

Artificial Intelligence in English Language Teaching: Transforming Pedagogy, Assessment, and Learner Engagement

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence has emerged as a transformative force in English Language Teaching by reshaping classroom pedagogy, assessment practices, and learner engagement. In the contemporary educational environment, AI-based tools such as intelligent tutoring systems, automated writing evaluation platforms, chatbots, speech recognition applications, adaptive learning systems, and generative AI models are increasingly influencing how English is taught and learned. This paper examines the role of Artificial Intelligence in English Language Teaching with special focus on three major areas: pedagogical transformation, assessment innovation, and learner engagement. The study adopts a qualitative and analytical approach based on recent developments in AI-supported language education. It argues that AI can support personalized learning, immediate feedback, learner autonomy, differentiated instruction, and interactive language practice. At the same time, the paper highlights important challenges such as academic integrity, overdependence on technology, unequal digital access, ethical concerns, teacher preparedness, data privacy, and the risk of reducing language learning to automated performance. The paper concludes that AI should not be viewed as a replacement for English teachers, but as a pedagogical partner that can enhance human teaching when used critically, ethically, and contextually.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, English Language Teaching, AI in Education, Generative AI, Language Pedagogy, Assessment, Learner Engagement, Digital Learning*

1. Introduction

English Language Teaching has experienced several methodological shifts, moving from grammar-translation approaches to communicative language teaching, task-based learning, blended learning, and

technology-enhanced instruction. In recent years, Artificial Intelligence has become one of the most significant forces influencing the direction of English language education. AI is no longer limited to computer science or technical fields; it has entered classrooms through grammar checkers, automated feedback systems, pronunciation tools, adaptive learning platforms, translation applications, and generative writing assistants.

The growing influence of AI in education is connected to its ability to process language, identify patterns, respond to learner input, and provide personalized support. UNESCO observes that Artificial Intelligence has the potential to address educational challenges and support innovation in teaching, learning, and assessment, but it also creates ethical, social, and policy-related concerns that require careful regulation (Miao and Holmes). In English Language Teaching, this dual nature is especially important because language learning is not only a technical process of mastering grammar and vocabulary, but also a social, cultural, communicative, and creative activity.

AI has changed the traditional relationship between teacher, learner, text, and technology. Earlier digital tools mainly provided access to materials, but AI-based tools can now interact with learners, generate responses, correct errors, suggest improvements, evaluate writing, simulate conversations, and adapt content to individual learning needs. The British Council's systematic review on AI in English Language Teaching shows that AI is increasingly being explored across school, higher education, and adult learning contexts (British Council). This indicates that AI is not merely a temporary technological trend, but a developing educational reality.

However, AI integration in English Language Teaching must be approached with caution. While it can improve engagement and provide personalized support, it may also produce inaccurate responses, encourage passive learning, weaken original thinking, and create ethical issues in assessment. Therefore, the central question is not whether AI should be used in English classrooms, but how it should be used responsibly and meaningfully.

2. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this paper are:

1. To examine the role of Artificial Intelligence in transforming English language pedagogy.
2. To analyze how AI influences assessment and feedback in English Language Teaching.
3. To explore the impact of AI tools on learner engagement, motivation, and autonomy.
4. To identify the major challenges and ethical concerns related to AI integration in ELT.
5. To propose a balanced pedagogical model for effective and responsible AI use in English classrooms.

3. Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How does Artificial Intelligence transform pedagogical practices in English Language Teaching?
2. In what ways does AI reshape assessment and feedback in language learning?
3. How does AI influence learner engagement and autonomous learning?
4. What are the risks and limitations of using AI in English language education?
5. How can teachers integrate AI without reducing the human value of language teaching?

4. Methodology

This paper adopts a qualitative, descriptive, and analytical research design. It is based on secondary sources, recent scholarly discussions, educational reports, and conceptual analysis of AI-supported English Language Teaching. The study does not involve field survey or experimental data collection. Instead, it critically examines the pedagogical possibilities and limitations of AI in English language education.

The paper focuses on three key domains: pedagogy, assessment, and learner engagement. These areas are selected because they represent the core functions of classroom practice. Pedagogy refers to teaching methods and instructional design; assessment refers to evaluation, feedback, and academic integrity; learner engagement refers to motivation, participation, interaction, and autonomy.

