

TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE ON INTEGRATING DEEPSEEK IN SAUDI EFL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence has provided manifold potentials for present-day instructional methods. The dawn of ChatGPT being a Large Language Model was a major breakthrough which initiated an impactful conversational app for users. Now, the introduction of Deepseek has caught the attention of the world as a Generative AI tool. Sensing its appreciation, the present exploration looks at the opinions of Saudi English as a foreign language teachers regarding the use of Deepseek for their learning by employing qualitative research technique. The population were whole Saudi EFL learners whereas the sample size was 20 teachers from various EFL classrooms in Saudia Arabia. The institutes and teachers were picked by simple random sampling technique. Interviews were conducted through a designed opened ended questionnaire. The recorded replied of the participants were analysed by theme analysis through Atlas.ti. The outcomes showed that Saudi EFL teachers took Deepseek as a low-cost, easy to use and open-sourced tool which provides them results with accuracy and precision. They stated that DeepSeek is a supportive app for teaching.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Deepseek, EFL classrooms, Teachers, Saudi Arabia.

1. Introduction

Technology and human intersection have given a new shape to communication (Ali, 2024). By providing personalized opportunities for knowledge and entertainment, like curating content designed specifically for the preferences of the people. Also, the areas like education. Science, healthcare, security and even automation of system has started using AI. One AI areas got a lot of applaud i.e., Generative AI. The inception of the ChatGPT as a revolution with the capability for generating content has transformed mind, method and techniques in human society (Adel, Ahsan & Davison, 2024; Sejnowski, 2024). Nazir and Wang (2023) shared that ChatGPT can train extensive textual data and it possesses magnificent capabilities for language comprehension and for the fluid production of text This model was subsequently refined into GPT-4, improving its performance in real-time interactions (Watson & Romic, 2024). ChatGPT has not only opened doors for innovation but has also paved the way for other prominent large language models such as Google AI and DeepSeek. Launched in January 2025, DeepSeek is an LLM developed by a Chinese AI company, trained on vast datasets. DeepSeek-R1, its latest iteration, exhibits capabilities akin to other advanced language models like ChatGPT (Krause, 2025). DeepSeek is an advanced platform designed to improve information retrieval and assist learners with prompt-based inquiries. Utilizing state-of-the-art AI and deep learning techniques, it offers an efficient and user-friendly search experience that prioritizes accuracy and relevance. This platform is a valuable resource for individuals, researchers, professionals, and businesses. With its intuitive interface, DeepSeek provides seamless access to information across a wide range of fields. The system ensures the delivery of high-quality content, focusing on precision and effectiveness, and its algorithms are finely tuned to deliver quick and accurate responses (Albuhairy & Algaraady, 2025; Alasmari, 2024).

1.1. Research problem

Traditional ways for learning have frequently resulted in boredom and inefficiency for learners, especially in ESL (English as a Second Language) environments. These conventional techniques have hindered satisfaction and failed to meet the changing needs of students. Due to this, inconsistent results and dissatisfied learners were the final products of EFL classrooms. However, the rise of AI has introduced new possibilities and strategies to better address contemporary educational demands. In particular, generative AI tools offer instant and effective support, enabling more engaging and efficient learning experiences.

1.2. Significance of the research

In the EFL conformist classrooms, the knowledge is shared by customary ways. These ways do not utilize any technological tools. Due to this, EFL people bear difficulties in learning. With the integration of AI app, the utilization and comprehension of language has been interesting and fruitful. Therefore, some adult education programs have started incorporating these technologies into their teachings. This research seeks to look at the teachers' views regarding the integration of AI DeepSeek a large language model in teachings. The observations from this investigation will assert the authenticity of DeepSeek in supporting teachers notably.

1.3. Research Question

1. What perceptions Saudi EFL teachers hold about using DeepSeek in their teaching process?

2. Review of Literature

Generative AI is a transformative force across various industries, offering innovative solutions. AI involvement in numerous sectors has some pros and cons. According to Sedkaoui and Benaichouba (2024) the goal of AI is to enable machines to operate effectively and possess an understanding of their surroundings, making them intelligent. AI involves the use of computer systems to carry out tasks similar to those performed by humans, such as collecting, modifying, generating, acting autonomously, and applying knowledge to complex tasks (Boussioux et al., 2024). In generative AI context ChatGPT ChatGPT is a pioneer in AI conversational models. As a large language model designed to deliver accuracy, variety, and generate responses based on user prompts, it has transformed the way humans interact with computers (Cano-Marin, 2024). It offers exceptional customization and compatibility, enhancing the overall user experience. Kanbach et al. (2024) shared that ChatGPT has the ability to learn from user preferences to create personalized results.

