From interaction to expression: the influence of padlet on Saudi EFL learners' speaking competence

تعامل سے اظہار تک: پیڈلیٹ کا اثرسعودی ای ایف ایل سیکھنے والوں کی بولنے کی صلاحیت پر

Written by:
Muhammad Mooneeb Ali¹
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0356-320X
Tahir Saleem²
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7952-0572
Nadeem Anwar³
https://orcid.org/0009-0004-7967-2535
Wael Alharbi⁴
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7713-5294
Farah Hanif⁵
https://orcid.org/0009-0008-1092-7279

Abstract

Digital technology is increasingly integrated into education, with tools like Padlet enhancing learning by supplementing traditional methods. Padlet, a valuable platform in EFL classrooms, supports various teaching goals. This study examines Padlet's impact on the speaking skills of Saudi EFL learners, focusing on accuracy, vocabulary, and fluency. Fifty Saudi high school graduates were split into experimental and control groups. Over twelve weeks, the experimental group practiced speaking with Padlet, while the control group followed traditional methods. Using IELTS speaking criteria, assessments showed the Padlet group significantly outperformed the control group. These findings highlight Padlet's potential as a transformative tool for developing speaking proficiency in EFL learners, emphasizing its value for increasing engagement and improving outcomes in language education.

Keywords: Technological tools, Padlet, Saudi EFL students, IELTS, learning, speaking.

خلاصہ

ڈیجیٹل ٹیکنالوجی کو تعلیم میں تیزی سے مربوط کیا جا رہا ہے ، جس میں پیڈلیٹ جیسے ٹولز روایتی طریقوں کی تکمیل کر کے سیکھنے میں اضافہ کر رہے ہیں ۔ پیڈلٹ ، ای ایف ایل کلاس رومز میں ایک قیمتی پلیٹ فارم ، مختلف تدریسی ابداف کی حمایت کرتا ہے ۔ یہ مطالعہ سعودی ای ایف ایل سیکھنے والوں کی بولنے کی مہارتوں پر پیڈلٹ کے اثرات کا جائزہ لیتا ہے ، جس میں درستگی ، الفاظ اور روانی پر توجہ دی جاتی ہے ۔ پچاس سعودی ہائی اسکول گریجویٹس کو تجرباتی اور کنٹرول گروپوں میں تقسیم کیا گیا ۔ بارہ ہفتوں کے دوران ، تجرباتی گروپ نے پیڈلٹ کے ساتھ بات کرنے کی مشق کی ، جبکہ کنٹرول گروپ نے روایتی طریقوں پر عمل کیا ۔ آئی ای ایل ٹی ایس بولنے کے معیار کا استعمال کرتے ہوئے ، جائزوں سے پتہ چلتا ہے کہ پیڈلیٹ گروپ نے کنٹرول گروپ سے نمایاں طور پر بہتر کارکردگی کا مظاہرہ کیا ۔ یہ نتائج ای ایف ایل سیکھنے والوں میں بولنے کی مہارت کو فروغ دینے کے لئے ایک تبدیلی کے آلے کے طور پر پیڈلیٹ کی صلاحیت کو اجاگر کرتے ہیں ، زبان کی تعلیم میں مشغولیت بڑھانے اور نتائج کو بہتر بنانے کے لئے اس کی قدر پر زور دیتے ہیں ۔

،کلیدی الفاظ :تکنیکی اوزار، پیڈلیٹ، سعودی ای ایف ایل طلباء آئی ای ایل ٹی ایس، سیکھنا، بولنا۔

¹ Associate Professor, Higher Education Department, Punjab Pakistan. WoS Researcher ID: K-9461-2017 Email: mooneebali@gmail.com
² Professor, Department of English, University of Central Punjab Lahore, Pakistan. WoS Researcher ID: ABG-4237-2020
³ Associate Professor, Higher Education Department, Punjab Pakistan. WoS Researcher ID: LRT-0842-2024
⁴ Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English, Yanbu English Language and Preparatory Year Institute Yanbu, Saudi Arabia. WoS Researcher ID: LCE-4993-2024
⁵ Lecturer in English, University of Lahore, Pakistan. WoS Researcher ID: LRT-7940-2024

