THE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN DEVELOPING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING SKILLS AMONG EFL STUDENTS

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Annotation: *This paper examines how artificial intelligence is changing second language learning, focusing on its concrete effects on reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. By synthesizing a comprehensive array of contemporary studies sourced from academic journals, conference proceedings, and scholarly text, this review delivers a current perspective on the integration of AI tools in today's language classrooms. The analysis focuses on the practical applications of tools such as speech recognition software and conversational language models, highlighting their potential to personalize learning, reduce speaking anxiety, and provide immediate feedback on linguistic errors. At the same time, the paper critically examines challenges associated with AI-assisted language learning, including learners' potential overreliance on automated tools, biases embedded in language models, and concerns surrounding data privacy.*

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence (AI), AI literacy, academic integrity, real-time feedback, personalized learning.*

Introduction: Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as an important technological development in contemporary education, offering new possibilities for personalized and adaptive language learning. The growing use of e-learning systems has further expanded access to flexible, scalable, and affordable learning opportunities, while AI enables these systems to provide content and activities that can be adapted to individual learners (Yu, 2023). In second language acquisition, AI-supported technologies are increasingly being used to complement traditional classroom instruction and provide learners with additional opportunities for practice. These technologies can support the development of the four fundamental language skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. In writing, for example, AI tools can assist learners with vocabulary, grammar, translation, revision, and organization of ideas. Conversational AI and speech-recognition applications can similarly provide interactive speaking practice and immediate feedback, while AI-supported platforms can offer learners reading and listening materials appropriate to their proficiency levels. Such

applications demonstrate the potential of AI to make language learning more individualized, accessible, and interactive. However, the availability of AI tools alone does not guarantee meaningful improvement in language proficiency, as their educational value largely depends on how learners use and evaluate them. Excessive reliance on AI-generated content may reduce opportunities for independent writing and critical thinking, particularly when learners accept generated responses without verification or use AI to complete academic tasks entirely. Concerns surrounding inaccurate information, algorithmic bias, privacy, and academic integrity further emphasize the need for thoughtful integration of AI into language education. These challenges highlight the growing importance of AI literacy, which involves not only operating AI technologies but also understanding their capabilities and limitations, evaluating their outputs, and recognizing the ethical implications of their use (Ng et al.). From a language-learning perspective, AI literacy can enable learners to benefit from technological assistance while maintaining their autonomy, critical engagement, and responsibility for their own learning. Therefore, AI should be viewed not simply as a replacement for conventional language-learning practices but as a complementary tool whose effectiveness depends on informed and responsible use. This review examines the role of AI in second language acquisition, focusing on its contribution to reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, while also considering the opportunities, limitations, and AI-literacy requirements associated with its use.

AI and the Development of English Language Skills

Artificial intelligence has created new possibilities for EFL learners to practice English beyond the conventional classroom environment. In particular, AI-powered applications can provide learners with repeated opportunities to use English, receive immediate responses, and work on areas of difficulty at their own pace. This is especially relevant to speaking development, where limited classroom time and learners' fear of making mistakes may restrict opportunities for oral practice. Makhlouf (2021) examined the use of ELSA, an AI-powered English-speaking application, among students at Abha University in Saudi Arabia. The application assessed learners according to their proficiency levels and provided feedback on pronunciation and accent after students recorded their speech. The study reported positive effects on students' speaking development and indicated that the application also supported vocabulary and grammar development through corrective feedback. These findings suggest that the value of AI in speaking instruction extends beyond automated correction: by allowing learners to practice repeatedly and receive immediate responses, AI can create a more flexible environment for developing oral competence. Moreover, the possibility of practicing independently at any time may be particularly valuable for learners who have limited opportunities to use English outside the classroom.

Similar evidence is provided by Alsadoon (2021), who investigated an interactive storytelling chatbot among low-intermediate EFL learners at the British Council in Riyadh. The chatbot combined conversational practice with dictionary, translation, image, and concordance functions, allowing learners to obtain linguistic support while communicating in English. The study found that the chatbot supported students' speaking practice, while the frequent use of its translation and dictionary functions demonstrated that learners particularly valued immediate assistance during communication. Taken together, the findings of Makhlouf (2021) and Alsadoon (2021) indicate that AI can contribute to speaking development by combining practice, interaction, and immediate support within a single learning environment. However, these findings should not be interpreted as evidence that AI can replace human communication. Rather, AI appears to be most useful when it increases the amount of practice available to learners and complements classroom interaction with teachers and peers.

