

Research Article

Challenges Faced by EFL Educators in Integrating Artificial Intelligence into Language Curricula

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received Sep 18, 2025 Revised Nov 11, 2025 Accepted Nov 15, 2025	The current era is experiencing rapid development in Artificial Intelligence technologies in the field of education, especially foreign language learning and teaching. The present study aims to investigate the challenges faced by Kurdish EFL educators in integrating Artificial Intelligence into language curricula. The descriptive approach using quantitative methodology is employed to achieve the objectives of the study. The data were analyzed using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (27.0). Statistical tests—Descriptive statistics to describe the perceptions of the educators, independent sample t-test to compare the mean score both male and female educators, and correlation analysis to present the relationship among the categories of the of the survey questionnaire items—have been utilized to analyze the data. The findings show that educators were very concerned about the use of AI in education due to its ethicality and academic integrity. The results of the gender-based differences showed no statistical significance between male and female educators in terms of encountering challenging AI tools in language teaching curricula. Furthermore, the correlation analysis revealed a strong positive inter-correlation among the survey's sub-scale (e.g., Technological Barriers, Ethical Concerns, and Training Deficiencies). These findings could contribute insights to teachers, educators, and policymakers to consider the proper uses of AI in educational practices and set appropriate guidelines in the educational institutions.
Keywords Artificial Intelligence Challenges of AI-tools Educational Context Kurdish EFL Educators Language curricula	



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1. Introduction

The current world is experiencing rapid developments in Artificial Intelligence technologies across diverse fields of studies with vast potential benefits for human beings. Education is one of these fields and is expected to be improved by AI technologies (Zhang et al., 2024). The Kurdish EFL context AI-based technologies provide opportunities for individual learning, instant feedback, and promote learning engagement. Therefore, incorporating the AI-driven tools into language curriculum is not without difficulty.

Educators in EFL settings often experience challenges such as technical infrastructure, educational support, pedagogical adaptation, and ethical matters, each of which impact on the process of integrating AI tools into classroom practices (Woolf et al., 2013). Acknowledging these difficulties is crucial for designing educational policies, development programs, and curriculum frameworks that enable educators to integrate AI-driven tools in teaching context (Pedro et al., 2019). These technologies also have the potential to greatly enhance the quality, access, and flexibility of the education we provide, making it more efficient and giving us a way to provide personalized learning to cater to the needs of the diverse population of students we serve (Eden et al., 2024). These AI-based tools create opportunities for learning through offering personalized, effective, real time interactional feedback (Jegade, 2024). In so doing, the role of AI has been increasingly critical in the design and development of language curricula that allows teachers to host more dynamic and interactive learning environments. Despite these promising developments, many challenges remain for teachers in employing AI in their teaching practices. The primary barriers to success the research likely points at are absence of technical training and enough institutional infrastructure and support to facilitate use of the AI tools in pedagogical models. In addition, the rate at which AI technology evolves is usually faster than that at which educators can keep up with it, leading to a disconnect between AI's possibilities and its actual implementation in the classroom (Celik et al., 2022).

The present study aims to investigate the obstacles that teachers encounter as they attempt to integrate AI tools in the language curriculum. These AI-based technologies present both difficulty and opportunity as they are developed and applied in educational settings worldwide. In this study, the main purpose is to gain insights into educators' perceptions of AI incorporation and its effect on teaching in language curricula and the pedagogical, technological, and ethical challenges that teachers encounter while attempting to incorporate AI into their lessons will be examined. It will specifically look at how these problems impact the efficiency of AI technologies in language instruction and whether or not teachers are ready to adjust to these technological advancements.

The importance of the study lies in identifying the most prominent challenges faced by Kurdish EFL teachers in both public and private universities when using AI programs to teach students, in order to overcome the problems, they encounter. Therefore, this study attempts to understand and uncover the factors that make AI useful and address the factors that bring difficulty to educators in the teaching process. As the study focuses on AI as a modern technology that has become crucial for achieving greater efficiency

and offering new opportunities to gain a competitive advantage for many universities that prioritize student-centered learning. Modern applications of teaching technologies are gradually integrating AI capabilities in the fields of general education, teaching students, and developing the educational process. It is intended that the results of the current study will contribute to identifying future indicators that may assist in the development of AI tools and their implementation, especially in language curricula. The researchers also expect that the findings of this study will motivate administrative authorities in educational institutions to implement training and development programs on AI applications, provide training to the teachers and educators, and guide educators on how to use them in language teaching.

