

Article

Research on the Innovation of College English Teaching Models Empowered by Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract: With the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, college English teaching is undergoing profound transformation. This study explores innovative teaching models empowered by AI, analyzing theoretical foundations and practical applications. It discusses AI-driven platforms such as adaptive learning systems, intelligent assessment tools, and virtual conversation partners, highlighting their roles in enhancing personalized learning, teaching efficiency, and student engagement. The paper also examines real university-based case studies demonstrating successful AI integration in English teaching reforms, intelligent essay evaluation, and oral proficiency development. Finally, challenges including teacher AI literacy, ethical concerns, and student autonomy are addressed, with proposed countermeasures to promote sustainable innovation. This research provides valuable insights for educators and policymakers aiming to advance AI-enabled college English education.

Keywords: artificial intelligence; college English teaching; teaching innovation; adaptive learning; intelligent assessment

1. Introduction

In the era of rapid technological advancement, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force across various sectors, including education. Particularly in the field of college English teaching, AI is gradually reshaping the traditional pedagogical landscape. Conventional classroom instruction, often characterized by teacher-centered delivery and standardized content, faces increasing challenges in addressing diverse learner needs, enhancing engagement, and fostering communicative competence. AI technologies such as intelligent tutoring systems, automated essay scoring, speech recognition, machine translation, and adaptive learning platforms are being actively introduced into English language classrooms. These tools offer a range of functions — from real-time feedback and personalized learning paths to interactive oral practice and intelligent content recommendation — that not only optimize teaching efficiency but also enrich the student learning experience. The integration of AI supports a shift from passive reception to active, learner-centered engagement, aligning with contemporary educational goals that emphasize autonomy, creativity, and critical thinking [1].

Against this backdrop, exploring AI-driven innovations in college English teaching has become both necessary and timely. This study aims to investigate how artificial intelligence empowers the transformation of English teaching models in higher education. Specifically, it examines the practical applications of AI technologies, the pedagogical changes they bring about, and the new forms of human-machine collaboration that are emerging in the learning process. By adopting a research method that combines literature review with empirical case analysis, the study seeks to identify effective teaching models that leverage AI for improved learning outcomes. Furthermore, it addresses key chal-

Published: 30 July 2025



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lenges such as teachers' AI literacy, ethical considerations, and the balance between technological efficiency and humanistic education. Through this inquiry, the paper contributes to the theoretical discussion and practical advancement of AI-assisted language education, offering both theoretical grounding and practical reference for future teaching reforms, while providing valuable insights for educators.

2. Theoretical Foundations of AI and English Language Teaching

2.1. Trends in Educational Informatization and Intelligence

The integration of artificial intelligence into education is part of a broader trend toward educational informatization and intelligent development. As digital technologies become increasingly embedded in teaching and learning environments, there is a growing shift toward personalized, data-driven, and adaptive instruction. In college English teaching, AI enables real-time feedback, individualized learning pathways, and multimodal interactions, aligning with global efforts to modernize educational practices. This shift reflects not only technological advancement but also a transformation in educational philosophy — from standardized instruction to student-centered, technology-enhanced learning.

2.2. Key Theories in AI-Enhanced English Teaching

2.2.1. Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivist learning theory posits that learners actively construct knowledge through experience, reflection, and interaction. In AI-enhanced college English teaching, students engage with intelligent systems that adapt to their learning styles, enabling them to explore language in context rather than through rote memorization. AI tools such as virtual simulations, intelligent feedback, and dialogic platforms support an active learning environment where knowledge is co-constructed through learner-machine interaction, in line with constructivist principles [2].

2.2.2. Multiple Intelligences Theory

Proposed by Howard Gardner, the theory of multiple intelligences emphasizes the diversity of learners' cognitive strengths, including linguistic, spatial, interpersonal, and musical intelligences, among others. AI technologies can cater to these diverse intelligences by offering multimodal learning experiences — videos, interactive games, voice interaction, writing tools — that address different learning preferences. In college English instruction, such customization helps foster deeper engagement and more meaningful language acquisition across varied learner profiles.

