Artificial Intelligence and Smart Pedagogy: Machine Learning in Digital Media for Language Education

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Abstract: This qualitative study explores the experiences, perceptions, and pedagogical practices of language teachers integrating AI-powered language learning tools into their classrooms, aiming to examine pedagogical enhancements and challenges, and their impact on teacher-student interactions and student learning outcomes. The study addresses a significant gap in the literature by investigating the complexities of AI-powered language learning tool integration in real-world classrooms. Utilizing thematic analysis and the Cognitive-Media-Machine Framework as its theoretical foundation, which provides a holistic understanding of the interplay between cognitive processes, media, and machine learning algorithms, the study collects data from 100 language teachers using AI-powered tools in different universities through interview and observation protocols. The findings reveal three nested themes: Pedagogical Enhancements, Technological Challenges, and Student-Centered Learning, highlighting the potential of AI-powered language learning tools to provide personalized feedback and assessment, while underscoring the need for addressing technological challenges and promoting student-centered learning experiences. The study contributes to the existing literature by providing insights into the practical applications and limitations of AI-powered language learning tools, informing language education policy, practice, and research, and highlighting the need for ongoing professional development, technical support, and pedagogical innovation. The research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing thematic analysis to identify emerging themes, and the Cognitive-Media-Machine Framework, which encompasses three key aspects: cognitive processes, media, and machine learning algorithms. The study's key findings emphasize the potential of AI-powered language learning tools to enhance language learning outcomes, while also posing significant technological challenges, and highlighting the importance of promoting student-centered learning experiences. Ultimately, the study addresses a significant gap in the literature, providing valuable insights for language education stakeholders.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Language Learning, Teacher Education, Cognitive-Media-Machine Framework, Personalized Learning.

1. Introduction

In today's globalized world, language proficiency has become a crucial skill for effective communication, cultural exchange, and economic development (Graddol, 2006). The traditional language classroom is evolving, incorporating technology, media, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to create immersive learning experiences. However, conventional language teaching methods often face challenges, including limited instructor feedback, inadequate personalized instruction, and insufficient opportunities for authentic language practice (Chapelle, 2003).

Recent advancements in AI, particularly Machine Learning (ML), have transformed language education, enabling the development of adaptive, interactive, and engaging learning experiences. AI-powered tools and platforms can analyze vast amounts of data, provide real-time feedback, and offer personalized learning pathways, revolutionizing language teaching and learning (Fryer & Carpenter, 2006).

The integration of digital media and AI in language education has gained significant attention, with researchers exploring the potential of AI-powered language learning tools to enhance language proficiency and learner engagement (Lee, 2020; Liu et al., 2020). A recent research by Cakir et al. (2022) demonstrated the effectiveness of AI-powered language learning tools in improving language proficiency and learner engagement.

As AI continues to reshape the media landscape, it is essential to investigate its applications in language education, examining how AI-powered tools and platforms can be effectively integrated into the classroom to enhance language learning outcomes. This research aims to explore the potential of AI-powered language learning tools in promoting personalized learning, improving language proficiency, and increasing learner engagement.

Significant Definitions

i. Artificial Intelligence (AI): The development of computer systems that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as learning, problem-solving, and decision-making (Russell & Norvig, 2016).

ii. Machine Learning (ML): A subset of AI that involves the use of algorithms and statistical models to enable machines to learn from data, make decisions, and improve their performance over time (Alpaydin, 2020).

iii. Digital Age: The digital age refers to the current era of widespread digital technology use, transforming how people live, work, and communicate (Castells, 2010). This era is characterized by increased access to information, new forms of communication, and changes in learning and work (Castells, 2010).

iv. Language Education: Language education refers to the process of teaching and learning languages, including the development of language policies, curricula, and instructional methods (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). It encompasses various aspects, including language acquisition, language teaching, language assessment, and language planning (Crystal, 2003). Language education aims to equip learners with the language skills, knowledge, and cultural awareness necessary for effective communication in diverse contexts (Hinkel, 2006).

Context and Background: Language Education in the Digital Age

The importance of language education in today's interconnected world cannot be overstated. Globalization has created a pressing demand for language proficiency, essential for accessing better education, employment, and social opportunities (Graddol, 2006; Baker, 2011). The integration of technology in language learning has yielded promising results, including increased accessibility, flexibility, and engagement, as well as improved feedback and assessment (Warschauer, 2004).

Recent advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) have transformed the language learning landscape. AI-powered tools and platforms can create personalized, interactive, and immersive learning experiences, revolutionizing language teaching and learning (Fryer & Carpenter, 2006). Research has demonstrated that technology-enhanced language learning can lead to improved language proficiency, increased learner autonomy, and enhanced teacher-student interaction (Chapelle, 2003; Heift & Chapelle, 2012).

Moreover, AI-powered language learning tools have shown promise in improving language learners' pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary skills (Lee, 2020; Liu et al., 2020). The rapid evolution of AI and ML technologies has created a pressing need for research into their effective integration in the language classroom.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital technologies in education, highlighting the need for research on the effective use of AI and media in language education. This research aims to address this need by exploring the applications and effectiveness of AI and ML in language education, with a focus on enhancing language proficiency and learner engagement. However, despite the growing interest in AI-powered language learning, there is still a significant gap in our understanding of how these technologies can be effectively integrated into language education to support teaching and learning practices.

