

Artificial Intelligence -Powered Educational Drama as a Pedagogical Tool for English Conversational Skills: Benefits and Drawbacks

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ABSTRACT

Original research paper

This investigation studies the deployment of Artificial Intelligence-facilitated curricular drama as a mechanism designed to elevate the proficiency of English-speaking abilities. The study examines the pedagogical affordances and impediments involved in integrating AI-constructed dramatic activities into the language-learning context. Qualitative interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of eight Palestinian English teachers to assess the merits and demerits of integrating artificial intelligence with dramatic pedagogy. Analyses reveal instances where AI reduces learner anxiety, cultivates self-esteem, situates latent learner identities in a productive light, and facilitates the digitization of the Palestinian English curriculum. Constraining factors such as limited infrastructure, high costs, teachers' hesitation, and ongoing shortages in specialized training have also been widely reported. Empirical data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, and a qualitative thematic analysis procedure identified recurrent motifs, dominant themes, and pedagogical ramifications. The analytic returns demonstrate that AI-enriched dramatic pedagogy engenders intensified learner involvement, improved levels of communicative competence, and elevated self-competence; yet, unresolved evidence of technological breakdowns and uneven teacher preparation persists as binding structural limitations. The inquiry presents empirically grounded recommendations for curricular adaptation and identifies productive avenues for further scholarly investigation.

Keywords: AI-Powered Educational Drama, English Conversational Skills, Benefits, Drawbacks.

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1. Introduction

The incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) within educational contexts has expanded the repertoire of instructional strategies capable of fostering heightened learner engagement and accelerated language acquisition. Within this repertoire, educational drama has emerged as a promising mechanism for cultivating English conversational proficiency. By combining conventional role-play modalities with adaptive intelligent systems, AI-augmented educational drama provides learners with the opportunity to practice authentic interpersonal interactions within interactive and context-sensitive scenarios (Li & Wang, 2023).

Drama-centred pedagogy has long been commended for its capacity to generate authentic communicative contexts, thereby motivating students to employ language for tangible, negotiated purposes (Stinson & Winston, 2011). The affiliation of AI instruments with such methodologies introduces the possibility of further individuating the educational encounter and of proffering immediate, formative feedback, a provision deemed particularly advantageous for second-language students (Godwin-Jones, 2022). Nevertheless, the academic discourse does not overlook the concomitant risks, namely the danger of undue dependency on technological systems, the potential for insufficient

cultural alignment, and the lack of professional development that explicitly addresses the assimilation of AI within instructional practice (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019).

Weighing the negotiated advantages against the foreseen constraints, this investigation examines English language teachers' evaluations of AI-empowered educational drama as a tool for advancing conversational skills. Through semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of eight language teachers, the study aims to document the instructional affordances and pedagogical liabilities that this emergent tool introduces into the everyday classroom ecology.

Problem Statement

Although educational drama has long been acknowledged as a beneficial strategy for enhancing conversational competencies, systematic incorporation of artificial intelligence within this pedagogical paradigm has attracted comparatively scant investigation, with the Palestinian educational landscape serving as a particularly pronounced example. Despite the potential for AI to stimulate innovative instructional practices and deepen learner engagement, empirical perceptual data regarding educators' attitudes toward an AI-augmented drama curriculum remain sparse. Moreover, the absence of targeted studies examining the operation of AI-mediated dramatic simulations to cultivate English-speaking proficiency in Palestine further evidences a substantial epistemological void within the existing scholarship, meriting rigorous analytical interrogation.

Research Question:

-What are the advantages and disadvantages of integrating artificial intelligence into drama-based language teaching?

