



Exploring Thai EFL Learners' Attitudes Toward ChatGPT in Foreign Language Education

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Abstract

Generative AI models, including ChatGPT, have begun to revolutionize foreign language education in response to the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence. This study analyzes survey responses from university students to investigate the influence of generative AI on foreign language learning. The results suggest that students perceive AI-powered chatbots as valuable instruments for facilitating autonomous study, promoting lifelong learning, and enhancing learning efficiency. Nevertheless, other obstacles were also identified, including reluctance to implement AI and apprehensions regarding potential errors. The study offers recommendations for the pedagogical integration of AI in language instruction and discusses the implications of these findings for educators, researchers, and policymakers. Additionally, future research directions are recommended to further investigate the potential of AI in the field of education.

Keywords: *ChatGPT, Thai EFL Learners, Student Attitudes, AI in Language Learning, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Higher Education*

1. Introduction

The rapid incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) in education has generated interest in its use in foreign language acquisition, especially via generative AI tools such as ChatGPT. Attitudes toward ChatGPT as a learning tool among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Thailand reflect a spectrum of enthusiasm and skepticism. Although AI-driven technologies provide prospective benefits like customized learning and immediate feedback, apprehensions persist about excessive dependence and the genuineness of AI-generated interactions (Huang & Li, 2023). Comprehending the viewpoints of Thai EFL learners about ChatGPT in language teaching is essential for assessing its effectiveness as an auxiliary learning resource.

A major feature of ChatGPT is its capacity to provide instantaneous replies and feedback, thus augmenting self-directed learning. In contrast to conventional educational approaches, where students often await instructor response, ChatGPT facilitates immediate interaction, enabling learners to enhance their comprehension effectively (Kartal, 2023). Thai EFL learners who utilize ChatGPT indicate an enhanced understanding of intricate grammatical structures and expanded vocabulary, attributed to the model's capacity to produce varied sentence constructions (Topsakal & Topsakal, 2022). This accessibility to real-time information promotes self-directed learning and aligns with contemporary pedagogical approaches that prioritize learner autonomy.

Furthermore, ChatGPT has been shown to enhance language fluency by emulating authentic discussions. Numerous Thai EFL learners lack opportunities to interact with native English speakers, rendering AI chatbots a significant alternative (Kostka & Toncelli, 2023). The capacity to engage in a casual, low-pressure setting facilitates the development of learners' confidence in their speaking and writing abilities. Studies suggest that students using AI-driven conversational models exhibit increased motivation and a greater propensity to engage in communication, thereby alleviating their concern around errors (Solak, 2024). The psychological advantages indicate that ChatGPT may function as a valuable supplement to conventional classroom teaching.



Notwithstanding its advantages, several learners articulate apprehensions about ChatGPT's precision and contextual comprehension. AI-generated replies may exhibit deficiencies in cultural sensitivity and pragmatic suitability, resulting in possible misunderstandings (Hong, 2023). This constraint prompts inquiries about ChatGPT's dependability in instructing Thai EFL pupils, who depend on context and social signals for effective communication, particularly concerning complex language elements. Although AI may enhance the structural components of language acquisition, it may fall short in replicating the nuanced role of human educators who provide cultural and contextual relevance in communication (Huang & Li, 2023).

A significant concern is the potential for learners to become reliant on AI-generated information. Certain Thai EFL students may develop an excessive dependence on ChatGPT for assignment completion and engage with language practice tasks, potentially at the expense of active cognitive language processing (Topsakal & Topsakal, 2022). This dependence could lead to passive learning, where students prioritize AI-generated answers over developing their own linguistic skills. Research indicates that such uncritical reliance on ChatGPT may impede learners' capacity for autonomous problem-solving and innovative language application, hence impacting their long-term performance (Solak, 2024).

Ethical factors significantly influence perceptions of ChatGPT in foreign language instruction. Rising concerns about plagiarism and academic dishonesty have emerged as some students misuse AI to generate essays and responses without a genuine understanding of the content (Kartal, 2023). Thai instructors underscore the need for explicit standards regarding ethical AI utilization to guarantee that pupils use ChatGPT as a learning tool rather than a replacement for genuine skill acquisition. Incorporating AI literacy into the EFL curriculum is seen as a means of enabling students to interact responsibly and critically with AI-generated information (Huang & Li, 2023).

