

Artificial Intelligence and the Transformation of English Studies in Indian Higher Education: Pedagogical Implications, Ethical Considerations and Curricular Responses

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Abstract—The rapid proliferation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in educational contexts has begun to reshape the teaching and study of English language and literature in Indian higher education institutions. This paper investigates how AI-driven technologies—including large language models, automated writing evaluation systems, machine translation engines, and computational text analysis platforms—are altering pedagogical practices, assessment paradigms, and curricular structures within English departments across Indian universities. Drawing upon a qualitative analysis of existing scholarship, policy documents, and curricular frameworks, the study maps the current landscape of AI adoption in English Studies and identifies three critical axes of transformation: language pedagogy, literary interpretation, and research methodology. The paper further examines the ethical dimensions of AI integration through the lens of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), proposing that concepts such as *pramāṇa* (valid means of knowledge), *viveka* (discriminative judgement), and *dharma* (contextual ethical responsibility) offer a philosophical vocabulary for addressing questions of epistemic validity, academic integrity, and pedagogical responsibility that Western regulatory frameworks address only partially. The study concludes with a set of curricular recommendations aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, arguing that the integration of AI into English Studies must be guided by epistemological self-awareness rather than instrumental adoption.

Key words: Artificial Intelligence, English Studies, Indian Higher Education, NEP 2020, Indian Knowledge Systems, AI Ethics, Pedagogy, Curriculum Design

I. INTRODUCTION

The discipline of English Studies in India occupies a paradoxical position. On the one hand, it remains one

of the most widely taught subjects across Indian universities, serving as a gateway to professional communication, critical thinking, and cultural literacy. On the other hand, it continues to operate within curricular and pedagogical structures that were established during the colonial period and have been only incrementally modified since independence. The arrival of Artificial Intelligence as an active participant in language production, text interpretation, and knowledge generation presents both a challenge and an opportunity for this discipline. AI does not merely offer new tools for old tasks; it redefines the very nature of writing, reading, and interpretation—the foundational activities of English Studies.

Large language models (LLMs) such as OpenAI's GPT-4, Google's Gemini, and Anthropic's Claude can generate essays, summaries, literary analyses, translations, and creative texts that are syntactically sophisticated and contextually coherent. Automated writing evaluation (AWE) platforms such as Grammarly and ProWritingAid have become embedded in the writing practices of students and educators alike. Machine translation engines have reached a level of fluency that complicates long-standing assumptions about the primacy of native-speaker competence in English language teaching. Computational literary analysis, powered by natural language processing (NLP) and distant reading techniques, has introduced quantitative methodologies into a discipline traditionally defined by qualitative hermeneutics.

In the Indian context, these developments acquire additional complexity. India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 [1] calls for the integration of

technology into higher education while simultaneously mandating the incorporation of Indian Knowledge Systems across all disciplines. The intersection of these two mandates—technological modernisation and epistemological indigenisation—creates a unique curricular challenge. How should English departments in Indian universities respond to AI? Should they adopt it instrumentally as a pedagogical aid, resist it as a threat to humanistic inquiry, or engage it critically as an object of study in its own right? And can Indian philosophical traditions offer frameworks for navigating these questions that complement or extend the predominantly Western discourse on AI ethics in education?

This paper addresses these questions through a structured investigation organised around three axes: the transformation of English language pedagogy, the reconfiguration of literary studies, and the ethical-epistemological implications of AI adoption. It argues that Indian higher education institutions have a distinctive opportunity to develop models of AI integration that are both technologically informed and epistemologically grounded—models that draw upon the philosophical resources of Indian Knowledge Systems to address questions of validity, integrity, and responsibility that the Western AI ethics discourse, for all its sophistication, leaves incompletely theorised.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. AI in Language Education: Global Perspectives

The scholarly literature on AI in language education has expanded considerably since 2020. Godwin-Jones [2] has examined how AI bots, ambient intelligence, and metaverse environments are creating new spaces for language learning, noting that the transition from rule-based grammar checkers to neural network-based writing assistants represents a qualitative rather than merely quantitative shift. In an earlier study, Godwin-Jones [3] examined how intelligent writing assistance tools are reshaping instructed language learning by enabling personalised, adaptive feedback that responds to individual learner profiles in ways that traditional classroom pedagogy cannot. Kohnke, Moorhouse, and Zou [4] have documented the growing use of ChatGPT and similar tools among university students for language practice, essay drafting, and grammar correction, raising questions about whether such usage constitutes

legitimate learning support or a circumvention of the cognitive effort that language acquisition requires.

