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Developing Oral Fluency of Second Language Learners: A Narrative Review

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Abstract

This paper provides a narrative review of studies conducted with a view of investigating the efficacy of techniques and methodologies used by teachers of English as a Second Language in order to develop oral fluency of learners in the classroom. The fluency building techniques investigated in this study were, the 4/3/2/ method, chunking, role- playing, shadowing, gallery walk and storytelling. Quasi-experimental research designs using control and experimental groups, pre-tests and post- tests to compare learners' performances between two time points and across groups were the method used by researchers to statistically analyze and measure improvements in oral fluency in all the studies that were investigated. The findings suggest that all six fluency building techniques can be successfully used to develop oral fluency of learners of a second or foreign language. The study concludes that a variety of well-planned fluency building activities introduced systematically, and supported by other equally important components of language along with consistent and targeted practice is key to developing oral fluency of learners.

Keywords: Oral fluency, English as a Second Language, fluency building activities, measurement of oral fluency

1. Introduction

Second Language Teaching nowadays emphasizes the development of all four language components—reading, writing, speaking, and listening and assigns greater significance to communication in authentic, real-life situations. Currently, nearly all major international English language proficiency tests for non-native speakers, such as IELTS, PTE, and TOEFL assess proficiency across these four language components, including speaking fluency.

Despite the importance given to speaking a second language most learners of a second or foreign language do not get the opportunity

to speak in the target language in the immediate environment they live in. Therefore, it is up to the teachers to provide opportunities for learners to develop their oral fluency in the classroom by selecting appropriate techniques and methods to improve their performance. According to Brown (2001) it is the teachers' job to provide a warm situation that will encourage students to speak, and students should be given adequate opportunity to practice and become fluent in their speaking.

Nation & Yamamoto (2012) states that fluency development is an important component in EFL learning with one quarter of the class

time as it makes the students believe that speaking fluently is achievable with their own efforts. The four equally important principles of language teaching as described in Nation and Yamamoto (ibid) are:

- Meaning-focused input. This strand of meaning-focused input, supports the development of receptive language skills in second language learners.
- Meaning-focused output
- Language-focused learning
- Fluency development

Fillmore (1979) defined four abilities of a fluent speaker: the ability to talk at length with few pauses, the ability to produce sentences coherently and to deal with lexical and syntactic items at a fast speed, the ability to use appropriate expressions that can be used in a wide range of contexts, and the ability to be creative and imaginative in language use.

Nation (1989) mentions three aspects of fluency: speed and flow of language production, the degree and control of language items i.e. pausing, rhythm, pronunciation and stress, and the way language and content interacts.

Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988) identifies seven principles to consider when designing and doing fluency building activities:

1. Incorporate repetition
2. Increase speaking time
3. Prepare before speaking
4. Use familiar and motivating topics
5. Ensure appropriate level
6. Impose time limits
7. Teach formulaic sequences

Practicing speaking skills and developing speaking fluency will therefore, enable a speaker to express his / her ideas and thoughts naturally and spontaneously without having to pause and think of the correct words to use. Techniques to measure oral fluency have been developed over the years and the most common techniques used in studies include:

Rate - The number of syllables spoken in a minute.

Hesitation - The number of pauses in a determined time period. These may be due to lack of vocabulary, time to reformulate the sentence or distraction.

Repair- Repetition of the same speech to make corrections.

This study is an attempt at investigating various teaching techniques and methods that could be used in the classroom to build second language learners' speaking fluency. The study reviewed eighteen seminal research papers on 06 such teaching techniques and methods used by teachers to develop learners' speaking fluency.

2. Methodology

Oral fluency stands as a crucial factor in language acquisition, particularly at tertiary level. This narrative review aims at exploring and evaluating six techniques employed by educators to enhance oral fluency amongst adult L2 learners.

A systematic search across scholarly databases, journals, and relevant academic sources was carried out using keywords such as "oral fluency," "techniques," and "Second Language / Foreign Language learners". Eighteen seminal articles that elucidate the

efficacy of the following techniques in fostering oral fluency amongst adult and teenage learners were selected for the study.

