The Study of EFL Students'Attitudes and Behaviors toward Using ChatGPT in English Language Learning

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Abstract

This study explored EFL students' attitudes and behaviors toward using ChatGPT in English language learning. The participants consisted of 48 Thai third-year undergraduate students from the Educational Technology and Communications program at Naresuan University, selected through purposive sampling. A questionnaire was used as the research instrument to assess students' attitudes and behaviors toward using ChatGPT in English language learning. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: general information, EFL students' attitudes toward using ChatGPT in English language learning, and EFL students' behaviors toward using ChatGPT in English language learning. The findings indicated that EFL students strongly agreed that ChatGPT was easy to use and convenient ($M = 4.83$). Regarding the development of the four key English language skills, students agreed that ChatGPT helped to improve writing ($M = 4.31$), reading *($M = 4.13$)*, and listening ($M = 4.08$) skills, though students were less confident in ChatGPT's impact on speaking skills ($M = 3.35$). In terms of behaviors, students reported using ChatGPT most frequently to improve writing skills ($M = 4.23$), followed by reading ($M = 3.94$), listening ($M = 3.63$), and speaking skills ($M = 3.04$). Additionally, students indicated using ChatGPT to boost students' interest and motivation in English language learning and investing time and effort into using ChatGPT to improve English proficiency. Lastly, EFL students demonstrated positive attitudes and behaviors towards using ChatGPT in English language learning, recognizing ChatGPT as a supportive tool. However, instructors need to establish clear guidelines on ethical considerations regarding using ChatGPT.

Keywords: ChatGPT, EFL students' attitudes, EFL students' behaviors, English language learning

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Introduction

English is recognized as a global language essential for communication in various fields. Proficiency in English can provide access to advanced educational opportunities and improve career prospects (Visaltanachoti et al., 2021). In Thailand, English has been regarded as a foreign language (EFL) and has played a crucial role in the country's education system for over a century. English is a mandatory subject at both the school and university levels, and students are expected to develop the four key English language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The implementation of the National Education Act in 1999 significantly influenced English language policy, this shift has led to a greater focus on students' individual differences; interests, aptitudes, and cognitive processes when designing lesson plans and assessing English proficiency (Taladngoen, 2019). To assess students' English proficiency, many institutions and universities have provided English courses and proficiency tests. According to the study by Kanchana Prapphal (2003), the researcher studied the English language proficiency of ASEAN students in academic settings. The results revealed that Thai students' average English proficiency was lower than students from other ASEAN countries. Furthermore, a study from one university in Thailand found that the English proficiency of Thai students did not meet the required standard during the test, with students' performance remaining at a low level (Yeunsak et al., 2022). Despite years of English education, Thai students' English proficiency still needs improvement (Kaewcharernnet & Noonkhan, 2021). To solve these problems, many English instructors in Thailand have focused on enhancing EFL students' English proficiency by emphasizing 21st-century skills. English plays a vital role in helping Thai EFL students to adapt to societal changes, communicate effectively in real-world situations, and access information in the digital age. Therefore, it is essential to develop English teaching methods that integrate digital literacy practices so Thai EFL students can apply students' English skills in everyday life (Sakulprasertsri, 2020). When teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), there are several important factors to consider. These include deciding which language skills to prioritize, understanding the contexts in which the language will be used, creating an effective learning environment, selecting appropriate materials and content, and establishing clear assessment criteria (Darasawang, 2007). UNESCO actively helped shape the ambitious education agenda for 2030 so that the essential role of education in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is important in this era. The report highlights the critical importance of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in ensuring equal access to education, bridging the digital divide, and offering students around the world equal opportunities (Öztemür et al., 2024).

In this era, to foster Thai EFL students' English competency, adopting Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the field of education has the potential to develop English teaching and learning (Phieanchang, 2024). Through machine learning, AI is continually redefining traditional teaching methods and ways of thinking. By analyzing data from both teachers and students, AI can provide valuable insights, knowledge, and information for the future of education. Nowadays, ChatGPT is one of the AI tools that has been highly used in English teaching and learning. It helps to improve English skills in various areas such as writing skills and grammatical knowledge (Kostka & Toncelli, 2023). ChatGPT is a highly effective tool for

learning English. It not only provides valuable input but also assists with writing, offers accurate feedback, and helps improve fluency and overall language skills through practice (Meniado, 2023). In Thailand, a new trend is emerging among English teachers and EFL students to incorporate ChatGPT into language education. The use of AI in the classroom offers numerous benefits, including personalized learning experiences tailored to each student's needs. AI-powered intelligent tutoring systems can adapt to individual students, enhancing comprehension and retention of material. However, despite its potential advantages, challenges remain, particularly in ensuring equitable access to AI technologies for all students (Songsiengchai et al., 2023).

