

## THE INTEGRATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE INTO ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: VOICES FROM VIETNAMESE EFL TEACHERS

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### ABSTRACT

The advent of sophisticated artificial intelligence (AI) technologies has resulted in the significant influence of AI on the process of English language teaching (ELT) and learning. Notwithstanding the greater penetration of AI into language education, little research focuses on English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' perspectives on AI integration into English classrooms at tertiary education in the Vietnamese context. This qualitative study examined four Vietnamese EFL teachers' perceived benefits and challenges of utilizing AI in English language teaching. To analyse qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews, the thematic analysis approach was adopted. The findings revealed that Vietnamese EFL teachers perceived AI as an essential teaching aid in their teaching process as the adoption of AI could enhance their teaching methods. The current study has important practical implications for language teachers, learners, and policymakers such as the stimulation of personalized learning, increase in student motivation and engagement in learning activities, and difficulties in using AI in ELT to promote an improvement in English language education quality.

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### INTRODUCTION

It is generally acknowledged that the emergence of AI technologies (AITs) greatly impacts ELT and learning. Additionally, the employment of AI is widespread globally, leading to its importance in every aspect of life, particularly in education (Pokrivcakova, 2023). Besides, AI tools can facilitate flexible and personalized learning (Luckin et al., 2016; Vu & Tran, 2025). Latterly, there is an increasing tendency for students to deploy chatbots for English language learning (ELL) due to the advancement of leading-edge technology. According to Chen et al. (2020), AI has taken various forms when applied to the educational sector such as online intelligent education systems and chatbots. AI is defined as machines that have human brilliance, including cognitive abilities, learning, and decision-making capacity (Chen et al.,

2020; Suryana et al., 2020). Hence, from the aforementioned definitions, AI is a valuable educational tool that can accomplish a wide variety of tasks in response to its users' enquiries.

Additionally, it is noticed that the rapid rise of AI results in myriads of AI tools that have been deployed in many sectors. In that regard, AI tools have the ability to transform the education sector as they can create personalized learning (Tan, 2020). Indeed, learners are likely to deploy AI chatbots in their ELL since chatbots are viewed as a new method that enables learners to improve their language capacity (Belda-Medina & Calvo-Ferrer, 2022; Godwin-Jones, 2022). Moreover, AI tools are beneficial to ELT and learning in contemporary society. Pokrivcakova (2023) postulates that AI can benefit teachers and students at tertiary levels as it can help improve teaching methods, enhance personalized learning environments, and improve educational management. Given the advantages of AI tools such as chatbots, Gruzdeva et al. (2024) revealed that chatbots enable learners to practice speaking skills so that their confidence can be boosted. What is more, chatbots are deemed a source of social learning as they support teachers in their work routine, improve students' engagement, work with many students concurrently, and enhance learning motivation for ELL (Colace et al., 2018). Furthermore, AI applications are viewed as powerful tools that help language learners develop writing skills and enhance their engagement in EFL settings (Nazari et al., 2021). Importantly, AI contributes to the improvement in electronic writing tools that play an essential role in sharpening students' writing skills (Alharbi, 2023). Chen et al. (2020) indicated that with the assistance of chatbots, it is possible for teachers to fulfil numerous repetitive tasks such as marking students' assignments, providing instant feedback, saving time, and improving teaching activities. Hence, it is noticeable that AI tools are innovative methods that are valuable for teachers and learners in terms of workload reduction, active engagement, language skill development, and personalized learning stimulation.

Notwithstanding AITs' benefits, Smutny and Schreiberova (2020) argued that users encounter some difficulties in using chatbots, including their unfamiliarity with new chatbots and a scarcity of clear instructions for use. Chatbots also show a lack of proper understanding of what users require and do not contain up-to-date information to discuss diverse topics (Kim et al., 2019). Therefore, such challenges should be taken into consideration when applying AITs into ELT.

