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**THE INFLUENCE OF VOKI ON LEARNERS' SPEAKING SKILL IN THE EFL
CONTEXT: A CASE STUDY WITH YOUNG LEARNERS**

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DEDICATION



To my beloved family...

ETHICS DECLARATION**Student's****Name & Surname :** Esen Gamze İSTİFANOĞLU**Number :** 20188039**Department :** English Language Education**Program :**

Master Thesis (√) Ph.D. Thesis()

Thesis Title: The Influence Of Vokı On Learners' Speaking Skill In The Efl
Context: A Case Study With Young Learners

I hereby declare that;

I prepared this master thesis in accordance with Çağ University Institute of Social
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I prepared this thesis within the framework of academic and ethics rules,

I presented all information, documents, evaluations and findings in accordance with
scientific ethical and moral principles,

I cited all sources to which I made reference in my thesis,

The work of art in this thesis is original,

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case of any circumstance contradicting with my declaration)

16 / 06 / 2020

Esen Gamze İSTİFANOĞLU

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ABSTRACT**THE INFLUENCE OF VOKI ON LEARNERS' SPEAKING SKILL IN THE EFL
CONTEXT: A CASE STUDY WITH YOUNG LEARNERS****Esen Gamze İSTİFANOĞLU****Master Thesis, Department of English Language Education****Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Şehnaz ŞAHİNKARAKAŞ****June 2020, 100 pages**

The aim of this study is to see the influence of Web 2.0 tool VOKI on learners' speaking skills in the foreign language environment. The research was designed as a case study. The participants of the study were twelve 5th grade students at a private school in Mersin. To collect data, poster presentations, Voki voice-recordings, teacher journals, and student interviews were conducted. To analyze the quantitative data, both analytic and holistic speaking rubrics were used for poster presentations and Voki voice-recordings. As for the qualitative data, content analysis for the interview and narrations were used. As a conclusion of the study, significant development, and an increase in confidence in students' speaking skills were observed.

Keywords: Blended learning, Digital natives, Speaking skill, Voki.

ÖZET**VOKI'NİN İNGİLİZCE'Yİ YABANCI DİL OLARAK ÖĞRENME
ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ: ÇOCUKLAR ÜZERİNE BİR ALAN ÇALIŞMASI****Esen Gamze İSTİFANOĞLU****Yüksek Lisans Tezi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı****Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Şehnaz ŞAHİNKARAKAŞ****Haziran 2020, 100 sayfa**

Bu çalışmanın amacı yabancı dil eğitiminde Web 2.0 araçlarından Voki'nin öğrencilerin konuşma becerileri üzerine yaptığı etkiye bakmaktır. Bu araştırma vaka çalışması olarak dizayn edilmiştir. Araştırmaya Mersin'deki özel bir okuldaki 5. sınıftan on iki öğrenci katılmıştır. Veri toplamak için, poster sunumları, öğretmen günceleri ve öğrenci röportajı uygulanmıştır. Nicel verilerden Voki ses kayıtları ve poster sunumlarını analiz etmek için hem analitik, hem de bütünsel rubrik kullanılmıştır. Nitel verilerden röportajı analiz etmek için içerik analizi ve betimlemeler kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın sonucunda, öğrencilerin konuşma becerilerinde belirgin bir gelişme ve özgüvenlerinde artış gözlemlenmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Harmanlanmış öğrenme, Dijital yerliler, Konuşma becerileri, Voki.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BL	: Blended Learning
CAL	: Computer Assisted Learning
CEFR	: Common European Framework
EFA	: Exploratory Factor Analysis
EFL	: English as a Foreign Language
F2F	: Face to Face
HL	: Hybrid Learning
ICT	: Information of Communication Technology
L1	: First Language
L2	: Second Language
SPSS	: Statistical Package of Social Sciences
WTC	: Willingness to Communicate

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CHAPTER I

1.INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study and research questions, and the significance of the study.

1.2. Background of the Study

In the last decades, with the rapid development of technology, the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners's needs and teachers's way of teaching have changed accordingly. As Cetron and Davies (1994) point out, we are surrounded by technology and language is not an exception. The Y and Z generations, who were born into the world of technology, are called 'Digital Natives'. Therefore, technology is a part of their daily lives and unavoidingly they have a demand of having technology integrated classes (Hockly, 2011). Together with the needs of 'digital natives generation', we face a new approach, called 'Blended Learning' (BL). According to Sharma and Barret (2007), BL refers to the combination of face-to-face (F2F) classroom and technology. In addition to that, 'how to blend' and 'what to blend' are two important key factors that need to be taken into account when blending the lectures.

Teaching four skills; reading, writing, listening and speaking in English is a long and difficult journey where the individual differences of the learners play an important role during this process. According to Ur (2012), speaking skill is the most important one among the other skills, which requires communication with the other users of the English language. In order to be able to communicate in an effective way, one needs to develop his/her speaking skills. However, since the learners are not exposed to English outside the classroom as much as they do in the language classrooms, it is crucial to help them meet opportunities outside the learning environment as well. As Al-Zedjali and Etherton (2009) claim, the books what the learners have seem to be the only place where they are exposed to English. Thus, in order to develop the learners's speaking skills, teachers have a big role, whereby creating opportunities to their learners, and having them being exposed to non-threatening language speaking environments so that they can have a chance to speak about what they feel and think (Willis, 1996).

Therefore, when taken into account the needs of digital native learner, technology integrated classrooms supplement face-to-face EFL classrooms that promotes more flexible learning and studying environment at their own pace. As Felix (2003) suggests, language learners find incorporated technology into face-to-face instruction more comfortable and that web-based activities help facilitate language learning with immediate feedback.

According to Biyaem (1997), learners face many obstacles while learning language and also have lack of confidence in speaking, partly due to their mispronunciation or not having been exposed to L2 (second language) in their daily lives. Promoting authentic materials and tasks to enhance 'speaking skills' in EFL classrooms are important for the learners to make connections with real world. Moreover, the affordances of BL for utilizing real-world issues and supporting learners and their relations are respected as underpins for true learning activities (Oliver, Herrington, & Reeves, 2014). One way of actively communicating is through speaking and as Khamkien (2010) infers, speaking skill is the most important one among the other skills in EFL learning and Wongsuwana (2006) rationalize that speaking skills can be trained. In the era of technology, speaking skills can be enhanced by using technology. As Prapphal (2003) infers, technology is not a substitute for a teacher but by means of instructions, it helps L2 learners communicate in the social environment. While applying BL into EFL classrooms to promote speaking skills, Web 2.0 tools provide learners with a wide range of opportunities where they could practice their speaking skills 'anywhere' and 'anytime', being independent from the teacher and as well as the four-walled classroom environment. 'Voki' and 'Voxopop' are some of the Web 2.0 tools that help learners improve their speaking skills online. Moreover, these tools also enable shy and silent learners in class who do not want to respond, or interact with peers and their EFL teachers, can improve their speaking skills by creating their avatars and letting their avatars speak for themselves while they get the opportunity to correct their pronunciation mistakes. Moreover, they can have their voices recorded in disguise of some other avatar and then share it with peers and teachers as well. In addition to that, students get the chance to practice what is taught in class in a fun and creative way which then be evaluated and their speaking skill progress is measured by the EFL teacher of that particular class.

On the other hand, it is also important to understand the characteristics of the learners in the particular learning context. One can not teach the language to adults as

the same way he teaches to young learners, due to their educational needs and cognitive developments. The term 'Young learners' in methodology literature is referred to the children who are between 5 to 12 years of age (Afia & Kharbech, 2008). They undergo significant physical and cognitive changes, therefore, their characteristics are different than the older learners (Cameron, 2003). So, it is vital for the teachers to understand their learners before designing their courses.

Young learners are energetic and curious in nature and they enjoy exploring new things and learn by actively involving in the language activities. In line with this idea, McCloskey (2002) suggests that, enjoyable language activities need to be provided to learners where they could get a chance to actively participate and practice L2 through collaboration with the scaffolding of the teacher. Since their educational needs and the way they process information are different than the older ones, more visuals and realia need to be integrated into the L2 environment (Shin, 2007) so as to give opportunities to the learners to use their imagination and creativity at the same time.

Bearing in mind that the young learners have short attention span, fifteen to twenty minutes, multiple activities need to be blended into the learning context to keep the interaction going. Philips (2001) suggests that the activities need to be clear and simple so that the learners could understand what is expected from them, and the focus of the activities should be on the meaning and appropriate to their age and interest (Peck, 2001). So, teachers need to implement various teaching methods and styles in order to ensure the continuity of attention and motivation of the young learners, whereby helping them to get actively involved in the learning process.

All in all, with the blending of technology integrated classrooms and face-to-face (F2F) classrooms in the EFL context, learners get a chance to practice their speaking skills in a more positive and more creative way in a non-threatening learning environment. Thus, enabling them to get exposed to language 'anywhere' and 'anytime', could help learners demonstrate more autonomy, and self-regulate themselves which may promote their success in their speaking skills.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Speaking skill is mostly neglected in the EFL context, and more focus is allocated on the linguistic forms. Yet, learners are exposed to language only in traditional classroom environments without having enough time to practice their

speaking skills. They can read and write ; however, when it comes to speaking they do not have verbal production. Since English is accepted as the tool for communication in this century, learners need to be prepared for this world. Therefore, learners need more opportunities to use L2 both in and out of their learning environment.

Thus an effective way of developing students' speaking skills and preparing them for real-life situations is blending F2F learning and technology in the EFL environments where students can practice speaking 'anytime' and 'anywhere' without any time constraints.

1.4. Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this case study is to understand the role of 'Voki' on speaking skills of twelve 5th grade EFL learners at Gelecek College in Mersin. Within this purpose, the study intends to understand the learners' perceptions of using the Web 2.0 tool 'Voki' and its effects on their speaking skills in BL environments. Therefore, this study seeks answers to the following research questions:

- 1) What is the role of 'Voki' in students' speaking skills?
- 2) What do students think of 'Voki'?

1.5. Significance of the study

Since individual differences have an important role in L2 development in the 21st century, it is at the same time crucial for educators to understand the needs of the learners so as to help them better in their language learning journey.

As So & Brush (2008) suggest, blended learning is important in terms of facilitating online collaborative learning. So, blending face-to-face learning and technology in EFL classrooms to this century's learners could provide authentic materials, help them understand and use the language in real-life situations. When using technology in or out of their learning environment, the learners feel free of time and space without having any affective filters. Thus, leading especially weak or shy students, to have a chance to develop their speaking skills freely with no fear of judgment from the peers or the teachers. Felix (2003) states that L2 learners find themselves more comfortable in blended learning classrooms and they also believe that it facilitates their learning.

Thus, this study will provide information for EFL teachers in terms of 'what to blend', 'how to blend', and 'how much to blend' to develop the learners' speaking skills by using the Web 2.0 tool 'Voki' in the EFL context.



CHAPTER II

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

This chapter covers the theoretical basis of this research study. First, it defines speaking skills. Then, it defines blended learning and digital natives. At the end, the use of the Web 2.0 tools and 'Voki' are presented.

2.2. Speaking Skill

Exchanging words and thoughts through language and being qualified for speech is defined as 'speaking'. Sayed (2005) infers that speaking contains linguistic, psychological, social and cultural components that interweave with each other. As Nunan (2003) suggests, it is the systematic verbal utterances that a person produces to convey meaning. According to Harmer (2001), speaking has two significant categories, namely; accuracy (proper use of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation) and fluency (being able to speak automatically). Additionally, Lazaraton (2001), states that the learners need to develop four competencies to master in oral communication; 'strategic competence' (strategies to use in different conditions), 'sociolinguistic competence' (rules for interaction, turn taking), 'grammatical competence' (phonology, vocabulary, word and sentence formation) and 'discourse competence' (cohesion in a sentence). Zhang (2009) implies that speaking is the most difficult one and Ur (2012) argues that it is the most important skill among the other four skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) and which on the other hand hard to assess. Therefore, high priority should be given for developing speaking skills (Sobhi&Abdul, 2018).

It is inferred that speaking skill is not a talent but it is what can be trained (Wongsuwana, 2006). In line with the idea, Al-Abri (2008) points out that one way of training the speaking skill could be using different methods like memorization, using rhymes and chants, reading, having task-based activities, telling stories, engaging in on-line educational platforms and so forth. Besides these trainings and methods in literature, learners' WTC (willingness to communicate) is essential. As Dörnyei (2003) points out, L2 (second language) competence by itself is not enough. High WTC is associated with increased frequency and amount of communication (Richmond

&Roach, 1992). Because, without the desire of interaction, and the enthusiasm of communication, students may find it difficult to follow the tasks, learn more vocabulary, and develop their language skills in challenging language learning process.

Bashir, Azeem, and Dogar (2011) infer that there are four stages in language development by means of speaking skill, so learners in the first stage (pre-production) are just silent observers who are not ready to speak, in the second stage (early production), the learners try to speak some words which are mostly memorized chunks and are not constantly accurate, in stage three (speech emergence), the learners have a good selection of vocabulary and can ask simple questions related to daily topics although the structures might not be accurate all the time, and negotiation of the meaning is frequently required, and in stage four (intermediate fluency), the learners can use complex sentence structures, express thoughts and opinions while speaking and can ask for clarifications and understand most input in his language environment. In stage five (advanced stage), the learners have native-like performance and can have discussions from their repertoire of vocabulary without having preparation of a certain topic. Therefore, the stages of the learners need to be observed, and speaking topics and tasks need to be given accordingly.

Prabhu (1987) argues the importance of the use of authentic language rather than focusing on the form in his 'Task Based Learning' method. Long (1985, p.89) defines the task as "a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward". According to the levels of the learners, these tasks can be 'giving directions', 'ordering food', 'going on a road trip', or 'preparing a party'. All these tasks illustrate the authentic language use in EFL context. Kolb's 'Experiential Learning Theory' (1984) presents shared principles with Prahbu's 'Task Based Learning' theory in focusing on language use to develop speaking skills. It identifies learning as *"the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience"*. (Kolb, 1984, p.41) That is the experiential learning in which learners get the chance to learn a language by using it actively in communicative tasks. Also, teachers and learners have the opportunity to contribute together in learning process. Thus, the topics are selected and determined by the teacher, but on the other hand, the real-world use of the language is authentic and content is determined by the learner.

Zang (2009) points out that the teachers need to create opportunities and effective ways to develop learners' speaking skills. Nation and Newton (2009) suggest

that focusing on meaningful and relevant language, using interesting activities and creating interest, using simple language, providing as much comprehensible input as possible and creating a non-threatening learning environment can be a starting point. First and foremost, to take the attention of the learners, the topics in speaking classes should be carefully selected. They should be comprehensible and suitable for the learners' levels, otherwise forcing them too much might lead them to lose interest in speaking activities. As Haozhang (1997) claims, language teaching activities need to focus on improving the learners' maximum language use in the classroom, otherwise, as Scrivener (2005) points out, it is meaningless to know a language unless you can use it. They need to have opportunities to use the language, and assigning learners communicative tasks might be a rational way for developing their speaking skills, where as a group they could negotiate for the meaning (Harper, 1982), and force themselves to retrieve their L2 knowledge and produce output in interaction.

Language learning is a long and difficult journey that emerges through time, nonetheless 'speaking the language' even needs more time, practice and patience. Learners need time to process the comprehensible input, and throughout the time they internalize what they have learned, choose the correct linguistic forms and consequently produce orally. Because English is used as a tool for communication all around world (Boonkit, 2010), it is important to help learners develop their speaking skills. Therefore, as Willis (1998) points out, learners need a non-threatening atmosphere to say what they think, and when they feel they are not negatively evaluated by the teacher or the peers, will eventually feel comfortable enough to speak in the positive classroom environment where the focus is on the meaning, not just the language itself.

2.2.1. Factors that Cause Speaking Difficulties

For most of the EFL learners, 'speaking skill' is the most difficult one to master and most stressful one among the other four skills (Young, 1992). As Dil (2009) claims, EFL learners in Turkey suffer from anxiety and unwillingness while speaking English. Ur (1996) infers that there are many factors causing speaking difficulties in the L2 (second language) context; learners have the fear of being criticized by the peers or having fear of making mistakes in front of the class or some are shy, silent or have nothing to say. Furthermore, some classes are over-populated that the learners either do

not have enough chance to take the turn to express themselves orally or prefer to speak in L1(mother tongue) for it is much easier to use.

More importantly, as Littlewood (1984) suggests, some learners lack the necessary vocabulary to keep the interaction going and some learners might lack motivation to keep them embark on a task or devote themselves to it and how long they preserve. Furthermore, he also draws attention that communicative skills can only be developed when the learners have the motivation and opportunity to express themselves. However, learners do not have sufficient opportunities to practice the language in class and as Al-Abri (2008) points out, learners' speaking difficulties are strongly related to having insufficient oral activities in the text books.

Additionally, another factor that causes difficulty in developing speaking skills is the teaching strategy where oral production in some EFL classrooms might be neglected (Bozdoğan & Karlıdağ, 2012) and more emphasis is made on linguistic features. However, as Kumaravadivelu (2003) points out, language is learned when the focus of the learning is not on the linguistic features but on doing something with the language, understanding and using it. Therefore, more speaking opportunities should be provided to the learners in the language learning environments.

2.2.2. CEFR Speaking Skill

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is an international standard that is accepted by 25,000 organizations worldwide, for describing language ability which aims to encourage the L2 learners how to become critical thinkers, how to become better in communication and learn to help themselves and others become better learners of the language (Council of Europe, 2001a). More importantly to support L2 learning for all practitioners like educational administrators, teachers, learners, and course designers and also to have the mutual recognition basis for language capabilities in Europe (Council of Europe, 2001b). Believing that better communication leads people to mobility in their lives, its concern is 'how to improve communication'. Asking all practitioners, without answering them, to reflect on themselves by asking certain questions like 'what people do when they speak to each other or what enables them to do that act, or how language learning takes place' and so on (CEFR, 2001).

