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فوائد و معوقات دمج الذكاء الاصطناعي في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الجامعات

الليبية من وجهة نظر أعضاء هيئة التدريس

هناء عبد النبي علي الكالي – عفاف رجب عباد

جامعة طرابلس – ليبيا – جامعة المرقب – ليبيا

afaf.abad@yahoo.com – elkalihana@gmail.com

المخلص: أثار الاحتمال التحولي لتطبيقات الذكاء الاصطناعي في التعليم العالي إلى مناقشات واسعة النطاق فيما يتعلق بفوائد وتحديات دمج الذكاء الاصطناعي في الفصول الدراسية للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف وجهات نظر ثمانية مدرسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بما يتعلق بفوائد ومعوقات اندماج الذكاء الاصطناعي في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية. تم إختيار المشاركين من ثلاث جامعات ليبية: جامعة طرابلس، وجامعة المرقب، وجامعة عمر المختار، فيما يتعلق بدمج الذكاء الاصطناعي في تدريسهم. وقد تم اختيارهم بناءً على خبراتهم مع الذكاء الاصطناعي في مناهجهم التعليمية. و تم تبني نهج نوعي لهذا البحث يتمثل باستخدام استبيان مفتوح عبر الإنترنت لجمع رؤى متعمقة حول آراء المدرسين حول فوائد وتحديات استخدام الذكاء الاصطناعي في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. أشارت النتائج إلى أن المشاركين لديهم مواقف إيجابية تجاه دمج الذكاء الاصطناعي في الفصول الدراسية للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. كشفت النتائج أن تطبيقات الذكاء الاصطناعي تقلل بشكل كبير من أعباء عمل المدرسين، وتوفر الوقت، وتزيد من تحفيز الطلاب، وتساعد في إنشاء المحتوى، وتعزز كفاءة اللغة، وتوسع المعرفة. ومع ذلك، حددت الدراسة أيضًا حواجز وتحديات رئيسية، بما في ذلك إمكانية الإفراط في الاعتماد على الذكاء الاصطناعي في تدريس اللغة، وعدم إمكانية الوصول إلى كل تطبيقات الذكاء الاصطناعي، والمخاوف بشأن جودة المحتوى، والتدريب غير الكافي للمعلمين. توصي الدراسة بأن يطور المعلمون خبراتهم العلمية بكل من فوائد وعيوب الذكاء الاصطناعي في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تطبيقات الذكاء الاصطناعي، الفوائد، المعوقات، بيئة تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL)، التعليم العالي

Benefits and the Challenges of Integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) in EFL Education at Libyan Universities from the Instructors' Perspective

Hana Abdulnnabi Ali Elkali –
University of Tripoli- Libya
elkalihana@gmail.com

Afaf Rajab Abad
Elmergib University - Libya
afaf.abad@yahoo.com

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Abstract: the transformative potential of artificial intelligence (AI) applications in higher education has prompted extensive discussions regarding the benefits and challenges of incorporating AI into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. This study explores eight EFL instructors' perceptions from three Libyan Universities: University of Tripoli, University of Elmergib, and Omar Al-Mukhtar University, concerning the integration of AI in their teaching. The participants are purposefully selected based on their experience with AI in their teaching methodologies. A qualitative approach was adopted for this research, utilizing an online open-ended questionnaire to gather in-depth insights into the instructors' views on the benefits and challenges of using AI in EFL teaching. The findings showed that the participants had positive attitudes toward integrating AI into the EFL classroom. The results revealed that AI applications significantly reduce instructors' workloads, save time, increase student motivation, assist in content generation, enhance language proficiency, and expand knowledge. The study also identified major barriers and challenges, including the potential for overdependence on AI for language teaching, accessibility issues, concerns about content quality, and inadequate teacher training. The study recommends that educators develop a critical awareness of both the benefits and drawbacks of AI in EFL education.

Keywords: AI Applications, benefits, challenges, EFL setting, Higher education.

Introduction

With the increasing integration of technology into the language learning process, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has garnered significant attention from researchers and educators in EFL pedagogy. Artificial intelligence (AI) is computers that are designed to think and learn like humans (Troyanskaya *et al.*, 2020). Previous researches contribute in enriching English learning process and fostering learning independence, particularly for those reliant on teachers. AI-powered tools, such as language learning apps and chatbots, can provide personalized learning experiences, offer immediate feedback, and facilitate independent language practice (Hartono *et al.*, 2023). Moreover, AI assists educators by streamlining lesson planning and content creation through efficient data analysis and automated material generation (Qiao and Zhao, 2023; Ayala-Pazmiño and Alvarado-Lucas, 2023; Hartono *et al.*, 2023). While critical thinking is essential for humans, AI can offer innovative ideas that educators may overlook due to teaching demands (Horváth *et al.*, 2023). It has been emphasized that AI chatbots benefit learners at all language proficiency levels, not just advanced students (Kim, 2016). Consequently, by reducing educators' workload and saving time, AI tools can positively impact the quality of language teaching outcomes, allowing educators to dedicate more time to personalized feedback, differentiated instruction, and fostering deeper student engagement.

