

RETHINKING LESSON PLANNING AND MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF CHATGPT IN EFL HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

The rapid emergence of generative artificial intelligence has created new possibilities for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, particularly in relation to lesson planning and instructional material development. Among these tools, ChatGPT has attracted considerable attention because of its ability to generate lesson ideas, adapt texts, produce classroom activities, suggest assessment tasks, and support teachers in managing time-consuming pedagogical work. However, the value of ChatGPT in EFL education cannot be understood only in terms of technical efficiency. Its usefulness depends on teachers' professional judgement, pedagogical knowledge, subject expertise, and ability to critically evaluate AI-generated content. This article examines EFL teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT as a tool for lesson planning and material development in higher education. Drawing on literature from Computer-Assisted Language Learning, Artificial Intelligence in Education, and the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge framework, the paper argues that ChatGPT should be understood not as a replacement for teachers, but as a pedagogical co-designer whose effectiveness depends on informed, reflective, and context-sensitive use. The article discusses perceived benefits, including time-saving, creativity, differentiation, and language support, as well as concerns related to accuracy, originality, over-reliance, cultural appropriateness, and ethical use. It concludes that successful integration of ChatGPT in EFL higher education requires not only access to digital tools, but also AI literacy, institutional guidance, teacher training, and critical professional agency.

Keywords: ChatGPT, EFL teachers, lesson planning, material development, higher education, artificial intelligence, TPACK

1. Introduction

Lesson planning has never been a visible part of teaching. Students see the lesson itself: the activities, explanations, discussions, and tasks that take place in the classroom. What they rarely see is the work that happens beforehand. Behind every lesson lies a series of decisions about objectives, materials, sequencing, timing, assessment, and learner engagement. For language teachers, these decisions are rarely straightforward.

They require balancing curriculum requirements with student needs, adapting materials to different proficiency levels, and finding ways to make language meaningful within specific educational contexts.

For decades, technology has played a supporting role in this process. Teachers have searched for authentic texts online, adapted digital resources, created presentations, and used learning management systems to organise instruction. Yet the emergence of generative artificial intelligence has altered the nature of that relationship. Tools such as ChatGPT do more than provide access to information. They generate content. A teacher can ask for a lesson plan, a reading activity, a set of discussion questions, or a grammar exercise and receive a response within seconds. Tasks that previously required substantial preparation can now be completed with remarkable speed.

This development has prompted considerable discussion within language education. Much of the early debate has focused on students. Researchers have examined the use of ChatGPT for writing assistance, language practice, feedback generation, and academic support. These discussions are important, but they tell only part of the story. Long before students encounter AI-generated content, teachers are already interacting with generative AI behind the scenes. They are experimenting with lesson plans, adapting instructional materials, generating classroom activities, and exploring new approaches to curriculum design. In many cases, ChatGPT enters the educational process not through learners but through teachers.

The growing presence of AI in lesson preparation raises questions that extend beyond efficiency. It is easy to frame ChatGPT as a tool that saves time, and indeed many teachers report exactly that. Yet time-saving alone does not explain why generative AI has attracted such attention within education. A calculator saves time. A spellchecker saves time. ChatGPT is different because it participates in forms of work that have traditionally been associated with professional judgement and pedagogical expertise. When a teacher asks ChatGPT to design a speaking lesson, adapt a reading text, or generate assessment criteria, the technology enters a space that was previously occupied almost exclusively by human decision-making.

This shift invites a reconsideration of what lesson planning and material development involve. These activities are often described as technical aspects of teaching, but they are also intellectual and creative processes. Teachers do not simply assemble activities. They make decisions about what learners need, what knowledge is worth prioritising, how language develops, and which forms of classroom interaction are most likely to support learning. The question, therefore, is not whether ChatGPT can produce educational materials. It clearly can. The more significant question is how teachers understand, evaluate, and incorporate those materials into their practice.

