Research Journal of Language and Literary Studies
Spring 2025, Volume 1, No.1, pp 86-109

Enhancing EFL Learning Through Generative AI: Institutional Provisions and Challenges in Public Sector Universities of South Punjab

Dr Abdul Rashid[1], Shaher Bano[2], Tanveer Baig[3]

Abstract

Recently, the development of chatbots assisted by the artificial intelligence has opened up new dimensions in the field of education. Among such is the Chatgpt. It is taken as a Pharmeka – a poison and remedy at the same time. Some had taken it a serious threat to the creativity and human intelligence. While at the same time, generative artificial intelligence had revolutionized language learning process particularly of the English Language. The present study is aimed to gauge readiness and the institutional provisions & challenges to use artificial intelligence for academic purpose in the public sector universities of the South Punjab-Pakistan. For data collection the questionnaire was distributed among 200 hundred students of undergraduate and postgraduate students studying English language and literature at the following universities; University of Layyah, University of Jhang, University of Mianwali, Ghazi University

[1] Lecturer in English, University of Layyah, Post-Doctoral Fellow, University of Reading, United Kingdom
[2] Lecturer in English, Government Graduate College Gojra Road Jhang
[3] Assistant Professor, Department of English, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Sub-Campus, Lodhran. Email: tanveerbaig@bzu.edu.pk

D.G Khan, Islamia University Bahawalpur, Women University Multan, Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan. The population was selected on random sampling-based technique and the questionnaire was distributed online. Ten participants both male and female were interviewed at the University of Layyah as focused group. The findings of the study reveal that there is a high frequency of Chatgpt users in the academic domains. The students are using it for the academic purpose but without any professional experience and training. Hands on training to use artificial intelligence would make the language learning more personalized, interesting and effective for academic purpose.

Keywords: Generative AI, AI In Education, Academic Challenges, EFL Classrooms, Language Learning

Introduction

Technology and the project of human progress go hand in hand. Our concern is that the countries which adopt technology make progress more quickly as compared to those countries which remain resistant to the adaptation of the technology. Similarly, the use of technology in educational contexts cannot be denied. The use of technology like other domains of life is inevitable in educational settings as well. Currently, the invention of Chatgpt is like a debris product in the field of artificial intelligence. It can be said that Chatgpt or other similar chatbots tools are extended and the latest version of artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence was already functional and operative in every field of life i.e., the radar system can be taken as the example of it. Even some people take the development of early machines as the starting point of the artificial intelligence. In a broader historical sense, it can be true as the early machines named as analytical machines or Turing machine by Charles Babbage were based on the same theoretical and mathematical models of mathematics as are of today's artificial intelligence. As these machines made the people to, "think" that machines can "think" as well. But in specific sense these early machines were different from artificial intelligence. As these machines were the mere tools while artificial intelligence is more like thinking, critical, analytical. These early machines were having no learning capacity except that they were programmed. Similarly, they were not having any capacity of reasoning, learning and decision making (Russell & Norvig, 2021). Currently, the use of AI has increased manifolds in academic settings due to its inbuilt

capacity of reasoning, learning, generating new knowledge and decision making. While students increasingly rely on these tools for assignments, paraphrasing, and grammar correction, but there is little guidance or institutional monitoring to ensure ethical use of it (Ravitch, 2023). The absence of digital literacy programs and policy awareness contributes to superficial and sometimes dishonest engagement with AI tools, raising concerns about academic integrity and assessment authenticity.[4]

The strategic use of generative AI holds transformative potential for improving the quality of English language instruction, enhancing student engagement, and addressing individual learning needs in low-resource contexts. For this to be realized, however, universities must establish robust institutional provisions, including teacher training, curriculum redesign, infrastructure development, and policy regulation. It is urgently needed to evaluate current usage trends, institutional readiness, faculty and student perceptions, and the pedagogical implications of AI integration in EFL contexts within public universities of South Punjab. It would enable to check the adoptability ratio and strategic use of the Generative AI in academic settings. In spite of the fact that generative AI holds immense potential to monitor and enhance EFL learning outcomes, its implementation in public sector universities in South Punjab is constrained by infrastructural deficiencies, limited teacher training, socio-economic

[4] Reading note: The researcher attended a training workshop at university of Veterinary and Animal Sciences conducted by Punjab Higher Education Commission Lahore. There were 64 participants in the session from the different universities of the Punjab. Every faculty member was of concern that AI is a threat to educational system and the role of teacher in the class rooms. While by the end of training everyone was enlightened that the proper training of the generative artificial is more beneficial and revolutionizing

disparities, and policy gaps. There is a need for systematic institutional support, capacity building, and curriculum reforms to bridge the gap between global educational technology trends and local teaching realities. Future research should focus on the development of localized AI tools, policy development for ethical AI use, and teacher-student training models tailored to the Pakistani public sector context.

