



Students' Perceptions of ChatGPT as an AI Based Learning Tool in EFL

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-04-07 Revised: 2026-05-19 Accepted: 2026-09-16 Keywords: ChatGPT, EFL learning, artificial intelligence, students' perceptions, language learning DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i2.10895 Corresponding Author: Naza Fanisa triutami136@gmail.com English Department, University of North Sumatera, Medan	<i>This study investigates senior high school students' perceptions of using ChatGPT as an AI-based learning tool in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. The study focuses on four dimensions: frequency of use, perceived usefulness, ease of use, and comparison between ChatGPT and English teachers. A quantitative descriptive research design was employed with 68 students from Grades X to XII at SMA Negeri 3 Medan. Data were collected through a close-ended questionnaire consisting of 15 statements measured using a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations. The findings indicate that all four dimensions fall within the Neutral category. Ease of use obtained the highest composite mean ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.77$), followed by frequency of use ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.80$) and perceived usefulness ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.88$), while comparison with teachers obtained the lowest composite mean ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.80$). These findings suggest that students recognize some practical value in ChatGPT but do not express strongly positive perceptions of its use for English learning. Students also appear to position ChatGPT more as a supplementary resource than as a replacement for English teachers. The findings should be interpreted as evidence of students' reported use and perceptions rather than as evidence of ChatGPT's demonstrated effectiveness in improving English proficiency. The study highlights the importance of teacher guidance, critical evaluation, verification of AI-generated information, and responsible use when integrating ChatGPT into EFL learning.</i>

1. Introduction

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has brought significant changes to educational practices, particularly in the ways students access information, receive feedback, and engage with learning resources. Among the various generative AI tools available today, ChatGPT has attracted considerable attention because of its ability to generate responses, provide explanations, answer questions, and support users in completing a range of language related tasks. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, these capabilities may provide students with additional opportunities to obtain explanations, examples, language practice, and feedback beyond the classroom. The use of technology to support language learning has also been associated with opportunities for individualized language practice and learner interaction. Recent reviews of ChatGPT research in language education indicate that the technology has been used for various purposes, including self-directed learning, content generation, feedback, and language practice, while also raising concerns regarding inaccurate information, academic dishonesty, privacy, and the need for appropriate guidance (Lo et al., 2024).

The use of ChatGPT in language education has been examined from several perspectives. Recent empirical research suggests that learners and teachers recognize potential benefits of ChatGPT while also expressing concerns about its limitations. Slamet (2024), for example, investigated the perceptions of 80 EFL teachers and 46 EFL students in East Java, Indonesia, regarding the use of ChatGPT as a digital language-learning assistant. The findings indicated that participants recognized the potential of ChatGPT in language learning while also identifying concerns related to the accuracy of AI-generated information and the need for appropriate training and support. These findings suggest that perceptions of ChatGPT may involve both recognition of its potential benefits and awareness of its limitations.

Other studies have examined ChatGPT in relation to specific areas of EFL learning, particularly writing. Teng (2024) investigated 45 EFL learners in Macau and explored their perceptions and experiences of using ChatGPT for writing feedback. The study employed a mixed methods approach involving questionnaire data and interviews following a semester long writing course. The findings indicated positive effects of AI assistance on writing motivation, self efficacy, engagement, and collaborative writing tendencies, although some participants also expressed concerns about using ChatGPT. These findings suggest that students may perceive ChatGPT as a useful learning resource while simultaneously maintaining certain reservations about its use.

Research has also begun to examine ChatGPT among secondary school EFL learners. Woo et al. (2024) investigated secondary school students who learned to write with ChatGPT support in a classroom instructional context. The students

were introduced to ChatGPT, learned prompt engineering skills, and completed an English writing task with ChatGPT's support. The study examined students' motivation, cognitive load, and satisfaction with the learning process. The findings showed positive aspects of learning with ChatGPT while also identifying considerable cognitive load, particularly in relation to learning prompt engineering. These findings indicate that access to ChatGPT alone does not necessarily guarantee an uncomplicated learning experience and that instructional guidance remains important when integrating generative AI into EFL learning.

