ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRATEGIES FOR HUMAN-CENTRED LEARNING

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Abstract

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), is transforming many aspects of modern education. English language teaching is one of the areas where AI-based technologies can provide significant opportunities for personalised learning, language practice, instant feedback, content generation, and the development of students’ communicative skills. At the same time, the integration of AI into education creates important challenges related to academic integrity, overdependence on technology, inaccurate information, privacy, and the possible reduction of students’ independent thinking. This article explores the opportunities and challenges of using artificial intelligence in English language teaching and proposes practical strategies for its responsible and pedagogically effective integration. Particular attention is given to the development of students’ speaking, writing, vocabulary, reading, and critical-thinking skills within a CEFR-oriented learning framework. The article is based on a review and analysis of relevant academic and institutional literature on AI in education and language learning. It argues that AI should not replace teachers or learners; rather, it should function as an additional educational resource under meaningful teacher guidance. A human-centred approach, appropriate assessment practices, AI literacy, and responsible use of technology are essential for ensuring that AI contributes to genuine language development.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, generative AI, English language teaching, language learning, CEFR, ChatGPT, digital education, personalised learning, critical thinking, AI literacy.

1. Introduction

The twenty-first century has witnessed rapid technological development that has significantly influenced the way people communicate, work, study, and acquire new knowledge. Among the most influential technological developments is artificial intelligence. In recent years, generative AI systems capable of producing texts, answering questions, providing explanations, generating ideas, and interacting with users in natural language have become increasingly accessible. Their emergence has created new possibilities as well as new challenges for educational institutions and teachers.

English language education is particularly suitable for the application of AI technologies because language learning requires continuous practice, interaction, feedback, vocabulary development, and exposure to authentic language. Traditional classroom instruction, although essential, may not always provide every learner with sufficient individual practice. AI-powered tools can potentially complement classroom instruction by offering additional opportunities for independent practice and personalised support. The Council of Europe’s CEFR Companion Volume has expanded the traditional understanding of language competence by including areas such as online interaction, mediation, and plurilingual and pluricultural competence. Therefore,

modern language education increasingly requires learners to use language effectively in diverse communicative and digital environments. However, the growing use of AI in education should not be interpreted as a reason to reduce the role of teachers. UNESCO emphasises a human-centred approach to generative AI and highlights the importance of human agency, ethical use, inclusion, privacy, and appropriate educational design. Consequently, the central question is not whether AI should be used in English language teaching, but how it can be used responsibly and effectively to improve learning outcomes. The purpose of this article is to analyse the potential of AI in English language teaching, identify major challenges associated with its use, and propose practical strategies for integrating AI into a human-centred and CEFR-oriented learning environment.

2. Methodology

3. This article employs a qualitative literature-review and pedagogical-analysis approach. Relevant academic publications, international educational guidelines, and documents related to artificial intelligence, generative AI, language education, and CEFR-oriented teaching were analysed.

The analysis focused on three main areas:

1. the potential benefits of AI for English language learning;
2. the pedagogical and ethical challenges associated with AI use;
3. practical strategies for responsible AI integration into English language classrooms.

The aim was not to measure the effectiveness of one particular AI tool experimentally, but to synthesise existing knowledge and formulate practical recommendations for English language teachers.

3. Artificial Intelligence as an Emerging Educational Resource

Artificial intelligence can be understood as a set of technologies that enables computer systems to perform tasks that traditionally require aspects of human intelligence, including language processing, pattern recognition, prediction, and content generation. In education, AI has been applied in areas such as intelligent tutoring systems, adaptive learning, assessment, personalised learning, educational chatbots, and automated feedback. Previous research has identified personalisation, assessment, prediction, adaptive systems, and intelligent tutoring among important areas of AI application in education (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). The emergence of generative AI has expanded these possibilities. Unlike many traditional educational technologies, generative AI can interact with learners through natural language and produce context-sensitive responses. For English learners, this means that AI can potentially act as a supplementary conversation partner, writing assistant, vocabulary practice tool, or source of additional explanations. Nevertheless, AI-generated information cannot automatically be considered accurate. AI systems may generate incorrect, incomplete, biased, or contextually inappropriate responses. Therefore, learners need to develop the ability to question, verify, and evaluate AI-generated content.

4. Opportunities for English Language Teaching

Personalised Learning. One of the major advantages of AI is its potential to support personalised learning. Students in the same English class often have different levels of vocabulary, grammar knowledge, confidence, learning speed, and communicative competence. AI tools can help teachers provide differentiated activities. For example, a teacher can create three versions of a reading text for A2, B1, and B2 learners. Students can also request additional

explanations or examples when they have difficulty understanding a particular grammatical structure. Personalisation can make learning more flexible because students are able to practise according to their individual needs and pace. Development of Writing Skills. Writing is one of the areas where AI can provide useful supplementary support. Learners can use AI to brainstorm ideas, generate possible outlines, identify grammatical problems, compare alternative expressions, and receive feedback on the organisation of their texts.For example, instead of asking an AI system to write an entire essay, a learner can submit their own paragraph and ask:

- Which grammatical errors should I correct?
- Are my ideas logically connected?
- Which linking devices could improve cohesion?
- Is my vocabulary appropriate for B2 level?
- How can I make this sentence more precise?

