

CHATGPT IN EFL READING INSTRUCTION: A NARRATIVE THEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

Nynda Eka Hamidah¹, Indah Sri Redjeki², Mohamad Sahril³

English Education Department,
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,
Universitas Ibn Khaldun Bogor

nyndaeka2@gmail.com; indahsri.redjeki@uika-bogor.ac.id; msahril@uika-bogor.ac.id

ABSTRAK

Penerapan kecerdasan buatan (AI) yang semakin luas dalam pendidikan telah menarik perhatian yang semakin besar terhadap potensi ChatGPT dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL), terutama dalam pengembangan keterampilan membaca. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mensintesis penelitian sebelumnya tentang penggunaan ChatGPT dalam pengajaran membaca EFL melalui tinjauan literatur tematik naratif. Artikel jurnal yang telah direview oleh rekan sejawat yang berkaitan dengan pemahaman membaca, pembelajaran bahasa dengan teknologi, dan penggunaan pedagogis ChatGPT dianalisis dengan memeriksa landasan teoritisnya, konteks pengajaran, pendekatan penelitian, dan temuan utama. Sintesis ini mengidentifikasi tiga tema dominan: fungsi pedagogis ChatGPT dalam mendukung aktivitas membaca (misalnya, penyederhanaan teks, penjelasan kosakata, dan pembangkitan pertanyaan pemahaman), manfaat pedagogisnya dalam meningkatkan pemahaman membaca dan keterlibatan siswa, serta tantangan terkait penggunaannya, termasuk akurasi informasi, ketergantungan berlebihan siswa, dan berkurangnya otonomi siswa. Secara keseluruhan, temuan menunjukkan bahwa ChatGPT dapat secara efektif mendukung pengajaran membaca Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) ketika diintegrasikan melalui desain pedagogis yang solid, implementasi yang dipandu guru, dan keselarasan dengan teori-teori yang telah established tentang membaca dan pembelajaran.

Kata Kunci: ChatGPT, membaca EFL, kecerdasan buatan, pemahaman membaca

ABSTRACT

The increasing application of artificial intelligence (AI) in education has attracted growing attention to the potential of ChatGPT in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), particularly in the development of reading skills. This study aims to synthesize previous research on the use of ChatGPT in EFL reading instruction through a narrative thematic literature review. Peer-reviewed journal articles related to reading comprehension, language learning with technology, and the pedagogical use of ChatGPT were analyzed by examining their theoretical foundations, teaching contexts, research approaches, and main findings. This synthesis revealed three dominant themes: the pedagogical functions of ChatGPT in supporting reading activities (e.g., text simplification, vocabulary explanation, and generation of comprehension questions), its pedagogical benefits in improving reading comprehension and student engagement, and challenges related to its use, including information accuracy, student overdependence, and reduced student autonomy. Overall, the findings suggest that ChatGPT can effectively support English as a Foreign Language (EFL) reading instruction when integrated through sound pedagogical design, teacher-guided implementation, and alignment with established theories of reading and learning.

Keyword: ChatGPT, EFL reading, artificial intelligence, reading comprehension

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental skill in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, as it plays a crucial role in developing learners' comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, and critical thinking abilities. Reading is not merely the ability to

recognize written symbols or answer text-based questions; rather, it involves complex cognitive processes such as identifying main ideas, making inferences, and constructing meaning from context (Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Snow, 2022). Despite its importance, numerous studies have reported that EFL learners continue to face difficulties in

understanding written texts effectively, particularly due to limited vocabulary knowledge, weak inferential skills, and insufficient use of appropriate reading strategies (Yusuf & Fauzan, 2016; Lestari et al., 2020)

These challenges are closely related to the instructional practices employed in reading classrooms. Previous research indicates that reading instruction in EFL contexts often remains teacher-centered and heavily dependent on textbooks, which may limit students' active engagement and fail to address diverse learning needs (Brown, 2007; Grabe & Stoller, 2011). As a result, reading activities tend to become monotonous and less meaningful for learners. This condition suggests that difficulties in EFL reading are not solely attributed to learners' linguistic competence, but also to how reading materials and activities are designed and implemented. Consequently, teachers, including pre-service English teachers, are expected to adopt more adaptive, strategic, and learner-centered approaches to reading instruction.

