

The impact of using telegram application on the improvement of Iraqi EFL secondary student's speaking performance

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of using the Telegram application during the COVID-19 pandemic on the speaking skills of Iraqi EFL secondary school students. The rapid development of educational technology and online learning platforms is pushing teachers to integrate mobile applications into English language instruction. Among these applications, Telegram has become one of the most popular communication tools due to its accessibility, adaptability and interactive features that make language learning easier. The purpose of the study is to find out whether the use of Telegram instead of traditional classroom instruction improves students' communication and speaking accuracy. It also examines the effect of personality traits such as extroversion, introversion, neuroticism, and stability on learners' speaking skills in virtual learning environments. The study was conducted among Iraqi secondary school students aged between 15 and 18 years. The learners' personality traits are measured by the Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI) and the Quick Oxford Placement Test (OPT) is used to ensure homogeneity. The research uses the experimental method, where students participate in online learning through telegram for twelve weeks. Speaking activities include storytelling, oral presentations, graphic descriptions, conversations, video analysis, and news reporting. Pre- and post-tests are completed in which students' speech accuracy is checked by Telegram video calls. Moreover, an attitude questionnaire is provided to know the students' attitude towards online education and the use of Telegram in teaching English language. The results of this study should indicate that Telegram improves students' speaking skills significantly by improving interaction, motivation, autonomy, and chances for communication out of the classroom. The research findings also stress the importance of integrating mobile applications for language learning in Iraqi educational contexts, particularly during significant times such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the results may assist educators, curriculum designers and educational decision makers to implement more successful technology solutions for enhancing English language learning and developing students' communicative competence.

Keywords: telegram application , Iraqi EFL

أثر استخدام تطبيق تيليجرام على تحسين مهارات التحدث لدى طلاب المرحلة الثانوية العراقيين في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية
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ملخص

تناولت هذه الدراسة أثر استخدام تطبيق تيليجرام خلال جائحة كوفيد-19 على مهارات التحدث لدى طلاب المرحلة الثانوية العراقيين في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. يدفع التطور السريع لتكنولوجيا التعليم ومنصات

التعلم الإلكتروني المعلمين إلى دمج تطبيقات الهاتف المحمول في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية. ومن بين هذه التطبيقات، أصبح تيليجرام أحد أكثر أدوات التواصل شيوعاً نظراً لسهولة استخدامه ومرونته وخصائصه التفاعلية التي تُسهّل تعلم اللغة. تهدف الدراسة إلى معرفة ما إذا كان استخدام تيليجرام بدلاً من التدريس التقليدي في الفصول الدراسية يُحسّن مهارات التواصل ودقة التحدث لدى الطلاب. كما تبحث الدراسة أثر سمات الشخصية، مثل الانطواء والانبساط والعصابية والاستقرار، على مهارات التحدث لدى المتعلمين في بيئات التعلم الافتراضية. أجريت الدراسة على طلاب المرحلة الثانوية العراقيين الذين تتراوح أعمارهم بين 15 و18 عاماً. وقد قُيست سمات شخصية المتعلمين باستخدام مقياس أيزنك للشخصية (EPI)، واستُخدم اختبار تحديد المستوى السريع لأكسفورد (OPT) لضمان تجانس العينة. تستخدم هذه الدراسة المنهج التجريبي، حيث يشارك الطلاب في التعلم الإلكتروني عبر تطبيق تيليجرام لمدة اثني عشر أسبوعاً. تشمل أنشطة التحدث سرد القصص، والعروض الشفوية، والوصف التصويري، والمحادثات، وتحليل الفيديو، وكتابة التقارير الإخبارية. يُجرى اختباران قبلي وبعدي لتقييم دقة نطق الطلاب من خلال مكالمات فيديو عبر تيليجرام. كما يُقدم استبيان لقياس آراء الطلاب حول التعليم الإلكتروني واستخدام تيليجرام في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية. تشير نتائج هذه الدراسة إلى أن تيليجرام يُحسّن مهارات التحدث لدى الطلاب بشكل ملحوظ من خلال تعزيز التفاعل، والتحفيز، والاستقلالية، وفرص التواصل خارج الفصل الدراسي. وتؤكد نتائج البحث أيضاً على أهمية دمج تطبيقات الهاتف المحمول في تعليم اللغات في السياقات التعليمية العراقية، لا سيما في أوقات الأزمات مثل جائحة كوفيد-19. علاوة على ذلك، قد تُساعد هذه النتائج المعلمين، ومصممي المناهج، وصناع القرار التربوي على تطبيق حلول تقنية أكثر فعالية لتعزيز تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق.

