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AI TUTORS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING: EFFICACY AND STUDENT PERCEPTIONS

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Abstract. *This thesis explores how AI tutors can change the way we teach languages today. It makes the case that, while AI tutors have proven to be quite effective for learning foundational language skills like vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, through a personalized experience that is available anywhere and anytime in an engaging way, they are not designed to replace human teachers. The findings suggest a significant gap between their quantitatively demonstrated impact upon skill-training and 115 the qualitative testimony of students, who have been positive overall about convenience and the non-judgmental atmosphere, but also remain critical concerning limits on speaking depth, cultural nuance, and the unique value of human contact. The conclusion in mind is that the ideal future of language learning should be hybrid, offering AI/tech scalable practice and drill with the human teacher expertise for fostering higher-order communicative competence (as well as cultural understanding) (Kessler,2018).*

Keywords: *AI Language Tutors, Language Acquisition Efficacy, Student Perceptions, Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL), Personalized Learning.*

Introduction

The language learning landscape is changing rapidly with breakthroughs in Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI-powered tutors such as those in Duolingo, Babbel, and ELSA Speak have gone from novelties to the mainstream, offering many people personalized, accessible, and often entertaining language instruction (Blake, 2013). They use Natural Language Processing (NLP), machine learning, and speech recognition to give students interactive exercises, conversational practice, and immediate feedback. The rush to introduce them requires that we ask some fundamental questions: How effective are these AI tutors really at helping people learn a language? Moreover, what do students who are using them think about their benefits and drawbacks? (Godwin-Jones, 2021)

This thesis hypothesizes that AI tutors are a productive but unfinished instrument in the language student's arsenal. They are certainly effective to a great extent in automating the development of basic knowledge and fostering learner confidence, yet lack recreating the subtly profound culture-bound' interactive context necessary for high-level interaction. Drawing on recent studies of learning outcomes and student feedback, this paper will discuss the clear advantages in terms of scale and motivation, together with major challenges, including pragmatic incompetence and the risk of fossilization in error. Ultimately, this analysis will argue for a balanced, hybrid approach to language education that strategically integrates the strengths of AI to complement, rather than replace, the role of human teachers (Vygotsky,1978).

Demonstrated Efficacy of AI Tutors

In terms of the AI tool for language learning, what you will feel at the beginning is that it works best at a basic level. For one thing, AI tutors are extremely effective in vocabulary and grammar learning (Godwin-Jones,2021). They use algorithms for spaced repetition, making the best time intervals to review in order not to forget. This more tightly controlled, drilling method has been repeatedly demonstrated in research as leading to considerable gains in vocabulary and grammar gain and serving as a firm foundation for beginners (Li & Wang, 2022).

Second, AI has an enormous advantage in pronunciation training. Automatic speech recognition systems enable instant and impartial feedback about phonemic production, intonation, and fluency. Applications such as ELSA Speak make it possible for learners to practice often in a private, low-stakes environment, resulting in noticeable gains in intelligibility. This activity is a logistical nightmare for any teacher who has more than one student in her class.

Third, AI tutors are very good at maintaining motivation and keeping students engaged. By incorporating gamified aspects like points, streaks, leader boards, and short lessons, such platforms effectively reduce the affective filter and spur users to study every day. Consistent exposure is key to success in language acquisition, and AI tools are singularly well-placed to provide it.

Students' attitudes towards AI tutors are mostly positive but nuanced, depending on their learning goals and phase, which emphasizes the richness of their feedback and the importance of differences (Godwin-Jones, 2021)

On the one hand, students tend to have a quite positive picture of tutors; on the other hand, however, their attitudes are contingent on personal learning goals and stages. One of the most frequently mentioned advantages is convenience, as well as accessibility. Students appreciate the freedom to practice at anytime, anywhere, with self-paced learning that transcends time and place (Godwin-Jones, 2021).

In addition, students often appreciate the non-threatening atmosphere. It is scary to be afraid of doing something wrong with the teacher or all those kids watching. AI creates a sandbox for trial and error, where mistakes are considered learning opportunities rather than stumbles. This allows them to develop a greater readiness to both speaking and writing with less inhibition (It develops their comfort zone).

This issue, as well as other concerns, remains an issue for more advanced learners. One of the major criticisms is that the reaction is being forced. AI interactions can also appear transactional and miss the empathy, humor, surprises, or worse of human conversations. This is frequently cited by students as inhibiting the formation of true communicative competence. Algorithmic limitations also cause some frustration: when the AI misreads a valid sentence or gives the wrong answer to an implied question, trust is lost (Li & Wang, 2022). Lastly, learners are frequently cognizant that AI is unable to help them navigate the subtleties of cultural and pragmatic aspects of L2 use (discerning sarcasm, formality levels, or certain idioms specific to altitude.

When subjected to closer scrutiny, the effectiveness indicators do not echo student satisfaction data. While AI is really effective in getting people to learn discrete pieces (as evidenced by test scores), users' satisfaction can drop as they advance and want a more meaningful type of interaction. This brings to the forefront the inherent limits of AI: its