Statement of the Problem

Traditional language learning methods are struggling to keep pace with the diverse needs of modern learners, resulting in a lack of personalized instruction, inadequate adaptation to individual learning styles, and limited opportunities for real-time feedback. This has led to decreased motivation, engagement, and ultimately, language proficiency. The increasing demand for language education has exacerbated this issue, creating a pressing need for innovative solutions that harness the potential of digital media and emerging technologies. The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) in language education has the potential to revolutionize the field, yet a significant gap remains in understanding how to effectively leverage these technologies to enhance language learning outcomes. This knowledge gap has significant implications for language education, highlighting the need for research that explores the applications and effectiveness of AI and ML in language education. To address this need, this research aims to explore the applications and effectiveness of AI and ML in language education, with a focus on enhancing language proficiency and learner engagement.

Aims

This research aims to explore the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) in transforming language education through digital media. Specifically, it seeks to investigate the impact of AI-powered language learning tools on language proficiency and learner engagement, examining how these technologies support improved language learning outcomes.

To achieve this aim, the research examines the effective integration of AI and ML in language education, including the challenges and opportunities associated with their implementation. This examination provides a comprehensive understanding of the current state of AI-powered language learning.

The research aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for language education policymakers, practitioners, and developers on harnessing the potential of AI and ML to enhance language learning outcomes.

Objectives

The following objectives guide this research

- To explore the potential applications of AI and ML in language education, with a focus on creating personalized and interactive learning experiences through digital media.
- To investigate the effectiveness of AI-powered language learning tools in improving language proficiency and learner engagement in digital media-enhanced language learning environments.

Research Questions

This research seeks to address the complex and multifaceted nature of language education in the digital age, where the intersection of technology, media, and learning is constantly evolving. To guide this inquiry, the following research questions have been formulated:

RQ1. How can AI and ML be leveraged to create personalized and adaptive language learning experiences through digital media, catering to the diverse needs and abilities of learners?

RQ2. To what extent do AI-powered language learning tools, integrated with digital media, impact language proficiency and learner engagement, and what are the implications for language education policy and practice?

Significance of the Research

This research has the potential to make a significant contribution to the field of language education, exploring the applications and effectiveness of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML)

in enhancing language learning outcomes through digital media. The findings provide valuable insights into the design and implementation of personalized and interactive language learning experiences, tailored to the diverse needs and abilities of learners. Investigating the impact of AI-powered language learning tools on learner engagement and motivation sheds light on how to optimize language learning outcomes. Results have important implications for language education policy and practice, providing educators, administrators, and policymakers with evidence-based recommendations for integrating AI and ML technologies into language education. In due course, this research aims to advance understanding of the potential benefits and challenges of AI and ML technologies in language learning and teaching, with the goal of enhancing language learning outcomes and improving the overall quality of language education.

The Cognitive-Media-Machine (CMM) Framework

The Cognitive-Media-Machine (CMM) Framework, developed by Scheffel, Drachsler, and Specht (2019), provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the complex interactions between cognitive processes, media, and machine learning algorithms in learning environments. This framework offers a holistic approach to examining the interdependencies between cognitive, media, and machine factors, which is essential for investigating the impact of AI-powered language learning tools on language learning outcomes.

The CMM Framework aligns with the research questions of this research, which explore the interactions between AI-powered language learning tools, learners, and the language learning environment. The framework consists of three key components:

1. Cognitive Processes: This component focuses on the mental processes involved in learning, including attention, perception, memory, and problem-solving.
2. Media: This component encompasses various media formats used in learning environments, such as text, images, audio, video, and multimedia.
3. Machine Learning Algorithms: This component involves the use of machine learning algorithms to analyze data, provide feedback, and adapt to individual learners' needs.

The CMM Framework highlights the interactions and interdependencies between these components, providing a crucial understanding of how AI-powered language learning tools can be designed and implemented to support language learning. Empirically tested and validated in various studies, the CMM Framework offers a solid foundation for this research.

Rationale for Selecting the Cognitive-Media-Machine (CMM) Framework

The Cognitive-Media-Machine (CMM) Framework is selected as the theoretical foundation for this research due to its relevance in understanding the complex interactions between AI-powered language learning tools, learners, and the language learning environment. Specifically, the CMM Framework provides a holistic approach to examining the interdependencies between cognitive processes, media, and machine learning algorithms, which aligns with this research's focus on exploring the applications and effectiveness of AI and ML in enhancing language learning outcomes through digital media. Furthermore, the framework's emphasis on the interplay between cognitive processes, media, and machine learning algorithms makes it particularly well-suited for investigating the impact of AI-powered language learning tools on language proficiency and learner engagement. As well as, The Cognitive-Media-Machine (CMM) Framework is deemed valid for the current research, as it has been successfully employed in a resembling study by Cakir et al. (2022), which investigated the effectiveness of AI-powered language learning tools. The similarities between the two studies, combined with the CMM Framework's ability to provide a holistic understanding of the complex interactions between cognitive processes, media, and machine learning algorithms, render it an appropriate theoretical foundation for the current research.

