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## The Challenges of Teaching and Learning ESL by the Use of AI Tools at Tertiary Level in Lahore

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### Abstract

This study investigates the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in the instruction and acquisition of English as a Second Language (ESL) at the tertiary level in Lahore, Pakistan. The widespread use of AI programs like ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Meta AI has significantly impacted the methods ESL students employ in academic writing, grammar enhancement, and language acquisition. Although AI provides advantages such as immediate feedback, personalised learning, and increased productivity, it also presents significant obstacles, including issues related to academic integrity, dependency, technical inaccuracies, and the erosion of students' critical thinking abilities. This study employs a qualitative research approach featuring unstructured interviews with BS and MS students, as well as university educators, to provide firsthand insights into the utilisation, advantages, constraints, and observations related to AI-assisted ESL education. Findings indicate that although AI technologies are widely utilised, particularly for assignments, grammar correction, and vocabulary development, they lack full consistency and frequently necessitate human validation. Participants underscored the necessity of integrating AI into ESL courses under teacher supervision to achieve a balance between technological assistance and conventional education. The research underscores the pressing necessity for educator training, policy formulation, and ethical strategies to guarantee the appropriate and effective implementation of AI in ESL instruction inside Pakistani colleges. These insights enhance the incomplete discourse on AI in education by providing recommendations and practical endorsements for systematic implementation.

**Keyword:** AI, ESL, ChatGPT, Grammarly

### Introduction

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education, particularly in English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction at the postsecondary level, has revolutionised traditional teaching and learning approaches. AI tools, such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and other language-processing software, are commonly utilised by students to enhance their writing, grammar, and research skills. Conversely, although AI offers numerous advantages, it also heightens concerns over educational trustworthiness, student reliance, and informational variability. The application of AI in ESL education at the tertiary level in Lahore, Pakistan, is becoming more prevalent, although there is a deficiency of thorough research about its impact on both students and educators.



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The notion of artificial intelligence in education dates back to the mid-20th century when Alan Turing introduced the idea of robots emulating human intelligence. The first AI-driven educational courses were initiated in the 1960s, exemplified by IBM's PLATO system, which facilitated computer-assisted learning. Over time, AI has evolved to incorporate sophisticated natural language processing (NLP) tools, adaptive learning methodologies, and AI-driven writing assistants. Currently, AI presentations in education have beyond mere computerisation, influencing instructional methods, program design, and assessment techniques. The increasing reliance on AI in educational contexts has generated issues over its ethical application, accessibility, and long-term effects on cognitive development.

Numerous scientists have delineated and elucidated the function of AI in education. Alan Turing (1950) defined artificial intelligence as the ability of machines to simulate human intelligence via computational processes. John McCarthy (1956) coined the phrase "Artificial Intelligence" and emphasised its potential to do jobs necessitating human-like comprehension. Sebastian Thrun (2003) advocated for the development of customised learning in school using intelligent tutoring systems. Norbert Wiener (1960s) introduced the concept of manufacturing, emphasising AI's significance in automation and feedback-driven learning. Peter Norvig (2011) asserted that AI can enhance school assessment through data-driven analytics. Ray Kurzweil (2012) anticipated that AI would facilitate the mechanisation and enhancement of human learning experiences via adaptive feedback mechanisms.

The utilisation of AI in ESL instruction provides multiple benefits. AI-driven applications such as Grammarly provide instantaneous corrections, enhancing pupils' grammar, coherence, and fluency. It also encompasses differentiated instruction, which accommodates diverse student requirements by providing personalised courses tailored to individual ability levels. It also enhances efficacy by automating organisational duties, enabling teachers to concentrate on facilitating learning. Moreover, AI enhances research capabilities by assisting students in generating ideas, structuring essays, and refining academic writing skills. The introduction of AI tools enables students to pursue independent study, facilitating continuous skill enhancement outside the classroom. Educators gain from AI by experiencing a less workload, since it assists in grading and evaluation, hence streamlining the assessment process. Furthermore, AI is essential in overcoming language barriers by facilitating translation and pronunciation practice, hence enhancing the language acquisition process for ESL learners. Ultimately, AI fosters autonomous learning, empowering students to assume control of their education and investigate new concepts at their own rhythm.

