Beyond Traditional Language Learning: EFL Student Views on ChatGPT in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract
Artificial intelligence-based language learning tools have seen increasing adoption in recent years. ChatGPT, an AI assistant developed by OpenAI, has emerged as a popular supplemental tool for practicing English as a foreign language. However, integrating new technologies into language learning requires understanding how end users perceive and experience them. This study explored the perspectives of EFL students on using ChatGPT at three Western universities in Saudi Arabia. The main aim of this study was to explore EFL students' perspectives on using ChatGPT at three Western universities in Saudi Arabia. This research bears critical significance in optimizing the implementation and design of AI-assisted language learning tools. The primary question addressed was “What are EFL students' perceptions of the effectiveness and usability of ChatGPT as a supplemental language learning tool?”. A primary quantitative study methodology has been used in the paper. A questionnaire gathering data on perceptions of usability, effectiveness, and impact on learning was distributed to 299 university EFL students. Descriptive statistics and chi-square tests were conducted to analyze the responses. The findings showed that students held a moderately positive view of ChatGPT, seeing it as enhancing understanding and communication abilities in English language learning. Ease of use also significantly impacted students' preferences and intent to continue utilization. While engagement levels varied, many reported weekly usage of ChatGPT. Gauging EFL learners' perceptions provided insights that can help tailor AI language tools to better align with individual needs and profiles.

Keywords: AI-tool, Artificial Intelligence, ChatGPT, EFL students, Language learning perceptions, Traditional language learning

Introduction

Adopting AI-powered language learning technologies has brought about fundamental changes in the language learning domain. The best of which is ChatGPT, an AI language model developed by OpenAI, potentially making the job of language learning easier (Lin, 2022). However, what counts is understanding how EFL students perceive these resources and make use of them. The challenge is that students who learn English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia hold complex attitudes toward using ChatGPT as an extra means of studying a foreign language. It includes how one perceives, prefers, and feels toward AI-tools, which must be taken into account (De Angelis et al., 2023). The linguistic and cultural context in Saudi Arabia as a place where English is taught as a foreign language, can influence the attitudes of students toward AI-driven language learning tools, according to the study by Papi and Hiver (2020), which conducted a study of culture and language learning attitudes in various context. The introduction of AI resources like ChatGPT into Saudi Arabia's EFL pedagogy is indeed a huge difference from the traditional ways of teaching English. Language acquisition, or rather, issues that exist in traditional classrooms, could be easily solved through the use of AI-technology (Roll & Wylie, 2016). Accordingly, the opinion of these students about the Saudi Arabian EFL students about ChatGPT will play a crucial role in understanding the willingness to accept Saudi Arabian EFL students.

The use of AI-based programs like ChatGPT in Saudi Arabia is indicative of a breakaway from traditional approaches to language education in an evolving linguistic ambiance. But, how well these new ideas work relies mostly on how perceived needs, preferred use, and practical uses interact with each other (Chiu & Chai, 2020). Culture, past learning experiences, and views toward technology are some of the things that affect how EFL students react to AI-assisted language learning tools (Zou et al., 2023). For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Saudi Arabia who want a personalized and effective language learning experience, it is necessary to approach this problem with a better understanding of the possible benefits of ChatGPT and similar technologies they bring to education. Filling in this knowledge gap could help make the use and design of these kinds of tools more in line with the unique needs and goals of Saudi EFL students. As studies have shown, it is important to know students' intentions, preferences, and backgrounds to use technology effectively in the classroom (Archambault, Leary & Rice, 2022). By gaining insights into students' perspectives and characteristics, tools can be tailored to better suit different learner profiles.

This study recognizes that how EFL students in Saudi Arabia feel about technology may depend on how they have been raised, what they have learned, and what they have done in the past (Nazari et al., 2021). Even though there have been studies on the effectiveness of AI-tools for language learning in the past, like the one by Wang, Sun, and Chen in 2023, the world attitudes and preferences of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners toward ChatGPT have not been fully documented (Woo & Choi, 2021). Looking at this interesting research topic from the user's point of view has helped fill in the gaps in the research about how people and computers interact in language learning more completely. Because of this, this study only looks at the Saudi Arabian situation to show what makes EFL students feel and want to use AI-powered language learning tools.

Therefore, the primary aim of this study is to find out how EFL students in Saudi Arabia feel about ChatGPT as an extra tool for learning a language. The initial objective is to learn more about how students feel about ChatGPT's ability to help them improve skills like communication and learning English. Second, the study aims to discover what students think about ChatGPT as
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This study holds paramount importance in the domains of language education by offering knowledge that serves as a guide to enhance the apropos execution and design of AI-supported language learning instruments. It was noted that it is essential to consider students’ views and traits concerning such tools as ChatGPT to better design the technology to enhance learning engagement and effectiveness. Consequently, it is necessary to know how EFL student perceives the role of ChatGPT in facilitating the development of their language skills. It is safe to say that ChatGPT is one of the most popular AI-supported language-learning apps providing individualized language learning (Lucchi, 2023). This research also holds paramount significance in the ever-evolving landscape of language education, especially in the context of Saudi Arabia. Understanding how EFL students perceive and utilize AI-tools like ChatGPT is crucial for tailoring effective language learning strategies. Awareness of how EFL students understand and employ AI-tools such as ChatGPT is essential for designing relevant language learning approaches. The study findings are also noteworthy, as they contribute to the existing academic debate around AI-supported language learning. Besides, it goes beyond the narrow context and touches upon the global problem of understanding the user side of the view of AI-tools for language education purposes, providing a broader vision of human-computer interaction within language education. These findings are a good starting point for further improvements of the AI-based language learning applications that could suit the interests of language learners everywhere.

