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ChatGPT's role in English language assessment: A systematic literature review

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Abstract: Due to the fast-phasing technological advancements, integrating generative artificial intelligence such as Open AI's ChatGPT into language teaching has been a topic for several studies. Considering this, the present study intended to synthesize the general findings of different studies that are focused on documenting the role of ChatGPT in English language assessment. This paper utilized a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to address the primary objective of this study. The studies analyzed in this SLR were all gathered from Google Scholar. The researcher has used the keywords "ChatGPT", "English Language Assessment", and "ChatGPT in English Language Assessment" and collected the studies which are published in the years 2023 and 2024. The findings of this SLR revealed that ChatGPT brings convenience to both language teachers and students in terms of language assessment by providing personalized feedback and assistance in the formulation and administration of formative and summative assessments. However, these roles pose a threat to the authenticity of the students' language outputs. These results make it safe to infer that there is a need for the development of guidelines about the integration of ChatGPT in language learning.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), ChatGPT, English language, Language assessment, Language learning, Language teaching

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1. Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one of the fastest-growing technological advancements today. An increasing reliance on AI has been observed due to the overwhelming number of tasks that a person needs to settle every day (Rao et al., 2021). In 2004, the term "Artificial Intelligence" or AI was defined by John McCarthy. According to him, AI is a "science and engineering of making intelligent machines" that can "stimulate" the human mind. It was also highlighted that the purpose of the invention of AI is to make people's lives easier by solving some of their problems. McCarthy's definition of AI has been justified after its years of advancements. AI has now been integrated into almost every aspect of a person's daily life, including the education sector, specifically in English Language Teaching (ELT).

1.1. AI integration in planning an ELT classroom

AI tools are perceived to be an advantage in planning an English language lesson, according to some English teachers. According to Tolstykh and Oshchepkova (2024), AI tools such as Learnt.ai, Teachology.ai, and MagicSchool.ai help during the planning stage of language teaching, for they can provide personalized instruction, which helps the language teacher to have a language lesson plan tailored to his/her teaching personality and strategy. These results were backed by the study of Bekou (2024), which highlighted that language teachers have perceived AI as an effective aid in planning a language lesson since it can "optimize" its implementation by providing activities tailored to the level and needs of the language learners. Due to AI's promising features, Zhang et al. (2023) have proposed the integration of AI from planning to the execution of the lesson in a language classroom.

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1.2. AI integration in English language teaching

Various studies have proven the advantages and disadvantages of the integration of AI in a language classroom. According to the study of Shaikh et al. (2023), the assistance of AI in a language classroom is an effective inclusion in the language learning of the students. This paper specified that artificial intelligence, such as ChatGPT, is easily accessible to learners who consider it a platform that can improve their vocabulary and grammatical competencies. This agrees with the paper of Isaiah (2023), which proved that students' vocabulary development depends on the level of language exposure. Furthermore, these results were supported by the paper of Font de la Vall and Araya (2023), which mentioned that one of the benefits of integrating AI in language learning is the time being saved in learning language concepts because of the assistance of AI. Elaborately, this leads to faster enhancement of the students' language skills. A literature review written by Rusmiyanto et al. (2023) specified the previously mentioned result and discussed that artificial intelligence has the potential to immensely improve the communicative skills of language learners due to AI's provision of a "personalized" and "interactive" language learning environment.

1.3. Implications of AI in a language classroom

The integration of AI in the pedagogical construct of English language education poses ethical issues for both language teachers and learners. It was proven in the paper of Dakakni and Safa (2023) that there are students who unethically use AI to help them with the language tasks assigned to them. With this, it was argued that language teachers play a pivotal role in supervising the students' utilization of AI in aid of their language learning. Additionally, it is asserted that AI must be a "complementary tool" and not a "replacement" for human interaction (Dakakni & Safa, 2023; Moybeka et al., 2023). Despite the ethical issues of AI in language learning, teachers still expressed their openness towards the potential of AI as an aid to language learning. According to the language teachers, a few of the possible solutions to this problem are to train the language learners on the ethical utilization of AI in their language learning and for them to function as the regulators of the language learning process (Aljabr & Hassan Al-Ahdal, 2024).

