



Examining Studies on Improving English Speaking Skills as a Foreign Language: A Meta-Synthesis Study

Murat Salman, Tuğba Yanpar-Yelken

Department of Education, Mersin University, Mersin, Türkiye

Email: slnmrt@gmail.com

How to cite this paper: Salman, M. and Yanpar-Yelken, T. (2024) Examining Studies on Improving English Speaking Skills as a Foreign Language: A Meta-Synthesis Study. *Open Access Library Journal*, 11: e12056. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1112056>

Received: August 3, 2024

Accepted: August 23, 2024

Published: August 26, 2024

Copyright © 2024 by author(s) and Open Access Library Inc.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the dimensions of the speaking skill development process by synthesizing the qualitative findings of researches conducted in Türkiye and abroad on improving English speaking skills as a foreign language. The study was carried out with the meta-synthesis method and the process was followed as recommended by [1]. Studies published between 2016 and 2023 were selected by criterion sampling method and 12 articles conducted with qualitative or mixed methods were examined. While obtaining these studies, “Google Scholar”, “National Thesis Center”, “ERIC”, “Dergi Park” and “Ulakbim” databases were used. As a result of the research, it was concluded that it is very important to do group work, use visual and audio materials, do pronunciation studies and benefit from technological and social media tools in improving English speaking skills.

Subject Areas

Language Learning and Teaching

Keywords

Foreign Language, English Speaking skill, Meta-Synthesis, Developing Speaking Skill

1. Introduction

Since the beginning of humanity, education and training activities have been the main endeavors of human beings. People have always been curious about things and made efforts to learn new things. Over time, they have realized how important education and training is for self-improvement and development. There-

fore, they have constantly tried new ways and methods to make the best of educational activities, which have a very important place in our lives. Especially the rapid development of technology has shown its effects in the field of education. Utilizing technology in educational practices and using new technology-supported methods have become widespread over time. Today, technology has a very important role in education as in all areas of life. In addition to other areas of education, utilizing technology and new applications in foreign language teaching and learning makes the language learning process more effective.

The use of technology in education is frequently preferred by students as well as teachers, and its use in language education is becoming more common day by day [2]. Language teaching, which is a skill-based process, must be carried out carefully so that individuals can understand different cultures, communicate with people from other cultures, and keep up with the globalizing world, as well as improve themselves [3]. Many studies are being carried out to provide better foreign language education, to improve language skills and to involve language learners more in the process [4]-[6]. As a result of these studies, more effective methods and techniques are determined and these are used in language teaching.

English ranks first among foreign language preferences, and the importance of English, which has become a common language in almost every part of the world, is known by everyone [7]. Spoken by almost a third of the world's population, English has become a global language used in education [8]. In our country, English is taught as a foreign language in schools starting from primary school, and this continues for years at all levels of education. The main purpose of learning English is to use the language effectively in communication, as well as skills such as reading, writing and listening. An individual who learns a foreign language can reach a good level of understanding in listening, improve his/her reading skills or communicate in writing, but developing oral communication skills in that language requires a different level and is quite difficult [9].

The most difficult and problematic area for foreign language learners is speaking. There are many reasons for this such as lack of vocabulary, not knowing grammar, lack of confidence, and anxiety about speaking to foreigners [10]. [11] state that learners' lack of motivation and encouragement, and experiencing feelings such as making mistakes and shyness, hinder their ability to speak English. Moreover, developing speaking skills requires sufficient practice and it is important to diversify teaching techniques for effective training [12].

There are many studies in the literature about the problems experienced in developing the skill of speaking English as a foreign language and the methods and techniques for developing this skill [13]-[15]. All of these studies reveal that it is extremely important to develop speaking skills in foreign language teaching and emphasize the importance of developing new methods and techniques to improve this skill. However, when looking at the literature, there is no study that focuses on the meta-synthesis of studies containing qualitative data on speaking skills and examines them in detail.

1.1. Purpose and Importance of the Study

The aim of this study is to analyze in depth the studies conducted in Türkiye and abroad on improving English speaking skills in terms of publication year, publication type, research method, target group and research results. It is thought that the studies on developing speaking skills, which is the most important and troublesome process of learning English, should be analyzed in depth. For this purpose, the meta-synthesis method, which allows in-depth analysis of the studies on how the general trends are, is suitable. There is no meta-synthesis study in the literature that comprehensively analyzes the studies on improving English speaking skills. Therefore, it is believed that this study will contribute to the literature in terms of methodology and research results. In this regard, the research problem was determined as “What are the effects of the methods and practices used to improve English speaking skills as a foreign language and what are the solution suggestions in this regard?”.

