

## ChatGPT in Language Education: How To Use It Ethically?

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### Article information

#### Abstract

The widespread adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, specifically ChatGPT, within pedagogy has engendered a dialogue regarding ethical implications. This article explores the ethical implications associated with using ChatGPT in the context of language teaching and learning. While we acknowledge the potential of ChatGPT in supporting and enhancing language teaching and learning, we also recognize its ethical issues. We argue that the responsible implementation of ChatGPT necessitates ethical considerations to ensure conscientious usage, as this is crucial in mitigating potential harms and ensuring that its development and utilization align with societal and professional values as language teachers. Critical ethical considerations include addressing biases, promoting critical thinking and verification, safeguarding learner privacy and data, and monitoring learner engagement. The ethical considerations surrounding the utilization of ChatGPT in language education are paramount to guarantee conscientious implementation, user confidence, impartiality, scholarly probity, analytical aptitude, confidentiality safeguards, acknowledgment of pedagogical proficiency, and adaptability to the ever-changing technological landscape. In other words, incorporating ethical considerations is crucial in ensuring the responsible implementation and optimization of ChatGPT's potential in language teaching and learning. It is suggested that additional

	empirical investigation be conducted to examine the effects of ChatGPT on educators' professional identity and students' academic performance.
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## 1. Introduction

The recent proliferation of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT (generative, pre-trained transformer) has garnered significant attention in teaching and learning. These tools, which possess transformative capabilities, have become focal points of discussion among education practitioners, researchers, and scholars regarding the ethical considerations surrounding their implementation and utilization (Koh & Doroudi, 2023; Ulla et al., 2023).

ChatGPT, one of the most popular AI, is a language model created by OpenAI that has the ability to produce responses that resemble human-like language when presented with natural language prompts, utilizing the advanced GPT language model technology (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Lund & Wang, 2023; Tlili et al., 2023). Lund and Wang (2023) have recognized that ChatGPT is a technologically advanced system that exhibits a diverse range of capabilities in text-based communication, encompassing a broad spectrum of functions, ranging from basic question-answering to more complex tasks such as the generation of thank-you letters and the facilitation of challenging conversations regarding productivity concerns.

Since its initial launch in November 2020, ChatGPT has been implemented in various applications, including education (Jeon & Lee, 2023), particularly in language teaching and learning (Kohnke et al., 2023; Ulla et al., 2023). Although Lo (2023) mentions that ChatGPT could be a valuable tool for teachers seeking to incorporate AI into their pedagogical practices, researchers (see Hsu & Ching, 2023; Ray, 2023; Tlili et al., 2023) have also expressed several concerns, including generating inaccurate or fraudulent data, fake citations, and evading plagiarism detection systems when using it in teaching and learning. For instance, Jeon and Lee (2023) conducted a study in South Korea to examine the correlation between ChatGPT and teachers, focusing on their complementary functions in education. A group of 11 language teachers was purposefully chosen to integrate the utilization of ChatGPT as a pedagogical tool into their instructional practices for two weeks. The participants were subjected to individualized interviews after interacting with the technological tool. In addition, the participants were instructed to elaborate on their personal experiences and furnish records of their interactions produced while utilizing the technology. Utilizing a qualitative data analysis methodology, the study has successfully identified four distinct roles that ChatGPT assumes. These roles include that of an interlocutor, content provider, teaching assistant, and evaluator.

Furthermore, the study has revealed the existence of three discrete teacher roles which encompass effectively coordinating diverse resources while making sound pedagogical judgments, fostering an environment of active inquiry among students, and nurturing a sense of ethical responsibility towards artificial intelligence. The investigation culminated in an exhaustive discourse on the cooperative efforts between teachers and ChatGPT, highlighting the importance of teachers' pedagogical expertise in optimally utilizing AI tools.

In a similar vein, Lo (2023) conducted a rapid literature review of ChatGPT to ascertain its affordances across diverse academic subjects, its relevance in the context of education, and the potential apprehensions that scholars have raised during the initial three months of its launch (i.e., December 2022 to February 2023). The investigator conducted a thorough examination of relevant databases and Google Scholar, identifying 50 articles that were subsequently subjected to content analysis. The study employed open coding, axial coding, and selective coding techniques to examine the efficacy of ChatGPT across various subject areas. The findings revealed that the effectiveness of ChatGPT varied across subject areas, with some areas demonstrating outstanding performance (e.g., economics) while others showed satisfactory (e.g., programming) or unsatisfactory (e.g., mathematics) results. In addition, the researcher have recognized the potential of ChatGPT as an educational instrument for instructors, encompassing its capacity to create educational resources and provide guidance, as well as a digital mentor for students, fostering investigation and cooperation. However, certain concerns have also been identified, such as generating inaccurate or fraudulent information and evading plagiarism detection systems. The researcher has suggested the prompt implementation of measures to revise the evaluation techniques and institutional protocols currently in place in academic institutions in light of the potential use of ChatGPT in education. The review underscored the necessity for educators' pedagogical instruction and the dissemination of knowledge to students regarding the advantages and limitations of ChatGPT in education.