Broader reviews also indicate that ChatGPT research in education has expanded rapidly, but the evidence remains heterogeneous across educational contexts, learning activities, and research designs. Earlier systematic research on artificial intelligence in education similarly highlighted the diversity of AI applications and the importance of considering their pedagogical implications (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). Lo et al. (2024), for example, found that empirical studies of ChatGPT in ESL/EFL education have examined different language skills and learning purposes, while also identifying methodological and contextual gaps in the existing literature. Similarly, broader research on ChatGPT in education has emphasized both its potential for personalized learning and feedback and concerns related to misuse, academic integrity, and the possibility of reduced learning when students rely on AI without appropriate guidance (Kasneci et al., 2023).

Although these studies provide important evidence regarding ChatGPT in EFL learning, previous research has often focused on particular language skills, especially writing, specific ChatGPT-assisted learning activities, or broader perceptions of ChatGPT among teachers and students. For example, Teng (2024) examined ChatGPT supported writing feedback, while Woo et al. (2024) focused on a classroom writing activity involving prompt engineering. Slamet (2024), in contrast, examined broader perceptions among EFL teachers and students. These studies provide valuable insights into the potential and challenges of ChatGPT; however, they do not fully explain how senior high school students perceive ChatGPT across multiple dimensions of their broader English learning practices.

More specifically, there is a need to examine students' perceptions not only in terms of whether ChatGPT is useful, but also in terms of how frequently students use it, how easy they perceive it to be, and how they position it in relation to their English teachers. Examining these dimensions together is important because a student may perceive ChatGPT as useful without using it frequently, or may find it convenient for obtaining information without considering it equivalent to teacher instruction. A multidimensional examination can therefore provide a more nuanced understanding of whether students perceive ChatGPT primarily as an independent learning tool, a replacement for conventional instruction, or a supplementary resource that operates alongside teacher guided learning.

The role of ChatGPT should also be considered in relation to students' ability to use AI critically and responsibly. Students need not only to know how to interact with generative AI but also to evaluate the accuracy and relevance of AI-generated

information, recognize its limitations, and make appropriate decisions about how its responses should be used in learning. Responsible use is also important because the use of generative AI in education has raised concerns about academic integrity and inappropriate reliance on AI-generated content (Cotton et al., 2024). The concerns regarding accuracy and the need for appropriate training and support identified by Slamet (2024), as well as the cognitive load associated with prompt engineering reported by Woo et al. (2024), demonstrate that educational use of ChatGPT requires more than simple access to the technology.

In the Indonesian senior high school context, this issue is particularly relevant because students increasingly encounter generative AI alongside conventional teacher-led instruction. However, the existing studies discussed above have largely examined specific skills, specific instructional activities, or general perceptions of AI. What remains less clear is how senior high school students perceive ChatGPT across several dimensions of everyday English learning within a regular school context and how they position the technology in relation to their teachers. Addressing this gap is important because understanding students' perceptions across these dimensions can provide a more comprehensive picture of the role that ChatGPT may occupy in EFL learning.

Therefore, this study investigates senior high school students' perceptions of using ChatGPT for learning English at SMA Negeri 3 Medan. Specifically, the study examines (1) the frequency with which students use ChatGPT for learning English, (2) their perceived usefulness of ChatGPT for different aspects of English learning, (3) their perceived ease of using ChatGPT, and (4) their perceptions of ChatGPT in comparison with their English teachers. By examining these dimensions together among students from Grades X to XII, this study contributes empirical evidence from an Indonesian senior high school context and provides a broader understanding of how students position ChatGPT as a supplementary resource within teacher guided EFL learning.

1. Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research question:

"How do students perceive the use of ChatGPT for learning English across different dimensions?"

