

Editorial

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Applications in TESOL: Opportunities, Issues, and Perspectives

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Received: 16 November, 2024/Accepted: 19 November, 2024/Published: 25 November, 2024

The dynamic field of language education is constantly evolving to meet the diverse needs of teachers and students globally, adapting to the rapidly changing technological landscape, particularly in TESOL. Since the release of ChatGPT, a generative artificial intelligence (AI) developed by OpenAI in 2022, it has garnered significant attention and become a focal point for extensive research. Scholars have explored both its advantages and disadvantages (Jeon & Lee, 2023; Kohnke et al., 2023; Ulla et al., 2023a). While much of this research highlights the transformative potential of generative AI tools in language instruction—such as enhanced motivation and self-efficacy (Huang & Mizumoto, 2024), personalizing teaching, facilitating real-time language assessment, and generating dynamic content (Mizumoto et al., 2024)—other studies have also raised concerns about plagiarism, ethical considerations, and the potential impact on students' social skills, analytical reasoning, and creativity (Teng, 2023; Ulla et al., 2023b).

In the *International Journal of TESOL Studies*, we recognize this burgeoning research trend on integrating generative AI tools into language education. To contribute to the ongoing discourse, we have curated a special issue themed “*Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Applications in TESOL: Opportunities, Issues, and Perspectives*,” which examines how ChatGPT and other GenAI tools can be effectively leveraged and integrated into TESOL pedagogy, alongside their various impacts on language instruction. Our aim is to explore both the opportunities and challenges these tools present, as well as the broader perspectives on their role in TESOL.

The first study in this issue by Huang (2024) examines the integration of ChatGPT into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, focusing on its role in enhancing students' speaking skills through voice prompts for oral presentations in Japan. The study highlights ChatGPT's potential to provide immediate, personalized feedback, addressing common challenges such as speaking anxiety and limited opportunities for language practice. The study concludes that incorporating ChatGPT into EFL speaking classes represents a significant advancement in AI-driven education, enabling learners to engage in independent practice while receiving constructive feedback that enhances their overall linguistic proficiency.

In addition to speaking skills, Yamaoka (2024) explores the motivational effects of ChatGPT on Japanese university students learning EFL. Through qualitative data analysis, the research reveals that students experienced heightened motivation and reduced anxiety when using ChatGPT as a learning tool. The students appreciated its ease of use and the enjoyable learning experience it facilitated, contributing to their language learning engagement.

Teng (2024) conducts a systematic review on the impact of ChatGPT on EFL writing instruction, highlighting the growing interest in utilizing AI tools to enhance writing skills. The study finds that while ChatGPT offers significant advantages—such as providing instant feedback, fostering creativity, and improving writing efficacy—it also presents challenges, including the risk of over-reliance on AI and the need for students to maintain critical thinking skills. The

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review emphasizes the importance of thoughtful implementation, suggesting that educators integrate ChatGPT in ways that promote a balanced approach, leveraging its benefits while addressing potential pitfalls.

Melliti (2024) further investigates the impact of ChatGPT on academic writing practices by exploring how graduate students use AI tools in crafting MA theses. The research identifies shifts in academic writing styles, including increased sophisticated vocabulary and a more narrative approach that enhances clarity and engagement. While AI tools promote a more structured and coherent writing style, the study also raises concerns about authenticity and originality, as reliance on AI may homogenize writing styles and reduce the diversity of academic voices. The research calls for ethical guidelines and pedagogical strategies to responsibly integrate AI into graduate-level education while maintaining academic integrity and rigor.

Toncelli and Kostka (2024) identify how English language teachers perceive and integrate GenAI into their teaching practices. Using a qualitative narrative inquiry approach, the findings reveal that while teachers recognize the potential of GenAI to enhance teaching and learning, they also express concerns about its implications for academic integrity and student engagement. The study concludes that GenAI offers innovative opportunities for instructional practices but also requires careful consideration of ethical and pedagogical challenges.

Similarly, Sherwood and Mac Donald (2024) investigate postgraduate English Language Learner (ELL) students' perceptions of generative AI tools, specifically ChatGPT, and their impact on the writing process and thinking. Findings revealed a mix of positive and negative responses: while some students acknowledged the efficiency and potential for enhancing insights, a significant number expressed concerns about the displacement of critical thinking, reliance on technology, and the disruption of the human aspect of writing. The study concludes that while generative AI can benefit task efficiency and creative output, it also poses challenges that educators must address to foster AI literacy and ensure that students can effectively integrate these tools into their learning without compromising their cognitive engagement and academic integrity.

Chia et al. (2024) explore the perceptions and usage of ChatGPT among PhD students at a university in Singapore, focusing on its role as a tool for developing English writing skills. Through a questionnaire survey, the research reveals that while most students have utilized ChatGPT for tasks such as grammar correction, paraphrasing, and summarizing texts, they express concerns regarding the accuracy and reliability of the AI-generated information. The findings suggest that while students appreciate the convenience of ChatGPT, they are cautious about its impact on critical thinking and academic integrity.

Finally, Li and Pan (2024) conduct a qualitative study examining how 12 English major students collaborate with generative AI chatbots, such as ChatGPT, in completing EFL writing assignments. The research utilized Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and critical discourse analysis to explore the interplay between human and nonhuman elements in students' diverse digital literacy practices. The findings revealed that as students negotiated between the native-like authenticity of AI-generated language and their own voices, their strategic decisions were influenced by academic and occupational pressures to gain competitive advantages. The study highlighted that students' interactions with ChatGPT extend beyond mere technical engagement, encompassing a complex network of language ideologies, academic expectations, and personal identities.

The studies in this *Special Issue* show that GenAI tools, such as ChatGPT, have the potential to transform language instruction by enhancing language competency, stimulate creativity, and address common challenges such as anxiety and limited practice opportunities in various contexts, including EFL speaking and writing. However, the findings also highlight serious concerns, including the risk of over-reliance, threats to academic integrity, and the potential loss of critical thinking and originality (Yang et al., 2024). To maximize the benefits of GenAI while addressing these challenges, thoughtful integration of creativity into digital literacy is essential (Hao et al., 2024). Teachers must implement pedagogical strategies that leverage AI's capabilities while ensuring that students maintain their cognitive engagement, ethical considerations, and academic integrity (Ulla et al., 2024).

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