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Unveiling the Potentials and Limitations of ChatGPT in Second Language Education: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

This study examines the integration of ChatGPT into second language (L2) education, with a focus on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching in Iran. Through qualitative analysis of interviews with 15 Iranian EFL teachers, the research explores how ChatGPT enhances teaching practices both inside and outside the classroom, the challenges teachers face when using it as an assistant, and their strategies for overcoming these challenges. The findings reveal that ChatGPT offers significant benefits, such as improving students' language skills—particularly in writing and reading—providing support for lesson planning, task creation, and material preparation and delivering immediate feedback for learner evaluation. However, the study also highlights key challenges, including the need for reliable VPNs and stable internet connections, risks of reduced originality and critical thinking, and concerns about diminished human interaction and creativity due to overreliance on the tool. The research concludes that while ChatGPT can be a valuable assistant in L2 education, its effectiveness depends on balanced usage, proper teacher oversight, and targeted training to ensure responsible and effective integration. These findings provide practical recommendations for educators and policymakers aiming to incorporate AI tools into language education effectively.

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Introduction

The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) has brought significant changes to various fields, including medicine, engineering, and research (Dowling & Lucey, 2023). One of the fields profoundly influenced by AI is education. In the realm of education, AI has introduced innovative tools and applications that enhance both teaching and learning experiences. AI technologies in education are advancing rapidly, offering features such as material generation, personalized assistance, and language translation. Among these tools, ChatGPT stands out as one of the most popular and impactful AI applications for language learners and educators. Its potential to transform classroom instruction has been widely recognized (Wang et al., 2023). Known for its ability to generate responses that closely resemble human language, ChatGPT has become a valuable resource in the language learning process. Studies by Aydian and Karaarslan (2023) highlight its potential to bridge gaps in classroom instruction, providing both teachers and learners with new opportunities for growth.

ChatGPT offers a wide range of capabilities for educators, helping teachers improve their instructional practices. It allows teachers to create classroom materials and access extensive resources, enabling more customized instruction to meet students' specific needs and interests (Limo et al., 2023). Ore and Sposato (2021) highlight ChatGPT's usefulness in assessments, particularly its ability to provide instant feedback, automate grading, and generate various question types. By delivering clear explanations and timely feedback, ChatGPT helps improve learning outcomes while saving teachers time on repetitive tasks. Additionally, Rudolph et al. (2023) emphasize ChatGPT's potential to enhance second language learning by creating more engaging and interactive lessons. This is especially helpful for students facing language barriers or needing extra support. ChatGPT's interactive approach makes language practice enjoyable and supportive, offering exercises and explanations based on each student's skill level. This flexibility helps students build confidence and improve their learning experience, making ChatGPT a valuable tool for classrooms.

However, while AI tools like ChatGPT have the potential to improve education overall, especially in L2 teaching and learning, educators need to be aware of the ethical concerns related to its use. Issues such as originality, plagiarism, and overdependence on AI tools can slow down the learning process (Haman & Školník, 2023). Additionally, ChatGPT sometimes provides incorrect or misleading answers, which can make it harder for students to develop critical thinking and accuracy. In response, some have suggested banning ChatGPT to address these issues (Mohamed, 2024). However, such a solution is unrealistic. Instead, teachers should focus on learning how to use AI tools wisely and teaching their students how to benefit from ChatGPT while avoiding its downsides (ElSayary, 2024). Research on using this tool and developing strategies to maximize its

advantages is highly recommended. This approach creates a well-balanced and effective learning environment (Cotton et al., 2023).

This study investigates the use of ChatGPT by Iranian EFL teachers both inside and outside the classroom to enhance their teaching efficacy. While prior research has explored the general applications of AI in education, there is limited understanding of how specific tools like ChatGPT are being adopted and adapted in real classroom settings, particularly in the context of L2 teaching. This study focuses on how teachers who have integrated ChatGPT as a classroom assistant use it to improve their teaching practices. The findings aim to address this gap by providing valuable insights into the benefits and challenges of adopting ChatGPT, as well as offering practical strategies to enhance its effectiveness in language education. To investigate how EFL teachers participating in this study utilize ChatGPT as an assistant tool both within and outside the classroom, we have formulated the following research questions.

How do EFL teachers utilize ChatGPT to enhance English teaching both within and outside the classroom?

What challenges and limitations do EFL teachers encounter when integrating ChatGPT into their teaching practices?

What strategies do EFL teachers adopt to address the challenges of using ChatGPT in English teaching?

Literature review

ChatGPT: Capabilities and concerns

OpenAI's ChatGPT, powered by GPT-3, represents a significant improvement in text prediction and natural language processing. Using machine learning, it provides detailed and accurate responses to user questions (Zhou et al., 2023). A notable achievement of ChatGPT is its rapid growth in user adoption—within five days of launch, it attracted one million users, and in just three months, this number reached 100 million (Firat, 2023) . The GPT-3 model was trained on over eight years of internet data, gathering an extensive amount of digital information. This training resulted in a model with approximately 5 billion tokens and 175 billion parameters, greatly enhancing its decision-making capabilities (Mbakwe et al., 2023).

ChatGPT has a simple, user-friendly design that allows users to type questions on various topics. As a generative AI chatbot, it produces text-based responses and automates several natural language processing tasks. These tasks include answering questions, creating content, writing creatively, summarizing texts, and translating languages such as Finnish, Urdu, Spanish, and Arabic (Lund et al., 2023; Macdonald et al., 2023). ChatGPT is highly capable and can handle a wide range of tasks. It can assist with writing resumes, essays, and assignments, as well as improving writing in different styles. It is also

excellent at creating quizzes, true/false questions, and multiple-choice questions with high accuracy (Aydın & Karaarslan, 2023; Kasneci et al., 2023; Tlili et al., 2023).