- 4/3/2 technique
- Chunking
- Role-play
- Shadowing
- Gallery Walk
- Storytelling

Literature on each technique was reviewed taking into consideration the impact of the techniques on developing fluency, and how fluency improvements were assessed objectively. A minimum of three seminal articles on each technique were reviewed and critiqued to obtain a comprehensive understanding of their impact on enhancing oral fluency.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Literature on the 4-3-2 fluency building technique

Maurice (1983) devised the 4/3/2/ fluency building technique to provide fluency practice to learners of English as a Second Language. In this technique learners deliver a 4-minute speech on a familiar topic to a partner. Then, they change partners and deliver the same speech in a reduced time of 3-minutes. Again, the same speech is delivered to a third partner in two minutes. According to Maurice, the 4/3/2 activity is a good technique to cover a large class as all the students can participate in the activity simultaneously.

Arevart & Nation (1991) mentions that the three features in the 4/3/2/ activity; the changing audience, repetition, and decreasing time makes an important contribution to the development of fluency. Changing the audience makes sure that the speaker's focus continuous to remain on the message, as it reduces the speaker's need to add new information to the talk to keep the listener interested by changing the content. Repeating the speech increases the speaker's familiarity with both the form and the content of the material and increases the speaker's speed in accessing the needed forms. The decrease in time puts pressure on the speaker to increase the rate of speaking, and limits the speaker's need to add new material in the 3- and 2- minute deliveries of the speech.

Santos & Ramirez-Avila (2022) investigated improvements in students' speaking fluency by adopting the two techniques; 4/3/2 technique and self-assessment using a randomly selected control group and an experimental group. The teacher scaffolded both groups' learning by supplying the necessary information to write a movie review. The necessary vocabulary and grammar were introduced before the movie was presented. At the end of each session, (4-minute, 3-minute & 2-minute) students of the experimental group did a self-assessment using a rubric and presented it to the whole class. Finally, the teacher gave them feedback on the self-assessment. The teaching technique of small class discussions was used with the control group. The study was conducted over three weeks and students' speaking fluency improved in both groups, but the students in the experimental group showed much more improvement than the students in the control group.

The study showed the importance of planning, practicing and repeating and the self-assessments revealed the importance of feedback. The study also highlighted that students could be independent learners and that there are different ways to develop fluency, making them the 'primary agent of their learning'.

Permata et al., (2019) studied the effect of the 4/3/2 technique on students' speaking ability using a quasi-experimental design consisting of an experiment class and a control class. Each group consisted of 32 students. The 4/3/2 technique was used with the experimental group as the technique had several features that develop speaking fluency:

- 1) It covers vocabulary, grammar, and discourse proficiency,
- 2) The students deliver their speech at a higher rate than they usually do.
- 3) Repeating the same speech is advantageous for the students to memorize, repeat, and rearrange their speeches for better performance rather than aiming solely at increasing speed.

The researcher gave oral presentations as a speaking test to the students of both groups in order to show the effect of the treatment toward students' speaking skills. The five indicators of speaking used to score - pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and content were adapted from Brown (2001). Students in both classes underwent the same test as it was presented individually in front of both groups. The activity was recorded and analyzed by the researcher.

The data for this research were collected from how students performed at the test and analyzed statistically. It was found that the students taught by using the 4/3/2 technique achieved significantly better scores in speaking than those who were taught by using the small group discussion technique.

Yang (2014) outlines a 4/3/2 method adapted in an EFL class in China. The research was conducted for a period of roughly three months over one semester and the 4/3/2 activity was conducted every week. As stated by Yang, although practicing speaking fluency over an extended period of time is a challenging task for both EFL teachers and the learners, it is a powerful retrieval strategy that can enhance speaking competence and will be beneficial to the learners in order to maintain conversations in real life. The results of the study was similar to the results of the previous studies showing development in speaking speed and a reduction in the number of pauses. Students' overall language proficiency too increased, in addition to speaking fluency and students' confidence when speaking.

