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The Effects of the Lexical Approach on EFL Learners' English Speaking in an Online Class*

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This study focuses on the effects of utilizing the Lexical Approach (LA) in the development of speaking confidence and proficiency of students in online conversation classes, in a university in Chungcheongnam-do, South Korea. The participants were 70 students at the university (Freshman to Senior) having undergone 30 hours of Practical English classes in over 15 weeks during the fall semester of 2020 through the Learning Management System platform. The study centered on the students' ability to solicit meaning from a particular context, their use of fixed and semi-fixed expressions, collocation preferences, and speaking confidence development. Research data was collected as follows: a survey, pre/post-test on collocation, interview, and recorded selfie videos. Quantitative and qualitative methods were utilized to identify the impact on students' learning. It tapped the use of descriptive research in analyzing the gathered data. Findings proved a significant improvement in the students' speaking proficiency to identify meaning from context, use of fixed and semi-fixed expressions, and collocation preferences. It also proved, based on personal assessment and data gathered, that students' confidence levels increased. The resulting productive strategies were discussed in terms of activating English Conversation classes using the LA.

[lexical approach/speaking skills/conversation class/online learning]

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the past, finding better ways to meet the language learners' needs has been the focal point of linguistic research and instruction. Richards and Rodgers (2014) claim teaching innovations have produced an array of approaches and methods where the Lexical Approach (LA) is one. They further suggest the fundamental element for language learning and communication is not "grammar, functions, notions, or some other unit of planning and teaching but in lexis" (p. 215). The LA is seen as an effective approach to learning especially because it focuses on a naturally occuring lexicon, otherwise known as 'chunks' (Kim & Aromin, 2019; Lackman, 2011; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Xu, Mao, & Liu, 2012).

Even if its potential as a valuable teaching tool is obvious, the LA has been criticized extensively as being impracticable, especially as it is protracted (Boers & Lindstronberg, 2009; Sample, 2014), within the societal context, in particular Korea (Mani & Trines, 2018) and China (Xu, et al., 2012) where education revolves around standardized tests (Mani & Trines, 2018; Owenby, 2015; Ozturgut, 2011; Sharif, 2018). The LA allows one to learn co-occurring expressions naturally since it is the convergence of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics in natural utterances. Thus, this approach is highly recommended to educators (Newmeyer, 1998; Xu, et al., 2012).

Apart from answering the demands of globalization, for which learning a language has become a necessity, many health issues, in particular the Covid-19, have changed education in a multitude of ways (Li & Lalani, 2020). While schools close, displacing more students, educators are forced to find alternative learning methods popularizing online learning to ensure the erudition of the students. Online learning has become the most used and accessible means of improving one's speaking proficiency and confidence among non-native speakers because it is accessible, flexible, cost-effective, and convenient (Ashley-Dennison, 2010; Dhawan, 2020; Galagan, 2000; McNair-Crews, 2015). In her 2011 study, Zayas shows attending online classes improves the general GPA scores.

Hence, as a means of containing the spread of Covid-19, universities around the world are forced to hold classes online as this is deemed the best alternative to face-to-face classes (Bahk, 2020; Li & Lalani, 2020). The didactic medium has changed instantaneously, making online teaching the mainstream.

Despite the extensive research done on utilizing the online platform in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), very few have focused on the impacts of employing the LA in online conversation classes among university students. Thus, this research aims to determine whether incorporating the LA in online speaking classes significantly improves students' speaking proficiency and confidence with particular focus on the following:

1) What impact does the Lexical Approach have on students' speaking proficiency in online classes?
2) How effective is the use of the Lexical Approach in online classes on students' confidence when speaking?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of the LA in a classroom setting is: "Language ability requires not only the ability to produce language through syntactic generation (via grammatical competence) but also the ability to use lexical chunks in appropriate situations" (Richards & Rogers, 2014, p. 217). In response to issues encountered by the traditional learning setting, technological advancements create an array of unconventional learning tools which makes student's SLA attainable.

