

Embracing AI in EFL Classrooms: Between Fears and Needs

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Abstract—This study investigates the transformative potential of artificial intelligence (AI) in education, focusing on its application in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Despite its widespread use, EFL teachers' use of AI, particularly in the Kuwaiti context, remains unexplored. The use of AI in education seems to be unavoidable, hence, this study was implemented to investigate EFL teachers' current familiarity with, and usage of, AI and explores teachers' perspectives towards embracing AI tools in their EFL classrooms. A sequential mixed-methods approach was employed to provide an in-depth perspective on teachers' use of AI. A questionnaire with multiple choice and open-ended questions was distributed to EFL teachers in various colleges and public schools in Kuwait ($n = 183$), followed by group interviews ($n = 23$) to obtain broader insight into teachers' perspectives and obtaining detailed information and examples of AI use. The findings suggest that while teachers believe that AI offers innovative tools to support second language pedagogies, such as personalized learning and student-centered learning, it might also pose ethical concerns. Issues such as cheating, inaccurate information, and teacher replacement seem to be the primary concerns. The findings of this study have significant implications for educators and policymakers who intend to incorporate AI into their language curricula.

Keywords—English as a foreign language, artificial intelligence, education, risks, benefits

I. INTRODUCTION

The term artificial intelligence, which John McCarthy coined, refers to “computers which perform cognitive tasks usually associated with human minds, particularly learning and problem-solving” [1]. In a much broader context, Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to “a science and a set of computational technologies that are inspired by, yet typically operate, quite differently the ways people use their nervous systems and bodies to sense, learn, reason, and take actions” [2]. The emergence of AI tools has profoundly affected how language is taught by teachers and produced by learners, transforming students' learning processes and enhancing their language skills [3, 4]. The ability of AI to analyze language patterns and provide instant feedback supports a more customized learning experience, catering to diverse student needs and fostering language proficiency [5]. In terms of language gains and development, empirical studies reported the effectiveness of AI tools in enhancing learners' grammatical and vocabulary knowledge [6, 7], listening decoding skills [8], writing skills [9, 10] and speaking skills [11].

Despite these potential benefits, integrating AI into education raises questions about its possible impact on academic integrity, critical thinking, and the traditional teacher-student relationship. Concerns about over-reliance on technology, data privacy, and the ethical implications of

using AI tools are prominent in educational discussions worldwide [12–14]. Another issue is that English language teachers face the challenge of keeping up with the latest trends and technologies and learning how to use them to produce innovative and engaging learning materials. Teachers fear that AI might diminish the human element in education and depersonalize the teaching approach [15]. Therefore, the effectiveness of AI depends primarily on teachers' awareness of these ethical issues and their skills and abilities to implement AI tools in effective pedagogies in their language classrooms [16, 17].

While there is a substantial body of published studies on the use of AI [18, 19], the literature explicitly focusing on English language teachers in the Arab context is limited. Since the sociocultural context plays a vital role in technology integration [20], this study aimed to explore teachers' level of familiarity with AI tools and understand their self-reported perspectives on the effectiveness of these tools in language learning classrooms in the Kuwaiti context.

Considering the status of English language teaching, teachers' use of technology in the Kuwaiti context, and the unprecedented development of AI technologies, this study has been conducted to explore teachers' use of AI in Kuwaiti EFL classrooms. To date, empirical studies that explore this topic in the Kuwaiti context have focused on education in general [21, 22]. Implementation of AI in the English language teaching in Kuwait has not been researched up to the knowledge of the researchers. This study has therefore, aimed to fill this literature gap by answering the following two research questions

- 1) Are EFL teachers familiar with the AI tools and their possible usage?
- 2) What are the benefits and risks of using AI in classrooms, from the perspective of EFL teachers?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. AI in Language Learning

Artificial intelligence is a system that mimics human behavior using the information received to provide the most logical answer. [1] divided AI tools in education into three categories: (1) learner-facing, (2) teacher-facing, and (3) system-facing. The first category refers to the software students used to learn the subject matter. The second category is the AI tools that teachers use to reduce their workload, including administration, assessment, and planning and designing activities. The third category refers to AI tools that provide information to administrators and managers at the institutional level. The current review focuses on the first two categories, namely, AI tools that students might use to develop their abilities in the English language and teachers'

use of AI tools.