1.4. Integration of AI in the Philippine language classroom

A literature review by Dalan (2023) confirmed that there has been a growing number of schools that slowly integrating the potential of AI in their language classrooms. Although it was also mentioned that there is still a need to develop a localized approach to integrating AI in the language classrooms of the Philippines, this is one of the ways to maximize the potential of AI integration in the language classroom. This is supported by the study of Javier and Moorhouse (2023), which stated that generative AI such as ChatGPT has the potential to aid the improvement of students in English as their second language since it can provide and maintain an interaction by taking the role of being an "interlocutor". In terms of the Filipino English teachers' perspective, they have perceived generative AI as a technological advancement that can bring several benefits to the students such as "translation and language comprehension support, conversational practice and language development, access to information and cultural understanding", but there is also a need to take note that this may also bring some shortcomings such as "cheating and plagiarism, lack contextual understanding and nuance, reliability and accuracy of information" (Mabuan, 2024).

2. Research gap

As far as the reviewed related literature is concerned, it is confirmed that the integration of generative AI, such as ChatGPT, is both advantageous and disadvantageous to the language learning of the students. It is also observed that the literature cited is focused on the implications of artificial intelligence in the planning and execution of a language lesson. With this, the researcher is raising a curiosity to inquire what the existing knowledge has to say about the role of AI in English language assessment. The reviewed related literature proved the need to address the gap observed by the researcher. This paper is believed to be beneficial to English language learners and teachers, curriculum developers, and school administrators. The students may find this beneficial because this paper contains the possible functions of ChatGPT in aiding their second language learning. On the other hand, English teachers will also benefit from this study, for this research may be used by them as their reference in integrating ChatGPT into their language assessments in a contextualized and culturally sensitive manner. This study will also be a good reference for curriculum developers if the Philippines happens to fully embrace the support that generative AI can provide to English language assessment. Lastly, school administrators may use this study as their basis for implementing an AI-assisted language classroom.

3. Statement of the problem

This paper is aimed at synthesizing the results of existing research focused on the role of ChatGPT in English language assessment. Specifically, this study answered the following question:

1. What role does ChatGPT play in a classroom-based English language assessment according to the existing studies?

4. Theoretical framework

Based on the variables presented in the preliminary portions of this paper, it is argued that this literature review is guided by Thomas and Harden's (2008, as cited by Xiao & Watson, 2017) *Thematic Synthesis*. This process aims to extract themes from the related studies included in the review. These themes are clustered and will be categorized by

formulating "analytical" themes. Therefore, this model views related studies as a research corpus that will be used to create a synthesized result based on different related studies. Furthermore, this theoretical framework is considered aligned with the primary objective of this paper, which is to synthesize existing studies focused on the role of ChatGPT in English language assessment.

5. Research methodology

To meet the primary objective of the present study, which is to analyze and describe the role of ChatGPT in language assessment by consulting the existing research related to it, this paper employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) as this paper's research methodology. SLR is defined as a research methodology that uses database searches of related studies in which results are going to be synthesized to provide an objective discussion of a specific research topic (SciELO, 2007; Nightingale, 2009). Through SLR, the general results of the specified studies will be synthesized to shed light on the role of ChatGPT in English language assessment.

5.1. Sampling technique

In distinguishing the research articles included in this study, a purposive sampling was employed by the researcher. According to Campbell et al. (2020), purposive sampling is a sampling method that allows the researcher to choose the research corpus that will appropriately correspond to the curiosity of the present study. This proves that purposive sampling is the most suited sampling method to be applied for this research. Purposive sampling provides certainty that the research papers scrutinized in this systematic literature review correspond to the problem statement of this study. The research papers included in this paper were all extracted from Google Scholar, a search engine of scholarly articles developed by Google. The research articles that served as the corpus of this study were chosen based on their relevance to the objective of the present study. The research papers analyzed in this study were published in the years 2023 and 2024. Collectively, eight (8) research papers were scrutinized to address the general objective of this paper.

