OPPORTUNITIES OF AI IN ASSESSMENT OF LANGUAGE SKILLS

Timur Suleymanov
Independent Researcher,
Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages,
Samarkand, Uzbekistan.
suleymanov.timka@gmail.com

Kaliya Kiyasova
Associate Professor, Uzbekali Zhanibekov
South Kazakhstan Pedagogical University, Kazakhstan

Abstract. This article discusses the opportunities of artificial intelligence in the assessment of language skills. In modern English language teaching, assessment is no longer limited to traditional written tests, oral examinations, or teacher-marked assignments. AI-based tools can support the assessment of reading, writing, listening, and speaking through automated scoring, instant feedback, adaptive testing, speech recognition, text analysis, learner analytics, and personalized recommendations. The article argues that AI can make language assessment faster, more flexible, more individualized, and more formative. At the same time, it emphasizes that AI should not replace the teacher's professional judgment. The most effective model is a human-centred approach in which AI supports teachers by providing additional evidence about learners' progress, common errors, fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary use, grammar accuracy, and communicative performance. The article concludes that AI creates important opportunities for improving language assessment, especially in EFL contexts, but its use must be ethical, transparent, pedagogically meaningful, and controlled by teachers.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, language assessment, English language teaching, language skills, automated feedback, formative assessment, AI in education.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada til ko‘nikmalarini baholashda sun’iy intellekt imkoniyatlari tahlil qilinadi. Zamonaviy ingliz tilini o‘qitishda baholash faqat an’anaviy yozma testlar, og‘zaki imtihonlar yoki o‘qituvchi tomonidan tekshiriladigan topshiriqlar bilan cheklanib qolmaydi. Sun’iy intellektga asoslangan vositalar o‘qish, yozish, tinglab tushunish va gapirish ko‘nikmalarini avtomatik baholash, tezkor qayta aloqa berish, moslashuvchan testlar yaratish, nutqni aniqlash, matnni tahlil qilish, o‘quvchi natijalarini kuzatish va shaxsiy tavsiyalar berish orqali rivojlantirishi mumkin. Maqolada sun’iy intellekt baholash jarayonini tezroq, moslashuvchanroq, individualroq va shakllantiruvchi xarakterga ega qilishi mumkinligi asoslanadi. Shu bilan birga, sun’iy intellekt o‘qituvchining kasbiy qarorini to‘liq almashtirmasligi kerakligi ta’kidlanadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: sun’iy intellekt, til ko‘nikmalarini baholash, ingliz tilini o‘qitish, til ko‘nikmalari, avtomatik qayta aloqa, shakllantiruvchi baholash, ta’limda sun’iy intellekt.

Assessment is one of the most important components of language education because it shows not only what learners know but also how they use language in meaningful communication. In English language teaching, assessment traditionally includes tests of grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, writing, and speaking. However, the development of artificial intelligence has created new possibilities for assessing language skills in more flexible, immediate, and learner-centred ways. Recent discussions in language assessment

show that generative AI and other AI-based systems are changing how productive skills, feedback, validity, reliability, fairness, and classroom assessment are understood. A 2025 systematic review of generative AI in language testing and assessment analyzed 77 studies and identified both opportunities and challenges related to reliability, validity, fairness, and practicality.

The main opportunity of AI in language assessment is the possibility of providing fast and detailed feedback. In traditional classrooms, teachers often need much time to check written assignments, listen to oral responses, correct mistakes, and prepare comments. This is especially difficult when there are many students in one group. AI tools can reduce this pressure by giving immediate feedback on grammar, spelling, vocabulary choice, sentence structure, pronunciation, fluency, and coherence. For example, automated writing evaluation tools can identify repeated grammar errors, suggest alternative expressions, and show whether a written text is clear and logically organized. Speaking tools can analyze pronunciation, pausing, stress, intonation, and fluency. This does not mean that the teacher becomes unnecessary. On the contrary, the teacher becomes more important because AI feedback must be interpreted, corrected, personalized, and connected with learning objectives.

