Generative Artificial Intelligence tool usage: The dual-faced experience of the in-service teachers following the Master of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages program

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool usage of 29 in-service EFL teachers who were currently following a Master of TESOL program in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Data were collected via an online questionnaire. As students, the respondents were quite young, familiar with Generative AI tools, and were frequent users of Chat GPT, Grammarly, and Gemini. The majority of respondents, though being aware of AI concerns, positively integrated or experimented with Generative AI in their learning. They acknowledged Generative AI tool benefits, but somewhat expressed ambivalence, insisting on critical evaluation of the prompts, and the majority of them had applied various strategies for responsible use. In the role of the teacher, the respondents also predominantly reflected their AI-positive practice with their teaching, mostly with lesson planning, and then teaching practice. Fewer accounted for their extensive AI usage with an assessment. While appreciating AI's potential values, the respondents, in turn, expressed their concerns about students' critical, and creative ability to be eliminated, the more accessible dishonesty, and challenges in identifying instances of Chat GPT use. As a whole, the respondents had prevalently integrated Generative AI tools in their learning and teaching. They strongly asserted that their main focus was on how AI could be used to enhance learning and teaching, and that they eagerly headed to integrating Generative AI tools into their EFL teaching practices. The findings have highlighted the practical benefits of AI integration and call for further study of the strategies the young AI users have applied for responsible use.

1. Rationales

The fast technological development, based on Artificial Intelligence (AI), opens up a new era of teaching and learning, including teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Vall & Araya, 2023; Yang & Kyun, 2022). The Generative AI (GenAI) tools can generate new forms of creative content, such as audio, code, images, text, simulations and videos, with tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, and ClaudeAI, etc., and consequently present distinctive chances for language learners (Bibi & Atta, 2024), as they generate plausible responses to user inputs (Farrokhnia et al., 2023). GenAI tools can offer customized and

adaptable language learning experiences that cater to the specific needs of individual learners (Grassini, 2023). However, GenAI tools are associated with several concerns, mainly related to ethics as a direct threat to academic integrity (Chan, 2025; Eke, 2023; Mohammadkarimi, 2023).

There have been numerous studies to investigate the perceptions, attitudes as well as experience of students, and those of EFL teachers on GenAI tools (Kohnke et al., 2023; Mohamed, 2023). Anyhow, the exploration just limits to the perceptions, attitudes, and experience of EFL teachers or students' per se, lacking the comprehensive exploration of perceptions of teachers who have experience of using GenAI in teaching practices, and concurrently experience of a student who is struggling with study workload, in the context of perspective shifting from skepticism to more positively leveraging GenAI potential (Chan & Hu, 2023; Slimi et al., 2025).

This paper endeavored to delve into the dual-faced experience of the GenAI users who are both the in-service EFL teachers, and students of a Master of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MTESOL) program in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The study firstly examined the master students' experience of GenAI tool usage in their study. Secondly, the study probed into these in-service teachers' usage of GenAI tools in their teaching practices, and their perceptions of prospective usage of GenAI tools.

2. Contributions

This paper hopes to add to the literature related to the integration of GenAI tools in EFL teaching and learning. The integration was approached through the experience reflection of the extent, the purpose, and drivers of using GenAI tools for teaching and learning of the MTESOL students, and how they coped with the academic integrity issues in their two roles as teachers and students. This paper, therefore, could support educators to make responsible integration of GenAI tools in English language teaching and learning in Vietnam, and to develop policy guidelines that balance technological innovation with the preservation of academic integrity.

3. Literature

Within a very short time from their emergence, GenAI tool use has become increasingly prevalent. GenAI tools provide versatile benefits to English language teaching and learning (Mohamed, 2023; Xiao & Zhi, 2023). Positive attitudes toward AI use in EFL teaching and learning were predominantly highlighted (Firdaus & Nawaz, 2024), even though a more skeptical view was still identified (Li, 2024). The following review will discuss the GenAI benefits for teaching and learning, and their related challenges and concerns.

