# The Effect of a VOKI Based-Instructional Program on Jordanian EFL Tenth-Grade Students' Speaking Skill

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**Abstract:**

This study investigated the effect of a VOKI based-instructional program on the speaking skill of EFL tenth-grade students. A quasi-experimental methodology was applied to two groups. The researchers assigned two sections of tenth-grade students at Um Al-Jemal secondary school for boys, a public institution under the directorate of education in north-east Badiah. The first section was randomly designated as the experimental group (n=20), and the second as the control group (n=20). A pre-/post-speaking skill test was prepared to achieve the study's goals. The experimental group was instructed using VOKI based-instructional program, while the control group was taught using the standard speaking strategy as outlined in the Teacher's Book. The findings indicated that VOKI based-instructional program significantly improved students' speaking skill. Based on the study's results, the researchers recommend that students of different EFL skill levels consider implementing VOKI based-instructional program as a teaching strategy.
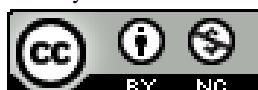
**Keywords** VOKI; Jordanian EFL Students; speaking skill.

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# أثر برنامج تدريسي مستند الى فوكي في مهارة التحدث لدى طلاب الصف العاشر الأردنيين متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية

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**ملخص:**

تناولت هذه الدراسة تأثير برنامج تدريسي مستند الى فوكي على مهارة التحدث لدى طلبة الصف العاشر في اللغة الإنجليزية. تم تطبيق المنهج شبه التجريبي على مجموعتين. خصص الباحثون قسمين من طلبة الصف العاشر في مدرسة أم الجمال الثانوية للبنين، إحدى المؤسسات الحكومية التابعة لمديرية التربية والتعليم في البادية الشمالية الشرقية. وقد تم اختيار القسم الأول عشوائياً للمجموعة التجريبية (20 طالباً)، والثاني للمجموعة الضابطة (20 طالباً). وتم إعداد اختبار مهارات قبل وبعد التحدث لتحقيق أهداف الدراسة. تم تعليم المجموعة التجريبية باستخدام البرنامج التدريسي المستند الى فوكي، في حين تم تدريس المجموعة الضابطة باستخدام استراتيجية التحدث القياسية كما هو موضح في كتاب المعلم. أشارت النتائج إلى أن البرنامج التدريسي المستند الى فوكي أدى إلى تحسين مهارات التحدث لدى الطلاب بشكل ملحوظ. بناءً على نتائج الدراسة، يوصي الباحثون الطلاب من مختلف مستويات مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بالتفكير في تنفيذ البرنامج التدريسي المستند الى فوكي كاستراتيجية تدريس.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** فوكي؛ طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية الأردنيين؛ مهارة التحدث.

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**Introduction**

English language learning aims to equip students with clear and effective communication skills. Speaking proficiency is crucial for expressing ideas and emotions confidently. It involves using oral language for immediate interaction (Butler et al., 2000). Mastering speaking is essential for effective communication in academic and professional settings (Ur, 1996).

Some experts argue that speaking forms are the core of second language acquisition. They assert that it is a critical skill for professionals in business and government and that honing effective public speaking abilities enhances communication and career prospects (Egan, 1999). Brown (2007) stated that speaking involves creating meaning, encompassing the reception, processing, and production of sounds. Moreover, Brown (2004) noted that speaking is an observable and immediately applicable skill.

Several researchers (Harmer, 2001, Mazouzi, 2013, Richards, 2008, Thornbury, 2005) emphasized that the ability to control pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency are all vital components of speaking performance. Cornbleet & Carter (2001) argued that speaking is as integral to daily activities and experiences as sight and mobility. Speaking is a crucial learning skill for acquiring a language, and it also enhances input (Saville-Troike & Barto, 2017). (Smith-Khan, 2017) suggested that techniques like role-playing, group discussions, and oral interviews encourage students to engage in communication. However, students may struggle to practice their English speech if they are hesitant to express themselves, lack confidence in their speaking skill, or lack motivation (Tok, 2009).

Both first and second-language learners should focus on honing their speaking skill. Developing speaking skill is considered the most crucial aspect of learning a second or foreign language, and success is determined by one's ability to engage in conversations in that language (Nunan, 1991). Despite its relevance, speaking has often been overlooked in schools and colleges due to an emphasis on grammar and unfavorable teacher-student ratios (Egan, 1999).