Although AI-powered language learning apps offer numerous benefits, their drawbacks and challenges cannot be overlooked. These challenges are represented in ethical concerns related to data privacy, and the risk of overreliance on technology, which could negatively impact critical thinking and creativity and a reduced capacity for independent thought (Nguyen, 2023; Ayala-Pazmiño and Alvarado-Lucas, 2023). In other words, these barriers could ultimately lead to undesirable learning outcomes if not carefully addressed by all stakeholders.

1. Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing body of research on AI in EFL, studies specifically examining its impact within the Libyan context remain limited. This research aims to fill this gap by investigating the perceptions of EFL instructors regarding integrating AI applications in the Libyan EFL learning environment. Understanding their perspectives is crucial for effectively harnessing the potential benefits of AI while mitigating potential risks and ensuring its ethical and responsible implementation. Furthermore, the utilization of AI in the Libyan EFL context is a relatively new trend, with both benefits and negative effects. Understanding the perspectives of EFL educators is crucial in comprehending the significance of the study. Therefore, this study shed light on the advantages and challenges of integrating AI in the EFL setting from Libyan EFL instructors' perceptions.

2. Research Questions

- **What are the benefits of integrating AI in the EFL Libyan context from instructors' perception?**
- **What are the challenges of integrating AI in the EFL Libyan context from instructors' perception?**

3. Significance of Study

The current research findings can contribute to several key areas:

1. The findings of this study will be advantageous in increasing the educational staff's awareness of the potential benefits of AI integration in the learning process, such as improved learning outcomes and personalized learning experiences.
2. The findings of the current study could contribute to raising awareness among learners and teachers about the potential negative effects of AI integration, such as the impact on the originality of assignments and the increased risk of plagiarism.
3. By highlighting these potential benefits and risks, the findings can inform the development of effective strategies for AI integration in educational settings. This includes measures to prevent plagiarism, such as training teachers to identify and address cases of plagiarism effectively and developing guidelines for responsible AI use in education.

Literature Review

This literature review explores the integration of AI within the EFL education setting, with a particular concentration on the benefits and challenges of AI-powered language learning platforms, chatbots, and automated assessment tools within the context of EFL classrooms.

1. Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to advanced computer systems designed to mimic human intelligence. AI can be defined as "the combination of intelligence, that is, machines capable of demonstrating human-like reasoning and making decisions using human skills" (Sun et al., 2020, p.2). Furthermore, AI empowers computers to exhibit human-like intelligence, acquiring knowledge from experience and accomplishing tasks that traditionally demand human cognitive

skills (Wei, 2023). In the realm of language education, AI has the potential to revolutionize traditional teaching methods. AI enables computers to exhibit human-like intelligence and learning from human experience. AI applications can greatly change traditional teaching methods by offering personalized learning that fits each student's needs and interests (Hwang *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, language learners can now benefit from a range of AI-assisted language learning tools available on computers and mobile devices, which aid in developing various language skills and subskills including vocabulary, grammar, writing, reading, speaking, and learner motivation (Wei, 2023).

2. AI Applications and EFL Setting

There is no doubt that Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to revolutionize English language learning in EFL settings, offering personalized learning experiences and empowering both learners and educators. Previous studies explore the impact of AI on both the learning process itself and the role of educators. These studies examine how AI is transforming the traditional EFL classroom by offering new approaches to teaching, learning, and assessment. The following paragraphs will delve into the specific benefits of integrating AI applications within the EFL pedagogical community.

