

Embracing AI in Language Learning: Perspectives of ESOL Students on Using Chatbots for English Writing Practices

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Abstract

Following a mixed method, the study aims to identify students' perspectives on how the students integrate chatbots into their English writing practices and factors influencing students' adoption of chatbots. A survey questionnaire was distributed among seventy students enrolled in the ESOL program at the University of Dhaka applying a cluster sampling approach and three focus group discussions were conducted. Five students for each group were selected based on voluntary response sampling. Statistical analysis and thematic analysis were done to analyze the data. The findings of this study foreground both positive and negative influences of chatbots on students, including ability to produce organized content, easy navigation process, ability to provide personalized feedback, over-dependence on AI tools, over-availability chatbots, incorrect information generated by chatbots, and ethical issues. The study shows if the use of chatbots for English writing practices has been proven to be beneficial for a student or not, largely depends on the student's purpose and how the student is using it. To understand the changing sphere of education, it is crucial to comprehend the ever-changing perspectives of students. Also, for a safe implication of chatbots in education, it is also important to understand their negative impacts on the students.

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Introduction

A lot has changed in the education field in recent times with the advancement of AI (Artificial Intelligence) based technology. Earlier, it was mostly the PowerPoint projectors and other audio-visual support that were used during the language classes in order to make the language classes interactive and engaging. However, in recent times, chatbots have become an unavoidable affair. According to research done by Mohamed & Alian (2023), learners find chatbots appealing as they can learn not only autonomously but also raise their confidence, which results in feeling more engaged and comfortable. Moreover, chatbots offer personalized and interactive experiences. This research aims to investigate the perception of ESOL students at the tertiary level towards the use of chatbots when it comes to their English writing practices.

Proficiency in English not only brings success in education but also enables students to seize lucrative opportunities in their careers by opening a door for immense possibilities. Proficiency in English is a prerequisite for becoming a global citizen. As one of the leading educational institutions in Bangladesh for teaching the English language, the Institute of

Modern Languages at the University of Dhaka emphasizes the development of English language skills among its students. Traditionally, learning a new language was rooted in instructions from the mentor in the class and textbooks, whereas, in contrast, the scenario has now vastly changed with the introduction of tech-driven learning platforms. Now, learners are more self-sufficient in their approach with the help of AI-powered tools.

Chatbots are AI-powered conversational mediums that can simulate human-like dialogue. Apart from writing organized, informative content for its users, the chatbots possess the ability to offer learners the opportunity to practice English writing. Students can develop their grammar skills, knowledge of vocabulary, and writing proficiency whilst receiving immediate feedback by being involved in a chat with the chatbot. One of the prominent advantages of a chatbot is that it can adjust its response according to the learners' needs, providing personalized learning experiences that cater to the learning mode and approach of the student.

Following a rigorous procedure, the study will attempt to answer the following questions:

- What are the primary motivations that influence students to use chatbots for their English writing practices?
- What are the potential advantages and disadvantages of using chatbots for English writing practices as perceived by students?
- How do students perceive the effectiveness of chatbots in improving their English writing skills?

Literature Review

Writing is one of the four skills that a person must master in order to achieve proficiency in a particular language. Being enrolled in any undergraduate or postgraduate program in Bangladesh requires a student to frequently write content in English, ranging from freehand to thesis paper, as for the majority of the higher educational institutes, English is the medium of instruction. However, in Bangladesh, a greater portion of the tertiary level students face similar problems that any ESL learner will face while trying to write in English. According to Sasmita (2021), EFL/ESL students encounter some difficulties in writing which include writer's block, trouble in communicating thoughts, lack of self-confidence and anxiety about causing errors. According to Muamaroh (2020), in the writing process, students often encounter difficulty with organization, content, lexicon, use of language and mechanics. Unfortunately, in the Bangladeshi context, school and college-going students do not get proper practice of writing in English. According to Hossain (2021), students in rural areas rarely get the chance to practice critical writing in class. Although they are taught the writing strategies sometimes, most of the time, the learners are unwilling to go through the process of idea generation, drafting or revising. Therefore, even at the tertiary level, a lot of students suffer profusely when it comes to writing in English, as the majority of the students in public universities like the University of Dhaka come from rural areas of Bangladesh. However, a recent shift has taken place in the field of education as chatbots have gained huge popularity in recent years.