Such use encourages students to remain active participants in the writing process. However, if students simply copy AI-generated essays and submit them as their own work, the educational value of writing is significantly reduced. Therefore, AI should be used primarily as a feedback and learning-support tool rather than as a replacement for students’ own writing.

Language learning requires cognitive effort. Students need to struggle with vocabulary, formulate sentences, make mistakes, revise their ideas, and solve communication problems. These processes are essential for learning. Consequently, AI should support thinking rather than replace thinking.

Accuracy and Reliability. AI systems may produce information that sounds convincing but is factually incorrect. This creates a need for information-verification skills. Teachers should therefore teach students to ask:

- Who produced this information?
- Is the information supported by reliable sources?
- Can the claim be verified?
- Is the AI response biased?
- Does another source provide the same information?

This process can turn AI from a potential source of misinformation into an opportunity for developing critical thinking.

Privacy and Ethical Issues. AI use also raises questions about privacy, data protection, copyright, fairness, and responsible use. UNESCO's guidance stresses the importance of protecting users and ensuring that generative AI is introduced through ethical and pedagogically appropriate approaches. Teachers should avoid requiring students to upload sensitive personal information into AI systems and should explain basic principles of responsible digital behaviour.

The Changing Role of the Teacher. AI does not eliminate the need for teachers. Instead, it changes some aspects of the teacher’s role.

The teacher increasingly becomes:

- a learning designer;
- a facilitator;
- a source evaluator;
- a feedback provider;

- an ethical guide;
- a mentor in the learning process.

UNESCO’s AI Competency Framework for Teachers similarly emphasises the need for teachers to develop knowledge, skills, values, ethical awareness, and AI-related pedagogical competence.

7. Practical Strategies for Teachers. To integrate AI effectively, teachers can follow a simple pedagogical model: Teacher → Task → AI → Student → Reflection → Teacher Feedback. First, the teacher defines a clear learning objective. Second, students complete a meaningful language task. Third, AI is used as a supplementary resource. Fourth, students evaluate and improve their work. Finally, the teacher provides feedback and assesses the actual learning outcome. Several classroom activities can be particularly effective.. Activity 1: AI Error Detective The teacher gives students an AI-generated paragraph containing several grammatical, lexical, and factual mistakes. Students must:

1. identify the errors;
2. explain why they are incorrect;
3. correct them;
4. compare their corrections with reliable sources.

This activity develops grammar knowledge, critical thinking, and AI literacy simultaneously.

Activity 2: Human vs AI Writing. Students write a short paragraph independently. Then they ask AI to generate a paragraph on the same topic.

Students compare both texts and analyse:

- vocabulary;
- grammar;
- coherence;
- argument quality;
- originality;
- appropriateness.

The objective is not to prove that humans are always better than AI, but to teach students to evaluate both human and machine-generated language critically.

Activity 3: AI-Supported Speaking

Students choose a topic and conduct a short conversation with an AI system. They then prepare a two-minute presentation based on the conversation. This combines speaking practice, information processing, vocabulary development, and presentation skills.

Activity 4: CEFR-Based AI Feedback. Students write a B1/B2-level text and ask AI to identify features related to CEFR performance, such as vocabulary range, grammatical control, coherence, and task achievement. The final evaluation, however, should remain the responsibility of the teacher. AI feedback can support assessment but should not replace professional teacher judgement.

8. Discussion. The analysis indicates that the educational value of AI depends less on the technology itself and more on the way it is integrated into pedagogy. AI can provide students with additional opportunities for practice, personalised feedback, and interaction. It can also reduce some routine workload for teachers by assisting with the preparation of exercises, examples, discussion questions, and differentiated materials. However, effective AI integration

requires clear boundaries. Teachers should avoid using AI merely to make lessons faster or easier. The primary question should always be: "Does this use of AI improve the learning process?" If the answer is yes, AI can be incorporated into the activity. If AI removes the cognitive effort that students need for learning, its use should be reconsidered. Therefore, a balanced model can be proposed: AI + Teacher Expertise + Student Agency + Critical Thinking = Effective AI-Supported Language Learning. In this model, technology does not replace human intelligence. Instead, it extends the learning environment while the teacher remains responsible for pedagogical decisions.

9. **Conclusion**

Artificial intelligence is becoming an important component of modern education and has considerable potential in English language teaching. AI-based technologies can support personalised learning, writing development, speaking practice, vocabulary acquisition, grammar learning, and independent study. At the same time, AI creates serious challenges related to academic integrity, overdependence, inaccurate information, privacy, and the development of independent thinking. These challenges demonstrate that technological innovation alone cannot guarantee educational progress. The most effective approach is therefore a human-centred model in which AI functions as a supplementary educational tool rather than a replacement for teachers or learners. Teachers should develop AI literacy, establish clear rules for responsible use, redesign assessment practices, and encourage students to verify and critically evaluate AI-generated information. In CEFR-oriented English education, AI can be particularly useful when its use is connected to clearly defined communicative objectives and learner outcomes. Students should not merely learn how to use AI; they should learn how to use it critically, ethically, creatively, and purposefully.

Ultimately, the future of English language teaching is unlikely to be a choice between teachers and artificial intelligence. The more productive direction is collaboration between human expertise and intelligent technologies. When used responsibly, AI can contribute to a more personalised, interactive, flexible, and learner-centred language learning environment.

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