To provide a clearer focus, the study also addresses the following sub questions:

1. How frequently do students use ChatGPT in learning English?
2. How do students perceive the usefulness of ChatGPT for vocabulary, writing, and overall English learning?
3. How do students perceive the ease of using ChatGPT as a learning tool?
4. How do students compare ChatGPT with teachers in supporting English learning?

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is supported by three theoretical perspectives related to technology enhanced learning and language learning: Behaviorism, Cybernetic Learning Theory, and Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). These perspectives provide a conceptual basis for understanding how students may interact with ChatGPT, receive feedback, and use digital technology as an additional resource in English learning. The theories are used as interpretive frameworks rather than as evidence that ChatGPT itself produces improvements in students' English proficiency.

A. Behaviorism Theory

Behaviorism views learning as a process in which observable responses are shaped through interaction with stimuli and reinforcement. Skinner (1957) emphasized the role of reinforcement and feedback in the development of learned behavior. In language learning, repeated practice and feedback can provide learners with opportunities to recognize errors and adjust their responses.

In relation to ChatGPT, the behaviorist perspective can help explain the potential role of immediate AI generated responses in students' learning interactions. Students can enter questions, language exercises, or writing-related prompts and receive responses that may provide information or feedback. However, the present study does not measure whether such interactions actually improve students' language proficiency. Therefore, Behaviorism is used here to explain the possible learning mechanism underlying repeated interaction and feedback rather than to claim that ChatGPT produces measurable learning gains.

B. Cybernetic Learning Theory

Cybernetic Learning Theory emphasizes feedback, communication, and the regulation of a system through information exchange. Wiener (1961) conceptualized cybernetics in terms of communication and control within systems. Applied to learning, a feedback process can be understood as an interaction in which learners receive information about their responses and use that information to adjust subsequent actions.

ChatGPT can be viewed as a digital environment that facilitates this type of interactive feedback process. Students can provide input, receive an AI-generated response, evaluate the response, and formulate another question or prompt based on the information obtained. This interaction may create a feedback loop that supports students' engagement with learning materials. Nevertheless, the quality and accuracy of AI generated feedback cannot be assumed, and students may require guidance to evaluate and verify the information they receive. This consideration is particularly relevant to the present study because students' perceptions of ChatGPT are examined rather than its objectively measured learning effects.

C. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) refers to the use of computer technologies to facilitate language teaching and learning (Levy, 1997). CALL has developed alongside advances in digital technology and has been used to provide

language practice, access to learning materials, and opportunities for interaction. Chapelle (2001) further emphasized the importance of considering how technological environments support language learning activities and how learners interact with technology in second-language acquisition.

From a CALL perspective, ChatGPT can be viewed as a contemporary AI-based language learning technology that extends opportunities for interaction beyond conventional classroom activities. Unlike earlier forms of CALL that often relied on predetermined exercises or automated responses, generative AI can produce responses dynamically based on students' prompts. This feature may allow students to obtain explanations, examples, vocabulary support, and writing-related assistance according to their immediate needs. At the same time, the use of ChatGPT introduces challenges concerning accuracy, responsible use, academic integrity, and students' ability to evaluate AI generated information. Recent research in EFL education similarly indicates that ChatGPT can provide learning opportunities and personalized support while requiring attention to incorrect information and academic dishonesty (Lo et al., 2024).

Taken together, these three perspectives provide a framework for interpreting students' perceptions of ChatGPT from complementary angles. Behaviorism highlights the role of interaction and feedback, Cybernetic Learning Theory emphasizes feedback loops and information exchange, and CALL situates ChatGPT within the broader development of technology supported language learning. These perspectives support the present study's focus on frequency of use, perceived usefulness, ease of use, and students' perceptions of ChatGPT in relation to their English teachers. They do not, however, imply that ChatGPT is inherently effective or superior to teacher instruction. Rather, they provide a conceptual basis for examining how students perceive and position the technology within their English learning experiences.

