

# Enhancing Traditional English Teaching Methods in Primary Classrooms through AI-driven Tools: A Literature-informed Perspective

Dongyi Zheng

Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong, 999077, China

## ABSTRACT

With the latest advancements in educational technology, artificial intelligence is seen as a new way to revolutionize primary EFL teaching for foreigners. The present study looks at the existing body of literature so as to gain some understanding of how AI could fit in with well-established primary English learning methods. It provides an extensive discussion about 6 major EFL teaching approaches and then talks about some important problems in today's primary EFL classrooms. From this analysis, the research finds main areas where AI can be integrated-smart speech recognition, AI chatbots, and adaptive learning solutions-all aligned with education needs. A methodical matrix for AI-assisted bettering different educational methods is made to evaluate AI's improvement capacity for particular methods. Lastly, it has implications for educators and academics who should remember that AI will help but not take over teachers, and that we need to strike a balance between old-school ideas and AI to make teacher training better and give everyone a fair chance with tech, all without hurting how well students learn or keeping their private info safe. This study adds to what we know by giving us a way to use AI in primary EFL learning that's backed up by books and papers.

## KEYWORDS

Primary English teaching; Artificial intelligence; Teaching methodologies; EFL; Systematic literature review

## 1 Introduction

Today, the world of educational development internationally is experiencing a change brought about by technology, with artificial intelligence being seen as one of the big changes (Qasseras, 2023); In primary EFL teaching-where building up basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) and encouraging a liking for learning matter most-AI has no equal when it comes to addressing longstanding problems. But educators and researchers argue if AI will replace or just add to old ways: The substitution paradigm looks down on teachers' hard-to-replace parts and usual methods (Sukavatee & Khlaisang, 2023), yet mixing AI with regular ways gets lots of attention. Primary school education forms habits and motivation, which affect language ability; traditional methods such as CLT and TPR fit children's learning features but have disadvantages such as poor teacher-student ratio (Wong, 2019). AI tools, along with data analysis, instant interaction, and personalization functions, can overcome these shortcomings; for instance, offering immediate pronunciation feedback which teachers find hard to give all at once. I examine the present literature regarding primary EFL learning and AI so as to learn about current methods and suggest practical AI integration strategies, adding to technology-assisted foreign language learning theory and helping instructors. Its research questions include: Main characteristics and application status of commonly used traditional methods in primary English classrooms; Key difficulties in current primary EFL procedures and how AI might fix them; Important AI integration areas for primary EFL lessons and how AI connects with traditional methods; And how blending AI with conventional techniques impacts primary EFL instructors. Primary EFL instruction calls for methods that balance linguistic knowledge and learning interest because young learners have different cognitive traits (short attention span, love experience-based learning, rely on senses) (Philominraj et al., 2023); over time, six valid methods have become the most commonly used, and this part explains what they mean and where they came from.

## 2 Overview of Traditional English Teaching Methodologies in Primary Classrooms

Communicative Language Teaching, or CLT, is based on the communication functions of language itself, with the core focus on context and authentic communication in the real world. The language is learned from meaningful communication activities, which include role plays or information gap exercises, group work, or discussions on mundane matters. CLT is extremely useful for teaching children in the primary school category because it meets the children's need for interaction with other people.

Task-Based Language Teaching, or TBLT, is based on the real-life tasks that need to be accomplished, involving the language the learners are studying, in order to attain particular objectives, for example, solving problems or organizing an event, the most common tasks consisting of project work, pair work involving language tasks.

Phonics & Audio-Lingual Method is the combination of two different but complementary approaches, with Phonics involving sound-letter relationships, teaching learners to decode words based on phoneme-grapheme relationships, while Audio-Lingual Method concentrates on building habitual responses through imitation, replication, or mechanical drilling. Common activities include matching letters to their sounds, sound blending or model sentence replication or substitute drills. Phonics & Audio-Lingual Method is extremely effective for EFL beginners in the primary stage, with the

Audio-Lingual Approach providing an ideal foundation for pronunciation learning or word recognition.

The PPP Model (Presentation–Practice–Production) is an organized three-tiered process, starting from Presentation, with the teacher demonstrating the target language in context, often with the help of pictures, with the context involving teaching the "past tense" concept, followed by the second tier, the "Practice" stage, with learners practicing controlled exercises, usually fill-the-gap exercises, followed by the "Production" stage, with learners applying their target language for the first time in communicative activities, involving their own experiences from the weekend, for instance.

