

AI IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING IN PAKISTAN: A WORLD ENGLISHES PERSPECTIVE ON TRENDS, OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

This study investigates AI use in learning and teaching English among Pakistani university students. Using Kachru's World Englishes model, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), it explores what is happening in this context, what the opportunities and challenges are, and what the ethical dimensions might be, of using AI in such contexts. Pakistani students are gradually leaning on AI tools like ChatGPT, Grammarly, QuillBot to help them in writing, grammar and vocabulary development. Although these tools increase learning opportunities, they bring a range of ethical issues to the forefront when it comes to plagiarism, academic integrity, and the potential suppression of regional varieties of English. From a World Englishes perspective, the worry is that by giving visibility to AI language models, these are likely to further perpetuate a standard British or American English, potentially impacting students' L2 identities. This paper contends that a culturally aware, pedagogically driven design is required for the ethical and effective deployment of an AI technology in English language teaching and learning in Pakistani context. The results add to the discussion of AI language learning in the context of multilingual and postcolonial conditions.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence AI, English Language Learning, TAM, AI tools in Education, Pakistani English, World Englishes

1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence has staged an inroad to the teaching software market in recent years all over the world, including language learning technology (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019; Holmes et al., 2019). Tools such as Grammarly, ChatGPT, and QuillBot automatically offer learners in-context feedback on grammar, style, coherence—introducing innovative ways of fostering English language learning in academic and everyday life. In Pakistan, where English is the second language and has a significant role in academic and professional achievement, the AI tools are gaining popularity among the university students of different disciplines and regions. Gone are the days when these tools were the prerogative of elite private universities, students in public sector

institutions and even in hinterland areas are now beginning to reach out to AI platforms, as better and better connectivity is assured and availability of smart phones is on the upswing.

But less is known about the impact of these technologies on students' learning, including in the context of the sociolinguistic situation of Pakistan. The language situation in Pakistan is complicated with a number of different local languages spoken along with Urdu and English. And English per se assumes a variety of the language in local context—Pakistani English—that represents the socio-cultural values, history, and educational environments of the country (Mahboob, 2009). In this context, utilization of AI tools opens up a whole set of issues around the impact of globalized technology solutions on local linguistic practices and identities.

Using the World Englishes (WE) construct (Kachru, 1992; Mahboob, 2009) as a theoretical framework, this paper discusses the effects of AI in English language learning in Pakistan. World Englishes raises the awareness of multiple Englishes in different sociolinguistic settings and the legitimacy of indigenized varieties such as Pakistani English. The incorporation of AI tools: Implications for Englishes Research The incorporation of AI tools raises critical issues about which Englishes are privileged and the impact on learners' language identities. In addition, ethical concerns such as academic integrity, authorship and critical thinking are becoming increasingly relevant as students rely more and more on AI computer generated text. This paper seeks to overcome the obstacles by dealing with trends, opportunities, challenges and ethical considerations in an abstract manner. It argues on the significance of pedagogically hooking up with local linguistic realities in an ethical us.

1.1 Significance of the Study

This study is also relevant as an addition to the nascent area of AI in language education, where a context (Pakistan) underrepresented in the literature has been targeted. As AI technologies are being rapidly integrated into the Pakistani higher education, their impact is less clear on local varieties of English, language learning, and students' identities. By examining these trends from the lenses of World Englishes, this paper calls attention to the importance of culturally sensitive AI-integrated pedagogical transitions. The study can have useful implications for educators, policy makers, and AI developers in such multilingual, postcolonial contexts like Pakistan in terms of sociolinguistic impact of AI use.

1.2 Research Objectives

- To investigate the current practices of using AI tools in English language learning and teaching, in the context of university students in Pakistan.
- To explore the potential of AI assisted EFL learning and its challenges in Pakistani context.
- To investigate ethical issues related to AI in language teaching, specifically rhetoric regarding academic dishonesty and linguistic identity.
- To look at the influence AI-produced English has on local English within World Englishes theory including Pakistani English.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the trend of AI use for learning and teaching English language at university level among Pakistani students?
2. How AI tools can be used to improve the English skills in Pakistani context?

