

EFL instructors' engagement with AI as digital media: A qualitative case study from Türkiye

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Abstract

Despite growing interest in integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into language education, research on how EFL instructors adopt, experience, and sustain the use of AI-driven tools over time remains limited. This qualitative study explores Turkish EFL instructors' perceptions and uses of AI-driven tools through the lens of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). The findings indicate that although most participants initially hesitated to integrate AI-driven tools, they gradually became active users, reflecting increased openness shaped by social influence and contextual factors consistent with the UTAUT framework. While instructors did not consistently adopt technological innovations, they demonstrated curiosity and eagerness to experiment with tools perceived as enhancing teaching performance. Performance expectancy and facilitating conditions, particularly access to technological resources, emerged as key factors influencing adoption. ChatGPT was identified as the most frequently used tool, followed by Grammarly and QuillBot, for material development, assessment, in-class activities, and feedback. At the same time, participants expressed concerns about overreliance and the lack of structured institutional training to support ethical and effective AI use. Overall, the study underscores the growing significance of AI integration in EFL education and highlights the need for sustained professional development to support responsible and pedagogically informed AI-driven practices.

Keywords

AI-driven tools, EFL instructors, unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT), technology integration in EFL settings, digital pedagogy

Introduction

Foreign language teaching has evolved in line with changing educational demands, shifting from traditional approaches toward technology-supported practices (Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

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