2.2.3. Human-AI Collaborative Learning Model

The Human-AI collaborative learning model focuses on the synergy between human teachers and intelligent systems in the learning process. Rather than replacing educators, AI functions as an intelligent assistant, supporting tasks such as content delivery, feedback, assessment, and learner analytics. In English teaching, this model encourages a cooperative environment where human pedagogical judgment and machine-based precision work together to enhance learning outcomes. The model supports a hybrid instructional paradigm where AI augments human capabilities, making instruction more efficient, responsive, and learner-centered.

3. AI Applications in College English Teaching

3.1. Intelligent Teaching Platforms and Systems

Intelligent teaching platforms have become a cornerstone in the modernization of college English education. These platforms integrate AI technologies to provide comprehensive support for both teachers and students. For example, "smart classrooms" utilize

interactive whiteboards, real-time student response systems, and AI-powered analytics to facilitate dynamic teaching and personalized learning. Such environments encourage active participation and enable instructors to monitor student progress with greater accuracy. The use of data-driven insights allows for timely adjustments in teaching strategies, making learning more effective and engaging.

In addition, AI-based writing correction systems like Grammarly and iWrite are increasingly adopted to assist students in improving their English writing skills. These tools offer automated grammar, vocabulary, and style feedback, helping learners identify and correct errors independently. Beyond mere error detection, these systems provide explanations and suggestions tailored to individual proficiency levels, which promotes autonomous learning and continuous improvement. The integration of these intelligent platforms and systems not only streamlines the teaching process but also empowers students to take ownership of their language development [3].

3.2. Personalized Learning Recommendations

Personalized learning recommendations represent a key advantage of AI integration in college English teaching. By analyzing vast amounts of learner data — including performance metrics, learning habits, and interaction patterns — AI systems can generate tailored content and study plans that address individual students' strengths and weaknesses. This data-driven approach helps overcome the limitations of one-size-fits-all teaching methods, enabling learners to focus on areas where they need the most improvement. Consequently, personalized recommendations enhance learning efficiency and motivation by making study experiences more relevant and targeted.

Moreover, adaptive learning platforms continuously update their recommendations based on real-time student feedback and progress, creating a dynamic learning environment. For instance, if a student consistently struggles with listening comprehension, the system might prioritize related exercises or suggest multimedia resources to support skill development. This intelligent adjustment not only supports diverse learner needs but also fosters self-directed learning by encouraging students to engage actively with customized materials. Overall, personalized learning recommendations powered by AI play a vital role in promoting differentiated instruction and improving language acquisition outcomes [4].

3.3. Intelligent Assessment and Feedback Systems

Intelligent assessment and feedback systems have become essential components of AI-enabled college English teaching. Automated essay scoring tools utilize natural language processing to evaluate written assignments quickly and consistently, providing students with immediate feedback on grammar, vocabulary, coherence, and content quality. These systems not only reduce the grading burden on instructors but also offer detailed insights that help learners understand their mistakes and improve their writing skills independently. The timely and objective nature of AI-based assessment enhances learning efficiency and motivates students to engage more deeply with the writing process [5].

In addition to writing evaluation, AI-driven oral scoring systems are increasingly used to assess speaking proficiency. These technologies analyze speech features such as pronunciation, fluency, intonation, and vocabulary usage, providing students with quantitative scores and qualitative feedback. By simulating real-world speaking scenarios, such systems encourage repeated practice and self-correction. The integration of intelligent assessment tools into language teaching creates a continuous feedback loop, enabling learners to track their progress over time and focus on targeted skill development.

3.4. Virtual Language Partners and Conversational Bots

Virtual language partners and conversational bots have gained popularity as interactive tools in college English oral instruction. Platforms like ChatGPT and iTalki offer

students opportunities to practice speaking and listening in a low-pressure environment. These AI-powered interlocutors simulate natural conversations, adapting responses based on learner input to maintain dialogue flow and relevance. Such interactions help students build confidence, improve fluency, and develop communicative competence outside the traditional classroom setting.

