Integrating Artificial Intelligence into EFL Classrooms: The role of Generative AI in enhancing feedback quality

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The rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its growing popularity, including in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, underscore the need to conduct research in this field. One area of application of AI in EFL is the generation of feedback on learners' output. According to Schluer (2022: 16), a large and at times contradictory body of research on feedback in language education distinguishes three primary strands of inquiry: feedback as reinforcement, feedback as information transmission and the most current view of feedback as co-constructive dialogue. The latter can be defined as a reciprocal exchange of information that individuals can use to enhance their performance and guide their learning (Schluer, 2022: 16) and encompasses various types of feedback such as for example corrective feedback that specifically targets learners' language errors (cf. Ellis, 2009), formative feedback provided at various times during the learning process that is intended to assist and enhance learners' performance (cf. Shute, 2008) as well as scaffolded feedback building on the broader concept scaffolding where a given support is gradually reduced over time and enables a learner to complete a task or reach a goal they could not have achieved on their own (cf. Wood, 1976).

While corrective and formative feedback generated by Generative AI, such as ChatGPT, on writing proficiency in EFL Classroom has been studied (e.g., Guo & Wang, 2024; Polakova & Ivenz, 2024), its effects on other competencies — such as for example speaking or reading skills – is still underexplored. Recent studies explored scaffolded feedback using ChatGPT in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) contexts (e.g., Han & Li, 2024; Yan, 2024) but this kind of research is still limited in scope, focusing mainly on learners' perspectives through interviews, providing no comparative analysis of peer-generated versus AI-generated scaffolded feedback and therefore offer insufficient insights into the extent to which ChatGPT can support language learning (e.g., Solovey, 2024; Zapata et al., 2025). To address this research gap, the project aims to answer the following research questions:

1) What are the differences in type and distribution of feedback provided by ChatGPT versus that from peers?
2) How do learners perceive feedback provided by ChatGPT compared to feedback from peers?
3) To what extend do learners operationalize feedback provided by ChatGPT compared to feedback from peers?

This study will employ a mixed-methods experimental design to explore the role of ChatGPT in supporting language learning tasks. Participants will be divided into pairs. To answer RQ1, each pair of participants will complete various language tasks, such as writing assignments and conversational exercises, in two conditions: in peer feedback sessions, they will collaborate and review each other's work; in ChatGPT feedback sessions, they will complete the same tasks with feedback generated by ChatGPT. To address RQ2, the study will include semi-structured interviews conducted at multiple stages of the project to explore how learners perceive the feedback they receive. Additionally, to answer RQ3, the revised output following the various kinds of feedback will be to assessed in terms of the extent to which learners incorporated the provided feedback. The evaluation of the revised learner outputs will be informed by already existing feedback frameworks (e.g. Hattie & Timperley, 2007). The qualitative data collected will be recorded and transcribed (if needed) and then analysed using qualitative content analysis (Mayring and Fenzl, 2014).

The study aims to offer insights into the ability of GenAI to support second language development as well as its potential to enhance peer feedback in language learning. It seeks to contribute practical implications for EFL teachers to improve classroom feedback practices.

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