1. Introduction

The integration of contemporary technology in English language education is recognised as the innovative utilisation of methods, tools, materials, technologies, systems, and strategies pertinent to English instruction, facilitating the attainment of specified goals. Consequently, technology is especially pertinent to English language instruction as it presents numerous opportunities to enhance both the content and delivery of conventional teaching methods, despite its recognition as a valuable educational and support tool across diverse teaching and learning environments. This is generally accomplished by allowing the student and/or teacher to review the difficult material multiple times until it is thoroughly comprehended and assimilated.

The introduction of cutting-edge teaching systems and techniques that enable quicker and more thorough learning development is the extent of familiarity with the concept of using modern technologies. The prevalent educational theories state that pupils are better equipped to acquire and refine their information and language abilities when they utilise the learning potential of technology. By attaining the intended outcomes, the use of technology in English instruction improves the integrated perspective of the system of contemporary methods and the connection with other elements that help students.

The integration of current technologies in English language training has become essential, particularly in light of significant advancements across several professions and disciplines. The education sector must adapt to the global technological revolution by integrating contemporary tools such as computers, multimedia devices, mobile phones, audio/visual applications, and social media to improve English language instruction and equip teachers to engage with language learners in a systematic and sophisticated manner. The Internet offers swift, convenient, and virtually limitless access to an extensive array of platforms, resources, and apps that can enhance English instruction and learning. It is essential to highlight that educators frequently assume a pivotal role in leveraging various resources and instructional strategies, despite the fact that anyone may be eligible for these scholarships. Moreover, numerous technologies are explicitly engineered to improve learner understanding and proficiency in the English language while facilitating efficient English language teaching.

According to Moerira et al. (2016), the ability, adaptability, and versatility of cell phones to support the formation of unique learning encounters have led to a development among educators and specialists regarding their use in the learning-teaching environment. According to Vavoula and Sharples (2008), mobile devices can foster productive learning in which students "show responsibility for and initiate their learning, share learning with experts and peers." According to Hayati et al. (2013), mobile devices allow students to take use of novel learning settings such as pedagogy (Petersen et al., 2008; Benson & Chik, 2010). Given the prevalence of wireless networks and mobile devices, such as tablets and smartphones, mobile learning facilitates and enhances learner-centred approaches (Karpisek et al., 2015). "WhatsApp" is a platform used for calls, chatting, and sharing content including photographs and audio. It was chosen as one of the most well-known portable ambassadors by "Most famous versatile informing applications," (2017). It is available on a number of portable platforms, including every mobile phone system. Another widely used online app is Telegram, which was introduced in 2013 by Pavel and Nikolai Durov, a software engineer and business visionary from Berlin. Because to its incorporated stickers and ease of use, Telegram is a user-friendly app. Compared to WhatsApp, this software has a different capacity for downloading and receiving various documents. Telegram is a multi-platform program that works on Windows, Mac, iOS, Android, and phones. Ebrahimi et al. (2016) claim that Telegram can be used on many devices at once. In order to broadcast to an endless number of viewers, Telegram users can form groups of up to 5000 people (Vivienne, 2016). According to Niayesh (2015), the number of Iranians who use Telegram has caused this adaptable informal community app to be an observer of a tremendous blast. This further clarifies that if local informal organisations attract more clients

like Telegram did, it will be beneficial for the country, particularly with regard to society and the economy. Iranian users had a number of problems when attempting to access other popular informal community apps, like Viber or Whatsapp, which led to the enormous reception wave.