Teaching practices in ESOL programs are being revolutionized by AI-powered tools such as chatbots. The benefits of AI chatbots in facilitating English learning are numerous. Personalized feedback, conversational practice and vocabulary development are some of the benefits offered by AI chatbots (Brinegar, 2023; Haristiani, 2019). According to

Pitychoutis (2024), AI chatbots offer prompt, tailored feedback and create a safe space for linguistic experiments when it comes to essay writing. According to Abu Sahyon et al. (2023), these technologies provide tailored, interactive experiences that promote learner involvement, autonomy and determination. In comparison to human tutors, chatbots offer personalized feedback, adjustable learning pathways, and real-world language exchange, giving learners the confidence to practice at their convenience (Haristiani, 2019). The ways a chatbot can help a language learner are multifaceted. Learners find chatbots appealing as they can learn not only autonomously but also raises their confidence, which results in feeling more engaged and comfortable (Mohamed and Alian, 2023). Therefore, chatbots could work as a great aid for ESL/EFL students who struggle to write in English. Moreover, chatbots aid vocabulary learning for ESP students (Qasem et al., 2023). Chatbots can scaffold students' argumentative writing by assisting in idea generation and triggering counterargument integration (Guo et al., 2022). According to Wahyuni (2022), when the right bot is employed, the learners will benefit from using the chatbot as it will contribute by providing sufficient time and place for learning, by upscaling learners' confidence, improving specific learning points, by providing direct feedback, and by achieving more goals than is achievable by working only with teachers or peers. ESL learners are required to write down notes and produce an outline in order to overcome their struggle to generate ideas on topics they do not know much about (Baharudin et al., 2023). Chatbots can help the students with the pre-writing process, which involves brainstorming and outlining. Apart from all the positive traits mentioned so far, chatbots are also user-friendly, engaging and easy to use (Klimova and Seraj, 2023). The potentiality of chatbots such as ChatGPT in giving personalized feedback, inspiring and engaging the learner, along with lessening anxiety was emphasized by both Baskara (2023) and Hawanti (2023).

Although these tools seem promising for enhancing learning outcomes and language competency, issues remain in terms of their design, application, and evaluation (Abu Sahyon et al., 2023). Challenges such as over-dependence on such tools and the necessity for cautious incorporation into curricula remain (Brinegar, 2023). Regardless of the countless benefits, contextual correctness, academic integrity and over-dependence are matters of concern (Song & Song, 2023; Imran & Almusharraf, 2023). To confront these issues while taking advantage of AI's potential as a writing assistant, educational institutions must modify their policies, evaluation techniques, and training programs to cope with the evolving nature of AI (Imran & Almusharraf, 2023). It is vital to synchronize the application of AI chatbots with the specific learning goals, improve contextual comprehension and encourage analytical abilities, besides the incorporation of AI tools, in order to optimize the advantages of AI chatbots (Brinegar, 2023). Notwithstanding these obstacles, AI-based technologies have the potential to refine English language learning, requiring more research and pedagogical applications in second language acquisition (Abu Sahyon et al., 2023; Woo & Choi, 2021).

Students' perspectives on artificial intelligence (AI) in education have been investigated in recent studies. Despite limited understanding, students from higher educational institutes across various disciplines acknowledge AI's influence and express the desire to learn more (Almaraz-López et al., 2023). These results emphasize how crucial it is to include AI education in the curriculum at all educational levels in order to enhance students' understanding, perceptions and acceptance of AI as a teaching tool. Both probable

problems and advantages of using AI in English education have been explored along with students' attitudes toward it. According to Phan (2023), AI tools are accepted positively by students in writing classes for their ease of access, simplicity and flexibility. These results demonstrate the necessity for better technology infrastructure and the incorporation of AI education in the curriculum to aid AI integration in English language learning. Chatbots were considered sincere friends by Turkish English language learners (ELLs) and were convenient for students who were uncomfortable communicating with other people directly (Yildiz, 2022).

Differing perspectives of students were revealed from the studies on technology integration in Bangladeshi education. According to Alam et al. (2023), although sentiments are influenced by disparities in access, most students hold a positive attitude toward digitalization in higher education. The factors impacting the acceptance of technology in education among Bangladeshi students were explored by recent studies. According to Miah et al. (2023), factors that determine how online learning would be accepted are effort expectation and facilitating conditions. Students' views regarding the usefulness and convenience of digital learning tools are impacted by their prior exposure to technology, including their familiarity with computer skills and media-related abilities (Sayaf et al., 2022). Nonetheless, a greater perceived stress level from online learning is connected to insufficient technological accessibility and usability, especially in the case of female students and students who live in rural areas (Hasan et al., 2021). Cultural impressions are important because, according to Rahman et al. (2023), trust moderates the association between attitudes toward utilizing ChatGPT and reported enjoyment. According to Karu and Hoque (2024), English language and literature students believe that, although ChatGPT helps them with their writing, it should only be used as a complementary tool. These results demonstrate the vitality of acknowledging the technical accessibility, usability and cultural considerations to support the effective implementation of technology in the educational context in Bangladesh.

Although the previous studies, mostly conducted in an international context, show that, students are motivated to use AI for its varied advantages, not much is known about the perception of Bangladeshi ESOL students on using chatbots for English writing practices. This study aims to address this gap and discover why Bangladeshi ESOL students choose to use chatbots for their writing practices, what advantages and disadvantages they perceive, and how they evaluate the effectiveness of the AI chatbots.

Theoretical Framework

Davis's (1989) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which describes how people come to accept and use technology, serves as the foundation for this investigation. Two important factors impact the adoption of technology, according to TAM:

- The extent to which a user thinks that utilising a technology will improve their performance is known as perceived usefulness, or PU.
- The degree to which a user feels that utilising a technology will be effortless is known as perceived ease of use, or PEOU.