Learning in the twenty-first century has evolved with the integration of technological advancements in education, departing from the traditional classroom-based approach to knowledge instruction. Technology offers students opportunities for self-directed learning, self-paced interactions, privacy, and a secure environment where mistakes can be corrected and

detailed feedback provided. Technology aids students in practicing their second language in real-world contexts (Ali, Bahadorfar & Omidvar, 2014).

Richards added, technology that allows the students to practice authentic language use in the classroom (Richards, 2015). Given its ongoing evolution, technology is now a critical factor in various fields, including telecommunications and education. Web 2.0 is a form of technology utilized in education, and has made teaching and learning accessible anywhere and anytime (Manty, Yunus, Badusah & Shah, 2017). All websites that enable users to create, edit, and share internet content are considered to have Web 2.0 tools, which facilitate the development of online digital content (Dictionary, 2022).

As a Web 2.0 application and tool suitable for teenage students' lessons, VOKI is considered an instructional technology that focuses on teaching students how to speak, listen, and write. Many teachers around the world have benefited from using VOKI to enhance their students' speaking, writing, and listening communication skills (www.voki.com).

According to Setyawati & Azizaturrohmah (2016) VOKI can help students become more motivated and creative while also enhancing their speaking, listening, and writing abilities. Additionally, it is possible for students who struggle with pronunciation when learning a foreign language to speak more fluently in extracurricular activities and to improve their writing abilities by outlining the material they will speak.

Furthermore, VOKI can be used on PCs, tablets, and smartphones. The application supports voicing in more than 30 languages across its four components: VOKI, VOKI Classroom, VOKI Presenter, and VOKI Hangout. Students can record their voices with VOKI, providing a useful tool for those hesitant to speak in front of the class and share audio messages. Customizing the avatar created by the application and giving it a voice creates an engaging learning environment (Lornsen, 2010). VOKI, in the form of podcasts, provides voice recordings that can be used for assessment, critical thinking, and peer collaboration, as well as enhancing speaking and listening skills (Cicconi, 2014). Therefore, it is used explicitly for speaking practice in foreign language lessons. Moreover, VOKI as an educational tool can engage students in the classroom by assisting them in articulating their opinions.

Aikina & Zubkova (2015) reported that VOKI online application creates a learning environment that is delightful, fun, stress-free, and

productive. When creating their avatars students can speak a few lines about themselves, for instance, to deliver new material engagingly, for revision, or to practice pronunciation (Mirtschin et al., 2010).  According to Pim (2012) VOKI is a great technique for preparing students for oral presentations, show-and-tell, storytelling, and other public speaking situations, etc.

As a result, this technology may be crucial for artistic endeavors, and creating animated characters might be used to help teachers and students by boosting instruction, classroom engagement and lesson comprehension (Mulumba, 2016). Students have a wide range of options, colors, and forms to choose from when creating an avatar for use in animated presentations. This allows them to express their creativity and enjoy crafting their speaking character for vocalizing written messages in online contexts (Agravat & Raval, 2015).

With VOKI, students can design their speech-generating virtual assistants (avatars) that can speak using the voice of the creator, a file they've uploaded, or text-to-speech technology that reads aloud messages that have been typed in a variety of languages. VOKI characters might be cartoon characters, animals, historical individuals, or even be made to resemble the user. Students can use this application to voice their selected characters in English (Oddcast Inc., 2020).

**Statement of the Problem**

Speaking is one of the most critical skills to cultivate and improve for effective communication. Speaking is one of the hardest components of learning a language. It might be challenging for many language learners to express themselves orally (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). The researchers, as teachers of English, have noticed that many students have difficulties in developing their capacity for communicative competence in the target language. Students feel comfortable communicating in Arabic as opposed to English because they have limited knowledge of English, they are anxious about making mistakes, and they are not used to speaking the language. The researchers noticed that students have a noticeable weakness in their speaking skill. In addition, they have insufficient vocabulary and are unable to comprehend spoken English. This is a problem that frequently grows in Jordan's public schools. The students might recognize the words during the speaking text, but they may not understand what they mean.