5.2. Data gathering procedure

As specified, the selection of the present study's research corpus is guided by the principle of purposive sampling. All research articles, which served as the research corpus, were searched through Google Scholar. The researcher used the prompts "ChatGPT", "English Language Assessment", and "ChatGPT in English Language Assessment" to search for research articles that could potentially be included in the study. The search results of the specified prompts were filtered using a set of criteria. The first criterion considered by the researcher is the year of publication. Only those research articles published in 2023 and 2024 were included in this study. Second, the research articles must be written in the Introduction, Methodology, Results, and Discussion (IMRD) format. Third, the research articles must be published in English. Lastly, the research articles should discuss findings and conclusions. To clarify, the present study disregarded the research methodology used in each research article. This means that this paper analyzed research articles that utilized qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methodologies.

5.3. Data analysis

The main objective of this paper is to describe and analyze the role of ChatGPT in English language assessment through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). The data for this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) were analyzed through the lens of a narrative synthesis since the included studies are diverse in terms of objectives, methodology, research design, and findings. A thematic analysis was also applied to determine the underlying patterns in the results of the research articles analyzed. During the thematic analysis, the coding cycle of Strauss and Corbin (1990) was utilized. Specifically, this coding cycle followed three steps: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding, the first step of the coding cycle utilized to separate the results of the research articles analyzed using "codes" that will categorize the results based on their similarities. The next step, axial coding, is done to investigate and draw the relationship between the codes and join them to a broader category. Lastly, selective coding is done by analyzing the sorted data. The researcher retained sufficient data and omitted the insufficient data. After this, the researcher drew the emerging themes that will address the research questions specified in this study (Williams & Moser, 2019).

5.4. Ethical considerations

The present study adhered to the ethical standards of research by ensuring that the research articles analyzed were used solely for academic purposes. All studies included in this review are sourced from publicly available databases, ensuring this study's compliance with intellectual property rights. All sources are properly cited to avoid plagiarism and maintain the highest degree of academic integrity. Bias is also minimized through a clearly defined inclusion criterion.

6. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents and discusses the general findings, conclusions, and recommendations in line with the objective of the present study. Also, this chapter attempted to answer the research questions specified in this paper.

6.1. Role of ChatGPT in English language assessment

Based on the table presented below, it is observed that the research articles analyzed in this study all agree that ChatGPT poses a huge positive impact on the language learning of the students, specifically in its role in the instructional assessment of their language proficiency (Ma et al., 2024; Nguyen, 2023). As stated in the study of Prasetya & Syarif (2023), ChatGPT has heavily impacted their self-assessment since it helps them to deepen their understanding of "grammar rules, vocabulary usage, and sentence structures." This is further supported by the study of Gabelaia et al. (2024). This paper highlighted that teachers supported the potential benefits of integrating ChatGPT into language learning due to its provision of personalized learning, which can lead to a more efficient language assessment. These results are claimed to be the predicting factors for the students to be more engaged and motivated in their language learning since ChatGPT provides positive reinforcement due to its personalized feedback (Prasetya & Syarif, 2023; Japoshvili-Ghvinashvili & Suleman, 2023). The possible reason for this is due to the discovery that ChatGPT's feedback aligns with human feedback (Koraishi, 2024). However, concerns are raised by English teachers related to the ethical integration of ChatGPT into language learning. They assert that this integration must have proper guidelines for its ethical use. This is due to the potential that language learners might "over-depend" on ChatGPT, which may compromise the authenticity of their language outputs (Yen et al., 2024; Zaiarna et al., 2024).

