Using AI Tools in Learning English – Experimental Research in Vietnam
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Abstract
AI tools are used in many fields, including learning English for high school pupils. This study aims to synthesize the benefits and limitations of using AI in learning English and the current situation of using AI in learning English for high school pupils in Vietnam. The authors have systematized theories about the benefits and limitations of using AI tools in learning English in about 32 articles in peer-reviewed journals from 2020-2024. To find out the status of using AI tools in learning English, the authors developed a survey to collect data from 297 high school pupils in Vietnam. Data processing using Microsoft Excel has shown the following results: Using AI in learning English is very popular for the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing; with high frequency of use; and with personal spontaneity. Most of the people are also well aware of the benefits and limitations of AI tools. To effectively use AI in learning English, the article has proposed several discussions to address the limitations of AI tools for pupils and schools in Vietnam.

Keywords: AI Tools, English Skills, Vietnamese Pupils, Benefits, Limitations.

Introduction
Artificial intelligence (AI) was born in the 1950s and AI applications in social life areas have developed strongly since the early 2000s. AI is the simulation of human intellectual processes by machines, especially computer systems, so it can enable individuals to better understand their environment and act accordingly. Many organizations are already adopting AI technologies to adapt or disrupt their ecosystems while growing and optimizing their strategic and competitive advantage. AI demonstrates its full potential through its ability to optimize existing processes and improve automation, information, and transformation effects while detecting, predicting, and interacting with humans. Many organizations believe that AI will be a tool to help improve their competitiveness, capital, and innovation (Haroon Sheikh, Corien Prins, & Erik Schrijvers, 2023).

In the field of education, AI tools are revolutionizing the educational management, teaching, learning, and research activities of schools, students, and teachers (Şahin Gökçearslan, Cansel Tosun, Zeynep Gizem Erdemir, 2024). The advantages of AI for learners are developing language skills, and developing learning motivation while the limitations are interaction, incorrect answers, and plagiarism (Şahin Gökçearslan, Cansel Tosun, Zeynep Gizem Erdemir, 2024). AI provides personalized learning experiences, enhances knowledge access, and self-learning for learners, and attracts the attention of educational managers (Krishnamurthy & Sandeep, 2020).

In language teaching, teachers, learners, and educational administrators have been constantly searching for effective methods to impart language skills. AI has proven itself to be a useful and groundbreaking tool for many things, including language learning, and has proven to be an invaluable asset for learners, especially for learning English (Enik Rukiati, Julien Arief Wicaksono, Gullit Tornado Taufan, Degita Danur Suharsono, 2023). Many AI tools such as Grammarly, and Google Translate... have been popularly used by learners to practice English listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Tran Thi Thu Hien, 2024).

AI supports the ability to improve learners’ pronunciation skills using speech recognition technologies, practice listening skills by interacting with AI and receive instant feedback on pronunciation, AI helps

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learners better understand and remember language concepts (Enik Rukiati, Julien Arief Wicaksono, Gullit Tornado Taufan, Degita Danur Suharsono, 2023). AI brings significant improvements to foreign language learning but also raises some challenges such as copying and violating scientific ethics (Dian Toar Y. G. Sumakul, Fuad Abdul Hamied & Didi Sukyadd, 2021) (Enik Rukiati, Julien Arief Wicaksono, Gullit Tornado Taufan, Degita Danur Suharsono, 2023), (Tran Thi Thu Hien, 2024). The impact of AI on language learning and teaching covers many aspects, bringing both opportunities and challenges for teachers, learners, and schools.

In Vietnam, learning English is highly emphasized at all levels of popular education, university, and postgraduate levels, not only because English is an important international language but the need to learn English is extremely important for examination, admission, and recruitment purposes (Tran Thi Thu Hien, 2024), (Tran Tin Nghi, Tran Huu Phuc, Nguyen Tat Thang, 2019). Vietnam has about one million students studying in grade 12. According to the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training, the number of high school students from grades 10 to 12 is about three million (MOET, 2022). Vietnam's information and communication technology and Internet infrastructure are developing rapidly. This has created opportunities for all people, including pupils in all grades to access and use the Internet at a very early. The smartphone subscription rate is over 80%. The smartphone usage rate of students in Vietnam is about 78.0% to 85.0% (MOIT, 2024). Vietnam's information and communication infrastructure penetration is higher than that of other high-income developed countries at low prices. The smartphone penetration rate in Vietnam is 84%, compared to the world average of 63%. Vietnam aims for 100% of smartphone users by the end of 2024 (MOIT, 2024). All of these have created extremely favorable opportunities for Vietnamese pupils to use computers and smartphones in their studies, including using AI tools in foreign language learning.

