

Zoom as a Synchronous Teaching and Learning Platform to Develop Speaking as a Skill among English as Second Language Learners

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Abstract - The current technological advancement along with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has forced educationists and policymakers to integrate technological apps and tools in the educational programs to facilitate effective learning. One of the concerns of the teachers in the classroom is lack of engagement of the learners in their learning. Kearsley's (1997) theory of engagement emphasizes that students should be able to meaningfully involve in their learning through meaningful, effective, and interactive tasks. The use of technology can promote engagement in the ESL class that is difficult to achieve otherwise. Accordingly, the main purpose of the current study is to investigate to what extent the use of zoom as synchronous teaching and learning platform is effective in developing learners' speaking skills through engagement with their peers in the breakout room activities in the English as a Second Language classroom. The current study (n=12) adopted an experimental research design with a mixed-method approach to conducting this study using a pre-test and a post-test to measure the students' improvement in speaking through engagement. The interview protocol was also used to record students' perceptions about their engagement during the activities. The findings indicate that activities in the breakout rooms in zoom sessions enhanced ESL students' engagement which enables them to communicate effectively with their peers than what was observed in the face-to-face class sessions.

Keywords: zoom, engagement, breakout rooms