

UZBEK EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CHATGPT-ASSISTED ACADEMIC WRITING

Shakhmaeva Olga Vladimirovna

New Uzbekistan University

E-mail: shakhmaevaolya123@gmail.com

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Abstract

The rapid development of generative artificial intelligence has introduced new possibilities for supporting academic writing in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Among emerging AI tools, ChatGPT has attracted particular attention because of its ability to generate ideas, provide language feedback, explain grammatical structures, suggest vocabulary, and assist learners in revising written texts. This thesis examines Uzbek EFL students' perceptions of ChatGPT-assisted academic writing, focusing on perceived usefulness, writing confidence, linguistic support, feedback, and concerns regarding accuracy, originality, and overreliance on artificial intelligence. Recent studies indicate that EFL learners generally perceive ChatGPT as a useful supplementary writing tool, while simultaneously recognizing limitations related to the reliability of generated information and the preservation of individual authorial voice. Research specifically involving Uzbek EFL learners also demonstrates positive perceptions of ChatGPT-supported writing, particularly regarding immediate feedback, task response, coherence, and cohesion. The thesis argues that ChatGPT can contribute positively to academic writing development when it is used as a supporting and feedback-oriented tool rather than as a substitute for students' own intellectual and linguistic work.

Keywords: ChatGPT, EFL students, academic writing, artificial intelligence, student perceptions, AI-assisted writing, Uzbekistan, writing feedback.

Introduction

Academic writing is one of the most demanding areas of English language learning for university students. EFL learners are expected to develop ideas logically, organize arguments coherently, use appropriate academic vocabulary, construct grammatically accurate sentences, and maintain an appropriate academic style. These requirements can create considerable difficulties, particularly for learners whose exposure to academic English is limited.

The development of generative artificial intelligence has introduced new forms of technological assistance into this process. ChatGPT can generate text, respond to questions, suggest ideas, explain grammatical problems, provide alternative expressions, and offer feedback on written work. Consequently, its role has rapidly expanded from general conversational interaction to language learning and academic writing support.

Recent research demonstrates that ChatGPT is increasingly being investigated in higher education, although questions remain concerning its reliability, ethical use, academic integrity, and pedagogical implementation. A systematic review of 57 studies published during 2023–2024 found that ChatGPT

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research in higher education covers diverse applications and continues to develop rapidly, while questions concerning effective and responsible integration remain important [1].

For EFL students, the issue is particularly significant because AI-assisted writing can simultaneously address linguistic difficulties and create new risks. On the one hand, students may use ChatGPT to identify grammatical errors, improve vocabulary, generate ideas, and organize arguments. On the other hand, excessive dependence on generated text may reduce opportunities for independent writing, critical evaluation, and development of an individual academic voice.

Therefore, students' perceptions are an important dimension of research. Understanding how Uzbek EFL students perceive the usefulness, limitations, reliability, and educational value of ChatGPT can help teachers develop more effective approaches to AI-assisted academic writing.

Main Discussion

ChatGPT can support academic writing at several stages of the writing process. During **pre-writing**, students may use the system to brainstorm possible arguments, identify relevant aspects of a topic, or develop an initial outline. During **drafting**, it can provide suggestions concerning vocabulary, sentence construction, and organization. During **revision**, students can request explanations of grammatical errors, ask for alternative formulations, or compare different versions of a sentence.

Research among EFL students supports the perception that ChatGPT can be useful across these stages. A 2025 study of 86 EFL undergraduate students found generally positive perceptions of ChatGPT as a supplementary tool for academic writing. Participants reported benefits in writing fluency, grammar, vocabulary, idea generation, clarity, and coherence. At the same time, students identified difficulties involving irrelevant responses, preservation of personal writing style, and uncertainty concerning the accuracy of AI-generated suggestions [2].

These findings indicate that students do not necessarily perceive ChatGPT as an entirely autonomous writing solution. Rather, many learners view it as a supplementary resource. This distinction is important because effective academic writing requires the writer to remain responsible for ideas, arguments, evidence, interpretation, and final language choices.

A particularly important dimension is **feedback**. Traditional teacher feedback is valuable but may be constrained by class size, time, and workload. ChatGPT can provide immediate responses, allowing learners to receive assistance while actively working on a text. Immediate feedback may be especially attractive to EFL students because writing problems can be addressed at the moment they occur.

Research involving Uzbek EFL students provides direct evidence of this tendency. Khidirov and Lee investigated 26 Uzbek EFL students preparing for IELTS Opinion Essay writing. After receiving an introduction to ChatGPT and using a predefined prompt, participants wrote essays, obtained ChatGPT feedback, and completed a survey. The students generally perceived ChatGPT positively, particularly for **task response, coherence, and cohesion**, and many participants reported increased confidence in their writing. They also valued the immediacy and detail of the feedback [3, pp. 46–62].