A key ethical issue in AI adoption is the potential for students to bypass authentic learning [23, 24]. Teachers worry that reliance on AI writing tools like ChatGPT might reduce students' ability to develop original thought and critical thinking [25]. These concerns are heightened by the opaque nature of algorithmic bias and privacy risks [26]. Several AI tools can be integrated into language classrooms to develop students' language skills and teachers' teaching practices [3, 4, 17, 19]. These include adaptive learning systems, Natural Language Processing (NLP), speech recognition technologies, machine translation tools, and AI writing assistants. These AI tools can potentially change language teaching and learning methods to benefit educators and students [27]. As Fuchs [21] outlines, personalized learning is an approach in education that can tailor instruction and learning support to the unique needs and interests of individual learners. NLP models can facilitate customized learning by analyzing students' language patterns to tailor their learning to specific cultural and social learning methods. In addition to NLP, AI writing tools, such as Grammarly, can help detect students' writing mistakes and support the development of grammatical knowledge [28]. Furthermore, students can use generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT [29], to advance their writing skills and translate texts from their native language [30].

Empirical studies have reported that the use of AI tools in classrooms enhances the language learning process. For example, a survey conducted by Carcia [29] in an ESL program for middle school students in South Korea found that over a semester of using an adaptive learning platform (i.e., systems that dynamically adjust instructional materials according to learners' performance), students showed statistical improvement in language tests compared with those who used traditional methods. Other studies have reported that using automated writing corrective feedback AI tools, such as Grammarly, improved writing quality [30] and helped students develop lexical diversity [28]. Tsai [31] compared students' self-written text and text written with the help of Google Translate, indicating that students who used Google Translate produced text that had significantly better quality, more words, and fewer mistakes in spelling and grammar.

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) was also used to facilitate conversational practices that lead to language acquisition [29]. An example of a well-known GenAI is ChatGPT, which has recently been used to improve language learning and explicitly write instructions. An empirical study by Schmidt-Fajlik [32] with Japanese learners of English found that, compared with Grammarly and ProWritingAid, ChatGPT provides the most helpful and best overall solution for helping Japanese English Language Learners with their grammar. ChatGPT can be used by students to generate ideas, offer assistance concerning the outlining of topics, and provide corrective feedback [25, 33], which subsequently improves their writing skills [10] and vocabulary knowledge [34]. It also promotes a focus on form by encouraging students to concentrate on their L2 accuracy by correcting their spelling and grammatical structure [35]. Kohnke, Moorhouse, and Zou [36] argued that AI-powered chatbots can provide linguistic input and daily conversation

practices for students and stimulate interest, which consequently contributes to an individual's intellectual growth. AI-powered chatbots can adjust proficiency levels; provide personalized learning materials; and suggest customized learning paths that offer a range of expressions, questions, and vocabulary that a human language partner may lack in their daily learning environment in and outside of the educational environment [36].

In Saudi Arabia, Qasem, Ghaleb, Mahdi, Al Khateeb & Al Fadda [25] conducted a study on a business class in which two students' learning conditions were investigated: one taught with chatbots and the other without chatbots. The post-test results revealed that the group trained with chatbots showed significant improvement compared to other learners. Test results and a series of interview questions revealed that using ChatGPT in and outside of the classroom had increased the students' motivation, participation, and confidence, as well as an increase in their language efficiency [36, 37]. Furthermore, Jeon & Lee [38] argued that teachers and ChatGPT have different, yet complementary roles that could help in enhancing language learning. Four roles were identified for ChatGPT: content providers, interlocutors, teaching assistants, and evaluators.

B. Language Teachers' Perspectives

Despite these benefits, numerous studies have reported mixed perspectives with expressed positivity, challenges, and concerns. Studies found that EFL teachers generally held positive attitudes toward embracing AI tools in their classrooms [39–42]. Teachers strongly rely on AI applications to facilitate tasks, offer data-driven insights to improve instructional strategies, and customize the learning process for each student [43]. They also positively valued the benefits of AI applications to their classrooms to improve the teaching process and language learning [44]. For instance, teachers believe that integrating AI tools can enhance multiple language skills, including writing skills [26]. Concerning teaching instruction, Kim and Kim [40] explored teachers' perceptions of AI, revealing that most teachers view it as a superior scaffolding tool that assists them in teaching. AI tools also provide a more personalized [45] and motivating EFL classroom experience for learners [36]. Simultaneously, AI provides language learners with non-judgmental feedback, maintaining fairness, a crucial ethical consideration in language learning; AI algorithms are designed to prevent discrimination and errors, and ensure transparent algorithms and data use [46].

