

Investigating ESL University Teachers' Views on the role of ChatGPT in English Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the perception of Pakistani ESL university teachers regarding the use of ChatGPT for English teaching and learning. Fifteen Pakistani universities' ESL teachers participated in this study through a semi-structured interview. As a result of the study, four positive themes emerged that encourage teachers to use ChatGPT in the field of English teaching and learning, such as Theme 1: Positive attitudes of teachers towards ChatGPT, Theme 2: Professional development of teachers, Theme 3: Personalized learning of students, and Theme 4: Useful pedagogical tool. In contrast, the study also showed that various negative aspects affect teachers' perception of ChatGPT in English teaching and learning as reflected through themes such as Theme 1: Misuse of ChatGPT by students, Theme 2: Accuracy concerns, Theme 3: Negative attitudes of teachers, and Theme 4: Replacement of teachers. In addition, the study found out that several practical solutions could be considered to address the challenges posed by the integration of ChatGPT in English teaching and learning, for instance, higher authorities in Pakistani universities should organize different activities such as conferences, workshops, seminars, and webinars to give education to students on the significance of ethical use of ChatGPT. In addition, it is recommended that classroom-based activities be emphasized while minimizing assignments given to students at home to minimize the use of ChatGPT. By understanding the perception of teachers and addressing their concerns, policymakers can develop appropriate policies and other stakeholders can contribute to meeting the requirements of teachers.

Introduction

Technology has a positive effect on education and students' training globally [26]. One of the most prominent developments was the creation of a new AI tool called ChatGPT, a language model developed by Open AI, one of the most popular AI tools for creating texts like humans [17]. It imitates a human due to its nature of being able to communicate in natural language making it highly desirable for its utilization in the English language [14]. This tool can be used as a medium of instruction where students can engage in dialogues with ChatGPT to improve their linguistic competency, correct their grammatical errors using the same tool, and chat naturally with it [14]. The role of AI tools in education has changed the learning process and improved it tremendously. With the inclusion of this technology in education, there has been a huge improvement in the relationship between students and teachers. It has enhanced the learning process of students [10]. AI tools have been utilized in classrooms to facilitate communication among students and teachers while also bridging the knowledge and information gap [6]. However, after integrating ChatGPT into the academic system, teachers and institutions have raised concerns about the misuse of this tool by students to cram and copy the material during examinations [30]. Hence it is important to know its usage from the point of view of teachers' perception who have a key role in instruction.

With the integration of ChatGPT, one of the biggest innovations has taken place in education. The way knowledge is taught by teachers for research work has changed [27]. It targets at providing an opportunity for instructors by designing distinct types of classroom activities, assigning tasks for the

students, setting question papers for them, and answering their queries [16]. The quality of education has improved due to the convergence of ChatGPT [25]. Teachers can use it to perform various tasks by connecting them to continuous learning. It helps them provide research methodology for accomplishing their studies and generate various researches for them to use while carrying out their studies [24].

On the contrary, ChatGPT has several drawbacks when it comes to integrating it in the education system. Teachers take part in playing a leading role in students' learning process. However, with the combination of ChatGPT, a clear connection between teachers and students may reduce, creating a wide gap of communication between them [21]. As a result, less interaction has taken place among teachers and students thereby affecting the former's learning process due to the lack of guidelines from the latter. Moreover, ChatGPT has interfered with the cognitive abilities and solving skills of both the teachers and students. Being over-dependent on the application has diminished teachers' creativity and analytical skills [19].

Considering the above points, the objectives of this study focus on assessing views of Pakistani ESL teachers towards incorporating ChatGPT as a beneficial and problematic technology in English instruction. Identifying the challenges that came along with using ChatGPT, this study will also review practical ways that teachers from Pakistani ESL universities can use to counter the influence of adopting ChatGPT in English classes. To achieve these goals, this study aims to answer these research questions:

- What are the views of Pakistani ESL university teachers about the benefits and challenges of using ChatGPT in the English teaching and learning contexts?
- What are the strategies Pakistani ESL university teachers suggested to be implemented to overcome the problems related to the use of ChatGPT in the English teaching and learning contexts?

Literature Review

The existing literature review sheds light on the role of ChatGPT in terms of benefits and challenges of teaching and learning in various contexts. The results of a study demonstrate that teachers view AI positively regarding its impact on engagement and personalized feedback, despite encountering concerns about trustworthiness, ethics, and academic integrity [13]. Another research has shown that ChatGPT has highlighted some concerns in the form of replacement of teachers and diminishing students' analytical competency [15]. Different other studies have shown some other concerns such as lack of trust, and accuracy of information and precision of ChatGPT [12, 2, 22]. ChatGPT in ELT enabled educators to design lesson plans while also providing feedbacks and professional developments, issues entailed apprehension regarding the accuracy, cultural relevance, and reliance on the application [5]. The mixed method study revealed the positive perceptions of foreign language professors towards ChatGPT as a time-saving and motivating tool, while various issues were raised at the same time in this study including plagiarism and its overuse resulting in students' lack of brainstorming [8]. Another research investigated that English teachers found the integration of ChatGPT into English teaching strategy to have a key role in enhancing the writing competency, vocabulary, language skills, and communicative

