



LEARN ENGLISH TEENS: AN AI-MEDIATED TEACHING SPEAKING SKILL IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Technological advances in teaching English have been established to support interesting media and authentic learning materials in language classes. This study investigates the implementation of internet-based media in the intermediate-speaking class provided by LearnEnglish Teens on the British Council Online Course. Using a qualitative descriptive research design, an exploration of the integrated activities in the classroom was observed using field notes. The results reveal that LearnEnglish Teens has a dynamic class atmosphere where students and lecturers can integrate fragment language skills into an integrative proficiency of language use by providing class stages to practice. Meanwhile, the negotiated activities in the class driven by the lecturer had also been described in detail in each stage such as regulating turn-taking, repetition, impulsive correction, assertive treatment, unlocking creativeness, equipping speaking organization, and generating useful expressions in specific- individualized practices.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; LearnEnglish Teens; Speaking; EFL

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape—particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the growing integration of digital technologies—there has been a renewed focus on communicative competence in language learning. Among the core language skills, speaking holds a central role in fostering effective communication, especially in English as a global lingua franca. The ability to speak fluently and meaningfully is not only an academic requirement but also a crucial life skill in professional, social, and digital contexts.

Speaking skill, as a vital component of language proficiency, facilitates more effective and purposeful communication (Sujiati et al., 2023; Putri et al., 2023). Engaging in speaking activities requires learners to actively participate in processes such as critical thinking, negotiation of meaning, and real-time interaction with others. These activities are not limited to verbal expression alone but also involve cognitive and social dimensions of language use.

Through conversation, speakers construct and maintain social relationships, exchange ideas, express emotions, and share perspectives.

Moreover, the act of speaking allows individuals to apply linguistic knowledge in practical contexts, transforming abstract language rules into structured and coherent utterances. This process involves not only mastering vocabulary and grammar but also developing the ability to organize and deliver messages in a way that aligns with the communicative goals and context of the interaction. Thus, speaking serves as both a medium for language practice and a means for meaningful engagement in various forms of discourse.

Communicating in different languages has caused students to become hesitant to engage orally with other people in the class. Arranging a well-structured speech is one of the biggest problems of non-English language speakers, including English learners in intermediate-speaking classes. Learners think about what should be said, what tense can be

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used, how it will be produced, and how it will be appropriately interpreted by the audience (Royani, 2023). As a result, it reduces the speed of speaking and leads to meaningless communication.

As an English Lecturer (Marleni, 2019) suggested, show-and-tell and presentation teaching speaking strategies be established since both were revealed more often to facilitate talk performances. Meanwhile, Wulandari (2020) argued that teachers should consider the students' needs Syaepul Uyun (2022), the speaking components and the media are also depicted by Razi et al. (2019), stated that the appropriate teaching strategies are role play, discussion, storytelling, problem-solving, speech and simulation, guessing games, and information gaps. Subsequently, the speaking activities through interactive communication promote attracting students to speak in the classes.

It is noteworthy that post-COVID-19 learning habits have significantly influenced how classroom environments are structured and designed (Widiastuti et al., 2020; Royani et al., 2021; Rohmawati, 2021; Febriyanti, 2023). The pandemic served as a turning point, prompting educators and institutions to rethink traditional learning models and adapt to more flexible, technology-driven approaches. Several studies highlight that the effectiveness of learning environments has shifted toward internet-based settings, further enhanced by the integration of robotic tools to support teaching and learning processes (Amin, 2023).

This shift has been particularly evident in the field of language learning, which has increasingly relied not only on online platforms and synchronous methods—as highlighted by Putri Dewi Saraswati and Noor Farida (2017), and Wang and Su (2000)—but also on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools. The integration of AI into language education has brought about transformative changes, enabling more interactive, personalized, and efficient language acquisition (Rokhayati & Widiyanti, 2022; Liya Umaroh et al., 2023; Zou et al., 2023; Madhavi et al., 2023; Royani & Sihombing, 2023; Ida Royani & Sihombing, 2024).

These technological advancements have not only redefined teaching practices but have also reshaped how language is produced, learned, and perceived. AI applications such as intelligent chatbots, adaptive learning systems, and automated linguistic analysis have made language learning more dynamic and contextually relevant (Alharbi, 2023; Ntumba et al., 2023). Consequently, in the context of contemporary education, the integration of digital technology and artificial intelligence has become a vital component in creating effective, inclusive, and future-oriented learning environments.

