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EFL WRITING COURSES AND AI: A STUDY IN THE EFFICACY OF CHATGPT

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the perceptions of Saudi EFL teachers on utilizing an AI-supported instruction (ChatGPT) in writing courses. The research employed a mixed-method approach to gather quantitative and qualitative data to answer two research questions. A questionnaire was developed to collect the data and findings were triangulated with responses in semi-structured interviews with teachers working at major Saudi universities. Thereafter, descriptive statistics measures (mean, standard deviation, and frequency) and inferential analysis (t-test and ANOVA) were used to analyze the data. The interviews were conducted in one-on-one sessions with ten teachers on a purely voluntary basis. Results indicated that the majority of teachers were aware of ChatGPT's capabilities as an educational tool and actively used it to improve learners' grammatical and structural writing skills, as well as to provide feedback and assessment. The study also found challenges that the teachers perceive such as concerns about plagiarism, over-reliance on the tool, a lack of professional training, and weak institutional oversight. Statistically, differences were found when analyzed discipline-wise, with ELT specialists being more open to and proactive in using the technology compared to their colleagues in literature and linguistics. The study concludes with recommendations for continued research and development in this field, enhanced institutional support for teachers, and comprehensive, ongoing training on the effective and responsible use of AI in higher education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent years have witnessed a growing tendency for the application of the latest technological developments in teaching English language at different university levels and majors(Marquis et al., 2024; Matyushok et al., 2021). The unique features of technologies like AI have sparked the interest of teachers and researchers because of their ease of access and use in educational settings. Recent studies have indicated that dialogical agents, as learners, can develop their accomplishment and engagement when participating in language learning activities, mainly for guidance to practice grammar and communication in the written form as well as the verbal form (Nguyen et al., 2024).

Dialogical agents function in an educational context as companions to improve the process of learning. The focus has now shifted to the potential use of chatbots in education. Research suggests that chatbots, such as ChatGPT, support teachers in lesson planning, instructional materials development and assessment, while simultaneously relieving them of manual workloads which make space for them to amplify instruction quality (Duong & Chen, 2025; Huang et al., 2022).

Additionally, chatbots can be of assistance to educators by supplying personalized direction to students at the individual level, or in the case of a large class size (Alotaibi & Alzu'bi, 2025; Baidoo-Anu & Ansah, 2023; Muthmainnah et al., 2023), which is relevant to the Saudi educational context. However, the introduction of ChatGPT in education raises difficult questions, not only in terms of academic integrity, students' independent learning, but also, students' overdependence on AI. A genuine concern that needs investigation in this direction is the long-term effect of these technologies on learners' critical thinking skills.

Moreover, given the dynamic nature of learning settings, the interaction of technology, learners, and teachers also needs evaluation before adopting the latest tools. What is more, although a plethora of research has been conducted on the role of AI in language education in the Saudi context, it does not give specific guidelines about what needs to be done to enhance the students' composing skills.

What is more, the Saudi context witnessed extensive research on teachers' and students' perceptions of the use of AI tools in language education. No doubt, such research informs about the acceptability of innovation in the Saudi EFL classroom but it stills gives little information about the use of AI tools in the Saudi writing classroom.

Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap by exploring the Saudi EFL faculty's perceptions of the use of these tools in teaching writing in the Saudi context.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The use of AI tools in language instruction has been rising steadily in the last few years across all language skills. Kasneci et al. found positive correlation between certain AI tools such as Replica, and Duolingo and improved student outcomes, thus supporting the cause of technology inclusion in education (Kasneci et al., 2023).

Likewise, Fitria's examination of Grammarly as an AI writing assistant focused on error detection and word selection (Fitria, 2021), grammar, and prosody led to encouraging outcomes. The ability of chatbot like ChatGPT to serve as personal learning companion has emerged as a highly valuable feature in language education contexts. Kim evaluated the effectiveness of the chatbot "Replika" as a personal grammar tutor and found that regular one-on-one conversations with the chatbot improved students' grammatical competence and created a supportive environment that helped them overcome emotional factors such as stress, anxiety, and fear (Kim, 2019). This finding has important implications for language learning contexts, where students may face communication challenges or cultural barriers that hinder their participation.