Moreover, conversational bots provide personalized language support that is accessible anytime and anywhere, breaking down time and location barriers. Unlike static learning materials, these bots can engage in diverse topics and contexts, exposing learners to authentic language use and cultural nuances. Their availability enhances learner autonomy and fosters a habit of regular practice, which is crucial for language acquisition. As AI conversational agents continue to evolve, their role in supplementing oral English education is expected to expand, offering more immersive and adaptive learning experiences. With the continuous advancement of artificial intelligence technologies, traditional college English teaching models are undergoing profound transformations. AI empowers teaching by providing intelligent tools, adaptive learning environments, and data-driven insights that enable more personalized, efficient, and interactive instruction. This chapter explores innovative teaching models enabled by AI, highlighting how the technology can be integrated effectively with pedagogy to enhance learning outcomes and reform instructional approaches [6].

4. Innovative Paths for AI-Driven College English Teaching Models

Artificial intelligence (AI) has opened up multiple innovative paths to transform traditional college English teaching models. These paths represent strategic approaches that integrate AI technologies with pedagogical principles to create more effective, personalized, and interactive learning environments. This chapter outlines several key innovation pathways empowered by AI, illustrating how the teaching process can be redesigned to meet diverse learner needs and promote deeper language acquisition [7].

4.1. Blended Teaching: Teacher-Led Guidance Supported by AI Platforms

In the context of AI empowering college English teaching innovation, the blended model where teachers lead instruction and AI platforms assist with practice and evaluation plays a vital role. Teachers focus on designing curriculum and guiding students, while AI systems provide adaptive exercises tailored to individual needs and conduct automated assessments. These assessments not only reduce teachers' workload but also generate valuable data that supports targeted feedback and personalized learning [8].

Moreover, AI-assisted evaluation delivers immediate and objective feedback on language skills such as grammar, vocabulary, writing coherence, pronunciation, and fluency. This helps students quickly recognize their strengths and weaknesses and adjust learning strategies. For teachers, AI-generated analytics enable targeted interventions, allowing precise support for individuals or groups.

By fully leveraging the strengths of both educators and artificial intelligence, this model delivers more targeted, responsive, and evidence-based English instruction. The collaboration between educators and AI creates a personalized, engaging, and data-driven learning experience, supporting the continuous innovative integration of AI-empowered college English teaching.

4.2. Integration of Flipped Classroom and Smart Classroom

The integration of flipped classroom and smart classroom models represents a significant innovation path in AI-empowered college English teaching. Before class, AI systems provide personalized preview materials, such as adaptive videos and quizzes, which help students independently understand and master basic concepts at their own pace. During class, smart technologies facilitate interactive activities and offer real-time feedback to enhance student engagement and collaborative learning. After class, AI-driven

tutoring delivers customized exercises and targeted support to help students address individual learning gaps and reinforce their knowledge effectively (see Figure 1).

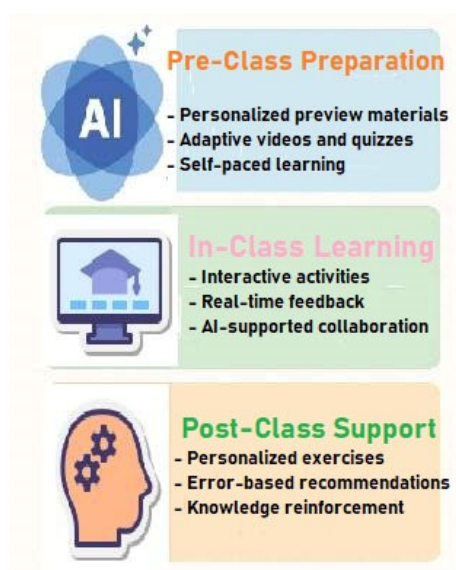


Figure 1. Workflow of AI-empowered college English teaching integrating flipped and smart classroom models.

This innovative pathway redefines the traditional teaching cycle by leveraging AI at every stage — pre-class preparation, in-class interaction, and post-class reinforcement — thus fostering a more active, student-centered learning environment. By combining the strengths of flipped and smart classrooms, this model enhances learning effectiveness, optimizes classroom time, and supports differentiated instruction. It exemplifies how artificial intelligence can drive continuous innovation in college English teaching models, aligning with the theme of this study [9].

