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Conception, design, literature review, data collection, analysis, interpretation, writing and editing.

Abstract

The integration of artificial intelligence in education presents both opportunities and challenges, particularly in the field of language teaching. This study aims to investigate Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions of AI's role in fostering or hindering creativity in language teaching. Through semi-structured interviews with 10 EFL teachers from private high schools, the research explores the potential benefits and challenges of AI integration. Key findings reveal that AI enhances student engagement, provides personalized learning experiences, and offers timely feedback. However, concerns about insufficient training, technical issues, and over-reliance on AI potentially undermining fundamental skills were also expressed. While AI tools support improvements in language skills and foster creative thinking, there is apprehension about standardization and the risk of diminishing originality. The study underscores the necessity for effective teacher training and a balanced approach to AI integration, ensuring it complements rather than replaces traditional teaching methods. These insights provide valuable guidance for educators, policymakers, and technology developers to optimize AI use in EFL education while fostering a dynamic and creative learning environment. Future research should explore innovative ways to integrate AI into language teaching without compromising creativity.

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Research Article

Enhancing or Hindering? AI's Role in Sparking Creativity in Language Teaching: Insights from Private High School EFL Teachers *

Seçil TÜMEN AKYILDIZ [1]

Abstract

The integration of artificial intelligence in education presents both opportunities and challenges, particularly in the field of language teaching. This study aims to investigate Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions of AI's role in fostering or hindering creativity in language teaching. Through semi-structured interviews with 10 EFL teachers from private high schools, the research explores the potential benefits and challenges of AI integration. Key findings reveal that AI enhances student engagement, provides personalized learning experiences, and offers timely feedback. However, concerns about insufficient training, technical issues, and over-reliance on AI potentially undermining fundamental skills were also expressed. While AI tools support improvements in language skills and foster creative thinking, there is apprehension about standardization and the risk of diminishing originality. The study underscores the necessity for effective teacher training and a balanced approach to AI integration, ensuring it complements rather than replaces traditional teaching methods. These insights provide valuable guidance for educators, policymakers, and technology developers to optimize AI use in EFL education while fostering a dynamic and creative learning environment. Future research should explore innovative ways to integrate AI into language teaching without compromising creativity.

Keywords: EFL, artificial intelligence tools, creativity, language teaching, EFL teachers

1. INTRODUCTION

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI hereafter) has elicited both excitement and concern among educators and researchers in the ever-changing educational landscape. The potential of AI tools to transform language teaching is undeniable as they become more sophisticated. Nevertheless, this transformation raises a critical question: Does AI foster or inhibit creativity in the EFL classroom?

Creativity is a fundamental component of effective language instruction, as it encourages critical thinking, deeper learning, and engagement. According to scholars such as Guilford (1950) and Vygotsky (2004), it is imperative for educators to foster creativity in students, equipping them to navigate an unpredictable future. The NACCCE (1999) emphasized the necessity of nurturing creativity within educational frameworks to adequately prepare students for their future careers, cultivate responsible societal members, and enable them to adapt to evolving conditions with cultural sensitivity. Guilford (1967) highlighted that creativity is fundamental to comprehensive education and essential for addressing humanity's most pressing challenges. Contrary to the widespread notion that creativity is reserved for a select few (Richards, 2007; Vygotsky, 2004), it is actually a skill that can be cultivated through education (NACCCE, 1999). Torrance and Torrance (1973) argued that creativity can indeed be taught. This "hidden potential" (Richards, 2007, p. 25) can either be nurtured or stifled by the educational methods employed in schools (Birkmaier, 1971). Consequently, teachers play a pivotal role in developing students' creative thinking by incorporating creative teaching

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strategies in their classrooms (Sternberg & Williams, 1996). Additionally, Tangaard (2011) asserted that teachers can further encourage creativity not only through their instructional methods but also through their attitudes and discussions about creativity. In the realm of education, creativity holds significant importance as it can enhance academic achievement. Fisher (2004) notes that research indicates academic performance improves when students are assessed in ways that acknowledge and appreciate their creative skills. Engaging in creative activities can reignite the interest of students who have become disengaged from school, as well as reinvigorate teachers who feel constrained by a culture of control and compliance.

1.1. Creativity in EFL

Creativity has also been associated with levels of achievement in second language learning. Contemporary language teaching methods often favor language tasks that are thought to unleash learners' creativity. These tasks typically include student-centered, interactive, and open-ended components, making them well-suited to fostering creative thinking and behavior among learners (Burton, 2010). Since the beginning of the 21st century, there has been a growing emphasis on fostering students' creative thinking, making it a crucial goal in education (Formosa, 2016). Alongside fundamental language skills, creative thinking is integral to EFL instruction. EFL teachers now face the challenge of creating innovative learning environments that go beyond mere knowledge transmission to engage students' thinking abilities. Enhancing learners' creative thinking skills allows them to process information in varied ways, apply their knowledge in multiple contexts, solve problems, tackle learning obstacles, and enhance their language competencies (Seelig, 2012). According to Ryabchenko and his colleagues, teachers' objectives align with the mission of engaging students in creative activities, specifically to cultivate innovative engineers capable of devising and executing unprecedented technologies, thereby educating and equipping them for their future vocation.

Creative teaching can be effectively implemented in EFL classes to foster students' creativity. These classes provide an ideal environment for creativity, even though EFL teachers have yet to fully recognize the connection between creativity and English teaching (Lee, 2013). This link is tied to the intrinsic nature of language, which inherently encourages creativity and imagination (Chomsky, 2008; Tin, 2013). Effective EFL teachers who embrace creativity are well-informed, non-conformist, willing to take risks, and reflective in their practice. They employ a variety of strategies, techniques, materials, and activities to stimulate creative thinking in their students. These teachers prioritize learner-centered approaches and continuously seek innovative methods to engage and motivate their students. They are adaptable, capable of making immediate adjustments to their teaching methods when necessary. Additionally, they utilize technology in creative ways (Richards, 2013). This multifaceted approach ensures that students are not only learning but are also actively engaged and inspired to think creatively.

Language teachers have three key advantages in enhancing students' creativity. Firstly, language itself is inherently creative, allowing individuals to use it in innovative ways, reformulate it, alter its structure, or convey meanings differently during communication. Secondly, language classes are limitless in terms of topics, covering areas such as sports, law, and food, which provides diverse and creative contexts for learning. Lastly, unlike many other subjects, creativity can be easily integrated into language classes, as they can offer more creative and real-life situations (Stepanek, 2015). Clarke (2005) also observed that foreign language teaching is a widely accessible and flexible field where creative activities can be easily implemented.

