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Iranian EFL Instructors' Perspectives on Integrating Artificial Intelligence Applications into English Language Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

Background: AI tools are increasingly recognized for their potential to enhance language acquisition, personalize instruction, and improve classroom efficiency.
Aims: This study investigates the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors in Iran regarding the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) applications into teaching and learning.
Methods: A quantitative research design was employed, collecting data via a structured survey from 50 EFL instructors across public and private universities in Iran.
Result: Findings indicate that most instructors viewed AI applications positively, particularly for their ability to deliver tailored feedback, foster engagement, and adapt learning to students' individual needs. AI-assisted tools, such as Duolingo and ELSA Speak, were noted as effective for improving pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. However, challenges such as limited technological infrastructure, potential cultural mismatches in content, and high implementation costs were also highlighted. Statistical analysis revealed significant differences in perceptions of AI benefits based on teaching experience, but no significant differences in perceived challenges.
Conclusion: The study concludes by recommending increased teacher training, investment in localized AI resources, and strategies to ensure cultural relevance in AI-driven language learning.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies has transformed many sectors, including education, where intelligent systems are increasingly used to enhance instructional practices (Vorobiev et al., 2016). In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), AI-powered applications can provide personalized learning, real-time feedback, and adaptive lesson planning (Jiang, 2022). In Iran, where English proficiency is often essential for academic advancement, employment, and global communication, integrating AI into EFL instruction is becoming a focus of interest for both policymakers and educators (Isaee & Barjesteh, 2026; Manoocherzadeh et al., 2025).

EFL instruction in Iran faces persistent challenges, including large class sizes, limited exposure to native English speakers, and constraints on instructional time (Barjesteh & Isaee, 2024). AI-driven applications such as Duolingo, which gamifies vocabulary and grammar learning, and ELSA Speak, which uses speech recognition to improve pronunciation, offer potential solutions by providing flexible, learner-centered practice (Hazaymeh et al., 2024; Lee et al., 2023; Risdianto et al., 2025).

These technologies can adapt to learners' proficiency levels, track progress, and generate data-driven insights for teachers (Olyaee et al., 2024).

International research highlights the role of AI in improving learner engagement, language skills, and instructional efficiency (Jiang, 2022; Lee et al., 2023; Vorobiev et al., 2016). However, cultural adaptation, affordability, and teacher readiness remain significant considerations (Isaee & Barjesteh, 2025). Although AI tools have been widely researched in other contexts, few empirical studies have examined Iranian EFL instructors' attitudes toward AI integration (e.g., Hoseini Moghadam, 2023; Mohammadi et al., 2025; Olyaee et al., 2024). This study addresses this gap by exploring perceived benefits, challenges, and the influence of teaching experience on instructors' views.

Iran's educational system has witnessed a gradual shift toward digital learning, yet AI integration remains uneven across institutions due to limited infrastructure, inconsistent internet access, and the absence of unified national AI policies in education (Marandi & Hosseini, 2024). Understanding instructors' perceptions within this policy and infrastructural landscape provides critical insight into adoption readiness.

Objectives of the Study:

Building on previous research and considering the current state of AI integration in Iran's higher education sector, this study seeks to address the lack of empirical investigations into Iranian EFL instructors' views on AI-supported teaching. Despite growing interest in educational technology, there remains limited localized evidence on how AI applications are perceived and utilized in Iranian universities. The objectives of this study are to:

1) Examine Iranian EFL instructors' perceptions of the benefits of using AI applications in English language classrooms.
2) Identify the challenges instructors encounter when integrating AI tools into their teaching.
3) Determine whether instructors' teaching experience influences their perceptions of AI's benefits.
4) Assess whether teaching experience affects instructors' perceptions of AI-related challenges.

By addressing these objectives, the study aims to provide insights for policymakers, university administrators, and teacher training programs seeking to enhance AI integration in Iran's EFL context. So, this study seeks to find the answer to the following questions:

1) What are Iranian EFL instructors' perceptions of the benefits of using AI applications in the EFL classroom?
2) What challenges do Iranian EFL instructors face in implementing AI applications in the EFL classroom?
3) Are there statistically significant differences in Iranian EFL instructors' perceptions of AI's benefits based on teaching experience?
4) Are there statistically significant differences in Iranian EFL instructors' perceptions of AI's challenges based on teaching experience?