Introduction

In the contemporary globalized landscape, English has emerged as a dominant lingua franca, reflecting its critical role in facilitating international communication across various sectors. The extensive diaspora of English speakers and its elevation to the status of a global language is propelled by several factors, including the economic and political ascendancy of the United States and the remarkable advancements in communication technologies. Llurda (2004) highlights English as the prevailing language worldwide, a sentiment echoed by Kirkpatrick (2011), who asserts its role as a global lingua franca. Furthermore, globalization and rapid economic development have heightened the demand for effective communication in English (Zahara et al., 2020), accentuating the necessity for English proficiency in both personal and professional realms.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) education, developing speaking proficiency among learners poses a persistent challenge. Speaking is often regarded as one of the most complex skills for language learners, who may struggle to articulate thoughts in real-time situations. The difficulties faced by novice EFL learners can be attributed to various factors, including the need to master grammatical structures, vocabulary, and pronunciation, as well as the ability to formulate context-appropriate responses (Rao, 2019; Saleem et al., 2021). Aziz et al. (2018) argue that many EFL learners lack opportunities for meaningful communication in English, resulting in limited vocabulary and speaking competence.

The role of technology in second language acquisition has become increasingly pivotal. Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is recognized as a vital tool for enhancing language instruction, providing equitable access to learning opportunities for diverse learners (Charalabopoulou, 2010; Mushtaq et al., 2021). CALL facilitates innovative approaches to language education, catering to learners who face barriers due to mobility, financial constraints, or limited local resources.

Recent advancements in educational technologies and the integration of Web 2.0 tools have further transformed language learning environments. Haris et al. (2017) assert that the incorporation of technological devices and applications into language instruction fosters increased engagement and motivation among students. One such promising tool is Padlet, a Web 2.0 platform that supports collaborative learning and information sharing (Aziz et al., 2020). Fuchs (2014) describes Padlet as a versatile multimedia wall that encourages real-time participation and feedback, enhancing the interactive learning experience.

Empirical studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of Padlet in improving EFL learners' speaking skills. Research by Ali et al. (2024) indicates that the use of Padlet in language classrooms fosters an engaging learning atmosphere, vital for maintaining student interest and participation. Further evidence from studies (e.g., Maqsood et al., 2019; Jong & Tan, 2021; Nagamani, 2016; Saleem et al., 2021; Saleem & Anjum, 2018; Taufikurohman, 2018) confirms Padlet's role in promoting active engagement, collaboration, and immediate feedback among learners, thereby supporting the development of speaking skills (Aziz et al., 2020; Putri & Umam, 2018).

Despite the positive findings surrounding Padlet's impact on various language skills, there remains a notable gap in the literature regarding its specific influence on the speaking proficiency of Saudi EFL learners. Prior studies have predominantly focused on writing skills (Ferawati et al., 2022) or explored its effects on vocabulary acquisition and grammar (Haris et al., 2017). Although some research has addressed Padlet's impact on speaking and other communication skills (Haroon et al., 2023), a targeted investigation within the Saudi educational context is warranted.

Thus, this study aims to explore the efficacy of Padlet in enhancing the speaking skills of Saudi EFL learners, addressing a critical gap in the existing literature and providing insights into the pedagogical challenges and practical implications of integrating this technology into language instruction. The research question guiding this study is:

RQ 1: To what extent does Padlet improve the speaking skills of Saudi EFL learners?

Based on this research question, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

- **H1:** There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and control group in the pre-test on speaking skills.
- **H2:** There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control group in the pre-test and post-test on speaking skills.
- **H3:** There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-test and post-test on speaking skills.