1.2. Limitations of the Study

The research was limited to studies conducted in Türkiye and abroad on improving English speaking skills as a foreign language between 2016 and 2023. In the literature, no meta-synthesis study examining studies on English speaking skills has been found. Since it was aimed to examine current studies on this subject, studies conducted between 2016 and 2023 were preferred. A total of 12 articles were examined within the scope of the research and were limited to studies focusing only on English speaking skills. Studies on other language skills such as reading, writing, listening and vocabulary were not included in the scope of the research. Additionally, studies conducted on this subject in languages other than Turkish and English were not included in the meta-synthesis.

2. Method

In this study, the meta-synthesis method, which enables interpretation and synthesis on the qualitative data of qualitative studies or mixed studies, was used. [16] explained meta-synthesis as a method that tries to combine the qualitative results of many studies on a similar topic and directs them towards an interpretative purpose. In meta-synthesis studies, similar and different aspects of a certain number of studies on the specified topic are described, then they are synthesized with a critical eye and discussed in detail with their results [17]. In the meta-synthesis, similar or different aspects are evaluated and synthesized by creating themes and templates while evaluating studies on a specific topic [18]. In this study, 12 studies on speaking skills in English as a foreign language were presented with themes and templates according to their similarities and differences, and their results were evaluated and discussed in depth.

When conducting a meta-synthesis study, it is important to follow a systematic approach in analyzing qualitative data and synthesizing findings [19]. In this meta-synthesis study, the Enhancing Transparency in Reporting Qualitative Re-

search Protocol (ENTREQ) was used. The purpose of developing this protocol is to support the comprehensive synthesis and reporting of qualitative research [20]. [21] explained the meta-synthesis research process as six steps. In this study, these steps were followed and the study process was carried out as shown below.

Step 1: Explanation of the Research Problem

Step 2: Conducting a Comprehensive Literature Review

Step 3: Evaluation of Studies According to Inclusion Criteria

Step 4: Integration and Analysis of Qualitative Research Findings

Step 5: Synthesizing and Presenting the Findings of the Studies

Step 6: Reflecting the Findings on the Research Process

Step 1: Explaining the Research Problem

When conducting a meta-synthesis study, the research problem is clearly stated in the first stage. Stating the problem clearly contributes to the synthesis and interpretation of the qualitative data obtained from the research. The synthesis and interpretation support a better and deeper understanding of the research problem. In this meta-synthesis study, the effects of the methods and techniques applied to improve the speaking skills of EFL learners and their reactions to these practices were emphasized. It is aimed to better understand the practices and situations that affect speaking skills positively or negatively and to synthesize and interpret the collected findings.

Step 2: Conducting a Comprehensive Literature Review

In this study, it is aimed to examine the qualitative data of the studies on the methods and practices that are effective on the speaking skills of EFL learners in depth and to reveal the subject better. In this context, a literature search was conducted and studies published in Turkish or English on this subject in Türkiye and abroad were accessed. During the literature search, “Google Scholar”, “National Thesis Center”, “ERIC”, “Dergi Park” and “Ulakbim” databases were scanned. The studies conducted between 2016 and 2023 were selected in order to evaluate the current ones among the studies. While searching the databases, the keywords “English speaking skill”, “Speaking skill” and “Developing speaking skill” were used.

2.1. Study Group

Step 3: Evaluation of Studies According to Inclusion Criteria

The 12 article studies evaluated in this meta-synthesis study were determined by considering certain criteria. The inclusion and exclusion criteria used in the selection of these studies are shown in **Table 1** below.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria stated in **Table 1** were determined by the researchers of this study by considering the basic principles of meta-synthesis and the requirements of the study. Qualitative or mixed-methods studies on methods and practices affecting English speaking skills were preferred. Among these studies, those published in Turkish and English and those that included direct statements of the participants were included in the evaluation. Studies

providing only quantitative data, book chapters, proceedings or thesis studies and outdated studies were excluded. In addition, studies on this topic but published in languages other than English and Turkish were not included. The process followed to access these studies is shown in **Figure 1** below.

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Qualitative/Mixed method studies	Studies providing quantitative data
Full-text articles	Book chapters/proceedings/theses
Studies conducted between 2016 and 2023	Studies prior to 2016
Studies written in Turkish/English	Studies not written in Turkish or English
Studies that included the quoted statement of the participants	