Within the specific domain of writing pedagogy, Warschauer and colleagues [5] have investigated the affordances and contradictions of AI-generated text for writers of English as a second or foreign language, demonstrating the complex ways in which AI writing tools mediate the composition process. Cope and Kalantzis [6] have positioned AI writing tools within the broader framework of multiliteracies pedagogy, suggesting that learning to write with and through AI may constitute a new form of literacy rather than a degradation of existing ones. These perspectives, while valuable, are predominantly grounded in Anglophone and Euro-American educational contexts and do not adequately address the multilingual, postcolonial realities of Indian English education.

B. AI and Literary Studies

The intersection of AI and literary studies has generated a distinct body of scholarship. Franco Moretti's [7] concept of *distant reading*—using computational methods to analyse large literary corpora rather than individual texts—anticipated many of the current possibilities offered by AI-powered text analysis. Moretti's work challenged the discipline's reliance on close reading as its primary method, proposing that quantitative approaches could reveal patterns of genre evolution, thematic circulation, and stylistic influence that remain invisible to the individual reader. More recently, the digital humanities movement has expanded this agenda, with scholars employing NLP techniques for sentiment analysis of literary texts, topic modelling of large corpora, and stylometric attribution studies.

However, the implications of generative AI for literary studies extend beyond methodology. When an LLM can produce a literary analysis that is structurally competent and interpretively plausible, the question arises: what cognitive and aesthetic capacities does literary interpretation require that AI cannot replicate? This question has been explored by Bender and colleagues [8], who argue that LLMs are *stochastic parrots*—statistical pattern-matchers that produce fluent text without genuine comprehension. If this characterisation is accurate, it has profound implications for how literary studies defines its own disciplinary identity.

C. The Indian Context: NEP 2020 and IKS

The National Education Policy 2020 [1] establishes two directives relevant to this study. First, it calls for the “creative integration of technology” into higher education. Second, it mandates the incorporation of Indian Knowledge Systems across all disciplines, not as an addendum but as a substantive component of curricular design. The UGC’s subsequent guidelines [9] on IKS integration have operationalised this mandate, directing universities to identify points of convergence between disciplinary content and Indian philosophical, scientific, and aesthetic traditions.

Within the specific domain of English Studies, the IKS mandate has been received with varying degrees of enthusiasm and resistance. The intersection of the AI mandate and the IKS mandate—how Indian philosophical frameworks might inform the ethical and pedagogical integration of AI into English Studies—remains largely unexplored in the existing literature. This paper seeks to address this gap.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative, interpretive methodology grounded in three complementary approaches. First, it conducts a critical review of the existing scholarly literature on AI in language education, AI in literary studies, and AI ethics in higher education, drawing upon peer-reviewed journals, edited volumes, and institutional reports published between 2018 and 2025. The literature was sourced from databases including JSTOR, Google Scholar, Web of Science, and the UGC’s INFLIBNET repository.

Second, the study undertakes a policy analysis of key documents governing Indian higher education, including the NEP 2020 [1], UGC guidelines on IKS integration [9], and NAAC assessment frameworks. The purpose of this analysis is to map the policy landscape within which AI integration in English Studies must operate.

Third, the study develops a conceptual framework for AI ethics in English pedagogy by drawing upon Indian epistemological traditions, particularly the Advaita Vedanta theory of *pramāṇas* (valid means of knowledge) as systematised by Swami Satprakashananda [10]. This framework is not

proposed as a replacement for Western AI ethics discourse but as a complementary philosophical vocabulary that addresses dimensions of epistemic validity and pedagogical responsibility that existing frameworks undertheorize.

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A. AI and the Transformation of English Language Pedagogy

The integration of AI into English language teaching in Indian universities is occurring along several trajectories, each carrying distinct pedagogical implications.

Writing Instruction and Automated Feedback. AI-powered writing assistants have become a default component of the writing process for many Indian undergraduate students. Tools such as Grammarly and QuillBot are used not merely for proofreading but for sentence restructuring, vocabulary enhancement, and tone adjustment. While these tools can support learners in identifying grammatical errors and improving surface-level fluency, their pedagogical impact is ambiguous. Writing pedagogy in the process-writing tradition emphasises revision as a cognitive activity—an occasion for the writer to rethink ideas, reorganise arguments, and develop rhetorical awareness. When AI automates the revision process, the cognitive engagement that revision is meant to foster may be bypassed.

Spoken English and Pronunciation Training. AI-driven speech recognition and pronunciation assessment tools offer possibilities for large-scale spoken English training that Indian universities have historically struggled to provide, given high student-teacher ratios and the diversity of mother-tongue influences on English pronunciation. However, these tools typically evaluate pronunciation against standardised norms—most commonly Received Pronunciation (RP) or General American (GA)—that do not account for the sociolinguistic reality of Indian English as a legitimate variety with its own phonological norms. The uncritical adoption of such tools risks reinforcing colonial-era hierarchies of linguistic prestige.