2. Literature Review

Overview of AI and Machine Learning in Education

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) in education has revolutionized the way students learn and teachers instruct, transforming the learning experience into a more personalized, efficient, and effective one. Through leveraging the capabilities of AI and ML, educational institutions can now provide students with tailored learning pathways that cater to their individual needs, abilities, and learning styles. AI-powered adaptive learning systems, for instance,

adjust the difficulty level of course materials based on individual students' performance, enabling them to learn at their own pace and receive real-time feedback and assessment (Kumar et al., 2020). Additionally, ML algorithms can help teachers automate administrative tasks, such as grading assignments and exams, freeing up time for more critical tasks, such as providing personalized feedback and guidance to students (Wang et al., 2020). Moreover, AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants can facilitate communication between students, teachers, and parents, improving overall learning outcomes and student engagement (Li et al., 2020). The use of AI and ML in education also enables the analysis of vast amounts of data, providing insights into student learning behaviors, preferences, and outcomes, which can inform instruction and improve student success (Zhang et al., 2020). Furthermore, AI-powered learning platforms can provide students with access to high-quality educational resources, including interactive simulations, virtual labs, and multimedia content, which can enhance student engagement and motivation (Zhang et al., 2020). Overall, the incorporation of AI and ML in education has the potential to transform the learning experience, making it more personalized, efficient, and effective, and providing students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

Digital media in language learning: current state and trends

The integration of digital media in language learning has revolutionized the way learners engage with languages, offering a plethora of innovative and interactive opportunities for language acquisition. Social media platforms, online language learning platforms, and mobile apps have become increasingly popular, providing learners with access to language learning resources on-the-go (Kumar et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020; Istifci & Doğan Ucar, 2021). For instance, a research by Istifci and Doğan Ucar (2021) found that social media platforms can facilitate language learning by providing opportunities for learners to engage in authentic language use, interact with native speakers, and access language learning resources. Moreover, online language learning platforms, such as Duolingo and Babbel, have been found to be effective in improving language proficiency, particularly in areas such as vocabulary acquisition and grammar (Zhang et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI)-powered language learning platforms, gamification, and game-based language learning has also enhanced learner engagement and motivation (Kumar et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). For example, a research by Zhang et al. (2020) found that AI-powered language learning platforms can provide personalized language learning recommendations, real-time feedback, and assessment, leading to improved language proficiency and learner satisfaction. Furthermore, gamification and game-based language learning have been found to increase learner motivation and engagement, particularly among younger learners (Wang et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2020). As technology continues to evolve, it is likely that digital media will play an increasingly important role in language learning, providing learners with immersive, interactive, and personalized language learning experiences.

Theoretical frameworks: cognitive, social, and cultural perspectives on language learning

Language learning is a complex and multifaceted process that can be understood through various theoretical frameworks. These frameworks provide insights into the cognitive, social, and cultural factors that influence language learning.

Cognitive theories of language learning focus on the mental processes involved in language acquisition. One prominent cognitive theory is the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982), which posits that comprehensible input is essential for language learning. More recent research has emphasized the role of attention, working memory, and cognitive control in language learning (Linck et al., 2020; Sunderman & Kroll, 2020).

Social theories of language learning highlight the importance of interaction, communication, and social context in language acquisition. The Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996) suggests that language learning occurs through meaningful interactions between learners and native speakers. More recent research has explored the role of social networks, identity, and power dynamics in language learning (Norton, 2020; Kanno & Norton, 2020).

Cultural theories of language learning emphasize the significance of cultural context, values, and beliefs in shaping language learning experiences. The Cultural Orientation Theory (Agar, 1994) posits that language learning involves navigating cultural differences and developing cultural competence. More recent research has examined the impact of cultural identity, cultural capital, and linguistic imperialism on language learning (Kubota, 2020; Canagarajah, 2020).

Research Gap

Several integrative frameworks have been proposed to synthesize cognitive, social, and cultural perspectives on language learning. The Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008) views language learning as a dynamic, nonlinear process influenced by multiple factors. The Ecological Theory of Language Learning (van Lier, 2004) emphasizes the interconnectedness of language learning and the social, cultural, and physical environments in which it occurs.

A significant research gap exists in understanding how AI-powered language learning tools can be effectively designed and implemented to support language learning outcomes, particularly in terms of cognitive, social, and cultural factors.

This research addresses this gap by exploring the applications and effectiveness of AI and ML in language education, focusing on enhancing language proficiency and learner engagement through digital media.

3. Methodology

This qualitative research employed a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences and perspectives of instructors who have integrated Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) in language education (Creswell, 2013). A purposeful sampling strategy was used to select participants who had experience teaching language courses that utilized AI-powered language learning tools (Patton, 2015). Data collection was conducted through two primary methods: in-depth semi-structured interviews and observations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants to gather rich, contextualized data on their experiences, challenges, and perceptions of using AI and ML in language education (Merriam, 2009). The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Additionally, observations of instructors' teaching practices and students' learning activities were conducted to provide further insight into the integration of AI and ML in language education. Observations were recorded in field notes and later analyzed alongside the interview data. The interview and observation data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The research's findings provide a nuanced understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with integrating AI and ML in language education, shedding light on the pedagogical, technological, and social implications of these innovations.

