ChatGPT in English writing: experiences and perceptions of Saudi EFL students

برنامج شات جي بي تي في الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية: تجارب وتصورات طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في السعودية

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Abstract

This study explores the experiences and perceptions of Saudi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students using ChatGPT for language writing tasks. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five female undergraduate English majors at the University of Hail who utilized ChatGPT. The findings reveal significant advantages, including assistance with content structuring, feedback enhancement, and personalized support. However, concerns were raised regarding potential academic dishonesty, overreliance on the tool, and doubts about the accuracy of ChatGPT-generated references. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of ChatGPT's role in language education and offer guidance for educators and policymakers on the benefits and challenges of employing AI chatbots to enhance students' writing proficiency. The study concludes with recommendations for further research in this field.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, language writing, EFL students, chatbots.

الملخص

تستكشف هذه الدراسة تجارب وتصورات الطلاب السعوديين الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية باستخدام برنامج شات جي بي تي لمهام الكتابة اللغوية. أجريت مقابلات شبه منظمة مع خمس طالبات جامعيات متخصصات في اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة حائل استخدمن برنامج شات جي بي تي. تكشف النتائج عن مزايا كبيرة، بما في ذلك المساعدة في هيكلة المحتوى، وتعزيز الملاحظات، والدعم الشخصي. ومع ذلك، أثيرت مخاوف بشأن الخداع الأكاديمي المحتمل، والاعتماد المفرط على الأداة، والشكوك حول دقة المراجع التي تم إنشاؤها بواسطة برنامج شات جي بي تي. تساهم هذه الرؤى في فهم أعمق لدور برنامج شات جي بي تي في تعليم اللغة وتقدم إرشادات للمعلمين وصناع السياسات حول فوائد وتحديات استخدام روبوتات الدردشة الذكية لتعزيز كفاءة الطلاب في الكتابة. وتختتم الدراسة بتوصيات لمزيد من البحث في هذا المجال.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الذكاء الاصطناعي، شات جي بي تي، الكتابة اللغوية، طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبيه، روبوتات الدردشة.

Introduction

For English-language learners, the development of language skills is fundamentally dependent on academic writing, which necessitates proficiency in organising ideas, maintaining coherence, utilising accurate grammar, and expanding vocabulary (Campbell, 2019). Mastery of writing enables learners to articulate their thoughts effectively, convey ideas with clarity, and achieve academic success across various disciplines (Yoon, 2011). However, providing thorough feedback on student writing presents substantial challenges in terms of time investment, the effort required by evaluation, and inherent subjectivity (Lim & Phua, 2019; Yu & Lee, 2014). Furthermore, time constraints frequently undermine the motivation of English-language learners to allocate ample time and effort to the enhancement of their writing abilities (Lee, 2017).

The use of technology in English-language classrooms is widely recognised as an asset for enhancing language learning, especially in higher education (Yang et al., 2023; Zhang & Zou, 2022). Technology provides unparalleled opportunities to interact with the target language through authentic and synergistic resources that significantly aid the development of essential skills in an immersive and meaningful manner (Hassan Taj et al., 2017). Moreover, technology boosts learners' motivation and independence, empowering them to take control of their educational journeys (Song & Song, 2023). In addition to these benefits, incorporating technology into English-language instruction addresses specific challenges associated with language acquisition. This includes offering effective solutions for overcoming the time constraints often encountered during the execution of writing tasks (Knox, 2020; Fathi & Rahimi, 2020).

In recent years, the integration of AI tools and software has precipitated significant advancements in technology-enhanced writing (Marzuki et al., 2023). A prominent development in this domain is the advent of AI-powered chatbots. By leveraging natural-language processing and machine-learning techniques, these chatbots facilitate interactive and personalised language-learning experiences for users (Guo et al., 2022). They possess the capability to adapt to individual proficiency levels, offer real-time feedback, and promote learner autonomy and self-correction (Chen et al., 2021; Xiao & Zhi, 2023). Among these innovative AI tools is ChatGPT, a chatbot developed by OpenAI in November 2022. This sophisticated application can generate complex text compositions and engage users in coherent conversations (Gill & Kaur, 2023). This allows it to enhance automated speech recognition and perform various informative automated tasks efficiently (Rahman & Watanobe, 2023).

