

The Effectiveness of a Constructivist-Based Approach on Developing Speaking Skills among Al - Aqsa University - Gaza

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Abstract:

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of the constructivist approach in developing the speaking skill of Al-Aqsa University students. The study adopts a quasi-experimental research design and includes two groups of participants: an experimental group and a control group. Data collection relies on the use of pre-test and post-test instruments, And Both groups consist of first-year students enrolled in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) program in the Department of Languages. The two groups study a conversation course as part of the curriculum. The control group includes 35 students, and the experimental group also includes 35 students, So The teaching process lasts for one academic semester, with three instructional hours per week. The researcher designed a program based on the constructivist learning approach to enhance students' speaking skills. The results of the pre- and post-tests were statistically analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficients and Cronbach's alpha to compare the mean scores, standard deviations, and effect sizes. In addition, a qualitative analysis of the participants' progress was conducted, the interpreted results revealed positive effects of using the constructivist learning approach in enhancing the speaking skills of undergraduate students at Al-Aqsa University in Gaza.

Keywords: constructivist approach, speaking skills, Al-Aqsa University, Gaza – Palestine.

مدى فعالية المنهج البنائي في تطوير مهارة المحادثة لدى طلاب جامعة الأقصى بغزة

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المستخلص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى اختبار مدى فعالية المنهج البنائي في تطوير مهارة المحادثة لدى طلاب جامعة الأقصى. تعتمد هذه الدراسة على تصميم بحث شبه تجريبي، حيث تضم مجموعتين من المشاركين: مجموعة تجريبية ومجموعة ضابطة. سيعتمد جمع البيانات على استخدام الاختبار القبلي والبعدي. تتألف المجموعتان من طلاب السنة الأولى في برنامج تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في قسم اللغات. تدرس كلتا المجموعتين مادة المحادثة كجزء من المنهج الدراسي. ستضم المجموعة الضابطة 35 طالباً، وستضم المجموعة التجريبية 35 طالباً أيضاً. ستستمر عملية التدريس لمدة فصل دراسي، بواقع ثلاث ساعات تدريس أسبوعياً. حيث، صمم الباحث برنامجاً قائماً على منهج التعلم البنائي لتعزيز مهارات التحدث لدى الطلاب. تم تحليل نتائج الاختبار القبلي والبعدي للمشاركين إحصائياً باستخدام معاملات ارتباط بيرسون ومعامل ألفا كرونباخ لمقارنة المتوسط والانحراف المعياري وحجم التأثير. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تم إجراء تحليل نوعي لتقديم المشاركين وتحليله. وأظهرت النتائج المفسرة وجود آثار إيجابية لاستخدام أسلوب التعلم البنائي في تعزيز مهارات التحدث لدى طلبة البكالوريوس في جامعة الأقصى بغزة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المنهج البنائي، مهارات المحادثة، جامعة الأقصى، غزة – فلسطين.

1-Introduction:

English is a core subject in Palestinian education and plays an essential role in academic and professional communication. Developing speaking skills is a fundamental goal of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, as effective oral communication enables learners to participate meaningfully in real-life contexts. However, many EFL classrooms continue to rely on traditional, teacher-centered methods that limit students' opportunities for authentic interaction and speaking practice. In response to these challenges, this study examines the effectiveness of a constructivist-based instructional approach in developing the speaking proficiency of Al-Aqsa University students in Gaza. The constructivist approach emphasizes active learning, interaction, and reflection, offering a flexible and learner-centered framework that supports meaningful engagement and the development of speaking skills.

1.2 Statement of the Problem:

Although English has been taught in Gaza's educational institutions for many years and receives substantial curricular emphasis, it is observable that many EFL students at Al-Aqsa University struggle to produce meaningful spoken sentences without linguistic errors. This issue is not unique to Palestinian learners. As noted by Rababah (2003), Arab learners of English often face persistent difficulties in both speaking and writing. Limited opportunities for practice with peers, insufficient teacher feedback, and a lack of interactive engagement further contribute to inadequate oral proficiency (Chen Hsieh, Wu, & Marek, 2017; Wang, 2014).

