Chugai Oksana
PhD in Pedagogy (Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences), Associate Professor
at the Department of English for Engineering № 2
National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute", Kyiv, Ukraine
E-mail: OChugai@meta.ua
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2118-8255

Havrylenko Kateryna
PhD in Pedagogy (Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences), Senior Lecturer
at the Department of English for Engineering № 2
National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute", Kyiv, Ukraine
E-mail: asdi15@i.ua
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9474-1990

Responsible use of ChatGPT in ESL: teachers' perspective

ChatGPT has become an essential educational tool, highlighting the importance of understanding its impact and potential in the classroom. While many studies explore AI applications, the ethical issues surrounding ChatGPT's use in language teaching have received less attention. This article addresses this gap by investigating ESL teachers' perspectives on the responsible use of ChatGPT. The study involved 33 English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers from universities and schools in Ukraine. Quantitative data was analyzed using the median (Mdn) and Inter-Quartile Range (IQR) on a five-point Likert scale, while qualitative data was drawn from written responses.

In terms of demographics, most respondents were aged 35 to 54 with more than half over 21 years of teaching experience. Regarding their attitudes toward ChatGPT's impact, over half viewed it as a valuable tool for enhancing ESL students' language skills, and 55% supported its use for generating ideas and content. On ethical considerations, most teachers agreed that students should be aware of the ethics of using ChatGPT. Two-thirds of respondents felt students should rely more on their efforts. Half were unsure if students could differentiate their work from ChatGPT-generated content. Regarding guidelines, 82% of teachers believed students need training on ethical use, and 80% thought students should face penalties for misuse. A majority (85%) agreed students understand the consequences of improper use and supported training ESL teachers to guide students on ChatGPT's use. Two-thirds believed discussions could help reduce unethical use. Respondents showed the highest level of agreement on the need for ethical ChatGPT's use and teacher training (IQR = 0), the strongest agreement was on the necessity of ethical awareness (Mdn = 5).

The findings of this study can inform policy decisions on integrating AI in foreign language teaching and support the development of teacher training programs focused on the ethical use of AI tools.

Keywords: *English as a Second Language (ESL), teachers' attitude, ethical considerations, ChatGPT generated content, responsible use.*

Introduction. ChatGPT, a widely recognized artificial intelligence (AI) model designed for natural language interaction, is increasingly being adopted in education, prompting the need to examine its academic impact, advantages, and challenges. ChatGPT is now a vital educational tool, making it crucial to understand AI's impact and potential (Liu, 2024: 1). One of the primary advantages of integrating ChatGPT into ESL classrooms is its potential to enhance language learning experiences. Through interactive conversations, students can practice speaking and writing in English in a simulated real-world environment which provides learners with opportunities to apply grammar rules, expand vocabulary, and improve fluency. However, ESL teachers must select appropriate conversational prompts and monitor interactions to mitigate potential risks.

There are some ethical considerations in terms of data privacy, bias, and accountability. Firstly, there should be strict guidelines regarding data collection, storage, and protection of sensitive information shared during interactions. Transparent communication with students about data privacy policies is essential to build trust and ensure compliance with legal regulations. Secondly, AI language models like ChatGPT may propagate instances of bias, stereotypes, or inappropriate content. Therefore, educators should actively promote diversity and inclusivity in language learning materials. Finally, ESL teachers are accountable for guiding students in using ChatGPT ethically and responsibly, advocating for critical thinking, digital literacy, and respectful communication.

While there are multiple studies on AI applications and implications, the ethical issues of using ChatGPT, an AI language model, have not been investigated enough. To fill this gap, the article aims to explore ESL teachers'

perspectives on the responsible use of ChatGPT. To achieve this aim, the following research questions should be answered:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of ESL teachers?
2. What is ESL teachers' attitude towards the impact of ChatGPT on students' language skills?
3. How important are ethical considerations of using ChatGPT by students in their academic work?
4. Do students and teachers need guidelines on responsible usage of ChatGPT?

