Editorial

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Reimagining English Language Teaching in an AI-Driven World

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The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI), changing educational landscapes, and growing demands for intercultural competence are reshaping how we understand the teaching and learning of English around the world. While technological developments continue to open new possibilities for language education, they also compel educators, researchers, and policymakers to revisit fundamental questions about what it means to learn, teach and communicate in English in an increasingly interconnected and digitally mediated society. The articles featured in this issue of *The English Teacher* offer timely insights into these developments and collectively highlight a theme that runs throughout contemporary English language teaching (ELT), where innovation must remain anchored in human learning, human judgement, and human connection.

This issue opens with a systematic review on **AI-assisted intercultural communicative competence (ICC) cultivation in college English education in China**. The study provides a valuable synthesis of emerging research on how AI technologies are being used to support intercultural learning and communication. At a time when intercultural competence is increasingly recognised as a core outcome of language education, the review demonstrates the potential of AI to facilitate learners' exposure to diverse cultural perspectives, authentic communication experiences, and personalised learning opportunities. Yet, the authors also remind us that technological affordances alone cannot guarantee meaningful intercultural development. The challenges they identify, including contextual limitations, pedagogical considerations, and research gaps, underscore the need for more nuanced and theoretically grounded applications of AI in English language education. Their review serves as an important reminder that successful AI integration requires not merely technological adoption but thoughtful pedagogical design.

Questions of technology and pedagogy continue in the second article, which examines **online literature learning among teacher trainees in Malaysia**. Revisiting experiences that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic, the study provides a timely reflection on what should be retained, modified, or reconsidered as institutions move beyond emergency remote teaching. The findings reveal high levels of learner satisfaction and highlight the enduring importance of responsive and supportive English language instructors. However, the study also reveals challenges related to motivation, self-discipline, and social interaction. Significantly, the authors argue that the success of online literature instruction should not be measured solely in terms of convenience or positive evaluations, but rather by the quality of engagement, interpretation, and literary understanding it fosters. This perspective resonates strongly with broader discussions in contemporary higher education, where the challenge is no longer whether technology should be used, but how it can be used to facilitate deeper language learning experiences.

The growing influence of AI on education is addressed more directly in the conceptual paper on **Glocalising AI literacy and competency in Malaysian ELT through the development of a Teacher AI Profile**. While much current discussion focuses on how teachers employ AI in ELT lesson planning, assessment, and instructional delivery, this paper argues persuasively that teachers' professional engagement with AI extends far beyond classroom practice. By drawing upon international AI frameworks, the Southeast Asia Teachers Competency Framework, and the Standard Guru Malaysia 2.0, the author presents a holistic view of AI literacy encompassing professional reflection, knowledge development, instructional practice, and community engagement. Particularly noteworthy is the paper's emphasis on ethical judgement and teacher agency. Rather than presenting AI as a technological solution to educational challenges, the proposed profile positions AI as a resource that must be evaluated critically and used responsibly within broader professional contexts. This perspective reflects a growing recognition that meaningful AI literacy requires not only technical competence, but also ethical awareness and professional wisdom.

These themes are further extended through the book review of **From AI Literacy to Generative AI Literacy: Theory, Policy, and Practice**. The review highlights a significant shift in educational discourse from understanding how AI functions to understanding how individuals can engage with AI critically, responsibly, and ethically. Particularly compelling is the emphasis on learner agency. In a period when generative AI systems are becoming increasingly capable of producing texts, answering questions, and simulating communication, the challenge for educators is ensuring that English language learners remain active participants in their own development rather than passive consumers of machine-generated outputs. The review reminds us that AI literacy involves much more than operational skills; it requires critical evaluation, ethical decision-making, and an appreciation of the limitations, as well as the possibilities of emerging technologies.

Complementing these discussions is the software review of **Educaplay**, a platform that demonstrates how digital tools can support language learning through interactive and gamified activities. Importantly, the review moves beyond simplistic assumptions that digital engagement automatically leads to effective learning. Instead, it draws attention to the importance of instructional design, pedagogical integration, and context. The review echoes a message that runs throughout all contributions in this issue: technologies matter, but their educational value ultimately depends on how they are used, why they are used, and what learning goals they serve.

Taken together, the articles in this issue suggest that ELT is experiencing a period of significant transformation. Artificial intelligence is changing how language learning materials are created, how feedback is provided, how assessments are conducted, and how teachers and students interact with knowledge. At the same time, globalisation continues to elevate the importance of intercultural communicative competence, while digital learning environments challenge traditional assumptions about teaching, engagement, and accessibility.

Yet, despite these changes, a common message emerges. The future of English language education should not be defined solely by technological innovation. Rather, it should be guided by a commitment to developing capable, reflective, ethical, and critically aware learners and educators. Whether we are cultivating intercultural competence, designing online learning experiences, developing AI literacy, or introducing new educational technologies, human judgement remains central.

As we look ahead, ELT professionals must continue to engage critically with emerging technologies while remaining attentive to the social, cultural, and ethical dimensions of English language education. Innovation should not replace pedagogy; it should strengthen it. Technology should not diminish human agency; it should enhance it. Most importantly, English language education should continue to foster meaningful communication, intercultural understanding, and lifelong learning in ways that prepare learners not only for a digitally advanced future, but also for active participation in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

It is hoped that the articles in this issue stimulate further dialogue, research, and reflection on these important questions. Together, they illustrate both the opportunities and the responsibilities that accompany the evolving landscape of English language teaching in the age of AI.

Happy reading!

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