

A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW ON IMPROVING ENGLISH SPEAKING CONFIDENCE AND FLUENCY USING ZOOM

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Abstract

This study presents a systematic literature review on the use of Zoom as a platform to enhance English speaking fluency and confidence among EFL learners. Following PRISMA 2020 guidelines, 24 peer-reviewed studies published between 2020 and 2025 were analyzed, retrieved from databases such as Scopus, Taylor & Francis Online, Google Scholar, and Sinta. The review synthesized both quantitative and qualitative findings, highlighting four major themes: the role of Zoom in improving speaking fluency, its impact on confidence and speaking anxiety, pedagogical strategies for effective implementation, and challenges faced by learners and educators. The results indicate that Zoom provides significant opportunities for interactive practice, reduces learners' anxiety in some contexts, and fosters higher engagement when supported by appropriate instructional strategies. However, technical barriers and unequal digital access remain persistent challenges. Overall, this review emphasizes the potential of Zoom as an effective tool in online EFL speaking instruction while also pointing to areas that require further pedagogical and technological development.

INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in spoken English is increasingly recognized as a core competency for academic achievement and global communication. Yet many learners face difficulties in developing fluency and confidence, especially in online settings where interaction may appear restricted or less natural. The sudden transition to digital learning environments during the COVID-19 pandemic has compelled educators to adopt platforms such as Zoom to sustain language instruction and promote communicative competence. Early evidence suggests that Zoom can effectively support speaking development. Mutakhirani et al. reported that its use improved multiple aspects of oral proficiency, including grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency (Mustafa et al., 2022). Similarly, Tauchid et al. showed that remote speaking tasks conducted through online platforms amplified learners' proficiency and self-confidence, highlighting the platform's potential to facilitate authentic language use (Tauchid et al., 2024).

Despite these opportunities, learners still encounter substantial challenges in online speaking activities. Without sufficient interaction, students may experience heightened anxiety, reduced motivation, and slower progress in oral proficiency. Nugroho et al. found that limited peer interaction in synchronous online classrooms increased speaking anxiety and discouraged active participation (Nugroho et al., n.d.). At the institutional level, Syafryadin and Santiana observed that online speaking instruction in junior high schools was hindered by limited infrastructure and low readiness among both teachers and learners (Syafryadin & Santiana, 2023). Likewise, Fauzi and Khusuma emphasized that digital literacy and self-efficacy



strongly affect learners' ability to perform oral tasks effectively in virtual environments (Fauzi & Sastra Khusuma, 2020). The lack of immediate feedback and reduced peer engagement further intensify these difficulties, particularly for hesitant speakers.

While individual studies have provided important insights, a systematic synthesis is needed to consolidate current knowledge of how Zoom supports the development of speaking fluency and confidence. It is also essential to identify which pedagogical strategies are most effective and to examine the recurring challenges across different contexts. Accordingly, this review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of best practices, opportunities, and constraints in Zoom-based speaking instruction, offering valuable guidance for teachers, institutions, and researchers designing online English language programs.

METHODS

This systematic literature review aimed to synthesize research on the use of Zoom to improve English speaking fluency and confidence among EFL learners. The review adhered to the PRISMA 2020 guidelines to ensure rigor and transparency. Relevant studies were retrieved from databases including Scopus, Taylor & Francis Online, Google Scholar, and Sinta-indexed journals, using keywords such as "Zoom," "EFL/ESL speaking," "fluency," "confidence," and "anxiety."

The review focused on studies published between 2020 and 2025 to capture recent developments in online learning. Inclusion criteria required that studies employed Zoom as the primary instructional platform, presented empirical evidence, and were published in peer-reviewed journals. Exclusion criteria applied to non-empirical studies, research not centered on Zoom, and studies outside EFL or ESL contexts. The selection process involved removing duplicates and screening titles, abstracts, and full texts, resulting in the identification of 24 relevant studies.

Key data from each study such as author, year of publication, participants, research design, intervention features, and main findings were systematically extracted. A thematic synthesis was then conducted, with findings grouped into four categories: Zoom and speaking fluency development, confidence and speaking anxiety, pedagogical strategies for effective use of Zoom, and challenges and limitations. Both quantitative evidences, including improvements in test scores, and qualitative insights, such as learner engagement and perceptions, were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of Zoom's role in EFL speaking instruction.