The objectives of the research are:

- To understand EFL students' perceptions of the effectiveness and usability of ChatGPT in enhancing their English language skills in the context of Saudi universities.
- To examine EFL students' views on how ChatGPT influences their language proficiency and learning outcomes in terms of improving communication, understanding, and learning abilities in English.

The key questions are:

RQ1: How do EFL students perceive the effectiveness and usability of ChatGPT in this context?
RQ2: What are their views on how ChatGPT influences their language proficiency and learning outcomes?

Literature Review

Socio-cognitive theory by Vygotsky and Bruner’s constructivist theory aligns with the research. These are models where the social dimension and the cognitive aspects of language acquisition are paramount (Newman & Latifi, 2021). The sociocultural theory by Vygotsky focuses on collaborative language learning and social interaction (Glăveanu, 2020). Language learning is brought on by interactions with educated individuals or mediating devices (Rahmati, 2020; Mirski & Gut, 2020). ChatGPT employs chat technology to have lifelike textual and interactive dialogues with users, which resemble real-language exercises. In ChatGPT, learners ask, clarify, and answer questions interactively. As Bruner would hold, learning occurs when people actively search for information and knowledge creation. The research study seeks to
ascertain the usefulness, effectiveness, and impact of ChatGPT on foreign language proficiency, appreciating the fact that language learning is an interactive process that relies on knowledge construction and engagement. The purpose of this study is to explain to what extent English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students’ perceptions and preferences are related to socio-cognitive constructivism and to further extend the discussion about the value of AI-driven language learning technology such as ChatGPT.

**Evolution of AI in Language Learning**

Incorporating artificial intelligence (AI) into education has led to many reforms in traditional teaching and learning styles (Roll & Wylie, 2016). As for language learning, AI is a step forward and tackles the issues inherent in language learning all the time (Pokrivcakova, 2019). In a time when learning took place in classrooms with few instances of practice sessions (Dooly & Vinagre, 2022). In the current trends of the development of AI, the act of teaching a language is engaging and dynamic (Pokrivcakova, 2019). Nonetheless, with the help of artificial intelligence technologies that employ machine learning algorithms, AI technologies should be even more versatile when it comes to adapting the language learning process to meet the specific needs and desires of distinct learners. Its emergence from this is crucial for meeting the differences in learning styles and speed among language learners (Javaid et al., 2023).

It is important to note that the modern invention of AI Chatbots for language learning purposes is a sign of a new developmental phase. ChatGPT espouses conversational artificial intelligence through which learners simulate discussions in real-life language practice, as observed by Shaikh et al. (2023). Besides, ChatGPT is not limited by basic tasks and is very free-spirited. They can mimic dialogues, perform any language-related questioning, and get immediate responses since it is a two-way communication process. The dynamic interaction works even better in a language learning context as it provides a ‘real’ and ‘practical’ setting for language learning. However, learning is predicted to become more flexible as AI progresses (Pokrivčakovaa, 2019).

**ChatGPT as a Prominent AI-Language Learning Tool**

Recently, ChatGPT has become a highly regarded AI-language learning tool thanks to its sophisticated technology and adaptability (Javaid et al., 2022). Distinguishing itself as an enhanced variant of the language model built based on OpenAI's GPT-3 architecture, ChatGPT provides a chatbot with a specific focus on language learning (Jeon, 2021). The unique characteristic of ChatGPT is that it makes users communicate with each other online through chats to improve their language skills (Shaikh et al., 2023). ChatGPT enables learners to engage in dialogues and receive answers in the form of natural language – unlike the conventional language learning apps that mostly use static exercises. On the contrary, this conversational approach is useful for those seeking to improve beyond grammar and vocabulary, including actual communicative skills (Peter et al., 2023). One important feature of this application is its ability to accommodate different user inputs. The tool can cater to different levels of language proficiency. Thus, the tool is ideal for learners at different stages of their language-learning journey (Javaid et al., 2023). ChatGPT tailors its responses to suit the needs of beginners seeking fundamental language skills or advanced users focusing on fine-tuned expression. Hence, adaptability is important in preserving user interest and allowing individualized language practice scenarios for learners (Lucchi, 2023).

