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DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS IN ENGLISH THROUGH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES: A THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a theoretical and analytical investigation into the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital technologies in developing speaking skills within English language education. The study does not rely on empirical experimentation; instead, it is grounded in a systematic review and critical analysis of contemporary linguistic, pedagogical, and methodological literature. The paper examines AI-based tools, digital platforms, and innovative instructional approaches that support oral communication, highlighting their pedagogical potential, limitations, and future research directions. The findings contribute to the conceptual understanding of technology-enhanced speaking instruction in the context of global digital transformation.

Keywords: speaking skills, artificial intelligence, digital technologies, English language teaching, communicative competence, technology-enhanced learning.

АННОТАЦИЯ

В данной статье представлено теоретико-аналитическое исследование роли искусственного интеллекта (ИИ) и цифровых технологий в развитии навыков говорения в обучении английскому языку. Исследование не основывается на эмпирических экспериментах, а опирается на систематический обзор и критический анализ современных лингвистических, педагогических и методических источников. В работе рассматриваются инструменты на основе ИИ, цифровые платформы и инновационные методы обучения, способствующие развитию устной речи, а также их педагогический потенциал, ограничения и перспективы дальнейших исследований. Полученные результаты вносят вклад в концептуальное осмысление обучения говорению с использованием технологий в условиях глобальной цифровой трансформации.

Ключевые слова: навыки говорения, искусственный интеллект, цифровые технологии, преподавание английского языка, коммуникативная компетенция, обучение с использованием технологий.

ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu maqolada ingliz tilini o‘qitishda og‘zaki nutq (speaking) ko‘nikmalarini rivojlantirishda sun’iy intellekt (SI) va raqamli texnologiyalarning o‘rni nazariy va tahliliy jihatdan tadqiq etiladi. Tadqiqot empirik tajribalarga asoslanmagan bo‘lib, zamonaviy lingvistik, pedagogik va metodik adabiyotlarning tizimli sharhi hamda tanqidiy tahliliga tayangan. Maqolada sun’iy intellektga asoslangan vositalar, raqamli platformalar va og‘zaki muloqotni

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qo‘llab-quvvatlovchi innovatsion o‘qitish yondashuvlari tahlil qilinib, ularning pedagogik imkoniyatlari, cheklovlari va kelgusidagi tadqiqot yo‘nalishlari yoritib beriladi. Tadqiqot natijalari global raqamli transformatsiya sharoitida texnologiyalar asosida speaking ko‘nikmalarini rivojlantirish bo‘yicha konseptual tushunchalarni boyitishga xizmat qiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: og‘zaki nutq ko‘nikmalari, sun’iy intellect, raqamli texnologiyalar, ingliz tilini o‘qitish, kommunikativ kompetensiya, texnologiyaga asoslangan ta’lim.

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and rapid digital transformation, English has assumed a dominant role as the language of international communication, academia, and professional interaction. Consequently, effective oral communication has become a key indicator of overall language proficiency. Among the four fundamental language skills—listening, reading, writing, and speaking—speaking occupies a central position, as it directly reflects learners’ ability to participate in real-life communicative situations.

Despite its significance, speaking remains one of the most challenging skills for language learners. Traditional classroom-based instruction often provides limited opportunities for sustained oral practice due to time constraints, large class sizes, and affective factors such as anxiety and fear of making mistakes. In response to these challenges, artificial intelligence and digital technologies have increasingly been integrated into language education, offering new possibilities for enhancing speaking instruction.

The purpose of this article is to explore the theoretical foundations, pedagogical implications, and future prospects of AI-supported and technology-enhanced speaking instruction.

Speaking as a Component of Communicative Competence. Speaking is commonly defined as a productive language skill that enables individuals to express meanings orally in a coherent, fluent, and contextually appropriate manner. According to Brown (2007), speaking integrates linguistic knowledge, cognitive processing, and social interaction. From a communicative perspective, speaking is not merely the accurate production of grammatical structures but an interactive process of meaning negotiation.

