Implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) As A Pedagogical Tool in Tertiary ESL Classroom: Teachers' Perspectives

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Abstract
The thriving of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology in the education industry has been gaining attention from educators, policymakers, researchers, and learners alike. AI-based tools have been introduced largely due to their convenience and accessibility. The aim of this paper is to investigate teachers' perspectives on the implementation of AI as a pedagogical tool in tertiary ESL classrooms. This study also implemented Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as a framework to explore teachers' perspectives on AI tools. Semi-structured interviews with four tertiary ESL teachers have been conducted, transcribed, and analysed. The findings revealed that ESL teachers show positive attitudes due to the benefits they gain from the use of AI in their teaching and learning contexts. They explore the implementation of AI in speaking and writing classes; however, the implementation of these tools is governed by different reasons. This study also outlines the challenges faced by ESL teachers and ways to overcome these challenges. It is believed that the findings of this study will pave the way for other ESL teachers in diminishing their fears and provide insights for stakeholders and policymakers to further strengthen the implementation of AI as a pedagogical tool in ESL classrooms.
Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), English as a Second Language (ESL), Pedagogical tool

Introduction
Background of Study
Artificial Intelligence (AI) has grown rapidly in recent years making its way into various industries and sectors. The education sector is also not being left behind. In English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms, AI has demonstrated the ability to enhance language learning and provide personalised support to students. This implementation of AI as a pedagogical tool in the ESL classroom holds great promise for both teachers and learners, addressing the challenges faced in language acquisition by making language learning more

accessible, engaging, and effective. Additionally, AI-based systems can provide personalised recommendations for learning materials, online resources, and interactive activities that are aligned with each learner's level and learning style (Mohamad Ali, 2023). While AI offers numerous advantages for the ESL classroom, its successful implementation relies on the teacher's knowledge of AI. Educators play a crucial role in guiding AI tools, ensuring that it is relevant to the content subject and aligns with the pedagogical principles.

The importance of English's usage grows as a result of the necessity for it to be a universal language. English is perceived as a difficult subject to be taught to second language learners due to its nature. Consisting of four main skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing; the learners are required to master all the skills. Teachers are using different methods and strategies to ensure that learners are able to acquire the language efficiently and become competent in the language. With AI accessing the education scene, it is essential for teachers to upgrade the educational atmosphere and foster learners' growth in a simulated language environment. The implementation of AI in the ESL classroom has the potential to transform language learning by providing personalised instruction, tailored content, and immediate feedback. By utilising AI technology, educators can enhance the effectiveness of their teaching practices and empower students to achieve their language learning goals.

Statement of Problem

As AI continues to evolve, it is essential to explore innovative ways to integrate this technology effectively in the ESL classroom and unlock its full potential for both teachers and learners. However, teachers are also amid balancing out the benefits and drawbacks of using AI in their lessons. The study by Pisica et al. (2023) concluded that some of the positive aspects of implementing AI are gains in the learning–teaching process, improvements in students' skills and competencies, and better inclusion for the learners. Other studies (Ding et al., 2019; Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al., 2018) believed that the quality of students' outcomes may be impacted by teachers' perceptions, an important factor to consider when integrating AI-based tools into education. Teachers need to be technologically literate in using and applying AI tools before integrating them into the classroom. Teachers presumably will be using the AI tool if it is deemed useful in the lesson and user-friendly. This coincided with the framework of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Davis (1989), which was used to observe the teachers' behavioural intention in using the AI tools.

Objective of the Study and Research Questions

The scarcity of research in this area should be addressed to investigate and find solutions to enhance teachers' effective use of AI in ESL classrooms. Thus, this paper aims to explore the types, benefits, challenges and ways to overcome, using AI applications in ESL classrooms. This paper will also discuss the teacher's practices and perspectives on the use of AI-based tools in ESL classrooms. Based on the aims, the following research questions have been constructed:
1. What are the types of AI tools used in the tertiary ESL classroom?
2. How do teachers use AI as a pedagogical tool in the tertiary ESL classroom?
3. What are teachers' perspectives on the benefits of implementing AI as a pedagogical tool in tertiary ESL classrooms?
4. What are the challenges faced by teachers and ways to overcome these challenges in implementing AI as a pedagogical tool in tertiary ESL classrooms?