Recent studies have explored the abilities of chatbots in the language teaching and learning sphere. For instance, Shahriar and Hayawi established the suitability of ChatGPT in language learning given its large vocabulary. Further, since it can explain complex text, find specific information in large content, and summarize content, its efficacy in writing classrooms can be explored. Both learners and teachers can utilize AI for assistance in certain tasks (Shahriar & Hayawi, 2023).

Bulatović et al. surmised that Grammarly, an AI powered chatbot application, can be a great help in correcting mistakes in assignments while teachers can divert their time and energy to providing constructive feedback on the same (Bulatović et al., 2024). Such assistance can be especially useful where the learner groups are large such as in Saudi Arabia, relieving teachers of mechanical tasks.

Moreover, some activities such as lesson planning and creation of content and activities can also be accomplished with the assistance of chatbots as they have a huge corpus of information from which novel combinations that fit student needs can be prepared. In this connection, Kasneci et al. (2023). maintain that ChatGPT assists teachers to save time and effort on

generating person. alized learning material and feedback, allowing them to focus more on other important aspects in their teaching process (AbuSa'aleek & Alotaibi, 2022; Alkodimi & Al-Ahdal, 2021). However, for any aid to be introduced into classrooms, the agency of teachers has to be prepared and their perceptions to the change need to be explored. In a recent study, Alruwaili and Kianfar investigated the application and efficacy of ChatGPT in lesson planning, designing of activities, and assessments.

The study sample comprised female EFL teachers, and results indicated fairly favorable views on the role of ChatGPT. Also, the study highlighted concerns for credibility and over-dependence on AI. Learners' critical thinking which an area of interest in contemporary education is also came under cloud with the integration of AI as much as the individual learning "process", and emotional intelligence of the students (Alruwaili & Kianfar, 2025). Implications for training and professional development programs to ensure successful incorporation of AI are focal in Saudi Arabian educational contexts.

As with many other online tools and applications, ethical concerns continue to plague blanket adoption of these tools and applications in education. Large language models have been trained on human inputs which are not free of biases and prejudices, and it is feared that AI-generated content may carry the same. Academic honestly and over-dependence of students on these aids are the other concerns that cannot be completely ruled out, at least not in the present nascent stage of AI applications in education. Kasneci et al. warn that students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities may also be adversely affected by AI tools, these fears need careful examination in different contexts, including their use by teachers (Kasneci et al., 2023).

A major ethical concern about ChatGPT involves privacy and security issues. In fact, using large language models can collect and recombine student data potentially in many ways leading to widespread violations of privacy and security. The study showed that the vulnerability of ChatGPT to sensitive inputs could be manipulated for impersonation or malfeasance, and in any case, there is the possibility of leaking personal data while producing content for other users.

In conclusion, the fact that students tend to over-rely on AI tools to perform their writing tasks might tempt some researchers and classroom practitioners to underestimate the instructional effect of AI tools. This observation seems to receive support from the fact that the existing literature produced in the Saudi

context does not provide practical guidelines to rationalize the students' over-reliance on AI tools. This argument could be rejected on two practical grounds. Firs, writing instructors actively use detection softwares to locate AI-generated content in the students' writing.

Second, writing courses include procedures to help students to paraphrase content that they adopt from other published sources, including content provided by AI tools. While it is true that students could use AI generated materials to enhance their writing skills, they should always comply with the honesty code prescribed the educational system.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Design

The current study adopted a mixed-methods design, which incorporated the qualitative phenomenological approach and the quantitative survey method to gain an in-depth insight into EFL university instructors' experiences of integrating ChatGPT to writing instruction across Saudi Arabia. This mixed-method approach enabled the examination of the depth of personal experiences alongside the breadth of views across a broader sample. This was an explanatory sequential study with quantitative and qualitative data that together offer deeper insights to answer the following research questions

1. What are the views of the Saudi university teachers on utilizing an AI tool like ChatGPT in writing courses?
2. What challenges do Saudi EFL instructors face when utilizing an AI tool like ChatGPT in writing courses?

3.2. Participants

Seventy-seven targeted teachers from five different regions of KSA were participated in this study to make scope for geographical diversity and better representation of the Saudi heterogenous teaching strata. Inclusion criteria required participants to: (1) nationality (Saudi only); (2) engaged in EFL academic writing instruction; (3) at least three years of active experience in EFL teaching; and (4) familiarity with education technology.

