mET modern English teacher

Volume 33 | Issue 2 | March/April 2024
www.modernenglishteacher.com

Online Resource Centre

Digital Library | MyCPD Tracker

Bringing the latest research and practical ideas to your classroom

Artificial intelligence

- Green issues
- Extra practice
- Using video
- Leadership
- Listening
- Jigsaw learning
- Vocabulary
- Revision
- Professional development
- Topic selection
- Using WhatsApp
- Very young learners

Rachel Tsateri
Anna Young
Mark Johnson
Iuliia Irgiztseva
Thomas Entwistle
Gary Robert
Adrian Tennant
Roy Edwards
Daniel Xerri
Johanna Stirling
Jessica Mackay
Flora Debora Floris

AI ethics 101: pedagogical

Flora Debora Floris
describes activities for responsible AI use.

The repertoire of artificial intelligence (AI) tools utilised in English language teaching (ELT) is expansive, encompassing: AI-driven adaptive language learning platforms; chatbots; virtual language assistants; automated essay scoring systems; and even applications in virtual and augmented reality. These AI tools offer a diverse set of capabilities, ranging from logical reasoning and problem-solving to more specialised tasks such as understanding human language. And they have significantly improved various aspects of language education. Demonstrable enhancements have been observed in vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension and pronunciation, among other areas (Floris, 2023).

Despite these advancements, the ethical dimensions associated with the deployment of AI technologies in ELT cannot be overstated. The implementation of AI engenders a range of ethical considerations that necessitate simultaneous scrutiny. Consequently, a judicious balance is crucial between the allure of technological innovation and the imperative for responsible pedagogy – one that respects ethical guidelines and underscores the importance of human interaction (Huang *et al.*, 2021; Pardo *et al.*, 2018; Sharadgah & Sa'di, 2022).

In a study conducted by Floris (2023), which explored six open Facebook groups with membership spanning teachers, technology enthusiasts, language learners and AI developers from various educational backgrounds around the globe, at least three significant challenges related to the ethical considerations of employing AI tools in ELT were revealed. These challenges resonated with the broader academic discourse, including contributions from Huang *et al.* (2021), Pardo *et al.* (2018) and Sharadgah and Sa'di (2022).

The first prominent challenge in Floris' (2023) study pertains to data ethics, which arises from concerns about the ethical dimensions of data collection and utilisation. Critics argue that some companies may engage in exploitative practices that involve harvesting data from communities or learners for the improvement of their AI systems. This concern is also reflected in Pardo *et al.*'s (2018) analysis, which underscores the vulnerability of the educational material itself, particularly the relationships between teachers and students, in an AI-centric pedagogical landscape.

Secondly, the issue of academic integrity is also a subject of critical discourse. Discussions in a study by Floris (2023) indicate that AI tools have the capacity to complete assignments, thereby inviting the risk of compromised academic integrity. As AI-generated content becomes increasingly sophisticated, distinguishing between student-generated work and AI-produced work has become a non-trivial task. Sharadgah and Sa'di (2022) extend this conversation by noting the potential for students to develop an unhealthy dependency on AI applications, thereby stymieing their academic and intellectual growth.

Last but not least, pedagogical adjustment is identified as an essential aspect to address. Teachers suggest that while AI tools can offer valuable learning assistance, they should not replace critical thinking and analysis. The utilisation of AI should be a supplement to, rather than a substitute for, pedagogically sound teaching practices. This perspective is bolstered by Huang *et al.* (2021), who amplify the scope of the dialogue by warning against the erosion of student-to-student communication in classrooms heavily reliant on AI, which they argue could lead to a dilution of essential social communication skills.

The incorporation of AI into ELT presents notable progress, but it also raises significant ethical concerns. These complexities have been previously discussed largely in the context of teachers' responsibilities, yet the role of students as active participants in this ethical landscape must not be overlooked. The active involvement of students with AI technologies places them at the intersection of advantages and ethical concerns, emphasising the necessity for their ethical education.

The following section will be redirected toward a collection of activities designed to enhance students' ethical awareness. The primary goal of these activities is to enhance their ability to effectively negotiate the complexities involved in utilising AI techniques in the field of ELT.

Pedagogical activities for responsible AI use

There are 10 suggested classroom activities that can be used for elevating student ethical awareness and responsible use.

profile should contain information about the system's intended use, the technology that drives it, the data it collects and the stakeholders it impacts.

Armed with this information, each group is required to undertake a systematic ethical impact assessment. This involves identifying the potential ethical risks, the stakeholders who would be affected and the measures that could mitigate these risks.