2. Method

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to examine senior high school students' perceptions of using ChatGPT for learning English. A descriptive quantitative approach was selected because the study aimed to describe students' reported experiences and perceptions based on their responses to a structured questionnaire rather than to determine the causal effects of ChatGPT on students' English proficiency (Creswell, 2014).

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations.

Participants

The participants were 68 senior high school students from Grades X to XII at SMA Negeri 3 Medan, Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The participants were

selected using purposive sampling based on criteria relevant to the objectives of the study. The inclusion criteria were that the students (1) were enrolled in Grades X-XII, (2) had experience using ChatGPT for learning English, and (3) were willing to participate in the study. A total of 68 completed responses were obtained and included in the analysis.

Research Instrument

The research instrument was a close-ended questionnaire consisting of 15 statements designed to examine students' perceptions and reported experiences of using ChatGPT for learning English. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The statements addressed students' use of ChatGPT, its perceived usefulness and ease of use, and their perceptions of ChatGPT in relation to their English teachers. The questionnaire was administered through Google Forms. Items 3 and 6 contained identical wording in the administered questionnaire. Both items were retained in the analysis because responses had already been collected, and their scores were reported separately without treating them as distinct behavioral indicators.

No formal expert validation, pilot testing, or statistical reliability testing was conducted before the questionnaire was administered. Therefore, the instrument was used to obtain descriptive information about the participating students' reported perceptions and experiences of using ChatGPT rather than as a formally validated measurement scale. This limitation is considered when interpreting the findings and is further addressed in the limitations of the study.

Data Collection

Data were collected through an online questionnaire administered using Google Forms. The questionnaire link was distributed to eligible senior high school students at SMA Negeri 3 Medan. Participants were asked to respond to each statement based on their experiences using ChatGPT for learning English. Participation was voluntary, and a total of 68 completed responses were obtained for analysis.

The mean scores were interpreted using the following categories:

Mean Score	Interpretation
1.00-1.79	Strongly Disagree
1.80-2.59	Disagree
2.60-3.39	Neutral
3.40-4.19	Agree
4.20-5.00	Strongly Agree

Composite mean scores were also calculated for each of the four dimensions to provide an overall description of students' perceptions of ChatGPT across the questionnaire dimensions.

Ethical Considerations

The students were informed about the purpose of the study before completing the questionnaire. Participation was voluntary, and students were asked to participate based on their own willingness. The questionnaire was completed through Google Forms, and no personally identifying information was requested. The responses were treated confidentially and used solely for research purposes.

3. Result

This section presents the results of the questionnaire distributed to senior high school students regarding their perceptions of ChatGPT as an AI based learning tool in EFL. The data are analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean scores, frequency, and percentages. The findings are organized into four aspects: frequency of use, perceived usefulness, ease of use, and comparison between ChatGPT and teachers.

Frequency of Using ChatGPT in Learning English

This section describes how frequently students use ChatGPT to support their English learning.

Table 1. Students' Frequency of Using ChatGPT in Learning English

Item	Statement	Mean	Interpretation
1	I frequently use ChatGPT to help me learn English.	3.13	Neutral
2	I use ChatGPT when I have difficulties understanding English lessons.	3.38	Neutral
3	I use ChatGPT to practice my English skills outside the classroom.	3.15	Neutral
4	I often use ChatGPT when doing my English assignments.	2.91	Neutral
6	I use ChatGPT to practice my English skills outside the classroom.	3.22	Neutral

Table 1 presents the reported frequency of students' use of ChatGPT in learning English. The five items obtained mean scores ranging from 2.91 to 3.38, all of which fall within the Neutral category. Overall, the findings indicate that students reported a neutral level of ChatGPT use across the English learning activities examined in the questionnaire.