Within EFL contexts, this question becomes particularly important. Language teachers frequently adapt published resources because textbooks do not always align with local educational realities. Materials may be culturally distant, linguistically inappropriate, or insufficiently responsive to learners' academic and professional goals. Consequently, lesson planning and material development occupy a central place in teachers' professional lives. Generative AI enters a context in which adaptation, modification, and pedagogical decision-making are already routine practices. Rather than replacing these practices, ChatGPT appears to be reshaping them.

This article examines EFL teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT for lesson planning and material development in higher education. Drawing on scholarship from Artificial Intelligence in Education, Computer-Assisted Language Learning, and teacher knowledge frameworks, it argues that ChatGPT should not be understood primarily as an instructional tool or a replacement for teacher expertise. Instead, it is more productively viewed as a pedagogical co-designer whose value depends on the professional judgement of the teacher using it. The technology can generate possibilities, but it cannot determine which possibilities are educationally meaningful. That responsibility remains firmly human.

The discussion proceeds by examining how ChatGPT is being incorporated into lesson planning and material development, the opportunities teachers associate with its use, and the concerns that continue to shape attitudes towards generative AI in educational settings. Particular attention is given to the relationship between technological innovation and teacher agency. While public discourse often presents artificial intelligence as a force capable of transforming education independently, the reality appears more complex. Technologies may influence teaching practices, but it is teachers who ultimately decide how those technologies are interpreted, adapted, and enacted in the classroom.

Understanding teachers' perceptions is therefore not a peripheral concern. It is central to understanding how generative AI will shape the future of language education.

2. Literature Review

2.1 From Educational Technology to Generative Artificial Intelligence

The integration of technology into language education is not a new phenomenon. For several decades, researchers in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) have examined how digital tools can support language learning, communication, and pedagogical innovation. Early discussions focused largely on access to information, multimedia resources, and online communication, emphasising the potential of technology to expand opportunities for authentic language use and learner autonomy (Warschauer, 1996; Stockwell, 2012). Within this tradition, technology was typically

understood as a tool that facilitated learning by providing resources, environments, or channels for interaction.

Recent developments in artificial intelligence have shifted this discussion in important ways. Unlike earlier educational technologies, generative AI systems do not merely provide access to information; they generate content in response to user prompts. Tools such as ChatGPT can produce lesson plans, explanations, reading passages, assessment tasks, discussion questions, and feedback almost instantaneously. As a result, generative AI occupies a different position within educational practice. Rather than functioning solely as a medium through which teaching occurs, it increasingly participates in activities traditionally associated with planning, designing, and organising instruction.

This distinction is significant because lesson planning and material development have historically been regarded as core components of teachers' professional expertise. They require teachers to draw upon their understanding of language, pedagogy, curriculum requirements, and learner needs. The emergence of technologies capable of producing educational content therefore raises questions that extend beyond technological efficiency. It invites a reconsideration of how pedagogical work itself is conceptualised and distributed between human and technological actors.

The rapid expansion of research on generative AI reflects this growing interest. Recent reviews indicate a substantial increase in studies examining ChatGPT and other large language models in educational contexts, particularly since late 2022 (Lo, 2024; Li et al., 2025). Much of this literature has focused on student learning, academic writing, assessment, and feedback. Comparatively less attention has been devoted to teachers' experiences and perceptions, especially in relation to the often-invisible work of lesson preparation and instructional material development. Yet it is precisely within these areas that generative AI may be exerting some of its most immediate influence.

2.2 ChatGPT in Language Education

The appearance of ChatGPT has generated considerable debate within language education. Early discussions were characterised by both enthusiasm and concern. Some scholars highlighted its potential to support personalised learning, facilitate language practice, provide immediate feedback, and increase learner engagement. Others raised questions about academic integrity, accuracy, ethical use, and the possibility of over-reliance on AI-generated content.

Within EFL and ESL contexts, research has frequently examined ChatGPT as a learning support tool. Studies have explored its role in writing development, vocabulary learning, grammar instruction, speaking practice, and learner feedback. Several researchers have argued that generative AI can provide learners with

opportunities for interaction and linguistic support that were previously difficult to access outside the classroom. From this perspective, AI may function as a readily available conversational partner, writing assistant, or source of language models.