CEFR (2001) describes the language ability on a six-point scale A1; Breakthrough, A2; Waystage, B1; Threshold B2; Vantage, C1; Effective operational

proficiency and C2; Mastery. CEFR infers that B1 level, Threshold learners who can introduce themselves, talk about their likes and dislikes, giving their address and telephone number, state their nationality, age and sex and understand similar information from the others. Additionally, according to CEFR criteria, the oral assessment may be categorized as sociolinguistic competence, phonological control, grammatical accuracy, flexibility, turn-taking, and vocabulary range. Thus, to improve the speaking skill of the learners, communicative tasks play a crucial role and yet the instructor, as a mediator, needs to reflect upon the communicative needs of the learners and raise awareness of their needs as well. To follow through with the communicative tasks, learners need to encounter in communicative language activities and also regulate their communication strategies. Public address (information, instructions) can be an example of a speaking activity which may include reading aloud a written text, speaking from notes, or visual aids (diagrams, pictures, charts), acting out a rehearsed role, and speaking spontaneously.

Assessing one's speaking skill is difficult, however, assessing the scale for each level provided by CEFR makes assessing more clear and understandable. Thus, such a scale enables the assessor to focus on what specific parts of the speech he needs to lay stress on while listening.

2.3. Blended Learning

In the last decades, technology has changed dramatically. It surrounded all aspects of our lives, including educational settings. Through internet access, 'Information and Communication Technology' (ICT) offers multi-dimensional sources that address the learners' differences and makes learning possible 'anywhere and anytime'. The term 'Blended Learning' (BL) or 'Hybrid Learning' (HL) which refers employing face-to-face (F2F) or traditional learning and online learning has become the 'buzzword' in educational settings. Thorne (2003) infers that BL is one of the utmost educational headways in this century due to its contribution to learners' learning experiences and involving them more in the learning process. BL is essentially based on e-learning experiences that emerged in the 1990s and since then different scholars defined it from different perspectives.

Horton (2006) defines e-learning as the use of ICT to provide learning opportunities for the learners whereas Ellis, Gins, & Piggott (2009) define ICT as the

tool that scaffolds learning. On the other hand, according to Stockley (2003, p.1), e-learning is "the delivery of a learning, training or educational program by electronic means." Macdonald (2008) defines BL as adopting a principled way of strategies to fulfill the needs of the learners as well as to maintain the objectives of the lessons. Aguilar (2012) defines BL as a combination of F2F and on-line learning supported by ICT. Neumier (2002) defines it as F2F and 'Computer Assisted Learning' (CAL). Yet, the more common way of describing BL is the 'blending F2F teaching with on-line technology materials'; internet, interactive whiteboards, and Web 2.0 tools, to optimize the learning outcome (Singh & Reed, 2001).

These definitions suggest that e-learning creates learning opportunities for the learners as they could access information easily and arrange their learning zone, and BL combines F2F and on-line teaching to provide learners a flexible, effective and convenient learning environment (Stein & Graham, 2014). Unlike in the past decades where F2F and on-line learning were identified as two different modes, teacher-directed and self-directed learning environments, BL combines both modes. Thus, as Graham (2006) infers, using the word 'BL' instead of 'learning' will become normalized in educational settings.

2.3.1. Contribution of BL on Learners

The concept of 'Blended Learning' suggests that F2F teaching can be blended with the advantages of the technology and it can enhance the learning process in the modern educational context when blended right by the teacher according to the needs of the learners. As Banados (2006) infers, learners are autonomous and they have their responsibility in the learning process in which they participate actively, and BL helps the learners take responsibility for their learning, self-regulate themselves, construct thinking abilities, and also helps them identify their strengths and weaknesses and do extra practice depending on those areas in the educational setting.

When taken into account the individual differences, the learners' demand for BL, their cognitive developments and their time management skills (Tabor, 2007), adopting BL environment with its time and place flexibility could help them master the language 'anywhere and anytime' (Masie, 2006). Moreover, it could provide them not only the chance to arrange their own study time and pace according to their learning needs (Stein & Graham, 2014), but could also help them interact more with the target language.

2.3.2. The Role of the Teacher in Blended Learning

The EFL learners in the 21st century do not learn in the same way as they did two decades ago. They were born into the technology world, therefore it is a natural process for them to use technology in their everyday lives, however, the case is different for the teachers who were not born into this world of technology (Kirschner & De Bruyckere, 2017). In this technology surrounded environment the teachers are expected to do a lot more than just teaching the curriculum (Banitt, Theis, & Van Leeuwe, 2013), but to be aware of the latest trends in educational technology, use them efficiently, and connect global and local community in educational settings (Kumaravadivelu, 2008).

Sharma (2007) infers that, the role of the teacher and the role of the technology need to be separated where the teacher has the lead role. In other words, it is the teacher who decides 'how much to blend' and 'what to blend' on a particular subject while bridging between F2F and on-line activities according to the needs of the EFL learners, finding the most efficient and effective blend to enhance the learning experience of the learners in a real-life context and leading them to become critical thinkers (Malik, 2013). Blending F2F and technology is neither easy nor to be taken lightly (Hoffman, 2002), so distinguishing BL from technology-enhanced design is crucial for teachers. As Garrison and Kanuka (2004) point out, designing a BL environment could not be as simple as blending just on-line and F2F courses but choosing the right implementation has a vital role therefore, it is important for teachers to become literate in this ever-changing technology world and they need to bear in mind that the role of technology in BL embraces *"a carrier of content, an instructional practice tool, a learning management tool, and a communication device"* (Nunan, 2013, pp. 142-143). As Marsh (2012) suggests, the teachers need to define the goals and carefully select which on-line resources to blend to make the learning progress more efficient and coherent in EFL classrooms, and to have an effective BL, teachers need to present the topic as a complement to F2F teaching, so that the learners can then practice it by using online platforms for follow up practice in self-study on their own pace (Singh, 2004).

Ionita and Asan (2003) infer that there is a change in the educators' perceptions due to the perpetual seeking to integrate technology into educational settings, thus technology use in L2 classrooms are no longer viewed as a complementary element but a vital one with multiple options to integrate into lessons. Therefore, the teachers must be acknowledged about the importance of their professional development (Vaughan,

2007) and they need to bear in mind that the responsibility as a teacher they carry is directly proportional with the technological developments (Starr-Glass, 2013). The success in any kind of innovation, namely on-line technology, is related to the teacher, how well he is to embrace new ideas and implement them in his educational setting (Commas-Quinn, 2011). Since the teacher is expected to fit a curriculum in which real-world and technology-rich expertise are required (Warner, Steffen & Cope, 2011), he needs to be skilled in his new professional identity that involves time and investment, and to be aware of the current equipment in ELT. As Freeman (1997) infers, learners view teachers as the symbol of the classroom and the institution, that can either make or part the total learning experience, therefore, as Johns and Shao (2011) suggest, teachers need to modify their teaching methods, integrate new technologies and adjust them according to the learners' needs.

2.3.3. Advantages of BL

According to Starr-Glass (2013), we are at the fifth stage of BL, called "intelligent flexible learning model" which indicates learning is possible 'anywhere' and 'anytime', and the main components of BL design as inferred by Garrison and Vaughan (2008, p.5) are *"thoughtfully integrating face-to-face and online learning"* and *"fundamentally rethinking the course design to optimize student engagement"*. When taken into account the change in the characteristics of today's learners, adopting BL design in education will lead them actively and collaboratively participate in the learning environment (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). As Thorne (2003) infers, BL could be this century's one of the most important educational advances for it improves learners' learning experience, and have learners involved more in the learning process (Wang, Shen, Novak, & Pan, 2009).

With its schematized digital tools, unlike the limited content of the textbooks, BL promotes real-world authenticity (Jones, 2006), and learners are exposed to activities that resemble real-life situations to be solved collaboratively, and with its 'anytime' and 'anywhere' flexibility, it enables learners to take responsibility for their learning over the content (Karim & Behrend, 2013). Again, BL designs, as Parra (2013) suggests, provide authentic group work activity with peer-to-peer interaction, and more importantly the learners get the opportunity to develop their 21st century language skills; 'communication', 'collaboration', 'creativity' and 'critical thinking' (Khan, 2005). Since

technology bridges the gap between their digital lives outside the classroom and their non-digital life in the classroom environment (Downes & Bishop 2012), Dawson (2012) points out that noticeable improvement of task engagement observed when the learners are allowed to use technology in the EFL context, and a noticeable improvement in learning observed when multiple instructional methods employed on learners who have different learning styles (King, 2009).

Adopting a 'Blended Learning' course design with its effective pedagogy and various types of learning tools may have a lot of advantages if blended right. Osguthrope and Graham (2003, p.231) pinpoint six rationales to adopt BL design in educational settings; 'pedagogical richness', 'access to knowledge', 'social interaction', 'personal agency', 'cost-effectiveness', and 'ease of revision'. Graham and Stein (2014) point out that BL is a part of the educational environment that benefits the learners and teachers with its providing access to knowledge, decreasing costs and easy accessibility to authentic materials. Additionally, it helps teachers to organize and monitor learners' learning as well as their progress in educational settings that might also change the quality of the learning environment (Garrison, 2011a). When considered the F2F learning environments, teacher is in the center, giving all the energy to establish control, giving feedback or checking the learners' comprehension, however as Garrison (2011b) points out, teachers could go beyond the traditional classroom by employing BL in educational settings and use their effectiveness in a better way in the limited classroom time where at some points class size may also become challenging. Moreover, in BL environments teachers can plan their courses according to the learners' individual needs. They, not only can support learners with after-class studies by assigning web-based activities depending on their educational needs, which will lead them to take control of their own learning process by going beyond the 'four-wall' learning environment and help them become autonomous learners, but also can scaffold them either in network base or in traditional F2F classroom settings, which are the basic principles in BL environments (Phipps & Meriotis, 2000).

2.3.4. Drawbacks of BL

Blended learning environment holds many advantages and innovative approaches, however, it may also bring some challenges for the students, teachers and administrators. Jokinen and Mikkonen (2013) point out that the teachers should be aware

of the drawbacks of BL while preparing content and implementing it, and they should help learners who are unwilling to accept a new approach. When taken into account the demand in BL, the administrators might have a lot of work since they need to develop instructional materials both for F2F and BL environments at the same time (Graham, 2006). Additionally, some research findings demonstrate that some challenges in BL might arise due to the heavy paperwork of the teachers, learners' not fulfilling their responsibilities, not attending classes, having a lack of internet connection and technological skills (Koç, 2016; İnce, 2015).

Having technology-integrated learning environment does not equally mean that the learners can get a high-quality education since there are multiple factors, namely; the context of the learners, the demands and expectations, the materials and resources, which determine the appropriateness of it (Poole, 2003), and it may not be always easy to adopt technological changes in one's educational environment when taken into account the learners' different educational backgrounds and individual differences.

Since there is an infinite number of on-line and Web 2.0 tools particularly designed for both learners and teachers, selecting the right blend for course design, as well as the objectives in BL environments, is a confusing matter (Bath & Bourke, 2010). From the perspective of pedagogy, the instructors need to select the activities carefully, decide 'what to blend', 'how to blend' and 'how much to blend' regarding the learners' needs and course objectives. Therefore, to fulfill the requirements of a BL course design, teachers need to be trained on what BL is, as well as how technology could be employed efficiently (Rubio & Thomas, 2014). Moreover, teachers should also scaffold learners, regarding the innovative technology tools which they are exposed to (Eugenia, 2010a). As Starr-Glass (2013) infers, adopting technology-enhanced learning environment as a complement to F2F learning, requires meaningful consideration about the design of the course as well as the interaction between the teacher and the learner otherwise, if the teacher is dependent only on multimedia tools while delivering the course, he may lose his key role as a facilitator and might create a lack of peer-peer and learner-teacher interaction where there is no active and communicative participation of the learner viewed in the learning environment. As Warschauer (2000) points out, maximum affordances for authentic social interaction need to be provided to learners otherwise, it may lead them to isolation and lack of social interaction with the peers in the classroom if not blended correctly by the teacher.

Additionally, when considered the required technical skills to use the technological tools efficiently, there are some technical obstacles that both learners and teachers need to overcome. Eugenia (2010b) infers that teachers need to bear in mind that the obstacles might arise because of having not enough technological skills, participation and time conflicts which might frustrate the learners. Therefore, teachers should learn about technological infrastructure and organizational perspectives (Graham, 2006).

2.4. Digital Natives

There are different terms used in describing today's learners. Oblinger & Oblinger (2005) and Tapscott (1997) call them "Net-Generation", "iGeneration" (Rosan, 2007), Gardner and Davis (2013); "App Generation", Strauss and Howe (2000); "Millennials" and the term "Digital Natives" coined by Prensky (2001). 'Digital Natives' are the ones who were born before 1984 and who have different learning styles and unique digital needs to be provided by the institution (Nesbit, 2007).

Tabscot (2009) infers that there is a change in the model of pedagogy, from a teacher-centered; information-based model to learner-centered; collaborative model. Therefore, it is important to understand the change in pedagogy as well as the characteristics and the needs of the 'Digital Natives'. As Prensky (2001) points out, this era's learners characterize the very generation who were born and grown up with digital age tools like cell phones, computers, and video games, so that their educational needs and learning styles are different from the other generations. Bennett, Maton, and Kervin (2008) claim that the distinctive characteristics of the 'Digital Natives' can be their knowledge and skill possessing with information technologies, and as a consequence of their upbringing in the technology surrounded environment, they have particular learning preferences compared to earlier generations called 'Digital Immigrants', who were born before 1980 (Prensky, 2001). Because they are born in this technology world, they are skilled in technology and it is an irreplaceable part of their daily lives. Oblinger (2005) points out that these tech-savvy learners carry their technological devices (i-pads, mobile phones, tablets) wherever they go and use them for socializing, learning and other types of activities. He also adds that they have immediate access to knowledge 'anytime' and 'anywhere', so that they do not wait for anyone to reply to their questions but search for themselves. As Brown (2000) infers, these learners are

'multiprocessing' information and are also multi-taskers who can manage several things all at the same time (using the computer, talking on the cell phone and so forth).

According to Prensky (2001), today's educational system is not designed to teach these 'Digital Natives', and he also points out that the technology gap between today's learners and the teachers creates dissatisfaction which can be identified as a huge problem in educational settings. Underwood (2007) sees this gap as a 'digital disconnect' between the 'Digital Natives' and the 'instructors' which is hard to bridge. As Prensky (2005) infers, these learners are very much engaged in technology, they have high digital competence and fluency in the digital language of computers, however, they are educated by the 'Digital Immigrants' who do not speak the same language. Frand (2000) claims that the 'digital immigrant' teachers deliver the lessons in a more traditional way, and adds that such delivery of the lessons does not embrace the learners' needs who are dependent on communication technologies to socialize and reach for knowledge.

2.5. Use of Web 2.0 Tools in ELT

With the advances in computer technology, computers have become a source of authentic materials and a basic medium of communication, thus, new possibilities in foreign language teaching have occurred (Kern & Warschauer, 2000, p.3). A good example of the new possibilities is the Web 2.0 tools. It is a term coined by Tim O'Reilly in 2004, which entails web-based tools namely, blogs, podcasts, wikis, social networking sites, video/photo sharing, and so forth (Solomon & Schrum, 2007). The educational technology is any vehicle of communication with the learners other than F2F communication and which entwines tools as well as equipment like programs, monitors, networks, projectors, software, the expertise to apply and understand them all effectively (Bates & Poole, 2003). Its high-speed wireless and mobile connections, free downloadable or usable software, and user-generated content enable learners and teachers to access knowledge and share their content like, interactive presentations with other people. Therefore, the Web 2.0 users are who can share and publish materials and communicate with others actively.

Nowadays rich learning environments are easily provided for the learners through technological tools (Stockwell, 2010) and the concept behind Web 2.0 tools is the rich web applications that can be easily used which do not require any programming

or design skills but provide a more creative learning environment (Dudney & Hockley, 2012). According to Ching and Hsu (2011, p.781), the characteristics of Web 2.0 technologies can be categorized as "powerful organization, simplified collaboration, automatic dissemination, and enhanced interactivity". As the skills required for 21st-century learners are 4Cs; 'critical thinking', 'creativity', 'communication' and 'collaboration', it is likely that L2 learners can develop them through Web 2.0 practices since it provides active participation of the learners and multi-way communication opportunities through authentic, real-life materials where the Web 2.0 users become active content creators rather than just staying common internet users (Glimor, 2004). Considering the learning barriers that the learners create due to their anxiety and the fear of judgment by the peers or teachers, it can be inferred that the Web 2.0 tools promote communication in a stress-free environment for the learners which they can exist with their avatars, profiles and their connections as well (Gray, 2012). Thus, it can be inferred that this globalization and digitization have redefined language education as to 'who to' and 'how-to' communicate (Lotherington & Jenson, 2011) that provide lots of different types of learning styles, fun and creative activities that take the learners' interest. Moreover, Stein and Graham (2014) suggest that the learners' spending more time on useful websites of the course might be due to the immediate feedback they are provided and access to knowledge. So, one of the advantages of using Web 2.0 tools is that they provide different types of images, animations, graphics, and sounds that attract the learners better than the printed materials. As Shotlekov (2008) infers, they allow learners to be more active and creative thus leading them to be responsible for their own learning 'anytime' and 'anywhere'.

Today, learners and teachers have a great chance to explore the language. Since the development of Web 2.0 tools has changed the traditional way of learning, education needs to be reconsidered in terms of a more current context (White, 2010) and educational institutions should make necessary modifications to keep up with the new developments both in technology and education (Littlejohn & Pegler, 2007). The changes in the trends in EFL teaching have significant growth of literature regarding technology use in ELT. The world is globalized and digitized (Brown, Lauder & Ashton, 2008), therefore as Varis (2007a) infers, such change has some consequences and requirements in the educational settings. Technology in this sense is accepted the most vital part in language teaching so, recently L2 textbooks have included interactive on-line components that enable teachers to decide flexibly what to teach both in and out

of the class (Rubio & Thomas, 2014). Since technology provides interesting, real-life sources, it is important to integrate them in L2 teaching to enhance learning. Thus, Varis (2007b) claims, digital literacy and professional development should be supported for implementing life long learning and accessibility, and connectivity should be supplied by the schools and governments in terms of removing barriers.