To frame the analysis, this review also drew upon Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1996), which emphasizes the role of meaningful interaction in language development, and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which highlights the importance of scaffolding and social collaboration in learning. These theories guided the synthesis and interpretation of findings across studies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Zoom and Speaking Fluency Development

A number of studies demonstrated that Zoom has a positive effect on learners' speaking fluency in EFL settings. For example, Andewi and Trinovita carried out a quasi-experimental study comparing students who participated in Zoom-based speaking classes with those who attended conventional face-to-face classrooms (Andewi & Trinovita, 2024). The results revealed that the experimental group obtained higher post-test scores, indicating that Zoom's synchronous features created richer opportunities for interaction and immediate feedback. Complementing these findings, Hartono et al. emphasized the potential of Zoom breakout rooms to foster collaboration and boost students' confidence in oral communication (Hartono et al., 2023). They argued that smaller, more supportive online settings reduced anxiety and encouraged learners to speak more actively, which aligns with Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1996) that stresses the importance of frequent and meaningful interaction for language development.

Further evidence is provided by Nisa et al. who investigated the role of small-group discussions in Zoom breakout rooms (Nisa et al., 2021). Their study demonstrated that such activities substantially increased the frequency of individual speaking turns, thereby creating a more equitable distribution of participation and offering learners repeated practice opportunities, an essential component for fluency building. Expanding the scope of Zoom-mediated activities, Al-Jarf reported that integrating online presentations, debates, and collaborative projects into Zoom classes enhanced not only fluency but also learners' adaptability to diverse communicative contexts (Al-Jarf, 2021). These varied speaking tasks simulated authentic language use, helping students adjust to different discourse styles and interactional demands. In a similar vein, Rojabi compared synchronous and asynchronous learning modes and confirmed that real-time interaction via Zoom facilitated more natural language production and richer negotiation of meaning than asynchronous platforms. His findings suggest that the immediacy of communication in Zoom classes plays a vital role in the development of oral proficiency (Rojabi & Praptika Septi Familia, 2023).

These studies indicate that Zoom fosters speaking fluency by combining real-time interaction, structured practice, and quick feedback. Beyond replicating face-to-face learning, its features like breakout rooms, chat, and screen sharing support individual and group practice. In line with Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1996), Zoom serves not only as a classroom substitute but also as a tool for continuous, authentic communicative competence development.

Confidence and Speaking Anxiety

A recurring theme in the literature is the relationship between Zoom and learners' confidence and anxiety in EFL contexts. Nugroho et al. investigated sources of speaking anxiety in online classes and found that insufficient interaction and the lack of immediate peer support often heightened students' apprehension when speaking English (Nugroho et al., n.d.). Students reported feeling more self-conscious in front of a virtual audience, especially when internet instability or delayed feedback disrupted communication. Supporting these results, Nur'Asifa et al. discovered that secondary school students also experienced considerable anxiety during Zoom-based speaking tasks, mainly due to fear of making mistakes and limited opportunities to interact with peers (Nur'asifa et al., n.d.). Similarly, Putri and Ekawati emphasized that technological barriers and reduced non-verbal cues contributed to learners' anxiety, making them less willing to participate actively in online speaking activities (Oktarina & Ekawati, 2022).

Several studies, however, indicated that Zoom can be employed strategically to mitigate these challenges and build learners' confidence. For instance, Rini et al. implemented storytelling activities in small Zoom groups and found that students became more engaged, less anxious, and more confident in oral production (Noorman & Nafisah, 2020). Storytelling encouraged learners to shift focus away from accuracy toward meaning, which reduced performance pressure and helped them enjoy the speaking process. Similarly, Maharani and Roslaini explored how students coped with speaking anxiety during online learning and highlighted the importance of scaffolding and peer encouragement (Nurfajri Maharani, n.d.). Their findings revealed that gradual exposure to speaking tasks, combined with supportive teacher feedback, enabled learners to regulate their emotions and develop greater self-assurance.

Zoom's technical features also play a central role in managing anxiety. Collaborative learning in breakout rooms has been shown to reduce communication apprehension and encourage hesitant learners to practice speaking in less intimidating environments. These smaller group settings provide opportunities for peer feedback and cooperative learning, allowing students to make mistakes without fear of judgment from the entire class. Over time, structured interactions in breakout rooms sustain regular speaking practice and gradually help students transition to more confident performance in the main session. In addition, features such as chat functions or the option to turn off cameras can serve as useful strategies for shy students to manage anxiety while still participating in class activities.

Overall, these findings indicate that while online learning can initially heighten anxiety due to technical and social challenges, Zoom's features help reduce these barriers. Through flexible participation, supportive collaboration, and gradual exposure to speaking tasks, it enables learners to manage apprehension and build lasting confidence.

