



## THE NOTORIOUS VOICE OF OPENAI CHATGPT IN FINISHING AN ESSAY WRITING TASK IN ENGLISH CLASS

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of ChatGPT as a writing assistance tool in English essay writing tasks among second-year EFL students. Triggered by discrepancies between assignment quality and in-class performance, the study investigates how students use, perceive, and critically evaluate ChatGPT. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through a 30-item Likert-scale questionnaire distributed to 35 students. Based on data, 84.8% of students reported using Google Translate more frequently than ChatGPT, and only 18.2% admitted full reliance on ChatGPT for essay tasks. Over half of the students expressed scepticism about ChatGPT's grammatical reliability, and many found its writing style rigid. The findings reveal that while ChatGPT is widely known and occasionally used, students still rely more on tools like Google Translate and do not fully depend on ChatGPT.

*Keywords: ChatGPT, Essay Writing, English Class, AI in Education, Academic Writing.*

### A. INTRODUCTION

Recently, teaching writing skills in a foreign language has become increasingly challenging due to the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies such as OpenAI's ChatGPT. Many students tend to reject the traditional process of learning writing structure and grammar, opting instead for instant responses generated by AI tools with a single click. This phenomenon poses a significant threat to the development of students' critical thinking and creativity, which are crucial in the writing process. Writing is not merely about producing grammatically correct sentences; it is a complex cognitive skill that involves organizing thoughts, applying appropriate vocabulary and grammar, and expressing emotions and personal ideas in a coherent written form (Hyland, 2022).



In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing classes, these issues become more pronounced. Students are expected to master various sub-skills, including brainstorming, outlining, drafting, revising, and editing. However, with the availability of AI writing tools, students increasingly bypass these stages. Based on classroom observation, instructors generally do not encourage or instruct students to use AI for their writing assignments. Instead, they emphasize the importance of writing outlines, engaging in one-on-one consultations, and gradually developing each paragraph of an essay, from introduction to body and conclusion.

To accommodate the modern classroom context, students are allowed to use laptops for typing their essays, as handwriting long essays (five to eight paragraphs) would be inefficient. Despite this, the submitted assignments consistently exhibit high quality in terms of structure, coherence, grammar, and idea development, raising concerns about potential misuse of AI tools like ChatGPT. These concerns are confirmed during midterm and final exams, where students struggle to produce more than two well-structured paragraphs independently. Common errors include grammar mistakes, spelling issues, and weak organization, indicating a significant gap between in-class performance and take-home assignments.

These findings suggest the likelihood of academic dishonesty through AI-generated content. Many students seem to rely on instant solutions rather than developing their own ideas and language skills. The uniformity of submitted essays further supports the assumption that AI is being misused in completing writing tasks. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the role and impact of OpenAI's ChatGPT, referred to here as the "notorious voice", in assisting or replacing students' efforts in finishing essay writing tasks in EFL classes.

This issue is crucial to explore, especially as AI becomes more accessible and sophisticated, potentially reshaping the landscape of foreign language education. While AI can offer assistance and support in learning, unchecked usage can lead to a decline in students' writing competence, critical thinking, and academic integrity (Susanti et al., 2023; Dwivedi et al., 2023). As educators face increasing pressure to adapt to technological developments, a balanced approach is needed to integrate AI responsibly without undermining pedagogical goals.



The rapid emergence of AI-based tools, particularly ChatGPT, has changed the landscape of academic writing among EFL learners. Despite having access to writing instruction that emphasizes outlining, coherence, and critical thinking, students increasingly turn to ChatGPT to complete essay tasks. This behavior raises questions about students' reliance on AI, the authenticity of their writing, and their ability to develop independent writing skills. Instructors have observed a discrepancy between students' well-written assignments and their poor in-class performance, suggesting potential overdependence on AI tools. The issue calls for a deeper understanding of how students perceive, use, and evaluate ChatGPT in academic writing tasks.

1. To what extent do EFL students use and depend on ChatGPT in completing English essay writing tasks?
2. How do students perceive the usefulness, accuracy, and limitations of ChatGPT in academic writing?

This study is motivated by the pedagogical concern that AI tools like ChatGPT, while potentially supportive, may hinder students' development of core academic writing skills. The increasing ease of accessing instant responses could lead learners to bypass essential cognitive processes such as brainstorming, organizing, and revising—skills that are crucial for long-term language development. By examining student reflections and behaviors through thematic analysis, this research provides timely insights into how ChatGPT is shaping writing practices in EFL contexts. The findings will also offer critical input for educators in designing instructional strategies that promote ethical and reflective AI usage.

## **B. METHOD**

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design involving 35 second-year undergraduate students enrolled in an academic essay writing course. Total sampling was used to include the entire class cohort. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire comprising 30 Likert-scale items (ranging from 1 to 5), designed to capture students' reflections on their experience using ChatGPT for essay writing. Although no formal

instruction was given by the lecturer to use AI tools, the questionnaire explored the degree to which students voluntarily engaged with ChatGPT to complete writing tasks. The instrument was distributed via Google Form. Data were analyzed using thematic coding and categorized into positive, neutral, and negative perceptions, based on five predetermined indicators: writing understanding, self-efficacy, technological usage, critical evaluation, and motivation toward AI integration.

