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Artificial Intelligence and the Transformation of English Language Teaching

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Abstract

AI is one of the essential technological developments that have taken place in English Language Teaching (ELT). New opportunities for language learning are presented by AI tools like ChatGPT, intelligent tutoring systems, speech-recognition software and automated writing tools. They are able to facilitate personalised learning, communication practice, writing development, vocabulary building, and immediate feedback. Meanwhile, AI presents issues of academic honesty, inaccuracy, privacy, inequity and reliance. Hence, AI needs to be used as an assistant pedagogical tool and not as a replacement of teachers. This article explores the impact of AI in ELT, considers its impact on language abilities, and discusses the shifting nature of the teacher's role, its challenges and future possibilities. It proposes that AI can be a valuable tool in the realm of effective English language education when used in a balanced, ethical, and human-centred manner.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, English Language Teaching, Generative AI, ChatGPT, Language Learning, and Digital Pedagogy.

1. Introduction

Technology has been playing a significant role in the development of English Language Teaching since time immemorial. The use of language laboratories, computers, multimedia and mobile apps and online learning platforms have more or less revolutionized the use of the classroom. The advent of Artificial Intelligence has led to another major change. AI can process, understand and produce text; it can react to learners; it can give feedback; it can make learning materials. The emergence of Generative AI tools like ChatGPT has new opportunities for both teachers and students. In the field of education, UNESCO calls for the use of Generative AI tools to be ethical, safe, equitable and human-centred (Miao & Holmes, 2023). For ELT, AI can be used to give students chances to practice language outside the class room and assist the teachers with creating learning materials.

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2. Artificial Intelligence in English Language Learning

AI can offer learner's opportunities to practise English based on their individual needs. Students may ask questions, engage in conversation, get new words, and get help with grammar and writing. AI tools can be accessed anytime that learners require extra practice, unlike the limited practice time that exists in a classroom setting. Personalised learning is one of the important advantages of AI. There are a number of learners with varying levels of proficiency and learning difficulties. AI can provide activities according to individual requirements. A student who requires assistance with simple grammar can do simple practice and another student who needs to work on academic writing or communicates with professional can do that. This individualised practice can foster independence of learners.

3. Artificial Intelligence and Language Skills

AI can help develop the four language skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing. Conversational AI can create opportunities for learning, allowing students to engage in simulated conversations, dialogues, and realistic scenarios like interviews, discussions, or everyday dialogues, in the context of speaking. This may be beneficial for students that do not feel comfortable speaking English in front of others. AI can support students with identifying grammatical mistakes, enhancing vocabulary usage, structuring ideas, and editing their compositions in writing.

Students are not to copy AI-generated essays, however. Rather, they can leverage AI feedback to enhance their writing. According to the most recent studies, writing is one of the most widely researched fields in research on Generative AI-supported language learning (Li et al., 2025). AI can also assist with reading, such as clarifying complex vocabulary, creating comprehension questions and offering summaries. AI tools and conversations can be used to create listening activities. However, first language communication should continue to be a vital aspect of language learning.

4. Changing Role of the English Teacher

The emergence of AI does not make the English teacher unnecessary. Rather, it alters and expands the role of the teacher. AI can help teachers create lesson plans, class activities, vocabulary exercises, comprehension questions, and writing activities. AI can automate some of the mundane tasks and give teachers more tools to work with. But AI-generated content requires a good amount of scrutiny. AI can sometimes generate content that is incorrect, inappropriate or unsuitable. Hence, teachers are expected to choose, adapt and modify the content created by artificial intelligence, based on the learners' requirements. The teacher becomes more of a facilitator, guide and critical evaluator of technology. Language education remains humanistic, involving human interaction, encouragement, cultural understanding and emotional support.

5. AI and Critical Thinking

While AI can offer immediate responses, students should always question information generated by AI. AI systems may generate false or misleading information at times. Thus, students need to be educated on how to fact-check information and critically analyse the answers provided by AI. AI can itself be a critical thinking activity for teachers. Students can then analyse an AI-generated

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text, pointing out any grammatical or factual mistakes and how to fix them, for instance. These kinds of activities can build up language skills and critical digital literacy.