Literature Review
English as a Second Language (ESL)
The English language has secured its position as the language of communication worldwide and internationally. It is used globally for trade, entertainment, and education. English as a second language (ESL) refers to the term for non-native speakers that are learning English (Hansen-Thomas, 2014). ESL is also defined as the language teaching approach designed for speakers of other languages that are not English. It describes the process of learning and acquiring the targeted language by learners whose first language is not English. English is considered as a second language in Malaysia. Thus, all Malaysian learners are required to learn English as early as preschool up until tertiary education.

However, there are many challenges faced by second language learners to master the targeted language. ESL learners are usually of different cultural backgrounds which may affect their understanding and norms. Learning new vocabulary and grammar may be complex and difficult. Most ESL learners struggle with a lack of confidence and motivation. Asghar et al. (2018) revealed that learners often have negative views towards learning English largely due to a lack of awareness of its importance and low motivation. Learning a new language is intimidating, and it needs a lot of scaffolding from the teachers. A lack of confidence could obstruct their progress and motivation to continue learning. Therefore, the teacher's role is pivotal in utilising the best method and strategy to cater to different learners in the classroom and deliver effective, meaningful learning (Poláková & Klimová, 2019).

Artificial Intelligence (AI)
Artificial Intelligence (AI) was first coined by John McCarthy in 1955. He was known as the father of AI. McCarthy et al. (2006) described AI as machines that "… use language, form abstractions and concepts, solve kinds of problems now reserved for humans, and improve themselves." Baker et al. (2019) supported the definition of AI as "Computers which perform cognitive tasks, typically associated with human minds, particularly learning and problem-solving". A recent study by Holmes et al. (2022) defines artificial intelligence as a collection of sciences, theories, and methodologies with the aim of imitating human cognitive capabilities in machines. Recently, AI has been introduced in the education field and has been promoted as a pedagogical tool for advanced teaching in and out of classrooms. The use of AI has become more prevalent to enhance powerful learning experiences.

In the 1980s, Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIEd) was established to further investigate AI tools to support teaching and learning. It was suggested that AI technologies are models of human intelligence and thinking. Bailin (1987) and Matthews (1993) brought forward the idea of AI as a language teacher to assist teachers in ESL classrooms. This is further supported by Ouyang and Jiao's (2021) three paradigms of AIEd. The three paradigms proposed are AI-directed, AI-supported, and AI-empowered. AI-directed refers to utilising AI in imparting knowledge and guiding learning, AI-supported is teachers or learners collaborating with AI while it is used to foster learning, and AI-empowered is learners using AI to facilitate their own learning autonomy. Hence, it enables teachers to develop personalised learning and student-centred lessons that are able to cater to different students' abilities.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a pedagogical tool in the ESL classroom
AI has been utilised in education in the past for a variety of purposes, from planning to teaching and assessment, all of which aimed to improve the learning and teaching process (Pender et al., 2022). This has been proven by the findings by Dewi et al. (2021) that students

who use AI-based applications such as Duolingo, Google Translate, and Grammarly benefit in a variety of skills like writing, listening, and pronunciation. According to Sharma (2021), ESL has received enormous assistance from the incorporation of AI. AI tools are great language aids for listening and speaking skills (SpeechAce), reading and writing (ChatGPT), and also grammar and immediate feedback (Automated Writing Assistance and Grammarly). A study by Samarasinghe and Prasangahi (2023) reported that ChatGPT is a useful tool in improving learners' English ability while still retaining their own creativity.

