

INNOVATIVE METHODS FOR TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS IN A  
DIGITAL CLASSROOM

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**Annotation:** *The article explores innovative methods of utilizing digital classroom opportunities to develop English speaking skills in higher education. It analyzes the importance of gamification, artificial intelligence, and online collaboration technologies in enhancing communication competence and learner engagement.*

**Keywords:** *digital classroom, speaking skills, gamification, artificial intelligence, online collaboration, language teaching, innovation*

### **Introduction**

The rapid advancement of digital technology has profoundly reshaped the landscape of modern education, transforming both how teachers deliver instruction and how students engage with learning materials. The integration of technology into education has not only expanded access to knowledge but also redefined traditional teaching methodologies, offering a wide range of tools that support creativity, collaboration, and autonomous learning. Among all language skills, speaking remains the most dynamic, interactive, and simultaneously the most challenging to teach and assess effectively. Developing oral fluency requires more than the memorization of vocabulary and grammar rules; it involves the ability to express thoughts spontaneously, use appropriate pronunciation and intonation, and engage in real-time communication.

However, in many traditional classrooms, the teaching of speaking has often been overshadowed by a strong emphasis on grammar accuracy and written skills. Students may perform well on written tests but struggle to communicate fluently in real-life situations. This gap between theoretical knowledge and practical competence continues to be a central issue in English language teaching (ELT) [1, p.45].

The emergence of digital classrooms has opened new opportunities to overcome these limitations. Modern technology allows teachers to create authentic speaking contexts, simulate real-life communication, and provide instant feedback that encourages self-correction and improvement. Digital tools such as video conferencing applications, online discussion platforms, AI-powered learning software, and gamified learning systems can foster a more interactive and student-centered environment [2, p.351].

The purpose of this study is to explore innovative digital methods for improving speaking skills in English language classrooms within higher education institutions. It

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seeks to highlight how technologies such as gamification, artificial intelligence (AI), virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR), and online collaboration can help learners build confidence, fluency, and communicative competence. The study also aims to identify challenges teachers face in integrating technology into language teaching and propose practical recommendations for more effective digital pedagogy.

### **Methods**

To investigate these aspects, a qualitative descriptive research design was adopted. This approach was chosen because it allows a deep exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions, and reflections regarding digital teaching practices. The study focused on the experiences of ten English teachers from three universities in Uzbekistan who actively use digital tools to enhance speaking instruction in their classrooms.

**Data Collection:** The data were collected through multiple sources to ensure triangulation and reliability. These included semi-structured interviews with teachers, direct observations of online classes conducted via Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams, and an analysis of recent scholarly publications on digital education and language pedagogy [3, p.5]. The interview questions focused on the teachers' use of digital platforms, the challenges they encountered, and their perceptions of student engagement and progress.

**Data Analysis:** The qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Common themes and recurring patterns were identified and categorized into four main groups of digital innovations that positively affected speaking skills:

This categorization provided a clear analytical framework for understanding how digital innovations enhance oral communication in English and how they can be applied in higher education contexts.

### **Results**

The results of the study demonstrate that the integration of digital technology significantly increases students' motivation, confidence, and engagement during speaking activities. The teachers observed that students became more willing to participate in oral communication tasks, even those who were previously shy or hesitant. Each category of innovation brought distinct advantages to the learning process.

#### **1. Gamification and Interactive Learning**

Gamification—the use of game-like elements in educational contexts—proved to be one of the most effective strategies for stimulating student interest. Platforms such as Kahoot, Quizizz, and Wordwall transformed routine exercises into competitive, fun, and interactive experiences. The sense of achievement through badges, scores, and rankings encouraged students to take speaking tasks seriously and enjoy them simultaneously [4, p.130]. Teachers reported that gamified lessons reduced anxiety and created a positive emotional climate, which is essential for improving oral performance. Furthermore, peer

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competition motivated students to use English spontaneously, fostering fluency and accuracy simultaneously.

## 2. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

The introduction of AI-based speaking applications such as ELSA Speak, Duolingo Max, and ChatGPT has revolutionized the practice of speaking. These tools provide immediate feedback on pronunciation, intonation, and fluency, allowing students to self-assess and correct their mistakes. The personalized learning pathways offered by AI tools cater to individual learner needs, which is difficult to achieve in large classroom settings [5, p.44]. Teachers noted that using AI encouraged students to practice speaking more frequently outside class hours, leading to improved pronunciation and greater linguistic autonomy. Additionally, AI-powered chatbots provided simulated conversations that mirrored real-life communication, giving learners valuable opportunities to apply language in context.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study confirm that digital innovation transforms English language learning into a more interactive, student-centered, and meaningful process. Unlike traditional teacher-centered methods, digital tools promote learner autonomy, creativity, and confidence. Gamification enhances motivation and reduces speaking anxiety by transforming language tasks into enjoyable challenges. AI tools, on the other hand, provide personalized and immediate feedback, helping learners become aware of their progress and errors in real time.

Virtual and augmented reality immerse learners in authentic communication environments, bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-life interaction. These technologies promote spontaneous language use, contextual understanding, and cross-cultural awareness—key components of communicative competence. Similarly, online collaboration tools encourage teamwork, critical thinking, and intercultural communication, skills that are vital in the globalized 21st-century workplace.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study reveals that innovative digital methods—specifically gamification, artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality, and online collaboration—significantly contribute to improving English speaking skills among university students. These technologies transform learners from passive recipients of knowledge into active communicators who use English confidently and creatively.

In digital classrooms, the teacher's role evolves from a mere provider of information to a facilitator and mentor, guiding students through technology-mediated learning processes. This pedagogical shift aligns with global trends toward learner autonomy, inclusivity, and lifelong learning.

As education continues to evolve in the digital era, adopting these innovative methods is no longer a luxury but a necessity. The integration of technology ensures that English

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language education remains relevant, adaptive, and capable of preparing students for communication in a globalized, technology-driven world. By embracing digital innovation, educators empower learners to build the linguistic, cognitive, and digital competencies essential for success in the 21st century.

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