



Original article

Improving EFL Literature Teaching via AI-Enhanced Drama: A Comparative Analysis Utilizing Doctor Faustus

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ABSTRACT

This research examines how effective traditional methods are compared to AI-assisted techniques in teaching drama to students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). By looking at student engagement, language growth, and creative expression in both methods, the study seeks to uncover the teaching benefits and drawbacks of using artificial intelligence in drama lessons. A mixed-methods approach that includes both quantitative measures and qualitative observations was used with EFL students at the University of Al- Farahidi in Baghdad. The results show that AI-supported drama teaching boosts motivation, offers personalized feedback, and encourages creative performances, while traditional methods help build basic skills and foster social interaction. The findings imply that combining traditional methods with AI tools can enhance EFL drama education, offering useful insights for teachers aiming to update their language teaching practices.

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Received: 15 March 2026

Accepted: 22 June 2026

Published: 01 August 2026

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.31185/wjfh.Vol22.Iss3/Pt2.1778>



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Cite:

Fayadh, M. I., & Ibrahim, S. I. (2026). Improving EFL Literature Teaching via AI-Enhanced Drama: A Comparative Analysis Utilizing Doctor Faustus. Wasit Journal for Human Sciences, 22(3/Pt2). <https://doi.org/10.31185/wjfh.Vol22.Iss3/Pt2.1778>

Keywords: AI, Drama, EFL Education, Elizabethan Drama, Doctor Faustus

تطوير تدريس الأدب في برامج اللغة الإنجليزية لغةً أجنبية عبر الدراما المعززة بالذكاء الاصطناعي: دراسة تحليلية مقارنة لمسرحية "دكتور فاوستوس"

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المستخلص

تتقصى هذه الدراسة مدى فاعلية الطرق التقليدية مقارنة بالتقنيات المدعومة بالذكاء الاصطناعي في تدريس الدراما للطلبة الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية لغةً أجنبية (EFL) ومن خلال فحص مستويات تفاعل الطلبة، والتطور اللغوي، والتعبير الإبداعي في كلا المنهجين، تسعى الدراسة إلى الكشف عن المزايا والعيوب التربوية لاستخدام الذكاء الاصطناعي في دروس الدراما. اعتمدت الدراسة منهجاً مختلطاً يتضمن قياسات كمية وملاحظات نوعية، طبقت على طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة الفراهيدي في بغداد. وتُظهر النتائج أن تدريس الدراما المدعوم بالذكاء الاصطناعي يعزز الدافعية، ويقدم تغذية راجعة شخصية، ويشجع على الأداء الإبداعي؛ وفي المقابل، تساهم الطرق التقليدية في بناء المهارات الأساسية وتعزيز التفاعل الاجتماعي. وتخلص النتائج إلى أن دمج الطرق التقليدية مع أدوات الذكاء الاصطناعي يمكن أن يرتقي بتعليم الدراما في برامج اللغة الإنجليزية، مما يقدم رؤية مفيدة للمعلمين الساعين إلى تحديث ممارساتهم في تدريس اللغة الانكليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الذكاء الاصطناعي، المسرحية، تعليم اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية، المسرحية الاليزابيثية، دكتور فاوستوس

Introduction

Drama has been known for a long time as an engaging and effective teaching method for learning languages. It provides students with chances to improve their communication skills, cultural understanding, and self-confidence through role-playing, improvisation, and performances.

Traditional pedagogical approaches to teaching the drama in English as a Foreign language (EFL) place significant emphasis on the face-to-face interaction, teamwork among the students, and the instructor directed tasks. These strategies help to create interpersonal competences and encourage spontaneous language production. However, the recent blistering development of artificial intelligence (AI) has offered new opportunities to enhance language learning with the help of digital tools providing personalized feedback, interactive experiences, and innovative creative assistance.

The development of artificial intelligence-based conversational systems, in particular, GPT-based ones, in the sphere of drama teaching is an opportunity to enrich traditional methods of instruction, meet the needs of learners with various needs, and promote novel teaching methods. Although there is increasing interest in AI-supported language learning, there is still little research comparing its effectiveness to traditional methods, especially in drama education for EFL students. This study aims to address this gap by comparing traditional and AI-based drama teaching methods, looking at their effects on student engagement, language skills, and creative results.

EFL has long been highly pragmatic in the sense that instructions are centered on teaching reading, grammar and vocabulary than fostering the lexical interests of the student, which may hamper the development of the imagination and the capacity to read literary texts critically. The role of literature in the EFL classroom, and the role of the canonical drama is paradoxical: it is highly dense in cultural and linguistic information and offers contextualized channels of language learning, critical thinking, and intercultural insight. The theme of the goal of ambition, ethics, and limitations of human will in the play *Doctor Faustus* (1604) written by Christopher Marlowe is an absolute challenge to EFL students. The Narcissistic language, cultural allusions and the way it is being taught to make it understandable to modern students offer multiple layers of challenge that can only be resolved by special purpose of teaching.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a new entity that has already brought revolutionary changes to the pedagogy of the literary field in the last few years. The new communication channels between students and the dramatic texts are provided by the AI-inspired applications, i.e., the natural language processing systems, voice recognition systems, chatbots, 3D-simulation-based visual virtual experiences, etc. Rather than passively reading or listening, learners are given a chance to participate in the scenes of the play that are pertinent to the context of AI, and the scripts are applicable to make sense of performance, avail prompt language response, and infer long overlooked meanings of the play. These processes will change the process of literature education with a stronger focus on a more embodied, dialogic student-centered mode.