This study aims to investigate the institutional provisions and challenges regarding the use of generative AI for academic purposes in EFL classrooms in public sector universities of South Punjab, Pakistan. By mapping out current practices, identifying institutional gaps, and analyzing the socio-technical educational system, this research hopes to offer practical recommendations for integrating AI tools in a pedagogically sound, ethically responsible, and contextually relevant manner. Such an inquiry is particularly important as Pakistan navigates its educational reforms under Vision 2025 and the Digital Pakistan initiative, both of which emphasize the use of technology in transforming education and improving equity in access and quality (Lateef, et.al, 2024).

Research Questions

The primary research questions of the current study are following ones.

- To what extent AI tools are being integrated in EFL Classrooms in public sector universities of the South Punjab?
- Which sort of institutional provisions had been established in the universities including teacher training, curriculum redesign, infrastructure development, and policy regulation regarding the effective and strategic use of AI in class rooms?

- What are current usage trends, institutional readiness, faculty and student perceptions, and the pedagogical implications of AI integration in EFL contexts within public universities of South Punjab?

Significance of the study

The current study is timely and significant. It is significant for the policy makers to redeem the problems which the students are currently facing regarding the integration of AI in the classrooms. It is significant for the university administrators and teachers to provide proper training to the students to disseminate the proper use of generative AI in teaching learning process of the targeted language i.e., English language learning classrooms. The current study is significant as it provides a mirror point of the prevailing deficiencies and gaps which the students are currently facing and are not properly getting the advantage of generative AI in the classrooms particularly in the public sector universities of the South Punjab.

Literature Review

Recently, the development of AI and its associated tools had revolutionized every domain of life particularly in the case of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms. It has provided a transformative shift in teaching and learning of English Language. The AI assisted tools like Quillbot, Google bard, Grammarly and Chatgpt are widely used by students for academic purpose. In case of foreign language, it is used in all skills of the targeted language. In traditional classrooms the teaching and learning of these skills were teacher oriented. With the

invention of AI assisted tools the teaching learning process of these skills of the targeted language had been shifted from teachers centered to AI centered. Now a days AI tools are capable of generating human like text, responding to prompts, translating languages, correcting grammar, and simulating dialogues, making them highly relevant in EFL classrooms (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Godwin-Jones, 2022).

Bai and Wang (2021) opined that AI tools assist students a lot in developing the structural coherence of the academic writing. Prompt writing actually compels the student unconsciously to think in the target language. In such a situation student basically translate his words into the targeted language and he attempts to make AI understand. So this exercise brings improvement in the writing and reasoning skills of the student. Godwin-Jones (2022) validates that the use of AI tools assist students to think in simpler terms. In this way student is able to break down the complex linguistic structures into simpler one. The prompts which students communicate to the AI tools are based on real sense understanding, reasoning and communication. Such learning is termed as democratized learning. It develops the lexical proficiency and the syntactical proficiency among the students. In addition to writing, AI technologies have been found useful in enhancing pronunciation and speaking skills through speech to text systems and virtual conversation partners. Learners in EFL contexts often face limited opportunities for real-time spoken interaction, especially in less developed areas where communication with the digitalized world is limited. AI tools fill this gap by offering immediate, non-judgmental feedback and a safe environment

for oral practice as well (Xie et al., 2023). Moreover, natural language processing (NLP) engines embedded in platforms like ChatGPT allow for dynamic conversations, which mimic real life interaction and can be tailored to learners' proficiency levels and interests. This interactivity fosters motivation and deepens engagement, especially for students in traditional teacher centered classrooms.

From a pedagogical standpoint, AI fosters a shift from standardized teaching models which was more mechanical to data-informed personalized learning which is more real and situational to the needs of the learners. AI systems can monitor students' progress over time, identify learning gaps, and provide scaffolding support aligned with curriculum goals (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). With such capabilities, teachers can assume the role of facilitators, focusing more on higher order thinking skills and less on repetitive language drills. Research also emphasizes the role of AI in formative assessment and diagnostic feedback, making teaching more responsive and evidence-based (Bond et al., 2021).

Higher Education Pakistan- an apex body of educational planning and monitoring had constantly emphasized on the adaptation of technology in the all classrooms particularly in EFL classrooms. However, there are a lot of factors which are hindering this project from its proper implementation. The public sector universities in Pakistan lack computer labs, trained faculty, limited access to pedagogical innovations and poor internet connectivity (Iqbal & Bhatti, 2021).

