

Developing Oral Linguistic performance and Alleviating Speaking Anxiety of EFL and AFL Learners: A Proposed Strategy

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Abstract

This study intends to demonstrate how oral performance measures such as accuracy, complexity and fluency can be distinctly targeted using the suggested strategy. Furthermore, the study provides insights into how such learners' self-reflection-oriented learning based strategy could help in alleviating FL speaking anxiety. The study sample consisted of 30 female EFL and AFL students, divided into two experimental groups. The data were collected through two main instruments: Oral performance test (two parallel forms: English and Arabic) and a foreign language speaking anxiety scale. The performances of each group on the pre and post tests were contrasted and their scores on the three oral linguistic measures were correlated. The instructors' written comments concerning participants' performance were also taken into consideration. The results indicated general improvement in both groups, as the suggested strategy prompted students' oral performance and speaking confidence. Integrating technology and appreciative inquiry in classroom teaching and learning process empowered students to identify their oral performance weaknesses and plan for overcoming them autonomously. The implications of the study are discussed and a number of recommendations are made to assist FL students in dealing with their speaking anxiety level.

Keywords: Audio recording, Appreciative inquiry, Oral linguistic performance, Speaking anxiety

1. Introduction

Nowadays, comprehensive communicative skills are highly required and this necessitates more concentration on developing active productive oral language qualities. Moreover, as globalization increases, speaking in a foreign language (FL) has become essential in most nations. Occhipinti (2009) indicates that the flourishing cross-cultural communications among people all over the world and even within single societies, for business, education or exploring a foreign culture purposes, has created a need for people to learn a FL speaking skill fluently, accurately and even quickly.

Yet, mastering a FL speaking skill in social and academic contexts is not always easy. It is a challenging and demanding process that may result in a sense of alienation; especially if the learner is not fluent enough in the target language (Crookal & Oxford, 1991: 142). The factors behind this can be mainly linguistic (e.g. phonology, syntax, semantics) or extra-linguistic such as contextual features, or interlocutors' relations and intentions (Al Batal & Belnap, 2006; Banks, 2008).

Thus, due to the crucial need for reappraising how FL speaking proficiency is perceived and establishing a baseline view of the oral performance process four key traits were highlighted: syntactic complexity, grammatical accuracy, lexical diversity, and fluency (Iwashita, Brown, McNamara, & O'Hagan, 2010; Ortega, 2003). Yet, definitions as well as testing methods of these four traits vary from one study to another. An additional problem is that most studies in this field have focused mainly on developing oral performance mainly in English language. Accordingly, there is a need to find out how research results on English as a foreign language (EFL) can be applicable to other typologically distant languages, such as Arabic.

The role of Arabic Language in international communication has gained more attention. In 1973, it was approved as one of the United Nations official languages since it preserved a universal civilization as well as spoken by 19 UN members (Sakho, 2012). Moreover, demands for learning Arabic as a foreign language are increasing as many Arab countries in Gulf region, are witnessing a massive economic development, hence attracting expatriates from foreign countries (Al Batal & Belnap, 2006; Al Matoonq, 2008; Sakho, 2012; Taimah, 2008).

Yet, due to its complex tonal nature and character-based writing system, Arabic language is considered a difficult language to study for most foreign learners that might cause higher anxiety levels (Ahmadian, 2011; Alnaka 2003; Younes, 2006; Younes & Alsheik, 2003). Even though, there is paucity in Studies on learning and teaching Arabic as a foreign language. Stevens (2006) assured that Arabic as a foreign language, compared to English language, has very recently started to get attention from experts.

Lee (2014) stresses the need for replacing passive learning model of foreign languages with independent inquiry based model. He assured that such model echoes the actual needs and aims of foreign language instruction. Thus it is easy to integrate it effectively into classroom practices and activities.

Appreciative inquiry (AI) based learning motivate students to learn actively through engaging

them in various constructive cognitive and discovery activities. Davies and Lewis (2013) describes AI as a dialogic cyclical process of “discovering and appreciating what is the positive core of the current experience, using this information to imagine possibilities, and planning how to achieve and create the desired future” (p.59).

Moreover, learners’ autonomy and self-reflection have been approved as the base in teaching and learning FL speaking skills all over the world. While Autonomy helps language learners to get rid of the shyness, anxiety and fear of speaking a new language through being responsible of their own learning, self-reflection stresses the necessity of serious and deep thought about one’s oral performance through monitoring and analyzing features that often go unnoticed during production. Today, technology supports such change through offering a wide range of facilities, tools and apps in foreign languages instruction (Bauer, Devitt & Tangney, 2015; Dupagne, Stacks & Giroux, 2007; Gilmore, 2011, Madhany, 2006). Yet, digital technology alone cannot be depended on to produce classroom dynamic. Students need to be guided by interesting task integrated with contemporary artifact in a constructive environment (Bauer, Devitt & Tangney, 2015: 45).

In the current study, the researchers tried to examine to what extent the use of individualized audio recordings software based tasks could stimulate FL students cognitively and affectively to simultaneously increase their oral performance and reduce their speaking anxiety level. Moreover, as successful integration of technology into education needs changes in teaching and learning strategies, the researchers of the current study used appreciative inquiry (AI) as a theoretical research perspective and an action research methodology.

1.1 Context of the Problem

The experimental part of the current study took place in two main locations at Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University: the University Center of Community Service and Continuing Education (UCCSCE) where the EFL learners study; and Arabic Language Teaching Institute (ALTI) where the AFL learners study. The main purpose of those centers is to nurture learners to be able to communicate effectively either in English or Arabic as foreign languages.

The university center of community service and continuing education (UCCSCE) provides a core training program called ‘Eahdad’ that includes many specialized training programs i.e. leadership and management, personal development, and English language skills. Among the main goals of the English Language skills (EFL) training Program is raising trainees' EFL proficiency either to pursue university academic studies or prepare them to join the work field. Students studying in this program set for a placement test at the beginning in order to enroll them in the appropriate language proficiency level (beginners, elementary, low intermediate, upper intermediate, lower advanced and upper advanced).

Practicality is an important aspect of this program. Nonetheless, the actual teaching methods and activities, currently utilized to pursue this goal -as proved by a pilot study- have fallen short of enabling students to achieve real progress which is manifested in their inadequate grammar and the tendency to use rather very basic utterances devoid of any sort of

elaboration. Student-centered classroom learning environments as well as student as self learner are still ignored. Even if students had the opportunity to participate, they use to allocate most of their attentional abilities to conveying the message itself, without any attention to the accuracy or complexity of what they are delivering.

Arabic Language Teaching Institute (ALTI), where part of the current study has been conducted, offers a program of non-intensive language courses targeting non-Arabic speakers in Riyadh from all nationalities with the aim of enabling them to produce oral and written language that is accurate, fluent and high in quality. For admission, student must have a high school certificate or equivalent; students should take admission and placement tests administered by the Institute. The Non-intensive course includes six levels delivered over three years. Each level lasts for three hours per day, three days a week, for 8 weeks (72 hours).

The teaching style followed at ALTI, based on classroom observations by the researchers, is mainly teacher-centered. The teaching method used is based on rote learning rather than interactive and authentic activities. Teachers rarely consider differences in students' learning styles, needs and strategies, even though some teachers might attempt to deal with individual differences instinctively.