Literature Review

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) in English Teaching and Learning

The introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in 1956 was introduced by Newell and Simon, who invented the 'thinking machine' program known as the Logic Theorist, which aimed to replicate human cognitive abilities in solving complex problems (Newell & Simon, 1956). This breakthrough laid the groundwork for the field of AI in Education (AIED), which seeks to apply AI technologies to reform teaching, learning, and decision-making processes through tools such as intelligent tutoring systems and adaptive learning platforms. AI in Education (AIED) aims to create personalized educational experiences that enhance the effectiveness of learning interventions (Chiu et al., 2023). The impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on English teaching and learning is both diverse and dynamic, offering a range of opportunities and challenges in educational environments. One key benefit is the ability to provide personalized learning experiences. AI applications can assess individual students' strengths, weaknesses, and learning preferences, allowing educators to customize instruction and offer targeted support, which in turn boosts student engagement and academic performance. Additionally, AI enhances English language practice and communication through tools like conversational agents and language learning apps, providing immersive language experiences that extend beyond the traditional classroom. For example, using ChatGPT can significantly improve students' written communication skills (Waluyo & Kusumastuti, 2024).

1. ChatGPT in English Teaching and Learning

ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI, was launched on November 30, 2022 (Gordijn & Have, 2023). It serves as a valuable tool in personalized learning by enhancing learners' motivation and reading comprehension skills through the generation of authentic language material. ChatGPT has demonstrated significant features in enhancing learning activities, particularly in education. Research has shown that integrating ChatGPT into classroom environments boosts student engagement and participation, resulting in improved learning outcomes. It has been utilized in various ways, including providing quick access to information, answering questions, offering explanations, and simulating interactions (Leunard et al., 2023). ChatGPT has been shown to positively impact academic performance by helping students understand difficult concepts and providing relevant study materials. Moreover, ChatGPT's ability to generate clear explanations and simplify complex topics in a user-friendly manner has been proven to enhance students' understanding and retention of information, ultimately leading to better academic

outcomes (Jowarder, 2023). In addition to enhancing learning outcomes, ChatGPT has become a powerful tool for boosting students' engagement in the English language learning process. ChatGPT can provide dynamic and engaging content that exceeds traditional teaching methods (Atakuziev et al., 2024). Additionally, ChatGPT has also proven beneficial for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers to design effective English teaching methods to help personalize the creation of curricula and materials, adapting to meet the unique needs of EFL students (Koraishi, 2023). ChatGPT has the potential to transform English teaching and learning by boosting learners' motivation, developing listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills, and improving English language learning. Integrating ChatGPT into the classroom can foster a more engaging and interactive learning environment, helping both students and teachers. In particular, using ChatGPT as an assisted debate clinic method to teach English significantly improved the oral proficiency of EFL students (Syaripuddin, 2024). Moreover, ChatGPT's conversational abilities make it a great tool for improving English listening skills through real-time interactions. Learners can actively practice listening comprehension while the chatbot's diverse responses expose learners to different speech patterns, accents, and vocabulary (Tokac et al., 2019). In addition, ChatGPT supports the development of writing skills by enabling users to engage in self-directed learning activities, such as translations and text summarization (Phuong, 2024). Recent research in English language learning has highlighted the positive impact of integrating ChatGPT on learner motivation, especially in enhancing reading and writing skills (Garkusha & Gorodova, 2023). Furthermore, ChatGPT assisted students in writing long essays and identifying grammatical mistakes within the sentences. However, while ChatGPT helped generate content, students still needed to review and edit the text to correct any grammatical errors (Fitria, 2023). Then, ongoing research and experimentation are crucial to fully understanding the implications and challenges of incorporating ChatGPT into educational English language teaching and learning (Songsiengchai et al., 2023).

