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EFL University Students' Awareness Toward Artificial Intelligence as a Language Learning Partner

Qasim Hammadi Al Ibadi[1], Noor Qasim Mohammed[2], Hiba Nadhim Jebur[3]

University of Wasit, College of Education for Human Sciences, Department of English

***Correspondence author**:
qhammadi@uowasit.edu.iq
nmohammad@uowasit.edu.iq
hjebur@uowasit.edu.iq

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ABSTRACT

Recently, artificial intelligence has become a significant part of the educational system. It is characterized by transforming the education system's functioning, increasing institutions' competitiveness, and empowering teachers as well as students at all language levels. Voice aids, like Apple Siri, Google Home, and Amazon Alexa, allow students to interact with different learning materials without communicating with their teacher. The current study investigates EFL university students' awareness of artificial intelligence in the overall educational system. It also seeks to examine the efficiency of artificial intelligence, specifically in the language learning process. The nature of this study is a descriptive one. Twenty university students were chosen to be the sample of this study. Closed-ended questions are the type of questionnaire utilized in the current study. The results of the questionnaire reveal that the majority of university students are aware of artificial intelligence tools when assisting and developing their proficiency and competency levels.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, awareness, language learning

وعي طلبة الجامعة دارسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بالذكاء الاصطناعي كشريك في تعلم اللغة

ا. د. قاسم حمادي داود[1]، م.م. نور قاسم محمد[2]، م.م. هبه ناظم جبر[3]
جامعة واسط، كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية، قسم اللغة الإنجليزية

المُستخلص

أصبح الذكاء الاصطناعي مؤخراً جزءاً لا يتجزأ من النظام التعليمي، إذ يتميز بقدرته على إحداث نقلة نوعية في أداء النظام، وتعزيز تنافسية المؤسسات التعليمية، وتمكين المعلمين والطلبة على حد سواء في جميع مستويات اللغة. تتيح المساعدات الصوتية، مثل سيري من آبل، وجوجل هوم، وأمازون أليكسا، للطلبة التفاعل مع مختلف المواد التعليمية دون الحاجة إلى التواصل مع معلميهم. تستكشف هذه الدراسة مدى وعي طلبة الجامعة دارسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية للذكاء الاصطناعي في النظام التعليمي ككل، كما تسعى إلى دراسة فعاليته، وتحديدًا في عملية تعلم اللغة. هذه الدراسة وصفية في طبيعتها، وقد تم اختيار عشرين طالبًا جامعيًا كعينة للدراسة. استُخدمت في هذه الدراسة استبانة تتضمن أسئلة مغلقة. أظهرت نتائج الاستبانة أن غالبية طلبة الجامعات على دراية بأدوات الذكاء الاصطناعي ودورها في دعم وتطوير مستويات كفاءتهم ومهاراتهم اللغوية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الذكاء الاصطناعي، الوعي، تعلم اللغة

1. Introduction

Lan et al. (2020) state that English is considered the most spoken language worldwide. As a global communication language, English is mostly used for jobs, tourism, discourse, markets, and international connectivity. In addition, it is the most widely studied language. According to some recent estimates, there are approximately two billion English language learners all over the world (Rich, 2021).

Teachers must seek techniques to help students succeed throughout their learning journey. In recent years, artificial intelligence has been heralded as a tool for supporting English language learning and teaching. It can provide new opportunities and strategies to overcome challenges and enhance learning (Baranwal, 2022).

1.1 Problem of the Study

Though English is a highly demanded language to develop, students encounter several obstacles that must be overcome. These obstacles are exemplified by insufficient exposure/input to the target language, restricted opportunities for utilizing English inside as well as outside the classroom, and the requirement to communicate in English across languages and cultural boundaries. Furthermore, learners face other obstacles, such as lacking skills to control their learning and the fear of committing mistakes or being misunderstood (Renandya & Widodo, 2016).

1.2 Aims of the Study

This study aims at:

1. Investigating EFL university students' awareness of artificial intelligence as an effective language learning partner across various proficiency levels.

2. Investigating the effectiveness of artificial intelligence-based language learning tools in enhancing students' language proficiency, engagement, and autonomy.

1.3 Value of the Study

The value of this study is represented by providing students with a new learning platform and technology, focusing on its importance, and identifying the obstacles students face in using it.

2. Literature Review

Recently, artificial intelligence has revolutionized education. Its role as a partner in language learning has gained considerable focus and attention. With the rapid development of artificial intelligence technologies, their use as partners in language learning promises to deliver personalized, innovative, and efficient learning experiences. The present review explores the major orientations and obstacles to employing artificial intelligence in language learning, providing an in-depth view of its current status and prospects.

