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**Pakistani ELT Teachers' Perceptions of ChatGPT as a
Pedagogical Tool: A Qualitative Study**



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Abstract

ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI, has recently gained significant attention in academia. With its ability to provide instant language assistance and generate diverse educational materials, it has emerged as a valuable tool in English Language Teaching (ELT). This study explores Pakistani ELT teachers' perceptions and experiences of using ChatGPT as a teaching aid in the ESL context. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with twenty five university teachers from different institutions in Pakistan. The findings reveal that ELT teachers employ ChatGPT for designing practice tasks, developing quiz and examination materials, and offering automated feedback. Teachers identified several advantages, including time efficiency, access to unlimited resources, and ease of use. However, they also expressed concerns regarding students' overreliance on the tool, plagiarism, misinterpretation of instructions, inaccurate information, and repetitive language patterns. The participants emphasized the need for proper training and ethical awareness among both teachers and learners to ensure the effective and responsible use of ChatGPT in the Pakistani ESL classroom. These insights are particularly useful for educators, students, and policymakers in shaping future directions for technology integration in language education in Pakistan.

Keywords: ChatGPT · ELT Teachers' Perspectives, Teaching Tool, Pedagogical Tool, Qualitative Study

Introduction

ChatGPT, an advanced AI model created by OpenAI, is increasingly being adopted in educational settings worldwide as a versatile teaching and learning aid. Its ability to generate contextually relevant responses makes it a valuable resource for diverse academic practices. Many educators recognize its potential in enhancing students' learning experiences by supporting critical thinking, problem-solving, writing, research skills, and by providing timely feedback on assignments. However, concerns regarding unethical usage have also emerged. Issues such as plagiarism, overdependence on the tool, and unquestioned reliance on its output raise questions about the validity of assessments and the development of independent learning skills (Kiryakova & Angelova, 2023). Despite these reservations, ChatGPT continues to gain ground as a complementary tool in traditional educational settings.

Although research into the use of ChatGPT in English Language Teaching (ELT) remains relatively limited, findings from broader educational contexts are highly relevant to language instruction. Studies highlight its potential to assist teachers in lesson planning, generating classroom tasks, and enhancing assessment practices (Zaman, Chandio, & Noor, 2025). At the same time, several scholars emphasize ethical and academic concerns associated with its use, stressing the need for institutional guidelines to ensure responsible integration (Grassini, 2023; Halaweh, 2023; Kasneci et al., 2023; Nguyen & Dieu, 2024; Rudolph et al., 2023a, 2023b; Tlili et al., 2023).

In the Pakistani context, the exploration of ChatGPT in higher education, particularly in ELT, is still at an early stage. While global studies suggest both opportunities and

challenges of AI adoption in classrooms, there is a lack of dedicated research focusing specifically on Pakistani ELT professionals' perceptions and experiences. This gap is significant, considering that Pakistan's education system is already negotiating challenges related to technology adoption, resource availability, and digital literacy among teachers and learners.

Understanding Pakistani ELT teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT—its benefits, challenges, and pedagogical implications—is therefore essential for ensuring its effective integration into ESL teaching. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating how Pakistani ELT professionals perceive and utilize ChatGPT as a teaching tool, and by offering insights that can guide educators and policymakers in promoting responsible and meaningful use of AI technologies in the classroom.

Statement of the Problem

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT are reshaping education worldwide, offering teacher's new ways to plan lessons, generate practice tasks, and provide instant feedback. In English Language Teaching (ELT), these tools are seen as valuable aids for improving teaching effectiveness and learner engagement.

In Pakistan, however, the integration of ChatGPT in ESL classrooms is still at a very early stage. Teachers face challenges such as limited resources, unequal access to technology, and varying levels of digital literacy. Concerns about plagiarism, overreliance on AI content, and inaccurate or repetitive responses further complicate its adoption.