However, the growing literature also highlights important limitations. ChatGPT's responses are generated through statistical prediction rather than disciplinary understanding. Consequently, outputs that appear fluent and authoritative may contain factual inaccuracies, fabricated references, oversimplified explanations, or pedagogically inappropriate suggestions. Researchers have repeatedly emphasised the need for critical evaluation of AI-generated content rather than unquestioning acceptance (Holmes et al., 2019; Sharples, 2023).

Importantly, these concerns are particularly relevant within language education. Unlike disciplines where correctness may be easier to verify, language teaching often involves decisions about appropriateness, communicative effectiveness, cultural relevance, and learner suitability. A language activity may be grammatically accurate yet pedagogically ineffective. Similarly, a reading text may be linguistically accessible but culturally disconnected from learners' experiences. Consequently, the educational value of AI-generated content cannot be assessed solely in terms of technical accuracy. This has led several scholars to argue that the most productive way of understanding ChatGPT is not as an autonomous educational agent but as a tool whose effectiveness depends on informed human mediation. Such perspectives shift attention away from the technology itself and towards the individuals responsible for integrating it into educational practice. In language education, this means focusing not only on what ChatGPT can generate, but also on how teachers interpret, evaluate, and adapt those outputs within specific teaching contexts.

2.3 Lesson Planning and Material Development as Professional Practice

Lesson planning and material development occupy a central place within language teaching. Although often treated as routine aspects of educational practice, both activities involve complex forms of professional decision-making. Teachers must determine what learners need to learn, how learning objectives can be achieved, which materials are appropriate, and how classroom activities should be sequenced to support meaningful language development.

In EFL contexts, material development frequently extends beyond selecting published resources. Teachers often adapt, supplement, simplify, or redesign materials to accommodate learner proficiency levels, institutional expectations, cultural considerations, and curricular goals. This is particularly common in higher education, where commercially produced materials may not fully address the academic, professional, or disciplinary needs of learners.

Research on teacher cognition has consistently demonstrated that lesson planning is shaped by a combination of pedagogical knowledge, subject expertise, contextual awareness, and professional experience. Planning is not merely a technical exercise; it reflects teachers' beliefs about language learning, their understanding of learners, and their interpretations of educational goals. Consequently, the introduction of generative AI into this process raises important questions about the relationship between technological assistance and professional judgement.

Recent studies suggest that many teachers perceive ChatGPT as useful for generating lesson ideas, adapting texts, creating classroom activities, and developing assessment materials. The attraction of these functions is understandable. Teachers often face substantial workloads, limited preparation time, and increasing administrative responsibilities. AI-generated content can therefore appear to offer practical support for tasks that are both necessary and time-consuming.

Nevertheless, there is an important distinction between generating educational materials and determining their pedagogical value. Effective lesson planning requires decisions that extend beyond content production. It involves anticipating learner responses, considering classroom dynamics, aligning activities with learning objectives, and making context-specific adaptations. These are dimensions of practice that generative AI currently struggles to address independently. As a result, the growing use of ChatGPT in lesson preparation may not reduce the importance of teacher expertise; rather, it may alter how that expertise is enacted.

2.4 Teacher Perceptions of ChatGPT

Teachers' perceptions play a critical role in determining how educational technologies are adopted and used. Technologies rarely transform educational practice simply because they become available. Their influence depends largely on how teachers understand their usefulness, limitations, and relevance to their own teaching contexts. Research examining teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT has identified several recurring themes. One of the most frequently reported benefits is efficiency. Teachers often describe AI as a means of reducing preparation time, particularly when generating lesson outlines, classroom activities, or instructional materials. In contexts where workload pressures are substantial, this perceived efficiency can make AI tools especially attractive.

Creativity represents a second commonly reported benefit. Rather than replacing teachers' ideas, ChatGPT is often described as a source of inspiration that prompts alternative approaches to lesson design. Teachers may use AI-generated suggestions as starting points for further adaptation, enabling them to explore activities or perspectives they might not otherwise have considered.