Despite the increasing integration of technology, including advanced tools such as ChatGPT, into language-learning processes, a significant research gap exists regarding the impact and effectiveness of such tools from learners' perspectives. While previous studies have examined the influence of AI on enhancing English-language acquisition outcomes (Huang et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2021), and specifically the role of ChatGPT in writing courses (Fitria, 2023; Javaid et al., 2023; Song & Song, 2023; Su et al., 2023; Yan, 2023), there are limited empirical data on students' experiences of utilising this tool for writing tasks (Nugroho et al., 2024). This study seeks to fill the gap by exploring the perceptions and experiences of Saudi EFL learners with respect to the use of ChatGPT for their writing tasks. The study aims to elucidate both the advantages these learners derive from employing this tool and the challenges they encounter in its application. Gaining this understanding is imperative for tailoring ChatGPT's use to the unique needs and obstacles faced by language learners.

Theoretical framework or literature review

Using ChatGPT for Foreign Language Writing

Conventional methods to automating operations within higher education institutions are becoming progressively inadequate in addressing current demands (Sulym et al.,2023). Consequently, artificial intelligence technology has emerged as a predominant solution in recent years, driven by significant advancements in research and development (Xu et al., 2024). A prominent application of AI is the use of chatbots, which utilise sophisticated deep-learning algorithms trained on large datasets to generate human-like responses. AI chatbots are instrumental in advancing education by offering personalized practice opportunities and engaging conversational experiences (Yefymenko et al., 2024). These advancements facilitated OpenAI's introduction of ChatGPT in November 2022 (Bender et al., 2021; Kasneci et al., 2023). Powered by large-scale language models, ChatGPT is designed to produce text that closely emulates human interactions based on the input provided (Bender et al., 2021; Kasneci et al., 2023). Beyond text generation, ChatGPT excels in answering questions and fulfilling various language-related tasks (Kasneci et al., 2023). Its capability to simulate realistic human conversations presents exciting opportunities for language learning, particularly in writing-skills enhancement (Imran & Almusharraf, 2023).

ChatGPT serves as an indispensable writing assistant thanks to its numerous benefits, including enhanced writing efficiency, idea generation, accurate and consistent content creation, and language translation capabilities (Imran & Almusharraf, 2023). Its impact is significant in academic settings where some educators have incorporated ChatGPT into their writing curricula (Barrot, 2023). ChatGPT's extensive capabilities cover various aspects of writing, including pragmatics, semantics, coherence, cohesion, conventions, language style, and format. Additionally, it ensures grammatical precision (Barrot, 2023). ChatGPT supports second-language writers by providing them with rapid feedback on individual needs and reliable help with various tools. The integration of ChatGPT in education enables students to enhance

critical elements of their prose, including syntactical coherence, structured cohesion, and grammatical accuracy. This can profoundly improve their overall linguistic proficiency (Imran & Almusharraf, 2023).

Numerous studies have examined the impact of ChatGPT on writing courses. In one study (Song & Song, 2023), the implementation of AI-assisted instruction using ChatGPT in an EFL class led to significant improvements in students' academic writing skills and motivation compared to a non-AI-assisted class. Similarly, Su et al. (2023) integrated ChatGPT into an argumentative-writing course, finding that it facilitated the development of outlines, content, language use, and reflective thinking among students. Furthermore, Yan (2023) utilised ChatGPT in writing course to evaluate its effectiveness for students' writing performance. The author found that ChatGPT has substantial potential for application in second language writing pedagogy thanks to an automated workflow designed to enhance writing efficiency. Moreover, Fitria (2023) and Javaid et al. (2023) highlighted the role of ChatGPT as an instructional tool that can guide students with responses akin to those provided by teachers. These studies primarily focused on incorporating ChatGPT into classroom-based writing courses and investigating its efficacy in improving students' writing capabilities.

