

Exploring EFL Instructors' Awareness and Perceptions of Using ChatGPT in Language Education

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Abstract

Since it was first released in 2022, ChatGPT has rapidly become widespread as a well-known and widely used chatbot. This innovative tool has attracted interest from language teachers and researchers for its potential benefits in language learning and teaching. Despite this, there is very little scientific understanding of the extent and how it is used for language learning and teaching. To this end, this study aimed to investigate university-level EFL instructors' awareness of ChatGPT's potential for language learning and teaching and their perceptions of its advantages and disadvantages. A questionnaire consisting of open-ended and closed-ended questions was administered to 153 EFL instructors working in different universities in Türkiye. The study found that although participants were aware of ChatGPT's capabilities and found it very useful for material development and lesson planning, they were concerned about inaccuracies, unreliable information, prompt difficulties, ethical issues, overreliance, and ineffective outputs. The findings of this study present several important implications for the effective integration of AI tools like ChatGPT into language instruction.

Keywords: *ChatGPT, Generative AI, AI tools in language education, EFL instructors*

INTRODUCTION

In today's educational landscape, the profound impact of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools is undeniable, reshaping the field of education and influencing every aspect of our society. ChatGPT, released by OpenAI in November 2022, is an AI chatbot that fluently simulates human conversation (Lamber & Stevens, 2023). Two months after its launch, ChatGPT reached nearly 100 million active users monthly, which made it one of the fastest-growing tools ever (Hu, 2023). Today, ChatGPT remains the most popular AI tool, with around 180 million users and 1.8 billion visits per month (Duarte, 2024; Hu, 2023). The fact that ChatGPT is interactive, easy to use, produces high-quality texts in many different areas, and is free of charge can be listed among the reasons for its widespread use (Adeshola & Adepoju, 2023). The potential of ChatGPT to enrich teaching and learning environments was immediately recognized by scholars and educators from various fields.

Several review papers were published to address the potential benefits and challenges of ChatGPT for educators and learners. In one of these papers, Lambert and Stevens (2023) asserted that despite offering unique opportunities to reshape the educational systems positively, generative AI applications like ChatGPT may also create serious risks that must be handled cautiously. Potential benefits include the opportunity for adaptive learning, assisting with assessment creation and grading, virtual personal tutoring, enhanced personalized learning, offering innovative teaching approaches, and improved pedagogical practices such as designing curricula, lesson plans, classroom activities, presentations, and teaching materials (Lambert & Stevens, 2023; Pokkakillath & Suleri, 2023). On the other hand, there are serious concerns about the accuracy of information produced by ChatGPT, academic integrity, ethical and plagiarism issues, over-reliance on the tool, fairness of assessments, and security and confidentiality issues (Adeshola & Adepoju, 2023; Lambert & Stevens, 2023; Pokkakillath & Suleri, 2023).

In their technology review, Kohnke et al. (2023) state that ChatGPT's capacity to accurately mimic human conversation offers a new and intriguing option for language education. First, it has the ability to serve as a language partner, which can identify the meaning of a word in context, correct and explain language mistakes, and offer dictionary definitions, example sentences, and translations (Kohnke et al., 2023). Language teachers can also use ChatGPT as a source of materials that can produce texts in a variety of genres, adjust the difficulty level of texts to make them more suitable for students at different levels, prepare vocabulary notes in both the target and primary language and generate comprehension and expansion questions to accompany reading tasks (Kohnke et al., 2023). Above all, however, ChatGPT can serve as a rich source of input for those learners who lack access to proficient interlocutors or native speakers for practice, thus democratizing language learning (Barrot, 2023).

Despite all these benefits, ChatGPT has certain limitations regarding language learning and teaching. According to Barrot (2023), the biggest limitation is that ChatGPT's responses lack emotional depth and cultural nuances, making it difficult to capture the authenticity of human interaction. Others include the tendency to overemphasize text-based learning and, thus, neglect other important skills, the lack of inclusion of the most up-to-date cultural norms, references, or events, and the fact that over-reliance on ChatGPT for interaction in L2 can lead to social isolation (Barrot, 2023).

Given the fact that AI tools are here to stay, it seems crucial to understand the extent to which language teachers are aware of ChatGPT's potential to support language learners and enrich the language learning environment, the ways they harness ChatGPT in their teaching contexts, and how they perceive its benefits and risks. Although the use of AI tools in language teaching is an important area of interest among academics, few studies have investigated language educators' awareness, perceptions, and practices regarding the use of ChatGPT in language teaching. Moreover, these studies are mainly small-scale and have a very limited number of participants. To address this research gap, this study investigates English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors' awareness and perceptions regarding the use of ChatGPT in language education.