In many EFL contexts, the utilization of technology in ELT and learning is widespread as it contributes to the improvement in knowledge and learning engagement among EFL students (Duong et al., 2021). Accordingly, ChatGPT plays a crucial role in enhancing English language education (ELE) (Hua & Le, 2024; Nguyen & Tran, 2023) as it can provide teachers and students with spelling checks, vocabulary enrichment, and rapid assessment (Nguyen & Tran, 2023). Additionally, Nguyen (2023) pointed out that ChatGPT has the potential for the enhancement of ELL and language instruction, leading to a tendency to adopt ChatGPT in teaching writing and research methodology courses by Vietnamese EFL teachers. Furthermore, Duong and Suppasetsee (2024) draw the conclusion that AI tools could create a new learning environment for ELE in the context of Vietnam. Hence, it can be seen that AITs are employed in ELT and learning in Vietnam due to their potential usefulness.

The current study hopefully makes a significant contribution to the technological age as it provides EFL teachers' perception of the deployment of AI to ELT in Vietnam. Specifically, this study will offer invaluable insights about benefits and challenges of employing AI to teach the English language. Additionally, the results of the present study might make a valuable contribution towards the body of research on the role of AI in ELE. Besides, this study can help policymakers make a crucial decision on the types of AITs that are apt for ELT and learning activities.

As the nature of the current study is to examine Vietnamese tertiary teachers' views on the integration of AI with ELE, Cope and Ward's (2002) teacher-student perceptions and the

quality of learning outcomes will be modified. Figure 1 illustrates teachers' perceptions of employing AI in teaching. Teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning use teacher-centered and student-centered approaches to provide information, assess students' learning, and promote independent learning (Cope & Ward, 2002). Cope and Ward (2002) mentioned that teachers' teaching approaches are affected by the way teachers perceive their teaching and learning. Likewise, Sumakul et al. (2022) stated that teachers' perceptions of learning and teaching may influence their teaching methods and their students' learning quality. Additionally, teachers' and students' adoption of AITs can enhance learning outcomes (ibid). Thus, Sumakul et al. (2022) posit that teachers' perceptions are not only a critical element of the success in ELL but also considered as contributing factors to teachers' utilization of technology in classrooms which benefits the teaching and learning processes.



Figure 1. Teachers' perception of using AI in teaching ELT (adapted from Cope & Ward's (2002) teacher-student perceptions and the quality of learning outcomes)

Apart from that, connectivism postulates that knowledge refers to networks and learning is the process of constructing such networks (Transue, 2013; Aldahdouh et al., 2015). Similarly, Kropf (2013) stated that connectivism attributes learning through cyber nodes in social networks. In a similar vein, Lin (2022) posited that learning is the establishment of connections among the nodes. Moreover, connectivists state that "knowledge and learning knowledge are distributive" since they contain networks that are established from social interaction and technology (Goldie, 2016, p. 2). Hence, the connectivist learning theory was employed in this study as it can build a perception of AI usage in teaching, which leads to improvement in teaching activities (Lin, 2022). In general, this study is framed by the two frameworks including teachers' perception of utilizing AI for teaching and the connectivist learning theory to investigate Vietnamese EFL teachers' perception of AI to enhance ELT.

A number of researchers and scholars (e.g., Aslvarez-Herrero, 2024; Cong-Lem et al., 2024; Duong & Suppasetsee, 2024; Galindo-Domínguez et al., 2023; Hazaymeh et al., 2024; Hua & Le, 2024; Nguyen, 2023; Nguyen & Tran, 2023; Pokrivcakova, 2023; Sumakul et al., 2022) carried out studies on the deployment of AI for ELT in different contexts. In foreign contexts, Sumakul et al. (2022) explored Indonesian EFL teachers' beliefs in the utilization of AI in classes. This study involved 4 teachers who attended interviews. The findings indicated that their perceptions of AI usage were positive as AI is beneficial to ELT. Besides, learning motivation and technological and pedagogical ability among language teachers should be considered when utilizing AI in classrooms. In Spain, Galindo-Domínguez et al. (2023) investigated the employment of AI among primary, secondary, and tertiary teachers. This study involved 445 teachers who answered a survey. The findings revealed that primary and secondary teachers utilized AI to create content while university teachers employed AI to obtain information and translate texts.