3. What are the challenges and ethical considerations related to the application of AI tools to language education in Pakistan?
4. How is AI English being used to affect student perceptions of Pakistani English and their linguistic selves in English?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Global Trends in AI and English Language Learning

AI applications in ELT have been the subject of worldwide interest, given their potential to revolutionize how we teach and learn (Holmes et al., 2019). Artificial intelligent-based tools can measure language performance, offer customized learning paths, and give learners interactive language practice that can be utilized as support to language learners (Luckin, 2018). Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019) note that AI applications in higher education, including intelligent tutoring systems and automated essay scoring, are already in use worldwide. Utilize these resources as writing coaches, as they will help improve your academic essays, enhance your vocabulary usage, and even mark your stylistic errors. In a number of Western contexts, AI-led writing tools had already been incorporated into university writing centers to offer students support beyond the walls of the physical third-space English-language like environments. The world is seeing the trend that language learners are catching up AI with fast speed as a normal tool. Recent advances in AI conversational agents also hold potential for the enhancement of speaking skills and pronunciation, a crucial aspect of language learning that has long been reliant on intense classroom interaction or personal tutoring.

2.2 AI and English Language Learning in Pakistan

AI in education space is nascent in context with Pakistan. Such initiatives as their utilization provides essential insights criminal justice system professionalism. Replacing the old can contribute to ensuring competence to produce a better university ... Recent research on teaching English language (Shamim & Rashid, 2019) indicates that while awareness of recent educational technologies is increasing among university learners, institutional support and policy frameworks in place of such tools in English language learning is still fledgling. The gap between the access to AI in urban and rural schools is striking. In private universities in major cities, students frequently use AI tools independently, but public institutions—particularly in rural areas—struggle with basic technological infrastructure. The World Bank (2021) notes that digital literacy and internet access remain challenges in Pakistan's higher education sector, which may affect the adoption of advanced educational technologies. Additionally, there is a lack of formal training for both faculty and students regarding the pedagogical use of AI tools in language learning. Furthermore, most teachers lack professional development opportunities related to educational technology, and there is limited institutional funding to promote AI integration in the English curriculum.

2.3 Ethical Issues in AI and Language Learning

From an ethical standpoint, Selwyn (2019) raises concerns about academic dishonesty and the erosion of critical thinking skills due to over-reliance on AI-generated content. Cotton et al. (2023) also arrived at the same results, agreeing that neither the students nor the teachers have any clue about how to deal with the ethical use of tools such as ChatGPT in academic writing. The use of AI tools has advanced much more quickly than the creation of institutional guidelines for the fair use of these tools and this has left us both with concerns. In an already plagiarism-rich higher education culture like in Pakistan, the following tools may add to more to the already

disgraced academic honesty and integrity. In addition, since Pakistani universities typically focus on examination-based assessment rather than process writing or creative work, students may be more inclined to resort to AI writing tools in order to “get through” rather than engaging in the process of learning. This trend begs the question of the lasting effects AI may have on students and their education, especially when it comes to issues such as authorship and originality.

2.4 AI, World Englishes, and Linguistic Identity

The concept of World Englishes (Kachru, 1992; Kachru & Nelson, 2006) has direct implications in this regard. Pakistani English is a variety and it exhibits sociocultural and historical influences of the region (Mahboob, 2009). Nevertheless, AI language models are very often trained on corpora full of inner-circle English norms (UK/US); possibly, as a upshot, they can weaken local language variation, and sustain the process of linguistic leveling. For instance; AI applications may “correct” stylistic and lexical features that come naturally in to being while spoken by Pakistani speakers of English and standardizes British or American norms. The students are likely to unconsciously adopt these corrections, thus leading to changes in their linguistic identity, and to weakening in both self-expression in and confidence to use [End Page 113] indigenous forms of English. This is especially true in postcolonial contexts such as Pakistan, where questions of cultural identity and social status are intimately connected to language. AI may recreate colonial orders of language and marginalize world Englishes by favoring some norms against the others.