AI chatbots are regarded as a technological tool that facilitates English writing in the context of this study. TAM offers a framework for comprehending how students' opinions

about chatbots' utility and usability affect their interaction with the tool and, in turn, how well they write. The study uses TAM to investigate whether favourable opinions of chatbots result in enhanced writing abilities involving higher-order thinking.

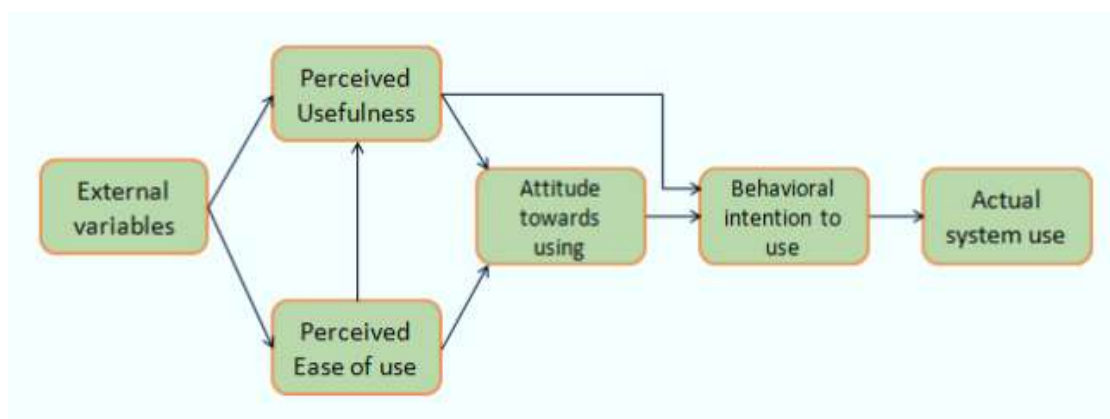


Figure 1: Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989)

Methodology

The research was conducted in a mixed-method approach and hence comprises both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The participants of this research are undergraduate students enrolled in the ESOL program at the Institute of Modern Languages, University of Dhaka. To select the participants, a clustered sampling technique was employed, considering the allotted time and budget for this study.

A questionnaire was developed using 5-point Likert scales. A survey was done initially where the questionnaire was distributed among seventy students of ESOL, where the researcher tried to collect data regarding students' overall attitude toward using chatbots for their English writing practices and factors that influenced students to engage with chatbots for their English writing practices. The questionnaires were distributed offline. In the following step, three focus group discussions were conducted where there were five students in each focus group and the students were chosen through voluntary response Sampling.

Different analytical techniques were employed to analyze the data. For example, Descriptive Statistical analysis of the survey responses was done to get the quantitative data. Using the Taguette application to transcribe and analyse the qualitative data obtained from online meetings, the themes in this study were inferred inductively. The researcher first familiarized herself with the transcripts through repeated reading and open coding, allowing patterns and ideas to emerge naturally from participants' responses. The primary themes were derived from recurring patterns found in the students' responses. In line with the study's research questions and the body of literature already available on technology-assisted language learning, the chosen themes highlight important facets of students' experiences with AI chatbots, such as engagement, perceived benefits, and difficulties with academic English writing.

A sample of the focus group transcripts' coding procedure is shown below (Table 1) to demonstrate the inductive thematic analysis process. This table illustrates how preliminary

codes were created straight from the unprocessed data and then arranged into more general categories and themes that served as a framework for interpreting the qualitative results.

Table 1: Sample of Inductive Coding from Focus Group Transcripts

Raw Data	Initial Code	Category	Theme
“The only reason why I use chatbots is to remove mindblocks. What happens is that usually I know about a topic very well; I can literally write at least a hundred pages about a specific topic that I know very well but somehow, I am unable to start writing. So chatbot helps me to start writing. Like, it helps me to create an outline. So, in this way, it can be effective”	AI simplifies writing by providing an outline	Overcoming the challenge of writing	Removes Mental Block
“Sometimes, it gives wrong information and confusing ideas. I would like to share an example. Once I asked the chatbot regarding the part of speech of a word in a sentence and ChatGPT responded - it is an adverb. I asked for confirmation as I thought it was an adjective. In response, it apologised to me for the confusion saying it actually was an adjective. So, I'm not sure about its answer”	AI provides incorrect information, sometimes	Unreliability in output produced by AI	Generating Incorrect Feedback
“My writing was so poor and I think my creativity was so poor as well. But after using the chatbot, I think I do not regret using chatbots. If I get, right now, a particular topic, I think about it so deeply, like the chatbot and I get some ideas about it”	AI chatbot sparks creativity and deep thinking	Encouragement of innovative thinking	Facilitates Creativity and Critical Thinking Ability by Generating New Ideas

To preserve the rights and privacy of the participants, this study complied with ethical research standards. All participants gave their informed consent after being made aware that participation was completely voluntary and that they could stop at any moment. Data were safely stored, and personal identifiers such as student names and institutional information were anonymised. Examples and quotations have been used to avoid

identifying specific people. Respect, confidentiality, and low participant risk were guaranteed by the study's adherence to institutional ethical guidelines.

