

Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education: Teachers' Perspective

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Abstract

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) has become an innovative tool for reshaping educational practices, with ChatGPT emerging as one of the most influential technologies. This technological online instrument, created by OpenAI, offers continuous and interactive learning support, fostering personalized education outside traditional classroom settings. Its integration into educational practices has been met with both enthusiasm and concern, especially regarding issues like AI-assisted academic dishonesty and plagiarism. While an increasing number of existing research has highlighted students' experiences with generative chatbots, particularly ChatGPT, a notable gap remains in understanding the perceptions and needs of language instructors. This study aims to address this gap by investigating EFL (English as a Foreign Language) instructors' perspectives on the use of ChatGPT in educational settings. Specifically, it examines instructors' familiarity with the tool, their views on its role in academic integrity, and the challenges they face related to AI-assisted cheating in assignments and exams as well as instructors' experiences and strategies for detecting AI-generated content. By addressing these focal points, the study contributes to the broader conversation on digitalization within Georgian higher education, providing insights on how instructors perceive AI's role, its implications for academic practices, and the integration of digital literacy policies. Additionally, it offers practical recommendations for educators and administrators on how to manage the emerging challenges of AI-assisted education while fostering an ethical and effective learning environment.

Keywords: *AI in Georgian higher education, ChatGPT, academic dishonesty, EFL instruction.*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, educators constantly strive to enhance teaching and learning experiences by introducing innovative approaches. One such innovation is the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in education. The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) has drastically increased over the past few years. As a result, ChatGPT has emerged as one of the most prominent AI tools that has been gaining popularity in different parts of the world (Appleby, 2023). This language model, developed by OpenAI, is reshaping how students, teachers and educational institutions approach the learning and teaching process. Unlike traditional teaching methods, the use of ChatGPT allows students to receive continuous and interactive learning support outside of regular classroom hours (Luckin et al., 2016). The interactive nature of ChatGPT can enhance the learning experience by addressing individual student queries and offering a more personalized and adaptive approach to education.

However, ChatGPT has not only positive effects on education but also introduces new challenges and risks for both instructors and students. Because of its potential to be used for completing assignments and exams, there are growing concerns about AI-assisted cheating and plagiarism (Cotton et al., 2024). Against this background, it is significant to acknowledge that the new digital reality has called for revisited educational approaches and policies throughout the whole world and Georgia is no exception. Therefore, it is crucial to constantly explore common perceptions towards the use of ChatGPT in education to adjust to new occurrences and effectively manage the emerging challenges in the teaching and learning process.

Student cheating has always been a challenge that instructors have faced for decades. With technological advancements new methods of cheating have been introduced, making cheating both more effective and difficult to detect (Denkin, 2024). The latest controversial development in this area is Generative AI, a field within computer science, which focuses on developing systems capable of mimicking human cognitive abilities such as reasoning and self-correction (Kok et al., 2002). The tool can effectively be used to generate texts for various purposes, including analyzing articles and literary pieces, paraphrasing, making presentations, generating ideas and writing academic papers. Furthermore, it brings with it a wide range of potential advantages, along with significant challenges (Nebieridze & Jojua, 2024). While the use of Generative AI is not universally defined as cheating, it still represents an emerging issue that needs further investigation (Denkin, 2024).

Numerous studies have shown increased concerns about how AI could threaten ethical values at multiple levels—individual (safety, privacy, data protection, freedom, human dignity), societal (fairness, responsibility, transparency, AI control, civil rights, job displacement, human relationships) and environmental (natural resources, energy, pollution) (Huang et al., 2023). As a result, concerns within the academic community about the increased potential for dishonest behavior, such as plagiarism, have emerged. Recent findings show that about 70% of the university students in Georgia (TSU) use chatGPT for various purposes even if they consider using AI-based tools as some form of academic dishonesty (Nebieridze & Jojua, 2024).

Cotton, Cotton and Shipway (2024) highlight the dual nature of ChatGPT in higher education. On the one hand, the given AI tool offers benefits such as increased engagement and accessibility and, on the other hand, it also raises significant concerns about academic honesty and plagiarism. Some strategies have to be introduced and implemented by higher educational institutions in order to ensure the ethical use of AI, including policy development, training and enhanced detection methods.

