

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

“Teacher, I need to show you a foreigner I have been talking to on my cellphone!” Unveiling students’ understanding about technology use for enhancing the speaking skill in English language

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ABSTRACT

The oral skill has been lately studied by researchers in the English Language Teaching field (ELT), once it is considered one of the hardest ones to be improved (Bygate, 2009). Some solutions have been suggested within the ELT literature as to assist students on this skill’s improvement (Lucas, 2001). Additionally, technology has taken its valuable position in society today, circumscribing the scholastic and working environments. Entangling both topics (the speaking skill and digital technology), this article displays an initial¹ research carried out with English learners worldwide, in which pupils could voice their opinions concerning the use of digital technologies in their English learning path alongside the impact of them in fostering pupils’ oral skill. Preliminary results show both negative and positive views regarding the use of technology and the oral skill’s improvement.

KEYWORDS: English language teaching; speaking skill; digital technology; English language learning.

“Professor, preciso te mostrar um estrangeiro com quem eu tenho falado no meu celular!” Revelando o entendimento de estudantes sobre o uso da tecnologia para o aprimoramento da oralidade em inglês

RESUMO

A habilidade oral tem sido estudada ultimamente por alguns pesquisadores na área de ensino de língua inglesa, uma vez que esta é considerada como uma das mais difíceis de ser melhorada (Bygate, 2009). Algumas soluções foram sugeridas na literatura de ensino de língua inglesa para ajudar os alunos no desenvolvimento desta habilidade (Lucas, 2001). Além do mais, a tecnologia tem tomado sua valiosa posição na sociedade atual, circunscrevendo o ambiente escolar e trabalhista. Relacionando ambos os tópicos (a habilidade oral e a tecnologia digital), este artigo demonstra uma pesquisa inicial realizada com quarenta aprendizes de inglês ao redor do mundo, na qual foi dada a oportunidade a estes estudantes expressarem suas opiniões sobre o uso de tecnologias em sua trajetória de aprendizagem de inglês bem como o impacto destas na promoção de melhorias da oralidade. Resultados preliminares demonstram ambas visões negativas e positivas em relação ao uso de tecnologias e a melhoria da habilidade oral.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Ensino de língua inglesa; oralidade; tecnologia digital; aprendizagem de língua inglesa.

¹ This article entangles a series of investigations which have been recently carried out in my current PhD research.

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1. INTRODUCTION

It has been asserted in the English language academic literature (Ahn, 2015; Osborn et al., 2009) that languages may open an immense ever-wide window of opportunities to glance upon the world by diversified means of meaning construction, which, inevitably are markedly portrayed/signified by language itself; languages learning may also contribute to learners experience a different understanding about one's own language and the additional one commonly related aspects, such as idioms/common language expressions, manners of exposing one's culture, behaviours, beliefs and ways to see life as a whole, which, unsurprisingly, may differ from the one people have here in Brazil. Moreover, being able to speak a language might open increasingly numerous opportunities for anyone who does it masterly, from the very social and friendly relationships one may have to the most complex ones in academic and work environments (Osborn et al., 2009). According to Richards (2012), the mastery of the speaking skill in English has been considered to be an immediate priority for many students, once many of them consider their overall development in the language based upon their speaking performance development. The development of many coursebooks in the market with a sharp focus on the oral skill demonstrates equivalently the social relevance this skill has in the world today. Regardless of all the advances which have been taken place in the additional languages teaching field (Bygate, 1987; Leffa, 1988), the oral skill has still been considered the most thorny one to be worked and suitably developed in additional languages classes (Lucas, 2001; Brown, 2007; Arifin, 2017).

In my additional languages teaching career, for instance, I have taken notice of students facing nerve-racking experiences when they were invited to voice their opinions or to simply answer short, everyday-life questions (e.g. "Where are you from?" or "How old are you?"), impelling students to eschew advancements in their studies with additional languages, dreading their abilities to vividly speak in front of colleagues in classroom or even in privately one-on-one classes.

Singularly valued by a differentiator social status (Rio & Delgado, 2016; Osborn et al., 2008), the speaking skill has been surrounded by a high number of learners (Savaşçı, 2013) and even additional languages teachers (Aragão, 2017) who feel obnoxiously anxious when they are about to utter their sentences before an audience, regardless of its size. No great wonder is the fact that the common ground question "Do you speak _____ (language)?" is similarly understood as "Do you master _____ (language)?", as if the fact of being able to speak another language consequently implied the mastering of this one. This social status that the speaking skill has gained since the last couple of decades has made the majority of additional language schools display commonly spread-out and rather hallow propagandas, such as the ones saying "once you have come to study with us, you will speak English sooner than you think, since the first class" and other alike ones, emphasizing that one might be only fathomed to "masterly" use a language once one may fluently² and accurately speak it. More than a meaningless sound production

² As I do not intend to bring forth a thoroughly profound discussion on the terms *fluency*, which normally conveys the idea of expressing oneself in an intelligible, accurate and suitably reasonable way without

(Bygate, 1987), the speaking skill has also been complexly said to be one that is done systematically, under unique linguistic principles, leading both listeners and speakers of a language to a suitably contextualized response (Clark, 1996).

In my additional languages learning and teaching path, for instance, I have seen how much digital technology assisted me in improving my oral skill as well as the other main three ones (listening, writing and reading). By testing, evaluating, creating and exploring dissimilar digital technologies, these ones gave me the opportunity to have contact with people I would not possibly be able to meet owing to several factors (e.g. time availability, financial support, everyday-life work and academic routine demands, to name a few). Technology has opened the doors to glimpse upon the world differently, every time I have tried to learn a different language. When properly used, these digital tools may bring fruitful results to additional language learners, who are able to overcome the sea of troubles that a particular linguistic system may sooner or later present (Arifin, 2017; Dewi, 2017). Positive results have been mentioned similarly in the ELT literature (Levy, 2009; Shumin, 2002; Volle, 2005; Paiva, 2015) related to the use of digital technology and English language improvement.

Bearing in mind these both topics, the *speaking skill development* and the *use of digital technologies*, in this article I intentionally bring up a small part of my current PhD research, which is mainly focused on the enhancement of the oral skill in the English language by means of digital technology, since this has been the main language I have been teaching for almost a decade. I unquestionably believe that the further sound based academic literature presented hitherto will be likewise valuable to other additional languages speakers and teachers, as the nature of the speaking skill is seemingly the same among other linguistic systems (Bygate, 2009).

In this article I present the results of a research made with 40 students worldwide, in which these ones were given the right to utter their views on the use of technology to foster the oral skill, displaying both negative and positive sides as to the use of digital technologies in their English language learning path until nowadays. As a way to properly analyse these results, I have made use of different and current Applied Linguistics and Technology education fields authors in both technology and speaking skill themes (Warschauer, 2003; Brown, 2007; Prensky, 2012, among others).