Pokrivcakova (2023) explored pre-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards the adoption of AI into the process of teaching in Slovakia. This quantitative study included 137 teachers who responded to a questionnaire survey. The results indicated that participants adopted favourable attitudes towards AI integration into ELE. In addition, they believed that AI could improve language ELT; therefore, AI should be included in curricula. Aslvarez-Herrero (2024) examined Spanish teachers' perspectives on using AI in the classroom. Participants were 599 teachers who filled in a questionnaire. The results disclosed that teachers believed that the application of AITs to teaching is possible in classroom settings; however, they need to acquire

deep knowledge of AITs. Hazaymeh et al. (2024) investigated EFL teachers' viewpoints on the efficacy of AI in their class. This quantitative study utilized a survey to collect data. This study involved 46 teachers. The findings unveiled teachers' use of AI to facilitate tasks, improve instructional strategies, and tailor individuals' learning processes. Besides, teachers believe that AI tools help them save time, offer students feedback on their language proficiency, improve their engagement, and develop their vocabulary and grammatical knowledge.

In the context of Vietnam, Nguyen and Tran (2023) examined the potential of adopting ChatGPT for ELT. This qualitative study involved one teacher who participated in a semi-structured interview and 10 students' essays. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse data. The results indicated that teachers believe that ChatGPT is a valuable tool that can reduce their teaching workload. In terms of essay assessment, students got similar scores from their teacher and ChatGPT. Besides, Nguyen (2023) did a study on attitudes towards the integration of ChatGPT into writing classrooms among EFL teachers. A cohort of 20 university teachers answered a survey and an interview so as to collect data. The results illustrated that teachers favoured employing ChatGPT for teaching writing.

In 2024, Duong and Suppasetsee investigated the utility of an AI voice-based chatbot to speaking skills development among 30 Vietnamese learners. A quasi-experiment was employed in this study. This study used pre-/post-speaking tests, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews so as to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The results disclosed that students improved their speaking skills with the assistance of a chatbot as they could use vocabulary as well as grammatical constructions appropriately. Cong-Lem et al. (2024) explored 31 Vietnamese teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT in ELT. This quantitative study utilized an online survey to gather data. The findings showed that teachers perceived that learners relied on AI due to their lack of linguistic ability and motivation for ELL. More recently, Hua and Le (2024) undertook research into Vietnamese university teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT employment in learners' writing assignments. This qualitative study recruited 9 teachers from two institutions to attend the semi-structured interview. This study utilized a thematic analysis method to analyse data. The findings showed that teachers agreed that ChatGPT could reduce their teaching workload, improve students' language proficiency, enhance student engagement, and foster students' personalized learning and critical thinking. However, teachers had difficulties in employing ChatGPT in writing lessons such as their reliance on ChatGPT, language exactness, contextual and cultural differences, effect on their creativity, and some technical problems.

Although some studies on teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT have been conducted in the Vietnamese context, there is a scarcity of research that focuses on the voices of Vietnamese university EFL teachers in the incorporation of AITs into ELE in different higher institutions. To that end, this study aims to examine EFL teachers' perception of the deployment of AI to teach the English language at four universities in southern Vietnam. Hence, this study endeavors to answer these questions as follows:

1. What are Vietnamese EFL teachers' perceived benefits of adopting AI in ELT?
2. What are Vietnamese EFL teachers' challenges of adopting AI in ELT?

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Research Design

The present study adopted the qualitative approach which is based on the constructivist worldview for data collection. This is simply because it is believed that using open-ended questions and gathering information by visiting the context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) can generate a detailed understanding of AI employment in ELT and learning. Additionally, constructivist researchers recognize that information obtained from the interview is the result

of an exchange between the researcher and informants (Mann & MacLeod, 2015). Moreover, the constructivist paradigm acknowledges that knowledge is the production of social and personal meaning-making, leading to the construction of new knowledge (Pilarska, 2021). The constructivist paradigm is appropriate for the present study since it explores EFL teachers' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of AI integration in ELT. In terms of the researchers' positionality, self-reflection and reflexivity are employed as the researchers acknowledge their own beliefs as well as their bias which can affect the outcomes of the research.