Literature review. ChatGPT's importance in education is significant: a 2023 review of 32 peer-reviewed articles revealed that 75% of studies emphasized that. Key challenges include integrating these tools into teaching and maintaining student engagement. ChatGPT excels in meeting diverse students' needs and encouraging collaboration (Mohebi, 2024). Thematic analysis of research on ChatGPT's integration into ESL instruction revealed its positive impact on writing, grammar, and vocabulary acquisition, as well as on students' motivation and engagement (Fatih et al., 2024). Language teachers recognize several benefits of using ChatGPT like easier access to vast knowledge resources, time-saving in lesson planning, enhanced instructional support, more language input for learners, and improved engagement. These advantages show ChatGPT's potential to enhance language teaching through increased practice opportunities and greater instructional efficiency (Riyadini, & Triastuti, 2023: 1111; Basilio, 2023). Educators foresee ChatGPT playing a key role in differentiated instruction, personalized feedback, fostering collaboration, enhancing critical thinking, and supporting problem-solving skills. Its integration signals a shift toward more student-centered teaching approaches. Researchers emphasize the transformative potential of ChatGPT in classrooms while stressing the importance of maintaining a balance between technology and human interaction within an ethically responsible educational framework. (Basilio, 2023; Lucas et al., 2023). It is essential to maximize its potential in fostering inclusive, dynamic classrooms (Mohebi, 2024).

However, educators also express concerns about privacy, data accuracy, and the possible impact on interpersonal relationships and personalized interactions (Basilio, 2023). First of all, a serious ethical issue is the unreliability of ChatGPT, as it often generates uncertain answers. There is also a concern that students might cease to think critically when interacting with ChatGPT. Treating it like a human and failing to consistently question its reliability could ultimately impede learning and lead to job displacement (Zeng & Mahmud, 2023: 37; Lucas et al., 2023). Another ethical issue is insufficient learning when students might not gain adequate knowledge just by copying from ChatGPT for certain tasks. While short-term comprehension of the subject might be good, true learning involves critical thinking, which should result in enduring knowledge and skills (Zeng & Mahmud, 2023: 37).

Academic dishonesty emerged as another significant theme; while students may initially use it for brainstorming, some may extend its use beyond that. Teachers may notice that their students' assignments look perfect, but asking if the students received extra help could lead to distrust between students and teachers. Therefore, it is important to address this issue by ensuring honest learning for everyone involved (Zeng & Mahmud, 2023: 38).

The research discovered that teachers mainly linked students' AI-driven plagiarism to a lack of original ideas, inadequate learning attitudes and motivation, and students' language abilities. Relying too much on AI was identified as impeding the growth of critical thinking and language proficiency, essential for developing knowledge and skills (Cong-Lem, 2024: 28). In addressing academic dishonesty, teachers supported stricter regulations, the adoption of AI-driven plagiarism detection tools, and educating students on responsible AI utilization. The results emphasize the necessity of adjusting language teaching methods and evaluations to integrate personalized learning and process-focused teaching strategies, which foster critical thinking and authentic learning motivation (Cong-Lem, 2024: 28).

Another study revealed the diverse (six favorable and six unfavorable) outcomes of employing ChatGPT for academic purposes (Hasanein & Sobaih, 2023: 2599). Additionally, the research has demonstrated that there are both beneficial and adverse ramifications associated with the utilization of ChatGPT in educational settings. The positive outcomes are time efficiency, decreased anxiety, enhanced language proficiency, bolstered self-assurance, timely submissions, and non-academic assistance. Conversely, the negative aspects of concern encompass excessive reliance, compromised academic integrity, diminished quality and precision, impaired learning outcomes, potential bias, and weakened student skill development (Hasanein & Sobaih, 2023: 2612).

