



BALANCING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND HUMANIZATION IN LANGUAGE TEACHING: A HUMANISTIC HYBRID PEDAGOGICAL MODEL

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RESUMEN

Este artículo examinó cómo la inteligencia artificial (IA) podía integrarse en la enseñanza de idiomas sin debilitar los valores humanísticos que sostienen un aprendizaje significativo. El problema surgió de la expansión de herramientas capaces de automatizar retroalimentación, práctica y diseño de materiales, frente a la necesidad de preservar la mediación docente, la seguridad emocional y el juicio ético. El estudio tuvo como objetivo analizar de qué manera la IA favorecía la personalización, la organización y la autonomía guiada en contextos remotos y personalizados, y proponer un modelo pedagógico híbrido humanista. Se empleó un diseño de métodos mixtos con predominio cualitativo, que combinó investigación-acción educativa, estudio de caso instrumental, observación participante, entrevistas semiestructuradas, diarios reflexivos, trackers, rúbricas, entrevista institucional y una encuesta de percepción. La muestra intencional ampliada incluyó aproximadamente quince estudiantes y una submuestra cuantitativa de diez respuestas válidas. Los resultados mostraron que 70 % utilizó IA con frecuencia, pero solo 30 % evidenció un uso autónomo, estratégico y reflexivo; 100 % reconoció el valor del acompañamiento docente y 90 % prefirió un modelo híbrido. Se concluyó que la IA resultó más pertinente como infraestructura de apoyo para personalización, práctica y seguimiento, mientras la relación docente-estudiante permaneció como núcleo interpretativo, afectivo y ético del aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza De Idiomas, Inteligencia Artificial, Pedagogía Humanista

ABSTRACT

This article examined how artificial intelligence (AI) could be integrated into language teaching without weakening the humanistic values that sustain meaningful learning. The problem emerged from the expansion of tools capable of automating feedback, practice, and material design, alongside the need to preserve teacher mediation, emotional safety, and ethical judgment. The study aimed to analyze how AI supported personalization, organization, and guided autonomy in remote and personalized learning contexts and to propose a humanistic hybrid pedagogical model. A mixed-methods design with qualitative predominance was used, combining educational action research, an instrumental case study, participant observation, semi-structured interviews, reflective journals, progress trackers, rubrics, an institutional interview, and a perception survey. The expanded intentional sample included approximately fifteen learners and a quantitative subsample of ten valid responses. Results showed that 70% used AI frequently, but only 30% demonstrated autonomous, strategic, and reflective use; 100% recognized the value of teacher accompaniment, and 90% preferred a hybrid model. It was concluded that AI was most relevant as supportive infrastructure for personalization, practice, and follow-up, while the teacher-student relationship remained the interpretive, affective, and ethical core of learning.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Humanistic Pedagogy, Language Teaching

INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of artificial intelligence has transformed contemporary educational practice, particularly in fields that depend on feedback, adaptation, and communicative interaction. Language teaching is one of these fields. AI-based systems can generate exercises, simulate dialogue, support writing, offer preliminary feedback, and create differentiated learning materials. These possibilities are especially attractive in language education because learners need frequent practice, immediate support, and tasks adjusted to their level, pace, interests, and communicative goals (Holmes et al., 2019; Luckin et al., 2016; Liang et al., 2023).

However, language learning cannot be reduced to the efficient processing of linguistic input. Learning a language involves risk, identity, affect, interaction, culture, motivation, and the willingness to be exposed to error in front of another person. From a humanistic perspective, teaching is not only the transmission of content but also an ethical and relational act. Freire (2005) and Rogers (1994) emphasized the role of dialogue, empathy, personal meaning, and trust in educational transformation. Noddings (2013) further argued that care is not an accessory to education but a central condition for meaningful learning. These ideas are especially relevant when AI enters the classroom because the speed and apparent efficiency of technological systems may obscure the emotional and ethical complexity of teaching.