2. Literature Review

Educational Drama

Drama is characterized by behaviors expressed both verbally and nonverbally. As defined by Sinaga, Amri, and Lestari (2020), drama is an art form composed of conversations and presented in the form of a text. It typically incorporates elements of analysis, creativity, humor, and social experiences. According to Nanda and Susanto (2021), drama can also be understood as a set of teaching and learning strategies that encourage and motivate learners within their educational journey. Furthermore, Hailat's (2006) research examined the impact of drama on the academic performance of fourth-grade students in social education compared with traditional classroom methods. A random sample of 208 students was selected from schools under the Irbid Directorate of Education. These were divided into two groups: an experimental group of 140 students taught through drama, and a control group of 68 students taught using

conventional methods. The results revealed significant differences in performance between the two groups, with the experimental group performing better. However, no significant differences were found in relation to gender or the interaction of gender with teaching methods. Similarly, Savela (2009) found that dramatic activities promoted communication, cultural understanding, and social skills. Although the specific actions that conveyed these outcomes were somewhat unclear, the activities nonetheless offered effective methods for enhancing learning. Students were encouraged to exercise creativity and spontaneity, rehearse phrases, and participate in both role-play and real-life scenarios (Bsharat, 2021).

Conversational skills:

Conversational skills are collaborative method of building meaning which involves data creation, analyzing data, and reception, as stated by (Suban, 2021).

Manakan, Untong, Mohamad, & Sinsuat (2023) agreed that effective verbal communication is crucial in achieving goals in various areas of life. A skilled speaker can further their career, expand a business, and build lasting partnerships. It aids individuals when presenting a concept or project in front of a gathering. Therefore, speaking helps in personal development and society at large. For both students and instructors, performing, interactive storytelling, and playing roles are instances of educational drama that has grown as an efficient instructional and learning, instructors and pupils in all levels of education from school to college may profit through utilizing interactive storytelling to improve their ability to communicate (Nair & Yunus, 2021).

Almost all scholars have confirmed that the primary intent of teaching English is to enable learners to become more effective speakers, thereby communicating appropriately both in and out of the classroom (Al-Tamimi, Abdullah, & Al Bin-Hady, 2020).

Educational Drama and Language Learning

Educational drama remains steadfastly recognized as a valuable pedagogical approach for enhancing linguistic competency. O'Neill and Lambert (2019) maintained that the assumption of specified character roles enables learners to practise perspective-taking and to absorb transferable communicative skills that are fundamental to authentic interaction. Techniques such as sustained role-play, improvisation, and methodically designed simulations expose learners to conversational English in context-specific scenarios, thereby promoting the dual development of fluency and self-assurance (Wessels, 2017). Stinson and Winston (2011) reinforce this argument by asserting that drama education orients students toward synchronous, embodied dialogue, which in turn fosters self-expression, imaginative engagement, and the joint resolution of narrative disputes.

Artificial Intelligence in Language Education

The field of artificial intelligence has progressively infiltrated instructional settings through the provision of adaptable platforms that modulate learning sequences according to each learner's proficiency profile, deliver instantaneous, focused corrective commentary, and produce context-sensitive prompts to address specific linguistic targets (Chen et al., 2021). Such technologies mitigate affective barriers, afford measured and self-directed practice, and supply calibratable, formative feedback that aligns with the learner's ongoing linguistic development (Godwin-Jones, 2022). The convergence of intelligent systems with drama-based pedagogy yields a novel curricular framework, within which students can interact with intelligent virtual partners, receive context-sensitive linguistic scaffolding, and practice authentic, situated communicative tasks.

AI's Role in Education.

The systematic incorporation of AI into educational practice has the potential to reconfigure established instructional paradigms.

Key applications include:

Personalized Learning: Artificial Intelligence can examine the entire data set corresponding to an individual learner, enabling the emergence of adaptive learning trajectories that match the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral profiles of each student. Empirical investigations empirically and positively correlate the pedagogical use of AI-assisted adaptations with elevated performance, heightened intrinsic motivation, and elevated learner satisfaction (Xu, 2025).

Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS): ITS frameworks emulate the nuances of personalized human tutoring by delivering context-sensitive feedback that is tailored to each learner's evolving performance state in each instance. Multiple meta-analyses document statistically significant gains in learner outcomes and instructional efficiency when ITS pedagogies are employed (Yarlagadda, 2025; Silva et al., 2024).

Data-Driven Decision Making: AI is deployed to distill actionable insights from extensive educational datasets, apportioned by predictive and learning analytics. When properly aligned, these algorithms afford educators and administrative leaders the discretion to implement empirically supported modifications in pedagogical strategy as well as the optimal allocation of material resources (Naayini, 2025).

