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2026**RESEARCH ARTICLE****WHEN AI ENTERS THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM: RETHINKING TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT****Dr. Dandu Swamy***Associate Professor, Dept. of English, Girraj Government College (A), Nizamabad, Telangana, India*

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54513/JOELL.2026.13218>**ABSTRACT****Article history:**

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The introduction of Generative Artificial Intelligence into English-language classrooms is not just a technological advancement; it is beginning to reshape the dynamics among teacher, learner, language, and knowledge. This paper explores how the presence of AI questions some of the foundational assumptions underlying traditional English Language Teaching. The paper contends that artificial intelligence does not merely function as a digital tool or another means of language practice, but rather establishes a novel pedagogical environment in which learners increasingly engage with a non-human language partner. This raises a fundamental question: if a machine can produce grammatically correct, contextually appropriate, and stylistically varied English in seconds, what should students truly focus on learning, practicing, and demonstrating? The paper suggests moving away from product-focused language learning toward approaches that emphasize process and interaction. It considers the idea that the educational benefit of writing may depend not only on the final product a learner creates, but also on the learner's capacity to question, revise, validate, adapt, and engage critically with AI-generated content.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Generative AI, English Language Teaching, English Language Learning, AI-Assisted Learning, Teaching Pedagogy.*

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The rise of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) has introduced a new scenario in English Language Teaching. The incorporation of technology into language education is not a recent development. Language laboratories, computers, online dictionaries, multimedia tools, learning-management systems, mobile apps, and digital classrooms have already transformed how English is taught and learned. However, Generative AI brings a distinct form of technological presence. It goes beyond offering just information or language materials. It can produce essays, summaries, dialogues, questions, explanations, vocabulary exercises, lesson materials, and feedback. It can also engage with learners and adapt its responses based on their questions and commands. For this reason, integrating AI into the English classroom demands more than simply adding another digital tool. It calls for rethinking the connections between teacher, learner, language, knowledge, and assessment. This development takes on greater importance in the context of English language learning. Learning English is more than just creating grammatically correct sentences. It requires communication, creativity, interpretation, cultural awareness, critical thinking, and the skill to apply language suitably across various contexts. A student can now generate a well-structured essay in seconds using AI. However, the presence of a well-written essay does not automatically indicate that the student has the same level of independent writing skill. This presents a significant teaching challenge. If AI can generate the final language output, educators must reconsider what content should be taught and what should be evaluated.

Marshall McLuhan's famous assertion, "the medium is the message" (1964, p. 7), offers a helpful theoretical foundation for grasping this shift. McLuhan's argument posits that a medium is more than just a vessel for information; it actively reshapes human behavior and social interactions. When applied to the English classroom, AI cannot simply be viewed as a machine that delivers extra English exercises. It alters how students engage with language, how teachers offer feedback, and how knowledge is created and assessed. A learner can request an explanation from an AI system before approaching the teacher, generate multiple versions of a paragraph, compare various expressions, and receive instant feedback. Therefore, the conventional dynamic among teacher, textbook, and learner is slowly evolving into a more intricate one that includes teacher, learner, and AI. At the same time, the arrival of AI should not be viewed solely as a threat. It opens up new opportunities for personal practice, linguistic exploration, and communication. A student who is reluctant to speak in front of classmates can practice a conversation privately using an AI system. A learner with a limited vocabulary may ask for examples and alternative ways to express themselves. A teacher can use AI to design a variety of classroom activities.

Paulo Freire's critique of passive education also applies to this situation. Freire observes that "the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor" (1970, p. 72). His critique of the banking model of education stems from the belief that learners ought not only to absorb knowledge but also to engage in creating and challenging it. The same issue can also arise in a classroom that uses AI



support. The source of pre-prepared information might shift from the teacher to the machine, yet passive learning can stay unchanged. Students may use AI to write essays, finish assignments, summarize readings, and produce answers without genuinely participating in the learning process. This paper, therefore, contends that AI should not be permitted to turn learners into consumers of machine-produced language. Instead, it should be used to foster learners who can question, evaluate, adapt, and responsibly apply such language.

