Vietnamese University Students’ Perceptions in Learning English Using ChatGPT

Lam Ky Nhan

Abstract - ChatGPT, a generative AI tool, has garnered significant interest due to its advanced capability to perform intricate tasks since it became available to the public. Numerous educators have conducted study on the sophisticated instrument in providing possible advantages for language instruction and acquisition. It is essential to comprehend the attitudes and experiences of students towards developing technologies in order to effectively integrate them into language learning contexts, as technology innovations continue to influence educational landscapes. This study aims to evaluate the attitudes of Vietnamese university students towards utilizing ChatGPT as a means to enhance their English learning. Additionally, it seeks to examine their perspectives of the benefits and drawbacks associated with ChatGPT. The study involved the collection of data from a sample of 100 undergraduate Vietnamese students. The data was obtained by the administration of a questionnaire that included items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The study’s findings indicate that students perceive ChatGPT as a valuable tool for enhancing their English language learning. However, it is crucial to prioritize the aspect of information security going forward. Collaboration among policymakers, technology experts, academics, and educators is essential to explore the safe and efficient integration of ChatGPT and other developing generative AI tools into English teaching and learning.

Keywords: ChatGPT, Learning English with AI, Perceptions, Education

I. INTRODUCTION

The field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has experienced significant growth, leading to various advancements and changes in multiple aspects of modern life (Gocen & Aydemir, 2021; Jain & Jain, 2019; Jillian et al., 2023). ChatGPT is a recent innovation that has an impact on the teaching and learning of the English language. The development of technology-based language teaching in recent decades has been influenced by extensive study on AI conducted over a long period of time. Prior research on technology integration mostly examined learning methodologies, motivation, attitudes, and the incorporation of technology into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs (Ali, 2022; Al-Kadi, 2018; Ali & Bin-Hady, 2019; Zhao et al., 2002). The introduction of ChatGPT, referred to as a “massive autocomplete machine” (Jillian et al., 2023, p. 1), has opened up new avenues for studying the integration of technology in second and foreign language teaching, specifically in the context of English (Aljanabi et al., 2023).

The education and training sector has experienced a recent upsurge in interest in AI owing to its capacity to fundamentally transform the process of learning. AI enables customized instruction, adaptive evaluations, and meaningful engagements in digital, portable, or integrated learning settings, establishing it as a prominent term in the discipline (Zhang & Aslan, 2021). In the realm of English language education, the emergence of AI-driven tools such as Chat GPT has garnered significant interest. Numerous studies have examined the application of these AI-powered tools in the context of English language learning (Alhalangy & AbdAlgane, 2023; Alharbi, 2023; Alsadoon, 2021; Han, et al., 2023). The effective incorporation of AI technologies in language learning relies not solely on technology progress or teachers, but also on comprehending learners’ perspectives and experiences regarding their utilization.

Although there have been efforts to incorporate AI into language programs to address current issues, there are critics who argue that AI-language bots are “unable to produce insights or conduct in-depth analysis” (Buriak et al., 2023, p. 1). A group consisting of 44 authors, led by Jillian Buriak, contended that “the results generated by the AI model should not be accepted without critical evaluation.” It was recommended that a thorough evaluation be conducted on all AI-generated results to avoid inaccuracies, omissions of important details, or assertions that are not relevant. According to Buriak et al. (2023, p. 2), ChatGPT, a recent AI
In order to enhance language learning, it is crucial to examine the perceptions of English learners towards ChatGPT. This will assist researchers in gaining a deeper understanding of the efficacy of ChatGPT in language acquisition. Due to the limited number of studies examining the perspectives of Vietnamese university students regarding ChatGPT, this research seeks to utilize a questionnaire to investigate the following questions:

- What are the major perceptions of Vietnamese university students towards learning English with ChatGPT?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Artificial intelligence and ELT

In recent years, there has been a significant surge in research focused on the integration of AI technology in language teaching and learning. AI in education encounters additional challenges, including output bias, human supervision, and misuse. Nevertheless, if effectively handled, these challenges offer valuable insights and prospects in education for acquainting students with potential societal biases, complexities, and hazards associated with AI implementations. Kasneci et al. (2023) offer resolutions to these problems and ethically implement these models in their teaching.

In their study, Göçen and Aydemir (2020) explored the potential opportunities that AI could bring to the field of education and its impact on the future of schools. The study employed the qualitative research methodology of phenomenology, which examined the perspectives of participants from various sectors. Researchers discovered that the utilization of AI in education has novel benefits for schools and teachers, as well as certain limitations and positive aspects. The findings include recommendations on the utilization of AI and strategies for addressing potential issues. While the majority of participants express a favorable attitude towards AI, many individuals, particularly teachers and academics, harbor apprehensions regarding the future of education.