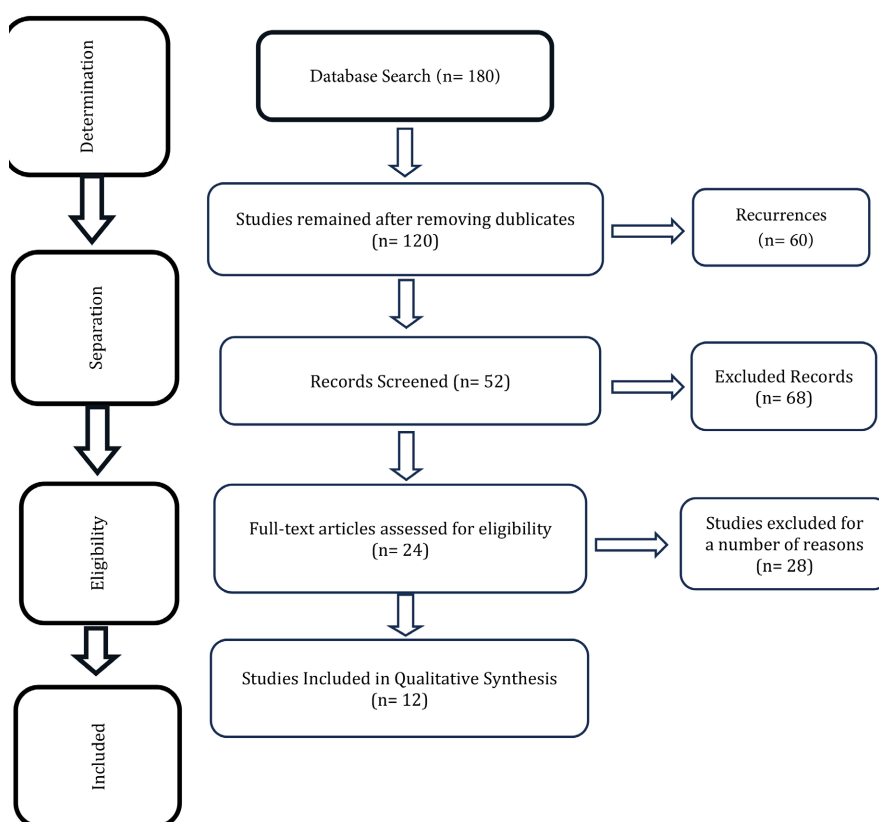


Figure 1. Process of systematic steps followed to access research.

When **Figure 1** is examined, a total of 180 studies were reached as a result of the databases search conducted within the scope of this topic. After excluding duplicates ($n = 60$), 120 studies remained. Studies containing only quantitative data, book chapters, proceedings, thesis studies, outdated studies (before 2016) and studies conducted in languages other than English and Turkish were not included in the evaluation. The number of full-text articles evaluated for eligibility

was 24. Some of these ($n = 28$) were not included in the evaluation because they did not contain direct statements of the participants. As a result, 12 articles that met the evaluation criteria were deemed eligible for this meta-synthesis study.

2.2. Data Collection Tools

The data for this meta-synthesis study were obtained by examining the qualitative data of the studies on EFL skills. The characteristics of these studies such as author, publication year, method, data collection tools, study group, data analysis and study type were determined and shown in **Table 2** below.

When **Table 2** is examined, it is understood that the 12 article studies included in the meta-synthesis are current studies conducted between 2016 and 2023. It is seen that 6 of these studies are mixed method, 3 are qualitative method, 1 is experimental method, 1 is action research and 1 is case study. Open-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, tests, exam results and reflective diaries were used as data collection tools. The collected data were analyzed by methods such as thematic coding, content analysis and descriptive analysis.

Table 2. Characteristics of the studies included in the Meta-Synthesis.

Author Year	Method	Data Collection Tools	Study Group	Data Analysis	Study Type
Pitura (2022)-(A1)	Qualitative	Semi-structured Interview Form	10	Content Analysis	Article
Acar & Arslan (2023)-(A2)	Mixed Method	Speech Test, Reflective diaries	23	Content Analysis, Descriptive Analysis	Article
Albogami & Algethami (2022)-(A3)	Case Study	Pre-test, Post-test, Semi-structured Interview Form	15	Content Analysis, Descriptive Analysis	Article
Mykytiuk vd. (2022)-(A4)	Mixed Method	Pre-test, Post-test, Questionnaire, Open-ended questionnaire	116	Content Analysis, Descriptive Analysis	Article
Shahini & Shahamirian (2017)-(A5)	Qualitative	Open Interview	17	Content Analysis, Descriptive Analysis	Article
Sun vd. (2017)-(A6)	Mixed Method	Pre-test, Post-test, Questionnaire, Focus group discussions	72	Content Analysis, Descriptive Analysis	Article
Al-Eiadeh vd. (2016)-(A7)	Qualitative	Semi-structured Interview Form	20	Content Analysis	Article
Alkan & Bümen (2020)-(A8)	Action Research	Exams results, Semi-structured Interview Form	19	Content Analysis, Descriptive Analysis	Article
Çetin Köroğlu & Öz (2023)-(A9)	Experimental Method	Pre-test, Post-test, Scale, Open-ended written interview	46	Content Analysis, Descriptive Analysis	Article
Hiep Vu (2023)-(A10)	Mixed Method	Online survey, Semi-structured interview	52	Thematic coding, Content Analysis, Descriptive Analysis	Article
Lyu (2019)-(A11)	Mixed Method	Survey, Test, Interview	39	Content Analysis, Descriptive Analysis	Article
Zhu, Zhang & Li (2022)-(A12)	Mixed Method	Semi-structured Interview Form, Production Tests	55	Content Analysis, Descriptive Analysis	Article