At the same time, concerns remain widespread. Accuracy continues to be one of the most frequently discussed challenges. Teachers report uncertainty regarding the reliability of AI-generated information and express concerns about the potential consequences of using inaccurate content in educational settings. Ethical issues, including transparency, academic integrity, and responsible use, have also emerged as important considerations.

Perhaps most significantly, several studies indicate that teachers remain cautious about the possibility of over-reliance on AI. While many acknowledge the practical benefits of ChatGPT, they also emphasise the continuing importance of human judgement. This tension is particularly evident in language education, where teaching decisions are often shaped by contextual factors that extend beyond what can be captured in a prompt. Teachers may therefore value AI-generated support while simultaneously resisting the idea that pedagogical expertise can be automated.

The existing literature suggests that teachers do not typically position ChatGPT as a replacement for professional knowledge. Instead, they tend to view it as a supplementary resource whose usefulness depends on critical evaluation and adaptation. This finding highlights the continuing importance of teacher agency within discussions of educational AI.

2.5 Theoretical Framework: Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)

To understand how teachers engage with ChatGPT, it is useful to draw upon the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework developed by Mishra and Koehler (2006). The framework argues that effective technology integration depends not on technological knowledge alone but on the interaction between technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge.

From a TPACK perspective, successful use of ChatGPT requires more than the ability to generate responses through effective prompting. Teachers must also possess sufficient pedagogical knowledge to evaluate whether AI-generated activities support learning objectives and sufficient content knowledge to determine whether generated language examples, explanations, or materials are accurate and appropriate.

The framework is particularly relevant because it highlights the limitations of viewing AI as a neutral tool. The educational value of ChatGPT does not reside within the technology itself. Rather, it emerges through teachers' ability to integrate technological possibilities with pedagogical intentions and disciplinary expertise. Two teachers may use the same AI tool in very different ways depending on their knowledge, beliefs, experience, and professional judgement.

This perspective also helps explain why perceptions of ChatGPT vary considerably across educational contexts. Teachers who possess strong technological confidence but limited pedagogical expertise may use AI differently from experienced educators with extensive teaching knowledge but less familiarity with emerging technologies. The framework therefore provides a useful lens for examining not only what teachers do with ChatGPT, but why they perceive it in particular ways.

2.6 Research Gap

The literature reviewed above demonstrates that generative AI has become an increasingly significant topic within language education. Existing research has explored its implications for language learning, academic writing, feedback, assessment, and educational innovation. Studies have also begun to investigate teachers' attitudes towards AI and its potential role in educational practice.

However, several gaps remain. First, much of the current literature focuses on students rather than teachers. Second, studies examining teachers' experiences often address AI integration in broad terms rather than focusing specifically on lesson planning and material development. Third, research from EFL higher education contexts remains relatively limited, particularly outside heavily researched educational settings.

Most importantly, existing scholarship has not yet fully examined how teachers understand the changing relationship between professional expertise and AI-generated pedagogical content. As ChatGPT becomes increasingly embedded in educational practice, understanding teachers' perceptions is essential for understanding how the technology is likely to shape future approaches to lesson planning and material development.

This study addresses that gap by examining EFL teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT as a resource for lesson planning and instructional material development in higher education. By focusing on teachers' experiences and interpretations, the study seeks to contribute to emerging discussions about the role of generative AI in contemporary language education.

3. ChatGPT for Lesson Planning

Lesson planning represents one of the areas in which ChatGPT has attracted particular interest among language teachers. Designing an effective lesson requires teachers to make decisions about learning objectives, task sequencing, classroom interaction, timing, assessment, and resource selection. While experienced educators often develop routines for managing these decisions, lesson planning remains a cognitively demanding process that requires the integration of pedagogical knowledge, subject expertise, and contextual understanding.