2.2. Emergence of ChatGPT

Open AI introduced ChatGPT, a versatile conversational chatbot, on November 30, 2022. It is anticipated to have a profound influence on several facets of our society. Nevertheless, the potential pedagogical ramifications of this natural language processing technology remain undetermined. Zhai (2022) posited that ChatGPT has the capacity to greatly impact educational learning objectives, assessment evaluation processes, learning activities, and evaluation processes. Prior to the rapid rise of ChatGPT, Jain and Jain (2019) conducted a study on the integration of AI in higher education teaching and learning. Their research demonstrated how AI enables the provision of higher education services beyond the traditional classroom setting at an unprecedented speed. The study examined the potential integration of AI into universities and its immediate and long-term impacts on several sectors of higher education.

Aydin and Karaarslan (2022) investigated the viability of utilizing artificial intelligence to condense literature review papers. As per the authors’ perspective, AI has the potential to revolutionize academic publication by minimizing human labor and enabling academics to focus more on their research. In addition, they utilized ChatGPT to compose an academic paper and deployed plagiarism detection techniques to verify the uniqueness of ChatGPT’s content. Zhai (2022) conducted a study in which ChatGPT was utilized. The findings demonstrated that ChatGPT is advantageous to researchers in producing coherent, precise, well-structured, and enlightening academic articles. The study suggests modifying learning objectives to incorporate the utilization of AI tools for subject-specific tasks, while emphasizing the cultivation of creativity and critical thinking instead of focusing on generic skill enhancement. ChatGPT enables students to delegate assessment assignments. The study proposed the necessity of developing new assessment instruments that prioritize creativity and critical thinking, as these cognitive abilities cannot be substituted by AI. Bin-Hady et al. (2023) conducted a study that focused on ChatGPT’s application in English language acquisition on a global scale.
Evidence indicates that ChatGPT is expected to contribute significantly to the field by improving learners’ language abilities, supporting the learning process, and offering prompt feedback on learning outcomes and language usage. The study proposed an AI-based model consisting of five aspects for assisted language learning (AIALL).

2.3. ChatGPT

ChatGPT, an innovative product developed by OpenAI, is a state-of-the-art language model based on the GPT-3.5 architecture, renowned for its groundbreaking progress in natural language processing (Brown et al., 2020). ChatGPT is highly skilled at generating coherent and contextually relevant responses. It has undergone extensive training on varied datasets, which allows it to comprehend and write text that resembles human language on a wide range of topics (Brown et al., 2020). According to the study conducted by Brown et al. (2020), ChatGPT’s advanced structure enables it to perform very well in interactive and dynamic conversations, demonstrating its adaptability for various uses like content creation, writing aid, language translation, and educational support. ChatGPT is equipped with advanced deep learning techniques that enable it to comprehend context in a sophisticated manner. This allows it to generate adaptive responses that are customized to various conversational styles (OpenAI, 2020).

ChatGPT has become a user-friendly and accessible tool, representing the advancement of natural language processing models in improving interactions between humans and computers (OpenAI, 2020). The extensive acknowledgement of ChatGPT in the field serves as evidence of its revolutionary capacity, indicating a fundamental change in the application of language models across diverse disciplines.

2.4. The application of AI technologies in education

The utilization of AI technologies in education signifies a revolutionary framework, altering conventional approaches to teaching and learning processes. The integration of AI into education holds the potential to deliver improved individualized learning experiences, intelligent tutoring systems, and efficient educational management as AI technology progresses. Techniques, such as natural language processing and machine learning algorithms, enable adaptive learning platforms that customize information based on the specific needs of each learner (Baker, 2016). AI-driven intelligent tutoring systems have the capability to deliver immediate feedback, detect areas of learning deficiency, and provide tailored support, thus enhancing the efficiency of the learning process (VanLehn, 2011). In addition, educational technology powered by artificial intelligence aid in the automation of administrative work, allowing educators to concentrate on instructional activities that have a significant impact (Siemens & Baker, 2012).

