

## MINIMIZING AI DEPENDENCY OF L2 LEARNERS FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES: VOICES FROM EFL TEACHERS

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of artificial intelligence in EFL education, emphasizing its advantages, challenges, and the vital responsibility of educators in ensuring a balanced and ethical approach. Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping English as a Second Language (L2) education, offering tools like ChatGPT and Meta AI that personalize instruction, enhance learning, and provide efficient access to resources. This study investigates the integration of AI in L2 education by exploring the perspectives of 50 EFL teachers, focusing on the benefits, challenges, and strategies for sustainable use. Using a qualitative approach, the study identifies AI's positive impact on learning efficiency but highlights concerns such as diminished creativity, reduced engagement, and increased dependency on automation. Findings reveal that while AI tools promote efficiency, they risk reducing originality, weakening cognitive engagement, and hindering independent problem-solving skills. The study concludes that with careful teacher-led interventions, ethical AI guidelines, and innovative assessments, AI can complement—not replace—the core learning process, fostering independent, creative, and ethical learners while preserving the integrity of L2 education.

**Keywords:** Minimizing, AI, Dependency, L2 Learners, Academic Purposes, Voices, EFL Teachers.

### INTRODUCTION

The rapid adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) in English as a Second Language (L2) education is reshaping how learners acquire linguistic skills. Tools like ChatGPT, an advanced language model by OpenAI, and Meta AI, which powers innovative platforms such as BlenderBot and LLaMA, have emerged as leading technologies offering real-time assistance for grammar correction, vocabulary building, and writing generation. These tools promise to make language learning more efficient and accessible, especially for learners in under-resourced settings (Holmes & Porayska-Pomsta, 2022; Vandenberghe et al., 2022). ChatGPT excels at generating nuanced, context-specific

responses, which help learners practice conversational English and refine writing skills. Similarly, Meta AI-powered tools focus on adaptability, offering learners tailored linguistic support that aligns with their proficiency and needs. For instance, \*Meta AI's adaptive algorithms\* analyze user input to provide personalized feedback, enhancing self-directed learning (Maslej et al., 2023; Lee, 2023). By reducing barriers to high-quality language education, such tools empower learners to overcome traditional constraints, fostering autonomy and self-paced progress. However, alongside these benefits, educators and researchers highlight significant challenges. The automation of language tasks

often leads learners to bypass crucial processes such as brainstorming and revising, which are essential for cognitive engagement and skill development (Zhai, 2022). Over-reliance on AI tools like ChatGPT and Meta AI risks stifling creativity and fostering dependency, limiting learners' ability to produce original content independently (Sok & Heng, 2023). Additionally, generative AI tools introduce ethical challenges, as learners may misuse these systems to plagiarize or submit unoriginal work, blurring the boundaries of academic integrity (Xia & Wang, 2023). Despite AI's transformative potential, its unregulated use raises questions about the future of L2 education. This study investigates how EFL teachers perceive AI's role in L2 learning and proposes strategies to integrate tools like ChatGPT and Meta AI responsibly, ensuring they enhance rather than detract from cognitive and linguistic growth.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study examines how AI tools such as ChatGPT and Meta AI influence L2 learners' autonomy, creativity, and ethical practices in EFL education. It aims to identify the benefits and challenges of AI integration while proposing strategies to foster responsible use and sustain learners' academic development.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To explore factors that attract L2 learners to tools like ChatGPT and Meta AI.
2. To analyze the risks of over-reliance on these tools in linguistic and academic development.
3. To develop strategies for educators to balance AI integration with critical skill-building.

### **Significance of the Study**

AI tools like ChatGPT and Meta AI have revolutionized L2 learning by personalizing education and democratizing access to linguistic resources. However, their misuse can undermine creativity, critical thinking, and ethical behavior. This research underscores the importance of equipping educators and learners with strategies to use

AI responsibly. The study provides a roadmap for integrating AI tools into EFL education without compromising pedagogical integrity or learner independence.

### **Research Questions**

1. Why do L2 learners find ChatGPT and Meta AI attractive in EFL education?
2. What risks does excessive reliance on ChatGPT and Meta AI pose to L2 learners' academic development?
3. How can educators ensure that these tools enhance creativity, critical thinking, and ethical responsibility?

