

PAPER

Using Flipgrid Videos to Enhance Speaking and Presenting in English for Non-Native Learners

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Many previous studies have explored the use of technology-based media in language learning, particularly in speaking lessons. One of the most popular platforms being used today is Flipgrid (FG). The primary objective of this study is to examine how non-native learners respond to the use of FG, which is aimed at enhancing their speaking skills. 40 Japanese students were recruited for this quantitative and qualitative research study. The data collection instruments utilized in this study were questionnaires and interviews. The study revealed that the outstanding positive responses towards FG use are its user-friendly interface, confidence in speaking performance, collaborative peer reviews and feedback, and self-enhancement in learning to speak English, whereas the most negative response is related to the difficulty in the editing and uploading process, which is perceived to be a technological challenge. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that FG, as a viable option, received more positive feedback for effectiveness than negative responses from non-native learners.

KEYWORDS

Flipgrid (FG), speaking and presenting in English, non-native learners, positive outcome

1 INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a fundamental aspect of foreign language acquisition, and it is essential for learners to develop strong speaking skills to achieve proficiency in a new language [1, 2]. Learners and teachers in Japanese universities recognize the acquisition of English as a vital language skill for non-native learners [3, 4]. Speaking is often considered the most important skill for Japanese learners to improve, as it is essential for effective communication in English [3, 4, 6]. Nevertheless, speaking in English is challenging for most Asian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners, as indicated by previous studies of Asian scholars [7, 8, 9, 10]. One significant challenge that non-native learners often face is the limited opportunities to practice and improve their English language skills [5, 10]. However, technology has made

Nguyen, T.T.T. (2024). Using Flipgrid Videos to Enhance Speaking and Presenting in English for Non-Native Learners. *International Journal of Engineering Pedagogy (iJEP)*, 14(2), pp. 100–111. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijep.v14i2.43813>

Article submitted 2023-08-07. Revision uploaded 2023-12-26. Final acceptance 2024-01-11.

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it possible to overcome this challenge by providing a range of digital tools that can assist in language learning [3, 4, 11].

One such tool is Flipgrid (FG), a video-based platform that allows learners to create and share short video presentations with their peers and teachers. This study aims to enhance language learning outcomes by utilizing technology and developing effective language teaching strategies in a particular context. The focus will be on analyzing how FG affects English language learning, specifically speaking and presenting in English for non-native learners in Japan. The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of using FG, a video-based educational platform, in freshman English-speaking classes at a university in Tokyo, Japan. The objective of the study is to explore the attitudes of the non-native learners towards the utilization of FG to aid their English-speaking skills.

In light of the aforementioned research background, this paper suggests exploring whether the utilization of the FG application can be a viable means of enhancing students' oral communication skills. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to assess the impact of FG on students' speaking proficiency. The primary research inquiries are as follows:

1. From the non-native learners' perspectives, how is FG used to improve speaking and presenting in English?
2. Is FG helpful for the students to self-study and enhance speaking and presenting in English?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The relevant literature on FG as an online video sharing platform and its impact on oral communication skills, specifically speaking skills, are reviewed as follows:

2.1 Flipgrid

Lamb [4] emphasized the critical need for educators to incorporate a blend of conventional and contemporary methods in their teaching practices. In the realm of language education, previous research has demonstrated that using video-based communication tools in language classrooms can significantly enhance students' oral presentation skills. According to a study conducted by Nur and Jafre [21], the integration of video-mediated communication tools in English language classes resulted in an improvement in students' oral proficiency. Additionally, the study revealed that the use of video technology fosters the development of learners' speaking skills by encouraging them to express their thoughts and opinions [21].

Flipgrid has gained popularity as an educational tool, particularly in language teaching, because it allows for easy video recording and sharing of spoken language practice. Although there are many resources available to help educators use FG in their classrooms, there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding its effectiveness in education. For instance, McLain [22] also found FG to be an effective educational tool in Business English Writing classes. In this study, students reported that FG was user-friendly and allowed them to practice language skills from home. Furthermore, there was an increase in students' confidence in their English-speaking abilities [19]. According to Lowenthal and Moore's [23] research, graduate students had positive perceptions of using FG in online courses. FG was found to be a valuable tool for promoting social presence through asynchronous video discussions. This finding

suggests that FG can be an effective resource for online educators seeking to foster social interaction and collaboration among students in a remote learning environment [22, 23].

