The Perception of English Instructors in Chinese Universities about the Use of Generative AI in English Language Teaching

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Abstract

The integration of Generative AI (GenAI) technology into English language teaching has gained significant attention in recent years. In order to assess the potential for GenAI adoption in English classrooms in Chinese universities, this study investigated the perception of university instructors of English in five Chinese universities about the use of GenAI, based on the Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT). A total of 330 Chinese instructors of English participated in an online survey, adapted from Chan and Zhou (2023). The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean scores and percentages. Almost eighty percent of the participants reported having used GenAI before, mainly in teaching preparation such as creating learning materials, lesson plans and exercises. Their knowledge about GenAI's capabilities and limitations was high (Mean = 3.94). Despite the moderate perceived costs (Mean = 3.12), especially regarding ethical concerns and implementation challenges, the participants' strong intention to integrate GenAI into their instructional practices (Mean = 4.08) appeared to be supported by the perceived value (Mean = 4.07) and perceived utility (Mean = 4.06). These results align with previous studies conducted in China, demonstrating a growing consensus regarding the potential and challenges of GenAI integration in English classrooms in higher education.

Keywords: Expectancy-Value Theory, technology adoption in English classrooms, teacher knowledge, perceived value, perceived cost

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Introduction

The rapid advancement of generative AI (GenAI) has garnered increasing attention for its potential to transform English language teaching and learning (Chan & Zhou, 2023; Dai & Liu, 2024; Lai & Lee, 2024). GenAI offers three main benefits (Celik et al., 2022). First, it enables teachers to tailor lessons and materials to address the diverse English proficiency levels and needs of learners (Wang & Xue, 2024). Second, GenAI can promote efficiency and time management. Lastly, GenAI can enhance teaching strategies and student engagement (Lin et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2024). For example, AI-driven tools such as automated grading tools and content generation systems can reduce teachers' administrative burden, allowing them to focus on classroom interaction, instructional planning, and professional development (Celik et al., 2022). Furthermore, virtual tutors or chatbots can simulate conversations, encouraging active participation, fostering real-world language use, and providing immediate feedback. These benefits suggest that GenAI has the capacity to transform what we normally do in English classrooms, fostering more innovative and dynamic learning and teaching (Lai & Lee, 2024). Therefore, exploring how GenAI can be effectively leveraged in ELT is crucial (Celik et al., 2022).

Previous studies have shown that the successful implementation of new technology in education is often linked to each individual's perception of the technology (Dai & Liu, 2024; Lai & Lee, 2024). Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT) provides a valuable framework for understanding the factors that influence adoption of new practices or technology (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). EVT posits that each individual's motivation to engage with a new behavior or technology is determined by their expectations of success and the value they place on the potential outcomes. Specifically, EVT considers expectancy (beliefs about one's ability to succeed), perceived value (perceived benefits, importance, or enjoyment), perceived cost (perceived effort, challenges, or negative aspects), and intention to use (planned future use) as key motivational factors (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Understanding teachers' perception about GenAI is therefore crucial for promoting AI implementation in educational settings (Dai & Lee, 2024).

While GenAI tools such as ChatGPT are recognized globally, China has been actively developing its own GenAI technology, including Tongyi Qianwen, Deepseek, Wenxin Yiyan, Doubao, and Kimi. Despite the increasing prominence of GenAI, research that explores teachers' perception about these tools, particularly in English language teaching (ELT), remains limited. Existing studies have focused on identifying trends in GenAI adoption (Lai & Lee, 2024)

and students' perception (Chan & Zhou, 2023), leaving a gap in understanding teachers' perception. To address this gap, this study, guided by EVT, investigated the following research question: What is the perception of English instructors in Chinese universities about the use of GenAI technology in ELT?

Literature Review

GenAI in English Language Learning and Teaching

The integration of GenAI in ELT promises to transform how English is taught and learned. First, GenAI facilitates personalized instruction by addressing the diverse English proficiency levels of learners (Wang & Xue, 2024). GenAI-powered listening tools, for instance, contribute significantly to this personalization by adapting exercises to suit students' individual proficiency levels. These tools also enhance efficiency by providing instant feedback on comprehension, allowing teachers to quickly identify areas where students are struggling and adjust their instruction accordingly. This data-driven approach not only improves student learning but also streamlines lesson planning and assessment for teachers. To illustrate, Speech to Text and AI-Powered Listening Labs allow learners to focus on specific aspects of listening comprehension, such as identifying key information.