Consequently, the potential of generative AI to personalize learning and reduce the teacher-student gap remains underutilized in this region.

Research Methodology

The current study is based on mixed methods for the collection of data. Theoretical insights have been taken from Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989). It includes items related to perceived usefulness, ease of use, behavioral intention to use generative AI, access to infrastructure, and institutional support. This approach is especially appropriate for educational research involving technology, as it allows for both statistical generalization and deep contextual analysis (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Cohen, et al., 2018).

The questionnaire and interviews were adopted being the most appropriate tools for data collection of the present study. The questionnaire was distributed among 200 hundred students of undergraduate and postgraduate students studying English language and literature at the following universities; university of Layyah, university of Jhang, University of Mianwali, Ghazi University D.G khan, Islamia University Bahawalpur, Women University Multan, Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan. The population was selected on random sampling technique and the questionnaire was distributed online. Ten participants both male and female were interviewed at the University of Layyah as focused group. Out of 200 participants 160 students returned the questionnaire. These universities reflect the diverse socio economic and institutional contexts of South Punjab and represent varying levels of technological readiness, policy implementation, and pedagogical engagement with AI tools. The

collected data through questionnaire was analyzed through excel spread sheets.

All procedures follow ethical guidelines. Informed consent is obtained from all participants, and participation is entirely voluntary. The anonymity and confidentiality of participants is maintained. The study is focused on the South Punjab region Pakistan, which may limit broader generalization of it. Its findings offer significant insights into the intersection of AI and EFL pedagogy in under resourced yet rapidly digitizing higher education contexts of South Punjab- Pakistan. This design enables a deep understanding of both the measurable trends in generative AI adoption and the structural or attitudinal barriers impeding its effective use for academic purposes.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The data collected through the questionnaire is analyzed and represented in the graphs. The quantitative data, collected from 200 EFL students was thematically analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework to explore deeper insights into attitudes, challenges, and educational practices involving AI.

The below graphs of the collected data show the level of preparedness of the universities for implementing generative AI tools in EFL classrooms in South Punjab-Pakistan. Each graph has been interpreted accordingly. The responses of the focused group have been represented accordingly with each graph to have both quantitative and qualitative understating of the collected data from the participants of the current study.

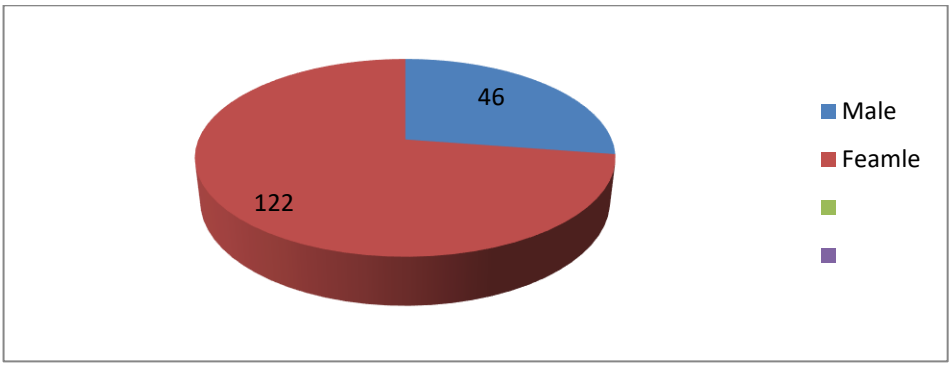


Fig.1

(Gender statistics of the AI users in South Punjab- Pakistan)

The Fig.1 represents the number of students who use Chatgpt and other similar gadgets of artificial intelligence for their academic purpose. The data shows that there is significant higher ratio of the female students who use artificial intelligence for academic purpose. While on the other side out of 160 participants only 38 males were using Chatgpt for academic purpose which is comparatively less as compared to the female. This factor was of much interest for the researchers. It was asked from the participants of the focused group.

Interview Responses: Regarding the significant female users of AI was asked to the male and female students to use of AI for academic purpose. The female students replied that as they feel shy to ask questions from the teachers in the class from the teachers, they prefer to ask it from Chatgpt and other gadgets of artificial intelligence. While male students replied that they can easily ask the questions to the teachers in the class rooms and

even in their office during student's hour. It points out that shy students are heavily relying on the gadgets of artificial intelligence. It also points out that heavy reliance of shy students on AI particularly of the female students is providing a shield to their shyness as well. Rather to develop a confidence of asking the questions in the classroom they are relying on artificial intelligence which makes them as passive participant in the classroom academic activities.