Translation and Multilingual Competence. Machine translation has reached a level of sophistication that complicates longstanding pedagogical assumptions about translation as a specialised skill. Google

Translate, DeepL, and domain-specific engines can now produce translations between English and major Indian languages that are syntactically acceptable, if not always idiomatically precise. For English departments in Indian universities, where many students navigate between English and one or more Indian languages, AI translation tools present both an opportunity and a dilemma.

B. AI and the Reconfiguration of Literary Studies

Computational Approaches to Literary Analysis. NLP-based tools now enable literary scholars to conduct analyses of large textual corpora that would be impractical through manual reading alone. Sentiment analysis can track emotional trajectories across novels; topic modelling can identify thematic clusters across periods and genres; stylistic analysis can attribute authorship and detect influence patterns. For Indian English literary studies, these tools offer the possibility of conducting quantitative analyses of Indian English fiction, poetry, and drama that could reveal patterns of thematic evolution, linguistic innovation, and regional variation. Moretti's [7] distant reading paradigm, combined with AI-powered NLP, could enable Indian literary scholars to map the field of Indian English literature in ways that traditional close reading alone has not permitted.

AI-Generated Literary Criticism. The capacity of LLMs to produce literary criticism raises questions that go beyond plagiarism detection. If interpretation is understood as the application of pre-existing theoretical frameworks to textual features, then LLMs are already competent interpreters. If, however, interpretation is understood as a mode of encounter between a situated human consciousness and a text—shaped by embodied experience, cultural memory, affective response, and ethical orientation—then what LLMs produce is something categorically different from literary interpretation, however superficially similar the outputs may appear.

Creative Writing and AI Co-authorship. Indian English creative writing has historically been shaped by the bilingual and bicultural sensibilities of its practitioners, drawing upon Indian oral traditions, regional literary forms, and the rhythms of Indian English speech. AI-generated creative text, by contrast, is produced through statistical pattern-matching across large corpora and does not emerge

from any form of lived experience or cultural situatedness. The pedagogical challenge is to help students distinguish between the technical competence that AI can supply and the imaginative, experiential, and culturally grounded dimensions of literary creativity that remain distinctively human.

C. Ethical and Epistemological Implications

The Pramāṇa Framework and Epistemic Validity. The Advaita Vedānta epistemological tradition, as systematised by Satprakashananda [10], identifies six valid means of knowledge (*pramāṇas*): perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), comparison (*upamāna*), postulation (*arthāpatti*), non-apprehension (*anupalabdhi*), and verbal testimony (*śabda*). Each *pramāṇa* has specific conditions under which it produces valid knowledge and specific conditions under which it produces error. This framework is relevant to AI in English Studies because it provides a structured vocabulary for asking: through which means of knowledge is AI-generated text produced, and under what conditions can that text be considered valid?

An LLM does not perceive; it does not have *pratyakṣa*. It does not infer in the classical sense of *anumāna*, which requires the cogniser to recognise the logical relationship (*vyāpti*) between the reason and the conclusion. What an LLM does is process patterns in training data and generate statistically probable continuations. In *pramāṇa* terms, LLM output occupies an epistemically ambiguous position. When a student submits an AI-generated essay, the text may be syntactically valid and argumentatively coherent, but it has not been produced through any *pramāṇa* that the student can claim as their own epistemic act.

Viveka and Discriminative Judgement. The concept of *viveka*—the capacity for discriminative judgement that distinguishes the real from the apparent, the valid from the invalid—offers a pedagogical principle for AI literacy in English Studies. Teaching students to use AI tools effectively is not sufficient; they must also develop the capacity to evaluate AI-generated outputs critically, to recognise when an AI-produced literary analysis is interpretively shallow despite being syntactically polished, and to distinguish between the appearance of understanding and its substance. In the context of literary education, cultivating *viveka* means developing in students the ability to distinguish

between a text that merely performs interpretation and a text that enacts it.

Dharma and Contextual Responsibility. The concept of *dharma*, understood not as dogma but as contextual ethical responsibility, provides a framework for thinking about pedagogical responsibilities in an AI-mediated educational environment. A teacher's *dharma* in the context of AI is not simply to enforce academic integrity policies or to ban AI tools from the classroom. It is to create conditions in which students develop the epistemic capacities—perceptual acuity, inferential rigour, interpretive sensitivity—that AI cannot substitute for, while also preparing students for a technology-mediated professional world. This dual responsibility is precisely the kind of contextual ethical navigation that the concept of *dharma* is designed to address. Vallor's [11] virtue ethics framework for technology resonates with this position but does not engage with the Indian traditions of *sādhana* (disciplined ethical practice) that offer equally robust accounts of character formation.