competence of the English language learners. However, there were some issues as well raised by the teachers, such as practice of copy-paste and reduction of students' abilities due to the use of ChatGPT [18, 4, 29]. Teachers considered the integration of ChatGPT is responsible to reduce their workload and provided automated feedback to the students regarding the lessons, but various issues, they think can arise such as more reliance on ChatGPT which can create hurdle in the students' growth [9, 11]. ChatGPT facilitated the teachers while planning lessons, providing assessment on the students, and enhancing the students' productive skills. It's provided a comfortable environment for the students to learn English [20]. Most of the studies conducted earlier have not accentuated the teachers' pedagogical perspectives towards the role of ChatGPT in terms of benefits and challenges in diverse contexts, but have only outlined the empirical evidence to mitigate these issues. The present study fills this gap by emphasizing the issues and their possible solutions to tackle them. While studies on Pakistani ESL learners have highlighted context-specific pragmatic challenges such as politeness perception in disagreement [1], broader bibliometric analyses reveal that AI's role in English education is shifting toward more learner-centered and pedagogically grounded approaches [30].

Methodology

The study used the descriptive qualitative research design because it allows one to understand more thoroughly and comprehensively the situation that is studied in a natural environment. This type of research design is appropriate, for exploring ideas and experiences through thematic analysis of qualitative texts or interviews. The participants included in this study consisted of fifteen ESL Pakistani universities teachers from public sector universities based in Lahore. The participants were from different departments of their respective universities including Humanities, Management Sciences, Computer Sciences, and Psychology. However, all the respondents were teaching English to the ESL students in their respective departments. The participants have 10–15 year of experience in their respective universities. The rationale of selecting these participants from different departments was to obtain diverse views and opinions from the respondents regarding the use of ChatGPT while teaching English language. All the respondents were selected based on their use and experience with ChatGPT. Snowball sampling was used as a sampling technique because it was difficult to identify the population of the regular users of the ChatGPT. Therefore, snowball sampling is the appropriate method for this study, whereby the researcher contacted and interviewed the participants who referred their colleagues using ChatGPT. The interviews were conducted in a manner convenient to the respondents. Some respondents preferred face-to-face meetings while others arranged online interviews through Zoom or Google Meet. This sampling procedure ensured that the data collected were relevant and adequate for the study by focusing on the actual experience of ChatGPT users in English language teaching and learning among the participants. The researcher intended to include only those respondents who agreed to participate in the study. fifteen teachers were invited to participate in the study, however, after interviewing ten teachers, the researcher realized that most of the information was repetitive and no new vital information was obtained. Thus, the final size of the sample was determined by the saturation point whereby no new information was obtained. The researcher stopped conducting interviews after fifteen

interviews and these participants as the total sample size of the study. All the participants were informed about the confidentiality of the data provided by them. They were ensured that the data will not be used for any other purpose and their names will be kept anonymous. A written consent was obtained from all the participants before the data collection process started. An ethical approval from Departmental advisory Committee was obtained with reference number Ref.No.CUI/LHR/HUM/DAC/227 before the start of the data collection process.

Research instrument

In this study, the research instrument in the form of semi-structured interviews was selected. This type of interview includes a small number of predetermined questions and allows additional questions to be included to obtain further information. The interviews aim to generate an in-depth understanding of the perspectives of Pakistani ESL teachers on the use of ChatGPT and its impact on teaching and learning English.

Each participant was provided with a list of interview questions to help them understand the objectives of this study. Following is the list of questions finalized by reviewing different previous studies and keeping into focus of Pakistani context:

1. For which purpose have you used ChatGPT?
2. How do you perceive ChatGPT for your professional growth?
3. In what ways can the use of ChatGPT be merged into your current teaching practice?
4. As an ESL teacher, how does the arrival of ChatGPT influence your English teaching in terms of curriculum designing and other tasks relevant to your job?
5. In your opinion, how could the use of ChatGPT help ESL students in their English learning?
6. In your opinion, what are the challenges of integrating ChatGPT in English learning for ESL students?
7. In your opinion, how does the use of ChatGPT help to enhance ESL students' productive skills in terms of English writing?
8. How do you think the use of ChatGPT influence the critical thinking and creativity of ESL students in English learning?
9. What are the concerns or ethical issues that make you worry while using ChatGPT in English teaching and learning?
10. What suggestions do you want to give to ESL teachers and students who use ChatGPT in their English teaching and learning respectively?
11. What are the practical solutions to deal with the challenges related to the use of ChatGPT in English teaching and learning?
12. How do you predict the role of ChatGPT in the future of English teaching and learning?

Each participant was also provided with a consent form to sign before participating in the study. The participants were also informed that they could withdraw their consent at any time. Each interview session lasted thirty minutes. Interviews were recorded using an interview- recorders by the researcher

using the interview protocol refinement (IPR) Framework developed by Shoozan & Mohamad [23]. This is a four-stage framework used in the design and protocol refinement of interviews for research. To develop reliable and valid interview questions for this study, the researcher reviewed the interview protocol. To achieve interview questions that can generate inquiry dialogue, the researcher sent the protocol to two teachers and two researchers to evaluate. The feedback provided by the teachers and researchers was used to edit the interview questions. The edited version of the questions was sent to another researcher not involved in the earlier stages to establish the validity of the constructs.