2.5 Gaps in the Literature

However, there are also some potential benefits that AI tools bring to Pakistani students, especially in terms of improving writing skills, exposure to world Englishes, and offering a tailor-made learning environment. A significant gap, however, seems to exist with respect to studies about the impact of such tools on students’ attitudes toward Pakistani English and their own language identity. The majority of research has been limited to the technical capabilities of AI tools rather than sociolinguistic or cultural aspects. This gap is the focus of theoretical analysis in this paper – while doing so, the aim is to further deepen our understanding of the increasing presence of AI in the changing linguistic dynamics of Pakistan. There is also a need to explore how the students perceive the role of AI in their language learning trajectories, language-ownership and language-confidence, and the use of Pakistani English in academic and professional contexts.

3. Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts a multi-theoretical approach to analyze AI use in English language learning in Pakistan. First, Kachru’s (1992) World Englishes framework provides a lens to examine how AI tools interact with localized varieties of English, particularly Pakistani English. The Three Circles Model highlights how inner-circle norms (UK/US) often dominate global perceptions of “correct” English, a dynamic that AI tools may inadvertently reinforce. As Pakistani learners engage with AI tools, they may face subtle pressures to conform to globalized language norms, which has implications for the future status of Pakistani English. This raises questions about linguistic identity and the right of Pakistani speakers to use their own variety of English without being subjected to correction or erasure by AI-driven technologies.

Second, AI (Vygotsky, cited in Luckin, 2018) is considered a mediating artifact, which mediates learners’ language development through interaction. “AI tools provide scaffolding to support linguistic competence and can also be used to mold learner attitudes toward linguistic

norms. By learning to conform to AI systems' idiosyncrasies, students improve their mechanics (and sometimes even their prose) while learning new habits of mind about what counts as "good" English—habits that are often shaped by and at odds with the prejudices implicit in the AI's own data. AI is thus imagined and plays as a technological as well as a sociocultural actor in language learning, having impact on the imbrication that students themselves make of certain linguistic forms and values.

Finally, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019) is used to explain student's perceived and actual usage of AI tools. Aspects like perceived usefulness, ease of use, cultural attitudes towards AI and peer pressure influence to what extent AI gets integrated into language learning practices. In Pakistan, acceptance of AI tools for students is not just about the pragmatic advantages, but is also affected by the societal views on student role and technology in education. Some students may interpret AI as one of the contemporary requirements corresponding to global academic tendencies, while others may be more reluctant and resistant to it, especially in the context of pedagogically conservative settings. Institutional variables, such as university policy and teacher attitudes may also affect patterns of use of AI in Pakistani higher education.

Combined, these theories offer an expansive framework within which to investigate the intricate dynamics of AI technologies, English language learning, and sociocultural identity in Pakistan. They also contribute to the notion of AI as not merely tool, but also influencing agent of language and culture learning.

4. Discussion

4.1 Trends

AI tools such as Grammarly, QuillBot and ChatGPT are popular among the university students in Pakistan for the enhancement of grammar, style and coherence in academic writing (Shamim & Rashid, 2019). IT is typically something faculty access on their own, because there are few institutions with policies and training on AI use. And their students are often using it for free (or at a steep discount if a student subscription is available) and being taught by their friends or via an online tutorial. The trend for AI tools is also seen in students' chatter on social media and university forums. And the artificial intelligence tools are sometimes folded into collaborative learning, with students sharing tips on how to use the bots for essay writing or to prepare for a term paper. Beyond academia, AI assistants are utilized to help write personal statements for scholarships, job applications, and other forms of professional writing.

4.2 Opportunities

AI offers students instant personal feedback, assisting them to develop a conscious understanding of grammar and academic style (Holmes et al., 2019). For those who lack traditional language support, AI tools democratize access to fosterage (World Bank, 2021). In most public sector universities, ESL learners have little opportunity in encountering competent ESL experts in class especially with big classes. AI tools play the role of a virtual tutor in the sense that they can offer feedback, which pupils would not otherwise receive in a timely manner. And AI can assist students in learning self-editing, growing their vocabulary and learning academic writing conventions. Students who are preparing to enter competitive professional areas or looking for opportunities outside India, AI tools also expose them to global Englishes, enabling them to adjust their writing according to international academic requirements.

AI tools can also help the thousands of students who suffer from writing anxiety or who lack confidence in their language skills. AI technology has the potential to inspire more risk-taking and creativity in writing by providing an unbiased place to try and fail and try again. In addition, AI tools can support students' code-switching skills and promote greater language flexibility by mediating between standard academic English and the conversational or primary language spoken by students.

