

Reimagining the Role of the EFL Teacher in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Perceptions, Practices, and Pedagogical Transformations

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Abstract:

The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping the philosophy and purpose of higher education worldwide. Moreover, it is transforming pedagogical practices and redefining teachers' professional roles and responsibilities. In EFL contexts, AI tools such as writing assistants, intelligent feedback systems, and conversational chatbots are altering institutional practice and teachers' responsibilities. This descriptive survey study aims to collect data on EFL teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and practices regarding how emerging AI technologies are reshaping instructional practices and professional responsibilities. To gain empirical data, a structured questionnaire was administered to a sample of 75 teachers from different Algerian universities. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in statistical software, such as SPSS, while the qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis to reveal recurring patterns and insights. The findings reveal predominantly positive perceptions, with most teachers recognizing AI tools' potential to improve teaching quality, student engagement, and offer a personalized learning experience. However, significant concerns were identified regarding academic integrity, students' over-reliance on AI tools, and the authenticity of assessment practices. The results further indicate moderate adoption of AI tools in instructional activities, with limited use in assessment contexts. Ultimately, the study concludes that the implementation of AI tools is redefining rather than replacing the role of EFL teachers, shifting their responsibilities toward facilitation, ethical guidance, and digital mediation. Consequently, these findings demand institutional policies, pedagogical innovation, and targeted professional development to support the effective integration of AI tools in higher education.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, EFL teachers, higher education, pedagogical transformation, teacher perceptions.

Introduction

Recently, AI has witnessed rapid advancements driven by breakthroughs in machine learning, deep learning, and neural network architectures. AI tools encompass the performance of computer system tasks that mimic human intelligence to achieve various cognitive activities, such as learning, problem-solving, and decision-making (Metwally & Bin-Hady, 2025). The use of these tools enables human-like functions, such as adapting, synthesizing, and self-correcting information, which facilitates the management of intricate data processing (Arefian et al., 2024).

In the realm of language teaching, AI tools display a new horizon for teachers not only to develop students' engagement and lesson efficiency but also to raise new pedagogical and ethical challenges. Also, the use of AI tools in EFL classrooms is increasing as more adaptive learning platforms, intelligent language learning systems, and automated writing evaluation tools become available. For instance, AI tools such as speech recognition systems, grammar correction tools, and conversational chatbots are widely adopted in EFL learning environments.

In Algeria, the current landscape of AI in English language teaching is marked by some new adaptations and practices of Algerian EFL teachers. Many teachers use various technologies to provide a more personalized learning experience that responds to learners' individual educational needs.

In this spectrum, the main aim of the in-hand study is to examine Algerian EFL teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and practices regarding the impact of AI technologies on teaching and learning in higher education. Also, this study addresses identified research gaps, such as the limited empirical mapping of AI studies in EFL in Algeria, inadequate investigation of teacher perceptions, and the absence of practical guidance for teacher development.

Consequently, this study is guided by the following three research questions:

1. What are Algerian EFL teachers' perceptions of the role of AI technologies in language teaching?
2. How do teachers perceive the pedagogical benefits and challenges associated with AI integration?
3. How are AI tools influencing instructional practices and professional responsibilities in EFL contexts?

Literature Review

Artificial Intelligence

Beyond its basic definition, Ouyang and Jiao (2021) point out that the term Artificial Intelligence (AI) was first used in 1956, launching the beginning of a new era in both computing and cognitive science. Jiang (2024) posits that AI development is a broad, interdisciplinary endeavor. Domains such as computer science, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, and cognitive and computational sciences are integrated, resulting in advancing AI tools. Consequently, Harakchiyska (2025) claims that over the last 60 years, AI has evolved from predictive models to advanced generative tools, such as ChatGPT and DALL-E, capable of generating new text and images.

