Final-Year EFL Student's Perceptions of ChatGPT in Teaching Competency Development

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the perceptions of final-year students majoring in English Education regarding ChatGPT in supporting the development of teaching competencies as artificial intelligence (AI) technologies become increasingly integrated into educational practices. Understanding its impact on future educators is of paramount importance. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with English Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur (UMKT). The findings reveal that ChatGPT serves as a valuable tool for improving lesson planning, enriching instructional materials, and enhancing classroom management strategies. The students expressed positive attitudes toward ChatGPT's ability to generate creative ideas, clarify complex topics, and serve as an easily accessible learning aid. However, concerns regarding excessive reliance on AI as well as the importance human-centered teaching approaches were highlighted. This research contributes to the understanding of how AI technologies like ChatGPT can be effectively utilized in EFL teacher training programs to balance technological advancements.
Key words: AI, ChatGPT, EFL

INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a branch of computer science aimed at developing systems or machines capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as decision-making, natural language understanding, and learning from experience. According to the definition provided (Sheikh et al., 2023), AI refers to systems that demonstrate intelligent behavior by analyzing their environment and acting autonomously to achieve specific goals. The definition of AI has evolved alongside advancements in technology and approaches within the field. (Joshi, 2024), in his article "On Defining Artificial Intelligence," proposed a definition stating that intelligence is "adaptation with insufficient knowledge and resources," emphasizing a system's ability to adapt under conditions of uncertainty.

Even though AI has made significant progress, challenges remain in universally defining this concept. In the article "Artificial Intelligence: A Clarification of Misconceptions, Myths and Desired Status," by (Emmert-Streib et al., 2020) it is mentioned that there is still no universally agreed-upon definition of "intelligence," and AI remains undefined mathematically despite nearly 65 years of development.

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) technology has brought about significant changes in various aspects of life, including in the field of education. Among the innovations in AI widely utilized by academics is ChatGPT, a natural language processing model designed to answer questions, provide explanations, and assist with other informational needs. ChatGPT emerges as a potential tool in supporting learning, particularly for students in need of quick and efficient access to information (Sholihatin et al., 2023). ChatGPT, as one of the advancements in the field of artificial intelligence, has begun to be applied in various learning contexts, including English language teaching. Over time, technological advancements have continued to progress, particularly in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI). These developments have brought significant changes to many aspects of life, including education (Kharis et al., 2024). Artificial Intelligence (AI) possesses the capacity to transform educational practices by offering tools designed to personalize the learning experience, thereby empowering educators to refine and optimize their teaching methods (Uygun, 2024).

The advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology in the field of education has introduced profound changes, especially during the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0, which prioritizes automation and data exchange. Among the latest innovations is ChatGPT, an AI-driven language model designed to produce interactive, accurate, and contextually relevant text responses, thereby enhancing communication and learning processes (Indik Syahrabanu, 2023). In the realm of language education, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a valuable tool to enhance various aspects of learning, including vocabulary acquisition, grammar mastery, and speaking proficiency. Applications such as ChatGPT exemplify this innovation, offering interactive and adaptive support that fosters more effective and engaging language learning experiences (Hwang et al., 2020). The rise of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT, has significantly transformed various domains, including higher education. These technologies possess the ability to produce text, generate code, and deliver human-like responses within seconds, presenting immense potential to optimize learning efficiency through automated feedback mechanisms and enhanced collaborative support. Nonetheless, their integration into educational settings poses challenges to maintaining the credibility of traditional assessment practices. For instance, students may leverage ChatGPT to effortlessly complete essay assignments, programming tasks, or even standardized examinations, raising critical concerns about academic integrity and the reliability of conventional evaluation methods (Smolansky et al., 2023).

According to (Richards, 2010), teaching competence can be defined as a combination of knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills required to execute teaching tasks effectively. This makes teaching competence one of the primary factors determining the success of the learning process. Amidst globalization, there is a burgeoning demand for English language education, thereby emphasizing the requirement for proficient teachers in English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Deficiencies in these areas may hinder the efficiency of the educational process and obstruct the attainment of learning objectives (Yudi Wahyudin et al., 2024). With the escalating demands for professionalism within the educational landscape, it becomes imperative for teacher education programs to yield graduates who are theoretically proficient and practically prepared for the teaching profession. According (Widodo et al., 2018), robust pedagogical competencies significantly contribute to grooming prospective teachers ready to tackle the actual challenges encountered in classrooms, particularly when teaching foreign languages that require significant levels of creativity and adaptability. The latest studies, such as that by (Saputro et al., 2023) underscore that enhanced teaching competencies bolster the confidence of teacher candidates in their instructional roles and positively influence the quality of interactions with students.

