Chapter X

Generative AI and Linguistic Inequality in Global English Language Teaching

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid rise of generative artificial intelligence (AI) has started to change educational processes across disciplines, especially English Language Teaching (ELT). Large language models, automated writing assistants, and AI-based feedback systems are increasingly being employed to help with language learning, academic writing, and evaluation. These technologies promise considerable advantages, such as tailored feedback, better efficiency in writing help, and expanded access to linguistic resources. Along with these benefits, scholars have expressed serious concerns about generative AI's sociolinguistic implications, particularly its ability to reproduce existing linguistic inequalities in the global landscape of English language education (Kepirianto, C., et al. 2024; Yan, 2023; Zawacki-Richter, O., et al. 2019).

English is neither a monolithic nor impartial language. According to the Global Englishes paradigm, English exists in different varieties that are shaped by various social, historical, and political contexts (Holmes, W., & Tuomi, 2022; Luckin, R., et al. 2016; Rose, H., et al. 2021). Nonetheless, traditional ELT approaches have historically favoured so-called "Inner-Circle" varieties—particularly British and American English—as the dominating standards in teaching, evaluation, and academic communication. This privilege frequently marginalizes speakers

from the "Outer-Circle" and "Expanding-Circle" contexts, framing their language practices as departures from an assumed norm rather than valid forms of English use.

Generative AI systems are mostly created in technology ecosystems controlled by institutions and enterprises based in Inner-Circle English-speaking countries. As a result, the training data used to develop these systems usually mirror standardized forms of English used in academic, professional, and media conversation in these contexts. As a result, AI-generated language suggestions, corrections, and comments frequently follow established linguistic conventions. While these outputs may appear linguistically advanced, they may also support the ideological belief that some kinds of English are more genuine than others (Dwivedi, Y.K., 2023; Kasneci, 2023; Kepirianto, C., & Mariam, 2025). In this sense, generative AI may unintentionally recreate long-standing hierarchies in worldwide English language use.

The incorporation of generative AI into educational settings heightens these concerns. Students are increasingly using AI technologies to revise writings, generate ideas, and improve grammatical structures. While these tools may improve writing skills, they may also normalize language patterns that are similar to hegemonic English variations, possibly eliminating local rhetorical styles and linguistic identities. This relationship poses significant pedagogical concerns about linguistic ownership, authenticity, and learner agency in AI-mediated language development (Mc.Kinley, J., Rose, 2022). When students rely significantly on AI-generated edits, the line between learner voice and algorithmic output may become more blurred. This statement is supported by (Kepirianto, C., et al. 2022; Kohnke, L., et al. 2023; Rose, H., et al. 2021).

For teachers, the expanding presence of generative AI poses new issues in language instruction and evaluation. AI-based feedback systems may influence teachers' expectations of "correct" language use by quietly reinforcing standardized norms encoded in algorithmic models. Furthermore, educators may use AI technologies without fully grasping the biases encoded in their training data or the sociolinguistic assumptions

that underpin their outputs (Holmes, W., & Tuomi, 2022). In such cases, AI no longer serves as a neutral technological instrument, but rather as a participant in the construction of linguistic authority and educational standards.

In addition to linguistic ideology, generative AI creates new types of inequality in digital literacy and technology access. While under-resourced educational contexts may find it difficult to acquire or critically engage with such technologies, institutions with sophisticated technology infrastructure may incorporate AI-supported learning environments. These differences run the danger of exacerbating already-existing worldwide gaps in academic engagement and language education. However, as AI-mediated language production becomes more prevalent, power may be transferred from local learning communities and teachers to opaque algorithmic systems whose decision-making processes are still mostly inaccessible.

2.DISCUSSION

The relationship between generative AI and linguistic inequality in international English language instruction is critically examined in this chapter. It examines how AI systems may support prevailing language ideologies while also creating opportunities for more inclusive and pluralistic approaches to English language instruction, drawing on viewpoints from Global Englishes, critical applied linguistics, and educational technology studies. Developing pedagogically responsible and morally informed applications of generative AI in ELT requires an understanding of these dynamics.

2.1 Generative AI, Global Englishes, and Linguistic Inequality in ELT

A conceptual framework that places technical innovation within larger sociolinguistic and ideological settings is necessary given the increasing prevalence of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education. Large language models used for writing assistance, feedback generation, and language

correction are examples of generative AI systems that are increasingly influencing how language learning and communication are mediated in English Language Teaching (ELT). These technologies do not function in a sociocultural vacuum, though. Instead, they engage with the global power structures, educational philosophies, and linguistic hierarchies that have traditionally influenced English instruction. This chapter uses three related theoretical stances—global Englishes, language inequality, and algorithmic mediation in AI systems—to critically comprehend these dynamics.

2.2 Global Englishes and the Plurality of English

An essential place to start when investigating the function of generative AI in language instruction is the Global Englishes paradigm. In contrast to a single standardized variation linked to native-speaker norms, scholars in this field contend that English should be viewed as a plural, dynamic, and globally diffused language (Rose, H., Mc.Kinley, J., Galloway, 2021). Nowadays, English serves as a universal language for speakers from many linguistic and cultural backgrounds, the majority of whom are not native speakers.

However, so-called Inner-Circle English variants, especially American and British English, have traditionally been given priority in traditional ELT (Luckin, R., et al. 2016; Zawacki-Richter, O., et al. 2019). These types are frequently used as the standard for academic writing, grammar, and pronunciation. Because of this, students from Outer-Circle and Expanding-Circle contexts often come across instructional strategies that subtly portray their language repertoires as inadequate or abnormal. Global Englishes scholarship, which promotes pedagogies that acknowledge language diversity, communicative flexibility, and intercultural competency, has harshly critiqued this phenomenon.

