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

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I enjoyed reading this article, especially when the findings support my own ongoing research. The topic is current and timely. However, a google search on Englehaven did not produce any search return of such an app. I wondered if this was a custom app developed by the authors/researchers. As I read on, under the heading of The SEC Course, only then will readers like myself realise that the Englehaven is part of The Advanced Spoken English Language course (SEC) on the EdX website, in which students are required to spend time on this virtual island, designed to encourage speaking practice. Perhaps this information could be provided earlier. Other info that could be brought forward would be the research questions, which are not normally under the heading of Methodology.

Also under Methodology, the interview participants' profile was under the subheading 'Interview'. Interview should discuss the interview questions, how many were there? What was the guiding framework? Were the questions adopted or adapted? I believe the participants profile should go under the Participants subheading. Perhaps, introduce your categories of participants and describe each category under its own subheading.

Furthermore, in Results, there were P1, P3 etc as well as S10, S13, but no earlier reference to what the S stand for.

In general, the paper is well-written with minimal grammatical mistakes. A bit awkward sounding would be the use of preposition 'on' in "on the VW", as if we are immersed, then we should be immersed 'in', not 'on'. 'In' connotes a 3-dimensional space. However, this repeated usage was only in one of the paragraphs. After that, 'in' was correctly used.

Other changes to be made include:

* References --> Many of the references are not as current as they should be. In some cases, this is fine but when the authors use an old reference to talk about recent EFL practices (Go to subheading Vocabulary), the reference cited (i.e., Laufer & Goldstein) was 19 years ago. This statement becomes questionable due to the discrepancy of the word 'recent' and the 19 year old source. A more current reference would be much better.
* Subheading 'Materials' --> should be changed to 'Research Instruments'
* This sense of immersion **confers** with previous literature (Slater and Sanchez-Vives, 2014 and 2016; Freina and Ott, 2015). **Confers** --> should be replaced with **concurs.**
* Style of writing for in-text citations -→ In-text citations are inconsistently done. Some parts effectively integrate the citations into the texts, aligning the study's findings to previous research, but in some places, e.g., Discussion (paragraph 1), it feels inaccurately done.

This is paragraph 1 under Discussion. The last two sentences can be better written so that readers can easily understand the connection between your research and the sources cited.

The first research question dealt with the improvements in speaking and listening skills as perceived by the participants and reflected in the data. The results of this study show that students improved in all areas but most significantly in fluency, pronunciation and listening skills between the pre and post-test (see Table 4). *By improving in fluency, the participants spoke faster with fewer hesitations and repetitions (Skehan, 2003). Pronunciation skills such as word stress, phrasal stress and pitch range improved (Trofimovich & Baker, 2006; Kang, 2010).*

Here is the revised paragraph.

The first research question dealt with the improvements in speaking and listening skills as perceived by the participants and reflected in the data. The results of this study show that students improved in all areas but most significantly in fluency, pronunciation and listening skills between the pre and post-test (see Table 4). *The findings agree with Skehan (2003) who reported that when fluency is improved, the participants spoke faster with fewer hesitations and repetitions. Likewise, The findings also support the findings of Trofimovich and Baker (2006) and Kang (2010) that increased fluency improved pronunciation skills such as word stress, phrasal stress and pitch range.*

This is fine --> The relationship between learning outcomes and perceived VW presence is also reinforced in this study, *which echoes prior research (Yang et al., 2020; Lee & Wong, 2014; Makransky & Lilleholt, 2018). This suggests a close relationship between immersion in a VW and enhanced speaking skills.*

What I would like to highlight is that there is an inconsistency in the style of writing as there are parts that need revision and parts that don't.

In terms of presentation of findings (e.g., Table 7, Table 9), I feel there is a better way to tabulate them. Perhaps you can refer to papers below and see which suit your findings better
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333912983_Students'_Perception_of_Learning_Experience_and_Achievement_Motivation_Prototyping_English_for_Academic_Purposes_EAP
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322056102_Needs_Analysis_in_ESP_Context_Saudi_Engineering_Students_as_a_Case_Study

All in all, this was an interesting read.