



Artificial Intelligence – AI in English language learning and teaching in the Australian context

Nhung Nguyen

Monash College, Australia

Rod Neilsen

Deakin University, Australia

Yingmei Luo

Deakin University, Australia

Australia hosts a substantial and diverse population of English language learners, encompassing school-aged students learning English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D), adult migrants engaged in settlement and workplace language programs, and international students enrolled in primary, secondary and tertiary education. This diversity in learner backgrounds, proficiency levels, learning goals and contexts, has positioned English language education as a significant but complex domain within the Australian education landscape. In recent years, this field has encountered profound challenges alongside new possibilities arising from the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI (GenAI). These technologies have begun to reshape our long-established pedagogical assumptions, instructional practices, assessment methods, and learner–teacher interactions.

Recent research highlights the transformative impact of AI technologies on language education, demonstrating their potential to enhance learning outcomes across various skills. AI-powered technologies have led to numerous positive developments, including enhanced autonomous learning (Han, 2019), improved student interaction and academic performance (Sun et al., 2021) and academic writing (Nguyen et al., 2024), and greater learner engagement (Shin, 2021). Additionally, integrating ChatGPT into language learning tasks significantly boosts student motivation and participation (Smith et al., 2022; Koç & Savaş, 2025), and critical thinking skills (Essien et al., 2024). AI is also instrumental in enabling personalised education (Huang et al., 2021), delivering real-time feedback, and creating adaptive learning environments (Abas et al., 2023). Research has also examined AI's influence on English as an additional language acquisition. It helps tailor listening materials to individual needs, thereby

Correspondence

Nhung Nguyen

nhung.nguyen@monashcollege.edu.au

Publication

Received: 27 June 2026

Revision: 29 June 2026

Accepted: 10 July 2026

Published: 12 July 2026

Copyright

©2026 TESOL in Context



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution – ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

increasing learners' confidence and enthusiasm (Hu & Hu, 2020). It further supports writing development through AI-assisted tools (Chong, 2021; Feng et al., 2025) and enhances translation accuracy with AI translation software (Dai, 2022). AI-driven robots have also been utilised to aid speaking practice (Thinh et al., 2020), and thus enhance speaking skills, including pronunciation and fluency (Al-Husban, 2025; Alwin et al., 2024). Also, AI-assisted mobile applications can help learners develop advanced academic speaking skills (Zhu et al., 2025).

Despite extensive publications focusing on AI in English language education, there remains a huge gap in research about the various applications of AI in learning and teaching (Zhou & Hou, 2025), particularly in English language centres and universities, in the adult migrant English programs (AMEP), and in English teacher training courses in Australia. The existing research lacks detailed emphasis on the four language skills (reading, speaking, writing and listening). Writing and speaking emerge as the most extensively studied and pedagogically promising areas (Jeon, 2025), whereas reading skills and grammar acquisition remain comparatively underexplored (Crompton et al., 2023). This gap is particularly evident in the research on the sub-skills essential for language development (Sharadgah & Sa'di, 2022) like academic reading, skimming and scanning, turn-taking, note-taking, and seminar discussion skills. This 2026 Special Issue ***“Artificial Intelligence- AI in English language learning and teaching in the Australian context”*** aims to fill these gaps with six publications from current research into the practical applications of AI in English language classroom settings in Australia along with one book review.

The first paper ***“An overview of Artificial Intelligence integration in English language education”*** by Luo, Nguyen and Lai presents a comprehensive overview of the role and application of AI in English language education. It begins by differentiating between traditional forms of AI—such as rule-based systems and adaptive learning technologies—and generative AI, which can autonomously produce human-like language, feedback, and instructional material. The paper also examines how various AI technologies are currently being implemented in educational settings, with particular attention to English language teaching and learning, and outlines commonly used AI-driven tools in this field. Given that language learning is inherently synchronous, interactive, and highly individualised, AI has particular relevance and utility for supporting personalised practice, real-time feedback, and scalable learner support. Building on this foundation, the paper critically analyses both the opportunities and the challenges associated with AI integration, including issues of pedagogical effectiveness, equity, ethical use, teacher professional roles, and learner agency. By engaging with these dimensions, the authors seek to contribute to an informed and balanced scholarly discourse on the responsible and pedagogically sound integration of AI in English language teaching.