In contrast, Nugroho et al. (2024) conducted a comprehensive study aimed at assessing students' experiences with ChatGPT as a scaffolding tool for essay writing. They found that learners benefitted in numerous ways from ChatGPT, such as by receiving translation assistance, enhancing writing accuracy and efficiency, generating ideas, and applying knowledge. Despite these advantages, the study also noted concerns among students regarding the generation of inaccurate information and the potential for academic dishonesty. This pivotal study provides valuable insights into students' diverse experiences and perceptions concerning the use of ChatGPT in writing tasks. Furthermore, it underscores the significant impact AI technologies can have on students' learning outcomes, and it emphasises the need to consider student perspectives in the development and implementation of AI-based educational tools.

The literature on the utilisation and potential adoption of ChatGPT for enhancing writing skills in higher education, particularly in the realm of English instruction, remains limited. There is a lack of studies on language learners' experiences and perceptions of the use of ChatGPT to improve their writing performance. This lack can be attributed to the recent invention of ChatGPT. To address this gap, this study aims to answer the following research question:

How do Saudi EFL learners perceive the role of ChatGPT in English writing tasks?

The goal is to offer valuable insights into the effectiveness and practical implications of integrating ChatGPT into language-learning curricula. The findings of this study will contribute significantly to existing knowledge of AI's role in language education. They will offer guidance to educators and policymakers regarding the benefits and challenges associated with the use of AI chatbots for improving students' writing proficiency. Ultimately, this research holds transformative potential for language education because it provides empirical evidence on the usage and prospective adoption of ChatGPT as a tool for enhancing writing.

Methodology

Research Participants

The study was conducted with five female undergraduate students majoring in English at the University of Hail, reflecting the cultural context in Saudi Arabia, where gender segregation is prevalent within educational institutions. Societal norms present challenges for women seeking to engage in discussions with men, resulting in limited interaction within mixed-gender settings. This cultural consideration guided the decision to focus exclusively on female students, enabling a more comprehensive examination of their unique experiences and perspectives. While it is acknowledged that a larger sample size could enhance the generalizability of the findings, this intentional choice for a smaller cohort allows for a more nuanced understanding of the pertinent issues. Such insights are anticipated to be valuable for future research initiatives on this topic. The participants were chosen based on the author's classroom observations and regular interactions, which ensured that they were active users of ChatGPT. It should be highlighted that during the data collection period, the university had not formally endorsed the use of ChatGPT in educational settings. Observationally, it was noted that most students used ChatGPT. The study focused on assessing the participants' experiences and perceptions of ChatGPT 3.5—the free version available at the

time; hence, all subsequent references to ChatGPT pertain to this version. Before collecting data, ethical approval was obtained from all participants.To safeguard the privacy of the participants, pseudonyms have been used in this study. This measure ensures adherence to ethical standards in research.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted in Arabic, the participants' native language. The interviews were transcribed by trained research assistants. Each session was audio-recorded with the participant's consent and lasted between 25 and 30 minutes. The primary objective of the interviews was to explore the experiences and perceptions of using ChatGPT to enhance writing skills. To delve deeper into the participants' responses, follow-up questions were also asked. Ethical approval for this study was secured from the author's university.

Data analysis employed the qualitative inductive approach described by Yin (2015) and Yuan et al. (2022). Initially, the data were coded to identify instances related to students' usage and opinions of ChatGPT for enhancing their writing quality. For instance, students' comments on utilising ChatGPT for generating ideas, structuring essays, organising thoughts, providing examples and inspiration, vocabulary enhancement, content development, assistance with grammar, and style adaptability were organised with codes such as "idea generation" and "essay structuring." These codes were subsequently consolidated under the theme "assistance with content and structure." Based on the participants' responses, the following four themes emerged: assistance with content and structure, feedback and improvement, support and customisation, and academic dishonesty and overreliance. These themes represent the participants' experiences and perceptions of the role of ChatGPT in English-language writing.

Results

Assistance With Content and Structure

The findings highlight the instrumental role that ChatGPT played in aiding students with the content and structure of their writing tasks. The AI tool supported learners by facilitating idea generation, organising thoughts, and structuring essays effectively. By offering guidance on content development and essay organisation, ChatGPT enabled students to tackle writing tasks with increased confidence and clarity.

