

EFL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: A SUPPORT OR HINDRANCE

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ABSTRACT

Teaching strategies have evolved in recent times owing to the latest technological advancements. The most significant recent development is the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Since its emergence in the modern era, AI has permeated every aspect of life. The integration of AI into teaching is also rapidly increasing, as it plays a crucial role in the teaching-learning process today. This study explores EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers' perceptions of AI's impact on English language acquisition in District Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). A phenomenological research design was employed, and data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Four EFL teachers were selected using purposive sampling from different institutions. The data were coded and transcribed, and thematic analysis was used to identify key themes. The main positive impacts of AI on English language acquisition identified were: improvement of English language skills, personalized learning, students' independence and autonomy, teachers' confidence during instruction, increased engagement and motivation, teaching efficacy, and AI's superiority over older search engines. Negative impacts included: reduced creativity, overreliance on AI tools, effects on critical thinking, hindrance to natural language development, and ethical and accuracy concerns. This study raises awareness among EFL teachers, educators, policymakers, and institutions interested in integrating AI into English language learning.

Keywords: EFL Teachers, Artificial Intelligence (AI), English Language, Acquisition, Support, Hindrance

INTRODUCTION

The field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction has experienced a substantial transformation due to the rapid advancement of digital technology in recent years. One of the most widely discussed innovations is artificial intelligence (AI), which is gradually becoming part of the classrooms around the world. AI tools such as Chat GPT, Grammarly, text-to-speech applications, and Duolingo's adaptive learning engine offer students new, engaging, and

productive ways to learn English independently. These tools are effective in a way that they provide personalized feedback to the students and satisfy the needs of each student in the class. Now, with these AI tools, it is possible to do what we could not do before (Chen et al., 2020; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). De le Vall and Araya (2023) explain that AI language learning tools include software and computer programs utilizing AI algorithms that help students master a foreign language.

Their study highlighted the significance of these tools, which may include software offering real-time translation of texts and speech, language-generating systems capable of creating original texts in a specific language, and personalized language tutoring systems delivering individualized lessons or feedback. Haristiani and Danuwijaya (2019) emphasize the role of AI in foreign language instruction, since they provide a platform for students to improve their language skills. Furthermore, Wang and Petrina (2013) argue that students can improve their vocabulary by interacting frequently with these tools. Several studies show that incorporating AI tools into foreign language learning positively affects learners' motivation (Moybeka et al., 2023), engagement, and academic performance (Khan et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2021). Specific AI tools like Quiltbot have been proven extremely helpful in providing instant feedback, grammar correction, pronunciation, and expression. They play a role in enhancing sentence structures, word choices, and tones, thereby improving the overall quality of the written content (Farhi et al., 2023; Xuyen, 2023). The integration of AI tools into English language learning has also been reported to enhance learners' listening, reading, and speaking skills (Adilbayeva et al., 2022; Ma, 2021). However, despite all these merits, some scholars have also shown concerns about the negative impacts of AI tools on language learning. Some of these are overreliance, lack of human interaction, and a potential decline in critical thinking skills (Bui, 2022; Zimmerman, 2006).

According to Dewi et al. (2021), students who use AI apps like Duolingo, Grammarly, and Google Translate take advantage of these tools and improve their listening, pronunciation, and writing skills. According to Sharma (2021), AI incorporation in ESL has significantly transformed it. These AI tools are extremely useful aids for listening and speaking skills (SpeechAce), reading and writing (ChatGPT), and also grammar and immediate feedback (Automated Writing Assistance and Grammarly). A study by Samarasinghe and Prasangahi (2023) observed that ChatGPT is a useful tool in enhancing learners' English ability while keeping their own creativity. When integrating technology in education, it is relevant to know the perspective of teachers as they may have an impact on students' ability to learn (Ding et al., 2019; Ottenbreit-