Pedagogical Strategies for Effective Zoom Use

Although Zoom offers technical features that support communication, its effectiveness depends largely on the pedagogical approaches employed. Nguyen investigated scaffolding strategies in Internet-based ELT classes and found that systematic support such as modeling, questioning, and guided practice helped learners sustain participation in speaking activities (Nguyen, 2022). Similarly, Inayati and Karifianto reported that scaffolding in online grammar courses supported students' self-regulated learning and enabled them to engage more confidently in synchronous discussions (Inayati & Karifianto, 2022).

Task-based and project-based methods were also effective when combined with Zoom. Takase (2024) compared synchronous video conferencing with asynchronous video letters and concluded that synchronous interaction via Zoom offered richer opportunities for fluency development through immediate feedback and negotiation of meaning.

Peer collaboration and integration with other digital platforms further enhanced the effectiveness of Zoom. Mansur and Asmawati showed that combining Zoom with Google Classroom and Quizizz created more opportunities for oral practice and engagement in communicative tasks (Mansur & Asmawati, 2021). Likewise, Day et al. demonstrated that online peer feedback on video presentations improved students' presentation skills and increased their confidence in public speaking (N. Z. Day et al., 2022).

These findings confirm that Zoom can serve as a powerful platform for communicative language teaching when used with appropriate instructional strategies. Approaches such as scaffolding, task-based learning, and collaborative projects are consistent with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which highlights the importance of interaction and support in language development. They also reflect principles of Task-Based Language Teaching, which encourage meaningful communication through authentic tasks.

Challenges and Limitations

Despite its advantages, Zoom is not without limitations. Zaim et al. reported that many students faced difficulties such as unstable internet connections, distractions at home, and unfamiliarity with online platforms, which often reduced engagement and participation during Zoom sessions (Zaim et al., n.d.). On a broader scale, Adedoyin and Soykan highlighted similar challenges worldwide, noting that technical barriers and unequal access to digital resources have been persistent obstacles to effective online learning (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2023).

Another limitation is the reduced availability of non-verbal cues in virtual communication. Ferginan et al. found that the absence of gestures, facial expressions, and other paralinguistic features hindered comprehension and sometimes lowered learners' confidence when responding to peers (Ferginan1 et al., 2025). This suggests that online learning environments may not fully replicate the richness of face-to-face interaction.

Teacher readiness also remains a critical issue. Rahmania et al. showed that limited digital literacy and inadequate training restricted teachers' ability to maximize the pedagogical functions of Zoom (Sunggingwati & Ida Wardani, n.d.). Similarly, Tutyandari and Purnamaningwulan revealed that many Indonesian EFL teachers still struggled to adapt their teaching strategies effectively to online contexts, often due to insufficient institutional support and technological challenges (Tutyandari & Purnamaningwulan, 2023).

Overall, these findings show that Zoom's effectiveness relies on stable technology, digital literacy, and teacher readiness. To overcome these limits, blended learning that integrates online flexibility with face-to-face interaction may be more sustainable. Ongoing investment in teacher training and digital literacy is also crucial to fully optimize Zoom for speaking instruction.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review examined the role of Zoom in enhancing English speaking fluency and confidence among EFL learners. Evidence from twenty-three empirical studies demonstrated that Zoom can facilitate significant improvements in fluency through synchronous interaction, structured practice, and immediate feedback.

The review also indicated that Zoom has the potential to lower speaking anxiety and foster learner confidence, particularly when teachers implement strategies such as small-group discussions, storytelling, and peer feedback. These practices create supportive environments that reduce affective barriers and encourage active learner participation.

Furthermore, the findings emphasized the importance of pedagogical strategies in maximizing Zoom's effectiveness. Approaches such as scaffolding, project-based learning, and integration with complementary digital tools were shown to sustain learner engagement and provide meaningful opportunities for oral practice. Nevertheless, several challenges remain, including unstable internet access, reduced availability of non-verbal cues, limited digital literacy, and insufficient teacher preparation.

Overall, this review offers both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of EFL instruction. The findings provide insights for teachers, institutions, and policymakers seeking to design effective online language programs. Future research should explore the long-term impact of Zoom on speaking development, compare its affordances with those of other platforms, and examine hybrid models that integrate online and face-to-face learning. Addressing these areas will support more inclusive, sustainable, and effective approaches to developing speaking fluency and confidence in English language education.

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