Speaking with Self-Confidence: A Case of Vietnamese University EFL Learners and Video-Based Technology

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Abstract: *In foreign language learning, speaking skills, which are considered as one of the most important, are underpinned by students' sense of self-confidence. Students often demonstrate this quality by taking photos or videos of themselves for social media sharing and similar activities. Teachers have explored advantages of Flipgrid as an online teaching tool which incorporates both photo and video content, similar to how students might engage with online social media. One language learning scholar notes an important benefit of Flipgrid is motivating students to speak and express themselves without shyness. This paper aims to present an overview of Flipgrid, and its implementation in a classroom context, aimed at improving student self-confidence in speaking English as a foreign language. Conducted over a six-week period, this qualitative study featured thirty-five Vietnamese EFL freshmen who undertook an online questionnaire designed to assess their self-perceptions regarding their use of Flipgrid concerning their self-confidence in speaking English. Findings indicated most students were aware of their own learning autonomy which helped them achieve greater progress in their performance as their self-confidence increased. Nevertheless, some students still lacked motivation in speaking English, so this paper presents pedagogical recommendations that teachers should consider in their encouragement and assessment of students which play an important part in students' self-confidence. To address this, the researchers recommend video-based teaching strategies in oral presentation classes, with opportunities for online peer feedback.*
Key Words: *Self-confidence, Speaking Skills, Educational Technology, EFL Learners, Vietnam*

I. Introduction

In recent decades teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has gained good momentum as it has become an important component in Vietnamese education and English is being taught in all schools, colleges and universities. Despite the improvement in the overall level of proficiency in English of Vietnamese EFL learners, the learning and teaching of the speaking skills still face great challenges. For many Vietnamese EFL students, mastering speaking skills in order to be efficient communicators is the most challenging when learning English and a lot of EFL students did reticence all the time when they learned English speaking in the class. Some linguistic and non-linguistic factors may affect the students negatively in their attempts to be proficient in speaking English. Among the factors, the students' lack of self-confidence in using English can potentially affect the success of second language learners (Nguyen, Warren, & Fehring, 2014). According to Priya & Shilaja (2016), the people who do not have enough self-confidence in themselves will not succeed in English speaking achievement. The lack of self-confidence can affect the students' achievement in English speaking skills. In terms of personality, self-confidence is the students' belief in their abilities in learning. Students who are competent in learning English but they think that they are not successful in the class lack self-confidence. In communication, self-confidence has an important role in determining the learners' willingness to communicate (Utama et al, 2013 and Dornyei et al as cited in Park & Lee, n.d.). High self-confidence can be positively correlated with oral performance (Heyde as cited in Park, 2004:198) because that can give enthusiasm, brave and stimulation to the learners. Therefore, student who has higher self-confidence than the other students can communicate better.

The situation of low level of speaking proficiency of the students requires pedagogical improvement in teaching methods and an innovative learning environment which enhances the speaking skills more efficiently and effectively. The developments in teaching and learning technology have made it possible for students to practice their speaking skills ubiquitously. Technology has created a learning space where learning materials such as presentations, can be practiced, recorded, reviewed, and being given feedback by peers online (Redecker et al., 2009). Previous studies have shown that the use of video technology in language classes has significant benefits in improving students' speaking skills. Berlian Nur and Mohamad Jafre (2011) found in their study that the use of video technology in English language lessons improved students' oral presentation skills and maximized the students' speaking skills as they are encouraged to express their opinion. A study on the effective use of multi-faceted video feedback for ESL presentation course by Wilhelm (2014) has shown that producing a video

presentation facilitates the students to build effective communication as they have a chance to view and analyze their own videos. When students view their own oral presentation videos, it will stimulate a recall of performance, which will encourage students to reflect on their presentation (Ahmad & Lidadun, 2017). Producing a video presentation will encourage the students to share their thoughts in a low-anxiety environment. They will be able to view their own oral presentation performance in the videos and identify their strengths, weaknesses and further improvement in their speaking ability.

Fligrid as a free online video-mediated communication tool was founded in 2015 by Charles Miller from University of Minnesota, USA, which was then acquired by Microsoft. This platform has emerged as as a tool that combines aspects of a social media platform and a video capture tool on one which is easy for teachers or educators to integrate in their classroom. Teachers can use this application for online assignments and practice in combination with the traditional face-to-face class. This new platform allows teachers to create their own class in the website, which is also known as Grid, and facilitate video discussions among the students by posing questions, discussion starters, or prompts, called Topics. Flipgrid gives the ability to the students to record short and authentic video, for a maximum duration of 5 minutes and if the students are not satisfied with their performance, they can simply make a new video with just one click. Thus the use of Flipgrid platform provides the students the ability to have infinite practice of their oral presentation as they can record and view their oral presentation before submitting it. By having a non-threatening learning environment, students will become more comfortable to have extra time they need to process the language input without the tension of having to give an immediate response (Mclain, 2018). In addition, they can make comments on each other's videos as well. Flipgrid has taken away the technical difficulties that most video-mediated tools faced when uploading the video to the website (Shih, 2010; Hung, 2011; Balakrishnan & Puteh, 2014).By using Flipgrid, students can directly record their video with the help of web or phone camera and once they have finished recording, the video will appear on the website after it gets the approval from the instructors. By this way, the students no longer need to worry about the inability to upload their video recording due to the large size of the file or internet connection problem. Therefore, the use of Flipgrid platform greatly benefits the students in their speaking skills development. (NN Miskam, S Aminabibi, 2019).

