AI DEPENDENCY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract: This article explores the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in modern language learning and highlights both its potential benefits and challenges. The study examines how AI-based tools, such as intelligent tutoring systems, adaptive learning platforms, and machine translation services, are reshaping traditional approaches to language acquisition. Special attention is given to the concept of AI dependency, where learners may overly rely on technology instead of developing autonomous linguistic and cognitive skills. The research emphasizes the balance between human-centered learning and AI support, suggesting strategies to use AI as a facilitator rather than a substitute for independent practice. The findings underline the importance of critical thinking, self-regulation, and pedagogical design in preventing over-dependence while maximizing AI's advantages in language learning.

Introduction. The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies has significantly transformed the landscape of education, particularly in the field of language learning. With the emergence of intelligent tutoring systems, adaptive platforms, chatbots, and machine translation tools, learners now have unprecedented access to personalized support, instant feedback, and a wide range of resources. These developments have made language acquisition more interactive, efficient, and accessible to students worldwide, breaking down barriers related to time, geography, and even proficiency levels.

However, alongside these advantages, a new challenge has emerged — the phenomenon of AI dependency. While AI can enhance vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation practice, and grammar correction, excessive reliance on such tools may limit learners' ability to develop independent problem-solving skills, critical

thinking, and authentic communication abilities. For instance, students who frequently depend on AI-based translation tools may experience slower progress in mastering target language structures and cultural nuances.

The integration of AI into language education also raises important pedagogical and ethical questions. Educators must carefully design instructional strategies that balance the supportive role of AI with the need for learner autonomy. Similarly, students need to be guided toward using AI as a facilitator of learning rather than a substitute for effort and practice. Striking this balance ensures that technology empowers learners without diminishing their active engagement and self-directed learning capabilities.

Therefore, studying AI dependency in language learning is of growing importance. By analyzing its potential risks and opportunities, educators, policymakers, and learners themselves can adopt effective practices that maximize the benefits of AI while minimizing its drawbacks. This article aims to investigate the extent of AI dependency, its impact on learner autonomy, and possible solutions for fostering sustainable and balanced integration of AI in language education. The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence has opened new horizons in the field of education, particularly in language learning. AI-powered applications such as intelligent tutoring systems, adaptive platforms, and machine translation tools are increasingly being integrated into classrooms and self-study routines. These technologies provide immediate feedback, customized learning paths, and interactive experiences that were once unimaginable. As a result, learners today have access to an unprecedented level of support that can accelerate their progress and enhance motivation.

Despite these promising opportunities, the rise of AI has also brought forth important questions about learner autonomy and critical engagement. Language acquisition is not only a process of memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary but also an active practice of problem-solving, self-regulation, and meaningful communication. When students rely too heavily on AI, they risk neglecting these essential human-centered aspects of learning. This phenomenon, often described as AI dependency, has become a growing concern among educators and researchers, as it may hinder long-term language development.

Another dimension of this issue is the psychological impact of technology on learners. While AI tools can boost confidence by reducing fear of making mistakes, they may also create a false sense of mastery. Learners might achieve short-term gains but struggle to apply their knowledge independently in real-world situations. Furthermore, the digital divide and unequal access to advanced

AI tools raise issues of fairness, as not all learners benefit equally from these innovations.

In this context, examining AI dependency in language learning becomes essential. Understanding how students use AI, the extent to which it supports or undermines their skills, and the pedagogical strategies needed to balance its use are critical for shaping the future of education. This study seeks to contribute to this discussion by analyzing the role of AI in language acquisition, highlighting both its potential benefits and its risks. By doing so, it aims to provide recommendations for educators and learners on how to harness AI responsibly while preserving the autonomy and creativity that lie at the heart of successful language learning.

Literature review. The increasing integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into language education has prompted a wide range of research that highlights both the transformative potential of these technologies and the risks associated with their overuse. Scholars have examined how AI-powered systems can accelerate learning processes, personalize instruction, and increase learner motivation, while also cautioning against the dangers of excessive reliance, or AI dependency, which may undermine autonomous learning. Early studies emphasized the role of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) as a precursor to modern AI-based systems. Warschauer and Healey (1998) demonstrated how digital technologies could support language learning by providing authentic input and opportunities for interaction. Later research extended these insights to AI-driven environments, where adaptive platforms and intelligent tutoring systems could analyze learners' strengths and weaknesses in real time (Li, 2020). These tools allow for individualized feedback, thereby supporting differentiated instruction in diverse classrooms.

At the same time, researchers such as Kukulska-Hulme (2020) have drawn attention to the pedagogical implications of AI, stressing that effective use requires careful instructional design. Without appropriate guidance, learners may develop a dependency on machine-generated corrections, which can reduce critical engagement with the learning material. For example, heavy reliance on machine translation tools such as Google Translate has been shown to discourage learners from practicing productive skills like writing and speaking (Garcia & Pena, 2011).

Another important line of research concerns learner autonomy and self-regulation. Benson (2013) highlighted that successful language acquisition depends on learners' ability to control and monitor their own learning strategies. When AI tools perform most of the tasks for students—such as correcting

grammar or suggesting vocabulary—there is a risk that learners may not fully develop these essential skills. On the other hand, studies by Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019) suggest that if used strategically, AI can actually promote autonomy by freeing learners from repetitive tasks and enabling them to focus on higher-order language competencies. From an ethical perspective, scholars such as Holmes et al. (2021) have cautioned against the uncritical adoption of AI technologies in education. They argue that over-dependence not only affects individual learning outcomes but also raises questions about data privacy, algorithmic bias, and equity in access to technology. These concerns are especially relevant in language education, where cultural sensitivity and human interaction remain crucial elements of the learning process.