One of the significant challenges with ChatGPT usage is the ability of instructors to effectively detect the AI tool being used by students. Fleckenstein et al. (2024) conducted a study on teachers' ability to detect AI-generated texts among student essays. The study has revealed that both rookie and experienced teachers struggle to identify texts generated by ChatGPT.

Against this background, it is significant to acknowledge that the new digital reality has called for revisited educational approaches and policies throughout the whole world and Georgia is no exception. Therefore, it is crucial to constantly explore common perceptions towards the use of ChatGPT in education to adjust to new occurrences and effectively manage the emerging challenges in the teaching and learning process.

So far, there is a lack of empirical research focusing specifically on language instructors' perspectives on ChatGPT and other generative chatbots, particularly within the Georgian higher education context.), exploring the effects of ChatGPT on various aspects of writing from students' perspective (Pipia & Gurgenshvili, 2024) rather than lecturers' views and expectations. There have been only few studies that explored the instructors' perspectives on the integration and efficacy of AI tools in enhancing mainly their writing abilities (Merkviladze, 2024).

Accordingly, this study aims to address this gap by investigating language instructors' perceptions of ChatGPT.

Correspondingly, the paper will a) identify the levels of EFL instructors' awareness of ChatGPT and its use in the educational context; b) find out the instructors' position on the use of ChatGPT as a certain form of academic dishonesty; c) explore the most common types of academic assignments in which students have been caught using ChatGPT; d) learn about the instructors' personal experience and ways of coping with AI-generated content; ultimately, based on the analysis of the study results speculate on the key areas of concern for educators as well as contribute to the ongoing process of digitalization in Georgian educational space

RESEARCH METHODS

Initially, the current study employed a quantitative research methodology, in particular survey questionnaires to identify teachers' views on the impact of AI in language courses. This method was selected for its ability to systematically collect data and provide teachers' perspectives on AI in language education. At the data analysis stage, the study utilized qualitative research elements to complement the quantitative findings. This approach was adopted to not only present numerical data but also highlight the hypothesized relationships and patterns between various variables (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

For this study purposive sampling technique was used to select the specific respondents. This method involves choosing individuals who possess specific characteristics or qualities relevant to the research topic (Robinson, 2014). The sample consisted of 16 participants, a target group of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) instructors teaching at the undergraduate level at Tbilisi State University, all of them having an experience of 3+ years of teaching English.

The research instrument was a survey questionnaire that was created using Google Forms and shared with the target group of instructors online using messenger chats and personal emails. The respondents were informed in advance that the survey was anonymous, thus encouraging them to provide honest responses.

The survey included 12 questions written in English, with the majority being multiple-choice, where the options were thoughtfully selected to align with the research objectives. In addition to the multiple-choice questions, two open-ended questions were incorporated to gather further information and qualitative data. Among the asked questions, the following were chosen to address our research goals and objectives:

1. Your age
2. Have you heard of ChatGPT?
3. Have you caught your student using ChatGPT during your course?
4. If the answer is yes, please, specify the type of assignment for which ChatGPT was used
5. If other, please specify which
6. Did you use any software program for checking the AI-generated content?
7. If yes, please specify which
8. Using ChatGPT is a certain form of academic dishonesty
9. Do you think it is ethical to use ChatGPT in education?
10. Have you mentioned some ethical issues with using ChatGPT at any stage of your class?
11. Do you have any notes about the use of ChatGPT in your syllabus?
12. If the answer is "No", do you think adding a note about academic dishonesty in relation to ChatGPT usage will prevent students from using it during class?

Using a survey questionnaire as a data collection tool enables researchers to obtain empirical data directly from respondents' answers. While instructors were notified in advance that the survey would be anonymous, there is still a chance that some may not have answered truthfully due to concerns about privacy. Furthermore, only 16 EFL instructors completed the questionnaire, which may not fully reflect the wider context.

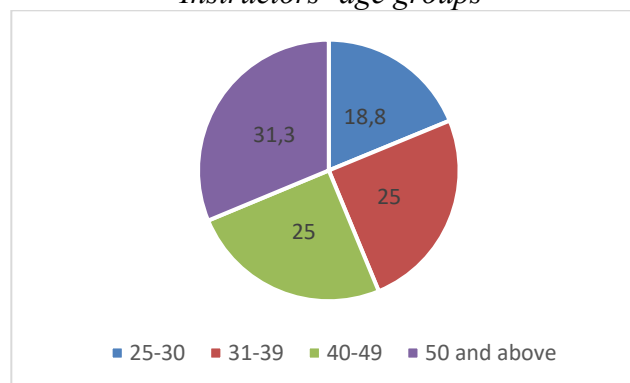
RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A survey was conducted to gather insights from 16 higher education instructors regarding their perspectives on the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) in language courses. The goal was to collect data on several key aspects, including the instructors' familiarity with AI tools, their views on its usage by students as well as their concerns about ethical issues.