According to Schmitt (2008), teaching EFL jargon can be defined as "words we should know to impart adequately" (Neuman and Dwyer, 2009). This suggests that jargon should be viewed as more than a collection of single-word units. Nowadays, learning a language without words is nearly impossible; even interpersonal communication relies on words (Walters, 2004). We might use the structures and capacities for comprehensible correspondence if we had a broad vocabulary (Nation, 2012). Since dialects rely on words, teaching words is an essential part of learning a language (Thornbury, 2002). In actuality, understanding technical terms plays a crucial role in acquiring the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English as a Second Language (ESL) and EFL (Nation, 2010). For example, realia, photographs, actions, motions, definitions, interpretation, and circumstances are some options that might be used to provide jargon in the introduction (Thornbury, 2002). Through spoken and written exercises, lucrative assignments that are responsive, and individual and group exercises, the training stage should develop precision. The exercises in the creation arrangement, which is intended to foster familiarity, are focused on recalling the recently acquired words (Criado, 2013).

As one of the major language skills that allows language learners to communicate successfully in a variety of settings, speaking abilities are a focus of any language program (Vural, 2019; Babakhouya, 2019). In many facets of human existence, including economics, culture, commerce, politics, administration, research, and academics, speaking can also be seen as the primary language ability for interactions (Lazarton, 2001). Although speaking is a difficult skill for many EFL learners, Lazarton (2001) contends that oral communication skills are equivalent to language proficiency since speaking is the primary form of human communication. When the needs of speaking skills are combined with the difficulties of virtual training, the situation becomes more complex. According to Vural (2019) and Babakhouya (2019), transferring learning-teaching practices from traditional face-to-face settings to isolated contexts where individual interaction is limited to some virtual interactions is likely to affect the learning outcome based on the learners' personality traits.

1.1. Statement of the problem

In terms of social, emotional, and economic factors in general and educational practices in particular, COVID-19 has made life difficult for people in the twenty-first century (Baloran, 2020; Shaw, Kim, & Hua 2020; Roy et al., 2020). Iraq is

hardly an exception; as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, its educational policies and practices are undergoing significant changes.

No empirical study has looked at how virtual education during the COVID-19 pandemic affected the speaking accuracy of English language learners in Iraqi secondary schools with various personality types, despite popular support for the creation of virtual language learning platforms. The association between personality traits and English speaking in the context of Iraq has not been investigated in relation to Telegram, despite the fact that numerous studies have shown that personality traits are linked to a variety of life outcomes and diseases.

In actuality, people are more distinct from one another and have a variety of unique traits. These qualities are genuinely specific to each person. To put it another way, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no prior study has examined the effect of identifiers in terms of personality traits in learners' success or failure in speaking correctness through the usage of Telegram, the Iraqi default educational platform for secondary school pupils. The impact of personality factors on EFL learners' speaking accuracy in virtual classrooms is actually not well understood by academics.

The literature does not provide any empirical evidence about the impact of personality factors on interaction behaviours. The purpose of this study is to determine whether virtual training during the COVID-19 pandemic has any impact on the speaking accuracy of English learners who are sedentary or neurotic and extroverted or introverted.

1.2. Significant of the study

This study assesses how the "telegram application" affects students' acquisition of the English language in our classrooms. It is believed that the study's findings will aid educators and decision-makers in comprehending how new technology affects instruction. These results may also encourage educators to seek out ways to further their own professional growth, which could result in better instructional strategies and higher English proficiency among their pupils.

Because they don't have the chance to encourage students' autonomous learning, teachers find it challenging to keep an eye on their work outside of the classroom. Because of this, the current study seeks to demonstrate Telegram's significant contribution to improved engagement in EFL lessons.

1.3. Purpose of the study

- To determine whether utilising the Telegram app improves EFL students' speaking abilities in Iraqi secondary schools.
- To compare the gains made by pupils utilising this app with those who are solely receiving traditional classroom instruction.

1.4. Research questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions are addressed and examined in order to fulfil the current study's goal:

RQ1: Does the COVID-19 program have a different impact on the speaking accuracy of extroverted and introverted English language learners?

RQ2: Does the COVID-19 epidemic have a different impact on the speaking accuracy of English language learners in stable and anxious secondary schools in Iraq?

RQ3: In terms of students' speaking accuracy, which personality qualities have been most impacted by virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic?

RQ4: How do Iraqi secondary school English language learners with various personality types see online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic?