It is expected that the findings of this study will offer important insights into the effective integration of AI tools like ChatGPT into language classrooms. As Lambert and Stevens (2023) point out, AI technologies are becoming more central to our lives, making it vital to explore ways to introduce these technologies into the classroom and teach students how to use them responsibly and ethically. Therefore, the findings from this study can provide prospective and in-service language teachers with insights into the unique teaching and learning opportunities that AI tools such as ChatGPT can offer and, at the same time, increase their awareness of the potential risks and threats these tools may pose.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite the growing body of systematic research on the use of ChatGPT in language teaching, there is a lack of evidence about its benefits and shortcomings in language learning and teaching, as well as the attitudes and opinions of language educators and learners. Among different language areas and skills, several studies have investigated using ChatGPT to improve language learners' L2 writing performance (Guo & Wang, 2023; Yan, 2023; Punar Ozcelik & Yangın Eksi, 2024; Escalante et al., 2023). Guo and Wang (2023) found that ChatGPT can be a useful tool to support teacher feedback in EFL writing, as it produces a significantly larger amount of feedback, which is given equally to the three important elements of writing: language, content, and organization. However, another study showed no significant difference between teacher feedback and ChatGPT feedback in improving students' writing performance (Escalante et al., 2023). Punar Ozcelik and Yangın Eksi (2024) showed that despite having the potential to help students improve their ability to self-edit in formal writing, students were hesitant about its effectiveness in informal and neutral registers.

The existing literature suggests that language learners tend to perceive ChatGPT as a useful and effective tool that can increase their engagement with a variety of language learning tasks and thus improve their language skills (Javier & Moorhouse, 2023; Liu & Ma, 2023; Shaikh et al., 2023; Ziao & Zhi, 2023). Using structural equation modeling techniques and interviews, Cai et al. (2023) found that information system quality and hedonic motivation were the best predictors of language learners' satisfaction with ChatGPT. In addition, the qualitative study by Sahari et al. (2023) showed that translation students perceived ChatGPT positively as it can help them write and edit translated texts, and they preferred it over Google Translate.

Contrary to the main trend in the literature, which aims to explore the potential of ChatGPT for language learning and teaching, some studies have mainly addressed the ethical considerations of using ChatGPT in L2 studies (Alexander et al., 2023; İbrahim, 2023; Yan, 2023). In a small-scale study with 12 undergraduate Chinese EFL students, Yan (2023) found that although students valued ChatGPT's assistance with writing tasks, they had significant concerns about academic honesty. Alexander et al. (2023) showed that ESL lecturers had difficulty distinguishing between ChatGPT and human-generated writing. The findings of the same study also suggested that these instructors need to be trained in using advanced artificial intelligence detection tools (Alexander et al., 2023). Similarly, İbrahim (2023) study, which tested the effectiveness of two AI-detection platforms in helping ESL instructors detect AI-based plagiarism, showed that despite being able to detect plagiarism, further development is needed for higher detection accuracy.

The few studies that investigated language instructors' views on using ChatGPT in language teaching were small-scale and qualitative (Bin-Hady et al., 2023; Mohamed, 2023; Ulla et al., 2023). In their major study, Bin-Hady et al. (2023) collected data from twenty EFL university teachers who participated in an online discussion on the ResearchGate platform. The participants reported that ChatGPT can enhance language proficiency, scaffolding language learning, language usage, and learner autonomy. To investigate Saudi EFL teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of ChatGPT in the language learning process, Mohamed (2023) conducted interviews with ten participants. The findings revealed that although they were aware of the potential benefits such as real-time feedback, personalized instruction, large knowledge base, natural language processing, human-like responses, and cost-effectiveness, they had significant concerns about the development of student's critical thinking and research skills (Mohamed, 2023).