Despite growing international research on ChatGPT in ELT, very little evidence exists on how Pakistani ELT professionals perceive and use this tool. Without such data, policymakers and institutions lack the necessary insights to create effective guidelines and training programs for responsible use.

This research addresses this gap by exploring Pakistani ELT teachers' perceptions and experiences with ChatGPT, offering insights that can guide ethical and meaningful integration of AI into ESL classrooms.

Research Objectives

To explore how Pakistani tertiary-level ELT teachers integrate ChatGPT into their classroom practices.

To examine the perceived benefits of ChatGPT in facilitating English language teaching

To analyze how teachers are adapting their teaching and assessment strategies in response to ChatGPT.

Research Questions

How are Pakistani tertiary-level ELT teachers using ChatGPT in their classrooms?

What benefits do teachers perceive from using ChatGPT in language teaching?

In what ways are teachers adapting their teaching and assessment methods in response to ChatGPT?

Significance of the study

This study is significant as it explores Pakistani ELT teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT, offering localized insights into its role in language teaching and learning. It highlights the benefits of AI in saving time, enhancing teaching resources, and

improving classroom practices, while also addressing challenges such as overdependence, plagiarism, and misinformation. The findings will assist universities and policymakers in formulating effective guidelines for AI integration, promote ethical and balanced use among teachers and students, and encourage innovation in pedagogy. Moreover, the study contributes to the limited body of research on AI in ELT from a Pakistani context and serves as a foundation for future investigations on technology-enhanced language education.

Literature review

The integration of ChatGPT in English Language Teaching (ELT) has attracted growing scholarly attention due to its potential to transform language learning and teaching practices. Theoretically, its adaptive and communicative nature aligns with Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, particularly the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the role of the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO), as learners engage in interactive dialogues and receive scaffolding that supports independent learning (Baskara, 2023; Firat, 2023; Kalina & Powell, 2009; Vygotsky, 1962; Punar & Yangın, 2024; Song & Song, 2023). Similarly, ChatGPT corresponds with Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982) by providing comprehensible input slightly beyond learners' current proficiency, thus promoting meaningful language development (Murphy et al., 2023). These frameworks establish AI as a valuable pedagogical tool for fostering personalized, collaborative, and self-regulated learning. Empirical studies further highlight ChatGPT's role in addressing common limitations of traditional ESL teaching, such as lack of personalization and insufficient feedback in large classrooms (Kefalaki et al., 2022; Chiu et al., 2023). Teachers have recognized its potential to create lesson plans, generate materials, design assessments, and provide instant feedback, thereby reducing workload while enhancing student engagement and motivation (Mohamed, 2024; Ulla et al., 2023; Derakhshan & Ghiasvand, 2024; Farrokhnia et al., 2024; Xiao & Zhi, 2023; Kohnke et al., 2023; Kasneci et al., 2023). Its ability to produce authentic dialogues, role plays, reading passages, and writing prompts increases learners' exposure to real language use and improves comprehension, writing, and critical thinking skills (Murphy, Wotley & Minn, 2023; George & George, 2023; Xia et al., 2023). Furthermore, research shows that ChatGPT supports diverse assessment methods, from multiple-choice questions to case studies and essay drafts, encouraging creativity and higher-order thinking (Boud & Soler, 2016; Bridgeman et al., 2023; Monash University, 2023; Kasneci et al., 2023; Rudolph et al., 2023a, b).

However, the adoption of ChatGPT is not without challenges. A key concern is plagiarism, as AI-generated texts are often indistinguishable from human writing, raising doubts about academic integrity and student motivation (Grassini, 2023; Alharbi, 2023; Halaweh, 2023; Buruk, 2023; Nguyen & Dieu, 2024; Cotton et al., 2024; Rahman & Watanobe, 2023; Sok & Heng, 2023). Moreover, overreliance on ChatGPT risks diminishing students' creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities, as they may substitute their own efforts with AI-produced responses (Alharbi, 2023; Kiryakova & Angelova, 2023; Marzuki et al., 2023; Nguyen & Dieu, 2024; Rahman & Watanobe, 2023; Malinka et al., 2023). Scholars suggest countering these risks by developing guidelines for responsible AI use, training learners in ethical practices such as proper citation, and redesigning assessment strategies to ensure authentic learning outcomes (Nguyen & Dieu, 2024; Hong, 2023; Sabzalieva &

Valentini, 2023).

