

ChatGPT for EFL: Usage and Perceptions among BA and MA Students

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Abstract

This study, part of a broader investigation into ChatGPT's role in an English as Foreign Language (EFL) setting, examines the perceived usefulness of ChatGPT in supporting language learning among female Bachelor (BA) and Master (MA) students. By employing a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 26 BA and nine MA students to explore their usage patterns and perceived usefulness. Findings indicate that ChatGPT serves as a valuable language-learning tool, offering significant support in areas such as vocabulary building, grammar practice, writing assistance, and conversational practice for BA students, while MA students primarily rely on it for advanced academic writing and complex language tasks. Most participants rated ChatGPT highly, underscoring its effectiveness in enhancing language proficiency. However, challenges such as accuracy issues and concerns regarding academic integrity were also noted, suggesting the need for balanced integration with educator oversight. The study highlights ChatGPT's potential to enrich language-learning experiences and offers insights into its responsible use within educational settings.

Keywords

ChatGPT, EFL, Self-Regulated Learning, Language-Learning Strategies, Perceived Usefulness

1. Introduction

Recent developments in Artificial Intelligence, specifically tools like ChatGPT, present significant potential for language learners, particularly in academic environments where access to language is limited. ChatGPT offers learners opportunities to engage with English outside the classroom, which leads to more opportunities for language practice. ChatGPT's interactive feedback and adaptive support

allow learners to develop fluency in various language skills, including vocabulary, grammar, and writing.

While previous research on digital tools that integrate AI features, such as Grammarly and Quillbot, have reported positive student perceptions and improved student outcomes (e.g. Kurniati & Fithriani, 2022; Xuyen, 2023), ChatGPT can provide a virtual English environment where learners can interact with the language and receive instant feedback and suggestions that closely mimic authentic conversational practice in an English-speaking environment, which is beneficial for developing language skills. It can also offer personalized guidance that helps learners make continuous progress and supports self-regulated learning habits. This is especially important for EFL students who might have limited opportunities for practicing English both in real-world and classroom settings. By doing so, students can simulate the immersion they would experience in an English-speaking environment.

Despite these opportunities, there is still limited research on how EFL students use and benefit from such AI tools in their language learning. This paper, therefore, seeks to bridge this gap by examining how female BA and MA students use and perceive ChatGPT's role in language learning, investigating not only its practical advantages but also how it influences their overall academic experience.

2. Theoretical Framework

ChatGPT has become an increasingly prominent tool in EFL academic writing, providing real-time feedback and interactive support that aids learners in improving their writing skills. Several educational theories, such as constructivism and social constructivism, and self-regulated learning, help frame the educational impact of ChatGPT by explaining its role in supporting autonomous learning and reducing cognitive demands.

2.1. Constructivism and Social Constructivism

ChatGPT aligns well with constructivist principles, especially Vygotsky's (Vygotsky, 1978) social constructivism, which emphasizes the importance of interactive learning and scaffolding to help students achieve beyond their independent capabilities. By providing real-time feedback and practical suggestions, ChatGPT functions as a scaffolding tool within students' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), guiding them through complex tasks like paraphrasing, content structuring, brainstorming, sentence restructuring, and vocabulary exercises. Ferguson et al. (2022: p. 3) state "personalized real-time feedback is an essential component of scaffolding for learning and has been shown to increase performance, aid learning outcomes, and improve knowledge construction". These interactions allow students to build foundational skills and progress through increasingly challenging language tasks. Diasamidze and Tedoradze (2024) highlight how ChatGPT's interactive feedback is like having a private mentorship, promoting reflection and helping students develop independent learning skills through structured guid-

ance. Additionally, ChatGPT's peer-like role creates a simulated social learning environment, where students can freely test ideas, ask follow-up questions, and receive instant explanations. All these can promote students' deeper understanding and allow them to engage actively in the learning process.

2.2. Self-Regulated Learning (SRL)

SRL theory refers to students' taking control of their own learning by setting goals, using learning strategies to solve problems, and assessing their own performance (Zimmerman, 2002). It encompasses several processes, such as autonomy, learning strategies, metacognition, motivation, and self-management (Chamot, 2018). ChatGPT supports this process by providing personalized guidance, which in turn makes the language-learning process more effective and less stressful. Students can set clear learning goals, ask specific language questions, and work at their own pace. This helps learners better monitor and control their progress and stay committed to their goals. Mahapatra (2024) illustrates how ChatGPT's instant feedback strengthens self-regulation, making students more independent and helping them improve their writing quality through consistent self-monitoring. This will help reduce learning anxiety and build confidence by offering a non-judgmental platform for practice and revision. Yıldız (2023) also supports this view, showing that ChatGPT's instant feedback reduces anxiety and enhances motivation, fostering self-directed learning. Such immediate feedback that students receive can help lower the stress of complex writing tasks, fostering a supportive environment that promotes self-efficacy, motivation, and engagement, especially in an EFL setting.

