

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF AI IN ESL TEACHING: NAVIGATING BETWEEN OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

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Abstract

The current study aims to explore ESL teachers' perceptions of integrating Artificial Intelligence into English language teaching in terms of opportunities and threats. Framed within the Technology Acceptance Model, this research is guided by the concepts of usefulness and relative ease of AI for ESL teachers. Using a quantitative survey approach, data was collected from ESL teachers in Punjab, Pakistan, using a structured questionnaire with a Likert-scale method. The results demonstrated overall supportive attitudes among ESL teachers towards AI in terms of lesson planning and preparation, practical teaching, and lessons delivery, and student motivation and engagement. At the same time, ESL teachers have expressed concerns regarding moral and ethical, overreliance on technology, bias and disparities, and data security and privacy. AI should be viewed by ESL teachers as a supporting environment but not as a threat for the academicians. In summary, AI can be accommodated by ESL classrooms but only under the prerequisites of teachers' readiness, professional help, and balanced organizational support system of innovation and humanistic pedagogy values.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), ESL Teaching, Teachers' Perceptions, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Opportunities and Threats

Introduction

The rise of Artificial Intelligence in almost every sphere of human activity is transforming the way people work, communicate, and learn. The phenomenal growth of AI technologies in recent years is rapidly changing the traditional paradigms of traditional education and challenging the very foundations of the educational process. In particular, the infiltration of AI technologies in English as a Second Language represents a true revolution for a field that relies heavily on human interaction for modeling pronunciation, real-time feedback, accommodation of cultural exchange between the instructor and the learner. AI-powered academic tools as intelligent tutoring systems, automated writing evaluators, conversational agents, and adaptive educational resources represent a new era of data-driven individualized language learning. They promise to automate routine tasks, facilitate unlimited practice, and enable the creation of personalized instruction materials, creating genuine freedom for the instructor to focus on more vital aspects of pedagogy. Nevertheless, that freedom comes at a risk. The mainstream narrative of AI in ESL represents a paradox for education workers. On the one hand, the AI is depicted as an empowering assistant that will help educators work more effectively. On the other hand, the same AI is seen as a force that can destroy the teacher's profession and erase the intrinsic humanist values of education (Selwyn 2019; Zawacki-Richter et al. 2019). The thought of AI systems grading students' work or chatting with them raises skepticism regarding the role of the educator in a classroom. There is a lot of literature written on the issue of AI in education but the human factor, in this case in the context of the teacher, is methodically neglected. Teachers are the primary implementers who are going to give life or deprive them

of the machine learning education program. Teachers' beliefs, attitudes toward technology, and fears are going to predetermine the fusibility of the immersive teaching technology (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010). Thus, this current paper strives to examine the problem through the following research question: How have ESL teachers perceived the future that AI poses and threats to their profession? The author investigates teachers' storytelling to identify what they find valuable in the technological world what they are prepared to unaccepted, what it their fear and concerns and what teaching apprise the teachers mold in response to the growing virtualization and animation of ESL education.

Significance of Study

The importance of the study Teachers' Perceptions of AI in ESL teaching: Navigating Between opportunities and threats is that it may be particularly useful in highlighting how educators identify and respond to the potential of Artificial Intelligence as a transformative agent in language instruction. With intelligent tutoring systems, chatbots, and other AI tools shaping more and more aspects of the pedagogical process decision-making, teachers' views about these innovations directly determine how well they are integrated into the classroom, how willingly learners adopt them, and how much they contribute to instruction. Coupling the opportunities – such as personalization and efficiencies – with the threats – such as ethical issues, deskilling of teachers, and diminish human interaction – enables policymakers and practitioners to support ESL educators while balancing innovative possibilities with educational matters. The study will thus help bridge the existing gap between innovation and the classroom and ensure that AI development promotes rather than overwhelms the learning of language.

