The International Journal of Language Studies
2026, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 1–11
Journal page: https://ijlangstudies.org/index.php/home
DOI: https://doi.org/10.60087/ijls.v3.n1.001
ISSN 3078-2244

Research Article

Beyond Acceptance: Exploring the Complexities of ChatGPT Integration in Vietnamese EFL Higher Education

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores Vietnamese EFL teachers' perspectives on using ChatGPT in language education, employing the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as a theoretical framework. Through ten semi-structured interviews with Vietnamese teachers, the study explores the interplay between perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and teachers' attitudes towards ChatGPT. The findings reveal a nuanced picture of initial hesitation and evolving perceptions, highlighting both the potential benefits and challenges of integrating AI into teaching practices. While teachers recognized ChatGPT's potential for time-saving, idea generation, and language support, they also expressed concerns about accuracy, ethical implications, and the need to balance AI's capabilities with human guidance and critical thinking. The study underscores the importance of contextual factors, cultural sensitivity, and ongoing dialogue in navigating the complexities of AI adoption in education. The insights generated from this research contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing technology acceptance among educators and offer valuable implications for the development of effective strategies for AI integration in language classrooms and beyond.

Keywords

ChatGPT; Technology Acceptance Model (TAM); Vietnamese EFL Teachers; Perceptions and Experiences; Language Education

1. Introduction

Teaching English in Vietnam presents a constant challenge, particularly when navigating overcrowded classrooms and limited access to instructional resources. Effectively engaging every student while catering to such diverse learning styles remains a difficult task to balance. Within this context, AI-powered tools like ChatGPT are beginning to prove their practical value. Rather than being just a technological trend, recent evidence suggests that ChatGPT can help alleviate some of these instructional pressures by providing the kind of personalized feedback and scaffolding that is often impossible to achieve in large-scale settings (Vo & Huynh, 2025; Liu, 2023; Shaikh et al., 2023; Xiao & Zhi, 2023). However, the priority remains on human-led instruction; as researchers emphasize, the real impact lies in how thoughtfully these tools are integrated into existing pedagogical approaches to maintain a balanced learning environment (Vo & Huynh, 2025; Đoàn, 2023).

While these studies highlight the potential of ChatGPT in

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Received: 21/03/2026; **Accepted:** 21/04/2026; **Published:** 26/04/2026

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language learning, there is a need for research that specifically examines the perceptions and experiences of Vietnamese EFL teachers. Understanding their perspectives on this technology is crucial for its successful adoption and integration in Vietnamese classrooms.

Building upon initial exploratory findings regarding teachers' metaphorical perceptions of ChatGPT (Vo & Huynh, 2025), this study broadens the scope by surveying a larger sample and applying a structured technology acceptance model (TAM). This study adopts the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) to explore the perceived factors that influence Vietnamese EFL teachers' acceptance and use of ChatGPT. TAM posits that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are key determinants of technology adoption (Davis, 1989). Therefore, this study applied TAM as a theoretical framework to seek to answer the following research questions:

1. How do Vietnamese EFL teachers perceive the usefulness and ease of use of ChatGPT, and how do these perceptions shape their overall attitudes towards its acceptance in language education?

2. What specific benefits and challenges do Vietnamese EFL teachers identify regarding the practical and ethical integration of ChatGPT into their classrooms?

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 ChatGPT in Language Education

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing various sectors, and education is no exception. In particular, the emergence of AI-powered language models like ChatGPT has generated considerable interest among researchers and educators alike (Kohnke et al., 2023; Le et al., 2025; Ma & Jiang, 2023; Tran & Tran, 2023). ChatGPT, with its ability to generate human-like text, translate languages, and provide personalized feedback, holds immense potential for transforming language learning (Vo & Huynh, 2025; Le et al., 2025; Son et al., 2023).

Various studies have investigated the applications and implications of ChatGPT in language education. For instance, Liu (2023) explored the use of ChatGPT for English learning among Chinese university students, finding positive attitudes towards its potential for content development and language practice. Similarly, Shaikh et al. (2023) highlighted ChatGPT's capabilities in evaluating language tasks and translating texts, suggesting its usefulness in formal English language instruction. Furthermore, Alghasab (2025) found that ChatGPT could be used by the students to enhance their writing, specifically translating and paraphrasing, developing outline and ideas, and correcting grammatical mistakes. These findings underscore the potential of ChatGPT to serve as a valuable tool for enhancing language skills.

However, the effective integration of ChatGPT in language classrooms requires careful consideration of pedagogical approaches and teacher training. Đoàn (2023) suggested that combining ChatGPT with diverse teaching materials and methods can cater to various learning styles and needs, creating a more balanced learning environment. Furthermore, Vo and Nguyen (2024) emphasized the need for teachers to develop new strategies for incorporating ChatGPT into their lessons, ensuring its feasible and effective application. This highlights the importance of teacher preparedness and professional development in maximizing the benefits of ChatGPT in language education.

