Reconceptualizing AI in English Language: Prospects and Challenges in Higher Education

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Abstract
Higher education has been transformed very rapidly by AI and more so in English language teaching and learning. This paper reconceptualizes the role of AI in English language education on the opportunities and issues of AI in higher education. In accordance with the existing studies, the literature review determines the possibilities of AI to enhance the process of the personalized learning, translanguaging, and academic writing pedagogy, along with ethical concerns, emotionality, and institutional readiness. The conceptual framing puts the AI on a sociocultural and critical pedagogy framework and views it as a two-sided tool, and a cultural agent. Opportunities and risks are also incorporated in the discussion and ideas of how to integrate responsibly are proposed. The conclusion gives a call to adopt a balanced approach, ethical stance and cross-disciplinary collaboration to ensure that AI has a critical impact in teaching English language in higher education.

Background
AI in Language Education
The application of AI in language teaching has increased in significant numbers, with the range of applications going between intelligent tutoring systems and natural language processing assistance (Abdelrady et al., 2025). Studies show that one of the opportunities of AI is to be applied to personalized learning, i.e., the opportunity to adjust the content based on the level of proficiency of the learners (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). AI applications that are automated writing evaluation systems can automatically give feedback on academic writing and enhance writing skills among students (Li, Link, and Hegelheimer, 2015). The new literature has emphasized the significance of translanguaging as a pedagogical process which taps on the whole repertoires of the learners (Garcia and Wei, 2014). Translanguaging may be offered with the help of AI software, which allows one to have both multilingual input and output and facilitates identity formation and relation to emotions (Canagararajah, 2022). The affective computing has been regarded to be important in learning via AI conditions and studies have shown that emotionality is necessary to enhance the motivation and wellbeing of the learners (Picard, 2010).

Ethics of AI introduction is also problematic, namely with regards to plagiarism, authorship and academic integrity. Research notes that an institutional policy that would regulate the application of AI in assessment and writing should be developed (Cotton et al., 2023). The data privacy and the potential of the algorithmic bias and the risk of AI reinforcing the disparity in access to the education are also in question (Williamson and Piattoeva, 2022).

Pedagogical Changes and the Institutional Preparedness.

Institutional readiness is one of the trends that could be observed in the literature (Jalalzai et al., 2025). In order to use AI, universities must invest in infrastructure (Aslam et al., 2020; Jan et al., 2022), educating the faculty, and developing the curriculum (Congman et al., 2019; Luckin, 2017). One needs to bring pedagogical shifts towards learner-centered pedagogies that have the potential to bring AI meaningfully into the picture rather than how old models of teacher- centered pedagogies (Selwyn, 2019).

Conceptual Framing

The paper re-conceptualises AI in teaching English language using sociocultural and critical pedagogy perspective. AI is not a technological but a cultural agent (Parveen & Akram, 2021), which creates discourses of language, identity, and ethics (Ma et al., 2024, 202). The social cultural theory makes us remember that tools play a crucial role in the mediation of learning (Vygotsky, 1978) and critical pedagogy is one that challenges power relations in AI systems (Freire, 1970). Putting AI within these paradigms, the paper will describe the view of the opportunities and problems as tied as firmly as both the more general educational field, the cultural field, and the ethical field.

Prospects

Individualized Learning: AI can enable adaptive learning, where the materials are presented in accordance with the needs of individual learners, taking into consideration the patterns of learning on the basis of the tailored resources and feedback (Akram & Abdelrady, 2023, 2025). This gives the learner independence and motivation which provides an opportunity to the students to study at their pace (Akram & Sohail, 2024). AI systems also can be implemented using multimodal inputs (speech and writing) to provide a global perspective of the progress and challenges of the learners. Translanguaging Support: Multilingual AI applications encourage inclusive pedagogy and emotionality grounded on the support of code-switching and translanguaging processes (Li & Akram, 2023, 2024). Such facilitations enable the learners to go through all their linguistic repertoires which support affirmed identity and higher thought. It is also possible to use language recognition and translation technologies, which rely on AI, to facilitate the delivery of real-time support in regards to different language groups to ensure that the overall diversity of people would be more properly represented in academic discourses.

Pedagogy of Academic Writing: Automated feedback Automated feedback systems may be helpful in enhancing writing, reducing the faculty workload, and providing prompt and formative feedback about grammar, coherence, and style. This allows the teachers to focus on the higher order writing and also individual mentoring. In addition, it is possible to scaffold more complex writing tasks with the help of AI and give students directions to follow the process of drafting, revising, and editing by offering certain prompts and resources.