## Purpose of the Study

The current study aims to investigate the effect of a VOKI based instructional program on Jordanian EFL tenth-grade students' speaking skill.

## Question of the Study

The present study attempts to answer the following question:

− Are there any statistically significant differences (a =0.05) in Jordanian EFL tenth-grade students' speaking skill due to the instructional mode (VOKI vs. conventional instruction)?

## Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide insights into the effect of a VOKI based-instructional program as an effective educational tool on students' speaking skill. This study is significant to students that it may highlight the effectiveness of VOKI in enhancing their creativity in creating their characters and ways to learn English and enhance their speaking skill.

Furthermore, this study may encourage EFL teachers to use this tool more often to enhance their students' speaking skill. The results of this study may be used as a reference for other researchers to conduct further studies to investigate VOKI as an instructional program that enhances speaking skill. Moreover, it may contribute to informing curriculum designers about the effect of using technological tools in learning English. They may see VOKI as a useful context for CALL when creating resources to teach English as a foreign language. The findings of the study may help the Ministry of Education to conduct training programs to train teachers on how to use VOKI and other technological tools in teaching English skills.

## Operational Conceptual Definitions of Terms

The study will focus on the following terms:

− **VOKI:** a web 2.0 tool that enables students to make their avatars called "VOKIs". By using a microphone to record their voices and uploading audio files, students may give their VOKIs voices. Students can send VOKIs to each other or post them on websites or social media as an oral presentation tool (Svendsen, Mondahl & Faizi, 2014). In this study, VOKI was used as an instructional tool to enhance students' speaking skill.

− **Speaking Skill:** is the ability for clear and effective verbal communication that the listener can understand. Speaking is defined as

speaking or utterances intended for the listener to grasp the speaker's intentions through processing the words (Amalia, 2017). The performance of Jordanian tenth-grade students on a speaking post-test created especially for this study is the subject of this investigation. The speaking skills under investigation were chosen based on the findings of a few selected study units in the Action Pack, and they include the sub-skills of grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, and entertaining speaking as well as informative speaking and persuasive speaking.

## Limitations of the Study

The following limitations apply to the current findings of the study:

1. The study's generalizability is restricted to tenth-grade male students at Um Al-Jemal Secondary School during the academic year 2022-2023.
2. The duration of the study was limited to a period of 8 weeks.
3. The textbook for this topic is Action Pack 10 (modules 5 and 6), which is used in Jordanian public schools.

## Review of the Related Literature

In a related study, (Bellés-Fortuño & Bellés-Calvera, 2018) examined the role of VOKI in teaching English pronunciation, particularly with the use of OERs. They examined a group of first-year undergraduate students in a Spanish university pursuing an English studies degree. The study employed a case study design, and after an eight-week experiment, it was revealed that Spanish students' pronunciation had noticeably improved.

Ramdani (2018) focused on assessing VOKI's potential in aiding the development of speaking skills in first-grade students. This qualitative study, employing a research and development technique, involved twenty-five first-grade students. The results showcased VOKI's features as a viable solution for improving students' proficiency in spoken English. The research concluded that employing VOKI enhances speaking skill.

Bellés-Fortuño & Bellés-Calvera (2018) investigated the use of VOKI in teaching English pronunciation with OERs. The sample consisted of 22 first-year undergraduate students at a Spanish university with an English studies degree. This study was a case study. The results revealed that following an eight-week experiment, Spanish students' pronunciation had improved.

Similarly, Yeşilbağ, Korkmaz & Çakir (2020) examined the impact of VOKI, a Web 2.0 tool, on students' academic performance and attitudes towards English courses. The study involved fifth-grade students from a

public secondary school in Turkey, encompassing both male and female participants. Utilizing a pretest-posttest control group design, the findings demonstrated improved test scores in both groups following the English class. Consequently, there was no significant difference in the groups' perspectives on English courses.

In another study, Gaona Vásquez (2020) investigated the effectiveness of peer feedback combined with VOKI to enhance students' awareness of registering in a speaking context. The study's sample comprised fifty high school students, and a mixed-methods approach was employed for data analysis. The results underscored the pivotal role of peer feedback and VOKI in creating an effective learning environment, facilitating knowledge sharing, and promoting an enjoyable learning experience.