This highlights that teaching competencies extend beyond mere technical skills, affecting the aspiring teachers' psychological dimensions. (Kim, 2019) found discrepancies between EFL teacher candidates' perceived readiness and their actual competencies, a gap that could undermine the effectiveness of teaching and learning activities if not timely recognized and ameliorated through suitable training initiatives. Acknowledging the criticality of teaching competencies necessitates amplified focus on teacher education, including the adoption of contemporary educational technologies like ChatGPT for competency development. Hence, exploring final-year EFL students' perceptions towards employing such technologies merits further research, underlining its significance in the evolving educational paradigms. The results of this study can provide insights for educational institutions in designing technology integration strategies that meet student needs and expectations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Related Study

Previous studies have explored related themes. Mairisiska and Qadariah (2023) examined students' perceptions of ChatGPT's usability, the knowledge gained, response accuracy, and its impact on motivation and engagement. Similarly, Putri Safira et al. (2024) found that students generally view technology as a tool that enhances learning and accessibility, though improvements in integration are still needed. Kinanthi Rejeki (2024) noted positive student perceptions of tech-based learning but also identified challenges such as infrastructure and digital distractions. These studies underscore the importance of understanding student perceptions,

particularly in using AI tools like ChatGPT, to support teaching competency development among prospective EFL teachers.

Teaching Competence in an EFL Context

Teaching competence is an integration of content knowledge, pedagogical skills, classroom managerial abilities, and reflective attitudes that enable teachers to design, implement, and evaluate learning effectively according to the context and needs of students (Caena & Redecker, 2019). Competence in teaching in the modern era is not limited to conventional abilities but also includes digital literacy, creativity in integrating technology, and expertise in facilitating hybrid learning to address the challenges of the 21st century (Instefjord & and Munthe, 2016) . UNESCO defines teaching competence as a combination of cognitive, social, and emotional skills that support teachers in creating inclusive learning environments, empowering students, and promoting global values such as sustainability and equity (Carney, 2022). Pragmatic competence has received considerable attention lately. As an attempt to contribute to literature in this field, this study investigated the importance of teaching pragmatic competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context (Al-Qahtani, 2020).

ChatGPT as a Tool in Education

Generative AI tools, including ChatGPT, have demonstrated substantial transformative potential within the educational sector. These technologies offer opportunities for personalized learning experiences, particularly through adaptive content delivery systems and instant feedback mechanisms, which simulate one-on-one tutoring scenarios (Zhai, 2022) .(Additionally, generative AI can serve as collaborative tools to enhance student creativity, supporting activities such as creative writing and problem-solving processes. However, educators must play an active role in guiding students to maintain critical thinking skills and avoid excessive dependence on such technologies (Halaweh, 2023). Despite these advantages, the adoption of generative AI tools in education presents significant ethical concerns. Among these are challenges related to academic integrity, risks of algorithmic bias, and the potential erosion of human-centered pedagogical approaches. These concerns highlight the need for robust policy frameworks to mitigate unintended consequences associated with AI integration (Rudolph et al., 2023). Moreover, embedding ChatGPT and similar tools into academic curricula allows for the cultivation of digital literacy, equipping students with critical skills to evaluate AI-generated content, discern biases, and engage responsibly with emerging technologies (Long & Magerko, 2020).

