

## ChatGPT in the Saudi EFL Classroom: A Study of Learner Usage Patterns and Possibilities in Learning Optimization

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### Abstract

*OpenAI's ChatGPT, a state-of-the-art conversational tool has reshaped the dynamics of language education, offering both novel avenues and challenges. Its prowess in generating varied textual content, offering swift responses, and delivering translations positions it prominently within the realm of next-generation AI. Yet, the definitive scope of ChatGPT's efficacy in supporting students with language tasks remains a territory yet to be charted fully. This study explores the implications of ChatGPT for English language acquisition among Saudi EFL learners. Through qualitative research methods, the study covered some key areas: (i) ChatGPT's prowess as a digital tutor offering tailored feedback; (ii) its role as an ideation catalyst for academic writing; (iii) the necessity for refined user queries to maximize learning; and (iv) concerns around potential for plagiarism. The findings reveal a dichotomy: while ChatGPT is seen as a transformative tool, enhancing accessibility, linguistic confidence, and fluency, there are tangible ethical challenges associated with its use. The research emphasizes the need for adaptive curricula in Saudi educational establishments, integrating AI tools responsibly and ethically. Further, it shows that faculty development initiatives should focus on familiarizing educators with such platforms, ensuring their optimal and judicious use in the classroom. The study concludes by stressing the importance of a nuanced approach to ChatGPT integration in Saudi universities, balancing technological potential with genuine learning and ethical considerations. This research is pivotal for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers in the Saudi context, shedding light on the transformative potential and challenges of AI in English education.*

**Keywords:** Artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, curriculum, digital platforms, language learning, Saudi EFL learners.

### Introduction

Language education has seen a surge of interest in technology-assisted tools, especially with the launch of OpenAI's ChatGPT in November 2022. Such advancements offer language learners enriched opportunities for engagement with their target languages, presenting genuine, interactive platforms that cultivate linguistic competencies in a profound and engaging manner (Bin-Hady et al., 2023; Dwivedi et al., 2023). Furthermore, the incorporation of technology boosts learner motivation and promotes learner-driven autonomy, enabling students to navigate their educational journey more effectively (Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2015; Al-Sobhi, 2017). Among these technological milestones, AI-driven chat platforms stand out given their unique features. Benefitting from advancements in natural language processing and machine learning, these chatbots

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immerse learners in conversational scenarios, granting them bespoke and dynamic language acquisition encounters (Ahmed, 2023; Duin & Pedersen, 2023). Their design accommodates variations in learner proficiencies, offers instantaneous feedback, and nurtures self-guided learning and rectification processes (Al-Ghamdi, 2020). The use of technology in teaching and learning is proven to have educative impact on students (Al-Ahdal & Alqasham, 2020; Alfallaj, 2020; Kitishat et al., 2020; Rad et al., 2022).

OpenAI's ChatGPT stands as a cutting-edge AI chatbot, leveraging expansive language models to craft texts reminiscent of human conversation (Malik et al., 2023). The potential applications of this for Saudi language learners span a wide range: from honing linguistic competencies, offering tailored linguistic resources, to supporting academic writing, inquiry, and cognitive tasks (Alanzi, 2023; Ali et al., 2023). While ChatGPT has etched its mark as a transformative asset in Saudi language education, it's not without its share of challenges, including concerns about fairness, potential copyright issues, and threats to academic sincerity (Ahmed, 2023). Questions about ChatGPT's precision and trustworthiness also prevail. Even with the proliferation of tech tools, like ChatGPT, in Saudi Arabia's language education sector, there is a conspicuous absence of research focusing on the learners' viewpoint to its integration in the learning process. While extant research underscores the prospective merits of AI-fueled chat platforms, it is imperative to delve into the Saudi learners' actual engagement, understanding, and the unique challenges they face with tools such as ChatGPT (Alanzi, 2023; Hewage, 2023). This evident research lacuna mandates more scholarly pursuit to harmonize the existing knowledge spectrum and refine the integration of ChatGPT into the Saudi linguistic educational milieu (Alanzi, 2023; Ali et al., 2023; Hewage, 2023). The present exploration seeks to fill this void, centering on Saudi learners' perspectives about ChatGPT's role in their linguistic tasks. By immersing into their experiences, sentiments, and interactions with this technology, we can derive a comprehensive understanding, vital for tailoring ChatGPT to the distinct requirements faced by Saudi language learners and the hurdles they encounter in this pursuit.