TPR is also based on the child's kinesthetic intelligence, with the child having fewer anxieties as the focus is on comprehension rather than production or production pressure on the child. Blended & Multimedia-Enhanced Instruction is characterized by the integration of face-to-face instruction with technology-based support from videos, audio clips, or interactive electronic books, capitalizing on multi-sensory input, with activities involving video-based lessons, tapping on words from electronic books for pronunciation, or collaborative worksheets on the net.

And it should be pointed out that these methods do not have to be used separately. In actual primary school EFL classrooms, good teachers usually use a "hybrid method", which combines some parts of several methods to satisfy different students' needs and the aims of every single class (Mohd Noor et al., 2025).

### 3 Current Challenges

Even though the traditional methods for learning English can be seen as successful on paper, there are many reasons why these methods fail when applied to primary school EFL settings, leading to inefficient learning and adding to teachers' burdens. This paper highlights and discusses twelve major difficulties that have become more prominent in the last eight years (2017-2025), which make it hard for elementary students to learn EFL. There is a big difference between what teachers are taught in their teacher training schools and how they teach in the classroom, especially when it comes to CLT and TBLT. Wong (2019) studies indicate that even though primary EFL educators get basic knowledge of these approaches during training, lots do not use them properly, depending on their own school experiences rather than theory. And also because of fast-moving advances in educational tech, some instructors don't have the know-how to mix AI tools with old methods, so they're hesitant to use tech or use it wrong. Large class size is a common problem in primary EFL education, especially in resource-scarce areas. A study done by Sukavatee and Khlaisang (2023) shows that in Thailand, there are about 40-50 students per class, which is much larger than the ideal number of 20-25 for interactive language teaching. This is an overcrowding that hurts methods that depend on interactions between teachers and students and among students, such as CLT and TPR. Traditional primary EFL classes take a "one size fits all" approach, where teachers give the same material to every student at once. Feedback is important for second language learning, but primary EFL classrooms do not have accurate timely feedback. In large classes, teachers cannot immediately respond verbally to each student; written feedback on assignments takes several days to reach students, and it merely points out errors without explanation; general feedback does not consider individual strengths and weaknesses. Textbooks, the main curriculum resources in most primary EFL classrooms, frequently fail to match students' cognitive levels, interests, and real-life language necessities (Alsowat, 2017). Outdated information that has nothing to do with everyday life or cultural trends, no cultural relevance due to unfamiliarity with foreign references, poor balance between language abilities, and slow updates (3-5 years) that cannot catch up with changes in education, language, or students' needs. Educational technology rapidly develops, especially AI-powered tools, which create a gap between available resources and teachers' ability to integrate them into traditional methodologies (Mohd Noor et al., 2025). Many primary EFL teachers lack the necessary digital literacy skills and confidence to make good use of AI tools, and there isn't much theoretical guidance on how to align those tools with particular pedagogical aims.

## 4 Critical Integration Points for AI-driven Tools Within Primary EFL Education

### 4.1 Improving Pronunciation and Speaking Practice

Current Challenges in Primary EFL Teaching ISR (Intelligent Speech Recognition) uses machine learning algorithms to turn words into text, check if pronunciations are correct, and find out which parts are said wrong. Transcription aside, it gives primary EFL learners thorough feedback on vowels and consonants' pronunciation, stresses and tones, so as to enhance their pronunciation and fluency skills (Philominraj et al., 2023). ISR tools are good for learning methods that focus on speaking, such as the Phonics Method, TPR, CLT, and TBLT. In phonics teaching, it can give immediate feedback to help with accuracy and also offer rewards to encourage students. As a "virtual conversational companion" in oral training and role-playing, it helps students to practice speaking skills alone. In TPR activities, it adds the vocal element through analyzing mouth movements when the teacher issues orders. ISR directly tackles two major obstacles in primary EFL classrooms: the absence of personal feedback on speaking abilities and too few chances to speak. It allows every learner to improve their pronunciation no matter how big the class is, it relieves teachers from having to watch each student's pronunciation during every single lesson. Common ISR tools are ELSA Speak, an EFL learning tool for pronunciation learning that uses AI to assess and analyze over 40 English phonemes; a research found that primary EFL kids who did this for 15 mins/day for 8 wks improved their pron by 27% (Philominraj et al., 2023). Google Speech-to-Text for Education is a free tool linked up with Google Classroom, enabling teachers to make pronunciation tasks, keep an eye on development

using a dashboard, and spot widespread errors for whole-class teaching, which makes it especially handy for large classes.

