**Teaching with ChatGPT in Vietnam: A Case Study from PMP English Center**

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**Abstract:** This article explores the integration of artificial intelligence, specifically ChatGPT, into ESL instruction to support the development of speaking and writing skills. Based on classroom practices at PMP English Center in Thu Duc, Ho Chi Minh City, the paper illustrates how AI can effectively complement teacher-led instruction.

For speaking practice, ChatGPT provides learners with structured examples and topic-relevant models, helping them gain confidence and fluency. Initially used as scaffolding during topic introduction, AI support gradually fades as learners begin to express ideas more independently. In writing, especially in exam-focused classes such as KET, PET, and IELTS, ChatGPT delivers clear, instant feedback on language accuracy, coherence, and task achievement enhancing both student awareness and classroom efficiency.

Rather than replacing teachers, AI tools should be viewed as co-pilots enhancing instruction and offering real-time support. The article advocates for a collaborative offline-online classroom model, where educators and AI work in tandem to create a more personalized and effective learning experience.

***Keywords:*** ChatGPT, artificial intelligence, speaking skills, writing skills, ESL, Vietnam, language education

**1. Introduction**

In recent years, Vietnam has been standing among the most rapidly advancing economies in Asia. According to the World Bank, the country’s GDP growth reached **5.1% in 2023**, driven by strong exports, foreign investment, and expanding domestic demand (World Bank, 2024). Alongside this economic progress, Vietnam is actively fostering international cooperation and global integration across sectors, including education.

In this context of openness and development, **English language proficiency** has become a vital skill for both individual success and national competitiveness. In recent years, Vietnam has experienced a substantial increase in the number of English language centers, particularly in its major urban areas. Following the country's accession to the World Trade Organization in the mid-2000s, the demand for English instruction surged nationwide. By 2024, the number of officially licensed English centers in Ho Chi Minh City had increased nearly sixfold, reaching approximately 2,380 institutions, while the number in Hanoi doubled to around 955 (VnExpress, 2025). Commercial mapping data further indicate that there are over 3,000 English language schools operating across the country, including urban hubs in particular with 345 in Ho Chi Minh City and 232 in Hanoi (Poidata.io, 2025). This rapid expansion reflects the growing societal and economic demand for quality English education, especially in Vietnam’s key metropolitan hubs, and underscores the increasingly vital role of English language proficiency. One of the city’s most promising educational districts, **Thủ Đức**, has become a hotspot for academic innovation, where both local and international educators work side by side to meet the growing expectations of learners and parents alike.

As Vietnam moves forward at a remarkable pace, the **demands placed on English language teachers** are evolving accordingly. Educators are expected not only to master traditional teaching techniques, but also to adopt technology-enhanced instructional strategies and approaches. Among these, **artificial intelligence (AI)** and in particular, tools like **ChatGPT** are gaining traction as a transformative classroom companion.

Far from replacing the teacher, AI should be viewed as a **co-pilot** in the teaching process: a responsive assistant that provides immediate feedback, enhances student engagement, and allows the teacher to focus on deeper pedagogical strategies. Just as flashcards once streamlined the preparation of visual aids and online dictionaries augmented vocabulary learning without replacing the role of the educator, modern AI solutions offer **new levels of personalization, efficiency, and insight** in real time.

This paper presents a practical case study of how **ChatGPT was used to support the development of speaking and writing skills** at **PMP English Center** in Thủ Đức, Ho Chi Minh City. PMP English is a forward-thinking institution that emphasizes both technological integration and teacher development, investing in regular pedagogical training and digital innovation. By sharing classroom observations and performance outcomes, this study highlights how AI can complement and empower teaching, offering valuable perspectives for ESL practitioners in Vietnam and beyond.

**2. Literature Review**

One of the major challenges in contemporary education is the effective integration of digital technologies into the development of soft skills. Traditionally, soft skills such as communication, collaboration, creativity, and adaptability are acquired through continuous in-person interaction between teachers and learners. However, as digital technologies become an integral part of everyday life, their use in language and skills education has become not only inevitable, but also essential.

The implementation of ICT in education offers both opportunities and limitations. On the one hand, access to online learning resources, learning management systems, video platforms, and conferencing tools has dramatically increased the availability and flexibility of education. On the other hand, maintaining engagement, interactivity, and personalization requires thoughtful **pedagogical design**.

