

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter explain; (1) background, (2) focus and sub-focus of the study, (3) problem formulation (4) the objective of the study, and (5) significance of the study

1.1 Background

The English language holds a prominent position on the global stage, with the most speakers worldwide, both native and non-native (Ethnologue, 2023). It serves as the lingua franca, facilitating communication and collaboration across cultures and continents (Graddol, 2006) This dominance extends to international business, diplomacy, science, and technology. English is also the primary language of academic publishing and research, granting access to a vast knowledge base for scholars worldwide (Hyland, 2007) Beyond its utility in formal contexts, English permeates popular culture. Movies, music, and television shows featuring the language are widely consumed globally, influencing communication patterns and cultural exchange (Pennycook, 2017). However, it is crucial to acknowledge these ongoing discussions regarding the impact of English on fields such as academia, business, and technology, while helping the non-native speakers learn English as one of the most important languages to acquire making them connected and be able to collaborate across cultures and continents.

Despite these debates on fields such as academia, business, and technology, the multifaceted roles of English – its rich history, unique characteristics, and contemporary functions – solidify its status as a defining feature of our globalized

world. Understanding its historical development, core features, and current uses is essential for navigating communication effectively in today's interconnected society, while considering the broader context of English in a globalized world. Exploring how can we enhance English learners' language performance is crucial.

To achieve proficiency in English, one must develop skills across four fundamental domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Brown, 2007a). Often referred to as the "four language skills," these areas are considered interdependent, meaning they interact and reinforce each other in the process of language learning (Harmer, 2007). By fostering proficiency in each of these skills, learners can develop a well-rounded understanding and ability to use language effectively in various contexts.

Speaking, one of the core language skills, plays a pivotal role in human interaction. It allows individuals to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas through spoken language (Brown, 2007a). Effective speaking encompasses not only the technical aspects of language production but also the ability to communicate fluently, coherently, and appropriately in diverse situations (Harmer, 2007). It requires control over phonetics, including pronunciation, accent, rhythm, and intonation. Speaking allows individuals to build relationships, connect with others, and participate actively in social settings. Effective communication skills are crucial for classroom participation, expressing ideas in discussions, and presenting information. The ability to articulate ideas clearly and confidently is important for career success in many professions.

While numerous methods exist for learning speaking skills, students often encounter challenges in developing spoken English fluency, from the researcher practical work experience. These hurdles can be broadly categorized into linguistic complexities (e.g., unfamiliar sounds), psychological factors (e.g., anxiety), and limited opportunities for spoken practice (Derwing et al., 2022).

Learning to speak English fluently presents numerous hurdles for learners, as discussed previously. However, a diverse array of educational tools can be harnessed to address these challenges and empower learners on their journey towards spoken proficiency. Forvo is an intriguing educational technology (EdTech) tool that can significantly enhance English learners' speaking performance. Educational technology tools have quite an impact in enhancing learning in the digital age, Educational technology (EdTech) tools encompass a broad range of digital resources that revolutionize the teaching and learning process (Bates, 2019). These tools facilitate the creation, delivery, and management of educational content, enhancing student engagement, promoting collaboration, and supporting personalized learning experiences (Selwyn, 2011). Forvo is a digital expertise designed to improve speaking skills. Applications like Forvo utilize speech recognition technology and audio recordings from native speakers to provide immediate feedback and targeted practice on pronunciation (Asratie et al., 2023). Students can listen to native speakers pronouncing words, which aids in improving pronunciation, fluency, and overall speaking abilities. Researchers, educators, and students should embrace educational technology like Forvo. Leveraging such tools can align teaching practices with the latest

advancements and enhance language learning experiences. Forvo contributes to a more articulate and confident speaking style, making it a valuable addition to language education.