Second, GenAI also significantly improves efficiency and time management (Celik et al., 2022). For example, adaptive learning platforms can automatically adjust the difficulty of reading texts based on students' reading proficiency. This eliminates the need for teachers to manually differentiate reading materials, which is a time-consuming task. These platforms often generate reports on student progress, further streamlining assessment and allowing teachers to focus on individualized support.

Third, GenAI offers powerful tools to enhance teaching strategies and student engagement (Nguyen et al., 2024; Lin et al., 2023). For instance, GenAI-powered writing tools can provide immediate feedback on grammar, spelling, and style, helping students improve their writing more quickly. This instant feedback not only saves teachers time on grading but also empowers students to take ownership of their learning and make rapid progress. However, it's important to remember that cognitive training in academic writing, such as developing critical thinking and argumentation skills, still requires manual intervention and personalized guidance from teachers. Furthermore, interactive dialogue systems and virtual tutors provide a safe and engaging space for students to practice speaking. These tools simulate real-world conversations, offering immediate feedback on pronunciation and fluency, thereby saving

teachers time on individual pronunciation correction while simultaneously enhancing student engagement and confidence.

These GenAI tools encourage active participation, foster real-world language use, and provide immediate feedback, making lessons more engaging and effective for students. As Lai and Lee (2024) suggested, GenAI technology offers opportunities to boost the potential for English competence, fostering more innovative and dynamic learning and teaching. In conclusion, while the integration of GenAI in ELT presents exciting possibilities for creating more personalized, efficient, and engaging learning experiences, realizing this potential requires addressing key challenges. Over-reliance on GenAI can hinder deep learning and critical thinking (Yun, 2024). Teachers also face barriers including insufficient training (Zhou et al., 2024), difficulty integrating GenAI with deeper learning, data privacy risks (Hockly, 2023), and algorithmic bias, particularly concerning non-English linguistic and cultural nuances (Liu et al., 2024). Robust training, ethical considerations, and bias mitigation are crucial for successful GenAI integration in ELT.

Teachers' Perception and Application

Teachers' perceptions of GenAI in English Language Teaching are shaped by a complex interplay of perceived benefits and inherent challenges (Demirbek & Ekizer, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2024). These perceptions significantly influence teachers' willingness to adopt and effectively integrate GenAI technologies into their classrooms (Nguyen et al., 2024). Positive perceptions are often associated with increased cognitive engagement with GenAI integration, while negative perceptions can create resistance and hinder adoption (Lin et al., 2023).

Teachers' perceptions of GenAI's potential to enhance student engagement and teaching effectiveness are a key driver of adoption (An et al., 2022; Lai & Lee, 2024). This perception of value is closely intertwined with perceived usefulness and technology readiness (Demirbek & Ekizer, 2024). While Lai and Lee (2024) highlighted the broad belief in GenAI's potential, Demirbek and Ekizer (2024) delved deeper to demonstrate how perceived usefulness directly influenced teachers' decisions to integrate AI tools. For example, the positive perception of GenAI grading tools such as CoGrader for streamlining essay scoring and platforms such as AutoGPT for providing rapid feedback, directly correlated with increased adoption of these tools. Teachers used them to alleviate their workload. This suggests that when teachers see a clear benefit, they are more likely to experiment with and integrate GenAI into their practice. Furthermore, the research suggests a reciprocal relationship: perceived

usefulness sparks initial interest, while teachers' technology readiness, including their technical skills and belief in GenAI's pedagogical potential, facilitates successful implementation. This successful implementation, in turn, further reinforces positive perceptions and encourages more innovative applications of GenAI in the classroom.

In traditional or test-oriented educational systems, teachers often express reservations about the alignment of GenAI with established pedagogical practices and high-stakes examinations. This leads to diminished perceptions of GenAI's value and consequently, reduced adoption (Jochim & Lenz-Kesekamp, 2025; Yang & Jiang, 2024). In those studies, teachers questioned the relevance of AI tools within the existing curriculum and expressed concerns about their potential impact on teaching effectiveness, particularly in relation to preparing students for standardized tests. This misalignment between GenAI and traditional methods diminished its perceived value, acting as a significant barrier to integration (Jochim & Lenz-Kesekamp, 2025). Furthermore, contextual constraints, such as inadequate infrastructure and limited access to technology in under-resourced schools, can exacerbate these concerns, creating a disconnect between the theoretical potential of GenAI and the practical realities of classroom implementation (Jochim & Lenz-Kesekamp, 2025).