4.3 Challenges

Excessive use of AI-based tools can limit occasions for reflection and creative expression (Selwyn, 2019). According to Cotton et al. (2023), the majority of students are exploiting AI-generated text without explicit knowledge for its impact on academic honesty. Large numbers of students have access to QuillBot or ChatGPT to paraphrase large portions of text, which blurs the line between legitimate learning assistance and cheating. Furthermore, there is concern that students might over rely on AI tools, failing to develop critically important cognitive processes central to composing, revising, and editing their writing. Auctioneers must also deal with the difference between AI-created language and the natural communication practices of their community users. Again, AI-written academic content may employ formal rhetorical devices not cognate with Pakistani academic readers and thus lead to stylistic bumbling. Furthermore, the homogenization may result in a lack of use of the localized linguistic features of Pakistani English (Mahboob, 2009) and may lead to linguistic homogeneity and cultural erosion.

Moreover, you can also run into the problem of students who develop unrealistic expectations about AI tools, where they come to see it as an authoritatively "correct" source of English, rather than one helpful resource. Without critical literacy, students will take AI-generated text at face value without considering its cultural biases or its suitability in their local contexts. This tendency may serve to further estrange students from their linguistic self-identity and act to strengthen feelings of linguistic insecurity, particularly for students from non-elite learning backgrounds.

4.4 Ethical Implications

Plagiarism is a huge issue. The distinction between when AI-aided learning is acceptable, and when such usage crosses an ethical boundary, is also not always clear, particularly if organizations have not drawn up guidelines (UNESCO, 2021). Some Pakistani universities are in a grey area and do not have clear policies about AI-generated content even though many in the system might be left bemused after the decision. People frequently struggle to detect AI-assisted writing, and academic honor codes have not yet adapted to the challenge. Furthermore, AI resources may favor the inner-circle English standard, which in turn discriminates Pakistani English; leading to linguistic imperialism (Kachru & Nelson, 2006). In attempting to adhere to these putative global standards students may also begin to marginalize culturally-specific varieties of English, and to experience what is popularly known as linguistic insecurity. The deployment of AI thus shares productive ground with larger postcolonial disputes over language, identity, and power. Without critical consciousness and culturally responsive pedagogy, there is also a danger of AI perpetuating the global linguistic hierarchies and sidelining the vibrant linguistic diversity of World Englishes in Pakistan.

Ethical considerations also include those related to data privacy, as many AI platforms store user data and text input for training. These data practices might not even be fully understood

by Pakistani students; complicating the matter with respect to informed consent and digital ethics in education.

5. Conclusion

Emerging AI applications that are reshaping English language teaching and learning when it comes to university students in Pakistan. While these kinds of tools appear to facilitate improvement to language-learning opportunities as well as access to learning support, it also elicits critical ethical and pedagogical considerations. From a World Englishes perspective, the concern is that AI language models could amplify centralized English norms at the expense of regional varieties, including Pakistani English.

Educators have to be critical when it comes to using A.I. in language classes: Students must be aware of the potential positive and negative aspects of these tools. The need for university AI ethics use guidelines and to teach AI literacy in English language pedagogies is identified. Teachers need to have critical conversations with students about the ways in which AI has a say in what is and isn't a proper way to speak and therefore a proper way to be. and secondly, designing AI models which are dialect-aware could contribute to encourage linguistic diversity and inclusiveness. International partnerships among AI developers, educators and linguists could provide new opportunities for developing a more culturally sensitive language learning technology.

It would be interesting to investigate how students perceive the impact of AI on their linguistic identity by adapting AI tools to be more responsive to the different Englishes in Pakistan and elsewhere. Such complicated dynamics might be studied in classrooms, by observing students, interviewing them, and analyzing the discourse of AI-generated texts. As AI evolves, it is critical that language educators, researchers, and policymakers work together to ensure that its application within English language learning empowers ethical, inclusive, and culturally responsive practices. Addressing those issues would not only benefit Pakistani learners, but would also help to create a more equitable and varied global ELE landscape.

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