

Positive Self-Talk: an Unexploited Self-Management Cognitive-Motivational Strategy at the University Level and Its Effect on Students' Oral Performances.

Abstract:

Positive self-talk is currently considered one of the most potent self-management learning strategies and as a major factor within educational psychology that can fully be exploited by college students in order to improve their academic performance, in general, and their oral performance, in particular. The present study is an attempt towards sensitizing learners on the significance and the usefulness of positive self-talk in aiding them produce more natural proficient English conversations. It also attempts to demonstrate that such a type of self-management learning strategy has generally been found to be effective in enhancing students' performance in a variety of skills (as the conversational skill), by emphasizing the link between what students say to themselves; either positive or negative self-messages, and how they perform orally. The paper first provides a theoretical background about the concept of self-talk. Then, it displays how positive self-talk has a vital importance for students, through the analysis of a questionnaire carried out on a sample of first-year ENSC students. Results reveal that positive self-talk as a cognitive-motivational method is, to a great extent, efficacious and successful in bolstering up students' oral performance/achievement.

Keywords: Positive Self-Talk ; Self-Management Cognitive-Motivational Strategy ; University Level ; Effect ; Students' Oral Performances

ملخص:

يعد الحوار الإيجابي مع الذات من الإستراتيجيات التعليمية الأكثر فعالية في التسيير الذاتي، المعتمدة في الوقت الراهن، وكعامل رئيسي في مجال علم النفس التربوي التي يمكن أن يستغلها الطلبة في تعزيز مستوى أدائهم الدراسي عموما و الشفوي خصوصا. وهذه الدراسة هي محاولة لتحسيس الطلبة بأهمية و جدوى الحوار الإيجابي مع الذات في مساعدتهم على إجراء محادثات أكثر طلاقة و عفوية باللغة الإنجليزية. كما تحاول أن تبين لهم بأن هذا النوع من الإستراتيجية المعرفية التحفيزية قد أثبتت فعاليته في تحسين أداء الطلبة في عدة مهارات (على غرار مهارة المحادثة)، من خلال التأكيد على الارتباط بين ما يقوله الطلبة لأنفسهم، رسائل ذاتية إما إيجابية أو سلبية، و نوعية أدائهم الشفوي. يقدم المقال أولا خلفية نظرية عن المفهوم ثم يعرض كيف أن الحوار الإيجابي مع الذات لديه أهمية حيوية للطلبة من خلال تحليل استبيان أجري على عينة من طلاب السنة الأولى بالمدرسة العليا للأساتذة بقسنطينة. وتكشف النتائج أن الحوار الإيجابي مع الذات كوسيلة معرفية تحفيزية هي، إلى حد كبير، فعالة و ناجعة في تحسين الأداء الشفوي و التحصيلي للطلبة.

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Introduction :

Due to the widespread issues observed with regard to the insufficient commitment, enthusiasm, and desire of learners; namely university students, as well as the increased language learning failures, Self-talk (S.T) as a self-management strategy has been found central to cognitive behavioral interventions, and has recently received significant research interest in the area of academic motivation and achievement.

This paper is mainly devoted to elucidate the influence that self-talk bears on students' performance, globally, and oral performance, particularly. By suggesting that when positive self-statements (self-talk) are firmly placed within students' minds, nothing can stop them, limit them or hold them back. They can accomplish anything they set their minds to, and they can surpass all limitations to fulfill their learning objectives.

1. Background Literature

1.1. Self-Talk Defined

Broadly speaking, self-talk can be defined as the ongoing internal conversation with oneself, which influences how one feels and behaves. In other words, it is one's constant internal conversation or the running dialogue inside one's head.

Vocate (1994:7) define self-talk "as a dialogue with the self existing in two forms: (a) the silent, internal dialogic process of inner speech, and (b) the audible, external dialogue addressed to self, although others may hear it." Roberts *et al.* (1987) push for specificity by defining intrapersonal communication as "all of physiological and psychological processing of messages that happens within individuals at conscious and non conscious levels as they attempt to understand themselves and their environment" (2).

