AI Tools to Foster Reading Habit in College Students

Dr. S. Latha Venkateswari
Professor of English
Government College of Engineering, Coimbatore - 641 013
Email: drlathagct@gmail.com

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Reading maketh a full man – Francis Bacon

Abstract

Reading skill is of paramount importance to student community irrespective of their discipline. This skill has the power to lift them up on the ladder to success. Considering its benefits, curricula in schools and colleges focus on this aspect. However hard education system tries to inculcate this habit in youngsters, over exposure to digital contents has ruined the development of this skill. Interestingly, when educators use digital tools for making learners acquire reading skills, they can channelise the curiosity of learners towards reading. Upon understanding the multitude of benefits, the student community starts reading. This article explores how AI Tools can nurture the reading habit and equip second language learners with the skill to comprehend aspects in a better perspective.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, AI algorithm, Second Language Learners (L2), AI tools

Introduction

The advancement of technology has simplified the process of teaching and learning. The buzzword "Artificial Intelligence" is revolutionizing every single field. AI "offers novel learning opportunities for students" (Pratma,16). Especially, it is a boon to the teaching community. AI not only lessens the workload of teachers but adds precision to their teaching. Wise application of AI tools will be highly beneficial and time saving to the language teachers.

An AI tool is a software application that performs specific tasks. These tools are designed to emulate human intelligence with which language teachers can teach LSRW skills accurately to the students. Teachers can create their own content or borrow ideas from free and authentic platforms. All the technology enabled activities will help learners grasp the content

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Dr. S. Latha Venkateswari
AI Tools to Foster Reading Habit in College Students   130

in no time. Initially, teachers have to design the learning material that might take time. But once they create, they can keep editing their own content to cater to the standard of students.

AI Tools for Reading

AI provides learners with several tools that assist them in learning and developing their English language and comprehension skills. It identifies the reading habits, strengths, and weaknesses of the learners. It helps them learn English at their own pace. Besides, it gives instant feedback and spots the areas where learners struggle to understand the concepts. Integrating AI into language learning atmosphere "can help address the diverse needs and challenges faced by English language learners, including limited access to native speakers, lack of immediate feedback, and individualized attention." (Rusmiyanto, 751)

Interactive AI Tools

Reading becomes interesting to learners when the reading content is interactive. Some of the AI tools like Chatbots, Interactive Story Telling Apps, Augmented Reality Books, Voice Enabled Reading Assistants like Google Assistant and Alexa, Gamified Reading Apps like Quizziz and Kahoot, give a dynamic reading experience to the learners. Gaining knowledge on the contextual information triggers the interest of the readers. When language teachers apply these tools for reading, learners get glued to reading.

Personalized Recommendation Engines

These are AI – driven platforms, which recommend texts based on the reader's preferences on reading books. This includes Book Bub, Bookish, Library Thing, Scribd and Story Graph. Besides, Amazon offers Goodreads and Audible. All these platforms use AI algorithm to identify reader's preferences and recommend books based on their interest. Language instructors can use these platforms with the institutional support since most of them offer paid service. On the other hand, students can also self-develop this skill with these engines that help them read a genre well.

These engines enhance the reading skill of students as they collect data, analyse, filter and recommend relevant content to the users. Consequently, it develops the reading habit of the learners.

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Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 24:5 May 2024
Dr. S. Latha Venkateswari
AI Tools to Foster Reading Habit in College Students   131

Text -to – Speech Software

This software simplifies the process of reading by converting the written text into an audible text. Depending on the operating system of the mobile device, laptop or desktop that the users possess, software like Balabolka, Read Aloud, Select to Speak, Spoken Content, TTS Maker etc. can help readers improve their reading speed, pronunciation, and understanding of semantics.

Reading Comprehension Apps

Android, iPhone and iPad through various Apps, personalize reading comprehension to match the English standard of the readers. These Apps include Reading Prep Comprehension, Lou Adventures, Reading Eggs, Readability Reading Tour, Accomplish Reading, Reading Trainer, Newsela, and Achieve 3000 to mention a few. These Apps are user – friendly and when employed for developing reading skill, its outcome is mind blowing.

Vocabulary Building Apps

Knowledge of words is a major impediment to learn a language. While reading a content filled with many difficult words, learners lose interest in reading. AI powered systems offer contextual meaning to difficult words and provide the readers with a pleasant learning experience. Users can have paid and free service from these Apps. Some of the free Apps are Elevate, Memrise, Magoosh Vocabulary Builder, WordPal, etc. Websites like Fluent U, Merriam Webster's Dictionary, Vocabulary.com etc. also give clear explanation to difficult words. These Apps and websites help readers build their vocabulary even without the help of language teachers.

Interactive E-books

Young learners show interest in reading when there is an integration of multimedia elements since they present the turn of events in an exciting manner. AI powered audio, video, animations, interactive quizzes, etc. engage second language learners more in reading. AI algorithms make reading easier to the users because it simplifies the reading content according to the proficiency level of the readers.

Content Summarization Tools

Reading is a challenge to second language learners because of their limited exposure to English language. Besides, semantics drains away the attention of readers towards reading. But

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Dr. S. Latha Venkateswari
AI Tools to Foster Reading Habit in College Students   132

with a clear understanding of the chosen text, readers can easily map the ideas in a text with the presentation style. AI with its summarisation tools helps readers with an overall understanding of the text. Quillbot, Summarizer.org, Resoomer, etc. assist readers in understanding the content.

Virtual Book Club

Language teachers and students can create a virtual book club to nurture reading habit among youngsters. The prerequisites of this club are deciding the genre, frequency of meetings, platforms for video conferencing, selecting the members, engaging them with interactions, and arranging follow-up sessions. People from different locations can join together virtually and use this club in the best possible ways to share their interest and develop the habit of reading.