Table 1 below summarizes the participants' demographic information.

It is evident from Table 1 that a reasonably diverse sample was taken in this study in terms of gender (both male and female), age groups (from 22-40+), academic rank (representation of all ranks of the academic hierarchy), specializations (ELT, linguistics, literature), and on-job experience (1-10+

years).

Table 1: Demographic Information.

	Male	Female		
Gender	43	34		
	55.8%	44.2%		
	22-26	27-35	36-40	+40
Age	21	15	16	25
	27.3%	19.5%	20.8%	32.5%
	Teacher	Asst. Prof	Assoc. Prof	Full Prof.
Academic rank	31	26	14	6
	40.3%	33.8%	18.2%	7.8%
	ELT	Linguistics	Literature	
Specialization	34	29	14	
	44.2%	37.7%	18.2%	
	1-5	6-10	+10	
Experience	30	27	20	
	39.0	35.1	26.0	

3.3. Instruments

Two instruments were used in this study for data collection: a comprehensive questionnaire to collect quantitative data and a semi-structured interview protocol to collect qualitative data. The quantitative instrument consisted of 28 items **divided into four main constructs**

- Awareness and use of ChatGPT
- Perceived benefits
- Challenges and concerns
- Impact on professional development

The items used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) for responses.

Table 2: Reliability of the Questionnaire.

No	Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
1	Awareness and use of ChatGPT	0.765	7
2	Perceived benefits	0.686	8
3	Challenges and concerns	0.721	7
4	Impact and professional development	0.659	6
	Total	0.903	28

At a value of 0.903, Cronbach's alpha indicates that all items in the questionnaire are consistent with each other. The ChatGPT Awareness and Usage construct, consisting of 7 items, were shown to be reliable by a Cronbach's alpha of 0.765. This indicates that the items measuring this construct consistently verify the awareness and frequency of its use by participants.

The Perceived Benefits construct contains 8 items and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.686 indicates an acceptable value: the items of this construct are moderately consistent.

The third construct, Challenges and Concerns, demonstrates good reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.721 across seven items. The Impact and Professional Development construct, which includes six items, has the lowest alpha value of 0.659, but it is still reliable. Thus, the values of each construct are acceptable making the questionnaire valid and reliable to be applied in the study.

3.4. Interview

The interviews centered around six key themes with inquiries matched to each question to provide depth of exploration regarding teachers' experience, perspective, and anxiety toward the use of ChatGPT. Questions were so designed for participants to respond elaborately while accommodating the purpose of the study.

3.5. Data collection procedures

Data for this study was collected in two stages. In the first stage, the survey was carried out electronically. In the second stage, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 participants randomly selected from the survey pool - the sample was selected to ensure varied perspectives and experiences. The interviews took place in Arabic or English, based on participant choice. The duration of each interview was between 45 and 75 minutes (M =

58 minutes) and took place over secure video conferencing platforms

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive analyses for this study computed the values means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages for all variables. Inferential analysis was done using independent samples t-tests to compare the gender, one-way ANOVA for comparison of demographic categories to explore the effect of these variables. For the qualitative analysis, ten respondents were interviewed, their responses were analyzed qualitatively. Table 3 below summarizes the responses for the first construct in this study, Awareness and Use of ChatGPT.

Table 3: Awareness and Use of ChatGPT.

No	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Std. Deviation	Mean
1	I am very familiar with ChatGPT's capabilities as an educational tool.	2	15	11	49	0.891	4.390
		2.6%	19.5%	14.3%	63.6%		
2	I primarily use ChatGPT to help improve grammar and sentence structure skills.		11	22	44	0.733	4.429
			14.3%	28.6%	57.1%		
3	I rely on ChatGPT for providing feedback on writing assignments.		5	28	44	0.620	4.506
			6.5%	36.4%	57.1%		
4	I use ChatGPT on a regular basis in my writing courses.		21	9	47	0.883	4.338
			27.3%	11.7%	61.0%		
5	I use ChatGPT primarily for assessing student writing.		11	24	42	0.730	4.403
			14.3%	31.2%	54.5%		
6	Institutional policies restrict my use of ChatGPT in classroom instruction.		12	25	40	0.742	4.364
			15.6%	32.5%	51.9%		
7	Students are adequately guided on the responsible use of ChatGPT in writing tasks.		16	20	41	0.802	4.325
			20.8%	26.0%	53.2%		