Recordings of the interviews were also made using a digital recorder. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and through other online methods (WhatsApp, Google meet, and zoom) depending on the convenience of the research participants. The interviews were transcribed by the researcher for easy information extraction. All the information collected was protected under the data protection regulation. While conducting the interviews, the researcher maintained confidentiality, respect, and a non-judgmental attitude towards the participants. All the datasets/materials used for the study is given below in the online repository link: <https://github.com/UzairDevelops/students-data>

Data Analysis

The interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, consisting of generating initial codes, searching for themes, and reviewing themes. Thematic analysis was used in the study because it helps achieve comprehensive information from the data collected from the participants. The software NVivo 15 was used for analyzing the data collected from the interviews because it allowed extensive thematic analyses to unveil the perspectives and perceptions of the participants—Pakistani ESL teachers—regarding the use of ChatGPT for learning and teaching English. Apart from that, the researcher also applied the recommended six steps in Braun and Clarke's [3] framework for performing thematic analysis on the data collected from the interviews. The next step was to generate initial codes and the search for themes to reveal the patterns or relationships that exist in the entire data set [6]. The next step was reviewing the themes, and then defining those themes. Another two coders were also involved to check reliability of the data.

Data Analysis

Teachers' Perceptions about the Role of ChatGPT in English Teaching and Learning

Teachers' Perceptions about the Benefits of Using ChatGPT in English Teaching and Learning

Theme 1: Positive Attitudes of Teachers to Use ChatGPT

Due to advancement in their pedagogical and problem-solving skills, ESL Pakistani teachers allured towards the utilization of ChatGPT in English teaching and learning. They realized that ChatGPT is a dire need for Pakistani ESL students and teachers in the digital era to make their schooling and teaching more innovative respectively.

I often use the ChatGPT for texting, analytical skills, structured planners, and for different queries. It is also a friend of those students who do not have friends. (R14)

I use ChatGPT for research, learning new terms and technologies, and problem-solving. It also helps our students in their learning practices. (R15)

Theme 2: Professional Development of Teachers

Teachers acknowledged that the integration of ChatGPT has influenced their English teaching as well as professional development. This incorporation has had a beneficial effect on their vocational advancement. The potential of ChatGPT for designing curriculum, lesson plans, classroom activities, and quizzes for them make it advantageous for their career development and pedagogy. It also assists them to fabricate their expertise and mastery up to the minute.

In professional growth, ChatGPT is a database. It contains a lot of information about various topics. I generally use it for brainstorming. It gives me exciting ideas. It can bring very positive change. ChatGPT plays a very important role in my professional growth, like designing lesson plans, quizzes, and other activities (R1)

Yes, for sure. ChatGPT helps me in my professional growth as it provides updated data for teaching and to organize different classroom activities for the students (R14)

Theme 3: Useful Pedagogical Tool

By consolidating ChatGPT in their English teaching classrooms, teachers have admitted it an influential and serviceable teaching tool. It enhances their overall instructional quality. By exchanging views, producing content, generating resources, providing new ideas, and organizing database for teachers also motivate them to incorporate ChatGPT in their English teaching. Its integration in teaching also succors them to develop their vocabulary and comprehend modern terminologies. Also, it has improved and revolutionized their teaching strategies by providing modern teaching expertise.

I generally use ChatGPT for lesson planning and designing activities. ChatGPT can be integrated into my teaching practice as it helps me in designing activities like vocabulary-building activities. I just share my

objectives or topic with the ChatGPT, it provides me a frame of different activities that can be further tailored by me. I can further polish those activities. It just provides me a Skeleton, you can improve it (R1)

It helps in lesson planning, content generation, facilitating discussions, and as a resource creation. As it helps to perform different tasks such as lesson planning, problem-solving, and brainstorming (R12)

Sub-Theme: Time-Saving Tool

The capability of ChatGPT in promoting modern teaching techniques and producing automated directorial and managerial tasks influenced the teachers to explore its exercise in English teaching. By using ChatGPT facets, teachers are saving their time and energy to make their classrooms more effective for learning. It saves their time by self-operating lesson plans, curriculum, quizzes, and useful classrooms activities.

It is a time saver tool as well. Yes, it is a very time-saving tool, you can use it for curriculum designing. However, we cannot deny the importance of human effort and knowledge, to the person who is using ChatGPT. In this way, we can say it plays a very important role as you give it information, attach files, provide material, write prompts, and ask ChatGPT to design the curriculum. In this way, it saves your time (R11)

It is also a time savor tool, for example, when I am in a hurry, I use ChatGPT for texting, making lectures outline, as well as structured planners. It also highlights punctuation mistakes. It helps in making vocabulary much better (R7)

Theme 4: Brainstorming

The potential of ChatGPT in creative collaboration, thought exploration, generation of ideas, and conceptualization inspires ESL teachers to integrate ChatGPT in English teaching and learning. They believed that students and teachers can take ideas and concepts from ChatGPT for brainstorming which helps them to enhance their creative skills, analytical skills and observant skills.

