



THE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN ENHANCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI), especially generative AI and large language models, is increasingly influencing English language teaching and learning. This article explores how AI supports personalization, automated feedback, learner autonomy, interaction, and teacher assistance. The findings show that AI can improve vocabulary learning, writing accuracy, pronunciation practice, communicative competence, and formative assessment when used with clear pedagogical goals and teacher guidance. However, challenges such as misinformation, bias, overdependence, data privacy, and academic integrity should be carefully considered. The article concludes that AI should serve as a supportive pedagogical partner rather than a replacement for teachers.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, English language teaching, English language learning, generative AI, ChatGPT, learner autonomy, AI-assisted feedback, digital pedagogy.

Introduction

The rapid development of artificial intelligence has created new opportunities in English language teaching and learning. Today, AI is used not only for grammar



checking and translation, but also for generating texts, giving feedback, supporting pronunciation practice, creating dialogues, and personalizing learning activities. These tools are becoming increasingly important for both teachers and learners because they make the learning process more flexible, interactive, and accessible. AI can help learners receive immediate support, additional practice, and individualized feedback, especially in large or mixed-ability classes. It can also assist teachers in lesson planning, materials development, assessment, and feedback. As a result, teachers may spend less time on routine tasks and focus more on meaningful pedagogical decisions and student development. However, the effective use of AI in English language education depends on clear pedagogical aims and responsible implementation. Although AI offers many benefits, it also raises concerns such as overdependence, misinformation, academic integrity, data privacy, and reduced independent thinking. Therefore, AI should not replace teachers, real communication, or learner responsibility. This article aims to analyze the role of AI in enhancing English language teaching and learning, focusing on its opportunities, limitations, and practical implications in classroom and independent learning contexts.

Literature Review

Artificial intelligence in education has been discussed for several decades, but its meaning and practical scope have changed significantly in recent years. Earlier AI applications mainly focused on intelligent tutoring systems, automated testing, learning analytics, and adaptive learning platforms. Recent developments, especially generative AI and large language models, have expanded the field by enabling systems to create texts, examples, feedback, and conversational responses. Zawacki-Richter, Marin, Bond, and Gouverneur (2019) note that AI in higher education has become a growing research area, although educators still need clearer understanding of how AI can provide meaningful pedagogical benefits rather than only technological innovation.

In language education, AI is closely connected with computer-assisted language learning, mobile-assisted learning, digital writing support, pronunciation software, and automated assessment. Godwin-Jones (2023) explains that AI bots and related technologies create new spaces for language learning by allowing



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learners to interact with digital agents and receive support beyond the traditional classroom. This is important because language learning requires repeated exposure, interaction, correction, and meaningful practice. AI can increase these opportunities by providing learners with access to feedback and practice at any time.

Large language models have further increased interest in AI-supported English language teaching and learning. Kasneci et al. (2023) state that such models can support content creation, learner engagement, personalized learning, and innovative teaching practices. However, they also emphasize the importance of critical thinking, fact-checking, human supervision, and digital literacy. This view is especially relevant because language learners may easily trust fluent AI-generated answers even when they contain factual errors, inappropriate examples, or culturally limited perspectives.

Kohnke, Moorhouse, and Zou (2023) examine the use of ChatGPT in language teaching and learning. They identify several advantages, including text generation, explanation, interaction, and language practice. For English teachers, ChatGPT and similar tools can help create model dialogues, reading passages, vocabulary exercises, writing prompts, grammar explanations, quizzes, and differentiated tasks. For learners, these tools can support conversation practice, paraphrasing, vocabulary clarification, and writing feedback. Nevertheless, issues of reliability, ethics, and user competence remain important.

Research also emphasizes the complementary relationship between teachers and AI. Jeon and Lee (2023) found that ChatGPT can function as an interlocutor, content provider, teaching assistant, and evaluator. However, teachers remain responsible for selecting resources, organizing learning activities, making pedagogical decisions, and developing students' ethical awareness. Therefore, AI should not be viewed as a replacement for teachers, but as a tool whose effectiveness depends on teachers' professional competence.

