

Using TED Talks to Improve Motivation of Learning English Language Skills among Middle School Students with Learning Disabilities

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Abstract

This study aimed to use TED Talks, which are abundant with real-life examples of English language use, that might improve the public speaking skills of elementary-level Jordanian EFL students with learning disabilities. The study also aimed at identifying the attitudes of the students with learning disabilities toward using TED Talks to increase motivation to learn English. This research used a quasi-experimental approach. The present study included 68 female EFL tenth graders from the Irbid Schools for Girls, a public institution under the Irbid Directorate of Education. The researcher created an educational program based on the TED talks. The pre-post-test was used to measure the students' progress and a questionnaire was used to measure their attitudes to this strategy. The program seems to have created good levels of interaction among the students and boosted their appetite to participate and engage with the visual and audio materials presented in the TED Talks videos. The students showed positive attitudes toward using the TED Talks program to raise their motivation to learn English language.

Keywords: TED Talks, English language skills, students with learning disabilities, instructional program.

1. Introduction

In today's more interconnected and globalized world, where speakers are increasingly expected to communicate with one another in a common language, the importance of effective communication has grown exponentially (Wu, 2020). Due to its extensive usage in worldwide commercial transactions and education, English has therefore become the language of choice. Another reason English has become the first global lingua franca is that it is the language most often used when communicating with agents and multinational corporations (Tilwani et al., 2022). To top it all off, English is the de facto international language of business, diplomacy, entertainment, technology, science, education, and the media. Because of this, many nations have

made English language education a top priority to improve the ability of their citizens and companies to interact effectively through the medium of English (Farid, 2019).

The increasing prevalence of English as a foreign language in schools, colleges, and institutions throughout Asia is largely attributable to the language's prominent position on the global stage. Preparing students for successful social and professional communication is the main goal of English language education in these nations (Puspita & Amelia, 2020). Similarly, English has become a mandatory subject from kindergarten through university in Jordan. Authorities in Jordan strive to include English in its education system as part of its Arab world identity. Consequently, the major goal of English language instruction in Jordanian schools is to help students become competent communicators so that they may participate fully in society, whether via the job market, furthering their education, or studying abroad (Yaqin & Athena, 2022). To accomplish these goals, the four pillars of effective language learning—listening, speaking, writing, and reading—are the focal points of English language instruction in Jordanian.

According to a solid amount of evidence, being able to articulate one's ideas calls for not just fluent speaking but also precise vocabulary and grammatical use. Learners need to grasp the principles of grammar and know how to apply them correctly in both spoken and written language to achieve accuracy, which entails the production of grammatically correct sentences (Gavenila et al., 2021). Conversely, fluency pertains to the student's capacity to generate spoken and written utterances effortlessly and efficiently, without communication breakdowns or pauses. Accurate and fluent speech is the holy grail for many language learners. Making fewer mistakes in grammar and vocabulary is just as important as being fluent while learning to speak (Mojgan & Tollabi, 2019). A speaker's performance and ability are two facets to consider while evaluating their speech. According to the definition, performance is defined as actual instances of language use in real-time, which allows for observation. The opposite is true: ability is a talent implicit in performance and is fundamental and consistent.

Both the teaching and learning of English rely heavily on technological tools. Thanks to recent digital developments, educators now have more chances than ever to incorporate online resources into traditional classrooms, elevating the quality of instruction and student engagement (Olga, 2019). Both educators and students benefit from having adequate access to the internet since it opens up a world of audiovisual materials that can be used to supplement classroom instruction. We can't imagine modern life without technology, which is why it's so pervasive in both the classroom and our everyday lives (Hsu, 2020). Modern youth, often called the "Internet generation," have mastered the skill of using various forms of electronic media since they were little children. Utami et al. (2021) state that, in contrast to earlier generations, today's learners use a wide range of instructional strategies. These days' students are always online and actively involved in their studies. People nowadays tend to assume that students study best when they are on their own and that they have a strong propensity to use technology to their advantage (Tatyana, 2021).