For instance, Reem explained that ChatGPT helped her overcome writer's block through its idea-generation and essay-structuring capabilities: "ChatGPT has been indispensable for my writing assignments. When I'm at a loss for what to write about, it helps me brainstorm ideas and outlines the structure of my essays. It's like having a virtual brainstorming partner always available!"

Leen emphasised how ChatGPT aided her in organising her thoughts and crafting well-structured essays, thus alleviating previous challenges:

I used to struggle with organising my thoughts in writing, but ChatGPT changed that. It guides me through essay structuring—from composing strong introductions to developing compelling arguments in body paragraphs—which makes the writing process less daunting and more manageable.

Noor valued ChatGPT's ability to offer illustrative examples and inspiration, which significantly helped her comprehension and application of writing techniques:

ChatGPT serves as my primary resource for identifying examples and drawing inspiration for my writing assignments. Whenever I require insight into the usage of a specific writing technique or need guidance on integrating evidence into my essays, it furnishes clear samples that I can learn from and implement in my own work.

As a nonnative English speaker, Asma found ChatGPT incredibly useful in suggesting vocabulary enhancements and improving the fluency of his expressions:

As someone who is not a native English speaker, I frequently worry about choosing the appropriate words and phrases in my writing. ChatGPT assists in broadening my vocabulary by suggesting synonyms and

alternative phrasings. It's akin to having a personal language coach who helps me to express myself more fluently.

Huda praised ChatGPT's adaptability in offering assistance for various facets of writing tasks, which made it an invaluable tool:

What stands out about ChatGPT is its versatility in supporting different aspects of writing tasks. Whether I need help with brainstorming ideas, structuring my essay, or refining grammar and style, it's always available. It's like having a multifunctional tool tailored to all my writing needs.

Overall, ChatGPT's support with content development and structural organisation played an important role in assisting the participants with their language-related assignments. It enabled them to generate ideas effectively, organise their thoughts coherently, and produce well-structured essays.

Feedback and Improvement

According to the participants, ChatGPT provides comprehensive feedback on grammar, style, and vocabulary, guiding students through the revision process by identifying errors, suggesting corrections, and fostering improvements. Reem said, "ChatGPT identified several grammar mistakes I had overlooked, and its suggestions enhanced my clarity." Noor recounted a similar experience: "ChatGPT offered detailed feedback on my essay, highlighting grammatical errors and proposing improved vocabulary. It significantly polished my writing." Leen shared her appreciation with the following words: "The feedback was immensely helpful. ChatGPT highlighted grammatical issues and suggested ways to enhance my vocabulary, thus strengthening my essay." Huda noted the tool's capacity for vocabulary enhancement: "I struggled with word choice, but ChatGPT provided synonyms that helped diversify my language and make my essay more engaging." Asma emphasised the thoroughness of the feedback: "ChatGPT gave me clear insights into grammatical mistakes and recommended better vocabulary. It genuinely elevated the quality of my writing." These experiences demonstrate the efficacy of ChatGPT in facilitating revisions and improving the quality of writing.

ChatGPT significantly enhanced students' writing abilities by offering precise and actionable feedback on grammar, style, and vocabulary. The uniformly positive feedback from the participants indicates that ChatGPT simplified the revision process. This led to clearer, more refined, and compelling written work. By identifying specific errors and providing insightful recommendations, ChatGPT helped the participants hone their writing skills and improve their academic performance.

Support and Customisation

ChatGPT's personalised approach to support and mentoring was highly advantageous for the students. By delivering explanations customised to each student's needs and learning preferences, the AI system created an optimal learning environment.

The participants praised ChatGPT's ability to tailor its assistance to their specific requirements. Huda said, "ChatGPT clarified difficult concepts for me and boosted my confidence." Noor commented, "ChatGPT adapted its feedback to my writing style, significantly aiding my improvement." Leen and Asma expressed similar sentiments regarding how personalised feedback from ChatGPT enhanced their writing skills.

Furthermore, Reem noted, "The tailored support I received from ChatGPT greatly enriched my learning experience."

These testimonials highlight ChatGPT's aptitude for providing bespoke support. By adjusting explanations, feedback, and mentoring approaches according to each student's skill level and learning method, ChatGPT promoted a positive and engaging educational journey. This personalised approach not only deepened the participants' understanding of complex topics but also bolstered their confidence and enthusiasm for learning.

