Exploring EFL Students' Perceptions of the Use of Synchronous Video Conferencing to Develop their Speaking Competence

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Abstract

This study explored participants' attitudes and perceptions of the adoption of Zoom video conferencing as a synchronous communication tool with the aims of developing students' speaking competence, fostering engagement, and enhancing their confidence. Grounded in sociocultural theory, this qualitative study examined videoconferencing as a tool that provides opportunities for real-time engagement and facilitation of the learning process. The main data collection method was a survey questionnaire taken from 18 participants enrolled in the Faculty of Social Sciences at a private university in Tokyo. Qualitative and thematic analyses were carried out with the assistance of the NVIVO 12 program. Qualitative and inductive analyses, as well as emerging patterns from the participants' responses, revealed: (1) increased confidence in their speaking skills after using Zoom; (2) significantly reduced anxiety levels attributed to speaking practice; (3) multiple factors at play on the effects of speaking practice on preparation; and (4) perceptions as a Zoom user reflecting personal/technical considerations.

Keywords: videoconferencing, qualitative, speaking fluency, sociocultural theory

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As the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continues to disrupt face-to-face instruction across institutions in Japan, particularly those in higher education, the shift to online learning and the increased implementation of technology has provided opportunities for language teachers to adopt online applications in their learning environments. Of particular interest to this study is the adoption of synchronous video conferencing programs, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams, as alternatives to face-to-face instruction in communication-oriented courses to facilitate engagement among learners. Vurdien (2019) contends that videoconferencing can provide opportunities for additional speaking practice for EFL learners who have fewer opportunities to communicate in

the target language.　With 83.8% of Japanese universities having adopted distance learning in some form, the use of videoconferencing for educational purposes has become a necessity to ensure the ability of students to learn outside of the traditional classroom (MEXT, 2020).　While the application of videoconferencing in higher education is not new in itself, it has never been as widely implemented and as extensively utilized at higher institutions in Japan as in current times.　In fact, only a few studies are available in the current literature that have examined the efficacy of videoconferencing as an educational tool.　This study attempts to examine students' perceptions of the use of videoconferencing in a Japanese education context to conclude whether it is an effective tool for facilitating university classes[1].

Literature Review

Videoconferencing

Videoconferencing is a synchronous model of real-time interaction which integrates voice, video, and media applications, thus enabling two or more people to interact with each other in real time (Wiesemas & Wang, 2010).　The application Zoom is one popular tool for synchronous learning, which focuses on integrating technology with teaching methodologies as a means of engagement between students and teachers (Ayoub, 2019).　According to Hratinski (2007), the use of devices such as smartphones, iPads, and computers paired with teachers and students engaging in real time, irrespective of geographic location, greatly enhances the higher education distance learning process.　The widespread adoption of videoconference tools like Zoom facilitates opportunities for educational researchers to develop effective pedagogy specifically for online learning in order to motivate students to engage in discussions, thus facilitating their language learning (Tanti, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

The use of videoconferencing for educational purposes can be conceptualized within the sociocultural theory (Wiesemas & Wang 2010, as cited in Candarli & Yuksel, 2012).　Within this sociocultural theory (hereinafter referred to as SCT) framework, it is argued that the cognitive function of humans is fundamentally a mediated process organized by cultural artifacts and activities (Ratner, 2002).　These *cultural artifacts* include both physical objects (e.g., computers, dictionaries, etc.) and symbolic systems (such as learning a second language or social behaviors) and serve as a buffer mediating the relationship between the individual and the environment

(Tomasello, 1999). Central to the mediation concept is the notion of *regulation*, a form of mediation which encompasses three major dimensions (Lantolf et al., 2014):

a. *Object-regulation* refers to artifacts in the environment which provide cognitive stimulation such as videoconferencing tools, dictionaries, class notes, and use of PowerPoint slides for oral presentations;

b. *Other regulation* is defined as a form of mediation by people which includes explicit feedback on grammatical form in speaking and writing as well as guidance from capable peers or a teacher;

c. *Self-regulation* can be described as an individual's progress towards gaining voluntary control with minimal support by becoming proficient in the use of mediational resources and having successfully internalized previously external forms of mediation (Thorne & Tasker, 2011).