In the context of language teaching and learning, a technology review of ChatGPT and its potential application was conducted by Kohnke et al. (2023). The technological review has yielded initial findings regarding the potential of ChatGPT as a language teaching and learning tool, providing a collection of learning activity examples that ChatGPT teachers may utilize. Moreover, the researchers have

acknowledged that ChatGPT has the potential to enhance language learning by simulating genuine communicative interactions. As Kohnke et al. (2023) have pointed out, ChatGPT possesses the ability to identify the contextual meaning of words, rectify and elucidate language errors, generate texts of diverse genres (such as emails, narratives, and recipes), construct quizzes, annotate texts, and provide dictionary definitions, example sentences, and translations. Additionally, the researchers have also identified several pertinent constraints associated with ChatGPT. These issues encompass ethical use, plagiarism, fake citations, academic dishonesty, and their potential impact on assessment outcomes. The review concludes with a recommendation that language educators and learners should possess advanced digital skills to effectively leverage the benefits of digital technologies while also managing their associated risks and limitations.

While the aforementioned studies on ChatGPT have provided insights into its application in the context of education, especially in language teaching and learning, these studies do not dig deeper into how to address some of its ethical issues and concerns. Koh and Doroudi (2023), in their editorial for the special issue of *Learning in the Age of Generative Artificial Intelligence*, have suggested that “the ethical aspects of generative AI in education have to be further fleshed out” (p. 114) as discussing the ethical aspects remains a gap in the existing studies worthy of further discussion.

Thus, in this article, we attempt to fill the gap in the literature by proposing and discussing the framework for the ethical use of AIs in language education based on the suggestions by Koh and Doroudi (2023). Also, informed by the existing studies, our discussion of the proposed framework touches on issues of legitimacy, authorship, data privacy, misuse prevention, and the broader societal implications of reliance on ChatGPT and AI tools in language education contexts.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Ethics in the Use of Educational Technology**

Moore and Ellsworth (2014) have acknowledged that the field of educational technology has historically overlooked the study of ethics, resulting in a lack of research in this area. However, with the pervasive use of technology in education, especially the development of AI, there is now a growing recognition of the

importance of ethics in educational technology, leading to increased attention and emphasis on investigating and advancing this field. According to Moore and Ellsworth (2014), ethics is more than just philosophical musing; it is the cornerstone of the outstanding standards of performance demanded of professionals and, therefore, a vital prerequisite to any legitimate and effective planning and design, especially in educational technology.

Contemporary scholars (Holmes, 1990; Marturano, 2002; Morán-Reyes, 2022; Tham, 2014) frequently employ a tripartite framework to delineate the domain of ethics, encompassing three distinct categories. Firstly, metaethics assumes a central position, directing its attention toward investigating the genesis and significance of ethical principles. Secondly, normative ethics assumes a prominent role, establishing criteria to discern and govern morally correct and incorrect behavior. Lastly, applied ethics assumes a consequential position, prioritizing examining intricate and unresolved cases and quandaries within the ethical realm.

In this article, the ethical assertions outlined in the following section focus more on normative ethics, as it is the most relevant concept commonly linked to codes of conduct and the differentiation of commendable or virtuous behavior from unacceptable or detrimental actions. Spector (2016) mentions that normative ethics delineate the behaviors and practices a community, culture, institution, or profession anticipates all members to adopt. In certain instances, deviating from an ethical principle may also constitute a breach of the law (Spector, 2016).

In the context of digital technologies in education, since these technologies brought about changes in how teachers and students connect with each other, perceive themselves, and interact with their educational surroundings, technologies have created a link between personal and societal well-being, the state of the information environment, and the digital tools that enable interaction within it (Ulla et al., 2020). As a result, there is an urgent need to address ethical questions about the impact of technology on overall welfare and understand the implications comprehensively. Considering the importance of understanding ethics in educational technology, Morán-Reyes (2022) recognizes that moral responsibility holds significant importance in scholarly inquiry, particularly when viewed through the lens of metaethics. In addition, the concept of moral

responsibility is delineated by an individual's subjective perception of their own autonomy as it pertains to their decision-making process, taking into account the various socio-cultural factors that influence their choices (Morán-Reyes, 2022).