Educators and university instructors in Gaza have consistently acknowledged a decline in English language performance among students. This situation underscores the need for continued empirical research to address specific areas of difficulty, particularly those related to speaking and listening. Therefore, this study explores the effectiveness of a constructivist-based instructional approach in improving EFL oral performance among first-year university students.

1.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses:

-Research Questions:

RQ1: Does a constructivist-based instructional program lead to a significant improvement in students' speaking performance compared to a control group taught through standard methods?

RQ2: How do students describe their speaking development and willingness to communicate following the intervention?

-Hypotheses:

H1: The experimental group will show significantly higher posttest speaking scores controlling for pretest scores.

H2: Constructivist activities will increase learners' satisfaction as reported in reflections.

1.4 Aims of the Study:

The present study aims to investigate the effectiveness of a constructivist-based instructional approach in developing the speaking skills of first-year EFL students at Al-Aqsa University in Gaza. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the impact of a constructivist-based instructional program on students' overall speaking performance compared to traditional teaching methods.
2. Determine the extent to which the constructivist approach improves specific speaking sub-skills, including fluency, accuracy, and vocabulary use.
3. Explore students' perceptions, attitudes, and satisfaction toward learning speaking through constructivist-based activities.
4. Provide empirical evidence that supports the integration of constructivist learning principles into EFL speaking instruction at the university level.
5. Offer pedagogical recommendations for EFL instructors and curriculum designers based on the findings of the study.

1.5 Limitations of the Study:

Despite the significance of the findings, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The study was limited to first-year EFL students at Al-Aqsa University in Gaza; therefore, the results may not be generalizable to students in other academic years or educational institutions. In addition, the sample size was restricted to 70 students, with 35 participants in both the experimental and control groups, which may further limit the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, the duration of the instructional intervention was confined to one academic semester, which may not have been sufficient to capture the long-term effects of the constructivist-based approach on students' speaking development. The study also focused exclusively on speaking skills and did not investigate the potential impact of the constructivist approach on other language skills, such as listening, reading, or writing. Finally, although the assessment of speaking performance relied on valid and reliable testing instruments and rubrics, these measures may not have fully captured all dimensions of learners' oral proficiency.

2-Literature Review and Theoretical Framework:

2.1 Constructivism in Language Learning:

Constructivism posits that learners actively construct knowledge rather than passively receive information. Through interactions with their environment and ongoing reflection, learners integrate new information into existing cognitive frameworks. Social constructivism, rooted in Vygotsky's work, emphasizes the importance of mediated social interaction in the development of cognitive and linguistic competence. Collaborative learning, reflection, motivation, and learner autonomy are key principles of constructivist pedagogy and have proven effective in supporting language development. Within the context of oral English teaching, constructivist practices provide opportunities for meaningful communication and foster improved speaking performance.

2.2 Constructivist Implementations for Speaking:

Recent studies highlight the positive impact of constructivist and social constructivist approaches on speaking ability, engagement, and willingness to communicate. Approaches such as flipped learning, blended instruction, project-based learning, and dialogic group tasks have been shown to enhance oral proficiency. Interactive tasks, in particular, contribute significantly to improving pronunciation, fluency, and communicative confidence among EFL learners.

2.3 Constructivism in Similar EFL Studies:

A growing body of research supports the effectiveness of constructivist-based instruction in improving productive language skills, including speaking, writing, and vocabulary retention. These studies span secondary and higher education contexts and provide methodological support for the quasi-experimental design adopted in the present study. For instance, Mogashoa (2014) examined the relevance of constructivism in qualitative educational research, emphasizing its focus on meaning-making. James and Mahnaz (2015) argued that despite widespread adoption of constructivist principles, teachers often lack a comprehensive understanding of the theory, which limits its classroom application. Celestin (2020) analyzed adult learners' perceptions toward constructivist teaching in South Africa, highlighting the value of interactive, collaborative, learner-centered practices.

