



AI-Mediated Parent-Teacher Collaboration: Addressing Separation Anxiety in a Very Young Second Language Learner

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) is gaining popularity in education, but little is known about how AI might help parents and teachers work together to address the emotional difficulties of young students, especially separation anxiety in second language (L2) environments. This study explored how artificial intelligence (AI) can support collaboration between a parent and a teacher in addressing a child's separation anxiety in the context of early English language learning. The study was conducted by the mother of the child, who served as both researcher and participant. Using a qualitative longitudinal case study design, the research followed a five-year-old boy over a six-month period as he began attending English classes in 2024. Data were collected through AI–parent chat logs, mother–child interactions, and the teacher's field notes. The child's emotional growth was tracked using thematic analysis, which also looked at how AI-mediated reflections affected the parent-teacher relationship. The findings revealed that AI served as a tool that supported three key dimensions of the collaborative process: (1) assisting the parent in communicating with the teacher in a courteous and cooperative manner; (2) organizing the collaboration process through reflective frameworks and progress monitoring; and (3) directing the content of interventions by recommending useful techniques like role-playing and classroom duties. The child's separation anxiety gradually decreased as a result of these AI-supported interactions, progressing from severe discomfort to increasing independence and self-assurance in the classroom. The study highlights the potential of AI to enhance teacher–parent collaboration and support children's emotional adjustment in second language (L2) learning environments. It offers both empirical and pedagogical contributions by extending research on L2 anxiety to include separation anxiety and by demonstrating how AI can facilitate reflective and solution-oriented communication. Although limited to a single case, the findings suggest promising directions for future studies on integrating AI-mediated collaboration in early childhood education and language learning contexts. The researcher's dual role as both parent and participant is acknowledged as a limitation of this study.

Keywords: artificial intelligence (AI), AI-mediated collaborative reflection, language anxiety, parental involvement, separation anxiety, teaching English to young learners

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1 Introduction

Separation anxiety is often studied in developmental psychology but rarely examined in the context of language education. Children who experience separation anxiety may struggle to attend class, engage socially, or benefit fully from instruction. In second language (L2) learning settings, emotional readiness is a foundation for participation, yet this dimension is underexplored in the literature (e.g., Botes et al., 2020; Teimouri et al., 2019). Meanwhile, research emphasizes that emotional barriers can become hidden sources of language anxiety, interfering with motivation and learning outcomes (MacIntyre, 2017).

According to developmental theory, young children's exploratory behavior and learning depend on emotional security (Bowlby, 1982). Children that suffer from separation anxiety use more of their cognitive resources on coping with their discomfort than on interacting with new stimuli, such as learning a language (MacIntyre & Vincze, 2017). This is in line with the emotive filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1985), which holds that emotional obstacles might hinder language learning by keeping students from absorbing information completely. Anxiety has been defined as a situation-specific emotional reaction that hinders involvement and performance in L2 learning (Horwitz et al., 1986). Separation anxiety is a developmentally grounded emotional barrier that is especially pertinent for young learners who are juggling language acquisition with the difficulty of being physically separated from caregivers, whereas L2 anxiety research has historically concentrated on older learners and classroom-related stressors (Teimouri et al., 2019). Thus, integrating attachment theory (Bowlby, 1982) with the affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1985) provides a theoretical lens for understanding why separation anxiety may specifically effect very young L2 learners' classroom involvement and adaption.

Parental involvement and strong parent–teacher collaboration are well-established predictors of children's academic, social, and emotional adjustment. However, implementing sustained, productive collaboration can be challenging because of constraints on time, communication, and shared understanding. Recently, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a tool with promise to scaffold communication, generate structured reflections, and support collaborative decision-making (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019). Yet, very few empirical studies have explored how AI-mediated parent–teacher interaction might function in real-life educational interventions related to emotional support or anxiety in children.

This gap is particularly relevant in environments where children are entering formal schooling or language programs. For a child experiencing separation anxiety, even beginning a language class can generate considerable distress—thus inhibiting participation and learning. This study seeks to bridge the gap between AI's pedagogical potential and the emotional needs of learners by examining how AI-mediated collaborative reflections might support a child's adjustment, especially one with separation anxiety in an L2 context.

Recently, AI tools have been introduced in education as potential supports for communication, reflection, and collaboration (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019). AI can generate structured feedback, help organize reflections, and guide discussions. Despite this potential, very little research has investigated how AI might be used to support parent–teacher communication about children's emotional difficulties, such as separation anxiety. This lack of research leaves two problems: first, we do not know what AI-mediated collaborative reflections would actually look like in a real case; and second, we do not know whether such reflections could help reduce a child's separation anxiety in an L2 classroom. Without

addressing these gaps, the field risks missing an opportunity to use AI as a tool not only for teaching language, but also for supporting children's social-emotional adjustment in language learning contexts.