In another similar study conducted with seventeen EFL teachers at a Thai university, Ulla et al. (2023) reported that teachers' positive perceptions of ChatGPT were mainly based on the fact that it can be used to create lesson plans and language activities and that students' interaction with it can improve their language skills. However, similar to the findings of Mohamed's study (2023), the participants in this study also identified certain disadvantages, such as the inconsistency and

untrustworthiness of the information provided by ChatGPT, as well as students' over-reliance on it, which poses a threat to the development of their critical thinking skills (Ulla et al., 2023). Chinese EFL university teachers (N=95) were also concerned about neglecting traditional learning resources, academic integrity, and excessive reliance on ChatGPT (Gao et al., 2024). In sum, it is clear that the limited number of studies conducted to date has not provided sufficient evidence on how language educators perceive the opportunities and shortcomings of ChatGPT for language teaching

METHODS

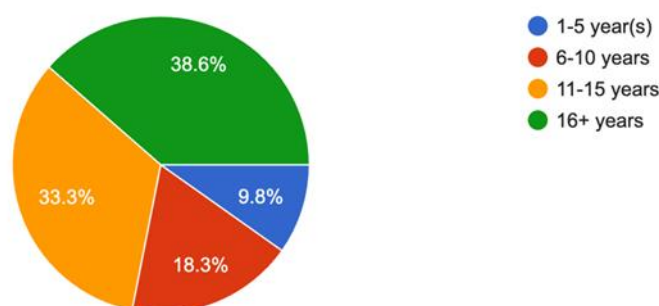
Research Design and Participants

Using a cross-sectional online survey design, this study sought to investigate tertiary-level EFL instructors' awareness of ChatGPT's potential for language learning and teaching and their perceptions of the benefits and challenges of using it in their teaching practice. A questionnaire consisting of open-ended and closed-ended questions was administered to 153 EFL instructors working in different universities in Türkiye.

The participants were determined using snowball sampling, defined as a "chain reaction" in which the investigator selects a small number of subjects who fit the parameters of the specific study and then requests that these subjects find more appropriate volunteers in the community (Dornyei, 2007). In accordance with that, data collection began in February 2024 and continued until mid-March 2024, when the researchers felt they had reached a sufficient number of participants. 78.9 % of the participants were female and 21.1% were male. The majority of the participants had more than ten years of teaching experience. Figure 1 below illustrates the graph showing the length of teaching experience held by the participants:

Figure 1

The bar chart showing the length of the participants' teaching experience



As Figure 1 clearly shows, 38.6 % of the participants (N=59) had more than sixteen years of teaching experience, and 33.3 % (N=51) had between eleven and fifteen years of teaching experience. 18.3 % of the participants (N=28) reported having between six and ten years of

teaching experience, and the least experienced group, with between one and five years of teaching experience (N=15), represented 9.8% of the total sample. Most of the survey participants (59.5 %, N=91) hold an MA degree. While 26.1 % (N=40) have a BA degree, only 14.4 % (N=22) have a PhD. Lastly, while 90 participants (58.8 %) are currently employed at a state university, 63 (41.2 %) participants work at a foundation university.

The questionnaire

As stated earlier, an online survey was used to collect data in this study. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part aimed to gather demographic information on participants' gender, the length of teaching experience, the latest degree they hold, and their workplace. The second part included three open-ended and ten closed-ended items to reveal the participants' awareness and perceptions of using ChatGPT in their language teaching.

As a first step in the preparation of the questionnaire, an item pool was created by reviewing the relevant literature. In addition, some items were created and added to the item pool by the researchers. Three faculty members, two of whom have a PhD in English language teaching and one of whom is a native English speaker, revised the item pool. Based on their suggestions, some changes were made to the questionnaire items. One open-ended item was turned into a closed-ended item by adding response options. In addition, some changes were made to the wording of some items. After piloting the questionnaire with 10 participants, further minor changes were made to the wording of some of the questionnaire items. This gave the questionnaire its final form and it was sent to the participants online.

Data Analysis

In this study, content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data obtained through the open-ended questions, while descriptive statistics (frequencies) were used to analyze the quantitative data. Kumar (2011) defines content analysis as analyzing the content of qualitative data to identify key themes emerging from participants' responses. He identifies four main steps in qualitative content analysis: identifying the main themes, assigning codes to the main themes, classifying the responses under the main themes, and integrating the themes and responses into the text of the report (Kumar, 2011). In this study, this four-stage content analysis method was the basis for the analysis of the qualitative data. The coding process was carried out separately by two of the researchers. Once the major themes were identified and codes were allocated, the researchers reviewed coded responses again and categorized them into a number of different themes. These themes are presented in the findings section.