The previous considerations triggered the researchers of the current research to conduct the present study as an attempt to examine the effectiveness of using students' audio recordings as input processing and Appreciative inquiry (AI) on developing AFL and EFL learners' oral performance and alleviating their speaking anxiety.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The study problem could be identified in EFL and AFL students' inadequate oral linguistic performance and high level of speaking anxiety, which were partly attributed to the regular teaching methods that barely grant students the chance to reflect on their oral performances and devise strategies for self-improvement. Thus, the study revolved around the following main question:

How will EFL and AFL students' oral linguistic performance and speaking anxiety differ if exposed to using self audio recording and appreciative inquiry based tasks as a new instructional strategy?

The following research questions were derived from the main question:

1. To what extent will the use of self audio recording and appreciative inquiry based tasks as an instructional strategy has effect on EFL and AFL students' oral performance as measured by the performance measures of accuracy, complexity and fluency?
2. To what extent will the use of self audio recording and appreciative inquiry based tasks as an instructional strategy has an effect on EFL and AFL students' speaking anxiety?
3. To what extent will the effect of the suggested instructional strategy on developing oral proficiency and alleviating speaking anxiety differ from EFL to AFL groups?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the application and outcome of using self audio recording and appreciative inquiry based tasks for developing EFL and AFL learners' oral linguistic performance, and alleviating their speaking anxiety. The study thus intends to demonstrate how oral performance measures such as accuracy, complexity and fluency could be distinctly targeted using the suggested strategy.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study is hoped to be of significance to FL instructors as it might help them devise appropriate appreciative inquiry-based tasks and techniques that enable students to examine and improve the accuracy, complexity and fluency of their oral performance; as well as giving them insights into the causes of anxiety faced by FL learners and how they can help students overcome them. The study might also enable FL learners to realize the potentials of using self- audio recording and appreciative inquiry (4Ds circle) based tasks in raising their consciousness of their actual oral performance, and so increasing their motivation to put more effort in doing such tasks. Thus, shifting their passive role concerning developing their oral performance, towards more active and responsible one.

1.5 Study Hypotheses

- 1 There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the first experimental (EFL) group as well as the second experimental (AFL) group on the pretest and posttest of the oral linguistic performance measures.
- 2 There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the first experimental (EFL) group and second experimental (AFL) group on the post test of the oral linguistic performance measures.
- 3 There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the first experimental (EFL) group as well as second experimental (AFL) group on the pretest and posttest of the speaking Anxiety scale.
- 4 There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the first experimental (EFL) group and second experimental (AFL) group on the posttest of the speaking Anxiety scale.

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

1. Three oral performance measures (accuracy, complexity and fluency).
2. A sample of 30 EFL and AFL learners, studying at A1-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University in Riyadh.
3. Transactional monologic oral production. Thus, other interactional conversational genres were not addressed in the current study.

1.7 Definition of Terms

1.7.1 Appreciative Inquiry

Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros (2008, xv) describe appreciative inquiry as “a philosophy that incorporates an approach and a process (4-D cycle of Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny) for engaging people at any or all levels to produce effective, positive change”.

1.7.2 Speaking Anxiety

Basic (2011, 4) defines speaking anxiety as “a fear of expressing oneself orally which can be recognized by some physiological signs - increased heart and breathing rates, increased adrenaline, and over-rapid reactions. It is most likely that these signs can obstruct and inhibit one’s ability to speak since a person who experiences that kind of anxiety will not be able to focus on the speaking process” (4).

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Teaching Arabic and English as Foreign Languages

Being inflectional synthetic language rather than analytic, Arabic language has a unique structure that is to a great extent different from English and other Indo-European languages. The syntactic relationship of nouns in Arabic, for example, is identified by case endings and verbs are inflected by means of prefixes, infixes, and suffixes to indicate the various persons, numbers, genders, derived forms, moods, and tenses, in contrast to English where a separate word (noun or pronoun) is required to indicate the person (AL-Shuwairekh, 2001; Al Maatooq, 2008; Sakho, 2012). Moreover, in contrast to English language, vowels are used as diacritical marks rather than written letters. English native speakers also are expected to have problems with Arabic with long consonants, as consonant length is not a contrastive feature in English (McLoughlin & Lee, 2008). Another problem may also result from different distribution of sounds in the two languages (Al Sady, 2007; Younus & Al Sheik, 2003).

There is a wide agreement among Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL) experts on attributing the slow progress of teaching Arabic as a foreign language to the pedagogy and teaching approach followed (Al Batal & Benlap, 2006; Al Fawzan, 2007; and Younus & Al Sheik, 2003). Madkour and Haridi (2006) state that Grammar Translation Approach, prevailing in teaching Arabic since mid-70s, has alienated learners from grammar and made the process of learning Arabic very frustrating. Al Midhwah (2011) posits that high levels of competition caused by imposing interactive approach into Arabic as a foreign language classroom and extensive excessive focusing on mastering listening and oral skills were the two main leading factors in increasing students’ anxiety level.

Another key point issue that gets the interest of TAFL specialists is diglossia (England, 2006). It means the dual use of Arabic language: using the Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), for writing and formal situations and Aamiyaa (or colloquial variety) at home, streets and informal situations. Learners of Arabic as a foreign language find this dual use in Arabic very

problematic, as they have to deal with two varieties of the language and learn double sets of vocabulary items (Al Maatooq, 2008; AL-Shuwairekh, 2001; Makour & Haridi, 2006). Many intellectuals and researchers in TAFL are against using colloquial varieties in teaching Arabic to non Arabs (Madkour and Haridi 2006; and Sakho, 2012). They stress that MSA must be the medium for teaching Arabic as a foreign language since it is commonly used by all educated people across the Arab world.

2.2 Oral Linguistic Performance

Though the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach called for promoting fluency in speaking classes through interactive activities and communicative based tasks that engage students in using language freely and creatively, the assumption that meaning should be highlighted over form and fluency over accuracy and appropriacy has been questioned in the last two decades (Alharbi, 2015; Alshareef, 2016; Lucero, 2014; and Vercellotti, 2012). Johnson (1992: 180, quoted in Metcalf, 2003) states that “if there is no concern for feedback in terms of linguistic correctness, you bring about ‘inaccurate chatterers’ who become ‘hapless victims’ of their own success”.

Jae ñ (2009) highlights another shortcoming in developing oral language skills that is a lack of appropriate teaching resources which truly embody the aspects of oral performance. Instead of presenting samples of real oral performance features artificial scripted dialogues based on someone’s intuitions about what people are likely to say are commonly used. Basic (2011) adds that in order to develop students’ oral competence, language teachers need to create situations and design tasks where students get the chance to speak and perform their oral skills and get appropriate feedback.

The best way to acquire oral competence in a foreign language is to communicate through meaningful interactive activities in which authentic language can be exercised while the negotiation of meaning takes place (Lee, 2014). Thus Task-based Instruction (TBI), or task-supported teaching, is evolved as a supplement to communicative language teaching (CLT) through stimulating natural acquisition processes (Nitta & Nakatsuhara, 2014). Due to the impact of CLT and TBI, teaching practice in FL classrooms thus focuses more on the enhancement of students’ active participation and the meaningful exchange of information in a simulated real-life context. Accordingly, the teacher’s ability to construct a dynamic teaching scheme becomes crucial.

Today, technology plays a major role in the quality of foreign language teaching process. Being a key aspect of daily practices at both social and professional levels, it is viewed as both a means and an end in the learning process. These assumptions often hold true in the oral performance context where instructors and researchers may anticipate that self-directed technology (e.g., students’ direct observation of their communication competence via audio, videotape, or video streaming) should enhance students’ communication experience, reduce apprehension toward that experience, and improve their speaking skills. Yet, digital technology alone cannot be depended on to produce classroom dynamic. Students need to be guided by interesting task integrated with contemporary artifact in a constructive environment (Bauer, Devitt, & Tangney, 2015). Thus, successful integration of technology

into education needs changes in teaching and learning strategies. Appreciative Inquiry could be an ideal theoretical and practice guide for today's teachers.