At the higher education level, the second paper ***“Using ChatPDF to interrogate academic readings: A qualitative study of international students' seminar preparation”*** by Restall and Pham delves into the use of ChatPDF to support international postgraduate students in reading and speaking skills. As observed by the authors, international postgraduate students enrolled in

English-medium Master of Education programs in Australia often face significant challenges when engaging with academically demanding readings in preparation for seminar participation. In response to these challenges, this qualitative case study investigates the use of ChatPDF, an AI-powered text analysis tool, as a mediating resource to assist international postgraduate students' academic reading comprehension, confidence, and participation in English-medium seminars. The authors emphasize the perceived benefits of ChatPDF, including the simplification of complex academic content, efficient summarisation of key ideas, improved understanding of culturally situated theoretical concepts, and increased confidence to engage in seminar discussions. The findings in this study conceptualise ChatPDF as a form of mediational scaffold that can productively support comprehension and participation when integrated thoughtfully and reflectively into postgraduate learning practices.

Ranabahu, Giri, and James' paper "***From silence to speech: Enhancing student oral communication skills through AI-Chatbots***" investigates the use of an AI-powered chatbot, Doubao, to support the development of English oral communication skills among postgraduate students enrolled in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course within an English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) program. The study adopted a qualitative-dominant mixed data approach, drawing on diagnostic and final speaking assessment results, student audio reflections, focus group interviews, and teacher class observations. The authors highlight that interaction with Doubao contributed to noticeable gains in speaking fluency, confidence, and learners' awareness of effective academic communication strategies, such as turn-taking, elaboration, and clarity of expression. They suggest that AI-driven chatbots can function as both pedagogical tools and collaborative language partners, effectively complementing classroom instruction in EAP and ELICOS contexts while highlighting the importance of balancing technological support with meaningful human communication.

Also, in an ELICOS setting, the following paper "***Empathetic AI for English speaking fluency: A reflective case study in the English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) context***" by Perera shifts the focus on the potential of an empathetic AI companion, Pi (Inflection AI), to support the development of speaking fluency among adult learners in a General English class. The findings suggest that Pi's empathetic and supportive dialogue contributed to increased learner motivation, emotional safety, and growing self-efficacy, which in turn supported improved fluency and willingness to communicate. Further, the author also highlights the importance of active teacher mediation to address limitations related to linguistic accuracy, pronunciation development, and contextual nuance that AI alone may not adequately support. The study underscores teachers' dual responsibilities as both facilitators of learning and ethical mediators of technology use. It concludes that compassion-oriented AI companions, when integrated thoughtfully and reflectively, can meaningfully expand opportunities for communicative practice and enhance learner fluency in ways that align with ELICOS expectations for communicative competence and digital literacy.

Based also on an ELICOS context, Nguyen, Isaakidis and Guraslan's paper "***Enhancing the skim reading skills of English learners with Copilot: A case study in the Australian ELICOS***"

sector” brings to light the challenges facing English students in skimming reading. Analysis of the 2024 end-of-course assessment results at their institution revealed persistent challenges among pre-intermediate learners in reading comprehension, particularly in their ability to identify main ideas at the text and paragraph levels. In response to this identified need, this case study sought to enhance students’ skimming skills, promote independent reading strategies, and increase overall engagement through the purposeful integration of AI support. Four carefully designed, integrated lessons were implemented, combining targeted instruction in skimming strategies with guided use of Copilot to model, practise, and reinforce main-idea identification. The authors noticed a notable increase in students’ confidence, strategic awareness, and willingness to use Copilot as a learning support tool, and they advocate for the importance of explicit teaching of skimming skills and Copilot to help students master these skills and enhance reading and skimming engagement in and after class.

