

First Year EFL Students' Perceptions Toward the Use of Artificial Intelligence to Enhance Oral Communication Skills: The Case of ENS Constantine

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Abstract

There was a tremendous widespread of the English language in different domains that underline its considerable importance as an international language. EFL teachers integrate artificial intelligence in language classrooms to enable them to practice the language in a relaxed learning environment considering the significance of oral communication skills to English learners. This paper aims to determine the impact of artificial intelligence-powered tools in enhancing oral communication skills. The study investigates English students' perceptions and opinions about the significance of artificial intelligence's integration to improve their oral communication skills. The research chooses the population randomly from first-year English students at the Ecole Normal Supérieure 'Assia Djebar', Constantine, Algeria, for the academic year 2023_2024. A semi-structured questionnaire is administered to forty students to give their opinions about the role of artificial intelligence in improving oral communication skills. Results of the research have concluded that artificial intelligence is significant in enhancing learners' oral communication skills and overcoming the possible challenges they face.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, English language, first year EFL students' perceptions, oral communication skills, powered tools, technology

ملخص

يبرز الانتشار الواسع لاستعمال اللغة الإنجليزية في المجالات المختلفة أهمية كبيرة لها، فالمتعلم يهتم بإتقان المهارات الشفوية ليتمكن من التواصل مع الآخرين، لذلك يحاول دمج تقنيات الذكاء الاصطناعي في عملية التعليم والتعلم، لما توفره هذه التقنيات المتقدمة من فرص متنوعة لممارسة اللغة الإنجليزية في بيئة تعليمية خالية من التوتر. تهدف هذه الورقة إلى معرفة تأثير الأدوات المدعومة بالذكاء الاصطناعي في تحسين مهارات الاتصال الشفوية، من خلال فحص الإجابة التي قدمها أربعون طالبا على الاستبيان ذو الصلة، وتقديم آرائهم حول دور الذكاء الاصطناعي في تحسين مهارات الاتصال الشفوية، وقد خلصت نتائج البحث إلى أن الذكاء الاصطناعي له أهمية كبيرة في تحسين مهارات الاتصال الشفوية للمتعلمين وتجاوز التحديات المحتملة التي يواجهونها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأدوات المدعومة، الذكاء الاصطناعي، تكنولوجيا، اللغة الإنجليزية، مهارات التواصل الشفوية.

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Introduction

English is the most widely used language in the world for communicating, trading, and learning. Most people seek to learn how to communicate effectively in English. They consider oral communication and mainly speaking skills as the standard of learning the language. For that reason, they give importance to acquiring speaking and listening skills more than reading and writing. They regard communicating in English means understanding and mastering it (Sari, 2021a). Although oral communication skills are the most preferable for language learners, they usually encounter various problems while attempting to interact or participate in conversation with others. Among oral communication problems is that speaking and listening are composed of many elements including grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency and comprehension. As a result, English teachers have thought that integrating advanced technological tools in English classrooms can be an effective way to facilitate and enhance oral communication skills.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is not a new technology that has appeared lately. However, AI has existed in education for more than sixty years. Its functions include preparing, designing, planning, and constructing educational operations and practices. Artificial intelligence technologies have witnessed several developments throughout recent years. Therefore, AI evolves into an effective tool that improves and helps language learners acquire the four language skills. AI also enhances learners' communication skills and their abilities to interact efficiently (Li, 2020). AI advanced technology promotes learners' self-autonomy by providing them with personalized learning experiences. In addition to granting them various opportunities that allow them to learn according to their personal preferences, accordingly AI results in satisfying English learners (Chappel & Jennings, 2018). AI provides language learners with advanced technologies like speech recognition AI, text-to-speech AI, conversation simulation AI, pronunciation training, virtual tutors, chatbots, and language learning applications. English learning obtains many privileges from AI technologies. It facilitates learning for students and makes it personalized and equipped to correspond to learners' needs and preferences (Radford et al., 2019). More specifically, the inclusion of AI in oral communication classrooms offers learners easy access to learning and speaking. It provides them with self-confidence to interact effectively and express themselves comfortably and efficiently. The present paper aims to examine the effectiveness of artificial intelligence in improving English learners' oral communication skills. The research explores learners' perceptions toward using artificial intelligence-powered tools to improve their communication abilities in oral communication classrooms. The study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- a. To what extent are the AI technological tools implemented in oral communication classrooms?
- b. What is the influence of AI-powered tools on learners' oral communication skills?
- c. What challenges do AI-powered tools overcome in oral communication classrooms?
- d. What do English learners think about integrating artificial intelligence in oral class?

Literature Review

This section provides a comprehensive explanation of the two main concepts that compose this research paper. First, giving a definition of artificial intelligence, a brief history of its development, and the integration of AI in language learning in general and oral

communication in particular. In addition to explaining oral communication skills and the possible challenges that English learners encounter in oral sessions.

Artificial Intelligence

When we hear about Artificial Intelligence (AI), we may think of recent technological developments. However, its core principles date back to the 1900's. The most significant technological progressions emerged in the 1950s, thanks to the different developments and achievements of early professionals in various areas of computer and programming technology. AI is a computer system and a virtual assistant tool that imitates human activities (Russell & Norvig, 2016). Thus, AI is an advanced technology that attempts to make operations and services that resemble human abilities and qualities. These systems analyze vast amounts of information, go through different machine processing, and save multiple previous operations to improve their progress over time. In contrast to computer software, which requires personal interference to process programming, AI operates autonomously in refining and optimizing its functions (tableau, n.d).

