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Artificial Intelligence in English Language Teaching: Opportunities, Challenges and Ethical Considerations

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Abstract:
Artificial Intelligence technology is changing the way English is being taught, learned, and assessed. However, the real value of such technology in the teaching of English as a second language does not merely lie in the technology itself, but in its application by students and teachers. This paper highlights the potential and issues in the use of Artificial Intelligence in English language teaching and learning, particularly in India's higher education institutions. Conversely, the use of AI to the extent that students are unable to put in the work required in terms of language and cognition, apart from learning from mistakes, is a possible problem associated with over-dependence on AI. One of the challenges that must be looked into is that students may be able to produce high-quality English yet unable to do so because they lack the capability of explaining or defending their views independently. AI is only capable of helping to assist in the process of learning, but not capable of replacing the human component in judgment, imagination, and communication. The article finally concludes that an ethical and efficient use of AI-assisted ELT will be a kind that fosters independence and communication skills.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, English Language Teaching, language learning, ethical concerns, academic integrity, Indian higher education

The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in English Language Teaching (ELT) has raised a new question to be taken into consideration in the classroom: If the computer is able to form sentences, fix paragraphs, and provide an explanation about grammatical rules within seconds, then what remains the learner's and teacher's responsibility? This challenge extends far beyond the use of technology. It has been for many years that the English teacher was considered a vocabulary and grammar teacher, who taught the art of reading and writing. It took time for these skills to be repeated and practiced with the close supervision of the teacher. Today, there is software available which helps one to do many of these things instantly. The learners can ask for an explanation of a particular phrase, practice a dialogue and also improve their writing skills. However, the ability to create a language is distinct from the ability to acquire a language. A computer is capable of writing an intelligent essay;

however, that does not demonstrate that the student has acquired the concept of the essay. A program can detect a mistake in grammar, but the learner will commit the same mistake again the following day. A chatbot may imitate a conversation, but that does not necessarily guarantee that the learner will converse with confidence with someone he or she doesn't know in a new environment.

This is particularly important in India because of the several uses of English in India. It is both a subject to be studied at schools and colleges, a medium of instruction and research, and a language that helps people make their way to better job opportunities as they consider it to be an elevation to better jobs. The students come to these classes with varied command of English. While some of the students have English-speaking environment and internet-enabled devices along with individual coaching, other students only depend upon classroom instruction.

2. Critical Perspectives: Five Quotations from Scholars and Researchers

The work by Neil Selwyn "Education and Technology: Key Issues and Debates" is helpful when considering the claim that bringing technology into use guarantees the enhancement of educational process. His critical approach urges educators to pay attention to the context where this happens, as well as institutional interest and pedagogical goals of technology incorporation. For ELT this means that the existence of AI in the classroom does not prove successful education. It is possible for a student to submit a perfect assignment without having learned how to write autonomously. It is possible for an educational establishment to market itself through AI-assisted teaching without making any investments in training teachers or providing equal educational opportunity. "AI will solve on its own all the problems that have been plaguing the education system around the world." This is particularly applicable in the case of Indian ELT. AI will not alone solve the problems like overcrowded classes, poor learning material, poor connectivity, examination-oriented teaching methods, and lack of opportunity for the students to learn English.

3. Opportunities: AI as a New Learning Partner

3.1. Personalised practice beyond classroom hours

A key strength of AI technology is that it offers an opportunity to practice beyond the confines of the school schedule. The learner can ask for extra examples, for easier explanations, and for more exercises until they grasp the idea. This works especially well with those who require more time than a teacher can offer in one class session. But personalisation should not imply providing every learner with unlimited exercises. Successful learning entails meaningful practice. The AI software should be able to identify the skill being acquired and offer the right challenges.

3.2. A private space for speaking practice

Many students refrain from communicating in English due to the possibility of making mistakes in front of their peers. Using the AI-based conversations allows for practicing interviews, question asking, and conversation on common topics in an

environment which guarantees privacy. This means that the student has an opportunity to practice self-introduction for the job interview, get advice on sentence building, and repeat the exercise. The next step would be the same task performed by the student in front of a peer. The main idea is that communication with other people is the final objective.

3.3. Writing as a process rather than a product

The use of AI can enable students to look at their work from various angles. It may offer alternatives to the vocabulary used by the learners, it may help the student detect grammar mistakes, and it may show where there are ambiguous sentences. However, it is when students take time to analyze the suggestions made that they learn the most. The three-step process can be implemented in which students first draft their own work then go through it with the help of AI.