AsDrexler (2010) points out, Web 2.0 tools enable learners to exceed the 'traditionally defined classroom concept' that might direct the learners to greater learner autonomy. Traditionally learning environments are identified with a physical location like a classroom, school and so forth, however, the understanding of a learning environment in today's world is no longer identified like before, it is easy to create educational settings outside the classroom by carefully selected Web 2.0 tools by the teachers. Therefore, both teachers and learners need to be skilled in this digital age. Thus, to develop one's self in this digital age, Lemke (2003) provides a framework in which four skills are identified through four dimensions. The first dimension is the 'digital-age literacy', that is being competent in using digital tools and evaluate information, the second one is the 'inventive thinking' which is related with the learners' cognitive abilities to use technology in more complex situations and being aware of the consequences of it, the third one is the 'effective communication' that involves written or oral dispatch with others while applying technological tools, and the last one is the 'high productivity' in which the learner is expected to prioritize, organize and handle the output.

As Dogoriti (2010) claims, Web 2.0 tools, in term of delivering authentic materials like texts, images, sound, and video recordings and interactive presentations, are due to their multimedia nature that aid for efficient collaboration and communication (Kayler & Weller, 2007). Therefore, more positive individual learning behavior observed when learners have technology equipped EFL classes (Liaw, 2002). However, Web 2.0 tools do not alone guarantee language learning. They are complementary tools to help enhance language learning in a more creative, collaborative, communicative, and fun way that can be helpful to learners in the hands of knowledgeable language teachers. Therefore, the teachers need to pre-select the tools according to the pedagogical needs of the learners as well as the objectives of the lessons.

2.6. Web tool 'Voki' in the EFL Context

In this globalization era, English is spoken all around the world, even there are more non-native speakers than the native ones (Gradol, 2000). Since English is the international language, educators try to find more effective ways to improve the EFL learners' language skills where communication is the major point. Thus, to communicate properly in this global world, learners need to develop their EFL speaking skills efficiently.

In today's internet world, almost every school has a wifi connection, some have smartboards or projectors in the classrooms to use technology in the educational settings. To fulfill the 21st century EFL learner's needs, it is crucial to use technology in and out of the classrooms. Thus, providing them more learning opportunities where they can use the language 'anytime' and 'anywhere' without any time limitations.

Since it is significant for the 'digital native learners' to use technology, the curriculum designers and technology producers have come up with multiple options and solutions and applications to integrate the learners more into language learning. One of the useful technology tools to develop the learners' speaking skills is 'Voki'. 'Voki' is a fun and creative way of providing learners opportunities to improve their speaking skills while teachers follow their progress (Schrock, 2012). It is an innovational Web 2.0 tool that has three sections; Free Voki, Voki Classroom, and Voki Presenter. Among the three sections 'Free Voki' is more suitable for individual study whereas 'Voki Classroom' and 'Voki Presenter' are more suitable for the teacher use. 'Voki' enables learners to record their voices by personalized avatars; which are in the forms of historical characters, animals, and even themselves. The learners can also select the background view, clothing, and hairstyle by which identifying themselves with an avatar. In addition to that, they could choose which character to speak for themselves and develop their speaking skills in a fun and creative way. Turrent (OUP ELT, 2015) points out that it also have learners create fun listening activities by using their special made avatars to represent themselves or a historic character. Since there is a 60 seconds time limit in 'Voki', learners need to organize their thoughts carefully so that within that time they could complete their voice recording which they can listen to it for multiple times. If they think they need to record again, they can re-record it as many times as they wish and share it with their peers or teachers.

Picardo (2003) claims that 'Voki' helps learners improve their language learning; the learners make more utterances of words, use conjunctions, and it increases the confidence in speaking. It is inferred that the more EFL learners practice their speaking skills by using 'Voki' the more they will become fluent in speaking. Estaban (2013) points out many advantages of using 'Voki'; a) since there are many different accents available, learners can get the chance to differentiate some accents, b) it is accessed easily, so it makes it possible for the learners to use it in and out of the classroom, and it helps learners to take their responsibility in learning and decide how much time they want to spend on the recording, c) more importantly, it makes shy learners get involved more in the speaking process- shy learners who do not want their voices heard in front of the class benefit a lot when recording their voices individually and get a chance to record and re-record their voices until they are satisfied which lead them to develop their speaking skills. Additionally, it facilitates the transition between teacher-centered classrooms to the learner-centered classroom, which is a vital aspect in the EFL context.

CHAPTER III

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction to Methodology

This chapter encloses the detailed methodological part of the research study. The context and the participants of the study, research design, data collection instruments and data analysis are presented.

3.2. The Context and the Participants of the Study

This case study was conducted at Gelecek Schools Yenişehir Campus in Mersin. The participants were twelve 5th grade students of age ten, among four females and nine males. Five of the students came to Yenişehir Campus from Mezitli Campus, and the rest of the students came from other private schools in Mersin. This year was their first year in secondary school, and they had 14 hours of English per week. They took a placement test before the school had started, and according to CEFR (Common European Framework) criteria, the participants' English level was A1.

Additionally, to be able to conduct the study, the ethics committee approval form was taken from Çağ University (See Appendix 1), and the administrative consent form was taken from Gelecek Schools' administration (See Appendix 2).

3.3. Case Study as a Research Design

Researchers have the freedom to choose the best methods and techniques that explain their objectives and meet their needs (Creswell, 2003). Thus, to understand the role of Web 2.0 tool Voki on speaking skills, and since the study was held in a particular classroom context, a mixed-method case study was applied in this study. Creswell (2011) points out that mixed methods exploit the strength of both qualitative and quantitative researches and facilitate cross-case analysis.

Hence case studies are empirical, intensive, and holistic studies, trying to investigate the phenomenon by "how" and "why" questions within real-life situations, it was most suitable for this study. So, during the process, learners were observed, voice-recorded in their natural classroom setting, and to obtain richer data, teacher journals were kept. As Yin (1998) suggests, among qualitative research methods, a case study is

the most frequently used one and he also indicates that notwithstanding whether one favors quantitative or qualitative research, there is solid and basic common ground between the two. In line with the idea, both qualitative and quantitative data were compared to see if there were any differences or similarities that occurred in the outcome.

3.4. Data Collection Instruments and Data Analysis

In order to collect data, both qualitative and quantitative tools were used during the study. The study searches for answers to two research questions, and to make it explicit, data collection tools and data analysis techniques are given in *Table 1*.

Table 1.

Data Collection Instruments and Data Analysis

RQ	Instrument	Analysis
1. What is the role of 'Voki' on students' speaking skills?	Speaking Rubric	Analytic
	Holistic Rubric	Analytic
	Teacher Journal	Narrative
2. What do the students think about 'Voki'?	Interview	Coding

As seen in Table 1, during the poster presentations of the students, the analytic speaking rubric that the school has been using, was used as a quantitative data tool (See Appendix 3). The rubric consisted of five criteria: Task Completion, Comprehensibility, Fluency, Pronunciation, Vocabulary, and Grammar. The five-point likert scale in the rubric rated as: '1-2; Does not approach expectations', '3; Approaching expectations', '4;Meets expectations', '5; Exceeds expectations'. The students delivered seven poster presentations in total. The three of them were delivered in the first trimester of the study (September - November), which was 'Pre-Voki' period, and four of them in the second trimester December - February) which was 'While-Voki' period. To have a clear view of the poster presentations, 'the speaking tasks', and 'the dates' are given in *Table 2*.

Table 2.

Poster Presentations

Tasks	Dates
1. All About Me	September 16 th
2. My Favorite Season	October 22 nd
3. Giving Directions	November 12 th
4. Possessions	December 12 th
5. Festivals	January 7 th
6. Chores	January 13 th
7. A Great Day Out	February 25 th

As seen in Table 2, to observe the speaking skills development of the students at regular intervals, seven poster presentations were assigned to the students throughout the study. In each task, the students were expected to use certain vocabulary, and express their thoughts freely, therefore the main focus was not on grammar but conveying the message. During the poster presentations, the researcher and a co-observer filled the rubrics synchronously for validation of the data. Later on, SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used to analyze the quantitative data statistically.

Secondly, the students were assigned 11 'Voki' voice-recording tasks with common topics covered in the class book on weekly bases throughout the second trimester of the study, which was 'While-Voki' period. To have a clear view, the task names and the dates are given in *Table 3*.

Table 3.

Voki Tasks

Name of the tasks	Dates
1. All about me	December 3 rd
2. Chores	December 10 th
3. A great day out	January 2 nd
4. Favorite holiday	January 9 th
5. Possessions	January 15 th
6. Favorite spors	January 16 th
7. Winter break holiday	February 4 th
8. How do we learn things	February 11 th
9. What do you find entertaining	February 18 th
10. A great day out	February 25 th
11. A review of a place	March 3 rd

For each task, they were allocated 'one-minute' for speaking. So, they had to clear their thoughts and present them within the allocated time. Since we wanted to assess the students' overall performances, a holistic rubric, which was adapted from Mertler (2001), was used for quantitative analysis. Oral proficiency scoring categories in the holistic rubric consisted of five parts, and scores ranging from 0 to 5 the highest (See Appendix 4). Each recording of the students was listened to by the researcher, and the voice-recorded data was assessed while listening to them.

For the qualitative part of the first research question, to have rich data, the researcher kept a teacher journal and wrote down the observations regarding holistic purposes and the developmental process of the students' speaking skills at regular intervals. The data was then used for the narrative analysis of the research (See Appendix 5)

As Merrel and Williams (1994) point out, the principal data collecting tool in qualitative research is the interview, therefore to answer the second research question, informal face to face learner interviews, which consisted of five semi-structured questions, were conducted for the qualitative phase of the study (See Appendix 6). To have a deeper understanding of the students' views about using Voki in the EFL context, and to avoid any misunderstandings, the researcher asked the interview questions in the

native language, Turkish. Later on, it was translated into English. The interview was recorded by the researcher's smartphone and then transcribed verbatim. The cross-check of the transcribed interview was done by another English teacher who had fifteen years of experience in the ELT field. In order not to get influenced by each other, all the questions were asked independently to the students, and the students answered the interview questions almost within two to three minutes. To avoid any miscodings, the gathered data was then analyzed by coding and re-coding by the same English teacher.

3.5. Trustworthiness

This study adopted both qualitative and quantitative design. As Denzin (1978), suggests triangulation in a qualitative study is a validation strategy that enables the narrated phenomena to be seen from different perspectives while eliminating any possible threats to the validity of the research. Thus, to ensure the trustworthiness and validity of this case study, multiple data sources were gathered; teacher journals, voice-recordings of the students during presentations, informal face to face interviews with the participants, online speaking tasks. The data then coded and re-coded together with a co-teacher, and the speaking rubrics were filled together with a co-observer.

Additionally, as it is inferred by Leung (2015) that the reliability in quantitative studies refers to not just the exact replicability but also the results of it. Therefore, after the data was collected, the items were subjugated to (EFA) Exploratory Factor Analysis by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) in the validation process of the scale.

CHAPTER IV

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the quantitative and the qualitative findings of the study. The poster presentations, Voki voice-recordings and the interview findings are discussed in details and demonstrated by figures.

4.2. Quantitative Data Analysis

4.2.1. What is the Role of Voki on Students' Speaking Skills?

The purpose of this research question is to understand the role of Voki on students' speaking skills. To answer this research question analyticspeaking rubrics were used for poster presentations, holistic speaking rubrics were used for Voki voice-recordings, and the teacher journal was used for descriptions.

4.2.1.1. Pre-Voki Period / Poster Presentations (September-December)

The first days of school have always been tough and when taken into account the different educational backgrounds of the students, who had been going to other private schools until this school year, one can undoubtedly say that it is even tougher. Yet, having 5th graders who had just started secondary school and having some troubles with adjusting and adapting themselves to a new educational environment that made it even much tougher. Under these circumstances, we started our first lesson on 9th September. To make it more clear, the general speaking skills development of the students during the poster presentations is given in Figure 1.

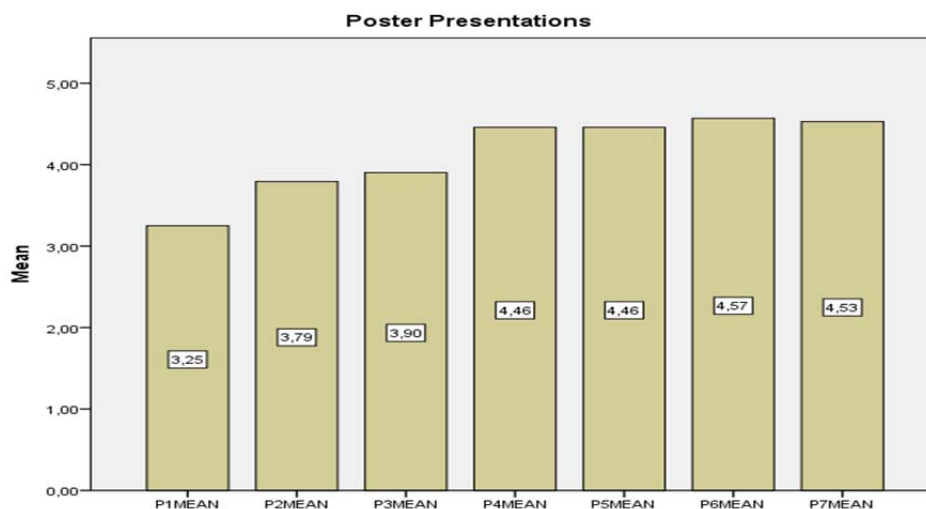


Figure 1. Speaking skill development of the students.

In the first week of the school, so as to have a deeper understanding of the students, I holistically observed all of them, took down notes about their characteristics, educational backgrounds, language levels as well as their families' educational backgrounds. There were especially three students who caught my attention (S3, S4, and S12) They were coming from different educational backgrounds, therefore, they were poor at all aspects of English; grammar, vocabulary, writing, and speaking. One could easily notice that they had difficulties in comprehending not only L2 but also the instructions in L1(Especially S12). S7, on the other hand, was a very talkative student who had a discrepancy between his 'actual self' and 'public self'. Although he had limited knowledge of English, he was mocking his friends when they answered incorrectly or saying "Oh, it's very easy", but in reality, he could not answer the questions easily, either. However, bearing in mind that too much forcing to get involved in speaking activities might demotivate them and since it was the first week of the school, I decided not to force them to speak so much, believing that they would start speaking whenever they felt comfortable enough, but kept observing them during the class activities, and their relationships with peers. Yet, there were also some students with high language competencies (S1, S9, S10) who really amazed me. They were quite confident while expressing their thoughts in L2 with minor grammar mistakes and with a high level of fluency. The rest of the students had an average English level and were mostly shy when addressed a question.

Believing in the vital role of 'speaking' in any language, which is the key aspect of communication, I explained to the students that in order to improve their 'speaking

skills', we were going to do 'poster presentations' every month. Some of the students were familiar with poster presentations from their previous schools, however, for some, it was quite a new thing. I did not want any of the students to feel threatened by a new idea, so I prepared a PowerPoint presentation (PPT) as an example of a poster presentation titled "All About Me" which contained 15 pictures related with my life; some pets, numbers, foods, sports activities and so forth. The aim of it was to encourage all the students to make a guess about me in a fun and creative way and speak in a positive language environment where there was no losing or winning any points. Regardless of their language levels, all the students tried to guess all the pictures in the PPT enthusiastically and came up with hilarious ideas that we laughed all together. So, at the end of the lesson, I asked them to prepare a 'poster presentation'; 'All About Me', just like mine, a PPT or on an A4 paper, without anything written on it but just some pictures to give us ideas about themselves; their likes and dislikes, their features, favorite colors, age, family members and so forth, and to give us an oral presentation the next week.

So, a week later, on September 16th, the students came to class with their poster presentations 'All About Me'. Some had PPT presentations and some had them on A4 paper, carefully drawn and colored. Surprisingly, some of them were so excited that they started trembling, so I needed to comfort them first and explained that they could start their presentations whenever they felt much calmer. Therefore, I asked the volunteers to start with their presentations first. The ones who volunteered were also the ones who had high language competencies, so they did not have any problems during their presentations. They fluently talked about themselves, giving as many details as they could and completed their task properly. However, the ones with limited vocabulary and grammar in L2 had difficulties during the 'poster presentation'. Let alone a sentence, some could hardly utter words. For instance, S12 could only say "*dog...mother...tennis...*". He hardly uttered these words with very long pauses and even with scaffolding, he could not manage to complete the presentation. S4, on the other hand, with long pauses managed to say "*blue..like colour.....dad 40...mum teacher...*" and in L1 she said that she could not complete it, so with a little scaffolding and encouragement she tried a little more, but hardly completed the task. S11, who had average English proficiency, asked for the meanings of some words in L1 during his presentation but managed to complete it, and at the end, he turned to me and said "*Mrs. Esen, I do good next time*" and I really appreciated him being so confident, as well as

his self-evaluation. On the other hand, S1, who has a high level of English, started as "Hello, my name is S1, I am 10 years old, I am going to talk about..." and completed her presentation with great fluency. While the students were giving their presentations, I filled up their speaking rubrics and filed them. Interestingly, filling up their speaking rubrics created excitement among the students and they all wondered their grades. I told them that they all did a terrific job and praised their efforts believing they would do better next time. What I realized all through these presentations was that, regardless of how many grammar or pronunciation mistakes they had made, all the students seemed so proud of giving an oral presentation in English, and I think this is what really matters. So, the average of the class in the first poster presentation as seen in Figure 1 was, 3.25 out of 5 and I think this could be directly related to some of the students' first time in giving a poster presentation and also it is still being the adaptation period to the new classroom environment.