Education is one of the fields that make use of Artificial intelligence to improve learning and teaching. AI aims to facilitate the teaching-learning process for both learners and teachers. AI provides learners with unlimited opportunities to learn individually, enhances their autonomy and offers them a personalized tutor anytime and everywhere. In the 1960's, computers gave learners various materials to help them reinforce their learning, through practicing independently or being assisted by their teachers inside the classrooms. It allows learners to interact and engage in the learning process by being active constituents. In addition, computers offer teachers insightful resources that assist them in gaining more knowledge and creative teaching strategies (Cotton, 1991). By the 1970s and 1980s, education has used intelligent tutoring systems in the learning and teaching process. Those systems encompass information about education, the learner and the teacher. Intelligent tutoring systems give learners coaching and training when doing a task professionally and creatively using teaching strategies. Thus, intelligent tutoring systems use problem-solving and decision-making strategies to simulate humans (Lajoie & Derry, 1993).

In recent years, the world has witnessed considerable growth in technology by launching varied software and applications. AI technologies continue to develop and affect education with innovative tendencies and inspired educational techniques. It provides learners with powered materials and resources to reshape their learning experiences and offer them educational opportunities and instant assistance. AI technologies provide teachers also with helpful teaching strategies. The inspired teaching techniques allow teachers to organize their time inside classrooms. Moreover, AI technologies incorporate other merits as follows; fostering collaboration between learners, providing learners with immediate and constructive feedback, and supplying teachers and learners with interactive practices which make the learning environment engaging and effective (Teachflow, 2023).

AI has become a valuable pedagogical strategy in language teaching and learning. It provides language learners with diverse opportunities to improve their language acquisition outcomes (Zhang & Zou, 2020). Language teaching and learning have integrated vital technologies into the classroom. This includes Natural Language Processing which operates computers in a comprehensible way and generates appropriate language for learners (Chang et al., 2021). Another technology is Machine Learning, which is an AI branch that deduces large amounts of data through a well-thought-out algorithm. The latter analyzes data, saves them, and

makes predictions and decisions to solve problems (Heil et al., 2020). Adaptive learning systems are effective technologies that fit learners' needs and fulfill their learning abilities to engage in an interactive learning environment (Baker & Burry, 2018). Therefore, AI advanced technologies supply various merits to English learners including individualized learning and self-directed learning. It also provides learners with immediate feedback for their performances and practices, in addition to offering an enjoyable, engaging learning environment through interactive content adapted to learners' needs.

The inclusion of AI in teaching and learning foreign languages is in tandem with different learning theories that focus on autonomy, self-directed learning and adaptation to individual needs. First, constructivism approves the belief that learners build up their knowledge by engaging in interactive learning practices and experiences. AI advanced technologies enable in the same manner learners to learn autonomously through interested learning (Sweller et al., 2011). Second, the interaction hypothesis posits that language learners improve their language skills through the ongoing process of interacting and communicating with others. It is based mainly on comprehending the language input to facilitate its acquisition. AI usually provides learners with understandable materials and language that ensure interactive learning practices (Liu & Li, 2019).

Oral Communication Skills

Since language is a means of communication, English learners sought to learn oral communication over other skills. It enables learners to convey their thoughts, intentions, hopes, and points of view. According to experts, there are many definitions of speaking. According to Harmer (2007), speaking is to talk fluently and it requires more than just knowledge of language features. But, the ability to comprehend information and language on the go is also needed. Speaking and listening are interrelated skills that one cannot separate from each other. Oral communication skills require the knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and pronunciation. Although oral skills have a considerable weight in English learning and teaching, teachers continue to neglect them in different educational institutions for the sake of teaching grammar and lexicon which is the case of most English curricula. Clifford (1987) stated that assessing and testing oral abilities is very restricted in comparison with the other skills due to the different challenges that testers may face from testing a great number of learners in a limited amount of time. No one can deny the significance of speaking and listening in learning a second or foreign language. Davies and Pearse (2000) said that the ultimate goal of teaching the English language is to enable learners to interact effectively while engaging in conversations. Nunan (1991) argued that an individual's oral communication skills appear in their ability to participate in conversational dialogues. Celce-Murcia (2001) stressed the importance of speaking. He has considered speaking a particular language as equivalent to mastering it since the most critical aspect of learning a language is being able to communicate with it.

Although oral communication skills are of major significance in English learning, different learners face multiple challenges and difficulties when they attempt to use them for interaction. Those challenges are of two types: linguistic and psychological. First, linguistic difficulties include restricted topical knowledge, where learners do not find ideas or information to express themselves (Rivers, 2018). They called it nothing to say the problem and it occurs when the teacher presents a topic that it does not fall in the favor of learners or they do not have ideas about it. Learners prefer to keep silent and do not embarrass themselves by

embarking on conversation. There is nothing to say the problem is related to the lack of vocabulary and grammar. Many learners have difficulties in using grammatical structures appropriately and having a limited vocabulary which affects expressing one's feelings and ideas accurately.

