Chatbots as Language Teaching Tools for L2 English Learners

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Abstract : Chatbots are computer programs that attempt to engage a human in a dialogue, which originated in the 1960s with MIT's Eliza. However, they have become widespread more recently as advances in language technology have produced chatbots with increasing linguistic quality and sophistication, leading to their potential to serve as a tool for Computer-Assisted Language Learning(CALL). The aim of this article is to assess the feasibility of using two chatbots, Mitsuku and CleverBot, as pedagogical tools for learning English as a second language by stimulating L2 learners with distinct English proficiencies. Speaking of the input of stimulated learners, they are measured by AntWordProfiler to match the user's expected vocabulary proficiency. Totally, there are four chat sessions as each chatbot will converse with both beginners and advanced learners. For evaluation, it focuses on chatbots' responses from a linguistic standpoint, encompassing vocabulary and sentence levels. The vocabulary level is determined by the vocabulary range and the reaction to misspelled words. Grammatical accuracy and responsiveness to poorly formed sentences are assessed for the sentence level. In addition, the assessment of this essay sets 25% lexical and grammatical incorrect input to determine chatbots' corrective ability towards different linguistic forms. Based on statistical evidence and illustration of examples, despite the small sample size, neither Mitsuku nor CleverBot is ideal as educational tools based on their performance through word range, grammatical accuracy, topic range, and corrective feedback for incorrect words and sentences, but rather as a conversational tool for beginners of L2 English.
Keywords : chatbots, CALL, L2, corrective feedback
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