1. Lexical Approach

Just as SLA was in high demand during colonial times leading to common secular schools (Cavanaugh, 1996), so it is being sought after these days but for different reasons. The result is the creation of new methods and approaches both suggested and implemented, of which the LA is one. The LA stands on the premise that learning originates from lexis and is the melting pot for syntax, semantics, and pragmatics (Sample, 2014). Richards and Rogers (2014) purport that the primary constituent of language learning and communication is lexis (words and word partnerships) and not syntax and morphology, functions and notions, nor on other units of planning and teaching.

Differentiated from the traditional approach, the LA supposes "language consists of grammaticalized lexis, rather than lexicalized grammar" (Lewis, 1997, p. 13). It questions the concept that grammar and lexis are separate units and proposes that language is composed of words or groups of words or lexical chunks (Lackman, 2011). Though the arbitrariness of the LA should be considered, it should be noted that L1 is still the basis for translation despite L2 being the main character (Lewis, 1993). Because many of these interactions occur naturally, it becomes conventional for L2 (Davies & Pearse, 2002), for which many Korean learners tend to infer their "phrasal teddy bear" (Wu, 2019).

1) Lexical Items

Improving communicative competence requires the ability to use collocations and prefabricated multi-word combinations as single units (Lewis, 1997; Wray, 2000). A key

indicator is the mastery of semi-fixed or fixed lexical phrases, known as ‘chunks, bundles or’ clusters (Biber & Conrad, 1999; Lewis, 1997; McCarthy, 1990; Wray, 2000). Utterances in oral and written communication are, for the most part, composed of lexical items (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Wood, 2010; Wray, 2002). From the perspective of patterned language, Lewis (1997) mentions several categories including words, collocations, fixed expressions, and semi-fixed expressions.

Among English learners in an EFL setting, words, otherwise known as vocabulary, are the most widely used category. They can stand alone (*happy, go, beautiful*) or co-occur (*happily married, go home, feel beautiful*). Collocations, on the other hand, are word partnerships. As the definition implies, they are groups of words that have a higher than random tendency to be used together naturally, like ‘*do homework’.* Lewis classified them as strong or weak collocations. Strong collocations are the group of words having a higher tendency to collocate with other words like ‘have, make, do’. Weak collocations have a lower tendency such as ‘*attend (your classes)’* and ‘*hand (in your homework)’*. These are called ‘chunks’, not because they co-occur but are already collocations (Lewis, 1997).

Wei (1999) mentions three: lexical, grammar, and idiomatic. Lexical collocations are recurring word partnerships primarily used as content words (*an earache,* and *ear pain,* but not *an ear hurt)*. Grammar collocations have grammatical inflections like ‘*She has the foresight to finish it*’ which shows a grammatical collocation of n+to+infinitive. Grammar rules, however, should not be confused with grammar collocations. Third are idiomatic expressions- a part of the fixed expression group that does not allow substitution on any of its parts (*it’s about time; call it a day; it’s better late than never.).*

Fixed expressions may include idioms (*bite the bullet; to make a long story short*); polite expressions (*Excuse me, please…; Can you hold…, please?);* social greetings (*How are you?; Good day, sir/ madam!*); phrasebook language (*Can you recommend a good place to* (*eat, visit, etc.*)); institutionalized utterances (*Would you want some milk in your tea?*); clichés (*from time to time; beauty is only skin deep*); prefabricated routines (*see you, take care*); formulaic sequences (*I bet you were happy; Excuse me?*); and sayings or proverbs (*Rome wasn’t built in a day; out of sight, out of mind*).

The last classification is the semi-fixed expression that allows humor, originality, and the freedom to change, fill, or modify a statement. Semi-fixed expressions boost the learner’s creativity with the use of their mental lexicon (*spill the beans= reveal the secrets)* including sentence builders like ‘*it’s a*---’.

2) Importance of Collocation in Teaching and Learning

Though all speakers have explicit knowledge of grammar rules including phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, one can showcase linguistic competence only if it

incorporates their mental dictionary/lexicon (Frompkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2014). In fact, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) lists South Korea as holding the record for the most educated population in the world (Mani & Trines, 2018). There is no doubt, in the Korean setting, the demand for a globally competitive workforce is on the rise (Kim & Aromin, 2019). In 2008, the majority of companies in the country refer to the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) score as part of the employment process. This propmped the government to execute policies providing English classes to students as early as primary school (Mani & Trines, 2018).

