

EFL STUDENTS' REFLECTIONS ON CHATGPT WITH AI PROMPT REPOSITORY MANAGER (AIPRM) FOR ACADEMIC WRITING

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Abstract

This study aimed to conduct an in-depth exploration of the reflective experiences of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students regarding their use of ChatGPT, augmented with the AI Prompt Repository Manager (AIPRM) extension, as a tool in their academic writing process. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach within a case study design, this research involved ten eighth-semester students from an English Education Program. Data were meticulously collected through open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, with thematic analysis serving as the primary analytical framework. The findings revealed a complex student reflection on the AI tool's dual role. On one hand, it was embraced as a "helpful assistant," instrumental in overcoming writer's block and boosting confidence. On the other, students viewed it as a "cheating partner," giving rise to ethical concerns and guilt about academic integrity. This conflict was compounded by challenges in creating effective prompts and an autonomy dilemma, caught between the tool's capacity to foster independence and a fear of over-dependency. These findings indicate that students are not passive users but are engaged in a complex negotiation, actively balancing the tool's practical benefits against its profound challenges to their skills, autonomy, and academic values.

Keywords: Student Reflections, ChatGPT, Academic Writing, AI in Education, Academic Integrity.

1 INTRODUCTION

Academic writing is a fundamental and often challenging component of university education, particularly for students in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. These students are frequently required to navigate complex rhetorical structures and demonstrate a high level of linguistic precision, often struggling with articulating clear arguments, maintaining grammatical accuracy, and selecting appropriate academic vocabulary [1], [2]. This situation is compounded when traditional teaching methods are unable to provide the immediate, individualized feedback that is crucial for skill development [3], [4]. It is within this challenging landscape that new Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT have emerged, fundamentally altering the resources available to students and reshaping the approach to writing education [5].

The integration of AI in education has created a new paradigm for learning. Tools like ChatGPT, especially when augmented with extensions like AIPRM (AI Prompt Repository Manager), offer structured assistance for tasks ranging from brainstorming to outlining and paraphrasing. While some studies show that AI can lead to measurable improvements in writing quality [6], a deep, qualitative understanding of the students' personal experiences is lacking. Understanding these subjective viewpoints is paramount, as personal experiences and attitudes ultimately shape how students engage with and benefit from such technology [7]. However, the potential of AI to make writing easier also introduces a new set of complex issues. Students face the risk of over-reliance, which could potentially hinder the development of their own critical thinking and writing skills [8], and the line between a student's original work and AI-generated content becomes increasingly blurred, raising significant concerns about academic integrity [9], [10]. Therefore, it is important to investigate student perceptions regarding the tool's utility, the challenges they face, and the strategies they develop to manage this new technology. This study aims to explore how English Education students perceive and experience the use of ChatGPT with AIPRM as a tool in their academic writing process.

2 METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design to explore the personal experiences, perceptions, and feelings of students in-depth [11]. A case study is an exploration of a "bounded system," which in this instance, is the experiences of a specific group of English Education students interacting with a particular technology within their university context.

The subjects were 10 eighth-semester students from the English Education Program at Universitas Pancasakti Tegal. This specific group was chosen via purposive sampling based on their direct and recent experience using ChatGPT with AIPRM for their academic writing tasks. Data were collected using two complementary techniques: open-ended questionnaires distributed to all 10 participants and semi-structured interviews conducted with 5 of these participants to provide deeper insights. The use of multiple data sources, or triangulation, was a key methodological choice that helped to enhance the validity and reliability of the research findings.

All collected data, including detailed written narratives from the questionnaires and the complete verbatim transcripts from the semi-structured interviews, were analyzed using thematic analysis. This method systematically identifies, analyzes, and reports patterns, or "themes," within the qualitative data, following the widely recognized steps outlined by Braun and Clarke [12].