The goal of creative English language teaching should be to encourage students to question and critically analyze various texts, produce new and unique works, and express their ideas and thoughts enthusiastically across different media (Cremin, 2009). Enhancing students' creativity in EFL is particularly significant compared to other subjects. It fosters both affective and cognitive engagement, which is crucial for language acquisition and for understanding how to use language for effective and

natural communication. Additionally, it develops students' predictive, analytical, critical, and problem-solving skills, as well as their confidence and self-esteem (Tomlinson, 2015). Research by Liao et al. (2018) indicates that creative teaching practices in EFL classrooms boost students' motivation, creativity, and academic achievement. Baghaei and Riasati (2015) highlight that creativity in EFL contexts makes class hours more enjoyable and interesting. To enhance students' interest and attention towards English, creative teaching strategies can be effectively employed. Both teachers and students benefit positively from these approaches (Avila, 2015). By fostering a more engaging and dynamic learning environment, these strategies contribute to the overall effectiveness of language instruction.

In language teaching and learning, the guidance of teachers is crucial as they have the ability to integrate language acquisition with primary socialization and enculturation (Gee, 2016). This is particularly important because when students are learning a new language, they often feel like 'outsiders.' Teachers serve as cultural brokers, helping students to learn the language in a comfortable and supportive environment. Chappell (2016) states that creativity serves the purpose of investigating learners' life experience. The more enriched the classroom is in fostering and facilitating this experience for the learners, the higher the likelihood of creativity to manifest. The language classroom has the potential to elicit and utilize all learners' experiences and the new language. Human creativity is the driving force behind technological evolution, which in turn offers new environments and instruments for creative expression (Henriksen et al., 2016). According to Holmes (2019), AI can significantly enhance the learning and teaching process by boosting productivity, fostering creativity, and streamlining administrative procedures. AI is an integral component of technological advancements, making it crucial to thoroughly explore this subject in the field of EFL. Additionally, the role of technology in general, and AI specifically, in fostering or hindering creativity in language learning environments needs to be addressed. Understanding how these tools impact creative processes in language education is crucial for determining their effectiveness and potential limitations.

1.2. AI Use in EFL

AI-powered tools have revolutionized language learning in EFL courses. Learners can take part in simulated talks and get immediate feedback with chatbots powered by AI. Convenient practice opportunities and personalized language training are provided by these chatbots, which mimic real-life conversational scenarios. Another use worth mentioning is adaptive testing systems. These systems utilize AI algorithms to assess learners' competence levels and tailor the exam process to their specific needs (Eliott, 2023). Huang and his colleagues (2022) stated that adequate input is crucial for achieving good second language acquisition. AI-driven chatbots have the capability to offer language input and facilitate everyday conversation practice.

AI has enhanced language teaching and learning, as research demonstrates its ability to support specific language skills (Wang & Petrina, 2013), including reading comprehension (Xu et al., 2019), oral communication, listening, and reading, as well as high-quality argumentative writing (Guo et al.,2022; Hong et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2019) practicing repetitive language tasks (Kim, 2019), and correcting English pronunciation (Noviyanti, 2020). Additionally, AI contributes to broader educational activities such as automated grading, providing feedback (Baskara & Mukarto, 2023), creating adaptive learning experiences, intelligent tutoring, and predictive analytics (Pokrivčáková, 2019). With the rise of AI use in education, it is crucial for educators to understand how AI can support the teaching and learning of EFL. Therefore, a review of existing studies is necessary to aid the academic and practitioner communities in comprehending how AI is benefiting English language educators and learners. This need for a comprehensive and current systematic review is echoed by scholars such as Yang and Kyun (2022), who have called for an updated analysis of AI in English language education. The recent dramatic development of generative AI follows the historical trend to technological innovation in education and is one of the more important technological innovations that has emerged, since in applications such as Chat GPT, Bing, Bard, and others there is the potential for

significant shifts in how teaching and learning are conducted and language is used creatively (Williams, 2023).

Moreover, AI possesses the capacity to enhance students' motivation and offer them additional chances to utilize a foreign language and engage in interpersonal communication (Mobeyka et. al., 2023). Advanced AI technologies, including voice interaction and voice-recognition systems, have achieved a word mistake rate that is comparable to that of humans (Nordrum, 2017). These advanced methods establish a captivating and interactive learning atmosphere, motivating students to engage in language practice and enhance their skills with greater efficiency. According to Kim (2020), it is necessary for students to have access to authentic and suitable listening materials in order to enhance their listening abilities. Interacting and conversing with robots enables learners to receive accurate language input, encompassing spelling and pronunciation, so supporting and facilitating their language learning process. In addition, Nordrum (2017) stated that AI technology, which includes voice interaction and speech-recognition systems with word error rates comparable to humans, can provide learners with more opportunities to actively engage in spoken communication in the target language, thereby enhancing their learning experience.

AI technologies are increasingly being integrated into EFL classrooms. They provide potential benefits as useful companions for both learners and teachers. However, they also present a potential risk to teachers' employment. Therefore, teachers' perspectives on this matter are crucial (Sumakul et al., 2022). AI chatbots have the potential to enhance the mastery of language knowledge among EFL learners, including grammar and new vocabularies (Wang & Petrina, 2013) with well trained teachers on the use of AI in instruction (Gill et. al, 2024).

There is an abundance of research that examines the integration of AI into EFL instruction. Kim (2020) conducted a study to investigate the impact of AI chatbots on Korean college students' English grammar skills. Over 16 weeks, 70 participants used AI chatbots, resulting in a significant improvement in their grammar skills. In a study by Nazari et al. (2021), 120 non-native postgraduate students were divided into two groups: one used an AI application for learning, while the other did not. The results showed that the group using AI demonstrated significantly higher improvements in behavioral engagement, indicating that AI-powered writing tools are effective in enhancing learning behavior and attitudes towards technology. In a study by Cavaleri and Dianati (2016), a survey was conducted at two colleges to gather students' opinions on using a tool for writing. The results showed high student satisfaction with the tool, noting its ease of access and helpful feedback on grammatical issues. The tool's feedback helped students address common problems efficiently, saving instructors time to focus on higher-level writing issues. Consistent with previous findings by Parra and Calero (2019), Schindler and his colleagues (2017) affirm that tools offering instant correction and feedback significantly enhance positive engagement in web-based courses. This engagement is crucial for effective technology-based instructional assessment. In a study by Šajben and his colleagues (2021), researchers examined the impact of using an AI game as an educational tool with 20 participants aged 10-14 years. The results indicated that learners became more dedicated to their learning process, finding the information provided through the game to be particularly useful. Interviews with the students revealed that they viewed the AI game as excellent and potentially superior to traditional teaching, noting that it encouraged active participation. Köse and Arslan (2015) explored the use of AI to enhance e-learning scenarios, aiming to improve instructional methods and educational activities. They emphasized the benefits of AI in education, particularly for English language learning, viewing AI as a tool to boost English language performance. Their research focused on the importance of using AI e-learning software for English language development. According to Marr (2018), it is believed that some AI tools have saved millions of people from embarrassment by helping them avoid mistakes while practicing the language. On the other hand, Baskara and Mukarto (2023) indicated that it is important to explore the possibility of replacing human language teachers with AI driven technology.