The researcher attempts to pose the following research questions to achieve the objectives of the study:

1. What are teachers' perceptions towards the issue of implementing AI technology in language practices?
2. What kind of pedagogical, technical, and ethical challenges do teachers face when incorporating AI tools into their language curricula?
3. Are there any gender-based differences in Kurdish EFL teachers' perceptions of the challenges related to AI integration?

2. Literature Review

2.1. AI in Language Learning and Education

AI is revolutionizing language learning, advanced resources for learning and teaching; it simulates human intelligence by means of computers processing natural language, recognizing patterns, and delivering customized feedback (Korteling et al., 2021). AI-powered tools such as automatic writing, speech recognition, and an adaptive learning system are being adopted into classrooms in language education at present. Such technologies make personal learning available through tracking progress and adjusting to their level, helping to provide focused learning and more active learners. The potential of AI for language education is vast in order to improve students' engagement and outcomes. AI-based chatbots, virtual tutors, and automated feedback software are a source of instantaneous feedback for students, an approach that may then ease the burden on teachers and enhance self-study (Ahmed, 2023; Diastuti et al., 2024). The use of AI for language learning is part of a larger shift to digitalization and personalization in teaching. The education process has to develop accordingly due to technological advancement and globalization. However, learner-oriented approaches are becoming more necessary, as students want more flexibility to study anywhere, at any time. AI enables these changes by offering continuous support, and

frequent evaluation of the flexibility to learn whenever possible (Bostancı & Ariannejad, 2022; Emeihe et al., 2024).

Such flexibility is particularly desirable for university students, who regularly attempt to balance their studies, careers, and personal lives (Yamijala et al., 2025). From basic grammar checking programs, AI has developed sophisticated systems like ChatGPT, which can interact with learners in conversational speech, provide interactive, and modified language learning. Using AI-based education, students are able to learn independently according to their specific needs and timetable.

AI tools can also automate much of the routine work previously done by teachers, such as grammar and vocabulary checking. This automation saves the time of instructors for more creative and higher-level pedagogy, such as discussion leading and creative writing (Tonicic, 2020). In addition, AI tools need to be integrated with solid pedagogical principles like communicative language teaching, task-based reinforcement, and constructivist pedagogy. For instance, conversational AI, such as chatbots, can be implemented in tasks that encourage real-time conversation and exposure to the target culture. Furthermore, AI contributes to the inclusivity of language teaching curricula as it provides accessibility tools such as speech-to-text and automatic translators, which help students with disabilities or those facing language barriers. While these affordances are impressive, using AI depends on its alignment with pedagogy and on teachers' ability to integrate it meaningfully into their teaching (Fitas, 2025; Qadir & Omar, 2025).

2.2. Benefits of AI Integration in Language Curricula

One of the greatest benefits of AI in language learning is its ability to promote learner engagement and personalized learning. AI-driven systems monitor learning behavior and adapt learning activities based on students' proficiency levels (Vera, 2023). For example, AI-driven adaptive learning systems, personalizing reading and grammar exercises in real time to suit students' requirements and improve self-learning abilities. In addition, AI facilitates collaborative learning and cross-cultural communication, which are essential in language learning. AI communication tools, such as online conversation partners and chatbots imitate real-time conversation in multiple languages (Xia et al., 2024). AI tools enable students to practice oral and written communication, improving fluency and confidence before interacting with their verbal counterparts; moreover, learners can pace their progress, monitor their performance, and engage with supplementary materials based on their interests (Dugošija, 2024).