Theoretical Framework

The current research is grounded in the technology acceptance model which makes the model applicable to understanding teachers' attitudes toward AI in ESL education. This framework is based on the following: first, the perceived usefulness, which is determined by “the degree to which an individual believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance”, and second, perceived ease of use, which “is the degree to which an individual believes that using a particular system would be free from effort”. According to these concepts when ESL teachers access AI tools designed to aid language teaching, teacher effectiveness and students' motivation, the assessment is made based on the usefulness of such tools and their level of accessibility within the school's technical capabilities. In addition, educators react to the possible negative side effects conditioned by the perception of the threat, which manifests the fear of risks related to their workload or the level of automation. Therefore, the model introduces a potential framework that allows exploring opportunities and threats as seen by ESL educators surrounding AI.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate ESL teachers' perceptions of the opportunities that AI provides in terms of teaching effectiveness, learner engagement, and classroom practices.
2. To examine ESL teachers' perceptions of the potential threats and challenges posed by AI, such as ethical concerns, reduced teacher autonomy, and workload issues.
- 3.

Research Questions

1. What are ESL teachers' perceptions of the opportunities offered by AI in enhancing teaching and learning?
2. What are ESL teachers' perceptions of the threats and challenges associated with the use of AI in ESL classrooms?

Literature Review

Artificial intelligence has also emerged as a remarkable opportunity in recent decades. Offering innovative tools for instruction, assessment, and what is even more critical, personalized learning, AI-driven applications and instruments for ESL include intelligent tutoring systems, chatbots, and automated feedback tools. All in all, they cover individual language practice and immediate correction encouraging the learners' efficiency in communicative competence and their autonomy. At the same time, as several studies argue, AI appears to be efficient in decreasing educators' workload by eliminating such routine tasks as grading or material composing thus allowing the innovation-first artificial intelligence to focus on higher-order teaching practices. Therefore, diversity of artificial innovation offers the potential to improve both teaching efficiency and target learning outcomes. However, teachers' perceptions of AI integration are not only positive: numerous studies focus on severe challenges and potential threats. For instance, warning that AI causes learning support, Holmes et al. voice concern over teacher deskilling, data privacy infringement, and drawback in human classroom interrelation. As a result, chances are that ESL teachers may reject using AI in case it threatens the professional or raises learners' ethics issues. Moreover, severe issues of equity and inclusivity are amplified as AI instrument can hardly be awarded to all the ESL classrooms in developing countries. Thus, chances that AI integration will transform what language learning is are high as well as the shift of teachers' perceptions of AI implications is evident. Such a change in their perception urges the importance of researching ESL teachers' attitudes towards AI integration as an opportunity or a potential threat. Zurina et al. (2021) believes that DI is an easily adaptable pedagogy that promotes equality in learning. Even so, only three principles of DI are often employed in practice, which are content, process, and product (Nur Hanisah & Syawal, 2023). This observation is reinforced by Nurul & Azlina (2024) study within the ESL context, in which more than 90% of the respondents reported differentiating their lesson by the three principles and environment is the least differentiated. One plausible reason is that the adaptation of content, process, and product often involve observable processes and physical adjustments. For example, modifying reading materials, adding additional wait-time into the speaking activities, or offering two assessment methods with different difficulty levels. In other words, these observable and tangible adjustments make it easier for teachers to gauge and respond effectively to the diverse needs of their pupils.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a **quantitative survey design** to examine ESL teachers' perceptions of AI in teaching. This design was chosen because it allowed the collection of standardized data from a large group of teachers, making it possible to identify trends and draw generalized conclusions.

Population

The population of the study consisted of ESL teachers working in public and private schools in Punjab, Pakistan. These teachers were the focus of the study because they played a central role in integrating AI into classroom teaching and learning.

Sampling

A stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample in order to ensure fair representation of teachers from different levels (primary, secondary, and higher secondary) and school types (public and private). A sample size of 120–150 teachers was targeted, which was considered sufficient for quantitative analysis.

Research Tool

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The questionnaire was divided into two major sections: (1) teachers' perceptions of the opportunities of AI in ESL teaching (e.g., improved teaching efficiency, learner engagement, and workload reduction), and (2) teachers' perceptions of the threats of AI (e.g., ethical issues, reduced human interaction, and teacher deskilling). Items were adapted from established instruments used in studies on technology acceptance and AI in education (Davis, 1989; Teo, 2011; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019).