Apart from concerns about pedagogical alignment, Dai and Liu (2024) found that teachers also expressed reservations about GenAI's reliability, ethical implications, and the risk of overdependence. Skepticism regarding the reliability of GenAI tools underscores the need for human oversight and careful consideration of ethical implications. Insufficient technical literacy and limited access to training, hinder effective GenAI adoption, emphasizing the need for comprehensive support and capacity-building initiatives (Dai & Liu, 2024). Furthermore, concerns persist regarding the potential impact of GenAI on human interaction and the development of essential skills, highlighting the need for clear guidelines to ensure balanced and ethical use (Qing et al., 2024; Yun, 2024; Hockly, 2023). Ethical considerations, such as academic integrity, further complicate the integration of GenAI tools (Hockly, 2023).

Expectancy-Value Theory

The Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT) offers a theoretical framework for understanding the adoption of novel innovations. It suggests that people's motivation is influenced by their expectations of success and the perceived value of these innovations (Teo, 2009; Hulleman et al., 2010; Eccles & Wigfield, 2020). According to Wigfield and Eccles (2000), EVT encompasses two: expectancy and value (attainment value, intrinsic value, and utility value). Expectancy

was defined as an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in a task. Value was described as a set of three beliefs. First, attainment value refers to the belief that engaging in a particular behavior will lead to an important goal or outcome. Second, intrinsic value refers to how engaging in the behavior brings about fulfilment or pleasure to the individual. Finally, utility value refers to the belief that engaging in the behavior would result in useful benefits, such as enhanced abilities or knowledge.

Using EVT as the framework, studies have shown perceived utility and ease of use as key factors in individuals' decisions to integrate AI (see Hulleman et al., 2010). Hulleman et al (2010) found that when teachers saw AI as enhancing their practices and being user-friendly, adoption was more likely. Additionally, perceived value, including user satisfaction and institutional support, was found to be crucial for sustained use and acceptance of AI in education (see Teo, 2009; Hulleman et al., 2010; Maheshwari, 2021).

Previous Studies about Using GenAI in China ELT Contexts

Research on GenAI-powered tools in Chinese ELT has revealed a generally positive trend in learner perceptions and acceptance (Lai & Lee, 2024; Dai & Liu, 2024) while also highlighting the complex interplay of factors influencing adoption and effective integration. Studies have explored student perceptions (e.g., Liu et al., 2024; Dai & Liu, 2024), and the impact on specific language proficiency (e.g., Yang & Jiang, 2024). Studies on teacher perceptions of GenAI in ELT have highlighted the importance of perceived usefulness and ease of use (Lu et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2024). For example, Lu et al. (2024) found that university teachers appreciated GenAI for personalized feedback and task automation but worried about its reliability and impact on human interaction. Their adoption was mainly driven by behavioral attitude and perceived control, with less influence from cost and subjective norms. Zhou et al. (2024) further emphasized the role of perceived behavioral control, suggesting that teachers who felt confident in their ability to use GenAI effectively were more likely to have positive perceptions of the technology.

Method

Research Design

This survey study employed an online questionnaire to investigate the perception of English Instructors in Chinese universities regarding the use of GenAI in English language teaching.

Population and Participants

The target population of this study was English language instructors at universities in mainland China. A minimum sample size of 400 participants was determined using a calculation based on the population size (Yamane, 1967) to ensure sufficient statistical power. Given the challenges of accessing a comprehensive list of all English language instructors in Chinese universities, a convenience sampling method was employed. One public university in each of the five geographical regions of China (North, West, Central, East, and South) was selected to participate in the study. These universities were chosen based on the agreement of the Dean of the Faculty of English at each institution. The number of English instructors at the selected universities ranged from 80 to 110, totaling 438 potential participants across five universities (see Table 1).

From the five universities, 330 English language instructors completed the questionnaire, resulting in a 75.34% response rate. These instructors were those involved in teaching fundamental English courses, which are compulsory for all students at each of the universities. The participants were predominantly female (68%, n=224), with 32% (n=106) male. The participants' teaching experience varied: 20% (n=66) were classified as novice lecturers (0-2 years of experience), 65.2% (n=215) as experienced lecturers (3-10 years of experience), and 14.8% (n=49) as professors (10+ years of experience).

