ISSN 2348-3156 (Print)
International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research ISSN 2348-3164 (online)
Vol. 14, Issue 4, pp: (505-511), Month: October - December 2026, Available at: www.researchpublish.com

Generative AI Tools in Language Teaching: Applications across the Instructional Cycle and Pedagogical Recommendations

Nguyen Thi Quynh Hoa[1*], Tran Thi Oanh[2]

Hanoi University, Vietnam

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24111439

Published Date: 10-November-2026

Abstract: **Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini are increasingly used in language education, yet much of the existing research concentrates on learners' use of these tools for writing and feedback. This paper focuses on the teacher's side of the instructional cycle. Drawing on recent studies of generative AI in language learning and on illustrative classroom scenarios, it examines how teachers can use these tools to generate and adapt instructional materials, plan and deliver lessons, and design exercises and assessments. It also considers how ICT and AI can support interaction. The paper argues that generative AI is most valuable when it works as an auxiliary partner under teacher judgment: outputs need to be checked for accuracy, level, and appropriacy, and tasks should require learners to evaluate and refine AI output rather than accept it. The paper closes with practical recommendations on prompt design, verification, assessment, AI literacy, and data protection, and identifies directions for future research.**

Keywords: **Generative AI; language teaching; ChatGPT; instructional materials; lesson planning; assessment design; AI literacy.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Generative AI tools have attracted considerable attention in language education because they can produce adaptive linguistic input, give immediate feedback, and support customized tasks. Most current tools are built on pre-trained large language models (LLMs) and are typically refined through techniques such as reinforcement learning from human feedback. They can process and generate natural language in text, and many also handle voice and images, which makes interaction feel conversational and allows responses in real time.

For language teachers, generative AI can act as a versatile auxiliary tool. It can help generate and adapt teaching materials, draft assessments, outline lessons, and serve as a conversational partner for practice. By taking over routine design tasks and offering preliminary frameworks, such tools may reduce preparation time. Whether they also improve the quality of teaching depends on how teachers use them.

Much of the empirical literature reviewed for this paper focuses on learners' use of these tools, especially for writing support and feedback. Fewer of the studies reviewed examine, in a practice-oriented way, how teachers can use generative AI across the instructional cycle: preparing materials, planning and delivering lessons, and designing assessments. Teachers also need guidance on the risks that accompany these uses, such as inaccurate content, mismatched language levels, and academic integrity concerns.

To cope with the need, this paper addresses three following questions:

(1) What does recent research suggest about the benefits and limitations of generative AI in language education?

(2) How can teachers use generative AI tools for instructional materials, lesson planning, and exercise and assessment design?

(3) What principles should guide responsible and effective integration?

The paper is a practice-oriented, conceptual discussion. It draws on a selective review of recent studies and on illustrative prompts and classroom scenarios, which show possible uses rather than report empirical findings.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Digital Technology and ICT in Language Education

Scholarship has often emphasized the potential of digital technology to widen access to education and improve its quality through interactive, multimedia-enhanced settings (Warschauer & Liaw, 2020; García et al., 2021; Ogbonna, 2021; Qu et al., 2022). Digital platforms, educational apps, and learning management systems (LMS) allow teachers to create flexible, learner-centered environments in which teachers and students can collaborate. Interactive technology can enrich subject content, support motivation, and strengthen understanding through visual presentation of knowledge. Ubiquitous access to digital resources also supports autonomous learning, as students can review materials independently, exchange feedback online, and complete digital assessments, which helps build digital literacy.

Within language education, technological advances, especially AI and web-based applications, have changed how instruction is delivered, making it more accessible, efficient, and tailored to individual needs (Dudeney & Hockly, 2016; Li & Cummins, 2019; Urbaite, 2024). Educational policy likewise reflects a growing commitment to embedding technology in language curricula to engage learners and provide authentic cultural exposure (Ürün, 2016). Akçayır et al. (2018), however, argue that although ICT can raise the quality of learning and offer virtual alternatives to traditional practice, its integration into everyday classroom practice remains limited. Evidence from university-level English instruction suggests that technology integration can strengthen teaching effectiveness by promoting active learner engagement (Nguyen, 2024).

Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) can foster learner autonomy and communicative competence through adaptive technologies and multimedia materials (Li & Hafner, 2022). These platforms can raise engagement through immediate feedback, gamification, authentic communication, and ubiquitous access to content (Hubbard & Levy, 2016), and have been linked to higher retention and involvement than traditional instruction (Albashtawi & Al Bataineh, 2020). With regard to LMS, Coates et al. (2005) identify efficiency, enriched learning experiences, student expectations, access, and competitive pressure as key drivers of adoption.

