



TED Talk Videos as a Pedagogical Tool for EFL Oral Expression in Algerian Higher Education: From Classroom Challenges to Academic Success

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Abstract ;

English has become a global medium of communication, increasing the demand for learners to develop effective speaking skills, especially in academic and professional settings. Public speaking, however, remains a major challenge for many students, who often struggle with anxiety, lack of confidence, and linguistic limitations. This study explores the potential of TED Talk videos as authentic materials to support the development of Master One students' public speaking skills at Tlemcen University.

Using an exploratory qualitative approach, data were gathered through questionnaires and teacher interviews. Results indicate that TED Talks can reduce performance anxiety, enhance confidence, and improve speech organization. The study underscores the pedagogical benefits of integrating digital resources into EFL oral expression classes.

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1. Introduction

The English has become a global medium of communication, shaping academic, professional, and social interactions across diverse contexts. Among the four language skills, speaking plays a particularly vital role as it enables learners to articulate ideas, engage in dialogue, and participate in real-life communication. Within speaking, public speaking is one of the most demanding yet essential abilities, as it requires students to organize their thoughts, express themselves clearly, and perform effectively in front of an audience. For EFL learners, public speaking is not only a linguistic challenge but also a developmental tool that enhances confidence, fluency, and overall communicative competence (Harmer, 2015; Brown, 2018).

Despite its importance, many EFL students continue to struggle with public speaking due to factors such as language anxiety, low self-confidence, pronunciation difficulties, and limited vocabulary. Research highlights that developing strong public speaking skills can significantly improve learners' fluency, accuracy, and ability to structure their ideas logically (Nation, 2018; Stepanyan & Milykhina, 2020). Moreover, public speaking encourages students to cultivate critical thinking, engage audiences actively, and apply effective delivery strategies that extend beyond the classroom into professional and

real-world contexts (Morreale & Pearson, 2008; Goh, 2021). These elements organizing thoughts, managing nervousness, engaging listeners, speaking confidently, improving fluency, expanding vocabulary, and fostering critical thinking, are widely recognized as central to successful oral communication in EFL settings.

In the Algerian higher education context, oral expression courses play a fundamental role in preparing students for academic and professional life. However, many learners still face persistent barriers that limit their oral performance and confidence. With the integration of digital resources into pedagogy, authentic materials such as TED Talk videos offer new opportunities for enhancing oral skills. TED Talks provide learners with models of effective delivery, logical structuring of ideas, and audience engagement, making them a valuable resource for developing public speaking. This study therefore explores the use of TED Talk videos as a pedagogical tool to address the challenges faced by Master One students at Tlemcen University, with the aim of improving their confidence, reducing speaking anxiety, and fostering academic success in oral expression.

1.1. Public Speaking in EFL Learning

Public speaking occupies a central place in the process of learning English as a foreign language because it brings together linguistic competence, communication

strategies, and psychological readiness to perform in front of an audience. Unlike informal speaking tasks, public speaking requires learners to structure their ideas coherently, articulate them with clarity, and engage listeners effectively, which makes it one of the most demanding yet rewarding aspects of oral expression. As Harmer (2015) notes, structured tasks such as presentations, speeches, and debates provide students with authentic opportunities to practice fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary within controlled but challenging contexts. Brown (2018) emphasizes that for many EFL learners, these tasks also serve as a bridge to overcoming communication anxiety and building confidence, a recurring issue in second language learning. In this respect, public speaking is not merely a performance skill, but a pedagogical tool that strengthens language acquisition by encouraging learners to confront their fears and refine their expressive abilities. Furthermore, scholars argue that mastering techniques of public speaking and oratory skills often determines students' success in academic and professional contexts, since effective oral communication remains one of the most sought-after skills in globalized workplaces (Helal, 2020; Thornbury, 2020). By fostering self-confidence, clarity, and the ability to adapt messages to audiences, public speaking enhances not only linguistic competence but also personal and professional development. In the EFL classroom, integrating public

speaking tasks thus contributes to shaping learners into confident communicators who can actively participate in academic life and beyond.

