TEACHER'S ROLE IN AI-SUPPORTED ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

This article examines the evolving role of teachers in AI-supported English language classrooms. As artificial intelligence technologies such as intelligent tutoring systems, speech recognition tools, automated assessment, and generative language models become increasingly integrated into English language teaching, the professional responsibilities of teachers are undergoing significant transformation. The study adopts a qualitative, literature-based approach to analyze how teachers function as pedagogical mediators, instructional designers, facilitators of learner autonomy, and ethical decision-makers in AI-enhanced learning environments. The findings suggest that while AI can effectively support personalization, practice, and formative assessment, it cannot replace the human dimensions of language teaching, including intercultural mediation, emotional support, and communicative authenticity. The article concludes that the successful implementation of AI in English language education depends on teachers' digital pedagogy, critical awareness, and informed integration of technology in line with communicative and learner-centered principles.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, English language teaching, teacher role, AI-supported classrooms, digital pedagogy.

Introduction

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has significantly reshaped educational practices across disciplines, including English language teaching (ELT). AI-powered tools such as intelligent tutoring systems, automated assessment platforms, speech recognition software, and generative language models are increasingly integrated into language classrooms worldwide (Holmes et al., 2019). These technologies promise personalized learning, immediate feedback, and expanded opportunities for autonomous practice. However, their

growing presence has also raised critical questions about the evolving role of the teacher in AI-supported English language classrooms.

Traditionally, English language teachers have functioned as primary sources of knowledge, language models, and evaluators of learner performance. With the introduction of AI-based systems capable of delivering instructional content and feedback, this role is undergoing transformation. While some educators express concern that AI may marginalize the teacher's position, research suggests that technology should complement rather than replace human pedagogical expertise (Warschauer & Healey, 1998).

Language learning is inherently social, interactive, and culturally embedded. Although AI systems can simulate communicative interaction, they cannot fully replicate empathy, motivation, intercultural awareness, and ethical judgment. Therefore, understanding the teacher's role in AI-supported classrooms is essential for ensuring that technological innovation aligns with communicative and learner-centered pedagogical principles (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017).

This article examines the role of the teacher in AI-supported English language classrooms from a pedagogical perspective. It explores how teachers mediate AI use, design learning experiences, support learner autonomy, and preserve the human dimension of language education.

Literature Review

Research on artificial intelligence in education highlights its potential to transform teaching and learning through personalization, automation, and adaptive feedback (Luckin et al., 2016). In ELT, AI applications are commonly associated with speaking and writing instruction, where automated systems provide feedback on pronunciation, grammar, and lexical accuracy (Holmes et al., 2019). AI-powered chatbots and speech recognition tools are frequently cited as effective means of increasing learner interaction and reducing anxiety, particularly in speaking practice. These tools offer learners a low-risk environment for experimentation and repeated practice. However, scholars emphasize that such systems have limitations in interpreting pragmatic meaning, cultural nuance, and communicative intent (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017).

The literature consistently underlines the irreplaceable role of teachers in AI-enhanced classrooms. Teachers are viewed as mediators who contextualize

technology use, interpret automated feedback, and guide learners toward meaningful communication. Furthermore, ethical issues such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and equitable access to technology require human oversight and professional responsibility (UNESCO, 2019). Recent studies also point to a shift in teacher identity—from knowledge transmitter to facilitator, instructional designer, and mentor. This shift necessitates new competencies, including digital pedagogy and critical AI literacy, as teachers must evaluate and integrate AI tools in pedagogically sound ways (Reinders & White, 2016).

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, literature-based research design focusing on conceptual and pedagogical analysis. Academic sources were selected from peer-reviewed journals, scholarly books, and international policy reports related to artificial intelligence, English language teaching, and educational technology.

The analysis employed a thematic approach, identifying key dimensions of the teacher's role in AI-supported classrooms, including pedagogical mediation, instructional design, learner autonomy, assessment, and ethical responsibility. The IMRAD framework was used to ensure coherence and academic rigor. Although the study does not involve empirical data, its methodological strength lies in synthesizing established theoretical and pedagogical perspectives (Bachman & Palmer, 2010).

Results and Discussion

The findings indicate that teachers remain central to the success of AI-supported English language classrooms. One of the most prominent roles identified is pedagogical mediation. AI tools do not possess inherent educational value; their effectiveness depends on how teachers integrate them into communicative tasks and curricular objectives (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017).

Teachers also function as instructional designers, balancing AI-mediated activities with human interaction. For example, AI tools may be used for pronunciation drills or automated feedback, while teachers facilitate discussions, collaborative tasks, and role-plays that foster higher-order thinking and communicative competence (Reinders & White, 2016).

Another key finding relates to learner autonomy. AI-supported platforms encourage self-directed learning by enabling learners to practice independently and monitor progress. However, autonomy requires guidance. Teachers help learners interpret AI feedback, set realistic goals, and reflect on their performance, preventing overreliance on automated systems (Reinders & White, 2016).

Assessment practices further highlight the teacher's indispensable role. While AI can efficiently evaluate linguistic accuracy, it cannot fully assess communicative competence, creativity, or pragmatic appropriateness. Teachers therefore combine AI-generated data with professional judgment, creating a more valid and comprehensive assessment process (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). Ethical responsibility also emerges as a critical dimension of the teacher's role. Teachers are responsible for ensuring transparent, fair, and inclusive use of AI technologies. Issues such as learner data protection and algorithmic bias require informed and ethical decision-making, reinforcing the necessity of human control in AI-supported classrooms (UNESCO, 2019).

Overall, the results demonstrate that AI reshapes rather than diminishes the teacher's role. Teachers become facilitators of learning environments where technology enhances, but does not replace, human interaction and pedagogical judgment.

Conclusion

The integration of artificial intelligence into English language classrooms presents both opportunities and challenges. While AI technologies support personalization, practice, and formative assessment, they cannot replace the social, cultural, and ethical dimensions of language teaching. This study has shown that the teacher's role in AI-supported English language classrooms is multifaceted and increasingly complex.

Teachers act as mediators, instructional designers, mentors, assessors, and ethical guardians. Their expertise ensures that AI tools are used purposefully and in alignment with communicative language teaching principles. Successful AI integration therefore depends not on technology alone, but on teachers' digital pedagogy, critical awareness, and professional judgment (Holmes et al., 2019; Selwyn, 2019). Future research should focus on empirical classroom studies exploring how teachers and learners interact with AI tools in diverse contexts.

Teacher education programs must also prioritize AI literacy to prepare educators for evolving pedagogical realities.

In conclusion, artificial intelligence should be understood as a catalyst for redefining and strengthening the teacher's professional role. When guided by human-centered values, AI can enhance English language education while reaffirming the centrality of the teacher in the learning process.

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