In summary, the capacity of ChatGPT to offer customised assistance is crucial to its effectiveness as an educational tool. Its adaptive and supportive methodology creates an environment conducive to personal growth and academic success.

Academic Dishonesty and Overreliance

The use of ChatGPT was seen as beneficial because the AI system offered content structuring, feedback enhancement, and personalised support. However, there were legitimate concerns regarding the potential for academic dishonesty and excessive reliance on the tool.

The participants were worried that overdependence on ChatGPT could result in plagiarism and underdeveloped writing skills. They recognised that given ChatGPT's power, its overuse could hinder their ability to think critically, conduct original research, and effectively articulate their ideas. There was a risk that students might become too accustomed to having ChatGPT generate content on their behalf rather than dedicating the necessary effort to developing their writing proficiency and analytical capabilities.

Furthermore, some of the participants raised concerns about the accuracy of references provided by ChatGPT. Despite its extensive abilities, the AI system does not always supply reliable citations, potentially leading to misinformation or incorrect attributions. This raised questions about the integrity and credibility of the students' work.

For instance, Leen said,
While ChatGPT is incredibly helpful, I sometimes worry that I might become too dependent on it and not fully develop my writing skills. I have also noticed that ChatGPT occasionally suggests incorrect references, which could harm the accuracy of my work.

Leen emphasised that although ChatGPT can offer valuable suggestions and guidance, it is essential to verify and crosscheck all the referenced information it provides to ensure its reliability.

Similarly, Huda underscored the importance of preserving her work's integrity by not merely duplicating the content generated by the AI system. She expressed her prudence as follows:

I appreciate the help, but I'm always cautious not to copy exactly what ChatGPT suggests. I want to ensure that my work remains original and genuinely mine. Moreover, I have encountered instances where ChatGPT provided incorrect references, which made me realise the importance of double-checking the information I use.

Noor echoed this sentiment, emphasising the need to find a balance: "While ChatGPT can be an excellent resource, it's crucial that I don't become overly reliant on it. My goal is to ensure that my assignments and essays genuinely reflect my personal understanding and insights."

The participants appreciated the various forms of assistance that ChatGPT provided, but they remained alert to the potential dangers of academic dishonesty and dependency. They tried to find a middle ground—leveraging ChatGPT as a tool while preserving both the originality and integrity of their work. Doing so included continuing to hone their writing skills, critical-thinking abilities, and capacity for original research and analysis. In this context, educational institutions should play a key role by offering careful guidance and establishing clear policies to help students navigate this evolving landscape, as well as by upholding academic honesty and achieving personal growth.

Discussion

This study examined Saudi EFL learners' perceptions and experiences of using ChatGPT for English-language writing tasks. The findings indicate that the AI system provides substantial benefits, including content structuring, feedback enhancement, and customised support. Previous studies have found similar results. First, ChatGPT offered valuable aid in content organisation, thus enabling students to brainstorm ideas, arrange their thoughts systematically, and effectively outline their essays. This is consistent with the findings of Rahman & Watanobe (2023), who found that ChatGPT assisted the development of reading and writing skills by offering syntactic and grammatical suggestions that improved writing organisation, vocabulary usage, grammar accuracy, and overall coherence. Furthermore, our results corroborate those of Kasneci et al. (2023), according to whom ChatGPT can emphasise essential phrases, generate summaries and translations, suggest alternative vocabulary choices, and propose improvements in grammar and style. Nugroho et al. (2024) noted benefits such as enhanced translation capabilities and improved writing accuracy and efficiency through idea generation—findings that align with our observations concerning

enhanced feedback tailored to students' needs. Also noteworthy is Al-Raimi et al.'s (2024) discovery that Omani EFL students held positive views of AI-assisted writing tools; they frequently used these tools for translating words and sentences, addressing spelling errors, and generating new ideas for essays and paragraphs. These findings support our conclusion that ChatGPT empowered the participants by boosting their confidence levels and proficiency when tackling various written assignments. Collectively, these studies underscore the efficacy of ChatGPT and related AI tools for enhancing students' writing performance.