#### Research objectives

This study is primarily designed to understand Saudi learners' perceptions of ChatGPT in their English language acquisition journey. Specifically, the research aims to delve into four main themes:

1. Analyzing ChatGPT's function as a digital tutor, providing bespoke assistance to Saudi learners;
2. Investigating ChatGPT's role as a catalyst, stimulating ideation in Saudi students' academic writing;
3. Assessing how Saudi learners refine their interactions and questions with ChatGPT to maximize their learning outcomes; and
4. Highlighting potential ethical challenges, especially concerns surrounding plagiarism, associated with using ChatGPT.

#### Literature Review

The 21st century is witnessing an unprecedented integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in various domains, including education (Lewis et al., 2019; Ocaña-Fernánd et al., 2019). One of the pivotal tools emerging from this technological revolution is ChatGPT, a state-of-the-art conversational tool developed by OpenAI. Beyond just using it as a digital assistant, learners' interactions, derived insights, and associated ethical consideration, particularly the dilemma of plagiarism (Dave et al., 2023; Yan, 2023) become focal points in research related to it. Saudi Arabia, with its unique socio-cultural dynamics and a booming technological landscape, offers an intriguing context for such an exploration.

The utilization of ChatGPT by Saudi EFL learners for language acquisition is situated within a confluence of socio-constructivist and technological determinist theoretical frameworks. At its core, Vygotsky's socio-constructivist theory posits that learning is an inherently social activity, with knowledge being constructed through interactions with others (Vygotsky, 1978). In this context, ChatGPT acts as a mediator of knowledge, offering interactions that simulate the social construction of linguistic knowledge (Yildiz, 2023). The tool not only dispenses information but engages learners in a dialogue, echoing Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, where learning occurs through scaffolded interactions just beyond a learner's current capability. On the other hand, the technological determinist perspective (McLuhan, 1964) suggests that the nature and characteristics of a technology can shape how it is used and its subsequent impacts. Under this lens, ChatGPT, with its advanced AI capabilities, has the potential to reshape traditional EFL learning methodologies, determining new patterns of learner engagement, while also introducing a core ethical dilemmas, that is, plagiarism (Kamalov et al., 2023; Rudolph et al., 2023) . The amalgamation of these theoretical stances provides a robust framework to explore how Saudi EFL learners are harnessing the capabilities of ChatGPT, the experiences and insights they derive, and the attendant ethical concerns they encounter.

The rapid emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) in educational settings has stirred considerable scholarly interest, with ChatGPT standing out as a notable example in language learning domains (Alanzi, 2023; Bin-Hady et al., 2023; Kamalov et al., 2023; Rudolph et al., 2023). Recent literature underscores the potential of ChatGPT in assisting English language learners in various capacities. Chen (2023) posits that such AI platforms can offer tailored feedback, bridging the gap between generic language applications and personalized tutoring. Similarly, a study by Sohail et al. (2023) reveals that non-native speakers, when interacting with ChatGPT, found opportunities to practice real-time conversations, enhancing their linguistic confidence and fluency. However, as with any technology-driven pedagogical tool, there are potential pitfalls. Marzuki et al. (2023) points out concerns related to over-reliance on AI for language tasks, cautioning against the potential for these tools to be used as crutches rather than genuine aids. Furthermore, the ethical challenges, particularly around plagiarism and authenticity in learners' outputs when using ChatGPT, have been highlighted (Jarrah et al., 2023). In summation, while ChatGPT offers promising avenues for enriched language learning experiences, educators and learners must navigate its use judiciously to ensure genuine skill acquisition.

While the integration of AI platforms like ChatGPT in education has been explored globally, there remains a significant practical gap in understanding its specific implications for Saudi EFL learners (Temsah et al., 2023). The distinct linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical milieu of Saudi Arabia necessitates a focused investigation into how such advanced AI tools cater to Saudi students in their English acquisition journey. Additionally, there is limited empirical evidence on the effectiveness of ChatGPT as a supplementary tool for language acquisition in this context (Ahmed, 2023; Alshahrani, 2023) Thus, this study aims to bridge this practical gap by providing insights into the experiential and ethical nuances of Saudi learners' engagement with ChatGPT, aiding educators and institutions in crafting more informed, culturally-responsive AI integration strategies.