### **3. Guidelines for Ethical Use of ChatGPT in Language Teaching and Learning**

The ethical aspects of incorporating ChatGPT into education demand a more thorough exploration. While prior research has identified and acknowledged certain ethical concerns surrounding the utilization of ChatGPT in education, with a particular focus on language teaching and learning, how to address these ethical issues has not been delineated clearly in the literature, especially regarding language teaching and learning. In other words, there should be a more profound and nuanced examination of these ethical issues, spanning from philosophical to practical considerations, particularly emphasizing the formulation of ethical guidelines.

Koh and Doroudi (2023) have raised several pivotal questions to foster a more in-depth discourse on the ethical use of generative AI in education. These questions extend to learners' legitimate applications of generative AI, specifically addressing its potential role as a cognitive extender, the concept of authorship in co-constructing student output, with a particular emphasis on the potential for plagiarism, particularly when the AI is trained on copyrighted text, identifying and resolving data privacy concerns, and preventing students from utilizing these tools for inappropriate purposes.

In this article, we proposed a conceptual approach to ethically use ChatGPT and other AIs in language teaching and learning, as these AIs will continue to influence our pedagogical methodologies significantly. To fulfill this objective, we formulated the concepts, created the framework, and proposed it (see Figure 1) based on existing studies. It should be noted that we have also asked the assistance of ChatGPT (OpenAI, 2023) to explain the concepts. However, while it gave us explanations, we complemented them by editing, paraphrasing, and modifying them for the discussions below.

#### **3.1 Pedagogical Prudence**

According to Kasneci et al. (2023), many teachers and educational institutions lack the skills to successfully incorporate new technology into their

curricula. This is especially true when it comes to integrating AI models into instruction. Large language models can be useful teaching tools, but like any new technology, their integration demands an awareness of both their strengths and weaknesses as well as how best to apply them to support or improve particular learning processes (Kasneci et al., 2023).

Furthermore, AI in education has proven to be advantageous by providing support to teachers in their teaching methods. In a study conducted by Celik et al. (2022), various benefits of utilizing AI in education were discovered, particularly in relation to teachers' pedagogical practices. However, some researchers have also expressed concerns regarding students' creativity, analytical thinking, and social skills, as well as copyright and ethical issues, especially when using these AIs, particularly ChatGPT, in the educational process (Jeon & Lee, 2023; Kohnke et al., 2023). According to Kohnke et al. (2023) and Ulla et al. (2023), ChatGPT does not follow the correct citation and sourcing guidelines, and its generated replies, comments, and answers to queries are plagiarized because they are essentially paraphrases of content from uncredited sources rather than unique works.

Given the above concerns, teachers must consider the ethical implications of using AI in pedagogy. In other words, teachers must exercise prudence when using ChatGPT or introducing it to students in their writing activities. Thus, in utilizing ChatGPT for language education, teachers should consider its pedagogical benefit to their students and whether or not the language lesson they want to discuss requires them to use AIs. Firstly, language skill development should be emphasized, encompassing more than just correctness. While the tool may help practice vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure, it should also foster fluency, understanding, and effective real-world communication.

Secondly, students must be encouraged to engage in critical thinking and verification. They should be taught to evaluate ChatGPT responses critically and corroborate information with reliable sources, promoting independent thinking, information literacy, and research skills. Thirdly, ongoing monitoring and evaluation of student engagement are vital. This means regular assessment helps track progress, identify challenges, and provide guidance, ensuring misconceptions are addressed and additional explanations are offered. Moreover, soliciting student feedback is essential. Teachers can refine the language model



and improve ethical practices by actively listening to students' concerns, suggestions, and insights.

Lastly, continuous professional development is crucial for teachers. Staying informed about AI advancements, understanding limitations, and promoting ethical practices necessitates staying updated on research, attending workshops, and engaging with professional communities focused on AI in language teaching.

