

## The Role of ChatGPT in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learning and Teaching: A Systematic Review

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### Abstract


The potential role of ChatGPT in English as a foreign language (EFL) learning and teaching has not yet been fully elucidated. Therefore, a systematic review was conducted using Web of Science to identify the effectiveness of ChatGPT in promoting EFL learning and teaching. The database was searched until May 2024. The review summarizes findings from twenty-one studies extracted from the Web of Science database to get a better insight into the advantages and drawbacks of using ChatGPT in the field of EFL education. The review results showed that ChatGPT significantly improved students' EFL learning experiences and teachers' teaching practices. The main advantages of ChatGPT in EFL education are that it can improve learners' language proficiency and basic language skills of speaking, listening, reading, grammar, vocabulary and especially the writing skill in addition to its ability to increase motivation and engagement, enhance learner autonomy, and provide individualized learning opportunities. Despite these beneficial effects, students and teachers approach ChatGPT with caution mostly because of its limitations and ethical issues. This systematic review research contributes to the understanding the key benefits and drawbacks of ChatGPT in the specific area of EFL teaching and learning.

### Keywords:

ChatGPT, English as a foreign language, Language learning and teaching, Systematic review.

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## **Introduction**

Technology not only has an impact on our lives and work, but also on the educational experiences (Culp et al., 2005; Dahiya, 2022). After the invention of printing press in the fifteenth century, technology has continued to play a significant role in education, with the use of radio and television in the twentieth century and having access to computers and the internet in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Kikalishvili, 2023). Many studies in the literature have showed and discussed the positive effects of using information and communication technologies (ICTs) in teaching and learning processes (Allah Rakha, 2023; Culp et al., 2005; Dahiya, 2022; Kikalishvili, 2023; Lakhan & Laxman, 2018; Punie et al., 2006). Similarly, by analyzing many studies, Schacter (1999) reported that uses of technology in learning and instruction had affected student achievement positively. In other words, as asserted by Dahiya (2022), ICT has a positive effect on everything regarding education, from curriculum studies to educational assessment. The benefits of new ICT developments in education is accepted and adopting active use of innovative pedagogies and materials is recommended for high quality learning environments by European Commission (2015). Furthermore, OECD (2010) points to the importance of technology-related competencies, which are part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies.

However, there is a substantial body of research available showing that technology use does not always improve learning performance and ensure desirable outcomes for all students in a language classroom. For instance, a study by Li et al. (2019) reported a negative role of technology use in promoting communicative language learning environment and only a minimal impact of technology on teacher feedback patterns in primary EFL classrooms; therefore, put an emphasis on the importance of EFL teachers' pedagogical awareness and competence in using technology in language classes. Kikalishvili (2023) suggested approaching with caution to technology use in educational settings in that overuse use of it can cause detrimental effects such as insufficient critical thinking skills, academic dishonesty, cyberbullying and social isolation. In addition, along with the positive effects of technology use on student achievement, Schacter (1999) found evidence that educational technologies could be ineffective unless learning objectives and the focus of using any kind of technology is specifically identified. Moreover, debates in the literature continue as to the benefits of ICT and researchers point to the limited data and elusive evidence as to the benefits and impact of ICT in education and the problems about its successful implementation (Eurydice, 2011; Livingstone, 2012; Pandolfini, 2016; UNESCO, 2009).

As in the educational settings described above, the benefits and opportunities of technology use in English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching and learning environments has been accepted (Al-Munawwarah, 2014; Azmi, 2017; Çakıcı, 2016; Hashemi, 2016; Mahmud et al., 2022; Sabiri, 2020). For instance, in a review study by Azmi (2017) it was revealed that use of ICT in an appropriate way in EFL classrooms can enhance motivation and engagement, promote learners' autonomy, boost interaction and communication, enhance authenticity and improve student performance. Hashemi (2016) has found that ICT can enhance the language learning experience and can be used as an effective tool for both teaching and learning. Chen (2022) revealed that technology-enhanced language learning reduced EFL learners' public speaking anxiety. In a meta-analysis, Hao et al. (2021) found that technology-assisted second language (L2) vocabulary learning helped language learners more than teaching without the use of technology. and the use of technology improved long-term vocabulary retention.



