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# GENERATIVE AI-MEDIATED ORAL ENGLISH LEARNING IN TECHNICAL EDUCATION: EFFECTIVENESS, OPPORTUNITIES AND PEDAGOGICAL CHALLENGES

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## ABSTRACT

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has created new opportunities for oral English practice, but evidence specific to post-secondary technical education remains limited. This paper examines the effectiveness, instructional opportunities and pedagogical challenges reported in a bounded set of studies involving diploma and polytechnic learners. A structured scoping-review-informed search covered publications from 1January 2022 to 31 October 2026. Five accessible bibliographic exports yielded 4,007 rows, reduced to 3,756 records after preliminary deduplication. As the wider corpus was not fully screened, the evidence set was frozen on 1 November 2026. Three full-text-verified primary studies were synthesised, while one mixed-tool study was used for implementation context only. The strongest comparative study reported an overall posttest speaking advantage for the GenAI-supported group (Hedges' g = 0.63, p = .003); however, only interaction remained significant after correction for multiple comparisons. Other studies described benefits for speaking-task preparation, dialogue practice and confidence, alongside mixed performance results, overreliance and methodological limitations. GenAI may therefore supplement teacher-guided oral English instruction, particularly when activities are linked to technical communication and followed by independent speaking tasks. The findings are illustrative rather than exhaustive, and do not establish a general causal effect on oral proficiency.

**Keywords:** Generative Artificial Intelligence, Oral English, Speaking Skills, Technical Education, Polytechnic Students, Bounded Evidence Synthesis

## INTRODUCTION

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), particularly large language models and conversational applications, has expanded the range of tools available for language learning. Unlike conventional computer-assisted language-learning systems built around fixed exercises, generative systems can produce context-sensitive responses, sustain exchanges and offer explanations or feedback. These capabilities have attracted attention in English language teaching, where meaningful interaction and repeated opportunities to use the language are central to communicative development. A scoping review by Law (2024) identified a broad range of potential applications while also pointing to the need for stronger empirical evidence. Reviews focused on chatbot-supported speaking have similarly reported potential benefits for practice, confidence and engagement Du and Daniel (2024), López-Molines (2025).

Oral English proficiency is relevant to students in technical and diploma programmes because they must explain processes, understand spoken instructions, participate in teamwork, present technical information and communicate in workplace settings. Yet

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opportunities for sustained individual speaking practice may be limited in classes with large enrolments and restricted instructional time. Learners may understand grammar and vocabulary but remain hesitant when required to communicate spontaneously. Fear of errors, limited exposure to English outside the classroom and a lack of individual feedback can further constrain oral development.

Oral communicative competence is multidimensional. It includes fluency, pronunciation and intelligibility, lexical and grammatical control, listening comprehension, coherence and the ability to respond appropriately during interaction. GenAI may support some of these dimensions through voice-based conversation, role-play, simulated interviews and repeated speaking tasks. Text-based interaction can assist with vocabulary and sentence preparation, but it does not by itself provide spoken production or listening practice. The distinction between text assistance and genuine voice interaction is therefore important when evaluating claims about oral-language learning.

Research on GenAI in language education has grown rapidly, although the literature has not been evenly distributed across language skills. Reviews have highlighted the need to distinguish learner perceptions from measured language performance Lee et al. (2026), Li et al. (2025). López-Molines (2025) examined GenAI tools for oral skills, but the evidence specific to post-secondary diploma and polytechnic programmes remains a narrower question. This distinction matters because technical students may require communication tasks linked to particular occupational fields rather than general conversational practice.

Some emerging studies have examined technical and higher-vocational settings. Zhang and Zhou (2026), for example, studied 92 students in a three-year vocational diploma programme in China. They reported a higher overall post-test speaking score for the AI-supported group, with the clearest adjusted difference in interaction. Pronunciation differences were not statistically significant, and some subdimension effects did not remain significant after correction for multiple comparisons. Other studies have investigated maritime English dialogue, voice-based chatbot practice and the use of GenAI to prepare speeches and simulated job interviews. Their designs and outcome measures differ, making direct comparison difficult.