Findings

Quantitative Data

Factors influencing students to engage with chatbots

To address the first question, the interviewer reviewed the questionnaires which were filled out by the participants. In the questionnaire, they were given 5 factors and were asked to rate them individually from 1 to 5 based on how much those factors influenced them to engage with chatbots for English writing practices. It was found that when it came to 'Individualized Learning Experience', 28% of the students were extremely influenced, 28% of the students were very influenced, 24% of the students were moderately influenced, 16% of the students were slightly influenced by the fact that chatbots can provide the students with an individualized learning experience whereas 4% of the students claimed that they were not influenced at all by this factor. When it came to 'Zero Risk of Judgement', 36% of the students were extremely influenced, 10% of the students were very influenced, 13% of the students were moderately influenced, 6% of the students were slightly influenced by the fact that chatbots save students from the fear of judgment, whereas 22% of the students claimed that they were not influenced by this factor at all. When it came to 'Always Available for Immediate Feedback', 30% of the students were extremely influenced, 38% of the students were very influenced, 22% of the students were moderately influenced, 2% of the students were slightly influenced by the fact that chatbots were always available, whereas 8% of the students claimed that they were not influenced by this factor at all. When it came to 'Comfortable and always accessible', 54% of the students were extremely influenced, 28% of the students were very influenced, 8% of the students were moderately influenced, 10% of the students were slightly influenced by the fact that chatbots are very user-friendly, whereas no student claimed that they were not influenced by this factor at all. When it came to 'More Chances of Practicing English', 28% of the students were extremely influenced, 18% of the students were very influenced, 22% of the students were moderately influenced, 14% of the students were slightly influenced by the fact that chatbots provide the opportunity for students to practice English more, whereas 18% of the students claimed that they were not influenced by this factor at all.

Table 2: Influencing Factors in Using Chatbots

	Individualized Learning Experience	Zero Risk of Judgement	Always Available for Immediate Feedback	Comfortable and always accessible	More Chances of Practicing English
Extremely Influenced	28%	36%	30%	54%	28%
Very Influenced	28%	10%	38%	28%	18%
Moderately Influenced	24%	13%	22%	8%	22%

Slightly Influenced	16%	6%	2%	10%	14%
Not Influenced at All	4%	22%	8%	0%	18%

Advantages of using chatbots according to the students

The survey's findings reveal how students view the benefits of utilising chatbots for their English writing exercises. 64% of students agreed or strongly agreed that chatbots improve grammar and vocabulary, compared to 14% who disagreed or strongly disagreed. This indicates that most students believe chatbots help students improve their language skills, but a sizable minority are not convinced. There was a mixed but generally positive perception of improving writing fluency, with 54% agreeing or strongly agreeing, 26% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, and 20% being neutral. Responses were more varied for personalised feedback: 42% agreed or strongly agreed, 28% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 30% were neutral. This suggests that the effectiveness of personalised feedback may vary depending on the student's expectations or prior chatbot experience. A significant majority (80%) agreed or strongly agreed that constant availability is a benefit, highlighting convenience as a primary advantage. Last but not least, 50% of students agreed or strongly agreed that chatbots could help some students feel less self-conscious when practicing their English, while 28% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Overall, the results point to areas for further development as they indicate that students' perceptions of personalised feedback and confidence-building differ, while chatbots are valued primarily for their accessibility and support for language development.

Table 3: Advantages of Using Chatbots

	Using Chatbots for English Writing Practices Enhances Grammar and Vocabulary Skills	Using Chatbots for English Writing Practices Helps in Increasing Writing Fluency	Using Chatbots for English Writing Practices Help by Giving Personalised Feedback	Chatbots being Always Available for English Writing Practices is an Advantage	Using Chatbots for English Writing Practices Saves Us from the Fear of Losing Face
Strongly Disagree	6%	6%	16%	6%	18%
Disagree	8%	20%	12%	6%	10%
Neutral	22%	20%	30%	8%	22%
Agree	40%	26%	28%	26%	10%
Strongly Agree	24%	28%	14%	54%	40%

Disadvantages of using chatbots according to the students

Students' opinions of the drawbacks of utilising chatbots for English writing exercises were also investigated in the survey. Ten percent disagreed or strongly disagreed, suggesting that students are worried about less personal support. The majority (70%) agreed or strongly agreed that the lack of human interaction and personalised guidance is a disadvantage. Responses were more mixed when it came to possible incorrect language suggestions: 32% agreed or strongly agreed, 26% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 42% were neutral. This suggests that students may not be entirely sure about the accuracy of chatbot feedback, or they may have had different experiences with it. In conclusion, 44% of students agreed or strongly agreed, 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 38% were neutral regarding reliance on technology for learning. This indicates that some students view an excessive reliance on chatbots as a limitation, while others are unsure.