The literature indicates that students receive very positively new technologies, particularly those that provide immediate assistance and tutoring (Cotton et al., 2023; Labadze et al., 2023). ChatGPT and other intelligent chatbots have garnered significant interest due to their capacity for prompt, realistic interactions and instant feedback (Kohnke et al., 2023). These features foster a supportive and engaging learning environment. Furthermore, ChatGPT's capability to deliver responses tailored to individual needs significantly enhances its usefulness as an educational tool. Evidence suggests that this AI system holds substantial promise as an effective learning aid (Strzelecki, 2023), especially thanks to its ability to promote student autonomy. By facilitating self-directed learning and addressing students' specific writing challenges, ChatGPT plays a crucial role in cultivating critical-thinking and problem-solving skills—key components of academic success.

The increased engagement of EFL learners in AI-supported writing activities may account for the observed outcomes. ChatGPT presented learners with viable alternatives for their texts, rendering this method more attractive compared to traditional writing instruction. By generating writing ideas, grammatically correct sentences, and suitable lexical resources, the AI tool facilitated the production of higher-quality texts. This led to heightened learner engagement in writing tasks within the AI-enhanced classroom environment. This elevated engagement probably contributed to the self-perceived improvements in the participants' academic writing skills. These findings align with the study by Utami & Winarni (2023), who also identified significant enhancements in EFL learners' engagement and writing proficiency thanks to the use of AI-powered language learning tools. Similarly, our study found that ChatGPT was of considerable help in structuring content, providing constructive feedback, and offering personalised support. This fostered greater involvement among students and improved the quality of their written work.

Our findings offer comprehensive insights into the impact of AI-assisted writing instruction on EFL learners. The participants' positive perceptions corroborate earlier research, underscoring the importance of real-time feedback as an educational instrument. ChatGPT's automated feedback system proved essential in addressing intricate aspects of writing, including grammar, vocabulary, and overall organisation. This is consistent with the studies of Barrot (2023) and Zhao (2022), who highlighted the pivotal role of immediate feedback in enhancing writing proficiency. In the present study, the instant and personalised feedback from ChatGPT improved students' writing accuracy and efficiency and fostered a supportive learning environment, which confirms previous research.

While the benefits of using ChatGPT for writing instruction are significant, the participants also identified certain challenges regarding the quality of the information provided by the AI system and its potential threat to academic integrity. Specifically, the students noted that the information generated by ChatGPT often lacked appropriate referencing, which made it unsuitable as a standalone source for their writing needs. Scholars have found that AI-generated content can be inaccurate, particularly concerning recent events (Barrot, 2023). This issue is especially problematic for students with limited information-literacy skills, who may be misled by seemingly authoritative but incorrect responses (Bhattacharyya et al., 2023; Al-Emran, 2024). AI-produced content frequently appears convincing, but it may contain inaccuracies, which complicates students' ability to accurately evaluate its credibility. Even when students specifically request the inclusion of up-to-date references, ChatGPT occasionally generates fictitious citations. Previous research indicates that many references supplied by ChatGPT are either inaccurate or fabricated (Bhattacharyya et al., 2023). Consequently, Yan (2023) has advised against the use of ChatGPT for academic writing. Another concern raised is plagiarism. Employing ChatGPT in writing courses could potentially harm students' writing ethics and foster an excessive reliance on the AI model (Huang et al., 2023). Without proper referencing mechanisms in place, there is a risk that ChatGPT may produce plagiarised content (Nugroho et al., 2024).

The findings indicate that a primary concern regarding the use of ChatGPT is its potential to foster academic dishonesty among students. The AI's capability to generate text poses a risk of misuse, including the

