English Teaching in the AI Era: Balancing Technological Empowerment and Humanistic Values—— Take the Journalism English Course as an Example

SANMAO ZHU*

School of English and Education, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Guangzhou, China.

Abstract: This paper explores the balance between technological empowerment and humanistic values in English teaching (taking Janalism English course as an example） amid the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI). The study first examines AI's applications and limitations in Jurnalism English teaching, then the paper highlights the irreplaceable value of human-led teaching, emphasizing its strengths in building emotional connections, transmitting cultural knowledge, providing personalized guidance for creative thinking, and fostering values and character. It further proposes a human-AI collaborative teaching model, where AI undertakes routine tasks (e.g., grading, basic practice) while teachers focus on high-level activities like guiding discussions and nurturing critical thinking, with teachers evolving into learning facilitators. The conclusion argues that the future of English teaching lies in integrating AI and human instruction, not choosing between them.

Keywords: AI Human-AI Collaborative Model   Jurnalism English Course.

Introduction

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the field of education. In the context of the English language teaching, the advent of AI has brought both opportunities and challenges, especially for specialized courses like Jurnalism English.

Jurnalism English, as a unique genre of English, is closely related to current affairs, politics, economy, culture, and other aspects of the real world. It requires students not only to have a solid foundation in English language skills but also to understand international news events, cultural backgrounds, and different value systems. AI can offer a wealth of resources for News English teaching. It can provide up - to - the - minute news articles, audio - visual materials, and even real - time language translation, which can greatly enrich the teaching content.

However, as with other areas of education, there are challenges. News English involves in - depth understanding of cultural, political, and social contexts, as well as the ability to think critically about news content. These are areas where AI may have limitations. For example, understanding the underlying cultural connotations in a news report about a traditional festival in a foreign country may be difficult for AI to fully convey. Moreover, the emotional and subjective elements in news reporting, such as the tone of a journalist's commentary, are also hard for AI to accurately interpret and teach.

Therefore, exploring how to strike a balance between leveraging AI technology and maintaining the essential human - centered elements in News English teaching is of great significance. It is crucial for improving the quality of News English teaching, cultivating students' comprehensive English application abilities, and enabling them to become globally - aware and competent language users.

The primary objective of this research is to explore the delicate balance between AI technology and humanistic values in News English teaching. Specifically, it aims to identify the appropriate roles of AI and teachers in the teaching process, and to develop practical teaching models that integrate the advantages of both.

1.   AI Applications and Limitations in News English Courses

AI plays a vital role in resource provision and interactive tools for News English courses. In terms of resources, platforms like Myshell offer a wealth of materials. It integrates audio-visual resources from BBC, CNN, and NPR, enabling students to listen to real-time news and improve listening skills while exposing them to authentic English. It also provides articles from The New York Times and The Guardian, covering diverse topics. Moreover, Myshell uses AI to recommend personalized content based on students' proficiency, such as advanced economic news for those weak in complex economic terms. For interactive tools, intelligent voice-recognition tools like Google Translate's help with pronunciation. Students can record terms like "quantitative easing," compare with native speakers, and get feedback. AI chatbots simulate news interviews too. A chatbot may act as a journalist, asking about topics like environmental policies, and students respond, enhancing oral skills. Chatbots also correct

inappropriate language, guiding students to use professional expressions.

AI exhibits notable limitations in three key aspects of News English teaching: cultural comprehension, emotional interaction, and personalized in-depth guidance. In cultural understanding, AI often stays at literal translation without grasping deep connotations. For example, when analyzing a news report on China's Spring Festival mentioning "hongbao" or "nian", AI can only explain their literal meanings but fails to convey their symbolic value—"hongbao" as a carrier of blessings and "nian" as a part of traditional legends. Similarly, for a Mardi Gras story, it describes parades and masks but ignores the event's roots in French and African-American cultures. In emotional interaction, AI lacks the ability to respond to students' feelings. If a student feels frustrated while tackling a complex international conflict news analysis, a human teacher offers encouragement and empathetic support, but AI only provides pre-programmed technical solutions, making learning impersonal. Regarding personalized guidance, AI struggles to foster critical thinking. When a student asks about a government policy's long-term impacts or interest groups' stances in a news article, AI can only give general information. Unlike human teachers who engage in dynamic discussions, guide source evaluation, and inspire multi-perspective thinking, AI fails to adapt to the student's unique needs, hindering in-depth learning.

