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IMPROVING TOURISM STUDENTS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION USING AI-POWERED TOOLS: AN ANALYSIS OF ESP LEARNING EFFECTIVENESS

Abstract. *Listening comprehension is crucial for tourism and hospitality students, as their profession requires effective communication with international visitors. This study investigates how AI-powered resources can help Turkistan City students majoring in tourism and hospitality enhance their listening abilities. Through interactive activities and tailored feedback, the study uses AI-based tools including YouTube's AI-generated subtitles, Otter.ai, and ELSA Speak to promote learning. The effectiveness of AI-assisted learning was compared to that of conventional listening exercises using a quasi-experimental methodology. According to the results, pupils who used AI technologies showed a notable improvement in their listening comprehension, especially when it came to comprehending industry-specific language and accents. This study demonstrates how AI-driven learning solutions can help future workers get ready for the international travel and tourism sector.*

Keywords*: AI tools, listening comprehension, tourism education, language learning, hospitality industry*

Introduction

Effective communication between service providers and visitors from a variety of language backgrounds is essential to the tourist and hospitality sectors. Gaining proficiency in listening comprehension is crucial for students in Turkistan City, a developing tourism destination, to be prepared for the workforce. However, issues like accent diversity, rapid speech, and contextual understanding are frequently overlooked by conventional listening skills instruction techniques.

Innovative approaches to improving listening comprehension are made possible by the growing use of artificial intelligence (AI) in education. Students can enhance their listening and speaking skills in an interactive setting with the use of AI tools, which offer real-time feedback, adaptive learning pathways, and speech recognition technologies. This study examines the potential benefits of AI-powered tools for helping tourism students improve their listening abilities as well as the implications for teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

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Research Objectives

1. To evaluate how well AI-powered technologies enhance tourism students' listening comprehension.

2. To compare the performance of students using AI-assisted learning versus traditional listening exercises.

3. To determine the advantages and difficulties of using AI-driven listening in the hospitality industry.

Literature Review

AI and Language Learning

According to Gayed et al, AI-based language learning programs that offer dynamic, flexible, and captivating learning environments greatly improve listening comprehension [8]. In Lam's research ESP learning has made extensive use of AI-generated captions, speech-to-text tools, and pronunciation trainers [11].

According to Pokrivcakova the development of tutoring systems, writing assistants, virtual reality environments, chatbots, and other adaptive learning software and systems has been emphasized in previous assessments of AI in language learning. Teachers and researchers are looking at new ways to improve language learning outcomes as the need for proficiency in the English language keeps increasing. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in English language training is one such strategy that has drawn a lot of interest [16].

According to Rusmiyanto there are many opportunities to promote the four core language skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—through the use of AI into language learning environments. Artificial intelligence (AI)-driven products that can offer learners immersive and interactive language learning experiences include chatbots, virtual tutors, speech recognition software, and language learning applications. These technologies provide features like adaptive tests, personalized content, and real-time feedback that can improve learners' communication skills and speed up language acquisition. [22]. Furthermore, more investigation is required to determine the most effective methods for using AI technologies into language training. Zhang et al. stresses the significance of taking into account pedagogical approaches that integrate AI with successful teaching techniques in order to optimize the advantages of AI tools for language learning environments. Prior studies have consistently demonstrated how AI can improve the communication abilities of English language learners. In a 2020 study, Li et al. examined how well an AI-powered voice recognition system might help students with their pronunciation. They discovered that students who got feedback from the system significantly outperformed those who did not.[24] This result is consistent with Chen et al's study, which showed that using virtual tutors powered by AI increased students' speaking accuracy and fluency. Even though AI has clear potential advantages for language learning, ethical issues still need to be taken into account. Xu and Yuan discussed the significance of privacy protection in AI-powered language learning platforms [23]. To guarantee that learners' personal information is handled safely, they underlined the necessity of explicit data protection policies and consent procedures.