2.2 Oral communication skill – Speaking skill

In L2 acquisition, the ability to speak is considered a key skill that needs to be developed [5, 9, 12]. Speaking is a productive skill that allows language learners to communicate effectively with others and establish meaningful relationships. This is because speaking is the primary way of conveying meaningful and complete ideas to those who are listening [12].

Harmer [13] defines speaking as more than just producing language output with correct pronunciation, intonation, stress, and connected speech. It also involves understanding communicative contexts, knowing how to repair conversations, and being able to engage in functional exchanges. Additionally, speaking requires selecting appropriate vocabulary and using correct grammar to convey communicative purposes [14].

Based on reports on the complexity of speaking skills, students in EFL contexts encounter challenges in acquiring oral skills due to limited opportunities to practice speaking outside the classroom setting [15]. Difficulties in speaking grammatically correct sentences are a common issue faced by EFL learners across the globe [16, 23, 24].

Flipgrid is a widely recognized educational application, considered highly beneficial for facilitating learning discussions and increasing learning engagement. FG's features, including real-time video chatting and video discussions, have been proven to effectively promote collaborative learning and student engagement, according to several studies [17, 18, 19, 20].

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Setting and participants

There were 40 students from a public university in Japan participating in the case study over a period of 15 weeks. Students were predominantly second-year students from two majors: sociology and international studies. The goals of the course were to improve efficiency in English communication skills via using FG, with a particular focus on speaking and presenting in English.

There were two phases in which the questionnaires were delivered to the students, including pre- and post-treatment surveys. One crucial part of the first phase questionnaires consists of five questions related to demographic information such as gender, age, major, and English learning time. Part 2 was constructed using a five-point Likert scale with five levels ranging from 5 to 1 (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree) to obtain the participants' general understanding and opinions about FG videos used in speaking practice. Furthermore, the questionnaires requested that the students self-assess their speaking performance based on five areas of rubrics, including pronunciation, confidence, fluency and accuracy, grammatical and lexical features, corrective feedback, and evaluation before and after 15 weeks of using FG. The rest of the questionnaires investigate the students' perspectives on how FG is used to improve their speaking and presenting skills to answer the two research questions.

3.2 Procedure

This study is carried out using quantitative and qualitative data, as this analysis is explicitly concerned with context rather than generalization [25, 26]. The qualitative case-study analysis was applied to investigate whether using the features of the FG could improve the students' speaking and presentation skills. The first survey was administered at the beginning of the semester and included questions for respondents to state their English level. The second survey was administered at the end of the semester and consisted of questions to determine students' English level of improvement, perceived attitudes toward the use of FG, and various other questions to determine what students perceived about their experience using FG to enhance their speaking skills. The survey included quantitative 5-point Likert-scale as well as qualitative open-answer questions. A quantitative method was used to collect data about the students' perceptions. It was administered as a guided survey consisting of open-ended answers. Furthermore, in-depth interviews were conducted to gain insights into the learners' experiences with using FG, and content analysis was used to examine the quality of the participants' speaking skills.

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 From the non-native learners' perspectives, how is Flipgrid used to improve speaking and presenting in English?

The procedure for data collection was administered to 40 non-native majors from a university in Japan. Phase 1 of the project was conducted before the training process with FG to assess whether the students' level of speaking performance witnessed any difference. Figure 1 expresses the speaking performance self-assessment by the participants based on five areas of rubrics, which are pronunciation, confidence, fluency and accuracy, grammatical and lexical features, corrective feedback, and evaluation. As can be seen from Figure 1, almost all the performances assessed by the students in all five criteria achieved between 20% and 30% of the total 100% average score. More than 45% of all participants believed that they were able to score 20%–30% in every aspect. To be specific, there were 67.5%, 72.5%, and 75% of the students who self-assessed their performance in pronunciation/corrective feedback and evaluation; confidence; and grammatical and lexical features between 20% and 30% out of 100% total, respectively. Similarly, a slight amount of achievement was observed in all fields of self-assessment, ranging from 31% to less than 50% of the total score. Unexpectedly, there was no higher than 50% of the total scores achieved in the participants' self-assessment of their speaking proficiency. Figure 1 shows the general performances in speaking ability among 40 non-native English learners in a Japanese university, with all less than 50% of the total 100% outcome. Phase 1 of the research was carried out before the students were introduced to using FG for practicing speaking and presenting in English within 15 weeks. The prerequisite knowledge shown in Figure 1 presents the initial level of English among the non-native English participants recruited in the research before they were asked to use FG videos to practice speaking and presenting in the case study.