Table 1: Systematic literature review

No.	Author(s) and Year	Journal	ematic literature review Sample Findings
1	Prasetya & Syarif (2023)	Voices of English Language Society, 7(3), 402-415	"Student's improvement in language and self-assessment consistency were shown to be significantly impacted by the individualized feedback they received via ChatGPT. Integrating ChatGPT in self-directed learning contributes to developing English language skills. The results indicate that personalized feedback helps students refine their language accuracy, deepen their understanding of grammar rules, and improve their proficiency in vocabulary usage and sentence structures."
2	Ma et al. (2024)	Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence, 7, 1- 10	"The results reveal ChatGPT's important role in facilitating language teaching across a full lesson cycle, including teaching material preparation before instruction, assisting teaching activities and conducting formative assessment (e.g., designing comprehension quiz for a reading text) during instruction, and provision of feedback, promotion of student use of ChatGPT as a self-learning tool/assistant, and conducting summative assessment at the end of instruction."
3	Japoshvili-Ghvinashvili & Suleman (2023)	Pakistan Journal of Multidisciplinary Innovation (PJMI), 2(1), 24-35	"The use of ChatGPT in teaching and learning can provide learners with personalized, engaging, and meaningful learning experiences that enhance their language skills and motivation. By leveraging the potential of ChatGPT in this way, educators can support learners in achieving their learning goals and developing the skills they need to succeed in the 21st century."
4	Gabelaia et al. (2024)	Artificial Intelligence for Human-Technologies Economy Sustainable Development, 23-25	"Several teachers strongly supported AI and Chat GPT integration, mentioning benefits such as personalized learning experiences and efficient assessment practices."
5	Yen et al. (2024)	Atlantis Highlights in Social Sciences, Education and Humanities, 7-21	"A substantial majority of participants (n=12 out of 15) highlighted assessment concerns with the inclusion of ChatGPT in the language education paradigm. The primary issue was the potential for students to over-depend on the tool, possibly hindering genuine language proficiency and complicating the assessment procedure."
6	Koraishi (2024)	Language Teaching Research Quarterly, 43, 22-42	"The findings of this study suggest that OpenAI's ChatGPT 4 exhibits a significant degree of alignment with human raters when grading Task 2 of the IELTS exam. Notably, the identical mean grades assigned by both ChatGPT and human assessors indicate a potential for AI models in educational assessment."
7	Nguyen (2023)	Proceedings of the AsiaCALL International Conference, 4, 104–115	"ChatGPT has been utilized in two main aspects of test design investigated in this study. The first one is working with input texts, covering both generating new texts and editing existing ones. The second factor is item composition with a number of suggested question types."
8	Zaiarna et al. (2024)	Information Technologies and Learning Tools, 102(4), 176-191	"Some educators acknowledge the potential benefits of using ChatGPT for assessment, such as generating exercises and saving time in content development. However, there is variability in the frequency of use, with some not using it regularly. Concerns are also raised regarding the accuracy of exercises generated by ChatGPT, particularly for training vocabulary."

After the thematic analysis done by the researcher under the spectrum of systematic literature review, three (3) emerging themes are observed in the studies presented above in line with the role of ChatGPT in English language assessment. These are providing personalized feedback, aiding the formulation and administration of instructional assessments, and raising ethical concerns for English language assessment.

Theme 1: ChatGPT can provide personalized feedback

Several research studies included in this study agree that the self-assessment of language learners has improved drastically due to the personalized, interactive, and real-time feedback that ChatGPT can provide to the students. Prasetya and Syariff (2023) revealed that ChatGPT's personalized feedback has a remarkable impact on the language skills of the students as reflected in their post-test scores. Specifically, ChatGPT's interactive feedback heavily impacted their "grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and overall proficiency." This proves that ChatGPT's personalized feedback can be used primarily in assessing students' speaking and writing skills (Japoshvili-Ghvinashvili & Suleman, 2023; Ma et al., 2024). It is observed that the language learning motivation of the students has increased due to the interactive feedback provided by ChatGPT. The language learners mentioned that this feature of ChatGPT has made a "fun and interactive" language learning environment for them (Gabelaia et al., 2024).