The study initially tried to identify the respondents' demographic characteristics, in particular, the age of EFL instructors. The data in figure 1 below show the age of the participants.

Figure 1

Instructors' age groups

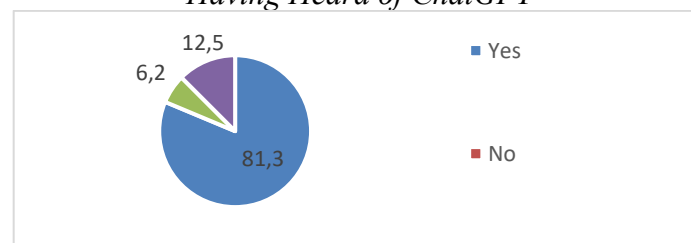


In our study, we attempted to represent various age groups (25-30, 31-39, 40-49, 50 and above) in order to explore if there was any noticeable correlation between the age of EFL instructors and their familiarity or expertise with ChatGPT-related issues. In total, 16 EFL instructors engaged in the survey and the age groups were represented in a fairly balanced way. Correspondingly, the instructors who have participated in the survey represented all four age groups more or less evenly: 18.8% (n = 3) were between the ages of 25-30, 25-25% (n=4) 31-39 and 40-49 age groups respectively, and a slight majority, 31.3% (n=5) were 50 and above.

As for familiarity with the AI tool (ChatGPT), the findings reveal that a substantial portion of the respondents (81.3%, n=13) reported having heard of ChatGPT. 12.5 % (n=2) have heard about ChatGPT, but were not sure how exactly it worked. 6.3% (n=1) have heard about ChatGPT, but were not sure exactly what it was. Eventually, there was not a single person among the respondents who had not heard about the given AI tool (figure 2).

Figure 2

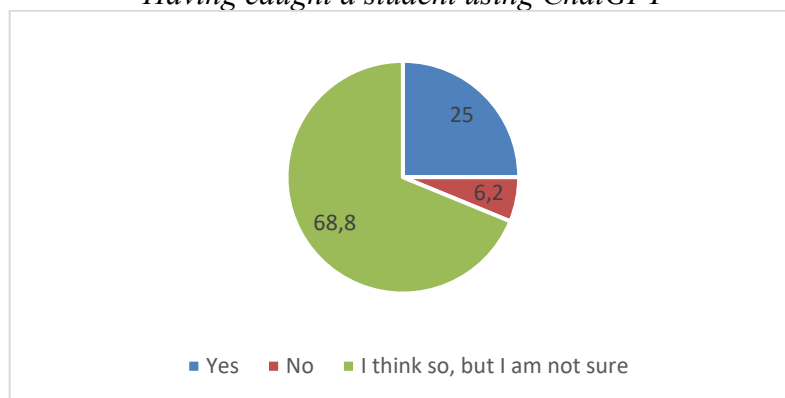
Having Heard of ChatGPT



The data analysis has revealed that respondents, across all age groups, were generally familiar with ChatGPT. However, there might be a slight tendency for older individuals (50 and above) to be less familiar with the AI tool. In particular, there was only one respondent in the survey, representing the age category 50 and above (6.3% overall and 20% within that category) who reported having heard of ChatGPT, but was uncertain about what it was. The finding can be considered as pretty expected because of the poor digital literacy they might have received within the former Soviet educational framework. In contrast, all respondents in the 40-49 age group were familiar with ChatGPT.

In addition, we tried to identify whether instructors have caught their students using ChatGPT during the course and specify the type of assignment for which ChatGPT was used (Figures 3 and 4).