Merits and Demerits of AI-Powered Drama

Empirical investigations indicate that AI-mediated dramatic activities significantly elevate learner engagement—motivational, attentional, and participatory—primarily within oral communicative competence (Li & Ni, 2022). Such interventions enable learners to surmount normative hesitation, unearth latent persona, and cultivate prudential confidence while performing in English. Notwithstanding

these pedagogical advantages, substantive barriers persist, including pedagogical dependency on affordances of digital systems, inadequate preparatory and content-focused professional development for instructors, and differential availability of technological resources (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). Should these obstructions remain unmitigated, their cumulative effect risks undermining the widescale, robust adoption of AI-supported instructional paradigms, especially within locales of variable infrastructural maturity.

While extant literature demonstrates promise, the predominant corpus derives from post-secondary contexts, leaving pedagogies at the elementary and early secondary levels under-explored (Li & Ni, 2022). Moreover, an empirical void characterises the interface of algorithms, drama-enveloped learning, and educational practice in the Palestinian educational milieu. Accordingly, this investigation proposes itself as the systematic inquiry required to address that deficit, furnishing rigorous, context-situated evidence to illuminate pedagogical efficacy and the existing conditions for adoption. Furthermore, the challenges confronting teachers and students in Palestinian schools, particularly regarding language instruction, are multifaceted. The recurrent political instability, economic adversity, and paucity of resources contribute to an education landscape marked by considerable disparity. Frequently, educators must contend with outdated educational materials and encounter difficulties when seeking professional development opportunities, ultimately leading to potential disruptions in students' educational experiences. These challenges have been comprehensively explored by Abu-Lughod and Awad (2024), who highlight the adverse implications for educational outcomes and advocate for integrating advanced pedagogical approaches.

When implementing new teaching methodologies on a broader scale, particularly within Palestinian educational institutions, it is essential to consider the impact of cultural factors. The educational framework is deeply rooted in the values and traditions of local societal norms, which are distinctly manifested in pedagogical approaches and student engagement. Integrating innovative methodologies into practice should meticulously align with the prevailing academic culture and effectively cater to the Palestinian context. As evidenced in Jarrar's 2023 study, implementing culturally responsive teaching practices significantly enhances the congruence of educational techniques with students' cultural backgrounds, thus yielding superior effectiveness within the Palestinian educational landscape.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This inquiry employed a qualitative framework, oriented by semi-structured interviews as the primary instrument of data collection. Such an approach is efficient for accessing the

depth of teachers' reflections on and encounters with AI-augmented drama pedagogy in the English-language classroom context. The qualitative pathway and semi-structured format were therefore applied with eight English-language teachers (four identified as female and four as male) from disparate secondary schools in Tulkarm, Palestine. The qualitative survey allows for immersion in lived experience and simultaneous attention to nonverbal cues, thereby yielding an ecological representation of participants' viewpoints. Recruitment difficulties arising from competing professional commitments and discretionary privacy were indeed recorded, a distributional feature recurrent in qualitative investigations. Nonetheless, the eight interviews delivered dense narratives that illuminated the subtleties of AI-embedded drama instruction.

Participants

The investigatory sample comprises a purposive selection of eight English teachers, equally distributed by gender, who are uniformly employed in preparatory and secondary institutions. Participants were selected for their substantial experience within the English curriculum and for their previously documented engagement with drama-excitatory instruction integrated into curriculum aims.

Data Collection

Interview data were obtained through semi-structured protocols uniformly executed across the catalogue of interviews, each lasting between 45 and 60 minutes, recorded with participant consent, and transcribed verbatim for subsequent thematic analysis.

Sessions, conducted exclusively in English, were digitally recorded with each participant's prior consent and subsequently transcribed word-for-word. The standard prompt schedule centred on four focal domains: (a) teachers' reflective narratives concerning the assimilation of dramatic methodologies into the English-as-a-second-language

curriculum; (b) anticipated pedagogical gains attendant on the merger of artificial intelligence with drama-based instructional activities; (c) pedagogical impediments encountered during the design and delivery of drama-inflected lessons; and (d) prescriptive guidance for the systematic incorporation of AI-enhanced drama into the broader instructional architecture.