Lu (2018) in the study discussed the benefits of AI where it could provide exercises with meaningful interactions for speaking skills and El-Shazly's (2020) findings suggest that AI has also offered improvement in speaking and listening performance. Hillson et al. (2019) stated that technology-assisted learning is beneficial as it encourages learners to cultivate a positive attitude towards learning. Motivation relates to the teaching methods and strategies that teachers could implement in the classroom to drive the learners' language learning. In conclusion, the integration of AI in the classroom is beneficial to both educators and learners. Teachers need to be technologically literate to address the issues and challenges in ESL classrooms. Educators need to take advantage of technological advancements to deliver effective lessons and interactive activities that are inclusive to all learners.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)
The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a framework that explains how the users' behaviour and perceptions towards technology will affect the usage and acceptance of the technology (Davis, 1989). In this study, the teachers' behaviours and views play a big role in the adoption of AI in the classroom. The model is based on two major factors in TAM namely: Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU). Perceived Usefulness (PU) refers to the degree to which AI will be useful in improving the students' output and the process of learning. Meanwhile, Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) is the user's judgment of how simple or easy it will be to utilise a certain technology. If the teachers feel that the AI tools benefit their learners and their lessons, and are easy to use, they will continue to implement the AI tools in class.

When incorporating technology into education, it is important to take teachers' perspectives into account as they may have an impact on pupils' ability to learn (Ding et al., 2019; Ertmer, 2005; Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al., 2018). Teachers' perceptions of AI tools may differ based on their beliefs, teaching experiences, prior experiences in using technology, students' data, and their willingness to adopt a new teaching method and strategy in the classroom. Therefore, the teacher's role is important in implementing technology in English classes (Razak et al., 2019), and TAM is the appropriate model to explore the teachers' behavioural intention in using the AI tools in the classroom through their perceptions of 'Perceived Usefulness' and 'Perceived Ease of Use.'
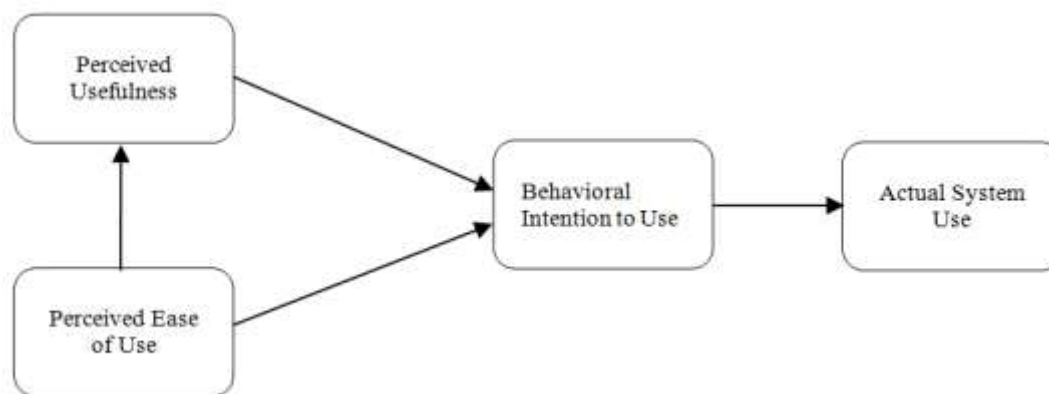
Figure 1: The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis (1989)

Methodology
This study adopts a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach. According to scholars (Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Cropley, 2021), phenomenology aims to explore participants' lived experiences and perceptions to gain an in-depth understanding of their perspectives on the benefits of implementing AI as a pedagogical tool in tertiary ESL classrooms.

Sampling Method
The sampling method utilised in this research was purposive sampling. This non-probability sampling technique involved selecting participants based on their relevance and expertise in the research area. Creswell (2017) emphasises the importance of selecting participants who have experience in the phenomenon studies. Thus, the participants were identified purposively based on three pre-determined criteria: must teach in tertiary education, use AI in the classroom for at least one semester, and have at least three years of teaching experience. Four ESL tertiary teachers were involved as participants in this study. Table 1 shows the demographic profiles of the participants.

