

A RAI teaching and learning approach to English language skills acquisition

Marianthi Batsila, *English School Advisor, M.Sc, M.Ed., Ed.D., marbatsila@gmail.com*

Abstract: In this research a comparative study was implemented with 82 General Senior High School learners to detect the extent to which the RAI approach can improve their listening and speaking skills in English and the extent to which it can enhance their interest and participation in the lesson. Two schools and four classes randomly selected participated in the research with a control and an experimental group each. Pre and post-tests were administered to the students and a focus group discussion took place in the end of the intervention. The findings revealed that the approach has positive effect on learners’ speaking skills and the ability to enhance their active participation and motivation towards English language learning. The study has implications for practitioners and policy makers.

Keywords: ICT, EFL, ΚΠΠΓ, RAI, IRI.

Introduction

Today’s constant growth of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) signal an era in which information and knowledge broadcast in just a few seconds, ready to serve any need (personal, social, educational, academic, professional). Especially in the educational domain, educational stakeholders are facing the challenge of ICT to a great extent, given that the majority of learners are well aware of the ICT latest applications, they feel comfortable with their uses and many a time simply precede their own teachers as far as the operational demands are concerned. To this end, instructors strive to find ways to cope with the new situation so as to live up to their learners’ expectations, spark their interest and help them achieve the target skills acquisition to the highest level possible.

Research shows that ICT accomplishes to enhance learners’ ability to explore, search, discover, collect, produce and manage the new information, improving their critical thinking, communication, cooperation and social skills (Jonassen, 2000). Similarly, and especially for the teaching of English, ICT has been found to boost skills acquisition (Arnell, 2012), leading learners to a higher cognitive level (Shaver, 2001). It has also offered authentic material to learners (Isisag, 2012) and the opportunity for interaction and synchronous/asynchronous communication through a variety of social media (Sife et al., 2007). Furthermore, they have provided learners with immediate and thorough access to a vast number of sources, expanding their horizons, thus, facilitating the acquisition of the learning how to learn life skill.

Among the educational uses of ICTs we discern Radio-Assisted Instruction (RAI). According to Unesco:

“RAI includes both radio broadcast education and interactive radio instruction. Radio broadcast education entails an audio lecture or lesson, with printed material for pupils to follow the lecture. Broadcast programs follow the traditional model of education and can cover every subject in many different languages, depending on the target audience. Interactive radio (IRI) turns a typically one-way technology into a tool for active learning inside and outside the classroom. It requires that pupils react to questions and exercises through verbal responses to radio program contributors, group work, and physical and intellectual activities while the program is on air. The use of audio cassettes or CDs, which lessen much of the rigidity of a broadcast, may also form the basis or radio-assisted instruction” (Schaaper and Wallet for Unesco, 2014).

Radio broadcasting can be implemented in various ways. For instance, teachers can record a certain program and show it to the students as supplementary material and in parallel to the work they are doing in class. They can also give a copy of it to the learners who may use it again when they feel like it, either for consolidation purposes or for a specific homework task. Podcasts or webcasts can also be downloaded from the web for educational use. Radio broadcasting has a long history serving as a teaching tool for many purposes; ie to teach mathematics to school children, for teacher training, rural development, public health purposes, literacy training, management courses for the agriculture sector, in support of correspondence courses, nutrition education, family planning, and in support of primary education and school instruction (Goodluck and Thompson, 1987) with positive outcomes. The particular authors state however that for effective educational results educators need to be well prepared and receive technical support. They argue nevertheless that even though many of the studies that have come across investigating the effectiveness of educational radio have not been carefully prepared and designed, the radio never ceases to be considered an “effective medium of instruction” (Goodluck and Thompson, 1987).

Latest research findings have also revealed that radio broadcasting has been used for a variety of subjects in schools with positive results. In India for example, radio programs led many of the learners to anticipate their content aiming to achieve their own targets such as certified vocational courses, coaching for entrance exams or updated information on careers, courses etc. (Chandar and Sharma, 2003). Moreover, IRI was used in India with elementary school learners improving the quality of teaching and learning (Kurrien, 2008). In Kenya, the radio was used to improve the quality of primary education at distance resulting in students’ learning improvement and teachers’ teaching methodology improvement (Odera, n.d.). Similarly, the radio was used to mobilise and sensitise nomadic pastoralists to appreciate the value of modern education, increase the level of support and enthusiasm of nomads, motivate them to enroll in adult literacy programmes and improve the quality of teaching and learning (NCNE, 2000). The project results revealed an improvement in the quality of curriculum content delivery and in the learning achievement of nomadic school children and adults.