### **3.2 Complementary: Complement, not replace, human interaction**

In the ethical framework of using ChatGPT for language teaching and learning, it is crucial to recognize the importance of human interaction. ChatGPT should be seen as a complementary tool rather than a replacement for human interaction in the teaching and learning process. While ChatGPT can offer valuable practice opportunities and feedback, language teachers and authentic human communication should remain at the core of language learning. Such authentic human interaction has been highlighted by Chiu (2021), who has recognized the importance of teacher-student interactions, arguing that when disregarding the significance of student learning and the dynamics of teacher-student interactions, it is plausible that educational measures may not adequately equip students with a fundamental understanding and readiness for a society characterized by the widespread integration of artificial intelligence.

Additionally, one of the key challenges associated with using these AIs, particularly ChatGPT, is teachers' and students' overreliance and dependence on these tools. For instance, in a study by Kasneci et al. (2023), the researchers identified that teachers and students may rely heavily on these tools, which could result in critical thinking and creativity issues. Thus, they have suggested that teachers employ these tools to enhance rather than replace their teaching methods. To Kasneci et al. (2023), addressing these issues involves effectively integrating language models into the instructional process and using them as a supplementary tool. Moreover, incorporating AIs into the curriculum, particularly for critical thinking and problem-solving activities, would provide an avenue to nurture these vital skills actively in students. In other words, fostering student engagement can be accomplished through creative and independent projects, providing opportunities for them to develop and implement their own ideas and learning practices.

Additionally, by embracing ChatGPT as a supplement, students can benefit from additional practice and support, allowing them to reinforce their language skills and maintain the human element in language education. This can be attributed to teachers offering specialized knowledge, direction, and tailored teaching methods that a machine alone cannot provide. In other words, human interaction facilitates students' participation in significant dialogues and refined communication that amplifies their linguistic proficiency and comprehension. Human interaction also promotes empathy, emotional connection, and a deeper understanding of cultural nuances that cannot be replicated solely through AI.

### **3.3 Transparency: Transparently disclose the use of AI**

Students should be fully informed about the use of AI, specifically when interacting with an AI language model like ChatGPT. Specifically, it is important to disclose to students that they are engaging with a machine-generated response system to ensure that students have realistic expectations about the capabilities and limitations of the AI model.

By being transparent about using AI, students are empowered to approach the language model with critical thinking. They would be able to understand that the responses they receive are not from a human but rather generated by an AI system. This knowledge should encourage them to actively engage with the language model, questioning its output and considering it as a valuable learning resource rather than an infallible source of information.

Furthermore, transparency also fosters trust and integrity in the language learning process. When students know that they are interacting with AI, it helps establish a transparent and ethical relationship between the technology and the student. They can make informed decisions about utilizing and interpreting AI-generated responses, enabling them to take greater ownership of their learning journey. Doing so would potentially reduce biases. As Hsu and Ching (2023) have noted, the potential for bias to remain undetected arises from the fluency of AI's natural language output and its ability to generate seemingly credible responses. This situation may occur when students and teachers fail to exercise awareness and instead rely exclusively on the information presented by AI. Implementing rigorous scrutiny and comprehensive measures is imperative to effectively mitigate the generation and dissemination of harmful or offensive content.

### **3.4 Accountability (Data Privacy)**

Accountability is deemed crucial for ChatGPT's responsible advancement and utilization to ensure safe, ethical, and responsible use, which lies with those involved in their development, deployment, and utilization. Hence, it is imperative to establish unambiguous regulations and principles governing the utilization of ChatGPT in language education. These should articulate ethical tenets, promote the judicious utilization of artificial intelligence, and provide guidance on addressing potential deficiencies or issues. Moreover, the involvement of teachers and academic institutions in formulating regulations is crucial to ensure that they align with the objectives and principles of the educational practice.

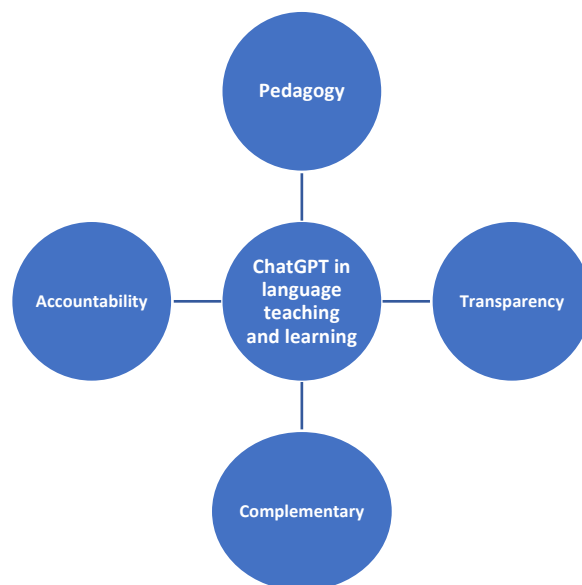
Privacy stands out as a key ethical concern when it comes to employing ChatGPT for language learning. As previously noted, ChatGPT, much like other AI models, relies on substantial data for training and enhancing its language generation capabilities. Vaccino-Salvadore (2023) has pointed out that information provided by users during their interactions with the model could become part of this data, giving rise to concerns regarding data security and privacy. In the context of language learning with ChatGPT, users often divulge their thoughts, emotions, and experiences, but the process of collecting, storing, and utilizing such sensitive data may entail potential risks (Vaccino-Salvadore, 2023).