The concept of communicative competence, proposed by Canale and Swain (1980), provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding speaking proficiency. This model comprises four interrelated components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Effective speaking instruction must address all of these dimensions to ensure balanced oral development.

Speaking Assessment and International Standards. International language assessment frameworks such as CEFR, IELTS, and TOEFL conceptualize speaking proficiency in terms of pronunciation, fluency, lexical resource, grammatical accuracy, and interactive communication. These descriptors serve not only as assessment criteria but also as pedagogical guidelines for designing speaking-oriented instruction.

Challenges in Traditional Speaking Instruction:

1. Affective and Psychological Barriers

One of the major obstacles to speaking development is language anxiety. Learners often experience fear of negative evaluation, embarrassment, and loss of confidence when speaking a foreign language. Horwitz (2001) emphasizes that speaking anxiety significantly reduces learners’ willingness to communicate, thereby limiting opportunities for oral practice.

2. Methodological and Organizational Constraints

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Traditional teacher-centered classrooms frequently restrict student talk time. Large class sizes, rigid curricula, and exam-oriented instruction further reduce opportunities for meaningful speaking practice. As a result, speaking activities may become artificial, brief, and insufficient for developing communicative competence.

Artificial Intelligence and Digital Technologies in Speaking Instruction

1. AI-Based Language Learning Tools

Recent advances in artificial intelligence have introduced a range of tools designed to support speaking development. Speech-recognition-based applications such as ELSA Speak and similar platforms provide immediate feedback on pronunciation, stress, and intonation. From a theoretical perspective, these tools facilitate autonomous learning, individualized practice, and formative feedback.

2. Virtual Conversational Agents

AI-powered chatbots and virtual interlocutors simulate authentic communicative scenarios, enabling learners to practice speaking in a low-anxiety environment. This approach aligns with Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, as reduced anxiety is believed to facilitate language acquisition. Theoretical models suggest that such environments can enhance learners' confidence and willingness to communicate.

Digital Platforms and Online Speaking Environments

1. Online Communication Platforms

Digital platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, and learning management systems (LMS) have expanded opportunities for interactive speaking practice. Features such as breakout rooms, collaborative tasks, and synchronous discussions support learner interaction and collaborative learning from a pedagogical standpoint.

2. Automated Speaking Assessment Systems

AI-driven assessment systems offer potential advantages in terms of objectivity, consistency, and efficiency. Automated scoring tools analyze speech features such as fluency, pronunciation, and lexical diversity. Although these systems cannot fully replace expert human judgment, they serve as valuable supplementary instruments for formative assessment.

Pedagogical Implications of Technology-Enhanced Speaking Instruction

The integration of artificial intelligence into speaking instruction necessitates a shift in the teacher's role from knowledge transmitter to facilitator and guide. Teachers are responsible for selecting appropriate technologies, designing meaningful speaking tasks, and ensuring pedagogical balance between human interaction and technological support.

From a theoretical perspective, AI-enhanced speaking instruction supports learner-centered education, self-regulated learning, and lifelong learning. However, excessive reliance on technology may result in reduced interpersonal communication, ethical concerns, and unequal access to digital resources. Therefore, a critical and balanced approach to technology integration is essential.

Future Directions and Research Prospects

Future developments in AI and educational technology are likely to include adaptive speaking systems, virtual reality (VR)-based communicative environments, and emotionally responsive AI tutors. These innovations have the potential to increase authenticity, engagement, and personalization in speaking instruction. Further theoretical research is required to examine their pedagogical effectiveness and ethical implications.

Conclusion

This theoretical and analytical study highlights the significant role of artificial intelligence and digital technologies in supporting the development of speaking skills in English language

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education. By addressing affective barriers, expanding practice opportunities, and enabling personalized learning, AI-based tools offer promising solutions to long-standing challenges in speaking instruction. Nevertheless, their effective implementation depends on pedagogically informed and critically balanced integration rather than technological determinism.

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