1.2. Challenges Faced by EFL Students in Public Speaking

Despite the recognized importance of public speaking, many EFL learners encounter significant challenges that hinder their ability to perform effectively in front of an audience. One of the most common difficulties is speaking anxiety, often rooted in a fear of negative evaluation, making mistakes, or failing to meet audience expectations. Li (2020) explains that public speaking anxiety is influenced by learners' negative self-perceptions, limited exposure to authentic speaking situations, and the perceived status gap between speaker and audience. This psychological barrier often results in avoidance behaviors, reduced fluency, and a lack of confidence in oral expression. In addition to anxiety, linguistic limitations such as restricted vocabulary, inaccurate pronunciation, and grammatical errors contribute to students' struggles (Nation, 2018). These challenges often affect not only the clarity of their message but also their willingness to engage in public speaking tasks. Moreover, lack of training in organizing thoughts logically and structuring presentations effectively adds to the difficulty, as many students fail to deliver speeches with coherence and impact (Koch, 2023). Research also

highlights that nervousness can manifest physically, leading to symptoms such as shaking, sweating, and voice trembling, which further undermine performance (Dwyer & Davidson, 2012). While interventions such as rehearsal, positive self-imagery, and anxiety-management programs (e.g., Corp-Oral) have been shown to reduce nervousness and improve performance (Monge et al., 2023; Landkroon et al., 2021), many learners still lack access to consistent support in developing these coping strategies. Overall, the challenges faced by EFL learners in public speaking are both linguistic and psychological, requiring targeted pedagogical interventions to help them build confidence, reduce anxiety, and perform successfully in academic and professional contexts.

1.2.1. The Contribution of TED Talk Videos to Students' Public Speaking

TED Talk videos have emerged as a powerful resource for enhancing students' public speaking competence. By observing speakers who demonstrate effective delivery, learners are exposed to authentic models of vocabulary use, grammar in context, nonverbal communication, and speech organization. Research indicates that regular engagement with TED Talks fosters improvements in learners' confidence and fluency, particularly when they analyze and replicate techniques employed by professional speakers (Sukrutrit, 2025). Moreover, the

effectiveness of TED Talks has been reported in diverse educational contexts, including Egypt, Pakistan, Indonesia, China, and South Korea, where they have been shown to positively influence learners' oral performance (Patty, 2024). As accessible and engaging audiovisual materials, TED Talks provide students with concrete examples of how to structure ideas, interact with audiences, and communicate persuasively (Hidayati & Cahyani, 2022). Therefore, integrating TED Talks into EFL oral expression courses represents a valuable pedagogical strategy for building students' public speaking skills.

1.2.2. Benefits and Learners' Attitudes toward TED Talks

The educational value of TED Talks extends beyond their role as speaking models, as they also shape learners' attitudes and perceptions of public speaking. These talks offer a wealth of authentic input on contemporary issues, presented by individuals who may not necessarily be experts but who share personal experiences and compelling narratives (Hubert, 2020). Such content makes the talks engaging, relatable, and motivational for learners. TED Talks also enhance incidental vocabulary acquisition by exposing students to real-life speech in audiovisual form, enabling them to assimilate new expressions naturally without relying solely on direct vocabulary instruction (Nguyen & Boers, 2019). In

addition, their inspirational qualities encourage learners to adopt effective communication strategies observed in the talks, such as voice modulation, storytelling, and rhetorical devices (Jaramillo & Osses, 2020). Thus, learners tend to view TED Talks positively, not only as a source of linguistic input but also as a motivating tool for developing confidence and competence in speaking.