Research in this field can investigate the ethical consequences of such replacement and the significance of human instructors in the process of language acquisition.

Modern technologies frequently introduce fresh opportunities for individuals to express their creativity. Teachers must possess a comprehensive understanding of the various ways in which technology can creatively deliver content in the classroom, and recognize how this aligns with different teaching methods. Given the continual development and evolution of technologies, a concentration on tools might be compared to aiming at a moving target. Exploring innovative methods of instruction enables us to explore how technology enhances our ability to perceive and comprehend educational material in unique and captivating manners. It enables us to generate original content instead of summarizing and reproducing it (Henriksen et.al., 2016). Additionally, previous research by Marrone and his colleagues (2022) suggests that although AI might not match human creativity, it can certainly aid in its development by focusing on social, affective, technological, and learning factors, proposing an AI model to enhance these experiences in educational settings. Zhai (2022) argued that by aligning the learning objectives to prioritize users' ability to utilize AI technologies for subject-specific activities, it leads to an improvement in creativity and critical thinking skills among both teachers and students.

There is a severe lack of empirical research examining how AI can be used in teaching EFL, specifically from the perspective of teachers (Jiang, 2022). While AI has shown promise in enhancing various aspects of language learning, there is a critical need to explore its impact on fostering creativity within EFL teaching through the eyes of teachers. This study aims to address the gap in understanding whether AI tools enhance or hinder creative processes in language education, particularly in the context of teaching EFL. The central problem addressed in this study is the lack of comprehensive understanding of how AI influences creativity in EFL classrooms. Specifically, the study investigates whether AI tools support or inhibit creative teaching practices and how they affect students' creative language use. The purpose of this study is to explore the role of AI in fostering or hindering creativity in EFL teaching. By examining the experiences and insights of EFL teachers, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the impact of AI on creative teaching and learning processes. The findings will be significant for educators, policymakers, and technology developers, offering insights into best practices for integrating AI in ways that support and enhance creativity in language education. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the viewpoints of Turkish EFL teachers about the concepts of creativity and the utilization of AI. The aim is to make a significant contribution to the field.

1.3. Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this research is to investigate Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions regarding the use of AI in EFL teaching. This study aims to explore how these educators views the integration of AI technologies in their teaching practices, its potential impact on language learning outcomes, and the relationship between AI use and creativity in EFL classrooms. In line with the aim of the study, the research questions were determined as follows:

1. What are Turkish EFL teachers' general perceptions of using AI in EFL teaching?
2. How do Turkish EFL teachers currently use AI tools in their teaching practices, if at all?
3. What are Turkish EFL teachers' attitudes towards the potential of AI to foster creativity and innovative language use in EFL learners?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Method

For this research, a qualitative approach was adopted, guided by the principles outlined by John Creswell (2007, 2012, 2016). This methodology allows researchers to examine phenomena within their natural context, accounting for their dynamic and complex nature. It also validates the study of smaller groups and specific phenomena for scientific inquiry and theory development. Thus,

this study was structured using a phenomenological approach to examine a phenomenon directly experienced by the participants. The methodological choice enabled the researcher to gain in-depth insights into the perceptions of Turkish EFL teachers working at private schools of AI in EFL teaching. The rationale for incorporating private schools into this study is that these institutions had superior technical infrastructure, hence affording students more convenient access to technology. Private schools offer foreign language education with a higher level of intensity compared to public schools. The foreign language proficiency of students in private schools surpasses that of students in public institutions. In order to participate in the research, instructors must incorporate AI into their instructional practices as well.

2.2. Participants

The research included 10 high school EFL teachers currently teaching in 4 different private schools in Elazığ, a city in the Eastern Anatolia region of Turkey. Participation was voluntary, with the majority being female (7) and 3 male teachers. The age distribution included 6 teachers aged 21-30 and 4 teachers above 32. Experience levels varied, with 5 teachers having 1-4 years of EFL teaching experience and 5 having 5-10 years. None had more than ten years of experience. Additionally, all of these participants teach at the high school level in private schools, which have at least 8 hours of English courses per week. Notably, they all teach 1st grade in high school, where students have 8 hours of English courses per week. The reason for choosing teachers who have 1st graders is that these students do not have the stress of the university entrance exam, allowing the teachers more freedom to incorporate technological activities into their courses. More demographic data is provided in Table 1 below.

Table1. Demographic data of Participants

Demographic variable	Category	Number of Participants
Gender	Female	7
	Male	3
Age	21-30	6
	31-40	3
	41-Above	1
Teaching experience	1-4 years	5
	5-10 years	5
	10 years-Above	0

2.3. Data Collection

To conduct this research, a purposeful sampling was employed, a method recommended for qualitative studies (Creswell, 2012; Frost, 2011). This selection process ensured that the participants were relevant and engaged with the research topic. Following recommendations by Frost (2011), semi-structured interview technique was chosen as the data collection method. The interview questions were prepared by conducting a thorough examination of relevant literature and consulting with specialists in the field of language education. Subsequently, a cohort of L2 teachers offered input on the articulation of questions, the coherence, and the progression of the items. Consequently, the items were changed by implementing relevant revisions. Their feedback assisted in improving the questions to guarantee the inclusion of essential elements in their experiences.

To address the first research question regarding general perceptions of AI in EFL teaching, interview questions were prepared such as:

-How do you perceive the role of AI in enhancing language teaching and learning?

-What potential benefits and challenges do you associate with the use of AI in EFL classrooms?

For the second research question on the current use of AI tools,

-Can you describe any AI tools you are currently using in your teaching practices?

-How do these tools impact your teaching and your students' learning?

For the third research question about AI and creativity,

-How do you think AI can foster creativity in language learning?

-Are there any concerns you have about AI potentially hindering creativity?

The interviews were conducted in person, with voice recordings used to capture the responses of the participants. This approach allowed for a flexible yet focused exploration of the teachers' perceptions regarding the use of AI in their EFL teaching practices. Each interview lasted between 38 and 62 minutes, with an average duration of about 44 minutes. The interviews were conducted bilingually, in both Turkish and English, allowing participants to choose the language they felt most comfortable using. This approach aimed to ensure they could express their thoughts freely. A voice recorder was used to capture the data, which was later transcribed.