AI tools offer significant advantages in personalized learning experiences. For example, (Hartono *et al.*, 2023) conducted mixed-methods research to investigate EFL teachers' and students' perceptions and experiences with AI solutions in English language teaching. The study findings revealed a favorable attitude of AI in EL instruction. Participants consistently highlighted the efficiency of AI in enhancing language skills through immediate feedback and personalized instruction. This positive perception from both teachers and students strongly supports the potential of AI technology significantly enhance EFL teaching and learning outcomes. These results are further supported by (Ayala-Pazmiño and Alvarado-Lucas', 2023) study. Their research investigated the challenges and benefits of integrating AI-based technology in Ecuadorian English language education through semi-structured interviews with five English school teachers. With a purposive sampling of the participants, the results demonstrated that AI plays a vital role in providing objective assessment, personalized feedback, and enhancing language outcomes. This study shares significant similarities with the present study in terms of research area (focusing on AI integration in EFL contexts), sample size (both studies interviewed a small number of educators), participant selection method (both employed purposive sampling), and research methodology (both utilized qualitative research method). This similarity can strengthen the validity and reliability of the current research results.

Furthermore, AI-powered language learning tools are beneficial in fostering learner autonomy, motivation, and engagement. For instance, (Wei's, 2023) study found that AI-mediated language instruction can improve English language learning in various ways. The findings of this study demonstrated that AI plays a vital role in Enhancing students' language performance, boosting their motivation, and improving their self-regulation. Based on these findings, Wei concluded that AI-powered educational technologies can positively impact language learning. Along the same lines, another experimental study with Chinese students was conducted by (Qiao and Zhao, 2023). The results showed that AI can improve self-regulation and speaking skills. Chinese students in the experimental group who experienced AI instruction showed higher self-regulation levels compared to those in the control group. In another study, (Sumakul *et al.*, 2022) conducted research with four Indonesian university teachers to explore their perceptions of the benefits and drawbacks of applying AI in the EFL teaching and learning community. The sample of this study was purposely selected. The results of semi-structured interviews revealed a positive

perception of integrating AI in the EFL process for both teachers and students. They also found that AI applications contributed significantly to increasing learner motivation in EFL classrooms, which positively impacts learning outcomes. Based on their results, the researchers concluded that AI applications should be considered valuable allies rather than adversaries in the EFL classroom. This is another study that shares similarities in research design with the present study, which strengthens the validity and reliability of the current study's findings.

AI apps significantly contribute to enhancing teacher efficiency and effectiveness. This is supported by several studies. (Abdalgane and Othman, 2023) asserted that artificial intelligence (AI) in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context is crucial for enriching the English language learning process among tertiary students in Saudi Arabia. They highlighted that AI tools help in keeping both teachers and learners abreast of digital advancements. Similarly, (Cotton, *et al.*, 2024) emphasized that AI could significantly promote various aspects of higher education. AI applications can revolutionize education. Moreover, they facilitate communication, foster collaboration among students, enhance virtual learning experiences, and provide immediate feedback. Furthermore, (Jaimovitch-López *et al.*, 2022) approved that GPT-3, an AI application, is a method for automating repetitive or time-consuming content production. In other words, this AI tool contributes to time savings for both teachers and students by automating tasks that would otherwise consume significant time for both teachers and students.

Improving English language skills is another advantage that could be gained from integrating AI applications into EFL community. A study conducted by (Zou *et al.*, 2023) explored the potential influence of AI speech evaluation applications in enhancing undergraduate Chinese EFL learners' speaking proficiency. The quantitative and qualitative data analysis indicated that AI automatic feedback significantly enhanced students' speaking proficiency. This result is consistent with those of (Qiao and Zhao, 2023) who found that Chinese students in the experimental group who received AI-based instruction showed greater progress in speaking skill compared to those in the control group. A study was conducted by (Charpentier-Jiménez, 2024) to examine the AI assessment and university instructors' calibration in EFL writing courses at a Costa Rica public university. One AI piece of software, Ten TESOL university professors, and ten TESOL students were recruited for this study. The results of this study revealed that the evaluation of students' paragraphs and AI paragraphs exhibited similarity. Furthermore, the results yielded that AI-generated paragraphs surpassed students' paragraphs in terms of mechanics, grammar, and vocabulary. The variation among professors in grading the students' writing outcomes results in inconsistency in assessing the students. Furthermore, (Duval *et al.*, 2020) confirmed that GPT-3 is a valuable AI tool for facilitating idea generation and alleviating writer's block of writers and content creators. On the other hand, AI apps not only foster specific English language skills but also improve overall EFL language performance. For instance, (Ayala-Pazmiño and Alvarado-Lucas, 2023) and (Hartono *et al.*, 2023) found that AI tools significantly contribute to enhancing general language skills.