Furthermore, AI facilitates automated assessment and feedback systems, making the assessment process easier for instructors. Traditional assessment methods typically take much time and effort, whereas AI applications provide immediate grading and full feedback on writing, pronunciation, and comprehension skills. AI-driven writing tools such as Grammarly and Turnitin's Revision Assistant aid learners in improving the quality of their writing skills by providing immediate feedback on grammar, coherence, and structure (Amina, 2025). AI further assists instructors in curriculum planning and pedagogical preparation. Through the analysis of students' performance output, AI tools can identify patterns and gaps in learners' progression, allowing instructors to make informed decisions during curriculum planning (Tatar et al., 2025). These insights promote differentiated instruction, allowing instructors to adjust content presentation according to class requirements. For example, if most students are performing poorly in verb conjugation. In that case, the AI system can mark this trend and recommend customized learner modules, saving instructors time as well as maximizing pedagogic accuracy.

Furthermore, AI enhances accessibility in the learning of languages through speech-to-text facilities, automated translation, and voice recognition for disabled students or learning another language in a multilingual environment. Such facilities make AI a valuable tool in the facilitation of inclusiveness and equal opportunities for diverse groups of learners which plays a crucial role in assisting students with learning difficulties and students with disabilities (Celik et al., 2022).

2.3. Teachers' Challenges in AI Integration

While the potential benefits are promising, educators face pedagogical challenges in integrating AI into language learning. Foremost among these is ensuring that AI tools enhance the objectives of the curriculum and align with current pedagogy (Eden et al., 2024). Many educators struggle to incorporate AI-driven systems into lesson plans without affecting pedagogical quality. For instance, AI's automated feedback might not effectively capture creativity, argumentation, and critical thinking in student writing. Some scholars, such as Korteling et al. (2021), argue that overdependence on AI might weaken students' ability for deep learning, as they might rely heavily on computerized ideas rather than developing independent problem-solving skills. Moreover, another pedagogical obstacle is ensuring alignment with differentiated pedagogies and inclusiveness because language classrooms are characteristically diverse with students having different levels of proficiency, learning competencies, and linguistic backgrounds (Novawan et al., 2024). AI tools, particularly those lacking inclusive algorithms, can become inappropriate

to such diversity. For instance, speech-to-text tools may inaccurately interpret non-native accents or dialectal differences, leading to miscommunication and demotivation. Teachers must carefully select and apply AI tools that are responsive to diverse learner needs.

However, few teachers possess the necessary skills or knowledge to critically evaluate these tools. Additionally, many AI systems function as "black boxes" that provide no transparency regarding how outputs, recommendations, or feedback are generated. This lack of explanation provides a pedagogical challenge for teachers, who are expected to explain the pedagogical explanation and justify the system's responses, despite being unaware of the tool's design. The lack of clarity can create tension in teacher-student interactions and raise concerns about the reliability of AI as a pedagogical ally. There is growing concern that AI impacts both motivation and engagement. Although AI tools can deliver instant responses and gamified elements, this does not necessarily promote deep engagement with the language. Pokrivčáková (2019) contended that students may use AI platforms as shortcuts to complete assignments rather than as tools for meaningful learning and skill development. As a result, Teachers face a struggle in designing pedagogy that fosters responsible AI use, encouraging students to use technology as a complement to instruction rather than as a replacement.

Technically, teachers face issues such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient training, and low digital literacy. This could mean that they are unable to perform the best of their abilities in academic settings. AI-based applications need technical support, such as good internet connectivity, updated computer software, and institutional information technology support, but this may not be commonly observed in all teaching environments (Tatar et al., 2025). In addition, many teachers are either unfamiliar with or lack sufficient knowledge of AI tools and do not receive adequate training to implement AI effectively in their instructional practices; as a result, this lack of knowledge prevents them from fully and efficiently integrating AI into the language teaching process (Vera, 2023).