In this context, **artificial intelligence (AI)** and, in particular, conversational tools like **ChatGPT**, open new horizons for ESL educators. These tools provide learners with instant feedback, personalized examples, and a safe environment for practicing language. For writing development, ChatGPT helps structure ideas and gives clear suggestions for improvement which is particularly valuable in preparing for exams including the Key (KET), Preliminary (PET), and IELTS exams. For speaking, it can act as a scaffolding tool, providing sample dialogues and useful vocabulary.

Importantly, AI is not meant to replace the teacher. Rather, it functions as a supportive co-pilot in classroom activities, but not leading the learning process. Effective integration of AI in ESL education requires the teacher to act as a facilitator, navigator, and human filter guiding learners to critically interpret, apply, and reflect on the AI-generated input. In this sense, digital transformation is not only about tools, but about rethinking the very approach to teaching and learning in a digital age.

*Javier and Moorhouse* (2023) report that ChatGPT functions as a conversation partner, supports the creation of task-based activities, and offers tailored written feedback, though they caution against excessive reliance compromising academic integrity. They argue that students need to develop digital competence, including prompt engineering and critical awareness.

As *Topal* (2024) rightly points out, one of ChatGPT’s most distinctive features is its ability to provide immediate feedback on language use, such as grammar, vocabulary, and writing, which allows autonomous learners to identify their strengths and weaknesses on language production and improve their accuracy accordingly. Such interaction aligns with current trends in personalized learning, where digital tools act as real-time mirrors, reflecting students’ language use and guiding them toward greater accuracy and fluency.

According to *Kazi* (2023), implementing AI monitoring and detection systems within the educational setting ensures that teachers and support staff adhere to guidelines and ethical practices while using AI tools. This approach not only protects academic integrity but also helps create a culture of transparency and accountability in classrooms where AI is actively employed.

As noted by *Crompton et al.* (2024), it is essential to prepare English language teachers to have an understanding of what AI is, how to exploit the many benefits of these tools with English learners and knowledge of what to avoid. Their research highlights that effective integration of AI in language instruction requires not only technical familiarity but also pedagogical literacy.

When applying artificial intelligence in the classroom, it is essential to take into account the cultural and national context, as well as the mindset and learning preferences of the students. In the Vietnamese educational setting, Nguyen Thi Nhu Ngoc and Nguyen Tran Tu Uyen (2023) emphasize the unique advantages of integrating AI tools within English language instruction. According to their findings, virtual classrooms offer numerous benefits for teachers, including the ability to integrate all four language skills, enhance overall teaching and learning performance, improve digital literacy, stay aligned with educational technology trends, and access a wide array of online resources. Furthermore, AI-supported environments encourage teachers to develop more creative, engaging activities that foster student motivation and active participation in English lessons. Such context-sensitive insights are crucial for successfully implementing AI in ESL classrooms in Vietnam and beyond.

At the same time, it is important to consider the concerns raised by *Yeo* (2023), who emphasizes the potential threats to academic integrity resulting from the increasing use of advanced AI-based co-authoring tools. She highlights the need to raise awareness among educators about these challenges and encourages the development of strategies that allow teachers to embrace new digital technologies responsibly, particularly in the context of teaching writing. Rather than rejecting AI outright, Yeo advocates for a balanced pedagogical approach—one that acknowledges both the opportunities and the risks of AI integration, and that equips teachers to guide students in using these tools ethically and reflectively in their learning processes.

In summary, the integration of artificial intelligence into ESL education represents both a timely response to global technological shifts and a pedagogical opportunity to enrich language learning in meaningful ways. The reviewed literature and recent studies collectively emphasize that AI-powered tools like ChatGPT can enhance learner autonomy, provide personalized and instant feedback, and support the development of essential skills such as writing and speaking. However, the successful implementation of these technologies depends not only on technical access but also on the teacher’s ability to act as a mediator between innovation and pedagogy. Ethical considerations, contextual awareness, and critical engagement remain central to this process. As the Vietnamese education system continues to modernize and open itself to global collaboration, the responsible use of AI in classrooms becomes not just a technological question, but a strategic step toward raising the quality and inclusiveness of language education.

**3.Methodology**

This study is based on practical teaching experience at **PMP English Center**, located in **Thu Duc, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam**. The author began collaboration with the center in **May 2023**.

**PMP English** was established on **March 25, 2016** by **Ms. Bach Thị Ngân**, with a clear educational vision: to become one of the most reputable and effective language education systems in Vietnam (PMP English Center, n.d.). The center’s mission is to help students **confidently master English and use it as a practical tool** for their careers and personal development.