It was seen that most EFL learners' grammar structures improved after the research period. Furthermore, the research also showed an increase in students' motivation in practicing speaking fluency and their willingness to participate in public speaking. The major finding in continuously doing the 4/3/2 activity was that the students' improvement in speaking fluency in class eventually supported real conversations that required similar language.

Collectively, these studies show that the 4/3/2 technique's varied benefits such as its structured approach, repetition, changing partners, and time constraints, have consistently led to enhanced speaking fluency, improvements in grammar, increased motivation, and greater confidence among the learners showing that the technique not only aids in speaking fluency in class but also supports the application of language skills in real-life conversations, making it a valuable tool in language instruction.

3.2. Chunking

When speaking, native speakers use numerous multi-word strings or chunks of language that sound natural and native-like. Second

or Foreign language learners too need to learn and use these multi-word chunks of language as fixed expressions in their conversations for their language to sound natural and spontaneous.

According to Lewis (1997) chunks include "everything that doesn't fit neatly into the categories of either grammar (as traditionally conceived) or single-word vocabulary, for instance:

collocations (wrong way, give way, the way forward)

fixed expressions (by the way, in the way)

formulaic utterances (I'm on my way; no way!)

sentence starters (I like the way...)

verb patterns (to make/fight/elbow one's way...)

idioms and catchphrases (the third way; way to go!)

(Levis, 1997, p.7)

3.2.1. Previous studies on chunking

A study by Mohammadi & Enayati (2018) aimed at investigating the effect of learning lexical chunks on the speaking fluency of EFL Iranian learners, taking into consideration the participants' knowledge and use of lexical chunks. A control group and an experimental group were used for the study. After a pre-test and a 30-item test on collocations, the experimental group participants studied common lexical chunks and collocations on different topics during three sessions of 90 minutes a week, over a period of six weeks. The book, *Collocations in Use*, written by Michael McCarthy and Felicity O'Dell was used in the sessions.

The experimental group utilized lexical chunks and wrote many unified paragraphs about different topics which they presented and discussed in the class. They were also instructed to make use of lexical chunks in their conversations. Finally, they role-played the provided conversations in the classroom. The learners in the control group did not receive any instruction on lexical chunks.

At the end of six weeks the subjects in both groups were post-tested in speaking fluency through an interview on the same topics used in the pre-test and a test of collocations similar to those that were previously carried out in the pre-test, but with different lexical chunks and collocations. In the process of the interview, the participants were required to discuss their ideas about ten main issues they may face in their lives. The participants' post-test transcriptions were analyzed to find out their improvements in terms of speaking fluency and to find out whether there was a significant difference between the performance of the two groups in speaking fluency.

Results of the paired t-tests used for comparing the experimental group learners' pre-test and post-test scores indicated that there was significant improvement in the learners' performance at the post-test regardless of the topics that they read about and learnt.

Cancino and Iturrieta (2022) reported the importance of exposing learners to natural chunking to develop their oral fluency. Their study too employed an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group was exposed to thirty-eight hours of teaching lexical chunks and formulaic expressions using authentic material such as songs, TV programs, and videos to introduce lexical chunks as well as to increase their awareness of how prefabricated structures were frequently used. The control group was taught conventionally, using regular lessons.

Both groups faced an oral test and the findings revealed that the experimental group scored higher in the proficiency tests and the number of formulaic expressions used. In addition, the study found

a correlation between the learners' oral proficiency and the use of formulaic expressions.

Monica (2022) examined the impact of chunking on enhancing EFL undergraduate students' speaking fluency. After a pre-test consisting of a speaking skills test and interviews the students were divided into a control group and an experimental group. The two groups were given speaking practice using the same tasks, but the experimental group was given instruction and practice using chunking to improve their speaking fluency. During the treatment, they were instructed to use chunks and they had to write about selected topics and present them in class.

Using the same tasks that were used earlier the experimental group was given a post-test in the form of an interview to measure the difference in their level of speaking ability, especially the frequency of using chunking when speaking. The independent samples t-test for comparing the mean values of the post-test of the experimental and control groups showed a significant improvement in speaking fluency in the experimental group and positive attitudes towards the use of chunking to enhance speaking fluency. The performance of the control group in the post-test did not change much in comparison to their pre-test mean scores.