Additionally, ethical considerations make the situation more complex. Teachers must navigate questions of fairness, academic honesty, and student privacy when introducing AI tools into their classrooms. For example, the use of AI-based plagiarism detection tools or AI-powered writing assistants may wrongly accuse students of cheating or dishonesty, which can make students lose faith in the education system. Time pressure also prevents teachers from being able to meaningfully apply AI in classrooms. Designing AI-enhanced lessons, trying out new tools, and adapting pedagogy to include new feedback

mechanisms can be highly time-consuming. In already challenging academic timetable, it may be impossible to accommodate this extra workload in the absence of institutional assistance (Ahmed & Ariannejad, 2025; Guan et al., 2025). Many teachers describe their experience with AI as a trial-and-error process, both mentally and administratively demanding, particularly where outcomes are uncertain or unclear. Ultimately, resistance to technological revolution, both cognitive and effective, must not be underestimated. Some teachers with many years of experience in traditional pedagogical models, AI appear to undermine rather than enhance their professional competence. This psychological barrier contributes to the slow and uneven adoption of AI tools, even in well-resourced institutions. Overcoming this resistance requires more than technical training; It requires a change in thinking that sees teachers as partners in creating AI-based teaching, not just users of outside technology (Guan et al., 2025).

2.4. Institutional and Policy Barriers to AI Adoption

Ivchik (2024) stated that the lack of clear institutional policies for the adoption of AI prevents consistency in its implementation and variability in adoption across educational settings. The lack of clear ethical standards, like plagiarism, data privacy, and excessive dependence on AI tools are not taken into account. ChatGPT is an example of an AI tool that makes it easy for students to create essays and responses, which can cause problems with academic dishonesty. Administration needs to develop clear ethical guidelines, indicating acceptable use of AI and ensuring academic quality. Without a clear policy, teachers encountered uncertainty about how to balance the AI's potential with academic standards.

Another significant barrier is the inadequate infrastructure and digital readiness of many institutions (Nawaz et al., 2025; Nuangchalerm et al., 2024). In particular, limited availability of internet connection, outdated hardware, and lack of technical support significantly limiting the adoption of AI tools in low-resource or low- and middle-income countries (Campos Zabala, 2023). Few institutions provide extensive workshops or certification programs in AI literacy. This skills gap leads to uncertainty and fear among instructors. In some countries, rigid curriculum standards do not allow AI to be used in teaching and assessment. For example, when national examinations and quality assurance mechanisms are not AI-based, as a result of which educational settings can be reluctant to invest in AI technology due to a mismatch with formal education objectives (Hassan et al., 2024). Legal and ethical uncertainties are another obstacle. Since AI technologies are evolving very quickly, institutional policies progress more slowly in addressing

questions regarding the protection of data, consent, and transparency of algorithms. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the European Union has strict requirements regarding how personal data is collected, stored, and processed, requirements that can unknowingly be breached by many AI tools, particularly those used by third-party providers that are outside their authority lack of legal transparency in these matters has led some institutions to heavily limit the use of generative AI tools until clearer guidelines are made (Kiris & Gurul, 2025).

2.5. Scholarly Related Studies

Several studies have explored the integration of AI in language learning, highlighting its benefits as well as its challenges. Yousaf et al. (2025) carried out a study to investigate the effectiveness of AI-based applications for language learning and found that AI personalizes learning experiences by adapting the material to the particular student's needs. Their research also highlighted the way in which AI enhanced engagement and access to learning languages but also stated that AI cannot fully replace learning while the role of teachers is critical in the fields like creativity and critical thinking. Expanding upon these discoveries, scholars have examined the real-world utility of particular AI software tools in instructional settings. A comparison shows the differences between institutions and regions with respect to the introduction of AI. For example, technologically advanced colleges and schools had more receptive instructors to AI integration, as to resource-poor colleges and schools that had the infrastructure and digital literacy challenge. Nah et al. (2023) further stated that instructors' use of AI hinged on institutional and faculty professional development support. While this line of research is growing, little is still known about how instructors' experiences vary across types of subjects of teaching, institutional policy and student bodies. These gaps should be filled by future research investigating long-term effects of AI integration.