3.4. Supporting teachers without reducing teaching to automation

However, the use of AI can facilitate the creation of worksheets, exercises, dialogue examples, and other materials that are used in classes by the teacher to help his students understand complicated grammatical rules. In this way, teachers will save preparation time especially if they deal with students of different levels. Nevertheless, all generated materials should be verified since sometimes even professionally-looking worksheet can include mistakes or incorrect examples that will not fit the context of the learners.

4. Challenges: When Convenience Becomes Dependence

4.1. The difference between generated language and learned language

The problem with AI in ELT is that even though the right answers may be provided by students, the process of learning may still not be complete. For instance, a student may provide a very good essay but may not be able to defend it. This gives rise to a differentiation between performance with support and competence without support. Both of these can have educational value, but they should not get mixed up in assessments. The student who improves their essay using AI has done a potentially beneficial thing, but the teacher needs to know what the student knows. An ideal approach would be to incorporate AI-based assignments along with in-class writing, oral explanations, and reflection. This does not mean punishing the use of technology; rather, this means finding out if technology helped in the learning process or not.

4.2. The danger of intellectual passivity

Language acquisition entails making decisions, testing phrases, observing mistakes and refining hypotheses. When an AI does all the tough work, learners will miss out on developing these skills. When one asks the AI to write every paragraph for him or her, he or she is likely to finish the assignment in no time; however, the patience required for organizing his or her argument fails to develop in such a case. Similarly, when one keeps on asking for the translation all the time, he or she is likely to escape the effort of grasping meaning from the context.

4.3. Errors, bias and the problem of authority

These systems may create incorrect explanations, inappropriate expressions, and wrong information. The confidence in their statements may lead to accepting responses without verifying them. In language learning, it is possible that even a grammatically correct sentence may be inappropriate for a certain audience. For instance, while a phrase which is appropriate in an informal discussion might seem rude in a formal email. Literal translation can keep individual words in mind but lose their cultural significance. Hence, AI-generated remarks must be regarded as suggestions that need to be evaluated.

4.4. The risk of standardising language and identity

English is spoken by people belonging to different languages and cultures. If the AI tools always suggest similar ways of expression, then the students might come to think that being good at English means having a particular voice or accent or culture. In India, where English is spoken in multilingual populations, this problem poses a real danger. Students must learn the rules of correct grammar and pronunciation as well as professional norms. They must not be made to feel that all influences of their first language are mistakes. ELT should be about enhancing communication without denying linguistic plurality. Thus, the suggestions of the artificial intelligence algorithm must be analyzed in terms of their appropriateness in the given context, rather than simply conforming to one variety of English.

5. Ethical Considerations: Who Is Responsible for Learning?

5.1. Academic honesty and authorship

The use of AI technology presents a dilemma regarding who deserves recognition for writing. In cases where students submit essays produced mainly by AI technology as independent essays, the assignment fails to paint an accurate picture of their writing skills. However, the ethical dilemma is not just about determining whether the use of AI is allowed or disallowed. The students should understand what kind of help is acceptable, when disclosure is required, and how AI-generated work needs to be cited.

5.2. Privacy and the protection of student information

Students are likely to include their personal details, names, grades, or other confidential information into the AI system, not knowing what would happen to their data afterward. Lecturers might also post student works on third-party services, without taking into account any institutional regulations. Responsible behavior entails ensuring that no unnecessary personal data is involved, reviewing privacy policy statements, and adhering to the guidelines of the institution. The uploading of student work onto external websites should be avoided unless proper consent and other relevant policies have been considered.

5.3. Fairness and unequal access

If AI is going to play a major role in assessing learners, then those who do not have the right gadgets, connectivity or subscription fees will face difficulties. An initiative that could help education might end up increasing the gap between people. It is the responsibility of institutions to provide for the completion of critical educational tasks without having to

spend on costly services. In instances where there is grading of work done using AI, there should be provision of equal access to the required resources.

5.4. Human judgement and the ethics of assessment

AI can be used for language evaluation, but educational assessment is not only about grammar mistakes. A tutor should think about student development, about the goal of the assignment, about argument construction and about the situation when writing took place. The problem with automated assessment is that it tends to look at the superficial correctness of a writing piece without considering how creative the piece is or whether it makes sense within the context.

6. Towards a Responsible Model of AI-Assisted ELT

There needs to be a learning purpose with the use of AI. Teachers need to determine what the purpose of a particular technology is; for example, if it is meant to improve speaking, writing, reading, or understanding grammar. Secondly, learners need to be taught to look at the output of the AI in a critical manner. They need to compare options and justify their answers. Most importantly, the reliance of the students on help must reduce with time. An activity aided by AI technology should aid the learner to progress from guided performance to independent performance. In case the students continue requiring help all the time, then the entire learning process will need to be reevaluated.

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