



RESEARCH ARTICLE



INTEGRATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRACT



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English language teaching (ELT) is changing as a result of the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI), particularly large language models (LLMs) and intelligent tutoring systems. This paper combines theoretical frameworks (Second Language Acquisition, Zone of Proximal Development, and TPACK), recent empirical research on AI tools and applications (e.g., conversational agents, pronunciation tutors, writing assistants, adaptive tutors), and the primary pedagogical advantages and ethical/operational challenges. This article makes the case that artificial intelligence can enhance learner autonomy, formative feedback, and customised practice based on systematic reviews and current research. According to the research, integrating AI requires teacher training, thorough evaluation procedures, data privacy and equitable protections, and a curriculum reform that prioritises advanced communicative skills over memorisation. To ensure that AI enriches rather than replaces effective ELT instruction, the essay offers practical implementation strategies and a roadmap for future research and legislation.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Challenges, Teacher training, ELT.*





INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) has moved rapidly from niche experimental systems to widely accessible educational technologies that directly influence classroom practice. Teachers and learners are increasingly using tools such as conversational agents, adaptive learning platforms, automated scoring systems, pronunciation analysers and large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT to scaffold language practice, generate instructional materials and provide instant feedback beyond the traditional classroom boundaries. AI-enhanced research on pronunciation training, academic writing, speaking fluency, listening comprehension, and individualised learning pathways has increased significantly in English Language Teaching (ELT), according to recent syntheses. This suggests both an unprecedented opportunity and an urgent need for pedagogically grounded implementation (Zawacki-Richter et al. 121; Li)

However, academics warn that strong frameworks, not techno-solutionist zeal, must direct the incorporation of AI. According to Warschauer and Liaw, actual interaction—rather than automated output—is crucial, and language learning systems should be based on communicative techniques and sociocultural theory. Similarly, rather than just digitising current pedagogical approaches, Kukulska-Hulme contends that the emergence of mobile and AI-enabled learning spaces necessitates a reconsideration of teacher roles and learner independence (204). Artificial intelligence risks perpetuating linguistic bias and rote learning, widening equity inequalities, and eroding critical

literacies in the absence of a theoretical foundation (Holmes et al. 13).

This article discusses the theoretical underpinnings for integrating AI in ELT, namely Second Language Acquisition (SLA) principles, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), in response to this challenge. It combines recent empirical work on AI-mediated learning with a review of representative applications, including conversational AI tutors, pronunciation and fluency feedback systems, grammar and essay writing assistants, and adaptive learning platforms. Emerging ethical issues such as algorithmic bias, academic integrity, data privacy, and teacher professional displacement are also discussed.

Rather than being a strictly technical survey, this study adopts a moral stance. It makes the case for expanding rather than restricting teacher agency and for human-centered pedagogy in deploying sustainable AI that aligns with communicative competency objectives. Recommendations for practitioners, teacher educators, and legislators are included in the article's conclusion, with a focus on evidence-based approaches to instructional design, assessment reform, and the responsible use of AI tools in ELT contexts.

FOUNDATIONS THEORETICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION (SLA)

Evidence-based instructional design in English Language Teaching (ELT) has long been founded on Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis asserts that motivation



and anxiety play a major role in mediating language learning. At the same time, his Input Hypothesis states that language acquisition occurs when learners receive *comprehensible input* that is slightly above their current competence (Krashen 20–25). This perspective supports Long's Interaction Hypothesis, which holds that through the negotiation of meaning and clarification requests in communication, negotiated interaction promotes understanding and language acquisition (Long 451). Swain's Output Hypothesis also claims that producing language forces learners to become aware of the gaps in their linguistic knowledge, i.e., what they want to say versus what they can say, leading to a deeper processing of form and function (Swain 125). These core SLA perspectives together determine not only the mechanisms of acquisition but also the pedagogical conditions for successful language development.

Conversational agents, adaptive input systems, and intelligent tutoring interfaces, in particular, have received praise for their adherence to important SLA criteria, such as enough exposure to target-language input and opportunities for low-stakes practice.