Table 1

The number of English Instructors in Five Participating Universities

Universities	Number of English instructors in the Faculty of English
A (North)	80
B (East)	88
C (Central)	83
D (West)	110
E (South)	77
Total	438

The Perception about the Use of the Generative AI Questionnaire

The questionnaire, adapted from Chan and Zhou (2023), was expanded from the original 23 items to better align with the research focus (using GenAI in English language teaching) and the Chinese context (adding an example of a GenAI tool used in China, i.e., Tongyi Qianwen). The adapted questionnaire consisted of 31 Likert-scale items and included four sections: informed consent, demographics (age and gender), usage profile (GenAI familiarity and purpose of using GenAI tools), and 27 items measuring instructors' knowledge, perceived value, perceived cost, and intention to use GenAI (see Appendix).

Modifications were made to the original questionnaire items in three ways: first, rewording for clarity without altering the core content; second, revising the content to better reflect the Chinese ELT context; and third adding items to capture nuances relevant to this specific study. Examples of the modification are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Examples of the modification in the adapted questionnaire

Modifications	Original Questionnaire	Adapted Questionnaire
Rewording	I have used generative AI techniques like ChatGPT.	I have used Tongyi Qianwen.
Changing Content	Students must learn how to use generative AI techniques like ChatGPT well for their career.	Teachers must learn how to use Tongyi Qianwen well for their career.
	I believe generative AI techniques like ChatGPT can improve my overall academic performance.	I believe Tongyi Qianwen can help improve overall teaching effectiveness.
	I think generative AI techniques like ChatGPT can help me become a better writer.	I believe Tongyi Qianwen can assist me in adapting instructional strategies to meet the needs of my students.
Adding New Items		For what purpose do you use Tongyi Qianwen?

Modifications	Original Questionnaire	Adapted Questionnaire
		I understand the benefits of integrating Tongyi Qianwen into teaching and learning activities.
		I believe integrating Tongyi Qianwen into my teaching to enhance student engagement.

Questionnaire Validity and Reliability

Content validity was established through expert review by five specialists with expertise in educational technology and ELT. A mean Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) score of 0.97 indicated strong agreement (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1977) among the experts regarding the relevance and appropriateness of the items, supporting the instrument's validity. The English questionnaire items were translated into Chinese, and the translation's accuracy was verified via back-translation. In this process, the Chinese version was translated back into English by an independent translator, and the two English versions were compared. Subsequently, a pilot study of the Chinese version with 30 Chinese university instructors refined the instrument, incorporating feedback to enhance relevance, accuracy, and clarity. Finally, the pilot test demonstrated high internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha=0.993), indicating that the items in the questionnaire were measuring the same construct (Santos, 1999).

Data Collection

The data were collected during the spring semester of 2024. A link to an online questionnaire, hosted on Questionnaire Star (https://www.wjx.cn), was distributed via a link to the Dean of the Faculty of English at each of the five participating universities. The Dean then distributed the link to potential participants via the faculty's established WeChat groups. Before completing the questionnaire, potential participants were presented with an informed consent form outlining the study's purpose, procedures, and potential benefits as well as their rights as participants, including the right to withdraw at any time without consequence. This study received ethical approval from the TEFL committee in accordance with research ethics standards in higher education. A group incentive, in the form of a donation was offered to each faculty to encourage participation while respecting individual choices.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages, were used to analyze the data. The mean scores were used to indicate the participants' knowledge, perceived value, perceived cost, and intention to use GenAI. In addition, the percentage of respondents selecting each Likert scale option was analyzed to examine the distribution of responses.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents the findings obtained from the questionnaire. It includes the Chinese university instructors of English' GenAI usage profile (GenAI familiarity and purpose) and key findings about their knowledge of GenAI, perceived value of GenAI, perceived cost of GenAI, and their intention to use GenAI in their teaching.