For Hackfort & Schwenkmenger (1993:355) self-talk is also referred to as "statements people make to themselves, either internally or aloud, and [...] as an internal dialogue in which the individuals interpret feelings and perceptions, regulate and change evaluations and cognitions and give themselves instructions and reinforcement". Furthermore, Hardy (2006) offers a definition of self-talk that is of greater utility. Hardy (*ibid*) defines self-talk as: "(a) verbalizations or statements addressed to the self; (b) multidimensional in nature; (c) having interpretive elements associated with the content of statements employed; (d) is somewhat dynamic; and (e) serving at least two functions; instructional and motivational" (84).

Specifically, in learning settings, self-talk has been defined by Anderson (1997:2) as: "What learners say to themselves to think more precisely about their performances and to direct their actions in response to those reflections. It is a tool for learning because it encourages the learner to focus on the process of skill acquisition."

On the basis of the previous definitions, one can say that self-talk (S.T) is the act or practice of talking to oneself; aloud or silently, intentionally or unintentionally, for self-regulation, self-instruction or self-motivation.

1.2. Types of Self-Talk

Understandably, we are constantly talking to ourselves. And this self-talk includes the internal dialogue or silent conversations that go on within our minds most of the time. Weinrebe. (1993) expressed clearly that this internal

dialogue can be self-defeating, destructive, and negative or optimistic, constructive, and positive.

1.2.1. Negative Self-Talk

Generally, we have all experienced, to some point, negative self-talk. And to some extent we have noticed that it has a potent impact on our lives, in general, and on our performance, in particular. It impairs our performance at any task we undertake. Negative self-statements are the first signs of failure. Yet, there is no guarantee that they will lead to, or cause, failure, but research in the field of cognitive psychology has also established that nothing makes individuals weak, less confident, less efficacious and anxious more than negative self-talk.

In this respect, Hardy (2006: 87) says “negative self-statements can be in the form of criticism or self-demeaning to the individual”. In the same vein, Beth (2012: 10) postulates that “negative self-talk is toxic to a person’s self-esteem, sense of efficacy and, ultimately, their self-confidence.” Beth (*ibid.* 10) points out that “all of this internal poison [negative self-talk] feeds a generalized sense of helplessness, which saps our motivation and energy to be proactive and try new things, and undermines our ability to be creative”. Henceforth, one can state that, when individuals’ self-talk sounds irrational, unrealistic and negative. It is considered their own worst enemy; the enemy within.

1.2.2. Positive Self-Talk

In essence, positive self-talk can greatly improve confidence, enhance effort and increase intensity by creating a positive mood. Intuitively, it makes sense that self-talk can affect learners’ performance. In a view of this, Hardy (2006:87) defines positive self-talk as “Positive self-statements that can be encouraging and praising to the individual.” Most importantly, it needs to be noted here that positive self-talk is considered by McShane *et al.* (2000:66) as “one of the key ingredients in students’ performance, productivity and creativity”. That is, a sine qua non condition for learners’ academic success. More specifically, Mc Shane *et al.* (*ibid.* 66) assert positive inner-speech (self-talk) refers to “the inner forces within a person that affect greatly his/her direction, intensity, persistence, desire, motivation, and energy within the process of learning”. Moreover, they (*ibid.*) express that even when students have clear goals, the right skills and the sufficient abilities, they will not get the expected performances without having positive inner-speech to achieve those goals. In other words, students have to talk to themselves positively in order to attain the goals they have already set.

McShane *et al.* (2006) state that learners who have positive inner-speech and who tend to speak positively to themselves are more challenging and they

are never reluctant to take risks while studying. They are willing to exert tremendous efforts, and they are ready to go beyond pitfalls that they are going to face. Likewise, Brophy (2004:134) points out that “Students will need to use positive self-talk, as an efficient cognitive strategy, which will help them handle tasks successfully”.

1.2.2.1. Kinds of Positive Self-Talk

Globally, each individual can relearn how to talk to her/himself positively, rationally, and realistically. In that, McGonigle (1988) states clearly that ‘optimistic’, ‘nowistic’, and ‘realistic’ self-talk can make individuals feel positive about situations, happy, and in control.

1.2.2.1.1. Optimistic Self-Talk (O.S.T)

According to McGonigle (1988:726) optimistic S.T is “putting our thoughts in the most positive way”. In simpler words, one can say that optimistic self-talk infers expecting good things; from situations, people or events.

