



# Using Artificial Intelligence in Foreign Language Teaching: Teachers' Perspectives

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## Abstract

Learners' achievements, motivation, and emotional states are closely linked to the roles and effectiveness of their teachers, while several challenges in foreign language classrooms hinder teacher efficacy. Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to offer substantial solutions by addressing individual student needs, expectations, and interests. However, successfully integrating AI in the English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching process depends on teachers' perceptions of these technologies. This study investigates teachers' perceptions of AI usage within the EFL teaching framework. In this qualitative study, the data were collected from seven EFL teachers via interviews. The study concluded that EFL teachers prefer using AI tools for various purposes and believe that AI tools offer significant benefits in the EFL teaching process, although they experience several drawbacks regarding using AI tools in their classes. Considering the conclusions, several recommendations were also noted.

**Keywords:** English as a foreign language, teaching, artificial intelligence

## 1. Introduction

Teaching English as a foreign language is of vital importance for several reasons. First, English has become the global language or lingua franca, facilitating communication among people from various linguistic backgrounds (Rose et al., 2021). Second, English proficiency enhances the economic development of countries, and it is crucial to have a word in the world market (Fandrych, 2009). Third, English is the primary language of academic studies, enabling non-native speakers to engage with and succeed in academic contexts effectively (Hamp-Lyons, 2005). However, while EFL teaching is important, learners' achievement, motivation, and affective states in the process directly relate to the roles of the teacher. From this perspective, EFL teachers have various roles. Harmer (2001) explains that the teacher can be the *controller*, *prompter*, *participant*, *resource*, and *tutor*. Thus, EFL teachers can control the lessons and organize the lesson structure. However, teachers are well beyond the controller and sometimes should be the *prompter* while the students feel stuck in an activity. In addition, they can participate in activities to energize the class from the inside. Next, they can be the language resource by not directly explaining everything but guiding them to the correct resources. Last, the teachers can be tutors, and while the students work in small groups, they act as both the resource and

the prompter to make them feel cared for and seen (Harmer, 2001). In the same vein, along with their role as the *facilitators* of the communicative atmosphere (Breen & Candlin, 1980), teachers have three more responsibilities in communicative language classrooms, according to Richards and Rodgers (2014). Initially, they are the *needs analysts*, who are supposed to identify the needs of learners formally or informally and design their lessons accordingly. They optimize communication as *counselors* who provide feedback, paraphrase, and ask follow-up questions. Finally, group process managers oversee and direct the communicative activities, recording any shortcomings in language or meaning-based competency so that they can be discussed later without disrupting the conversation. However, these roles cannot be performed without solving certain problems.

As emphasized above, several challenges in foreign language classrooms impede teachers' effectiveness. First, large class sizes pose a significant issue, as they hinder teachers' ability to manage the classroom, provide individualized attention, and offer personalized assessment and feedback (Sarıçoban, 2005). Moreover, insufficient instructional resources limit educators to practice productively (Asmari, 2015). Technological issues further obstruct effective language instruction. For instance, the absence of technology integration in language classrooms significantly affects the quality of instruction (Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu, 2006). Likewise, inadequate technological infrastructure, such as unreliable internet and insufficient computers, complicates teachers' efforts to incorporate digital tools and resources into their lessons (Ndibalema & Mrosso, 2024), even when they have positive attitudes towards technology use (Eryansyah & Erlina, 2023). Furthermore, teachers' professional competence, curriculum, working conditions, students and their parents, colleagues and school administrators, and physical conditions can influence EFL teachers' motivation (Aydın, 2015). Considering these persistent challenges, exploring innovative solutions that can alleviate the burden on teachers and enhance instructional effectiveness becomes essential.

AI might offer significant solutions regarding supporting teachers. For instance, AI-powered tools and environments can provide personalized learning experiences, allowing teachers to address individual student needs even in large classes (Cizrelioğlu & Aydın, 2025; Keerthiwansha, 2018). Additionally, they can be used to automate assessment and feedback processes (Athanasopoulos et al., 2023), reducing the workload on teachers. Moreover, AI usage can enhance instructional resources by offering innovative teaching methods and materials (Mena Octavio et al., 2024). By enhancing teachers' ability to facilitate, manage, and engage students, its usage can improve the overall learning environment and make it more effective and efficient (Aydın & Zeinolabedini, 2024; Kostka & Toncelli, 2023). On the other hand, while AI tools and environments provide unique opportunities in the EFL teaching process, their utilization directly relates to teachers' perceptions. Dramatically enough, current research lacks insight into how teachers perceive AI tools and environments in their teaching adventures, as seen in the research synthesis below. However, a theoretical framework is drawn before presenting the results of the previous research.

