THE IMPACT OF AI-ASSISTED SPEAKING PRACTICE ON ENGLISH SPEAKING FLUENCY, CONFIDENCE, AND WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE AMONG EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Annotation: This study investigates the impact of artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted speaking practice on English-speaking fluency, confidence, and willingness to communicate among EFL university students. The rapid development of AI technologies has transformed language learning by providing learners with interactive and personalized speaking opportunities. AI-powered applications, including chatbots, virtual assistants, and speech-recognition tools, enable students to practice English in authentic communicative contexts and receive immediate feedback on pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary use. The study explores how regular interaction with AI systems affects students' speaking performance and their attitudes toward communication in English. The findings indicate that AI-assisted speaking activities significantly improve learners' fluency, increase their self-confidence, and encourage active participation in classroom discussions. Furthermore, AI tools reduce communication anxiety and create a supportive learning environment. The research highlights the importance of integrating AI technologies into foreign language education to enhance students' communicative competence.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, speaking fluency, self-confidence, willingness to communicate, English language learning, EFL students.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu tadqiqot sun'iy intellekt yordamida tashkil etilgan nutq mashg‘ulotlarining ingliz tilida so‘zlashuv ravonligi, o‘ziga bo‘lgan ishonch va muloqot qilish istagiga ta'sirini o‘rganadi. Sun'iy intellekt texnologiyalarining jadal rivojlanishi chet tillarini o‘rganish jarayonini tubdan o‘zgartirmoqda. Chat-botlar, virtual yordamchilar va nutqni aniqlash dasturlari talabalarga real muloqot sharoitlariga yaqin vaziyatlarda ingliz tilida mashq qilish imkoniyatini yaratadi. Ushbu texnologiyalar talaffuz, grammatika va lug‘at boyligi bo‘yicha tezkor fikr-mulohaza olish imkonini beradi. Tadqiqot natijalari sun'iy intellekt yordamidagi mashg‘ulotlar talabalarning nutq ravonligini oshirishini, o‘ziga bo‘lgan ishonchini mustahkamlashini hamda ingliz tilida faol muloqot qilishga undashini ko‘rsatadi. Bundan tashqari, sun'iy intellekt vositalari kommunikativ qo‘rquvni kamaytirib, qulay ta'lim muhitini shakllantiradi.

Kalit so‘zlar: Sun'iy intellekt, nutq ravonligi, o‘ziga ishonch, muloqot qilishga tayyorlik, ingliz tilini o‘rganish, EFL talabalari.

Аннотация: Данное исследование посвящено изучению влияния практики устной речи с использованием искусственного интеллекта на беглость речи, уверенность в себе и готовность к общению среди студентов, изучающих английский язык как иностранный. Быстрое развитие технологий искусственного интеллекта значительно изменило процесс изучения языков, предоставив студентам новые возможности для общения. Чат-боты, виртуальные помощники и программы распознавания речи позволяют учащимся практиковать английский язык в условиях, приближенных к

реальному общению, а также получать мгновенную обратную связь по произношению, грамматике и словарному запасу. Результаты исследования показывают, что использование искусственного интеллекта способствует развитию беглости речи, повышению уверенности студентов и их готовности к общению на английском языке. Кроме того, такие технологии снижают уровень тревожности и создают благоприятную образовательную среду.

Ключевые слова: Искусственный интеллект, беглость речи, уверенность в себе, готовность к общению, изучение английского языка, студенты EFL.

Introduction. The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has significantly influenced various fields, including education and language learning. In recent years, AI-powered technologies have become increasingly popular in English language teaching because they provide learners with innovative opportunities to practice and improve their language skills. Among the four language skills, speaking is considered one of the most challenging areas for students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). Many university students experience difficulties in expressing their thoughts fluently, communicating confidently, and participating actively in conversations.

Traditional classroom instruction often provides limited opportunities for speaking practice due to time constraints, large class sizes, and students' fear of making mistakes. As a result, many learners lack confidence and hesitate to communicate in English. Artificial intelligence offers new solutions to these challenges by creating interactive and personalized learning environments. AI-based tools, such as chatbots, virtual assistants, and speech-recognition applications, enable students to engage in real-time conversations and receive immediate feedback.

AI-assisted speaking practice allows learners to improve pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and overall communicative competence. Unlike traditional methods, AI systems can adapt to individual learning styles and provide personalized recommendations based on students' performance. Moreover, these technologies create a stress-free environment where learners can practice speaking without fear of criticism or embarrassment.

