

The Effect of Teaching Based on Intelligent Dialogue Simulation on the

Development of English Communication Skills in Fourth Grade

Preparatory School Students

أثر التدريس القائم على محاكاة الحوار الذكي على تنمية مهارات التواصل باللغة الإنجليزية

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الكلمات المفتاحية: محاكاة الحوار الذكي، الكفاءة التواصلية، تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية، المرحلة

التحضيرية.

Keywords: smart dialogue simulation, communicative competence, English

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الملخص

هدف الدراسة كان الكشف عن أثر التدريس المعتمد على المحاكاة الذكية للحوار في تطوير مهارات الاتصال باللغة الإنجليزية بين طلاب الصف الرابع الإعدادي. استخدم الباحث المنهج شبه التجريبي وطبق مقياس كفاءة الاتصال قبل وبعد الدراسة على عينة مكونة من ٥٠ طالباً موزعين على مجموعتين: مجموعة تجريبية درست باستخدام محاكاة الحوار الذكية ومجموعة ضابطة درست باستخدام الأساليب التقليدية. وأكدت النتائج فعالية هذا الأسلوب في تعزيز القدرة على التحدث، والطلاقة اللغوية، والنطق، والتخفيف من مخاوف التحدث، وكذلك تعزيز الثقة بالنفس لدى المتعلمين. وقد أشارت هذه الدراسة إلى أهمية استخدام الأساليب التفاعلية للتدريس باستخدام تقنيات ذكية في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية لطلاب المرحلة الإعدادية.

Abstract

The aim of the study was to reveal the effect of teaching based on intelligent dialogue simulation on the development of communication skills in English among fourth-year preparatory school students. The researcher used a quasi-experimental approach and applied a communication competence scale before and after the study to a sample of 50 students divided into two groups: an experimental group that studied using intelligent dialogue simulation and a control group that studied using traditional methods. The results confirmed the effectiveness of this approach in enhancing speaking ability, language fluency, pronunciation, alleviating fears of speaking, as well as strengthening learners' self-confidence. This study has suggested that interactive teaching approaches using smart technologies be employed for teaching English language to middle school students.

Research Introduction

Rapid global changes in the fields of knowledge and communication have necessitated a re-examination of the role of English within educational systems. English is no longer just a subject of study, but has become an essential tool for engaging in scientific research, technology, and the global labor market, making proficiency in English a prerequisite for integration into contemporary knowledge society (Domingo, 2020; Nanquil, 2021). Recent educational literature also emphasizes that the digital transformation has redefined the concepts of reading, writing, and linguistic communication, as linguistic practices are no longer confined to traditional written texts but have come to rely on multiple digital media that integrate image, sound, and interaction, which requires the development of both digital and linguistic competencies in learners (Robin, 2008; Lea & Jones, 2011). This reinforces the trend toward teaching language as a tool for constructing meaning, thinking, and communicating in dynamic digital learning environments that transcend the boundaries of the traditional classroom.

“The current and fast-paced globalization of knowledge and communication means that there is a paradigm shift regarding the place of the English language within the educational system. A subject of study is not merely being replaced by the English language but is instead becoming an instrument of involvement with scientific research, technology, and the worldwide labor market. Proficiency in this subject is mandatory to be included in the knowledge society,” states Domingo (2020), with Nanquil (2021) adding that the English language is being positioned to be the medium by which everything is accomplished.

Following from this, it means that the measurement of English language education is not only based on the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary, but the ability to communicate in real life

situations, known as "communicative competence" that incorporates language knowledge with appropriate use of context and interaction rules (Obaidul et al., 2013; Salvador et al., 2023).

While it is theoretically emphasized, research studies still prove that even in relatively advanced educational systems, poor performance in oral communication still persists among learners of English. This is attributed to the limited effectiveness of traditional teaching methods and the poor practical application of educational policies (Cabigon, 2015; Roslaniec, 2018; Baclig, 2020). In this context, the Ministry of Education in the Republic of Iraq has sought to make communicative competence a central goal, with a focus on performance-based learning and continuous assessment (Department of Education, 2016; Barrot, 2018). However, assessment results have revealed a gap between stated goals and actual learning outcomes, due to factors related to teacher preparation, learner motivation, and anxiety about speaking a foreign language (Domingo, 2020; Puente, 2022; Rahman, 2014).

Based on this, there is a need for interactive teaching approaches that simulate real-life language use and provide a psychologically and linguistically supportive environment. Smart technology-supported dialogue simulations are among the most prominent of these approaches, capable of effectively developing oral communication skills and reducing language anxiety.