3. Challenges of Integrating AI in the EFL Setting

Although AI offers numerous benefits in EFL classes, it also comes with certain challenges and potential drawbacks. Ethical concerns -data privacy, algorithmic bias, plagiarism- are some of the AI challenges in EFL pedagogy. For instance, a study carried out by (Nguyen, 2023) aimed to explore teachers, administrators, and policymakers' perceptions of AI applications in academic writing and plagiarism. The questionnaire results revealed that the participants are aware that AI applications may trigger a negative influence on users' performance. This study is limited in applying just the quantitative approach to reach this result. Furthermore, (Cotton *et al.*, 2024) raised concerns about the potential risks of AI applications like ChatGPT in higher education, including

academic integrity and plagiarism due to the ability of these tools to generate essays. (Ayala-Pazmiño and Alvarado-Lucas, 2023) identified privacy and security concerns as major challenges in AI integration.

Another barrier to integrating AI applications in EFL setting is dependence on technology and reduced human interaction. For instance, (Hartono *et al.*, 2023) and (Lee, 2018) warned against overdependence on AI and stressed the importance of human interaction in language learning. This aligns with the findings of (Ayala-Pazmiño and Alvarado-Lucas, 2023), who claimed that AI can negatively impact emotional support and human interaction for EFL learners. Lack of accessibility and the need for teacher training and professional development negatively influence the successful implementation of AI in language learning. For example, (Ayala-Pazmiño and Alvarado-Lucas, 2023) identified concerns about limited infrastructure and accessibility issues as common challenges in integrating AI. Furthermore, they emphasized the crucial role of teacher training in ensuring the successful integration of AI applications. These drawbacks highlight the need for careful consideration and thoughtful implementation of AI in EFL classrooms to maximize its benefits while mitigating its risks.

Despite the increasing amount of research on the use of AI in the EFL community, there is a limited number of studies that specifically examine its impact within the Libyan context. Existing research primarily focuses on the perspectives of EFL learners, with limited attention accorded to the perceptions and experiences of EFL instructors. Furthermore, only a few studies have investigated the unique challenges and advantages of integrating AI applications into the EFL setting in general, and the Libyan EFL context in particular.

To address this gap in the literature, this study aims to investigate the perceptions of Libyan EFL university instructors regarding the integration of AI in their classrooms. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for educators, and decision-makers in Libyan education, contributing to the informed and ethical integration of AI in EFL education.

Methodology

1. Participants

The participants who were involved in this study were 8 EFL University instructors. Since AI is a relatively new technology in our community, purposive sampling was employed to select participants with experience in integrating AI into their teaching methodologies. The same sampling method was utilized in the studies conducted by (Ayala-Pazmiño and Alvarado-Lucas, 2023) as well as (Sumakul *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, both studies examined the benefits and challenges of integrating artificial intelligence (AI) in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. These methodological similarities strengthen the validity and reliability of the current research findings by providing a comparative framework and increasing the generalizability of the results. These educators were chosen from different Libyan universities. Three instructors were from the University of Tripoli, two of them were from Elmergib University, and three of them were from the University of Bangazi. They possessed varying levels of experience with AI, ranging from six months to five years. The participants identified a range of AI-assisted language learning tools that they utilized in enhancing their pedagogical practices, including ChatGPT, Chatbot, Gemini, Grammarly, Fetchy, KnowJi, Plato, and Canva. These tools were integrated into various language skills: writing, reading, listening, speaking, grammar, and vocabulary, all these skills are considered essential components of language proficiency.

2. The Instruments of the Study

This study employed a qualitative research methodology to gain in-depth insights into EFL instructors' perceptions of the benefits and challenges associated with artificial intelligence (AI) in teaching English as a foreign language. An online Open-ended questionnaire was conducted using a predetermined set of 11 open-ended questions. According to (Purandare and Patil, 2023), “*open-ended questions are designed to give freedom to the respondent to answer the question and is mainly used for qualitative research*”. This questionnaire was designed to explore specific areas of AI integration in the EFL context, allowing for flexibility and a nuanced understanding of the participants' perspectives. For example, participants were asked about their prior experience with AI applications in teaching, their comfort level with integrating AI into their classrooms, and the specific English language skills that they believed could be enhanced through AI. Additionally, the questions probed into potential risks and challenges that might arise from AI integration in the EFL process.

3. Procedures

Permission was obtained from the recruited sample to conduct the research. The online version of the survey was sent to participants via messenger. Respondents were given two to three days to complete the survey. This extended timeframe allowed the participants ample time to consider their responses, contributing to the reliability and quality of the data collected. The thematic analysis was applied to identify the potential benefits and challenges of integrating AI in English language teaching from the participants' perspectives.

The Results of the Study

This study investigates the advantages and the challenges of integrating AI tools in the EFL Libyan context based on instructors' perceptions. In this part, the research questions are answered based on the analysis of the participants' responses to the open-ended questions survey.