Table 3 shows that most teachers authenticated having extensive knowledge of ChatGPT's educational roles with only 2.6% disagreeing, while 63.6% strongly agreed. The mean score for this item was 4.39, and the low standard deviation value means that the respondents had general agreement with the statement with few outliers. Further, 57.1% opined that ChatGPT helped their students improve their grammar and syntax. A similar percentage, i.e. 57.1%, reported that they used ChatGPT to provide feedback, 61.0% of the participants reported using ChatGPT regularly, while only 27.3% indicated they did not use it. For the next statement, 54.5% of the participants agreed that they used ChatGPT to evaluate students' writing, as evidenced by a high mean score of 4.403. Approximately 51.9% of participants indicated they were aware of institutional limitations. More than half of the participants believed that students received sufficient guidance on the responsible use of ChatGPT. However, a small section still disagreed which point towards some scope for ethical training even though it is apparent that Saudi teachers widely use ChatGPT and are rather well adjusted with its role in helping them do their jobs well. Institutional support and student supervision nevertheless remain areas of concern that need address.

Table 4 below summarizes the responses to the construct of Perceived Benefits in the use of ChatGPT by their students.

Table 4: Perceived Benefits.

No	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Std. Deviation	Mean
1	ChatGPT helps motivate students to write more frequently.		19	21	37	0.826	4.234
			24.7%	27.3%	48.1%		
2	ChatGPT improves the creativity of student writing.	1	15	19	42	0.834	4.325
		1.3%	19.5%	24.7%	54.5%		
3	ChatGPT assists in correcting grammatical errors.		19	16	42	0.844	4.299
			24.7%	20.8%	54.5%		
4	ChatGPT offers instant feedback to students.		6	28	43	0.641	4.481
			7.8%	36.4%	55.8%		
5	ChatGPT increases student confidence in writing tasks.		18	23	36	0.809	4.234
			23.4%	29.9%	46.8%		
6	ChatGPT makes lesson planning more efficient.		17	23	37	0.801	4.260
			22.1%	29.9%	48.1%		
7	ChatGPT provides personalized writing assistance.		9	26	42	0.696	4.429
			11.7%	33.8%	54.5%		
8			9	24	44	0.699	4.455

	ChatGPT enables differentiation for varied student ability levels.		11.7%	31.2%	57.1%		

Table 4 reflects highly positive impressions among the participants as more than half the participants agreed or strongly agreed with ChatGPT's benefits including motivation to write regularly, enhancing student creativity, and supporting for correction of grammatical errors. The participants highly rated the ability of ChatGPT to give instant and individual feedback which is not possible for human agency. On this count, 55.8% expressed strong agreement with a mean value of 4.481. In addition, teachers reported better learner confidence in writing when aligned with ChatGPT. From the teachers' perspective, ChatGPT was seen as a great teachers' aid too, it helped them improve lesson planning in terms of novel ideas that fitted the

specific learner needs. Moreover, they acknowledged its efficacy in providing personalized, differentiated writing support for students of varying proficiency with agreement responses ranged from 54.5% and 57.1%.

It is evident that feedback, personalization, originality, and student confidence are positively impacted on using ChatGPT in EFL writing in this study. At the same time, motivation and enhancement of learners' proficiency elicited a mixed response from the teachers.

The next construct that the study examined is Challenges and Concerns perceived by the teachers in integrating ChatGPT in EFL writing.

Table 5: Challenges and Concerns.

No	Statement	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Std. deviation	Mean
1	Students may use ChatGPT to cheat on writing assignments.	9	24	44	0.699	4.455
		11.7%	31.2%	57.1%		
2	Teachers struggle to assess original student work with ChatGPT.	11	24	42	0.730	4.403
		14.3%	31.2%	54.5%		
3	ChatGPT may generate content with incorrect information.	11	23	43	0.732	4.416
		14.3%	29.9%	55.8%		
4	Overuse of ChatGPT could harm student independence in writing.	11	28	38	0.721	4.351
		14.3%	36.4%	49.4%		
5	Some teachers lack sufficient training to use ChatGPT effectively.	14	27	36	0.758	4.286
		18.2%	35.1%	46.8%		
6	ChatGPT sometimes produces generic or non-contextual writing.	13	22	42	0.762	4.377
		16.9%	28.6%	54.5%		
7	Evaluating student progress becomes complicated with AI involvement.	13	32	32	0.728	4.247
		16.9%	41.6%	41.6%		

According to table 5above, a large section (57% and 31.2%) of the participants expressed fears of abuse of ChatGPT by the student community. This demonstrates that many participants are aware of this risk, as evidenced by the high mean of 4.455 and the moderate standard deviation of 0.699.

