

AI Tools for Education: A Guide



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ABSTRACT: This article examines Artificial Intelligence (AI) based tools that have been identified and explored by graduate students and teachers in a Master of Science in Education (MSE) in English Language Learners (ELL) Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) degree program. The authors evaluate QuestionWell, Quizizz, ExplainPaper, Poio by Kahoot!, Gliglish, Otter, and CoGrader, providing general information, a review, costs of the tools, and an example activity for each tool. The tools are assessed from both teacher and student perspectives, with practical examples demonstrating their application in language acquisition scenarios. The authors conclude that while AI tools offer significant advantages in efficiency, personalization, and student engagement, they should complement rather than replace teacher expertise. The paper emphasizes the importance of professional development and collaborative exploration to ensure responsible AI integration that serves inclusive and meaningful language education goals.

Keywords: Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI), Differentiation, Technology, Professional Development, AI Integration

1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) has made a profound impact on education particularly in language learning, an area once considered uniquely human. Generative AI rapidly creates original content that resembles human-produced text, images, music, code, and presentations through user prompts (Latorre et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2025), enabling language teachers to personalize content and provide real-time feedback.

This article explores practical AI tools for language learning environments with accompanying classroom activities. Written as part of a university Technology and AI for Education course, the content was developed by TESL Master's students who evaluated these tools from both learner and teacher perspectives while connecting them to established pedagogical approaches.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Generative AI in Education

The emergence of generative AI has impacted education. Unlike previous versions of AI focused on data analysis, generative AI creates original content that can enrich the teaching and learning experience. Pegrum (2025) suggests we view generative AI as supporting educational evolution in areas needing

improvement. Generative AI is changing the homework and assignments of many language teachers, but learning to use it well is a skill for both the teachers and learners.

Much of the existing research has been done at the higher education level with English as the dominant language (Lee et al., 2025). These studies often rely on self-report data with a specific focus on attitudes, self-efficacy, and motivation. Since the introduction of tools like ChatGPT, generative AI has been a topic of conversation regarding its educational implications (Woolley, 2024). One of the key elements that is discussed is generative AI's ability to enhance productivity and creativity (Batchu & Venkat, 2024). As AI continues to advance teachers are provided with new tools and ways to approach learning and creating personalized feedback and adaptive learning opportunities.

2.2. AI in Language Learning

Educators are increasingly exploring how these technologies can enhance differentiated instruction and foster meaningful engagement in language classrooms (Eslit, 2023; Li et al., 2025). Personalized learning is a big reason AI is moving into language education. AI-powered tools like chatbots, speech recognition software, and intelligent tutoring systems all allow for students to practice language on their own. Studies have shown that AI-driven language models help students work independently and are motivating by enabling self-directed, personalized learning (Mohebbi, 2024; Pegrum, 2025).

For teachers, AI significantly reduces the burden of grading and assessment. Automated systems can evaluate written responses, provide constructive feedback, and analyze learning patterns to inform instruction (Li et al., 2025). AI-driven analytics also help teachers monitor student progress and identify areas needing additional attention, supporting data-informed teaching decisions (Lee et al., 2025; Sajja et al., 2021).

2.3. Practical Applications and Benefits

Generative AI can do amazing things in a language classroom. They can create engaging interactive quizzes and games that capture student interest and promote active recall (Kahoot!, 2023). Platforms like Poio offer learning journeys that adjust difficulty based on individual performance, creating supportive environments for students who might struggle in traditional settings. AI also promotes inclusivity by adding options that help language learners and those with disabilities, by making materials more accessible (Li et al., 2025; Syed, 2025). These tools help to bridge communication gaps ensuring that learners that need more support have access to it.

Khan's research (2024) demonstrates how adaptive learning platforms adjust exercise difficulty based on student performance, ensuring each learner faces appropriate challenges. This personalized approach addresses diverse learning needs while boosting engagement. AI tools also serve as valuable supplementary resources, offering additional practice beyond classroom hours. Applications like Quizizz provide interactive exercises that students can complete at their own pace, which can be particularly helpful for those with busy schedules or who need extra practice. AI tools can also simulate authentic conversations, allowing students to develop speaking skills in virtual environments (Abusahyon et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2025).