Research problem

Despite the important place that English occupies in educational curricula, and the goals it contains that focus on developing communication skills, educational studies indicate a continuing noticeable weakness among preparatory school students in using the language for communication purposes, especially in speaking and listening skills. This weakness manifests itself in hesitation during oral expression, poor fluency, fear of making mistakes, and lack of linguistic interaction in semi-realistic situations.

The literature attributes this deficiency to reliance on traditional teaching methods that focus on theoretical linguistic content, with limited opportunities for interactive practice, in addition to limited teaching time, high linguistic anxiety, and low motivation and self-confidence, especially in environments where the use of English is limited to the classroom (Roslaniec, 2018; Blas et al., 2018; Alhassan et al., 2021).

Based on this, the research problem is the gap between the stated communicative goals of English language teaching and the actual communicative competence of preparatory school students, which calls for investigating the effectiveness of alternative teaching approaches, such as teaching based on intelligent dialogue simulation, as an approach that may contribute to providing a supportive interactive learning environment that enhances the functional use of language and reduces language anxiety. Therefore, the research question is defined as follows: ***What is the effect of teaching based on intelligent dialogue simulation on the development of communicative competence in English among fourth-grade preparatory school students?***

Research hypotheses

The research verified the following two hypotheses:

- There are statistically significant differences at the 0.05 significance level on the English communication competence scale among fourth-year preparatory school students in the experimental and control groups in the post-test, which can be attributed to the application of teaching based on intelligent dialogue simulation.
- There are statistically significant differences at the 0.05 significance level on the English communication competence scale among fourth-year preparatory school students in the experimental group in the pre- and post-tests in favor of the post-test.

Research objectives

- To reveal the effect of teaching based on intelligent dialogue simulation on the development of English communication competence among fourth-year preparatory school students.
- To identify the level of English communication competence among fourth-year preparatory school students before the application of teaching based on intelligent dialogue simulation.
- To provide scientific indicators that can be used in developing English teaching methods at the preparatory level.

Research Significance

- To contribute to expanding the theoretical framework of the concept of communicative competence and linking it to modern teaching strategies based on simulation and intelligent dialogue.
- Highlighting intelligent dialogue simulation as a contemporary teaching approach that combines interactive learning and communicative theories in language teaching.
- Filling a research gap represented by the lack of Arabic studies that have addressed the use of intelligent dialogue simulation in developing communicative competence among preparatory school students.
- Provide a theoretical basis on which to build subsequent studies on the use of smart technologies in foreign language teaching.
- To help English teachers in preparatory school adopt more effective and interactive teaching methods.

- To provide curriculum planners and developers with practical indicators on the effectiveness of using intelligent dialogue simulation in developing communication skills.

Research limitations

The current research is limited by the following constraints:

- Topic limitations: The research was limited to studying the impact of teaching based on intelligent dialogue simulation on the development of communication skills in English, without addressing other language skills such as reading or writing independently.
- Participant-related limitations: The research was applied to a sample of fourth-grade preparatory school students.
- Spatial boundaries: The research was conducted at ().
- Temporal limitations: The research was conducted during the first semester of the academic year (2025-2026).

Definition of terms and procedural definitions

First: Intelligent dialogue simulation: Dialogue simulation is defined as an educational strategy that relies on designing interactive situations that mimic real life, enabling learners to practice the language through dialogue, role-playing, and decision-making in a safe learning environment with minimal psychological pressure (Richards & Renandya, 2002; Hamad & Alnuzaili, 2022). The simulation of intelligent dialogues pertains to the application of digital technologies or intelligent systems to facilitate such occasions, as they aid in language modeling, offering immediate feedback and multiple interactive situations to reinforce practical language learning and motivate the learners (Pradeep et al., 2020).

Procedural definition: In this research, it is defined as a teaching method that employs interactive dialogue situations supported by smart technologies in the classroom, in which fourth-grade students participate in dialogues, role-playing, and language scenarios that simulate real-life communication situations, under the supervision of the teacher, with the aim of developing speaking and listening skills according to a specific educational plan and assessment tools.

Second: Communicative competence: Communicative competence is defined as the ability to use language effectively and appropriately in different communicative situations, through the use of linguistic knowledge, communicative ability, and awareness of the rules of discourse and social context, in order to achieve mutual understanding between communicators (Obaidul et al., 2013). It is also considered an integrated construct that includes grammatical, discursive, and communicative competence, enabling the learner to produce coherent and contextually appropriate discourse (Salvador et al., 2023).

