

AI-Enhanced Literary Education: Unveiling the Potential of Generative AI in Literary Education

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to investigate the interaction between AI tools and undergraduate English majors in Chinese universities during their literary studies and examine the effectiveness and sustainability of such interaction. The present study attempts to demonstrate how AI technology can be integrated to enhance literary comprehension and analytical skills in English literature courses for Chinese undergraduate students, evaluate the benefits and challenges of implementing AI-assisted learning in this specific context, and illustrate innovative teaching approaches through authentic classroom case studies from Chinese higher education institutions. By analyzing various AI applications in literary education and their impact on Chinese students' learning experience, this research provides a practical AI-assisted teaching framework to Chinese educators and contributes to the development of AI-enhanced literary education in Chinese universities.

Keywords: Generative AI, Literature Learning, Chinese Undergraduate Students

Introduction

Generative AI models, such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini, are large language models (LLMs) that have been trained on vast amounts of textual data to generate human-like responses to prompts. These generative AI models have gained significant attention due to their impressive language understanding and generation capabilities. They have the potential to revolutionize various fields, such as customer service, content creation, assistance, and education. Recent scientific literature increasingly explores the potential applications of artificial intelligence (AI) in education (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019; Grassini, 2023), especially in language education settings (Kussin et al., 2023; Chen & Yuan, 2022; Alhalangy & AbdAlgane, 2023; Xiu-Yi, 2024), highlighting the importance of providing ongoing professional development and support for teachers to help them effectively integrate AI-based tools like ChatGPT into their mathematics instruction (Grassini, 2023; Egara & Mosimege, 2024).

The traditional curriculum of literary studies typically includes literary theory and criticism, author and text studies, literary history and movements, and creative writing and

compositional techniques. Through intensive literary studies, students should cultivate their literary competence, critical thinking skills, cultural awareness, creative and expressive abilities, analytical reasoning, and research capabilities. While in Chinese universities, students face significant challenges due to limited classroom sessions and over-reliance on teacher-centered approaches, which often result in superficial understanding and passive learning among students. Motivated by the potential of improving traditional literature teaching methods and creating more engaging learning experiences with the assistance of AI, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of generative AI tools in literary education, with a particular focus on enhancing student engagement and comprehension, this research addresses the following questions:

1. How can generative AI tools support the literary education objectives?
2. What are the impacts of AI-enhanced teaching methods on student engagement and comprehension in literary studies?
3. What are the potential challenges and opportunities in implementing AI tools in literary education ?

Literature Review

AI and Literature

Generative AI models are increasingly used to facilitate learning across various disciplines. Reflections are emerging on the potential impact of automating creativity on the literary industry and academia. Van Heerden and Bas (2021) argue that interdisciplinary collaboration between machine learning experts and literary theorists could significantly enhance the quality of AI-generated texts. This collaboration would enable AI to better understand and replicate the mechanics of literature, potentially transforming both the creation and the study of literary works. Questions arise regarding the possible emergence of AI publishing houses, the monetization of AI-generated literature, copyright issues, as well as human-machine collaboration in literary creation. AI technology has the potential to reshape the literary landscape, lead innovation in text production, and promote the emergence of new literary forms and genres (Hu, 2023). Based on their interviews with everyday writers who have incorporated LLMs into their composition practices, Laquintano and Vee (2024) conclude that AI will likely integrate with existing practices rather than completely overtake them. Perlow (2024) suggests that in the context of AI and LLMs, teachers should emphasize the quality of ideas in student writing rather than focusing on length. Additionally, researchers are exploring ways to incorporate literary theory principles into AI language models. They suggest establishing theoretical frameworks for analyzing computer-generated literary texts. This approach could not only enhance the creative capabilities of AI but also lay the groundwork for the future study of machine-written literary works (Dimock, 2020; Zeng, 2024).