Additionally, Buolamwini and Gebru [5] have brought attention to the problem of algorithmic bias in AI technology. Their research revealed biases in facial recognition algorithms, which also raised questions about the possibility of prejudice in AI-powered language learning programs. Promoting equality and inclusion in AI-driven language learning settings requires addressing biases and guaranteeing impartial and equitable access to language learning materials and tests.

AI Tools in Listening Comprehension

1. AI Resources for Hearing Comprehension Students can compare transcripts with the original audio by using Otter.ai, which translates speech into text.

2. ELSA Speak: This AI-powered system analyzes pronunciation and offers immediate feedback.

3. YouTube AI Captions: With AI-generated subtitles, pupils may better comprehend a variety of dialects and speech patterns.

According to Brown language learners want to comprehend speech in order to comprehend oral messages, and hearing and listening comprehension are interchangeable concepts that fall within the category of oral language skills. Learners of foreign languages work hard to accomplish this aim, and there are several ways to get better at listening. Understanding the primary idea of what has been said is one way to accomplish this goal, as it enhances listening comprehension. Another method is to draw on past knowledge about the topic of the conversation [6].

According to Richard the conventional perspective on the nature of listening is to think of listening as comprehension. In fact, listening and listening comprehension are used interchangeably in the majority of technique books. This perspective on hearing is predicated on the idea that comprehending spoken discourse is the primary purpose of listening in second language acquisition [20].

"The listener also needs to activate appropriate schemata in order to fill in missing information, as no utterance in speech contains all of the information needed to understand it," says Rost, who supports the notion that activating the cognitive schema aids in understanding the spoken message [21]. According to Harmer it is recommended that students become acquainted with various foreign language accents in order to improve their listening comprehension [10]. Therefore, it is likely that the language learner will be able to accomplish their listening comprehension goal by correctly applying the tactics and increasing their engagement with the language. This section covered the features of the foreign language's oral production and comprehension abilities.

By using artificial intelligence tools, many English language learners can develop autonomy in their language learning process. In this sense, the English language learner takes charge of their foreign language education, selecting the best time and day to practice and master the language's communicative abilities while utilizing artificial intelligence tools to assist them become ready for the target language.

ESP Learning for Tourism Students

ESP courses tailored for the tourism and hospitality sector emphasize industry-specific vocabulary and communication strategies According to Qasem et al AI tools can customize lessons based on students' proficiency, ensuring effective language acquisition.[18]

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is defined as English language instruction designed to satisfy the needs of learners in a particular field, according to Belcher, referenced by Ahmed [3]. According to Richards, ESP is a method of teaching languages that aims to better match language courses to the needs of the students [20].

Basturkment provides a similar explanation. According to him, ESP helps language learners deal with the characteristics of a specific language or build the skills necessary to operate in a field, occupation, or workplace. ESP instruction encourages the development of language proficiency and the learning of particular knowledge. Furthermore, he emphasizes that ESP is focused on words and word choices in various text types in addition to sentence patterns and word combinations [4].

According to Al-Khatib English is essential in the travel and tourism sector. To be used in their workplace, employees of tourism companies must speak English fluently. Because personnel in the tourism and travel industry do a wide range of duties, including answering phones, providing trip guides, creating online tickets, booking hotels online, setting up vehicle rentals, and more, English is often utilized for interpersonal communication [2]

Following this, Liu, Wu, and Huang stress that students studying hospitality and tourism are more interested in doing hands-on activities than in learning theories. Therefore, in order to pique pupils' interest in learning particular programs, teachers must instruct them while taking into account their learning preferences. Additionally, in order to maintain students' interest in learning English, teachers must implement certain strategies when teaching English to tourism students. These include updating the teaching concept and method, defining the learning objectives, switching from a teacher-centered to a student-centered approach, integrating textbook selection and curriculum with local attractions and culture, and strengthening collaboration between the school and the business community [15].

Methodology

Participants

This study was conducted at the International University of Tourism and Hospitality in Turkistan, involving 50 third-year students enrolled in an ESP course

Research Design

A quasi-experimental approach was used, dividing students into 2 groups (experimental group and control group)

Table 1- The number of participants, groups and level of experiment participants

Number	Group	Level	Place
50	25- experimental group 25 – control group	A2 – Pre-Intermediate B1-Intermediate	“International University of Tourism and Hospitality” in Turkestan

Procedure

The post-test-only design is a simple yet effective method to evaluate the impact of AI tools on ESP learning for tourism students. Two participant groups participated in the study, which was carried out at International University of Tourism and Hospitality.