Procedural definition: In this study, it is defined as the level of performance of fourth-grade students in oral communication skills in English, measured by the score obtained by the student on a communication competence assessment tool developed by the researcher, which includes indicators such as fluency, pronunciation, interaction, listening comprehension, and use of vocabulary in the appropriate context.

Theoretical Framework

English language skills include four main skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, where listening and reading skills are considered inputs to the language, while speaking and writing are considered productive outputs (Nunan, 2002, p. 45). Although listening is related to speaking, it

is often neglected in teaching, while speaking and writing are considered indicators of a learner's level of language competence.

McCauley and Christiansen (2019, p. 112) point out that language acquisition can be seen as a model that integrates linguistic comprehension and production, supporting learners' cognitive and skill development. Hence, it appears that developing speaking skills requires good preparation and motivating students to participate and interact freely according to systematic teaching methods, as identified by McCarthy and O'Keeffe (2004, p. 58) identified six key areas for teaching speaking skills, including: the impact of recorded texts, models of native and non- native speakers, the authenticity of teaching materials, methods of understanding speaking in the classroom, the selection of texts and accompanying skills, and recent developments in teaching materials and methods.

With the development of teaching methods, the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) emerged, which relied on repetition and imitation to mimic dialogue and overcome mother tongue habits, with the aim of developing oral communication (Freeman & Anderson, 2011, p. 77). However, this method was limited to repeating dialogues, which produced learners who were "like parrots," without any real development of communicative competence. Therefore, alternative methods were developed, such as communicative language teaching (CLT), which aims to enhance motivation and communicative competence (Freeman & Anderson, 2011, p. 78).

Skills in speaking involve mastery of several linguistics features, such as intonation, stress, rhythm, grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatics (Hebert, 2002, p. 33). This shows that students usually feel nervous in class when it comes to speaking, and there is less engagement in activities that can encourage free speaking, like discussions and role-playing (Hamad, 2013, p. 59). On the

other hand, activities designed for learning through the use of technology, such as WhatsApp, have the ability to enhance learning (Hamad, 2017, p. 102).

Previous studies:

Recent studies have also established the role of technology learning methodologies, such as simulation, role play, and digital stories, in the acquisition of language skills and overcoming language anxiety for learners (Oflaz, 2019; Hamad & Metwally, 2019). The effect of the use of interactive video technology, such as the software VideoScribe, which facilitates increased learner focus and the building of writing and speaking skills, as evidenced by a study by Maulina et al., 2019, and the effect of simulation education in improving oral skills and increasing microcompetences like grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary, as supported by another study by Laura and Amparo, 2019, also requires acknowledgment.

In the same vein, another research by ML Angelini and García-Carbonell (2019) revealed that simulation can also assist students in developing oral presentation abilities, fluency, the use of proper expressions, and the enhancement of research, discussion, and decision-making abilities. In contrast, the use of mobile learning has been proven to develop speaking, listening, and learning abilities (Hwang et al., 2014).

Research indicates that the inadequacy of educational resources, too much use of the target language, and a lack of confidence among the students have been factors associated with poor performance in oral activities (Al-Sobhi & Preece, 2018), though research conducted by Arunget et al. (2020) revealed that instruction based on the students' preference helps improve performance in oral activities as it aids in self-instruction and evaluation. Finally, research conducted by Vitthal (2010) established that strategies like self-presentation, one-minute

sessions, reading the newspaper aloud, role-playing, group discussions, and debates have contributed to an increase in fluency level.

Furthermore, research has shown that digital storytelling improves the speaking skills of students and word recall, and is effective in practicing language in the class (Hwang et al., 2016; Eissa, 2019). In addition, research has shown that the integration of simulation and new technologies has an impact that motivates students towards learning at their own level of ability (Hwang et al., 2014).

Firstly, based on the empirical findings, simulation-based education can be deemed an effective method for improvement in communication skills. This is supported given that simulation-based education overcomes some common issues in learning English, which include fear of speech, lack of fluency, and lack of practice opportunities in English (Hamad, 2017). Simulation-based education motivates students and encourages them to practice the language in everyday life (Hamad, 2017; Hamad & Metwally, 2019).

Research Method

This study employs a quasi-experimental design to investigate the impact of the teaching process using intelligent dialogue simulation on the acquisition of English communication skills by fourth-year students studying at preparatory schools. A control and experimental groups pre-test and post-test design is applied.

Research population and sample

The population to be studied consisted of all fourth-year preparatory school students in public schools in the city of () during the year 2025-2026, and it was estimated to be around 400 students aged between 15 and 16 years and including all genders.