2.4. Data Analysis

This study utilized a qualitative research methodology. This research design aimed to facilitate the documentation of English language teachers' perspectives on the utilization of AI tools in EFL instruction and its impact on creativity. The research approach was used to examine individual viewpoints, investigate underlying reasons and meanings, reveal contextual components, and comprehend the complex nature of AI application in EFL and creativity. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2021) stated that qualitative data analysis in the literature is typically conducted using content analysis. The primary objective of this study is to conceptualize the data and uncover the patterns that exist between them. This principle formed the starting point of this research, guiding the approach to data analysis. Content analysis was conducted using an interactive model, involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In addition, Yıldırım and Şimşek (2021) asserted that qualitative content analysis can be conducted using both inductive and deductive approaches. Inductive analysis aims to derive concepts from data. Given the exploratory nature of this study, an inductive approach was adopted to allow categories and codes to emerge organically from the data. This approach was selected to ensure that the analysis remained grounded in the participants' experiences and perspectives. This was done in two phases: independently coding data during collection and comparing analyses post-collection to ensure reliability and agreement.

This approach was selected for its flexibility and its ability to provide a detailed and nuanced account of the data. To organize the data systematically, codes were developed for emerging themes to facilitate the analysis process. Initial codes were generated through open coding, where the data was broken down into discrete parts and closely examined for similarities and differences (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These codes were then reviewed and refined through axial coding to identify relationships between them, leading to the development of broader categories (Gibbs, 2007). The researcher had an insider role in shaping the interpretations to develop a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences. Initially, the raw data was transcribed and carefully reviewed multiple times through the process of generating memo notes. Secondly, the initial codes were created by identifying new patterns present in the responses and extracting noteworthy comments. Next, comparable statements were categorized and organized, then redundant elements and redundancies were removed, and the emergent layers were revised. Subsequently, the codes were grouped into more general categories in order to gain an understanding of the participants' perspective on the utilization of AI in EFL and its effect on creativity. Invariant structures were then found. To enhance the credibility of the findings, the researchers spent extended periods of time in the field, documenting the codes and verifying them against relevant themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

To preserve participants' privacy, codes such as P1 and P2 were used instead of full names, representing the first and second participants, respectively. This ensured anonymity and confidentiality throughout the analysis process. The reliability and validity of the analysis were further enhanced by triangulation, involving other academics in the coding process and cross-checking the findings (Patton, 1999). This collaborative approach helped to minimize bias and increase the credibility of the results.

By employing inductive content analysis, the data was analyzed systematically and rigorously, providing a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perceptions and experiences regarding the use of AI in EFL teaching.

3. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The analysis of the interview data revealed insightful perceptions of Turkish EFL teachers on three key aspects of AI integration in language teaching. First, their general perceptions of using AI in EFL teaching highlight both enthusiasm for its potential benefits and concerns about its challenges. Second, the current use of AI tools in their teaching practices varies, with some teachers actively incorporating AI technologies while others face barriers to adoption. Third, teachers' attitudes towards the potential of AI to foster creativity and innovative language use in EFL learners are mixed, reflecting a cautious optimism. The results for each research question are presented in detail below, providing a comprehensive overview of the experiences and views of high school EFL teachers in Turkey regarding the use of AI in their classrooms.

3.1. What are Turkish EFL teachers' general perceptions of using AI in EFL teaching?

To address the first research question, the following interview questions were asked to the participants:

-How do you perceive the role of AI in enhancing language teaching and learning?

-What potential benefits and challenges do you associate with the use of AI in EFL classrooms?

By analyzing the data inductively, the categories and codes were emerged organically from the participants' responses, ensuring that the findings were deeply rooted in their experiences and perspectives. Therefore, the analysis of the interview data revealed three main categories: perceived benefits of AI in EFL teaching, challenges and concerns about AI integration, and the impact on teaching practices and student outcomes which can be seen in Table 1.

Table 2. AI in EFL teaching

General Category	Code	Frequency
Benefits	Enhanced Engagement	7
	Personalized Learning	5
	Feedback	4
	Support for Difference in Learning Styles	3
Challenges and Concerns	Insufficient Training for Teachers	5
	Technical Issues	4
	Over-reliance	3
	Ethical Concerns	3
Teaching Practices	Improvement in Language Skills	5
	Increased Motivation	3
	Equity Learning Opportunities	3
TOTAL		**45**

The participants of the first category ‘Benefits’ declared a variety of answers to create 4 different codes. The first code is ‘enhanced engagement’ (F=7). P7 commented on this code:

“*AI technologies have greatly raised my students' interest in the material. When we employ AI tools like chatbots and language learning apps, they become far more engaged and eager to participate. AI-driven vocabulary drill, for example, is made enjoyable and competitive, and chatbots offer students a secure environment in which to practice conversational skills without worrying about making mistakes.*”.

The second code of this category is 'personalized learning' (F=5). The participants commented on this code declared that AI allows for tailoring lessons to individual student needs and learning paces. For instance, P5 stated:

"*AI has been really useful in personalizing lessons for my students. Tools such as adaptive learning software change the complexity of tasks based on each student's performance, ensuring that students are always challenged but not overwhelmed. For example, systems like Smart Sparrow and Dream Box Learning give individualized practice sessions that suit to individuals' strengths and shortcomings.*".

The other code is 'feedback'(F=4). Teachers generally reported that AI provides timely and accurate feedback on language tasks and assessments. P2 who commented this way stated the following:

"*AI solutions such as automated essay scoring and grammatical checkers provide my students with prompt feedback, allowing them to learn from their mistakes quickly. For example, utilizing platforms such as Turnitin or Edmentum, students receive thorough feedback on their writings within minutes, allowing them to make adjustments and comprehend their faults immediately.*". P6 commented "*With AI-driven tools, my students can get immediate feedback on their pronunciation and speaking skills. Applications such as ELSA Speak and Rosetta Stone listen to their speech and provide real-time corrections*".

The last code of the first category is 'support for difference in learning styles' (F=3). According to the participants who commented for this code AI helps cater to various learner preferences and styles, making learning more effective. P4 claimed:

"*Using AI applications, I can provide a variety of learning activities that suit individual preferences. For example, kinesthetic learners enjoy interactive AI-based language games like Kahoot! and Socrative, which make learning more hands-on. Meanwhile, more analytical students benefit from structured AI-driven grammar drills and exercises available on platforms like Grammarly*"

The second category is 'challenges and concerns'. The responds of the participants created four codes. The first is 'insufficient training for teachers' (F=5). EFL teachers feel they lack adequate training to effectively utilize AI tools. P1 reported:

"*While AI has great potential, I feel that I haven't received enough training to use these tools effectively in my classroom. Many of the applications are complex, and without proper guidance, it's challenging to integrate them into my teaching. We need more professional development opportunities focused on AI in education*".