Item 2 obtained the highest mean score ($M = 3.38$), indicating that students most frequently reported using ChatGPT when they experienced difficulties understanding English lessons. Item 4 obtained the lowest mean score ($M = 2.91$), indicating comparatively lower reported use when completing English assignments. Items 1, 3, and 6 produced mean scores of 3.13, 3.15, and 3.22,

respectively, while all remained within the Neutral category. Items 3 and 6 had identical wording in the questionnaire and are therefore reported separately as individual item responses rather than interpreted as representing different behaviors.

Perceived Usefulness of ChatGPT

This section presents students' perceptions of the usefulness of ChatGPT in improving their English skills.

Table 2. Students' Perceived Usefulness of ChatGPT

Item	Statement	Mean	Interpretation
5	ChatGPT helps me improve my English vocabulary.	3.16	Neutral
7	ChatGPT helps me improve my English writing skills.	3.21	Neutral
8	ChatGPT is useful for improving my overall English skills.	3.10	Neutral

Table 2 presents students' perceptions of the usefulness of ChatGPT for supporting different aspects of English learning. All three items fall within the Neutral category, with mean scores ranging from 3.10 to 3.21. This indicates that the students expressed neither a clearly positive nor a clearly negative perception of ChatGPT's usefulness for the English learning aspects examined. Item 7, concerning the use of ChatGPT for improving English writing skills, obtained the highest mean score ($M = 3.21$). This was followed by Item 5, concerning vocabulary improvement ($M = 3.16$). Item 8, concerning the usefulness of ChatGPT for improving overall English skills, recorded the lowest mean score ($M = 3.10$).

Although the differences among the three items were relatively small, all scores remained within the Neutral category. Overall, the findings indicate a neutral perception of ChatGPT's usefulness for supporting vocabulary, writing, and broader English learning.

Ease of Use of ChatGPT

This section presents students' perceptions regarding the ease of using ChatGPT as a learning tool.

Table 3. Students' Perceptions of the Ease of Using ChatGPT

Item	Statement	Mean	Interpretation
9	I find ChatGPT easy to use for learning English.	3.16	Neutral
10	It is easy for me to ask questions to ChatGPT about English topics.	3.24	Neutral
11	The explanations provided by ChatGPT are clear and easy to understand.	3.29	Neutral

12	I can quickly find information about English learning by using ChatGPT.	3.35	Neutral
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Table 3 presents students' perceptions of the ease of using ChatGPT for learning English. All four items fall within the Neutral category, with mean scores ranging from 3.16 to 3.35. This indicates that students reported a neutral perception of the ease of using ChatGPT for English learning purposes. Item 12 obtained the highest mean score ($M = 3.35$), indicating that students relatively more strongly perceived ChatGPT as convenient for quickly finding information related to English learning. Item 11 followed with a mean score of 3.29, suggesting a neutral perception of the clarity and understandability of ChatGPT's explanations. Item 10 obtained a mean score of 3.24, while Item 9 recorded the lowest mean score ($M = 3.16$). Although all four items remained within the Neutral category, the relatively higher scores for Items 11 and 12 suggest that students perceived some practical advantages in accessing information and explanations through ChatGPT.

Overall, however, the findings indicate neutral rather than strongly positive perceptions of ChatGPT's ease of use.

Comparison Between ChatGPT and English Teachers

This section presents students' perceptions comparing ChatGPT with their English teachers in supporting English learning.