AI and Literature Education

Moreover, as AI becomes more integrated into education, questions arise about its long-term impact on teaching practices. Researchers such as Hayles (2002) have pointed out that literary studies, which traditionally emphasize close reading, have been slow to adapt to digital technologies. Mehrpouyan (2023) highlights the need for effective and practical strategies in online English language and literature classrooms. The challenges of engaging students in a virtual environment require teachers to adapt their teaching methods by making use of various e-learning tools.

Roy and Putatunda (2023) examine the implementation of AI technologies in undergraduate English literature education in India, analyzing their effectiveness in promoting student interaction, learning outcomes, and peer collaboration. Their research demonstrates that an efficient pedagogical design can transform artificial intelligence into a collaborating agent in the teaching-learning process while mitigating the epistemological and ethical concerns that may arise. Gibson and Green (2024) explore the integration of literature, artificial intelligence (AI), and collaborative pedagogy, emphasizing how librarians can provide crucial support in searching, evaluating, synthesizing, and properly citing AI resources, thereby substantially improving literature learning effectiveness. By developing an AI-based online learning system incorporating BP neural networks and data mining, Chen and Yuan (2022) use intelligent analysis to improve teaching effectiveness and conclude that this AI-based learning system can help improve student performance and awareness of autonomous learning in English literature. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2023) propose a SMART system based on AI technology that integrates local semantic features and global semantic features. Their system effectively enhances students' English language and literature comprehension and application skills.

Statement of the Problem

Although these discussions are still in their infancy, they reveal the boundless possibilities of collaboration between AI and literature. However, how AI might affect literature education and study is largely overlooked by researchers. While literary studies continue to emphasize close reading as a fundamental skill for students, Hayles (2003) points out that it has been slower to adapt to and capitalize on the growing trend toward digital technologies and resources. Accordingly, this study investigates the potential applications of AI in literary education and its impact on teaching and learning practices. The present study attempts to demonstrate how AI technology can be integrated to enhance literary comprehension and analytical skills in English literature courses for Chinese undergraduate students, evaluate the benefits and challenges of implementing AI-assisted learning in this specific context, and illustrate innovative teaching approaches through authentic classroom case studies from Chinese higher education institutions. By analyzing various AI applications in literary education and their impact on Chinese students' learning experience, this research aims to provide practical insights for educators and contribute to the development of AI-enhanced literary education in Chinese universities.

Methodology

The National Standards for Teaching Quality in Foreign Languages and Literature in China states that "students majoring in foreign languages should possess language proficiency, literary appreciation skills, intercultural communication competence, critical thinking ability, as well as certain research capabilities, innovation skills, information technology application abilities, autonomous learning abilities, and practical skills." Specifically, literary appreciation competence includes "the ability to comprehend the content and themes of foreign literary works; the ability to appreciate the characteristics, style, and linguistic artistry of different literary genres; and the ability to critically comment on literary works" (Ministry of Education Foreign Language Teaching Advisory Board, 2018, p. 8).

Carter and Long (1991) proposed three models of literature teaching: the Language Model, the Cultural Model, and the Personal Growth Model. These models closely align with the above-mentioned China's National Standards for Teaching Quality in Foreign Languages

and Literature. The Language Model, which focuses on enhancing language proficiency through grammatical, lexical, and discourse analysis, helps to promote “the ability to comprehend the content and themes of foreign literary works.” The Cultural Model, which emphasizes understanding literary works within the target culture context, corresponds to “the ability to appreciate the characteristics, style, and linguistic artistry of different literary genres.” The Personal Growth Model, which encourages students to express personal insights and emotional experiences, corresponds to “the ability to critically comment on literary works.” This correspondence provides a theoretical foundation for designing and implementing AI-assisted education in foreign literature education. Similarly, Elaine Showalter (2002) advances twelve objectives in literature teaching, which can be broadly categorized into several key competencies: textual analysis, cultural inquiry, critical thinking, and creative expression.

In traditional English literature classroom, lecturers in China have typically adopted a teacher-centered approach, focusing primarily on vocabulary explanation, complex sentence analysis, and text comprehension. This single-dimensional teaching mode often fails to stimulate students' interest and cannot meet the demands for developing students' comprehensive abilities and critical thinking abilities. AI, however, can serve as an effective solution by providing personalized learning experiences, interactive engagement, and diverse analytical tools. Therefore, this paper proposes to use AI as a supplementary tool to enhance effectiveness of literary education.

