

Research on the Practical Path of Integrating ChatGPT into College English Education in the Era of Generative AI

Wanqing Xie

School of Humanities and Sport, Hebei Oriental University, Langfang, China

Abstract: In the current era of digital transformation in education and rapid development of generative AI, English education in universities still faces problems such as fixed teaching models, difficulty in implementing personalized teaching, and weak training in listening and speaking. ChatGPT combines the advantages of natural language interaction, massive corpus storage, and real-time intelligent feedback, bringing a new empowerment path for the reform of English education in universities. This article combines the current situation of English education in universities, relies on digital education policies and teaching practice data, analyzes its adaptability to English education in universities, explores the integration practice path of classroom teaching and other dimensions, constructs a multi-layer guarantee mechanism, and provides optimization ideas for application problems such as technology trust and excessive dependence. This study provides practical reference for the deep integration of generative AI and college English education, promoting its transformation towards a "language ability+Digital literacy" training model, and helping to improve the quality of college English teaching and talent cultivation efficiency.

Keywords: Generative AI, ChatGPT, College English Education, Practical Path, Educational Digitalization, Digital Literacy.

1. Introduction

The digitization of education is accelerating its penetration into all aspects of education and teaching, becoming a crucial breakthrough in building an educational powerhouse. The Ministry of Education has made clear arrangements to promote the deep integration of large language models (LLMs) with education and teaching, and actively explore new development paradigms and teaching forms of "AI + Education". As a core carrier for cultivating students' cross-cultural communicative competence and shaping global perspectives, college English education still has a significant gap between the current teaching situation and the core needs of talent cultivation in the new era. Specifically, the average student-teacher ratio for foreign language majors in universities announced by the Ministry of Education is about 12:1, and for some universities, the student-teacher ratio for college English (for non-English majors) exceeds 15:1. The limitations of large-class teaching hinder the effective implementation of personalized teaching; The overall participation rate for the National College English Test Band 4 and Band 6 oral exams has been consistently below 30%, and the cultivation of listening and speaking abilities has become a prominent weakness that hinders the improvement of students' language application abilities, which contradicts the goal of cultivating cross-cultural communicative competence. A survey on the digital teaching ability of foreign language teachers in universities shows that over 30% of them have shortcomings in AI technology application ability, and their technical competencies are disconnected from the actual teaching needs, making it challenging to keep up with the pace of digital teaching. In 2024, a pivotal year for the further advancement of smart education in China, various intelligent tools have undergone continuous iteration and upgrading, and the emergence of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT will provide a new path to solve the development dilemma of English education in universities. Its unique advantages in

language scene simulation, diverse material generation, personalized and precise guidance are highly in line with the core demands of English education in universities. The precise adaptation of this technology to teaching needs has injected new vitality into educational innovation. In this context, exploring the scientific practice path of integrating ChatGPT into college English education, standardizing its application scenarios and boundaries, is of great practical significance for promoting the reform of college English education and improving teaching effectiveness [1].

2. Realistic Pain Points of English Education in Universities in the Era of Generative AI

In the context of the comprehensive penetration of generative AI technology, the existing paradigm of English education in universities has clearly deviated from the core demands of talent cultivation in the new era. The deep constraints mainly focus on four dimensions: teaching implementation, teacher quality, practical empowerment, and evaluation system, and all the problems are supported by industry research data and frontline teaching practices. Firstly, the implementation of personalized teaching has encountered bottlenecks. The average student-teacher ratio for foreign language majors in universities announced by the Ministry of Education is about 12:1, and in some places, the student-teacher ratio for college English (for non-English majors) at some universities exceeds 15:1. The inherent limitations of large-class teaching make it challenging for teachers to take into account students with varying English proficiency levels. Layered teaching and personalized guidance have always been challenging to implement, making it challenging to achieve the original intention of teaching according to individual needs. Secondly, there are shortcomings in the cultivation of listening and speaking abilities. The overall participation rate for the National College English Test Band

4 and Band 6 oral exams has been consistently below 30%. English teaching in universities still tends to overemphasize reading and writing at the expense of listening and speaking. In addition, there is a lack of immersive and high-frequency oral practice scenarios, which makes it challenging for students to fully hone their English language application abilities and hinders the improvement of cross-cultural communicative competence. Thirdly, the promotion of digital teaching practice lags behind. Nearly 60% of local undergraduate universities have not yet established AI education and training scenarios for school-enterprise cooperation. A survey on the digital teaching ability of foreign language teachers in universities shows that more than 30% of teachers have a gap in AI technology application ability, and about 35% of teachers are burdened with varying degrees of technology application anxiety. Cognitive biases have led to the application of digital teaching tools only staying at the surface level and failing to deeply integrate into the teaching process [2]. Fourthly, the teaching evaluation system has limitations in homogenization. English teaching in universities still relies on summative assessments such as final exams and CET-4 and CET-6 scores, lacking dynamic tracking and diverse assessments of students' learning processes and language application abilities. It is challenging to comprehensively and accurately map students' comprehensive English literacy and provide effective support for personalized teaching improvement [3].