However, some challenges and concerns about the use of ICT have been recognized in the EFL arena as well. Blake (2008) clarifies that technologically enhanced activities do not ensure success for students in language classes, but instead the way technology is used with a strong pedagogical planning produces satisfactory results. In another study, Azmi (2017) points out that appropriate implementation of ICT in English language teaching requires careful planning and well-defined objectives. Çakıcı (2016) mentions some certain disadvantages of using ICT in EFL classrooms like inexperienced teachers about ICT use, problems in classroom management, challenges in choosing the most suitable tool with the content, the cost. In a study by Irgatoğlu (2021), it was revealed that the opportunity of ICT to provide authentic materials is the most motivating factor for EFL instructors, while the problems of technical support and nonavailability of ICT facilities are the most preventing. Moreover, Papadima-Sophocleous et al. (2014) found that despite policymakers' interest, language teachers have some hesitations in using ICT in their classes and more studies are needed to elucidate the impact of technology use in language classrooms.

As with the use of other technologies in education, the relatively new technology of artificial Intelligence (AI) is a subject of debate among educators as it offers both some benefits and drawbacks in the teaching learning processes. A study by Kikalishvili (2023) demonstrated that the AI technology is helpful in terms of creating an interactive learning environment which encourage student engagement with the content material and hereby supports learning process; however, along with AI's potential to enhance educational experiences, it was noted that it can cause academic misconduct and plagiarism. Chukwuere (2024) found that the use of ChatGPT can provide both some advantages like providing individualized instruction, encouraging feedback and student interaction, easy access to learning, and the disadvantages like inability to comprehend emotions, the lack of social interaction, technological limitations, and depending too much on ChatGPT. In a recent review study, Gökçearsan et al. (2024) reported both advantages and disadvantages of AI chatbots for both students and educators. In the study, increased motivation, language skill development, and increased performance were reported as the advantages for learners while limited interaction, misleading answers, and limited individualized feedback were the most common disadvantages. Regarding the educators, cost-effectiveness, reducing workload, and providing educational resources were reported as the advantages while the disadvantages include the originality and plagiarism, the inability to determine the level of readiness and the difficulty in the development of AI-based applications.

The benefits of AI technology in enhancing second or foreign language learning experiences in many aspects are widely recognized in the literature. Studies (Sumakul et al., 2022; Vera, 2023) show that EFL teachers are of the opinion that the AI technology could help both teaching and learning processes in the EFL classes. A study by Chen (2022) revealed that the instructional feedback generated by AI decreased EFL learners' public speaking anxiety. Alharthi (2024) reported that Siri, Apple's mobile intelligent assistant, improved EFL learners' pronunciation skills more than in-class instruction. In Tai and Chen's (2020) study, it was demonstrated that Google Assistant fostered EFL learners' willingness to communicate, enhanced communicative confidence, and decreased speaking anxiety. Dizon (2020) found that the use of intelligent personal assistant, Alexa, promoted L2 speaking skills. In another study, Amazon Echo was found to be helpful in assisting L2 learners' pronunciation practice (Moussalli & Cardoso, 2016). Marzuki et al. (2023) underscore the potential benefits of AI writing tools



in improving the quality of EFL student writing. A meta-analysis by Seyyedrezaei et al. (2022) revealed that the applications of educational technology produce a major positive effect on EFL/ESL learners' writing performance. Despite the considerable amount of research results on the benefits of AI technology in EFL education, there exists studies discussing the cons of AI. In their studies, Elliott (2024) and Mohamed (2024) bring the concerns about the use of AI in EFL settings into focus due to its inhibiting effects on research and critical thinking skills. In another study, Rukiati et al. (2023) assert that the position of human as teachers, bias in AI algorithms, privacy, and the quality of the AI-based applications are the concerns that should be addressed to make the most of AI technology. Vera (2023) addresses the importance of creating a responsible and ethical use of these technologies in the EFL classroom.

Developed by the American AI research lab OpenAI, ChatGPT is an artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot and was launched in November 2022 (Xames & Shefa, 2023). It "uses a pre-trained generative language model to understand user questions, consider context, and generate accurate and relevant conversational responses" (p. 4) and the most well-known versions are GPT-1, GPT-2, GPT-3, and GPT-4 (Sarrion, 2023). The potential opportunities of ChatGPT for both teaching and learning processes in general educational setting (Kasneci et al., 2023; Sullivan et al., 2023; Xames & Shefa, 2023) and in advancing EFL learners' English proficiency (Baskara, 2023; Elliott, 2024; Karataş et al., 2024; Koraiishi, 2023; Mohamed, 2024; Tseng & Lin, 2024) have been reflected in the literature. However, some limitations and biases concerning the adoption of ChatGPT in the education context have been reflected. In their study, Kasneci et al. (2023) emphasize the privacy, security, environmental, regulatory and ethical requirements that should be met in the integration of ChatGPT into education. Xames & Shefa (2023) address the challenges and concerns such as AI authorship, nonexistent references, unintentional plagiarism, biases, and copyright and ethical issues.