Student's Perceptions

Student perceptions play a pivotal role in the successful integration of educational technology, as they shape learners' acceptance, engagement, and long-term adoption of digital tools (Albiladi & Alshareef, 2019). These perceptions not only reflect individuals' attitudes toward technology, but also influence intrinsic

motivation, active participation, and learning outcomes (Venkatesh et al., 2016). In the context of English language education, understanding EFL students' perceptions of ChatGPT is essential to measure the extent to which this tool supports mastery of technology-based teaching competencies, such as the ability to design multicultural materials or provide automated feedback (Luckin et al., 2022)

METHOD

Design and Samples

This study would employ a descriptive qualitative approach to investigate students' perceptions of utilizing ChatGPT in developing competency teaching. According to (Cresswell, 2013), qualitative research would enable a thorough examination of issues linked to participants' experiences. This method would facilitate an in-depth investigation into students' views and experiences. By adopting this approach, researcher would aim to gain a comprehensive understanding of how students would perceive the use of ChatGPT in enhancing their competence teaching. This study would aim to examine students' views utilizing ChatGPT for developing competence teaching. The approach that would be adopted would provide a detailed explanation of the phenomenon by conducting thorough interviews with students who would interact with ChatGPT. The research would focus on interpreting occurrences and observations during the study, as well as analyzing findings from the participants. Through this method, the researcher would gain a deeper understanding of students' opinions regarding ChatGPT as an educational resource.

Instrument and Procedure

This study was grounded in qualitative research methods and interviews conducted with students. It necessitated a meticulous and well-structured data collection instrument. Drawing upon the guidance of (Patton, 2014), the interview protocol was designed to explore various facets of students' experiences in using ChatGPT. The instrument comprised open-ended questions crafted to elicit comprehensive responses, probing participants' perceptions, challenges encountered, and perceived implications for developing teaching competencies through the use of ChatGPT. This instrument aligned with the qualitative approach, aiming to delve into students' subjective experiences in their interactions with technology-enhanced writing tools.

In this study, the researcher would utilize the purposive sampling method to select the participants. This technique would be chosen to ensure that the sample would meet specific criteria, thereby enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation   (Cresswell, 2013).1 Students are enrolled in the English Education Study Program, class of 2021. 2.Students have utilized ChatGPT in the context of enhancing their teaching competence. 3.Students expressed their willingness to participate in a semi-structured interview to share their experiences.

Data Analysis

This study employed a qualitative approach, primarily using interviews to explore students' attitudes, challenges, and suggestions regarding the use of ChatGPT for improving paraphrasing skills. Following the precedent set by Pokhrel (2024), who used interviews to gather student perceptions on ChatGPT in English learning, this research also positioned interviews as the main data source. In line with Creswell and Poth (2007), interviews provided valuable insights into students' experiences with ChatGPT, while Denzin and Lincoln (2008) highlighted interviews as a means to understand participants' subjective realities. Data were collected through three main techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Participant observation allowed researchers to closely observe how students engaged with ChatGPT in authentic learning environments, offering contextual insights (Creswell, 2015). Interviews, as emphasized by Tisdell et al. (2025), helped uncover students' perspectives, benefits, and challenges of using ChatGPT in their learning and teaching preparation. Documentation—such as journals, photos, and online resources—served as supplementary evidence, reinforcing findings from interviews and observations. Primary data were derived from interviews and academic sources.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Advantages of Using ChatGPT in Developing Teaching Competencies

The findings indicate that almost all participants have the same perceptions of the use of ChatGPT in developing teaching competencies, with only a few having different perceptions. As explained below, these include ChatGPT's role in assisting with lesson planning, classroom management, generating relevant teaching materials to support the growth of prospective EFL teachers' teaching competencies, its ability to save time in the creation of materials, and its overall effectiveness in facilitating the development of teaching abilities.

Highly Useful Tool for Developing Teaching Competencies

Based on the data obtained from ten interview participants, the majority agreed that ChatGPT assists them in enhancing their teaching competency processes. This includes helping with teaching module creation, lesson planning, teaching methods, and other aspects related to teaching competencies.

According to (R3) FY, *"As a prospective EFL teacher, I assess the effectiveness of ChatGPT in developing core teaching competencies as varied depending on the aspect, with clear advantages and limitations. In the development of teaching*

materials, I believe ChatGPT demonstrates high effectiveness due to its quick responses in providing assistance or helping us create teaching materials."

(R4) DA's response is similar, (R4) DA stated that the role of ChatGPT is highly effective in developing teaching competencies.

(R4) DA, *"It's effective because ChatGPT can provide several examples that help us plan lessons, manage them, and also make classroom learning more effective. For instance, with a certain number of students, it might be better to structure the learning in a particular way. In my opinion, ChatGPT already gives us an abundance of options through the examples it provides."*

(R1) AF expressed their thoughts on using ChatGPT to develop their teaching competencies through aspects such as its 24-hour availability.