1.1. Problem statement

The process of education Because of the strong correlation between fluent English and effective oral communication, proficiency in the English language has long been considered crucial for

students and teachers of other languages. Speaking, however, has been repeatedly named by a plethora of research as the most difficult ability to teach and acquire a language. Acquiring fluency in a second or foreign language may be a daunting task for students. This is especially true when it comes to languages like English, where fluency demands not just grammatical knowledge but also the ability to use the language in authentic situations. According to the study's findings, Jordanian EFL students have a hard time communicating effectively in English. It would indicate that Jordanian EFL students have trouble speaking verbally in English, and there may be fewer chances to speak and practice the language outside of the formal classroom in Jordanian, where EFL is taught.

That being said, it could be a top priority in the Jordanian context to think about communicative activities that provide EFL students with real chances to practice and enhance their speaking skills. If we want to see improved results from Jordanian EFL students with learning difficulties, we must solve this problem. Incorporating communicative tasks that provide genuine and significant chances to enhance speaking fluency and accuracy is prioritized. It is possible that TED Talks, which are abundant with real-life examples of English language use, might improve the public speaking skills of elementary-level Jordanian EFL students. Students may practice their critical thinking, communication, collaboration, oral presentation, creativity, and innovation skills in a real-world setting by participating in an educational program modelled on TED Talks, for example. This research found that students' English proficiency may be improved by an authentic context learning approach based on TED Talks, which went beyond just providing students with TED Talks videos and speaking worksheets.

1.2. Questions of the study

1- Are there any statistically significant differences in the motivation to learn English language skills among students with learning disabilities due to the teaching technique (using TED Talks vs. conventional method?)

2. What are the attitudes of the students with learning disabilities toward using TED Talks to increase motivation to learn English?

1.3. Significance of the study

So far as the researcher is aware, this study is among the few that have looked at TED Talks as a teaching tool in a Jordanian setting. Curriculum developers, decision-makers, and educators may become more aware of the pressing need to include TED Talks into students' public speaking skills as they plan, assess, and choose English language teaching resources. Additionally, interested scholars may get new insights from the data, which might contribute to educational research. The ultimate goal of this research is to see if the participants can improve their public speaking skills by creating TED Talks. The following reasons highlight the significance of this study: First, the research tackles a big problem in Jordanian English language education: students need English to get a job, learn new things, understand other cultures, and go to school abroad. It seeks to enhance English language training in the nation by investigating new teaching techniques such as TED Talks. The second benefit of TED Talks as a teaching tool is the way it uses technology to shift the focus from the instructor to the students. Its success reveals the promise of combining real-world material with technological tools for language

instruction. Third, the impact of the learner's attitude and motivation on the results of language acquisition is substantial. Insights about how to build a more interesting and inspiring learning environment might be gleaned from this research on the views of Jordanian EFL students regarding instructional programs based on TED Talks. Finally, this research adds to the expanding corpus of literature on pedagogy, technology integration, and language instruction. Evidence of the efficacy of TED Talks in enhancing public speaking abilities is shown empirically. The results of this research might be useful for English language instructors in Jordan and throughout the world. Both classroom instruction and student public speaking might benefit from watching TED Talks.

1.4. Study limitations

The study's scope is narrowly defined as the first semester of the 2023–2024 school year at a public school in Jeddah, Jordanian, and it only includes eighth-grade female students with learning difficulties. Thus, the results are generalizable to other samples or settings with comparable characteristics.

2. Literature Review

Teaching foreign languages is a scientific and life necessity. It is an urgent need and a basic requirement in contemporary life, which is witnessing a major information revolution as a result of advances in communications technology, which has contributed to dissolving barriers between peoples and cultures, and has made the world a small global village in dialogue with one another (Kozłńska, 2021). Likewise, learning foreign languages helps cultural openness to the world and helps keep pace with the ongoing technological and scientific development in the world. Moreover, global developments in the current era force people to communicate and dialogue among themselves. All of this would increase the importance of teaching and learning foreign languages (Putri, 2023). Motivation is one of the topics that has gained the attention of many educators, and it is one of the most important areas presented in the educational field. It constitutes a great interest for educators in our present era, especially psychologists, because of what they have observed of its effective impact in the possibility of changing many paths of methods and educational methods affecting the learner has a positive impact on the learner and the educational process (Valerievna & Viktorovna, 2021).

