

# Transforming ELT: AI Insights from EFL Pre-service Teachers in a Globalizing English Landscape

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## Abstract

This research investigates the perceptions of 23 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pre-service teachers from Rajabhat University in Thailand regarding the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in language teaching pedagogy. Employing a mixed-method approach involving both quantitative (a questionnaire) and qualitative (a semi-structured interview) methods, the study explores the perspectives, challenges, and opportunities encountered by pre-service teachers as they navigate the integration of AI into their pedagogical practices. Most participants expressed positive attitudes towards incorporating AI tools into their teaching practices, citing potential benefits such as enhanced personalized learning experiences and engagement. However, challenges including limited access to advanced AI tools, varying levels of technological proficiency among pre-service teachers, and concerns about ethical considerations such as data privacy were identified. Despite these challenges, participants recognized opportunities for professional growth through AI integration in their training, viewing exposure to AI tools during pre-service education as valuable preparation for the technologically evolving landscape of language education. This research illuminates the nuanced perspectives of EFL pre-service teachers on the integration of AI in language teaching pedagogy, highlighting both the positive attitudes towards AI tools and the complex challenges that accompany their implementation.

## Keywords

ELT, EFL pre-service teachers, AI

## 1 Introduction

Nowadays, artificial intelligence (AI) plays a crucial role in all sectors, particularly in education. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in English Language Teaching (ELT) with a focus on literature studies is a growing area. AI brings benefits like personalized learning, better teaching methods, and increased efficiency (Shafarini et al., 2023). Generative AI has the potential to revolutionize education but also presents challenges. Research is needed to optimize integration of Generative AI in education and address potential risks (Wang et al., 2024). As technology advances, AI tools offer innovative solutions for personalized learning, adaptive teaching, and

enhanced student engagement. This study focuses on the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pre-service teachers at a Rajabhat University in Thailand, examining their views on the incorporation of AI in their pedagogical practices.

## 2 Literature Review

The landscape of English Language Teaching (ELT) is rapidly evolving in response to globalization and technological advancements, particularly with the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in educational contexts. As English continues to solidify its position as a global lingua franca, the role of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers is becoming increasingly complex and multifaceted (Crystal, 2003). Artificial intelligence (AI) has been described as a transformative technology that will reshape society, industry, and education (Har, 2023). This complexity is further amplified by the integration of AI technologies in language learning and teaching, presenting both opportunities and challenges for pre-service EFL teachers who are at the forefront of this transformation (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017).

Recent studies have highlighted the potential of AI to revolutionize ELT practices. For instance, Shafarini et al. (2023) demonstrated the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in English Language Teaching (ELT) with a focus on literature studies is a growing area. AI brings benefits like personalized learning, better teaching methods, and increased efficiency. It is changing how literature is taught and analyzed. But challenges like data privacy and reliance on technology need addressing. However, the integration of AI in ELT also raises concerns about the changing role of teachers and the potential dehumanization of the learning process (Selwyn, 2019). For example, Wang et al. (2023) explores how artificial intelligence (AI) can impact international students in higher education, discussing its benefits like personalized learning, adaptive testing, and chatbots, but also addressing concerns such as privacy and ethical implications. AI can enhance educational experiences for international students, but challenges like cultural differences and language proficiency need to be considered. The paper highlights the importance of integrating AI into education while ensuring inclusivity and ethical use. These concerns underscore the need for a critical examination of AI's impact on ELT from the perspective of pre-service teachers, who are poised to shape the future of language education.

In the context of a globalizing English landscape, pre-service EFL teachers face the dual challenge of preparing students for a multilingual world while navigating the technological shifts in their profession. Marlina (2018) argues that EFL education must move beyond traditional native-speaker norms to embrace a more pluricentric view of English that reflects its global status. This shift necessitates a reevaluation of teaching methodologies and materials, as well as the development of new competencies among pre-service teachers. Understanding how these teachers perceive and interact with AI technologies in this evolving landscape is crucial for developing effective teacher education programs and shaping policies that support the meaningful integration of AI in ELT.

### 3 Method

#### 3.1 Participants

Twenty-three EFL pre-service teachers from the English Teaching Program, Faculty of Education, Phranakhon Si Ayutthaya Rajabhat University, Thailand, participated in this experiment.

#### 3.2 Instruments

There are two instruments. The questionnaire was in the form of a statement, and it included five degrees of answer options. The interview, on the other hand, was in the form of semi-structured.

#### 3.3 Data collection

The survey was administered using a Google Form. Additionally, the semi-structured interview was carried out.

#### 3.4 Data analysis

The gathered data was organized. The data was analyzed using statistical processes, namely percentages. Recommendations were provided in accordance with the discoveries.

### 4 Findings

#### 4.1 Results of the questionnaire

Table 1 indicates the general perception of the pre-service teachers regarding the use of technology in teaching pronunciation. The questionnaire consisted of 10 items and the pre-service EFL teachers answered all of them. Most of the participants responded positively to the perception on the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in language teaching pedagogy.

**Table 1**

*The perception of the pre-service teachers' perception on the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in language teaching pedagogy*

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
<b>Enhancing linguistic proficiency</b>					
1. AI plays a key role in developing expertise in English grammar.	0	7.1	39.3	32.1	21.4

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
2. AI serves as a facilitator in the development of four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as vocabulary.	0	17.9	7.1	39.3	35.7
<b>The performance of teaching English</b>					
3. Using AI saves time in organizing English teaching activities.	0	0	21.4	57.1	21.4
4. The integration of AI into English teaching contributes to cost reduction.	0	0	17.9	53.6	28.6
<b>English teaching participation and activities</b>					
5. AI helps create interesting activities for language learning in English teaching.	0	0	42.9	42.9	14.3
6. Students showed increasing interest in lessons that introduce AI technology to teach English.	0	0	21.4	25	53.6
<b>Enhancing the teaching media</b>					
7. AI strengthened English teaching media, both digital media and resources.	0	0	14.3	46.4	39.3
8. The implementation and creation of teaching media that responds to such diverse learning needs makes AI technology useful in developing English language teaching.	0	0	3.6	39.3	57.1
<b>Evaluation and analysis of information in English teaching</b>					
9. AI is effective in providing immediate answers to students in English teaching.	0	0	32.1	46.4	21.4
10. AI is used to create content for English teaching, including lessons and evaluations.	3.6	0	17.9	28.6	50

*Note.* SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree.