3. Literature Review

The advent of AI tools in education has sparked significant interest in ChatGPT, especially in the field of language learning. In EFL settings, ChatGPT has become a valuable tool for engaging students in conversational practices, correcting grammar, offering writing support, and developing vocabulary. Researchers have explored ChatGPT's applications for providing authentic language practice, grammar feedback, and supporting personalized learning, leading to enhanced motivation and engagement among learners.

3.1. Authentic Conversation Practice and Language Skills

One of the most significant benefits of using ChatGPT in EFL stems from its ability to provide authentic conversational interaction. According to Hong (2023), ChatGPT offers learners a simulated environment for authentic conversational practice, which is particularly valuable in contexts where access to native speakers is limited. Kostka and Toncelli (2023) further support this by noting that ChatGPT enables personalized learning experiences that can adapt to each student's language proficiency level. They underscore its use for grammar correction, conversational practice, and reading comprehension, indicating ChatGPT's multifaceted role in enhancing language exposure. Wu et al. (2023) add that ChatGPT's grammar

correction feature offers advantages beyond conventional correction tools. In their comparative study with Grammarly, they observed that while ChatGPT displayed unique flexibility by restructuring sentences for enhanced clarity, it encountered challenges maintaining precision, particularly in longer sentences. Nevertheless, ChatGPT's ability to maintain fluency while correcting grammatical errors has positioned it as a potentially valuable tool for EFL learners looking to improve both grammatical accuracy and overall writing clarity.

With regard to vocabulary acquisition, several studies indicated positive outcomes among learners in vocabulary learning. For instance, [Algraini's \(2024\)](#) research on Saudi female EFL learners revealed that ChatGPT provided valuable feedback on vocabulary use, enhancing learners' motivation and self-regulation. Similarly, [Mugableh \(2024\)](#) found that Saudi male students using ChatGPT significantly outperformed the control group in both vocabulary breadth and depth, showing that AI-based tools can provide an engaging environment that is conducive to deeper vocabulary learning. In addition, [Losi et al. \(2024\)](#) examined high school students' perceptions of ChatGPT in vocabulary acquisition and found that ChatGPT was well-received for its ease of use, effectiveness, and ability to engage learners through personalized feedback.

3.2. Motivational and Personalized Learning

Research shows that ChatGPT's interactive design fosters higher levels of motivation and engagement in EFL learning. [Ali et al. \(2023\)](#) reported that ChatGPT significantly increased students' motivation in reading and writing, though it had a limited impact on listening and speaking. This difference in perceived motivation could be due to the nature of ChatGPT, which is a text-based platform. ChatGPT's immediate feedback can motivate learners by enhancing their confidence in language use, providing them with practical applications of their skills. In another study, [Yıldız \(2023\)](#) explored how ChatGPT-supported vocabulary instruction affects student motivation, noting improvements in self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, and a reduction in test anxiety. ChatGPT's interactive platform helps students manage language-learning anxiety, adjust their learning strategies, and monitor their learning progress, all of which are core components of SRL. This aligns with findings from [Song and Song \(2023\)](#), who observed that Chinese EFL students who used ChatGPT for writing tasks experienced greater motivation and engagement compared to those following traditional instruction. The real-time feedback and personalization offered by ChatGPT were key factors that contributed to such heightened engagement, highlighting the tool's potential to foster self-directed learning.

ChatGPT's adaptability also plays a crucial role in facilitating personalized learning. According to [Xiao and Zhi \(2023\)](#), ChatGPT acts as a mentor by providing critical feedback that encourages students to reflect on their language choices, fostering self-evaluation and critical thinking. This ability to offer personalized guidance helps students identify areas for improvement, promoting a deeper un-

derstanding of language structures and enhancing their decision-making skills in language use. Additionally, studies by [Moybeka et al. \(2023\)](#) found that ChatGPT's interactive features allow it to adjust to each student's pace, fostering a supportive environment for continuous learning. By adapting to individual needs, ChatGPT helps sustain student engagement, ensuring that learners remain motivated in their language-learning journeys. These studies emphasize the importance of personalization in EFL learning and highlight ChatGPT's role as a tool that caters to diverse learner needs.

3.3. Challenges and Limitations

Despite the positive reception, several studies have noted challenges related to ChatGPT's use in EFL learning. For instance, concerns over potential over-reliance on AI were among the reported challenges. [Song and Song \(2023\)](#) state that while ChatGPT offers a convenient and engaging tool, excessive dependency on AI-generated feedback might hinder students' independent learning and critical thinking over time. In addition, [Algraini \(2024\)](#) points out limitations related to the accuracy and consistency of ChatGPT's responses, with students sometimes receiving repetitive or less contextually appropriate feedback. Similarly, [Losi et al. \(2024\)](#) note that some students reported occasional errors or overly repetitive suggestions while using ChatGPT.