On 23rd September, in speaking class, our topic was about "festivals". We watched a video about different festivals held in other countries and then tried to identify similarities and differences in the festivals between Turkey and in other cultures. I wrote down a list of words that the students told about the festivals and asked each student what they thought about the important features of a festival were. Again, the students with good command of English pointed out their views fluently, giving as many details as they could, however, the weak students had some trouble in speaking. S12, the weakest one, after I had tried scaffolding him from different perspectives, he could only say "*no festivals*". Therefore, to fill the language gap between the others, I decided to scaffold the weak students more. So, for four weeks every Monday after school and twice during the lunch breaks I studied with S3, S4, S5, and S12 (a very silent student but his English was a little better than the other three). In the beginning, they did not want an extra study, they simply rejected it, however, even after the first day of the study was over, they felt much confident and in the next day during the class, unexpectedly, they were as if touched by a magic wand, kept raising their hands and tried answering all the questions I asked, and volunteered in all the speaking activities that day. So, here I can say that their (WTC) willingness to communicate; that is one's readiness to enter into the discourse in L2 at a specific time with specific persons (MacIntyre et al, 1998), was directly proportional with their self-efficacy beliefs. Self-efficacy as Bandura (1997) suggests, is characterized as the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of actions to accomplish a pre-determined goal.

Thus, students with higher self-efficacy beliefs were more likely to motivate themselves and participate in speaking activities.

On 15th October, in speaking class, our topic was on 'seasons'. We talked about what kinds of activities we do in each season and the students made really good commands on it. This time, I observed that they were more confident in expressing their thoughts. S3, for example, who at the beginning of the term could hardly utter some words, this time tried forcing herself and said *"In the summertime I'm we go to the beach.....(pause) In winter time is we go sledding"*, which was clearly a huge step and a great language development for her. So, for the second 'poster presentation', I asked them to prepare a poster about their ' favorite season' for the following week.(I always assigned their poster presentations a week before they presented them so that they would have plenty of time for the preparations and would not feel anxious during the period.)

On 22nd October, the students gave their 2nd oral presentations about their "My favorite season". Different than the first one, all the students had written about their favorite season in their notebooks during the class which I, later on, corrected all of them, and gave feedback one by one. Yet, they were supposed to memorize it before the presentation day and come to class prepared. Moreover, on that day, we had a co-observer in class, a teacher trainer working at our school as head of the English Department, to grade the students. She sat at the back of the class with speaking rubrics and me in my regular place, in front of the classroom and we both filled the speaking rubrics separately. When the students saw the observer, they got really worried. Most of the students asked; *"Why is she here?" "Who is she?" "Is she going to give us grades?"*, *"What if we can't do well?"* This time not just me but she also tried to comfort them and explained that she was just a guest visiting their classroom, nothing to worry about. Putting myself in their shoes, I can totally understand them. Giving an oral presentation regarding their age might be difficult, yet having another person for observation is much more difficult than it sounds. Especially, the ones who had a low level of L2 got more anxious than the others. Therefore, the observer and I made some jokes and waited as they got relaxed. Later on, again we started with the volunteered students. However, while the volunteers were giving their presentations, I realized that the rest was not listening at all but working on their memorized texts. I felt that memorization created a kind of anxiety for the students. When the students came up in front of the classroom for their presentations, some kept forgetting the next sentence and asked if they could

start again. Concentrating only on the text rather than the visuals they had prepared beforehand, caused stress on most of the students. I even witnessed a student praying! (not to forget the sentences). This time their presentations were a little better than the first one, however, I could not help but wonder which was the best way, 'memorization' or 'spontaneity'. So, I figured memorization was good at a certain level, in terms of getting the outline, having a general understanding of the topic but for the rest, I thought it would be much better if they gave the presentations within a natural flow. Nonetheless, I can say that even the ones who had low L2 competencies, besides their excitement, the whole class seemed really enthusiastic in doing the presentations. After the class, the teacher trainer told me that we had a positive classroom environment and added that the students really enjoyed what they were doing. And I could not agree more. Yet there was a visible increasement in their language development, as seen in Figure 1, which was 3.79 out of 5, which might be because of memorization, getting used to the procedure, or the effects of the speaking activities we had completed in class up until the poster presentation.

On 12th November, the students did their 3rd poster presentations about "giving directions" starting from their house to a certain point as they wished. We had studied how to give directions during the class a week before their presentations. So, the students were familiar with it. Moreover, this time I did not ask them to memorize a text but to prepare a poster by using certain structures and vocabulary we had learned so far. Yet, we had a co-observer in the classroom, but this time the students did not feel as excited or worried as before. I believe that knowing the person and being familiar with the procedure had a positive effect on the students. None of them asked any questions about the co-observer or uttered any kind of negative feelings like the previous one. During the presentations, the students were calmer, and that visibly affected most of the students' oral presentations in a more positive way. So, when the speaking rubrics checked, one can clearly see the language development in these students. The average of the classroom on the third poster presentation, as seen in Figure 1, had increased to 3.90. Ones you have a positive classroom environment, and students know that they are not going to be judged or made fun of, they go with the flow and do their best in a natural classroom environment.

4.2.1.2. VokiImplementation and Poster Presentations- 'While-Voki' Period (3rd December- 17th January - 1st Term)

In this ever changing technology world there are various tools to apply in ELT classrooms to develop the language learners' skills. Yet, Web 2.0 tool 'Voki' is a fun and creative tool for developing 5th graders' "speaking skills" in BL environments. Since the aim of this research was to understand the effects of Voki on "speaking skills" in BL course designs, after having only poster presentations given by the students for three months period, we integrated a technological tool, Voki, as a complement to F2F learning environment and continued this study with both poster presentations and Voki voice recordings for three months. In this section, the first term is analyzed. To illustrate better, the developmental process of the students with Voki is given in Figure 2.

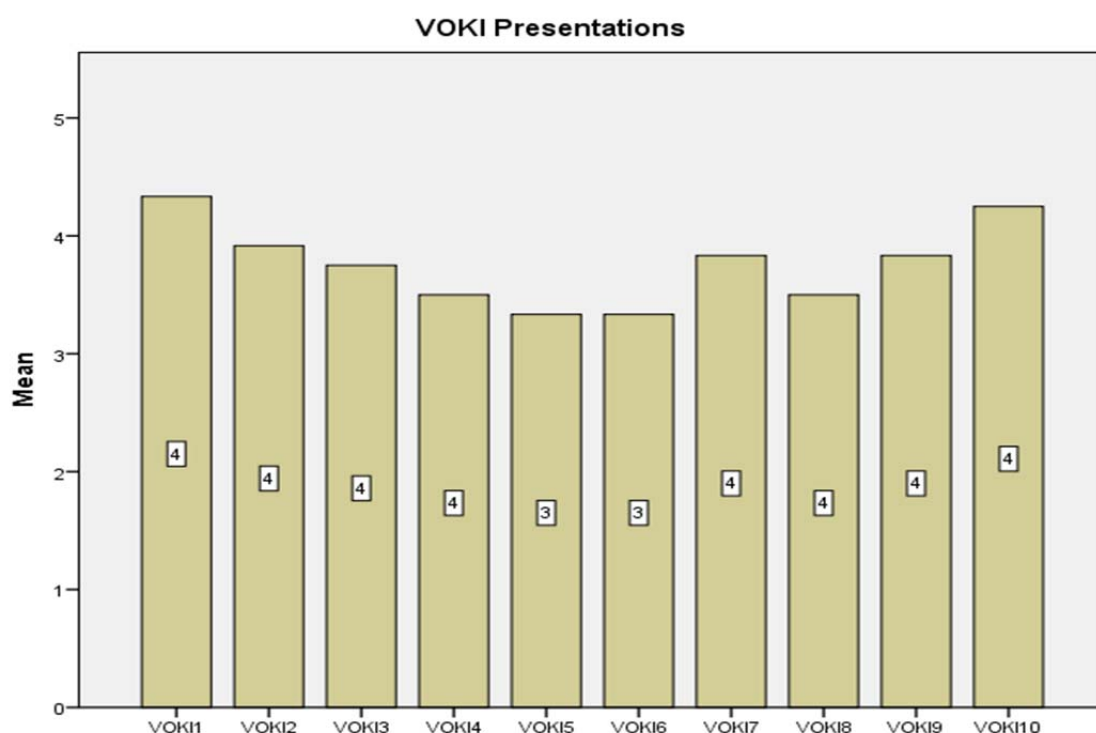


Figure 2. Speaking skills development of the students with Voki.

In the last week of November, I introduced 'Voki' to the students. I had prepared a Voki presentation of my own before coming to class which included a basic greeting and some information about Voki. Since it allows only one- minute talk, I decided to prepare something fun so as to create a curiosity among the students. I designed my avatar with similar features as mine and created my own background. The students enjoyed watching it so much and asked, "Can we do it?", "When can we do it?", "Can

we choose the avatars?" I informed them that we were going to use it regularly every week. In the age of technology, the 'digital natives' got really excited to hear that we were going to do it every week. Thus, I decided to have the 'Voki' hours on Tuesdays, for we had four hours in a row that day. Additionally, I planned it as, assigning the 'speaking tasks' to the students which were related to the subjects we had studied until that day, and just before they did their voice-recordings so as to have a spontaneity and in a more natural way. Although we had the opportunity to do the recordings in the computer lab, thinking it would not be a natural environment to sit next to each other and do the recordings while the voices were mingling, I asked all the students to bring their own electronic devices to school; mobile phones, lap-tabs or tablets, whichever they preferred.

So, on 3rd December the students did their first Voki voice-recordings on "All about me", which they had also done a poster presentation in September. The reason why I chose this topic was to have the students do their recordings on a familiar topic and also to see the language development within these months on the same task. Although I had asked them and showed them how to do registration for 'Voki' previously, some students came to class without doing it, so we had to do their registrations first. The positive thing was that, the students who had already done their registrations, voluntarily helped the others for registrations, showed them how to do it very patiently and collaboratively. After I assigned the task to the students, some of them went to other vacant classrooms, some went outside in the garden, some sat on the benches in the corridors, and some walked and voice-recorded at the same time. I did not interfere with any of the process, but walked around and examined if everything was going as it should have been. Happily, I observed S12, the weakest student in class, walking in the corridor with his mobile phone in his hand, sometimes pausing, sometimes looking out of the window as he was still recording his voice, in a very comfortable manner and sometimes he was shaking his head believing it was not good enough, started again and again. Although he had tried voice-recording multiple times, he did not give up but continued the recording. That was exactly what I wanted to observe. He self-regulated himself and succeeded in the end and sent it to me via e-mail. The other students, on the other hand, in the other parts of the school, were working on their recordings individually. Unfortunately, some of them (S3, S5, S11) did not have any electronic devices, so they had to share with a friend. In fact, I believe it helped them work collaboratively and learned from each other. For example, S7, who was

sitting in the classroom with high level of anxiety, and who on the other hand was good at technology use, was constantly asking me *"What am I going to say?"*, *"How am I going to start?"* and telling that he did not have any idea. At that moment, S10, who had completed his task was back to the classroom and immediately gave some ideas to S7, and with scaffolding, he managed to complete his task right away with only a couple of tries and with a great relief of accomplishment. After he had completed his task, S5, who did not have an electronic device, sat next to S7. This time S7 scaffolded S5 and even conformed him by saying *"Don't worry, just say ... it is very easy!"*

However, during this voice-recording process, some of the students had difficulties while choosing or creating their avatars and sending their Voki links to me via e-mail. The students found choosing avatars very challenging due to the extra payment requirements for selected avatars like politicians (Kennedy), historic characters (Knights, Einstein) or ethnic characters (Japanese). Since we were using free-voki, the students had to choose among those ones. Additionally, while the students tried sending their links, there were also challenges partly due to the internet connection and partly the 'Voki' tool, itself which did not allow the students share their links with me. Therefore, they either recorded their voices again or used my computer to save them on my 'Voki' page. Although that created some kind of boredom among the students, they completed the task eventually. After all the students had completed the link sharing process, I copied them in a word document to listen in the evening, took down notes and the next day I gave feedback to all the students on their tasks which I believe was helpful for their language development. I used a holistic rubric to assess the students' speaking skills and during the analysis. As it can be seen in Figure 2, it was found that the mean score of the class was 4 among 5, which was quite good when considered their age group. That might be due to having had a poster presentation on the same topic in the beginning of September. Therefore for the next recording, I decided to assign a task which they hadn't worked on before.

On 10th December, as a 2nd Voki voice-recording, the students' task was about their 'Chores' which we had discussed on the subject in the previous week in our class. During the recording period, all the students had their electronic devices except for S3, so she had to share with S2. Since the students were not allowed to use any kind of electronic device at school, before the first lesson started they brought their devices to my room and locked them in my cupboard. Again, this time we followed the same procedure, I assigned their task right before their voice recording period and they went

to the vacant classrooms or anywhere they felt comfortable with. I allocated one class hour (35 minutes) and told them to be back in the classroom whenever they completed their tasks. While I was observing them, I noticed that S4 was doing her recording about her mother's chores, not about hers, so I decided to explain her one more time what her task was in L2 and asked her to do another one. Although she seemed to understand and said *"I am just trying the recording, I will do it again"*, when I listened to her recording after she shared the link with me, I realised that she did the same mistake again. So, I decided to explain the task more briefly to her for the next time. As for the students with good command of English, had no difficulties in fulfilling the requirements and shared their links with me almost within twenty minutes. Therefore, I immediately listened to their recordings and gave feedback right away. Meanwhile, I also observed S5, who is a shy student with low language competencies, was doing his voice-recording at the end of the corridor where there was no one, and in such a low voice that it was impossible to understand any of his words. When he realized I was walking towards him, he did not get distracted by me and carried on his recording, and he had finished it by the time I got there. He looked at me and said shyly and proudly *"Mrs Esen, I did it three times but I couldn't send it to you, this was my fourth time, but I think I did it"*. Again, some students had some challenges while sharing the links with me but managed to complete it at the end. So, as can be seen in Figure 2, I can say that with minor changes, the general average of the students was equal to the first one, which was 4 among 5 points, which indicates that they understood the content, fluently and spontaneously used appropriate vocabulary at a certain level.

On 12th December, the students gave their 4th 'poster presentations' about 'possessions' which I had assigned in the previous week. The aim was to talk about their favourite possessions, the importance of it, when it was bought, who was it given by, and they also needed to give as many details as they could. The students' poster preparations and presentations were much better than the previous ones. The posters were more neatly prepared, coloured perfectly, designed in a better way and, even some had brought objects to class and displayed them on a desk during their presentations; necklace from grandmother, shoes from babyhood, mug from a best friend, were some examples to that. Moreover, I can say that, there was a great interest among the students to the presenter's objects and pictures in the posters which also created enthusiasm to the presenter. For example, S11 who was a very talkative and a curious student, asked to S8 (he had babyhood shoes displayed on the desk) *"Oh, how cute!"*

Who got you those? How old were you?" and S8 answered all the questions in great pride. Additionally, such a presentation, with displayed objects and shared memories, also made students interact more with each other and helped them to communicate more than the other presentations. As can be seen in Figure 1, there is a visible increase in their poster presentations; from 3,90 to 4,46. This could be due to the topic choice, because what I observed in all the students was that they enjoyed very much talking about their objects and how they felt about them.

One week later, on 19th December, in the speaking class, I assigned a group task to the students, It was about preparing an "outdoor activity poster" in which they were supposed to write the types of activities, which age group to attend, entrance fee, meeting place and time, and so forth. I allotted one class hour for organization and preparation of the poster and in the second hour for presentations. Since the English levels of the students were not the same, I figured it would be much better if I grouped them according to their levels. So, considering each students' level and the ones with leader characteristics and good L2 competencies, I grouped them as, first group; S2, S3, S7, S12 and S2 as the group leader due to her high L2 competency and good social relations. S3 and S12 were the weakest students, therefore I grouped them especially with S2, believing she could be very helpful to them with her positive personality and create a sense of belonging, and as for S7, he always claimed that his speaking skill was not as good as the other skills, so I wanted him to contribute to the group with his ideas and I also wanted him to increase his self efficacy. S3 also forced her limits and tried to contribute as much as she could, however S12 was very quiet, he did not contribute and I also heard him asking what they were doing in L1, but the group members were understanding towards him scaffolded him as much as they could. Second group was S1, S5, S8, S10 and S2 as the group leader for he had always been fair to everyone and also had good organisational skills with a good command in L2. The weakest students in the group was S5 and it was so great to see how all the group members were trying their best in helping him and valuing his ideas. For example, S10 was asking S5 *"What shall we name our group"*, *"What activities shall we have?"* and he suggested having "basketball and yoga" activities which were approved by the other members of the group. I appreciated their support to his friend and his contributions to the group. The third group was S4, S6, S9, S11 and S9 as the group leader for he had high L2 competencies and creative ideas. In this group, S4 was the weakest student and to my surprise the other group members did not treat her equally which really upset and

demotivated her. Therefore, I changed her group and joined her in the first group where she felt a sense of belonging, motivated and seemed enjoying what they were all doing as a team while sharing her ideas. I can say that having a sense of belonging and being able to work collaboratively have a great impact on L2 learning especially in terms of developing 'speaking skills'. Once the students felt comfortable enough within the group and once they had the feeling that they would not be judged or made fun of by the peers, they eventually came up with some creative ideas and expressed their thoughts in the positive environment. During their poster preparation time, I constantly walked around the classroom and scaffolded when necessary. I can say that, all the groups worked collaboratively in L2, came up with brilliant ideas which they presented them in the second hour. They came up in front of the classroom and hung their posters, and starting with the group leaders everyone took turns explaining their posters in details. Second group came up with the yoga activities where there was a special place for babies to sleep while mothers were doing yoga and fathers were playing basketball. I asked *"Did you enjoy doing this task"* and all the group members said joyfully *"Yes, it was so much fun"*. This also indicates the importance of motivation, collaboration and willing to use L2 in EFL context for developing speaking skills.