LITERATURE REVIEW

AI Integration in EFL Education:

AI applications in EFL settings are designed to provide personalized feedback, facilitate autonomous learning, and supplement traditional instruction(Schmidt & Strassner, 2022). Studies have demonstrated that AI tools can enhance vocabulary acquisition, grammar accuracy, and pronunciation skills through adaptive practice (e.g., Kuning, 2019; Lee et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023). Duolingo's gamified model and ELSA Speak's pronunciation analytics exemplify how AI can merge assessment and feedback to improve learner outcomes.

Benefits of AI for Language Learning:

Personalized learning is among AI's most significant contributions to language education (Wang et al., 2023). Intelligent tutoring systems, for example, can adjust task difficulty based on learner performance, offering individualized pathways for skill development (Hooda et al., 2022). Research in Asian EFL contexts reveals that learners utilizing AI-assisted platforms frequently exhibit greater motivation and confidence compared to those in conventional classrooms (García & Pena, 2010). Additionally, AI can automate administrative tasks, allowing teachers to focus on higher-order instructional activities (Niño, 2020).

The present study also draws on established adoption models to contextualize instructor perceptions. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM; Davis, 1989) emphasizes perceived usefulness and ease of use as determinants of technology acceptance, while the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Rogers, 2003) frames adoption as a social process influenced by communication channels and institutional norms. These frameworks provide a theoretical lens for interpreting instructors' responses to AI integration.

Recent international studies have further nuanced understanding of how AI supports EFL instruction across diverse educational systems. Large-scale investigations in East Asian and European contexts demonstrate that AI-supported language platforms enhance not only linguistic accuracy but also learner autonomy by enabling self-paced, data-informed practice (Holstein et al., 2017; Manoocherzadeh et al., 2025). Similarly, cross-contextual reviews indicate that AI tools are most effective when embedded within pedagogically guided frameworks rather than used as standalone technologies (Hooda et al., 2022; Risdianto et al., 2025; Schmidt & Strassner, 2022). Studies conducted in developing and transitional educational systems additionally highlight that instructors' acceptance of AI is closely tied to institutional support, professional training, and perceived alignment with local curricular goals (Akyuz, 2020; Kuning, 2019; Olyaee et al., 2024). Collectively, this international body of research suggests that while AI offers globally recognized pedagogical advantages, its classroom impact remains highly context-dependent, reinforcing the need for localized empirical investigations such as the present study.

Recent international evidence further indicates that both teachers and learners perceive AI-supported pedagogical tools as effective for enhancing engagement, feedback quality, and learner autonomy when aligned with instructional goals (Isaee & Barjesteh, 2026).

Challenges in AI Adoption:

Despite these benefits, barriers to AI adoption persist. High implementation costs, lack of localized content, and insufficient teacher training have been identified as major obstacles in various EFL contexts (Deng & Yu, 2022). In countries like Iran, infrastructural constraints, including inconsistent internet access and outdated hardware in some institutions, can limit the effective integration of AI (Marandi & Hosseini, 2024). Furthermore, concerns have been raised regarding cultural relevance and the potential for AI content to overlook local communicative norms (Deng & Yu, 2022).

Recent global investigations have explored similar dynamics across EFL contexts, underscoring how AI integration intersects with issues of teacher agency, learner autonomy, and assessment ethics (e.g., Jiang, 2022; Opyr et al., 2022; Sumakul et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2023). However, few of these studies have examined contextual constraints in developing countries, particularly Iran, where socio-technical and policy factors play a decisive role. However, international findings also reveal that positive perceptions of AI are often moderated by concerns related to pedagogical control, cultural relevance, and over-reliance on automated feedback, particularly in EFL contexts where communicative authenticity is prioritized.

Research Gap in the Iranian Context:

While there is growing global literature on AI in EFL teaching, Iranian-based empirical studies remain scarce. Previous research has focused largely on student perspectives or experimental trials with limited scope (Akyuz, 2020; Marandi & Hosseini, 2024). This study expands the discussion by examining Iranian EFL instructors' perspectives, offering insights into both the pedagogical potential and the systemic challenges of AI integration in higher education.