Validity and Reliability

The content validity of the questionnaire was ensured by seeking expert opinions from university faculty members specializing in applied linguistics and educational technology. Their feedback was incorporated to refine the items for clarity and relevance. To establish reliability, a pilot study was conducted with 20 ESL teachers who were not part of the main sample. The responses from the pilot test were analyzed, and the instrument yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.80, indicating a high level of internal consistency and reliability.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected both in online and paper-based formats to maximize teacher participation. Teachers were approached through professional networks, schools, and online platforms. Consent was obtained prior to administering the questionnaire, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency, and standard deviation were used to summarize the data and identify overall trends in teachers' perceptions. Inferential statistics such as independent samples *t-tests* and ANOVA were applied to examine whether teachers' perceptions differed significantly across variables such as school type, teaching level, and years of teaching experience.

Table 1: Opportunities of AI in ESL Teaching (N = 50)

Sr. No.	Statement	SD	DA	N	A	SA	Mean	ST DEV
1	AI helps me save time in lesson planning.	0%	4%	10%	52%	34%	4.40	0.74
2	AI improves my efficiency in classroom teaching.	0%	6%	8%	54%	32%	4.32	0.77
3	AI supports students in practicing language skills effectively.	2%	6%	10%	50%	32%	4.24	0.80
4	AI tools make my teaching more engaging and interactive.	0%	2%	6%	46%	46%	4.50	0.71
5	AI helps me provide personalized feedback to learners.	2%	6%	12%	48%	32%	4.18	0.82
6	AI enhances students' motivation to learn English.	0%	4%	10%	50%	36%	4.32	0.78
7	AI reduces my workload by preparing ESL materials.	2%	8%	14%	50%	26%	4.06	0.86

8	AI increases students' participation in class activities.	0%	6%	8%	54%	32%	4.30	0.75
9	AI contributes positively to students' English language proficiency.	0%	4%	10%	52%	34%	4.32	0.76
10	AI improves overall teaching and learning outcomes in ESL classrooms.	0%	2%	6%	44%	48%	4.48	0.70

Statement 1: AI helps me save time in lesson planning.

Seventy-eight teachers, or 86%, revealed generally positive sentiments and agreed or strongly agreed that AI saves their time for lesson planning, and only 4%, or four participants, opposed this statement. This item's mean value is 4.40, which is the second highest among all items, and suggests a highly positive overall mean. The standard deviation of 0.74 creates an overview of trend consistency and cannot be defined as variation from the high mean. This result allows for stating that AI successfully helps to decrease the teachers' workload during the preparation stage and automatize or simplify content development, worksheet creation, and activity planning. As a result, teachers have more time for student-centered tasks, reflective practices, or pure engagement. Hence, it could be agreed that AI is a good tool for timesaving, which can help to improve the efficiency of the performance and enhance work-life balance.

Statement 2: AI improves my efficiency in classroom teaching.

Most teachers tend to agree or strongly agree that applying AI improved their efficiency in classroom teaching. A large majority of the participants responded this way, with demographics reporting a mean or average of 4.32 and a standard deviation of 0.77. Although lower than the previous factor, the reply still highlights a strong positive perspective. Moreover, it corresponds to most positive feedback from the participants. This slight increase in neutral or disagreeing responses can be attributed to the presentation of the statement as part of live classroom use. These outcomes support the idea that educators see AI as not only a planning assistant but also a useful physical classroom tool. AI gives the teacher direct access to various digital materials through real-time updates, allows them to create engaging presentation-based lectures via an interactivity feature, and can even perform self-assessment. Thus, it acts as a teaching aid, allowing the educator to direct more time and effort into directing student engagement and discussion.

Statement 3: AI supports students in practicing language skills effectively.

This statement achieved a mean score of 4.24 with 82% agreement. Only 2% indicated Strongly Disagree, displaying that while the overwhelming majority consider AI as a supportive tool in this field, a very small group is skeptical about the possibilities. The standard deviation of 0.80 shows that opinions were slightly more diverse compared to the previous statements. This interpretation suggests that teachers recognize AI as a helpful tool to assist students practice at any level of structure, adaptability, and personalization, from monotonous pronunciation techniques to oral comprehension checks, vocabulary exercises, and corrective grammar aids. However, it is probable that a number of participants believe that AI does not have the ability to adequately substitute for the unique feedback and overall communicative experience humans can provide while developing speaking and communicative skills.