Academic integrity is another issue that has been discussed in previous research. For instance, research by [Kostka and Toncelli \(2023\)](#) highlights issues of academic integrity, as ChatGPT's ease of access to information can lead to plagiarism risks. They emphasize the need for balanced use, combining AI tools like ChatGPT with traditional instruction to maintain academic honesty while benefiting from AI's adaptive feedback capabilities. Therefore, there is a need for balanced integration, with teacher oversight, to avoid the limitations associated with accuracy and reliance. This underscores the role of ChatGPT as a complementary tool, enhancing EFL instruction by supporting learners' engagement and increasing linguistic awareness.

The literature indicates that ChatGPT has a significant role in supporting EFL learners through enhancing conversational practice, grammar correction, vocabulary development, and personalized learning. Its ability to engage learners, increase motivation, and foster self-regulation underscores its potential as an effective language-learning tool. However, concerns such as over-reliance and occasional inaccuracies underline the necessity for balanced integration to maximize ChatGPT's potential. Overall, ChatGPT holds significant promise for enhancing EFL language learning, particularly in environments where there is a lack of exposure to English outside the classroom.

4. Methodology

This study is part of a broader project investigating the use of ChatGPT in educational contexts, focusing on two primary areas: its general usage and perceived

usefulness in language learning, and its role in supporting research writing. This paper addresses the first area—usage and perceived usefulness in language learning—employing a mixed-methods approach that integrates both quantitative and qualitative data collection.

This study was conducted between May 2024 and August 2024 and adopted a sequential explanatory design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The quantitative phase commenced in May 2024 with the distribution of a questionnaire to 26 Saudi female BA students, followed in August 2024 by administering a similar questionnaire to nine Saudi female MA students. Each group received a distinct survey link to ensure the separation of responses for accurate analysis.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, targeting students actively engaged in research writing and frequent users of ChatGPT in their academic tasks. Discussions with potential participants confirmed their familiarity and experience with ChatGPT. The study was carried out within the context of their coursework. To ensure that the questions in the questionnaire aligned with the study's objectives, a comprehensive literature review was conducted prior to designing the questionnaire. The questionnaire aimed to gather data on how frequently students used ChatGPT and the primary purposes for usage, including language learning, homework assistance, and general information. Also, it investigated specific aspects of language learning supported by ChatGPT, such as vocabulary building, grammar practice, reading comprehension, and writing practice (See Appendix 1). Students were also asked to rate the usefulness of ChatGPT for language learning.

Building on the insights from the quantitative data, a qualitative phase followed to explore the findings in greater depth. The interview questions were initially generated using ChatGPT to provide a structured framework for exploring students' use of ChatGPT in language learning. The researcher reviewed and modified these questions to ensure they were relevant to the study's objectives. Modifications included simplifying the language, focusing on specific aspects of language learning, and incorporating open-ended prompts to encourage detailed responses (See Appendix 2). Semi-structured interviews with 10 selected BA participants and four MA participants provided a deeper exploration of the specific ways students use ChatGPT and their perceptions of its benefits for language learning.

This methodological approach allowed for a thorough investigation of ChatGPT's perceived usefulness, balancing quantitative insights with qualitative depth to better understand its impact on language learning for students at different academic levels, and allowing validation of the findings. As Brown (2014) notes, carefully planning triangulation helps to address potential biases and strengthens the reliability of the results by balancing the limitations of any single method.

Quantitative data from structured questionnaires were analyzed using Microsoft Excel to produce descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, summarizing participants' responses to closed-ended questions. The results

were organized into tables, highlighting trends, such as how often ChatGPT was used, its primary purposes, and its perceived usefulness for language-learning tasks. Responses were reviewed and categorized to identify general patterns, such as specific uses of ChatGPT for tasks like vocabulary building, grammar assistance, and writing improvement.

Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews were reviewed and thematically analyzed using Dörnyei's (2007) framework to identify general patterns, such as specific uses of ChatGPT for tasks like vocabulary building, grammar assistance, and writing improvement. Responses to questions about ChatGPT's role in English learning were coded into themes, such as vocabulary acquisition, grammar practice, reading comprehension, and writing improvement. Participants' insights into the benefits and challenges of using ChatGPT, including its helpful features and areas for improvement, were highlighted and supported with direct quotes. The findings from interviews were integrated with the quantitative results to provide a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences and perceptions of ChatGPT as a language-learning tool.

Ethical considerations were rigorously followed throughout the study. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents' anonymity and confidentiality were ensured. Students were also informed about the purpose of the research, and consent was obtained before participation.

5. Results and Discussion

This section reports the findings of this study, focusing on the overall frequency, purposes, and perceived usefulness of ChatGPT among BA and MA EFL students. The analysis integrates both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of usage patterns and student perceptions, while also discussing the results concerning relevant studies.