2.1 Artificial Intelligence in Educational Systems

Ghosh and Thirugnanam (2021) define artificial intelligence as a domain of computer science that deals with the initiation of intelligent computer systems. These systems are capable of perceiving, analyzing, and reacting accordingly to the inputs. The capacity of a machine to mimic intelligent human behaviour is called artificial intelligence. It is also known as the science of creating intelligent machines, specifically intelligent computer programs (McCarthy, 2007).

Al-Ali (2025, p.923) defines artificial intelligence as "a discipline of computer science that aims at creating systems that can work and think like humans, for instance: making decisions, learning and comprehending."

Artificial intelligence contributes to addressing some pressing issues, such as transforming educational methods and promoting the achievement of Sustainable Development fourth goal. However, rapid technological progress comes with challenges and risks. Artificial intelligence technologies can contribute to achieving the 2030 Education Agenda. Furthermore, UNESCO is committed to supporting Member States in achieving that by ensuring their use in educational contexts is consistent with the core values of equity and inclusivity (Cantos et al., 2023).

The deployment of artificial intelligence in education presents data security and complex privacy challenges due to the sensitivity of learner data involved. Systems of Artificial intelligence require access to a large amount of personal information for the sake of delivering personalized learning experiences. However, the process of collecting this data raises some concerns about how it is used and who has access to it (Leslie, 2019).

Besides technical safeguards, clear policies and guidelines are needed to regulate data collection, storage, and use. Educators and artificial intelligence technology developers must collaborate to ensure that data collection is limited to necessity and educational use only. Students and their parents should also be informed of data collection practices and encouraged to control their personal information, including providing an option to decline data collection when possible (Huang, 2023).

2.2 Artificial Intelligence Association in Language Learning and Teaching

The involvement of artificial intelligence in English language teaching has achieved notable successes, reflecting its ability to enhance various directions of the learning process. Analysis of these successes shows that artificial intelligence technologies have greatly influenced learner engagement, improved learning outcomes, and increased teaching efficiency (Loor et al., 2024).

One of the most prominent areas of success is improving learner interaction. Based on artificial intelligence, interactive platforms have played a fundamental role in enhancing levels of engagement among students. In addition, game-based learning experiences have proven effective in increasing students' motivation and interest, building a more attractive and convenient learning environment (Sa'di, 2022).

Moreover, artificial intelligence-powered language assessment tools have contributed to more comprehensive and accurate evaluations of students' proficiency, allowing a deeper understanding of their language abilities. Another area of success has emerged in the use of artificial intelligence-based content recommendation systems, which provide personalized educational materials that meet the needs of each student. This possibility has proven effective in enhancing learning outcomes by providing relevant and engaging content that supports learner development (Liu & Kong, 2021).

Finally, artificial intelligence has greatly contributed to enhancing teaching efficiency through the development and implementation of different artificial intelligence-powered tools and systems. Among these tools, there are smart rating systems that simplify the grading process by reducing the time and effort spent by teachers (Loor et al., 2024).

Additionally, artificial intelligence-based data analysis tools provide accurate insights into areas of improvement and progress of students, helping teachers make informed instructional decisions. The adoption of artificial intelligence-based curriculum planning tools improves the design of lesson plans and allocates resources more efficiently, contributing to advanced and effective teaching practices (Bozkurt et al., 2021).

2.3 Artificial Intelligence Orientations in Language Learning

Artificial Intelligence has increasingly transformed the scenery of language learning by offering innovative methodologies and tools that promote learning and teaching experiences. This topic introduces the various orientations of artificial intelligence in language learning, highlighting the major applications.

2.3.1 Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS)

Using artificial intelligence to provide personalized feedback and instruction to learners. These systems adapt to individuals' paces, learning styles, and proficiency levels. It also provides customized exercises and instant corrections to support the learning process effectively. For example, *Duolingo* uses artificial intelligence algorithms to examine the difficulty of lessons depending on individuals' performance to ensure optimal learning possibilities (Vesselinov & Grego, 2012).

2.3.2 Natural Language Processing (NLP)

It enables the development of implementations that can comprehend, interpret, and initiate human language, facilitating communicative language practice and assessment. For example, *Grammarly* employs natural language processing to offer grammar and style suggestions, aiding students in improving their writing skills (Huynh, 2018).

2.3.3 Adaptive Learning Platforms

Artificial intelligence-based adaptive learning platforms assess students' strengths and weaknesses in actual time, customizing content to identify specific needs and promote an effective learning environment. For example, *Knewton* provides adaptive learning technologies that transform educational content into students' profiles, enhancing language acquisition (Vesselinov & Grego, 2012).

2.3.4 Chatbots and Conversational Agents

They simulate real-life conversations, providing students with opportunities to practice all language skills in engaging and interactive contexts. For example, *ChatGPT* and other conversational possibilities provide platforms for students to engage in dialogue, promoting their conversational accuracy and fluency (Loor et al., 2024).