Guided by above-mention standards and learning models, this study examines the integration of AI technology into literary education to create an interactive and engaging learning environment. The research aims to explore how AI tools can enhance the achievement of course objectives, address Chinese students' specific learning challenges, and facilitate collaboration between instructors and technology, where AI serves as a complementary teaching aid rather than a replacement for human instruction. Furthermore, this study investigates Chinese educators' perspectives on adopting AI in literature classrooms and evaluates the long-term viability of such practices in Chinese higher education.

To achieve these objectives, data has been collected from two primary sources: direct observations of undergraduate English literature classes where AI tools were implemented and in-depth interviews with undergraduate students from key universities in China. The classroom observations focus on students' interaction with AI tools in literary analysis and creative activities. At the same time, the interviews explore students' experiences, concerns, and suggestions regarding AI integration in literature education.

This study will utilize William Faulkner's iconic short story, *A Rose for Emily*, as its target text. It is commonly included in the English literature textbooks used by second-year undergraduate English majors in Chinese universities. This influential work presents both literary significance and interpretive challenges for students. The non-linear narrative structure of *A Rose for Emily* often proves to be the most difficult part for students. It jumps between different time periods, often without clear transitions, so the students often feel confused. Some popular AI tools will be applied to identify and address common challenges in literary text comprehension.

Result and Discussion

While there is no clear, stable definition of literature that applies across all times and contexts, certain literary language is often complex and difficult to understand. The Russian Formalist Roman Jakobson's view of literature as an “organized violence committed on ordinary speech”

(qtd. in Goldblatt et al., 2006, p. 265) suggests that literature transforms and intensifies ordinary language. Similarly, according to Terry Eagleton, the use of elaborate, poetic, or archaic language often sets literary texts apart from ordinary, everyday communication. Literature transforms and intensifies ordinary language, deviating systematically from everyday speech. As Eagleton (2003) quips, “If you approach me at a bus stop, and murmur ‘Thou still unravished bride of quietness,’ then I know I am in the presence of the literary” (p. 2). When confronted with archaic expressions, intricate metaphors, and sophisticated literary devices, students may struggle to grasp even the basic meaning of the text, let alone engage in deeper analysis of themes and interpretations. However, the powerful language capabilities of generative artificial intelligence can assist students in understanding challenging vocabulary and complex literary language. Educational large language models have advanced speech recognition and semantic analysis functions.

Case Study I: Using ChatGPT for Semantic Understanding

This case study will use ChatGPT to analyze William Faulkner’s *A Rose for Emily* where learners are expected to develop better comprehension of complex literary language through AI-assisted semantic analysis. Through the use of AI, students will be able to decode and comprehend challenging literary expressions while maintaining analytical autonomy. This learning approach corresponds to the fundamental objectives of literary education outlined by Elaine Showalter (2002), particularly the goal of helping students “recognize subtle and complex differences in language use” and “read figurative language and distinguish between literal and metaphorical meaning” (p. 26). As a natural language processing tool with contextual understanding, ChatGPT is an ideal tool for simplifying complex literary expressions while preserving the nuances of the original text.

Faulkner’s languages are always long and complex with multiple layered clauses, which may cause difficulties in reading. In this case, students were asked to identify sentences or expressions they found particularly challenging to understand. Through an anonymous voting system, the class selected several passages that posed significant comprehension challenges. The most voted excerpt was:

Alive, Miss Emily had been a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town, dating from that day in 1894 when Colonel Sartoris, the mayor, he who fathered the edict that no Negro woman should appear on the streets without an apron, remitted her taxes, the dispensation dating from the death of her father on into perpetuity. (pp. 119-120)

The biggest challenge of this text lies in its complex sentence construction. The main clause “Alive, Miss Emily had been a tradition, a duty, and a care” is modified by multiple subordinate clauses and insertions, making the entire sentence lengthy and complex. Especially the time markers like “dating from that day in 1894” and “dating from the death of her father” appear interspersed in the narrative, making it difficult for readers to understand. Beside, the mention of Colonel Sartoris’s decree, as well as the term “hereditary obligation,” requires relevant historical knowledge to understand. Additionally, the word “dispensation” has a specific legal meaning, all of which pose challenges to students’ semantic understanding of the text. In order to facilitate students’ comprehension of this story, they were guided to use ChatGPT 4o to analyze the passage through carefully crafted prompts.