After 15 weeks, a similar self-assessment of speaking performances in accordance with the five given criteria was employed. Accompanied by Phase 2, speaking performance assessment (see Figure 2), the results of the post-treatment process were analyzed using SPSS vs. 26 to find out additional answers on the impression of FG use via 5-point Likert scale questionnaires.

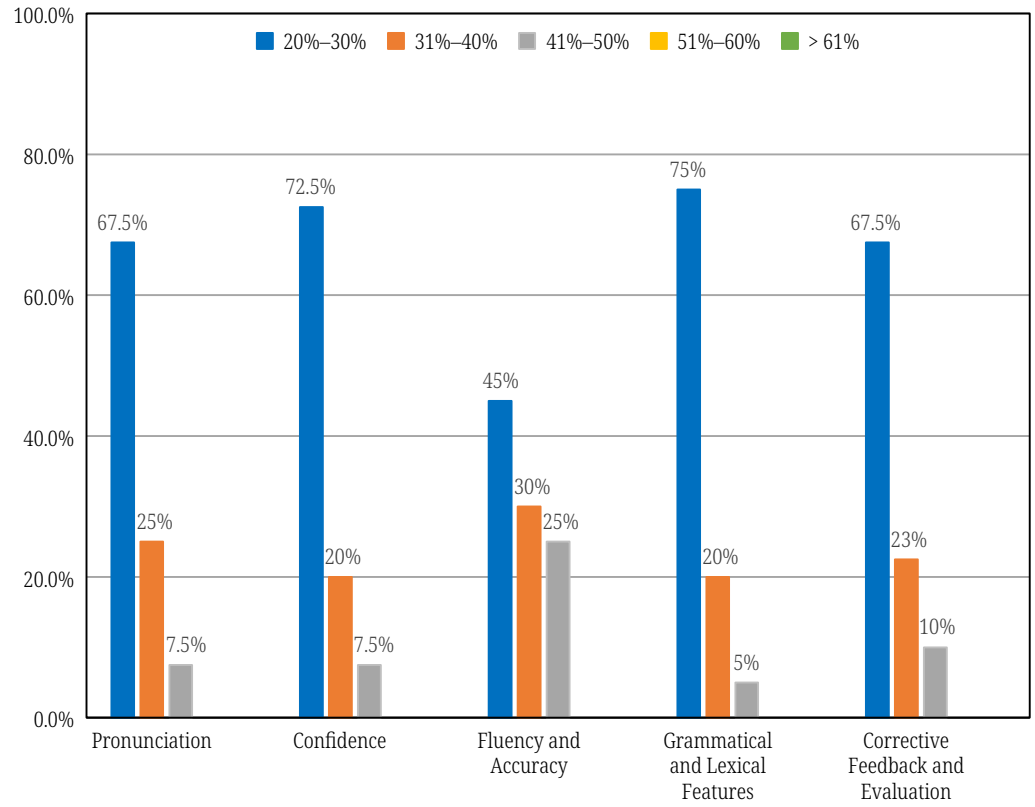


Fig. 1. Speaking performance self-assessment (Phase 1)