Although teachers hold positive attitudes toward using AI, valuing its potential to improve language instruction, several challenges have been reported, including issues of data privacy and security [47], ethical considerations [48] and teachers' lack of training [49]. For example, Aljohani [41] investigated EFL Saudi teachers' attitudes towards using AI in their classrooms and found that despite teachers' positive attitudes towards integrating AI, they faced difficulties because they followed traditional teaching methods. Pokrivcakova [17] conducted another study on Slovak EFL pre-service teachers. The findings revealed that teachers generally had positive attitudes towards the use of AI. However, they expressed fear of losing some of their teaching skills and making EFL teaching less personal when using AI.

She strongly recommends the implementation of teachers' AI training courses.

Besides these challenges, there are also specific ethical considerations when using AI tools for English language teaching and learning. Teachers believe that AI tools may encourage academic misconduct, thus jeopardizing academic integrity within the educational environment [23]. For example, Hong [24] highlighted the cases of student cheating reported after the introduction of ChatGPT. Such cases witnessed students using the application to write their essays, which has led educators and whole institutions to apply a ban on the use of the application entirely. Closely to this is the inaccurate knowledge provided by AI tools such as ChatGPT. Kartal [23] explains that while AI tools can generate "linguistically coherent and contextually appropriate responses," these are not necessarily always accurate, which can be especially problematic in language learning. The potential issue is that incorrect explanations or examples lead to an internalization of wrong language patterns or concepts" [23]. Others have argued that some AI tools potentially reduce students' critical cognitive and research skills [21]. The key issue remains that there will always be a risk of students becoming over-reliant on technology to the detriment of developing their critical thinking skills [21]. Another potential issue of using AI is privacy concerns. AI tools collect information about students' and teachers' interactions with platforms, and there is a possibility that this information might be misused. Research continues to identify that AI tools cannot replace the expertise of teachers when understanding individual students' needs, emotions, and the nuances of daily learning skills and practices [50]. The issues and challenges associated with using AI can be addressed by evaluating educators' needs and providing training through professional development workshops [51]. In tandem with these approaches, universities should involve teachers and students in developing and implementing AI tools to address their specific needs and preferences [21]. Therefore, "AI should support and enhance human learning rather than replace teachers, with human dignity, autonomy, and privacy guiding the use of AI in language learning" [42].

The next section focuses on describing the context of this study. Specifically, it situates the study in the Kuwaiti context, describing English Language Teaching (ELT) and the technology used in English as a foreign language EFL classroom.

C. Language Teachers' Perspectives

Kuwait is a small country with approximately 1145 schools at all levels, from kindergarten to secondary school. Of this total, 664 are public and 481 are private schools [50]. In the Kuwaiti government school system, English is taught as a Foreign Language (EFL) from the first to twelfth grades, giving each student 12 years of formal instruction, delivered in 45-minute lessons five times a week. In 2002, the English language curriculum was developed to follow multiple approaches, including content-based, skill-based, and task-oriented [51]. According to Tryzna and AlSharoufi [52], the modernized curriculum has a balance between communicative and structural approaches. Three main objectives are emphasized in the English language curriculum including linguistics (reading, writing, speaking, and

listening).

The main goals for teaching English in Kuwaiti government secondary schools are derived from the general aims of the Ministry of Education, one of which is particularly relevant to the present study, emphasizing "bridging the digital gap between the reality of the current general education requirements and dealing with advanced technology in various fields of scientific, practical, and private life" [53]. Empirical studies found that "each teacher in the English language department taught an average of eight lessons using ICT tools, including projectors, whiteboards, PowerPoint, and linguistic programs" [53]. In addition, some teachers use Excel, educational websites, word processing, Skype, and the Internet for teaching and learning purposes (i.e., they encourage their students to use the Internet to complete science and language projects and engage in active learning). Although Al-Sharija, Qablan & Watters [53] found that a wide range of ICT tools are used in government secondary schools; their study, along with the studies of Alharbi [54] and Alenezi [55], reported that teachers use technologies to support their existing traditional teaching practices.

On the other hand, AlAwidi and Aldhafeeri [56] found that Kuwaiti teachers were not ready to implement the digital curriculum, and that some issues should be considered to ensure that the digital curriculum is effectively implemented, enhancing technical and pedagogical components of readiness. Factors related to time constraints, knowledge and skills, infrastructure, and technical support were identified by teachers as factors that hindered their readiness [57]. AlSabbagh [58] found that teachers consistently outlined a lack of preparation by the ministry as a critical factor in determining the extent to which they adopted and integrated digital technology into their teaching.