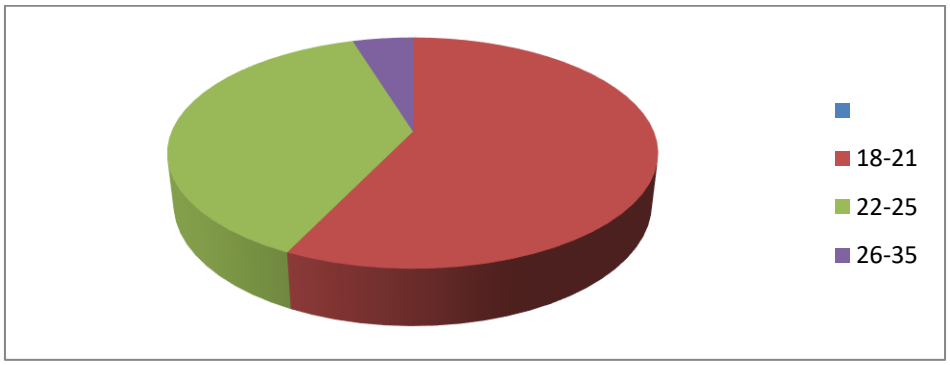


Fig 2

(Statistics of AI Users- Age groups)

Fig.2 represents the age of participants who are using AI gadgets for academic purpose. It shows that students from the age of 18-21 are larger in number as compared to other age groups who are using artificial intelligence for their academic purpose. It shows that at undergraduate level there is the dire need of the training of AI gadgets. While the users of AI ranging from the age group 26-35 are comparatively less.

Interview Responses; during interview the participants reported that there is the dire need of the training of the usage of artificial intelligence.

Similarly, it requires revisions in the curriculum as well which should be more on artificial intelligence related contents.

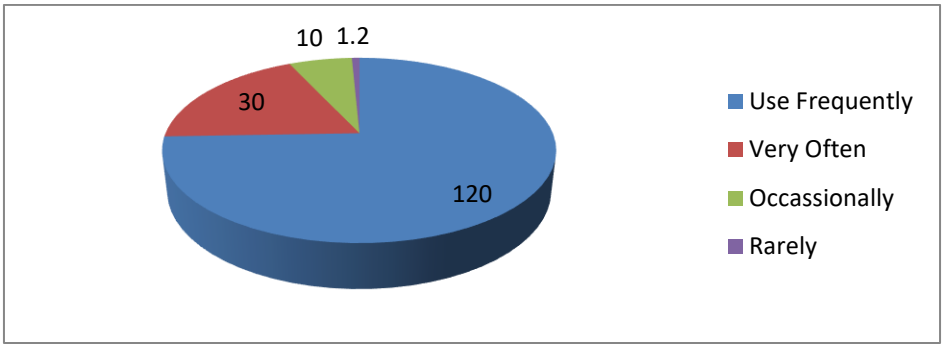


Fig 3

(AI users' Time Frequency)

Fig.3 shows the frequency of AI based gadgets for academic purpose. Among the participants the ratio of those who frequently use AI is highest one. Similarly, those who never used AI is insignificant. It shows that the use of AI gadgets is inevitable in the academic domains.

Interview responses: During interview the reason was asked for the frequent use of the AI gadgets. The participants opined that it is easy, convenient, reliable and user friendly. Mostly, participants asserted that it is more focused as compared to Google where a lot of other stuff makes them as confused. While AI is specific to users' needs.

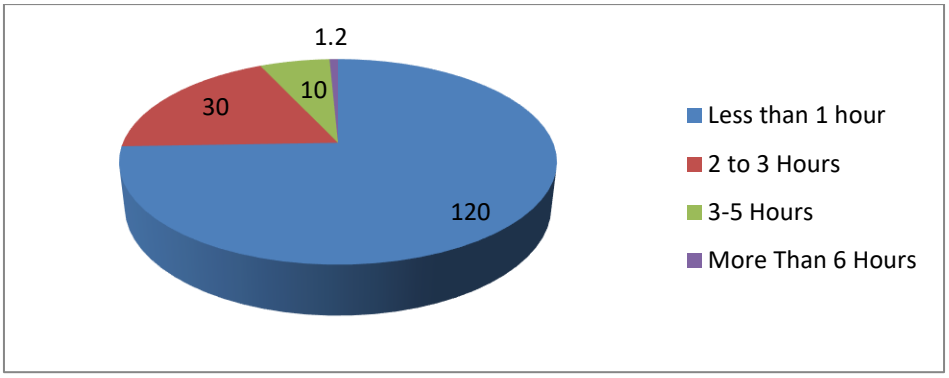


Fig 4

(Daily time limit spent on AI based tools)

Fig. 4 shows the time spent on AI on daily basis. It shows that the use of AI and the time spent on its use is moderate and is not divertive one. It shows the use of AI is balanced one on daily basis which is less than an hour.