2.3. Data Analysis

Step 4: Integration and Analysis of Qualitative Research Findings

It is extremely important that the studies identified for a meta-synthesis study are evaluated by experts in terms of quality. It is necessary for the integrity of the data that these studies have a certain quality score. In this study, Critical Appraisal Skills Program (CASP) was used to determine the quality of the evaluated articles. CASP is a 10-question program that helps to examine the evaluated studies in detail in terms of reliability and appropriateness [22]. The appropriateness of the articles identified for this study according to CASP criteria was evaluated by two experts. According to the ten questions prepared within the scope of CASP given in the table, the level of meeting the criteria was scored as “1: Adequate”, “0.5: Adequate to Some Extent” and “0: Inadequate”. Miles and Huberman’s formula ($\text{Reliability} = \text{consensus} / (\text{consensus} + \text{disagreement}) * 100$) was used to ensure the reliability of the evaluation. In order for the research to be considered reliable and appropriate, a consensus of 80% or more must be reached between the expert evaluation [23]. For this study, the evaluation and quality scores made by 2 experts according to CASP criteria are given in **Table 3**.

When **Table 3** is examined, it is seen that the quality scores of the studies included in this study are above 80% according to the CASP evaluation result. As a result, it can be said that these studies are at an acceptable level in terms of quality and suitability for meta-synthesis. Miles and Huberman’s formula was used to test the reliability of inter-expert coding and coding reliability between two experts was calculated as 0.83. A consensus above 80% indicates that the inter-coder consensus is reliable.

3. Findings

Steps 5 and 6 (Synthesizing the Findings of the Studies and Reflecting the Findings to the Research Process)

At this stage of the meta-synthesis, the selected articles were read in detail and all concepts and the relationships between these concepts were explored. First, second and third order constructs in these studies were identified and evaluated. Direct quotations from the participants of the studies selected for meta-synthesis constitute first order constructs. The comments made by the authors of these studies constitute second order constructs, and the structures reached and synthesized at the end of the meta-synthesis research constitute third order constructs. After carefully examining the first and second order constructs, the researcher synthesizes and interprets them [24].

In this meta-synthesis study, the first and second order constructs in the studies examined by considering the research problem are presented in step 5. The third order constructs consisting of the researcher’s interpretation and the synthesis are given in step 6. The qualitative data in the studies were examined by the researcher and synthesized within the scope of certain themes. Considering the findings, the factors affecting English speaking skills were evaluated under four themes. These

Table 3. CASP summary.

Researches	Expert	The aim of the study is determined clearly	Use suitable qualitative research methods	Rationale for the study design	Appropriate sampling strategy, description of the sample, and discussion about the sample	Appropriate description of data collection methods	Researchers critically examine their own roles in collecting and analyzing data and their potential prejudices	Approval evidence by a relevant institution	Adequate and in-depth description of the analysis process	Clear description of the findings	Contribution to the existing knowledge	Quality Score
Pitura (2022)	Expert 1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	80
	Expert 2	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	85
Acar& Arslan (2023)	Expert 1	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0.5	80
	Expert 2	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0.5	1	75
Albogami & Algethami (2022)	Expert 1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	80
	Expert 2	1	1	0	1	1	0.5	0	0	0.5	0	80
Mykytiuk vd. (2022)	Expert 1	1	1	1	1	0.5	0	1	1	1	1	85
	Expert 2	1	1	1	1	0.5	0.5	1	1	0.5	1	85
Shahini &Shahamirian (2017)	Expert 1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1		1	1	80
	Expert 2	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0.5	1	85
Sun vd. (2017)	Expert 1	1	1	0.5	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	85
	Expert 2	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0.5	1	75
Al- Eiadeh vd. (2016)	Expert 1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	80
	Expert 2	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0.5	1	75
Alkan & Bümen (2023)	Expert 1	1	1	0	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	85
	Expert 2	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	80
Çetin Köroğlu & Öz (2023)	Expert 1	1	1	0.5	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	85
	Expert 2	1	1	1	1	1	0.5	1	1	0	1	85
Hiep Vu (2023)	Expert 1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	80
	Expert 2	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0.5	1	85
Lyu (2019)	Expert 1	1	1	0.5	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	85
	Expert 2	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0.5	1	75
Zhu, Zhang & Li (2022)	Expert 1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	80
	Expert 2	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0.5	1	85

are: “The Effects of Group Works on Speaking Skill”, “The Importance of Audio-Visual Materials”, “Factors Affecting Learners’ Pronunciation” and “The Role of Technology and Social Media Tools in Speaking Skills”. In line with these themes, the first and second order structures and the third order structures formed from their synthesis are given below as headings. The studies examined within the research were coded as A1, A2, A3 as shown in **Table 2**.