As discussed above, the use of technology in varying forms has been subject to considerable debate in the educational research area, highlighting both advantages and concerns. Similarly, researchers continue to hold intense discussions on the use of ChatGPT, a state-of-the-art natural language generation model developed by OpenAI, and its impact in both learning and teaching processes. Furthermore, the need for further research to reveal the effects of ChatGPT in EFL learning (Abdelhalim, 2024; Mohamed, 2024) as well as in general educational setting (Kasneci et al., 2023; Sullivan et al., 2023) was indicated. Therefore, the aim of this study was to carry out a systematic review of the studies to explore the impact of ChatGPT in EFL learning and teaching, an area which needs further investigation. In line with this aim, the relevant studies published in Web of Science (WoS) database from 2022 to 2024 and in the category of education were reviewed. The study is thought to be useful for both researchers in the field of EFL education and EFL educators who want to integrate AI technologies into their practice. Following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the advantages of using ChatGPT in EFL teaching and learning processes?
2. What are the drawbacks of using ChatGPT in EFL teaching and learning processes?



## Method

### Research Design

This study focused on the impact of ChatGPT on EFL learning and teaching, to gain a comprehensive understanding of its advantages and drawbacks in the EFL field. Therefore, the present study is designed as a systematic review. Bruce and Mollison (2004) state that “A systematic review is a critical synthesis of research evidence, which involves analysis of all available and relevant evidence in a systematic, objective and robust manner” (p. 13). The authors further clarify that it is a formal, meticulous methodological process with overcomes the subjectivity of traditional narrative reviews. The key stages of a systematic review include “the clarification of the research question, comprehensive identification of relevant literature, explicit inclusion criteria, critical assessment of included studies, summarizing data in an informative manner and interpretation of findings” (p. 16).

### The Manuscript Selection Process

A search was performed in the Web of Science database for available literature on the use of ChatGPT in the EFL teaching and learning. The Web of Science database was chosen as it is known as the most extensive and reliable academic information resource library in the world (Ferhatoglu et al., 2020; Lv et al., 2021). The keywords used for the search were “ChatGPT”, “English language learning” and “foreign language learning”. Article date was not identified as a criterion in the manuscript selection process as ChatGPT was launched in November 2022 and all the relevant studies started since then. Therefore, all the relevant literature from 2022 to 2024 were included. The keywords were searched in the “All Fields” filter in the WoS database. Article and early access were chosen as the document type while review articles and proceeding papers were excluded. Education educational research, Computer science cybernetics, Computer science interdisciplinary applications, Language linguistics, Linguistics, Multidisciplinary sciences, Computer science theory methods were chosen as Web of Science search areas. The last search was conducted on 12 May 2024. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were given in Table 1 below. Article selection process was presented in Figure 1 below.

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Article topic	Discuss ChatGPT into EFL teaching and learning	Discuss ChatGPT into another field of study
Document type	Article, early access	Review article, proceeding paper
Web of science category	Education educational research, Computer science cybernetics, Computer science interdisciplinary applications, Language linguistics, Linguistics, Multidisciplinary sciences, Computer science theory methods	Other categories
Article availability	Full text articles	Non-full-text articles
Article language	English	Non-English