The study found that using chunks helped EFL learners to be more fluent in interaction as it reduced their anxiety levels during the process of speaking and built up their confidence. The study recommends that material developers should consider creating language learning materials by introducing different types of chunks along with instructions on how they should be applied.

The findings of these studies showed that mastery of readymade chunks could help learners develop their fluency in speaking a second language.

3.3. Role-play

Using the role-play technique provides learners with opportunities to practice spontaneous speech, engage in meaningful conversations, and improve their communication skills in a dynamic and interactive way. Richard (1985) defines role-play as a classroom activity akin to drama, where students assume diverse roles within a given scenario, simulating real-life situations. For instance, students might enact scenarios involving customer complaints or apologies, fostering practical language use within a shop setting.

Distinct types of role-play methodologies include fully scripted role plays detailed by Harper-Whalen & Morris (2005), involving pre-determined dialogues, suitable for lower-proficiency learners, semi-scripted role plays, as proposed by Livingstone (1983) that incorporate model conversations with missing words, suitable for upper-beginner to intermediate proficiency levels and non-scripted role plays outlined by Dickson (1989) and Pi-Chong (1990) that offer students keywords, materials, or contexts to be used with less structured tasks for intermediate to advanced learners, promoting conversational flexibility and problem-solving skills (cited in Cho, 2025, p.38-39).

3.3.1. Effects of roleplay on building oral fluency

Aliakbari and Jamalvandi (2010) conducted a study with 60 EFL sophomores, aged 18-30, who were attending various universities in Ilam, Iran. The participants were ranked based on their IELTS scores and then split into two groups: experimental and control. The IELTS speaking assessment involves evaluating fluency, coherence, lexical resource, grammatical accuracy, and pronunciation. Fluency was assessed by observing the participants'

speech for speech rate, repetition or self-correction. While content-related pauses were permitted, pauses due to word-finding or grammatical difficulties were considered indicators of disfluency. The experimental group utilized role-play cards aligned with Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) principles as their primary instructional material. Conversely, the control group received conventional language teaching material. The study evaluated participants' speaking abilities using the IELTS speaking test at both the pre-test and the post-test.

The speaking test involved three sections:

- A 4-5minute segment where candidates answered general questions about themselves, their families, studies or jobs, interests, and related familiar topics.
- A 3-4minute segment requiring candidates to speak for 1-2 minutes on a given topic from a card, with a one-minute preparation time, followed by one or two additional questions.
- A 4-5minute discussion between the examiner and the candidate on thematically linked issues and concepts to the candidate's speech.

The experiment spanned approximately two months, with both groups attending classes twice a week. The experimental group engaged with Task Based Language Teaching oriented role-play cards, while the control group followed traditional language teaching methods. Following the study period, a post-test similar to the IELTS speaking assessment was conducted. The results revealed a significant difference between the experimental and control groups demonstrating the experimental group's improved performance compared to the control group. This indicated the positive impact of the Task-Based Language Teaching approach based on the role-play techniques.

Rahman and Maarof (2018) investigated the effect of the role-play and simulation approach on Malaysian Polytechnic engineering students' ESL oral communication skills. A mixed method design was employed, using both quantitative and qualitative data collection approaches. The quantitative data were collected from 100 students aged between 18-20 years using a quasi-experimental study. The numbers of respondents were 100 students consisting of 50 students from the role-play and simulation approach group and 50 students from the control group doing traditional ESL / EFL activities.

A Speech Evaluation Form and Oral Presentation Rubrics developed by the National Communication Association, USA were used to rate students' oral performance. The oral communication tests were rated using standard oral presentation measurement rubrics consisting of five components: content, organization, language, adaptation to audience and context and the use of paralinguistic features which were allocated 5 points each. Results of both the pre and post oral tests were evaluated out of 25 points and the results were totaled to indicate students' achievements out of 50 points.