Another important theme in the literature is learner autonomy. AI can support autonomous learning by helping students ask questions, practise language skills, receive feedback, and revise their work outside the classroom. However, autonomy should not be confused with dependence on ready-made AI-generated answers. If students use AI only to complete tasks without thinking, their



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linguistic and cognitive development may become weaker. For this reason, teachers should design AI-based tasks that require analysis, comparison, revision, reflection, and personal production.

Assessment is also an important area of AI use. AI tools can support formative assessment by giving immediate feedback on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, coherence, and task achievement. Such feedback may help learners improve their drafts before final submission. However, AI assessment has limitations because it may not fully understand context, creativity, pragmatic appropriateness, or individual learner development. Therefore, AI-generated feedback should be treated as an additional source of support rather than a final evaluation. Ethical issues are central to current discussions on AI in education. UNESCO stresses that generative AI should be implemented in ways that protect privacy, fairness, inclusion, safety, and human agency (Miao & Holmes, 2023). In English language education, ethical concerns include data privacy, unequal access to AI tools, bias, cultural stereotyping, plagiarism, and the loss of authentic learner voice. These concerns suggest that educational institutions should create clear guidelines and teachers should help students develop responsible AI literacy.

Overall, the literature presents AI as a powerful but complex pedagogical resource. It can enhance English language teaching and learning by increasing practice opportunities, personalizing feedback, supporting teachers, and extending learning beyond the classroom. However, its effectiveness depends on pedagogy, teacher guidance, ethical use, and learners' active engagement rather than technology alone.

Methods

This article uses a narrative literature review method to synthesize major themes, concepts, and implications from existing research on artificial intelligence in English language teaching and learning. The review focused on scholarly articles, institutional reports, and policy documents related to generative AI, language learning, teacher roles, learner autonomy, feedback, assessment, and ethical issues.



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The selection of sources followed three main criteria. First, priority was given to peer-reviewed journal articles and reputable institutional publications. Second, recent studies and reports published mainly between 2019 and 2026 were emphasized because AI technologies, especially generative AI, have developed rapidly during this period. Third, the sources were selected according to their relevance to English language teaching and learning or to broader AI-in-education principles applicable to language education. Key sources included UNESCO guidance on generative AI, the OECD Digital Education Outlook, systematic reviews of AI in higher education, and studies on ChatGPT in language teaching

The reviewed literature was analysed thematically. Repeated ideas were grouped into major categories, including personalization and learner autonomy, interactive communication, writing and feedback, teacher support, assessment, and ethical challenges. This article does not aim to cover all publications on AI in education. Rather, it provides a focused conceptual synthesis intended to support English teachers, curriculum designers, and researchers in understanding responsible AI integration in language education.

Results

The thematic analysis of the literature produced six major findings concerning the role of AI in enhancing English language teaching and learning. These findings are presented below as synthesized results rather than as statistical outcomes. They show that AI has significant pedagogical potential, but its effectiveness depends on careful integration into learning objectives, teacher mediation, and ethical practice. The analysis of the reviewed literature revealed six major findings related to the role of artificial intelligence in English language teaching and learning.

1. AI supports personalized and differentiated language learning

The first finding is that AI can support personalized language learning. In traditional classrooms, teachers often work with learners who have different levels of proficiency, motivation, learning speed, vocabulary knowledge, and confidence. AI tools can help by producing tasks at different difficulty levels,



giving individualized explanations, suggesting additional examples, and adapting practice to learner needs. For example, an AI chatbot can simplify a reading text for a B1 learner, provide advanced vocabulary for a C1 learner, or explain grammar step by step.

Personalization is especially useful in English language learning because students need repeated practice in listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. AI can provide extra practice outside the classroom and allow learners to study at their own pace. However, such personalization should be connected with clear learning goals so that AI support strengthens learner independence rather than reducing academic challenge.

2. AI increases opportunities for interaction and communicative practice

The second finding is that AI can increase opportunities for interaction. Many EFL learners have limited chances to communicate with proficient English speakers. AI chatbots can simulate dialogues, interviews, debates, role plays, and everyday conversations. They can ask follow-up questions, respond to learner answers, and generate new topics. This can help develop fluency, vocabulary use, pragmatic awareness, and confidence. At the same time, AI interaction cannot fully replace human communication. Real communication includes emotions, social context, cultural norms, non-verbal signals, and unpredictable meanings. Therefore, AI is more useful as a preparatory or supplementary practice space before learners interact with classmates, teachers, or real speakers.