Literature Review

With the emergence of English as a key global language, the emphasis on English language proficiency has intensified, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Despite considerable efforts, however, the development of speaking skills among EFL learners remains a significant concern (Safeer et al., 2024). Existing literature highlights challenges such as limited opportunities for authentic practice, a lack of speaking-focused activities, and traditional pedagogical approaches that often prioritize reading and writing over oral communication (Batool & Saleem, 2023; Dogar et al., 2024). The integration of technology in language education has shown promise in addressing shortcomings in traditional methodologies. Virtual platforms provide opportunities for interactive and engaging language practice, fostering a communicative environment that mirrors real-world situations. Rahman (2015) notes that technology creates a learner-centered classroom atmosphere where students actively participate in activities, take on significant roles, and become independent learners. Additionally, technology offers L2 learners' access to authentic materials and contact with native speakers, exposing them to the target language and culture (Asmat et al., 2024). Numerous studies indicate that technology use in language classrooms enhances learners' motivation (Saleem & Khan, 2024).

However, there are also disadvantages to technology integration in language learning. Asmat et al. (2024) argue that learners often rely excessively on the internet, which can hinder their independent thinking (p. 37). Many L2 learners view technology primarily as a source of entertainment, wasting time on texting, watching videos, and browsing the web instead of utilizing it as a learning tool. Maqsood et al. (2018) supports this argument, noting that pervasive technology can impede the cognitive development of L2 learners. Nevertheless, the benefits of technological tools generally outweigh the drawbacks. One such tool is Padlet, a collaborative online board that enables users to share multimedia content and provides a dynamic space for language exploration (Haroon et al., 2023). Padlet is a free Web 2.0 application that allows users to create virtual walls that function as notice boards or whiteboards to display various files. The creator of a wall controls its layout, content, style, and privacy settings (Khan et al., 2023). They can choose from various wallpapers and arrange postings as desired. The privacy settings enable creators to manage access to their walls, making them public or exclusive. Users can customize links and addresses for their walls, granting permissions for reading, writing, and moderating posts. Once posted, content on a wall cannot be altered unless deleted or the wall is removed (Saleem et al., 2020). Padlet also supports simultaneous contributions from multiple authors, making posts instantly viewable. Padlet has gained popularity in various educational contexts due to its versatility and user-friendly interface. However, its specific application in enhancing speaking skills among Saudi EFL learners remains relatively unexplored. Research in other settings suggests that Padlet's collaborative features, multimedia capabilities, and accessibility contribute to creating an interactive language learning environment. Mahmud (2019) states that Padlet empowers students in their tasks, while Jong and Tan (2021) demonstrated that Padlet motivates students to engage actively in class activities. Collaborative learning has shown positive effects on language acquisition, particularly in speaking skills. By fostering interaction and encouraging peer-to-peer communication, collaborative approaches align with the communicative nature of language learning (Ullah et al., 2023). The literature underscores the potential synergy between collaborative learning strategies and Padlet's functionalities in developing effective spoken language abilities. Ahmad et al. (2022) note that Padlet facilitates collaborative opportunities, benefiting students. Furthermore, the freedom granted during the learning process enhances engagement (Saleem et al., 2018). As a result, students feel more in control of their education and experience a greater sense of autonomy and responsibility.

Nevertheless, several researchers have recently explored the impact of Web 2.0 tools, particularly Padlet, on various aspects of L2 language acquisition across diverse educational contexts. Most studies have primarily concentrated on enhancing writing skills through Padlet, showcasing both strengths and limitations in their methodologies and findings. For instance, Khan et al. (2023) investigated the influence

of Padlet on improving the writing performance of female Saudi EFL students. This study involved 24 fifth-level participants who were assigned to either a control group receiving traditional lecture-based instruction or an experimental group engaged in Padlet writing exercises. The post-treatment assessments indicated that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group, highlighting Padlet's effectiveness in fostering student engagement. However, the study's limited sample size raises questions about the generalizability of its findings.

Similarly, Rashid et al. (2019) examined the role of Padlet in enhancing the writing performance of 87 EFL learners. Utilizing task analysis, questionnaires, and teacher observations, they found that Padlet not only increased learners' motivation but also reduced anxiety and improved communication between students and teachers. While these results are promising, the reliance on self-reported measures may introduce bias, potentially affecting the validity of the conclusions. Ferawati et al. (2022) further explored Padlet's application for improving Malaysian students' personal letter-writing skills through observational methods and online tests. Their findings indicated positive performance improvements; however, the study lacked a control group, which limits the ability to ascertain the effectiveness of Padlet compared to other methods.