In order to systematize the next coming pages, this article is divided in three main sections: the first one brings academic literature on the speaking skill, such as what elementarily constitutes the oral skill and the advantages when one is able to suitably master it, alongside the main difficulties that learners usually face since they are willing to improve it (Ilhomovna, 2017; Brown, 2007); the second section brings a summary of digital technology within the ELT field, followed by interestingly remarkable examples of the positive impact technology has been causing in recent studies carried out

too much hesitating in speech production, otherwise the communication flow may breakdown, once listeners may lose their interest in it (Hedge, 2000); and *accuracy*, which usually convey the idea of how well the target language is with regard to the rule system of the target language used (Skehan, 2009). I also leave the interested reader with some additional and further investigation academic literature on these topics, such as the ones found in Ellis (2009) and Amaral (2011), which discuss more thoroughly these terms.

by some scholars (Pinho, 2013; Correa, 2015; Sihem, 2013), and, further, the thorny problems that the inefficient use of technology may leave aside to language learners; subsequently, in the third section methodological procedures and accordingly questionnaire analysis are presented, being the responses closely considered under the sustained theoretical background developed throughout this article; and, at the very end of this paper, further and more in-depth studies suggestions are given for the interested readers on this topic.

The first section, henceforth, takes a lengthier heed to the speaking skill, unveiling the aspects briefly aforementioned.

2. AN INSTANTANEOUS BUT LIKEWISE COMPLEX SOUND PRODUCTION NAMED *SPEAKING*

Considering the last decades shifts in English language teaching methodologies (Leffa, 1988; Richards & Rodgers, 2001), the evolution of technological resources in society (Prensky, 2001), which consequently and more aggressively brought about the globalisation phenomenon (Kumaravadivelu, 2006), the one by which the barriers among countries have been profoundly lessened in a short time (Warschauer, 2000), the constant rising number of new language schools and institutes (Rio & Delgado, 2016) worldwide and the social status this skill has nowadays, it is arguably reasonable to affirm that the mastering of the speaking skill in another language is an *in vogue phenomenon*. This skill, albeit being a seemingly easy one to be produced by native speakers of a given language, is unequally perceived when one tries to learn a different language. In fact, according to Thornbury (2002, p. 1) the speaking skill covers so much of a huge part of one's daily life that one may despise its valuable importance. Following this author's ideas (2002), one may produce "tens of thousands of words a day", regardless of what one may do professionally in life. He adds as well that this skill is so particularly natural in most of the social *lieus* in which people might be that "we forget how we once struggled to achieve this ability – until, that is, we have to learn how to do it all over again in a foreign language".

The speaking skill occurs as any other linguistic production, in which a linear system of properly situated and meaningfully understood sounds among speakers and listeners are instantaneously uttered (Rio et al., 2015; Rio & Delgado, 2016; Bashir, Azeem, & Dogar, 2011; Harmer, 2002). Thornbury (2002) assumes that the speaking skill has some characteristics that intrinsically constitute this one, such as *linearity*, *contingency*, *spontaneity*, *interactionism* and *swift time management*.

The *linearity* principle stands for the word-by-word process in which every word needs to be uttered once, in order to a tangible speech take its place. Similarly, these pronounced words will have to occur in a contextualized situation, showing consequently its contingent factor to where these words and sentences are being used. Albeit the speaking skill may happen in a context in which the pronunciation of words are previously set (such as in a public speech), most of the time this skill requires the speaker to be spontaneous while producing his/her speech to an audience, which also entangles the *spontaneity* and *interactionism* constituting patterns of this skill, as long as a

speaker needs to be properly able to continue the information flow being constructed, not getting lost into his/her speech ideas' development. At last and not less important, the author differs speaking from the writing skill (also understood as a productive linguistic one) with the *swift time management* characteristic, so particularly intrinsic to the oral one, since speakers do not have a lengthy time (as it may likely happen to the writing skill) to express their ideas and opinions on a topic.

Interestingly surprising is the fact that the management of all these aspects may, at the very first seconds of speech production, reveal one's personality traces towards an audience, as Ounis (2017) once asserted. According to this author (2017), the listener may grasp and even judge the ability a speaker may have in a given language; when speaking slowly and continuously with a lot of hesitation, a listener (audience) may foresee that the speaker's inability to fitly and orally make use of the language hinders the speaker of being said to be fluent in the language. A body of research has also been in agreement with this aspect (Lucas, 2001; Rio & Delgado, 2016).

Clark (1996) in his studies on the nature of face-to-face conversations, in which the speaking skill consequently plays a vital part in it, once said that some interactive factors surround general and spontaneous conversations, the ones everyone has the majority of time in life. According to the author (1996), conversations usually involve the *copresence* of speakers, once speakers normally see themselves respectively (entangling also a *visibility* aspect in it); every conversation integrates *audibility*, once words are orally produced, *instantaneity*, considering that most of the time speech needs to be produced in an authentic way and not merely "read out loud" or done in a bookish way (Brown, 2007); the *evanescence* and *recordlessness* assets usually occur in everyday life interactions, as speakers normally do not retain audibly what has been uttered and, hence, the words which have just been said fade slowly and fragmentally away. It means as well that there is never a chance of revising the output message once it happens in real time (Bygate, 2009); the *simultaneity* factor is another that entails this conversational interaction. It would take a light-years time to understand a conversation that took a seemingly unending time to have both speakers and listeners interacting with each other, meaning that in the complex trade of ideas in a speech and listening comprehension set, both speakers and listeners need to react properly accurate in time as to not get lost upon the flow of information being worked.

Brown (2007) also uttered that speaking entangles the use of some particularly unique characteristics, such as *stress, rhythm, intonation* and *pronunciation, performance variables, clustering, redundancy, reduced forms of language, contextualized production* and *use of conversational fillers*. As it was once displayed by Rio and collaborators (2015), different stress, rhythm, intonation and pronunciation of words may convey different meanings during a conversation, emphasizing some meaning of words, meanwhile also possibly hiding other less important ones. Performance variables concern the ability of speakers and listeners to handle both information flow and silent periods in conversations, taking thoughtful attention to what is being said and listened by each interlocutor. The clustering asset involves

the ability to make the speech production move beyond the word-by-word process to a more collocational and phrasal construction, as it would be inexorably tiring for human beings to cognitively process word by word in order to speak one’s mind in a conversation. By being able to cluster sentences in groups, the information flow may occur more smoothly and suitably adequate in a conversation (Luoma, 2004). Redundancy also takes place in the speaking skill, since speakers generally tend to utter the same idea more than once in a speech, emphasizing what is inevitably important in an oral production. Reduced forms of language mean the use of elisions, reduced vowels, clustering vowels to consonant in sentences, as well as the use of colloquial contractions. Further, Brown (2007) also affirms that the use of “fillers” (e.g. “You, know?”, “Right?”, etc.) are not only important for helping to complete the silent voids in conversations, nonetheless they rather assist the speaker in keeping the listener attentive to what is being uttered (Ashour, 2014).