2.2.1 Components of Oral Linguistic Performance

Language oral performance has been analyzed into three main components by applied linguists: Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency (CAF) (Vercellotti, 2012). According to findings of many studies in the field of studying CAF (e.g., Foster, Tonkyn, & Wigglesworth, 2000; Inoue, 2010; Iwashita, 2010; Yuan & Ellis, 2003), there are a trade-off effects among these three components; a higher performance in one component corresponds to lower performance in another during tasks. Researchers have attributed such trade-off effects to the learner's inability to simultaneously attend to all the three components (CAF) at the highest level possible.

2.2.2 Measurement of Oral Linguistic Performance

There are two main methods for assessing oral linguistic performance: first, rating scales. Some studies such as, Larsen (2006) and more recently, Iwashita (2010) have examined oral proficiency level based on scores gained from rating scales and feedback from qualified teachers and experts on these ratings using qualitative approach (five main component elements making up global proficiency i.e., vocabulary, correct grammar, pronunciation, comprehensibility, pragmatic competence and organization...etc.). Assessment is carried out by assigning a score to each performance level, based mostly on the rater's discretion (North, 2000, 206).

The second method is performance measures sometimes called discourse analysis measures: Unlike the studies above, other studies such as Ellis, 2005; Iwashita, 2010; and Lucero, 2015 focused on the development of oral proficiency through analyzing certain aspects of oral language by providing counts of certain features in learner's production, mainly complexity, accuracy and fluency, to facilitate comparison of different performances. Substantially, unlike rating scales, discourse analytic measures sound more objective, as little disagreement can appear among raters (Riggenbach, 1990, 153).

2.2.3 Analysis of Speech Unit

In contrast to written text, oral language cannot be directly analyzed into defined units based on punctuation, as speakers use idea units not sentences. Accordingly, Analysis of Speech unit (AS unit) was introduced as a reliable and consistent measure of oral data (Foster et al., 2000). An AS unit is an utterance with an independent clause (clause with a finite verb) and all subordinate clauses (either clauses with a finite verb or clauses with a non-finite element and at least one other clausal element) associated with the clause. The next sections review specific measurements of oral language performance: accuracy, complexity, and fluency.

A. Accuracy means "error-free" speech (Housen & Kuiken, 2009). It can be measured either specifically (e.g., accuracy of verb forms) or generally (e.g., overall number of errors or error-free units). Ellis and Barkhuizen, (2005, 151) argue that measuring specific forms of accuracy cannot give an accurate view of students' general accuracy, mainly if those students

have mixed language background. Moreover, findings of researches that compared both measurements of accuracy proved that the general measurement has often been found to be either more informative than the specific measure (e.g., Michel, Kuiken, & Vedder, 2007) or giving the same information as the specific measure (e.g., Ahmadian & Tavakoli, 2011; Yuan & Ellis, 2003).

B. Complexity is identified by the level of sophistication or variety, or a function of syntactic or grammatical complexity (Ortega, 2009). Researchers have used two measures of complexity as follows:

- Syntactic Complexity: For Ortega (2003) “syntactic complexity (syntactic maturity) refers to the range of forms that surface in language production and the degree of sophistication of such forms” (p. 492). Three measures of syntactic or grammatical complexity have been highlighted, global (words per AS unit), subordination (clauses per AS unit) and sub-phrasal (words per clause).
- Lexical complexity: Lexical variety can be calculated by finding the type-token ratio (TTR), which is the number of word types divided by all word tokens. Some researchers count the number of different word families or the ratio of functional words to lexical words (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 155).

C. Fluency: Though, raters mostly prefer to assess fluency holistically, they can be biased (Koponen & Riggenbach, 2000). Accordingly, researchers have attempted to avoid holistic ratings and be more specific by analyze fluency into four subcomponents: repair, speed, breakdown of fluency, and automatization (Skehan, 2009).

2.3 Appreciative Inquiry

Versus the linear question-answer teaching model, Inquiry-based teaching focuses on cognitive and discovery learning tasks. In terms of practices, Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a transformative agent that recognizes the best in students and helps them move towards their potential (Lee, 2014).

AI classrooms teachers guide learners throughout a highly cognitive process of exploring and constructing their own conceptual system, as well as facilitating their affective adaptation regarding the classroom new tasks (Davies & Lewis, 2013). The AI teacher designs highly interactive learning situations that stimulate students to speak, supports persistence, acknowledge progress, and respect students’ perspectives and experiences (Neville, 2008; Conklin, 2009). Thus AI classroom has been shown to ensure greater classroom engagement (Bruce, 2014) and academic achievement (Davies & Lewis, 2013; Lee, 2014; and Thomas & Nathan, 2014).

Appreciative inquiry differs from traditional problem solving models in engaging students in reflection process and sharing personal successful experiences. Participants begin the AI process by reflecting on a peak experience in a particular domain then participating in focused conversations about it with other participants. The intent is to understand the dynamics of peak moments and what created them. Conklin and Hartman (2014, 37) state

that “AI captures the practice of asking questions (inquiring) into a dynamic direction when participants can take stock of (appreciate) what was positive in that moment”.

Despite the promise of AI as a powerful tool which has been used to spark positive organizational change in schools, the development of AI processes within the educational action research literature is relatively new (Dick, 2006). In their study Davies and Lewis (2013) used AI as a framework for teaching children to investigate how ‘talking and listening’ in a primary mixed year 2 and 3 class could be improved. The goal was to develop children’s ideas and ‘dreams’ into new ways of functioning in the classroom. Participants gave feedback regarding the AI process generally, and how they could improve ‘talking and listening’ specifically.

Johnson’s study (2014) aimed at exploring the impact of appreciative inquiry, as an online instructional strategy, on developing a sample of adult learners’ motivation, engagement, and performance. Results revealed that depending on the success of appreciative inquiry and its ability to impact individuals’ performance as well as learning environment, AI has the potential to be adapted to different environments, including the online classroom environment. Also appreciative inquiry, an instructional method, proved to have a potential to help bridge the gap between the instructor and student within an online classroom.

2.3.1 Andragogy as an Original Base for Adapting Appreciative Inquiry

Andragogy is a learning model that distinguishes adults’ teaching and learning from the theory of children’s instruction (pedagogy) (Sheridan, 2007). The core assumption of andragogy is positive nature of learning that occurs through interactive process of action and self-reflection. In other words, adult learner has an inner attitude to learn and a high willingness to take responsibility of that learning (Neville, 2008). There are numerous studies documenting AI’s viability, as a classroom andragogy based approach, in helping university students (Conklin, 2009; Conklin, & Hart, 2009; Neville, 2008). AI supports students’ learning through highlighting three basic features of effective learning: (a) active involvement of students in the learning process, (b) facilitative social settings, and (c) a problem-solving focus (Proserpio & Gioia, 2007).

2.3.2 Underlying Principles of Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

Neville (2008: 45-67) assures that in order for teachers to practice appreciative inquiry both as theory and practice; they need to be well versed in its eight principles. The first three of these principles are based on social constructivism as follows:

1. Constructionist principle- Students are expected to construct information into something novel. Learning itself is a constructive process where students construct personal interpretation of experience.
2. Simultaneity principle- AI, Students will start reflecting and reconstructing their learning based on what they found or discovered.
3. Poetic Principle- Students learn best when they experience strong relationship with their teachers and peers within safe and supportive learning environment.