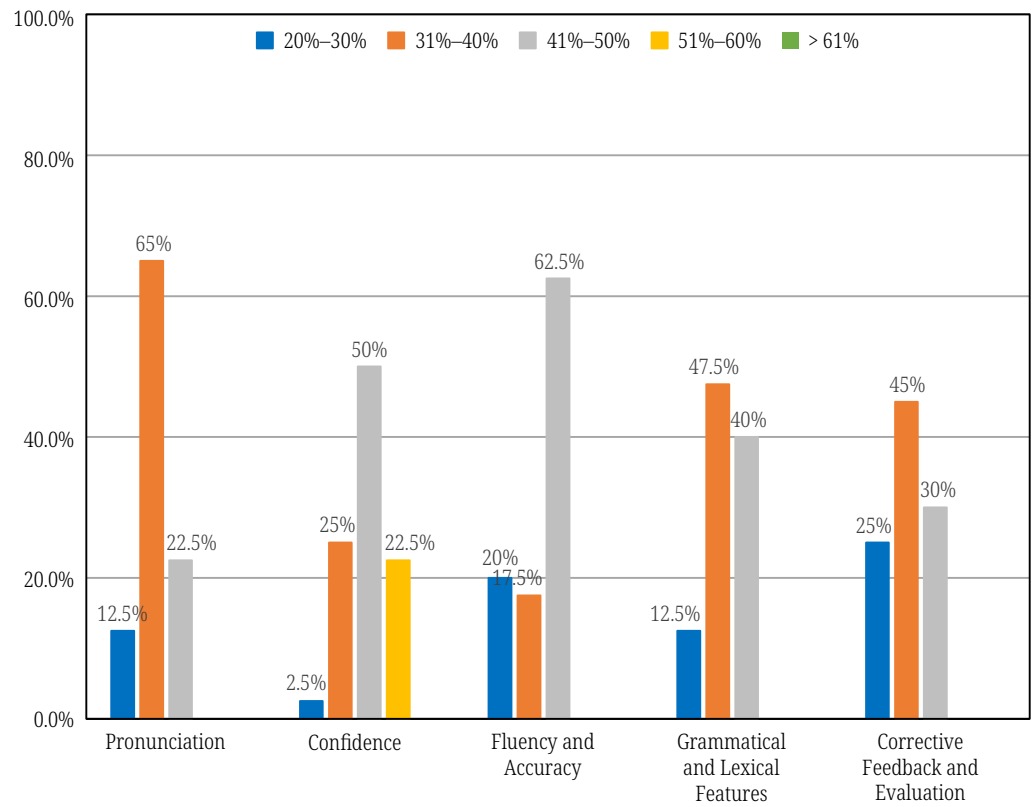


Fig. 2. Speaking performance self-assessment (Phase 2)

Interestingly, there was an obvious increase in the scores of achievements in all five criteria in Phase 2 of the research after 15 weeks of using FG for speaking practice among the participants. However, the increase was not too significant, with the average assessment ranging between 31% and 50%. There were fewer students who marked their pronunciation, confidence, fluency, accuracy, grammatical and lexical features, corrective feedback, and evaluation lower than 30% out of 100% total scores. Outstandingly, the highest enhancement belongs to pronunciation, with 65% of the students using FG to record videos for speaking practice. As can be seen from Figure 2, 62.5% of the students also enhanced their fluency and accuracy level up to 41%–50% after 15 weeks with FG. In order to clarify the first research question, the mean scores and the standard deviation (SD) were calculated from the questionnaires given to the participants on the implementation of FG in their learning to speak English. Further detailed explanation is entailed in the findings summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Students' perspectives of the use of Flipgrid in speaking practice

Students' Perspectives of the Use of Flipgrid in Speaking Practice		Mean	SD
1	Flipgrid is helpful in practice speaking in English outside classroom	4.10	1.253
2	I can improve my speaking by repeating the video recording with Flipgrid many times	3.25	1.633
3	Flipgrid released the stress of confidence in my public speaking	3.8	1.541
4	My pronunciation was improved by practicing before video recording with Flipgrid	3.95	1.365
5	The accuracy and fluency in speaking was enhanced after video recording with Flipgrid	3.20	1.589
6	I enjoyed watching my peers' video of speaking and presentations	3.60	1.467
7	I could respond to my peers' video to interact with their presentation	3.80	1.541
8	I can interact with my classmates to conduct the video recordings together	3.25	1.633
9	Grammatical and lexical features were improved with comments and feedback from peers and teacher for future practice	3.50	1.498
10	Flipgrid enhances collaboration among the students' participation (peers' review, comments and feedback)	4.20	1.218
11	I can edit the videos on Flipgrid with emoji icons, or PowerPoint slides	3.80	1.541
12	It is simple and convenient to use Flipgrid (record, upload, edit with PowerPoint)	3.95	1.365
13	I felt comfortable to speak English in the videos on Flipgrid before real-time speaking	4.25	1.211
14	The teacher could give comments and feedback for our improvement	3.60	1.467
15	I can practice speaking English with Flipgrid anytime and anywhere	4.20	1.218
16	My outcome performances of real-time speaking English are improved after using Flipgrid	3.80	1.541