In Lahore's tertiary education sector, AI tools have been widely adopted by students for academic writing and learning purposes. Conversely, this has elicited concerns among educators about an over-dependence on AI, plagiarism, and the deterioration of critical thinking skills. The integration of AI in higher education presents numerous problems. A primary concern is academic integrity, as AI-generated content may compromise the originality and legitimacy of student submissions. Moreover, numerous instructors have challenges in effectively integrating AI into their curricula due to insufficient training in AI technology. Supply constraints present a challenge,



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since inadequate IT infrastructure at many colleges hinders the further integration of AI tools in educational settings. Ethical considerations, such as concerns around data privacy and the legitimacy of AI-generated content, are critical topics that require discussion. Furthermore, there exists a potential for cognitive reliance, wherein students may rely excessively on AI-generated explanations as a substitute for participating in profound learning and rigorous examination. A significant difficulty is the absence of adaptive regulations, as universities in Pakistan are still formulating organised criteria for AI utilisation, complicating the regulation of its application across various organisations. This research aims to examine the reliance of ESL students on AI tools at the university level in Lahore, evaluate the issues encountered by teachers owing to AI-assisted learning, and assess the effectiveness of AI tools from the students' perspective. Comprehending the function of AI in ESL instruction within Pakistan's conventional and academic framework would facilitate the development of systematic AI integration strategies, educator training initiatives, and principled rules for responsible AI use. This study expands on existing material while providing focused insights into the difficulties and opportunities that AI brings in Pakistani higher education. Furthermore, it seeks to propose endorsements for the integration of complementary AI applications within traditional educational institutions to improve ESL educational outcomes.

### Research Questions and Objectives

#### Research Objectives

1. To explore the student's dependency on AI tools in universities.
2. To find the challenges faced by teachers from students who use AI.
3. To find out challenges caused by the use of AI in teaching and learning in universities.

#### Research questions

1. How do the students depend on AI tools in university?
2. How to find the challenges faced by teachers from students who use AI?
3. what are the challenges caused by the use of AI in teaching and learning in universities?

### Literature Review

The developing incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) in teaching and learning has expressively compressed English as a Second Language (ESL) learners and higher education. Numerous studies have discovered the effectiveness, challenges, and suggestions of AI writing tools in improving academic skills. This literature review studies some of the significant factors contributing to difficulties in teaching and learning by the use of AI tools at universities level, with a particular focus on the perspective of Pakistan, as well as the part of technology, mostly artificial intelligence (AI), in teaching and learning.

Firstly, research by A. shahid, A. khan (2024) investigates the role of AI writing tools in improving ESL students' academic writing skills in Pakistan. The study discoveries that AI tools be responsible for instant feedback, decrease check through time, and develop efficiency. It highlights that AI-assisted writing enhances grammar, vocabulary, coherence, and overall adeptness. However, it also highlights the challenges such as deficiency of awareness, unsatisfactory



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training, and limited IT resources, signifying faculty training sessions and workshops to mitigate these issues.

A study by Javed (2023) focuses on the impact of AI on second-language learning, highlighting grammar checkers and bootlegging detectors. The study shows that AI expressively improves students' writing and learning skills by contributing real-time response and error correction. While AI assistances in academic success, research, and professional growth, concerns remain about students' dependency on AI-generated content, which may hold back their critical thinking skills.

The role of ChatGPT in higher education has also been observed. Ali & Raza (2023) discuss the assistances and challenges of using ChatGPT, recognizing five benefits: adaptive learning, modified feedback, investigation support, computerization of administrative tasks, and advanced assessments. However, the study also explores experiments such as academic reliability concerns, reliability issues, and restrictions in development critical thinking and teamwork. The authors suggest AI reading ability programs and ethical AI incorporation approaches to address these challenges.

The study by Rahman et al. (2022) explores the inspiration of AI-based writing support on university-level research writing. The findings reveal that AI tools help revolutionize research authorization by improving structure, coherence, and citation management. However, the study informs of potential principled concerns regarding the validity and distinctiveness of AI-assisted work.

Fatima & Hussain (2022) examine Pakistani university teachers' viewpoints on ChatGPT in higher education, detaching light on teachers' worries about copy and depends on AI-generated content. Their discoveries line up with the present study, as both underline the need for clear established procedures and AI learning programs. However, while the present study explores student experiences, and their research focuses mostly on teacher's observations, as long as corresponding understandings into AI's role in higher education. It finds that ChatGPT support research, feedback, and academic learning and writing. The study mentions developing clear strategies and training programs to ensure principled AI usage among students and faculty.

