

Exploring Students' Attitudes Towards AI-Powered Language Learning Tools Insights from First-Year Students at ENS "Assia Djebbar," Constantine

استكشاف مواقف الطلاب تجاه أدوات تعلم اللغات المدعومة بالذكاء الاصطناعي
رؤى من طالبات السنة الأولى في المدرسة العليا للأساتذة "أسيا جبار"، قسنطينة

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Abstract :

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing education, particularly in the field of language learning. Tools like virtual assistants and grammar checkers are becoming essential for students aiming to enhance their writing, vocabulary, and communication skills by providing personalized feedback and flexible learning opportunities. To explore the impact of these technologies, a study surveyed 47 first-year female students at ENS "Assia Djebbar," Constantine. The findings revealed both benefits and challenges: while students appreciated the effectiveness of AI tools in improving their skills and boosting confidence, they also expressed concerns about over-reliance, occasional inaccuracies, and a lack of cultural context. The study highlights the potential of better integrating AI into education to create a more engaging and supportive learning environment, emphasizing the growing significance of these tools in shaping the future of learning.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Language Learning, Benefits, and Challenges

ملخص

تُحدث التكنولوجيا الذكية (الذكاء الاصطناعي) ثورة في مجال التعليم، لا سيما في تعلم اللغات. أصبحت الأدوات مثل المساعدات الافتراضية والمدققات النحوية ضرورية للطلاب الذين يسعون لتحسين مهاراتهم في الكتابة والمفردات والتواصل، حيث توفر تغذية راجعة مخصصة وفرص تعلم مرنة. لاستكشاف تأثير هذه التقنيات، أُجريت دراسة شملت 47 طالبة في السنة الأولى بمدرسة "أسيا جبار" العليا للأساتذة في قسنطينة. كشفت النتائج عن فوائد وتحديات؛ فقد قدّر الطلاب فعالية أدوات الذكاء الاصطناعي في تحسين مهاراتهم وتعزيز ثقتهم بأنفسهم، لكنهم أبدوا مخاوف بشأن الاعتماد المفرط عليها، وبعض الأخطاء، وقلة مراعاة السياق الثقافي. تُبرز الدراسة أهمية دمج أفضل لهذه الأدوات في التعليم لخلق بيئة تعليمية أكثر تفاعلية ودعمًا، مع التأكيد على الدور المتزايد لهذه التقنيات في تشكيل مستقبل التعلم. الكلمات المفتاحية: الذكاء الاصطناعي، تعلم اللغات، الفوائد، التحديات.

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1- Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is about creating systems that can understand their environment and take actions to achieve goals, as Russell and Norvig (1995) explained. Rich (1983) adds that AI is essentially teaching computers to do things people are currently better at. In education, AI tools are making a big impact, helping students improve skills like writing and critical thinking. This study focuses on understanding what first-year students at the Ecole Normale Supérieure Assia Djebbar of Constantine

(ENS-C) think about using AI tools to learn languages. The main questions driving the research are the following:

- What are students' attitudes towards the use of artificial intelligence in language learning?
- What are the most significant benefits of using AI tools for language learning, according to students?
- What are students' concerns or challenges regarding the use of AI tools in language learning?

2-Literature Review

2.1- Definition of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been defined in various ways, reflecting its complexity and multifaceted nature. According to Ghosh and Thirugnanam (2021), AI is "a domain of computer science which deals with the development of intelligent computer systems, which are capable to perceive, analyze, and react accordingly to the inputs" (p. 23). Another perspective is provided by Bhbosale et al. (2020), who break down the term into its components: "Artificial" refers to something manmade, while "Intelligence" denotes the capacity for thinking. They define AI as the branch of computer science by which we can develop intelligent machines that can behave like humans, think like humans, and make decisions logically. Indeed, AI is a field dedicated to creating systems that emulate human-like thinking and decision-making capabilities, grounded in logical programming and advanced computational techniques.

2.2- Advantages of Using AI in Language Learning

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the way we learn languages, making the process more personalized, engaging, and accessible than ever before. Researchers like Luckin et al. (2021) and Warschauer (2020) have explored how AI is reshaping language education, highlighting its potential to improve how we access resources, receive feedback, and stay motivated.