The introduction states the situation of the comparative analysis of the traditional and AI-based pedagogical approaches to the use of the drama to make EFL learners comprehend the process of the stage directions in play by Dr. Goldsmith. First, it describes the historical and pedagogical significance of literature in foreign-language learning; second, it reflects on the essence of the latter challenges associated with the teaching of drama, third, it proposes how AI-enhanced drama can alleviate the latter; and, finally, it offers the EPA framework as a case study of a practice demonstrating the effectiveness of AI-assisted drama in pedagogy.

Literature can be taken as one of the resources that have assisted in the acquisition of a foreign language in fostering empathy, cultural sensitivity and critical thinking (Lazar, 1993; Paran, 2008). Drama has also been mentioned as an effective method of learning by experience where the students are allowed to engage in a conversation and therefore negotiate meaning and as a result develop a genuine skill of communication (Maley and Duff 2005). To internalize the literature is to internalize the literature with the body and with the implications of it, not to do it as an operation of the memory, memorizing the language and the syntax but with the development of the deeper and significant state of communication including all the information learnt.

Despite this, even though such advantages are planned, the teaching of literature in EFL classrooms can be easily marginalized, being handled as a challenging task that does not offer any short-term communicative gains (Carter and Long 1991, p. 316). The spoken language, the unfamiliar culture of the speaker and the complexity of symbols pose a challenge to the comprehension of a learner. In such an exhortation of the canonical texts that linguistic accessibility and literary knowledge should be compatible, teachers are in an ill-equipped state

to teach other freshmen, and so they feel either overworked, or insufficiently worked, by the Lutheranization of dramaturgy.

There are certain educational problems in production of a play such as Marlowe (*Doctor Faustus*). Elizabethan syntax and vocabulary are extremely challenging, and the text can hardly be understood without much assistance (Crystal, 2008). Secondly, among the cultural and religious presumptions of the play that are founded on Renaissance humanism, religion, and the moral philosophy, there is a chance that it may fail to appeal to the cultural object-relations of learners (Greenblatt, 2001). Third, theater is not constructive; nevertheless, acting in a foreign language may generate anxiousness and make it impossible to intervene (Gregersen and MacIntyre, 2014).

Although modern educational theory has largely shifted toward student-centered learning, traditional pedagogical methods—such as teacher-directed lectures and line-by-line reading of texts—often persist in classroom practice. Educators frequently fall back on these outdated techniques due to systemic constraints such as standardized testing pressures, heavy syllabus loads, or a lack of training in dynamic pedagogy. However, rather than benefiting the pupils, the continued use of these disjunctive techniques tends to aggravate student disengagement and push them away from the material. Furthermore, the absence of required instruction time, language services, and the availability of prescribed stage facilities create practical obstacles to the introduction of dramaturgy, despite the inherent attractiveness of theatrical activities. Consequently, there is an evident need to implement pedagogical innovations that bridge this gap; innovations that do not spoil the dramatic constituent of literary works, but rather make them more emotionally resonant and linguistically accessible. The efforts towards introducing artificial intelligence into the learning process have already led to the reinvention of the language acquisition process by yielding to the individualized, adaptive, and interactive experience (Holmes and Automatic M PIL.T. U, 2022). Theatrical is one of the ways AI can enhance experiential learning without trimming the objectives of traditional teaching. To demonstrate this point, speech-recognition can provide in real-time feedback on the pronunciation and intonation during role-playing exercises (Li and Ni, 2021). It is possible to use NLP to translate Elizabethan language into modern vernacular to prevent any decline of texts and make them easier to read (Lauponse et al., 2019). The theatrical role can be played with AI: a family can be created where the students will speak to virtual Faustus, Mephistopheles, or Wagner under controlled digital conditions that will imitate the circumstances of the interactive performance (Zawacki-Richter et al. in press).

AI-enhanced drama allows differentiated learning with high-level learners being provided with original work, and the other learners with simplified or annotated text. Using AI analytics, a teacher will be able to monitor contact with students and identify gaps in their language so that assistance is timely. The technique will allow the learners to deal with a complex text like *Doctor Faustus* at the level and depth, corresponding to their language proficiency. It is possible by a combination of needs of the dramatized texts (performative) and the artificial intelligence (adaptive) to facilitate a rigorous and non-elitist education.