On 2nd January, the students did their 3rd Voki voice-recording about 'great day out' which we had discussed in our class in the previous week and again we applied the same procedure in this task. I assigned the task just before they did their recordings and students went around the school and chose a place where they felt themselves comfortable enough to do their recordings. What took my attention again was their incredible efforts in trying to do their best recording. At different parts of the school, they were working individually and putting great effort to do a 'one-minute' recording. I could read from their facial expressions when things did not go right and they needed to do it over and over again until they appreciated their work. Surprisingly, they somehow managed to find a way to self-regulate and motivate themselves and completed their given tasks appropriately. On the other hand, there were especially some students who were able to complete the task in one try and shared the Voki links with me immediately. Those were again the ones with high L2 competencies and wanted me to give feedback right away. There were also some students who wanted to be on the safe side, therefore they were bringing their device and asking me to listen to their recordings before sharing the link. For example, S11 who was a very talkative and willing student, and who on the other hand silently competing with S10 and S9, came

to me and asked; *"Mrs Esen, can you listen, is it OK? I can share now?"* Only after getting my approval he could share the link with me. As can be seen in Figure 2, although there were minor changes in the students' Voki recordings when considered individually, the result indicates that the mean score was 4 among 5, which was the same with the previous ones.

On 7th January, the students gave their 5th 'poster presentations' about 'festivals'. We had an observer to fill the speaking rubrics of the students with me during their poster presentations, and again we sat in different places where none of us had a chance to see eachothers' rubrics. This time, I observed that the students demonstrated positive behaviours towards the observer, nobody felt anxiety, but comfortable enough to give their presentations about 'festivals'. They were supposed to prepare an e-flyer poster before coming to class, decorate and present it. It was an imaginary festival, so the students were allowed to use imaginary and exaggerated objects or activities as they wished. Additionally, they were supposed to include the name of the festival, types of activities, food, music, and so forth. The students' e-flyers were really very creative, for example S7 included balloon parks and famous singers, S8 had the festival held in Canada, provided accomodations all in a reasonable price, and more importantly there was a noticable improvement in their confidence which made the presentation delivered in a fun and relaxed environment. As it can be seen in Figure 1, there is a significant improvement in all aspects in terms of comprehensibility, task completion, fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar, which has increased from 3,90 to 4,46. That could be due to the type of the task which enabled students to use L2 in a more creative and fun way.

On the 'Voki' days, the students would come to school with great joy, and they were happy to do Voki recordings. Although they knew we were going to do Voki recordings on Tuesdays, they would always ask in the first lesson, *"Mrs Esen, we are doing 'Voki' today, aren't we?"*, and with my approval they would say "Yes!" as if they had won a prize. The same question and behaviour continued all through the term. On 9th January, the students did their 4th Voki recordings about their 'favourite holiday'. Again, we applied the same procedure as the previous ones. I assigned the task right before they did their recordings, explained that they needed to think about a holiday they had been to, who they had gone with, how they had gone, what kinds of activities they had involved in, and additionally remained them they had to use as many linking words as possible. After that all the students went to different locations where they felt

comfortable in the school territory. They were free to go where ever they felt was suitable for doing voice recording. This time, I noticed that there were some students without a device (S3, S6, S11) and when I asked the reason, S3 told me that she had forgotten, S6 told me that his brother had to use it and S11 told me that it was broken. Therefore they needed to share their friends' devices. I can say that their friends happily shared their devices with these students. Yet again, S5 and S12 (two of the weakest students in class, other than S3 and S4) preferred a more quieter place to do their voice recordings for they had the fear of judgement by their peers, however S4 and S3 did not have any difficulties while doing their 'Voki' recordings together with the students who had better L2 competencies. After they had completed their tasks, again they all sent their 'Voki' links to me via e-mails. When the students' speaking skills analysed holistically, as can be seen in Figure 2, they exhibited similar performance, 4 over 5, with only minor changes which did not effect the overall class performance.

On 13th January, the students did their 6th 'poster presentations' about 'chores', which they had done the same task by voice recording via Voki on 10th December. Therefore, I assigned the same task on purpose to see if there would be any developments observed in students' speaking skills after using Voki on the same topic. When I assigned the students their poster presentations, S7, who had generally displayed excited and anxious behaviours most of the time, turned to his friends and said in confidence *"Don't worry, it is easy, just like 'Voki'!"* Considering his first poster presentations and his anxiety before the first 'Voki' recording, the boost in his confidence truly amazed me. During the poster presentations, the students displayed relaxed and more natural behaviours in a sense that they were casually talking on a favourite matter, and more gestures were included while speaking. I can say that memorization of certain structures might help L2 development, however, concentrating only on the pre-studied structures and memorized texts might also create stress among the students. For example, when they did the memorized presentation on 'season', some students had asked me if they could start again for they had forgotten what the second sentence was. When compared to the memorized presentation, here, they displayed much relaxed behaviours, adding mimes and gestures, even included jokes in their presentations and extra information in a more natural way. For example S8 said, *"Mrs Esen, my father never does washing up but he always says 'I do' and I don't tidy my room, but I tell my brother to do. When mum asks 'Did you tidy your room?' and I say 'Yes' ",* that made all the class laugh. So, in this poster presentation, as it can be seen in

Figure 1, there is a noticeable improvement in students' speaking skills, which has increased from 4,46 to 4,57.

On 15th January, which was the last week of the first semester, the students did their 5th Voki recording about 'possessions'. Again, this was the same task what they had done their poster presentations about on 12th December and when a great improvement had been observed. In this Voki recording, we applied the same procedure as in the previous ones. However, this time the students had many challenges in terms of recording their voices and sharing the links with me and even when they shared the links, I did not receive the recording but a blank page instead. So, after some more trials, we decided to do their recordings either on my computer or on my mobile phone. This process was really tiring both for me and for the students. The queue of students in front of me, who were waiting to do their voice recordings for several times and complaining about it, was exhausting and demotivating. On the other hand, while I was busy with this group of students, the others were not doing their recordings in a proper way. I noticed that they were in groups, discussing some unrelated issues and had completed their recordings randomly. Thus, as can be clearly seen in Figure 2, there is a significant decrease in their performance, which dropped from 4 to 3 points out of 5. This could be due to the technical problems they had been through, or it could be its last week of the semester for they were bored with most of the things and counting for the days for a holiday.

Therefore, right after their last performance, 14th January, I decided to assign them another Voki recording about 'favourite sports' to be done at home this time. That was the first time I had assigned a recording to be done that evening and sent it to me from home. So, I was excited. However, only S1, S6, S9 and S10 sent the recordings which was truly discouraging for me. Therefore, when we went to school, I asked them why they had not sent me their Voki recordings, and the answer was very simple; 'they had forgotten.' Thinking that was an acceptable excuse for it was their first time to do a voice recording assignment at home, I asked them to complete and send their tasks for next day. So, on 16th January, just the day before the winter break holiday, they had successfully sent their recordings. However, most of them was not appropriate, they were randomly accomplished. So, as it can be seen in Figure 2, the mean score stayed the same as the previous one, which was 3 points. This could be because of the excitement of the last days of the school, boredom or their not being used to doing Voki recording at home.

4.2.1.3. 'Voki' Implementation and Poster Presentations (4th February- 3rd March - Beginning of the Second Term)

As the second term started, the students came to school with joy and full of energy. Yet, one of the first things they asked me was, "*Mrs Esen, are we doing Voki tomorrow?*" It was a significant question in terms of understanding their willingness to continue doing the Voki voice recordings.

On 4th February, the day after the school had started, I assigned their 7th Voki task about 'winter break holiday'. They were supposed to talk about what they did on the holiday, where they went, how they went, who they went with and also to add as many linking words as they could while using correct grammar structures. Again, we followed the same procedure, I assigned the speaking assignment right before they did their voice recordings on Voki and they all went to different parts of the school; some went to the vacant classrooms, some went to the library, some went to a remote place to be all alone and S7 who always carried a lab tap stayed in the classroom. I always wanted them to act freely while doing their voice-recordings, therefore I never interrupted them but observed each student to see if they were doing fine. This time the students spent more time on choosing avatars for themselves, some chose animals, some chose funny characters and some used what the 'Voki' tool provided for them without spending time on choosing. When I asked S10 why he did not change his avatar, he simply said, "*It is not bad, so I used it*". I can say that it was a common thought for some other students who preferred to use the 'regular avatar' which was provided by 'Voki', itself. After they completed their recordings, again some students had problems while sending the links to me via e-mail. Somehow, 'Voki' tool either did not enable them to share the link or in some cases the send button was not active. Therefore, I allowed the students to do the voice recordings by using my lab tap. For example, while S12, who was one of the weakest students in class, was doing his voice recording on my device I could not help but listen to him; "*My holidays is difficult and beautiful...my holidays is go to the Antalya and restaurant.....*" Although these sentences were not accurate, but when the first days of S12 was considered, who started using the language with only saying 'yes' and 'no' and even sometimes the meaning was not accurate, I can say that there was a significant L2 development observed, especially in this student. I also observed such speaking improvement with the other weak students as well. After listening to each student's links, I evaluated the tasks by using the holistic rubric, focusing on the student's understanding of the content, fulfilling the task requirements, spontaneity and

the appropriate use of vocabulary and grammar and provided feedback accordingly. So, as a result, as can be seen in Figure 2, 'Voki 7', the students started the second term with an increasement in their speaking skills compared how they completed the first term, which was 3 and increased to 4. Thus, the result may suggest that stress-free environments and willingness, might help students produce better in orally, especially when compared to the last two Voki recordings of the first semester.

On 11th February, the students did their 8th Voki recording about 'how do we learn things'. We had discussed about the topic in the previous week during our speaking class, which I wrote their ideas on the board. Some of the ideas from different students given during the discussion were, *'by going to school, by reading, by travelling, by doing'*. So, again we followed the same procedure during the Voki recording. However, this time to my surprise S9 guessed their task before I told them and asked, *"Mrs Esen, are we going to do 'how do we learn things?'"*, it was indeed a very good guess which I think demonstrated the commitment to the task in the student. Then I realised that not just S9 but the others were trying to guess what the task on 'Voki' would be. Seeing students internalised the 'Voki' use in our lessons was remarkable. Afterwards, the students again went to different locations in the school and recorded their tasks and shared their links with me, which I also kept a record in my documents to listen to later on. In order to get feedback right away, some early finishers came to me and asked if I could listen to their 'Voki' recordings first. This time I listened to their recording while they were with me. These early finishers, S7, S9, S10, S11 did not want to be present in the classroom with his friends and S7 said *"Oh, no Mrs Esen, my voice is terrible, do not listen now!"* and even he covered his face with his hands and tried to leave, however, when I explained that he had to be present in order to get feedback, he stayed in the class and giggled as we all listened to his 'Voki' recording. What we all noticed from his recording was its being a randomly done task with some irrelevant parts, but I think the most important aspect was, it was not me giving feedback to him but his friends' giving feedback to him, which I think was a good example of their L2 improvement. They knew what aspects were important, what my expectations were, and which parts had S7 failed to accomplish. Thus, S7 went to a quieter place to re-record his task and sent it to me. This time he did a great one. What took my attention in this 'Voki' recording was that there were more collaborative recordings unlike the previous ones. The students scaffolded each other, gave really helpful advices to each other, and as a result when I analysed their recordings holistically, I can say that their positive

scaffoldings were reflected on the recordings in which I could get the feeling of their self-confidence while speaking. As can be seen in Figure 2, the mean score is 4 over 5.

On 18th February, the students did their 9th 'Voki' recording about 'what do you find entertaining?' Again, just like the previous one, students tried to guess what the task was going to be about, this time none of them made a correct guess. After I assigned their task, the students stated their opinions on the task, and again they went to different spots at school where they felt more comfortable. This time, S3 caught my attention. She not only this time, but also in the previous one claimed an excuse of not having a device with her. When I asked for the reason, she could not give a plausible reason, so figuring she might want to share a device with another friend in order to work collaboratively, I did not ask any further questions and let her share the device with S2. However, while silently observing the students during their recordings, I noticed that S3 was avoiding the voice-recording and only after she realized me she started doing her recording, which she had to do a couple of times claiming her recordings were not good enough. Eventually, all the students completed and shared their links with me. Again, some students had difficulties when sharing the links, therefore although they had completed their tasks, they had to do re-recording in order to be able to share the links with me. This was frustrating for the students as they had spent time and put effort on a particular task but were not able to send it. Moreover, doing the same task over and over again was also demotivating. I can say that for some students doing a voice recording was an easy task, whereas for some students who had less L2 competencies, it had been quite challenging to re-record themselves for couple of times, and which accordingly was reflected on the results. As can be seen in Figure 2, after holistically analysed, the general average of the students stayed as 4 like the previous one.

On 25th February, the students did their 7th and last poster presentations about 'a great day out' which they had done a 'Voki' recording on 2nd of January. When I asked them to prepare a poster presentation on the selected topic, I noticed that especially the students with low L2 competencies like S4 and S7, felt great relief. S7 told his friends with enthusiasm *"Great! I can do it spontaneously like 'Voki' "*. The other student, S4, turned and asked me *"Mrs Esen, like 'Voki', yes?"* When I said *"Yes, just like 'Voki' "*, she turned to others friends and said, *"It is very easy"*. Seeing such relief in a student, especially like the one in her case, with low L2 competencies and little self confidence, was what I truly wanted. Again, we had an observer in the classroom, yet the students felt comfortable enough to give their presentations without thinking about the existence

of the observer but completely focused on their presentations. Yet, they also seem enjoying what they were doing very much. S4 for example, had no sense of anxiety left in her when compared to the very first presentations, how her hands were sweating, and how she was telling that she could not do the presentation even while presenting it. Although she still needed a lot of scaffolding, when considering her situation that was a great improvement for her. I can say that, the students were terrific during the poster presentations with gestures, relaxed behaviours, colourful drawings, and more importantly they had great self confidence, which I believe has a significant role in the development of speaking skills in EFL context. As it can be clearly seen in Table 1, the students started their poster presentations with 3,25 mean score in the beginning of the first term and which has increased to 4,53 by the end of the 7th presentation. That might also indicate that the students have developed their speaking skills in a significant way all through the research period. However, when analysed their 'fluency' and 'grammar', their scores remained at 4. This might be due to students' putting more emphasis on the use of vocabulary, pronunciation and spontaneity rather than using appropriate grammar. For the 'fluency', students' pausing occasionally to try to find the right words while presenting their posters spontaneously might be a reason why it could not reach at 5 but stayed 4.

On 28th February, the students did their last group task about 'writing and advert about a place'. We had discussed what an advert was in the previous lesson, so the students were well aware of the requirements. This time I divided the class into two groups considering their L2 levels. S1, S2, S4, S5, S8, S9 were in the first one and S3, S6, S7, S10, S11, S12 were in group two. The aim was to write an advert of a place, so that the people would want to go there. Some of the information required to be included while discussing among the group members were; name of the place, location, how to book, how to get there; transportation, age group, fee and so forth. I allotted a class hour for discussion and preparation (writing and drawing figures) and in the second class hour the students presented their adverts. While they were discussing about their tasks, I was constantly monitoring and scaffolding them. It was spectacular to see the students working collaboratively and with great enthusiasm using only L2 all through the time. As time was running out, I heard S11 saying to his group *"Hurry up! No time"*. In the second hour the students started with their task presentations. Both groups presented their tasks in a natural way, with jokes, and in a more interacted way. For example S10 said that their advert was about an imaginary place called 'Never Forget Park' and stated

the reasons and activities in a good organized way and S6 added "*You come and you don't want to go back*" and S7 added with joy "*Yes! Because 'never forget' "* which made everyone laugh. What I also observed from this last group task was that everyone was highly motivated, self-confident, collaborative and willing to use L2 in the EFL environment.

On March 3rd, the students did their last 'Voki' recording about 'a review of a place'. Again, we had discussed about the topic in the previous week, so the students had a general knowledge about it. I also reminded them that they had to talk about the location of the place, staff, if it was a cafe to mention the food quality and prices, and finally to add recommendations. After the brief reminding, the students again went to different locations at school where they felt more comfortable and undisturbed and did their 'Voki' recordings individually. This time I observed that some students spent more time than usual in choosing their 'Voki avatars', this may be because of peer effect, that they had been talking about which avatar to choose and telling each other whose avatar was the 'coolest' before doing the 'Voki' recordings. As I was monitoring the students, S4, S5 and S12 caught my attention. They were walking along the school corridors while recording their voices. First, I thought they were talking on the phone with someone since they were using hand gestures with relaxed behaviours and completely concentrated, however when I approached to them I noticed that they were doing the recordings as if talking to a friend and sharing information with that person. Seeing especially these students who had less L2 competencies than the others in such a relaxed manner was truly pleasing. So, as can be seen in Table 2 that the students' mean score, after analysing holistically in terms of understanding the content, task requirements, spontaneity and the appropriate use of vocabulary and grammar, with an improvement stayed as 4 out of 5. The underlying reason why their mean score did not reach 5 might be mainly due to not focusing on the use of appropriate use of grammar structures, but emphasizing more on the spontaneity while speaking.

4.3. An Overview to the Speaking Skills Development with Poster Presentations

In order to develop the students' speaking skills, seven poster presentations with seven different topics were assigned to the students. Since the L2 levels of the students varied, the topics were selected regarding the content of the class book (Oxford University Press, 'Bright Ideas 6') so that they would have had a familiarity with them.

The students were evaluated by the researcher and a co-observer who both used the speaking skills rubrics all through the delivery of the poster presentation process of the students. As mentioned in Chapter I, the students were analyzed by a five-point likert chart over five criteria; 'Task Completion', 'Comprehensibility', 'Fluency', 'Pronunciation', 'Vocabulary' and 'Grammar'.