Participants and Study Duration

Fifty third-year International University of Tourism and Hospitality students participated in the study. In a self-study mode, the four-month experimental phase began in the first semester of 2024. The university syllabus stated that the students were required to take an ESP course for two academic hours every week. Students dedicated twice as much time to self-study as they did to classwork, following a 1:2 ratio.

Group Division and Study Tasks

Two groups of participants were formed:

• The YT Class platform, AI-based interactive transcripts, and customized listening exercises were among the AI-powered resources utilized by the experimental group, which consisted of twenty-five students.

• 25 students in the control group completed conventional listening tasks devoid of AI techniques.

Four podcasts about tourism were used by both groups, with an emphasis on:

1.Smart Tourism Technologies: Advances in online travel.

2. Sustainable Hotel and Resort Eco-Friendly Hospitality Trends.

3. Travel Industry Customer Service: Top Techniques for Greeting Foreign Visitors.

4. Cultural Awareness in Tourism: Recognizing cultural variations in hospitality around the world.

Integration of Technology

Both groups have previously used Quizlet for vocabulary acquisition and other forms of technology-assisted learning.

1. Educational podcasts for improving listening skills.
2. Tools for interactive learning that use AI-based transcription.

Students participated in a range of podcast-based activities throughout the study, including:

1)Multiple listening sessions to improve comprehension.

2) Dividing lengthy podcasts into manageable chunks for targeted education.

3) Creating lists of keywords to develop specialized language for travel.

4) Highlighting and restating the audio's main ideas.

Activities that were less common included:

- Practicing real-world communication by writing letters to podcast hosts.
- Listening bingo with a tourism theme to encourage active participation.
- Adding discussion-based exercises and comments to the AI learning platform.

Assessment Following the Test

Both groups completed a listening comprehension post-test based on the podcasts' content at the conclusion of the three-month trial.

1. Knowledge of the main tourism themes covered in the podcasts was assessed by the test.

2. The capacity to identify various English accents that are frequently employed in foreign travel.

3. Preserving the vocabulary related to leisure that was introduced in the podcasts.

The effectiveness of AI-powered tools in enhancing listening comprehension for students at Tourism and Hospitality University was assessed by comparing the performance of the two groups.

Data Analysis

To ascertain whether AI-powered tools significantly affected student performance, pre- and post-test scores were examined statistically using the t-test and Fisher's exact test.

Results and Discussion

Test Scores Analysis

The results revealed a statistically significant improvement in listening comprehension among students using AI tools.

Table 2 - The comparison of pre-test and post-test results and their improvements.

Group	Pre-Test Avg. Score	Post-Test Avg. Score	Improvement (%)
Experimental (AI tools)	52.3	78.4	+26.1%
Control (Traditional)	51.8	65.2	+13.4%