- 1) To what extent are EFL teachers in Kuwait familiar with AI tools and their potential classroom applications?
- 2) What are the perceived benefits of using AI tools in EFL classrooms?
- 3) What are the perceived risks and ethical concerns associated with AI use in language learning?

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Study Design

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-method research design using quantitative and qualitative approaches [59]. In an explanatory sequential design, quantitative data are first collected, followed by qualitative data. This design has been used to further explain the quantitative data, with additional qualitative insight. This present study employs a survey to obtain an overall view of participants' familiarity with AI and their general perspective on AI use in language classrooms. Qualitative interviews were conducted to explore the underlying dynamics of teachers' perspectives of AI in their classrooms.

B. Sample

A random sampling technique was used to recruit EFL teachers from different schools and colleges in Kuwait. From this sample, a group of teachers was selected randomly to provide further insights into their perspectives on using AI in

language teaching. A total of 183 participants (113 females and 70 males) were included in the study. The participants were between 23 and over 50 years old, with teaching experience ranging from 2 to 20 years. From this, 23 students (10 males and 13 females) were randomly chosen to participate in group interviews to gain more insight into the use of AI in EFL classrooms. While the primary aim was to investigate teachers' perspectives, 23 students were also included in group interviews to triangulate the findings and provide context on how teachers' AI use is perceived in real classroom environments. This study also considered demographic variables, such as gender, age, and teaching experience, in order to better understand how these factors influence AI familiarity and usage.

The questionnaire included mandatory questions aimed at exploring the participants' familiarity with AI-powered applications, their usage of these applications in teaching, and their perceptions of the potential benefits and risks associated with AI in educational contexts. The questions also assessed teachers' comfort with AI use, the specific AI tools they had utilized, and their views on the impact of AI on student engagement, learning outcomes, and ethical concerns such as academic integrity.

C. Data Collection Instruments

The researchers, guided by the aims of the present study, designed and administered an online questionnaire which comprises three main sections: (1) teachers' familiarity with AI tools, (2) teachers' beliefs about the effectiveness of AI in teaching the English language, and (3) teachers' perceptions of ethical considerations and the potential benefits and risks associated with the use of AI. Each section includes statements that cover a range of topics related to AI integration, such as its potential effectiveness in supporting language learning, its benefits and challenges, and any concerns or reservations teachers may have regarding using these tools in their teaching practices. Using a Likert-scale questionnaire survey, quantitative data were collected on teachers' perspectives on AI in language courses in a structured and standardized way. This approach can help identify common trends and patterns in teachers' attitudes and provide a broad overview of the impact of AI on language teaching. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The analysis indicated that the questionnaire's overall reliability was acceptable, suggesting that the items effectively measured the intended construct (0.78).

Findings obtained through the questionnaire administration phase guided the group interviews, each consisting of 3–4 participants. The primary themes addressed in the interviews included participants' familiarity with AI tools, perceived benefits and risks of integrating AI into educational practices, and potential ethical concerns. Open-ended questions encouraged participants to reflect on their experiences and provided detailed insights into the applicability of AI in their teaching. Interview responses were analyzed thematically to identify patterns and trends across groups.

D. Data Analysis

In this study, the frequencies of teachers' responses to the questionnaire were calculated and presented to provide an

overview of teachers' general attitudes throughout the SPSS29. This step was accompanied by analyzing the interview data using a thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis allows researchers to organize and describe data in rich detail, often revealing their underlying meanings, relationships, and insights. This approach is particularly useful for exploring participants' perspectives, experiences, and attitudes, making it well suited for studies that involve open-ended interviews. The data has been explored across several phases: familiarization with the data, grouping data, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming themes, all presented a final outlook.

It is worth noting that t-tests and MANOVA were performed using SPSS, and the results indicated no significant differences between genders for AI familiarity, AI usage, or the combined dependent variables (benefits, risks, and confidence scores).

IV. FINDINGS

A. Familiarity with Using AI

The comparison showed that 86% of the female participants were familiar with AI applications, while 80% of the male participants indicated familiarity. Moreover, 35% of female participants utilized AI applications in their teaching compared to 31% of male participants. Notably, female participants were slightly more comfortable using technology in teaching (75%) than male participants (71%). This indicates that most survey participants had considerable technological experience, which may have influenced their cautious yet optimistic approach to AI integration. The chi-square test showed no significant gender differences in AI familiarity ($p > 0.05$).