Nguyen and Trang (2023) studied the impact of peer feedback facilitated by Padlet on Vietnamese EFL students' email writing abilities. This study, which involved both a control group of non-English majors and an experimental group, found that peer feedback significantly enhanced email writing skills. The inclusion of semi-structured interviews added depth to the findings, yet the mixed participant levels may complicate comparisons across different contexts. Research by Alabbad and Saad Bin Huwamel (2020) on Padlet's effectiveness for vocabulary learning among Saudi female EFL learners demonstrated that seven Padlet-based training sessions led to improved lexical understanding. While the results are encouraging, the study does not address potential long-term retention of vocabulary learned through Padlet.

Ali (2021) assessed the impact of Padlet on beginner English grammar learning and reported significant performance gains among Malaysian university students following pre- and post-testing. Their findings were bolstered by favorable survey responses regarding Padlet's utility. Nevertheless, the lack of qualitative data limits understanding of the students' experiences with the tool. Alastal et al. (2022) explored Padlet's role in enhancing English speaking and deductive thinking skills among 30 students in the Gaza Strip. Utilizing SPSS for detailed analysis, the study underscored the need for integrating emerging technologies in speaking instruction to bolster 21st-century skills. However, the small sample size and specific context may limit the applicability of the findings to broader populations.

Ali (2021) focused on the effects of Padlet on the presentation skills of Pakistani university-level English language learners. Their quantitative one-shot experimental design revealed significant improvements in presentation skills, grades, and motivation. While the results are noteworthy, the study lacks a longitudinal perspective to assess sustained impacts over time. Mahmud et al. (2023) investigated the influence of Web 2.0 resources like Padlet on Pakistani L2 learners' teamwork and communication abilities, finding significant improvements and positive attitudes toward Padlet in group education settings. The comprehensive approach adds value, yet further research is necessary to explore individual versus group outcomes. Saleem et al. (2022) assessed 21st-century learning skills (creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication) through Padlet, concluding that it promotes creativity and collaborative learning. However, the broad focus on various skills may dilute specific insights into Padlet's impact on language learning (Maqsood et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, the existing literature predominantly emphasizes writing skills (e.g., Ferawati et al., 2022; Nguyen & Trang, 2023) and other language aspects such as vocabulary and grammar (Alabbad & Saad Bin Huwamel, 2020; Haris et al., 2017). Consequently, there is a pressing need for empirical research specifically examining the effect of Padlet on the speaking skills of Saudi EFL learners. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating how Padlet influences speaking competence, thereby illuminating the pedagogical issues and practical implications of integrating this technology into language instruction.

Research Methods

A quantitative research design is utilized for exploring the impact of a variable on a specific population. In line with this perspective, the researchers employed a quantitative research design for the current study, utilizing a pre-test and post-test experimental design to gather quantitative data.

Participants

The participants in this study comprised 50 Saudi EFL learners enrolled at the Aramco Center in Saudi Arabia. All students were male, aged between 18 and 24 years, and had completed their high school education. They had studied English as a major subject until the intermediate level, ensuring a foundational proficiency in the language. The selection of subjects was conducted using random sampling techniques to ensure representativeness and minimize bias. Following the selection process, participants were divided into an experimental group (n = 25) and a control group (n = 25) to facilitate the intervention effectively. In addition to the learners, two instructors from the same institute participated in the study: one served as the primary instructor, teaching both the experimental and control groups, while the other acted as an examiner responsible for evaluating the students' responses in the pre- and post-tests.

Instruments

The research tools utilized in this study included speaking prompts administered to the participants during both the pre-test and post-test phases. The responses gathered from these assessments were evaluated by the examiner using a specific rubric adapted from the Cambridge IELTS rubric, which is known for its robust validity and reliability in assessing speaking performance. The rubric ensures that the evaluation is objective and consistent, allowing for accurate measurement of improvements in speaking skills. Initial and final tests were conducted to determine the effectiveness of the independent variable, which in this case was Padlet. This technological tool serves a variety of functions in language learning and has been recognized for its effectiveness by numerous researchers, educators, and students alike. For the purposes of this investigation at the Aramco Center, Padlet was employed as the primary assessment tool. For more details on the rubric used in this study, please refer to the Cambridge IELTS speaking assessment rubric, which can be accessed here.

