

# Impact of ChatGPT on the Role of Elementary and Middle School English Teachers and Its Transformation

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**Abstract.** The integration between ChatGPT and education is gradually becoming a new hot topic. ChatGPT brings convenience to education. At the same time, ChatGPT has also brought certain impacts on education, such as the change of teachers' roles, especially elementary and middle English teachers in EFL countries. The integration between ChatGPT and education has changed the logic of English teaching in EFL countries. The integration between ChatGPT and education has also influenced the English teaching priorities in EFL countries. As a result, the roles of elementary and middle English teachers in EFL countries have changed under the influence of ChatGPT. EFL teachers have shifted from teaching learning to teaching thinking, and from evaluators to monitors. To adjust to these new roles, elementary and middle school teachers need to improving digital competencies, distinguish their own subjective practicalities, and create more emotional values.

**Keywords:** ChatGPT, English teacher, EFL.

## 1. Introduction

Because of COVID-19 Epidemic's impact, digitalized education has developed in a rapid way. As the great development of Artificial Intelligence, ChatGPT is quickly gaining popularity. Under this background, the integration between ChatGPT and education immediately becomes a hot issue. Compared with other teaching tools, if ChatGPT is used as a teaching tool, it has the inspiring content generation capability, the dialogue context understanding capability, the sequential task execution capability, and the programming language analysis capability [1]. These four capabilities make it become a new teaching subject in education. Meanwhile, the influence of ChatGPT on teachers' roles become a discussed issue. Teachers' role could reflect social demands for education. As society develops, demands for teachers continue to change, therefore, teachers' role also continues to change. Especially under the background of ChatGPT, it could not only bring about convenience but also might make teachers' role change [2]. Optimists believe the integration of ChatGPT and education could boost the efficiency of education and help the development of students [3]. There are already scholars indicating that ChatGPT has potential educational applications. Through study, ChatGPT has been able to initially accomplish the task of evaluating instruction [1]. Therefore, the integration of ChatGPT and teaching can release teachers' burden of repetitive works.

At the same time, we couldn't ignore the risks after the combination, such as, such as the risk of knowledge alienation, the risk of student subjectivity alienation, the risk of teaching process alienation, the risk of digital ethics, and the risk of digital education governance [4]. The interaction between ChatGPT and teachers or ChatGPT and students makes ChatGPT become a new educational subject. Traditional pedagogical relationships have changed from binary to ternary [5]. It might influence teachers' roles. Current research on the impact of ChatGPT on the role of the teacher has mainly focused university and college or native speakers. Only few research focus on elementary education and teachers in EFL (English as Foreign Language) countries. Therefore, this essay would focus on primary and secondary English teachers, especially in EFL countries. Through this essay, ChatGPT's influence on teachers' role would be discussed. Furthermore, a range of suggestions would be given about adjusting to the new role.

## **2. The Integration of ChatGPT into English Teaching in EFL Countries**

### **2.1. The Influence Over Teaching Logic**

In EFL countries, students could use English normally as a second language tool. However, in international English proficiency tests, such as IELTS (The International English Language Testing System), many examiners have difficulty understanding expressions in Chinese students' writing [6]. That is the result of different language thinking logic. In EFL countries, modes of teaching English tend to be based on their language habits [7]. Both teachers and students are accustomed to teaching and learning English through comprehension in the mother tongue before learning it. Because of this, traditional EFL teaching lacks a real, effective English context.

However, the integration of ChatGPT and English teaching might solve this problem. ChatGPT is a language model based on the thinking of English speakers. In this way, it provides high-quality, authentic language expression and usage [8]. This potential function could make up for the lack of real English context. In other words, students in EFL countries could directly learn real native speakers' English logic.

### **2.2. The Influence over Teachers' Teaching Priorities**

Traditional EFL teaching more focus on general knowledge output and ignores different students' personally various doubts. ChatGPT gives chances to personalize learning experiences for students [9]. In this way, teachers could use ChatGPT for personalized and efficient instruction. What's more, traditional EFL teaching more focuses on teaching knowledge. Teachers may assess learning by testing mastery of knowledge in the form of translation, spelling, grammar, etc. Because of this, it is hard for teachers to avoid teaching only for knowledge rather than abilities. ChatGPT has a strong database, in the future, it may take over some people only with knowledge. Therefore, EFL teachers begin to turn to focus more on developing students' abilities.

## **3. Impact of ChatGPT on the Role of English Teachers in Elementary and Middle Schools**

In EFL countries, younger students lack systematic mastery of English learning methods. With a range of experience, teachers have these skills. In this way, in EFL learning, teachers still play important roles in teacher-student relationships. However, the integration of ChatGPT might change the ways of EFL teaching. Therefore, it is significant for EFL teachers to rebuilt their role to adapt the future changes. In this way, students can use English as a useful tool under the background of ChatGPT, and teachers can teach in more effective way and satisfy the need of society.