1.5. Definition of Key terms

1.5.1. Distance Learning

Both trade and communication have changed as a result of the expansion of the Internet. Everything at the door becomes instantly accessible thanks to the Internet, which eliminates all distances. New methods of learning have also been made possible by the advancement of the World Wide Web and Internet technologies. Online graduation with a master's degree or postgraduate portfolio is now feasible. E-learning and remote learning are part of this emerging trend. As a component of e-learning, distance learning enables users to learn, receive grades, and pass tests from the comfort of their homes or offices using their own computers. Numerous e-learning resources and online tools may be useful for distance learning. The learner will have to work on their own for this.

Compared to online learning, distance learning offers certain advantages. First, even in situations like snowy days or the COVID-19 epidemic, distance learning may go on without interruption. These kinds of disruptions don't have the same impact on your lessons as they do on traditional in-person classes because you've already been studying remotely. Additionally, distant learning gives students more freedom to work at their own speed and examine assignments as needed.

This also has to do with giving students access to your course materials whenever it's most convenient for them, which is crucial for students who might have erratic work schedules.

Now that you are aware of the advantages of online and remote learning, there are four primary issues to consider when putting distance learning into practice. First of

all, if your pupils do not have access to devices or the Internet at home, then remote learning is not worthwhile.

1.5.2. Telegram Application

The benefits of this educational approach are instantly apparent. Students are able to integrate the learning process into their professional lives because they are given access to a non-location-related form of education. This allows them to study at an institution that is physically far away while still taking care of their jobs. One should not undervalue the importance of creating a welcoming and inspiring environment. This benefit is related to the fact that these cat studies are independent of both time and location. Even though a full-time professional might not be able to leave their work to attend classes, they would still be happy to study online after work. Not everyone follows the same biological schedule on a personal level. While some people might prefer this activity to be done during the day, others would be more productive and effective in a learning process late at night. An effective way to help students become independent of other people's schedules is through e-learning. This kind of freedom is crucial in the workplace.

The ability to learn at their own pace is another important consideration. Nothing is more annoying than when a student works more quickly than the other pupils in the class. The teacher finds it embarrassing to have to "wait" for every student because he is unable to let his fastest students know how quickly the class is moving. It is discouraging for a quick learner, who feels that the class isn't fulfilling his needs. The slow student experiences a persistent sense of inadequacy, believing that he is not "good" enough if he is not as quick as the others. This issue can be effectively resolved by e-learning, which allows students to study at their own pace and time, "move through" the content that they find easy to understand, and devote more time to the sections of the curriculum that they find difficult.

Many articles discuss the use of e-learning either on its own or in combination with more conventional approaches. E-learning can take many different forms, such as totally online teaching materials, interactive applications used in "regular" classrooms or as core materials, online teaching resources utilised in "traditional classes," or the usage of Telegram as a communication tool.

1.6. Limitation

The study is restricted to Iraqi middle school pupils.

1.7. Review of literature

Numerous other research have demonstrated how well the Telegram app works for teaching and learning English (Heidari-shahreza & Khodarahmi, 2018; Xodabande, 2017). A number of aspects of EFL learners' English language proficiency are improved by the use of Telegram, including reading comprehension (Naderi & Akrami, 2018), vocabulary (Ghobadi & Taki, 2018), writing (Aghajani & Adloo,

2018), and speaking (Setiawan & Wahyuni, 2017; Xodabande, 2017). The importance of mobile learning for teaching and studying English was covered by Akobirov and Vokhidova (2018). They concentrated on the mobile app "Telegram." According to their research, Telegram could be a very effective and promising tool for teaching language skills. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening are all impacted by the Telegram app.

Naderi and Akrami (2018) assert that the utilisation of Telegram groups in education markedly enhances students' reading comprehension abilities. They affirmed that it improved the kids' reading comprehension abilities. Two other studies (Abbasi & Behjat, 2016; Setiawan & Wahyuni, 2017; Xodabande, 2017) concentrated on improving speaking proficiency within the comparable framework of utilising the Telegram application for English language instruction. Abbasi and Behjat (2016) examined the impact of storytelling on Telegram on the speaking difficulties of EFL students. The experimental group outperformed the control group in speaking complexity, as indicated by the results.

