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THE ROLE OF AI TOOLS IN IMPROVING LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS IN UNIVERSITY FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSES

Abstract. *The article is devoted to the possibilities of implementing artificial intelligence technologies into the foreign language learning process for students of higher education institutions. In particular, it considers AI tools (NaturalReader, Gliglish, Lingolette, Luvvoice) that can improve students' speaking and listening skills and increase their motivation for personal self-improvement.*

Key words: *artificial intelligence, AI tools, foreign language, listening skills, speaking skills.*

Лемещенко-Лагода В.В. Роль інструментів штучного інтелекту в покращенні навичок аудіювання та говоріння під час вивчення курсу іноземної мови у закладах вищої освіти. *Статтю присвячено розгляду можливостей імплементації технологій штучного інтелекту у процес вивчення іноземної мови студентами закладів вищої освіти. Зокрема, розглядаються AI-інструменти (NaturalReader, Gliglish, Lingolette, Luvvoice), які здатні покращити навички говоріння та аудіювання студентів та підвищити їх мотивацію до персонального самовдосконалення.*

Ключові слова*: штучний інтелект, інструменти штучного інтелекту, іноземна мова, навички аудіювання, навички говоріння.*

Relevance of the study. The rapid development of artificial intelligence technologies and the intensification of digital transformation processes in all spheres of human activity necessitate the modernisation of traditional methods of professional training for future specialists in higher education institutions. In particular, special attention should be paid to a comprehensive review of issues related to the introduction of AI tools into the educational process, taking into account their advantages and potential challenges.

Modern foreign language education is one of the areas that requires urgent innovative educational solutions capable of increasing both the effectiveness and adaptability of foreign language learning and, most importantly, providing educational support for the individual educational trajectory of each student. In this context, AI technologies, in particular those that contribute to the formation of students' foreign language competence and the development of their speech skills, are the means that can ensure a flexible transition and integration of modern educational tools into the learning process.

Thus, the **purpose of this article** is to analyse the potential of artificial intelligence technologies in teaching foreign languages to students of higher education institutions, with an emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills. The implementation of this objective involves the following tasks:

1. Characterisation of AI tools aimed at developing speaking and listening skills.
2. Analysis of the advantages of integrating AI into the teaching of foreign languages to students of different specialities.

Presentation of the main material. Nowadays, modern higher education is influenced by globalisation and digital transformations, which require students to have a high level of foreign language communication skills. In the context of international cooperation and collaboration, the development of foreign language competence among future specialists is becoming increasingly important and is one of the conditions for the competitiveness of future specialists in both the domestic and international labour markets. Traditional teaching methods, which were previously able to ensure an adequate level of development of all types of speech activity, are now losing their relevance, giving way to modern AI tools. Thus, researcher O. Zubenko believes that the use of AI can make foreign language classes more effective and improve the intensity of the learning process, as well as generate interest in cognitive activities and engage even passive students [1, p. 84]. In turn, T. Kosova emphasises the importance of introducing artificial intelligence, in particular the GPT chatbot, into English language teaching using interactive methods and the need to individualise teaching approaches for each student [2, p. 206-207]. I. Romanyshyn et al emphasise that thanks to the ability of AI technology to analyse learning needs, it is capable of developing personalised tasks and materials that correspond to the level and style of learning of each student, which opens up the possibility not only to learn the language

effectively, but also to do so at a pace and in a format specially adapted to them [3]. In addition, A. Khomyk stresses that artificial intelligence could serve as virtual assistants that engage in dialogue with students, increasing their engagement and motivation. According to the researcher, such interaction with AI not only helps students improve their language skills through constant practice but also provides an interactive learning experience that is particularly useful for those who are less confident in their language abilities [4, p. 306].

Therefore, as S. Sharov aptly sums up, the integration of artificial intelligence into the process of learning English by future specialists at universities plays a strategically important role in the training of qualified personnel [5, p.137].