The next two principles of AI are based on imagery (Fitzgerald, Murrell & Miller (2003).

4. Anticipatory Principle- Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros (2008) claim that the most pertinent resource for initiating constructive and effective change can be reached through practicing future thinking skills.

5. Positive Principle- represented in facilitating and encouraging attitudes such as hope, excitement, inspiration, caring, friendship, sense of urgent purpose, and sheer joy in creating something meaningful.

The next three principles are the evidences of the continuing evolution of AI theory (Preskill & Catsambas, 2006):

6. The Wholeness Principle- means involving all students in a large group/ class to stimulate collective capacity and reaching the completeness outcomes.

7. The Enactment Principle- Positive change occurs when there is a model of the ideal future and living examples of the future.

8. The Free Choice Principle- Free choice stimulates creativity and positive change.

2.3.3 Appreciative Inquiry 4Ds cycle

Appreciative inquiry cycle starts with determining a core theme, and then proceeds in four phases: Discovery, Dream, Design and Discovery. See figure 1.

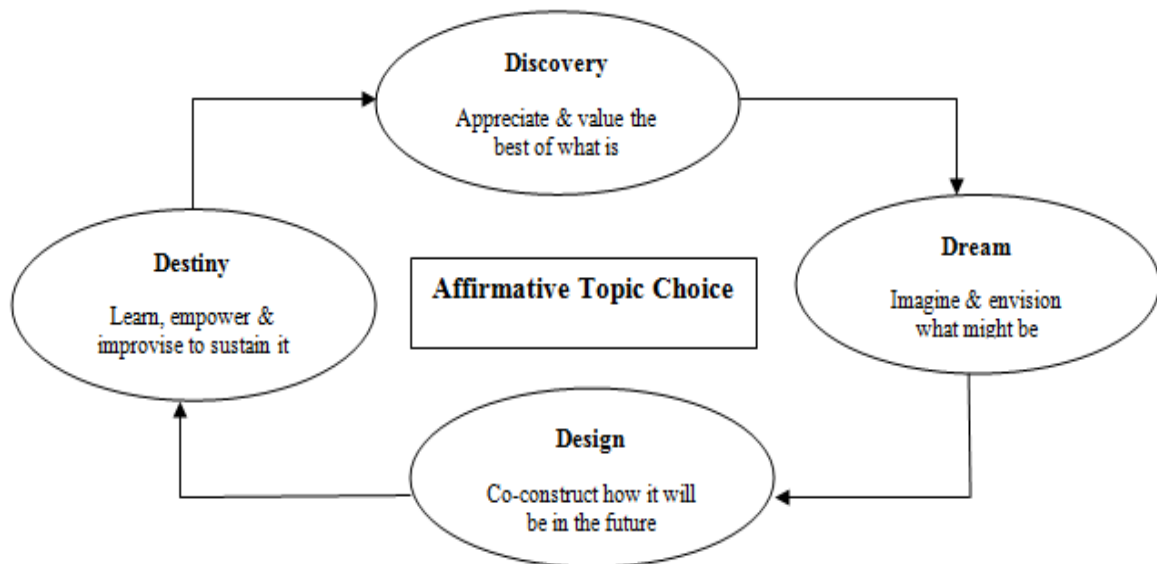


Figure 1. The 4-D Appreciative Inquiry Cycle

Source: Ludema & Fry (2008).

Figure 1 shows that the core of the cycle is an affirmative topic choice. It is the most important part of the AI theory and practices. Cooperrider and Whitney (2008) assure that the 4Ds cycle of appreciative inquiry links the energy of positive core to changes that would

appear impossible. The four Ds of AI cycle are as follows:

- **Discovery stage** includes questions for examining as well as reflecting on students' own learning experiences aiming to understand what worked, and what was effective. The core question in this stage is: 'What *has been* my peak learning experience?'
- **Dream stage** leads to envision and imagining the possibilities. The main question here is: 'What *could* be done to facilitate my peak learning?'
- **Design stage** aims to trigger students' curiosity to explore beyond the materials provided; it revolves around finding an answer to one basic question: 'what is needed to realize my dreams?' collaboratively, students have to decide on the priorities and then write an outline for an effective proposition. In that proposal, they describe in positive terms and in the present tense the teaching and learning activities they most want.
- **Destiny stage** enables learners to envisage how they are going to empower their discovered and affirmed experiences, skills and knowledge. In this stage action plans and goals are made concrete through group work. The basic question to be answered is 'What will be done in this class to facilitate students' peak learning?'

Ludema and Fry (2008, p. 284) commented on the linearity of this 4Ds diagram stating that it should not be mistaken for a 'forced march' agenda that one must follow. They assure that students can actually start by having a dream or destiny before proceeding to discovery stage. By having dream or destiny, students may take the initiatives by discovering more knowledge and skills that can help accomplish their dream or destiny.

2.4 Speaking Anxiety

Researchers have identified three main traits that distinct foreign language anxiety from general anxiety: Communication apprehension, resulting from learners' difficulty to appropriately express mature thoughts and ideas; fear of negative social evaluation, stemming from learner's attempt to make a positive social impression on others; and test anxiety or apprehension over academic evaluation (Horwitz, 2001). Researchers have reached the result that one-third of foreign language learners experience at least a moderate level of foreign language anxiety (e.g. Basic, 2011; Horwitz, 2001; Luo, 2012). Researchers have also found a negative correlation between anxiety and foreign language learning in general and oral English proficiency in particular (Al Midhwah, 2011; Occhipinti, 2009; and Zheng, 2008).

Various studies have tried to explore the correlation between foreign language speaking anxiety and the source and target culture of each language. Yet, most of these studies focused mainly on western languages, like, English, Spanish, French and German, and little attention has been paid to languages like Korean, Japanese or Arabic (Occhipinti, 2009). Al Maatooq (2008) and Madkour, Al Midhwah (2011) and Haridi (2006) assure that the high complexity level of the Arabic language may be the main source of anxiety among foreign learners of Arabic. Along similar lines, due to the big differences between English and Arabic languages, it is widely recognized that Arabic is a challenging language for English speakers to learn.

Moreover, according to the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) of the Department of State in USA,

Arabic language is classified as Category IV on a scale of four categories, of foreign languages on the basis of the difficulty for native speakers of other languages.

2.4.1 Alleviating Speaking Anxiety

Cooperative learning provides a safe learning environment where a personal rapport develops among students and encourages them to participate willingly and listen to each other. Frey, Fisher and Everlove (2009) discuss how setting up cooperative learning groups help in alleviating speaking anxiety through Positive interdependence among group members and practicing interpersonal skills, where students learn how to communicate their ideas to teach each other and establish agreements and manage conflicts.

Researches (Ketabi & Ketabi, 2014; Qamar, 2016) assure also that formative assessment, properly implemented, raises academic standards in learning, arouse students' learning motivation, relieve anxiety, and foster autonomous leaning. Taylor (2011) indentifies two common types of skills training, self-reviews and peer-reviews, for alleviating speaking anxiety. Self-review is the process of analyzing the quality of one's performance with the goal of improving the performance (Flowers & Cotton, 2006). In the speaking class, this allows speakers to view their performance rather than making assumptions about it based on recall and perceptions. Hafner and Miller (2011), Madhany (2006) and Özdener and Güngör (2010) suggest that using technology for self- and peer review is most preferred because the speakers' presentation can be re-played to carefully identify the problems in the presentation.