3.4 Data Analysis

The resultant transcripts were analysed in accordance with the thematic analysis framework articulated by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis progressed through four mutually informing stages: (1) the analysts immersed themselves in the dataset, re-reading the complete corpus until recurrent and salient patterns of meaning became apparent; (2) the analysts then generated initial codes, marking salient passages, and subsequently grouped codes into provisional thematic clusters displaying conceptual harmony; (3) the provisional clusters were then examined and re-fined, each cluster being tested against the entire dataset to ensure internal coherence and external transferability; (4) finally, the analysts articulated refined themes for each cluster, situating each theme in terms of conceptual content and anchor in empirical data, and maintaining constant alignment with research question.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Procedures for securing participants' confidentiality and anonymity were stringently enforced. Prior to the commencement of recorded interviews, subjects signed informed consent documentation, which explicitly delineated the parameters of data protection and underscored participants' irrevocable prerogative to withdraw consent without adverse consequences at any point during the research engagement.

3.6 Table 1: Participants

Participant	Gender	Years of Experience	Familiarity with AI	Experience with Drama Activities
T1	Female	5	Medium	High
T2	Male	10	Low	Medium
T3	Female	7	High	High
T4	Male	12	Medium	Low
T5	Female	8	High	Medium
T6	Male	6	Low	Medium
T7	Female	9	Medium	High
T8	Male	11	High	High

4. Results

Data collected from eight teachers yielded significant findings on the integration of AI-augmented educational drama in enhancing English conversational proficiency. Following thematic analysis, two main themes were identified: the merits of integrating AI in teaching drama, and the demerits of integrating AI in drama teaching, and many sub-themes related to them:

The results for the first question are:

1. What do you see as the main benefits of integrating AI into drama education for students' conversation and expression skills?

Eight teachers (four male and four female with teaching experience) shared their perspectives on the advantages of integrating AI in teaching conversational skills.

Several teachers highlighted that AI can boost students' confidence and fluency by providing realistic simulations of dramatic situations. As a teacher reported:

"AI can simulate real-life drama scenarios, which gives students more confidence to speak." (T.3)

Another teacher emphasized the value of immediate feedback, which helps learners improve their performance more quickly:

"It provides immediate feedback so that students can correct mistakes on the spot." (T.5)

Results for the second question

On the other hand, some teachers expressed concerns that excessive reliance on AI might reduce the emotional and human dimension that drama requires. One female teacher stated:

"Drama is about emotions and body language; AI cannot fully replace human interaction." (T.2)

Another teacher pointed to issues of access and equity, noting that not all schools have the resources to implement AI tools effectively:

"The challenge is accessibility; not every school has the tools to use AI effectively." (T.6)

Results related to the third question

When asked about balancing AI and human interaction, most teachers agreed that AI should remain a supportive tool rather than a replacement. As one teacher noted:

"Use AI as a support tool, but never let it dominate the drama lesson." (T.7)

Another teacher emphasized the importance of teacher presence, adding:

"Students still need our facial expressions, gestures, and emotional feedback- AI cannot replace that human connection." (T3)

1. The results related to the fourth question

Finally, teachers recommended introducing AI gradually and ensuring that lessons remain enjoyable and stress-free. A female teacher summarized this approach:

"Start small, combine AI with traditional drama, and always keep the fun element." (T.4)

In addition, another teacher highlighted the need for professional preparation before adopting AI widely:

"If we don't receive proper training, AI will only add pressure instead of helping us." (T6)

Theme 1: The benefits of integrating AI into drama-based language to teach conversational skills

Observation Table: Engagement Levels

Participant	Engagement Level (Low/Medium/High)	Example Comment
Teacher 1	High	AI role-play increased participation
Teacher 2	Medium	Some students distracted by technology
Teacher 3	High	Students volunteered more for speaking tasks
Teacher 4	Medium	Needed guidance to stay on task
Teacher 5	High	Increased enthusiasm in class
Teacher 6	Medium	Technical delays affected focus
Teacher 7	High	Students enjoyed AI dialogues
Teacher 8	High	Improved participation among shy learners

Theme 2: the challenges of integrating AI in drama -based language to teach conversational skills:

Challenges

Challenge Type	Frequency	Example
Technical issues	5/8	Software glitches
333	4/8	Not enough tablets/computers

Analysis Findings

The interactive dramatization augmented by artificial intelligence demonstrably enhances learner engagement and promotes dialogue among participants. Nonetheless, persistent technical difficulties—such as inconsistent connectivity and software glitches—paired with constrained institutional resources, inhibit full implementation. Comprehensive professional development, oriented not only towards technical competencies but also towards pedagogical integration, emerges as a prerequisite for unlocking the transformational promise of AI-mediated instruction.