This Uzbek-specific evidence is particularly important because it demonstrates that positive perceptions of ChatGPT are not limited to EFL learners in other educational contexts. At the same time, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that ChatGPT automatically improves all dimensions of academic writing. The study examined students' perceptions and experiences rather than establishing that ChatGPT independently caused measurable long-term improvements in writing proficiency.

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Another important issue is **language accuracy**. ChatGPT can identify many grammatical and lexical problems, which may help learners notice weaknesses in their writing. However, AI-generated suggestions are not necessarily correct in every context. Students therefore need sufficient linguistic and critical knowledge to evaluate whether a proposed correction actually improves their text.

This concern is reflected in research on undergraduate learners' use of ChatGPT for academic writing. Pinninti's 2025 study of 51 undergraduate ESL students found that students appreciated ChatGPT's ability to summarize and correct grammar and vocabulary problems, while also expressing caution concerning the trustworthiness of its responses. The findings suggest that students may simultaneously recognize the practical usefulness of ChatGPT and remain uncertain about the reliability of its output [4].

The question of **academic authenticity** is equally significant. Academic writing is not simply the production of grammatically correct sentences. It involves the expression of an individual's ideas, interpretation of evidence, critical reasoning, and construction of an argument. If students directly reproduce AI-generated text without substantial evaluation and transformation, the educational value of the writing process can be weakened.

Research on EFL students' experiences has highlighted precisely this tension. A qualitative study of EFL learners found that ChatGPT was valued for overcoming uncertainty, clarifying vocabulary, and suggesting content, but students also recognized concerns about authenticity and the need to balance AI assistance with human judgment. The study consequently emphasizes the importance of critical thinking and appropriate ethical guidance [5].

For Uzbek universities, this issue deserves particular attention. Students should be taught not simply **how to use ChatGPT**, but **how to use it academically and responsibly**. For example, a teacher may encourage students to use ChatGPT to identify weaknesses in a draft rather than simply requesting a complete essay. Students can then evaluate the suggestions, verify information, rewrite relevant sections, and explain why particular changes were accepted or rejected.

Such an approach changes the role of AI from **text generator** to **learning assistant**. This distinction is pedagogically important. If students ask ChatGPT to produce an entire essay and submit the generated response unchanged, they may complete a task without developing the underlying writing competence. In contrast, if students use AI to receive feedback and then revise their own writing, the technology can become part of an active learning process.

Another relevant consideration is **student confidence**. Writing in a foreign language can create anxiety because students may be uncertain about grammar, vocabulary, organization, and overall correctness. Immediate AI feedback can reduce some of this uncertainty. The Uzbek study by Khidirov and Lee reported increased confidence among participants after using ChatGPT for IELTS essay writing [3, pp. 46–62].

Nevertheless, increased confidence should be accompanied by increased competence. A student may feel more confident because AI corrects a text, while still lacking the ability to identify and solve similar problems independently. Therefore, effective pedagogical practice should combine AI-assisted revision with independent writing activities.

A balanced model for Uzbek EFL academic writing can consequently be represented as:

Student-generated text → ChatGPT-assisted feedback → Critical evaluation → Student revision → Teacher feedback → Final independent text

This model preserves the student's authorship while allowing artificial intelligence to provide additional linguistic and organizational support.

Conclusion

ChatGPT has considerable potential as a supplementary tool for academic writing among Uzbek EFL students. Current research indicates that students generally value its capacity to generate ideas, support vocabulary and grammar development, improve coherence and cohesion, and provide immediate feedback. Evidence from Uzbek EFL learners is particularly encouraging: participants in a 2025 study reported positive experiences with ChatGPT-assisted IELTS essay writing and highlighted its usefulness for task response, coherence, cohesion, confidence, and detailed feedback [3, pp. 46–62].

However, positive perceptions should not be equated with unconditional acceptance. Students also need to recognize the limitations of AI-generated content, including possible inaccuracies, irrelevant suggestions, stylistic problems, and threats to academic authenticity. Recent research consistently suggests that responsible use requires human judgment and appropriate pedagogical guidance [2–5].

For Uzbek higher education, the most productive approach is therefore not to replace traditional academic writing instruction with ChatGPT but to integrate AI-assisted feedback into a broader writing pedagogy. Students should remain responsible for generating ideas, evaluating evidence, constructing arguments, and producing the final text. ChatGPT can then function as a supplementary assistant that supports revision, language awareness, and reflection.

Ultimately, the educational value of ChatGPT depends less on its ability to generate text than on how students interact with and critically evaluate that text. When integrated into a structured learning process, ChatGPT can contribute to the development of more confident, reflective, and digitally literate EFL academic writers.

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