Coyle (2004) asserts that SCT provides a solid theoretical approach to learning "in which students construct their own knowledge as a result of interacting with their environment and of mediating through their social context" (p. 4). Since the social world is the primary source of all learning in SCT, participation in cultural organized activities (such as partaking in video conferencing sessions) is essential for learning (Ohta, 2001). Within the framework of SCT, the use of videoconferencing can offer students the opportunity "to experience and analyze sociocultural learning and teaching interactions" (Candarli & Yuksel, 2012, p.358).

Videoconferencing and Second Language Learning

Numerous studies in the literature have examined the use of videoconferencing and its impact on language learning. For example, McCloskey et al. (2013) suggested that the implementation of activities through a Zoom session could help students achieve the desired learning outcome. Studies in the literature support the significance of synchronous video conferencing with respect to students' academic performance due to its flexible modalities of use with text, video, and voice chats helping students become proficient in basic language skills (Keegan et al., 2005). Similar findings by Chen et al. (2005) revealed that the feedback supplied in videoconferencing settings can lead students to discover both their strengths and weaknesses with respect to language learning to improve their academic performance.

On examining the effect of videoconferencing use in English communication courses, several researchers have affirmed the positive influence on learning outcomes with Zhao (2009) stating that synchronous video instruction can be used as a creative tool for teaching and practical use

of the language.　Zoom sessions, used effectively, allow students to take part in instantaneous discussions which promote positive interactions with one another while increasing students' motivation (Liang, 2006).　Furthermore, Wang (2006) added that second-language learners can use a variety of discourse strategies to maintain conversation flow during these sessions.

The use of videoconferencing and its effect on students' anxiety levels has also been examined by Chen & Lee (2011), whose findings suggested that when students receive feedback through online interaction with their teachers and classmates, the anxiety felt when sharing with others is decreased.　Another study conducted by Wang (2014) has explored the anxiety factors and learning strategies students use to cope with their anxiety.　Strategies such as familiarizing themselves with the vocabulary and content topic before class have been found to lessen their anxiety and perform better in speaking.

Developing Speaking Fluency

Speaking is the most commonly evaluated performance metric in second language literature (Lambert & Kormos, 2014) and is the central component of communication (Shumin, 2002).　According to Nation (1997), *speaking fluency* can be defined narrowly as making use of linguistic resources that are already known and is measured in terms of speaking rate (i.e., words per minute).　It can also be broadly defined as producing speech that is rapid and comprehensible (Crowther et al., 2015).　Speaking fluency can be influenced in the first stage of planning what you want to say, as fluent language requires the access of procedural knowledge (Towell et al., 1996).　Once procedural knowledge has been attained, there is still a long way to go before fluent speaking behavior can be displayed.　A significant amount of practice is required to decrease the time it takes to execute the task as well as the amount of attention required to do so.　Over time, this practice leads to gradual automatization of knowledge (DeKeyser, 2007).　Just like the development of other skills such as writing, listening, and reading, the path to speaking fluency relies primarily on repetition of the same material (Nation, 1997).　Nation (1997) advocates the use of 4/3/2 speaking technique in improving fluency in second language (L2) learners.　This technique involves the speaker talking for three consecutive times, reducing the duration of speech each time to an audience of changing listeners.　In each reduced time increment (e.g., 4 minutes to 3 minutes), the speaker delivers the same content and repeats key features, having already planned and organized the ideas.　Whilst this current study is not concerned with analyzing and quantifying participants' speech fluency, we will examine students' perceptions of how certain variables such as changing partners and using the same discussion materials affect

their fluency rate.

This study seeks to further contribute to the existing research base in examining students' perceptions of the use of videoconferencing as a medium of online interaction, and how its adoption affects students' confidence, anxiety, and speaking competence. The following four qualitative questions that guided this study are:

a. What are the participants' confidence levels with regard to their speaking skills online after using videoconferencing?

b. How would the participants describe their anxiety levels after speaking practice with their interlocutors?

c. What are the effects of this type of speaking practice, especially in regard to their perception of their speaking ability?

d. What are the participants' perceptions of the use of videoconferencing (as opposed to face-to-face classroom instruction) and their levels of satisfaction after using Zoom for one semester?