The core values of PMP English include:

* **Dedication** to student progress and well-being,
* **Innovation** in teaching methodology and technology integration,
* **Practical language application**, especially in real-life communication,
* **Family-like learning atmosphere**, where students feel supported and empowered.

These institutional principles have played an important role in shaping the pedagogical approaches used at PMP, particularly in the context of blended and digitally supported instruction. The center regularly serves a diverse group of learners ranging from teenagers to adult professionals at various proficiency levels (from Pre-Intermediate to IELTS preparation).

In practical classroom settings at PMP English Center, ChatGPT was integrated into both speaking and writing tasks as a supportive tool for learners preparing for international language exams such as KET, PET, and IELTS.

As far as teaching speaking skills is concerned, ChatGPT provided: **sequencing support** for picture-based stories, **sample stories** with accessible vocabulary and logical structure, as well as **live feedback and reformulations**, helping learners better understand how to **organize** their **ideas**. To add, ChatGPT was used to generate sample scripts based on personalized templates and assisted in building confidence before public speaking by modeling correct sentence structure and idea flow.

In preparing students for the IELTS Speaking module, ChatGPT proved to be a versatile tool that enhanced both fluency and coherence. Learners practiced common IELTS Part 1 topics (e.g., future jobs, usefulness of English, travel plans) by first generating sample answers using ChatGPT and then refining them with teacher’s guidance. For example, a Band 6.5 response like “I want to be a software engineer because I enjoy technology” was expanded with the help of AI into a Band 8-level answer such as “In ten years, I hope to be working as a senior software engineer or perhaps leading my own tech startup, where I can turn creative ideas into real-world solutions.” This provided students with clear models of more sophisticated vocabulary, natural phrasing, and structured reasoning. In addition to IELTS, similar interactive practices were applied in preparing learners for **Cambridge English qualifications such as KET and PET**, particularly when practicing personal introductions, expressing opinions, and describing routines.

Regarding writing skills improvement, ChatGPT was used to delivered tailored feedback on **Parts 6 and 7 of the KET and PET writing components**, as well as **Parts 1 and 2 of the IELTS Writing section**. Thanks to this technology use, each student managed to receive individual evaluation based on **CEFR band descriptors** and was suggested improved versions of their emails, stories and essays. For instance, during IELTS writing preparation at PMP English, ChatGPT was used as a supplementary tool to provide immediate feedback on students’ Task 1 and Task 2 responses that were further commented and explained by the teacher. Learners submitted their essays into ChatGPT, which offered structured analysis aligned with IELTS assessment criteria such as Task Achievement, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resource, and Grammatical Range and Accuracy. For instance, in Task 1, several students initially wrote “the process is reserved” instead of “reversed,” or “waters to pump” instead of “water is pumped.” ChatGPT not only highlighted these errors but also explained them in accessible language, allowing students to internalize corrections. In Task 2 essays, phrases like “agree to a large extent” were refined into more idiomatic alternatives such as “strongly agree with the idea that...”. In addition, the tool helped students improve paragraphing and linking devices – for example, recommending smoother transitions like “despite this,” “similarly,” and “as a result” instead of basic connectors.

This dual process of active writing and critical comparison with AI-generated samples not only improved performance, but also built learner autonomy and analytical thinking both of which are crucial for success in IELTS academic writing. It helped students recognize their errors and **internalize correct structures**.

Overall, these classroom applications illustrate how ChatGPT functions as a **co-pilot** – offering models, explanations, and corrections in real time, while the teacher acts as a facilitator, ensuring learners develop both independence and critical awareness.

**4. Results**

The integration of ChatGPT into ESL instruction at **PMP English Center (Thủ Đức, Ho Chi Minh City)** has demonstrated a range of **tangible learning outcomes** across multiple student groups *between late 2024 and mid-2025*. As it was mentioned before, the focus was placed on improving speaking and writing skills among teenagers and young adults preparing for exams such as KET, PET, and IELTS.

