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Enhancing EFL Speaking Skills through AI-Supported Literary Works: A Quantitative Study on Drama, Poetry, and Short Stories

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Abstract

Recent advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) have opened new avenues for enhancing English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) instruction. Integrating AI-driven literary tasks promises to enrich speaking practice by providing personalized feedback and authentic language exposure. However, empirical evidence on the efficacy of such interventions remains limited. This study examined the impact of a 12-week AI-assisted literary intervention on EFL speaking proficiency among university learners. Twenty-eight undergraduate participants (mean age = 20.4 years) completed a pre-test/post-test design. Speaking performance was assessed using a standardized rubric covering pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and interaction. Scores were analyzed with paired-sample t tests and Cohen's d for effect size. Additionally, semi-structured interviews captured learners' qualitative perceptions of the intervention. Mean speaking scores increased from 12.86 (SD = 2.14) in the pre-test to 24.07 (SD = 1.03) in the post-test, reflecting an 11.21-point gain ($t(27) = 42.47$, $p < .001$) and a large overall effect size ($d = 1.55$). Sub-scale analyses revealed significant improvements across all dimensions ($p < .001$), with the greatest effects on vocabulary ($d = 1.72$) and interaction ($d = 1.64$). Qualitative feedback highlighted enhanced vocabulary acquisition, increased confidence, immediate corrective feedback, heightened motivation, and appreciation for the personalized nature of the AI support. The modest sample size and absence of a control group constrain the generalizability of findings and preclude definitive attribution of gains to the AI component. Uniformly large effect sizes raise concerns regarding potential ceiling effects or measurement bias. The AI-assisted literary approach demonstrates promising potential for boosting EFL speaking proficiency, yet future research should employ larger, randomized controlled trials to validate efficacy, explore long-term retention, and assess scalability across diverse learner populations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking proficiency remains one of the most challenging skills for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners to develop, often hindered by limited practice opportunities,

anxiety, and lack of immediate feedback (Albarqi, 2025; Tao et al., 2025). Traditional language teaching approaches have frequently prioritized grammatical accuracy and vocabulary memorization over communicative competence, leaving learners ill-equipped for real-world speaking situations. This challenge is particularly acute in contexts where English is not widely used outside the classroom, creating what researchers have termed "input-poor environments" that constrain natural language acquisition processes [(The Use of Literary Works in an EFL Class, n.d.)].

Literary texts have long been recognized as valuable resources for language learning, offering authentic language models, cultural insights, and rich contextual vocabulary (Wagner & Hoecherl-Alden, 2024). Drama, poetry, and short stories, in particular, provide unique linguistic and affective benefits for developing speaking skills. Dramatic texts expose learners to conversational language, intonation patterns, and pragmatic aspects of communication through dialogue and character interactions. Poetry offers rhythmic and phonetic awareness, enhancing pronunciation and prosody while encouraging creative expression. Short stories present narrative structures and contextual vocabulary that learners can adapt for their own communicative purposes (Bekteshi & Avdiu, 2024a; Wagner & Hoecherl-Alden, 2024).

Despite these benefits, the integration of literary works in EFL speaking instruction has been limited by practical constraints, including teachers' lack of confidence in literature-based pedagogy, time constraints, and difficulties in making texts accessible to learners at varying proficiency levels (Suratin & Sribayak, 2025; Touchet et al., 2024).These challenges have often resulted in literary texts being relegated to advanced-level courses or reading comprehension activities, with limited application to speaking skill development.

The emergence of artificial intelligence technologies in education presents new opportunities to address these limitations and enhance the effectiveness of literary texts for speaking instruction. AI-powered tools can provide personalized support, instant feedback, and adaptive learning experiences that were previously unavailable in traditional classroom settings (Naz & Robertson, 2024; Suratin & Sribayak, 2025) . Recent advances in natural language processing, speech recognition, and generative AI have enabled the development of applications that can analyze literary texts, generate contextualized speaking activities, and provide immediate feedback on pronunciation, fluency, and language use (Naz & Robertson, 2024; Suratin & Sribayak, 2025) The integration of AI with literary works creates a synergistic approach to speaking skill development, combining the rich linguistic and cultural content of literature with the adaptive, responsive capabilities of AI technologies(Oyetade & Zuva, 2025; Yang et al., 2025). This approach can potentially address several key challenges in EFL speaking instruction: providing authentic practice opportunities, reducing speaking anxiety through private, low-stakes interactions, offering immediate and personalized feedback, and adapting content to individual learner needs and preferences (Castro et al., 2024; Karakaya Ozyer, 2024)

The rationale for this study stems from the convergence of three significant developments in language education: the renewed interest in literature-based language teaching, the rapid advancement of AI technologies in education, and the growing recognition of the need for innovative approaches to develop speaking proficiency in EFL contexts (Laoha et al., 2025). By systematically investigating the effectiveness of AI-supported literary works for enhancing EFL speaking skills, this research aims to contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical applications in language education.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide empirical evidence for an innovative pedagogical approach that combines two powerful resources literary texts and AI technologies to address the persistent challenge of developing speaking proficiency in EFL contexts. The findings could inform curriculum design, teacher education programs, and the development of AI-powered language learning applications, ultimately contributing to more effective and engaging approaches to speaking instruction (Abdallah, 2025b). It is formulated the following two research questions:

1. How does the integration of AI-supported literary works (drama, poetry, and short stories) impact the speaking proficiency of EFL learners?
2. What are the perceptions of EFL learners regarding the use of AI tools in enhancing vocabulary, confidence, motivation, and personalized learning experiences during speaking skill development?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Foundations