The general objective of this study is to analyze how artificial intelligence can be integrated into language teaching from a humanistic perspective to support pedagogical personalization and affective accompaniment in remote and personalized learning contexts. The specific objectives are to identify patterns of AI use and learner autonomy; examine the perceived role of teacher accompaniment; analyze preferences regarding hybrid pedagogy; and formulate a pedagogical model that distributes functions between AI support and human mediation.

The research question is: How can artificial intelligence be integrated into language teaching from a humanistic perspective in order to support pedagogical personalization and affective accompaniment in a small group of remote and personalized language learners? The guiding proposition is that AI enriches language teaching when it is subordinated to pedagogical intentionality, ethical supervision, and the teacher-student relationship. The study does not seek to establish causal improvement through pretest-posttest measures; instead, it examines situated pedagogical processes and learner perceptions.

STATE OF THE ART

Artificial intelligence in education refers to a broad ecosystem of technologies that can support prediction, automation, natural language processing, learning analytics, adaptive tutoring, feedback generation, and content design (Russell & Norvig, 2020; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). In language teaching, these affordances are particularly relevant because language acquisition requires exposure, practice, correction, repetition, contextualization, and interaction. AI can assist teachers and learners through automated writing feedback, speech recognition, vocabulary practice, adaptive platforms, chatbots, and generative models capable of creating explanations, dialogues, examples, and differentiated tasks (Liang et al., 2023; Li et al., 2024).

Recent research on generative AI in language education suggests that tools such as large language models can support autonomous practice, content generation, teacher workflows, and formative feedback. Bonner et al. (2023) argue that large language models may offer practical opportunities for language classrooms, provided that they are used within clear pedagogical purposes and under teacher supervision. Similarly, Jeon and Lee (2023) emphasize a complementary relationship between teachers and ChatGPT, rather than a replacement logic. The teacher remains necessary to validate, contextualize, interpret, and humanize AI-generated content.

The benefits of AI in education are therefore inseparable from its risks. UNESCO (2023) warns that generative AI in education requires institutional validation, transparency, privacy protection, human oversight, and digital literacy. AI systems can generate plausible errors, reproduce biases, promote dependency, and weaken critical thinking when learners use them without guidance (O'Neil, 2016; Crawford, 2021). Consequently, the relevant educational question is not whether AI is powerful, but under what conditions it becomes pedagogically meaningful and ethically responsible.

Across this literature, a consistent line of inquiry concerns complementarity rather than replacement. Research emphasizes AI-supported practice, feedback, content generation, and teacher workflows, while simultaneously identifying the need for human validation, digital literacy, privacy safeguards, and contextual judgment. The present study contributes to this discussion by examining these tensions in a small remote and personalized language-learning setting and by focusing specifically on the relation between technological support, affective accompaniment, and pedagogical personalization.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Humanistic pedagogy and the affective dimension of language learning

Humanistic pedagogy understands the learner as a whole person, not as a passive receiver of information. Rogers (1994) emphasized authenticity, empathy, and trust in the learner's capacity for meaningful growth. Freire (2005) viewed education as dialogical and transformative rather than mechanical transmission. Noddings (2013) developed an ethics of care that places relational responsibility at the center of the educational act. These frameworks are crucial for language teaching because learners often experience anxiety, embarrassment, frustration, and vulnerability when speaking or writing in another language.

The affective dimension of language learning is also supported by second-language acquisition theory. Krashen (1982) argued that affective barriers can interfere with acquisition, while Vygotsky (1978) highlighted the importance of mediated interaction in development. Dörnyei (2005) showed that motivation, self-image, and individual learner differences shape language learning trajectories. From this perspective, personalization is not only a technical adjustment of difficulty level; it is an interpretive and relational process through which the teacher recognizes the learner's goals, fears, interests, identity, and communicative needs.

