



Utilizing ChatGPT in English Language Learning: Higher Education Students' Experience

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Abstract. The emergence of ChatGPT opens a wide range of debate among scholars. It is believed that the integration of ChatGPT in English language learning could be a double-edged sword. ChatGPT could boost students' learning development as it provides personalized learning activities. Yet, it could also result in too much dependence on ChatGPT. This study aims at discovering students' perception towards ChatGPT in English language learning by involving EFL learners, specifically higher education students. Survey method was employed to gather the data regarding students experience on using ChatGPT in English language classroom. The data was interpreted through open coding and reported narratively. The findings reflected that ChatGPT provided personal learning environment, provided writing assistance, simplified complex concept, provided enjoyable learning experience, and boosted students' confidence. However, the needs to guide students in using ChatGPT judiciously are still required.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, ChatGPT, English Language Learning

1 Introduction

The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in English language learning, specifically ChatGPT, has been an issue of debate among scholars. Since it was launched, ChatGPT has been viewed as a threat to educational realm rather than as an assisting tool. The possible pitfall that might arise, due to the use of ChatGPT in English language learning, is the dependency on ChatGPT (Ghosal, 2023). ChatGPT has been proven that it can work faster than human in such way that ChatGPT could instantly provide feedback or suggestions to its users. By the same token, ChatGPT facilitates students to interpret statistical data, generate writing outline, summarize literature review, or even compose writing production from scratch (Alberth, 2023). Due to its convenience, ChatGPT is perceived to hinder students' critical thinking skills development as students merely depend on suggestions provided by ChatGPT (Ghosal, 2023; Halaweh, 2023). Another issue related to the use of ChatGPT in English language learning is academic honesty. Teachers assume that ChatGPT tempts students to cheat during exam or plagiarize the writing production generated by ChatGPT (Alberth, 2023; Kohnke, Moorhouse, & Zou, 2023; Mohammadkarimi, 2023)

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Apart from the threats, several merits offered by ChatGPT could aid students in their learning process. ChatGPT has an outstanding capability to think and respond like human. By meaning that ChatGPT could provide personalized and real-time feedback based on students' needs (Baskara, 2023). By providing personalized feedback to the students, the use of ChatGPT in English language classroom could engage students and improve their academic achievement.

Moreover, ChatGPT could be personal assistant or personal tutor that guides students in completing academic task such as suggesting writing topics, providing writing assistance as well as suggesting writing outline (Alberth, 2023; Xiao & Zhi, 2023). Since ChatGPT could provide real-time suggestions, students could easily develop writing products. Students could also request for ChatGPT's assistance in their language learning process (Xiao & Zhi, 2023). Surprisingly, ChatGPT is also useful for interpreting data generated from SPSS (Alberth, 2023). Not only does benefit the students but also ChatGPT proposes advantages to teachers. ChatGPT could provide learning creation and material sources to support learning activities (Kostka & Toncelli, 2023). In a nutshell, both teachers and students gain benefits from the use of ChatGPT in English language classroom.

Previous studies only focused on the benefits and drawbacks of ChatGPT as well as teachers' perception of ChatGPT. There is still limited study involving students as the participant. Questions on the implication of generative AI tools, specifically ChatGPT, in English language learning will still remain. However, the results of this study will add another perspective of utilizing ChatGPT in English language learning from students' perspectives. The aim of this study is to discover students' experience and view of using ChatGPT in English language learning. Therefore, this study seeks to discover the perceived benefits of using ChatGPT in English language learning. Understanding the significance of ChatGPT from students' perspectives might offer recommendations or suggestions for educators and stakeholders on how to integrate ChatGPT in English language classrooms as technology should not be seen as a threat

2 Review of Literature

2.1 Artificial Intelligence

John McCarthy was the founding father of Artificial Intelligence (AI). He first introduced the term of AI in 1955 as a machine that was capable of using language, thinking abstract concepts, and solving various problems (Sumakul, Hamied, & Sukyadi, 2022). AI is designed to resemble the way humans think. As a result, AI could give responses, suggestions, or feedback the way humans do.