METHOD

Research Design:

This study employed a descriptive quantitative design to investigate the perspectives of EFL instructors in Iran on the use of AI applications in language teaching and learning. The approach was selected to allow for systematic measurement of attitudes, perceived benefits, and challenges while identifying potential differences based on teaching experience. A structured questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument. The research process involved four key phases:

1) Instrument Development drafting, validation, and piloting of the questionnaire, 2) Data Collection – distribution to participating instructors via online and institutional channels, 3) Data Analysis – use of statistical methods to address research questions, and 4) Interpretation and Reporting – synthesis of findings into actionable insights.

Participant:

A total of 50 EFL instructors participated in the study, representing public and private universities in Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, and Mashhad. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure inclusion of instructors with varying teaching experience and institutional backgrounds.

Table1. Participant Demographics

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	18	36
	Female	32	64
Teaching Experience	Less than 5 years	14	28
	5–10 years	20	40
	More than 10 years	16	32

Instrument:

The questionnaire was adapted from validated instruments used in prior AI-in-EFL studies (Jiang, 2022; Schmidt & Strassner, 2022; Wang et al., 2023), with modifications to reflect the Iranian context. It consisted of three sections: 1) *Demographic Information*, including gender, teaching experience, and institution type, 2) *Perceived Benefits of AI Applications*, including 22 items across three domains of personalized feedback and adaptive learning (7 items), language acquisition enhancement (7 items), engagement, motivation, and teaching efficiency (8 items), and 3) *Perceived Challenges of AI Applications*, including 6 items addressing issues such as cost, cultural adaptation, and technological infrastructure.

A five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) was used. For negatively worded statements, scores were reverse-coded.

Validity and Reliability:

Content validity was established through review by a panel of five applied linguistics and educational technology experts from Iranian universities. Feedback led to the rewording of some items to improve clarity and cultural relevance. Face validity was confirmed in a pilot test with 12 instructors, after which minor adjustments were made. Reliability analysis on the final dataset yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.916 for the entire scale, indicating excellent internal consistency. Domain-specific alphas ranged from 0.882 (Language Acquisition Enhancement) to 0.901 (Engagement, Motivation, and Teaching Efficiency)

Data Collection Procedure:

The online questionnaire was distributed over six weeks (October–November 2024) through university mailing lists, professional networks, and Telegram groups for Iranian EFL instructors. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before data submission.

Data Analysis:

Items were grouped into three conceptual domains based on exploratory factor validation conducted during the pilot phase. Prior to analysis, statistical assumptions for ANOVA, including normality (Shapiro–Wilk) and homogeneity of variances (Levene) were examined and satisfied. Participant anonymity and informed consent were ensured in accordance with the university's ethical research guidelines. Data were analyzed using SPSS (version 27). Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and percentages) summarized participant responses, and one-way ANOVA tests were conducted to examine the effects of teaching experience on perceptions of AI's benefits and challenges. Where significant differences were detected, Tukey's HSD post hoc tests identified specific group contrasts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results:

This section presents the findings about the four research questions, using descriptive and inferential statistics.

4.1 Perceived Benefits of AI Applications

To address the first research question (i.e., *What perspectives do Iranian EFL instructors have on the benefits of using AI applications in the classroom?)*, mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for each benefit domain.

Table 2. Perceptions of AI Benefits

Domain	Mean	SD	Level	Rank
Personalized Feedback & Adaptive Learning	4.07	0.56	High	1
Language Acquisition Enhancement	3.85	0.49	High	3
Engagement, Motivation & Teaching Efficiency	4.02	0.51	High	2
Overall	**3.98**	**0.32**	High	—

As shown in Table 2, the data suggest that Iranian EFL instructors most strongly valued AI's ability to provide personalized feedback and adapt to learners' needs, followed closely by its role in enhancing engagement and teaching efficiency. While language acquisition support was rated slightly lower, all three domains scored in the "High" range, indicating an overall positive perception toward AI integration in EFL classrooms.

4.1.1 Personalized Feedback & Adaptive Learning

Table 3. Personalized Feedback Domain

Statement	Mean	SD	Level
AI tools can provide instant, individualized feedback on student performance	4.15	0.68	High
AI can adapt lesson content to match learners' proficiency	4.08	0.73	High
Feedback from AI helps identify specific areas for improvement	4.12	0.70	High

According to Table 3, all items in this domain scored above 4.0, highlighting strong confidence in AI's ability to tailor instruction. The slightly higher score for instant feedback suggests that instructors value AI's immediacy in correcting student errors, which can be particularly effective in language learning. Adaptivity and diagnostic feedback were also considered essential, reflecting a belief that AI can address diverse learner needs in real time.