Heading to the end of this first section part, it is highly important to show that the relevance of the speaking skill is primarily high, both for language learners and teachers (Lucas, 2001; Burns & Joyce, 1999; Rio & Delgado, 2016). People who are fluent in an additional language are commonly understood to be gifted, as these ones are able to fitly get their meaning across and interact with people from different cultural backgrounds (Richards, 2012; Li & Lui, 2011; Salomão, 2015). As Salomão (2015) once expressed, the cultural aspect seems to be one of the most interestingly unique assets that unnoticeably takes part of one who is fluent in another language.

Following the author’s ideas, when one is able to speak an additional language, his/her mind is open to unlimited possibilities in the culture of the “other one”, as if, metaphorically speaking, the new language and culture of other people started to be inside of us and our culture inside of them, the moment we are able to orally express our ideas; despite the picturesque idea displayed by this author, it is undeniably recognized that suitably mastering the speaking skill enables once set apart people to harmoniously live altogether; Osborn and collaborators (2008) demonstrate that the fluent speaker of an additional language may have more windows of opportunities for self-improvement in business organizations; abroad study experiences; job interviews; debates concerning a scientific study/theory which may be under development among nations in symposiums, colloquiums and alike academic events; possibilities of making new friends in other countries; life-changing experiences in international contexts; uplift of one self-confidence as well as social skills to look at the world with distinctively unique perspective glasses (Warschauer, 1996); and, even avoidance of mental diseases such as Alzheimer’s (Marzari, Santos, Zimmer, & 2012), once bilingual or polyglot speakers have a higher cognitive skills level for information processing (Pereira, 2012), as the human brain needs to make use of a unique workload in order to select, organize, retrieve and modify every bit of new information that is added in someone’s mind by means of interaction. Therefore, speaking additional languages may biologically benefit one, according to the Neuropsycholinguistics field studies recently carried out (Pereira, 2012; Preuss, 2014).

2.1 Main speaking skill difficulties found by language learners

Although the positive portrayed aspects of the speaking skill beforehand mentioned could suitably stir one's motivation up to speak an additional language, the reality that circumscribes more specifically English language teaching and learning nowadays seems to depict a nerve-racking learning experience reported by many scholars (Horwitz, 1996; Savaşçı, 2013; Yenkimalek, van Heuven, & Yenkimaleki, 2016; Aragão, 2017). In the second part of this section, I intend to shed some light into the main difficulties English language learners have faced when willing to improve the oral skills. Notwithstanding, in order to be promptly succinct on that, I have divided these troublesome aspects into the possible following categories: the *language partners/colleagues* that students may have in their additional language learning path; the *institutional situation* in which a learner may be; the *very complex nature of the speaking skill*; the *learners' own preoccupations*, and, inevitably unsurprising, the *teachers and their methodology teaching practices*.

With regard to *language partners/colleagues* students may have within the scholastic context, a group of studies have recently displayed the negative set of attitudes that students' colleagues may perform (Ur, 1996; Hodson & Jones, 2006; Dewi, 2017; Romero & Manjares, 2017; Juhana, 2017; Arifin, 2017; Junior et al., 2018). One of the constantly cited assets carried out by learners' colleagues are the overuse of the first language (Romero, Manjares, 2017), considering that within the language classroom students both miss the opportunity to practice the target language and display consequently a seemingly unwilling attitude to take a harder effort to make use of the language being learned. Savaşçı (2013) found that her students felt more confident to have social interactions and speak with native speakers of English than to have among students themselves. The reason behind such findings is that, according to her pupils, English native speakers do not focus entirely on the perfectly correct grammatical sentences of which students make use, but, on getting their meanings across.

Contrariwise, colleagues in the scholastic context would primarily emphasize one's grammatical and lexical mistakes, instead of understanding and carrying a conversation further. Such rigidity upon a perfect use of grammar, vocabulary, prepositions and alike linguistic system assets in a sentence one produces may heavily lead a student to further give up on learning the language, once language mistakes are taken as unbearable problems; the literature has otherwise shown that making mistakes is a natural process in languages learning (Pinho, 2013; Battistela, 2015) and that it should be properly worked in class in order to avoid students' desistance and bring about a more cooperative classroom culture, rather than a competitive and struggling one (Rio & Delgado, 2016).

Undoubtedly the *institutional situation* entangles social and cultural aspects a school or institution may have as for speaking in English. Lucas (2001) noticed in his study that students used to feel a lot worse than their teachers during the English learning process, considering that the culture within his researched classroom stated that the teacher should own most of the speaking time in a class, leaving no wide doors for learners to utter their ideas; the Asian cultural background reported by Li and Lui (2011)

displays a methodology in which students are given no room to speak or ask questions during a lecture class, being able to question the teacher at the very end of the class, not primarily focusing on the oral skill, but on the listening one. Additionally, precarious environments to teach English, such as the ones elicited by Rio and Delgado (2016), Fragozo and Monawar (2012), Shumin (2002) and Ounis (2017) may also influence on the poor speaking skill development. The lack of textbooks, large and overcrowded classrooms, missing technological materials such as radio, computers, cell phones and similar ones may decrease one's motivation and performance in speaking an additional language as English.

As it was previously said in the first part of this section, the *speaking skill nature* entangles a complex group of diversified assets that go beyond the monotonously oral production of decontextualized sounds in a meaningless construction of air particles. These aspects involve, as said earlier, the *interactive, social, linguistic, cognitive and psychological* areas of one's life (Clark, 1996; Nunan, 1996; Brown, 2007; Rio, 2015; Rio & Delgado, 2016).

Taking into account *learners' own preoccupation*, as it was cited in Savaşçı's research (2013), English language students face a hugely dreadful anxiety when they are to utter a sentence in English, regardless of the level one person might be in an additional language (Horwitz, 1986). Actually, even in his first/native language, one may stutter in front of an audience, considering that anxiety may become an overwhelmingly difficult barrier that leaves a person apparently speechless before a group of people, leaving one with no "foggiest idea" of what should be said (Tsui, 1996; Juhana, 2012; Aragão, 2017). Ilhomovna's research findings (2017) showed that students usually face the "nothing to say" problem in class, once they tend to feel unable to give their personal opinion in a given topic, being also possibly explained by a lack of poor linguistic knowledge, passiveness and timidity or even demotivation or no speaking strategies provided by their teachers (Dewi, 2017; Arifin, 2017; Rio & Delgado, 2016)

Finally, *teachers and their methodology practices* may heavily influence students' poor oral skill performances in English. For instance, teachers may have a huge void in their academic and professional backgrounds, being at many times unable to properly handle students' struggles with such a skill (Rio et al., 2015; Rio & Delgado, 2016; Arifin, 2017; Aragão, 2017). Similarly, one ought not to forget that teachers themselves may likewise face the same problems (though at a different level, presumably speaking) their students have, such as anxiety, shyness, fear and, because of that, apply a more teacher rather than student's needs centered class, playing the teacher the most part of the class course routine participation.