5.1. Frequency of Use

When investigating the overall frequency of using ChatGPT among BA and MA students, it can be seen from **Table 1** that significant variations exist in usage patterns. Most BA students (about 53.9%) reported using ChatGPT either once a week or less than once a week, indicating infrequent usage. This infrequency could be attributed to limited knowledge of the tool's full capabilities or the less demanding nature of BA-level coursework. Approximately 25% of the BA students used it several times a week, possibly for weekly assignments. Interestingly, only a smaller percentage of BA students (19.2%) used ChatGPT daily, potentially for consistent tasks such as research, study support, or assignment help. It is interesting to note that none of the participants reported ever using ChatGPT. This variation in usage patterns among BA students may indicate that ChatGPT's versatility makes it suitable for both regular and occasional use. In addition, factors such as academic level, ICT competence, or academic exposure to digital tools might have an effect on such results. These findings are consistent with a study by

Alharthi (2024), which showed Saudi EFL students reporting similar trends, with 38.5% using ChatGPT weekly and 21.1% monthly. However, in contrast to the current study, Alharthi's (2024) study reported that 13.7% of respondents indicated never using ChatGPT. This suggests potential gaps in awareness, access, or incorporation of ChatGPT in language learning.

Table 1. Frequency of using ChatGPT.

Frequency of Use	BA	MA
	Percentage	Percentage
Daily	19.20%	44.40%
Several times a week	26.90%	44.40%
Once a week	15.40%	11.10%
Less than once a week	38.50%	0
Never	0	0

On the other hand, with regard to MA results, it can be noted that only 11.1% of MA students use ChatGPT once a week, and the rest use it either weekly or several times a week, with no participants reporting less frequent or no usage. When comparing this to the usage patterns of BA students, it appears that, while BA students use ChatGPT, MA students are more likely to integrate it into their daily routines, likely due to the demands of postgraduate-level tasks, such as research, in-depth analysis, and advanced writing. In contrast, BA students might recognize the value of ChatGPT but tend to use it less often, possibly because their coursework is less complex or due to limited awareness of its potential benefits.

It is also important to note that the data collection for BA students started in May 2024, while it took place in August 2024 for MA students. Such difference in timing may have influenced the results, as students' awareness of ChatGPT's potential might have increased during this period. Reassessing usage patterns a year from now could provide insights into how ChatGPT usage among BA students might change over time. Therefore, this disparity in usage among BA and MA students may be attributed to the increased demands of their graduate level. MA students might find the tool assists them in saving time, especially since most (six out of nine) of the registered MA students have jobs, and improving their writing, as well as supporting them in brainstorming ideas and clarifying their arguments. The higher frequency of ChatGPT use among MA students underscores the need for resources that address their advanced academic needs.

5.2. Primary Reasons for Using ChatGPT

When asked about the purposes of using ChatGPT for language learning, students were allowed to select multiple options. In what follows, details about the results are supplemented with qualitative data from semi-structured interviews.

5.2.1. General Information

Almost half of the BA students selected to use ChatGPT for general information, as can be seen in **Table 2**. This could be due to its role as a convenient source for quick facts and insights on a broad range of topics. Notably, 100% of MA students selected that they use ChatGPT for general information. This suggests that MA students use ChatGPT as a quick reference for any inquiry they may have, probably because they need fast, interdisciplinary, and detailed insights to deal with more complicated tasks and broader areas of information compared to those at lower academic levels.

Table 2. The primary purpose of using ChatGPT.

Purpose of Use	BA—No. of Mentions	MA—No. of Mentions
	Percentage	Percentage
General Information	15 (57.7%)	9 (100%)
Homework Assistance	21 (80.8%)	7 (77.8%)
Language Learning	9 (34.6%)	8 (88.9%)
Entertainment	6 (23.1%)	3 (33.3%)
Other	0	2 (22.2%)

5.2.2. Homework Assistance

It can be noted from **Table 2** that the most common purpose of using ChatGPT among BA students is homework assistance, with a percentage of 80.8%. This could be due to the ability of this tool to answer any question or provide explanations for certain grammatical points or vocabulary usage. Two interviewees indicated that they use ChatGPT to check their answers in various courses. One interviewee mentioned that they sometimes use it to check their translation. She stated:

I use it instead of Google Translate. It is much better. You know, you will not get weird or unsuitable words. It is like ChatGPT is very smart and understands cultural differences.

Other interviewees mentioned that they use it mostly to write summaries for the content they are currently studying or to explain any required tasks.

Regarding the MA students, it appeared that 77.7% of them use ChatGPT for homework assistance. They indicated (three students) that they use it to check their understanding of the requirements of any assigned homework. One commented:

It is very convenient, with one click you will be able to get access to accurate information.

However, another student indicated that ChatGPT is very useful but that answers should be checked for accuracy. She stated:

You know I had to ask him again to check for answers and then when I told him that his answers were wrong, he apologies

Such findings highlight that, while both BA and MA students rely on ChatGPT for homework assistance, challenges related to accuracy and critical evaluation were more frequently noted by MA students. Such comments were also noted in the study by [Losi et al. \(2024\)](#), where some students reported occasional errors while using ChatGPT, and repetitive suggestions (see Section 3.3).