Table 1

ChatGPT- Assisted Semantic Understanding in a Rose for Emily

| Prompts | Answer by ChatGPT 4o |
|--|--|
| Please break down this long sentence into smaller, simpler sentences while maintaining its original meaning. | When she was alive, Miss Emily was regarded as a tradition, a duty, and a responsibility. The town saw her as a kind of hereditary obligation. This perception stemmed from an event in 1894, when Colonel Sartoris, the mayor at the time, excused her from paying taxes. Colonel Sartoris was also the one who issued the decree that no Black woman should appear in public without wearing an apron. The tax exemption he granted Miss Emily extended indefinitely, starting from the time of her father's death. |
| Identify the main clause. | "Miss Emily had been a tradition, a duty, and a care." This clause stands independently and conveys the central idea that during her lifetime, Miss Emily represented these qualities to the town. |
| Explain the following terms in this context: hereditary obligation; remitted her taxes; dispensation. | <p>1. Hereditary Obligation In this context, hereditary obligation refers to the town's perception of Miss Emily as a figure tied to a long-standing, inherited duty. This obligation was not based on any formal legal requirement but rather on tradition and a sense of social responsibility. It implies that the town felt a persistent, almost ancestral duty to care for or accommodate Miss Emily due to her family's historical status and prominence.</p> <p>2. Remitted Her Taxes To remit her taxes means that Colonel Sartoris, as mayor, officially forgave or canceled Miss Emily's obligation to pay taxes. This decision exempted her from a financial responsibility that would otherwise be required of all citizens. The action likely stemmed from a combination of respect for her family and recognition of her financial difficulties following her father's death.</p> <p>3. Dispensation In this context, dispensation refers to the special exemption or privilege granted to Miss Emily by Colonel Sartoris. This dispensation was the act of releasing her from paying taxes and was intended to continue indefinitely. The term carries a formal or authoritative tone, emphasizing the exceptional nature of this arrangement, which was rooted in both respect for her family's legacy and societal norms of the time.</p> |

As exhibited in Table 1, the responses given by ChatGPT are quite similar with some popular lit guides like *A Rose for Emily (LitCharts Literature Guide)*, *CliffsNotes on Faulkner's Short Stories*, etc. In this case study, ChatGPT demonstrated its effectiveness in three key areas: decomposing complex sentences while maintaining original meaning, identifying core narrative elements, and providing detailed contextual explanations of period-specific terminology. By removing initial barriers to comprehension, ChatGPT allowed students to dedicate more energy to higher-level thinking and critical analysis. More importantly, the process of formulating questions for ChatGPT encouraged students to think critically about what aspects of the language they found challenging and why.

Case Study II: Using Chatgpt 4o for Connotation and Thematic Exploration

As discussed above, the National Standards for Teaching Quality in Foreign Languages and Literature in China positions thematic comprehension as a core competency, emphasizing the ability to comprehend the content and themes of foreign literary works as fundamental to literary appreciation. This importance of thematic understanding is reinforced by both Carter and Long's teaching models and Showalter's teaching objectives, which integrate thematic analysis into language learning, cultural understanding, and personal growth. Though relatively short in length, *A Rose for Emily* is dense with linguistic nuances and symbolic meanings. To explore its themes, readers have to pay close attention to key vocabulary and their connotative implications, as these words often carry multiple layers of meaning that contribute to the story's larger thematic framework. For example, students sensed a feeling of historical vicissitudes as they frequently encountered the words like "gray," "ashes," "dust," and "decay." However, they were uncertain the connections between these words and the theme. After consulting AI, they were provided with the connotation of these words as well as their link with the themes.

