

English in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Reimagining the Future of English Language Teaching

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Abstract—Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly becoming part of the educational environment in which English is taught and learned. Generative AI applications can produce and revise text, conduct simulated conversations, suggest vocabulary and grammar practice, provide preliminary feedback, process speech, and support differentiated learning. These functions may be particularly useful in higher-education settings where students have unequal access to sustained opportunities for English interaction beyond the classroom. At the same time, AI-supported English Language Teaching (ELT) introduces substantial pedagogical and ethical questions concerning authorship, accuracy, fabricated information, privacy, unequal access, algorithmic bias, learner dependence, and the changing professional responsibilities of teachers. This paper examines these possibilities and challenges from a human-centred perspective. It considers personalised learning, writing, speaking and pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar, assessment, critical thinking, teacher education, multilingualism, World Englishes, and the Indian higher-education context. The paper proposes that AI should be positioned as a supervised learning assistant rather than as a substitute for teachers or for students' intellectual effort. Responsible integration requires clear learning objectives, verification of AI output, protection of personal information, transparent rules for academic use, equitable access, and continued emphasis on human interaction. The paper argues that the most productive future for ELT is one of augmentation: AI can broaden opportunities for practice and feedback, while teachers retain responsibility for pedagogy, judgement, ethical guidance, cultural interpretation, and the development of meaningful human relationships in learning.

Index Terms—Artificial Intelligence; English Language Teaching; Generative AI; personalised learning; AI literacy; language assessment; teacher identity; World Englishes

I. INTRODUCTION

English occupies an important place in higher education, scientific communication, professional life, digital communication, and international exchange. Methods of teaching English have changed in response to new theories of learning and new technologies. Grammar-Translation, the Direct Method and Audio-Lingual approaches were followed or supplemented by Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching, computer-assisted learning, mobile learning, and online education. These developments changed classroom practices, but none removed the need for teachers.

The present expansion of Artificial Intelligence marks a further development because contemporary AI systems can interact with natural-language prompts and generate explanations, examples, dialogues, questions, summaries, and drafts. Speech technologies can process spoken language, while adaptive applications can use information about learner performance to suggest additional practice. Such capabilities create new possibilities for language learning, but they also raise questions about authorship, reliability, assessment, and professional responsibility.

The central issue for English education is therefore not simply whether AI should be present in the classroom. The more useful question is how teachers and learners can employ it in ways that improve learning. An AI system may produce a polished paragraph, but the system cannot independently establish whether a learner genuinely understands the paragraph, whether its argument is appropriate for a particular context, or what kind of encouragement an individual learner needs. AI integration should consequently be guided by pedagogical judgement rather than by technological novelty.

II. AI AND THE CHANGING ELT LANDSCAPE

AI-assisted language learning has developed from earlier forms of computer-assisted language learning. Digital exercises, electronic dictionaries, online corpora, and automated feedback had already expanded access to language resources. Generative AI adds a more flexible form of interaction: learners can ask for explanations at different levels, request examples based on familiar contexts, rehearse interviews, or obtain suggestions about their writing. This flexibility can extend learning beyond a fixed textbook sequence. Students may obtain additional practice when a difficulty arises, while teachers can prepare differentiated materials more efficiently. AI can also create low-stakes environments in which learners can repeat activities without the pressure associated with public performance.

The educational value of these possibilities, however, depends on the reliability of the output. Generative systems can provide incomplete or inaccurate explanations, invent references, or produce language that is grammatically acceptable but inappropriate for a particular social situation. Outputs may also reproduce biases associated with their training data or design. AI literacy must therefore become part of language education. Students need to learn not only how to formulate prompts but also how to question, verify, edit, contextualise, and appropriately acknowledge AI-assisted material.

III. REIMAGINING THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

An AI-supported English classroom can place greater emphasis on active language use rather than on the transmission of information alone. A teacher can establish a clear learning objective, design an authentic task, permit AI assistance at selected stages, and finally ask learners to justify and defend their choices. In such a model, technology supports the activity while the teacher retains control of its educational purpose.

AI can facilitate differentiated practice. A learner who needs support with sentence construction may work with guided examples and simpler prompts, while a more advanced learner can analyse an argument, prepare an academic presentation, or participate in a simulated professional discussion. Students can rehearse job interviews, travel interactions, telephone

conversations, debates, presentations, customer-service situations, and group discussions. Such activities can be useful where students have limited opportunities to use English outside college.