AI also creates opportunities for formative assessment. Formative assessment is assessment for learning, not only assessment of learning. Its purpose is to help students understand their strengths and weaknesses during the learning process. AI can support formative assessment by giving students regular feedback before final exams or official evaluation. For instance, a student can submit a short paragraph, receive comments, revise it, and submit an improved version. A learner can record a speaking answer, receive feedback on pronunciation and fluency, and practice again. In this way, assessment becomes a continuous process rather than a single final event. Studies on AI-based language tools increasingly focus on assessment and feedback because these tools can support repeated practice and learner improvement. A 2025 study, for example, examined AI-based tools such as Grammarly, Duolingo, and ELSA Speak in relation to language testing and feedback provision.

In writing assessment, AI can be especially useful because written language contains many features that can be analyzed automatically. AI can evaluate grammar accuracy, vocabulary range, sentence complexity, cohesion, coherence, organization, and task achievement. It can also help students notice their typical mistakes. For example, if a learner often makes errors with articles, prepositions, verb forms, or punctuation, AI can identify these patterns and provide practice recommendations. This is useful for both students and teachers. Students receive individual support, while teachers receive information about the most common difficulties in the group. However, writing assessment should not be reduced to mechanical correction. A good written text also requires argumentation, originality, audience awareness, academic style, and communicative purpose. These aspects still require human evaluation.

In speaking assessment, AI can create new possibilities through speech recognition and automatic pronunciation analysis. Speaking is one of the most difficult skills to assess because it requires attention to fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, interaction, coherence, and pragmatic appropriateness. AI can record and analyze oral responses, measure speech rate, detect long pauses, compare pronunciation with target models, and provide feedback on clarity. This is particularly useful in EFL contexts where students may not have enough opportunities to speak English outside the classroom. AI-based speaking practice gives learners the chance to speak more frequently and receive feedback more often. At the same time, speaking assessment must include

communicative meaning, interaction, intention, and context. British Council research on speaking assessment in the AI era emphasizes that AI should capture genuine communicative competence rather than only AI-specific test-taking performance.

In reading assessment, AI can help teachers create adaptive tasks according to students' level. Instead of giving the same text and the same questions to all learners, AI can recommend texts with suitable vocabulary, grammar complexity, topic familiarity, and question difficulty. It can also analyze students' answers and identify whether they have problems with main idea comprehension, inference, vocabulary in context, reference, detail, or critical interpretation. This allows teachers to understand reading difficulties more precisely. For example, one student may understand factual information but fail to infer the writer's attitude, while another may struggle with academic vocabulary. AI-supported assessment can show these differences and help teachers design targeted reading activities.

In listening assessment, AI can provide flexible and repeated practice with different accents, speeds, topics, and task types. Listening is often difficult for EFL learners because they must process pronunciation, connected speech, speed, intonation, and meaning at the same time. AI can generate listening tasks, control the level of difficulty, provide transcripts after completion, and analyze students' mistakes. If a learner repeatedly fails to understand numbers, names, reduced forms, or specific vocabulary, AI can identify this pattern. It can also help teachers prepare listening tasks for different proficiency levels. Adaptive listening assessment is useful because students do not always develop listening skills at the same speed.

Another important opportunity is personalization. In a traditional classroom, all students often receive the same test, the same feedback, and the same homework. AI makes it possible to provide more individualized assessment. If one student has difficulty with pronunciation, another with grammar, and another with academic vocabulary, AI can recommend different tasks for each learner. This supports differentiated instruction and makes assessment more meaningful. A 2025 systematic review on technology integration in L2 pragmatic competence found that computer-mediated communication, automated dialogues, virtual environments, and digital games can support contextualized and personalized language learning. Although this review focused on pragmatics, its findings are also relevant to assessment because modern assessment increasingly includes interaction, context, and learner-specific feedback.