The purpose of this study was to explore how AI-mediated collaborative reflections between a parent and a teacher can be used to address a child's separation anxiety in an EFL classroom. Specifically, the study aimed to identify what such AI-supported reflections entail in practice—how AI helps structure communication, generate strategies, and guide joint reflections between adults working to support the child. The second aim of the study is to examine whether these AI-mediated reflections can actually help reduce the child's separation anxiety over time and foster smoother adaptation to classroom life. Accordingly, the following research questions guided this study:

2 Literature Review

2.1 Separation Anxiety

Clinical separation anxiety disorder (SAD) is a diagnosable condition that is characterized by excessive and persistent distress that is disproportionate to the child's developmental level, lasting at least four weeks in children, and causing significant impairment in social, academic, or other areas of functioning. Normative separation anxiety is a developmentally appropriate phenomenon observed in young children, typically emerging around 6–8 months and resolving by age 3–4, though it can reappear during transitions like starting school (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Although the youngster in this study showed signs of discomfort when separated, his anxiety did not fit the diagnostic criteria for SAD because it was responsive to supportive therapies, context-specific (limited to the language classroom), and did not persist in all situations. Therefore, rather of treating normative separation anxiety as a clinical condition, this study focuses on it as a transitional challenge.

A child's excessive emotional anguish during or before being separated from a parent or primary caregiver is referred to as separation anxiety. It frequently shows itself as sobbing, avoidance, physical problems, or severe psychological discomfort (Jreisat, 2023). Separation Anxiety Disorder (SAD) manifests when symptoms are persistent, excessive, and functionally debilitating, whereas brief separation anxiety is developmentally normal. According to Lewinsohn et al. (2008), anxiety disorders, including SAD, are among the most prevalent mental illnesses in children and frequently indicate psychopathology in later life. According to Schneider et al. (2011), SAD is one of the first anxiety disorders that may be diagnosed, and it has long-term effects on emotional and functional outcomes. This highlights the significance of early detection and treatment.

Children with SAD will have trouble focusing, functioning, and performing. SAD in children presents in the form of refusal to attend class, class underperformance, and social and emotional developmental problems; such problems can put the child and the family in trouble (Ulaş & Seçer, 2024). If SAD is not adequately dealt with, it can lead to other anxiety and mood disorders in adulthood. In terms of prevalence, SAD among children is estimated at approximately 4–5% based on statistical studies, and is considered to be one of the most common child anxiety disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Researchers have used different theories to explain why some children develop SAD. Two of these theories which have informed the present study are attachment theory and behavioral models.

Based on attachment theory, the bond that a child has with his or her care-givers determines how they respond to separation. In the case of secure attachment, children tend to feel safe exploring the world and can handle short separation. However, in the case of insecure attachment (e.g., inconsistent, overly anxious, or unavailable parents), children may find separation much more difficult to put up with. The latter can increase the likelihood of developing SAD. According to behavioral theories, it is learning and reinforcement that can specify the dosage of separation anxiety (Ulaş & Seçer, 2024). If a child gets nervous and anxious after getting away from parents and the parents' reaction is letting the child stay home and not attend school, the child's anxiety is reinforced. With the passage of time, the child's refusal and avoidance strengthens his or her anxiety. This cycle makes SAD more difficult to handle.

2.3 Empirical Studies

As far solutions to the problem are concerned, psychological interventions, parent support, and teacher and class involvement have been reported as strategies to deal with separation anxiety. Parental involvement has been found to be crucial for dealing with separation anxiety. Family accommodation which refers to parental behaviors aimed at reducing a child's anxiety, such as allowing co-sleeping, avoiding separation, or providing constant reassurance can be a further solution to SAD (Weeks et al., 2024; Lebowitz et al., 2020). This behavior is particularly prevalent in separation anxiety, as children naturally seek proximity to caregivers (Schleider et al., 2018). The child's attachment security moderates the relationship between family accommodation and separation anxiety: children with lower attachment security show stronger associations between parental accommodation and observed anxiety symptoms, whereas securely attached children may experience accommodation as supportive rather than anxiety-maintaining (Weeks et al., 2024). Parental characteristics such as maternal anxiety and empathy further shape the impact of accommodation on child anxiety (Settipani & Kendall, 2015). This evidence highlights that family accommodation is a key factor in the development and maintenance of separation anxiety, interacting closely with the quality of the parent-child attachment relationship (Schleider et al., 2018).

Collaborative efforts between parents and teachers enhance children's coping with separation anxiety. Andersson Søre and Psouni (2025) report that trust and communication between parents and teachers facilitate warmer teacher-child relationships. Consistent behavioral strategies across home and school ensure children receive coherent messages, reinforcing coping skills and reducing anxiety, as elaborated by Andersson Søre and Psouni (2025). Teachers' classroom interventions, such as gradual exposure to stressors, structured support during transitions, and active parent communication, further improve school adaptation for anxious children (Jreisat, 2023).

2.4 AI and Separation Anxiety

While a lot of AI research focuses on language development, AI tools also facilitate conversation and reflection, which are essential for tackling emotional issues like young learners' separation anxiety. AI can help with reflection by summarizing observations, posing insightful queries, and encouraging users to think about different interpretations (Warschauer et al., 2023). Reflection is critically analyzing one's activities and decisions to inform future practice. When it comes to parent-teacher collaboration, AI solutions allow people to discover behavioral trends, pinpoint triggers, effectively exchange insights, participate in asynchronous communication, and jointly develop plans for the child's support. Effective communication between parents and teachers is crucial because children

with separation anxiety experience difficulty when they are separated from their caregivers (Vukašinović et al., 2025).