As already referred in *Section 4.2*, the students started their 1st poster presentations, a short time after the school had started. As can be seen in Figure 1, during the first three poster presentations, little improvement is observed in each of them. It starts with a mean score of 3,25 and reaches 3,90 out of 5 by the end of the third presentation, which might be inferred as an average score. The underlying reason for this could be due to the need for improvement in speaking sub-skills, for there was a huge L2 gap among the students. However, when compared to the first three poster presentations, there is a significant improvement observed at the 4th one with a mean score of 4,46. This improvement could be due to the topic choice or could be also the implementation of Voki during this process. As for the 5th poster presentation, there is not any improvement observed, and the mean score is the same as the previous one, which is 4,46. The mean score of the 6th poster presentation is 4,57, which shows that there is a little improvement in the students' speaking skills. That could be because of having 5th and 6th presentations within a week, and the feedback given on their mistakes during the 5th presentation was taken into account. As for the 7th poster presentation, which is also the students' last poster presentation for this research period, it has a mean score of 4,53. It could be inferred that the students have developed their 'speaking skills' through the research period in a significant way. However, their mean score has not reached full points, which is 5. This could be partly due to the researcher's not providing sufficient feedback for the students, regarding their speaking skills, and it could be also due to the students' not putting enough emphasis on the poster presentations while delivering them.

4.3.1. An overview to the sub-skills development

In this section, to have a deeper understanding of the developmental process of the students, speaking sub-skills regarding their 'Task Completion', 'Comprehensibility', 'Fluency', 'Pronunciation', 'Vocabulary' and 'Grammar' will be analyzed separately.

4.3.1.1. Task Completion

As can be seen in Figure 3, the students started their first poster presentation with a mean score of 3 out of 5. This can be due to the students' first poster presentation that they might not have a clear view of how to complete a task. As for the 2nd and 3rd tasks, a significant improvement is observed with a mean score of 4, which could be due to their clear understanding of how to deliver a poster presentation in a better way. When 4th, 5th, and 6th presentations are analyzed, there is a highly noticeable improvement observed in their task completion with a mean score of 4. One reason could be, as inferred in *Section 4.2*, due to the students' finding themselves comfortable enough while delivering the poster presentations and their understanding of the task requirements. As for the 7th one, there is a remarkable development observed in task completion, with a mean score of 5 over 5. Again as mentioned in *Section 4.2*, this could be due to the students' feeling more confident compared to the previous presentations.

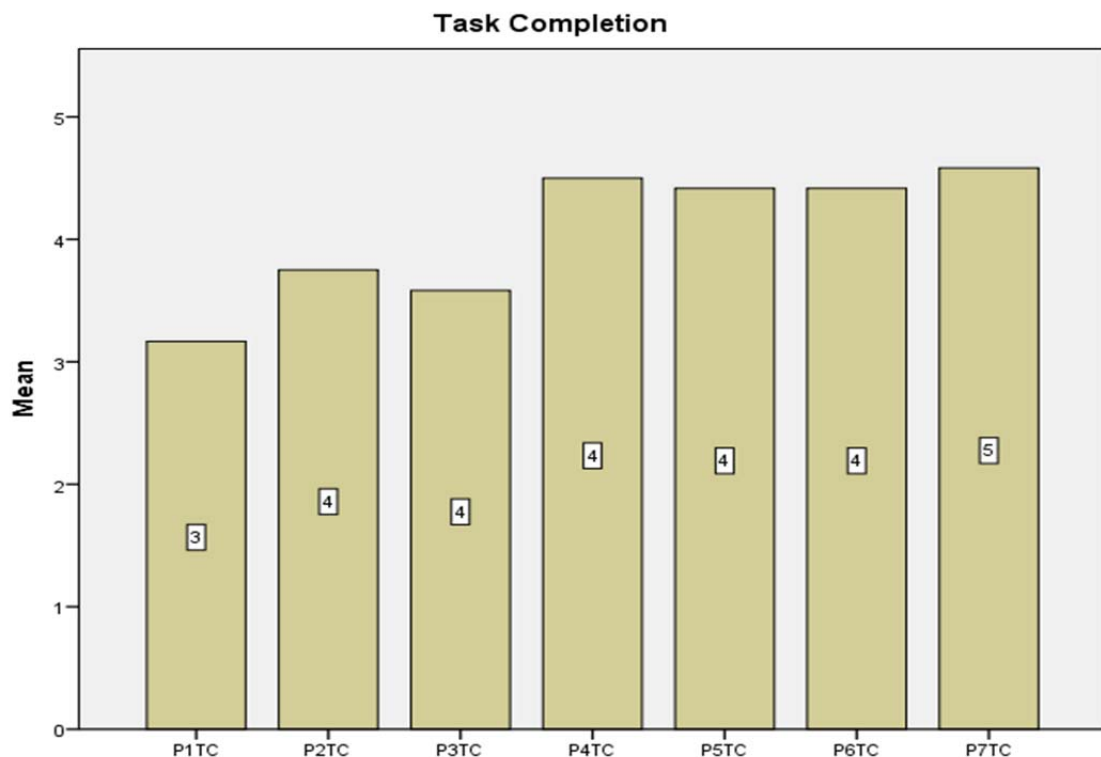


Figure 3. Task completion process of the students.

4.3.1.2. Comprehensibility

As can be seen in Figure 4, the students started their poster presentations with a mean score of 3 out of 5. As mentioned in *Section 4.2*, this could be mainly due to having a significant L2 gap among the students. When analyzed 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th poster presentations, it can be inferred that in each one the students have improved their comprehensibility levels while delivering their poster presentations. Thus the mean scores have increased to 4. As for the 6th and 7th presentations, there is a significant improvement observed in the mean score, which 5 out of 5. This could be due to students' delivering the poster presentations in a more relaxed and natural way.

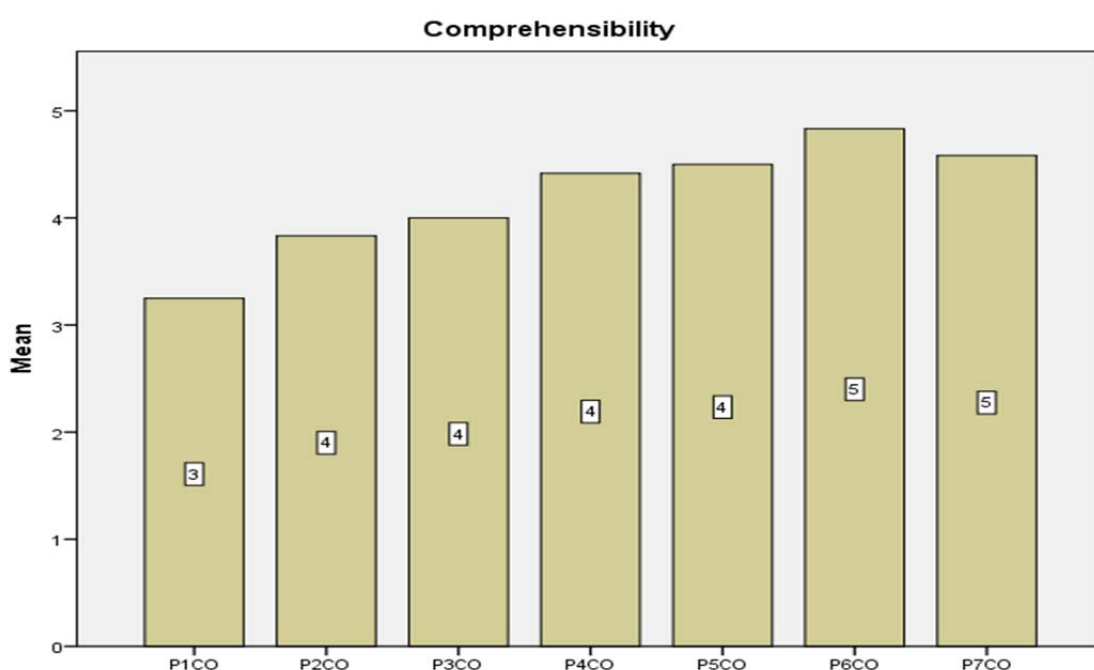


Figure 4. Comprehensibility development of the students.

4.3.1.3. Fluency

As can be seen in Figure 5, the students started their poster presentations with a mean score of 3 out of 5 points. This could be, as mentioned in *Section 4.2*, due to the L2 gap among the students that some of them had difficulties while delivering the poster presentations, regarding frequent pauses and slow speech. However, starting with the 2nd poster presentation and until the 7th one (the last one), with little improvements, their mean score in fluency increased to 4 and stayed as 4. This could be due to the hesitations that the students had been through during their presentations in terms of pausing frequently to search for words while expressing their thoughts.

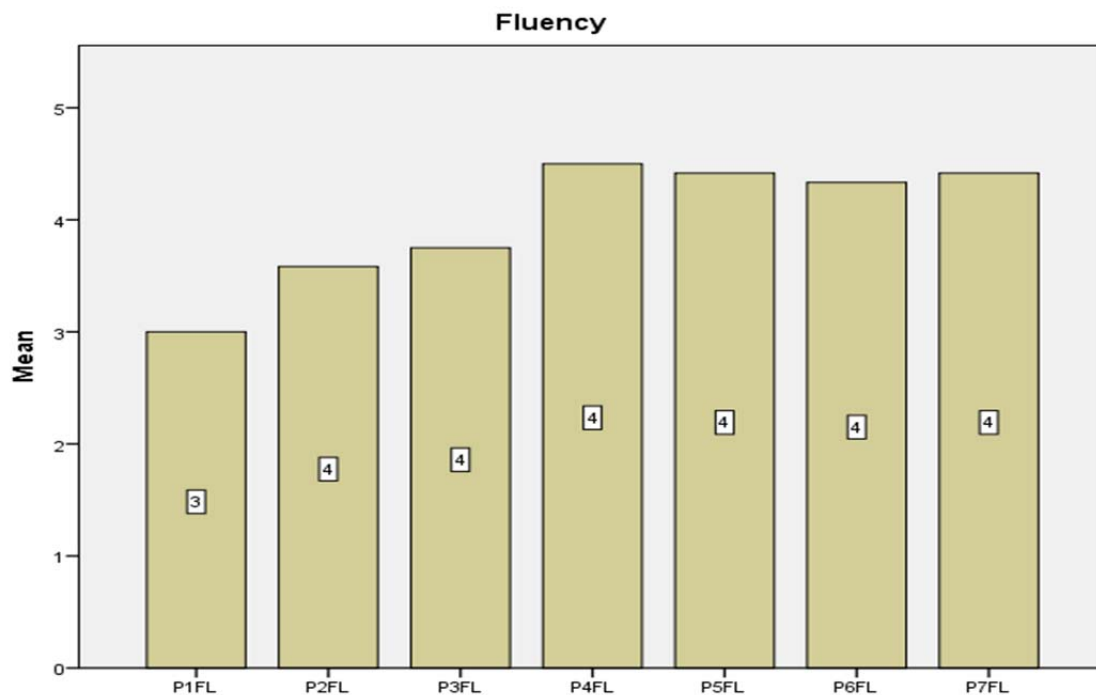


Figure 5. Fluency improvement of the students.

4.3.1.4. Pronunciation

As can be seen in Figure 6, the students started their poster presentation with a mean score of 3 out of 5 points in pronunciation. That could be due to some students' coming from different educational backgrounds and not having enough L2 competencies. Starting with the 2nd poster presentation, until the 4th one, a significant improvement is observed in students' pronunciation, which has increased to 4. That could be due to putting more emphasis on pronunciation during the lessons that the students started uttering words more naturally. As for 5th, 6th, and 7th poster presentations, there is a noticeable improvement observed in the pronunciation of the students, which has increased from 4 to 5. Exposing more to L2, their self-studies, and Voki implementation as mentioned in *Section 4.2*, during these periods could be a reason for the pronunciation development of the students.

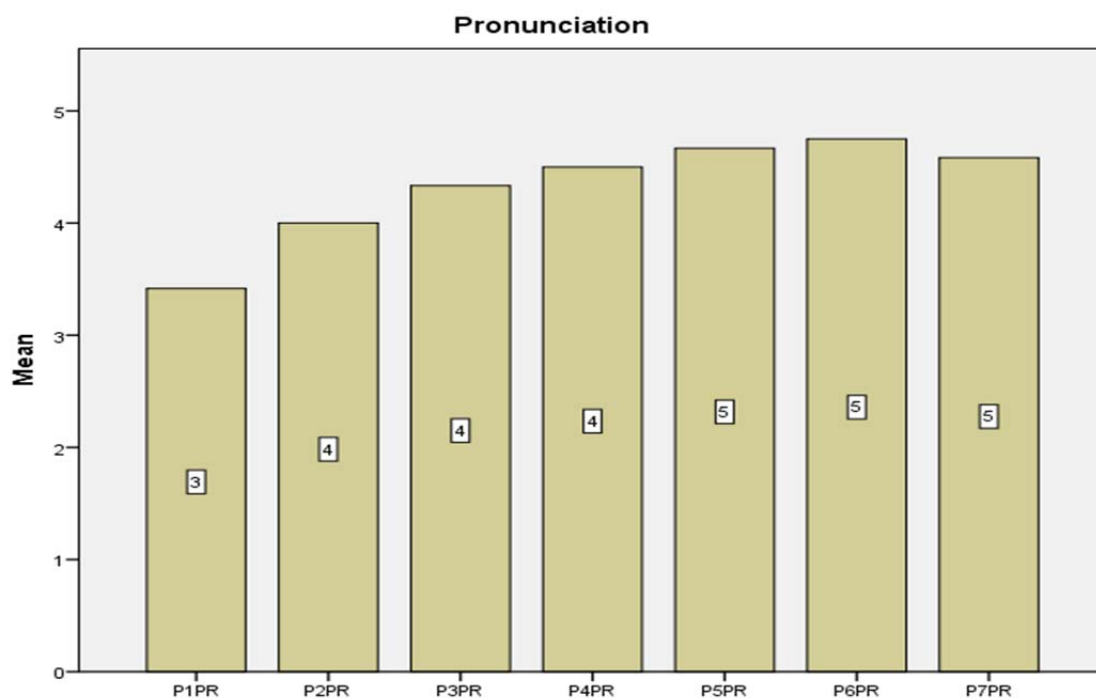


Figure 6. Pronunciation development of the students.

4.3.1.5. Vocabulary

As can be seen in Figure 7, the students started their poster presentations with a mean score of 3 out of 5 in vocabulary. That could be due to students' not having enough vocabulary repertoire for it was the beginning of the school year. As for the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th poster presentations, there is a significant vocabulary development observed, which has increased from 3 to 4. This could be due to putting more emphasis on vocabulary and having more fun vocabulary game activities in and out of the classroom environment so that the students had opportunities to practice their vocabulary skills more than the usual time. When the 6th and 7th poster presentations are analyzed, a great improvement is observed. They have a mean score of 5 out of 5. This could be due to the students' familiarity with the words that they started uttering rich and varied use of vocabulary on pre-selected topics.

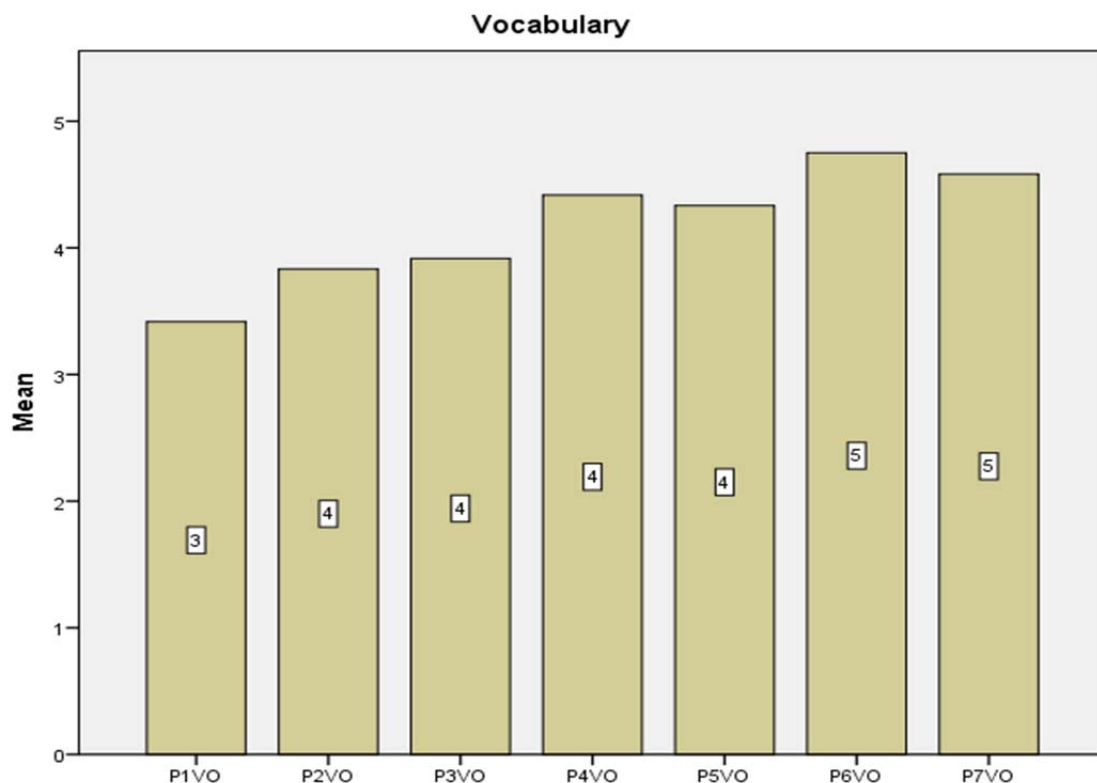


Figure 7. Vocabulary development of the students.