2. Constructing a New Teaching Model of AI - Humanities Collaboration

Traditional News English teaching often faces dual challenges: on one hand, teachers are burdened with repetitive basic tasks (such as vocabulary drilling and material sorting), leaving limited time for in-depth guidance on critical thinking and cultural literacy; on the other hand, students struggle with personalized learning support, as a one-size-fits-all curriculum fails to address individual gaps in language proficiency or knowledge of news contexts. The AI-humanities collaborative teaching model solves these pain points by clarifying the division of labor between AI and teachers—letting AI handle mechanical, data-driven tasks while teachers focus on human-centric, high-level instructional activities. This synergy not only improves teaching efficiency but also elevates the quality of News English education, helping students develop both language competence and the ability to analyze news with a critical, culturally informed perspective.

2.1 AI - Responsible Basic Tasks

AI's greatest advantage in News English teaching is its ability to automate repetitive, rule-based tasks and provide personalized support at scale—freeing up teachers from administrative and mechanical work to focus on more meaningful interactions. Its applications in basic tasks can be divided into three key areas: vocabulary and grammar instruction, news material curation, and real-time learning feedback.

News English is characterized by its use of discipline-specific terminology (e.g., "fiscal deficit" in economic news, "plea bargain" in legal news) and concise, time-sensitive syntax (e.g., the frequent use of present perfect tense to describe recent events). Mastering these elements requires targeted practice, which AI can deliver through adaptive learning systems. AI plays a pivotal role in aiding students to familiarize themselves with and master new vocabulary across disciplines, newsese vocabulary as a typical

example, leveraging advanced algorithms and interactive features to enhance learning efficiency.

Platforms like Quizlet utilize AI-driven spaced repetition systems (SRS) to optimize vocabulary retention. By analyzing users' performance, it schedules reviews of terms like "epistemology" or "photosynthesis" at intervals when forgetting is most likely, reinforcing memory through flashcards, matching games, and audio prompts. This adaptive approach ensures targeted practice, focusing on words students struggle with. Vocabulary.com uses AI to assess learners' levels and deliver personalized word lists. Scouring texts students engage with (e.g., news articles, essays), it identifies unfamiliar terms like "ubiquitous" or "synergy," then provides definitions, usage examples, and quizzes. This contextual learning mirrors real-world encounters, improving application skills. Apps like Duolingo can be a great asset too. Duolingo offers a wide range of language courses, including modules specifically designed for News English. It can systematically teach students basic grammar rules, such as the correct usage of tenses in news reports. For example, when reporting on a past event in a news context, it can clearly explain the difference between the simple past tense and the past perfect tense, using real - world news examples.

In addition, AI can assist in processing data. It can automatically collect and categorize news materials from various sources, such as news websites, newspapers, and magazines. For example, an AI - based news aggregator can group news articles by topic, such as "sports news", "economic news", "entertainment news", etc. It can also filter out low - quality or duplicate content, saving teachers and students a great deal of time in searching for relevant and high - quality news materials for teaching and learning.

Last，AI also excels at providing instant, data-driven feedback on students' basic skills—such as reading comprehension and listening ability—helping students identify gaps in real time and teachers monitor class progress. For example, AI-powered platforms like Pearson's MyEnglishLab offer News English listening exercises where students listen to a news clip (e.g., a CNN segment on a scientific breakthrough) and answer comprehension questions. As students complete the exercise, the AI tracks their performance: it notes which questions they got wrong (e.g., questions about main ideas vs. supporting details), how long they took to answer, and whether they replayed the clip multiple times.For teachers, the AI compiles class-wide data—showing, for instance, that 70% of students had difficulty with a question about "cause and effect" in the news—allowing the teacher to address this common gap in the next class. This real-time feedback loop ensures that learning is not a one-time event but an ongoing, adaptive process.

2.2 Teachers' Focus on High - level Teaching Activities

While AI handles basic tasks, teachers play an irreplaceable role in guiding students through high-level learning activities that require critical thinking, emotional connection, and cultural interpretation—skills that AI cannot replicate. In News English teaching, these activities focus on three core areas: news analysis and critical thinking, emotional support and classroom atmosphere, and value guidance and cultural literacy.

