

The role Artificial Intelligence in English Language Teaching

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence is increasingly transforming English Language Teaching by offering adaptive learning systems, automated feedback, and personalized instruction. While AI presents numerous benefits, including efficiency and accessibility, its implementation in ELT also raises significant pedagogical, ethical, technological, and socio-cultural challenges. This paper highlights the role and main issues of Artificial Intelligence while English Language Teaching.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, English Language Teaching, pedagogical, ethical, technological, challenges.

Introduction

In recent years, the rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has had a transformative impact across numerous sectors, including healthcare, education, and finance. The term “Artificial Intelligence” was formally introduced at the historic conference held at Dartmouth College in 1956, an event widely regarded as the birth of AI as a distinct academic discipline (Zhao, 2022). This conference brought together prominent scholars from computer science, mathematics, and cognitive science to examine whether machines could simulate aspects of human intelligence.

AI is an interdisciplinary field grounded primarily in computer science that seeks to simulate, extend, and enhance human cognitive abilities through computational systems. Over time, AI technologies have become deeply embedded in various sectors of society, generating both significant opportunities and complex challenges. Its integration into industries such as healthcare, finance, manufacturing, and education has reshaped traditional practices, improved efficiency, and fostered innovation.

In the field of education in particular, the application of AI technologies is expanding rapidly. From intelligent tutoring systems to automated assessment tools, AI is

increasingly influencing teaching methodologies, learning experiences, and educational management systems.

Materials and Methods

The landscape of English language teaching has undergone profound transformations in recent decades and it is driven by advancements in technology, evolving pedagogical approaches, and the increasing globalization of communication. English language continues to solidify its position as a global lingua franca. (Vaishnav, 2024) In the era of AI, the traditional teacher-student interaction in English language teaching has been redefined with the integration of a new participant—AI. Advancements in technology, particularly the proliferation of computer networks, have introduced transformative opportunities for the development and enhancement of English language teaching methodologies. In the following part, representative researches are provided to demonstrate the potential of AI in solving complex problems in different areas of English language teaching.

Pokrivcakova (2019) indicates that the integration of AI into education enhances both learning and teaching by fostering a more personalized learning experience, flexible teaching methods, and inclusive management. AI-driven tools can assist in cultivating the knowledge and skills

required for success in a technology-advanced society. To effectively incorporate these tools into traditional teaching practices, educators must develop new competencies to support students, while also minimizing unnecessary workloads and eliminating repetitive tasks. So, experts at the British Council and Dr Helen Crompton from the Research Institute of Digital Innovation in Learning at ODUGlobal examined 43 research studies about this topic. They found:

1. AI tools are being used to improve speaking, writing, and reading skills. It can provide new ways of teaching and supports students with goal setting and managing their own learning. AI tools don't seem to be used much for improving listening skills.

2. AI tools can help learners practice English outside class. They can also lessen learners' fear of speaking in English.

Although, even with rapid changes in technology, traditional lecture-style teaching is common.

However, the integration of AI into ELT also presents several challenges that must be addressed to maximize its effectiveness. One of the primary challenges of using AI in ELT is the reliability and accuracy of AI, particularly in the areas of language processing and feedback. While AI technologies have made significant strides in understanding and analyzing human language, they are not infallible. AI may struggle with the nuances of language, such as idiomatic expressions, cultural context, or complex sentence structures, which can lead to inaccurate or incomplete feedback. This limitation raises concerns about the quality of language instruction provided by AI-driven platforms. Students who rely solely on AI for feedback may receive misguided corrections or inadequate explanations, hindering their progress rather than supporting it. Therefore, while AI can assist in certain areas of language learning, it cannot replace the nuanced

judgment of experienced human educators who are capable of understanding the context and subtleties of learners' language use.

One of the primary concerns is student overdependence on AI systems. When learners rely excessively on AI for writing or speaking tasks, they may bypass essential cognitive processes required for language acquisition. For example, automated essay generators may produce grammatically accurate texts, but learners may not develop critical thinking or productive skills. Although AI systems are highly advanced, they may struggle with nuanced linguistic and cultural contexts. Idiomatic expressions, pragmatic meaning, and cultural references often require human interpretation. AI-generated feedback may sometimes be technically correct but pedagogically inappropriate.

AI-driven ELT tools often require stable internet access, modern devices, and subscription fees. In low-resource contexts, these requirements may exacerbate educational inequalities. Learners from disadvantaged backgrounds may have limited access to AI-enhanced learning opportunities.

As English language teaching is the most common discipline for AI use in education, English language teachers must develop their AI literacy skills. Teachers should also develop learners' AI literacy so that they can understand its limitations and risks. Experts should think carefully about which AI models to use, as models may not include all varieties of English. Clear rules on data privacy and ethics statements for AI in English language teaching are needed.

Recent developments have seen a rise in AI, with empirical findings (eg, Crompton et al., 2022), revealing a trend towards using AI in language learning and writing skills more frequently than in other disciplines. Technology has been an integral support in ELT (Rivera Barreto, 2018). Previous

researchers revealed that AI is a multifaceted technology with three user categories: (1) learner facing, used by students to learn; (2) teacher facing, used by teachers to help in teaching activities, for example, grading; and (3) system facing, which is used by administrative staff to manage and examine student data (Pokrivčáková, 2019). However, challenges persist in the integration of AI into ELT. Despite the significant advancements in AI research, there remains a notable gap in understanding how AI models can be effectively adapted to ELT with limited resources. Current AI models often require extensive computational resources, which are typically unavailable to the area of ELT. Besides, one notable issue with AI technology was the generation of incorrect responses. Additionally, the system's limited capabilities emerged as a significant challenge. This limitation highlighted users' desire for AI systems to perform tasks more effectively and with greater sophistication, exceeding their current level of functionality. The purpose of this study is to explore the key challenges and limitations of integrating AI technologies into English Language Teaching. Specifically, this research aims to investigate how AI-powered tools and systems can be utilized to personalize learning experiences, improve language proficiency assessments, and support teachers in instructional design. By addressing existing challenges in the application of AI into ELT, such as accuracy in response generation and system capability, the study seeks to develop practical strategies for leveraging AI technologies effectively.

Conclusion

All in all, AI has immense potential to enhance ELT by offering personalized feedback, flexible learning opportunities, and innovative instructional methods. However, its integration is not without challenges. Pedagogical limitations, ethical

concerns, data privacy risks, teacher readiness issues, and digital inequality must be carefully addressed to ensure responsible and effective implementation. Rather than replacing teachers, AI should serve as a supportive tool that complements human expertise and fosters meaningful language learning experiences.

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