant started using the same formal and informal expressions, along with appropriate tone and body language, in a subsequent video.

(b). *Students' Perceptions of the Impact of Self-Filming and Imitation on Enhancing Speaking Proficiency*

Filming themselves while imitating movie scenes allowed the learners to assess their own pronunciation. They would identify pronunciation mistakes with certain sounds and correct them through recurrent practice. The visual feedback of how their tongue, lips, and mouth moved while articulating various words helped the learners attain correct pronunciation. For example, two students (S1 & S2) said:

We failed many times in knowing how to correct the pronunciation of words that English movie characters speak. We were very confused about one word's pronunciation with another word's pronunciation. When we were imitating many movie dialogues, we knew that we must pronounce nouns and verbs with different pronunciations. And it was a great help to us in understanding how we should pronounce two different words with different spellings. If a word is a noun, it has a certain pronunciation, but if the same word is a verb, we pronounce it differently.

Besides pronunciation, continually watching various scenes helped the learners familiarize themselves with new words and their usage, grammatical structures, situational expressions in different conversational contexts, and natural rhythm and intonation patterns. This type of learning motivated the students to actively participate in imitation activities and enhance their fluency. According to S3, S4, and S5:

We wanted to speak. We had ideas. Even then, we were not able to make sentences because we did not know when we should use which type of word. We did not know about the intonation of new expressions. We did not feel free because of hesitation. Imitating made our learning enjoyable, and we improved.

In addition, regularly imitating scenes enabled students to understand the contextual as well as pragmatic use of language. Movies depict authentic use of language in real-life situations, such as informal discussions, conflicts, and greetings. Imitating these conversations helped students grasp how language is used in various situations and enhanced their pragmatic speaking skills. In the opinion of S6, S7, and S8, learning the pragmatic use of language was very important:

We watched scenes of speaking at airports, railway stations, restaurants, hotels, and formal and informal meetings. Before, we did not know what to say, so we felt ashamed because we did not know what to say at railway stations, airports, or restaurants, or how we could greet people in an office. Also, we had no information about how to use sentences in different situations. Watching movies gave us a lot of information about sentences that are spoken in different situations. And we practiced them in imitation activities, so now we can use many of them.

Moreover, for EFL learners, self-filming and imitation techniques would create an environment conducive to the active learning of spoken English. Imitating movie characters would allow learners to internalize vocabulary, situational expressions, facial expressions, and gestures for a better understanding of how language is used in different scenarios. Furthermore, imitation boosted their listening, helping them grasp fast speech and different accents. Also, it enabled them to adapt to the use of strings of words, phrases, and complex sentences.

V. DISCUSSION

This study explored the impact of self-filming and imitation techniques on the speaking skills improvement of Saudi EFL learners based on three major research questions. The results showed an answer to each question, thus improving general knowledge of good language acquisition strategies. The merging of qualitative and quantitative results creates meaningful insights that need to be discussed.

RQ1: To what extent does video recording positively impact Saudi EFL learners' spoken English?

Quantitative results revealed much better speaking proficiency for Saudi learners who practiced self-filming. The experimental group performed significantly better in the post-test compared to the control group, with their mean score jumping from 2.891 to 3.88 ($p < 0.001$). These results go some way toward supporting the view that self-filming can enhance spoken English through providing opportunities for self-assessment accompanied by reflection. Some qualitative data also support this view by shedding light on the fact that learners were able to recognize mispronunciations through video reviews and make corrections, thereby making articulation clearer. From qualitative findings, it seems that self-filming has boosted the confidence of learners, with concrete evidence found while reviewing how monitoring the progress over time enabled them to see definite improvements, most likely encouraging them to be more actively engaged in learning.

The integration of self-filming in the class has already evidenced a great impact on the pronunciation, intonation, and fluency of the learners. This supports the claim by Huang (2022) that video recording has an immense effect on the pronunciation, intonation, and language proficiency of learners. In most cases, it is seen that after reviewing their self-recorded videos, the learners recognize their mistakes in pronunciation. This supports the finding that identification of errors is a resource for improving pronunciation (Hago & Khan, 2015). Regularly reviewing recorded speech performances by students themselves can show specific elements of pronunciation that need to be improved. Evidence also validates this finding through proof that lessons involving fun dubbing activities in classroom settings have a strong possibility to improve learners' abilities regarding their pronunciation skills (Wu & Ekstam, 2021).

The study found significant changes in fluency output by the learners, thus underscoring the place of lexical improvement and contextual understanding in the learning process. At first, low extended utterance output was characterized by vocabulary inadequacies and grammatical ineptitude, with frequent pauses and slow rates of speech. However, as the respondents revealed that they had adequate practice lessons—mostly through imitating native speakers—practice lessons yielded improved fluency output with less frequent pauses that was more confident. This finding is parallel to earlier studies on the impacts of video dubbing in class on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' fluency development and understanding of language use in context (Chiu, 2012).

Another finding is the important role of authentic English media in changing learners' intonation and elocution. At the beginning, the monotonous delivery of most learners posed a common problem. Achieving linguistic proficiency does not necessarily equate to acquiring the ability for good oral communication. Over a period, through self-realization by viewing their self-filmed videos, learners realized that their speech was monotonous, and with practice for variation, they improved and were appreciated as having acquired contextual variation of tone. The above results are supported by the findings of He and Wasuntarasophit (2015) and Luo et al. (2016). Exposure to different linguistic contexts highly improves learners' ability to use different tones that result in better oral competence.