Table 4. Students' Comparison Between ChatGPT and English Teachers

Item	Statement	Mean	Interpretation
13	ChatGPT helps me understand English lessons as well as my English teacher.	3.00	Neutral
14	ChatGPT's explanations are sometimes easier to understand than my English teacher's explanations.	2.75	Neutral
15	ChatGPT is a helpful supplement to my English teacher in learning English.	3.16	Neutral

Table 4 presents students' perceptions of ChatGPT in comparison with their English teachers. All three items fall within the Neutral category, with mean scores ranging from 2.75 to 3.16. Item 15, which describes ChatGPT as a helpful supplement to the English teacher, obtained the highest mean score ($M = 3.16$). This suggests that students were relatively more inclined to view ChatGPT as an additional learning resource rather than as a replacement for teacher support. Item 13, concerning whether ChatGPT helps students understand English lessons as well as their English teacher, obtained a mean score of 3.00. Item 14, concerning whether ChatGPT's explanations are sometimes easier to understand than those provided by the English teacher, obtained the lowest mean score ($M = 2.75$). Overall, the findings indicate that students did not strongly perceive ChatGPT as equivalent

to or superior to their English teachers. Instead, the responses suggest a neutral perception in which ChatGPT may function as a supplementary resource alongside teacher led instruction.

Table 5. Summary of Students' Perceptions of Using ChatGPT

Dimension	No. of Items	Composite Mean	SD	Interpretation
Frequency of Use	5	3.16	0.80	Neutral
Perceived Usefulness	3	3.16	0.88	Neutral
Ease of Use	4	3.26	0.77	Neutral
Comparison with Teachers	3	2.97	0.80	Neutral

Table 5 summarizes students' perceptions across the four dimensions examined in the study. The composite mean scores for all four dimensions fall within the Neutral category, ranging from 2.97 to 3.26. The highest composite mean was found for ease of use ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.77$), followed by perceived usefulness ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.88$) and frequency of use ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.80$). The comparison with teachers dimension obtained the lowest composite mean ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.80$). Overall, the findings indicate that the students expressed neutral perceptions of ChatGPT across the four dimensions rather than strong agreement regarding its use for English learning.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that students at SMA Negeri 3 Medan generally held neutral perceptions of ChatGPT for learning English. Across the four dimensions examined, all composite mean scores fell within the Neutral category. Ease of Use obtained the highest composite mean ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.77$), followed by Frequency of Use ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.80$) and Perceived Usefulness ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.88$), while Comparison with Teachers obtained the lowest score ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.80$). These findings suggest that students recognized some practical value in ChatGPT but did not express strongly positive perceptions of its use as an English learning tool. The results therefore indicate a relatively cautious orientation toward ChatGPT rather than an unreserved acceptance of generative AI in English learning.

The findings reveal an important relationship between students' reported use of ChatGPT and their perceptions of its usefulness. Both Frequency of Use and Perceived Usefulness obtained the same composite mean ($M = 3.16$), while Ease of Use recorded a slightly higher mean ($M = 3.26$). These results indicate that students neither reported intensive use of ChatGPT nor expressed strongly positive perceptions of its usefulness. Nevertheless, the relatively higher score for Ease of Use suggests that students may find ChatGPT accessible and convenient even though their reported use remains within the Neutral category. This pattern may

indicate that accessibility alone does not necessarily result in frequent use. Students may use ChatGPT selectively for particular English learning needs rather than incorporating it routinely into all learning activities. However, the present study did not investigate the specific reasons for students' frequency of use; therefore, factors such as access, teacher policies, academic integrity concerns, AI literacy, or the extent of classroom integration should be considered as possible explanations rather than established causes.

The findings of the present study are broadly consistent with previous research showing that students recognize the potential value of ChatGPT while maintaining some reservations about its use. Slamet (2024), who investigated 46 EFL students and 80 EFL teachers in East Java, found that participants recognized the potential of ChatGPT as a digital language-learning assistant but also identified concerns related to language accuracy and technological dependence. This combination of potential benefits and concerns is comparable to the neutral perceptions found in the present study, where students did not express strongly positive views of ChatGPT despite reporting some practical use of the technology. However, the present findings differ in emphasis from Teng (2024), who reported positive effects of ChatGPT assistance on writing motivation, self efficacy, engagement, and collaborative writing among 45 EFL learners in Macau. This difference may be related to the learning context and research focus. Teng's study involved a semester-long writing course in which ChatGPT was deliberately integrated into the writing process, whereas the present study examined students' reported use and perceptions of ChatGPT across broader English learning practices. Therefore, the more neutral perceptions found in the present study may reflect the less structured and more general nature of students' ChatGPT use. However, this interpretation remains tentative because the present study did not directly examine the extent of classroom integration or the specific reasons for students' use.