In response to these challenges, educational technology has increasingly been viewed as a potential means to enhance the quality of language learning. Prior studies have demonstrated that digital technology can support more flexible, personalized, and student-centered learning environments (Chapelle, 2001; Redjeki & Muhajir, 2021). The rapid development of technology has further introduced artificial intelligence (AI) into educational settings, offering new possibilities for supporting both teaching and learning processes. Rather than functioning merely as technical tools, AI-based applications have begun to play a role in facilitating cognitive and pedagogical processes in language learning.

One AI-based tool that has attracted considerable attention in recent research is ChatGPT, a generative language model capable of producing human-like responses and providing immediate linguistic support. Several studies have reported that ChatGPT can support EFL reading instruction through various functions, such as simplifying texts, explaining vocabulary, generating comprehension questions, and engaging learners in interactive dialogue to support text understanding (Zhai et al., 2024; Çelik et al., 2025 & El Hassan &

Alsawah, 2025). Other studies have emphasized its potential benefits for teachers and pre-service teachers, particularly in assisting them to design reading materials and learning activities more efficiently and adaptively (Kasneci et al., 2023; Hoang et al., 2025). Although these studies consistently highlight the pedagogical potential of ChatGPT, they differ in terms of instructional focus, learning contexts, and the pedagogical readiness of its users.

Despite the growing body of research on the use of ChatGPT in English language education, existing studies remain fragmented and tend to focus on specific language skills, such as writing, general learning support, or the broader application of AI in education (Kasneci et al., 2023; Lo et al., 2024; Zhai et al., 2024). Research that systematically synthesizes findings related to the use of ChatGPT in EFL reading instruction, particularly from pedagogical perspectives and in relation to teachers and pre-service teachers, is still limited. Therefore, this article aims to present a narrative thematic literature review that synthesizes previous studies on the use of ChatGPT in EFL reading instruction by grouping the literature into key themes, comparing similarities and differences across studies, and identifying research gaps to inform future research and instructional practices.

METHOD

This study employs a narrative thematic literature review approach, which synthesizes previous studies by grouping them into thematic categories rather than reviewing each study individually (Green et al., 2006; Snyder, 2019). This review focuses on peer-reviewed journal articles that examine the teaching of reading English as a foreign language (EFL), reading comprehension, and the pedagogical use of ChatGPT or other artificial intelligence (AI) tools. Selected studies were analyzed based on their theoretical framework, teaching context, research objectives, and key findings. Through repeated comparisons, recurring patterns, similarities, and differences between studies were identified and synthesized into key themes highlighting the pedagogical function, benefits, and challenges of integrating ChatGPT into EFL reading instruction. As this study is a literature review, journal articles serve as the primary data source and are synthesized in the following sections.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1: Pedagogical Functions of ChatGPT in EFL Reading Instruction