Motivation is an essential element in teaching and learning a language to non-native speakers. Experimental studies indicate that students who have high motivation learn the language faster and better than those who find studying the language repulsive (Samaranayake, 2023). So, there is a need for interesting pedagogy, through which the desire to learn a foreign language can be aroused in students and the feeling that learning that language is very beneficial. Failure to create motivation will impose severe restrictions on and hinder the learning process (Madarbakus, 2021). Ideally, motivation should come from the learners themselves, or to be based primarily on their desires and needs, but it is difficult to achieve this goal with young students between the ages of ten and eighteen; Because they are not mature enough to understand the goals behind learning a foreign language (Hamza, 2019).

Since the English language in the Arab world is taught as a foreign language in an environment other than the mother tongue environment, with little stimulation from the current environment - success or failure will depend largely on the incentives mentioned above. These incentives constitute the driving force that makes the educational process more effective, and the teacher himself - as we mentioned - constitutes the strong motivational factor (Jasmin & Yanto, 2021). Therefore, it is the teacher's interests, competence, and diligent hard work that determine the degree of success of any language course. It is clear from what was mentioned that intrinsic motivation - the state in which interest in learning a foreign language comes from the student himself - is the ideal state for acquiring the language easily and quickly, and after that comes external motivation; that is: the interest in learning a foreign language comes from external factors, and this factor is very important for school students (Gunawan et al., 2023).

The quality of language learning may be improved with the use of technology. Websites and other online platforms provide learners with a wealth of learning resources, and technology also gives them access to an endless database and source of knowledge (Triviño, 2024). The ability to add interactivity to both the information and the visual presentation is another way in which technology enhances education (Tilwani et al., 2022). The evolution of audiovisual content into interactive video is displacing printed materials in favour of audiovisual content due to the former's inherent aesthetic appeal. When people talk of the media as a whole, they usually mean the three main forms of mass communication: television, radio, and newspapers. Yet, in this instance, the goal of incorporating media into the classroom is to pique students' curiosity and inspire them to actively participate in their education so that they can keep up with global events (Farid, 2019). To assist their students grow as individuals, teachers should be imaginative in their lesson plans and include many forms of media in their lessons. Consequently, information, ideas, or views may be formed and developed by learners via mediation (Puspita & Amelia, 2020).

When it comes to using technology in the classroom and teaching students how to speak, videos are by far the most popular and essential piece of audiovisual equipment. Magnetic tape may capture both still images and moving audio and video in the form of video (Gavenila et al., 2021). So, to rephrase, movies are just sequences of still pictures shown on a screen with audio tracks added. In addition, videotapes have become ubiquitous in language classrooms, and the majority of publishers have acknowledged the need to include video elements in their course materials. To make their lessons more interesting, instructors should also incorporate language-learning videos and things that aren't airing on television (Mojgan & Tollabi, 2019). It is typical practice in today's educational system to use films as a means to enhance language learning. It is a way to grab students' interest and hold it throughout the lesson. In incorporating films into EFL lessons, students would be able to hone their communication skills and actively participate in their education. Therefore, there are a lot of benefits to using movies in the classroom (Olga, 2019).

Notable and not-so-famous individuals alike have given public remarks in TED Talks. Having a significant fan base or being renowned are not prerequisites to giving TED Talks (Hsu, 2020). Essentially, TED Talk presenters need to know their stuff and have expertise in the field. TED Talks are presented by dynamic and compelling presenters who can captivate a worldwide audience with their compelling arguments and cutting-edge ideas. On TED Talks, you may find

several components (Tatyana, 2021). The speech's foundation should be an abstract concept with broad applicability. This theme has to stand out by being straightforward, easy to grasp, and repeatable. To get people to think, speakers need to come up with interesting and catchy words to utilize in their talks (Koziońska, 2021). Having supporting evidence is a crucial part of these lectures that has to be done well so that the audience remembers and understands what the presenters are saying. It shows that they are not just making emotional claims; they are also citing outside sources to back up their claims (Putri, 2023).

