

The Role and Importance of Artificial Intelligence in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

In recent years, the use of AI has noticeably risen in the educational field, particularly in English language teaching. This article examines the role and significance of AI in teaching English as a foreign language based on studies of international and Uzbek contexts. Through a literature review, it investigates the effects of chatbots and speech-recognition systems on speaking skills, automated-correction tools on writing skills, and AI tools on students' autonomous learning and motivation. The findings indicate that AI applications contribute to reducing students' speaking anxiety, improving writing quality, and developing self-regulation. However, it is revealed that overuse of these tools may violate academic integrity and limit the development of autonomous learning skills. Research conducted in the Uzbekistan context showed positive attitudes among teachers, but there are still limitations related to systematic training and clear institutional policies. This article suggests practical solutions such as integrating AI tools under teacher supervision for certain pedagogical purposes, implementing professional training for teachers, and adapting assessment approaches.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, English as a Foreign Language, Higher Education, Uzbekistan, Language Learning Technologies.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the use of AI technologies in education, particularly in foreign language teaching, has increased significantly (Crompton et al., 2024). Artificial Intelligence enhances both the quality of teaching and learning outcomes simultaneously. Teachers benefit from AI-powered tools and high technological apps that present AI features. Moreover, students increasingly use chatbots, speech-recognition applications, and automated writing correction tools which improve their speaking (Jeon et al., 2024) and writing skills (Dizon & Gayed, 2021).

In Uzbekistan, the demand for English language proficiency has gained considerable importance in recent years. English language certificates have become an important requirement for teaching positions in educational institutions as well as for admission to higher education and postgraduate programs. Furthermore, the implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has strengthened the emphasis on English language teaching since 2017. Although many institutions have been equipped with digital technologies such as interactive whiteboards, the integration of AI-specific tools into classroom instruction remains limited, as many teachers still lack sufficient

knowledge and skills to use such technologies effectively. This gap presents a significant challenge to the successful integration of AI into English language teaching. Moreover, there is limited research on the implementation of AI technologies in English language teaching (Shikina, 2025).

2. Literature Review

In this part, research on various aspects of foreign language teaching will be discussed. Specifically, speaking and writing competences, as well as motivational research, will be examined.

2.1 AI and speaking skills.

Jeon et al. (2024) found that speech-recognition chatbots can enhance learners' speaking proficiency and reduce their communication anxiety. Similarly, Wang et al. (2024) compared three groups of Chinese university students ($N = 99$; 33 per group): a control group and two experimental groups using text/audio chatbots and avatar-based chatbots (D-ID Agent). The results showed that students who interacted with conversational chatbots exhibited higher willingness to communicate and lower speaking anxiety than those in traditional settings. Moreover, Ding and Muhyiddin B Yusof (2025) conducted research using mixed methods, and 60 undergraduate students at the IELTS preparation center participated. Participants were divided into two groups: the experimental group used an AI-based app called Mondly for 6 weeks, and the control group practiced traditional exercises. Students' speaking proficiency was tested by the IELTS Speaking test. The results showed that those using the Mondly platform demonstrated improved speaking skills and reduced speaking anxiety, which is consistent with previous studies. Despite this, some of these studies covered a limited period (six weeks or less); hence, it is uncertain whether the long-term success of chatbots will be retained.

2.2 AI and writing skills

Dizon and Gayed (2021) examined the impact of an automated writing-correction tool, Grammarly, on students' writing quality. Thirty-one undergraduate students used the tool for 8 weeks, and the study found that the students improved both their grammatical accuracy and lexical richness. In a related study, Alkamel and Alwagieh (2024) conducted a survey among EFL university students in Yemen to explore their perceptions of using ChatGPT in writing. The results showed that the

students believed ChatGPT helped develop the overall quality of writing, fluency, and accuracy. However, some students were concerned about plagiarism and academic integrity. In research on a quasi-experimental mixed-methods design, conducted by Du and Mohd Nordin (2026), sixty Chinese students were divided into two groups. The experimental group utilized an automated writing assessment system called iWrite for 12 weeks; conversely, the control group was provided with traditional teacher feedback. Consequently, those using the iWrite system enhanced their writing performance and lessened their writing anxiety. Although AI tools like ChatGPT promote significant improvement in writing, they may lead students to become overly reliant on automated writing tools and raise concerns about academic integrity.

2.3 AI and learner motivation/autonomy.

The survey conducted by Shikina (2025) covered 27 students in Uzbekistan to analyze the effect of AI tools on students' autonomy, self-directed learning, and motivation. The findings suggest that AI-tool users reported higher levels of self-directed learning and intrinsic motivation. Similarly, Guan et al. (2024) conducted a meta-analysis investigating the effect of AI-powered tools on informal English learning, particularly language proficiency, motivation and self-regulation. As a result, AI tools helped students plan their own learning process and progress at their own pace. This is further supported by Achuthan's (2025) meta-analysis, according to which AI-based applications positively influence students' self-regulated learning and self-directed learning. Consequently, AI served as a flexible scaffold supporting students' autonomous and effective learning strategies. Afzaal et al. (2025) studied the role of intrinsic motivation and factors related to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in undergraduate students' willingness to use ChatGPT at a university in Saudi Arabia. The findings revealed that intrinsic motivation, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use were significant predictors of students' behavioral intention to use ChatGPT.