Research shows that teaching collocations in the classroom is effective to some degree. There is a correlation between competence in both recognizing and producing collocations and that of general English proficiency (Kim, 2003; Lewis, 2000).

Many educators have adopted this approach, finding it significantly increases students' confidence when using language proven by their heightened discourse skills (Tatsukawa, 2018; Xu, et al., 2012). Research done in Korea by Lee (2005) shows learners having a 'weak sense of salience' towards collocations. Kim (2012) suggests Korean EFL learners need to receive better or more intensive instruction in collocations that focus on reading and listening.

As the main goal of learning a second language is to communicate in a live setting, English should be used as often as possible (Davies & Pearse, 2002), for which the LA plays a vital role. Students who learned lexical chunks and collocations have better output, become confident speakers, and are more creative with their language production (Newmeyer, 1998; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2013; Tchakamba, 2014; Zaabalawi & Gould, 2017). Educators then should be mindful that teaching is not only to transfer knowledge, but to coach the learners to a level where real English functions through interactive dialogue (Davies & Pearse, 2002; Walsh, 2005). Even though there are studies by domestic and foreign researchers regarding high effectiveness between speaking and LA (Hill, 2000; Lewis, 1997; Kim, 2019; Kim & Brent, 2011), further studies need to be done specifically on the impact on speaking proficiency and confidence.

2. Online Learning

Traditional schools were modeled and developed in response to the needs of the industrial revolution in the 19th century (Haley, 2013). To adapt to the "new normal" (online classes), in response to the Covid-19 challenge, new directives to implement the Learning Management System (LMS) platfrom across South Korea are encouraged.

History has its means of showcasing how old ways are being replaced with more sophisticated systems and considered more efficient like automobiles in exchange for carriages and horses (Haley, 2013). This is also apparent with the shift from using

manuscripts and scrolls to help with distance learning, to the use of airwaves and radio frequencies allowing for wider audiences.

With the advent of e-learning, the use of mobile phones, smartphones, and computers paves way for more learners to avail themselves of the opportunity to learn a language in the comfort of their homes, without worrying about time and travel expenses (Ashley-Dennison, 2010). Many educational institutions opt for online language classes to practice theories learned in class (McNair-Crews, 2015) and is highly sought after as an economical alternative to learning a language with regards to its functionality, including the commercial sector (Ashley-Dennison, 2010).

Many educators have incorporated audio-visual materials into their classes. As technology continues to advance, its use has become a fad. In reality, this trend solves many issues encountered by students in a conventional learning set-up (Haley, 2013).

Just as traditional brick and mortar schools were established to cope with the needs of the Industrial Revolution, online teaching is the best response to the issues of the 20th century (Galagan 2000) and the present-day dilemma of Covid-19 (Oh, 2020).

Many schools used to be skeptical about the sudden shift in the pedagogical framework, for which, online learning has taken its place. If educators were ready before the disaster, time spent on learning the process could have been spent preparing for content and would be a different story (Dhawan, 2020; Todorova & Bjorn-Andersen, 2011). Sadly, educators struggle with issues that relate to online teaching: installation, logging in, audio and video glitches, to name a few (Dhawan, 2020). As each learner is different, online classes have success and failures because of flexibility, complacency, distraction, and motivation (Dhawan, 2020; Li &Lalani, 2020; Loeb, 2020). Hence, educators have been given options on which method to use in online conversation classes.

3. Incorporating Lexical Approach in Online Classes

Very little research combine both the LA and online erudition. Groves and O'Donoghue (2009) state that many learners find online learning enjoyable and beneficial. Whereas LA proves to have a positive impact on students (Kim, 2003), the use of technology has shown to speed up learning and create a more erudite workforce, which in turn enhances national competitiveness (Long, Vignare, Rappold, & Mallory, 2007), utilizing this will be favorable.

While many educators tap the power of technology to supplement their classes (Cavanaugh, 2006; Zayas, 2011), the need to shift from traditional to an online classroom setting remains to be seen (Bahk, 2020). Consequently, the use of the LA in online EFL classes is indispensable.