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) technology into education, namely through conversational language models such as ChatGPT, has the potential to greatly transform the way we learn. ChatGPT, an innovation developed by OpenAI, embodies a sophisticated natural language processing model that demonstrates exceptional performance in interactive and dynamic dialogues. Within the realm of education, ChatGPT can function as a potent instrument for augmenting language acquisition encounters, delivering tailored instruction, and cultivating active participation. Students have the opportunity to participate in discussions that are happening in real-time and are aware of the context. This allows students to receive feedback that is specifically customized to their needs, practice their language skills, and study different educational themes through conversation. Integrating ChatGPT into education is in line with the larger movement of utilizing AI to establish adaptable and individualized learning settings. This technology not only improves conventional educational methods but also introduces new opportunities for inventive and interactive learning encounters.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Participants

The study comprised a sample of 100 junior students who were randomly chosen from the population of academic English majors at Nam Can Tho University. The age range of the sample was between 20 and 21. All participants were Vietnamese native speakers who stated that they had undergone seven years of English education in secondary and high schools, in addition to at least one year of English study at the university level. During the research, their proficiency in English was determined to be at the B1 level, which corresponds to an
intermediate level according to the Common European Reference Framework for languages (CERF). Every student has previously utilized artificial intelligence software or other associated technology for educational purposes.

3.2. Instrument

The research employed a five-point Likert scale questionnaire consisting of two parts (Appendix 1), which was derived from the questionnaire utilized by Hasan (2019). The first part consists of four statements that pertain to demographic information, such as the participants’ gender, current location, and whether they have utilized artificial intelligence in their English learning. The second part comprises sixteen statements that focus on the participants’ perceptions of ChatGPT. The statements were categorized into three groups: perceptions or awareness of ChatGPT (6 items), perceptions regarding the benefits of ChatGPT (3 items), and perceptions regarding the drawbacks of ChatGPT (3 items). The close-ended statements were formulated using the five-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from Strongly Disagree (ranked as 1) to Strongly Agree (rated as 5). The participants were instructed to select the option that most accurately aligned with their thoughts.

3.3. Data collection and analysis

The data was collected using a survey. At first, a physical survey was given to students who had used ChatGPT in their academic pursuits, asking them to take part in the research. In order to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was carried out using a sample of 20 replies. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS software (version 25), utilizing descriptive analysis and one-sample t-tests. The participants’ responses were recorded, analyzed, and classified in order to find common patterns and themes.

IV. FINDINGS

This study seeks to comprehend the perceptions of Vietnamese university students regarding the advantages and drawbacks of it. The findings will be analyzed in relation to the four categories presented in the questionnaire.

Table 1. Participants’ perceptions or understanding of ChatGPT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think that ChatGPT is easy to use.</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I state that ChatGPT can help me learn more effectively.</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that ChatGPT is compatible with multiple input languages.</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I can easily understand the content provided by ChatGPT.</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect to use ChatGPT frequently for learning in the future.</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that ChatGPT is a useful tool for study.</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A significant proportion of students (M=3.33, suggesting a moderate level of agreement) reported that they are able to comprehend ChatGPT. The findings indicate that a significant proportion of students perceive ChatGPT as highly user-friendly (M=4.13), and recognize its potential in enhancing their learning experience, particularly in the context of English language acquisition (M=3.72). A significant proportion of students perceive studying English with ChatGPT as a valuable resource for their language acquisition (M=3.53, indicating a moderate level of agreement). Additionally, ChatGPT is capable of accommodating many input languages (M=3.45).
Table 2. Participants’ perceptions regarding the advantages of ChatGPT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think that ChatGPT can help me save time.</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that ChatGPT has the potential to enhance the caliber of my learning.</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I state that ChatGPT offers a wide range of knowledge across multiple fields.</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that ChatGPT offers tailored instruction and evaluation by taking into account the individual student’s educational requirements and advancement.</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think ChatGPT can help me enhance my learning abilities.</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 reveals that most participants displayed a moderate level of agreement with the benefits of ChatGPT. Specifically, the average rating for the statement “I think ChatGPT can help me save time” was 3.74, while the average rating for the statement “I think that ChatGPT can help me save time” was 3.74. Students exhibited a comparatively higher level of favorable attitudes about the potential of ChatGPT to assist them in time-saving. Regarding ChatGPT’s role in facilitating learning experiences for utilizing ChatGPT as a tool to discover further educational possibilities (M=3.36). By utilizing ChatGPT to enhance the quality of learning, the responses exhibited significant variation in this instance (M= 3.65). Additional investigation is needed to identify more precise factors contributing to this outcome.