Procedure

To initiate the research procedure, the researchers obtained permission from relevant stakeholders, including the head of the institute, the examiner, the instructor, and the participants involved in the study. Conducting the research themselves allowed the researchers to minimize discrepancies and enhance their understanding of the institutional systems. This direct involvement enabled them to address potential classroom management issues, as well as concerns related to Padlet and assessment procedures, thus mitigating any biases that could influence the research process.

The study began with a pre-test, which consisted of ten speaking prompts, each requiring students to respond for one minute. All participants completed the pre-test, and their performances were evaluated using a rubric-based assessment. This evaluation facilitated the equitable distribution of participants into two heterogeneous groups, ensuring a mix of abilities within each cluster.

Following the pre-test, the intervention phase commenced, lasting one month. During this period, both groups engaged in daily classroom practices focused on improving speaking skills, but they did so using different approaches. The control group practiced conventional speaking tasks, where topics were presented on the board for students to discuss. In contrast, the experimental group utilized Padlet for their speaking activities, which incorporated various methods to enhance their speaking skills through topic randomization and extemporaneous speaking. This group benefited from opportunities to collaborate with classmates and teachers, allowing for practice both within and outside formal classroom settings, as well as opportunities for independent speaking tasks. After a twelve-week intervention period, a post-test was administered to assess the speaking performance of both groups. The outcomes of the pre-tests and post-tests were subsequently analyzed and compared, and the findings will be presented in the following section.

Variables of the Study

In this study, the independent variable was Padlet, while the dependent variable was the enhancement of students' speaking skills. Several significant confounding variables were identified, and the researchers took measures to minimize their potential impact, which included:

- **Instructor Mood**: To mitigate the effects of the instructor's mood on student performance, assessments were scheduled for the morning when the instructor was typically more relaxed and prepared. Both

pre-test and post-test evaluations were conducted during this time to ensure a consistent assessment environment.

- **Economic and Social Conditions**: The participants were selected from a similar socio-economic background, ensuring that their financial conditions did not vary significantly. This homogeneity was crucial in minimizing any socio-economic bias that could influence learning outcomes.
- **Intelligence**: Participants' intelligence levels were indirectly assessed through their prior academic performance in English. Only those students who scored between 70 and 75 in their high school English examinations were included in the study, ensuring a baseline level of proficiency among all participants.

Additionally, several moderating variables were considered, including:

- **Instructor**: The specific teaching style and experience of the instructor could influence student engagement and learning outcomes.
- **Course and Syllabus**: The content and structure of the course, including the syllabus followed, were standardized to maintain consistency across groups.
- **Duration of the Intervention**: The length of time allocated for the Padlet intervention was controlled to allow for adequate exposure without overwhelming the students.
- **Class Duration**: The overall time allotted for each class session was standardized to ensure that all participants received equal instructional time.
- **Gender and Age**: These demographic factors were monitored to account for any potential differences in learning styles or engagement levels that may arise from gender or age disparities.

Data Analysis

A quantitative analysis was conducted on the data collected from the pre- and post-tests administered to the participants. To assess the impact of the intervention on student performance, the mean scores and standard deviations of the pre- and post-test grades were compared using a paired sample t-test. This statistical method allows for a robust evaluation of the differences in performance before and after the implementation of the intervention.

Results

The primary aim of the current study was to assess the effectiveness of Padlet in enhancing the English-speaking abilities of Saudi EFL learners. To evaluate this hypothesis, participants were randomly assigned to either an experimental group or a control group. Data collected from pre-, and post-tests were analyzed using paired sample t-tests through SPSS software. Preliminary analyses indicated that there was no significant statistical difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the pre-test for speaking skills. This hypothesis was tested by summarizing and describing the data, including the computation of means and standard deviations for both groups as presented in the table below:

Table 1.
Experimental and Control Groups' Pre-test Results: Independent Sample T-Testing Method