Taken together, the literature reveals ChatGPT's dual role as both an opportunity and a challenge in ELT. While it offers unprecedented avenues for personalization, feedback, and resource generation, it also raises serious ethical and pedagogical concerns. This underscores the need for context-specific investigations into how ELT teachers perceive and utilize ChatGPT in their classrooms.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore how ELT teachers in Pakistan perceive and utilize ChatGPT as a teaching tool. A total of 25 English teachers from various universities in Pakistan participated in the study. The participants were selected purposively to ensure that they had relevant teaching experience at the tertiary level. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed participants to share their perceptions and experiences. The qualitative approach was chosen to gain in-depth insights into teachers' attitudes and practices regarding ChatGPT, as it enables a deeper understanding of the contextual realities of ELT classrooms in Pakistan.

Data Collection Instruments

Since the present study employed a qualitative research design, data were collected solely through semi-structured interviews. A set of 12 open-ended questions was carefully developed after reviewing relevant literature (Baskara, 2023; Hong, 2023; Kostka & Toncelli, 2023) to ensure the instrument addressed key themes such as teachers' awareness, usage patterns, perceived benefits, challenges, and strategies of adaptation regarding ChatGPT in English language teaching. These interviews were conducted with 25 ESL teachers working at different private and public universities in Pakistan, each with at least five years of teaching experience at the tertiary level. The open-ended nature of the questions allowed participants to share their perspectives freely, thereby providing rich, detailed, and contextually grounded data. This approach facilitated deeper insights into teachers' attitudes and experiences with ChatGPT, ensuring that emerging themes were explored comprehensively. To enhance the trustworthiness of the instrument, the interview guide was reviewed by two experts in applied linguistics before its use.

Data Analysis

Since the study was qualitative in nature, the data obtained from the 25 semi-structured interviews was carefully recorded, transcribed, and systematically analyzed. The transcripts were read multiple times for familiarity and then coded to identify recurring ideas and patterns related to teachers' perceptions and experiences of using ChatGPT. Key themes emerged around areas such as classroom usage of ChatGPT, perceived benefits (e.g., saving time, enhancing lesson preparation), challenges (e.g., over-reliance, lack of institutional training, concerns about students' creativity), and adjustments in teaching and assessment practices. The thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, which includes familiarization, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. This method ensured a structured and reliable interpretation of the data while capturing the nuanced perspectives of Pakistani tertiary-level ESL teachers.

Findings of the Study

The interviews revealed that Pakistani tertiary-level ESL teachers generally hold a positive attitude toward the integration of ChatGPT in teaching. They emphasized its usefulness in providing automated feedback, saving time in lesson planning, and generating classroom materials. At the same time, concerns were raised about ethical challenges, including plagiarism, over-reliance on AI, and the need for teachers to constantly verify and moderate the content produced by ChatGPT.

Seven key themes emerged from the data: teachers' usage of ChatGPT in ESL teaching, perceived benefits, drawbacks, task types generated, skill adequacy, ethical guidance, and future adaptations. While teachers recognized its value for enhancing reading and writing activities, they noted limitations in addressing speaking and listening skills. Overall, participants stressed the importance of balanced use, ethical training, and responsible integration to ensure that ChatGPT serves as a supportive tool rather than a replacement for traditional teaching methods.