Overall, even though chatbots are accessible and convenient, students are still wary of their limitations in terms of accuracy, personalised guidance, and the possibility of dependence, highlighting areas where academic writing practices should be implemented carefully.

Table 4: Disadvantages of Using Chatbots

	Using Chatbots for English Writing Practices Results in Lack of Human Interaction and Personalized Guidance	Using Chatbots for English Writing Practices Poses the Potential for Incorrect Language Suggestion	Using Chatbots for English Writing Practices Results in Dependency on Technology for Learning
Strongly Disagree	4%	18%	8%
Disagree	6%	8%	10%
Neutral	20%	42%	38%
Agree	16%	26%	12%
Strongly Agree	54%	6%	32%

Students' Opinion on the Effectiveness of Chatbots

Participants were asked if they thought chatbots helped them write better in English in order to gauge how effective they thought these tools were. According to Figure 2, most students, which is 62%, thought chatbots were effective, 14% thought they were very effective, and 24% had no opinion. According to these findings, the majority of students believe chatbots can improve their English writing, but a sizeable percentage of students were undecided, suggesting a range of experiences or expectations.

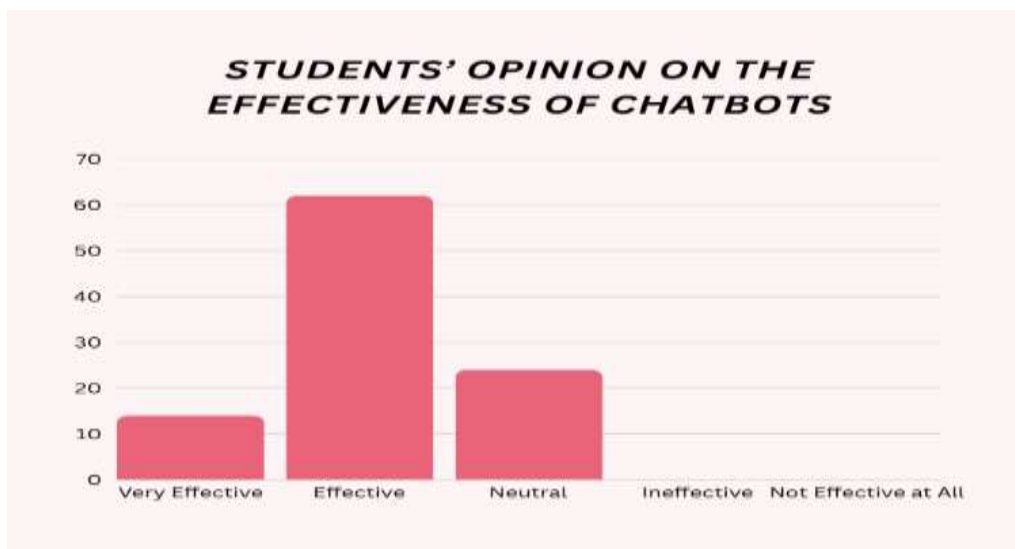


Figure 2: Effectiveness of Using Chatbots According to the Students

Qualitative Data

To ensure accuracy, 3 focus group discussions were arranged as a part of the data triangulation process. Thematic analysis was done to analyze the data received through the focus group discussions. At first, the data was transcribed and then codified. The data is presented below by the themes that have arisen.

Code frequencies were computed to determine the most prevalent and recurring themes throughout the focus group discussions in order to bolster the validity of the qualitative analysis. The main themes that surfaced from the inductive coding process are shown in Table 5, along with the frequency of occurrence of each theme in the responses of the participants.

Table 5: Theme Frequency Table

Theme	Example Code	Frequencies (Mentioned)
Fear of Judgment	"I think there are several reasons for gravitating towards the chatbots. The first thing is, I will say, releasing the shyness, particularly"	7
Grammatical, Syntactic Structural and Vocabulary Support	"I think it actually gives us a like immediate feedback so we can improve our writing easily and also they have already talked about the vocabulary learning and the grammar and it also like polishes Our grammar, for example, the subject verb agreement and the dangling, modifier problem can be easily solved if we use chatgpt one or two times a day, like if we practice writing in chatgpt, So I think that's it"	29

Saves Time	“I gravitated towards using chat bot because I didn't have much time and energy and I needed some organized material”	15
Generating Coherent and Organized Output	“When it comes to benefits, it can present answers in a very well organised manner within a short time”	17
Removes Mental Block	“It sometimes helps me to actually develop my writing skills. Whenever I get stuck on some idea, I don't I can't generate that properly. I prefer using a chat bot to actually have a better idea about that”	9
Dependency on Chatbots Creating Psychological Barrier	“The thing is, I think, but when I get so little time, I don't have any patience for think about something. Just my mind says, to go to the chat bot and ask it”	26
Ethical Issues	“Ethical issues means I am talking about the plagiarism. Sometimes I wrote a paragraph from the chat bot and I just submit to the quill bot and the grammarly and there they say they have significance plagiarism. So these ethical issues”	3
Generating Incorrect Feedback	“I think the most important drawbacks that is happens I have observed that not all chat bots are providing the correct information All the time”	7
Generalized Answer	“The final thing is that chatbots, Yes, they may correct the grammar and the may help in increasing vocabulary but they're kind of generalized in chatbots the formats, the structures are in my opinion are generalized. So if we want something out of the box, we cannot get it from the chat bots. we will just have to think it ourselves”	5
User's Purpose of Using Chatbot	“I think chatbots are either effective or not depends on the Learners, if they want to use them efficiently it can be effective for them and if they are not willing to do so if they're just copying the ideas from the chat bot, it will not enhance their skill”	23