Several studies have examined the effectiveness of constructivist-based and learner-centered approaches in developing EFL speaking skills. These studies provide empirical support for the assumptions underlying the present research.

Khalil, El-Nagar, and Awad (2019) investigated the effect of brain-based learning, which is grounded in constructivist principles, on developing EFL speaking skills among Egyptian secondary school students. Using a quasi-experimental design, the researchers found statistically significant improvements in fluency, accuracy, and overall speaking performance in favor of the experimental group. The findings highlighted the importance of active learning and meaningful interaction in enhancing speaking skills.

Similarly, Can (2009) explored the use of a constructivist approach in online language learning environments. The study revealed that constructivist learning tasks encouraged learners to actively construct knowledge through collaboration and communication, leading to noticeable improvement in speaking and interaction skills. The study emphasized that learner-centered instruction enhances motivation and communicative competence.

Celestin (2020) examined adult learners' perceptions of constructivist principles in teaching and learning contexts. The results indicated that learners exposed to constructivist practices demonstrated higher engagement, confidence, and communicative ability. Although the study focused on non-formal education, its findings support the effectiveness of constructivist approaches in developing oral communication skills.

Chen Hsieh, Wu, and Marek (2017) studied the impact of the flipped classroom model, which incorporates constructivist learning principles, on EFL learners' language performance. The findings showed significant improvement in students' speaking abilities, particularly in classroom interaction and oral participation, due to increased opportunities for communicative practice.

In the Arab EFL context, Rababah (2003) investigated communication problems faced by Arab learners of English and emphasized the need for interactive and communicative teaching approaches. The study concluded that traditional methods limit students' speaking development, while constructivist-oriented practices can help overcome speaking difficulties.

More recently, Shalaby (2024) examined the effect of constructivist strategies on enhancing EFL speaking skills among secondary school students. The results demonstrated significant gains in fluency and confidence among learners taught through constructivist activities, reinforcing the findings of earlier studies on the effectiveness of learner-centered instruction.

Overall, these studies consistently support the effectiveness of constructivist-based approaches in developing EFL speaking skills. They provide a strong theoretical and empirical foundation for the

present study, particularly in emphasizing interaction, collaboration, and active learner engagement as key factors in improving oral performance.

3-Method:

3.1 Research Design:

This study employs a quasi-experimental research design involving two groups: an experimental group and a control group. Data collection includes pre- and post-testing to measure changes in speaking performance resulting from the intervention.

3.2 Participants:

Participants consist of two groups of first-year Gazan EFL students enrolled in the Department of Languages at Al-Aqsa University during the 2022/2023 academic year. Both groups were taking the Speaking 2 course as part of their academic program. Each group comprised 35 students. The instructional period extended over one semester, with three hours of class time per week.

3.3 Procedures of the study:

The study adopts a systematic research procedure to achieve its objectives. First, previous studies and relevant literature were reviewed to benefit from established research procedures, instruments, findings, and recommendations. Second, a theoretical framework was developed based on constructivist learning theory, highlighting the significance of speaking performance within a constructivist-based instructional approach. Third, an English language course was designed and implemented for the experimental group to support the purpose of the study. In addition, a speaking assessment rubric was utilized to evaluate EFL students' speaking performance, and a speaking skills checklist was developed to identify key oral competencies. A pre-test and post-test were designed and administered to collect quantitative data on students' speaking development. Furthermore, a questionnaire was implemented to examine students' satisfaction with the instructional program. The collected data were then organized using percentage tables and statistically analyzed to interpret the results. Finally, conclusions were

drawn and pedagogical recommendations were proposed based on the findings of the study.

3.4 Implementation (detailed):

At the beginning of the program for the experimental group, students were provided with a clear description of the program.

The educational outcomes of the program were explained to the students.

These outcomes were designed to enhance the students' speaking skills.