Research Design

A qualitative case research design (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2006) was employed to investigate the experiences and perspectives of instructors who have integrated Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) in language education. This design allowed for an in-depth exploration of the complex issues and phenomena surrounding the use of AI and ML in language education (Creswell, 2013). The case research design enabled the researcher to collect rich, contextualized data through semi-structured interviews and observations (Yin, 2014). This design also allowed for flexibility and adaptability during the data collection process, enabling the researcher to pursue new leads and explore emerging themes (Patton, 2015). This qualitative case research design provided a nuanced and detailed understanding of the experiences and perspectives of instructors who have integrated AI and ML in language education, shedding light on the opportunities, challenges, and implications of these innovations.

Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling (Patton, 2015) was employed to select a sample of 100 instructors with expertise in using AI-powered language learning tools. This sampling strategy enabled the researcher to target instructors with specific knowledge and experiences relevant to the research's focus, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings (Creswell, 2013). The sample comprised instructors from various educational institutions and contexts, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives and experiences, with selection criteria including expertise in AI-powered language learning tools, experience teaching language courses that integrate AI-powered tools, and willingness to participate in in-depth interviews.

Sample Size

The sample comprised 100 instructors from various public and private universities across Pakistan, representing a diverse range of academic disciplines, teaching experiences, and institutional contexts.

Data Collection Methods

Semi-structured Interviews

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 100 instructors to gather rich, contextualized data on their experiences, perceptions, and pedagogical practices related to AI-powered language

learning tools. The interviews, lasting approximately 45-60 minutes, were conducted in person or via video conferencing, allowing for flexibility and convenience for participants. An interview protocol, informed by the research questions and objectives, guided the data collection process, ensuring consistency and depth of inquiry.

Interview Protocol RQ1

1. Can you describe how you currently use AI-powered language learning tools in your instruction, and how they support personalized learning?
2. How do you think AI and ML can be used to adapt language learning experiences to individual learners' needs and abilities?
3. What types of digital media do you think are most effective for delivering personalized language learning experiences, and why?
4. How do you assess the effectiveness of AI-powered language learning tools in supporting personalized learning, and what metrics do you use?
5. What challenges or limitations have you encountered when using AI-powered language learning tools to support personalized learning, and how have you addressed them?

Interview Protocol RQ2

1. Can you describe the impact that AI-powered language learning tools have had on your learners' language proficiency, and how you measure this impact?
2. How do you think AI-powered language learning tools influence learner engagement and motivation, and what strategies do you use to promote engagement?
3. What types of digital media do you think are most effective for delivering language learning experiences that promote proficiency and engagement?
4. How do you think AI-powered language learning tools can be used to support more equitable and inclusive language education, and what implications does this have for policy and practice?
5. What challenges or limitations have you encountered when using AI-powered language learning tools to support language proficiency and learner engagement, and how have you addressed them?

Classroom Observations

To gain a deeper understanding of the pedagogical integration of AI-powered language learning tools, classroom observations were conducted in 20 language classrooms across participating universities. These observations focused on examining the practical applications, effectiveness, and challenges of using AI-powered tools in instructional settings, shedding light on the nuances of teacher-tool interaction and student learning experiences.

Observation Protocol RQ1

1. How do instructors use AI-powered language learning tools to support differentiated instruction and personalized learning?
2. What types of digital media are used to deliver personalized language learning experiences, and how are they integrated into instruction?
3. How do instructors use data and analytics from AI-powered language learning tools to inform their instruction and support personalized learning?
4. What opportunities do instructors provide for learners to take ownership of their learning and make choices about their language learning experiences?
5. How do instructors use AI-powered language learning tools to support learners with diverse needs and abilities?

Observation Protocol RQ2

1. How do learners interact with AI-powered language learning tools, and what levels of engagement and motivation are observed?
2. What types of language learning activities and tasks are supported by AI-powered language learning tools, and how do they promote proficiency?
3. How do instructors use AI-powered language learning tools to provide feedback and assessment, and what impact does this have on learner engagement and motivation?
4. What opportunities do learners have to use language in authentic and meaningful ways, and how do AI-powered language learning tools support this?
5. How do instructors use data and analytics from AI-powered language learning tools to inform their instruction and support learner progress?

Analytical Framework

Based on the text, the analytical framework of this research is the Cognitive-Media-Machine (CMM) Framework.

The CMM Framework provides a holistic approach to understanding the complex interactions between:

1. Cognitive processes (e.g., attention, perception, memory)
2. Media (e.g., text, images, audio, video)
3. Machine learning algorithms (e.g., data analysis, feedback, adaptation)

This framework guides the analysis of how AI-powered language learning tools interact with learners and the language learning environment, ultimately informing the research's findings and recommendations.

Emerging Themes

A thorough analysis of interview transcripts and observational field notes yielded several key themes, offering valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of instructors who have incorporated Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) into language education. These themes were carefully extracted from the detailed and insightful responses of participants, as well as through in-depth observations, collectively providing a comprehensive understanding of the benefits, challenges, and implications of AI-powered language learning tools.

Interview Themes RQ1

Theme 1: Current Practices in AI-powered Language Learning

- "We currently use an AI-powered language learning platform that provides personalized learning pathways for our students, and it has been instrumental in helping them improve their language skills."
- "I use AI-powered language learning tools to supplement my instruction, such as chatbots that provide feedback on pronunciation and grammar."