In general, even though MA students use ChatGPT at a slightly lower percentage than the BA group, this high percentage still reflects substantial academic reliance. This indicates that ChatGPT is considered a convenient resource for assisting with assignments, probably due to its ability to explain complex concepts and provide simple explanations suitable for their levels.

5.2.3. Language-Learning Support

Language-learning support was significantly higher among MA students (88.9%) compared to BA students (34.6%). BA participants stated that they use ChatGPT to learn languages, most probably to improve their language proficiency, practice grammar, and enhance vocabulary. MA students reported using ChatGPT for language-related tasks, particularly to improve their writing skills. The high number of graduate students who use ChatGPT shows just how valuable it is for their language support. Many rely on it to proofread and enhance their research paper. Some of the students' comments highlighted how they use ChatGPT for language learning. For instance, they stated:

I mostly use it to practice grammar and build vocabulary, it's like having a tutor always there to help. (BA student)

It's been really helpful for my academic writing; I use it to check grammar and edit and proofread my writing. (MA student)

The roles of ChatGPT in language learning are discussed in detail in Section 5.3.

5.2.4. Entertainment

It can be noted from the table that approximately 23.1% of BA participants use ChatGPT for entertainment. When asked about the type of entertainment they engage in with ChatGPT, they indicated that they use it to imagine scenarios and just to have a chat with someone. Two BA students stated:

I like using ChatGPT to create stories and for chats when I need a break from my studies.

It helps me relax. I like how funny chats we have together—it's a nice break.

With regard to MA students, approximately 33.3% of them use ChatGPT for entertainment. They indicated that they use it for anything that crosses their minds, hinting that they are using ChatGPT in unexpected ways.

5.2.5. Generating Ideas

Two MA students selected "Other" and pointed out that they use ChatGPT to brainstorm ideas and develop study plans to help them be efficient. They indicated

that this is important, especially when you don't have enough time. One stated:

It really helps me when I don't know how to organize my ideas.

Such a result indicates that this tool is helpful in regulating their self-study (see Section 2.2), which in turn can enhance their learning experience.

In conclusion, the overall result of asking participants about their primary reason for using ChatGPT reveals that both BA and MA students use ChatGPT mainly for academic purposes, but there are differences in emphasis among MA students, showing a higher dependency on ChatGPT for general information and language learning, likely due to the complex demands of postgraduate-level study, but BA students rely slightly more on ChatGPT for homework assistance. These differences suggest that ChatGPT is adaptable to different academic levels and needs. The varied applications of ChatGPT reflect its strength in meeting the multifaceted needs of graduate-level students.

5.3. Language-Learning Aspects with ChatGPT Usage

When asking the students about the purposes of using ChatGPT for language learning, students were allowed to select multiple options. **Table 3** demonstrates how respondents use ChatGPT across different aspects of language learning, including grammar practice, vocabulary building, reading comprehension, writing practice, and conversation practice. In what follows, these results are discussed considering relevant studies, emphasizing specific areas in which ChatGPT supports BA and MA students, as well as the challenges they encounter.

Table 3. The primary purpose of using ChatGPT.

Aspect of Language Learning	BA—No. of Mentions	MA—No. of Mentions
	Percentage	Percentage
Grammar Practice	18 (69.2%)	7 (77.8%)
Vocabulary Building	15 (57.7%)	4 (44.4%)
Writing Practice	15 (57.7%)	9 (100%)
Conversation Practice	11 (42.3%)	2 (22.2%)
Reading Comprehension	10 (38.5%)	1 (11.1%)

5.3.1. Grammar Practice

Grammar practice appeared to be the most frequently used feature of ChatGPT, with 69.2% of BA students and 77.8% of MA students. This high reliance highlights the importance of grammatical accuracy across various levels of language learning. Two BA students commented that:

I use it all the time to check if my writing is correct or not.

I use ChatGPT to help me understand grammar rules and correct mistakes in my assignments. It's a quick way to make sure my writing is clear.

Notably, [Hong \(2023\)](#) and [Kostka and Toncelli \(2023\)](#) emphasize the relevance

of ChatGPT's grammar feedback, particularly in supporting non-native English speakers. Furthermore, [Wu et al. \(2023\)](#) note that ChatGPT's flexibility in sentence restructuring offers an advantage over traditional grammar tools by enhancing clarity, a feature that is particularly valued by MA students for its role in supporting precise academic writing.

For MA students, who are expected to produce advanced academic writing, the slightly higher usage may indicate the importance of accuracy in their work. However, MA students commented on the ethical issues and academic integrity. One stated:

I like to use it as a proofreader—it saves a lot of time but the problem I am afraid when I submit my assignment it might be marked as plagiarized.

Such concerns reveal that MA students often struggle to balance the advantages of using ChatGPT with maintaining academic integrity, particularly with the higher standards expected at this academic level. These findings are consistent with those reported by [Kostka and Toncelli \(2023\)](#) (see Section 3.3) and emphasize the importance of using specific measures to mitigate such concerns.