Immediately after the completion of the treatment for 14 weeks, the oral communication skills of students in both groups were scored using the same tool and compared across the two groups. The results showed a significant improvement in the post-test scores of the role-play and simulation group compared to the other group suggesting that role-play and simulation techniques positively impact ESL students' oral communication abilities.

Purnamawati et al. (2015) investigated the use of role-play as a teaching tool for speaking skills, involving 34 grade-eight students from SMPN 12 Pontianak during the 2013-2014 academic year. Their research adopted a pre-experimental approach utilizing pre-tests and post-tests, and employed Penny Ur's speaking test performance criteria (Penny Ur, 1996:135) graded on the five-point scale given below:

1. Little or no communication,
2. Very hesitant and brief utterances, sometimes difficult to understand,
3. Get the idea across, but hesitantly and briefly
4. Effective communication in short turns
5. Easy and effective communications, uses long turns

The pre-test scored 50.58 on average and the post-test scored 64.41, indicating a notable increase and a high effect size (> 0.5). This substantiates the success of employing role-play in teaching English speaking skills.

Collectively, these studies provide empirical support for the effectiveness of the role-play technique in enhancing speaking abilities across diverse learner groups, advocating for its integration into language teaching methodologies.

3.4. Shadowing

Shadowing was originally utilized as a treatment for stuttering as well as a technique used to train interpreters in Europe (Hamada, 2017). However, in recent times shadowing is being utilized as a language learning technique. Lambert (1988) states that "shadowing involves the immediate vocalization of auditory presented stimuli, i.e. word for word repetition in the same language, parrot-style" (p. 266). As mentioned in Yavari & Safiee, (2019) shadowing is a language learning tool in which learners repeat a spoken text as closely as possible immediately after hearing it.

3.4.1. Effects of shadowing on developing oral fluency

Juneri (2018) investigated the effect of shadowing on improving students' speaking ability. The research population comprised sixty-four 2nd and 4th semester students in the academic year 2017/2018 of the State Vocational High school, Nigeria. The selected sample out of 64 students comprised a homogeneous group of 19 students who had been selected through a speaking test. The sample was divided into two: an experimental group ($n=8$) and a control group ($n=11$). A pre- and a post-test experimental design was used to investigate the impact of the shadowing technique on students' speaking ability. The pre-test was administered to get initial data of students' speaking ability. The topic of their speaking task was determined based on the material they learnt in class. The experimental group was taught using the shadowing technique and the controlled group was taught by using a conventional technique. Finally, the post-test was administered to examine the effect of shadowing on oral fluency.

The researcher chose the scoring rubric of speaking ability based on the components which are explained in Brown (2004): grammar, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation and comprehension. Fluency was assessed using band descriptors from level 5 to level 1 as follows:

- Has complete fluency in the language fully accepted by educated native speakers
- Able to use the language fluently at all levels normally pertinent to professional needs. Can participate in any

conversation within the range of an experience with a high degree of fluency.

- Can discuss particular interests with reasonable competence and ease. Rarely grope for words.
- Can handle language with confidence but not with facility in most social situations, including introductions and casual conversations about current events, as well as work, family, and autobiographical information
- No specific fluency description

The mean score of the control group on the post-test was 67 whereas the experimental group scored 77 on the post-test. The result shows that the Speech Shadowing technique has a positive effect on improving English speaking ability.

Yavari and Shafiee (2019) examined the effect of shadowing and tracking (listening to a person and then repeating the words for the person to hear to fix a communication breakdown) to test speaking fluency in regular EFL classrooms, using a group of 60 Iranian EFL learners aged between 15 and 20 attending the Jahad Danesheshgahi Language Institute in Isfahan in Iran. A homogeneous sample was selected to administer the PET (Preliminary English Test) based on the Cambridge English Language Assessment. The PTE speaking section is assessed based on several criteria outlined in its rubric such as fluency, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, interaction, and overall communication. Fluency was assessed based on the candidates' ability to speak without unnecessary pauses or hesitations.