According to Lamia and Mohamed (2019), an intelligent tutoring system (ITS) enhanced learners' motivation by supplying instant feedback and customized learning paths. In their investigation, students who used AI-powered tools showed greater self-efficacy and a tendency to study independently. They found that chatbot-based feedback boosted learners' vocabulary confidence during practice, especially in speaking and listening. Klimova and Chen (2024) noted that AI apps fail to transmit the cultural subtlety that is essential for communicative competence. Their investigation on a group of Chinese EFL learners utilizing AI-based translation apps showed students missing contextual information and pragmatics due to AI's mechanical responses. This implies that AI should be used with human mediation. AI-based platforms

such as Duolingo and Elsa Speak facilitated enhanced inclusiveness, especially for students with special needs and non-native.

However, on the institutional level, researchers such as Namaziandost and Rezai (2024) who examined policy climates under which AI integration in language education is facilitated or obstructed. Their multi-country analysis indicated that national education digitalization policies are key to deciding how quickly schools and universities adapt AI tools. Nations with AI master plans and funding programs, like South Korea and Finland, exhibited greater AI adoption and pedagogy innovation. Conversely, nations with little investment in the integration of individual teachers result in inconsistent usage and outcomes. Another concern is privacy and bias related to AI adoption in language learning.

According to Bogina et al. (2022) AI tools collect a large amount of student data, which could be compromised for commercial ends. Their review also warned of the presence of biases in language models, especially if the training information used is based on stereotypes or omits minority varieties. These issues imply the need for regulating teachers' awareness of responsible technology use. Van Moere and Downey (2016) found that AI systems are effective in identifying grammar and punctuation errors, but weak in evaluating creativity, coherence, and appropriateness in speaking and writing assignments. These findings concur with those of previous work, which warned against depending on AI-based assessment systems, particularly in high-stakes assessment situations.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The present study follows a descriptive approach using quantitative methodology. The research aims to explore the Kurdish EFL educators' perceptions regarding the challenges of utilizing AI-driven technologies in educational settings. The study further attempts to identify the challenges faced by teachers when incorporating AI into language teaching practice. For this reason, quantitative research is used which is based on organized collected data and analyzing statistical and numerical data to assess attitudes, opinions, and other variables (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014).

3.2. Population and Sampling

This research focused on the sample of Kurdish EFL educators who are delivering lectures at public and private universities of Sulaymaniyah governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The participants were 186 in total (110 female and 76 male). Regarding sampling and data collection, the teachers were selected based

on snowball sampling, initiated with targeted techniques, which helped the participants at specific universities to share their experiences and challenges related to using AI-driven tools in teaching practices.

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

A survey questionnaire was employed as the data collection tool. The survey was sent through the link of Google Forms to the participants to share their perceptions and viewpoints based on their own experience. The survey was sent through their institutional email addresses. The survey consisted of two sections: the first section asked about demographic details about the participants; moreover, the second section asked 14-item questions about the educators' perceptions regarding the challenges and obstacles of AI-based technologies in teaching environments. The questionnaire items were categorized into three main categories: Pedagogical and Ethical Concerns, Teacher Competence and Workload Challenges, and Technical and Institutional Support Limitations. The questionnaire items consisted of 5-Likert Scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The total time needed to fill in the questionnaire was about 5-7 minutes. Ethical approval was obtained from Tishk International University. All participants provided written informed consent prior to participation. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained, and the data were used solely for research purposes.

3.4. Data Analysis Procedure

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 27.0). The assumption of normality for the composite variables was evaluated using the Shapiro–Wilk test. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were then computed to summarize educators' perceptions of the challenges associated with integrating artificial intelligence into higher education teaching practices. Composite scores were calculated for the three main categories: Pedagogical and Ethical Concerns, Teacher Competence and Workload Challenges, and Technical and Institutional Support Limitations. To examine potential gender-based differences in educators' perceptions, independent-samples t-tests were conducted. Furthermore, Pearson product–moment correlation analysis was employed to investigate the relationships among the three challenge categories. A significance level of $p < .05$ was adopted for all statistical analyses.

3.5. Reliability and Validity of the Study

The reliability of the questionnaire was examined using Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency of the measurement instrument. The overall reliability coefficient for the 14-item questionnaire

was $\alpha = .716$, indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency for research purposes. This result confirms that the items were sufficiently consistent in measuring Kurdish EFL educators' perceptions of the challenges associated with integrating artificial intelligence into language curricula.