One of AI's strengths is its ability to tailor learning experiences to individual needs. Take platforms like Duolingo, for example—they adapt lessons based on your progress, helping you focus on areas where you need more practice. This personalized approach not only allows learners to go at their own pace but also keeps them motivated and improves how well they retain what they've learned (Luckin et al. 2021).

AI is also a game-changer when it comes to instant feedback. Tools like Grammarly and speech recognition software, such as Google Translate, help you identify and fix mistakes in real time, whether it is grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation. According to Warschauer (2020), this kind of immediate response empowers learners to take charge of their progress and overcome obstacles more easily.

When it comes to creative writing, AI proves to be a helpful ally. It can suggest ideas and prompts, helping students break through writer's block and explore new perspectives. Sulistiyo (2024) notes that these tools encourage creative thinking, while Roisah et al. (2024) highlight how tools like ChatGPT offer invaluable support by providing feedback and brainstorming ideas, leading to better writing outcomes.

What is more, AI makes language learning available to almost anyone. With apps and online platforms, you can practice anytime and anywhere, without having to pay for expensive lessons or travel to specific locations. This accessibility is especially meaningful for people in remote areas or those with limited resources (Kohnke et al., 2021). Roisah et al. (2024) even suggest that incorporating AI tools like ChatGPT into classrooms could improve how students learn languages and encourage schools to adopt more tech-focused teaching methods.

AI has completely redefined language learning. By offering smarter, more flexible tools and removing barriers, it is empowering learners and pushing traditional education into an exciting, tech-driven future.

2.3- Drawbacks of Artificial Intelligence in Language Learning

While Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers numerous benefits in language learning, there are also several challenges and limitations that need to be addressed. Scholars like Luckin et al. (2021), Warschauer (2020), and Kohnke et al. (2021) have highlighted some of these concerns, which range from over-reliance on technology to the lack of human interaction in the learning process.

One of the main drawbacks of AI in language learning is the risk of students becoming too dependent on technology. While AI tools offer immediate feedback and personalized lessons, they cannot fully replace the guidance of human teachers. Luckin et al. (2021) note that relying heavily on AI may hinder learners from developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills that are essential in real-life conversations. This over-reliance on technology may also limit the depth of learning, as AI lacks the nuanced understanding and emotional intelligence that a teacher can provide.

Another challenge is that AI tools often fail to capture the cultural and contextual aspects of language. Warschauer (2020) points out that language learning is not just about grammar and vocabulary; it also involves understanding the culture, history, and social context behind the language. AI tools, while effective at teaching technical aspects, often overlook these cultural nuances, which can lead to incomplete or shallow language learning experiences.

Additionally, while AI can provide immediate feedback, it may not always be accurate. For example, speech recognition technology might struggle with different accents or pronunciations, leading to incorrect corrections. Kohnke et al. (2021) highlight that this can cause frustration for learners and may even hinder their progress if the feedback is not precise. These technological limitations remind

us that AI is still far from perfect and cannot fully replicate the human ability to adapt to various learning styles and nuances.

Despite the many advantages of AI in language learning, there are significant drawbacks to consider. Over-reliance on AI, the lack of cultural context, and potential inaccuracies in feedback are issues that need to be addressed. As AI continues to evolve, finding a balance between technology and human interaction will be key to ensuring that language learners can benefit from both worlds.

3- Methodology

To explore students' perceptions towards the use of artificial intelligence in learning English, a questionnaire was administered to 47 female students aged 17 to 21, all of whom are learning English as their second foreign language. They completed the survey in about 30 minutes. The questionnaire included both Likert scale questions and open-ended ones, aiming to capture their thoughts and experiences with AI in language learning. It is organized into several sections, each focusing on a different aspect of students' experience with AI-powered language learning tools. In the Usage of AI Tools section, students are asked to identify which AI tools are used, such as Grammarly or ChatGPT, and how frequently they are used for tasks like improving vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and writing. The Perceived Effectiveness section invites students to rate how much these tools are believed to improve language skills and whether they make tasks easier or more efficient. In Impact on Skills, students are prompted to reflect on how AI tools affect creativity, critical thinking, and confidence in language learning. The Concerns and Drawbacks section addresses potential concerns, including over-reliance on AI, its impact on critical thinking, and the accuracy of feedback provided by AI. Finally, the Overall Attitude section gathers opinions on the overall usefulness of AI tools and their potential role in language education. The questionnaire concludes with Open-Ended Questions, where personal experiences, concerns, and suggestions for improving AI in language learning can be shared. Responses will remain anonymous and will be used solely for research purposes to enhance the role of AI in language education.