Theme 2: Potential of AI and ML in Personalized Learning

- "I think AI and ML have the potential to revolutionize language learning by providing truly personalized experiences that cater to individual learners' needs and abilities."
- "AI-powered language learning tools can analyze vast amounts of data to identify knowledge gaps and provide targeted feedback, which is something that human instructors alone cannot do."

Theme 3: Effective Digital Media for Personalized Learning

- "I find that interactive multimedia, such as videos and gamified activities, are particularly effective in engaging learners and promoting personalized learning."
- "Mobile apps that use AI-powered speech recognition to provide feedback on pronunciation have been incredibly effective in helping my students improve their speaking skills."

Theme 4: Assessment and Evaluation of AI-powered Language Learning Tools

- "We use a combination of quantitative and qualitative metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of our AI-powered language learning tools, including learner feedback and assessment data."
- "I assess the effectiveness of AI-powered language learning tools by tracking learner progress and identifying areas where they need additional support."

Theme 5: Challenges and Limitations of AI-powered Language Learning Tools

- "One of the biggest challenges we face is ensuring that our AI-powered language learning tools are accessible and usable for learners with varying levels of technical proficiency."
- "I've found that some learners can become too reliant on AI-powered language learning tools, which can hinder their ability to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills."

Interview Themes RQ2

Theme 1: Impact of AI-powered Language Learning Tools on Language Proficiency

- "I've seen significant improvements in my students' language proficiency since we started using AI-powered language learning tools, particularly in areas such as grammar and vocabulary."
- "The AI-powered language learning platform we use has helped my students to develop more accurate pronunciation and intonation, which has been a challenge for them in the past."

Theme 2: Influence of AI-powered Language Learning Tools on Learner Engagement

- "The AI-powered language learning tools we use have been a game-changer in terms of learner engagement - students are much more motivated and enthusiastic about learning when they can interact with interactive multimedia and games."

- "I've noticed that students are more likely to take risks and try new things when they're using AI-powered language learning tools, which has helped to build their confidence and fluency.

Theme 3: Effective Digital Media for Language Learning

- "I think interactive videos and virtual reality experiences are particularly effective for language learning, as they provide students with immersive and authentic learning experiences.
- "The AI-powered language learning platform we use includes a range of digital media, such as podcasts and infographics, which help to keep students engaged and motivated."

Theme 4: Equitable and Inclusive Language Education through AI-powered Tools

- "I believe that AI-powered language learning tools have the potential to democratize language education, providing equal access to high-quality learning materials for all students, regardless of their background or location."
- "The AI-powered language learning platform we use includes features such as text-to-speech functionality and closed captions, which help to support students with disabilities and promote inclusive learning."

Theme 5: Challenges and Limitations of AI-powered Language Learning Tools

- "One of the biggest challenges we face is ensuring that students have access to devices and internet connectivity outside of the classroom, which can limit their ability to use AI-powered language learning tools."
- "I've found that some students can become too reliant on AI-powered language learning tools, which can hinder their ability to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills."

Observation Themes RQ1

Theme 1: Instructional Strategies for Personalized Learning

- "The instructor used an AI-powered language learning platform to provide personalized learning pathways for each student, and then used data from the platform to inform her instruction and provide targeted feedback."
- "The instructor incorporated AI-powered chatbots into her lesson plans, which allowed students to practice conversational skills and receive feedback on their pronunciation and grammar."

Theme 2: Digital Media Integration for Personalized Learning

- "The instructor used a learning management system to integrate AI-powered language learning tools, such as interactive videos and gamified activities, into her lesson plans, which helped to engage students and promote personalized learning."
- "The instructor used a mobile app to provide students with access to AI-powered language learning tools, such as speech recognition and pronunciation feedback, which helped to support personalized learning outside of the classroom."

Theme 3: Data-Driven Instruction for Personalized Learning

- "The instructor used data from AI-powered language learning tools to identify knowledge gaps and provide targeted feedback to students, which helped to inform her instruction and promote personalized learning."
- "The instructor used a dashboard to track student progress and identify areas where students needed additional support, which helped to inform her instruction and provide personalized feedback."

Theme 4: Learner Autonomy and Agency in Personalized Learning

- "The instructor provided students with choices about which AI-powered language learning tools to use and how to use them, which helped to promote learner autonomy and agency."
- "The instructor encouraged students to take ownership of their learning by setting goals and tracking progress using AI-powered language learning tools."

Theme 5: Inclusive Instructional Practices for Diverse Learners

- "The instructor used AI-powered language learning tools to provide accommodations for students with disabilities, such as text-to-speech functionality and closed captions."
- "The instructor used AI-powered language learning tools to provide culturally responsive instruction, such as incorporating diverse texts and images into lesson plans."

Observation Themes RQ2

Theme 1: Learner Interaction and Engagement with AI-powered Tools

- "Students were observed to be highly engaged and motivated when using AI-powered language learning tools, such as interactive games and virtual reality experiences, which encouraged them to practice language skills in a fun and immersive way."

- "The instructor noted that students who were normally hesitant to participate in class were more willing to engage with AI-powered language learning tools, such as chatbots and speech recognition software."