As shown in Table 1, the participants expressed positive attitudes towards the use of FG in speaking practice, which was demonstrated by the mean scores ranging from 3.2 to 4.25. More importantly, the low SD measured the variability, which shows how much variation there is from the mean scores. The SD indicates that there was no significant difference among the answers given by the participants in accordance with the level of agreement. In other words, the results regarding the participants' attitudes towards FG revealed that the students mostly showed favorable positivity in their English-speaking practice and enhancement.

The most significant improvement with FG was reported in the comfort with speaking English in the videos before real-time speaking ($M = 4.25$). More interestingly, the interviews with 8 out of 15 interviewees emphasized the comfortable

feeling of using FG outside of the classroom. Student A reported that she felt more comfortable and confident when she spoke to herself many times with FG. Student F also mentioned that *“I could record many times until I felt enough to speak in Flipgrid. It totally helped me enjoy practice the speaking skill.”* In line with this, 67.5% of the participants agreed that their speaking was highly improved by repeating the videos many times with FG (M = 3.25); and 65% of the students strongly agreed that FG released the stress of confidence in public speaking (M = 3.8). Most of the students agreed that by practicing with FG before real-time speaking or presenting at class, their level of confidence and comfort in using English improved (SD = 1.541).

In terms of language skills, most Japanese students responded positively in their enhancement of pronunciation (M = 3.95), grammatical and lexical features (M = 3.5), and accuracy and fluency (M = 3.2). Moreover, 70% of the students agreed that it is simple to use and edit the videos with FG (M = 3.95). The students could use the emoji icons or add the Power Point slides to their presentation with FG. Figures 3 and 4 are examples of presentations by the participants when FG was used with various supportive functions such as editing, commenting, or downloading the videos, etc.