3.1. GenAI tool benefits from the learning perspectives

The efficient and time-saving GenAI tools (Hassan, 2023) serve as a supportive educational resource, offering instant explanation, and feedback (Hwang et al., 2023). They can help clarify concepts, generate ideas, or even simulate dialogue practice (Ali et al., 2024). They facilitate language practice in real-life situations. Through simulating authentic conversations, learners can participate in dynamic and interactive conversations, and consequently boost their language fluency. The most popularly accepted tool is ChatGPT, which has widely been proved effective in helping students refine their writing skills, enhance learners' pronunciation accuracy, and comprehensibility (Rad & Roohani, 2024; Zhao, 2022).

GenAI tools can offer customized and adaptable language learning experiences that cater to the specific needs of individual learners (Grassini, 2023). GenAI tools, especially ChatGPT, can provide instant and targeted feedback on language use, grammar, and structure, which helps

students reflect on their errors and make corrections. This mechanism allows students to learn from the feedback on their mistakes without waiting for teachers' intervention (Bibi & Atta, 2024). The personalized feedback through these tools increased learner engagement both inside and outside the classroom (Mohamed, 2023; Xu & Li, 2024). By receiving varied tasks aligned with students' preferences, proficiency levels, and learning goals or path, students can customize prompts that suit their cognitive abilities, contributing to a more learner-centered (Yang & Kyun, 2022), and promoting self-directed learning.

3.2. GenAI tool benefits from the teaching perspectives

The positive attitudes of teachers toward GenAI tools are highlighted (Firdaus & Nawaz, 2024). GenAI tools can reduce the teachers' workload (Hua & Le, 2024). There are numerous ways GenAI tools support teachers as they can apply GenAI tools in curriculum design, lesson planning, enhancing personalized learning, assisting student assessment, and fostering engagement among language learners (Bonner et al., 2023).

Furthermore, teachers resort to AI to generate innovative teaching materials that incorporate multimedia elements and interactive activities, which enrich the learning experience and appeal to various learning styles. Teachers enrich their teaching practice with futuristic methods and techniques, and improve teaching effectiveness (Li, 2024; Rad & Roohani, 2024). GenAI tools can also assist teachers in assessing student work, and designing assessment rubrics (Hassan, 2023; Karakose & Tülübaş, 2023; Acosta-Enriquez et al, 2024).

3.3. Challenges and concerns

However, the use of GenAI tools is not without significant challenges and concerns (Cotton et al., 2023; Perkins, 2023). First, AI technologies in education raise social considerations, including reinforcing existing inequalities, privacy disclosure (Farhi et al., 2023), dependence on technology, and impairing students' ability to think critically and solve problems in a negative way (Črček & Patekar, 2023; Hasanein & Sobih, 2023; Putra et al., 2023). Second, various concerns are related to the quality and accuracy of responses generated by the tools (Chan & Hu, 2023; Lambert & Stevens, 2023).

Third, AI tools increasingly raise concerns for ethical and academic integrity in assessment practices (Amin, 2023; Chan, 2025; Chan & Hu, 2023). The AI tools introduce a new layer of complexity to the discussion of academic integrity (Dillon et al., 2024; Waltzer et al., 2024). AI amplifies the accessibility, and teachers confront challenges in detecting AI-generated assignments (Mohammadkarimi, 2023), which allure students of academic dishonesty.

In the meantime, the classification of AI-generated content as plagiarism and appropriate citation practices remain subjects of debate (Cotton et al., 2023; Dillon et al., 2024; Waltzer et al., 2024). Students, anyhow, are increasingly found to be aware of AI concerns, especially the ethical issues of AI, recognizing the potential for misconduct in certain scenarios (Adel et al., 2024; Birks & Clare, 2023), and they have applied strategies to eliminate the risks (Fajt & Schiller, 2025).

4. Methodology, data collection, and analysis

Data for this exploratory study were gathered through an online Google form survey in April 2025, targeting the MTESOL students at a university in Ho Chi Minh City. They were all in-service teachers, teaching at primary, secondary schools, or at the English language centers. Students voluntarily participated, and they were assured that their responses would remain confidential and would be used exclusively for this study purpose. The research was conducted in

accordance with ethical standards, not only to protect the respondents but also ensure the validity and reliability of the collected data, contributing to the overall rigor and credibility of the study.

The questionnaire items were inspired from the content codes derived from findings of Özkan et al. (2024), and Arowosegbe et al. (2024) questionnaire. It consisted of four part. The first part displayed the age range and teaching experience length. The second part, consisting of eight questions, explored the respondents' GenAI tool usage experience as a student. The third part, with four questions, examined the respondents' reflections on their GenAI tool usage as a teacher in their current teaching practices. The last five questions in the fourth part asked about the respondents' prospects of GenAI tool integration into their English teaching.