2.3.5 Gamification and Communicative Learning Environments

Artificial intelligence fosters gamified learning experiences by initiating interactive and adaptive environments that motivate students through game-like elements. For example, *MindSnacks* employs artificial intelligence to provide language learning games that adjust to user progress, making learning enjoyable and effective (Huynh, 2018).

2.4 Artificial Intelligence Obstacles in Language Learning

Artificial intelligence has revolutionized language learning, providing tools and systems that improve the process. However, the implementation and adoption of artificial intelligence in this domain reveal significant challenges. This topic presents the central obstacles associated with using artificial intelligence in language learning.

2.4.1 Limited Contextual Understanding

While artificial intelligence is advanced in comprehending structures of language, it still struggles to grasp situational, contextual, and cultural nuances in communication. This restriction affects its ability to offer relevant and accurate feedback in diverse scenarios. For example, artificial intelligence-based systems may fail to convey cultural references or idiomatic expressions accurately, which are significant in language learning (Korhonen et al., 2019).

2.4.2 Bias in Artificial Intelligence Models

Artificial intelligence-based systems often obtain biases from the datasets utilized for training, leading to inappropriate or unfair feedback. For instance, the bias of accent in speech recognition tools may disproportionately disadvantage non-native speakers. Speech recognition systems such as *Siri* and *Google Speech-to-Text* may cause higher error scores for speakers with non-standard languages (Atat et al., 2018).

2.4.3 Dependence on Quality Data

Artificial intelligence-based systems require diverse datasets and high quality for achieving effective training. Such datasets will not always be available, especially for the less commonly spoken languages and dialects. In language learning, the tools of artificial intelligence focus largely on widespread languages such as English, Spanish, and Mandarin, while noticeably neglecting minority languages (Korhonen et al., 2019).

2.4.4 Limited Social and Emotional Intelligence

Language learning is not totally academic; it involves social and emotional interactions. Recent artificial intelligence tools lack the social and emotional intelligence to respond compassionately or simulate authentic and social interactions effectively. For example, artificial intelligence chatbots can present structured dialogues but sometimes fail to involve learners in meaningful and emotionally nuanced conversations (Atat et al., 2018).

2.4.5 Resistance to Adoption

Teachers and learners may resist the tools of artificial intelligence due to the lack of trust, fears of job displacement, and insufficient training on artificial intelligence integration into traditional pedagogical methods. For example, teachers might hesitate to utilize artificial intelligence-based assessment tools, doubting their validity and reliability compared to human judgment (Korhonen et al., 2019).

3. Methodology

According to Stangor (2011), a research methodology is the procedure of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data that a researcher employs. Researchers can utilize one of three major types of research methodologies. Each type provides a fundamental avenue for scientific exploration. Experimental, descriptive, and descriptive-correlational research are placed among the other types of research.

Depending on the nature of the present study, a quantitative descriptive design is utilized. Koh & Owen (2000) define descriptive design as the type of research that explores a current situation. It is commonly preferred in fields such as epidemiology, education, nutrition, and behavioral sciences.

There are three classifications for educational research: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed. The quantitative research uses “objective measurement to gather numeric data that is used to answer questions or test predetermined hypotheses.” Quantitative research requires a well-controlled setting. In contrast, the qualitative research emphasizes “understanding social phenomena from the viewpoint

of the human participants in natural settings. It does not begin with formal hypotheses, but it may result in hypotheses as the study unfolds" (Ary, et al., 2010, p.22).

3.1 Population and Sample of the Study

Creswell (2012) denotes that the population is a collection of individuals who share common properties. The population in the current study is Iraqi university students at the College of Education for Human Sciences. The total population is confirmed to be (40) Iraqi university students enrolled at the second stage.

According to Pennock et al. (2008), the concept of the sample is defined as a group of individuals chosen from the population to extract the population characteristics. The central notion of sampling is to pick up some of the elements that are found in a population. As a result, the same conclusions would be reached about the existing population (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). Iraqi university students at the Department of English Language at the College of Education have been randomly chosen for the sake of being the sample for the present study. The sample is (20) university students.

3.2 The Instrument of the Study

In the current study, the instrument, which is used in the study, is a questionnaire. A questionnaire is a group of closed-ended or open-ended questions to which respondents should respond. Closed-ended questions are used in this study. Questionnaires are categorized into two types: closed and open questionnaires. In a closed questionnaire, the researcher has decided on the answers. In an open questionnaire, the respondents' answers are not determined by the researcher but allow them to answer the questions on their own (Juliansyah, 2014).