### **Population and Sample**

This study involved four Vietnamese EFL male teachers who were currently working in four universities in the South of Vietnam. Four participants held MA degrees in English language studies and their teaching experience ranges from five to more than ten years. In addition to this, their ages range from 30 to 45. These participants were purposely chosen as they had practical experience in integrating AI into their language teaching. Thus, choosing participants intentionally enables researchers to fully grasp the problem of their research and the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Specifically, they were likely to employ AI such as ChatGPT and Grammarly to teach speaking and writing courses so as to enhance Vietnamese English-majored students' speaking and writing competence. In particular, they instructed students how to use AI so that their students knew how to utilize it properly and send their requests when needed. Participants also adopted AI when they prepared lesson plans and games to attract students to their lessons. In addition, Duolingo was utilized in teaching and learning activities to develop students' vocabulary inside and outside the classrooms as students could practice with Duolingo everywhere and at any time. All participants were skilled at deploying AI tools since they were fully aware of the importance of AI integration into their classes. Moreover, their technical skills were improved after the outbreak of the coronavirus. Consequently, these participants leveraged AITs to enhance ELT in a digital era. Four Vietnamese EFL teachers were selected since they had experience in employing AI in their English language teaching in tertiary education; therefore, they can represent the population.

### **Instruments**

The semi-structured interviews were designed based on the research objectives to gain detailed information about teachers' stance on the adoption of AI to ELT, which included five main questions. Semi-structured interviews were selected as they help the interviewer investigate the full details of the interviewees' responses (Roulston, 2010). An interview protocol was employed to ask questions during the interviews (Creswell, 2014). The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese in order to help respondents express their ideas fully.

### **Data Analysis**

Before collecting data, the researchers first gained permission from the university administrators. The purpose of conducting the present research was clarified to participants and their participation was guaranteed anonymity. The consent form was administered to all participants to sign before the process of interviews. Before the main study took place, the interview questions were piloted with two instructors who were excluded from the main study to ensure that the research instrument was clear and valid. According to Friedman (2011), piloting the interview questions helps the researcher to address possible problems so that the questions can be revised before data collection occurs. A one-on-one interview was adopted as it assisted the researchers in gaining in-depth information on participants' views. Four teachers were invited to attend the online interview individually via Google Meet on a voluntary basis to ensure that they had private space to provide honest opinions. Each interview lasted around twenty minutes. The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese to gain detailed information. The interviews were recorded with the full permission of the respondents for later transcripts.

Four interviewees were labeled T1 to T4. The transcription was transcribed and translated into English. After that, the translation was cross-checked by an English teacher to ensure its accuracy. Creswell (2014) claimed that cross-checking takes place when different practitioners compare their codes. Furthermore, to enhance the reliability and validity of the current study, the interview questions were piloted with two Vietnamese language teachers who were not involved in the main study. After that, the research instrument was modified for the main study. To analyse qualitative data from the interviews, Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis was employed, including familiarizing with the data, creating initial codes, exploring themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the report.

First, the recordings were transcribed into written forms and translated into English. The data were then read and re-read several times so that familiarity with the content was gained. In order to enhance the reliability of data, transcriptions were checked by the researchers to avoid making errors during the transcription (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Additionally, member checking was utilized to increase the validity of the data. Specifically, the translated versions were sent back to the interviewees for content confirmation. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), adopting member checking can help researchers determine the accuracy of their findings. Thus, member checking is viewed as an effective technique to delve into the results' credibility (Birt et al., 2016).

Second, initial codes were generated systematically in which basic elements of raw data from the interviews could be coded to find potential themes. Then relevant data to each code were identified and compared. Third, different codes were categorized into potential themes as well as relevant coded data were compared in the identified themes. For instance, codes such as "boosting teaching efficiency and effectiveness", "providing support for assessment", and "facilitating learners' personalized learning" were classified into an identified theme, "the benefits of adopting AI in English Language Teaching". Fourth, themes were reviewed and refined. The former refers to reviewing all coded data extracts to form a coherent theme. The latter involves re-reading the entire data to check the relevance of themes as well as to code additional data within themes. For example, three themes, including "technical issues, technology ability, and students' unfamiliarity with AI" were integrated to form a broader theme entitled "technical problems".

The next stage encompasses defining and naming themes. The core of each theme was identified and elements of each theme were determined. The final stage involves producing a report by selecting extracts that illustrate important points that provide participants' perspectives. Moreover, to increase the reliability of data analysis, two EFL teachers were invited to cross-check three randomly chosen pieces of data. Creswell and Creswell (2023) indicated that cross-check codes occur when different researchers compare the results. Inter-rater reliability was also employed.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Research Findings**

#### **The Benefits of Adopting AI in ELT**

All participants agreed that AI is a partner in their ELT as incorporating AI in classrooms is beneficial to teaching activities. Specifically, all teachers believed that AI as a companion could help them boost their teaching methods in EFL classes and assess their students' assignments.