Recently, in the educational context, AI tools adoption has been recognized as a central component of educational innovation, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. These tools are utilized to enhance personalized learning, improve teaching efficiency, and automate administrative tasks through intelligent tutoring systems, automated feedback tools, and predictive analytics (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). Many researchers indicate that AI tools involve mimicking human intelligence to reach predetermined results such as learning, problem-solving, and decision-making (Metwally & Bin-Hady, 2025; Mohammed Ahmed Mudawy, 2024). In this spectrum, higher education institutions and universities are undergoing

a paradigm shift from traditional knowledge transmission toward more flexible, technology-enhanced, and learner-centered models (Williamson & Eynon, 2020).

Moreover, the application of AI tools by EFL teachers influences pedagogical structures, curriculum design, and assessment practices. Teachers use AI tools to adapt the learning process to learners' progress and individual educational needs.

AI in EFL Teaching: Opportunities and Pedagogical Shifts

In the realm of English as a foreign language, the increasing integration of AI tools into this learning process is driven by their compatibility with the language-learning process. This integration leads to shifts in the pedagogical methodologies. Godwin-Jones (2022) and Meylani (2024) hold that automated writing assistants, speech recognition systems, intelligent tutoring platforms, automated writing evaluators, adaptive vocabulary trainers, and conversational chatbots are the most commonly used AI tools in the EFL environment. Also, Maity and Deroy (2024) note that AI's cognitive strengths are particularly significant. They hold that intelligent tutoring systems, automated writing feedback tools, and conversational chatbots support EFL learners in practicing language skills, obtaining adaptive feedback, and customizing their learning experiences.

The use of AI tools in the EFL context reinforces the learning process and paves the way for a more interactive learning experience. For instance, the application of these tools supports skills such as writing by providing compelling opportunities for immediate feedback on grammar, vocabulary, and coherence (Ranalli et al., 2017). Also, tools such as speech recognition applications, Chatbots, and conversational agents enhance learners' oral skills and proficiency through real-time corrective feedback and by simulating authentic interaction scenarios (McCrocklin, 2019).

Furthermore, the utilization of AI tools aligns with the requirements of contemporary pedagogical approaches as they reinforce active learning, engagement, and learners' autonomy. In this vein, Liang et al. (2021) find that learners can access adaptive platforms that adjust content based on their proficiency levels and learning pace. Also, AI Tools support modern class reforms, as their adoption offers teachers opportunities to track students' progress accurately, tailor instruction to students' proficiency levels and educational needs, and promote independent learning through real-time feedback (Cabrera-Solano et al., 2024; Metwally & Bin-Hady, 2025).

On the other hand, the increasing use of AI tools in EFL contexts raises concerns and significant pedagogical challenges (Kasneci et al., 2023). Challenges such as students' reliance on technology and the authenticity of their language production pose significant problems for teachers. Consequently, teachers should reconsider new and adaptive instructional strategies and ensure that AI tools support, rather than replace, meaningful language learning processes.

Teachers' Perceptions, Attitudes, and Practices toward AI

However, a central question regarding the role of teachers in the era of rapid AI expansion is. Many scholars and researchers, such as Selwyn (2019), assert that AI tools are not just technological innovations but an important transformative force that protests traditional educational responsibilities and roles. Building on this groundwork, teachers' perceptions and attitudes, from both practical and theoretical perspectives, are critical determinants of the extent

to which AI technologies are integrated into educational settings and of how effective they can be. Teachers believe that the implementation of certain AI tools in learning, such as Plot Generator for writing and Elsa for pronunciation, is positively impacting the learning process and even supporting teaching (Metwally & Bin-Hady, 2025).

Importantly, teachers' adoption of AI is highly influenced by access to such technologies, institutional support, even professional training, and clear policies and guidelines. These contextual factors may result in uncertainty and inconsistent practices among educators (Redecker, 2017). Many teachers point out pedagogical and ethical concerns when using AI tools. Perkins (2023) argues that these concerns raise questions about students' true competencies and make teachers' assessments more challenging. These problems can be summarized in the AI-generated content misuse, academic integrity, and plagiarism.