4.1.2 Language Acquisition Enhancement

Table 4. Language Acquisition Domain

Statement	Mean	SD	Level
AI-based pronunciation practice tools (e.g., ELSA Speak) improve learners' pronunciation	3.74	0.82	High
AI-assisted grammar and vocabulary drills support language mastery	3.91	0.76	High
AI applications enhance reading comprehension and writing	3.88	0.79	High

As shown in Table 4, although all items scored in the "High" range, grammar and vocabulary improvement received the strongest support, indicating that instructors see AI as particularly effective for structured language skills. Pronunciation tools scored lower, suggesting either limited exposure to or skepticism about speech recognition accuracy in the Iranian context. Nonetheless, the results confirm that AI is perceived as a useful supplement for all core language skills.

4.1.3 Engagement, Motivation & Teaching Efficiency

Table 5. Engagement Domain

Statement	Mean	SD	Level
AI gamification features increase student motivation	4.18	0.65	High
AI tools make learning more accessible and flexible	4.05	0.69	High
AI reduces teacher workload by automating grading	3.83	0.71	High

Table 5 shows that the highest-rated item was the motivational impact of gamified learning features, underscoring the value of interactive, reward-based activities for Iranian learners. Flexibility in access also scored highly, suggesting AI's potential in overcoming geographic and scheduling barriers. The relatively lower score for workload reduction may reflect skepticism about AI's ability to fully automate grading in language courses without losing qualitative assessment depth.

4.2 Perceived Challenges of AI Applications

To answer the second research question (*What challenges do Iranian EFL instructors face when using AI applications?*), responses indicated several barriers.

Table 6. Perceptions of AI Challenges

Statement	Mean	SD	Level	Rank
High cost of AI implementation	3.94	0.77	High	1
Limited localized/culturally relevant content	3.89	0.81	High	2
Internet connectivity and technical issues	3.78	0.85	High	3
Reduced face-to-face communication opportunities	3.66	0.79	Medium	4
Data privacy concerns in AI applications	3.59	0.82	Medium	5

According to Table 6, the most pressing concern for instructors was the financial cost of AI adoption, reflecting budget constraints in Iranian higher education. The second major issue, lack of localized content, aligns with cultural adaptation challenges noted in prior regional studies. While technical issues and reduced interpersonal interaction were also noted, data privacy concerns ranked lowest, possibly due to limited awareness of AI-related privacy implications among instructors.

4.3 Effect of Teaching Experience on Perceived Benefits

To answer the third research question (*Are there statistically significant differences in Iranian EFL instructors' perceptions of AI's benefits based on teaching experience?*), A one-way ANOVA was employed to test whether teaching experience influenced perceptions of AI benefits. Results revealed a significant difference between groups ($F(2, 47) = 7.85$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 7. Benefits by Teaching Experience

Experience	Mean	SD
Less than 5 years	4.15	0.42
5–10 years	4.05	0.39
More than 10 years	3.75	0.44

As shown in Table 7, newer instructors rated AI benefits more positively than veteran educators, which may reflect greater openness to technology among younger professionals or those trained in more recent pedagogical approaches. More experienced instructors may have stronger preferences for traditional teaching methods or be less comfortable with rapid technological change. This pattern may reflect generational differences in digital literacy, where younger instructors have greater familiarity with mobile-based learning tools and perceive fewer barriers to AI integration. Conversely, more experienced instructors might express pedagogical caution due to established classroom routines and skepticism toward algorithmic feedback.

4.4 Effect of Teaching Experience on Perceived Challenges

To answer the fourth research question (*Are there statistically significant differences in Iranian EFL instructors' perceptions of AI's challenges based on teaching experience?*)**,** a separate one-way ANOVA found no statistically significant difference in perceptions of challenges based on teaching experience ($F(2, 47) = 1.42$, $p = 0.25$).
This finding suggests that obstacles to AI adoption, such as cost, localization, and infrastructure, are systemic rather than dependent on professional background. Regardless of years of service, instructors encounter similar institutional and technological barriers to effective AI integration.

Discussion:

Rather than simply reaffirming the quantitative outcomes, the findings illuminate how Iranian EFL instructors are negotiating between pedagogical innovation and systemic constraints. This duality highlights the interplay between professional readiness and institutional infrastructure in shaping instructors' attitudes toward AI adoption.