Nikitina and Ishchenko (2024) and Pegrum (2025) observe that AI reduces administrative workloads, allowing teachers to spend more time in building relationships and supporting student growth. Automating tasks allows teachers to focus on more meaningful aspects of teaching such as student interaction and personalization. The tools presented in this article have been carefully evaluated to make sure they met both learning needs and ethical standards.

3. Seven AI Tools for Teachers and Students

3.1. QuestionWell

QuestionWell is a browser-based AI tool designed to support educators in quickly creating engaging and personalized learning materials. Without the need for downloads, teachers can log in at [QuestionWell.org](https://www.questionwell.org), enter their content area, and instantly generate various assessments and activities. QuestionWell can export into multiple platforms, including Quizlet, Google Forms, Kahoot, and more, simplifying lesson preparation. It supports students from kindergarten through college.

3.1.1 Review

QuestionWell significantly reduces the time and effort teachers spend on lesson preparation. Instead of manually writing quiz questions, teachers can input a topic or resource, such as a video or article, and instantly receive multiple-choice or true/false questions (limited in the free version). This is especially helpful for ESL teachers who often adapt materials for language learners. The platform supports personalized content creation, including reading passages and handouts with fill-in-the-blank formats based on uploaded texts. Teachers can also generate rubrics tailored to specific assignments, learning outcomes, and even their regional education standards.

The Exit Ticket Generator allows teachers to assess student understanding at the end of class. Videos can be embedded to generate questions, promoting comprehension through multimedia. For first-year teachers or those seeking activity ideas, QuestionWell offers ready-made prompts and reflection tasks aligned with grade level and content area. QuestionWell enhances instructional efficiency and student engagement across subjects.

3.1.2 Cost

QuestionWell offers a free basic account with access to essential features such as generating up to ten multiple-choice questions per activity and exporting to other platforms. Upgrading is required to unlock the full features, including true/false questions, full access to the Exit Ticket Generator, and the ability to create up to 30 questions per quiz. QuestionWell costs \$7 a month or \$70 a year. There are team and enterprise plans as well but those require reaching out for pricing or have variable pricing depending on the number of users.

3.1.3 Activity

In a kindergarten ESL class, the teacher used QuestionWell to turn a YouTube video into an interactive learning activity. After selecting the grade level and pasting the video link, the tool automatically generated 10 multiple-choice questions in under a minute. The teacher then exported the questions to Kahoot to create an engaging review game. This saved significant time compared to manually watching the video and creating questions and helped reinforce vocabulary.

3.2. Quizizz

Quizizz is a user-friendly, gamified platform that helps teachers create and deliver interactive learning activities like quizzes, lessons, and polls. It supports a range of question types and multimedia elements, making it easy to customize content for different subjects and grade levels. Students can participate in real-time or on their own schedule, and teachers can track progress with built-in grading tools and detailed performance reports. Quizizz also offers a large library of ready-to-use educational resources.

3.2.1 Review

Students are able to participate individually or in teams using personal devices on Quizizz. Teachers can utilize Quizizz to implement a variety of instructional strategies, including warm-up check-ins, real-time review games, exit tickets to assess comprehension, and opportunities for students to create their own quizzes.

The platform accommodates a diverse range of question types, such as multiple choice, open-ended, drag-and-drop, matching, and multimedia-based prompts. Through the Quiz Editor and New Quizzes tools, educators can incorporate images, videos, audio clips, and hyperlinks, which allows for differentiated

instruction. Features like leaderboards, adjustable time limits, anonymous responses, and custom feedback further support engagement and classroom management.

Quizizz offers an extensive library of pre-designed quizzes, lessons, and games aligned with various curricular standards that teachers can use as is or modify for specific needs. The platform also includes analytics, providing data reports on student performance, participation, and comprehension trends helping teachers identify learning gaps. Quizizz is a flexible and powerful tool for promoting active learning, differentiated instruction, and meaningful formative assessment.

3.2.2 Cost

The Free Version allows instructors and students to create and play quizzes without cost. Free-For-Schools provides free lifetime access to top premium features for all teachers within a school. There are also paid versions: the Individual Plan offers a more comprehensive option with unlimited access to resources, advanced question types, and collaboration features. School & District Plans are designed for institutions, offering advanced analytics, full LMS integration, and school or district-wide reporting. Quizizz for Schools paid version starts at USD 99.00/month.

