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Research Paper

The Future of Artificial Intelligence in English Language Teaching: Can AI Replace Human Teachers?

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ABSTRACT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most transformative forces in contemporary education, particularly within the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). This rapid evolution of the smarter systems capable of generating language similar to that of humans, provide automated reply as well as customise the learning process has raised natural queries as to the role of the teachers as they will be in the future. The critical analysis of this paper explains how AI is changing the landscape of the ELT field and whether AI can replace the teachers of the English language. The abilities of the AI- based tools, the impact of these tools on the process of language learning, and the drawbacks associated with their capacity to address the cognitive, emotional, social, and cultural dimensions of language education are reviewed with the assistance of a comprehensive conceptual and pedagogical methodology. The article has indicated that AI is lacking in the human side of language teaching despite its immense advantages in terms of efficiency, personalisation, and accessibility. The most likely option is that AI will not replace the teachers but rather transform and broaden the position of the instructors since the human teachers in an AI-enhanced classroom will become instructors, trainers and/or cultural interpreters of AI.

KEYWORDS: Artificial Intelligence, English Language Teaching, Language Education, Human Teachers, Educational Technology, Pedagogy.

1. INTRODUCTION

The integration of Artificial Intelligence within education has accelerated rapidly in recent years, fundamentally reshaping teaching and learning practices across different disciplines. ELT, the field that is profoundly predetermined by communication, interaction, and cultural exchange, is becoming an object of attraction of AI-powered inventions (Fitria *et al*., 2023). Some of the applications of AI technologies to language classrooms and self-directed learning environments include the automated grammar checker, the intelligent tutoring systems, chatbots and adaptive learning platforms, among others.

The old age arguments surrounding the involvement of teachers in an increasingly automated learning environment have been introduced due to this technological change. A key question of whether or not AI can replace human teachers in ELT is not only a technical one, but also a philosophical, pedagogical, and ethical one. Linguistic competence, knowledge of identity, emotional engagement, cultural awareness, and human contact

make learning language a complicated human behaviour, which cannot be comprehended by the understanding of linguistic competence (Louis *et al*., 2023). As AI systems are becoming more and more proficient in language creation and in processing linguistic expressions, it is worth approaching the task of managing the intricate task previously carried out by educators with a grain of salt.

This paper is aimed at discussing the opportunities of AI in ELT, paying attention to the opportunities it can assume in the sphere of pedagogy and the disadvantages and concerns associated with the instructional practice. It attempts to address the issue of whether AI would fully replace human English language teachers or whether its activity can be viewed as complementary. The paper contributes some form of novelty to the already present discourse of technology, education, and the future of teaching proposal through a critical and holistic perspective regarding the specified problem.

2. Artificial Intelligence and Its Emergence in English Language Teaching

2.1 Conceptualising Artificial Intelligence in Education
Artificial Intelligence is a term that can be defined as the development of computerised systems that can perform tasks that were normally performed by human thinking (or cognitive process) (had the ability to reason, learned, and use language). The purpose of the artificial intelligence in education is not to mimic the human consciousness but is just a particular way of behaving of an intelligent type, which must also be modelled to assist to learn (Sharadgah *et al*., 2022). The application of AI in the English Language Teaching industry is primarily aimed at analysing, generating and evaluating language to enable the computer to communicate with the students in a more advanced way. These systems work on advanced algorithms that recognise the patterns of languages, and any input that will be made by the learner will be processed to yield any output that will be similar to how human beings use language. Accordingly, the AI has become a significant technological trend that influences the teaching, learning and assessment of English at numerous learning institutions.

2.2 Evolution of AI Technologies in ELT
ELT has been evolving in AI applications in various phases. The earliest implementations were more rule-based and used predefined grammar structures and vocabulary slots to which corrections and drill practices can be given to the user. These systems were not flexible and responsive because they worked in structures, and when the context and the learners changed could not accommodate this easily. When computational linguistics and machine learning continued to evolve, the AI systems ceased to be dependent on any specific rules, but instead, they were able to create models that had been trained on thousands of examples of language, and they could learn (Kushmar *et al*., 2022). This was a significant milestone in the field of ELT because the AI tools could adapt in response to the behaviour of the learners and produce more natural language.

Other more recent ones are the development of AI systems, which are capable of producing convincing texts, having a conversation, and engaging in negotiating dialogues. The technologies have expanded on the operation of AI in ELT, not just limited to discrete skill practice, to more holistic use of the language, e.g., writing assistance, speaking practice, and interactive learning conditions (Vogt *et al*., 2023). As a result, AI has shifted from being a peripheral support device in educational activities to becoming a core component of many online language schools.

2.3 Drivers of AI Adoption in English Language Teaching
Technology, education, and society have colluded, which has seen the emergence of AI in ELT. One of the major factors is the advancement of the natural language processing methods since it has significantly improved the machines to understand and generate the human language (Saydasheva *et al*., 2025). This has contributed to the development of AI systems which will respond suitably to the input of learners as opposed to being only preprogrammed in relation to response.