In addition to these applications, ChatGPT can explain complex topics across various fields, including medicine, law, finance, and software engineering. It is useful for group work, self-learning, and exam preparation (Choi et al., 2023; Gilson et al., 2023; Tlili et al., 2023). Specifically in medical education, ChatGPT excels at understanding and explaining complex medical terminology and concepts. It also supports personalized diagnosis and treatment queries, making it a valuable tool for clinical decision-making (Kung et al., 2023). Research by Nisar and Aslam (2023) shows ChatGPT's effectiveness as an instructional tool for self-studying and as a reference for medical students, demonstrating its high accuracy in answering undergraduate-level pharmacy questions.

Moreover, ChatGPT can generate programming code in multiple languages and assist in creating educational materials and assessment tools in different languages (Tlili et al., 2023). ChatGPT's capabilities have also been tested in professional examinations, including the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE), the United States Bar Examination, and the University of Minnesota Law School Examination. Studies have shown that it can generate coherent and relevant answers, often achieving average passing marks (Choi et al., 2023; Gilson et al., 2023; Kung et al., 2023). The literature also highlights its potential as a reliable tool for academic and professional purposes. Researchers also use ChatGPT for tasks like planning studies, reviewing literature, and organizing content across diverse topics (Dowling & Lucey, 2023; Haman & Školník, 2023; Macdonald et al., 2023).

The capabilities of ChatGPT come with notable challenges, including the risk of providing incorrect information and producing biased content. These issues raise ethical concerns and can undermine the reliability of its responses (Kitamura, 2023; van Dis et al., 2023). Additionally, there are growing concerns about cheating, plagiarism, copyright violations, and other ethical problems related to AI-generated content (Cotton, Cotton, & Shipway, 2023). Research has shown that the references provided by ChatGPT are often unreliable, as it struggles to consistently generate accurate sources or citations (Haluza & Jungwirth, 2023; Nisar & Aslam, 2023). This makes it difficult for users to find detailed and trustworthy information, limiting its effectiveness for academic and research purposes.

A study by Yeadon et al. (2022) highlighted that ChatGPT poses challenges to essay writing, as many people heavily rely on it for their assignments. While traditional plagiarism detection tools are often recommended to identify cheating, they struggle to detect AI-generated content because of its low similarity to existing material (Aydın & Karaarslan, 2023; Gao et al., 2022). This means that content created by ChatGPT can still be misleading, inaccurate, or biased. Identifying these issues in AI-generated text is both difficult and time-consuming, making the use of this technology more complicated (Tlili et al., 2023). Moreover, ChatGPT often fails to account for user emotions or specific

contexts, emphasizing the importance of human oversight at every step to ensure accuracy (Dowling & Lucey, 2023; Haman & Školník, 2023; Macdonald et al., 2023). Additionally, some studies suggest that ChatGPT may negatively impact learners' motivation and essential skills, such as critical thinking and creativity (Kasneci et al., 2023; Tlili et al., 2023).

These concerns echo historical debates about the adoption of educational technologies, such as calculators, televisions, and the internet. Critics have argued that such tools could hinder creativity and innovation. However, rather than banning these technologies, the key lies in balancing their benefits with potential drawbacks (Gentile et al., 2004; Williams et al., 1982). For example, the calculator debate in the 1970s raised concerns about over-dependence on the tool, which could save time on calculations but potentially weaken understanding of basic math skills. Ultimately, calculators were accepted, but guidelines were introduced to ensure they were used effectively and appropriately (Bukowski, 1975; Kissane, 2000). Similarly, ChatGPT's integration into learning and research could benefit from clear rules and responsible usage to reduce its potential downsides while maximizing its advantages. Similarly, it is necessary to take the same approach with ChatGPT: identifying its advantages and disadvantages to develop rules and strategies for its best use, instead of banning it completely.

Building on this perspective, the current study focuses on the specific applications of ChatGPT in second-language teaching and learning. The following section will explore how ChatGPT can improve language education, providing insights into its potential to create engaging and effective learning environments.

ChatGPT in language teaching

The use of ChatGPT in education has expanded rapidly, particularly in the field of second-language teaching and learning (Solak, 2024). This technology has proven to be a valuable resource for both educators and students. Research by Kostikova et al. (2024) highlights that countries like the United States, Taiwan, and Hong Kong are leading in the adoption of chatbots in educational settings. While technology is not a substitute for human teachers, ChatGPT provides learners with opportunities to practice language skills, receive feedback, and access diverse language-related materials.

One of ChatGPT's most notable strengths is its ability to enhance language practice. It offers students an interactive and supportive environment to develop their language skills in a stress-free and engaging setting (Barrot, 2024). A study conducted in Thailand by Say et al. (2025) explored the use of ChatGPT as an assistant for speaking practice. The study found that ChatGPT improved various aspects of language learning, such as response speed, language translation accuracy, and the ability to create more engaging and human-like interactions.

On the other hand, ChatGPT has also been widely recognized as an excellent tool for improving writing skills. A study by Schmidt-Fajlik (2023) in Japan found that it

significantly enhanced students' writing abilities, surpassing tools like Grammarly and ProWritingAid. In the study, Japanese students used these tools to revise and refine their writing based on detailed feedback. The findings revealed that ChatGPT provided more comprehensive and effective support, resulting in noticeable improvements in writing quality. However, potential drawbacks, such as overreliance on the tool and a possible decline in creativity, should be considered. Similarly, a study by Tsai et al. (2024) in Taiwan explored the benefits of ChatGPT for EFL students. Conducted in 2023, the study involved 44 college students majoring in EFL, who submitted both original and revised essays with ChatGPT's assistance. The results indicated that ChatGPT significantly improved essay scores in key areas, including vocabulary, grammar, organization, and content, greatly enhancing the overall quality of the students' writing. These findings highlight ChatGPT's value as a powerful resource for EFL students, particularly in supporting the revision and improvement of their essays. For vocabulary development, ChatGPT offers valuable support by recommending synonyms, advising on word usage in specific contexts, and helping learners expand their vocabulary. Additionally, in terms of pronunciation, ChatGPT provides phonetic transcriptions, guidance on intonation and stress, and practical tips to improve speaking clarity and accuracy.