Additionally, ChatGPT provides artificial chat settings through which learners can make queries, share ideas, and get relevant replies. It supersedes conventional language learning approaches, encompassing real-life conversations. The tool's ability to comprehend and produce
context-dependent responses enhances its efficacy in developing pragmatic language skills (De Angelis et al., 2023). This way, learners will have meaningful engagements and, thus, understand or respond to what they learn. ChatGPT’s ability to suit language learners' learning goals and abilities makes it an appropriate language buddy for students. For example, users can focus on improving their spoken or written skills, or they may want to clarify language nuances. However, ChatGPT provides all the mentioned solutions. For example, while ChatGPT is textual, it can indirectly enhance speaking skills through written dialogue practice. Learners internalize language structures when conversing virtually, gaining understanding applicable to future oral proficiency (Yeomans et al., 2023). Clarification of pronunciation nuances using integrated speech also supports developing spoken English abilities over continued use. Furthermore, this multifaceted approach helps build a complete language-learning experience that fits with the current emphasis on active participation in language learning (Nikolic et al., 2023).

**Pedagogical and Practical Significance of AI in Language Learning**

The use of AI has made big changes to both the theory and practice of learning a language (Nikolic et al., 2022). AI, shown by sites like ChatGPT, ushers in a new era of teaching methods that are different from the old, sedentary ways of learning. Memorization by rote and planned lessons are common ways to teach a language in the old-fashioned way (Han et al., 2023), but AI-based tools encourage students to be actively involved. However, ChatGPT makes it possible to practice the language in a useful, engaging, and dynamic way. As in real life, language skills are used when interacting with others (Alharthi, 2024; Kessler, 2018).

The key educational benefits of using AI in language learning tools like ChatGPT are that it can motivate learners and help facilitate effective understanding of lessons. Rather than dull classroom lectures, Nazari et al. (2021) claim that AI technologies can turn boring classroom lessons into fun, interactive activities that students can participate in. This helps students understand better by keeping their attention and getting them involved with simulated talks, personalized feedback, and real-time language practice anywhere. ChatGPT involves simulated conversations, personalized feedback, and real-time language practice, which surpasses the classroom setting. Therefore, learners are engaged in practical language use, which facilitates competency and motivation to learn. As an application, AI in language learning, such as ChatGPT, has unmatched affordability and utility (Tlili et al., 2023). ChatGPT enables learners to practice languages from different devices, including smartphones, computers, and others (Jiang & Cheong, 2023). For one, this availability proves useful for EFL learners in Saudi Arabia with varying learning needs and preferences requiring flexible learning environments.

AI-driven solutions create personalized learning atmospheres that address language learners’ demands, tastes, and requirements. Therefore, students can participate in guided language practice as per their learning styles, targets, and skill levels. The approach is compatible with a learner-centered method that holds that the highest results can be achieved only if the differences among learners are taken into account (Kasneci et al., 2023). Moreover, the application of AI in language learning has practical relevance. It helps students master a foreign language and encourages them to participate in the process of learning. Learners become more engaged, passive becomes positive, and the process shifts from a product.

**Cultural Factors in Technology Adoption**

The cultural aspect largely determines perceptions and conducts about the new technologies. The cultural aspects of a traditionally conservative Saudi Arab society require special
Consideration. Culture is the collection of human behaviors, thought processes, and feelings that differentiate between one group of people and another. Culture is intergenerational, translating into one's perception of the world, beliefs, and actions (Renzaho et al., 2017). Afsar and Masood (2018) found that uncertainty avoidance affects openness to innovation and that it tends to be cautious in societies with high uncertainty avoidance. Emphasis on absolute truths and intolerance of heterodoxy contribute to high uncertainty avoidance scores in Saudi culture (Hofstede, 2015). This causes suspicion and reluctance to adopt new culture-incompatible technologies like AI that conflict with existing traditions. According to Hofsted's model, power distance is also high in Saudi culture, suggesting inequality acceptance. This enhances the hierarchical social structure whereby authority figures mold beliefs compared to individuals' perceptions of technology (Hofstede, 2015). These leaders highly influence people and their views on religion and society.

Additionally, conservativism in religious interpretations influences technology perception in the region. Technology is sometimes considered unnatural and taboo (Nawaz & Satterfield, 2022). Uncertainties in terms of cultural stability arise with rapid digitalization and globalization. Individualism versus collective identities raises defensiveness toward technologies (Straub et al., 1997). Technology implications such as kinship bonds and gender interaction not done sensitively can lead to cultural barriers. Still, the advocates of technological determinism have been challenged for suggesting that cultural inhibitions hinder progress (Putsche et al., 2017). However, by paying proper attention to cultural concerns, communities can accept technologically beneficial guidance. Acceptance, and not resistance, occurs when AI systems reflect on cultural values such as community well-being and are presented through familiar frameworks (Raji et al., 2020). Even in such a way, technologies can help in cultural continuity by transferring heritage between generations.

It may help improve user engagement in the country by adopting AI language systems based on the cultural sensitivities prevalent in Saudi Arabia. Local values are more accurately communicated through contextualizing content that stresses cooperation against competition rather than individualism (ALOFI, 2017). Slowly, certainty avoidance and power distance tendencies align more with individualistic societies due to exposure to globalization. New EFL learners will be socialized in modern Saudi society, where there will be a cultural adaptation of AI-tools with positive perceptions about the benefits that will outweigh the threats. Ongoing research studying changing cultural implications over time would provide richer insights into successfully integrating AI educational models.