The participants were grouped into three age brackets: 31–40, 41–50, and 51+. The analysis revealed that the 31–40 age group had the highest AI familiarity at 90%, followed by the 41–50 group at 75%. The 51+ group had 50% familiarity. It was also found that AI usage in teaching was highest in the 31–40 group (40%) and lowest among the 51+ age group (20%).

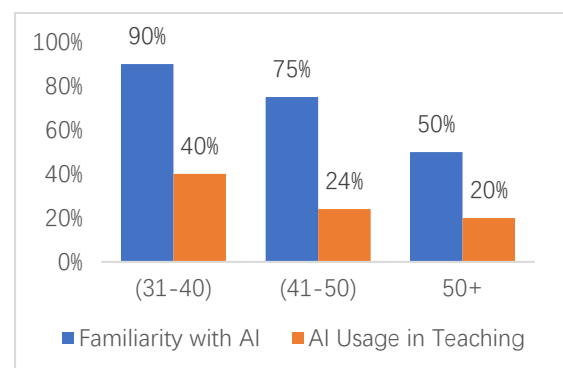


Fig. 1. Distribution of data according to age.

Teachers were also categorized into four groups based on their teaching experience: 1–5 years, 6–10 years, 11–15 years, and 16+ years. When exploring familiarity with AI across years of experience, teachers with 6–10 years of experience were the most familiar with AI tools (85%), followed by those with 11–15 years (80%), and 16+ years (75%). Teachers with 6–10 years of experience were also most likely to use AI tools (40%), whereas only 25% of those with 16+ years of

experience used them in their classrooms. Fig. 1 reflected data distribution in relation to age.

Despite being highly familiar with AI tools, the actual implementation of AI in teaching was moderate, with only 33% of the participants reporting its usage in classrooms. The results indicated that younger and less experienced teachers are more open to using AI applications in classrooms than older and more experienced educators. Furthermore, concerns about AI encouraging dishonest behaviors (such as cheating) and potentially replacing human teachers were more prevalent among participants with more years of experience.

Interview data corroborates these finding. Among the participants, 70% of male teachers and 83% of female teachers indicated familiarity with tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Duolingo as well as confidence in utilizing them for teaching purposes. Several participants shared innovative ways to integrate these tools into their classrooms. One teacher stated, "Using Grammarly, helped me in the first place, then I thought students could use it too". Another example of AI familiarity was mentioned by many teachers, yet 24% of those familiar with AI mentioned using tools such as ChatGPT to generate multiple-choice questions from PowerPoint slides as a wrap-up activity. "It takes a few minutes with editing" one participant commented. Similarly, 10% of teachers reported allowing students five minutes to practice language skills using AI-based apps, such as Duolingo, during class. A few teachers (approximately 8%) noted an interactive exercise in which students posed questions to ChatGPT and worked collaboratively to refine their queries for clearer or more accurate outputs. Female teachers were particularly proactive in implementing these creative activities, with 44% reporting their use compared to 30% of the male teachers. One male teacher defended his avoidance by adding "I don't feel the need to use AI... I know the material too well". However, a female teacher claimed that her use "makes it less time-consuming. Those who used AI described their use as "fast," "convenient" and "smart." These examples highlight growing comfort and enthusiasm for integrating AI tools into daily teaching practices. Fig. 2 above displays the familiarity of the usage if AI by demographic categorization.

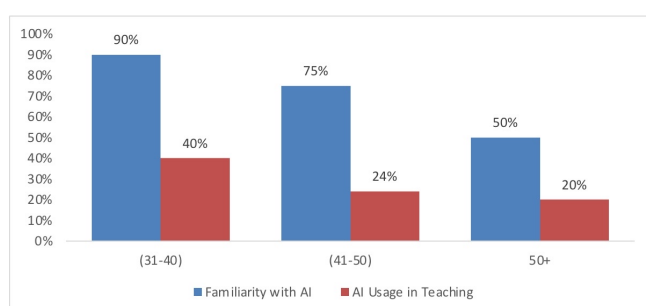


Fig. 2. The familiarity and usage of AI by demographic categories.