#### Significance of the study

Given the increasing prominence of technology in education, there remains a conspicuous research void in exploring Saudi students' experiences and views concerning burgeoning AI tools, particularly the ChatGPT chatbot (Al-Mansour et al., 2023). Such an inquiry is paramount for multiple rationales. Firstly, eliciting nuanced insights from Saudi students' direct interactions will furnish pivotal data on how ChatGPT aligns with or deviates from their linguistic aspirations, predilections, and obstacles they face. Achieving this learner-centric comprehension is crucial to harness ChatGPT's potential in Saudi educational

settings effectively. Secondly, the perceptions of Saudi learners dictate the acceptance and seamless incorporation of such technology. Constructive views can amplify ChatGPT's resonance within Saudi linguistic educational realms, while adverse sentiments could impede its integration. Lastly, these perspectives can add to the empirical knowledge around the ethics of AI substantially by contributing to the global discourse. By venturing into the experiential world of Saudi students interacting with ChatGPT, our study aspires to extract pragmatic insights. Such knowledge is pivotal for tailoring this technology in ways that resonate with the needs and objectives of Saudi learners.

## Methods

### Research design

The present research utilized an exploratory qualitative methodology to probe into Saudi students' views and interactions concerning ChatGPT's role in language education. The research was undertaken at a premier English-medium college in Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. The institution, during the data collection phase, did not formally endorse ChatGPT's inclusion in the pedagogical process. Explicitly, the guidelines from the university prohibited employing ChatGPT for assignments contributing to the final course evaluation. Nonetheless, given the university's progressive academic environment, students were naturally inclined to experiment with different tools. As observed by the lead researcher, a substantial number of students had previously interacted with ChatGPT. Taking this observation forward, this investigation zeroes in on the students' encounters with ChatGPT 3.5, the accessible version most participants used. Henceforth, all references to ChatGPT pertain to this version. The study took place in the academic year 1444 AH.

### Participants

The participant cohort consisted of five undergraduate students pursuing various majors at the aforementioned Qassim University. Their fields of study were Business Administration, Translation Studies, and Computational Analytics, spanning from sophomore to senior years. Given the novelty of ChatGPT in the Saudi academic landscape, we aimed to encapsulate a variety of student perspectives. The selection rationale was grounded in the principal investigator's classroom observation and ongoing rapport with the student community, ensuring that all participants had tangible experience with ChatGPT. Specific inclusion benchmarks entailed: Mike's regular sharing of ChatGPT usage techniques; Tessa's deployment of ChatGPT for TOEFL readiness; Ahmad's noticeable reliance on ChatGPT for coursework; Khalid's preceding academic project centered on ChatGPT; and Noor's independent study probing ChatGPT's capabilities and her feedback. This selection, driven by specific criteria rather than randomness, sought to encapsulate a rich spectrum of student experiences, facilitating a profound grasp of their ChatGPT usage patterns and perceptions. Due consents were obtained from the studenta with all ethical issues clearly spelt out and consent was also sought for individual interviews with the participants.

### Data collection and analysis

Data for this inquiry were gathered using semi-structured interviews centered on learners' perceptions and engagements with ChatGPT in their English language endeavors. The comprehensive interview framework is detailed in Appendix A. Grounded in the theoretical framework presented by Al-Otaibi et al. (2018), the discussions explored three pivotal facets: (1) learners' familiarity and comprehension of ChatGPT; (2) modalities of ChatGPT deployment in language acquisition; and (3) learners' cognizance and strategies to navigate potential impediments tied to ChatGPT's usage. Opting for Arabic – the native language of the participants – the interviews were duly transcribed by qualified research aides. With explicit consent from the interviewees, all sessions were audio recorded and

later, transcribed. Ethical clearance for this endeavor was secured from the lead author's affiliated academic institution. Analytical procedures were grounded in a thematic approach, employing NVivo 11 software, and steered by the thematic framework on ChatGPT's potential articulated by Al-Harbi (2019). This framework encapsulated three main dimensions: (1) the efficacy of ChatGPT; (2) foreseeable challenges; and (3) ethical and effective deployment of ChatGPT. At a later stage, an additional dimension – "reflective critiques on ChatGPT" – emerged prominently. Guided by Al-Harbi's (2019) thematic framework, our analysis embraced a flexible stance, allowing the emergence of intricate codes directly from the raw data. For instance, under the efficacy of ChatGPT, codes such as "ideation facilitation", "tailored support", and "real-time feedback provision" were discerned. Initial codification was undertaken by the primary author, with the secondary author meticulously revisiting and endorsing the thematic categorizations.

