

INNOVATIVE DIGITAL TOOLS IN TEACHING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS TO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Annotatsiya: Ushbu tezis universitet talabalarida ingliz tilida gapirish ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishda innovatsion raqamli vositalarning ahamiyatini yoritadi. Unda raqamli platformalar, sun'iy intellekt vositalari va interaktiv topshiriqlarning afzalliklari, cheklovlari hamda amaliy qo'llash usullari tahlil qilinadi.

Kalit so'zlar: digital tools, speaking skills, EFL, innovation, higher education

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматривается значение инновационных цифровых инструментов в развитии навыков устной английской речи у студентов университета. Анализируются преимущества, ограничения и практические способы применения цифровых платформ, инструментов искусственного интеллекта и интерактивных заданий.

Ключевые слова: digital tools, speaking skills, EFL, innovation, higher education

Abstract: This thesis discusses the importance of innovative digital tools in developing English speaking skills among university students. It analyzes the benefits, limitations, and practical applications of digital platforms, artificial intelligence tools, and interactive speaking tasks in EFL classrooms.

Key words: digital tools, speaking skills, EFL, innovation, higher education

Introduction: The rapid development of educational technology has changed the process of teaching and learning foreign languages. Today, English teachers are expected to use not only traditional teaching methods but also innovative digital tools that can make language learning more interactive and effective. Among the four language skills, speaking is often considered the most difficult because it requires students to use vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and listening comprehension at the same time.

The relevance of this topic is connected with the growing need to improve students' communicative competence in English. Many university students know grammar rules and vocabulary, but they still hesitate when they need to speak. They often feel anxious, lack confidence, or do not have enough opportunities for real speaking practice. In such situations, digital tools can create a more flexible and motivating environment for oral communication [1].

The aim of this thesis is to examine the role of innovative digital tools in teaching English speaking skills to university students. The objectives are to describe the importance of speaking skills in EFL learning, identify the main digital tools used for speaking practice, analyze their advantages and disadvantages, and provide practical recommendations for teachers.

Speaking is a productive skill that plays an essential role in foreign language communication. It allows learners to express ideas, share opinions, ask questions, and participate in social and academic interaction. However, many EFL students face

difficulties in speaking because classroom conditions do not always provide enough time and space for every learner to practice actively. In large groups, some students speak frequently while others remain silent. This problem makes the use of digital tools especially relevant [2].

Innovative digital tools can support speaking instruction in different ways. One group includes online communication platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams. These platforms are useful for conducting discussions, oral presentations, interviews, and pair or group speaking activities in both online and blended learning environments. Their advantage is that they allow teachers to organize interaction even outside the traditional classroom [3].

Another group includes interactive educational platforms such as Padlet, Flip, Kahoot, and Quizlet. These tools can be adapted to speaking lessons by asking students to record short oral responses, comment on each other's ideas, or prepare mini-presentations. For example, Flip is especially effective because students can record their speech in video form, repeat it if necessary, and improve their confidence before sharing the final version. This is very useful for shy students who may not feel comfortable speaking spontaneously in front of the whole class.

Artificial intelligence tools also play an increasing role in speaking instruction. Speech recognition systems, pronunciation applications, and AI-based chatbots can help learners improve pronunciation, stress, and fluency. Such tools provide immediate feedback, which is one of their greatest strengths. A student can practice many times without waiting for the teacher's correction. This encourages autonomy and helps learners become more independent in their speaking development [4].

One important advantage of digital tools is motivation. Modern students are familiar with digital technologies and often feel more engaged when lessons include online tasks, interactive activities, and multimedia materials. Digital speaking tasks may seem more natural and attractive to them than only textbook-based oral exercises. As a result, students participate more actively and develop a more positive attitude toward speaking English.

Another advantage is flexibility. Digital tools make it possible to practice speaking not only in class but also at home. Teachers can assign oral homework in the form of voice recordings, video reflections, or short presentations. Students can listen to their own speech, notice mistakes, and try again. This repeated practice strengthens fluency and self-confidence. At the same time, teachers can check students' work more carefully and provide more individualized feedback.

Digital tools also support collaborative learning. Students can work in pairs or small groups on podcasts, dialogues, online discussions, and project presentations. During such activities they learn not only language, but also communication strategies, teamwork, and self-expression. These are important skills for their future academic and professional life. Digital environments often make collaboration easier because students can communicate, record, and share their work at different times and in different formats.

Despite these advantages, some problems should also be mentioned. First, not all students have equal access to the internet, devices, or a quiet place for recording speaking tasks. Second, some teachers may use technology without clear methodological purpose. If digital tools are used only for entertainment or without connection to learning goals, they do not improve speaking effectively. Third, AI feedback cannot fully replace the

teacher because real communication involves meaning, context, and appropriateness, not only pronunciation accuracy.

For this reason, digital tools should be used in a balanced way. Technology must support pedagogy. A successful speaking lesson should combine communicative tasks, teacher guidance, and appropriate digital resources. For example, a teacher may begin with vocabulary practice through Quizlet, continue with pair discussion, and then ask students to submit a short video response on Flip. Such a lesson integrates both traditional and innovative methods.

In university education, digital speaking tasks can be designed to reflect real-life communication. Students can prepare presentations, record job interview answers, create video CVs, participate in debates, or discuss academic topics online. These tasks increase not only linguistic competence but also practical communication skills that students will need in their future careers [3].

Thus, innovative digital tools have strong potential in speaking instruction. They create more opportunities for practice, lower speaking anxiety, increase learner engagement, and develop autonomy. However, their effectiveness depends on thoughtful lesson planning, teacher competence, and equal access to resources.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the use of innovative digital tools in teaching speaking skills has become highly important in modern EFL education. Speaking remains one of the most difficult skills for university students, but digital tools can make this process easier, more engaging, and more effective. Online platforms, interactive applications, and AI-based technologies provide learners with additional opportunities to practice oral communication, receive feedback, and build confidence.

The analysis shows that digital tools are beneficial because they motivate students, support flexible learning, and encourage collaboration. At the same time, teachers should remember that technology is only a means, not an end. It should be selected according to lesson objectives and students' needs.

Several practical recommendations can be suggested. First, teachers should choose simple and accessible digital tools that directly support speaking practice. Second, oral tasks should be communicative and meaningful rather than mechanical. Third, digital feedback should be combined with teacher feedback. Fourth, institutions should provide technical and methodological support for both teachers and students. Finally, digital speaking activities should be integrated regularly into the course so that students can improve step by step.

When used carefully and purposefully, innovative digital tools can significantly contribute to the development of English speaking skills in higher education.

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