Content validity was ensured through a comprehensive review of relevant literature on artificial intelligence integration in language education. The questionnaire items were developed to reflect the major pedagogical, ethical, technical, and institutional challenges identified in previous studies and were aligned with the objectives of the present research. The items were carefully reviewed to ensure clarity, relevance, and suitability for the Kurdish EFL higher education context. In addition, face validity was established, as the questionnaire items were clear and easily understood by the participants.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Teachers' Perceptions of AI in Teaching

This section presents the descriptive statistics for the questionnaire items to assess the attitudes of the teachers and educators regarding the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into classroom teaching and educational practices. The aim of the analysis is to offer a general outline of how participants evaluated each item in the questionnaire in the survey, focusing on the patterns and trends prior to the inferential analysis. The items were categorized into three main categories: Pedagogical and Ethical Concerns, Teacher Competence and Workload Challenges, and Technical and Institutional Support Limitations. Descriptive statistics assess the mean score and standard deviation of each questionnaire item.

Table 1 presents the descriptive details of questionnaire items evaluating teachers' attitudes of incorporating AI-based technologies into classroom environments in higher education settings. The mean scores ranged from 2.94 to 4.27, implying diverse levels of understanding across question items. The top-rated concern of the participants "*AI increases cheating/fraud risk*" ($M = 4.27$, $SD = .921$), which shows the high potential of AI-driven tools in cheating and deception risks in doing assignments by the students. It was further monitored closely by "*students over-rely on AI*" ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.873$), signifying strong resemblance in relation to negative effect of AI on academic practice and student's learning autonomy. On the contrary, "*AI requires more time/resources*" obtained the lowest mean score ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.24$), denoting relatively lower tenancies with the obstacles and difficulties of AI tools. In general, the teachers' responses contemplated reasonable to higher understanding with standard deviations ranging from .80 to

1.24, suggesting some variations with their attitudes regarding AI-usage in educational settings.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of teachers' perceptions towards AI integration in higher education.

Descriptive Statistics			
No.	Items	Mean	SD
1	AI limits teacher–student communication	3.34	1.10
2	AI does not meet diverse teacher needs	3.03	.94
3	AI teaching methods create obstacles	3.27	1.06
4	Students over-rely on AI	4.19	.87
5	No ethical guidelines for AI in teaching	3.73	.91
6	AI increases cheating/fraud risk	4.27	.92
7	Teachers lack AI tool knowledge	3.93	.80
8	Hard to keep up with AI changes	3.76	1.02
9	Difficulty selecting suitable AI tools	3.34	1.10
10	AI requires more time/resources	2.94	1.24
11	Lack of administrative AI support	3.76	1.02
12	Frequent AI technical issues	3.91	.96
13	AI does not cover all subjects/courses	3.26	.95
14	Needed AI tech not available	3.87	1.04

The findings of the present study showed that the educators have concerns about the employment of AI tools in their teaching. There are several possible interpretations for driving these results. The overdependency of AI-based technologies in educational practices. It is shown that the educators are highly concerned about the potential risks of AI in preparing lessons and biasness in providing details in their lectures. It is clear that AI tools work on specific algorithms which rely greatly on given information. The AI-generated texts are heavily influenced by input data which is restored in the AI-tools server. The educators show their fear and anxiety that AI facilitates plagiarism and reduces critical thinking skills among the students which completely fades authenticity their academic tasks. Furthermore, educators were anxious about the ethical considerations of utilizing AI tools in classroom since there are no specific guidelines in the educational institutions. Another key issue is the lack of technical knowledge among the educators. As it is known, AI works in English language mostly which creates a strong barrier to those who are not familiar with English language. For this reason, AI-based applications do not meet diverse teacher needs. The findings of the present study align with the results of the research conducted by Benek (2025) and in which the EFL teachers experienced similar challenges when integrating AI tools in their teaching practices.

4.2. Test of Normality (Shapiro–Wilk)

Before conducting the inferential statistical analyses, the assumption of normality was examined to determine the appropriateness of parametric statistical procedures. Since independent-samples t-tests and Pearson correlation analyses were employed in the study, assessing the distribution of the composite variables was a necessary preliminary step. The Shapiro–Wilk test was selected due to its suitability for samples of this size and its frequent application in educational and social science research.