Meanwhile, the use of the educational radio in developing countries in Asia and Africa as a way for the developed world to learn from this practice and realize that “the medium deserves greater attention as a means of giving educational opportunity to rural, isolated people worldwide (Berman, 2008).

1. Rationale as to the present study

Teaching and learning are interconnected procedures aiming at the same goal: knowledge acquisition. When it comes to teenagers, motivating them seems all the more a hard task given that teenage learners consider themselves “old enough” to jump onto decisions of their own, many a time questioning their own teachers and their practices. To this end, teachers need to keep abreast with all the latest methods and technologies in order to maintain the learners’ interest and participation in the lesson. Driven by this need and by the positive aspects of ICT in education the author of this paper decided to investigate the extent to which the RAI approach can prove to be motivating and enhance learners’ speaking and listening skills in English, conducting a comparative study with Senior High School learners. It is important however to clarify at this point that the project was not an actual Radio broadcasting to all but it was conducted only for the purposes of this project. The main purpose was actually to detect whether the participation in such an activity, in other words, the use of Radio broadcasting as a teaching tool, could have positive results in the learning process. Nevertheless, according to Wilson et al., (2011:23), the integration of media in the teaching process display pedagogical benefits, offering pedagogical dialogues and interaction facilitation, problem solving techniques and cognitive level improvement. Therefore, if research results proved to be beneficial for the learners there was an intention for those who wished to officially participate later in the European School Radio community.

2. The research

2.1. Research questions

The main research question in this study is whether Radio Assisted Instruction can improve learners’ speaking and listening skills in English and enhance their participation and interest in the lesson. The research was conducted with a mixed method approach and the research questions are: 1. To what extent can the use of RAI improve learners’ speaking skills in English? 2. To what extent can RAI improve learners’ listening skills in English? 3. To what extent can RAI enhance learners’ interest in English?

2.2. The sample

A number of 82 first grade General Senior High School learners aged 15-16 participated in the research (39 learners constituted the control group and 43 the experimental group). The

students came from two schools and four classes, randomly selected. The schools participated with a control group (CG) and an experimental group (EG) each. All students’ level in English was officially expected to be that of B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

2.3. The research tools

For the purposes of the first two research questions, learners’ skill competence was measured with the use of the National Foreign Language Exam System (KPG test), which comprises four modules (reading comprehension and language awareness, writing and written mediation, listening comprehension, speaking and oral mediation) (table 1). KPG is a stabilized test, used to assess learners’ skills competence in foreign languages. The maximum possible score at B1 level candidates can gain is 100. The pass mark for the KPG, as set by law, is 60. Candidates must gain at least 30% of the maximum possible marks in Modules 1-3; there is no minimum mark required in Module 4, although the marks candidates receive are included in their total score. Thus, this test was used to provide answers for the first two questions. For the third question a focus group was formed with randomly selected learners from the experimental group (21 participated out of the 24 EG learners who were approached) gave their opinion on the specific method and tool and the impact it had on their attitude/interest in English.

Table 1. KPG exam specifications

Module	Type of items/tasks	Number of items/tasks	Weighting	Mark		Time (minutes)	Text size (words)
				Max	Min		
1	Choice	40	0.5	20	8	65	700-1000
	Completion	10	0.5	5			
2	Semi guided written production	2-3	-	30	9	45	160-200
3	Choice	15	1	15	8	15-20	Not defined
	Completion	5	2	10			
4	Semi guided oral production	3	-	20	-	15-20	Not defined
Minimum total grade required for B1 level certification					60		
Highest possible grade for B1 level certification				100			

2.4. Research phases

The project which was implemented within the framework of the school course “Project work” had duration of 24 teaching hours and two hours per week. The activities were implemented in six successive stages:

1st stage: Preparation stage of the research: In this stage which lasted for a week, the schools and their classes were randomly selected. However, the choice of central schools was intentional as central schools have availability in computing labs which was necessary for this project. After having the schools’ and English language teachers’ consent and voluntary participation for the idea for this project, all students were informed about it and the first sign was positive as they anticipated the beginning of it.