2.2. Generative AI in Language Learning and Teaching

Recent studies have examined both the affordances and the constraints of generative AI in language pedagogy. Investigating EFL students' use of ChatGPT for language learning tasks, Xiao and Zhi (2023) found that learners used it for ideation, sentence reformulation, and proofreading. Participants reported that their writing became clearer and more precise, but they also expressed concern about over-reliance and about accepting AI output uncritically. These findings suggest that AI can scaffold writing performance, while unmediated use may reduce learners' own language production.

A similar balance appears in Balci's (2024) systematic review, which identified writing assistance, vocabulary building, and material design as the main areas of research on ChatGPT in EFL learning and teaching. The review reports that ChatGPT can enhance learner engagement and self-efficacy and can relieve teachers of routine tasks such as exercise generation and initial feedback. It also highlights drawbacks, including factual hallucinations, linguistic inaccuracies, and academic integrity risks, and concludes that AI is most valuable when embedded in structured tasks that require teachers and students to evaluate and refine model outputs critically. These concerns point to the need for explicit AI literacy instruction, so that learners do not mistake fluent output for reliable content.

A further strand of research concerns corrective feedback. Almutlaq and Alsaleh (2025) and Tran (2025) examine ChatGPT-generated feedback and its relationship to EFL learners' writing quality, engagement, and revision practices, and their work suggests that such feedback can provide rapid, detailed comments that may help learners notice grammatical and lexical errors. Zhang (2024) reviews the use of ChatGPT as an automated written corrective feedback tool in L2 writing instruction. Studies of learners' perceptions (Sarica & Deneme, 2025; Xiaoyi, 2025) indicate that human teachers remain better placed to give contextually sensitive feedback, to prioritize the most important error types, and to offer affective support. This line of research supports a collaborative model in which AI serves as a low-stakes supplementary resource and teachers retain responsibility for contextualization and pedagogical judgment.

At a broader level, Ekizer's (2025) meta-analysis of empirical studies published between 2019 and 2025 examines the effectiveness of AI-based approaches in English language teaching in relation to different learner groups, teaching environments, and areas of language achievement. The meta-analysis covers AI-based approaches generally rather than generative tools alone.

2.3. Research Gap

Taken together, the studies reviewed portray generative AI as a promising but double-edged resource. Its reported strengths include rapid material generation, personalized scaffolding, and gains in productivity and engagement. Its reported risks include over-dependence, threats to academic integrity, and occasional inaccuracies. The studies generally recommend treating AI tools as auxiliary partners that complement, rather than replace, human educators.

Two features of this body of work motivate the present paper. First, most of the studies reviewed here concern learners' use of AI for writing and feedback, whereas teachers' use of AI to design materials, plan lessons, and build assessments has received less systematic attention. Second, the benefits reported depend heavily on how tasks are designed and mediated, which makes concrete, teacher-oriented guidance particularly useful.

3. APPLICATIONS OF GENERATIVE AI ACROSS THE INTRUCTIONAL CYCLE

3.1. Generating and Adapting Instructional Materials

Generative AI tools can help language teachers create and customize instructional materials. Teachers can use them to find or draft reading texts and contemporary documents aligned with specific curricular goals, and to produce supplementary materials from targeted prompts. For example, a teacher can ask ChatGPT for contextual dialogues for a shopping unit, covering functional scenarios such as asking about prices, bargaining, or finding a fitting room. Such custom resources allow teachers to diversify content beyond the textbook.

Teachers can also calibrate reading texts for topic, length, and linguistic complexity to suit learners of different proficiency levels. Using models such as ChatGPT, they can produce simplified, standard, and advanced versions of a single text. These texts can then be converted into audio with text-to-speech tools to support listening activities. Similarly, tools such as Claude can help teachers design writing and speaking materials through tailored prompts and sample outputs. A teacher might generate situated dialogues for settings such as railway stations, shopping malls, or academic conferences, or request a 250-word B1-level essay on a topic such as "taking a gap year." The generated texts can be turned into comprehension tasks (for example, True/False items, multiple-choice questions, or summary completion) or used as the basis for vocabulary and grammar exercises.