And while researchers have repeatedly emphasised the need to introduce and intensify the use of AI tools in foreign language classes, in our opinion, insufficient attention has been paid to the practical consideration of these tools and the specifics of their use. In particular, AI tools that promote the development of speaking and listening skills require separate consideration, as these skills form the basis for building intercultural dialogue and productive cooperation within an international team.

Thus, we see the following as the main areas of application of AI technology in foreign language classes:

– interactive speaking practice (using chatbots, voice assistants, virtual interlocutors, etc.);
– adaptive listening (generation and playback of authentic audio materials, including accents and specific pronunciation that are as close as possible to real speakers);
– speech recognition and analysis (speech recognition technologies for pronunciation correction, detection of grammatical errors, recommendations for further study, etc.);
– simulation of professional and everyday communication situations.

Among the main tools capable of solving the tasks set and ensuring the implementation of all the above areas, we suggest considering the following: NaturalReader [9], Gliglish [6], Lingolette [7], and Luvvoice [8]. The choice of these tools is determined not only by their basic functionality, but also by their affordability (they can be used free of charge) and user-friendly interface.

In order to improve listening skills, we believe that students should use AI tools that can generate audio from text. Today, there are many available

resources, among which we would like to focus on NaturalReader [9] and Luvvoice [8].

Luvvoice [8] is a tool that can convert text into audio. The resource allows you to choose not only the language, but also the accent and timbre that will be most understandable to the user. The system allows you to create short audio recordings, which can then be downloaded to your device and listened to at any time. Students can use Luvvoice when preparing for reports and presentations, or for daily training in listening comprehension of foreign language texts. Moreover, while working with the text and listening to the audio, students can make notes on pronunciation, intonation, etc.

Another no less important resource is NaturalReader [9], which allows you to convert written texts into audio, enabling you to simultaneously track the progress of the virtual speaker's reading, i.e. follow the text and listen to the audio. In fact, the resource completely reproduces the downloaded text in accordance with the settings selected by the user. Thus, users can choose not only languages, but also pronunciation variations, and even the timbre and tone of the virtual speakers' voices. Moreover, the resource personalises content for each user, allowing them to choose font size and colour, adapt the text to the educational needs of students with dyslexia, increase and decrease the audio speed, and more. Thus, by using this resource, students can not only listen to the text in strict accordance with the parameters they have set, but also practise the pronunciation of words by repeating after the virtual speaker.

It is worth emphasising the usefulness of AI tools for developing and improving speaking skills. Gliglish [6], which is essentially an AI-generated speaking partner, allows you to have conversations with a virtual interlocutor on topics suggested by the system or your own. Using this resource, students can practise their speaking skills without fear of judgement from their interlocutor, practise individual phrases and responses, improving their pronunciation each time, and, most importantly, learn to converse freely on any topic.

The Lingolette [7] resource works on a similar principle, allowing you to have conversations with a virtual interlocutor, ask them questions, get reactions and feedback on your answers, and so on. Thus, the above-mentioned tools allow students to improve their speaking skills at a time convenient for them and in a comfortable atmosphere, which has a positive effect on their motivation to learn. When communicating with virtual interlocutors, students are not afraid to be themselves and boldly express their thoughts without fear

of condemnation from their peers. Moreover, the atmosphere during such communication becomes as relaxed and informal as possible, which can positively influence not only the desire for further learning, but also the speed of acquiring new knowledge and forming speaking and listening skills.

Conclusions. In conclusion, it should be emphasised that given the rapid development of technology and the increase in the number of AI applications aimed at supporting learning, including the study of foreign languages, their gradual integration into the educational process is becoming a prerequisite for the successful formation of future specialists who are able to actively interact with international experts, quickly master new technologies, and promote international cooperation. AI tools are capable of providing additional support and ensuring a flexible schedule for language skills training, which in turn allows students to improve their knowledge and skills by following their own educational trajectory.

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