Methods

Discussion-Based Lesson Overview

In this section, a short description of the typical lesson flow is presented with particular attention paid to the description of stages that make up the task-based activity. The researcher of this study adapted methodology from Eichhorst et al. (2016) called Preparation, Discussion, Reaction (PDR) in his discussion-based class. PDR utilizes a learner-centered, flipped-classroom approach which promotes active engagement, critical thinking, and use of students' linguistic resources. The stages of the discussion-based lesson, as described using the PDR framework are as follows:

Stage 1: Preparation

The discussion-based course for participants involved reading recent news topics to help students engage in reflective conversations. In the preparation stage, students are asked to read an article of interest (See Table 1) and complete a preparation worksheet. Their preparation worksheet contained sections in which they are asked to write their general impressions of the article and answer the provided questions relating to the article. They are also to write their own original question appropriate for discussion. In reading the article and completing the

preparation worksheet before class, the students are likely to be prepared to engage in higher-level discussions.

Table 1　Discussion Preparation Tasks

Reading articles	Sample questions to prompt interactions
1. Medical masks worn in public	Why is wearing a mask a good thing? Why is wearing a mask not necessary?
2. Sports event cancelled, COVID-19 fears over Olympics	How worried are you about the Olympics being cancelled? How bad would it be if the Olympics were cancelled?
3. Scientists start huge search for E.T.	Is there life on other planets? How would you feel if scientists found extraterrestrial life?
4. Cyberbullying: The case of Hana Kimura	Do you think cyberbullying affects mental health? What would you do if you received harmful online messages?
5. Bucket List	What are your top 3 bucket list ideas? Is living for the moment better than having a bucket list?
6. Japan to recognize Ainu indigenous people for the first time	What do you know about the Ainu people? Is it the right move for the Japanese government to recognize the country's ethnic Ainu as indigenous people?
7. Scientists change how we calculate dog years	What is your opinion/reaction to the new method of calculating dog years? In what ways can dogs help humans?
8. Supplementary Activity 1,2 (Casual Talk)	School Life: How long does it take you to get to school? Part-time job: Why did you choose your part-time job?

Stage 2: Discussion

In the discussion stage, students participate in three discussions in groups of three that are consecutively shortened each session.　In this study, the researcher used an adapted and modified (cf. Nation 1997) fluency exercise of 20/15/10 minutes long.　The number of questions in their preparation worksheet, as well as the number of people in the group, are taken into consideration for estimating the time required to complete these exercises.　The discussion stages are divided into three levels, with each level progressing to a more difficult task:

    a.　Level 1 discussion permits speakers to read their answers using their preparation worksheet.

    b.　Level 2 discussion permits speakers to refer to their preparation worksheet without

reading their preparation worksheet.

c. Level 3 discussion requires speakers to discuss their preparation worksheet questions and answers without using their notes as a guide.

Stage 3: Writing

The last 15 minutes of the class are dedicated to a task in which learners are required to write a reaction/reflection paper in English focusing on the news topic discussed. They can source their content ideas from their preparation worksheet or use a dictionary to look up words, and their written content needs to be structured and organized logically.

Final & Midterm Presentations

In addition to reading articles and preparation worksheet tasks, midterm and final oral presentations are incorporated into the course curriculum in which students are to choose a current news topic relevant to their interests that they feel comfortable discussing with others. Students are required to design their presentation slides and fill them with contents such as a news summary, general impressions, reactions, and questions they would like to explore and answer. Students are given five minutes for their midterm individual presentation and three minutes each for final pair presentation to discuss their news topic via Zoom.

Context and Participants

The study was conducted at a private university located in the western part of Tokyo, Japan. The private university offers students a multidisciplinary foundation in the Faculty of Social Science. Within the Faculty of Social Science is the Global Career Program (hereinafter referred to as GCP) which benefits students not only with its English immersion courses but also the opportunity to participate in its study abroad program. The students enrolled in this GCP program are afforded opportunities including being able to take intensive English courses in their first year, take elective courses such as news discussion or presentation skills, as well as specialized subjects like economics and business courses in second or third year. In their second year, students are given the option to cultivate their linguistic skills through study abroad programs, which vary in duration by semester from half a year to a one-year program. The holistic approach to its curriculum allows GCP students to develop stronger English skills and international insight which they can confidently put into practice upon entering the global business world.