The effect of ChatGPT on educators' duties in the classroom subsequently affects students' perceptions. Some see AI as an auxiliary instrument that enriches education, while others apprehend that it might undermine the significance of human educators (Kostka & Toncelli, 2023). Thai EFL educators are progressively investigating methods to include AI into their teaching techniques while preserving human connection as the fundamental element of language instruction. The most effective strategy seems to be a hybrid paradigm, whereby AI facilitates personalized learning while educators provide engaging, communicative, and contextual educational experiences (Hong, 2023).

The attitudes of Thai EFL learners toward ChatGPT indicate a balance between recognition of its advantages and apprehensions about its shortcomings. Although many acknowledge its benefits in promoting self-directed learning and fluency, others express reservations over its trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and possible disadvantages (Solak, 2024). Maximizing its efficacy requires systematic deployment, using ChatGPT as a tool for engagement instead of a substitute for critical thinking and active learning.

Future studies should investigate the long-term impacts of AI-assisted learning on language competency, focusing on how Thai EFL learners adapt to AI tools over time. Moreover, subsequent research might explore methodologies for educators to effectively incorporate AI into courses while maintaining academic integrity and fostering interactive learning. By addressing these factors, AI-driven solutions such as ChatGPT may serve as valuable resources in foreign language instruction, aiding Thai EFL learners while preserving crucial linguistic and cognitive abilities (Huang & Li, 2023).

Thus, the primary objective of this research is to investigate the perspectives of students at a Thai private university. In this case, examining students' opinions helps identify the various advantages and disadvantages of ChatGPT, allowing teachers, students, and universities to revisit the concepts, comprehend the reality from the learners' point of view, and improve future performance.

2. Objectives

The objective of this study is to explore Thai EFL students' attitudes toward the educational use of ChatGPT in higher education. It aims to identify the perceived benefits, limitations, and ethical considerations to inform AI integration in language instruction



3. Materials and Methods

A survey research design was used for a mixed-method study that had a substantial quantitative component and a complementary qualitative aspect for collecting participants' written replies. The supplementary qualitative component allowed the researchers to explore themes that the questionnaire may not have sufficiently addressed. Students' reactions to the entire educational process would be more readily understood if their viewpoints were more nuanced. This approach largely used a questionnaire to delineate the participants' attitudes, perspectives, and behaviors regarding ChatGPT, the setting, and the investigative attributes. Purposive sampling was employed to select 406 undergraduate students at a Thai private university who exhibited intermediate to advanced English proficiency and had prior exposure to AI tools in education. The selection aimed to capture varied perspectives on ChatGPT usage. Descriptive statistics were used for quantitative analysis (frequencies, percentages), while thematic coding guided the qualitative analysis of open-ended responses.

The data, which was then interpreted and categorized, would be found in the following parts:

Part I: The participants' background information was analyzed in frequency and percentage.

Part II: The participants' opinions were identified, categorized, and explored.

4. Results

This section presents the analysis of the data collection in the study from the questionnaire.

4.1 General information of respondents

A total of 406 respondents participated in the study, providing their perspectives and experiences regarding ChatGPT as a foreign language learning tool. The present study included participants with varying levels of English proficiency, with a substantial number having been exposed to the language for more than ten years. The demographic distribution of the participants indicated that 77.6% were female ($n=315$) and 22.4% were male ($n=91$). In terms of age distribution, 43.3% of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 19, 37.2% were between the ages of 20 and 21, 19.0% were between the ages of 22 and 25, and only 0.5% were older than 25. In terms of academic year distribution, 60.9% of respondents were first-year students, 11.1% were second-year students, 14.6% were third-year students, and 13.6% were fourth-year students. The majority of respondents (61.9%) had studied English for more than ten years, while 25.2% had studied for five to ten years, and 13.1% for three to five years. These figures suggest that the majority of participants had substantial experience with English language acquisition prior to the commencement of the study.

4.2 Opinions towards ChatGPT

The responses collected from students suggest that there are several important themes regarding the perceived advantages of utilizing ChatGPT in the classroom. These themes underscore its influence on the efficacy of learning, the accessibility of information, the development of language, cognitive stimulation, and the enhancement of confidence.

Numerous respondents underscored the time-saving benefits of ChatGPT when conducting academic inquiries. Unlike conventional search engines, ChatGPT offers immediate responses, thereby minimizing the time spent on research and comprehension. Several participants observed that ChatGPT could be used to rapidly locate explanations for concepts, elucidate concerns, and verify their answers. This feature is especially beneficial in classroom settings where students require immediate assistance to enhance their understanding.

Students emphasized the fact that ChatGPT offers access to a wide range of knowledge that surpasses that contained in textbooks. The chatbot allows learners to pose inquiries across diverse domains, including programming, grammar rules, general knowledge, and travel planning. The capacity to access real-time information without the necessity of physical resources enhances self-directed learning, enabling students to investigate subjects that pique their interest without limitations.