2.2. What is DeepSeek?

DeepSeek has garnered significant attention both within the AI community and beyond. Since its introduction in January 2025, it is a new addition to the Generative AI landscape. It is a conversational large learning model that delivers accurate responses to user prompts. DeepSeek stands out in the market due to its unique features, including affordability and personalization, as it observes and analyses user behaviour, expertise level, and emotional tone. It also provides responses sourced from authoritative references, such as journals, ensuring precise

information. In addition, DeepSeek enhances user interaction by offering vibrant exploration through dynamic filtering, predictive questioning, and visual support. (Neha & Bhati, 2025). DeepSeek has some unique features, even comparing it with ChatGPT. Firstly, the training cost associated with DeepSeek's output and accuracy is significantly lower compared to ChatGPT. Then, DeepSeek focuses on advancing toward Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) and is specifically designed to process specialized domains and datasets more effectively. Further, it excels in providing precise information in areas such as legal, healthcare, and industry-specific data. Finally, DeepSeek is an open-source model, making it freely accessible to all users. This openness contributes to its widespread adoption and broad appeal. (Ali, Anwar and Zahid, 2025)

2.3. Theoretical connection

George Siemens (2004) and Stephen Downes (2005) viewed that connectivism begins when a person turns to digital technology to address a problem (Downes, 2022). This might involve actions like googling a question, texting a friend, or looking for relevant content on social media. The Connectivism Learning Theory suggests that using digital technology to solve problems enhances the understanding of a subject. (Peter & Ogunlade, 2024). Connectivism recognizes technology as a key factor in the learning process. The theory advocates that learning can effectively take place through digital platforms.

Connectivism builds on existing theories and suggests that technology is transforming what, how, and where we learn. In their research, Siemens and Downes outlined eight key principles of connectivism:

1. Learning and knowledge are found in a variety of perspectives.
2. Learning involves forming connections.
3. Learning can be stored in non-human tools.
4. The ability to learn is more important than simply knowing.
5. To keep learning, it's essential to nurture and maintain connections.
6. Recognizing connections between different fields, ideas, and concepts is a fundamental skill.
7. The goal of connectivism-learning is to have accurate, up-to-date knowledge.
8. Decision-making is a learning process, and what we know today may change tomorrow. What's correct now could be incorrect later due to the evolving nature of information (Ismail, 2024).

2.3.1. Some advantages of connectivism

It fosters collaboration as the learning happens when peers connect and exchange opinions, viewpoints, and ideas through collaboration (Mukhlis et al., 2024). This approach allows a community to validate their actions and enable spread of knowledge (Pandya et al., 2024). It empowers learners and teachers to create ambiances and building the communities for guiding the learners (Brown & Foster, 2023).

Further, diversity is another advantage of connectivism. It boosts up individuals to share their point of views and due to this knowledge is shared and no knowledge is superior to other (Zakaria et al., 2023). Researchers also found some disadvantages of connectivism lie sometimes instructors sometimes face trouble while shifting from dominant role to the partner one (Ali, Alaa & Shahnaz, 2024). Moreover, the students 'learning is dependent on their personal skill and not on the age group. Further, some learners, especially those new to a topic or with limited background knowledge, might need more structured guidance and direct teaching (Dziubaniuk, Ivanova-Gongne & Nyholm, 2023). Finally, sometimes, technology can be more of a barrier than a benefit (Ali et al., 2024).

2.4. Recent researches on DeepSeek

Since DeepSeek was released in January 2025, there is limited research available on the topic. However, some scholars have explored its structure, engineering, and capabilities. Mercer, Spillard, and Martin (2025) noted that DeepSeek is a model designed for efficient reasoning with minimal cost compared to other AI models, yet it remains a strong competitor. This generative AI model combines expert blending with reinforcement learning and advanced engineering as its key components. Its coverage is extensive, and it is structured to provide more precise results.

Arabi (2025) conducted a study to explore the opportunities and challenges of automation in accounting. The research highlighted promising prospects, such as the enhancement of analytical skills, practical applications through simulations, and the development of technicians, all observed through the use of DeepSeek. It was concluded that DeepSeek could have a significant impact on the field of accounting through AI-driven innovations.