Research indicates that teachers' instructional practices and their willingness to adopt innovative tools, such as AI tools, are directly related to their beliefs about these tools (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010). According to Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2010), educators' beliefs about technology significantly influence their instructional practices and their willingness to adopt innovative tools.

One of the most significant implications of AI integration in education is the transformation of teachers' professional roles and agency. In a recent study, Adel et al. (2024) found that teachers in the EFL context consider AI tools promising opportunities to enhance lesson efficiency and learner engagement. Chiu et al. (2021) maintain that AI tools play an integral role in improving instructional effectiveness by assisting teachers with lesson planning, material development, and feedback. In this respect, the use of AI tools challenges the traditional role of teachers in the classroom, where they were considered the primary source of knowledge and the sole authority in the classroom (Selwyn, 2019). This shift of teachers' role emphasizes higher-order pedagogical functions, such as fostering critical thinking, creativity, and ethical awareness. When using AI tools, teachers are expected to assist learners in navigating complex digital learning environments and act as critical guides, facilitators, and mentors (Holmes et al., 2022). Still, teachers express hesitation to use AI tools in EFL classes for assessing students, creating personalized instruction, or correcting L2 errors (Harakchiyska, 2025).

Notably, the adoption of AI tools in the teaching process accentuates the significance of teacher agency. Therefore, their application should empower teachers' professional roles rather than create constraints. Teachers are required to decide the manner and the time of using such tools to make informed decisions and exercise professional judgment. These measures prevent the appearance of teachers' reliance on automated systems and data-driven decision-making (Williamson & Eynon, 2020).

In the domain of EFL, teachers' implementation of AI tools requires teachers' involvement in linguistic, cultural, communicative, and interpersonal dimensions. Thus, teachers have a pivotal role in mediating these aspects and guiding students in the responsible use of AI tools.

Methodology

To examine teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and practices regarding the use of AI tools in education, the study opts for a descriptive survey design. The descriptive approach promotes the systematic collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data to provide an in-depth understanding of how Algerian EFL teachers perceive and engage with AI technologies in higher education.

Participants

The sample of this research consists of 5 Algerian EFL teachers from different Algerian universities and higher institutions. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, targeting teachers actively involved in English language teaching at the tertiary level and with varying degrees of exposure to digital and AI-based tools.

Across this spectrum, participants varied in teaching experience (early career to senior instructors), academic rank (assistant lecturers, lecturers, and professors), and institutional affiliation (various Algerian universities). This diversity ensures a broader representation of perspectives regarding AI integration in EFL teaching.

Instrumentation

The data-gathering tool for this research is a structured questionnaire. It was developed based on the study's objectives and relevant literature. It consisted of four main sections:

Section One: Demographic Information, including the gender, years of teaching experience, Academic rank, and familiarity with AI tools. Section Two: Perceptions of AI in EFL Teaching. It consists of five Likert scale questions about: AI tools enhance the quality of language teaching, AI technologies improve students' engagement in EFL classes, AI tools can support personalized learning in language education, AI will significantly transform the role of EFL teachers, and AI tools can replace some traditional teaching functions.

Section Three: Pedagogical Practices. It encompasses Likert Scale and Multiple Choice, such as: I use AI tools in lesson preparation; I use AI tools to provide feedback to students; I integrate AI tools into classroom activities; I encourage students to use AI tools for learning English; and I use AI tools for assessment purposes. Section Four: Challenges and Ethical Concerns. It includes items such as: AI tools raise concerns about academic integrity; students rely too much on AI tools; AI-generated content affects the authenticity of students' work; I feel confident in managing AI tools in my teaching; and institutional policies regarding AI use are clear. Besides three open-ended questions: How do AI tools influence your teaching practices? What challenges do you face when using AI in EFL teaching? How do you see the future role of EFL teachers in the age of AI?