Despite all these resources, this researcher found few in-depth studies focusing on the

use of the LA in online classes. The fact remains: using the LA and online classes has a latent impact on the speaking proficiency of EFL learners.

III. METHOD

1. Participants

To determine the effects of the LA in online classes, with regards to the students' proficiency level, the research was done at a university in ChungcehongNam-do, South Korea. The participants are Freshmen to Senior tertiary students from thirteen (13) different departments. There are 26 males and 44 females.

Table 1 summarizes the demographics (n=70) considering three independent variables—gender, year, and department. From Table 1 there are a total of 26 males and 44 females. It also shows the majority of participants are Freshmen (61), followed by Junior (5), then Senior (3), and finally Sophomore (1). It is also worth noticing that the participants come from thirteen different departments as follows: Cuum College (14); Emergency, Medical Service and Rescue (12); International Finance and Real Estate (11); Global Business Support (10); Physical Therapy (8); Early Childhood Special Education (4); Special education (3); Adapted Physical Therapy/Sign Language Education (2); Christian Education (2); Nursing (2); Business Administration (1) and Social Welfare (1). It is a-priori that the respondents' speaking ability are approximately similar.

TABLE 1

Demographic Information of Participants (n = 70)

Variable	Factor	Population
Gender	Male	26
	Female	44
Year Level	Freshmen	61
	Sophomore	1
	Junior	5
	Senior	3
Department	Adaptive Physical Therapy/ Sign Language Education	2
	Business Administration	1
	Christian Education	2
	Emergency Medical Technician	12
	Global Secretary	10
	Nursing	2
	Physical Therapy	8
	Real Estate and Finance	11
	Special Education	3
	Early Childhood Education	4
	Cuum College	14
	Social Welfare	1

2. Instruments

To obtain adequate and accurate data, descriptive data was used via SPSS ver. 23, known for its ability to answer any research question.

1) Pre/Post-Collocation Test

Pre/post collocation test was necessary as classes were held online and face-to-face interaction was restricted. A two-part questionnaire was given to students via a web link and uploaded to the nCyber LMS. The first contains the self-assessment, using the Likert Scale, with 1= strongly agree, 2= somewhat agree, 3= neutral, 4= somewhat disagree, and 5= strongly disagree. The second part comprise the proficiency questions: soliciting meaning, fixed expressions, semi-fixed expressions, and preference on delexicalized words.

2) Interview

Interview questions were used to follow-up on their proficiency. It was comprised of general topic questions about a social issue outsourced from the book, open-ended questions on their honest opinion concerning the class, and suggestions/recommendations. Social issues outsourced from the book as part of the interview served to guage their ability to proficiently and confidently use the language in an actual setting. None had prior experience in systematic and well-planned online courses. Interviews were conducted at the beginning and near the end of the semester. In the form of feedback, they responded to interview questions identifying supplementary experiences, offering additional thoughts and opinions about the LA activities. These were treated with descriptive research methods using quantitative data collection and data analysis.

3) Selfie Videos

To check the confidence level of the students it was necessary to use selfie videos. Selfie videos are recorded videos by the students of themselves, talking about a particular topic. As differentiated from self-recorded videos, selfie videos limit the scope allowing only the person’s face and his/her background in the frame. Any other type of video presentation (videos of travel, without their face showing) does not qualify. It is similar to vlogging but without the sound effects and the sound bed. Selfie videos are said to benefit the students in three ways: it improves confidence, increases speaking time, and enhances self-awareness (Hwang, 2018). It was submitted during the last week of the term.

3. Procedures

Data were collected within the third week of September 2020, and the second week of December 2020. Participants were chosen based on their exposure to English via online classes, which were imposed by the government to contain the pandemic. Pre/post-test collocation surveys were administered via the weblinks, while the interview was administered online. Selfie videos were submitted on the last week of the term. Responses were uploaded and saved to a database for future reference. The gathered data was tabulated, examined, and interpreted using the SPSS v.23 program.