Additionally, Setiawan and Wahyuni (2017) used a recording capability in the Telegram application to demonstrate the role of E-talk Castel's model in enhancing students' English speaking abilities. The findings showed that using the E-talk castle model, which Telegram supported, gave students a useful tool to help them become more proficient English speakers.

Xodabande (2017), who looked at Telegram's usability in teaching English pronunciation to EFL learners, supports Setiawan and Wahyuni's (2017) study. The results demonstrated that participants' pronunciation greatly improved as a result of using Telegram. According to the study, utilising Telegram to teach English can be very beneficial and promising. Writing proficiency was another English skill that was taught through the use of the Telegram app. Participants in Telegram cooperative writing groups scored marginally higher than those in in-person cooperative writing groups, according to Aghajani and Adloo (2018). They asserted that Telegram learning has a great deal of potential in terms of pervasiveness, ubiquity, personalisation, and adaptability thanks to popular mobile devices. Additionally, Telegram aids with the development of English vocabulary. Stickers are one of Telegram's features, and they are essential for learning new words. According to Ghobadi and Taki (2018), using Telegram stickers to teach vocabulary could have significant benefits for students. According to the study, Telegram helped EFL learners acquire new vocabulary words. Ghobadi and Taki's (2018) findings were consistent with those of Heidari-shahreza and Khodarahmi's (2018) case study. The authors investigated how Telegram helps EFL students understand the English

language's word stress patterns. The results revealed a statistically significant variation in the experimental group's fever.

Additionally, the pupils were enthusiastic about using Telegram to learn new words. Ghaemi and Golshan (2018) investigated how Telegram's short messaging services (SMS) affected EFL students' vocabulary acquisition. The researchers claim that using SMS over Telegram as a teaching tool had a positive impact on students' vocabulary acquisition. However, Bello and Hadiza (2017) noted that Telegram is a useful teaching tool. They determined that Telegram might give English teachers the necessary resources to create excellent and useful lessons. The researchers advised English teachers to get ready so they could use Telegram effectively in the classroom.

However, Zarei (2015) investigated how well the Telegram app works as a teaching tool for language acquisition. The study employed mixed methods to find out how using the Telegram app affected students' perceptions of using the app for writing purposes as well as how it affected giving feedback and improving writing accuracy in L2. The results demonstrated that the Telegram-using experimental group outperformed the control group. According to student opinions, utilising the Telegram app for writing was beneficial and satisfying.

Ibrahim, Norsaal, Abdullah, Soh, and Othman (2016) alongside Yinka and Queendarline (2018) focused on students' perceptions of employing Telegram for writing and English instruction. Yinka and Queendarline (2018) assert that students using Telegram for educational purposes. They suggested including telegraph usage into the curriculum to improve university education. Moreover, the Telegram application facilitates the efficient creation and dissemination of knowledge, hence enhancing the processes of teaching and learning (Ibrahim et al., 2016). Numerous prior research have investigated the efficacy of the Telegram application in the instruction and acquisition of English language skills (Aghajani & Adloo, 2018; Heidari-shahreza & Khodarahmi, 2018; Xodabande, 2017). Nonetheless, there is a paucity of prior research investigating students' perceptions of utilising Telegram as a mobile application for English as a Foreign Language education (Zamakhsari, 2018). Moreover, within the Saudi context, cellphones have demonstrated superior efficacy in EFL learning.

However, no published study in the Saudi context discusses how EFL learners perceive using Telegram as a mobile application to enhance their English language learning, according to the researcher's search and restrictions. The success of integrating new technology into the educational process rests on students' willingness to accept and use it, despite the fact that decision-makers make these decisions on a regular basis. Understanding how humans perceive new technologies

has therefore piqued the interest of numerous researchers. Understanding why some students accept one technology while rejecting another is also crucial (Al-Lozi, Al-Hujran, & Al-Debei, 2016).

Thus, the purpose of the current study was to assess how students in our schools used the "telegram" app to learn English. It is believed that the study's findings will aid educators and decision-makers in comprehending how new technology affects instruction. These results may also encourage educators to look for ways to further their own professional development, which could result in better instructional strategies and higher English proficiency among their pupils.

Because they don't have the chance to encourage students' autonomous learning, teachers find it challenging to keep an eye on their work outside of the classroom. Because of this, the current study seeks to demonstrate Telegram's significant contribution to improved engagement in EFL lessons.