The following code is 'technical issues' with four comments. They are the concerns about the reliability and accessibility of AI technology in schools. P 2 stated:

"*Accessibility is a big issue in our school. Not all students have access to the necessary devices or a stable internet connection at home, which limits their ability to use AI tools outside the classroom. This digital divide makes it difficult to ensure all students benefit equally from AI-enhanced learning opportunities*".

The other code is 'over-reliance' (F=3). The respondents told about their fear that excessive use of AI may reduce the development of traditional teaching skills. P9 commented:

"*AI tools are helpful, but I fear they might make us forget the basics of teaching. For instance, students might depend on AI for grammar and spelling checks and not learn to proofread their own work. We need to find a balance to ensure that these tools enhance rather than replace essential teaching and learning practices. I had a student who started relying heavily on Grammarly for all their writing assignments. While the tool corrected their mistakes, it also meant they weren't learning to identify and correct errors independently. To address this, I began incorporating traditional*

proofreading exercises alongside the use of AI tools, which helped the student develop their own editing skills and gain a deeper understanding of grammar rules".

The last code is 'ethical concerns' (F=3). The participants of this code reported their worries about the ethical implications and data privacy issues related to AI use. P10 stated:

"*There are significant ethical concerns regarding AI in education. We have to consider the implications of using AI tools that gather personal data. It's important to ensure that these tools are not only effective but also respect the privacy and rights of our students. Transparency in how these tools operate and handle data is crucial*".

The last category of the first research question is 'teaching practices'. Under this category, the most commented code is 'improvement language skills' (F=5). P 8 commented "*AI tools have noticeably improved my students' pronunciation and grammar skills. For example, applications like ELSA Speak provide real-time pronunciation feedback, which helps students correct their mistakes on the spot and practice until they get it right*". And P3 stated:

"*I've seen significant improvements in my students' writing skills thanks to AI-based grammar checkers. Tools like Grammarly and WriteLab not only correct mistakes but also explain the rules, helping students understand and learn from their errors. This has made a big difference in the quality of their writing over time*".

The following code is 'increased motivation' (F=3). Teachers indicated that AI tools increase student motivation and interest in learning. P4 declared:

"*AI tools have definitely increased my students' motivation. They are much more eager to participate in activities and complete assignments when we use interactive AI applications like Kahoot! and Quizlet. These tools make learning fun and competitive, which keeps the students engaged and excited about their lessons*".

The last code of this category is 'equity in learning opportunities'(F=3). Teachers generally reported that AI helps bridge learning gaps among students with varying abilities. P1 commented:

"*One of the most significant benefits of AI in education is its capacity to provide individualized assistance to students who may otherwise struggle. For example, programs like Read&Write include text-to-speech and vocabulary support capabilities that are especially beneficial to students with learning difficulties, allowing them to stay up with their peers. I had a dyslexic student who found reading assignments very difficult. She was able to use Read&Write to listen to the text read aloud while following along, which substantially improved her understanding and recall."*

3.2. How do Turkish EFL teachers currently use AI tools in their teaching practices, if at all?

The integration of AI tools in education has opened new avenues for enhancing teaching and learning experiences, particularly in EFL classrooms. To understand how Turkish EFL teachers are currently utilizing AI tools in their teaching practices, the following interview questions were asked to the participants:

-Can you describe any AI tools you are currently using in your teaching practices?

-How do these tools impact your teaching and your students' learning?

The analysis of their responses revealed several key categories of AI application, encompassing improvements in language skills, interactive learning activities, feedback and assessment, and classroom management which can be observed in Table 2. This section delves into the specific ways these educators are using AI technologies to enrich their instructional methods and address the diverse needs of their students.

Table 3. EFL teachers' use of AI tools in their teaching practices

General Category	Code	Frequency
Language Skills Improvement	Listening & Speaking	7
	Reading & Writing	6
Interaction	Gamified Learning	6
	Adaptive Learning	4
Giving Feedback	Real-time Feedback	5
	Automated Scoring	4
Others	Warm-up	4
	Storytelling	2
TOTAL		**38**

The first category determined is 'language skills improvement'. The first code of this category is 'listening & speaking'. Participants responded giving AI applications they use to improve students listening and speaking skills. P4 commented:

"*With AI tools like FluentU, my students can watch real-world videos and practice their listening skills. The app provides interactive captions and quizzes that help them improve their pronunciation by learning the correct sounds and intonations*". On the other hand, P3 reported "*Using ELSA Speak in my classes has made a noticeable difference in my students' pronunciation. The app gives immediate feedback on their speaking, helping them correct mistakes on the spot and practice until they get it right*".

For the second code teachers told about the AI applications they utilized to improve the reading and writing skills of their students. P7 stated: *"AI-driven platforms like News in levels adapt reading materials to the student's level, which helps improve their reading skills progressively. The quizzes and interactive features also keep them engaged and motivated".* P8 talked about Grammarly and stated:

"*...For instance, I had a student who consistently struggled with complex sentence structures and punctuation. By using it, he received instant feedback and detailed explanations for each correction. Over time, he started understanding the nuances of grammar better and made fewer mistakes. This tool not only improved his writing skills but also increased his confidence in expressing his ideas clearly and correctly*".

The other category is 'interaction'. The responds given for this category was divided into two codes. The first one is 'gamified learning' (F=6). They stated that they use AI tools to create fun and competitive learning experiences. P4 commented:

"*Using Kahoot! and Quizlet in my classes has really boosted student engagement. The competitive element of Kahoot! quizzes makes learning fun, while Quizlet's flashcards and games help reinforce vocabulary. Both tools adapt to each student's learning pace, ensuring they stay challenged and motivated*". The second code is 'adaptive learning' (F=4). P6 stated *"Duolingo has been a fantastic tool for adaptive learning. It tailors lessons based on each student's progress, ensuring they are always working at the right level of difficulty".*

The third category is 'giving feedback'. The teachers indicated that AI tools provide immediate feedback on tasks and assessments. The first category is 'real-time feedback' (F=5). P5 reported: "*Edmentum's AI-driven assessments give real-time feedback that helps my students understand their strengths and areas for improvement. I had a student who struggled with grammar and often felt discouraged. Using Edmentum, she could see immediate feedback on her assignments and understand*

exactly where she went wrong. Over a few weeks, she began to show remarkable improvement, gaining confidence with each correct answer and understanding her mistakes more clearly".