This paper presents the current situation of using AI tools in learning English as a compulsory foreign language for students in Vietnam, the benefits and limitations of using AI in learning English, and proposes solutions for using AI effectively in learning English for Vietnamese students.

Background Concepts

The role of English and learning English

English plays an important role in people's learning, work, communication, and social life. English is the main language of communication globally in all fields, politics, economics, commerce, culture, science, education, and tourism, including online communication. Most people who are fluent in English have high opportunities to find jobs and integrate internationally, becoming global citizens (M. Samanth Reddy, 2016).

Among the 6500 languages used in the world today, English is widely used and taught in more than 118 countries, is an official language in 53 countries, and is used by about 400 million people worldwide as a first language (Endang Sri Andayani, 2022). According to the British Council (2020), about two billion people around the world are learning English, accounting for about 20%-25% of the global population. In the World Wide Web alone, it is estimated that 52% of websites in English are visited by about 550 to 600 million people daily. English, whether used for any purpose, whether for study, work, or entertainment, is really important. It is a medium of international communication both in the real world and the electronic world. Therefore, learning English is an urgent human need in the current context of deep global integration (Rajathurai Nishanthi, 2018).

According to the British Council, learning English is language learning, meaning learners must learn speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills and the language system includes vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and discourse. Learners can be pupils, students, candidates, or workers studying for different purposes. Learning English can be done under the guidance of teachers at training facilities, or self-study with the support of other means such as books, dictionaries, tapes, computers, and media. Society. English is a mandatory subject at many educational levels. In general, the goal of the learner is to master the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and depending on the level of education, these four skills
are used to evaluate the learner's level to meet exam requirements of schools, or recruitment requirements of employing units and organizations.

**AI Concept**

AI stands for Artificial Intelligence is a branch of the field of computer science, related to the development of computer programs to complete demanding tasks. Human intelligence. AI is intelligence created by human programming with the goal of helping computers automate intelligent behaviors like humans. AI is defined in a broad and narrow sense. In the broadest definition, AI is synonymous with algorithms, while in the narrowest definition, AI stands for the imitation of inherent human intelligence by computers. Defining AI as technology that allows machines to imitate various complex human skills, (Haroon Sheikh, Corien Prins, & Erik Schrijvers, 2023), AI are systems that exhibit intelligent behavior by analyzing their environment and taking action – with a certain degree of autonomy – to achieve specific goals (European Commission's 2018).

As such, AI refers to systems that exhibit intelligent behavior by analyzing their environment and taking actions – with a certain degree of autonomy – to achieve specific goals. AI-based systems can be entirely software-based, operating in virtual worlds (e.g., ChatGPT, voice assistants, image analysis software, search engines, face, and speech recognition systems) or AI can be embedded in hardware devices (e.g. advanced robots, autonomous cars, drones or Internet of Things applications).

AI is widely applied in the following fields, such as the financial, medical, and educational fields. For example, Financial companies use AI to analyze data and predict market trends. AI applications help investors make smart investment decisions and achieve higher profits. In addition, AI is also applied by financial companies to monitor financial transactions, detect fraudulent behaviors, and protect their customers. In addition, some pioneering insurance companies have also used artificial intelligence to make insurance decisions and process customer claims quickly and accurately. AI is used in the medical field to help doctors detect and diagnose diseases, develop appropriate treatment plans, and predict treatment outcomes. Artificial intelligence is being used by education administrators and teachers to improve teaching, learning, and school management methods. Using AI can analyze student learning data, make recommendations on teaching methods, and create customized tests to help students develop learning skills more effectively. The most important benefits of AI are summarized by (V. Saidyutivashnavi, 2021), including minimizing human error, improving user experience, being deployed across multiple industries, and facilitating decision-making by making processes faster and smarter.