Table 3. Participants’ perceptions regarding the disadvantages of ChatGPT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think that ChatGPT can provide unreliable information on topics with few citations.</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that ChatGPT’s answer quality deteriorates after few paragraphs.</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find ChatGPT to be unbeneficial for my English language acquisition.</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I state that ChatGPT is unable to cite sources accurately.</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 demonstrates that participants held differing perspectives about the drawbacks of ChatGPT, although they reached a consensus on the efficacy of ChatGPT for English language acquisition. Regarding the concerns about “ChatGPT’s potential to offer unreliable information on topics lacking sufficient citations,” individuals exhibited diverse opinions, and their comments reflected a sense of uncertainty. Regarding the issue of “ChatGPT’s inability to accurately cite sources,” a majority of individuals (M=3.56) believed that ChatGPT faced challenges in correctly referencing sources while undergoing the learning process. Among the respondents, a small number acknowledged that ChatGPT is advantageous for their acquisition of the English language, as indicated by a mean score of 1.12.

IV. DISCUSSION

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the perspective of university students regarding the utilization of ChatGPT in the field of education. The study findings indicated that students’ perspective of utilizing ChatGPT exceeded the average level. Overall, learners had a favorable opinion regarding the implementation of this AI chatbot in their learning.

When integrating artificial intelligence into education, it is imperative to comprehend students’ views in order to prioritize user-centricity and enhance its functionalities. The findings indicate that the majority of Vietnamese university students have knowledge and experience in utilizing artificial intelligence, such as ChatGPT, as a means of learning English. They possess knowledge on the objectives of ChatGPT and regard it as a highly efficient educational instrument.

The findings underscore a significant correlation between users’ present geographical position and their willingness to embrace ChatGPT. In general, Vietnamese students studying abroad exhibit a more favorable
disposition towards utilizing ChatGPT for English language acquisition. These students are inclined to utilize ChatGPT to enhance their writing and reading proficiency, as well as get insights into English cultures.

The data indicate that ChatGPT offers notable advantages for English language acquisition. Vietnamese university students maintain their motivation to acquire English language skills by utilizing ChatGPT as a supplementary tool outside of the classroom. They are eager to dedicate time and effort to improve their proficiency in using it, as it significantly enhances their capacities for self-directed learning and problem-solving. Additionally, ChatGPT is purported to enhance students’ learning efficiency and efficacy.

Regarding the drawbacks, participants reached a consensus on the problems of plagiarism, information disclosure, and erroneous responses. However, they maintain a strong belief in the usefulness of ChatGPT for their English learning. Prior research by Cotton, Cotton & Shipway (2023), Kasneci et al. (2023), and Rudolph, Tan & Tan (2023) has highlighted the importance of addressing these academic concerns. It is crucial to anticipate technological advancements and provide explicit instructions and guidelines to mitigate potential instances of academic dishonesty.

IV. CONCLUSION

Ultimately, the research on “Vietnamese University Students’ Perceptions in Learning English Using ChatGPT” provides insight into the complex process of incorporating ChatGPT into English language education for Vietnamese university students. The wide array of viewpoints, encounters, and input collected from participants highlights the subtle influence of employing sophisticated language models in educational environments. The research findings from the growing use of technology on language acquisition offer valuable guidance for educators, curriculum developers, and legislators. The study not only enhances the comprehension of how ChatGPT is perceived but also provides practical implications for maximizing its integration to improve language learning outcomes. The results underscore the importance of customized strategies that take into account variations in language aptitude, technological familiarity, and preferences for learning. As we explore the changing field of AI-assisted education, the results of this research contribute to the current discussion on how to effectively use technology to develop language learning environments that are more engaging, adaptable, and focused on the needs of students.

The results of this study can assist educators and technology specialists in determining the extent to which English language learners are deriving advantages from ChatGPT. Additional investigation can be conducted utilizing a mixed-method approach to analyze the particular facets of language learning that can be integrated with ChatGPT to more effectively meet the needs of students. Furthermore, it is important to consider the viewpoints of language teachers, curriculum designers, and software developers in order to provide recommendations for optimizing the functionalities of ChatGPT in the context of language learning.

Hence, in accordance with the research conducted by Graham (2022) and Stokel-Walker (2022), ChatGPT, being a promising language model, has the potential to aid in content development and language skill practice. However, it is crucial to exercise responsible usage of ChatGPT by adhering to the standards in order to maintain academic integrity.

About the Authors
Lam Ky Nhan earned his M.A in English Education from Can Tho University in 2021. He is a lecturer of English Department at Nam Can Tho University, Vietnam, currently pursuing his Ph.D’s, with anticipated graduation in 2026. His teaching interests include teaching grammar and academic writing, teacher and learner motivation, testing and assessment.

References