Table 1
Demographic Profiles of Participants

Participants	(P1) Teacher N	(P2) Teacher M	(P3) Teacher S	(P4) Teacher T
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female
Years of teaching experiences	7 years	13 years	10 years	4 years
Highest Qualification	Bachelor's Degree in TESL	Master's Degree in Education	PhD Forensics in Linguistics	Masters in TESL

Instrument
The data collection instrument employed in this research was a semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews allowed for open-ended questions that encouraged participants

to share their experiences, opinions, and reflections on the use of AI as a pedagogical tool. The interview format enabled the researchers to delve into participants' unique perspectives while also allowing for flexibility to explore unanticipated insights (Ruslin et al., 2020).

Data Collection Procedure
The semi-structured interviews were conducted online to ensure flexibility and convenience for both the participants and researchers. Prior to the interviews, informed consent was obtained from each participant, assuring them of anonymity and confidentiality throughout the study. The interviews were video recorded with participants' consent to ensure accurate capturing of their responses and perspectives.

Interview Protocol
The interview protocol consisted of a set of open-ended questions designed to elicit participants' insights on the benefits, challenges, and potential of AI implementation in tertiary ESL classrooms. The questions were designed to cover various aspects related to AI integration in teaching, personal experiences, and perceptions of its effectiveness in enhancing language learning outcomes (see Appendix 1). Constructs of TAM were also used as a foundation to further explore teachers' perspectives.

Data Analysis
The recorded interviews were then transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were sent to the participants for review. This measure was taken to uphold the reliability and validity of this research. Zainuddin and Zaki (2023) assert that this step provides power to the interviewees to review what was transcribed thus maintaining the ethical standards of the study.
Once the transcripts have been validated, the data were analysed using the six-phase framework of deductive thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process involved identifying recurring themes, patterns, and categories within the participants' responses. TAM constructs were also used to refine the themes for data analysis. Then the researchers independently coded the data, compared, and discussed the findings through intercoder agreement. This was to ensure the rigour and validity of the analysis.

Findings and Discussion
The findings of this study will be discussed by answering the research questions.
RQ 1: What are the types of AI tools used in the tertiary ESL classroom?
There were four types of AI tools discovered from the participants. Table 2 below shows the summary of AI tools used by the participants.

Table 2
Summary of Ai Tools used By the Participants

Participant	AI tool (s) used in the classroom
P1	ChatGPT
P2	Turnitin and Speechace
P3	Grammarly and ChatGPT
P4	ChatGPT

The findings reveal a diverse range of AI tools were used in the tertiary ESL classrooms of the participating teachers. This aligns with prior studies (Dewi et al., 2021; Hilson et al., 2019; Sharma, 2021) that highlight the potential benefits of AI-assisted language learning. These studies emphasise that interactive AI systems have shown promising results in enhancing student motivation and language proficiency. ChatGPT emerged as a popular choice among the participants.

RQ 2: How do teachers use AI as a pedagogical tool in the tertiary ESL classroom?
The findings of this research have shed light on how teachers utilise AI as a pedagogical tool in the tertiary ESL classroom. The data collected from the participants revealed specific use of AI tools in different language skill areas such as writing and speaking classes.

Turnitin as a Plagiarism Checker (P2):
P2 reported using Turnitin extensively in her writing class as a plagiarism checker. Turnitin is employed as a preventive measure to control plagiarism among students. By using Turnitin, the teacher claimed that academic integrity is ensured, and originality in students' written assignments is encouraged.

Speechace for Pronunciation Support (P2):
P2 also stated using Speechace frequently in her speaking class. Speechace is employed to assist students in improving their pronunciation skills. According to P2, Speechace provides automated speech evaluation and feedback, allowing students to practice and refine their pronunciation during and after class hours.

Grammarly for Writing Assistance (P3):
P3 utilises Grammarly widely in the writing class. P3 asserted that Grammarly serves as a valuable AI tool for students to refine their grammar in the final written work. It offers real-time grammar and writing suggestions, helping students enhance the overall quality of their final written assignments.