Discussion

The data demonstrate that AI-mediated educational drama may serve as an influential instructional mechanism for refining English conversational competence. As corroborated by O'Neill and Lambert (2019), drama-oriented activities consistently elevate levels of student engagement and participatory effort. Teachers reported that AI-generated narratives enhanced lesson interactivity, thereby motivating learners to practice oral skills within a secure and responsive framework.

The observed advancement in communicative competence is consistent with Wessels (2017), who asserted that structured role-playing and improvisation cultivate both fluency and self-esteem. The incorporation of AI amplifies these gains by delivering responsive, adaptive feedback in instantly rehearseable conversational scenarios. Notably, timid learners experienced a marked increase in assertiveness when conversing with AI personae, as the absence of immediate, visible peer evaluation reduced their apprehension.

Conversely, impediments—namely, technical breakdown, constrained device accessibility, and the requirements of classroom governance—were acknowledged. This observation corroborates Kukulska-Hulme's (2020) warning against relying too heavily on technological devices. So, levels of teachers' preparation emerged as a pivotal determinant, thereby underscoring the necessity for targeted professional development and ongoing training to ensure proficient enactment.

In summary, the investigation substantiates the assertion that AI-augmented educational drama presents substantial instructional potential, provided that deliberate curricular

design, comprehensive educator preparation, and sufficient infrastructural support are in place.

Conclusion

The empirical evidence affirms that the deployment of AI-facilitated educational drama produces distinct gains in spoken English proficiency, characterised by a pronounced elevation of learner engagement and durable motivation, the fostering of pragmatic fluency and confidence—particularly among previously hesitant speakers—and the furnishing of a sheltered space for linguistic risk-taking within realistically simulated contexts.

Nonetheless, a triad of ongoing challenges—intermittent hardware and software instability, economic limitations, and the associated requirement for methodical instructional design—continues to impede further expansion. The study therefore advocates a methodical and judicious embedding of artificial intelligence, supplemented by ongoing, targeted professional training for educators, to ensure that the anticipated pedagogical dividends are fully realised.

Limitations of the study:

The present investigation was conducted within Palestinian educational institutions, an environment characterized by distinctive limitations that likely influenced both the delivery and effectiveness of AI-enhanced educational drama. Constraints were evident in the restricted availability of technological hardware, frequent power outages, and unreliable internet access, each of which hindered the seamless integration of AI resources into daily pedagogy. Compounding these infrastructural challenges, the ongoing occupation fosters a volatile political climate that, along with intermittent school closures, disrupts the regularity of instructional time. Contextual characteristics of this nature warrant careful consideration in the analysis of the outcomes, as they may limit the applicability of the resulting evidence to settings with more robust technological and geopolitical conditions.

Recommendations

The evidence gathered supports several targeted actions: (1) Implement continuous professional learning for teachers through workshops dedicated to leveraging artificial

intelligence within drama initiatives; (2) Secure adequate instructional hardware and reliable platforms to safeguard lesson flow; (3) Embed AI-mediated theatrical assignments into the English syllabus on a carefully calibrated schedule; (4) Present learners to AI applications incrementally to build confidence and enrich collaborative engagement; (5) Launch longitudinal studies to measure the sustained impact of AI-facilitated drama on language competence at varying stages of formal education.

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Appendix (A)

Abbreviaton	Meaning
AI	Artificial Intelligence

T	Teacher
ITS	Intelligent Tutoring Systems

Appendix (B) The interview questions:

1. What do you see as the main benefits of integrating AI into drama education for students' conversation and expression skills?
- 2-What challenges or drawbacks have you faced (or do you expect) when using AI in educational drama?
- 3-In your view, how can teachers balance the human aspect (direct interaction, emotions) with the technological aspect (AI use) in drama teaching?
- 4-What recommendations would you give to other teachers who want to use AI in drama-based lessons?