The study also used the pre/post test paradigm. A pre/post-intervention survey was taken by 70 participants who underwent 30 hours of online classes (2 hours x 15 weeks). As shown in Table 2, lessons were based on learners' needs, the scope of use, teachability, and suitability. Students were given tasks including note-taking, noticing, collocation grids, context vocabulary, and repetition, and recycling on top of homework in the form of monologues, pair work, as well as writing activities all throughout the term. Participants have been immersed in the LA weekly as summarized below.

TABLE 2

Class Procedures and Content

Week	Content	Remarks
Weeks 1-4	Information Questions/ Indirect Questions. Present perfect Articles/ Modals for advice	Collocations were introduced, in particular, Adj+N, Adv+Adj, N-collocations, Adv-collocations, and Prep-collocations Questionnaires were distributed in class with face-to-face interaction (once) and face-time calls. Monologues and speaking with partners were initiated. A face-time call was necessary, but not all students were able to join. A group chat was created for faster response time, announcements, recorded speech homework, etc. Internet connection and technical issues were a big problem.
Weeks 5–8	Making predictions with present continuous for future plans. Simple past/ past continuous. Quantifiers/ present and future conditionals. Mid-Term Exams	V-collocations Semi-fixed and fixed Expressions. Students were tasked to do two speaking activities: a monologue for 2 minutes and speaking with a partner (assigned by the professor) for at least 3 minutes. Both activities were recorded and uploaded via LMS. Topics were practical issues outsourced from the book.
Weeks 9-12	Grades Release. Present Perfect continuous. present perfect vs. present perfect continuous. Simple present passive.	Semi-fixed/fixed expressions: v-, n-, and prep- collocations. Contrastive stress in chunking (speech) were taught in class via face-time calls and individual or group calls. Students were encouraged to listen to their own recording and to compare it with other students for proper chunking and intonation.

Weeks 13–15	Phrasal verbs. Present and future second conditionals. Speaking Exams part 01. Speaking Exams part 02	Phrasal verb collocations, Noun collocations. Clause collocations. The survey was given for the post-test. The interview was administered. Selfie videos were passed. Individual calls were administered before the final exams to ensure that students understood the lessons in class.

4. Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher opted to gather pertinent data from the following: Pre/post-test survey questions were given to ensure more accurate data to confirm or deny the impacts of the LA in the online classes with regards to the students' speaking proficiency and confidence. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: (1) self-assessment and (2) collocation usage. The second part was divided further into four categories which include soliciting meaning, fixed expressions, semi-fixed expressions and collocation preference. It is important to note that the data gleaned from the survey was run through the following statistical treatment: Descriptive analysis and frequency analysis using the Distribution and Pearson's Correlation Analysis.

An interview was also conducted to gauge whether students can use the language in a natural setting with questions about social issues outsourced from the textbook and an open-ended question on their assessment of both the methods employed in class and of their development throughout the course. Answers were observed for coherence and cohesion, contextual and grammatical collocation, lexical resource, and task response as criteria. Data were treated using Pearson's correlation analysis.

Selfie videos were noted for frequency of collocation usage, fixed, and semi-fixed expressions. It was also observed for proper chunking of statements. The fluency and speech rate per minute was also considered. To achieve this, the video was transcribed using the Microsoft Word document transcription feature and then run through the automatic speech recognition program (ASR). Body language and facial expressions, as well as the general presentations, were also observed. Data gathered was analyzed using descriptive, frequency, and Pearson's Correlation analysis.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After being immersed in LA for 2 hours weekly over a period of 15 weeks, using the LMS platform, the following data has been gathered. In general, it should be emphasized that the 70 participants, from 13 different departments and whose knowledge of the English language is assumed to be approximately the same level, show significant

development in speaking confidence and proficiency.

1. Effects of the Lexical Approach in the Student's Proficiency

The survey data on proficiency shows a general improvement in students' comprehension of the meaning of collocation and the use of fixed and semi-fixed expressions. The table illustrates the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient ranging from -2 and +2 measuring the strength of the linear relationship between variables. Data on soliciting meaning, fixed expressions and semi-fixed expressions are summed up below. The data reveals a significant increase in the participants' knowledge of collocations as can be seen from the differences between the pre/post-test. Table 3 summarizes the participants' knowledge on the use of the word and word partnerships with regards to their understanding of the use of the lexicon in a particular context.