2. Related Studies on Students' Attitudes and Behaviors toward Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in English Teaching and Learning

To describe the students' attitudes and behaviors toward using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in English teaching and learning, there was a study in Jordan involving 880 students that highlighted the importance of credibility, usefulness, and ease of use in shaping students' positive attitudes toward adopting AI in classroom settings. The results showed that students viewed AI as a valuable tool for education (Masadeh et al., 2024). Similarly, in Bangladesh, a survey of 344 students revealed that perceptions of AI's usefulness, ease of use, and informativeness significantly influenced students' intention to use it for learning (Rahman et al., 2023). In EFL education, ChatGPT has enhanced university students by personalizing lessons for individual students, offering real-time feedback, and automating grading. However, ethical concerns regarding privacy AI usage must be addressed. Effective implementations highlight the advantages of AI integration, and the future of EFL education will rely on balancing AI with human interaction to foster a more effective learning experience (Amin, 2023). ChatGPT has developed the English teaching and learning process by providing quick access to information. Using ChatGPT helped students improve the four main skills in English

(listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills) (Monika & Suganthan, 2024). A recent study conducted at a University in Thailand on improving English language proficiency through ChatGPT-assisted conversational practice found that ChatGPT was a user-friendly platform that effectively enhanced students' speaking skills. The system helped improve language translation abilities, response speed, and more human-like interactions (Say et al., 2023). Additionally, ChatGPT has been shown to positively enhance L2 writing skills. In a recent study, researchers explored the experiences and perceptions of Thai and Vietnamese EFL learners using ChatGPT for second language (L2) writing. The results revealed that participants had a positive view of using ChatGPT for L2 writing. Participants primarily used ChatGPT to generate ideas and outlines, refine concepts, gather relevant information, and edit drafts for accuracy and suitability (Meniado et al., 2024). ChatGPT can be an effective English language learning tool for learners of English as a foreign language (Athanassopoulos et al., 2023). Furthermore, Ulla et al. (2023), examined the views of seventeen English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers at a Thai university regarding ChatGPT as a language teaching tool. The results showed that the participants had positive attitudes towards ChatGPT and recognized ChatGPT's diverse uses, such as lesson preparation and creating language activities. However, the participants also noted some limitations, particularly concerns about ChatGPT's reliability, trustworthiness, and potential to foster excessive dependence among students.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate EFL students' attitudes toward using ChatGPT in English language learning
2. To explore EFL students' behaviors toward using ChatGPT in English language learning

Methodology

1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach, where the researcher distributed a questionnaire to assess EFL students' attitudes and behaviors regarding the use of ChatGPT in English language learning.

2. Participants

The participants consisted of 48 Thai third-year undergraduate students from the Educational Technology and Communications program at Naresuan University. Participants enrolled in English for 21st Century Communication (Career) course, which was a required subject in the curriculum. The course was designed to enhance critical thinking and develop English language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), with a focus on improving communication for the 21st-century workplace. Throughout the course, participants studied eight units during the first semester of 2024, participating in various learning activities such as listening and note-taking exercises, watching videos and summarizing, practicing conversational exchanges, leading group discussions, delivering short presentations, enhancing reading comprehension, and writing short essays. Additionally, in the English teaching and learning process, the researcher served as the class lecturer and encouraged students to use ChatGPT as a supportive tool to complete learning activities. The participants for this study were selected using

purposive sampling. The criterion sampling involves 1) students enrolled in the English for 21st Century Communication (Career) course during the first semester of 2024, and 2) students who used ChatGPT for English language learning.

3. Instrument and Procedure
3.1 Instrument

The instrument in this study was a questionnaire of EFL students' attitudes and behaviors toward using ChatGPT in English language learning.

3.2 Procedure

To assess EFL students' attitudes and behaviors toward using ChatGPT in English language learning, the researcher created the questionnaire by studying the knowledge, concepts, and various studies that related to students' attitudes and behaviors toward using ChatGPT in English language learning. The questions were adapted from Liu (2023), Atakuziev et al. (2024), and Phuong (2024). There were three main parts. Part 1 involves EFL students' general information. Part 2 examines EFL students' attitudes toward using ChatGPT in English language learning. The Likert Scale was used for each statement, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral., 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree). Finally, Part 3 explores EFL students' behaviors toward using ChatGPT in English language learning. The Likert Scale was used for each statement, ranging from never to always (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, and 5 = always). The index of item-objective congruence (IOC) was used to test the content validity. The questionnaire was content validated by three experts who had a minimum of four years of experience in English language teaching and language assessment. The IOC (Index of Item Objective Congruence) was 1.00, meaning that the questionnaire was valid and accurate. Then, the researcher conducted an instrument try-out with 20 students in a try-out group who had similar characteristics but did not participate in the main research to assess the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was comprehensible for the students. The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. It was found .82 and considered reliability.

4. Data Collection

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to 48 participants enrolled in the English for 21st Century Communication (Career) course during the first semester of 2024. Then, the researcher explained the objectives of the questionnaire and assured the participants that the answers would not affect the participant's grades in any manner. After clarifying the objectives of the questionnaire, the researcher provided 15 minutes for the participants to complete the questionnaire and then collected all the completed questionnaires.

