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STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES OF USING CHATGPT AS A LEARNIG TOOL AT GRADE XI IN SMA SWASTA HKBP 1 PEMATANGSIANTAR

Arisdani Elman Situmorang[1], Dumaris Elseria Silalahi[2], Bertaria Sohnata Hutauruk[3]
[1,2,3]English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar, Pematangsiantar, Sumatera Utara, Indonesia
Corresponden e-mail; arissitumorang.as123@gmail.com

Abstract

This research aimed to investigate Grade XI students' perspectives on using ChatGPT as a learning tool in English language learning activities at SMA Swasta HKBP 1 Pematangsiantar. A qualitative descriptive design was employed involving 30 students from class XI-3, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a 15-item open-ended questionnaire developed based on three dimensions of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM): Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and Attitude Toward Using Technology. The data were analyzed through data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings indicate that students generally perceived ChatGPT as useful for explaining learning materials, translating words and sentences, expanding vocabulary, and answering questions. This perception was reflected in one student's response that ChatGPT helped by "explaining in detail the materials that I do not understand." Regarding ease of use, students appreciated its accessibility and immediate responses, although they experienced difficulties related to internet connectivity, data availability, and usage restrictions. Students also expressed positive attitudes toward ChatGPT while recognizing its limitations. One participant acknowledged that its responses were "not necessarily valid," indicating the importance of verifying AI-generated information. Furthermore, some students expressed concerns about excessive dependence on ChatGPT and its potential to reduce independent learning. These findings suggest that ChatGPT is perceived as a useful supplementary learning resource, provided that its use is accompanied by critical evaluation and active student engagement.

Keywords: *ChatGPT, Students' Perspectives, English language learning, Learning tool, Technology Acceptance Model.*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology and artificial intelligence (AI) has brought significant changes to educational practices, including English language education. In recent years, the emergence of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) has created new opportunities for teaching and learning by enabling users to interact with AI systems that can generate human-like responses, explanations, and learning materials. Unlike conventional digital learning tools that mainly provide predetermined information, GenAI allows learners to ask questions, receive personalized responses, and engage in interactive conversations based on their individual learning needs. These capabilities have attracted increasing attention in education because they can provide additional learning support and extend opportunities for students to access information beyond the classroom (Crompton & Burke, 2023; Lo et al., 2024).

In English language education, GenAI tools such as ChatGPT offer various possibilities for supporting students' language learning activities. Students can use these tools to understand grammatical structures, translate unfamiliar words and sentences, develop vocabulary, generate ideas, practice writing, and obtain explanations of difficult learning materials. ChatGPT also enables learners to ask follow-up questions and request alternative explanations when they do not fully understand an initial response. Such interactive features may support more

flexible and self-directed learning by allowing students to explore language-related questions at their own pace. Previous studies have highlighted the potential of ChatGPT to provide personalized learning support, facilitate language practice, and assist students in different aspects of English language learning (Meniado, 2023; Kohnke et al., 2024; Lo et al., 2024).

The growing role of GenAI is also relevant to secondary school education, where students increasingly encounter digital technologies as part of their learning experiences. At this educational level, students may use AI tools to obtain assistance with classroom assignments, clarify unfamiliar concepts, and complete English-related learning activities outside school hours. However, the use of GenAI among secondary school students requires particular attention because learners at this stage are still developing their critical thinking, independent learning, and digital literacy skills. Although ChatGPT can provide immediate explanations and convenient access to information, students may also encounter inaccurate responses, misunderstand AI-generated explanations, or become overly dependent on the technology. Therefore, the educational value of GenAI does not depend solely on its technological capabilities but also on students' ability to evaluate its responses and use the tool responsibly. Research involving high school students has also emphasized the importance of AI literacy and students' awareness of responsible ChatGPT use in English language learning (Hasanah & Degeng, 2025).