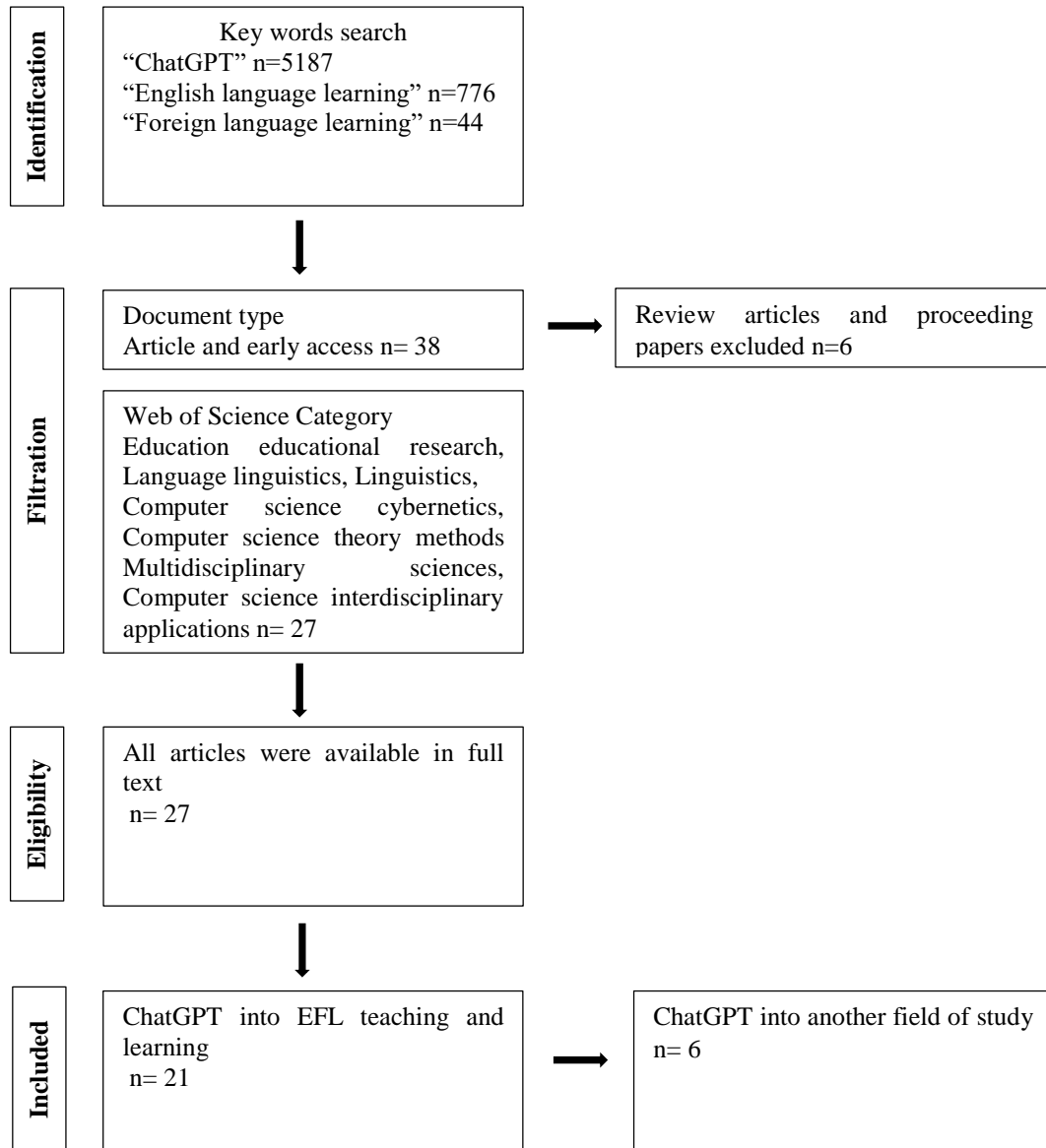


Figure 1. Article Selection Process

## Results

The aim of this study was to carry out a systematic review of the studies to explore the impact of ChatGPT in EFL education by focusing on its advantages and drawbacks. Through an analysis of the existing studies published in the WoS database, the advantages and drawbacks of using ChatGPT in EFL teaching and learning processes were identified. The relevant studies included in this review were categorized according to their research design and their main findings were summarized in the tables. Table 2 presents the main results of the three experimental studies, Table 3 presents the main results of the five mixed-method studies, Table 4 presents the main results of the ten qualitative studies, and lastly Table 5 presents the main results of the three quantitative studies.