TABLE 3

Results of Collocation Proficiency Pre/Post-test (*n* = 70)

	Pre-test		Post-test		*t*	*p*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
Soliciting Meaning	6.92	2.63	7.37	2.72	.658	.000***
Fixed expressions	7.02	2.65	7.52	2.74	.928	.000***
Semi-Fixed Expression	6.65	2.58	7.47	2.73	.930	.000***

$p < 0.001$

With regards to the student's ability to identify the meaning within a context, the pre/post-test shows high results on all variables at $p < 0.001$. Data shows that there is a positive correlation of their exposure to LA in their ability to solicit meaning as can be seen from the results of the pre/post-test. The increase in the student's ability to identify the correct collocation in a particular context is proven from the data gathered. .

Fixed expressions are classified as collocations where word substitution is not allowed, such as the case of idioms and prefabricated routines. Data suggests there is an increase in the students' ability to use fixed expressions in a particular situation. It is seen from the Pearson Correlation analysis data that the correlation between the pre/post test on this item is relatively high at $p < 0.001$. Data shows there is a general increase in the students' response after exposure to 30 hours of LA. It is safe to conclude that the participant's ability to use fixed expressions in a given context has improved.

Statistics also show recognition of fillers, slots, and frames increased over time. With the $p < 0.001$, the significance of using LA in online classes cannot be disregarded. It should be

noted that the preposition collocation (My plan didn't work (out)) received a higher positive response compared to the pre-test. Surprisingly, verb collocation (What did you do?) got perfect scores in the post-test.

TABLE 4

The Results of Collocation Proficiency on Collocation Preference (*n* = 70)

Preference		a	b	c
Q4		**I'm glad to hear that!**	**What a relief!**	**It's nice to know you are fine!**
I almost missed my flight to the UK because of some terrible accident on the way to the airport. Whew!	**Pre-test**	4 (6.06%)	54 (81.82%)	8 (12.12%)
	Post-test	10 (14.29%)	57 (81.43%)	3 (4.29%)
Q5		**how far**	**how long**	**how much**
Who knows __ I've loved you!	**Pre-test**	6 (9.09%)	27 (40.91%)	35 (53.03%)
	Post-test	7 (10.00%)	35 (50.00%)	28 (40.00%)
Q9		**I'm fine too!**	**I'm good!**	**I'm happy!**
A: Hi! How are you? B: I'm fine! Thank you! And you?	**Pre-test**	61 (92.42%)	6 (9.09%)	1 (1.52%)
	Post-test	60 (85.71%)	8 (11.43%)	2 (2.86%)
Q11		**taxi**	**bus**	**subway**
A: I always get lost around the city. B: Well, I think the best way to travel around here is to take the ---.	**Pre-test**	45 (68.18%)	18 (27.27%)	5 (7.58%)
	Post-test	52 (74.29%)	13 (18.57%)	5 (7.14%)
Q19		**bet**	**guess**	**expect**
You have finally passed your driver's license. I ---- that made you feel good	**Pre-test**	9 (13.64%)	22 (33.33%)	37 (56.06%)
	Post-test	14 (20.00%)	26 (37.14%)	30 (42.86%)

The statistical data in Table 4 represents the frequency analysis of the students' proficiency in their preferred collocations with the pre/post-test showing varying shifts. With one statement provided which could have three possible answers, the students were to choose the word, that to them, best collocates with the situation. The shift on the students' choices is seen from the frequency analysis. Quite surprisingly, the how-collocations highlight the students' penchant to change their choices with 'how long' and 'how much' changing from 27 (40.91%) to 35 (50%), and from 35 (53.03%) to 28 (40.00%) of the total respectively. Although minimal, shifting from one collocation to the other is apparent. From the frequency analysis data, it is safe to assume that student's propensity to shift from their 'collocation teddy bear,' when exposed to other options is highly likely.

The data confirms Kim's (2012) claim that the correlation of recognizing and producing collocations and student's English proficiency is affirmative. It also affirms the LA is effective in the general proficiency of the students in ELT (Kim, 2019; Lackman, 2010; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Xu, et al., 2012).

