AI-POWERED LANGUAGE LEARNING APPS: DO THEY REALLY WORK?

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Annotation: *This article explores the effectiveness of the language learning apps that use Artificial Intelligence. This article will critically review and assess the usage of platforms such as Babbel, Duolingo, and Busuu in creating personalized study plans. Moreover, article will discuss the accuracy of AI in assessing language skills and reinforcing vocabulary. In the end, readers will gain balanced knowledge about how helpful AI powered language learning apps work who might benefit most from them.*

Keywords: *AI, Artificial Intelligence, Language, Education, AI-powered, apps.*

In modern world where AI is becoming a part of our lifestyle, every educator and learner should know how useful it is to implement it in language learning journey. July 2024, Duolingo was the most popular language learning app worldwide based on monthly downloads, with around 14.3 million users downloading the app to their mobile devices during the month. Lingutown was the second most popular language learning app in the examined period, with almost two million downloads. Language learning apps focusing on language acquisition for children were also popular, with children-specific app Buddy.ai: Buddy.ai: Fun Learning Games generating 1.63 million downloads worldwide. Language learning apps, which combine learning gamification with language acquisition, have become an increasingly popular method to learn and practice a foreign language for both adults and kids.[1]

Therefore the purpose of this article is to answer the call for an up to date systematic review on AI powered language learning apps, and also addressing the gaps detected in the learning process

How AI enhances language learning.

One of the key benefits of **AI in education** is its ability to create personalized learning pathways for individual students. By analyzing student data, AI algorithms can identify each student's learning style, strengths, weaknesses, and preferences. This information allows the system to tailor the learning experience and provide targeted content, activities, and resources that match the student's unique needs. Elements of Adaptive Learning Styles AI:

Personalized content: AI algorithms analyze student data to deliver customized learning materials that cater to individual needs and learning styles.

Individual pacing: Adaptive learning platforms adapt the pace of instruction according to each learner's progress, providing additional support or challenges as necessary.

Immediate feedback: AI-powered systems offer instant feedback, allowing learners to identify areas of improvement and make real-time adjustments to their learning approach.

Intelligent assessments: AI algorithms assess learners' performance and comprehension, guiding educators in providing targeted interventions and support.

Personalized learning styles AI and adaptive learning styles AI are revolutionizing education, fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment that caters to the individual needs and preferences of every student. [2]

When approaching a task-oriented knowledge acquisition task, one must be aware that the resultant computer systems must interact with humans, and therefore should closely parallel human abilities. The traditional argument that an engineering approach need not reflect human or biological performance is not truly applicable to machine learning. Since airplanes, a successful result of an almost pure engineering approach, bear little resemblance to their biological counterparts, one may argue that applied knowledge acquisition systems should be equally divorced from any consideration of human capabilities. This argument does not apply here because airplanes need not interact with or understand birds. Learning machines, on the other hand, will have to interact with the people who make use of them, and consequently the concepts and skills they acquire-if not necessarily their internal mechanisms-must be understandable to humans.[3]

Gamification has been proven to have the highest impact on students' motivation and academic achievement and the least on cognitive load.

To know how gamification affects a student's motivation, let's understand how motivation works.

Motivation works based on reward-based reinforcement. When a person performs an action and gets rewarded, dopamine (a neurotransmitter linked to reward and pleasure) is released. It reinforces the action that resulted in the rewarding experience and increases the person's propensity to repeat that action in the future.

Gamification taps into the reward-based reinforcement mechanism with the help of rewards like badges, points, and scores and motivates students to study.

AI tools can help teachers curate engaging assessments and provide automated feedback on students' performance.

For instance, when students attempt a quiz, they get a positive score for every question they answer correctly; for every question answered incorrectly, they are given a negative score. Once they are done with the quiz, they get to know their final scores and positions on their class's dashboard. Simultaneously, they can look at the feedback for the questions they got wrong and gain insight into their mistakes. [4]

Greater accessibility

AI has made language learning more accessible to people who may not have access to traditional learning resources. With AI-powered apps and platforms, anyone with a smartphone or internet connection can learn a new language from anywhere in the world.

Flexibility

Flexibility is a stellar advantage of AI in language learning. Users can access study content anytime, anywhere. Regardless of the device, they benefit from the same learning experience. Additionally, most platforms using the technology are self-paced, easily adapting to their routines.

These features also make for more productive study sessions. Students are less afraid of making mistakes when speaking to a bot than a native speaker. They learn when they feel motivated and apply new knowledge on the spot. Finally, real-time feedback helps correct mistakes almost instantly and boosts their language proficiency. [5]

Drawbacks of using Ai-powered language learning apps.

Dehumanized Learning Experience

The lack of human touch is a critical disadvantage of AI in education, leading to a dehumanized learning experience. Traditional education relies heavily on human interaction, with teachers providing not only academic instruction but also emotional support and mentorship. AI systems, while efficient, cannot replicate the empathy, understanding and personal connection that human educators offer. This absence of human elements can affect students' social and emotional development, as well as their overall engagement and motivation in the learning process.

Another limitation of AI in language learning is its ability to personalize instruction. While some AI programs can adapt their lessons based on student performance, they cannot entirely replicate the level of personalization that comes from working with a human tutor or teacher. Additionally, not all students learn in the same way, meaning that an AI program designed for one type of learner may not be effective for another.

Finally, it's worth noting that not all learners have access to the technology required for the successful use of AI in language learning. Without reliable internet access or necessary hardware (such as smartphones or computers), students may find themselves unable to take advantage of these tools. This can create a further divide between those who have access to advanced technology and those who do not, potentially perpetuating educational inequalities.[6]

Who may find AI-powered language learning apps most useful

Since one can use AI-powered apps anytime, anywhere, it can easily suit people who travel, such as tourists who spend their time abroad and are in need of learning multiple languages.

Another people who may find it facilitating are beginners. Starting a new language from scratch can be hard and monotonous from time to time; however, AI-powered apps can easily provide basic grammar and vocabulary and make it easier and more fun by filling the process with images and games. This not only makes it easy but also helps it to be memorable.

On the other hand, people with hectic lifestyle can benefit from it's accessibility anytime. Since it does not require a specific time or place to use the application, one can utilize it when having dinner or commuting.

Language learning applications such as Babbel, Duolingo, and Busuu powered by AI have made excellent improvements by making it easier, more individualized and more flexible for users to learn new languages. Such apps possess various modes of achieving their objectives that appeal to different learners in terms of learning style and settings as well as pace making it more interactive and motivating. These apps are perfect for

anyone looking to learn languages on the go, whether they are beginners or have a hectic schedule. Nevertheless, while significant progress has been made, there remains a limit to how well AI can be developed to sufficiently replace certain human factors such as emotional guidance and mentorship. In addition, technology access barriers can restrict some learners from reaping the full benefits of such tools and this can create more inequalities in education. All in all, AI based language learning is a promising breakthrough particularly in providing various innovative and efficient learning techniques for many users, however, it cannot and shouldn't fully replace the traditional approach.

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