

ABSTRACT

Adawiyah, Siti Rabiah, 2230150019, 2025., Investigating Informal Digital Learning of English (IDLE) On EFL Students' Speaking Skills: A Neo-Ecological Perspective. A paper. English Education Department, Postgraduate Program, State Islamic University of Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung

Informal Digital Learning of English (IDLE) has emerged as a significant mode of language acquisition beyond formal classroom settings. It encompasses students' self-directed engagement with English through various digital tools such as social media, podcasts, YouTube, online games, and language exchange applications. This study investigates how IDLE shapes the speaking skills of EFL students from a neo-ecological perspective, utilizing Bronfenbrenner's nested ecosystems model (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem). Specifically, it aims to explore the ecological factors influencing students' speaking practices in IDLE and to investigate the speaking development opportunities afforded by IDLE.

This qualitative case study involved four second-semester students from the UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung English Education Department. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their IDLE habits and speaking proficiency. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, open-ended questionnaires, personal learning journals, and technology-assisted classroom observation using the RATER app. These instruments provided rich insights into students' speaking experiences across digital platforms and their interactions within various ecological levels.

Findings revealed that students' speaking practices in IDLE are shaped by ecological factors across four levels: support from family, peers, and motivation (microsystem); teacher integration and digital communities (mesosystem); institutional policies and digital resources (exosystem); internet policies, economic and cultural attitudes toward English (macrosystem). IDLE offers speaking development opportunities through authentic exposure to real-life spoken English through YouTube videos, podcasts, online games, and social platforms. It provides interactive practice through language exchange apps, voice chats, and virtual group discussions. IDLE also fosters confidence by offering a self-paced environment and personalized learning based on individual goals and comfort levels. The study recommends that teachers and policymakers consider the multifaceted digital ecosystem in designing strategies that integrate informal digital practices into formal EFL instruction.

Keywords: EFL, IDLE, Neo-ecological, Speaking