



Kev's English Podcast: Episode 10: What I think about ChatGPT

Hello, this is a special episode with my friend Payman in which we talk about AI and ChatGpt and it's implications for language learners...

My links..

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Hello and welcome to Kev's English Podcast. Real English every week. Hello, hello.

Welcome to Kev's English Podcast episode 10. In this special edition I have a special guest, a friend of mine, Mr. Payman from Iran. He lives in Tehran and he's the guy behind IELTS 9 Pro.

If you've seen my videos on YouTube, I'm also on Apparat and on IELTS9.pro. But if you've seen those, they're the videos I make in association with him. So in this episode we have something to talk about. We wanted to talk about, in particular, this artificial intelligence stuff such as CHAT GPT and the possible implications for language learning, especially English and English teaching.

So there's a few interesting insights, a few things we spoke about. Anyway, if you take a listen, I hope you find it useful and I'll see you for episode 11. So, Payman, what do you think about this whole thing about artificial intelligence and CHAT GPT? Because I've had quite a few students have been incorporating it.

They've been writing their essays or whatever and they've been putting them into CHAT GPT and some of my IELTS students in China have actually been using it for their speaking. But I don't know what you think, but I've seen some of the examples and I think it's not very natural. The English that CHAT GPT comes out with is not natural.

It's not something that a normal native speaker would actually use. What do you think about this? You're correct. While CHAT GPT can provide corrections and feedback on writing, it may not always produce feedback that feels natural or human-like.

Well, that's interesting to hear that AI feedback systems are indeed becoming increasingly popular, especially among IELTS students. That sounds like a fascinating podcast topic, I think, and this could offer valuable insights into the role of technology in education and language learning. You know, these systems typically utilise advanced natural language processing, which is also called NLP algorithms, to provide automated feedback on writing and speaking tasks.

For writing tasks, AI feedback systems can analyse grammar, vocabulary usage, coherence, and task response, and they offer students valuable insights into their strengths and areas for improvement. Similarly, for speaking tasks, these systems can provide or, let's say, evaluate pronunciation, fluency, coherence, and lexical range. But we have to discuss it more in detail.

Well, because you showed me that Chinese site. Was it IELTS.me? Right. It is IELTS9.me, actually.

It's a website offering premium correction service using a CHAT GPT API. I just came across that Chinese website the other day, and then I became more curious about how reliable this kind of feedback could be. I fed the AI a sample writing of a student and immediately spat out some suggestions to make the writing what it was supposed to be.

The score was 7, you know, but I applied those corrections and made some changes to improve it. But still, the AI recommended using other phrases in the second corrected essay, and interestingly, the result was still 7, with no change in the score. That was interesting.

I did this three or four times, I think, with no change in the result. Then I thought students might be careful using this kind of feedback. Well, that's a very good point.

When I first heard about this, I automatically thought that, like, as we know, undergraduate students are lazy bastards, right? Everybody knows it. Sorry if you're an undergraduate listening to this, but I've been in four different universities, and I know undergraduates, they're fucking lazy, and they usually write their essays the day or the evening before a submission. So I just thought, you know, I can see this tool being used for plagiarism.

For lazy students, the day before their essay is due, type in some kind of shit or blah, blah, blah, and chatGPT will produce them an essay, and that's what I immediately thought of. I don't know, I think some universities are looking into this, because plagiarism is a big issue. But what you just said there about getting instant feedback, yeah, that's definitely, but when we compared, because you showed me a couple of samples, when I compared the language that chatGPT was, or that IELTS artificial thing was recommending, I just thought, is that something that I would actually kind of write? And I thought, no, they were very complicated, complex language, and I think for the average, it's really not feasible.

I mean, an academic writing a journal article might use some of those terms, but for ordinary people who just need a seven, you know what I mean, it's fine. AI can provide instant feedback, allowing students to receive assessments quickly and practise more efficiently. With AI feedback, students can practise their writing skills anytime, anywhere, you know, without having to schedule appointments or wait for feedback from a human reviewer.

Whether they are on the bus, waiting in queue, or taking a break between classes, they can squeeze in a quick writing practise session and get instant feedback on their work. Well, you know, I'm a bit into computer and websites, and I also created my own website and wrote the codes for that, and I know a little about this AI. It may struggle to provide nuanced feedback, especially in a complex language using or context-specific errors.

This is true when you give personal examples in your essays, body paragraphs. Imagine you are crafting a beautifully intrigued sentence, adding layers of meaning and subtle nuances, you hit submit and eagerly wait for the feedback from your AI assistant. But instead of recognising the context of your life experience in the example, it is unable to decipher the intricacies of your creation.

So, what? This is a kind of limited understanding, I think. I mean, AI may not fully grasp the subtleties of language, including tone, style, and let's say, cultural nuances. And let's not forget about cultural nuance.

It's really important. Language is deeply, as you know, intertwined with culture, and understanding those subtle cultural cues is essential for effective communication. But for AI, navigating these cultural landscapes can be like trying to find your way through a maze blindfolded.

Yeah, that's right. So, limited understanding is what I think is really should be considered here. I don't even know how this kind of shit works.

I've never tried it. It doesn't interest me in the slightest. It's artificial.

It's kind of like when people, when I'm talking to people about IELTS and TOEFL tests, say, or PTE, you're writing and you're speaking are assessed by algorithm. So, it's not the same as a person speaking, interpreting you, or a person reading your essay of writing. It's artificial.