The second code is 'automated scoring' (F=4). P8 commented "*Grammarly's automated scoring feature is incredibly helpful for both me and my students. It not only grades their essays but also offers detailed explanations for each correction, making it a great tool for learning and self-improvement".*

The last category is 'others. The respondents commenting on this code stated that AI tools help them with conducting different tasks, freeing up time for teaching. The first code is 'warm-up' (F=4). P10 indicated:

"*In my high school English language class, we use Google's Quick, Draw! as a fun and engaging way to practice vocabulary as a warm-up activity. For instance, when asked to draw 'a unicorn,' students not only enjoyed creating their drawings but also practiced their English by describing their drawings and discussing different ideas. This activity helps them think creatively and improves their language skills in a playful and interactive manner".*

The last code is 'storytelling' (F=2Teaches reported that with AI-driven storytelling tools, students are able to explore different genres and themes. P6 stated:

"AI-driven tools like interactive storytelling apps have really sparked my students' creative thinking. For example, I had a student who was initially shy and hesitant to participate in class. When we started using Storybird, she became more engaged and enthusiastic. She created a story about a young explorer traveling through magical lands. She thought deeply about each character's background and motivations, which really showcased her creative thinking. The visual aspect of Storybird allowed her to bring her ideas to life with beautiful illustrations, making the storytelling process even more engaging. These activities not only improved their writing skills but also helped them to express their ideas more confidently and creatively."

RQ.3 What are Turkish EFL teachers' attitudes towards the potential of AI to foster creativity and innovative language use in EFL learners?

To understand Turkish EFL teachers' attitudes towards the potential of AI to foster creativity and innovative language use in EFL learners, the following interview questions were asked to the participants:

-How do you think AI can foster creativity in language learning?

-Are there any concerns you have about AI potentially hindering creativity?

The analysis of the responses of the participants revealed a range of perspectives, from enthusiastic support for AI's role in enhancing creative thinking to concerns about over-reliance on technology and its impact on originality. Table 3 presents the findings, categorized into positive attitudes towards AI and creativity, concerns about AI limiting creativity, and mixed views on AI's role on creativity.

Table 4. AI to Foster or Hinder Creativity

General Category	Code	Frequency
Positive Attitudes	Encouraging Creative Thinking	4
	Innovative language Use	4
Concerns	Over-reliance on Technology	4
	Standardization	3
Mixed Views	Balanced Approach	2
TOTAL		17

The first category is 'positive attitudes'. Under this category participants commented their positive perspectives on the effect of using AI technologies on students' creativity in EFL classes. The first code is 'encouraging creative thinking' (F=4). P4 commented:

"*For example, using tools like MindMeister for brainstorming sessions allows individuals to think differently and see connections between ideas that they may not have considered before. One student, who was previously reticent to contribute ideas, became considerably more involved after using MindMeister. She began integrating concepts in new ways, resulting in a sophisticated mind map about environmental sustainability. This transformation in perspective, from passive learning to active, creative thinking, has been one of the most major benefits of introducing AI tools into my classroom*". The next code is 'innovative language use' (F=4). P6 stated:

"*The creative language use in my classroom has been greatly improved by AI tools. For example, kids who use chatbots like Replika have interactions that force them to consider their answers imaginatively. Using Replika for everyday conversation practice, one of my students produced intricate talks with humor and idiomatic expressions—two things he had trouble with before. Because the chatbot could simulate real-life conversations, he was able to play with language in novel and creative ways. These resources offer a lively and participatory learning environment that encourages students to investigate and use language creatively*."

The second category of this research question is 'concerns' regarding the use of AI tools to limit creativity. The first code of this category is 'over-reliance on technology' (F=4). P9 reported:

"*While AI tools have advantages, depending too much on technology carries a danger. For instance, I saw that students were utilizing Grammarly and other AI-powered grammar and spelling checkers for all of their assignments. One student stopped checking his own work and relied just on the AI's fixes. To help students become proficient writers, I organized peer review sessions and conventional proofreading activities. Students who took this method developed their self-reliance and grasp of grammar principles*".

The other concern is 'standardization' (F=3). P7stated the common belief of this code as:

"*Using AI in the classroom worries me because of the need for homogeneity. AI systems, for example, such as automatic essay assessors frequently favor formulaic writing and penalize nontraditional yet original methods. A student I taught liked to play around with narrative style and voice in his essays. Nevertheless, the computerized grading system penalized him for not adhering to the conventional essay structure and did not acknowledge the inventiveness in his writing. This forced him to write more conventionally and inhibited him from being creative*."

The last category of this research question is 'mixed views'. The common belief of the participants commented in this way is AI has the potential to foster creativity depends on how it's integrated into the curriculum. The only code is 'balanced approach' (F=2). P8 noted:

"*The way AI is included into the curriculum will determine how well it stimulates creativity. Though they should be used in conjunction with peer critiques and teacher comments, AI programs like WriteLab offer insightful writing criticism. Using WriteLab, a student of mine improved his grammar and style, but he was unable to get the detailed criticism that a teacher can. I make sure now that AI technologies are used to enhance conventional feedback techniques rather than to replace them. Students that use this well-rounded method get all-encompassing support, which improves their creative learning experience*".

4. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions regarding the use of AI in EFL teaching. The research questions focused on three key aspects: general perceptions of AI in EFL teaching, current use of AI tools in teaching practices, and attitudes towards AI's potential to foster creativity and innovative language use.

4.1. General Perceptions of AI in EFL Teaching and Current Use of AI

This study revealed Turkish EFL teachers' multifaceted perceptions of AI, encompassing its potential to enhance language learning and the obstacles that need to be navigated.

The most prominent perceived benefit, as reported by participants, was the enhancement of student engagement. Participants observed that AI technologies, such as chatbots and language learning apps, significantly increase student interest and participation. For instance, AI-driven vocabulary drills and chatbots create enjoyable and competitive learning environments that motivate students to practice conversational skills without the fear of making mistakes. This finding is consistent with the existing literature, which asserts that AI tools have the capacity to improve the acquisition of language proficiency among EFL learners, encompassing grammar and new vocabulary (Wang & Petrina, 2013). Additionally, they can improve their English language proficiency in areas such as oral communication, listening, reading, and high-level argumentative writing (Guo et al., 2022; Hong et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2019) Consistent with the findings of this research, a study conducted by Gill et al. (2024) discovered that the advantages of AI encompass heightened language production and fluency, improved engagement and motivation. Teachers indicated that AI tools boost student motivation and interest in learning. These results reflect those of Mobeyka and his colleagues (1992) who also found that AI has significant potential to motivate and encourage EFL students.