RESULTS

Quantitative Data Results

EFL instructors' perceptions about the use of ChatGPT were obtained via a survey developed by the researchers. The close-ended questions in the survey were aimed to reveal *whether participants have heard of ChatGPT before, their familiarity with it, their awareness about the potential of ChatGPT in language learning and teaching, their beliefs concerning the effectiveness of ChatGPT in enhancing language learning in the classroom, and their perceptions regarding the benefits of employing ChatGPT in language teaching.* In addition, participants were asked *whether they have used ChatGPT in their language teaching practices, experienced any challenges during their practices, and ever participated in any formal or informal training on using ChatGPT.* As a last question, instructors answered a question on *their interests in receiving*

training on how to effectively use ChatGPT in language teaching. In this part, the related results will be presented in the order the questions were presented in the questionnaire.

EFL Instructors' Familiarity with ChatGPT

Table 1. Familiarity with ChatGPT

		N	%			N	%
Have you ever heard of ChatGPT before?	Yes	151	98.7	What is your familiarity with it?	Heard of it but never used before	23	15
	No	2	1.3		Used it for personal purposes	74	48.4
					Used it for academic purposes	69	45.1
					Used it for teaching purposes	91	59.5
					Other	2	1.3

As can be seen in Table 1 while 151 instructors (98.7 %) were familiar with the term ChatGPT, two participants (1.3 %) stated that they had not heard it before. 23 participants (15 %) stated that they had never used ChatGPT even though they had heard it before. 74 EFL teachers (48.4 %) benefited from ChatGPT for personal purposes whereas 69 (45.1 %) participants used it for academic purposes such as proofreading, literature review, and research ideas. A great majority of the participants (59.5 %, N=91) reported utilizing ChatGPT for their teaching purposes such as lesson planning, exam preparation, and material development. Lastly, two (1.3 %) instructors highlighted using ChatGPT for translation purposes and as an assistant to grade student papers.

EFL Instructors' Awareness about the Potential of ChatGPT and Their Perceptions about the Effectiveness of ChatGPT

Table 2. Awareness about the Potential of ChatGPT and Perceptions about the Effectiveness of i

		N	%			N	%
To what extent are you aware of the potential of ChatGPT for language learning and teaching purposes?	Not aware at all	8	5.2	To what extent do you believe ChatGPT can enhance language learning experiences in the classroom?	Not at all	3	2
	Somewhat aware	32	20.9		To a small extent	17	11.1
	Moderately aware	57	37.3		To a moderate extent	55	35.9
	Very aware	44	28.8		To a large extent	56	36.6
	Extremely aware	12	7.8		To a very large extent	22	14.4

As shown in Table 2 above, eight of the EFL instructors (5.2 %) stated that they were not aware of the potential of ChatGPT for language learning and teaching purposes at all. While 32 teachers (20.9 %) described themselves as somewhat aware, 57 participants (37.3 %) perceived themselves as moderately aware. 44 of the EFL instructors who constituted 28.8 % of the whole group stated that they were very aware of the potential of ChatGPT whereas only twelve teachers (7.8 %) described themselves as extremely aware.

Next, when EFL instructors were asked about their beliefs about the effectiveness of ChatGPT in terms of enhancing language learning experiences in the classroom, three participants (2 %) expressed that they did not find it effective at all. Seventeen teachers (11.1 %) believed that it can enhance language learning experiences in the classroom to a small extent whereas 55 participants (35.9 %) selected the option to a moderate extent. 56 EFL instructors (36.6 %) who constituted the largest proportion of the group asserted that ChatGPT can enhance language learning experiences in the classroom to a large extent. Lastly, 22 participants (14.4 %) stated that they found ChatGPT effective to a very large extent.

Potential Benefits of Using ChatGPT in Language Teaching

Table 3. Potential Benefits of Using ChatGPT in Language Teaching

	N	%
Enhanced Language Practice Opportunities	126	82.4
Personalized Learning Experiences	122	79.7
Assistance in Lesson Planning	118	77.1
Improved Student Engagement	73	47.7
Other	8	5.2

Next, EFL instructors were asked what might be the potential benefits of using ChatGPT in language teaching. As shown in Table 3, 126 instructors (82.4 %) believed that using ChatGPT in language teaching may enhance language practice opportunities. 122 of the participants (79.7 %) stated that personalized learning experiences might be one of the benefits of ChatGPT. 77.1 % of the participants corresponding to 118 EFL instructors emphasized that ChatGPT might assist in

lesson planning. Furthermore, 73 teachers (47.7 %) believed that using ChatGPT in language teaching might lead to improved student engagement. In addition to the aforementioned potential benefits, eight participants (5.2 %) stated some other potential benefits which were giving feedback (N=2, 1.3 %), testing and assessment (N=1, 0.7 %), assistance in material development (N=1, 0.7 %), scoring (N=1, 0.7%), independent learning (N=1, 0.7 %), extending learners' task perception (N=1, 0.7%), and saving time (N=1, 0.7 %).