3. Method

3.1 Deign of the Study

The analytical descriptive method was used for reviewing pertinent literature and the quasi-experimental method for examining the effectiveness of using audio recording and appreciative inquiry based tasks in developing the oral performance and alleviating speaking anxiety of a sample of EFL and AFL learners. The study therefore required the use of two experimental groups of students (EFL group and AFL group). The design used was the pre-post test experimental design.

3.2 Participants

The participants of this study were 30 EFL and AFL female learners. The EFL group members were all non-English Majors Saudi students studying English as a foreign language (EFL) at University Center of Community Service and Continuing Education, Imam University. Their mean age was 29. None of them had notable experience of living in an English-speaking country. The AFL group included multi international students (Among them, one from Argentina, one from Mexico, one from Guatemala, two from France, one from Italy, two from Spain; two from Ukraine, one from India, two from Pakistan, one from India and one from Turkey) speaking English as a second language (Their English proficiency-level was considered to be around B1 with a few exceptions at the B2 level of European Framework of Reference for Languages) and learning Arabic at tertiary level in Arabic

Language Teaching Institute, Imam University. The average age of the participants was 32.

To make sure that differing levels of language proficiency would not affect the results of the test, the students were enrolled in their groups based on their scores in a placement test. The participants of this study were all at the level of low-intermediate. Participants of the study both in EFL and AFL groups were studying the foreign language (Arabic – English) for the aim of improving their language proficiency and communication skills to be able to communicate in the target language in different life situations as well as helping them to find a suitable job opportunity.

3.3 Instruments

3.3.1 The Oral Performance Measures Checklist

The checklist composed of thirteen speaking performance measures subsumed under the headings of accuracy, complexity and fluency. Six jury members-specialized in the field of applied linguistics and methods of teaching English and Arabic as foreign languages-were asked to determine the most important and feasible measures. The jury members also were asked to choose measures which lent themselves to a single interpretation in order to minimize disagreement among raters. According to their advice, nine performance measures were selected to be the focus of the current study as follows:

- Grammatical accuracy
 1. Global accuracy: Number of error-free AS-units per No. of total AS-units (including grammatical and lexical errors).% Error free per AS-unit
- Complexity
 - a. *Syntactic complexity*
 2. length (both T-unit and clause) number of words per AS/T-unit, number of words per clause.
 3. Subordination: number of dependent clauses per AS/T-unit
 - b. *Lexical complexity*
 4. Lexical density- No. of lexical tokens (words) per No. of total tokens.
 5. Lexical diversity (Giraud index)- number of types (different words) divided by the square root of No. of tokens.
 6. Lexical sophistication-number of sophisticated word types per token.
- Fluency
 7. Speed: The total number of words per second divided by the total length of speaking time
 8. Breakdown: The total length of pauses per second (longer than 0.2 second) divided by the total length of speaking time

9. Repair: The number of repetitions, self-corrections, and reformulations, divided by the total number of words

3.3.2 The Oral Performance Tests (OPTs)

Two parallel forms of oral performance test, one in English used with the EFL group and another version in Arabic used with the AFL group, were prepared by the researchers to measure oral performance in English and Arabic as foreign languages before and after applying the proposed strategy. Both tests consisted of one warm-up task and two main tasks under two different conditions with a 1-minute pre-task planning time (See appendix B).

- **The warm-up task:** students have to respond to three questions, presented for one minute, focused mainly on exchanging personal information to set the stage for the next two tasks.
- **The first main task was Elicited Imitation Task (EI task).** The task included 20 sentences varying in length and syntactic complexity. The participants have to repeat as many of these sentence as they could after hearing them on a DVD.
- **The second task, in turn, was Oral Narrative Retells (ONR) task.** Two oral narrative story-telling sub-tasks (monologic tasks) were typically used in oral proficiency interviews. In the first sub-task, learners have to watch one of Chaplin's short silent films: *'the Circus'* or *'the lion's cage'* then retell the story of the film in the target language. In the second sub-task, learners have to listen to a story in their L1 (for the EFL group Arabic and for the AFL group English) on DVD then recount the story in the target language (English or Arabic) using the accompanying pictures. Learners were given approximately three minutes to tell each story. Two minutes of planning time for the first task and two minutes for the second. All test sessions were audio-recorded.

After tests administration, the researchers transcribed students' recordings on the pre and posttests. For the EFL learners the researchers used a computer program called 'Transcriber' that detects and measures each silent pause in milliseconds. For the AFL group the researchers transcribed the recordings manually. Then, two versions (for each group) of the transcripts were produced. The first versions were segmented into AS units to calculate accuracy and syntactic complexity in terms of general complexity, subordination and length. The second versions were uploaded to text analysis software *'Sketch engine'*. The Sketch Engine software is a comprehensive suite of text analysis tools designed to handle texts in many languages and scripts. Taking into account the linguistic features of each language, it calculates the proportion of word types belonging to the first 1,000 most frequent words, the second 1,000 most frequent words, and off list words. For the purpose of the current study, all words beyond the first 1,000 were considered quite sophisticated for the targeted students. Counts of words, types, lexical density, and sophisticated words were also obtained.

Test validity and reliability: Face validity was obtained through submitting the test to eight TEFL and TAFL professional experts. Validity results proved the suitability of the test items, of the two test forms, for what they are supposed to measure. Furthermore, intra- rater reliability for each test form was calculated through repeating the correction process by the

researchers after one month and calculating the correlation between the two ratings. Cronbach Alpha results proved to be adequate, ranging from 0.85 to 0.95 for almost all spoken samples.

3.3.3 Speaking Anxiety Scale (SAS)

To examine students' speaking anxiety, 20 items scale was administrated to both groups of students. The scale items were adapted from Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz (1986) to examine the scope and severity of foreign language anxiety. The scale items were placed on a 5-point scale ranging from Strongly Agree (scale point 5) to Strongly Disagree (scale point 1). Negatively phrased items were coded reversely. The possible range of score for the speaking anxiety scale is 20-100.

Considering the validity of the scale, the final version was submitted to a panel of jury members (EFL & AFL specialists) who recommended rephrasing some items. The researchers modified the scale and resubmitted it to the jury members who approved its validity. The scale items were translated into Arabic and English languages. Before administering the scale, it was explained to the participants that they should respond to the items of scale according to their feelings and attitudes in their EFL/AFL speaking classes.

3.4 General Framework for the Intervention

Participants in both experimental groups were given three introductory sessions comprised three hours and two face to face weekly sessions (90 minutes each) spread over 10 weeks by a total of fourteen sessions by the researchers. Taking into consideration that there were other skills in the language syllabus to cover, each recording task required approximately two weeks (4 sessions; 90 minutes each) to transcribe, revise, reflect on using the AI 4Ds cycle and repeat. The time spent was distributed evenly for each task. Thus, the five oral performance tasks took approximately three months (10 weeks) to undergo the entire AI 4Ds cycle. Two weeks were set for pre and post testing. Thus, the treatment commenced on the 6th of October and ended on the 30 of December 2018.

3.5 Procedures

Students are asked to carry out a series of five main transactional monologic oral tasks and record themselves when doing each. See figure 2 for the procedures of the suggested strategy.