While the potential of ChatGPT is significant in language education, researchers have also acknowledged its limitations and potential challenges. For example, Al-Obaydi et al. (2023) cautioned against overreliance on ChatGPT and stressed the need to consider its limitations within the context of established learning theories. Additionally, in their case study of 18 Indonesian EFL students, Nugroho et al. (2023, p.237) pointed out that "the integration of ChatGPT for language learning was considered controversial due to the participants' worries about ethical violation which might lead to cheating behavior and academic dishonesty." Such risks emphasize the importance of responsible and ethical integration of ChatGPT in educational settings.

Despite these challenges, the existing research suggests that ChatGPT can be a beneficial tool for enhancing language learning and teaching, particularly when integrated thoughtfully and ethically into existing pedagogical practices. This study, therefore, aims to contribute to this growing body of literature by examining the perceptions and experiences of ten Vietnamese EFL teachers regarding their use of ChatGPT. The present study employed the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to understand the factors that influence its adoption and use in their classrooms.

1.2.2 The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) is a widely used theoretical framework for understanding and predicting user acceptance of new technologies (Granić & Marangunić, 2019; Huynh et al., 2023). It proposes that the acceptance of a technology is primarily determined by users' perceptions of its usefulness and ease of use.

TAM is built upon four core constructs. Perceived Usefulness (PU) refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a technology will enhance their performance or productivity, influencing their attitude towards using it. Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a technology will be effortless, impacting both PU and attitude towards using the technology. Attitude Towards Using (ATU) represents the user's overall evaluation of using the technology, shaped by

PU and PEOU, and is a predictor of behavioral intention. Finally, Behavioral Intention (BI) reflects the strength of the user's intention to use the technology, influenced by ATU and PU, and is a direct predictor of actual technology usage behavior.

The applicability of TAM in education is well-established, with numerous studies investigating teachers' and students' acceptance of various educational technologies (Granić & Marangunić, 2019; Huynh et al., 2023). For teachers, Leem and Sung (2019) examined South Korean teachers' acceptance of smart mobile devices for education, finding that PU and PEOU predicted their intention to use the technology. Similarly, Peng et al. (2023, p.14) studied EFL teachers' acceptance of online teaching tools and found that "EFL teachers' acceptance of online teaching primarily influences their emotional labor strategies through teachers' perceived usefulness of online teaching and perceived ease of use of digital technology". For students, Strzelecki (2025) investigated students' acceptance of ChatGPT in higher education, reporting that performance expectancy (akin to PU) and habit strongly predicted their intention to use ChatGPT. Similarly, Zou and Huang (2023) focused on Chinese doctoral students' acceptance of ChatGPT for writing, revealing that PU and PEOU significantly influenced their intention to use the AI-powered writing assistant.

The choice of TAM for this study is justified by its proven validity across diverse contexts, including studies on technology acceptance among teachers. Furthermore, as an AI-powered language model, ChatGPT can be considered an educational technology, making TAM well-suited to investigate the factors influencing its acceptance. The relevance of TAM to the Vietnamese EFL context is supported by previous studies that have successfully applied it to investigate technology acceptance among Vietnamese EFL teachers (Hua & Le, 2024; Huynh et al., 2023; Le et al., 2025). Within the scope of the present study, we particularly focus on exploring teachers' perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use regarding their experience with ChatGPT. Ultimately, TAM provides a comprehensive model for explaining the key determinants of technology acceptance, aligning with the goal of understanding Vietnamese EFL teachers' acceptance of ChatGPT.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the perceptions and experiences of Vietnamese lecturers working at a university in Vietnam regarding ChatGPT use. Qualitative methods are particularly suited to exploring the complexities of human experiences and interpretations, offering rich, context-specific insight (Creswell & Poth, 2016). As mentioned, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was employed as the theoretical foundation for this study.

2.1 Participants

The participants of this current study were ten Vietnamese educators working at a Vietnamese university. These participants are different in terms of teaching experience, subject expertise, and familiarity with technology. This diverse sample enabled a comprehensive exploration of the range of perspectives on ChatGPT within the Vietnamese teaching community. Table 1 summarizes demographics of the teacher participants involved in this study (pseudonyms were used for each to ensure their anonymity).

Table 1. *Summary of participant demographics*

Participants	Gender	Teaching experience
Teacher 1	Female	5-10 years
Teacher 2	Female	5-10 years
Teacher 3	Female	5-10 years
Teacher 4	Male	1-5 years
Teacher 5	Female	5-10 years
Teacher 6	Female	10-15 years
Teacher 7	Female	10-15 years
Teacher 8	Male	10-15 years
Teacher 9	Female	10-15 years
Teacher 10	Female	More than 20 years

It is important to note that out of the ten participants in this study, the interview data of four teachers were previously utilized and analyzed in a separate study by Vo and Huynh (2025). While the previous study exclusively examined the narratives of these four teachers through the lens of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the current research expands the sample size to ten participants. Furthermore, it employs a completely different theoretical framework – the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) – to address distinct research questions regarding the perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and practical challenges of ChatGPT integration. This methodological and theoretical shift provides a broader and fundamentally different understanding of the phenomenon.