AI can also support teacher assessment literacy. Assessment literacy means the teacher's ability to design, interpret, and use assessment appropriately. AI tools can help teachers create rubrics, prepare test items, analyze learner performance, and compare results across different tasks. For example, AI can help generate different versions of vocabulary quizzes, reading comprehension questions, speaking prompts, and writing tasks. It can also help teachers see which items are too easy, too difficult, or unclear. However, teachers must check all AI-generated materials because AI may produce inaccurate, biased, culturally inappropriate, or pedagogically weak content. Therefore, AI should be treated as an assistant, not as an authority.

For future English teachers, AI-supported assessment is especially important. They need to learn not only how to use AI tools but also how to evaluate their reliability, fairness, and pedagogical value. They should understand what AI can assess well and what it cannot assess fully. AI may be useful for surface-level features such as spelling, grammar, fluency, and pronunciation accuracy, but it may be weaker in evaluating creativity, critical thinking, cultural appropriateness, pragmatic meaning, emotional tone, and classroom interaction. This is why future teachers should

be trained to combine AI-generated evidence with human judgment. The British Council's 2025 position paper on human-centred AI in English learning and assessment stresses that AI should prioritize learner needs, fairness, inclusion, teacher roles, collaboration, ethics, accessibility, and AI literacy.

AI can make assessment more inclusive if it is used carefully. Some learners need more time, more practice, more feedback, or alternative ways to show their ability. AI can provide additional practice opportunities for shy students, students with weak confidence, or students who are afraid of making mistakes in front of others. It can also help learners practice independently outside the classroom. For example, a student can practice speaking at home, receive feedback, and come to class better prepared. This can reduce anxiety and increase learner autonomy. However, inclusion also means that all students should have equal access to technology. If some learners do not have good internet, devices, or digital skills, AI-based assessment may create inequality instead of solving it.

Ethical use is one of the most important conditions for applying AI in language assessment. Student data must be protected, assessment criteria must be clear, and learners must know how AI is used. UNESCO's guidance on generative AI in education and research emphasizes the need for data privacy protection, regulation, ethical validation, and human-centred use of AI in education. This is highly relevant to language assessment because assessment results can influence grades, scholarships, admission, and professional opportunities. If AI is used carelessly, it may produce unfair results or reduce trust in assessment. Therefore, educational institutions should create clear rules for AI-supported assessment.

Another challenge is academic integrity. AI can help students learn, but it can also be misused to produce essays, answers, translations, and summaries without real learning. For this reason, assessment tasks must be redesigned. Instead of only asking students to submit final written products, teachers can assess the process: planning, drafting, oral explanation, revision, reflection, and classroom performance. AI can be included in this process as a learning tool, but students should explain how they used it. This approach encourages responsibility and prevents blind dependence on technology.

The best model for using AI in language skills assessment is a balanced model. AI should provide speed, analytics, feedback, and personalization, while teachers provide interpretation, ethical control, emotional understanding, cultural awareness, and final professional judgment. In this model, AI supports the teacher but does not replace the teacher. It helps collect more evidence about student learning, but the teacher decides how to use that evidence. It gives feedback, but the teacher makes feedback meaningful. It identifies errors, but the teacher understands why learners make those errors.

In conclusion, artificial intelligence offers many opportunities for the assessment of language skills. It can support writing, speaking, reading, and listening assessment through automated feedback, adaptive tasks, speech recognition, text analysis, learner analytics, and personalized practice. It can make assessment faster, more continuous, more individualized, and more useful for learning. For English language education, especially in EFL contexts, AI can help teachers manage large groups, support independent practice, and provide students with more frequent feedback. However, AI must be used responsibly. It should be transparent, ethical, inclusive, and guided by pedagogical aims. The future of language assessment is not fully automated assessment, but human-centred assessment supported by artificial intelligence.

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