## Findings and discussion

Four emergent themes emerged: (i) ChatGPT provides tailored assistance; (ii) it provided catalyst ideation for academic writing; (iii) it amplified the learning outcomes; and (iv) it gave rise to plagiarism issues. These themes are discussed in detail in the following sections.

### Theme 1. ChatGPT: A digital tutor offering tailored assistance in Saudi Arabia

Three out of the five participants envisaged ChatGPT as a digital tutor offering guidance comparable to that of classroom teachers, but with enhanced accessibility. For instance, when Key Informant 1 (KI1) was gearing up for her IELTS writing exam, she relied heavily on ChatGPT. KI1 elaborated, "When refining the structure of my essay, I'd ask ChatGPT for ways to enhance its coherence. The tool would pinpoint disjointed statements and guide me on weaving the information together. Moreover, for a richer narrative, I'd ask it to supplement with relevant examples." From KI1's account, it is clear that ChatGPT dons the hat of an English tutor, assisting students in honing their linguistic skills interactively. She highlighted that her visits to the university's Language Centre diminished, attributing this to ChatGPT's capacity to furnish instantaneous feedback on a range of written materials. Interestingly, KI1 even tapped into ChatGPT's prowess to gauge ways of elevating her essay to IELTS Band 7 or 8. The immediacy and accessibility of feedback appeared to be pivotal attributes drawing students to ChatGPT. Echoing this sentiment, KI2 revealed how ChatGPT served as a guide, helping him carve out distinct segments of his academic papers, much like his professors would. ChatGPT equipped him with insights into drafting impactful "Introductions," identifying "Challenges," and proposing "Resolutions" in a technical document, thus circumventing the need to seek professorial guidance. KI3 added that he "Received tailored feedback and step-by-step assistance for crafting compelling essays". KI3 also praised ChatGPT for its bespoke feedback mechanism. He cherished the tool's capacity to facilitate a progressive learning journey, enabling him to craft essays in fluent English, replete with compelling illustrations. These reflections reaffirm ChatGPT's value in delivering adaptive, individualized learning encounters.

Table 1. Key Informants' perspectives on ChatGPT as a digital tutor in the Saudi context

<i>Informant</i>	<i>Primary Use of ChatGPT</i>	<i>Feedback Experience</i>	<i>Comparison with Traditional Methods</i>	<i>Other Noted Features</i>
<i>KI1</i>	<i>IELTS writing preparation</i>	<i>Enhances coherence of essays, supplements with relevant examples</i>	<i>Decreases reliance on university's Language Centre for feedback</i>	<i>Values instantaneous feedback; targets IELTS Band 7 or 8</i>
<i>KI2</i>	<i>Assistance in drafting academic papers</i>	<i>Guides in drafting "Introductions," identifying "Challenges," and proposing</i>	<i>Compares favorably to guidance traditionally received from professors</i>	<i>Equips with structural insights for papers</i>

		<i>"Resolutions"</i>		
<i>KI3</i>	<i>Crafting essays in fluent English</i>	<i>Delivered tailored feedback and step-by-step assistance for crafting compelling essays</i>	<i>Values ChatGPT's individualized assistance over generic classroom advice</i>	<i>Appreciates adaptive, progressive learning journey</i>

These findings are in line with Firat (2023) and Javaid et al. (2023) who found that ChatGPT provided tailored feedback for students in their learning. Javaid et al. (2023) concluded that ChatGPT enabled students to acquire knowledge of concepts and principles while simultaneously creating content with it. Thus, ChatGPT exhibited potential as a language education tool due to its ability to translate written text from one language to another. In the Saudi context, learners can use ChatGPT for honing linguistic competencies, using tailored linguistic resources, supporting academic writing, inquiry, and cognitive tasks (Alanzi, 2023; Ali et al., 2023).