In the context of AMEP, the paper “*AI-Enhanced Foundation Skills Training: A Case Study of MyAMES Chat*” by Le, Hayes, Reynolds and Tran proposed a new learning application, MyAMES Chat to support learner pronunciation. This article presents a practice-based case study of MyAMES Chat, an AI-powered, mobile-friendly learning application developed by AMES Australia in collaboration with Getmee. The tool was designed to extend opportunities for pronunciation practice, vocabulary development, and employability-focused speaking beyond the classroom, particularly for learners who may have limited time or confidence to practise orally in face-to-face settings. Importantly, MyAMES Chat was not intended as a replacement for teachers; rather, it functioned as a complementary support that redistributed routine rehearsal and feedback tasks, enabling teachers to devote more classroom time to differentiated instruction and meaningful communicative engagement. The article also documents the co-design process between AMES Australia and Getmee, highlighting how curriculum alignment, accessibility considerations, and teacher guidance were central to effective implementation for a diverse learner cohort. The authors suggest that AI-enabled tools can enhance the inclusivity and quality of adult foundation skills training when they are tightly aligned with curriculum goals, thoughtfully mediated by teachers, and introduced with adequate learner support to build confidence and sustained engagement.

The articles in this special issue are complemented by one book review by Kashef and Khabazian. The book was entitled *AI-Powered English Teaching* authored by Ankit Shukla, Benjaporn Meeprom, Kongkiat Khunasathitchai, and Nagendra Yadav. The volume positions AI not merely as a technological add-on, but as a transformative force capable of enhancing the effectiveness, inclusivity, and responsiveness of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education across diverse learning contexts. The book provides practical guidance for both teachers and students on integrating AI-assisted platforms into classroom and out-of-class learning, illustrating how these tools can support language development while also addressing affective factors such as learner motivation, anxiety, and autonomy. Through numerous case studies, the book highlights both the benefits of AI integration and the potential challenges faced by teachers and learners, such as ethical considerations, digital literacy demands, and overreliance on technology. Kashef and Khabazian’s review provides a succinct and comprehensive overview of the ten chapters, which address major dimensions of AI in foreign

language learning, and the use of AI tools in formative assessment, making it a comprehensive and accessible resource for educators navigating the evolving landscape of AI-enhanced EFL teaching.

To sum up, this special issue contributes to bridging key gaps in the current literature by showcasing empirically grounded and practice-based research on the pedagogical integration of AI in English language education. Collectively, the articles illustrate how a range of AI-enabled tools can support diverse aspects of language learning across contexts and proficiency levels: ChatPDF is examined as a scaffold for international postgraduate students' academic reading and speaking participation; Pi (Inflection AI) is explored as an empathetic companion for developing speaking fluency; the AI chatbot Doubao is investigated for its role in enhancing oral communication skills in EAP settings; Copilot is employed to strengthen English learners' skimming and main-idea reading strategies; and MyAMES Chat is presented as a tool for extending pronunciation practice among adult migrant learners. Together, these contributions demonstrate the potential of AI to enhance learner confidence, autonomy, and communicative competence when thoughtfully aligned with curriculum goals and guided by teachers. The issue underscores the importance of pedagogically informed, ethically mediated AI use and offers practical insights for educators seeking to integrate emerging technologies into English language teaching in meaningful and context-responsive ways.

References

- Abas, M. A., Arumugam, S. E., Yunus, M. M., & Rafiq, K. R. M. (2023). ChatGPT and personalized learning: Opportunities and challenges in higher education. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 13(12). <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i12/20240>
- Al-Husban, N. A. (2025). The impact of AI-assisted language learning tools on augmenting university EFL students' speaking skills in Jordan. *Journal of Applied Learning & Teaching*, 8(1), 116–127. <https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2025.8.1.13>
- Alwin, W. R., Manurung, K., Lebagi, D., & Mukrim, M. (2024). The use of English Language Speech Assistant (ELSA) speak application to improve pronunciation. *Jurnal Onoma: Pendidikan, Bahasa, dan Sastra*, 10(3), 2880–2887. <https://doi.org/10.30605/onoma.v10i3.3926>
- Chong, D. (2021). Research on artificial intelligence-based English writing blended teaching mode. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 1852(3), 032018. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1852/3/032018>
- Crompton, H., & Burke, D. (2023). Artificial intelligence in higher education: The state of the field. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 20, 22. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-023-00392-8>
- Dai, H. (2022). Comparative analysis of machine translation and human translation under the background of internet. In B. J. Jansen, H. Liang, & J. Ye (Eds.), *Cognitive based information processing and applications* (pp. 877–882). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-5857-0_111
- Essien, A., Bukoye, O. T., O'Dea, X., & Kremantzis, M. (2024). The influence of AI text generators on critical thinking skills in UK business schools. *Studies in Higher Education*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2024.2316881>
- Feng, H., Li, K., & Zhang, L. J. (2025). What does AI bring to second language writing? A systematic review (2014–2024). *Language Learning & Technology*, 29(1), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.64152/10125/73629>
- Han, B. (2019). Application of artificial intelligence in autonomous English learning among college students. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, 14(6), 63–74. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v14i06.10157>
- Hu, J., & Hu, X. (2020). The effectiveness of autonomous listening study and pedagogical implications in the module of artificial intelligence. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 1684(1), 012037. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1684/1/012037>
- Huang, J., Saleh, S., & Liu, Y. (2021). A review on artificial intelligence in education. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 10(3), 206. <https://doi.org/10.36941/ajis-2021-0077>
- Jeon, E.-Y. (2025). Artificial intelligence in ESL/EFL education: Evidence from recent reviews (2024–2025). *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 24(10), 509–526. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.24.10.2>