The participants also found it difficult to assess students' original work when using ChatGPT. 54.5% strongly agree and 31.2% agree that assessment is challenging in this situation. They also feared that ChatGPT might present false or misleading information, with 55.8% strongly agreeing and 29.9% agreeing on this notion. This indicates that these participants believe AI-generated content is not always reliable with a high mean value of 4.416. Nearly two-thirds of the participants expressed concern that excessive use of ChatGPT might undermine students' autonomy in writing tasks. Most participants believed that teachers are not

trained enough to use ChatGPT effectively. 54.5% strongly agreed and 28.6% agreed that ChatGPT sometimes generates common, non-contextual content, raising concerns about its relevance and approximately 83% indicated that AI made it more difficult to assess student performance.

Table 6 below shows the teachers' perceptions of the impact of ChatGPT on their Professional Development.

As can be seen in table 6, the results show positive impressions among the participants regarding the impact of ChatGPT on their teaching and classroom interactions. The majority of the participants reported that ChatGPT had changed the way of writing assignments distribution, with a mean value of 4.403 and a standard deviation of 0.748, which indicates a strong agreement among the participants on this notion.

Regarding workload, 48.1% of the participants

strongly agreed, and 37.7% of them agreed that the workload for providing feedback had decreased as a result of the use of ChatGPT, with a mean value of 4.338. The teachers appreciated the assistance of AI in assessing their learners' writing and also in providing them the feedback, tasks that were once time-consuming. They expressed a positive disposition to inclusion of technological tools in their writing classes, especially that of ChatGPT. More than half of the participants were confident of the efficacy of ChatGPT as an educational tool, which indicates that Saudi teachers are ready for adopting technology.

Table 6: Impact and Professional Development.

No	Statement	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Std. deviation	Mean
1	ChatGPT has changed the way I assign writing tasks	12	22	43	0.748	4.403
		15.6%	28.6%	55.8%		
2	My feedback load has decreased due to ChatGPT usage.	11	29	37	0.718	4.338
		14.3%	37.7%	48.1%		
3	I am more open to technological innovation in the classroom after using ChatGPT.	15	26	36	0.772	4.273
		19.5%	33.8%	46.8%		
4	I feel confident in my ability to integrate AI into my pedagogy.	14	24	39	0.768	4.325
		18.2%	31.2%	50.6%		
5	I have attended workshops or seminars on AI in language teaching.	16	26	35	0.781	4.247
		20.8%	33.8%	45.5%		
6	My students are more engaged in writing since introducing ChatGPT.	14	27	36	0.758	4.286
		18.2%	35.1%	46.8%		

As far as professional development of participants' use of AI is concerned, 45.5% welcomed the idea with 20.8% remaining neutral. This may be taken as an indication of a professional gap in tech training of teachers and may need to be actively addressed if technology must be integrated into the EFL classrooms.

This study hypothesized that different genders may perceive utilization of ChatGPT differently. Table 7 below summarizes these findings.

Table 7: Comparison of Means of Perceptions on Utilizing ChatGPT according to Gender.

Gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	sig
Awareness and use	male	43	4.3887	0.52287	0.928
	female	34	4.3992	0.47806	
Perceived benefits	male	43	4.3227	0.42366	0.707
	female	34	4.3603	0.44781	
Challenges concerns	male	43	4.3455	0.44222	0.723
	female	34	4.3824	0.46220	
Impact and professional	male	43	4.3605	0.44085	0.299
	female	34	4.2500	0.48418	

Table 7 illustrates the difference in the means of perceptions in using ChatGPT based on gender. As can be seen in the table, there are no statistically significant differences in Saudi university educators' perceptions of the efficacy of ChatGPT according to gender. Since the p-values for all the constructs were above 0.05, it can be concluded that both genders exhibit similar attitudes towards ChatGPT's role in English writing courses and its related challenges.