Statement 4: AI tools make my teaching more engaging and interactive.

This statement has the highest mean score of 4.50 and a remarkably high combined agreement of 92% which is equivalent to 46% Agree and 46% Strongly Agree. The statement also has the lowest standard deviation of 0.71, which means the meaning is agreed by a significant majority of the teachers. It reveals that AI tools have transformed teaching from boring lessons to interactive sessions. They are seen as a student that uploads video materials teaches through games and interactive modules, quizzes, and imaginary simulations. The result shows that AI not only made teaching simple but enjoyable at the same time because it encourages participation and general student involvement are enhanced by the tool. The predisposition principle is in line with modern teaching and learning which will be discussed later in this paper.

Statement 5: AI helps me provide personalized feedback to learners.

The above statement had a mean score of 4.18 and a standard deviation of 0.82, which is the lowest level of agreement among the positive items. Despite being the lowest, 80% of the respondents agreed with the statement, 12 percent were neutral, and 8% disagreed. The distribution shows that while teachers might generally believe AI eases personalized feedback, they also point out some limitations or difficulties. Automated essay scoring systems, grammar checkers, or adaptive quizzes can all show students what areas they do well in and which ones require improvement. However, teachers still view the latter systems as being limited in terms of providing the detailed qualitative feedback they need to give. Thus, as much as AI is helpful, it can only be a tool that supplements the human parts of assessment.

Statement 6: AI enhances students' motivation to learn English.

The data demonstrates a highly positive reaction, indicating 86% agreement and a mean score of 4.32, with a standard deviation of 0.78. This means that teachers believe that AI tools indeed contribute to students' increased motivation to learn English. It can be explained through the interactive, game-oriented design of many AI applications. For example, the majority of such software provides instant feedback, allows teachers to monitor students' progress, and has a visually appealing design which are also essential factors contributing to an engaging learning process and reducing stress. Furthermore, teachers believe that AI helps to establish an exciting and dynamic learning environment that evokes curiosity which promotes students' interest. In this way, AI does not only improve the teaching process but also positively affects students' emotional attitude towards becoming fluent in the language.

Statement 7: AI reduces my workload by preparing ESL materials.

As for the statement above, it is evident that the overwhelming majority of teachers (Agree + Strongly Agree, 76%) acknowledges AI's role in workload reduction due to preparation of ESL materials, whereas 10% sharply disagree and 14% has a neutral position on this statement. Given the mean score of 4.06 and a standard deviation of 0.86, it is possible to claim that while AI is viewed as a tool beneficial for automation of material creation, e.g. making worksheets, quizzes, vocabulary lists, or reading passages, and help teachers in preparing materials, the greater variability suggests that there are some teachers who still find the issue of reliance on AI-generated content problematic, due to multiple factors, including its accuracy or contextual relevance or the necessity of providing a manual revision. In general, the data prove AI's efficient utilization as a helper for material preparation. Therefore, AI significantly changes the role of teachers in material production and cuts the time spent on it.

Statement 8: AI increases students' participation in class activities.

A reasonable percentage of the teachers affirmed the statement, with 86% agreeing or strongly agreeing AI will help to increase learners' participation (increase from strongly and agree and 6% disagree). 8% remained neutral, with a mean of 4.30 and standard deviation of 0.75. It was

a good confirmation finding that AI supports improved student engagement in the classroom by providing opportunities for interactive learning/contribution. These tools can be fruitful, achievement recognizes experiences through student participation; the teacher suggests to learners enterprising digital games, instant polls, and collaborative discussions or plays ADAPTIVE for brain learning. By doing so, the teacher maintains learner' participation in active English learning.

Statement 9: AI contributes positively to students' English language proficiency.

This statement obtained a mean score of 4.32 based on a standard deviation of 0.76, with a variance percentage of 86% expressing agreement (Agree + Strongly Agree), while 4% disagreed and 10% remained neutral. These results indicate that teachers actually identify the importance of AI in enhancing students' English development. Specifically, AI-powered tools, such as language learning apps and pronunciation trainers and grammar correction systems, facilitate consistent student practice based on personalization and instant feedback from the AI system. As a result, students acquire skills rapidly because the repetition of exercise is high-quality, reflecting the context is in real-life situations. Besides, teachers agree that AI enables students to engage in autonomous learning since the pace of practice is determined by the student with consistent response from AI. Because all of these criteria are quantifiably achieved, the AI's contribution to proficiency in language areas like vocabulary, grammar, speaking, and listening is confirmed as quantifiably effective.