Personalized learning was another critical benefit identified by the participants. AI allows for the customization of lessons to meet individual student needs and learning paces. This finding was also reported by some studies (An et al.,2023; Huang, et al.,2022; Gill et al.,2024). Jiang (2022) also discovered that AI applications, such as automated assessment systems, intelligent tutoring systems, and AI chatbots, effectively enhance the learning of EFL by offering individualized and facilitating flexible learning environments. Baskara and Mukarto (2023) also emphasized the potential of ChatGPT to provide personalized language instruction and generate authentic language material, which is consistent with the findings from our study regarding the personalization and engagement benefits of AI tools. AI helps promote equity in learning opportunities Teachers reported that AI provides individualized assistance to students with varying abilities, helping to bridge learning gaps. This result seemed to be consistent with the one (An et. al., 2023) which found AI enables enhanced personalization of learning. AI can identify the learning style of each student, as well as their distinct strengths and weaknesses, through sophisticated data analysis.

Additionally, AI's capacity to provide timely and accurate feedback was highly valued. Participants highlighted how AI solutions such as automated essay scoring and grammatical checkers offer prompt feedback, enabling students to quickly learn from their mistakes. Tools that offer immediate feedback and automated scoring have shown to be highly beneficial, enabling students to promptly recognize and rectify their errors. AI-facilitated interactive learning activities, such as gamified quizzes and adaptive learning systems, have gained widespread use. These technologies not only enhance the engagement of learning but also guarantee that it is tailored to the specific advancement of each learner. Akça and Özel (2023) suggested that incorporating games into the learning process fosters solution-oriented thinking in students, helping to unlock their cognitive potential. This approach not only enhances problem-solving skills but also nurtures creativity by encouraging students to explore innovative solutions in a dynamic and engaging environment. Meşe and Meşe (2021), in their meta-analysis study, concluded that game-based learning and gamification are effective in promoting active student participation, increasing satisfaction levels, and enhancing motivation. These components are also closely linked to fostering creativity, as they create an engaging and interactive learning environment that encourages students to think outside the box and develop innovative solutions in a logical and structured manner. Šajben and his colleagues (2020) also found that using a technological game as an educational tool, particularly for 10-14-year-olds, increased student focus and effectiveness in learning, with students expressing it as superior to their teachers. This finding was also reported by Mobeyka and his colleagues (2023) who supported that AI has the capability to promptly give feedback on language workouts by identifying mistakes and providing ideas for enhancement. Eliott (2023) also highlighted that AI-driven chatbots allow learners

to participate in simulated discussions and receive instant feedback. In a similar vein, Anders and Sahakyan (2023) recommended the implementation of chatbots in EFL writing classes, emphasizing their ability to provide immediate feedback.

These chatbots imitate genuine conversational situations, offering convenient practice opportunities and individualized language assistance. Furthermore, AI supports different learning styles, catering to various learner preferences and making learning more effective. The results are consistent with the prior study conducted by Sumakul and his colleagues (2022), which also discovered that AI has a beneficial effect on student engagement and determining their learning style. According to Koraishi (2023), teachers can utilize AI to propose activities that are in line with their lesson objectives, cater to students' requirements, and accommodate their learning styles.

Despite these benefits, significant challenges and concerns were identified. A primary issue is the insufficient training for teachers. Many teachers feel they lack the necessary training to effectively utilize AI tools. Gill and his colleagues (2024) also believed that teachers should undergo training to effectively utilize AI in their instructions.

Technical issues such as unreliable internet connections and lack of access to necessary devices, also pose significant obstacles. In line with this finding of the research Abd Algane and Othman (2023) believed that the use of AI technology could present a variety of challenges for both instructors and learners, as it necessitates a high-speed internet connection and a foundation in technology.

Additionally, there was concern about excessive dependence on AI, which might potentially hinder the cultivation of essential abilities like proofreading. Participants expressed fear that excessive dependence on AI might diminish traditional teaching skills and reduce students' ability to learn independently According to Eliott (2023), in order to ensure a comprehensive education, it is important to maintain a proper balance between AI-based tools and activities that encourage active participation, and student-led investigation. Similarly, Mobeyko and his colleagues (2023) noted that Students may develop an excessive dependence on AI which is a challenge for instructors.

Lastly, Ethical concerns regarding data privacy and the ethical implications of AI use in education were also noted. This result is in agreement with the one Mobeyko and his colleagues (2023) who stated that AI gathers extensive quantities of data regarding the learning patterns and advancements of students. Data privacy and security concerns can discourage certain students from fully participating in AI-powered platforms.

These contrasting views underscore the complexity of AI integration in education, suggesting that while AI holds promise, it also presents challenges that need to be carefully managed to ensure equitable and effective language learning outcomes.

4.2. Attitudes towards AI to Foster Creativity

To the best knowledge of the researcher, there is no existing study that specifically focuses on the use of AI and its impact on creativity in EFL contexts, which may limit the discussion of this research question. The participants had varied answers to the potential of AI to stimulate creativity and encourage new language use. AI tools have been discovered to enhance creative thinking by offering interactive and innovative learning platforms. Storytelling applications and conversational agents, for instance, have motivated learners to explore language in novel and creative approaches. Games in education have been shown to significantly influence students' attitudes by making learning more interactive, enjoyable, and engaging. The findings of the study by Sercanoğlu, and his colleagues (2021) demonstrated that games positively influences students' attitudes toward EFL courses, and enhances their motivation for EFL learning. Additionally, students particularly highlighted the fun and interactive nature of interactive games which contributes to fostering creativity by making the learning process more engaging. This research emphasized the student viewpoint, showcasing how game-based platforms can stimulate creativity and motivation through active participation and enjoyment in the learning process. Similarly, Han (2019) found that various technological tools can foster creativity in

EFL learners by enhancing divergent and convergent thinking, imagination, and critical thinking skills. In parallel, Ryabchenko and his colleagues (2021) determined that IT clubs significantly contribute to the development of students' creative abilities by providing modern IT forms of artistic activity and fostering motivations such as learning new things and gaining creative experience. Zhai (2022) also conducted a pilot test using ChatGPT to compose an academic paper on AI for Education. The study proposes adapting learning objectives to prioritize users' capacity to employ AI tools for subject-specific tasks, while highlighting the cultivation of creativity and critical thinking among both teachers and students. Abd Algane and Othman (2023) supported that students of EFL are able to improve their critical thinking, debate, and argumentation abilities through the use of AI as well.