This argument becomes more complicated with the advent of generative AI. Large language models frequently reflect prevalent linguistic patterns found in digital texts because they

are trained on enormous datasets derived from those writings. These tendencies typically correspond with the standardized forms of English that predominate in online communication, media discourse, and international academic publishing. As a result, AI-generated corrections and feedback may unintentionally marginalize alternative linguistic patterns while reinforcing standardized standards. This poses important considerations concerning whether AI technologies facilitate or impede the recognition of linguistic heterogeneity in ELT from the standpoint of Global Englishes.

2.3. Linguistic Inequality and Language Ideology

The idea of linguistic inequality aids in the explanation of how some language variations gain prominence while others are side-lined. The unequal distribution of language legitimacy, authority, and value within social institutions, including education, is referred to as linguistic inequality (Kasneci, 2023; Kepirianto, C., & Mariam, 2025; Luckin, R., et al. 2016). Standardized language variations serve as linguistic capital in many educational situations, opening doors to social mobility, career prospects, and academic accomplishment. Linguistic disparity in ELT frequently shows itself as the preference for academic discourse patterns, standardized tests, and native-speaker norms. While learners who deviate from these norms may be viewed as less proficient, those who can approximate them may receive rewards. This dynamic is a reflection of more general language ideologies that link particular varieties of English to intelligence, authority, or international status.

2.4. Algorithmic Mediation and Educational Technology

The idea of algorithmic mediation in educational technology is the subject of a third theoretical lens. The term "algorithmic mediation" describes how automated processes in digital systems influence human behaviour, knowledge creation, and social interaction (Dwivedi, Y.K., 2023; Kohnke, L., et al. 2023;

Li, H., et al. 2023). Algorithms have a growing impact on the creation, assessment, and dissemination of knowledge in educational settings. Because generative AI systems actively contribute to language production, they constitute a particularly potent type of algorithmic mediation. These systems produce text that can be immediately included into student writing or classroom communication, as opposed to only giving information. AI techniques can thereby affect rhetorical styles, linguistic decisions, and patterns of academic communication.

The authority of AI-generated language can influence perceptions of correctness and expertise. Because AI systems frequently produce fluent and grammatically correct language, users may believe that their outputs represent authoritative linguistic standards. However, the procedures that produce these outputs remain essentially opaque. Users rarely get access to the training data, algorithmic parameters, and decision-making procedures that drive massive language models. This ambiguity raises significant ethical concerns about AI's role in establishing linguistic norms and educational practices (Chiu, T.K.F., 2023; Crompton, H., & Burke, 2023; Godwin-Jones., 2022).

Furthermore, algorithmic mediation touches on larger themes of digital inequality. Access to advanced AI tools is not fairly spread among educational institutions and national contexts. Universities in technologically advanced countries may incorporate AI-powered learning environments, whereas institutions in resource-constrained situations may lack the infrastructure or expertise necessary to properly implement these technologies. Such discrepancies have the potential to exacerbate existing worldwide inequities in language availability and academic participation.

2.5. Towards a Critical Perspective on AI in ELT

A framework for critically analysing the function of generative AI in ELT is provided by integrating these three viewpoints: global Englishes, linguistic inequality, and algorithmic mediation. This concept emphasizes how AI systems are integrated into larger sociolinguistic and political frameworks rather than seeing AI as a neutral technological advancement. According to this viewpoint, generative AI is both a site of opportunity and a site of risk. On the one hand, by giving preference to standardized forms of English that are present in their training data, AI systems may perpetuate current linguistic hierarchies. However, they also offer chances to reconsider language acquisition in ways that value linguistic variety and international communication.

For instance, rather of accepting AI-generated language without question, educators might urge pupils to critically analyse it. Discussions concerning linguistic variance, rhetorical decisions, and the sociocultural contexts of English use might begin with AI results. By encouraging learner agency in language production and raising awareness of linguistic diversity, these instructional techniques support the objectives of Global Englishes.

In the end, going beyond solely technological viewpoints is necessary to comprehend the connection between generative AI and language inequality. It necessitates a critical examination of the sociolinguistic beliefs ingrained in AI systems as well as the educational methods used to implement these systems. Teachers and researchers can strive toward more inclusive and equitable forms of English language instruction in the digital age by placing generative AI within the larger framework of global Englishes and linguistic justice.

3.FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Future research in English Language Teaching (ELT) must consider generative AI's wider sociolinguistic and pedagogical consequences rather than just seeing it as a technological advancement as it develops. Examining how AI systems affect learners' linguistic identities and views of acceptable English is one crucial avenue. Empirical research is required to investigate

whether generative AI models promote Inner-Circle linguistic norms or whether they can be modified to recognize and support diverse English varieties within Global Englishes frameworks, as many of these models prioritize standardized variants of English.

AI-critical pedagogy in language instruction is another crucial field. Future research should look at how educators may use generative AI tools while helping students develop a critical understanding of digital authorship, language ideology, and algorithmic bias. Teachers may utilize AI outputs as analytical tools that inspire students to challenge linguistic conventions, contrast linguistic variances, and consider their own voice in academic writing rather than viewing them as authoritative language models.

Furthermore, multidisciplinary cooperation between academics in education, artificial intelligence, and applied linguistics will be crucial. The creation of AI systems that more accurately reflect linguistic diversity and educational requirements in multilingual settings can be aided by this kind of cooperation. In order to ensure that the use of generative AI in ELT promotes more inclusive and equitable language learning settings rather than perpetuating current educational inequities, future research should also address worldwide discrepancies in access to AI technologies.

Author

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