Despite its potential benefits, the use of ChatGPT in English language learning also raises several concerns. AI-generated responses may contain inaccurate, incomplete, or contextually inappropriate information, which can affect students' understanding of learning materials. Furthermore, excessive dependence on AI-generated answers may reduce opportunities for students to develop independent thinking and solve problems through their own efforts. Students therefore need to critically evaluate and verify the information provided by ChatGPT rather than accepting every response without consideration (Kostka & Toncelli, 2023; Lo et al., 2024). Teacher guidance is consequently important to ensure that ChatGPT functions as a supplementary learning resource rather than a replacement for classroom instruction, textbooks, or students' independent learning efforts.

This issue is relevant at SMA SWASTA HKBP 1 PEMATANGSIANTAR, where Grade XI students have been observed using ChatGPT to understand learning materials, translate words and sentences, and complete English-related tasks. However, the availability and use of this technology do not necessarily indicate that students perceive it as useful, easy to operate, or beneficial for their learning activities. Their experiences, evaluations, and concerns therefore need to be explored to obtain a clearer understanding of how ChatGPT is accepted and used in the secondary school English learning context.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), proposed by Davis (1989), provides an appropriate theoretical framework for examining students' acceptance of technology through three dimensions: Perceived Usefulness (PU), Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), and Attitude Toward Using Technology (ATU). In this research, PU refers to students' perceptions of the contribution of ChatGPT to their English learning activities; PEOU concerns how easily and conveniently they can access and use the platform; and ATU reflects their feelings and evaluations toward using ChatGPT as a learning tool. Although previous studies have discussed the potential of ChatGPT in English language education, further context-specific investigation is needed to understand how secondary school students perceive its usefulness, ease of use, and overall role in their learning activities. Accordingly, this research aimed to investigate Grade XI

students' perspectives on using ChatGPT as a learning tool in English language learning activities at SMA Swasta HKBP 1 Pematangsiantar.

METHOD

This research used a descriptive qualitative design to describe students' perspectives, experiences, and opinions about using ChatGPT as a learning tool in English language learning. This design was chosen because the research focused on understanding students' experiences rather than measuring the effectiveness of ChatGPT. The research was conducted at SMA SWASTA HKBP 1 PEMATANGSIANNTAR, located at Jl. Gereja No. 26, Pematangsiantar, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The participants were 30 Grade XI students from class XI-3 who had experience using ChatGPT in English learning activities. They were selected through purposive sampling based on their experience with ChatGPT and their willingness to participate in the research.

The main instrument was an open-ended questionnaire consisting of 15 questions based on the three dimensions of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Davis (1989). The dimensions were Perceived Usefulness (PU), Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), and Attitude Toward Using Technology (ATU), with five questions for each dimension. The questions explored students' opinions about the usefulness of ChatGPT, its ease of use, and their attitudes toward using it in English learning activities. The open-ended format allowed students to express their experiences, opinions, and difficulties in their own words.

Data were collected by distributing the questionnaire to the 30 participants. Before answering the questions, the researcher explained the purpose of the research and gave instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. Students were asked to answer based on their actual experiences of using ChatGPT in English learning. After collecting the questionnaires, the researcher reviewed and organized the responses according to the 15 questions and the three TAM dimensions.

The data were analyzed using the model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. First, all students' responses were collected and organized. Second, the responses were selected, simplified, and grouped according to similar meanings and the three TAM dimensions. Both positive and negative or critical responses were included in the analysis. Third, the findings were presented through descriptions, response frequencies, and selected quotations from students. The frequency summaries were used to support the descriptions of students' responses, not to measure learning outcomes or test statistical hypotheses. Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the response patterns and relating them to the TAM framework and relevant previous studies.

To support the credibility of the findings, the researcher compared students' responses to identify similarities and differences and checked whether the interpretations were supported by the collected data. Selected quotations were also included to provide examples of students' actual responses. Since this research used only an open-ended questionnaire as its data collection instrument, methodological triangulation was not applied. Therefore, the findings were based on students' questionnaire responses and interpreted according to the descriptive qualitative approach.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire generated 450 response units from 30 students answering 15 open-ended questions. The findings are organized according to the three dimensions of TAM: Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and Attitude Toward Using Technology. Overall, students' perspectives were generally favorable but accompanied by critical awareness of the platform's limitations.