The next variable that the study considered was age of participating teachers. Table 8 below summarizes these findings.

Table 8 indicate that Saudi university educators across different age groups shared similar levels of awareness, perceived benefits, concerns, and perceived impact regarding the integration of ChatGPT into English writing courses. So, the age variable does not significantly influence how these concepts are perceived or experienced among these educators.

The next variable that the study considered was the academic positions of the participating teachers. Table 9 below summarizes these findings.

Table 9 shows that as academic rank increases, awareness and use of ChatGPT also tend to rise, with full professors scoring an average of 4.5000, although the differences are not statistically significant as the p-value was 0.728. Similarly, perceived benefits are valued highest by full professors with a mean of 4.5, with no significant differences across ranks as the sig was 0.631, at the same time, full professors report the most challenges with a mean score of 4.5476. To sum

up, despite minor upward trends in relation to academic rank, no significant differences in the utilization of ChatGPT are found due to academic rank of the teachers.

Table 8: Comparison of Means of Perceptions on Utilizing ChatGPT According to Age.

Age		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	sig
Awareness and Use	22-26	21	4.4558	0.48994	0.629
	27-35	15	4.2476	0.56750	
	36-40	16	4.3839	0.54391	
	+40	25	4.4343	0.44888	
Perceived Benefits	22-26	21	4.3214	0.43584	0.953
	27-35	15	4.3083	0.43524	
	36-40	16	4.3281	0.43511	
	+40	25	4.3800	0.44849	
Challenges and Concerns	22-26	21	4.3673	0.44394	0.883
	27-35	15	4.2857	0.44852	
	36-40	16	4.3571	0.39727	
	+40	25	4.4057	0.50116	
Impact on Profession	22-26	21	4.2540	0.50722	0.257
	27-35	15	4.3222	0.44305	
	36-40	16	4.1667	0.49441	
	+40	25	4.4467	0.39299	

Table 9: Comparison of Means of Perceptions on Utilizing ChatGPT According to Academic Rank.

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	sig
Awareness and Use	teacher	31	4.3272	0.49788	0.728
	Asst. Prof	26	4.3956	0.53652	
	Assoc. Prof	14	4.4898	0.42936	
	Full Prof.	6	4.5000	0.57676	
Perceived Benefits	teacher	31	4.2742	0.43231	0.631
	Asst. Prof	26	4.3798	0.42936	
	Assoc. Prof	14	4.3393	0.43420	
	Full Prof.	6	4.5000	0.48734	
Challenges and Concerns	teacher	31	4.2995	0.42435	0.515
	Asst. Prof	26	4.4231	0.46508	
	Assoc. Prof	14	4.3061	0.45472	
	Full Prof.	6	4.5476	0.51442	
Impact on Profession	teacher	31	4.2419	0.44480	0.641
	Asst. Prof	26	4.3846	0.46849	
	Assoc. Prof	14	4.2857	0.50817	
	Full Prof.	6	4.4167	0.44410	

Table 10 below summarizes the findings pertaining to the next variable that the study considered i.e., teachers' specialization.

Table 10: Comparison of Means of Perceptions on Utilizing ChatGPT According to Area of Specialization.

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	sig
Awareness and Use	ELT	34	4.7017	0.45498	0.000
	Linguistics	29	4.1084	0.40163	
	literature	14	4.2347	0.36575	
Perceived Benefits	ELT	34	4.6213	0.42360	0.000
	Linguistics	29	4.1853	0.28859	
	literature	14	3.9732	0.22563	
Challenges and Concerns	ELT	34	4.6092	0.46299	0.000
	Linguistics	29	4.1823	0.37583	
	literature	14	4.1327	0.19782	
Impact on Profession	ELT	34	4.5980	0.43445	0.000
	Linguistics	29	4.1322	0.36564	
	literature	14	3.9881	0.27319	

The table presents the mean values of ChatGPT usage among Saudi university educators across academic specializations indicating that the ELT educators scored the highest mean values. They reported remarkable awareness and usage with a mean value of 4.7017, perceived benefits at a mean of 4.6213, challenges and concerns at a mean of 4.6092, and impact and professional development at a mean of 4.5980, all high values indicating extremely positive attitudes. Further, the p-value is 0.000 across all constructs confirming statistically significant differences in perceptions and uses of ChatGPT based on specializations of the participants and in favor of ELT specialists across all categories.