V. DISCUSSION

A. Summary and Significance

The findings of this study indicate that AI is reshaping English Studies in Indian higher education along three interconnected axes—language pedagogy, literary interpretation, and ethical-epistemological reasoning—and that Indian universities are navigating these transformations without an adequate conceptual framework. The predominantly Western discourse on AI in education [12], [13], while valuable for establishing principles of transparency, accountability, and fairness, does not provide the ontological and epistemological depth required to address questions about the nature of knowledge, the validity of machine-generated text, and the cultivated capacities that humanistic education is meant to develop. Indian Knowledge Systems, and the *pramāṇa* framework in particular, offer philosophical resources that can fill this gap.

B. Extension of Prior Work

This study extends the existing scholarship on AI in education by shifting the frame of analysis from the instrumental—how can AI be used in English classrooms?—to the epistemological—what does the use of AI reveal about the nature of the knowledge that

English Studies produces? By introducing the *pramāṇa* framework [10], this paper provides a conceptual vocabulary that enables educators and policymakers to ask questions about AI-generated knowledge that the existing literature does not adequately formulate.

C. Scholarly Implications

If the analysis presented here is accepted, then the response of English departments to AI cannot be limited to policy measures—AI use policies, plagiarism detection software, revised assessment rubrics—though these are necessary. The response must also be curricular and philosophical. English departments must articulate what forms of knowledge and what cognitive capacities their discipline cultivates, and demonstrate that these forms and capacities are not replicable by AI. Indian epistemological traditions, with their elaborated theories of valid cognition, offer precisely the philosophical resources for this theorisation.

D. Curricular Recommendations

Based on the analysis presented, the following curricular responses are recommended for English departments in Indian universities operating under the NEP 2020 [1] framework.

First, English departments should introduce a dedicated course on “AI, Language, and Literature” that examines AI as both a tool for and an object of literary and linguistic study.

Second, existing courses in literary criticism and theory should be revised to include a module on computational approaches to literary analysis, introducing students to distant reading [7], stylometry, and NLP-based text analysis as complementary methods alongside close reading.

Third, writing pedagogy courses should integrate AI writing tools as objects of critical analysis, requiring students to evaluate AI-generated texts against criteria of interpretive depth, argumentative originality, and rhetorical effectiveness, thereby developing the discriminative judgement (*viveka*) that AI literacy in the humanities requires.

Fourth, assessment practices should be diversified to include oral examinations, portfolio-based evaluation, process-documented writing assignments, and collaborative interpretation exercises that foreground

the cognitive and relational dimensions of learning that AI cannot replicate.

Fifth, the IKS component mandated by NEP 2020 should be integrated not as a separate module but as an epistemological framework that informs how AI is discussed, evaluated, and used across the curriculum, ensuring that Indian philosophical concepts function as analytical tools rather than cultural decorations.

E. Limitations

This study is conceptual and theoretical in nature and does not include primary empirical data from Indian universities. The IKS framework proposed here draws primarily upon the Advaita Vedanta epistemological tradition and does not engage with the full range of Indian philosophical schools—Nyāya, Buddhist, Jain—that offer alternative epistemological models. Future research should address these limitations through empirical investigation and broader philosophical engagement.

F. Field Relevance

The questions addressed in this paper are not confined to English Studies. Every humanities discipline in Indian higher education faces analogous challenges as AI tools become capable of producing competent academic prose and simulating analytical reasoning. The framework proposed here—combining critical AI literacy with IKS-based epistemological grounding—is transferable across the humanities and could inform a broader conversation about the future of humanistic education in an AI-mediated world.

VI. CONCLUSION

Artificial Intelligence is not a peripheral development that English Studies can choose to engage or ignore. It is a structural transformation of the conditions under which language is produced, texts are interpreted, and knowledge is validated—the foundational activities of the discipline. Indian higher education institutions, guided by the dual mandates of NEP 2020 [1]—technological integration and epistemological indigenisation—are positioned to develop responses to this transformation that are both globally informed and philosophically distinctive.

The *pramāṇa*-based framework proposed in this paper offers one such response. It does not reject AI or romanticise pre-technological pedagogy. Instead, it

provides a structured philosophical vocabulary for evaluating the epistemic status of AI-generated knowledge, cultivating discriminative judgement in students, and articulating the forms of understanding that humanistic education develops and that AI, by its nature, cannot replicate. The task ahead for Indian English departments is to translate this conceptual framework into curricular practice—into course designs, assessment strategies, and pedagogical approaches that prepare students to live and work in an AI-mediated world while preserving and deepening the modes of knowing that make the humanities indispensable.

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