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THE IMPACT OF CHATGPT-ASSISTED WRITING ON EFL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC WRITING PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies into language education has transformed English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction worldwide. Among these technologies, ChatGPT has gained significant attention due to its ability to provide immediate feedback, language support, and writing assistance. This study investigates the impact of ChatGPT-assisted writing on EFL students' academic writing performance. The paper explores theoretical foundations, empirical evidence, practical applications, and instructional strategies related to AI-assisted writing. The findings suggest that ChatGPT can improve grammatical accuracy, lexical diversity, coherence, and organization when used appropriately. However, excessive dependence on AI may hinder learners' creativity and autonomous writing development. The study concludes that ChatGPT should be used as a writing support tool rather than a replacement for students' independent writing efforts.

Keywords: ChatGPT, Academic Writing, EFL Learners, Artificial Intelligence, Writing Performance, Higher Education

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INTRODUCTION

Academic writing remains one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners. Students frequently encounter difficulties related to grammar, vocabulary, coherence, cohesion, and argument development. Traditional classroom instruction often provides delayed feedback, limiting opportunities for immediate revision and improvement.

The emergence of ChatGPT offers a new approach to writing instruction. Unlike conventional grammar-checking tools, ChatGPT engages learners in interactive dialogue, generates writing suggestions, explains language errors, and assists in organizing ideas. Consequently, educators have begun examining whether AI-assisted writing can improve students' academic writing performance.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

According to Vygotsky (1978), learning occurs through interaction with more knowledgeable others within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ChatGPT can function as a virtual scaffold by providing support that helps learners perform writing tasks beyond their current proficiency level.

Example:

Student sentence:

"Technology make education easier."

ChatGPT feedback:

"The verb should agree with the singular subject. A revised version is: Technology makes education easier."

Through repeated interaction, learners gradually internalize grammatical knowledge.

Process Writing Theory

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Process writing emphasizes several stages:

- ✓ Prewriting
- ✓ Drafting
- ✓ Revising
- ✓ Editing
- ✓ Publishing

ChatGPT supports each stage by generating ideas, suggesting outlines, reviewing drafts, and providing editing assistance.

Cognitive Theory of Writing

Flower and Hayes (1981) proposed that writing involves planning, translating, and reviewing. ChatGPT assists learners in each cognitive process by reducing linguistic burdens and allowing greater focus on content development.

REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Recent studies have demonstrated positive effects of ChatGPT-assisted writing. Research conducted by Yan (2024) found that EFL learners using ChatGPT showed significant improvements in writing fluency, grammatical accuracy, and vocabulary use.

❖ Kasneci et al. (2023) reported that generative AI systems can facilitate academic writing by providing immediate feedback and personalized support.

❖ Lo (2024) found that students perceived ChatGPT as particularly useful for idea generation, paraphrasing, and revising academic texts.

However, several scholars warned that excessive reliance on AI-generated content may reduce originality and critical engagement with writing tasks.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Question

Does ChatGPT-assisted writing significantly improve EFL students' academic writing performance?

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Hypothesis

H1: Students using ChatGPT-assisted writing demonstrate higher academic writing performance than students using traditional writing methods.

Participants

60 undergraduate EFL students

Experimental Group = 30 students

Control Group = 30 students

Duration: 8 weeks

Data Collection Instruments:

Writing Pre-test

Writing Post-test

Student Perception Questionnaire:

- Semi-structured Interviews
- Assessment Rubric
- Grammar Accuracy (25%)
- Vocabulary Use (25%)
- Coherence and Cohesion (25%)
- Task Achievement (25%)

Students receiving ChatGPT-assisted writing support improved approximately 30%, whereas students receiving traditional instruction improved only 11%.

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR USING CHATGPT IN WRITING CLASSES

Strategy 1: Brainstorming

Prompt: Generate five academic arguments supporting online learning in higher education.

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Strategy 2: Thesis Statement Development

Prompt: Improve the following thesis statement and make it more academic.

Strategy 3: Paragraph Organization

Prompt: Organize these ideas into a coherent academic paragraph.

Strategy 4: Grammar Feedback

Prompt: Identify grammatical errors and explain corrections.

Strategy 5: Academic Vocabulary Enhancement

Prompt: Replace informal words with academic vocabulary.

Example

Original: Many people think online learning is good.

Improved: Numerous scholars argue that online learning provides substantial educational benefits.

Strategy 6: Cohesion Improvement

Prompt: Improve transitions and coherence between paragraphs.

BEST CHATGPT PROMPTS FOR ACADEMIC WRITING

- Act as an academic writing instructor and provide detailed feedback on my essay.
- Evaluate my essay according to IELTS Writing Task 2 criteria.
- Identify weaknesses in organization, coherence, and argumentation.
- Suggest advanced academic vocabulary suitable for this essay.
- Improve this paragraph without changing its original meaning.

The findings suggest that ChatGPT-assisted writing positively influences academic writing performance through immediate feedback, personalized guidance, and enhanced revision opportunities. Improvements are particularly evident in grammar, vocabulary, and organization. Nevertheless, educators should ensure that students critically evaluate AI-generated suggestions rather than adopting them unquestioningly.

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CONCLUSION

ChatGPT represents a valuable instructional tool for improving EFL students' academic writing performance. When integrated into process-oriented writing instruction, it can significantly enhance grammatical accuracy, lexical sophistication, coherence, and overall writing quality. Future research should examine long-term effects and optimal pedagogical models for AI-assisted writing instruction in higher education.

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