5. Artificial Intelligence and Pedagogical Transformation in ELT

AI has significantly transformed English language pedagogy by creating opportunities for personalized, adaptive, and interactive learning. Traditional classrooms often follow a common pace for all learners, but AI-based systems can identify individual learner needs and provide customized exercises. Woo and Choi observe that many AI-based language learning tools use machine learning and natural language processing to identify errors, provide feedback, and assess language abilities. Such tools can help learners receive individualized support outside the limitations of classroom time (Woo and Choi).

One of the major pedagogical benefits of AI is personalization. In a typical English classroom, students differ in vocabulary knowledge, pronunciation ability, grammar accuracy, reading speed, writing confidence, and communicative competence. AI tools can analyze learner performance and suggest suitable learning paths. This supports differentiated instruction, where teaching is adjusted according to learner ability. In this sense, AI helps teachers address mixed-ability classrooms more effectively.

AI also supports immediate feedback. In traditional classrooms, teachers may not always have time to correct every sentence or respond to every learner's writing in detail. Automated writing evaluation

tools can identify grammar errors, spelling mistakes, sentence-level issues, and problems in coherence. Although such feedback cannot replace human judgment, it can help learners revise their work before submitting final drafts. Woo and Choi note that AI-supported language tools have been used for error identification, feedback, and language assessment, showing their usefulness in language-learning contexts (Woo and Choi).

Another important contribution of AI is its role in communicative language practice. Chatbots and conversational AI tools can simulate dialogue situations, allowing learners to practice English in low-pressure environments. Many learners hesitate to speak English because of fear, embarrassment, or lack of confidence. AI conversation tools can provide repeated practice without social anxiety. Lai's systematic review of conversational AI tools in English Language Teaching shows that chatbot-based and conversational AI tools have become increasingly relevant in EFL learning environments, especially for interactive language practice (Lai).

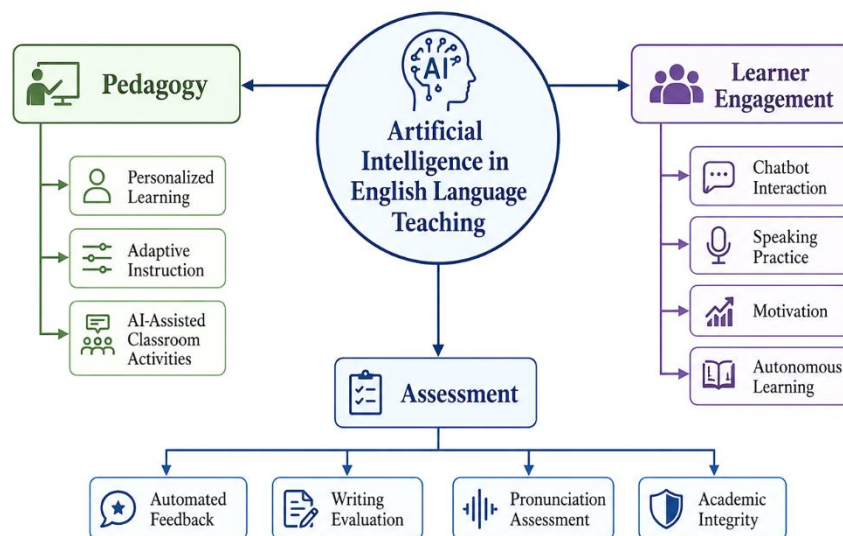


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Artificial Intelligence in English Language Teaching

Generative AI has further expanded classroom possibilities. Teachers can use it to create lesson plans, reading passages, vocabulary tasks, grammar exercises, role-play situations, discussion questions, and writing prompts. Learners can use it to brainstorm ideas, improve drafts, practice conversations, and understand difficult passages. However, UNESCO emphasizes that generative AI in education should be guided by human-centered values, institutional regulation, and ethical responsibility (Miao and Holmes). Therefore, AI transforms pedagogy not by removing the teacher, but by changing the teacher's role.

6. AI and the Changing Role of the English Teacher

The arrival of AI has created anxiety about whether machines will replace teachers. In English Language Teaching, this fear is misplaced because language learning requires emotional support, cultural understanding, ethical guidance, creativity, human interaction, and contextual interpretation. AI may correct grammar, but it cannot fully understand a learner's emotional struggle, cultural background, classroom silence, hesitation, or personal growth.

The role of the English teacher is therefore not reduced but redefined. Teachers are no longer only transmitters of knowledge. They become facilitators of language use, critical interpreters of AI-generated content, and mentors who guide learners toward responsible communication. UNESCO's guidance clearly emphasizes that generative AI should support human capacity and must not weaken the human-centered purpose of education (Miao and Holmes). This idea is highly relevant to English classrooms because language teaching depends on human expression, empathy, and communication.