The second one is the high availability of Internet access and online learning websites. Online learning and blended learning platforms have given the necessity to come up with the tools capable of serving the learners on an independent and asynchronous basis. Solutions delivered or driven by the AI may also be continuously operated and not tied by time or place. Among these, they can be highly attractive in distance education or self-directed learning.

2.4 Functional Roles of AI in ELT
The ELT AI systems are designed to perform a great number of instructional tasks which may be analogised to human pedagogy. They are the functions that include introducing the language input that consists of appropriate explanations, correction of errors, modelling of how to use languages properly, and also monitoring the progress of the learners (Ismail *et al*., 2024). By having automated analysis, the trends of the performance of the learners can be generated by the AI tools, and the specifically targeted feedback that would serve to address the weaknesses of the individual learners can be achieved.

Put another way, practically, AI is often applied as a guide or tutor who takes the students step by step through systematic tasks and provides them with guidance when needed. The latter job description is particularly evident in grammar classes, vocabulary and pronunciation training, during which impartial norms could be applied to evaluate the result (Jose *et al.*, 2024). Dealing with these mundane instructional duties, the AI systems would bring additional efficiency to the learning process and burden the teachers with a lesser intensity of instructional workload, as it had long been the tradition.

2.5 Claims of Teacher Replacement and Emerging Debates
The increased sophistication of AI applications in ELT has also generated the argument that AI can subsequently then substitute human teachers, especially in circumstances that concern the teaching and learning of standardised language (Kuddus *et al*.,

2022). To the arguments that AI can boost human learning, one can have personalised learning on a huge scale with AI, and it is not limited to a human being, in terms of exhaustion and other forms of bias. At that, AI can be viewed as a cheaper alternative, which could be programmed to perform most of the significant pedagogical tasks.

2.6 The Need for Critical Examination

Owing to the complexity of language teaching, the implementation of AI in ELT must be inspected critically and critically (Pokrivcakova *et al.*, 2023). One should distinguish between the problems that can be effectively automated and lecturiary work of a teacher on a larger scale. Such an overstatement of the abilities of AI would easily reduce the education in languages to the same level of operation as machines, without paying much attention to the human aspects that are involved in the process of meaningful learning.

3. Pedagogical Foundations of English Language Teaching

ELT is based on proficiency, the language acquisition theories, communication and pedagogy. It involves language skills, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and pragmatic self-awareness and intercultural awareness. ELT also needs cognition, emotional state, culture and social circumstances to understand the learning processes of the students.

The mediation of such aspects of learning is the main role of human instructors (Liu *et al.*, 2023). They perceive the needs of the learners, they are responsive to the needs of the learners, and they possess favourable learning environments, resulting in motivation and confidence building. The teaching process is not an either way teaching or imparting teaching, but a process of relating, negotiation of meanings and understanding.

4. Capabilities of Artificial Intelligence in English Language Teaching

4.1 Automated and Immediate Feedback Mechanisms

The opportunity to provide individual and immediate feedback may be deemed as one of the most significant AI functions in English Language Teaching. With the help of AI-based systems, both written and oral input of learners can be processed in real-time, and they can be identified with numerous types of language errors in terms of grammar, vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation, and fluency (Shah *et al.*, 2023). It can be immediate as compared to the standard classroom environment, where the feedback is typically delayed due to time constraints, since an AI system can help the learners to recognise and correct their errors on time, as the learning process still takes place.

4.2 Personalised and Adaptive Learning Experiences

The other prominent AI in ELT is the fact that it can personalise the learning procedures. Intelligent learning systems that are driven by AI can monitor the behaviour of the learner and a progress change as time goes by and adjust the learning content to meet the learner's needs. Such systems can also adjust the difficulty of a task and prescribe exercises, as well as focus on what needs to be improved based on the outcomes of the

performance (Jiang *et al.*, 2022). These customisations fit different needs of learners in a homogenous learning environment in which individual difference matters so much, particularly in the classroom with the disparity in the level of various proficiency and learning styles.

4.3 Enhancement of Practice Opportunities

AI opens the potential of practising the language even more than the classroom time would allow. The AI-driven technologies would also enable the students to communicate with them anytime, and this would enable the students to be exposed to the target language in the long run (Yang *et al.*, 2025). Interactive activities, role-playing and a writing support system enable such a learner to practice his or her language without experiencing embarrassment, which otherwise arises when one is interacting with his or her fellow human beings.

4.4 Scalability and Global Accessibility

Scalability and accessibility are another core strength of AI in the teaching of the English Language. AI-driven digital platforms would support many learners but would not drive the consistency of instructions (Okulich-Kazarin *et al.*, 2023). This is mainly applicable in those regions where there are low numbers of qualified teachers of the English language. In isolated or underserved areas, AI may be applied to offer a system of language instruction and practice tools to learners via online applications and mobile applications.

4.5 Support for Teachers and Instructional Efficiency

The AI is also beneficial to the teachers, as it helps them in automating routine and administrative tasks (Yang *et al.*, 2024). Tasks such as grading objective tests and tracking learners can be effectively managed with the help of AI systems and the production of practice items. This automation will reduce the teacher workload and the teachers will be in a position to spend more time and energy on the more advanced pedagogical processes, e.g. lesson plans, individualised tutoring and interesting classroom facilitation.