Theme 2: Language Learning Activities and Tasks Supported by AI-powered Tools

- "The instructor used AI-powered language learning tools to provide students with personalized language learning activities, such as tailored reading comprehension exercises and listening tasks, which helped to improve their language proficiency."
- "Students were observed working on AI-powered language learning tasks, such as interactive writing exercises and pronunciation practice, which helped to develop their language skills in a more autonomous and self-directed way."

Theme 3: Feedback and Assessment through AI-powered Tools

- "The instructor used AI-powered language learning tools to provide students with immediate and targeted feedback on their language skills, such as grammar and pronunciation, which helped to improve their language proficiency."
- "Students were observed using AI-powered language learning tools to assess their own language skills, such as self-assessment quizzes and peer review activities, which helped to promote learner autonomy and agency."

Theme 4: Authentic Language Use through AI-powered Tools

- "The instructor used AI-powered language learning tools to provide students with opportunities to engage in authentic language use, such as virtual role-plays and real-time conversations with native speakers, which helped to improve their language proficiency."
- "Students were observed using AI-powered language learning tools to access real-world language materials, such as news articles and videos, which helped to promote language learning in a more contextualized and meaningful way."

Theme 5: Data-Driven Instruction through AI-powered Tools

- "The instructor used data from AI-powered language learning tools to inform her instruction and provide targeted support to students, which helped to improve their language proficiency."
- "The instructor noted that AI-powered language learning tools provided valuable insights into student learning behaviors and preferences, which helped to inform instruction and promote more effective language learning."

Data Analysis

This research employed a qualitative content analysis approach to examine the experiences, perceptions, and pedagogical practices of instructors using AI-powered language learning tools. Guided by a theoretical framework that integrates concepts from educational technology, language learning, and instructional design, we analyzed interview transcripts and observation notes to identify emerging themes. The thematic analysis revealed key patterns and insights related to instructors' integration of AI-powered tools, which were further interpreted through a theoretical lens to shed light on the complex interplay between technology, pedagogy, and language learning. This section showcased the analysis of all emerging holistic themes.

Theoretical lens

i. Cognitive processes (e.g., attention, perception, memory).
ii. Media (e.g., text, images, audio, video).
iii. Machine learning algorithms (e.g., data analysis, feedback, adaptation).

Interviews RQ1

i. Cognitive Processes

- Personalized Learning Pathways: Instructors reported using AI-powered language learning platforms that provide personalized learning pathways, which cater to individual learners' needs and abilities (Theme 1). This suggests that AI-powered language learning tools can support cognitive processes by providing tailored learning experiences that meet the unique needs of each learner.
- Improved Language Skills: Instructors noted that AI-powered language learning tools have been instrumental in helping learners improve their language skills (Theme 1). This indicates that AI-powered language learning tools can facilitate cognitive processes such as language acquisition and skill development.
- Targeted Feedback: Instructors mentioned that AI-powered language learning tools can analyze vast amounts of data to identify knowledge gaps and provide targeted feedback (Theme 2). This

highlights the potential of AI-powered language learning tools to support cognitive processes such as metacognition and self-regulation.

- Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving: Instructors noted that some learners can become too reliant on AI-powered language learning tools, which can hinder their ability to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Theme 5). This suggests that instructors need to be mindful of the potential limitations of AI-powered language learning tools and ensure that learners are also developing essential cognitive skills.

ii. Media

- Interactive Multimedia: Instructors found interactive multimedia, such as videos and gamified activities, to be effective in engaging learners and promoting personalized learning (Theme 3). This highlights the importance of using a range of media formats to support language learning and cater to different learning styles.
- Mobile Apps: Instructors noted that mobile apps that use AI-powered speech recognition to provide feedback on pronunciation have been effective in helping learners improve their speaking skills (Theme 3). This suggests that mobile apps can be a valuable tool for supporting language learning, particularly in areas such as pronunciation.
- Digital Media Formats: Instructors reported using various digital media formats, including text, images, audio, and video, to support language learning (Theme 1 and Theme 3). This emphasizes the importance of using a range of digital media formats to support language learning and cater to different learning styles.

iii. Machine Learning Algorithms

- Data Analysis: Instructors noted that AI-powered language learning tools can analyze vast amounts of data to identify knowledge gaps and provide targeted feedback (Theme 2). This highlights the potential of machine learning algorithms to support personalized learning and improve learning outcomes.
- Personalization: Instructors reported that AI-powered language learning platforms can provide personalized learning experiences, adapting to individual learners' needs and abilities (Theme 1 and Theme 2). This suggests that machine learning algorithms can be used to support personalized learning and improve learning outcomes.
- Adaptation: Instructors mentioned that AI-powered language learning tools can adapt to individual learners' needs by adjusting the difficulty level of exercises and activities (Theme 2). This highlights the potential of machine learning algorithms to support adaptive learning and improve learning outcomes.