Teacher agency is essential because AI tools may produce biased, inaccurate, or contextually unsuitable content. A classroom activity generated by AI may not match the linguistic level, cultural context, or emotional needs of a specific group of learners. Therefore, teachers must review, adapt, and humanize AI-generated materials. AI can assist lesson preparation, but pedagogical judgment must remain with the teacher.

7. AI in Language Assessment and Feedback

Assessment is one of the most affected areas of English Language Teaching.



Figure 2. Role of AI in English Language Assessment

AI has introduced new possibilities for automated scoring, instant feedback, plagiarism detection, writing analysis, pronunciation evaluation, and adaptive testing. These tools can reduce teacher

workload and give learners more opportunities for self-correction. Automated writing feedback can help students identify surface-level errors such as grammar, spelling, punctuation, word choice, and sentence structure. Speech recognition tools can support pronunciation practice by showing learners where their pronunciation differs from standard models. Adaptive tests can adjust difficulty based on learner responses, making assessment more individualized. Woo and Choi's review confirms that AI-based language learning tools have been used to assess language abilities and provide feedback to learners (Woo and Choi).

However, AI-based assessment also creates serious concerns. First, automated systems may not fully understand creativity, argument quality, originality, tone, cultural nuance, or rhetorical effectiveness. A student's writing may be grammatically correct but weak in thought, or grammatically imperfect but rich in originality. Human assessment is necessary to evaluate deeper meaning.

Second, generative AI challenges traditional assessment. Students can use AI tools to produce essays, summaries, answers, and assignments. This creates uncertainty about authorship and academic integrity. Perkins, Furze, Roe, and MacVaugh propose the AI Assessment Scale as a practical framework for clarifying the permitted level of AI use in assessment and aligning it with learning outcomes. Their model is useful because it shifts the discussion from simple prohibition to transparent academic practice (Perkins et al.).

Third, teachers need to redesign assessment. Instead of relying only on take-home essays, teachers can include oral presentations, reflective writing, viva voce, process-based drafting, classroom writing, annotated submissions, peer review, and personal learning journals. These methods make it harder for learners to depend entirely on AI and easier for teachers to observe real learning.

AI should therefore be used as a feedback assistant, not as the final authority in assessment. The final evaluation of language learning should remain human-centered, especially in areas such as creativity, interpretation, argumentation, literary appreciation, and communicative confidence.

8. AI and Learner Engagement

Learner engagement is one of the strongest arguments in favor of AI-supported English Language Teaching. Many learners lose interest in English because they experience it as a difficult, examination-oriented, or fear-producing subject. AI tools can make language learning more interactive, immediate, and personalized.

AI-based platforms can increase engagement through gamified tasks, instant responses, adaptive exercises, voice interaction, visual learning, and simulated communication. Learners who are shy in the



classroom may participate more actively with AI tools. Students can practice speaking, writing, reading, and vocabulary at their own pace. This supports learner autonomy.

AI chatbots can be particularly useful for conversational practice. They allow learners to ask questions, repeat exercises, receive corrections, and experiment with language. Lai's review of conversational AI in ELT indicates that conversational AI tools have been increasingly studied for their role in English learning, especially in EFL contexts (Lai). For learners who lack English-speaking environments at home or in their community, AI can provide additional exposure and practice.

At the same time, engagement should not be confused with entertainment. A learner may enjoy using AI but still fail to develop deep language competence. True engagement involves attention, effort, reflection, interaction, and improvement. Therefore, teachers must design AI-based activities that require learners to think, speak, revise, compare, question, and create.

Roe and Perkins argue that generative AI may support learner agency through personalization, but it may also create risks related to inequality, dependence, and reduced autonomy (Roe and Perkins). This is highly relevant to ELT because learner engagement must lead to independence, not dependence.

9. AI, Writing Skills, and Academic Literacy

Writing is one of the most visible areas where AI has influenced English learning. Students now use AI tools for brainstorming, grammar correction, paraphrasing, summarizing, translation, essay drafting, and citation support. These tools can be useful when students use them as learning aids. For example, a student can compare an original draft with AI suggestions and learn how to improve sentence clarity.

AI can also support academic literacy by helping learners understand structure, coherence, paragraph development, and vocabulary usage. Teachers can ask students to analyze AI-generated writing and identify its strengths and weaknesses. This turns AI from a shortcut into a learning object.