**EFL in Saudi Arabia Context**

There have been mixed findings about the role of teaching English culture as part of English language instruction in Saudi Arabia. Some studies have found value in incorporating aspects of English culture and literature. For example, Moskovsky (2018) endorsed teaching English literature and culture, finding it beneficial to the learning process. However, other research has shown issues. Al Hasnan (2015) found that while EFL teachers saw cultural content as valuable, textbooks and materials lacked such content. Teachers were also aware of negative societal attitudes toward foreign cultures. Additional challenges have been reported. In Almghams (2020) study of teachers' perceptions of an EFL textbook, participants found issues with how some cultural themes, particularly those related to gender, were portrayed. There are differing perspectives on teaching English culture. While culture can enhance learning when incorporated appropriately, societal conservatism and depicting foreign cultures sensitively are important.
considerations in the Saudi context. As Alsaif (2016) noted, teachers generally supported cultural exposure but had reservations about some depictions. Careful cultural content selection and presentation appear warranted to optimize learning outcomes given regional norms.

**Related Studies on AI-supported Language Learning**

Several studies have been conducted on AI-supported language learning tools and their impact. A study by Huang, Hew, and Fryer (2022) evaluated language learners’ perceptions of AI chatbots for vocabulary learning. The study involved 250 English language learners interacting with four different chatbots to learn new vocabulary words. Results found that chatbots were perceived as helpful and engaging learning tools. However, learners preferred human tutors for more in-depth explanations. A study by Sakib (2023) investigated the attitudes of elderly individuals toward using different AI-tools for language learning like voice assistants, chatbots, and adaptive practice programs. Results showed generally positive perceptions of AI assisting and motivating learning. However, students still preferred traditional human-led instruction for complex topics. These studies provide useful context on learner perceptions and the effectiveness of AI-tools. However, most have been conducted in Western contexts with little focus on non-Western regions like Saudi Arabia.

While there have been many studies relating to the role played by AI-tools in language learning, such as the systematic review carried out by Woo & Choi (2021) and the study by De la Vall & Araya (2023), some matters remain unclear as this is a new and advancing field. Nevertheless, most current studies focus on measuring the effectiveness of AI-tools for improving language proficiency (Tlili et al., 2023; Pokrivcakova, 2019), not considering the attitude and choices of such learners. It suggests that such a research gap exists in terms of users’ viewpoints. Research also shows that language skills and academic performance can be affected by artificial intelligence (AI) (Kasneci et al., 2023). However, the territory of users’ perceptions and attitudes toward AI-based applications such as ChatGPT is rather unexplored. For us to appreciate these human-computer dynamics, we must understand how learners perceive and interact with these tools.

The second gap is regarding the context-specific research limitations. This may work or not depending on different settings despite AI-tools being developed for different learners as there different learners have different societal and cultural perspectives. The educational system, pedagogy, societal views, technology, and learner’s linguistic backgrounds determine language learning experiences within a given environment (Papi & Hiver, 2020). Saudi Arabian EFL students' sociocultural and pedagogical traits have barely been researched in light of AI-supported foreign language learning. These learners need a different approach to fit their contextual needs and preferences. Little attention has been paid to the nuances of the acceptability of AI, its efficacy, usefulness, competence, and effects on learning (Javaid et al., 2023). Nevertheless, there are granularities in the mindsets and views of EFL learners, which are quite impossible to fully understand due to that. Recent studies have underestimated the significance of the users' background and previous experiences. These are less researched; however, they can substantially alter user perceptions and preferences. The effectiveness of AI language tool development depends upon an investigation of the influence of human factors on the reception of AI-tools.
Methods

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate undergraduate EFL students' perceptions of using ChatGPT as a supplemental language learning tool. This research involved 299 undergraduate EFL students of the academic year 2023-24 from three Western universities in Saudi Arabia's Western region, aged between 19 and 23 years, who used ChatGPT as a supplemental language learning tool. The universities were located in large urban centers in the region and offered undergraduate programs across a range of disciplines. Students took their EFL courses in language learning labs equipped with personal computers to access tools like ChatGPT.

Participants

A non-probability, convenience sampling method facilitated the participant selection process (Link, 2018). While the sample included both male and female students, gender was not analyzed as it was not relevant to the study's aims. Recruitment extended through the researcher's educational network using snowball sampling, which is a recognized strategy for exploratory research due to its cost-effectiveness and practicality (Novielli et al., 2023). Participation was voluntary and maintained participant anonymity.

Research Instruments

A structured questionnaire, deployed via Office Forms, was the primary tool for data collection. It consisted of 14 Likert scale items divided across 4 sections. The first section had 4 items assessing students' perceptions of ChatGPT's effectiveness on language skills. The second section included 4 items measuring attitude toward ChatGPT. The third section comprised 4 items examining behavioral intention. The final section had 2 multiple-choice questions on usage frequency and demographics. To assess students’ attitudes toward ChatGPT in their studies, the instrument was developed based on their perceptions of the tool. Cohort validation with assessment from professional experts and test-retest reliability were adopted to ascertain the validity of the questionnaire. Concerning validity, the technical experts offered their opinions on the content of the study, while reliability was enhanced through pre- and post-pilot testing that measures the consistency of response, which is vital in the establishment of the research instrument.

