Challenges and Ethical Considerations in AI for Language Assessment

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Abstract:

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in language assessment and feedback has transformed educational practices, offering scalable, efficient, and personalized solutions for learners and educators. AI-powered tools such as automated writing evaluators and speech analysis systems promise to reduce workloads, provide instant feedback, and accommodate diverse learning needs. However, this innovation is accompanied by a complex set of challenges and ethical considerations that require critical examination.

One significant issue is algorithmic bias, where AI systems may inadvertently disadvantage specific linguistic or cultural groups due to biased training data or inadequate representation. Such biases risk perpetuating inequities in learning opportunities and outcomes, particularly in high-stakes assessments. Additionally, the opacity of AI decision- making—often referred to as the "black box" problem—raises concerns about fairness, as users may struggle to understand or challenge the reasoning behind an AI-generated score or feedback.

Privacy is another critical concern, as these systems rely on extensive data collection, often including sensitive personal and linguistic information. Ensuring robust data protection measures while maintaining the functionality of these systems presents a delicate balance. Moreover, there is a risk of over-reliance on AI tools, potentially diminishing the role of human judgment, intuition, and cultural sensitivity in teaching and assessment.

This presentation delves into these challenges, offering a comprehensive analysis of the ethical dilemmas posed by AI in language assessment and feedback. Drawing on recent case studies and research, it highlights the need for transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in the design and deployment of AI systems. The session will propose practical recommendations, such as embedding ethical frameworks into AI development, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, and advocating for regulatory standards to protect learners and educators.

Ultimately, this presentation aims to spark a dialogue on how AI can be responsibly integrated into language education, ensuring that its transformative potential is realized without compromising equity, fairness, or human dignity. By addressing these challenges head-on, we can pave the way for more ethical and effective applications of AI in language learning.