These are Indicators and Theoretical Framework for the Questionnaire Items. Based on the purpose, each of the 30 items in the questionnaire is categorized into thematic indicators and supported by relevant grand theories in English Education, language learning, and technology integration, as follow:

- Understanding of Essay Writing in EFL

Grand Theory: *Cognitive Process Theory of Writing* (Hayes, 2012), *Genre Theory* (Hyland, 2019)

Item	Item Statement	Indicator
1	I understand the meaning of writing an essay	Conceptual understanding of essay writing
3	I understand types of essays	Knowledge of essay genres
4	I have written different types of essays	Practical experience with genre variation
19	I understand paragraph organization in essays	Understanding paragraph structure
24	I know that writing essays requires good reading references	Importance of reading input in writing process

- Experience and Self-Reliance in Writing (Self-Efficacy and Constructivism)

Grand Theory: *Constructivist Learning Theory* (Schunk, 2012), *Self-Efficacy Theory* (Bandura, 2012)

Item	Item Statement	Indicator
2	I have experience writing essays in English	Experience and writing fluency
6	I have no difficulty generating ideas for essays	Idea generation capability
7	I have no difficulty identifying main ideas in writing	Focused content creation
20	I realize my English proficiency is not yet sufficient to write well	Self-awareness of linguistic ability

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21	I know how to write a good essay without relying on electronic media	Writing autonomy
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- Use of Technology and ChatGPT

Grand Theory: *Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)* (Venkatesh & Bala, 2008), *Blended Learning Theory* (Graham, 2013)

Item	Statement	Indicator
5	I have used electronic media to help me write essays	Use of technology tools in writing
8	I use Google Translate or dictionaries when writing essays in English	Use of language assistance tools
9	I know what ChatGPT is	Awareness of AI-based tools
10	I have used ChatGPT	Experience using AI tools
11	I frequently use ChatGPT to help me write essays	Frequency of ChatGPT utilization
12	I have used ChatGPT to complete essay writing tasks	Practical use of ChatGPT in coursework
29	I know other electronic applications besides ChatGPT	Awareness of alternative writing tools

- Critical Evaluation of ChatGPT related to Critical Thinking and Metacognition

Grand Theory: *Critical Literacy Theory* (Luke, 2018), *Metacognition* (Flavell, 2013)

Item	Statement	Indicator
13	I never use ChatGPT to search for specific academic information	Lack of trust in AI knowledge base
14	I think ChatGPT is inaccurate in helping me write essays	Skepticism about AI accuracy
15	I know that ChatGPT's grammar is not always accurate	Critical evaluation of grammar quality
16	I can determine coherence and cohesion in essays generated by ChatGPT	Structural awareness in writing
17	I find ChatGPT unhelpful in completing English essay tasks	Perceived usefulness of AI
18	I prefer writing independently without using ChatGPT	Preference for autonomous writing
23	I find it difficult to write without the help of tools or applications	Digital dependency
25	I never check ChatGPT's accuracy	Lack of verification behavior
26	I find ChatGPT's narrative style very rigid	Criticism of style and tone
28	I think my writing is better than ChatGPT's	Self-confidence in personal writing quality

- Motivation and Attitude Toward ChatGPT

Grand Theory: *Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Motivation Theory* (Deci & Ryan, 2008), *Self-Regulated Learning Theory* (Zimmerman, 2011)

Item	Statement	Indicator
22	I can write an essay outline well without using electronic media	Planning skills and writing independence
27	I want to use ChatGPT for academic writing purposes	Motivation for integrating AI into learning
30	I rely solely on ChatGPT	Full reliance on AI tools

### C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach involving 35 second-year students enrolled in an essay writing course. All students were asked to complete a 30-item Likert-scale questionnaire (1–5) reflecting their experiences and attitudes toward the use of ChatGPT in completing their essay writing tasks. Although the instructor never provided any instruction to use AI tools, the survey aimed to explore the extent of students' autonomous use of ChatGPT. Thematic coding and categorization based on positive, neutral, and negative responses were applied to analyze the data.

1. To what extent do EFL students use and depend on ChatGPT in completing English essay writing tasks?

- a. Indicator 1: Experience and Self-Reliance in Writing

Although 54.5% of students rated their experience in essay writing as 4 or 5 (Item 2), only 33.3% stated they had no difficulty generating ideas (Item 6) and 30.3% had no issues identifying the main idea (Item 7). Furthermore, 51.5% agreed that their English proficiency was still not strong enough (Item 20), and only 27.3% claimed they could write a good essay without using electronic media (Item 21). These suggest a gap between experience and actual independence.