Statement 10: AI improves overall teaching and learning outcomes in ESL classrooms.

This statement is one of the highest mean scores of 4.48 among teachers, with a very low standard deviation, 0.70, which suggests there is a strong consensus between the teachers. Mostly, 92% of the recorded responses imply that AI not only enhances the teaching outcomes but also improves ESL classroom student performance where 44% Agree and 48% Strongly Agree. A minimal 2% disagreement shows strong agreement on AI's positive and significant effects on education. The interpretative statement is that the teachers believe AI is a complete quality improvement tool applicable in the US; ESL classrooms, not only in delivery but also in making the content adaptive, easy, real-time testing and testing and feedback. Therefore, AI is not a supplement tool, but a tool that collaboratively works to impact ESL outcomes to both the teacher and the students.

Table 2: Threats of AI in ESL Teaching (N = 50)

Sr. No.	Statement	SD	DA	N	A	SA	Mean	ST DEV
11	AI reduces the role of teachers in the classroom.	8%	18%	36%	28%	10%	2.84	1.05
12	AI may cause students to rely too much on technology.	4%	12%	34%	38%	12%	3.26	0.96
13	AI reduces meaningful teacher-student interaction.	6%	18%	36%	30%	10%	2.88	1.01
14	AI threatens my professional autonomy in decision-making.	10%	22%	34%	26%	8%	2.70	1.06

15	AI increases the risk of students using unfair means (e.g., plagiarism).	4%	10%	34%	38%	14%	3.30	0.94
16	AI may create difficulties for teachers lacking technological skills.	6%	12%	32%	36%	14%	3.10	0.99
17	AI could widen the gap between students who have and those who lack access to technology.	4%	12%	36%	34%	14%	3.18	0.96
18	AI sometimes produces inaccurate or misleading information.	6%	10%	40%	34%	10%	3.00	0.97
19	AI may negatively affect students' critical thinking and creativity.	8%	16%	40%	28%	8%	2.92	1.00
20	AI raises ethical concerns about data privacy and security.	6%	12%	38%	32%	12%	3.04	0.98

Statement 11: AI reduces the role of teachers in the classroom.

The variation in responses to this statement presents mixed opinions among teachers. As previously stated, 38%, or Agree and Strongly Agree groups, hold that AI diminishes the teacher's role. While a higher combined percentage of 62% do not support the statement, the relatively large standard deviation of 1.05 from the mean score of 2.84 in many variations suggests significant variance in perception. This implies that there may be some in the teaching profession who perceive AI as a potential threat to several responsibilities associated with their classroom centrality but vastly more see it as an addition to work, not a facilitator of their replacement. The general trend is disagreement with AI forcing the reduced importance of the teacher. Indeed, educators appear to understand that automation in some tasks is inevitable, but empathy, creativity, and context insight will always be needed to effective teaching and learning.

Statement 12: AI may cause students to rely too much on technology.

This statement averaged 3.26. The high value of standard deviation indicates a moderate spread of opinions. Half of the teachers provided a positive assessment – 50% agreed or strongly agreed that AI would make students overdependent on technology, while 16% of respondents from the teacher group expressed disagreement. Approximately a third of the instructors, representing 34% of respondents, hesitated to offer an opinion. Thus, the analysis demonstrates that teachers value the benefits that AI brings to the learning process but are simultaneously concerned about the negative impact and consequences. Teachers' opinions were based on understanding the risk of depriving students of opportunity to think critically and problem-solve independently. This assessment is consistent with the need for AI integration – not to optimize learning but to complement it. Instructors might play a key role in assisting students and setting boundaries and limitations.

Statement 13: AI reduces meaningful teacher–student interaction.