Interview Responses: During interview the participants said that they use Youtube and Instagram and tiktok which are random in content and choice so they spend 4 to 7 hours daily on these social media forums for entertainment and social connections. They claimed that though they are addicted to these social media platforms but these are not useful in academic terms as is Chatgpt.

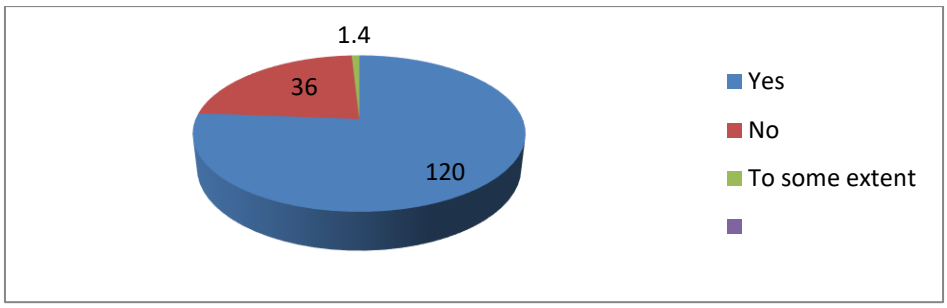


Fig 5

(Awareness at University)

Fig. 5 shows the level of awareness about Chatgpt and other Ai tools in the academic domains in the university is well established one. Out of 160 participants of the research 110 were well aware of its use in academic purpose. It shows the tendency and adoptive role of artificial intelligence in the academic domains.

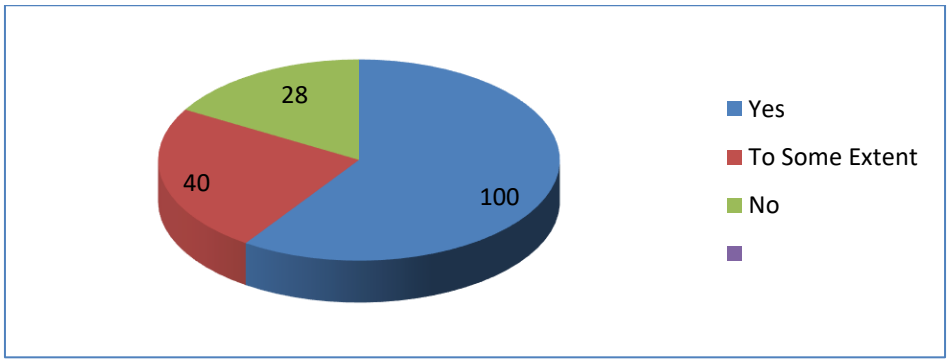


Fig 6

(Personal use for English)

Fig.6 shows that the students consider the use of AI tools as personalized one. It means that they can ask the answers as modified according to their

specific needs. While other data bases are not personalized and specialized and focused one.

Interview Responses: During discussions and interviews of the participant of the focused group conveyed their concern that the Chatgpt is personalized. I student shared a video which she made by the assistance of artificial chatbots. She shared that Chatgpt creates the prompts given by her in the native speakers' voice. Therefore she is able to hear the targeted language in the native accent which is very helpful and fascinating for her.

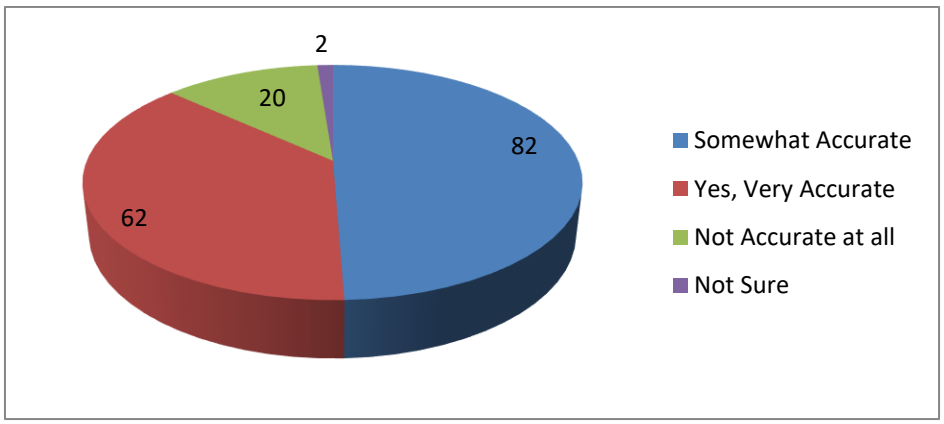


Fig 7

(AI Accuracy Perceptions)

Fig.7 shows the reliance of the students on AI tools in terms of accuracy. The ratio of those who consider AI as very accurate and somewhat accurate is the highest one. While those who are not sure or do not take it as accurate at all is quite insignificant.