**AI Applications in Learning English**

**Applying AI in learning English listening:** AI helps learners improve their writing skills. There are many AI tools used in learning English skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. AI supports learners in writing and correcting spelling, grammar, and comma errors. The author (Tira Nur Fitria, 2021) believes that AI helps English learners improve the quality of articles and correct grammar errors. Using AI tools, learners can improve their English essay writing ability (Shireen Mostafa Ahmed Abdalkader, 2022) (Shireen Mostafa Ahmed Abdalkader, 2022). The authors (Rizky Vita Losi, Eka Putra Putra, Nurbaity Ali, Adinda Silvana Dewi, 2024), emphasized the benefits of AI technologies to help learners write English essays, while also developing their ability to self-study. AI tools used to support writing skills such as Grammarly, Writesonic, and Wordtune... have their advantages, suitable for the field of social science or natural science, but they all have in common helping learners discover or correct spelling errors, grammatical errors, or support editing attractive content. Learners can use AI tools to support writing skills with suggestions to correct grammar and spelling errors and improve style, but it should primarily rely on the learner's ability (Godwin-Jones, R, 2022). In other words, AI supports learners in writing English but has limitations in semantic and content accuracy (Lasha Labadze, Maya Grigolia & Lela Machaidze, 2023).

**Applying AI in learning English speaking:** The authors (E. Madhavi, Lavanya Sivapurapu, Vijayakumar Koppula, P. B. Esther Rani, Vemugant Sreehar, 2023) (E. Madhavi, Lavanya Sivapurapu, Vijayakumar Koppula, P. B. Esther Rani, Vemugant Sreehar, 2023) conducted a study with 100 students which was divided into two
groups, the group learning English for non-IT professionals and the group learning English for IT professionals. Compared with the non-IT professionals group using the speaking learning method without AI support and the group of IT professionals using AI to learn speaking, the group of IT majors showed superior performance in all test parameters speaking. AI tools contribute significantly to progress in learning speaking skills. Another study on using AI to practice academic English speaking skills researched by (Zou, B, Liviero, S. Hao, M. Y. & Wei, C. Y, 2020) (Zou, B, Liviero, S. Hao, M. Y. & Wei, C. Y, 2020) showed that learners preferred and satisfied with AI tools for speaking development due to lack of teacher feedback. Learners also noticed some limitations in current AI tools such as the lack of different voices for learners to improve their speaking skills. AI tools support learners but cannot replace teachers. Research by (Cristhian Joel Lucas Soledispa, Paola Nathaly Mantilla Carrera, Araceli Maritza Dávila Macías, Luisa Fernanda Jaramillo Crespo, Diego Omar Armijos SolanoCiencia Latina Revista Científica, 2024) (Cristhian Joel Lucas Soledispa, Paola Nathaly Mantilla Carrera, Araceli Maritza Dávila Macías, Luisa Fernanda Jaramillo Crespo, Diego Omar Armijos SolanoCiencia Latina Revista Científica, 2024) has emphasized the technological aspect of AI tools that need to be perfected so that learners who practice their speaking skills can achieve higher levels of fluency and accuracy.

**Applying AI in learning English listening:** Authors (Suryana, I., Astrianto, & Murwantono, D, 2020) conducted a survey at the Department of Psychology of Sarjanawiyata University and presented results on effective AI mobile applications to improve listening skills, and the most effective way to improve English listening skills is to use Netflix. A study conducted by (Nguyen Thi Lam, 2023) aimed to investigate how AI applications are supported on mobile devices for English listening learners. The author implemented a teaching method for two months for learners to use AI tools to practice listening skills via mobile devices in class and at home. Research has found that using AI has improved learners' listening abilities. A study has also recognized that AI can help English learners with listening and speaking skills, enhancing learners' communication skills (Cristhian Joel Lucas Soledispa, Paola Nathaly Mantilla Carrera, Araceli Maritza Dávila Macías, Luisa Fernanda Jaramillo Crespo, Diego Omar Armijos SolanoCiencia Latina Revista Científica, 2024).