Leftwich et al., 2018). A lack of research has been observed regarding the teachers' perspectives, particularly about their knowledge and understanding of AI, the challenges they face when using it, and the assistance they need to use it effectively. To ensure the integration of AI in education, teachers' perceptions are extremely important. Because its successful implementation is dependent on teachers' readiness to accept AI in the teaching learning process (Kessler, 2018). Students' writing efficiency can be drastically improved with ChatGPT because of its ability to generate content, give instant feedback, and provide thought organization (Fathi & Rahimi, 2024; Lee, 2024). Van Horn's (2024) ChatGPT makes students more autonomous and motivated in their writing skills by providing a dynamic and engaging environment. With this ChatGPT writing facility, there is a growing tendency towards departure from traditional writing practices and adoption of the new writing pedagogies (Marzuki et al., 2023; Gurney & Michaud, 2024).

Overdependence on AI for generating content for language acquisition is a serious concern (Shen et al., 2023). Apps like ChatGPT, Grammarly provide support for academic writing, spelling correction, and content creation, often lacking in originality, semantic perspective, and depth. (Ouyang et al., 2022). These apps make students lazy and robotic, without using their intellectual power, although they provide instant support to the students and save their time. (Foroughi et al., 2024). Overreliance on AI tools for language acquisition will reduce real-life interaction and will interfere with the natural development of language. Privacy protection and biased algorithms are also serious issues linked with using AI in education. (Cheng et. al., 2021; Tucker, 2019). Sharing the student's personality and learning styles information with AI may violate the privacy policy. In addition, Unintentional biases towards certain student groups, on the basis of the recoded data, may provide privileged access to education. The availability of language learning apps has improved the overall quality of education, but the unequal access to technological facilities has exacerbated the situation (Beaunoyer et. al., 2020).

Significance of the study

The study holds significance for teachers, students, and policymakers. It not only highlights the positive impacts of Artificial Intelligence on students' learning of the English language but also endeavors to explore how AI can obstruct the creativity of students by over-reliance on it. For teachers, this study is important as how they can utilize AI effectively in their teaching and learning process to improve students' creative writing, spoken, grammar, and language proficiency Skills. Both EFL teachers and students can learn how they use AI for English language acquisition without compromising their creative skills. For policymakers, this study is important because it will help them in integrating these AI tools into educational policies for fruitful outcomes, especially in EFL teaching.

Objectives of the study

1. To investigate the positive effects of AI on EFL students' acquisition of the English language.
2. To find out how AI hinders EFL students' English language acquisition.

Research Questions

1. What are the advantages of AI for the EFL students' English language acquisition?
2. How does AI negatively affect EFL students' English language acquisition skills?

Methodology

This study was conducted in the District Swat of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan. The investigation was carried out through Phenomenological Research, which is a data collection method in qualitative research. The respondents using this method share their experiences of a particular phenomenon in detail. The participants in the current study recoded their experiences of interaction with AI in EFL classrooms, and also its positive and negative impacts on English language acquisition. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The purpose of the study was explained to all the participants. Four participants, who taught English as a foreign language to intermediate and advanced level students, were selected through purposive sampling.

Data Analysis

The data obtained were coded, transcribed, and categorized. The participants were coded from T1 to T4. To identify key themes in the data, the thematic analysis technique was used. The following are some of the important themes from the data collected.

Benefits of the use of AI in English language acquisition

English language skills enhancement

The focus of EFL teachers is on developing all four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The use of AI is useful in all these skills. But the effectiveness of AI in enhancing these skills depends on its judicious use.

According to participant T1: *"In my view, the Use of AI apps such as ChatGPT is extremely useful in improving all four skills of English: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. If we talk specifically about writing skills, they can be enhanced through AI in such a way that when we write a paragraph in English and give it to AI, it will identify the mistakes in that paragraph and then provide us with the corrected version"*.

This statement indicates that AI can improve all four skills in English, especially the writing skill. But if we want to achieve these skills, the function of AI should be to create ideas and find mistakes in the human-created writing. But not as an alternative to creative writing.