#### **Reforming Teaching Methods**

In terms of their teaching methods, teachers stated:

"AI offers some advantages for me. When I teach English, I mostly use ChatGPT to prepare my lesson plan, exercises, and special activities for my

students. I also use Google Diagflow and Andy English Bot to design a conversation so that students can practice speaking with them. Also, AI helps to reduce my time when I prepare lessons and exercises for my students because it can instantly suggest exercises when I have queries so I have more time to think about new activities to teach my students.” (T1)

“Using AI helps me improve my teaching method as AI can provide immediate responses after receiving my requests and assign suitable tasks to my students. AI tools such as ChatGPT and Quillbot help me save time and reduce my teaching workload as they can create various tasks quickly for different levels of students’ language proficiency due to their functions when I do not have much time to prepare tasks” (T2)

“I believe that AI can help me improve my teaching method. The AI tool I mostly use is ChatGPT to prepare games and tasks that are suitable for my students’ level. Besides, I use AI for my lesson plan preparation by providing inputs or prompts to AI then adapt AI’s responses to be appropriate for my teaching objectives.” (T3)

“AI can improve my teaching method when I do not have great ideas for lessons, activities, or teaching approaches to achieve teaching goals. So, AI can suggest some appropriate activities to me so that I can apply them in my class.” (T4)

In short, the results indicate that all teachers employed AI such as ChatGPT in their classrooms due to its ability to create lesson plans and activities, lighten their teaching workload, and save time, leading to the enhancement of their teaching methods.

### **Providing Support for Assessment**

In respect of assessment, two teachers shared:

“I think AI can help me evaluate my students’ writing assignments. I use ChatGPT to mark my students’ writing then read ChatGPT’s scores to ensure the accuracy of the results.” (T3)

“I think that AI can assess my students’ writing.” (T4)

Generally, the findings demonstrate that AI such as ChatGPT can mark students’ writing assignments. Apart from that, teachers agreed that AI is students’ friend since it could help their students foster their personalized learning, improve their speaking and writing skills, and increase student motivation and participation in the learning process.

### **Facilitating Learners’ Personalized Learning**

Teachers agreed that employing AI could improve personalized learning among students. They shared:

“I believe that AI can provide students with a personalized learning environment.” (T1)

“AI can facilitate personalized learning for each student’s level. Specifically, Duolingo is an application that can create students’ personalized learning.” (T3)

“AI supports my students’ language learning as it can improve their personalized learning. Students can ask AI whenever they have questions about their assignments. Additionally, AI can provide personalized feedback for each student.” (T4)

The results show that AI can foster personalized learning environments for students. This is mainly because AI can respond instantly to all students' questions in their ELL process.

### **Improving Learners' Speaking and Writing Skills**

Regarding speaking and writing skills development, the majority of teachers agreed that utilizing AI could help students enhance their English speaking and writing skills. They stated:

"Students can practice speaking with AI anytime and everywhere. AI can give automatic feedback to each student after receiving students' prompts." (T1)

"Using AI can help motivate students to complete their assignments. AI can correct students' mistakes as well. Some students learn a lot from AI as AI can suggest ideas for their writing tasks." (T2)

"Students can use Grammarly, ChatGPT, and ELSA to practice speaking and writing skills. Thus, AI such as Duolingo and ELSA can assess students' language skills and learning progress." (T3)

The emergence of two major themes from the interview involves students' speaking skill development and writing skill improvement. It can be seen that AI such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and ELSA can offer students considerable support for their ELL as they can practice and converse with AI whenever they have queries or need some great ideas for their assignments.

### **Enhancing Learner Motivation and Engagement**

One teacher believed that adopting AI in learning English could help students increase their learning motivation and involvement in classroom activities as follows:

"Students can use Duolingo to improve their vocabulary. Using this app can also increase student motivation for learning English. Adopting AI can improve students' motivation and engagement in their learning activities." (T3)

This finding displays that utilizing AI could help to build up students' motivation for and engagement in learning English. In brief, participants believe that AI is regarded as a partner in ELT and learning owing to its affordances in terms of teaching approaches, teaching efficacy, assessment, personalized learning environments, language skills development, and motivation and learning engagement enhancement.