> **Illustrative prompt**
>
> *Write a 250-word essay at CEFR B1 level on "taking a gap year" for adult EFL learners. Use common vocabulary, mostly simple and compound sentences, and a clear structure (introduction, two arguments, conclusion). Then write five True/False questions and three vocabulary-in-context questions, and provide an answer key.*

Language models do not always match a requested level, so teachers should check vocabulary, grammar, and length against the intended level and revise where needed.

Multimodal capabilities add further possibilities. Many current models can interpret images, so a teacher can upload a photograph of a landmark, such as the Pyramids or the Great Wall of China, and ask for background information or discussion questions. This can help teachers expand their own subject knowledge and enrich lessons. Image interpretation can be mistaken, however, and factual details should be verified against reliable sources before they are used in class. For teachers of languages with fewer locally available teaching resources (for example, Spanish or Portuguese in some EFL-dominant contexts), AI tools can be a useful supplementary source of materials, although output quality may vary across languages and should be checked.

In translation and interpreting pedagogy, generative AI can help instructors design practice materials at different difficulty levels and in specialized domains such as education, environmental science, economics, culture, and politics. Converting text into natural-sounding speech also allows teachers to prepare listening materials for interpreting drills. AI-generated

texts and speech are synthetic, however, and cannot fully replace authentic speeches and documents, which remain important for interpreting practice. They are best used to complement authentic sources, especially when suitable authentic texts are hard to find.

3.2. Lesson Planning and Delivery

Generative AI can streamline lesson planning by helping teachers develop tailored frameworks from simple prompts. For ideation and activity design, teachers can use tools such as Claude to generate options for class themes, tasks, and reading materials. For example, a Spanish instructor designing a B1-level unit on South American historical sites can ask Claude to structure a lesson around Machu Picchu. Teachers may either supply their own source materials or ask the model to curate and organize suitable content aligned with the learning objectives and time available. From the options generated, teachers can choose the most suitable outline and adjust the timing, difficulty, or skill focus. AI tools can also suggest teaching methods and follow-up activities that reinforce lesson goals. Teachers can request stage-by-stage plans that take account of class size, resources (for example, a blackboard-only classroom), or specific instructional models such as exam preparation, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), or English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

> **Illustrative prompt**
>
> *Design a 60-minute lesson for 20 university students at CEFR B1 on Machu Picchu in Spanish. The classroom has only a whiteboard. Objectives: students can describe a historical site and give reasons for visiting it. Give stages with timing, interaction patterns, and one follow-up homework task.*

AI-generated plans should be treated as drafts. Teachers remain responsible for checking factual content, such as historical details, for the realism of timing, and for alignment with the curriculum and with learners' needs.

Beyond planning, tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Claude can help teachers prepare presentation slides by suggesting slide titles, layouts, and ideas for illustrations. Dedicated AI-enabled presentation tools can generate draft layouts as well. Visually well-organized slides can help capture learners' attention, but teachers should still check the accuracy of text and the suitability of images.

3.3. Exercise and Assessment Design

Generative AI can support the design of assessment instruments. Teachers can use it to draft rubrics for complex tasks, self- and peer-assessment checklists for collaborative work, and model feedback comments.

These tools can also speed up the creation of practice exercises and test items. By reducing the time spent on first drafts of items, they allow teachers to generate varied question sets for formative practice, review sessions, and summative assessments more quickly. AI tools can diversify question formats, including multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, matching, true/false, and summary completion items. Teachers can also request items at tiered difficulty levels for multilevel classes, which is often hard to do by hand in heterogeneous classrooms. Teachers who want assessments aligned with Bloom's taxonomy can ask the tool to write items that target different cognitive levels, from remembering and understanding to higher-order application. Finally, teachers can ask AI to write supplementary questions based on standard textbook passages, creating new comprehension questions beyond those in the prescribed coursebook.

> **Illustrative prompt**
>
> *Based on the passage below, write six multiple-choice comprehension questions for CEFR B1 learners: two at the "remember" level, two at "understand," and two at "analyze." Each question should have four options with one correct answer and plausible distractors. Indicate the correct answer and the cognitive level for each item.*

Item quality needs careful review. AI-generated items may contain wrong answer keys, ambiguous wording, implausible distractors, or content that does not match the intended objectives. Teachers should check each item against a test specification, verify the answer key, and, where possible, pilot items before use. For high-stakes assessment in particular, AI-drafted items should never be used without thorough human review.