In technology-mediated environments, humanization becomes even more important. Gairín (2019) suggests that virtual learning environments require intentional conditions of presence, accompaniment, and relational meaning. Selwyn (2019) similarly warns against reducing education to automated information delivery. Good teaching involves judgment, professional responsibility, context sensitivity, and ethical decision-making. Therefore, AI can support the language classroom, but it cannot replace the teacher's capacity to interpret silence, detect insecurity, adapt an explanation, slow down the pace, validate error, and sustain confidence.

Hybrid pedagogy between technological support and human mediation

The integration of AI and humanization should not be framed as a binary opposition between technology and tradition. A more productive approach is to design hybrid pedagogical models in which AI supports repetitive, organizational, diagnostic, or exploratory tasks while the teacher remains responsible for interpretation, care, feedback, ethical orientation, and situated decision-making. This logic is aligned with human-in-the-loop approaches: technology contributes to the process, but human judgment remains within the decision cycle.

A hybrid model in language teaching may include AI-assisted materials, personalized tasks, guided autonomous practice, preliminary writing feedback, simulated conversation, progress tracking, and

differentiated assessment. Yet the quality of such a model depends less on the number of tools used and more on the pedagogical coherence of their integration. As Biesta (2015) argues, education cannot be reduced to efficiency or measurable output; it must also preserve judgment, subject formation, and educational purpose. In this sense, AI is valuable when it helps teachers teach more humanely, not when it replaces the human relation that gives learning its meaning.

METHODOLOGY

The study followed a mixed-methods design with qualitative predominance. This approach was appropriate because the phenomenon under analysis involved pedagogical decisions, subjective experiences, technological mediation, emotional accompaniment, ethical tensions, and learner perceptions. The qualitative component made it possible to interpret the meaning of learners' experiences, while the quantitative component provided descriptive tendencies that complemented the analysis.

The design combined educational action research and an instrumental case study. It was action-oriented because it examined situated pedagogical practice and the transformation of teaching strategies through reflective implementation. It was also an instrumental case study because a specific remote and personalized language-learning context was used to understand a broader problem: how AI can be articulated with humanistic pedagogy without weakening the teacher-student relationship.

The expanded intentional sample included approximately fifteen participants in remote and personalized language-learning contexts. Participants varied in age, linguistic level, nationality, professional background, learning goals, digital familiarity, and affective needs. The study also included a quantitative subsample of ten valid survey responses, used only for descriptive analysis. This distinction was important to avoid confusing qualitative depth with statistical generalization. The study does not claim to generalize to all language-learning contexts; rather, it offers situated insights that may be transferable to comparable settings.

Data collection included participant observation, semi-structured interviews with learners, teacher reflective journals, personalized progress trackers, assessment rubrics, class evidence, an institutional interview with the director of the language center, and a Likert-type perception survey. The instruments were selected because they aligned with the humanistic focus of the research: they did not only register linguistic performance, but also autonomy, affective perception, confidence, motivation, ethical awareness, and the perceived role of teacher mediation.

Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic coding and interpretive categorization. Six analytical categories guided the process: interaction with AI tools, autonomy and control of learning, teacher accompaniment, emotional connection, pedagogical preferences, and learning-style evaluation. Quantitative data were analyzed through frequencies, percentages, descriptive indicators, and Wilson confidence intervals due to the small subsample. Triangulation was used as the main criterion of consistency: findings were considered stronger when they appeared across interviews, observation, reflective journals, trackers, rubrics, survey data, and institutional testimony.

The study also incorporated reflexivity because the researcher participated actively in the teaching context. This position offered rich situated access but also created a potential risk of interpretive bias. To control this limitation, the study differentiated observed evidence from pedagogical interpretation, used multiple instruments, and presented findings as contextual and exploratory rather than statistically generalizable.

RESULTS

AI use and critical appropriation

In the quantitative subsample, seven out of ten participants reported frequent use of tools such as ChatGPT, Duolingo, Google Translate, Wordwall, and Quizlet. Three out of ten demonstrated autonomous, strategic, and reflective use. Qualitative records showed that some learners wrote specific prompts, requested speaking practice, compared grammatical explanations, and evaluated outputs, whereas others relied on teacher confirmation regarding correctness, level appropriateness, or pedagogical usefulness.