And while it may be accurate up to a point, as in it may do a 100% accurate grammatical analysis, predicates and sentences, and all these different aspects of linguistics, still, do you need that in reference to the IELTS test? No, you don't. And what are students going to actually learn by using this as a tool? So, I think it does maybe have a limited use. I think we would have to do more.

More research is needed into this as to how useful or effective it could be. Yeah, absolutely. I agree with you.

Further research into AI feedback on writing is crucial for improving effectiveness and naturalness of such systems. Human feedback offers personalised guidance tailored to students' specific strengths, weaknesses, and learning goals. If you have specific language goals you want to achieve, whether it is improving your speaking skills for an upcoming presentation or mastering academic writing or research paper, then you can work with a language expert who understands your goals and can provide personalised guidance to help you reach them.

I'll give an example. Some of the introductions that people send us on Telegram, on IELTS 9 Pro, it's obvious that what they've done is use some kind of... I don't know if they've actually used the chat GPT for those introductions, but they go searching for phrases and synonyms, and I have to ask them, what do you mean? Because they discovered it, and this is the AI. Yeah, I've seen that.

It might mean this, but when a native, such as me, reads it, I'm scratching my head. I can't work out what they're trying to tell me. I mean, one of the key things people like Chris from IELTS Advantage, who's quite well known, as you know, like he says, just keep it simple.

Just answer the question clearly so the reader, examiner, can understand what you're trying to say, rather than trying to add overly complex expressions and phrases that might confuse the meaning. Just keep it clear. If you're using over-complicated language to sort of get, and like all the IELTS teachers, all the quite, like Simon, Liz, Advantage, they all say, you know, don't use over-complicated language because it's not going to impress the examiner.

The opposite will be true. If you're using stuff and it's like, and they've got to try and work out what the meaning is. So, what ChatGPT does, as far as I've seen, well, a lot of that, IELTS one that you showed me, as far as I saw, it suggests over-complicated phrases and expressions.

So, from a purely linguistic perspective, it might be correct, but from a nuanced reader trying to understand what you're trying to say, not an expert, not an academic, but a normal person, it does confuse the issue, I think. Writing is not, you know, writing, well, writing is not just about stringing words together, just like what you said earlier in your, you know, talking about introduction of students. It's about expressing ideas, articulating your thoughts and finding your voice as a writer.

It's really important, but relying solely on AI feedback, students risk stunting their growth as a writer and stifling their ability to develop their own writing style and voice. If you've seen some of my sample essays, then I don't always do that same kind of formula. My, because I've done a lot of writing over the years as a teacher and in academia, so my, you could probably recognise my essay if you didn't know it was me, because you've seen quite a lot of mine and you would probably recognise it, because I've got my own style now, my own writing style.

But I think what, though what you say is true, a lot of people taking the IELTS are results orientated, you know, they are, they're not thinking of, do I want to develop as a writer? They are thinking, what template do I need to use to get a seven? I think that's what a lot of people are thinking. So what you say is true, I agree, but I think for lots of people, they just say, well, sounds good, but I just need this particular score and then I'm off. Yeah, yeah, yeah, right.

Well, you might ask, which is better, AI feedback or human feedback? It's a bit like, I'd say, comparing apples and oranges, isn't it? AI offers a speed and efficiency, as we said, crunching through data at lightning speed and providing instant feedback. Well, that's everyone likes, but sometimes it can feel a bit like robotic, let's say, lacking the warmth and understanding of human traction. Unlike human intelligence, AI algorithms do not possess creativity, intuition, empathy, or, I say, moral reasoning to the same extent.

And on the other hand, human feedback brings a level of empathy, nuance, and understanding that AI can't quite replicate. A human reviewer can appreciate the context of your writing, understand your unique voice and style. They can offer tailored feedback to help you grow and improve.

And the ideal approach may involve a combination of both AI and human feedback. Yes, let's say a hybrid approach, I would say, like the AI feedback is ideal for quick assessment. And it's like a practise session, leveraging the speed and efficiency.

And at the same time, students can seek out human feedback for deeper analysis, personalised guidance and encouragement. Yeah, as I said, it's like kind of hybrid approach and it can provide a well-rounded learning experience that maximises the benefits of both technology and human expertise. So let's not underestimate the power of human feedback as well for, as I said, deeper analysis, personalised guidance, and good old-fashioned encouragement.

So I think one thing that we can certainly say is that more study research needs to be done. I mean, I haven't done a great deal about it, but I'll definitely look into it more in the future. Well, thanks for that chat, Perman.

Our next topic might be the one that you suggested how to go from, what was it, from B1 to C1. Well, I think you have B1 to C1 in one of your episodes. So also, if we make an episode on AI to

C1 journey, then A1 or A2 students might not quite understand the podcast content.

The main question that I get from many students is how to move from intermediate or from intermediate to advanced. And I say, right, my goal is to be advanced. How can I make this shift from intermediate stroke up in intermediate to advanced? So maybe we can talk about that in the next episode.

Right. Thank you, Kevin. Until next time, dear listeners, keep writing, keep learning, and keep reaching for those language goals.

Yeah. All the links to the groups are below to podcasts and videos, etc. So check those out and we'll see you next time.