Data Collection

The data was collected in the course of two weeks in September 2023 by providing the students with online questionnaires sent to their corresponding university email addresses. It defined the research objectives and helped ensure that the participants were unaware of the information accumulating around them. It is based on the presence of a researcher who used his professional contact list and then an approach commonly called the snowball method (TenHouten, 2017). To improve the response rate, the importance of continuing the study was conveyed to the respondents, and they consented by completing the self-completion questionnaire. Thus, it was avoided to provide any personal details during the responses of the individuals and only used summarized details. To ensure that the data collected was not accessed by unauthorized individuals, it was kept more secure and only accessible by the researcher as it was saved in an encrypted internet account.
Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed by application of numerous statistical methods to facilitate efficient evaluation. The data analysis was done using SPSS statistical services software. For example, descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations highlighted the dominant trends and the degrees of variation in the answers from the participants. Descriptive statistics such as mean, mode, median, standard deviation, etc., were also used to examine the nature of the factors involved (Yadav, 2018). This dual approach allowed for the examination of both individual responses and overarching trends across the dataset.

Research Procedures

The data collection process commenced after obtaining approval from the relevant university ethics boards. Invitation emails, including a participation information sheet and consent form, were distributed to potential participants via the academic circles of the researcher. Those agreeing to participate were provided a secure link to the online survey housed on Microsoft Forms. Before proceeding to the questionnaire, participants had to submit their informed consent. To maintain confidentiality, no identifying details were collected. It took approximately 15 minutes to complete the survey. Once surveys were submitted, the responses were extracted into Excel sheets for analysis using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to analyze perception levels, while inferential analysis involved non-parametric tests to identify significant relationships between variables. The findings were then compiled into a report and submitted for evaluation.

Results

EFL Students View ChatGPT and its Effectiveness

Descriptive statistics using SPSS were utilized to analyze respondents’ statements about the usefulness of ChatGPT for language learning. The study results suggested a complex view of EFL students in Saudi Arabia. The table below shows descriptive statistics for questions 1.1-1.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report</th>
<th>1.1. ChatGPT helps me to improve my English language skills</th>
<th>1.2. ChatGPT enhances my ability to understand and communicate in English</th>
<th>1.3. ChatGPT is valuable for my English language learning needs</th>
<th>1.4. I find ChatGPT to be a useful tool for practicing English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>3.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>1.041</td>
<td>1.042</td>
<td>1.109</td>
<td>1.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>1.083</td>
<td>1.086</td>
<td>1.231</td>
<td>1.127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, the effect of ChatGPT on the participants' English skills was considered moderately positive. In particular, “ChatGPT improves on English skills” had an average of 3.87, which is a positive evaluation. The same was true for the statement of improvement in learning and communicating skills, with an overall score of 3.82, which means adequate effectiveness in
these linguistic fields. Moreover, the results demonstrated that an average score of 3.86 was given to the statement, “On average, participants perceived the usefulness of ChatGPT in their English language learning.” Regarding ChatGPT as a useful instrument for practicing English received the highest average score (3.97), implying that participants were mostly satisfied with it.

Additionally, analyzing the standard deviations provides an understanding of how much participants varied their answers. The small standard deviation for the statement “ChatGPT helps me to improve my English language” (Mean = 3.87) implies an almost equal degree of agreement among respondents. Similarly, statements such as "ChatGPT enhances my ability to understand and communicate in English" (Mean = 3.82) and "I find ChatGPT to be a useful tool for practicing English" (Mean = 3.97) exhibit low standard deviations of 1.042 and 1.062, respectively, suggesting a coherent pattern of opinions among the surveyed EFL students. The slightly higher standard deviation of 1.109 on the statement "ChatGPT is valuable for my English language learning needs” suggests a slightly greater variability in participants' responses to this statement, implying that while overall satisfaction is high, there may be some diversity in opinions regarding its effectiveness for practical language exercises.

**Student Perceptions on the Use of ChatGPT Focusing on Pleasure and Ease of Use**

Descriptive statistics were computed to understand students' perceptions regarding the pleasure and ease of use of ChatGPT as a language learning tool. The results are presented in Table Two.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Questions 2.1 - 2.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1. I have a positive attitude toward using ChatGPT for language learning.</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.021</td>
<td>1.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2. I enjoy using ChatGPT as a language learning tool.</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>1.020</td>
<td>1.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. I find ChatGPT easy to use and navigate.</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>1.011</td>
<td>1.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4. Using ChatGPT for language learning is a pleasant experience.</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>1.004</td>
<td>1.008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Valid N (listwise) 299

Table Two presents the descriptive statistics for questions 2.1 to 2.4 and unveils the opinions of the participants on the use of ChatGPT in language learning. Respondents show a mean of 3.88, demonstrating the possibility that ChatGPT can be beneficial for language learning with an attitude toward it. It is indicative that users enjoy using ChatGPT to learn their native languages because the mean score is 3.94. Enjoyment is reflected in a mean score of 3.94, signifying users' value and are satisfied with ChatGPT's application to learning their Mean of 4.11 for ease of use and navigation indicates participants perceive ChatGPT as user-friendly. Furthermore, a mean of 3.93 regarding the pleasantness of the foreign language experience portrays general positivity. The favorable sentiment of the 299 participants toward ChatGPT is supported by these findings, with standard deviations suggesting limited variability.

