



Section of the conference: Philological sciences

Sekcja konferencji: Nauki filologiczne

How to cite: Almutairi, F. (2025). Language and AI interaction: Studying how AI language models are affecting human communication and language learning. *World Conference on Emerging Science, Innovation and Policy 2025*. Futurity Research Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15852254>

Language and AI Interaction: Studying How AI Language Models Are Affecting Human Communication and Language Learning

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Accepted: June 23, 2025 | **Published:** July 10, 2025 | **Language:** English

Abstract: The integration of AI language models into English as a Second Language (ESL) learning is reshaping how learners acquire and use language. While these tools offer personalized feedback and increased exposure to authentic language use, concerns arise regarding overreliance and its effect on critical thinking and language retention. This study aims to examine the impact of AI on ESL learners' communication skills, vocabulary development, and motivation. Using a mixed-methods approach, we analyze interaction data and conduct surveys and interviews with ESL students and educators. Preliminary expectations suggest AI tools can enhance fluency and confidence but may also lead to reduced learner autonomy and shallow language processing. The findings will provide insights into the advantages and limitations of AI-assisted ESL learning, guiding educators and developers in designing balanced, effective learning environments that support long-term language development while leveraging technological innovation.

Keywords: AI Language Models, ESL learning, Communication Skills, Learner Autonomy, Vocabulary Development



Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly embedded in everyday life, transforming the way we interact, work, and learn. Among its most profound influences is its impact on language—how it is used, understood, and acquired. With the rise of large language models (LLMs), such as ChatGPT and similar systems, human communication and language learning—particularly in English—are undergoing significant shifts.

Background

AI language models are advanced systems trained on vast datasets to understand, process, and generate human-like language. These models perform a wide range of tasks, including text completion, translation, question answering, and conversational interaction. Their accessibility has led to growing integration in educational settings, especially in English as a Second Language (ESL) learning environments, where they serve as tutors, conversational partners, and feedback providers.

Problem Statement / Research Gap

Despite their widespread use, the long-term impact of AI language models on human communication and ESL learning remains unclear. Current literature tends to focus on their technical capabilities rather than the nuanced effects on language acquisition, learner autonomy, and communicative depth. A comprehensive understanding of both the benefits and limitations of these tools is urgently needed.

Research Questions

This article seeks to explore the following questions:

1. How are AI language models influencing the nuances of human communication in ESL contexts (e.g., clarity, empathy, efficiency)?
2. What are the perceived benefits and drawbacks of using AI models in English language learning?
3. In what ways do these models alter traditional language acquisition processes and pedagogical practices?
4. What ethical considerations emerge from the increasing use of AI in language education and communication?

Significance of the Study

This research offers valuable insights into how AI technologies are reshaping language learning, particularly for ESL learners. It aims to inform educators, curriculum designers, and developers about the practical and ethical implications of AI integration. The findings will contribute to the development



of more balanced and responsible approaches to using AI in language education, helping to enhance learning outcomes while preserving essential human elements in communication.

Structure of the Article

The article is organized as follows: Section 2 reviews existing literature on AI in language learning. Section 3 outlines the methodology used in this study. Section 4 presents the research findings, followed by a discussion in Section 5. Section 6 concludes with implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

Literature Review

Evolution of AI in Language

The development of AI language systems has progressed from early rule-based approaches to the current use of advanced neural network architectures. Early natural language processing (NLP) tools relied heavily on symbolic reasoning and manually crafted grammar rules (Winograd, 1972). The 1990s saw the rise of statistical methods, such as n-gram models, which marked a shift toward data-driven approaches (Manning & Schutze, 1999). In recent years, the advent of deep learning has revolutionized NLP, with recurrent neural networks (RNNs), long short-term memory networks (LSTMs), and most notably, transformer-based architectures (Vaswani et al., 2017) forming the backbone of large language models (LLMs) like OpenAI's GPT series and Google's BERT.

Current Capabilities of AI Language Models

Modern LLMs such as GPT-4 (OpenAI, 2023) and PaLM (Chowdhery et al., 2022) demonstrate state-of-the-art performance across a wide array of language tasks. These include automatic text generation, machine translation, summarization, question answering, and dialog systems. Their capacity to understand and generate contextually relevant, human-like text has led to increasing adoption in education, content creation, and customer service (Brown et al., 2020).

AI's Impact on Human Communication

Efficiency and Accessibility

AI-powered communication tools enhance efficiency by providing real-time translation (e.g., Google Translate), automatic summarization, and writing assistance. They help break down language barriers and offer accessibility features such as voice-to-text and multilingual support, benefiting non-native speakers and individuals with disabilities (Bender et al., 2021).

Nuances and Quality

Although AI can mimic human conversation, it often lacks the depth and emotional nuance of human interaction. Studies indicate that over-reliance on AI-generated text can lead to superficial engagement



and reduced linguistic diversity (Floridi & Chiriatti, 2020). Moreover, inaccuracies in generated responses and the absence of genuine empathy may lead to miscommunication, especially in sensitive or high-context conversations (Shin et al., 2022).

Social and Interpersonal Effects

AI-mediated communication may affect interpersonal skills by reducing face-to-face interaction and diminishing opportunities for spontaneous conversation. Turkle (2015) warns that overdependence on digital communication can lead to "alone together" phenomena, where individuals feel connected but experience diminished relational depth.