B. Teachers' Perceptions about the Potential of AI Use in EFL Classrooms

The findings from the second theme (i.e., teachers' perceptions towards the effectiveness of AI in enhancing EFL classrooms) offer a comprehensive view of EFL teachers' positive attitudes toward the potential benefits of AI. A large majority of the teachers believed that AI apps might help students generate homework (52%), address the needs of students with different learning styles (52%), and improve their experience (67%) by providing tailored instruction to meet the needs of each student (57%). Other pedagogical benefits also included the effectiveness of AI tools in providing proper input and daily conversation practices (43%), providing customized learning (62%), motivating learning experiences (52%), answering students' questions (57%), and increasing students' participation and confidence (57%). Overall, EFL teachers also strongly agreed that AI advancement improved language learning (62%), increased EFL language proficiency (57%), and made library resources accessible to students with disabilities (67%).

Despite these promising findings, teachers' actual use of AI technology in their classrooms is limited. Teachers' responses to the questionnaire items about their actual use of AI technologies were relatively low (33%). A small number of teachers used AI apps to generate coherent translated text for students (10%), accommodate different learning styles and requirements (14%), generate homework or exam questions (29%), or create prompts for improving writing skills (29%). The findings underline the complex and nuanced nature of teachers' perceptions, revealing both shared positivity about the effectiveness of AI tools in enhancing English language learning and teaching and, at the same time, the limited use of AI tools in their classrooms.

The finding of interview data aligns directly with the previous findings. Many teachers have acknowledged the advantages of incorporating AI tools, citing examples from their experiences and insights gathered from social media. Approximately 75% of the participants—70% of males and 80% of females—described these tools as valuable for saving time and enhancing classroom efficiency. They also used terms as "fast" and "convenient." Teachers explained that AI tools simplify lesson planning, assist in creating practice exercises, and provide immediate feedback to students. One female teacher insisted that "my lesson plans became better and more elaborate." Some participants had seen online demonstrations where AI performed tasks typically assigned to teachers, such as grading essays or generating tailored lesson plans, which reinforced their belief in the AI's potential. Approximately 65% of the participants also noted how these tools can make learning more engaging for students by offering interactive and adaptive content, such as grammar exercises or vocabulary games. Many agreed that such benefits made these tools helpful supplements to traditional teaching. Table 1 represents some quantitative data for these findings.

Table 1. benefits of using AI (interview data)

Theme	Sub-themes	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Overall
Benefits of AI	Teachers found AI tools valuable for saving time and efficiency	70% (7)	80% (10)	75%
	Tools simplify lesson planning and provide feedback	60% (6)	70% (9)	65%
	AI tools make learning more engaging	60% (9)	70% (9)	65%

C. AI Ethical Considerations and Risks

The third dimension of the questionnaire sheds light on EFL teachers' perceptions of the ethical considerations related to AI use. Most teachers strongly agreed that using AI tools has several ethical implications, including plagiarism, authorship attribution, transparency, and potential biases in algorithms. That is, 52% of the teachers expressed their concerns about users' privacy, security, and legal issues related to the use of AI in EFL classrooms. 67% of the teachers expressed their concerns and firmly believed that using AI may increase instances of plagiarism and cheating, which may result in an increase in dishonest behavior (57%). 62% of teachers believed that excessive dependence on AI technologies could hinder critical thinking progress and negatively influence students' cognitive skills in the long term and teachers' workloads (57%). This suggests concern about AI, potentially fostering dependence and discouraging critical thinking. While some teachers felt that AI could cater to diverse needs (52%), there was less agreement on AI's ability to provide contextually appropriate linguistic input (43%). Moreover, 57% of teachers strongly agreed that cultural considerations should be considered when using AI in classrooms.

Regarding teachers' fear of diminishing human elements in education due to the introduction of AI, 33% of teachers expressed concerns about AI replacement for human teachers in the future. Generally, while teachers see the potential of AI to enhance educational outcomes, they are cautious about its risks, especially concerning academic integrity, privacy, and the role of human teachers.

Interview data demonstrated that a significant proportion of the participants (75% of male teachers and 80% of female teachers) expressed apprehension about students misusing AI tools for cheating or plagiarism. This was particularly evident with tools such as Grammarly and ChatGPT, which some felt could undermine students' efforts to develop independent writing skills. The teachers said that "students start to rely on Grammarly and don't edit," they added "it's not plagiarism, but it's not ethical." Dependence on AI was another major concern, with 50% of teachers noting that over reliance on such tools could weaken critical thinking and creativity. One teacher talked about his experience with the use of ChatGPT; most of his students started presenting homework written by ChatGPT, and they did not even read it. Ethical issues, such as privacy and data security, were mentioned by 80% of participants, with female teachers showing slightly more concern (90%) than male teachers (80%). Finally, the most significant fear expressed by 88% of teachers (80% of males and 96% of females) was the potential replacement of teachers by AI. Many participants worried that the increasing sophistication of AI would eventually devalue the role of educators, creating uncertainty about their future in the profession.