Nevertheless, simulated interaction cannot reproduce every feature of human communication. Face-to-face communication involves gesture, facial expression, humour, relationships, cultural expectations, emotion, and immediate negotiation of meaning. AI should therefore widen opportunities for practice without reducing peer interaction and teacher-student communication. A balanced classroom will use technology to create additional practice while protecting the social character of language learning.

IV. PERSONALISED LANGUAGE LEARNING

English learners differ in vocabulary knowledge, grammatical control, pronunciation, reading speed, writing ability, and confidence. A single instructional pace cannot respond equally well to every learner. AI-supported applications may identify recurring patterns in learner performance and suggest targeted activities. For instance, a student who repeatedly confuses articles may receive further practice with articles in meaningful contexts, whereas a learner whose written grammar is stronger than speaking confidence may receive additional conversational practice.

Personalisation can also connect language learning with students' interests. Literature, science, commerce, tourism, and other subject areas can provide contexts for vocabulary and communication activities. This flexibility may encourage learner autonomy by helping students identify difficulties, request assistance, and monitor their progress.

However, algorithmic recommendations should not be treated as automatically appropriate. Teachers must consider whether a suggested activity fits the curriculum, learner proficiency, age, institutional setting, and cultural context. Personalisation becomes educationally meaningful only when it is embedded in sound instructional design.

V. AI AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING SKILLS

Writing is one of the language skills most directly affected by generative AI. Learners can use AI during brainstorming, organisation, language review,

comparison of expressions, and revision. These functions can support process-based writing when students remain responsible for the ideas, decisions, and final text.

A productive classroom procedure is to require students to prepare an independent first draft before using AI for limited feedback. Students can then record which suggestions they accepted, modified, or rejected and explain the reasons for their decisions. The teacher can assess both the revised text and the student's reflection. This approach turns AI use into an exercise in metacognition instead of allowing the technology to take over the writing task.

AI-generated passages can themselves become useful teaching materials. Students can inspect such passages for coherence, evidence, register, repetition, factual reliability, and cultural suitability, and then compare them with human-authored texts. The principal danger is substitution: if learners submit machine-produced work that they do not understand as their own, assessment becomes less trustworthy and learning may be reduced. Institutions should therefore state clearly what kinds of assistance are acceptable, when disclosure is required, and which assignments demand independent work.

VI. SPEAKING, LISTENING AND PRONUNCIATION

Speaking development requires repeated opportunities to formulate and communicate meaning in real time. In large classes, each learner may receive limited individual speaking time. Conversational AI can supplement classroom opportunities by allowing students to rehearse dialogues, interviews, presentations, and everyday interactions. Speech-recognition tools can also draw attention to aspects of pronunciation, fluency, stress, and intonation. Repeated practice may be especially helpful for learners who are reluctant to make mistakes in front of classmates.

Automated pronunciation feedback nevertheless needs careful interpretation. Effective communication does not require every learner to imitate a single native-speaker model. English is used across diverse linguistic communities, and legitimate accent variation is part of its contemporary global use. The instructional goal should therefore be intelligibility, flexibility, and communicative effectiveness rather

than the removal of every trace of a learner's linguistic background. Teachers and human interlocutors remain important for evaluating meaning, interaction, appropriateness, and the wider communicative context.

VII. VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR DEVELOPMENT

AI can make vocabulary learning more contextual and productive. Instead of learning an isolated word, students can explore definitions, collocations, synonyms, antonyms, register, and example sentences, and then use new vocabulary in their own sentences. Teachers can transform these possibilities into activities involving prediction, comparison, contextual interpretation, and language production.

Grammar instruction can similarly benefit from flexible explanation. AI systems can present alternative explanations of tenses, articles, prepositions, conditionals, and sentence patterns and can generate practice exercises with immediate preliminary feedback. Such explanations, however, require teacher or source verification because confident-looking output can still be incomplete or inaccurate.

A sound pedagogy therefore treats AI as a resource for variation and practice while the teacher remains responsible for conceptual accuracy. Students should compare AI explanations with course materials, dictionaries, and other dependable sources. AI becomes educationally useful when it operates within a broader evidence-based learning environment rather than functioning as an unquestioned authority.

VIII. ASSESSMENT IN THE AI ERA

The availability of generative AI makes it increasingly difficult to treat a polished take-home product as sufficient evidence of individual learning. Assessment can therefore place greater emphasis on process and demonstrated understanding. Drafts, revisions, oral presentations, portfolios, projects, reflective journals, classroom performance, and brief individual conferences can provide evidence of how learners developed an answer.

AI may assist formative assessment by helping teachers prepare practice questions, organise common error patterns, or provide preliminary feedback. The

final academic judgement should nevertheless remain with a qualified teacher. Automated systems that attempt to identify AI-generated writing should also be used cautiously and should not, by themselves, be treated as conclusive evidence of misconduct.