Variable	EXP(G) (n = 25)		CNTR(G) (n = 25)				95% CI		CH
	MN	SV	MN	SV	F	t (118)	P	LLT	ULT	D
PRT	8.25	0.77	8.19	0.76	.375	-0.63	.004	-0.3	-0.20	0.41

Note*: EXP-Experimental group, CNT-Control group, MN-Mean, SV-Standard deviation, V-Variable, FV-Variance of frequency, CH-Cohen, CIN-Confidence interval, LLT-Lower limit, LLT-Lower limit, ULT-Upper limit, PRT-Pre-test, POT-Post-test*

Table 1 presents the values indicating a variance of 0.375, demonstrating that the assumption of homogeneity was met across both cluster groups. This finding suggests that the initial test variance was consistent within both the experimental and control groups. The calculated t-value of -0.63 further supports the observation that there were only minor differences in the performance between the two groups. Specifically, the mean score (M) for the control group was 8.19, while the experimental group had a mean score of 8.25. Additionally, the effect size, as measured by Cohen's d, was found to be 0.41, indicating a

medium effect size. This suggests that there is a negligible statistical difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups in the pre-test assessment of speaking skills.

The hypothesis was evaluated by calculating and summarizing the means and standard deviations for the control group in both the pre-test and post-test assessments of speaking skills, as illustrated in the table 2 below:

Table 2.
Control Group's Pre- and Post Tests Results: Paired Sample T-test Method

V	EXP (G) (n = 25)	CNT (G) (n = 25)				95% CI	CH
	MN SV	M	SV F	t (118)	P	LLT ULT	D
POT	15.97 1.76	10.90	0.11 .234	-30.11	.000	-4.54 -4.23	3.50

The analysis of the initial and final test scores in the control group revealed a significant variation (t = -23.12, p < .001). This finding is further supported by the mean scores, which increased from 8.19 in the initial test to 10.90 in the post-test. Additionally, Cohen's d value of 3.21 suggests a medium effect size, indicating a notable impact of the intervention.

Table 3.
Complete Statistics of the Items

	Scale Means if Item Deleted	Variance of Scale if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Multiple Correlation Squared	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
PRT	10.90	0.244	.514	.521	.
POT	8.19	0.974	.514	.521	.

The scale analysis indicates that the mean score of the pre-test (M1 = 10.90) is significantly higher than that of the post-test (M2 = 8.19). The variance for the pre-test cluster, denoted as $v1=0.244v\_1 = 0.244v1 =0.244$, is notably lower than that of the post-test group, which has a variance of $v2=0.974v\_2 = 0.974v2 =0.974$. The corrected item correlation stands at $r=0.514r = 0.514r=0.514$, suggesting a strong and statistically significant relationship among the scores. Additionally, the squared correlation coefficient of $r2=0.521r^2 = 0.521r2=0.521$ reflects the degree of proportionality between the scores and other items on the scale.

Table 4.
Statistical Scale

MN	V	SV	Number of Items
Mc = 19.09	V = 3.987	SV = 1.898	2

The combined mean score for both the initial and final tests (MN) was 19.09, with a variance of 3.987 and a standard deviation of 1.898. These statistics indicate that there is minimal statistical difference between the mean scores of the control group in the pre-test and post-test assessments of speaking skills.

"*There is statistically significant difference between the mean scores of experimental groups in the pre- and post-test on speaking skills.*"

To test this hypothesis, the data for the experimental group were analyzed by calculating the mean and standard deviation for both the pre-test and post-test on speaking skills, as illustrated in the table below:

Table 5.

Experimental Group's Pre- and Post Tests Results: Paired Sample T-test Method

V	PRT		POT				95% CI		
	MN	SV	*MN*	SV	*t (149)*	P	*LLT*	*ULT*	CH D
EXP (G)	8.25	0.77	15.97	1.76	-54.14	.000	-6.78	-6.875	5.21

The results of the experiment revealed a significant variation in the scores between the initial and final tests for the experimental group, with a t-value of -54.14 (p < .001). This significant difference is further supported by the mean scores, which increased from 8.25 in the initial test to 15.97 in the post-test. Additionally, Cohen's d value of 3.21 indicates a large effect size, demonstrating a substantial impact of the intervention on speaking skills.