2.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The dataset for this study comprises semi-structured interviews with ten participants. Data from four of these participants were collected during the previous phase of a broader research project (partially reported in (Vo & Huynh, 2025). All collected data underwent a novel and rigorous thematic analysis process specifically guided by the TAM constructs (Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and Attitudes). Unlike previous metaphor-based interpretations, this systematic coding process ensured that the data were analyzed to uncover the specific factors influencing technology acceptance.

The interview questions were designed to elicit responses related to the perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and overall attitudes towards ChatGPT. Each of these participants brought different levels of teaching experience in English education. They were selected for their ready availability and eagerness to share their narratives on using ChatGPT in their teaching practices. The interviews were conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2023-2024 at a Vietnamese university. The 20-30 minute interviews were guided by a list of prepared questions, but the interviewers had the flexibility to ask follow-up questions to explore topics in more depth.

As for data processing and analysis, the interview sessions were audio-recorded and then transcribed, using speech-to-text software application. The collected data underwent thematic analysis (Dawadi, 2020), focusing on how participants describe their interactions with and perceptions of ChatGPT. The themes were then analyzed in relation to the TAM constructs to understand the factors influencing the teachers' acceptance of ChatGPT. This involved a systematic process of coding, categorizing, and interpreting the data to identify recurring themes and patterns.

This method allows for a rich and nuanced understanding of the participants' experiences and perceptions. This rigorous thematic analysis process ensured that the data were analyzed in a systematic and transparent manner, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives on ChatGPT.

3. Results

As mentioned, qualitative data obtained from interviews with ten Vietnamese EFL teacher participants were audio-recorded and transcribed. These transcripts were then subjected to a detailed thematic analysis to extract key insights regarding teachers' perspectives on using ChatGPT in their professional practices. Table 2 provides a snapshot of the key themes identified in the interviews, organized within the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) framework, which will guide the subsequent presentation of the full findings.

Table 2. Key Themes on ChatGPT Acceptance Identified in Teacher Interviews, Organized by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) Constructs

TAM Construct	Key Themes
Perceived Usefulness (PU): The extent to which a person believes that using a particular technology will enhance their performance	Time-saving Participants highlighted ChatGPT's ability to quickly generate ideas, activities, and lesson plans, saving them valuable time.
	Idea generation ChatGPT was seen as a useful tool for generating new ideas and activities, particularly when teachers felt "stuck."
	Language and research support Participants found ChatGPT helpful for providing vocabulary support, generating language exercises, and improving the quality of student writing. ChatGPT was utilized for gathering information, generating outlines, and assisting with literature reviews.
Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU): The degree to which a person believes that using a particular technology will be free from effort.	Initial hesitation and technical challenges Some participants initially found ChatGPT challenging due to a lack of technical expertise or unfamiliarity with AI tools.
	Importance of clear instructions Participants emphasized the need for clear and specific instructions (prompts) to obtain desired results from ChatGPT.

3.1 Perceived Usefulness (PU)

In the TAM framework, Perceived Usefulness (PU) refers to the degree to which an individual believes that using a particular technology will enhance their job performance. In the current study, the interviewed teachers considered ChatGPT to be particularly helpful across multiple professional tasks, specifically saving time, generating ideas, supporting language instruction, and facilitating research.

3.1.1 Time saving

Based on the interview findings, one of the fundamental elements of ChatGPT's perceived usefulness was its ability to accelerate resource and material creation. This allows the teachers to significantly save time that would otherwise be spent on manual searching and drafting. Specifically, the obtained data reviewed three sub-themes relating to teachers'

perceived benefits when using ChatGPT to save time for teaching activities: the quick and instant responses, reducing time consumed for preparing materials and lesson plans, and efficiency in searching for information.

In terms of speed and quickness, all the participants acknowledged that their first impression was that ChatGPT outperforms other traditional tools in terms of fast answering and speedy responses. For example, Teacher 1 remarked, *"When you put in the request, it returns very quickly. It is very fast."* Similarly, several other educators (Teacher 2, Teacher 7, and Teacher 9) echoed this sentiment, describing the response time as instantaneous and significantly faster than Google or manual searching. Such a beneficial feature helps them save time in preparation and material creation, including creating lesson plans, tests, and searching for linguistics resources. While Teachers 1, 2, and 7 highlighted its utility in finding resources and preparing lessons efficiently, others specifically emphasized its role in assessment preparation. Teacher 5 explicitly stated, *"... it helps me create test questions (or exam papers) much faster ... It's faster than doing it myself a lot"* , an experience also shared by Teacher 4 when drafting grammar quizzes.