### 1.1. Theoretical Framework

AI is a platform that includes multitasking, such as learning, adapting, and understanding knowledge, and that reactivates the present knowledge by using creative language that can be produced by human intelligence. It can be defined as a branch of computer science that aims to enable machines to think and act as humans do, including problem-solving, decision-making, perception, and comprehension (Sarker, 2022). The utilization of AI in language teaching can be explained within the scope of Activity Theory. According to the theory, humans' mental capabilities relate to their technical and cultural aspects (Bertelsen & Bødker, 2003). In this socio-technical system, the elements of the activity system are actors engaged in the activities, social context, concepts, tool mediation, division of labor, and rules (Bryant et al., 2005). The

theory explores the individuals and the social context in which they are embedded by analyzing their deliberate activities (Kaptelinin & Nardi, 2009).

*Perception* is organizing and interpreting sensory information to understand the information in the environment (Schacter et al., 2009). It is shaped by the individual's expectations, attention, memory, and learning (Bernstein et al., 2008). Bruner (1957) proposes a three-phased model regarding perception. First, the individual who encounters an unfamiliar target is open to new information based on perception. Second, when the information is not enough, the individual seeks cues. Last, the individual seeks more cues to confirm the categorization of the target. The Social Cognitive Theory suggests that cognitive processes and environment influence behaviors; thus, perceptions may directly impact behaviors (Aydın, 2022). From the constructive perspective, perception is a product that depends on the interaction between stimulus and knowledge (Démuth, 2013). From the computational perspective, perception relates to easy mechanical rules concerning unconscious entities (Gregory, 2015). Within this scope, it can be noted that perception may depend on algorithms that can be applied to understand human perception (Démuth, 2013).

## 1.2. Previous Research

Research indicates that EFL teachers' perceptions regarding the use of AI in language classrooms are diverse. While some teachers enthusiastically embrace AI integration, others have mixed feelings and remain tentative about its utilization. For instance, some studies showed that teachers viewed AI positively, agreeing that it could aid in conducting lessons (Sumakul et al., 2022), planning and designing curriculum, and assessing learners' writing (Octavio et al., 2024). Additionally, AI-developed activities are perceived favorably by both instructors and learners because they enhance language and content-based skills, engagement, and motivational levels (Japoshvili-Ghvinashvili & Suleman, 2023). However, some teachers also recognized the drawbacks of AI integration. While they appreciated AI-based creative activities and ease of lesson preparation, they highlighted concerns regarding accuracy, validity, and students' over-reliance on AI (Ulla et al., 2023). Similarly, other faculty members acknowledged its advantages and disadvantages in language classes. They found AI to be a valuable tool that enhanced teaching methodologies and provided learners with more fruitful learning experiences, yet they worried that it might hinder students' critical thinking and research skills (Mohamed, 2024). Moreover, recent studies indicated that AI reduced teachers' workload and helped learners develop writing and vocabulary skills through personalized and immediate feedback. Despite this enthusiasm, teachers remained cautious due to potential hazards such as excessive reliance on technology, academic dishonesty, the importance of rapid and accurate prompt formulation, and the limitations of multimedia functions (Dilzhan, 2024). In a recent study, Alwaqdani (2025) explored teachers' perceptions towards the integration of AI educational tools into their educational practices and concluded that teachers acknowledge AI educational tools to save time, assist in designing activities, and personalize learning experiences while they have concerns regarding training, job displacement, unintended consequences, the lack of creativity and critical thinking, and trust in AI-related errors. Finally, Benek (2025) examined EFL teachers' perceptions of AI-powered technologies regarding usefulness, personalization, and adaptability. This descriptive study concluded that teachers report several problems, including ethical concerns, compatibility issues with school technology, and difficulties in EFL learning standards and assessments.