Table 6.

Complete Statistics of the Items

	Mean Scale f Item Deleted	Variance Scale if Item Deleted	Item Correlation Corrected	Multiple Correlation Squared	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Pre-Test (x1)	15.97	.893	.691	.420	.
Post-Test (x2)	8.25	0.865	.691	.420	.

The analysis of the scale indicates that the mean score of the pre-test (M1 = 15.97) is significantly higher than that of the post-test (M2 = 8.25). Additionally, the variance for the pre-test group (v1 = 0.893) is lower compared to the post-test group (v2 = 0.865), suggesting greater consistency among the initial test scores. The corrected item correlation is .691, indicating a strong and statistically significant relationship among the scores. Furthermore, the squared correlation value of .420 reflects a substantial degree of proportionality between the scores and the other items on the scale.

Table 7.

Statistical Scale

MN	V	SV	Number of Items
Mc = 24.22	V = 4.892	Sc = 1.925	2

The combined mean score for both the initial and final tests on the mean scale (MN) was 24.22, with a variance of 4.892 and a standard deviation of 1.925. These findings indicate a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control group in the pre-test and post-test assessments of speaking skills.

Discussion

The present study investigated the effectiveness of Padlet in enhancing the speaking skills of Saudi EFL learners. The findings demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in the speaking performance of the experimental group, who used Padlet, compared to the control group. These results align with recent research highlighting the potential of technology-enhanced language learning tools in fostering interactive and collaborative learning environments. Studies have consistently shown that Web 2.0 tools like Padlet not only promote learner engagement but also enhance critical language skills, particularly in speaking (Azam, 2023; Hamid & Shafi, 2023; Khalid et al., 2023; Sagheer et al., 2023). The use of Padlet as a digital platform facilitates active participation and provides opportunities for learners to practice speaking in a supportive and interactive setting, further corroborating its effectiveness in EFL contexts.

Our findings reveal a substantial improvement in the experimental group's post-test scores compared to their pre-test results, highlighting the effectiveness of Padlet as a learning tool for enhancing speaking skills. This outcome contrasts with prior research, such as Nguyen and Trang (2023), which primarily explored

Padlet's application in developing writing skills and reported mixed outcomes regarding its effectiveness for written tasks. While their findings emphasized notable improvements in writing performance, our study broadens the scope of inquiry by examining its impact on speaking skills. By doing so, it underscores Padlet's adaptability across different language competencies and learning contexts, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of its pedagogical potential (Ghani et al., 2022; Ockert, 2018).

The improvement in speaking skills among participants using Padlet can be linked to its ability to foster a collaborative and interactive learning environment. Padlet's features, such as real-time feedback and peer interaction, align with current research emphasizing the importance of interactive digital platforms for enhancing L2 speaking proficiency. For instance, Mahmud et al. (2023) found that AI-mediated interactive activities, including tools like Padlet, not only enhanced speaking skills but also improved learners' willingness to communicate by providing personalized feedback and a low-pressure environment. Furthermore, Padlet supports meaningful interactions and promotes anxiety reduction through its user-friendly design, similar to findings by Saleem at al. (2018) on GenAI-enabled speaking tools. These studies highlight that such platforms allow learners to engage in authentic, task-based activities, fostering language acquisition through active collaboration and immediate feedback. By leveraging these features, Padlet contributes significantly to creating a supportive and engaging ecosystem for L2 learners, promoting the development of fluency, vocabulary, and accuracy in speaking skills. This underscores its role as a critical component in modern language education strategies (Aslam & Nasir, 2023; Mushtaq, 2023; Tahir, 2023; Furnaz, 2023).

The significant effect size observed in the experimental group highlights that Padlet not only enhanced speaking skills but also positively influenced learners' motivation and confidence in using English. This aligns with recent findings by Ferawati et al. (2022), who emphasized that Web 2.0 tools like Padlet play a critical role in boosting student motivation and alleviating anxiety in language learning environments. Furthermore, recent studies, such as those by Ahmad Faudzi et al. (2023) and Wang and Kabilan (2024), have emphasized the transformative potential of digital platforms in fostering learner engagement and reducing psychological barriers in ESL and EFL contexts. Consistent with these insights, the present study confirms that the integration of Padlet contributed to a more dynamic and supportive learning experience for Saudi EFL learners, thereby enhancing their speaking competence and overall confidence.