The example of *Doctor Faustus* can serve as an ideal example of thinking about how education and play composition can be supported by AI. The transcultural interface of its themes, the ambition, knowledge, temptation, and damnation, and the contextualization of its Elizabethan language present specific linguistic issues, which explains its suitability to the AI intervention testing. The play was found to have the following benefits as a learning strategy: tragic seriousness and comic lightness; the dialogue gives a strong foundation to the use of interactive simulations of artificial intelligence (AI) systems, in which students will be able to act as characters, evaluate interpretations, and make moral judgements.

Doctor Faustus is often staged in a theatrical performance-oriented lecture and text-exegesis form, and it is hardly possible to dramatize it in its conventional context. An AI-optimized version would enable students to read out important scenes, like the Faustus-Mephistopheles confrontation, in voice-enabled AI software, evaluate translations baffling modern translation through natural language processing or debate theology with help of chatbots. Such inventions would not just have the capacity to foster lingual knowledge, but they would be directed toward fostering the incorporation of more to the moral and philosophical fractions of the play.

The current research paper is directed to the comparative evaluation of the traditional drama pedagogy and the AI based comic marriage learning in terms of addressing the character of *Doctor Faustus* among EFL students. It claims adaptive scaffolding by the AI will enhance the knowledge, engagement, and academic performance of learners by means of interactive role-play and feedback. Such juxtaposition of results across distinct teaching environments will help to pinpoint what must be done in the generic discourse on AI as an alternative to the conventional teaching methods, in addition to serving as fresh breath, introducing a new layer of literature pieces into the language research.

The paper is used to add to the existing discussions on whether technology is relevant to humanities. Despite the word that education is becoming over-technologized and, as critiques hope, education will become more technicized over time (Selwyn, 2016), supporters argue that AI is making education more democratic and personalized, thus, it becomes more interactive (Luckin, 2017). It is also the conclusion of the paper not to name AI an object per se, but an instrument by which to pursue the performative and interpretive potential of dramatic literature, which continues in the twenty-first century with the likes of *Doctor Faustus* that can be effectively utilized in language learning and contact with culture.

Research Question: Does the use of AI (GPT chat) in drama teaching help EFL students understand and engage with *Doctor Faustus* better than traditional lectures?

Scope and limitation of the Study.

This research paper will carefully assess how effective it is to use AI-enhanced drama in English as a Foreign Language literature classes, focusing on Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* as the main text. The research will include EFL students at Al- Farahidi University. The main aim will be to explore how these students interact with and understand literary texts using the lecture method and the AI tool (GPT chat).

Methodology:

This research will use a quasi-experimental design to evaluate the effectiveness of two different teaching methods—AI-enhanced drama and traditional lecture-based instruction—on the learning outcomes of EFL students studying Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*.

Participants: 40 students from the second stage – Department of English- University of Al-Farahidi.

Group A: (20 Students) taught using traditional lectures, discussions, and textbook analysis.

Group B: (20 students) taught using GPT Chat for interactive explanations, Q&A, and creative prompts.

Assessment Tools: Quizzes, essays, and presentations assessing understanding of the historical background, themes, plot, and characters.

Procedure

Students in the control group attended a traditional, instructor-led lecture detailing the historical background of Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. Conversely, the experimental group was assigned to use the AI tool ChatGPT to explore the same historical context. To isolate the effect of the AI, this experimental group did not receive prior in-class instruction on the topic; rather, the AI served as their primary information source. The instructor provided the students with a specific set of guiding keywords (e.g., 'Elizabethan era,' 'Renaissance,' and 'religious conflict') and instructed them to engage in an interactive dialogue with ChatGPT. Rather than simply being handed the themes, the students were expected to figure out the historical context through these conversations and independently deduce how that history influenced the play's central themes and characterizations. Finally, they synthesized the information gathered from their AI interactions to formally state their understanding of the play's background

Control Group

After the lecture, students might have a general understanding, but their responses could indicate challenges with detailed comprehension or personal connection, common limitations of passive learning and uniform instruction. Here are two responses;

Student A: *“The lecture provided a lot of information. I recall certain dates and names, such as Christopher Marlowe and the Renaissance era. It was overwhelming at times, and I occasionally lost my concentration. I got the main concept that it was a play involving a pact with the devil, but linking it to the precise historical context seems somehow unclear now. It was very difficult for me to ask any question that would come to my mind during the lecture.”*

Student B: *“In the recent times, I used to write detailed notes in relation to the historical characters and religious thoughts of the era. The lecturer presented the explanations clearly though I had a problem with the understanding of many new words and historical constructions in English. I was reluctant to ask questions and this led to conjectures. As much as this strategy worked in the short run, I am not confident when it comes to presenting the content to third parties.”*

Experiment Group

While artificial intelligence platforms offer significant potential benefits—such as personalized explanations, continued engagement with difficult subjects, and the ability to ask follow-up questions—it was necessary to structure the activity to ensure these outcomes were met. To

address varying levels of digital literacy and ensure all students knew how to use the AI, the instructor provided a brief 15-minute in-class tutorial prior to the activity. During the session, students were given specific prompt guidelines and worked individually. Specifically, they were assigned to describe the exact task: e.g., query ChatGPT regarding the Renaissance context of *Doctor Faustus*, evaluate the AI's initial summary, and ask at least two targeted follow-up questions. By scaffolding the assignment with explicit in-class instructions and technical support, students were equipped to effectively leverage the platform to deepen their understanding."