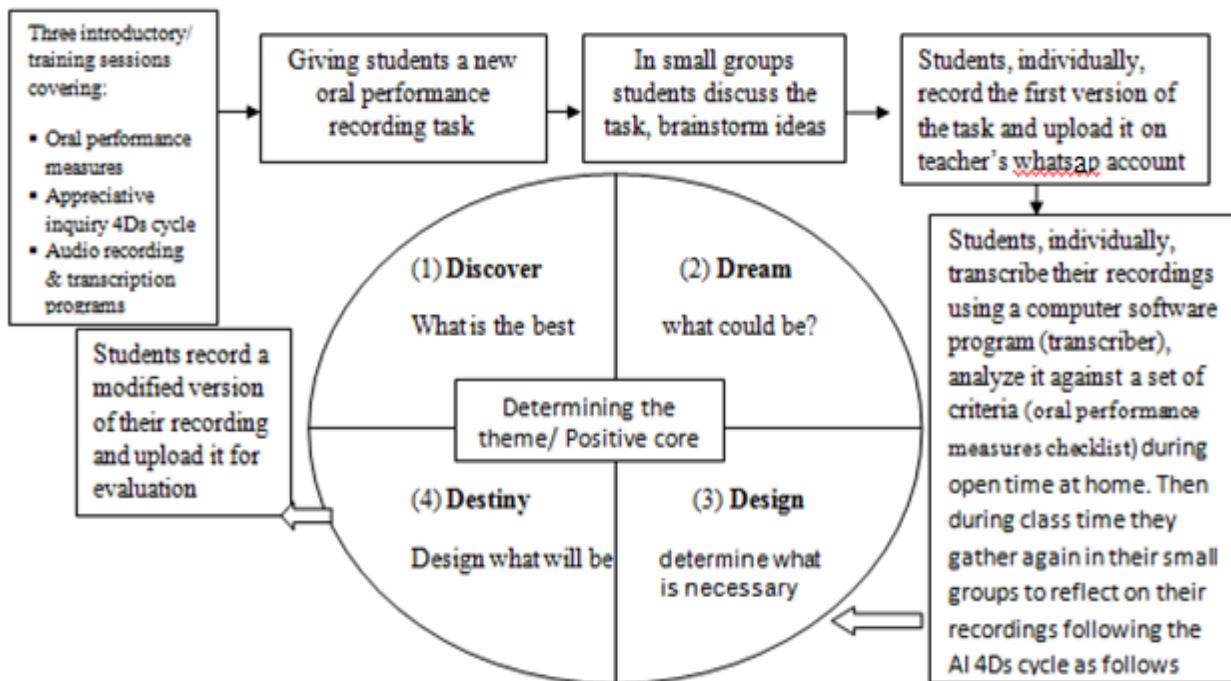


Figure 2. Procedures of the Suggested Method

According to figure no. 2 Prior to the treatment, students in both groups - over three introductory sessions- were exposed to training on using oral performance measures checklist, appreciative Inquiry 4Ds cycle, and audio recording and the transcription software programs for improving their oral performance. Then in doing each of the five assigned monologic recording tasks they follow a certain sequence as follows:

- a. In small groups students discuss the given task and brainstorm ideas about what to say in the recording and how to perform in appropriate oral performance.
- b. Then each student individually start to record her first version of the task using the recording software program (Audacity).
- c. After that they have to upload a copy of this first version to the instructor's 'whatsapp' account.
- d. Students, individually, transcribe their recordings using a computer software program (transcriber), analyze it against a set of criteria (oral performance measures checklist), and give it a score using an oral performance rating scale during open time at home, to build speaking confidence.
- e. Then during next class time they rejoin their small groups to reflect on their recordings, using both the audio and transcription forms, following the Appreciative Inquiry 4Ds cycle; starting with determining the theme (positive core to work on) which is improving oral performance in terms of accuracy, complexity and fluency, guided by the oral performance checklist, and then proceeds in four phases as follows:

- **Discovery** (Rate the best of what has) –students in a new small group (3 students) listen to each other’s recordings and identifying what worked, what was effective, whose recording was distinguished, and what best contributions each students made to that peak learning experience; A rich description of the positive core; Stories about best practices and exemplary behavior are told.

- **Dream** (Imagine what could be): The same small group begins to work with what was discovered. This serves as a platform to imagine what might be possible. Questions used at this step include the following:

1. What would have to happen for this recording to be a high level oral performance?
2. What would you hope to learn and practice more to produce a better recording of this task?
3. Describe your experience if you consider yourself performed well in this recording what makes it look like this??

Group Results are collected by the instructor and written on the board that serves as the collective memory of the group and helps facilitate the ensuing process.

- **Design** (Determine what is necessary): Based on the positive findings from the previous discovery and dream phases, students jointly determine the priorities, then write in present tense using positive terms the oral activities they most want in class and out of class to improve their oral performance i.e. accessing certain websites, model activity from the teacher, working on certain syntactic or lexical rules, having extra activities on fluency ...etc. The instructors plan their coming lessons in light of students identified needs through adding various enrichment activities.

- **Destiny** (Design what will be): In this stage, all students are invited to participate in working groups to make decision and develop an action plan about the most important issues, experiences, and ideas that they hold dear and to which they will commit their energy to improve their oral recordings. Subsequently, they start to follow their action plan supported by the teacher modified class activities. Later, a student –teacher conference is held to induce students to reflect again on their first recording/transcript and how to produce a modified one.

f. Finally, students (individually) are supposed to record a new enhanced version of the oral task and upload it again on the Whatsapp group for evaluation by the instructor.

This suggested strategy used a sort of formative evaluation that engaged students in the process rather than the product of their spoken performance. In other words, a process-oriented approach to oral performance was adopted. Moreover, to make sure that students speak naturally without reading a pre-written monologue, the researchers insisted on giving them strict time limit for each task.

3.5.1 Tasks Included in the Experiment

- The introductory task involved each student creating a “Getting to know you” audio in their target language (either English for EFL group and Arabic for the AFL group based on oral performance criteria they developed in groups during brainstorming activity).

- Task (2) each student create an audio recording in which she describes a given picture in as much detail as she can.
- Task (3) each student record a FL (English/Arabic) podcast using Audacity software discussing one topic out of five assigned topics; comprising subtopics- pertinent to the units they study in their text book i.e., the value of education, travelling, weather report, books and reading, time, friendship, goals and dreams, good manners – future technology.
- Task (4) each student creates an audio recording containing information content researched on-line and outdoors on their local tourist areas (historical places and buildings in their countries).
- Task (5) each student creates an audio recording in the target language (AFL or EFL) telling a story or a critical situation she had in her life that affected her personality.

3.5.2 Techniques Used

- a. Transcribing. It is a technique that enables learners to make their spoken production visible and tangible. Transcribing helps learners check their hypotheses about the target language, notice points of strength and weakness and set goals for bridging the gaps in their inter-language system (Mennim, 2012; Salas, 2015; Stillwell et al., 2010). In the current study, two versions of the transcripts were produced for each recording with the help of a computer program called ‘Transcriber’.
- b. Task repetition. Ahmadian (2011) and Hawakes (2011) suggest that repetition can be dealt with as one component of speaking process-oriented instruction adopting a plan, perform, analyze and repeat sequence. In the present study, instead of examining the effect of repetition in isolation as previous studies did, repetition was viewed as a componential element in overall appreciative inquiry strategy comprising other techniques.
- c. Group discussion. A regular class activity that aims at helping students in both groups (EFL & AFL) listen to and reflect on their recordings as well as amendments they were planning to conduct.

4. Data Analysis and Results

In this section, a general review of the students' gains in terms of the three oral performance traits (accuracy, complexity and fluency) and alleviating speaking anxiety will be discussed. The results of the analyses are reported for each language group (EFL & AFL) separately. Results are presented with reference to the study hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1

To evaluate both groups' longer-term profits, pretest and post tests were compared for each group. Paired samples t-test was used as in table 1.