Furthermore, teachers explicitly valued ChatGPT for its ability to provide immediate, focused answers, which they contrasted sharply with the result overload experienced on Google. Teacher 3 highlighted this advantage: *"Instead of typing something into Google, which will give me many sources, and I won't know which one to choose... ChatGPT answers that exact thing for me. ... It narrows the scope for me, more than Google does"*. This ability to synthesize information directly eliminates the "very time-consuming" process of manually reading "millions of results and clicking through page after page" from traditional search engines (Teacher 8; *see* also Vo & Huynh, 2025). Other participants, such as Teachers 9 and 10, agreed that by compiling required information directly and serving specific requirements (e.g., finding poetry sources or theories), ChatGPT saves a significant amount of "brainpower" and time.

Conversely, ChatGPT is lauded for its "function of serving my requirements" by compiling and synthesizing information directly, thereby eliminating the tedious process of selecting and compiling sources (Teacher 9). This ability to narrow the scope and provide immediate clarity allows teachers to feel more certain about their work tasks and avoid wasted effort, directly improving their workflow efficiency (Teacher 3).

> It just saves a lot of time, so instead of Google, it synthesizes it for me [...] So, the change is probably that it saves time for teachers, instead of having to find different sources to compile, it compiles it for me. (Teacher 9)
>
> [...] Using it certainly takes less time, saves a lot of brainpower, and saves a lot of time for preparing a lesson plan. (Teacher 3)

In summary, the evidence consistently establishes time-saving efficiency as the fundamental element driving teachers' perceived value of ChatGPT. This efficiency operates on multiple levels: first, through the immediate speed of its responses, which drastically outperforms traditional searches; second, by functioning as a powerful material creation tool that instantly drafts quizzes, outlines, and lesson components; and third, by acting as a superior information synthesizer that provides focused results, eliminating the "time-consuming" effort of manually filtering vast search engine outputs. Ultimately, the ability of ChatGPT to accelerate resource acquisition, streamline preparation, and reduce cognitive load represents a significant shift in the instructional workflow, allowing teachers to preserve their time and "brainpower" for higher-order tasks and direct classroom engagement.

3.1.2 Idea generation

Beyond synthesis, ChatGPT is viewed as a highly valuable tool for direct content creation, enabling teachers to quickly generate specific, ready-to-use classroom materials. Six of the teachers reported frequently using the tool to design targeted activities, lessons, and exercises. For instance, Teacher 1 uses it to "create some activities, such as a discussion or answering questions," while Teacher 6 relies on it for "in-class activities, like how to warm-up the class." It is also utilized to generate structured elements, such as "10 or 20 sentences related to students' difficulties in listening comprehension" or "a sample outline" for writing courses (Teacher 7). This direct utility, including generating novel games "like a bingo game" (Teacher 3), significantly streamlines the instructional preparation process.

Furthermore, ChatGPT functions as a powerful creative collaborator and brainstorming partner for teachers experiencing instructional block. Educators rely on the tool to overcome moments when they are "stuck on activities," using it to swiftly "generate new ideas" (Teacher 8). This application during the "brainstorm stage" allows teachers to rapidly source context-specific materials, such as activities for an interpretation course, providing a quick source of inspiration to "create more activities where students interact with each other" (Teacher 2).

These findings highlight how teachers utilized Generative AI, specifically ChatGPT, as a brainstorming partner and time-saving tool for lesson planning. Instead of manually searching Google's vast and unfocused results, they use ChatGPT to quickly generate specific, relevant teaching content like discussion prompts, game ideas (e.g., Bingo), warm-up activities, writing outlines, or practice questions. This suggests that AI tools like ChatGPT are valued for their ability to narrow the focus and provide immediate, targeted ideas when teachers face an "activity block" thereby enhancing student interaction and efficiency in course

preparation.

3.1.3 Supporting academic research and writing

The findings from interview data demonstrate that teachers significantly leverage AI tools like ChatGPT as a crucial research assistant, moving beyond basic classroom activities to support complex academic tasks for themselves and their students. In particular, teachers used the AI's ability to process and structure information quickly to overcome writer's block, define research scope, and ensure structural clarity. Specifically, they rely on it to generate research outlines (including the structure for comprehensive literature reviews), suggesting relevant variables for analysis, and even brainstorm new ideas or research topics for student theses. This provides teachers with a clear direction when academic pathways feel vague or blocked. Teacher 3 provided a comprehensive example of this utility: *"If you use ChatGPT with the correct prompt, it will draft and provide you with a direction. For example, if I get stuck on the variables... ChatGPT will generate the exact things I need to ask for... it will give me an outline with the sections included"*. This structural support was echoed by Teachers 4, 5, and 6, who regularly use the tool to overcome writer's block, find new ideas, and define the structure of their papers or literature reviews. Additionally, the tool is highly beneficial for guiding learners. As Teacher 7 noted, *"Students often have limitations when it comes to having ideas for a research topic, so I can ask it to help find some topics or suggest themes*."