3 RESULTS

The data analysis revealed a complex picture of student experiences, characterized by a significant tension between the tool's practical benefits and the personal and ethical challenges it presents. The results are structured into two main subsections: an overview of the quantitative findings from the questionnaires and a detailed exploration of the qualitative themes that emerged from the in-depth interviews.

3.1 Questionnaire Findings

The questionnaire provided a broad overview of the students' usage patterns and general perceptions. A significant majority (90%) of students reported using ChatGPT for more than six months, indicating a substantial level of experience with the tool. The data showed that the tool was most commonly used for tasks at the beginning of the writing process, with brainstorming ideas (70%) and creating an outline (50%) being the most frequent applications. This suggests that students perceive the tool as most valuable for overcoming the initial hurdles of a writing assignment.

When asked to identify the single biggest benefit gained from using the tool, the majority of students (60%) stated that it mainly helped improve the technical quality of their writing (e.g., better grammar, vocabulary, or structure). Conversely, when asked to choose their main challenge, the responses were split evenly between technical or output issues (40%) (e.g., getting inaccurate answers, difficulty with prompts) and concerns about their personal skills and habits (40%) (e.g., fear of dependency, reduced critical thinking). A large majority of students (70%) felt that their writing process is now more efficient, and 60% believe the ideal role for AI in education is as a "Supportive Tool" to be used occasionally for specific tasks, rather than as a primary, integrated assistant.

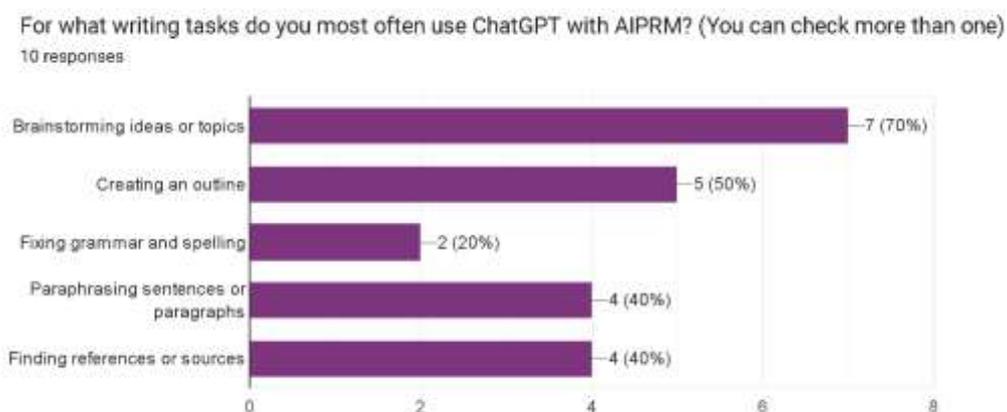


Figure 1. Common on Writing Tasks for ChatGPT.

3.2 Questionnaire Findings

Thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews revealed four main themes that captured the essence of the students' lived experiences: the dual role of the AI, the hidden skill of prompt engineering, the autonomy dilemma, and the navigation of ethical boundaries.

3.2.1 The Dual Role of AI: A Helpful Assistant or a "Cheating Partner"

This theme emerged strongly as students expressed a significant internal conflict. On one hand, they valued the AI as a powerful assistant, but on the other, they grappled with feelings that using it was not entirely honest. One participant described the interaction as a "collaboration, like musicians jamming together," where ideas are combined to create a new piece. However, another participant expressed the anxiety this relationship can cause: "Sometimes when the result is really good, I feel like 'this isn't me.' There's a bit of guilt, like I don't deserve a good grade for this writing." This highlights the complex psychological negotiation students undergo, balancing the tool's practical help against a persistent ethical unease.

3.2.2 The Hidden Skill: Challenges in Prompting and Verification

A recurring point of frustration was the AI's inability to provide quality answers without specific, well-crafted prompts. Students quickly learned that using the tool effectively required a new, "hidden skill." A major issue that eroded trust was the AI's tendency to provide false information, particularly fake references. One student noted, "When it gave me fake references... I searched for them on Google Scholar, nothing. They were all hallucinations. Since then, I've never trusted it for finding sources." These experiences taught students that they could not be passive recipients of information; instead, they had to become critical consumers and verifiers of the AI's output.