Theme 2. ChatGPT: A catalyst for ideation in Saudi academic writing

Table 2 shows that all five participants were unanimous in their sentiment that ChatGPT was an indispensable asset for ideation, particularly when drafting English essays, as illustrated in the following responses: KI3 argued, "ChatGPT is a beacon when I'm grappling with ideation. If I'm set on an essay theme, I typically consult ChatGPT for initial thoughts or potential starting points." Furthermore, KI 4 added, "Initiating an essay is always a hurdle. With ChatGPT, I can solicit an array of topics, and then cherry-pick the one that resonates the most with me". Such feedback underscores ChatGPT's utility during the formative stages of crafting an English essay. KI 1 pointed out that while ChatGPT's suggestions might not always be groundbreaking, they often serve as reminders or triggers for ideas she hadn't yet considered. She remarked that the tool's suggestions are generally overarching and generic. Hence, she usually employed them as rudimentary building blocks, fleshing them out with her research and examples. KI4's feedback reflects a mature understanding of the tool's capabilities and limitations, showcasing her strategic approach in harnessing its advantages. Meanwhile, KI 5 contextualized ChatGPT's ideation prowess against pre-existing methods. KI5 noted: "While ChatGPT is stellar at ideation, it's essentially streamlining what older methods achieved. Pre-ChatGPT, I'd tap into books or Google searches for fresh perspectives. ChatGPT just condenses this into a more seamless, instantaneous process." KI5's perspective illuminates a broader sentiment, highlighting ChatGPT as merely a modern, more efficient iteration of tools that students in Saudi Arabia have been leveraging for ideation. These findings are consistent with Dergaa et al. (2023) and Lingard (2023). Lingard (2023) found that ChatGPT provided students with easy-to-follow advice to enhance their writing skills in three areas: Energy, clarity, and persuasiveness. Each entry centered around a vital writing feature or technique, demonstrated common mistakes, taught the necessary grammatical foundations, and suggested ways to use it effectively.

Table 2. Students' perceptions of ChatGPT as a tool for ideation in Saudi academic writing

Key Informant	Quote	Interpretation
<b>KI3</b>	"ChatGPT is a beacon when I'm grappling with ideation. If I'm set on an essay theme, I typically consult ChatGPT for initial thoughts or potential starting points."	Emphasizes ChatGPT's role in kickstarting the writing process, acting as a guide during the brainstorming phase.
<b>KI4</b>	"Initiating an essay is always a hurdle. With ChatGPT, I can solicit an array of topics, and then cherry-pick the one that resonates the most with me."	Highlights the versatility of ChatGPT in offering a range of topic suggestions, enabling a tailored selection process.
<b>KI1</b>	"ChatGPT's suggestions might not always be groundbreaking, but they often serve as reminders or	Acknowledges the general nature of ChatGPT's input but values its

	triggers for ideas I hadn't yet considered... I employ them as rudimentary building blocks, fleshing them out with my research and examples."	function in laying the groundwork for deeper research and essay development.
<b>KI5</b>	"While ChatGPT is stellar at ideation, it's essentially streamlining what older methods achieved. Pre-ChatGPT, I'd tap into books or Google searches for fresh perspectives. ChatGPT just condenses this into a more seamless, instantaneous process."	Recognizes ChatGPT's efficiency but aligns its function with traditional methods, emphasizing its role in modernizing the ideation process.

Theme 3. The art of refining queries to amplify learning outcomes with ChatGPT in Saudi Arabia