4.1. Interview Analysis

The qualitative data gathered from interviews with ten participants on the use of ChatGPT in English writing courses shows that the educators generally believe that ChatGPT helps students' writing by improving their grammar, helping them generate new ideas, expanding their vocabulary, and structuring their essays. Some interviewees said that ChatGPT encouraged students to learn through exploration, reduced their anxiety about writing. Participant 2 reported that ChatGPT "lowers anxiety and inspires more frequent writing practice", while participant 8 added that Chat GPT "encourages autonomy and offers personalized writing support".

Immediate feedback and personalized assistance were found to be appreciated by most participants (s 6, 8, 9, 10) as the most prominent benefits. Participants also praised ChatGPT's ability to reduce the fear of making mistakes. Many participants noted that increased student engagement (4, 7) and independence (6) are significant positive outcomes associated with integrating ChatGPT in EFL writing. Technical issues can sometimes retard full adoption of technology as much as digital divide which are real challenges in Saudi Arabia.

Finally, Some participants (1 and 5) voiced doubts about keeping learners' plagiarism free if AI tools are brought on board and at least one teacher (teacher 2): "Over-dependence could stunt skill growth", she added, "so the students even do not even think about composing a simple sentence."

Broadly speaking, the interviewees were open minded about integration of ChatGPT in the EFL writing classes given its many educational benefits but also warned about the need for adherence to ethics, teacher supervision, and technical support to ensure optimal and healthy usage of the tool in English writing classes in Saudi Arabia.

5. DISCUSSION

Being a mixed methods study, the researchers here could triangulate data to obtain a global picture of the use and potential of ChatGPT in EFL in Saudi universities. The teachers' responses clearly indicate both their awareness and readiness to integrate ChatGPT into their EFL classrooms, though they do harbor some reservations that other studies have also highlighted. The teachers are aware of the features that make AI a unique teaching-learning aid that has great potential for students as well as teachers. In addition to this, the results establish the fact that ChatGPT has been in the teachers' repertoire for quite some time and they are not alien to its use and dangers either. They reported the use of ChatGPT with their students for grammar and sentence formation assistance and an equal number were already using it as a feedback and assessment tool.

There were reverts of awareness of the obstacles in complete integration of AI in the classrooms originating at institutional level, while almost half the respondents were conscious of the limitations that hinder the integration of artificial intelligence in university education. The teachers were also positive that systems were in place to guide the students in responsible use of technology, but a small section expressed reservations, highlighting the need for more intensive ethical training in this area.

It was noted that more than half of the teachers in the study perceived the motivation that came with the use of technology in modern classrooms, and the efficacy of ChatGPT in enhancing learners' creativity and engagement as well in instant assistance in writing correctly without errors. They also opined that the tool was an aid for teachers in prepping need-based lesson plans, providing one-on-one writing support to the learners and helping with accurate feedback. They believed that with these features, the confidence of their students in writing was also boosted. However, responses showed a disparity in the perceived motivational impact and effectiveness of ChatGPT, indicating a significant variation in teachers' experiences.

Even with so many pros, there were some obstacles and fears reported by the teachers in this study. The greatest cause of worry was keeping their learners on the right and honest path while they used AI as plagiarism and lack of originality were likely to affect their critical thinking and problem-solving abilities in the long run. Apart from these, the well-known handicap of ChatGPT in making up information was seen as a threat, as well as a lack of adequate teacher training and weak policy in place, which further complicates student performance and assessment.

The study found that Saudi EFL teachers considered ChatGPT as a great tool in teachers' development and classroom practices as it helped them focus on aspects that had a more immediate impact on their students since it tackled their assessment and feedback tasks. The study results point towards teachers' readiness for technology adoption and pedagogy innovation as they appreciated the many uses that AI tools can be put to in the language classrooms. At the same time, they perceived a need for more professional development workshops and seminars, highlighting the importance of ongoing support and training.