By organizing and summarizing observational data, pointing out behavioral trends, offering thoughtful cues like "Which activities help the child settle?" and facilitating collaborative decision-making, AI helps youngsters with separation anxiety. By offering structure, clarity, and chances for concentrated thought, AI improves human judgment rather than replacing it (Warschauer et al., 2023). Its application necessitates human oversight, ethical treatment of sensitive data, and proper interpretation of insights produced by AI. As a result, AI has a great deal of promise to enhance introspective parent-teacher communication about behavioral and emotional problems, such as separation anxiety, ultimately assisting caregivers in making better, child-centered decisions.

2.4.1 Limitations and Ethical Considerations of AI Use in Educational Contexts

Although ChatGPT and other AI tools show promise in facilitating conversation and introspection, its application in emotional and educational situations is not without limitations. First, AI systems may produce false or erroneous information—a phenomena called hallucination (Ji et al., 2023)—which calls for close human supervision and confirmation of any recommendations made. In order to prevent incorrect or impracticable proposals from being implemented, all AI-generated techniques in this study were examined and vetted by the parent and teacher prior to implementation.

Second, when utilizing AI platforms that handle sensitive data on children's emotional and behavioral difficulties, privacy and data security are major problems (Holmes et al., 2021). Every interaction in this study was anonymized, and no identifiable information was given to the AI tool. However, while utilizing commercial AI platforms, researchers and practitioners need to be mindful of the dangers of data exposure.

Third, AI systems may produce recommendations that are unsuitable or insensitive for certain cultural situations since they are trained on big datasets that may contain cultural biases (Noble, 2018). AI-generated recommendations could not always be in line with local beliefs or customs, for example, because parenting styles, classroom norms, and expectations regarding kid behavior differ among countries. The mother and instructor in this study used professional judgment when choosing and customizing AI recommendations for their cultural setting.

These drawbacks highlight the need for AI to be a helpful tool rather than a substitute for human judgment. For ethical and efficient use, critical interaction with AI outputs, contextual adaptability, and continuous reflection are crucial.

2.5 Research Gap

No empirical studies have looked at how AI-mediated parent-teacher collaboration might help with young learners' separation anxiety in L2 contexts, despite the established role of parental involvement and parent-teacher collaboration in supporting children's emotional adjustment and the emerging potential of AI to scaffold communication and reflection. In particular, there are two gaps in the literature: (1) detailed explanations of what AI-mediated collaborative reflections actually involve in practice; and (2) proof of whether these reflections can aid a child's long-term adaption. In order to close these gaps, this study describes a real-world instance of parent-teacher cooperation aided by AI that was intended to lessen a child's separation anxiety in an EFL classroom.

3. Research Questions

1. What do AI-mediated collaborative reflections on a child's separation anxiety between a parent and a teacher entail?
2. How does the child's separation anxiety change over time during AI-supported parent–teacher collaboration?

Given the descriptive and exploratory nature of this case study, the aim is not to establish causal relationships but rather to observe and document the child's emotional trajectory and the collaborative processes that accompany it.

4 Method

4.1 Design

This study adopted a qualitative longitudinal case study design. The focus was to examine a child's separation anxiety over time and to explore how AI mediated collaborative interactions between a parent and a teacher in addressing this challenge. The inquiry was qualitative in nature, reflecting the main characteristics of qualitative research such as exploring meaning, context, and lived experience (Ary, et al., 2010).

Data collection and analysis were both interactive and inductive. The aim was not to generalize findings but to provide a contextualized understanding of separation anxiety as it unfolded in natural settings, such as the home and the language institute. By situating the research in these real-life contexts, the study captured how separation anxiety was experienced and addressed in practice.

4.2 Participants

The participants in this study were a child with separation anxiety, his mother, and his English teacher. They were selected purposively, as each participant might give rich data related to the research issues (Patton, 2015). Since the goal of this case study was to obtain a comprehensive, contextualized understanding of a particular phenomenon—that is, the experience of separation anxiety in an L2 classroom and the cooperative efforts to address it—purposeful sampling was judged appropriate. The mother and teacher were chosen as key informants who could offer a variety of viewpoints on the child's emotional and behavioral trajectory because they played direct and active roles in the child's everyday life and classroom experience, respectively. The child was chosen because he represented a typical case of a young learner experiencing separation anxiety in a new educational setting. His separation anxiety was approved officially by the psychologist who had been treating the child before he took part in this study. The child was a five-year-old preschool boy and a true beginner in English, with no prior exposure to the language either formally or informally. Due to his separation anxiety, he had never attended nursery school or any language institute before the time of data collection. He was also an only child.