However, there is a danger that students may submit AI-generated work without understanding it. This weakens originality, critical thinking, and language development. Perkins et al. argue that educational institutions need transparent frameworks to clarify when AI use is appropriate and when it is not appropriate in assessment contexts (Perkins et al.). In English writing classrooms, this means teachers should not simply ban AI, but should teach students how to use it honestly and critically.

A responsible AI-based writing pedagogy should ask students to declare how AI was used, submit drafts, explain changes, and reflect on what they learned. This helps maintain academic honesty while allowing students to benefit from technology.

10. AI, Speaking Skills, and Pronunciation Development

Speaking is often the most challenging skill for English language learners. Many students understand English but hesitate to speak because of fear of mistakes, peer judgment, pronunciation anxiety, or limited exposure. AI-based speech tools can help learners practice pronunciation, fluency, intonation, and conversational responses.

Speech recognition applications can identify pronunciation errors and provide instant feedback. Conversational AI can create simulated speaking situations such as interviews, classroom discussions, customer interactions, travel conversations, and academic presentations. Lai's review shows that conversational AI tools have been used in ELT to support interaction and language practice, especially in contexts where learners need additional speaking opportunities (Lai).

However, AI speaking tools should not replace human interaction. Real communication involves body language, emotion, turn-taking, social context, humor, politeness, cultural meaning, and spontaneous negotiation. AI can prepare learners for communication, but classroom dialogue, peer interaction, group discussion, and teacher feedback remain essential.

11. AI, Reading Skills, and Vocabulary Development

AI can support reading comprehension by simplifying difficult texts, explaining vocabulary, generating summaries, asking comprehension questions, and adapting reading passages to different levels. This is useful for mixed-ability English classrooms where some learners struggle with complex academic texts. Vocabulary learning can also be improved through AI-based spaced repetition, contextual examples, personalized word lists, and interactive exercises. Learners can ask AI tools to provide synonyms, antonyms, collocations, example sentences, and usage differences. Woo and Choi note that AI-based language tools have been developed to support different aspects of language learning, including feedback, assessment, and individualized learning (Woo and Choi).

However, teachers must ensure that AI simplification does not reduce the richness of literary or academic texts. In English studies, difficulty is sometimes necessary because it trains learners to interpret tone, ambiguity, metaphor, and layered meaning. Therefore, AI should support reading, not remove intellectual challenge.

12. Ethical Issues and Challenges

Despite its benefits, AI integration in English Language Teaching presents several challenges. The first challenge is academic integrity. Generative AI can produce essays, answers, summaries, and assignments within seconds. This makes it difficult to identify whether a student's work reflects actual

learning. Perkins et al. argue that institutions need clear frameworks to manage AI use in assessment and to maintain transparency between teachers and learners (Perkins et al.).

The second challenge is digital inequality. Not all learners have equal access to devices, internet connectivity, paid AI tools, or digital literacy. If AI becomes central to learning without addressing access, it may widen educational inequality. Roe and Perkins note that AI-supported education may increase learner agency, but it may also reproduce unequal access and dependence if it is not implemented carefully (Roe and Perkins).

The third challenge is data privacy. AI tools may collect student data, including writing samples, voice inputs, learning patterns, and personal information. UNESCO emphasizes that generative AI in education requires careful regulation, privacy protection, and institutional responsibility (Miao and Holmes).

The fourth challenge is bias. AI systems are trained on large datasets that may include cultural, linguistic, racial, gender, or ideological biases. In English Language Teaching, this may affect examples, accents, cultural references, or evaluation standards. Therefore, teachers must critically evaluate AI-generated materials before using them in class.

The fifth challenge is overdependence. Learners may stop thinking independently if they use AI for every task. This is dangerous in language learning because fluency develops through effort, mistakes, revision, and practice. AI should support learning, not replace the learner's own intellectual and communicative effort.

The sixth challenge is teacher preparedness. Many teachers may not have adequate training to use AI effectively. Woo and Choi highlight the importance of teacher preparation in the effective use of AI-based language learning tools (Woo and Choi). Without professional development, AI may be misused, underused, or feared.

13. Recommendations for Effective AI Integration in ELT

For meaningful AI integration in English Language Teaching, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. AI should be used as a support tool, not as a replacement for teachers.
2. Teachers should receive training in AI literacy, prompt design, digital ethics, and AI-supported assessment.
3. Institutions should develop clear policies on acceptable and unacceptable AI use.
4. Assessment should include process-based, oral, reflective, and classroom-based components.
5. Learners should be taught to use AI critically rather than passively.