3. The Adaptability Foundation of ChatGPT Integration into College English Education

The practical pain points of English education in universities have provided precise application opportunities for ChatGPT technology empowerment, while the multidimensional support system consisting of policy orientation, technological characteristics, faculty reserves, and teaching resources has laid a solid foundation for the deep integration of the two. From a policy perspective, the "Outline of the Plan for Building an Education Strong Country (2024-2035)" clearly outlines the development blueprint of "AI + Education", and various education departments have successively issued supporting implementation rules. The Ministry of Education's "Opinions on Accelerating the Promotion of Education Digitalization" further refines the requirements and promotes the deep coupling of large language models (LLMs) with all elements and processes of education and teaching. This not only sets clear policy boundaries for the integration of ChatGPT into English education in universities, but also provides solid policy endorsement for universities to carry out relevant teaching practices. In terms of technical features, ChatGPT's natural language interaction capability can simulate immersive, multi-domain cross-cultural dialogue scenarios, accurately filling the gap in English listening and speaking teaching scenarios in universities. Its corpus also has dynamic updating characteristics, which can fit the current language usage reality; Its massive multi domain and multi genre corpus reserve balances standardization and diversity, and can efficiently complement the English course resources with over 1.2 billion annual visits on the National Smart Education Platform, significantly expanding the coverage and adaptability of teaching materials. In terms of teacher and resource guarantee, after the implementation of the Ministry

of Education's Digital Teacher Training Special Plan, the overall attainment rate of digital literacy among university teachers has increased to over 80%. Various universities have also carried out school-based training on AI teaching applications, laying a core competency support for ChatGPT teaching applications [4]; Many domestic universities have established a complete digital teaching hardware matrix, such as the official website of Hanshan Normal University, which is equipped with 84 smart classrooms and 7 professional voice laboratories. Most universities have introduced platforms such as Chaoxing Learning Management System and Pigai Network, which can achieve seamless technical integration and collaborative functions with ChatGPT. In addition, ChatGPT's real-time intelligent feedback function can quickly respond to personalized learning questions from students, adjust the depth and method of Q&A for students with varying English proficiency levels, highly meet the needs of independent English learning after class in universities [5], and aligns well with the current online and offline integrated teaching paradigm. This multidimensional integration has removed key barriers to the practical application of this technology.

4. The Core Practice Path of Integrating ChatGPT into College English Education

The integration of ChatGPT and college English education must be anchored in the fundamental pedagogical needs, focusing on the three core fields of classroom empowerment, after-school guidance, and teaching evaluation, and achieving a deep transition from technological tools to teaching empowerment elements. All practical paths are rooted in the mature experience of digital English teaching in domestic universities. In the classroom setting, for listening and speaking teaching, ChatGPT is used to build diversified cross-cultural dialogue scenes such as daily greetings, business negotiations, and academic discussions, providing students with one-on-one immersive oral practice and instant error correction guidance, cleverly solving the dilemma of low participation and scarce practical opportunities in traditional classroom oral practice; Targeting reading and writing courses, ChatGPT can generate reading texts and writing frameworks with different themes and graded difficulty levels, guiding students to delve deeper into discourse deconstruction and practical writing. This not only enriches the dimensions of teaching materials, but also strengthens the precise adaptability of content [6]; For translation courses, ChatGPT generates multi-domain and cross domain translation cases as a carrier to guide students in distinguishing the advantages and disadvantages of machine translation and manual translation methods, and to hone their translation thinking ability and cross-cultural translation literacy. During the self-directed learning session after class, ChatGPT can tailor personalized learning plans based on core elements such as students' English proficiency and preparation goals, and accurately push suitable content [7]; At the same time, relying on real-time Q&A function, it efficiently resolves students' confusion in vocabulary analysis, grammar application, sentence structure optimization, and other aspects after class. Practical data from multiple universities shows that this type of intelligent guidance models can increase the pass rate of College English Test Band 4 by 15% -20%, effectively enhancing learning

efficiency. In the dimension of teaching evaluation, ChatGPT is used to accurately collect process data such as students' classroom interaction performance, post-class practice effectiveness, and oral simulation quality. It is linked with the multimodal intelligent evaluation system of college English to achieve accurate matching of over 85% of tutoring resources, promote the transformation of the evaluation system from a single result-oriented approach to a comprehensive evaluation that is process oriented, diversified, and personalized, and comprehensively outline the true level of students' English application ability and comprehensive literacy.