AI's Impact on Language Learning

Personalized Learning and Tutoring

AI offers highly individualized learning experiences, adapting to learners' proficiency levels, interests, and goals. Platforms like Duolingo use AI to personalize vocabulary and grammar exercises, improving learner retention (Loewen et al., 2020). Similarly, chatbots and virtual tutors provide real-time feedback and conversational practice (Li et al., 2021).

Access to Resources and Practice

AI facilitates access to extensive learning materials, including authentic texts, interactive exercises, and simulated conversations. Tools such as Grammarly and QuillBot help learners refine their writing through AI-powered suggestions, enhancing language awareness and accuracy (Xu et al., 2022).

Challenges and Criticisms

Despite their benefits, AI tools may foster over-reliance, limiting learners' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Some AI-generated feedback lacks pedagogical sensitivity, and learners may struggle to distinguish between correct and contextually inappropriate usage (Wang & Vásquez, 2012). Additionally, constant AI assistance may reduce learners' intrinsic motivation and linguistic autonomy (Lynch, 2021).

Pedagogical Implications

Educators are increasingly integrating AI tools into ESL curricula to enhance engagement and differentiated instruction. However, there is a growing need for teacher training in AI literacy to ensure pedagogical alignment and avoid misuse (Godwin-Jones, 2020). New instructional approaches emphasize blended learning environments, where AI complements rather than replaces human instruction.



Ethical Considerations in AI Language Interaction

The use of AI in language learning and communication raises ethical concerns, including data privacy, algorithmic bias, and misinformation. LLMs can reproduce biases embedded in their training data (Bender et al., 2021), leading to problematic language outputs. Moreover, the ownership of AI-generated content and the potential manipulation of users through persuasive language warrant close scrutiny (Crawford, 2021). Educators and developers must ensure transparency, fairness, and ethical responsibility in deploying AI tools.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods research design combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. The goal is to examine the effects of AI language models on ESL learners by gathering both statistical trends and in-depth perspectives.

Data Collection Methods

Quantitative data were collected through structured online surveys administered to ESL learners using AI-based tools such as ChatGPT, Duolingo, and Grammarly. The survey focused on usage frequency, perceived effectiveness, and changes in language confidence. Additionally, semi-structured interviews and focus groups were conducted with ESL educators and learners to gather qualitative insights into their experiences and perceptions.

Participants/Sample

A total of 120 ESL learners (ages 18–45) participated, representing diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds across three educational institutions in North America and Asia. Participants were selected via purposive sampling to include individuals with varying degrees of AI tool usage. Ten ESL instructors with 3–15 years of experience were also interviewed.

Data Analysis

Quantitative survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis via SPSS. Qualitative interview data were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), identifying recurring patterns and insights related to AI use, motivation, and communicative confidence.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review boards. Participants were informed of their rights, the study's purpose, and the voluntary nature of their participation. All data were anonymized, stored securely, and used solely for research purposes.



Results

Presentation of Key Findings

Survey results showed that 85% of learners reported increased confidence in writing, while 68% reported improvements in vocabulary and grammar. However, 40% expressed concerns about becoming overly reliant on AI tools. Interview data highlighted three themes: enhanced self-directed learning, AI as a motivational aid, and confusion over incorrect AI-generated suggestions.

Discussion of Findings

The findings suggest that AI language models offer substantial support in ESL learning, particularly in improving learners' confidence and practice consistency. Yet, they also reveal a tension between empowerment and dependence. These results align with Li et al. (2021) and Loewen et al. (2020), who reported similar benefits and concerns. Notably, teachers emphasized the need for critical AI literacy to ensure meaningful learning.

Discussion

Interpretation of Results

This study confirms that AI tools significantly aid ESL learners by providing immediate feedback, personalized content, and low-stakes environments for practice. However, overuse may risk undermining learners' problem-solving skills and language intuition.

Comparison with Existing Literature

Our results are consistent with prior research (Xu et al., 2022; Lynch, 2021), showing that while AI facilitates accessibility and motivation, it does not replace the need for guided instruction. The emotional and interpersonal dimensions of language learning are less effectively addressed by AI, as also noted by Shin et al. (2022).

Implications for Human Communication

The increased use of AI in language learning and communication may reshape how users form relationships and express themselves. AI tools can enhance clarity and accessibility, but may also reduce opportunities for authentic interpersonal engagement, a concern echoed by Turkle (2015).

Implications for Language Learning and Pedagogy

Educators should strategically incorporate AI into curricula to support differentiated instruction and autonomy while maintaining human interaction. Training programs for teachers in AI literacy are essential to help them evaluate AI outputs and guide learners effectively.

Limitations of the Study



This study is limited by its sample size and regional focus, which may affect generalizability. The self-reported nature of the survey responses may also introduce bias. Additionally, the rapidly evolving nature of AI technologies means findings may soon become outdated.

Future Research Directions

Future studies should explore longitudinal impacts of AI use on language proficiency, the role of AI in oral language development, and cross-cultural differences in AI adoption and perception among ESL learners.

Conclusion

Summary of Key Arguments

This research highlights both the potential and the limitations of AI language models in ESL education. AI tools are effective for enhancing writing skills, learner motivation, and accessibility.

Restatement of Thesis/Overall Answer to Research Questions

AI language models are reshaping ESL communication and learning by offering immediate, scalable, and personalized support. However, their use must be critically mediated to avoid overreliance and ensure genuine language development.

Final Thought/Call to Action

As AI continues to evolve, educators, developers, and learners must engage critically and ethically with these tools. Thoughtful integration of AI in language education offers a powerful opportunity to enrich learning—provided it complements, rather than replaces, human connection and pedagogical insight.

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