What are the benefits of integrating AI from instructors' perceptions in the EFL Libyan context?

All the participants asserted that they have a positive perception of integrated AI applications in the EFL Libyan context.

1. Time-saving

The majority of the participants reported that integrating AI-powered language learning platforms significantly reduces their workload and saves time. Therefore, AI tools can automate tasks like lesson planning and assessment, freeing up time for teachers to focus on interactive activities. (Teacher 1) informed that AI applications such as Team GPT, Fetchy, Know Ji, and Plato “*These apps can also save time in evaluating particular types of exams.*”

“*Much less time-consuming, especially with automating teacher tasks, no human error, and resourceful.*” (Teacher 3)

“*It saves time for me when preparing lessons, and it could make learning more fun and interactive.*” (Teachers 5)

“*Since I started teaching. I have found it really beneficial and saving time.*” (Teacher 7)

“*It simply gives me the gist, so it saves time and effort.*” (Teacher 8)

2. Content Generation

Many participants recognized the versatility of AI in enhancing various aspects of language learning. They applied AI tools to create engaging learning environments, generate lesson plans and assessment materials, provide personalized feedback, and assist in content creation. Additionally, they found AI as an effective method of developing language skills, such as listening comprehension, writing, speaking, reading, grammar, vocabulary, and literature. For instance: (Teacher 1) who integrated AI applications into teaching literature stated *“What is more important is that using these apps can create an imaginative community for students with other students or teachers who are natives.”* On the other hand, (Teacher 8) applied AI tools *“to prepare my lessons”* and *“to get more information about certain poems and stories.”*

“I mostly use AI to aid in tiring teaching tasks such as creating plans, rubrics, counseling and giving appropriate feedback, and designing activities, especially for speaking and writing skills.” (Teacher 3)

“Focusing on listening comprehension for gist and writing paraphrase skills.” (Teacher 2)

Regarding Listing skill, (Teacher 4) reported that: *“creating questions and changing texts to voice generating questions for”*

(Teacher 5), who integrates ChatGPT in teaching (reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar, and vocabulary), informed that *“to come up with activities and examples to use in all skills....* he also added that *“it quickly modifies its answers to reach what I need.”*

“I did use AI with university students particularly those whose major is English in courses such as writing and speaking. Also, I used AI in teaching a course of novels and poetry and it was really successful.” (Teacher 7)

“AI can create immersive language environments, where learners are surrounded by the target language in various forms, enhancing their listening skills through constant exposure.” (Teacher 6)

3. Enhance Language Proficiency

Some teachers recognized the benefits of AI-assisted language learning applications, including their user-friendliness, language enhancement features, and ability to optimize tasks like design work. For instance, tools like Gemini, ChatGPT, and AI-integrated design platforms were praised for their effectiveness. For instance:

“Praised for their user-friendliness, vocabulary enrichment, and ability to suggest alternative phrasings, often aligning with target language usage.” (Teacher 2)

I use Gemini and ChatGPT the most but also when designing on canva.com it has recently incorporated AI and it is effective in optimization. (Teacher 3)

4. Motivation and Engagement

Many teachers highlighted the positive impact of AI on student engagement and motivation. They noted that AI-powered tools can foster a more interactive and enjoyable learning environment. By creating opportunities for collaborative learning with native speakers and providing visual aids for complex concepts, AI can enhance both student motivation and understanding. For example,

(Teacher 1) stated “What is more important is that using these apps can create imaginative community for students with other students or teachers who are natives. This would in turn motivate students to learn as well as get improved in the learning process. Also, some apps can help both teachers and students in understanding some complex concepts in literature.” He added, “Students are motivated to learn through these apps. They only need a good warm-up about how to use them.”

“It could make learning more fun and interactive.” (Teacher 5)

“I noticed that students feel more motivated and engaged in the class.” (Teacher 7)

5. Knowledge Expansion

Teachers also highlighted the potential of AI to expand their knowledge and creativity. AI can facilitate global collaboration, enabling teachers to connect with educators worldwide and exchange experiences. Additionally, AI can inspire innovative teaching approaches and stimulate imaginative thinking, ultimately enhancing the overall learning experience. For example:

“It also enlarges your knowledge experience, and also your imagination in teaching.” (Teacher 4)

“There are numerous advantages of this amazing facility. First, it can help us as university staff members in exchanging experience and thoughts with other instructors working in different parts of the world.” (Teacher 1)

What are the challenges of integrating AI in the EFL Libyan context from instructors' perceptions?