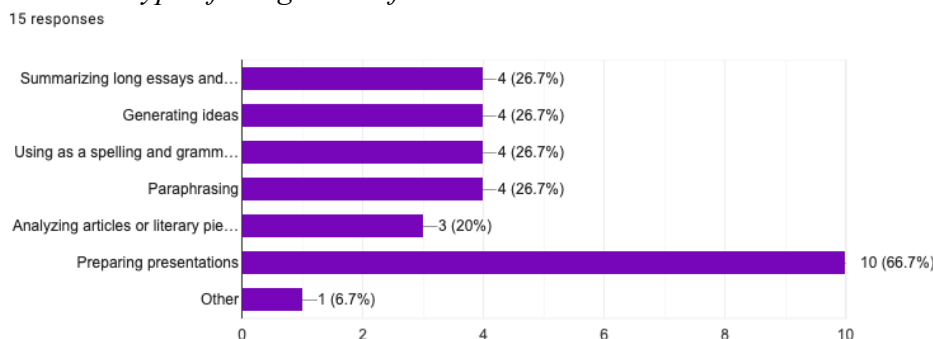
Figure 3
Having caught a student using ChatGPT



The findings from the survey provide valuable information on instructors' experiences regarding the use of ChatGPT by students during courses. According to the data presented in Figure 3 below, 25% (n=4) of respondents reported having caught their students using ChatGPT. It is noteworthy that the majority of instructors (68.8%, n=11) expressed some level of doubt concerning their students' use of ChatGPT. This suggests a widespread concern among educators, that even though students are using AI tools, it is still hard for instructors to detect it. Furthermore, only 6.3% (n=1) of respondents claimed that they had not caught or suspected their students of using ChatGPT. This implies that either a) some students are not using ChatGPT or, b) there is a lack of awareness among the instructors. However, the first assumption seems less likely because the findings from the previous research conducted among undergraduate students of the same university (TSU) within the same time frame proved otherwise (Nebieridze, & Jojua, 2024). So, there is a strong likelihood that the instructors struggle to detect the instances of AI-generated content in students' work.

As for the type of assignments/tasks for which ChatGPT was used, the survey (see figure 4 below) has revealed that from EFL instructors' perspective, students mainly used the AI tool for preparing presentations (66.7%, n=10), equal 26.7% (n=4) used ChatGPT to summarize long essays and texts, generate ideas, use as a spelling and grammar check and for paraphrasing texts. 20% (n=3) use it for analyzing articles and literary pieces and 6.7% (n=1) stated that ChatGPT was used for writing the introduction and conclusion of an essay.

Figure 4
Type of assignments for which students use ChatGPT

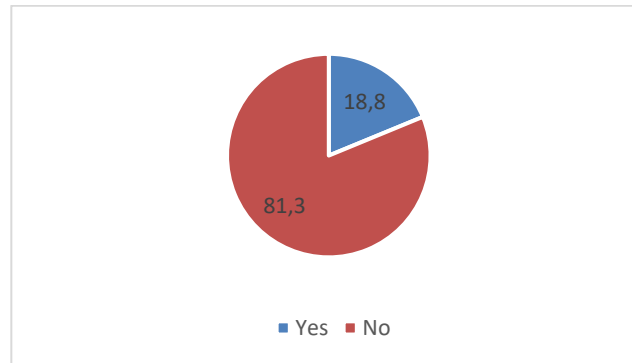


The data shows that, from instructors' perspective, ChatGPT is being used by students for various tasks in the learning process, ranging from presentation preparation and writing tasks to more analytical functions. This highlights the potential value of AI tools for students.

However, it also raises concerns about academic dishonesty once again calling for more reliable and stronger mechanisms for detecting and preventing plagiarism within academic institutions.

The questionnaire also asked instructors on whether they have used any software to check for the AI-generated content (figure 5).