3.1. The Effects of Group Works on Speaking Skills

Group works have a very important place in the process of developing speaking skills, which constitute the most important step in foreign language learning. Group work of learners, especially with their peers, affects them positively, motivates them, enables them to learn from each other and helps them to progress by having fun. In addition, group work helps students to establish good interaction and practice the language they are learning.

The second order constructs of authors of the studies analyzed within the scope of this meta-synthesis study on the effects of group works on developing speaking skills are as follows:

A1: “*Working with other students allow students to improve their speaking skills and enjoy this activity.*”

A2: “*Group work and group discussions contribute to students’ collaboration skills.*”

A3: “*All interviewees expressed a positive attitude towards the use of WhatsApp voice messages.*”

In the theme of the effects of group activities on English speaking skills, the findings including the first order constructions obtained from the analyzed studies are as follows:

A1: “*Not only did I have fun, but I also learned something from my friends who would often say something better than I did and understood something better. I learned a lot from them... For example, that the debate is not about this and that but it is about that. And I said, “Okay, good”. Then I corrected myself and I understood it better.*”

A2: “*I learned how to live in a community and designed a new island thanks to the collaboration with my group friends.*”

A3: “*I was quite happy to speak in the group because I could practice English speaking in an interesting environment.*”

The findings of the meta-synthesis study revealed that group work is very effective on English speaking skills. Group work has a significant effect on students’ enjoyment of the activities and their speaking skill. The findings showed that the participants had a positive attitude towards group work and made better progress through these activities. They also found that they had the opportunity to practice English and interact with their friends. There are many studies supporting the important role of group work on speaking skills [25] [26]. The findings of this meta-synthesis study are in line with these studies.

3.2. The Importance of Audio-Visual Materials

The materials used in learning-teaching processes are the biggest helpers of teachers and students in achieving their goals. Especially for individuals learning a foreign language, the use of different and interesting materials affects the process extremely positively. Written materials alone are not sufficient to improve speaking skills for individuals learning English as a foreign language. Using materials that appeal to learners' visual and auditory intelligence is critical for effective language learning. Seeing people speaking English while listening to them and following their body language is effective in improving speaking skills.

The second order structures obtained from the studies evaluated within the scope of this meta-synthesis study on the importance of audio-visual material on speaking skills are as follows:

A1: *"Learning 'theory' is not enough; seeing somebody speak is indispensable because 'then you realize what it should look like. It is only then when you speak better. And not when someone simply explains that there should be an introduction, main body and conclusion, and that's it'. These video materials, both provided by the instructor and found by the students, also served to prepare their own talks."*

A2: *"Half of the participants believed that implementing P4C sessions in English and challenging discussion issues were encouraging for them to express themselves orally and were useful to enhance their English-speaking skills."*

The first-order structures obtained from the findings of the studies examined within the scope of this meta-synthesis study on the development of English speaking skills are as follows:

A1: *"because...we liked it. I must honestly say that after class, one still wanted to talk. It was such a cool experience, so funny that you can talk and somehow, we even sometimes did better in English than in Polish...For example, when we visited each other (...) or through Messenger chats. It was...more for entertainment, but it was also (...) cool."*

A1: *"I just listened to them speak, trying to create my podcast. I often just played the video and listened to how they were speaking, what words they were using. I tried to find a [video on a] similar topic...to listen to someone, how someone spoke to be able to imitate that person."*

The findings of the study show that the materials used are very important in developing speaking skills in English as a foreign language. When EFL learners benefit from audio-visual materials sufficiently, it helps them to understand the spoken language better and express themselves easily. Listening to native speakers of English by seeing them has a positive effect on learners and contributes to the development of their speaking skills. Through audio-visual materials, learners can listen to and benefit from a conversation again and again. There are many studies supporting these findings in the literature [27]-[30].

3.3. Factors Affecting Learners' Pronunciation

One of the most important issues that individuals learning English as a foreign

language often have trouble with and need to focus on is the pronunciation of words. The spelling and pronunciation of English words are different from each other. Pronouncing the words correctly is important for the speaker to be understood correctly. For this reason, foreign language teachers attach great importance to this issue and carry out various studies to improve the pronunciation of language learners. Language learners often hesitate to mispronounce when communicating and are afraid to communicate. Individuals who are advanced in pronunciation are more willing to communicate and improve their speaking skills. It is observed that the pronunciation of people who are exposed to more listening and pronunciation in virtual learning environments improves over time.