Enhancing speaking activity in the classroom has been argued by Yahya et al. (2019) by stating that technological tools have been regarded as ways of helping students improve their language skills. Internet, podcasts, video, and speech recognition video software are the best tools to teach speaking. Moreover, Wang and Su (2000) argued that learning in real-time technology can help solve the problem of insufficient exposure to speaking practice. So, speaking classrooms with high-tech uses and authentic language uses through applications and the web are recommended activities for any level of speaking skills.

Suryana et al. (2020) and Liya Umaroh et al. (2023) agree that teaching speaking using the Web can effectively enhance the students' English-speaking skills and that students react positively towards Web use in the classrooms. Further, Rokhayati and Widiyanti (2022) studied the use of mobile phones in teaching English speaking for intercultural education and revealed that students accessed material and learning platforms primarily by mobile phones as well as effectively helping teachers to deliver materials and boosting the students' motivation to speak through mobile phones. Prominently, the students' speaking skills improved by 18.3% because of available videos, interactive speaking with native English speakers, and watching movies to confirm emotions and gestures to support speaking attitudes. Therefore, technology use in class has become a helpful and appropriate media for teaching English to students nowadays.

The newest learning platform designed by Britishcouncil.com is LearnEnglish Teens, programmed to guide English language learners to practice English skills virtually with an artificial intelligence companion. It allows students to decide whether to choose a personal online or secondary plus English course, to select their language proficiency level, and to break down the language skills (Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing), grammar, and Vocabulary as well. Besides, learners can also take tests and strategies to achieve the goal on the Exams course bar. Another option is Study Break, where students can justify their affective emotion into learning with fun by video zone and series, magazine, YouTube, and Reading zone.

While the aforementioned studies have provided valuable insights into the technology uses in the language classroom, there remains a notable research gap in investigating classroom activities atmosphere in the actual teaching descriptively. In light of these earlier studies and the requirements to gain such filed reports, it is crucial to disclose every step of classroom practice when using AI with observable activities developed by the lecturer simultaneously guided by a programmed learning tool. Thus, two research questions were developed for this study:

1. What are the students' activities in the EFL classroom using LearnEnglish Teens?
2. How does the lecturer negotiate the classroom practice to drive students' English skills using LearnEnglish Teens?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A comprehensive exploration of related studies on speaking skill activities in the EFL classroom and the use of artificial intelligence in language learning has been presented. It aims to critically analyze and synthesize the idea of a bundle of research, books, articles, and scholars' opinions on the topic addressed in the present study. By investigating the work of esteemed researchers and scholars, this review endeavors to the current knowledge including substantive findings, as well as theoretical

and methodological contributions to the problems being investigated.

A number of research have been outlined by experts in English language studies. Currently, Khasinah et al. (2024) mentioned that the EFL students used a variety of coping strategies to gain successful speaking skills in the Presentation exercise, including preparatory techniques by rehearsal and memorizing script, highlighting the significance of preparing self-assurance and increasing motivational engagement. Additional tools can also be helpful to ensure performance in the class PowerPoint slides, short video clips, and YouTube videos.

Designing practices in language classrooms was also studied by Muluk et al. (2021) Explaining classroom management strategies, such as arranging seating, promoting discipline, implementing specific speaking activities, and offering engaging discussion topics, highlights the challenge for educators to organize the classroom in a way that encourages interactive and effective teaching practices.

Bai (2022) argued that current English professionalism should integrate IT and English as the teacher's information literacy besides reducing the burden of teachers to improve the quality of learning because of the rapid development of technology (Akbarani, 2024). In addition, Hapsari and Wu (2022) briefly recommend English teachers be able to aid the learning process and achieve the course objective more effectively. Specifically, they suggested an AI chatbot to employ a Casual Conversation Course as self-regulated learning to facilitate speaking performance and interaction during the learning process in a university-speaking classroom. This AI chatbot has acted as a speaking partner or tutor while students implemented it.

Furthermore, Fattah et al. (2023) demonstrates AI has a positive influence, improving language skills, boosting engagement, and fostering tailored learning experiences. In the same line, Wei (2023) had concluded and convinced that AI-mediated instruction positively impacts English learning achievement, L2 motivation, and self-regulated learning. The results support the notion that AI-mediated language instruction holds promise in revolutionizing language learning, and it

highlights the positive impact of AI-driven educational technologies in the realm of language education.

Classroom interaction using AI should commit to the selected learning goals set by teachers which enables to negotiate unpredicted responses while learning. Such idea has been argued by Yang and Kyun (2022) which stated that teachers' intervention and configuration of AI-supported language learning in the pedagogical design plays an important role in effective learning.