Participant T2 believes: *"Learning a language is based on four skills. AI has been extremely useful in developing these core English skills: Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing. For reading practice, tools like ChatGPT help me generate reading comprehension passages and follow-up questions. For the enhancement of writing skills, I use Grammar Checker. Writing assistant improves sentences and their structure. For pronunciation, I use the ELSA Speak app and text-to-speech (TTS) applications. These apps not only help student in the improvement of their pronunciation but also comprehension. But the main focus of most of the students is the acquisition of spoken English skills. And I motivate my students to use AI to improve their spoken skills."*

The above statement of participant T2 emphasizes that for EFL teachers, one of the most important skills they want to develop in English is speaking. This is because speaking has more practical uses than the other three skills for these students. Since AI can talk in English, it plays a vital role in

helping learners master this skill. AI apps like ChatGPT and Gemini offer the option to speak in English.

Participant T3 views: *“AI tools definitely support students in the development of their core English language skills. In my opinion, the primary benefits of using AI are finding relevant vocabulary and improving pronunciation. Teachers are generally comfortable using AI tools, finding them effective in vocabulary and pronunciation. AI-powered writing tools provide grammar and spell checks, suggest alternative phrases, and offer feedback on coherence and clarity, helping students refine their writing skills.”*

This statement highlights the use of AI in helping EFL students find relevant vocabulary and correct their pronunciation. Finding appropriate vocabulary for specific situations and creating sentences and phrases is quite a difficult job. AI has made this job much easier now. Before the age of the Internet, it was extremely difficult to find the correct pronunciation of words in audio. And this job has been made even easier with the advent of AI. While talking with AI, you can correct your pronunciation. Besides this, if we provide a written paragraph to the AI tools such as ChatGPT, it will find all the grammar and spelling mistakes and will even provide alternative phrases. The views of participant T4 justify the above description: *“AI really helps improve our English because it gives quick corrections with clear examples. When we make mistakes in grammar, pronunciation, or word choice, AI points them out right away. So, we learn faster and remember better from AI.”*

Personalized learning

Personalized learning is a type of learning in which students have the autonomy to learn at their own pace according to their needs and strengths. AI tools provide this opportunity to all students to practice personalized learning. The views of the following participants support the use of AI for personalized learning.

Participant T4 believed: *“Everyone learns differently, and AI understands that. It adjusts lessons according to our level, interests, and pace. If we’re weak in grammar or vocabulary, it gives more practice in those areas, which makes learning more comfortable and effective.”* Similarly, the statement of participant T2 supports this theme in the following way.

Participant T2 argues that, *“AI has great potential for EFL classrooms, provided they are used judiciously. They provide a personalized learning experience to*

teachers. They also provide learners with instant feedback because they cater to both teachers and students. The AI-integrated personalized teaching is of great advantage. They can learn anywhere and everywhere, without assistance from a teacher, according to their needs.”

The statements of both participants T2 and T4 indicate that in contrast to the classroom teaching, which is a one size fit for all, and does not cater to each student’s needs, AI provides a personalized learning experience that fulfils the individual needs of the students. Students can now learn according to their needs and overcome their weaknesses.

Students’ Independence and Autonomy

With the introduction of AI, students have become much more independent and autonomous in learning a language. It not only helps students in the four skills, but also corrects their pronunciation.

Participant T1 thinks: *“When students find any difficulty in their studies, they have the opportunity to use AI for answers to their questions. In this way, AI can play the role of a teacher for the students without any limitation of time and space. A teacher can get tired and feel exhausted, but since AI is a machine response, it does not have any such limitations, thereby making students more autonomous and independent in their learning”.*

Participant T2 argues that: *“I feel students have greater autonomy and independence to use AI tools outside class hours and review the contents taught in the class. This makes them responsible for their learning. Students can come to the class with questions generated through AI or summaries of the topics. This helps in the development of their language skills.”*

The views of participants T1 and T2 highlight the fact that AI removes the time and space constraints in helping students learning at their own pace. Students can also prepare in advance for the class and organize the relevant questions.

Participant T3 thinks: *“AI-integrated teaching made my students more independent, which made our job easier. These tools offer self-assessment, instant feedback, and recommend materials to students.”*

Participant T3 argues that when students can learn and assess themselves, teachers’ jobs also become easier. Students will come prepared to the class with a better pre-class understanding of the topics. Students’ dependence on teachers is also minimized due to AI facilitating their language

practice. The following statement of participant 4 supports this whole discussion.