As noted earlier, the study employed inferential statistics to obtain results. It is apparent that teachers irrespective of gender, age, and academic rank employed ChatGPT as a learning aid in their writing classes. The only variable that seemed to affect usage patterns was academic specialization which showed significant differences. This variable indicated that ChatGPT was most acceptable to ELT specialists who integrated it more holistically in their classes, while literature and linguistics teachers used it in a limited way as compared to the conservative approach.

The interviews showed that most participants found ChatGPT to be effective in enhancing students' writing skills specifically by correcting errors, helping them explore new ideas, making learning more autonomous for them, and providing quick and individual feedback. At the same time, fears about ethical and academic integrity were also cited as the most perceptible obstacles along the way.

From the foregoing, we conclude that ChatGPT has entered the Saudi higher education system as a potential resource in EFL, but its sustainability is subject to teachers' training in the use of AI students' training in maintenance of ethics, and the right direction of policy formulation.

The results of the current study reflect a notable agreement with previous literature on the use of artificial intelligence, particularly ChatGPT, in teaching writing. The study shows that awareness of and dependence on ChatGPT is high among Saudi teachers, which aligns with the findings of Alharbi and Hassan Al-Ahdal (2025) who report that participants expressed concerns about over-dependence on AI, warning against diminished critical thinking, intellectual complacency, and the erosion of human interaction in education as this notion was stressed by Liang and Wu (2024). Regarding benefits, our findings are consistent with Jamshed et al. (2024) who found that AI improved English as a Second Language (ESL) writing through personalized feedback and targeted corrections.

According to this study, senior secondary learners in India gained more from ChatGPT's mobile application feedback as compared to traditional methods. This result is replicated in the current study as much as (Ali et al., 2023; Anjum et al., 2024); Mahande et al. (2025), who reported that self-efficacy and motivation significantly enhance student performance in blended learning, with ChatGPT moderating the positive effects of self-efficacy. Concerns regarding academic dishonesty and over-dependence on AI are consistent with the findings of Zhai et al. (2024). Previous studies such as ElSayary (2024); Elbanna and Armstrong (2024); Aljabr and Al-Ahdal (2024); Aryal (2024) and Hojeij et al. (2025); Alotaibi and Alzu'bi (2021); Alotaibi (2022) have highlighted the need for teacher upskilling for optimal technology adoption.

6. CONCLUSION

Three constructs were tested in this study viz., perceived benefits, challenges and concerns, and impact and professional development afforded by ChatGPT in the Saudi universities EFL writing classes. A validated questionnaire and personal interviews were used to gather data to answer the two research questions. The study sample comprised 77 teachers (male and female) employed at major Saudi universities. The study concludes that Saudi EFL teachers' have positive perceptions on the use of ChatGPT in their writing classes. At the same time, ethical issues and ensuring academic integrity as much as students' independent and critical thinking abilities are some areas of worry for the teachers. The findings emphasized Saudi teachers' wish to move forward moderately, with well-planned implementation, and suggested established models of technology acceptance may need to be reassessed to consider issues of personalization, ethics and instructor training.

It is also suggested that, for successful implementation, institutions should provide support in the form of clear policies, a reliable infrastructure, technical support, leadership support and reliable ongoing professional development. Future research should address the longitudinal development of teachers' perceptions, their impact on student learning outcomes, appropriate strategies of professional development, and how advancing AI capabilities impacts the educational climate. The current study serves as an opportunity for future investigations in these areas and provide timely implications for educators, administrators and policy makers engaged with the integration of AI in EFL education.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the background of these findings, the research arrived at several important recommendations that would enhance and develop the use of ChatGPT in teaching English writing at Saudi universities. First, teachers need greater institutional support in the form of openness to pedagogical experimentation in the context of AI and for this to be possible, teacher education and development in the latest changes in education technology is mandated.

In addition, teachers' fears about the misuse of technology and their own limitations in containing them need to be allayed to ensure their readiness to adopt technological tools in the classrooms.

Studies in varied educational environments should be initiated to fully understand the impact of technology on Saudi EFL higher education.

8. LIMITATIONS

Though this was a unique study, some limitations may make the impact of results limited to select contexts. One, the sample was limited to Saudi professionals due to which the generalizability of the results to other educational environments may not be possible. Boarder and diverse methodologies were not used in this study which could have led to a more comprehensive understanding of the effects. Furthermore, the study relied on teacher feedback and did not include direct assessments of student performance or personal experiences.

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