GenAI Usage Profile

Table 3 shows a substantial familiarity with GenAI among Chinese university instructors of English. The majority of the participants (76.3%) reported having used GenAI for various pedagogical purposes. This high adoption rate underscores the rapid integration of GenAI into educational practices, which is consistent with other studies (e.g., Lu et al., 2024). However, nearly one-fourth of the teachers (23.7%) had not used GenAI. Regarding the purposes of GenAI usage, the predominant application was for teaching preparation, including the development of learning materials (60.6%), lesson plans (48%), and exercises (43%). While these applications are valuable, they represent only a subset of GenAI's capabilities. The relatively low use of GenAI for personalized learning, assessment feedback, and plagiarism detection raises questions about teachers' understanding of GenAI's potentials and their skills in utilizing GenAI (MoE, 2023), which may indicate a need for training (Dai & Lee, 2024).

Table 3

GenAI Usage Profile of English Instructors in Chinese Universities (n=330)

Items	Percentages
3. I have used generative AI technology like Tongyi Qianwen.	
Yes	76.3

No	23.7

4. For what purpose do you use generative AI technology like Tongyi Qianwen?	
Creating lesson plans	48.0
Creating learning materials	60.6
Designing exercises	43.0
Providing personalized feedback	30.5
Updated teaching examples	35.8
Grading assignments and homework	17.6
Checking for plagiarism	12.5
Offering cultural background information	40.5
Other	7.9

Teachers' Perception about the Use of GenAI in Teaching

To understand the factors influencing the adoption of GenAI, the perception of English Instructors in Chinese universities were examined based on the EVT framework. Four key factors were analyzed: knowledge, perceived value (attainment value, intrinsic value, and utility value), perceived cost, and intention to use.

As shown in Table 4, the findings about the four factors indicate a positive trend for GenAI adoption. The knowledge and perceived value of GenAI were both high while the perceived cost was moderate. Importantly, the intention of the instructors to use GenAI was strong.

Table 4

The Overall Perception of English Instructors in Chinese Universities Using Generative AI Technology (n=330)

Factors	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Knowledge	3.94	0.89	High level of understanding
Value	4.05	0.78	High value
Attainment value	4.07	0.87	Important
Intrinsic value	3.64	1.12	Enjoyable

Utility value	4.06	0.86	Useful
Cost	3.12	1.2	Moderate Cost
Intention to use	4.08	0.69	Strong intention

Knowledge of GenAI for English Teaching

The findings indicate a high level of understanding of GenAI's benefits and drawbacks among the participants (Mean = 3.94, SD = 0.89). This result is promising since knowledge constitutes the basis for informed decision-making, particularly in technology adoption (Dai & Liu, 2024). People with a comprehensive understanding of the value and cost of technology have been found to be more likely to engage with it (Lu et al., 2024). This high level of understanding of GenAI among Chinese university instructors of English was also found in other studies in China (e.g., An et al., 2022; Lu et al., 2024) while studies conducted in Bangladesh (e.g., Shirin, 2022) and Indonesia (e.g., Sabaruddin, 2024) have shown different trends. The positive results in China may be attributed to increased digital literacy initiatives by the Chinese Ministry of Education (see MoE, 2023).

While the participants demonstrated a generally high level of understanding of GenAI's benefits and drawbacks (Mean = 3.94, SD = 0.89), over 20% of participants expressed uncertainty or disagreement regarding its limitations (see Appendix, Items 6-9). This uncertainty is also reflected in the standard deviation of 0.89, indicating that a substantial group of participants do not share the same level of understanding of GenAI, particularly in its limitations.

Perceived Value of GenAI for English Teaching

For perceived value, the overall findings show that the participants placed high value on GenAI for English language teaching. The overall mean scores of perceived values (Mean = 4.05, SD = 0.78) as well as the mean score of each of the three components: attainment value (Mean = 4.07, SD = 0.87), utility value (Mean = 4.06, SD = 0.86), and intrinsic value (Mean = 3.64, SD = 1.12) are notably high (see Table 4). These results are promising. Based on EVT (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020), the Chinese university instructors of English are likely to integrate GenAI into their teaching since they perceive its potential in helping them achieve their teaching goals. Similar trends were found in other studies in China, Turkey, Vietnam (e.g., An et al., 2022; Lu et al., 2024; Demirbek & Ekizer, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2024).