I generally use it for brainstorming. It gives me exciting ideas. It can bring very positive change (R9)

Yes, it has a great influence in my English teaching as I use ChatGPT for brainstorming and to take different ideas and concepts (R14)

Theme 5: Personalize Learning of Students

The potential integration of ChatGPT in English learning has improved patented and subjective abilities of ESL students by polishing their productive skills such as writing and reading skills. Students use ChatGPT to perform multiple tasks such as to solve various problems, check grammatical mistakes, spelling correction, sentence making, make assignments, and presentations, paraphrase texts, and facilitate research. These potential factors motivate teachers to allow students for utilization of ChatGPT in English learning for ESL students.

Yes, it can be a very helpful tool for the students. I generally suggest my students to use ChatGPT because other AI tools are not free that are for polishing speaking skills (R7)

They can study as much as they want from it. For reading skills, I think that would be, that's a 100% yes. It gives you a lot of provision to read things. So, I prefer it for reading skills a lot. (R11)

Theme 1: Negative attitudes of teachers towards the use of ChatGPT

The teachers also unveiled some of their concerns regarding the use of the AI chatbot ChatGPT in the teaching and learning of English. Misusing ChatGPT in English instruction demolishes creativity, thinking potential, intelligence level, and problem-solving ability in both teachers and learners. They argued that ChatGPT is also a cancer for learners and teachers of English, as it hijacks their individual productive skills. The teachers confessed that ChatGPT is not a culture-sensitive tool, as it sometimes provides classroom activities that are prohibited in certain cultures. In the same way, the teachers also argued that ChatGPT provides irrelevant data, which demoralizes them from using this digital tool in English teaching and learning.

I'm really not advocating; I'm just not comfortable with it because it's very basic. It's just very popular, so that's why everyone uses it. There are so many other AI tools that you can use. It has not influenced my English teaching style, nor is it relevant to my job at all because it's not really useful. (R2)

If teachers start doing the same, the shape of knowledge/information will be distorted badly, as in many cases the machine interprets things very differently from what humans intend when producing that knowledge. (R13)

Theme 2: Replacement of Teachers

The teachers unveiled that the extreme involvement of ChatGPT by learners in educational systems, especially in the English learning process, has created a barrier in human interactions between students and teachers. They believed that students take ChatGPT as a virtual teacher or assistant, but they highly recommended that ChatGPT has no emotions to facilitate the betterment of students' learning, as it is merely a tool. This involvement and replacement of teachers by students has led to a lower interpersonal connection and teamwork capacity between teachers and students.

Humans have to use AI tools logically. Of course, every teacher has knowledge; nobody can replace that teacher. (R12)

So, our generation may come to a point where students do not need teachers to teach, and if teachers only have to teach the English language, they might not be in a position to teach English to students. ChatGPT is like a machine. It's a mechanical thing. (R5)

Theme 3: Accuracy Concerns

The teachers exposed that they have encountered reliability, inconsistency, and accuracy issues while using ChatGPT to generate information or data related to the English language. They advised that it is mandatory to verify the data provided by ChatGPT before implementing it. They also admitted that ChatGPT mostly provides irrelevant information for research work, which indicates that this tool lacks competence and contextual understanding to generate relevant and appropriate data on specific topics in the English language.

Sometimes, it gives incorrect data, but then I verify the data. But we cannot totally rely on these AI tools. The other main concern is that it provides incorrect information. You have other options to check the correctness of the information. (R11)

However, it needs to be double-checked against the sources it gave. Once I used it to learn about the main taxonomies of a phenomenon from major researchers so far; it gave a quick, brief summary, which was useful, though I needed to double-check the references from Google Scholar. (R3)

Theme 4: Misuse of ChatGPT by the Students

The teachers highlighted another concern related to the use of ChatGPT by students in the English learning process. They explained that the data provided by ChatGPT to students for English instruction demolishes their productive skills. The teachers admitted that students use ChatGPT for cheating purposes in their examinations and assignments in English language classes. Due to extreme involvement with this digital tool, their critical thinking, analytical, and creative skills are deteriorating. Total reliance on this AI tool is making students lazy and less intellectual, as they do not think or produce anything on their own, which is leading them to the hell of incompetency.

Well, students basically stop doing creative activities that they used to. Then the assignments that they do with the help of ChatGPT lack the human flavor. It has basically ousted them. It has made these things minus for the students. This means that critical thinking and creativity have both been ousted from students' lives. (R12)

Their critical thinking is also affected. 100% reliance on ChatGPT also affects their critical thinking, and we can say overall learning. (R14)

Theme 5: Solutions to Reduce Concerns

The teachers also unveiled some practical and effective solutions and recommendations to minimize the concerns related to the use of ChatGPT in English teaching and learning. They explicated that providing training to teachers and students about the ethical and virtuous use of AI tools such as ChatGPT can reduce these concerns. They also argued that minimizing total reliance on this tool can assist both students and teachers in improving their English teaching and learning, as they can update and revolutionize their knowledge and understanding of the English language by using this digital tool

appropriately to enhance their teaching and learning. They can use this tool for taking ideas and developing their understanding of a particular topic. Additionally, the teachers explained some practical solutions to reduce the concerns related to this AI tool. According to them, government education and higher education departments can organize seminars, webinars, specific training sessions, courses, books, and workshops related to the ethical use of AI tools, i.e., ChatGPT in English teaching and learning for Pakistani ESL teachers and students.