1. Overdependence on AI Applications

The majority of the participants expressed concerns about the potential negative impacts of overreliance on AI tools. They highlighted the risk of hindering creative and critical thinking skills and limiting language development. While recognizing the potential benefits, teachers emphasized the importance of using AI as a tool, not a substitute, for human intelligence and creativity. For example:

“My major concern is the overdependence on AI potentially hindering thinking creatively because whenever I need a solution, I just ask AI.” (Teacher 2)

“There could be a fear in the future that once teaching is very intertwined with AI, if teachers would lose some of those skills that they would rather rely on AI for.” (Teacher 3)

“If the student relies on it too much, it could be a problem since they wouldn't be developing their own language. The same goes for teachers as well.” (Teacher 5)

However, (Teacher 8), who was a new user of AI applications, mentioned, “I am still new to using AI so I am not fully aware of the disadvantages of this technique yet. But I would say it might make us a little bit lazy as teachers.”

2. Accessibility Issues

Some teachers highlighted several challenges in implementing AI in education. A primary concern was the cost of AI tools, limiting accessibility, particularly in resource-constrained educational institutions. Teachers also noted limitations in AI capabilities, such as the inability to generate high-quality content and the reliance on free, often restricted versions. Furthermore, the lack of

institutional support for adopting modern teaching approaches, including AI integration, posed a significant obstacle. For instance, (Teacher 1) said, *“What I found more challenging about AI is related to their price so they are not always accessible, especially in our educational institutions, we don’t always have the internet access or even the technological devices.”*

(Teacher 3) who used ChatGPT and Gemini confirmed:

“AI has many limitations as of today. And also I only use free paid versions of AI that I'm familiar with. Content creating is not something I found AI to be useful in. For example. I considered using online bots once to read out text that I personally wrote in different accents for my learners but I could only use a few very unnatural sounding bots and for 15 minutes at a time unless I subscribed for a paid version. And the AI apps I am familiar with are not able to do that.”

“The biggest challenges the public educational institutions didn’t support the teachers to apply the modern approaches inside the classroom.” (Teacher 7)

“You need to be connected to the internet this is the only challenge.” (Teacher 4)

3. Content Quality

Some participants informed that AI-generated content may require modification and fact-checking to ensure accuracy and natural language usage, particularly when dealing with sensitive topics. They emphasized the need for critical evaluation of AI outputs and the importance of considering cultural context. For example, (Teacher 1) said, *“here is that if the teachers were not aware of the idea that these apps sometimes need to be modified or only used with some.”*

(Teacher 2) said, *“and the risk of encountering inaccurate information, especially for learners....”* and *“Evaluated for its potential to generate paraphrases and writing prompts, concerns regarding information accuracy, particularly in sensitive topics like religion, are noted.”*

4. Inadequate Teacher Training

Some participants confirmed that the lack of familiarity with AI tools can be a barrier for some teachers. For instance, (Teacher 1) stated: *“Also, not all university professors have background about the way these apps are used.”*

5. Unsuitability for All Levels

A few participants mentioned that out of the total, the AI applications may not be effective for beginners or in situations requiring complex analysis or collaboration. For instance, (Teacher 5) mentioned that *“It is still not suitable for every level. I don't usually use it with beginners. The language it generates is repetitive and unnatural.”*

Discussion

This study aimed to find out the advantages and drawbacks of integrating AI-assisted language learning applications in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting from the perspective of university instructors in Libya. The findings indicated that all participants had a positive perception of the integration of AI applications in the EFL context in Libya. This result aligns with the findings of (Hartono *et al.*, 2023) and (Sumakul *et al.*, 2022), who also reported positive perceptions of AI integration in English language education among both teachers and students.

The findings of the current study indicated that AI applications significantly reduced the teachers' workload and saved time. The study also demonstrated that AI tools were beneficial in easing content generation and enhancing language proficiency. The participants of this study indicated that AI can automate tasks like lesson planning and assessment, to create engaging learning environments, generate lesson plans and assessment materials, provide personalized feedback, and assist in content creation, freeing up time for teachers to focus on interactive activities which in turn improving language skills proficiency. These findings gained further support by (Jaimovitch-López *et al.*, 2022) who approved that GPT-3, an AI application, contributes to time savings for both teachers and students by automating tasks that would otherwise consume significant time. The present study's findings align with those by (Ayala-Pazmiño and Alvarado-Lucas, 2023) who investigated the benefits and challenges of integrating AI-based technology in the Ecuadorian English language process. They found that AI plays a vital role in providing objective assessment, personalizing feedback, and enhancing language outcomes. Similarly, (Duval *et al.*, 2020) demonstrated that GPT-3 is a valuable AI tool for facilitating idea generation and alleviating writer's block among writers and content creators.