4.3. Project-Based Learning Supported by AI Collaboration

Project-based learning (PBL) centered on authentic language tasks, such as creating English podcasts, videos, or presentations, represents a key innovative pathway in AI-empowered college English teaching. This approach shifts the focus from traditional rote memorization to active, meaningful engagement with real-world communicative situations. Students work collaboratively on projects that require them to apply language skills in practical contexts, enhancing not only their linguistic competence but also critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork abilities. By tackling authentic tasks, learners gain deeper motivation and a stronger sense of purpose, as their work has tangible outcomes and real audiences. Such experiential learning helps bridge the gap between classroom instruction and real-life language use, preparing students for diverse communicative demands beyond the academic setting.

Artificial intelligence tools assist students throughout the creative process by offering language generation, content suggestion, and editing support. For example, AI-powered writing assistants help refine scripts, while voice synthesis and video editing software enable more polished multimedia productions. This collaboration not only enhances students' autonomy and creativity but also provides immediate, formative feedback that guides skill development [10].

By integrating AI into project-based activities, this model transforms traditional language learning into an immersive, learner-centered experience. It fosters critical thinking, collaboration, and digital literacy, embodying a comprehensive innovation path that aligns closely with the theme of AI-driven teaching model reform.

4.4. Integrated Learning-Research-Practice Model Empowered by AI

The integrated learning-research-practice model represents a comprehensive innovation path in AI-driven college English education. This approach seamlessly combines language acquisition, academic research, and practical application, enabling students to develop multifaceted competencies essential for academic and professional success.

Artificial intelligence tools are applied throughout this model to support various stages of learning. In the learning phase, AI technologies such as adaptive learning systems dynamically adjust exercise content and difficulty based on students' vocabulary size and grammar mastery, improving learning efficiency. AI-powered oral assessment systems provide real-time feedback on pronunciation, intonation, and fluency, helping students enhance their speaking skills. Additionally, intelligent writing assistance tools like Grammarly are widely used by some universities and students to improve writing quality. Although the adoption and popularity of specific tools vary across institutions, these technologies generally promote greater learning effectiveness and language proficiency.

In the research phase, AI-assisted literature retrieval and management tools such as Semantic Scholar and EndNote have been broadly adopted in universities to help students efficiently screen and integrate academic resources. Text generation and writing assistance tools like ChatGPT are gradually embraced by faculty and students to enhance paper writing, summarization, and content rewriting. Data analysis and visualization tools like Tableau are applied in some research projects to assist students in processing data, facilitating deeper research and innovative outcomes. Overall, AI applications in English learning and research in Chinese higher education are steadily developing and expanding, showing promising prospects.

By integrating AI across learning, research, and practical application, this model cultivates students' comprehensive abilities — including critical thinking, language proficiency, digital literacy, and problem-solving skills — preparing them to meet the complex demands of academic and professional environments in a globalized world.

5. Case Studies of AI Applications in College English Teaching at Universities

5.1. Case Study 1: AI-Driven Comprehensive Reform of College English Teaching in Chinese Universities

Several well-known Chinese universities, including Open University of China and East China Normal University, have publicly launched AI-based English teaching reform platforms (e.g., iWrite, smart classroom systems), which serve as representative models for exploring real-world implementation. These platforms encompass the entire teaching process, including pre-class preparation, in-class interaction, and post-class feedback. The pre-class modules often involve AI-guided personalized preview materials, such as adaptive videos and quizzes, which help students independently grasp foundational concepts. During class, interactive AI tools support real-time engagement and collaborative learning activities, while post-class feedback systems offer tailored exercises and progress tracking [11].

These platforms integrate multiple modules, including intelligent adaptive learning systems that adjust content difficulty based on student performance, spoken language assessment tools employing speech recognition for pronunciation and fluency feedback, automated essay grading systems for timely writing evaluation, and virtual tutoring assistants that provide on-demand academic support. This systematic innovation has transformed traditional teaching methods into a blended, personalized, and data-driven approach, significantly improving teaching efficiency and enhancing student learning experiences, thereby advancing the innovation of college English teaching models. This case exemplifies the Human-AI Collaborative Learning Model by demonstrating how teachers and intelligent systems can jointly support student-centered, data-driven instruction.