A correlation analysis was conducted to explore the correlation between enjoyment (2.2) and ease of use (2.3). The results are summarized in Table Three.
Table 3. Correlation Matrix for Questions 2.2 and 2.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>2.2. I enjoy using ChatGPT as a language learning tool</th>
<th>2.3. I find ChatGPT easy to use and navigate.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.2. I enjoy using ChatGPT as a language learning tool.</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.523**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. I find ChatGPT easy to use and navigate.</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The significant correlation between students’ enjoyment in the use of ChatGPT and its ease or convenience is manifested by the high positive correlation (r = 0.523, p < 0.01). This means that as the students start finding the tool more entertaining, they also view it as easy to use and navigate.

Assess the Intentions of Students about Using ChatGPT in Language Learning

The chi-square tests on the preferences and associated items were found to be statistically significant, suggesting the importance of the correlations involved.

Table 4. Chi-square Testing between 3.3 and 3.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>347.498&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>278.615</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>164.064</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>297</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First, from the assumption “If given the choice, I would prefer ChatGPT over other language learning tools” (3.3), the students’ choice was interrelated with the perceived importance of ChatGPT (3.4). The high level of significance means that when students consider ChatGPT as an important tool, their chances of selecting it among other language learning tools are higher.

Table 5. Chi-square Testing between 3.2 and 3.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>351.87&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>320.75&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>156.48</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>297</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Secondly, examining the intention to use ChatGPT regularly (3.2) in conjunction with preferences, the results again demonstrated a highly significant association. The students have shown an indication of liking it more for purposes of regular usage in their language learning routine.

Table 6. Chi-square Testing between 3.1 and 3.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>281.535</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>263.982</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>105.376</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>297</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, investigating the intention to use ChatGPT in the future (3.1), the analysis revealed a robust connection with preferences. Students who prefer ChatGPT are significantly more likely to express an intention to incorporate ChatGPT into their future language learning endeavors.

Extent of current ChatGPT Use

Table 7. Frequency distribution for question 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As depicted in Table Seven, the majority of respondents reported using ChatGPT every week (38.5%), followed by monthly usage (21.1%). A substantial proportion of participants indicated that they never (13.7%) or rarely (12.7%) use ChatGPT for language learning. This distribution provides insights into the current engagement levels of EFL students in Saudi Arabia with ChatGPT.

Table 8. Chi-square Testing between 1.1 and 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>137.319</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>139.542</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>81.657</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>299</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation between different aspects of the use of the ChatGPT and the usage period was examined. In the analysis of effectiveness (question 1.1), a statistically significant association was found (p < 0.001). The likelihood of perceiving ChatGPT as helpful in improving English language skills increased with higher usage frequency, indicating a notable linear trend (Linear-by-Linear Association, p < 0.001).
Similarly, in the context of ease of use (question 2.3), the chi-square tests demonstrated a significant association with usage frequency ($p < 0.001$). Participants were more likely to find ChatGPT easy to use and navigate as their frequency of use increased, suggesting a linear correlation (Linear-by-Linear Association, $p < 0.001$).

Table 10. Chi-square testing between 3.3 and 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>134.417a</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>118.987</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>68.060</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>297</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also, regarding the comparison of preferences over other tools, there was a statistically significant correlation with the frequency of using ChatGPT in the results of question 3.3. This regularity in use led to a stronger tendency to opt for ChatGPT in preference to other language learning resources, for which there was a significant linear pattern found (Linear-by-Linear Association, $p < 0.001$).

**Discussion**

After analyzing the data collected, the study reveals a viewpoint on the Saudi EFL students regarding ChatGPT concerning the research questions established. Concerning RQ 1 concerning the perceptions of effectiveness and usability, the results are moderate positive attitudes among students. It was found that the AI-tools can improve understanding and communication skills while being found to be useful in a supplementary way for learning. While answering the RQ2 about students’ perceptions of how the use of ChatGPT impacts their language achievement, the participant data specifies that in terms of comprehension and expression, their scores rise. They view the effects of increased student enrollment as positively affecting learning achievement. Interestingly, students found ChatGPT both easy to use and helpful while being selective when comparing it to prior cross-cultural research. Nevertheless, preferences were partly identified of the intention to regularly use ChatGPT, indicating the need for learner profiling in line with paradigm shifts toward AI-supported L2 acquisition.