Psychological challenges pose critical problems to English learners too, they suffer from being inhibited and anxious, which are natural feelings in human beings. However, when those feelings exceed their natural levels, they become a severe issue for English learners since they prevent them from expressing themselves adequately. Ur (2000) claimed that learners are inhibited from speaking English because of different reasons including fear of making mistakes, being negatively criticized by their teachers and peers, feeling of humiliation, shame, or shyness to get attention (p.111). Negative feelings generate in learners constant stress in personalities which makes them lack their self-confidence, esteem and motivation. Many other factors may hinder learners from interacting effectively in an oral communication classroom including the use of their mother tongue, particularly when learners do not find the appropriate words and even sentences in English. Speaking in the mother tongue prevents learners also from achieving fluency in the target language which creates an obstacle in communicating effectively in English. Learners may also face pronunciation problems in oral communication classes. Mistakes in pronunciation can cause problems in comprehending what the speaker says or conveying the message correctly. Misuse of stress and intonation can also change the message's meaning and block interlocutors' flow of ideas.

The recent technological developments have facilitated the different difficulties that face English learners. Technology has become an essential part of teaching oral communication skills. It gives learners the desire to engage interactively in conversations and discussions. Technology provides learning and teaching with powerful tools and materials that attract attention, foster learners' motivation, and improve creativity. Furthermore, it offers accessible data that enables learners to enhance their grammar and vocabulary. Technology offers real-time in-person conversation which improves learners' pronunciation, fluency and comprehension. As a result, learners overcome their learning difficulties, become more confident, motivated, and autonomous, and can communicate effectively and efficiently.

Teaching Oral Communication in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Teaching oral skills is a very challenging task which drives English teachers to adopt new advanced technologies, mainly AI tools in the teaching process. English learners may encounter many language difficulties when they communicate in oral sessions, AI advanced technology boosts their self-confidence to face their fears and communicate effectively and efficiently. Li (2020a) maintained that AI plays a significant role in providing personalized learning experiences and immediate feedback in English classrooms through different voice assistant applications and speech recognition systems. Namely, learners can improve pronunciation skills like intonation, stress, and spelling while using applications like Smalltalk, Elsa-speak, and Did-Studio tools. They provide them with instant feedback to correct their mistakes. Thus, voice assistant applications and speech recognition systems foster learners' inner motivation to practice English speaking and improve their abilities to interact and communicate with others (Cango Patiño et al., 2024). Similarly, Zheng and Xing (2020) stressed the importance of AI-based tools including virtual assistant tools, virtual tutors, AI communication-based platforms like chatbots, and language learning applications like Duolingo, (Liu et al., 2019). They affirmed that those tools encourage learners to practice

speaking and listening to English inside and outside oral classes. This leads learners to become adapted to communicating the language, especially with native speakers. Wang and Liu have stated that AI advanced technology contains effective language learning applications which contribute to improving vocabulary and grammar through the repeated and intensive but enjoyable practice of daily challenges. Language learning applications contribute to enriching learners' language repertoire and strengthening their knowledge of grammatical structures by offering them abundant online and offline applications. Language learning apps enable English learners to build a broad understanding of vocabulary and grammar. They facilitate their engaging in discussions and conversations easily anytime without being afraid of negative feedback from others. Ross et al. (2022) argued that AI plays a vital role in enhancing learners' critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making. Those skills are the high-ordered thinking skills that improve creativity in learners and make them reflect while interacting in conversations. Thus, advanced AI tools give learners a sense of responsibility towards learning, foster their autonomy, increase self-directed learning and motivate them to communicate.

Researchers have conducted many studies in the area of AI technology integration in enhancing oral communication skills including the following. Warman et al. (2023) investigated the role of AI applications on introverted learners. They have found that using AI in teaching English promotes introverted learners' motivation and encourages them to use more learning styles. Another research by Yin and Wei (2023) concluded that the creation of intelligent systems in college helps learners improve their pronunciation, accuracy, and fluency which leads to the development of their speaking and listening skills. Intelligent systems provide learners with instant feedback and evaluation and easy access to learning. In the same vein, Jiang (2022) explored the effectiveness of AI speech recognition system technology (English learning system application) in enhancing both speaking and listening skills through oral practice with the aid of multimedia courses. There are also studies on improving oral communication skills through using AI for ESP learners. Dandu and Gomatam (2023) examined the significant impact of AI mobile apps on technical learners' accuracy and fluency. The two researchers have found that advanced AI tools are essential in enhancing technical learners' oral communication abilities to interact with others. Hoang et al. (2023) explored the impact of AI chatbots on vocational students' pronunciation. They have concluded that AI chatbots (Mission Fluent) have a significant influence on improving vocational learners' pronunciation skills.

There are no research studies on using artificial intelligence to improve oral communication skills in the Algerian context. While there are many studies about using AI to enhance the process of English learning in general, we mention two of them. Guemide and Sahraoui (2023) investigated the role of AI applications in improving English language learning among EFL students in Algeria. The findings show that AI helps provide instant feedback to learners. Boumaraf (2024) explored students' attitudes regarding the use of AI-assisted English language learning. The research study concludes that learners admit positive attitudes toward using AI in their learning. AI helps them to increase engagement, motivation and self-confidence.

Although AI advanced technology has great importance and effectiveness in English teaching and learning, however, no one can deny that many obstacles and difficulties may prevent teachers and learners from adapting and adopting those AI-powered tools. There are many poor regions in the world especially in underdeveloped countries, where people don't

know how to use technology or do not have the financial ability to do so. Many teachers and learners also resist innovative teaching and learning strategies using AI technology. In addition to that, using AI technology is not always characterized by a bright side. Learners and teachers can spend long hours in front of their computers or mobile phones without getting adequate information from the internet, they can deviate from the essential objective into checking useless websites. Eventually, AI technology can be significant if learners use it wisely in their learning process.