2. Methodology

I had anticipated that this study would last for one cycle. To raise the pupils' level, I provide a variety of films and techniques. Additionally, I provide students with themes of interest in the Telegram group of applications so they may communicate and share thoughts or information.

I started up by discussing the Internet, how it can be used to study English, and how Internet applications may help students. After that, I discussed how crucial it is to include Internet apps into the classroom in general and English instruction in particular.

2.1. Participants

Male and female secondary school EFL students in Iraq between the ages of 15 and 18 made up the study's population. The Oxford Rapid Placement Test (OPT) will be used to make sure study participants are homogeneous. Students who score between 31 and 40 will be chosen as participants in this manner. From Pre-A1 to C2, this score range corresponds to CEFR level A2-2. Since secondary school English learners in Iraq rarely exhibit a competence level higher than A2-2, this level of competency was used to accommodate more secondary school students in this study. In order to lessen the influence of factors other than the independent variable, the researcher also makes an effort to choose individuals from families with relatively similar socioeconomic, cultural, and income backgrounds. Interviewing the participants before the study is conducted will make this feasible. We should also mention that all data gathering will take place online because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.2. Instruments (and Materials)

2.2.1. Quick Oxford Placement Test (OPT)

An OPT test, an English language exam offered by Oxford University Press and the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (2009), will be given to participants in order to verify their homogeneity for the purposes of this study. There are two parts to the OPT, which shows how well test takers can utilise English in daily situations: the sections on listening and using English. In addition to typical grammar, lexis, and listening questions, the 110-item Use of English Section focuses on meaning beyond the phrase, including inferred meaning; the language sampled in the test is in fact an accurate predictor of general language competence. Ten items make up the listening portion, and it takes the test takers about ten minutes to finish them. According to an independent study, the test's validity is higher than that of other placement tests (Wistner, Sakai, & Abe, 2009).

2.2.2. Eysenck's Character Inventory (1975)

The Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI), which assesses two broad and independent aspects of personality—extraversion and introversion and neuroticism and stability—will be used to determine the participants' personality traits. The majority of the variation in the personality domain may be explained by this inventory. There are 57 "yes-no" questions in the inventory, and none of them are repeated. The recognition of response distortion is made possible by the existence of a spoofing method. Extraversion/introversion and anxiety/stability are the personality qualities that are assessed. The inventory will be translated into Arabic, and back translation will be used to verify the tool's dependability. Previous research has also verified the measurement of instrument validity (e.g., Bodling & Martin, 2011). The EPI score consists of:

a "lying score" that ranges from 9 to gauge how socially acceptable respondents' responses are. Respondents who have a score of five or above on this scale are more likely to attempt to appear respectable and provide responses that are not totally truthful. "E (extraversion) and N (neuroticism)" are scores on a 24-point scale. The latter gauges the respondent's neuroticism, whereas the former gauges their openness.

2.2.3. Speaking test

The researcher will create a speaking accuracy exam that asks participants to discuss various subjects pertaining to Iraqi scholars; b) the usage of dictionaries in order to confirm the impact of virtual instructions on the participants' speaking accuracy. d) Energy from renewable sources, etc. These subjects are mostly based on the subjects covered in English textbooks created by the Iraqi Ministry of Education to instruct high school pupils in the language between the ages of 15 and 18. The Speaking Accuracy Test consists of a collection of predetermined questions that will be administered in a same manner to every participant in order to guarantee that the test items are the same for every participant. The following are the questions:

- a) What do you know about the most well-known scientists from Iraq? Which inventions are the most well-known?
- b) What makes respecting our elders so crucial?
- c) How crucial is it to preserve our culture for future generations?
- d) How can we pronounce words more clearly?
- e) Where can we locate some helpful word-related information?
- f) What aspects should you take into account while selecting a dictionary?
- g) What is the variety of renewable energy sources?
- h) Do you think fossil fuels can be replaced by renewable energy?
- i) Will the use of renewable energy prevent global warming?