The literature suggests that while AI holds immense promise for enhancing language learning, it must be carefully integrated into educational practice. The risk of AI dependency is real and can hinder the development of essential skills if left unchecked. Therefore, the challenge for educators and learners alike is to find a balance between leveraging AI's strengths and preserving the human-centered, autonomous aspects of language acquisition.

Research methodology. This study adopts a mixed-methods approach to explore the influence of AI dependency in language learning, combining both quantitative and qualitative research techniques. The purpose of using this design is to ensure statistical accuracy while also capturing in-depth perspectives on learners' experiences with AI-powered tools. Participants were selected from university-level language programs, with a total of 120 students taking part in the research. They represented diverse backgrounds and levels of AI engagement, ranging from frequent users of translation applications and grammar correction software to those who used AI tools only occasionally or relied mainly on traditional methods. This diversity provided an opportunity to compare how varying degrees of exposure to AI influence learners' autonomy, motivation, and language proficiency.

Data collection employed several instruments. Questionnaires were distributed to assess students' frequency of AI usage, perceived usefulness, and self-reported dependency. In addition, language proficiency tests were administered before and after the research period to evaluate progress in core language skills such as speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Classroom observation was carried out to examine learner behavior when faced with independent problem-solving tasks, while semi-structured interviews with both students and instructors provided qualitative insights into the motivational and cognitive effects of AI reliance. The research was conducted over twelve weeks.

During the initial stage, baseline surveys and tests were administered to establish starting points for each participant. In the middle stage, learners engaged with their coursework under natural conditions, with varying degrees of AI integration. Their usage patterns and behaviors were monitored continuously. In the final stage, post-tests, surveys, and interviews were conducted to compare results and identify any changes in proficiency, motivation, or dependency.

Data analysis followed a two-layered strategy. Quantitative results from surveys and proficiency tests were analyzed using statistical methods to identify correlations between AI usage and learning outcomes. Qualitative data from interviews and classroom observations were thematically analyzed to capture recurring patterns such as over-reliance on translation, reduced memorization efforts, or increased confidence in oral communication. Triangulation was used to strengthen the validity of findings by cross-checking results from different sources.

The study paid close attention to ethical considerations. Participants were fully informed about the aims of the research, and their consent was obtained prior to involvement. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed, and participation was voluntary, with students having the right to withdraw at any point. At the same time, the study acknowledges certain limitations. The participant sample size was relatively modest, and self-reporting measures may not fully reflect actual behaviors. Moreover, the twelve-week duration, while sufficient for short-term insights, may not capture long-term patterns of AI dependency in language learning.

Research discussion. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges presented by the integration of artificial intelligence into language learning. One of the most notable outcomes was the clear distinction in learning behaviors between frequent AI users and those who relied more on traditional methods. Students who engaged heavily with AI tools demonstrated faster improvements in specific areas such as grammar accuracy, vocabulary acquisition, and writing fluency. This can be attributed to the immediate corrective feedback and adaptive nature of AI platforms, which allowed learners to practice more efficiently and at their own pace. However, the data also revealed signs of over-reliance among frequent users. Many participants expressed that they preferred using translation applications or grammar correction software instead of attempting to solve language-related problems independently. This dependency appeared to reduce critical thinking and problem-solving skills, particularly in productive tasks such as essay writing or spontaneous conversation. Interviews confirmed that while students felt more

confident with AI support, they often struggled when required to perform without technological assistance.

In contrast, learners with moderate or balanced use of AI showed more sustainable progress. These students benefited from AI support when necessary but also engaged actively in independent practice. Their instructors noted that such learners maintained higher levels of autonomy, creativity, and adaptability. This suggests that the effectiveness of AI in language learning depends not only on the technology itself but also on how learners are guided to use it in conjunction with traditional study methods. The research also highlighted motivational effects. Many students reported that AI tools made learning more engaging, reducing anxiety and building confidence. However, some instructors expressed concern that constant reliance on machine-generated corrections might discourage learners from developing intrinsic motivation and deeper cognitive engagement. These findings align with previous research suggesting that while AI can enhance efficiency, it may also undermine long-term learning strategies if not integrated thoughtfully.

Another important issue raised in this study relates to ethics and equity. Not all students had equal access to advanced AI tools, and this technological gap created differences in learning outcomes. Moreover, concerns about data privacy and algorithmic bias were noted by instructors, reinforcing the importance of critical and responsible adoption of AI in education. Overall, the discussion suggests that AI should be considered a complementary tool rather than a replacement for human-driven language learning processes. Its potential lies in supporting learners with feedback, personalization, and efficiency, but true mastery of language still requires independent practice, critical thinking, and active interaction with peers and instructors. The challenge for educators, therefore, is to design curricula and teaching strategies that strike a balance—maximizing the benefits of AI while minimizing the risks of dependency.

Conclusion. This study has examined the impact of artificial intelligence on language learning with a particular focus on the issue of AI dependency. The results demonstrate that while AI-powered tools offer significant advantages in terms of efficiency, personalization, and learner confidence, there are also potential drawbacks when students become overly reliant on these technologies. Learners who used AI tools excessively tended to show weaker autonomy, reduced problem-solving skills, and difficulties in performing without technological assistance. In contrast, students who adopted a balanced approach—combining AI support with independent practice—achieved more sustainable progress and maintained stronger cognitive engagement. The

findings underscore the importance of designing pedagogical frameworks that encourage responsible AI use. Educators and curriculum developers should ensure that AI is implemented as a supportive instrument rather than a replacement for human learning processes. Strategies such as guided use, reflective practice, and activities that require learners to work without AI assistance can help strengthen autonomy and prevent over-dependence.

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