AI AND THE CHANGING NATURE OF THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

The introduction of AI into the English classroom marks a shift from technology-supported learning to technology-mediated learning. Previous technologies typically provided resources that students and teachers used for specific tasks. However, generative AI can also take part in the process itself. It can answer a learner's question, adjust its response, propose an alternative, and keep the interaction going. This sets AI apart from a traditional textbook or dictionary. This shift can be seen as a move from the traditional classroom dynamic (teacher, textbook, and learner) to a more intricate one that includes the teacher, the learner, and AI. A student can compose a paragraph, use AI to edit it, choose which suggestions to keep or discard, and then review the revised version with their teacher. In another scenario, the learner might request the AI to produce an essay and submit it without making any changes. These two situations can yield equally refined texts, yet the learning processes involved are entirely different. This distinction matters because educational value is not always present in the final product. It may also be

present during the process of product creation. Therefore, AI compels English teachers to consider more than just the surface-level quality of language. A grammatically correct paragraph is helpful, but the teacher also needs to assess whether the learner comprehends its meaning, can explain it, can support its argument, and can adapt it to new contexts.

Neil Selwyn's critical perspective on educational technology is helpful in this context. Selwyn contends that educational technology must be evaluated not solely based on its advertised advantages, but also in light of the social, cultural, and educational contexts in which it functions (Selwyn, 2010). This approach matters because technological efficiency alone does not guarantee educational quality. AI can generate an answer rapidly, but speed does not equate to learning. It can produce complex language, but complexity does not equate to effective communication. Thus, the presence of AI prompts teachers to reevaluate what classroom activity entails. An activity is not automatically successful just because it yields the right answer. It should prompt students to think, communicate, compare, question, and make decisions. Thus, the English classroom can serve as a space where students learn not only how to use AI but also how to assess the language it generates.

THE SUPPORTIVE POSSIBILITIES OF GENERATIVE AI

There are multiple reasons GenAI can prove beneficial in English language education. A key benefit is the ability to engage in real-time interaction. In the past, students often had to wait for the teacher to grade their assignments or answer their questions. AI can offer an instant response. This can be especially helpful for students needing extra



practice beyond the classroom. AI can also help facilitate personalized learning. English classrooms often include students who vary in vocabulary, grammar, reading skills, and speaking confidence. One textbook exercise might not suit every learner's needs. AI can offer easier explanations for students who struggle and more complex tasks for advanced learners. It can create dialogues, role plays, comprehension questions, and vocabulary exercises tailored to various levels.

Another key option is providing writing assistance. Students can leverage AI to create alternative introductions, spot grammatical issues, compare various expressions, and get advice on improving structure. When students apply these suggestions thoughtfully, AI can evolve into a collaborative writing partner instead of merely replacing them as a ghostwriter. AI can also assist with practicing speaking. Students can practice interviews, group discussions, presentations, and everyday conversations without worrying about being judged immediately by their classmates. This can provide additional opportunities for learners who are hesitant to speak in public. For teachers, AI can help reduce routine prep tasks. It can assist in creating examples, questions, classroom scenarios, worksheets, and discussion topics. This does not imply that teachers should unquestioningly accept everything produced by AI. Teacher verification is still required.

Nevertheless, the technology can serve as a foundation for teachers to create materials suited to their specific contexts. Therefore, a positive perspective on AI is warranted when it is employed to expand opportunities for practice,

experimentation, and interaction. The issue arises when convenience takes precedence over learning.