All in all, ChatGPT serves as an excellent study companion for both classroom learning and home study. It assists students with homework, provides additional exercises, and answers questions, offering valuable support for self-directed learning (Godsk & Elving, 2024). Its accessibility allows students to reinforce their understanding, practice their skills, and enhance their learning both inside and outside the classroom (Lund et al., 2023).

ChatGPT is also an excellent assistant for teachers, providing a valuable resource for creating teaching materials and activities. By interacting with ChatGPT, educators gain access to a wide range of teaching aids, including lesson plans and interactive exercises (Tlili et al., 2023). This support enables teachers to design dynamic and engaging classroom experiences, fostering a more active and motivated learning environment for students. A study conducted by Ulla et al. (2023) in Thailand explored the perspectives of seventeen EFL teachers on using ChatGPT in educational settings. Through in-depth interviews, the researchers collected insights into the teachers' experiences and opinions regarding this AI tool. The findings revealed a predominantly positive attitude toward ChatGPT, with teachers recognizing its effectiveness in various aspects of their teaching practices. They particularly highlighted how ChatGPT simplifies lesson preparation and task creation, streamlining workflows and enhancing the quality of teaching materials. The study concluded that ChatGPT is a highly valuable tool, offering significant support to educators in their daily responsibilities.

Additionally, large language models like ChatGPT have the potential to revolutionize teaching practices by offering educators a wide range of tools and resources—such as books, websites, apps, and online courses—that can enhance

instructional strategies and support professional growth (Kostikova et al., 2024). L2 teachers, in particular, can benefit greatly from ChatGPT's feedback, and specialized resources. The tool provides detailed grammatical feedback by identifying and correcting errors, explaining grammar rules, and guiding students to improve their language accuracy.

Moqbel and Al-Kadi (2023) argue that the advent and integration of ChatGPT into language learning significantly enhance assessment processes, providing teachers with more efficient ways to evaluate learners through various methods such as cloze tests, open-ended questions, interviews, role-plays, and other performance-based techniques. Furthermore, ChatGPT supports the development of self-assessment skills in learners, a valuable approach that empowers them to take ownership of their learning, recognize their strengths, and identify areas for improvement (Shahrakipour, 2014). It also enables L2 teachers to create tailored assessment exercises and evaluate language proficiency through interactive conversations. By using these capabilities, educators can innovate their assessment tools. A study by Dijkstra et al. (2022) explored the use of ChatGPT for summative assessments, particularly in generating multiple-choice questions and answers for reading comprehension tests. The study identified two significant advantages of this automated approach: it substantially reduces the manual workload for educators and provides students with an effective tool to practice and assess their understanding while studying textbooks or preparing for exams.

ChatGPT provides numerous benefits for L2 teaching and learning, there are important considerations to address for its effective use. One concern is the potential reduction in human interaction, which is essential for fostering personal connections and emotional engagement—key components of effective language learning.

Overreliance on ChatGPT might also encourage passive learning, where students depend on the tool instead of actively practicing the target language and engaging in meaningful conversations (Cotton et al., 2023). A study conducted by Teng (2024) in China, involving 45 students and employing both quantitative and qualitative methods such as questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, highlighted both positive and negative aspects of ChatGPT usage. While the research affirmed ChatGPT's value as a peer or assistant for learners, it also emphasized the risks of over-dependence on the tool. Teng's findings stress the importance of balancing AI-assisted learning with independent practice to achieve optimal educational outcomes. Additionally, privacy concerns arise when using AI tools, as they often involve handling sensitive student information. Safeguarding this data is critical to ensure ethical and secure implementation in educational settings (Koraishi, 2023).

Overall, while ChatGPT offers many benefits as a teaching and learning aid in English language education, addressing its limitations—such as the risks of reduced interaction, passive learning, and privacy issues—is crucial. A balanced and mindful

approach will balance its effectiveness and provide a comprehensive educational experience.

Method

Design

This study is qualitative research aimed at assessing the application of ChatGPT in L2 teaching and learning. Qualitative research was chosen over quantitative methods because it provides detailed insights into how L2 teachers adopt and utilize ChatGPT both inside and outside the classroom. The study employs a case study approach, focusing on 15 Iranian EFL teachers who have used ChatGPT as a teaching assistant in and out of their classes. This approach is preferred because it allows for an in-depth examination of a specific case, offering detailed information about the benefits, challenges, and potential solutions for enhancing the adoption of ChatGPT in educational settings. Data was collected through interviews with these teachers to gather their opinions and experiences regarding the use and limits of ChatGPT.