To help students address these issues, it is recommended that ChatGPT is not simply used as a primary resource but rather as a support tool, particularly for academic writing. In order for students to be better able to assess content generated using AI tools, avoid over-dependence, and learn how to incorporate these tools into their work responsibly, it is also important that clear procedures and guidelines are established for the ethical use of AI. By providing students with targeted training and support in ethical writing and the use of AI, educators can contribute significantly to reinforcing these practices.

5.3.2. Vocabulary Building

Vocabulary building is a priority for 57.7% of BA students, compared to 44.4% of MA students, indicating that BA students place greater importance on expanding their vocabulary, probably because they are still developing foundational language skills.

One BA student commented that she checked the meaning whenever she had difficulty understanding a word, stating:

I ask ChatGPT for the meaning of words and to put them in any context I like.

Also, another BA student stated that:

It is very effective, and the good thing is that I can give ChatGPT all the vocabularies that confuse me and then I ask ChatGPT to create different exercises, such as multiple-choice questions.

It is interesting to note that, when the researcher was teaching other students a reading course, multiple-choice questions were created about the words they were studying, and many students found this helpful and asked how to do this, high-

lighting the value of this feature for learners.

For MA students, who typically have a more extensive vocabulary, ChatGPT serves as a tool for refining vocabulary suited to academic writing rather than expanding general vocabulary knowledge. One MA student comments:

Even though I don't use it much for this purpose, I found it helpful when one instructor commented that I don't use academic words when I submit my assignment, so ChatGPT helped me a lot in this matter. It showed me the different ways of enhancing my vocabulary. It is fantastic.

Such results were well supported by previous studies, as demonstrated by [Algraini \(2024\)](#) and [Mugableh \(2024\)](#), who found significant improvement in vocabulary knowledge among EFL learners, particularly through contextualized feedback that aids learners in understanding the meaning and usage of words. However, [Algraini's \(2024\)](#) study also highlights the need for teacher guidance to complement AI-driven exercises, particularly to avoid occasional inaccuracies in ChatGPT's feedback. This underscores the idea that, while ChatGPT is valuable in vocabulary expansion, its integration must be monitored to ensure accuracy.

5.3.3. Writing Practice

As can be noted from [Table 3](#), there is a higher reliance on ChatGPT for writing practice among MA students (100%) compared to BA students (57.7%), indicating the increased demands of postgraduate-level writing. For BA students, ChatGPT's writing support aids in developing essential skills needed to effectively structure and communicate their ideas clearly. Comments by BA students emphasized this. They stated:

I like to use ChatGPT when I run out of ideas. It helps me express my ideas clearly.

I like how it helps me understand what I want to deliver. This tool understands me, even if I write in broken language. It still understands.

With regard to MA students, many expressed their gratitude for this amazing tool, stating:

We are lucky to have this tool at this time. It is much needed.

I like how it helped me express my ideas clearly and understand myself very well.

I like it to check if my writing is correct. With one click you receive feedback.

Such statements highlight the critical role of ChatGPT in supporting writing at different academic levels. For BA students, it primarily aids in developing foundational skills, while for MA students, it supports the construction of complex arguments with clarity and coherence. The importance of proficient writing among MA students reflects the advanced demands of postgraduate studies. According to [Kostka and Toncelli \(2023\)](#), ChatGPT's ability to provide individualized writing feedback aligns well with the high demands of postgraduate studies.

Additionally, [Ferguson et al. \(2022\)](#) emphasize that ChatGPT can help reduce cognitive load by simplifying routine tasks, enabling MA students to focus more on creating coherent and well-structured arguments.

Nonetheless, despite these advantages, students mentioned some challenges and fears in using ChatGPT to meet individual writing styles and academic expectations across diverse educational contexts. Concerns about over-reliance, critical thinking and the potential discontinuation of ChatGPT were most frequently expressed by MA students. One MA student expressed her fear of losing critical thinking, and another stated:

What if they decide to stop this service? What will we do, especially since we have work and are not native speakers of English, and this tool helps us a lot.

These comments underscore the need to balance the benefits of ChatGPT with strategies that ensure students maintain essential academic skills, such as critical thinking and independent writing. While ChatGPT offers substantial support, especially at the postgraduate level, it should be used as a supplementary tool rather than a replacement for skill development.

5.3.4. Conversation Practice

The way in which students use ChatGPT for practicing English differs notably between BA and MA students, with 42.3% of BA students using it to enhance their spoken English skills, while none of the MA students reported similar use. Such a contrast indicates that BA students are generally more interested in conversational fluency, probably because they are still strengthening their foundational language skills and feel less confident in spoken English. Conversely, MA students focus primarily on academic writing, reflecting the research-centered needs of postgraduate studies. Two BA students described their experiences as follows:

Practicing conversations with ChatGPT makes me feel more comfortable with spoken English, which I don't get to practice as often.