### **3.1. From Teaching Knowledge to Teaching Ways of Thinking**

In traditional EFL teaching, teachers play important roles in teaching knowledge. With formal experience and advanced teaching planning, teachers are knowledge's direct contractors. EFL students gain knowledge from teachers' teaching indirectly. After ChatGPT's integration, teachers are no matter only teaching knowledge. ChatGPT has powerful generation features. Some studies have shown that teachers can ask ChatGPT to generate natural English texts for teaching English [10]. In this way, under teachers' guidance, student could learn knowledge directly. But ChatGPT cannot take over EFL teachers totally. Therefore, teachers need to teach students how to think.

For one thing, teachers need to teach students dependent and critical thinking. ChatGPT can provide personalized and lively instructional texts. This greatly enhances student learning autonomy [11]. In traditional EFL teacher-student relationships, teachers, as direct knowledge contact people, only teach students correct knowledge. The integration of ChatGPT might destroy the status quo. However, because of this status quo, EFL students are lack of the capabilities of thinking dependently and critically. Traditionally, the whole knowledge gained from teachers is true. Students do not need to distinguish true or false dependently and critically. However it is important to regard ChatGPT's

disadvantages carefully. Because of the limitations of the algorithm, ChatGPT may provide false information for the purpose of reaching the questioner [12]. In the future, ChatGPT would become a teaching assistant to appear in the EFL teacher-student relationship. Students could contact with true or false knowledge. Therefore, EFL teachers need to teach students to use their formal knowledge to distinguish new information.

For another, teachers need to teach students to prompt engineering thinking. In the ChatGPT usage environment, prompting is the process of designing the prompting session model text [13]. The precondition of effective conversations with ChatGPT is an effective prompt [14]. ChatGPT is the generative chatbot. It requires questioner guidance. In this way, to have effective learning, EFL teachers and students need to have the capability to use detailed and effective prompts. Compared with native-speaker countries, most EFL countries, especially countries in Asia, belong to high-context cultures. In a high-context culture, people tend to not use too many details to express their ideas [15]. Therefore, for EFL teachers, learning and handling the capabilities of using prompts remains an important challenge. The prompt engineering thinking is an essential thinking capability for students. EFL teachers must help students to gain this thinking ability.

### **3.2. From Evaluator of Learning to Monitor of Learning**

In traditional EFL teaching, teachers play the role of evaluators. After teachers' teaching and students' learning, evaluating is a significant part. Through evaluation, teachers could know the effectiveness of teaching. In this way, teachers could further refine their approach to teaching. Through evaluation, teachers could know the qualities of students' learning. In this way, teachers could give different students personalized guidance and suggestions. After the integration between ChatGPT and teaching in EFL, ChatGPT might take over teachers' role as evaluators. After initial domestication, ChatGPT has been able to complete the correction of homework and test papers [16]. Meanwhile, ChatGPT could give personalized suggestions depending on different students' learning styles.

However, ChatGPT involvement spawns new roles for teachers as monitors. The role of the monitors is expressed in terms of learning integrity, quality of learning, and learning autonomy.

ChatGPT's engagement makes integrity a new discussion point [17]. It is convenient for EFL students to use ChatGPT to finish their homework and review their studies. It gives students real English contexts and personalized guidance. In the meantime, it is much easier for students to have dishonest learning behaviors. There is already a study represents some middle school students using ChatGPT to finish some homework and online examinations [18]. Students could ask ChatGPT for some difficult homework rather than solve it by their own selves. Homework and examinations are significant ways for students to figure out their shortage of study. Additionally, in elementary and middle school, it is important for students to develop self-study habits by finishing homework and studying alone. Using ChatGPT dishonestly might cause habits to fail to be built. Therefore, EFL teachers must become monitors of integrity. Teachers must normalize the use of ChatGPT.

In general, the interaction between students and ChatGPT might enlarge students' knowledge of thinking. Its strong database could give students different answers. However, there is instability and homogeneity in the output of the answer by ChatGPT. Teachers' strong knowledge base could help students figure out ChatGPT's instability and homogeneity. Therefore, teachers must monitor the learning quality.

Instability represents ChatGPT might give one same question different answers. ChatGPT giving answers depends on tips from questioners. Essentially, ChatGPT keeps on giving answers to satisfy questioners' needs. In this way, to satisfy questioners, ChatGPT might change the correct answers to the wrong ones. However, students in elementary and middle school don't have such a strong knowledge background to figure out the wrong answers. It may decrease the quality of students' study. Homogeneity representing ChatGPT might limit students' ideas. ChatGPT also gives answers that require questioners' effective hints. The "effective" means that the questioners' hints are clear and comprehensive. Elementary and middle school students have a narrow knowledge base, so their

output of hints is often limited to a certain field. Therefore, the answers given by ChatGPT are also limited to a certain field. In other words, ChatGPT might decrease learning quality by limiting the answer. Thus, teachers should give more emphasis on monitoring the learning quality.