Every participant emphasized the importance of fine-tuning their queries to extract relevant and precise information from ChatGPT. KI3 drew a vivid comparison, likening interacting with ChatGPT to guiding a novice: "You can't merely instruct it to pen an English essay on a vague theme. Instead, detailed directives about the desired academic style, pre-existing notions, expectations, or even the specific subject matter are crucial. Armed with clear guidance, ChatGPT is more adept at delivering tailored content." KI3's reflection signals her cognizance of the iterative nature of ChatGPT's learning process and her grasp on formulating effective strategies to craft a quality essay. Similarly, Noor detailed her practice of breaking down her essay, feeding ChatGPT one paragraph at a time. She accentuated the merit in seeking pinpointed assistance, like integrating examples or bolstering analytical depth. Given its architecture, ChatGPT resonates better with concise, well-defined tasks. KI5 added, "I practice breaking down my essay, feeding ChatGPT one paragraph at a time. The merit is in seeking pinpointed assistance, like integrating examples or bolstering analytical depth. Given its architecture, ChatGPT resonates better with concise, well-defined tasks." KI1, collaborating on a project centered around ChatGPT with his data analytics mentor, mentioned the ongoing efforts in the academic domain. Data experts are engrossed in devising refined query frameworks, ensuring a more user-centric output from ChatGPT. Ahmed advocated for a constructive approach while querying, emphasizing what ChatGPT should pursue rather than what it shouldn't. When probed about the origins of their mastery over effective queries, participants attributed their expertise to persistent experimentation, use of digital platforms, and peer discussions. For instance, KI4 cited: "Numerous threads on Twitter and other Saudi-centric platforms are dedicated to mentoring users in curating potent ChatGPT queries. Such discussions, often laden with example queries and trigger words, are a goldmine for novices looking to exploit ChatGPT's prowess in English essay creation". This sentiment mirrors the broader outlook of the students, showcasing their proactive stance in leveraging technology-enhanced tools. These learners actively delve into strategies and techniques to harness ChatGPT's potential, with a view to elevate their English essay writing skills in the Saudi academic landscape. These findings agree with Limna et al. (2023) and Dwivedi et al. (2023). Limna et al. (2023) reported that ChatGPT is generally viewed positively by educators and students in the context of education. The chatbot is seen as a useful tool for giving prompt feedback, addressing inquiries, and supporting students. Educators also recognized that ChatGPT can lessen their workload by handling routine questions, freeing up their time to concentrate on more important tasks.

Table 3. Art of refining queries to amplify learning outcomes with ChatGPT in Saudi Arabia

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Key Insight</b>	<b>Response/Quote</b>
<b>KI3</b>	<i>Importance of providing detailed guidance to ChatGPT</i>	<i>"You can't merely instruct it to pen an English essay on a vague theme. Instead, detailed directives about the desired academic style, pre-existing notions, expectations, or even the specific subject matter are crucial. Armed with clear guidance, ChatGPT is more adept at delivering tailored content."</i>
<b>KI5</b>	<i>Strategy of breaking</i>	<i>"I practice breaking down my essay, feeding ChatGPT one paragraph</i>

	<i>down essay tasks for ChatGPT</i>	<i>at a time. The merit is in seeking pinpointed assistance, like integrating examples or bolstering analytical depth. Given its architecture, ChatGPT resonates better with concise, well-defined tasks."</i>
<b>KI1</b>	<i>Academic efforts in enhancing ChatGPT query outputs</i>	<i>Ahmed, collaborating on a project about ChatGPT, mentioned the ongoing academic domain efforts. "Data experts are devising refined query frameworks, ensuring a more user-centric output from ChatGPT." He also emphasized a constructive querying approach, focusing on what ChatGPT should do rather than what it shouldn't.</i>
<b>KI3</b>	<i>Source of mastery over effective queries</i>	<i>Participants attributed their skills in crafting effective queries to persistent experimentation, various digital platforms, and peer interactions.</i>
<b>KI4</b>	<i>Learning from digital platforms and peer interactions</i>	<i>"Numerous threads on Twitter and other Saudi-centric platforms are dedicated to mentoring users in curating potent ChatGPT queries. Such discussions, often laden with example queries and trigger words, are a goldmine for novices looking to exploit ChatGPT's prowess in English essay creation."</i>