6. AI tools should be selected according to learner level, context, affordability, and pedagogical purpose.
7. Students should be encouraged to disclose AI assistance in academic work.
8. Teachers should combine AI feedback with human feedback.
9. AI-based activities should promote communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking.
10. Ethical concerns such as privacy, bias, access, and fairness should be addressed before large-scale implementation.

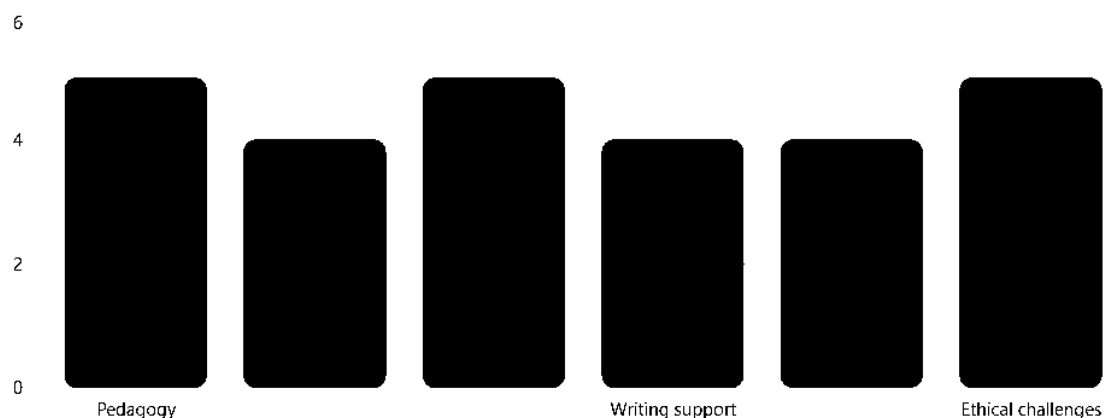
These recommendations are consistent with UNESCO's human-centered approach to generative AI in education and with recent assessment frameworks that call for transparency, fairness, and pedagogical alignment in AI use (Miao and Holmes; Perkins et al.).

14. Discussion

Artificial Intelligence has the power to transform English Language Teaching, but its value depends on how it is used. If AI is used only for shortcuts, automated answers, and surface correction, it may weaken language learning. If it is used as a guided learning partner, it can strengthen pedagogy, feedback, engagement, and learner confidence.

Thematic impact of AI in English Language Teaching

Conceptual representation based on the discussion of AI influence on pedagogy, assessment, learner engagement, and ethical challenges.



Note: Values are thematic indicators, not empirical survey scores.

The graph shows that AI has a strong impact on pedagogy and learner engagement because it supports personalized learning, adaptive instruction, instant feedback, and interactive practice.

The most productive model is a human-AI collaborative model. In this model, the teacher designs learning goals, selects appropriate tools, monitors learner progress, evaluates performance, and provides emotional and intellectual guidance. AI supports practice, feedback, personalization, and resource generation. The learner remains active, reflective, and responsible.

This model is especially useful in English classrooms where teachers face large class sizes, mixed proficiency levels, limited time, and diverse learner needs. AI can help manage some of these challenges by providing additional practice and individualized support. However, it cannot replace the relational, ethical, and interpretive dimensions of teaching.

The future of ELT should therefore not be AI-dominated, but AI-informed. English teachers must preserve the human purpose of language learning: communication, understanding, creativity, cultural awareness, and critical expression. As UNESCO argues, the future use of generative AI in education must be guided by human-centered values and responsible governance (Miao and Holmes).

15. Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence is transforming English Language Teaching by changing how teachers teach, how learners practice, how assessment is conducted, and how engagement is sustained. It offers powerful possibilities for personalized learning, instant feedback, adaptive instruction, pronunciation practice, writing development, and learner autonomy. At the same time, it raises serious concerns related to academic honesty, digital inequality, privacy, bias, overdependence, and teacher readiness.

This paper argues that AI should be understood as a pedagogical partner rather than a substitute for human teachers. The success of AI in ELT depends on responsible integration, ethical policy, teacher training, and learner awareness. English language education must not lose its human foundation in the pursuit of technological advancement. Instead, AI should be used to strengthen human communication, critical thinking, creativity, and meaningful learning. A balanced approach to AI in English Language Teaching can create classrooms that are more interactive, inclusive, personalized, and reflective. The future of ELT lies not in choosing between teachers and technology, but in developing a thoughtful partnership between human pedagogy and intelligent digital support.

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