Students perceive both substantial linguistic benefits and risks of overreliance when using chatbots for English writing, as evidenced by the most commonly mentioned themes in Table 5: Dependency on Chatbots and Grammatical and Vocabulary Support.

Fear of Judgment

7 students have mentioned that chatbots save them/other students from losing face or facing embarrassment due to writing mistakes. As a student said,

I think there are several reasons for gravitating towards the chatbots. The first thing is, I will say, releasing the shyness, particularly. During the first year, in the first semester and in the second semester, even during the second year, I felt too shy to ask questions in the classroom. So, in the chatbot, it is 24/7 availability I have. So, I can ask anything without any shyness. So, from my personal experience, I think releasing shyness can be a reason behind students gravitating towards Chatbots.

Grammatical, Syntactic Structural and Vocabulary Support

Most of the students have frequently mentioned the grammatical, syntactic and vocabulary support they get from chatbots. For instance, one of the students said,

Chatbots actually have a higher level of syntax and vocabulary than the sentences and vocabulary that we normally use. So, if you continue to use it and if someone continues to read the things, the materials that chatbots provide for them, some of those vocabularies, and some of the sentence structures are bound to get internalized by default. And if you're serious about using it, I mean using chatbots to practice and improve yourself, it can be extremely helpful, in all of the sectors, like, you are here getting exposure to new vocabulary, you're learning a lot of new sentence structures. And any kind of grammatical explanation or grammatical rules that you need to be clear about, you can find all of it using chatbot very easily”.

However, one student had a contradicting opinion on this. She said,

I think it will destroy our creativity and destroy our critical thinking ability. Also, it will lessen our grammatical ability. If I hadn't used a chatbot, I may have used my ability to check my writing and ultimately, I would have worked on my grammar to improve my writing skills. So, if a chatbot is helping me, I am not working on my grammar. So, thinking about all these perspectives, I think chatbots have drawbacks in lessening our creativity, our critical thinking ability and our grammatical abilities.

Saves Time

7 students have mentioned the time-saving aspect of chatbots and how they can provide immediate feedback. As one student said,

Chatbots are very convenient and they're not time-consuming at all, and they're organized, we're getting everything like everything is right in your grasp. We're getting anything in the blink of an eye and everything is organized.

Generating Coherent and Organized Output

All the students agreed when it came to the fact that chatbots help them by organizing their scattered ideas. As one student said,

In the first semester, I didn't know when I should say ‘first of all’ when I should say ‘secondly’, ‘thirdly’ and ‘conclusion’. I didn't know. It was a mix-up. So, after using the chatbot, I think I get a good sequence and it's a great benefit for me that after any writing, I can organize it through segments, and I can develop my writing segmentally. So, that's why I think it's also a positive benefit. It makes my writing coherent.

Removes Mental Block

Many students have mentioned that chatbots help them by providing a sample outline in case they are struggling to start their writing. As one student stated,

If I command ChatGPT or chatbots to teach me the writing process, then it can help me learn the ways we can develop our writing. So, writing is a process. What ChatGPT does is it breaks everything of this process into smaller segments that can make us feel like ‘Yes, we can develop it now’. Also, the only reason why I use chatbots is to remove mindblocks. What happens is that usually I know about a topic very well; I can literally write at least a hundred pages about a specific topic that I know very well but somehow, I am unable to start writing. So chatbot helps me to start writing. Like, it helps me to create an outline. So, in this way, it can be effective.

Facilitates Creativity and Critical Thinking Ability by Generating New Ideas

When it came to the impact of chatbots on the creativity and critical thinking ability of the users, conflicting responses were found. Majority of the students believed that using chatbots has proven to be detrimental to their creativity and critical thinking ability. As one student mentioned,

There are definitely some drawbacks that I can think of. So first, what I would like to mention is that writing is a process that requires a lot of thinking. I mean if you cannot think in an organized way, you cannot write in an organized way, right? So, when we are using ChatGPT, we're depriving ourselves of the process through which our thinking process develops. It's like we're taking the easy way out. We're not going through a lot of articles. We are not going through a lot of books. I mean, what you need in order for your thinking to be faster, to be more organized is to read a lot. You're supposed to read anything that you can get your hands on. It can be academic; it can be non-academic. But when you're using ChatGPT, you are reading specifically. I mean, suppose you're writing an essay on ‘the influence of social media’, you're only reading about that. I mean the range of your reading materials is quite limited when you're using ChatGPT. Like the other participant has mentioned before, if you like to continue to use it, if your brain gets used to it, it can slow down your thinking process. You definitely cannot use it during exams. So, what are you going to do then, right?