1.2.2.1.2. Realistic Self-Talk (R.S.T)

Accordingly, McGonigle (*ibid*: 726) sees realistic S.T as “a way to view things objectively”. In other words, it is a way of not being hard on oneself.

1.2.2.1.3. Nowistic Self-Talk (N.S.T)

Again, McGonigle (*ibid*) views Nowistic S.T as “a way to remain in the present, to do what is possible in the here and now. Do not dwell on what could have or should have been done [or said]”. In other words, self-talk is automatic and reflexive in nature. But one can relearn to change how she/he talks to her/himself and, therefore, how one reacts to events. Change, however, requires effort.

1.3. The Influence of Self-Talk on Emotions and Behavior

It needs to be noted here that self-statements (inner-speech) affect students’ academic emotions, emotional states, and performance.

In a view of this, Dembo (2004) asserts that academic emotions impact learning and achievement. He (*ibid*) states that learners’ academic emotions are closely linked to their learning, ‘self-control’, and ‘scholastic achievements’. Yet, Dembo (*ibid*: 112) says that “positive emotions foster your control over your learning, whereas negative emotions lead to more passive behavior. Positive emotions predict high achievement”

There is increasing evidence that self-talk corresponds to emotional states which, in turn, affect performance. Consequently, one could state clearly that a student may be able to enhance her/his performance by maintaining positive self-talk and controlling her/his emotional state. In other words, learners’ feelings are an indication of their self-talk. In that, if they are feeling

unenergetic, down, or like they cannot face the world. In this case, switching to more positive self-talk would change their feelings to become more positive, creative and productive. Like for instance; “It is going to be a great day”, “I am up to the challenges that the day holds”.

In an attempt to highlight more the significant, potent and interesting concept of positive self-talk and positive emotions, Makin *et al.* (2004) note that the way in which self-talk influences performance is through influencing ‘thought patterns’. Self-talk, according to Neck and Manz (1992), has its effect on one’s ‘emotional state’ which then influences thought patterns. These ,then, influence performance.

Interestingly, Makin *et al.* (2004) state that there is another mechanism by which self-talk influences behavior, it is via its impact upon ‘perceived self-efficacy’. As Bandura (1986) points out that self-efficacy is a process of ‘self-persuasion’, such self-persuasion often takes the form of an internal dialogue. In that, there is evidence to suggest that positive self-talk can have a beneficial effect on performance. As for instance, in clinical settings, many prominent psychologists advocate its use in treating emotional disorders.

Overall, Schwebel *et al.* (1996:144) express that “(...) it is always useful to monitor your self-talk (...) you can reject unhelpful self-talk and encourage yourself to make more positive self-talk.”

All in all, what one thinks, especially, about himself, will influence how he feels , and how he feels will has an important impact on his motivation, which in turn, will has a direct influence on his performance.

1.4. Using Cognitive Influences to Improve Performance

Various studies in a number of different fields have provided support for the relationship between an individual’s self-talk and performance (Neck and Manz, 1992). Furthermore, they have said that these studies together suggest that the utilization of self-talk, either alone or in conjunction with other cognitive strategies such as goal-setting, and the frequency of these self-verbalizations or inner-speech, are related to successful performance.

Jason (2012) asserts that cognitive techniques may improve learners’ performance. One such technique is the use of self-talk, that is, motivational or instructional phrases or skill cues to oneself.

Importantly, Theodorakis *et al.* (2000) emphasize that the appropriate use of self-talk, as a cognitive- motivational strategy has been shown to improve individuals performance on a variety of tasks by increasing ‘confidence’, ‘focus’, and ‘awareness’. They add that much research has been undertaken to construe the fundamentals, characteristics, and application of self-talk as a cognitive strategy. Moreover, they note that a wealth of studies suggest that positive self-talk provides more benefit than others in improving performance.

Viewed from such an angle, Hardy (2006) states that research shows that self-talk may increase feelings of self-confidence in the process of goal-attainment. He suggests that self-talk can influence the improvement of a person's confidence and encourage beliefs in her/ his ability to accomplish a task. Hence, this could lead to positive goal achievement outcomes. In this respect, Dembo (2004:83) states that "there is evidence that what we say to ourselves is an important factor in determining our attitudes, feelings, emotions, and behavior".