Interestingly, however, the overall mean score of the perceived intrinsic value was shown to be the lowest among the three components. The percentages of agreement in items 17-19, measuring perceived intrinsic value, also showed different patterns from the other perceived value items (see Appendix). While for the items measuring attainment value and utility value, most of the participants (75.1% - 88.7%) shared the same views, agreeing with the statements, the three items for intrinsic value obtained different responses. Only concerning one item, Item 19, did most participants agree with the statement. The responses to Item 17 "I can ask questions to generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen that I would otherwise not voice out to my colleagues" show no consensus among the participants (24.1% agreed, 42.2% disagreed, 33.7% uncertain). Similarly, a substantial number of participants (28.5%) showed uncertainty regarding Item 18. These findings suggest that while the participants recognize the importance and practical benefits of GenAI, they may not fully embrace its potential to create a safe and non-judgmental environment for inquiry. This lower perceived intrinsic value was also found in Xu et al. (2024).

Perceived Cost of GenAI for English Teaching

Among the four factors, perceived cost obtained the lowest overall mean score (Mean = 3.12, SD = 1.2) (see Table 4), indicating a moderate level of concern about the use of GenAI in English language teaching. The percentages of the agreement responses showed that the Chinese university instructors of English had different perceptions about the cost of GenAI. As shown in Appendix, there is no consensus in the responses to the four items measuring perceived cost of GenAI - in undermining academic integrity and the value of university education (Item 26), in reducing the quality and frequency of teacher-student interactions (Item 27), in hindering the development of generic skills (Item 28), and in enhancing over-reliance on GenAI (Item 29).

According to Eccles and Wigfield (2020), individuals with a thorough understanding of the cost of technology are more inclined to adopt it while high perceived cost was found to deter GenAI integration or foster ambivalence (Xu et al., 2024). The moderate level of perceived cost found in this study is therefore another promising sign for the adoption of GenAI among Chinese university instructors of English. Even though about one-third of the participants showed concerns about the effects of GenAI on the quality of teaching and learning (see Yun, 2024; Hockly, 2023), a substantial group of participants had different views.

Intention to Use GenAI for English Teaching

Unsurprisingly, the results showed that the Chinese university instructors of English reported to have a strong intention to use GenAI in English language teaching (Mean = 4.08, SD = 0.69). As suggested in previous studies (e.g., Eccles & Wigfield, 2020; Dai & Liu, 2024), the intention to adopt GenAI can be predicted by individuals' knowledge, perceived value, and perceived cost. Specifically, people with a thorough knowledge of GenAI, who perceive its value and who have a low perception of its cost are those people likely to have the intention to use it. The findings in the present study, as well as in other studies in a Chinese context (e.g., Lu et al., 2024; Xu et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2024), seem to confirm these relationships.

Despite a high overall mean score, the percentage of responses to Item 30 showed that around 20% of the participants did not agree (3.9% disagreed, 16.8% uncertain) that the use of GenAI would have a positive long-term impact on teaching and learning (see Appendix). This same trend was reflected in the usage profile. While the majority of the participants seemed to be enthusiastic and have used GenAI in their teaching, a significant minority group (around 20%) remained hesitant or unconvinced about its long-term benefits.

Summary of Key Findings

In summary, the majority of the Chinese university instructors of English who participated in this study demonstrated a strong understanding of GenAI's benefits and drawbacks and have used GenAI to support their teaching, especially in their preparation. Their perceived attainment and utility values seemed to be key drivers for their intention to use GenAI rather than intrinsic value, suggesting a more pragmatic approach than passion-driven. Nevertheless, the instructors had different perceptions about the cost of utilizing GenAI in English language teaching. These findings lend support to the Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT) (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020). The high perceived attainment and utility values appeared to correlate with both the strong intention to use and the actual usage of GenAI in English language teaching. The moderate perceived cost does not outweigh the influence of the perception of value in predicting the usage intention (see also Lu et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2024).

Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Research

The findings in this study indicate a need for continual training on GenAI for Chinese university instructors, especially in English language teaching, despite existing initiatives by the

Chinese Ministry of Education (MoE, 2023). While the university instructors in this study understood GenAI and its practical value in general, the uncertainty about its limitations and cost suggest that the current training may not be sufficient. The absence of specific government guidelines on GenAI in ELT further underscores this gap. Furthermore, higher education institutions should consider ways to support Chinese university instructors of English to utilize GenAI in a wider range of pedagogical tasks, such as curriculum design, personalized and immediate feedback, and creating learning materials, as the findings showed their current usage of GenAI to be rather limited, primarily focused on teaching preparation.