In an AI-rich environment, assessment should make learning visible. Students can be evaluated not only for linguistic accuracy but also for their ability to explain decisions, evaluate evidence, revise work, communicate ideas, and use digital tools responsibly. Such an approach aligns assessment more closely with the skills required in academic, professional, and civic life.

IX. THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE ENGLISH TEACHER

AI does not necessarily diminish the professional significance of English teachers; instead, it can alter the distribution of their work. When explanations and language examples are readily available, teachers can devote more time to designing meaningful tasks, diagnosing difficulties, facilitating discussion, and developing higher-order thinking. The teacher's role increasingly includes that of facilitator, mentor, learning designer, evaluator, language coach, and ethical guide.

Teachers must decide when AI is educationally appropriate, what information learners may safely share, which outputs require verification, and how a particular activity contributes to the intended learning outcome. They also provide sustained knowledge of individual learners within a social and educational relationship—something an automated system cannot fully reproduce.

Teacher education should therefore include AI literacy as well as pedagogy. Professional development can address prompting, evaluation of outputs, privacy, bias, copyright, academic integrity, and responsible use. More importantly, teachers need to understand when technology genuinely improves learning. Technical familiarity alone is insufficient; the key competence is the ability to connect technological possibilities with established principles of language teaching.

X. GENERATIVE AI AND CRITICAL THINKING

A major educational risk associated with generative AI is intellectual passivity. When a fluent response is available immediately, learners may be less inclined to ask whether it is accurate, relevant, adequately supported, or appropriate for a particular context. English education can counter this tendency by treating AI output as material for investigation.

Students can analyse generated passages for unsupported claims, factual inaccuracies, weak reasoning, repetition, unsuitable register, missing evidence, and cultural assumptions. They can then revise the passage using reliable sources. Teachers can also ask students to obtain responses to the same question through different prompts or systems and compare the results.

Such activities make verification and reflection part of language learning. Students learn that linguistic fluency does not guarantee factual accuracy and that persuasive writing still requires evidence. AI literacy can consequently strengthen critical literacy by encouraging learners to examine how language communicates meaning and how digital systems shape the information they encounter.

XI. ETHICAL ISSUES IN AI-ASSISTED ELT

Responsible AI integration requires attention to several ethical concerns. Academic integrity is central. Students should know when AI assistance is permitted, when it should be acknowledged, and which tasks require independent work. Clear institutional guidance is more useful than vague restrictions.

Accuracy is another concern because AI systems can produce plausible but false statements, fabricated citations, or inappropriate examples. Verification should therefore be taught as a normal part of language learning. Privacy is equally important. Learners may inadvertently enter personal, academic, or confidential information into external systems, so institutions should establish practical data-protection guidance and discourage unnecessary disclosure.

Digital inequality must also be recognised. Students do not necessarily have equal access to devices, connectivity, paid AI services, or digital skills. AI-dependent assignments should not disadvantage learners who cannot use a particular platform;

institutions should provide equitable access or meaningful alternatives.

Bias and linguistic diversity require further attention. AI systems may privilege dominant linguistic patterns or reproduce assumptions present in their training data. English education should recognise Indian English and other legitimate varieties while developing intelligibility, flexibility, and intercultural competence. Finally, excessive dependence can reduce the productive effort involved in language learning. AI should remove unnecessary barriers, not remove the effort through which language ability develops.

XII. AI, ENGLISH AND WORLD ENGLISHES

The international spread of English has resulted in numerous established varieties. Indian English, Singapore English, Nigerian English, and other varieties illustrate the diverse communities and purposes associated with English use. AI systems may influence learners' perceptions of acceptable English because the examples and feedback they provide can shape expectations about language norms.

If digital systems consistently favour a narrow range of English varieties, learners may interpret legitimate differences as deficiencies. ELT should distinguish between forms that obstruct communication and variation that reflects linguistic identity. AI can expose learners to different accents, registers, and communicative contexts, but teachers should guide that exposure and explain the social meanings of language variation.

Multilingualism is particularly important in India. Students may use Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, and other languages alongside English. Carefully designed AI activities can provide vocabulary bridges, explanations, and additional practice for multilingual learners. Such support should strengthen students' existing linguistic resources and cultural identities rather than treating their other languages as obstacles to English development.