3.2.3 Activity

Teachers can begin class with bell ringer quizzes to activate prior knowledge or introduce new content. These short, engaging quizzes of 3 to 5 questions can review material from the previous lesson or preview an upcoming topic. Student-created quizzes can be a powerful tool. Assigning students to design and facilitate their own quizzes encourages critical thinking and reinforces content, such as having students generate literature-based questions on characters and themes after reading a novel. At the end of class, teachers can use exit ticket quizzes to quickly gauge what students learned or found confusing. These short assessments often include both multiple-choice and open-ended responses, allowing teachers to collect feedback for future planning.

Outside of class, teachers can assign homework quizzes for asynchronous completion, with answer explanations and retry options supporting independent study. Before starting a new unit, teachers can administer a pre-assessment quiz to determine students' baseline knowledge and tailor instruction accordingly, such as testing familiarity with solar system vocabulary before a space science unit. Tournament-style review games create engaging test preparation through team competition with leaderboards and incentives.

3.3. ExplainPaper

ExplainPaper is a tool where the core function is simple: you upload a PDF, and when you highlight a sentence or paragraph, the tool generates a plain-language explanation. It doesn't just restate the sentence with easier words but breaks down what the author is trying to say, especially when the writing is full of abstract or theoretical terms. You don't need to sign in or navigate layers of menus.

3.3.1 Review

ExplainPaper helps users work through complex articles. Extended use of the tool showed the value of using it to help with academic reading comprehension, especially for second language learners. ExplainPaper was used on second language acquisition research as well as morphology research. It did a good job of identifying key terms and concepts making them more accessible, even when the original text was full of field specific language and jargon. This functionality is helpful for language learners and educators preparing instructional materials.

The tool does have certain limitations. Sometimes it oversimplifies, such as reducing "morphological decomposition" to merely "breaking words into parts", which while accurate is not a complete explanation. Users should approach the tools explanations with a critical eye and evaluate rather than blindly accepting. Make sure it makes sense and clarify with other tools if necessary. ExplainPaper is effective

as a pedagogical scaffold and can help support students' engagement with otherwise overly demanding academic texts.

3.3.2 Cost

The free version allows users to have unlimited highlight explanations, the ability to ask follow-up questions, and is powered by ChatGPT. The next level is the Plus version which is \$12 a month, which does all of those things as well as generates a summary of any upload, you can see a record of all your highlights and explanations, and soon it will allow you to search through papers. The Pro plan is \$20 a month and has all the previous abilities as well as being powered by GPT-4o and will soon be able to analyze multiple papers at once.

3.3.3 Activity

Level: High-intermediate to Advanced

Skill Focus: Reading comprehension and vocabulary building

In this activity, students will use ExplainPaper to unpack a short academic article related to their major or language studies. Before class, the teacher selects a PDF article (2-3 pages) and uploads it to ExplainPaper. In pairs, students read the article using the platform, highlighting at least five sentences they find difficult. For each highlighted sentence, they'll read the AI-generated explanation and decide whether it's helpful, accurate, or lacking. If they find it confusing, they are encouraged to write a "better" explanation in their own words.

In the second half of class, pairs will present one of their chosen sentences, along with the original sentence, ExplainPaper's explanation, and their own version. The goal is to get students thinking critically about meaning—not just passively accepting simplified versions. It also gives space for noticing how academic language is structured.

I also started imagining how it could be used in class. For example, in an academic writing or reading strategies class, students could upload their assigned readings, use the tool to annotate and highlight difficult parts, and then bring those explanations into a group discussion. That could be a way to not only improve reading comprehension but also build awareness of how complex ideas are structured in English. This tool is like having training wheels for reading academic texts and can be a way to build confidence and understanding.