The sample used was selected using stratified random sampling to ensure that there is representation of study participants by gender. The sample consisted of two equal groups: the experimental group (25 students) and the control group (25 students). The equivalence of the two groups in terms of age and prior speaking skills was verified before the study was conducted, as shown in the following table:

Table (1): Equivalence of the experimental and control groups in terms of age and speaking skills (pre-test)

Variable	Group	Number	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	T Calculated Value	Significance Level	Decision
Age (Years)	Experimental	25	15.84	0.42	0.63	0.53	Not Significant
	Controlled	25	15.92	0.39			
Speaking Skills (Pretest)	Experimental	25	52.36	3.18	0.41	0.68	Not Significant
	Controlled	25	52.04	3.07			

The table shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in terms of age and speaking skills in the pre-test, as the calculated T-values were lower than the tabulated value at the significance level (0.05). This indicates that the two groups were equivalent before the start of the experiment, allowing any differences that appear later in the post-test to be attributed to the effect of teaching based on intelligent dialogue simulation, rather than to other external factors.

Research requirements

The research requirements included the following elements:

- Educational curricula: Textbooks for the English language course for the fourth preparatory grade.
- Teaching technologies: computers, projectors, intelligent dialogue simulation applications, and programs for recording students' oral performance.
- Data collection tools: a scale for measuring the development of communicative competence in speaking skills, evaluation forms, and progress tracking tables.

Research tools:

The communication competence scale was designed based on the practical oral test model and contains 20 items to assess pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary use, ability to express ideas, and context comprehension. The design of the scale was grounded on some studies conducted previously which were relevant to the study at hand, such as the study of Hamad (2017), the study of Laura & Amparo (2019), and a study conducted by Hwang et al. (2014), which aimed at enhancing speaking skills through some interactive teaching methods and simulation processes.

2. Psychometric properties of the scale

a. Expert validity: The content validity of the scale was proven by showing the scale to seven experts in the English language and methods of teaching. In accordance with the feedback, the items were revised to be more clear and applicable.

b. Internal consistency: The internal consistency of the scale was calculated using Cronbach Alpha, as an indicator showing the extent to which the characteristics of the scale's items measure the same concept, with values above 0.70 accepted as good.

Table (2): Stability of the scale according to Cronbach's alpha coefficient

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Oral Communication Competence	20	0.87

The result indicates that the scale has high internal consistency, reflecting its reliability in measuring the speaking skills of fourth-grade students.

C. Split-half reliability Split-half reliability coefficients were determined to check the stability of the scale. The acceptable value of this criterion is ≥ 0.70 since it represents the degree to which the performance on each half and the other half of the scale correlates with each other.

The results are shown in the following:

Table (3): Scale stability according to split-half reliability

Scale	Number of Items	Spearman-Brown Coefficient
Oral Communication Competence	20	0.84

The results indicate that the scale is stable and reliable for measuring speaking skills across all its components.

Research application procedures

The study began with a pre-test of all students to determine their level of speaking skills. After that, teaching based on intelligent dialogue simulation was applied to the experimental group for 6 weeks, at a rate of two lessons per week, starting from Sunday, October 5, 2025, to November 9, 2025.

The experimental teaching was based on practical simulation methods, such as role-playing, interactive dialogues, digital stories, and the use of supporting technological applications. In contrast, the control group continued with traditional teaching without the use of any simulation practices. At the end of the experiment, a post-test was conducted to assess the impact of teaching on the speaking skills of both groups.

Statistical methods

The following statistical methods were used to analyze the data:

- Descriptive: arithmetic mean and standard deviation.
- Comparative analysis: T-test for independent samples to compare performance between the two groups, and T-test for related samples to analyze differences between pre- and post-tests.
- Validity and reliability verification: Cronbach's alpha coefficients, split-half scoring, and scale content analysis by arbitrators.

Verification and Discussion of Hypotheses:

First hypothesis: There are statistically significant differences at the significance level (0.05) on the English communication competence scale among fourth-grade students in the experimental and control groups in the post-test, due to the use of the intelligent dialogue simulation teaching. This hypothesis is examined by using the T-test among the experimental and control groups regarding the English communication competence scale. This process aims to check the extent to which the intelligent dialogue simulation teaching strategy is effective compared to the conventional approach in terms of the enhancement of speaking proficiency.

Table (4): Results of the independent samples t-test comparing the experimental and control groups in the post-test on the communicative competence scale

Group	Number	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Calculated T-value	Significance Level	Decision
Experimental	25	78.64	4.21	5.87	0.000	significant
Controlled	25	69.12	4.73			

The results show a statistically significant difference between the two groups in favor of the experimental group, as the calculated T value exceeded the tabulated value at the significance level (0.05). This was due to the fact the dialogue simulation strategy offered a semi-realistic educational environment which provided students the numerous chances of applying the English language meaningfully without the fear of committing errors. This was evident in the enhancement of fluency, accuracy in pronunciation, as well as the application of vocabulary.