In contrast, the control group exhibited only marginal improvements, suggesting that traditional instructional methods may have limited efficacy in developing speaking skills. These findings highlight the critical need to incorporate innovative technological tools into language teaching to optimize learner engagement and outcomes. Similar results have been reported in recent studies, including Alabbad and Saad Bin Huwamel (2020), who found that traditional approaches often fail to sufficiently engage learners when compared to technology-enhanced methods. This is further supported by Gao and Yang (2023), who demonstrated that integrating digital platforms into language instruction significantly enhances speaking proficiency by fostering interactive and learner-centered practices.

Building on prior research, this study stresses the efficacy of Padlet as an interactive platform for enhancing the speaking skills of Saudi EFL learners (Sadry, 2022; Syahrizal & Rahayu, 2020). The substantial improvements demonstrated by the experimental group provide compelling evidence that technology can revolutionize language education by fostering increased engagement, intrinsic motivation, and communicative proficiency. These findings align with recent advancements in digital pedagogical tools, emphasizing their potential to create dynamic, learner-centered environments conducive to meaningful language acquisition.

Limitations of the Study

This study provides valuable insights into the use of Padlet for enhancing speaking skills among Saudi EFL learners; however, several limitations warrant consideration. The exclusive focus on male learners limits the generalizability of the findings to female or mixed-gender groups, suggesting the need for future research to explore gender-based variations in learning outcomes. Additionally, the relatively small sample size of 50 participants may not adequately capture the diversity of Saudi EFL learners, highlighting the importance of larger sample sizes in future studies to enhance the vigour of findings. The 12-week intervention period, while effective in capturing short-term impacts, may not be sufficient to assess long-term improvements, emphasizing the need for longitudinal studies to evaluate sustained benefits. Furthermore, the study's context—restricted to a single institution (Aramco Center) with participants from

similar socio-economic backgrounds—may limit the applicability of the results to other regions or educational settings. While the study focused on speaking skills, it did not address Padlet's potential impact on other language competencies, such as listening or reading, emphasizing the need for a more comprehensive analysis to provide a holistic view of its effectiveness. The assumption that all participants had equal access to and familiarity with technology may not reflect realities in resource-limited settings, where variations in technological literacy could influence outcomes. Finally, despite efforts to minimize instructor bias, the potential for unconscious influence cannot be entirely excluded, suggesting that further studies should account for this variable to ensure unbiased results.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of Padlet as an instructional tool in enhancing the English-speaking abilities of Saudi EFL learners. The findings indicate a significant improvement in the speaking skills of participants who used Padlet compared to those in the control group, suggesting that integrating technology into language learning can lead to substantial advancements in learner performance, particularly in speaking tasks, which are often challenging for EFL learners. The implications of this study extend beyond the immediate context of the Aramco Center, highlighting the potential of Web 2.0 tools like Padlet in various educational settings. Educators and curriculum developers can benefit from these insights by incorporating technology into their teaching methodologies, ultimately fostering a more engaging and effective learning environment. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of using interactive platforms that promote collaboration and feedback among students, essential components in language acquisition. Based on the findings and their implications, several suggestions for future research can be made. First, future studies could explore the impact of Padlet on diverse learner populations, including females, younger learners, or students with varying levels of English proficiency, to ascertain its effectiveness across different contexts and demographics. Second, conducting longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of using Padlet on language skills development. Such research could track the progress of learners over an extended period, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of sustained learning outcomes. Third, researchers should consider comparative studies that evaluate Padlet against other technological tools or teaching methods to determine the relative effectiveness of various interventions in improving speaking skills and other language competencies. By addressing these areas, future research can further contribute to the body of knowledge surrounding technology-enhanced language learning and provide valuable guidance for educators in effectively utilizing these tools to support student success.

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