- Koç, F. Ş., & Savaş, P. (2025). The use of artificially intelligent chatbots in English language learning: A systematic meta-synthesis study of articles published between 2010 and 2024. *ReCALL*, 37(1), 4–21. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344024000168>
- Nguyen, A., Hong, Y., Dang, B., & Huang, X. (2024). Human–AI collaboration patterns in AI-assisted academic writing. *Studies in Higher Education*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2024.2323593>
- Sharadgah, T. A., & Sa'di, R. A. (2022). A systematic review of research on the use of artificial intelligence in English language teaching and learning (2015–2021): What are the current effects? *Journal of Information Technology Education: Research*, 21, 337–377. <https://doi.org/10.28945/4999>
- Shin, M. H. (2021). Development of English teaching model applying artificial intelligence through maker education. *Journal of the Korea Convergence Society*, 12(3), 61–67. <https://doi.org/10.15207/JKCS.2021.12.3.061>
- Smith, J., Brown, K., & Davis, M. (2022). Enhancing English language learning through the use of ChatGPT: A study with English language learners. *Journal of Educational Technology and Applied Linguistics*, 15(3), 112–130.
- Sun, Z., Anbarasan, M., & Praveen Kumar, D. J. C. I. (2021). Design of online intelligent English teaching platform based on artificial intelligence techniques. *Computational Intelligence*, 37(3), 1166–1180. <https://doi.org/10.1111/coin.12351>
- Thinh, N. T., Hai, N. D. X., & Tho, T. P. (2020). The influential role of robot in second language classes based on artificial intelligence. *International Journal of Mechanical Engineering and Robotics Research*, 9(9), 1306–1311. <https://doi.org/10.18178/ijmerr.9.9.1306-1311>
- Zhou, C., & Hou, F. (2025). How do EFL teachers utilize AI tools in their language teaching? *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 15(2), 403–413. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1502.10>
- Zhu, Y., Zou, B., & Jia, W. (2025). The impact of artificial intelligence (AI) technology on EAP speaking. *International Journal of Distance Education Technologies*, 23(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJDET.380730>

Dr Nhung Nguyen is an English teacher and lecturer at Monash College. She is dedicated to supporting teachers with syllabus delivery, learning materials, and assessment. Nhung's research interests include extensive reading; learner motivation, autonomy and identity; critical thinking, and the role of AI in English acquisition. She has been an editor and committee member for a number of conferences including The Asian Conference on Education Review Committee for the International Academic Forum (IAFOR), the International Conference on Languages, Literature, and Linguistics (ICLLL), and the International Conference on Education and E-Learning (ICEEL). Contact detail: nhung.nguyen@monashcollege.edu.au

Associate Professor Rod Neilsen directs Masters and Graduate Certificate courses in TESOL at Deakin University, and is Co-Convenor of the Research group Transforming Professional Lives, Learning, and Leadership (TPLLL). His research interests include language teacher professional development, language awareness, multilingualism in education, and teacher mobility. He was chief editor of TESOL in Context from 2015-2021. His co-authored book *Navigating TESOL* (Routledge) is currently in press. Contact detail: rod.neilsen@deakin.edu.au

Dr Yingmei Luo is currently a lecturer at Deakin University and has extensive experience in both English language teaching and research. Her research areas include English language pedagogy, intercultural language teaching, culture and identity, multilingualism, discourse analysis and Chinese learners of English. Contact detail: yingmei.luo@deakin.edu.au