6. Challenges of Using AI in ELT

While AI offers numerous advantages, it also has its drawbacks. Academic integrity is important since it can be possible for students to submit AI-generated work as their own. For this reason, teachers should stimulate original writing and evaluate the learning process, not relying solely on written tasks. There's another issue, which is accuracy. Responses generated by AI may be inaccurate or contain information that is fabricated. Pupils need to be taught the importance of checking information with accurate sources. Access to technology and privacy are other concerns, and especially in the context of education, students may have varying access to digital devices and internet facilities. Excessive dependence on AI may also reduce students' independent thinking and language production. AI should thus serve as an ally and not a replacement for students when it comes to learning.

7. Global Englishness and Cultural Context

English is no longer a language of just one culture or region. People who speak different languages use English in worldwide situations. Thus, ELT needs to be aware of varieties of English and the different cultural backgrounds. However, the AI systems are trained with massive information and can regurgitate the dominant language and culture. Incorporating a Global Englishes perspective into the classroom, however, calls on teachers to ask students the questions of whose English is represented and whose cultural perspectives are visible. Recent scholarship suggests that authentic data, teacher agency and wide range of resources should be used alongside AI-generated language in ELT supported by GenAI not as stand alone. This is especially true for Indian classrooms of English Language learners. Students are able to interact with AI, as well as Indian English, regional cultures, multi-lingual experiences and local contexts. AI can support learners to communicate internationally without having to give up their language and cultural identity.

8. The Use of AI in the Indian ELT Context

The opportunities for teaching and learning with AI are very promising in the context of higher education in India, especially in the classrooms where students come with diverse linguistic and educational backgrounds. AI can provide additional opportunities for communication practice, academic writing, vocabulary development, interview preparation and professional communication. AI can also be used to create activities on employability skills and communication skills that teachers can use. Meanwhile, Indian students should be supported to retain their multi-lingualism and cultural identity. AI should support learners to communicate effectively in English, but not supplant their local language and culture.

9. Developing a Pedagogy for Human-Centered AI

AI–teacher collaboration should be the basis of the future of AI–assisted ELT, not teacher replacement. Human centred approach is a humanistic approach, in which the object of teaching, the development of the child, ethics and the relationship between people are placed at the heart of technological innovation.

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The following five principles can be used as a useful paradigm for AI for ELT:
Purpose: AI should be used only when it serves a clear learning objective.
Participation: Students should actively interact with, question and evaluate AI-generated content.
Personalisation: AI can provide differentiated learning opportunities according to learner needs.
Professional judgement: Teachers should evaluate AI-generated materials and remain responsible for pedagogical decisions.
Principled use: AI integration should respect academic integrity, privacy, equity and cultural diversity.
This aligns with the focus of the UNESCO on ethical, safe and equitable use of GenAI in education, with a human-centred emphasis.

10. Future of AI in ELT

AI is likely to further facilitate collaboration among teachers, learners and AI technologies in the future of ELT. Studies on the use of Generative AI in language learning are growing rapidly, including in writing, speaking, personalised learning, and feedback and learner engagement (Lee et al., 2025). The best possible implementation of AI will be achieved not only by having cutting-edge technology but when implemented properly in education. Professional development and AI literacy is needed for effective use of these tools by teachers. Responsible usage of AI, verification of information and academic integrity are additional concepts that students must grasp.

Conclusion

In this age of Artificial Intelligence, English Language Teaching is undergoing a metamorphosis that opens up new possibilities for personalised learning, communication practice, support of writing and immediate feedback. It can take language learning outside the classroom and help teachers create the language course content. But there's more to learning than technology. Teachers are vital in giving guidance, motivation, cultural awareness, critical evaluation and meaningful interaction. ELT should therefore move towards a balanced relationship between human teachers and intelligent technologies in the future. If applied critically, creatively and ethically, AI can be a powerful tool for the development of effective and learner-centred ELL.

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