Table 2

| Prompt | Answer by Chatgpt 4o |
|--|---|
| How are the words like "gray," "ashes," "dust," and "decay" connected with the themes of <i>A Rose for Emily</i> ? | <p>The words "gray," "ashes," "dust," and "decay" are strongly connected to the themes of death, time, isolation, and the decline of tradition in William Faulkner's <i>A Rose for Emily</i>. Here's how these words relate to the story:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Symbolism of Death and Decay Words like "ashes," "dust," and "decay" evoke a sense of mortality and physical degradation. Emily's house, described as "dusty" and "decaying," mirrors her physical and mental deterioration, as well as the decline of the old Southern aristocracy she represents. The image of dust is particularly significant in the shocking climax, when Homer Barron's corpse is revealed. The layer of dust covering the room symbolizes how time has stood still in Emily's world and how she has clung to the past. 2. Gray: Blurring the Past and Present The color "gray" is used to describe Emily's appearance, particularly her hair, emphasizing her aging and stagnation. Gray also represents the ambiguity between life and death, as Emily exists in a liminal state, refusing to let go of her past or acknowledge the passage of time. 3. Isolation and Despair The pervasive presence of "dust" in Emily's home underscores her isolation and the stagnant, unchanging nature of her life. The house becomes a tomb-like space, disconnected from the living world outside. "Ashes" can symbolize the remnants of something once alive, such as Emily's dreams, her family's legacy, or her own spirit, now reduced to fragments of their former vitality. 4. The Decline of the Old South The themes of decay and ruin reflect the broader social changes happening in the South. Emily's refusal to change, coupled with the physical decay of her home, parallels the collapse of the traditional Southern way of life, as new values and modernity encroach upon the old order. These motifs create a haunting atmosphere in the story, reinforcing the inevitability of death and the destructive consequences of clinging to the past. |

As exhibited in Table 2, Chatgpt4o helped students understand both the denotative and connotative meanings within the text. When addressing questions about the meanings of words like "gray," "ashes," "dust," and "decay," the AI tool exhibits multi-layered analytical

capabilities, helping students transition from understanding specific vocabulary to grasping thematic concepts. However, this AI-assisted analysis requires appropriate guidance from teachers. With the help of AI tools, teachers can design interactive classroom discussions, encouraging students to present their own interpretations while avoiding over-reliance on AI's readings. Additionally, teachers can guide students to connect these themes with broader literary traditions and social contexts to deepen their understanding.

Case Study III: Using AI Tools for Critical Analysis

When exploring some open questions in literary works, different AI tools gave some contradictory interpretations. One of its distinctive features is the use of an unidentified narrator, which adds suspense to the story and has sparked extensive discussion among scholars. This discrepancy is also reflected in different AI tools, for example, Claude and ChatGPT gave completely different reply on the gender of the narrator in *A Rose for Emily*.