RQ2: To what extent does the imitation technique positively influence Saudi EFL learners' spoken English?

The second research question was regarding the role that imitation could play in improving speaking abilities. Results found that steady imitation of native English speakers greatly enhances the pronunciation, intonation, and oratory skills of the learners from Saudi Arabia. The results proved that learners faced issues in their pronunciation; however, imitating different scenes from English movies regularly improved them to a great extent. Errors in pronunciation were noted in pretest results, and these were particularly regarding certain sounds of consonants. Post-test results, on the other hand, indicated improvement to a great extent, which proves that regular imitation helps learners absorb the nuances of English pronunciation and achieve correct articulation. This finding proves the claim of Palpanadan et al. (2021) that imitation helps EFL learners realize their mistakes in pronunciation.

Regarding fluency, results described how much better the learners spoke with more confident and natural utterances. What was initially restrained due to a scarcity of lexical items and social anxiety gradually came out more confidently expressed as it benefited from regular imitation of idioms and phrases used by native speakers. This finding tallies with the earlier study results that found fluency could be highly promoted through intensive practice of dialogues accompanied by imitating the facial expressions and postures of native speakers (Mardiyah & Santika, 2023). A change in speaking style from making frequent or even occasional pauses at a slow pace to speaking with more poised articulation would provide evidence that the imitation technique facilitated a smoother and more natural style of speaking.

Moreover, the results of the study clearly indicated how much the imitation method could influence learners' ability to shift from imitated responses to spontaneous ones. Gradually, they attained a level at which they were able to recall the contextual applications of different sentences and conversation prompts much more easily and better, which goes beyond mere replication. This proves that imitation can be used as an approach toward learning a language, on the one hand, and on the other hand, it leads to oral communication being fulfilled effectively. For example, using appropriate context phrases accompanied by relevant facial expressions and body posture of the learners indicates improved use of language by learners. The literature supports that regular practice of imitation can help EFL learners assimilate intonations in spoken English and adjust their facial expressions and posture accordingly (Zerrougui & Taibi, 2018).

RQ3: What do Saudi EFL learners think about self-filming and imitation as language learning tools?

The third research question contained the views of Saudi learners on self-filming and imitation as techniques for language acquisition. Responses from the learners indicated that these interventions greatly improved their speaking proficiency. In the beginning, they were not able to pronounce English words and phrases correctly; however, they picked up correct pronunciation through continuous exposure to different native speakers presented in varied videos. Articulation

was then fine-tuned in the process of constant imitation. Findings by Wu and Ekstam (2021) in an experimental study support the hypothesis that speaking proficiency can be substantially improved through imitation for EFL learners.

Also, learners said that alternating imitation and self-filming built their confidence and encouraged them to participate more energetically in learning activities. While some learners were at first uneasy with self-filming, their participation in imitation activities made learning fun (Sahari & Al Mahmud, 2024). This supports results found by Okada et al. (2017), who note that video imitations of models may help EFL learners improve their pronunciation, intonation, and general speaking ability. Learners thought that this combination of imitation and self-filming could help remove their fear of public speaking and lower their anxiety; in addition, some stated that such a combination creates an environment that leads toward culturally understanding the use of language for real oral communication. Overall, learners would like both processes of imitation and self-filming applied at the same time.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study generally highlighted the positive effects of imitation and self-filming as dual interventions on the speaking proficiency of Saudi learners. Quantitative and qualitative findings vividly showed that participants in the experimental group developed better skills in spoken English than their counterparts in the control group, which has already been discussed above. The experimental group scored much higher mean scores on the post-test on spoken English proficiency when compared to those of the control group. This quantitative finding proved to be very favorable toward the positive effects of interventions. Results from a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews also support this claim since students were found to have a positive outlook toward interventions. This study revealed helpful ways for improving spoken English. Accurate articulation from native speakers was received through imitating different scenes of movies, while self-filmed videos enabled the learners to discover and realize their mistakes in pronunciation and intonation.

A diverse set of movie scenes helped learners understand how to use language in different situations, thereby improving their pragmatic competence. These were movie scenes that provided learners with various contextual expressions in English, for example, like those used at restaurants and cafes, hotels, railway stations, or airports. Such everyday conversational skills were acquired by the learners. They made them feel more confident and less anxious in speaking performance because they had already learned speaking performance through imitation, followed by self-filming. As a result, the researchers strongly urge that new techniques be implemented in language learning and recommend their integration to improve learning outcomes.

Recommendations

From the results of this study, stakeholders are advised to integrate imitation and self-filming in English language learning programs for EFL/ESL learners. This prescription is based on the tremendous improvement of pronunciation and fluency, including confidence, by the experimental group that adopted these interventions. Students provided with many opportunities to interact with authentic language by imitating different scenes from English movies start assimilating structural aspects and correct pronunciation, as well as the situational use of tones; meanwhile, related mistakes are also identified for rectification.

As much as the amalgamated intervention of imitation and self-filming eases language acquisition, it gives students a chance to surmount anxiety, build confidence, and judge their performance better, thus increasing understanding of language use in context. Moreover, qualitative feedback from the learners attests to positively improving assertiveness, the ability for self-reflection, and pragmatism in the use of language.

Because of the positive results of the intervention and favorable student responses, curriculum designers should include such treatments in general language courses to develop an active learning environment. Another study that can be recommended for future studies is one that will look at the long-term effects of such interventions across different contexts. Speaking proficiency improves with thoughtful and dynamic classroom activities; therefore, such environments help EFL learners be better speakers as well as ensure overall development in language acquisition.

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