## 1.3. Overview of the Current Study

As previously highlighted, EFL instruction is of paramount importance due to its direct correlation with economic, scientific, and educational advancement on a global scale. Notably, learners' achievements, motivation, and emotional states throughout the learning process are closely linked to the roles and effectiveness of their teachers. From this standpoint, several challenges in foreign language classrooms hinder teacher efficacy, such as oversized classes, limited instructional resources, insufficient technological infrastructure and professional competence of educators, curricular constraints, and suboptimal working conditions. In light of these issues, *Artificial Intelligence* (AI) has

the potential to offer substantial solutions by addressing individual student needs in large classrooms and automating assessment and feedback processes. These advantages could alleviate teachers' workload, expand instructional resources by providing innovative teaching methods and materials, and enhance the management and engagement of students. However, the successful integration of AI in the EFL teaching process depends on teachers' perceptions of these technologies. Current research conspicuously lacks insights into how teachers perceive AI tools and their applicability in educational settings. Existing studies predominantly focus on areas such as curriculum planning and design, assessment of learners' writing, content-based skills, student engagement, motivation, accuracy, validity, and the risk of students' over-reliance on AI. With these concerns in mind, this study aims to investigate teachers' perceptions of AI usage within the EFL teaching framework.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. Research Context**

The present study was designed to use a qualitative research design. Within this scope, the study used a synthetic approach and a heuristic objective since the current literature has not presented evidence regarding the underlying factors that were related to EFL teachers' perceptions of using AI in the foreign language teaching process. Thus, a synthetic approach was preferred for defining the phenomenon and understanding the factors concerning teachers' perceptions of AI usage in the teaching process. Moreover, the study is designed to be in a heuristic objective as it did not ask a research question or formulate a hypothesis (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989).

### **2.2. Participants**

The participants of this study were seven EFL instructors. The group consisted of five female (71.4%) and two male teachers (28.6). The mean score for age was 30.43 within the age range of 26 to 40. The mean value for their teaching experience in years was 6.43, ranging from 2 to 18 years. Regarding their educational background, two participants had undergraduate degrees (28.6), while five teachers had MA degrees in related fields. Finally, while one participant taught at a high school, six worked at higher education institutions.

### **2.3. Tools**

A background questionnaire and interviews were used to collect data. The background questionnaire included questions about age, gender, teaching experience years, educational background, and the school types in which they worked. Second, interviews were used to collect data about their utilization of AI tools and environments, experiences, perceptions, and problems they encountered. The rationale behind preferring interviews was that there was a strong need for a better and deeper understanding of AI usage in teaching from their perspectives in a holistic approach. In addition, interviews were adaptable and flexible to the specific aspects of the issues within the scope of AI utilization in the EFL teaching process.

The interviews were in the form of e-mail interviews. E-mail or online asynchronous interviews are generally conducted through e-mails, starting with the invitation of the researchers, which continues with a few exchanges between the researchers and the participants. This type of data collection may be more efficient since it allows the researchers to reach many geographically distant participants simultaneously while also diminishing the transcription cost. In addition, the researchers do not have to conduct the interviews with one person at a time. As for the participants, they can answer the questions at their convenience and in their comfort zones, and they can be more self-explanatory because of anonymity and because they can take their time before sending their answers (Meho, 2006).

### **2.4. Procedure**

Before the collecting data process, the participants were informed about the significance purpose, and outputs of the study. The participants were also informed about the ethical rules that should be followed.

They were also informed that the research did not include any social and psychological risks. It was assured that their participation was on a voluntary base and that their privacy was protected. It was also stated that the data obtained from the current study were confined to scientific purposes. Purposive sampling was preferred for the data collection, and the teachers were selected since they were knowledgeable about AI and were currently using it for their teaching. One of the researchers sent e-mails with the interview questions attached to each of the participants to find answers to the questions regarding their background information, their experiences, perceptions, attitudes, familiarity, the tools and environments they preferred, the contributions of AI tools to EFL learning, their expectations, and problems they encountered, concerns and challenges.

Before data collection, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, significance, output, and ethical considerations, including voluntary participation and privacy protection. They were also informed that the research did not include any social and psychological risks. It was also stated that the data obtained from the current study were confined to scientific purposes. The study involved purposive sampling, selecting teachers knowledgeable about AI and actively using it in teaching. One researcher sent e-mails with interview questions covering background information, experiences, perceptions, attitudes, AI tools and environments used, contributions to EFL learning, expectations, challenges, and concerns. In line with these principles, informed consent was obtained electronically from all participants prior to data collection. Purposive sampling was preferred for the data collection, and the teachers were selected since they were knowledgeable about AI and were currently using it for their teaching. This approach ensured that participants could provide rich, relevant, and experience-based insights aligned with the aims of the study.