2.4 Challenges and Limitations

Although AI-based tools contributed to significant improvement in various aspects of English language learning, there are several potential risks and limitations associated with their use. A study conducted by Lekamge and Smith (2025) investigated the impact of the

automated correction and suggestion functions in Microsoft Word on ESL learners' academic writing proficiency. First-year and third-year undergraduate students' and master's students' writing samples and semi-structured interviews conducted with them were examined. As a consequence, beginner-level students made fewer spelling and punctuation mistakes; however, long-term reliance on the software negatively affected language proficiency. Furthermore, interviews revealed that due to being over-dependent on technology, students' confidence in writing significantly decreased. In Kyaw and Deng's (2025) comprehensive literature review, they examined sixty-nine research studies. The results revealed that AI-based applications face challenges in developing analysis, evaluation, and creation skills, as well as difficulties regarding cultural aspects. In addition, researchers identified concerns related to over-reliance on AI, ethical problems, technical deficiencies, teachers' lack of sufficient skills, and unequal access to these tools.

3. AI in English Language Teaching in Uzbekistan

While the reviewed studies offer valuable insights into the opportunities and limitations of AI tools, it is equally important to understand how these global trends are reflected in developing countries' education systems, such as that of Uzbekistan. Research conducted by Shakib Kotamjani et al. (2023) analyzed the attitudes of 15 lecturers from different subjects at an international university in Uzbekistan toward AI technologies and found that almost all teachers (13) reported themselves as active users of AI, specifically ChatGPT, for editing research work and grammar checking. An investigation by Mirzayev et al. (2025) focused on 7 Uzbek EFL teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT and challenges they have encountered at Fergana State University, as research on this topic was limited in Uzbekistan. The findings highlighted mainly positive thoughts: improving students' autonomy, providing immediate feedback, and checking grammar. However, the research also revealed that over-relying on ChatGPT negatively impacts students' analytical-critical thinking skills and reduces interpersonal communication. Although these studies provided initial insights into the acceptance of AI in higher education, they were mainly based on limited samples. Hence, in the Uzbekistan context, specifically in English language teaching, there is a growing need for broader and more comprehensive studies on the influence of AI.

4. Discussion and Pedagogical Implications

Based on the research reviewed in this article, it is worth considering that chatbots and writing assistants indeed generate beneficial opportunities. However, from my perspective, these tools should not replace human teachers but supplement them. Particularly, in the Uzbekistan context, as shown by Shakib Kotamjani et al. (2023) and Mirzayev et al. (2025), teachers have already shown a willingness to use AI. Hence, instead of rejecting these tools or accepting them without limitations, integration with clear pedagogical purposes under teacher supervision may be the most effective way. Another important consideration is the lack of teachers' AI knowledge. As Kyaw and Deng (2025) highlighted, teachers faced challenges with utilising AI tools for educational purposes, which may cause some problems related to inconsistent or ineffective use of AI in the classroom. Additionally, Shakib Kotamjani et al. (2023) and Mirzayev et al. (2025) discussed that although Uzbek teachers have shown an increased interest in AI, inadequate systematic preparation still remains a problem. To address these issues, teachers should be provided with compulsory professional training programs. Moreover, the next problem to discuss is related to academic integrity and plagiarism. Alkamel and Alwagieh (2024) and Lekamge and Smith (2025) raised concerns about academic honesty and misconduct, noting that over-reliance on AI undermined students' writing skills. In addition, Kyaw and Deng (2025) also reported overall ethical problems as significant risks. In my view, alleviating these risks requires some changes in assessment methods. For example, instead of relying solely on take-home writing, students should also be required to complete in-class writing tasks and defend their work orally. Furthermore, providing clear instructions on how to use AI correctly and ethically may help prevent misuse. Finally, as Kyaw and Deng (2025) emphasized, unequal access to AI and technical issues are considered significant problems. From my perspective, universities and educational organizations should invest in designing clear institutional policies, providing equal access for all students, and developing essential technical infrastructure.

5. Conclusion

In this article, the role and importance of AI tools in teaching English as a foreign language are analysed based on research in the international and Uzbek contexts. The findings suggest that AI applications may

be beneficial for developing students' writing and speaking proficiency and motivation; however, overuse of AI can cause issues such as increased risks of academic integrity violations and reduced development of independent study skills. As this article is based on a literature review, there is a need for in-depth and extensive research examining the effect of AI in higher education, especially in English teaching in Uzbekistan.

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