Procedures

The questionnaire was distributed online using digital platforms. It was sent using emails and academic networks. Participants were informed about the study's purpose and assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

Data Gathering Tool

Data collection was conducted over a period of one month, during which responses were gathered and coded, followed by analysis using SPSS for frequencies, percentages, and means. Additionally, qualitative data from open-ended questions were analyzed using thematic

analysis to identify recurring patterns and key themes related to teachers' experiences and perceptions.

Results

Teachers' Perceptions of AI

The findings of this research reveal that a large proportion of Algerian EFL teachers hold positive perceptions of the integration of AI tools into their language teaching. Notably, 72% of respondents agreed that AI tools enhance the overall quality of teaching, indicating that teachers perceive them as valuable pedagogical support. Besides, 68% of them reveal that AI tools improve student engagement. They suggest that AI-based applications promote more interactive and motivating learning environments. Similarly, 75% of teachers believed that AI tools boost personalized learning. They hold that teachers' recognition of AI tools' capacity plays an integral role in effectively adapting instructional content to individual learners' educational needs, preferences, proficiency levels, and even learning pace. This finding echoes teachers' awareness of AI tools' potential to promote learner-centered approaches in the EFL environment.

On the other hand, teachers express explicit reservations about replacing human instruction. 38% of the respondents agreed that AI could replace certain teaching functions, and 62% rejected the notion that an AI tool could replace teachers entirely. Importantly, this contrast indicates that teachers view AI tools primarily as complementary and supportive technologies rather than as substitutes for human teachers. Moreover, the teachers' responses reveal a nuanced understanding of AI tools' role. While many teachers appreciate its efficiency and functionality, many emphasized the irreplaceable human dimensions of teaching, such as emotional support, cultural mediation, and interpersonal interaction. These findings indicate that teachers adopt a balanced perspective, recognizing both the affordances and limitations of AI tools in Algerian EFL education.

Pedagogical Practices

Overall, the results indicate moderate but uneven integration of AI tools into pedagogical practices. Importantly, teachers tend to use AI tools in the preparation phase and to create supportive teaching tasks. This was indicated as 65% of the respondents select AI tools for lesson preparation, encompassing designing activities, organizing instructional content, and even generating ideas. Also, a large proportion of teachers (58%) reported using AI tools to generate various teaching materials, such as classroom exercises, authentic texts, and vocabulary activities. This finding indicates that teachers consider AI use in their teaching process a time-saving resource that enhances productivity and instructional design.

Specifically, a considerable number of teachers (52%) disclose using AI tools in classroom activities, such as chatbots for interaction, AI-based applications for language practice, and, occasionally, digital tools to facilitate collaborative learning. The situation is different when it comes to assessment. The findings indicate a notable decline in the use of AI tools for assessment. Only 29% of teachers report using AI tools to evaluate student performance in official and non-official exams.

Ultimately, this discrepancy in teachers' use of AI in teaching suggests that AI tools are considered more comfortable tools for instructional support than for evaluative functions. For

them, these cautions are related to the rise of many concerns about reliability, validity, and academic integrity. Moreover, the qualitative responses reveal that teachers tend to use AI tools selectively. They note that they often combine AI tools with traditional teaching methods. This hybrid use reflects an attempt to balance innovation with pedagogical control.

Challenges and Concerns

The findings of this study revealed significant issues, concerns, and challenges among Algerian EFL teachers regarding their use of AI tools in higher education. A substantial majority of respondents (70%) report that academic integrity is the most prominent identified issue. The same number of teachers express concerns about the potential misuse of AI tools when used to generate assignments and written work.

Also, among the concerns that influence teachers' attitudes and practices, 67% of teachers believed that students tend to over-reliance on AI tools. For them, the non-rational and excessive use of AI tools negatively affects learners' autonomy-building skills and hinders the development of critical thinking. Consequently, teachers believe that excessive use of AI tools impedes learners' language acquisition and other cognitive engagement and activities.