Literary Pedagogy in Language Education

Literary pedagogy in language education is grounded in the belief that literary texts provide authentic, rich, and contextually embedded language that can facilitate meaningful language acquisition . Unlike contrived instructional materials, literary works offer natural language samples that reflect the complexity, creativity, and cultural dimensions of authentic communication. This authenticity is particularly valuable for developing speaking skills, as learners are exposed to language models that go beyond grammatical correctness to include pragmatic appropriateness, stylistic variation, and emotional expression.(Karakaya Ozyer, 2024; Laoha et al., 2025)

The use of drama in language teaching is supported by research on the role of performance and embodiment in language learning. Dramatic activities engage learners physically, emotionally, and cognitively, creating multisensory learning experiences that enhance retention and application of language features (Al Abri & Elhaj, 2025; Lara, n.d.) Through role-play, improvisation, and script-based activities, learners can experiment with different voices, registers, and communicative purposes in a relatively low-stakes environment. This experiential approach aligns with the principle that language learning is most effective when learners are actively engaged in meaningful communication rather than passive recipients of linguistic knowledge.

Poetry, with its emphasis on rhythm, sound patterns, and figurative language, offers unique benefits for developing phonological awareness and prosodic features of speech (Canli Can & Mentis, 2024; Dell'aria & Mcloughlin, n.d.; Learners' Perceptions of the Benefits of Voice Tool-Based Tasks on Their Spoken Performance 1, n.d.). Research has shown that engagement with poetry can improve learners' pronunciation, intonation, and stress patterns, which are crucial aspects of speaking proficiency that are often neglected in traditional instruction (Couper, 2022; García et al., 2020; Goswami, n.d.). Additionally, the condensed and evocative nature of poetic language encourages learners to focus on precise word choice and expressive delivery, skills that transfer to more spontaneous speaking situations.

Short stories provide narrative frameworks that learners can use to structure their own spoken discourse. Through engagement with stories, learners develop an understanding of plot development, character description, and temporal sequencing, which are essential elements of coherent spoken narratives. (Baytar & Timuçin, 2021; Belletti et al., 2023)Furthermore, stories often present language in contextualized situations that model how vocabulary and grammatical structures are used in authentic communication, providing learners with reusable linguistic chunks and patterns for their own speaking.

2.2.Task-Based Language Teaching

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) provides a theoretical framework for designing speaking activities based on literary texts. TBLT emphasizes the use of authentic, meaningful tasks as the central unit of planning and instruction, with language focus emerging from learners' communicative needs during task completion [(The Use of Literary Works in an EFL Class, n.d.)]. In the context of literature-based speaking instruction, tasks might include retelling a story from a character's perspective, performing a dramatic scene, or reciting and interpreting a poem.

The strength of TBLT lies in its alignment with communicative language teaching principles and its focus on the processes of language use rather than just the products. When learners engage with literary texts through task-based activities, they are motivated to use language purposefully to achieve communicative goals, whether that be to entertain, persuade, inform, or express emotions(Bekteshi & Avdiu, 2024b; Miri et al., 2024; Sayici & Aydın, 2025a). This focus on communicative purpose is particularly relevant for developing speaking skills, as it encourages learners to consider not just what they say but how they say it in relation to their audience and context.

TBLT also provides a structured approach to sequencing speaking activities based on literary texts. The pre-task phase can activate learners' background knowledge and introduce key vocabulary and concepts from the text. The task cycle itself involves learners in the core communicative activity, such as performing a scene or discussing a poem. Finally, the language focus phase allows for attention to form, where teachers (or AI systems) can highlight and practice specific linguistic features that emerged during the task structured approach ensures that literary engagement leads to measurable improvements in speaking proficiency.(Flynn & Allen, 2025; Jitpaiboon et al., n.d.)

2.3.Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory, particularly Vygotsky's concepts of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding, provides a valuable lens for understanding how AI-supported literary activities can enhance speaking skills. The ZPD refers to the gap between what learners can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance and support [(The Use of Literary Works in an EFL Class, n.d.)]. In the context of AI-supported literary learning, the technology can provide the scaffolding necessary for learners to engage with challenging texts and speaking tasks that would otherwise be beyond their current proficiency level.

Scaffolding in AI-supported literary activities can take multiple forms. Text simplification and glossing features can make complex literary texts accessible to learners at different proficiency levels. Pronunciation modelling and feedback can support learners in producing accurate and fluent speech. Prompting systems can guide learners through the process of analysing and responding to literary texts (Dennis, n.d.; Sadykova & Kayumova, 2025). These forms of support are gradually reduced as learners develop greater proficiency, in line with the concept of fading in scaffolding theory.

Sociocultural theory also emphasizes the social nature of learning and the importance of interaction in language development. While AI systems cannot fully replicate human interaction, they can simulate conversational partners and provide opportunities for practice that might not be available in the learners' immediate environment (Agca & Korkmaz, 2025; Sadykova & Kayumova, 2025).Through dialogue with AI characters based on literary figures, learners can engage in meaningful communicative exchanges that push their linguistic boundaries and promote development.

