

**AI IN TESOL: REPLACEMENT OR SUPPORT?****Khomidova Gulnozakhon Kurbonali kizi****Institute of Social and Political Sciences****Department of Uzbek and Foreign Languages****English Language Teacher****Tashkent, Uzbekistan****hamidovagulnoza5@gmail.com****<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18181088>****ARTICLE INFO**Received: 05th January 2026Accepted: 06th January 2026Online: 07th January 2026**KEYWORDS***artificial intelligence in education, TESOL methodology, communicative***ABSTRACT**

This article examines the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), focusing on whether AI functions as a replacement for teachers or as a supportive pedagogical tool. Through a critical review of recent scholarly literature, the study analyzes the theoretical foundations of AI-assisted language learning, its practical applications, benefits, and limitations. The findings indicate that AI enhances personalized learning, assessment, and instructional efficiency; however, it cannot replace the pedagogical, cultural, and emotional roles of human teachers. The effectiveness of AI integration depends on ethical implementation, teacher competence, contextual adaptation, and institutional support. The article concludes with recommendations for balanced and responsible AI use in TESOL contexts.

Introduction

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has significantly influenced contemporary educational practices, including the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). In recent years, AI-powered tools such as automated assessment systems, adaptive learning platforms, and generative language models have been increasingly integrated into language teaching and learning processes. This technological shift has intensified debates regarding the role of AI in education, particularly whether it can replace human teachers or should be viewed as a supportive instructional resource.

Traditionally, TESOL methodology has emphasized the central role of the teacher in facilitating interaction, providing feedback, and mediating cultural and linguistic meaning. However, advancements in AI technologies—accelerated by the global transition to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic—have introduced new possibilities for personalized instruction and large-scale learner support. These developments necessitate a critical examination of AI's effectiveness and limitations within TESOL.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the effectiveness of AI in TESOL from both theoretical and practical perspectives. The study addresses the following research questions: What are the theoretical foundations of AI-assisted language learning? How is AI applied in TESOL practice? What benefits and challenges does AI present for teachers and learners?

Addressing these questions is essential for understanding how AI can be integrated responsibly into language education.

Methodology and Literature Review

This study adopts a qualitative literature review methodology, examining peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and policy reports related to AI in language education. The analysis focuses on theoretical models of AI-assisted learning, empirical studies on classroom implementation, and ethical discussions surrounding AI use in TESOL contexts.

The theoretical foundations of AI in TESOL are closely linked to communicative language teaching and learner-centered pedagogy. Scholars argue that AI has the potential to support communicative competence by providing individualized feedback, adaptive input, and opportunities for authentic interaction (Chapelle & Sauro, 2022). Personalized learning, a core principle of modern TESOL, is further enhanced through AI systems capable of analyzing learner data and adjusting instructional content accordingly.

Research indicates that AI-powered tools such as speech recognition software, automated writing evaluation systems, and conversational agents can support pronunciation practice, writing development, and interactive communication (Blake, 2016). Studies also highlight the growing use of generative AI tools, including chatbots, which enable learners to practice language skills in low-anxiety environments. However, scholars caution that these tools lack sociocultural awareness and pragmatic sensitivity, which are essential components of effective language use.

Empirical studies demonstrate that while AI can increase learner motivation and autonomy, its effectiveness depends heavily on pedagogical integration. Borg (2017) emphasizes that teacher beliefs and training significantly influence how successfully technology is implemented in the classroom. Without adequate professional development, AI tools may be underutilized or misapplied.

Results and Discussion

The reviewed literature suggests that AI functions most effectively as a supportive tool rather than a replacement for teachers in TESOL. One of the primary benefits of AI is its ability to provide personalized learning experiences. Adaptive platforms can respond to individual learner needs, allowing students to progress at their own pace and receive immediate feedback. This contributes to increased learner engagement and improved language outcomes, particularly in speaking and writing skills.

AI also enhances assessment practices by enabling real-time feedback and data-driven evaluation. Automated assessment systems allow teachers to monitor learner progress efficiently and identify areas requiring additional support. Nevertheless, concerns remain regarding the reliability and fairness of AI-based assessment, particularly in relation to algorithmic bias and limited recognition of linguistic diversity.

Despite these advantages, AI cannot replace the human aspects of language teaching. Teachers play a critical role in fostering motivation, managing classroom interaction, and addressing cultural and emotional dimensions of learning. Studies consistently indicate that learners benefit most when AI tools are mediated by skilled educators who can contextualize feedback and guide meaningful communication.

Ethical considerations represent another significant challenge. Issues related to data privacy, transparency, and academic integrity require careful regulation. Overreliance on AI-generated content may negatively affect learners' critical thinking and creativity if not appropriately guided. Therefore, ethical frameworks and clear usage guidelines are essential for responsible AI integration.

Conclusion

This review demonstrates that artificial intelligence holds considerable potential to enhance TESOL practices through personalized learning, efficient assessment, and expanded access to language resources. However, AI should not be viewed as a replacement for teachers. Instead, it functions most effectively as a pedagogical support tool that complements human instruction.

The successful integration of AI in TESOL depends on multiple factors, including teacher training, contextual adaptation, ethical safeguards, and alignment with communicative teaching goals. Future research should focus on long-term classroom-based studies, culturally responsive AI design, and the development of teacher education programs that promote critical and informed use of AI.

In conclusion, a balanced and reflective approach to AI integration—one that values both technological innovation and human expertise—offers the most effective path forward for TESOL in the digital age..

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