Participant T4 argues: *"With AI tools, students don't have to depend on the teacher all the time. They can practice English whenever they want. This builds confidence and helps them to take control of their own learning journey."*

Teachers' Confidence level during teaching

For effective teaching, a teacher's own confidence is essential. This confidence mainly comes from the accuracy and understanding of the content the teacher delivers. In an EFL classroom, correct pronunciation and grammar are vital. AI has made it much easier now to gain command over the contents, resulting in increased confidence among teachers.

Participant T3 believed: *"The integration of AI tools in EFL classrooms is revolutionary. These tools offer EFL teachers, innovative ways to support language learning. AI tools help teachers prepare lesson plans, providing instant feedback on students' writing and speaking, and using AI chatbots for interactive speaking practice. All these facilities, in turn, increase the confidence of teachers during EFL class."*

The statement of participant T3 highlights that when a lot of the teachers' workload is decreased by using AI tools, he will better focus on his class management and delivery of the content. This makes him more confident during teaching.

Participant T2 views also support this theme and shares that, *"I feel moderately to highly confident. Now I have become capable enough to use basic AI tools, such as ChatGPT and Deep Seek. I am continually improving my use of such tools. But I still feel there is still more to learn about the ethics of the use of AI, avoiding students' overdependence on AI, and limiting their creativity."*

Both participants, T3 and T2, argue that the confidence level of EFL teachers increases with the use of AI tools in teaching. This gives them command over their subjects by providing them with the most relevant content along with answers to their questions.

Increased engagement and motivation

Innovations in technology have made advancements in teaching practices. AI is one of the newest technologies that has significantly increased the engagement and motivation of EFL students and teachers. The views of the following participants support this idea.

Participant T2 thinks: *"Students always find AI tools engaging and motivating because they offer instant responses. AI tools can create interactive images, videos and can talk live on a particular topic. This makes the class more engaging and increases their motivation. Shy or hesitant students also feel more confident using AI tools for speaking, writing, or any other skill."*

One of the greatest advantages of AI is to provide instant responses to the learners. If AI tools are used in the classroom, they can create new ideas and explain the content in an engaging way. If AI apps such as ChatGPT or Gemini are used for talking practice in the live class, they will not only provide correct pronunciation but will also provide a live English conversation to the students.

Participant T1 views that: *"Mostly in our educational institutions, traditional teaching methodologies are followed. But with the use of these new technologies, especially AI, students' motivation and engagement have been significantly increased."*

Participant T1 views indicate that traditional teaching is still prevalent in our classrooms for English language acquisition. But this landscape will change when more EFL teachers become aware of the potential of AI in teaching.

Participant 4 adds that: *"AI makes learning more fun and interactive. Learning English through games, quizzes, and chatbots will become more enjoyable. It even keeps EFL teachers excited and motivated to teach and study more every day."*

From participant T4's perspective, AI can make English learning more fun by creating interactive games and fun activities, resulting in greater student engagement and motivation in the EFL class.

Efficacy in teaching

Learning a foreign language is a complex process, and teaching it demands a high level of skill. The beginning of the AI era has brought a great revolution in learning a foreign language. With the help of AI tools, EFL teachers can adopt various AI-integrated teaching methodologies, making teaching more effective. The views of the following participants support this theme.

Participant 4 views that *"AI also helps teachers by checking homework, tracking student progress, and suggesting useful materials. This saves a lot of time and allows teachers to focus more on real teaching and guidance."*

Participant T4's opinion suggests that AI tools help an EFL teacher avoid burnout and save time by creating content easily without much effort. All his energies are then focused on presenting the content in class.

Participant T2 shares the same view, supporting the current theme.