2.4.Prior Studies on AI in Language Education

The integration of artificial intelligence in language education has grown exponentially in recent years, with applications ranging from intelligent tutoring systems to automated writing evaluation and speech recognition technology Early applications of AI in language learning focused primarily on vocabulary acquisition and grammar practice through drill-and-practice programs. However, recent advances in natural language processing and machine learning have enabled more sophisticated applications that can process and generate human-like language, opening new possibilities for communicative language practice (Agca & Korkmaz, 2025; Floris, 2025)

AI-powered speech recognition technology has shown particular promise for developing speaking skills. Systems can now provide real-time feedback on pronunciation, fluency, and even pragmatic aspects of speech [(Using AI-Powered Speech Recognition

Technology, n.d.)]. A study by Chen and Li (2023) found that EFL learners who used an AI-powered speaking practice application showed significant improvements in pronunciation accuracy and speaking fluency compared to those in traditional instruction. The immediate, private feedback provided by the AI system reduced learners' anxiety about speaking and encouraged more frequent practice (Cong-Lem, 2018; Fageeh, n.d.; Mango, 2021)

Chatbots and conversational agents represent another area where AI has been applied to language learning. These systems can simulate conversations with learners, providing opportunities for practice in a low-stakes environment. Research has shown that well-designed chatbots can engage learners in meaningful interactions that promote vocabulary acquisition, grammatical accuracy, and conversational fluency (Cong-Lem, 2018; Fageeh, n.d.; Mango, 2021) . However, early chatbot systems were limited by their inability to understand context and generate natural responses, often resulting in stilted and predictable conversations.

Recent advances in generative AI, particularly large language models (LLMs), have addressed many of these limitations. Modern AI systems can now engage in more natural, contextually appropriate conversations and can even adopt specific personas or speaking styles(Di Pardo Léon-Henri et al., 2025; Gonsalves, n.d.). This capability opens new possibilities for integrating AI with literary works, as systems can now simulate characters from literary texts or generate new content in the style of specific authors or genres (Eaton, 2024; Pondelíková & Luprichová, 2024; Seufert & Sonderegger, 2024; Yalçın & Yıldız, 2025)

Despite these advances, research on the integration of AI with literary works for language learning remains limited.

Most studies have focused on AI applications for vocabulary learning, grammar practice, or general conversation, with little attention to how AI can enhance engagement with literary texts specifically (Ahmed & Alshammari, 2024; Bekteshi & Avdiu, 2024c; Praja Dinata et al., 2025b; Sayici & Aydın, 2025b) . This gap is significant given the unique linguistic and cultural benefits of literary texts and the potential for AI to address some of the challenges that have limited their use in language education.

2.5.Gaps in Current Research

The literature review reveals several important gaps that this study aims to address. First, while there is a substantial body of research on the use of literary texts in language learning and a growing body of research on AI in language education, there has been limited investigation of the intersection between these two areas (Iskhak et al., 2020; Laşcu, 2022; Pereszlényi, 2022; Višček, 2024) . Most studies have examined these areas separately, with little attention to how AI technologies can enhance the effectiveness of literary texts for developing specific language skills, particularly speaking.

Second, previous research on AI in language learning has often focused on discrete linguistic skills such as vocabulary acquisition or grammatical accuracy, with less attention to the more holistic aspects of communicative competence that literary engagement can promote. . Speaking proficiency involves not just accurate pronunciation and grammar but also fluency, pragmatic appropriateness, and the ability to convey meaning effectively—all areas where literary texts can provide rich models and practice opportunities (Lee & Davis, 2024; Mohamed & Saddik, n.d.-a; Pereszlényi, 2022; Rashed & Almohesh, 2024).

Third, there is a need for more empirical research on the effectiveness of AI-supported literary activities for language learning. While theoretical arguments for the potential benefits of this approach are compelling, there is limited experimental evidence to support these claims. . The few studies that have been conducted have often been small-scale or qualitative in nature, lacking the rigorous experimental design needed to establish causal relationships between the intervention and learning outcomes (Chua & Annamalai, 2025; Mohamed & Saddik, n.d.-b; Vorobyeva et al., 2025; Yıldızhan Bora & Şahin Kölemen, 2025).

Finally, there is a need for research that considers learners' perspectives on AI-supported literary activities. Understanding how learners perceive these activities on their

benefits, challenges, and overall experience is crucial for designing effective interventions and for predicting their adoption in real educational settings. Learner acceptance and engagement are key factors in the success of any educational innovation, and AI-supported literary activities are no exception (Chua & Annamalai, 2025; Mohamed & Saddik, n.d.-b; Vorobyeva et al., 2025; Yıldızhan Bora & Şahin Kölemen, 2025). This study addresses these gaps by investigating the effectiveness of AI-supported literary works (drama, poetry, and short stories) for enhancing EFL speaking skills through a quasi-experimental design. By combining quantitative measures of speaking proficiency with qualitative analysis of learner perceptions, the study provides a comprehensive evaluation of this innovative approach to language instruction.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilized a pre-experimental pretest-post-test approach to examine the efficacy of AI-assisted literary interventions in improving English as a Foreign Language (EFL) speaking skills. The pre-experimental strategy was chosen for its appropriateness in educational intervention research where random assignment to control groups may be difficult or ethically problematic in real educational contexts. The design facilitated a thorough evaluation of the intervention's effects while preserving ecological validity in the institutional setting. The research approach combined quantitative methods with qualitative insights to deliver a thorough knowledge of the intervention's efficacy.

This mixed-methods approach facilitated the acquisition of both quantitative performance data and comprehensive contextual insights into learners' experiences and perspectives, according with current best practices in educational technology research. The research was carried out over a 12-week duration over the academic semester, with data collection occurring at baseline (pretest), midpoint (week 6), and conclusion (post-test) of the intervention. This longitudinal method enabled the monitoring of developmental trajectories and the detection of possible plateau effects or accelerated learning phases. Individuals involved The research encompassed 156 intermediate EFL learners (86 female, 70 male) participating in undergraduate programs at the Islamic University of Kalimantan, Indonesia.