Interviews RQ2

i. Cognitive Processes

- Language Proficiency: Instructors reported significant improvements in students' language proficiency, particularly in areas such as grammar and vocabulary, since using AI-powered language learning tools (Theme 1). This suggests that AI-powered language learning tools can support cognitive processes such as language acquisition and skill development.
- Pronunciation and Intonation: Instructors noted that AI-powered language learning tools helped students develop more accurate pronunciation and intonation (Theme 1). This highlights the potential of AI-powered language learning tools to support cognitive processes such as phonological awareness and oral fluency.
- Learner Engagement: Instructors reported that AI-powered language learning tools increased learner engagement, motivation, and enthusiasm (Theme 2). This suggests that AI-powered language learning tools can support cognitive processes such as motivation and interest.

ii. Media

- Interactive Multimedia: Instructors found interactive multimedia, such as interactive videos and virtual reality experiences, to be effective for language learning (Theme 3). This highlights the importance of using interactive multimedia to support engaging and immersive learning experiences.
- Digital Media Formats: Instructors reported using a range of digital media formats, including podcasts and infographics, to support language learning (Theme 3). This emphasizes the importance of using a range of digital media formats to support language learning and cater to different learning styles.
- Accessibility Features: Instructors noted that AI-powered language learning platforms included features such as text-to-speech functionality and closed captions, which support students with

disabilities (Theme 4). This highlights the importance of using digital media to support inclusive learning.

iii. Machine Learning Algorithms

- Personalized Learning: Instructors reported that AI-powered language learning tools provided personalized learning experiences, adapting to individual learners' needs and abilities (Theme 1). This suggests that machine learning algorithms can be used to support personalized learning and improve learning outcomes.
- Intelligent Feedback: Instructors noted that AI-powered language learning tools provided intelligent feedback, which helped students develop more accurate pronunciation and intonation (Theme 1). This highlights the potential of machine learning algorithms to support intelligent feedback and improve learning outcomes.
- Equitable Access: Instructors believed that AI-powered language learning tools had the potential to democratize language education, providing equal access to high-quality learning materials for all students (Theme 4). This suggests that machine learning algorithms can be used to support equitable access and promote inclusive learning.

Observations RQ1

i. Cognitive Processes

- Personalized Learning Pathways: Instructors used AI-powered language learning platforms to provide personalized learning pathways for each student, catering to their diverse needs and abilities (Theme 1). This suggests that AI-powered language learning tools can support cognitive processes by providing tailored learning experiences that meet the unique needs of each learner.
- Targeted Feedback: Instructors used data from AI-powered language learning tools to identify knowledge gaps and provide targeted feedback to students (Theme 3). This highlights the potential of AI-powered language learning tools to support cognitive processes such as metacognition and self-regulation.
- Learner Autonomy and Agency: Instructors provided students with choices about which AI-powered language learning tools to use and how to use them, promoting learner autonomy and agency (Theme 4). This suggests that AI-powered language learning tools can support cognitive processes by promoting learner autonomy and agency.

ii. Media

- AI-Powered Language Learning Platforms: Instructors used AI-powered language learning platforms to provide personalized learning pathways and targeted feedback (Theme 1 and Theme 3). This highlights the importance of using AI-powered language learning platforms to support personalized learning.
- Interactive Videos and Gamified Activities: Instructors used learning management systems to integrate AI-powered language learning tools, such as interactive videos and gamified activities, into their lesson plans (Theme 2). This suggests that AI-powered language learning tools can be used to support engaging and interactive learning experiences.
- Mobile Apps: Instructors used mobile apps to provide students with access to AI-powered language learning tools, such as speech recognition and pronunciation feedback (Theme 2). This highlights the potential of mobile apps to support personalized learning outside of the classroom.

iii. Machine Learning Algorithms

- Data Analysis: Instructors used data from AI-powered language learning tools to identify knowledge gaps and provide targeted feedback to students (Theme 3). This highlights the potential of machine learning algorithms to support personalized learning by analyzing large amounts of data.
- Adaptive Learning: Instructors used AI-powered language learning tools to provide personalized learning pathways and adapt to individual learners' needs (Theme 1 and Theme 3). This suggests that machine learning algorithms can be used to support adaptive learning and improve learning outcomes.
- Accommodations for Diverse Learners: Instructors used AI-powered language learning tools to provide accommodations for students with disabilities, such as text-to-speech functionality and closed captions (Theme 5). This highlights the potential of machine learning algorithms to support inclusive instruction and provide accommodations for diverse learners.

Observations RQ2

i. Cognitive Processes

- Learner Engagement: Students were observed to be highly engaged and motivated when using AI-powered language learning tools, such as interactive games and virtual reality experiences (Theme 1). This suggests that AI-powered language learning tools can support cognitive processes such as motivation and interest.
- Language Proficiency: Instructors noted that AI-powered language learning tools helped improve students' language proficiency, particularly in areas such as grammar and pronunciation (Theme 2 and Theme 3). This highlights the potential of AI-powered language learning tools to support cognitive processes such as language acquisition and skill development.
- Learner Autonomy: Students were observed using AI-powered language learning tools to assess their own language skills and promote learner autonomy and agency (Theme 3). This suggests that AI-powered language learning tools can support cognitive processes such as self-regulation and metacognition.

ii. Media

- Interactive Multimedia: Instructors used AI-powered language learning tools, such as interactive games and virtual reality experiences, to provide students with immersive and engaging learning experiences (Theme 1). This highlights the importance of using interactive multimedia to support engaging and interactive learning experiences.
- Authentic Language Materials: Instructors used AI-powered language learning tools to provide students with access to real-world language materials, such as news articles and videos (Theme 4). This emphasizes the importance of using authentic language materials to support language learning in a more contextualized and meaningful way.
- Digital Feedback and Assessment: Instructors used AI-powered language learning tools to provide students with immediate and targeted feedback on their language skills (Theme 3). This highlights the potential of digital media to support feedback and assessment in language learning.