2. Effects of Lexical Approach on EFL Learner's Speaking Confidence

The study evaluated the confidence level of the participants using three factors: self-assessment, self-reflection, and selfie-video. Both the self-assessment and self-reflection values were gathered using the survey and interview; whereas, the selfie -video was collected via uploads to nCyber.

1) Self- Assessment

As classes were online-based, participants stayed home and watched recorded video lectures uploaded via nCyber LMS as well as did assigned tasks therein. As online classes allow mobility and flexibility, response rate differs, student's background and experience affect the students' English proficiency and confidence. The data shows statistics on the student's perception of the class.

This table shows summary statistics for the pre/post-test self-assessment in the development of the participants' English-speaking confidence. It includes measures of variability and correlation. Of particular interest here are the high levels of significance which can be used to determine the implications of the study. From the data, items 8, 9, 10 show a very high significance with $p < .001$. We can infer that students perceive themselves as better speakers, with more confidence to boast because the class provided them with what they needed for their acquisition of the language.

TABLE 5

The Results of Self-Assessment ($n = 70$)

Answer Choices	Pre- Test		Post- Test		*t*	*p*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
1. Do you take the Online classes seriously?	4.17	0.8	4.3	0.86	3.01	.002*
2. Are the methods employed in the online lectures appropriate for learning a second language?	3.83	0.81	4.22	0.81	2.89	.003*
3. Does this class increase your interest in learning English?	4.03	0.83	4.3	0.74	1.53	.005*
4. Does learning words and word partnerships in online classes help improve my English-speaking abilities?	3.99	0.85	4.22	0.82	3.30	.008*
5. Has efforts to improve technical issues related to online classes been answered?	3.93	0.86	4.15	0.81	2.64	.095
6. Has your Knowledge of Lexical items increased?	3.89	0.88	4.1	0.8	2.28	.009*
7. Has your speaking abilities improved?	4.07	0.89	4.21	0.86	2.46	.001*

8. Do you feel that you can speak better now than before you took this class?	4.13	0.9	4.18	0.83	2.10	.000**
9. Has this class been helpful in your confidence as a speaker?	3.94	0.9	4.17	0.8	2.23	.000**
10. Does this class provide everything you need to become a better English speaker?	4.1	0.95	4.16	0.75	2.56	.000**
11. Are you satisfied with this class?	4.21	0.96	4.36	0.77	3.46	.002*

*Paired samples t-test was conducted *$p < .01$, **$p < .001$

With a significance level of $p < .01$, items 1 and 11 show a degree of improvement due to the use of the LMS for their required tasks and proves a general satisfaction with the methods and strategies employed. Data shows that students' interest in learning the language and their use of lexical items have increased significantly (items 3 and 6). The Table indicates that technical issues seem to be one of the greatest problems in class with $p = 0.095$ (item 5).

2) Interview: Self-reflection

From the interview, participants were asked three questions: 1) A social issue outsourced from the book. 2) Personal perceptions of their speaking ability. 3) Suggestions to the class.

TABLE 6

Interview: Perceptions on Speaking Ability

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	65	92.9	97.0	97.0
	No	2	2.9	3.0	100.0
	Total	67	95.7	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.3		
	Total	70	100.0		

Std. Error of Mean: 0.021
Std. Deviation: 0.171

From the 70 participants, 92.9% agreed they have indeed improved; whereas, 2.9% believe they have not made any progress at all, with 4.3% deciding not to comment. More importantly with *SD* = 0.171 value, it is safe to assume that students perceive themselves improving in both proficiency and confidence when speaking English after being taught the LA online for one semester.

Jeong, Y.S., a Sophomore from the Department of Social Welfare in an interview conducted on December 4, 2020, stated:

"*The English class made my fall class happy because I could study English. Thanks to your support, I was able to finish my English class successfully. I was able to talk on the phone everyday. The homework that the professor gave me improved my English. From now on, I got the strength to study, so, I am happy. The language didn't work well, but the professor did her best so I will remember the English class for the fall semester."*

When asked about his progress as an EFL student, Kwak, G. S, a Senior student from Business Administration said, in an interview on December 8, 2020, that indeed he feels a better speaker because he gained more confidence in class. An outspoken freshman, Kim, S. Y. from Cuum College, claims her knowledge of English improved significantly and did not know the LA was being used in class. She further claimed there was no pressure in identifying nor producing collocations, during an interview conducted on December 1, 2020. Yang, Y. T. asserted, "*it was like learning grammar, but better and more practical*".

