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Research Paper

Role of Artificial Intelligence in Teaching English Language at College Level

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force in higher education, particularly in the teaching and learning of English language skills at the college level. AI-driven tools such as intelligent tutoring systems, chatbots, automated writing evaluation software, and adaptive learning platforms are reshaping pedagogical practices, assessment models, and learner engagement. This paper examines the theoretical foundations, practical applications, benefits, challenges, and pedagogical implications of AI in English language teaching (ELT) in higher education. A review of recent studies (2023–2025) demonstrates that AI enhances writing proficiency, pronunciation accuracy, learner motivation, and self-regulated learning while also raising concerns about academic integrity, overdependence on technology, and teacher preparedness. The paper argues that AI should function as a supportive pedagogical partner rather than a replacement for human educators. Effective integration requires curriculum redesign, digital literacy training, ethical guidelines, and balanced human-AI collaboration. The study concludes that AI has the potential to revolutionize English language teaching in colleges by enabling personalized learning environments, efficient feedback systems, and inclusive educational practices.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, English Language Teaching, Higher Education, Generative AI, Adaptive Learning, Language Skills, Digital Pedagogy

1. Introduction

The rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies has significantly influenced teaching and learning processes across educational sectors. Higher education institutions increasingly integrate AI-based systems to enhance instructional quality, learner engagement, and assessment efficiency. English language teaching (ELT) at the college level

is particularly suited to AI integration because language learning involves continuous feedback, communication practice, and personalized skill development.

AI systems can process large datasets, recognize language patterns, and generate feedback in real time. These capabilities allow them to support grammar correction, pronunciation training, vocabulary building, academic writing assistance, and conversational practice. As universities face expanding enrolments and diverse student proficiency levels, AI tools offer scalable solutions for individualized instruction.

Recent research highlights that AI adoption in English language education has accelerated following the digital transformation of education and post-pandemic shifts toward blended learning environments. Studies report that AI-mediated instruction improves learner motivation, achievement, and self-regulation in English learning contexts.

This paper explores the role of AI in teaching English at the college level by analyzing current practices, reviewing recent research, and discussing pedagogical implications for future education systems.

2. Conceptual Framework of Artificial Intelligence in Education

Artificial Intelligence in education refers to computer systems capable of performing tasks such as language analysis, prediction, automated feedback, and adaptive instruction. These systems rely on:

- Machine Learning – identifies patterns in learner performance
- Natural Language Processing (NLP) – enables understanding and generation of human language
- Speech Recognition – analyzes pronunciation and fluency
- Generative AI models – produce text, explanations, and feedback
- Learning Analytics – tracks student progress and predicts outcomes

AI-supported education builds on earlier developments such as Intelligent Computer-Assisted Language Learning (ICALL), which focuses on learner-centered digital environments and adaptive feedback systems.

AI technologies can analyze learner data, tailor instruction, and provide immediate responses, creating customized and efficient learning experiences.

3. Review of Literature (2023–2025)

3.1 Global Trends in AI-Assisted English Language Teaching

A recent systematic analysis of global research found that the majority of AI-related studies in English language education have been published after 2023, indicating rapidly

growing scholarly interest. These studies primarily focus on writing and speaking skills, demonstrating AI's strong potential in improving pronunciation and written accuracy.

Similarly, contemporary research emphasizes that AI integration fundamentally transforms pedagogical practices in higher education, especially in large classrooms with diverse language proficiency levels.

3.2 AI and Learning Outcomes

Recent empirical studies show measurable improvements in student learning outcomes when AI tools are integrated into English language instruction:

- AI-mediated learning enhances student motivation and achievement in EFL classrooms.
- AI writing tools improve writing quality and feedback processes among university learners.
- AI chatbots and speaking tools improve fluency, grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and confidence compared with traditional teaching methods.

These findings indicate that AI can function as a powerful supplementary learning environment that extends practice beyond classroom time.

3.3 AI for Writing and Language Skills

Research consistently identifies writing support as one of the most effective applications of AI in ELT. AI grammar checkers, translation tools, and automated writing feedback systems improve vocabulary usage and reduce grammatical errors in student writing.

Recent studies also highlight AI-supported peer feedback systems, which improve both feedback quality and student writing performance in university-level English courses.

3.4 Teacher Perspectives and Institutional Policies

Studies examining AI adoption in higher education reveal generally positive teacher attitudes toward generative AI tools, though concerns remain about detecting AI-generated assignments and ensuring academic integrity.

Institutional responses vary widely, with some universities embracing AI integration while others impose restrictions or guidelines for its responsible use.

3.5 Challenges Identified in Recent Research

Recent literature identifies several recurring concerns:

- Teacher preparedness and digital literacy gaps
- Ethical and privacy issues

- Overreliance on automated tools
- Assessment redesign requirements

Despite these challenges, researchers conclude that AI can enhance engagement, accessibility, and learner-centred instruction when implemented thoughtfully.