Against the aforementioned background, the purpose of this paper was to investigate students' attitudes towards the use of Flipgrid and determine their perceptions of the effectiveness of the utilization of Flipgrid on their speaking skills development. Specifically, this research was to seek answers for the following questions:

1. What are the students' attitudes towards the use of Flipgrid to practice speaking English skills outside the class?
2. What are the students' perceptions of the effects of the use of Flipgrid on their English-speaking self-confidence?

II. Theoretical Background

A number of recent studies have revealed that the use of Flipgrid in language classroom has significant benefit in improving students' speaking skills and increasing their self-confidence. Oraib Mango (2019) carried out a research on students' perceptions and attitudes toward the use of Flipgrid in the language classroom with thirty students enrolled in Arabic courses in a university in the Southwest of the US in the 2017/2018 academic year. The participants used Flipgrid outside the classroom on a weekly basis to post video responses to assignments that complemented their classroom learning. Student perceptions of the effects of the use of Flipgrid on their learning were investigated using an 18-item, 5-point Likert-type questionnaire. Results indicated that students found Flipgrid to be a valuable learning tool that enhanced their language learning and positively affected the development of their speaking and listening skills. The students all indicated that Flipgrid helped them participate in speaking activities, and that they were engaged learners who repeatedly practiced their speaking before sharing their videos. However, the use of Flipgrid must be integrated into the language classroom curriculum and not be an end in itself.

A qualitative study by Hashim, H.U., et. al. (2019) involving twenty-two undergraduate students of English for Communication Course at a local public university has shown that the routine of 3-minutes pitching with the help of FlipGrid in combination with face-to-face classroom is helpful in making learners to be good in communication skills. The findings have gathered that this pedagogical innovation has helped learners to develop self-confidence and to combat speaking anxiety.

McLain, T. (2018) conducted a research on the integration of the video response App FlipGrid in the business writing classroom and found out that FlipGrid tool was valuable for speaking practice. He also found that there was an impact on students in this class and their perceived confidence in spoken communication. Students agreed that the service was easy-to-use, helped them practice more at home, and assisted in increasing their English-speaking confidence.

Among other related studies, Andrew Innes (2020) added more insights into the effectiveness of Flipgrid use in a study with 100 students in four speaking classes at Mukogawa Women's University in Japan on the student evaluation of Flipgrid. Students were asked to make a video between 60 and 90 seconds on various

subjects, and then evaluate Flipgrid using an online survey. Results of the qualitative survey indicate – among others - positive feedback for mediation of social features (54.9%) and platform features (27.5%), but negative feedback for technical problems (39.2%) and feelings of embarrassment (30.3%). Hall and Buzwell, (2013), (in Stoszkowski, 2018) noted that students who tended to be quiet in physical classes were more engaged in discussions when conducted on the platform. The same paper also noted how students preferred watching their peers speak on the platform over "boring" written material. Besides, Jaramillo and Nadia (2019) found that the safe and judgment-free learning environment increased communicative performance and general willingness to communicate. Agan, Anderson, Atwood, Casarez, Heron and Self (2020) found that 40% of students agreed that Flipgrid facilitated a more personal connection with their peers, with 50% strongly agreeing that it was more personal than a traditional discussion board. A further 60% reported gaining a better understanding of their classmates when compared with a traditional introduction discussion board.

The use of Flipgrid also gets attention from Vietnamese scholars and researchers. In a recent study on the application of Flipgrid to develop listening skills for students in Hoa Lu University by Mien, N. T. (2019), the positive influence of the use of Flipgrid on students' speaking practice was confirmed. The study revealed that the students have more autonomy in their learning, especially speaking skills, feel more excited, positive and more confident participating in speaking activities in and outside the classroom. The teachers can grasp the practice situation and the progress of students easily and promptly adjust teaching as well as assign requests or exercises to suit the actual situation. The teachers' grading and evaluation are also done easily and save time and effort. She suggested that although some disadvantages cannot be avoided, Flipgrid tool should still be studied and widely applied in foreign language teaching in general and speaking and presentation skills in particular.