In this section, we have covered some initial aspects to take into consideration when one wants to investigate surrounding aspects entangling the *nature of the speaking skill, the windows of opportunities* open by the mastery of the oral skill and the *possible learners' main difficulties* when these ones wish to improve their speech production in English.

The proper use of digital technology has been taken as one to bring forth fruitfully productive results in fostering such a skill. In the next section, some assets involving the use of technology in the ELT classroom will be mentioned (Warschauer, 2000; Paiva, 2015), as they form one of the necessary

theoretical background for the questionnaire analysis further displayed in this article.

3. TECHNOLOGY IN THE ELT WORLD

Technology has been a typical everyday asset one has nowadays to use for multiple ways, purposes and ends, in different times and places where one may be located. Thanks to advancements in the Internet, which has been able to "cancel distances, shorten time and make the world more like a small electronic screen (Al Musa, 2002, p. 2)", globalization has brought about a world in which the social-technological landscape (Kalčić, 2014) has been dramatically shifted. According to Kumaravadivelu (2006), this rapidly increasing information revolution has made people's lives more interconnected, consequently not only leading countries to expand their economies to the international market but driving cultural and linguistic identities closer than ever before. Yet, one may not clearly suppose the future consequences this phenomenon has been leaving upon society, considering that different countries, whose physical barriers once limited contact among them, now have opened new bridges and communication means by long distance and in real time. One researcher, Carr (2010, p. 5-6), has particularly described the changes he himself has been long feeling since the last few years with the start of the Internet:

I've had an uncomfortable sense that someone, or something, has been tinkering with my brain, remapping the neural circuitry, reprogramming the memory. My mind isn't going – so far as I can tell – but it's changing. I'm not thinking the way I used to think. I feel it most strongly when I'm reading. I used to find it easy to immerse myself in a book or a lengthy article. [...] That's rarely the case anymore. Now my concentration starts to drift after a page or two.

On the alike thought chain, Bohn (2013) stated that nowadays readers need to flick through the pages and words in a book with the same speed a tourist clicks on his camera to take a hundred of shots of a sightseeing scenario, considering that at every minute, infinite reading perspectives are multiplied, which will unavoidably leave one to an open sea of links and reading possibilities in a different meaning landscape. Albeit metaphorically regarding the swiftness that technology has brought to society, shortening space, time, relationships, emotions and thoughts concerning different life demands, today's society is remarkably changed into a global village, in which one small activity performed in an unknown village/town may be tomorrow on the most ever-known famous newspaper editions and be broadcasted worldwide (Wallace, 1991).

If these briefly commented technological changes, which are undeniably at the heart of the globalization process (Graddol, 1997), have been driving society to frontier shrinkages among countries, at the school system this information revolution has similarly taken its place. According to Prensky (2001, 2005, 2012) this technological revolution has contributed to the birth of *digital natives*, the new students who are brought up surrounded by technological devices; contrariwise, the generation that saw the birth as well

as the development of technology is named *digital immigrants*. The researcher (2005) points out to some characteristics of this new model of students that teachers have in the twenty-first century: these pupils have been brought up living in a milieu in which videogame consoles, computers, cell phones, digital music players and other digital toys surrounding their daily life. He goes further on saying that such students have spent a huge amount of time playing digital games rather than reading books, emphasizing that instant messaging, the Internet, computer games, e-mails, and digital apps integrate a considerable part of their lives.

In Brazil, for instance, in light of what Gomes contributes to this topic (2015), the Brazilian Education Ministry, by means of the National Education Plan (2001) once emphasized this technological and social changes in the third millennium, in order to foster universities in teachers' trainings during their undergraduate teaching courses, as to integrate technology within the near-future teaching practices in class. As Paiva additionally mentions (2015), at each new technology birth, the school system needs to be fitly able to catch up with the constantly new technologies that come up nowadays in a blink of an eye, in order to not be left behind the uninterrupted changes taking place in society, otherwise teachers could be induced to become *technophobes* (Dudeney, Hockley, 2007, p. 9), the ones who are rather unconfident to deal with these aforementioned wind of changes in the technological and social domain.

With regard to the languages teaching field, Warschauer and Meskill (2000) argue that the teaching style has also suffered dramatic changes in the last few decades. Teachers who once followed the grammar-translation method, in which students were explained the grammatical rules and then asked to perform translations, made use most of the time of blackboards, under a one-way information transmission. As time went by, the overhead projector assumed its position, in which the teacher still had its dominating function in bringing forth the knowledge transmitted to students. Between the 1970's and 1980's, a vast majority of university classes took place in audio labs, where students would enter at a specific time and perform different repetition drills on computers (Davies, Otto, & Rüschoff, 2013). At that time, it was believed that the more auditory exposure student could have, the better students would perform further in life concerning their linguistic skills. Even though these new technologies at those times have strongly broken in the classroom daily routine, the teachers who were not able to make use of technology for communicative purposes kept on achieving poor results. From the 1980's onwards, the ELT world was dramatically changed by the communicative approach³, which has given rise to more engaging and meaningful interactions in language classes.

Nowadays, the use of technology and the endless possibilities to learn additional languages have seemingly surpassed the old limitations one had in previous decades. As it has been succinctly said beforehand, technology may open up windows of opportunities for people to have contact with

³ The reader who is not accurately aware of the different teaching methodologies history in the ELT world is invited to read the article written by Leffa, (1988), and Richards and Rodgers (2001), whose focus was primarily on delineating the language teaching methodologies shifts in history, in order to support the reading understanding at this paper topic in here briefly mentioned.

other languages, even when one is not able to travel overseas and have personal contact with native speakers of a given language. When technology is suitably used, it may bring fruitful results to both teachers and students, as the following sub-section will briefly work upon.

3.1 Benefits coming from the proper use of technology in English oral skill fostering

It is seemingly common ground in current times to say that technology may bring life and colour in the scholastic context, as a huge body of research has sustained such idea (Levy, 2009; Rio et al., 2015; Shumin, 2002; Volle, 2005; Paiva, 2015; Gomes, 2015; Rüdigkeit, 2006). In the next paragraphs, I present some studies which display positive results in authentic use of digital technology as well as the ones whose focus were primarily on the speaking skill.