To ensure the successful adoption of GenAI in English language teaching at universities in China, further research should examine the situation using the data from multiple sources, rather than rely only on a questionnaire as in the present study. More details about the existing training and support that English university instructors have access to will also help to better understand the current situation, including the effectiveness of current training in addressing the uncertainties surrounding the limitations of GenAI and various aspects of its cost. Lastly, considering that GenAI was recently introduced into the education system in China, more studies at all educational levels and in as various pedagogical, ethical, and practical aspects as possible are encouraged.

Conclusion

This study offers valuable insights into the perceptions and usage of GenAI among Chinese university instructors of English. The findings reveal a generally positive trend, characterized by substantial familiarity with GenAI, a strong perception of its value (particularly attainment and utility), and a strong intention to integrate it into teaching practices. The relationship among these factors, based on the Expectancy-Value Theory, suggest a pragmatic adoption of GenAI driven by perceived practical benefits. While perceived cost was moderate and did not deter intention, the study also highlights nuances such as the lower perceived intrinsic value and a degree of uncertainty regarding GenAI's long-term impact and limitations among a notable minority. The predominant use of GenAI for teaching preparation, despite its wider potential, underscores the need for targeted training and institutional support to facilitate a more comprehensive and confident integration of this technology in English language teaching within the Chinese higher education context.

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AI Declaration Statement

During the preparation of this work the authors used Gemini to check grammar and proofread. After using this Gemini, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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Appendix

Descriptive statistics percentage for perception of Teachers of English in Chinese universities by items (n = 330)

Items	Statements	Percentages		
		A/ SA	N	D/SD
5	I understand generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen have limitations in their ability to handle complex tasks.	84.1	10.7	5.2
6	I understand generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen can generate output that is factually inaccurate.	71.3	18.5	10.2
7	I understand generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen can generate output that is out of context or inappropriate.	73.8	16.5	9.6
8	I understand generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen can exhibit biases and unfairness in their output.	59.4	26.8	13.8
9	I understand generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen have limited emotional intelligence and empathy, which can lead to output that is insensitive or inappropriate.	67.8	23.4	8.8
10	I understand the benefits of integrating generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen into teaching and learning activities.	86.9	10.1	3.0
11	Teachers must learn to use generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen well for their career.	76.9	17.9	5.2
12	I believe generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen can improve my digital competence.	81.6	13.1	5.2
13	I believe generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen can improve overall teaching effectiveness.	81.3	13.4	5.3
14	I believe generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen can assist me in adapting instructional strategies to meet the needs of my students.	83.1	12.3	4.6
15	I believe that integrating Conversation mode of generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen can enhance my teaching effectiveness.	84.8	12.5	2.7

Items	Statements	Percentages		
		A/ SA	N	D/SD
16	I believe integrating generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen can enhance student engagement.	78.4	19.6	2.0
17	I can ask questions to generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen that I would otherwise not voice out to my colleagues.	24.1	33.7	42.2
18	Generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen will not judge me, so I feel comfortable with it.	60.8	28.5	10.8
19	I think generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen is a great tool for teacher support services due to anonymity.	82.5	14.6	3.0
20	I believe generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen can help me save time.	87.9	8.3	3.8
21	I believe generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen can provide me with unique insights and perspectives that I may not have thought of myself.	83.3	11.7	4.9
22	I think generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen can provide me with personalized and immediate feedback and suggestions for my teaching and student assignments.	77.3	19.2	3.5
23	I think generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen is a great tool as it is available 24/7.	88.7	8.6	2.6
24	I think integrating generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen can help me design personalized teaching Strategies.	77.2	16.7	6.1
25	I think integrating generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen can help me differentiated instruction.	75.1	19.0	5.9
26	Using generative AI techniques like Tongyi Qianwen undermine academic integrity and value of university education	34.8	38.3	26.9
27	Using generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen may reduce the quality and frequency of my interactions with students in teaching and learning.	36.7	21.6	41.7
28	Generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen will hinder teachers' development of generic or	40.4	27.5	32.2

Items	Statements	Percentages		
		A/ SA	N	D/SD
	transferable skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, and leadership skills.			
29	I can become over-reliant on generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen.	35.6	26.5	37.9
30	The integration of generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen in higher education will have a positive impact on teaching and learning in the long run.	79.3	16.8	3.9
31	I envision integrating generative AI technologies like Tongyi Qianwen into my teaching and learning practices.	85.6	12.5	1.9

Note: A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree