

AI-Supported Speaking Practice in Higher Education: Student Experiences and Perceptions of AI Generated Feedback for Spoken English Development

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Abstract:

The increased use of artificial intelligence in language learning has opened new possibilities for speaking practice, role play, and feedback. This study examines students' perceptions of an AI assisted speaking tool, in terms of its value as a role play partner and the usefulness of its AI generated feedback. Focusing on AI generated small-talk role-play tasks, this study reports on a small-scale mixed-methods study of university students' experiences of using Yoodli, an AI-supported speaking tool. The participants were 17 Fashion Design students enrolled in a course designed to prepare them for the social English and workplace communication needed for internships in the fashion industry.

The study investigates students' perceptions of using Yoodli and its value for developing spoken English in an English-for-specific-purposes context. In particular, it examines whether students found the AI-generated feedback meaningful, actionable, and relevant to their communication needs. It also explores the students' feelings regarding the role play's authenticity, its potential to provide much needed conversation practice and its ability to develop the students speaking confidence.

Data were collected through post-use questionnaires and focus groups. Questionnaire responses and focus-group data were examined thematically to identify patterns in students' evaluations of their experience of using the tool and the feedback it generated. By examining student responses to AI-generated speaking feedback in higher education, the study aims to contribute to current discussions regarding the use of AI in language education. It also suggests practical implications for integrating AI-supported speaking tools such as Yoodli into classroom practice, or for advising students on the independent use of such tools.

Keywords: English for specific purposes, speaking practice, artificial intelligence, AI generated feedback