**Applying AI in learning English reading:** AI supports learners with English reading skills. Reading skills play an important role for English learners. The ability to read and understand documents is an important skill for learners to be able to take tests and practice professionally, reducing errors and negatively affecting learning outcomes. The author (Muhamad Taufik Hidayat, 2024) evaluated the reading comprehension support and effectiveness of an AI-based personalized reading platform for high school pupils. Based on a pilot study with 43 pupils using AI and 42 pupils without using AI, reading level tests were used to evaluate these two groups of pupils before and after the experiment. Statistical analysis results showed that the group of 43 pupils using the AI-based platform had significantly higher reading comprehension scores than the group of 42 pupils who did not use AI. Research by (Muhamad Taufik Hidayat, 2024) shows that AI has effectively improved reading comprehension. According to (Dessy Rizky Nuraini Herawati, Wiwik Widjajati, Endang Pudjiastuti Sartinah, 2022). AI tools have vocabulary definition and explanation features, and text-to-speech features that can help readers practice listening and speaking skills. Research by (Sri Lestari, Wahyuningsih Usadiati & Misrita, 2021) found a correlation between AI use and English reading skill achievement of students at Kalimantan University. The authors found a correlation between the variable using AI and the variable of students' English reading results with a correlation coefficient of 0.67. The authors have concluded that the relationship between the variable using AI and the variable reading English is significant. AI tools have features to score reading skills and evaluate reading skills, through which learners know their strengths and weaknesses (Xinyi Huang, Di Zou, Gary Cheng, Xieling Chen, and Haoran Xie, 2023).

Table 1 summarizes research on the benefits and limitations of AI applications in learning English. It is worth noting that because the studies use many words to express the benefits or advantages and positive impacts of AI; limitations, disadvantages or negative impacts of AI, however in this study, the authors use the terms benefits and limitations of AI in English learning to create a table.

**Table 1. Summary of research on the benefits and limitations of AI applications in learning English**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students enjoy learning and applying AI. AI supports students in writing (Enik Rukiati, Julien Arief Wicaksono, Gullit Tornado Taufan, Degita Danur Suharsono, 2023), (Patchara Vanichvasin, 2022)</td>
<td>Technology problems, limited AI capabilities, and lack of language standardization (Enik Rukiati, Julien Arief Wicaksono, Gullit Tornado Taufan, Degita Danur Suharsono, 2023)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners perceive positively about using AI applications, learners enjoy using AI in doing homework (Dian Toar Y. G. Sumakul, Fuad Abdul Hamied &amp; Didi Sukyadi, 2021)</td>
<td>Reduced communication skills (Godwin-Jones, R, 2022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner satisfaction using AI, study and homework support, personalization of learning experience, and development of various skills. (Lasha Labadze, Maya Grigolia &amp; Lela Machaidze, 2023)</td>
<td>Reliability, accuracy, and ethical considerations, limited interaction, incorrect responses, limited personalized feedback, failure to understand complex expressions (Lasha Labadze, Maya Grigolia &amp; Lela Machaidze, 2023)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase motivation to study, develop language skills, improve academic performance, Personalized learning, and environmental adaptation, and Instant feedback (Patchara Vanichvasin, 2022)</td>
<td>Increase motivation to study and actively study (Ching-Yi Chang, Gwo-Jen Hwang, Meei-Ling Gau, 2022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop language skills (Esteban Vázquez-Cano, Santiago Mengual-Andrés, and Eloy López-Meneses, 2021)</td>
<td>The answer is misleading (Patchara Vanichvasin, 2022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalized learning and environmental adaptation (Hyangeun Ji, Insook Han &amp; Yujung Ko, 2022)</td>
<td>Easy access (Yang, Hyejin; Kim, Heyoung; Lee, Jang Ho; Shin, Dongkwang, 2022)</td>
</tr>
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Source: Authors

**Research Methodology**

**Research Methods**

Based on the synthesis of research on the application of AI in English language learning and teaching, the authors developed a questionnaire to collect data on the status of using AI tools in English learning of high school pupils.