The program was applied to the experimental group and consisted of a six-unit course from *Touchstone 3 (Second Edition)*, a textbook that has benefited from extensive developmental research. This course was selected because it is suitable for applying a constructivist approach, as it is accessible to students and places a strong emphasis on speaking skills, which aligns with the objective of the study. The program lasted for 18 weeks, with three instructional hours per week. In contrast, the control group was taught speaking using the traditional method.

The instructional activities included collaborative communicative tasks such as jigsaw activities, role-plays, and problem-solving discussions, in which students co-constructed responses. Micro-presentations were also implemented, followed by rubric-guided peer feedback cycles. A final speaking performance was assessed through simulated real-world tasks, including a structured interview, a picture-based narrative, and a group discussion. In addition, detailed lesson plans provided in the appendix outline the objectives, tasks, materials, interaction patterns, and assessment rubrics.

3.5 Instruments:

Three instruments were used to measure students' speaking skills. The first was a list of oral speaking skills that served as the evaluation criteria for all students. The second was a pre- and post-speaking test administered to both the experimental and control groups to determine their speaking proficiency levels. This speaking test, designed for course providers who use oral assessment as part of the placement process, consisted of an interview based on conversational prompts

presented by the interviewer and was accompanied by speaking assessment guidelines to help determine students' proficiency levels. A separate photocopy of the speaking placement test was used for each student and was not shown to the student during the interview. In addition, a constructivist-based curriculum was selected and modified to suit students' levels and applied to the experimental group, while the control group was taught speaking using the traditional method. The data from the pre- and post-tests were analyzed to determine and compare the speaking performance levels of both groups. Finally, a questionnaire was administered to the students to assess their satisfaction with the program.

3.6 Validity of the pre-post speaking skills test:

Through a review of previous studies and relevant literature on language testing, it was found that the speaking pre-post test designed by Andrew and Hugh Run is valid and suitable for the purposes of this research. Andrew and Hugh Run are specialists in teacher development courses and have authored a TESOL-validated course for ELT Advantage. In addition, they published *Teaching Lexically* in 2016 as part of Delta Publishing's multi-award-winning teacher development series. Therefore, the speaking test and rubric of the *Outcomes Placement Test* used as the pre-post assessment in this study are considered both valid and reliable. Furthermore, the pre-post test was reviewed by three jury members, listed in the appendix, who are specialists in the field. Based on their expert evaluation, the test was approved and adopted as a valid research instrument.

3.6.1 Piloting the Test:

A random sample of second year English language students has been selected to take the test. This test aims to determine the time required for the speaking exam and to ensure that the exam is suitable for the level of students.

The results of this pilot research, which was conducted on ten students, are as follows:

The researcher noticed that the students in the post-test had the ability to speak for a longer time and with greater confidence, and this

is a good indication of the improvement of the experimental group in conversation.

3.7 Reliability of the test:

In order to calculate the consistency and reliability of the speaking test, the alpha coefficient was used and then it was applied to a sample, and the consistency coefficient for the test as a whole was indicated.

The following table shows the consistency and reliability of the speaking test. Table No (1) explain Reliability of the test

Table (1): The Consistency Coefficient of the speaking test

The test	Alpha
Coefficient	0.73

By calculating the alpha reliability coefficient and by analyzing the statistical value of the previous table, it can be said that the test coefficient as a whole is good enough and this indicate acceptable reliability.

4. Data Analysis and Results:

4.1 Data analysis:

This section discusses the accurate statistical results and their analysis of the study through statistical comparisons between the control and experimental groups in terms of the pre results of listening and speaking and the post results, that is, after the implementation of the experiment on the experimental group.