5. Results

5.1. Characteristics of respondents

A total of 29 MTESOL students responded to this survey. These Master students were young, mostly belonged to Gen Y and Z. 58.6% of the total were in their early middle age, under 40 years old, the typical Gen Y, growing up with information and communicative technology, and preferred interactive and technology-based methods in education. 31% were under 30, growing up with digital technology and social media, leading to a digital-first and technoholic mindset. The rest were under 50 years old. The technological familiarity, especially the constant access to the digital environment, might shape the respondents' AI learning preference and expectation towards education (Chan & Lee, 2023).

The respondents were all in-service teachers, mainly in their early-mid career. One-third only had 01 - 05 years of teaching experience (37.9%), and the rest was in their early mid-career: 31% of them had 06 - 10 years teaching experience; 27.6% had been teaching 11 - 15 years, and quite few had more than 15 years of teaching experience.

5.2. Experience of GenAI tool usage as students

The three most popular GenAI tools: ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Germini for academic learning purposes were cited. ChatGPT tends to be the most popular and influential due to its capacity to create educational content (Hasanein & Sobih, 2023), and to address the various task demands. It can be accessed for free, and not restricted to an operation system (Zaiarna et al., 2024), user-friendly, and easily accessible (Shaikh et al., 2023).

The MTESOL students showed their considerable engagement with GenAI tools. Their frequent use was highly noted, with 65.5% of the total always or often used the tools for their study, 17.2% always used, and 41.4% often used. Only one-third of respondents applied the tools occasionally, with 24.1% sometimes used, and 17.2% stated that they had just tried several times. Studies have showed that students with prior experience using AI tools are more likely to have stronger intentions to use them, and are also more likely to translate those intentions into actual use (Arthur et al., 2024). This suggests that the digital technology comfort of mostly Gen Y and Z MTESOL students, might affect their adoption of GenAI tools for learning purposes. Apart from that, the learning environment can influence the utilization of such tools. Those students experiencing substantial academic pressures from their Master program could opt for the use of AI tools as well (Abbas et al., 2024).

z in this study, the order was to generate ideas, paraphrase and summarize, and correct grammatical mistakes. In Arowosegbe et al. (2024), with the study on the undergraduate students in London, the primary was for grammar checking, idea generating, then answer

seeking, while with students in Jordan, the first main focus was on summarizing and analyzing the material, and then seeking resource for their studying (Ajlouni et al., 2023).

Related to the main drivers or reasons of AI use, with the openness, 75.9% of the total respondents claimed that they wanted instant clarifications, 69% of the total relied on the GenAI tools to seek assistance with their assignments, and 55.2% considered the GenAI tools could help enhance their learning efficiency. The GenAI tools could help students save time (55.2%), and the least was that they turned to the GenAI tools to seek access to information needed, accounting for 55.2% of the respondents. The results to some extent reconfirmed the practical benefits addressed from the survey of the students of another university in Vietnam (Ngo, 2023), or business students in Arab Saudi (Hasanein & Sobih, 2023), especially to highlight the time saving attribute, or homework assistance from the engineering students in Bangladesh (Naher et al., 2023).

When being asked about their most concerns on AI, 79.3% respondents stated that GenAI tools could produce inaccurate or false factual references. The second was that using GenAI tools might make them overly dependent on AI (62.1%). Only 51.7% considered relying on GenAI tools may lead to unintentional plagiarism issues, and 48.3% addressed GenAI tools to the threat of creative and independent thinking. The respondents even cared about financial subscription for GenAI tools at the same level as data privacy issues (24.1%). As the University and the MTESOL program had informed the AI guide, students therefore did not actually identify the policy clarity a serious issue (10.3%).

Since ChatGPT can produce entire essays or assignments, raising issues about academic integrity (Ngoet al., 2024), this study examined how respondents had used the AI prompts in their study. The findings revealed the respondents' responsible usage primarily. Nearly half of them (48.3%) reported that they adapted and developed the AI suggestions to be their own, 24.1% made the modifications to the suggestions, and 10.3% of respondents, after considering the suggestions carefully, kept them unchanged if they were good enough. Quite a few of respondents (13.8%) sometimes used GenAI tools's suggestions directly without changes, and 3.4% often used suggestions directly without changes.