3. METHODS

The qualitative descriptive design is used to explore the intermediate speaking activities and practices in the classroom of English Education students, Faculty of Tarbiyah dan Teacher Training at UIN Syahada Padangsidempuan, Indonesia. The students were in two classes consisting of 20 people in each who were joining in the Intermediate speaking subject in the academic year 2023/2024 as an obligatory to integrate their basic speaking in the earlier semester and for future advanced speaking in the following semester.

Instrument and Data Collection

The lecturer was the researcher who implemented the 'LearnEnglish Teens' internet media and observed simultaneous activities in the classroom. Observation using field notes was used in twelve meetings for about a hundred minutes in each meeting. The students were taught using the LearnEnglish Teens in all aspects of speaking activities provided by the platform. While teaching the class, the researcher took notes to capture the activities from the beginning to the end. Despite multi-tasking, the researcher has to convince the data using triangulation across peers, colleagues, and confirmation to students to increase the credibility of the data's trustworthiness.

Analysis

The data were analyzed based on Miles and Huberman (2019) suggestion by data reduction, data display, verification, and conclusion. Researchers classified activities into stages by describing what occurred in

the class. Furthermore, researchers visualized activities in detail and long emphasis on figuring out what had been established. Verifying what had been gained was conducted by triangulation to clarify the originality of data to avoid meaningless activities and reiterate the explanation in the conclusion.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the LearnEnglish Teens platform, the speaking course is generated through various activities on various topics pertinent to students at that age (teen) and those who took the intermediate speaking class.

Class Activity using LearnEnglish Teens

Stage 1: Preparation

Preparation occurred at the first stage of class activity by inviting students to the introduced topics. This may be pictures, matching two parts of questions and answers, vocabulary terms, phrases, definitions, and meaning, providing some useful expressions to the state of speaking skill aspects that are going to be practiced, asking for grouping the expressions, and reading a short text and fill in the gaps.

Stage 2: Practice

The students are exposed to a video of a conversation between two students of their age, taking familiar topics to them gradually from levels A1, A2, B1, and B2., such as school environment, making friends, talking about weekends, feelings, different opinions, suggestions, interview, and discussion about pros and contras. Primarily, the video presents a conversation between native speakers, girls or boys, for about one to two minutes. Later, the video is paused by instructing the listener to role as the other speaker played in the video by reading the provided transcriptions as long as the previous video. Lastly, the video lets the audience replay. However, at this moment, the given transcriptions are missing several sounds, words, and phrases, which must be completed by participant players to carry on the conversation.

Stage 3: Check students' understanding.

Practice on this site includes a vast number of exercises that encourage students to comprehend the speaking activity, and the idea of the conversation delivered through practice, such as reading aloud the provided transcription in the video and copying the missing speaker. The exercises can be True-and False and gap-filling. The conversations are provided in the videos, and students are allowed to recapture the typical conversation opportunity by drilling themselves into using expressions like those in the other context that the exercise required.

Stage 4: Discussion

At this end of the activity, LearnEnglish Teens provided students with creativity engagement where students can elaborate their ability at the set of speaking skill expression uses by asking for more complex issues to solve, which still obligates students to recall the materials on the previous exercises and practice.

Lecturer-driven Activities

Lecturer had activated classroom throughout the provided stages with involving appropriate interaction as seen in the following.

Table 1. Activities with LearnEnglish Teens

Stages	Lecture-driven Activities
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recalling relevant experiences - Attempting interest - Regulating turn-taking - Managing slides and appearance
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playing role by video practice initiative - Engaging in a guided short conversation - Impulsive correcting errors and mistakes - Asserting treatment of students' involvement
Checking understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drilling and practicing - Confirming language

- use by reading aloud
- Reacting to the specific responses
- Unlocking creativity by restating differently the identical response

- Discussion**
- Using learned expressions
 - Exposing newly learned words and phrases with meaning
 - Enhancing vocabulary uses
 - Equipping a well-structured speaking organization
 - Monologuing
 - Elaborating ideas as given by drill and practices
 - Taking pauses into emerging- ideas

1. Stage 1: Preparation

At the beginning of the preparation, the lecturer showed the given preparation materials to get the students' knowledge towards the relevant experiences. Pictures or simple questions are answered together in front of the class as a class activity. In addition, students were also encouraged to move forward if necessary to actualize the intended answer of the preparation stage.

Nonetheless, the lecturer had to support activities with additional aid to regulate the turn-taking of participation by managing slide presentations into zoom in and out or just having the students' articulation and pronunciation well produced. Besides, the lecturers also revealed how the appropriate answers for the questions were discussed instinctively when some students answered incorrectly.