The impact of AI-generated content on educational valuation is discovered in research by Shah et al. (2021). The study examines how universities calculate AI-generated course work and their suggestions for grading systems. Conclusions recommend that traditional valuation methods may have need of version to differentiate between AI-assisted and self-sufficiently written work, ensuring fair calculation practices.

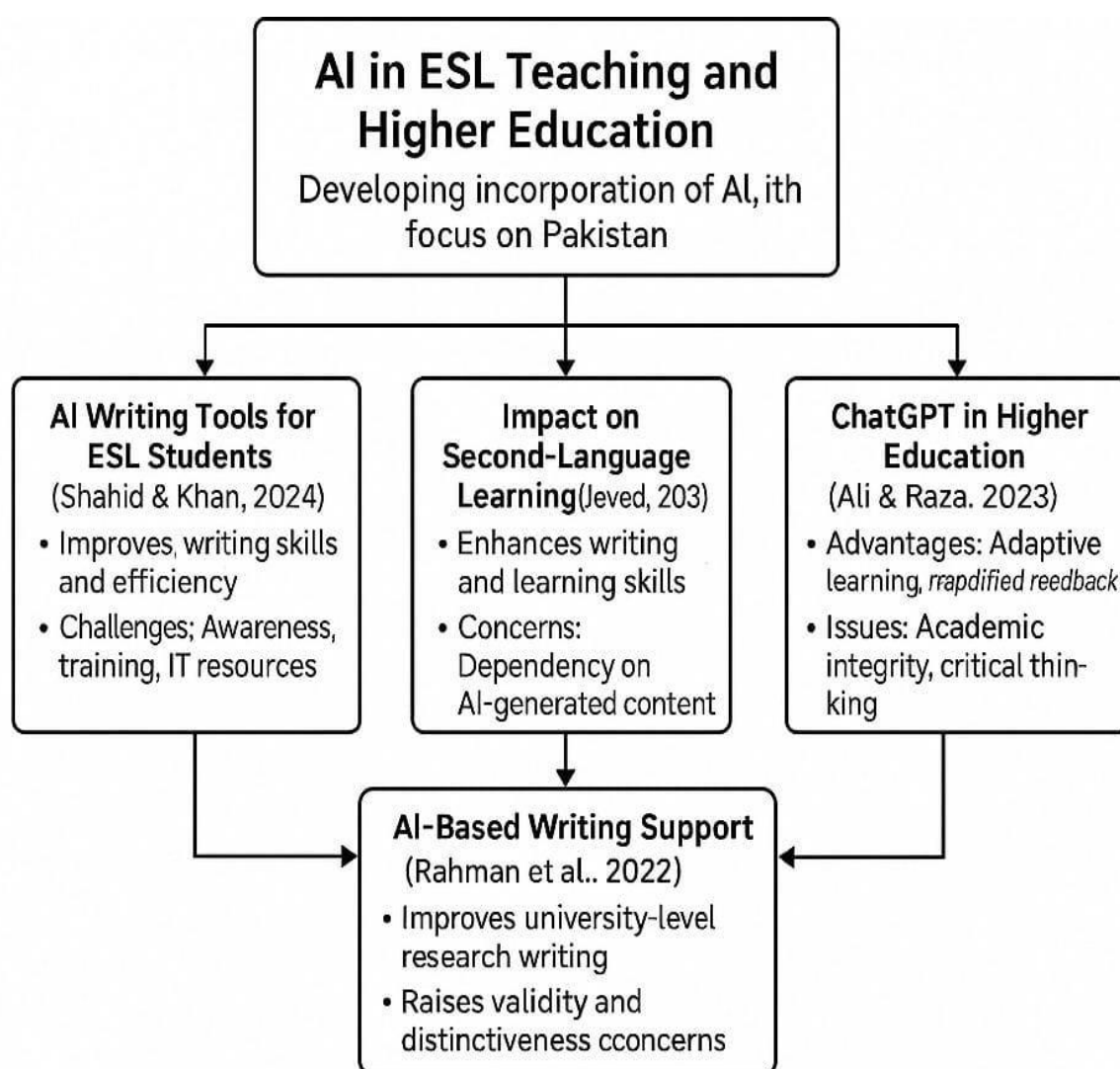
Furthermore, a study by Yousef et al. (2021) investigates AI's role in improving student commitment and learning outcomes. It discovered that AI-driven teaching and writing tools temporary communicating learning environments, helping students improve their writing skills through adapted guidance. However, the study informs against over-reliance on AI, which may decrease students' ability to develop independent analytical skills.