2.2.1 News Analysis: Cultivating Critical Thinking

News English is not just about learning language—it is about understanding the world through news, which requires students to

analyze information critically, identify biases, and connect events to broader social, political, and economic contexts. This is where teachers' expertise shines. For example, when teaching a unit on "international trade disputes," a teacher might select a news article from The Financial Times about U.S.-EU trade tensions over steel tariffs. Instead of just asking students to memorize vocabulary like "tariff hike" or "trade embargo," the teacher leads a deep-dive analysis :First, the teacher guides students to unpack the "surface content" of the article: Who are the key players (e.g., U.S. Commerce Department, EU Trade Commissioner)? What actions have they taken (e.g., U.S. imposed 25% tariffs on EU steel; EU threatened retaliatory tariffs on U.S. agriculture)? Then, the teacher pushes students to explore "underlying factors": Why is the U.S. targeting steel imports? How might the tariffs affect steelworkers in both regions? What role does the World Trade Organization (WTO) play in resolving such disputes? To encourage critical thinking, the teacher organizes a debate where students take on different roles: representatives of the U.S. government, EU businesses, steelworkers, and WTO officials. Each group must argue their position using evidence from the news article and additional research (supported by AI-curated materials). During the debate, the teacher acts as a moderator: they ask probing questions (e.g., "How do your arguments account for the impact on developing countries that export steel?"), challenge students to consider alternative viewpoints (e.g., "What if the U.S. argues the tariffs are necessary for national security?"), and help students connect their arguments to broader concepts like "economic globalization" or "protectionism." After the debate, the teacher leads a reflection: What did students learn about the complexity of trade disputes? How did the language in the news article reflect the biases of different stakeholders (e.g., did the FT article focus more on business impacts than worker impacts)? This process not only helps students master News English vocabulary and syntax but also teaches them to view news as a product of context—not just a set of facts—cultivating critical thinking skills that are essential for global citizenship.

2.2.2 Emotional Support: Building a Positive Classroom Atmosphere

Learning News English can be challenging for students—especially when discussing sensitive topics like war, poverty, or social injustice. In these cases, teachers provide emotional support that AI cannot: they create a safe, inclusive classroom where students feel comfortable expressing their opinions, even if they are controversial. For example, when discussing a news article about "refugee crises in the Middle East," a student might share a personal story about a family member who is a refugee, or express frustration about how the media portrays refugees. The teacher responds with empathy: they listen attentively, validate the student's feelings ("Your perspective is important, and it's okay to feel upset about this issue"), and then guide the class to respect diverse viewpoints ("Let's hear from others who might have different experiences—how does this article resonate with you?").

This emotional support is critical for student motivation. When students feel valued and understood, they are more likely to participate actively in class, ask questions, and take risks in their learning (e.g., trying to speak in English about difficult topics). For instance, a shy student who initially hesitates to share their opinion might feel more comfortable doing so after seeing the teacher

respond empathetically to a classmate. Over time, this positive atmosphere builds trust between teachers and students, making the classroom a space where learning is not just intellectual but also emotional.

2.2.3 Value Guidance: Fostering Cultural Literacy and Global Citizenship

News English is a window into different cultures and values, and teachers play a key role in helping students navigate these cultural nuances—avoiding misunderstandings and fostering global citizenship. For example, when teaching a news article about "environmental protection efforts ," the teacher does not just focus on language points like "carbon neutrality" or "renewable energy." Instead, they help students understand the cultural context behind a nation's policies: How does the nation's history of natural disasters shape its approach to renewable energy? What role do community-based initiatives play in environmentalism?

The teacher then connects this to students' own cultures: "How do environmental protection efforts in our country ? What values do both approaches reflect?" This cross-cultural comparison helps students develop cultural literacy—the ability to understand and respect different cultural perspectives. Additionally, the teacher uses the article to guide students toward positive values: they discuss the importance of "sustainability" and "collective responsibility," and challenge students to think about how they can contribute to environmental protection in their daily lives (e.g., reducing plastic use, supporting renewable energy).

Conclusion

In this study, we have delved deep into the complex and dynamic landscape of News English teaching in the AI - dominated era. The research findings paint a comprehensive picture of the current situation, highlighting both the remarkable potential and the existing challenges.

AI has made significant inroads into News English courses, with a wide range of applications. Intelligent assignment grading platforms like Pigai.org have revolutionized the assessment process, offering quick and accurate feedback on grammar, vocabulary, and writing structure in students' news - related assignments. This not only saves teachers a great deal of time but also provides students with immediate guidance for improvement. Abundant learning resources are now readily available on platforms such as Myshell, which aggregates news - related English materials from various sources, including audio - visual resources and a vast collection of news articles. These resources are personalized based on students' language proficiency levels, catering to their individual learning needs. Interactive learning tools, such as intelligent voice - recognition tools and AI - powered chatbots, have also enhanced the learning experience. They enable students to practice pronunciation, engage in simulated news interview scenarios, and receive instant feedback on their oral communication skills.