I use it on my phone, and I like that I can talk, and he can correct me. It is like talking to a real person without feeling shy about making mistakes. It's fun and practical!

These comments highlight the value that BA students place on ChatGPT's conversational features as a tool for building confidence and fluency in spoken English. Research by [Hong \(2023\)](#) underlines ChatGPT's effectiveness in creating a safe, engaging environment for conversational practice that can be hard to find outside of native English settings. Meanwhile, due to the research-oriented requirements of postgraduate studies, MA students are more focused on academic writing:

My main focus is academic writing, so I don't really have time to use ChatGPT for practicing conversation.

This difference reflects the distinct priorities at each academic level: BA students leverage ChatGPT for foundational skill-building, such as improving con-

versational fluency, while MA students utilize it for advanced academic tasks, like refining writing skills.

5.3.5. Reading Comprehension

BA students tend to use ChatGPT more often for reading comprehension (38.5%) than MA students (11.1%). This difference highlights that BA students, due to their basic academic level, benefit greatly from ChatGPT's assistance in understanding complex material. Also, it could be due to the fact that part of the BA curriculum includes two reading courses. [Kostka and Toncelli \(2023\)](#) explain that ChatGPT is especially helpful for these students, as it provides clear summaries and simplifies challenging language, making advanced material easier to understand. MA students, who usually have more experience with academic texts, don't often rely on ChatGPT for reading help. They prefer to work through complex material on their own, using ChatGPT more for writing support.

One student described their experience as follows:

ChatGPT helps me understand difficult readings by breaking them down into simpler language. (BA student)

Regarding MA students, they expressed that they don't use ChatGPT for reading comprehension. When asked about their approach to reading research articles, they indicated that they rely on other tools that are specified for simplifying and summarizing research articles, such as Elicit. One student commented:

I actually use Elicit for summarizing research. If you are subscribed, you can access many features, but if you are not, you can still use two features before needing to delete and choose others.

To conclude, this section clearly shows that ChatGPT has numerous benefits as an independent language-educational tool for both BA and MA students. It assists BA students in developing several language skills, such as vocabulary, grammar, writing, and speaking, whereas MA students primarily focus on the development of academic writing skills and correction of grammatical structures, ensuring fluency. This aligns with theoretical concepts such as constructivism and social constructivism, and SRL (see Sections 2.1. and 2.2), which highlight the rationale for incorporating ChatGPT in the language curriculum.

5.4. Perceived Usefulness of Using ChatGPT for Language Learning

Table 4 shows how BA and MA students perceive the usefulness of ChatGPT for their language learning, based on a 5-point scale (1 = "not useful at all", 5 = "very useful"). Most BA students (88.4%) rated ChatGPT as "very useful" and "useful". This reflects an overall acknowledgement of its usefulness as a learning tool to correct grammar, enhance vocabulary, and offer personalized instant feedback. Similarly, in a study by [Xiao and Zhi \(2023: p. 1\)](#), BA students had a positive experience with ChatGPT, considering it as "a valuable learning partner" that can assist in completing language tasks. It is also noteworthy that only 11.5% rated it

a 3, suggesting they find it moderately helpful. Interestingly, all BA students rated it at least a 3, demonstrating a general appreciation of its value as a study aid.

On the other hand, MA students evaluated ChatGPT even more favorably, with a remarkable 88.9% rating it a 5, highlighting its significance for advanced language skills, such as academic writing, grammar refinement, and specialized vocabulary enhancement. Only one participant rated it a 4, showing slight reservations. This could be due to the concerns associated with its use, such as plagiarism risks. Notably, no MA students rated it below a 4, indicating strong confidence in ChatGPT's effectiveness for advanced language learning.

Table 4. The usefulness of ChatGPT for language learning.

Usefulness of ChatGPT for Language Learning	BA	MA
	Percentage	Percentage
Extremely useful	69.2%	88.9%
Quite useful	19.2%	11.1%
Moderately useful	11.5%	0
Not useful	0	0
Not at all useful	0	0

Overall, the perception of both BA and MA students towards ChatGPT is positive. Students considered ChatGPT a valuable resource for their academic needs. This reflects ChatGPT's effectiveness in addressing diverse educational needs across different levels of study.

In summary, this section presented the results and discussion of the frequency, purposes, and perceived usefulness of ChatGPT usage among BA and MA students. Findings indicated distinct usage patterns and motivations, with BA students primarily engaging with ChatGPT for foundational academic support, while MA students utilized it more intensively for advanced, research-oriented tasks. The overall positive perception of ChatGPT highlights its adaptability and effectiveness in meeting a broad range of academic needs across different educational levels.

5.5. Limitations

This study is based on a small sample size of BA and MA female Saudi EFL students, and, therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to a broader context. The analysis is based on perceptions and a self-reported study, which might be biased. Also, the study focuses on BA and MA students without exploring other academic levels. Additionally, the data were collected over a period of time, and, therefore, the study is bound by the time period, which may not reflect ChatGPT's evolving role in language learning. Also, while challenges like over-reliance and academic integrity concerns are noted, they are not thoroughly explored. These limitations highlight the need for future research with larger samples and a focus on long-term impacts.