Participant 2 is of the view that *"AI tools are more flexible and easier to learn, and provide the most relevant and concise content. When the teachers utilize AI tools to ask all the questions in their mind and prepare a lecture, they will be better equipped to deliver it in an organized way during the class. AI tools can prepare an organized lecture with the most relevant content."*

Participant T2 points out that when EFL teachers create content with AI tools, it is more relevant in a sequence. This makes teaching more organized.

Advantages of AI over the old search engines

The beginning of AI in the current era is a phenomenal breakthrough in the context of teaching and learning. Previously, it used to be a hectic job to learn a language. But today, with AI tools, it has become much easier to learn and practice a language. Before AI, different search engines, such as Google and Yahoo, were used to search for content on a particular topic. But the content would not be completely relevant, and according to the needs of the learner. AI has this advantage over the old searches that it can give you the answers to your questions that are the most relevant and to the point. This theme is supported by the statements of the following participants.

According to participant T1, *"Before the advent of AI, I used to search for topics on Google, which was not so advanced and could not give me the relevant answers to my questions. The prominent advantages of using AI in EFL teaching are: its understanding of the context and the ability to point out grammatical and vocabulary mistakes in English. It also removes any ambiguities about the topics we discuss in the EFL classrooms and clarifies our ideas"*.

Similarly, participant T3 shares his views in the following statement to support the current theme. According to participant T3, *"Before AI came to the forefront. I used to seek help from various Google and YouTube channels in searching for relevant content. I faced many difficulties in searching for authentic sources. However, I now feel confident in using AI tools in teaching practice, as these tools provide us with the best and most authentic sources, which makes our teaching more effective."*

From the views of the participants T1 and T3, it is evident that AI tools are better equipped to understand the context and provide the most relevant and to-the-point content in EFL teaching. Besides this, it can prepare lesson plans, worksheets, and can live talk to you, that is, it is superior to the other older search engines, which could not understand the context.

AI as a hindrance to language acquisition

Despite all the advantages of AI in language acquisition, its usage also has some serious disadvantages. Students' overreliance on AI apps for content creation is killing their creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. In the context of EFL students, over-reliance on AI reduces their practice of the English language.

Reduced Creativity

Language acquisition is a creative process where learners create new sentences, connect ideas in different ways through brainstorming and imagination. With AI, it has become very convenient to create ideas, sentence structures, grammar, stories, essays, discussions, and other EFL content. But with this convenience, the mental effort to create all this stuff has become rare now. This trend creates a hindrance to creativity in creating language if AI is not used judiciously. The statements of the following participants support this theme.

Participant T1 argues that: *"When students become addicted to using AI for content creation, their own creative skills will diminish. If students don't create solutions using their own minds and instead always look to AI for answers to their problems, they will become overly dependent on these AI apps. In such a situation, AI will be more of a hindrance to creativity than a support. In the context of English learning, if students become wholly dependent on AI, their creative writing skills and spoken skills will decline, and their mental capacity will also decrease"*.

In the above statement, Participant T1 shares that Overreliance on AI and loss of creativity are interlinked. Students' overreliance on AI tools for creating content to learn the English language is killing their creativity.

Participant T2 believes that *"Some students rely heavily on AI-generated answers, especially when doing writing tasks. I have seen students submit essays not written in their natural style, lacking personal expression and originality. Students just provide a hint to the AI"*

tools, and they create the whole content without any mental effort, which is killing the creativity of the students in the English language acquisition.”

Participant T2 in the above statement argues that students even rely on AI for solving their assignment, which is not good for their creativity.

Participant T4 shares the same views on the current theme.

Participant 4 thinks: *If our students always depend on AI to write or translate their homework, they might stop using their own imagination. It can make them less creative and limit their ability to express ideas in their own words. Even someone famously stated that “AI is the death of creativity”.*

Over-reliance on AI tools

Students’ overreliance on AI for language acquisition is a matter of great concern. This is because it makes them addicted to using AI for their assignments and creative process. Without the mental creative process, English language acquisition becomes impossible. The following statements of the participants support this theme. According to Participant T2, *“Overreliance on AI tools is a growing concern for the students. They often use Google Translate or Chat GPT to complete assignments quickly without attempting to apply the grammar and vocabulary they have studied. This prevents them from using their own problem-solving skills and limits their language retention. Their thinking power is also decreased by overreliance on AI. This habit makes them addicted to using AI for creating anything.”* Participant T2 in the above statement shares that when students use AI excessively for creating content or solving their assignments, they become addicted to this habit, which is a bad thing. Participant T3 supports the current theme in the following words.