2nd stage: At this stage which lasted for another week, the students of the experimental group were explained how to create a Free Radio Station with the help of the computing teacher who cooperated with the English teachers in the school. The whole procedure was not difficult as all radio hardware (microphones, headphones, and computers) and software (Audacity/shoutcast) were available in the school lab.

3rd stage: Before proceeding with the actual implementation of the activities all learners took a pre B level KPG test to detect their level and determine their knowledge before the intervention. All learners took the same test the same day or the following (depending on the school schedule).

4th stage: In this stage, the project was actually implemented and lasted for three months. Both experimental and control classes were divided in two groups each (Group A-broadcasters/Group B - audience) exchanging this role every other week. This way they all participated in both roles cyclically, worked for the same amount of time on both roles (12 hours as broadcasters and 12 hours as listeners) and had the opportunity to practice equally their speaking and listening skills. The title of the project for both classes was “Music in the world” and all topics and tasks, which were only in English, were arranged and co-decided with the help of the English teachers and were the same for all participants of both schools.

When the learners (CG and EG), had the role of the broadcaster, they had to find information regarding the kind of music of a country they were assigned each week, its historical facts, the artists that represented it, its relationship with the tradition of the country, and representative musical pieces/songs which they had to present and discuss for the audience. When they had the role of the audience their task was to respond to a variety of questions and tasks on relevant worksheets, based on the content of their classmates’ topics (of the group-broadcasters) in real time.

However, the Experimental group-broadcasters (EG) used this material to broadcast from the school lab with the help of the computing teachers whereas the Experimental group-audience (EG) listened to their classmates and worked in the school library with the presence of the English teachers. Meanwhile, the Control group-broadcasters (CG) role-played their material in their traditional classroom (without any equipment) whereas the Control group-audience (CG) shared the same classroom with them in the presence of the English teachers.

5th stage: Upon the end of the project all groups took a post B KPG level test to detect any possible changes in their language level. The test had similar tasks with the first one and was taken on the same day by all students, who had to answer it at exactly the same time. In the

meantime, a focus group with randomly selected students from the two experimental classes was implemented to discuss their opinion on the project and any changes of attitude/interest enhancement towards the English language.

6th phase: Three weeks after the post test, learners took a similar follow up test, again of the same level to determine any differentiation in their answers.

2.5. Data Analysis

In order to check the statistical hypothesis the statistical package SPSS is used. The statistical hypothesis testing aims to verify or reject a hypothesis. To exploit the data sample two hypotheses are formulated: a) The Null hypothesis H_0 , based on the assumption that there is no statistically significant effect of the independent variable on the dependent and b) The Alternative hypothesis H_1 , which is the opposite of zero. A statistically significant difference, less than an acceptable threshold (5%, 1% and 1‰), means rejections of the null hypothesis and acceptance of the alternative (Makrakis, 2005).

The use of an appropriate testing criterion (parametric or not) of the research hypothesis depends mainly on the research project, the commitment of the data level or the type of scales measuring the variables. It should be pointed out that parametric statistical tests are generally more powerful even if we may have relevant violation of the conditions needed (normal population distribution, random sampling, continuous dependent variables, equal variances of comparison groups of the population) (Roussos & Tsaousis, 2011).

A. Checking the conditions for the implementation of a parametric or non parametric testing

Random sampling is ensured by the conditions of the investigation with the participation of all students of the subject areas and the dependent variables are continuous. The test condition for the use of a parametric or non-parametric testing requires controlling the normality of groups and gender variations.

a) Checking the normality of groups

The checking of normality is implemented with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) criterion. This criterion checks the null hypothesis H_0 : The format of the data distribution does not differ from the normal one (Table 2).