D. Open-Ended Question

In the survey open-ended question, which consisted of participants' feedback on AI use in education, approximately 25 respondents shared their thoughts. Most participants emphasized a balance between technology and traditional teaching. The participants believed that technology could enhance education but should not replace human teachers.

This belief reflects a global concern seen across educational contexts (e.g., Alenezi, 2021 [55]; Pokrivcakova, 2019 [17]) that AI should enhance—rather than replace—the pedagogical roles of teachers. These findings align with the Technology Acceptance Model, where perceived usefulness and ease of use are weighed against perceived risks. The nuanced stance of Kuwaiti teachers contributes to the global discourse by emphasizing the cultural and pedagogical readiness needed for AI integration. Some teachers have discussed the variation in how AI tools help students, suggesting that their effectiveness depends on students' motivation and learning goals. This shows that AI's benefits of AI may not be uniform for all students, aligning with the idea that AI works best when tailored to individual needs. Some participants raised concerns about excessive technology use, which may detract from human relationships. This idea underscores the importance of maintaining personal interactions and connections even in technology-enhanced learning environments.

V. DISCUSSION

Previous findings suggest that the integration of AI into English language pedagogy presents both substantial opportunities and notable fears. Two main points are prominent based on the previous data: (1) despite being highly familiar with AI tools, the actual implementation of AI in teachers' EFL classrooms is relatively limited, and (2) the findings also underline the complex and nuanced nature of teachers' perceptions, demonstrating both positivity about the potential of AI for language learning and shared concerns about AI ethical issues. These two points are discussed further with specific reference to the broader EFL Kuwaiti context.

The results pertaining to the first question regarding EFL teachers' familiarity with AI tools indicate that Kuwaiti EFL teachers are knowledgeable about AI tools and aware of the transformative potential of AI in language learning. In line with previously published studies [17, 39, 40–42], the data showed that Kuwaiti EFL teachers shared predominantly positive attitudes towards using AI and expressed optimistic expectations regarding the impact of AI on their teaching pedagogies. They believed that AI could significantly improve their language teaching instruction, particularly in terms of providing personalized learning paths and enhancing students' engagement and motivation [36, 45]. Nevertheless, the use of AI has not yet been fully exploited or implemented by Kuwaiti EFL teachers in their classrooms. That is, the data revealed that teachers' use of AI tools in classrooms was limited, suggesting their unreadiness to implement these tools in their existing pedagogies. While previous studies conducted in Kuwait [18, 49, 56] have found evidence of technology integration in language classrooms, the current study's findings suggest the absence of AI tool implementation. In line with Al-Awidi and Aldhafaeri [56], Kuwaiti EFL teachers in the current study seem to be unprepared or fear implementing AI tools in their existing pedagogies. This finding can be attributed to three main factors: (1) teachers' concerns about ethical issues associated with AI use, (2) teachers' fear of over-reliance on AI, which could diminish their roles in the future, and (3) teachers' lack of pedagogical and technical knowledge on how to integrate

AI into their pedagogical instruction.

Kuwaiti EFL teachers' attitudes towards using AI in their language classrooms can be described as cautiously optimistic. While the data presented a high level of positivity and familiarity with AI tools, teachers were cautiously concerned about the ethical issues associated with the use of AI, which could be a factor in teachers' reluctance to integrate AI. In accordance with findings reported in previous studies [17, 27, 48], teachers expressed their concerns and firmly believed that using AI may increase instances of plagiarism and cheating, which may result in an increase in dishonest behavior. In addition, teachers expressed concerns about users' privacy and legal issues related to the use of AI in EFL classrooms. Teachers also expressed their fear that students might become passive recipients of knowledge, depending on AI, to obtain information resulting in underestimating and weakening criticality and creativity skills. The interplay of teachers' familiarity with AI, reluctance to implement AI tools in their practices, and their expressed concerns reveals an important point: the integration of AI in language learning is not simply a matter of technological change but a complex socio-technological process that involves ethical, pedagogical, and societal dimensions. In other words, the implementation of AI in teachers' teaching practices goes beyond being familiar with AI. It is highly informed by the surrounding broader educational context in which teachers operate [20].