5. Implementation Guarantee Mechanism for Integrating ChatGPT into College English Education

To achieve scientific adaptation and efficient implementation of ChatGPT in English education in universities, it is necessary to establish a four-dimensional linkage guarantee system between universities, teachers, students, and technology, clarify the core responsibilities and action logic of each subject, ensure the deep integration of technology application and teaching essence, and avoid potential risks such as technology abuse and technology disconnection. At the university level, it is necessary to establish the characteristics and positioning of English teaching in the school, formulate detailed rules for the application of ChatGPT teaching, and clearly define its applicable scenarios, usage boundaries, and operational guidelines in different courses; At the same time, we will accelerate the construction of an exclusive teaching platform for the integration of AI and English education on campus, deepen the collaboration between schools and enterprises, fill the gaps in AI education training scenarios in local universities, and create a standardized and regulated technology application ecosystem for teachers and students. At the teacher level, universities should establish a regular specialized training system, focusing on improving ChatGPT application skills, and emphasizing the development of teachers' teaching design and integration abilities. Teachers should be guided to reshape their teaching processes, using ChatGPT as an auxiliary carrier to achieve the organic integration of technology empowerment and teaching experience [8]; At the same time, teachers are encouraged to deepen their interdisciplinary teaching research and integrate the cultivation of digital literacy into the daily teaching texture, in line with the goals of cultivating English professionals. At the student level, it is necessary to strengthen the cultivation of AI usage literacy, rely on various forms such as special lectures and course immersion, guide students to rationally recognize the tool attributes of ChatGPT, avoid the inertia of overly relying on AI to complete core tasks such as writing and translation, and build core abilities for independent thinking and language expression; Simultaneously incorporating digital literacy into English assessment dimensions, honing students' ability to use AI technology in a standardized manner and their information recognition literacy. At the technical level, it is necessary to strictly abide by the red line of laws and regulations such as the Personal Information Protection Law, establish a full-process security protection mechanism for students' learning data, and build a strong security barrier between personal

information and learning data; Synchronize the establishment of a ChatGPT teaching corpus review and calibration mechanism [9], promptly correct corpus errors, cultural deviations, and other issues in the model output, and establish a bottom line for the accuracy and standardization of teaching content.

6. Reflection and Optimization Direction on the Integration of ChatGPT into College English Education Practice

The application of ChatGPT in English education in universities is still in the exploratory and practical stage. Based on feedback from digital teaching practices in universities and research and analysis by foreign language teachers, there are still many urgent issues that need to be addressed in its implementation. It is necessary to provide targeted optimization paths to promote the deep integration and efficient fusion of technology and teaching. From practical reflection, firstly, the validity of the content output of technology is questionable. Some foreign language teachers have reported that ChatGPT has corpus errors and cultural biases. About 30% of teachers hold a cautious attitude towards the credibility of its content output, which directly hinders the effectiveness of teaching implementation; Secondly, the hidden concern of students' excessive reliance is becoming increasingly prominent. Some students use ChatGPT to do core tasks such as English homework, writing, and translation, which weakens their independent thinking and language proficiency, deviating from the core educational goals of English education; Thirdly, there is a lack of adaptability in scenarios, and there are significant differences in educational goals and teaching cores between basic college English (for non-English majors) and English major training. Currently, ChatGPT teaching lacks targeted and differentiated design, making it challenging to meet the teaching demands of different courses; Fourthly, the application effectiveness evaluation system has not yet taken shape, and universities have not established scientific quantitative indicators for the effectiveness of generative AI English teaching applications such as ChatGPT, making it challenging to accurately measure their actual effectiveness in improving teaching quality and student abilities [10]. From the perspective of optimization, the first step is to establish a collaborative teaching paradigm of "teacher+AI", anchor the teacher's main position, and use ChatGPT as an auxiliary carrier to achieve complementary advantages between humans and machines, enabling technology to empower rather than replace teaching; Secondly, establish an exclusive iteration mechanism for ChatGPT teaching corpus, benchmark the English curriculum guidelines and content requirements of universities, create an exclusive corpus, and improve the accuracy and adaptability of model output; implement a track-based integration strategy, combine the characteristics of college English (for non-English majors) and English majors, customize differentiated application scenarios, plans, and guidelines, and strengthen technical adaptability; Finally, its application effectiveness will be incorporated into the comprehensive evaluation system for English teaching, and quantitative indicators will be constructed from the dimensions of teaching effectiveness, student ability advancement, and teaching satisfaction to promote continuous iteration and improvement of teaching applications.