4. Applications of AI in Teaching English at College Level

4.1 AI-Assisted Writing Instruction

AI writing tools provide:

- Grammar and syntax correction
- Vocabulary recommendations
- Essay organization suggestions
- Plagiarism detection
- Academic style improvement

Students receive immediate feedback, enabling iterative learning and self-revision. Teachers benefit from reduced evaluation workload and improved monitoring of student progress.

4.2 Personalized Learning and Adaptive Instruction

AI systems analyze individual learner performance to:

- Identify weak language areas
- Provide customized exercises
- Adjust difficulty levels automatically
- Recommend learning resources

Adaptive instruction supports heterogeneous classrooms where students possess varied linguistic backgrounds and proficiency levels.

4.3 Speaking and Pronunciation Development

Speech recognition tools allow students to practice pronunciation independently. AI-based speaking platforms simulate real conversations and provide real-time corrections for:

Accent

Stress and intonation

Fluency

Listening comprehension

Such systems are especially useful in large college classes where individual speaking time is limited.

4.4 Chatbots and Virtual Tutors

AI chatbots function as:

- Conversation partners
- Writing assistants
- Grammar explainers
- Homework helpers

They enable continuous learning outside classroom hours and promote learner autonomy.

4.5 Automated Assessment and Analytics

AI systems can:

- Grade objective tests instantly
- Provide preliminary evaluation of essays
- Track attendance and participation
- Generate learning analytics dashboards

These capabilities allow teachers to focus more on pedagogy and student interaction.

5. Benefits of AI in College-Level English Language Teaching

5.1 Enhanced Learner Engagement

AI tools incorporate gamification, interactive tasks, and adaptive content that sustain student interest and motivation.

5.2 Immediate Feedback and Self-Regulated Learning

Instant feedback helps students correct errors quickly and develop independent learning habits.

5.3 Inclusive and Accessible Learning

AI supports learners with different needs by offering:

- Flexible pacing
- Multimodal instruction
- Translation support
- Accessibility features

This promotes equity in higher education classrooms.

5.4 Teacher Productivity

AI automates routine tasks such as grading, attendance tracking, and assignment checking, enabling teachers to devote more time to mentoring and communication.

5.5 Data-Driven Instruction

Learning analytics help instructors identify performance patterns and adapt teaching strategies accordingly.

6. Challenges and Ethical Concerns

6.1 Academic Integrity

AI-generated assignments present challenges for traditional assessment methods. Studies show that AI-produced exam responses can sometimes evade detection and achieve high grades, prompting calls for redesigned assessment practices.

6.2 Overdependence on AI

Educators worry that excessive reliance on AI tools may weaken students' critical thinking and independent writing abilities.

6.3 Digital Divide

Not all students have equal access to reliable internet connections, devices, or paid AI platforms, creating inequities.

6.4 Teacher Training and Readiness

Effective AI integration requires:

- Technical knowledge
- Pedagogical redesign
- Ethical awareness
- Assessment reform

Many instructors require institutional support and professional development.

6.5 Privacy and Data Security

AI platforms collect large amounts of learner data, raising concerns regarding:

- Data protection
- Consent
- Algorithmic bias
- Transparency

Institutions must establish regulatory frameworks to address these issues.

7. Role of Teachers in AI-Supported English Classrooms

AI does not replace teachers but transforms their roles. In AI-enhanced classrooms, teachers act as:

Facilitators of learning

- Designers of AI-supported tasks
- Ethical guides for responsible AI use
- Evaluators of creativity and originality
- Providers of emotional and social support

Human teachers remain essential for fostering critical thinking, cultural understanding, and communicative competence.

8. Pedagogical Implications for Higher Education

AI integration requires systemic changes:

- Curriculum redesign incorporating AI-based learning activities
- Blended learning models combining classroom teaching with AI practice tools
- Assessment reform emphasizing analytical, oral, and project-based evaluation
- AI literacy programs for students and teachers
- Institutional guidelines for ethical AI usage

English departments should encourage responsible AI use while maintaining academic rigor.

9. Future Directions

Future research should focus on:

- Long-term impact of AI on language proficiency
- AI-supported collaborative learning models
- Cross-cultural implications of AI-generated language
- Teacher professional development frameworks
- Ethical AI governance in universities

The growing sophistication of generative AI suggests that English language teaching will increasingly involve human-AI collaboration.

Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping English language teaching at the college level by enabling personalized instruction, real-time feedback, and data-driven pedagogy. Recent research confirms that AI improves learner motivation, writing quality, speaking proficiency, and engagement. However, successful integration depends on balanced implementation, ethical guidelines, and teacher readiness. AI should be viewed not as a replacement for educators but as a pedagogical partner that enhances teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes. With appropriate institutional support and responsible usage, AI can significantly transform English language education in higher education.

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