Within this context, ChatGPT offers several forms of support. One of its most practical functions is the generation of preliminary lesson structures. Teachers can request lesson outlines based on specific language skills, topics, proficiency levels, or learning outcomes and receive a sequence of suggested activities within seconds. For many educators, the value of such output lies not in its immediate usability but in its ability to provide a starting point for further development. The challenge of lesson planning is often not generating ideas from scratch but organising them into a coherent instructional sequence.

Beyond lesson structure, ChatGPT can assist in diversifying classroom activities. It can generate alternative approaches to reading, writing, speaking, and vocabulary instruction, offering teachers a range of options that may extend beyond familiar classroom routines. This capacity is particularly relevant in contexts where teachers repeatedly teach similar courses and seek new ways to maintain learner engagement. In such cases, AI-generated suggestions may serve as prompts for pedagogical reflection rather than ready-made solutions.

Another area in which ChatGPT may contribute is lesson coherence. Teachers can use the tool to examine whether planned activities align with learning objectives, whether task progression appears logical, or whether sufficient opportunities for language practice have been incorporated. Although these suggestions require careful evaluation, they can encourage teachers to revisit assumptions and reconsider aspects of lesson design that might otherwise remain unquestioned. In this sense, ChatGPT may function less as a planning tool and more as a catalyst for reflective practice.

At the same time, the limitations of AI-generated lesson plans should not be overlooked. While the outputs often appear organised and pedagogically plausible, they frequently lack the contextual awareness necessary for effective teaching. ChatGPT cannot fully account for learners' prior knowledge, institutional expectations, classroom dynamics, available resources, or cultural considerations. Consequently, lesson plans generated by the tool may contain activities that are unrealistic, insufficiently differentiated, or poorly aligned with local teaching conditions. What appears effective in theory may prove less appropriate in practice.

This limitation highlights an important distinction between generating instructional content and designing instruction. Lesson planning is not simply the arrangement of activities but a process of pedagogical decision-making informed by professional judgement and contextual knowledge. From this perspective, the educational value of ChatGPT lies not in its capacity to plan lessons independently but in its ability to support teachers as they engage in planning. The technology can propose possibilities,

but it cannot determine which possibilities are pedagogically appropriate for a particular group of learners. That responsibility remains firmly with the teacher.

4. ChatGPT for Material Development

If lesson planning represents the organisational dimension of teaching, material development represents its creative dimension. EFL teachers rarely rely exclusively on published resources. Instead, they routinely adapt, supplement, and redesign materials to address learners' linguistic needs, academic goals, and local educational contexts. This process is particularly evident in higher education, where teachers are often required to develop materials related to academic communication, discipline-specific language use, professional skills, and research literacy. Within such contexts, ChatGPT has emerged as a potentially valuable resource for supporting material development.

One of the most widely discussed applications of ChatGPT is its capacity to transform existing texts. Teachers can request simplified versions of authentic materials, adapt texts to different proficiency levels, or modify content to suit particular learning objectives. This function is especially useful in EFL contexts, where authentic materials frequently present linguistic challenges that exceed learners' current abilities. Rather than abandoning authentic resources altogether, teachers can use AI-generated adaptations as a means of increasing accessibility while preserving exposure to meaningful language. In this respect, ChatGPT may help bridge the longstanding tension between authenticity and comprehensibility in language teaching.

The tool also enables the rapid generation of learning activities. Teachers can produce comprehension questions, vocabulary tasks, discussion prompts, role-play scenarios, writing exercises, and collaborative activities with minimal preparation time. While the educational value of these materials depends on subsequent evaluation and refinement, their availability may expand the range of pedagogical options available to teachers. This is particularly relevant in contexts characterised by heavy workloads and limited preparation time, where the challenge is often not a lack of pedagogical knowledge but a lack of time to transform that knowledge into classroom resources.

Beyond activity design, ChatGPT may support differentiation. Contemporary EFL classrooms frequently contain learners with diverse proficiency levels, learning preferences, and educational backgrounds. Producing multiple versions of the same task has traditionally required considerable effort. Generative AI offers the possibility of creating alternative materials for different learner groups more efficiently, enabling teachers to adjust linguistic complexity, task demands, or support mechanisms according to students' needs. Although such adaptations still require professional

oversight, the technology may reduce some of the practical barriers associated with differentiated instruction.

