

## Enhancing Communicative Competence in Foreign Language Learning through Artificial Intelligence Technology

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### Abstract

*This article explores the evolution of approaches in English language teaching, starting from traditional approaches, communicative approaches, and culminating in the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based approaches. Traditional approaches, which emphasize linguistic structures and forms, have proven insufficient in achieving the main goal of language education—enhancing students' oral and written communication skills. As a response, the communicative approach emerged, focusing on meaningful language use in real contexts and centering learners as active participants in the learning process. Over time, the communicative approach has been enriched by the integration of AI, which offers personalization, interactivity, and efficiency through tools such as chatbots, virtual assistants, and automated evaluation systems. AI enables more adaptive learning, instant feedback, and a more authentic language learning experience. Nevertheless, integrating AI into language education also presents challenges, including technological accessibility gaps, the need for teacher training, and concerns regarding data ethics. This article concludes that a hybrid model combining communicative and AI-based approaches can create more effective and relevant English language instruction in the digital age, provided it is supported by inclusive educational policies and well-prepared human resources.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language teaching plays a crucial role in developing individuals' ability to communicate effectively. English, as an international language, has become one of the core subjects across various educational levels in Indonesia. However, traditional methods commonly used—such as structural approaches and the Audio-Lingual Method—are often not effective enough in comprehensively enhancing students' communication skills (Williams, 2017). This has created a need for a new approach that is more relevant to the needs of modern learners: the Communicative Approach.

The Communicative Approach emerged as a response to the limitations of traditional methods, focusing on the meaningful use of language and its application in real-life contexts. This concept was first introduced by Dell Hymes in 1972 through his article *On Communicative Competence*, which emphasized the importance of communicative ability in social interactions. The approach rapidly developed and has become a key reference in language teaching in many countries, including Indonesia (Rodgers, 2014)

Recent studies show that the communicative approach is more effective in improving students' language competence compared to traditional methods. For instance, a study by Brown (2020) found that students taught using the communicative approach showed significant improvement in speaking skills compared to those taught using the Audio-Lingual Method. Furthermore, research by Larsen-Freeman (Anderson, 2016) highlighted the importance of authentic contexts in language learning to enhance communication skills naturally.

In today's digital era, the communicative approach is further strengthened by the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in language teaching. AI technology has opened up new opportunities in personalized learning, automatic assessment, and real-time feedback, which can help students improve their communicative abilities. According to Romadhon (Romadhon, 2024), the use of AI-based chatbots like Duolingo, Replika, or ChatGPT enables students to actively engage in English conversations anytime and anywhere, without fully relying on the teacher's presence.

A study by Liu. (Liu, 2022) also shows that AI-based adaptive learning systems can tailor content according to students' proficiency levels, making language competence development more effective on an individual basis. In addition, AI applications in speech recognition and natural language processing allow for instant correction of pronunciation and sentence structure, accelerating the learning process (Vancova, 2024)

Other studies support the effectiveness of combining the communicative approach with AI technology. For example, research by (AbuSahyon, Alzyoud, Alshorman, & Al-Absi, 2023) (Safar & Anggraheni, 2024) emphasized that integrating AI technology into communication-based classrooms can boost students' confidence and provide a more engaging and interactive learning experience. Thus, the combination of the communicative approach and AI technology represents an innovative strategy capable of addressing the challenges of 21st-century language education.

Given these findings, implementing the communicative approach supported by artificial intelligence has become an urgent need in Indonesia's language teaching curriculum. This approach not only improves students' communication skills but also better prepares them to face increasingly complex global challenges.

## **STATE OF THE ART**

Based on the problem background above, this research utilizes a theoretical foundation involving several approaches, methodologies, and language teaching techniques, particularly in English, as proposed by language experts.

**Structural Approach: Audio-Lingual Method** One of the theories used is the structural approach through the Audio-Lingual Method, developed in the United States during World War II. This language learning program was specifically designed for military purposes and is known as the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) or The Army Method (Alrabai, 2020). This approach emphasizes repetition and habit formation in speaking, aiming to create automatic responses to certain language patterns.

However, this approach has limitations in improving learners' overall communication skills (Larsen-Freeman, 2003) indicates that while this method is effective in enhancing structural accuracy, it lacks the ability to foster deep understanding of authentic communication contexts.

