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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EFL TEACHING: NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY

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Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming increasingly common in education, including English language teaching. Many teachers and learners already use AI-based tools for writing, vocabulary practice, grammar support, speaking practice, and lesson preparation. This development creates new opportunities for language teaching, but it also requires teachers to consider carefully how these tools can be integrated into the classroom. The main purpose of this article is to examine the potential role of artificial intelligence in EFL teaching methodology and to consider how AI can support, rather than replace, the teacher.

One of the main opportunities provided by AI is the possibility of offering learners more individualized practice. In a traditional English classroom, it can be difficult for a teacher to provide every learner with sufficient time to practise a particular language skill. This is especially relevant to speaking and writing activities. AI-based tools can provide learners with additional opportunities to practise outside the classroom. For example, learners can use AI tools to simulate conversations, ask questions about grammar, or receive feedback on their writing.

However, effective use of AI is not simply a matter of giving students access to a digital tool. The teacher needs to determine why the tool is being used and what learners are expected to gain from the activity. Therefore, traditional principles of lesson planning remain important. The teacher should first identify the learning objective and then determine whether an AI tool can contribute to achieving that objective.

AI can be particularly useful in writing instruction. EFL learners frequently experience difficulties with grammar, vocabulary, organization, coherence, and the development of ideas. An AI tool can help learners identify some of these difficulties and suggest possible improvements. For example, a learner can write a paragraph and request feedback on grammar, vocabulary, or clarity. The learner can then compare the original version with the suggested revision and reflect on the differences.

At the same time, learners should not simply copy AI-generated answers. If students allow AI to write essays or assignments for them, they may complete the task without developing their own writing skills. Therefore, teachers should teach learners how to use AI as a learning support tool. Students can be asked to evaluate AI-generated suggestions, explain why a correction is appropriate, or rewrite a sentence in their own

words. In this way, AI becomes part of the learning process rather than a substitute for independent learning.

AI can also be applied to speaking instruction. Some learners are reluctant to speak English because they are afraid of making mistakes in front of their classmates. Individual practice with a digital tool can provide such learners with an additional opportunity to prepare before participating in classroom communication. For example, students can practise answering questions, describing situations, or expressing opinions before completing a similar activity with a partner or group.

Another potential application of AI is differentiated learning. EFL classrooms often include learners with different levels of English proficiency. A single activity may be too easy for some students and too difficult for others. With appropriate teacher guidance, AI can be used to create different versions of the same task. Less confident learners can receive vocabulary support, sentence starters, or simplified instructions, while more advanced learners can work with open-ended questions and more complex communicative tasks.

AI can also support teachers during lesson preparation. Teachers may use AI to generate discussion questions, examples, short texts, vocabulary exercises, or alternative versions of classroom activities. This can reduce preparation time and provide additional ideas. However, teachers should carefully review all AI-generated materials before using them. AI tools may produce inaccurate information, inappropriate language, materials that are unsuitable for a particular proficiency level, or content that does not correspond to the intended learning objectives. Professional teacher judgment therefore remains essential.

The use of AI also has an important methodological dimension because it can influence the teacher’s role. The teacher is no longer only a source of information but increasingly acts as a facilitator who helps learners select information, evaluate digital feedback, and use technology responsibly. This requires teachers to develop not only their methodological knowledge but also their digital competence.

For EFL methodology, one of the most effective approaches may be to combine AI-based activities with communicative and learner-centered teaching. For example, students can first use AI to generate or organize ideas about a particular topic and then discuss those ideas with their classmates. Similarly, learners can receive preliminary feedback on their writing from an AI tool and subsequently discuss important difficulties with the teacher. Such activities allow technology to support learning while keeping human interaction at the center of the educational process.

There are also limitations that need to be considered. Not all learners have equal access to digital technologies, and AI-generated responses are not always accurate or reliable. There are also important questions concerning academic integrity, learner autonomy, and independent thinking. These challenges indicate that AI should be introduced into EFL teaching with clear guidelines, appropriate tasks, and consistent teacher supervision.

In conclusion, artificial intelligence offers new possibilities for EFL teaching methodology. It can provide additional opportunities for language practice, support writing and speaking development, assist teachers in preparing learning materials, and help adapt activities to different learner needs. However, the effectiveness of AI depends on appropriate methodological planning and responsible implementation. Teachers need to determine when and why AI should be used and help learners critically evaluate its suggestions. AI is therefore most effective when it works in combination with teacher guidance, classroom interaction, and learners’ own thinking and creativity.

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