#### 4.2 Facilitating Communicative Practice and Contextual Learning

AI chatbots, powered by natural language processing (NLP), enable human-like conversations with students, offering a safe, low-pressure environment for English communicative practice. They adapt to students' language levels, generate contextually relevant responses, and simulate real-world communication scenarios (Qasserras, 2023), making them well-suited for CLT and TBLT by extending communicative practice beyond in-class interactions. Their application scenarios include daily conversation practice, task-based learning participation, and cultural contextualization. Aligned with teaching needs, chatbots address the lack of communicative opportunities in EFL classes—non-English-speaking students rarely interact with native speakers outside institutions, and large classes limit in-class speaking time. Chatbots provide 24/7 access to a "talking buddy," allowing children to communicate freely without fear of mistakes and can be tailored to in-class learning content. Typical tools include ChatGPT for Education, which can be adapted for young learners; a study by Qasserras (2023) showed 20 minutes of weekly school-related conversations improved primary students' communicative fluency by 35%. Kuki AI Bot (Education Edition) is designed for young learners, using gamification and visuals to engage them in conversations, storytelling, and language games, with teacher-accessible chat history for progress tracking.

#### 4.3 Enabling Personalized Learning Paths

Adaptive learning systems (ALS) use AI algorithms to analyze students' learning data—including test performance, activity completion, and time spent on tasks—to design customized learning plans, adjusting material difficulty and selecting activities based on individual performance (Mohd Noor et al., 2025). ALS conforms to the PPP Model and blended learning as it permits personalized learning outside classrooms: it gives personal practice after the teacher's presentation, picks reading materials that match levels and interests, monitors vocabulary knowledge, assigns extra homework and extension tasks, and lets teachers check on their students. Primary EFL context ALS meets differentiated instruction need through automation of needs analysis and content selection so teachers can focus on higher order tasks such as discussion facilitation, emotional support, and addressing complex learning needs while closing gaps for low performers and stretching high flyers. The most typical ones are Raz-Kids which is an adaptive reading platform featuring leveled e-books, placement tests, comprehension quizzes and teacher monitoring functions; Squirrel AI, an all-round EFL platform encompassing phonics, grammar, reading, and writing that relies on big data to detect knowledge deficiencies. According to a research carried out by Mohd Noor et al. (2025), primary EFL students who used Squirrel AI saw a 40% improvement over 12 weeks, compared to the control group's 15% improvement.

#### 4.4 Enhancing Formative Evaluation

Intelligent assessment and feedback systems use AI to do the automatic marking of written and spoken assessments and to look at how well students are doing over time. Besides smart marking, they also evaluate writing (coherence, vocabulary) and spoken English (fluency, pronunciation), and provide suggestions for improvement (Alsowat, 2017). These systems make it so that evaluations get better by using things like CLT (communicative competence) and TBLT (task completion), which cover written tests, oral tests, and formative tests—watching how well people do over time to make reports about getting better and places that could improve. Teaching needs come first, address late and shallow feedback in class with instant analysis and mistake correction to support learning. Also cut down on teachers' marking load, making sure there's enough time to do a good job evaluating higher order skills when AI can't handle it. The typical tools are Write&Improve(Cambridge Assessment English) which gives free analysis of writing grammar, vocabulary and structure according to Cambridge English test criteria. A study shows 30% improvement in students who used it for 6 weeks (Alsowat, 2017). Grammarly EDU checks for grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors, explains corrections, suggests style improvements, and helps instructors assign papers and track student progress.

### 5 Enhancing Traditional Methodologies with AI Tools

Methodology-AI Tool Matching Matrix is given so that the main EFL teachers can get some context which will help them match AI tools to traditional methods, so they can use technology easily and reach their teaching goals. For teachers, the key takeaway from the matrix is that there is no one size fits all AI tool; every methodology has different AI application depending on what it's trying to achieve. AI supplements but does not replace traditional methods, fixing their flaws instead of substituting them, teachers and teaching methods still need people's intervention. It is flexible enough for teachers to adapt AI applications to suit their students' needs. Also, lots of AI tools can help with data-driven instruction because they make up info that tells teachers how to teach better, so they can fix learning gaps.