The sample was divided into four groups: shadowing group (SG), tracking group (TG), shadowing and tracking group (STG), and control group (CG). The pre-test and the post-test in this study took the form of interviews employed to measure fluency and to gather the required data. Each of these tests comprised oral questions related to familiar topics and the learners were expected to answer these questions in a fluent way. Fluency was gauged according to the number of syllables produced per minute of speech. All the subjects in different groups took part in an interview pre-test, and their fluency scores were gauged. The experimental groups received their relevant treatments, while the control group received neither shadowing nor tracking. Results show the mean scores of the experimental groups and the control group as follows: SG ($M = 2.15$), TG ($M = 1.84$), STG ($M = 2.45$), and CG ($M = 1.67$). Although the results show that the shadowing technique is significantly more effective than the tracking technique, the difference between SG and STG ($M = 2.45$) shows that the combined effect of shadowing and tracking was significantly more effective than when using the shadowing technique alone.

Nashta and Rahimy (2018) investigated the efficacy of L2 dialogue shadowing practice using Iranian intermediate EFL learners' conversation ability. For this purpose, 30 Iranian intermediate EFL learners at Padideh Language Centre participated in the study. The participants were selected randomly and divided into an experimental and a control group comprising 15 in each. A pre-test of conversation ability was administered to both groups. The experimental group received 10 sessions of teaching L2 conversation as well as the dialogue shadowing technique (DST) while the control group did not engage in shadowing. Padideh Language Center's chart which focusses on correct pronunciation, fluency, and grammar of the target language was used to evaluate the participants speaking ability.

The results revealed that Iranian EFL learners in the experimental group performed better and received higher scores in the conversation test after 10 sessions of treatment.

Overall, these studies indicate that techniques like Speech Shadowing, when integrated into language learning, positively improves speaking ability, enhancing aspects like fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and overall conversation skills.

3.5 Gallery Walk

As outlined by Caulfield and Jennings (2005), the Gallery Walk Technique engages students by rotating clockwise through the classroom, writing comments, questions, and answers to written pieces of text affixed to the walls of a classroom. After visiting each idea displayed on the wall, students have the opportunity to comment on their peers' work. Thus, the gallery walk technique can be defined as an instructional activity that involves students actively moving around the classroom, engaging in examining, questioning, exchanging ideas, peer responses, and the formulation of their individual thoughts.

3.5.1. Studies on Gallery Walk in developing oral fluency

In a study by Anwar (2015), the impact of the 'Gallery walk' technique on students' speaking skills was investigated. The research involved 34 students from the academic year 2014/2015 at SMA Muhammadiyah (plus) Salatiga, Indonesia. The methodology incorporated two cycles, each comprising planning, action, observation, and reflection. As part of this approach, students were organized into groups of four or five, with each group using a different coloured pen to create galleries. Given below is a summary of the steps carried out by Anwar (ibid) to implement the gallery walk technique.

- Preparation: The teacher provides materials and discussion questions.
- Group Formation: Class divides into smaller groups, each given a coloured pen.
- Gallery Creation: Groups create their galleries and discuss the contents within.
- Gallery Rotation: Groups rotate to review other galleries, adding comments or information with their coloured pen.
- Rotation Cycle: Students move through each gallery until all groups have visited all galleries.
- Return to Own Gallery: Groups prepare comments and a brief oral report.
- Oral Reports: Each group presents in the larger class, ensuring understanding of the lesson.
- Teacher Feedback: The teacher gives comments, summarizes discussion questions, and wraps up the learning.

Analyses of pre-test and post-test results demonstrate that using the gallery walk technique has a discernible impact on students' speaking skills as students recorded a marked improvement of 26.4 % from cycle I to cycle II. However, the study lacked any evidence on the rubrics that were utilized for evaluating the performance of participants on the pre- and post-tests.

Rangkuti et al. (2002) conducted an experimental investigation to evaluate the influence of the Gallery Walk Technique on the

speaking ability of students. 30 participants from SMA Pelita Bulu in China were used as the sample. The students were randomly assigned into an experimental group (X-I) comprising 15 students and an equally sized control group (X-II). The research utilized a pre-test and post-test evaluations to gauge the participants' performances. Assessments were conducted using Harris' (1989) speaking skill rubric which consisted the evaluation of pronunciation, comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and grammar. The rubric evaluated speaking proficiency across four key areas, each scoring from 1 to 4, where 1 indicates the lowest proficiency and 4 the highest. Fluency, in particular, was measured through the speaker's ability to articulate ideas smoothly and coherently, devoid of hesitations or repetitions.