The integration of ChatGPT into educational settings presents two key concerns: the risk of over-dependence on AI in learning processes and challenges pertaining to academic integrity. While ChatGPT serves as a valuable educational resource, excessive reliance on it could hinder the development of critical thinking and problem-solving abilities essential for students. There's a potential danger that students may excessively lean on ChatGPT for solutions, diminishing their capacity for independent exploration and analysis. Regarding academic integrity, apprehensions arise from the possibility of students misusing ChatGPT for unethical

practices, such as plagiarizing intellectual content or engaging in academic dishonesty. When students employ ChatGPT to produce assignments or answers without proper acknowledgment or originality, it violates the core tenets of academic honesty and fair assessment. Moreover, there are concerns regarding the impact on learning outcomes. Relying heavily on ChatGPT as a primary learning tool may negatively affect students' social interactions within educational environments. This dependency could limit opportunities for face-to-face interactions between students and educators, potentially discouraging collaborative endeavors among peers and impeding the development of essential communication skills (Hasanein & Sobaih, 2023: 2611).

While EFL instructors at Van Lang University expressed a positive inclination towards integrating ChatGPT into writing courses, they also voiced apprehensions regarding its implementation. The primary concern raised was the potential for students to excessively rely on ChatGPT due to improper usage (Nguyen, 2023: 39). Based on the findings of the recent study, it is concluded that EFL teachers at Van Lang University hold varied perspectives on the role of ChatGPT in the future of language teaching. While fifty percent of the interviewed teachers strongly believed that ChatGPT would be a supporting tool widely used in EFL classrooms, the other thirty percent of the respondents posited the notion that ChatGPT could replace teachers in grading students' papers and creating learning resources, while twenty percent of the participants predicted the disappearance of ChatGPT due to serious concerns over its implementation (Nguyen, 2023: 38).

Recommendations highlight the need for ongoing professional development, ethical guidelines, pedagogical support, teacher collaboration, and further research (Basilio, 2023). EFL teachers also advised users of ChatGPT to be mindful of its limitations and potential risks, ensuring that the chatbot is employed appropriately in writing classes and preventing excessive reliance on its capabilities. Lastly, they recommended combining formative and summative assessments in writing classes to ensure fair evaluation of students' writing skills and mitigate concerns about academic integrity (Nguyen, 2023: 38–39).

Materials and methods

Research design. Using a mixed research design, we collected quantitative and qualitative data through a Google Form. The data was analyzed, interpreted and summarised.

Participants and instruments. The respondents, teachers of English as a Second Language (N = 33) worked at universities and schools in Ukraine. Their participation in the research in February 2024 was voluntary. The survey consisted of two parts, one devoted to demographic information, and another to responsible use of ChatGPT by ESL students. To process the data using the quantitative method, the median (Mdn) and Inter-Quartile Range (IQR) on a five-point Likert scale were calculated. The qualitative research method was applied while processing written responses.

Data collection. Data was collected by sharing an online survey through social networking sites and emails.

Results and Discussion

Section 1. Demographic characteristics of ESL teachers

Considering the age, most respondents were from 35 to 54 years old (73%), and practically a quarter were 55 and older (See Figure 1).

More than half of the respondents had at least twenty-one years of teaching experience, and third – from eleven to twenty years (See Figure 2).

Considering gender, women prevailed (94%). Regarding the place of current work, most respondents were university teachers (91%), the rest – secondary school teachers.
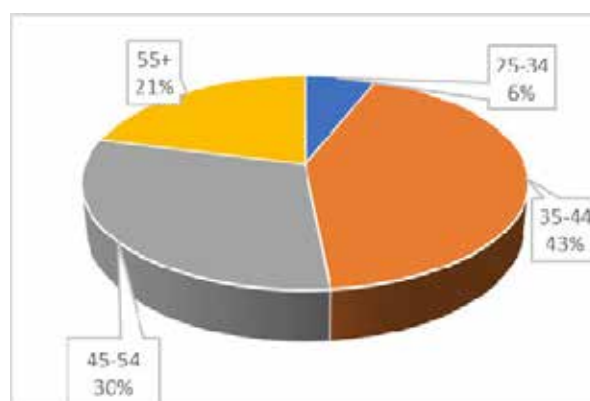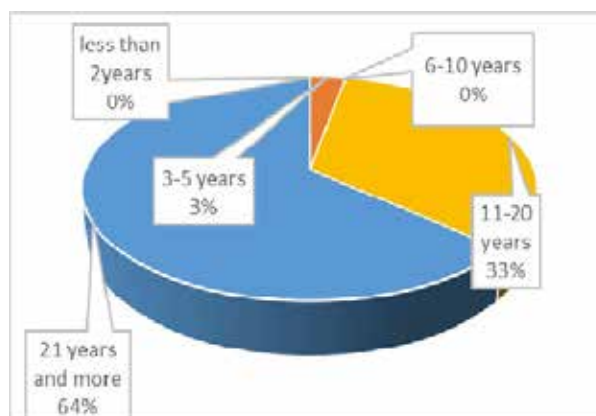