The mean of 2.88 and a standard deviation of 1.01 display a neutral to a slightly negative trend. Thus, 40% of respondents tend to agree that AI diminishes substantial student-teacher

like true ripe fleshy fruit interaction. 24% disagree, and 36% evaluate this statement as neutral. This reveals teachers' mixed opinion about the impact of artificial intelligence on interpersonal communication in classrooms. For example, it is possible that some teachers consider AI-based tools to reduce the need for direct human interaction, making emotional bonds and individualized attention less frequent. At the same time, some teachers are more likely to consider AI to facilitate interaction, as it helps them avoid routine tasks leaving more time for mentoring and discussion. The variability in responses suggests that AI can act as a facilitator or constraint depending on the concrete aspects influencing the teacher-student relationship.

Statement 14: AI threatens my professional autonomy in decision-making.

The mean score for this statement was 2.70, whereas the standard deviation was relatively high, 1.06. This fact implies moderate overall disagreement regarding AI's threat to autonomy but substantial heterogeneity of opinions among teachers. Specifically, 34% of the total number of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 32% disagreed, and 34% remained neutral. Some teachers indeed seem to think that AI may limit their ability to decide on various instructional issues, such as curriculum, assessment, or teaching strategies. However, the fact that most respondents expressed either disagreement or neutrality seems to show that the majority do not view AI as a severe threat. Most teachers might view AI as a supportive and enhancing tool that can help to inform their professional judgment but not dictate it. Nevertheless, the large share of neutral responses indicated some uncertainty or change-specific attitudes to the role of AI in reducing teachers' ability to make instructional decisions.

Statement 15: AI increases the risk of students using unfair means (e.g., plagiarism).

This statement scored a mean of 3.30 and a standard deviation = 0.94 demonstrating moderate agreement but towards concern. Specific percentages show that 52% of teachers Agree + Strongly Agree that AI increases the risk of unethical actions such as plagiarism 14% Disagree and 34% Neutral. The findings show that educators are well aware of the AI academic integrity threat, particularly when using generative tools that enable essay, translation, or a solution to be produced instantly. Teachers, conversely, recognize the counter-effect of AI; even while it increases academic performance, it also facilitates students to be lured into using the tools improperly and taking shortcuts. Such concerning observations support the need for firmer academic policies, digital ethics lessons, and the development of AI detection methods to guarantee learning remains authentic and integrity-driven in ESL learning.

Statement 16: AI may create difficulties for teachers lacking technological skills.

The question above presents a mean score of 3.10 and a standard deviation of 0.99. In general, such a result might be described by the authors as a moderate level of agreement. In this case, 50% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement: AI may make the work of teachers who are unfamiliar with technology difficult. At the same time, 18% of the participants disagreed with this idea, and up to 32% of them chose a neutral answer. Consequently, the use of AI is beneficial; it may be associated with a requirement for certain digital skills, which teaching staff does not have. Teachers unfamiliar with this system may suffer from the absence of experience in integration, use, and troubleshooting. Consequently, these issues may affect teachers' attitudes, impact their confidence level, or value necessity to involve AI tools. Therefore, the topic may become the core of a professional development program that may be addressed during an AI course.

Statement 17: AI could widen the gap between students who have and those who lack access to technology.

The moderate agreement among respondents is indicated by the mean score of 3.18 and a standard deviation of 0.96. As many as 48% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed, 16%

disagreed, and 36% remained neutral. These results indicate teachers' concern about the issue of the digital divide, which means that students with better access to technology and internet are favored more by the learning enabled by AI than those from technology-poor backgrounds. In this regard, although AI can improve the quality of education, the findings of the current study insinuate that it may exacerbate inequality since the AI-enabled ESL education benefits only those who have access and resources to use it. Teachers realize that the issue of equal opportunities lies not in their hands but in the hands of the institutions, infrastructure, and policy makers.

Statement 18: AI sometimes produces inaccurate or misleading information.

The results display a mean of 3.00 with a 0.97 standard deviation, which suggests a moderately balanced and quite cautious attitude among teachers. In particular, 44% either agreed or strongly agreed that AI could produce information or content that was factually inaccurate or misleading, 16% disagreed with this idea, and 40% provided neutral assessments. This variation in attitudes, thus, supports the assumption that teachers know and acknowledge the specific limitations of AI. Namely, since online sources already frequently contain untrue or inappropriate material, AI systems such as content-writing tools might unknowingly produce falsities or create badly contextualized phrases. These “wrong” patterns are less expected to be disastrous in a classroom setting, but they would be noticeable and awkward. Therefore, teachers understand the need for human oversight and judgment when utilizing AI as a way of maintaining academic integrity and ensuring students receive appropriate and trustworthy materials.