The above findings reveal that interviewed teachers primarily utilize ChatGPT as a powerful, time-saving research assistant focused on overcoming the initial and structural hurdles of academic writing and research design. Instead of generating final content, the AI is instrumental in defining direction and structure.\

3.1.4 A helpful tool for language enrichment

The teachers also acknowledged that they used AI to search for vocabulary, sentence structures, or suitable linguistic corpora, which helps enrich lecture content. Half of the participants (five out of ten) mentioned using ChatGPT to source appropriate vocabulary tailored to specific teaching needs. Instead of merely retrieving simple word lists, educators leverage the tool to generate "diverse vocabulary ideas" for specific topics (Teacher 9) or to pinpoint an exact English word to "describe this quality" (Teacher 10). Furthermore, ChatGPT acts as a sophisticated digital corpus; for instance, Teacher 1 uses it to "create a text that includes about 20 vocabulary words" along with their definitions. This process is not only "faster" but also consistently yields "really high-quality words" (Teacher 2), effectively supplying teachers with the necessary "idea, vocabulary, [and] sentence structure" (Teacher 8). Ultimately, these capabilities enrich the quality and variety of their teaching materials, ensuring the language presented to students is both relevant and advanced.

These findings confirm that one of the most immediate and valued uses of AI among language instructors is for linguistic resource generation. Teachers leverage ChatGPT not just to retrieve simple word lists, but to quickly source high-quality, diverse vocabulary and appropriate sentence structures tailored to specific lecture topics. The AI acts as a sophisticated digital corpus, creating customized content - such as short texts with defined vocabulary counts and accompanying definitions, which is far faster than manual compilation. This capability enriches the quality and variety of their teaching materials, ensuring the language presented to students is both relevant and advanced, thereby directly supporting the goal of making lecture content more robust and engaging. Teachers also revealed that they use ChatGPT to make language expression more fluent, academic, and standardized, particularly in written texts. For their own professional development and academic publications, educators leverage the tool to refine their writing and ensure grammatical accuracy. Teacher 3, for instance, uses ChatGPT to correct mistakes and elevate the text so it reads "just like a native speaker wrote it," resulting in more "complex" sentence structures and "refined" vocabulary. This capability effectively "alleviates the worry" of grammatical inaccuracies when submitting articles for publication. Similarly, Teacher 9 relies on AI to "rephrase" sentences and "adjust" paragraphs to make them "better and grammatically correct". Beyond personal use, teachers also observe significant linguistic benefits in their learners. When students take advantage of AI for language refinement, the improvement is "immediately noticeable". Instead of writing "in circles with just one idea," students produce text that is "more concise," exhibiting higher overall quality and better language use. Consequently, educators are increasingly open to allowing AI assistance specifically "for the Language part" of assignments to help students improve their expressions.

Interestingly, several teachers who teach translation courses for English majored students noted the good and fast translation ability of ChatGPT, surpassing tradtional tools:

And I ask ChatGPT to translate it immediately, so I have the answer key for that part, and every translation requires vocabulary, so the students studying interpretation need vocabulary every day. (Teacher 1)

For example, translation. [...] For example, if I give a student a script to translate. If you drop it in there, it will generate the translation. And it's also relatively accurate [...] For example, you type 'Is the following translation correct?' And it will reply to you. Then you throw the translation in. It still understands what you are doing. (Teacher 2; *see* also Vo & Huynh, 2025)

Although the language support is very good, teachers also

noticed limitations in the creativity and diversity of sentence structures/exercises:

[...] then I would phrase the sentences differently, but of course that would take time. Whereas, for example, if you look it up on there and it gives you 10 sentences, it spits out 10 sentences very quickly, but the structure is exactly the same [...] The structure isn't diverse. It's not varied, it's not like it follows my intentions [...] It saves time, but the vibrancy of the language is not there, it lacks dynamism. (Teacher 7)

The above findings highlight a duality in AI's usefulness: it is highly effective and fast for technical language tasks like translation and linguistic refinement, yet it struggles with creative dynamism. Translation instructors valued ChatGPT for its superior speed and accuracy compared to older tools, using it to quickly generate answer keys or check student translations, noting that "it still understands what you are doing" (Teacher 2). This positions AI as an excellent tool for efficiency and standardization in language learning. However, this precision comes at a cost: teachers find that the automatically generated content, such as exercises, lacks structural diversity and creative "vibrancy", often producing identical, repetitive structures. Thus, while AI is invaluable for tasks requiring accuracy and speed (like translation or grammatical correction), human expertise remains essential for injecting creative variety and dynamic, nuanced language into pedagogical materials.

