



# THE EVOLUTION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGIES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PEDAGOGICAL SHIFTS FROM THE PRE-AI TO AI ERA

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In today's world, it has become almost impossible to imagine our daily lives without the influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI). As highlighted in the article "The AI Revolution" [1], the adoption rate of technological innovations has accelerated at an unprecedented pace over the past few decades.

For instance, it took approximately 24 years for 80% of the U.S. population to adopt the Internet, reaching this milestone by 2011. Similarly, the widespread embrace of smartphones occurred much faster, taking only 17 years and becoming mainstream by 2016. Remarkably, AI technologies have demonstrated an even more rapid integration into society, with projections indicating that within just 5 years, by 2025, a significant portion of the population will have adapted to AI tools and applications. This trend highlights not only the increasing speed of technological adoption but also the profound and growing impact of AI on everyday life, from communication and work to education and healthcare, fundamentally reshaping the way individuals interact with the world around them.

According to NVIDIA's CEO, Jensen Huang, the evolution of Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be categorized into four major stages: Perception AI, Generative AI, AI Agents, and Physical AI [2]. Each stage represents a significant leap in AI's capabilities, from simple data recognition in Perception AI to the creation of original content and problem-solving in Generative AI. Among these stages, Generative AI exemplified by tools such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and Grok and AI Agents have emerged as particularly transformative. These technologies function as powerful digital assistants, actively supporting professionals across diverse domains including software development, design, education, healthcare, and customer service. By automating repetitive tasks, generating insights, and offering context-aware recommendations, Generative AI and AI Agents not only enhance productivity but also redefine the way humans collaborate with intelligent systems, making AI an integral part of modern professional workflows.

In software development, Generative AI tools have significantly boosted productivity by enabling faster code generation, debugging, and optimization. However, as noted in "The Junior Developer Extinction: We're All Building the Next Programming Dark Age" [3], overreliance on AI may risk a decline in core programming skills, potentially leading to a "Programming Dark Age." Similarly, AI has impacted English Language Teaching (ELT) by reshaping the core skills of Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing. This paper explores how AI has redefined instructional strategies, shifted pedagogical priorities, and transformed approaches in English Language Education, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges of its growing role.

1. Comparison of Pre-AI and AI Era in ELT



The evolution of English Language Teaching (ELT) reflects broader educational and technological shifts over time. The transition from traditional methods to AI-enhanced approaches highlights a movement from teacher-centered instruction to learner-centered, adaptive, and interactive learning experiences. Understanding this progression provides a foundation for comparing how ELT operated in the pre-AI era versus the current AI-driven context.

### 2.1. English Language Teaching in the Pre-AI Era

Before the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies, English language teaching (ELT) primarily relied on traditional, teacher-centered methods that emphasized grammar, vocabulary memorization, and written exercises. Teachers played the dominant role in the classroom, while students were mostly passive recipients of knowledge. Lessons were largely focused on theoretical understanding, learning rules, translating texts, and completing written drills rather than on practical communication or real-life language use.

One of the most widespread methods during this period was the Grammar-Translation Method, which focused on learning a language through the study of grammar rules and translation exercises. Students were expected to memorize vocabulary lists, analyze sentence structures, and translate texts back and forth between English and their native language. Listening and speaking skills received little to no attention, as accuracy and grammatical precision were prioritized over fluency or communication.

Over time, educators and researchers realized that this approach failed to develop learners' ability to use English effectively in real-life contexts. Knowing grammar and vocabulary did not necessarily lead to communicative competence. This realization gave rise to new, learner-centered methodologies that emphasized interaction and practical language use.

By the latter half of the 20th century, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach became increasingly popular. This method viewed language as a tool for communication rather than a system of abstract rules. Students were encouraged to engage in dialogues, discussions, and role-plays, allowing them to use the language in meaningful contexts. Game-based learning, songs, audiovisual materials, and interactive exercises made lessons more dynamic and motivating.

These communicative methods helped transform English learning from a passive and theoretical process into an active, experience-based one. Learners not only studied the language but also practiced using it in authentic communicative situations, thereby enhancing both confidence and fluency.