Participant T3 believed that *“Overdependency on AI for language skills or task completion could potentially reduce face-to-face interactions and the need to practice interpersonal skills. For example, A student who relies heavily on AI to write emails, prepare presentations, or even summarize complex information may become less proficient. In my view, students nowadays mostly rely on AI tools, which can affect their creativity. Some students might use AI tools as a crutch, relying too heavily on suggestions rather than applying their own language knowledge.”*

Participant T2 points to an important issue with the overreliance on AI, and that is the lack of face-to-face interaction. For language acquisition, face-

to-face interaction with others is very important while practicing English. But overreliance on AI for language acquisition has reduced the chances of face-to-face interaction with people.

Participant T4 argues: *“Sometimes, students rely so much on AI that they stop trying to learn on their own. They just copy what AI creates instead of thinking or practicing themselves.”*

The statement of participant T4 indicates that students’ own thinking is seriously curtailed by the overdependence on AI tools.

Impact on Critical-Thinking skills in language acquisition

Critical thinking is extremely important in language acquisition because it is not limited to memorization. Critical thinking enables learners to analyze texts, solve problems, and communicate more effectively by evaluating information and understanding different perspectives. The following views of the participants support this theme.

Participant T1 comments that: *“The critical thinking and problem-solving skills of the students have declined due to the inappropriate use of AI. Students utilize these two faculties when they need them. But as the AI technologies have made the creation of content effortless, it becomes an unnecessary activity for them to use their critical thinking and problem-solving skills in English language acquisition.”*

Although AI can negatively impact the critical thinking faculty in students for language acquisition, participant T2's statement is a testament that if used judiciously, AI can improve students’ critical thinking.

Participant T2 believes: *“When students depend on AI to generate ideas or create sentences or correct grammar, they may avert the mental effort required to analyze. However, if used with guidance, AI can enhance critical thinking skills. For example, by asking to evaluate, edit, or improve an AI-generated response, the students will use their critical thinking skills to do so. And when teachers and students only take help from AI in generating ideas and then creating their own content on those ideas, this will be extremely useful for language efficiency. AI just provides a hint, and the rest of the language has to be created by the students themselves. And I personally recommend it for the EFL teacher. This way, the AI overdependence will decrease, and hence their creativity will be enhanced.”*

Similarly, participant T4 supports the current theme in the following statement.

Participant 4 is of the view that, *“When AI gives answers instantly, we don’t get a chance to think deeply and solve problems ourselves. Over time, this can weaken our critical thinking skills and brainstorming. These are both God gifted abilities, soon they will be destroyed by AI; if we over-rely on it.”*

In contrast to the views of the other participants, participant T3 favours AI for boosting critical thinking in the following statement.

According to participant T3: “I don't believe AI limits students' critical thinking or problem-solving skills in language learning tasks; rather, its impact is heavily dependent on how it is used and the pedagogical strategy surrounding it.”

Hinderance to Natural Language Development

It has been observed that when students over-rely on AI for language creation, they often lack natural human expression. They are not even able to talk in a real situation, interacting with humans. This is because the language created by AI is formulaic and structured, while the language spoken in natural human interaction is unstructured. The views of the following participants support this theme.

Participant T4 commented that, *“AI language sounds perfect, but not always natural. If we keep following AI’s way of writing or speaking, our English might sound robotic and less like real human communication. Hence, we need to learn language in a natural environment because we use it in a human community, not in a machine zone.”*

Participant T4 in the above statement points out that AI tools interfere with natural language development by creating a more structured and robotic English, which is different from natural English.

Participant T2 believes, *“When students rely on AI for language creation, this overreliance can result in uniform or formulaic writing. This kind of writing sounds more like machine writing than human writing.”*

Participant T2 in the above statement also supports the current theme, emphasizing that overreliance on AI for language acquisition will result in formulaic English rather than natural English.

