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ETHICAL CHALLENGES OF AI CHATBOTS IN ENGLISH EDUCATION

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Abstract. This article examines the ethical challenges associated with the use of artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots in English language education. The growing integration of AI-powered chatbots into educational environments provides learners with opportunities for personalized practice, instant feedback, interactive communication, and independent learning. However, their widespread use also raises important ethical concerns related to academic integrity, data privacy, algorithmic bias, transparency, digital dependency, and the potential reduction of human interaction in the learning process. The study analyzes the major ethical issues that may arise when AI chatbots are used by English language learners and teachers. Particular attention is given to the responsible use of AI, protection of students' personal data, prevention of plagiarism and excessive reliance on automated responses, and the role of teachers in maintaining pedagogical and ethical standards.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, AI chatbots, English language education, ethics, academic integrity, data privacy, algorithmic bias, digital literacy, personalized learning, teacher-student interaction.

Introduction. The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has significantly transformed various areas of modern society, including the field of education. In recent years, AI-powered technologies have become increasingly integrated into teaching and learning processes, providing new opportunities for personalization, automation, interaction, and access to educational resources. Among these technologies, AI chatbots have attracted particular attention in English language education because of their ability to communicate with learners in natural language, generate texts, provide immediate feedback, explain grammatical structures, and support vocabulary and writing development.

The integration of AI chatbots into English education can provide learners with opportunities to practice the target language beyond the traditional classroom environment. Students can interact with chatbots at any time, receive explanations according to their individual needs, and engage in simulated conversations without the pressure that may occur during face-to-face communication. Such features can contribute to learner autonomy, motivation, and the development of communication skills. At the same time, the increasing use of AI chatbots creates a number of ethical challenges that require careful consideration from educators, institutions, researchers, and policymakers.

Literature review. The integration of artificial intelligence into education has become an important area of contemporary educational research. Existing studies indicate that AI technologies can support personalized learning, provide immediate feedback, and facilitate interaction between learners and digital systems. At the same time, researchers emphasize that the educational benefits of AI should be considered together with ethical, pedagogical, and social risks. Holmes, Bialik, and Fadel [1] examined the potential of artificial intelligence in education and emphasized that AI can contribute to more personalized and adaptive learning environments. However, the authors also highlighted the importance of considering ethical issues, including privacy, transparency, equity, and the changing role of teachers. Their work demonstrates that technological innovation in education should be accompanied by appropriate ethical frameworks. Luckin et al. [2] investigated the potential of artificial intelligence to transform education and argued that AI can support teachers and learners by providing individualized educational experiences. According to the authors, AI systems can analyze learners' needs and provide personalized assistance. Nevertheless, they stressed that human teachers

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remain essential because educational processes involve social, emotional, and contextual dimensions that cannot be fully replaced by technological systems. Zawacki-Richter et al. [3] conducted a systematic review of research on artificial intelligence applications in higher education. Their findings demonstrated that AI has been used for assessment, prediction, adaptive systems, intelligent tutoring, and student support. However, the researchers identified a need for greater attention to pedagogical and ethical perspectives. In particular, they noted that much of the existing research focuses on technological capabilities rather than the experiences and responsibilities of educators. Kasneci et al. [4] examined the opportunities and challenges associated with large language models, including ChatGPT, in education. The researchers identified several potential benefits, such as personalized feedback, assistance with writing, brainstorming, and language practice. At the same time, they emphasized concerns related to misinformation, plagiarism, bias, and students' overreliance on AI-generated content. These findings are particularly relevant to English education, where students may use chatbots to generate written assignments or practice communication. Tlili et al. [5] explored ChatGPT as a case study of generative AI in education and discussed both its educational potential and ethical challenges. The study highlighted issues concerning academic integrity, reliability of generated information, privacy, and the possibility of inappropriate use. The authors argued that educational institutions need clear policies and responsible practices to ensure that generative AI supports learning rather than undermining students' independent intellectual development. Cotton, Cotton, and Shipway [6] focused specifically on the relationship between ChatGPT and academic integrity in higher education. Their research suggests that generative AI can make traditional approaches to plagiarism detection and assessment more difficult. Students may submit AI-generated texts as their own work, creating challenges for teachers who need to evaluate authentic learning outcomes. The authors therefore emphasized the importance of reconsidering assessment practices and promoting responsible AI use among students. UNESCO [7] provided a broader ethical framework for the use of generative AI in education and research. The guidance emphasizes human-centered approaches, data privacy, transparency, inclusiveness, and the need for appropriate regulation.

Materials and methods. This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the ethical challenges associated with the use of AI chatbots in English language education. The research was based on a review and analysis of academic literature, research articles, educational reports, and international guidelines concerning artificial intelligence, generative AI, and English language teaching. Particular attention was given to academic integrity, data privacy, information reliability, algorithmic bias, and the role of teachers.

The research process consisted of three main stages: selection of relevant literature, thematic analysis of identified ethical challenges, and synthesis of findings. The selected sources were compared to identify common ethical concerns and their implications for English education.

Table 1. Research materials

Research material	Purpose
Scientific articles	Analysis of AI-related educational research
International reports	Identification of ethical principles
Studies on ChatGPT and AI chatbots	Examination of practical challenges
Educational guidelines	Analysis of responsible AI use

The collected information was analyzed through thematic classification. Ethical challenges were grouped according to their potential impact on students, teachers, and the educational process.

Table 2. Main analytical categories

Category	Main focus

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Academic integrity	Plagiarism and unauthorized AI use
Data privacy	Protection of students' information
Reliability	Accuracy of AI-generated content
Algorithmic bias	Cultural and linguistic bias
Teacher's role	Human–AI balance in education

The methodology made it possible to identify the major ethical risks of AI chatbots and determine the conditions necessary for their responsible integration into English language education.

Discussion. The findings of the study demonstrate that AI chatbots have considerable potential to support English language education, but their implementation also creates several ethical challenges. The analysis indicates that the main concerns are related to academic integrity, data privacy, reliability of AI-generated information, algorithmic bias, students' dependence on technology, and the changing role of teachers.

One of the most significant issues is academic integrity. AI chatbots can generate essays, answers, summaries, and other academic materials within a short period of time. While these capabilities can support students during the learning process, inappropriate use may reduce students' independent work and make it difficult for teachers to determine whether submitted work reflects the learner's actual knowledge. This finding is consistent with Cotton, Cotton, and Shipway , who emphasized that generative AI creates new challenges for traditional approaches to academic integrity. Therefore, English language teachers should focus not only on detecting AI-generated texts but also on designing assessment tasks that require personal reflection, critical analysis, oral communication, and individual application of knowledge.

Conclusion. The study concludes that AI chatbots offer significant opportunities for improving English language education through personalized learning, interactive communication, immediate feedback, and independent language practice. However, their integration also presents important ethical challenges, particularly in relation to academic integrity, data privacy, information reliability, algorithmic bias, and excessive dependence on technology.

The findings indicate that the effective use of AI chatbots requires clear ethical guidelines and responsible practices. Students should be encouraged to use AI as a learning support tool while maintaining academic honesty, critical thinking, and independent learning skills. Teachers should provide appropriate guidance, verify AI-generated information, and ensure that AI technologies complement rather than replace human interaction.

Therefore, the successful integration of AI chatbots into English education depends on achieving a balance between technological innovation and ethical responsibility. Developing AI literacy among both teachers and students, strengthening institutional policies, and maintaining a human-centered approach can help maximize the educational benefits of AI while reducing its potential risks.

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