Table 1. T-test Results Comparing the Pre- and Post-Test Means for EFL and AFL Groups on Oral Performance Measures

Measures	Indicators	EFL group				T-test	sig	AFL group				t-test	sig
		Pre-test		Post-test				Pre-test		Post-test			
		M	S.D.	M	S.D.			M	S.D.	M	S.D.		
Accuracy	A1	5.5	1.3	10.5	1.25	8.2	.00	5.2	1.4	14.83	1.98	14.6	.00
Syntactic complexity	S1	7.3	1.5	10.25	1.98	11.8	.00	7.1	1.3	9.1	1.82	10.1	.00
	S2	4.3	1.31	4.18	1.35	.87	.08	4.1	1.29	4.29	1.30	0.88	.08
Lexical complexity	L1	8.7	1.4	14.1	2.7	7.79	.05*	8.8	1.3	10.6	1.88	6.02	.05*
	L2	7.1	1.3	11.9	2.1	11.00	.05*	7.3	1.2	8.89	1.89	10.2	.00*
	L3	9.5	2.1	10.2	2.2	0.84	.07	9.7	2.3	10.1	2.4	0.88	.07
Fluency	F1	6.8	1.9	11.7	2.5	6.5	.05*	6.4	1.87	7.00	1.73	0.74	.00*
	F2	4.6	3.4	4.56	3.5	0.7	.05*	4.4	2.1	6.6	2.1	9.3	.09
	F3	5.4	1.3	8.16	1.9	6.2	.07	5.2	1.3	9.6	2.3	9.4	.07

According to table 1, it is apparent that there were statistically significant differences at either 0.01 or 0.05* levels between the mean scores of the EFL group on the pretest and posttest on accuracy measure, as well as on the first and second measures of lexical complexity (lexical density & diversity), the first measure of syntactic complexity (length) and two fluency measures (speed & breakdown) in favor of the posttest. On the other hand, no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the EFL group on the pre-test and the post-test on the second measure of syntactic complexity (subordination) as well as the third measure of lexical complexity (sophistication) and the second measure of fluency (breakdown/pauses) could be found.

As for the AFL group, there were statistically significant differences at either 0.01 or 0.05* levels between the mean scores of pretest and posttest on the accuracy measure, both measures of syntactic complexity and the first and second measure of lexical complexity (lexical density and lexical diversity) in favor of the posttest. Yet, there were no statistically significant differences between the mean scores on the pre and posttest on the third lexical complexity measure (sophistication) and the first measure of fluency (speed).

Hypothesis 2

Related to potential development, before implementing the proposed strategy, pre-administration of the study instruments was carried out to both groups to assess whether there was an academic difference between them. Results revealed that there is no statistically significant difference between the two experimental groups' mean scores on the pre-administration of the oral performance tests and speaking anxiety questionnaire. This proves that the two groups were homogeneous in their level of oral language performance before conducting the experiment.

To compare the speaking performance of both experimental groups on the oral performance post tests, the independent samples t-test was used as shown in table 2.

Table 2. Independent Samples T-Test Results Comparing the Mean Scores of Students in both Experimental Groups on the Posttest on the Oral Linguistic Performance Measures

Measures	Indicators	EFL group		AFL group		DF	Mean Squares
		M	S.D.	M	S.D.		
Accuracy	A1	10.5	1.25	14.83	2.1	14	3.5
Syntactic complexity	S1	10.25	1.98	9.1	1.82	14	4.9
	S2	4.18	1.35	4.29	1.30	14	1.1
Lexical complexity	L1	14.1	2.7	10.6	1.88	14	.36
	L2	11.9	2.1	8.89	1.89	14	1.5
	L3	10.2	2.2	10.1	2.4	14	5.3
Fluency	F1	11.7	2.5	7.00	1.73	14	.53
	F2	4.56	3.5	6.6	2.1	14	0.50
	F3	8.16	1.9	9.6	2.3	14	0.66

As shown in table 2, the results of the independent samples t-test indicate that there were overall statistically significant differences among the two groups on all measures. Comparing the EFL and AFL groups, it is clear that statistically significant differences existed in favor of the AFL group on accuracy measure. However, no statistical significant differences were found on the second measure subordination ($p=0.27$). As for lexical complexity, different results were acquired. There was a significant difference in lexical density (the percentage of content words in the total word tokens) between the two groups in favor of EFL group. While greater variety of words was produced by the participants in the EFL group than the AFL group, this difference was not significant. Also, no significant differences were found lexical sophistication. As for fluency, there was significant difference in the first measure of fluency (speed) in favor of the EFL group and in the third measure (repair) in favor of the AFL group. No significance difference was found on the second measure of fluency (breakdown).

Hypothesis 3

To examine this hypothesis, one-way ANOVAs, Pearson Correlation and t-tests were used. Results of the pre-application of the scale revealed that 80% of the students, in both groups, felt anxious about speaking in the target language. The reasons for students' fears were as follows: 56% of EFL students and 37% of AFL students feel anxious about speaking without preparation; 29% of EFL students and 24% of AFL students feel anxious because they compare themselves to other students; 30% of EFL students and 59% of AFL students felt overwhelmed by the number of rules one have to learn to speak; and 15% of EFL students and 20% of AFL students feel anxious because of teacher's oral feedback in class. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics and impacts of the suggested intervention on students of EFL and AFL groups' speaking anxiety using a paired *t*-test.

Table 3. t- test Results Comparing the Pre- and Post-Test Means of both Groups in Speaking Anxiety

	EFL group				t-test	Sig	AFL group				t-test	Sig
	Pre-test		Post-test				Pre-test		Post-test			
	M	S.D	M	S. D			M	S.D	M	S.D		
Speaking	1.6	.44	2.9	.69	4.8	.00*	1.9	.66	4.1	.9	7.12	.00*
anxiety	1.9	1.16	3.8	.87	2.8	.00*	2.1	1.1	2.9	1.2	1.5	.139

According to table 3, there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the first experimental (EFL) group as well as the second (AFL) group on the pretest and posttest on the speaking anxiety scale ($p < 0.01$) in favor of the post test.

Hypothesis 4

To compare the speaking anxiety level of both experimental groups on the post test, the independent samples t-test was used as shown in table 4.

Table 4. Independent Samples t-test Results Comparing the Mean Scores of Students in both Experimental Groups on the Posttest of Speaking Anxiety Scale

Measures	EFL group		AFL group		DF	Mean Squares	t	Effect size
	M	S.D.	M	S.D				
Speaking anxiety	2.9	.69	4.1	0.9	14	2.03	6.4	.00*

Table 4 indicates that speaking anxiety level differed significantly across the two groups. Effect size indicates that the AFL group surpassed the EFL group.

5. Discussion

This study was conducted to explore the effect of integrating self-audio recording tasks and appreciative inquiry model (4Ds) on oral performance measures (complexity, accuracy and fluency) as well as speaking anxiety of EFL and AFL Learners. Accordingly, various features in the three traits of oral proficiency in English and Arabic as foreign languages were examined via in-depth analyses of oral performances. The different findings between both experimental groups (EFL & AFL) data can be returned to the difference in the two languages as indicated by Al Batal and Belnap (2006), AL Fawzan (2007), and Al Maatooq (2008). Yet, the specific features of each language were largely ignored in the study.

As summarized in Tables 1,2,3 and 4, the results of the data analysis of the two language groups differed remarkably on the pretests and posttests, except for one feature of syntactic complexity (subordination), one feature of fluency (repair) and lexical sophistication. This result is consistent with the results of other related studies, i.e. Iwashita's (2010), and Riva,

Olivier and Ceyte's (2003), that highlight an existence of trade-off effects during oral tasks (in which a higher performance in one measure of oral performance corresponds to lower performance in another) during tasks. They attributed these trade-off effects to learner's inability to attend to all FL components simultaneously at the highest level.

