



Who is Ron Lee?

Ron Lee is recognized as a pioneer in Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), starting with the development of his website: <https://www.rong-chang.com> during his PhD studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1994. At the time, Ron created English learning materials including audio files and published them on his website. English learners across the globe accessed his website, which encouraged him to create more online resources, including exercises for listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary.

Later on, Ron started another site <https://www.eslfast.com> to host the ever-growing English learning resources he developed. Through ad revenue generated from his websites, Ron is able to keep all the materials on both of his sites fully free and accessible to the public. These mobile-friendly materials have benefitted both ESL instructors and students with depth of content and ease of access. Additionally, Ron has created an ESL Robot called “Tutor” to help students practice speaking English. “Tutor” won second place at the International Loebner Prize 2018 Contest, an annual international artificial intelligence contest hosted at Bletchley Park in the UK. In recent years, both [rong-chang.com](https://www.rong-chang.com) and [eslfast.com](https://www.eslfast.com) have undergone significant improvements. To make English learning more engaging and motivating, a gamified, points-based reward system has been integrated into the websites. This system encourages consistent practice, rewards achievement, and enhances overall user engagement.

ESL Robot has also evolved considerably. The latest version, ESL Robot 5.0, is now available online (<https://www.eslfast.com/membership/talk-to-tutor>). Powered by advanced AI, it brings the long-envisioned concept of computer-assisted language learning closer to reality. More than just a chatbot, it simulates a real human tutor engaging students in conversation, identifying their errors, and guiding them toward more accurate and natural expression. It is being developed as a teacher’s assistant, supporting ESL educators in delivering more effective instruction.

CATESOL is thankful for Ron’s support and efforts in furthering the use of technology for ESL and his continuous development of even more ESL resources on his websites.