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

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

In terms of relevance, this title is timely considering an extensive engagement we have with the virtual world, today.

ABSTRACT:

1. Specify which virtual world platform was used, as there are many out there. This might provide clearer context for readers and potential replicators of the study.

2. It's commendable that the results not only highlight the improvement in language skills but also in motivation and confidence, as these aspects are addressed in the purpose.

Introduction:

The introduction clearly outlines the challenges associated with teaching academic English in today's era, especially the speaking skills. However, here are suggestions for improvement:

1. While it's mentioned that the classroom situation cannot provide adequate opportunities for speaking practice, the author should elaborate more by providing the situations take place or examples of the situations, use previous research examples to strengthen the argument.
2. There is a slight redundancy in terms of the mention of the requirement for B2 level English. Please elaborate more about the importance of the CEFR level.
3. The introduction lacks the pedagogical backing. Introduce a pedagogical theory or principle that supports this method of teaching. For instance, a theory related to gamified learning, experiential learning, etc.

Methods:

The use of mixed-methods is commendable, because it allows for a richer and more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Here are some suggestions:

1. Given the considerable dropout or non-response rate, it might be beneficial to discuss potential reasons for this discrepancy and how it might impact the findings.
2. Explain why only t-test was employed for inferential statistics. Provide a strong justification on the suitability of t-test to analyze your data.

Results:

1. Some correlations are high, but there are others that are small. Please explain on the impact of the small correlation on the findings.
2. Ensure tables are consistently formatted. Consider using graphs or visuals for some of the data, especially the Likert scale results, as this could make it easier for readers to understand at a glance.
3. Mention why understanding correlations between time in the VW and language improvements is significant. Are there broader implications for language teaching?
4. Correlation coefficients tell about the strength and direction of a relationship, but they don't explain causality. Make sure to note that while there are positive correlations, it doesn't necessarily mean one caused the other.
5. When discussing themes from the open-ended questions and interviews, ensure there's a clear methodological approach to how themes were identified and coded.

Discussion:

- Instead of frequently referencing tables like "Table 4" or "Table 6", consider including concise summaries or infographics in the main text. This can ensure the reader doesn't need to flip back and forth to understand the content.
- While the discussion cites numerous studies, consider drawing more comparisons or contrasts between your findings and those of other researchers. This can provide a richer context.