Table 2. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov criterion for the variables of the research in the pre and post test

		Tests of Normality			
		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a		Shapiro-Wilk	
	Groups_Works	df	Sig.	df	Sig.
Efficiency_Listening _PreTest	Experimental_Group	43	,200*	43	,154
	Control_Group	39	,155	39	,124

Efficiency_Listening	Experimental_Group	43	,200*	43	,158
_PostTest	Control_Group	39	,092	39	,101
Efficiency_Speaking	Experimental_Group	43	,140	43	,238
_PreTest	Control_Group	39	,118	39	,306
Efficiency_Speaking	Experimental_Group	43	,200*	43	,461
_PostTest	Control_Group	39	,143	39	,131

According to the test results K-S: a) the control group CG forms a normal distribution both in the pre-test [D (39) $p=0.155$], and in the post-test [D (39) $p=0.092$ for Listening b) the control group CG forms a normal distribution in both the pre-test [D (39) $p = 0.118$], and the post-test [D (39) $p=0.143$] for speaking c) the experimental group E.G. forms a normal distribution in both the pre-test [D (43) $p > 0.200$], and the post-test [D (43) $p > 0.200$] for Listening d) the experimental group E.G. forms a normal distribution in both the pre-test [D (43) $p = 0.140$], and the post-test [D (43), $p > 0.200$] for Speaking. Based on the above the condition of group normality is fulfilled, the significance measure in all cases is > 0.05 , the null hypothesis is not rejected and the distributions to all groups are normal.

b) The Test of Homogeneity of Variance

This condition refers only to cases in which we have experimental design of independent samples (especially in the case that in each condition a different number of people is involved). In case of an experimental design of dependent samples, this condition does not apply if the two sets of measurements derive from the same individuals. This condition will be checked with the Levene criterion. We consider therefore, that the conditions for the use of parametric checking of data are fulfilled.

Checking the effectiveness of radio broadcasting as a teaching tool – Comparison

The participant groups are: one group of learners that corresponds to 25 individual and constitute the control group and another group who constitutes the experimental team (24 individuals) who worked with RAI. The process involves two main stages of checking a) a checking per group and between groups in the pre and post phase for Listening and b) a checking per group and between groups in the pre and post stage for Speaking.

Checking learners’ cognitive level of the subject taught before the teaching intervention for each participant group, comparison of groups (pre-testing) in Listening and Speaking.

The checking can be done with the parametric t test for independent samples, because it fulfills the conditions for the use of the criterion. Firstly, the hypotheses must be formulated:

- Null hypothesis H_0 : The performance of students of the control group (CG) in Listening does not differ from that of the students’ in the experimental group (EG) before the teaching intervention ($H_0=H_1$).
- Null hypothesis H_0 : The performance of students of the control group (CG) in Speaking does not differ from that of the students’ in the experimental group (EG) before the teaching intervention ($H_0=H_1$)

- Alternative hypothesis H11: The performance of students of the control group (CG) in Listening differs from that of the students’ in the experimental group (EG) before the teaching intervention (Ho=H1).
- Null hypothesis Hos: The performance of students of the control group (CG) in Speaking differ from that of the students’ in the experimental group (EG) before the teaching intervention (Ho=H1)

It should be noted that as there is no attempt to predict which group has a better or worse performance, a two-sided test hypothesis is formulated. The results of SPSS statistical package are presented on the following table (Table 3):

Table 3. Results of the t test for the independent groups, as shown on the SPSS Viewer for CG and EG in pre-testing

	Independent Samples Test						
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Efficiency_Listening_PreTest	,381	,426	,249	80	,804	,372	1,495
Efficiency_Speaking_PreTest	,044	,835	-,062	80	,951	-,082	1,330

The results of the Levene criterion application are shown on the above table. The specific criterion checks the extent to which the variances of the two groups being compared are equal. For all possible combinations of groups we have Sig >0,05, we do not reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the variances of the two groups are equal, thus, the condition of variance equality is fulfilled.

Based on t criterion we have $t(80) = 0,249$ $p = 0,804$ for Listening which corresponds to a non-statistically significant result and leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis (i.e. the performance of the control group (CG) in Listening does not differ from that of the experimental group (EG) before the teaching intervention) (Ho=H1).

Similarly, based on t criterion we have $t(80) = -0,062$, $p=0,951$ for Speaking which corresponds to a non-statistically significant result and leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis (i.e. the performance of the control group (CG) in Speaking does not differ from that of the experimental group (EG) before the teaching intervention) (Ho=H1).