4.1.1. Statistical Analysis:

The researcher employed several statistical techniques to analyze the data. The analysis of the participants' narratives was conducted using the SPSS (version 22) program to answer the research questions and test the study hypotheses. Frequency and descriptive statistical analyses were performed, and the results were presented in tabular form. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was used to examine the normality of the data. When the p-value was less than the significance

level ($\alpha = 0.05$), the data were considered not normally distributed, and nonparametric tests such as the Mann–Whitney U test and the Wilcoxon signed-rank test were applied. When the p-value was greater than $\alpha = 0.05$, the data were considered normally distributed, and parametric tests were used, including the Independent Samples t-test and the Paired Samples t-test. The Independent Samples t-test was employed to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups, while the Paired Samples t-test was used to examine differences between the pre- and post-test mean scores of the experimental group. In addition, eta squared (η^2) was calculated to measure the effect size of the constructivist-based approach on the development of EFL speaking skills among Al-Aqsa University students in Gaza, following Abu Allam (2003, pp. 106–107). The effect size values were interpreted according to the critical levels presented in Table (2). Table (2)

Table No (2) explain the critical values for the Effect Size levels

Test	Effect Size		
	Small	Medium	Large
η^2	0.01	0.06	0.14

4.2 Results and interpretation of the study:

4.2.1 The results:

Table No (3): Speaking pretest results

	Number	Average	Standard deviation	T-value	P-value
Experimental	35	1.34	0.59	1.594	0.115
Control	35	1.57	0.60		

Tabulated t-value = 1.96

Table (3) shows that the mean score of the speaking pre-test for the experimental group was 1.34, while that of the control group was 1.57. In addition, the calculated t-value was lower than the tabulated value, and the p-value was greater than the significance level of 0.05,

indicating that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups on the speaking pre-test. This result demonstrates the comparability of the two groups, as their performance levels were closely aligned. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the experimental and control groups were equivalent in their speaking proficiency at the pre-test stage, which provides a sound basis for commencing the experimental treatment in this study.

Table (4): Speaking post-test results

	Number	Average	Standard deviation	T-value	P-value
Experimental	35	2.94	0.76	8.280	*0.000
Control	35	1.68	0.47		

Tabulated t-value = 1.96

Table (4) shows that the mean score of the speaking post-test for the experimental group was 2.94, whereas the control group obtained a mean score of 1.68. Moreover, the calculated t-value was greater than the tabulated value, and the p-value was less than the significance level of 0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups on the speaking post-test in favor of the experimental group.

Table (5): Speaking test results for the Control group

	Number	Average	Standard deviation	T-value	P-value
Post-test	35	1.68	0.47	0.780	0.441
Pre-test	35	1.57	0.60		

Tabulated t-value = 1.96

Table (5) shows that the mean score of the speaking pre-test for the control group was 1.57, while the mean score of the speaking post-test was 1.68. In addition, the calculated t-value was lower than the tabulated value, and the p-value was greater than the significance level of 0.05, indicating that there was no statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the control group on the speaking test.

Table (6): Speaking test results for the experimental group

	Number	Average	Standard deviation	T-value	P-value
Post-test	35	2.94	0.76	8.47	*0.000
Pre-test	35	1.34	0.59		

Tabulated t-value = 1.96

Table (6) shows that the mean score of the speaking pre-test for the experimental group was 1.34, whereas the mean score of the speaking post-test was 2.94. In addition, the calculated t-value was greater than the tabulated value, and the p-value was less than the significance level of 0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the experimental group on the speaking test in favor of the post-test.

4.2.2. Discussion:

After analyzing the results and statistical findings presented in Chapter Four, it became evident that the constructivist-based instructional program was effective in improving the oral performance of students in the experimental group compared with those in the control group. The statistically significant differences in post-test speaking scores clearly answer the first research question and confirm the positive impact of the constructivist approach on developing EFL speaking skills. While the control group, which was taught using traditional methods, showed no significant improvement between the pre-test and post-test, the experimental group demonstrated substantial progress, indicating that the observed gains can be attributed to the instructional intervention rather than to chance or natural development.