Research has demonstrated that AI can mimic interactional feedback, thereby creating avenues for modified output that encourage noticing and form negotiation (Li and Hegelheimer 368; Heift and Schulze 89). The profusion of technology, however, does not ensure acquisition in and of itself. Meaningful task design still matters for AI-produced input, which should be appropriate to learners' developmental stage, encourage interaction rather than passive consumption, and provide corrective feedback in line with SLA research (Ellis 45; Chapelle

55). AI risks flooding learners with decontextualised language in the absence of principled integration, thereby promoting inaccuracy or fossilisation rather than communicative ability. As a result, SLA perspectives provide a crucial theoretical framework for assessing and creating AI-augmented ELT instruction.

2.2 ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT (ZPD) AND SCAFFOLDING

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) positions learning as a fundamentally social and mediated process in which learners move from assisted to independent performance through interaction with a more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky 86). According to Wood, Bruner, and Ross's later conceptualisation, scaffolding is the provision of short-term assistance to students so they can complete tasks that they would not be able to complete on their own. To help learners internalise new structures, instructional scaffolding in ELT environments typically involves modelling language use, encouraging metalinguistic awareness, or offering progressive support. For a long time, research in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has acknowledged that successful technology integration needs to be based on these principles of mediated development rather than a simple linear transfer of information (Lantolf and Thorne 201–206).

Artificial intelligence can simulate adaptive mediation, thus creating new possibilities for ZPD-based scaffolding. AI-driven tutors, intelligent feedback systems, and conversational agents can provide contingent support, such as dynamic hints, recasts, prompts, or metalinguistic cues, that is



tailored to learner performance in real time (Holmes et al. 17). However, the pedagogical value of such assistance depends on its congruence with sociocultural principles of learning. Tools that provide fixed, decontextualised feedback or adhere to a rigid task sequence risk causing cognitive overload or frustration by failing to adapt to the learner's changing needs (Dikilitaş and Arnold 54). Mercer and Howe go on to argue that meaningful learning is not simply a by-product of completing a task, but rather of dialogic interaction that promotes reasoning and learner agency (14). Therefore, AI may improve the scaffolding in digital learning environments, but only when its design and implementation are sensitive to the need to maintain responsiveness, learner engagement, and human-machine collaboration within the ZPD.

2.3 TECHNOLOGICAL PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE (TPACK)

Mishra and Koehler's Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework offers a productive lens to view the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in English Language Teaching (ELT). According to the model, effective instructional design is situated at the nexus of three fundamental knowledge domains: pedagogical knowledge (PK), which includes mastery of language teaching techniques, assessment strategies, and task-based learning; content knowledge (CK), which includes knowledge of linguistic structures, discourse features, and communicative competence; and technological knowledge (TK), which is the functional understanding of available tools and their affordances (Mishra and Koehler 1025). Crucially, the paradigm emphasises how these domains are

interdependent and suggests that technology integration should be pedagogically intentional rather than tool-driven. AI also adds a new level of complexity to the ELT framework, acting as a dynamic agent that generates language, provides feedback, and influences classroom relationships, while also serving as a tool for material delivery.

As AI becomes more prominent in educational settings, teachers must extend their expertise toward what emerging research calls "*AI-TPACK*"—a refinement of the original framework that incorporates *algorithmic awareness, evaluation of AI-generated content, and ethical decision-making* (Zhang and Li 58). Teachers need not only procedural knowledge of how to operate AI tools but also critical technological pedagogical judgment : understanding when and why AI should be used, how it supports specific learning goals, and what its limitations and biases may be (Popenici and Kerr 5). For instance, in order to prevent reliance and encourage learner autonomy and metalinguistic awareness, pedagogical measures are needed for AI writing aids. To prevent language learning from becoming mere mechanical repetition, pronunciation tools should be utilised alongside meaningful interaction. A gap between AI technologies and communicative pedagogy could lead to shallow learning or even undermine academic integrity if TPACK is not sufficiently developed. As a result, TPACK for AI must be the primary focus of teacher training and professional development so that technology supports ethical ELT practice rather than undermining it.