Kieu (2021) scrutinized the impact of high school learners' self-practice using VOKI on their speaking performance. The study involved forty-seven tenth graders studying English as a core subject in a Vietnamese high school. Employing a quasi-experimental control group design, the results indicated significant improvement in students' speaking skills and increased satisfaction with the effectiveness and engagement of the Web 2.0 tool. As a result, students' initial shyness and anxiety about speaking the target language diminished, replaced by growing confidence.

Trindade & Moreira (2023) investigated the possible contributions of VOKI for Education in the teaching-learning process of the English language. This study was a case study. The results showed that it was possible to highlight the contributions of using VOKI in the English teaching-learning process.

Aktaş (2023) investigated the effect of VOKI on Turkish learners' speaking skills and speaking anxiety. This study used exploratory sequential design. The sample of this study consisted of 61 students at the A2 level who learned Turkish as a foreign language. The findings of the study indicated that the students in the experimental group's speaking skills increased thanks to the VOKI application and they had favorable opinions about the application.

Rahman (2023) examined the effect of technology using VOKI as a technique to improve ESL speaking skills among students. This study used a mixed-method approach to validate the effectiveness of VOKI and the learners' perceptions of VOKI in improving speaking skills. The sample of the study was 100 undergraduate students from public universities in

Malaysia. The findings of the study indicated that VOKI helped in enhancing speaking skills, increasing confidence levels, reducing anxiety in speaking English, and improving pronunciation and fluency in speaking.

## The Concluding Remarks

After reviewing the literature, the researchers noticed that this study is similar to Kieu (2021), Rahman (2023), Trindade & Moreira (2023), and Aktaş (2023). However, it is different from other studies that it includes a designed VOKI based instructional program of the speaking skill activities of Action Pack 10 which was applied to tenth-grade students in an EFL Jordanian context. Previous research also examined the effect of VOKI on students' speaking skill. However, this study investigates how VOKI can help students with speaking sub-skills such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency and how to connect their ideas to speak English. The goal of this study is to close a gap in the literature on this subject.

## Method and Procedure (Methodology)

## Design and Variables of the Study

This study applied a quasi-experimental design based on the use of two groups of tenth graders. The independent variable is the teaching method (VOKI vs. conventional instruction) while the dependent variable is the speaking skill of tenth-grade students.

Participants of the Study

Students from the tenth grade at Um Al-Jemal Secondary School for Boys, a public school in the North-East Badia Directorate of Education, participated in the study during the second semester of the academic year 2022/2023. The participants were 40 tenth grade students who were selected purposefully. Action Pack 10 textbook is the curriculum that is used to teach tenth-grades in public schools in Jordan. The school had two tenth-grade sections, each of 20 students that were randomly assigned.

The control group is taught using the conventional method based on the Teacher's Book, while the experimental group is taught using an instructional program using VOKI.

## Study Instruments

The pre-/post speaking skill test was designed to achieve the goal of the study. A description of the instrument is provided below:

## The Pre/Post-test for Speaking Skill

The researchers constructed a speaking pre-/post-test based on the speaking levels of the tenth-grade students after looking at the content analysis of the targeted modules 5 & 6 of Action Pack 10. The designed

pre-/post-test focused on three main types of speaking which were: informative speaking, persuasive speaking and entertaining speaking, taking into consideration the learning and teaching objectives given in the teacher's book of Action Pack 10. The test was intended to evaluate the students' speaking skill before and after using the treatment, and, thus, students were asked to speak on the given topics (informative speaking, persuasive speaking and entertaining speaking).

## The Speaking Scoring Rubric

The students' speaking skill was marked by the researchers employing (Harries, 1969) scoring rubric which consists of the four speaking sub-skills aspects of pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, and grammar.

## Reliability and Construct Validity of the Speaking Performance Test

To evaluate the internal consistency (construct validity) of students' performance on the test, the test was piloted to a sample of 19 students, who were excluded from the sample of the study. Then, Pearson Correlation Coefficient was extracted between the skill score and the total score of its type and Pearson Correlation Coefficient between the skill score and the total score of the whole test. It was also extracted between the skill score and the total score of its type.