Teacher accompaniment

All surveyed participants recognized the value of teacher support, and 80% identified the teacher as their main source of clarity, motivation, and security. Interviews and reflective journals registered recurring references to explanation, emotional safety, adaptation, confidence, and continuity. Observed teacher actions included reformulating instructions, adjusting class rhythm, validating frustration, using examples from learners' lives, adapting tasks to goals, and correcting without humiliation.

Preference for a hybrid model

Ninety percent of surveyed participants preferred a model combining AI-supported practice with direct teacher accompaniment. Learners associated AI with availability, speed, repetition, and practice opportunities, while they associated the teacher with explanation, contextualization, correction, and emotional support.

Autonomy and structured follow-up

Progress trackers, rubrics, checklists, and SMART-based goals were used to document weekly progress and areas for improvement. Approximately 60% of learners showed a medium level of autonomy. Records indicated that learners used these instruments to identify goals, review progress, and organize practice between classes.

Pedagogical invisibility of AI

Learners did not always identify when AI had supported the preparation of materials, differentiated exercises, feedback organization, or progress tracking. They nevertheless reported valuing outcomes associated with those processes, including relevant classes, continuity, clearer materials, and personalized tasks. This pattern was documented across observation, interviews, trackers, and reflective records.

Humanistic hybrid pedagogical model

The evidence supported the formulation of a seven-component humanistic hybrid pedagogical model. Table 1 summarizes the components, their pedagogical functions, and their application criteria.

Table 1

Components of the Humanistic Hybrid Pedagogical Model

Component	Pedagogical function	Application criterion
Humanistic initial diagnosis	Identifies level, goals, age, context, learning style, digital autonomy, and affective needs.	Use interviews, initial observation, and learner profile records before designing the learning path.
AI-assisted personalized design	Uses AI to draft activities,	All AI output must be reviewed,

	examples, materials, routes, and differentiated exercises.	filtered, and adapted by the teacher.
Humanistic teacher mediation	Sustains the bond, explains, contextualizes, regulates emotions, and makes situated decisions.	AI does not decide for the teacher; it supports operational and preliminary design tasks.
Guided autonomous practice	Expands exposure, repetition, writing, speaking, and self-evaluation outside class.	Learners receive clear guidance to use tools without replacing their own reflection.
Trackers and rubrics	Documents progress, confidence, weekly goals, areas for improvement, and self-review.	Instruments should register linguistic progress, emotional perception, and autonomy.
Critical feedback	Contrasts answers, identifies errors and biases, and builds linguistic judgment.	Final correction remains under human supervision and metacognitive orientation.
Situated triangulated evaluation	Integrates class evidence, learner perceptions, observation, productions, and follow-up tools.	Results are interpreted within the studied context, without statistical generalization.

DISCUSSION

The findings contribute to the contemporary debate on AI in education by moving beyond the instrumental question of which AI tool should be used. The more relevant question is under what pedagogical, ethical, and relational conditions AI can strengthen language teaching without weakening its human core. The study suggests that AI integration is most valuable when it is governed pedagogically. This means that teachers and institutions must define what AI is used for, who supervises it, how learner data are protected, what tasks remain under human responsibility, and how students are taught to use tools critically.

The study also suggests that humanization should be treated as a criterion of educational quality rather than as an emotional add-on. In the observed context, humanization appeared in concrete instructional decisions: adjusting the pace, choosing meaningful topics, validating frustration, offering feedback with respect, using learners' interests, and creating safe conditions for error. These decisions were not opposed to technology. Instead, they gave technology direction and meaning.

The proposed model aligns with Jeon and Lee's (2023) complementarity framework, UNESCO's (2023) human-centered recommendations, and Selwyn's (2019) critique of teacher replacement narratives. It also responds to the methodological caution required in small-scale educational studies. Because the sample was small and contextual, the results should not be read as statistical proof of AI effectiveness. Their strength lies in interpretive density, triangulation, and pedagogical transferability.