3. A TYPOLOGY OF ELT AI TOOLS AND APPLICATIONS

Recent systematic reviews have begun to classify AI applications in ELT based on pedagogical purpose rather than technological novelty. Some of the common categories are: (1) conversational agents and chatbots that simulate spoken interaction and support fluency (Jia et al. 4); (2) automated writing evaluation (AWE) systems and AI-based drafting assistants that give feedback on grammar, vocabulary, and discourse organization; (3) speech recognition and pronunciation training tools that evaluate segmental and suprasegmental features; (4) adaptive learning platforms that personalise tasks based on learner analytics; and (5) AI authoring tools that generate instructional content such as quizzes, reading passages, or prompts (Zawacki-Richter et al. 920). Among empirical studies, ChatGPT, Grammarly, ELSA Speak, Duolingo, and Write & Improve were the most popular from 2021 to 2025 due to their availability and scalability in class and self-study settings (Bai and Guo 271). These tools are now widely used to support language practice, instructional planning, and assessment. This is a shift from Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) to AI-mediated learning ecosystems.

Numerous empirical studies have demonstrated the short-term benefits of using AI tools with instructional guidance in terms of learner engagement, feedback immediacy, vocabulary uptake, and pronunciation accuracy (Li et al. 38; Godwin-Jones 9). For instance, pronunciation apps have been found to enhance intelligibility when integrated into communicative tasks rather than isolated drills, and chatbots can boost speaking fluency through interactive turn-taking practice.

However, major reviews point out important limitations in current research, such as small sample sizes, lack of experimental control, and little longitudinal data to assess sustained development of proficiency (Fathi and Ebadi 13). Moreover, many studies depend on self-reported perceptions rather than validated measures of proficiency, which challenges the strength of the current evidence. Finally, AI tools have the potential to support micro-skills (e.g., grammar editing, pronunciation). However, there is less evidence of their impact on holistic communicative competence, intercultural pragmatics, or critical language awareness. These limitations point to the need for more rigorous research to assess the long-term pedagogical value of AI.

4. EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

4.1 PERSONALISATION AND ADAPTIVE LEARNING

One of the most frequently cited pedagogical benefits of AI in ELT is personalisation. Leveraging learning analytics and performance data, AI-powered platforms dynamically adapt the difficulty, pacing, and sequencing of tasks to meet individual learner needs. This approach contrasts sharply with traditional one-size-fits-all instruction by enabling data-informed differentiation that responds to learner errors, response times, and prior mastery (Holmes et al. 22). For heterogeneous ELT classrooms—where learners differ widely in proficiency, cognitive styles, and learning pace—AI-based personalization can help ensure that learners engage with tasks situated within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Such adaptivity is central to instructional efficiency, reducing time



spent on tasks that are either too easy or frustratingly difficult (Chen et al. 77).

Adaptive platforms, when implemented thoughtfully, have the potential to improve **learner** outcomes, and empirical research supports this potential.

Research has demonstrated that incorporating adaptive practice systems such as Duolingo, Busuu, and Carnegie Speech into structured pedagogical frameworks can lead to substantial improvements in learner engagement, vocabulary retention, and grammar accuracy (Xia and Zhang 59;). However, researchers caution that personalisation alone does not guarantee quality learning. Adaptive systems, without teacher mediation and pedagogical transparency, may encourage superficial completion rather than deep processing, and learners may misunderstand why they are being assigned certain tasks (Kukulska-Hulme and Viberg 207). Also, critics have warned about the possible overreliance on AI, which may undermine learner agency if adaptive recommendations are not paired with opportunities for self-directed choice and interaction (Passey 193). Therefore, AI-enabled personalisation is not a replacement for the teacher, but is a supportive tool to enhance differentiated instruction and learner autonomy within a principled ELT pedagogy.

4.2 INSTANT, FORMATIVE FEEDBACK

Formative feedback is a key factor in second-language development, and artificial intelligence greatly expands opportunities for timely, individualised corrective feedback in ELT contexts. Research in SLA shows that feedback helps learners notice, test hypotheses, and restructure their

interlanguage, all of which are key processes in acquisition (Long 452; Ellis 54). These principles are put into practice in AI tools that provide diagnostic information in response to a learner's error in grammar, lexical choice, discourse coherence, and pronunciation. Automated writing evaluation (AWE) systems like Grammarly, Pigai, and Write & Improve offer iterative feedback on linguistic accuracy and rhetorical organization, allowing learners to participate in repeated revision cycles. Similarly, speech analysis applications such as ELSA Speak and Google Speech assist learners by providing visual and acoustic cues to identify mistakes in stress, intonation, rhythm, and articulation.