The efficacy of ChatGPT in aiding English language acquisition was one of the most frequently



mentioned themes in the responses. Students found it to be particularly advantageous for sentence restructuring, vocabulary improvement, and grammar correction. Several participants reported that they utilized ChatGPT to refine sentence fluency, identify grammatical inaccuracies, and improve their writing abilities. Furthermore, the chatbot functions as a tool for practicing conversational English, enabling students to acquire an understanding of appropriate word usage and syntax.

ChatGPT's contribution to the development of creativity and critical thinking was another noteworthy benefit identified. Respondents indicated that the AI assists them in the development of novel concepts, the refinement of their cognitive processes, and the improvement of their academic writing. Students employ ChatGPT to more effectively structure their arguments, summarize information, and brainstorm concepts. The instrument also motivates students to investigate novel viewpoints on various subjects, thereby enhancing the overall learning experience.

A significant number of students reported that ChatGPT enhances their confidence in the use of English by offering a judgment-free environment in which to strengthen their language skills. The platform engages learners to take the initiative in their learning process by enabling them to pose inquiries without fear of humiliation. This benefit is especially pertinent in EFL classrooms, where certain students are hesitant to speak up due to apprehension or the dread of making errors.

The chatbot allows students to personalize their learning experience by offering explanations that are tailored to meet their unique requirements. ChatGPT enables students to obtain immediate clarification on intricate subjects without the need to await feedback from their instructors. This personalized approach enhances the flexibility and efficacy of learning by accommodating students with varying learning paces and preferences.

ChatGPT's user-friendliness and convenience were highly regarded by numerous students. The chatbot is accessible at all times, enabling students to access educational materials and information beyond the confines of the traditional classroom. Additionally, certain respondents acknowledged the way in which AI technology is transforming education, rendering the acquisition of knowledge more interactive and engaging.

Although the majority of students recognized the advantages of ChatGPT, a few expressed apprehensions regarding its constraints. Several respondents noted that AI-generated information may not always be precise and should be verified with additional sources. Others cautioned against the potential consequences of over-reliance, which could diminish students' capacity to think independently and critically.

4.3 Thematic Analysis: The Integration of Direct Quotes from Students

The responses obtained from students indicate numerous key themes concerning the perceived benefits of employing ChatGPT in the classroom. These themes emphasize its impact on the efficacy of learning, the accessibility of information, language development, cognitive engagement, and the development of confidence.

1. Improving the Efficiency of Learning

A significant number of respondents emphasized the time-saving advantages of ChatGPT for academic inquiries. ChatGPT distinguishes itself from traditional search engines by offering immediate responses, thereby reducing the time necessary for research and comprehension. Numerous students reported that ChatGPT enabled them to promptly identify explanations for concepts, resolve uncertainties, and verify their responses. One participant stated, "ChatGPT assists in the effective response to English questions and saves time in the search for answers." Another individual observed, "It facilitates rapid and effortless searches, thereby facilitating the learning process." This feedback underscores that ChatGPT enhances the efficiency of study sessions by offering prompt resolutions to students' academic-related inquiries.

2. Access to a Broad Spectrum of Knowledge

Students emphasized the fact that ChatGPT provides access to a wealth of knowledge, exceeding that found in conventional textbooks. The chatbot allows learners to ask questions about a wide range of topics, including programming, grammar standards, general knowledge, and travel planning. According to



one respondent, ChatGPT facilitates the retrieval of information from a variety of websites, thereby increasing the accessibility and convenience of knowledge. Another individual observed, "It enables me to inquire about topics that are not included in textbooks and obtain responses promptly." This accessibility encourages autonomous learning, enabling students to investigate topics that pique their interest without constraints.

3. Facilitating Language Acquisition

ChatGPT's contribution to the acquisition of the English language emerged as one of the most frequently discussed topics. Students regarded it as particularly beneficial for the purposes of sentence restructuring, vocabulary enhancement, and grammar correction. One pupil stated, "ChatGPT assists me in rectifying errors and grammar issues that I am unable to resolve independently." Another observed, "It aids in the acquisition of grammar, the development of writing structures, and the summarization of information to facilitate comprehension." Additionally, the chatbot functions as an instrument for practicing conversational English, enabling students to enhance their syntax and word usage.