Participants

Fifteen Iranian EFL teachers, both male and female, aged between 20 and 37 years, participated in this study. The age range allowed us to collect data from both younger and older teachers, helping us explore their different perspectives, including their positive opinions and challenges with using ChatGPT. The participants had varying levels of teaching experience, ranging from one to ten years, and worked with learners at different proficiency levels. This variety helped us examine how their teaching experience and the learners' proficiency levels affected the use and effectiveness of ChatGPT in the classroom. All participants had been using ChatGPT in their teaching for at least eight months, ensuring they had enough experience with the tool to provide meaningful insights. They were selected through purposive sampling because of their experience with ChatGPT as a teaching assistant. Detailed demographic information about the participants is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants

Age	Number	Percentage
20-25	9	60%
26-31	4	26%
32-37	2	13%
Gender	**Number**	**Percentage**
Female	8	53%
Male	7	46%
Academic Degree	**Number**	**Percentage**

Bachelor's	8	53%
Master's	4	26%
Ph.D.	3	20%
Years of Teaching Experience	**Number**	**Percentage**
1-5	6	40%
6-10	9	60%
Proficiency levels taught	**Number**	**Percentage**
Pre-intermediate	2	13%
Intermediate	4	26%
Upper-Intermediate	6	40%
Advanced	3	20%

Instrumentation

This study utilized semi-structured interviews to collect data from participants. The semi-structured interview approach was chosen for its ability to balance structure with flexibility, allowing researchers to address key research questions while enabling participants to freely express their attitudes and opinions (Adams, 2015).

Nine interview questions were developed through a thorough review of the relevant literature and consultations with three experts in computer-assisted language learning. After drafting the questions, feedback was collected from three EFL teachers with experience using ChatGPT in their teaching. The questions were then refined and revised based on their feedback (see Appendix A for the final set of interview questions). These questions explored the situations where teachers can use ChatGPT as their assistant, the benefits and support it provides, the challenges they face while using it, and the strategies they employ to address these issues.

Before the interviews, participants were provided with informed consent forms. These forms outlined the study's objectives, detailed how participants' data would be used and protected, and confirmed their voluntary participation. Each interview lasted between 30 to 40 minutes and was conducted either online or face-to-face, depending on the participant's preference. Online interviews were conducted via Google Meet, with participants having the option to use video calls. Interviews were conducted in English or Persian, based on the participants' language preferences, to ensure comfort and ease of communication.
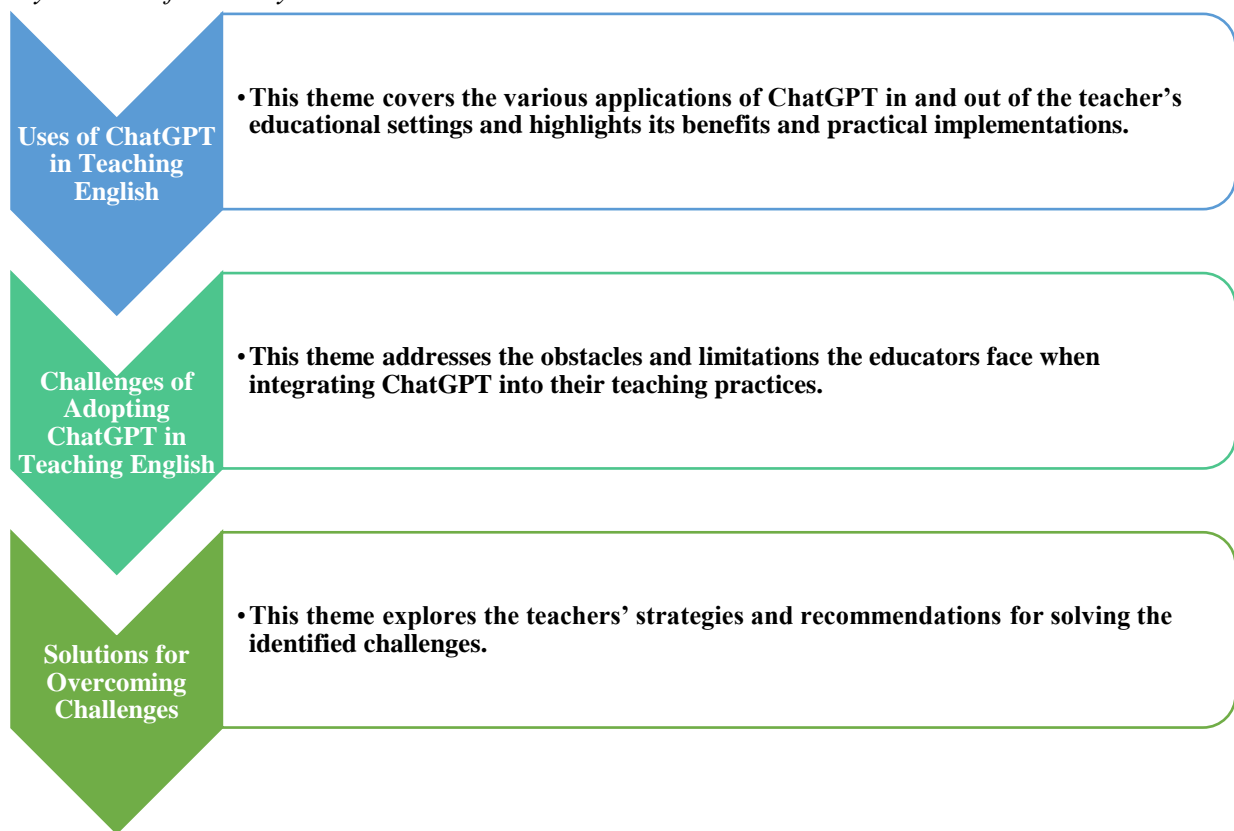
Procedure

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis, a method aimed at identifying and interpreting patterns within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process began with pre-coding, which involved transcribing the interviews verbatim to ensure every

detail was accurately captured. Each transcript was thoroughly reviewed to familiarize the researcher with the data and gain an initial understanding of its content.

In the coding stage, each transcript was manually coded, with the codes representing key pieces of information relevant to the research questions. These initial codes were carefully reviewed and refined to ensure consistency and relevance. The refined codes were then grouped into broader categories, which were further analyzed to uncover overarching themes. Finally, during the post-coding stage (Saldaña, 2021), these themes were organized into three primary areas to provide a structured and comprehensive understanding of the data (Table 2).