(R1) AF, *"Perhaps, in terms of specific aspects, I think it's the availability of ChatGPT 24/7, which allows us to create lesson plans, find ice-breaking methods for students, and further develop existing materials using ChatGPT."*

(R6) RFW, (R7) YR AND (R10) RM share the same opinion about how easy it is for them to create lesson plans (RPP) during KKN/PLP2.

(R6) RFW Statement, *"Recently, during KKN, I mainly used ChatGPT to create lesson plans (RPP), to find materials, and also to ask for recommendations on what things teachers should or usually do in the classroom. I felt that ChatGPT was quite helpful in this regard."*

(R7) YR Statement are, *"Back then, when I was completely stuck after being asked to create a lesson plan (RPP) by my mentor teacher, I really felt that ChatGPT helped me a lot in that situation."*

And (R10) RM expressed that he felt greatly helped by ChatGPT during the community service program (KKN), *"It was extremely helpful. For example, during my first experience with KKN, I used ChatGPT for teaching. At that time, I struggled to create teaching modules, lesson plans, and also to handle the different characteristics of students in each class. Additionally, the materials we teach vary for each grade level. So I used ChatGPT to assist with things like that."*

Meanwhile, (R1) EZ and (R9) SM share the same opinion on the impact of ChatGPT in assisting prospective EFL teachers to develop their teaching competencies, such as the need for creative ideas to help them enhance their teaching skills and also the ability to utilize their time as efficiently as possible.

(R1) EZ stated, *"In my opinion, it helps prospective teachers to find information on how to manage classroom conditions, understand how to deal with students in the classroom, and perhaps also look for additional learning materials."*

According to (R9), *"In my opinion, the specific aspect is in correcting things, for example, needing ideas to create materials for the classes we teach. As a prospective EFL teacher, I feel we face unique challenges, so ChatGPT helps me in finding more creative ideas."*

The participants had positive experiences and even shared similar experiences. Their feedback explains that ChatGPT plays a role in developing teaching competencies by creating lesson plans, finding creative ideas for teaching both inside and outside the classroom, and its efficiency in helping EFL teacher candidates enhance their teaching competencies.

Saving Times

Based on the analysis of ten interviews, it was found that ChatGPT facilitates students in optimizing time efficiency when completing tasks related to lesson planning, generating creative ideas, designing teaching modules, creating ice-breaking strategies, and other activities associated with developing teaching competencies. The majority of participants agreed that ChatGPT enables users to complete such tasks more effectively and efficiently.

According to (R8) YQZ, *"The presence of ChatGPT today makes me feel very grateful because it helps us save time with its quick responsiveness in answering our questions. By simply instructing what we want, with just one click, the results are instantly displayed without having to wait long."*

(R5) JH also responded that he feels greatly assisted by the speed of ChatGPT in answering questions related to developing his teaching competencies. *"It helps me a lot. Previously, before I knew about ChatGPT, I often felt confused or uncertain about what kind of lesson plan would be suitable for me and my class. But after using ChatGPT, I just type in the specific lesson plan I need and adjust it to the conditions of the class I teach, and it becomes available quickly. This makes my time much more efficient, allowing me to focus on learning and understanding the lesson plan more deeply."*

Participants such as (R1) AF, (R2) EZ, (R7) YR and (R9) expressed how ChatGPT helps save their time in the process of creating lesson plans, summarizing journals, and identifying key points within the journals being researched. This allows them to focus on other, more important aspects of developing their teaching competencies.

Response from (R1) AF, *"It's really, really helpful in summarizing. Sometimes I get confused about how long we should spend transitioning from this first material to the second and the next, and it truly helps a lot in saving time when creating lesson plans."*

(R2) EZ, *"Yes, with ChatGPT I can summarize many journals at once, which definitely helps me find the key points in a learning journal I'm reading, or even in a learning book that I'm planning to provide to my students."*

Th response from (R7) YR is, *"It's really helpful, especially when I feel too lazy to read everything one by one. All I need to do is just ask ChatGPT to summarize it, and it saves a lot of time"*

And response from (R9) SM, *"If asked whether it helps or summarizes, it can definitely be said to help, because as I mentioned, sometimes it takes hours, whereas using ChatGPT, the answers appear in a matter of seconds like that."*

(R6) RFW believes that the presence of ChatGPT serves as a collaborative tool to assist the teaching process due to the speed produced by ChatGPT, which can make time usage more efficient.