On the contrary, some students claimed that using chatbots for English writing practices has heightened their creativity and sparked their critical thinking ability as well. One of them said,

Just sharing my experience because my writing was so poor and I think my creativity was so poor as well. But after using the chatbot, I think I do not regret using chatbots. If I get, right now, a particular topic, I think about it so deeply, like the chatbot and I get some ideas about it.

Dependency on Chatbots Creating Psychological Barrier

Almost all the students have mentioned about the drawbacks of using chatbots for English writing practices where they felt they were getting dependent on chatbots over the time. As a student mentioned,

Chatbots are definitely addictive. If someone is very accustomed to using it, it can lead to problems especially in improving English because they will be very lethargic and a little indifferent to using their own creativity, own power to generate any sentences and it definitely hinders the natural and smooth process of taking oneself to the next level.

Ethical Issues

3 students expressed their concern about the ethical issues of using chatbots for English writing practices. As one of them said,

I can feel the decrease in the morality of students because the text or writing that ChatGPT produces is obviously not written by us. Someone has written about it previously. So, what ChatGPT or chatbot do is, they just modify according to our prompt or according to the question we put in. So, in that case, what students are doing is that they often break the rules of copyright, they claim the writing as their own and submit it as their assignment. So, this is one of the biggest drawbacks that I see.

Generating Incorrect Feedback

Throughout the focus group discussions, the issue of chatbots generating incorrect feedback came up 7 times. Some students mentioned that they personally found chatbots giving false output whereas other students were skeptical about the accuracy of the answers that chatbot generates. As one student said,

Sometimes, it gives wrong information and confusing ideas. I would like to share an example. Once I asked the chatbot regarding the part of speech of a word in a sentence and ChatGPT responded - it is an adverb. I asked for confirmation as I thought it was an adjective. In response, it apologised to me for the confusion saying it actually was an adjective. So, I'm not sure about its answer.

Generalized Answer

5 times throughout the discussions, the issue of chatbots generating generalized answers came up. Students thought it lacked the ability to understand diversified natural language and therefore the answers it generates sound mechanically. As a student said,

Yes, chatbots may correct the grammar and they may help in increasing vocabulary but they're kind of generalized in chatbots. The formats, the structures are, in my opinion, generalized. So, if we want something out of the box, we cannot get it from the chatbots. we will just have to think it ourselves.

User's Purpose of Using Chatbot

The major theme that came to the surface during these discussions is 'the purpose behind students using chatbots' as it would act as an essential defining factor of whether the students will benefit by using chatbots or will cause more harm than benefit. First of all, most students believe that students are mostly using chatbots to do their assignments and homework. Also, some students are using it only as a study aid before exams which, as a result, is making the students lazy and dependent on chatbots. On the other hand, some students claimed that they use chatbots for the purpose of practicing English writing and it has helped them improve their English writing skills. As a student said,

When it comes to the effectiveness of using ChatGPT for practicing English, I think it depends on the user, the user's mindset, and the way they're using the chatbot.

Discussion

With an emphasis on motivations, perceived benefits and drawbacks, and perceptions of efficacy, this study examined ESOL students' opinions regarding the use of chatbots for English writing exercises. The results are interpreted in light of the three research questions, earlier research, and pertinent theoretical frameworks in the discussion that follows.

RQ1: Reasons for Including Chatbots in English Writing Exercises: According to the quantitative results, the two most important factors encouraging students to use chatbots were accessibility (92%) and instant feedback (96%), while lowering students' fear of being judged (65%) had the least impact. This implies that students are more driven by pragmatic advantages like accessibility and effectiveness than by emotional factors. Mohamed and Alian (2023) reported similar results, emphasising confidence and autonomy as important drivers of chatbot use. Students are drawn to chatbots because they can practise their language skills at their own pace without being constrained by class schedules, according to Haristiani (2019).

Students frequently described chatbots as "always available tutors" and tools for brainstorming or organising ideas, which was supported by the qualitative findings. This aligns with Guo et al. (2022), who highlighted chatbots' role in scaffolding argumentative writing, and with Baharudin et al. (2023), who suggested chatbots are particularly useful for pre-writing tasks such as note-taking and outlining. From a Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) perspective, these motivations align with Perceived Usefulness (immediate feedback, idea scaffolding) and Perceived Ease of Use (24/7 accessibility), both of which shape students' intent to adopt chatbots in their writing practices.

RQ2: Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Chatbots: The most important benefits, according to the students, were grammar correction, vocabulary support, writing fluency, and round-the-clock accessibility. These results are in line with Qasem et al. (2023), who discovered that chatbots were useful for ESP learners' vocabulary acquisition. The students in this study shared the views of Abu Sahyon et al. (2023), who observed that personalised and interactive chatbot feedback encouraged learner autonomy and perseverance. Crucially, the results indicate that students mainly appreciated chatbots for their technical and linguistic assistance. Fewer participants emphasised higher-order abilities like argument development or critical analysis, even though some mentioned creativity and idea generation. This implies that rather than seeing chatbots as collaborators in intricate academic writing, students still frequently see them as technical support tools.