Reviewed studies indicate that ChatGPT is primarily used as a pedagogical tool in teaching English reading as a foreign language (EFL). Its main functions include simplifying reading texts, explaining vocabulary, generating comprehension questions, and facilitating guided interaction with reading materials. Studies by Zhai et al. (2024), Çelik et al. (2025), and El Hassan & Alsawah (2025) showed that ChatGPT helps teachers adapt texts to students' proficiency levels, allowing students to focus more on meaning construction than linguistic decoding. Through guided interaction, ChatGPT also supports students in clarifying ideas, checking understanding, and interacting more actively with the text. In this regard, ChatGPT serves as a scaffolding tool that supports reading instruction and classroom activities, rather than replacing the pedagogical role of teachers.. In this sense, ChatGPT functions as an instructional aid that supports lesson preparation and classroom activities, rather than replacing the pedagogical role of teachers. This study employed a literature review method using a narrative thematic approach, which synthesizes previous studies by organizing them into thematic categories rather than reviewing each study individually (Green et al., 2006; Snyder, 2019). This approach was applied to integrate theoretical perspectives on reading comprehension and language learning with empirical studies examining the use of ChatGPT in teaching English reading skills in EFL contexts. The data sources consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles discussing reading comprehension skills, technology-enhanced language learning, and the pedagogical use of ChatGPT or other AI-based tools in reading instruction. The selected studies were analyzed by examining their theoretical frameworks, research objectives, methodological approaches, instructional contexts, and key findings. The findings were then synthesized by identifying similarities, differences, and recurring patterns across studies to highlight dominant themes, pedagogical implications, and research gaps related to the integration of ChatGPT in EFL reading instruction. As this study was a literature review, it did not involve a population or sample; instead, journal articles served as the primary data

sources and were synthesized and discussed in the following section..

Theme 2: Pedagogical Benefits of ChatGPT for EFL Reading Comprehension

Most studies reviewed report positive impacts of ChatGPT on learners' reading comprehension and engagement. Research by Kasneci et al., (2023) and Hoang et al., (2025) shows that the use of ChatGPT supports learners in understanding both explicit and implicit information in texts through vocabulary support and guided questioning. The interactive features of ChatGPT encourage learners to actively engage with reading tasks and facilitate the development of higher-order reading skills, such as summarizing, inferencing, and critical interpretation. These findings suggest that ChatGPT can enhance EFL reading comprehension when integrated as a supplementary learning tool under appropriate teacher guidance.

Theme 3: Challenges and Pedagogical Concerns in Using ChatGPT

Despite its reported benefits, several studies highlight challenges related to the use of ChatGPT in EFL reading instruction. Common concerns include the accuracy of AI-generated responses, the risk of students' overreliance on ChatGPT, and the potential reduction of learner autonomy (Lo et al., 2024; Zhai et al., 2024). Some researchers caution that excessive dependence on AI assistance may limit students' opportunities to develop independent reading strategies. These contrasting perspectives indicate that the effectiveness of ChatGPT largely depends on teachers' pedagogical competence and instructional design rather than on the technology itself.

Overall, the literature suggests that ChatGPT offers valuable pedagogical functions and benefits for EFL reading instruction, while also presenting notable challenges that require careful consideration. However, existing studies tend to examine these aspects separately and within specific contexts. There remains a lack of narrative thematic literature reviews that synthesize pedagogical perspectives on the use of ChatGPT in EFL reading instruction, particularly from the standpoint of teachers and pre-service teachers. This gap highlights the need for further research that integrates both benefits and challenges into a

coherent pedagogical framework for the effective use of ChatGPT in EFL reading classrooms

CONCLUSION

This literature review concludes that ChatGPT has notable potential as a supportive tool in teaching English reading skills in EFL contexts. The synthesis of previous studies indicates that ChatGPT is primarily used to assist learners in understanding texts through vocabulary clarification, text simplification, generation of comprehension questions, and guided interaction. These functions align with established theories of reading comprehension that view reading as an interactive and cognitive process, as well as learning theories emphasizing scaffolding and learner support. Overall, the reviewed studies suggest that ChatGPT can enhance learners' engagement and comprehension when integrated appropriately into reading instruction.

However, this review also reveals variations in research findings regarding the effectiveness of ChatGPT. While many studies report positive outcomes, others highlight challenges such as the accuracy of AI-generated content, the potential for learner overreliance, and concerns related to learner autonomy. These differences indicate that the pedagogical effectiveness of ChatGPT is not inherent in the technology itself but depends on how it is designed, guided, and implemented within instructional practices. Therefore, ChatGPT should be positioned as a complementary instructional tool rather than a substitute for teachers or learners' cognitive processes.