Table 2.

Key Themes of the Study

Uses of ChatGPT in Teaching English	• **This theme covers the various applications of ChatGPT in and out of the teacher's educational settings and highlights its benefits and practical implementations.**
Challenges of Adopting ChatGPT in Teaching English	• **This theme addresses the obstacles and limitations the educators face when integrating ChatGPT into their teaching practices.**
Solutions for Overcoming Challenges	• **This theme explores the teachers' strategies and recommendations for solving the identified challenges.**

It should also be noted that after familiarization and an initial practice as how to conduct the thematic analysis, the two researchers of this study conducted the analysis independently. The intercoder agreement turned out to be .86, which showed the consistency of the analysis.

To ensure the reliability of the data, member checking was employed. Early findings were shared with participants to confirm that the identified themes and results accurately represented their views (Candela, 2019). Participants reviewed these findings and provided feedback on whether they aligned with their experiences. This feedback was

incorporated to refine and enhance the results, ensuring that the final conclusions accurately reflected the participants' perspectives.

Findings

This study explored how teachers use ChatGPT in teaching English, the challenges they face, and their proposed solutions to overcome these challenges. The findings are summarized below and organized by research questions.

Five key themes were identified to address the first research question—how teachers use ChatGPT in teaching English both inside and outside the classroom- and the benefits of adopting it as an assistant. The identified themes are as follows:

- **Evaluation Assistant**
  Teachers highlighted ChatGPT's role in assessment-related tasks. One participant shared, "ChatGPT is really useful for conducting formative assessments in class," while another mentioned, "I use ChatGPT to give feedback on students' writing." It was also noted that ChatGPT assists in exam preparation, with one teacher explaining, "It helps me design practice tests for final and midterm exams."

- **Providing Immediate Assistance**
  Teachers highlighted the time-saving benefits of ChatGPT. One participant shared, "ChatGPT saves time by quickly providing what you need." Others noted its effectiveness in lesson planning, with one saying, "It's perfect for writing lesson plans and designing activities fast." Another teacher remarked, "I can get any materials I need from ChatGPT at any time, even during class."

- **Creating Tasks and Activities**
  ChatGPT was widely praised for its ability to generate relevant tasks and activities. One participant said, "ChatGPT is a great tool for creating tasks and activities in class." Another added, "Whenever I need a specific task, I use ChatGPT because it helps create something based on my learners' interests and levels." It was also noted for its assistance in finding engaging topics for speaking activities. For instance, Figure 1 presents a speaking task designed by ChatGPT for language teachers.
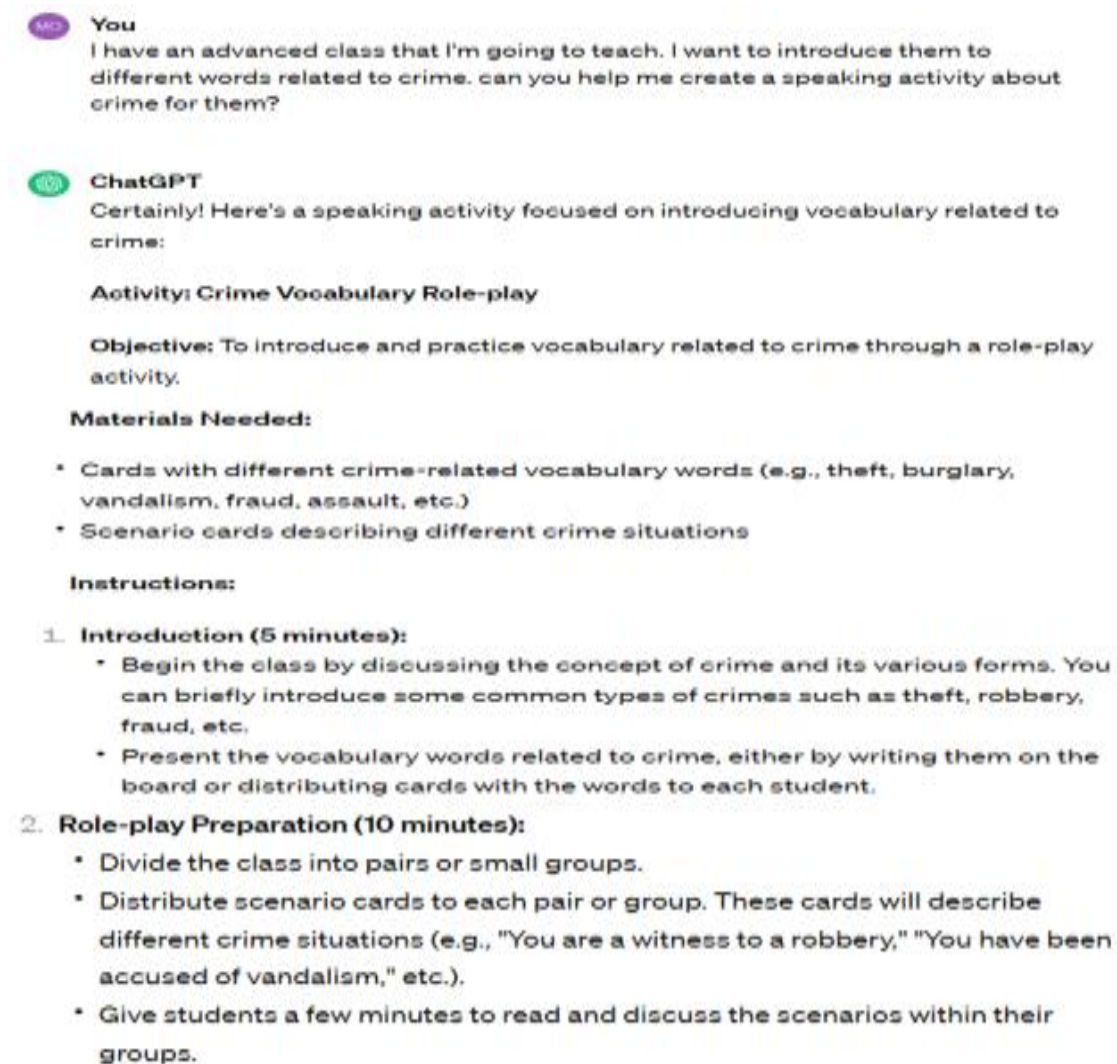
You

I have an advanced class that I'm going to teach. I want to introduce them to different words related to crime. can you help me create a speaking activity about crime for them?

