The Robots are Coming!
Chatbots in ELT

Nicky Hockly
Director of Pedagogy
The Consultants-E

nicky.hockly@theconsultants-e.com
The Robots are Coming!

Jill Watson
I didn't find the title of the PDF file for submission. Can we just called it 'Assignment 1.pdf'?

Jill Watson

Please submit as a PDF. There isn't a specific format for the file name, so you can name it what you'd like.
This is incredibly cool

Thank you for sharing. This indeed incredibly interesting to me. I wish I would have the opportunity to implement something like this in my own research.

Just when I wanted to nominate Jill Watson as an outstanding TA!
Hey Jill, are you available for dinner this evening?

Jill Watson
Discuss

1. What’s a robot? Can you think of a definition?
2. What are these?: android, cyborg, social robot, chatbot
3. What have robots got to do with ELT?
4. Are the robots coming? If so, will they replace teachers?
Discuss

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What’s a robot?
A Definition

... a physical machine that's usually programmable by a computer that can execute tasks autonomously or automatically by itself

[ the ‘sense - think - act’ paradigm]

Kate Darling
Roboticist
MIT Media Lab

Source: https://bit.ly/2wILLYk
What’s a robot?

A Definition

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Terminology

Android
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Terminology

Android

Cyborg
The Robots are Coming!

**Terminology**

- **Android**
- **Cyborg**
- **Social robot**
The Robots are Coming!

Terminology

- Android
- Cyborg
- Social robot
- Chatbot
Discuss

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What’s a robot?

A Definition

chatbots


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Chatbots in ELT
Limitations

- Function in very limited contexts
- View of language as discrete chunks
- Traditional methodology (presentation -> repetition drills)
- No real communicative language practice
- Doesn’t understand & doesn’t think!
- Novelty factor can wear off
Discuss

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Robots in ELT

Source: https://cnb.cx/2kt64SJ
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Robots in ELT

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Robots in ELT

Source: https://read.bi/2uBWT0a
“Students do not see [the chatbot] as a viable replacement for communication with another human being. Its lack of emotion, visible cues, and inability to confirm understanding were reported to be some of the major drawbacks to its form of interaction. Therefore, educators should be skeptical of incorporating current AI technology in the L2 classroom as frustration from interaction might outweigh any benefit.  [Gallacher et al. 2018]
Takeaways

- Text vs speech chatbots - both options freely available for learners
- Chatbots can help low-proficiency learners gain confidence
- Chatbots can provide extra grammar, vocab & pron practice for learners in very limited contexts
- Sophia is unlikely to be the future of language learning!
- Beware of shiny box syndrome
- The cut and thrust of real conversation with humans cannot be replaced
- There is no way current AI can compete with real teachers
Thank you!

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https://www.traintodo.com/mail
Low-proficiency learners like chatbots for speaking [Fryer 2006]

Chatbots are not perfect language partners (off topic; grammar issues) [Coniam 2014]

Novelty factor vs. longer-term interest [Fryer et al. 2017, 2018]

“My robot is an idiot!” [Gallacher et al. 2018]

Effective when students use chatbots within their limitations eg for repetition, sources of new vocab & grammar, pron...[Fryer et al. 2018]