Aydın et al. (2025) compared the DeepSeek, Qwen large language models (LLM), and ChatGPT. They noted that these tools are freely available, open to everyone, and without limitations on inquiries. Their universal appeal lies in the boundless nature of prompt queries and the absence of costs. Furthermore, they emphasized their strong potential in research, academic content development, and writing. By analyzing forty research articles on healthcare and Digital Twin, they integrated AI generative tools to produce content based on posed questions. Their findings revealed that all AI generative tools performed well and generated accurate content when compared to ChatGPT. This outcome reinforces the effectiveness of DeepSeek, a novel AI application in the market.

Given the rapid appreciation of DeepSeek, an unexplored research area was considered. The goal was to investigate the perspectives of teachers who have used DeepSeek in their English language classrooms. This study aims to be a pioneering effort to determine whether DeepSeek is widely accepted among teachers. Additionally, it will provide insights into local opinions on utilizing and exploring DeepSeek.

3. Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach for data analysis and interpretation. The quantitative method is particularly effective for gathering data that can be used for descriptive analysis.

3.1 Sampling process

The population encircled Saudi EFL teachers. From the said population, 30 teachers were selected from 10 different local universities. Both teachers and the local universities were chosen by simple random sampling pick and choose technique.

3.1.1. Participant Information

Table 2:

Gender	Num of participants	Age Range	AI app usage experience	English overall experience	Teaching Province	Native Country
Male	15	27-37 (8)	2	8-15	Eastern,	Saudi
		38-48(7)	2		Western	Arabia
Female	15	27-37 (7)	2	8-15	Eastern	Saudi
		38-48(8)	3		Western	Arabia
Total	30	100%				

3.2. Research Instruments

The instrument used for this study was a two-tiered, open-ended questionnaire. It gathered demographic information from the teachers and also captured their perspectives on the DeepSeek AI app. Participants were asked to give interviews with their consent. Moreover, the consent was taken from them to record the interviews.

3.3. Procedure of theme extraction from Atlas.ti.

3.3.1. Text Familiarity

The first step in thematic analysis is to deeply familiarize oneself with the data. This involves carefully reading and re-reading materials, like interview transcripts or survey responses, to fully grasp their scope and nuances.

3.3.2. Generating initial codes

After data familiarity, codes were initially assigned with the text sections. They are the pivotal aspects of the text which helped to generate codes later on.

3.3.3. Theme Search and review

After data coding, codes were collocated into the potential themes. In this procedure, the examination of data with codes align with the research questions was performed. These themes also provide us with a dataset of number of frequencies of particular words, phrases occurred in the text. Then the next phase was to review the themes which were done in two steps. Firstly the data was reviewed and then it was compared with the themes.

3.3.4. Naming and defining Themes

after the review, the themes were tagged by names and single line definition for better comprehension and connection for data analysis

3.4. Analysis

To collect the qualitative data, a focused visit was made to the participants, data was then analyzed using Atlas.ti for thematic analysis for extracting themes.

Findings from Qualitative Data

The qualitative data analysis identified five major themes which were extracted from Atlas.ti regarding the offering vivid output about the views of teachers in connecting with the integration of DeepSeek in EFL settings. Both qualitative and quantitative data. The major themes decoded from Atlas.ti are as follow:

Table 4: *Atlas.ti for analyzing the themes.*

This table shows the themes extracted from Claude AI and their explanations. The data were submitted to Claude AI. In the second stage, the number of tokens (words) in expression that occurred in the text was chosen as a major theme. Claude AI is a purposefully developed AI app for extracting themes from text. The second table shares examples from the teachers' interviews for each theme.

No	Themes	Text Examples
1.	Relevance of Deepseek in EFL classrooms	Teacher 1 expressed: "DeepkSeek is a latest AI sensation which can provides replies to many EFL questions. The conversational element makes it pertinent to EFL settings" T10 shared: "Generative AI app like DeepSeek is pertinent to the EFL classrooms due to the diversity, output and accuracy of information. Also. instant output is its key