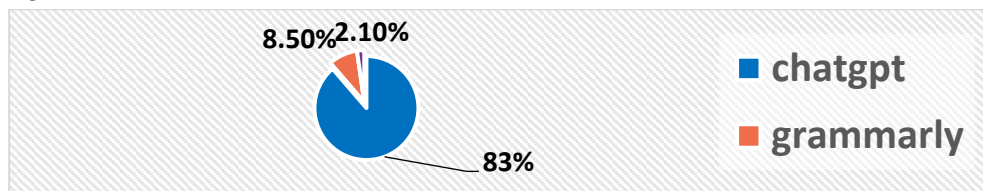
4- Results

4.1- Usage of AI Tools in Language Learning

AI tools have become an essential part of language learning for many students, offering valuable support in improving skills like vocabulary, grammar, and writing. The widespread use of these tools highlights their importance in students' daily routines.

4.1.1- Preferred Tools

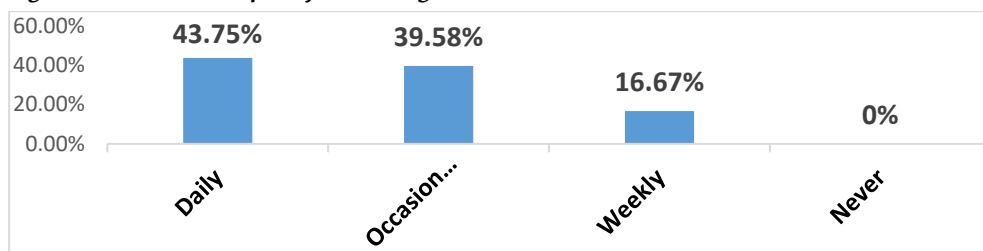
Figure1. Students' Preferences



ChatGPT is by far the most popular AI tool, with 83% of students using it for language learning. This indicates that many students find it versatile and effective for various tasks. Grammarly follows behind with 8.5% of students using it, often alongside other tools for more targeted tasks like grammar checks. A few other tools, like Quillbot and Duolingo, were mentioned but used by smaller groups of students, showcasing the range of options available, though ChatGPT remains the primary choice.

4.1.2- Frequency of Use

Figure 2. Students' Frequency of AI Usage



The frequency of AI tool usage varies among students. Nearly half (43.75%) use AI tools daily, making it an integral part of their language learning routine. 39.58% use them occasionally, while 16.67% use them weekly. Notably, none of the students reported never using AI tools, indicating universal engagement and reliance on these resources for learning.

4.1.3- Aspects of Language Learning

Students appreciate AI tools for their ability to enhance multiple areas of language learning. Some students use AI for comprehensive improvement in skills like vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and writing. Others focus specifically on improving vocabulary and writing or conversation practice, depending on their individual needs. This versatility highlights how AI tools cater to diverse learning styles and preferences.

4.2- Perceived Effectiveness of AI Tools

Students' perceptions of the effectiveness of AI tools in improving various aspects of language learning were mixed, reflecting both positive outcomes and areas where expectations were not always met.

Table1. Students' Attitudes towards the Benefits of AI Tools

| Perceived Effectiveness | Mean |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Improving Skills | 3.61 |
| Providing Helpful Feedback | 3.83 |
| Making Writing Tasks Easier | 4.13 |
| Fostering Creativity in Writing | 3.64 |
| Fostering Creativity in Writing | 3.64 |
| Improving Critical Thinking Skills | 2.78 |

4.2.1- Improving Writing Skills

The majority of students agreed that AI tools were helpful in enhancing their writing skills, with a mean score of 3.61. However, the relatively high standard deviation of 1.09 suggests that some students found these tools less effective, indicating that while many benefitted, there were varied experiences and some challenges.