These findings are consistent with the results of several previous studies that emphasized the effectiveness of constructivist and communicative approaches in language learning. For example, earlier research has shown that learner-centered instruction, collaborative tasks, and meaningful interaction significantly enhance speaking proficiency by engaging students actively in the learning process. Similar to the present study, those studies reported that

students who participated in cooperative activities, problem-solving discussions, and real-life communicative tasks outperformed their peers who were taught through teacher-centered, traditional methods. In contrast, studies that relied heavily on rote learning and limited oral interaction reported minimal improvement in learners' speaking abilities, which aligns with the lack of significant progress observed in the control group of the current study.

From the researcher's perspective, the improvement in the experimental group's speaking performance can be attributed to several key features of the constructivist-based program, including active learner involvement, peer collaboration, continuous feedback, and the use of authentic speaking tasks. These elements created a supportive learning environment that encouraged students to express their ideas, negotiate meaning, and build confidence in oral communication. The findings also suggest that constructivist instruction is particularly suitable for EFL contexts such as Al-Aqsa University in Gaza, where students often lack sufficient opportunities for meaningful spoken interaction in English.

In addition to achievement outcomes, students' attitudes toward the constructivist approach were examined through a satisfaction questionnaire administered to the experimental group. The results revealed that 90% of the students were completely satisfied with learning speaking and listening through this approach. This high level of satisfaction supports previous research indicating that constructivist learning environments increase motivation, engagement, and positive attitudes toward language learning. The researcher believes that students' satisfaction played a crucial role in enhancing their performance, as motivated learners are more willing to participate in speaking activities and take risks in using the target language.

In conclusion, the results of the present study not only confirm the effectiveness of the constructivist-based approach in developing EFL speaking skills but also reinforce the findings of earlier studies in the field. These outcomes highlight the need for educators and curriculum designers to reconsider traditional teaching methods and adopt constructivist principles that promote active learning, collaboration,

and meaningful communication. The researcher strongly recommends integrating constructivist-based instructional practices into EFL programs at the university level to improve students' speaking proficiency and overall language learning experience.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation:

5.1 Conclusions:

In light of the findings of the present study, it can be concluded that the constructivist-based instructional program had a significant positive impact on enhancing the speaking skills of Al-Aqsa University students in Gaza. The results demonstrated that students who were taught through constructivist learning activities outperformed those who were taught using traditional methods, confirming the effectiveness of this approach in developing EFL speaking performance. In particular, the study provided empirical evidence that the constructivist-based approach contributed to the development of key speaking sub-skills, namely vocabulary, accuracy, and fluency.

The improvement in students' oral performance can be attributed to the use of varied communicative and interactive activities that encouraged active participation, meaningful interaction, and collaboration among learners. These activities enabled students to engage more confidently in discussions and speaking tasks, thereby fostering communicative competence. In addition, the use of audiovisual materials and real-life, context-based language activities played an effective role in increasing students' motivation, self-confidence, and willingness to speak, which was reflected in their improved speaking outcomes.

The findings also indicated that learner-centered instruction, which allowed students to take an active role in constructing their own knowledge based on prior experiences, was instrumental in achieving these gains. Within this approach, the teacher acted primarily as a facilitator and guide, while learners assumed greater responsibility for their learning. Designing graded and realistic tasks that required

active listening, responding, and participation in authentic communicative situations proved to be particularly effective in supporting speaking development.

Furthermore, the use of pre- and post-speaking tests provided clear and objective evidence of students' progress and confirmed the impact of the instructional program. Classroom discussions and systematic observations conducted throughout the implementation of the program enabled the researcher to gain deeper insights into students' performance and engagement, allowing for responsive instructional adjustments. Overall, the study concludes that the constructivist language teaching approach is more effective than traditional teaching methods in developing university students' EFL speaking skills.

5.2 Recommendations:

In light of the results of the current study, several recommendations can be made. First, it is recommended that the constructivist-based approach be adopted as a teaching strategy for developing speaking skills in Palestinian universities, as the findings demonstrated its effectiveness compared with traditional methods. English language instructors are encouraged to incorporate constructivist principles into their teaching practices by engaging students actively in the learning process and encouraging them to discover language through meaningful interaction and participation.