**Communicative Approach: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)** In addition to the structural approach using the Audio-Lingual Method, this research also applies the Communicative Approach as the primary theoretical basis. The Communicative Approach emerged in the 1970s as a result of the work by the Council of Europe. This organization

developed a syllabus known as Notional Functional Syllabuses, which later led to the rise of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). (Brown & Lee, 2015)

Dell Hymes, in his work *On Communicative Competence*, asserted that communicative ability is the natural and intuitive mastery of a language used by a speaker to communicate with others in social contexts (Rodgers, 2014), according to Hymes *Communicative Competence* can be defined as “the knowledge of how to use the language appropriate to a given situation.” (Tollefson & Millans, 2018)

Littlewood emphasized that if the goal of language teaching shifts toward the development of learners’ communicative competence, then teachers must focus on *language use* for communication purposes, rather than merely *language usage*. In practice, this approach prioritizes interaction, active student participation, and real communication situations that involve relevant social and cultural contexts. (Littlewood, 2011)

According to Richards and Rodgers (Arifin, 2024), the key principles of this approach include:

1. A focus on meaningful communication
2. Use of language in authentic contexts
3. Active learner participation
4. The use of communicative tasks in language instruction
5. Development of sociolinguistic competence

Research by Aenrietta Alla Eddie and Azlina Abdul Aziz (Eddie & Aziz, 2020) shows that in communicative-based learning environments, students are more motivated to speak English due to the natural interaction encouraged. Similar findings were reported by (Liang & Luo, 2024) on Nation and Macalister work, highlighted the importance of task-based learning techniques in this approach.

Ellis (Aswad, Putri, & Sudewi, 2024) supports the communicative approach with second language acquisition theory, emphasizing that effective language learning must involve meaningful interaction with other speakers. This aligns with Long’s (Mackey, 2003) (Marlina, Solihat, & Asikin, 2021) *Interaction Hypothesis*, which states that interaction in the target language aids learners in better understanding and using the language.

Building on these ideas, Canale and Swain (Sukavateea & Khlaisang, 2023) proposed a model of communicative competence, encompassing four dimensions: Grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. By incorporating these dimensions, CLT aims to equip language learners with the necessary skills and knowledge to engage in authentic and meaningful communication in real-life contexts.

**Artificial Intelligence-Based Approach** With the advancement of technology, particularly in Artificial Intelligence (AI), language learning paradigms have undergone significant transformation. AI has made substantial contributions to improving the quality and effectiveness of English language instruction, both in formal and informal contexts. AI in language learning can provide real-time feedback, personalize learning materials based on students’ needs, and facilitate speaking practice through voice recognition systems and chatbots. Common applications include AI-based tutoring systems (Butarbutar, 2024)

In line with this, (Guo, Zheng, & Zhai, 2024) found that AI integration in language learning not only boosts student engagement but also offers analytical data to help teachers assess student progress more objectively. For example, AI systems can detect grammatical errors, mispronunciations, and inappropriate vocabulary usage, offering immediate and contextual feedback.

This technology-based approach also supports the principles of Communicative Language Teaching, as many AI platforms allow students to interact orally and in writing

in contexts resembling real communication. Godwin-Jones (Godwin-Jones, 2022) emphasized that NLP-based chatbots help learners practice everyday English conversations with minimal error and a more natural learning experience.

Moreover, AI integration promotes adaptive learning, where materials are dynamically tailored to each learner's performance. A study by Wang et al. published in *Computer Assisted Language Learning* found that AI systems can recognize student learning patterns and provide appropriate challenges, accelerating language acquisition. (Ima & Jihad, 2024)

However, this technological approach is not without challenges. According to Lu et al., there is a risk of overdependence on technology, which could reduce essential human interaction in language learning. Thus, AI should be seen as a complement to the communicative approach, not a full replacement for teachers. (Zheng & Yang, 2024)

English language instruction has evolved from structural methods to communicative approaches, now further enhanced by AI-based technologies. The communicative approach remains central due to its ability to holistically develop communicative competence, while AI enriches the learning experience through interactivity, personalization, and efficiency. Integrating these approaches into language education curricula is essential to create learning that is adaptive, relevant, and effective in today's digital age.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research method is a scientific approach used to obtain data for specific purposes and uses through a series of systematic activities. A research method is (Rachman, Yochanan, Samanlangi, & Purnomo, 2024)" essentially a scientific way to obtain data for certain purposes and uses." Based on this, there are four key concepts to consider in research: scientific approach, data, purpose, and utility. The data obtained in this research are empirical data that meet specific criteria—namely, validity.

This study employs a qualitative approach using the **library research** method, which is a systematic process of collecting, processing, and drawing conclusions from data through the review of relevant literature. The library study involves examining theories from experts such as Dell Hymes, Chomsky, Littlewood, as well as other relevant perspectives in the context of language teaching (Ilhami, Nurfajriani, Mahendra, & Sirodj, 2024) (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2012)

To reinforce its contemporary foundation, this research also integrates **artificial intelligence** (AI) approaches in its analysis. This approach is used to explore how AI technologies, such as natural language processing and adaptive learning systems, can enrich and revolutionize language teaching methods—both in structural (Audio-Lingual) and communicative contexts. AI enables linguistic pattern analysis, personalization of learning materials, and the development of automated evaluation systems that enhance the effectiveness of language learning (Arifah, Kuncorowati, Suprapti, & Narimo, 2025). Thus, the artificial intelligence approach becomes relevant to explore as part of the development of language teaching theory and practice in the digital era.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **The Integration of Artificial Intelligence in English Language Teaching**

With the advancement of time and technology, the world of education has also undergone significant transformation, especially in terms of teaching methods and approaches. One of the most influential innovations is the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in language teaching, including English. AI-based approaches do not

replace communicative approaches but rather complement them, making learning more adaptive, personalized, and interactive in line with 21st-century needs.