Experience in Using ChatGPT and Challenges Faced While Using It

Table 4. Experience in Using ChatGPT and Challenges Faced While Using It

		N	%			N	%
<i>Have you ever used ChatGPT in your teaching?</i>	Yes	87	56.9	<i>Have you encountered any challenges while using it?</i>	Yes	59	47.2
	No	66	43.1		No	66	52.8

Participants were asked if they had used ChatGPT in their language teaching before. As shown in Table 4, 87 of the participants (56.9 %) utilized ChatGPT in their teaching whereas 66 EFL instructors (43.1%) stated that they did not use it in their teaching. Participants were also requested to state if they had encountered any challenges while employing ChatGPT in their teaching practices. 59 participants (47.2 %) stated that they faced some difficulties whereas 66 EFL instructors (52.8 %) said they did not encounter any problems.

Training on Using ChatGPT in Language Teaching

Table 5. Training on Using ChatGPT in Language Teaching

		N	%			N	%
<i>Have you ever participated in any training on using ChatGPT in language teaching?</i>	Yes	54	38	<i>Would you be interested in receiving training on how to effectively use it?</i>	Yes	112	73.2
	No	88	62		No	4	2.6
					Maybe	37	24.2

Lastly, EFL instructors were asked if they had participated in any formal or informal training on using ChatGPT in language teaching such as in-service training, webinars, or seminars. As demonstrated in Table 5 above, while 54 participants (38 %) stated they attended training on employing ChatGPT in language teaching, the majority (N=88, 62 %) asserted that they did not. To find out their interest in further training, EFL instructors were asked if they would like to receive training or professional development on how to effectively use ChatGPT in language teaching. 112 EFL instructors (73.2 %) stated that they would be interested in getting trained whereas 37 participants (24.2 %) were not sure. Only four participants constituting 2.6 % of the whole group declared that they would not be interested.

Qualitative Data Results

The open-ended questions of the survey in which 153 English language instructors were involved aimed to find out how these teachers used ChatGPT in their teaching practices, the challenges they encountered while using it, or what concerns they had. In this part, the participants' perceptions regarding those issues will be presented.

The Use of ChatGPT in Teaching Practices

In the first open-ended question of the survey, EFL instructors were first asked to describe how they used ChatGPT in their teaching practices in and/or out of the classroom. Table 6 below shows the number of comments made related to their use of this tool.

Table 6. Distributions of Comments on the Use of ChatGPT in Teaching Practices

Category	Number of Comments
Material development	110
Lesson planning	23
Idea generation	15
Exam preparation	10
In-class activities	9
Feedback	7
Discouraging	5
Proofreading	4
Grading	3
Easing the workload	2
Encouraging	2

As can be seen in Table 6 above, EFL instructors included eleven categories in their comments about the use of ChatGPT in their teaching practices, and these are *material development, lesson planning, idea generation, exam preparation, in-class activities, feedback, discouraging, proofreading, grading, easing the workload, and encouraging*.

In terms of material development, there were far too many comments compared to the other purposes of ChatGPT use. It was observed that the teachers used ChatGPT while preparing and adapting materials, activities, and worksheets for their students, most of which were for their reading lessons. In addition, the participants asserted that they also used the tool to create materials to teach grammar and vocabulary as well as to practice writing and speaking skills in their classes. EFL instructors also stated that ChatGPT was useful for generating production-based activities in which students could be more actively involved, examples of which could be brainstorming, creating mind maps, and pair/group work.

It was observed from the qualitative data that lesson planning was the second most common use of ChatGPT among the participants. One of the participants (T106) added that they also used the tool for curriculum and syllabus design. Idea generation was found to be the third most common purpose for teachers to use ChatGPT in their teaching. One of these instructors said (T114), "I usually use it to get inspired for designing my in and out-of-class activities." Finding writing prompts, course topics, and warm-up ideas were also mentioned by the participants to be the areas which they make use of the tool.