The results showed that the Pearson Correlation Coefficient between the speaking skill score and the total score of its type, the total score of the speaking skill score and the total score overall test is statistically significant (i.e., the values are higher than 0.35). The corrected item-total correlation between speaking skill and the total score of its type is higher than the threshold value (0.35). These results indicate an acceptable degree of internal consistency for the speaking skill test (Brown & Hudson, 2002).

Additionally, the reliability of the speaking test, Cronbach Alpha coefficients and test-retest approach were used with two weeks between them, the Cronbach Alpha Coefficients for the Informative Speaking, Persuasive Speaking, and Entertaining Speaking were .71, .89, and .82, respectively. It was calculated to be .79 for the entire scale, and all above the cut-off value .70 (Cronbach, 1951). Furthermore, the test-retest coefficients for the Informative, Persuasive and Entertaining speaking were .72, .85, and .88, respectively. It was calculated to be .88 for the entire scale, and all above the cut-off value .70 (Cronbach, 1951).

## VOKI Strategy-Based-Instructional Program

To achieve the purpose of the study, the researchers designed an instructional program to improve the participants' speaking skill. The speaking activities in Units 7, 8, 9, and 10 in Modules 5 and 6 of Action Pack 10 were redesigned to enable the participants of the experimental group to use VOKI in speaking skill lessons. This instructional program was created to give Jordanian EFL students in the tenth grade a chance to develop their speaking skill by using VOKI, which may help students speak more effectively and quickly and encourage them to keep learning. The instructional program was designed to provide Jordanian tenth-grade EFL students with practical experience to develop their speaking skill through VOKI.

## The Instructional Material

The instructional material used in this study is based on the speaking sub-skill activities in units (7, 8, 9, and 10 in Modules 5 and 6) which are (grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and pronunciation) in the Student's Book of Action Pack 10. There are some activities for the participants in the experimental group that are included in each topic such as describing pictures or objects, talking about different places, and talking about geniuses or artists. The researchers redesigned these activities according to VOKI to be used to teach speaking to the participants in the experimental group. In this study, the students prepare their speech, the teacher assigns the task and the students prepare for what they will speak. After that, the students do tasks like speaking simple sentences, dialogues, or a short story. The teacher assigns homework and provides general comments to students, as well as gives the students feedback and follow-up work to encourage them and increase their enthusiasm.

## Procedures for Designing the Instructional Program

The following procedures were carried out in the implementation of the current program:

1. The researchers conducted a thorough review of theoretical and practical literature related to English language teaching, second language acquisition, and speaking skill development.
2. The researchers Identified and analyzed the activities with speaking content in the targeted modules of Action Pack10 which VOKI program may be integrated.
3. Based on the content analysis and the theoretical literature, the researchers carefully assigned VOKI that matched with the identified

speaking objectives and topics. The researchers chose VOKI according to students' needs and interests to emphasize speaking skill.

4. The researchers developed a well-structured program outline, outlining the sequence of lessons and activities. Lesson plans were designed to incorporate VOKI, speaking exercises, and other relevant materials.

5. The researchers created a variety of speaking exercises and activities that suit different learning styles and promote active participation.

6. The researchers assigned appropriate time for each lesson, depending on the speaking tasks involved. The duration of each lesson depended on the complexity of the speaking exercises and the depth of discussion required.

7. The researchers designed a pre-test to be given to the control and experimental groups before introducing VOKI.

8. Validity of pre-/ posttests, refer the pre- or post-speaking test to the supervisor and a jury for any modifications then do the required modifications.

9. Modifying the test per the jury's remarks.

10. After modifying the test regarding the required remarks, a pre-test was conducted on both the control and experimental groups.

11. The researchers designed the instructional program using VOKI.

12. The researchers examined students' performance in speaking skill after implementing the program through a post-test.

**Validity of the Instructional Program**

To check the validity of the instructional program, the researchers gave it to a jury of ten experts in curriculum and instruction. The jury members were requested to review the instructional program and provide the researchers with any amendments and recommendations, which the researchers later took into account for the preparation of the final version of the instructional program.