The questionnaire of the present study is considered as being developed. The scale of Likert (Strongly Agree =5; Agree =4; Undecided =3; Disagree =2; Strongly Disagree =1) has been used. Bertram (2007) defines the Likert scale as a type of non-comparative approach to scaling that is considered unidimensional (measures only one aspect). Respondents are kindly asked to answer the questionnaire for the sake of indicating their degree of agreement with a particular statement.

The items of the questionnaire have been taken from the study of (Jamshed et al., 2024). The questionnaire has been applied to the sample of the present study, from Tuesday, 26th of July, 2025 to Monday, 30th of July, 2025. The researchers have denoted the aim behind the instrument of the present study for its sample. Respondents are kindly requested to fill out the items of the questionnaire by choosing only one alternative from the alternatives given (Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). Finally, the results of the questionnaire have been calculated.

4. Results and Discussions

Twenty university students filled out the questionnaire from Tuesday, 26th of July, 2025 to Monday, 30th of July, 2025. The questionnaire consists of ten items that are devoted entirely to artificial intelligence, self-engagement, self-development, and autonomous learning.

The results of the questionnaire, in the table below, reveal that the highest percentage of use is "agree" which takes about 57.6%. The use of "strongly agree" takes almost 49% of the total percentage. Then, the use of "undecided" shows that the percentage is 28.2%. Then, the use of "disagree" shows that it takes about 11.6% of the total percentage. Finally, the use of "strongly disagree" takes 0.6% which is the lowest percentage in the questionnaire's results.

Table 1

Total Number, Percentage, and Rank of the Questionnaire's Items

Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Artificial intelligence-based learning aids EFL students in developing their skills and acquiring proficiency.	11	6	3	0	0
2. Artificial intelligence usage increases EFL students' learning efficacy and self-confidence.	6	8	3	3	0
3. Artificial intelligence-based teaching leads to an active and engaging process.	5	9	5	1	0
4. Artificial intelligence-based learning decreases the trusting relationship between teachers and their students.	0	6	7	6	1
5. Artificial intelligence integration in EFL classrooms promotes the English language teaching process.	6	5	6	3	0
6. I believe that utilizing artificial intelligence in EFL classrooms raises challenges for teachers and students.	2	9	6	2	1
7. Artificial intelligence-based learning encourages interactive and collaborative learning.	6	8	3	3	0
8. I think artificial intelligence-based learning prepares students to be independent.	6	3	6	5	0
9. Integrating artificial intelligence-based system is a significant difficulty with significant privacy concerns.	3	9	4	4	0
10. The shortage of experts can cause obstacles to artificial intelligence-based learning.	4	9	4	2	1

Total Number	49	72	47	29	3
Percentage	49%	57.6%	28.2%	11.6%	0.6%
Rank	Second	First	Third	Fourth	Fifth

The ages of the respondents are randomly chosen. In addition, all the respondents are from the same study stage, which is the second stage, and enrolled in the English department at Wasit University. In Table 1 above, responses to ten statements regarding artificial intelligence and its implementation in learning are given.

The results of the questionnaire reveal that second-stage students who are studying at the English department get a lot of benefits from implementing artificial intelligence in their learning. Furthermore, the respondents are aware of artificial intelligence systems, which aid in their proficiency and competency levels. University students see the value of being engaged in cooperative and active learning processes by which they can practice and develop their language skills electronically. However, students prefer to make use of artificial intelligence tools individually rather than being involved in physical classes. University students encounter difficulty with the limited privacy when using artificial intelligence tools for the sake of being independent in their learning. Very few university students can easily access artificial intelligence tools because they are proficient, whereas others are not, because they lack proficiency in some technological skills.

5. Conclusions

Artificial intelligence offers revolutionary potential in language learning, enabling personalized learning, scalability, instant feedback, and immersive learning experiences. This technology enhances students' proficiency and engagement through data-driven and easy-to-access tools. However, this technology faces challenges that hinder its widespread adoption, such as language limitations, data privacy issues, biases, and high development costs.

Artificial intelligence lacks cultural sensitivity and emotional intelligence, which are significant to achieving comprehensive language learning. To enlarge its benefits, artificial intelligence must act as a support for human learning and expand access to marginalized communities and languages. Through thoughtful integration, a balanced, comprehensive, and effective educational system can be created.

5.1 Recommendations

Depending on the results achieved, researchers recommend the following:

1. University professors should provide students with training courses about how to access and make use of artificial intelligence tools in terms of developing their language learning.
2. University students should be allowed to use artificial intelligence tools inside their classes whenever possible to elaborate on professors' explanations.

5.2 Suggestions

Based on the recommendations given, the following suggestions are introduced:

1. Studies about the correlation between artificial intelligence usage and students' overall language skills development can be conducted.
1. Further studies about the advantages and disadvantages of using artificial intelligence tools in promoting communicative competency can be conducted.

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