Table 2. The Main Results of the Experimental Studies

<b>AUTHOR(S) AND YEAR OF PUBLICATION</b>	<b>RESEARCH AIM AND LANGUAGE SKILLS OR ASPECTS</b>	<b>PARTICIPANTS (if available)</b>	<b>MAIN RESULTS</b>
Boudouaia et al. (2024)	The use and acceptance of ChatGPT-4 in students' EFL writing	76 undergraduate students participating in an EFL program	ChatGPT-4 had a beneficial effect on students' EFL writing skills, which ultimately led the students to accept the tool. The main reason for its acceptance was its potential usefulness in putting students' previous knowledge of EFL writing into practice. Experimental group's views were reported to be improved which could be attributed to the use of ChatGPT.
Özçelik and Ekşi (2024)	The impact of ChatGPT on the acquisition of register knowledge in a variety of writing tasks	11 undergraduate students	The students found ChatGPT useful for the acquisition of formal register knowledge but did not find it necessary for informal writing.
Young and Shishido (2023)	ChatGPT's potential for creating reference dialogues to help EFL learners improve English.	-	ChatGPT generated reference dialogues are mostly suitable for elementary level students. The dialogues are easy to understand, allowing students at this level to understand most of the vocabulary used. In addition, a significant proportion of the dialogues generated for intermediate level students provide sufficient stimulation to learn new words.

Table 3. The Main Results of the Mixed-Method Studies

<b>AUTHOR(S) AND YEAR OF PUBLICATION</b>	<b>RESEARCH AIM AND LANGUAGE SKILLS OR ASPECTS</b>	<b>PARTICIPANTS (if available)</b>	<b>MAIN RESULTS</b>
Alenizi et al. (2023)	Teachers' views on integrating ChatGPT into special education EFL instruction	Questionnaire-199 EFL special education teachers Interviews-5 EFL special education teachers	ChatGPT was perceived as moderately effective with moderate obstacles. Female teachers were more likely to use it.
Abdelhalim (2024)	The impact of EFL students' level of metacognitive awareness on their views, use and satisfaction with ChatGPT in developing research competence.	Questionnaire-27 undergraduate students enrolled in an English Language and Literature program Interviews-14 undergraduates	Metacognitive awareness level significantly predicted students' views and practices of ChatGPT.
Liu et al. (2024)	Chinese EFL learners' recognition and acceptance of GPT technologies in informal digital English learning	Questionnaire-867 Chinese EFL learners Interviews-20 Chinese EFL learners	A theoretically grounded model has been developed. This model explains EFL learners' adoption of new GPT technologies. The interview results provide examples of EFL learners' acceptance and use of GPT



			technologies for informal digital English learning purposes.
Gao et al. (2024)	EFL university teachers' views about the integration of Large Language Models in language education	95 EFL teachers from Chinese universities	Neglect of traditional learning resources, academic integrity, over-reliance were the main concerns regarding the integration of Large Language Models (LLMs).
Yan (2024)	EFL learners' feedback seeking skills in the writing classroom using ChatGPT as an automated provider of written corrective feedback and their perceptions	3 EFL learners with different language proficiencies and technological competences at a Chinese university	The key factors that determine students' development of feedback seeking skills were identified.

Table 4. The Main Results of the Qualitative Studies

AUTHOR(S) AND YEAR OF PUBLICATION	RESEARCH AIM AND LANGUAGE SKILLS OR ASPECTS	PARTICIPANTS (if available)	MAIN RESULTS
Karataş et al. (2024)	The effect of ChatGPT on students' language learning experience and its advantages and disadvantages in EFL teaching	13 preparatory class students studying English at the School of Foreign Languages at a university in Türkiye	ChatGPT can improve language proficiency while increasing learner motivation and engagement. Over-reliance on ChatGPT, connection problems, encouraging students to take the easy way out in learning processes, and limited effectiveness for practicing speaking were reported as drawbacks.
Xiao and Zhi (2023)	Students' experiences with ChatGPT and their perceptions of	5 undergraduate students from different disciplines at a Chinese university	ChatGPT can help students complete language tasks and provide instant feedback and personalized learning experiences.
Tseng and Lin (2024)	The integration of GPT-3.5 within a university-level EFL writing course	15 junior or senior non-native English speaking undergraduate students at a private university in Taiwan	GPT-3.5 speeds up the writing process by providing immediate feedback and creating content ideas. It also encourages critical thinking and help them develop a distinctive writing voice.
Yeh, (2024)	The integration of ChatGPT into EFL teacher learning	13 in-service teachers enrolled in an 18-week advanced graduate course titled English Teaching Methods	AI technologies enabled teachers to design interactive and adaptive learning materials. The adaptability of AI tools improved students' listening and speaking skills.
Mohamed (2024)	Faculty members' views on ChatGPT as a tool for learning EFL	10 EFL faculty members	ChatGPT enhanced students' English proficiency. Faculty members found ChatGPT's responses quick and accurate; however, its negative effects on students' critical thinking and research skills, and its possible support in bias or misinformation were reported as disadvantages.
Bao and Li (2023)	Graduate student instructors'	5 graduate student instructors enrolled	The capability of ChatGPT to generate ideas, texts, grammar and comprehension