The child's mother, who was also the researcher, was 36 years old at the time of data collection. She was an MA student in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), a non-native English speaker, and an experienced English teacher with more than a decade of professional experience. The child's teacher was a 38-year-old female with a bachelor's degree in TEFL. She had over ten years of experience teaching English to young learners and had also completed teacher training courses. Like the mother and child, she was a non-native English speaker and shared Farsi as her first language. Informed

consent was obtained from the teacher in line with research ethics. Since the researcher was both the parent and legal guardian of the child, separate consent from the child was not required and was therefore assumed.

4.3 Procedures

Prior to initiating the study, the child was officially identified as case with separation anxiety, however, at the time of data collected he was not attending any therapeutic session. Several sources of data were collected. First, the interactions between the parent and the child that took place at home before and after attending the language institute were audio-recorded. These recordings captured the child's immediate emotional responses and reflections on his experiences. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted at different points throughout the study to elicit the child's perceptions, feelings, and experiences. The interview questions were developed based on a review of the literature on separation anxiety, and their validity was confirmed by consultation with a child psychologist. Second, the mother (who was also the researcher) interacted with AI, specifically ChatGPT, throughout the study to seek support in addressing the child's anxiety. Finally, the teacher maintained field notes over the course of the study, systematically documenting the child's behavior, emotions, and engagement during English class sessions. These notes provided an external professional perspective to complement the child's and parent's accounts.

4.4 Instruments

Four primary tools were used to gather data in order to answer the research questions:

4.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews with The Child

Throughout the course of the six-month study period, interviews were held at various intervals to gather the child's thoughts, emotions, and experiences about being away from his mother and attending English class. A child psychologist was consulted to verify that the interview questions were age-appropriate and clear. They were created based on a review of the literature on separation anxiety in young children. The audio recordings of the interviews were verbatim transcribed.

4.4.2 Audio-Recorded Mother–Child Interactions

Apart from the official interviews, audio recordings were made of the mother and child's realistic interactions at home, both before and after language class sessions. These recordings provided valuable contextual information outside of the formal interview style by capturing the child's impromptu emotional reactions, thoughts, and casual talks about his educational experiences.

4.4.3 Teacher's Field Notes

Throughout the study, the child's English teacher kept methodical field notes. During every class period, she recorded the child's behavior, emotional state, degree of involvement, and social contacts. These notes acted as a useful source for triangulation and offered an outside expert viewpoint that enhanced the mother's and child's testimonies.

4.4.4 AI Chat Logs

Every conversation that took place between the mother (as a researcher) and ChatGPT, an AI tool, was recorded and collated. The mother's questions, the AI-generated recommendations, and the mother's and teacher's subsequent reflections and choices were all recorded in these chat logs. They

were the main source used to investigate how AI mediated the collaborative process between parents and teachers.

4.5 Data Analysis

The analysis was qualitative and inductive, following the principles of thematic analysis. All audio-recorded interactions between the child and his mother were transcribed, and the teacher's field notes and AI chat logs were compiled into a unified dataset. The purpose was to identify patterns of change in the child's experience of separation anxiety over time and to examine how collaboration between parent, teacher, and AI supported this process.

The analysis proceeded in several stages. First, open coding was conducted to highlight key words, phrases, and behaviors that reflected the child's feelings and reactions (e.g., "fear of being left," "crying," "enjoyment of football," "managing emotions"). Second, these codes were grouped into broader themes such as separation anxiety, partial adaptation, emotional regulation, and collaboration. Third, the data were organized into longitudinal stages, which showed how the child moved from strong dependence to partial adjustment and, eventually, to greater independence.

To strengthen the validity of the findings, triangulation was applied across three sources: the child's voice (interviews and mother-child talk), the teacher's perspective (field notes), and the AI-mediated interactions (ChatGPT logs). Comparing and cross-checking these perspectives allowed for a richer and more reliable account of the child's developmental trajectory. In addition, the interview questions were validated by a child psychologist, and emerging interpretations were discussed with the teacher to ensure credibility. Finally, the findings were presented through tables, themes, and narrative accounts that combined direct quotations from the child, excerpts from teacher notes, and examples of AI-suggested strategies.

While inter-coder reliability was not employed—consistent with the interpretive, reflexive nature of this case study analysis—credibility was established through triangulation across three data sources, member checking with the teacher, and the researcher's ongoing reflexive journaling (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Several steps were taken to mitigate bias and ensure that the findings are credible and trustworthy. First, multiple sources of data were deployed; thereby, data triangulation and cross-checking provided a more trustworthy perspective on the child's behaviors and the effectiveness of interventions. Secondly, the interview questions and initial codings were reviewed by a child psychologist to validate accuracy and credibility of the interpretations. Finally, the data have been made available in the appendices as data transparency is an optimal strategy to mitigate bias (Ary, et al., 2010).

5 Findings

5.1 The role of AI in mediating collaboration

In this section, some excerpts of interactions between AI and the parent will be provided. As will be shown in the following extracts, AI-mediated interactions entail the use of AI tools to generate practical strategies, communication support, and structured reflections that guide the collaboration between parent and teacher. In this case, the parent and teacher adopted AI-generated suggestions for

intervention content (e.g., strategies like role-play), the form of communication (respectful scripts), and the process of collaboration (plans, progress charts), leading to improved outcomes for the child.