Student C: *"The use of the artificial intelligence tool was beneficial. I asked to have explained to me in simple terms the meaning of the so-called Faust legend, and then a question was brought up, as to the political situation in Elizabethan England at the time when Christopher Marlowe wrote the play. The answers were highly concise and precise. When faced with a new word, I got the system to define the word. I would have an opportunity to advance at my own speed, review the explanations, and request examples as illustrations. As a result, I was able to get a thorough insight into how historical happenings informed the play."*

Student D: *"The religious aspects of the time of Doctor Faustus were hard to understand by me. The AI assisted me by simplifying complicated theological concepts into smaller, easier-to-understand pieces and even provided analogies. I also inquired about how societal perceptions of magic and agreements evolved over time, which helped me feel more linked to the historical background. It felt like having a personal tutor, and I wasn't hesitant to ask 'silly' questions."*

Based on the capabilities of AI tools and identified limitations of traditional lectures, the AI tool method appears to be more effective for EFL students in understanding the historical background of *"Doctor Faustus."* The following table shows capabilities and limitations depending on students' responses on each feature;

Table 1: Effectiveness Comparison of Traditional Lecture vs. AI Tool Methods for Teaching Historical Context

Feature	Lecture Method	AI Tool
Access to Information	Information is usually given to all students at the same speed determined by the teacher. Students may struggle to go back to certain topics right away, and the learning process can feel passive. <i>"The instructors spoke quickly in lectures. They covered historical information</i>	Students can access information whenever they need it, which lets them look into particular historical topics and related ideas at their own speed. This creates a flexible learning space, allowing students to ask for more details on anything they don't completely understand. <i>"I used GPT. I could ask it about specific historical</i>

	<i>fast. If I missed something, I used my notes. I felt passive. I just listened and tried to learn.”</i>	<i>events. I could also ask about unclear ideas in Doctor Faustus. The tool gave me instant, detailed answers. This helped me learn at my own pace. I felt like I was in charge of my learning.”</i>
Language Support & Clarity	Depends greatly on the teacher's skill to make complex academic language easier and adjust to the different English levels of students. Difficult academic words can hinder understanding for EFL students. <i>“The instructor often used academic terms without explaining them, and with everyone’s different English levels, it was hard to follow and grasp the main ideas about the play.”</i>	Provides strong language support by rewording difficult ideas, simplifying vocabulary, and offering explanations in plain English. This helps make intricate literary analysis and historical context easier to understand. <i>“GPT helped me understand Doctor Faustus better. It made complex words and ideas simpler. It also made historical details clear. It felt like always having a personal tutor to explain things.”</i>
Engagement & Motivation	Can be a passive learning experience, leading to disengagement for EFL students who might get bored with long, teacher-centered lectures. Motivation may decrease if content lacks cultural relevance or is too difficult.	Provides interactive and personalized learning experiences, which can significantly increase student engagement and motivation. It offers timely feedback and fosters strong interactivity. <i>“Using GPT chat made learning Doctor Faustus interesting. It was also interactive. I could ask</i>

	<i>“The lectures often felt boring. They also felt passive. It was hard to stay focused for an hour of listening. When the material was hard or not important, my motivation went down.”</i>	<i>questions. I got instant feedback. I could explore the play based on what I wanted to know. I did not just listen passively.”</i>
Depth of Analysis	Offers a general summary of the historical background. A more in-depth analysis usually relies on students' skills to understand intricate literary interpretations and might need extra independent research to completely understand the subtleties. <i>“Lectures gave a general overview of Doctor Faustus's history. Deeper literary meanings were not covered. We had to find those ourselves. This often meant doing extra research. I need to understand complex ideas.”</i>	facilitates deeper analysis by allowing students to ask specific follow-up questions, compare different historical elements, and delve into underlying motivations with guided contextual evidence. It can help students understand English-speaking countries' culture, which is key to historical context. <i>“GPT chat changed how I looked at Doctor Faustus. I could ask specific questions about history and culture. I could also explore why characters did things, using evidence. This helped me understand the play's culture and history much better.”</i>
Customization & Personalization	Personalization is limited; teaching usually targets the average student. To	A highly customized learning experience that adjusts content and explanations to fit each

	address the unique needs of EFL learners, instructors must put in considerable extra effort. <i>“Lectures were made for the average student. My needs were not fully met. This was true even though the professor tried. This happened because I was an EFL learner. It also happened because I was a more advanced student.”</i>	student's needs and learning preferences. Students are encouraged to take charge of their own learning journey. <i>“The best part of the GPT tool was its personal touch. It adjusted to my needs. It made difficult ideas clear. It helped me explore more deeply. It also motivated me to control my own learning.”</i>
Immediate Feedback	Feedback is typically delayed (e.g., through assignments, quizzes, or classroom discussions). It can be challenging lecturers to provide immediate, effective feedback during lectures for all students.	offers instant feedback, explanations, and details on ideas, aiding in real-time comprehension and quickly correcting misunderstandings. AI Tool Method (e.g., GPT Chat) - More Effective