	exploration and integration of ChatGPT into language teaching	in a graduate-level course	questions were reported as its opportunities, while unnatural answers and its limited ability about Chinese language were its disadvantages.
Derakhshan and Ghiasvand (2024)	EFL teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT's potentials and threats for L2 learning, teaching, assessment, and research	30 EFL teachers who were active in research and practice and teaching English in different state universities	ChatGPT can both benefit and harm L2 language education. Increasing learner autonomy, providing individualized learning, reducing teachers' workload were reported as some potentials while ChatGPT' negative effects on creativity and academic integrity, supporting cheating, spreading false and misinformation, and encouraging plagiarism were reported as threats.
Nugroho et al. (2024)	Students' experiences of using ChatGPT to provide scaffolding for essay writing. It also reveals students' views of ChatGPT.	12 EFL learners who used ChatGPT in academic writing classes	Some benefits of translation, accuracy and efficiency in writing, generating ideas, and practicality were reported as some advantages. Students had some criticisms regarding misinformation and academic dishonesty.
Yan (2023)	Students' views and behaviors of ChatGPT in writing classrooms	8 Chinese undergraduate EFL majors	The findings revealed the convenience of ChatGPT in writing classrooms. Some concerns related to ethical issues and equity were reported.
Zou and Huang (2023)	Doctoral students' perceptions of ChatGPT's impact on writing.	215 doctoral students at a public university	ChatGPT served as a self-learning tool for writing, supporting students at all stages of their writing process. In addition, concerns reported included learning loss, authorial voice, unintelligent writing, academic integrity, and social/safety risks.

Table 5. The Main Results of the Quantitative Studies

<b>AUTHOR(S) AND YEAR OF PUBLICATION</b>	<b>RESEARCH AIM AND LANGUAGE SKILLS OR ASPECTS</b>	<b>PARTICIPANTS (if available)</b>	<b>MAIN RESULTS</b>
Dehghani and Mashhadi (2024)	Factors influencing the adoption of ChatGPT for English language teaching	234 Iranian EFL teachers	Iranian EFL teachers had generally positive views towards ChatGPT. The ease of use of ChatGPT was positively related to the perception of its usefulness.
Xu and Thien (2024)	The factors that influence the intention of Chinese undergraduate EFL students to use ChatGPT for their English language learning.	432 first- and second-year undergraduate students at two Chinese universities	Intention to use ChatGPT for English learning was directly influenced by effort and performance expectancy, social influence and perceived enjoyment.
Guo and Wang (2024)	ChatGPT's role in teaching and learning writing.	Five Chinese EFL teachers	ChatGPT produced various and more feedback than teachers in a very short time.



## Discussion

This research aimed to investigate the role of ChatGPT, a Large Language Model (LLM)-based chatbot, in the EFL teaching and learning practices. By reviewing a total of twenty-one relevant articles extracted from the prestigious database of WoS, it was attempted to get a better insight into the advantages and drawbacks of using ChatGPT in the field of EFL education. The findings of the reviewed studies provided insights into the potential advantages and drawbacks of ChatGPT that can enhance its efficient use for effective EFL teaching and learning. Regarding research question one, which concerns the advantages of using ChatGPT in EFL teaching and learning processes, results show that ChatGPT has the potential to enhance students' learning experiences and teachers' instructional practices in the EFL context. Concerning overall EFL proficiency, studies (Boudouaia et al., 2024; Mohamed, 2024) point out that ChatGPT can help students improve their overall language proficiency. Similarly, regarding language skills, Karataş et al. (2024) reported positive effects of ChatGPT in students' learning experiences, especially in writing, grammar, and vocabulary as well as its potential to foster motivation and engagement; however, limited impact on speaking skills and no impact on listening skills were reported. Unlike Karataş et al. (2024), Yeh (2024) reported that the in-service teachers believed that AI tools enhanced students' listening and speaking skills. Xiao and Zhi (2023) highlight the potential of ChatGPT in EFL education as a helpful learning partner in completing language-related tasks. Young and Shishido (2023) report that the reference dialogues generated by ChatGPT might be helpful especially for elementary level EFL learners as they provide speaking, reading and listening practices simultaneously. In addition to its advantages in improving diverse language skills, ChatGPT was also reported to be helpful in terms of enhancing learner autonomy, providing individualized learning opportunities for students, relieving teachers' burden by developing rubrics that can be used in student assessment processes and summarizing academic papers which take up teachers' time and energy (Derakhshan & Ghiasvand, 2024), generating ideas for class activities, comprehension questions, texts, grammar exercises (Bao & Li, 2023); as well as contributing to students' academic achievement and language learning motivation to actively participate in language learning activities (Gao et al., 2024). In addition to these advantages, Mohamed (2024) suggests the advantages of immediate feedback, motivation enhancement, individualized instruction, broad base of knowledge, low cost, proper responses, and the advantage of practicing EFL skills out of the class for students. Liu et al. (2024) also emphasize that ChatGPT technologies are easy to adopt for students.