Gamified Reading Platforms

The term "gamification" was first coined by Nick Pelling in 2002. Since then, it got its momentum thanks to digitization. Particularly, digital natives engage themselves more in gaming platforms because of their curiosity to win and stay engaged throughout their chosen activities. AI offers a wide range of motivation to the readers through its gamified platforms such as Duo Lingo, Epic, Reading Rewards, Kahoot, Litmos, Wattpad etc. They offer facilities like points, badges, levels and leaderboards. Language instructors can inject gaming elements into Learning Management Systems like "MOOC, Blended or Flipped Learning, E-Learning sites, Gamified Platforms, Mobile Apps or gamification without online support" (Harismayanti, 25) to make reading dynamic and stimulating.

Educational Platforms with AI Tutoring

Teachers can achieve the specified learning outcomes when they leverage on AI tutored educational platforms. Designing required content to suit the need and standard of students, teachers create personalized reading experience. Teachers can rely on platforms like Course Hero, Grade Scope, Google's AI Tutor, and Educational Chat bots. They help teachers curate relevant reading material and provide the readers with easy access, feedback, and real time support.

Reading Skill through Chat GPT

ChatGPT is an advanced language model from open AI. Of late, digital natives prefer to use ChatGPT because it gives comprehensive details related to their search. Language

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Dr. S. Latha Venkateswari
AI Tools to Foster Reading Habit in College Students   133

instructors and learners can use this "Generative Pre-Trained Transformer" to develop LSRW skills. This can create a story on any topic, design comprehension questions, give feedback to the responses, provide the users with relevant information. It acts as "a personal tutor assisting" the learners "with various language related tasks" (Fang, 9). One can develop one's language skills and gain knowledge on any area through this platform.

Significance of AI Tools for Acquiring Effective Reading Skill

While Second Language Learners leverage AI driven tools, they see transformation in their reading skill development. AI tools can select reading content based on the proficiency level of the readers. This optimizes the reading efficiency of the learners. AI aids in building vocabulary of the learners. Reading new words and understanding their contextual meaning make readers remember and use those words on their own.

Google Lens and Google Translate prove to be a boon to L2 learners as they give a chance to translate English to their native language and vice versa. Alongside, readers get a better understanding of using idioms and phrasal verbs in English. Readers do active reading thanks to the AI powered tools that design engaging activities such as answering questions, making predictions, completing sentences with apt ideas and so on.

Reading English content through AI tools makes SLL understand and practise phonetics well. Especially, AI powered speech recognition technology identifies inaccuracy in pronunciation and gives suggestions to the users on improving speech patterns. So, readers know how to pronounce, give proper stress and use proper intonation while reading a text. Reading paves way to speak English well.

Reading content combined with comprehension questions and feedback make readers understand their standard and the kind of efforts that they have to put in for improving themselves. Progress tracking facility in AI enables readers know about their strengths and weaknesses. This encourages readers to be on track to reach their desired level of learning.

AI exposes readers to different genres of writing. Exposure to a wide range of resources provides youngsters with exposure and augments the reading skill. Real time assistance and tutoring engage and motivate the learners all through their reading process. Therefore, when

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Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 24:5 May 2024
Dr. S. Latha Venkateswari
AI Tools to Foster Reading Habit in College Students   134

AI is integrated into reading activity, it develops the language proficiency of L2 learners. Moreover, students develop this skill at their pace without any peer pressure.

Initially, language teachers have to show this usage to students. Once they realise its benefits, self-learning will take place. This way language teachers can equip L2 learners with the ability to communicate well in English. Indeed, they prepare the student community to take up the future assignments in their workspace.

Challenges

Emergence of any new field must stand the test of time, regardless of its benefits. Though AI tools develop reading skills, they have certain problematic aspects. Firstly, the efficiency of AI usage depends on the teachers' level of exposure to technology and the ease with which they operate AI tools. Secondly, spending time for choosing the apt tools to match the standard of the target group is difficult as teachers have to balance their time for completing academic and administrative assignments. Thirdly, getting and giving access to the tools may be limited as most of these tools offer paid services. Institutes, which pay more attention to improve the standard of students alone will come forward to try paid services. So, teachers have to confine themselves to the limited service. Fourthly, teachers may have to address equity as some students cannot afford buying gadgets with recent specifications. Fifthly, it limits human interaction and requires internet connectivity all through the learning process.

If teachers use this methodology, it will be effective. In contrast, allowing students to read on their own might not be quite effective in the initial stages. Because, in the process of using gadgets for learning purpose, youngsters get easily carried away by the unwanted notifications that pop up every now and then. Yet, focus on improving oneself can thwart such disturbances.

Future Trends

In this dynamic and fast changing world, one has to adopt new changes if one wants to flourish. AI has started stamping its potential in every single field. When AI powered tools are integrated into learning environments, they can revolutionize the teaching and learning experience. Learners will get digital literacy and critical thinking skills. AI develops the skills necessary for success in an increasingly digital world" (Bass, 13). Language learning can take

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Dr. S. Latha Venkateswari
AI Tools to Foster Reading Habit in College Students   135

a different dimension as AI gives access to literature of different languages. In addition, digitization can preserve our heritage and historical texts for future generation.

Summation

AI has permeated our lives in many ways. Particularly, in language learning, The remarkable features of AI can give L2 learners more engaging, personalized, and supportive experience in reading. Moreover, these tools can encourage consistent reading practice. Considering its transformative impact on the L2 learners, it is high time educators integrated AI into teaching process.

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Dr. S. Latha Venkateswari
AI Tools to Foster Reading Habit in College Students   136