2.	Motivating EFL learners	<p>T5 stated:” <i>DeepSeek for me can be one of the best tools for increasing learners’ motivation. The seamless learning capability and the interesting options given by DeepSeek motivates learners.</i>”</p> <p>T15 shared: “<i>I believe that short summaries, making important questions and also simplifying any difficult concept makes DeepSeek the biggest motivator for learners.</i>”</p>
3.	Support collaborative environment	<p>T18 said:” <i>I observed, DeepSeek fostered collaboration through interesting outputs. Though, I designed collaborative environment but DeepSeek supported me to have a lot of attractive activities</i>”.</p> <p>Teacher 9 viewed: “<i>I put my learners together for better output. For this, I didn’t have to design a single activity like earlier. DeepSeek did that for me by giving effective and impactful collaborative activities.</i>”</p>
4.	Students response to DeepSeek-based activities	<p>Teacher 7 shared:” <i>Students felt enthusiastic and were eager to use it in the classroom.</i>”</p> <p>Teacher 14 told:” <i>I found my students welcoming and energetic. They were ready to use and showed curiosity in integrating it.</i>”</p>
5.	Particular challenges during DeepSeek integration	<p>In view of Teacher 17:” <i>There are no specific challenge as DeepSeek is easy in use and simple app.</i>”</p> <p>Teacher 6: “<i>The only challenge is to blend DeepSeek with the syllabus to get better outcome.</i>”</p>
6.	Comparison of DeepSeek compare to more traditional language learning methods	<p>Teacher 13 expressed:”<i>DeepSeek is definitely better as it is contrary to the traditional approaches of teaching and learning. It is catchy, efficient and</i></p> <p>Teacher 4 said</p>
7.	DeepSeek with ChatGPT comparison	<p>Teacher 16 said:” <i>well, to my knowledge DeepSeek provides better out put in precision to technical academic prompt.</i>”</p> <p>Teacher 3 said: “<i>Both are perfect, as conversational AI tool I will recommend to utilize both in teaching and learning.</i>”</p>
8.	Benefits DeepSeek has in an EFL classroom	<p>Teacher 8 shared:” <i>I think DeepSeek offered easy learning. It also supports collaboration with free access without limits of data input.</i>”</p> <p>Teacher 2 said:” <i>To me, the uninterrupted output with swiftness and efficiency are the major benefits of DeepSeek. It seems it can provide reply to anything in the world</i>”</p>
9.	Helping to overcome difficulties of learners	<p>Teacher 11 said:” <i>Yes! By fostering catchy activities, precise summaries and relevant information it can minimize learner’s issues.</i>”</p>

		Teacher 2 shared: <i>“Learning in EFL is individual also, with DeepSeek, an individual can ask for any problematic area on which he/ she can get the desired output. Personalized learning is a key of this AI app.”</i>
10.	Rigorous implementation in EFL settings	Teacher 20 expressed: <i>“For rigorous implementation, I will suggest to design syllabus which is a blend of tasks that demands DeepSeek involvement.”</i> Teacher 12 said: <i>“This is for the policy makers, Managers and heads of institutes to devise a structure that supports DeepSeek implementation. Lessons plans should be made according to the involvement of DeepSeek.”</i>

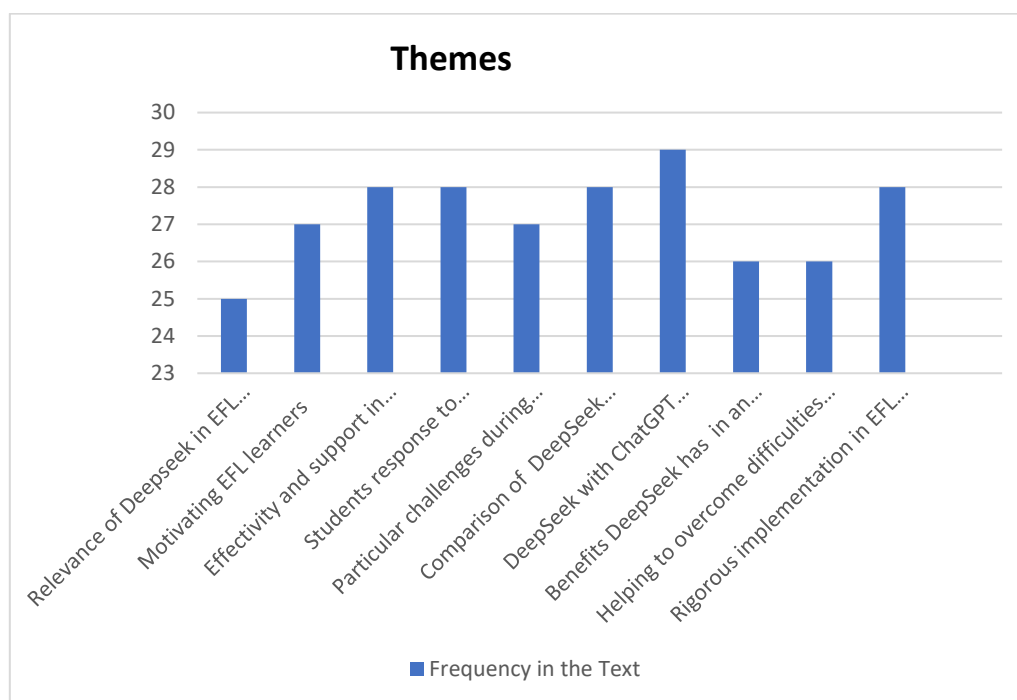


Figure 1: *Most frequently mentioned themes in the text.*

3.5. Discussion

The coding through Atlas.ti shared some frequently occurred themes which completed the canvas of teachers’ perspective regarding DeepSeek. Teachers believed that DeepSeek is a novice yet impactful AI tool introduced to enhance ease and smoothness operations for its users.