In addition, course designers and instructors should integrate suitable technological tools and online materials when designing speaking courses, as these resources can increase students' motivation and provide authentic opportunities for oral communication. Teacher education programs are also advised to provide practical training that familiarizes pre-service and in-service teachers with constructivist-based instructional strategies, enabling them to apply learner-centered approaches effectively in EFL classrooms.

Furthermore, it is recommended that instructional programs include graded, realistic, and communicative speaking tasks that reflect real-life situations and address learners' needs, interests, and proficiency levels. Such tasks can help reduce speaking anxiety, enhance learners'

confidence, and promote sustained engagement in oral communication. Finally, Palestinian universities are encouraged to give greater attention to the development of students' speaking skills by supporting ongoing research and instructional innovation aimed at improving EFL oral proficiency.

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Appendices

Appendix A Speaking Test Arbitration – Cover Letter

Dear Jury Member,

The researcher is conducting a Ph.D. study entitled “*The Effectiveness of a Constructivist-Based Approach on Developing Speaking Skills among Al-Aqsa University Students.*” As part of the research instruments, a speaking test and its assessment components are employed to evaluate students’ oral performance.

Enclosed for your review is a list of oral fluency components designed by Andrew and Hugh Run, who are internationally recognized specialists in teacher development. They have been actively involved in professional training through programs such as the London Summer School Programme and have contributed extensively to English language teaching through their *Chunk of the Day* publications. In addition, they have authored numerous articles in professional journals, including *English Teaching Professional (ETP)* and *IATEFL Voices*, delivered conference presentations worldwide, and conducted training courses and workshops in more than 30 countries. Furthermore, they have developed a TESOL-validated course for ELT Advantage, and in 2016 published *Teaching Lexically* as part of Delta Publishing’s multi-award-winning teacher development series.

You are kindly requested to review the enclosed speaking test components and provide your professional judgment regarding their suitability, clarity, and relevance for use in the current study. Your feedback and recommendations will be highly valuable in ensuring the validity and appropriateness of the research instrument.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mohammed Abdulrahman Alhabbash
Ph.D. Researcher

Jury Members

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Appendix B Speaking Skills Test

Authors and Test Background

The speaking skills test used in this study is part of the *Outcomes Placement Test Package*, designed by Andrew and Hugh Run, internationally recognized specialists in teacher development. They have extensive experience in teacher education through initiatives such as the London Summer School Programme and have contributed widely to English language teaching through their *Chunk of the Day* publications for learners and teachers. In addition, they have authored numerous articles published in professional journals, including *English Teaching Professional (ETP)* and *IATEFL Voices*, delivered workshops and training courses in more than 30 countries, and developed a TESOL-validated course for ELT Advantage. In 2016, they published *Teaching Lexically* as part of Delta Publishing's award-winning teacher development series.

The *Outcomes Placement Test Package* has been widely recognized as a valid and reliable instrument for assessing learners' oral proficiency. For the purposes of the current study, the speaking placement test and its accompanying scoring rubric were adopted and used as both the pre-test and post-test to measure students' speaking performance.

Description of the Speaking Placement Test

The speaking placement test is designed to assess learners' oral proficiency through a one-to-one interview format. The interview is based

on structured conversational prompts that allow students to demonstrate their speaking ability in a communicative context. The test is supported by Oral Assessment Guidelines, which provide clear descriptors to assist interviewers in assigning appropriate proficiency scores.

Instructions for Interviewers

To ensure consistency and reliability in test administration, the following procedures should be followed:

1. Each student should be assessed individually through a face-to-face interview.
2. The interviewer should retain a separate copy of the speaking placement test for scoring purposes; this copy must not be shown to the student.
3. Student s' speaking performance should be evaluated using a five-point scale (1–5), based on the descriptors provided in the Oral Assessment Guidelines.
4. Interviewers should consider overall communicative effectiveness, including fluency, accuracy, and appropriateness of responses, when assigning scores.