However, the pedagogical usefulness of feedback by means of AI is strongly dependent on its interpretability and its integration in meaningful learning tasks. Research shows that learners might ignore or over-accept AI feedback if not prompted to think critically of error patterns and revise judiciously (Stevenson and Phakiti 319). Teachers play a vital mediating role in helping learners distinguish between global and local feedback, prioritize revision goals, and avoid overreliance on automated corrections (Hyland and Hyland 207). However, research warns that while AI tools excel at surface-level accuracy, they struggle with pragmatic appropriateness, argument quality, and genre conventions – things that require human judgment and contextual knowledge. Therefore, immediate AI feedback is most effective when used as a hybrid model that combines AI affordances with teacher guidance and peer review to promote metalinguistic awareness and learner autonomy.



4.3 MEANINGFUL OUTPUT OPPORTUNITIES

Traditionally, input has been the focus of language teaching, but Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research emphasises the value of output for developing fluency, syntactic processing and pragmatic competence. Swain proposes the Output Hypothesis (126), which suggests that learners develop when they are forced to produce intelligible language and modify it in response to feedback. This leads to more detailed language processing and the testing of hypotheses. Artificial intelligence provides opportunities for this kind of productive language use by offering low-stakes, interactive environments where learners can practice language without fear of negative evaluation. Conversational agents and chat-based AI tutors simulate dialogic interaction, offering learners chances to practice language functions such as asking questions, clarifying, requesting, agreeing, and disagreeing, as well as gaining confidence through repetitive practice (Jia et al. 6). These settings are especially useful in large or exam-focused classes where there are few other opportunities for speaking practice.

However, the pedagogical value of AI-generated output depends on the design of the task and the authenticity of the communication. Open-ended conversations with AI risk degenerating into shallow exchanges unless guided by meaningful learning goals such as role-plays, transactional dialogues, academic seminar simulations, or professional communication scenarios (Bygate 58). Researchers warn that AI conversation tools should not replace human interaction but rather supplement it, incorporating task-based language teaching (TBLT), which provides pre-task planning, interaction

rehearsal, and post-task reflection (Ellis 82). Also, research shows that the output quality is better when conversational AI offers interactional feedback like clarification requests, recasts, or prompts, features that reflect naturalistic communication (Taguchi 410). Therefore, rather than seeing AI as a replacement for speech, effective pedagogy uses AI as a communicative scaffold to enhance oral fluency while preserving the primacy of teacher-facilitated interaction in ELT.

4.4 MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

The advent of Large Language Models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini has sparked a seismic shift in instructional design, enabling the rapid development of educational resources. These models can generate full lesson plans, graded reading passages, comprehension questions, vocabulary worksheets, writing prompts, grammar explanations, and dialogue scripts in seconds. For teachers with heavy workloads, particularly in large ELT classes, LLMs offer a way to reduce preparation time and expand the scope of instruction to accommodate different proficiency levels and learner needs (Kohnke, Moorhouse, and Zou 5). Generative AI, when used strategically, can support responsive teaching by enabling teachers to adapt materials in real time based on formative assessments and learner progress.

However, teachers warn that AI-generated material needs to be *carefully mediated pedagogically before it can* be used in classrooms. Because LLM output is based on probabilistic text prediction and not validated educational frameworks, it may contain factual inaccuracies,



invented references, linguistic bias, or culturally inappropriate examples (Floridi and Chiriatti 692). In addition, AI-generated materials may lack SLA-informed sequencing or communicative value, leading to tasks that emphasise form over meaning or fail to encourage interaction and higher-order thinking. To evaluate the accuracy, relevance, cognitive demand, congruence with language learning outcomes, and ethical considerations—such as the representation and inclusion of the created materials—teachers must engage in critical AI literacy. AI-assisted content creation can boost output without sacrificing instructional integrity when teachers exercise caution. Unchecked reliance, however, may jeopardise the quality of instruction.