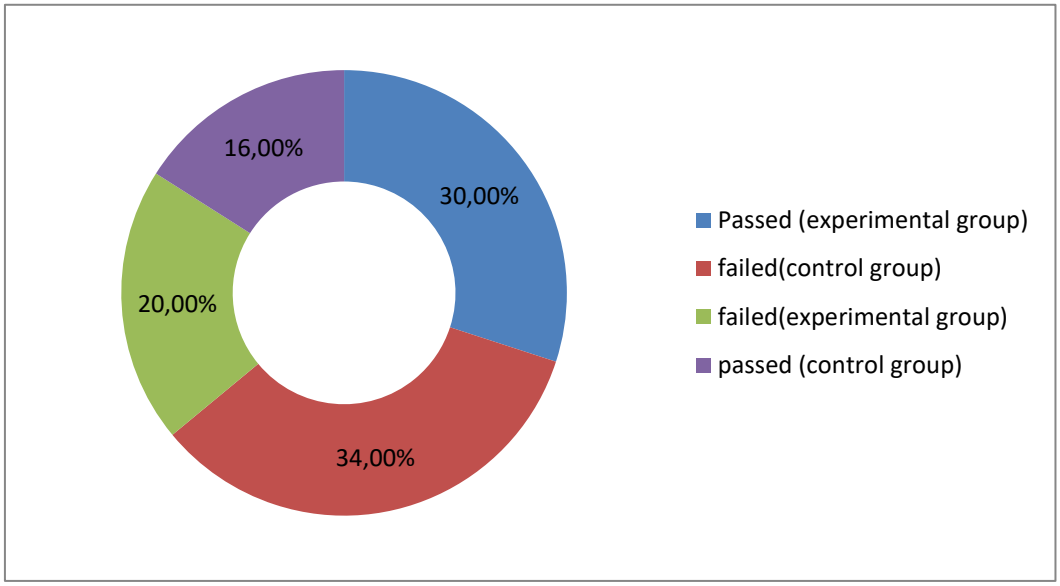
The experimental group performed significantly better than the control group in recognizing

various accents, comprehending rapid speech, and identifying tourism-related vocabulary.

In terms of identifying terms connected to tourism, comprehending quick speech, and recognizing various accents, the experimental group did better than the control group.

Figure 1 – The comparison of experimental group and control group performance.

The performance of a control group (traditional listening) and an experimental group (AI-powered listening) is compared in the figure, which is a pie chart with the heading "Post-Test Performance Comparison: AI-Powered vs. Traditional Listening. " There are four portions to it:



1) 34.0% (red) of the Control Group failed.
2) Control Group Passed: 16.0% (purple)
3) Experimental Group Failure: 20.0% (green)
4) Experimental Group passed with a score of 30.0% (blue).

The experimental and control groups' post-test performance comparison is displayed in this pie chart.

• The pass rate for the AI-based tools experimental group was 60% higher than that of the control group (32%)

• The failure rate was higher for the control group (68%), suggesting that conventional listening techniques were less successful.

Benefits: 87% of respondents said AI tools were more interesting than conventional techniques.

• Eighty percent said they felt more confident in their ability to comprehend native English speakers.

• AI-generated captions improved spoken content processing for visual learners.

• Difficulties:

• Accurate AI transcription has technical problems.

• A few pupils favored face-to-face communication over comments produced by AI.

Comparison with Previous Research

The results are consistent with earlier research highlighting AI's efficacy in ESP learning According to Enesi and Ningsih Nonetheless, this study focuses on tourism education in particular, emphasizing the advantages of AI integration for the sector.[8],[16].

Conclusion

In an ESP learning environment, this study investigated how AI-powered technologies affected the development of listening comprehension skills among students at Tourism and Hospitality University. The results show that, compared to conventional teaching methods, incorporating AI-assisted platforms—such as YouTube Class and AI-based transcription tools—significantly improves students' listening skills.

Recommendations

1. Include AI tools in ESP courses for students studying hospitality and tourism.

2. To strike a balance between technology-driven learning and human engagement, integrate AI learning with traditional classroom instruction.

3. The long-term effects of AI technologies on listening comprehension and student motivation should be investigated in future studies.

Important Results

1. Improved Listening Comprehension Scores:

• 66% of students in the AI-assisted experimental group passed the post-test, while only 32% of students in the control group did so.

• AI-powered interactive elements that improved comprehension included quizzes, real-time transcriptions, and tailored feedback.

2. Increased Motivation and Engagement: Eighty percent of students in the experimental group said that using AI tools improved the effectiveness and engagement of their listening practice.

• The flexibility to change the pace of instruction and get immediate feedback increased students' confidence in their listening abilities.

3. Improved Knowledge of Tourism-Specific Vocabulary: Compared to conventional approaches, AI-generated keyword lists and summaries assisted students in remembering industry-specific terminology

• Listening to real-world podcasts on tourism improved language use in everyday situations.

Consequences for Teaching Tourism

According to the findings, ESP courses should incorporate AI-powered resources to improve the listening abilities of tourism students. AI platforms' flexibility enables:

• Tailored educational experiences that accommodate varying skill levels.