**Results**

To answer the study question, the researchers followed the following procedures:

– The means and standard deviations of the pre-/post-test scores in the overall three types of speaking, (Informative Speaking, Persuasive Speaking, and Entertaining Speaking) for the experimental and control groups were calculated, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of the overall three Types of Speaking**

| Group | Pre-test | | Post-test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Mean | S.D | *Mean | S.D |
| Experimental | 23.75 | 4.33 | 43 | 4.62 |
| Control | 25 | 4.14 | 31.55 | 3.76 |
| Total | 24.38 | 4.23 | 37.28 | 7.14 |

*The total score is 60

Table 1 illustrates that the experimental group obtained a higher average score (Mean=43.00) compared to the control group (Mean=31.55) across all three types of speaking (Informative Speaking, Persuasive Speaking, and Entertaining Speaking). In order to assess the statistically significant impact of the teaching method (utilizing VOKI versus traditional instruction) on the three speaking types overall, while taking into account the influence of pre-test scores, a one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted, and the results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: One-Way ANCOVA for the Effect of the Teaching Method on the overall three Types of Speaking**

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-test (Covariate) | 111.736 | 1 | 111.736 | 7.34 | 0.01 | 0.166 |
| Teaching Method | 1397.444 | 1 | 1397.44 | 91.8 | 0 | 0.713 |
| Error | 563.214 | 37 | 15.222 | | | |
| Total | 57563 | 40 | | | | |
| Corrected Total | 1985.975 | 39 | | | | |

Table 2 indicates a significant and favorable distinction in the overall performance across the three types of speaking between the two groups, even after accounting for the influence of pre-test scores. The partial eta squared value of (.713) suggests that the teaching method accounted for a substantial 71.3% of the variability observed in the three types of speaking (Informative Speaking, Persuasive Speaking, and Entertaining Speaking).

Moreover, the means, standard errors, and standard deviations for both groups in the overall three types of speaking were computed both before and after adjusting for the overall pre-test scores. These findings are summarized in Table 3.

**Table 3: Adjusted and Unadjusted Means of the Overall Three Types of Speaking**

| Group | Unadjusted Mean | | Adjusted Mean | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | Std. Error |
| Experimental | 43 | 4.62 | 43.25 | 0.877 |

| Group | Unadjusted Mean | | Adjusted Mean | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | Std. Error |
| Control | 31.55 | 3.76 | 31.3 | 0.877 |

As depicted in Table 3, notable discrepancies can be observed between the two groups in their overall performance across the three types of speaking, specifically in the post-assessment phase after accounting for variations in pre-test scores. This suggests that the implementation of the VOKI teaching method led to an improvement in the overall three types of speaking for the experimental group.

The means and standard deviations of pre-/post-test scores in the three types of speaking (i.e., Informative Speaking, Persuasive Speaking, and Entertaining Speaking) were calculated, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Means and Standard Deviations of the Pre-Test and Post-Test Per-Level in the three Types of Speaking**

| Types of Speaking | Group | Maximum score | Pre-test | | Post-test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Mean | S.D | Mean | S.D |
| Informative Speaking | Experimental | 20 | 7.85 | 2.28 | 13.6 | 1.85 |
| | Control | | 7.55 | 2.26 | 10.9 | 1.25 |
| Persuasive Speaking | Experimental | 20 | 8.55 | 2.63 | 14.5 | 2.87 |
| | Control | | 9.5 | 3.12 | 9.1 | 2.65 |
| Entertaining Speaking | Experimental | 20 | 7.35 | 2.16 | 14.9 | 2.51 |
| | Control | | 7.95 | 2.28 | 11.55 | 2.95 |

Table 4 illustrates that the experimental group achieved higher post-test scores in all three types of speaking compared to the average scores of the control group.

In order to examine the impact of the teaching method (VOKI versus traditional instruction) on the collective performance in the three types of speaking (Informative Speaking, Persuasive Speaking, and Entertaining Speaking) after adjusting for the influence of pre-test scores, a one-way multivariate analysis of covariance (one-way MANCOVA) employing a multivariate test (Hoteling's Trace) was employed, as detailed in Table 5.