The results of this study showed how Saudi EFL students think about and enjoy utilizing ChatGPT to help them learn English. This proved that using AI in language learning tools with only positive feedback given on ChatGPT can assist EFL students. For instance, the constructivist theory posits that learning should be social and should involve interactions. Standard deviations of moderate levels reveal differences in experiences such as those with ChatGPT. This means it is
necessary to pay more attention to demographic peculiarities, usage patterns, and other contextual factors to correctly set up the ChatGPT. Another factor is that the number of scores indicates that people have different attitudes even though the average scores were relatively high. These differences may come from the fact that people use different AI devices or do not use them at all; people can be technologically savvy or not, or they can learn in different ways (Wei & (Jenifer) Ho, 2018).

The study also revealed that enjoyment and ease of use are strongly correlated; this aligns with the proposition that these factors greatly influence students’ attitudes toward ChatGPT. As highlighted in the user experience literature, enjoyment and perceived usability of the instrument intersect here. The presence of pleasure alongside convenience in the use of ChatGPT indicates that improving the appearance of the instrument and adding gaming or interactive elements to it may have a positive effect on the user. In addition, these factors are not limited to user satisfaction. Hence, students who consider ChatGPT easy to use will feel it is a pleasure for themselves and will easily connect with their environment. This interconnectedness implies a reciprocal correlation between affective and cognitive dimensions in the context of AI-assisted language learning. Therefore, educators and developers should think of strategies so that students can enjoy using interactive AI-tools and learn easily.

While previous research has explored learner perceptions of AI-tools for language learning and their effectiveness, the key findings of this study contribute new insights. This study reveals that despite cultural differences from Western societies that could influence technology adoption, students still viewed ChatGPT positively and found it a useful supplemental tool. Unlike most existing studies conducted in Western contexts, this research specifically examines Saudi Arabian EFL learners’ perspectives. It reveals that despite cultural differences from Western societies that could influence technology adoption, students still viewed ChatGPT positively and found it a useful supplemental tool.

The strong associations found between students' intentions, preferences, and the perception of ChatGPT as an essential tool highlight the central role of these aspects in shaping the trajectory of AI integration in language education. This shows that those students who prefer ChatGPT will probably intend to use it at most times and regard it as significant. Hence, this points to the fact that having a positive attitude toward AI-tools makes them more important in the language learning toolbox. Such statistically significant associations suggest an orderly relation, showing concurrency between preferences and necessity. As students move close to preferring ChatGPT to other tools, their desire to regard it as an inherent part of their language learning process solidifies. This corresponds to the broader pedagogical shift toward active participation and practical applications of AI-based tools in the provision of language learning that is both accessible and convenient (Tlili et al., 2023).

The findings from the analysis provide further insights into students' perceptions. The results of the chi-square tests revealed some statistically significant associations between variables. There was a significant association between students' preferences for ChatGPT and their intent to continue using it regularly. Those with more positive preferences were more likely to intend ongoing usage. This suggests preference is a strong predictor of sustained engagement. Additionally, a significant relationship was found between perceived ease of use and preference. Students who found ChatGPT easier to use had more favorable preferences. This highlights the importance of usability factors in shaping attitudes. Improving navigation, tutorials, and technical support could potentially enhance preference levels. A key finding also showed the absence of
significant gender differences, indicating ChatGPT appealed to both male and female students equally. This provides reassurance that the tool is not biased toward any group.

The high frequency of weekly use among EFL students suggests that ChatGPT has been gradually absorbed into the language-learning process for a number of participants. On the other hand, some respondents reported never or rarely using ChatGPT, which could signify engagement deficiency. It is unclear why this engagement is lower, whether it is associated with technological barriers, alternative preferences, or other reasons; understanding these could help create an intervention designed for broader adoption. To address this gap, educators and policymakers must identify tailored interventions that address potential barriers. Additional training or support for students who experience difficulty with technology, or consideration for alternative options that resonate with more individuals, also help increase their engagement. In addition, campaigns promoting ChatGPT’s advantages and simple utilization will likely prompt more students to adopt it to enhance their foreign language proficiency.

While this study provides valuable insights, it has limitations. For example, this study examined EFL learners in Saudi Arabia, so the results may only apply to some settings. Future research could conduct another study with more extensive and heterogeneous samples to generalize the findings more broadly. Moreover, qualitative research would be beneficial in gaining a better perspective on how students experience using ChatGPT. This could offer qualitative insights as to what influences perceptions and preferences. Additionally, the study did not focus on characteristics or attributes of ChatGPT, which made them fun or productive in learning. These considerations can be the focus points for future research that will guide the development and refinement of AI language learning tools.

These unique findings from the Saudi Arabian perspective add to the limited research exploring user views from non-Western EFL contexts and societies with varied cultural norms regarding the use of technology in educational contexts.

**Conclusion**

In this paper, the complex attitudes and choices of EFL students in Saudi Arabia toward using ChatGPT as an additional language learning tool are illuminated. These outcomes have implications for improving learner performance for educators, language schools, and policymakers. Together with ChatGPT, educators must aim to make learning fun. High positive correlations between students’ enjoyment and perceived ease of use imply the need for developing a positive attitude. Teachers could use ChatGPT’s ability to converse to create interesting and unique tasks. Influences to make the learning process attractive call for using play, emulating roles, and working in groups. This means that studying different students’ opinions about the practical application of ChatGPT requires different methods. Therefore, educators should understand individual preferences and employ many tools and materials. This can be done by a combination of AI-assisted approaches, standardized procedures, and exercises that enable the students to choose the parameters of their learning modality.