However, AI is not without its limitations. In the realm of News English, cultural context comprehension is crucial, yet AI struggles to fully understand the deep - seated cultural connotations in news reports. For example, when dealing with news stories about cultural festivals or historical events, AI can only provide a surface - level understanding, failing to convey the rich cultural heritage and emotional significance. Emotional interaction, which

is essential for effective learning, is another area where AI falls short. It lacks the ability to detect and respond to students' emotional states, such as frustration or confusion during the learning process. Moreover, AI has limitations in providing in - depth and personalized guidance, especially when it comes to cultivating students' critical thinking skills. It often offers general information rather than engaging in dynamic, in - depth discussions tailored to students' unique questions and perspectives.

On the other hand, the humanistic values in News English teaching are irreplaceable. Teachers play a central role in establishing emotional bonds with students. Through classroom discussions, one - on - one conversations, and providing emotional support, teachers can create a positive and trusting learning environment. They can also overcome students' learning hurdles by patiently guiding them through difficult news - related vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and challenging topics. In terms of cultural inheritance, teachers are responsible for transmitting cultural knowledge, such as the historical background, traditions, and values associated with the news events. They also cultivate students' cultural awareness, helping them understand and respect different cultural perspectives. Teachers inspire students' personalized thinking by recognizing their unique characteristics and hobbies, and then fostering their critical and innovative thinking through activities like group discussions, debates, and creative assignments. Additionally, teachers play a vital role in shaping students' values, incorporating positive values into teaching content and guiding students to make correct value judgments when analyzing controversial news events.

The proposed new teaching model of AI - humanities collaboration offers a promising solution. AI can be entrusted with basic tasks such as teaching basic language knowledge, correcting assignments, and sorting materials, which can significantly improve teaching efficiency. Teachers, meanwhile, can focus on high - level teaching activities, including cultivating students' comprehensive abilities, providing emotional communication, and guiding students' values. This division of labor allows both AI and teachers to give full play of their repective advantages，creating a more effective and well - rounded learning experience.

Looking ahead, the future of News English teaching lies in striking a delicate balance between AI technology and humanistic values. As AI continues to evolve, it will undoubtedly bring more advanced tools and resources to the classroom. For example, we can expect more intelligent language learning platforms that can adapt to students' learning progress in real - time, providing even more personalized learning paths. These platforms may also incorporate virtual reality or augmented reality technologies to create immersive news - learning environments, allowing students to feel as if they are on - site at international news events.

However, we must also ensure that the human touch in teaching is not lost. Teachers will always be essential for fostering students' emotional intelligence, cultural understanding, and moral values. In the future, teacher training programs should focus on equipping teachers with the skills to integrate AI into their teaching effectively. Teachers need to be proficient in using AI - based teaching tools, design innovative teaching activities that combine AI technology with traditional teaching methods, and provide personalized guidance based on AI - generated data.

Moreover, educational institutions should play a role in promoting the integration of AI and humanistic values in News English teaching. They can invest in the development and implementation of AI - enhanced teaching systems, provide professional development opportunities for teachers, and create a supportive environment that encourages the exploration of new teaching models.

In conclusion, by leveraging the strengths of both AI and humanistic values, we can create a News English teaching environment that nurtures students' language skills, critical thinking abilities, cultural awareness, and moral values. This will enable students to become well - rounded, globally - aware individuals who are equipped to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and information - driven world.

References

1. KARKI B, KARKI T M. Integrating AI in English Language Teaching: Challenges and Opportunities[J]. Dristikon A Multidisciplinary Journal, 2025, 15(1):13-28. DOI:10.3126/dristikon.v15i1.77118.

2. Jantanukul, W. AI and Human Synergy: Utilizing AI to Enhance Teaching and Learning (J). Journal of Education and Learning Reviews, 2024, 1(4): 1-12. DOI: 10.60027/jelr.2024.749.

3. 曹斯瑞，刘凤娟。智慧教育时代翻转课堂教学中教师的适应性探究 [J]. 中国教育信息化，2020（2):22-25. DOI: CNKI:SUN:JYXX.0.2020-02-006.

4. 庞晖，孙泓，朱奇峰。借助 AI 构建英语智能双师课堂的思考 [J]. 中小学数字化教学，2022 (2):9-12.