Qualitative observation throughout the treatment highlighted students' positive responses to the notion of recording their oral performance and analyzing it individually and in small groups. This was reflected in their enthusiasm for following the Appreciative Inquiry 4Ds model. Nevertheless, quantitative data provided more insights into both experimental groups' performance. These findings will be discussed in terms of gains in each oral proficiency measure as well as alleviating speaking apprehension as shown in the following section:

5.1 Effect on Accuracy

In terms of accuracy, both groups relatively gained as they surpassed their pre-test performance. This result supports the presumed effect of the proposed strategy. However, some contradictions between the two experimental groups (EFL & AFL) were discernible. For the AFL group, an evident progress could be observed, which was not the case with the EFL group. A possible explanation for AFL group improvement might be that EFL students paid more attention to content aspects at the expense of attaining accuracy. In other words, being occupied with the dream stage of the AI model, EFL students seemed to focus on reaching a model oral performance through covering their topic thoroughly and supporting ideas with more details. Hence, they did not achieve the same progress on the accuracy measure as the AFL group. This result supports the effectiveness of the AI model in promoting deeper level of processing that exceeds the concentration on discussing only grammatical errors. This was sustained by results of previous studies that stressed on the need to promote learners' autonomy and deeper self-reflection during or subsequent to oral performance (Davies & Lewis, 2013; JAE N & Basanta, 2009; Lynch, 2007; Occhipinti, 2009; Taylor, 2011; and Qamar, 2016).

5.2 Effect on Complexity

Final results revealed that complexity grew for both groups in comparison to their performance on the pre-test; this proves that recording technique and appreciative inquiry 4Ds model can help in stretching intra-language system of students. Even though EFL group students exceeded the AFL group in terms of the number of words and clauses that they produced, these differences were not significant. Also, the difference between the two groups in number of dependent clauses per clause (subordination) was not significant. This means that students in both groups focused on producing a lot of smaller clauses and words, yet when the speech samples were measured with a larger unit (T-unit) the difference was not significant.

Although both EFL and AFL groups achieved a small gain in lexical density and diversity, they could not progress in terms of lexical sophistication. This can be attributed to students' natural tendency to stick to and recycle their available simple active vocabulary to express different ideas about a certain topic. Turkey's study (2011) proved that developing

sophistication could hardly be activated during a limited- time treatment. Comparing the two groups, it was found that there was a significant difference between the two groups in Lexical density in favor of the EFL group. While the EFL group produced a significantly greater variety of words than the AFL group participants, this difference was not significant. Also, no significant differences were found on lexical sophistication.

5.3 Effect on Fluency

Final results revealed that though students of the EFL group spoke significantly faster than the AFL group students, more repeated instances of pause and repair were noticed among EFL students than the AFL students. Unexpected finding was that AFL students recorded longer speech and significantly fewer unfilled pauses than EFL students. This can be justified by the fact that students in the AFL group had the possibility to interact with native speakers more than the case with EFL group missing such privilege which sounded more challenging.

5.4 Effect on Speaking Anxiety

To some degree both groups experienced a significant positive gain in speaking anxiety from the pre-test to the post test. This progress lends itself to the interpretation that repeating the same task (recording twice), according to the phases of the proposed strategy, gave students the chance to experience mastering speaking skills which contributed in alleviating their speaking anxiety. In addition, taking the responsibility of transcribing, analyzing and modifying their oral performance might have elevated their sense of self-regulation so that they started to refer improvement to their own exerted effort rather than external factors such as chance. This result confirms results of other studies that show how reflection practices and AI model can positively affect learners' speaking anxiety (Hurd, 2007; Conklin, 2009).

Moreover, co-planning for oral tasks in small work groups and in pairs throughout the phases of the suggested strategy helped in alleviating students' anxiety. Also, providing students with a safe classroom learning environment helped them improve and test their hypotheses about their language proficiency. This result was previously confirmed by Occhipinti's study (2009) highlighting that small groups and pair work based tasks help learners to speak more freely in the foreign language.

6. Conclusion

Results of the current study indicated that the proposed strategy generated stimulating and interesting learning opportunities as well as appropriate educational climate that helped students to develop their oral performance traits and alleviate their speaking anxiety. The AI (4 Ds) model created a more self-reliance; self-directed and autonomous learning environment that trusts students' abilities respects their trials and takes it forward. This finding is consistent with studies of Hubbs and Brand (2010) and Molee, Henry, Sessa, and McKinney-Prupis (2010) which proved a positive correlation between the quality of the classroom environment and student learning and development.

Restating Oxford's proposal (2003), a change in the learning setting (from traditional

classroom to self-recording and reflection tasks) engaged students in practice (evidenced in recording twice or more) in a trial to perform better and show awareness and willingness to be understood as self-learners. Also, task repetition technique positively affected students' oral task performance; as suggested by other research results (Ahmadian, 2011; Hawkes, 2001; Larsen, 2009).

Following the AI 4Ds model, in groups helped most students in identifying, building on their strengths and improving their recordings easily. Moreover, analyzing and evaluating another group's work proved to be an efficient means of raising learners' linguistic awareness. This finding is consistent with that of Alharbi (2015), Davies & Lewis (2013) and Ahmadian (2011) studies.

More interestingly, unlike conventional language labs, students were not asked to work with pre-fabricated recordings, but with their own recordings which turned out to be more meaningful to them and therefore more natural to engage with. Employing various techniques in the classroom also challenged students and catered for diversity in students' learning styles. Moreover, the appreciative inquiry (AI) model encouraged students to create advanced future images of their oral performance that in turn resulted in more enhanced performance.

Although the proposed strategy encouraged students to participate and practice their FL oral performance, their cultural traits intervened at the beginning through being less cooperative and reluctant. Thus both instructors (researchers) devoted more effort to motivate and engage students in the classroom activities. Moreover, the cultural background of both groups played a crucial part in the results of the study, mainly the differences in speaking anxiety and some of the oral performance measures. The results show that all the EFL group students were more open and positive towards analyzing their oral performance recordings than their AFL group counterparts. This result is in consistent with the studies of Methitham (2014) and Talley and Hui-ling (2014) who stressed that FL instructor should consider learners' cultural backgrounds to be able to identify the most effective and motivating FL speaking strategies that would engage students to speak and implement them according to learners' needs.

7. Recommendations

Based on the previous results, some implications can be drawn as follows:

- FL teachers' pre and in-service training programs must target theoretical and practical aspects concerning the development of oral linguistic competence: its measures and appropriate linguistic classroom activities to teach them.
- Reflective practices and activities should be integrated in FL learning depending on autonomous learning principles.
- FL evaluation practices must target the components of oral linguistic competence.
- Students-teacher relationships in foreign language classroom should base on enthusiasm motivation, rapport and professionalism.

- FL teachers should acknowledge students that mistakes is normal part of foreign language learning and try to use a variety of gentle correction techniques of oral mistakes.
- There is a need to acknowledge cultural diversity and learning styles of learners in FL curriculum design and teaching approaches,
- Holding regular workshops for FL teachers in order to update them on modern trends in language teaching so as to respond to the changing needs of non-Arabic learners,

8. Further Studies

- The study needs to be extended to a wider range of spoken discourse features needs to be considered.
- A follow-up study is warranted to test the effects of appreciative inquiry on developing writing skill of FL learners.
- A study exploring the difference between male and female EFL and AFL learners' speaking anxiety levels and factors involved in this would deepen understanding of the issue more.

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