AI in the context of English language learning takes many forms, such as learning chatbots, Natural Language Processing (NLP)-based applications, virtual assistants, adaptive learning, and data analysis tools that enable teachers and learners to better understand individual strengths and weaknesses. The use of AI allows for a more personalized and contextualized approach, offering an interactive, flexible, and data-driven learning experience.

According to research by Godwin-Jones (Godwin-Jones, 2022), AI enables students to learn at their own pace, provides instant feedback, and creates simulated environments that closely resemble real communication contexts. Examples include the use of speech recognition and automated writing evaluation tools like Duolingo, Grammarly, and ChatGPT, which help students independently correct their mistakes and learn from real-time feedback.

Furthermore, this approach aligns with the principles of the communicative approach—building communicative competence through language use in real contexts. AI-powered chatbots, for example, can be used by students to practice realistic conversations without fear of judgment, as the interaction occurs with a system. This provides space for exploration and improvisation, as emphasized in the communicative approach.

AI also facilitates data-driven learning (DDL), enabling teachers to understand students' progress and needs through automatic and comprehensive performance analysis. As explained by Chen et al. (Che, Zou, Xie, Cheng, & Liu, 2022), the integration of AI in language teaching helps teachers focus more on their roles as facilitators and mentors, since administrative tasks and grading are handled by the system. This supports a learner-centered approach, where students are given greater control over their learning process and goals.

In practice, AI also allows for the development of more adaptive and contextual learning materials, as systems can adjust difficulty levels and content according to students' needs and proficiency levels. Zawacki-Richter et al. (Zawacki-Richter, Marín, Bond, & Gouverneur, 2019) noted that this adaptivity makes AI highly promising in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of language learning, without compromising the essence of communication and meaning.

## **Advantages and Challenges of AI-Based Approaches in English Language Teaching**

### **1. Advantages**

The integration of AI into English language teaching brings several significant advantages, including:

1. **Personalized and Adaptive Learning:** AI can adjust materials and activities according to each student's competency level and learning style (Hwang, Lai, & Wang, 2015)
2. **Increased Interactivity:** AI-based applications provide dynamic learning environments rich in interaction and immediate feedback (Godwin-Jones, 2022).
3. **Higher Motivation and Engagement:** AI systems featuring gamification (e.g., Duolingo) have been proven to increase learners' motivation to engage in self-directed learning (Yazid, Heriyawati, & Mistar, 2024).
4. **Evaluation Efficiency:** With the ability to automatically evaluate students' writing and speech, teachers can focus more on fostering students' critical and creative thinking (Chen, Zou, Cheng, & Xie, 2021).

5. **Simulation of Real-Life Environments:** With natural language processing and deep learning technologies, AI can create conversations that resemble authentic communication, exposing learners to real language use contexts.

## 2. Challenges

However, the AI-based approach also faces several challenges, such as:

1. **Overdependence on Technology:** Learners may become overly reliant on AI and fail to develop independent critical thinking skills.
2. **Digital Divide:** Not all schools or students have access to adequate devices and internet connectivity, especially in remote areas (Zawacki-Richter, Marín, Bond, & Gouverneur, 2019).
3. **Data Privacy and Ethics:** The use of AI demands careful management of students' personal data to avoid privacy violations.
4. **Teacher Readiness:** Not all teachers are prepared to integrate AI into their teaching practices. Professional training is needed for teachers to understand and utilize AI effectively (Hwang, Lai, & Wang, 2015).
5. **Lack of Emotional and Social Nuance:** Although AI can mimic conversation, it still falls short in understanding social and emotional contexts compared to human interaction between students and teachers.

6.

## 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The combination of communicative and AI-based approaches opens up new possibilities for more effective, adaptive, and enjoyable English language teaching. AI is not a replacement for teachers but a strategic partner in creating an empowering learning ecosystem. To maximize the benefits of this approach, support is needed from various stakeholders, including educational policymakers, tech developers, teachers, and the students themselves.

English language teaching in the digital era should focus on developing communicative competence, critical thinking, and adaptability to technological change. Therefore, the curriculum and education policy must promptly accommodate the use of artificial intelligence as part of a national strategy to improve the quality of language education in Indonesia.

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