6. Conclusion and Implications

The results of this study underscore the significance of ChatGPT as a language-learning tool, particularly in assisting BA and MA EFL students. With ChatGPT, learners have immediate access to information and feedback, and can benefit from conversational practice, grammar correction, vocabulary building, and writing support. There are distinct academic expectations for students at different educational levels, which are indicated by the varying patterns of ChatGPT usage. BA students tend to use ChatGPT to clarify concepts and for support with basic language tasks, as they are still honing their foundational skills. Conversely, MA students take advantage of the tool for more complex tasks, such as improving academic writing and enhancing grammatical accuracy. The role of ChatGPT has increased significantly for MA students, as they rely heavily on its capacity to refine their writing and ensure grammatical precision. The findings of this study highlight that ChatGPT is a versatile tool and a valuable resource for both foundational and advanced language learning.

While these advantages are noteworthy, this study also uncovers some possible challenges regarding the use of ChatGPT, such as issues related to accuracy, academic integrity, and ethical considerations. MA students, who have greater academic expectations, specifically expressed their concerns regarding over-reliance as well as their apprehension about losing critical thinking skills. One MA student raised concerns about the possibility of unintentionally violating academic integrity when submitting work that was assisted by ChatGPT, while another student expressed anxiety about the long-term effects of depending too heavily on ChatGPT for writing assignments. Several students voiced their concerns about the potential discontinuation of ChatGPT, highlighting the necessity for balanced use of the tool and the significance of additional guidance from educators. These challenges indicate that, although ChatGPT can be a valuable support tool for students, it is important that they are encouraged to use it responsibly while ensuring that they continue to use their own critical thinking skills and uphold academic integrity.

The results of the study reveal that there are various benefits to integrating ChatGPT into language-learning programs. First, educational institutions could foster improvements in students' language skills by incorporating ChatGPT's capabilities into the curriculum as an additional learning resource. Second, institutions could encourage self-regulated learning and reduce students' cognitive load when tackling complex language tasks by leveraging ChatGPT's ability to provide personalized and immediate feedback and support. Furthermore, educators have a vital role in ensuring that ChatGPT enhances rather than replaces critical thinking and independent learning skills, by helping students to use the tool in an effective and responsible manner. With a focus on skill development and critical evaluation of content generated using AI tools, this guidance could help alleviate MA students' concerns about over-reliance and ethical considerations. BA students could also be encouraged to use ChatGPT as a valuable tool for mastering

foundational language skills, while MA students could be encouraged to utilize it to support them with complex writing assignments. It is important that educators offer students clear guidance regarding academic integrity when using ChatGPT and that students are encouraged to use the tool for language learning and academic support rather than as a primary resource.

This study emphasizes how ChatGPT and other AI tools can meet diverse academic needs and foster accessible, personalized learning in the field of EFL education. Nonetheless, the study also outlines challenges in using ChatGPT, especially among MA students, which highlights the necessity of placing AI tools in their educational context. Further studies could examine the long-term trends and the progressive impact of ChatGPT on students' academic development, especially from foundational to advanced levels of language proficiency. Subsequent research could also explore the factors influencing students' engagement with ChatGPT, such as educational level and ICT skills, as well as the potential implications of AI on students' learning behaviors and expectations in the long term.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire Sample Questions:

How often do you use ChatGPT?

- Daily
- Several times a week
- Once a week
- Less than once a week
- Never

What is your primary purpose for using ChatGPT? (Select all that apply)

- Language learning
- Homework assistance
- General information
- Entertainment
- Other (Please specify):

If you used ChatGPT for language learning, what aspects of language learning do you use ChatGPT for? (Select all that apply)

- Vocabulary building
- Grammar practice
- Reading comprehension
- Writing practice
- Conversation practice
- Other (Please specify)

How useful do you find ChatGPT for your language learning?

- Not useful at all 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely useful

Appendix 2: Interview Questions: (Adopted from ChatGPT and Modified)

Section 1: General Use

1) What do you usually use ChatGPT for?

Section 2: Language Learning

- 2) How does ChatGPT help you learn English?
- 3) Do you use ChatGPT to learn new words? How?
- 4) Has it helped you with grammar? Can you give an example?
- 5) Do you think ChatGPT helps you understand reading texts better?
- 6) How do you use it to improve your writing?

Section 3: Usefulness

- 7) Do you think ChatGPT is useful for learning English? Why or why not?
- 8) What part of ChatGPT is most helpful to you?
- 9) What is one thing you don't like or find difficult about using ChatGPT?

Section 4: Final Thoughts

- 10) What do you like most about using ChatGPT?
- 11) What challenges have you faced while using ChatGPT?
- 12) Is there anything else you want to share about your experience with ChatGPT?