Dieu, N. T. T and Ha, N. T. H (2019) investigated the incorporating of Flipgrid into teaching a pronunciation course in Ba Ria Vung Tau College of Education. They examined the attitudes of 20 English-majored freshmen in Ba Ria Vung Tau College of Education towards learning Pronunciation 2 with Flipgrid and what impacts Flipgrid have on students' engagement in pronunciation practice. Data were collected from a survey questionnaire, from case study students via semi-structured interviews, and from their videos submitted on Flipgrid. The findings of this study revealed students' favorability for using Flipgrid to learn pronunciation, an increase in student engagement with pronunciation practice, and the development of learner autonomy which includes aspects of learning motivation and self-confidence.

These previous studies stimulate interest for further studies on the utilization of the innovative video response platform.

III. Methodology and analysis procedures

The paper adopted descriptive and quantitative research design, because descriptive and quantitative method describes characteristics of a population and allows explanation of a phenomenon being studied by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based method, particularly statistics (Aliaga and Gunderson, 2002 cited in Muijs, 2004). The participants in this study were thirty-five Vietnamese EFL freshmen who were enrolled in English Language undergraduate program at Thai Nguyen University of Sciences (TNUS) in the 2022-2023 academic year. The participants used Flipgrid outside the classroom on a weekly basis to post video responses to assignments that complemented their classroom learning. The Flipgrid assignments were posted online on Friday of every week and were due on Monday of the following week. This arrangement aimed at allowing students to practice their speaking over the weekend and on days where they had no formal classroom instruction. Each assignment required students to record their voices in response to certain topics posted by the instructor for that particular Flipgrid. The research period lasted six weeks. An online survey consisting of 13 quantitative Likert-style questions was constructed to answer the research question guiding this study. Student's attitudes of the use of Flipgrid and perceptions of the effects of the use of Flipgrid on their self-confidence improvement were investigated using a 5-point Likert-type questionnaire. The participants completed the questionnaire online after the last week of the research period and were asked to state their level of agreement with each item ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree (SD) to 5= Strongly Agree (SA). The results were downloaded into a spreadsheet and analyzed through data analysis tool pack of MS Excel. The results are transformed into quantitative measurement, which is represented in tables for clear understanding.

IV. Data presentation and discussion

The participants were asked to rate their degree of agreement on a five-point Likert-type scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. The mean and responses of each item on the online questionnaire were calculated into percentages and tabulated in Tables 1 to 2 for the purpose of analyzing and interpreting the results.

Table 1 presents the students' attitudes of the use of Flipgrid in practicing English speaking skills outside the class. Responses ranged from 3.41 to 5.00 were seen as a positive attitude, from 2.61 to 3.40 as a neutral attitude, and from 1.00 to 2.60 as a negative attitude.

Statements	Mean score (M)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
1. I believe Flipgrid is a great video capture tool that empowers EFL learners to share their voices with their comfort.	3.70	5.7	5.7	8.6	71.4	8.6
2. I was responsible for my speaking practice because I had to watch my videos several times before submitting.	3.60	8.6	8.6	14.3	62.9	8.6
3. It is easy to use Flipgrid to practice speaking English.	3.90	2.9	2.9	17.1	54.3	22.9
4. It was useful to receive video feedback from my teachers and classmates.	4.10	2.9	11.4	5.7	37.1	42.9
5. Flipgrid promoted my willingness to speak English.	3.70	5.7	5.7	11.4	68.6	8.6
6. I felt more interested in English speaking activities due to the use of Flipgrid.	3.50	8.6	11.4	8.6	62.9	8.6
7. I will keep using Flipgrid for practicing speaking in the future.	3.90	0	2.9	11.4	77.1	8.6

Table 1: The students' attitudes towards the use of Flipgrid in practicing English speaking skills outside the class

Data in Table 1 indicates that the majority of the students (80%) agreed and strongly agreed that Flipgrid was a great video capture tool that empowered EFL learners to share their voices with without the tension of having to give an immediate response (M = 3.70). 11.4 % of the students chose the disagree spectrum and the remaining chose 8.6 % chose the middle ground somewhat agree. In addition, the majority of learners (77.2%) believed that they did not find it difficult to handle their English speaking tasks with the use of Flipgrid (M = 3.90). Therefore, the fifth item received a high extent from the participants' answer. More than 70% of the respondents were eager and more interested in speaking English because of the safe and judgment-free learning environment (M = 3.70 and M = 3.50, respectively). Unexpectedly, 11.4% of the learners did not feel motivated to take part in speaking activities on Flipgrid. Almost all the students in this study (71.5%) said that they were in charge of their speaking practice because they had chances to watch their videos several times before submitting (M = 3.60). When they previewed their own videos, it stimulated a recall of performance. What is more, the students were asked if receiving video feedback from their teachers and classmates was beneficial to them. 80% of the participants answered either agree or strongly agree (M = 4.10). As can be seen from the table, the learners show their high level of expectation of the use of Flipgrid for practicing speaking in the future (M = 3.90). Only 2.9% of the students showed their disagreement with the seventh item.