XIII. A HUMAN-CENTRED MODEL OF AI-INTEGRATED ELT

A practical model for responsible AI integration can be organised around five principles. First, human priority places educational goals, relationships, learner

wellbeing, and human judgement at the centre. Second, AI-as-assistant means that technology supports selected learning tasks without replacing the learner's intellectual work or the teacher's professional responsibility. Third, critical use requires students to question, compare, test, and verify AI output. Fourth, ethical use requires attention to authorship, privacy, fairness, transparency, and appropriate disclosure. Fifth, inclusive use considers access, disability, language diversity, and socioeconomic differences.

These principles can be implemented through a five-stage classroom cycle: establish the learning objective; determine whether AI provides genuine educational value; permit controlled interaction with the tool; require learners to evaluate and transform the output; and assess the learner's understanding. This framework keeps pedagogy ahead of technology and gives teachers a practical basis for deciding when and how AI should be introduced.

XIV. REIMAGINING THE FUTURE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

The future English classroom may involve purposeful interaction before, during, and after class. Before a lesson, learners may use AI for preliminary vocabulary study or rehearsal. Classroom time can then be devoted to discussion, collaboration, presentations, debates, problem solving, and teacher-guided interaction. After class, students may use digital tools for reflection, revision, and additional practice.

This arrangement may reduce some repetitive preparation and practice demands while increasing the importance of activities that require judgement, creativity, collaboration, and human interaction. As synthetic communication becomes more common, authentic human communication may become even more educationally significant.

The future teacher is therefore unlikely to be defined simply as a lecturer or a technology operator. A more useful description is a human learning designer who combines subject expertise, language pedagogy, digital competence, and ethical judgement. Reimagining ELT means redesigning the relationship between people and tools rather than transferring educational responsibility to machines.

XV. IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

India is an especially important context for AI-supported ELT because English is widely used in higher education, employment, professional communication, technology, and administration, while students enter colleges with diverse linguistic backgrounds. AI can provide supplementary practice in academic writing, presentations, interviews, professional communication, pronunciation, vocabulary, and critical reading.

At institutional level, colleges can develop practical guidance for AI use, provide faculty development, and protect the credibility of assessment. English departments can illustrate acceptable and unacceptable forms of AI assistance in assignments and can ask students to record or explain their use of AI when appropriate.

For multilingual classrooms, AI can provide scaffolding without positioning English against other languages. Teachers can encourage strategic movement between languages when it supports comprehension, followed by purposeful production in English. Such an approach recognises multilingual resources as potential supports for English development and respects learners' existing linguistic identities.

XVI. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS

The following practices may support responsible and pedagogically useful AI integration:

1. Begin with a clearly defined language-learning objective, not with a technology tool.
2. Use AI for supplementary practice, brainstorming, feedback, or simulation only when it adds educational value.
3. Teach students to formulate clear prompts and to improve prompts through reflection.
4. Require verification of factual, linguistic, and cultural claims.
5. Ask learners to retain drafts and explain significant revisions.
6. Use AI-generated texts as materials for critical reading, editing, and comparison.
7. Preserve substantial opportunities for peer interaction and direct teacher feedback.

8. Develop AI literacy alongside digital and information literacy.

9. Establish transparent institutional rules for acceptable AI assistance and disclosure.

10. Protect personal, academic, and confidential information.

11. Provide reasonable alternatives for students who lack equal access to a particular AI service.

12. Evaluate learning through multiple forms of evidence rather than relying solely on polished take-home products.

The most effective English teachers in an AI-rich environment are unlikely to be either unquestioning adopters or complete rejecters of the technology. Their professional strength will lie in making informed decisions about when AI supports learning, when it does not, and how human teaching can remain central.

XVII. CONCLUSION

Artificial Intelligence is changing the conditions under which English can be taught and learned. Its ability to generate language, support conversation, offer preliminary feedback, and provide differentiated practice can expand opportunities for learners. These benefits, however, are accompanied by serious concerns involving authorship, accuracy, privacy, unequal access, bias, and excessive dependence.

English learning remains fundamentally human because it involves identity, culture, relationships, emotion, imagination, and the negotiation of meaning with other people. AI can assist with many activities, but it cannot remove the teacher's responsibility to interpret context, motivate learners, exercise professional judgement, and build a supportive learning community.

The most appropriate direction is therefore augmentation rather than replacement. AI can extend the teacher's reach and increase learners' opportunities for practice while preserving human agency. Students need linguistic competence together with critical thinking, digital judgement, and the ability to evaluate information. Teachers need technological awareness alongside strong pedagogical and ethical foundations. The central question is not whether AI will replace the English teacher, but how teachers and learners can use AI deliberately so that technology strengthens meaningful language learning. A balanced partnership among human intelligence, technology, and pedagogy

offers a promising direction for the future of English Language Teaching.

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