Furthermore, ChatGPT's engagement creates challenges to students' learning autonomy, therefore, it is more important for teachers to become monitors. This manifests itself in two ways, increased dependence on ChatGPT and decreased student motivation. Students may become increasingly reliant on ChatGPT for problem-solving rather than thinking or finding answers on their own. The instant answers and convenience provided by ChatGPT make students inclined to seek help directly from the AI when they encounter a problem rather than taking the time to think independently or solve the problem through other means. This over-reliance may weaken students' independent learning and problem-solving skills. Due to the convenience of ChatGPT, some students may lose interest in learning and believe that they do not need to make an effort to study on their own as long as they have the help of AI. When students realize that answers or help are easily available, learning may become less challenging and fulfilling. This diminished motivation to learn may lead to less student commitment to self-directed learning, affecting their long-term learning habits and attitudes. It's really essentially a question of the ethical relationship between ChatGPT and its users. The teachers' past experience gives them the ability to deal with these issues. Teachers, as monitors, can set clear rules for ChatGPT use and require students to complete tasks independently. Teachers can also organize regular discussions with students about their experiences and feelings when using ChatGPT, encourage them to reflect on their learning behaviors, and help them adjust and improve their learning strategies through feedback.

## 4. Suggestions

In the future, the integration between ChatGPT and EFL teaching will become a normal thing. At the same time, the rebuilt roles would become EFL teachers' new roles. To adapt to these new roles, EFL teachers must develop new qualities. First of all, EFL teachers must improve their digital competency. Secondly, EFL teachers need to distinguish their own subjective practicality. Thirdly, EFL teachers need to harness emotional value.

### 4.1. Improving Digital Competency

ChatGPT is a new AI technology tool. People have tried to make the integration between ChatGPT and education. In the future, there must be more and more professional education on AI technology tools. They may be similar to ChatGPT. Or even they would be more advanced than ChatGPT. In any case, EFL teachers need to discover the opportunities they bring, accept the challenges they present, and handle them. After handling, EFL teachers must learn to skillfully use it before, during, and after class. EFL teachers need to use them to have more creative teaching and explore different effective teaching methods.

### 4.2. Distinguishing Subjective Practicality

Some scholars have already suggested that college teachers should pay more attention to the subjective practicality of the individual and rebuild the teacher-student relationship [19]. In EFL countries, elementary and middle school English teachers greater need to focus on subjective practicality. Elementary and middle school students are not yet mature in their psychological development. Their understanding of many new things is not comprehensive enough. Therefore, they need guidance from their teachers. If not, they may depend on ChatGPT too much and study in a dishonest way. Especially in EFL teaching, as non-native speakers, without the guidance of the teacher, they may form wrong language logic at the early stage of learning. In this way, EFL teachers must know their important status in the teacher-student relationship. ChatGPT may come into this relationship as a teaching assistant. However, it would not change teachers' significant functions.

Only under teachers' experienced guidance, EFL students could have a clearly and systematic cognition of English language learning.

### 4.3. Creating More Emotional Values

ChatGPT allows for a question-and-answer session but lacks the authenticity of interaction to provide human-specific emotional value. Therefore, first of all, EFL teachers should bring the emotional value of sociality to their students. Teachers should actively encourage cooperative learning. This not only helps students to practice English but also develops teamwork, collaboration, and conflict-resolution skills. When students are confused, frustrated, or stressed, teachers can provide emotional support and comfort to help them maintain a positive attitude toward learning. Teachers need to create a favorable classroom environment. This boosts students' self-confidence and sense of belonging and allows them to feel safe and supported in their learning process.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the integration of ChatGPT and education has brought a greater impact on the role of English teachers in elementary and middle schools in EFL countries. Elementary and middle school English teachers have shifted from teaching students to learn to teach them to think. Elementary and middle schools' English teachers have also changed from evaluators of learning to monitors of studying. However, the integration of education and ChatGPT will certainly bring great progress to education in the future. Therefore, in order to better adapt to their new roles and better help students learn, elementary and middle English teachers need to improve digital competencies, distinguish their own subjective practicalities, and create more emotional values.

But this study still has some limitations. The population of the study is limited to elementary and middle English teachers in EFL countries, and the scope of the study is limited to the subject of English. In the future, it is hoped that the impact of ChatGPT on the role of the teacher will no longer be limited to the subject of English. It is possible to go for more impacts of ChatGPT on basic education.

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