- b. Indicator 2: Use of Technology and ChatGPT

A large percentage of students (81.8%) reported having used electronic tools (Item 5), with 84.8% using Google Translate (Item 8). Regarding ChatGPT, 75.8% were familiar with it (Item 9), and 72.7% had used it at least once (Item 10). However, only 39.4%

reported frequent usage for essay writing (Item 11), and 51.5% admitted to using it for completing assignments (Item 12). Additionally, 60.6% knew other electronic tools aside from ChatGPT (Item 29), suggesting that students incorporate multiple technologies in their writing process.

**c. Indicator 3: Motivation and Attitude Toward ChatGPT**

Only 18.2% of students stated they rely solely on ChatGPT (Item 30), while 45.5% were interested in using ChatGPT for academic writing (Item 27). Moreover, 36.4% believed they could create outlines without using electronic tools (Item 22). These figures suggest that while ChatGPT is commonly used, students still exhibit a degree of caution and balance.

**2. How do students perceive the usefulness, accuracy, and limitations of ChatGPT in academic writing?**

**a. Indicator 4: Understanding of Essay Writing**

72.7% of students stated they understood the meaning of essay writing (Item 1), and 60.6% were familiar with various types of essays (Item 3). However, only 39.4% had written several essay types (Item 4), and 54.6% claimed to understand paragraph structure (Item 19). Most notably, 60.6% recognized that essay writing requires exposure to references (Item 24), indicating theoretical awareness but uneven practice.

**b. Indicator 5: Critical Evaluation of ChatGPT**

While 33.3% claimed never using ChatGPT to search for scientific information (Item 13), 48.5% perceived ChatGPT as inaccurate (Item 14), and 57.6% were aware of grammatical flaws in its outputs (Item 15). Half the students (50%) could assess the coherence of AI-generated text (Item 16), but 39.4% said ChatGPT was unhelpful (Item 17), and 33.3% preferred writing independently (Item 18). A notable 48.5% admitted struggling without digital tools (Item 23). Only 21.2% never checked ChatGPT's accuracy (Item 25), and 33.3% found the language too stiff (Item 26). Meanwhile, 42.4% believed their writing was better than ChatGPT's (Item 28). These results reflect a complex view: students are aware of AI's limitations and exercise some level of critical evaluation.



The integration of AI into educational environments has prompted a surge in both student engagement and critical discourse around its pedagogical implications (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). Recent studies have shown that students' acceptance of AI tools such as ChatGPT is influenced by perceived usefulness, but also by concerns about originality and critical skill development (Yin et al., 2023). The findings confirm the presence and growing influence of AI-based tools such as ChatGPT in EFL academic settings. While students are aware of and utilize ChatGPT, they do not rely on it exclusively, showing signs of digital literacy and critical awareness. For example, the higher preference for using Google Translate (84.8%) over ChatGPT (72.7%) reflects selective use based on familiarity and task suitability. Despite familiarity, only 18.2% admitted full reliance on ChatGPT, indicating a balanced approach.

Students also expressed doubts about ChatGPT's reliability. Nearly half questioned its grammatical accuracy, and many commented on the rigidity of its language. These perceptions indicate that students remain cautious and do not view ChatGPT as a flawless writing solution. Instead, they use it as one of several tools to support their writing, blending human reasoning with AI-generated content. These findings reflect broader concerns over writing authenticity and academic integrity. The ability to produce well-structured assignments at home, contrasted with difficulties in exam settings, suggests potential overdependence on technology. However, the critical stance taken by students, through their evaluation of grammar, coherence, and usefulness, demonstrates emerging metacognitive awareness.

The term "notorious" becomes appropriate in this context, as ChatGPT is both helpful and controversial. Its popularity is evident, yet it remains distrusted in some aspects. This duality calls for pedagogical innovation. Educators must develop authentic assessments, promote in-class writing, and foster critical discussions on the use of AI. Only through guided integration can AI enhance rather than replace language learning. This aligns with recent calls for AI literacy and critical pedagogies in higher education to ensure responsible integration (Holmes et al., 2022).

This study is significant for understanding how AI tools such as ChatGPT influence the writing behaviours of EFL learners. It offers valuable insights for educators to create instructional strategies that promote critical thinking and writing authenticity in the digital era. The findings help curriculum designers integrate digital literacy and ethical AI use into language instruction.



Moreover, it provides guidance for institutional policy-making on academic integrity in the age of artificial intelligence, while encouraging students to become reflective, responsible users of emerging writing technologies

#### D. CONCLUSION

This study reveals a nuanced picture of how EFL students perceive and use ChatGPT in essay writing. While the tool is widely known and occasionally used, students demonstrate both caution and critical awareness. The data show that only a small portion of students rely entirely on ChatGPT, and many are sceptical of its grammatical accuracy and rigid writing style. Despite its utility, ChatGPT is not viewed as a flawless or primary tool, which highlights students' emerging digital literacy. These findings call for a pedagogical shift that integrates AI responsibly while preserving the integrity of academic writing. Educators should design assessment practices that balance technological support with independent thinking—such as in-class timed essays, peer feedback, and reflective AI usage reports. Ultimately, AI should be framed not as a shortcut, but as a supplement to foster deeper engagement with the writing process, critical thinking, and learner autonomy.

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