Methods and Materials

This research is conducted using quantitative data, a questionnaire was administered to first-year students of English from l'Ecole Normale Supérieure of Constantine, Algeria. The school is responsible for training pre-service teachers to prepare them for future classroom practices and enhance their English language skills.

Participants

The study relies on simple random sampling; the researcher has chosen learners randomly to answer the questionnaire. The ages of students range between 17 and 18, they are 40 learners most of them are females (34) with only six males. The study took place at the English department in the ENS Constantine, in the second semester of the academic year 2023-2024 to guarantee that the learners have experienced at least some of the AI technological tools in their oral classrooms since they study the speaking and listening module four hours and a half per week.

Demographic Information

Demographic information concerns learners' gender, age and years of studying English. The results are in Table One.

Table 1. *Participants' demographic information*

Age		Gender		Years of studying English	
17 years	10%	Male	15%	Seven years	40%
18 years	90%	Female	85%	Eight years	60%

Table One demonstrates that females constitute the majority of the participants (85%), which can be observed in most foreign language classes in general and in the English department at the ENSC in particular. Their ages range between 17 and 18 years since they are first-year students. Most of them are 18 years old (90%). The number of years of studying English ranges between seven and eight years.

Research Instruments

The study used a quantitative approach to address the population through a semi-structured questionnaire. The research explores students' perceptions toward integrating AI-powered tools in the oral classroom and their impact on enhancing oral communication skills. The questionnaire seeks numerical and descriptive data about students' attitudes (Cohen et al., 2000). The participants know that the questionnaire is anonymous and that they have enough time to respond. The questionnaire consists of three sections, the first is about demographic information including gender, age, and years of studying English. The second section investigates general details on learners' oral communication skills. The third section explores students' perceptions toward the effect of AI on enhancing oral communication skills, and oral communication challenges that can be improved by AI. The questionnaire has various questions including yes/no questions, multiple answers, and Likert scale questions.

Research Procedures

The study took place at the English department of ENS Constantine, the researcher chose the sample randomly from first-year students who studied the oral expression module for four hours and a half per week. The researcher has opted for a semi-structured questionnaire which aims to explore learners' perceptions and attitudes toward using AI-advanced technology to enhance oral communication skills. After collecting the data, clarifying, and examining all the information gathered, general conclusions have been drawn.

Results

The following are the results of the questionnaire

General Information about Learners' Oral Communication Skills

Oral communication skills are of paramount significance in learning any foreign language. Learners who acquire the language consider themselves effective communicators of that language. Even so, learners can encounter different obstacles and challenges in oral communication class.

Question 1: Which skill do you prefer most?

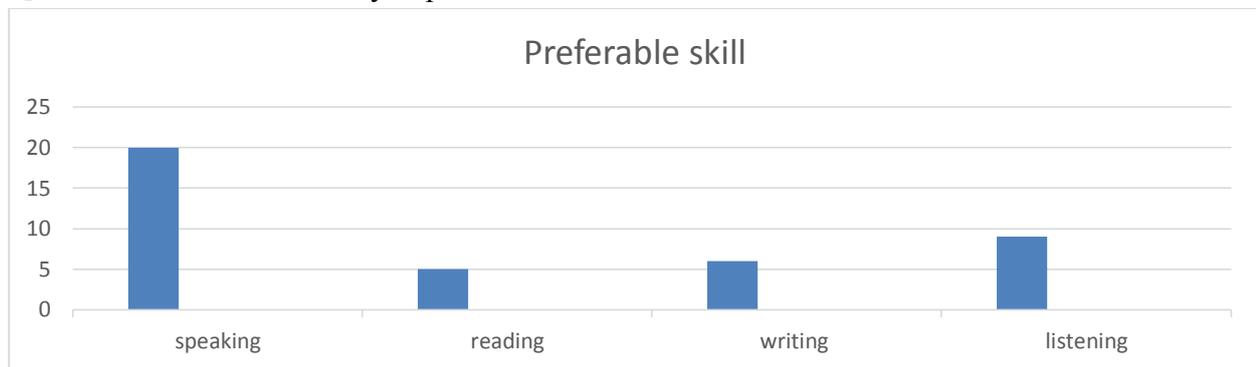


Figure 1. The preferable skill

Results in Figure One show that English learners prefer speaking and listening skills which are the skills that enable them to communicate effectively. The majority of the participants choose speaking (50%), then listening (22.5%) over the other two skills reading (12.5) and writing (15%). The results demonstrate that learners are interested in oral skills more than reading and writing.

Question 2: How would you describe your level of speaking skills?