4.3.1.6. Grammar

As can be seen in Figure 8, the students started their poster presentations with a mean score of 3 out of 5 in grammar. That could be especially due to the weak students who had not exposed to English much until coming to this school, therefore they had little L2 competencies. Thus, they had rarely accurate grammar and had difficulties while expressing their thoughts. Yet, starting with the 2nd poster presentation until the 7th one, with minor changes, there is a noticeable improvement observed regarding the students' grammar skills. Their grammar has become more accurate, which has 4 mean scores, however it has not reached 5. That could be due to the huge L2 gap among the students, for some, it was not easy to catch up with the grammar topics covered during this research period.

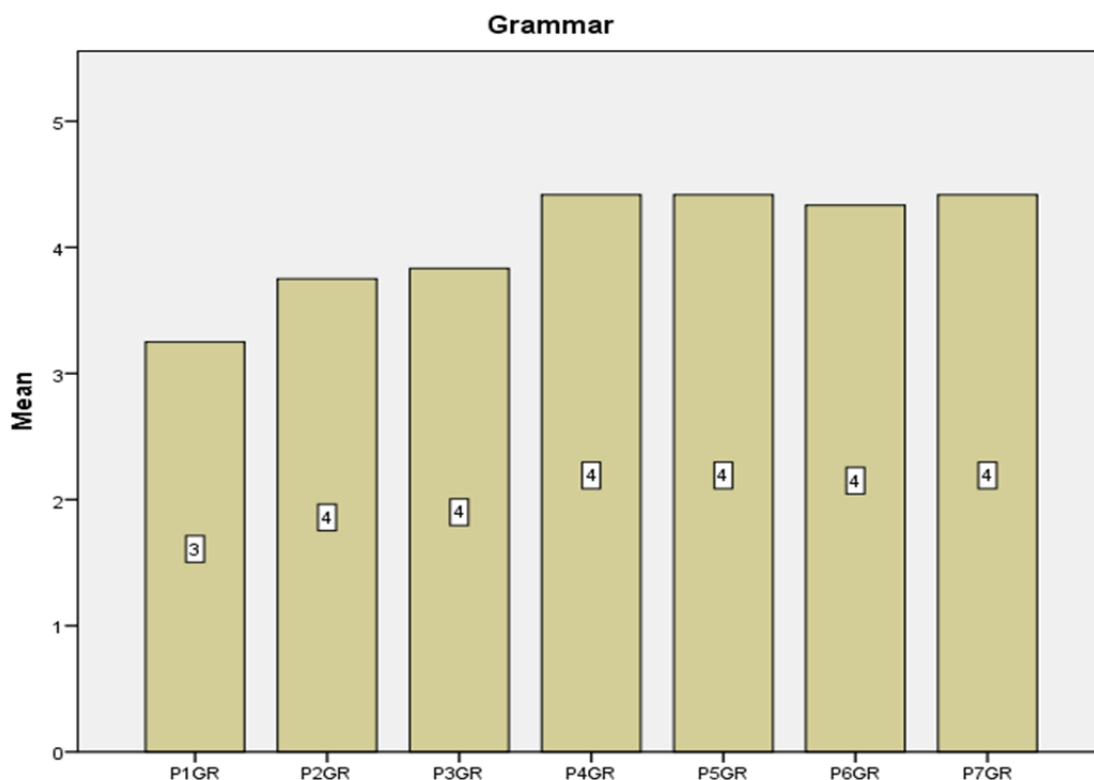


Figure 8. Grammar development of the students.

4.4. Qualitative Data Analysis

4.4.1. An Overview to the Voice-recorded Voki Presentations-Interview Findings

Communication has a vital role in human life and the key element for communication is speaking. Due to its significant role, we aimed to develop the students' speaking skills by integrating the Web 2.0 tool Voki as a complement to the F2F classroom environment. As mentioned in Chapter I, the students' recorded Voki presentations are analyzed holistically while listening.

As can be seen in Figure 2, the students started their first four 'Voki' presentations with a mean score of 4 out of 5. The underlying reasons for that might be the students' willingness to use a technological tool at school, self-motivation, and the immediate feedback provided by the teacher regarding the sub-skills as referred in Section 4.3. However, during the 5th and 6th presentations a sudden decrease from 4 to 3 is observed in the mean scores of the students. As mentioned in Section 4.2, it could be due to some technical problems that the students had been through, or the boredom in general terms. On the other hand, starting with the 7th presentation until the 10th one, a noticeable increasement is observed in the mean scores of the students, which has

increased to 4 from 3. This could be mainly because of the significant development in the students' self-confidence, better understanding of the task requirements, peer-peer, and teacher-student feedback. Yet, the underlying reason why the students could not reach 5 but stayed 4 in mean score might be due to putting more emphasis in spontaneity rather than the grammar.

4.4.2. What do Students Think of 'Voki'?

4.4.2.1. Students Perceptions (on the Effect) of Voki

The purpose of this research question was to understand the students' perceptions of 'Voki' in EFL speaking classrooms. For this research question, the data was collected through semi-structured student interviews which were prepared by the researcher (See Appendix 6). Five open-ended questions were asked to the students and the gathered data, after the content analysis, was categorized under two categories: (1) Positive and (2) Negative. The categories were then categorized under some sub-categories. To make it clear, the categories and sub-categories are given in Figure 9.

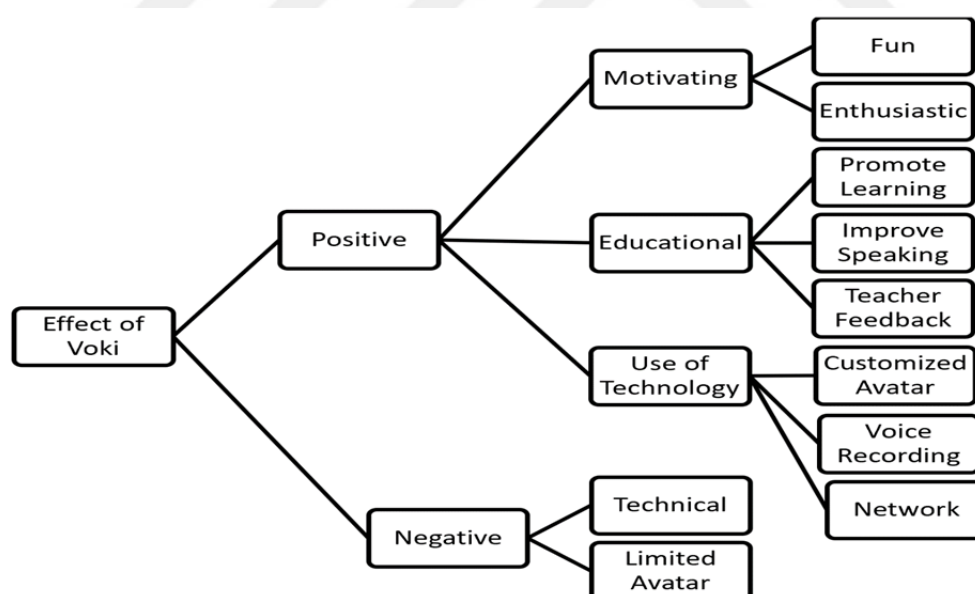


Figure 9. Students' Perceptions of Voki

As can be seen in Figure 9, according to the students' answers, the effects of 'Voki' were categorized as 'positive' and 'negative'.

4.4.2.1.1. Positive Effect

For the first positive category, the students stated that Voki was 'motivating' in terms of using the language in a stress-free environment in a 'fun' way and feel 'enthusiastic' in using it. For example, one of the students finds it fun to pretend to be a cat, as seen in the following extract:

Voki is so much fun when doing my voice-recording. I can be a cat and say what I want to say in that way.

Another one also states how they have fun with their classmates:

Voki is so much fun, you can watch your friend's Voki. We laugh at each other's Voki when it is a weird one.

Motivation is one of the most important elements in language classrooms, because when not motivated either due to individual characteristics or feeling insufficient to use the language orally, students do not utter verbally, and that leads to 'silent speaking classrooms'. An example of a student how he feels enthusiastic about using Voki at school is given in the following extract:

The night before Voki day at school, I always put my tablet in my bag not to forget it. Because when you forget it you need to share your friend's tablet, but I want to use it all by myself. Otherwise, I have little time to spend with Voki activities.

Another one also states how he wants to be present at school to do Voki voice-recording:

I always want to come to school on Voki days. I can do voice-recordings at home, but doing it with friends is better.

As can be inferred from the given examples, using Voki with its fun features in language classrooms can be motivating, thus enabling them to become active users of the language. In speaking classes creating fun activities to take the students' attention,

and creating the feeling of enthusiasm are key elements. When students lose interest or get bored, they no longer want to participate in speaking activities. As seen in the extracts, the students have fun and feel enthusiastic while using Voki, which eventually will help them practice the language more frequently thereby enhancing their L2.

The interview data also reveals another positive view of the students about using Voki which is its embracing 'educational' aspects. As choosing the right Web 2.0 tool in educational settings plays a crucial role in terms of language development, Voki in this sense facilitates the students' active involvement in the L2 learning process and many help them become autonomous learners as it 'promotes learning'. For example, one of the students points out how he developed his vocabulary by using Voki, as seen in the given excerpt:

I ask my friend or the teacher how I could say some Turkish words in English, and then I use them during my voice-recording.

Another student states that he has improved his pronunciation:

My pronunciation was not good before, but it is better now.

As seen in the examples, it can be inferred that Voki enables students to learn new words and pronounce better in L2. Since speaking is the major point in communication, more focus was made on improving the speaking skills of the learners during the study. One of the students states how Voki helped him to speak spontaneously, as presented in the following extract:

I could not speak spontaneously before, but I can now.

Another student states how Voki helped him deliver better poster presentations and speak fluently:

I could do better poster presentations now. Before using Voki I could not speak fluently and express my thoughts, but now I believe I can.

On the whole, it is possible to state that Voki creates opportunities for the students to use the language, thus enabling them to speak spontaneously whereby

building up their confidence. Additionally, to improve the speaking skills and to become better language users, teacher feedback has a crucial role. One of the students' statement about how he improved his language skills due to the teacher feedback is seen in the following extract:

The teacher gives feedback after we do our voice-recordings, so I understand my mistakes and try to do a better one next time.

As can be understood from the given extract, giving efficient feedback has a vital role in L2 development. In this way, the students get a chance to focus on their mistakes, self-regulate themselves, and modify their speech accordingly.

The third positive aspect of the students' perceptions of using Voki is the 'use of technology'. When taken into account the 21st century learners' needs, this category does not come as a surprise. Among the many advantages of using the Web 2.0 tools are different types of images, immediate sharing options, and sounds. Following excerpt is one example to this advantage of Voki:

There are many different types of avatars that we can use for ourselves.

Another student articulates how he shares the Voki voice-recordings:

I can record my voice and then share it with my teacher via g-mail, and I can also listen to it whenever I want.

As seen in the given examples of the students, the use of Voki enables the students to develop their speaking skills within anywhere and anytime, and use their technology and language skills effectively and efficiently within the EFL context.

4.4.2.1.2. Negative Effect

The second category is about the students' 'negative' perceptions of using Voki. Because this generation's learners require immediate feedback, and reach for knowledge anywhere and anytime, technical obstacles and limited avatar choices might demoralize them. In the following extract, one of the students' view about the limited use of avatar choice is presented:

For some avatars, presidents, and historical characters, you need to pay and I don't like it.

Another student states some technical obstacles he faced during the sharing process:

I sometimes do voice-recordings too many times but I can't send it because of some technical issues. Voki does not allow me!

As seen in the examples, such circumstances might affect the learners' perceptions in a negative way, especially when taken into account the participants' age group, it could be unbearable.

All in all, in respect to the revealed data, it can be concluded that with minor technological obstacles and limited avatar choices, all the students enjoyed Web 2.0 tool Voki voice-recordings, and all of the students claimed that it had a positive effect on them in terms of developing their speaking skills. Moreover, it can be also stated that the students became confident in speaking throughout the Voki implication which was also reflected on their overall speaking performance in this study.

CHAPTER V

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

This last chapter covers the summary and discussion of the study, then implications, limitations and suggestions for further studies are presented.

5.2. Summary and Discussion

This case study research aims to understand the contribution of the Web 2.0 tool 'Voki' on speaking skills in blended learning contexts. In order to collect data, speaking rubrics are used, teacher journals are kept and interviews are conducted with 12 fifth grade students. Since it is important in BL environments that the teachers decide on 'what to blend', 'how to blend' and 'how much to blend' according to the needs of the students, 'Voki' as a complement to F2F teaching is used in weekly periods, whereas poster presentations are delivered in long intervals. To achieve the purpose, two research questions guided this study which are discussed below:

Research Question 1: What is the role of Voki in students' speaking skills?

Research Question 2: What do students think of Voki?

The two research questions will be discussed separately. For the first question, the findings are obtained from both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data is obtained from the analytic and the holistic speaking rubrics, and the qualitative data is obtained through teacher journals that the teacher kept during the study and also through the students interviews. In this section, the data will be analyzed according to 'pre-voki' and 'while-voki' periods.

The findings in 'pre-voki' period, which encloses the first trimester of the study, reveal that, regarding the age factors, memorized speech helps students develop their speaking skills at a certain point. It helps them to use phrases, linking words, and the grammar structures during the poster presentations in a certain way, however trying to remember the next line, starting the presentation over again, and the fear of judgment by the peers and the teacher create anxiety, especially for the students with low L2

competencies. Similar study findings carried out by Liu (2006), also points out that the students appeared to be anxious during Oral EFL classroom. These students suffer from nausea before and while delivering their presentations. Under such circumstances, it makes an oral presentation impossible to be delivered. They could only utter some isolated words and some disconnected sentences. However, as for the students with higher L2 competencies, such a state does not apply to them so much. They deliver their presentations with less anxiety than the others, but in a very controlled manner that no interaction with the audience is observed. Therefore, during this 'pre-Voki' period only a little development in speaking skills is noticed. From this finding, it is likely to suggest that it is not possible to develop speaking skills when students feel anxiety, which causes poor performance and decreases motivation, therefore stress-free and positive learning environments need to be created by the teacher.

Since technology has a significant role in developing students' language skills in EFL classrooms, in the second trimester of the study, which is 'while-Voki' period, Web 2.0 tool 'Voki' is integrated as a complement to F2F teaching. With the integration of 'Voki' in EFL classes, based on the quantitative and qualitative findings, it can be stated that a great deal of L2 development, especially in the students' speaking skills, is observed. It is noted that with its fun and creative features, the Web 2.0 tool 'Voki' enables the students to use the language in a natural, and stress-free environment. It is observed that with teacher scaffoldings, frequent oral practice opportunities, and feedback, students could manage to self-regulate themselves. As Graham (2007) points out, the students' effective self-regulatory strategies are directly proportional to their perceived self-efficacy. In other words, they can use appropriate strategies to plan, monitor, and complete a given task. Thus, the findings also reveal that with self-regulation, the students improved their speaking skills in a significant way and they became more confident while speaking.

It can be also inferred that the students acknowledge the 'Voki' use during the classes as a natural cycle of the learning process, which is reflected in the previous chapter. Moreover, with the integration of Voki in the EFL classroom, a significant development is also observed in students' poster presentations. It is noted that the students, even the ones with low L2 competencies and shy personalities, started to demonstrate relaxed manners and natural behaviors, including 'jokes' in their speech during the presentations. From this finding, it can be stated that 'Voki' has a positive effect on the students that helped them build their self-efficacy beliefs which have a

vital role in terms of developing one's language skills. As Bandura (1997) states, self-efficacy alludes to a conviction in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of activity to realize a pre-determined objective. In line with this idea, it is noted that with a high self-efficacy, the students exhibit a lower level of anxiety while delivering their poster presentations. Based on the findings, it is likely to state that Voki helped the students overcome their anxiety and helped them deliver spontaneous presentations and improve their speaking skills in a significant way.

Research Question 2: What do students think about Voki?

The qualitative findings reveal that the 'Voki' voice-recordings generated confidence and enthusiasm while delivering a spontaneous speech. Based on the findings, not only for the students with high L2 competencies but also for the ones with low L2 competencies, it is likely to state that Voki contributed to their speaking skills in a significant way. It can be stated that due to its fun and creative avatars, the students are motivated to do voice-recordings. The findings of Aikina and Zubkova (2015) also suggest that, a good blend of Web 2.0 tools help the lessons become more creative, effective and motivational. Moreover, the students believe that feedback from the teacher helped them develop their self-efficacy beliefs so that they tried to do a better voice-recording for the next time. The result also reveals that although the students faced some technical obstacles while sharing their 'Voki' links with the teacher, as well as the demotivating limited and paid avatar choices, to improve their speaking skills, the students are willing to use Web 2.0 tool Voki as a complement to F2F classroom in EFL context.

As discussed in Chapter II, technology has various positive contributions to the EFL in BL. Especially when taken account the circumstances we have been going through due to the "Novel Coronavirus Pandemic" these days, which has ended up with school closures and F2F education worldwide, we can state that a new era has begun in education. In response to school closures, to limit the disruption of education, distance learning programs, and open educational applications, and platforms are being used all around the world so that education could continue remotely. Thus, the significance of the use of technology in the EFL context has emerged one more time which enables the teachers and the students to use technology efficiently, effectively, and benefit the most of it during the remote education era.

As a result, the analysis of both the quantitative and the qualitative findings demonstrate that the students, especially the ones with low L2 competencies, face difficulties in speaking activities when they feel anxious. It could be due to personal reasons, the classroom environment, or memorized texts. However, the Web 2.0 tool Voki has a positive effect on the students regarding their speaking skills. It enables the 'digital native' learners to become active learners of the language and develop their speaking skills in a fun, and spontaneous way, where the focus is on conveying the message within a natural and positive learning environment. In line with this idea Goodwin (2001) also states that the important aspect of speaking is that the audience should understand the message of the speaker without putting much effort. Vilimec (2006) also emphasizes a similar issue, stating that, it is important to avoid purely grammatical structures but to focus on speaking activities when learning to speak. Therefore, regarding the participants' age and their ecology in this study, it can be stated that well-defined goals, the right choice of technology tool, suitable topics for speaking tasks, creating speaking opportunities, efficient feedback by the teacher, and positive EFL environment play a significant role for developing the speaking skills of the students in BL.