Figure 5
Using AI detector software

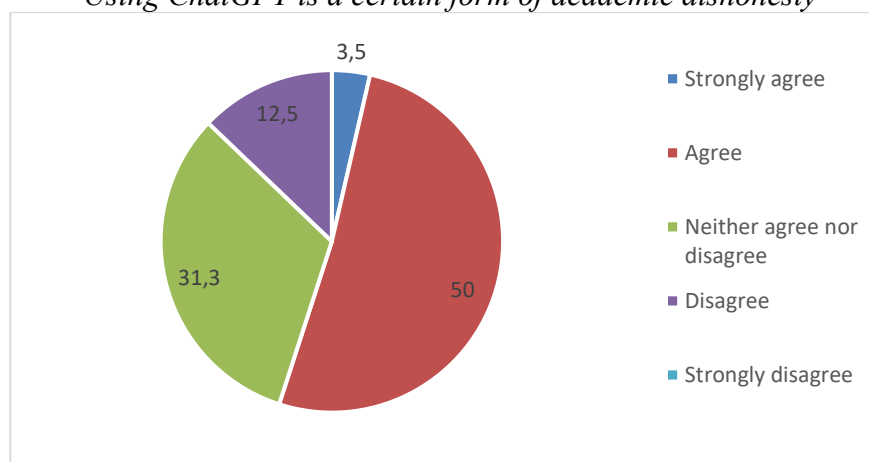


The vast majority of respondents 81.3% (n=13) admitted that they have not used any software, and only a small portion, 18.8% (n=3) have used some type of AI detector. Those instructors (18.8%, n=3) who admitted having used an AI detector then specified software programs they had used (Scribbr, Plagiarismdetector.net, GPTzero, Free Turnitin).

The results of the study show that instructors need to be educated on how to check for AI-generated content, what to look for and which software programs to incorporate in the detection process.

The survey also attempted to identify instructors' attitude towards the use of ChatGPT by students. They had to comment whether they considered the use of ChatGPT as some form of academic dishonesty (figure 6).

Figure 6
Using ChatGPT is a certain form of academic dishonesty

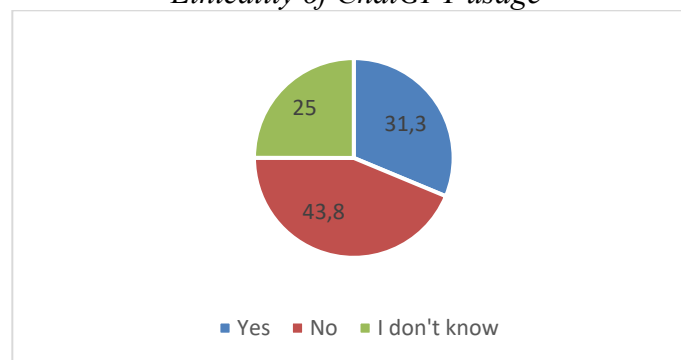


It is noteworthy that there was not a single respondent participating in the survey who strongly disagreed that using ChatGPT was some sort of academic dishonesty. Furthermore, 50% (n=8) of the instructors participating in the survey agreed that using ChatGPT is a certain form of academic dishonesty. 31.3% (n=5) could not decide, 6.3 % (n=1) strongly agreed that ChatGPT usage is academic dishonesty and only 12.5 % (n=3) disagreed (figure 6).

The study showed that most of the instructors considered the use of ChatGPT as academic misconduct more or less; however, when asked whether it was ethical to use ChatGPT in

education, beside 43.8%, (n= 7) stating that it was unethical, surprisingly, 25% (n=4) still could not decide and 31.3% (n=5) considered the use of ChatGPT in education to be ethical (Figure 7).

Figure 7
Ethicality of ChatGPT usage

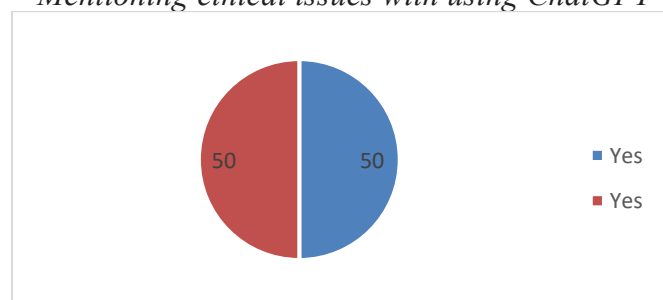


It is noteworthy that while most instructors were concerned about the potential for academic dishonesty using ChatGPT, their opinions on the ethical implications were inconsistent. The analysis of the data obtained through the survey revealed that 100% of respondents who strongly agreed (6.3%, n=1) that the usage of ChatGPT was academic dishonesty also considered it unethical to use the AI too. Additionally, out of 8 EFL instructors (50%) who agreed that using ChatGPT was academic dishonesty, a vast majority, 75% (n=6) considered the use of ChatGPT unethical, however 25% (n=2) stated that they did not know whether it was ethical or not. The respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed that using ChatGPT was academic dishonesty (31.3%, n=5) either did not know whether the usage of chatGPT was ethical or not (40%, n=2), or considered its usage ethical (60%, n=3). Eventually, 100% of respondents who disagreed that ChatGPT usage was academic dishonesty also did not consider its use in education unethical.