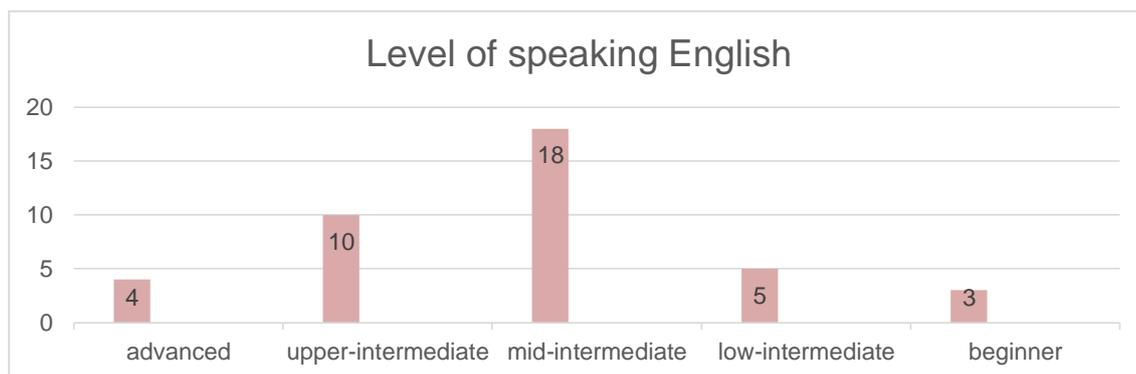


Figure 2. Participants' level of speaking English

Results in Figure Two show learners’ level of speaking English, the majority of learners answer that they have a mid-intermediate level in speaking English (45%). While (25%) say that they have an upper-intermediate level and 10% of them have an advanced level. It means that most students (about 80 %) acquire a good level of English speaking. Five students (12.5%) say that they have a low-intermediate level while three students (7.5%) declare having a beginner level. Hence, the minority are less skilful in speaking.

Question 3: Do you like oral communication sessions?

Table 2. *Opinion about loving oral communication sessions*

Loving oral communication session		
Yes	28	70%
No	12	30%
Total	40	100%

Table Two demonstrates participants’ opinions about oral communication sessions, the majority proclaim they like oral sessions (70%). Whereas the remaining participants (30%) say they don’t like oral sessions. The results show that learners love studying and attending oral communication sessions.

Question 4: Do you find difficulties in oral communication classroom sessions?

Table 3. *Challenges and problems in oral communication classroom sessions*

Having difficulties in oral session		
Yes	31	77.5%
No	9	22.5%
Total	40	100%

Table Three indicates that most participants (77.5%) face difficulties in oral communication classes. While some of them (22.5%) do not find any problems while interacting in oral sessions.

Question 5: What difficulties can you encounter in oral communication sessions?

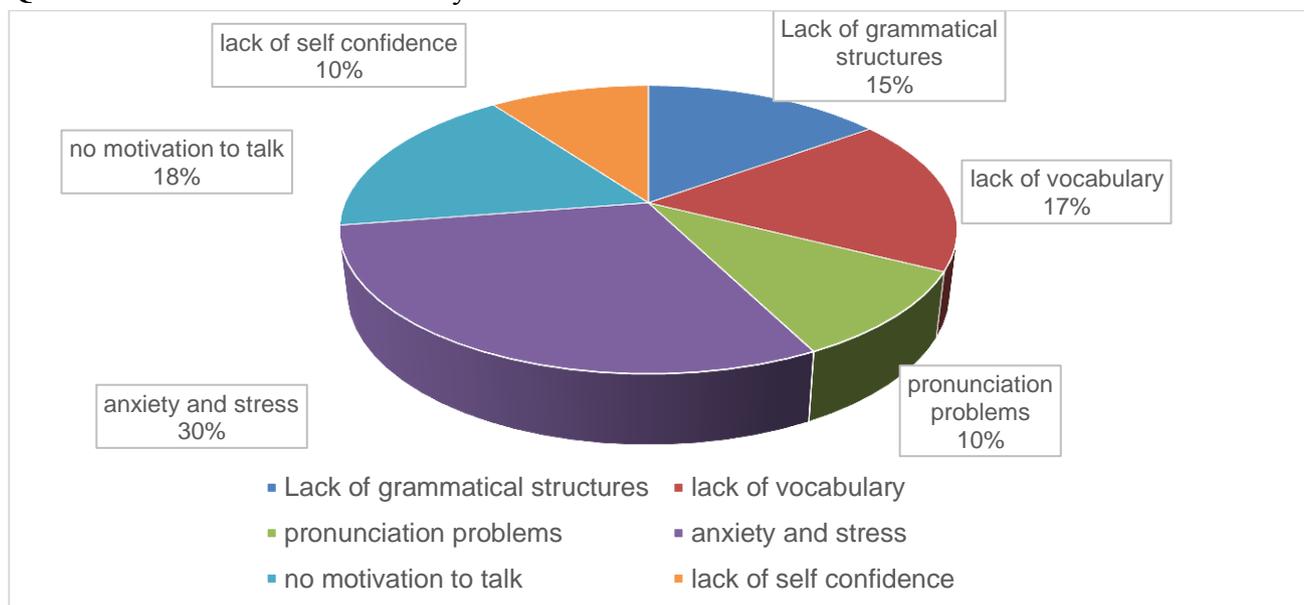


Figure 3. Difficulties in oral communication classroom

Figure Three shows the results of students’ perceptions toward the oral communication

classroom difficulties. Their answers were varied, (30%) say that anxiety and stress are barriers that prevent them from communicating effectively. (18%) of participants answer they are not motivated to participate in speeches and conversations. (17%) and (15%) answered that they lack vocabulary and grammatical structures in the given order. The same percentage (10%) belongs to participants who respond that they have problems concerning self-confidence and issues in pronunciation.

Question 6: Which strategy would better develop your English oral skills?