　　The researcher teaches 25 GCP students enrolled in the elective discussion class entitled Recent Topics in the Spring 2020. The course aims to develop students' awareness of current events in the world and promote the understanding of how these events affect Japan. Secondary to this aim is the development of students' fluency by having them participate in current events discussions which encourage them to think critically and develop a wider world view. Two weeks prior to the survey, the researcher informed the students about the research proposal to be conducted on the last day of the semester. Students were informed ahead of time that their decision to participate was strictly voluntary and would in no way affect their grade in the class. The researcher used an initial sample of 25 GCP students, but this sample was subsequently reduced to 18 after three students were absent and four students elected not to participate in the study. A Google survey form containing the consent to participate in the study and a survey questionnaire was sent to students to complete electronically. The 5-question survey was translated into both English and Japanese so that the participants could comprehend the questionnaire fully. The Japanese questionnaire was validated for its linguistic accuracy by a native Japanese speaker. All 18 participants (10 females and 8 males) were native Japanese speakers whose ages ranged from 19 to 20 years old. Although the researcher had no previous TOEIC/TOEFL records of his 18 GCP students, the participants' English proficiency was informally judged to be the equivalent of CEFR level B1, the third level of English in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). At this level, they can deal with most situations likely to arise where the target language is spoken and can understand most points of clear standard input on familiar matters relating to school, leisure, or work. Furthermore, they can describe their experiences, hopes and dreams and are able to give reasons and explanations for plans (Council of Europe, 2001).

Results and Discussion

　　This section contains qualitative analysis obtained through the use of the NVIVO 12 software of the data gathered throughout the study. Results from the research questions are presented below. In addition, a thematic analysis of survey transcriptions taken from the questionnaire data has been included, as well as a description section related to the frequency of words used by the respondents. Codes were assigned in order to look for emerging patterns and establish categories and sub-categories (See Table 2).

Table 2 Codebook: Videoconferencing

Code #	Label Categories	Label Sub-categories
1	Confidence level	
2	Effect of speaking practice on anxiety level	
3	Effects of speaking practice	
4	Satisfaction with and usefulness of Zoom	satisfactory, unsatisfactory
5	Zoom as a medium for class discussion	adjustment, applicability, comfortability, efficiency, interaction, preference, and usability.

Word Frequency

The researcher utilized the qualitative analysis program NVIVO 12 to review and organize all the words used in the survey, which exhibit the frequency and the semantic tendencies taken from the 18 GCP students' transcriptions. The software organized the words in the form of word clouds, which are automatically generated from word frequency queries. Having analyzed the factors associated with the participants' confidence levels, effects of speaking practice, and satisfaction with Zoom as well as its perception, the researcher of this study found a high frequency of including "better", "good", "internet", "screen", "smoothly", "time", "current", "difficult", and "conversation". The frequency of these words suggests that respondents' perceptions of and experiences with Zoom are influenced by factors ranging from interaction experience, platform user experience, and speaking activities. Presented below (Figure 1), are the 18 GCP students' semantic tendencies in visual form.

Figure 1 Word Cloud Where Size Corresponds with Frequency of Use

Confidence Level

Speaking presentation exercises using Zoom as a medium of communication affected the students' levels of confidence in various ways as presented visually in Figure 2. For most of the students, their gradual progress in adopting Zoom resulted in increased confidence which subsequently improved their speaking skills. One of the reasons for this was the fact that some felt there was a decrease in their constant state of alertness which resulted in a decrease in their anxiety levels. One comment about this was, "*As I have been making presentations twice so far, I was less nervous and at a state of low alertness towards presentations than before*" (Taken from S9, F). The repetition of presentation activities made the student less anxious and more confident in her approach to subsequent presentations. Her comment is in accordance with Nation's (1997) fluency development, which stated that repeated practice of the same content can contribute to improvements in fluency by encouraging learners to take more risks in oral presentations. Another student attributed his increased confidence to the ability to see his classmates' faces and gauge their non-verbal signals, such as their expressions, when he is talking to them.

He commented:

"*I feel that my speaking skills have improved considerably by using Zoom. Because you can see the expressions of other students and teachers while you are talking, are you interested? It is also possible to reflect on how to speak by seeing the facial expressions when they are not well understood*" (Taken from S18, M).