ChatGPT

Certainly! Here's a speaking activity focused on introducing vocabulary related to crime:

Activity: Crime Vocabulary Role-play

Objective: To introduce and practice vocabulary related to crime through a role-play activity.

Materials Needed:

* Cards with different crime-related vocabulary words (e.g., theft, burglary, vandalism, fraud, assault, etc.)
* Scenario cards describing different crime situations

Instructions:

1. **Introduction (5 minutes):**
   * Begin the class by discussing the concept of crime and its various forms. You can briefly introduce some common types of crimes such as theft, robbery, fraud, etc.
   * Present the vocabulary words related to crime, either by writing them on the board or distributing cards with the words to each student.

2. **Role-play Preparation (10 minutes):**
   * Divide the class into pairs or small groups.
   * Distribute scenario cards to each pair or group. These cards will describe different crime situations (e.g., "You are a witness to a robbery," "You have been accused of vandalism," etc.).
   * Give students a few minutes to read and discuss the scenarios within their groups.

Figure 1: Utilizing ChatGPT as a tool to assist in the creation of speaking tasks

* **Access to a Wide Range of Materials**
  Teachers valued ChatGPT for its extensive range of resources. One participant stated, "ChatGPT is the only place where I can find anything I need for my classes." Another mentioned, "It provides materials that match my learners' levels and interests."

* **Skill Improvement**
  Participants recognized ChatGPT's role in enhancing language skills. One teacher explained, "ChatGPT is a perfect tool for improving writing skills." Another shared, "It's useful for making level-adapted reading texts as extra activities for learners."

    One teacher shared an example (Figure 2) demonstrating how ChatGPT can be used to enhance writing skills. The screenshot shows how the teacher uses ChatGPT to help students with their writing challenges. Teachers also reported that ChatGPT provides writing samples and detailed feedback, helping students improve their writing abilities.
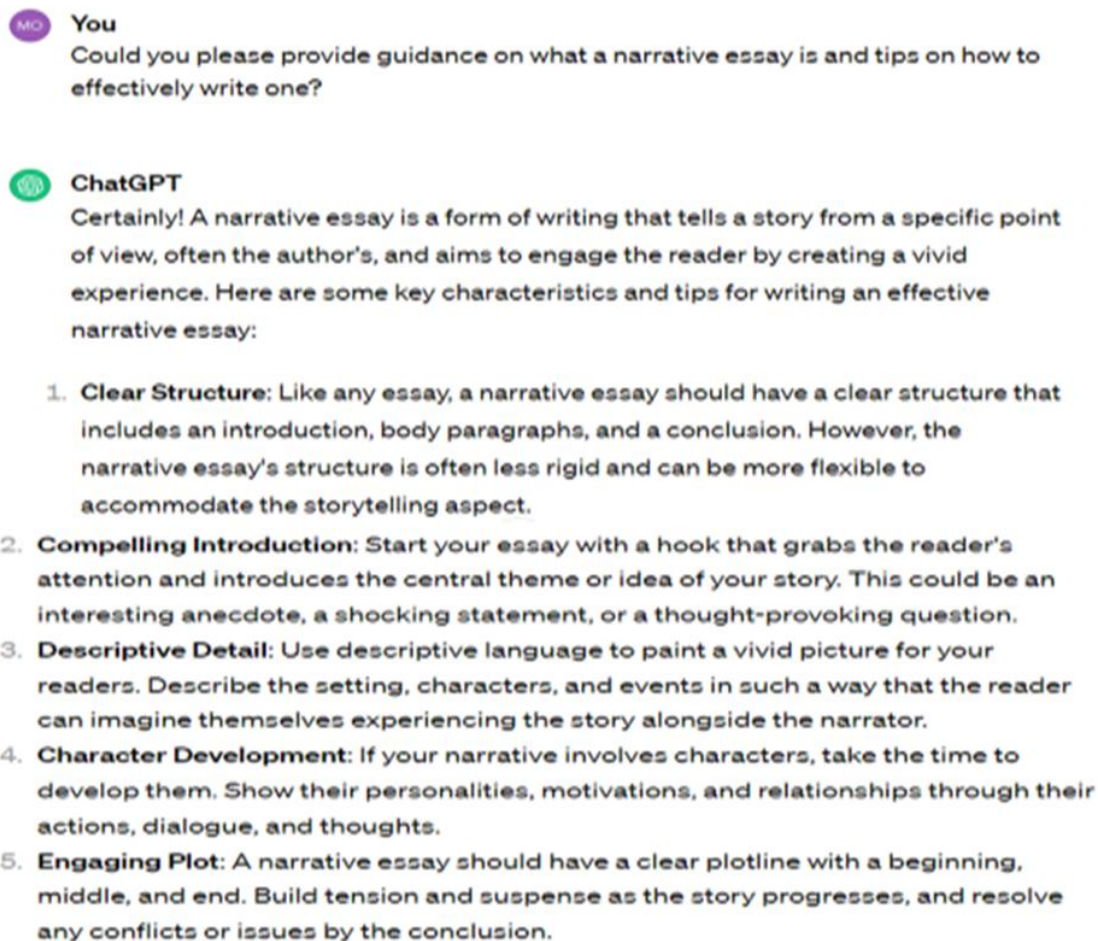
Figure 2: Using ChatGPT as an assistant to enhance writing skills

To address the second question regarding the challenges of using ChatGPT as an assistant tool in teaching, six key themes were identified and are presented below.