It is clear from the systematic literature review that studies mostly tend to focus on the writing skill (Boudouaia et al., 2024; Guo & Wang, 2024; Nugroho et al., 2024; Özçelik & Ekşi, 2024; Tseng & Lin, 2024; Yan, 2023; Yan, 2024; Zou & Huang, 2023) and acknowledge ChatGPT's positive effects on EFL writing. Some of these potential positive effects include improving the organization of students' written works (cohesion and coherence), supporting them in accurate grammar use during the writing process, increasing their vocabulary knowledge (Boudouaia et al., 2024); offering immediate feedback, creating content ideas, and accelerating the writing process (Tseng & Lin, 2024); translation and writing efficiency (Nugroho et al., 2024), producing a larger amount and different types of feedback in a very short time compared to teacher feedback (Guo & Wang, 2024), its speed in text creation, general quality and high standards of academic writing, that is, its convenience and applicability for writing skill (Yan, 2023); supporting students across all writing stages (pre-, while-, and post-) as a self-learning tool (Zou & Huang, 2023). However, it deserves mentioning that, in the study by Özçelik and Ekşi (2024),



although ChatGPT was reported to have a beneficial effect on acquiring formal register knowledge, the same beneficial effect was not applicable for informal writing. These positive effects of ChatGPT on EFL writing proficiency can be explained by its potential to provide individualized practice and explanations (Alenizi et al., 2023; Boudouaia et al., 2024), immediate feedback (Xiao & Zhi, 2023), and/or its ability to develop critical thinking (Tseng & Lin, 2024).

A substantial amount of the study results included in this review are based on EFL students and teachers' perceptions. The systematic analysis of these studies show that both students (Abdelhalim, 2024; Karataş et al., 2024; Nugroho et al., 2024; Xiao & Zhi, 2023; Zou & Huang, 2023) and teachers (Bao & Li, 2023; Dehghani & Mashhadi, 2024; Gao et al., 2024; Guo & Wang, 2024; Mohamed, 2024; Yeh, 2024) generally indicate positive perceptions regarding the use of ChatGPT in EFL learning. However, in the study by Alenizi et al. (2023), the EFL teachers found ChatGPT as moderately affective tool for EFL learning. Furthermore, metacognitive awareness level was reported to have a significant effect on EFL students' perceptions and practices of ChatGPT and prompt formulation, systematic thinking, self-regulation strategies, and trust in AI were reported as the key factors for using it in an efficient way (Abdelhalim, 2024). Perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use were reported as the factors affecting ChatGPT's acceptance by the EFL teachers (Dehghani & Mashhadi, 2024). Besides, effort and performance expectancy, social influence and perceived enjoyment were reported as the factors which have direct effects on intention to use ChatGPT for language learning (Xu & Thien, 2024). Teachers' knowledge of content and pedagogy were reported to affect their use of technology (Bao & Li, 2023). Furthermore, despite their limited number, experimental studies (Boudouaia et al., 2024; Özçelik & Ekşi, 2024; Young & Shishido, 2023) considerably confirm other study results indicating the potential of ChatGPT in enhancing EFL proficiency.