3.4. Poio by Kahoot!

Poio by Kahoot! is a fun, interactive, game-based literacy app that is designed to help young and beginner learners learn to read through playful exploration and storytelling. This app is originally intended for native-speaking early readers, but it has also been highly effective for beginner English Language Learners (ELLs). The app guides learners through a fun and colorful world where they can collect letters and build words to unlock story elements. The app adapts to each individual's pace, it can support differentiated learning and can meet students where they are developmentally. It puts importance on phonics and vocabulary development within an immersive and stress-free environment, making it ideal for engaging young or beginner learners.

3.4.1 Review

Poio stands out for its amazing ability to support early literacy through context-rich, phonics-based play! For ELLs, the apps use of native audio pronunciation, visual support, and gradual skill progression make it particularly useful. Students are not simply memorizing the sounds, but they are applying them in real-time to solve world-building puzzles in a fun story driven format. Teachers can pause the game to ask questions that the students can reflect on or extend their learning through drawing and speaking activities. While this AI platform is great and is strong in foundational skills, it can lack explicit grammar instruction. Poio can also be too basic for more advanced learners. Overall, it is a strong supplemental tool that is great for introducing reading and language in a fun, accessible way.

3.4.2 Cost

While Poio is free to download and use, there is some cost with the app. You are allowed to download the app and experience the learning platform for free for 7 days. After the 7 day trial is over, you have a couple options for subscriptions. The monthly subscription is \$7.99 and the annual subscription is \$49.99. There is a one-time purchase for \$29.99 for lifetime access. These are offered through the Kahoot! Kids app on both the app store and google play. These subscriptions do not only allow access to Poio but other apps that are associated with Kahoot! as well.

3.4.3 Activity

Since Poio is for beginners or young learners, the lesson can help with focusing on the introduction of basic phonics and common sight words through fun storytelling and play. This lesson is ideally for English language learners who are just beginning to read and speak in English. The teacher would begin by introducing a few simple letter sounds like /b/, /c/, /m/, and /t/ and some basic words like, "bat, cat, mom, or top". Learners would then open the Poio app and begin their journey with their story-based game, where they join a friendly troll on an adventure to unlock letters and words. Now since this is an app that is tailored to the student, there is no assigning certain sounds or words for the student. As the students explore the interactive world, they can collect letters and use them to build words, which reinforces both phonemic awareness and vocabulary recognition. The game will naturally introduce the phonics in context, helping students be able to connect letter sounds to actual words in the story. The teacher can pause the game at key moments and ask/pose questions like, "What word did you just build?" or "What sound does that letter make?" After the learners have finished their gameplay, they can draw or act out the words they have learned, or even try to form simple sentences like, "The cat is big." This will allow the students to come up with all different kinds of sentences since they are all on different learning journeys.

3.5. Gliglish

Gliglish is a language learning platform that leverages artificial intelligence to deliver personalized, interactive language lessons through real-time conversations with an AI-powered teacher. With Gliglish, language learners can have real-time conversations with an AI teacher, allowing users to practice listening and speaking skills in a natural way. Using AI, the Gliglish 'teacher' can adapt to the user's learning style and pace so that the lessons and exercises are tailored to the exact needs of the language learner.

3.5.1 Review

Gliglish is offered in over 30 different languages and language variations with more to come according to the website. The platform uses multi-lingual speech recognition to accurately understand and respond to user's input. On top of general speaking practice, Gliglish also offers mini-lessons such as describing habits and routines, giving directions, greetings, sharing personal information, telling the time, etc. as well as role-playing scenarios for everyday situations such as an appointment at the doctors, asking a stranger for help, at the restaurant, calling a taxi, checking into a hotel, etc. Gliglish produces human-like language with accurate accent and word choices based on the country and language selected.

During a conversation with Gliglish, a transcript of the conversation is typed out onto the screen, and at any time the user can click on a word or sentence and listen to it again. Gliglish also offers learners multiple suggestions on what to say in the conversation. Users can alter the playback speed of the conversation as well as input preferred languages when translating content. Gliglish can interpret and respond to language in 45 second increments. It can answer advanced questions about language structure, grammar, word choice, accent, pronunciation, etc. Gliglish can also provide users with feedback on their pronunciation. Users can listen to their pronunciation mistakes and are provided with a model to improve. Gliglish saves your conversations and allows users to refer back to them and continue them as they wish. Speaking with Gliglish in my second language, I was genuinely impressed by the advanced questions Gliglish was able to answer about the language, as well as its use of vocabulary that mimicked common speech patterns and word choices of the selected country.