Assessment-related material development represents another area of growing interest. Teachers increasingly use ChatGPT to generate quizzes, rubrics, self-assessment checklists, and peer-review guidelines. These materials can provide useful starting points for designing assessment tools and clarifying performance expectations. However, assessment also illustrates the limitations of AI-generated content. Effective assessment requires close alignment with learning outcomes, curricular objectives, and institutional standards. Generic rubrics generated by AI may appear comprehensive while overlooking important disciplinary or contextual considerations. Consequently, assessment materials produced through ChatGPT should be regarded as preliminary drafts rather than finished products.

The growing use of ChatGPT for material development also raises broader questions about authenticity. One of the enduring principles of communicative language teaching has been the value of exposing learners to authentic language use. AI-generated materials complicate this principle. On the one hand, they can provide linguistically accessible texts tailored to specific learning goals. On the other hand, such materials are generated rather than naturally occurring. They often display a degree of coherence, balance, and predictability that differs from the complexity of real-world communication. As a result, teachers face decisions about when AI-generated materials can effectively support learning and when authentic texts remain pedagogically preferable.

A related concern involves cultural representation. Because large language models are trained predominantly on data originating from particular linguistic and cultural contexts, their outputs may implicitly reflect assumptions associated with dominant English-speaking environments. Examples, scenarios, and communicative situations generated by ChatGPT may therefore appear disconnected from learners' social realities, particularly in contexts outside North America and Western Europe. For EFL teachers working in Central Asia and other underrepresented regions, the challenge is not merely linguistic adaptation but cultural localisation. Materials often require modification to ensure that examples, references, and communicative contexts resonate with learners' experiences and educational goals.

These considerations highlight a broader issue within discussions of AI-assisted material development. The value of ChatGPT does not lie simply in its ability to generate content. Educational materials are not neutral products that can be transferred unchanged from one context to another. Their effectiveness depends on how well they align with learners' needs, institutional expectations, and pedagogical objectives.

Consequently, material development remains a process of professional judgement rather than technological production.

From this perspective, ChatGPT is perhaps best understood as a resource that expands teachers' options rather than replaces their expertise. It can accelerate drafting, support adaptation, and generate alternative possibilities. However, decisions regarding relevance, appropriateness, authenticity, and educational value remain fundamentally human responsibilities. The technology may assist in the production of materials, but it is teachers who determine whether those materials contribute meaningfully to learning.

5. Discussion

The literature reviewed in this article suggests that the significance of ChatGPT lies not simply in its ability to generate educational content but in the ways it is beginning to reshape pedagogical work. Discussions surrounding generative AI often focus on efficiency, emphasising its capacity to reduce preparation time and automate routine tasks. While these benefits are undoubtedly attractive, such explanations provide only a partial account of the technology's educational significance. More fundamentally, ChatGPT is altering how lesson planning and material development are initiated, organised, and enacted within language teaching practice.

Traditionally, pedagogical preparation has been conceptualised as a process that begins with teachers generating instructional ideas and transforming those ideas into classroom materials. Generative AI introduces a different starting point. Rather than creating resources from scratch, teachers increasingly interact with AI-generated drafts, suggestions, and alternative instructional possibilities. This shift does not eliminate pedagogical work; rather, it redistributes it. The emphasis moves away from initial production towards evaluation, adaptation, and contextualisation. Consequently, the professional challenge facing teachers is no longer simply how to design instructional materials but how to exercise informed judgement in relation to materials generated by artificial intelligence.