Sihem (2013) carried out a study in Algeria, in which she made use of videos to foster students' understanding of the English language as well as the oral skill. According to the author and, in light of what Erben, Ban and Castañeda (2009) likewise affirm, she noticed that making use of videos to teach her pupils was a unique way to bring students authentic English use in everyday life. By presenting different programs in TED Talks, TV series episodes and some video teaching techniques, the author points out that her students not only improved their verbal productive skills (e.g. presentations in front of colleagues in class, small group discussions, among others) but also non-verbal communication was seemingly outperformed. She (2013) highlights the fact that in videos, students are able to grasp other aspects such as eye movement, hand gestures, voice intonation, which, in ordinary textbooks may not be lively and noticeably regarded, as the visual stimuli portrayed in different and contextualized situations in videos feature more authentically such paralinguistic assets. These results are in agreement with other similar ones carried out by Berk (2009), who also made use of videos to foster students' productive skills in English.

Pinho's PhD thesis (2013), whose research was carried out in a private university in Rio Grande do Sul – Brazil, presented how a virtual environment could help students become more productive in their writing and speaking skills as a whole. According to the author (2013), technology is a highly potential learning-reaching outcome tool, once digital technology may help students feel more confident to correct beforehand their oral and written productions, as well as assisting those students, who, at that time, were majoring in an English language teaching undergraduate course. These students were also able to see how much technology is able to energize their future teaching practices in class.

In a digital project (Rio et al., 2015) I was fortunate to carry out in a State school in the central region of Rio Grande do Sul – Brazil, with first grader students (7-year-old ones), in which it was possible to have contact with students from the Netherlands. The main purpose was to broaden students' horizons to new possibilities of cultures outside the Brazilian and Dutch countries. In the end of the project I and the Dutch teacher had the unique opportunity to have a Skype™ video conference, in which our students could,

yet at a very elementary level in English, speak about the local folk *gaúcho's* culture and the Dutch pupils about their local cultural elements. According to the author, it was possible for students to deepen not only their cultural knowledge about a different country, but similarly improve their oral skills in English in real-life activities that mattered to these students.

Correa (2015) in a Colombian university context with students at elementary level in English performed a set of activities by using Skype™ conference calls. According to the author, by making use of such a digital technology, students were empowered to improve their speaking skills in meaningfully contextualized situations. The author emphasizes that his students felt more confident and relieved to speak English, as they had a longer preparation time to build up sentences they would bring to further conversation in different environments (at home, at university, on the street, at national parks in the country, to name a few – once digital technology enables students to voice their ideas beyond the four walls of a classroom). One particularly interesting conclusion one may draw from this study is that at the same time the speaking skill might negatively lead a learner to struggle with the English language, considering the hindrances mentioned previously in the oral skill's section in this article; nonetheless, when properly used by a fluent speaker, the speaking skill helps considerably in building up students' confidence and self-esteem assets, as other academic literature support this idea (Sharma & Barret, 2007; Costa, 2013; Smith & Barber, 2007; Moya, 2015, Malasari, 2017).

A final asset to be mentioned in here regarding the use of digital technologies in improving the oral skill is the fact that these activities may be done outside the classroom. The reachability that technology may have is clearly supported by a learning era in education which is not mainly limited to the walls of a school but may happen at any other environment and different occasions, such as waiting in line in a supermarket, waiting for a doctor in his/her office, waiting for someone at an airport, among others (Clarey, 2007; Gomes, 2015). In the last couple of years, I have made use of the Duolingo and Busuu Platforms⁴ in order to provide students additional English language exercises, in which pupils are able to practice all four skills in this language and other available ones. Thanks to the digital technology, learning is more easily suitable to take place at anytime and anywhere.

3.2 Negative impacts caused by ineffective digital technology use

In spite of the fact that many studies display positive results regarding the use of technology in the ELT context, as it has been just mentioned in last subsection, there have been other ones demonstrating that technology may become a negative tool under some circumstances. Dudeney and Hockley (2007) state that one of the first problems teachers may have at school, for instance, is a lack of knowledge about technology, which could come either from the teacher or from students themselves. It is vitally important, though, to carry out a very quick digital technology history survey with students

⁴ Duolingo for schools and Busuu are additional languages platforms (available at <www.duolingoforschools.com> and <www.busuu.com>, respectfully) aimed at assisting languages learners in furthering their study paths in the languages.

before working with digital tools in class, as teachers or students may be hindered of performing well in a given task, once they may find out they are unable to use a certain technology resource, a case that is described, for instance, by Barr, Leaky and Ranchoux (2005).

Sung (2012) points out in his study at the university level in Taiwan, that, although students could work upon activities entangling the speaking skill with digital technologies as a support, more often than not learners had Internet connection problems, as well as some platforms used during the study had a more difficult access for some students to properly make use of them. Costa (2013) speaks about her research, in which her students' cell phones could not suitably work with Mp3, Bluetooth, voice and video recorder activities; as a result, the researcher needed to ask for financial support to a research sponsorship program in order to purchase some cell phones to some needy students. Such similar cases are similarly mentioned by Chinnery (2006). Bell and collaborators (2007) also speak of students' problems with the use of podcasts to improve their oral skill. The authors highlight that, although podcasts are interesting resources to be used in class, and afterwards, listened by students in their smartphones, the lack of visual stimuli made students feel bored at times and unwilling to pay intentional heed to what was discussed in such podcasts.

Shyamlee and Phil (2012, p.153-154) pinpoint four main problems that technology may bring throughout an inefficient use of it by teachers: *major means replaced by the assisting one*, *loss of speaking communication*, *restriction of students' thinking potential* and *abstract thinking replaced by imaginable thinking*. The very first one states that, if not intentionally cared about, teachers may become technology slaves, in which classes are fulfilled with multicolored and unending slides, making the *assisting tool* become the most important one, as it might likely demonstrate the lack of teaching autonomy a teacher may have; the second troublesome point, *loss of speaking communication* refers to an overuse of digital technology that makes students become mere viewers/spectators and teachers topic presenters, in which the cold digital screen weakens teacher's and students' communicative relationship; the third problem, *restriction of students' thinking potential* is about letting students eschew their thinking capacities to play the major role in exercises that require meticulous attention and thoughtful reasoning. Furthermore, there ought to be encouragement of students guessing, deduction and cognitive skills to be used in class, in order to properly master the rules in a language, which are similarly pivotal ones (Arifin, 2017). Finally, *abstract thinking replaced by imaginable thinking* slightly refers to the reality framed by Prensky (2001), which, due to the fact that students nowadays are surrounded by virtualized images and digital videos, teachers may bring to classroom (or students themselves) images or photos in class (as for the imaginable thinking) instead of having students reading excerpts or more thought-provoking texts, which would inexorably need more abstract thinking capacities from the students' side.