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## **2.5. Data Analysis**

A descriptive analysis was performed using the interview data from participant teachers. This type of analysis involves creating a logically organized and reader-friendly summary of the data components (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). Thus, key opinions and statements regarding the use of AI were identified and highlighted in the transcriptions to discern emerging patterns. The findings were then reported holistically, highlighting both similar and differing perspectives to compare the teachers' views on the subject. Additionally, relevant quotations were included under appropriate headings to reinforce the findings with the teachers' own words. In the analysis process, two blind analyzers coded the data and categorized the codes into patterns. Then, these patterns were found to be similar, trustworthy, and valid.

## **3. Results**

The results obtained from the study show that EFL teachers preferred using several tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Quizlet, AI-based chatbots, Curipod, Mentimeter, Gamma, Quizziz, Kahoot, Eduaide, Twee, and Gencraft for various educational purposes. ChatGPT was the most used AI tool by all participant teachers. First, they used these tools as a teaching assistant, including the tasks generating ideas for lesson planning, classroom activities for different levels and interests, discussion prompts, detailed teaching instructions, example sentences, and getting feedback for their plans and materials. Teachers also used them to create vocabulary, grammar, writing, and speaking materials. For instance, one of the teachers used Kahoot for grammar activities, Quizlet for vocabulary, and Mentimeter to teach

a new grammar topic. Similarly, another teacher used AI-based chatbots to develop her students' speaking skills as she expressed, "... learners find a way to develop their speaking skills with the opportunities provided by the chatbots as EFL learners lack speaking opportunities outside the classroom. The more speaking practice they have, the more self-confident they become in expressing themselves in English." Second, they employed AI to assess learners' productive skills, namely writing and speaking, by creating worksheets and activities designed for specific aims and levels. Within this scope, they believed that AI could be used as a language assistant for grammatical and lexical accuracy or to check the appropriateness of the input for the target level. Some also used AI to energize their students when they were bored with paperwork and make their lessons more enjoyable and memorable. They also stated that the mentioned tools provided alternatives and allowed them to adapt materials according to students' needs and expectations.

The findings indicate that AI tools can provide several benefits in the EFL teaching process. First, the teachers believed that AI tools helped to save time by quickly generating lesson plans and materials such as quizzes and worksheets. Teachers also reported that AI tools were beneficial regarding engagement and gamification, which increased students' motivation and created a more interactive environment. Second, they stated that AI tools enhanced the authenticity of the target language used in the classroom settings by offering real-world learning opportunities. In addition, some teachers wanted their learners to use AI for in-class activities and assignments. As one of the teachers indicated, "*I witnessed many times that my students learn a new phrase, vocabulary, or grammar item that they want to use later from these tools.*" Last, one teacher believed that AI tools enhanced productivity since they provided alternative ideas regarding lesson adaptation in accordance with learners' individual learning needs and interests, as clear in her sentences: "*Another advantage is that these tools have always alternatives to offer: If you don't like its response, you can make it provide a better one.*"

While EFL teachers experienced positive aspects of AI usage in the teaching process, they seemed to be aware of several drawbacks. First, teachers complained that AI tools could give wrong answers to the prompts, create mistakes in the lesson materials that required double-checking, or correct the students' writing even if they were already correct; thus, they believed that IA usage increased their workload in one regard. As mentioned by one of the teachers, "*I also have to check a tool's credibility through more search or use of another AI tool because I encountered wrong answers before.*" Additionally, one of the teachers found it overwhelming to learn a new tool and make the AI create what he wanted. Second, they mentioned that AI tools distracted learners from traditional lessons, specifically in game-based language learning environments, where they felt engaged with the game, resulting in a loss of focus on the core material. Similarly, the students could sometimes use their phones for texting or scrolling on social media, pretending they were engaged in AI-based online activity. Third, teachers found that AI tools provided inappropriate language content that might not be suitable for proficiency levels in the target language. Fourth, they stated that students over-used and over-relied on AI tools rather than focusing on the tasks designed for learning without engaging in the creative or critical thinking process. For instance, some teachers detected that the students depended on AI so much while editing their production without paying attention to their mistakes, or they wanted the AI to write the whole essay. One teacher remarked, "*I can say that while learners especially write an essay on a given topic, they rather prefer ChatGPT to write it, which is not what we actually expect from them.*" They also noted that this overreliance on AI could hinder student interaction. Next, some teachers believed that since AI provides what the teachers need very easily, it could diminish teachers' creativity skills and make them lazy. Finally, they complained about technical problems such as the lack of internet access and dead batteries that disrupted individual activities and prevented classroom participation.