We can make them realize the importance of these AI tools ethically in English language learning. I think practical solutions should include introducing different courses, books, and organized workshops about the ethical use of AI tools like ChatGPT. Teachers should also be trained to use ChatGPT. We need to change ourselves with time. As we are not natives, we should evolve our methods of English teaching and learning using these AI tools instead of fearing them. (R10)

My recommendation to teachers as well as to students is that they need to use ChatGPT with care and caution. They must not produce anything that is to be presented in their name at any forum solely through ChatGPT. (R12)

Theme 6: Future of ChatGPT

The teachers also predicted the future role of ChatGPT in English teaching and learning in the Pakistani context. They believed that it will have both positive and negative impacts on students' learning and teachers' teaching of the English language. They argued that AI is the future, and everyone will rely on these tools. We should accept this change and modernize our learning and teaching techniques according to these tools. They also elaborated that if these AI tools can turn darkness into light, they can also turn light into darkness. Its correct use will help Pakistani ESL teachers and students improve their English teaching and learning, respectively.

Yes, I think ChatGPT is also updating its database. Different new versions of ChatGPT have ensured its accuracy level. I think AI is the future, and we need to accept this change. We need to change ourselves to meet the expectations of changing times. Therefore, banning these AI tools is not the solution. (R1)

So, to me, ChatGPT is a major advancement in technology that students will be working with in their near future. The role of ChatGPT will be increasing in the near future. There will be a kind of boom in ChatGPT's usage, and then there will be maximum use. (R15)

Discussion

The current study highlighted that Pakistani ESL teachers have shown that ChatGPT is a very useful and helpful tool for English teaching and learning. The Pakistani ESL teachers believed that students and teachers can use ChatGPT to make their learning and teaching more innovative and effective. Teachers integrated ChatGPT to check their grammatical mistakes while writing texts and emails as well. They also perceived that the use of ChatGPT has influenced their teaching practices. Overall, teachers have shown positive attitudes toward the use of ChatGPT in English teaching. Furthermore, teachers also

noted that ChatGPT is a time-saving tool. The teachers used ChatGPT to make lesson plans, design different classroom activities, make question papers, assignment questions, quizzes, for content generation, and organization of data. The present research also highlighted that teachers use ChatGPT to save their energy and time. Previous studies conducted by Elsaadany [8] and Ulla et al. [28] indicated that teachers showed positive intentions toward the use of ChatGPT in English teaching and learning. Furthermore, they also elaborated that ESL teachers viewed ChatGPT as a time-saving tool and a useful pedagogical tool.

In addition, the study also highlighted that Pakistani ESL teachers considered that the ethical use of ChatGPT can increase personalized learning for ESL students. It improves their vocabulary, enhances their creativity by taking concepts or ideas, checks spelling mistakes, makes sentence corrections, and rephrases. Mabuan [17] and Nguyen [19] yielded the same outcomes, which shed light on the personalized learning of ESL students. It can enhance their reading and writing skills [3, 29].

By integrating ChatGPT into English teaching and learning, teachers use it for icebreakers in lectures and it also generates main headings for the topics they must teach. On the other hand, the Pakistani ESL teachers also noted that students' critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and creativity can improve by using ChatGPT. Studies showed that teachers conceded that ChatGPT can enhance brainstorming for students and teachers if used appropriately [22, 10].

The current study assimilated that the Pakistani ESL teachers expressed an alarming situation for ESL students because they revealed that students use ChatGPT not for brainstorming, but for cheating purposes. The misuse of ChatGPT and overreliance on it is demolishing their critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills, which is very harmful for their personal learning. Studies conducted by Juan et al. [15] and Elsaadany [8] expressed these same concerns, explaining that ESL students use ChatGPT as a cheating tool.

Another concern foregrounded by the Pakistani ESL teachers was that ChatGPT is a substitute for teachers. They deemed that students can take help from ChatGPT when they have no one to guide them, but as ChatGPT is a tool, it has nothing to do with the emotions that teachers have for their students. But some Pakistani ESL teachers affirmed that ChatGPT cannot take the place of teachers. They spotlighted some issues related to discipline. And due to the excessive use of ChatGPT, a gap has been created between teachers and students, which is affecting students' learning. Juan et al. [15] also featured that ChatGPT would take the place of teachers soon, but it has nothing to do with the emotions that teachers have for their students.

Previous studies also underlined these concerns, but they did not infer practical solutions to tackle the problems of integrating ChatGPT into English teaching and learning in the Pakistani context. This study fills this gap by highlighting practical solutions for integrating ChatGPT into English teaching and learning. Teachers acknowledged that different courses, books, seminars, webinars, and workshops should be organized to train ESL students and teachers about the importance and ethical use of ChatGPT in English teaching and learning. They also expressed that ESL teachers should change their

teaching strategies to minimize the use of AI tools in learning. They can give students the opportunity to use AI tools in the classroom just for brainstorming and to check their mistakes. The study also shed light on the fact that teachers should avoid home-based assignments and other tasks. They must design activities that students have to perform in the classroom in front of their teachers. In this way, teachers can observe students' understanding. They can identify the intelligence level and mental abilities of students. Furthermore, teachers also supposed that the ethical use of ChatGPT in English teaching and learning can advance personalized learning for students and teachers. Moreover, teachers also unfolded that the coming era will be the era of AI. That's why students will use AI tools as substitutes for teachers in the future.