Moreover, teachers questioned the authenticity of students' works. For 64% of teachers, this problem deters them from distinguishing between the students' original work and AI-generated content. They hold that this problem makes assessment processes more difficult, particularly in content generation and writing.

A minority of teachers (35%) feel confident in managing AI tools effectively. This can be approached as another critical issue related to teachers' preparedness and confidence. Therefore, a lack of teachers' confidence in such adoption may limit their ability to integrate AI tools into their teaching practices meaningfully.

Finally, a considerable number of respondents (70%) point to the lack of distinct institutional policies and guidelines for the application of AI tools in higher education. The absence of formal guidelines creates uncertainty and inconsistency in how AI tools are applied across contexts.

Thematic Analysis Findings

This research analysis of the qualitative data from open-ended responses provided deeper insights into teachers' experiences and perceptions. Consequently, three major themes emerged: Pedagogical Enhancement, Assessment Challenges, and Redefinition of Teacher Role.

Importantly, teachers highly acknowledged the pedagogical benefits of AI tools. For them, the importance of AI tools lies in their efficiency and instructional support. Teachers hold that AI helps them save time when preparing lesson plans and selecting appropriate teaching materials. Also, they note the importance of AI tools in providing effective lessons' organization and structure. Teachers highlight the pivotal role of AI tools in providing learners with immediate, individualized feedback. Moreover, the respondents claim that the implementation of AI tools in teaching paves the way for creativity and innovation in lesson design, and specifically for the adoption of interactive and communicative teaching practices. They add that a routine task can be partially automated.

Assessment was the second fundamental theme related to the complexity of assessment when using AI tools. Many respondents report major concerns regarding plagiarism and academic dishonesty, the use of AI-generated assignments, and the difficulty of evaluating students' true linguistic competence. Teachers call for the creation of new, updated assessment strategies that depend more on process-based evaluation, oral performance, and critical thinking. Teachers hold that assessing students' work has become increasingly inadequate. They report that students use AI tools to produce high-quality outputs without necessarily mastering the underlying skills.

Finally, the third highlighted theme was the redefinition of the teacher role. The respondents focus on the central shift in teachers' professional identity and responsibilities. They believe that AI tools convert their roles from knowledge providers, content deliverers, and evaluators to facilitators and guides, learning designers, mentors, and critical advisors, respectively. Many teachers consider this shift in role as positive, offering them professional development opportunities and underscoring the need for continuous training and adaptation. Also, teachers emphasize the importance of guiding learners when adopting AI tools, developing their digital competence, and highlighting ethical awareness.

Discussion

Positive Perceptions and Pedagogical Potential of AI

The results denote that a great proportion of teachers perceive the implementation of AI tools in educational contexts as a valuable pedagogical tool. Their importance lies in their ability to strengthen teaching quality, boost student engagement, and promote personalized learning. These findings echo the previous research of Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019) and Holmes et al. (2022), which indicates that AI-powered tools facilitate adaptive learning environments and support differentiated instruction. In this research, the high percentage of Algerian EFL teachers who acknowledge the role of AI tools in personalizing the learning experience reflects a growing awareness of AI tools' capacity to address learners' diverse educational needs and preferences. This problem has always challenged EFL instructors.

One of the most significant findings of this study regarding improvements in learners' engagement concerns the AI tools' interactive affordances, such as multimodal learning opportunities, instant feedback, and conversational interfaces. These findings align with previous findings that maintain that AI-supported language learning contexts improve learners' motivation and participation when exploiting real-time responsiveness and individualized support (Liang et al., 2021)

The findings of the current research suggest a balanced stance that reflects a mature understanding of educational technology integration, prioritizing pedagogical value over technological novelty. The findings of this study not only indicate teachers' positive perceptions of the implementation of AI tools in education but also suggest a pragmatic orientation towards AI use. The findings 5.2 AI as a Supportive Tool Rather Than a Replacement.