Ethical and Accuracy Concerns

In the age of AI, concerns about ethical and accuracy issues in content creation are a significant problem. We can’t always believe what we find on the internet or social media. AI also creates

content by scrutinizing the already given content given in online websites. The information given on those sites may be biased or inaccurate. So, the created content should always be cross-checked for ethical and accuracy concerns.

The statement of participant T4 supports this theme in the following words.

According to participant T4, “AI is not always right. Sometimes it gives wrong information or biased answers. Dependence on it without verifying facts can lead to confusion or misunderstanding. Even, sometimes they violate our real context and disclose our content accuracy.”

The above statement indicates that AI should be used cautiously and the content created through AI should be thoroughly scrutinized for ethical and accuracy concerns.

Results and Discussions

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the newest development in the field of Information Technology. AI has sparked a revolution in every aspect of life, including teaching and learning. This study focuses on the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers regarding the use of AI in language acquisition. AI tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, Deep Seek, chatbots, Grammarly, and many other applications have transformed the entire landscape of teaching and learning. Before AI, obtaining relevant, concise information on a particular topic was quite challenging. Previously, gathering information required visiting multiple websites, collecting data, and then editing it to create useful content. This process was not only difficult but also very time-consuming. Now, with AI, information on any subject can be generated instantly, tailored to the learner’s needs because AI understands the context. All one needs to do is ask a question or provide data, and AI will deliver relevant answers or solutions to a problem. However, AI also has negative impacts on learners, with the most significant being its effect on students’ creativity. Since the current study is about EFL teachers’ perceptions about the use of AI in English learning acquisition, almost all the participants favoured the use of AI for English learning, if used judiciously. It has been found in this study that AI plays a significant role in improving all four skills of English: Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. For teachers, it can provide relevant and need-based content for lesson planning, increasing

students' engagement in the class due to its interactive features and efficacy in teaching. For students, they are useful in personalized learning and self-assessment. AI tools such as ChatGPT and Gemini have the feature to talk. These AI apps can be used for live conversation during the class, which helps students improve their pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence structures. These tools can also provide instant feedback and find mistakes in grammar, spelling, and pronunciation. When teachers prepare their lesson plan with AI for an EFL class, their command over the content they teach increases, resulting in greater confidence during teaching.

Despite the many benefits of AI in language learning, there are significant issues linked to its improper use. Relying too much on AI, especially for creative tasks, can be problematic if used without proper guidance. It can kill the creativity of the students. Almost all the participants in this study shared the view that students' overreliance on AI for creating content in language acquisition has negative impacts on their critical thinking skills. Students should not accept everything created by AI as such. They should rather scrutinize and critically evaluate AI-generated content and should rely more on their mental abilities for creative writing and spoken language than on AI. AI should be used only as a guide or a facilitator, but not as a replacement for mental creation. And there are also authenticity issues with AI-generated content. Therefore, AI should be used carefully, and the content created should be cross-checked for authenticity.

Conclusion

The findings from this study confirm that AI is not only supportive in English language learning but also a hindrance, if not used judiciously. AI tools can help students improve all four skills: reading, listening, writing, and speaking. AI tools also assist students in personalized learning, increasing their independence and autonomy to learn according to their needs and convenience. AI is also helpful for EFL teachers in boosting their confidence during teaching, along with increased students' engagement, resulting in greater efficacy in teaching. Besides all these advantages, the use of AI in English language acquisition also has negative impacts, such as reduced creativity and critical thinking skills. Students may become over-reliant on AI tools for creating content. It also

interferes with natural language development, as the language created by AI tools is mostly formulaic with a specific structure. Students then face difficulty in interacting with humans in a natural environment. Finally, there are ethical and accuracy concerns in the use of AI for language acquisition. Use of AI tools for writing assignments or solving papers is a violation of ethical codes. Also, AI can't always provide the correct responses to one's queries. So, the content generated through AI should be verified and cross-checked for validity.

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