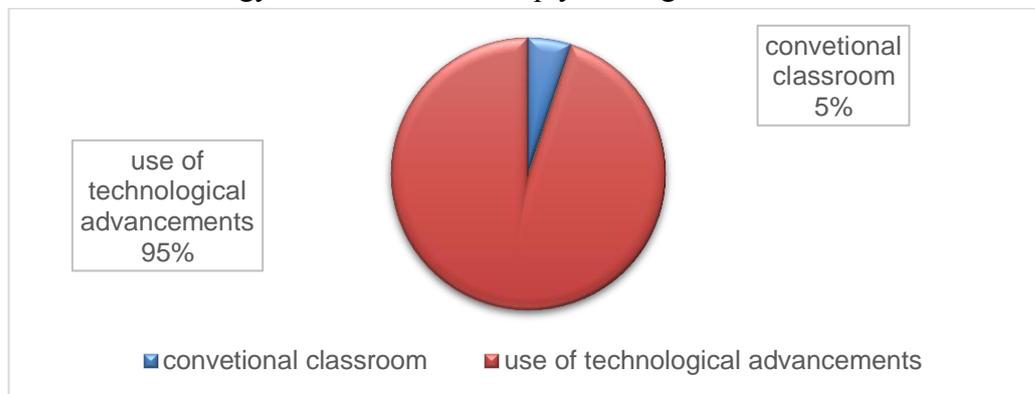


Figure 4. Preferred strategy for learning oral communication skills

Results in Figure Four show the great majority of learners (95%) prefer to use advanced technological tools in oral classrooms. While a small minority choose to study oral skills in the traditional way of learning.

The Effect of Artificial Intelligence on Enhancing Oral Communication Skills

Many English teachers choose to integrate technology tools into their classrooms. Technology plays a significant role in facilitating the learning of English in general and oral skills in particular. It provides learners with various opportunities for oral practice. Furthermore, it enables them to overcome the challenges and difficulties they may face in oral sessions.

Question 1: Have you ever experienced using AI In an oral communication classroom?

Table 4. Using AI in oral communication classroom

Using AI in oral class		
Yes	37	92.5%
No	3	7.5%
Total	40	100%

The majority of learners (82.5%) approve of the use of AI in the oral communication classroom. While (17.5%) say they don't use AI technological tools in oral sessions.

Question 2: How did you find your experience with using AI inside an oral communication classroom?

Table 5. Learners' perceptions about using AI in oral communication classroom

Learners' perceptions about using AI in		
Great	21	52.5%
Good	14	35%
Bad	5	12.5%

The results of Table Five exhibit that most of the learners (87.5%) find using AI inside an oral classroom a great or good experience (52.5%+35%). The remaining percentage (12.5%) find it as a bad experience.

Question 3: How often do you use AI tools (e.g., virtual assistants, language learning apps)?

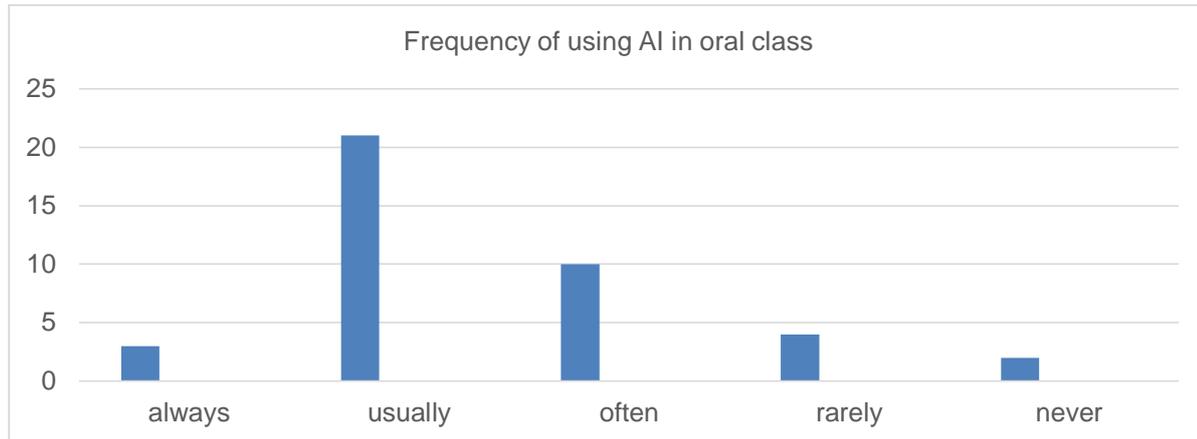


Figure 5. Frequency of using AI tools

The results in Figure Five demonstrate that the majority of participants (52.5%) usually use AI tools in the oral class. Some of them (25%) say that they often use it. (7.5%) of them use it always. The minority (15%) answered they rarely use it (10%) or never use it (5%).

Question 4: Which AI tools do you prefer most for the oral communication classroom?