The opinion from (R6) RFW, *"Yes, the presence of ChatGPT is very helpful. Besides that, the speed generated by ChatGPT makes our time more efficient, allowing it to be utilized for other purposes. In my opinion, we also need to be tech-savvy, so whether we like it or not, we have to collaborate with ChatGPT or other AI tools to assist in the teaching process or in creating lesson plans like that."*

By optimizing time management, college students gain additional opportunities to refine their teaching abilities. Leveraging ChatGPT helps students allocate their time more efficiently, allowing them to concentrate on crucial aspects of their education, such as mastering teaching content, exploring effective teaching strategies, generating innovative ideas to create engaging classroom environments, and more.

The enhancement of efficiency not only facilitates the mastery of academic content but also creates additional opportunities for engaging in collaborative learning and critical thinking endeavors. Additionally, the time conserved may be strategically allocated toward soliciting constructive feedback from instructors and peers, thereby contributing to a more profound and well-rounded educational experience.

The Effectiveness of ChatGPT in Developing Teaching Competencies.

ChatGPT demonstrates potential as a pedagogical support tool in the design and development of educational resources, encompassing classroom scenarios, formative exercises, instructional strategies, assessment frameworks, and comprehensive lesson planning. By delivering context-sensitive and adaptive recommendations, ChatGPT offers educators a scalable mechanism to curate and tailor instructional materials that align with learner-specific objectives and contemporary educational standards.

According to (R3) FY, *"As a final-year EFL student, I feel that ChatGPT can be a highly effective tool in supporting the development of core teaching competencies. I believe that ChatGPT can serve as a valuable resource in enhancing my teaching abilities. However, it is important to remember that the use of this technology must be accompanied by critical thinking and adaptation to the specific context and needs of the students."*

(R9) SM also stated, *"If we say it's effective, it can indeed be considered effective, especially because its ideas are limitless and creative in providing the information we need, particularly for lesson plans, where everything is clearly outlined."*
Several participants agreed that ChatGPT is effective in developing their teaching competencies, even drawing from their own experiences using ChatGPT to enhance their teaching skills.

According to the experience of (R5) JH, *"I think ChatGPT is effective, because during my use of ChatGPT, it has been very helpful, especially in terms of how I should manage one class to another or find ideas, such as teaching modules that I need to teach and adapt. What lesson plans I need to use—it all becomes easier. So, in my use of ChatGPT to assist with the teaching process, ChatGPT has its own role and has proven to be effective in my opinion."*

(R4) DA also share her experience while using ChatGPT for developing teaching competency, *"Effective, actually, because based on my experience using ChatGPT, it can provide several examples where we can plan lessons, manage them, and determine their effectiveness for classroom learning. For instance, with a certain number of students, it helps improve the teaching approach in each class, suggesting the most suitable learning format. In my opinion, ChatGPT already gives us an abundance of options and examples to choose from."*

And the experience of (R8) YQZ, *"In my opinion, ChatGPT is very effective based on my experience. It has become common practice for me to ask or discuss with ChatGPT about teaching materials that need to be taught, suitable ice-breaking activities to lighten the classroom atmosphere, and of course, I also ask ChatGPT to create a lesson plan for me. Although the lesson plan is not entirely generated by ChatGPT, I complement it with other references."*

(R1) AF and (R2) EZ argue that ChatGPT is also effective for developing or enhancing the teaching competence of prospective EFL teachers.

(R1) AF's opinion on the effectiveness of ChatGPT in developing teaching competence is, *"It might be effective for me, as using ChatGPT itself helps educators find methods for core teaching competencies. When teachers need an idea to develop core teaching competencies, the use of ChatGPT might be helpful, despite its drawback of sometimes being unable to provide the specific details we need."*

And (R2) opinion is, *"In my opinion, it is very effective because this AI serves as a tool to assist us in teaching. So, I think the presence of ChatGPT is effective, especially for prospective EFL teachers."*

ChatGPT plays a significant role for EFL students, as its presence provides substantial support by offering insights pertaining to the development of teaching competencies, both for their own growth and for the advancement of prospective EFL educators.