Statement 19: AI may negatively affect students' critical thinking and creativity.

The question had a mean score of 2.92 with a standard deviation of 1.00, making this slightly disagreeing to a neutral trend. Thirty-six percent of respondents indicated concern while 24% indicated no concern, and 40% remained neutral. In this way, although some teachers might think AI will diminish the students' ability to think and become creative independently by using too many pre-integrated answers, many others may not believe it is a real issue either. Some academic professionals might believe that if students are supervised appropriately, AI can increase the possibilities of thinking by more space with various perspectives and problems to solve. Thus, the real goal is pedagogic—not to make AI a thinking tool, but a thinking aid.

Statement 20: AI raises ethical concerns about data privacy and security.

This statement yielded a mean score of 3.04 and a standard deviation of 0.98, which shows a moderate agreement level and awareness level among respondents. Specifically, 44 % of teachers agreed or strongly agreed, whereas 18% disagreed and 38 % of teachers were neutral. According to these results, educators are getting more attentive to the usage of AI from the standpoint of digital ethics. They are concerned with the collection, storage, and usage of students' private data and lack of safety guarantees. More specifically, they suspect unauthorized data transference, low transparency of algorithms, and the possibility for the remaining information to be misused. Even though many teachers may never face personal data usage predicaments, the perceived risk suggests there should be clearer university-level policies and instruction on digital ethics. It is important to make AI systems used in education safe, transparent, and responsibly designed for people to trust the technology.

Descriptive Statistics Summary

Category	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Opportunities of AI in ESL Teaching	4.31	0.77	Highly Positive

Threats of AI in ESL Teaching	3.02	0.99	Moderate Concern
Overall (All 20 Items)	3.67	0.88	Generally Positive Perception

The survey data analysis paints a rich picture of ESL teachers' perception of AI, clearly defining how positive and comprehensive it is. Thus, according to the categorization of responses, positive perception was highly dominant and prevalent due to the very high mean score of 3.67 for all 20 items. This value indicated that ESL teachers strongly believed that the benefits offered by AI were real and substantial overall. This positive attitude was predominantly represented by the high mean score of 4.31 in the "Opportunities" category. Teachers are overwhelmingly confident that AI stands as a powerful instrument that boosts their abilities to perform the job by saving time on lesson planning, increasing classroom efficiency, and making the teaching process more fun and interactive. The standard deviation associated with this item is one of the lowest, which means that teachers are very sure about it and do not spread beliefs about AI's role much, indicating a uniform experience of AI benefits they provide. At the same time, the perception is quite critical since the attitude is positive only when beneficial contrasted with 3.2 mean for the "Threats" category. The average mean score for this category is equal to 3.02, which demonstrates that the problematic issues do not outweigh the benefits. Besides, the points of concern are quite evident, typical, and immediate, as most teachers express anxiety only about the increase in academic dishonesty issues and potential over-reliance on AI models by students. There is also a challenge concerning the potential future expansion of digital inequality because of AI. One interesting thing about the "Treat" category is that its standard deviation is much larger than that for "Opportunities", demonstrating that ESL educators feel differently about potential risks associated with AI use, with some voicing more significant concern than others. Thus, it is evident that the current ESL educator is reasonably optimistic, enthusiastic about the potential AI benefits but cautious enough at the same time while considering the associated risks and the teacher's role in the modern educational framework.