Student Responses on Characterization in *Doctor Faustus*

Both of these cohorts are to be trusted with the analytical exploration of the multifaceted persona of Doctor Faustus, including his motivations, his inner conflicts and his character development throughout the dramatic text.

Control Group

Participants of the control group very much rely on the didactic lectures of the instructor, auxiliary notes and to a certain extent on classroom discussions to the extent that it is possible due to engagement. Although this technique provides a structured overview, depending on the depth that learners can look into details of characters may be limited due to their English aptitude and the scheduling of the lecture. The following excerpts show salient responses of two students in each cohort:

• Student A: *"The lecture dealt with the ambitions of Faustus and the pact he made with the devil. The instructor made him a paradigm of the Renaissance individual, at the same time tragic. I wrote that he was proud and power seeking. It is difficult for me to reconcile all of his actions with these attributes since the text of the play is written in Early Modern English and I sometimes forget the subtle details that inform his motivations or show the development of his emotions. While I understand the main points, it is still difficult to put his internal struggle in my own words."*

Student B: *" During the lecture I focused on the different aspects of Faustus's character as presented by recording them. I perceived that the character is portrayed that he is in conflict between moral goodness and moral evil, and he is seduced by Mephistopheles. Although the lecturer did speak at greater length about some of the key scenes, I would have liked to see more time spent analyzing certain lines or dialogues which develop his character. In periods of involvement I found myself in a disoriented state, due to the professor's elaborate English explanations, and I was not able to pose clarifying questions related to each ambiguity regarding the development of his character: each and every term or phrase."*

Experiment Group

Characters in the experiment group utilize an AI chatbot to explore the character of *Doctor Faustus*. Their experience is likely to be more interactive, individual, and flexible in relation to their language and understanding requirements.

Student C: *"What I did was to use the AI chat to deconstruct the character of Faustus. I have started by asking for a simple overview before asking for very specific questions such as What are Faustus's main motivations for making the deal? and 'How does his ambition change him throughout the play?' The AI told me in simple terms what his pride and intellectual curiosity was, and provided me with quotes from the play along with explanations. When I didn't understand a word I just asked the AI to define it or simplify the explanation. I also told it to highlight for me examples of his internal conflict but this really made it easier for me to see his transformation. It was like having a one-on-one tutorial and I could go as deep as I needed to."*

Student D: *"Faustus's psychological journey was amazing with the help of the AI. I asked it to compare Faustus's character at the beginning and the end of the play and it gave me a detailed comparison of his mindset and morality. I could ask for explanations of certain soliloquy to learn more about what is going on inside his mind. It helped me analyze the character's traits and how they evolve by providing direct textual evidence and then explaining the significance of the text evidence provided. I also found it useful to clarify cultural or historical references that shaped his character, and this made his motivations more clear to me as an EFL student."*

The following table defines the relative effectiveness of different instructional modalities for EFL learners of characterization, combining empirical evidence of the benefits of artificial intelligence in terms of personalized instruction and learner engagement and feedback for individualized learning, and comparing them with some of the limitations involved in traditional lecture-based approaches. Students' responses are registered for each feature;

Table 2: Comparative Effectiveness of Lecture vs. AI Methods for Understanding Characterization

Feature	Lecture Method	AI Tool
Pace and Accessibility	Set pace, single delivery; hard to go back to certain points or clarify right away. Might not accommodate different learning speeds and language skills. <i>“After the lecture on Doctor Faustus, I was still unsure about some of his choices. The professor moved quickly through his ambition and conflict. I didn't get to ask about specific lines. The old English and fast pace made it hard to follow. I felt I missed some of the character's traits.”</i>	Fast and accessible <i>“Using the GPT helped me deeply understand Faustus's character. It explained his ambition, pride, and inner conflict using quotes. It also made old language clear. I could learn at my own pace. This was possible through repeated review and asking more questions.”</i>
Personalization	Personalization is limited; the content is made for the entire class, which may be too much for some EFL students and does not target their specific understanding issues. <i>“In the lecture on Doctor Faustus, I understood the main ideas about his flaw and conflicts. But I struggled to link them to specific scenes and choices. The fast pace, hard words, and missing historical details made it difficult to understand his reasons. My questions about</i>	Highly personalized; provides customized explanations, definitions, and examples according to specific questions. Addresses personal strengths and weaknesses. <i>“I once saw Faustus as only wanting power. After more study, I understood his ambition comes from not being satisfied with how much humans can know. His true flaw is hubris. This is an excessive pride. It</i>