4.2.2- Providing Helpful Feedback

AI tools were generally viewed as providing helpful feedback, with a mean score of 3.83. This feedback was largely appreciated by students, though it was not always equally effective for everyone, as indicated by the same standard deviation of 1.09. While most found the feedback useful, a minority may have encountered issues with accuracy or relevance.

4.2.3- Making Writing Tasks Easier

Students strongly agreed that AI tools made writing tasks easier, with a mean score of 4.13. This was the highest score in this section, indicating widespread satisfaction with the tools' ability to simplify writing. However, some students did raise concerns about usability, suggesting that while AI made tasks easier, it was not always entirely intuitive for every user.

4.2.4- Fostering Creativity in Writing

AI tools were generally believed to foster creativity, with a mean score of 3.64. However, the relatively higher standard deviation of 1.19 points to a diverse range of experiences. While some students felt that AI encouraged creative thinking, others may have found it limiting or less helpful in this regard.

4.2.5- Improving Critical Thinking Skills

When it came to improving critical thinking skills, students were more divided. With a mean score of 2.78, the responses reflected a mix of disagreement and neutrality. This suggests that many students did not see AI tools as significantly enhancing their critical thinking abilities, with some likely feeling that these tools were more focused on basic language skills rather than cognitive development.

4.2.6- Boosting Confidence in Writing Abilities

One of the most consistent findings was the strong increase in students' confidence in their writing. With a mean score of 4.06, students overwhelmingly agreed that AI tools boosted their writing confidence. The relatively low standard deviation of 0.91 indicates that the feedback on this aspect was consistent across most participants, highlighting the positive impact of AI on students' self-assurance in their writing abilities.

4.3- Concerns and Drawbacks of AI Tools

While AI tools have been beneficial for many students, there are notable concerns about their potential drawbacks, particularly regarding overreliance, limitations on critical thinking, and the accuracy of feedback.

Table2. Students' Attitudes towards AI Concerns

| Concerns and Drawbacks | Mean |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Overreliance on AI Tools | 3.36 |
| Limitation of Critical Thinking | 3.48 |
| Incorrect or Misleading Feedback | 3.46 |

4.3.1- Overreliance on AI Tools

Students expressed moderate concerns about becoming too dependent on AI tools, with a mean score of 3.36. This indicates that many students agree that overuse of these tools could impede the development of independent problem-solving skills. However, the relatively high standard deviation of 1.33 suggests that opinions were mixed, with some students feeling more reliant on AI than others, reflecting a diversity of perspectives on this issue.

4.3.2- Limitation of Critical Thinking

There was also a moderate agreement regarding the limitation of critical thinking due to AI use, with a mean score of approximately 3.48. This suggests that many students worry that relying on AI tools might hinder their ability to engage deeply with the material and think critically about their work. The variability in responses, indicated by a standard deviation of 1.27, shows that while some students were more concerned, others did not perceive AI as limiting their critical thinking.

4.3.3- Incorrect or Misleading Feedback

Students expressed concerns about the accuracy of AI-generated feedback, with a mean score of around 3.46. While AI tools are generally seen as helpful, students noted that inaccuracies or misleading suggestions could occur, which affects their learning experience. The high standard deviation of 1.37 points to significant variation in how students experienced the feedback, with some encountering more problems with accuracy than others.

4.4- Overall Attitudes Toward AI Tools

In general, students expressed strong positive attitudes toward the use of AI tools in language learning, with a recognition of their potential benefits and support for their broader integration into education.

4.4.1- AI Tools as Beneficial for Language Learning

AI tools were widely regarded as beneficial for language learning, with a mean score of approximately 4.41. This strong agreement suggests that students found AI tools to be a valuable resource in improving their language skills. The low standard deviation of 0.68 reflects a consensus among students, showing that there was little variation in their views on the usefulness of AI tools. Overall, the feedback indicates that students feel positively about the impact of AI on their language learning experience.

4.4.2- Support for a Larger Role of AI in Education

When it comes to the potential expansion of AI's role in education, students were generally in favour, with a mean score of around 4.02. This shows a strong inclination toward using AI more extensively in learning environments. However, the standard deviation of 1.01 points to some hesitation, indicating that a few students remain cautious due to concerns about over-reliance on AI and its limitations in fostering deeper learning. Despite these concerns, there is clear support for AI playing a larger role in the educational landscape.