5.1.1 Scaffolding Communication: From "Speechless" to Strategic Partner

AI supported the parent in finding respectful and collaborative language to use with the teacher. The parent initially described feeling "speechless" when approaching the teacher, unsure how to give suggestions without offending her. AI provided scripts such as beginning with appreciation ("I appreciate your patience with him") and framing requests in terms of "we" rather than "you." This scaffolding reduced tension, allowed the parent to voice concerns, and encouraged the teacher to become an active partner in problem-solving. For instance, when the parent suggested introducing small duties for the child, the idea was accepted because it was framed collaboratively, as shown in the following Excerpts.

Extract One:

Mom: *I have a five-year-old son who cries and refuses to go to language class without me. We've tried prizes, encouragement, changing schools—nothing works. When I meet his teacher, I often get speechless. What can I tell her respectfully?*

AI: *Start with appreciation: "I really appreciate your patience with him." Use "we" instead of "you": "We've noticed he still struggles with separation. Would it be okay if we worked together on a small plan?" You can also ask for small adjustments: a predictable arrival routine, a comfort object, or a simple job at the start of class. Frame it as teamwork, not criticism.*

Extract Two:

Mom: *I approached the teacher with appreciation and suggested giving my son duties. She seemed reluctant at first but then agreed.*

AI: *That's positive. Keep it simple—one or two easy jobs (handing out markers, turning off lights). Praise your son at home for being the "teacher's helper." Check in gently with the teacher afterward: "How did the job routine go?" This shows you care about her experience too.*

Extract Three:

Mom: *The teacher and I tried duties, but my son keeps crying and refuses responsibilities. He just wants me.*

AI: *When a child is in panic mode, his brain is flooded with fear. His refusal isn't disobedience—it's fear. Gently shift expectations with the teacher: "I see he's still struggling. I think this is more about his anxiety than the classroom. I'll look for extra support, but in the meantime, let's keep things predictable and gentle."*

The collaboration between parent and teacher focused on building trust and communication. The parent started conversations by showing appreciation and offering collaboration. At first the teacher seemed reluctant, but over time she became more involved. This initial trust allowed both adults to plan interventions for the child's separation anxiety.

5.1.2 Structuring the Process: From Ad-Hoc to Systematic Collaboration

AI mediated interactions by giving both parent and teacher a framework for reflection and progress tracking. This included the creation of themes and codes (e.g., “emotional support,” “positive reinforcement,” “monitoring progress”) as well as tools such as a weekly progress chart to record how long crying lasted and what strategies worked. These structures made the collaboration more systematic. After each session, the parent and teacher reflected together, asking: “Did he settle more quickly today? Did the activity help?” This reflective structure helped ensure consistency and made small improvements visible over time (Extracts Four & Five).

Extract Four:

Mom: *This strategy didn't work. The teacher said it didn't help. I feel speechless again.*

AI: *You don't need a long explanation. Let's create a structured step-by-step plan so you both have something clear to lean on, instead of trying random ideas.*

Extract Five:

Mom: *Today we discussed the plan with the teacher. We agreed on it.*

AI: *That's wonderful. Check in briefly after each class: “He cried for 5 minutes, then settled with drawing.” Celebrate small wins together. Don't change the plan too soon—consistency is key.*

Challenges and Failed Strategies

Not every recommendation made by AI worked. For example, the approach of assigning the child jobs in the classroom (such as passing out markers and shutting off lights) was tried but failed since the youngster's fear was still too great for him to participate in these activities. Extract Three states that the child “keeps crying and refuses responsibilities.” In a similar vein, the child's major source of comfort remained his mother's physical presence, therefore the use of a comfort object was recommended but did not always work. These unsuccessful tactics demonstrate that reducing anxiety is a gradual rather than a linear process and that AI-generated recommendations necessitate appropriate contextualization and human assessment.

5.1.3 Informing Intervention Content: From General Advice to Tailored Strategies

AI provided specific strategies that became focal points for discussion and practice. For example, suggestions such as giving the child classroom responsibilities (e.g., handing out pencils) and using a comfort object were initially tested. While responsibilities were less effective because the child's anxiety remained too strong, the idea of role-play (where the parent and child switched roles as “teacher” and “student”) proved especially useful. This activity, proposed through AI and taken up by the teacher, allowed the child to rehearse separation in a playful way and helped him feel more confident. Here, AI-generated content shaped the practical interventions trialed both at home and in class.

Extract Six:

Mom: *The teacher came to me with AI-generated suggestions, including role-play—me as teacher, my son as himself, and vice versa. My son really liked it.*

AI: *That's hopeful. Role-play gives him a safe space to practice separation without pressure. Switching roles lets him process feelings from different perspectives and introduces humor, which reduces anxiety. Just update the teacher positively: "He really liked role-play—he laughed when he played the teacher."*

Extract Seven:

Mom: *The teacher reports my son is much better. We collaborate, use strategies, and talk about their effectiveness after each session. We are making progress.*

AI: *That's wonderful. Consistent strategies, role-play, predictable routines, and gradual exposure are building his confidence, not just masking fear.*

Therefore, based on the data, AI-mediated interactions between the parent and teacher were practical, concrete, and action-oriented. Rather than abstract technological mediation, AI shaped the content, communication, and process of collaboration in ways that directly impacted the child's experience of separation anxiety. Thus, AI provided content support, communication scaffolding and reflective structure.