5. Data Analysis

In this research, the researcher analyzed data collected from the participants using a computer program, presenting the results with mean (*M*) and standard deviation (SD.). For interpreting the mean scores, a Likert Scale was used for each statement. In Part 2, which examines EFL

students' attitudes toward using ChatGPT in English language learning, the mean scores were interpreted as follows: strongly disagree (1.00 - 1.80), disagree (1.81 - 2.60), neutral (2.61 – 3.40), agree (3.41 - 4.20), and strongly agree (4.21 - 5.00) (Nyutu et al., 2021). In Part 3, which explores EFL students' behaviors toward using ChatGPT in English language learning, the mean scores were interpreted as: never (1.00 - 1.80), rarely (1.81 - 2.60), sometimes (2.61 – 3.40), often (3.41 - 4.20), and always (4.21 - 5.00) (Eryilmaz, 2015).

Results

The results were divided into three sections: general information, attitudes toward using ChatGPT in English language learning, and behaviors toward using ChatGPT in English language learning.

1. General Information

From the findings, there were 48 participants, including 18 males ($N = 18$) and 30 females ($N = 30$). They were Thai third-year undergraduate students aged between 20-25 years old ($N = 48$).

2. EFL Students' Attitudes toward Using ChatGPT in English Language Learning

Table 1
EFL Students' Attitudes toward Using ChatGPT in English Language Learning

Items	*M*	*SD.*	Levels of Agreement
1. ChatGPT is simple and convenient.	4.83	0.38	Strongly Agree
2. ChatGPT helps to improve English listening skills.	4.08	0.87	Agree
3. ChatGPT helps to improve English speaking skills.	3.35	1.06	Neutral
4. ChatGPT helps to improve English reading skills.	4.13	0.91	Agree
5. ChatGPT helps to improve English writing skills.	4.31	0.95	Strongly Agree
6. I understand the content provided by ChatGPT easily.	4.19	0.96	Agree
7. ChatGPT helps to gain insightful knowledge of English language learning.	4.35	0.76	Strongly Agree
8. ChatGPT provides more English language learning opportunities.	4.60	0.49	Strongly Agree
9. ChatGPT should be used as a supportive tool in English language learning.	4.75	0.44	Strongly Agree
10. ChatGPT helps to enhance confidence in doing assignments.	4.42	0.71	Strongly Agree
Overall	4.30	0.75	Strongly Agree

Note. N = 48

Table 1 shows that EFL students strongly agreed that ChatGPT was simple and convenient to use ($M = 4.83$). Students also strongly agreed that ChatGPT should be used as a supportive tool in English language learning ($M = 4.75$). Additionally, ChatGPT provides more English language learning opportunities ($M = 4.60$). Regarding the attitudes of EFL students toward using ChatGPT in developing four English skills, the findings show that students strongly agreed that ChatGPT helped to improve writing skills ($M = 4.31$). They also agreed that ChatGPT helped improve reading ($M = 4.13$) and listening skills ($M = 4.08$). However, the student's attitude was more neutral regarding improving speaking skills ($M = 3.35$).

3. EFL Students' Behaviors toward Using ChatGPT in English Language Learning

Table 2

EFL Students' Behaviors toward Using ChatGPT in English Language Learning

Items	*M*	*SD.*	Levels of Frequency
1. I use ChatGPT to improve English listening skills.	3.63	1.10	Often
.I use ChatGPT to improve English speaking skills.	3.04	1.11	Sometimes
3. I use ChatGPT to improve English reading skills.	3.94	0.86	Often
4. I use ChatGPT to improve English writing skills.	4.23	0.90	Always
5. I use ChatGPT in doing assignments.	4.19	0.82	Often
6. I use ChatGPT to enhance interest and motivation in English language learning.	3.96	1.03	Often
7. I tend to invest my time and effort in using ChatGPT to improve my English proficiency.	4.15	0.95	Often

Note. N = 48

Table 2 indicates the behaviors of EFL students toward using ChatGPT in enhancing four English skills; the findings show that students highly used ChatGPT to improve writing skills ($M = 4.23$), followed by reading ($M = 3.94$), listening ($M = 3.63$), and speaking skills ($M = 3.04$). Students also used ChatGPT in doing assignments ($M = 4.19$) and tended to invest time and effort in using ChatGPT to improve English proficiency ($M = 4.15$). Additionally, students used ChatGPT to enhance their interest and motivation in English language learning ($M = 3.96$).