Conclusion

Directed by the thematic analysis approach, this qualitative study explored the views of fifteen Pakistani ESL university teachers about the role of ChatGPT in terms of benefits and challenges in English teaching and learning contexts. This study also highlighted the strategies and solutions employed by these teachers to overcome problems related to the use of ChatGPT in English teaching and learning. The data for the study were collected using semi-structured interviews. The reason for conducting interviews was to gain lived experiences and practical insights from Pakistani ESL teachers about the role of ChatGPT in English teaching and learning. Fifteen interviewees, holding various designations as lecturers and assistant professors in Pakistani government universities, provided useful insights into their lived experiences.

The results contributed to an understanding of the strategies and practical solutions encouraged by Pakistani ESL teachers to overcome the challenges related to the use of ChatGPT in English teaching and learning in the Pakistani context. The study explored positive themes such as personalized learning for students, useful pedagogical tools, positive intentions of teachers, and professional development of teachers. The study also highlighted some themes related to the challenges of using ChatGPT, such as misuse by students, accuracy concerns, negative attitudes of teachers toward ChatGPT, and replacement of teachers.

This study also elucidated the suggestions and practical solutions given by Pakistani ESL teachers to reduce concerns related to the use of ChatGPT in English teaching and learning. The study revealed that teachers acknowledged that different courses, books, seminars, webinars, and workshops should be organized to train Pakistani ESL teachers and students about the importance and ethical use of ChatGPT in English teaching and learning. The study findings may be helpful for users of ChatGPT to understand the benefits and challenges of its use.

Implications for teachers and students

(1) The education system needs to motivate teachers and students about the importance and ethical use of AI tools, i.e., ChatGPT, for educational purposes. They need to understand the competencies and

limitations of AI tools. Improving their educational technological abilities will help them make their teaching and learning more effective and innovative.

(2) To motivate students and teachers about the ethical use of AI tools, various training sessions such as seminars, webinars, workshops, and courses should be organized by higher education and educational authorities. Through this, their confidence in using AI tools and their productive skills will be improved.

(3) ESL teachers who know the ethical and successful use of AI tools can share their lived experiences with other teachers and students through workshops on “How to use AI tools for educational purposes.” This will help students and teachers incorporate ChatGPT into the classroom and influence the standard of teaching and students’ educational records.

(4) ESL teachers can conduct research on the importance and significant benefits of using AI tools, i.e., ChatGPT, in educational settings and share the findings with high authorities and management of the educational system. This will help high authorities and teachers understand the importance and potential benefits of using AI tools, i.e., ChatGPT, for educational purposes.

Limitations and Scope for Future Research

This study provides significant insights into Pakistani ESL teachers’ perceptions about the use of ChatGPT in terms of benefits and challenges and strategies to overcome these challenges related to its use in English teaching and learning contexts, but there are some limitations that should be considered. The study sample was limited to only fifteen ESL teachers working in government universities in Pakistan, which may limit the generalizability of the results. However, different results could be found by increasing the number of participants. Views of teachers working in various cultural and educational settings can also be explored. Also, this study used Braun and Clarke’s (2006) framework as a qualitative approach. Although this framework provides significant insights, future researchers could integrate quantitative methods. Future researchers could also explore the beliefs and views of ESL students about the role of ChatGPT in the Pakistani or any other context. This study investigated the role of ChatGPT, but future researchers could examine other AI tools, i.e., Grammarly, DeepSeek, etc., to obtain the perceptions of teachers or students.

Declarations

Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards for research involving human participants, as outlined by the American Psychological Association (APA) and the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE). Ethical approval was obtained from the Departmental Advisory Committee (DAC), Department of Humanities, COMSATS University Islamabad, Lahore Campus,

Pakistan, under Reference No. CUI/LHR/HUM/DAC/226, dated July 25th, 2025, prior to the commencement of the study.

All participants were fully informed about the purpose and procedures of the research, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any consequences. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection commenced. Participant anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained throughout the research process. No identifying information was collected, and all data were stored securely and used solely for the purposes of this study.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest among the authors.

Clinical Trial Number

Not applicable.

Consent to Publish

The authors declare that this manuscript is an original work and has not been published previously nor is it under consideration for publication elsewhere. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript and consent to its publication in the journal if accepted.

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Author Contribution

K.A. supervised the project, reviewed the theoretical framework, and validated the findings. A.N. conceptualized the study, designed the research methodology, and secured ethical approval. S.W.A. conducted the literature review and assisted in data collection. T.D.S. performed data analysis and interpreted the results. A.Q. contributed to the manuscript drafting and revision. R.S.A. managed data curation and visualization. N.K.J. provided critical feedback, administrative support, and finalized the manuscript for submission. All authors reviewed and approved the final version.