In a similar manner, Chroni *et al.* (2007: 27) state clearly that "self-talk can serve to focus attention, regulate effort, enhance confidence, control cognitive and emotional reactions or trigger automatic execution". They also note that the implications of the use of self-talk can be carried over in other settings, because of the dynamic nature of self-talk and its many functions. Again, Hardy (2006) notes that the conclusions drawn by previous research further demonstrate that self-talk would be considered as a key performance enhancement strategy.

In the light of all this, it can be said that in learning settings, students can benefit from the appropriate use of positive self-talk as a self-management cognitive-motivational strategy in order to enhance their performance in different skills, such as the speaking skill. Self-talk, mainly positive inner-speech would foster their attentional focus, self-motivation, persistence, commitment, self-confidence, and self-efficacy, in attaining their learning goals.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Choice of the Method

The aim of this study is to probe students' attitudes towards the usefulness of self-management cognitive-motivational strategies, namely positive self-talk in improving academic performance. A descriptive method would be of great utility to investigate this study so as to bring about some pedagogical implementations for both language learners and instructors.

2.2. Population

The present study deals with a sample of twenty (20) first year E.N.S.C students, from a total population about one hundred (100) freshmen learners of the Department of English E.N.S.C. It was, therefore, assumed that the participants, in this study, would provide a homogeneous representative sample in terms of instruction input and cultural environment. It has been observed that at the college level, the majority of students do not well perform, because they do not use self-management cognitive-motivational strategies as self-talk while learning.

2.3. Data Gathering Tools (procedure)

For the current piece of research, we administered a questionnaire, for twenty first year ENSC students so as to explore their attitudes vis-à-vis the role of self-talk in fostering their oral performance. Learners' eagerness to participate in this research helped us to get more reliable data. The questionnaire has been administered in optimal conditions since learners were given uniform instruction in a relaxed warm atmosphere before the completion of the questionnaire.

2.4. A Qualitative Analysis of the Results of Students Questionnaire

As a global understanding of learners' questionnaire results, we can construe easily that students' answers were quite positive. For the simplest reason that when we have looked globally to the two sections in the questionnaire. We directly understood that students' opinions, attitudes and responses vis-à-vis our statements were entirely supportive to our previous hypotheses concerning the significant correlation between learners' positive self-talk and their successful performances mainly the oral performance.

Following now is the description and the analysis of some precise items of self-talk questionnaire. In section one, the items deal with learners' beliefs and awareness about the importance of self-motivation and its association with successful learning. In section two, the items deal with learners' concern with the significance of self-talk in effective learning and their attitudes towards enhancing their performance namely their speaking fluency as one important skill to measure among the four skills.

Question 1: Motivation and Learning

Self-motivation is considered as a critical component of effective learning.

The very first question we asked our population of students is whether they consider motivation as a critical component of effective learning. (55%) of participants agreed, against (45%) who disagreed.

Question 2: Students' Beliefs about whether it's enough for them to Be Merely Extrinsically Motivated.

Even though students are, from time to time, extrinsically motivated, it is not quite sufficient and they need to be intrinsically motivated.

Because of the significance of motivation, in general, and self-motivation (intrinsic motivation), in particular, in the current research, we did not hesitate to ask them about their belief about whether they consider extrinsic motivation insufficient, for an effective learning, and hence intrinsic motivation would be quite beneficial for them. The twenty (20) learners gave a positive answer (yes) to this question. Say, (100%) of the total respondents.

Question 3: Intrinsic Motivation and Effective learning.

If yes, hence, effective learning, in general, and speaking fluency, in particular, is unlikely to take place in the absence of intrinsic motivation.

In the same line of thought, we wanted to ask them about their belief about any effective learning to take place in the absence of intrinsic motivation. The twenty students (100%) said yes.

Question 4: Learners' Point of View about the Existence of Some Interfering Thoughts Before, and During Oral Performance.

Have you ever noticed that there are some interfering thoughts that come to your mind before and during oral performance?

Concerning this question, we wanted to comprehend whether students have ever noticed that there exist some interfering thoughts that come to their minds before and during oral performances. All the students (100%) answered 'yes'.

Question 5: Students' Opinions about the Interfering Thoughts and whether they Affect their Oral Performance.

Do they affect your oral performance?

Furthermore, we asked them about the impact of interfering thoughts on oral performance. (95%) of the informants responded 'yes' (19 students out of 20).