Table 2. Shapiro–Wilk Test of Normality for Composite Variables.

Variable	W	df	p-value
Pedagogical and Ethical Concerns	.886	186	< .001
Teacher Competence and Workload Challenges	.941	186	< .001
Technical and Institutional Support Limitations	.903	186	< .001

Before examining educators' perceptions of the challenges associated with integrating AI tools into language curricula, the distribution of the composite variables was assessed to ensure the appropriateness of subsequent statistical analyses. As the study employed parametric procedures to explore teachers' perceptions, including independent-samples t-tests and Pearson correlation analyses, testing the assumption of normality served as a preliminary methodological step.

As shown in Table 2, the Shapiro–Wilk test indicated statistically significant deviations from normality for all three composite variables—Pedagogical and Ethical Concerns, Teacher Competence and Workload Challenges, and Technical and Institutional Support Limitations ($p < .05$). Such results are common in perception-based educational studies that rely on Likert-scale questionnaires and relatively large samples, where normality tests are sensitive to minor distributional irregularities rather than reflecting substantive issues in the data.

Despite these results, parametric analyses were retained in the present study. Given the large sample size ($n = 186$) and the robustness of parametric tests in educational research contexts, these deviations were not considered to undermine the examination of educators' perceptions. Accordingly, the normality assessment supports the reliability of the subsequent analyses while maintaining the study's primary focus on understanding teachers' views and experiences regarding the integration of AI tools into language curricula.

4.3. Gender-based Differences

This section presents the variation between male and female educators in expressing their attitudes

and perceptions regarding the challenges and difficulties in integrating AI-based tools in curricula in classroom environment.

Table 3. Gender-Based Comparison of Challenges in Integrating AI Tools in Higher Education Teaching.

	Group Statistics				t-value	p-value
	Gender	N	Mean	SD		
Pedagogical and Ethical Concerns	Female	110	25.19	3.29	0.420	.576
	Male	76	24.96	4.16		
Teacher Competence and Workload Challenges	Female	110	13.88	2.34	-0.610	.955
	Male	76	14.11	2.59		
Technical and Institutional Support Limitations	Female	110	11.54	1.90	-0.010	.873
	Male	76	11.54	2.14		

Table 3 presents the results of independent sample t-test for gender-based differences Kurdish EFL teachers. The results were compared over three categories: Pedagogical and Ethical Concerns, Teacher Competence and Workload Challenges, and Technical and Institutional Support Limitations. A brief overview of the t-value showed that there were no significant differences between male and female teachers regarding their perceptions toward the challenged faced by the educators when incorporating AI in their classroom teachings.

In line with the results, for all three categories, no significant variation was found between female participants. As can be seen from the table, the mean scores are closely attached to each other indicating similar understanding between male and female educators. Moreover, the ($p > .005$) in all three categories represents no significant difference between both groups, signifying both genders have comparable conceptions regarding the challenges and obstacles of AI-driven tools in preparing topics, planning lessons, designing exams, and providing supplementary materials for teaching practices.

The findings propose that the challenges and obstacles in integrating AI in teaching practices and curricula is not related gender-based variations, but rather it is structural and systemic, indicating both male and female educators encounter similar difficulties in steering ethical, institutional, and pedagogical hindrances. There are several reasons for these abovementioned results. Firstly, it is important to note that both genders shared the same teaching experience, technological foundations, and language curriculum. These balanced exposures decrease statistical differences among male and female educators in Kurdish EFL university context. Another reason is the universal challenge of integrating AI-driven tools for lesson

planning, teacher preparation, exam designing, and material development in academic settings. The obstacles refer to the newly introduced tools which are almost quite difficult to handle due to their trendy features in the field. For this reason, it is noteworthy to mention that diversity is not an issue related to gender differences. These results reflect those of Benek (2025) who also found that there is no gender-based differences among the Slovakian teachers in integrating technology into classroom settings.