Impressive graphics are a need for TED Talks. If the speaker wants their audience to remember what they said, they need to use visual aids like pictures, films, or graphics to back up their claims. Still, it would be best if the presenter didn't rely too much on visual aids (Valerievna & Viktorovna, 2021). The speakers need to strike an emotional chord by making the listeners feel something; this may be achieved by using dramatic flourishes, anecdotes, and humour to captivate the audience. An emotional connection is established with the audience as a consequence.

Previous studies

The efficacy of TED Talks as a medium for improving students' English proficiency was studied by Karimah et al. (2022). The major goal was to find out how students thought TED Talks fit into several types of teaching roles, such as handling emotions, encouraging students, making jokes, offering instructions, and lecturing. Fifteen students from MTsN Surabaya's seventh grade E participated in the research. The study used a mixed-method research strategy to get its data. Pre- and post-test assessments provided the quantitative data, while interviews yielded the qualitative data. Results showed that after watching TED Talks videos, students' English-speaking abilities significantly improved, especially in terms of fluency and pronunciation.

Researchers Tusino et al. (2023) looked at how watching TED Talks affected the public speaking skills of EFL students. Finding out how students felt about using TED Talks in English as a foreign language (EFL) speaking lessons and how TED Talk videos affected their performance were the main goals of this research. The research included 72 secondary school students from Indonesia and was conducted using a quasi-experimental method. Tests and closed-ended surveys were used to gather the data. Students whose lessons included TED Talks videos outperformed their peers whose lessons did not include these films after the intervention.

The effects of TED talk-based EFL training on the speaking fluency of secondary-level pupils were studied by Alghobashy (2021). A total of thirty second-year students from the Integrated Distinct Governmental Language Secondary School in Shebin Elkom participated in the research. Researchers found that students' EFL speaking fluency improved after utilizing TED talks as an instructional tool since there was a statistically significant difference between the students' pre-and post-test scores on the speaking fluency exam. Therefore, it is safe to say that second-year EFL secondary school students' speaking fluency was improved by the use of TED talks-based education.

Aprilia (2023) looked into how well TED Talks short session videos worked as digital supplemental material for college students taking public speaking programs. Forty undergraduates majoring in English Education at Universities in Negeri Surabaya participated in

the research. Data was collected using an experimental pretest-posttest study approach. Criteria for evaluating students' oral presentations presumably included things like voice delivery, fluency, topic arrangement, and overall presenting abilities, among others, as described in a speaking rubric. This research found that college students' public speaking skills might benefit from participating in brief TED Talk sessions.

3. Methodology

Using a single experimental group and a single control group, this research used a quasi-experimental approach. Two levels of instruction, TED Talks, and traditional classroom methods, make up the independent variable. Students' post-test scores on the speaking proficiency exam serve as the dependent variable. Also, after the experimental group had the therapy based on the TED Talks instructional program, we employed a questionnaire to find out how the participants felt about TED Talks.

3.1. Sample

The present study included 68 female EFL tenth graders from the Jordanian Institution for Girls, a public institution under the Irbid Directorate of Education, who were hand-picked by the researcher. The present research was conducted in the first half of the 2023–2024 school year. In terms of age, education level, and cultural background, the participants were all quite similar to one another. They are all students in the tenth grade. The students were divided into two groups, one experimental, who was taught using the TED Talks method, and a control group, who was taught using the traditional methods. The participants were all educated in public schools in Jordanian by highly competent and experienced female instructors of English.