### 6 Discussion

AI integration within primary EFL methods will have consequences for those involved such as teachers and curriculum developers, certain elements need to be highlighted. Seamless AI integration means that AI makes things better instead of taking over teacher jobs (Qasseras, 2023), it does routine tasks such as worksheets and pronunciation corrections but

cannot copy teachers' special qualities. Primary students require emotional guidance and nurturing which AI cannot provide. Also, teachers' flexibility in managing classrooms and their capacity to impart higher order instruction (thinking skills, creativity, cultural knowledge) cannot be substituted. Teachers should treat AI as a teaching assistant so they can concentrate on high-value tasks such as developing relationships with students, creating interesting lessons, and tackling difficult learning problems; they should see AI as an aid for improving education quality rather than a danger. A common pitfall is adopting AI tools for technological novelty instead of alignment with teaching methodologies and objectives (Mohd Noor et al., 2025). Effective integration requires a "pedagogy-first" approach: define teaching objectives, select a matching traditional methodology, and choose AI tools that improve the methodology and aid objective achievement. Educators should prioritize tools relevant to their educational approach and aims over popular or innovative ones, while curriculum writers should develop frameworks linking AI to conventional techniques to support educators. AI integration demands teachers' digital literacy and ability to connect AI to educational practices (Wong, 2019), a challenge for many due to inadequate skills. Teacher training should cover effective AI tool utilization and integration with conventional pedagogy via relevant matrices, incorporating practical and ongoing learning activities to keep educators updated on technological advances, such as in-house AI coaches. AI applications collect extensive student data (personal and learning details), and handling such information is both a moral and legal obligation under regulations like GDPR and COPPA (Philominraj et al., 2023). Schools and districts should establish AI-specific student data privacy policies; teachers should use law-compliant tools with transparent privacy policies that collect only necessary data, avoid third-party data sharing without consent, and receive training on secure data handling while educating students on privacy. Educators should only use school or district-approved technologies.

## 7 Conclusion

### 7.1 Summary of Key Findings

There are six prominent methodologies based on child psychology theory as the basis for primary school EFL teaching, which can be combined according to different levels of learning ability. Primary EFL instruction has six major problems: a gap between teacher education programs and pedagogy theory, large class sizes, no individualized instruction, slow feedback, textbooks not aligned with pedagogy requirements, and technology lagging behind pedagogy. Six main points of AI integration directly target these pain points, linking up with certain learning methods. By looking at what people have written about old ways of doing things and artificial intelligence, we give some ideas on how AI can help students learn languages better, so teachers can make their plans work well with both old and new ways of using computers to teach. Methodology-AI Alignment Matrix helps primary EFL teachers' practice to realize AI-assisted teaching, which meets teachers' need to use AI. Teachers trainings, tech equities and privacies lead ed policy makers to design responsible and fair polices for AI in primary EFL learning.

### 7.2 Limitations and Future Research Directions

This paper uses a systematic literature review method, which may have some shortcomings due to the quality of existing studies. Future work might do empirical research (classroom experiments etc.) to back up the suggested AI incorporation framework. As the reviewed literatures mostly come from either western or eastern culture, it would be interesting if future studies can explore on integrating AI into EFL teaching in African or Latin American context to see if it's still relevant. This study does not consider the long-term impact of AI integration on children's ability to retain their language skills and maintain motivation over time, thus it is necessary to carry out further long-term studies to understand these long-term effects.

## References

- [1] Alsowat H. H. (2017). A systematic review of research on teaching English language skills for Saudi EFL students. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 8(5), 30–37.
- [2] Hymes D. H. (1972). On communicative competence. In J. J. Gumperz & D. H. Hymes (Eds.), *Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication* (pp. 269–293). Blackwell.
- [3] Mayer, R. E. (2001). *Multimedia learning*. Cambridge University Press.
- [4] Mohd Noor N. A., Mahamod Z., & Mohamad Nasri N. (2025). Systematic review of teaching methods in language education: Trends and innovation. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 14(3), 2031–2041.
- [5] Philominraj A., Ranjan R., Ubilla Rosales L., Cocio A., & Brauchy Castillo J. G. (2023). Methodology to the teaching of English as a foreign language: A systematic review. *MEXTESOL Journal*, 47(2), 1–9.
- [6] Qasserras, L. (2023). Systematic review of communicative language teaching (CLT) in language education: A balanced perspective. *European Journal of Education and Pedagogy*, 4(6).
- [7] Skinner, B. F. (1957). *Verbal behavior*. Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- [8] Sukavatee, P., & Khlaisang, J. (2023). A survey of research into English teaching approaches and instructional media in Thailand. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 16(2), 752–769.
- [9] Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds.). Harvard University Press.
- [10] Willis, J. (1996). *A framework for task-based learning*. Longman.