- **Internet Connection Issues**

Teachers highlighted the difficulties of using ChatGPT due to unstable internet connections in Iran. One participant mentioned, "In Iran, internet connection problems often prevent us from using technology effectively in our classes." Another stated, "ChatGPT requires a good internet connection, but the internet at our institute is too weak to use it in class." This issue forces some teachers to rely on traditional methods instead.

- **The Importance of Using a Reliable VPN**

Filtering issues in Iran necessitate the use of VPNs to access ChatGPT, adding an additional challenge. One participant explained, "Due to filtering issues in Iran, we need a good VPN to access ChatGPT." Another shared, "I have to pay a significant amount each month for a VPN to access ChatGPT." When VPNs fail, teachers are left without access to essential tools, as one teacher noted, "When my VPN doesn't work, I can't use ChatGPT to prepare my materials."

- **Rise of Cheating**

Participants expressed concerns about increased student cheating with ChatGPT. One teacher observed, "ChatGPT has led to more cheating among students who ask it to do their assignments." Another noted, "Students rely on ChatGPT for ideas and projects, neglecting their own creativity." This reliance on technology undermines student originality and independent thinking.

- **Too Much Reliance on ChatGPT**

Over-reliance on ChatGPT was another common concern. One participant explained, "I have used ChatGPT too much, and I am worried I might lose my creativity in designing tasks for my classes." Another shared, "ChatGPT is an excellent teaching assistant, but relying on it too much is not ideal. We should combine our own abilities with its assistance for better results."

- **Providing Incorrect Answers**

The accuracy of ChatGPT's responses was a frequent concern. One teacher noted, "ChatGPT sometimes provides incorrect answers, so I need to carefully review its responses to identify any issues." Another emphasized the importance of double-checking, stating, "It is essential to double-check the answers ChatGPT provides because there are often mistakes in its responses."

- **Difficulty Understanding Contextual Factors**

Teachers highlighted the need to verify ChatGPT's cultural and contextual accuracy. One participant shared, "ChatGPT can have issues with cultural and contextual accuracy, so I always verify its answers on cultural topics." Another recounted, "Once, I used ChatGPT to create a task for class without checking its cultural accuracy, which caused confusion in the classroom."

To address the third research question, which explored teachers' solutions for overcoming the challenges of using ChatGPT in classrooms, three key themes emerged and are presented below.

- **The Need for Literacy to Use ChatGPT Appropriately**

Teachers highlighted the importance of technological literacy for effectively utilizing ChatGPT. They emphasized that without sufficient knowledge about its proper use, desired outcomes cannot be achieved. Additionally, giving accurate instructions to ChatGPT requires adequate training and practice, as using it effectively is more complex than it may initially appear.

- **ChatGPT is Not a Performer, but Rather an Assistant**
Participants noted that ChatGPT should be viewed as an assistant, not as a tool to complete assignments or tasks independently. Misusing ChatGPT for such purposes was seen as promoting laziness and undermining creativity. To achieve optimal results, it is essential to combine the use of ChatGPT with personal creativity and abilities.

- **The Need to Review ChatGPT's Responses**
Teachers stressed the importance of reviewing ChatGPT's responses before using them, as the information provided may contain inaccuracies or errors. By verifying and refining ChatGPT's answers, teachers can utilize the information more effectively and ensure its reliability in classroom settings.

The findings of this study show how teachers use ChatGPT as a teaching assistant, the challenges they face, and the strategies they suggest to overcome these barriers. By solving these challenges and improving technological skills, educators can use ChatGPT to improve English language teaching while keeping creativity and ensuring responsible usage.

Discussion

This study examines the adoption of ChatGPT in second language classrooms, focusing on its advantages, challenges, and strategies to address these challenges while ensuring its effective integration. This section discusses the findings of the current study in relation to previous research, highlighting how ChatGPT contributes to language learning and teaching.

The study began by examining the positive aspects of ChatGPT and its benefits for teachers in second language teaching. One significant advantage of ChatGPT is its effectiveness in enhancing students' language skills, particularly in writing and reading, which are critical for language acquisition. These findings align with those of Wang et al. (2023) and Hong (2023), who also highlighted ChatGPT as a valuable tool for improving students' writing and reading abilities. The second area where ChatGPT proves to be highly beneficial is in assessment. It serves as a valuable tool for teachers to conduct both formative and summative assessments. Tlili et al. (2023) emphasized similar findings, asserting that the use of ChatGPT in assessment processes has been successful. Their research highlights ChatGPT's capability to simplify tasks such as student evaluation, test creation, and progress tracking, making these processes more manageable for educators.

Another notable strength of ChatGPT is its ability to assist in classroom management by finding materials and tasks to students' proficiency levels and interests. As highlighted by Kasneci et al. (2023), ChatGPT enables teachers to design activities that align with learners' needs, making instruction more effective and improving students' learning outcomes. The final advantage of ChatGPT for teachers in classrooms is its high accessibility. With a reliable internet connection, teachers can access ChatGPT anytime, making it a highly flexible and practical tool. Zhang (2024) similarly highlights that

ChatGPT's quick responses save teachers time and provide support when it is most needed.