### **Literature Review**

Generative AI tools like ChatGPT and Meta AI have become pivotal in language education, offering learners immediate feedback, personalized support, and scalable solutions. ChatGPT's advanced natural language processing enables it to simulate meaningful conversations, helping learners practice fluency, improve syntax, and refine grammatical structures (Johnson & Walker, 2021). Meta AI, leveraging sophisticated models such as BlenderBot and LLaMA, offers more adaptive learning experiences, catering to diverse learner needs and proficiency levels (Lee, 2023). Research indicates that such tools improve learning outcomes significantly. For instance, ChatGPT enhances essay-writing skills by generating detailed, context-relevant prompts and feedback, reducing barriers to self-expression for learners struggling with complex tasks. Meanwhile, Meta AI's emphasis on contextual adaptability ensures more effective vocabulary building and error correction (Maslej et al., 2023). Studies suggest that learners using these tools show a 30% improvement in writing accuracy and language retention compared to traditional methods (Brown et al., 2022). However, these tools also introduce risks. Over-reliance on ChatGPT for writing tasks often results in superficial engagement with language acquisition processes, such as drafting and editing, which are critical for internalizing linguistic structures (Zhai, 2022). Similarly, learners using Meta AI tools may become dependent on its automated corrections,

failing to develop independent problem-solving abilities (Peterson & Clark, 2022). Ethical issues also arise, with increasing instances of plagiarism and unacknowledged use of AI-generated content challenging academic integrity (Xia & Wang, 2023). Currie (2023) emphasizes the need for AI literacy programs to teach learners the ethical implications of AI misuse and equip them with skills to critically evaluate AI-generated outputs. By integrating AI responsibly, educators can harness its potential to enhance engagement and creativity while addressing the cognitive and ethical challenges it presents.

### Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, focusing on semi-structured interviews with 50 EFL teachers to explore their perspectives on the integration of AI tools like ChatGPT and Meta AI in L2 education. The teachers, selected through purposive sampling, were drawn from diverse institutional contexts, ensuring varied insights into the benefits and challenges of AI in language instruction. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and themes, highlighting the nuanced impacts of AI on learners' autonomy, creativity, and ethical practices.

### Sample and Data Collection

This study involved 50 EFL teachers selected through purposive sampling to ensure diverse perspectives on the integration of AI tools in L2 education. Participants represented various institutional contexts, including urban and rural schools, to capture a broad range of experiences. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews conducted either in person or via online platforms. Each interview was recorded with participants' consent. The open-ended questions encouraged teachers to share their insights on the benefits, challenges, and ethical considerations of using AI tools like ChatGPT and Meta AI in their classrooms. Collected data was analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns and key themes.

### Data Analysis

The analysis of interviews conducted with 50 EFL teachers unveiled ten critical themes concerning the integration of AI tools like ChatGPT and Meta AI in L2 education. These themes shed light on both the advantages and challenges of leveraging such technologies in language learning.

**1. Accessibility:** AI tools were praised for democratizing access to high-quality resources, particularly in under-resourced educational contexts. However, teachers noted that this accessibility often led to over-dependence, where learners relied on AI tools instead of developing problem-solving skills and linguistic independence.

**2. Efficiency:** Automation provided by AI tools streamlined various learning tasks, allowing learners to complete assignments faster and with greater accuracy. However, this efficiency came at a cost, as students tended to bypass critical cognitive processes, such as synthesizing information or deeply engaging with linguistic structures.

**3. Personalization:** Meta AI's adaptive algorithms offered customized feedback, which increased learner confidence and encouraged self-paced learning. Nevertheless, teachers observed that such personalization limited students' critical exploration, as they became accustomed to receiving immediate, tailored answers rather than experimenting with diverse solutions.

**4. Creativity:** A major concern highlighted was the decline in creative thinking among learners. Generative AI tools, while helpful for idea generation, often discouraged brainstorming and originality, as students frequently opted for AI-generated suggestions over developing their own.

**5. Plagiarism:** Teachers identified plagiarism as a significant challenge, with students using ChatGPT to produce unoriginal content without proper attribution. This behavior raised ethical concerns and blurred the lines of academic integrity, particularly in assignments and projects.

**6.Skill Gaps:** The convenience of automated grammar corrections provided by tools like Meta AI hindered learners from internalizing foundational language rules. Teachers expressed concerns about the lack of skill retention and the inability of learners to apply grammatical concepts independently.

**7.Writing Practices:** Essays generated with the assistance of AI often lacked authenticity and personal voice, reflecting a mechanical approach to writing. This finding emphasized the importance of process-driven activities that require learners to draft, revise, and refine their work independently.

**8.Assessment Challenges:** Traditional assessment methods, such as written exams and take-home assignments, were found to be susceptible to AI misuse. Teachers highlighted the necessity for innovative assessments, including oral presentations, collaborative tasks, and reflective exercises, to evaluate authentic learner performance.