Figure 1. The age of respondents

Figure 2. Work experience of respondents

Section 2. Responsible usage of ChatGPT by ESL students

More than half of respondents think that ChatGPT is a valuable tool for improving ESL students' language skills, while forty-two percent have not decided which to choose (See Figure 3).

More than half of respondents (55%) were sure that ESL students should use ChatGPT as a resource for generating ideas and content, a third expressed their disagreement and the rest could not decide (See Figure 4).

The majority of respondents were sure that ESL students had to be aware of the ethics of using ChatGPT, but some did not know which to choose (See Figure 5).
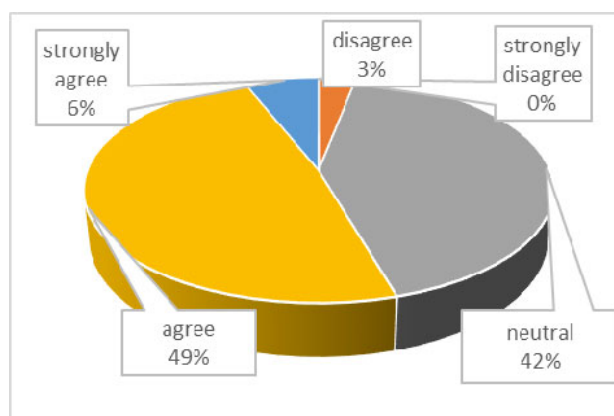
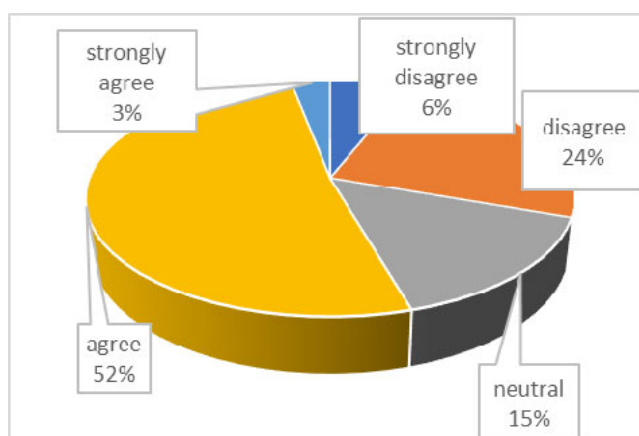*Figure 3. Can ChatGPT be a valuable tool for improving ESL students' language skills?*

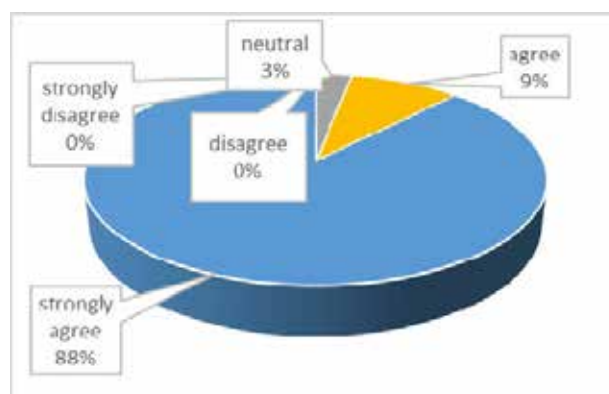*Figure 4. Should students use ChatGPT as a resource for generating ideas and content?*