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3.4. Interactive Language Pedagogy with ICT and AI

Synchronous tools such as Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams support interaction beyond classroom hours through online discussion, presentations, and speaking practice (Nguyen, 2025). Digital resources such as YouTube, VOA, BBC Learning English, and AI speech tools can strengthen listening, speaking, reading, and writing by offering authentic input and real-time correction (Nguyen, 2025), and thereby support learner autonomy.

Evidence from Vietnam (Tran & Nguyen, 2025) suggests that EFL teachers regard AI as an important aid for personalizing instruction and motivating learners. The authors recommend structuring AI integration to meet pedagogical standards and encouraging critical teacher oversight.

AI-driven tools, such as intelligent tutors, speech recognition systems, and conversational agents, can enable dynamic interaction among learners, content, and instructors. By adjusting input and task difficulty to individual learning paths, they can support core learner-centered principles (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017). Chatbots and dialogue systems can offer low-anxiety spaces for communicative practice (Kukulska-Hulme & Viberg, 2018). Integrating AI into these environments also allows teachers to design tasks that emphasize process, reflection, and interaction rather than passive reception.

3.5. Summary

Table 1: Teacher Tasks, Possible Uses of Generative AI, Main Risks, and Recommended Teacher Checks

Teacher task	Possible uses of generative AI	Main risks	Recommended teacher checks
Instructional materials	Texts at several levels; situated dialogues; comprehension tasks; background information from images; practice texts for interpreting	Level mismatch; factual errors; synthetic or unnatural language; cultural bias	Check level, length, and accuracy; compare with authentic samples; review for appropriacy
Lesson planning and delivery	Lesson outlines; activity and follow-up ideas; draft slide titles and layouts	Unrealistic timing; inaccurate content; generic activities	Adapt to objectives, learners, and resources; verify content; trial and revise
Exercises and assessment	Rubrics; self- and peer-assessment checklists; item drafts in several formats; tiered items; items targeting different cognitive levels	Wrong answer keys; ambiguous items; misalignment with objectives; academic integrity	Review items against test specifications; verify keys; pilot where possible; state a clear AI-use policy
Interaction and practice	Chatbots and dialogue systems; speech tools; preliminary feedback	Over-reliance; inaccurate feedback; privacy of learner data	Use structured tasks that require evaluation of output; keep teacher oversight; protect learner data

4. PEDAGOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AI INTEGRATION

Generative AI tools should function as auxiliary partners rather than substitutes for human educators. Integrating them into language teaching therefore needs to be accompanied by critical evaluation, reflective practice, active language engagement, and clear ethical and assessment frameworks. The paper proposes five pedagogical recommendations as follows:

(1) Write detailed, contextualized prompts. Because the precision and completeness of the output depend on the clarity of the input, teachers should state the instructional objective, the learners' level (for example, CEFR level), age and context, the length and format required, and any constraints. A useful pattern can be as follows: role, context, task, constraints, and output format. Prompts can then be refined over several turns.

(2) Verify and adapt every output. Teachers should check content for accuracy, level, appropriacy, and bias, and adapt it to the local curriculum and learners' needs. The teacher remains the final decision-maker.

(3) Use AI to create higher-order tasks. Tasks can require learners to analyze, evaluate, and transform AI-generated content, for example by comparing an AI draft with their own, or by finding and correcting errors in an AI-generated text. Assessment should correspondingly give more weight to learning processes, metacognitive reflection, and meaningful interaction.

(4) Teach AI literacy and set transparent policies. Curricula should explicitly include critical evaluation skills, awareness of limitations such as hallucination, and ethical use. Teachers should state when AI use is permitted and how it should be acknowledged.

(5) Develop professional judgment through reflective practice. Teachers can keep records of prompts and outputs that worked well or poorly, share them with colleagues, and review whether AI-supported activities can serve their learning goals.

Following these principles can help language teachers draw on the strengths of generative AI while safeguarding instructional quality. Rather than posing a threat to language teaching, AI tools can prompt teachers to rethink how language learning is designed, mediated, and assessed.

5. CONCLUSION

Generative AI offers language teachers substantial new support for preparing materials, planning lessons, and designing assessments. Its value depends, however, on teacher judgment: outputs must be checked, adapted, and embedded in tasks that engage learners critically. By using AI as an auxiliary tool within a flexible and well-governed framework, teachers can pursue targeted teaching, tailored learning experiences, rigorous assessment, and effective management of mixed-ability classes.

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