### **The Challenges of Adopting AI in ELT**

Interview results revealed Vietnamese teachers' problems of utilizing AI in their ELT including improper responses, teachers' dependence on AI, and a reduction in creativity and critical thinking.

### **Inappropriate Responses**

Teachers argued that they faced a major challenge when integrating AI into their teaching, which was the irrelevant responses produced by AI. They stated their difficulty as follows:

"Sometimes, AI's responses are inappropriate, so teachers need to check and revise them." (T2)

"AI may provide teachers with inappropriate responses if it does not understand teachers' teaching context." (T3)

"AI's responses may be inappropriate; therefore, teachers need to read its answers thoroughly and select the appropriate answers." (T4)

The result of the interview specifies that one of the drawbacks of AI is that it would produce incorrect responses, which could hinder teachers in their ELT. Hence, checking AI's replies are important.

### **Teachers' Dependence on AI**

In addition to its improper answers, one teacher mentioned that their dependence on AI was their difficulty in teaching English.

“Teachers' reliance on AI is the challenge since AI can answer teachers' questions quickly.” (T3)

Hence, it is believed that AI exerts a negative influence on teachers as it makes them dependent on it for ideas generation.

### **Reduction in Teachers' Creativity and Critical Thinking**

One teacher shared that the use of AI could reduce their critical and creative thinking in ELT.

“Using AI can reduce teachers' creativity and negatively affect critical thinking because they just send their requests to ChatGPT so that it can offer them ideas.” (T4)

The interview divulges EFL teachers' challenge of integrating AI into their classes. It will be difficult for teachers to encourage their creativity as well as critical thinking if they have developed a habit of employing AI on a daily basis. In addition, some difficulties that students encounter when they use AI for learning English involve technical problems and impact on students' creativity.

### **Technical Problems**

The result showed that technical problems were challenging for students when they utilized AI in their ELL. One participant indicated:

“Students may face technical issues when using AI to practice speaking skills because their mobile phones do not have settings for the English language.” (T1)

“Students lack understanding of AI, leading to their difficulties in using AI to improve their English language learning.” (T2)

The interview reveals that students' technical issues emanate from their mobile phones and their lack of AI knowledge. Hence, utilizing mobile devices that are compatible with AITs should be taken into account.

### **Effect on Students' creativity and critical thinking**

Concerning students' creativity with the employment of AI, one teacher disclosed:

“AI may reduce students' creativity and negatively impact their critical thinking because they are likely to send their questions to ChatGPT and wait for the answers.” (T4)

The result demonstrates that the employment of AI in language learning could negatively affect students' creativity the process of ELL.

In general, the findings explain that teachers argued that they and their students faced challenges of deploying AI for teaching and learning English such as reliance on AI, teachers' prompts, technical issues, AI's inappropriate responses, the strangeness of AI, and the effect on teachers' and students' creativity and critical thinking.

## Discussion

This study revealed several key findings. Firstly, regarding the benefits of integrating AI and ELT in the first research question, Vietnamese EFL teachers perceived that AI is their partner or their inseparable companion in their teaching process as the adoption of AI could improve their students' learning outcomes. The finding of this study was aligned with Chen et al. (2020) and Cope and Ward (2002), who asserted that teachers' perception of employing AI in teaching and learn can lead to their use of AI to help students enhance their learning quality. It can be inferred that AI is a valuable educational resource for language teachers. Besides, this finding was similar to studies by Chen et al. (2020), Hazaymeh et al. (2024), and Nguyen and Tran (2023), who revealed that AI could help teachers perform their daily tasks, save time, and ease their heavy workload. This can be explained that AI could provide teachers with instant feedback after receiving teachers' requests. It can be implied that teachers were familiar with the design of AI to apply it efficiently, which indicates their positive cultural attitudes toward AI usage in ELT teaching. Moreover, it can be inferred that participants received strong support from their universities in relation to AI tools such as ChatGPT and Grammarly. Consequently, language teachers could leverage such tools in their teaching process and increase students' engagement in their learning.