#### 4.2 Results of the interview

The next section presents three key insights into pre-service teachers' perceptions from semi-structured interviews.

1) Do you have any concerns about using AI in teaching English, and how do you think these concerns will affect your teaching?

This study explored whether pre-service teachers have any concerns about using AI in teaching English and how they think these concerns will affect their teaching. As a whole, pre-service teacher results showed that the use of AI in teaching English was incredibly interesting. However, it was found that it affects their teaching in the future.

As reported by pre-service teachers who participated in the interview, AI may assist them in their teaching. One of the pre-service teacher interviewees, Manassanun, stated that:

I am concerned about the lack of morality and ethics in students due to the use of AI in teaching, which allows them to easily and quickly access various kinds of information from different locations. Consequently, there is an increased opportunity for dishonesty in exams or when assigning tasks to students. Students will rely solely on AI tools for different subjects, resulting in a slower development of critical thinking skills as they do not actively engage in problem-solving.

Another pre-service teacher, Waraporn, said that:

I worry about the use of AI in handling data, particularly concerns about unauthorized use of data and potential copyright issues, is also noteworthy. It is essential to thoroughly verify and ensure that the data used by AI systems are obtained with proper authorization and adhere to copyright laws. Incorrect use of data could lead to legal and ethical complications.

Another pre-service teacher, Arunsiri, agreed with what Manassanun, Waraporn said previously. On top of these, she added:

I concern about learners arise because AI currently cannot understand emotions and feelings of learners as humans do.

As a whole, the pre-service teachers felt that AI in teaching English often revolve around its limitations in human interaction, ethical implications, and potential over-reliance. Many express apprehension that AI lacks the emotional intelligence necessary to understand students' feeling or adapt teaching to their individual needs.

2) Is there any factor of AI technology that you find most challenging or worrying in the context of teaching English in Thailand? How?

The pre-service teachers noted that AI technology would be a challenging in the context of teaching English in Thailand. For example, during the interview process, Thanutcha, one of the pre-service teacher interviewees, found AI to be particularly replace their career in the future. He commented:

In my opinion, I am concerned that AI might replace in English teaching in certain aspects in the future, such as the accuracy of content in various subjects such as Grammar, Vocabulary and many more.

Kanjana concurred with Thanutcha by saying:

I feel that if AI replaces teachers, students may have new learning experiences, and in the future, AI will have to continue to be developed, and the role of teachers may be reduced.

In general, all of the comments collected indicated that AI is worring in the context of teaching English in Thailand. They expressed concerns about AI potentially replacing teachers in the future, particularly in delivering accurate content like grammar and vocabulary. While they acknowledge that AI may offer new learning experiences for students, they are worried that the continuous development of AI could reduce the role of teachers, raising concerns about their future career prospects in education.

3) Identify the AI used in teaching, such as ChatGPT, GEMINI, Quilbot.

In the opinion of pre-service teacher interviewees, AI used in teaching, such as ChatGPT, GEMINI, or Quilbot, provided personalized feedback and correction in their teaching method like lesson plan suggestion. Theerapat, for instance, reaffirmed its effectiveness of AI:

AI helps to access learning at any time, saving time in learning and technology helps in answering questions to and knowledge that is convenient with access and provides information that is quite accurate and of high quality.

Another pre-service student, Napakrit, added:

During lessons, students are required to write reports or essays. They can use ChatGPT to generate various sentences, saving time and reducing concerns about spelling errors. Additionally, it can assist in evaluating students' understanding.

The participant described ChatGPT as usefulness for them to assist their teaching in appropriate learning content. For example, ChatGPT aids in searching for information for learning management suitable for learners

of various ages. It facilitates the ease of preparing learning materials. ChatGPT's capability to provide guidance in selecting teaching materials suitable for conveying the desired subject matter to learners is noteworthy. It serves as a tool to effectively train English language skills, such as assisting in correcting assignments writing for teachers and learners in accordance with grammatical principles.

## 5 Discussion and conclusion

The findings of this study reveal a complex landscape of AI integration in EFL pre-service teacher education, reflecting both enthusiasm and apprehension. The positive attitudes expressed by most participants align with previous research highlighting the potential of AI to enhance language learning experiences (Zhu et al., 2021). However, the challenges identified, particularly regarding access to AI tools and varying levels of technological proficiency, echo concerns raised by Selwyn (2019) about the equitable implementation of AI in education. The ethical considerations, especially regarding data privacy, underscore the need for a critical approach to AI integration, as advocated by Chapelle and Sauro (2017). Despite these challenges, the pre-service teachers' recognition of AI as a valuable tool for professional development suggests a shift towards a more technologically integrated view of language pedagogy, consistent with the evolving global English landscape described by Marlina (2018). This research contributes to the growing body of literature on AI in ELT by providing insights from the perspective of pre-service teachers in Thailand, a context that has been underrepresented in previous studies. Future research could explore how these perceptions translate into actual classroom practices and investigate the long-term impact of AI integration on language teaching effectiveness and student outcomes.

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