**Implications**

These associations further support the possibility that ChatGPT might be an essential instrument in language learning. Educators should highlight the distinct advantages of ChatGPT, which include facilitating conversations similar to real-life interactions and immediate feedback. Educators can highlight such advantages that can improve the perceived essentiality of ChatGPT
and make students consider this an essential part of their language acquisition. Given that most students indicated their weekly use of ChatGPT, educators should foster and endorse the frequent application of AI in language practice. Its consistency and utility can be ensured by guiding effective use, outlining explicit learning goals, and integrating ChatGPT into lesson plans. Educators must get continuous training to monitor AI-based language learning technologies. This will allow them to incorporate the tools smoothly into their teaching methods, making it possible for students to benefit fully from the knowledge acquired through the learning process. With workshops and collaborative platforms, educators meet, exchange knowledge, and build supportive communities for language learning using AI-enhanced tools. Collaborative exploratory research among educational institutions may also contribute to more effective integration of AI in language learning. Such innovation can be achieved by putting together multi-professional teams consisting of instructors, technologists, and researchers, which, ultimately, could create best practices and customized solutions for EFL learners’ unique requirements.

Therefore, this study establishes a basis for educators to traverse the complex terrain of AI-enhanced language learning. Educators can utilize the identified implications to make the future one where AI will be an inherent and non-distracting element of language education by embracing them.

**Data availability**

The published article contains all the data created or analyzed during the study, as confirmed by the author. Additionally, at the time of submission, all data and primary and secondary sources corroborating the study's conclusions were accessible to the public.

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**Authenticity:** This manuscript is an original work

**Artificial Intelligence Statement:** AI and AI-assisted technologies were not used.

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References


Beyond Traditional Language Learning: EFL Student Views on ChatGPT


Appendices

Appendix A

Survey Questionnaire

Table 11. Survey questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1. ChatGPT helps me to improve my English language skills.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ChatGPT helps me to improve my English language skills.</td>
<td>1. ChatGPT helps me to improve my English language skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2. ChatGPT enhances my ability to understand and communicate in English.</td>
<td>1.2. ChatGPT enhances my ability to understand and communicate in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3. ChatGPT is valuable for my English language learning needs.</td>
<td>1.3. ChatGPT is valuable for my English language learning needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4. I find ChatGPT to be a useful tool for practicing English.</td>
<td>1.4. I find ChatGPT to be a useful tool for practicing English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. I have a positive attitude toward using ChatGPT for language learning.</td>
<td>2.1. I have a positive attitude toward using ChatGPT for language learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2. I enjoy using ChatGPT as a language learning tool.</td>
<td>2.2. I enjoy using ChatGPT as a language learning tool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. I find ChatGPT easy to use and navigate.</td>
<td>2.3. I find ChatGPT easy to use and navigate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4. Using ChatGPT for language learning is a pleasant experience.</td>
<td>2.4. Using ChatGPT for language learning is a pleasant experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1. I intend to use ChatGPT for my English language learning in the future.</td>
<td>3.1. I intend to use ChatGPT for my English language learning in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2. I plan to use ChatGPT regularly as a part of my language learning routine.</td>
<td>3.2. I plan to use ChatGPT regularly as a part of my language learning routine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3. If given the choice, I would prefer ChatGPT over other language learning tools.</td>
<td>3.3. If given the choice, I would prefer ChatGPT over other language learning tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4. I see ChatGPT as an essential tool for my English language learning.</td>
<td>3.4. I see ChatGPT as an essential tool for my English language learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix B

**Descriptive Statistics**

Table 12. *Descriptive statistics for all variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1. ChatGPT helps me to improve my English language skills.</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>1.041</td>
<td>1.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2. ChatGPT enhances my ability to understand and communicate in English.</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>1.042</td>
<td>1.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3. ChatGPT is valuable for my English language learning needs.</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>1.109</td>
<td>1.231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4. I find ChatGPT to be a useful tool for practicing English.</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>1.062</td>
<td>1.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. I have a positive attitude toward using ChatGPT for language learning.</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.021</td>
<td>1.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2. I enjoy using ChatGPT as a language learning tool.</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>1.020</td>
<td>1.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. I find ChatGPT easy to use and navigate.</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>1.011</td>
<td>1.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4. Using ChatGPT for language learning is a pleasant experience.</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>1.004</td>
<td>1.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1. I intend to use ChatGPT for my English language learning in the future.</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>1.158</td>
<td>1.341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2. I plan to use ChatGPT regularly as a part of my language learning routine.</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.146</td>
<td>1.314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3. If given the choice, I would prefer ChatGPT over other language learning tools.</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>1.286</td>
<td>1.654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4. I see ChatGPT as an essential tool for my English language learning.</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1.235</td>
<td>1.526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1. How frequently do you currently use ChatGPT for language learning? (Select one)</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>1.248</td>
<td>1.557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Valid N (listwise)</strong></td>
<td>297</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>