**9.Teacher Guidance:** Teachers emerged as key figures in moderating AI usage. They played a critical role in setting boundaries and establishing guidelines for ethical and effective integration of AI tools in classrooms. This proactive involvement was seen as crucial for mitigating misuse and dependency.

**10. Ethical Awareness:** The need for AI literacy programs was underscored, focusing on educating learners about the ethical implications and appropriate use of AI tools. Teachers advocated for embedding such programs within the curriculum to promote critical awareness and responsible behavior among students.

The analysis revealed a complex interplay between the benefits and challenges of AI in L2 education. While these tools offered unprecedented opportunities for accessibility, efficiency, and personalized learning, their unregulated use posed risks to essential aspects of linguistic and cognitive development. Addressing these concerns through thoughtful strategies, ethical education, and innovative practices was

deemed imperative by the participating teachers.

### Results Discussion

The findings reveal that while ChatGPT and Meta AI have improved accessibility and efficiency in L2 education, they pose significant challenges to cognitive and ethical development. Teachers reported that learners often misuse ChatGPT for essay generation and Meta AI for grammar corrections without engaging with underlying language rules. This dependency risks widening skill gaps, particularly in areas like syntax mastery and critical thinking. Plagiarism was identified as a pervasive issue, with learners submitting AI-generated content without proper attribution. Teachers emphasized the need for AI literacy programs to educate learners on ethical practices and the limitations of AI tools. Moreover, creativity was cited as a major casualty, with learners relying on pre-generated ideas instead of developing original thought processes. Educators also highlighted the importance of designing innovative assessments that prioritize oral presentations, collaborative tasks, and reflective exercises to reduce AI misuse. By setting clear guidelines for ethical usage and fostering a culture of critical engagement, teachers can help learners use ChatGPT and Meta AI as complements to their learning rather than replacements for effort.

### Recommendations

To ensure secure AI integration in education, it is crucial to implement AI literacy programs that teach learners ethical usage and critical evaluation of tools like ChatGPT and Meta AI. Creative assignments requiring originality and brainstorming should be prioritized, alongside clear ethical guidelines to uphold academic integrity. Innovative assessments, such as oral and collaborative tasks, can minimize over-reliance on automation, while teacher training equips educators with strategies for effective AI integration. Additionally, activities focusing on grammar, vocabulary, and syntax, coupled with collaborative peer-based projects, can



foster independent skill development and reduce dependency on AI tools.

### Conclusion

AI has revolutionized L2 education by providing personalized, efficient, and accessible tools that enhance language acquisition and learner autonomy. Despite its benefits, unregulated use raises significant concerns, including diminished creativity, weakened critical thinking skills, and threats to academic integrity through plagiarism and over-reliance. This study highlights the importance of balanced AI integration by advocating for ethical education through AI literacy programs, the redesign of assessments to encourage originality and active engagement, and strategic teacher interventions to guide responsible usage. Addressing these challenges ensures that AI tools serve as complementary aids, fostering independent, creative, and ethically responsible learners while preserving the integrity of core learning processes.

### Contributions of the Study

The study offers practical strategies for educators to balance AI tools with traditional skill-building, ensuring sustainable learner growth. It informs institutional policies on ethical AI use, fostering academic integrity and mitigating dependency risks. Emphasizing AI literacy, it advocates equipping both teachers and learners with critical evaluation skills. Additionally, the research supports redesigning assessments to prevent AI misuse, encouraging deeper and more meaningful engagement with learning tasks.

### Implications of the Study

Educational practices should integrate AI tools as supplements rather than replacements, ensuring they enhance rather than overshadow pedagogical strategies. Incorporating AI ethics and responsible usage into L2 curricula is essential to prepare learners for an AI-driven academic landscape. Clear institutional guidelines on permissible AI usage, combined with comprehensive training for educators and students, are vital for effective technology management.

Additionally, stakeholders must prioritize innovations that align AI integration with the core objectives of language education, such as fostering creativity, critical thinking, and ethical awareness.

### Future Directions

Future research should explore the long-term effects of AI on L2 learners' skill development and academic behavior through longitudinal studies. A mixed-methods approach with quantitative analysis can provide deeper insights into AI's impact on learning outcomes. Including learners' perspectives will reveal their motivations, challenges, and ethical concerns, while comparative studies across diverse EFL contexts can identify unique strategies and challenges. Additionally, assessing the effectiveness of AI literacy and ethical awareness programs will offer evidence-based guidance for enhancing policies and syllabuses.

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