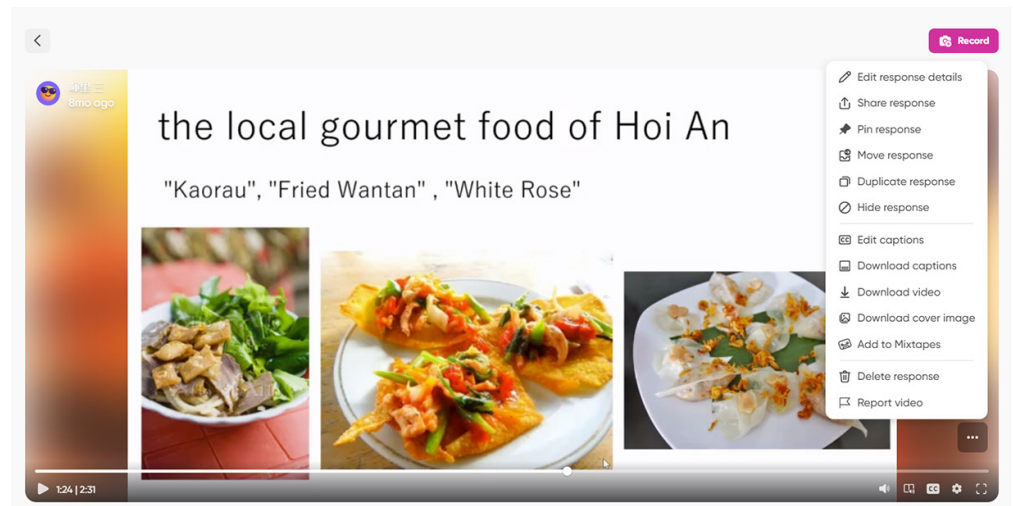


Fig. 3. Example of a presentation on Flipgrid with functions

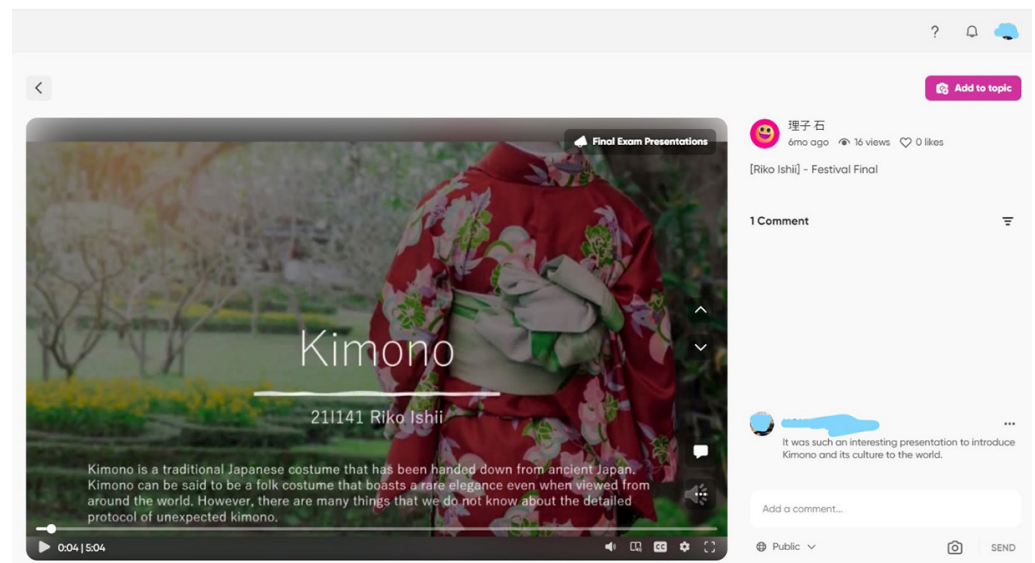


Fig. 4. Example of a presentation on Flipgrid with comments

By giving comments and feedback to the videos on FG, the students enjoyed the interaction, even though FG is an online platform. 37.5% and 62.5% of the participants showed strong agreement and agreement, respectively, when they could make use of online interaction to improve their speaking and presenting skills in English by responding to their peers' videos ($M = 3.8$). However, a few students expressed difficulty using FG for the first time due to a lack of technological agility, which constituted a small portion of 7.5% of the disagreements in the questionnaire responses. When it came to the interviews, two students confirmed that they were not able to upload the PowerPoint slides to FG until they were given instructions from the teacher. They did not know how to record their voice when the slides were shown. Basically, the results from these above items revealed that non-native students needed further instructions, if possible, to deal with technological issues. Nevertheless, the situation gradually improved after the students got used to using FG for practice. At the end of the project, 100% of the participants agreed that with FG, they could practice speaking anytime and anywhere ($M = 4.2$) when an enhancement of the outcome performance was witnessed. In addition to language improvement such as pronunciation, grammatical and lexical features, fluency, and accuracy, the positive results from the questionnaires and further explanations in the interviews revealed that FG is helpful for Japanese students in improving their English-speaking skills with less anxiety. The outcome matched the findings from previous research mentioned in the literature review section, consisting of research by Hamer [12]. The findings similarly clarified the effectiveness of FG in enhancing non-native learners' speaking practice and reducing the stress of speaking English as a foreign language for better comfort and confidence in English speaking and presenting [22, 23].

4.2 Is Flipgrid helpful for students to self-study English speaking and enhance speaking skills?

The second research question focuses on the usefulness of FG for non-native students in practicing English speaking by themselves outside of the classroom. In addition to the positive results as an educational tool presented in Research Question 1, this study attempts to investigate FG's effectiveness in autonomous learning for its users. In this part of the study, the participants were asked to answer another 5-point Likert questionnaire about their preference for FG and their future intentions for its use in their language studies.