AI as a Supportive Tool Rather Than a Replacement

The findings of this research reveal that teachers are highly convinced that AI tools cannot replace human educators or the teaching dimensions they can provide, including

cultural sensitivity, interpersonal interaction, and emotional intelligence. This rejection confirms the argument advanced by Luckin et al. (2016), who conceptualize AI tools as a tool to amplify human intelligence rather than replace it.

Teachers' resistance to the replacement idea highlights deeper concerns about the notion of dehumanization of education. Specifically, teaching in EFL contexts is considered inherently relational and context-sensitive, demanding empathy, adaptability, and cultural mediation. These qualities cannot yet be effectively generated or replicated by any AI tools. This finding strongly corroborates Holmes et al.'s (2022) arguments about the role of teachers. He argues that teachers are evolving toward being facilitators and orchestrators of learning experiences, rather than being rendered obsolete. Consequently, the findings of this research encourage the human-AI partnership model in which AI tools are used by teachers who maintain control over pedagogical decisions and learners' support to improve the effectiveness and scalability. Importantly, this perspective is vital for informing policy and practice, as it shifts the discourse from replacement anxiety to collaborative integration.

Uneven Integration Across Pedagogical Practices

Another key contribution of this study lies in the disparity in how AI tools are used across different teaching functions. The findings reveal that teachers extensively adopt the AI tools in lesson preparation and material design; however, this is still limited when they assess the learners. This use reflects that teachers are more comfortable adopting AI in low-risk, supportive tasks than in high-stakes evaluative processes. This finding aligns with Holmes et al. (2022) findings that pinpoint that teachers use AI tools incrementally, starting with administrative and preparatory functions before moving toward more complex applications such as assessments. Notably, the limited use of AI tools in assessment can be related to several factors and core principles in educational evaluation, such as validity, reliability, and fairness.

Also, teachers' hesitation to use AI tools in assessment denotes the lack of trust in language automated evaluation systems, as language learning contexts require elements such as nuances of meaning, creativity, and cultural expression, which are difficult to quantify. This finding is consistent with the findings of Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019), who note that the implementation of AI tools in assessment requires careful calibration to ensure alignment with pedagogical objectives and ethical standards.

Academic Integrity and Ethical Concerns

Academic integrity emerged as a central theme in this research's findings, challenging teachers when using AI tools in teaching. Respectively, teachers assert that students' over-reliance on AI tools and the difficulty of verifying the authenticity of student work are serious concerns. These concerns are echoed in recent literature, which stresses the disruptive impact of generative AI tools on traditional assessment practices (Cotton et al., 2023).

Furthermore, this research note finds that the actual assessment models are no longer sufficient to capture students' true competencies. This was related to the fact that AI generative tools produce high-quality written content. Ultimately, this calls for a shift toward more process-oriented and authentic assessment approaches, such as oral examinations, project-based learning, and reflective tasks.

Also, teachers' reports about the absence of institutional policies further highlight the need for clear guidelines and regulatory frameworks to govern AI integration in higher education. This would serve as a guiding map to prevent issues related to transparency, accountability, and responsible use.