However, not all students reported an increase in confidence. Some students felt that they were not able to understand Zoom classes as well as face-to-face classes, and they felt that they had more opportunities to speak in a traditional classroom setting. "*My confidence in my speaking skills has decreased. Because I was able to understand the lesson in the face-to-face lesson. Zoom classes have become harder to understand*" (Taken from S16, F).
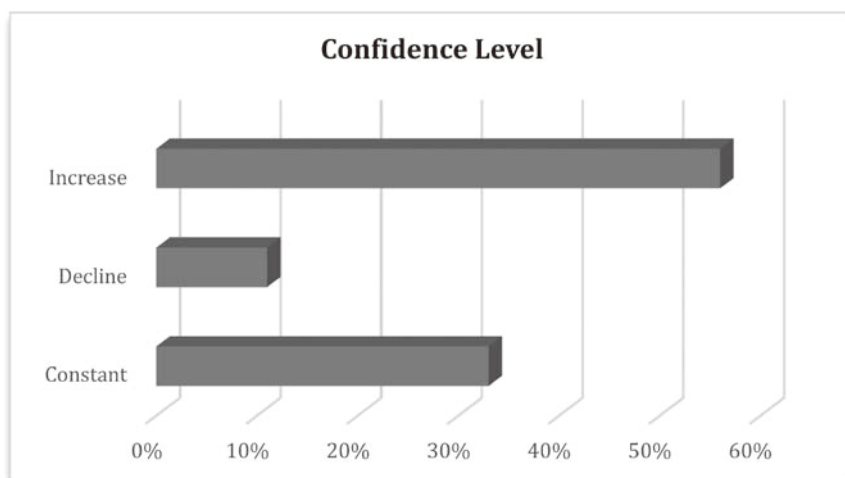
Confidence Level

Figure 2 Self-Reported Student Confidence Levels with Presentation Skills After Using Zoom

Effect of Speaking Practice on Anxiety Level

With regard to the participants' anxiety levels, some felt that speaking English with multiple partners had reduced their anxiety. They attributed this decrease to familiarization with the online lesson flow, repetition of speaking exercises, and knowing that it was a low-pressure practice exercise. In this excerpt, the respondent exhibited decreased anxiety as the speaking exercise progressed: "*At first, I was nervous with a random partner… However, now is not scare. I was looking forward to a random partner. I had no anxiety level*" (Taken from S11, F). One student reported "*I wasn't anxious after I break through the beginning of the conversation. It was also fun to talk with people I met for the first time…*" (Taken from S15, M), and another was only concerned with keeping the conversation going, "*I wasn't anxious about practicing conversations with multiple partners, but the only thing I was anxious about was that the conversation didn't last when the other person didn't want to talk*" (Taken from S18, M). Their positive attitudes toward practicing conversation with their partners have allowed these individuals to enjoy speaking, which in turn affected their language use anxiety. Whilst the majority of the respondents surveyed (See Figure 3) reported not having any anxiety or having reduced anxiety—a few participants even reporting explicitly about it, "*I think anxiety level is reduced by speaking practice with my partner before the presentation…I am a little less anxious… It was fun to practice after the number of people I could talk to increased. I can now practice smoothly. I'm less worried*" (Taken from S1, M; S5, F; S16, F), there were some instances in which participants

reported no effect on their anxiety level. They attributed this to rigorous preparation before the class exercise. "*To be honest…you have looked up the words in advance. The reason is that I watch various news on a daily basis*" (Taken from S14, M). In summary, most participants' responses seemed to be correlated with a certain level of intrinsic motivation. Their enjoyment of the speaking process, their willingness to practice speaking, and their preparation ahead of time all correlated to reporting none or a significantly reduced level of anxiety (Wang, 2014).