3.2 Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)

3.2.1 Initial hesitation and technical challenges

Nine out of ten instructors admitted to experiencing psychological reservations before integrating ChatGPT into their workflows. For some, this hesitation stemmed from self-doubt regarding their technological proficiency; Teacher 1, for example, initially avoided the tool, perceiving AI as something "distant," "formidable," and "very complicated." For others, early media coverage cultivated a cautious wait-and-see attitude, prompting educators like Teacher 2 to completely avoid the tool for the first few months after it "exploded" in the news. Beyond technical apprehension, deeper pedagogical and ethical anxieties significantly delayed adoption. Educators expressed early fears of becoming overly "dependent" on the AI (Teacher 3). Moreover, as Teacher 7 articulated, this reluctance was driven not only by a fear of "violating ethics," but also by a profound concern about "dulling [their] thinking" and "losing [their] sharpness."

3.2.2. The importance of clear instruction

Despite the overwhelming consensus on ChatGPT's efficiency, the teachers identified a critical condition governing its usefulness: the necessity of specific and detailed prompting. They unanimously agreed that to achieve accurate and relevant results, the input prompt must clearly define the objective and include vital contextual details, such as the target audience (e.g., "second-year university students, English language majors") or required output format (e.g., "presented in a table") (Teacher 8, Teacher 6, Teacher 2).

I gave it a command, meaning I described my scenario, and then I asked it to give me some interesting activities. The most important thing is that we have to be as specific as possible... For example, describing that I teach second-year university students, English language majors. That means the result for English majors versus non-majors will be different. That is, when we interact with it, if we want efficiency, we must describe things as specifically as possible. (Teacher 8)

So initially, the very first time I got the account, I really didn't know what to ask it... If the person asking asks like they must phrase the question correctly, centered on a main idea, for example, saying you need to find me data... if you speak clearly and say that you need that information presented in a table so I can compare something, it will produce a more accurate result... If our prompt is not complete or not exactly what we want, then the result won't be correct. (Teacher 6)

I think knowing the command is important. That is, knowing how to phrase it. At the very beginning, I only gave a general sentence like, 'Give me content for this lesson plan'... But over time, I increasingly added background info to make it more specific, and the results were better.(Teacher 2)

Teachers realized through experience and training that "the clearer and more detailed the prompt," the better the output aligns with their needs (Teacher 3). Conversely, vague or incorrect phrasing results in unsatisfactory, inaccurate, or circular responses that can lead to "frustration" and ultimately "waste time"(Teacher 3, Teacher 1). This finding emphasizes that ChatGPT is not a passive solution but a tool requiring a learned skill – knowing the correct "command" and phrasing the request precisely – to realize its time-saving potential.

I also encountered problems often, meaning the prompt wasn't clear enough. So there was one time I asked it to create a multiple-choice quiz... I also had issues where I asked but didn't get the answer I wanted... I think it was probably because my prompt wasn't clear enough or something. (Teacher 1)

[…] Later, I went to a training session... That's when I learned that the clearer and more detailed the prompt, the more the result aligns with what you need. That's when I realized it was effective. (Teacher 3)

In sum, the teachers' transition from initial apprehension to conditional acceptance highlights that ChatGPT's perceived ease of use relies fundamentally on the user's mastery of prompt engineering. While providing specific, context-rich instructions helps overcome early technical barriers, educators still grapple with more profound challenges regarding the

tool's reliability and ethical integration. These persistent issues, which extend beyond mere technological acceptance, are further explored in the next section.

3.3 Beyond Acceptance

In addition to the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, data from the interviews revealed various concerns of teacher participants. These include *Concerns about accuracy and reliability* and *The role of human guidance*.

3.3.1 Concerns about accuracy and reliability

Despite its operational benefits, the adoption of ChatGPT is heavily moderated by significant concerns regarding accuracy, reliability, and academic integrity. Teachers universally acknowledged that the output is not 100% trustworthy (Teacher 4, Teacher 5).

But I'm not sure about its accuracy... It's not accurate. Its reliability is not high... Yes, I still maintain the view that I don't trust its answer. Everything must be checked. (Teacher 4; previously reported in Vo & Huynh, 2025)

There are some things that are wrong, too; there are times when it gives a wrong table, but I feel that when we use it, it is only effective if we base it on the knowledge we already have. You can't trust it 100%... There are things that aren't right. For example, in a multiple-choice quiz, it still gives wrong options sometimes, and sometimes the sentences before and after contradict each other, which also happens. (Teacher 5)

They frequently encounter instances where the tool "makes mistakes," provides contradictory information, or repeats inaccuracies copied from other sources, requiring full verification based on the teacher's existing knowledge (Teacher 1, Teacher 3, Teacher 5, Teacher 6).

But it still has some issues, meaning it continues to make mistakes. It repeats itself. I still don't know why, but I think it might be because my prompt wasn't clear or something. (Teacher 1)

After using it, it's only acceptable, not something I would call great anymore, because I see that there are still things that are wrong. ...And there are mistakes in its answer. So I tried typing that sentence and searched on Google, and it was wrong in exactly the same way as on Google. That means it copied it from Google. If Google is wrong, it's wrong in the exact same way. (Teacher 3)

The difficulty is that some of the information it provides is wrong, which confuses me... I believe it has very good intelligence, but it needs to be verified; it shouldn't be applied completely. (Teacher 6)

This mandatory verification step detracts from the perceived efficiency. A major factor undermining reliability is the lack of source transparency; teachers noted that ChatGPT often fails to provide clear references or, alarmingly, "self-fabricates" false citations, making the necessary process of verification incredibly time-consuming and difficult (Teacher 4, Teacher 10).

