

Chapter 7

Discussions of Using AI in Language Education in Hong Kong

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ABSTRACT

This chapter sets out to investigate the discussions of using AI in language education in Chinese press in Hong Kong. From 2018-2023, there are news articles showcasing the AI tools and potential use of AI in language education in Hong Kong. This chapter discusses the debates on the use of artificial intelligence in language education and analyses newspaper discourse to investigate the different views of stakeholders in language education including students, teachers, educators, and policymakers in Hong Kong. A corpus containing Hong Kong newspaper articles discussing and debating the effectiveness and challenges of applying artificial intelligence in language education in Hong Kong has been constructed and analysed.

INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence has an impact on different aspects of human life. The use of artificial intelligence has been actively discussed in the educational field. There are studies discussing the use of conversational artificial intelligence in language classrooms (Jeon, 2022; Ji et al., 2023). Some research explores how artificial intelligence and chatbot technology can shape future language learning and teaching (Kim et al., 2019). The discussion about the development and impact of artificial intelligence as well as its use in education has been a topic receiving the attention of linguists, educators, policymakers, and the public in recent years (Chen et al., 2022; Zai et al., 2021). Topics relating to the use of artificial intelligence in education have been widely discussed in Hong Kong's public media (Chen, 2023) and there

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are ongoing debates on these topics in Hong Kong press. Some newspaper articles suggest that the use of artificial intelligence is effective in language learning in Hong Kong schools (Yeung, 2019). On the other hand, some articles voice out that the students and the educational field are not benefiting from artificial intelligence (Liu & Yau, 2023). This paper sets out to discuss the debates on the use of artificial intelligence in language education and investigate the different views of the stakeholders in language education including students, teachers, educators, and policymakers expressed in Hong Kong newspapers. A corpus containing Hong Kong newspaper articles discussing and debating the effectiveness and challenges of applying artificial intelligence in language education in Hong Kong has been constructed and analysed. The research questions are set as follows: (i) to investigate the extent to which the Hong Kong press expressed arguments in favour of the use of artificial intelligence in language education in Hong Kong; and (ii) to analyse the range of arguments to oppose the use of artificial intelligence. This is the first systematic investigation of opinions in Hong Kong's public opinions expressed in printed media concerning the use of artificial intelligence in language education in Hong Kong. This study will shed some light on the discussions of the use of artificial intelligence in language education in the Hong Kong context.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

It has been a long history of computer-assisted language learning (CALL). There have been some discussions about the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in language education since OpenAI laid the groundwork with GPT-1 on 11 June 2018 and marked the advancement of a natural language processing model that can produce a coherent and contextually relevant response to a particular prompt. Then, AI has been adopted and used in education in different forms. AI initially took the form of computer and computer-related technologies, transitioning to web-based and online intelligent education systems, and ultimately with the use of embedded computer systems, together with other technologies, the use of humanoid robots and web-based chatbots to perform instructors' duties and functions independently or with teachers (Chassignol, et al., 2018; Pedró et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2020). These platforms can help teachers review and grade students' assignments more effectively and efficiently to achieve higher quality in their teaching activities. There was also research demonstrating the design of AI applications in language education (Sun et al., 2021), discussing how AI can change students' learning styles and habits (Kang & Kang, 2020), and modeling the role of teachers in the AI era (Cope et al., 2021; Schmidt & Strasser, 2022). There was also a bibliometric analysis to study the research literature relating to the use of AI in language education (Huang et al., 2023). This research reviewed 516 papers published from 2000 to 2019 relating to the theme and summarised the 10 most popular topics related to AI in language education were, (1) automated writing evaluation, (2) intelligent tutoring systems for reading and writing, (3) automated error detection, (4) computer-mediated communication, (5) personalized systems for language learning, (6) natural language and vocabulary learning, (7) web-resources and web-based systems for language learning, (8) intelligent tutoring systems for writing in English for specific purposes, (9) intelligent tutoring systems for pronunciation and speech training, and (10) affective states and emotions (Huang et al., 2023). Given the rapid development of AI and its use in education, UNESCO urged stakeholders to deal with ethics and transparency in data collection, use, and dissemination, to develop a comprehensive view of public policy on AI for sustainable development, to develop quality and inclusive data systems, to ensure inclusion and equity for AI in education, to enhance research on AI in education, and to prepare teachers for an AI-powered education (Pedró et al., 2019).

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