The authors of the studies analyzed for this meta-synthesis study discussed the following second order constructs regarding the factors affecting EFL learners' pronunciation:

A1: *"Receiving instructor's feedback, recording podcasts and listening to speaking peers (Division of Labour) made the students more aware of the quality of their own pronunciation. Above all, these activities made them realize the existence of the shortcomings in their performance. The way the instructor delivered feedback on students' pronunciation problems was perceived as valuable."*

A3: *"Some also mentioned how the voice messages improved their English pronunciation."*

A4: *"The students indicated that they could imitate the pronunciation of speakers and remember the intonation."*

In the theme of factors affecting learners' pronunciation, the first order constructs revealed by the participants of the studies are as follows:

A3: *"when I listened to my fellows' voice messages, I noted that I was mispronouncing some words and I began to use an online dictionary to check on my pronunciation."*

A4: *"It's great to memorise the pronunciation when I hear it naturally in speech. I even can remember the voice!"*

A5: *"The secret of my success is that I learned English when I was a kid."*

The findings of the studies examined within the scope of the meta-synthesis study revealed that there are many factors that affect the pronunciation of language learners. Especially, it is extremely important that teachers themselves pronounce the words correctly and provide effective feedbacks to the students. Learners can practice listening using various tools to improve their pronunciation or correct their pronunciation by hearing from their friends. Listening carefully to people speaking and paying attention to intonation and facial expressions is also effective on pronunciation. Additionally, it has been observed that individuals who start learning a foreign language at an early age are more successful in pronunciation. There are many studies in the literature that emphasize the importance of English pronunciation and support the findings of this study [31]-[33].

3.4. The Role of Technology and Social Media Tools in Speaking Skills

Technological tools and social media, which have an important place in everyone's life today, have become frequently used in the process of foreign language learning. In particular, these tools are the biggest help for learners to improve their speaking skills. These tools, which can be used anywhere and at any time, provide learners with the opportunity to repeat and practice and encourage them to learn on their own. Thanks to these tools, interaction between individuals occurs and learning is provided while having fun. In addition, these tools, which enable learners to gain courage and be willing to communicate, have very important effects on speaking skills.

The second order constructs that include the opinions of the authors of the studies evaluated within the scope of this meta-synthesis study on the role of technology and social media tools in speaking skills are discussed as follows:

A1: *"Technology plays an important role at this stage (12). Student smartphones and computers (instruments) allowed the students to easily access available online digital sources of information."*

A3: *"The interviewees reported that using WVM (WhatsApp Voice Messages) had a positive impact on improving their speaking proficiency. Most of the interviewees reported that using WVM encouraged them to speak English."*

A4: *"The participants indicated that learning via Facebook is more motivating. The answers concerning this question revealed that although most students saw the benefits of FB use to achieve educational goals."*

The first order structures that evaluate the role of technology and social media tools in English speaking skills are as follows:

A9: *"I think that digital tools are very important to make students engage with lesson so that in this area children are digital natives we should be aware of these digital tools in short I think digital assessment of speaking skills will very helpful for my future experience I had a chance to see in two sides student site and teachers' site for six weeks so this type of assessment prevent the monotonous lesson."*

A6: *"I like to hear my own voice in English. My sound is a little different than I imagined. I uploaded my homework after I practiced several times."*

A12: *"Because the AR video only shows your mouth, you do not have to worry about the background and the clothes you are wearing. It is more convenient since you can practice and upload the homework wherever you are."*

The findings of the reviewed studies showed that technology and social media tools play an important role in improving English speaking skills. Nowadays, it is very easy to access information thanks to smartphones or tablets that everyone can use. In addition, thanks to social media tools such as WhatsApp and Facebook, there is an opportunity to practice English. Students can benefit from digital dictionaries, record and listen to their own voices, and improve their speaking skills by watching and listening to videos shared by others. There are various studies in the literature that reveal the effects of technology and social media

tools on English speaking skills [34]-[36]. The results of these studies are in line with the results of this meta-synthesis study.

4. Conclusions

In this meta-synthesis study, the findings of the researches on developing speaking skills in English were synthesized and the tools, different practices or methods and techniques that are effective on speaking skills were revealed. In addition, the learners' reactions to the tools and practices used in speaking skill development were evaluated. In line with the findings, four themes were formed as "The Effects of Group Works on Speaking Skills", "The Importance of Audio-Visual Materials", "Factors Affecting Learners' Pronunciation" and "The Role of Technology and Social Media Tools in Speaking Skills".

It has been concluded that group works carried out in the process of improving English speaking skills are very effective on students' foreign language development. Students learn by having fun in group activities and support each other by collaborating. It has been determined that other students also made progress and were encouraged to practice speaking thanks to their friends with a better level of English. It was concluded that new ideas emerged in group discussions and these had a positive impact on the participants, and their speaking skills improved because of the opportunity to practice.

Another conclusion reached as a result of meta synthesis research is the importance of visual and auditory materials used in developing speaking skills. Materials that enable students to listen and see the person speaking are very effective in the development of students' speaking skills. It was concluded that watching videos of native English speakers positively affects students' speaking skills and encourages them to speak.