Gliglish is designed to build confidence, improve fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and listening skills. While not a replacement for human instruction, it offers a safe space for learners to practice, experiment, and grow. It's a valuable tool for classroom use or extra speaking practice on the go.

3.5.2 Cost

Gliglish offers a free plan that allows users to talk for 10 minutes a day. Gliglish plus, \$29 a month, allows users to speak 'as much as needed' with no limit to the length of conversations. Gliglish also offers plans for schools and districts. All Gliglish users can access this AI conversation tool on multiple devices, making it easily accessible for learners to practice anytime, anywhere.

3.5.3 Activity

Using the free version of Gliglish, teachers can have students practice speaking and listening for 10 minutes a day. Students can use Gliglish at home, submitting screenshots of their conversations, or during class as an individual activity. It also works well as a warm-up: students can discuss a specific topic with Gliglish, then share what they talked about. Teachers may assign role-play scenarios, with students reporting on the experience and the feedback they received.

3.6. Otter

Otter is a powerful real-time speech-to-text tool that is especially suitable for educational scenarios. It can convert speech content from lectures, discussions or meetings to text in real time. Otter not only supports the recognition of multiple languages and dialects, but also has features such as intelligent punctuation, automatic segmentation and keyword highlighting, making the converted text clearer and easier to read. In the field of education, Otter has been a helpful assistant to teachers, students and distance learners.

3.6.1 Review

Otter reduces students' note-taking burden in classes. In the traditional classroom, students often need to spend a lot of energy on taking notes of the teacher's explanation, but Otter's real-time speech-to-text function allows students to focus more attention on understanding and absorbing knowledge. This not only improves learning efficiency but also helps develop students' critical thinking skills. Otter is essential for distance learning and online learning. In distance courses, teachers and students may face problems such as an unstable network connection or hearing impairment, and the real-time text transcription function provided by Otter ensures the accurate transmission and reception of information. In addition, Otter also supports the export of transcribed text content as a document, which is convenient for students to review and organize after class.

In addition to classroom learning and distance learning, Otter can be used in multiple educational scenarios such as academic research, group discussions, and meeting notes. In academic research, students can use Otter to record the content of expert lectures and seminars for subsequent analysis and summary. During panel discussions, Otter transcribes each member's speech in real time, ensuring that information is fully recorded and accurately communicated. Otter also excels in taking meeting minutes, efficiently translating the meeting content into a transcript.

3.6.2 Cost

Otter.ai offers a range of transcription plans tailored to different user needs, from individuals to large enterprises. The Basic plan is free, providing 300 transcription minutes per month with a 30-minute limit per conversation. The Pro plan costs \$16.99 per month or \$100 annually, offering 1,200 minutes per month, 90-minute conversation limits, and features like speaker identification and file imports. The Business plan is priced at \$40 per month per user, with 6,000 minutes per month, 4-hour conversation limits, and additional tools for team collaboration and admin oversight. For larger organizations, the Enterprise plan offers custom pricing and includes advanced features. Students and educators with a .edu email address can receive a 20% discount on Pro plans.

3.6.3 Activity

The teacher gives a lecture, and Otter converts the speech content into text in real time and displays it on the screen. Students can view the transcribed text while listening to the explanation to deepen their understanding of the content discussed. After class, the teacher exports the transcribed text content as a document and shares it with the students. Students use the documents to review and study after class. Teachers can also take advantage of Otter's AI capabilities for classroom summary and assessment. Otter helps students learn and teachers summarize their lessons. Through this activity, students can not only focus more on the classroom explanation but also review and synthesize the knowledge conveniently after class to improve learning.

3.7. CoGrader

CoGrader is an AI-powered tool that helps teachers grade essays faster and more efficiently. For ESL instructors, giving detailed feedback on grammar, organization, and content can be time-consuming especially with large classes. CoGrader supports teachers by generating useful feedback and score suggestions, making the grading process smoother while still focusing on quality.