The findings once again highlight the need for a revisited discussion and consistency on what exactly is meant under the term “academic dishonesty and plagiarism within academia and call for clear guidelines on the institutional level.

The questionnaire also asked the respondents to reflect on whether they had mentioned some ethical issues with using ChatGPT at any stage of their class (figure 8).

Figure 8
Mentioning ethical issues with using ChatGPT



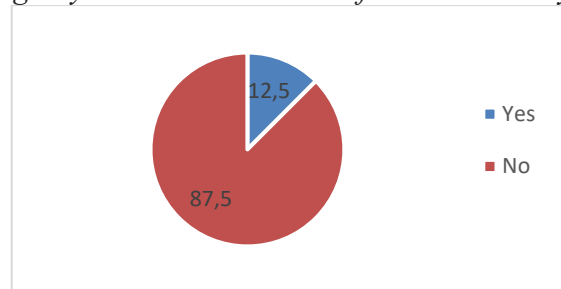
The results obtained from the survey have revealed that 50% (n=7) of EFL instructors mentioned ethical issues related with ChatGPT usage, while the remaining 50% (n=7) did not place emphasis on such issues. While half of the instructors felt the need to address the ethical issues, the other half either did not consider them as significant or have opted not to discuss them in class.

Besides discussing whether instructors had mentioned some ethical issues related to chatGPT usage in class, we also attempted to identify if EFL instructors had any notes about the use of ChatGPT in their syllabi. The data analysis has revealed that the vast majority of

respondents 87.5 % (n=14) did not have any note about the ChatGPT in the syllabus and only a small portion, 12.5 % (n=2) have added a note about academic dishonesty in relation to chatGPT usage (figure 9).

Figure 9

Having any note about the use of ChatGPT in syllabus

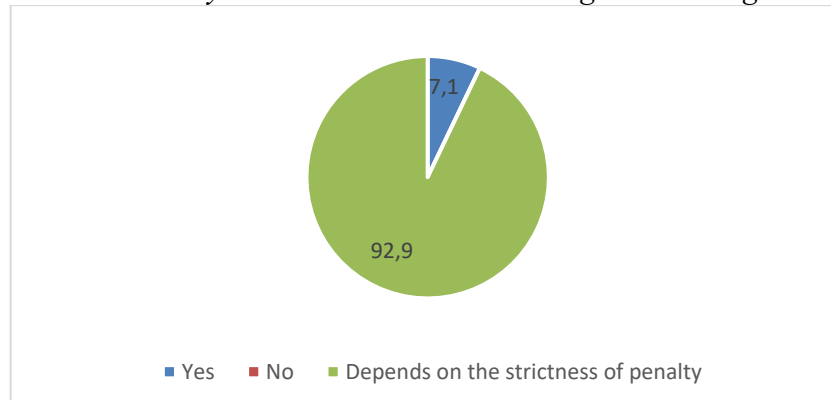


The findings suggest that despite EFL instructors' concerns about academic dishonesty or ethical issues, many instructors (87.5%, n = 14) did not include any mention of ChatGPT in their syllabi which may indicate that they have not yet formally incorporated any specific guidelines about ChatGPT. Furthermore, this could also suggest that there are no clear policies from the higher institutions regarding the AI tool usage, thus instructors are still reluctant on how to address the issue.

Those respondents who provided negative answers (87.5%, n-14) had to comment whether they thought that adding a note about academic dishonesty in relation to ChatGPT usage will prevent students from using the AI tool (figure 10).

Figure 10

Note on academic dishonesty in relation to ChatGPT usage decreasing AI tool application



Most of the survey participants, 92.9% (n=13) considered that it depends on the strictness of the penalty, whereas 7.1% (n=3) thought that it would prevent students from using ChatGPT. No one provided a negative answer

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, as the study results have demonstrated, the majority of multi-level EFL instructors teaching in Georgia encounter numerous instances of students' use of AI (ChatGPT) in the learning process, but struggle to distinguish non-human content from human reasoning which highlights the growing challenge of addressing AI tools and their impact on academic integrity. The study has also indicated that further systematic training on the issues of academic

integrity and plagiarism detection tools is essential to support instructors in understanding and preventing cheating through generative artificial intelligence.

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