It was found that the total scores increased from 753 in the pre-test to 810 in the post-test. In the pre-test, scores ranged from 43 - 55, while in the post-test, the range was between 48 - 61. This demonstrated the effectiveness of the gallery walk technique in enhancing students' speaking skills.

Rashmi (2018) investigated the impact of the gallery walk technique on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' oral performance. 60 homogeneous pre-intermediate learners in the age group of 13-16 years from a private language institute were selected and divided randomly into two equal groups; experimental group and control group for the study. The researchers measured the students' language proficiency level using the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT). The design of the study was quasi-experimental research which included a pre-test, a treatment session, and a post-test. The pre-test included several questions based on the learners' text book. (i.e., New Interchange 1) developed by Richards (2008). The learners had to talk on the topics of the units for about 2 to 3 minutes and their speech was recorded for the second rater. The post-test was similar to the pre-test in form and different on topics. This test included topics extracted from the New Interchange 1 course book. The level of the topics was the same in terms of difficulty in both pre and post-tests. The fourth instrument was the speaking checklist (Hughes, 2003) which included pronunciation, grammar, fluency, expression and vocabulary. It was used to help the raters score the participants' speech. The raters scored the participants' speech based on the mentioned speaking checklist. Fluency was rated using the following criteria.

- Speech is so halting and fragmentary that conversation is virtually impossible (1.0-4.5)
- Speech is very slow and uneven except for short routine sentences. (4.6-5.5)
- Speech is frequently hesitant and jerky; sentences may be left incomplete (5.6-6.5)
- Speech is occasionally hesitant, with some unevenness caused by rephrasing and grouping for words (6.6-7.5)
- Speech is effortless and smooth, but perceptively non-native in speed and evenness (7.6-8.5)
- Speech on all professional and general topics are effortless and smooth as a native speaker's (8.6-10)

(Hudges, 2003: 131)

The learners in the experimental group received treatment on the gallery walk technique and the control group continued the conventional program in the classroom; they did not receive any

specific treatment. After the treatment, the researchers administered the modified version of the mentioned pre-test as the post-test. The mean value of the post-test scores was 14.66 points higher than the mean value of the pre-test scores. The results of the post-test showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group. The findings indicate that the gallery walk technique improved the Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' speaking ability.

In essence, the implementation of the Gallery Walk Technique, as discussed by Anwar, Rashmi and Namaziandost, revealed substantial enhancements in speaking abilities among participants. The interactive and collaborative nature of this technique seemed to contribute significantly to the development of fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and the overall oral skills of learners which contributed to moulding more proficient and confident learners in the target language.

3.6. Storytelling as a technique used to develop speaking skills

Storytelling is an effective technique that can be used to develop learners' speaking and listening skills in the classroom to arouse the interest of the learners and to keep them engaged in the language learning process.

Hamilton and Weiss (2005) mention that storytelling can improve expressive language skills and stimulate innovative thinking and state that listening to stories can improve language skills such as vocabulary development, comprehension, sequencing, and story repetition. They also argue that storytelling can encourage creativity because it ignites students' imaginations and inspires them to tell stories and write their own stories.

Haven (2000) gives the advantages of storytelling as follows:

- Effective in improving students' reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.
- Information is better remembered and retained longer when presented in story form.
- A strong and effective interdisciplinary, cross-curriculum teaching.
- Positive storytelling motivates students to learn.
- Effective in building students' self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Effectively engages and develops better imagination and creativity.
- Is engaging and entertaining.
- Creates empathy and a sense of connectedness.
- Enhances analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Creates valuable links to society and heritage.