5. CHALLENGES AND RISKS

5.1 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND VALIDITY OF ASSESSMENT

Teachers are being forced to reconsider conventional ideas of authorship, originality, and learner accountability as a result of the quick integration of generative AI into English Language Teaching (ELT), which has immediately prompted questions about academic integrity. Without engaging in the cognitive labor required by the assignment, students can write polished articles, answers to comprehension questions, or even spoken transcripts with relative ease thanks to AI tools such as ChatGPT and other LLMs (Lancaster & Cotarlan 12). Teachers are therefore doubting the reliability of conventional assessment methods, especially online tests, take-home essays, and other unsupervised submissions.

SLA research emphasises the significance of authentic evaluation that assesses accuracy as well as

communication ability, strategic language use, and task-based problem-solving—all of which can be obscured when AI is employed unsupervised (Carless and Winstone 54).

In response, educational institutions and educators are developing alternative tests to preserve rigor while accounting for potential AI applications. Process-oriented assessment (drafting, peer review, reflection), oral and in-class evaluation, portfolio-based assignments, and project work with a focus on application and teamwork are some of the tactics (Popenici and Kerr 10). The use of AI is becoming more permissive, but it remains regulated as policy frameworks continue to develop. The validity of summative assessments is maintained when students are instructed to utilise AI for formative tasks such as ideation, writing, or pronunciation practice. Despite these modifications, there are still issues to be resolved, such as establishing moral standards for AI-assisted work, training instructors to identify exploitation, and ensuring equity for diverse student groups. Rigorous pedagogical design and the establishment of institutional regulations are required to achieve a balance between learner assistance options and assessment validity and integrity in contemporary ELT. It also entails a multifaceted relationship between accountability, pedagogy, and technology.

5.2 BIAS, HALLUCINATION, AND RELIABILITY

Large Language Models (LLMs) can generate highly fluent and coherent text but are also prone to producing incorrect, misleading, or biased content, a phenomenon commonly referred to as "hallucination." This type of error is especially worrying in the ELT context, where learners might be



using AI to acquire factual information, cultural representations, or pragmatic norms. Unverified outputs may inadvertently perpetuate linguistic inaccuracies, misinformation, or stereotypes (Shen et al. 7). Research has demonstrated that AI-generated materials are predisposed to systematic bias, including gender, cultural, and socio-economic bias. This underscores the necessity of critical evaluation and mediation in the classroom (Blodgett et al. 1). To ensure that learners receive contextual framing and that AI-generated content is verified against credible sources, educators must establish verification protocols. Moreover, instruction in AI literacy, which encompasses the ability to assess the reliability of sources, identify potential biases, and critically evaluate AI recommendations, can enhance learners' *digital critical-thinking skills*, thereby ensuring that AI is a valuable learning tool rather than an unquestioned authority (Williamson and Piattoeva 124). Thus, promoting reliability-aware interaction with AI aligns with the overarching objectives of ELT, which are to cultivate language users who are autonomous, culturally aware, and critically literate.

5.3 COMMERCIAL INTERESTS AND DATA PRIVACY

The widespread use of artificial intelligence (AI) in English Language Teaching (ELT) increasingly relies on cloud-based platforms that collect, store, and analyse massive amounts of student-generated data, including written drafts, voice recordings, interaction logs, and performance data. Data streams offer possibilities for adaptive learning, personalised feedback and analytics-driven insights, but also raise considerable ethical and legal concerns about consent, data ownership and possible secondary use by commercial providers (Williamson 53). Many AI

applications are built by for-profit companies that may utilise aggregated or anonymised data for model improvement, marketing, or other purposes, often with little transparency to educators or learners. Such practices can unintentionally compromise student privacy and undermine trust in educational technology.

Therefore, educational institutions need to implement robust data governance practices to protect learners and comply with relevant regulations, such as GDPR, FERPA, and local data protection laws. Policies should include careful consideration of vendor contracts, specific opt-in consent mechanisms, open communication regarding how student data will be used, and protocols for data retention and deletion (Selwyn 148). Teacher and student awareness of digital ethics and data literacy is also crucial for enabling informed participation in AI-mediated learning environments. When thoughtfully managed, artificial intelligence systems can provide pedagogical benefits without compromising privacy ; without such management, schools risk legal liability, reputational harm, and the erosion of learner autonomy, highlighting the need for a proactive, ethically informed approach to AI integration.