…It's like when I'm stuck for an idea, I can find one, but it has no source. It just gives me that piece of text. I don't know where the source is from... meaning the AI provides an answer. It doesn't give the basis for that answer. For example... in ChatGPT, it listed that these people have said that... But actually, it gets the source from Google. [...] And I can't find it, I can't find it in that list. (Teacher 4, as cited in Vo & Huynh, 2025)

...It gives me a reference list below, but when I click it, the article doesn't exist [...] It means it self-fabricates the source... It creates inaccurate information value. It fabricates and makes things up to answer. (Teacher 10, as cited in Vo & Huynh, 2025)

This concern over factual integrity is compounded by the ethical dilemma of plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Teachers viewed the potential for students to abuse AI for cheating as the "biggest problem," fearing a decline in the quality of learning products and making genuine assessment a "double-edged sword" (Teacher 1, Teacher 2).

The biggest problem I think is related to plagiarism or ethical issues... We use plagiarism and AI checkers to see if the students have used it or not. (Teacher 1)

I was afraid of lagging behind it, that the students knew how to use it but I didn't, which is why I started using it... I have to read the students' activities. For example, if I ask it to list 4 or 5 interpretation teaching activities, I have to read all 4-5 activities to see if I have used any of them already. ...If we just hand everything over to it, then nothing meaningful comes out. That is the harm. That's why it is a double-edged sword. Initially, I was also reluctant, like, for example, the newspapers talked about ChatGPT... but I was still hesitant to use it (Teacher 2; *see* also Vo & Huynh, 2025)

Consequently, while acknowledging the tool's utility, many teachers remain hesitant, concerned about violating academic ethics personally and witnessing its negative impact on student development (Teacher 7, Teacher 10).

Another thing is that I'm afraid that if I use it, it's like I'm violating academic integrity... I don't worry too much, but I'm afraid of violating ethics. (Teacher 7)

It is an issue related to ethics... There are things we need to say and things we have to write ourselves... If the instructor doesn't do it, the expert won't accept it. It allows us to use it for what? To use it for language purposes only, to make it easier for our students to read [...] But if it's an AI paper, like we say we didn't write that paper but we ask it to write it, then that is AI, and it will generate false information. (Teacher 10; previously reported in Vo & Huynh, 2025)

3.3.2 The Role of Human Guidance

Interviewed teachers unanimously stated that human guidance is essential when using ChatGPT, emphasizing the necessity of intervention, cross-checking, and the decisive role of the user. Because ChatGPT's output is viewed merely as a preliminary draft, educators maintain that "everything must be checked" and verified against "the knowledge we already have" (Teacher 5). Participants acknowledge the tool's intelligence but insist it "shouldn't be applied completely," warning that taking its content "wholesale" is "not acceptable" (Teacher 6). This skepticism extends to their instructional directives, as they frequently remind students to "verify that information again" and not to "completely depend on it" (Teacher 7). For instance, Teacher 4 requires students to discuss AI-generated search results and "check the source again on Google" before finalizing their work (previously reported in Vo & Huynh, 2025).

Furthermore, the educators stressed their indispensable role as critical filters and personalizers of AI output. Because generic AI content "may not be suitable for the exact class," teachers must carefully adjust it to fit their specific classroom contexts (Teacher 1). Relying on AI materials "just to cope" or choosing to "throw it into ChatGPT... without checking anything" is considered a severe neglect of professional responsibility (Teachers 1 and 3). Participants warned that bringing unchecked mistakes into the classroom not only "affects the entire teaching process" (Teacher 3), but ultimately damages the educator's "reputation" and violates professional "ethics" (Teacher 1). These findings underscores the critical understanding among educators that AI output is a starting point, not a final product. The prevailing consensus is a firm commitment to skepticism and verification; teachers "don't trust its answer" 100% and insist that "everything must be checked" (Teacher 4). This necessity stems from the AI's known issues with accuracy and contextual fit. Consequently, the teacher's role is shifting from a sole content creator to a critical filter and adaptor. Educators recognize the professional risk of adopting unchecked AI content, as mistakes discovered by students could severely impact their reputation and the quality of the teaching process (Teacher 1, 3). They see it as their professional responsibility to evaluate the AI's suggestions, cross-check facts, adjust the language for the specific classroom context, and ensure students are reminded to "verify that information again" (Teacher 7), thus maintaining academic integrity and pedagogical effectiveness.

4. Discussion

This study examined the perceptions and experiences of Vietnamese EFL teachers regarding the integration of ChatGPT, utilizing the established Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) as the theoretical framework. The findings strongly support the central TAM constructs of Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) as key determinants of acceptance, while simultaneously revealing a crucial third dimension: a set of challenges related to ethics and accuracy that necessitates active human guidance "beyond acceptance."