At the same time, disadvantages were widely accepted as well. Concerns regarding over-reliance, decreased human interaction, and the possibility of losing analytical skills were voiced by many students. Song and Song (2023) and Imran and Almusharraf (2023) both cautioned that an excessive reliance on AI could compromise academic integrity and critical thinking. In line with Klimova and Seraj (2023), who stressed the significance of contextual correctness, several students also complained that they were given generalised or inaccurate outputs. Divergent opinions on creativity were revealed by the qualitative data: some students believed that chatbots increased creativity by offering fresh viewpoints, while

others believed that originality was reduced. Karu and Hoque (2024) found that Bangladeshi literature students accepted chatbots, but only as supplementary tools. Rahman et al. (2023) argued that cultural and trust-related perceptions strongly shape the enjoyment of tools like ChatGPT. Collectively, these findings imply that chatbots' educational value is contingent upon both their design and the pedagogical and cultural context in which they are used.

RQ3: Students' Perceptions of Chatbots' Effectiveness: Overall, 62% of students thought chatbots were effective for writing in English, while only a small percentage thought they were "very effective," and almost a quarter were neutral. This ambivalence might be a reflection of a lack of clarity regarding the assessment of AI tools. A similar pattern was noted by Phan (2023), who discovered that although students valued chatbots' accessibility, they had doubts about their dependability. According to Almaraz-López et al. (2023), students in this study also seemed wary, despite acknowledging AI's increasing influence and not fully comprehending its pedagogical role.

These subtleties were brought to light by qualitative responses. In line with Wahyuni (2022), who highlighted that chatbots boost confidence by providing flexible learning environments, students reported that chatbots helped them feel less shy and less writer's block by creating a "safe space" for questions. In line with Pitychoutis (2024), who emphasised chatbots as platforms for "linguistic experimentation," other participants appreciated chatbots' ability to generate structured drafts rapidly, which they used as a model for their own writing. But there were also clear ethical and academic integrity issues. In support of the International Centre for Academic Integrity (2021), which emphasised honesty and responsibility as essential academic values, students expressed concern that improper use of chatbots could promote plagiarism or diminish authentic learning. Similar findings were made by Tanvir et al. (2023), who discovered that Bangladeshi students who misused ChatGPT for assignments reported poorer performance and motivation. According to these findings, students view chatbots as useful but constrained supplementary resources, and their usefulness varies according to the context and goals of use.

This study, which combines survey and interview data, demonstrates that although quantitative findings highlight the technical advantages of chatbots, qualitative insights highlight conflicts and inconsistencies. For instance, while 96% of students appreciated instant feedback, some said that this discouraged deeper reflection, echoing Brinegar's (2023) warning against relying too much on AI to provide quick fixes. According to Hasan et al. (2021), who connected rural students' digital constraints with difficulties in contextual comprehension, many students acknowledged that chatbots had increased their vocabulary, but they also pointed out sporadic inconsistencies in usage. These results imply that students' experiences cannot be adequately represented by statistics alone, as reality is influenced by both sociocultural factors and technological affordances.

Overall, this study reveals a paradox: students fear dependency, ethical risks, and the loss of deeper learning skills, but they also see chatbots as empowering, lowering anxiety, and improving technical writing accuracy. Abu Sahyon et al. (2023) and Woo & Choi (2021), who both advocated for more pedagogically informed applications of AI in language learning, share this dual perception.

Theoretically, TAM explains why students embrace chatbots so quickly: acceptance is driven by usefulness and ease of use. However, sociocultural viewpoints serve as a reminder that writing is about more than just fixing mistakes; it's also about creating meaning, exercising critical thought, and communicating authentically. The implication for educators is obvious: chatbots should be positioned as supplemental resources that are intentionally incorporated to support brainstorming, editing, and reflection without taking the place of human direction. According to Brinegar (2023), maximising the advantages of chatbots requires coordinating their use with particular learning objectives and encouraging critical thinking skills.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research tried to shed light on the perceptions of ESOL students on the use of chatbots for their English writing practices. The result of this research not only shows the positive influence of chatbots on students but also brings out the negative aspects of it to the surface. On one hand, students benefit from the chatbot's all-time availability; ability to produce organized, cohesive content; easy navigation process; ability to provide personalized feedback etc., whereas, on the other hand, concerns such as over-dependence on AI tools; chatbots generating incorrect information and ethical issues were discovered as well. The study shows that whether the use of chatbots for English writing practices will prove to be beneficial for a student or not, largely depends on the student's purpose and how the student is using it.

To ensure the best use of this latest tool, further research can be done on:

- Finding the best applications of AI chatbots for English writing exercises
- Examining ways to optimise chatbot benefits while reducing any potential drawbacks.
- Providing precise instructions on how to incorporate chatbots into academic English writing procedures.

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