3.6.1. Studies on storytelling on developing speaking skills

Hartono et. al. (2020) conducted quasi-experimental research to find out the effect of using storytelling on learners' speaking skills. 41 students were divided into two groups (experimental and control), and pre-tests and post-tests were given before and after treatment. The storytelling technique was used with the experimental group and the control group continued to follow the conventional teaching methods used by the teacher

Pre-Storytelling activities, While-Storytelling Activities and Post-Storytelling Activities were conducted including feedback. It was found that repeated speaking improved fluency in speech of

learners, and developed their vocabulary, and grammar. The researchers used 3 raters to calculate students' scores of the speaking tests.

To get t-test results, the researchers calculated the results of the mean scores of the pre- and post-tests. The mean score of the pre-tests in the experiment class ($\bar{X} 1$) was 42.29, and the mean score of the post-tests in the experiment class ($\bar{X} 2$) was 91.24.

The study found that the learners who were administered the storytelling technique achieved a better performance in speaking in English than the learners who were taught using traditional techniques at the post-test. The research concluded that there was a significant positive effect of using storytelling to develop learners' speaking skills.

A study by Tifani et. al. (2020) aimed at investigating how the storytelling technique using webtoons would improve students' confidence in speaking. Webtoons or web-based cartoons are digital comics with graphic narratives that originated in South Korea and became popular with the students during the time the research was conducted. As a speaker's knowledge of a given topic appears to facilitate learner's speaking confidence, webtoons were used as a tool to give the needed topical knowledge to the students. The study consisting of two cycles was conducted using 32 high school students who lacked confidence to speak in English in class. In the first cycle of the activity the learners did not get good results as they were shy to speak in front of the teacher, nervous and afraid of making mistakes.

The researchers found that most of the learners improved their confidence in speaking during the second cycle after practicing and the teacher's feedback. The questionnaire survey results showed that the improvement in the percentage of the learners' confidence in speaking English in the first cycle was 18.57 %, and in the second, 30.43 %. From the findings it can be concluded that storytelling using webtoons improved students' confidence in speaking English. The students also found the teaching and learning process interesting and enjoyable.

The aim of a quasi-experimental study conducted by Saed (2016) was to investigate the effect of storytelling on the speaking ability of 40 female Iranian intermediate level EFL learners in the age group of 14- 16 years attending Chabahar Maritime University High School, Iran. The homogeneity of their proficiency level was established via the administration of a TOEFL (Paper-Based Test) proficiency test and also a pre-test to measure their proficiency.

The learners were randomly divided into a control group and an experimental group. A speaking test was administered to the subjects of both groups at the beginning of the study. The experimental group used the storytelling technique twice a week via movies for three months while the control group was not trained on this technique. The experimental group worked using the storytelling technique via movies while the control group experienced traditional teaching methods for example, the Direct Method. The teacher used the subtitles of the movies to clarify the meaning of ambiguous words and the required grammar. The words and the grammar that would facilitate the subjects' speaking ability were discussed using the movies with definitions and sample sentences. A post-test the was administered to all learners and the independent sample t-test and the paired sample t-test were used for data analysis. The results showed that the storytelling

technique has a significant effect on improving the speaking ability of intermediate level EFL learners.

The papers reviewed in this study in order to examine the efficacy of using the six speaking activities of; the 4/3/2/ method, chunking, role-playing, shadowing, gallery walk and storytelling all attest to the fact that that they can be successfully implemented in ELT classrooms using a systematic approach, due preparation, and practice in order to develop speaking fluency of learners of English.

4. Conclusion

The study highlights the significance of diverse techniques in promoting oral fluency among language learners. However, there is a need for further empirical research to determine the most effective and adaptable fluency building strategies within varying educational contexts. Overall, oral fluency includes the ability to speak smoothly and coherently, without hesitation or repetition or unnecessary pauses mainly due to lack of vocabulary and proficiency in grammar. Therefore, fluency building activities have to be well planned and supported by other equally important components of language learning needed for fluency building strategies to succeed.

In general, the findings suggest that consistent and targeted practice, combined with a variety of speech and fluency building activities is key to developing oral fluency of second language learners, but teachers should keep in mind that developing oral fluency is not developing learners' ability to speak fast and at the expense of accuracy.

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