

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-58618

Title: From Chalkboard to Chatbot: Integrating AI-Driven Conversational Agents to Foster Autonomous EFL Learning.

Recommendation:

Accept as it is

Accept after minor revision...yes.....

Accept after major revision

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality			Y	
Techn. Quality			Y	
Clarity			Y	
Significance			Y	

Reviewer's ID: JPR-Dr.Shaweta Sachdeva

Detailed Reviewer's Report

Major Comments

1. The manuscript presents an important contribution to AI-assisted language learning, particularly in low-resource contexts, but the novelty should be stated more explicitly in the Introduction.
2. The literature review is comprehensive; however, a critical comparison of previous studies is needed instead of primarily summarizing existing work.
3. Include a conceptual framework or research model illustrating the relationships among AI conversational agents, learner autonomy, motivation, speaking anxiety, and oral proficiency.
4. The methodology would benefit from additional details regarding participant assignment, intervention monitoring, and measures taken to reduce experimental bias.
5. More information should be provided regarding the prompts used with ChatGPT-4o so that the study can be replicated by other researchers.
6. The manuscript reports significant statistical improvements, but detailed statistical tables including descriptive statistics, confidence intervals, ANCOVA assumptions, and effect size interpretation should be included.
7. A dedicated subsection discussing threats to validity and study limitations should be expanded beyond the brief mention of data privacy and infrastructure issues.
8. The discussion should compare the findings with more recent AI-in-education studies published during 2024–2026.
9. Include a stronger discussion on ethical AI issues such as hallucinations, bias, academic integrity, learner dependence, and responsible AI usage in language education.

Methodological Comments

1. Explain how the reliability and validity of the oral proficiency assessment were established beyond reporting inter-rater reliability.

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2. Clarify whether participants had prior experience using generative AI tools before the intervention.
3. Describe how learner engagement with ChatGPT was monitored (e.g., usage logs, interaction frequency, prompt quality).
4. Provide additional demographic characteristics such as gender distribution, English proficiency level, and socioeconomic background.
5. Discuss possible confounding variables such as internet quality, digital literacy, and individual motivation.

Results and Discussion

1. Include graphical representations of quantitative findings (bar charts, box plots, or line graphs) to improve presentation.
2. Present sample interview quotations in a table aligned with the identified qualitative themes.
3. Discuss unexpected findings or negative learner experiences in greater detail.
4. Compare the observed effect size with similar studies to better demonstrate the significance of the findings.
5. Explain the practical implications of the reported effect size for classroom implementation.

Literature and References

1. Include more recent publications from leading journals on Generative AI, ChatGPT, and AI-supported language learning published during 2025–2026.
2. Consider citing recent systematic reviews and meta-analyses from journals such as *Computers & Education*, *Educational Technology Research and Development*, *Language Learning & Technology*, and *Computer Assisted Language Learning*.
3. Verify that every in-text citation has a corresponding reference and ensure consistent APA formatting throughout the reference list.

Language and Presentation

1. The manuscript is generally well written, but several sections contain repetitive explanations that can be condensed.
2. Some headings are overly long and could be simplified for better readability.
3. Check grammar, punctuation, spacing, and consistency of capitalization throughout the manuscript.
4. Ensure consistent formatting of tables, figures, headings, and citations.
5. Avoid repeating similar arguments in the Discussion, Pedagogical Implications, and Conclusion sections.

Minor Comments

1. Include a table summarizing the research objectives, research questions, hypotheses, instruments, and corresponding analyses.
2. Add a list of abbreviations for commonly used terms such as EFL, AI, CALL, ANCOVA, and ZPD.
3. Improve figure and table captions to make them more informative.
4. Mention the software version used for qualitative analysis, if applicable.

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5. Include a brief data availability statement and conflict of interest statement if required by the journal.

Overall Recommendation

The manuscript addresses an important and emerging research area and provides valuable empirical evidence on the use of AI-driven conversational agents for promoting learner autonomy in EFL education within a low-resource context. The study is methodologically sound and educationally relevant. Nevertheless, strengthening the methodological transparency, expanding the statistical reporting, providing deeper critical discussion, incorporating recent literature, and improving presentation would significantly enhance the manuscript's scientific quality and impact.