However, despite these advances, traditional approaches still exhibited several limitations. Because the classroom was heavily teacher-centered, individualized learning was minimal, every student followed the same pace and materials regardless of their proficiency or interests. Lessons often felt monotonous, focused on error avoidance rather than self-expression, and placed excessive weight on grammatical correctness. As a result, many learners developed strong theoretical knowledge but struggled to use English effectively in conversation or spontaneous communication.

### 2.2. English Language Teaching in the AI Era

The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has brought revolutionary changes to English language teaching. Learning environments have become personalized, data-driven, and highly interactive, shifting the focus from rote memorization to adaptive and experiential learning. AI-



based systems now enable teachers to analyze individual learners' needs, track progress, and create customized learning paths tailored to each student's abilities and goals.

Modern AI-powered platforms such as Grammarly, and Generative AI (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Crok) provide real-time feedback by detecting pronunciation errors, analyzing grammar, and assessing writing style. These tools supplement classroom instruction and give learners opportunities to practice independently while receiving immediate, data-informed guidance.

AI has also strengthened the communicative dimension of language learning. Virtual tutors and chatbots simulate realistic conversations, enabling students to engage in spontaneous dialogues, refine pronunciation, and develop listening comprehension skills in natural contexts. Moreover, AI supports receptive skills like reading and writing by offering interactive materials, articles, blogs, and videos combined with automated feedback systems that correct and explain mistakes.

In the AI era, grammar is no longer treated as the central goal of instruction but rather as a supporting tool for effective communication. This shift encourages learners to use grammar functionally within meaningful language tasks, helping them integrate accuracy and fluency more naturally.

Nonetheless, these technological advancements also introduce new challenges. One emerging concern is learners' overreliance on AI tools. Writing assistants and text generators make it easier to produce grammatically correct and well-structured writing, but they can also hinder creativity, critical thinking, and independent composition skills. Similarly, instant translation tools reduce learners' motivation to read and understand authentic texts deeply, which weakens comprehension and analytical abilities.

Therefore, the key task for modern ELT practitioners is to integrate AI responsibly leveraging its analytical power and adaptability while maintaining the essential human elements of teaching such as emotional intelligence, mentorship, and cultural context. AI should not replace the teacher but rather serve as a supportive partner that enhances personalized learning, accelerates feedback, and sustains motivation.

Overall, the primary goal of English language education in the AI era is to develop learners who can use the language effectively and independently in real-world contexts. It aims to cultivate not only linguistic competence but also digital literacy, creativity, and critical thinking skills essential for thriving in an increasingly AI-augmented world.

### 1. AI Tools for Developing Language Skills in ELT

In today's world, discussions regarding the potential of AI to replace human jobs have become increasingly prevalent. Nvidia's CEO, Jensen Huang, once stated: "The person who uses AI will take your job." This remark underscores the necessity of adapting to technological advancements rather than resisting them. Every professional domain must learn to collaborate effectively with AI, and English language teaching is no exception. By integrating contemporary AI tools into language instruction, educators can substantially enhance learning outcomes.

A central objective of this paper is to bridge the gap between traditional Pre-AI teaching methods and the innovative approaches emerging in the AI Era. We aim to demonstrate how English Language Teaching (ELT) can evolve through the adoption of tools and techniques utilized by today's AI-empowered learners. In this context, we examine the most effective AI



tools for improving the four core competencies of ELT: Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing.

Considering the distinctive impact of AI, we categorize these competencies into two groups. Speaking and Listening have been significantly strengthened in the AI Era, whereas Reading and Writing have experienced a relative decline due to their growing reliance on AI tools. Accordingly, our analysis is structured under the following sections: Speaking & Listening with AI in ELT and Reading & Writing with AI in ELT.

### 3.1 Speaking & Listening with AI in ELT

Among the four core skills of English Language Teaching (ELT), speaking and listening are arguably the most rapidly evolving areas in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The primary reason for this advancement lies in the growing number of AI tools and AI-powered applications that focus specifically on enhancing oral communication and auditory comprehension skills. These tools leverage natural language processing (NLP), real-time speech recognition, and conversational feedback to simulate human-like interactions, thereby helping learners build fluency, accuracy, confidence, and listening comprehension.

From an analytical perspective, AI resources designed to support speaking and listening practice can be classified into two main categories: AI Conversational Tools and AI-Powered Applications.