Challenges of Using ChatGPT to Develop Teaching Competencies

In this study, participants were invited to elaborate on the challenges they experienced while utilizing ChatGPT to enhance their teaching competencies, with the objective of analyzing the obstacles associated with employing this technique. According to the participants' feedback, students encountered several challenges, including excessive dependence on the tool, which hindered critical thinking, difficulties or limitations in effectively utilizing ChatGPT, and the generation of results that failed to align with expectations.

Excessive Reliance
Through a comprehensive analysis of the interview data, several participants articulated apprehensions regarding the prospect of becoming overly reliant on ChatGPT, which they indicated could hinder the cultivation and refinement of their critical thinking abilities. Several participants, such as (R1) AF, (R3) FY, (R7) YR, and (R8) YQZ, stated that their reliance on using ChatGPT has made them lazy and prone to instant thinking. They are aware that such negative tendencies can lead to a decline in their critical thinking abilities.

(R1) AF, *"Regarding dependence, it seems that as times progress, no matter where we go, we will continue to rely on AI, which may lead to becoming too lazy to think critically and solely relying on the results provided by ChatGPT if it is used too often."*

(R3) FY, *"ChatGPT, in my opinion, is a double-edged sword; it can speed up work but also risks undermining professional competence if used without control."*

(R7) YR, *"Limiting it might be quite difficult, in my opinion, because we can easily gain access to AI itself."*

(R8) YQZ, *"The existence of ChatGPT makes us constantly want to do everything instantly because of its responsiveness, which I believe also has a negative impact on ourselves."*

ChatGPT offers a notable advantage in its ability to consistently provide the information or assistance we seek. However, it also presents a potential drawback,

as its accessibility and convenience may inadvertently foster a tendency toward idleness.

According to (R2) EZ, *"The way to reduce excessive dependence on ChatGPT is by limiting the use of the AI more and focusing on quoting, searching, or manually looking for journals. The rule is to only use ChatGPT when we are truly stuck on the concept we want to find, or use ChatGPT solely to help us locate sources related to the concept we are searching for."*
The opinion of (R2) EZ aligns with that of (R9) SM, which suggests limiting the act of quoting or fully taking explanations from ChatGPT, while complementing it with other reference sources.

(R9) SM, *"Perhaps a way to limit our dependency on ChatGPT is by not taking all the output/results it provides, but only the basic information. We should then supplement the explanations with other reference sources such as books or teachers/lectures in the relevant field, and then customize the information ourselves. Additionally, we might limit the proportion of reliance, for example, by using 40% of AI-generated content from ChatGPT and obtaining the remaining 60% from journals we find on our own."*

Meanwhile, the opinion of (R4) DA emphasizes that, as students, we must learn to set boundaries by adopting the mindset that ChatGPT is merely a tool to assist us in completing tasks.

(R4) DA, *"In fact, overcoming our dependency on ChatGPT is simple because we need to adopt the mindset that ChatGPT is a tool. This means it is there to assist us, not to complete our tasks in their entirety. A tool is for assistance, and that certainly applies to ChatGPT as an assistant and a reference."*

As prospective EFL teachers, we must possess our own knowledge and have our own principles without relying solely on ChatGPT or AI, as stated by (R6) RFW.

(R6) RFW, *"Because as prospective EFL teachers, if everything in our teaching process is sourced from ChatGPT, I believe there will be a sense of confusion due to relying too heavily on ChatGPT's opinions."*

The importance of using ChatGPT depends on its users, where students must understand the limitations or appropriate portions and be aware of when, where, and under what circumstances the ideal use of ChatGPT applies. This awareness is crucial to minimizing excessive dependency, which can negatively impact critical thinking skills or personal development.

Challenges and Limitations

The challenges and limitations in utilizing ChatGPT to enhance teaching competencies have become significant factors in hindering the learning process for students and prospective EFL teachers.

As stated by (R3) FY, *"As a prospective EFL teacher, I encountered several significant challenges when using ChatGPT to create lesson plans. ChatGPT does not understand the specific characteristics of students (e.g., cultural background, level of motivation, or skill gaps in a heterogeneous classroom). When I requested a lesson plan for the topic 'Descriptive Text,' ChatGPT generated an activity based on 'Describe your dream vacation in Europe'—which is irrelevant for students in rural Indonesia who have never been abroad."*

The limitations in ChatGPT's knowledge and its lack of relevance regarding classroom-related issues pose significant challenges for students to conduct deeper research. Another limitation arises when experiencing poor network or connectivity issues while accessing ChatGPT, as stated by (R6) RFW.