3.2. Instrument of the study

The study's goal was to find out how eighth graders felt about using the TED Talks program and how motivated they were to learn. Therefore, the researcher created an educational program based on the TED talks. The program was designed after researching relevant material to provide the groundwork for the study in theory and practice and reviewing the presentation materials for analysis. The researcher verified the pre-post rubric's accuracy and dependability. The second instrument was the questionnaire. The researcher gave the experimental group of students an attitude questionnaire to find out how they feel about incorporating TED Talks into their public speaking classes once the program is implemented.

Ten linguists and curriculum instruction specialists served as jurors for the researcher to evaluate the instructional program's validity. With their consent, the researcher reviewed the lesson plan and solicited comments and recommendations. The jury's feedback was carefully considered and included in the revised curriculum.

To test the effectiveness of the program, the researcher designed a test of English language skills and a questionnaire to measure the attitudes of students toward the use of this strategy. An initial pilot exam was administered to a subset of 21 students (not included in the final research population) to determine the test's internal consistency (construct validity). Then, the corrected

item-total correlation, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient between the component score and the total score of its type, and the Pearson Correlation Coefficient between the component score and the test total were all extracted. The findings are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The Correlation Analysis (Internal consistency)

Speaking Type	Alpha Coefficient	The whole test	Inter-rater reliability
Speaking	.71**	.46**	.53
Reading	.73**	.45**	.56
Writing	.70**	.58**	.49
Listening	.57**	.38*	.40
Overall	.71	.46	.51

The inter-rater reliability and Cronbach alpha coefficients were used to assess the speaking test's dependability. The outcomes are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The inter-rater reliability and Cronbach alpha coefficients for the speaking test

Speaking Type	Alpha Coefficient	Inter-rater reliability
Speaking	.73	.77
Reading	.80	.85
Writing	.87	.89
Listening	.77	.84
Overall	.88	.89

There was an inter-rater reliability value of .77 for the intense type, .85 for the responsive type, .89 for the interactive type, and .84 for the comprehensive type. It was determined that the full scale was 0.89, which is higher than the cut-off number 70.

A panel of English language teachers validated the face and content validity of the revised questionnaire. In this case, the Jordanian EFL tenth graders were asked to serve as jurors and decide if the survey questions were sufficient, relevant, and exhaustive. The jury members shared their feedback and recommendations with the researcher. This study's questionnaire was deemed acceptable after the researcher made the necessary revisions; it was designed to examine students' perspectives on incorporating TED Talks into public speaking classes. To evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha was used as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations of the Students' Attitudes to using TED talks

Domain	Cronbach alpha
Practices about TED Talks on speaking performance in English	.80
Beliefs about TED Talks on Listening Performance in English	.84
Feelings about TED Talks on Performance in English	.89
Total	.88

4. Results and discussion

4.1. The first question

Table 4 displays the results of the calculations of the means and standard deviations of the two groups' performance on the overall English skills test before and after the intervention.

Table 4. Means and Standard Deviations of the English Language Skills

Group	Pre-test		Post-test	
	*Mean	S.D	*Mean	S.D
Experimental	43.79	4.69	82.93	5.77
Control	43.24	3.84	65.55	9.07

*The total score is 100

Table 5 shows the results of a one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) conducted to examine the impact of the teaching technique (TED Talks vs. regular training) on the total speaking types after correcting for the influence of the pre-test scores.

Table 5. Results of One-Way ANCOVA about the Effect of the Teaching Method

Source	Type III Squares	Sum of df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Pre-test (Covariate)	9.439	1	9.649	.156	.665	.003
Teaching Method	4747.675	1	4747.575	81.801	.000	.595
Error	3579.685	55	56.994			
Total	313103.000	58				
Corrected Total	7207.121	57				

Once we remove the influence of the pre-test scores from the equation, Table 5 reveals that the experimental group outperformed the control group in terms of total English language skills in the post-test. With a partial eta squared value of (.595), we can see that the approach to instruction accounted for 59.5% of the variation in the language varieties. The results showed that there is a significant effect of using the instructional program based on TED talks in raising the motivation of students with learning disabilities to learn English language skills. The program seems to have created good levels of interaction among the students and boosted their appetite to participate and engage with the visual and audio materials presented in the TED Talks videos.

