DIALOGUE SYSTEMS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING: A META-ANALYSIS
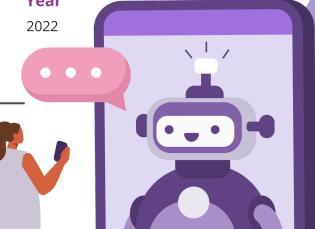
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KEY TERMS

Dialogue-based CALL

Where a language learner has a dialogue with an automated agent (e.g., chatbot, robot, or non-player character in a virtual world)

WHAT EVIDENCE IS SUMMARISED?

17 studies

803 participants

WHAT CAN I LEARN FROM THIS SECONDARY RESEARCH?

How effective is dialogue-based CALL? How do different implementations compare in terms of effectiveness?

WHAT DOES IT FIND?

- Dialogue-based CALL interventions showed significant positive results on L2 development, but not without qualifications.
- Noticeable effects were only observed in beginner (A1) and lower-intermediate (A2) learners.
- No clear difference between post-tests and delayed post-tests means effects may be long term.
- Interventions which had some elements of gamification had a significantly stronger impact.

HOW CAN I USE THE FINDINGS IN MY TEACHING?

- Dialogue systems can be used by learners to practise language in meaningful contexts.
- Conversations with automated agents can be incorporated into task-based language teaching by assigning them as tasks.
- Communicating with a dialogue system provides learners with a low-anxiety setting (the robot will not judge them) which may increase their willingness to communicate.