5.4 TEACHER READINESS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Research has consistently shown that teacher knowledge, attitudes, and self-efficacy are crucial factors in the successful integration of AI in English Language Teaching (ELT). Systematic reviews show that without structured professional development, AI adoption is often superficial, limited to some tasks, or



abandoned (Holmes et al. 29; Luckin et al. 72). Effective training needs to go beyond the basics of using the tool and should incorporate TPACK specifically for AI, which covers technological competence, pedagogical design consistent with SLA principles, content knowledge, and ethical decision-making. Teachers need to know not only how AI works, but also how it can be used to improve language learning.

5.5 ACCESS AND EQUITY

There are significant fairness and access concerns with the use of AI in English language instruction (ELT), especially in settings with a variety of technical infrastructures. Access to devices, dependable internet connectivity, and subscription-based AI technologies varies greatly among regions, schools, and socioeconomic levels, which can exacerbate already-existing educational disparities (Selwyn 142; Holmes et al. 33). AI-mediated learning may not be fully accessible to students in low-resource settings, which would reduce their opportunities for targeted practice, formative feedback, and meaningful output. The digital gap may lead to a two-tiered society where pupils who are more technologically savvy pick up language abilities faster than others.

To address these discrepancies, institutions must employ inclusive and context-sensitive strategies. Blended approaches, which combine AI technology with low-tech, offline alternatives including printable activities, peer involvement, and teacher-facilitated practice, can provide wider access while preserving educational benefits (Kukulska-Hulme & Viberg 210). Schools might also think about centralised infrastructure support, open-access AI resources, and subsidised gadgets to assist lower financial obstacles.

As part of their professional development, teachers must complete equity-focused digital literacy training, which will enable them to identify and resolve access discrepancies as well as construct flexible, inclusive lesson plans. Proactive engagement with equity in AI integration can enhance learning possibilities without further entrenching structural disadvantages, orienting technology adoption toward the larger goals of socially equitable and inclusive education.

6. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES: PRINCIPLES FOR CLASSROOMS AND PROGRAMS

Literature and established pedagogical frameworks can inform several actionable principles to guide the responsible integration of AI in ELT, ensuring the technology is used to augment rather than displace pedagogical goals.

6.1 ALIGN AI USE WITH EXPLICIT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

A pedagogically focused approach is the first step toward successful AI integration. Before selecting tools or platforms, teachers should make clear what they want their students to accomplish, such as better oral fluency, vocabulary learning, or revision and editing skills. According to empirical studies, learning gains are inconsistent and frequently shallow when AI adoption is technocentric (i.e., tools define tasks) (Luckin et al. 84; Holmes et al. 29). By ensuring that AI affordances are in line with specific goals, tools become scaffolding that facilitate meaningful language practice rather than ends in and of themselves. For example, automated writing evaluation systems can be utilised to carry out structured revision cycles based on task-based



learning outcomes, and chatbots can be used to practise transactional dialogues (Li and Hegelheimer 368).

6.2 DESIGN TASKS REQUIRING HIGHER-ORDER SKILLS

To encourage genuine learning and minimise abuse, activities should differentiate between higher-order skill development and AI-assisted lower-level processing. Grammar drills, pronunciation exercises, and vocabulary practice can be efficiently handled by artificial intelligence, freeing up learners' cognitive capacity for critical thinking, discourse competence, and real-time interaction—areas where human judgment remains crucial (Bygate 58; Ellis 82). AI should be utilised in pre-task or rehearsal activities, according to task-based learning frameworks. However, tasks involving the negotiation of meaning, pragmatics, or argumentation should be saved for human-facilitated evaluation and group projects (Swain 126). This method leverages AI's potential for immediate feedback and personalised practice while maintaining the developmental roles of output and interaction.