This is in line with the findings obtained in previous research, for example, Laura & Amparo (2019) and Angelini & García-Carbonell (2019), which proved the efficacy of simulation teaching in cultivating speaking skills and grammatical-communicative competence, as well as the findings obtained in Hwang et al. (2014) regarding the significance of technology-aided interactive learning spaces in improving speaking and listening skills.

Hypothesis 2: There are statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level on the English communication competence scale between fourth-year preparatory school students in the experimental group in favor of the post-test compared to the pre-test. The aforementioned hypothesis was proven by comparison through the T-test for related samples between the

performance of the experimental group students in the pre-test and post-test, with the purpose of assessing the degree of progress created by the teaching procedure based on the intelligent dialogue simulation in the experimental group itself.

Table (5): Results of the post-test for two related samples of the experimental group between the pre-test and post-test on the communication competence scale

Application	Number	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Calculated T-Value	Significance Level	Decision
Pre-Test	25	52.36	3.18	14.92	0.000	significant
Post-Test	25	78.64	4.21			

The results indicate a statistically significant difference between the two applications in favor of the post-test, reflecting the powerful impact of the intelligent dialogue simulation strategy. This can be accounted for by the fact that the instructional input presented the students with opportunities for graduated practice in speaking simulated contexts that closely approximate real language use, thus influencing the students' language anxiety, self-confidence, intonation, tone, and linguistic structure of speech.

These findings support those that exist within the field, for instance, the study by Shumin (2002) on the relevance of language practice within a social setting, Hamad (2013) that fear of speaking affects communicative competence but can be alleviated by interactive activities, and the study by Oflaz (2019) that verified teaching method plays an important part in decreasing anxiety levels and improving speaking abilities.

Conclusions

Based on the research results and analysis, the conclusions can be summarized as follows:

- The proposed method based on the simulation of intelligent dialogue proved to be an effective means for improving the English communication skills for fourth-grade students in preparatory schools, given that the experimental group exceeded the traditional method in the post-test.
- Intelligent Dialogue Simulation was one factor that contributed to the enhanced speaking ability, fluency, pronunciation, language structure, and vocabulary usage, enabled by the semi-realistic contexts created inside the classroom.
- The strategy alleviated anxiety and fear of speaking, as well as enhanced students' self-confidence, which positively affected their levels of participation in class and language interaction.
- The findings proved that in the interactive learning environment enhanced by smart technology, the role of the learner was shifted from that of a passive recipient to that of an active participant, keeping in accordance with the latest learning trends of the 21st century.
- The study found that there is a mismatch between the aims of English language learning curricula and activities performed in English learning classes, thereby requiring the application of methods that prioritize practical application of the English language as opposed to by-hearting rules.
- The results have shown that the improvement of communicative competence cannot be attained solely through an increase in language material, but a reorganization of educational methods, considering the psychological and motivational aspects of learners, is necessary.

Recommendations

In light of the findings, the researcher recommends the following:

- Adopting teaching based on intelligent dialogue simulation as one of the effective methods in teaching English, especially at the preparatory stage, due to its positive impact on the development of communication skills.
- Training English teachers to design and implement dialogue simulation activities supported by modern educational technologies, as part of teacher preparation and in-service training programs.
- Reviewing methods of teaching speaking skills, moving from traditional methods to interactive methods that focus on the actual practice of language in real-life situations.
- Employ smart technologies and interactive educational applications in the classroom to enhance student motivation and develop their self-directed and collaborative learning.
- Allocate sufficient time for oral communication skills in English classes, providing real opportunities for language practice and interaction.
- Encourage school administrations to provide a supportive and psychologically safe classroom environment that reduces students' fear of making mistakes and promotes self-confidence and effective communication.

Suggestions

Based on the limitations and results of the research, the researcher suggests the following future studies:

- Study the impact of intelligent dialogue simulation-based teaching on the development of other language skills, such as listening, reading, and writing.



- Compare the effectiveness of intelligent dialogue simulation with other modern teaching strategies, such as project-based learning or the flipped classroom, in developing communication skills.
- Study the impact of intelligent dialogue simulation on reducing language anxiety and increasing student motivation to learn English.
- Conduct qualitative studies exploring the experiences of learners and teachers with the use of intelligent dialogue simulation to identify challenges and opportunities for application.

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