7. Conclusion

Under the wave of generative AI and with the continuous iteration and evolution of technology, the deep integration of ChatGPT and college English education is an irreversible trend in the digital transformation of education. Its unique technological endowment is highly compatible with the practical bottlenecks of college English education, providing a new breakthrough path for teaching reform, quality upgrading, and efficiency improvement. This article is based on the reality of English education in universities, analyzing the bottlenecks in teaching implementation, teacher quality, and practical empowerment. It accurately captures the core contradictions between teaching and learning, clarifies the policy support, technical characteristics, teacher reserves, and resource supply for the integration of the two, and explores specific integration paths from the three core dimensions of classroom empowerment, after-school guidance, and teaching evaluation. It constructs a four-dimensional linkage implementation guarantee system between universities, teachers, students, and technology, and proposes targeted reflection and optimization paths based on frontline practical feedback. It should be clarified that ChatGPT has always been an auxiliary carrier of English education in universities, serving the fundamental task of cultivating students' moral character. It cannot replace the teaching subject status and humanistic infiltration function of teachers. Its core value lies in empowering teaching innovation, enriching educational forms, and helping students improve their comprehensive English application ability and digital literacy. In the future, English education in universities needs to benchmark against the curriculum reform requirements of the Ministry of Education, adhere to the original intention of "student-centered", balance the dialectical relationship between technological empowerment and independent ability cultivation, deeply cultivate the integration of technology and teaching through scientific norms, improved guarantee mechanisms, and continuous optimization, and realize the transformation from traditional language skills training to a composite talent training model of "language ability+digital literacy+cross-cultural vision", in order to provide English professionals who possess both cross-cultural competitiveness and digital competence, and meet the needs of the new era for the construction of an educational powerhouse.

References

- [1] Perkins, M., Furze, L., Roe, J., & MacVaugh, J. (2024). The Artificial Intelligence Assessment Scale (AIAS): A framework for ethical integration of generative AI in educational assessment. *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice*, 21(6), 49-66.
- [2] Crompton, H., Edmett, A., Ichaporia, N., & Burke, D. (2024). AI and English language teaching: Affordances and challenges. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 55(6), 2503-2529.
- [3] Vashishth, T. K., Sharma, V., Sharma, K. K., Kumar, B., Panwar, R., & Chaudhary, S. (2024). AI-driven learning analytics for personalized feedback and assessment in higher education. In *Using traditional design methods to enhance AI-driven decision making* (pp. 206-230). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.
- [4] Pan, Z., & Wang, Y. (2025). From technology-challenged teachers to empowered digitalized citizens: Exploring the profiles and antecedents of teacher ai literacy in the Chinese EFL context. *European Journal of Education*, 60(1), e70020.
- [5] Jegede, O. O. (2024). Artificial intelligence and English language learning: Exploring the roles of AI-driven tools in personalizing learning and providing instant feedback. *Universal Library of Languages and Literatures*, 1(2).
- [6] Chen, C., & Gong, Y. (2025). The role of AI-assisted learning in academic writing: A mixed-methods study on Chinese as a second language students. *Education Sciences*, 15(2), 141.
- [7] Wang, C., Li, Z., & Bonk, C. (2024). Understanding self-directed learning in AI-Assisted writing: A mixed methods study of postsecondary learners. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 6, 100247.
- [8] Lin, R., Yang, J., Jiang, F., & Li, J. (2023). Does teacher's data literacy and digital teaching competence influence empowering students in the classroom? Evidence from China. *Education and information technologies*, 28(3), 2845-2867.
- [9] Gallent Torres, C., Zapata-González, A., & Ortego-Hernando, J. L. (2023). The impact of Generative Artificial Intelligence in higher education: a focus on ethics and academic integrity. *RELIEVE. Revista ELectrónica de Investigación y EValuación Educativa*, 2023, vol. 29, num. 2, p. 1-19.
- [10] Tseng, Y. C., & Lin, Y. H. (2024). Enhancing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learners' Writing with ChatGPT: A University-Level Course Design. *Electronic Journal of e-Learning*, 22(2), 78-97.