

THE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PEDAGOGY: OPPORTUNITIES, LIMITATIONS, AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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Abstract. *The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, particularly generative AI such as ChatGPT, has transformed English language teaching (ELT) pedagogy. This paper explores the opportunities, limitations, and ethical considerations associated with integrating AI into ELT practices. Drawing on recent empirical studies and systematic reviews from international journals (2023–2025), it highlights how AI enhances personalized learning, provides dynamic feedback, and boosts learner motivation and engagement. However, challenges include overreliance on technology, potential biases in AI outputs, inaccuracies in language nuances, and risks to critical thinking development. Ethical issues, such as data privacy, academic integrity, and equity in access, are also examined. The findings suggest that while AI offers significant pedagogical affordances, its effective integration requires teacher training, critical oversight, and ethical guidelines to complement rather than replace human instruction. This review contributes to ongoing discussions on AI's role in fostering inclusive and effective English language pedagogy.*

Keywords. *Artificial Intelligence, Generative AI, ChatGPT, English Language Teaching, Pedagogy, Opportunities, Limitations, Ethical Considerations, EFL, Personalized Learning*

Introduction. In recent years, artificial intelligence has emerged as a disruptive force in education, particularly in English language teaching. The release of generative AI tools like ChatGPT in late 2022 has accelerated this transformation, enabling new forms of interaction, feedback, and personalization in language learning. As global English proficiency remains essential for communication, employment, and academic success, AI presents promising opportunities to address traditional challenges in ELT, such as large class sizes, diverse learner needs, and limited access to native-speaker input.

However, alongside these benefits come significant limitations and ethical dilemmas. Recent systematic reviews and meta-analyses emphasize AI's potential to improve learning outcomes while warning of risks like dependency, bias, and privacy concerns. This paper synthesizes evidence from high-impact studies published in Scopus and Elsevier journals between 2023 and 2025 to examine the role of AI in ELT pedagogy, focusing on opportunities (e.g., personalized feedback and motivation), limitations (e.g., inaccuracies and overreliance), and ethical considerations (e.g., bias and integrity).

Opportunities of AI in English Language Teaching Pedagogy

AI tools have demonstrated substantial benefits in enhancing ELT effectiveness. A meta-analysis of 23 experimental studies found that AI-based interventions yield large positive effects on EFL outcomes, particularly in writing accuracy, speaking fluency, and learner motivation ($g = 1.10$). Tools like ChatGPT provide immediate, tailored feedback, simulating conversational practice and supporting self-directed learning. In writing and speaking pedagogy, generative AI facilitates dynamic interactions, reducing anxiety and increasing willingness to communicate. Empirical research shows AI chatbots improve engagement and enjoyment, especially in multilingual classrooms. Teachers report that AI assists in lesson planning, material generation, and assessment, freeing time for higher-order instructional activities.

Furthermore, AI promotes inclusive practices by adapting to individual learner profiles, offering comprehensive input and personalized experiences. Studies in higher education contexts, dominant in recent literature, highlight AI's role in transforming teacher-student dynamics toward more student-centered approaches.

Limitations of AI in English Language Teaching Pedagogy

Despite these affordances, AI integration faces notable constraints. Systematic reviews note persistent issues with AI accuracy, particularly in handling complex linguistic nuances, cultural contexts, or creative tasks. For instance, generative AI may produce stereotypical or biased content, limiting its reliability for authentic language use. Overreliance on AI risks diminishing learners' critical thinking and autonomy, as tools like ChatGPT can complete tasks without deep cognitive engagement. Pedagogical challenges include rigid curricula that hinder integration, technical barriers (e.g., access in low-resource settings), and the inability of AI to replicate teachers' empathetic, contextual insights. Mixed-methods studies reveal that while AI supports fluency development, it often falls short in promoting deep cohesion or higher-order skills compared to human feedback. Geographical and contextual biases in research—predominantly from East Asia and higher education—further limit generalizability to diverse ELT settings.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical implications are increasingly central to AI in ELT discussions. Key concerns include data privacy, as AI tools collect user interactions; algorithmic biases that perpetuate stereotypes; and threats to academic integrity, such as plagiarism via AI-generated content. Reviews emphasize the need for transparency in AI decision-making and equitable access to prevent digital divides. Overdependence may erode learner agency, while unexamined biases in training data could reinforce inequalities in global Englishes pedagogy. Educators advocate for guidelines like AI literacy training, plagiarism detection integration, and reformed assessments to mitigate these risks. Professional development is crucial to ensure ethical AI use complements human teaching without displacing it.

Conclusion. AI tools offer transformative opportunities for ELT pedagogy by enabling personalized, engaging, and efficient language instruction. However, limitations in accuracy and depth, coupled with ethical challenges around bias, privacy, and integrity, necessitate cautious implementation. Future research should prioritize longitudinal studies in diverse contexts, teacher AI competency frameworks, and ethical policies to maximize benefits. Ultimately, AI should augment, not supplant, the irreplaceable human elements of teaching—empathy, cultural sensitivity, and critical guidance—ensuring equitable and effective English language education in an increasingly digital world.

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