4. Fostering Critical Thinking and Cognitive Engagement

Students identified ChatGPT's contribution in fostering critical thinking and creativity as another significant benefit. Numerous participants reported employing AI to enhance academic writing, refine their thought processes, and generate novel concepts. One respondent observed, "ChatGPT enables me to observe novel viewpoints regarding my work." Another individual expressed, "It contributes to the development of novel concepts and the expansion of my comprehension of a variety of subjects." These insights illustrate that ChatGPT not only offers information but also motivates students to critically analyze and synthesize knowledge, thereby improving their academic engagement.

5. Enhancing Confidence in Language Use

A substantial number of students reported that ChatGPT facilitated the development of their confidence in the use of English by providing a judgment-free environment in which to enhance their language abilities. One participant expressed, "ChatGPT enhances my confidence in English writing, provides me with assignment ideas, and assists me in the acquisition of new vocabulary." Another individual expressed, "It enables me to practice English in a manner that is conducive to my comfort." This is consistent with the discovery that AI-driven learning tools establish low-stress environments, which enable students to practice language skills more freely.

6. Study Support and Personalized Learning

ChatGPT enables students to personalize their learning experience by providing personalized explanations, as noted by student feedback. The chatbot offers immediate clarifications on intricate subjects without the necessity of awaiting feedback from a teacher. One student observed, "I am able to obtain an immediate response whenever I have questions by contacting ChatGPT," which is a valuable resource. Another individual stated, "It functions as an additional educational resource that extends beyond the classroom." This personalized approach is more adaptable and effective, as it accommodates students with varying learning paces and preferences.

7. Technological Advancements and Convenience in Education

ChatGPT's accessibility and user-friendliness were frequently praised by numerous students. The chatbot is accessible at all times, allowing students to access educational resources that are that go beyond what is typically offered in traditional classroom settings. According to one participant, ChatGPT is both convenient and user-friendly, which facilitates the learning process and enhances its efficiency. Another individual observed, "It enables students to access knowledge at any time, which enhances the interactive and engaging nature of the educational experience." This is indicative of the way in which AI technology is transforming education by facilitating the acquisition of knowledge more dynamically and seamlessly.

8. Considerations and Obstacles

Although the majority of students acknowledged the advantages of ChatGPT, a few expressed apprehensions regarding its constraints. A small number of respondents observed that AI-generated information may not always be precise and should be cross-referenced with other sources. One participant expressed concern, stating, "The information is only current as of 2021, so it may not always be accurate."



Other individuals cautioned against the potential hazards of excessive dependence, which could potentially diminish students' capacity for independent reasoning and problem-solving. According to one pupil, "I believe that relying on chatbots to provide answers to all questions is not always beneficial; errors may occur, and I prefer to consult with my teacher." These apprehensions underscore the significance of responsibly employing ChatGPT and cultivating AI literacy skills to supplement conventional education.

In conclusion, the thematic analysis suggests that Thai EFL learners regard ChatGPT as a potent educational tool that enhances learning efficiency, facilitates language development, encourages cognitive engagement, builds confidence, personalizes learning experiences, and provides immediate access to information. Students acknowledge the significance of responsible utilization to prevent dependency and misinformation, despite their appreciation for its convenience and effectiveness. While instructing students on the ethical application of AI and the development of critical thinking skills, educators should integrate ChatGPT as an additional educational resource. By doing so, ChatGPT and comparable AI tools can continue to effectively support and enhance foreign language education.

5. Discussions

The results of this study suggest that ChatGPT has a substantial influence on the acquisition of foreign languages by enhancing efficiency, increasing access to knowledge, promoting cognitive engagement, fostering language development, and bolstering learner confidence. Participants have identified ChatGPT as a significant advantage in that it enables them to rapidly access information that is not readily available in textbooks, thereby reducing the time spent seeking answers ("ChatGPT can assist in resolving the question that interests you and can verify your response"). Huang and Li (2023) have emphasized the significance of AI in enabling just-in-time learning, which enables students to more effectively acquire language skills. This is consistent with their research.

Additionally, ChatGPT was regarded as a tool that fosters active participation in the learning process and increases engagement. According to one participant, "ChatGPT helps us understand what we are interested in studying accurately and quickly, and stimulates learning engagement in the classroom." This is consistent with the constructivist perspective on language acquisition, which posits that students actively construct knowledge through interactive and meaningful learning experiences (Kartal, 2023). Additionally, the chatbot facilitates the real-time exploration of novel concepts and ideas, thereby enhancing cognitive presence, a critical component of online and hybrid learning environments.

Another recurring theme in the responses was the development of confidence. Several students reported that ChatGPT increased their confidence in composing and speaking English. A participant commented, "ChatGPT increases my confidence in writing English, helps me learn new vocabulary, and generates ideas for assignments." This is in accordance with the findings of Topsakal and Topsakal (2022), who contend that AI-based tools provide students with low-pressure environments that enable them to practice without fear of judgment, thereby fostering increased self-efficacy.