4.6 Data-Driven Insights for Instructional Decision-Making

The other influential feature of AI is that it creates information-based insights that can be applied to make instructional decisions. Using learning patterns among learners, the AI systems can provide the teacher with detailed reporting on the type of errors that make the performance characterised and the improvement trends over time, along with the learning areas that prove to be struggles for learners.

4.7 Contribution to Learner Autonomy and Motivation

AI will help to create learner autonomy due to individual feedback, open access, and interactive learning. Students get a greater power over their learning processes, and they get the option on when and where they can get practice (Sumakul *et al.*, 2022). This autonomy can be utilised to increase motivation, particularly with adult learners and those engaged in self-directed learning.

5. Limitations of AI in Language Teaching

The advantages of AI have serious limitations, which include the use of AI in ELT. The first weakness is that it lacks any actual perceptions and understanding. The AI is not intentional, empathetic, or experienced as much as it can work through the structures of language and provide responses which can be viewed as credible. Meaning-making, emotion, and identity are connected with language learning, in turn, where AI cannot play a significant role.

The AIs experience an issue of contextual and cultural sensibilities as well. Linguistic practices are also dictated by the social constructs, cultural cues and circumstances requiring judgments of interpretation (Kemelbekova *et al.*, 2024). The human educator can depend on the knowledge about their culture and professional experience to help the learners go through such complexities. However, AI relies on probabilistic patterns that are not always applicable in specific situations.

The other restriction is the one that relates to ethical judgment and responsibility. Value-based choices exist as well to make on assessment, inclusion and on learner well-being by the teachers. It is also incorrect to hold any moral responsibility toward AI systems because they operate under a series of algorithms and are not morally responsible for their actions. This will cast doubt on the fairness, prejudice and responsibility of the AI-mediated instruction.

Additionally, AI is not capable of building actual relations with the learners. Human contact and encouragement may be essential in motivating, encouraging and helping us not to give up learning a language (Schmidt *et al.*, 2022). The absence of physical social presence would result in an obstacle to the success of AI in sustaining a long-term interaction.

6. The Role of Human Teachers in an AI-Enhanced ELT Environment

Human teachers cannot be replaced in a language classroom. They are role models, mentors/learning facilitators. Through the process, teachers have the ability to provide emotional support, get the learners to pursue new knowledge, and break barriers. These are the human factors which particularly concerning in language learning that might involve vulnerability and risk-taking.

In the ELT environment where AI can be applied to enhance growth, the teacher's position might not be completely abolished but redefined (Negrila *et al.*, 2023). Teachers can become more of learning creators, a bibliographer of online resources, and interpreters of the AI-generated information. They will also mentor learners to be responsible and critical users of AI tools, hence leading to the growth of digital literacy, besides language skills. The teachers will also take the centre stage in helping to facilitate communicative competence and intercultural understanding (Etiubon *et al.*, 2023). AI will not be capable of duplicating face-to-face interaction, teamwork and actual communication. By means of a balanced way of implementing AI, one can build more vibrant and more intensive learning environments without lowering the quality of pedagogy.

7. Can AI Replace Human Teachers? A Critical Discussion

The fact that AI will be able to substitute human teachers in ELT should be approached with the delicacy (Idham *et al.*, 2024). At the functional level, AI may crowd out certain activities which teachers, in particular, perform, namely, possessing routine practice and error correction and providing information. In that regard, AI can be as fast and predictable, or even faster and more accurate than human beings. However, teaching cannot be merely explained as a sequence of activities but as a complex professional practice, the roots of which are in human relations and moral responsibility. AI lacks the option of empathising, having morality and responding to situations. Particularly, the language acquisition process is founded on the concept of interaction, sensemaking, and cultural interaction, which is impossible to accomplish using computers.

8. Implications for Teacher Education and Professional Practice

Implication of AI in ELT is colossal in their professional development and teaching education. The teachers ought to also be presented with an opportunity to acquire AI literacy that will make them understand how AI works, what they can and cannot do, along with the ability to apply it in an ethical and pedagogical manner (Li *et al.*, 2022). The professional practice must respond with the use of competencies linked to digital pedagogy, data interpretation, and design of instructions. At the same time, human caring skills, such as communication, empathy, and reflective practice, which are essential in the AI-enhanced environment, should continue to play a role in the field of teacher education.

9. Future Directions of AI in ELT

They will most probably make a difference in the development of AI in ELT by enhancing technology, pedagogy, and the values of society. Using AI systems in learning a language will be enhanced as it evolves further. However, the success in education does not rely solely on the level of technological progress.

10. CONCLUSION

Therefore, the concept of artificial intelligence is transforming the area of English Language Teaching in an extremely profound way that provides the novelties of being customised, readily accessible, and effective. However, the idea that the AI could be fully used to replace the human teachers is not only unsound pedagogically, but also educationally undesirable. Language teaching is a fundamentally human process, and it involves the emotional process, cultural consciousness and moral responsibility.

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