As a result of the research, it was determined that there are various factors that affect the correct pronunciation of words, which is one of the most important parts of English speaking skills. The feedback given by the instructors on the pronunciation of the students is very important. Students recording and listening to their own voices, listening to their friends' posts and sent voice messages had positive results on their pronunciation. Additionally, it has been found that students correct their mispronunciations by listening to the speakers and imitating them.

As a result of the research, it was concluded that the use of technology and social media tools is very effective on speaking skills. Thanks to smart phones and computers, students can easily access information and study on their own whenever they want. It has been seen that they can practice and learn while having fun thanks to social media tools such as WhatsApp and Facebook. Also, it was concluded that these tools motivate students and encourage them to speak, thus positively affecting their speaking skills.

Considering the results of this meta-synthesis research, it has been seen that group work, using audio-visual materials, instructors giving positive feedback to students, and using technological and social media tools have positive effects on

improving English speaking skills. These tools and applications can also be used to develop skills such as listening, writing and reading in learning English. Especially technology and social media tools can be used in learning and teaching activities of other foreign languages. By going beyond classical language learning environments, environments in which students will interact more can be created. Researchers who want to study this subject can conduct studies examining the factors affecting other skills other than speaking in foreign language learning.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

- [1] Noblit, G.W. and Hare, R.D. (1999) Chapter 5: Meta-Ethnography: Synthesizing Qualitative Studies. *Counterpoints*, **44**, 93-123.
- [2] Demirekin, M. (2023) Current New Technologies in Language Teaching. *Journal of Academic History and Thought*, **10**, 627-641.
- [3] Şimşek, B. (2023) The Use of Virtual Reality Applications in Language Teaching. *International Journal of Turkish Literature Culture Education*, **12**, 816-836.
- [4] Yangın Ersanlı, C. (2023) The Effect of Using Augmented Reality with Storytelling on Young Learners' Vocabulary Learning and Retention. *Novitas-ROYAL (Research on Youth and Language)*, **17**, 62-72.
- [5] Thaosiri, S. and Chano, J. (2022) The Development of an Instructional Model Based on Social Cognitive Theory to Enhance English Listening and Speaking Skills for Grade 6 Students in Small Size Schools. *Journal of Educational Issues*, **8**, 20-40. <https://doi.org/10.5296/jei.v8i2.19919>
- [6] Azar, A.S. and Tan, N.H.I. (2020) The Application of ICT Techs (Mobile-Assisted Language Learning, Gamification, and Virtual Reality) in Teaching English for Secondary School Students in Malaysia during COVID-19 Pandemic. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, **8**, 55-63. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2020.082307>
- [7] Ameen, L.G. (2021) The Effectiveness of Using a Dramatized Content through Augmented Reality to Improve English Language Fluency of High School Students. *Journal of Faculty of Education*, No. 126, Part (3).
- [8] Al-Oqaily, E.I. and Salam, A.R. (2022) The Use of Blackboard in the Practice of English Speaking Skills among Saudi EFL Learners during COVID-19. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)*, No. 2, 342-355.
- [9] Büyükkikiz, K.K., Tekin, A. and Yıldız, A.G. (2024) Research on Developing Speaking Skills in Teaching Turkish to Foreigner: An Evaluation of the Last Twenty Years. *RumeliDE Journal of Language and Literature Studies*, No. 38, 35-72.
- [10] Renandya, W.A. and Nguyen, M.T.T. (2022) Teaching Speaking in L2 Contexts. In: Hinkel, E., Ed., *Handbook of Practical Second Language Teaching and Learning*, Routledge, 269-280. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003106609-22>
- [11] Ahmed Al-Hassaani, A.M. and Mahmood Qaid Al-Saalmi, A.F. (2022) Saudi EFL Learners' Speaking Skills: Status, Challenges, and Solutions. *Arab World English Journal*, **13**, 328-337. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol13no2.22>
- [12] Karpovich, I., Sherdekina, O., Krepkina, T. and Voronova, L. (2021) The Use of