creation of plagiarised information. This would undermine the integrity of student work and impede their learning and development. It is imperative for students to recognise the importance of originality and ethical writing practices and for educators to highlight the consequences of academic dishonesty when integrating ChatGPT into educational settings (Imran & Almusharraf, 2023). Another significant issue is overreliance on ChatGPT. Excessive dependence on this AI system can hinder students' critical-thinking and problem-solving abilities. Resorting too frequently to ChatGPT may impede their capacity to think critically, evaluate information effectively, and form independent judgements. Consequently, it is vital to find a balanced approach to the use of ChatGPT. Students must be encouraged to perceive it as a supportive tool rather than a replacement for their cognitive processes. The implications of these concerns pertain to both students and teachers. It is imperative that the former recognise the constraints of ChatGPT and comprehend that it should not substitute for their intellectual capacities. Educators, for their part, should steer students towards the judicious use of ChatGPT while cultivating a culture of academic integrity (Cotton et al., 2023). They must establish explicit guidelines regarding the responsible application of AI tools, foster critical-thinking abilities, and urge students to corroborate information generated by the AI system using credible sources.

To delve deeper into the theoretical implications, it is crucial to examine the evolving role of educators within an AI-integrated learning environment. Educators must transition from being mere facilitators of knowledge to becoming guides who assist students in navigating the complexities associated with AI tools. This transformation requires a comprehensive reassessment of teacher training programs, emphasizing competencies in digital literacy and ethical use of AI. Additionally, the integration of AI into language education opens up new research opportunities that investigate the interplay between technology and pedagogy. This encourages educators to explore how AI can enhance collaborative learning experiences effectively. Practically speaking, educational institutions should prioritize professional development initiatives aimed at equipping educators with the skills necessary to create interactive and engaging learning environments, while utilizing AI responsibly. It is equally important to cultivate a classroom culture that promotes critical reflection on technology's role in education. By adopting a proactive approach, educators can better prepare students to engage with AI tools ethically and effectively—ensuring that technology becomes an ally in their educational journey rather than a dependency.

Conclusions

This study aimed to investigate the experiences and perceptions of Saudi EFL students regarding the use of ChatGPT for language writing by adopting a qualitative research method. The findings showed that Saudi EFL students gained several advantages from employing ChatGPT in their writing tasks. The AI tool helped them to structure their content, enhanced their feedback, and offered personalised assistance. However, the study also highlighted some concerns among the participants regarding potential academic dishonesty and overreliance on ChatGPT, along with doubts about the accuracy of the references provided by the chatbot. While the results of this study are consistent with previous findings (e.g., Nugroho et al., 2024; Xiao & Zhi, 2023), they significantly enhance the understanding of ChatGPT's application in language learning, particularly in writing tasks. Additionally, this research offers valuable insights into the Saudi context regarding Saudi students' use of ChatGPT for their writing assignments. Notably, there is a lack of existing literature that investigates the experiences and perceptions of Saudi EFL learners concerning the utilization of ChatGPT for language writing tasks.

While this research study has yielded valuable insights into the application of ChatGPT in language writing, it is essential to recognize its limitations. The findings are specific to the Saudi context and may not extend to other contexts. Furthermore, the research was conducted with a limited sample size of only five female students due to cultural considerations, which constrains the generalizability of the results. The qualitative methodology employed, which relied on semi-structured interviews, may not provide sufficient grounds for broad conclusions. Consequently, future investigations could enhance their robustness by incorporating a larger and more diverse sample that includes both male and female participants, as well as adopting a mixed-method approach to explore the role of AI in language learning more comprehensively. Given that the application of ChatGPT for educational purposes remains relatively new, it is recommended that scholars further examine its effects on students' language-learning achievements. Future studies should explore the impact of ChatGPT through practical interventions in experimental research to provide valuable insights into its effectiveness and limitations. Moreover, scholars should focus on effectively integrating ChatGPT into language-learning curricula by considering factors such as frequency of use, duration of the interactions, and appropriate learning tasks. Investigating how ChatGPT can foster learner autonomy and

self-directed learning—independent problem-solving skills—would also be beneficial. Assessing which specific language skills can be improved by interacting with ChatGPT (e.g., speaking, writing, and listening comprehension) would be very useful for language educators. Understanding how students engage with the AI system to monitor their progress and how they regulate their cognitive processes during these interactions represents another crucial area for enquiry. Finally, it is imperative to address ethical concerns surrounding privacy, data security, and the responsible deployment of ChatGPT in educational settings. Rigorous research into these areas is essential to fully comprehend the advantages and drawbacks of using ChatGPT as a language learning tool.

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