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VIDEOCONFERENCING AS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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The rapid advancement of technology in recent years has given foreign language teaching a whole new level of significance. As students' opportunities for interaction outside of the classroom are limited and as their communication skills need to be improved, emerging technologies—especially the latest developments in audio and video communication in educational settings—are especially beneficial in helping students meet their language learning objectives.

In recent years, the application of videoconferencing for foreign language learning purposes has been growing in popularity. A large number of studies have been conducted to examine the effect of videoconferencing teaching on promoting L2 learners' language proficiency, motivation, confidence and cultural awareness. (R.Sadler 2019, Yu L-T and Wu H-P (2023), Cirit-Işıklıgil, N.C., Sadler, R.W. & Arıca-Akkök, E. (2023), Barbara Loranc-Paszyk (2015), Chimeva, Y. & Trenchs-Parera, M. (2024))

Videoconferencing made its debut in 1964 when AT&T launched its video telephony system. While the concept generated excitement, the technology suffered from poor image quality due to insufficient video data compression techniques. In addition, the videophone required expensive communication channels since the bandwidth of the widely used switched channels was insufficient.

The 1990s marked a turning point for videoconferencing, as advancements in data transmission networks expanded its availability to the public. The introduction of the H.230 recommendations in 1990 significantly lowered costs, facilitating the shift from proprietary systems to standardized software and hardware. Subsequently, a series of additional recommendations, known as H.32x, were established.

Due to the unexpected scope of the COVID-19 pandemic, educational institutions were forced to close in order to restrict social connections and slow the virus's transmission. Teachers and students switched from traditional in-person courses to online learning at this time, using synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) to continue educational activities. Videoconferencing, a synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) approach, provides a multimodal environment to promote interaction and allows users to communicate simultaneously with each other through audio, video, text, or their combinations

[1]. In the search for innovative methods to enhance language acquisition, videoconferencing has emerged as a useful tool for foreign language teaching. Many videoconferencing applications, such as Skype, Google Meet, Zoom, Teams, and WhatsApp, have been applied in educational contexts ranging from elementary schools to higher institutions.

With the ability to connect from anywhere, students can participate in language classes regardless of geographical barriers. This flexibility accommodates diverse learning styles and schedules, making language education more accessible. By bridging geographical gaps, videoconferencing provides foreign language educators with a means to address the challenge of limited speaking practice in traditional classroom settings, allowing students to engage in authentic interactions that can enrich their communicative experiences. Students from all backgrounds could gather together to study new subjects, increase their intercultural awareness, share knowledge, and have more chances to interact with others from different cultures [2]. More and more studies have been conducted to examine the effect of videoconferencing tasks on promoting language learners' development of language abilities and other affective aspects (e.g., motivation, confidence, and interest) [3]. Videoconferencing platforms enable real-time communication, allowing students to engage in conversations with native speakers and peers from around the world. This immediate interaction enhances speaking and listening skills, crucial components of language learning.

Many researches highlight advantages of Videoconferencing in Language Learning. Language is deeply intertwined with culture. Videoconferencing facilitates cultural exchanges, providing students with insights into the customs, traditions, and social contexts of the language they are learning. This exposure fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of the language. Partnering students with native speakers through language exchange programs can significantly enhance their speaking abilities. Regular practice with native speakers allows learners to pick up nuances, slang, and pronunciation that are often missed in traditional classrooms. Yu L-T and Wu H-P noted that research has shown that learning a second language (L2) through videoconferencing is particularly beneficial for enhancing speaking and listening skills compared to traditional, non-videoconferencing environments. Therefore, it would be advantageous to promote more L2 learning activities using videoconferencing methods. In the cross-cultural videoconferencing presentation by the interaction with authentic speakers enabled the participants to sharpen their target language, demonstrate their own cultures, and experience American culture [4].

Student engagement is significantly increased when interactive activities that offer real-time practice are integrated with videoconferencing in the foreign language learning process. Teachers can utilize a variety of digital resources during videoconferencing sessions, such as videos, interactive quizzes, and online articles. This multimedia approach enriches the learning experience and caters to different learning preferences. Engaging students through interactive activities, such as role-playing, debates, or virtual scavenger hunts, can make learning more dynamic. These activities not only promote language use but also encourage teamwork and

critical thinking. Visual aids such as slides, videos, and infographics can help reinforce vocabulary and grammar concepts. Teachers can share their screens to present materials that support their lessons and stimulate discussion.

Creating a supportive and upbeat atmosphere is essential. Teachers should encourage pupils to try out new language abilities and provide constructive criticism to help them become more confident.

Through videoconferences in the education system, the following types of study sessions can be used:

-educational and demonstration conferences

This type of educational work is useful when students can meet in a group in one place and the teacher is territorially separated from them or some students are in the classroom, with the teacher and others attend the conference by videoconference.

-collective or individual consultations

This type of work is especially effective if students are united by a residence and some joint activity, such as the development of a project. Individual consultations can be carried out during the work stage, as well as free of charge.