The participants in this study highlighted the positive impact of AI on student engagement and motivation. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Wei, 2023), who found that AI-mediated language instruction can enhance students' language performance, boost their motivation, and improve their self-regulation.

Teachers also highlighted the potential of AI to expand their knowledge and creativity. Additionally, AI can inspire innovative teaching approaches and stimulate imaginative thinking, ultimately enhancing the overall learning experience. These results were confirmed by (Horváth *et al.*, 2023) who stated that while critical thinking is essential for humans, AI can offer innovative ideas that educators might overlook due to teaching demands.

However, the findings of the current study revealed several challenges in implementing AI in education. A primary concern about the potential negative impacts of overreliance on AI tools. They highlighted the risk of hindering creative and critical thinking skills, and limiting language development. While recognizing the potential benefits, teachers emphasized the importance of using AI as a tool, not a substitute, for human intelligence and creativity. These findings are consistent with those presented by (Hartono. *et al.*, 2023) and (Lee, 2018) warned against overreliance on AI and stressed the importance of human interaction in language learning. These results also echo those of (Nguyen's, 2023) study which aimed to explore teachers, administrators, and policymakers' perceptions of AI applications in academic writing and plagiarism. He found that AI applications may trigger a negative influence on users' performance. These results are in line with those of (Ayala-Pazmiño and Alvarado-Lucas, 2023) who claimed that AI negatively influences emotional support and human interaction for EFL learners.

The second AI application challenge was accessibility issues, especially in resource-constrained educational institutions. Additionally, the results indicated that AI-generated content often requires modification and fact-checking to ensure accuracy and appropriate language use, particularly when addressing sensitive topics. Inadequate teacher training also poses a barrier for some educators. These findings are supported by (Ayala-Pazmiño and Alvarado-Lucas, 2023), who identified concerns about privacy and security, a lack of infrastructure, and insufficient teacher training as common challenges in integrating AI within the English language community. Furthermore, the findings of this study indicated that AI applications were not suitable for all levels of EFL students. surprisingly, this result was against the claim of (Kim, 2016) who emphasized that AI chatbots benefit learners at all language proficiency levels, not just advanced students.

Table 1: The Similarities and Differences between the Present Study and Those of (Ayala-Pazmiño and Alvarado-Lucas, 2023) and (Sumakul *et al.*, 2022)

The study	(The present study , 2024)	(Ayala-Pazmiño and Alvarado-Lucas, 2023)	(Sumakul <i>et al.</i> , 2022)
Context	Libyan EFL	Ecuadorian EFL	Indonesian EFL
Methodology	Open-ended survey	Semi-structured interviews	Semi-structured interviews
Participants	8 EFL Libyan university instructors	5 Ecuadorian EFL teacher	4 Indonesian EFL university teachers
Sampling Method	Purposive sampling	Purposive sampling	Purposive sampling
Focus	Instructors' perceptions of benefits and challenges	Teachers' perceptions of the benefits and challenges	Teachers' and students' perceptions of the benefits and challenges
Key Findings (Benefits)	Positive perception of AI integration by teachers, Time-saving, content generation, enhanced language proficiency, motivation engagement, knowledge expansion	AI provides objective assessment and personalized feedback; AI enhances language outcomes.	Positive perception of AI integration by both teachers and students, increased learner motivation, and improved learning outcomes.
Key Findings (Challenges)	Overdependence on AI, accessibility issues, content quality, inadequate teacher training, unsuitability for all levels	limited infrastructure and accessibility issues, teacher training needs, negatively impact emotional support and human interaction, privacy and security concerns	AI applications are valuable allies rather than adversaries in the EFL classroom

Table 1 illustrates the similarities and differences between the present study and those of (Ayala-Pazmiño and Alvarado-Lucas, 2023) and (Sumakul *et al.*, 2022). The rationale for highlighting these two studies in the literature review is due to of their significant similarity to the present study.

Concerning the similarities, all three studies share a common focus on investigating the perceptions of EFL teachers and, in one case, students, regarding the integration of AI in language education. The studies predominantly employ qualitative research methods, specifically semi-structured interviews and open-ended surveys, to gather data on teachers' experiences and opinions. All studies utilize purposive sampling to select participants, targeting specific groups of EFL teachers within their respective educational contexts (Ecuadorian, Indonesian, and Libyan). Across all studies, there's a consistent recognition of the potential benefits of AI integration, including enhanced language learning outcomes, increased student motivation, personalized learning experiences, and improved teaching efficiency (e.g., time-saving, automated tasks).