All in all, what has been noticed so far is that the success of rightly applying digital technologies in English language learning is due to the main *handling factor* of these aforementioned tools; that is to say, digital technology may either bring fruitful or disastrous results to both teachers and students; moreover, neither language learners nor teachers should make use of the

new technologies as the seemingly old-fashioned ones (blackboard, blanket sheet of papers, chinks, among others). As Paiva (2015) once boldly affirmed, by making use of such innovative technologies in this way, the peculiar brightness and powerfulness inherently involved in such new technologies may gradually turn into old and erstwhile technologies, losing its singular potential they were aimed to have.

Hence, at this moment, we are to have a glimpse upon the online questionnaire applied to forty students worldwide in the present research, in which pupils were given the opportunity to voice their opinions about digital technology and its application in fostering the speaking skill.

4. METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

In a month period, it was possible to obtain 40 answers from learners who come from ten different countries. The questionnaire had been sent via e-mail and its online link shared in some social media websites as well as online forums, in order to reach a more diversified English language learner's public. This questionnaire was made of nine questions, in which three of them were more related to the participants' background, such as their age, the time length they have been studying English and their home country. The other five ones concerned aspects surrounding digital technologies and the oral skill, main aspect of this research so far. Firstly, these research questions and responses are analysed and later some initial results are presented, since the analysis of all the questions would take a longer time and more pages beyond this paper's limit; on the other hand, as said earlier, these results are to be more thoroughly and appropriately discussed in the PhD thesis I am currently developing.

The answers from the participants were analysed under the qualitative approach (which is commonly associated to an interpretivist view); according to Corbin and Strauss (2008), a qualitative approach is the one that enables the researcher to get at the heart of inner experiences of participants, as to determine how the meanings are formed under the cultural background the participants come from; a quantitative approach (epistemologically and similarly positivist) is fairly used in this present paper, once some small statistic data are mentioned and consequently analyzed and afterwards, possible hypothesis are raised due to the results here circumscribed (Richards, Lockhart, 1994; Johnson, Christensen, 2008⁵).

Let us have a closer look at the questions and some important research findings.

4.1 Questionnaire and its preliminary analysis

The first question in this research was a multiple options one about different opinions regarding technology and English language learning, similar to

⁵ For more detailed information on the different approaches that may be undergone in educational researches such as the one in this paper, the reader ought to read a seminal book that thoroughly and more in-depth works with intrinsically correlated characteristics of such approaches in the book named *Educational Research: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed approach* by Johnson and Christensen, published in 2008.

a likert scale, in which each participant was lack to select the numbers 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (undecided), 4 (agree) or 5 (strongly agree). As this question displayed many opinions concerning technology and English language learning, I displayed preferentially below (for the time being) the ones which most correlated the topics *speaking skill* and *technology use*, as other answers to opinions did not seem to be representative for the present analysis.

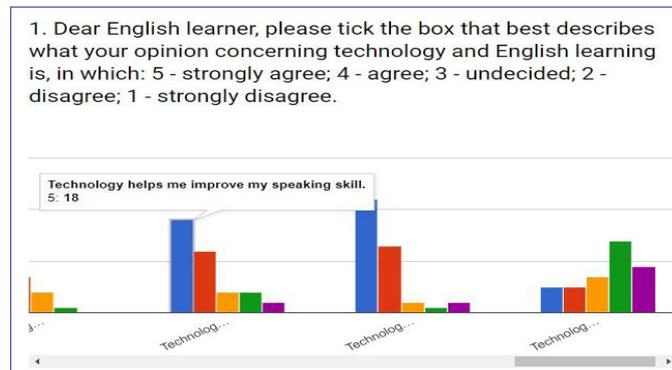


Figure 1. Answers samples to the question 1

As for the opinion "*technology improves my language learning outside the classroom*" it was noticed that the majority of respondents agrees with the potentialities technology may bring to a deeper language learning experience, one which may go beyond the four rooms of a classroom – 35 answers – 87,5% had *agreement* responses (*strongly agree* and *agree* ones), 4 ones – 10% of *undecided* responses and only one (2,5%) *strongly disagree* response was selected). This finding is in agreement with what some scholars concluded, as previously mentioned in this paper (Correa, 2015; Paiva, 2015); the second worthy to mention opinion "*Technology helps me to improve my speaking skill*", portrayed as well a huger agreement than discordance with regard to the relevance of technology in supporting the improvement of such important skill (with 30 answers – 70% of the *agreement* responses, 4 ones – 10% of *undecided* responses and 6 ones – 15% of *disagreement* responses). The agreement responses seem to fairly fall into what some researchers have found about the benefits of technology in assisting the English oral skill (Rio, Delgado, 2016; Gomes, 2015); at the same time, this 15% of disagreement responses may happen to several reasons, such as the ones described in the last section (teachers' overuse of technological resources, possibly making overuse of them as it was previously done with blackboards and chalks); a final but likewise interesting result was found in the opinion "*Technology does not help me to reduce my anxiety to speak English*", which displayed the same number of disagreement and agreement responses (18 responses for agreement, respectively – 45%, and 4 "undecided" responses, which represent 10% of the responses). As it was presented with the body of research in the section 2.1 in this paper, anxiety to speak in front of colleagues seems to be one of the hardest challenges language learners face (Aragão, 2017; Heuven, Yenkimaleki, 2016) in order to overcome their inner and colleague fears, despite authentic technological support (e.g. being mocked or looked

down by colleagues in class, fear of making mistakes in front of people, environmental/institutional problems, among previously mentioned ones).

Moving to the second question in this research, "Which of these technological websites, apps or online platforms have you already used to improve your speaking skill? Tick more than once", this one was more an investigative question in order to collect data concerning students' most used apps, websites online platforms or correlated ones and notice any similarity among the preferences from students with regard to the speaking skill itself. The most cited digital technological tools were Duolingo (mentioned 28 times), followed by social media networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter (mentioned 21 times), coming after Memrise (cited 9 times), Hello Talk and Busuu (same number of mentioned times – 8 times); other less mentioned examples were given such as Lyricstraining, Lingualeo, Hello English, among other ones. One reason by which the participants might have chosen such apps (Duolingo, Busuu, Memrise, Twitter, Facebook – also available in both online or app version in cell phone – Lingualeo and Hello English) is due to the portability and easiness conveyed by such digital tools (Prensky, 2000); as previously alluded, such digital technologies give opportunities for language learners to have learning experiences at different times, spaces and occasions (Correa, 2015), a phenomenon that is inherently associated with today's globalized world (Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

The third question "Have you ever had a positive experience using different technological resources (websites, apps, online courses platforms) to improve your speaking skill?", displayed a huge load of positive answers (36 at the total – 90% of positive responses), whereas only 4 respondents mentioned not to have experienced favourable experiences with diversified technological resources yet. Some more representative answers are shown below:

In general yes, it helped me learn new vocabulary and also learn my own grammatical mistakes. also Ebooks and audio books helped me learning many new skills. They are more accessible and easier to use – *Participant 15*.