5.2 The Child's trajectory of adaptation

In this section, three transcripts of interactions between the mother and the son will be provided. The first is related to two months after English classes; the second has to do with four months after while the last is related to six months after starting English classes. Thus, the following thematic analysis demonstrates the child's progression in language English class adjustment over seven months.

5.2.1 Stage 1: Acute Separation Anxiety and Dependency

In the first stage which has to do with the first two months of conducting the study, the child was experiencing rather an extreme case of separation anxiety. The following extract comes from the respective time span.

Extract Eight:

Mom: *Why do you cry when you enter the classroom without me or dad?*

Son: *Because I didn't know the teacher. I wanted YOU.*

Mom: *Has your fear lessened?*

Son: *My fear is less, but I'm not better. Moms and dads shouldn't take their children to the teacher and leave them there.*

Mom: *Are you happy that you've been able to stay in class alone?*

Son: *No. I'm not happy.*

In this stage, the child's remarks, such as "Because I didn't know the teacher, (.) an' I wanted YOU", or "They shouldn't take them to the teacher (.) an' leave them there", are indicative of strong separation anxiety, fear of unfamiliar teachers, and a need for maternal presence. All these can be subsumed under strong separation anxiety.

5.2.2 Stage2: Partial Adaptation and Emotional Ambivalence

The second stage, i.e., three to four months after the initiation of the study, the child was adjusting with difficulties, but still had problems.

Extract Nine:

Mom: *How do you feel when you go to class?*

Son: *I feel good.*

Mom: *Then why do you sometimes cry?*

Son: *You're not there to see me. The teacher doesn't notice at that moment.*

Mom: *When you play football, do you want me there?*

Son: *Yes. I miss you.*

Mom: *When you score a goal, are you happy?*

Son: *Yes, but still sad, because you're not there to see me. I want to score a goal, hug you, then go back and play.*

In the second stage, partial adaptation occurred, but emotional struggles and peer-related challenges remained. This can be deduced from the child crying due to mother's absence, enjoyment of playing football, and happiness mixed with sadness. The instances of such feelings can be traced in utterances such as "I want to score a goal, hug you, then go back an' play again", "Because my friend punches me, (.) an' you're not there to see it" or "Yes, I'm happy (0.4) but still sad, because you're not there to see me."

5.2.3 Stage 3: Growing independence and emotional regulation

In the final stage which was from four to six month after conducting the study, the child seemed to be able to manage his feelings and overcome his anxiety.

Extract Ten:

Mom: *How do you feel before class?*

Son: *I feel good.*

Mom: *If I'm not there, does anything upset you?*

Son: *Nothing upsets me. I do miss you, but I can handle it now.*

Mom: *Do you prefer me to watch you play?*

Son: *It's better if you're not there, because I know the principal doesn't allow parents in the yard. I have lots of friends now.*

Mom: *What if I come and then leave?*

Son: *That's when I cry. So it's better if you hug me, say goodbye right at the start, and then leave.*

To sum up, this staged approach highlights how structured support, gradual exposure, and emotional scaffolding from both parents and teachers can foster resilience, social confidence, and successful adaptation to school life as English class.

5.3 The teacher's perspective: corroborating the child's development

In this section, to corroborate the developmental stages identified in the mother–son interactions, I also analyzed the teacher's field notes across the same six-month period. While the child's talk with his mother revealed his inner feelings about separation, the teacher's observations provide an external and professional descriptions of his behavior in the classroom. Triangulating these two sources strengthens the validity of the findings, as it allows for a comparison between what the child expressed at home and how he acted in language classes.

While the mother and teacher collaborated throughout the study, the data sources retained a degree of independence: the teacher's field notes were recorded prior to discussions with the mother and were not influenced by the AI interactions, and the mother–child interactions occurred independently of teacher observations. This allowed for meaningful cross-checking of perspectives.

5.3.1 Initial Observations: Distress and Resistance

In what follows, an extract taken from teacher's notes during the first two months is provided.

Extract Eleven:

- *The child keeps crying and doesn't feel good.*
- *He seems to be scared.*
- *He doesn't talk and play with classmates.*
- *He wants to leave the class.*
- *I talked to his mother today again.*
- *I gave him some responsibilities.*
- *He didn't accept responsibilities.*
- *We still have problems.*

In the beginning, the teacher noticed that the child was very distressed. He often cried, appeared scared, and avoided playing or talking with other children. He wanted to leave the class whenever possible and refused to take on any responsibilities given to him. The teacher also mentioned repeated conversations with the mother, showing that they were both aware of the ongoing challenges. This stage highlights the child's strong resistance to separation and difficulty in adjusting to the classroom environment.