Perceived Usefulness

The findings showed that students generally perceived ChatGPT as useful for supporting their English learning activities. They used it to understand difficult learning materials, translate English words and sentences into Indonesian, improve their vocabulary, answer questions, and obtain additional explanations. Based on the questionnaire responses, 148 out of 150 responses (98.67%) were categorized as positive, while 2 responses (1.33%) were negative or critical across the five questions related to Perceived Usefulness. This result indicates that students generally recognized the benefits of ChatGPT in helping them understand English learning materials.

Students' responses also provided evidence of these benefits. One student stated that ChatGPT helped by "explaining in detail the materials that I do not understand." This response shows that students used ChatGPT to clarify materials they found difficult to understand. Other responses also indicated that students appreciated its translation features and its ability to provide additional explanations when they had difficulties with English lessons. Students could also ask further questions to obtain information that better suited their learning needs.

However, students also recognized that not all information provided by ChatGPT was necessarily accurate. One participant stated that its responses were "not necessarily valid." This response indicates that although students considered ChatGPT useful, they were also aware of the need to check the information it provided. These findings suggest that ChatGPT can support students in understanding English materials and completing learning activities, but its responses should still be evaluated critically. This finding is consistent with previous research highlighting the potential of ChatGPT to support language learning while emphasizing the importance of verifying AI-generated information (Bin-Hady et al., 2025; Kostka & Toncelli, 2023).

Perceived Ease of Use

The findings indicated that students generally considered ChatGPT easy and convenient to use. They appreciated its simple access, immediate responses, and interactive features, which allowed them to ask questions and receive further explanations. Some students also mentioned that they could submit photographs of questions to obtain assistance from ChatGPT. Across the five questions related to Perceived Ease of Use, 110 out of 150 responses (73.33%) were positive, while 40 responses (26.67%) were negative or critical. These findings suggest that most students found ChatGPT convenient to use, although some experienced difficulties during its use.

Students' responses illustrated these experiences in their daily learning activities. For example, one student explained that using ChatGPT was easy because they only needed to take a photograph of a question and send it to the application. Another student described the benefit of being able to request different examples when the initial explanation was difficult to understand. These responses show that ChatGPT's interactive features allowed students to obtain assistance in a relatively simple way.

Despite these positive experiences, some students reported difficulties related to internet connectivity, insufficient data quota, limitations on uploading photographs or files, and usage restrictions. Others mentioned that some responses were difficult to understand or did not match the learning materials. These difficulties indicate that students' perceptions of ease of use were influenced not only by the platform's features but also by technical conditions and the quality of its responses. Therefore, although ChatGPT was generally considered easy to use, its accessibility and usefulness could still be affected by several limitations. This finding supports the view that the effective use of digital technology in education depends on both the availability of technological tools and the conditions that support their use (Crompton & Burke, 2023).

Attitude Toward Using Technology

The findings showed that students generally had positive attitudes toward using ChatGPT in English learning activities. They expressed satisfaction and enjoyment because ChatGPT was easy to use and provided quick responses, translations, and detailed explanations. Across the five questions related to Attitude Toward Using Technology, 120 out of 150 responses (80%) were categorized as positive, while 30 responses (20%) were negative or critical. These findings indicate that most students had favorable experiences when using ChatGPT as a supplementary learning tool.

However, students' positive attitudes did not always mean that they were willing to depend on ChatGPT or continue using it without considering its limitations. Regarding their intention to use ChatGPT in the future, only 10 students expressed a clear willingness to continue using it, while 20 students showed negative, reluctant, or conditional responses. Some students were concerned that excessive dependence on ChatGPT could make them less prepared to complete examinations when the application was unavailable. Others worried that frequent use of ChatGPT might reduce their interest in reading books and their ability to learn independently.

These responses suggest that students appreciated the convenience and assistance provided by ChatGPT but remained concerned about its possible effects on their learning habits. Therefore, their attitudes can be described as positive but conditional. Students recognized the benefits of ChatGPT while understanding that they still needed to develop their own knowledge and learning abilities. This finding is consistent with Kostka and Toncelli (2023), who emphasized the importance of responsible ChatGPT use and the need to avoid excessive dependence on AI-generated information. It also highlights the importance of teacher guidance in encouraging students to use ChatGPT critically while maintaining their independence in learning.