For institutions, the findings imply that AI adoption should not depend only on individual teacher experimentation. Language centers need institutional protocols that distinguish permitted, supervised, and discouraged uses of AI. They also need professional development that includes prompt design, verification of AI output, data protection, detection of bias, assessment integrity, and humanistic pedagogy. Without these conditions, AI may be used superficially or inconsistently, producing inequalities between teachers who know how to integrate it and those who use it minimally or uncritically.

For teachers, the study indicates that AI requires a new form of professional competence. The teacher is no longer only a content selector and language explainer; the teacher is also a curator of tools, a designer of AI-supported tasks, a validator of generated language, a mentor in digital literacy, and a

protector of the affective and ethical dimensions of learning. Far from making the teacher obsolete, AI makes professional judgment more necessary.

The 70%-30% difference between frequent use and strategic appropriation indicates that access to AI does not by itself constitute pedagogical competence. This result is consistent with UNESCO's (2023) emphasis on human oversight and digital literacy and with Bonner et al. (2023), who frame large language models as useful when embedded in clear pedagogical purposes. In the present context, teacher mediation functions as the mechanism through which AI outputs are validated, contextualized, and converted into learning opportunities.

The unanimous recognition of teacher support and the 90% preference for hybrid pedagogy reinforce Jeon and Lee's (2023) complementarity framework. The results also resonate with Rogers (1994), Noddings (2013), and Freire (2005): personalization is not merely technical adaptation but a relational process involving trust, dialogue, care, and recognition of learner vulnerability. The observed value of pacing, respectful correction, and emotional validation suggests that humanization is a condition of educational quality rather than an accessory to technological innovation.

The study's principal conceptual contribution is pedagogical invisibility of AI. In this model, AI can operate discreetly in material preparation, differentiated practice, preliminary feedback, and organization without becoming the protagonist of the class. The teacher remains visible as the person who interprets, validates, cares, and decides. This distribution of functions avoids both technological idealization and technological rejection and aligns with human-in-the-loop approaches to educational decision-making.

The study has important limitations. The sample is small and intentionally selected, the quantitative subsample includes only ten valid responses, and the researcher participates actively in the teaching context. In addition, the study does not measure causal gains in proficiency through standardized pretest-posttest instruments. Accordingly, the percentages describe the studied group and should not be generalized statistically. Triangulation and reflexivity strengthen interpretive consistency, but future research should include broader samples, external observers, longitudinal language measures, and comparisons between different degrees of AI visibility.

At the institutional level, the findings support governance frameworks that define permitted, supervised, and discouraged uses of AI, together with professional development in prompt design, verification, privacy, bias detection, assessment integrity, and humanistic pedagogy. At the classroom level, AI may expand practice and accelerate preliminary design, but final evaluation, sensitive decisions, emotional accompaniment, and contextual interpretation remain under human supervision.

CONCLUSIONS

Artificial intelligence is a valuable ally in language teaching when it is integrated through a humanistic hybrid model. It supports differentiated resources, guided autonomous practice, preliminary feedback, organization, and aspects of personalization; however, these benefits depend on pedagogical intentionality, ethical supervision, and teacher mediation.

The human dimension remains structurally central. The evidence shows that learners value confidence, emotional safety, contextualized correction, clarity, and recognition of personal goals alongside technological support. Teacher accompaniment therefore remains the core of meaningful language education in the studied AI-mediated context.

The proposed seven-component model organizes a clear distribution of functions: AI expands resources and operational support, while the teacher interprets, validates, contextualizes, cares, and decides. The concept of pedagogical invisibility of AI captures an integration in which technology strengthens instructional infrastructure without displacing the teacher-student relationship from the center of the learning experience.

These conclusions are contextual rather than statistically generalizable. Future research should test the model in broader settings, compare levels of AI visibility, incorporate external evaluation, and examine longitudinal relationships with language anxiety, motivation, writing, oral fluency, and learner autonomy.

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