5.3.2 Mid-term Reflections: Strategic Collaboration and Emerging Stability

The following is an extract taken from teacher's notes during the second two months where the teacher and parent were taking steps forward and started strategic and planned collaborations and interventions.

Extract Twelve:

- *His mom is cooperative.*
- *We changed our decisions.*
- *We have a plan for each session.*
- *We talk after each session.*
- *Coordination between me and his mom*
- *Our plan is working, I think.*

By the next stage, the teacher's notes shifted focus from only describing the child's distress to also describing collaboration with the mother. She noted that the mother was very cooperative and that they worked together to create a plan for each session. After every class, they reviewed the child's progress and adjusted their approach. While the teacher does not describe the child's emotions in as much detail here, her comments suggest that the structured collaboration began to create small improvements and gave both adults a sense of direction. This stage reflects a turning point: the focus moved from struggling to cope toward planning and experimenting with strategies.

5.3.3 Final assessment: successful integration and effective strategies

The following extract represents the final stage where the participants made a significant progress in the process of dealing with the child's separation anxiety.

Extract Thirteen:

- *I used AI.*
- *We tried role-plays.*
- *He is getting along with classmates.*
- *He doesn't cry.*
- *He stayed in the whole session.*
- *I plan worked.*
- *His mom is happy, too.*

In the final stage, the teacher described clear changes in the child's behavior. She highlighted that he no longer cried, stayed for the entire session, and began interacting more positively with classmates. Importantly, she mentioned that role-play activities suggested by AI were introduced and proved effective. The teacher also noted that the mother was happy with the progress, showing a shared sense of achievement. This stage marks the child's growing independence and confidence, as well as the successful outcome of the parent–teacher collaboration supported by AI.

6 Discussion

The findings of this study evinced how AI facilitates parent–teacher collaboration and children's adaptation to a new educational setting. AI-mediated interactions were associated with a reduction in separation anxiety in this case as it shapes the content, process, and communication of collaborative

interventions. Specifically, role-play activities implemented by both the parent and teacher, for example, appeared to provide practical, action-oriented solutions. Previous research also emphasized AI's mediating agency in making educational decisions and solving problem by scaffolding interventions in structured ways (Baker & Siemens, 2022; Holmes et al., 2021).

Alternative explanations for the child's improvement must be acknowledged. First, maturation may have contributed, as children naturally develop emotional regulation skills over time (Coplan & Arbeau, 2009). Second, increased teacher attention and the mother's heightened engagement may have created a more supportive environment regardless of AI involvement (the Hawthorne effect). While we cannot isolate AI's unique contribution from these factors, the triangulation of data sources and staged documentation of progress suggest that the combination of consistent strategies and emotional scaffolding—facilitated by AI—was meaningfully associated with the child's adaptation. Future studies with control groups are needed to disentangle these effects.

Prior research on L2 anxiety, conducted on adult learners mostly, has introduced linguistic difficulties, learner related (e.g., self-confidence, motivation), and classroom-related sources (e.g., teacher behavior, peer pressure) as the main sources of language learning anxiety (see Papi & Khajavy, 2021, 2023; Teimouri et al., 2019); however, the finding of this research revealed that separation anxiety represents a distinct and significant dimension of young learners' emotional distress that impacts their classroom engagement. Documentation of the impact of AI-supported collaboration on a five-year-old decreasing separation distress in this study expanded the conceptual boundaries of L2 anxiety beyond L2 learning contexts.

It has been shown that AI serves early childhood education by providing personalized learning experiences, and by planning and differentiated instruction, as Crompton and Burke (2024) asserted. However, how AI might facilitate emotional support and collaboration between parents and teachers has not been widely researched despite the fact that some authorities like Warschauer et al.'s (2023) pointed AI may enhance reflective practice. The findings of this study open a vista toward using (Gen)AI to build up relational scaffolding defined as supporting the interpersonal dynamics children need to overcome their emotional challenges. In this study, it was demonstrated that AI appeared to support parent-teacher communication in this case to improve cooperative environment by providing respectful and collaborative language scripts.

However, care should be taken when interpreting this favorable result. A more nuanced picture has emerged from recent large-scale research on AI chatbots, showing that although AI interactions can be helpful, increased usage is paradoxically linked to increased loneliness and emotional dependence on the AI itself (Fang, et al., 2025) —a pattern seen in other studies on technological companionship (Papadopoulos, C., 2025). This implies that rather than the child's direct, unsupervised involvement with the technology, the effectiveness of AI-mediated collaboration in this situation may be heavily contingent on its targeted, goal-oriented use by involved adults.

Also, in this study, AI shaped the content of interventions, particularly role-play exercises which raised the child's independence and confidence. The child's transition from separation anxiety to partial adaptation and autonomy showed playful, experiential strategies were effective in socio-emotional development as previously discussed by Coplan and Arbeau (2009) and Kestenbaum et al. (2017). This also aligns with Shafiee Rad's (2025) findings. Likewise, it was shown that activities developed with the aid of AI provide dynamic, interactive experiences and, thus, increase learner engagement.