Another studies of Hassan & Karim (2020) discovers the proper attentions interconnected to AI in academic learning and writing, emphasising concerns about data privacy, academic honesty, and adjusting needs. Their research, directed in the European context, shares resemblances with the current study in encouraging for responsible AI use. However, while they focus on strategy





approvals at a macro level, the present study delivers practical commendations personalized to Pakistani graduate students and their unique academic challenges. They recommend universities found AI integrities committees to confirm responsible application of AI tools in education.



Overall, the literature establishes AI's transformative role in academic writing, highlighting both its benefits and challenges. The current study dimensions upon remaining research by specifically focusing on Pakistani ESL learners at the graduate level, addressing their exclusive experiments while integrating insights from transnational perspectives. The discoveries contribute to the developing discourse on AI in education by encouraging for structured AI integration, teachers training, and ethical AI use to optimize academic writing development without cooperating academic reliability.

## Methodology

There are three major types of research approaches or types: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Qualitative research refers to the process of



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discovering and trying to explain complex social phenomena; it is aimed at understanding people's thoughts, behaviours, or experiences with the use of certain instruments such as interviews, observations, and content analysis. Quantitative research relates to data derived from numbers or numerical analysis in general. It is very useful in research, particularly one concerning a large number of samples and one that has quantifiable results, but it will quantify variables and look for patterns. Mixed methods research combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches in an attempt to represent a much more detailed and, therefore, all-inclusive understanding of a research problem. It integrates strengths by making the approach more balanced in dealing with numerical data and subjective insights. The current study has resorted to a qualitative approach for just the purpose of narrating the challenges of teaching and learning ESL by the use of AI at tertiary level in Lahore. Qualitative research has particularly come out to be well-suited for such a study because it probes deep into the knowledge and awareness held by students about the use of AI in learning. Interviews will be employed for this study to gather rich modes through which the students would perceive and respond to use of AI instruction in ESL classes. Interviews are the instrument for this research in collecting data. This is an extremely well-established method of qualitative research. Further, through interviews, ridiculous personal perceptions from the respondents are obtained because they allow open-ended responses where people can electively try to explain their experiences in detail. There are three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. In a structured interview, a list of predesigned questions would be asked in the same order of every individual interviewed, thus making all interviews uniform in their overall resemblance. Semi-structured interviews are not so formal and strict in their format and thus allow the generous elasticity of an interviewer to ask questions that may stand up from a respondent's answers. Unstructured interviews, the most fluid are used in this research. They allow the room for an interviewer to investigate into a potential hole that may be dug during an interview by a respondent, since his or her response may dictate. That is, the respondent is free to answer the interviewee in the latter's preferred style; hence, the interviewer is free to investigation questions as the conversation explains to gain better insight into a respondent's thought process and environments of an experience. For this research, the principal data collection instrument used is unstructured interviews. Unstructured interviews are very effective at gaining in-depth insight into participants' perceptions and experiences. This approach allows flexibility in asking questions during the interviewing process, which would be very appropriate if one wanted to understand how students experience and perceive learning through AI. It keeps on at the respondents to respond with honest opinions but still ensures that the responses are as elaborative as possible and subjective. This study shall use unstructured interviews in order to discover the perceptions of students with regard to the effectiveness of task-based language teaching in their improvement of developing languages and also in achieving success in academics at the BS and MS level population: The population of this study is BS and MS students and teachers in a university. This population will best fit the requirements of research in challenges of teaching and learning ESL by the use of AI since it comprises actively engaged students from the university who are more mature and consequently capable of reflecting on their learning



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experience. Since the task activities in the process of BS and MS levels appear to be high-order in nature, they would probably engage critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which form the basis of language teaching by the use of AI. The experiences they have with use of AI in learning will be very useful when they are trying to understand how these methods have an effect on language learning at the tertiary level. The research should focus on "the challenges of teaching and learning ESL by the use of AI at the tertiary level in Lahore." Hence, university students would be the best population relevant to conducting the study. Since the research addresses the influence of AI used in learning the English language the most important factor for this purpose is to engage learners who are exposed to such teaching methods in the setting they are attending currently. BS and MS-level students are at a stage in their education where they should have acquired academic English, not only as a complement to their ability to acquire any knowledge but also for professional enrichment. The ratings of teaching and learning ESL instruction will enable significant data on how effective the methods are in terms of promoting language proficiency, critical thinking, and interest in schoolwork.