#### Theme 4. Potential issues of plagiarism related to ChatGPT

Concerning the potential issues of plagiarism related to ChatGPT, participants were clearly cognizant of this looming challenge. This was notably reflected in KI3's statement: "Given that the platform can generate ideas on demand, it's not a stretch for students to want it to draft entire essays. While this deviates from genuine educational pursuits, students primarily looking to finish assignments might resort to this." Similarly, KI2 opined that the tool's usage would be largely determined by students' attitudes towards the value of the task at hand. Those with a fleeting interest in learning might be tempted to misuse ChatGPT as a writing proxy. Yet, there was a unanimous consensus that barring access to ChatGPT wouldn't be feasible. Instead, there was a call for educators to recalibrate their teaching methodologies in line with technological advancements, and to encourage the principled use of tools like ChatGPT. He elaborated, "Leveraging ChatGPT is in essence a skill, akin to effectively searching on Google. Nobody raises an eyebrow when we derive insights from a Google search. Inevitably, ChatGPT might be the Google of tomorrow. If we can craft resumes using ChatGPT in the future, should we even emphasize resume-writing as a skill?" His sentiments underscored the broader challenge confronting educators: determining what remains relevant to teach in an age dominated by AI. This sentiment was mirrored by many students who hinted at the possibility of AI overtaking conventional programming tasks, given its efficiency and speed. Moreover, the emphasis was on the pivotal role educators play in steering this narrative. As captured by KI1: "Imposing restrictions on ChatGPT's usage isn't the solution. What's imperative is for educators to usher students towards constructive use." KI2 added a layer of accountability to this, suggesting, "Students ought to be transparent about their use of ChatGPT. If its usage is declared and detailed, it can serve as a reflective exercise for the student." These insights underscored a significant shift in perspective – viewing ChatGPT as a potential educational asset rather than a looming menace. It beckons a call for educators to redesign teaching paradigms to harness the power of such tools responsibly and productively within a Saudi educational context. ChatGPT may be biased and let students to complete their tasks using this AI bot. Similar findings were reported by Jarrah et al. (2023) who concluded that the usage and misuse of ChatGPT in academic writing, is a matter of growing debate. While it is true that ChatGPT can be an effective writing aid, but it is crucial to adopt ethical practices to maintain academic integrity. It is vital to acknowledge and cite ChatGPT's contribution appropriately to prevent plagiarism and adhere to scholarly writing principles.



Table 4. Plagiarism issues related to Chat GPT

<i>Informant</i>	<i>Key Point</i>	<i>Response/Quote</i>
<b>KI3</b>	<i>Potential misuse of ChatGPT for essays</i>	<i>"Given that the platform can generate ideas on demand, it's not a stretch for students to want it to draft entire essays. While this deviates from genuine educational pursuits, students primarily looking to finish assignments might resort to this."</i>
<b>KI2</b>	<i>Determinants of ChatGPT usage</i>	<i>"The tool's usage would be largely determined by students' attitudes towards the value of the task at hand. Those with a fleeting interest in learning might be tempted to misuse ChatGPT as a writing proxy."</i>
<b>KI2</b>	<i>Importance of using ChatGPT as a skill</i>	<i>"Leveraging ChatGPT is in essence a skill, akin to effectively searching Google. Nobody raises an eyebrow when we derive insights from a Google search. Inevitably, ChatGPT might be the Google of tomorrow. If we can craft resumes using ChatGPT in the future, should we even emphasize resume-writing as a skill?"</i>
<b>KI1</b>	<i>Educators' role in guiding ChatGPT's usage</i>	<i>"Imposing restrictions on ChatGPT's usage isn't the solution. What's imperative is for educators to usher students towards constructive use."</i>
<b>KI2</b>	<i>Accountability in using ChatGPT</i>	<i>"Students ought to be transparent about their use of ChatGPT. If its usage is declared and detailed, it can serve as a reflective exercise for the student."</i>

Previous studies have shown that brainstorming and the potential of ChatGPT as a digital tutor showcases the democratizing capacity of technology in providing enhanced accessibility and quality of learning, regardless of geographical or cultural context. This is exemplified by its growing acceptance even in regions like Saudi Arabia which have been steadfast in the holding the conventional educational paradigm dear. Furthermore, its utility in ideation signifies a shift in pedagogical approaches, where digital tools do not merely offer information but also, stimulate creative thinking and problem-solving. However, with the increasing interactivity of platforms like ChatGPT, the onus is equally on users to refine their queries, underscoring the importance of digital literacy in harnessing the full potential of technology-mediated learning. The potential misuse of such tools, especially in terms of plagiarism, brings forth an ethical dimension to this discourse. Rather than curbing the accessibility to these tools, there's a pressing need to reorient educational frameworks to emphasize ethical conduct and originality. In essence, while tools like ChatGPT offer transformative possibilities for education, they also necessitate holistic understanding and adaptive strategies to ensure that their benefits are maximized while mitigating potential pitfalls.