This study identifies concerns about AI potentially leading to a more uniform method of education, potentially suppressing innovation and originality, neither Han (2019) nor Ryabchenko (2021) specifically address these challenges. On the other hand, Singh and his colleagues (2023) highlight concerns about the reliance on AI tools like ChatGPT. While these tools can make work easier for students, they may also curb out-of-the-box thinking and disturb the art of writing, leading to a reduction in creativity and independent problem-solving skills. The study found that over-reliance on AI can make students dependent, reduce their capacity for unique thought and creativity, and hamper their ability to engage in thorough research.

Teachers in the current study observed that although AI offers essential assistance, it should not eliminate traditional approaches that cultivate autonomous and imaginative thinking. The general agreement is that AI tools should be used to supplement, rather than replace, existing educational methods. Strategically incorporating AI into the curriculum is essential to guarantee that technology amplifies, rather than reduces, students' creative abilities. Marrone (2022) also discussed similar concerns, noting that students often view AI as limited to robots and automation, which can restrict their understanding of AI's broader applications and its potential to foster creativity. They emphasized that AI should be seen as a tool to enhance rather than replace human creativity and suggested a model to integrate AI effectively into education by addressing students' misconceptions and encouraging a balanced approach.

These insights echo the concerns raised in the present study about the potential drawbacks of AI use in education. These problems are reaffirmed in the literature, where scholars have observed the necessity for a well-rounded approach to using AI in education. Jiang (2022) emphasized that although AI tools can facilitate creative and interactive learning, it is crucial to acknowledge the potential hazards of excessive dependence on technology and ensure that AI supports rather than takes the place of human instruction. Thus, while both studies highlight the role of technology in fostering creativity, our research provides a more nuanced view of the potential drawbacks associated with AI use.

4. CONCLUSION and RECOMENDATIONS

To summarize, the incorporation of AI in EFL instruction offers both advantages and challenges. Turkish EFL teachers typically have a positive view of AI, acknowledging its ability to improve student involvement, offer customized learning experiences, and stimulate creativity. Nevertheless, the effective incorporation of AI necessitates the resolution of apprehensions over excessive dependence on technology, technical challenges, and the imperative for adequate teacher preparation. It is vital to adopt a balanced approach that utilizes the advantages of AI while preserving fundamental teaching methods in order to maximize the advantages of AI in EFL education.

To address these challenges, the following concrete and actionable strategies are recommended for EFL teachers. First of all, schools should provide ongoing professional development opportunities focused on the effective use of AI tools in language teaching. Workshops and training sessions can help teachers become proficient in using AI technologies, ensuring they can integrate these tools seamlessly into their curriculum. Secondly, to prevent over-reliance on AI, teachers should use AI

tools as supplements to traditional teaching methods. For example, while AI-driven grammar checkers like Grammarly can provide immediate feedback, teachers should also conduct regular peer-review sessions and traditional proofreading exercises to develop students' independent editing skills. Next, teachers can use AI tools to create interactive and gamified learning experiences. Platforms like Kahoot! and Quizlet can make learning fun and competitive, while adaptive learning systems like Duolingo can tailor lessons to individual student needs, keeping them engaged and motivated. Fifth, AI tools that offer personalized learning experiences should be integrated into lesson plans to cater to individual student needs. Adaptive learning software can adjust the difficulty of tasks based on each student's performance, ensuring that all students are appropriately challenged and supported. Addressing ethical concerns, schools and teachers must ensure transparency in how AI tools handle data. Educators should be informed about the ethical implications of AI use and take steps to protect student privacy. Clear guidelines should be established for data use and sharing to maintain trust and integrity. Next, adequate technical support and infrastructure are essential for the successful integration of AI in EFL teaching. Schools should ensure reliable internet access and provide the necessary devices to both teachers and students. Additionally, a support system for troubleshooting technical issues should be in place. Lastly, AI tools should be used to foster creativity in language learning. Teachers can utilize AI-driven storytelling apps and conversational agents to encourage students to explore language in novel and imaginative ways. Activities should be designed to stimulate creative thinking and allow students to experiment with language use.

Subsequent investigations should prioritize the development of efficacious instructional programs for educators and the exploration of inventive methods to incorporate AI into language instruction while preserving the creative elements of learning. These insights provide valuable guidance for educators, policymakers, and technology developers who are striving to capitalize on the potential of AI in language education while simultaneously addressing its obstacles. A dynamic and effective learning environment that improves both language proficiency and creativity can be established by resolving these concerns and utilizing AI's strengths.

Future research should include a more diverse sample of participants from various educational contexts, such as state schools and different regions. Including a wider range of teachers with varying access to technology can help generalize the findings and understand how AI influences creativity in less resourceful environments. Another recommendation for future research would be to conduct longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of AI integration on creativity and language proficiency in EFL classrooms. Such studies would provide valuable insights into how the sustained use of AI tools influences both student learning outcomes and teacher practices. By tracking these variables over an extended period, researchers could better understand the potential shifts in creative language use, student engagement, and instructional strategies that evolve with continuous AI implementation. This approach would also help to identify any lasting benefits or challenges associated with AI in language education contexts. Further research is needed to explore the ethical concerns surrounding the use of AI in education, particularly in relation to data privacy and the potential for student over-reliance on AI tools. Additionally, future studies should investigate the psychological effects of AI on students' motivation and independence, with a focus on how their reliance on technology may influence creative output. These inquiries are essential for ensuring that AI integration in educational settings supports both ethical standards and the development of autonomous, motivated learners.

4.1. Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. One key limitation is the selection of participants, which consisted of 10 EFL teachers working in private high schools in Elazığ, Turkey. The rationale for choosing teachers from private schools was based on the technological availability and the intensive English language courses offered in these institutions.

Private schools generally have superior technical infrastructure and more resources to integrate AI tools effectively into their teaching practices. Additionally, private school students often have greater access to technology both at school and at home, which can significantly influence the outcomes of using AI in language learning. However, this selection criterion introduces a limitation in terms of the generalizability of the findings. The perspectives and experiences of teachers working in private schools may not fully represent those of teachers in state schools, where technological resources and access to AI tools might be more limited. State schools may face different challenges and constraints, which could affect the integration and impact of AI in EFL teaching. As a result, the findings of this study might not be applicable to all EFL teachers, particularly those working in state schools with fewer technological resources. Furthermore, the relatively small sample size of 10 participants limits the breadth of perspectives captured in this study. While the qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of teachers' experiences and perceptions, a larger sample size could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the varied views and practices across different educational settings. Future research should consider including a more diverse range of participants, including teachers from both private and state schools, to enhance the generalizability and applicability of the findings. In conclusion, while this study provides valuable insights into the use of AI in EFL teaching from the perspective of private school teachers, caution should be exercised in generalizing the results to other contexts. Further research is needed to explore the experiences and perceptions of a broader and more diverse group of EFL teachers to fully understand the potential and challenges of integrating AI in language education.

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