**Table 5: Multivariate Test (Hoteling's' Trace) for the Effect of the Teaching Method on the three Types of Speaking**

| Effect | Value | F | Hypothesis df | Error df | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Teaching Method | 2.878 | 31.660 | 3.000 | 33.000 | .000 | .742 |

Table 5 demonstrates that the influence of the teaching method was substantial. It implies that there are discernible distinctions in students' performance across the two groups when considering a combined

assessment of the three types of speaking (Informative Speaking, Persuasive Speaking, and Entertaining Speaking). The partial eta square value of (.742) indicates that a significant 74.2% of the variability in this combined performance can be attributed to the teaching method. Given the significant impact of the teaching method, a subsequent univariate analysis (Follow-up ANCOVAs): tests of between-subject effects were carried out, as detailed in Table 6.

**Table 6: The Effect of the Teaching Method on the three Types of Speaking Per-level after Controlling the Effect of Pre-Test Scores**

| Source | Dependent Variable | Type III Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Squared |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Covariate-1 | Informative | 33.099 | 1 | 33.099 | 20.198 | 0 | 0.366 |
| Covariate-2 | Persuasive | 60.798 | 1 | 60.798 | 9.959 | 0.003 | 0.222 |
| Covariate-3 | Entertaining | 0.276 | 1 | 0.276 | 0.035 | 0.852 | 0.001 |
| Teaching Method | Informative | 57.796 | 1 | 57.796 | 35.268 | 0 | 0.502 |
| | Persuasive | 320.628 | 1 | 320.628 | 52.522 | 0 | 0.6 |
| | Entertaining | 89.359 | 1 | 89.359 | 11.474 | 0.002 | 0.247 |
| Error | Informative | 57.357 | 35 | 1.639 | | | |
| | Persuasive | 213.664 | 35 | 6.105 | | | |
| | Entertaining | 272.571 | 35 | 7.788 | | | |
| Corrected Total | Informative | 167.5 | 39 | | | | |
| | Persuasive | 582.4 | 39 | | | | |
| | Entertaining | 396.975 | 39 | | | | |

Table 6 shows that there were statistically significant differences between the two groups in the three types of speaking in favor of the experimental group. The partial eta squared values of .502, .600, and .247 indicated that the teaching method explained 50.2%, 60.0%, and 24.7% of the variance in informative speaking, persuasive speaking, and entertaining speaking, respectively.

Additionally, the means, standard errors, and standard deviations of the two groups in the three types of speaking before and after controlling the pre-test scores were extracted, as shown in Table 7.

**Table 7: Adjusted and Unadjusted Means of the three Types of Speaking**

| Types of Speaking (Dependent Variable) | Group | Unadjusted mean | | Adjusted mean | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mean | S.D | Mean | S.E |
| Informative Speaking | Experimental | 13.6 | 1.84676 | 13.498[a] | 0.292 |
| | Control | 10.9 | 1.25237 | 11.002[a] | 0.292 |
| Persuasive Speaking | Experimental | 14.5 | 2.87457 | 14.739[a] | 0.563 |
| | Control | 9.1 | 2.6537 | 8.861[a] | 0.563 |
| Entertaining Speaking | Experimental | 14.9 | 2.51103 | 14.777[a] | 0.636 |
| | Control | 11.55 | 2.94645 | 11.673[a] | 0.636 |

Table 7 shows that there are differences between the post-performance of the two groups on the three types of speaking after the differences in the pre-test scores are controlled. As such, using VOKI program enhanced students' performance in the three types of speaking.

## Discussion of the Results

The results of this study are in line with Kieu's (2021) study which investigated the impact of high school learners' self-practice using VOKI on their speaking performance. The results indicated significant improvement in students' speaking skills and increased satisfaction with the effectiveness and engagement of the Web 2.0 tool. However, Aktaş's (2023) study investigated the effect of VOKI on Turkish learners' speaking skills and speaking anxiety. The results indicated that the students in the experimental group's speaking skills increased thanks to the VOKI application.

The results of this study agreed with the results of Rahman's (2023) study which examined the effect of technology using VOKI as a technique to improve ESL speaking skills among students. The findings of the study indicated that VOKI helped in enhancing speaking skills, increasing confidence levels, reducing anxiety in speaking English, and improving pronunciation and fluency in speaking. Also, the results of this study agreed with the results of Trindade & Moreira's (2023) study which investigated the possible contributions of VOKI for Education in the teaching-learning process of the English language. The results showed that it was possible to highlight the contributions of using VOKI in the English teaching-learning process.