We arrive at the same conclusion using a chart (fig.1) with confidence intervals of 95% of the average performance for each group:

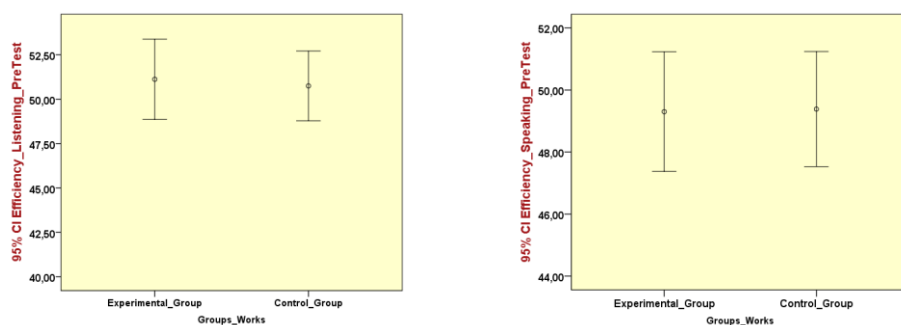


Fig. 1. Error charts for the participating groups at pre-test

From the above charts it can be supported that there is no statistically significant difference between groups at pre-test as the overlaps are not bigger than half the average margin of error.

b) Checking the level of improvement of the subject taught for each group (pre-post test)

This checking can be done with the parametric t test for dependent samples, because the conditions for the use of this criterion (average differences, measurement scale of equal intervals, dependent samples, and parametric criteria) are fulfilled. First, we need to formulate our hypotheses:

- Null hypothesis H_0 : The performance of students of the control group (CG) in Listening, in the pre-test, does not differ from that in the post test after the teaching intervention ($H_0 = H_1$).
- Null hypothesis H_0 : The performance of students of the control group (CG) in Speaking, in the pre-test, does not differ from that in the post test after the teaching intervention ($H_0 = H_1$).
- Null hypothesis H_0 : The performance of students of the experimental group (EG) in Listening, in the pre-test, does not differ from that in the post test after the teaching intervention ($H_0 = H_1$).
- Null hypothesis H_0 : The performance of students of the experimental group (EG) in Speaking, in the pre-test, does not differ from that in the post test after the teaching intervention ($H_0 = H_1$).
- Alternative hypothesis H_1 : The performance of students of the control group (CG) in Listening, in the pre-test, differs from that in the post test after the teaching intervention ($H_0 \neq H_1$).
- Alternative hypothesis H_1 : The performance of students of the control group (CG) in Speaking, in the pre-test, differs from that in the post test after the teaching intervention ($H_0 \neq H_1$).

- Alternative hypothesis H11: The performance of students of the experimental group (EG) in Listening, in the pre-test, differs from that in the post test after the teaching intervention ($H_0 \neq H_1$).
- Alternative hypothesis H1s: The performance of students of the control group (CG) in Speaking, in the pre-test, differs from that in the post test after the teaching intervention ($H_0 \neq H_1$).

The results of SPSS statistical package are presented on the following table (Table 4):

Table 4. Results of all possible combinations between groups at two-sided t Test of dependent samples

		Paired Samples Test			t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
		Paired Mean	Std.Dev	Std.Error Mean			
Pair1	Listening_PreTest_C_G -	-14,72	5,94	,901	-16,335	42	,000
Pair2	Listening_PostTest_Speaking_PreTest_C_G -	-24,11	9,45	1,441	-16,726	42	,000
Pair3	Speaking_PostTest_Listening_PreTest_E_G -	-13,76	6,34	1,015	-13,556	38	,000
Pair4	Listening_PostTest_Speaking_PreTest_E_G - Speaking_PostTest E G	-13,84	5,93	,950	-14,566	38	,000

Based on t criterion and the above table data, for all possible comparisons there is a statistically significant result ($p < 0,001$), which leads to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, that is to say, both groups learners' performance on Listening and Speaking at the post test differs than that of the learners at pre-test after the teaching intervention ($H_0 \neq H_1$).