Question 6: Learners' Attitudes towards the Impact of These Interfering Thoughts on Performance.

Do you think that these interfering thoughts have a positive role to play or a negative one?

This question was a trial to know about their view point about the effect of these interfering thoughts, whether they are positive or negative. (95%) of the respondents admitted that it has a very negative impact on their performances.

Question 7: Students' Awareness of the Importance of Self-Talk in Facilitating their Learning.

Have you ever been aware about your inner-talk and its significance in facilitating your learning?

The related question to the previous one was to know, whether learners have ever been aware of their self-talk and its importance in the process of learning. As it is expected, eighteen 18 students (90%) said no, against two students (10%) said yes.

Question 8: Students' Opinion Concerning the Thoughts Hindering Them from Speaking Fluently.

Is there anything that hinders you from improving your speaking skill?

Accordingly, we put our next question on whether or not there exists something (negative self-talk) that prevents learners from improving their oral performance. (80%) of the respondents said yes, and (20%) said no.

Question 9: Students' Beliefs about the Existing Relation between Negative Self-Talk and Learners' Oral Performance.

Do you believe that increases in speaking fluency are related to decreases in negative thoughts?

We asked them if they believe that increases in speaking fluency are associated with decreases in negative inner-speech (self-talk). (90%) of the informants admit that, against only (10%) who say no.

Question 10: Students' Focal Point When Learning English.

Do you see that students' focus point when learning the English language would be on: 'speaking fluent English'/ 'getting the diploma'/ 'obtaining good grades'/ 'all of them'.

The other question was about the focal point of interest when studying the English language. Eight 08 students (40%) said speaking fluent English, six 6 students (30%) said getting the diploma, six 6 students (30%) said all of them, and none (0%) opted for obtaining good grades.

Question 11: Students' Beliefs about the Impact of Self-Talk on Learning; speaking.

Do you believe that your inner-talk would have a powerful effect on your learning, in general, and your speaking skill, in particular?

Because of the significance of self-talk in the process of learning, we did not hesitate to ask our informants about their belief about the influence of inner-talk in learning and oral performance. (100%) of the respondents agreed by saying 'yes'.

Question 12: Learners' View Point about the Effects of Positive Self-Talk.

Does positive self-talk reduce your anxiety inside the classroom and enhance your oral performance?

This question was a trial to know whether learners believe that positive self-talk would reduce their anxiety and foster their oral performance while learning. 20 twenty students (100%) stated that positive self-talk helps them reduce their anxiety and bolster up their speaking fluency.

Question 13: Students' View Point about the Prime Cause that Hinders them to Speak in Class.

Do you think that your negative inner-talk is the prime cause for creating and maintaining a high level of anxiety that prevents you from speaking in oral expression sessions?

The other question was about the point of view of students concerning the main cause that hinders them to speak freely in oral expression sessions. The majority of the informants (75%) admitted that negative self-talk is the main cause behind hesitation and frustration that result in the avoidance of speaking in class.

Question 14: Learners' Trial to Control Their Self-Talk.

Once you have become more aware of inner-talk significance in enhancing your speaking skill, how often do you try to control it?

Afterwards, we move to ask our students whether they try to control their self-talk, once they have become aware of the role it plays in fostering their oral performance. (35%) of the informants said often, (25%) said always, (25%) also said sometimes, (10%) said rarely, against (5%) who said never.

Question 15: Students' English Fluency in the Absence of Inner-Talk.

Having great abilities to learn to speak good English is insufficient in the absence of motivating oneself through positive self-talk.

Additionally, we asked the question of whether it is insufficient for learners to have great capabilities to learn to speak fluent English without motivating themselves through positive inner-speech. (50%) of the total respondents said they agree with the point, (45%) strongly agreed, against 5% who said indifferent.

Question 16: Students' Negative Self-Talk and their Weak Oral Performances.

Inner-talk is the problem behind all problems concerning students' weak oral performances; even if they have great abilities and a good mastery of the language.

Here again, it is about learners' self-talk and about whether students' negative inner-speech is considered the main obstacle or pitfall behind weak oral performance. (30%) of our informants said they agree, (55%) said they strongly agree, (10%) disagreed, against only (5%) strongly disagreed.

Question 17: Students' Regular Use of Positive Self-Talk and Their Trial to Speak out the Language.