Data Availability

All the analysed items and datasets are publicly accessible through an online repository link which is given below. It includes the transcribed interview data of all the participants.<https://github.com/UzairDevelops/students-data> Moreover, participants details, interview question items and analysed data figures is provided as supplementary files.

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Figures

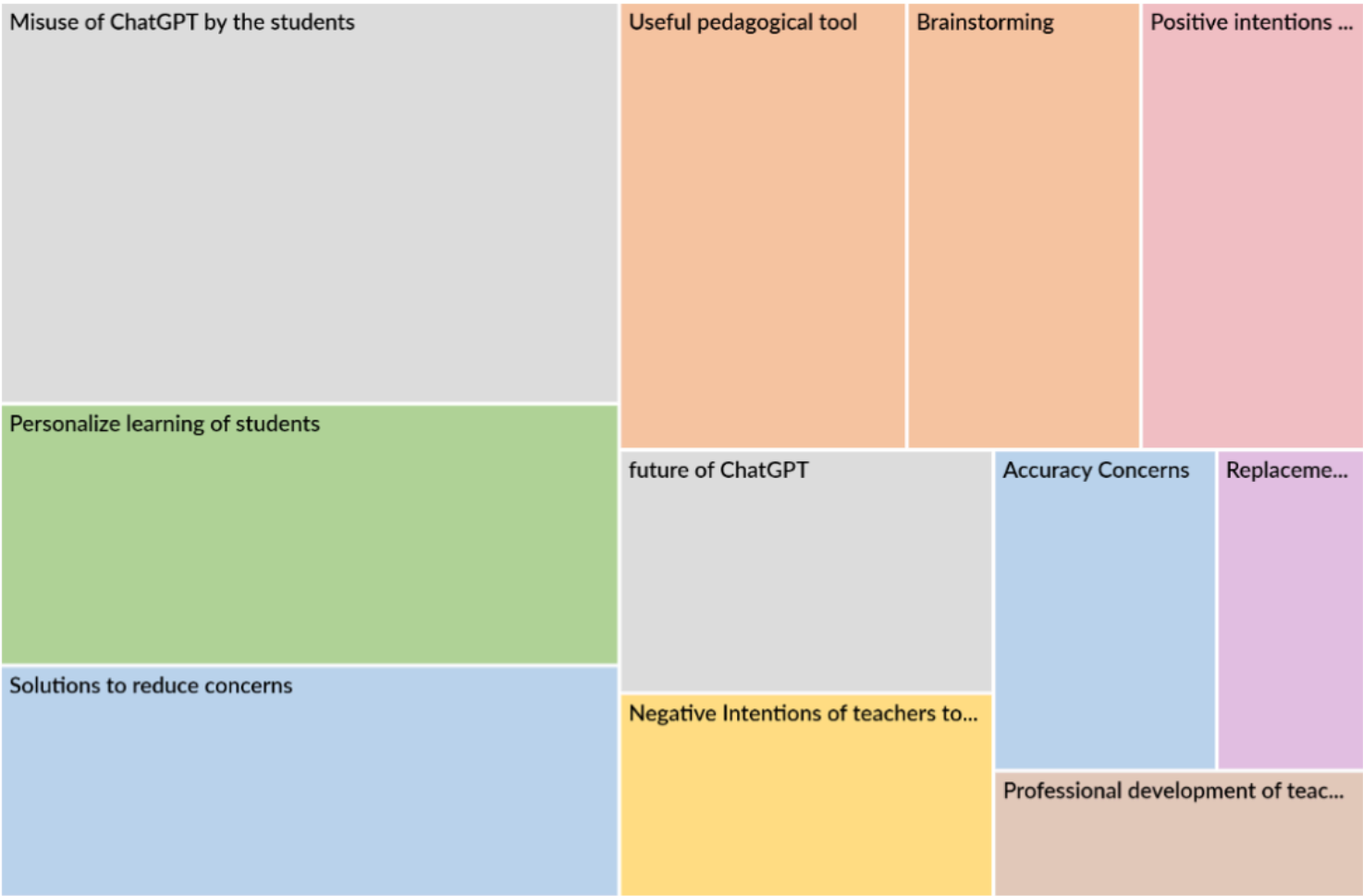


Figure 1