5.2. Case Study 2: Intelligent Essay Evaluation System in University English Writing Courses

The “iWrite Intelligent Writing Teaching System” developed by Beijing Foreign Studies University’s Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, is a pioneering AI-based tool widely adopted in Chinese universities including Beijing Foreign Studies University, Fudan University, and Zhejiang University. The system offers a comprehensive suite of functions designed to support both students and teachers in the English writing process [12].

Key features include automated essay scoring aligned with standardized rubrics, intelligent error detection and correction for grammar, vocabulary, and syntax, logical structure analysis to assess coherence and organization, and tailored writing suggestions aimed at improving expression and style. The system’s capacity to record and display revision histories allows teachers to conduct formative assessments and provide targeted feedback, facilitating a process-oriented teaching approach.

Empirical evidence from multiple universities indicates that students using iWrite demonstrate significant improvements in writing accuracy, complexity, and overall quality over time. Moreover, teachers report that the system reduces the grading burden, allowing them to allocate more time to pedagogical design and individualized student support. Research articles published in peer-reviewed journals document the system’s effectiveness, highlighting enhanced student engagement, increased motivation, and measurable gains in academic writing proficiency. The implementation of iWrite aligns with Constructivist Learning Theory by enabling students to actively revise and reflect on their writing through continuous machine-assisted feedback.

5.3. Case Study 3: AI-Enhanced Immersive and Interactive English Teaching in Higher Education

Several Chinese universities have pioneered the integration of AI technologies to create immersive and interactive English learning environments. These institutions utilize AI-powered virtual scenarios and intelligent tutoring systems to transform traditional classroom instruction. A prominent example is the deployment of AI digital humans that simulate authentic communication contexts, enabling students to practice language skills through role-playing activities such as cross-cultural dialogues, academic discussions, and professional interviews. This innovative approach not only enhances linguistic proficiency but also develops students’ critical thinking and intercultural communication competencies.

The implementation extends to smart learning platforms that leverage data analytics to provide personalized learning experiences. These systems continuously monitor student performance, identifying individual strengths and weaknesses to deliver customized exercises and targeted feedback. For instance, AI-driven speech recognition tools offer real-time pronunciation correction, while automated writing evaluation systems provide detailed assessments of grammar, coherence, and stylistic elements. Empirical data from these universities demonstrate significant improvements in students’ language accuracy and fluency, with some reporting up to 30% reduction in common grammatical errors after sustained use of these technologies.

Beyond individualized learning, AI facilitates collaborative and creative pedagogical approaches. Universities have adopted platforms that allow students to co-create multimedia projects, such as virtual presentations or interactive storytelling, using AI-generated content. These activities foster teamwork and digital literacy while reinforcing language skills. Faculty members report that AI tools have substantially reduced their administrative workload, particularly in grading and feedback provision, allowing them to dedicate more time to instructional design and student mentoring. This model represents a paradigm shift in English language education, where AI serves as both an enabler of personalized learning and a catalyst for innovative teaching methodologies. The success

of these implementations underscores the potential of AI to create more engaging, effective, and scalable solutions for foreign language education in higher learning institutions. This immersive and multimodal approach reflects Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory by addressing diverse learner preferences and fostering holistic language development.

6. Challenges and Countermeasures

Artificial intelligence has brought transformative opportunities to college English teaching, but its integration also faces several critical challenges that must be addressed to maximize its benefits and ensure balanced educational development [13].

6.1. Insufficient AI Literacy among Teachers

Currently, many college English teachers have limited experience and understanding of AI technologies and their pedagogical applications. This lack of AI literacy hinders effective integration of AI tools in curriculum design, classroom management, and student assessment. In particular, teachers may feel uncertain about selecting appropriate AI tools, interpreting AI-generated data, or balancing AI assistance with traditional teaching methods. To overcome this obstacle, universities should implement comprehensive professional development programs focused on AI competencies. These programs may include workshops, hands-on training, and collaborative research projects that enable teachers to explore AI tools, understand their capabilities and limitations, and develop strategies to incorporate them effectively into teaching practices. Furthermore, establishing peer-learning communities and ongoing support networks can help sustain teachers' AI literacy growth. Enhancing teachers' AI literacy not only improves teaching quality but also fosters greater acceptance and confidence in adopting new technologies, ultimately promoting a more innovative and effective English teaching environment.