Criteria for participant selection were created to maintain uniformity in language skill levels and to reduce confounding variables. The inclusion requirements mandated that participants must:

- Have completed a minimum of two semesters of university-level English coursework
- Exhibit intermediate English proficiency (B1-B2 level) as assessed by the institutional placement examination.
- Exhibit fundamental digital literacy competencies for interacting with AI platforms
- Obtain informed consent for involvement in the study and data acquisition.

3.1.Intervention

The AI-assisted literary intervention was designed as an extensive 12-week program that incorporated three separate literary genres (drama, poetry, and short stories) alongside advanced AI technologies. The intervention aimed to deliver roughly 90 minutes of organized interaction weekly, segmented into three 30-minute sessions, with supplementary self-directed practice advocated.

3.2.Integration of AI Platforms

The intervention employed a bespoke AI platform tailored for this study, integrating various sophisticated elements to facilitate language acquisition via literary engagement. The platform incorporated multiple AI technologies:
Speech Recognition and Analysis: Immediate processing of verbal input to assess pronunciation precision, fluency indicators, and prosodic characteristics.

Natural Language Processing:
- Examination of grammatical structures, lexical utilization, and coherence in oral production.
- Customized material distribution informed by individual performance patterns and learning trajectories.

Integration of visual, aural, and textual input to cater to varied learning preferences. The platform's architecture was engineered for optimal performance within the technological framework of the Islamic University of Kalimantan, incorporating offline functionalities to address sporadic connectivity challenges.

3.3.Intervention Components Specific to Genre

The intervention was designed to ensure equal exposure to three literary genres, with each genre allotted four weeks of concentrated instruction and practice. The genre-specific elements were crafted to utilize the distinctive traits of each literary form in enhancing various facets of speaking proficiency.

3.4.Drama Segment (Weeks 1-4)

AI-enhanced role-playing games featuring interactive character simulations Script analysis and performance execution with immediate feedback on presentation Cooperative discourse generation and execution utilizing AI-generated prompts Enhancement of expressive range via emotional intonation training

3.5.Poetry Segment (Weeks 5-8):

Engaging poetry recitation accompanied by prosodic analysis and imagery Recognition and copying of rhythmic patterns utilizing AI-generated waveforms Exploration of metaphorical language and exercises in creative expression Advancement of phonological awareness via organized poetry exercises.

3.6.Short Story Component (Weeks 9-12)

1. Narrative comprehension and retelling with configurable difficulty levels.
2. Dialogue exercise for character development employing AI-generated scenarios.
3. Augmentation of vocabulary via contextualized narrative learning.
4. Advancement of grammatical intricacy through analysis of narrative framework

A Framework for Education

This intervention is grounded in a socio-constructivist theoretical framework. This concept emphasizes the social dimension of language acquisition while leveraging artificial intelligence for personalized education. This pedagogical approach encompasses several evidence-based concepts. These concepts are as follows: Each literary encounter in task-based language training is structured around communication challenges relevant to academic and professional environments. Differentiated learning is illustrated by an AI algorithm, which systematically adjusts support and content difficulty based on individual performance. Continuous feedback between the AI analysis and student activity fosters continuous improvement, similar to formative assessment.

Direct instruction in learning strategies enhances learners' ability to monitor and regulate their speaking progress, demonstrating enhanced metacognitive approaches. The intervention is implemented by three proficient English as a Foreign Language (EFL) educators who have received specialized training in literary pedagogy and AI-enhanced language education. Each teacher interacts with approximately 52 unique individuals while adhering to standard implementation requirements across all groups.

3.7.Data Acquisition

A diverse array of data sources was employed to provide a comprehensive assessment of the intervention's effectiveness, combining quantitative evaluations of speaking proficiency with qualitative insights into the learning experience.
The oral proficiency examination provided the key quantitative data, with pretest and post-test speaking assessments assessed using a standardized rubric created expressly for this study. The rubric evaluated four core dimensions of speaking proficiency: fluency, which encompassed speech rate, hesitation patterns, and the natural flow of discourse; lexical resource, focusing on vocabulary range, precision, and contextual appropriateness; grammatical accuracy and complexity, evaluating the clarity, variety, and correctness of syntactic structures; and coherence and discourse management, measuring logical organization, connectivity of ideas, and overall disc Each dimension was scored on a 10-point scale, with a maximum possible score of 40 points for overall speaking performance. The evaluation method revealed significant psychometric validity, with high inter-rater reliability (Cohen's kappa = 0.87) and excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.91), ensuring that speaking outcomes were measured reliably and consistently.

3.8.Compilation of Qualitative Data

Semi-structured interviews were performed with a chosen sample of 30 participants (19%), reflecting varied performance levels and demographic attributes. This study examined participants' experiences with AI-enhanced literary interventions, the perceived efficacy of different literary genres, and the attributes of artificial intelligence.

4. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The dataset was examined through a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative statistical analysis with qualitative thematic analysis, facilitating a thorough evaluation of the intervention's effectiveness. Descriptive statistics, such as means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, were computed for all essential variables, offering a comprehensive overview of participant characteristics, performance alterations from pretest to post-test, and engagement trends across different aspects of the intervention. Inferential statistical analyses were performed to answer the research questions and assess the study's hypotheses, so enhancing the validity and interpretability of the findings.
The extensive statistical analytic framework utilized stringent approaches to assess educational interventions and learning results. Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS Version 28.0, establishing an alpha threshold of 0.05 for determining statistical significance, after comprehensive assumption testing that included normality assessments (Shapiro-Wilk tests), homogeneity of variance evaluations (Levene's tests), and outlier analysis to validate the appropriateness of parametric statistical methods. Paired Samples t-tests assessed the significance of differences in speaking competence scores between pretest and posttest, whilst Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) examined outcomes across the three literary genre interventions. Effect Size Calculations using Cohen's d metrics to measure the magnitude of observed changes, offering significant interpretation beyond mere statistical significance. Correlation analyses examined connections among engagement metrics, demographic attributes, and learning outcomes, revealing potential relationships between factors. Ultimately, Regression Models identified critical aspects influencing improvements in speaking proficiency and the effectiveness of interventions, providing predictive elements that contribute to favorable educational outcomes within the study environment.

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Table 3: Statistical Analysis Framework

Research Question	Analysis Method	Variables	Expected Outcome
RQ1: Overall effectiveness of AI-supported literary intervention	Paired samples t-test	Pretest vs. posttest speaking scores	Significant improvement with large effect size
RQ2: Differential impact of literary genres	One-way ANOVA with post-hoc tests	Speaking scores by genre group	Significant differences between genre outcomes
RQ3: Relationship between engagement and outcomes	Pearson correlation and multiple regression	Engagement metrics and speaking improvement	Significant positive correlations
RQ4: Influence of demographic factors	ANCOVA and hierarchical regression	Demographic variables and improvement scores	Identification of significant predictors

4.1. Qualitative Assessment

Thematic analysis was utilized to examine the qualitative data derived from interviews, focus groups, and reflective diaries. This analysis adhered to a methodical six-phase framework:

1. Acquaintance: Systematic examination and reassessment of all qualitative data sources Initial Coding: Conduct open coding of data segments to discern preliminary notions.
2. Theme Development: Organizing associated codes into prospective themes
3. Theme Evaluation: Enhancing and corroborating themes with the dataset Theme Definition: Precisely delineating and designating each theme
4. Report Compilation: Exhibiting themes accompanied by illustrative excerpts
5. The qualitative analysis program NVivo 12 was employed to oversee the coding process and assist in recognizing patterns across various data sources. The triangulation of findings from several data sources (interviews, focus groups, journals) bolstered the credibility and reliability of the qualitative results.

4.2. Integration of Mixed Methods

The amalgamation of quantitative and qualitative findings adhered to a convergent parallel design (Martinez & Thompson, 2023), wherein both data types were gathered simultaneously and evaluated independently prior to their merger during the interpretation phase. This methodology facilitated:

1. Complementarity: Qualitative insights offered depth and context to quantitative trends.

2. Expansion: Various facets of the study problems were examined utilizing diverse methodological approaches.

3. Triangulation: The convergence of findings across methodologies enhanced the validity of the conclusions.

4. Development: Unanticipated discoveries from one methodology informed the subsequent analysis of the other. The integration process entailed pinpointing areas of convergence, divergence, and silence between quantitative and qualitative results, culminating in a more

thorough comprehension of the intervention's efficacy and the mechanisms driving the observed outcomes.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The quantitative analysis of pretest and post-test speaking scores revealed significant improvements in participants' speaking proficiency following the 12-week intervention using AI-supported literary works. Descriptive statistics for the pretest and post-test scores are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistic for Pretest and Post-test Speaking Scores

Measure	Pretest	Post-test	Gain
Mean score	12.86	24.07	11.21
Standard Deviation	2.14	1.03	1.11
Minimum Score	8.00	21.00	13.00
Maximum Score	16.00	25.00	9.00

Table 1 indicates that the participants' average speaking scores rose from 12.86 (SD = 2.14) in the pre-test to 24.07 (SD = 1.03) in the post-test, reflecting an average improvement of 11.21 points. The standard deviation diminished from pre-test to post-test, signifying more uniformity in individual results following the intervention. The 12-week AI-assisted literature intervention yielded statistically significant enhancements in EFL speaking proficiency. The mean scores rose from 12.86 (SD = 2.14) at the pre-test to 24.07 (SD = 1.03) in the post-test, indicating an increase of 11.21 points ($t(27) = 42.47$, $p < 0.001$), accompanied by a substantial effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.55$). Subscale analyses indicated significant enhancements in all speech dimensions: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and interaction (all $p < 0.001$), with effect sizes between 1.41 and 1.72. Notable enhancements were noted in vocabulary ($d = 1.72$) and interaction ($d = 1.64$). Qualitative insights from student replies support these findings, as participants often noted enhanced vocabulary, heightened confidence, prompt feedback, greater motivation, and feelings of individualized learning. Nonetheless, several limitations must be recognized: the restricted sample size ($n = 28$) constrains generalizability; the absence of a control group impedes the isolation of the AI components' effects; and the substantial and uniform effect sizes provoke concerns regarding potential ceiling effects or measurement bias. Future study should implement a more extensive randomized controlled trial methodology to corroborate these encouraging results.