ChatGPT for Brainstorming and Content Refinement (P1, P3, and P4):
In contrast to the three AI tools discussed earlier, ChatGPT is used limitedly in both writing and speaking classes, as reported by P1, P3, and P4. The primary purpose of ChatGPT in these contexts is to facilitate brainstorming sessions and refine content. Additionally, the participants agreed that ChatGPT is used to overcome writer's block, encouraging students to

generate ideas and express their thoughts more effectively. However, the participants expressed reluctance to fully utilise ChatGPT in their writing class as they are concerned that the students may take advantage of this tool.

"For ChatGPT, I think we still need to find ways how to control it. So that the students will not take advantage of ChatGPT". (P3)

"So I think that is what's making me not use it so much because I think if I use it a lot in class, I feel that it also gives the students an idea. 'I don't have to think'". (P4)

This finding corroborates previous studies (Shyamlee, 2021; Siddiqui, 2021) that have highlighted teachers' reluctance in incorporating AI tools despite the benefits teachers have encountered. This will be further explained later under RQ 4.

RQ 3: What are teachers' perspectives on the benefits of implementing AI as a pedagogical tool in tertiary ESL classrooms?

To answer this research question, the interview protocol was set based on the TAM constructs by Davis (1989) which was discussed earlier. This model consists of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. Therefore, the responses will be discussed based on these two main themes and their sub-themes. Generally, all four participants agreed that the benefits offered by AI tools have led to the implementation of these tools in their classrooms.

Perceived Ease of Use
Easy to Use
From the analysis, three teacher participants agreed that AI tools are easy to incorporate in their classrooms which has drawn the interest and the exploration of AI tools in their teaching and learning process. They showed a consensus that the tools are easy to be used by both teachers and students, not only due to the support given by the institutions but also because the interface of the systems has further encouraged them to utilise the tools.

"It's very straightforward. It's like we are chatting with someone. It's very easy to use". (P1)

"It will be easy because, in universities, we do have access to the Wi-Fi connection all over. So even in classrooms". (P2)

"It's easy. You don't have to learn about coding. It's user-friendly. I think the interface is. Because you just log in, right? And then whether you want to upload your documents or you can simply copy-paste your text or even you can type in that section and then you will automatically generate outputs for you". (P3)

Time-saving
In the teaching and learning context, utilising time effectively is crucial to ensure learners will be benefited from the lessons. This has been emphasised by two teacher participants from the interview conducted. They mentioned that the use of AI tools in their classes has helped them to save students' time in completing tasks which have influenced the use of AI in their classes.

"So, I think when we can save their time, we can show that there is an easier way." (P1)

"If we do that manually, it might take a bit of time but with AI, it's a quicker process". (P4)

Cost saving
Two participants also expressed that AI tools are easy to use as these tools are mostly free and affordable for license purchasing.

"I think because of the price as well. That's why our university can afford to subscribe. And allow each of our students to have access." (P3)

"So, for the positive part, I think, AI is free." (P4)

Perceived Usefulness

Improve students' performance
One of the major factors that influence the implementation of AI tools in ESL classrooms is the students' improved performance. All teachers have shown significant satisfaction in the pronunciation and final written assignments produced by their students after AI tools are introduced in the teaching and learning process.

"OK, now the outline of this semester, they are much better compared to my previous semester". (P1)

"So I think this can be very useful for them to practice their pronunciation and to improve their speaking skills in the class or with others". (P2)

"Gradually, I can see changes in terms of their outputs". (P3)

"... having this is a bit of a brainstorm, I think it is somehow assisting them in writing a little bit". (P4)

This finding corroborates other findings in prior studies (Dewi et al., 2021; Hilson et al., 2019; Sharma, 2021) which noted that the use of AI has significantly improved students' performance.

Immediate and Personalised Feedback
The sophisticated AI systems have also helped teachers to provide immediate and personalised feedback to their students. As supported by Mohamad Ali (2023), providing meaningful feedback to learners will help them to make use of the input to further improve their tasks and strengthen their language acquisition. With the help of AI tools, teachers have the luxury of time and reliable input generated by AI tools.