Regarding preparing exams, ChatGPT was found to be used by some of the EFL instructors. One of them (T125) included both “summative and formative assessment forms” in this category. The results also indicated that the tool was used for the generation of in-class activities. While emphasizing the incorporation of ChatGPT into their lessons, one of the teachers (T4) said, “After a lesson analyzing ‘tone’, I had students use ChatGPT to co-write a piece of writing with a specific tone”, and added, “I allow students to brainstorm for writing with ChatGPT.” Another teacher (T74) put forward another example of use in terms of writing: “I had students use it for generating ideas and writing sample tasks to evaluate according to the grading criteria.” Other answers showed that in addition to writing-related activities, ChatGPT was used to create more fun activities such as games.

Moreover, it was expressed in the participants’ comments that they used ChatGPT to give feedback to students and while grading student work. While some participants demonstrated encouraging attitudes toward their students about ChatGPT, others’ focus was on the weaknesses of the tool. For example, one of them said (T8), “I used a ChatGPT generated academic essay for students to revise and improve. The goal of the lesson was ... illustrating the limitations of ChatGPT to discourage its use in graded essays for the course.” One other participant (T152) added that ChatGPT used an “unnecessarily elaborate style” and “ma[de] up non-existing research articles”.

In addition to the aforementioned areas above, the results showed that EFL instructors used ChatGPT for proofreading purposes, too. Lastly, there were only two comments focusing on how ChatGPT could make teachers’ lives easier by lessening their workload and saving time.

The Challenges of Using ChatGPT in Teaching Practices

In the survey, participants were also asked if they encountered any challenges while using ChatGPT for their teaching practices. While 66 participants stated they did not experience any challenges, 59 of the participants mentioned facing some difficulties. Table 7 below shows the number of comments made related to the challenges of utilizing ChatGPT.

Table 7. Distributions of Comments on the Challenges of Using ChatGPT in Teaching Practices

Category	Number of Comments
Impractical Results	32
Difficulty in Coming up with the Right Prompts	22
Extra Editing	8
Level Specificity	7
Student-related Challenges	5
Time-related Issues	4
Ethical Issues	3

As can be seen in Table 7, EFL instructors included seven categories in their comments regarding the challenges they experienced, and these are *impractical results*, *difficulty in coming up with the right prompts*, *extra editing*, *level specificity*, *student-related challenges*, *time-related issues*, and *ethical concerns*.

It was seen that the comments about impractical results outnumbered other comments in terms of challenges. Teachers asserted that the information provided by ChatGPT was not always accurate and relevant in that the responses it provided were not appropriate and sufficient and they were sometimes out of scope. Additionally, participants highlighted the repetitiveness of the replies provided. One participant (T104) said, “It was quite repetitive; it couldn’t generate different context after a while”. While three teachers emphasized the grammar errors in their replies, two of them stated that the material created by ChatGPT was inauthentic.

As Table 7 shows, EFL instructors found writing prompts quite challenging. While one of the teachers (T150) emphasized “... it requires very detailed repeated instruction”, another participant (T52) expressed their doubts about prompts: “Sometimes I am not sure about writing the right directions/questions”. Next, it was observed that the need to edit ChatGPT’s answers was the third common challenge experienced. Teachers asserted that they had to carefully edit and refine the output before they used it in their lessons. Moreover, level specificity was mentioned as another challenge faced by EFL instructors. Teachers emphasized that ChatGPT sometimes failed to prepare proficiency level-specific questions or materials.

Apart from the above-mentioned challenges, student-related issues were also mentioned by some of the teachers. Participants observed over-reliance on ChatGPT and wrong perceptions about it among their learners. In addition, inability to employ ChatGPT effectively was emphasized by one of the teachers. Regarding time-related issues, there were three negative and one positive comment. While three of the participants stated ChatGPT did not save them time, one participant (T12) still noted “Suggestions often need extra work, refinement so they fit your lessons and meet lesson objectives- however, it still saves a lot of time”. The last challenge that the qualitative data proved was ethics. One teacher (T4) said, “Students are not always sure where the ethical boundary of usage is”. In the same vein, plagiarism was highlighted by the participants.

The Concerns About Incorporating ChatGPT into Language Teaching Practices

Although four out of 153 teachers stated they did not have enough knowledge about ChatGPT to have concerns and 29 of them commented that they had no concerns about how to implement ChatGPT in their teaching practices, others expressed their worries by providing detailed explanations. The number of comments made regarding teachers’ concerns is demonstrated in Table 8 below.