GenAI also raises questions about the quality of feedback, reliability of generated information, learner dependence, privacy and unequal access. AI interaction cannot be assumed to reproduce the unpredictability, interpersonal sensitivity and contextual negotiation of human communication. It is therefore better considered as a possible supplement to teacher-led instruction and authentic interaction than as a replacement for either.

This paper synthesises a bounded selection of verified evidence on GenAI-mediated oral English learning in post-secondary technical education. It asks: (a) how GenAI has been used to support oral English; (b) what speaking, listening and affective outcomes have been reported; (c) what pedagogical and technological concerns have emerged; and (d) what implications can reasonably be drawn for English language teaching in Indian polytechnic institutions. Because the available search record is a targeted discovery inventory rather than a completed multi-database search, the findings are presented as preliminary evidence mapping.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### ORAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AND GENAI

GenAI refers here to systems that generate new text or speech in response to user input, including large-language-model-based conversational applications. For oral English learning, the relevant feature is not simply that a platform is labelled as AI, but that generative capability is integral to the activity. Automated speech recognition, pronunciation scoring and machine-marked speaking tests are not treated as GenAI unless a generative conversational or feedback function is documented.

Communicative competence extends beyond grammatical knowledge. Canale and Swain (1980) described grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence, and Canale (1983) subsequently elaborated the framework to include discourse competence. In this review, oral communication is considered through speaking fluency, pronunciation and intelligibility, lexical and grammatical use, listening comprehension and interactional competence. The latter includes turn-taking, clarification, responsiveness and the ability to sustain an exchange.

## THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Long (1996) Interaction Hypothesis provides a basis for examining conversational practice. Negotiation of meaning, clarification requests, confirmation checks and feedback can help learners notice communication problems and modify their production. GenAI may reproduce some features of this process through simulated dialogue, although AI-mediated exchanges cannot be assumed to offer the same social and contextual demands as human interaction.

Swain (1985), Swain (1995) Output Hypothesis emphasises the role of language production in learning. Producing language can prompt learners to notice gaps in their knowledge, test linguistic choices and revise their expressions. Voice-based GenAI activities may create additional opportunities for spoken output, particularly when learners are required to formulate original responses rather than read generated scripts.

Krashen (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis draws attention to anxiety, confidence and motivation. A low-pressure practice environment may encourage learners who are reluctant to speak in front of peers to attempt more exchanges. However, reduced anxiety or positive attitudes should not be treated as evidence of improved oral proficiency without separate performance measures.

## ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The synthesis used these perspectives as interpretive lenses rather than as a validated causal model. GenAI-supported opportunities included voice conversation, simulated role-play, feedback and preparation for oral tasks. The proposed learning mechanisms were repeated interaction, spoken output, feedback-based revision and lower-pressure practice. Outcomes of interest included fluency, pronunciation, listening, interaction and affective responses. The interpretation also considered the influence of platform quality, learner proficiency, task design, teacher guidance and access to digital resources.

## METHOD

### REVIEW DESIGN AND SCOPE

This study adopted a focused narrative synthesis approach**,** drawing on a structured literature search informed by scoping-review principles. The approach was considered appropriate for examining an emerging body of research on Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in oral English learning within technical education. The synthesis was limited to the verified empirical studies available at the point of evidence selection.

The scope of the study was defined using the Population–Concept–Context (PCC) framework. The population comprised students enrolled in post-secondary diploma, polytechnic or equivalent higher-vocational technical programmes. The concept concerned the use of GenAI as an integral component of oral English learning, particularly in developing speaking, pronunciation, listening and oral interaction skills. The context encompassed technical education institutions across different countries. Studies involving school-level vocational students and general university students without a separately identifiable technical diploma population were considered outside the scope of the review.