Research Opportunity: AI has established novel possibilities in the areas of corpus linguistics, discourse analysis and language assessment to act on the multitude of information and identify complex patterns through which new research methods and choices are feasible. Meta-analyses and systematic reviews can likewise be performed by means of the AI tools since data extraction and synthesis can be automated.

Challenges

The issue of plagiarism, authorship and bias need great institutional frameworks. The absence of transparency in the AI algorithms puts the question of responsibility and accountability on the agenda, which needs to be clear in terms of directions and moral norms. Besides, the potential abuse of AI-created works weakens the classical idea of originality and intellectual property. Emotions and Human Interaction: The reliance of the AI would result in the loss of emotional elements of teaching (Ramzan et al., 2025, 2023, 2020). Despite the idea of affective computing, indicating and responding to the emotions of

learners, the modern AI-based tools are not as responsive and culturally intelligent as human instructors (Chen & Ramzan, 2024; Javaid et al., 2024). The gap can affect the motivation of the learners, the engagement and the development of intercultural competence.

Institutional preconditions: lapses in infrastructure and insufficient training of the faculty are obstacles to successful adoption. Some of the issues faced by most institutions to adopt AI include financial constraints, lack of the technical expertise and unwillingness to alter the pedagogical method. Only the comprehensive professional development and the support constant can make the implementation successful in order to form faculty confidence and competence. Cultural and Linguistic Bias: AIs incline toward the favouring of dominating languages and repress the other linguistic minority activities (Nawaz et al., 2021; Ramzan et al., 2023). One of the flaws that inclusivity seeks to control against is that training data can entail the introduction of biases that can be prone to reinventing stereotypes and ignoring a variety of voices. In order to address such biases, one has to engage in certain actions when curating datasets, working on algorithmic fairness, and participatory design along with marginalized communities.

Discussion

The application of AI in English language teaching sphere is a complex field that assumes prioritization of the vast and broad opportunities and challenges that lie out of the visible opportunities and challenges. However, as far as AI is asserted to have a number of essential strengths which take the form of a personalized learning process and the uniqueness of the learning and teaching process, it should be approached with examination of more precise consequences of this technology in general. One of the spheres, which can be discussed, is the role of AI and professional identity of teachers. As the work of the instructional and even the process of automation of the latter will be busy with AI technologies, the teachers will have no other choice but to adjust their roles a little bit and acquire new skills/teaching techniques. The transition in question would mean much pretraining of the faculty and constant provision of the sort that would allow the teachers to be receptive to AI technologies rather than get kicked out of them.

Another component of language learning process that one cannot disregard is, the emotional and relational one. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the success recorded in the area of the affective computing, AI systems can never have the capacity to portray human interactions with its nuances that are the ingredients of motivation, empathy and cultural insight. There should be a balance of the technological effectiveness and the relationship between the human being in the process of the teaching of the language to allow the aspect of language teaching to be achieved to avoid neglecting the holistic aspect of language teaching (Aslam et al., 2020). Another aspect of socio-political environment of AI implementation is one more that is very important. The equity, access, and representation issues are also crucial topics and concerns because the AI technologies are capable of replicating the status quo of inequalities against its will unless the technologies become ubiquitous. This entails taking into account the language diversity, providing the students with different socio-economic backgrounds and the receptiveness of the options by AI.

Finally, it is possible to address the aspect of the correction of the academic integrity in the AI- enhanced environment. The schools should re-evaluate the way they approach assessment and develop the policy that will help discover both the strength and weaknesses of AI as well as advance its ethical use without causing the abuse. All in all, the issue regarding the role of AI in the English language learning is a multi-faceted discovery of the pedagogical, emotional, socio- political, and moral sides of the concept. It is the general answer which will enable educators, institutions and policymakers to be more ready to implement AI in the framework of its responsible and efficient use.

Pathways Forward

The latest research suggests that institutions should establish code of conducts in the application of AI in

higher education. More importantly, AI literacy policy be built to monitor faculty growth programs in higher institutes. In the same stream, multidisciplinary cooperation of computer scientists, ethicists and linguists should be promoted. As suggested in the literature cited above, higher institutes should enhance the development of AI to be accommodative and therefore fit different lingual and cultural needs.

Conclusion

Reinvention of AI in teaching English language needs a sensitivity of its possibilities and the threat. Although, it is not ruled out that AI can change the environment of individual learning and the pedagogy of the process of academic paper translating and writing, certain ethical, emotional, and institutional issues may arise. Colleges and universities must adopt a moderate stance of adopting AI into the education system in a responsible way relying on the sociocultural and critical pedagogy theories. In the future, the introduction of AI design, making of ethical policies, and the interaction of AI with human agency must be incorporated in the study as well. This means that AI could play a significant role in the development of teaching English language at higher institutions of learning.

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