- Monologue Speaking Tasks to Improve First-Year Students' English-Speaking Skills. *Education Sciences*, **11**, Article No. 298. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11060298>
- [13] Tai, T., Chen, H.H. and Todd, G. (2020) The Impact of a Virtual Reality App on Adolescent EFL Learners' Vocabulary Learning. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, **35**, 892-917. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2020.1752735>
- [14] Kumar, T. (2021) "Desire to Learn, Learn to Shine": Idolizing Motivation in Enhancing Speaking Skill among L2 Learners. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences*, **16**, 411-422. <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v16i1.5542>
- [15] Rohmah, F.N. (2019) Developing Computer-Based Instructional Media for English Speaking Skill at Senior High School. *JET (Journal of English Teaching)*, **5**, 63-76. <https://doi.org/10.33541/jet.v5i1.960>
- [16] Walsh, D. and Downe, S. (2005) Meta-Synthesis Method for Qualitative Research: A Literature Review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, **50**, 204-211. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2005.03380.x>
- [17] Çalık, M. and Sözbilir, M. (2014) Parameters of Content Analysis. *Education and Science*, **39**, 33-38.
- [18] Çakmak, Z. and Taşkıran, C. (2020) Analysis of Studies in the Field of Social Studies Education in Turkey: A Meta-Synthesis Study. *International Journal of Turkish Literature Culture Education*, **9**, 1243-1261.
- [19] Sandelowski, M. and Barroso, J. (2006) Handbook for Synthesizing Qualitative Research. Springer Publishing.
- [20] Tong, A., Flemming, K., McInnes, E., Oliver, S. and Craig, J. (2012) Enhancing Transparency in Reporting the Synthesis of Qualitative Research: ENTREQ. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, **12**, Article No. 181. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-12-181>
- [21] Erwin, E.J., Brotherson, M.J. and Summers, J.A. (2011) Understanding Qualitative Metasynthesis: Issues and Opportunities in Early Childhood Intervention Research. *Journal of Early Intervention*, **33**, 186-200. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1053815111425493>
- [22] Chenail, R.J. (2011) Learning to Appraise the Quality of Qualitative Research Articles: A Contextualized Learning Object for Constructing Knowledge. *The Qualitative Report*, **16**, 236-248.
- [23] Miles, B.M. and Huberman, M.A. (2016) Qualitative Data Analysis (Translate Editors: S. Akbaba Altun ve A. Ersoy). Pegem Akademi. (2. Baskıdan Çeviri)
- [24] Ironsi, C.S. (2023) Investigating the Use of Virtual Reality to Improve Speaking Skills: Insights from Students and Teachers. *Smart Learning Environments*, **10**, Article No. 53. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-023-00272-8>
- [25] Lyu, Y. (2019) Using Gamification and Augmented Reality to Encourage Japanese Second Language Students to Speak English. Degree Project in Computer Science and Engineering, Second Cycle, 30 Credits, 2019.
- [26] Taskiran, A. (2018) The Effect of Augmented Reality Games on English as Foreign Language Motivation. *E-Learning and Digital Media*, **16**, 122-135. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2042753018817541>
- [27] Bayotas, C.V.D. (2023) Effects of Video Recording Platform (Flipgrid) on English as Second Language Students' Oral Performance. *European Journal of Theoretical and Applied Sciences*, **1**, 857-873. [https://doi.org/10.59324/ejtas.2023.1\(5\).72](https://doi.org/10.59324/ejtas.2023.1(5).72)
- [28] Acar, F. and Arslan, R.Ş. (2023) Enhancing Critical Thinking and English-Speaking Skills of Gifted Students through Philosophy for Children Approach. *International*

- Journal of Assessment Tools in Education*, **10**, 345-375.
<https://doi.org/10.21449/ijate.1267223>
- [29] Alkan, H. and Bümen, N.T. (2020) Action Research on Developing English Speaking Skills through Asynchronous Online Learning. *International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*, **12**, 127-148.
 - [30] Zhu, J., Zhang, X. and Li, J. (2022) Using AR Filters in L2 Pronunciation Training: Practice, Perfection, and Willingness to Share. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, **37**, 1364-1396. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2022.2080716>
 - [31] Albogami, A. and Algethami, G. (2022) Exploring the Use of Whatsapp for Teaching Speaking to English Language Learners: A Case Study. *Arab World English Journal*, No. 2, 183-201. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/covid2.12>
 - [32] Mykytiuk, S., Lysytska, O., Melnikova, T. and Mykytiuk, S. (2022) Facebook as a Flexible Ubiquitous Learning Space for Developing Speaking Skills. *IAFOR Journal of Education*, **10**, 109-133. <https://doi.org/10.22492/ije.10.1.06>
 - [33] Shahini, G. and Shahamirian, F. (2017) Improving English Speaking Fluency: The Role of Six Factors. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, **8**, 100-104. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.8n.6p.100>
 - [34] Çetin Köroğlu, Z. and Öz, G. (2023) Pre-Service English Teachers' Speaking Skills Assessment Literacy: Transformation to Digital Assessment. *The Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal*, **23**, 1-17.
 - [35] Sun, Z., Lin, C., You, J., Shen, H.J., Qi, S. and Luo, L. (2017) Improving the English-Speaking Skills of Young Learners through Mobile Social Networking. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, **30**, 304-324. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2017.1308384>
 - [36] Pitura, J. (2021) Developing L2 Speaking Skills in English-Medium EFL Higher Education. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, **16**, 118-143. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2021.1884688>