The answer to this question showed that there were statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups' mean scores on the speaking skill post-test at (= 0.05). Students in the experimental group outperformed those in the control group on the speaking skill post-test as a whole and each of the three types of speaking (informative speaking, persuasive speaking, and entertaining speaking). VOKI enhanced speaking skill in all three types.

There are many reasons why the experimental group if they had implemented VOKI, would have fared better on the speaking skill post-test in terms of both their overall skills and each type of speaking skill. One of these features could be credited to the design of the instructional program of VOKI.

Over the course of 16 classes, it was thoughtfully designed and given to focus on speaking skill. The teacher gave his students a thorough set of instructions for every lesson. For example, in each speaking lesson, the teacher concentrated on helping the students improve their speaking skill (giving meaning to words, identifying specific facts, details, or information stated in the exercise, responding to questions before, during, and after speaking, speculating on the meaning of new vocabulary, determining the questions' answers based on prior knowledge, engaging in straightforward conversation when speaking, understanding oral language, etc.) to carry out the aims of the lesson and how to finish the assigned work.

The emphasis that VOKI placed on group work is another factor that might have helped students in improving their speaking skill. VOKI enhanced their collaboration by highlighting individual differences to complete given tasks. In many cases, teachers gave their students the option of working alone or in groups to finish their assignments. VOKI program encouraged student participation in the learning process rather than restricting instruction to the teacher.

As a result, this technology may be created, and animated characters might help teachers and students by boosting instruction, classroom engagement, and lesson comprehension. Students have a wide range of options, colors, and forms to choose from while making an Avatar, which allows them to express their creativity and have fun creating their speaking character and use them to vocalize written messages in an online context.

## Conclusion

The purpose of the current study was to investigate how tenth-grade EFL students' speaking skill was affected by using VOKI. For the academic year 2022–2023, VOKI was developed and implemented to achieve this goal. Particularly, the researchers came to the following conclusions:

1. VOKI is an instructional program that helps students improve their performance in EFL-speaking environments.
2. The effectiveness of VOKI is attributed to its interactive nature which increased students' curiosity, motivation and engagement.
3. Giving students cooperative learning strategies like VOKI may help them use them more confidently and without as much shyness or hesitancy.
4. The students' enhanced performance on the post-test compared to their performance on the pre-test shows that VOKI was successful in

increasing the teaching/learning process and enhancing the instructional content of the Ministry of Education textbook.

In conclusion, VOKI program helps students enhance their performance in EFL speaking situations. VOKI's effectiveness is due to its participatory aspect, which raises students' curiosity, motivation and involvement. It also provides cooperative learning tools to students, such as VOKI, that may help students apply them more confidently and without shyness or uncertainty. In addition, the students' improved performance on the post-test compared to the pre-test indicates that VOKI was effective in improving the teaching/learning process and improving the instructional content of the Ministry of Education textbook.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the current study the researchers suggested many recommendations made for EFL instructors, EFL supervisors, the Ministry of Education, and authors of EFL textbooks as follows:

1. EFL teachers are recommended to incorporate VOKI when teaching different language skills and aspects to help students learn better since it improves their visualization of the topic at hand and helps students relate it to all they have learned before.

2. EFL teachers are advised to integrate VOKI in all educational stages and levels which will make students more familiar with such methodology and develop their speaking skill early on. VOKI, although rudimentary, at best, when prepared by a student in his/ her early grades, will evolve and become more elaborate as the student progresses.

3. EFL researchers are recommended to conduct similar studies on Jordanian secondary-stage students, for example, and different language aspects like parts of speech and other skills like reading, writing and listening.

4. Further research can be conducted on non-conventional strategies that may be used in the EFL classroom no matter the level to improve students' performance and help them move away from the teacher-centered classroom to one where students become responsible for their learning regardless of the teacher's effort, or lack thereof.

5. Textbook and syllabus designers are recommended to incorporate strategies like VOKI in the curricula to help students be more autonomous and ground their knowledge and use it to learn more with little help from the teacher.

6. It is recommended the EFL supervisors inform teachers on the significance of VOKI and provide them with training sessions on how to use it to improve their students' performance in speaking.

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