Teachers views about the role of ChatGPT in English teaching and learning

Source: Author’s creation

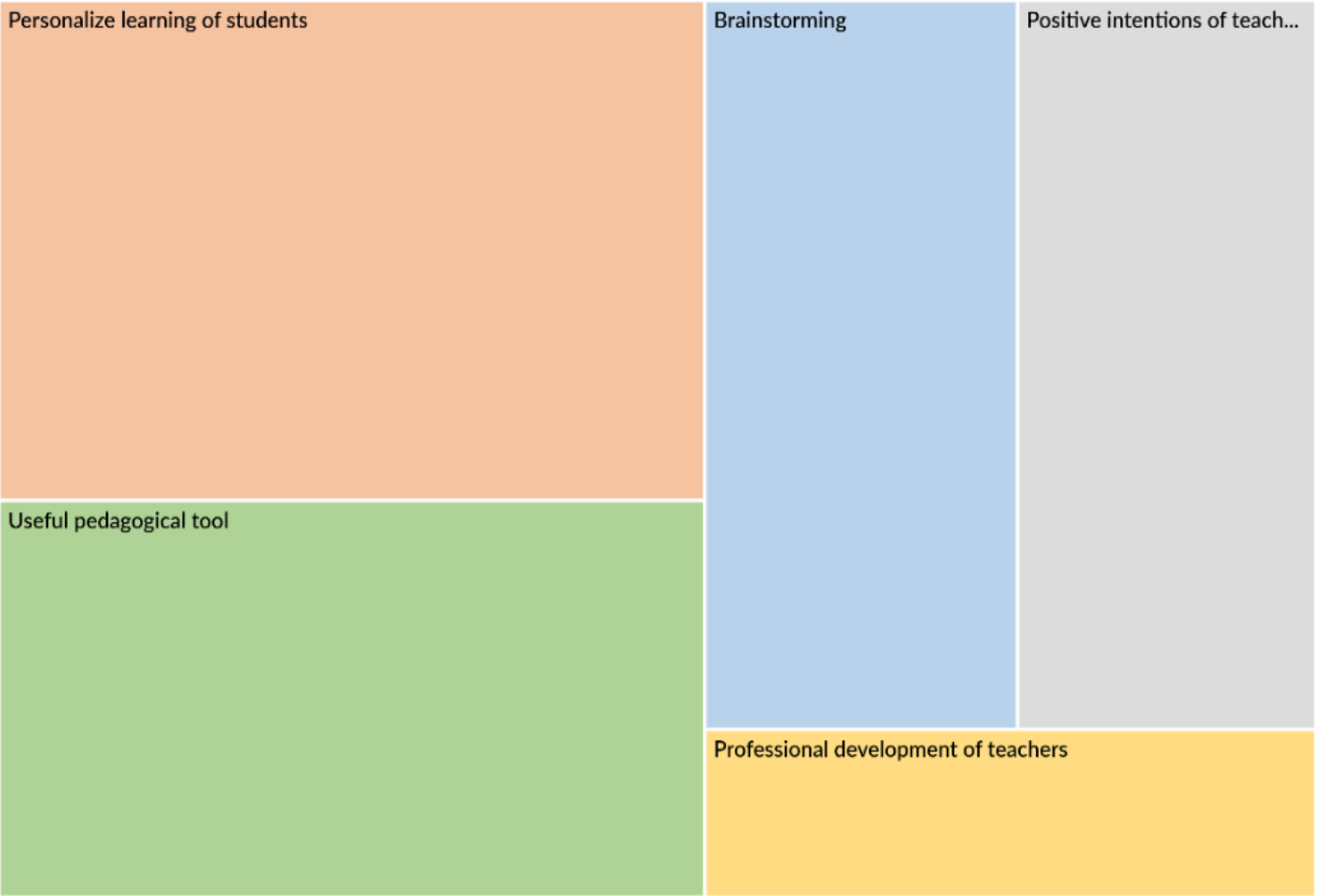


Figure 2

Teachers’ beliefs about the use of ChatGPT in terms of benefits in English teaching and learning

Source: Author’s creation

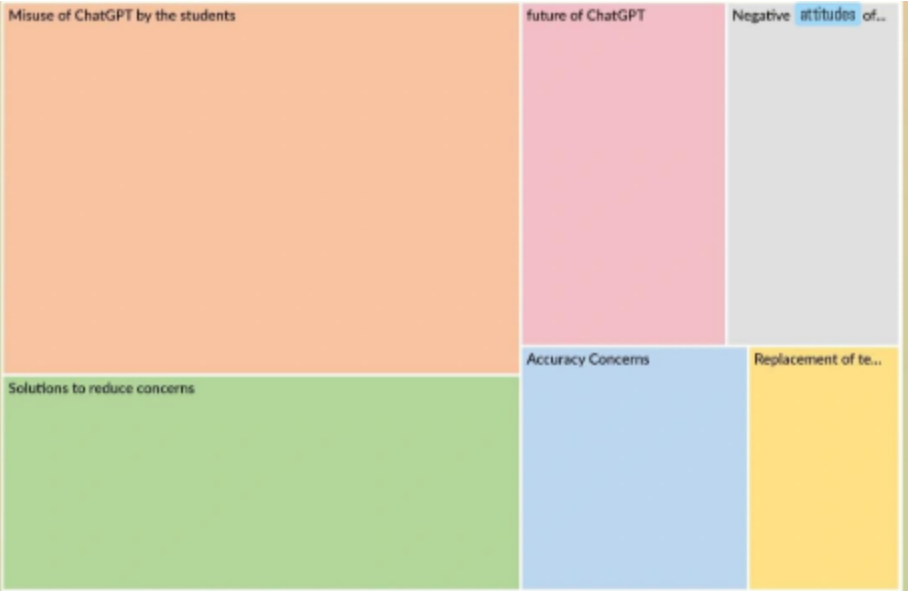


Figure 3

Teachers' views about the challenges of using ChatGPT in English teaching and learning

Source: Author's creation

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