FROM LEARNING TO ANSWER PRODUCTION

The primary critique of AI in ELT centers on the distinction between learning and merely obtaining answers. In a conventional writing assignment, students are expected to consider a topic, structure their ideas, choose appropriate vocabulary, form sentences, revise their text, and ultimately submit the completed work. When students rely on AI to handle most of these tasks, the result may be strong, but the learning process often stays underdeveloped. This situation presents a fresh challenge for English teachers. A high-quality essay is no longer sufficient on its own to demonstrate high-quality learning. The teacher needs to understand how the essay was created. Did the student construct the argument? Was the student using AI solely for grammar checking? Did the student alter the machine-generated response? Does the student comprehend the final text? This issue can be linked to Freire's idea of banking education. If students merely get pre-prepared answers from AI, the technology could perpetuate the same passive learning approach that Freire criticized. The distinction is that the depositor is no longer solely the teacher. The machine serves as another source of information storage. This presents an intriguing paradox. AI can give students the impression of independence since they can access information without relying on teachers. However, relying too heavily on AI could undermine intellectual independence. A student who constantly turns to AI to write even a single paragraph may be tech-savvy but intellectually reliant.

**FROM CORRECT ENGLISH TO APPROPRIATE ENGLISH**

The presence of AI also alters what language competence means. In the past, English instruction has placed significant emphasis on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and accuracy. These are still significant. However, AI reduces the difficulty of achieving grammatical accuracy, as students can receive corrections almost immediately. The more challenging question is whether students can assess the appropriateness of language. A sentence may be grammatically correct yet inappropriate for a specific context. An email may be grammatically flawless yet overly formal. A speech may include sophisticated vocabulary, but it can sound unnatural when spoken aloud. A paragraph may be linguistically correct yet culturally unsuitable. Thus, students must cultivate the ability to make linguistic judgments. They ought to be able to review AI-generated language and question whether it conveys what they truly intend to express. They ought to take into account the audience, purpose, tone, cultural context, and the relationship between the speakers. This indicates a significant shift in ELT. The question should not be limited to, "Can the learner produce correct English?" It should also be: "Can the learner determine which variety of English is suitable in a specific context?" This change increases the importance of human judgment rather than diminishing it. AI can offer options, but students need to learn how to select among them.

AI, ENGLISH VARIETIES AND LINGUISTIC IDENTITY

In multilingual societies like India, the question of linguistic identity takes on particular significance. Indian learners come into the English classroom already possessing some linguistic knowledge. They

incorporate Telugu, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Kannada, Marathi, and other linguistic and cultural influences into their use of English. Generative AI can assist multilingual learners, yet it may also promote standardization. Lee, Jeon, McKinley, and Rose (2025) analyzed GenAI through the lens of Global Englishes and discovered that AI systems often gravitate toward standard English norms, potentially failing to reflect the full range of English varieties. Their discussion indicates that prompting can enhance the representation of linguistic diversity, yet tendencies toward standard English may still be substantial (p. 104). This finding carries significant implications for Indian ELT. If students repeatedly encounter AI-generated English that reflects a limited standard, they may start to think that their own variations or culturally shaped expressions are inherently wrong. This can transform language enhancement into linguistic uniformity.

English education should therefore not aim to eliminate multilingual identity. The goal should be clear, suitable, and understandable communication. Students must learn about various forms of English and learn how to select appropriate ones based on context. Teachers can even turn AI's shortcomings into classroom content. Students can analyze an AI-generated paragraph to determine which variety of English it uses, identify any cultural assumptions embedded in it, and recognize which perspectives are absent. They can then adapt the passage for an Indian audience. In this way, AI transcends being merely a language generator and becomes a subject of critical linguistic inquiry.

**THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE ENGLISH TEACHER**

The introduction of AI does not automatically diminish the significance of the English teacher. Rather, it alters the essence of teacher expertise. AI can offer explanations and examples, but teachers have a deeper understanding of individual learners, classroom dynamics, educational goals, and cultural context. The teacher can thus act as a bridge between machine-generated language and human learning. The teacher might inquire why the student chose a specific AI suggestion, whether the language suits the intended audience, and whether the student comprehends the final output.

The teacher's role may slowly shift from primarily delivering information to designing learning experiences. The teacher designs scenarios that require students to communicate, ask questions, work together, reflect, and make decisions. This is especially crucial because AI cannot replicate the social and emotional aspects of classroom interaction. English is ultimately acquired to communicate with others. Students must listen to diverse perspectives, respond promptly, negotiate meaning, interpret facial expressions and body language, and adjust their speech to social contexts to engage in authentic human interaction.

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