The integration of AI in English language learning is not a novel concept. The first practice of using AI in English language learning began in the 1960s with the term computer-assisted language learning (CALL). CALL is defined as the computer's involvement in language teaching to present material, assist students, and provide engaging learning activities (Jafarian, Soori, & Kafipour, 2012). At the beginning of its use, learning activities provided by CALL merely focused on vocabulary learning in which comprised of multiple-choice and filling the gap activities (Wolff, 1991). Due to its

limited and insufficient features, CALL was continued to be developed in order to help elevate students' language proficiency. CALL is believed to facilitate students' language learning and help achieve learning goals (Mali, 2017). The integration of computer in English language classroom became the turning point of the shift from teacher to student-centered learning (Lam & Lawrence, 2002). In essence, CALL supports students in regulating their own learning as it provides a personalized learning environment.

AI operates successfully by replicating human intelligence to machine, particularly computer. With advanced computer development, AI begin to work with big data. AI is developed to recognize and store patterns given by its users. It can be said that AI excels in data processing. AI depicts as a tool that can decide quickly, predict accurately, scan and read data precisely. "AI-powered devices are now able to talk to and understand learners, provide feedback to their spoken language, and grade their writing" (Sumakul, Hamied, & Sukyadi, 2022). Moreover, AI offers wide variety of learning sources. For example, Genie Tutor aims at improving writing production by suggesting expressions to its users (Lee, Kwon, Kim, & Lee, 2015). iSTART (Interactive Strategy Training for Active Reading and Thinking) guides learners in reading activities by providing summarization strategies and interactive narrative stories (Johnson, 2005). Moreover, learners could also enhance their speaking skills by interacting and asking questions to AI (Ayedoun, 2019).

2.2 ChatGPT in English Language Learning

ChatGPT (Chat Generative Pre-Trained Transformer) is an AI-based tool developed by Open AI. ChatGPT was launched on November 30, 2020 and accessible worldwide. Since then, ChatGPT has received 100 million users (Halaweh M. , 2023). Since its emergence. ChatGPT has become a spotlight and become a result of advanced technology development as ChatGPT are able to work in every aspect of human lives such as business, education, law, and medical fields (Sunyoung, Shim, & Shim, 2023). The first version of ChatGPT launch called GPT-3 was capable of working with massive language yet the provided menu was still limited. GPT-3 could only perform by giving suggestions or feedback to its users. The latest version of ChatGPT called GPT-3.5 operates with large corpus of data. With the latest update, users could inquire ChatGPT to generate visual design and even to learn academic concept guided by ChatGPT verbally. Having an ability termed Natural Language Processing (NLP), ChatGPT performs in conversational manner in which it provides suggestions based on the given prompt (Sunyoung, Shim, & Shim, 2023). ChatGPT is believed could support the revolution of learning process from teacher-centered to student-centered learning. Moreover, ChatGPT might also leverage English language learning experiences.

3 Method

The researchers tried to discover students' perception towards ChatGPT in English language leaning through a survey. Survey method provides opinions of population (Creswell, 2012). Moreover "survey gathers data at a particular point in time with the

intention of describing the nature of the existing conditions” (Cohen, 2002, p. 25). The participants of this research were EFL students from private universities in Semarang. The data were collected by distributing questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part of the questionnaire was asking participants opinion on ChatGPT by using 5-point Likert scale. Whereas, the second part of the questionnaire was used to collect student’s personal experience of using ChatGPT. To ensure ethical consideration, the information of participant was kept confidentially. Therefore, the researchers did not collect participants’ personal information such as name, age, and university.

4 Results and Discussions

The first part of the questionnaire was asking students’ perception on the use of ChatGPT. Participants were asked to complete five statements. The data from questionnaire revealed that ChatGPT has various potential to support English language learning process as explained below. This part aimed to profoundly elaborate five major themes derived from this research based on questionnaire results. There are five major themes namely (1) provides personal learning environment, (2) provides writing assistance, (3) simplifies complex concept, (4) provides enjoyable learning experience, and (5) boost confidence.

4.1 Provides Personal Learning Environment

Based on the results of the questionnaire (75%), the majority of participants agree that ChatGPT provides learning environment based on participants’ learning needs. ChatGPT could provide suggestion from the users’ input in which differ from each user. Therefore, ChatGPT also gives different feedback to its users. In a nutshell, ChatGPT gives learners personalized feedback and suggestion based on the input given from users. The findings of this research are supported by (Xiao & Zhi, 2023) who found that students prefer to use ChatGPT when they would like to find information since ChatGPT could act as their tutor who provide individual assistance. Indeed, one of ChatGPT’s abilities is responding conversation in natural language or in human-like conversation. Students could adjust the complexity of ChatGPT’s explanation as well. Therefore, English language learning could be more enjoyable and less confusing.