The purpose of this study was to explore Iranian EFL instructors' perceptions of AI applications in language teaching, focusing on perceived benefits, challenges, and differences based on teaching experience. The findings indicate a generally positive attitude toward AI integration, but significant barriers remain.

Benefits of AI Applications in the EFL Classroom:

The highest-rated benefit domain was Personalized Feedback and Adaptive Learning, which is consistent with the work of (Jiang, 2022) and (Akyuz, 2020), both of whom emphasized AI's capacity to tailor instruction to the unique needs of individual learners. Iranian instructors in this study valued AI's ability to provide instant, diagnostic feedback and to adjust lesson difficulty in real time. Such features are particularly relevant in Iran, where large class sizes and varying proficiency levels make individualized teaching difficult. The Engagement, Motivation, and Teaching Efficiency domain also scored highly, especially concerning gamification features and flexible access to learning. Instructors acknowledged that AI-driven activities, such as Duolingo's point system and ELSA Speak's progress tracking could improve learner motivation, an important factor in Iran's exam-oriented education culture. This finding aligns with Sumakul et al., (2022), who highlighted AI's role in sustaining learner engagement through interactive elements.

Although Language Acquisition Enhancement received the lowest of the three benefit domain scores, it still ranked within the "High" category. This suggests that instructors recognize AI's usefulness for improving grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, but may be less convinced of its impact on pronunciation training. Such reservations may stem from the limitations of AI speech recognition in accurately processing Persian-accented English, a challenge also noted by Deng and Yu (2022) in similar non-native English-speaking contexts.

Challenges of AI Applications in the EFL Classroom:

The most prominent challenge identified was the high cost of AI adoption, a concern also raised by (Abalkheel, 2021) in his examination of technology integration barriers in EFL settings. Even widely accessible tools often require paid subscriptions to unlock advanced features, which can be a significant burden for Iranian institutions and students. This piece of finding reminisces the findings of Barjesteh and Isaee (2024); Isaee and Barjesteh (2025-2026), and Marandi and Hosseini (2024). The second-highest challenge was the lack of localized or culturally relevant content, echoing the concerns of (Opyr et al., 2022), who noted that many AI-driven resources reflect Western communicative styles and cultural references. In Iran, where language teaching is often tied closely to cultural and religious contexts, such misalignment can limit adoption, as previously confirmed by Isaee and Barjesteh (2026), and Manoocherzadeh et al. (2025).

Technical barriers, such as inconsistent internet access and outdated hardware, were also reported, reflecting similar issues highlighted by Dong et al. (2021) in their study of technological readiness in education. Lower-ranked concerns, such as reduced face-to-face interaction and data privacy risks, suggest that instructors in this study prioritized logistical and pedagogical issues over ethical ones, at least at the current stage of AI adoption. These findings are also consistent with the findings of Hazaymeh et al. (2024), and Isaee et al. (2024).

From a classroom perspective, these findings suggest that AI applications are most effective when strategically integrated into daily instructional routines rather than treated as supplementary or optional tools. For example, AI-based feedback systems can be incorporated into pre-class or post-class activities to support formative assessment, allowing teachers to reserve in-class time for communicative practice and interaction. Pronunciation tools such as ELSA Speak may be used selectively for individual practice, while instructors provide contextualized feedback that AI systems cannot fully capture. Moreover, gamified AI platforms can function as motivational scaffolds, particularly in exam-oriented contexts, by sustaining learner engagement without replacing teacher-led instruction. Importantly, the identified challenges indicate that instructors require institutional guidance on how to align AI tools with curricular objectives, assessment standards, and cultural expectations, underscoring the role of pedagogical mediation in AI-supported EFL classrooms.

The Role of Teaching Experience:

The significant differences found in perceptions of AI's benefits across teaching experience groups indicate that less experienced instructors are generally more enthusiastic about integrating AI into their teaching. This observation aligns with the conclusions of Holstein et al. (2017), who argued that teachers trained in more recent pedagogical methods are more comfortable with technology integration. Conversely, more experienced instructors may prefer traditional teaching methods and be more cautious about changing established practices.

In contrast, the lack of significant differences in perceived challenges across experience levels suggests that AI adoption barriers are systemic rather than tied to individual teaching backgrounds. Whether a novice or a veteran, Iranian EFL instructors face similar infrastructural and institutional challenges to implementation. From a practical standpoint, these insights suggest that AI should be treated not as a replacement for human instruction but as a pedagogical partner. Integrating reflective teaching approaches alongside AI tools may help maintain learner motivation while preserving essential human interaction.