4.5- Major Findings from Open-Ended Questions

The open-ended questions provided valuable qualitative data, offering deeper insights into students' experiences with AI tools, highlighting both advantages and concerns, as well as suggestions for improvement.

4.5.1- Advantages of AI Tools

Students found several significant benefits from using AI tools. One of the most commonly mentioned advantages was the creative support AI provides, particularly in generating ideas and overcoming writer's block. Many students appreciated AI's ability to suggest synonyms and improve vocabulary, helping them expand their word choices. Grammar and error correction were also highlighted as key strengths, with AI tools helping to identify mistakes and improve accuracy in writing. Additionally, students noted that AI tools increase efficiency by enabling quick idea generation and organizing content effectively. Another important benefit was the confidence boost students received from real-time feedback, making them feel more secure in their writing.

4.5.2- Concerns About AI Tools

Despite the positive feedback, students raised several concerns about over-reliance on AI. Many feared that frequent use of these tools could lead to a reduction in independent thinking and creativity.

Another concern was the reduced human interaction that AI tools promote, limiting opportunities for collaboration and social learning. Accuracy issues were also highlighted, with students mentioning the potential for AI to provide culturally irrelevant or incorrect feedback. The lack of deep personalization in AI tools was another concern, as some students felt that these tools did not cater to their unique learning needs. Finally, there was a concern that AI might encourage surface-level learning, such as copying and pasting, rather than fostering critical thinking and deeper engagement.

4.5.3- Suggestions for Better AI Integration

To address these concerns, students offered several suggestions for improving the integration of AI tools in language learning. One suggestion was to focus AI use on goal-oriented exercises, such as enhancing creativity, grammar, or vocabulary. This would allow for more targeted and effective learning. Another recommendation was to combine AI with traditional teaching methods through a blended learning approach, maintaining the balance between technology and human interaction. Students also suggested that AI tools should be improved to provide more contextually relevant and personalized feedback, which would enhance the learning experience. Lastly, students advocated for selective usage of AI, proposing that it should primarily be used for revisions, paraphrasing, and idea generation rather than replacing the original work or the learning process.

5- Discussion

AI tools have quickly become an essential resource for language learners, helping improve skills like writing, vocabulary, and grammar. Among these tools, ChatGPT stands out as a favorite, especially for first-year students at ENS-C, who use it daily because of its ability to address a variety of learning needs. A study by Roisah et al. (2024) found that students who used ChatGPT significantly improved their writing skills compared to those taught with traditional methods. The study, which involved a control group and an experimental group, showed a statistically significant difference in pre- and post-test scores, with a t-test result of 0.00 confirming the impact of ChatGPT.

Most students found AI tools helpful, particularly for making writing tasks easier and boosting their confidence. However, opinions were divided when it came to how well AI fosters creativity and critical thinking. While many students valued the convenience and support AI provided, some felt it didn't always encourage original ideas. Others worried about becoming too dependent on AI, potentially limiting their ability to think independently. Research by Lawasi et al. (2024) highlighted that AI's impact on critical thinking depends on how students interact with it. Students who actively used AI to ask precise questions and analyze the content it generated found it helpful for developing new ideas and deeper insights.

At the same time, while students appreciated the feedback AI provided, they noted occasional issues with accuracy and relevance, particularly when suggestions felt culturally off or misleading. Despite

these concerns, most students were optimistic about the role of AI in language learning. They supported its continued use but suggested it should complement—not replace—traditional teaching methods. Many advocated for a balanced approach, using AI for tasks like grammar checks and idea generation while relying on traditional methods to foster creativity and critical thinking. This combination, they felt, would provide the best of both worlds for effective and meaningful language learning.

6- Conclusion

In conclusion, AI tools are now a key part of language learning, offering benefits like improved writing skills, increased confidence, and easier task completion. However, first-year students at the ENS-C have mixed experiences. Most find these tools helpful for vocabulary, grammar, and writing, yet concerns remain about over-reliance, critical thinking limitations, and feedback accuracy. Overall, students support AI's growing role in language education but emphasize the need for balance with traditional methods to foster engagement, creativity, and personalized learning. As AI evolves, further research and thoughtful integration will be crucial to maximize its benefits while addressing student concerns.

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