Effect of Speaking Practice on Anxiety Level

Reduced Anxiety 37%

No Effect 49%

No Anxiety 14%
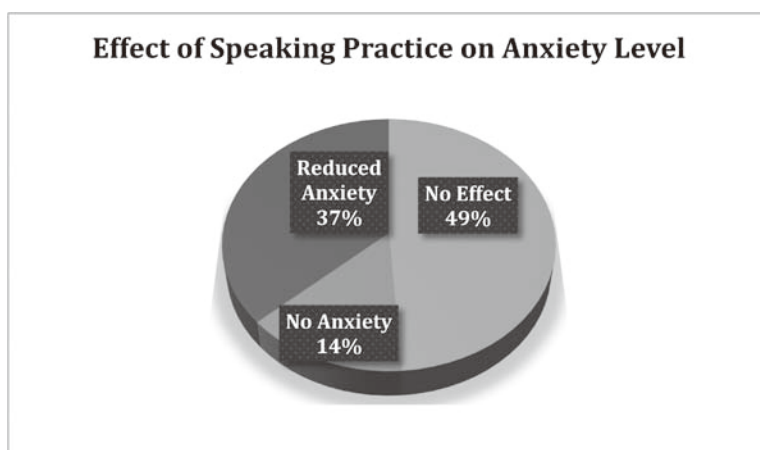
Figure 3　Effect of Speaking Practice on Anxiety Level

Effects of Speaking Practice on Presentation Preparation

When students were given the chance to take part in a speaking exercise involving multiple partners, their ability to prepare for presentation was affected in various ways. Two respondents reported "*My speaking ability improved as my partner changed their questions and also by practicing conversation with a plurality of partners*" and "*The first is to let the other classmates know if they understand. The second is to be able to point out your pronunciation*" (S8, F; S14, M). These statements indicate that the students' behavior is largely in response to their environment, which was consistent with research findings that behavioral regulation and speaking accuracy is influenced by feedback given by the teacher and their peers (Lantolf et al., 2014; Chen & Lee, 2011). It is particularly noteworthy that students who adopted a strategy of preparing for a speaking presentation ahead of time in addition to practicing were better able to refine their speaking skills during a videoconferencing session. Important examples from the survey results confirmed this, as exemplified in the following excerpts: "*I also learned the preparation and practice are essential for giving presentation,*" "*I became more aware that I need to prepare properly as some of seniors can speak fluent English. I came to think that advance*

preparation is very important for someone like me who do not speak English at all yet" (Taken from S9, F; S3, F).

Students' personality factors are at play as well, such as conscientiousness and having a keen awareness of the task involved. These help make the engagement with their speaking partner a success. As one respondent reflected, "*I had to have a keener sense of attention about who to work with. If I am not prepared, it will cause trouble for partners*" (Taken from S6, M). Other students perceived their online interaction with other students as fun and interesting, as evidenced in the following excerpts: "*I usually talk only with close friends, so it was fun to talk with everyone, taking our time and exchange opinions,*" "*It was just fun*" (Taken from S15, M; S17, F). Students view speaking with their partner as interesting, fun, and interactive since it requires the learners' participation in a no-pressure environment and within a natural context as suggested by Huang et al. (2019).

Several respondents expressed that a key factor in successful engagement with their instructor is the appropriate selection of strategies that facilitate learning. One of these strategies is to have perspective on the conversation and consider the thoughts, feelings, and motivations of others. This helped some students re-assess their interpretation of certain issues at hand, and introduced them to new ways of thinking and learning from others which were completely different from their own. The following excerpts acknowledged the value of a perspective-taking approach: "*It was a very good practice. This is because I was able to hear the opinions of many classmates,*" "*When preparing for a presentation, the opinions of others were often completely different from my own, so I was able to understand what I had not noticed until now*" (Taken from S7, F; S18, M). In summary, transcriptions from the participants showed that there are multiple factors involved which affect the outcome of speaking practice on presentation preparation. These factors have a varying effect on participants, with some perceiving their online experience as fun while others found it had no effect on their preparation. Some students attributed their speaking improvement to their diligence, preparation, and the ability to have a new perspective on the situation at hand (See Figure 4).
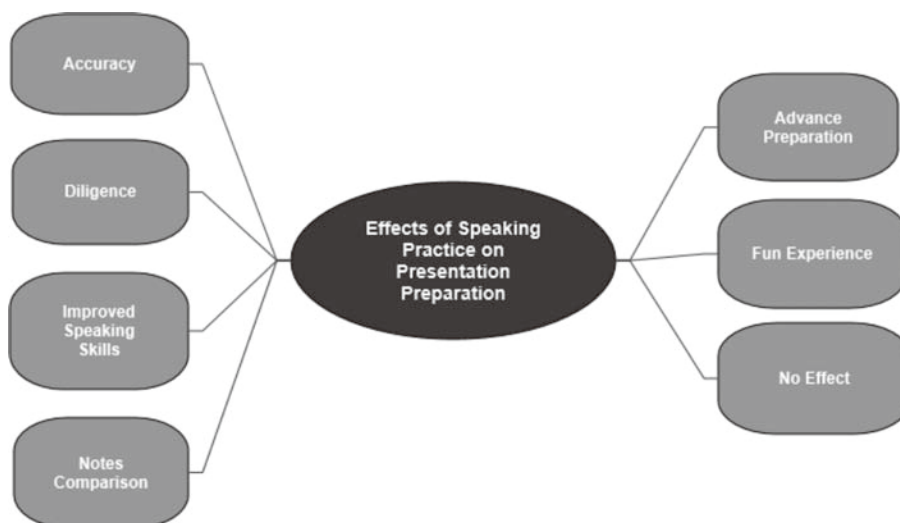
Figure 4 Mind Map of Effects of Speaking Practice on Presentation Preparation

