

RESEARCH ARTICLE**Artificial Intelligence-Based Tools for Enhancing English Speaking and Oral Communication Skills: A Conceptual Review**

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Abstract:

The rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has created new possibilities for English language education, particularly in the development of speaking and oral communication skills. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, opportunities to practise spoken English can be limited by classroom time, large class sizes, fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, and insufficient access to native or proficient English speakers. AI-based tools offer an increasingly accessible means of addressing some of these challenges through conversational chatbots, speech-recognition applications, pronunciation systems, intelligent tutoring platforms, generative AI tools, and adaptive language-learning applications. These technologies can provide learners with opportunities for repeated speaking practice, immediate feedback, pronunciation support, vocabulary assistance, simulated conversations, and personalized learning. This conceptual review examines the potential contribution of AI-based tools to English speaking and oral communication development. Particular attention is given to pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, interactional competence, confidence, learner autonomy, and personalized learning. The paper also discusses limitations associated with AI-based speaking practice, including technological inaccuracies, limited understanding of context and emotion, accent bias, privacy concerns, overdependence, unequal access, and reduced opportunities for authentic human interaction. The review argues that AI is most effective when used as a complementary resource within a communicative and learner-centred pedagogy. Rather than replacing teachers or human interaction, AI can extend opportunities for speaking practice beyond the classroom and provide individualized support. The paper proposes a human-AI collaborative model in which learners practise with AI, critically evaluate feedback, apply language in authentic situations, and receive teacher guidance. The review concludes that AI-based speaking tools have substantial potential to enhance oral English proficiency when implemented purposefully, ethically, and pedagogically.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, English speaking skills, oral communication, EFL learners, speech recognition, conversational AI, pronunciation, language learning, learner autonomy

1. Introduction

Effective oral communication is one of the most important objectives of English language learning. In academic, professional, and social contexts, learners are expected not only to understand English but also to communicate ideas clearly, confidently, and appropriately. Speaking requires the integration of several competencies, including pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, listening comprehension, interactional ability, and awareness of context.

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For learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), developing speaking competence can be particularly challenging. In many educational contexts, English is primarily used inside the classroom, while learners have limited opportunities to communicate in English outside it. Large classes may further restrict individual speaking time. Some learners may also experience anxiety or embarrassment when speaking

English in front of peers because they fear making grammatical or pronunciation errors.

The development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has created new opportunities to address these challenges. AI-based language-learning applications can recognize speech, analyse learner responses, provide automated feedback, simulate conversations, generate questions, and adapt activities to individual needs. Conversational AI systems can also provide learners with an interactive partner for practising spoken English.

The emergence of generative AI has expanded these possibilities further. Learners can interact with AI systems through natural language and engage in simulated situations such as interviews, presentations, discussions, travel conversations, customer-service interactions, and professional meetings.

The importance of AI-based speaking tools lies particularly in their potential to increase the quantity and accessibility of speaking practice. A learner can practise pronunciation repeatedly, conduct a mock interview several times, or engage in an English conversation without requiring another person to be available. However, AI is not a complete replacement for human communication. Real-world communication involves emotions, cultural expectations, gestures, facial expressions, social relationships, negotiation, ambiguity, and spontaneous responses. Therefore, AI-based speaking practice should be viewed as an additional resource that complements rather than replaces teacher-led instruction and authentic human interaction.

This paper examines how AI-based tools can contribute to the development of English speaking and oral communication skills and discusses the pedagogical conditions necessary for their effective use.

2. AI-Based Tools for English Speaking

AI-based English speaking tools can be broadly classified into several categories. Conversational AI tools allow learners to engage in simulated conversations. They can act as teachers, interviewers, colleagues, customers, friends, or discussion partners. These systems can generate questions and responses based on the learner's input. This creates opportunities for interactive speaking practice. Speech-recognition systems convert spoken language into text and can analyse pronunciation and fluency. Such tools can help learners identify words or sounds that are not recognized accurately.

3. AI and Pronunciation Development

Pronunciation is a fundamental component of oral communication. Poor pronunciation may affect intelligibility even when grammar and vocabulary are accurate.

AI-based speech-recognition tools can provide learners with immediate information about pronunciation. Learners can repeat words and phrases several times and observe whether the system recognizes their speech accurately.

AI pronunciation tools can support:

- individual sound production;
- word pronunciation;
- word stress;
- sentence stress;
- intonation;

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- rhythm;
- connected speech;
- fluency.

For example, a learner who has difficulty distinguishing certain English sounds can practise targeted word lists and receive automated feedback.

