

An Investigation of the Integration of Synchronous Online Tools into Task-Based Language Teaching: The Example of SpeakApps

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Abstract : The research project described in this presentation focuses on designing and evaluating oral tasks related to students' needs and levels to foster communication and negotiation of meaning for a group of female Saudi university students. The significance of the current research project lies in its contribution to determining the usefulness of synchronous technology-mediated interactive group discussion in improving different speaking strategies through using synchronous technology. Also, it discovers how to optimize learning outcomes, expand evaluation for online learning tasks and engaging students' experience in evaluating synchronous interactive tools and tasks. The researcher used SpeakApps, a synchronous technology, that allows the students to practice oral interaction outside the classroom. Such a course of action was considered necessary due to low English proficiency among Saudi students. According to the author's knowledge, the main factor that causes poor speaking skills is that students do not have sufficient time to communicate outside English language classes. Further, speaking and listening course contents are not well designed to match the Saudi learning context. The methodology included designing speaking tasks to match the educational setting; a CALL framework for designing and evaluating tasks; participant involvement in evaluating these tasks in each online session; and an investigation of the factors that led to the successful implementation of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) and using SpeakApps. The analysis and data were drawn from the technology acceptance model surveys, a group interview, teachers' and students' weekly reflections, and discourse analysis of students' interactions.

Keywords : CALL evaluation, synchronous technology, speaking skill, task-based language teaching

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