### Interview 1

Do you know what is ESL?

Yes, I know, English as a second language learning.

How long have you been learning English?

Since, my undergrad I focused on it and I learn English properly.

What are the challenges do you faced in learning English?

I think big challenge that I faced that is fluency, because we always learn English through grammar translation method so, that was not very effective, and I faced many challenge in learning English language.

Are you familiar with any AI tool like chatGPT grammarly?

Yes, sometimes I use WhatsApp meta AI for instruction and sometime I used chatGPT for my assignment

Have you faced any difficulties using AI tool like any technical issue or data error?

I think the biggest issue That I have faces that is limited data, and I have never faced any technical issue

Do you think AI tools are always providing accurate data?

No, I do not think so because I have been learning English and I asked certain questions from AI and it did not provide me accurate data and relatable answer to me so I am not agreed with this

How much you depend on AI tools in class?

I think our subject is English and it allows us to use AI tools and I am so dependent on AI like we ask so many question from AI in our daily routine and almost I am 70% depend on AI tools for my learning. Firstly, I give my own input and then I asked from AI tools and mostly I rewrite my data from my own words.

Do you think teacher should integrate AI tools in regular ESL class?

I think teacher should integrate it in ESL learning because from task I think student learn more and more in classroom

And now a day's role of AI tools in our lives are too much we totally depend on AI tools in our lives for learning and for everything.



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## Interview 2

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## Interview 3

Do you know what is ESL?

Yes, it's a course for people who want to learn English as their second language.

How long have you been learning English?

Since I was in school, but I got serious about it during my undergrad. When I got admission in English then I realize that English is much more important for me and then I started learn English.

What are the challenges you faced in learning English?

Understanding idioms was hard. Also, thinking in English takes practice. And also I faced problem in fluency I cannot speak in good fluency. And sometimes I do not understand the exact meaning of the word that make problem for me and I recently use AI like chatGPT for my learning and I use some other tools for learning an English language

Are you familiar with any AI tools like ChatGPT or Grammarly?

Definitely! I use ChatGPT for writing and practicing speaking. Grammarly helps with grammar. But mostly I used chatGPT for my learning and it helps me in





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good way to learn English.

Have you faced any difficulties using AI tools like any technical issue or data error?

Sometimes the internet connection is slow or the app crashes. Or I cannot face any technical issue while using the AI tools. Yeah!

Do you think AI tools are always providing accurate data? Not always. I noticed that sometimes ChatGPT gives outdated or wrong information.

How much you depend on AI tools in class? Moderate. I use it for support, but I still learn better from teachers. and I depend on chatGPT like 50% we can say that I depend on chatGPT.

Do you think teachers should integrate AI tools in regular ESL class? Yes, but with guidance. Students need to learn how to use them responsibly.

### Interview 4

Do you know what is ESL? Yes, it means English as a Second Language. It helps people learn English when it's not their native language. And the meaning of this is English as second language.

How long have you been learning English? I've been learning English for about 8 years now, since high school. And learning an English language is very difficult for me because sometime I do not pronounce a very accurately.

What are the challenges you faced in learning English? Pronunciation and listening were the hardest for me, especially with different accents. And basically I do not face any technical issue while I use any AI tools for my learning and especially in learning an English language.

Are you familiar with any AI tools like ChatGPT or Grammarly? Yes! I use Grammarly for writing and recently started using ChatGPT for practicing conversation. And chatGPT help me in good manner for learning an English language. And I learn many new words from AI tools which I used in my conversation.

Have you faced any difficulties using AI tools like technical issues or data error? Sometimes Grammarly doesn't understand context, and ChatGPT can give wrong answers if I'm not specific.

Do you think AI tools always provide accurate data? No, not always. I think they are helpful, but I always double-check the information. sometimes they guide us in another way and we want some other direction and that is why I believe that they never always provide us accurate and good data.

How much do you depend on AI tools in class? I use them often for writing assignments and grammar corrections but not for everything. And mostly 60% I depend on AI tools we can say that...

Do you think teachers should integrate AI tools in regular ESL class? Yes, it would make classes more interactive and help students learn at their own pace.

### Interview 5

Do you know what is ESL?

Yes, ESL stands for English as a Second Language. It refers to programs or



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classes designed to help non-native English speakers improve their language proficiency. As a university student, I've come across ESL programs both on campus and online, aimed at helping international or multilingual students adjust to academic life in an English-speaking environment. ESL courses cover a wide range of skills including reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and often focus on academic vocabulary, essay writing, and communication strategies needed for university success.