The findings coined Fajt and Schiller's (2025) two key themes of behaviors. The respondents acknowledged benefits but expressed ambivalence, highlighting for critical evaluation of the AI generations, and they resorted themselves with strategies for responsible use. The first theme centers on students' negotiation of AI's potential. The second addressed the strategies for mitigating AI-related risks. Though a minority number of respondents revealed they used the generations without changing, the majority used strategies for responsible use. The respondents had applied different strategies, from adapting, developing, modifying, even keeping the suggestions without changing after considering them. These findings suggested a nuanced student experience, recognizing both AI's potential (Jo, 2024) and the importance of responsible use. These strategies emphasized critical evaluation of AI-generated content, leveraging it for knowledge acquisition in a responsible manner, and demonstrated that students wanted to make use of GenAI tools to enhance learning, while maintaining awareness of the potential pitfalls within academic settings (Ali et al., 2024; Damiano et al., 2024).

The results also showed that students relied prevalently on GenAI tools for their own study, even where AI was not quite favorably accepted by their teachers. Only 10.3% of teachers of the MTESOL program integrated GenAI tools in the teaching, and 17.2% provided the usage guidance. The majority of their teachers (58.6%) showed their concern about students' usage of GenAI tools in assignments, and 13.8% of teachers forbade students to use GenAI tools.

Overall, the MTESOL students had predominantly integrated GenAI tools in their study. Nearly half of students (44.8%) positively integrated them in the learning, 27.6% were experimenting and trying to adopt them in their learning, while 10.3% notified that AI had gained their acceptance gradually. A few of them showed that they were skeptical (13.8%), or afraid of using them (3.4%).

5.3. Experience of GenAI tool usage as EFL teachers

The same respondents expressed the overall positive attitudes and prevalent practices when reporting their experience on GenAI tool usage in their teaching in class. Currently 20.7% of the total only used GenAI tools in preparation for lesson planning, while 24.1% used GenAI tools both in lesson planning, and in teaching practice, and 20.7% used them in lesson planning, teaching practices, and assessments. 27.6% claimed that they planned to integrate GenAI tools into their teaching preparation, and teaching practices in thư very near future. Only 6.9% reported that they did not apply any GenAI tools in their teaching yet, though they have applied them in their learning. As Fajt and Schiller (2025) claimed the positive attitudes and social influence were significant predictors of ChatGPT usage. The respondents of this study might popularly translate their positive attitudes in their study to the adoption of the GenAI tools in their teaching practice. This AI integration in teaching became their professional advantage to their colleagues, as only after the issuance of the Circular 02/2025/TT-BGDDT, providing regulations on the digital competence framework (Ministry of Education and Training, 2025), in January 2025, which strongly pushed the AI integration in teaching and learning that the institutions started to consider the AI adoption. The experience of the respondents, both as students and as teachers, might be more reciprocal, while previous studies revealed more skeptical perceptions of teachers towards GenAI capabilities, as well as concerns about the risks and dangers than those of students (Chan & Lee, 2023). Teachers with a lack of training on GenAI tools might resist using them, and in consequence, could not sufficiently benefit from these tools, which brings about negative impacts on both students and teachers (Özkan et al., 2024).

In reference to how AI assisted their teaching, most of the respondents, accounting for 75.9% of the total, identified that GenAI tools could reduce their workload and stress. Teachers could save time as GenAI tools could provide students with personalized tutoring and feedback (69%). GenAI tools provided support for lesson planning (65.5%), and then consequently Improved teaching efficiency (51.7%). The contribution of GenAI tools to teachers' professional development might be of much less appreciation, as only 37.9% respondents reflected their credit to the role of GenAI tools in their professional development. The current study confirmed the benefits of GenAI tools, especially ChatGPT, in assisting teachers (Amin, 2023; Hua & Le, 2024; Nguyen, 2023; Özkan et al., 2024). These benefits highlight how AI could alleviate certain teaching workload, thereby allowing teachers to focus more on fostering a more innovative and technology-rich educational environment.