"It can be a very good assistance for students and of course for teachers. It is helpful because it can show them a clear direction…". (P1)

"They also learn to pronounce some of the words they find difficult to pronounce. They can also use this tool for them to pronounce it in a correct manner". (P2)

"Because, Grammarly suggest ways, so our students have that knowledge. So they can critically think and evaluate". (P3)

"And we can individualise, or somehow categorise lessons for each type of student with the use of AI". (P4)

Perceived Excitement
Interestingly, through the interview conducted, the researchers have also identified another benefit aside from ease of use and usefulness, which is perceived excitement. This was derived from two participants who mentioned that the implementation of AI in their classrooms is also driven by this benefit.

"And it also interests the students as well. It excites the students". (P1)

"We are not doing the traditional method. So yes, they will get more excited". (P2)

This benefit aligns with the revised TAM by Davis et al. (1992) which has also included perceived enjoyment (PE) as one of the constructs. Figure 2 below shows the revised TAM.
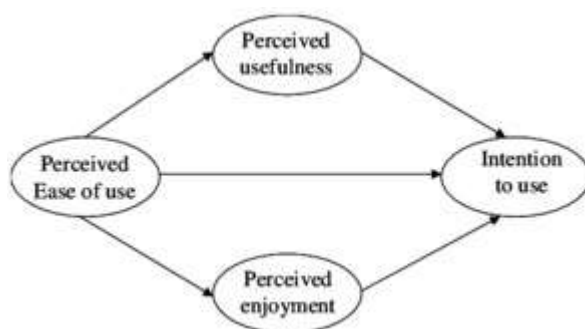

Figure: Revised TAM by Davis et al. (1992)

Davis et al. (1992) have included this new construct as it was discovered that teachers' intention to use a technological device is also drawn by this benefit. This is supported by prior studies (Hapsari and Wu, 2022; Liu et al., 2021) which stated that the use of AI in ESL classrooms fosters enjoyment and excitement among the learners.

RQ 4: What are the challenges faced by teachers and ways to overcome these challenges in implementing AI as a pedagogical tool in tertiary ESL classrooms?
This study has discovered the challenges and fears teachers face when integrating AI tools in their ESL classrooms, which are worth to be further explored. It is noted that, despite the positive attitude shown by these teachers towards the benefits of AI tools, their choices are also influenced by challenges and fears.

Challenge 1: Lack of Language Acquisition
As stated by other scholars, teachers are concerned about the overuse of AI may hamper language learning and acquisition among the learners. As discovered by Kasneci et al. (2023), there are a lot of uncertainties in using AI to develop learners' language acquisition. The participants of this study (P1, P3, and P4) have also exhibited the same concerns. However, in this study, the concerns are only mentioned for ChatGPT and not for other AI tools.
The advance AI tools such as ChatGPT are able to produce tasks for the learners which may not measure the learners' true ability. Due to this reason, teachers are concerned about the acquisition of language skills among learners.

"As the language teachers, what we wanted to see is that we wanted to make sure that our students are aware that… For example, (when) they have difficulties, they don't really grab the idea of simple things such as subject-verb agreement. And we wanted to make sure that they know this". (P3)

"...unless they're just copying and pasting things without reading. Then I think it's not used well at all". (P4)

Way to Overcome: Limit the Use of ChatGPT
Influenced by the fear that the students may not acquire the language as they should, these teachers have stated that they limit the use of ChatGPT in the classroom. This explains why ChatGPT is used limitedly compared to other AI tools in RQ 2. The teacher participants feel that by limiting the use of ChatGPT, they may be able to control the overdependence on AI and foster language learning among their students. This aligns with Pavlik's findings (2023) that outline the use of AI should be restricted as a support to language learning rather than replacing humans' abilities.