Table 1. Personalized Learning Environment

No	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	ChatGPT provides learning environment based on my learning needs.	0	0	2 (16.6%)	4 (33.3%)	9 (75%)

The results of the close-ended questionnaire are supported by open-ended questionnaire. One of the participants acknowledge that the use of ChatGPT could broaden his view and understanding of certain topic. Each student has different experience in using ChatGPT. ChatGPT has potential to drive self-directed learning since it provides personalized feedback and resources to learners (Baskara, 2023). P3 states that English learning could be easier and more flexible since ChatGPT provides personalized feedback to her.

“...and offers personalized feedback anytime I need it. It makes learning English easier and more flexible for me.” (P3)

“ChatGPT enlarge my joy of something I searched for.” (P5)

4.2 Provides Writing Assistance

The second statement of the questionnaire was asking how ChatGPT help participants in writing. Based on the questionnaire result, most of the participant (58.3%) agree that ChatGPT help them generate writing idea. The purpose of ChatGPT is helping users to complete task such as essays, coding, emails, and more. Students can make the best use of ChatGPT in their writing assignments since this technology can generate research ideas or writing outline (Alberth, 2023). In addition, ChatGPT facilitates writers, especially those who face difficulty with writing the first words, to produce writing products by offering writing structure (Buriak, 2023). However, the suggestion offered by ChatGPT might not always be accurate and reliable. Although ChatGPT could cite scholarly’ s works, students should have responsibility to confirm that ChatGPT refer to trustworthy sources. Buriak (2023, p. 4091) states a similar opinion in which “AI language bots are incapable of understanding new information, generating insights, or deep analysis, which would limit the discussion within a scientific paper”.

Table 2. Writing Assistance

No	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
2	ChatGPT help me generate ideas in writing by providing suggestions used for my writing.	1 (8.3%)	0	3 (25%)	7 (58.3%)	4 (33.3%)

In open-ended questions, participants state that ChatGPT could assist their writing process. There are several ways of how ChatGPT assists students in writing process. P4 and P15 state that ChatGPT helps them in generating writing ideas. P5 emphasizes that ChatGPT provides her with writing outline which could be developed by herself. P5

provides a responsible behavior of ChatGPT user through developing suggestion provided by ChatGPT. It is suggested for students who utilize ChatGPT to still use their own ideas in their assignment.

“It is a really helpful tool because I can develop my ideas on writing.” (P4)

“When I don’t know what to write an essay, I can ask ChatGPT for the outline then I develop it myself with my own thoughts.” (P5)

“I found it more efficient with ChatGPT because it helps me to generate my ideas.” (P15)

4.3 Simplifies Complex Concept

The results of this research show 66.7% students agree that ChatGPT helps them understand difficult concept by simplifying complex explanation into simple words. ChatGPT works with meta data meaning that the more input given to ChatGPT, the richer information ChatGPT will have. Unlike Google, ChatGPT could provide comprehensible explanation for its users. Students could benefit this particular strength to help them understand complex concept. (Buriak, 2023, p. 4092) shares similar ideas in which ChatGPT “provide knowledge in an area in which one has little familiarity, in a structured, easy-to-digest manner”.

Table 3. Simplifies Complex Concept

No	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
3	ChatGPT help me understand difficult concept by simplifying explanation into simple words.	1 (8.3%)	0	0	8 (66.7%)	6 (50%)

The participants of this study explain that ChatGPT is mainly used to facilitate them in understanding complex concept. According to P2, the use of ChatGPT makes academic tasks become easy to solve. Moreover, P9 states ChatGPT provides answers based on students’ needs. P9 could request simpler answer in order to understand a certain concept. Based on this result, ChatGPT is suggested to be used to facilitate students understand complex concept in simpler explanation. However, teachers should still confirm students’ understanding or clarify information provided by ChatGPT.

“After I decided to use Chat GPT, my tasks or questions on something related with academic things are become simpler and easier to be solved.” (P2)

“ChatGPT provides simpler explanation.” (P9)

4.4 Provides Enjoyable Learning Experience

The use of AI is believed to reduce tension of English learning (Puri, 2023). ChatGPT, as one of AI tools, is commonly used to assist students in their learning process. The results of this questionnaire reveal that most of the participants (41.7%) thinks ChatGPT could make English learning less terrifying. One of the underlying reasons is that students could get assistance from ChatGPT whenever they face difficulty. Moreover, ChatGPT do not judge students' ability like what teachers usually do.