3.7.1 Review

One of the best things about CoGrader is its ability to give automatic feedback. You can upload essays or connect it to platforms like Google Classroom, and the tool will point out grammar mistakes, issues with clarity, and how well the argument flows. It also suggests ways students can improve. Teachers can adjust this feedback as needed.

Another helpful feature is the customizable rubric. You can either use the default grading rubrics or create your own. For ESL classes, this is especially useful and you can focus on things like sentence structure, vocabulary, transitions, and fluency. CoGrader also checks for plagiarism and can flag content that might be written by AI. This is important now that more students are using tools like ChatGPT. It even gives you class data, so you can see common writing problems across the group and track student progress over time.

3.7.2 Cost

CoGrader offers a free trial, but full access comes with a subscription. The free starter plan allows for 100 student submissions per month, lets you build rubrics, is FERPA compliant, and gives you access to the help center. The standard plan costs \$15 a month and gives you all the starter plan features but increases to 350 student submissions per month, has Google Classroom integration, allows for handwritten assignments, does grammar checks, has a class dashboard, and has chat and email support. There are school and district as well as higher ed and enterprise plan options which have more features but require reaching out to the company for pricing.

3.7.3 Activity

One practical way to integrate CoGrader into the ESL classroom is through an opinion essay and feedback reflection activity. In this task, students are asked to write a short opinion essay of about 150-200 words on a relevant topic such as "Is it better to study in your home country or abroad?" This topic encourages personal reflection and the use of persuasive language, which are key components in academic writing.

Students first submit their drafts through Google Classroom, where CoGrader is connected. The tool then generates feedback on grammar, organization, and content. After reviewing the feedback, students revise their essays and submit a second draft. This process allows them to actively engage with the feedback and improve their writing through self-editing. Once the final drafts are submitted, the teacher reviews the revised versions and examines the class report provided by CoGrader. This report highlights common errors and writing patterns across the class, helping the instructor identify areas that need further attention in future lessons.

To close the activity, students write a short reflection on the feedback they received. They are encouraged to explain what they changed in their second draft and why. This reflection not only reinforces the learning process but also helps students build confidence in using feedback to become more independent writers.

4. Conclusion

As current ESL practitioners and graduate students in TESOL, we are navigating a rapidly changing educational environment where generative artificial intelligence is becoming increasingly integrated into language teaching. AI-driven tools such as QuestionWell, Quizizz, ExplainPaper, Poio, Gliglish, Otter, and CoGrader offer opportunities to enhance language instruction through increased personalization, efficiency, and learner engagement. From automating routine tasks like grading and transcription to supporting learners with differentiated reading and speaking activities, these tools can help educators respond more effectively to the diverse needs of multilingual students.

Some practical considerations that teachers need to know before using Generative AI is that their students have access to devices and the internet, potentially both in class and at home. The teacher needs to ensure that the students feel comfortable using different types of platforms. Perhaps going over different platforms in class together or even having lessons for how to use them could be useful before getting started. It is important to always remind students about data protection. The teacher also needs to ensure that they follow the law and guidelines for their school district.

To navigate these challenges, ongoing professional development is essential. Teachers may benefit from structured training sessions, peer workshops, or collaborative exploration groups that allow them to experiment with tools in low-risk settings. Building professional communities, whether within institutions or through virtual networks, can further support the responsible adoption of AI by enabling teachers to share insights, troubleshoot issues, and reflect on evolving practices. Having a place where it is safe to ask questions and share their ideas, is a key part of ongoing teacher AI development.

Ultimately, while AI can support and enhance our work, it is the teacher's expertise, empathy, and responsiveness that remain central to student success. As both educators and learners ourselves, we have the opportunity—and the responsibility—to shape how these tools serve the goals of inclusive, communicative, and meaningful language education.

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Joanna O'Connor is an Instructor at the English Language Institute at the University of Central Missouri and an ESL Test Assessor with over 12 years of teaching experience, including six years in Japan. She holds a BS in Industrial Engineering and is pursuing an MEd in ELL TESL. A military spouse, she volunteers with the Foreign-Born Military Spouse Network to support international families. Fluent in multiple languages, Joanna creates inclusive, culturally responsive classrooms that build students' real-world communication skills, confidence, and academic success. Her passion lies in empowering diverse learners through effective, engaging instruction.

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