6.2. Overreliance on Technology and Imbalance with Humanistic Education

While AI provides powerful technical support, there is a risk that overdependence on technology could marginalize the humanistic aspects of English education, such as cultural awareness, ethical reasoning, and critical thinking. Language learning is not merely about mastering linguistic skills but also about developing intercultural competence and personal growth. If AI-driven instruction overly focuses on mechanical tasks like grammar correction or test preparation, it might neglect these essential human dimensions. Therefore, the role of teachers as value transmitters and mentors remains irreplaceable. To maintain a balanced educational ecosystem, educators should emphasize the irreplaceable human elements, guiding students to use AI as a tool rather than a crutch. Pedagogical frameworks must integrate AI support with human-centered teaching approaches, ensuring that technology enhances but does not overshadow the holistic development of learners. This includes embedding cultural discussions, ethical debates, and reflective activities into AI-enhanced curricula, fostering students' comprehensive language and personal skills.

6.3. Data Privacy and Ethical Concerns

The widespread use of AI platforms necessitates the collection and processing of extensive student data, including personal information and learning behaviors. This raises significant concerns regarding data privacy, security, and ethical use. Without proper safeguards, there is a risk of data breaches, misuse, or biased algorithmic decisions that could negatively impact students' academic progress and well-being. For instance, algorithmic biases may unfairly disadvantage certain learner groups, exacerbating educational inequalities. To address these issues, institutions must establish clear policies and regulations that govern data collection, storage, and sharing. Implementing transparent data protection mechanisms, such as encryption and anonymization, alongside ethical

guidelines that promote fairness, accountability, and respect for students' rights, is essential. Additionally, institutions should regularly audit AI systems for bias and accuracy. Furthermore, educating teachers and students about data ethics enhances awareness and promotes responsible use of AI technologies. Collaborative efforts among educators, technologists, and policymakers are needed to create trustworthy and ethical AI learning environments.

6.4. Uneven Levels of Students' Autonomous Learning Ability

AI-powered personalized learning relies heavily on students' capacity for self-directed study, but in reality, students vary greatly in their motivation, discipline, and skills for autonomous learning. Some students may struggle to manage their time effectively or lack the strategies to make full use of AI-generated resources. This disparity can limit the effectiveness of AI-driven education and widen learning gaps, as more independent learners benefit more from AI tools. Educators should therefore provide targeted guidance to cultivate students' autonomous learning skills, such as goal setting, time management, and critical reflection. Integrating metacognitive strategy training into courses can enhance students' self-regulation abilities. Workshops or tutorials on how to effectively interact with AI learning systems can also empower students, helping them navigate the available resources efficiently. Moreover, fostering a supportive learning community encourages peer collaboration and accountability. By fostering a learning culture that values self-regulation and responsibility, institutions can ensure that AI tools truly support all students' development and minimize inequities caused by varying levels of learner autonomy.

7. Conclusion

Artificial intelligence has brought significant innovations to college English teaching, enabling more personalized, efficient, and interactive learning experiences. This study demonstrates that AI-powered tools, such as adaptive learning platforms, automated assessments, and virtual tutors, help tailor instruction to individual student needs and improve overall teaching effectiveness.

However, challenges remain, including the need to enhance teachers' AI literacy, balance technology use with humanistic education, address data privacy and ethical concerns, and support students with varying levels of autonomous learning ability. Tackling these issues requires targeted training, clear policies, and fostering students' self-directed learning skills.

Looking ahead, further research should focus on developing advanced AI evaluation systems, integrating AI to foster intercultural communication skills, and exploring emerging generative AI technologies to enrich language learning.

In summary, AI offers promising opportunities to transform college English education, but its success depends on thoughtful integration that balances technological innovation with pedagogical values.

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