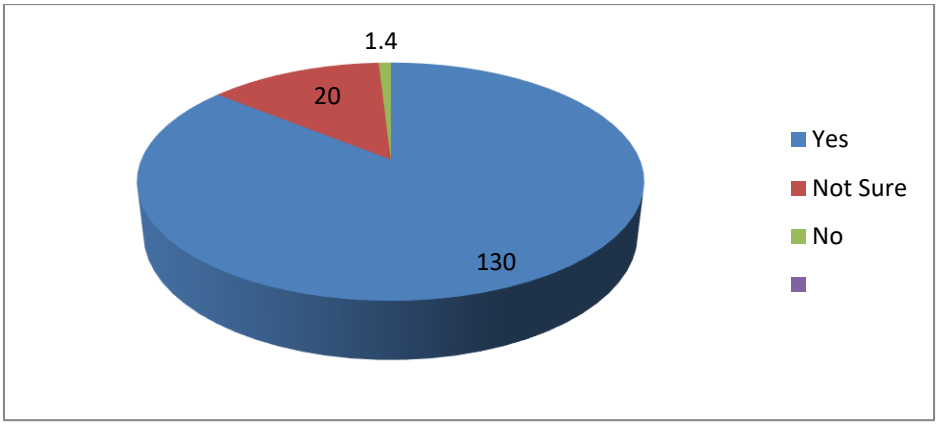


Fig 8

(Integration of AI in Degree Programs)

Fig. 8 shows that the students want the integration of AI tools in their academic degrees and the use of these AI tools in the academic activities. It shows the current need of revisions in the curriculum development. While the current syllabus and the scheme of studies were found outdated and without any designed use of artificial intelligence in existing curriculum.

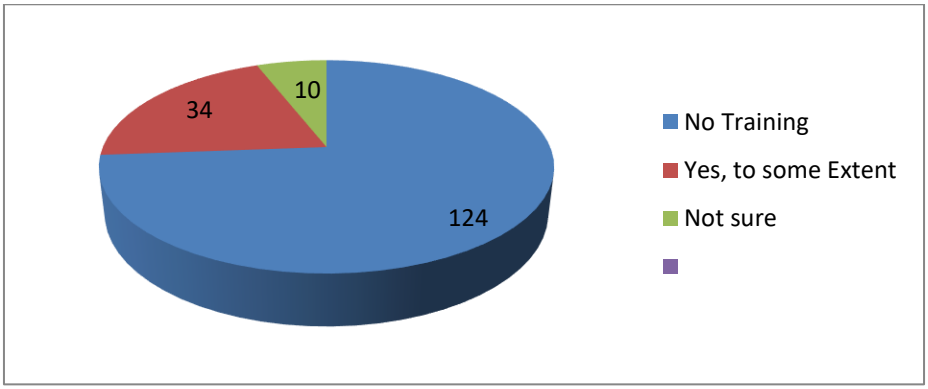


Fig 9

(Trainings provided by the University)

Out of 160 research participants 90 participants responded that they were not provided any training by the university regarding the proper and effective and efficient use of AI tools for academic purposes. While 32 responded that somewhat training or information was provided by the university. It shows that there is a serious need of provision of the training in the universities. The use of artificial intelligence without proper training is threatening for the users on the ethical grounds as well.

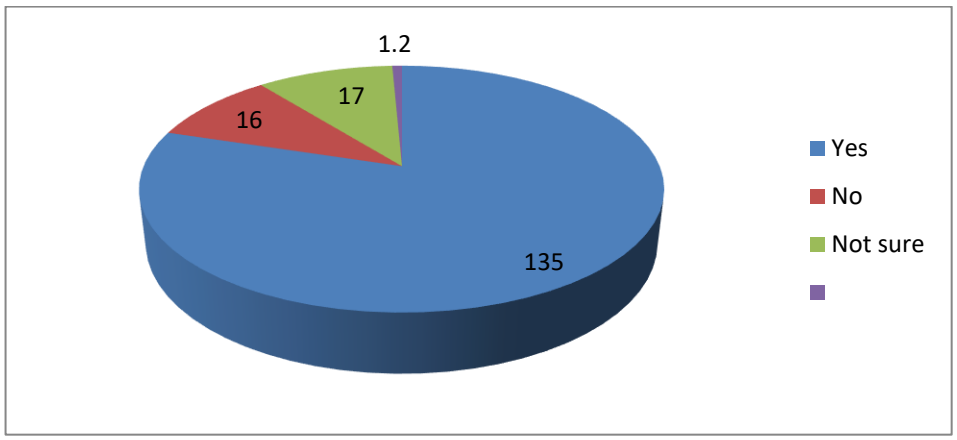


Fig 10

(Willingness to attend Workshops)