Overall Discussion

The findings show that students' acceptance of ChatGPT is mainly related to its usefulness and ease of use in English learning. According to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are important factors in users' acceptance of technology (Davis, 1989). Both factors help explain why students generally have positive perceptions of ChatGPT.

First, perceived usefulness is one of the main reasons students accept ChatGPT. The findings show that 148 out of 150 responses (98.67%) in this dimension were positive. Students found ChatGPT helpful for explaining difficult materials, translating words and sentences, providing vocabulary, and answering questions. These features help students understand English materials more easily. They can also ask additional questions when they do not

understand the first explanation. This suggests that students accept ChatGPT because they believe it can support their learning needs.

Second, perceived ease of use also plays an important role. A total of 110 out of 150 responses (73.33%) in this dimension were positive. Students liked the quick responses, simple interaction, and ability to send photographs of questions. These features make ChatGPT convenient to use when they need help with English learning. However, some students experienced problems with internet connections, data quota, upload restrictions, and answers that were sometimes unclear or unsuitable. This shows that students' experiences with ease of use are also affected by internet access and the quality of ChatGPT's responses.

Third, students' attitudes toward using ChatGPT were generally positive, with 120 out of 150 responses (80%) being positive. Students appreciated the assistance and convenience provided by the platform. However, their willingness to continue using ChatGPT was not always certain. Some students were concerned that depending too much on ChatGPT could make them less independent, reduce their habit of reading books, and create difficulties when they had to complete examinations without the application. This means that students liked using ChatGPT but were also aware of its possible disadvantages.

The three TAM dimensions are connected in explaining students' acceptance of ChatGPT. Students considered the platform useful because it helped them understand English materials. They also found it easy to use because it provided quick responses and simple interaction. These positive experiences contributed to their favorable attitudes. However, concerns about inaccurate answers, technical problems, and excessive dependence made their acceptance conditional rather than unconditional.

These findings are in line with previous studies that describe ChatGPT as a tool that can support English learning, provide feedback, and encourage learner autonomy (Agustini, 2023; Hatmanto & Sari, 2023; Kohnke et al., 2024). However, students still need to check the information provided by ChatGPT because its answers are not always accurate or appropriate (Kostka & Toncelli, 2023). This research describes students' perceptions and experiences; therefore, the findings do not prove that using ChatGPT directly improves their English proficiency.

Overall, students accept ChatGPT mainly because they find it useful and easy to use for English learning. Nevertheless, their concerns about excessive dependence show that ChatGPT should be used wisely. It is best used as a supplementary learning tool, not as a replacement for teachers, textbooks, or students' own learning efforts.

CONCLUSION

This research found that Grade XI students generally had positive perceptions of using ChatGPT as a tool for English learning. Students considered ChatGPT useful for understanding difficult materials, translating words and sentences, learning vocabulary, and answering questions. They also appreciated its quick responses and easy interaction. However, some students experienced problems with internet access, unclear or inaccurate answers, and the possibility of becoming too dependent on the application.

These findings have several practical implications. First, English teachers can introduce ChatGPT as an additional learning resource to help students understand difficult topics, find vocabulary meanings, and practice English. Teachers should also guide students to check ChatGPT's answers using textbooks, dictionaries, and other reliable sources. Second, students

should be encouraged to use ChatGPT to support their learning rather than copy answers directly. They should try to understand the explanations, compare information, and complete learning tasks using their own understanding. Third, schools can provide guidance on responsible AI use and remind students about the importance of independent learning, reading textbooks, and developing critical thinking skills. Therefore, ChatGPT should be used as a supplementary learning tool rather than a replacement for teachers, textbooks, or students' own efforts. Its use in English learning should be supported by proper guidance so that students can benefit from its features while avoiding excessive dependence on the technology. This study was limited to 30 Grade XI students from one private senior high school. Therefore, the findings may not represent the perceptions of all senior high school students. Further research could involve students from different schools and grade levels to gain a broader understanding of students' perceptions of ChatGPT in English learning.

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