How long have you been learning English?

I've been learning English for over a decade now. I started during my primary school years, and it became a key part of my education over time. At the university level, I use English in nearly every aspect of academic life from attending lectures and writing research papers to participating in discussions and giving presentations. Although I've learned English for many years, I still continue to build on my vocabulary, academic writing, and fluency as I move through my degree program.

What challenges have you faced in learning English?

As a university student, some of the biggest challenges I've faced while learning English include:

The first challenge that I faced that is Academic Writing. Writing formal essays and research papers can be difficult due to complex grammar structures, vocabulary, and citation rules. And Speaking in Seminars participating in class discussions can be intimidating, especially when expressing complex ideas or debating with fluent speakers. And the most bigger and important challenge that I faced that is Pronunciation and Fluency Even after years of learning, it's not always easy to pronounce certain words naturally or speak without pauses.

Are you familiar with any AI tool like chatGPT or grammarly?

Yes, I use both ChatGPT and Grammarly regularly. As a university student Grammarly helps me correct grammar and spelling in my essays, assignments, and even emails to teachers. It also gives me feedback on tone and clarity. ChatGPT is useful for brainstorming ideas, understanding complex topics, practicing academic writing, or even getting explanations for grammar rules or vocabulary.

Have you faced any difficulty while using AI tools like any technical issue or data error?

Yes, I've had a few issues Grammarly sometimes suggests changes that don't fit the academic tone or context of my writing. ChatGPT, while very useful, can occasionally give incorrect or outdated information, especially for specific or technical topics.

Occasionally, there are technical problems like slow loading times or platform glitches. I've also noticed that AI can't always understand the full meaning behind my writing if it's very nuanced or creative. So while these tools are helpful, I always double-check the suggestions or content before submitting any work for grading.

Do you think AI tools always provide accurate data?

Not always. AI tools are powerful, but they can make mistakes. For example

They might misunderstand the context of a sentence or suggest grammar changes that are not appropriate. When asked factual questions, tools like ChatGPT sometimes generate confident but incorrect answers. They also lack human judgment, especially in understanding tone, intent, or creativity in



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writing. That's why I think it's important to treat AI tools as assistants, not as sources of absolute truth. They're helpful, but I always use my own judgment and sometimes consult with teachers or reliable sources for confirmation.

How much you depend on AI tools in class?

I wouldn't say I completely depend on them, but I use them as study and 70% I depend on AI tool

Then said, I still rely heavily on lectures, textbooks, class notes, and group discussions. AI tools help me be more efficient and accurate, but they don't replace the learning process itself

Do you think teachers should integrate AI tools in regular ESL class?

Yes, I definitely think AI tools should be integrated into ESL classes, especially at the university level. Like we can say that

They provide instant feedback, which helps students correct mistakes and learn faster. They offer personalized learning, adapting to each student's pace and level. They can boost confidence, especially in writing and grammar practice. They help prepare students for real-world communication and modern academic tasks.

### **Interview 6**

Do you know what is ESL?

Yes, ESL is about learning English when it is not your native language. In Pakistan we had basic English classes but they were not enough for universities level. I think we need to develop our English classes and apply different strategies for learning an English in classes.

How long have you been learning English?

I started in middle school, but seriously only since I entered university. I've been started to learn English language and use English in my language.

What challenges have you faced in learning English?

Listening and speaking are hardest for me. Sometimes I understand the text but freeze when asked to talk. Also, understanding different accents is tough. In my different classes, the terms are very formal, and I struggle to use them naturally.

Are you familiar with AI tools like ChatGPT or Grammarly?

Yes. Grammarly is my go-to for fixing essays and assignment. ChatGPT helps me prepare for different presentations and find phrases I can use. And it helped me more when I need to learn an English language. It provides me a good vocabulary and different words.

Have you faced any difficulties using AI tools?

Yes. Sometimes ChatGPT gives long, confusing answers that don't match the context. And Grammarly sometimes marks things as wrong that are actually fine in formal writing. But also sometime it provides me good and accurate data.

DO you think AI tools always provide me accurate data?

No, they try their best but sometimes miss the point. I think they're still learning, just like us. So, it's best to double-check everything.



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How much do you depend on AI tools in class?