6.3 USE TEACHER MEDIATION AND REFLECTION

AI feedback should not be taken for granted. Teachers have to mediate the automated suggestions, helping learners to interpret their feedback critically, prioritise revision goals and translate the error signals into actionable learning strategies (Hyland and Hyland 207; Mercer and Howe 14). This mediation reflects Vygotsky's ZPD: social interaction remains important for scaffolding, with AI serving as a helpful tool rather than a stand-alone teacher. Structured debriefs, reflection prompts, and

teacher-led peer discussions enable learners to internalise feedback and increase their metalinguistic awareness, encouraging sustained acquisition rather than simply complying with AI suggestions.

6.4 CREATE TRANSPARENT POLICIES AND ONLINE LITERACY CURRICULA

Clear institutional policies and explicit online literacy instruction are essential to prevent confusion about ethical AI use. Syllabi also ought to state what uses of AI are allowed, explain how AI-generated work will be graded, and instruct students in how to cite or acknowledge the use of AI (Williamson and Piattoeva 124; Luckin et al. 72). Creating critical thinking activities that require students to verify content produced by AI against credible sources can promote critical thinking and ensure academic integrity. Clear guidelines reduce ambiguity on plagiarism, promote ethical use, and foster learners' independent and responsible use of AI tools.

6.5 MAKE DATA SAFETY AND EQUITY A PRIORITY

Data privacy and fair access should be key elements in an ethical deployment of AI. Institutions should choose vendors with clear data-protection policies, create protocols for obtaining consent, and anonymise student data as much as possible (Selwyn 142; Slade and Prinsloo 112). Strategies for equitable access, such as on-campus devices, offline AI alternatives, or subsidised subscriptions, also help to mitigate the digital divide. Procurement processes should include privacy impact assessments and ethical review to ensure that the adoption of AI does not erode learner trust or exacerbate inequities.



6.6 INVEST IN TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The evidence highlights that teacher preparedness is one of the most potent predictors of successful AI adoption (Holmes et al. 29; Luckin et al. 84). PD programs should include a technical orientation to frequently used tools, workshops on pedagogical task design with AI, ethics, and data-privacy modules, and sustained communities of practice for experimentation and knowledge sharing. Research shows that a small amount of guided PD can make an outsized difference in teacher confidence, the quality of adoption, and instructional alignment, so that AI tools are strategically, ethically, and effectively integrated rather than superficially deployed.

7. CONCLUSION

The possibilities of AI in English Language Teaching (ELT) are transformative, offering scalable personalisation, instant formative feedback, and greater opportunities for meaningful language production. Tools like conversational agents, automated writing evaluation systems, pronunciation tutors, and adaptive learning platforms can support differentiated instruction, low-stakes practice, and data-informed task design, which can potentially enhance learner engagement, autonomy, and motivation (Li and Hegelheimer 368; Holmes et al. 29). LLMs and generative AI also enable teachers to reduce their preparation time, create personalised instructional materials, and deliver adaptive learning sequences, thereby providing teachers with unparalleled flexibility to address different requirements in the classroom (Kohnke, Moorhouse, and Zou 5).

However, the educational value of AI depends on its thoughtful integration. SLA-informed task design, attention to the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky 86), and teacher mediation are important for ensuring that technology supports meaningful learning rather than superficial or decontextualised practice (Swain 126; Mercer and Howe 14). Ethical, responsible, and inclusive adoption depends on institutional protections, including data privacy policies, strategies for equitable access, transparent rules for AI use, and professional development (Selwyn 142; Luckin et al. 84). Also, assessment practices need to be revisited in an effort to balance AI-assisted formative opportunities with authentic evaluation of learner competence and communicative proficiency (Popenici and Kerr 10).

The aim of AI integration in ELT should be augmentation, to expand teachers' pedagogical reach, but not at the expense of the human components central to language learning : social interaction, cultural nuance, ethical reasoning, and critical engagement (Carless and Winstone 54). AI, when used with research-based strategies, reflective teaching practices, and ongoing assessment, can be a powerful partner in developing communicative competence among a wide range of learners and in a variety of settings globally. Future research should look at longitudinal impacts, socio-emotional outcomes, and equal access to ensure that AI-enhanced ELT remains effective and inclusive in a rapidly evolving digital environment (Zawacki-Richter et al. 920; Holmes et al. 33).



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