Table 8. Distributions of Comments on the Concerns About Incorporating ChatGPT into Language Teaching Practices

Category	Number of Comments
Ethics	57
Laziness	43
Insufficient help	21
Unreliability	19
Implementation	10
Domination	4
Safety	1

As shown in Table 8 above, the aspect that EFL instructors were mostly concerned about was related to ethical issues. Their concerns included cheating, plagiarism, copyrighting, and inauthentic student work. One teacher (T8) said that the situation which involves those problems

also created “a lot of fear and dread regarding its implications for college writing”. Some teachers also wrote about their worry regarding the assessment process which they thought would be affected by the use of ChatGPT. One of the teachers (T87) indicated their concern, and said, “... it (the use of ChatGPT) will make it difficult to assess the true writing abilities of my students.” Another issue that the participants were worried about was that using ChatGPT made or could make teachers and their students lazier. Overreliance on the tool and its consequences were highlighted by most participants who commented on the issue referring to both teachers and students. For instance, one participant (T96) put forward that since “it (ChatGPT) provides ready-made solutions, it makes [them] too dependent or mentally inactive”, and added that they felt “mentally inactive.” Some other teachers also highlighted the negative impact of using ChatGPT on their creativity, effectiveness, productivity, and uniqueness. In addition, another teacher (T100) exemplified the unfavorable effects of ChatGPT on teachers by saying that it could “hinder critical thinking, imagination, problem-solving, or research abilities.”

In terms of student use, besides the overreliance on the tool and the lack of creativity it could generate, EFL instructors commented on how ChatGPT could influence students’ learning process negatively. In other words, the results showed that the teachers’ concern was that students would lose their motivation to learn and not put enough effort into their own learning journey as ChatGPT provided ready-made solutions which they could obtain easily. One of the participants (T152) wrote they were also worried about the hindrance of students’ “analytical thinking” skills. In the same vein, another participant (T73) also added that “[i]t (the use of ChatGPT) leaves no room for creativity and imagination in language production.” According to one other participant (T10), this whole situation might eventually cause the students’ “potential performance” to worsen.

The results indicated that the help which ChatGPT provided could be insufficient for several reasons, which was another subject of worry. Some teachers asserted that they were not content with the results that ChatGPT produced as they usually had to edit and revise them, which increased the time that they spent on the preparation of materials rather than decreasing it. In addition, some participants emphasized that ChatGPT was not useful for certain areas of teaching such as listening and speaking. Another concern about the materials provided by ChatGPT was that they were not always natural, context-specific, or appropriate for students’ levels. Referring to this issue, one teacher (T84) drew attention to the necessity of teacher awareness about ChatGPT use, and said, “... teachers should also understand that ChatGPT is not tailor-made to the needs and interests of students. It might facilitate learning, but it is not magic.” Some participants were also concerned about the irrelevant and repetitive materials that they received using ChatGPT. Moreover, according to the results of the qualitative data, participant EFL instructors could not completely trust the information that ChatGPT provided. While most of them conveyed their worry about the inaccurate and invalid information and sources, some others highlighted the risk of bias. One participant (T21) stated that they could not be certain whether the information created by ChatGPT could be “truly unbiased and nondiscriminatory.”

In addition, the teachers described their feelings of insufficiency regarding how to implement ChatGPT in their classes and be more helpful to their students. Some of the teachers wrote that they barely knew how to use the tool, and one of them (T68) said this situation made her feel unconfident. Another worry was to be able to create a balanced approach which was put forward by one other teacher (T74): “Although I want to use it (ChatGPT) in my classes, I don’t want students to normalize all ways of using it.”

The results suggested that only four of the participants were concerned about the future domination of ChatGPT in the field of education. Referring to this issue, one of the teachers (T102) said “As it (ChatGPT) can enhance one's learning process and guide them through this journey, the need for teachers may be questioned in the future despite its deficiencies.” Lastly, there was only one teacher (T15) who had safety considerations as she was not sure about how the data she entered on the tool could be “used and for what purposes.”

DISCUSSION

The findings showed a high level of familiarity and use of ChatGPT among EFL instructors. Although they indicated that their awareness of the potential of ChatGPT for language learning and teaching was not high, they believed that ChatGPT could enhance this process. A possible explanation for this could be that although they have started to experiment with ChatGPT for teaching purposes, they believe that there is still much more to discover about ChatGPT and its use in language teaching. This finding may also be explained by the fact that most of the participants did not receive any training on using ChatGPT for language teaching.