Figure 5. Should ESL students be aware of the ethics of using ChatGPT?
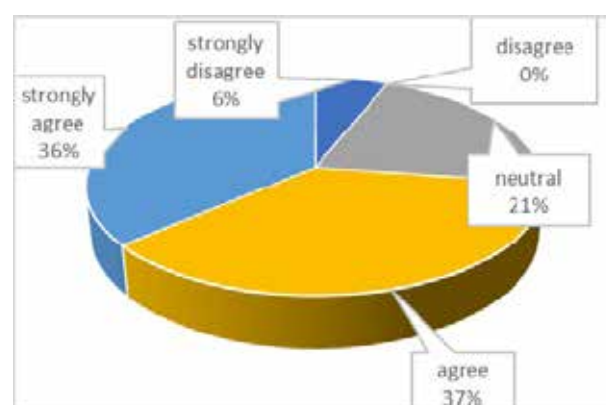

Figure 6. Should ESL students rely on their efforts, not ChatGPT?

The same threat was mentioned in another research related to the fact that students cannot see the difference between the AI and a human therefore neglecting to regularly question its reliability, spreading misinformation (Zeng & Mahmud, 2023: 37).

At the same, time two-thirds of the respondents thought that ESL students had to rely on their efforts, while twenty-one percent could not decide (See Figure 6).

Similarly, fifty percent of respondents in another research highlighted the overreliance on ChatGPT to provide answers for every query, along with the tendency to replicate its responses, resulting in diminished critical thinking abilities and weakened problem-solving skills (Nguyen, 2023: 39).

Half of the respondents in our research were not sure if ESL students could see the difference between their work and ChatGPT content (See Figure 7).
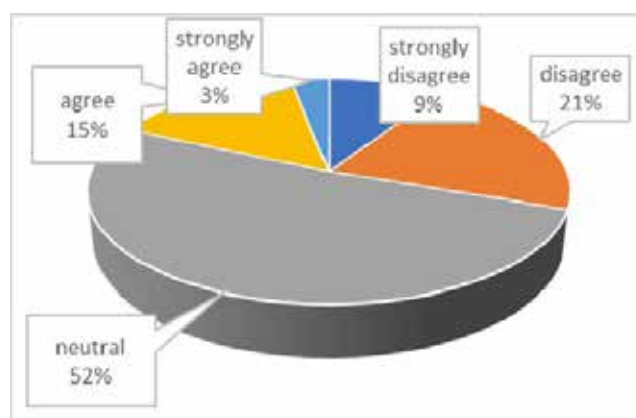

Figure 7. Do ESL students distinguish between their work and ChatGPT content?

Most respondents thought that ESL students needed training on the ethical use of ChatGPT (82%), and some were neutral about that (See Figure 8).

The majority of respondents (80%) were sure that ESL students were supposed to be punished for using ChatGPT (Figure 9).

Most respondents (85%) thought that students were aware of the consequences of using ChatGPT inappropriately (See Figure 10).

Most respondents (85%) thought it was necessary to train ESL teachers on guiding students' appropriate usage of ChatGPT (See Figure 11).
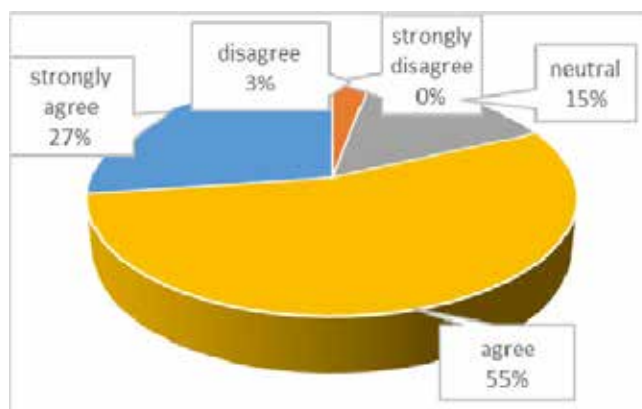