Table 2 reveals the students' perceptions of the effects of the use of Flipgrid on their English-speaking self-confidence.

Statements	Mean score	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
8. I could practice my English-speaking skills whenever I wanted and nobody laughed at me when I said something wrong.	4.10	8.6	2.9	11.4	25.7	51.4
9. Receiving peer feedback from teachers and classmates on Flipgrid assisted me in boosting my self-confidence.	3.50	8.6	11.4	14.3	57.1	8.6
10. My self-confidence in my speaking performance has improved because of my own learning autonomy using Flipgrid.	4.10	5.7	5.7	5.7	42.9	40
11. I had more opportunities to correct my mistakes before pressing the submit button.	3.90	8.6	5.7	14.3	28.6	42.9
12. I felt less anxious when looking at the notes the teacher provided on the screen.	3.90	5.7	5.7	8.6	51.4	28.6
13. Flipgrid encouraged me to practice speaking English without anxiety.	3.70	5.7	5.7	11.4	71.4	5.7

Table 2: The students' perceptions of the effects of the use of Flipgrid on their English-speaking self-confidence

More than half of the students (51.4%) strongly agreed and 25.7% of the students agreed that they could practice speaking whenever they wanted (M = 4.10). To those students who were shy to speak English in front of others, having them record a video utilizing Flipgrid instead of making a direct presentation, so they would not worry about others laughed at them when they made mistakes. They considered Flipgrid as a safe platform which

supplied the practice space at the convenience. However, 11.5 % of the participants did not agree with the eighth statement. The evidence if that 71.5% of the students agreed and strongly agreed that they had more chances for speaking practices before they published the videos because they wanted the best products to be made (M = 3.90). As a result, 65.73% of the learners revealed that receiving peer feedback from their teachers and classmates on Flipgrid assisted them in boosting their self-confidence (M = 3.50). In the last two items, we found that the percentage of the participants who indicated that they became less anxious when looking at the notes the teacher provided on the screen and Flipgrid encouraged them to practice speaking English without anxiety is more than 70% (M = 3.90 and M = 3.70 respectively). It is noticed that over 80% of the students showed their agreement with the statement "My self-confidence in my speaking performance has improved because of my own learning autonomy using Flipgrid" (M = 4.10). They could spend a lot of time practicing speaking repeatedly in a low-anxiety environment.

This study concerns with Vietnamese EFL freshmen's perceptions of the efficacy of the use of Flipgrid platform on their English-speaking self-confidence. The results of this study showed that Vietnamese EFL freshmen have a positive attitude towards the use of Flipgrid in practicing English speaking skills outside the class. The finding revealed that the students perceived an improvement in their self-confidence with the use of Flipgrid. This result bolsterers McLain (2018) about Flipgrid can boost students' self-confidence in speaking skills. Additionally, the finding provided positive insights about the participants' attitudes towards the use of Flipgrid in practicing English speaking skills outside the class. It is important to note that most of the students spoke more in their Flipgrid videos because they were motivated to complete the tasks in Flipgrid.

V. Conclusion

Flipgrid is a reliable and manageable video recording and social media application to employ as a means of practice in an English speaking class. The use of Flipgrid as a medium to promote English language learners' self-confidence, autonomy, motivation and interaction with the appropriate scaffolds and supports.

This paper aims to present an overview of Flipgrid, and its implementation in a classroom context, aimed at improving student self-confidence in speaking English as a foreign language. The study was also intended to determine Vietnamese EFL freshmen's attitudes towards the use of Flipgrid in spoken practices outside the class.

Findings indicated most students were aware of their own learning autonomy which helped them achieve greater progress in their performance as their self-confidence increased. Numerous students agreed that having recorded speaking practices utilizing Flipgrid helped the learners not only become more confident but also felt more comfortable and less anxious. Nevertheless, some students still lacked motivation in speaking English, so teachers should consider in their encouragement and assessment of students which play an important part in students' self-confidence. Interaction among students is a benefit of using Flipgrid which prompts students to speak, make comments and reply to questions without anxiety. Moreover, teachers should make rubric grading of the assignments to provide effective feedback on students' performance which alerts teachers to students' strengths and weaknesses. Based on the students' positive responses in the questionnaire, it would appear that using Flipgrid an instructor can help students increase their speaking skills inside and outside of the classroom. In addition, teachers ought to scaffold and provide instructions for effective student discussions.

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