# Harnessing Artificial Intelligence to Enhance Debate-Integrated ESL Instruction: Challenges and Pedagogical Opportunities

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) becomes an increasingly influential force in education, its integration into English as a second language (ESL) instruction offers new opportunities for enriching pedagogy and deepening student engagement. This paper explores how AI can support educators in implementing debate-integrated ESL instruction—a method well-established for fostering critical thinking, structured communication, and language development. The study examines how AI assists teachers in designing debate activities, scaffolding argumentation, analysing speaking and writing performance, and providing targeted feedback. In classrooms with learners aged 8 to 18, these tools offer pedagogical benefits such as differentiation, real-time analytics, and reduced preparation time. However, their use also raises challenges, including digital literacy gaps, over-reliance on automation, and ethical concerns related to content authenticity and data privacy. Drawing on current literature, classroom-based observations, and tool analysis, this paper proposes a framework for responsibly harnessing AI to enhance debate-based ESL instruction and support learner-centred, cognitively demanding language education

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**Track Classification:**   Harnessing AI in TESOL: Opportunities and Challenges