Students' regular use of positive self-talk would decrease their anxiety; thereby increase their opportunities to try to speak the language inside and outside the classroom.

With the next question, we wanted to know about learners' point of view about when they talk positively to themselves in a regular basis, if that would decrease their anxiety, in turn, would increase their chance to attempt to speak out the English language inside and outside the classroom. Of total respondents 20 twenty (100%) answered yes.

Question 18: Taking Conscious Control of Self-Talk and Students' Speaking skill.

The key to improving the students' speaking skill is to take conscious control of their self-talk.

A question about taking control of their inner-speech was necessary. We wanted to know about the key to enhance the students' speaking fluency whether it is by taking conscious control of their self-statements. Of the total informants (50%) said they agree, (40%) said they strongly agree, against (10%) who said indifferent.

Question 19: Students' Self-Messages Towards their Abilities to Speak Fluent English.

What is your feeling towards yourself and your capabilities to learn to speak more fluent English? What do you say to yourself?

Accordingly, we put our next question on what students say to themselves; that is their feelings towards themselves and their potentialities to learn to speak more fluent English. (30%) answered “I’m not competent enough to speak in front of my classmates”, (25%) said “I will make a lot of stupid mistakes”, also (25%) answered “my vocabulary is very poor”, (10%) said “my teacher start correcting a lot of mistakes”, and (10%) said “I’m the dumbest student in the classroom”.

Question 20: Students’ Negative Self-Talk When Having an Oral Exam.

What are the negative self-talk messages that come to your mind when having an oral exam (before and during)?

When asked about some examples of negative self-messages that come to learners’ mind before and during their oral expression exam. Of the total informants (40%) said “they will panic”, (25%) said that “their classmates will speak better than them”, (20%) said “they are not competent enough to speak fluent English”, (10%) said “their pronunciation is very bad”, against (5%) who said “they are sure they cannot do it”.

Question 21: Learners’ View Point About the Way How to Discard Negative Self-Talk.

Do you think that one excellent way to combat and overcome negative self-talk is through using positive affirmations instead?

In addition, we asked them about their point of view concerning how to get rid of negative self-statements by substituting them by positive affirmations (self-talk). (50%) of the informants agreed, and (50%) also said they strongly agree.

Question 22: Some Positive Affirmations Students Can Use to Replace their Negative Self-Talk.

If you agree, which of the following positive affirmations do you prefer to use to replace these negative self-talk messages: ‘I like myself’/ ‘I am a positive person and I create a positive life’/ ‘I am a wonderful person of immense value and who deserves to be loved’/ ‘all of them’.

Then, we wanted to know about what students would prefer of the above positive affirmations in order to use them instead of their negative self-messages. (40%) of the total respondents preferred “I am a positive person and I create a positive life”, (30%) said “I am a wonderful person of immense value and who deserves to be loved”, and (30%) said all of them.

Question 23: Students’ Opinion about Improving Their Abilities by Hard Work and Practice.

Do you believe that your abilities can be improved by hard work, study and practice?

About the belief of students, whether they think that they can bolster up their abilities by hard work and practice. 90% of students (18 eighteen students out of 20 twenty) answered positively to this question (yes), against only 10% (2 students) who said no.

Question 24: Students' Positive Self-Messages and the increased Desire to Practice the Language.

Words like: "I'm good enough" "excellent" "great job"... push me to exert more effort and increase my desire to practice the language.

The other aspect we wanted to know was whether positive self-messages would push students to exert more effort and enhance their desire to try out the language. (90%) 18 eighteen students of our informants said yes, against (10%) two 2 students who said no.

Question 25: Students' Self-Efficacy and Learning English Successfully.

If I believe strongly in my abilities to speak good English, I will learn English successfully.

Concerning this question, we wanted to construe whether students would think that if they believed strongly in their potentialities to become fluent English speakers, they will learn English effectively. Of the total respondents (100%) said yes.

Question 26: Positive Self-Talk and Students' Increased Energy, Persistence, Motivation, and Relaxation.

I feel pleased, relaxed, motivated, persistent, and full of energy, when I talk to myself more positively.

In the same line of thought, we wanted to ask them, if they feel relaxed, self-motivated, pleased, persistent, whenever they talk positively to themselves. (100%) of the participants were very positive in their answers; said 'yes'.