Regarding speaking skills across *PMP classes 7.9, 8.5, and 8.7*, learners showed **noticeable improvement** in spoken English fluency and the ability to deliver more confident, structured, and elaborate responses. Several students from PMP classes 8.5 and 8.7 consistently demonstrated excellent command of the language and engagement in speaking tasks *after regular use of ChatGPT-based exercises*. In follow-up terms, students previously described as “shy” or “reserved” became more confident and participative in classroom discussions. One advanced learner demonstrated highly fluent speaking with detailed elaboration after practicing through AI-generated models. Similarly, another student, recognized for his creativity, reported that ChatGPT helped him generate and refine ideas quickly during speaking practice, which boosted his confidence during in-class debates.

As for writing development, the integration of ChatGPT into IELTS writing preparation has shown significant positive effects on students' performance and engagement (*especially in IELTS Online LV3 class*). By providing instant, structured feedback and offering model responses, ChatGPT, supplemented with teacher’s comments has helped learners better understand the criteria for high-scoring IELTS writing tasks. Students reported increased confidence in organizing their ideas, using a wider range of vocabulary, and correcting common grammatical mistakes. Moreover, the tool empowered learners to refine and improve their work autonomously outside the classroom, fostering greater learner autonomy. While teacher guidance remained central, ChatGPT served as an effective co-pilot, reinforcing key writing skills and accelerating students’ progress toward their target band scores. For instance, several students in upper-intermediate classes demonstrated measurable improvement in sentence structure, coherence, and overall organization of written texts between November 2024 and April 2025.

Feedback across all classes indicates that learners appreciated the clarity and structure of ChatGPT responses. This was especially helpful for students who initially struggled with fluency and organization in writing but showed significant improvement in later evaluations.

All in all, between winter and summer terms (November/December 2024 to April/May 2025), most students maintained or improved their attendance (88–100%) and academic performance including speaking and writing skills. For instance, one student in class PMP 8.5 became significantly more fluent and confident in speaking, while still continuing to improve pronunciation. Another learner from PMP 8.7 maintained a high level of performance across both terms, consistently demonstrating fluency and confidence. A third student from the same group showed notable behavioral transformation, progressing from occasional distraction to actively raising hand and staying fully focused during lessons.

The use of ChatGPT acted as a **bridge** between structured practice and free production, helping students to transfer from guided input to autonomous language use in both speaking and writing. The qualitative feedback collected from students provided compelling evidence of the emotional, motivational, and pedagogical impact of personalized instruction and supportive classroom dynamics.

Three representative testimonials were selected for closer examination to illustrate the recurring themes of **confidence-building**, **teacher encouragement**, and **student autonomy**.

One learner reflected on the holistic nature of the learning experience, emphasizing both linguistic and psychological growth: *“Throughout the course, I have learned not only the English language, but also the confidence to use it effectively in various situations. Your engaging lessons and supportive feedback have significantly improved my skills.”*

Another student expressed gratitude for the teacher’s inspirational role in the learning process: *“You gave me and all the students in the course many meaningful lessons. Moreover, you motivated me and my friends to learn English and pass exams.”*

A third student, who received support for IELTS preparation, linked her exam outcome to the instructor's emotional encouragement and the reasonable usage of ChatGPT: *“Thanks to your support and feedback from ChatGPT, I got 6.5 in speaking. I don’t know how to say it exactly, but you both motivated me a lot, and I felt I just did my best.[[2]](#footnote-2)”*

The observed progress among ESL learners using ChatGPT-supported activities in the PMP English Center is summarized in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.**

*Summary of PMP English Learners’ Progress in Speaking and Writing Using ChatGPT Tools*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Class** | **Time Frame** | **Skill Area** | **Main Improvements Observed** |
| PMP 7.9 | Nov 2024 → Apr 2025 | Speaking | Increased fluency, more complete and structured responses |
| PMP 7.9 | Nov 2024 → Apr 2025 | Writing | Better coherence, grammar control, use of linking phrases |
| PMP 8.5 | Dec 2024 → May 2025 | Speaking | Shyer students gained confidence, answers became more detailed |
| PMP 8.5 | Dec 2024 → May 2025 | Writing | Expanded vocabulary, improved organization and grammatical accuracy |
| PMP 8.7 | Nov 2024 → Apr 2025 | Speaking | Greater speaking fluency, improved pronunciation and engagement |
| PMP 8.7 | Nov 2024 → Apr 2025 | Writing | Stronger paragraph structure and richer language use |
| IELTS Online LV3 | Nov 2024 → May 2025 | Speaking | More fluent and confident answers |
| IELTS Online LV3 | Nov 2024 → May 2025 | Writing | Improved essay structure and coherence |

*Note:* Data based on qualitative teacher observations and end-of-term student performance reports.