Yes, I'm a native German speaker and I like it a lot when I can communicate with people on Reddit and they can't notice that I'm not a native English speaker. *Participant 19*.

Yes, I have met different people on social medias, apps, which in the end led me to have a better speaking production. Technology also helped me to contact my teacher and colleagues outside the classroom. It was very useful indeed! – *Participant 39*.

Yes, in one class we could speak via Skype with a friend of our teacher, she was an English native speaker. It was absolutely unforgettable, because we had a real experience with a real person and not only with the book and with my colleagues in class. *Participant 10*.

These answers seem to be vitally important ones to support what was beforehand discussed about the potentialities inside technological resources. Participant 15, for instance, emphasizes the fact that his grammar mistakes and new vocabulary were learned; this one mentions as well as the relevance of Ebooks in assisting this participant to possibly improve his speaking

skill. Participant 19 displays his thoughts regarding the social status the speaking skill has got by means of showing a suitable English level that other English language speakers could not recognize whether this person was a native speaker of English or not. Evidently, this answer agrees with what relates about the mastery of the speaking skill bringing about more confidence and a higher self-esteem to the language user, whose abilities were improved thanks to the use of such aforementioned digital technologies (Sharma & Barret, 2007). Participants 39 and 10 show similar opinions about the window of opportunities in communication that digital technologies may bring to their English language learning path (Gomes, 2015); participant 39, for instance, particularly denotes that the use of technology helped this one to not only get in touch with the participant's colleagues beyond the scholastic lieu, but, at the same time, fostered the participant speaking skill, as (s)he possibly contacted colleagues and the teacher orally; participant 10 slightly similar on the "contact with other people" topic, mentions that such a situation with an English native speaker in a Skype conference was life-changing for him/her, once the real situation took also over the use of books and colleagues in class, which suggests a preference for new and authentic ways to vividly experience the English language learning path (Paiva, 2015).

As for the fourth question "Have you ever had a negative experience using different technological resources (websites, apps, online courses platforms) to improve your speaking skill? If so, how has it happened?" the majority of participants responded "no" and other similar answers, which entail 30 ones (75 % of responses), a result which is normally expected – supported by the literature previously exposed (Levy, 2009; Rio et al., 2015; Shumin, 2002; Volle, 2005); other 10 answers (25% of the total), interestingly, relate negative experiences with technology use. Three out of this 10 negative answers are about internet connection problems; other 3 problems were about teachers who made use of technology following the same old procedures done before with a chalk and a blackboard; as an example of such answers, the participant 36 uttered "Technology is important but we need to use if it will really help us learn in a different way, no "more of the same!". This participant's enraging reaction demonstrates his/her desire to have innovative classes, which will go beyond the seemingly endless number of slides presentation (Paiva, 2015). Other four respondents revealed having problems with colleagues and the scholastic environment, which hinder these ones of improving their oral skill, by factors such as the one mentioned by participant 6, saying that his/her colleagues mocked him/her because she had mispronounced a word in English, possibly during a video record: "I can't remember well the word but I believe that this experience made me feel a little bit afraid to speak in front of a camera or online to people" – said the participant 6, showing the negative part colleagues may play in fostering dreadful memories in learner's lives (Savaşçı, 2013; Dewi, 2017); participant 8 says that his/her colleagues have "indecent minds", which inhibited this one to further carry on a conversation by means of digital technology; the other two respondents provided answers related to their shyness and lack of confidence to make use of technology in different contexts, a fact that is also supported in the previously mentioned literature (Sung, 2012; Costa, 2013).

The final question that required a more in-depth answer, the fifth one, "How do you think technology may help you to improve your English speaking skill both inside and outside the classroom?" displayed a wide range of diversified positive answers. Here are two interesting ones:

Inside the classroom: it can help us learn in a personalized way. Students have different levels, technology makes it possible to respect each student. *Outside the classroom:* it can help us practice the language with real texts. Access interesting materials and learn from apps. And all this anywhere in the world. – Participant 35.

There are many ways to use the technology to learn something, you can watch English videos, you can read fanfics, can speak with other learners and natives of this language, in the classroom, you can let the students go to their own rhythm, with apps that have all of the lesson divided in sections to access when you want, but with this "liberty" the students can be lazy, because of this you need to have proofs or something to motivate the learners, my generation have all of the knowledge in their (our) hands, but this wonderful possibilities can improve our procrastination. – Participant 32.

Such valuable and representative answers were chosen, as they elucidate the powerfulness technology brings about in today's world (Prensky, 2012). Participant 35, for instance, presents both uses of technology within and beyond the school lieu, in which, at school, technology apparently helps weaken students' different levels, making learning be more authentic ("in a personalized way"). Outside the classroom, technology would provide learners real and authentic text, as well as different language learning apps. Participant 32 mentions what I have hereafter metaphorically named *at the palm of your hand paradox*, in light of what this participant has said. According to this respondent, nowadays learners may reward themselves, thanks to the opportunities brought by technology, a world of freedom to have unforgettable learning experiences with native and foreign English speakers or the hellish and nerve-racking one due to procrastination (once the easy access to technology may help students to become even lazier than ever), demonstrating, therefore that students' autonomy to make use of technology may invariably lead these ones to either meaningfully learn a language or to regard such experience as an insignificant one (Shyamlee & Phill, 2012).

Another interesting answer was given by participants 3, who mentions that technology is a way to connect people from different nations and that, due to her teacher's support with diversified technological resources (computer, data show, audios, podcasts, among others) helps this participant to feel more confident to speak English. Participant 12, for instance, related an episode in which he travelled to Germany and, because of some translation apps in his smartphone, he was able to more swiftly get detailed information in many situations about different expressions in English, an achievement he said he would be unable reach, had he had a paper-based dictionary next to him.