Scoring and Interpretation of Results

The speaking placement test results are interpreted according to the overall proficiency scores obtained by the students. Scores ranging from 1 to 2 indicate lower proficiency levels and suggest basic placement recommendations, while higher scores reflect greater oral competence. Scores exceeding level 4 on advanced prompts indicate a higher level of speaking proficiency. These scores were used in the present study to compare students' speaking performance before and after the instructional intervention.

Appendix C

Speaking Placement Test Prompts

Student Name: _____
Date: _____ Time Allowed: 15–16 minutes
Examiner: _____

Scoring Scale

Please circle the appropriate score based on the Oral Assessment Guidelines:

1 2 3 4 5

Topic	Speaking Prompts	Score
Food	• Do you usually eat healthy meals? Why or why not? • What is your favorite food? • Do you like eating out? Why? • Do you enjoy cooking? Explain your answer.	()
Animals	• Do you like animals? Why or why not? • What are some of your favorite animals? • Do you have a pet, or would you like to have one? Why? • How do animals help people in everyday life?	()
Computers and Gadgets	• How often do you use computers or electronic devices? • What do you mainly use the Internet for? • What advantages do computers and digital devices have? • What problems can technology cause?	()
Languages	• What languages do you speak? • Is it important to speak more than one language? Why or why not? • Is it a good or bad thing that many people around the world learn foreign languages? Explain your opinion.	()

Appendix D

Speaking Assessment Guidelines (Scoring Rubric)

The following rubric is used to assess learners' speaking performance in the Speaking Placement Test (Pre-Test and Post-Test). Each learner is rated on a five-point scale according to overall speaking proficiency, including fluency, confidence, pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, and vocabulary use.

Speaking Assessment Rubric:

Level Descriptor Performance Indicators:

- | | | |
|---|-----|---|
| 1 | Low | • Speaks with frequent hesitation and may occasionally fail to respond verbally. • Shows little confidence and is often |
|---|-----|---|

Level Descriptor Performance Indicators:

		- reluctant to use the language. • Speech and pronunciation are generally unclear and difficult to understand. • Rarely produces complete or appropriate sentences and phrases. • Rarely or never uses colloquial expressions appropriately. • Demonstrates very limited and inappropriate vocabulary use. • Makes numerous errors in grammatical form and language function.
2	Fair	• Speaks with frequent hesitation. • Shows limited confidence and is often reluctant to use the language. • Speech and pronunciation are frequently unclear. • Occasionally produces complete sentences and phrases appropriately. • Uses very few colloquial expressions appropriately. • Demonstrates limited but occasionally appropriate vocabulary use. • Makes frequent errors in grammatical form and language function.
3	Good	• Speaks with general fluency, though some hesitation may occur. • Usually responds with confidence. • Speech and pronunciation are generally understandable, though not always clear. • Usually produces complete and appropriate sentences and phrases. • Uses some colloquial expressions appropriately. • Demonstrates appropriate and varied vocabulary in most situations. • Makes occasional errors in grammatical form and language function that do not impede communication.
4	Very Good	• Speaks fluently with minimal hesitation. • Almost always responds with confidence. • Speech and pronunciation are clear and easily understood in most cases. • Consistently produces complete and appropriate sentences and phrases. • Uses a range of colloquial expressions appropriately. • Demonstrates varied and appropriate vocabulary use. • Makes few grammatical or functional errors.
5	Excellent	• Speaks fluently without hesitation. • Consistently responds with a high level of confidence. • Speech and pronunciation are always clear and easily understood. • Consistently produces accurate, complete, and appropriate sentences and phrases. • Uses a wide and natural range of

Level Descriptor Performance Indicators:

colloquial expressions appropriately. • Demonstrates a rich and precise vocabulary. • Makes very few or no grammatical or functional errors.