Regarding the second research question, which concerns the drawbacks of using ChatGPT in EFL teaching and learning processes, research results show that despite the positive perceptions mentioned by both EFL teachers and students, ChatGPT's limitations and some concerns regarding its use in EFL education have been emphasized. Main concerns and drawbacks expressed by students about ChatGPT's use in the EFL context include excessive dependence on it, some technical problems, encouraging students to take the easy way out in learning processes (Karataş et al., 2024), reliability issues, its inability to understand informal registers (Özçelik & Ekşi, 2024), ChatGPT's mono-modal interface, common sense deficiency, lack of the ability to learn from experiences (Liu et al., 2024); ethical issues like academic dishonesty and misinformation (Nugroho et al., 2024); learning loss and safety risks (Zou & Huang, 2023). Some drawbacks expressed by EFL teachers include lack of emotional support and nonverbal cues, limited opportunities to practice listening and speaking skills, time consumption (Alenizi et al., 2023); its negative effects on critical thinking and research skills, problems related to privacy and ethical issues (Mohamed, 2024); unnatural answers, its limited ability to process some languages (Bao & Li, 2023); negative effects on creativity and academic integrity, negative support in cheating (Derakhshan & Ghiasvand, 2024); disregarding traditional learning sources, extra time for planning, potential treats towards teachers' identity (Gao et al., 2024); too long, difficult and irrelevant feedbacks (Guo & Wang, 2024); academic dishonesty (plagiarism) and educational inequity (Yan, 2023).



It is clear from the above discussion that ChatGPT does indeed provide advantages as well as some limitations and drawbacks for both students and teachers in the EFL teaching and learning processes. As technology continues to advance at a rapid pace, we can expect more advanced AI tools and applications that will revolutionize the future of EFL education. It really seems impossible to avoid technology in the EFL teaching and learning processes as it has been integrated in our lives. Furthermore, we cannot ignore its benefits for both students and teachers in the EFL context if used in an ethical way and integrated properly into EFL lessons. Therefore, as indicated in the literature, EFL teachers need to develop the necessary skills and knowledge via trainings to efficiently make use of the AI tools in their classrooms (Bao & Li, 2023; Mohamed, 2024), and teachers should model their students in terms of its ethical use (Boudouaia et al., 2024). In this respect, Dehghani & Mashhadi's (2024) suggestion as to the integration of ChatGPT's ethical practices into the teacher training programs sounds reasonable.

It should be noted that the number of the available experimental studies conducted on the use of ChatGPT in the EFL context is rather low, which prevents reaching definite conclusions regarding the values of ChatGPT in the EFL context. Therefore, there is clearly a need for further studies, especially experimental ones, to better understand the effectiveness and potential drawbacks of ChatGPT in the EFL arena. Moreover, as indicated by Abdelhalim (2024), the literature on the use of ChatGPT primarily focuses on the perspectives of scholars and teachers, it is of vital importance to conduct studies to get students' views regarding the integration of ChatGPT in EFL learning. Furthermore, this study has some limitations which could affect the generalizability of the findings. First and foremost, the studies included in this systematic review were extracted from the WoS databases. Future research can retrieve articles from other databases which could possibly include relevant high-impact articles. Secondly, future systematic reviews can focus on the articles in languages other than English. Lastly, the number of the experimental studies focusing on the role of ChatGPT in EFL context is rather low. Therefore, the role of ChatGPT in teaching and learning of other languages as a foreign language can be covered in future systematic reviews.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this systematic review was to identify the impact of ChatGPT in the EFL education with a special focus on its benefits and disadvantages. After reviewing a total of twenty-one full-text articles from the WoS database, it can be concluded that ChatGPT is a promising tool that can support both EFL students' learning experiences and teachers' instructional activities both in and out of class. The main advantages of ChatGPT in the EFL context include enhancing general language proficiency and various language skills (such as grammar, vocabulary, syntax, writing, listening, speaking, reading) and promoting language learning motivation, enhancing learner autonomy, providing personalized learning opportunities, reducing teachers' burden, immediate feedback, broad base of knowledge, low cost, opportunity to practice EFL skills out of the class for students. However, along with its benefits, potential limitations and drawbacks were also addressed in these studies. The main limitations and drawbacks expressed by students are excessive dependence on ChatGPT, technical problems, reliability issues, its inability to understand informal registers, ChatGPT's mono-modal interface, common sense deficiency, ethical issues and safety risks. In addition, lack of emotional support and nonverbal cues, limited opportunities to practice some language skills, its negative effects on critical thinking and research skills, problems



related to privacy and ethical issues, its negative effects on creativity and academic integrity, potential treats towards teachers' role and identity, too long feedback and educational inequity are some main drawbacks expressed by EFL teachers.

### Author(s)' Statements on Ethics and Conflict of Interest

**Ethics Statement:** I hereby declare that research/publication ethics and citing principles have been considered in all the stages of the study. I take full responsibility for the content of the paper in case of dispute.

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