3. AI improves writing support and formative feedback

The third finding concerns writing development. AI tools can help students brainstorm ideas, organize outlines, revise grammar, improve coherence, paraphrase sentences, and receive feedback on drafts. Automated writing feedback is useful because learners often need more individual feedback than teachers can provide during limited classroom time. AI can quickly identify some errors and suggest possible improvements.

However, writing support should be carefully controlled. If students use AI to produce entire essays, the task may no longer reflect their own language ability. A more effective approach is to use AI for specific stages of writing, such as



generating ideas, comparing introductions, identifying grammar errors, revising a paragraph, or reflecting on feedback.

4. AI supports teachers in materials design and classroom preparation

The fourth finding is that AI can assist teachers in preparing educational materials. English teachers regularly create reading texts, comprehension questions, vocabulary exercises, grammar tasks, speaking prompts, assessment rubrics, lesson plans, and differentiated activities. AI can generate first drafts of these materials and save time. Teachers can then edit, localize, and adapt them according to curriculum requirements and learner needs. Nevertheless, teacher expertise remains essential. AI-generated materials may include factual inaccuracies, unnatural examples, cultural bias, unsuitable difficulty levels, or poor alignment with learning outcomes. Therefore, teachers should evaluate AI materials in terms of accuracy, relevance, level, inclusiveness, communicative value, and assessment purpose.

5. AI can strengthen assessment when used formatively

The fifth finding is related to assessment. AI can support formative assessment by giving quick feedback, generating quizzes, analysing common errors, suggesting revision points, and helping students practise before formal tests. For example, AI can create IELTS-style speaking questions, evaluate vocabulary variety in a paragraph, or generate grammar practice based on students' mistakes. However, AI should not be used as the only assessor of English ability. Language assessment requires attention to communicative purpose, content relevance, interactional competence, creativity, and context. AI may overvalue surface accuracy or produce inconsistent judgements. Thus, human teachers should make final assessment decisions, while AI can be used for practice, feedback, and diagnostic support.



Table 1. Summarizes the main pedagogical roles of AI in English language teaching and learning.

AI role	Examples in English language education	Potential benefit	Necessary teacher control
Tutor	Explaining grammar, giving vocabulary examples, simplifying texts	Individualized support and repeated practice	Check accuracy and level appropriateness
Conversation partner	Role plays, interviews, debates, dialogue practice	Increased fluency and confidence	Connect AI practice with human communication
Writing assistant	Draft feedback, coherence suggestions, paraphrasing support	Improved revision and self-editing	Prevent plagiarism and require reflection
Assessment assistant	Quizzes, error analysis, practice feedback	Faster formative feedback	Use teacher judgement for final evaluation
Materials assistant	Lesson plans, tasks, rubrics, texts, exercises	Reduced routine workload	Edit, localize, and align with objectives
Learning coach	Study plans, reminders, goal setting, reflection prompts	Greater learner autonomy	Guide students toward active effort

Discussion

The findings show that AI can enhance English language teaching and learning in several ways, but these benefits are not automatic. The key issue is pedagogical integration. AI tools are powerful because they can produce language quickly and interactively. Yet language learning is not only the production of correct sentences. It also involves meaning-making, identity, culture, communication, reflection, social interaction, and critical awareness. Therefore, AI must be placed within a learning design that encourages students to think, speak, revise, question, and create.

One important implication is that teachers' roles become more complex rather than less important. Teachers are no longer only providers of knowledge or correctors of mistakes; they become designers of AI-enhanced learning



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environments. They decide when AI should be used, what task it should support, what level of assistance is acceptable, and how students should demonstrate learning. This corresponds with Jeon and Lee's (2023) argument that teachers orchestrate resources and raise ethical awareness. AI can generate material, but it cannot fully understand the social and emotional needs of a specific classroom. Another implication concerns learner autonomy. AI can help students become more independent by providing access to explanations, examples, and feedback outside class. For English learners in contexts where exposure to English is limited, this is a significant advantage. Students can practise dialogues, request vocabulary lists, ask for pronunciation guidance, and revise writing drafts. However, autonomy requires responsibility. Teachers should train students to ask better questions, evaluate AI output, compare suggestions, and make final decisions. In this sense, AI-supported autonomy should be reflective rather than passive.