The papers of Koraishi (2024) and Nguyen and Tran (2023) state that the assessment provided by ChatGPT to the students' writing skills exhibits a noticeable resemblance to the human raters' assessment. This proves that ChatGPT is capable of providing reliable language-related feedback that imitates human feedback (Xiao & Zhi, 2023), leading to an engaging and personalized learning experience, which resulted in increased language learning motivation of the students.

Theme 2: ChatGPT can aid in the formulation and administration of instructional assessments

The scrutiny of the research articles revealed that ChatGPT is used to support the language assessment of the students by maximizing two functions. Nguyen (2023) explained that ChatGPT is capable of producing and editing text inputs. Also, ChatGPT can be used to assist a language teacher in crafting language test questions. Specifically, Ma et al. (2024) revealed that ChatGPT has efficiently assisted language teachers in making formative and summative language assessments. Elaborately, this study has documented that language teachers maximize the assistance provided by ChatGPT in creating reading comprehension questions, which enables the teachers to oversee the language progress of the students. Japoshvili-Ghvinashvili and Suleman (2023) highlighted in their study that ChatGPT can assist in the creation of communicative activities. These activities helped motivate the learners to engage in a conversational application of the language concepts discussed (Yıldız, 2023). The study of Japoshvili-Ghvinashvili and Suleman (2023) concluded that ChatGPT can make noticeable changes in the language classrooms by making language assessments more engaging and fun by generating "gamified" language activities.

Ma et al. (2024) explained that designing a language summative assessment can also be aided by ChatGPT. According to Nguyen (2023), open-ended, multiple-choice, true or false, and gap-filling questions are a few of the text-generating features of ChatGPT. In addition, the same study revealed that ChatGPT can also produce reading passages that can be useful in reading comprehension assessments. The language teachers expressed their appreciation for the effectiveness of the assessment items produced by ChatGPT (Shin & Lee, 2023). However, concerns were also raised regarding the multiple-choice questions generated by this AI. The teachers expressed that the distractors generated by ChatGPT are not enough to discriminate against the test takers. Despite this, these results revealed that integrating ChatGPT into language teaching and learning can bridge the gap between instructional planning, execution, and assessment. Therefore, it will allow English teachers to play their role as facilitators of English language learning more effectively.

Theme 3: ChatGPT poses ethical concerns for English language assessment

Several English teachers, although they acknowledge the potential benefits of integrating ChatGPT into language teaching and learning, have expressed some ethical concerns related to this idea. According to the study of Yen et al. (2024), there is a chance that students will over-depend on ChatGPT, which can compromise the authenticity of their language outputs. Next, equity is also viewed as an ethical issue in this integration. According to the English teachers, some students are incapable of accessing ChatGPT after school hours. This means that English learners might have diverse exposure to this integration (Vaccino-Salvadore, 2023). Lastly, data privacy is one of the dominating ethical concerns of English teachers. According to them, the personal data that was collected while the students use the aid of ChatGPT for their language learning might be used against them, compromising the data privacy rights of each student (Zhou et al., 2024).

These ethical concerns raised by the English teachers led the suggestions of pieces of training for students and teachers regarding the ethical integration of ChatGPT into language learning and teaching. According to the paper of Zaiarna et al. (2024), the English teachers specified that this training must delve into structured guidelines on how to ethically integrate ChatGPT into language teaching, specifically in language assessment construction. Elaborately, these guidelines may focus on "clarity on task design, alignment with curriculum objectives, and effective implementation strategies." These results make it safe to infer that the potential convenience that the integration of ChatGPT in English language assessment may bring to both English teachers and students could be misused and abused without clear guidelines that provide boundaries to both English teachers and learners (Rane et al., 2023).