Question 27: The Impact of Students' Self-Efficacy Face Any Difficulty in Speaking Good English.

It is quite important that students' believe in their capabilities to face any difficulty in speaking good English.

This question is about the importance of students' belief in their potential to face the difficulties they encounter when trying to speak more fluent English. (100%) of the informants answered positively; by saying yes.

Question 28: Students' Belief about the Effect of Positive Self-Talk in Enhancing their Speaking Skill.

Do you think that positive self-talk messages would improve students' speaking skill?

Right after that question we wanted to know about their opinion concerning whether their positive self-talk would foster their speaking skill, by improving their attentional focus, self-confidence, self-esteem, self-efficacy, energy, desire, persistence, and reduce their anxiety and negative shyness. (25%) of the respondents said "self-confidence" and "self-esteem". (20%) said "reducing

their anxiety and negative shyness. (5%) said “attentional focus, (5%) said “energy”, 5% said “motivation (desire)”, (5%) said “energy”, (5%) said “persistence”, and (35%) said all of them.

Question 29: Students’ View Point Concerning Changing their Negative Self-Talk.

May students change their negative self-talk to more positive inner-talk for better speaking fluency, by saying positive self-statements.

Then, we wanted to see whether students could change their negative inner speech to positive inner-talk, for more fluent English through self-statements like: “I am smart” “I can do it” “I have a great potential”. (100%) of the total respondents said yes.

Question 30: Students’ Feelings When Using Some Positive Self-Statements.

When you use some positive self-talk affirmations (mainly, inside the classroom) you feel that: ‘my attempt to try to use the English language improves’/ ‘my desire is enhanced’/ ‘the exertion of effort appears’/ ‘fears and doubts go away’/ ‘all of them’.

As a last question in this questionnaire, we asked the participants about their feelings, mainly when they are practicing positive self-talk inside class. (20%) of the informants said “my attempt to try to use the English language improves”, (15%) said “my desire is enhanced”, (10%) said “the exertion of more effort appears”, (5%) said “fears and doubts go away”, (5%) said “hesitation disappears”, and (45%) said “all of them”.

2.5. Results and Discussion of Students Questionnaire

As a global understanding of the questionnaire results, we can construe with some relief that students displayed impressive interest, agreement and awareness vis-à-vis the potential impact of positive self-talk on fostering their English as a foreign language. Moreover, their answers strengthened more the background ideas we developed in the theoretical aspect, and reveal about some aspects concerning their attitude towards the importance of inner-speech in the process of learning and also reveal the effect of positive self-talk in fostering and promoting students’ academic, (oral) performances. This allows us to be somehow confident in the predictions of our hypotheses. If we consider again the answers of the respondents we can say that all learners’ attitudes towards the significance of positive self-talk in bolstering up their academic performance, except some learners a minority who responded negatively, display a positive significant correlation with their level of achievement. As the answer in table 02, 03, 15, 04, 11, 17, 23, 25 , 27, and finally table 29, all indicate the association between cognitive-motivational strategies; positive self-talk, and the enhancement of students’ academic performance.

Throughout the estimation of the data of the questionnaire, it has become clear that indeed positive self-talk, as a cognitive-motivational strategy, play a major role in improving students' oral performance (the conversational skill). Therefore, it should not be atomized in just making the learner merely succeed in her/his studies. But rather learners would become, not surprisingly, outstanding students. In that, they adopt self-management strategies in order to bolster up their academic achievements, generally, and their conversational skills (oral performance), particularly.

Suggestions and Recommendations

It is noteworthy to state that learners need to care for themselves. By surveillance of their self-talk, they can improve and enhance their feelings about themselves, and their emotions in learning settings, which in turn, would foster their academic performance. One have to clarify more the point to language learners that is crucial for them to try hard to combat the enemy within called 'negative self-talk'; which is considered as the primary source of students' unsuccessful oral performances, stress, anxiety, and unproductivity. It should come to no surprise that students should try hard to substitute it with more constructive helpful self-talk in order to become more creative and outstanding learners.

In a view of this, Gesell (2007:21) did provide two methods that would aid learners conquer, transform, and neutralize the power of negative self-talk.