## Conclusion

The transformative potential of technological tools like ChatGPT in the Saudi educational landscape is evident from the findings of this research. The narrative woven by the participants attests to ChatGPT's prowess as a digital tutor, offering tailored assistance to Saudi learners. It emerges as a bridge between traditional pedagogies and the beckoning era of AI-driven methodologies. Students consistently identified its value, ranging from facilitating ideation during academic writing, providing instantaneous feedback, to enhancing linguistic capabilities. However, it is crucial to recognize that the tool's benefits are intrinsically linked with its judicious use. Learners highlighted the significance of refining their queries to obtain precise information, underscoring the iterative nature of their interaction with ChatGPT. This resonates with the broader narrative of technology usage in education: the tool in itself isn't transformative; the way it's integrated into the learning process is. Therefore, effective deployment demands an understanding of its strengths and limitations. The concerns around plagiarism are undeniably real, and the awareness among participants of ChatGPT's potential misuse reaffirms the pressing need for a recalibrated educational approach. Rather than resisting the tide of technological advancements, educators must consider them as catalysts for reshaping instructional strategies. Encouraging transparency, fostering constructive usage,

and integrating tech tools within pedagogical frameworks can transform them from potential threats to formidable allies in the educational journey. Lastly, the sentiments expressed by the participants depict a larger shift in perspective, viewing AI tools not as replacements but as enablers in the education process. In the evolving academic milieu, the onus is on educators, policymakers, and students to collaboratively navigate this transition. As technology embeds itself further into our lives, the Saudi educational realm stands at the cusp of a paradigm shift. Tools like ChatGPT, when harnessed responsibly, can catalyze this transition, elevating the learning experience to unprecedented heights.

## **Recommendations**

The revelations from this study underscore the transformative potential of ChatGPT in the English language acquisition realm for Saudi learners. Its perceived value as a digital tutor, ideation catalyst, and a tool that demands refined querying suggests its integrative capacity in the modern educational landscape. However, as with any technology, it brings forth ethical challenges, prominently the issue of plagiarism. As such, the following recommendations and directions for future studies emerge:

(1) Institutions should consider revising their pedagogical approaches to encapsulate the constructive use of ChatGPT and similar AI platforms. Curriculum developers must recognize the tool not as a mere shortcut, but as an innovative method to understand and hone language skills. The challenge lies in assimilating it without undermining the core tenets of genuine learning; (2) Saudi educational establishments must develop an ethical framework guiding the use of AI in academic tasks. Guidelines emphasizing transparency in ChatGPT's usage, perhaps with students detailing and reflecting on their interactions with the tool, can promote principled utilization; (3) Faculty development initiatives should incorporate training sessions highlighting the potential and limitations of AI tools.

As to future research direction, familiarizing educators with platforms like ChatGPT can pave the way for them to embed such technologies creatively and responsibly into the learning journey. Future studies could delve into designing curricula that seamlessly integrate ChatGPT, observing its impact on students' linguistic capabilities. This would necessitate longitudinal studies capturing not only immediate language gains but also retention and practical application. Given the ethical considerations tied to plagiarism, research should probe deeper into students' motivations behind leaning on AI for academic tasks. An understanding of their intrinsic and extrinsic motivations can guide interventions to promote integrity in academia. As hinted by the participants, the evolving landscape where AI potentially supplants traditional tasks demands research. Studies should investigate the broader implications of AI on the skills students need for future employability and societal roles, especially in the Saudi context. In closing, embracing ChatGPT in Saudi Arabia's English education is neither about total rejection nor unconditional acceptance. It beckons a nuanced approach, considering the technology's capabilities and the ever-evolving needs of the modern learner.

## **Implication of the study to Saudi Universities**

This study emphasizes the profound potential of ChatGPT in bolstering English language acquisition for Saudi learners. As a burgeoning tool in the edtech domain, ChatGPT stands out not merely as a digital assistant but as a revolutionary facet of modern pedagogy. Recognizing its capacity as a digital tutor and ideation enhancer, Saudi universities are prompted to reconsider and recalibrate their educational paradigms. The findings suggest the need for a more adaptive curriculum that incorporates such AI platforms as essential learning aids, rather than just supplementary resources. This not only requires an update in teaching methods but also demands a refreshed ethical framework. Given the potential for misuse of such tools, like plagiarism, Saudi

institutions must instate clear guidelines, ensuring transparent and principled AI interactions. Moreover, it is imperative that faculty members are well-acquainted with the nuances of these AI platforms to guide students responsibly. As the educational landscape evolves with AI, Saudi universities must stride with caution, ensuring that the integration of tools like ChatGPT fortifies genuine learning and ethical integrity while preparing students for a future where AI plays an increasingly pivotal role in societal and professional realms.

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