Satisfaction with and Usefulness of Zoom

A number of students appreciated Zoom as an online platform for student interaction. They were satisfied with what Zoom could offer them as a substitute for face-to-face classroom interaction. Some participants rated their satisfaction with Zoom highly, as evidenced by one student who stated, "*thanks to the Zoom lesson, I was happy to see my classmates every week*" (Taken from S7, F). Another participant concurred, "*I was satisfied with contacting with my friends on Zoom. We can't meet each other and see each face in these days. Zoom lesson is one good way to communicate*" (Taken from S4, M). On the other hand, there were a number of dissatisfied responses to Zoom, especially pertaining to student-teacher interactions. Many attributed this dissatisfaction to technical issues such as poor, unstable connections which affected the flow of the lesson. As one participant reported:

"*I sometimes turned the video off in the early stages of this class because the camera did not look normal due to computer issue. So I realized again that the internet connection environment of each students would affect to the progress of the lesson*" (Taken from S9, F).

In addition, other participants expressed a strong preference for face-to-face classroom interaction instead of synchronous online instruction. They found it difficult to communicate and were unable to gauge the feelings and responses of others as well as they would have been in a face-to-face environment. "*For me, I am not satisfied with online communication using Zoom. It was hard to feel the other person's feeling*" (Taken from S9, F).

Zoom as a Medium for Class Discussion

The findings of the qualitative data revealed varying opinions of the use of videoconferencing and the perception of the Zoom platform. These opinions were influenced by factors such as students' adjustment to online learning, the application and relevance of Zoom for pedagogy purposes, the level of comfort of each participant, the efficiency of Zoom as a tool for learning, and the level of interaction they thought it provided. Moreover, while students thought that Zoom was suitable for class discussion activities, some participants expressed frustration about the limitations of Zoom and viewed their interactive experience as limited compared to face-to-face instruction. Table 3 below shows seven key points of user consideration encompassing both personal and technical considerations.

Table 3　Key Points of User Consideration and Sample Quotes

Categories	Sample Quotes
1. Adjustment	"*Above all, my eyes are so much tired. This is weak point on zoom classes. Other than that, there is no problem… I thought it was a good opportunity to gain the different feeling and fears of speaking from face-to-face…So I felt I needed to get used to it*" (Taken from S12, M; S9, F).
2. Applicability	"*Speaking class works when everyone talks to each other on face-to-face, not on online lesson… Face-to-face is a lot better when it comes to easy to apply method. However, considering the current situation, I think continuing with Zoom is better*" (Taken from S4, M; S6, M).
3. Comfortability	"*I am comfortable with Zoom class for now*" (Taken from S15, M; S9, F).
4. Efficiency	"*Also I thought that the advantage of using Zoom is that I can quickly look up words I didn't understand…Honestly, I was happy to get up later than going to university. I could prepare for the presentation to the just in time*" (Taken from S9, F; S11, F).
5. Interaction	"*However, there was the time that the conversation wasn't really great, or become silence after all work is done*" (Taken from S9, F).
6. Preference	"*I think face-to-face lessons would have been better when the number of Covid19 infected people decreased*" (Taken from S3, F).
7. Usability	"*I think it is good for speaking with a small number of people, but it was not suitable for using it to take action for a large number of people such as presentations*" (Taken from S2, M).