The teachers in the present study considered ChatGPT highly useful across various professional tasks, particularly for saving time, generating ideas, and supporting language and research tasks. This high perceived usefulness aligns with existing literature on the potential of AI in language education.

A fundamental element of ChatGPT's PU was its ability to accelerate material creation and save time, driven by its rapid processing capabilities and instantaneous delivery of information. This finding supports the general notion that AI-powered models hold immense potential for transforming language learning. The efficiency of ChatGPT was specifically valued over traditional search engines like Google because of its capacity to synthesize data and deliver highly targeted results, circumventing the information overload and extensive filtering required by conventional web searches.

Furthermore, the teachers valued ChatGPT as a powerful brainstorming partner, frequently leveraging it to generate specific activities, exercises, discussion prompts, and game ideas to overcome instructional blocks and creative stagnation. The AI was also found to be a useful research assistant, helping to generate research outlines and suggest variables for academic writing. This perceived benefit echoes the findings of Liu (2023), who reported positive attitudes toward ChatGPT's potential for content development and language practice among Chinese university students.

The findings from this study also confirm that Vietnamese EFL teachers found ChatGPT to be a helpful tool for language enrichment, using it to source high-quality, diverse vocabulary and appropriate sentence structures for lecture content. This directly supports the finding by Nugroho et al. (2023) that ChatGPT could be used to enhance students' writing, specifically by translating and paraphrasing, generating outlines and ideas, and correcting grammatical and syntactical mistakes. In the present study, teachers also used the AI to refine their own written English, noting its capability to enhance syntactic complexity and elevate lexical sophistication to mirror native-like proficiency. Additionally, its speed and relative accuracy in translating texts were noted as useful for generating answer keys in translation courses, a capability also highlighted by Shaikh et al. (2023), who suggested its usefulness in formal English language instruction.

Despite the high utility, a duality was observed: while ChatGPT is fast and effective for technical tasks like grammatical correction and translation, teachers noted that automatically generated content often lacked creative

vibrancy and structural diversity. This confirms that human expertise is still essential for injecting dynamic, nuanced language into pedagogical materials.

The PEOU findings illustrate a journey from initial psychological reservation to a conditional acceptance, heavily reliant on the user's skill. Nine out of ten teachers admitted initial hesitation, rooted in fears of complexity, media caution, or concerns about ethical over-reliance and the risk of cognitive complacency and the degradation of critical thinking skills. This initial reluctance suggests that factors outside the core PEOU construct – such as anxiety toward new technology or ethical concerns – can function as initial barriers to adoption, even before the technology is used.

Beyond the core TAM constructs, the findings from interviews with ten Vietnamese EFL teachers in this study identified significant concerns related to accuracy, ethics, and the necessity of human intervention. First, a major drawback noted was the issue of misinformation and lack of reliability, with teachers reporting that ChatGPT frequently produces factual inaccuracies and self-contradictory information. Consequently, educators maintain a strong skepticism, acknowledging that AI outputs cannot be accepted without rigorous cross-verification. A severe concern was the AI's lack of transparent references, with participants noting its tendency to hallucinate academic references or generate fictitious citations. This strongly aligns with Al-Obaydi et al. (2023)'s caution against overreliance on ChatGPT and the need to consider its limitations within the context of established learning theories.

5. Conclusion

This study successfully applied the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to explore the adoption of ChatGPT among Vietnamese EFL teachers, revealing that Perceived Usefulness (PU) is the primary driver of acceptance. Teachers embraced ChatGPT because of its proven effectiveness as a significant time-saving tool for material creation, a robust brainstorming partner, and a powerful assistant for linguistic refinement and academic research tasks.

However, acceptance is conditional and requires mastery of the technology, specifically prompt engineering, which proved to be the critical determinant of successful utilization under the umbrella of Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU). Generic use results in ineffective outcomes, transforming the initial barrier of complexity into a necessary skill for efficiency. Crucially, the findings emphasize that ChatGPT is a double-edged sword. The benefits are tempered by significant challenges related to accuracy, the fabrication of reference sources, and the persistent risk of plagiarism and academic dishonesty (Nugroho et al., 2023; Vo & Huynh, 2025).

Therefore, the study strongly concludes that successful and ethical integration of ChatGPT into language education requires essential human guidance and intervention. The role of the teacher is shifting from a sole content creator to a critical filter and contextual adaptor, ensuring that all AI-generated output is verified, adjusted, and personalized. Educators must always check the information, base their application on existing knowledge, and remind students to verify all data, confirming that AI should not be applied completely or trusted 100%.

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge the support of time and facilities from Tra Vinh University (TVU) for this study.

Artificial Intelligence Statement

During the preparation of this work, the authors used Easy-Peasy in order to transcribe the audio data and Gemini for proofreading the manuscript. After using these tools, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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