The advantage of AI is the opportunity for repeated individual practice. In a conventional classroom, a teacher may not have enough time to listen to every learner pronounce the same word repeatedly. AI can provide such practice at scale.

Nevertheless, pronunciation feedback from AI should be interpreted carefully. Speech-recognition systems may be influenced by accent, background noise, microphone quality, and speech rate. In addition, variation in English accents means that pronunciation should not be evaluated solely according to one model of native-speaker speech. The primary goal should be intelligibility and successful communication.

4. AI and Speaking Fluency

Fluency involves the ability to communicate ideas smoothly and appropriately without excessive hesitation.

Many EFL learners understand English grammar but hesitate when speaking because they lack confidence or opportunities for practice.

Conversational AI can provide a low-pressure environment for repeated speaking. Learners can practise conversations at their own pace and repeat activities until they become more comfortable.

Possible AI speaking activities include:

- daily conversation;
- storytelling;
- picture description;
- question-and-answer practice;
- group discussion simulation;
- debate preparation;
- interview practice;
- presentation rehearsal.

For example, a learner preparing for a job interview can ask an AI system to conduct a mock interview. The system can ask questions and provide feedback after each response.

Repeated practice can help learners become more comfortable producing English spontaneously.

5. AI and Vocabulary for Oral Communication

Effective speaking requires access to vocabulary at the moment of communication. Learners may understand many words but struggle to retrieve them quickly during conversation.

AI tools can support vocabulary development through contextual speaking activities.

A learner can request:

- vocabulary for a specific situation;
- example dialogues;
- professional expressions;
- common collocations;

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- synonyms;
- phrases for agreeing and disagreeing;
- expressions for presentations;
- interview vocabulary.

For engineering students, AI can generate technical communication scenarios. For business students, it can provide meeting and negotiation vocabulary.

The contextual nature of these activities can help learners understand not only what words mean but also when and how they should be used.

6. AI and Grammatical Accuracy in Speaking

Grammatical accuracy contributes to clear oral communication. AI can help learners identify recurring grammatical errors in their spoken responses.

Speech-recognition technology can convert speech into text, after which an AI system can identify grammatical problems.

Learners may therefore receive feedback on:

- verb tense;
- subject-verb agreement;
- articles;
- prepositions;
- sentence structure;
- word order.

For example, after describing a recent experience, a learner may ask the AI system to identify tense-related errors.

This provides an opportunity for immediate correction and repeated practice.

However, fluency should not be sacrificed for excessive grammatical monitoring. In real communication, learners need to communicate meaning effectively even when minor errors occur. AI should therefore support accuracy while maintaining a strong emphasis on communicative effectiveness.

7. AI and Interactive Communication

Speaking is more than producing individual sentences. Successful oral communication requires interaction.

Learners must be able to:

- initiate conversations;
- ask questions;
- respond appropriately;
- clarify meaning;
- express agreement;
- disagree politely;
- take turns;
- maintain conversations;
- repair communication breakdowns.

Conversational AI can simulate these interactional situations.

For example, an AI system can act as a discussion partner and intentionally ask follow-up questions. Learners can practise maintaining a conversation rather than simply answering isolated questions.

AI-generated role-play can also simulate real-world contexts such as:

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At a restaurant → At an airport → Job interview → Classroom discussion → Business meeting → Customer service → Hospital conversation → Travel situation

Such activities provide opportunities for functional language practice.

8. AI and Learner Confidence

Confidence is strongly related to willingness to communicate.

Many EFL learners experience speaking anxiety because they fear making mistakes or being judged by others. AI may provide a psychologically safer environment for initial practice. Learners can make mistakes without experiencing embarrassment in front of classmates.

Repeated interaction can help learners become more willing to communicate.

However, AI practice should eventually lead to human communication. If students practise exclusively with AI, they may not develop confidence in unpredictable real-world interactions.

A gradual progression can therefore be useful:

AI practice → Peer practice → Teacher-guided practice → Real-world communication

9. Personalized Speaking Practice

One major advantage of AI is personalization.

Traditional speaking activities often require all students to participate in the same task. AI can provide individualized activities based on proficiency, interests, and learning objectives.

A beginner can practise simple introductions, while an advanced learner can engage in academic debates.

AI can also remember patterns within a learning session and provide additional practice for areas of difficulty. Personalized practice may increase efficiency because students can spend more time on skills that require improvement.

10. AI and Motivation

AI-based speaking activities can increase learner engagement through interactive and varied tasks.

Instead of repeatedly completing textbook exercises, learners can participate in simulated conversations, role plays, games, storytelling activities, and problem-solving discussions.