Based on the presented data, teachers shared a common concern about the possibility of diminishing their role as educators because of the widespread use of AI. This result is in good agreement with previous studies [17] wherein teachers expressed concerns about replacing them with AI tools. While Alghasab, Alfadley & Aladwani [60] reported several factors hindering the process of implementing technologies in EFL classrooms, this study suggests an additional factor related to the fear of diminishing teachers' roles. This could also prevent teachers from using AI in their classrooms. While teachers are concerned about their rise being diminished, stemming from the increasing capabilities of AI tools and automating various structural and illustrative tasks, these fears were addressed by Mohammed [44], who noted that AI tools cannot replace the human element of teaching, such as understanding students' emotions, needs, and nuanced learning practices. Advanced AI systems are capable of providing personalized instruction, content generation, and even assessment, causing concerns in the field of teaching. However, Jeon and Lee [38] found in their study that teachers play a unique role in orchestra resources and make quality pedagogical decisions that AI cannot replicate. Aljohani [41] and Kannan *et al.* [26] also emphasize that AI only plays a complementary role in the educational context, which supports the idea that AI should complement, not replace teacher roles.

Pedagogical knowledge refers to understanding how to design lessons that effectively incorporate AI and align its use with educational objectives and student learning outcomes. Despite not being mentioned by teachers in this study's data, their lack of pedagogical and technical knowledge on how to integrate AI into their pedagogical instruction could also be a reason for AI-limited classroom implementation. This is consistent with the findings of previous studies [17, 22, 41,

49, 60], regarding teachers' unpreparedness to implement innovation technologies due to a lack of pedagogical and technological training. This lack of pedagogical and technological knowledge of AI integration highlights a critical area for policy intervention and professional support to equip teachers with the competencies and confidence to effectively integrate AI into classroom contexts. There are gaps in professional training and the absence of structured programs to build teachers' competencies and use AI tools. Mohammed [44] emphasized the need for teacher training to address both the technical and ethical aspects of AI integration to enable teachers to use these tools effectively in classroom settings. This idea was supported by Sumakul, Hamied & Sukadi [47], who found that a lack of training was a significant barrier to AI adoption in classrooms. Teachers' hesitation to use AI tools due to limited knowledge reflects the broader finding that professional development workshops are essential to equip educators with the required skills. The findings must be interpreted within the limitations of the study. First, the relatively small and localized sample limits generalizability. Second, the data relied heavily on self-reporting, which may introduce bias. Finally, Kuwait's specific educational culture and infrastructure may not reflect the challenges faced in other regions.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate EFL teachers' familiarity with and perceptions of the use of AI in their classrooms. The results of this study show that Kuwaiti EFL teachers are users of AI and are aware of the transformative potential of AI in language education. However, this study highlights the complex relationship between familiarity, usage, and beliefs. That is, although teachers are familiar with AI tools and know how to use them, their AI integration practices in the classroom are limited.

This study has the following limitations. First, the sample of educators participating in this study was limited to a small number of language teachers in Kuwait. This may hinder the generalization of the findings to the population of teachers in other countries and various educational environments. Second, the study was based on self-reported data; it should be acknowledged that this type of data is subject to interpretation errors. Third, the use of group interviews did not allow for an in-depth understanding of each participant's perspective.

Despite these limitations, this study has several practical implications for educators, school administrators, and policymakers involved in implementing AI in education. The results highlight the need to design and deliver administrative and professional development training courses. Teachers should be trained not only to use AI tools effectively but also to integrate them in ways that complement their teaching styles and pedagogical objectives [17]. These training courses should also equip teachers with ethical regulations and standards associated with the use of AI in the classroom. Policymakers should ensure that adequate funding and support are available to teachers and institutions. In the Kuwaiti context, school policies are of paramount importance in promoting the use of AI. Schools are recommended to foster a culture of innovation, encouraging teachers and students to use AI to accomplish various pedagogical

objectives. Future research could explore the longitudinal effects of AI training programs for EFL teachers, and cross-cultural comparisons could provide deeper insight into how different educational systems adapt to AI integration. Investigating student outcomes over time will also help determine the long-term effectiveness of AI-enhanced instruction.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Hanan Taqi conceived the study and developed the research design. She collected and analyzed the data. Maha Alghasab has reviewed the relevant literature, contributed to the analysis of results and writing the discussion section. She has also contributed to the writing of manuscript. Rahima Akbar designed the questionnaire, and translated it into Arabic; reviewed the literature, and proof read the final draft of this paper. Reem AlRubaie was responsible for conducting the literature review and synthesizing relevant theoretical and empirical studies. All authors had approved the final version.

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