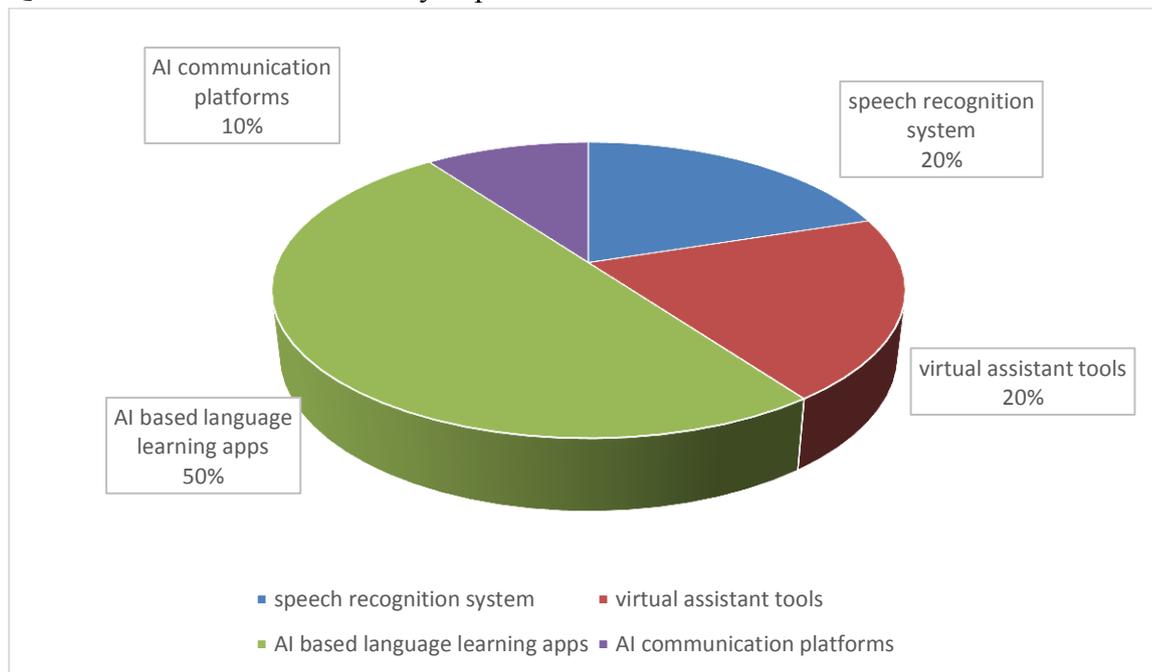


Figure 6. The preferable AI tools for oral communication classroom

The results in Figure Six show that most students (50%) prefer AI-based language learning apps. The remaining ones' opinions are as follows: (20%) choose speech recognition systems, the same percentage go to virtual assistant tools and (10%) choose AI communication platforms.

Question 5. Please specify the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

Table 6. *Students' perceptions about the effect of AI technological tools in enhancing oral communication skills*

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. AI advanced tools motivate me to speak inside the oral communication classroom.	2.5 %	7.5 %	12.5 %	52.5 %	25%
2. Speech Recognition systems improve my speaking and listening skills.	5%	5%	15%	47.5 %	27.5 %
3. AI-powered Virtual assistants enhance my pronunciation abilities	2.5 %	2.5 %	7.5%	62.5 %	25%
4. AI chatbots push me to communicate effectively without being scared to make mistakes.	5%	2.5 %	5%	67.5 %	20%
5. AI technologies help me to reduce anxiety, fear, and stress while communicating.	2.5 %	5%	10%	52.5 %	30%
6. Language learning apps promote my vocabulary and grammatical structures.	0%	2.5 %	2.5%	70%	25%
7. Virtual tutors encourage me to communicate with high self-confidence.	7.5 %	2.5 %	7.5%	45%	37.5 %
8. AI-powered tools create an enjoyable, exciting, and supportive learning environment	0%	0%	2.5%	82.5 %	15%
9. AI-powered tools will take a dominant place in oral communication classrooms.	5%	2.5 %	2.5%	70%	20%

Table Six displays the results of the students' perceptions toward the effect of AI-advanced technologies in improving oral communication skills. The first statement says that AI tools motivate learners to speak in oral communication sessions, most participants either agree (52.5%) or strongly agree (25%). The second statement states that Speech Recognition systems improve speaking and listening skills. (15%) are neutral, whereas the majority of them (75%) either agree or strongly agree. In the third statement, which asserts that AI-powered Virtual assistants enhance pronunciation abilities, (62.5%) agree and (25%) strongly agree. In the fourth statement, the majority (67.5%) state that AI chatbots boost them to communicate effectively without being scared of making mistakes, and (20%) strongly agree. In the fifth statement, most participants (82.5%) agree or strongly agree that AI technologies help reduce anxiety, fear and stress while communicating. In the sixth statement, nearly all learners (70%) agree and (25%) strongly agree that Language learning apps promote vocabulary and grammatical structures. In the seventh statement, the majority of participants (45%) agree and (37.5%) strongly agree that Virtual tutors boost their self-confidence to communicate efficiently. In the following statement, nearly all learners (82.5%) agree and (15%) strongly agree that AI-powered tools create an enjoyable, engaging and supportive learning environment. In statement eight most of the participants (70%) agree and (20%) strongly agree that AI-powered tools will take a dominant place in oral communication classrooms.

Question 6. Express your opinion about the effectiveness of AI tools in improving oral communication skills

The results of question six depict participants' opinions and perceptions about the effectiveness of AI tools in improving oral communication skills. Most answers highlight the importance of using AI technological tools in oral communication classrooms. They emphasize the significant influence of AI tools in oral sessions, they appreciate their roles in enhancing speaking and listening skills. They point out the significance of AI-powered tools in providing

learners with self-confidence, decreasing their anxiety and stress, in addition to fostering their motivation to communicate effectively. Thus, AI overcomes learners' challenges and enables them to practice oral skills efficiently.

Discussion

English Learners are keen on oral communication skills which make an essential part of both their education and their professional job in the future. Although learners acknowledge that they face different obstacles while they attempt to communicate in oral classes, they insist on learning and loving oral skills (Bueno et al., 2006). Many challenges an English learner in oral communication sessions include linguistic obstacles such as lack of vocabulary and grammatical structures, pronunciation problems, and mother tongue use. In addition to psychological barriers like increasing levels of anxiety and stress, fear of making mistakes, and losing face because of negative feedback from teachers or peers, low self-confidence and no motivation to talk and participate in conversations.