#### 4. Conclusions and Discussion

Three main conclusions were reached in the study. The first conclusion is that EFL teachers prefer using AI tools for various purposes. For instance, they prefer using AI tools for generating ideas for lesson planning, classroom activities, and discussion prompts, as well as for creating materials to teach vocabulary, grammar, writing, and speaking skills. Teachers use AI tools to assess learners' writing and speaking skills and grammatical and lexical accuracy. Moreover, they use it to check grammar and to find context-appropriate vocabulary. The second conclusion is that EFL teachers believe that AI tools

offer significant benefits in the EFL teaching process. For instance, they state that AI tools are ideal for generating materials such as quizzes and worksheets. From this perspective, they believe that using AI tools in language classes increases engagement and gamification, enhances the authentic use of the target language, provides real-world learning opportunities that develop productivity, and alternative ideas for adapting lessons according to learners' individual needs, interests, and expectations. The third conclusion is that EFL teachers experience several drawbacks regarding using AI tools in their classes. For instance, they believe that the use of AI tools causes distraction among learners. Moreover, they have concerns about the accuracy of AI-generated content. They also state that AI tools produce inappropriate language content and have difficulties producing content according to learners' proficiency levels. Some other problems experienced by teachers were the overreliance on AI tools among students, the debilitation of teachers' and students' creative and critical thinking skills, and technical problems.

#### **4.1. Pedagogical Implications**

A summary of the results of the current research is provided below. From a broad perspective, the findings reveal that while EFL teachers employ AI for various pedagogical purposes, they are also conscious of its associated advantages and limitations. These outcomes resonate with previous research conducted by Slamet (2024), Ulla et al. (2023), Mohamed (2024), and Dilzhan (2024), who similarly concluded that AI use in language instruction is a multifaceted issue, eliciting both positive attitudes and reservations from educators. This is further supported by Alwaqdani (2025), who found that while teachers recognize AI tools as time-saving and helpful in personalizing learning, they also express concerns about training, creativity, trust, and job security. Similarly, Benek (2025) highlights ethical concerns, compatibility issues, and challenges in aligning AI use with EFL standards and assessment. Although some institutions have opted to prohibit AI in language classrooms due to ethical concerns (de Fine Licht, 2024), this study advocates for integrating AI to exploit its benefits.

#### **4.2. Practical Recommendations**

In light of the findings, some practical recommendations can also be noted. First, teacher training programs should be implemented regarding technology integration to ensure teachers are equipped with the skills for effectively incorporating AI into their instructional practices. Second, educational institutions should establish comprehensive guidelines for AI use in teaching and learning, grounded in ethical considerations. Moreover, they should adopt and adapt existing frameworks from renowned universities, enabling teachers to tailor these guidelines to their specific classroom contexts. Third, teachers and learners should be aware of these ethical guidelines through professional development opportunities such as workshops and seminars. Furthermore, continuous and comprehensive professional training is essential for effectively embedding AI into EFL instruction to enhance student learning outcomes (Pokrivcakova, 2019). Fourth, fostering a collaborative learning environment among teachers to explore various AI tools could further enrich classroom engagement. Considering these recommendations, teacher education programs regarding AI literacy must be revised to support such effective and ethical use of AI in classrooms. Professional development initiatives should focus on technical proficiency and emphasize pedagogical strategies that align AI usage with curricular goals. Moreover, educational stakeholders, including school leaders and policymakers, should work collaboratively to develop guidelines that help institutions navigate the benefits and risks of AI integration. In this context, the study offers practical insights that can inform institutional decisions on training, curriculum design, and resource allocation for AI-supported EFL instruction.

#### **4.3. Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research**

Several notes can be added regarding the limitations of the study. First, the scope of the study was limited to data from a background questionnaire and qualitative data obtained from interviews. Second, the participants were confined to seven EFL instructors. Third, the data included in the study included their self-reports rather than the data provided through interventions.

Further research should incorporate descriptive, experimental, and mixed-method research designs for a nuanced, better, and deeper understanding of AI usage in the EFL teaching process. Qualitative studies

should include a variety of data collection tools such as observations, diary keeping, reflections, and content analysis, whereas intervention and experimentation-based studies should be performed to validate the current findings and to examine the factors that may influence AI usage in the teaching and learning context. In addition, given that the current study is confined to seven participants, further research should include larger sample groups from diverse educational backgrounds and institutions within the scope of longitudinal studies.

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