The questionnaire on DeepSeek was designed to assess its user-friendliness, efficiency and effectiveness. Positive responses were evident after analysing the quantitative data. The majority of learners highlighted the effectiveness, efficiency, and their preference for DeepSeek.

The open-ended interview results exhibit a vivid tilt of teachers towards the use of DeepSeek. They expressed that it is increasingly viewed as a relevant and a revolutionary tool and a trend in the realm of Generative AI conversational apps.in this aspect they are on the similar view

with Ali, Anwar and Zahid (2024) who shared that DeepSeek is the latest tool for learning in English learning. Further, because of the attractive and interesting outputs generated from inputs it motivates learners. Neha and Bhati (2025) also stated that AI apps are best to raise motivation in second and foreign language contexts. Going ahead, the effectivity of DeepSeek in the view of teachers is superb and it provides significant help inside and even outside teaching environment. From providing pertinent examples to giving relevant information this AI app is supportive to its user (Mercer, Spillard & Martin, 2025). Similar findings were observed in this research. Moreover, teachers believed that the learners get themselves engaged and become interested in using DeepSeek. Krause (2025) shares that diversification of activities with effectiveness is a key of AI models. Traditional learning methods have become less effective, and it is evident that English language learners now prefer more contemporary methods to fulfill their educational needs. AI-driven applications play a crucial role in enhancing both technology and communication, leading to better learning results (Sejnowski, 2024). The rise of AI has opened up new opportunities, offering an innovative way to address today's educational requirements, as demonstrated by the positive feedback from learners (Maluleke, 2024). Even in comparison with ChatGPT teachers found it to be as impactful and helpful as ChatGPT. Brown and Foster (2023) also expressed that ChatGPT and DeepSeek are generative conversational models design to provide seamless and accurate output. Yet teachers believed that DeepSeek is open-source and free to use. Overall, the teachers shared that it gives a lot of benefits due to low cost, easy to use app, friendly app interface and simple design.

This research joins with the key aspects of connectivism. It is observed here that learners developed formal connections through DeepSeek which is a digital tool. Downes (2022) shared that learning needs formal connectivity and it is in non-human tools. The perspective of teachers validated that accurate and updated knowledge was the goal which is also the aim of connectivism (Peter & Ogunlade, 2024). Then, this latest app was recognized to be a decision-making tool which helps in providing a learning platform. Ismail (2024) shared that in connectivism, learning can effectively take place through digital platforms. Overall, this research is clipped with the research by Arabit (2025) and Aydin et al. (2025) who believed that AI app like Deepk seek have universal appeal and they it can perform magnificently well according to the needs and requirements of users.

4. Conclusion

Crucial outcomes have been recorded regarding the teachers' perspectives regarding DeepSeek. The analysis done through Atlas.ti recommends that teachers found this new conversational generative AI app to be efficient, free of cost where one can ask unlimited queries unlike ChatGPT. Especially contrasting with ChatGPT this new app is easier due to its free use and accurate outcomes. From connectivism viewpoint, DeepSeek served as a binding force to help users collaborate, connect and share information for a positive outcome.

This study gives various outcomes for many stakeholders to use this as one of the pioneers for an experimental study later on. The questionnaire from the study reflects that AI tools are now emerging rapidly and their efficacy is undeniable. The study can aid future investigators, policy designers and administrative officers to use DeepSeek for better and effective outcome.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

1. Do you think "DeepSeek" is relevant in EFL classrooms?
2. DO you think DeepSeek enhances the learners' engagement and learning outcomes?
3. Do you feel DeepSeek motivated EFL learners ?
4. Do you believe DeepSeek supported collaborative environment for EFL learners?
5. How do students typically respond to DeepSeek-based activities?
6. Are there particular challenges you faced during DeepSeek integration?
7. In your opinion, how does DeepSeek compare to more traditional language learning methods in terms of effectiveness for EFL students?
8. What do you think are the biggest benefit DeepSeek has in an EFL classroom?
9. How DeepSeek helped students to overcome difficulties in language learning
10. Do you think DeepSeek should be rigorously integrated in EFL settings?

Appendix

B