I almost depend on AI tools we can say that 80%. They're useful, especially when I'm writing something like for our presentation. But I don't depend entirely on them. I also use dictionaries, thesauruses, and feedback from my teachers.

DO you think teacher should integrate AI tools in regular ESL class?

Yes! AI tools are part of the future. If teachers show us how to use them well, they can make learning easier and more fun.

### Interview 7

Do you know what is ESL?

Yes, ESL is a learning program for people whose native language is not English. In Pakistan many students take ESL classes in high school or university to improve their speaking and writing.

How long have you been learning English?

I have been learning English since I started my undergrad. But learning English is mostly about grammar and exams. It's only after joining academy that I started learning real communication skills.

what challenges have you faced in learning English?

Fluency and confidence. I know the rules and words, but I hesitate to speak. Also, idioms and informal expressions are confusing. Media studies involve lots of abstract thinking, so expressing opinions clearly is a challenge.

Are you familiar with AI tools like ChatGPT or Grammarly?

Definitely. I use Grammarly to check my writing for grammar and tone. I also use ChatGPT for brainstorming ideas like for different quiz, teacher gives us a difficult questions and I use ChatGPT for difficult questioning, writing scripts, and improving my vocabulary for presentations.

Have you faced any difficulties using these tools?  
Sometimes I feel the AI doesn't understand emotional or creative writing. In media assignments, tone and style matter a lot, and AI suggestions are too robotic.

Do you think AI tools always provide accurate data?  
No. They are helpful, but not always right. I once used ChatGPT for research, but the facts it gave me weren't supported by real sources. That was a big lesson.

How much do you depend on AI tools in class?  
I use them as support tools, especially for writing drafts and checking grammar. But I always revise the content myself and ask my professors or classmates for real feedback.

Do you think teachers should integrate AI tools in regular ESL classes?  
Yes, I think so. Students should be taught how to use tools like ChatGPT for improving their skills. But teachers should also encourage independent thinking, creativity, and real conversations.

### Major Themes and Codes:

Theme	Codes	Insights from Interviews
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Understanding of ESL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ESL as English learning</li> <li>2. ESL as academic requirement</li> </ol>	All participants correctly defined ESL as English as a Second Language, usually associated with academic or formal learning contexts.
Duration of English Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learning since school or</li> <li>2. undergrad</li> <li>Increased focus in university</li> </ol>	Most participants began learning English in school but became serious during university
Challenges in ESL Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fluency</li> <li>2. Grammar</li> <li>3. translation method</li> <li>4. Idioms</li> <li>5. Pronunciation</li> <li>6. Confidence</li> </ol>	Fluency, pronunciation, and understanding idioms or academic vocabulary were common issues. Grammar-translation method was criticized for lack of speaking practice
Familiarity with AI Tools	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use of ChatGPT</li> <li>2. Use of Grammarly</li> <li>3. Use of Meta AI/WhatsApp</li> </ol>	All participants are familiar with and have used AI tools like ChatGPT and Grammarly, especially for assignments and writing help.
Use Cases of AI Tools	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Writing help</li> <li>2. Vocabulary building</li> <li>3. brainstorming</li> </ol>	ChatGPT is often used for learning vocabulary, practicing speaking, and generating ideas. Grammarly is used for grammar and tone correction.
Issues with AI Tools	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Incorrect or outdated data</li> <li>2. Lack of contextual understanding</li> <li>3. Technical glitches</li> </ol>	Most participants reported AI tools sometimes provide incorrect or context-insensitive data. Some mentioned slow loading or irrelevant suggestions
Accuracy of AI Tools	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. AI not always accurate</li> <li>2. Need for human validation</li> </ol>	Majority of interviewees acknowledged that AI tools are helpful but not fully reliable. Human judgment is still required
Dependency on AI Tools	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 50%–80% dependence</li> <li>2. Used mostly for assignments and grammar</li> </ol>	Dependence varies from moderate to high. Students use AI mainly for assignments, grammar correction, and learning support
AI in ESL Classroom	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Integration recommended</li> <li>2. Enhances learning</li> <li>3. Should be</li> </ol>	All participants agreed that teachers should integrate AI into ESL learning, with a balance of guided instruction and independent critical thinking.



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## Results and Findings:

The qualitative analysis of interview data discovered a number of key understandings into how tertiary-level students in Lahore observe and experience the use of AI tools in learning English as a Second Language (ESL). All participants established a clear understanding of ESL, recognizing it as “English as a Second Language” primarily related with academic or formal learning. Most initiated learning English in school but only became more motivated and thoughtful about it during their university education, where the theoretical difficulties heightened the importance of English skill.