ChatGPT Usage in ESL Teaching

The interviews with 25 Pakistani tertiary-level ESL teachers revealed diverse patterns in the use of ChatGPT as a teaching tool. A consistent trend among all respondents was the use of ChatGPT for generating practice materials and supplementary tasks for classroom activities. Several participants also reported employing it to design quiz and exam questions, while a smaller number indicated its use in providing feedback on student assignments.

One participant explained, "I mostly use ChatGPT to generate tasks that students can practice in class. I also prepare additional exercises for students on topics that they seem to be struggling with and upload them before quizzes or exams. This especially helps the weaker ones or those who are sincere and willing to do more practice" (P5). Similarly, another teacher shared, "For my reading courses, I usually use it to generate reading passages and to make questions. For my writing course, I generate samples for students" (P1).

Another respondent highlighted, "As I mostly teach Reading, I take help from ChatGPT to generate reading passages and exercises for classroom use, quiz or exam questions" (P3). In addition, one teacher noted a more student-driven application, stating, "I ask students to take a picture of their writing and use the OCR integrated in Google Lens to turn their written text into typed text. Then they put it into ChatGPT and ask for feedback to find out where they got things wrong" (P1).

These responses indicate that ChatGPT is being primarily employed for material generation and task design in ESL classrooms, with limited but emerging use in providing automated feedback.

Benefits

The analysis of interview data revealed four key benefits of integrating ChatGPT into ESL teaching. First, all participants unanimously emphasized its time-saving potential, noting that it significantly reduces the effort required to prepare teaching materials. Second, four teachers highlighted ChatGPT's ability to provide unlimited and customized resources, enabling teachers to tailor tasks according to student needs. Third, four respondents pointed out its role in enhancing language learning by generating diverse practice opportunities for students. Finally, three teachers identified accessibility as a major advantage, stressing its capacity to support learners

from varied backgrounds in improving their language skills.

As one teacher explained, “The best part of using ChatGPT is that if I have to go to the internet and search for reading passages or materials or writing samples, it would take me 2–3 hours, and still I may not get something to my liking. But if I give the command to ChatGPT, it can make passages or samples according to my requirements. It makes my work so much easier” (P1). Similarly, another participant noted, “It has given me sufficient leverage to design the course materials. For the students, in skill-based courses, the more they read or write, the better they become. Now it is easier for me to produce as many practice materials as I want. So students can practice more and this is very helpful for them” (P6).

Echoing this, a teacher observed, “It empowers the teacher by giving access to unlimited resources, saving time, and decreasing workload” (P5). Others emphasized accessibility and student engagement, with one respondent stating, “It is an open platform for any language enthusiast who is willing to improve his skill. It is very accessible and user-friendly; anyone can anytime engage in real-time conversations and thus can improve their skill” (P2). Another added, “It makes my life easier by helping me prepare teaching-related materials, although I have to revise and edit them a lot. But it is a big help” (P3).

These insights collectively highlight ChatGPT as a valuable pedagogical aid that enhances efficiency, provides abundant resources, fosters skill development, and ensures accessibility for both teachers and learners.

Drawbacks

Despite its advantages, the interviews revealed several drawbacks associated with ChatGPT use in ESL teaching. Five participants highlighted the need for continuous revision due to inaccuracies and fabricated content generated by the tool. Four respondents mentioned issues of misinterpretation of prompts, which often led to irrelevant or unusable material. Additionally, two teachers reported repetitive language and structure in ChatGPT’s outputs, which limited variety in instructional content. Perhaps the most serious concern, reported by five participants, was the increased tendency among students to plagiarize in their take-home assignments by relying excessively on AI-generated text.

As one teacher explained, “The main problem with it is it is very repetitive. When you have generated sufficient material, if you read it, you will see the structure and language are so similar. It doesn’t matter what you ask it to write on, it can be social media, intergalactic travel, or book fair, and it will use a similar structure and repetitive words” (P1). Another added, “The primary problem would be miscommunication. Sometimes the instructions are misinterpreted, and the tasks are not done as I intended them to be” (P2).