The researcher will conduct a five-minute interview with the participants via Telegram video call as part of the speaking exam. The percentage of exact verbs used by test takers will be determined by recording, compiling, and analysing the votes. Speaking often develops over time, therefore short-term treatment may not have a major impact on it. Thus, the usage of verbs by interviewees will be the main emphasis of this study. Therefore, the participants' total number of verbs used in their speech will be divided by the number of minute verbs they created during the speaking test. The accuracy test result for the participants is represented by this ratio (Yuan & Ellis, 2003).

Prior to the study's main phase, the test's validity, reliability, and practicality will be examined by assigning items to 20 students who are comparable to each other and evaluating the findings for interrater reliability. Speaking accuracy tests will be evaluated by two assessors to guarantee test item reliability through interrater reliability. In a panel discussion with a number of experts in applied linguistics and assessment, test items will be developed to further validate the validity of the scale's content.

2.2.4. Attitude survey

By completing an attitude questionnaire in Arabic at the conclusion of the study, Iraqi secondary school students' opinions of various personality traits regarding virtual education—including learning English via Telegram during the COVID-19 pandemic—will be investigated. The fourth research question is addressed by this scale.

2.3. Data Collection Procedure

The researcher will administer the Quick OPT to determine whether all students have roughly the same level of competence after getting the principals' consent and requesting that they not reveal study aims to pupils. Due to practical and administrative challenges, the test will be administered in multiple sessions at

various schools. Those who completed the tests and received a score between 31 and 40 will be chosen to participate. From Pre-A1 to C2, this score range corresponds to CEFR level A2-2. The participants will then take the EPI (1975) to assess their neuroticism/stability and extroversion/introversion. Each participant receives three scores based on the inventory results:

- The respondent's attempt to be socially desirable in their responses is measured by the "lie score," which is out of 9. Individuals who receive a score of five or above on this scale are most likely attempting to present a positive image of themselves and are not being completely truthful in their answers.
- The respondent's level of extroversion is measured by their "E score," which is out of 24.
- The respondent's level of neuroticism is measured by the "N score," which is out of 24.

After completing the EPI, the participants will be split up into four groups for comparison: Participants in

Group 1 have a N score of less than 12. (Stable)

Group 2: Those who receive a N score higher than 12. (Neurotic)

Group 3: Individuals with an introverted E score of less than 12.

Group 4: Individuals who receive an E score higher than 12. (Outgoing)

After that, the participants will take a speaking exam, and their results will be noted for further examination. Telegram will be used as an educational medium in the following phase, during which all participants will take part in 18 online sessions spread over 12 weeks. The research teacher selects a topic based on the EFL course material for each session, allowing the students to engage in the following activities and exercises:

- **Picture Prompt ESL Warm-Up:** Depending on the subject of the lesson, the group will be shown several pictures. As the supervisor and administrator, the researcher will talk about an image that fits the class's theme. This might assist pupils in applying what they already know about a subject. The pupils will next be asked to describe what they see, guess what will happen next, connect what they see to personal experiences, construct sentences based on the image, respond to a few basic questions, and more.
- **Retelling a Story:** Speaking accuracy will be the main focus of this exercise. Every student is required to share a tale with the teacher and other students about the subject of his class.

- **Breaking News in English:** In two or three minutes, students will be required to present and explain news pertaining to the class's topic. The instructor and their peers will then provide them with comments.
- **Short Videos:** A 4–5 minute video is shown to the group, and participants are invited to consider it, offer critical feedback, and connect it to the subject.
- **Presentation:** Students are required to deliver an oral presentation on the session's subject.
- Throughout the group activities, the researcher serves as both a facilitator and a supervisor. Students will retake the speaking exam at the conclusion of the semester, and their results will be computed based on the proportion of correct verbs. Online performance evaluations, including interviews, might be just as trustworthy as in-person evaluations, according to earlier research (Watson & Sottile, 2010).

2.4. Analysis

The following statistical analyses will be applied in this study: The reliability of the general aptitude test will be examined along with descriptive statistics like the mean and standard deviation of results across the four categories of personality traits. The Cohen's Kappa for Evaluator Reliability will be used to assess the speaking accuracy test's validity and reliability. If its presumptions are met, a one-way ANOVA will be performed to ascertain whether personality traits and speaking accuracy scores significantly interact; if not, a Kruskal-Wallis H will be employed. In order to determine which personality factors interact with speaking accuracy scores, a post hoc Bonferroni test will be conducted.

3. References

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