The respondents' usage of GenAI tools in their teaching might take root in their beliefs of the GenAI benefits that they might bring about to the students. The study was in line with the previous ones in listing the benefits (Ali et al., 2024; Mohamed, 2023; Slimi et al., 2025). Two-thirds of them (75.9% and 72.4%) expressed that GenAI tools could provide students with personalized tutoring and feedback based on the students' learning needs and progress. As GenAI tools could generate ideas in writing, teachers believed that they would help improve students' efficiency and productivity. 69% of the total respondents believed GenAI tools could help their students save time in learning, as the teacher respondents also translated the

practicality of GenAI tools as saving time. Nearly half of the teachers also highlighted that GenAI tools could assist students to understand concepts, and practice skills. Anyhow, not many of them (35.7%) believed in the AI role of enhancing students' engagement and motivation.

As a teacher, 69% of respondents were aware that their students might use Gen AI tools for their studies. Their main concerns about students' use of GenAI tools could be listed as the following. GenAI tools hindered students from developing critical, and independent thinking skills (62.1%), and hindered the development of creativity (41.4%). GenAI tools made academic dishonesty more accessible, and tempting for students (55.2%), while the teachers encountered challenges in identifying instances of ChatGPT that might enable academic dishonesty in students' writing (48.3%).

The findings shed light on the possible various perspectives of academic integrity. While in Tran (2024) study on high school teachers, his study illuminated the complex ethical landscape high school teachers navigated with emphasis on ethical awareness, combined with significant concerns about transparency, academic integrity, and data privacy, Nguyen (2023) study on the university students' writing raised teachers' voices on the potential concerns over the application, such as students' heavy reliance on ChatGPT to generate responses, and the habit of copying its answers, which might lead to serious issue of academic integrity. The MTESOL students, however, showed a more tolerant view as they expressed more concern about AI hindering students from developing critical, and independent thinking than the possible violence of academic integrity.

Overall, the respondents exhibited a favorable experience toward GenAI tool usage in teaching. Almost all of the respondents (89.7%) strongly confirmed that they found GenAI tools useful both for their learning and teaching, though 79.3% respondents believed that concerns about academic integrity, ethical implications, and the negative impact on student learning still remained, 89.7% of the respondents very strongly exhibited their main focus was how AI could be used to enhance learning, personalized education, and improve teaching practices, and the concerns could not hinder the AI integration. Most of the respondents (82.8%), as a consequence, claimed that their prospective target would be how to integrate GenAI tools into their teaching practices.

6. Conclusion

The current study was undertaken to explore the GenAI tool usage experience of the in-service EFL teachers who were currently following a Master of TESOL program in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The respondents were quite young, and frequent users of GenAI tools. As students, they acknowledged GenAI tool benefits to provide instant clarifications, to assist them with assignments, to enhance learning efficiency, and to save time, but somewhat expressed ambivalence, insisting on critical evaluation of the prompts, and the majority of them applied various strategies for responsible use. As teachers, they had applied AI with their lesson planning, and then teaching practice, but fewer with assessment. They reasserted AI is beneficial for students, but expressed concerns about students' critical, and creative ability impairment, about more accessible academic dishonesty, and having challenges in identifying instances of Chat GPT in students' assignments. As a whole, the respondents expressed a positive attitude towards GenAI tools, and had applied them predominantly for their learning and teaching. Despite the concerns from either students' or teachers' perspectives, the respondents still confirmed their eagerness to integrate GenAI tools into their prospective practices.

The GenAI has indicated its potential in current and future EFL learning and teaching contexts in Vietnam as an effective and time-saving aid or resource. In the context of switching attitudes from cautious to positive integration of AI in teaching and learning, the findings generated implications for future practices, highlighting the practical benefits of AI integration. The evolution of AI's capabilities has streamlined the teaching workload, and encouraged futuristic methods in language teaching. The GenAI potential has better met students' diverse needs, even at the graduate level as well. The potential for a more effective GenAI tool usage might be achievable with a commitment of evaluative judgment of AI prompts, and responsible usage. Though the findings might be at the exploratory level, they also impel further studies on how the young generation of AI users have practically approached AI integration.

SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTION

The manuscript clearly identifies a research gap; the manuscript extends or refines existing theories; the manuscript opens new directions for further research.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

CRediT: **Le Thi Thanh Thu**: Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Writing - Original Draft, Project Administration.

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The author declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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