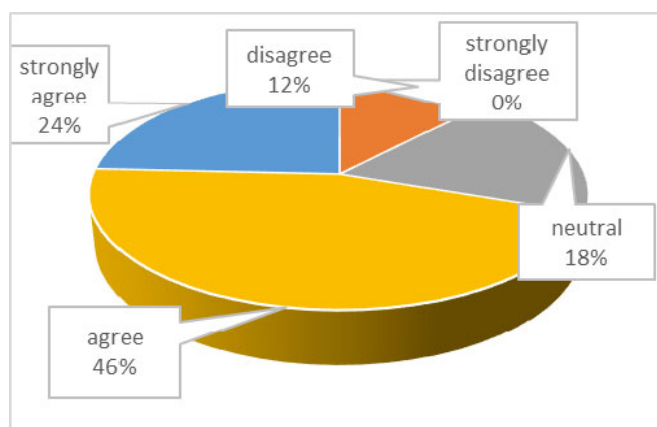*Figure 8. Should ESL students be trained on the appropriate use of ChatGPT?*

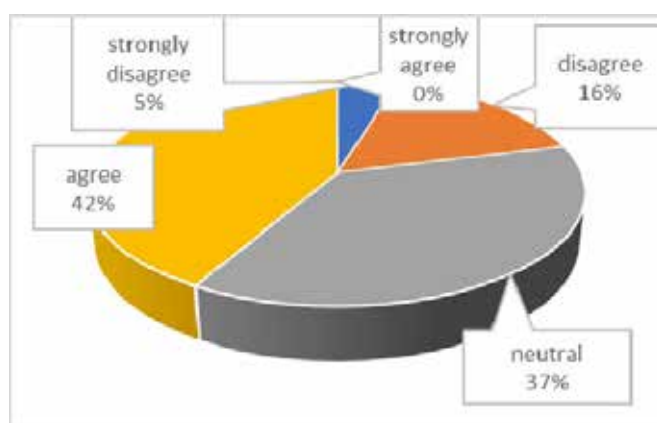*Figure 9. Should ESL students be penalized for using ChatGPT?*

Figure 10. Do students understand the consequences of using ChatGPT inappropriately?
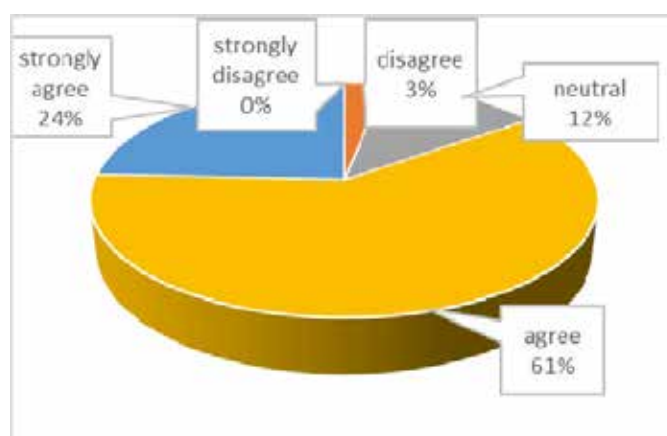
Figure 11. Is it necessary to train ESL teachers on guiding students' appropriate usage of ChatGPT?
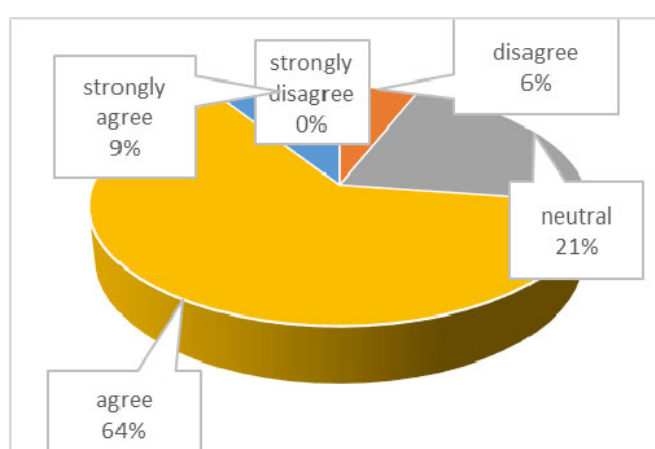