Furthermore, the chatbot was determined to be an advantageous addition to the acquisition of vocabulary and grammar. A participant reported, "ChatGPT helps teach grammar and writing principles, assists in structuring discussions, and improves students' ability to synthesize information effectively." This is consistent with the research conducted by Kostka and Tonnelli (2023), who emphasize the potential of AI-driven tutoring systems to offer structured language instruction, particularly in the areas of grammar and syntax.

Although these advantages are present, there are still reservations regarding the dependability and precision of AI-generated responses. Some students noted that ChatGPT is restricted to data from prior to 2021, which may diminish the relevance of the information provided ("ChatGPT is convenient for retrieving information, but its data is limited to 2021"). This underscores the importance of AI literacy training, which ensures that students critically assess the information provided rather than adopting it without question (Solak, 2024).



An additional obstacle is the potential overreliance on ChatGPT, which was acknowledged by certain participants as a double-edged sword. While it facilitates the learning process, there is a possibility that students may utilize it as a shortcut rather than participating in more complex cognitive processes ("The effectiveness of using ChatGPT to answer multiple-choice questions is inferior to learning from a teacher"). This observation aligns with the apprehensions expressed by Hong (2023), who contends that AI should be employed as a supplement to traditional instruction, rather than as a substitute, in order to prevent dependency.

The long-term effects of AI-assisted learning on language proficiency should be the primary focus of future research. Longitudinal studies could investigate whether ongoing exposure to AI tools results in enhanced retention and mastery of language skills. Furthermore, additional research is warranted to investigate the specific roles of AI in shaping collaborative learning environments. It is imperative to comprehend the manner in which AI either facilitates or impedes peer interactions, as language acquisition is inherently social (Huang & Li, 2023).

Finally, additional research is necessary to determine how AI can accommodate a variety of learning methods. The potential effectiveness of AI tools could be improved by tailoring them to support multimodal instruction, as certain students are more inclined toward visual or auditory learning. By addressing these considerations, AI technologies such as ChatGPT can continue to evolve as valuable assets in foreign language education, thereby improving accessibility, engagement, and overall learning outcomes.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, the results indicate that ChatGPT significantly improves foreign language learning by promoting cognitive engagement, fostering language development, expanding access to knowledge, and bolstering confidence, as well as enhancing efficiency. This chatbot constitutes a valuable aid for learners across proficiency levels, owing to its ability to offer personalized learning experiences and immediate feedback. Additionally, its function to simulate interactive dialogues and facilitate writing exercises aids in English fluency development and mitigates students' language apprehension.

Nevertheless, educational strategies that encourage AI literacy and critical information evaluation should be implemented to resolve the challenges associated with AI accuracy and over-reliance. It is imperative that both educators and institutions guarantee that students acquire the skills required to differentiate between AI-generated content and authentic linguistic constructs. This necessitates the integration of AI training into curricula, which underscores the significance of critical thinking and verification when interacting with AI-generated content. Furthermore, ethical concerns, including academic dishonesty and plagiarism, must be addressed by establishing explicit guidelines for the responsible integration of AI in educational environments.

Future research should investigate the long-term effects of AI-assisted learning on language proficiency, including the ways in which sustained AI interactions affect the quality of writing, the fluency of speaking, and the overall level of communicative capability. Longitudinal studies may yield deeper insights into the extent to which continuous exposure to AI-driven technologies improves the long-term mastery and retention of language skills. Additionally, research should examine methods for reconciling the integration of AI with conventional pedagogy. This involves evaluating the integration of AI into blended learning models to enhance human instruction without undermining the role of educators.

Furthermore, additional research could examine the function of AI in improving collaborative learning environments and its impact on various learning patterns. Insights into the efficacy of AI beyond individual learning experiences can be gained by comprehending how it facilitates peer-to-peer interactions and collaborative activities, as language learning is inherently social. To develop adaptive AI-driven language instruction that meets the requirements of a wide range of students, it will be essential to conduct research on the ways in which various learner types—including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners—interact with AI tools. By addressing these considerations, ChatGPT and similar AI tools can continue to enhance and



support foreign language education. In order to optimize their advantages, stakeholders, including educators, researchers, and policymakers, must collaborate to establish structured frameworks for AI integration. AI can be a valuable complement to traditional language instruction, improving the overall language proficiency, engagement, and accessibility of learners worldwide through the cautious implementation of AI.

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