Participants informed facing some challenges in ESL learning. These involved complications with facility, pronunciation, grammar, and understanding idioms or academic vocabulary. Many disapproved the grammar-translation method for absent applied speaking opportunities, and a number of noted that low confidence delayed their ability to use English effectively.

All participants were familiar with AI tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Meta AI (including versions accessible via WhatsApp). These tools were commonly used, mostly for writing support, vocabulary building, and idea generation. ChatGPT was often engaged to brainstorm and practice speaking, while Grammarly was frequently used to correct grammar and tone in written assignments.

Even with the general use of AI tools, students pointed out several issues. Some tools occasionally provided outdated or context-insensitive information, while others experienced technical problems such as slow loading or unrelated suggestions. This managed to a general compromise that AI, even though helpful, is not always consistent and must be used with human misunderstanding. Participants highlighted that human judgment remains necessary to validate AI-generated content, especially in academic work where accuracy and context are crucial.

The level of dependence on AI tools varied, with students estimating that 50% to 80% of their English learning tasks elaborate these tools. Most used AI primarily for assignments, grammar correction, and supplementary learning support. However, there were concerns about overreliance theoretically undermining independent learning skills.

All participants agreed that AI tools should be integrated into ESL classrooms, but with suitable direction from teachers. They suggested that AI can enhance learning when balanced with serious thinking and human instruction. This guided combination was seen as essential to confirm that AI serves as a supportive tool rather than a replacement for foundational language learning processes.

## Conclusion

In a progressively globalized world, English as a Second Language (ESL) has become an important component of academic, social, and specialised success, for the most part in multilingual societies such as Pakistan. English is not only the medium of education at many universities in Pakistan but also a dynamic obligation for accessing global knowledge, acquiring engagement, and



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contributing in international discourse. However, even with its extensive significance, a significant number of students at the tertiary level continue to face determined challenges in understanding the language. These challenges include complications in grammar, vocabulary practise, writing fluency, pronunciation, and understanding, which delay their academic presentation and confidence. In recent years, the advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has introduced new avenues for language learning, with tools like ChatGPT, Grammarly, Quillbot, and Duolingo gaining admiration among undergraduates and educators. These tools provide instant feedback, grammar correction, vocabulary enhancement, and writing assistance, potentially revolutionizing traditional ESL teaching methodologies. They are especially valuable in contexts where personalized instruction and real-time language support are limited due to large class sizes or lack of resources.

In the face of these capable developments, the combination and efficiency of AI tools in ESL education remain under-explored in the Pakistani context, particularly at the university level. To address this gap, the existing study seeks to discover the experiments and perceptions surrounding the use of AI tools for ESL learning among tertiary students and teachers in Lahore. A qualitative research design was adopted to capture in-depth and contextually rich insights into the lived experiences of participants. The study applied unstructured interviews as the primary data collection method, allowing for open-ended and flexible conversations. This approach stimulated participants to share their reliable thoughts, feelings, and personal stories related to their use of AI tools in language learning. Through these interviews, several key themes emerged. Students reported that AI tools significantly aided them in improving their grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary. Many used these tools frequently, specifically for writing assignments, presentations, and communication tasks, with described usage ranging from 50% to 80% of their academic work. However, they also highlighted certain negatives, including the lack of contextual understanding by AI, the leaning to produce overly formal or unusual reactions, and the risk of becoming overly dependent on technology rather than developing independent language skills.

Teachers, on the other hand, communicated both hopefulness and thoughtfulness regarding the use of AI in ESL instruction. While they recognized the benefits of integrating AI tools as complementary resources, they stressed the importance of guided use, critical thinking, and teacher administration to avoid mismanagement or academic untruthfulness. The study was conducted in various public and private universities across Lahore, focusing on students enrolled in Bachelor's and Master's programs in English and other punishments, as well as faculty members involved in ESL teaching. Lahore was chosen due to its diverse and technologically progressive academic environment, making it a suitable location for examining the intersection of AI and ESL education. By analysing the perceptions of both learners and educators, this study aims to contribute to a better understanding of how AI tools are shaping language education in higher institutions and what steps can be taken to ensure their effective and ethical integration into ESL classrooms. The findings provide valuable insights into the evolving educational landscape, highlighting both the chances and limitations of using AI as a tool to enhance English language proficiency in a non-native context.



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