Fig. 10 shows that out of 160 130 participants are willing to get the training of AI tools in the university. It reveals a high tendency of their willingness to adopt it in the academic domains. So keeping in view the highest ratio of students who are willing to join for the training it is suggested that the universities should establish a proper training center in which the students of all programs should be provided training on the use of artificial intelligence in the academic purposes and in general social life as well.

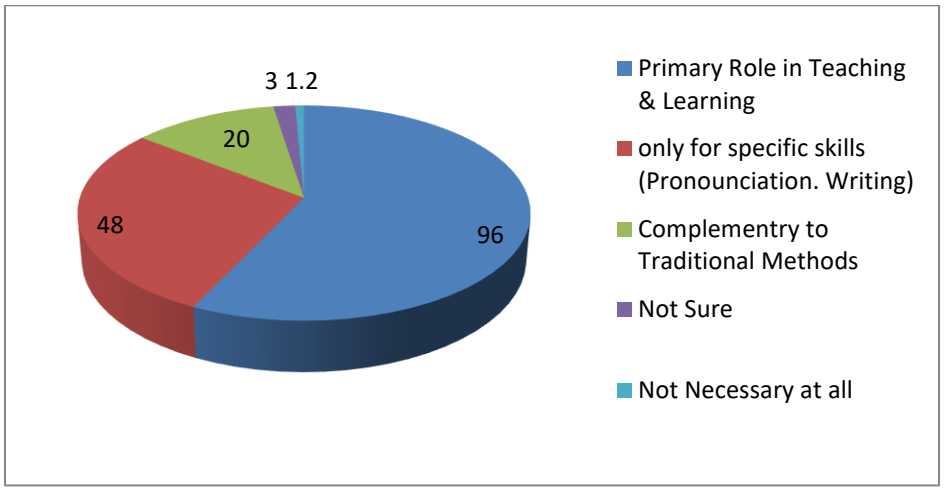


Fig. 11

(Future of AI in classrooms)

Fig. 11 points out the adoptive role of Ai in teaching. The ratio of those who consider that AI would adopt the primary role in teaching and learning is the highest one. While on the other hand the ratio of those who considered not necessary at all is very insignificant. So the use of AI has become unavoidable in the academically. It is suggested that it should be adopted as early as possible but with proper training and effective use of it.

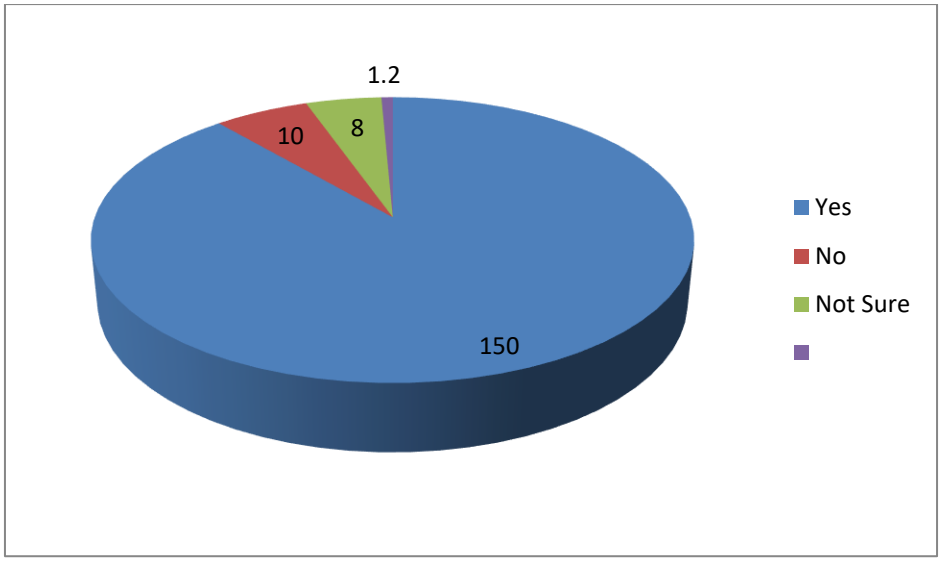


Fig 12

The fig.12 represents that out of 160 participants 116 people responded that they recommend the use of AI tools for others. Such a high recommendation of AI tools shows its reliability and sustainability at the same time.