Figure 12. Can discussions help mitigate the risks of ChatGPT?

Two-thirds of respondents thought that discussions could help mitigate the risks of unethical usage of ChatGPT.

The degree of agreement among respondents was the highest for two questions, about the necessity of students to be aware of the ethical usage of ChatGPT and training of ESL teachers on guiding students (IQR = 0) (See Table 1). Respondents' choices were dispersed for two questions, about students' usage of CharGPT for generating ideas, content, and relying on their efforts instead of ChatGPT (IQR = 2).

Considering Median, respondents mostly agreed on one question, about the necessity of being aware of ethical ChatGPT usage (Mdn = 5). Respondents were not sure what to choose in two cases when asked about the ability of students to see the difference between their work and ChatGPT content and understand the consequences of inappropriate ChatGPT usage. In other cases, respondents agreed with the statements.

The respondents in our study described some ways their students used ChatGPT to complete writing assignments. Firstly, it was a responsible way of using ChatGPT, when it was practically impossible to prove its assistance. The piece of writing was on the topic, all the questions were answered, and it was logical and reasonable. Secondly, when ChatGPT assistance was obvious: the writing was on the topic, but it was too general and not natural. For example, the task: "Answer the questions, write 50 words. Imagine you are going to make a film about your life. Choose three events you would like to include (Why did you choose to ...? What happened when you ...? What did you enjoy best about ...?") Student's response: "One significant event in my life film would be the challenging career setback I faced. Overcoming this obstacle not only tested my resilience but also propelled me into a period of self-discovery, leading to valuable insights and personal growth. Embracing change became a pivotal aspect of my journey, shaping the narrative of my life film." As we can see, no concrete information or specific details, and three questions were not answered. Finally, the worst-case scenario was when students used ChatGPT irresponsibly to such an extent that they did not even read the response it provided. The task: "Think of two pieces of technology you have used in the last

twenty-four hours. Did you have any problems with them? What problems can you have with them?" Student's response: "Unfortunately, I cannot answer the questions about the image without any context. To give you the best possible response, I need some information about the image, such as the text in it, the objects or people depicted, and what you want to know about it. Please provide more details so I can understand your request and answer your questions accordingly." This is a typical response generated by ChatGPT when it needs additional information. Another significant issue, highlighted by educators, was the matter of academic integrity. The results of another research showed that some students exploited ChatGPT to produce written assignments submitted for evaluation, which led to concerns about biased assessments (Nguyen, 2023: 39).

Conclusions. This study offers valuable insights into ESL teachers' perspectives on the responsible use of ChatGPT. Regarding demographic characteristics of ESL teachers, most respondents were aged 35 to 54 years, with nearly a third being 55 or older. Over half had at least 21 years of teaching experience. The majority were women, most worked at universities (91%), with the remainder teaching in secondary schools.