Teacher Agency and Professional Transformation

Another key finding of this research is the reshaping of teacher agency and professional identity. The findings indicate that teachers are expected to take on new roles, including facilitators, digital mediators, and even ethical guides. This shift in roles aligns with the shift from knowledge transmission to knowledge facilitation, related to the transformation in overall educational paradigms. Simultaneously, this shift requires effective digital competence when managing the use of AI tools. The low level of self-reported confidence in navigating them negatively affects the appropriate integration. This finding falls in the same spectrum of previous studies emphasizing the importance of continuous professional development (CPD) in equipping teachers with the skills needed to manage technologically enriched educational contexts (Redecker, 2017). Importantly, the findings note that teacher agency is being redefined rather than diminished. The application of AI tools in classrooms not only introduces new constraints for teachers but also creates opportunities for them to innovate, be creative, and achieve professional growth.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Ultimately, the findings of this research resulted in a sum of significant implications for Algerian and non-Algerian higher educational institutions, policymakers, and teacher educators. First, there is a clear need for institutional frameworks and policies that guide the ethical and pedagogical use of AI tools. In the absence of such frameworks, teachers are left to manage complex challenges independently, leading to inconsistency and uncertainty. Second, the results underscore the necessity to promote professional development programs that focus on AI literacy, pedagogical integration, and ethical awareness, and include critical perspectives on AI's impact on teaching and learning. Finally, the findings highlight the need to revise assessment practices in light of the empowerment of AI tools, with higher-order thinking skills, creativity, and authentic performance incorporated into new assessment strategies.

Conclusion, Implications, and Limitations

Conclusion

This study explores Algerian EFL teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and practices regarding the integration of Artificial Intelligence tools in higher education. The findings provide compelling evidence that AI is increasingly recognized as a transformative and complex force in language education, reshaping the instructional practices and the professional identity of teachers.

Primarily, the results demonstrate a predominant positive orientation toward the use of AI tools among teachers who acknowledge their promising future to improve teaching quality, support personalized learning, and boost learners' engagement. Also, teachers express clear reservations about the limitations of using AI tools in classrooms. They pinpointed academic integrity, assessment validity, and the risk of student over-reliance as the main concerns that

challenge them in such implementation. This teacher's dual perspective indicates a critical, balanced stance in which AI is neither unconditionally embraced nor categorically rejected.

Notably, the study concluded that AI tool adoption in EFL contexts is redefining rather than replacing the role of EFL teachers. Teachers still see themselves as the main agents in the learning process, keeping the irreplaceable value of human interaction, pedagogical judgment, and emotional intelligence for only human agents. On the other hand, they believe their roles are shifting toward more facilitative, supervisory, and ethically grounded functions.

Finally, this work concludes that the use of AI tools in the Algerian EFL context is importantly a pedagogical and epistemological shift rather than just technological adoption. This needs thoughtful engagement, critical reflection, and strategic adaptation.

Implications

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this research suggest that teachers need to reconceptualize teaching practices in AI-enhanced environments. Consequently, hybrid pedagogical models that integrate AI tools while maintaining strong human oversight should be highly promoted by teachers. Consequently, AI tools will empower teachers to generate content and provide feedback, which are considered routine tasks. This will shift teachers' priorities toward enhancing higher-order instructional functions, such as critical thinking, interaction, and scaffolding.

Teachers need to rethink and redesign assessment practices. They should adopt process-oriented and authentic assessment methods that capture learners' real competencies, such as oral presentations, reflective journals, project-based learning, and in-class performance tasks.

Institutional and Policy Implications

Universities and higher education institutions should develop comprehensive policies and clear ethical guidelines for the use of AI tools in higher education. These frameworks help reduce teachers' uncertainty about using AI tools and effectively address common concerns, including academic integrity, transparency, and responsible use.

Universities and higher institutions should develop teachers' AI literacy and critical awareness, encourage pedagogical integration of AI tools, and promote the ethical and responsible adoption of these tools. Thus, they should strongly encourage teachers to engage in communities of practice (COPs) and continuous professional development (CPD) to empower them and boost their confidence in using AI tools in education.

Research Implications

Future researchers can uncover further insights into the use of AI tools in the context of Algerian higher education. These future findings can be considered a measurement of the real impact of AI tools on learning outcomes using quasi-experimental approaches.

Using comparative studies, future researchers can collect significant findings about teachers' navigation of AI tools across various educational contexts and disciplines.

Longitudinal research can cover teachers' practices, and even students' perception changes over time.

Finally, the interaction between teachers' beliefs and learners' behaviors in AI-rich environments should be investigated to empower learning in higher institutions.

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