AI Conversational Tools – this group includes tools such as *ChatGPT*, *Gemini*, *Claude*, and *Grok*, which enable direct, open-ended conversation with an AI system. Learners can discuss a wide range of topics, ranging from everyday communication to academic and professional discussions, thus developing fluency in spontaneous speech and sharpening listening skills through real-time responses. Based on practical testing and user experience, ChatGPT demonstrated the highest conversational coherence and naturalness (rated 5/5), followed by Grok (4/5), while Gemini and Claude performed moderately well (3/5).

Table 1. AI conversational tools and their rating based on Speaking & Listening.

AI Tool	Rating
ChatGPT	5/5
Grok	4/5
Gemini	3/5
Claude	3/5

AI-Powered Applications – these are specialized applications built explicitly for English speaking and listening practice, including *Praktika*, *Speak*, *Talkpal*, and *Hallo*. Unlike general AI tools, these apps combine conversation features with structured language learning design, such as pronunciation feedback, vocabulary tracking, progress monitoring, and listening exercises. Experimental evaluations revealed that Praktika provided the most realistic and pedagogically effective speaking and listening experiences (rated 5/5), followed by Speak (4/5), while Talkpal and Hallo demonstrated satisfactory but limited depth in both speaking and listening practice (3/5).

Table 2. AI Applications and their rating based on Speaking & Listening.

AI Tool	Rating
Praktika	5/5
Speak	4/5



Talkpal	3/5
Hallo	3/5

Overall, these findings indicate that AI-driven speaking and listening tools are reshaping oral communication pedagogy by making conversation-based and auditory practice more accessible, interactive, and adaptive to individual learner needs. As AI technologies continue to advance, such tools will likely play a central role in redefining how speaking and listening skills are taught, practiced, and assessed in modern ELT environments.

### 3.2 Reading & Writing with AI in ELT

The emergence of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) has significantly transformed approaches to English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly in the domains of reading and writing. While AI tools are capable of providing immediate corrections and feedback, relying solely on AI for language acquisition can lead to dependency rather than skill development. Ideally, AI should function as an auxiliary tool to enhance students’ capabilities rather than replace traditional learning processes. To examine the effectiveness of AI in improving reading and writing skills, two recent studies from 2025 were analyzed.

The first study, “How Can Artificial Intelligence Improve Children’s English Reading Comprehension?”, explored the impact of *Microsoft Coach* in supporting elementary students’ reading comprehension. Conducted over a six-week intervention, students engaged with AI-assisted reading exercises using Microsoft Coach alongside traditional classroom instruction. Results indicated significant improvements in reading comprehension scores, as well as heightened engagement and motivation toward English learning. Importantly, the study emphasized that AI should complement, rather than replace, teacher guidance and active student participation.

The second study, “The Effectiveness of AI-Powered Writing Assistants in Enhancing Essay Writing Skills at Undergraduate Level”, investigated AI writing tools’ influence on undergraduate students’ essay composition. Over an eight-week period, students utilized AI-powered writing assistants, such as *Grammarly*, to support grammar, structure, and style. Findings revealed notable improvements in essay quality, grammar accuracy, and self-editing skills. However, the study also highlighted potential risks of over-reliance on AI, stressing the importance of maintaining critical thinking and academic integrity.

**Table 3.** AI Platforms and their rating based on Reading & Writing.

AI Tool	Rating
Reading Coach	5/5
Grammarly	5/5

In conclusion, the transition from traditional English teaching to AI-enhanced methodologies marks a major paradigm shift in education. While the pre-AI era prioritized accuracy and teacher authority, the AI era promotes adaptability, learner autonomy, and personalized learning experiences. The findings suggest that integrating AI responsibly can significantly improve English proficiency when used as a supportive tool rather than a replacement for human instruction. Among current AI resources, ChatGPT, Praktika are most effective for speaking and listening, whereas Microsoft Coach and Grammarly excel in enhancing reading and writing.



Looking forward, future research should focus on the role of AI Agents in ELT, investigating how autonomous AI systems can support personalized learning, real-time feedback, and adaptive skill development. Such studies could explore their long-term impact on learner engagement, creativity, and autonomy, as well as the best practices for harmonizing AI Agents with human instruction. Ultimately, the future of ELT depends on achieving a balance between technological innovation and the irreplaceable human role in teaching and learning.

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