Concerns regarding factual accuracy were also stressed, as one participant noted, “Since it is an intelligence, but an artificial intelligence, it does make mistakes, and there are issues that need to be revised after it is done initially by ChatGPT” (P7). Another teacher raised the issue of plagiarism, stating, “The first problem that I would mention is related to its benefit. It easily accommodates information from different sources and generates materials for us but while doing that, it includes fake or fabricated information. But the worst problem comes from the students’ side. When teachers are generating things, they are modifying them or using them for teaching-related purposes. But when it comes to students, they simply copy and paste from

ChatGPT. No matter how much we discourage them, they are still doing it” (P6). Overall, these findings underscore that while ChatGPT can be a useful teaching aid, its drawbacks, especially issues of accuracy, repetitiveness, misinterpretation, and academic dishonesty, pose significant challenges for sustainable integration in ESL classrooms.

Tasks

The interviews revealed that most teachers utilized ChatGPT to design tasks for functional courses such as Writing and Reading. The most frequently mentioned activities included cohesive device practice (reported by 9 teachers) and summary writing tasks (reported by 25). Additionally, four participants used the tool to generate prompts for paragraph or composition writing, while three incorporated it for paraphrasing exercises. Less frequently, ChatGPT was employed for table completion, true–false, and matching activities (each mentioned by 2 participants).

Despite these varied uses, some participants reported not relying on ChatGPT at all for classroom tasks, reflecting caution or skepticism about its instructional value. As one teacher explained, “I prefer not to integrate ChatGPT directly into my lesson planning, as I feel it might compromise students’ originality” (P3). Similarly, another noted, “So far, I haven’t found a need to use ChatGPT in my classes, since my course materials are already fixed” (P4).

These findings suggest that while ChatGPT is increasingly applied to generate diverse reading and writing tasks, its adoption is not yet universal, with some teachers remaining hesitant about its integration into classroom practice.

Skill Adequacy

The findings indicate that most educators lack confidence in their knowledge and skills regarding ChatGPT. Out of seven participants, six acknowledged limited proficiency and expressed a strong willingness to enhance their expertise through workshops or training programs, while only one teacher reported having sufficient knowledge, supported by prior participation in an AI-focused workshop. The majority emphasized that although ChatGPT remains somewhat taboo in educational contexts, it holds significant potential for EFL teaching, making skill development essential for both teachers and learners.

Teachers highlighted the challenges of balancing heavy teaching loads, typically 12–15 credit hours per semester and classes of 35–45 students, with the demands of self-learning advanced tools. As one participant noted, “I don’t think I have enough skill in using ChatGPT. I would love to attend workshops or training because I think...very soon it can become a necessary tool for us just like a calculator or Google” (P6). Similarly, another remarked, “I would love to know more about prompt engineering...However, I haven’t yet received any training as in Bangladesh, it is kind of regarded as taboo that you are using AI in class” (P18).

Others reinforced the importance of structured support, stating that while their current practices were self-taught, professional training could expand ChatGPT’s applications in areas such as task generation and feedback provision. For instance, one teacher shared, “Whatever I am doing with ChatGPT, this is done through self-learning. But I believe it can be used as a very useful tool” (P2). Another expressed interest in using ChatGPT for differentiated learning and assessment, adding, “I am not well-versed in using ChatGPT and am quite willing to receive training on its use, specifically on

generating texts or tasks for students of different proficiency levels and grading student papers” (P13).

Overall, the data suggest that while current skill levels are limited, educators are motivated to develop proficiency in ChatGPT integration, recognizing its future role as a valuable pedagogical tool.