The relatively higher score for Ease of Use also deserves attention. Although the overall perception remained within the Neutral category, Ease of Use obtained the highest composite mean among the four dimensions ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.77$). At the item level, students reported relatively higher perceptions regarding their ability to quickly find information about English learning through ChatGPT and the clarity of ChatGPT's explanations. These findings are broadly consistent with previous research describing ChatGPT as accessible for obtaining information and receiving language-related assistance. Slamet (2024), for example, reported that students and teachers recognized the potential of ChatGPT as a digital language learning assistant, while Woo et al. (2024) found positive aspects of ChatGPT supported learning among secondary school EFL students. However, Woo et al. (2024) also reported considerable cognitive load associated with learning prompt engineering. This suggests that perceived ease of access does not necessarily mean that students can use ChatGPT effectively for all learning purposes. Students may

find the technology convenient to access while still requiring guidance to formulate appropriate prompts, evaluate AI generated responses, and use the information appropriately in their English learning.

The findings regarding students' comparison of ChatGPT with their English teachers provide an important pedagogical implication. The Comparison with Teachers dimension obtained the lowest composite mean among the four dimensions ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.80$). At the item level, students gave the highest mean to the statement that ChatGPT is a helpful supplement to their English teacher ($M = 3.16$), whereas the statement concerning whether ChatGPT's explanations are sometimes easier to understand than those provided by the English teacher obtained the lowest mean ($M = 2.75$). This pattern suggests that students did not strongly perceive ChatGPT as equivalent to or superior to their teachers. Instead, the findings point toward a complementary role in which ChatGPT may provide additional, on-demand assistance while teachers continue to provide contextual judgment, pedagogical scaffolding, verification, and interpersonal support. This interpretation is consistent with Woo et al. (2024), who found that secondary school EFL students experienced positive aspects of ChatGPT supported learning but also required instructional scaffolding, particularly when dealing with prompt engineering and the cognitive demands of AI-supported writing. Therefore, the present findings suggest that ChatGPT may be used as a supplementary resource within teacher-guided English learning rather than as a replacement for teacher instruction.

The findings also highlight the importance of AI literacy in students' use of ChatGPT for English learning. However, the present study did not directly measure students' AI literacy; therefore, no conclusion can be made about their actual ability to use ChatGPT critically or ethically. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that perceived ease of use should not be equated with effective use of generative AI. Students need to be able to evaluate the accuracy and relevance of AI-generated responses, recognize the limitations of generated information, and determine when AI assistance is appropriate for a particular learning task. This consideration is consistent with Werdiningsih et al. (2024), who reported that EFL students valued ChatGPT for vocabulary clarification and content suggestions while also recognizing the importance of human judgment and concerns related to authenticity and ethical use. In addition, the cognitive load reported by Woo et al. (2024) in relation to prompt engineering suggests that students may require guidance not only in accessing ChatGPT but also in interacting with it purposefully. Therefore, integrating ChatGPT into English learning should be accompanied by opportunities for students to develop critical evaluation, verification, and responsible use practices rather than relying uncritically on AI generated information.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings suggest that ChatGPT may be most appropriately integrated as a supplementary resource within teacher guided English learning. The neutral perceptions across the four dimensions indicate that

