



USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN ASSESSING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots in improving English speaking skills among university students. The aim of the study is to assess the effectiveness of AI-based tools in improving vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in students. The study used a mixed methodology, including a questionnaire and an analysis of the results of 100 EFL students. The results showed that AI chatbots significantly increase vocabulary and confidence in speaking, but their excessive use can reduce independent thinking and real-world communication skills. The study concludes that AI should be used as a support tool, not a replacement for traditional teaching methods.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, EFL, Chatbots, Language Learning, Speaking Skills, Educational Technology.

Artificial intelligence has rapidly become an integral part of modern education, particularly in the field of language teaching. In recent years, AI-powered tools such as chatbots, automated assessment systems, and virtual tutors have been increasingly adopted to support language learners. These technologies offer interactive and personalized learning experiences, making the process of language acquisition more flexible and accessible. Among the various language skills, speaking remains one of the most challenging to develop, as it requires fluency, confidence, and the ability to think quickly. This has raised an important question about whether artificial intelligence can effectively contribute to the improvement of speaking skills, especially for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL).

Existing research on the use of artificial intelligence in language learning presents a range of perspectives. On the one hand, many studies highlight the advantages of AI tools, noting their ability to enhance vocabulary acquisition and provide immediate, consistent feedback. Chatbots, in particular, create a low-anxiety environment in which learners can practice speaking without fear of judgment, thereby encouraging more frequent engagement. On the other hand, some researchers point out potential drawbacks, arguing that overreliance on AI may limit opportunities for authentic human interaction and reduce the development of critical thinking skills. Additionally, artificial intelligence systems often lack emotional intelligence and cultural awareness, both of which are essential for effective communication in real-life contexts. These contrasting viewpoints suggest that while AI has significant potential, its role in language learning must be carefully balanced.

To explore this issue further, a study was conducted involving 100 EFL students between the ages of 18 and 22. The research employed a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Participants engaged in speaking activities using AI chatbots over a period of four weeks. Their progress was evaluated through speaking tasks and an online questionnaire, and the results were analyzed using percentage-based and comparative methods.

The findings revealed that a majority of students experienced noticeable improvements in their speaking abilities. Specifically, 78% of participants expanded their vocabulary, 72% demonstrated greater fluency, and 65% reported increased self-confidence when speaking in English. These results indicate that AI chatbots can positively influence key aspects of speaking development. However, the study also uncovered a potential concern: 40% of students showed signs of becoming overly dependent on AI tools. This suggests that while the benefits are substantial, there are also risks associated with excessive use.

The overall findings support the idea that AI chatbots are effective in enhancing EFL speaking skills, particularly by improving vocabulary and boosting learner confidence. At the same time, the issue of dependency highlights the importance of maintaining a balanced approach. Overuse of AI may hinder the development of independent thinking and reduce opportunities for meaningful human interaction, both of which are crucial components of language learning.

In conclusion, artificial intelligence represents a valuable resource in the development of speaking skills for EFL learners. Its ability to provide personalized, interactive learning experiences makes it a powerful supplementary tool in education. However, it should not be viewed as a replacement for human teachers. Instead, the most effective approach lies in integrating AI technologies with traditional teaching methods, ensuring that learners benefit from both technological innovation and human guidance.

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