Because learning a foreign language at high schools in Vietnam is quite diverse, pupils can choose one or two foreign languages such as English, French, Chinese, Korean, etc. In this paper, the authors only investigated pupils who chose English as a compulsory subject for final exams or admission to universities. The authors selected the pupils at LV school for investigation. LV school is located in Hanoi the capital of Vietnam. This is a famous school in the educational system in Vietnam. The total number of students in three grades: grade 10, grade 11, and grade 12 is 300, with 100 students each grade. However, when the questionnaire was distributed, 297 students fully answered the questions in the questionnaire. The investigation happened at the end of May 2024, at the end of finishing academic year, and pupils will be free for summer break.

**Data Processing**
Data about the name, student code, class code, gender, and other personal information are not included in the data processing. The questionnaire includes an explanation of AI tools including web tools used on smartphones and computers for students to clearly understand. AI applications in English learning are explained in the questionnaire as students’ use of AI tools in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

**Question 1:** How do you use AI in learning English? The question uses a five-level frequency scale: from never, rarely, sometimes, often, and always. As a result of data processing, 67% chose always level (the highest frequency level). If calculating from often level to always level, there are about 87% of students chose AI to learn English. Thus, 100% of students have used AI in learning English. The frequency of pupils using AI to learn English is very high (see Figure 1).

![Figure 1. Frequency of using AI in learning English by pupils](image1)

**Question 2:** How do you use AI to learn different English skills? The question also uses a five-level frequency scale: from never, rarely, sometimes, often, and always. The data processing results show that: in learning three skills: listening, speaking, and writing, students often use AI at the frequency of always (the highest level) respectively 60.6%; 67.3%, and 84.2%. In contrast, students use AI at a frequency of always (the highest level) for learning reading skills only 8.1%. This data processing result shows that although the frequency of AI use in learning English by students is very high (see Figure 1), students choose to use AI depending on which skill they are learning. Especially, students use AI tools to support writing skills at the highest level of 84.2%.

![Figure 2. Frequency of using AI in learning different English skills](image2)
Question 3: Where do you use AI tools in learning English skills? Data processing results inform that 100% of students use AI in English centers (additional/supplement classes) and at home. In contrast, only 6.7% of students use AI tools in learning English at school. The remaining 33.7% of students use AI in learning English at other locations. The reason for the above number shows that the school without a lab room for learning English. Pupils are prohibited from using smartphones/computers during class including English class (see Figure 3).

![Figure 3. Places for using AI tools in learning English skills](image)

Question 4: Which benefits of using AI in learning English skills do you get? The 5-point Likert scale applied in which: completely disagree is 1 point and completely agree is 5 points. In response to this question, pupils chose the 4-point level account for the highest percentage for the three skills of listening, speaking, and writing, at 50.5%; 44.8%; and 43.4% respectively. Although pupils agreed with the benefits of using AI in learning reading skills, the 4-point level accounts for 26.9% only. The benefits of using AI in learning English in all four skills were significant, accumulating from 3 to 5 points accounting for over 62.0%. The total cumulative values at the 1 and 2 points for each skill of listening, speaking, reading, and writing were 6.7%; 9.4%; 38.0%, and 6.1%, respectively (see Figure 4). This is also illustrated in Figure 5, with three levels of perception of the usefulness of AI for learning English, 77% chose Yes, 4% chose No and 19% chose Uncertain.

![Figure 4. Benefits of using AI in learning English skills](image)
Question 5: Do you agree with the usefulness of AI in improving students' foreign language skills? There are three options: yes, no, not sure. Up to 77% of respondents agreed, 4% disagreed and the remaining 19% were unsure (see figure 5).

Although using AI tools has benefits for learning English, it also has some limitations. Two questions were used to get pupils' opinions on this content.

Question 6: Do you agree with the roles of AI in English learning activities? The 5-point Likert scale applied in which: completely disagree is 1 point and completely agree is 5 points. Three specific roles of AI include supporting learning, completely replacing teachers, and supporting education (learning and teaching process). The number of respondents reflects the role of AI which is very useful for pupils, supports the process of learning English, and supports the teaching and learning process, but AI cannot completely replace teachers. The collected data evidence shows that the cumulative total at the 3 to 5-point level has 14.5% agreed, as opposed to 85.5% strongly disagreed. AI benefits learning English and an important role in the foreign language learning and training process, but it has its limitations (see Figure 6).