Secondly, given the advantages of AI in learning English, teachers perceived that deploying AI could help students enhance their speaking and writing skills. These findings were congruence with those of Alharbi (2023), Gruzdeva et al. (2024), and Nazari et al. (2021), revealing that the employment of AI among language learners could help them master their speaking and writing skills. A reasonable interpretation is that AI demonstrates the technological capability for providing immediate feedback and learning resources to students that meet their needs. Another plausible interpretation for this could be that AI has a wide range of applications that students can select appropriate ones to practice speaking and writing skills at any time and everywhere. Moreover, it can be illustrated that as a friend, AI could suggest brilliant ideas to students so that they could complete their assignments and produce great scripts.

With respect to the second research question, teachers pointed out that both teachers and students confronted some problems of employing AI which hindered them from developing their English language teaching and learning competence. In terms of teachers' difficulties in utilizing AI, teachers revealed their challenges including AI's inappropriate responses. This finding was in line with that of Kim et al. (2019) which indicated that chatbots lack understanding of users' queries. A plausible reason is that AI may have limited resources due to their shortage of human aspects. In addition, teachers agreed that they encountered difficulties in using AI such as their dependence on AI and a decrease in their creativity and critical thinking. These findings were supported by Hua and Le (2024), who indicated that reliance on AI and AI's effect on creativity are major problems teachers may face when using ChatGPT. This is because AI performs a useful function that can produce automatic responses. As a result, teachers were likely to rely on AI's answers when they had tight teaching schedules, which may lead to their little time for lessons and task preparation.

Concerning students' challenges of using AI for learning English, teachers unveiled some difficulties including technical problems and impact on students' creativity. These findings were different from a study by Hua and Le (2024), who disclosed that teachers faced technical problems when using AI and AI could stimulate students' critical thinking. A probable explanation is that students' mobile phones may not be equipped with different foreign language settings, or they may not support the AI platform. Another justification is that students may be likely to pose questions without working out a solution to their problems, showing their characteristic of reliance on their teachers or AITs. Besides, teachers perceived that students had difficulties with AI since they were unfamiliar with AITs. This was in line with Smutny

and Schreiberova 's (2020) study which showed that unfamiliarity with chatbots was users' challenge. This is simply because students lack awareness of using AI appropriately.

## CONCLUSION

This study concluded that Vietnamese EFL teachers perceived AI as a partner in EFL settings since it offers teachers and students substantial benefits (such as transforming the teaching methods, providing support for assessment, facilitating learners' personalized learning, improving learners' speaking and writing skills, and enhancing learner motivation and engagement) and yet some challenges (namely, improper responses, teachers' dependence on AI, and reduction in creativity and critical thinking).

As such, pedagogical implications are proposed. First, language teachers should be aware of their prompts and utilize different AI tools to check the effectiveness of such prompts so that they can select the most appropriate product for their particular teaching context to enhance their ELT. Besides, it is language educators who need critical thinking when deploying AI for EFL classes to ensure the appropriateness of AI's responses for each student's level and ability. What is more, language teachers should choose AI that is apt for their students and make full use of AI so that their students can gain knowledge of the English language and experience in adopting AI. More importantly, the advantages and limitations of AI should be clarified to students as well as explicit instructions on employing AI appropriately should be concentrated on as some students are unable to utilize AI tools efficiently on their own. The deployment of AI in ELT and learning should be fostered and monitored properly in line with students' needs and the basic requirements of language teaching and learning. Finally, university administrators should provide many training programs in using AI, which assist teachers and students in incorporating AI into their ELT and learning productively.

The current study imposes limitations. Firstly, the present study involved a small sample size (e.g. four Vietnamese EFL male teachers) from four universities in southern Vietnam. Hence, it is difficult to generalize the findings to other contexts. Secondly, this study lacked investigation into university administrators' and students' attitudes about the incorporation of AI into ELT and learning. Thirdly, this study employed a pure qualitative research design so as to obtain data. Therefore, future research could recruit more participants including males and females from different universities throughout the country to provide meticulous data analysis and make generalizations about these findings. What is more, future studies should adopt a mixed-methods design in order to triangulate data as well as offer comprehensive perspectives of AI in ELE. Finally, future research could include administrators, curriculum developers, and students to offer a thorough understanding of the deployment of ELE.

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