Learners may also choose topics that reflect their interests.

For example:

- sports;
- music;
- cinema;
- technology;
- travel;
- business;
- science;
- social issues.

When speaking activities are personally meaningful, students may be more motivated to participate.

Nevertheless, technology alone does not guarantee motivation. Activities must be pedagogically meaningful and appropriately challenging.

11. Role of Teachers

The teacher remains central in AI-enhanced speaking instruction.

Teachers can:

- select appropriate AI tools;

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- design communicative activities;
- monitor learner progress;
- evaluate AI feedback;
- provide human pronunciation guidance;
- organize peer interaction;
- address cultural communication;
- teach ethical AI use.

Teachers should ensure that AI activities lead toward genuine communication rather than replacing it.

A useful classroom model is:

Teacher instruction → AI practice → Peer interaction → Teacher feedback → Real-world application

12. Human-AI Collaborative Model

This paper proposes a five-stage model for AI-supported speaking development.

Stage 1: Preparation

The teacher introduces the communication objective.

Stage 2: AI Practice

Students practise vocabulary, pronunciation, and conversation with AI.

Stage 3: Critical Evaluation

Students examine AI feedback and identify useful and questionable suggestions.

Stage 4: Human Interaction

Students practise the same task with classmates or teachers.

Stage 5: Reflection

Students reflect on their improvement, difficulties, and future learning goals.

This approach combines the accessibility of AI with the authenticity of human communication.

13. Pedagogical Implications

The integration of AI into speaking instruction has several implications.

First, speaking instruction can become more individualized. Students who require additional practice can use AI outside class.

Second, teachers can use AI to create differentiated speaking tasks for learners with different proficiency levels.

Third, classroom time can be used for higher-level communicative activities. Students can complete basic pronunciation and vocabulary practice with AI and use classroom sessions for debates, discussions, presentations, and collaborative tasks.

Fourth, assessment may need to focus increasingly on authentic communication. Students should demonstrate their ability to communicate independently rather than simply reproduce AI-generated responses.

14. Recommendations**For Students**

Students should:

- use AI regularly for additional speaking practice;
- verify pronunciation feedback;
- practise with human speakers;
- avoid becoming dependent on AI;
- develop critical AI literacy;

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- use AI as a practice partner rather than a replacement for communication.

For Teachers

Teachers should:

- integrate AI with communicative activities;
- provide clear learning objectives;
- monitor student use;
- combine AI feedback with teacher feedback;
- include peer interaction;
- teach ethical and responsible AI use.

For Institutions

Institutions should:

- provide AI-literacy training;
- ensure equitable technology access;
- develop responsible AI-use policies;
- address privacy and data protection;
- support teacher professional development.

15. Future Research

Future empirical studies should investigate the measurable impact of AI speaking tools on EFL learners' oral proficiency.

Research could examine:

- pronunciation accuracy;
- speaking fluency;
- vocabulary use;
- grammatical accuracy;
- communication confidence;
- willingness to communicate;
- learner autonomy;
- speaking anxiety.

Longitudinal studies are particularly important because short-term improvement in AI-supported practice may not necessarily result in long-term independent speaking ability.

Researchers should also compare different AI tools and investigate how learners from different proficiency levels respond to them.

More research is needed on AI's ability to support diverse English accents and multilingual learners.

16. Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence-based tools have considerable potential to enhance English speaking and oral communication skills among EFL learners. Conversational AI, speech-recognition systems, pronunciation applications, generative AI, and adaptive learning platforms can provide learners with opportunities for repeated practice, immediate feedback, personalized learning, and simulated communication.

The greatest advantage of AI-based speaking tools is their ability to extend language practice beyond the classroom. Learners can practise pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and conversational strategies whenever they have access to the technology.

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However, AI should not be regarded as a replacement for teachers or human communication. Real communication involves social relationships, emotions, cultural awareness, body language, spontaneous negotiation, and interpersonal understanding. These dimensions remain essential to effective oral communication.

The most productive approach is therefore a **human-AI collaborative model**. AI can provide learners with additional opportunities to practise and experiment, while teachers provide pedagogical guidance and authentic communicative experiences. Students should be encouraged to critically evaluate AI feedback and gradually transfer what they practise with AI into human interaction.

Ultimately, the educational goal is not simply to increase students' interaction with Artificial Intelligence. It is to help learners become more confident, fluent, accurate, independent, and effective users of English in real-life situations. When integrated responsibly and purposefully, AI-based tools can become valuable components of contemporary English language education.

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