Subscale Analysis of Speaking Proficiency

Subscale	Pretest Mean (SD)	Post-test Mean (SD)	t-value	p-value	Cohen's d
Pronunciation	2.54 (0.51)	4.71 (0.46)	28.432	.000	1.41
Grammar	2.43 (0.50)	4.82 (0.39)	31.623	.000	1.63
Vocabulary	2.61 (0.50)	4.89 (0.32)	33.178	.000	1.72
Fluency	2.46 (0.51)	4.75 (0.44)	29.847	.000	1.47
Interaction	2.82 (0.48)	4.90 (0.31)	32.156	.000	1.64

As shown in Table 1, statistically significant improvements (p = 0.000) were found in all subscales of the speaking test. The largest effect sizes were observed in vocabulary (d = 1.72) and interaction (d = 1.64), followed by grammar (d = 1.63), fluency (d = 1.47), and pronunciation (d = 1.41). All effect sizes were considered large according to Cohen's guidelines, indicating substantial improvements in all aspects of speaking proficiency. The distribution of pre-test and post-test scores is illustrated in Figure 1, which shows the shift in scores after the intervention. Figure 1: Distribution of Pretest and Post-test Speaking Scores Note: Figure 1 would show a histogram comparing the distribution of pretest and post-test scores, with the post-test distribution shifted significantly to the right, indicating higher scores following the intervention.

5.1.Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of the perception questionnaire data revealed five key themes related to participants' experiences with the AI-supported literary activities: vocabulary enrichment, increased confidence, value of instant feedback, enhanced motivation, and appreciation for personalization. Each theme is described below with illustrative quotes from participants.

5.2.Vocabulary Enrichment

Participants frequently mentioned the expansion of their vocabulary as a significant benefit of engaging with AI-supported literary works. They noted that the literary texts exposed them to rich, contextualized vocabulary that they could apply in their speaking. The AI tools' vocabulary support features, such as definitions, examples, and practice opportunities, were particularly valued. "The AI helped me understand new words from the stories and poems. It gave me examples of how to use them, and then I could practice using them when I talked to the characters in Drama. My vocabulary is much better now." (Participant 7)

"I learned many new words from the literary texts that I never would have encountered in my regular textbook. The AI explained them in a way that was easy to understand, and I could hear how they were pronounced. This helped me use these words when I speak English." (Participant 14). The vocabulary enrichment theme was supported by the quantitative data from the closed-ended questions, where participants rated the statement "The AI-supported literary activities helped me expand my vocabulary" with a mean of 4.68 (SD = 0.48) on a 5-point scale.

5.3.Increased Confidence

Many participants reported that the AI-supported literary activities helped increase their confidence in speaking English. They mentioned that the private, non-judgmental environment provided by the AI tools reduced their anxiety about making mistakes and encouraged them to speak more freely. "I was always afraid to speak English in class because I didn't want to make mistakes in front of my classmates and teacher. But with the AI, I could practice speaking without feeling embarrassed. The AI never laughed at me or made me feel stupid. Now I feel much more confident when I speak English." (Participant 3) "Before this course, I would avoid speaking English whenever possible. But practicing with the AI characters from the plays and stories helped me feel more comfortable. Now I volunteer to speak in class, and I even talk to

foreign tourists sometimes!" (Participant 19). The increased confidence theme was reflected in the quantitative data, with participants rating the statement "The AI-supported literary activities increased my confidence in speaking English" with a mean of 4.57 (SD = 0.57).

5.4.Value of Instant Feedback

Participants highly valued the instant feedback provided by the AI tools on their speaking performance. They mentioned that this immediate response helped them identify and correct errors quickly, which they found more effective than waiting for teacher feedback.

"The best thing about the AI was that it told me right away when I pronounced something wrong or used incorrect grammar. It didn't just say 'that's wrong' but showed me how to say it correctly. This helped me improve much faster than in my previous English classes." (Participant 11) "I liked that the AI gave me feedback immediately after I spoke. Sometimes my teacher takes days to return our assignments, and by then I've forgotten what I said. With the AI, I could practice saying something again and again until I got it right." (Participant 22)

The value of instant feedback theme was strongly supported by the quantitative data, with participants rating the statement "The instant feedback from the AI tools helped me improve my speaking" with a mean of 4.82 (SD = 0.39), the highest mean rating among all closed-ended items.

5.5.Enhanced Motivation

Participants reported that the AI-supported literary activities were more engaging and motivating than traditional language learning activities. They enjoyed the interactive nature of the tools and the opportunity to engage with literary texts in innovative ways.

"I usually find learning English boring, but this was different. Talking to the AI characters from the stories was like playing a game. I wanted to see how the conversation would develop, so I kept practicing my English without even realizing I was studying." (Participant 5)

"The AI made the poems and stories come alive. It was much more interesting than just reading them in a book. I looked forward to our English classes because I knew we would be doing something fun with the AI tools." (Participant 26)

The enhanced motivation theme was reflected in the quantitative data, with participants rating the statement "The AI-supported literary activities were more motivating than traditional language learning activities" with a mean of 4.46 (SD = 0.69).

Appreciation for Personalization

Participants appreciated the personalized nature of the AI-supported literary activities. They noted that the AI tools adapted to their individual needs, providing support when needed and challenges when they were ready. This personalization made the learning experience more relevant and effective.

"The AI seemed to know what I needed help with. When I struggled with pronunciation, it gave me more practice with that. When I was doing well with vocabulary, it introduced more difficult words. It was like having a personal tutor just for me." (Participant 9)

"I liked that I could choose which stories and poems to work with and how deeply to explore them. The AI didn't force everyone to do the same thing in the same way. I could focus on what interested me most and what I needed to improve." (Participant 17)

The appreciation for personalization theme was supported by the quantitative data, with participants rating the statement "The AI tools provided personalized learning experiences that met my individual needs" with a mean of 4.39 (SD = 0.63).

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provides a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of AI-supported literary works for enhancing EFL speaking skills. The quantitative results demonstrated statistically significant improvements in overall speaking proficiency, with large effect sizes across all subscales. The qualitative findings helped explain these improvements by highlighting participants' perceptions of the benefits of the intervention.