Stage 2: Practice

The practice was established by three stages, namely, watching a conversation video, playing with the video by reading the given transcription, and playing the video by filling in the gaps of missing sounds, letters, or words. In practice, students were initially presented with a video of two speakers

conversing on a specific topic with useful expressions of the present language use achievement. The lecturer played two or three times, adjusted by duration and students' needs. Then, students were induced to practice with the video initiatively; meanwhile, on other occasions, the lecturer just called the name to ensure an alternate practice in the class. So, students' participation can emerge systematically and assert fair treatment among students.

Essentially, at this moment, the lecturer cannot correct the students' errors and unintentional mistakes because of the slower speed than the actual native speaker, which was switched. However, with repetition to gain opportunities to practice again and more, it had been intentionally accomplished well enough which reflected the negotiated assertion and impulsive correction while playing in the students' practice. In this part, Thornbury (2023) depicts that providing opportunities for students to talk during class and limiting teacher talk should be a fundamental aspect of teaching speaking principles. Moreover, this also argues the linguistic competence of intermediate speaking skills by Brown (2019), in which students aim to satisfy routine social demands by asking for repetition for clarity and enforcing students' speaking skills to be more confident and intelligible while engaging only in short conversations, as found in the learning materials in LearnEnglish Teen.

Stage 3: Checking students' understanding

After having role plays with the video, checking students' understanding was begun by drilling and practicing the previous conversation; guidance was given primarily to students. In about 3 to 5 minutes, students completed the exercises and performed the answers to the entire class. At this moment, students confirmed their understanding of the language use and adequate responses by reading aloud in shifts, one by one, repeatedly until the end of the exercise items. The lecturer can use this mode of reciprocal interaction by pronunciation check so that the whole class is aware of inappropriate realization occurrences. Corrections can be made in words, phrases, and utterances.

Interestingly, the lecturer also developed this activity by reacting to the specific responses of the exercises, such as the True and False questions. The lecturer expected a more complex answer by creating new statements. For instance, the statement 'Gemma is stressed and upset' was answered by 'True'. The intended response is not True briefly. However, students had to answer, 'It is true that Gemma is stressed and upset.'

This activity unlocked students' creativity and allowed them to think of different ways of saying identical things. Nonetheless, students must be noticed again frequently in each meeting to reply as alike in every situation. Thus, the lecturer should assist the students as efficiently as possible in exercise drill Harmer (2019), who stated that the teacher's role is as a prompter, resource, and tutor.

Stage 4: Discussion

As the latest part of the drilling, the practice of intermediate English speaking is discussed. Through this element, students are developed to use learned expressions in the given context. The lecturer in this activity empowered language skills through a monologue in front of the class. Students answered the discussion question by elaborating ideas and descriptions to bring about the use of authentic language expressions in a common communication which had been played in the previous practices.

Having speeches in a classroom performance has been categorized into several organizations that students need to achieve. Vocabulary enhancement was the pre-occurred activity before monologuing. As the fundamental practice in the intermediate speaking class, students were exposed to numerous important new phrases with meanings as their lexical resources in language learning. Then, students are equipped with a well-structured organization of speech at the primary level of general speaking in the forward-facing of a small number of audiences. The lecturer stimulated every aspect of speaking elements, contents, language use, and additional strategic advice for better communication. If they had paused while talking, then the lecturer would have anticipated taking over a few seconds to fill

the gap of the speaking exercise by asking leading questions to the expected track.

On the other hand, the remaining students should have recognized that the drill continued randomly, including themselves. So, they would rather listen to the performers than pay less attention because of individual preparation for class performance turns. Participation activities resulted in the classroom using LearnEnglish Teens as the most diverse and interesting in the oral communication repertoire. As students memorize the speaking aspects as the learned materials, it is necessary to emphasize their speaking knowledge in their existing experiences through driven practices. So, a higher level of drilling and practice is supported by this last classroom activity in LearnEnglish Teens.

5. CONCLUSION

Teens'—in intermediate speaking classes enables students to actively engage in various learning components, including activities, exercises, drills, repetition, and exposure to authentic language. The learning process encourages full participation from both students and lecturers, fostering collaborative classroom practices. Rather than merely acting as a facilitator, the lecturer helps motivate students to take an active role in the learning experience. The dynamic nature of classroom interaction is reflected in the fluid shifts of student performance. Moreover, the integration of AI technology contributes to a more interactive and cohesive learning environment, where discrete language skills can be developed into integrated language proficiency.

For future research, it is recommended to explore the long-term impact of AI-based learning platforms on students' communicative competence, as well as to investigate their effectiveness across different proficiency levels and diverse educational contexts. Comparative studies between AI-assisted and traditional learning methods could also provide deeper insights into optimizing speaking skill development.

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