AI also changes the nature of classroom activities. Traditional tasks that ask students only to produce a paragraph or answer simple questions may become less reliable because AI can complete such tasks easily. Teachers may need to redesign assignments so that they include process evidence, oral explanation, peer discussion, personal reflection, local context, and in-class performance. For example, instead of asking students to submit only an essay, a teacher may ask them to submit a planning map, first draft, AI feedback record, revised draft, and reflection. This approach makes learning visible and reduces dishonest use.

In speaking classes, AI can be used before, during, and after communicative tasks. Before class, students may practise vocabulary or rehearse with an AI chatbot. During class, teachers can use AI-generated prompts for debates or problem-solving tasks. After class, students can use AI to reflect on their performance and prepare improved answers. However, the final goal should remain human communication. AI practice should lead to more confident interaction with classmates, teachers, and real audiences.

In writing classes, the most effective use of AI is likely to be process-based. Students can ask AI to comment on clarity, coherence, grammar, or vocabulary. They can compare AI suggestions with teacher feedback and decide which changes improve their meaning. Teachers can encourage students to mark AI-



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supported revisions and explain why they made them. This develops metacognitive awareness and prevents AI from becoming a hidden ghostwriter. The aim is not to ban AI completely, but to make its use transparent, limited, and educationally meaningful.

The ethical dimension should be treated as a core part of English language education. Since students will probably use AI in academic and professional life, they need guidance on responsible use. Institutions should develop clear policies about acceptable and unacceptable AI assistance. Teachers should explain when AI may be used for brainstorming or editing and when it is not allowed. Students should also learn that AI systems may reproduce bias, invent sources, misunderstand tasks, or provide culturally inappropriate language. Critical evaluation is therefore a language skill and a digital citizenship skill.

The results also suggest that AI may be especially useful in contexts with limited resources. Teachers who have large classes can use AI to generate additional practice and differentiated support. Students who cannot access native speakers can practise conversations. Learners who feel shy can rehearse privately before speaking in class. However, unequal access to devices, internet, and premium AI tools may increase educational inequality. For this reason, institutions should consider fair access and provide recommended free or approved tools where possible.

From a research perspective, more empirical studies are needed in specific EFL contexts. Much of the current discussion is conceptual or based on early experiences with generative AI. Future research should examine how AI affects vocabulary retention, writing development, pronunciation, speaking confidence, learner motivation, academic integrity, and teacher workload. Studies should also investigate the long-term impact of AI use. Short-term improvement in performance does not always mean deep learning. Researchers should therefore distinguish between AI-assisted output and genuine competence development.

Overall, the discussion supports a balanced position. AI should neither be idealized as a magical solution nor rejected as a threat to education. Its value depends on human choices. When teachers use AI with clear objectives, critical evaluation, ethical rules, and communicative tasks, it can enhance English language teaching and learning. When it is used without guidance, it can lead to



superficial performance, dependence, and weakened learning. The future of AI in language education should therefore be based on cooperation between human teachers, active learners, and carefully selected digital tools.

Conclusion

This article examined the role of artificial intelligence in enhancing English language teaching and learning through a narrative review of recent literature. The analysis shows that AI can support language education by personalizing learning, increasing practice opportunities, improving formative feedback, assisting writing development, supporting teachers in materials design, and strengthening learner autonomy. AI can also create new forms of interaction through chatbots and large language models, which may help learners practise English beyond the classroom.

At the same time, AI integration requires careful pedagogical and ethical control. The main risks include overdependence, plagiarism, misinformation, bias, privacy problems, unequal access, and reduced critical thinking. For this reason, AI should not replace teachers, human feedback, or authentic communication. Instead, it should be used as a supportive pedagogical partner. Teachers remain central because they design tasks, interpret learner needs, evaluate performance, guide ethical use, and create the human relationships necessary for meaningful learning.

The article concludes that the most effective approach is a human-centred model of AI-enhanced English language education. In this model, AI supports but does not dominate learning; students remain active producers of language; teachers remain pedagogical decision-makers; and institutions provide clear policies for responsible use. Future research should provide more empirical evidence on the long-term effects of AI on English language competence, motivation, assessment, and teacher professional practice

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