

Review of: "Enhancing Academic Speaking Skills: An Immersive Virtual World Approach"

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The paper reflects a good piece of work and the authors did a good job in examining academic speaking skills using an immersive virtual world approach. The topic is timely and interesting. However, I have the following comments for the author(s). Hopefully, they can be useful in improving the quality of the paper:

- Literature review is more like presenting a series of studies than a synthesis of those studies. That is, rather than presenting previous studies and their results in a row, authors are recommended to make an analysis and synthesis of these studies highlighting similarities and differences and detailing the gaps in previous research.
- In line with the previous comment, the Literature Review section is too long and broad and divided into discrete parts. It needs to be more concise, and its parts need to be interwoven together.
- Since the research questions are already included, there is no need for adding research hypotheses as well (in line with the recent trends in writing academic papers in highly ranked journals).
- I really admired the triangulation of data collection and administering more than one qualitative data collection instrument, but these are too broad for a pilot study.
- The "Materials" section is more like "Instruments and Data Collection" section.
- Nothing is mentioned about how the post-course survey was constructed and what dimensions/ factors it assesses.
- Since the authors just used the paired samples t-test to compare the participants' pre-and posttest scores, why did they assume that the improvements in the participants' performance were treatment-led not time-related differences? Why did not they use another control group (and consequently a one-way ANCOVA test) to control any time-related differences?
- Also, were the t-test parameters (i.e., normality of distribution) verified before running it?
- The discussion section is well-written, but I recommend comparing the findings of the current study with those of previous research highlighting how this study's findings are in line or in disagreement with the previous studies suggesting possible rationale for any controversies, if any.