(R6) RFW, *"The limitation occurs when we experience poor network or connectivity, which really hinders us in the process of creating lesson plans or accomplishing other tasks."*

The capability to access ChatGPT or other AI systems offline or while connected to a network necessitates an upgrade to obtain this feature. Furthermore, other functionalities, such as enhancing our opportunities to access ChatGPT or achieving optimal outcomes from ChatGPT, also require an upgrade to a superior plan.

This limitation was experienced by participants (R1) AF, (R4) DA, (R8) YQZ, (R9) SM, and (R10) RM, who expressed their concerns as follows.

(R1) AF, *"Perhaps it's because we are using the free version, and as students, we are not yet able to pay or upgrade to the premium version. Sometimes, I feel restricted, like having to wait until a certain time before we can access ChatGPT again due to its limitations."*

(R4) DA, *"Perhaps the main constraint is that, if we want more impressive results from ChatGPT, we have to pay several dollars to upgrade to the premium version."*

(R8) YQZ, *"The limitation occurs when we have reached the access limit while trying to obtain or search for the information we need."*

(R9) SM, *"The limitation comes when we reach the limit or run out of opportunities to ask ChatGPT about the things we want to know. At that point, we need to upgrade to the premium version, which requires a cost that can be considered quite high or expensive."*

And the last one (R10) RM experience, *"Yes, ChatGPT has a paid version and a limit. Sometimes, I haven't finished working on my research, and I've already hit*

the limit—the limit on asking or searching for sources from ChatGPT. So, one of my solutions is to create a new account so I can continue my research again."

The limitation lies in the lack of optimal quality in the results provided by ChatGPT, wherein the writing it generates tends to be repetitive, overly formal, and distinctly artificial. This issue has been experienced by participants such as (R2) EZ, (R5) JH, and (R7) YR.

As explained by (R2) EZ, *"Especially when ChatGPT does not understand the prompt I provide. Moreover, when the output given by ChatGPT does not align with what I have planned or the plans I have created."*
(R5) JH, *"Its limitation mainly lies in the writing generated by ChatGPT, which is often repetitive. For example, when we create articles or papers, the writing can always be detected as AI-generated, not humanized, and tends to be overly formal. That's where I face challenges."*

And according to (R7) YR, *"Sometimes it doesn't connect with what I type, so I have to be really careful in typing the prompt to make sure ChatGPT understands what I mean."*

AI can be a highly useful tool in developing teaching competencies, but as a future teachers' EFL need to understand its limitations and use it wisely. To overcome these challenges, it is crucial for educators and students to develop skills in using AI effectively, learn to harness technology without diminishing critical thinking and creativity, and always integrate human values into the teaching and learning process.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to gain a deeper understanding of the perspectives of final-year students, particularly those majoring in English Education, regarding the use of ChatGPT, specifically for the development of teaching competencies. Students recognize that ChatGPT offers significant benefits as a tool for accessing information and accelerating task completion. However, they also express concerns about the potential for excessive reliance on this AI technology. Such dependence is perceived to hinder the development of critical thinking skills and creativity, particularly in processing information into deeper understanding.

The findings of the study also highlight several key challenges faced by students. Excessive Dependence. Some students acknowledged that the intensive use of ChatGPT leads to instant thinking patterns and may result in a decline in critical thinking abilities. For instance, one participant stated, "ChatGPT is a double-edged sword; it accelerates tasks but also risks weakening professional competence if not used with proper control." Limitations of Results. The outputs generated by ChatGPT do not always align with students' expectations or specific needs in certain contexts. This creates the necessity to complement the information with other

sources, such as books or academic journals. Prudent Approach. Students emphasized the importance of establishing boundaries in using ChatGPT and viewed AI as a supplementary tool rather than a replacement for the learning process and the development of teaching competencies. Overall, final-year EFL students recognize that ChatGPT offers numerous advantages in enhancing their competencies as prospective teachers. However, to ensure optimal outcomes, they must use this technology wisely, understand its limitations, and continue to cultivate their knowledge and principles independently, without relying entirely on AI tools. This aligns with the perspective that ChatGPT is a tool to assist, not replace, the learning process.

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