Table 4. Provides Enjoyable Learning Experience

No	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
4	The use of ChatGPT makes English learning less terrifying.	0	2 (16.7%%)	4 (33.3%%)	5 (41.7%)	4 (33.3%)

The participants of this study explain that ChatGPT provides enjoyable learning experience and makes English learning less terrifying. P12 shares the ideas of how she uses ChatGPT in English learning process. She is no longer worried of having difficulties in English learning. She finds that ChatGPT is really helpful, especially when she requires sudden assistance. Since English is not EFL students' first language, they often encounter challenges in learning English. EFL students often need to deal with anxiety in English learning process (Rodriguez, 2022; Sukmawati, 2021). The feeling of anxious might lead students to poor academic achievement. It is proved that anxiety level is correlated with students' low academic achievement (Ozer, 2021). The utilization of ChatGPT could help assist students in English learning and lessen the feeling of tension.

“ChatGPT helps a lot if I need a sudden preparation for something.” (P12)

Another viewpoint from P9 reveals that ChatGPT helps students answer difficult questions. P9 compares his experience finding answer through different website. P9 finds that ChatGPT provides answer his been looking for. ChatGPT has been trained to work with massive data set as a result ChatGPT could provide answer asked by its users. However, students should be aware of the accuracy issue. Students need to double cross-checked answer provided by ChatGPT in order to ensure the accuracy of the information provided by ChatGPT.

“My experience with ChatGPT was quite good because I managed to answer the questions that I found difficult. Sometimes I could not find the answers from Google or YouTube and from now on I use ChatGPT as a tool for questions that I find difficult to answer.” (P9)

The result of this study shows that ChatGPT could also be used to hone students' speaking skills. P3 states that ChatGPT helps her to practice conversations. The latest version of ChatGPT provides experience to have conversation with the users. Users could ask questions verbally and gain responses from ChatGPT with a natural voice. EFL students might often experience anxiety in speaking (Hasibuan & Irzawati, 2019) (Erdiana, Daud, Sari, & Dwitami, 2020). Moreover, Students could benefit from ChatGPT in terms of practicing speaking skills.

“ChatGPT gives me quick answer, helps me practice conversations.” (P3)

4.5 Boost Confidence

The use of AI is supposed to enhance students' performance. However, students should barely over-dependent on the use of AI, specifically ChatGPT. With the help of ChatGPT, students are expected to excel in given assignment. (Xiao & Zhi, 2023) find that ChatGPT enhanced participants' language competence. They discovered that the participants could improve their grammar skills and vocabulary knowledge. Surprisingly, the majority of the participants (53.3%) agree that ChatGPT could boost their confidence in English language learning. The participants make the best use of ChatGPT by utilizing the technology to assist their learning process. With the latest version of ChatGPT, students practice their English proficiency without being judged. ChatGPT will bring benefits if it is used judiciously. Therefore, it is suggested that students use ChatGPT as their assisting tool or personal tutor in solving English learning difficulties.

Table 5. Boost Confidence

No	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
5	I become more confident if I use ChatGPT in my English learning.	2 (13.3%)	0	4 (26.7%)	8 (53.3%)	1 (6.7%)

5 Conclusion

To put in a nutshell, it could be stated that students have positive experience towards the use of ChatGPT in English language learning. The findings of this study demonstrated that ChatGPT provided benefits to students such as provided personal learning environment, provided writing assistance, simplified complex concept, provided enjoyable learning experience, and boosted confidence. However, the use of ChatGPT should be monitored by teachers. Students, specifically adult learners, can no longer be restricted in using technology. Therefore, teachers could assist learners in making the best use of ChatGPT. There are numerous ways teachers could use to integrate ChatGPT in learning process. Teachers could integrate ChatGPT in the learning process by asking

students analyze written product generated by ChatGPT. Students are also encouraged to develop their ideas although they get writing outline from ChatGPT. To reduce the issue of over-reliance, teachers could also engage students in reflective practice in order to gain genuine response from the students. The use of ChatGPT in English language learning will always be an issue of debate. However, the focus of this issue should be shifted from over-reliance of using ChatGPT into how to assist students in utilizing this tool judiciously.

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