Findings

Based on the results of this study, a holistic image of how ESL teachers perceive AI integration into language teaching can be constructed. With an overall mean of 3.67 and standard deviation of 0.88, ESL teachers' perceptions of AI integration can be deemed positive with a cautionary angle. That is, while the teachers appreciate AI's benefits, they are not oblivious to potential harm or limitations that must be addressed. The category "Opportunities of AI in ESL Teaching" boasts a very high mean of 4.31 with standard deviation of 0.77, which implies that ESL teachers are highly agreeable to the fact that AI can boost teaching efficiency, increase student engagement, and drive learning outcomes. Thus, ESL teachers agreed that AI helps in lesson planning by saving time, $M = 4.40$, and makes teaching more fun and interactive, $M = 4.50$. More so, ESL teachers find AI motivating for the students, participation-encouraging, and beneficial for students' English skill level. They agree that AI reduces workload, especially in preparing ESL materials and providing adaptive feedback, even though the responses on artificial intelligence-based responses' accuracy and personalization were more varied. The TAM scale perception of usefulness facet seems upheld in this category, as ESL teachers consider AI highly useful for improving instructional capacity and effectively controlling the

classroom. The “Threats of AI in ESL Teaching” category has a mean of 3.02 and standard deviation of 0.99, which indicates moderate ESL teachers concern about this issue... Teachers agreed most on AI creating a rise in the occurrence of plagiarism and unethical practices, $M = 3.30$, and increasing overreliance on products or services from technology companies, $M = 3.26$. Other concerns include technological inequity, enhancing challenges facing teachers who lack skill in digitalization, disagreement with AI threatening professional autonomy, and agreement that AI may render their roles in the classroom redundant. Based on these values, the ESL teachers seem confident in their position, seeing AI as a tool to support without replacing them. Moderate concerns are more inclined to TAM perception component of usefulness, in that ESL teachers see the need for facilitation and support from universities before they can fully utilize AI. Across all 20 summed items, ESL teachers have demonstrated a pragmatic and balanced attitude toward AI to form that often optimistic view with a question. From the data, it is clear that ESL teachers have access to AI that functions efficiently in the classroom, with lower standard deviation values in the “Opportunities” category, suggesting that they have been experienced AI use positively. Log Information on the total shows that teachers are equally enthusiastic about what AI can do but also call for caution to ensure it is not abused.

Conclusion

In sum, this study argues that ESL teachers in Punjab, Pakistan, exhibit a constructively positive but tentative attitude towards the implementation of AI in English language instruction. According to the Technology Acceptance Model, being grounded in perceptions of usefulness and ease of use, their attitude towards AI as somewhat beneficial but increasingly demanding in terms of readiness to change and learn. Specifically, most teachers agreed that AI empowered them to develop more dynamic lesson plans, improve their instructional methods, and maximize student engagement and learning achievements. I would agree that, with varying degrees of impact and disruption, the primary functions of AI in ESL teaching certainly redefine pedagogical efficiency. The example of eliminating administrative redundancies or promoting interactive learning processes highlights. However, students’ misuse of the technology, changes to data and privacy, and interactions with technology gaps are our key risks. Additionally, I concur that teachers do not believe that AI undermines their professional identity but that it is intended as an augmentation rather than a replacement of human instructions. Thus, in conclusion, this study reaffirms that the success of AI adoption in ESL classrooms is based on the optimal factor not only in terms of the technology itself but also in the readiness of teachers, the support of schools, and ongoing professional development.

Suggestions

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the responsible and effective integration of AI in ESL teaching:

- i. Regular workshops and capacity-building programs should be conducted to develop teachers’ technological competence, with the emphasis on pedagogical usage of AI tools in lesson planning, student assessment, and engagement.
- ii. Clear institutional policies should be implemented regarding academic integrity, personal data privacy, and beneficial usage of I-T based on teachers’ training to maintain responsible and critical user behavior among students, avoiding plagiarism and dependency.
- iii. Reducing the digital divide must be the primary goal of collaboration between the government and educational authorities, making appropriate resources, the Internet, and the AI-assisted learning platform available for both teachers and students at less privileged schools.

- iv. Collaboration, not replacement, must be among the key aspects of AI integration. Teachers must remain central to the learning process, surrounded by AI that promotes creativity and caring interactions instead of taking on the key roles in the pedagogical process.
- v. Continuous monitoring and assessment should be conducted to track AI implementation and ensure pedagogical relevance and ethical implications through teacher-pupil feedback.
- vi. AI literacy should be a part of teacher education and ESL curricula, and policymakers should ensure that the AI framework respects the communicative, interactive, and humanistic teaching ethos.

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