7. Recommendations

Based on the analysis, it is proven that ChatGPT brings several advantages to both language teachers and students as far as language teaching and learning are concerned. Thus, the researcher recommends that the curriculum developers in the Philippines consider integrating ChatGPT into their language classrooms and speech laboratories. This

integration must come with the development of guidelines for the ethical utilization of ChatGPT in our language classrooms. The colleges, universities, and education departments in the Philippines are also recommended to spearhead training for their language teachers and professors concerning the integration of ChatGPT into language teaching and assessment. Future researchers are recommended to explore further this topic, focusing on ChatGPT's role in English language learning. Dwelling on the student's perspective on this research topic will further contribute to the development of guidelines for the integration of ChatGPT into language teaching and learning.

8. Contributions of the study

The present study contributes a significant perspective to the discipline of language teaching and learning. Through this study, an awareness will be raised towards both language teachers and learners about the positive and convenient influence of ChatGPT in crafting and responding to language assessments. Also, this paper helps in strengthening the concern raised about the ethical issues of integrating ChatGPT into language pedagogy. Furthermore, this paper evidenced the need for language teachers to undergo a series of training that will pedagogically equip them with this integration. Also, educational departments and institutions may consider the results of this study in crafting their guidelines concerning the appropriate use of ChatGPT in language assessments. Generally, this study contributes a practical perspective in optimizing the integration of ChatGPT towards language teaching and learning.

9. Implications of the study

The present study poses implications for the theoretical foundations of language acquisition and learning. Elaborately, this study suggests a new perspective to the existing language acquisition theories, such as the Sociocultural theory by Vygotsky (1978) and the Input Hypothesis by Krashen (1977). Vygotsky (1978), through the words of Alkhudiry (2022), argued that language acquisition is heavily impacted by society. This means that language acquisition effectively happens if the language learner engages in a rich interaction with an adult whose competency in the target language is higher than the learner's. ChatGPT's capacity to provide "interactive dialogue simulations" gives convenience to both language learners and teachers (Kartal, 2023). However, this poses a question about whether a combination of generative AI and human interaction can better aid language acquisition than what Sociocultural theory suggests, which is human interaction alone. This study also highlighted the capability of ChatGPT to generate text inputs. Therefore, the potential of integrating ChatGPT in the language classrooms proves the developing relevance of Krashen's (1997) Input Hypothesis. This theory, as paraphrased by Gong (2023), argues that language acquisition will be amplified through a "comprehensible input," which means that the inputs consumed by a language learner must at least one level higher than the current level of the student.

10. Limitations of the study

This study is limited only to the role of ChatGPT in English language assessment since most of the existing studies related to ChatGPT and language learning are focused on the teaching side of this topic. There are a few existing studies that are aimed at documenting its role in English language assessment, which the researcher intends to synthesize as reflected in the general objective of this paper.

11. Conclusion

Through existing studies related to the objective of this paper, this systematic literature review is materialized to provide a comprehensive documentation of the role of ChatGPT in English language assessment. The analysis revealed that ChatGPT plays a significant role in assisting language teachers in crafting their formative and summative assessments. In terms of formative assessments, ChatGPT can make language learning motivating by generating fun and engaging gamified language activities (Slamet, 2024). In addition, ChatGPT can elevate the exposure of the learners to their target language by generating conversational activities. This feature gives the students more opportunities to utilize and practice their target language, aligned with the competencies that need to be evaluated.

ChatGPT can also generate different forms of language assessments that complement the language objectives of the students. This can help language teachers in crafting diverse language tests that can be administered during summative assessments. The concluded role of ChatGPT in English language assessment could bring huge convenience to both English teachers and students. ChatGPT can also be considered as an integration that can elevate the language exposure of the students, leading to an increase in their English proficiency (Niyozov et al., 2023). However, this potential should be harnessed in moderation, for it may affect the academic integrity and honesty of students if they have too much dependence on ChatGPT when to their language assessments. This may heavily affect the originality and creativity of the students when it comes to the generation of language outputs.

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