The benefits identified in speaking research are also relevant to AI-assisted language learning more broadly. One of the most significant advantages of AI is real-time feedback, which enables learners to identify and respond to language problems during the learning process rather than waiting for delayed correction. This can make learning more responsive and allow students to focus on their individual weaknesses. AI can also support personalized learning by adapting tasks, content, and feedback to learners' proficiency levels, needs, and learning pace. Such personalization is particularly important in EFL classrooms, where students may differ considerably in their linguistic abilities and learning needs. Instead of providing identical activities for all learners, AI-supported systems can offer additional practice in areas that require greater attention, potentially making learning more focused and efficient.

Another important advantage is the continuous accessibility of AI-based learning tools. Because many applications can be used outside formal class hours, learners can practise English according to their own schedules and repeat activities when necessary. This accessibility can contribute to learner autonomy by shifting some responsibility for language practice from the classroom to the learner. For students who have few opportunities to communicate in English in their daily lives, AI may therefore function as an additional source of language exposure and practice. However, accessibility alone does not ensure effective learning. The educational value of AI depends on whether learners actively engage with the language, reflect on feedback, and apply what they learn rather than simply accepting automated answers.

Overall, the literature suggests that AI has considerable potential to support English language development through personalized learning, immediate feedback, continuous practice, and increased learner autonomy. Nevertheless, its contribution should be understood

as supportive rather than substitutive. AI can expand learning opportunities, but meaningful language development still requires learners to actively produce and evaluate language and to engage in authentic communication. This distinction is particularly important when considering the limitations of AI, including learner overdependence, inaccurate outputs, and reduced opportunities for independent language production.

Challenges of AI Use in EFL Learning

Despite the potential benefits of artificial intelligence in EFL learning, its integration presents several challenges that may influence the quality and effectiveness of language development. One of the main concerns is learner overdependence on AI-generated content. When students rely on AI to produce written responses, translate texts, correct language, or complete academic tasks without engaging with the learning process themselves, the technology may reduce opportunities for independent language production and critical thinking. Therefore, the educational value of AI depends not simply on access to these tools but on how actively and purposefully learners use them.

Another important concern is the accuracy and reliability of AI-generated content. AI systems may provide grammatically acceptable but contextually inappropriate expressions, inaccurate explanations, or misleading information. This can be particularly problematic for EFL students who may not yet have sufficient linguistic knowledge to identify errors in AI-generated responses. In addition, algorithmic bias may affect the linguistic or cultural perspectives presented by AI systems. Privacy and academic integrity represent further challenges, especially when students provide personal information to AI platforms or submit AI-generated work without sufficient modification or acknowledgment. These issues suggest that AI should be integrated into EFL education with appropriate guidance rather than treated as an unquestionable source of linguistic or academic support.

AI Literacy and Responsible Use

The challenges associated with AI highlight the importance of developing AI literacy among EFL learners. As discussed in the introduction, AI literacy involves understanding AI technologies, using them appropriately, evaluating their outputs, and recognizing the ethical implications of their use. Recent research in EFL and English for Academic Purposes contexts similarly emphasizes students’ familiarity with AI, knowledge of its functions, strategic use of AI tools, evaluation of generated content, and ethical awareness (Hossain, Çelik, & Hınız, 2025). These abilities are particularly important in language learning because students need to distinguish between using AI as a learning aid and allowing it to perform language-learning tasks on their behalf.

AI literacy can encourage learners to engage with AI outputs critically rather than accepting them automatically. For example, instead of simply accepting an AI-generated

correction, students can compare it with their original sentence, identify the linguistic problem, and examine why the suggested form is more appropriate. Similarly, when using AI for translation or writing support, learners can verify the output using reliable linguistic resources and consider whether it is appropriate for the specific context. Such practices can transform AI from a shortcut for completing academic tasks into a tool that supports reflection and language development.

Thus, AI literacy should be viewed as an essential condition for the responsible integration of AI into EFL learning. While AI can provide learners with immediate assistance and expanded opportunities for practice, its effectiveness depends on students' ability to use these technologies critically, independently, and ethically. Developing such literacy can help learners benefit from AI while maintaining their autonomy, critical thinking, and responsibility for their own language development.

Conclusion: Artificial intelligence has considerable potential to support English language development among EFL students by providing personalized practice, immediate feedback, and greater opportunities for learning beyond the classroom. The reviewed studies suggest that AI can particularly support speaking development and learner autonomy, but it should complement rather than replace teachers and authentic human communication.

At the same time, challenges such as overdependence, inaccurate outputs, bias, privacy, and academic integrity highlight the need for responsible use. AI literacy is therefore essential for helping students evaluate AI-generated content, use these tools strategically, and maintain their autonomy and critical thinking. Overall, AI can be a valuable resource in EFL education when it is used critically, ethically, and as a complement to conventional language-learning practices.

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