Considering ESL teachers' attitudes towards the impact of ChatGPT, over half of respondents viewed ChatGPT as a valuable tool for improving ESL students' language skills, while 42% were undecided. Most (55%) supported its use for generating ideas and content, though a third disagreed and some were uncertain. Exploring ethical considerations of using ChatGPT by students, the majority of ESL teachers believed that students should understand the ethics of ChatGPT use, but opinions varied on specifics. Two-thirds of the respondents thought students should rely more on their own efforts, with 21% undecided. Half were unsure if students could distinguish between their work and ChatGPT content. Regarding the necessity of guidelines, most (82%) teachers thought ESL students needed training on ethical use, and 80% believed students should face penalties for misuse of ChatGPT. Most respondents (85%) thought students were aware of the consequences of improper use; they also supported training for ESL teachers on guiding appropriate ChatGPT use. Two-thirds of teachers believed discussions could help mitigate unethical ChatGPT's use. Respondents were most unified on the need for ethical ChatGPT use and training ESL teachers to guide students (IQR = 0). There was more variation in opinions on students using ChatGPT for ideas versus relying on their efforts (IQR = 2). The agreement was strongest on the necessity of ethical awareness (Mdn = 5). There was uncertainty about whether students could distinguish their work from ChatGPT-generated content and fully grasp the implications of its misuse. In other areas, respondents generally agreed.

Our research findings can facilitate policy decisions on integrating AI into language teaching and help shape teacher professional development programs to focus on the effective use of AI tools in language instruction.

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Відповідальне використання ChatGPT в ESL: точка зору викладачів

Чугай Оксана Юріївна
кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент кафедри англійської мови технічного спрямування № 2
Національного технічного університету України
«Київський політехнічний університет імені Ігоря Сікорського»,
Київ, Україна

кандидат педагогічних наук, старший викладач кафедри англійської мови технічного спрямування № 2
Національного технічного університету України
«Київський політехнічний університет імені Ігоря Сікорського»,
Київ, Україна

ChatGPT став важливим освітнім інструментом, що підкреслює важливість розуміння його впливу та потенціалу в навчанні. Незважаючи на те що багато досліджень присвячено застосуванню штучного інтелекту, етичним проблемам, пов'язаним із використанням ChatGPT у викладанні іноземної мови, приділялось менше уваги. Наша стаття заповнює цю прогалину, досліджуючи погляди викладачів ESL з університетів і шкіл України на відповідальне використання ChatGPT. У дослідженні взяли участь 33 викладачі англійської як другої мови (ESL). Кількісні дані аналізувалися за допомогою медіани (Mdn) та міжквартильного діапазону (IQR) за п'ятибальною шкалою Лайкерта, тоді як якісні дані отримували з письмових відповідей.

З позиції демографії більшість респондентів були віком від 35 до 54 років, більше половини з яких мали понад 21 рік педагогічного стажу. Щодо їхнього ставлення до впливу ChatGPT, то більше половини вважали його цінним інструментом для покращення мовних навичок студентів, що вивчають англійську як другу мову, та підтримали його використання для створення ідей і контенту. Щодо етичних міркувань, то більшість викладачів погодилися, що студенти повинні дотримуватися етичного використання ChatGPT. Дві третини респондентів вважають, що студенти повинні більше покладатися на власні зусилля. Половина викладачів не були впевнені, чи зможуть студенти відрізнити свою роботу від контенту, створеного ChatGPT. Близько 82% викладачів вважають, що студенти потребують навчання етичного використання, а 80% впевнені, що за неправильне використання ChatGPT студенти мають понести покарання. Більшість респондентів (85%) погодилися, що студенти усвідомлюють наслідки неналежного використання ChatGPT, і підтримали підготовку викладачів англійської як другої мови, яка допоможе студентам ефективно використовувати ChatGPT. Дві третини вважають, що обговорення цієї проблеми може допомогти зменшити неетичне використання ChatGPT. Респонденти продемонстрували найвищий рівень погодження щодо необхідності етичного використання ChatGPT та навчання викладачів (IQR = 0), найбільшої згоди було досягнено щодо необхідності усвідомлення етичного використання ChatGPT (Mdn = 5).

Результати цього дослідження допоможуть прийняти стратегічні рішення щодо інтеграції штучного інтелекту у викладання іноземної мови та спрямувати розробку програм підготовки викладачів з урахуванням етичного використання інструментів штучного інтелекту.

Ключові слова: *англійська як друга мова (ESL), ставлення викладачів, етичні міркування, контент створений ChatGPT, відповідальне використання.*