5.3. Implications

The findings of this research are significant in contributing to the related literature as the results suggest that in the EFL environment the students may overcome their speaking anxiety and develop speaking skills through the educational technology tool Voki in a fun and creative way. Yet, it is the teacher's role to provide opportunities to the students to encounter the language in a positive language environment while providing effective feedback to the students to develop their speaking skills.

In BL environments the teachers have the lead role to decide 'what to blend', 'how much' to blend and to find the right blend according to the learners' needs and build a bridge between the technology world and the F2F learning environment. It is also important for the teachers to be skilled in technology use since the learners of this age, referred to as the 'digital natives', have particular learning preferences compared to other generations. Therefore, teachers should follow the latest educational technology, modify their teaching according to the learners' needs, and apply them effectively and efficiently in the learning environment.

Additionally, as referred in the literature that 'the speaking is not a talent but it is what can be trained', therefore teachers should create affordances to the learners to practice their speaking skills, otherwise, it is meaningless to know a language unless you can use it (Scrivener, 2005). Yet, Voki in this sense a great educational tool to enable students to practice speaking skills 'anywhere' and 'anytime', and at the same time encourage even the shy learners to actively involve in the learning process with a great deal of motivation.

In the light of this research, it could be concluded that EFL speaking skills can be developed through Voki voice-recordings and the teacher's commitment to creating opportunities for the learners, by constantly observing their developmental process, and giving efficient feedback while helping them develop their self-efficacy beliefs in a non-threatening positive learning environment.

5.4. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

Like in every study, this study has some limitations. First of all, this case study was conducted at a particular school with 12 students. So, in order to have a deeper understanding of the study, it could have conducted at different schools with more participants, and results could be compared and contrasted. So, future studies can be conducted at different schools and with more number of students.

Using only Web 2.0 tool 'Voki' to improve speaking skills was another limitation of the study. Since there are many different types of technological tools for language development, for further studies, other Web 2.0 tools like 'Voxopop' or 'Vocaroo' can be also used.

Furthermore, this study only investigated the students' views about 'Voki'. For further studies to get a wider perspective and to obtain richer data teachers' views can be also investigated.

The last limitation of the study is, only the speaking skills development of the students were investigated. For further studies, to get a deeper understanding of the language development as a whole, 4 skills can be investigated by using different Web 2.0 tools.

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7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Ethics Committee Approval Document

T.C	
ÇAĞ ÜNİVERSİTESİ	
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ	
TEZ / ARAŞTIRMA / ANKET / ÇALIŞMA İZNİ / ETİK KURULU İZİNİ TALEP FORMU VE ONAY TUTANAK FORMU	
ÖĞRENCİ BİLGİLERİ	
T.C. NOSU	25153862800
ADI VE SOYADI	Esen Gamze İstifanoğlu
ÖĞRENCİ NO	20188039
TEL. NO.	5331389937
E - MAİL ADRESLERİ	eistifanoğlu@hotmail.com
ANA BİLİM DALI	İNGİLİZ DİLİ EĞİTİMİ
HANGİ AŞAMADA OLDUĞU (DERS / TEZ)	TEZ
İSTEKDE BULUNDUĞU DÖNEME AİT DÖNEMLİK KAYDININ YAPILIP-YAPILMADIĞI	2019 / 2020 - GÜZ DÖNEMİ KAYDINI YENİLEDİM.
ARAŞTIRMA/ANKET/ÇALIŞMA TALEBİ İLE İLGİLİ BİLGİLER	
TEZİN KONUSU	Harmanlanmış Öğrenme'nin İngilizce dil sınıflarında konuşma becerileri üzerindeki rolü.
TEZİN AMACI	Harmanlanmış Öğrenme'nin, öğrencilerin yabancı dil becerilerine katkısına bakma.
TEZİN TÜRKÇE ÖZETİ	Yüzyüze eğitim ve teknoloji araçlarının birbirine entegre edildiği harmanlanmış öğrenmenin, özel bir kurumdaki 5. sınıfların yabancı dil derslerindeki konuşma becerilerine nasıl bir katkı sağladığına bakma amaçlı bir 'vaka çalışması' yapılacaktır.
ARAŞTIRMA YAPILACAK OLAN SEKTÖRLER/ KURUMLARI N ADLARI	Mersin Gelecek Okulları

İZİN ALINACAK OLAN KURUMA AİT BİLGİLER (KURUMUN ADI- ŞUBESİ/ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ - İLİ – İLÇESİ)	Mersin Gelecek Okulları / Yenişehir Kampüsü/ Mersin
YAPILMAK İSTENEN ÇALIŞMANIN İZİN ALINMAK İSTENEN KURUMUN HANGİ İLÇELERİNE/ HANGİ KURUMUNA / HANGİ BÖLÜMÜND E/ HANGİ ALANINA/ HANGİ KONULARDA / HANGİ GRUBA/ KİMLERE/ NE UYGULANAC AĞI GİBİ AYRINTILI BİLGİLER	Yapılmak istenen çalışma, Mersin'deki Gelecek Okulları'nın Yenişehir Kampüsündeki 5A şubesinin İngilizce dil sınıfında, harmanlanmış öğrenme'nin dil becerilerine katkısına bakılacak olup, Web 2.0 araçlarından 'Voki' uygulaması ve ders kitaplarının on-line uygulamaları kullanılarak, öğrencilere birer dakikalık verilen konu hakkında konuşup, ses kaydı yapmaları istenecektir. Bunun yanı sıra, her hafta öğrencilere yine belli konu başlıkları verilerek sınıfta arkadaşlarına yüz-yüze sunum yapmaları istenecek ve sunum sırasında öğretmen tarafından değerlendirme formları doldurulacaktır. Bunlara ek olarak, ders içlerindeki konuşma becerileri de ayrı bir formla hem araştırmacı hem de farklı bir İngilizce öğretmeni tarafından araştırma boyunca gözlemlenip, değerlendirilecektir.
UYGULANAC AK OLAN ÇALIŞMAYA AİT ANKETLERİN / ÖLÇEKLERİN BAŞLIKLARI/ HANGİ ANKETLERİN - ÖLÇELERİN UYGULANAC AĞI	Konuşma beliti formu ve konuşma kontrol föyü

EKLER (ANKETLER, ÖLÇEKLER, FORMLAR, V.B. GİBİ EVRAKLARIN İSİMLERİYLE BİRLİKTE KAÇ ADET/SAYFA OLDUKLARI NA AİT BİLGİLER İLE AYRINTILI YAZILACAKTIR)	1) Konuşma kontrol föyü (Tally Sheet) (1) Sayfa 2) Konuşma beliti formu (Speaking rubric) (1) Sayfa			
ÖĞRENCİNİN ADI - SOYADI: Esen Gamze İstifanoğlu		ÖĞRENCİNİN İMZASI: Enstitü müdürlüğünde kalan asıl sureti imzalıdır TARİH: 05 / 10 / 2019		
TEZ/ ARAŞTIRMA/ANKET/ÇALIŞMA TALEBİ İLE İLGİLİ DEĞERLENDİRME SONUCU				
1. Seçilen konu Bilim ve İş Dünyasına katkı sağlayabilecektir.				
2. Anılan konu İngiliz Dili Eğitim faaliyet alanı içerisine girmektedir.				
1. TEZ DANIŞMANININ ONAYI	2. TEZ DANIŞMANININ ONAYI (VARSA)	SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRÜNÜN ONAYI	A.B.D. BAŞKANININ ONAYI	
Adı-Soyadı: Prof. Dr. Şehnaz ŞAHİNKARAKAŞ	Adı - Soyadı:	Adı - Soyadı: Doç. Dr. Murat Koç	Adı - Soyadı: Prof. Dr. Şehnaz Şahinkarakaş	
Unvanı : Profesör	Unvanı:	Unvanı : Doç. Dr	Unvanı: Profesör	
İmzası: Enstitü müdürlüğünde kalan asıl sureti imzalıdır.	İmzası :	İmzası: Enstitü müdürlüğünde kalan asıl sureti imzalıdır	İmzası : Enstitü müdürlüğünde kalan asıl sureti imzalıdır	
05 / 10 / 2019		05 / 10 / 2019	05 / 10 / 2019	
ETİK KURULU ASIL ÜYELERİNE AİT BİLGİLER				
Adı - Soyadı: Mustafa BAŞARAN	Adı - Soyadı: Yücel ERTEKİN	Adı - Soyadı: Deniz Aynur GÜLER	Adı - Soyadı: Ali Engin OBA	Adı - Soyadı: Mustafa Tefvik ODMAN
Unvanı : Prof. Dr.	Unvanı : Prof. Dr.	Unvanı: Prof. Dr.	Unvanı: Prof. Dr.	Unvanı: Prof. Dr.
İmzası: Enstitü müdürlüğünde kalan asıl sureti imzalıdır	İmzası : Enstitü müdürlüğünde kalan asıl sureti imzalıdır	Enstitü müdürlüğünde kalan asıl sureti imzalıdır	İmzası :	İmzası :

05/10/2019	05/10/2019	05 / 10 / 2019	05 / 10 / 2019	05 / 10 / 2019
Etik Kurulu J üri Asıl Üyesi	Etik Kurulu J üri Asıl Üyesi	Etik Kurulu Jüri As ıl Üyesi	Etik Kurulu Jüri Asıl Üyesi	Etik Kurulu Jüri Asıl Üy esi
OY BİRLİĞİ İLE		ÇalışmayapılacakolanteziçinuygulayacakolduğuAnketleri/Formlar ı/ÖlçekleriÇağÜniversitesiEtikKuruluAsılJüriÜyelerinceİncelenmiş olup, 05 / 10 / 2019 - 10 / 01 / 2020 tarihleriarasındauygulanmaküzeregereklizninverilmesitaraflarımı zcauygundur.		
OY ÇOKLUĞU İLE				
AÇIKLAMA: BU FORM ÖĞRENCİLER TARAFINDAN HAZIRLANDIKTAN SONRA ENSTİTÜ MÜDÜRÜNE ONAYLATILARAK ENSTİTÜ SEKRETERLİĞİNE TESLİM EDİLECEKTİR. AYRICA YAZININ PUNTOSU İSE 12 (ON İKİ) PUNTO OLACAK ŞEKİLDE YAZILARAK ÇIKTI ALINACAKTIR.				

Appendix 2. Analytic Speaking Rubric

SPEAKING RUBRIC

Name: _____ Date: _____ Assignment: _____

	<i>1-2 Does Not Approach Expectations</i>	<i>3 Approaching Expectations</i>	<i>4 Meets Expectations</i>	<i>5 Exceeds Expectations</i>
TASK COMPLETION	Task minimally complete. Provides little or no information.	Partially completes task; lacks important information or response is too basic.	Completes task appropriately.	Completes task by elaborating on theme, with high level of detail and/or creativity.
COMPREHENSIBILITY	Most parts of the response not comprehensible to the listener.	Some parts of the response are comprehensible; others require interpretation on the part of the listener.	Response comprehensible; requires minimal interpretation on the part of the listener.	Response readily comprehensible; requires no interpretation on the part of the listener.
FLUENCY	Speech halting and uneven with long pauses or incomplete thoughts.	Speech choppy and/or slow with frequent pauses; most thoughts are complete.	Some hesitation but manages to continue and complete thoughts.	Thoughts expressed completely with few pauses or hesitation.
PRONUNCIATION	Multiple problems with pronunciation/intonation that may interfere with communication.	Some problems with pronunciation/intonation that may interfere with communication.	Sounds somewhat natural.	Sounds natural.
VOCABULARY	Vocabulary does not convey meaning most of the time; too basic for level.	Vocabulary does not convey meaning some of the time; too basic for level.	Vocabulary conveys appropriate meaning most of the time; appropriate for the level.	Rich and varied use of vocabulary.
GRAMMAR	Grammar is rarely accurate or appropriate for the level.	Grammar is sometimes accurate and/or not appropriate for the level.	Grammar is mostly accurate and appropriate for the level.	Grammar is consistently accurate and appropriate for the level.

Overall Grade: _____

Appendix 3. Holistic Speaking Rubric

Score	Description
5	Demonstrates complete understanding of the content. Presents information fluently using appropriate transitions and vocabulary. Speaks spontaneously, but only occasionally needs to search for words to keep speaking.
4	Demonstrates considerable understanding of the content. Presents information mostly fluently using appropriate transitions and vocabulary most of the time. Speaks spontaneously, but only occasionally needs to search for words to keep speaking.
3	Demonstrates partial understanding of the content. Presents information somewhat fluently using some transitions and vocabulary. Speaks spontaneously to some extent, and time to time needs to search for words to keep speaking.
2	Demonstrates little understanding of the content. Presents information with short breaks; shows some problems in using appropriate transitions and vocabulary. Very often needs to search for words to keep speaking.
1	Demonstrates no understanding of the content. Presents information with long breaks with no appropriate transitions or appropriate vocabulary.
0	No response.

Appendix 4. A Sample Teacher Journal

Field Note : FAVORITE HOLIDAY
Class: 5/A
Date : January 9th, 2020
Today, we used Voki for the fourth time. They come to school with fully prepared; tablets, smartphones, some had forgotten the devices so they had to share with a friend, but it was all right. Because their friends shared the devices happily. As for S7, he always brings his computer and headset and all the things what a computer needs:). It is his most valuable object, so in the morning as soon as he comes to school, he puts his computer in a safe place in the teachers' room and asks when he could get it. I think Voki days are their favourite day of school. Each time I realize how confident they have become while speaking. I really admire watching them doing voice-recordings. They fan out to different spots at school. I don't say anything or interfere with what they do so much. I just monitor them, because I really want them to feel free while doing the recordings. S3 and S4 are really weak, and prefer doing their recording a bit further place than their friends, and I totally understand them and respect that. Today, the students did not have problems while sharing the Voki links with me, that was relieving, because it could be demotivating for them when they can't share it at once. They feel like doing everything urgently. I recorded their links in my computer, however keeping the data of the recordings is an extra work load, a bit tiring and sometimes overwhelming, but as you see the spark in their eyes and the enthusiasm, you just say "It worths it."

Appendix 5. Interview Questions

1. What do you think of Voki?
2. What do you like the most about it?
3. What don't you like about it?
4. Do you think it has an influence on the development of your speaking skill? If so, explain? If not, explain?
5. Are you willing to use Voki in the language classes? If so, explain why?



Appendix 6. Permission and Approval Letter from Çağ University



T.C.
ÇAĞ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
ÇAĞ UNIVERSITY

SAYI : 23867972/ **1135-786**
KONU: Tez Anket İzini Hakkında

05.11.2019

MERSİN GELECEK OKULLARI MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE
YENİŞEHİR / MERSİN

İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi olan (20188039 numaralı) **Esen Gamze İSTİFANOĞLU**, “**Harmanlanmış öğretme’nin İngilizce dil sınıflarında konuşma becerileri üzerindeki rolü**” konulu tez çalışmasını Üniversitemiz öğretim elemanı Prof. Dr. Şehnaz ŞAHİNKARAKAŞ’ ın tez danışmanlığında yürütmektedir. Adı geçen öğrenci tez çalışması kapsamında **Kurumunuzda halen eğitim gören 5/A İngilizce dil sınıfı öğrencilerini** kapsamak üzere kopyası Ek’lerde sunulan bir anket uygulaması yapmayı planlamaktadır. Tez çalışması kapsamında yukarıda belirtilen anketin uygulayabilmesi için gerekli iznin verilmesi hususunu bilgilerinize sunarım.

Enstitüde Kalan Aslı İmzalıdır

Doç. Dr. Murat KOÇ

Sos. Bil. Enst. Müdürü

EKLERİ: Üç sayfa tez anket formları ve Üç sayfa tez etik kurul izin formunun fotokopileri.

A.Yaşar Bayboğan Kampüsü, Adana-Mersin Karayolu 33800 Yenice-Mersin / TÜRKİYE T. +90 (0324) 651 48 00 F. +90 (0324) 651 48 11
www.cag.edu.tr

Appendix 7. Administrative Consent Form



12.11.2019

GAZİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE
YENİCE

Üniversitenizde İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programında öğrenci olan (20188039 numaralı) Esen Gamze İstifanoğlu'nun, **"Harmanlanmış öğrenmenin İngilizce dil sınıflarında konuşma becerileri üzerindeki rolü"** konulu tez çalışmasını, Yenişehir Kampüsümüzdeki 5/A sınıfında uygulaması kurumumuzca uygun görülmüştür. Tez çalışması kapsamında Ek'te sunulan anketlerin uygulanabilmesi için gerekli izinlerin verildiğini bilgilerinize sunarım.



M. HAZİM EKER

[Handwritten signature]

1803

8. BIOGRAPHY

PERSONAL DETAILS

Name-Surname : Esen Gamze İSTİFANOĞLU
Date of Birth : 22.06.1975
Place of Birth : Edirne
Contact Information: E-mail : eistifanoglu@hotmail.com

EDUCATION

1993-1997 Bilkent University, American Culture and Literature
1997-1998 Mersin University, Pedagogical Formation
2014-2016 Atatürk University, Child Development
2017-2019 MEB Traditional Turkish Silver Art Work Certificate
2018August KOSGEP , Entrepreneurship Certificate
2018 –2020 Çağ University MA ; English Language Teaching

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

2019-2020 Gelecek Schools ; English Teacher
2015-2017 Toros University Preparatory School ; English Teacher
2014-2015 Doğa College, Mersin ; Kindergarten Director
2011-2014 Doğa College, Mersin ; English Teacher
2009-2011 İlgi School ; (Part Time)English Teacher
2009-2011 Çocuk Dünyası Kindergarten ; English Teacher/ Director
2000-2001 Ata College ; English Teacher
1999-2000 Tarsus Amerikan College ; English Teacher
1998-1999 Türkmen Elementary School ; English Teacher
1997-1998 Gazi Paşa Elementary School ; English Teacher