Challenge 2: Ethical Considerations
Participants of the study also raised concerns about the ethical considerations when implementing AI in their classrooms. The teachers are concerned about the authenticity of students' work as the ideas are AI-generated.
"AI could generate content or answers from anywhere. Meaning, we don't know the genuine source from where it comes from. So the user may not even check or authenticate whether it is real…". (P4)
Without verification, students may include false information that may jeopardise the quality of their work. This corroborates the findings by Hong (2023) who observe similar concerns among the teachers in his institution regarding the originality of students' work when using ChatGPT.

Way to overcome: Impromptu Cross-Check
P3 and P4 assert that it is important to conduct cross-checking with students' work as it helps them to monitor students' real abilities. This intervention will somehow assist the teachers in controlling the use of ChatGPT and scaffold their students in the selection of ideas produced by ChatGPT.

Challenge 3: Lack of Training
Lastly, lack of training is another challenge mentioned by the participants. According to them, despite announcements and webinars organised by their institutions, there is a need of having specialised training for ESL teachers. This is important to address the issue mentioned in prior challenges: lack of language acquisition and ethical considerations.
As the teachers are eager to embrace the use of AI in their lessons, there are concerns that must be addressed by professionals to increase teachers' confidence and competency in implementing AI.
P3 and P4 have expressed their concern about limited knowledge and skills in manoeuvring ChatGPT which has become a challenge for them to fully utilise ChatGPT in their lessons.
"Maybe in the future, we can have someone to teach us specifically how to use AI for language skills". (P3)

"I think if you have more knowledge, you will know what to do, how to personalise, and how to be creative. But when you don't have that knowledge, you only know how to use it for brainstorming".

Way to Overcome: Provide Personalised Training For ESL Context
It is essential for ESL teachers to learn the best way of incorporating AI into their lessons. As ESL emphasises language acquisition, the teachers need assurance that AI may not jeopardise their learners' abilities. If these teachers are given guidelines on how to effectively implement AI, they will be able to fully utilise these tools and provide a more engaging lesson for their students.

Conclusion and Implication of the Study
This study expounds on the use of AI-based tools among tertiary ESL teachers. It is noted that teachers embrace the use of AI tools in their classrooms. They all agree that the implementation of AI tools (Speechace, Turnitin, Grammarly, and ChatGPT) has shown a significant improvement in their teaching and learning. With the help of AI tools, their learners are able to obtain personalised feedback that may help them to improve their pronunciation, generated ideas, and overall writing. The positive responses to using AI in the classroom in the future, indicate that it is a sign of encouragement for the implementation of these tools. However, this study has discovered that despite ChatGPT being the popular choice among participants, the execution of this tool is limited by the teachers. This is drawn by the fear that ChatGPT may hamper language acquisition among their learners.

These findings are aligned with TAM by Davis (1989) which emphasised that teachers are likely to incorporate AI tools when they notice the benefits outweigh the challenges, and vice versa.

Hence, it is evident that these teachers are aspired to use AI tools in their classrooms; therefore, there is a need of providing proper and personalised training for ESL teachers to ensure AI tools such as ChatGPT will be fully utilised in the teaching and learning process. Educational institutions should further consider the development of AI in the classrooms as this may not only assist the teachers but also enhance students' performance in mastering English.

All in all, it is hoped that the findings of this study represent a significant theoretical and contextual contribution to the field of language education. In theoretical terms, this research augments our understanding of the evolving role of technology in education, shedding light on the transformative potential of AI in language learning. By exploring teachers' perspectives, it offers valuable insights into the dynamics of human-AI interaction within the classroom, contributing to the broader discourse on the integration of AI in educational settings. Moreover, in the context of ESL education, where language acquisition is paramount, this study's findings provide a nuanced understanding of how AI can enhance the teaching and learning process, offering practical guidance to educators and institutions. Ultimately, this research bridges the gap between theory and practice, demonstrating how AI can be meaningfully harnessed to improve ESL instruction, thereby fostering effective communication skills and cultural competence among tertiary students. Therefore, ESL teachers should further explore AI tools and gain confidence to incorporate them into the lessons while the stakeholders and policymakers should provide appropriate guidelines in assisting teachers to implement AI.

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