The eligibility criteria and evidence-mapping procedures were informed by established scoping-review guidance (Peters et al., 2020), while the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) Tricco et al. (2018) provided a reference for transparent reporting. However, the study did not claim to constitute a completed JBI scoping review, as the wider search corpus had not undergone comprehensive screening. Consequently, the findings were presented as a focused narrative synthesis of verified empirical evidence**,** without reporting final PRISMA-ScR inclusion and exclusion counts.

### INFORMATION SOURCES AND SEARCH ACTIVITY

Search activity covered publications dated 1 January 2022 to 16 November 2026 and drew on accessible Crossref and OpenAlex exports, with supplementary exploration of ERIC and direct Google Scholar results. The five export datasets contained 4,007 raw rows. Preliminary deduplication removed 251 rows, producing a consolidated database of 3,756 records. These figures describe the available exported records, not the number of independently screened studies. Some export queries reached retrieval caps, and Google Scholar results could not be comprehensively exported. Scopus and Web of Science were not searched through institutional subscriptions. Consequently, search coverage should not be interpreted as exhaustive.

### ELIGIBILITY, SCREENING AND EVIDENCE FREEZE

Records were considered potentially relevant when they addressed English speaking, listening, pronunciation or oral interaction; involved a generative AI or large-language-model application; and concerned a post-secondary diploma, polytechnic or equivalent technical programme. Empirical quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods studies were eligible in principle. Studies focused only on writing or reading, conventional automated speech recognition without a generative component, secondary vocational-school populations, or general university students outside the target population were excluded.

Automated title, abstract, and metadata triage was followed by targeted examination of priority records and selected full texts. The majority of the 3,756 records did not receive complete independent substantive screening. At the author-directed evidence-freeze point, further screening and exclusion were stopped and the evidence base was frozen on 19 November 2026. Three primary studies with verified full-text evidence were retained for core synthesis: Zhang and Zhou (2026), Sabrina and Tur (2026), and Ratnaningsih (2025). Rossydi et al. (2026) was retained solely as contextual evidence because its results combined generative and non-generative AI applications. Four additional candidate studies remained unresolved and were not incorporated as confirmed core evidence. The previously recorded exclusion of Kuzmenko and Panov (2026), owing to the absence of an identifiable diploma cohort, was preserved without further adjudication.

### DATA CHARTING AND SYNTHESIS

The frozen extraction matrix recorded study setting, sample, design, AI tools, oral-English outcomes, source-access status, and interpretive cautions. Findings were organised narratively into effectiveness, pedagogical opportunities, and pedagogical challenges.

No meta-analysis was attempted because the three core studies differed in intervention, design, outcomes, and comparators. No final PRISMA-ScR flow diagram was produced, as the available records did not support complete screening and inclusion counts.

## FINDINGS

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FROZEN EVIDENCE SET

The core synthesis comprised three full-text-verified primary studies: Zhang and Zhou (2026), Sabrina and Tur (2026), and Ratnaningsih (2025). The studies concerned one Chinese higher-vocational diploma setting and two Indonesian polytechnic settings. Their designs included an intact-class quasi-experiment, classroom action research and a qualitative multiple-case study. Rossydi et al. (2026) was retained as supplementary contextual evidence because its findings combined generative and non-generative AI applications. The frozen set is not an exhaustive account of all eligible studies in the search corpus.

**Table 1**

**Table 1 Characteristics and Evidential Roles of the Frozen Studies**

| Study | Setting and sample | GenAI use and design | Evidence and interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Zhang, and Zhou (2026) | China; three-year higher-vocational diploma; n = 92 | iFLYTEK Spark; 12-week intact-class quasi-experiment | Rated speaking posttest; strongest adjusted result for interaction; no dedicated speaking baseline |
| Sabrina and Tur (2026) | Indonesia; two Diploma III programmes; n = 58 | ChatGPT, Gemini and other tools; four-week multiple-case study | Speech/interview preparation; mixed scores; concerns about dependence |
| Ratnaningsih (2025) | Indonesia; maritime polytechnic; n = 69 | ChatGPT dialogue and role-play; classroom action research | Reported speaking improvements; no untreated comparison; inconsistent cycle reporting |
| Rossydi et al. (2026) | Indonesia; aviation polytechnic; 82 students and 5 lecturers | ChatGPT and Gemini alongside other AI tools; mixed-methods | Supplementary context only; GenAI-specific outcomes not separated |

**Note:** The three core studies were used for outcome synthesis. Rossydi et al. (2026) was considered only for contextual discussion; its mixed-tool results were not attributed specifically to GenAI.

### FORMS OF GENAI USE

The studies illustrate two distinct instructional applications. Voice-enabled dialogue and role-play offered opportunities for simulated interaction, as in the iFLYTEK Spark activities studied by Zhang and Zhou (2026) and the maritime English activities described by Ratnaningsih (2025). AI-assisted oral-task preparation served a different purpose. Sabrina and Tur (2026) examined the use of generative tools to develop speeches and prepare for simulated job interviews. Such preparation can support organisation and linguistic formulation, but does not necessarily entail sustained spoken exchange with the system.

### ORAL PERFORMANCE AND AFFECTIVE OUTCOMES

Zhang and Zhou (2026) provided the clearest comparative performance evidence. Following 12 weeks of iFLYTEK Spark-assisted speaking practice, the experimental group's overall posttest mean was 3.69, compared with 3.19 in the comparison group (Hedges' $g = 0.63$; $p = .003$). Interaction showed a comparatively larger effect ($g = 0.75$; $p = .001$) and remained statistically significant after correction for multiple comparisons. Differences in language use and fluency/coherence did not remain significant after correction; pronunciation was not statistically significant ($p = .071$). The classes were intact rather than randomly assigned, and no dedicated speaking pretest was administered. Accordingly, these results are post-intervention differences, not demonstrated within-person improvement attributable solely to GenAI.

Ratnaningsih (2025) reported improvements in vocabulary, grammar, and fluency during ChatGPT-supported maritime English activities. The study is pedagogically relevant because it places dialogue and role-play within an English for Specific Purposes context. Nevertheless, its classroom action-research design did not include an untreated comparison group. An internal reporting discrepancy also warrants caution: the abstract refers to two instructional cycles whereas the method section refers to four. The evidence therefore supports a report of classroom improvement, but not a controlled estimate of ChatGPT's effect.

Sabrina and Tur (2026) documented the use of AI tools in speech and mock job-interview preparation. Participants described assistance with drafting, reformulation, and task completion, but the performance findings were mixed. For the Accountancy cohort, an AI-assisted mean of 72.93 was lower than an earlier non-AI mean of 79.67. Because these scores came from non-equivalent

comparisons, they neither demonstrate a harmful AI effect nor establish improvement. Across the three studies, there is no defensible pooled estimate of speaking gains.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND PEDAGOGICAL CHALLENGES

First, GenAI can extend opportunities for dialogue rehearsal beyond limited classroom speaking time. Interactive role-play may be especially useful for practising turn-taking, clarification, and responses to unexpected prompts. The interaction finding in Zhang and Zhou (2026) is consistent with this affordance, although it does not establish that every aspect of speaking benefits equally.

Second, generative tools can help learners prepare discipline-relevant oral tasks. Sabrina and Tur (2026) described speech and employment-interview preparation; Ratnaningsih (2025) used maritime English dialogues and role-play. Such uses can connect oral English with anticipated professional communication, provided the resulting language is accurate, contextually appropriate, and understood by learners.

Third, the studies described accessible feedback and learner confidence as potential benefits. These reports should be distinguished from independently assessed performance. Confidence and engagement may support practice, but neither should be treated as a substitute for reliable speaking assessment.

The most immediate instructional concern is overreliance on generated language. A fluent AI-produced script can enable task completion without ensuring that the learner can explain, adapt, or spontaneously reproduce its content. Sabrina and Tur (2026) particularly foregrounded the risk of superficial comprehension and dependence on assistance. Teachers therefore need to distinguish supported preparation from autonomous oral performance.

