Using Voice & AI assistants for language learning

Joshua Underwood
Outline

- Who am I?
- Voice Interaction & AI assistants
- Why use them?
- Some experiences, opportunities & issues
- Looking to the future...
- Summary & questions
Who am I?

not

see joshua underwood for more info
I am...

- an EFL teacher & teacher trainer
- with a background in education technology research & design
- I’d self-assess my DigiCompEdu as C1 (see EU framework)
- What’s yours? Answers in the chat...

novice A1 A2 | B1 B2 | C1 C2 expert
Why now?

...voice interaction has improved more in the last 30 or so months than it did in its first 30 years, word error rate for voice-recognition systems [...] is now on par with humans


For example, try dication.io - What do you think? How accurate is it? What opportunities for learning does it offer?
And Artificial Intelligence (AI) is getting much better at interacting in human like ways

Listen to [Google Assistant phone to book a hair appointment](https://www.google.com/assistant), which one was the human?
Voice Interaction & AI assistants

Siri

Google Assistant

Google Home

Amazon Alexa

How much do they cost?

How do they compare to other classroom tech?
Meet my assistants
Why use voice interaction & AIs?

More, more meaningful, motivating, and fun opportunities for speaking.
show me a picture of a sheep

show me a picture of a ship
Try getting dumpling to jump - https://www.dumplingthepug.com/
“...there was lower anxiety & a more positive attitude towards English...

...students... ...had great fun... (and) ...believed they were learning more effectively, which helped them boost their motivation in the long run.”

Experiences & opportunities

How do you say...?
What does... mean?
How do you spell...?
Experiences & opportunities

How many planets are there?
What’s the coldest planet?
Which planet is closest to the sun?
Other teachers are doing similar things:

“We’re using it for spelling, checking facts, math...”
http://www.coolcatteacher.com/amazon-alexa-classroom/

“set a countdown timer, choose a student at random, talk about the weather, etc”
What kinds of questions are AIs (currently) good/bad at answering?

- Think of some questions to test the AI
- Try them out
- Prepare a mini presentation on what AI’s are good/bad at. Say why? P.E.E.L

What would you ask? Answers in the chat
& many more opportunities...

Skills

Guess the animal, Jeopardy, Jokes, Quizzes, etc...

Voice Experiments

Mystery Animal, Safari Mixer, Mixlab, etc...

Getting Creative

Interactive Spoken Stories, Skill Blueprints, Making Quizzes, Cognimates - AI for Scratch
what do you think I said ...?
Some issues & more opportunities

Frustration, Safe search, Data protection,
Transcription, Assessment, English for the future
Looking to the future...

English for the future - living with AI?

Critical & active engagement with AI?

The future of English?

The nature of learning?

& language learning?
“It is easy to envision a future when robots initially take the positions of teaching and administrative assistants and then gradually, when the students, parents, teachers, school administrators, and government officials accept this technology, replace most of the teachers in the education institutions.”

“...we imagine quite a different scenario—one involving AI designed to support, not usurp, teachers”

A.I. Is the New T.A. in the Classroom by Rose Luckin and Wayne Holmes
Looking to the future...

Do you fear the robot teacher?

What are the advantages & disadvantages?

What is important about what teachers do & how might this change?

Is it about relationships? Try building a relationship with him
Opportunities for more, more meaningful speaking practice thoughtfully integrated into our teaching & learning practices &

English for the future opportunities to ‘critically’ prepare students to actively engage in this future