Each group then presents their ethical impact assessment to the class, detailing their methods, findings and recommendations. The teacher, along with peer students, can offer insights, thereby enriching the collective understanding of the activity's subject matter.

Ethical code design

The activity named 'Ethical code design' plays a role in fostering in students a sense of corporate social responsibility and ethical awareness. This task goes beyond mere ethical theorisation to engage students in the pragmatic aspects of constructing ethical norms and protocols, similar to what they may encounter in real-world organisational settings.

Students are first divided into groups and given instructions to conduct in-depth research on current codes of ethics that are common in the technology industry. Students are then instructed to design a fictitious AI or technology company, including its main goals, potential investors and operational concerns. After this is conceptualised, students are asked to create an ethical code of conduct that acts as the moral compass for the company. This code should address a number of topics, such as data management, employment practices and environmental sustainability in addition to ethical AI development.

Upon completion, the groups are required to present their ethical codes before the entire class. These presentations serve dual purposes. First, they function as peer review platforms, where each ethical code is scrutinised by fellow students. Second, they act as collaborative learning environments where students not only internalise the content of their own codes but also acquire insights into the ethical priorities and challenges perceived by others, thus broadening their ethical horizons.

Looking at ethical code design, teachers take on the roles of mentors and critical reviewers. They offer the tools and basic support for preliminary research. During group discussions and presentations, they take on the role of a moderator, providing constructive criticism and encouraging students to think more deeply about their ethical claims.

AI ethics debate tournament

An AI ethics debate tournament begins with the teacher developing a proposition focused on an ethical dilemma related to AI or emerging technologies. Propositions such as this could include statement like: 'AI-driven language assessment tools should not be used in ELT due to potential biases in evaluating second language accents', drawing attention to matters that are both highly relevant and significant. Students are then split up into groups and given positions to argue for or against the provided argument.

Each team should prepare for the debate by conducting an in-depth study to support their distinct positions. The foundation of their arguments is evidential support, which guarantees that the arguments put forth are not just rhetorical but also based on theoretical or empirical truths. The use of primary and secondary sources, including academic articles or credible news reports, is encouraged to support each team's position.

Upon preparation completion, the debate tournament takes place, comprising multiple rounds wherein teams engage in discussions under the adjudication of the instructor and peer audience. After the completion of the debate rounds, there is a post-debate reflective writing task. This enables students to condense their ideas, reflect on the points made during the discussion and gain a deeper understanding of the difficult ethical issues raised by AI.

In short, this section presents 10 pedagogical activities designed to foster ethical awareness and responsible use of AI. Teachers act in various capacities across these activities, from facilitators and moderators to intellectual provocateurs, thereby guiding students toward a comprehensive ethical education related to AI.

Conclusion

The emerging reality of AI in ELT requires critical analysis and ethical consideration. Because of this intersection's interdisciplinary nature, extensive teaching initiatives are necessary to guarantee that AI is applied in ELT in a way that is both ethically sound and effective. In order to achieve this goal, this paper offers a repertory of 10 educational activities designed to help teachers and students develop an ethical awareness.

This study sincerely argues that ethical training ought to be part of professional development programmes for ELT teachers. Educational institutions can also consider incorporating more ethical AI courses into their ELT curricula to ensure that the next generation of students is equipped to handle an increasingly AI-mediated environment.

References

Floris, F.D. (2023). *Unveiling teachers' perceptions: A journey into the use of artificial intelligence tools in English language teaching* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. State University of Malang.

Huang, X., Zou, D., Cheng, G., & Xie, H. (2021). 'A systematic review of AR and VR enhanced language learning'. *Sustainability* **13** 9:4639.

Pardo, A., Poquet, O., Martínez-Maldonado, R. & Dawson, S. (2018). 'Provision of data-driven student feedback in LA & EDM'. In Lang, C., Siemens, G., Wise, A.F. & Gašević, D. (Eds.). *Handbook of Learning Analytics*. 163–174. Society for Learning Analytics Research (SoLAR).

Sharadgah, T.A. & Sa'di, R.A. (2022). 'A systematic review of research on the use of artificial intelligence in English language teaching and learning (2015–2021): what are the current effects?' *Journal of Information Technology Education: Research* **21** 337–377.

Flora Debora Floris serves as a senior lecturer at the English Department of Petra Christian University, Indonesia. Her academic pursuits primarily encompass language teacher professional development, the integration of technology in language learning and the exploration of English as an international language.