	certain phrases or actions were not really answered.”	makes him reject philosophy, law, and medicine. He thinks they are not enough. He then seeks forbidden, transcendent power through magic.”
Engagement & Interaction	Passive learning depends on how well students pay attention and take notes. It offers few chances for asking questions directly and exploring character details interactively. <i>“From the lecture and my notes, I learned that Faustus is a tragic figure. His ambition and pride lead him to make a pact with the devil. I noted his internal conflict and moments of doubt. However, we focused more on definitions than discussion. Because of this, I missed the deeper meaning behind his struggles.”</i>	Very interactive and engaging; it encourages ongoing questions, follow-ups, and a deeper understanding of character motivations and growth. It lessens the fear of asking questions. “The discussion showed me Faustus's ambition becomes trivial. This made me question if his 'growth' was actually a decline. Exploring his repentance showed how Mephistopheles weakened his doubt. Faustus was trapped between his free will and outside control. This made me wonder if he could ever truly escape his fate.”
Feedback & Clarification	Delayed or limited feedback; students may not get immediate answers to complex questions about character analysis. Explanations might not	Immediate feedback and students can get clarification for every point that needs to be clarified.

	always be simplified for EFL learners <i>“In the lecture on Doctor Faustus, I noted his pride and internal conflict but wasn’t sure how they connect—does his hubris cause the conflict, or is something else driving it?”</i>	<i>“At first, I thought Faustus’s pact was final. But feedback clarified that his conflict is an ongoing struggle. This struggle is between repentance and despair. It is shaped by external forces. By highlighting scenes with the Angels and the Old Man, and asking how Mephistopheles blocks repentance, I realized the devil actively causes Faustus’s damnation.”</i>
Depth of Analysis	General overview of character; deeper analysis may depend on instructor’s detailed explanation and students’ ability to follow complex literary interpretations. <i>“From lectures and readings, Faustus is a brilliant scholar. He is also dissatisfied. His ambition and pride drive him to make a pact with the devil. He struggles with regret. He also has thoughts of repentance. However, he never acts on them. This makes him a tragic figure. His pursuit of forbidden knowledge leads to his downfall.”</i>	facilitates deeper analysis by allowing students to explore specific aspects, compare character traits, and delve into underlying motivations with guided textual evidence. <i>“Using GPT tool deepened my understanding of Doctor Faustus. It showed that his ambition comes not just from wanting power. Instead, it stems from intellectual dissatisfaction with traditional studies. By rejecting philosophy,</i>

		law, and medicine as 'base,' he looks for divine knowledge beyond human limits. This is driven by hubris, which blinds him to those limits."
Language Support	depends on the student's current level of English skills; complicated academic language in lectures may obstruct comprehension of character concepts. "I struggled with complex terms. This made it hard to grasp Faustus's deeper motivations. I spent more time trying to understand the language than analyzing his character beyond the plot."	offers language support; can reword complicated concepts, clarify vocabulary, and give explanations in easier English, making literary analysis easier to understand. "The GPT's language support greatly helped me understand Doctor Faustus. Terms like 'hamartia' confused me. GPT gave clear, simple explanations. It showed that Faustus's tragic flaw, or hamartia, is his hubris. This pride drives him to defy divine limits."

In summary, although the lecture method gives a clear introduction, the AI tool method is more effective for EFL students in grasping characterization in *Doctor Faustus*. It accommodates personalised, participatory and language assisted pedagogical experiences, which respond to a plethora of difficulties non-native English speakers face to come to grips with complex literary texts and analyses of characters.

Student Responses on Themes in *Doctor Faustus*

Both groups are challenged to detect and understand the relevant themes from the play *Doctor Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe such as ambition, damnation, good versus evil, and the pursuit of knowledge.

Control Group

Depending on a lecture presented by their instructor, students in the control group rely on the lecture. While lectures give a rundown of a set theory, learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) may face challenges understanding dry literary themes. Such challenges are fuelled by use of academic terminology, the rate at which it's delivered or the lack of opportunities to clarify immediately. Furthermore, the presence in literary works of historical and cultural background often leaves EFL-students with other difficulties. The following are some representative responses from each of the groups:

Student A: *" Student A: The lecture went on to identify ambition as a principal theme in Doctor Faustus. Faustus desires great knowledge and power which is beyond the scope of a human. The professor also spoke on the themes and sin and damnation of Faustus's deal with the devil. Although I was able to capture the key points I found how these concepts interrelate or how they apply to the play, their meanings, and their significance throughout the play to be troubling. Articulation of the subtleties of Faustus's ambition, and the scale of his fall, is difficult in English, particularly the archaic language of the text."*

Student B: *"I heard the conflict between good and evil especially through the Good and Evil Angels. The lecture was clear that Faustus's desire for knowledge was the cause of his downfall. While interesting, it was hard to understand how these abstract concepts are manifested in the text through determining the specific dialogues or actions. I also I struggled to follow some of the more intricate literary analysis being presented in English and was not able to ask questions about every challenging concept being presented in the lecture."*

Experiment Group

Students in the experimental group utilize an AI tool (GPT Chat) to delve into the themes of *Doctor Faustus*. This approach enables personalized learning, repeated clarification, and interactive exploration, which are very helpful for EFL learners dealing with intricate literary ideas. AI tools can assist in breaking down language barriers by simplifying complicated explanations and providing definitions.