These findings carry broader implications for educational policy and curriculum reform. Embedding AI literacy and ethics within teacher education curricula could prepare instructors to critically evaluate AI tools rather than passively adopt them. National initiatives supporting localized AI content development would further align technological innovation with cultural and linguistic realities

Implications

These findings suggest that successful AI integration in Iranian EFL classrooms will require a multi-pronged approach. Effective implementation will depend on training and professional development through workshops that familiarize instructors with AI tools and demonstrate how to adapt them to local teaching needs. Equally important is the localization of AI content, achieved by collaborating with developers to include culturally relevant material suitable for Iranian learners. Infrastructure investment is also critical, involving expanded access to reliable internet and modern digital devices across all educational institutions. Additionally, equitable access strategies must be developed to ensure that the benefits of AI applications are available to students across different economic and geographic backgrounds. Consistent with international findings reported by Isaee and Barjesteh (2026), the present results suggest that AI tools are most pedagogically effective when used as instructional supports rather than replacements for teacher-guided interaction.

Suggestions

Given the limited body of Iran-specific studies on AI in EFL contexts, future research could focus on conducting longitudinal studies to measure the sustained impact of AI on learners' language proficiency, exploring student perspectives alongside teacher perceptions to gain a fuller understanding of adoption dynamics, investigating discipline-specific AI integration to see how AI might be adapted differently for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) versus General English courses, and comparing urban and rural institutional contexts to assess how infrastructure differences shape AI adoption and effectiveness.

Study Contributions:

This study contributes to the field of technology-enhanced language learning by providing empirical evidence on Iranian EFL instructors' perceptions of AI benefits and challenges, filling a gap in the regional literature. By including statistical comparisons across teaching experience levels, it highlights how professional background influences attitudes toward AI, underscores the importance of localization and cultural adaptation when implementing AI-based learning tools in non-Western contexts, and offers practical recommendations for policymakers and educators to enhance AI adoption in Iran's higher education sector.

CONCLUSION

This study examined Iranian EFL instructors' perceptions of artificial intelligence applications in English language teaching, focusing on perceived benefits, challenges, and differences based on teaching experience. The results indicate that instructors generally hold positive views toward AI, particularly in its capacity to provide personalized feedback, enhance learner engagement, and improve teaching efficiency. Applications such as Duolingo and ELSA Speak were seen as valuable supplements to classroom instruction, offering adaptive learning paths and real-time feedback that can address diverse student needs. However, the study also revealed notable barriers, including high implementation costs, limited culturally relevant content, and technical infrastructure constraints. While less experienced instructors tended to express greater enthusiasm for AI integration, all participants, regardless of teaching experience, reported facing similar structural and logistical challenges. Overall, the findings underscore that AI integration in Iranian EFL contexts is both promising and complex. Its potential to enhance language learning outcomes is clear, but without targeted policy, infrastructure investment, and localized adaptation, its benefits may remain underutilized. Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed. First, expanding professional development opportunities through regular training sessions on AI pedagogy and tool selection, with a focus on practical classroom integration, can help instructors effectively incorporate AI (Isaee & Barjesteh, 2023). Second, localizing AI content in collaboration with developers to create culturally appropriate and linguistically relevant materials tailored to Iranian learners can address content relevance issues. Third, improving digital infrastructure by ensuring consistent internet connectivity and providing updated hardware in both urban and rural educational institutions is essential. Fourth, subsidizing access to premium AI tools through partnerships between universities and AI companies can make advanced resources more accessible. Finally, encouraging blended learning models that integrate AI tools into hybrid teaching formats can balance technology use with the human interaction necessary for communicative competence.

This study contributes to ongoing discussions about educational technology in Iran by offering empirical evidence on AI perceptions from a diverse sample of Iranian EFL instructors, providing a framework for AI adoption that balances technological innovation with cultural and infrastructural realities, and highlighting the need for systemic solutions to address cost, localization, and access barriers in AI-assisted learning. By implementing these recommendations, Iranian higher education institutions and policymakers can more effectively integrate AI into English language instruction, fostering a more engaging, personalized, and equitable learning environment.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

I am the only Author of this paper.

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