Table 3

Literary Techniques

| Prompt | Answer by Claude |
|---|--|
| Explore how William Faulkner utilizes non-linear storytelling in <i>A Rose for Emily</i> to create a narrative that unfolds in a fragmented timeline. Discuss how this technique enhances the mystery, deepens the themes, and engages readers in unraveling the complexities of the story. | <p>Nonlinear Narrative Structure: The story unfolds through a series of disjointed vignettes and flashbacks, jumping back and forth in time without a strict chronological order. The narrator often withholds information, revealing details about the past and present in a piecemeal fashion. Events are not always presented in a clear cause-and-effect relationship, forcing the reader to make connections and inferences.</p> <p>Enhancing Mystery and Intrigue: The nonlinear structure creates a sense of mystery and uncertainty around the central events and character motivations.</p> <p>Deepening Thematic Exploration: The fragmented timeline mirrors the disjointed nature of memory and the subjective, unreliable nature of the narrator's perspective. (Over-interpretation) This enhances the themes of the lingering power of the past, the erosion of tradition, and the individual's struggle against the relentless march of time.</p> <p>By resisting a clear chronological progression, Faulkner underscores how the past continually intrudes upon and shapes the present in Miss Emily's life. (Abridged)</p> |
| Do you think the narrator is male or female? | <p>ChatGPT: It's challenging to definitively determine the narrator's gender, but the narration style may suggest a male point of view. The narrator describes Emily and the other women of the town with a certain distance, often through the lens of male-dominated social norms. For instance, the narrator refers to the women's interest in Emily's life, commenting on their collective desire to know about her and speculate about her relationships, which may reflect a more male-centric societal perspective. The tone also seems to reflect the condescension and judgment that can sometimes be linked with a male perspective in a traditional Southern context. However, it's not impossible that the narrator</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>could be female, as the story does not lean heavily on gender-specific observations.</p> <p>Claude: There are no explicit textual markers that definitively reveal these characteristics. The narrator seems to be:</p> <p>Intimately familiar with the town's history and social dynamics</p> <p>Speaking from a position of insider knowledge</p> <p>Using a tone that suggests familiarity with Emily and her family's social standing.</p> |
|--|---|


As with the disagreement between Blythes's(1988) and Michael Burduck's(1990) interpretation, where the former argues that the narrator is male and the latter believes it is female, two AI platforms also reveal this disparity in their responses. As demonstrated in Table 3, Claude adopts a cautious, text-based analysis method. It emphasizes that the text does not provide clear gender markers, while ChatGPT takes a more interpretive approach by drawing inferences from the narrative tone, perspective, and other subtle cues, suggesting that the narrator might be male. These contradictory interpretations provided by different AI tools create opportunities for students to develop their own analytical skills.

It reflects two important approaches in literary analysis: one that strictly adheres to textual evidence, and one that infers reasonable conclusions based on textual details. It not only highlights the different tendencies of AI tools when handling open-ended questions but also push the students to reflect literary interpretation. Furthermore, the existence of this difference itself leads to deeper textual analysis and critical thinking, which helps students appreciate the wide variety of possibilities in literary interpretation. This case also serves as a reminder that when using AI tools in literary education, we should not view them as providers of definitive answers but as platforms that stimulate thought and discussion.

Case Study IV: Enhancing Literary Visualization through DALL-E

According to Clark et al. (2019), computer and textual interactions can be categorized into text-based, visual and multimedia, speech and audio, and adaptive and personalized interactions. DALL-E, developed by OpenAI, stands out for its ability to understand intricate literary descriptions and generate detailed visual interpretations. This case study examines the use of DALL-E in visualizing key scenes and symbols from *A Rose for Emily*. The study focused on helping students bridge the gap between textual descriptions and visual imagination through AI-assisted visualization.

Oppenlaender et al. (2024) identify key principles to produce effective prompts for better text-visual results, including the use of diverse adjectives, quality specifications, artistic style definitions, artist references, limited object count, and precise descriptions. Building on these principles, students were encouraged to extract appropriate words from the text to visualize the story's setting, translating descriptive words like "squarish frame house," "heavily lightsome style of the seventies" and "stubborn and coquettish decay" into detailed visual prompts. Additionally, they were encouraged to incorporate their own interpretative elements through certain constant descriptors in their prompts, such as "Southern Gothic atmosphere" or "1930s photographic style," to enhance authenticity and thematic coherence. Through a close reading of the text, the students meticulously extracted the key features of Emily's residence. They not only focused on the superficial architectural descriptions but also add their own imagination, and then reconstruct into a vivid prompt. Here is an example from one of the students:

| Prompt | DALL-E-3 |
|---|--|
| <p>Create an image of a decaying Southern mansion from the 1870s. The house is a large, squarish frame structure that was once painted white but now shows signs of deterioration. It features ornate architectural details including cupolas (small domes), Gothic spires, and elaborate scrolled balconies in the Victorian style.</p> <p>The house stands isolated and anachronistic, stubbornly rising above its modernized surroundings . Its presence is both dignified and haunting - a testament to faded grandeur.The overall atmosphere should convey: Gothic Southern decay; Faded elegance and aristocratic pride; A sense of time standing still; The contrast between past glory and present deterioration.</p> |  |