Other concerns include mechanical or repetitive conversational output, the need to check generated terminology, and the possibility that feedback may not align with local assessment expectations. Research-level limitations were also prominent: short interventions, single-institution samples, lack of randomisation or untreated controls, heterogeneous tools, and inconsistent reporting.

Rossydi et al. (2026) provided supplementary implementation context from an aviation polytechnic involving 82 students and five lecturers. Its mixed-tool findings suggested perceived benefits alongside infrastructure and teacher-readiness constraints. Because ChatGPT and Gemini were considered alongside applications such as Duolingo and ELSA Speak, the combined findings cannot be attributed specifically to generative AI. The study was therefore not used as core evidence of GenAI effectiveness.

## DISCUSSION

The inventory suggests that GenAI is being used in technical education in more than one way. Direct voice-based conversation provides opportunities for learners to practise responding to questions and participating in simulated exchanges. Task-preparation applications, by contrast, help students organise content for speeches or interviews. These are related but distinct forms of support. The first offers conversational practice; the second may improve task preparation without necessarily increasing spontaneous oral production.

Listening and interaction require particular care in interpretation. A learner who listens to an AI-generated response and answers it is engaging in an oral exchange, but this does not automatically demonstrate improved listening comprehension. Listening should be assessed separately, as should turn-taking, clarification, repair and responsiveness. Similarly, a rehearsed presentation or AI-supported script does not show that the learner can respond to unfamiliar questions or communicate effectively with a human interlocutor.

The theoretical perspectives help explain why GenAI may support learning, while also identifying the limits of the current evidence. Interaction-based practice may create opportunities for negotiation and feedback Long (1996). Repeated spoken output may prompt learners to notice gaps in their language knowledge Swain (1985), Swain (1995). A less threatening practice environment may encourage participation among anxious learners Krashen (1982). These mechanisms remain plausible interpretations; the candidate studies do not consistently test them as causal pathways.

The reported performance outcomes are encouraging in selected respects, but do not establish a consistent effect across all dimensions of oral competence. Zhang and Zhou (2026) found an overall posttest difference and a more specific adjusted effect for interaction, whereas pronunciation was not significant. Ratnaningsih (2025) reported classroom-level gains, but the action-research design cannot isolate the contribution of ChatGPT. Sabrina and Tur (2026) illuminate how learners use AI assistance, while their non-equivalent score comparisons cannot establish either improvement or harm. These studies answer different questions and should not be combined into a single effectiveness estimate.

The source matrix also illustrates why the label 'AI chatbot' is insufficient for inclusion in a GenAI review. Some speaking platforms provide automated pronunciation scores or speech recognition without documented generative capability. Such systems may be educationally useful, but they do not meet the concept boundary used here unless a generative function is integral. Similarly,

a vocational college label does not by itself establish that participants are enrolled in post-secondary diploma programmes. Both technology and population need verification at full-text level.

The supplementary study by Rossydi et al. (2026) raises implementation concerns about infrastructure and teacher readiness. As its findings combined several technologies, it informs the discussion of institutional conditions without supporting GenAI-specific claims. Finally, the geographical concentration and small number of verified studies limit direct transfer to Indian polytechnic education. The available evidence can inform cautious pedagogical experimentation, but it does not establish that the same effects will occur across different technical disciplines or institutional settings.

## PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIAN TECHNICAL EDUCATION

GenAI can be introduced as a supplementary resource within existing English communication courses and communication-skills laboratories. It need not become a separate subject or displace classroom instruction. Teachers can use voice-enabled tools for short dialogues, listening-and-response tasks, role-plays, group-discussion preparation and simulated interviews, while ensuring that students also communicate with peers and teachers.