Findings and Discussions

The findings of the analyzed data reveal that

Attitude of the Students towards AI Tools

- Among the research participant the large number of the population who use AI tools for language learning is of female students. Therefore the proper training of AI tools is very much urgent in the women universities in Pakistan. But at the same time there is need to train the students that they could express their knowledge in the social domains as well. Heavy reliance on the Chatgpt may deter

the confidence and public speaking ability of the female students seriously.

- The participants opined that it is easy, convenient and reliable and user friendly. It provided personalized experience of learning. Personalized learning becomes more interesting, interactive and lively.
- The over experience of the users of artificial intelligence is positive but with a serious demand of proper training. This survey shows that students are using the artificial intelligence for academic purpose but on and according to their own limited capacity. There is dire need of training and institutional support provisions to them for the effective use of these artificial intelligence tools.
- The research participant highly recommended the use of AI tools for others.
- The number of students who are willing to get the training of AI tools is the highest one among the participants of the study.

Institutional Gaps in Training and Infrastructure

Despite the interest, most universities lacked formal training programs or digital literacy sessions for AI tool usage. Students repeatedly emphasized the absence of institutional policies or official platforms for incorporating AI into curriculum design or assessment practices.

Digital Disparities and Technological Barriers

Access to reliable internet, personal devices, and updated digital tools remained uneven. Students from rural campuses or lower-income backgrounds faced greater barriers to AI usage. This digital divide was

consistently cited as a reason for limited exposure to emerging technologies.

Conclusion

This study highlights the dual-edged impact of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) language learning contexts across public sector universities in South Punjab, Pakistan. The findings indicate a growing awareness and experimental use of generative AI tools such as Chatgpt, Grammarly, and Quillbot among both students and faculty. However, this adoption is largely informal and remains underutilized for structured academic enhancement due to several institutional and infrastructural shortcomings. The role of generative AI in EFL classrooms in South Punjab is contingent upon institutional readiness, teacher preparedness, and equitable access. When responsibly implemented, AI holds the potential to revolutionize language learning by offering more personalized, engaging, and accessible education. However, realizing this potential depends on sustained commitment from educational policymakers, university administrations, and pedagogical stakeholders to create an AI-informed, ethically grounded, and inclusive academic environment.

References

Bai, B., & Wang, J. (2021). Effects of automated feedback on EFL students' writing: A meta-analysis. Language Teaching Research, 25(4), 582–607.

Bond, M., Zawacki-Richter, O., & Marin, V. I. (2021). Mapping research in student engagement with digital technologies in higher education: A systematic evidence map. Educational Technology Research and Development, 69(3), 1071–1097.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). Research methods in education (8th ed.). Routledge.

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). Designing and conducting mixed methods research (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. MIS Quarterly, 13(3), 319–340. https://doi.org/10.2307/249008

Dwivedi, Y. K., Hughes, D. L., Baabdullah, A. M., et al. (2023). Artificial Intelligence (AI): Multidisciplinary perspectives on emerging challenges, opportunities, and agenda for research, practice and policy. *International Journal of Information Management, 71,* 102642.

Godwin-Jones, R. (2020). Artificial intelligence and language learning: A brave new world? Language Learning & Technology, *24*(3), 5–11.

Iqbal, S., & Bhatti, Z. A. (2021). Barriers to the successful integration of ICT in teaching and learning: A review of literature. Contemporary Educational Technology, *13*(1), ep293.

Lateef, A., Yousaf, S., Noor, K., Parveen, A., & Zahira, S. U. (2024). The Future of Education: Trends to Watch in The Next Decade in Pakistan. *Journal of Social Signs Review*, *2*(6), 54-73.

Ravitch, D. (2023). Academic integrity in the age of AI: New challenges and responsibilities. Educational Researcher, *52*(1), 14–22.

Russell, S., & Norvig, P. (2021). *Artificial intelligence: A modern approach* (4th ed.). Pearson.

Xie, H., Yu, Z., & Liu, H. (2023). Harnessing ChatGPT for education: Promises, challenges, and future directions. Educational Technology Research and Development, *71*(1), 1–8.

Zawacki-Richter, O., Marín, V. I., Bond, M., & Gouverneur, F. (2019). Systematic review of research on artificial intelligence applications in higher education – Where are the educators? *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, *16*(1), 39.