According to Puspita and Amelia (2020), there are many advantages of using TED Talks videos in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. The script and subtitles in TED Talks might help students develop their comprehension abilities, even though TED Talks are mostly used for listening exercises. Watching TED Talks videos, both in and out of class, may provide students with visual and aural cues—like the speaker's facial expressions and body language—that can help them improve their language skills (Gavenila et al., 2021). Through engaging listening, they also enhance their grasp of real-life English words and phrases and a variety of accents.

4.2. The second question

How did students feel about utilizing TED Talks as a tool for teaching public speaking? We computed their averages and standard deviations to find out. The averages and standard deviations for each attitude scale domain are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Means and Standard Deviations of the Students' Attitudes to Using TED Talks

Item Number	Domain	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Level of Agreement
3	Practices about TED Talks on speaking performance in English	3.97	.73	1	High
2	Beliefs about TED Talks on listening performance in English	3.84	.50	2	High
1	Feelings about TED Talks on Performance in English	3.64	.47	3	Medium
	Total	3.72	.44		High

Table 6 shows that descriptive statistics yielded mean scores of (3.54) to (3.87) on a five-point scale, indicating medium to high levels of agreement, regarding students' opinions about utilizing TED Talks in teaching speaking. The "Practices about TED Talks on speaking performance in English" domain had the greatest level of agreement (Mean=3.97) among students, followed by the "Beliefs about TED Talks on speaking performance in English" domain (Mean=3.84), and finally, the "Feelings about TED Talks on speaking performance in English" domain (Mean=3.64). In addition, students had a positive outlook on utilizing TED Talks as a training tool for public speaking.

The students showed positive attitudes toward using the TED Talks program to raise their motivation to learn English language. Because of the abundance of accessible lectures and the captivating quality of these presentations, TED presentations have considered them. Their production value is high. Their dual status as a topic and a field makes them an obvious choice for a public speaking class (Hsu, 2020). The main advantage of TED Talks is the authenticity of the presenters' stories, ideas, and experiences, which makes the films very valuable. Everyone in the audience knows that TED Talks are always full of interesting and thought-provoking ideas, that the presenters make an effort to connect with them, and that the main points cover most of the material (Tatyana, 2021). By starting with the audience's comprehension and moving on to more surprising conclusions, language propels their debate forward. Learners of public speaking who are interested in the life story of the speaker might benefit from this, and the presentation itself can serve as a source of inspiration and motivation for the speaker.

5. Conclusion

TED Talks presenters come from many walks of life, speak fluently in languages other than their native tongue, and share their ideas with an international audience. When used as teaching resources, TED Talks have the potential to subtly shift viewpoints and boost students' confidence as they begin to speak English as a foreign language. The data analysis and study discussion results indicate that using sorted TED Talks Short Sessions may help first-year university students become better public speakers. As long as the review is more methodical and rigorous in its selection, future researchers are free to use and enhance the results' importance. Students' motivation in learning English language and its skills, such as speaking fluently (i.e., without stuttering, repetition, or pauses), expressing themselves verbally using a variety of forms, and engaging in meaningful conversations on themes they are already acquainted with were all enhanced via the use of TED presentations as a teaching tool. Possible explanations for the success of TED talk-based education include the integration of technology, exposure to native speakers, and activities designed to foster students' fluency in speech.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations must be considered in this study. As a first step in becoming a better public speaker, watch the TED Talks Short Sessions. This is because this kind of instruction necessitates not only group work but also personal accountability. If teachers want

their students to get the most out of TED Talks Short Sessions, they should keep an eye on them as they study. The school needs to back instructors' professional development by furnishing them with first-rate resources, including an internet connection. Topics that pupils are already acquainted with will be simpler for teachers to cover than totally novel ones. Since some TED talks have been easier to understand than others, it is the teacher's responsibility to assess their students' language proficiency before selecting an appropriate presentation.

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