1.2.3. The Role of Facial Expressions in Effective Speaking

Facial expressions are a key component of nonverbal communication and play a decisive role in shaping the impact of public speaking. In TED Talks, speakers frequently rely on facial cues to convey emotions, reinforce their messages, and establish rapport with the audience. Empirical studies suggest that elements such as eye contact, gestures, and facial expressions significantly influence the perceived credibility and effectiveness of a presentation (Michelson & Peleg, 2021). Analysis of TED Talk performances using technological tools like neural networks has confirmed that expressive delivery enhances audience engagement and message retention, regardless of the speech topic. Consequently, learners who watch and analyze TED Talks are exposed to exemplary uses of nonverbal behavior, which they can imitate and incorporate into their own public speaking practices.

1.2.4. The Importance of Structure and Organization in Speech Delivery

Another notable advantage of TED Talks lies in their demonstration of well-structured and organized presentations. Effective public speaking requires clarity of thought, logical sequencing, and adaptation of content to audience needs. TED Talks exemplify these skills by offering various strategies, such as storytelling, argument-based presentations, and the use of visuals to enhance comprehension (Miller, 2010; Zhang, 2021). Scholars have argued that a narrative approach often resonates with general audiences, while more structured, argument-driven formats appeal to professional or academic listeners (Gross & Harmon, 2009). Moreover, understanding the audience's expectations, knowledge, and cultural background is essential for creating a persuasive message (Russell & Munter, 2001). By analysing these features, students gain insight into how to craft and deliver well-organised speeches, thereby improving their ability to communicate effectively in both academic and professional contexts.

1.3. TED Talks: From Fear to Fluency

In the context of Algerian higher education, TED Talk videos have emerged as a powerful pedagogical tool to help students move from communicative challenges toward academic success in public speaking. By exposing learners to authentic

models of fluent English delivered by diverse speakers, TED Talks provide input that naturally enriches vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and discourse organization, addressing one of the key barriers, limited lexical and structural resources, that Algerian EFL learners often face (Patty, Alit, & Faradiba, 2023; Tilwani, Abdulameer, & Alghazali, 2022). Moreover, the visual and nonverbal elements, such as facial expressions and gestures, offer students valuable guidance on how to enhance delivery and engage an audience effectively, which contributes to more coherent and impactful presentations (Michelson & Peleg, 2021). Importantly, TED Talks have been shown to reduce language anxiety and fear of public speaking by offering repeated exposure to real-life communication in supportive and motivational ways; this not only helps shy students confront their nervousness but also fosters greater confidence and self-esteem as they gradually adopt the rhetorical strategies of skilled speakers (Lui, 2021; Shruthi & BR, 2024; Sukrutrit, 2025). Research in different EFL contexts, including Egypt, Indonesia, and South Korea, has further demonstrated that learners who watch and analyze TED Talks show noticeable improvements in fluency, speech organization, and overall communicative competence (Hidayati & Cahyani, 2022; Karimah, Setiawan, & Munir, 2022). For teachers and curriculum designers, these findings underscore the importance of integrating TED Talk-based

activities such as guided listening, critical reflection, and speech reproduction tasks into oral expression courses to equip students with the linguistic resources and performance skills required for both academic and professional success (Farid, 2019; Li, Gao, & Zhang, 2015).

3. Recommendations for Further Studies

Although the present study highlights the pedagogical value of TED Talk videos in enhancing EFL students' public speaking skills, several avenues remain open for further investigation. Future research is recommended to adopt longitudinal designs to examine the long-term impact of sustained TED Talk integration on learners' fluency, confidence, and overall communicative competence. While short-term exposure has been shown to yield positive outcomes, extended observation periods would provide deeper insights into whether these gains are maintained over time (Hidayati & Cahyani, 2022; Sukrutrit, 2025).

Further studies may also benefit from employing mixed-methods approaches that combine quantitative performance measures with qualitative data such as interviews, reflective journals, or classroom observations. Such triangulation would allow researchers to capture not only measurable improvements in speaking performance but also learners' evolving perceptions, emotional responses, and

strategy use when engaging with TED Talk-based activities (Nguyen & Boers, 2019; Karimah, Setiawan, & Munir, 2022). This approach would be particularly valuable for understanding how anxiety reduction and confidence-building occur across different learner profiles.