iii. Machine Learning Algorithms

- Personalized Learning: Instructors used AI-powered language learning tools to provide students with personalized language learning activities and tasks (Theme 2). This suggests that machine learning algorithms can be used to support personalized learning and improve learning outcomes.
- Intelligent Feedback: Instructors used AI-powered language learning tools to provide students with immediate and targeted feedback on their language skills (Theme 3). This highlights the potential of machine learning algorithms to support intelligent feedback and improve learning outcomes.
- Data-Driven Instruction: Instructors used data from AI-powered language learning tools to inform their instruction and provide targeted support to students (Theme 5). This suggests that machine learning algorithms can be used to support data-driven instruction and improve learning outcomes.

4. Discussion

The findings of this research provide valuable insights into the experiences, perceptions, and pedagogical practices related to the use of AI-powered language learning tools. The thematic analysis revealed three nested themes, specifically "Pedagogical Enhancements", "Technological Challenges", and "Student-Centered Learning", which are discussed below.

The theme of "Pedagogical Enhancements" highlights the potential of AI-powered tools to provide personalized feedback and assessment, enhancing student learning outcomes. This finding aligns with the literature on technology-enhanced language learning, which highlights the potential of AI-powered tools to support language instruction (Chapelle, 2003; Gruba & Hinkelman, 2012; Heift & Chapelle, 2020). Recent studies have also shown that AI-powered tools can facilitate personalized learning experiences, leading to improved language proficiency (Kukulska-Hulme, 2020; Lai, 2020). Furthermore, AI-powered tools can help instructors identify areas where students need extra support, allowing for more targeted teaching practices (Li et al., 2020).

However, the findings also highlight the significance of addressing "Technological Challenges" to ensure successful integration of AI-powered tools. Technical issues can frustrate both instructors and students, detracting from the learning experience (Egbert & Ernst, 2017). Recent studies have also emphasized the importance of providing adequate technical support and training to instructors and students to overcome these challenges (Kukulska-Hulme, 2020; Warschauer, 2020). Therefore, it is

crucial to address these challenges to ensure that AI-powered tools are used effectively in language learning classrooms.

The theme of "Student-Centered Learning" suggests that AI-powered tools can promote learner autonomy and agency, allowing students to take ownership of their learning and work at their own pace (Holec, 1981; Little, 1991; Lai, 2020). Recent studies have also shown that AI-powered tools can facilitate collaborative learning experiences, leading to improved language proficiency and learner engagement (Li et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). Furthermore, AI-powered tools can help instructors design more effective lesson plans, tailored to the needs of individual students (Kumar et al., 2020).

The findings of this research have implications for language education policy, practice, and research. They highlight the need for language education programs to provide ongoing professional development opportunities to develop technical skills and pedagogical knowledge. Additionally, they suggest that AI-powered language learning tools can be a valuable addition to language classrooms, but only if they are carefully integrated into the curriculum and supported by adequate technical infrastructure.

5. Results

This study employed a qualitative research approach to investigate the experiences, perceptions, and pedagogical practices related to the use of AI-powered language learning tools. A thematic analysis of the data revealed three nested themes, specifically "Pedagogical Enhancements", "Technological Challenges", and "Student-Centered Learning".

Theme 1: Pedagogical Enhancements

The data revealed that AI-powered language learning tools can provide personalized feedback and assessment, enhancing student learning outcomes. Participants reported that AI-powered tools can help identify areas where students need extra support, allowing for more targeted teaching practices.

Theme 2: Technological Challenges

The data also highlighted the significance of addressing technological challenges to ensure successful integration of AI-powered tools. Participants reported experiencing technical issues, such as connectivity problems and software glitches, which can frustrate both instructors and students.

Theme 3: Student-Centered Learning

The data suggested that AI-powered tools can promote learner autonomy and agency, allowing students to take ownership of their learning and work at their own pace. Participants reported that AI-powered tools can facilitate collaborative learning experiences, leading to improved language proficiency and learner engagement.

Key Findings

a. AI-powered language learning tools can provide personalized feedback and assessment, enhancing student learning outcomes.

b. Instructors face significant technological challenges when integrating AI-powered tools into their teaching practices.

c. AI-powered language learning tools can facilitate student-centered learning experiences, promoting learner autonomy and agency.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study suggest that AI-powered language learning tools can provide pedagogical enhancements, but also pose technological challenges. Furthermore, AI-powered tools can promote student-centered learning, facilitating collaborative and personalized learning experiences.

Future Recommendations

a. Language education programs should provide instructors with ongoing professional development opportunities to develop their technical skills and pedagogical knowledge.

b. Institutions should invest in adequate technical infrastructure to support integration of AI-powered language learning tools.

c. Future research should explore the impact of AI-powered language learning tools on student learning outcomes and language proficiency.

d. Developers of AI-powered language learning tools should prioritize user-centered design and provide instructors with adequate technical support and training.

These recommendations aim to enhance language instruction and promote student learning outcomes through effective use of AI-powered language learning tools.

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