4.4. Correlation Analysis

This section presents the correlation analysis to obtain greater understanding into the connection of the primary obstacles and challenges determined among the variables. The analysis targeted the three main categories—pedagogical and ethical concerns, teacher competence and workload challenges, and technical and institutional support limitations—function individually or demonstrate interconnected designs in integrating AI-driven technologies in higher educational teaching context.

Table 4. Correlation Analysis of Major Challenges in AI Integration within Higher Education Teaching.

Variables	1	2	3
1. Pedagogical and Ethical Concerns	—	.497**	.414**
2. Teacher Competence and Workload Challenges		—	.370**
3. Technical and Institutional Support Limitations			—

Table 4 presents the Pearson correlation analysis which was carried out to investigate the correlation between the three main categories of Pedagogical and Ethical Concerns, Teacher Competence and Workload Challenges, and Technical and Institutional Support Limitations. The findings in Table 4 suggest that all three variables were statistically and positively correlated at the .01 level (two-tailed). Pedagogical and Ethical Concerns revealed a moderate positive correlation with Teacher Competence and Workload Challenges ($r = .497$, $p < .01$) and with Technical and Institutional Support Limitations ($r = .414$, $p < .01$). Correspondingly, Teacher Competence and Workload Challenges were comparatively correlated with Technical and Institutional Support Limitations ($r = .370$, $p < .01$). According to these findings, educators who expressed more pressing concerns in one area also reported more concerns in the other areas too, implying that the obstacles in incorporating AI-driven tools into higher education environments might be interrelated rather than distinct.

The powerful relationship among the categories such as pedagogical and ethical concerns and teacher competence and workload challenges, all significant at ($r = .497$), propose that educators experience these

difficulties in all categories generally. From this perspective, it can be stated that challenges were not in a specific area, but rather educators had difficulties in all areas. Furthermore, the strongest correlation between the two abovementioned categories imply that teachers show uncertainty regarding the ethical matters of utilizing AI-based tools in Kurdish EFL curriculum, or they think of employing it as overburden. These results are in accord with recent studies conducted by Godwin-Jones (2024) indicating that incorporating AI in language learning settings encounter certain challenges and barriers, such as confusion in decision-making of using AI-driven technologies in educational practices. The unclear guidelines of using AI tools in language curriculum is one of the challenges of the Kurdish EFL educators.

5. Conclusion

The present research aimed to address the difficulties and challenges that educators encounter in integrating AI into language teaching in the educational context. The study collected the perceptions of 186 educators at private and public universities of Sulaymaniyah in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq through a survey questionnaire using snowball sampling initiating targeted technique. The findings presented that educators find it difficult employing AI-based technologies in educational settings. The survey results also indicate that most teachers feel apprehensive about the potential negative effects of AI on teacher-student relationships. Many teachers thought AI could damage the teacher-student relationship due to ethical matters in producing academic works, reduce critical thinking, and encourage reliance on AI. Some agreed that AI can also provide flexibility, better resources, and more personalized instruction, if implemented well. Regardless of the benefits of AI, the majority of teachers faced important difficulties, such as the lack of necessary training, vast technological advancements, and the difficulty of finding appropriate AI tools for their classes. The educators also highlighted the importance of clear ethical guidelines for the use of AI and also expressed concerns about its misuse, for example, cheating and dishonesty in academic work. Many respondents showed insufficient institutional support in the AI integration, suggesting a need for administrations to provide more resources and training for teachers. Finally, while the role of AI is great in improving language education, the study highlighted the need for continuous training on AI programs, technological support facilities, and clear guidelines to overcome the challenges teachers may encounter in incorporation AI into their teaching.

The current study can be viewed as an important step in the area of integrating AI into language practice and curricula. However, the findings of this study should be considered with caution due to small

sample numbers and lack of specific details and suggestions regarding the participants. Future research can further study the subject of AI integration, its advantages and disadvantages, and what could be done to improve the AI tools to help teachers use them effectively in the classroom. The ways innovative technology is arranged in a modern approach could further expand the possibilities and opportunities that AI in education could provide. It could also contribute to understanding the attitudes of teachers toward utilizing AI in classrooms.

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