Previous study from (Asratie et al., 2023) investigated the effectiveness of educational technology (EdTech) tools in enhancing the speaking performance of the students. Their findings demonstrated a positive correlation between EdTech use and improvements in fluency, accuracy, vocabulary range, and pronunciation. This research provides valuable insights and paves the way for further exploration in this domain. Building on (Asratie et al., 2023) work, future research could delve deeper into several aspects, Which is investigating specific EdTech Tools, while their study explored a range of tools, By delving deeper into specific tools, and considering learner autonomy, future research can provide valuable insights for educators seeking to optimize technology use in the classroom.

Based on the rationale provided, this study seeks to answer the following research question, How do learners perceive utilizing Forvo in their language learning journey? What are learners' views on the effectiveness of Forvo in enhancing their speaking performance? What role does Forvo play according to the students, in improving their speaking performance? through study entitled “LEARNERS’ PERSPECTIVES ON USING THE FORVO WEBSITE AS A STRATEGY TO ENHANCE SPEAKING SKILLS”

1.2 Focus and Sub-Focus of the Research

This research primarily focuses on exploring the English learners' perspectives and experiences in utilizing the Forvo website as a tool to enhance their speaking skills. The study aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of learners' interest in using Forvo to enhance speaking skills, student perceive of the effectiveness, role or overall value of Forvo in relation to their language learning goals.

While the sub-focus of this research is :

1. Usability and Accessibility, Investigate learners' experiences with the website's interface, navigation, and features. Assess whether they find it user-friendly and accessible.
2. Motivational Factors, Explore the aspects of Forvo that students find most motivating, engaging, and conducive to regular practice.
3. Individual Differences, Explore how learners' perspectives on Forvo vary based on their language proficiency level, learning style, or cultural background.

1.3 Formulation of the Problem

From the background of the research, students often encounter challenges in developing spoken English proficiency. learners often encounter challenges in developing spoken fluency due to linguistic complexities, psychological factors, and limited opportunities for spoken practice. While educational technology tools like Forvo have shown promise in improving speaking skills, there remains a gap

in understanding English learners' perspectives on using such tools and how they integrate them with other learning strategies. This study addresses this research problem by investigating how students perceive the benefits in using Forvo to enhance their speaking skills. It also explores how students view on the effectiveness and role of Forvo in enhancing their speaking skills.

This research seeks to explore and understand English learners' perspectives on using the Forvo website as a strategy to enhance their speaking skills in English. Specifically, the research will investigate the following questions:

1. How do students perceive utilizing Forvo in their language learning journey?
2. How do students evaluate the effectiveness of Forvo in improving their speaking skills?
3. What roles does Forvo play in learners' overall language learning strategies?

1.4 The Objective of the Research

The objective of this research is to investigate English learners' perspectives on using the Forvo website as a strategy to enhance their speaking skills, which consist of learners interest in using Forvo, how students perceive effectiveness and role of Forvo, an educational technology tool designed to improve pronunciation and overall speaking abilities. Building on previous research (Asratie et al., 2023), this investigation seeks to provide deeper insights into the specific use of Forvo and its impact on learner autonomy.

1.5 The Significance of the Research

The significance of this study endeavour for various stakeholders, including teachers, students, fellow researchers, and myself as the researcher embarking on this journey.

1. For Teachers, this research can offer valuable guidance on how to effectively integrate Forvo into their teaching practices, potentially enhancing learners speaking skills and promoting learner autonomy.
2. For Students, the findings will provide insights into the potential benefits and limitations of using Forvo, aiding them in making informed decisions about incorporating this tool into their language learning strategies.
3. For Other Researchers, This study aims to establish a sound framework for investigating the multifaceted impacts of FORVO on English speaking skill development. This framework will not only contribute to the growing body of study on technology-integrated language learning but also serve as a springboard for future studies exploring the potential of similar platforms. Imagine an expanding network of researchers working collaboratively to unlock the full potential of technology in enriching the language learning experience.
4. For Myself, As a researcher, embarking on this study is not just an academic pursuit, but a personal journey of discovery. It allows me to broaden my understanding of how technology can transform language learning, moving beyond traditional methods and embracing innovative avenues.