This development has important implications for understandings of teacher expertise. Earlier debates surrounding educational technology often focused on access to digital tools and teachers' willingness to adopt them. The emergence of generative AI raises a different question. The issue is not whether teachers can use ChatGPT, but whether they can critically engage with its outputs. The ability to identify pedagogical weaknesses, recognise contextual limitations, evaluate linguistic appropriateness, and adapt content to local educational realities becomes increasingly important in AI-mediated teaching environments. In this respect, professional expertise is not

diminished by generative AI; it is reconfigured. What distinguishes effective practice is not the capacity to generate content but the capacity to evaluate it.

The TPACK framework provides a useful lens through which to understand this transformation. The literature consistently demonstrates that technological competence alone is insufficient for meaningful AI integration. ChatGPT may generate plausible lesson plans and instructional materials, but determining their educational value requires the interaction of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge. The effectiveness of AI-assisted teaching therefore depends less on the sophistication of the technology itself than on the quality of the professional knowledge brought to its use. This observation reinforces a broader principle within educational technology research: innovations do not improve teaching independently; their impact is mediated through teacher decision-making.

The discussion also highlights a persistent tension between standardisation and contextualisation. Large language models are designed to generate broadly applicable responses based on patterns within vast datasets. Teaching, however, is inherently contextual. Effective lesson planning and material development require sensitivity to learner needs, institutional expectations, cultural realities, and educational goals that may not be fully captured within AI-generated outputs. As a result, the value of ChatGPT cannot be separated from the contexts in which it is used. Materials that appear pedagogically sound in one setting may be inappropriate in another. This reinforces the continuing importance of localisation as a core component of language teaching practice.

A further implication concerns teacher education and professional development. Much of the current discussion surrounding AI integration focuses on technical competencies such as prompt engineering and platform familiarity. While these skills are important, the literature suggests that they represent only one dimension of effective AI use. Equally important are critical AI literacy, ethical awareness, and the capacity to evaluate pedagogical quality. Future professional development initiatives may therefore need to move beyond training teachers to use AI and towards preparing them to interrogate, challenge, and refine AI-generated content. Such an approach would position teachers not as passive users of technology but as active participants in shaping its educational application.

Taken together, these developments suggest that the integration of ChatGPT should not be understood as a purely technological phenomenon. It represents a broader transformation in the relationship between educational knowledge, professional expertise, and instructional design. The central question is no longer whether AI can contribute to lesson planning and material development. Increasingly, the more

significant question concerns how teachers negotiate the opportunities and constraints introduced by AI-generated pedagogical content. Understanding these negotiations is likely to become an increasingly important area of inquiry as generative AI continues to expand its presence within language education.

7. Conclusion

The rapid adoption of generative artificial intelligence has introduced new possibilities for lesson planning and material development in EFL higher education. However, the significance of ChatGPT extends beyond its ability to generate instructional content efficiently. Its emergence signals a broader shift in how pedagogical work is conceptualised, organised, and supported within contemporary educational practice.

This article has argued that ChatGPT is most productively understood not as a substitute for teacher expertise but as a resource that participates in the design process. Its capacity to generate lesson structures, adapt materials, and propose instructional alternatives offers valuable support for teachers navigating increasingly complex educational demands. At the same time, the effectiveness of AI-generated content remains dependent on professional judgement, contextual awareness, and pedagogical reasoning. Educational value does not reside in the technology itself; it emerges through the ways teachers interpret and apply its outputs.

The discussion has further highlighted the importance of viewing AI integration as a pedagogical rather than purely technological issue. Questions surrounding authenticity, contextual relevance, ethical use, and instructional quality cannot be resolved through technological innovation alone. They require informed decision-making grounded in disciplinary knowledge and educational experience. Consequently, the future role of generative AI in language education is likely to be shaped less by the capabilities of the technology than by the capacity of educators to engage with it critically and purposefully.

As generative AI continues to evolve, discussions within EFL education must move beyond questions of adoption towards questions of responsible integration. Understanding how teachers negotiate the opportunities and constraints of AI-assisted pedagogy will be essential for ensuring that technological innovation remains aligned with educational aims. Ultimately, the contribution of ChatGPT to language teaching will depend not on what the technology can generate, but on how teachers choose to transform those possibilities into meaningful learning experiences.

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