Thus, safeguarding the privacy and data of students is of utmost importance. The privacy issue ought to be effectively addressed when utilizing ChatGPT as a language instruction and learning platform. Compliance with relevant data protection laws and regulations should also be prioritized to maintain accountability.

It is also imperative to conduct periodic evaluations of ethical considerations in light of the advancements in AI technology and the emergence of novel ethical dilemmas. Maintaining up-to-date knowledge of ethical standards, current research, and optimal methodologies is imperative for ensuring the sustained ethical utilization of ChatGPT in language education.

**Figure 1**

*Framework for ethical use of AIs in language education.*

**4. Conclusion, Implications, and Recommendations**

This article has explored how AI tools such as ChatGPT can shape the educational landscape, particularly in language teaching and learning. While we acknowledge the potential of ChatGPT in supporting and enhancing language teaching and learning, we also recognize its ethical issues. We argue that the responsible implementation of ChatGPT necessitates ethical considerations to ensure conscientious usage, as this is crucial in mitigating potential harms and ensuring that its development and utilization align with societal and professional values as language teachers.

Although this is only a commentary article, it also offers implications that can guide language teachers in utilizing ChatGPT ethically in their language pedagogical practices. First, cultivating user trust and transparency should be facilitated when using ChatGPT. Thus, it is important for language teachers and learners to acknowledge that their interactions with ChatGPT entail engagement with an artificial intelligence language model, resulting in machine-generated responses. Such a practice of transparent disclosure is crucial in fostering trust and enhancing user comprehension of the system's limitations and capabilities.

Second, studies have made it clear that ChatGPT has some issues and that it has the potential to sustain biases that are inherent in the data unintentionally.

These issues of producing erroneous or fake content, fake references, and circumventing anti-plagiarism software must be tackled to guarantee that language teachers and students participate in genuine and truthful educational practices. Through proactively considering ethical implications, language teachers can effectively identify and address potential biases in ChatGPT's responses, fostering equitable and comprehensive practices within the context of language education.

Third, language teachers and learners should be engaged in a critical evaluation of the responses generated by ChatGPT and subsequently cross-verify the information obtained through the utilization of reliable sources. Such a practice fosters the cultivation of critical thinking, information literacy, and research proficiency, allowing learners to evaluate information judiciously. It is also worth noting that language teachers should recognize their language teaching skills and pedagogical expertise in the classroom. In other words, although ChatGPT can be considered as a supplementary tool that enhances language learning, with emphasis placed on the essential role of human interaction and authentic communication as the core of the learning process, it is just a facilitative instrument for augmenting pedagogical methodologies rather than a replacement for human language teachers. Language teachers still maintain a significant level of authority over their classes and language instruction pedagogy.

Furthermore, as the development of AI continues, it is plausible that new ethical predicaments may surface. However, given the ethical implications associated with ChatGPT, it is imperative to examine how this AI can enable teachers to adapt to the ever-changing communication technology landscape, ensuring they are equipped with the most effective methodologies. Thus, for ChatGPT to be deployed wisely in language teaching and learning and to remain consistent with increasing norms, ethical considerations must be periodically assessed.

The ethical considerations surrounding the utilization of ChatGPT in language education are paramount to guarantee conscientious implementation, user confidence, impartiality, scholarly probity, analytical aptitude, confidentiality safeguards, acknowledgment of pedagogical proficiency, and adaptability to the ever-changing technological landscape. Through proactive engagement with

ethical considerations, educators can effectively leverage the capabilities of artificial intelligence technologies while simultaneously ensuring the protection of learners' interests and welfare and maximizing the language teaching and learning process.

Finally, it is recommended that further research be undertaken to investigate the impact of ChatGPT or other artificial intelligence systems on educators' professional identity and their students' academic performance.

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