Question 7: What limitations do you encounter when using AI to learn English? The five limiting aspects of AI selected by the authors from Table 1 are i) technical issues, ii) lack of human interaction, iii) difficulty understanding feedback, iv) inconsistent content, v) and limited access to resources. The limitations one to four are above 57.2% of the students' responses respectively. These four limitations are all related to AI solutions that do
not meet the needs of users. As for the fifth difficulty, 40.4% answered the choice, reflecting that opportunities to access AI still have barriers, such as lack of available free AI, and difficulty access to the free Internet (see figure 7).

**Figure 7.** Limitations of using AI in learning English

*Question 8: Your recommendation to schools/teachers to increase the use of AI to support English learning?* Three answer options are given: i) Equip computer labs and AI for English teaching and learning; ii) Encourage students to use AI during English class; iii) Do not prohibit using AI during English lessons. Pupils' opinions are answered in five levels, completely disagree is 1 point and completely agree is 5 points. The results of answering questions and opinions from level 4 to level 5 point are very high, with values of 67.3% respectively; 70.7% and 66.3% for the three options (see figure 8).

**Figure 8.** Recommendations to increase the use of AI in learning English

**Discussion**

Studies on the use of AI tools in learning English and the investigation results in this study both confirm its benefits. The survey results showed that 100% of pupils who chose to study English for admission or
high school graduation exams at LV school used AI to improve their English learning skills. Although the frequency of using AI to learn skills varies, pupils use it very often to learn listening, speaking, and writing skills. This reflects the role of AI tools that pupils choose and are willing to use for learning purposes.

The survey results also show the benefits of AI in learning four English skills and the usefulness of AI in improving students' foreign language skills. While previous studies emphasize the benefits of using AI tools in learning English in terms of enjoyment of discovery, customized learning, increasing learning motivation, and developing learning skills, this survey found that AI tools benefit learners according to learning skills, most notably writing skills 83.8% recorded benefits at 4 to 5 points on a scale of 1-5; Next are listening skills and speaking skills at 75.1%, recording benefits at 4 to 5 points, the lowest is reading skills at 57.2%.

In addition to the benefits, the survey results also reflect the limitations of using AI tools in learning English. AI has supported humans, but AI tools cannot replace humans. The survey results highlight the benefits and limitations of AI, but overall, the benefits of AI outweigh the limitations, with 23% of respondents saying that using AI does not or is not sure to improve pupils' foreign language skills. The limitations of AI tools are unavoidable for many reasons: some AI tools are of good quality, while some AI tools are not smart enough, most pupils are new to using some AI tools, and AI is lacking smart features, and AI is in the process of developing to meet human needs.

The survey results also reflect that the use of AI is not considered important in schools. Pupils use AI tools personally, spontaneously, and learn and use themselves. Pupils have a need to use AI to support learning foreign language skills but have not received investment or attention at school. Recommendations on facilitating and supporting, not prohibiting using AI tools were selected by pupils, expressing their wishes as very valid.

In summary, based on the results of this survey, we can conclude that AI tools play an important role in pupils' English learning. The benefits of AI may vary for each learner and skills, but the overall benefits are clear. However, to use AI more effectively, it is necessary to address the limitations that learners face, which are organizational issues, schools need to support and facilitate for pupils to use AI at school. In addition, other issues such as technology, AI tool selection, and interaction problems with AI will be resolved through technical and organizational measures, with the support of teachers. With the continuous improvement of AI tools, using AI in learning English will be more effective and help students excel in their English learning skills.

Conclusion

The current and potential benefits of AI in English learning make it a promising area for continued research and development. AI has brought significant benefits to English learners, but there are also some limitations to keep in mind. Even if AI develops to a certain extent, AI is the only technology that supports humans but cannot replace humans. Schools, teachers, and students need to be supported to officially use AI in learning and teaching English. AI tool users must combine the power of AI with their knowledge and experience to meet their needs and goals and use AI effectively. Limitations of AI and negative impacts of AI must be detected early, controlled, and resolved so that AI platforms and tools can be used usefully, contributing to improving learning capacity and promoting positive results for all users.

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