3.2.3 The Autonomy Dilemma: Gaining Independence vs. Becoming Dependent

Students found themselves caught in a dilemma regarding their academic autonomy. For some, the AI was a learning tool that helped them "upgrade" their writing skills. However, a more common sentiment was the fear of becoming overly dependent, which they worried could weaken their own critical thinking abilities over time. This concern was often linked to the pressure of deadlines, as one student candidly admitted: "Honestly, sometimes when the deadline is close, I just trust it without thinking critically." This highlights the central tension between the desire for efficiency and the long-term educational goal of skill development [13].

3.2.4 The Ethical Line: Navigating Originality and Academic Honesty

Students demonstrated a strong awareness of the ethical line between legitimate assistance and plagiarism, which led them to develop their own personal rules for using AI. One participant offered clear advice: "Whatever it gives you, treat it as a first draft. Your job is to be the editor... Don't be a copy-paste person." This anxiety was also connected to uncertainty about institutional rules and a fear of being misunderstood by their lecturers. Students worried they would be labeled as cheaters even when using the tool for assistance, highlighting a need for clearer institutional guidelines [14], [15].

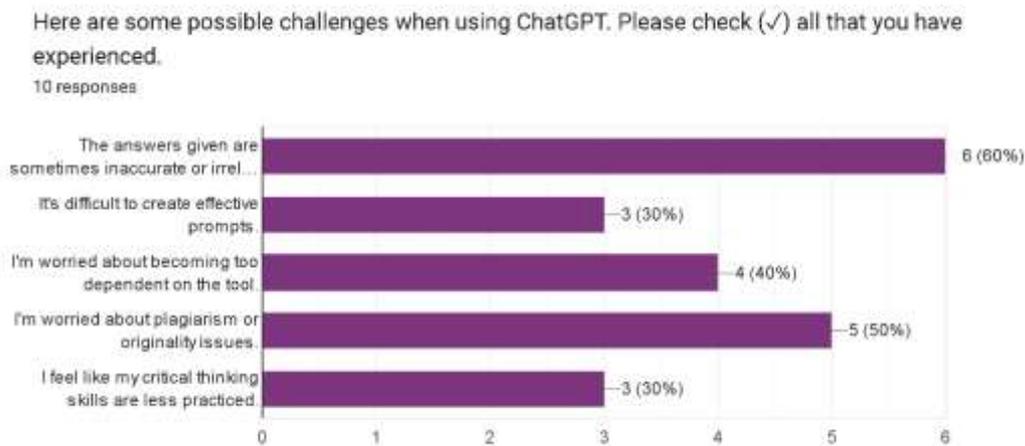


Figure 2. Main Perceived Challenge of Using AI.

4 CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that EFL students' perceptions of ChatGPT with AI PRM are not straightforward but are characterized by a complex negotiation between the tool's practical benefits and the personal and ethical challenges it poses. Students perceive the AI as having a dual role: it is both a "helpful assistant" that boosts confidence and improves the technical quality of their writing, and a "cheating partner" that elicits feelings of guilt and anxiety about academic integrity.

The findings reveal that students are not passive users. They are actively developing new skills in prompt engineering and information verification to manage the tool's limitations. They are also caught in an autonomy dilemma, constantly balancing the tool's ability to foster independence against a pervasive fear of becoming overly dependent and eroding their critical thinking skills. This research highlights that students are deeply engaged with the ethical dimensions of AI, developing their own strategies to maintain authenticity in their work. Ultimately, students advocate for a balanced approach, viewing AI not as a replacement for their own intellect but as a supportive tool to be used with caution and critical judgment. These insights are crucial for educators seeking to develop pedagogical strategies and institutional policies that address the nuanced reality of how students interact with AI in their academic lives [14].

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