Activities should be connected to students' technical specialisations. Mechanical Engineering students might explain machinery or maintenance procedures; Civil Engineering students might describe construction processes; Electrical and Electronics students might discuss components and safety procedures; and Computer Engineering students might practise explaining software functions or responding to technical interview questions. Teachers or subject specialists should check technical terminology and generated information before use.

Practice can be differentiated according to proficiency. Learners who need additional support may begin with guided dialogues and short responses, while more proficient learners can attempt extended discussions, problem-solving tasks and spontaneous follow-up questions. The progression should move from structured AI practice towards communication with human interlocutors. This helps ensure that students develop transferable communicative abilities rather than familiarity with a single application.

Assessment should distinguish prepared performance from independent speaking. A student who uses GenAI to draft a speech may deliver a polished presentation without being able to explain or defend the content. Assessment can therefore combine prepared presentations with follow-up questions, role-plays, group discussions and simulated workplace interactions. Relevant criteria include intelligibility, fluency, coherence, responsiveness and the ability to communicate without relying on generated scripts.

Teacher mediation remains necessary. Teachers should select suitable tools, explain their limitations, check feedback, establish rules for acceptable use and help students evaluate generated content. Institutions should also consider device and internet access, data privacy, platform costs, digital literacy and academic integrity. Faculty development can support informed use of voice-based GenAI, task design, prompt construction and oral assessment. A gradual, evaluated introduction is preferable to compulsory adoption of a single platform.

## RESEARCH GAPS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The first gap is the limited amount of research that clearly identifies post-secondary diploma students as its population. Future studies should report the qualification level, programme duration and institutional status of participants rather than relying on broad labels such as vocational college. Research across different technical disciplines and countries would help establish whether findings are transferable.

Second, more studies need to measure oral performance directly. Learner perceptions and confidence are relevant, but they cannot substitute for validated speaking assessments. Future work should assess fluency, pronunciation, intelligibility, accuracy, listening comprehension and interactional competence separately, using clearly described rubrics and independent raters where possible.

Third, transfer from AI-mediated practice to human communication remains underexamined. Studies should compare learners' performance in AI conversations with their ability to respond spontaneously to teachers, peers and workplace interlocutors. Turn-taking, clarification, repair and negotiation of meaning deserve explicit attention.

Longitudinal and comparative designs are also needed. Research could compare voice-based conversation, AI-assisted task preparation and teacher-guided blended instruction, while documenting the precise platform and its generative functions. Studies in Indian government polytechnics could examine feasibility, access, learner proficiency, linguistic diversity and discipline-specific communication needs. Such work would provide a sounder basis for local teaching models and institutional guidance.

## LIMITATIONS

The principal limitation of this study concerns the scope of the literature reviewed. The five datasets initially yielded 4,007 records, which were reduced to 3,756 after preliminary removal of duplicates. However, the screening process could not be completed for all the identified records, and several potentially relevant studies remained unverified at the time of finalising the

evidence base. Furthermore, the literature search was limited by the availability of scholarly databases, restrictions on retrieving records and incomplete coverage of supplementary sources. Consequently, the three studies included in the main analysis cannot be considered representative of all the available research in this field. Differences in their research designs, methods and outcome measures also made a statistical synthesis of the findings inappropriate. Therefore, the present study is presented as a focused narrative synthesis rather than a comprehensive scoping review, and no final PRISMA-ScR flow diagram has been provided.

## CONCLUSION

This paper examined a bounded body of evidence on GenAI-mediated oral English learning in post-secondary technical education. The verified studies documented direct conversational practice and AI-assisted preparation of oral tasks. Some findings suggest benefits for interaction, classroom speaking performance and task preparation, but the results are uneven and do not permit broad causal conclusions. Teacher mediation, authentic human interaction and assessment of independent oral performance remain central. For Indian polytechnic education, GenAI may offer additional opportunities for discipline-specific practice when it is integrated carefully into communication-skills teaching. Its educational value should ultimately be judged by students' ability to communicate clearly and appropriately without relying on generated scripts. Further rigorously designed, context-specific research is needed to establish sustained effects and transfer to workplace communication.

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