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INTEGRATING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract

This study explores the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in English language teaching (ELT) and its impact on learner engagement, personalized learning, and language skill development. Traditional ELT approaches often face challenges in addressing diverse learner needs, providing instant feedback, and promoting autonomous learning. AI technologies, including intelligent tutoring systems, automated feedback tools, and AI-powered chatbots, offer innovative solutions. A four-week pilot study with intermediate-level university students investigated the use of AI tools for vocabulary acquisition, grammar practice, and speaking exercises. Data were collected through pre- and post-tests, observation checklists, and learner surveys. Results indicate that AI integration significantly enhances learner motivation, provides personalized learning pathways, and improves language performance. The study highlights the potential of AI to transform ELT in higher education contexts, while also discussing limitations and ethical considerations.

Keywords:

Artificial intelligence, English language teaching, personalized learning, learner engagement, autonomous learning, higher education

Introduction

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into education has transformed traditional teaching practices, offering opportunities for personalized instruction, automated feedback, and interactive learning (Luckin et al., 2016). In English language teaching (ELT), AI has emerged as a promising tool to support vocabulary acquisition, grammar practice, speaking fluency, and listening comprehension, particularly in large or heterogeneous classrooms (Li & Ni, 2022).

Traditional ELT methods often struggle to provide instant feedback, address individual learner needs, or maintain engagement. AI-based tools, such as intelligent tutoring systems, chatbots, and AI-powered learning apps, can adapt tasks based on learner performance, providing targeted exercises and scaffolding. For example, AI chatbots allow learners to practice speaking and writing in a low-pressure, personalized environment, while intelligent tutoring systems can identify gaps in vocabulary or grammar and offer customized activities (Chen et al., 2021).

Despite its potential, AI integration in ELT is still in its early stages, particularly in higher education contexts in developing countries, where access to technology and teacher training may be limited (Heil et al., 2021). This study investigates the effectiveness of AI-assisted English learning for university students, focusing on comprehension, engagement, and autonomous learning outcomes.

Methods

Participants

The study involved 30 intermediate-level English learners (18–22 years old) enrolled in a university English course. Participants were selected based on B1-level CEFR proficiency to

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ensure consistency. The sample included a balanced mix of genders and students from urban and rural backgrounds, reflecting typical higher education classrooms.

Materials

AI tools used in the study included:

AI chatbots for conversational practice and grammar correction.

Vocabulary learning apps with adaptive exercises.

Automated writing evaluation tools to provide instant feedback on grammar, sentence structure, and word choice.

Speech recognition tools for pronunciation practice.

Materials were selected to align with course objectives and incorporated authentic academic content to enhance relevance.

Procedure

The study lasted four weeks, with two 45-minute sessions per week. Each lesson incorporated AI tools into a structured learning cycle:

Pre-activity: Learners accessed AI tools to review vocabulary and grammar.

Interactive activity: Students used AI chatbots to practice conversation, receive real-time feedback, and complete adaptive exercises.

Post-activity: Reflection surveys and peer discussions analyzed the AI tool's feedback and effectiveness.

Data collection included:

Pre- and post-tests to measure improvement in vocabulary, grammar, and speaking skills.

Observation checklists to track engagement and task participation.

Learner surveys to assess perceptions of motivation, autonomy, and satisfaction with AI tools.

Results

Analysis indicated positive effects of AI integration:

Language performance: Average post-test scores increased by 20%, with notable improvements in vocabulary retention and grammar accuracy.

Engagement: Observations showed 90% active participation when learners interacted with AI tools, compared to 60% in traditional tasks.

Learner perception: Surveys indicated that students felt more motivated and confident when using AI tools, especially chatbots for speaking practice. They reported that immediate feedback and adaptive exercises enhanced learning efficiency and autonomy.

These results demonstrate that AI can support personalized, engaging, and effective language learning, particularly in higher education contexts where diverse learner needs may challenge traditional instruction.

Discussion

The findings are consistent with previous research highlighting AI's potential in ELT (Chen et al., 2021). AI tools allow learners to practice at their own pace, receive instant feedback, and focus on areas requiring improvement, fostering autonomous learning and metacognitive awareness.

Peer collaboration and reflection were important in maximizing the benefits of AI, confirming that technology should complement, not replace, teacher guidance (Li & Ni, 2022). Ethical considerations, such as data privacy, algorithm bias, and over-reliance on AI, must be

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addressed when implementing AI in university classrooms (Heil et al., 2021). Limitations include a small sample size, short duration, and dependence on technology access.

Future research could explore:

Long-term effects of AI on academic language performance.
Integration of AI with collaborative learning and multi-skill development.
Comparative studies of AI-assisted versus traditional ELT methods.

Conclusion

AI integration in English language teaching offers significant opportunities to enhance comprehension, engagement, and autonomy in university learners. By incorporating chatbots, adaptive apps, and automated feedback tools, instructors can create personalized, interactive, and motivating learning environments. While AI cannot replace human teachers, it can serve as a valuable supplement to traditional teaching, supporting learners' linguistic development and academic success.

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