Changes in Teaching Strategies

When discussing strategies for the appropriate integration of ChatGPT in language learning, most participants emphasized the need to equip students with the skills to use AI effectively, practically, and ethically. A key recommendation was reducing reliance on traditional take-home assignments—which often lead to plagiarism—and instead emphasizing in-class tasks that promote authentic learning. Two participants also stressed raising awareness among educators about the pedagogical benefits of ChatGPT, while one suggested adopting the flipped classroom model to maximize classroom practice by shifting lecture components online.

As one participant explained, “To reduce the risk of plagiarism, the weight on take-home assignments should be reduced...One good solution can be a flipped classroom where theoretical topics and discussions can be covered in online classes so that we can avail more time for classroom practice in face-to-face classes” (P5). Another participant highlighted the importance of guiding learners, stating, “If we tell students not to use ChatGPT, they may not listen. So...if we can show students certain ways in which they can use it to improve their skills, I think that would be more effective” (P4). Similarly, others emphasized careful design of assignments to ensure they cannot be easily completed through AI alone, with one remarking, “Home assignments should be reduced, and when unavoidable, they should be carefully designed ensuring that they cannot be done using AI” (P3).

The findings suggest that fostering responsible use of ChatGPT requires rethinking traditional assessment practices, raising teacher and student awareness, and innovating classroom strategies to balance technology use with meaningful language learning.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that ESL teachers in Bangladesh acknowledge the growing significance of ChatGPT in language teaching, particularly for generating practice materials, enhancing student engagement, and reducing teachers’ workload. These results align with recent studies (e.g., Kasneci et al., 2023; Lo, 2024), which also highlight ChatGPT’s potential as a supportive pedagogical tool. The teachers’ emphasis on time-saving and resource generation reflects a broader trend in AI integration, where efficiency and accessibility are considered key benefits.

At the same time, the study reveals notable challenges such as repetitive language patterns, misinformation, and the risk of plagiarism among students. These concerns echo findings from emerging scholarship (Zou et al., 2023; Dwivedi et al., 2023), which caution against uncritical reliance on AI-generated outputs. Importantly, the reported drawbacks highlight the necessity for critical human oversight in teaching and assessment practices to safeguard academic integrity.

Another important insight from the interviews is the lack of teacher confidence in their own AI literacy. Most respondents expressed willingness to attend training or workshops to enhance their skills, suggesting that institutional support and

professional development programs are essential for effective adoption. This resonates with the broader discourse on AI in education, which stresses the need for capacity building and structured guidance (Holmes et al., 2022).

Finally, the teachers' recommendations to redesign assessment strategies, particularly reducing take-home assignments and promoting flipped classroom models, point toward innovative pedagogical adaptations. Such strategies could mitigate risks of plagiarism while fostering authentic learning experiences. Thus, the findings suggest that integrating ChatGPT into EFL teaching requires not only technological adoption but also pedagogical and ethical reorientation to balance opportunities with challenges.

Conclusion

The study concludes that teachers generally hold a positive attitude toward the integration of ChatGPT in ESL teaching, recognizing its potential to save time, provide unlimited resources, and support student learning. However, significant concerns remain regarding plagiarism, accuracy, and overreliance on AI-generated content. The findings also reveal that while teachers see value in using ChatGPT for designing tasks and enhancing classroom activities, most lack adequate skills and express a strong need for training and workshops. Moreover, participants emphasized the importance of ethical guidance and strategic changes, such as reducing take-home assignments and introducing innovative approaches like flipped classrooms, to ensure responsible and effective use of AI. Overall, the study highlights both the promise and challenges of ChatGPT integration, calling for professional development and thoughtful pedagogical adjustments to maximize its benefits in ESL contexts.

Future researchers

Future researchers could extend this study by exploring ChatGPT's role in diverse educational contexts, comparing public and private institutions, or conducting cross-country analyses. They may also adopt mixed-method designs that combine teacher perceptions with classroom observations and student performance data to measure ChatGPT's actual impact on learning outcomes. Additionally, future studies should examine long-term effects on learner autonomy, academic integrity, and AI literacy among both teachers and students.

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