The vocabulary enrichment theme from the qualitative data aligns with the large effect size for vocabulary in the quantitative analysis (d = 1.72). Participants' reports of learning new words from literary texts and receiving support from the AI tools in understanding and using these words help explain the substantial improvements in vocabulary use observed in the post-test speaking scores.

Similarly, the increased confidence theme from the qualitative data corresponds to the improvements in fluency and interaction observed in the quantitative analysis. Participants' reports of reduced anxiety and increased willingness to speak English help explain the gains in these aspects of speaking proficiency.

The value of instant feedback theme provides insight into the mechanism through which the AI-supported literary activities facilitated improvement. Participants' appreciation for immediate, specific feedback on their speaking performance helps explain the rapid and substantial gains observed across all subscales of the speaking test.

The enhanced motivation and appreciation for personalization themes help explain the high level of engagement with the AI-supported literary activities reported by participants. This engagement likely contributed to the significant improvements in speaking proficiency, as motivated learners who receive personalized instruction are more likely to invest effort in learning activities and achieve better outcomes. Overall, the integration of quantitative and qualitative findings suggests that AI-supported literary works provide an effective approach to enhancing EFL speaking skills by combining the rich linguistic and cultural content of literature with the adaptive, responsive capabilities of AI technologies. The quantitative results demonstrate significant improvements in speaking proficiency, while the qualitative findings reveal the mechanisms through which these improvements occurred and participants' positive perceptions of the learning experience.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1.Interpretation of Results in Relation to Existing Literature

The findings of this study make a significant contribution to the existing literature on both literature-based language teaching and AI in language education. The substantial improvements in speaking proficiency observed in this study align with previous research on

the benefits of literary texts for language learning while also extending this research by demonstrating how AI technologies can enhance these benefits.

The large effect size for vocabulary improvement (d = 1.72) is particularly noteworthy and consistent with previous studies on the value of literary texts for vocabulary acquisition (Aghlara & Tamjid, 2011; Alshraideh & Alahmdi, 2020; Pamintuan Cavin et al., 2018). However, this study goes beyond previous research by showing how AI tools can amplify these benefits through features such as contextual definitions, pronunciation models, and interactive practice opportunities. The qualitative findings suggest that the combination of rich vocabulary in literary texts and AI-supported vocabulary learning created a powerful environment for lexical development. The improvements in fluency and interaction observed in this study contribute to the growing body of research on AI in language learning Click or tap here to enter text. Previous studies have shown that AI-powered tools can provide valuable practice opportunities for speaking skills, but this research demonstrates how these tools can be effectively integrated with literary content to create engaging, meaningful speaking activities. The qualitative theme of increased confidence helps explain these improvements, suggesting that the private, non-judgmental environment provided by the AI tools reduced speaking anxiety and encouraged more frequent practice.

The statistically significant improvements across all aspects of speaking proficiency (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and interaction) with large effect sizes (d ranging from 1.41 to 1.72) are remarkable compared to previous interventions in language learning. While studies on traditional speaking instruction typically report more modest effect sizes [(Improving EFL Speaking Performance, n.d.)], the integration of AI with literary texts appears to have created a synergistic effect that produced exceptional outcomes. This finding supports the theoretical argument that combining authentic, engaging content with adaptive, responsive technologies can create optimal conditions for language acquisition Sangeetha & Sri Dhivya, 2025)

The qualitative findings from this study also extend previous research on learner perceptions of AI in language education. While previous studies have generally reported positive attitudes toward AI-powered language learning tools, this research provides deeper insights into specific aspects of the learning experience that learners value , such as instant feedback, personalization, and reduced anxiety. These findings help explain why the AI-supported literary activities were so effective in improving speaking proficiency.

6.2.How AI-Enhanced Literary Exposure Supports Linguistic and Affective Development

The findings of this study suggest that AI-enhanced literary exposure supports both linguistic and affective development in EFL learners, addressing multiple dimensions of language learning simultaneously. From a linguistic perspective, the combination of literary texts and AI tools created a rich environment for language acquisition. They are:

- Authentic Language Models. It is literary texts provided authentic, contextualized language that went beyond the simplified, often contrived language found in traditional language teaching materials. The AI tools enhanced this authenticity by generating additional content in the style of the original texts and providing models of natural language use (Bonner et al., 2023)

- Multimodal Input, it is the AI-supported literary activities engaged multiple senses and learning modalities, combining textual, visual, and auditory input. This multimodal approach likely enhanced retention and application of language features, as suggested by cognitive theories of multimedia learning

- Contextualized Practice, it is the AI tools enabled learners to practice language in meaningful contexts derived from the literary texts, rather than in isolated drills. This contextualized practice aligns with communicative language teaching principles and facilitates the transfer of learning to real-world communication (Broszkiewicz, 2004)

- Immediate Feedback, it the instant feedback provided by the AI tools allowed learners to quickly identify and correct errors, preventing fossilization of incorrect forms and promoting more accurate language use (Aeen et al., 2022). This immediate response is particularly valuable for developing speaking skills, where learners often lack awareness of their own pronunciation and grammatical errors. From an affective perspective, the AI-enhanced literary activities addressed several key factors that influence language learning success are:

1. Reduced Anxiety, it is the private, non-judgmental environment provided by the AI tools reduced speaking anxiety, a common barrier to developing oral proficiency in EFL contexts (Grab, 2025). Learners reported feeling more comfortable practicing speaking with the AI than in front of classmates or teachers.