3) Selfie Video

To extract data on whether the students have improved in their proficiency and developed confidence in their English-speaking ability or not, the researcher used the following criteria: speed of speech, body language, lexical items, fillers, coherence, and cohesion.

TABLE 7
Selfie Video: Criteria for Confidence (*n*=70)

	Words per minute	Body laguage	Lexical Items	Fillers	Coherence & Cohesion	
Yes	68	67	61	67	Very good	44
No	2	3	9	3	Good	21
SD	0.17	0.20	0.34	0.20	Needs Improvement	5
Std. Error Mean	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.02	*SD*	0.63
Variance	0.03	0.04	0.11	0.04	*Std. Error Mean*	0.08

Frequency analysis (Table 7) shows 68/70 students were able to speak an average of 130 words per minute, with a standard error mean of 0.02. As for body language, statistics show that 67/70 of the students used appropriate body language including facial reactions and body gestures. Data also demonstrate how students used lexical items in this criterion. From Table 7, we could see that 9/70 failed to mention at least 20 collocations learned in

class, while 3/70 decided to avoid using fillers. With the last criterion being coherence and cohesion, statistics reveal that at an *SD* = 0.63, student levels are at approximately the same level. Frequency analysis shows that 44 participants have impressive use of coherence and cohesion, 21 did their best and the remaining 5 need more coaching.

These data prove what Fanguy (2018) claims that knowledge of lexical items improves one's fluency level. It further affirms a research done by Tatsukawa (2018) that discourse skills, explicitly taught, elicits better results in the discourse of the speakers. Selfie videos, like public speaking, are essential in showcasing one's proficiency and confidence as it improves confidence, increases speaking time outside of the classroom and facilitate self-awareness (Hwang, 2018; Kim, 2018; Toon, 2019).

V. CONCLUSION

The current research investigated the effects of using LA in online conversation classes in a university in ChungcheongNam-do, South Korea, focusing mainly on the participants' ability to solicit meaning from context, use of fixed/ semi-fixed expressions, and their propensity for a particular expression. It has been found that even with the technical setbacks, like choppy recording and unclear audio/video, using LA in online lectures has a significant effects on the proficiency level of participants.

Concerning the first question on what impacts the lexical approach has on student's speaking proficiency in online classes, it has been proven that using LA in the online platform helps improve the students' ability to elicit meaning from context, develops their creativity in using semi-fixed expressions, and increases their knowledge and use of fixed expressions. Their knowledge of the collocations also allows them to form their 'phrasal teddy bear' or to add to it.

On how effective is LA in online classes on student's confidence when speaking, the research shows there is a strong relationship between using LA in online classes and learners' confidence when speaking. In their own assessment, students claim the methodology helped them in their development as EFL learners, affirmed by the selfie video data, as most participants were able to speak with ease and confidence, based on the rate of words per minute, body language, fillers, number of lexical items in the speech, and coherence and cohesion. The interview further validates these claims as students generally expressed their gusto on using LA in online classes.

Although incorporating LA in university online classes seems rewarding in terms of speaking proficiency and confidence level, it should be noted it will not be as effective if students fail to cooperate and do the tasks on time. Although various strategies including noticing, collocation grid, content vocabulary, note-taking, corpora, repetition, and

recycling have been utilized in class, other strategies should also be integrated. Further, because classes were held online it is necessary to maintain follow-up sessions with the students. To avoid inconveniencing both teachers and learners, announcements or related notices and queries should be sent within office hours only. Likewise, student homework and assigned tasks must get an immediate response. In addition, videos, or audio uploads should also be checked for glitches, especially when computers or other devices have low specifications, e.g., slow processor.

It is further suggested that related research be done to validate the reliability of the effects of incorporating the LA in online speaking classes in the teriary level. Pre/post-test survey questions should be given to confirm or deny assumed outcomes. There is also a need to use other methods of analysis to check for significant differences or relationships within the context.

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