We arrive at the same conclusion using a chart (fig. 2) with confidence intervals of 95% of the average performance for each group:

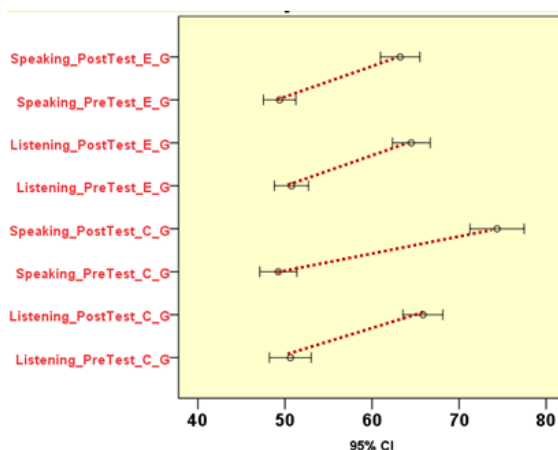


Fig. 2. Error charts for the participating groups at pre and post test

From the above chart it can be argued that there is statistically significant difference between groups at pre-test and post-test as for all group comparisons there are no corresponding overlaps.

c) Checking each participant group’s cognitive level at the subject taught after the teaching intervention – comparison of groups (post-testing) in Listening and Speaking.

The checking can be implemented with the t parametric criterion for dependent samples, because all conditions for its use are fulfilled. Firstly the hypotheses are formulated again:

- Null hypothesis H_0 : The performance of students of the control group (CG) in Listening, does not differ from that of the experimental group students’ (EG) after the teaching intervention ($H_0=H_1$).
- Null hypothesis H_0 : The performance of students of the control group (CG) in Speaking, does not differ from that of the experimental group students’ (EG) after the teaching intervention ($H_0=H_1$).
- Alternative hypothesis H_1 : The performance of students of the control group (CG) in Listening differs from that of the experimental group of students after the teaching intervention ($H_0 \neq H_1$).
- Alternative hypothesis H_1 : The performance of students of the control group (CG) in Speaking differs from that of the experimental group students after the teaching intervention ($H_0 \neq H_1$).

The results of SPSS statistical package are presented on the following table (Table 5):

Table 5. Results of t criterion for independent groups as these are presented on SPSS viewer for CG and EG post testing

	Independent Samples Test						
	Levene's Test for Equality of Var		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff	Std. Error D
Efficiency_Listening_PostTest	,118	,732	1,040	80	,301	1,556	1,47
Efficiency_Speaking_PostTest	2,713	,103	5,443	80	,000	10,188	1,81

The results of the Levene criterion application are shown on the above table. The specific criterion checks the extent to which the variances of the two groups being compared are equal. For all possible combinations of groups we have $\text{Sig} > 0,05$, we do not reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the variances of the two groups are equal, thus, the condition of variance equality is fulfilled.

Based on t criterion we have $t(80) = 1,040$, $p = 0,301$ for Listening which corresponds to a non-statistically significant result and leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis (i.e the performance of the control group (CG) in Listening does not differ from that of the experimental group students (EG) after the teaching intervention ($H_0 = H_1$)). Similarly, based on t criterion we have $t(80) = 5,443$, $p < 0,001$ for Speaking which corresponds to a statistically significant result and leads to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (i.e. the performance of the control group (CG) in speaking differs from that of the experimental group (EG) after the teaching intervention) ($H_0 \neq H_1$). The average percentage of learners' performance after the teaching intervention with the Radio broadcasting is bigger by 10,19% ($\pm 1,81\%$) compared to that of the learners who were taught in the traditional class.

We arrive at the same conclusion using a chart (fig. 3) with confidence intervals of 95% of the average performance for each group:

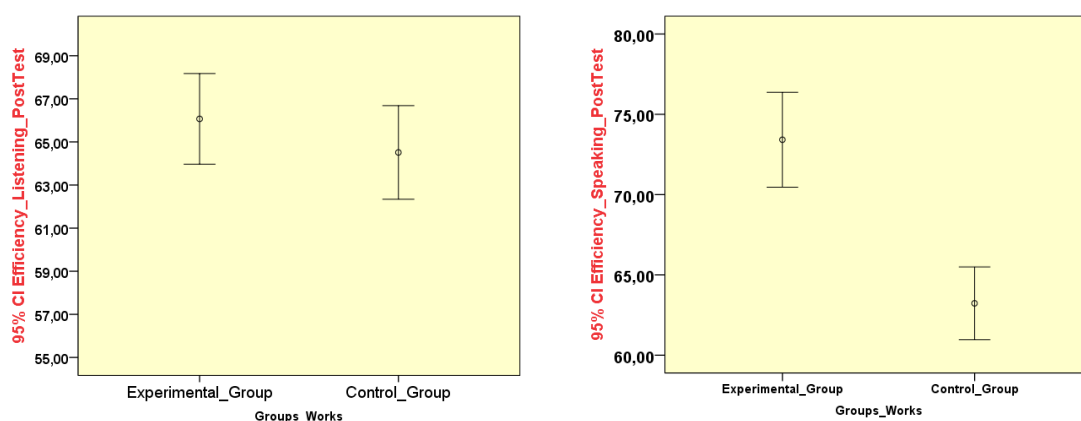


Fig. 2. Error charts for the participating groups at post test

2.6. Focus group discussion process and results

The focus group was conducted upon the end of the teaching intervention. A number of 24 randomly selected learners were approached to participate in the discussion after they had been explained on its purpose and were reassured that they could withdraw any time they wished. However, 21 students finally consented to the discussion which was based on semi-structured questions and designed in order to detect learners’ opinion on the RAI approach and thus, provide possible answers for the third research question. For the validity of the questions a pilot phase was first conducted with 4 learners. The reason was to verify the appropriateness of the questions and the extent to which they were clear enough to the learners. When some corrections had been made and questions had been finalized the discussion took place in the school library of one of the two participant schools and lasted for 46 minutes. The questions were classified into four main axons: interest, motivation, innovation, skills improvement. Students’ answers were thematically analyzed and for anonymity reasons they are referred herein as L1, L2, L3 and so on to support the findings. Due to space limitations there are only a few of the students’ responses provided here.

According to their views the RAI approach was considered an interesting process which they enjoyed very much. When asked why they replied that *“we want some change finally...it’s boring sitting on a chair for 7 hours”* L1 and *“I felt important... I was doing something cool, like in a real radio show”* L12. Students explained that their participation in a process which they know pretty well (being listeners to actual radio shows or listening to club Djs) and therefore they were motivated to participate. As one of the learners said: *“I did not realize I was talking in English... I was carried away to broadcast for my friends [in the group-audience]... they like my music...and I loved talking about it”* L7 or *“I have done this in a couple of clubs in the summer and I found it really exciting and easy...it felt as if I were doing it again”* L19 and *“it was interesting to hear [] from Poland who told us about the music of his country and [] who played songs from Russia”* L11, or *“We could choose the music we listen to with [], [] and [] to play to the other kids... that was neat”* L21 and *“I liked it very much that Mrs [] told me to play my guitar and sing in the show. That was real fun”* L18. When asked whether they found the approach innovative they argued that: *“I don’t know many teachers doing this! Even the principal was curious to know what we were doing...”* L3, and *“I told my cousins in [] about it and they said how lucky we are because their teachers are boring and very strict”* L6. The majority of the students believed that their communicative skills were improved because of their active engagement in the broadcasting process. However, this was not the case for the group-audience as they did not feel there was any differentiation in their skills level. As they said: *“I liked it, it was nice but it didn’t change the way I can understand others when I listen to English”* L15, and *“I liked very much talking on the radio and I wish we continue it next semester. It helped me a lot improve my English and how I speak”* L7. Overall, learners regarded this approach in their English language learning as an effective and interesting one, and the majority hoped for its continuation. The most important thing for them however was the fact that this was something new and different to

them which excited them and motivated them to participate in the lesson more eagerly and actively than before mainly because it represented their real life situations.

Discussion and Conclusions

The world of today seems all the more challenging for all aspects of our lives. Technological advances have changed the way people perceive knowledge and offer a vast variety of media to improve our everyday actions. Education has gained a lot from technology as new sources and ideas have emerged to facilitate teaching and learning. Within this framework, a variety of tools are used in the classroom in the hope to bring about an innovative and motivating school environment with effective educational results. Radio broadcasting can be used as another tool in the classroom for educational purposes.