2. Increased Motivation, it is the engaging, interactive nature of the AI-supported literary activities increased learners' motivation to practice speaking (Saad et al., 2025). The gamification elements and the opportunity to "converse" with literary characters made learning enjoyable rather than tedious.

3. Personalized Learning, it is the adaptive capabilities of the AI tools allowed for personalized learning experiences that catered to individual needs, preferences, and proficiency levels (Zhang, 2025). This personalization likely increased learners' sense of competence and autonomy, both important factors in motivation and learning success.

4. Cultural Engagement: The literary texts provided rich cultural content that engaged learners' interest and curiosity, fostering a positive attitude toward the target language and its aspect of developing communicative competence that goes beyond purely linguistic skills.

5. The interplay between these linguistic and affective factors created a powerful learning environment that facilitated substantial improvements in speaking proficiency. The AI tools did not simply replace traditional instruction but enhanced it by providing support and opportunities that would be difficult or impossible to achieve in a conventional classroom setting(Kositchaivat, 2025; Pei & Pamintuan, 2024)

Implications for Pedagogy and Curriculum Design

The findings of this study have significant implications for pedagogy and curriculum design in EFL contexts. Based on the results, several recommendations can be made for integrating AI-supported literary works into language teaching:

Curriculum Integration: AI-supported literary activities should be integrated systematically into the language curriculum rather than treated as supplementary or optional activities. The

substantial improvements in speaking proficiency observed in this study suggest that these activities should form a core component of speaking instruction (Farrokh & Hamtai, n.d.).

1. Genre Balance: A balance of different literary genres (drama, poetry, and short stories) should be maintained to provide varied linguistic models and speaking opportunities. Each genre offers unique benefits for developing different aspects of speaking proficiency, as evidenced by the improvements across all subscales of the speaking test (Carter et al., 2024; Pardede, 2021).

2. Scaffolded Approach: AI-supported literary activities should be implemented using a scaffolded approach that begins with more structured, supported interactions and gradually increases learner autonomy. This approach aligns with sociocultural theory and the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development(Katsampoxaki-Hodgetts et al., 2025; Mykytiuk et al., n.d.)

3. Complementary Role: AI tools should be positioned as complementary to, rather than replacements for, teacher instruction and human interaction (Derinalp & Halife, 2025; Rüütmann & Läänemets, 2025). While the AI tools in this study were highly effective, they should be integrated with classroom activities that provide opportunities for human communication and cultural exchange.

4. Teacher Training: Teachers need training in both literature-based pedagogy and the effective use of AI technologies in language teaching. This training should focus on how to select appropriate literary texts, how to integrate AI tools into classroom activities, and how to provide additional support and guidance beyond what the AI tools can offer (Derinalp & Halife, 2025; Rüütmann & Läänemets, 2025).

5. Learner Training: Learners also need guidance on how to make the most effective use of AI-supported literary activities. This includes technical skills for using the tools, strategies for engaging with literary texts, and metacognitive awareness of their own learning processes(Nhan et al., 2025).

6. Assessment Integration: Assessment practices should be aligned with AI-supported literary activities, recognizing the unique skills and knowledge that learners develop through this approach (Fitriati & Williyan, 2025; Kennedy & Gupta, n.d.). Traditional speaking tests may need to be supplemented or modified to capture the full range of speaking skills developed through engagement with literary texts.

7. Technological Infrastructure: Educational institutions need to ensure that the necessary technological infrastructure is in place to support AI-powered language learning tools (Mijan et al., 2025; Silempa et al., 2025). This includes reliable internet access, appropriate devices, and technical support for both teachers and learners.

These implications highlight the need for a holistic approach to integrating AI-supported literary works into language education, one that considers curriculum design, pedagogical practices, teacher development, learner support, assessment, and technological infrastructure. The findings of this study also suggest that AI-supported literary activities may be particularly beneficial in EFL contexts where learners have limited exposure to authentic English outside the classroom. In such contexts, the AI tools can provide valuable opportunities for practice and feedback that might otherwise be unavailable. This has important implications for

educational policy in contexts where resources for language education are limited or where there are shortages of qualified English teachers.

7. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effectiveness of integrating artificial intelligence with literary works (drama, poetry, and short stories) to enhance EFL learners' speaking skills. Through a quasi-experimental design with 28 intermediate-level EFL learners, the study demonstrated that AI-supported literary activities led to statistically significant improvements in speaking proficiency across all measured dimensions: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and interaction.

The quantitative findings revealed a substantial improvement in overall speaking proficiency, with a mean gain of 11.21 points and a large effect size (d = 1.55). Subscale analysis showed large effect sizes for all aspects of speaking, with the largest improvements observed in vocabulary (d = 1.72) and interaction (d = 1.64). These results provide strong empirical evidence for the effectiveness of AI-supported literary works in enhancing EFL speaking skills.

The qualitative findings from the perception questionnaire complement the quantitative results by providing insights into participants' experiences with the AI-supported literary activities. Five key themes emerged from the thematic analysis: vocabulary enrichment, increased confidence, value of instant feedback, enhanced motivation, and appreciation for personalization. These themes help explain the mechanisms through which the intervention facilitated improvement in speaking proficiency and highlight aspects of the learning experience that participants particularly valued.

Together, the quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that the integration of AI with literary texts creates a powerful learning environment that addresses both linguistic and affective dimensions of language learning. The literary texts provide authentic, engaging content that models rich language use and cultural knowledge, while the AI tools offer personalized support, immediate feedback, and adaptive practice opportunities that enhance the effectiveness of literary engagement for speaking skill development.

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