As shown in table 4, the generated picture is breathtaking: a Victorian building with the architectural details depicted in the story while perfectly capturing that unique elegance tinged with decay. The grand, decaying house symbolizes Emily's loneliness and isolation from the outside world. This state of disrepair and the contrast with the surrounding environment emphasize her detachment from society. Overall, this illustration perfectly encapsulates the feeling of faded glory, mystery, and unease that permeates Faulkner's story, and help the understanding of this novel. Although it is not so real compared with photos, this visual representation promote the reader's emotional and psychological engagement with the story. The AI-based study can create an immersive and stimulating learning environment that promotes students' autonomous learning awareness and enthusiasm (Chen and Yuan 2022; Zhang et al.2023; Alnasib and Alharbi 2023). From the students' heated discussions, it is evident that this process of transforming text into visual imagery has greatly stimulated their enthusiasm for literature. Through the writing of prompts and the generation of images, the originally abstract literary descriptions become tangible and perceptible. This innovative learning model demonstrates the unique advantages of AI-assisted teaching. It not only deepens students' understanding of the text but, more importantly, opens a new window for them to experience the charm of literature. In this process, technology becomes a bridge connecting literary imagination with visual experience.

Interview: Student Feedback on AI Tools

While conducting this study, some undergraduate students participated in the AI-assisted literature learning program were interviewed to explore their perceptions and experiences about AI-assisted learning. In almost all cases, respondents expressed positive feedback regarding AI tools, noting that they provided immediate clarification and deeper insights into complex literary concepts. Several respondents observed that compared to traditional approaches, tools like ChatGPT made learning more engaging and less intimidating. They also emphasized how the use of visual aids, such as those generated by DALL-E, adds a new dimension to literary exploration, making abstract concepts more tangible and understandable for students at various levels of literary comprehension. In the words of one respondent, "DALL-E is like a magician, with some spell-like prompts, it can transform the text into images. It makes reading a fun experience!"

However, when asked about potential threats regarding AI integration, some students acknowledged that the convenience of AI tools occasionally led to intellectual laziness, with

one student candidly admitting, “Sometimes I find myself taking shortcuts and letting AI do the thinking for me.” Also, while AI tools can offer detailed analyses, they often lack the subtle understanding and emotional depth that human instructors bring to discussions about literature. In general, most respondents observed that despite these concerns, integrating AI tools into literary education can enhance student engagement and comprehension. By providing immediate, detailed explanations and facilitating interactive learning, AI tools address common challenges faced in traditional literary studies.

Conclusion

The integration of generative AI tools in literary education presents a promising avenue for enhancing student engagement and comprehension. AI tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and DALL-E ect. offer innovative ways to explore and understand complex literary texts, making literary education more interactive and accessible. As Alnasib and Alharbi (2024) argue that AI tools like Gemini may transform language learning into a more playful and interactive experience. More and more educators are embracing AI in literary education. For instance, Professor Zrinka at UCLA is launching her Comparative Literature course on the AI platform Kudu in 2025, because it allows her focus on “the things professors are best at doing-teaching basic analytical skills, critical thinking and reading skills”(Brenner). Despite the numerous benefits, there are challenges and limitations to consider. Relying too much on AI tools might hinder the growth of independent critical thinking and interpretative skills. It’s essential to find a balance, using AI as a helpful resource rather than relying on it too heavily. The findings of this study suggest several implications for future research and practice. Further exploration is needed to understand the long-term impact of AI tools on students’ analytical skills and literary appreciation. Additionally, developing frameworks for effectively integrating AI into literary curricula could help maximize its benefits while mitigating potential drawbacks. Collaboration between AI developers and literary educators is essential to refine these tools and tailor them to educational needs. Future research and collaboration will be key to refining these tools and developing best practices for their integration, ultimately contributing to the development of literary education.

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