To sum up, the classroom implementation of ChatGPT at PMP English Center has led to **measurable progress in students’ speaking and writing abilities**, particularly in exam-oriented contexts such as KET, PET, and IELTS. The integration of AI served not as a replacement for human instruction but as a **valuable extension** of the teacher’s toolkit, offering students timely support, personalized feedback, and structured models of effective communication. The positive learning dynamics observed rising student confidence, improved academic performance, and increased classroom participation. Taken together, these outcomes highlight **the pedagogical potential of combining technological innovation with human-centered teaching**.

**5. Discussion**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is not merely a tool of the future. It is already reshaping language education in the present. However, we are still at the beginning of this transformation. The full spectrum of AI’s capabilities in ESL learning remains largely unexplored. While early observations and qualitative feedback are encouraging, **comprehensive quantitative research** is still needed to validate the long-term efficacy and sustainability of these innovations.

At **PMP English Center** in Thủ Đức, Ho Chi Minh City, the implementation of ChatGPT in the classroom has yielded promising results. Students have been demonstrating increased motivation, engagement, and performance both in classroom activities and on standardized exams such as **KET**, **PET**, and **IELTS**. Learners have been reporting that AI tools like ChatGPT provide them with: clear and well-structured examples of spoken and written expressions, immediate, targeted feedback on grammar, vocabulary, and content, as well as creative reformulations and interpretations of their original ideas.

Such features not only help students build fluency and confidence but also foster a more **autonomous learning mindset.** Importantly, ChatGPT enables students to experiment with language in a safe, supportive, and low-pressure environment often unlocking voices that might remain hesitant in traditional group settings. Nevertheless, it is critical to emphasize that AI is a **tool**, not a teacher. Its impact depends entirely on **how** it is used. Some learners may over-rely on ChatGPT for homework and writing tasks, inadvertently slowing down their independent language development. Similarly, teachers may be tempted to substitute AI for thoughtful lesson planning or creative scaffolding. As with any powerful educational resource, **conscious, reflective, and purposeful use** is key.

A further consideration lies in ChatGPT’s own disclaimer: *"* *ChatGPT can make mistakes. Check important info."* On the one hand, this underlines the necessity of fact-checking and teacher’s supervision; on the other hand, it provides a valuable **pedagogical lesson**: mistakes even by AI systems are an essential part of the learning process. When students see that even AI can be wrong, it reinforces the notion that making and analyzing errors is a natural step in language acquisition.

**6. Conclusion**

**In conclusion,** the implementation of AI-driven tools like ChatGPT has shown to be both **impactful and motivating**. Lessons have become **more dynamic and interactive**. The integration of ChatGPT into ESL instruction at PMP English Center has proven to be an effective enhancement of both speaking and writing skill development. The combination of AI-generated support and teacher-led feedback created a productive learning environment where students were encouraged to engage more confidently and independently. Tangible improvements were observed across several groups, particularly in writing organization, vocabulary usage, and spoken fluency. Learners exemplified how consistent use of AI tools, complemented by pedagogical scaffolding, led to notable academic growth within a relatively short period.

**At the same time,** this case study highlights that while AI can significantly improve the quality and efficiency of language learning, it must be applied mindfully. ChatGPT is not a replacement for the teacher, but a collaborative co-pilot that offers models, corrections, and suggestions which enhance rather than substitute human guidance. As Vietnam continues to develop its educational landscape with a growing demand for English proficiency, especially in dynamic academic hubs like Thủ Đức, such hybrid approaches may become a promising new standard in Vietnam’s ESL landscape. Future research and classroom experimentation will be crucial to refining best practices, measuring long-term outcomes, and ensuring that AI-powered education remains both equitable and effective.

Moving forward, it is crucial to **continue experimenting** with AI-enhanced methodologies while carefully observing their effects across different learner levels and contexts. The growing interest in AI in education reflects Vietnam’s broader commitment to **educational excellence and global integration**. As the country continues to develop as a desirable destination for professionals, students, and tourists alike, innovations in English teaching, particularly those involving AI will play a key role in empowering individuals and strengthening Vietnam’s global presence. This case study not only demonstrates the potential of AI in current ESL settings but also lays the groundwork for future innovation in blended education across Southeast Asia and beyond.

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**Bionote**

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2. ***Note:*** Student names have been removed to ensure privacy and comply with ethical research standards. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)