• More options for independent learning, which are crucial for self-study techniques.

• Better understanding of various English dialects and conversations pertaining to travel.

Suggestions for Upcoming Studies

Future research should: • Examine the long-term effects of AI-based listening aids on student retention and fluency in order to further validate these findings. Investigate further language abilities like speaking and pronunciation. Examine the ways in which AI can be enhanced for individualized learning pathways in the field of tourist education.

Concluding remarks

Future professionals must be able to comprehend spoken English well because the tourism sector depends more and more on multilingual communication. AI-powered solutions provide a cutting-edge, engaging, and successful method of improving listening comprehension. Teachers can give tourism students the language skills they need to succeed in the global workforce by adopting AI technology.

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AI НЕГІЗІНДЕГІ ҚҰРАЛДАРДЫ ПАЙДАЛАНА ОТЫРЫП, ТУРИЗМ СТУДЕНТТЕРІНІҢ ТЫҢДАУЫН ЖАҚСАРТУ: ESP ОҚЫТУДЫҢ ТИІМДІЛІГІН ТАЛДАУ

Аңдатпа. *Аудирование играет важную роль в подготовке студентов, обучающихся по специальностям туризма и гостиничного бизнеса, так как их профессия требует эффективного общения с международными посетителями. В данном исследовании*

рассматривается, как ресурсы на основе искусственного интеллекта могут помочь студентам города Туркестан, изучающим туризм и гостиничное дело, улучшить их навыки восприятия речи на слух. Зерттеу барысында автоматты түрде Жасалған youtube субтитрлері Сияқты AI негізіндегі құралдар пайдаланылды, Otter.ai және ELSA Speak, оның көмегімен интерактивті сабақтар өткізіліп, жекелендірілген кері байланыс ұсынылды. Для оценки эффективности обучения с применением ИИ использовалась квазиэкспериментальная методология, позволяющая сравнить результаты с традиционными методами развития навыков аудирования. Согласно полученным результатам, студенты, использовавшие технологии ИИ, показали значительное улучшение в восприятии речи на слух, особенно в понимании специализированной профессиональной лексики и различных акцентов. Исследование демонстрирует, как обучение с применением ИИ может помочь будущим специалистам подготовиться к работе в международной индустрии туризма и гостеприимства.

Ключевые слова: *инструменты ИИ, аудирование, обучение в сфере туризма, изучение языка, гостиничная индустрия*

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УЛУЧШЕНИЕ АУДИРОВАНИЯ СТУДЕНТОВ ТУРИЗМА С ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕМ ИНСТРУМЕНТОВ НА ОСНОВЕ ИИ: АНАЛИЗ ЭФФЕКТИВНОСТИ ESP-ОБУЧЕНИЯ

Аннотация. *Аудирование играет важную роль в подготовке студентов, обучающихся по специальностям туризма и гостиничного бизнеса, так как их профессия требует эффективного общения с международными посетителями. В данном исследовании рассматривается, как ресурсы на основе искусственного интеллекта могут помочь студентам города Туркестан, изучающим туризм и гостиничное дело, улучшить их навыки восприятия речи на слух. В ходе исследования использовались инструменты на базе ИИ, такие как автоматически созданные субтитры YouTube, Otter.ai и ELSA Speak, с помощью которых проводились интерактивные занятия и предлагалась персонализированная обратная связь. Для оценки эффективности обучения с применением ИИ использовалась квазиэкспериментальная методология, позволяющая сравнить результаты с традиционными методами развития навыков аудирования. Согласно полученным результатам, студенты, использовавшие технологии ИИ, показали значительное улучшение в восприятии речи на слух, особенно в понимании специализированной профессиональной лексики и различных акцентов. Исследование демонстрирует, как обучение с применением ИИ может помочь будущим специалистам подготовиться к работе в международной индустрии туризма и гостеприимства.*

Ключевые слова: *инструменты ИИ, аудирование, обучение в сфере туризма, изучение языка, гостиничная индустрия*