For the purposes of this study a RAI learning approach was used to investigate whether this method-tool can improve students’ listening and speaking English language skills and the extent to which it can enhance their interest and motivation in the lesson. A comparative study was implemented the results of which revealed that listening skills did not display any differentiation at the post test for both control and experimental groups. However, the experimental groups displayed a statistically significant difference in the performance of their speaking skills of 10,19% ($\pm 1,81\%$) compared to the skills of the learners who did not use radio broadcasting. Based on these results a few conclusions are made. Radio broadcasting can be used for educational purposes for many reasons. It can welcome student diversity (cultures, language, religion) and with different capabilities. Working in groups with a common goal (in the case of this research to inform and amuse the audience) can lead to students’ active involvement and high interest in a supportive environment of solidarity. As the ultimate target of broadcasting is the audience, students learn to negotiate and serve their purpose away from conflicts or arguments. Furthermore, students learn important life skills, such as how to address a certain audience, how to communicate with them, and how to develop a mutual relationship. Moreover, they learn to broadcast, how to report something, how to prepare for its presentation and how to analyze it for clarification purposes. Moreover, it can serve as a network between school and society, developing learners’ social skills among them and between them and the society. Additionally, it can enhance learners’ creativity, serving as an interesting means of expressing their ideas, feelings and views.

The results have implications for both practitioners and policy makers who need to focus on the new digital generation and their needs and adjust curricula and syllabi accordingly. Additionally, they need to offer the necessary flexibility to teachers to employ new and innovative methods to EFL teaching. Especially today, with learners being experts in technology applications and far more digitally competent than their own teachers, it seems important to find ways to attract their attention. This seems easier to be fulfilled when teachers make an effort to approach the learners’ world rather than have students approach adults’ world. After all it is their era we are living in and it seems vital to adapt to this school

generation needs and world if we wish to understand it and succeed in our goals both as educators and future generations caretakers. It is worth mentioning that both schools are at present active members of the European School Radio community in Greece!

References

- Arnell, A. (2012). *The use of ICT in the teaching of English Grammar; the views and experiences of six teachers of English in Sweden*, Linnaeus University, School of Language and Literature.
- Bates, A. (2005). *Technology, e-Learning and Distance Education*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Berman, S., D. (2008). The Return of Educational Radio? *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, Vol. 9 (2), Retrieved July 28, 2015, Available at:
<http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/563/1038>.
- Chandar, U. & Sharma, R. (2003). Bridges to Effective Learning Through Radio, *The International review of research in open and distributed learning*, Vol. 4 (1), Retrieved August 2015, Available at:
<http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/118/198>.
- Goodluck, N., N. & Thompson, G. (1987). The Use of Educational Radio in Developing Countries: Lessons from the Past, *Journal of Distance Education*, Vol. 2 (2), pp. 43-54.
- Isisag, K., U. (2012). The Positive Effects of Integrating ICT in Foreign Language Teaching, *International Conference “ICT for Language Learning” 5th edition*, Florence, Italy, 15-16 November 2012.
- Jonassen, D. (2000). *Computers as mindtools: engaging critical thinking*. New Jersey: Merrill.
- Kurrien, Z. (2008). The use of educational radio for improving the quality of teaching and learning in government regional medium elementary schools, *Consultation on ‘National Policy on ICTs in School Educaton’*, April 29th-30^{ie}th, 2008, New Delhi.
- Makrakis, B. (2005). *Data Analysis in Research using SPSS - From Theory to Action, 3rd Edition*, Gutenberg: Athens, 2005
- National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) (2000). Use of Radio in a Nomadic Education Programme, Effective Literacy Practice, *Unesco Institute for Lifelong Learning*
- Odera, F. Using World Space Radio to improve quality of primary education in Kenya at distance, Retrieved September 2, 2015.
Available at: <http://pcf4.dec.uwi.edu/viewpaper.php?id=288&print=1>.
- Roussos, P., L. & Tsaousis, J. (2011). *Statistics in social sciences using SPSS*. Topos: Athens, 2011.

- Schaaper, M. & Wallet, P. (2014). UIS Survey on Statistics of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Education: Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) Meeting, *UNESCO INSTITUTE for STATISTICS, COMMUNICATION and INFORMATION STATISTICS*, Paris, France, 9-10 December 2014.
- Shaver, J. (2001). Electronic technology and the future of social studies in elementary and secondary schools. *Journal of Education*, Vol. 181 (3), pp. 13-40.
- Sife, A. S., Lwoga, E., T. & Sanga, C. (2007). New technologies for teaching and learning: Challenges for higher learning institutions in developing countries, *International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology (IJEDICT)*, 2007, Vol. 3 (2), pp. 57-67.