Based on the findings of this literature review, several recommendations can be proposed. First, EFL teachers and pre-service teachers are encouraged to integrate ChatGPT into reading instruction in a guided and pedagogically informed manner, ensuring alignment with reading objectives and established learning theories. Clear instructional guidance and critical use of AI tools are necessary to maximize learning benefits while minimizing potential risks.

Second, teacher education programs should place greater emphasis on developing digital literacy and pedagogical competence related to AI-based tools. Preparing pre-service teachers to use ChatGPT

ethically and effectively is essential to support meaningful integration in future EFL classrooms.

Finally, future research is recommended to explore the long-term impact of ChatGPT on learners' reading development, learner autonomy, and critical reading skills. Further empirical studies focusing on specific educational levels and instructional contexts will contribute to a deeper understanding of how AI-based tools can be optimally utilized to support English reading instruction.

REFERENCES

- Bannert, M., Kasneci, E., Sessler, K., Stefan, K., Fischer, F., Gasser, U., Groh, G., Stephan, G., Poquet, O., Sailer, M., Schmidt, A., & Seidel, T. (n.d.). *ChatGPT for Good? On Opportunities and Challenges of Large Language Models for Education*. 1–13.
- Brown, H. D. (2007). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy (3rd ed.)*. Pearson Education.
- Çelik, F., Ersanlı, C. Y., & Arslanbay, G. (2025). *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning Does AI Simplification of Authentic Blog Texts Improve Reading Comprehension, Inferencing, and Anxiety? A One-Shot Intervention in Turkish EFL Context Does AI Simplification of Authentic Blog Texts Improve Reading Comprehension, Inferencing, and Anxiety? A One-Shot Intervention in Turkish EFL Context*.
- Chapelle, C. A. (2001). *Computer applications in second language acquisition: Foundations for teaching, testing, and research*.
- El Hassan & Alsalwah. (2025). *Exploring the Impact of ChatGPT on EFL Reading Practices: Opportunities and Challenges*. 13(1), 85–93.
- Fauzan, Y. &. (2016). *ISSN: 2527-8037 Proceedings of the 1 English Education International Conference (EEIC) in conjunction with the 2. 2015*, 510–514.
- Grabe & Stoller. (n.d.). *Teaching and Researching Reading*.
- Green, B. N., Johnson, C. D., & Adams, A. (2001). *Writing narrative literature reviews for peer-reviewed journals: secrets of the trade*. 101–117.
- Lestari, M. & H. (2020). *AN ANALYSIS OF*

- Students' Difficulties In Reading Comprehension*. 3(1), 43–49.
- Lo, C. K., Leung, P., Yu, H., Xu, S., Tsz, D., Ng, K., & Siu, M. (2024). Exploring the application of ChatGPT in ESL / EFL education and related research issues: a systematic review of empirical studies. *Smart Learning Environments*. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-024-00342-5>
- Phuong1, H. H., & Le Thi Ha Quynh2. (2025). High School Teachers' Perceptions Of Using Chatgpt For Designing English Reading Comprehension Tests For Tenthgrade Students. *T. 19 S. 2 (2025): (Vol. 19 No.2/2025) Tạp Chí Khoa Học Tây Nguyên (TNJoS)*.
- Redjeki, I. S., & Muhajir, R. (2021). *Gamification in EFL classroom to support teaching and learning in 21 st century*. 6(1), 68–78. <https://doi.org/10.21070/jees.v6i1.882>
- Snow, C. (n.d.). *Reading for Understanding Toward an R & D Program in Reading Comprehension*.
- Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology : An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 104(March), 333–339. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039>
- Zhai, C., Wibowo, S., & Li, L. D. (2024). The effects of over - reliance on AI dialogue systems on students ' cognitive abilities : a systematic review. *Smart Learning Environments*. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-024-00316-7>