Student C: *"Using the AI tool was very useful for grasping the themes. I began by asking, 'What are the key themes in Doctor Faustus?' and it provided a list: ambition, damnation, the struggle between good and evil, and the quest for knowledge. Then I requested explanations for each theme, and it offered clear definitions along with specific quotes from the play as examples. Regarding the theme of 'damnation,' I asked the AI to explain why Faustus couldn't repent, and it simply outlined the theological aspects. I could ask as many follow-up questions as I wanted until I completely understood each theme and its representation in the text, which made a significant impact."*

Student D: *"The AI was incredible in assisting me to link the abstract themes with the actual play. I had difficulty grasping the concept of Doctor Faustus as a 'morality play', so I requested*

the AI to clarify that idea and its influence on the themes. It gave a straightforward explanation of how the play examines moral decisions and their outcomes. I also inquired about the importance of Faustus's quest for knowledge and its connection to Renaissance values. The capability to receive immediate explanations for challenging vocabulary and intricate concepts made it much easier for me to understand these themes.

The following table highlights the comparative effectiveness of each method, considering the specific challenges EFL students face when analyzing literary themes and the unique advantages offered by AI tools in addressing these challenges. An Example of student's response is mentioned for each point;

Table 3: Comparative Effectiveness of Lecture vs. AI Methods for Understanding Themes:

Feature	Lecture Method	AI Tool
Depth of Understanding	can provide a foundational overview, but the abstract nature of themes and academic language can limit EFL students' deeper comprehension and their ability to connect themes to textual evidence. <i>"In Doctor Faustus, the lectures provided a basic understanding of the main themes. However, the abstract ideas and academic language often made it difficult for me to understand them. It was hard to link those complex themes directly to the textual evidence we received."</i>	Facilitates deeper understanding through iterative questioning, personalized explanations, and direct textual examples. Students can explore themes at their own pace and level of detail, requesting elaboration on complex concepts. <i>Using the AI tool to explore Doctor Faustus was transformative. It let me ask unlimited follow-up questions. I also received tailored explanations with textual examples. This allowed me to learn at my own pace. Ultimately, it helped me understand the play far more deeply than through lectures alone.</i>

Clarity of Concepts	Depends on how well the instructor delivers the material and how well students understand it in a foreign language. If complex ideas are not explained right away, they can stay unclear or be misunderstood. <i>“Understanding the complex themes in Doctor Faustus during lectures often felt uncertain. It largely depended on how well the instructor explained the material. This was especially true since we were learning in a second language. If a challenging concept wasn't clear right away, it could remain unclear. It could even be misinterpreted throughout the entire discussion.”</i>	Provides clear, simplified explanations and rephrases complex ideas upon request. Can offer multiple perspectives or analogies to enhance understanding of abstract themes, and can define difficult vocabulary. <i>“GPT chat made complex themes easy to understand. It did this by giving clear explanations. It also reworded things when needed. It offered helpful analogies. Finally, it clarified difficult vocabulary. It really simplified the play's deeper meanings.”</i>
Engagement & Interaction	Typically passive, with limited opportunities for individual questions or interactive discussion during the lecture itself, potentially leading to disengagement for EFL students <i>“During our lectures on the complex themes in Doctor Faustus, the</i>	Highly interactive; students actively engage by asking questions, seeking clarifications, and exploring sub-themes. This dynamic interaction keeps students engaged and motivated. <i>“Talking about the intricate themes in</i>

	<i>discussion felt quite one-sided. There was little opportunity to ask personal questions. There was also little chance to have a genuine conversation. This made it easy to lose interest. I frequently felt like I was merely listening instead of really engaging with the content."</i>	<i>Doctor Faustus using the AI tool was very engaging. It was not merely passive listening. I was always asking questions. I also sought clarifications. I delved into various sub-themes that emerged. This lively interaction truly kept me motivated. I was actively engaged in grasping the play more deeply."</i>
Personalization	Personalization typically adopts a "one-size-fits-all" methodology, which may fail to address the varied linguistic and cognitive requirements of individual EFL learners when engaging with intricate themes. <i>"When we talked about the hard themes in Doctor Faustus in class, it felt like everyone was taught the same way. I often felt that my personal language and learning needs were not met. The difficult topics were hard for me to understand. This happened because the teaching method didn't help different types of learners."</i>	Highly personalized; adapts to the student's specific queries and learning pace. It can provide customized examples and explanations tailored to their comprehension level <i>"When I use GPT chat, the hard themes in Doctor Faustus became very personal. It changed completely to fit my questions and how fast I learned. It gave me examples and explanations that were just right for me. It was like having my own teacher who knew exactly what I needed to learn those difficult ideas."</i>