However, these studies also exhibit key differences. Firstly, they are conducted in different geographical and educational contexts (Libya, Indonesia, Ecuador), which likely influence the specific challenges and opportunities encountered in AI integration. Secondly, the scope of the studies varies. The present study appears to have a narrower focus, primarily examining instructors' perceptions of benefits and challenges. In contrast, (Sumakul *et al.*, 2022) explore the perspectives of both teachers and students, providing a more comprehensive understanding of AI integration in the Indonesian EFL context. Furthermore, while all studies acknowledge challenges, the specific concerns vary. For instance, the present study highlights overdependence on AI and inadequate teacher training as key concerns, while (Ayala-Pazmiño and Alvarado-Lucas, 2023) emphasize limited infrastructure and accessibility issues.

These three studies offer valuable insights into the integration of AI in EFL contexts. While they share common ground in their focus on teacher perceptions and the recognition of potential benefits, they also highlight distinct challenges and considerations based on the specific cultural, educational, and technological contexts within which they are conducted.

These studies contribute to the existing literature on AI in EFL education in several ways. The first method is contextualization. By investigating AI integration in diverse contexts (Ecuador, Indonesia, Libya), these studies expand the understanding of how cultural, educational, and technological factors influence teachers' perceptions and experiences. This adds valuable context to the broader literature, which may have previously focused on specific regions or educational levels. Furthermore, the studies prioritize the voices of EFL teachers, providing valuable insights into their concerns, challenges, and perceived benefits of AI integration. This complements existing literature that may have primarily focused on technological aspects or student outcomes. Refinement of existing findings is another way these three studies contribute to the existing literature. By comparing and contrasting findings across different contexts, these studies can help to refine and strengthen existing knowledge about the impact of AI in EFL education. For example, while the studies generally agree on the potential benefits of AI, they also highlight context-specific challenges that require nuanced approaches to implementation.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. Firstly, the relatively small sample size of EFL instructors may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population of EFL teachers in Libya. Secondly, the study primarily focuses on the perceptions of EFL instructors, not directly assessing student experiences or outcomes. Thirdly, the data collected through the survey relies on self-reported information from the participants, which may be subject to biases such as social desirability bias. Fourthly, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw conclusions about cause-and-effect relationships. Finally, the study may not have captured the full range of AI tools and applications used or considered by EFL instructors in Libya.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that EFL (English as a Foreign Language) educators in Libya have a positive perception of integrating AI applications into the EFL community. The results indicate that AI applications are beneficial for saving time, generating content, enhancing language proficiency, increasing motivation and engagement, and expanding knowledge. However, there are key challenges to integrating AI applications, including the risk of over-dependence on AI,

accessibility issues, concerns about content quality, inadequate teacher training, and the unsuitability of AI tools for all proficiency levels.

Theoretical Implications

This research contributes to the growing body of literature on AI in EFL education by providing valuable insights into the perspectives of EFL instructors in a specific context – Libya. The findings shed light on the complexities of integrating AI into existing teaching practices and the need for a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by AI in diverse educational settings.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study have significant practical implications for EFL educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers in Libya:

- Integrate AI tools strategically to complement, rather than replace, teacher instruction.
- Encourage critical thinking skills alongside AI use to ensure students can evaluate information and solve problems independently.
- Provide professional development opportunities for teachers to effectively incorporate AI into their classrooms.
- Advocate for increased accessibility to affordable AI tools and reliable internet in educational institutions.
- The study highlights the importance of developing curricula that integrate AI in a meaningful and ethical manner, ensuring that AI supports rather than supplants critical thinking and independent learning.
- The findings can inform policy decisions regarding the ethical and responsible use of AI in education, including data privacy, algorithmic bias, and equitable access to technology.

Future Research Recommendations

Future researchers are recommended to:

- Conduct research with larger and more diverse samples of EFL teachers and students across different educational institutions in Libya. This will help to increase the generalizability of the findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perspectives across various contexts.
- Conduct longitudinal studies to track the long-term impact of AI integration on student learning outcomes and teacher professional development. This will provide valuable insights into the sustained effects of AI implementation over time.
- Employ mixed-methods research approaches, such as combining quantitative data with qualitative data from observations and case studies, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of AI integration in EFL classrooms. This will allow for a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of the complexities of AI integration in EFL classrooms, capturing both quantitative data and qualitative insights into the experiences and perspectives of teachers and students.

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