-practical sessions and seminars

This type of work is effective in terms of oral knowledge test, joint exercises, solving class problems or the application of any solution method, and rejects the possibility of sleeping in the workshop.

To organize the educational process in the form of a videoconference, the teacher must be prepared not only from a methodological point of view, but also technical, which requires knowledge and skills to work with a computer, with other control systems to change the mode of control monitors

In their observations and surveys, the researchers identified several key points related to the benefits and drawbacks of videoconferencing for foreign language development [5].

Synchronous videoconferencing can establish an inclusive, adaptable, and efficient classroom setting, promote an engaging online learning atmosphere, and enhance interactive communication between educators and students. Videoconferencing could encourage students to prepare content for the following meeting's discussion or presentation [6]. Researches have shown that learning foreign language through videoconferencing is particularly beneficial for enhancing speaking and listening skills compared to traditional non-videoconferencing environments. Therefore, it would be beneficial to increase the use of pedagogical foreign language learning activities conducted via videoconferencing.

Study of Rojabi, N. a. R., Setiawan, N. S. examined student engagement in videoconferencing courses, specifically within Microsoft Teams. The results indicated that students actively participated in meetings by asking questions and sharing their thoughts during class discussions. This aligns with the findings of researchers, who noted that Microsoft Teams offers appealing features, including well-equipped study spaces and conference tools that facilitate direct interaction, thereby enhancing student engagement. Additionally, teachers can easily record sessions and upload them to the platform. Furthermore, Microsoft Teams supports

file sharing across various formats, such as PowerPoint, Word, and PDF, consolidating multiple functionalities within a single application [6].

Rojabi, A. R., & Praptika Septi Familia. (2023). In their study highlighted the success of video conferencing in an online course using Zoom in a foreign language course. Synchronous videoconferencing can create an accessible, flexible, and effective classroom environment, facilitate an engaging online learning environment, and increase interactive and communicative interaction between teachers and students. By doing so, faculty members can create virtual courses utilizing Zoom videoconferencing for live interaction and an engaging classroom environment.

The drawbacks of using videoconferencing in language teaching include:

- *technical issues and poor connections*, unexpected delays and inadequate mechanical arrangement. Researchers Rojabi, A. R., & Praptika Septi Familia Rojabi emphasize that technical issues and connectivity issues might cause disruptions to courses. The challenges that students encountered during Zoom videoconferencing sessions were related to problems with internet access and audio and visual quality [7].

- *practical problems* as insufficient time to reflect on the subject low level of volunteer involvement as varying levels of student participation; communicative problems as misunderstandings resulting from differences in cultural background;

- *linguistic problems* connected with misinterpretation of syntactic and semantic elements creating grammatical mistakes;

- *self-strategic problems* arising from low confidence levels resulting in decreased participation

,feeling discouraged about engaging in class activities. and difficulties in encouraging meaningful interactions amongst participants.

- *disparity in time zones*, which makes synchronous contact between the participants challenging, may be the next issue with using videoconferencing for foreign language instruction. Thoughtful organization and adaptability are essential for managing various time zones.

Besides, the capacity to recognize nonverbal cues, which are essential for efficient communication, may be compromised by videoconferencing. To make up for this restriction, teachers should urge students to express themselves verbally and through expressive language. In the research articles scientist Rojabi, N. a. R., Setiawan, N. S, Mi-Young Jung, Ahmad Ridho Rojabi, Slamet Setiawan reported that during observations, it was noted that some students experienced anxiety when it came to speaking, which led them to choose not to turn on their cameras [5, 6, 7].

Despite the clear drawbacks of utilizing videoconferencing systems in the classroom, it can be argued that the benefits surpass these limitations. In fact, incorporating videoconferencing in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms may significantly aid students in practicing and improving their communicative competence. Maintaining student engagement can be challenging

in a virtual environment. Incorporating varied activities and encouraging participation can help keep students focused and motivated.

Videoconferencing has the potential to revolutionize foreign language education by bridging geographical divides and enhancing the learning experience. By fostering real-time interaction, cultural exchange, and access to diverse resources, educators can create a dynamic and effective language learning environment. While challenges exist, the benefits far outweigh the drawbacks, making videoconferencing an invaluable tool in modern language education. As technology continues to evolve, its integration into language teaching will likely deepen, further enriching the educational landscape.

There are no particular difficulties while using videoconferencing in the educational process. As a matter of fact, it makes students more motivated to pay attention during the training, improves their performance in the lessons, and pushes them to attend teacher meetings with greater diligence. Additionally, participants are more focused on having productive interactions and are better prepared.

Due to its capacity to transcend geographical barriers and enhance the entire learning experience, videoconferencing holds great potential to revolutionize the teaching of foreign languages. It promotes instant communication, cultural exchange, and resource accessibility, enabling teachers to create a stimulating and productive environment for language learning. While there are drawbacks to take into account, overall, the benefits greatly outweigh the drawbacks, making videoconferencing a vital tool in modern language learning. It is anticipated that as technology develops, more of it will be used in language training, improving the learning environment even more.

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