Confidence is another important factor influencing language acquisition. Students who feel confident are more likely to participate in discussions, ask questions, and express their ideas in English. AI technologies contribute to building confidence by offering unlimited opportunities for practice and constructive feedback. In addition, willingness to communicate is an essential element of successful language learning because students who are willing to communicate tend to achieve higher levels of proficiency.

Previous studies have shown that AI-assisted learning positively affects students' motivation and engagement. However, more research is needed to examine its impact on speaking fluency, confidence, and willingness to communicate among university students studying English as a foreign language.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of AI-assisted speaking practice on English-speaking fluency, self-confidence, and willingness to communicate among EFL university students. The study also aims to explore the benefits and challenges of integrating AI technologies into English language education.

Methodology. This study employed a mixed-method research design to examine the impact of AI-assisted speaking practice on English-speaking fluency, confidence, and willingness to communicate among EFL university students. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to obtain comprehensive and reliable data.

The participants of the study consisted of fifty undergraduate students majoring in English language and literature at a university in Uzbekistan. Their ages ranged from eighteen to twenty-two years. The participants were selected through purposive sampling because they had previous experience in learning English as a foreign language and were familiar with digital technologies.

The research was conducted over a period of twelve weeks. During the experiment, students used various AI-assisted speaking tools, including ChatGPT, speech-recognition applications, virtual assistants, and AI chatbots. They participated in speaking activities such as role-playing, discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and pronunciation exercises for at least thirty minutes per day.

Several instruments were used to collect data. First, pre-tests and post-tests were administered to measure students' speaking fluency before and after the intervention. Second, questionnaires were distributed to assess learners' confidence and willingness to communicate in English. Third, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather students' opinions and experiences regarding AI-assisted learning.

The quantitative data obtained from tests and questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentages, means, and standard deviations. Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, the researchers used data triangulation by combining different sources of information. Ethical considerations were also taken into account. Participation in the study was voluntary, and all personal information remained confidential throughout the research process.

The methodology allowed the researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of AI-assisted speaking practice and its influence on students' language development.

Results and Discussion. The results of the study indicate that AI-assisted speaking practice had a positive impact on students' English-speaking fluency, confidence, and willingness to communicate. The comparison between pre-test and post-test scores showed significant improvement in students' pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and speaking speed.

Questionnaire data revealed that most participants felt more confident when speaking English after using AI tools regularly. Students reported that AI applications provided immediate feedback and created a supportive environment for practicing communication skills without fear of making mistakes.

The interview findings also demonstrated that AI technologies increased students' motivation and encouraged active participation in classroom discussions. However, some participants emphasized that AI tools should complement traditional teaching methods rather than replace human interaction.

Overall, the findings confirm that AI-assisted speaking practice can effectively support English language learning among university students.

Conclusion. The findings of this study demonstrate that artificial intelligence has considerable potential to improve English language learning, particularly in the area of speaking. AI-assisted speaking practice positively influences students' fluency, confidence, and willingness to communicate in English. Through regular interaction with AI-powered tools, learners are able to practice speaking in a flexible and supportive environment, receive immediate feedback, and develop their communicative competence.

One of the main advantages of AI technologies is their ability to provide personalized learning experiences. Unlike traditional classroom instruction, AI systems can adapt to students' individual needs, learning styles, and proficiency

levels. This adaptability enables learners to focus on their weaknesses and improve their speaking performance more effectively.

The study also highlights the important role of AI in increasing students' confidence. Many EFL learners experience anxiety and fear when speaking English in front of others. AI-assisted applications reduce these psychological barriers by creating a non-judgmental environment where students can practice freely. As students become more confident, they are more willing to participate in discussions and communicate in English.

Furthermore, AI technologies contribute to the development of students' willingness to communicate. Frequent interaction with chatbots, virtual assistants, and speech-recognition systems encourages learners to use English in authentic situations. As a result, students become more motivated and actively engaged in the learning process.

Despite these advantages, AI should not replace teachers or traditional classroom instruction. Human interaction remains essential for developing critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal communication skills. Therefore, AI technologies should be used as supplementary tools that support and enhance the teaching process.

Educational institutions should encourage the integration of AI into language education and provide appropriate training for both teachers and students. Universities can benefit from incorporating AI-based speaking activities into their curricula to create more interactive and effective learning environments.

In conclusion, AI-assisted speaking practice represents a valuable innovation in foreign language education. By improving fluency, building confidence, and increasing willingness to communicate, AI technologies can help university students achieve greater success in learning English as a foreign language.

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