Table 2. Usefulness of Flipgrid and future intention of use

Usefulness of Flipgrid and Future Intention of Use		Mean	SD
1	Flipgrid helps me a lot to practice speaking English on my own outside of classroom.	3.45	0.438
2	I prefer self-studying speaking with FG before real-time speaking in the public	3.30	0.495
3	Flipgrid is an effective tool to self-study speaking and presenting in English by myself	3.85	0.316
4	I will continue to use Flipgrid videos to practice speaking and presenting in English by myself	4.20	0.364
Average		3.70	

As can be seen from Table 2, all the participants expressed a high preference for the use of FG in learning English-speaking skills. The average mean score ($M = 3.70$),

along with the small change in SD, indicate that the participants insisted on using FG and continued to use FG to practice speaking in English. 100% of the Japanese learners believed that they would continue with FG, not only because it is available at any time but also because it is free to use.

As for in-depth interviews, the students agreed that FG is simple to use on both their smartphones and computers. Student G reported that *“I could record many times to practice pronunciation before joining the group presentation. I could see how my facial expressions looked like in the videos, so that in real-time speech, I would feel more confident.”*

Student B said that, *“I have never recorded videos when I speak English. This time with Flipgrid, I find it interesting to use the emoji icons to express my feelings. I could also present a topic with power point slides, which makes the presentation impressive.”*

Several reports from the interviews depict the high interest of the learners in using FG to practice speaking in English.

“I listened and watched my video recording before submitting it to Flipgrid. By doing this, I could double check whether the performance was smooth or not.” (Student A)

“Whenever I record my video on Flipgrid, I find it easy to play with the emoji and its functions. I feel less pressure to speak English.” (Student D)

“If I make a mistake in the presentation, I can edit the video and record it again to submit the best final version of my presentation on Flipgrid.” (Student E)

“After using Flipgrid, I gain more confidence to speak and present a topic in English. I would like to continue using Flipgrid to practice speaking to develop my speaking skill.” (Student F)

When it comes to the question of self-studying and learning autonomy, 67.5% of the participants expected to use FG to practice on their own. They would introduce this video-based platform to other students to practice by themselves. The Japanese students expressed a high interest in self-practice since they, to a large extent, had anxiety when speaking and presenting in English. 65% of the students thanked FG for supporting their self-studying speaking skills outside of class time ($M = 3.45$).

In a nutshell, in terms of autonomous learning, the Japanese students completely believed that FG was a supportive tool to help them practice speaking in English alone. Although some students had a feeling of difficulty mastering the technological tool, the participants got used to FG and gained confidence in creating their own speaking videos. This interesting result is aligned with findings from the questionnaires, which state that FG is useful to enhance students' self-studying of English.

5 CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

According to the general findings, FG proved to be an effective tool for enhancing non-native learners' speaking skills through the submission of speaking videos. The study observed a significant impact on students' speech performance, with students reporting improvements in their fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, facial expressions, and gestures as a result of using FG. It is an interactive video discussion platform that enables teachers and students to share and discuss ideas through video recordings. Indeed, conducting a study of FG in face-to-face language learning classes could provide valuable insights into its effectiveness as a technology-enhanced learning tool. Overall, FG provides a dynamic and engaging platform for students to participate in interactive video discussions and improve their speaking skills.

Moreover, such a study could explore the effectiveness of different FG activities and assignments, such as individual presentations, group presentations, and peer feedback, in enhancing students' language skills and learning outcomes.

By identifying the most effective FG activities and strategies, language instructors can optimize their use of the platform to support their students' language learning goals.

Indeed, a study of FG in language learning classes has the potential to provide valuable insights into the role of technology in enhancing learners' presentation skills in English. Through the use of FG, students can practice their presentation skills in a supportive environment, receiving feedback and support from their peers and instructors. Additionally, the platform can facilitate collaborative learning and teamwork, helping students to develop their communication and collaboration skills, which are essential for effective presentations.

By exploring the impact of FG on learners' presentation skills, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the potential benefits of technology-enhanced language learning tools for language learners. This could include examining factors such as learners' motivation, engagement, language proficiency, confidence, and willingness to use technology for language learning.

The results of this study should not be generalized to suggest that all students who use FG will necessarily improve their speaking skills. Therefore, further research is recommended to explore the impact of FG on students' speaking abilities in greater depth.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author expresses deep gratitude to the Japanese students, who devoted their time and interest to conducting the research within 15 weeks. The author also owes sincere thanks to the members of Knowledge System Laboratory at Nagaoka University of Technology, Japan for statistics, data analysis, and technical supports during the project.

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