Conclusion

This study explored students' perceptions of the efficacy of Zoom as a video conference platform to develop students' speaking competence. All in all, there was a strong consensus among participants that the repeated practice of fluency activities, combined with the familiarity of the discussion stages, contributed to building their speaking confidence. The findings in this

study were consistent with DeKeyser (2007) in which the opportunity to practice orally before class time allowed them to automatize their declarative knowledge as well.　In regard to the effect of speaking practice on anxiety, while most participants received corrective feedback and benefitted through online interaction with their classmates (cf. other regulation), qualitative data revealed that the majority of respondents reported no effect on anxiety as a result of speaking practice.　This is contrary to the findings of Chen and Lee (2011), who reported that online interaction with classmates can decrease anxiety levels.　While most students rated Zoom as satisfactory and considered it an appropriate platform in the current conditions, there are other personal and technical considerations (e.g., poor internet conditions, preference, etc.) that are beyond the control of teachers and institutions.　Finally, the seven user considerations (See Table 3) and students' overall perceptions paint a broader picture regarding opinions on the adoption of videoconferencing platforms as instructional tools.

　　In summary, further exploration of the use of videoconferencing involving varied approaches (such as synchronous and blended face-to-face interaction) is necessary.　The outcome of these approaches could more thoroughly inform us of students' perceptions and provide a richer, more nuanced picture of their views.　As this current paper reflects qualitative findings of one specific institution, the results cannot be generalized due to institutional differences in teaching and learning context.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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Note
(1)　Data for this study were collected and managed according to the ethical and legal standards of the TESOL Quarterly Research Guidelines. Informed consent to gather, analyze, and present the data anonymously was obtained using the TESOL Quarterly Release Form for Adults.

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Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire (Bilingual)

Survey
Q1. How would you describe your level of confidence with your speaking presentation skills after using Zoom? JP: Zoom を使用した後、プレゼンテーションのスピーキングスキルに対する自信のレベルをどのように説明しますか？
Q2. How has speaking practice with multiple partners affected your ability to prepare for speaking presentations? JP: 複数のパートナーとの会話練習は、プレゼンテーションを話す準備をするあなたの能力にどのように影響しましたか？
Q3: 3. How would you describe your anxiety level after speaking practice with multiple partners during class? JP: 授業中に複数のパートナーと練習を話した後の不安レベルをどのように説明しますか？
Q4: What do you think of the use of Zoom as a platform medium to have a class discussion in lieu of face-to-face classes? JP: 対面式のクラスの代わりにクラスディスカッションを行うためのプラットフォームメディアとしての Zoom の使用についてどう思いますか？
Q5: How would you describe your satisfaction using Zoom as a medium of interacting with students during the semester? JP: 学期中に生徒とやり取りする手段としてズームを使用した満足度をどのように説明しますか？

スピーキング能力を伸ばすために同期ビデオ会議を使用し EFL 学生の認識を探る

マーティン・ジャーウィン・K

抄　　録

　この研究では，学生のスピーキング能力を高め，その取り組みを促進し，各自の自信を高めることを目的とした同期コミュニケーションツールとしての ZOOM ビデオ会議システムの適用に関する参加者の考えや見識を調査した。関連して，社会文化理論に基づいた，この質的調査は学習プロセスのリアルタイム化の関与と促進のきっかけを提供するツールとして，ビデオ会議を調査材料とした。主なデータ収集方法は，東京の私立大学社会科学部に在籍する 18 名の参加者からの調査アンケートに基づいており，NVIVO12 プログラムの支援を受けて，質的及び主題分析を行った。質的及び誘導的分析，ならびに参加者の反応からの新たなパターンは次のことを明らかにした。(1) Zoom を使用した後のスピーキング能力に対する自信の向上，(2) スピーキング練習に起因する不安レベルの大幅な減少，(3) スピーキング練習の準備に影響を及ぼす複数の要因，そして (4) 個人的・技術的考慮事項を反映した ZOOM ユーザーとしての認識。

キーワード：ビデオ会議，質的，流暢な会話，社会文化理論