In conclusion, ChatGPT serves as a 24-hour teaching assistant and a valuable tool, offering innovative ways to enhance teaching and support teachers in various aspects of classroom management and instruction. Most importantly, by reducing teachers' workload and providing practical assistance, it has become an essential resource in modern L2 classrooms (Mohamed, 2024).

However, despite its advantages, there are significant challenges associated with using ChatGPT. In the Iranian context specifically, one major issue is the need for a stable and reliable internet connection. Rahimi and Sevilla-Pavón (2024) highlighted that a dependable internet connection is essential for utilizing ChatGPT effectively in Iranian classrooms. Without it, teachers face difficulties in accessing the tool. Similarly, our findings revealed that teachers expressed concerns about the necessity of high-speed internet for using ChatGPT efficiently. Additionally, internet filtering in Iran poses further obstacles, forcing teachers to rely on VPNs to access ChatGPT. This underscores the critical need to improve internet infrastructure in Iran to ensure that teachers can fully benefit from the opportunities ChatGPT offers.

Another significant concern is the risk of students becoming overly reliant on ChatGPT, potentially diminishing their creativity and critical thinking skills. Cotton et al. (2023) also highlighted this issue, cautioning that excessive dependence on ChatGPT could lead to laziness and discourage learners from thinking critically or conducting their own research. This dependency further raises concerns about an increased likelihood of cheating. Similarly, our study, consistent with the findings of Kasneci et al. (2023), reveals that teachers are apprehensive about students relying too heavily on ChatGPT for completing assignments, which could hinder their ability to work independently and contribute to academic dishonesty.

Lastly, another drawback of ChatGPT is its occasional provision of incorrect or culturally irrelevant information, as noted by Sun and Hoelscher (2023). This underscores the importance of teachers verifying the accuracy and relevance of ChatGPT's outputs before incorporating them into classroom activities, ensuring that the information provided aligns with educational and cultural contexts.

To maximize the benefits of ChatGPT while addressing its challenges, it is essential to provide adequate training for both teachers and students. Jeon and Lee (2023) emphasized that the effectiveness of ChatGPT depends significantly on its users and the quality of the prompts they provide, which determines how well they can achieve their desired outcomes. Training teachers to use ChatGPT effectively, while simultaneously educating students to utilize it as a supportive tool rather than a substitute for their own efforts, can help reduce issues such as cheating and over-reliance. This approach also promotes the development of creativity and problem-solving skills among students.

In conclusion, while ChatGPT offers numerous advantages for language teaching, it also presents challenges and must be used thoughtfully. Both educators and students need proper training to ensure its effective and responsible use. This will help maximize its benefits while minimizing potential drawbacks, such as overdependence on ChatGPT and reducing teacher engagement. By combining human oversight with ChatGPT's capabilities, the education sector can fully utilize this tool's potential while maintaining high standards of learning, critical thinking, and creativity.

Conclusion

The use of ChatGPT in L2 teaching and learning offers great opportunities to improve teaching effectiveness and classroom dynamics. By providing quick access to a wide range of teaching materials, helping with task design, simplifying student evaluation, and offering prompt feedback, ChatGPT can greatly reduce teachers' workloads. However, to fully unlock its potential, several challenges need to be addressed. In particular, Iranian EFL teachers face issues such as unreliable internet access and the need for effective VPN solutions. Additionally, focused training on how to use ChatGPT effectively and improve digital literacy is important. Teachers should aim to balance the use of ChatGPT with their own creativity and ensure that its use does not lead to over-reliance, particularly among students. Creating assignments that promote responsible use and checking ChatGPT's responses for accuracy—especially in context-specific or culturally sensitive matters—are key steps in maintaining quality education.

This study provides valuable insights for language teachers considering or already incorporating ChatGPT into their classrooms. The findings underscore the potential of ChatGPT to assist teachers in lesson planning, student evaluation, and material development. For educational institutions and policymakers, this research highlights the need to support teachers with resources and training to optimize the use of ChatGPT in their teaching practices. Encouraging thoughtful integration of this tool can help improve teaching efficiency and student outcomes. Moreover, the study emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balance between technology and human oversight, ensuring that ChatGPT complements rather than replaces educators' roles.

The study primarily focused on qualitative data, which, while rich in detail, limits the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, it centered exclusively on the perspectives of L2 teachers, excluding students, who are also key stakeholders in the use of ChatGPT. This narrow scope may overlook important aspects of how ChatGPT impacts learners and classroom dynamics as a whole. Furthermore, the study did not extensively explore the broader technological challenges or institutional barriers that could influence the adoption of ChatGPT in various teaching contexts.

Future studies should incorporate both qualitative and quantitative data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of ChatGPT's impact on L2 teaching and learning. Expanding the participants to include students, administrators, and educators from

diverse contexts will give us more representative insights. Investigating students' experiences and their learning outcomes when using ChatGPT can offer a more balanced perspective on its effectiveness. Additionally, research into the factors influencing teachers' reluctance or hesitance to adopt ChatGPT, such as technological barriers, misconceptions, or ethical concerns, will be critical for addressing challenges and promoting broader acceptance.

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Appendix

Interview questions

1. Do you usually use ChatGPT inside or outside classroom? Can you give specific examples?
2. Could you please briefly describe your experience with ChatGPT in language teaching?
3. Compared with how you taught English before, what do you think are the particular strengths of ChatGPT in language teaching?
4. What specific language skills do you think ChatGPT may provide more support with?
5. How do you judge if the resources provided by ChatGPT are accurate or reliable?
6. What challenges have you met when you used ChatGPT? How did you troubleshoot challenges when using ChatGPT?
7. What can be the major drawbacks of the use of ChatGPT?
8. Do you consider any ethical issues when using ChatGPT in your teaching?
9. What solutions do you suggest for addressing the problems and challenges associated with using ChatGPT in language teaching?