In the first question "To what extent are the AI technological tools implemented in oral communication classrooms?". Technology has become an integral part of individuals' everyday lives. Technological tools facilitate the process of learning through using it in transmitting and practicing information. The several advancements and developments that occurred in technology have led to a flourishing in artificial intelligence and its use in education in general and English learning in particular. Ross et al. (2022) maintained that AI technology has brought up a new era of learning by enabling individuals to analyze data, think creatively and make reasonable decisions concerning their learning. Oral communication classrooms are not an exception, they take the lion's share in integrating the different AI-powered tools in speaking and listening classes. Teachers usually use AI-based technologies in oral classes such as speech recognition systems, AI chatbots and AI-based language learning apps which spread joy, interest and positive attitudes in the learning environment.

Concerning the second and third questions "What is the influence of AI-powered tools on learners' oral communication skills?" and "What challenges do AI-powered tools overcome in oral communication classrooms"? The above questions are correlated since the impact of AI-powered tools does influence oral communication skills through overcoming learners' challenges and difficulties that they usually encounter while they communicate inside oral classes. English teachers rely on many AI-powered tools to teach English oral skills. Examples of AI-powered tools are speech recognition systems which analyze learners' speech and play an essential role in improving their pronunciation, rhythm and intonation (Li et al. 2020b). In the same vein, Cango Patiño et al. (2024) stated that learners can benefit from speech recognition systems and voice assistant applications to enhance their pronunciation abilities by improving their spelling, stress, and intonation to foster their intrinsic motivation and self-confidence in interacting with others. Other examples of AI tools include virtual assistant tools, virtual tutors, AI communication-based platforms like chatbots, and language learning applications. Those AI tools have a significant role in improving oral communication skills. They provide learners with abundant opportunities to practice speaking and listening in a natural setting through interacting with native speakers (Zheng & Xing, 2020). AI-powered tools contribute also to increasing learners' retention of new words and grammatical structures. Language learning apps help learners to associate words with their equivalent pictures which facilitates the building of a variety of vocabulary. AI advanced tools foster learners' self-confidence and motivation and push them to participate in conversation. They also become able to face their

worries concerning negative feedback from others. Learners' high self-confidence leads to decreasing anxiety levels, stress and fear of making mistakes. Learners become more eager to practice the language and communicate with it.

The last question involves students' perceptions toward integrating AI-powered tools in oral communication sessions. Most learners share the same perspectives toward using AI technology in English classrooms in general and oral classes in particular. Learners hold positive attitudes toward AI integration in oral classes because it makes them feel motivated to participate in conversations with their teachers and peers. AI also increases learners' self-confidence to interact in English without feeling scared or embarrassed. Therefore, English learners appreciate the advancements of technology especially AI-powered tools that facilitate and support them to communicate effectively.

Pedagogical Implications

Artificial intelligence is an effective technology that enhances oral communication skills, especially if teachers integrate it successfully in English classrooms. Learners benefit from speech recognition systems by receiving immediate constructive feedback to improve the pronunciation issues that they may experience in communicating (Li et al., 2020b). Wang and Liu and Li (2019) have argued that AI-based language learning applications contribute to developing learners' oral skills by offering them rich apps that build their vocabulary and strengthen their grammar rules which foster their confidence to communicate efficiently. Language communication platforms also play an essential role in equipping learners with multiple sources to practice language and communicate effectively through oral interactions, particularly with AI chatbots. Zhang and Zou (2020) have stated that chatbots help learners reinforce their motivation and get involved in several conversations. Hence, AI-powered tools support learner-centeredness by boosting learners' autonomy and providing personalized experiences. AI advanced technologies create also an enjoyable and exciting learning atmosphere which allows learners to learn and communicate in comfortable ways.

Conclusion

The present study aims to determine AI-powered tools' impact in enhancing oral communication skills. The study investigates English students' perceptions of the importance of AI integration in improving oral communication skills. The findings of the research develop general conclusions as follows. Oral skills are fundamental in learning a foreign language since they enable learners to express their ideas, thoughts, and emotions. Furthermore, oral skills increase collaboration by involving learners in conversations, discussions and debates. Many English learners prefer speaking and listening over reading and writing, they become obsessed with learning oral skills to communicate effectively. Even though oral communication skills are preferable and most significant, learners face different obstacles and problems in their attempts to communicate. Oral communication challenges can be linguistic such as lack of vocabulary and grammatical structures, mother tongue use, and pronunciation issues. Psychological ones include anxiety and stress, fear of making mistakes, lack of self-confidence, and motivation. Those problems lead teachers to integrate several AI technological tools in their teaching. AI technology appeared a few decades ago, but it has flourished recently in different domains including education. AI-powered tools provide English learners with multiple opportunities to improve their language and practice speaking and listening. AI advanced tools allow learners to gain self-confidence and motivation to communicate with their teachers, peers and even people outside the classroom. Moreover, AI technology enables learners to overcome their problems. It

also offers them a range of new words and grammatical structures which push them to communicate effectively and avoid using their mother tongue. Accordingly, artificial intelligence is effective in improving and enhancing oral communication skills, it also helps learners overcome problems that they face in oral class.

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Declaration of AI Refined

This research paper has undergone language correction using the AI-powered tools Grammarly and Scholar AI Chat to address grammatical, spelling, and stylistic errors. It is acknowledged that the use of such tools may introduce standardised patterns typical of AI-generated content. Consequently, a certain percentage of content may reflect AI-generated language structures. Yet, the intellectual content and the analysis remain entirely the work of the authors.

Statement of Absence of Conflict of Interest

The authors mentioned above hereby solemnly declare that they are not and shall not be in any situation that could give rise to a conflict of interest in what concerns the findings and recommendations contained in this academic article.

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