In addition, future research could explore the differential effects of TED Talks across proficiency levels, academic disciplines, and learning contexts. Comparative studies involving first-year and advanced university students, or learners from humanities versus scientific disciplines, may reveal variations in how TED Talks support public speaking development (Nation, 2018; Patty, 2024). Such findings would help instructors tailor instructional strategies more effectively to specific learner needs.

Another promising direction involves examining the role of guided pedagogical interventions, such as explicit instruction on nonverbal communication, speech organization, and rhetorical strategies derived from TED Talk analysis. Experimental studies comparing guided versus unguided exposure could clarify the extent to which teacher mediation enhances learning outcomes (Farid, 2019; Li, Gao, & Zhang, 2015). Moreover, the integration of technology-based tools, including speech analysis software or peer-feedback platforms, could further enrich TED Talk-based instruction and warrants systematic investigation.

Finally, future research should consider context-specific studies within Algerian higher education, as empirical evidence in this context remains limited. Investigating institutional constraints, teacher preparedness, and curriculum alignment would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how TED Talks can be sustainably integrated into EFL oral expression courses (Tilwani, Abdulameer, & Alghazali, 2022; Lui, 2021). Addressing these dimensions would strengthen the practical relevance of research findings and support evidence-based curriculum development.

Conclusion

The integration of TED Talks into higher education, particularly within the Algerian EFL context, demonstrates considerable potential for enhancing students' public speaking competence and overall communicative performance. As authentic and engaging audiovisual materials, TED Talks expose learners to real-life models of effective communication that combine linguistic accuracy, rhetorical clarity, and persuasive delivery. This exposure plays a crucial role in helping students overcome persistent challenges such as speaking anxiety, shyness, limited lexical resources, and weak organizational skills. Empirical evidence indicates that learners who engage regularly with TED Talk-based instruction show noticeable improvements in confidence, fluency, speech coherence, and delivery techniques, which are

essential components of successful academic and professional communication (Guo et al., 2014; Karimah et al., 2022; Sukrutrit, 2025).

Beyond linguistic development, TED Talks contribute significantly to learners' affective and motivational growth. By observing diverse speakers who communicate complex ideas with clarity and confidence, students are encouraged to reassess their own speaking abilities and adopt more positive self-perceptions. This motivational dimension is particularly important in EFL contexts where fear of negative evaluation often limits students' willingness to speak publicly. Through repeated exposure and guided pedagogical exploitation, TED Talks can gradually reduce speaking anxiety while fostering learner autonomy and self-efficacy in oral expression.

Based on the findings of the present study, several pedagogical recommendations can be advanced for teachers and curriculum designers in Algerian higher education. First, TED Talks should be systematically integrated into oral expression and public speaking courses as a core instructional resource rather than as supplementary material. Their authentic language use and rich nonverbal features provide learners with concrete examples of effective communication strategies, including speech organization, audience engagement, and expressive delivery (Hidayati & Cahyani, 2022; Tilwani et al., 2022).

Teachers are therefore encouraged to design structured classroom activities that combine guided viewing, critical analysis, and practical speaking tasks, such as speech imitation, presentation rehearsals, and reflective discussions on verbal and nonverbal communication.

Furthermore, curriculum designers should consider embedding TED Talk-based activities within assessment frameworks to ensure progressive and scaffolded development of public speaking skills. Gradual exposure to speaking tasks, supported by constructive feedback and peer interaction, can help learners build confidence and reduce performance anxiety over time (Lui, 2021; Shruthi & BR, 2024). In addition, greater emphasis should be placed on training students to critically engage with TED content, not only as a linguistic input but also as a means of developing creativity, intercultural awareness, and academic thinking skills.

In conclusion, TED Talks represent a valuable pedagogical tool that bridges the gap between classroom instruction and real-world communication demands. When effectively integrated into EFL curricula, they have the potential to guide learners from initial hesitation and communicative insecurity toward greater fluency, confidence, and academic success. Their inclusion in Algerian higher education can therefore contribute meaningfully to the

development of competent, confident, and globally oriented speakers of English.

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