The final questions in this research concerned the participants' background, such as age, time length of English language learning experience and the home country, as the subsequent figure displays:

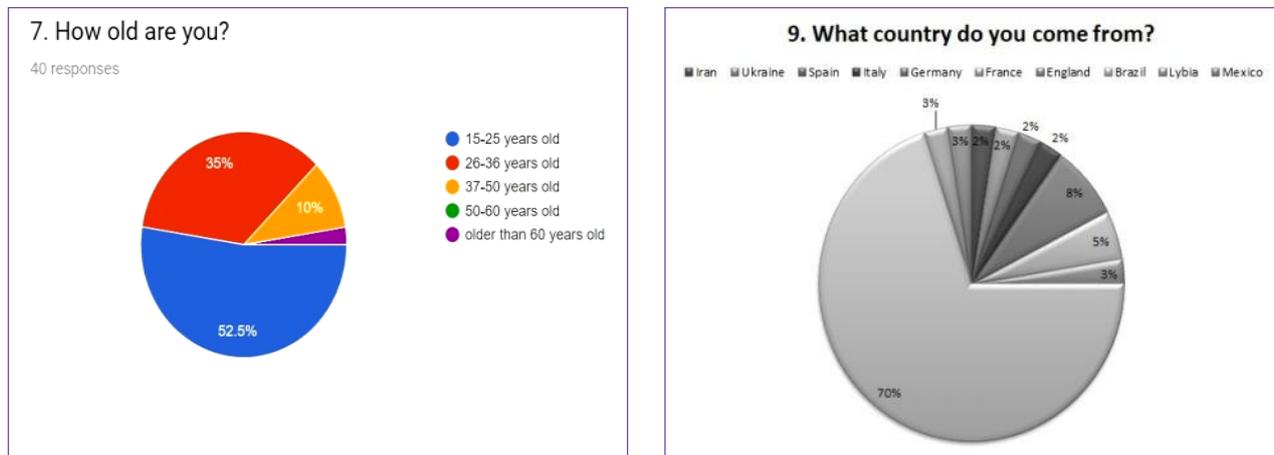


Figure 2. Answers samples to the question 1

Most of the participants declared to be between fifteen and twenty-five years old (52,5% of the participants, corresponding to twenty-one of them), while 35% (fourteen participants) of them are between twenty-six and thirty-six years old; 10% of the participants (represented by 4 of the 40 ones) affirmed to be between fifty and sixty years old and one participant aged older than sixty (2,5 % of the participants); with relation to these results, it may be said that most of these ones (52,5% – 21 participants) belong to what Prensky (2001) named *digital natives*, the ones who are born alongside the technological revolution; whereas almost the other half (47,5% – 19 participants) belong to the *digital immigrants* (Prensky, 2001; Dudeney & Hockley, 2007); for further analysis it would be valuably interesting to triangulate the data coming from each of these types of learners (digital native and immigrant ones) to their conceptions about their opinions concerning the value of technology in their English language learning path (as it was briefly demonstrated in question 1), as their age might shed some light into (dis)likes about the use of technology in English language learning.

As for the time spent on English language learning (entailing question 8), fifteen participants (37,5% of them) have been learning English between four and six years; four respondents (10% of them) have been studying the language between seven and nine years; nine participants (22,5% of these ones) have been learning English for more than a decade; twelve respondents (which corresponds to 30% of all the participants) affirmed they have been learning English between one and three years. As a thought-provoking insight for further research, it would be mildly interesting to compare and afterwards triangulate these study time devoted to English language learning responses with those opinions shared in the first question in this questionnaire, in order to formulate hypothesis concerning the time length devoted to English language learning and the difficulties students may have either with digital technology (Shyamlee & Phill, 2012) or the speaking skill itself (Arifin, 2017; Rio & Delgado, 2016).

The final question, which regarded the participants' home country, it was noticed that the majority of them come from Brazil (corresponding to 70% of them, 28 participants), followed by three German respondents (8%), two

French ones (5%), and each one participant from other countries, such as Ukraine, Spain, Italy, Lybia and Mexico (all of them representing 2,5% for each these countries). Another study suggestion, which is based on some studies carried out so far (Rio & Delgado, 2016), would be to verify how the difficulties and positive views towards digital technology and the speaking skill differs among the nations here represented. As a research that may not be completely filled in some pages, I deeply sense and believe that these results here presented are worthy to be more thoroughly analysed in further researchers.

Let us head to the final (for the meanwhile) remarks of this research here presented.

5. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL REMARKS

This paper aimed at showing a first research carried out as a part of my current series of studies, which are under development in my actual PhD research, concerning the speaking skill and the use of digital technologies for its enhancement, since the literature points out to exist a huge gap between both topics researched altogether (Rio & Delgado, 2016).

As it was noticed, the speaking skill delineates more than only the utterance of meaningless sounds within a given situation (Bygate, 2009; Brown, 2007). Rather, it is a highly complex skill, which may take a longer time to be developed, once learners may fall into several hindrances that might take their place during their English language journey, as it was succinctly expressed in the second article's section. Once the communicative era in the ELT is considerably in vogue, developing this skill is intrinsically pivotal for a series of benefits that such a socially valued skill may bring forth (Rio & Delgado, 2016).

It has been demonstrated that, not only has the language teaching methodologies changed owing to the existence of more increasingly communicative approaches in the language teaching history development (Richards, Rodgers, 2001). The revolution brought about by digital technology, mainly the one represented by the advent of technology in History, has dramatically shifted the ways languages were taught until a few decades back. Both more communicative teaching approaches (whose primarily focused action remains on the speaking skill) and the aforementioned technological revolution are seemingly responsible for ringing the changes in the ELT and the globalized world we are currently living.

Throughout the questions in the present research, it was markedly noticed that technology stands oftentimes as a highly useful resource for the fostering of English language learning, particularly seen as well with regard to the speaking skill (as the responses in questions 1 and 3 appealed to be in light with this thought chain). Participants similarly voiced both positive and negative experiences related to the use of technologies. In this paper I have assumed a rather neutral and critical view about the technology use, instead of only reporting positive answers or results on that – a phenomenon that is notoriously observed, when one aims at finding results about the use of technology and students' performance in English; as Paiva (2015) and other researchers pointed out, it is not technology that stands as a determining factor

to favour development either in the English language learning as a whole or in the speaking skill alone, but rather the organizational and analytical skill of teachers and learners as well in competently and meaningfully making use of technologies in order to an effective and successful learning take place inside and outside the four walls of school and, better yet, at anytime and anywhere a student may possibly be.

Were I to boldly affirm that these research results so far are fully and exhaustively analysed, I would not have suggested alongside the lines of this paper some future study suggestions. In these final lines, I hereby raise some other similar ones which could be more detailedly carried out. Studies taking into view what teachers have to say about the use of technology in fostering either students general abilities in English or the speaking skill itself could be brought into existence, as a way to see what lies behind teachers' beliefs concerning the use of technologies in the English language teaching field; in addition, it would be similarly interesting to have studies carried out in schools, in which teachers present students digital technologies, such as the ones cited in the questionnaire (Duolingo, Busuu, Memrise, Hello Talk, among others), as a way to see the effectiveness of such digital resources in fostering English language learning and more fruitful learning experiences for the case of the speaking skill. The Applied Linguistics field is wide open and certainly welcomes brand new researches in such a rapidly changing world to come about in the next couple of years.

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