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate EFL students' attitudes and behaviors toward using ChatGPT in English language learning. The results revealed that EFL students strongly agreed that ChatGPT was easy and convenient to use ($M = 4.83$). Students also strongly agreed that ChatGPT should be used as a supplementary tool in English language learning ($M = 4.75$). Moreover, students believed that ChatGPT offered additional opportunities for learning English ($M = 4.60$) and helped increase confidence in completing assignments ($M = 4.42$). Furthermore, ChatGPT was seen as a valuable resource for gaining insightful knowledge ($M = 4.35$). Students found the content provided by ChatGPT easy to understand ($M = 4.19$). In terms of developing the four main English language skills, students strongly agreed that ChatGPT contributed to improvements in writing skills ($M = 4.31$), followed by reading ($M = 4.13$), and listening skills ($M = 4.08$). However, the results show a lower agreement regarding ChatGPT's impact on speaking skills ($M = 3.35$), consistent with the finding that students only sometimes used ChatGPT to enhance speaking abilities. Conversely, ChatGPT was found to significantly enhance students' writing and reading skills. The tool offered immediate feedback, highlighted areas for improvement, and assisted in the overall development of language proficiency. Through this interactive support, ChatGPT helped students improve writing skills. However, attitudes were more neutral regarding improving listening and speaking abilities. (Ali et al., 2023; Atakuziev et al., 2024). Similarly, the students showed confidence in ChatGPT's capability to serve as an automatic grammar checker and paraphrasing tool, particularly for written essays. On the other hand, students also recognized ChatGPT's limitations in enhancing English listening and speaking skills because ChatGPT lacked face-to-face communication (Phuong, 2024).

Based on the findings, the behaviors of EFL students toward using ChatGPT to develop the four English language skills show varied results. The findings indicate that students most frequently used ChatGPT to enhance writing skills ($M = 4.23$), followed by reading ($M = 3.94$), listening ($M = 3.63$), and speaking skills ($M = 3.04$). Additionally, students often used ChatGPT to complete assignments ($M = 4.19$). Similarly, many students used ChatGPT to do assignments such as summarizing, paraphrasing, and proofreading (Črček & Patekar, 2023). Students also showed a tendency to invest time and effort in using ChatGPT to enhance English proficiency ($M = 4.15$) and to increase students' interest and motivation in learning English ($M = 3.96$). Additionally, students adopted ChatGPT for various other purposes, such as revising material, enhancing learning, correcting errors, explaining concepts, and developing writing skills (Bok & Cho, 2023).

Conclusion

In this study, the results were based on EFL students' perceptions toward the experiences of using ChatGPT in English language learning. ChatGPT played a vital role in shaping EFL students' attitudes as a supplementary tool for enhancing both hard and soft English skills. Students had a positive view of using ChatGPT to support English language learning, finding ChatGPT's user-friendly, simple, and convenient. Students particularly gained advantages

from ChatGPT's assistance with writing and reading skills. However, students expressed less confidence in ChatGPT's ability to improve listening and speaking skills. Students also often used ChatGPT to complete assignments and were willing to invest time and effort in using ChatGPT to enhance overall English proficiency. Additionally, ChatGPT was an effective tool to raise students' interest and motivation in learning English. Furthermore, to obtain more in-depth insights into EFL students' attitudes and behaviors toward using ChatGPT in English language learning, conducting interviews with some students could be valuable for future research.

Recommendations

1. Implications

ChatGPT is a valuable resource for supporting EFL students in English language learning. Schools and universities should consider incorporating ChatGPT into the curriculum in a structured way, covering all four areas of English proficiency: listening, speaking, writing, and reading. In addition, comprehensive training programs should be developed for both students and teachers to ensure effective and informed use of ChatGPT in the learning process. However, there are important ethical considerations regarding the use of ChatGPT. It is essential to establish clear guidelines for the ethical use of AI in academic settings, particularly concerning issues such as information accuracy and plagiarism. Technology experts, researchers, and teachers must work together to ensure that ChatGPT is used responsibly and effectively in English language teaching and learning.

2. Further Studies

In this research, the researcher focused solely on university students as participants. To gain a broader and more in-depth understanding of EFL students' attitudes and behaviors toward using ChatGPT in English language learning, conducting research with students at different educational levels would be beneficial. Also, conducting longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term impact of ChatGPT on English language learning in all four skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) is essential. Further studies should also compare the effectiveness of ChatGPT with other AI language learning tools and traditional teaching methods in order to identify the most effective approaches for creating an optimal English teaching and learning environment that enhances EFL learners' language proficiency.

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