Method 1:

1. Become aware of the nature of your negative self-talk. That is, whether it is the worrier type, or the critic, the victim, or the perfectionist kind. For instance: "I am really not as good as my [instructor] thinks I am".
2. Challenge it. Which means, challenging your self-sabotaging self-talk labels, anytime you notice a negative label. For example: "Why do I say that I'm not as good? I'm not perfect, and still my evaluations are good and they are realistic".
3. Change it. That is to say, replacing it with positive inner dialogue (self-talk). As an instance, "I'm pleased to be recognized as valuable to [my group], and there are things that I want to improve on".

Method 2:

1. Pause and take a deep breath.
2. Ask yourself the following questions:
 - What is my self-talk right now, word for word?
 - How am I upsetting myself?
 - How can I reinterpret this situation so I will respond with reasonable and objective feelings and actions?
3. State the reinterpreted, positive self-talk to yourself.

Indeed, learners can change the station in their heads and tune to positive one instead; i.e. substituting negative self-statements with positive self-dialogue. This can be implemented by learners when they are performing orally, for instance, they should focus their attention on their speech; on the idea they tend to communicate, instead of sending negative messages to themselves, like saying “ I will make stupid mistakes” or “ I’m not a good speaker of English; I’m not fluent” , at the moment they are performing. Similarly, Beth (2012) maintains that fortunately, one can transform negative self-messages to positive ones. That is, the good news is that one can intervene and break the cycle at any point. Beth (ibid) also recommends recognizing or discerning negative self-talk, and the emotions behind it, as the first step toward breaking the ‘vicious circle’. Beth (ibid: 10) says:

“We have the choice to believe in the good or the bad about ourselves (...) it’s never too late to change the direction of your thinking, and start the journey to a more optimistic, happier and healthier version of you”.

It is worth stating that students can, to a great extent, transform and conquer their negative inner voice. We would like to express it clearly (to students). “If you hear a voice within you saying ‘no matter how you try, you can’t do it, then try by all means and do it, and that inner voice (negative self-talk) will be silenced!”. The influence of self-talk on speaking skill is then evident and learners need to be aware of its potent impact and its significance.

It is also worth suggesting that instructors can also have a role to play in building students’ awareness about the potential impact of positive self-talk in improving students’ oral performance. To ensure effective confident communication, teachers should consider the role of cognitive- motivational strategies when instructing through introducing the construct of self-talk and its importance for their students whenever they have free talk moments inside the classroom. As an extra beneficial information, outstanding instructors can give to their learners in order to aid them foster their self-motivation for better learning. By integrating all the basic factors: motivational, cognitive, affective...and so forth. They have also to remind their learners, repeatedly, of the possibility of using such learning strategies, as self-management cognitive-motivational methods that would help them produce successful English oral performances. Learning to speak English as a foreign language is a very demanding task, and most students, if not all of them, spend a good amount of their time thinking and planning before they try out the language.

Conclusion

Throughout this research work we attempted to inspect whether or not the self-management learning strategy; positive self-talk (P.S.T) has a significant impact on college students’ [Oral] performance. The focal interest was to determine the effectiveness of this cognitive-motivational method in

EFL classrooms. Aiming to put our learners in a better position to become outstanding successful language learners. The current study, then, has covered the issue of how self-talk (inner-speech) effects college students' self-motivation, self-efficacy, self-confidence, meta-cognitive potentialities – functioning– and persistence, which in turn, would impact learners' speaking proficiency (oral performance). As a matter of fact, it was basically interested in checking, in real classroom settings, whether this learning strategy really impact language learners' speaking skill by aiding them attain a good level of performance.

The results of this study underscore the strong link between students' self-talk and their level of achievement (oral performance). They also support the validity of utilizing this self-management learning strategy by college students' to improve their oral performance. Our research findings, then, shed a little more light on their significance, to markedly account for learners' successful oral performance. Furthermore, the obtained results display considerable agreements with our review of literature. More specifically, the results of the present study did confirm that learners who self-set learning goals and who, most of the time, self-talk positively produce successful oral performances.

In the light of our study, the results obtained point to one clear conclusion that there is a logical link between what students say to themselves and how they perform orally. In other words, students' successful oral performances and positive self-talk are highly correlated. Substantially, one can state clearly that positive self-talk as a self-management cognitive-motivational strategy, can be of great help for students to enhance their oral performance.

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