When asked to indicate the potential benefits of ChatGPT for language education, the vast majority of the participants reported that it could enhance language practice opportunities, personalize learning experiences, and assist in lesson planning. This finding corroborates the ideas of Pokkakillath and Suleri (2023) and Lambert and Stevens (2023), who regard personalized learning and improved pedagogical practices, such as designing lesson plans, materials, and classroom activities, as the most noteworthy benefits of ChatGPT for education. This finding also supports the idea of Kohnke et al. (2023) and Barrot (2023), who suggested that ChatGPT can serve as a language partner for learners who do not have the opportunity to practice the target language with native speakers or competent interlocutors.

The results of this study show that, by far, the most common reason for EFL instructors to use ChatGPT is to develop materials such as reading texts, vocabulary, and grammar notes. This finding is consistent with Kohnke et al. (2023), who suggested that ChatGPT can provide teachers and learners with texts in various genres and prepare vocabulary notes. The finding that ChatGPT is most commonly used to prepare reading materials also highlights the danger, as pointed out by Barrot (2023) previously, of overemphasizing text-based learning to the detriment of other important language skills.

According to the results of the current study, planning language lessons was the second most common reason among the participants to use ChatGPT. In addition to supporting Lambert and Stevens' (2023) and Pokkakillath and Suleri's (2023) ideas, this result also coincides with the findings of Ulla et al.'s (2023) study, which revealed that one of the main reasons why Thai EFL teachers perceived ChatGPT positively was to help with lesson planning. The findings of this study also showed that ChatGPT can promote productive language skills by serving as an idea generator for writing prompts, warm-up ideas, discussion questions, and course topics. This can help alleviate the concern expressed by Barrot (2023) regarding the overemphasis on text-based learning.

The present findings seem consistent with Mohamed's study (2023), which found that the inaccuracy and the untrustworthiness of the information provided by ChatGPT were considered significant disadvantages by EFL instructors. It was an unanticipated finding that the participants of this study reported having difficulty in coming up with the right prompts, which can be attributed to the fact that the quality of the prompts used to initiate and guide the interaction is a key factor in the success of a ChatGPT conversation (Diaz, 2023). In order to get the best answer from ChatGPT, the prompts need to have a clear focus, be specific enough, and avoid using ambiguous language and broad questions (Diaz, 2023).

It is not surprising that the participants in this study were highly concerned about ethical issues such as plagiarism and academic integrity. These results match those from earlier studies (Alexander et al., 2023; Gao et al., 2024; Ibrahim, 2023; Yan, 2023). Moreover, as in previous studies (Gao, 2024; Mohamed, 2023; Ulla, 2023), this study found widespread concern among

participants that overreliance on ChatGPT would make students mentally inactive and damage their creative and critical thinking skills. Furthermore, as well as being concerned about ChatGPT making learners lazier, EFL instructors were also not happy about their own overreliance on the tool and the danger of losing their creativity.

One finding not previously described is that participants in this study expressed significant dissatisfaction with the assistance provided by ChatGPT, as it required additional editing and revision. This can be attributed to ChatGPT's lack of information and updating, as well as undetailed and non-specific prompts.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate EFL instructors' awareness and perceptions regarding the use of ChatGPT in language education. 153 EFL instructors working at universities in Turkey responded to an online survey consisting of open-ended and closed-ended questions. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. The findings showed that although they were familiar with and aware of the tool and its affordances, they believed there was still much to be explored regarding the use of ChatGPT in language teaching. It was also revealed that the participants in this study found ChatGPT highly useful for material development and lesson planning. However, they were highly concerned about such issues as inaccuracy and the untrustworthiness of the information provided by ChatGPT, the difficulty of coming up with the right prompts, ethics, overreliance on the tool, and the ineffectiveness of ChatGPT's output. The findings of this study have several important implications for the effective integration of AI tools like ChatGPT into language instruction. First of all, it is clear that AI tools are here to stay. Therefore, rather than avoiding them, educators should be trained on how to make the best use of these tools while minimizing their negative impact. For example, EFL-specific prompt repositories could be created so that teachers can get the most accurate output as soon as possible. Additionally, further assistance should be provided to encourage their learners about ethical and responsible uses of these new tools. Second, it is important not to accept ChatGPT or other AI tools as an end-product but rather consider them as tools that might enhance language teaching and learning through considerate use.

It is advised that initial teacher education programs should pay attention to training their prospective EFL teachers about the responsible use of AI tools. Lastly, it is of utmost importance that school administrators create a school environment supporting collegiality so that teachers have the opportunity to share their knowledge and experience with their colleagues and cooperate.

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