Although the results imply that AI can facilitate parent-teacher cooperation, a number of restrictions need to be noted. First, there is a serious risk associated with AI hallucinations, which are suggestions that are incorrect or improper for the setting (Ji et al., 2023). Before being used in this study, all AI-generated strategies were subjected to the mother's and teacher's professional assessment. Inappropriate AI recommendations, however, might be applied carelessly in less monitored settings, with unforeseen repercussions for kids.

Moreover, results might not apply to other AI platforms due to the tool's specialization (ChatGPT). Future studies should examine the potential effects of various AI technologies and interfaces on child outcomes and parent-teacher collaboration.

7. Conclusion, Implications, and Suggestions

This study explored how AI-mediated interactions between a parent and teacher supported a child experiencing separation anxiety during language school. The findings demonstrate that AI appeared to play a practical and action-oriented role in this case in shaping the content, form, and process of collaboration. Specifically, the parent and teacher used AI-generated suggestions as communication scaffolding, structured reflective tools, and targeted intervention strategies, which facilitated effective parent-teacher collaboration and directly influenced the child's adaptation. The staged analysis of mother-child interactions revealed a clear trajectory from strong separation anxiety to partial adaptation and, ultimately, growing independence. These findings were corroborated by teacher field notes, highlighting consistent behavioral improvements in the classroom and demonstrating the child's increasing confidence, social engagement, and ability to manage separation.

Attachment theory can be used to understand the child's stepwise journey from acute distress to partial adaption and finally independence (Bowlby, 1982). The mother was the child's primary secure basis, and the child's initial distress upon separation was indicative of an engaged attachment system. The teacher's encouraging presence and the regular, predictable routines established in the classroom served as a secondary attachment figure, progressively enabling the kid to grow to trust the classroom setting.

The study's conclusions have a number of ramifications. First, from a practical standpoint, the findings imply that AI could be a helpful tool to promote parent-teacher cooperation and kids' emotional adjustment in learning environments, although further study is required before wider adoption. Second, the work has theoretical ramifications for comprehending how technology mediates human interactions. The results imply that AI may actively promote relational dynamics between parents and instructors by promoting courteous conversation, cooperative decision-making, and group reflection rather than just serving as a passive tool. However, these findings should be interpreted cautiously due to the exploratory and single-case nature of this work.

There are some limitations to be aware of. First, a major methodological limitation is the researcher's dual function as participant and mother. The insider viewpoint posed possible biases in data collection, interpretation, and reporting even while it offered a unique window into the child's emotional world. It is impossible to completely rule out the possibility of unconscious bias, even with strategies like member checking, triangulation, and reflexive journaling. The nature of the contacts and the data gathered were unavoidably altered by the closeness of the mother-child bond, and the researcher's interest in the child's development may have affected how she interpreted the findings. Independent

researchers who are not intimately connected to the individuals should be involved in future investigations.

Second, the results' generalizability is constrained by the single-case design. The child's particular traits, such as his age, cultural background, anxiety profile, and family history, could not be typical of other young students. Third, results may not apply to different AI platforms due to the usage of a single AI tool (ChatGPT). Fourth, the comparatively brief six-month period restricts comprehension of long-term results and improvement sustainability. Lastly, it is impossible to rule out other possibilities (maturation, instructor attention, Hawthorne effects) due to the lack of a control group.

Future research should focus on the following topics in light of this study's limitations. First, to get rid of the dual-role bias in this study, replication trials with other researchers are required. Second, in order to assess the generalizability of findings across various children, circumstances, and cultural settings, larger-scale research including several instances are required. Third, controlled designs would assist separate the special contribution of AI from other elements like maturation or enhanced attention (e.g., comparing AI-supported cooperation with non-AI collaboration). Fourth, to evaluate the sustainability of benefits and long-term results, longitudinal studies lasting longer than six months are required. Fifth, studies contrasting various AI platforms and tools would shed light on how functionality and interface design affect kid results and parent-teacher cooperation.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors have conducted the study, collected data, analyzed and interpreted the data, and written up the manuscript.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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Appendix: AI Prompt Protocol

The following prompts were used by the mother when interacting with ChatGPT throughout the six-month study period:

"I have a five-year-old son who cries and refuses to go to language class without me. We've tried prizes, encouragement, changing schools—nothing works. When I meet his teacher, I often get speechless. What can I tell her respectfully?"

"I approached the teacher with appreciation and suggested giving my son duties. She seemed reluctant at first but then agreed. Any advice on how to proceed?"

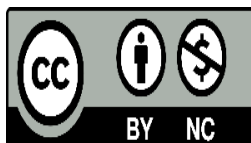
"The teacher and I tried duties, but my son keeps crying and refuses responsibilities. He just wants me. What should we do now?"

"This strategy didn't work. The teacher said it didn't help. I feel speechless again. Can you help me create a structured plan?"

"Today we discussed the plan with the teacher. We agreed on it. What should we do next?"

"The teacher came to me with AI-generated suggestions, including role-play—me as teacher, my son as himself, and vice versa. My son really liked it. What are your thoughts?"

"The teacher reports my son is much better. We collaborate, use strategies, and talk about their effectiveness after each session. We are making progress. Any final suggestions?"



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