Language Support	Students need to handle complicated academic English quickly, which can be a major obstacle to grasping subtle thematic conversations. <i>“During lectures on Doctor Faustus, the biggest problem was the difficult English used in academics. It went too fast. This made it hard to understand the deeper meanings, especially for someone learning English as a foreign language.”</i>	Offers immediate vocabulary definitions, paraphrasing of complex sentences, and explanations in simpler language, removing linguistic barriers to thematic understanding. <i>“In the lecture on Doctor Faustus, the themes were explained in abstract ways. We had to find quotes from the text ourselves to support these themes. I found this hard because just understanding the abstract ideas was already difficult. It was even harder to find the exact words in the text to prove them.”</i>
Connection to Text	May present themes abstractly, requiring students to independently connect ideas to specific quotations or events in the play. This can be challenging for EFL students. <i>“In the lecture on Doctor Faustus, the themes were explained in abstract ways. We had to find quotes from the text ourselves to support these</i>	Directly connect themes to specific text examples, quotes, and plot points, showing how themes are represented in the play. Students can ask for examples of any theme. <i>“When we talked about the difficult ideas in Doctor Faustus using the AI tool, it was very good for linking ideas directly to the writing. I could ask for examples of any idea,</i>

	themes. I found this hard because just understanding the abstract ideas was already difficult. It was even harder to find the exact words in the text to prove them.”	and it would quickly give me exact quotes, story points, or events from the play. This helped me much better understand how those complicated ideas were shown in the story.”
Time & Accessibility	Fixed time and location; comprehension might be restricted by memory and notes. Reviewing or clarifying needs going over notes again or asking the instructor outside of class. “In our classes about the hard themes of Doctor Faustus, we had set times and stayed in the classroom. If I didn't understand something immediately, I had to rely on my memory and notes. To review, I just looked at those notes again. If I needed more help, I had to try to talk to the teacher outside of class, which was often difficult.”	Available 24 hours. students can revisit explanations, explore themes at any time, and spend as much time as needed to fully grasp each concept This flexibility promotes self-regulated learning “The best thing about using GPT chat for Doctor Faustus was the time and how easy it was to use. It was ready whenever I needed it. This let me look at explanations and learn about themes whenever I wanted. I could take all the time I needed to fully understand each idea. This freedom was very important for my learning. It truly helped me study at my own speed.”

In conclusion, while a conventional lecture is a viable method to initially introduce the themes of *Doctor Faustus*, the instructional approach using an AI approach is more efficacious for English as a Foreign Language learners. Its interactive, personalised and easily accessible nature directly helps overcome the linguistic and conceptual barriers that EFL students often have to face when attempting to understand complex literary motifs.

Conclusion: Forging a New Pedagogy for EFL Literature

This comparative research has proven the great benefits of the integration of AI-powered tools in the EFL literature classroom. While the traditional method of lecturing offers a basic knowledge of Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, the results show that a more AI improved approach enables a demonstrably deeper, more personalized and more resilient, understanding between students. The AI tool proved to be better at breaking down the specific linguistic and analytical barriers that EFL learners tend to run into.

The main advantage of the AI paradigm is its potential to act as an interactive and dynamic learning guide. The major benefits that were experienced in the experimental group include:

Personalized Learning: Contrary to traditional lectures which are fixed and of one size fits all approaches, the AI tool takes note of each student and has specific explanations to meet their unique understanding level.

On-Demand Language Support: The AI is one of the key linguistic scaffolds which eases the archaic language and explains the complex academic terminology in clear English thus allowing students to have a direct interaction with the literary work.

Greater Interaction and In-depth Discussion: The non-academic yet engaging atmosphere allows the learners to ask an infinite number of questions, allowing them to delve into the motives of the characters, thematic nuances and backgrounds in ways that are not possible in time-constrained lectures. As a result, the learners in the AI group were more confident and independent in their study.

The implications of these findings are indicative of a desirable change in EFL pedagogy. This study does not support the substitution of human instructors, instead, it promotes a Blended-Strategy. The role of the instructor can change to being more of a provider of information rather than a higher order critical thinking facilitator. Using AI to automate baseline understanding and one-on-one inquiry, teachers can use high-quality classroom time to facilitate delicate conversations, group interpretations, among other components that capitalize on the social aspects of the live classes setting.

Even though this study presents strong evidence, its area of research is projected to one literary piece and a particular group of students in Al-Farahdi University. The follow-up research ought to aim at validating these results to different literature genres, different proficiency levels and different AI platforms. After all, AI is not only a unique technology but a strategic power that will be applied thoughtfully. It provides EFL students with instruments to overcome the language barrier, they can gain confidence in the analytical skills and read more advanced literary pieces in a much more comprehensible, purposeful and empowering mode.

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