simply providing students with access to ChatGPT may not be sufficient to promote meaningful learning. Instead, teachers can guide students in using ChatGPT for specific learning purposes, such as generating ideas, clarifying concepts, practicing language forms, or obtaining preliminary feedback, while requiring them to evaluate and verify AI generated responses. Teachers can also help students develop appropriate prompting strategies and recognize situations in which AI assistance may be inappropriate or insufficient. In this complementary model, ChatGPT can provide immediate and individualized language support, while teachers retain responsibility for contextual judgment, pedagogical scaffolding, verification, and interpersonal support. Such an approach may allow students to benefit from the accessibility of generative AI without treating AI-generated information as a substitute for teacher expertise.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study was conducted with students from a single senior high school, which limits the transferability of the findings to other schools and educational contexts. Second, the study relied on students' self-reported responses, which reflect their perceptions and reported use of ChatGPT rather than objectively observed patterns of technology use. Third, the study did not include a direct measure of students' English proficiency or learning achievement; therefore, the findings cannot establish whether ChatGPT use resulted in improvements in students' English language abilities.

Fourth, the cross sectional design provides a snapshot of students' perceptions at one point in time and does not capture how their perceptions or use of ChatGPT may change over time. Fifth, the questionnaire was not subjected to formal expert validation, pilot testing, or statistical reliability testing before data collection. Consequently, the instrument should not be regarded as a formally validated measurement scale. Finally, the questionnaire-based approach did not provide qualitative explanations of why students reported particular levels of use or perception. Future research could address these limitations by involving multiple schools and larger samples, establishing questionnaire validity and reliability through expert review, pilot testing, and appropriate statistical procedures, combining self reported data with qualitative interviews or observations, incorporating measures of English proficiency or learning outcomes, and examining students' use of ChatGPT longitudinally.

Overall, the findings should therefore be interpreted as evidence of students' reported use and perceptions of ChatGPT rather than evidence of its demonstrated effectiveness for English language learning. The results show that students reported use of ChatGPT within the Neutral category, perceived it as relatively easy to use, and viewed it more favorably as a supplementary resource than as a replacement for their English teachers. These findings highlight the importance of distinguishing between perceived usefulness, actual usage, and demonstrated learning effectiveness. While the present study provides evidence concerning the

first two, it does not directly establish the third. Accordingly, the educational value of ChatGPT should be considered in relation to how it is integrated into teacher guided learning and how students are supported in using generative AI critically, responsibly, and purposefully.

5. Conclusion

This study examined senior high school students' perceptions of using ChatGPT for learning English at SMA Negeri 3 Medan. Based on the responses of 68 students from Grades X to XII, the findings indicate neutral perceptions across the four dimensions examined: frequency of use, perceived usefulness, ease of use, and comparison with English teachers. Among the four dimensions, ease of use obtained the highest composite mean ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.77$), followed by frequency of use ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.80$) and perceived usefulness ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.88$), while comparison with teachers obtained the lowest composite mean ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.80$). These findings suggest that students recognized some practical value in ChatGPT but did not express strongly positive perceptions of its use for English learning.

The findings further suggest that ChatGPT is more appropriately positioned as a supplementary resource rather than a replacement for English teachers. Students' neutral perceptions of ChatGPT in comparison with their teachers indicate that teacher-led instruction remains important in the learning process. ChatGPT may provide additional access to explanations, information, and language related assistance, but its use should be accompanied by teacher guidance, critical evaluation, and verification of AI generated information.

The study also highlights the importance of developing students' AI literacy. Effective use of ChatGPT requires students not only to interact with the technology but also to evaluate the accuracy and relevance of AI generated information, recognize its limitations, and use it responsibly. Therefore, English teachers and schools may consider providing guidance on responsible AI use, information verification, academic integrity, and the complementary integration of AI tools with teacher instruction.

Finally, the findings should be interpreted within the limitations of the study, particularly its single-school sample, purposive sampling, self-reported data, lack of formal questionnaire validation and reliability testing, and descriptive cross-sectional design. The study does not establish a causal relationship between ChatGPT use and English learning outcomes. Future research involving larger and more diverse samples, validated instruments, longitudinal or experimental designs, qualitative data, and objective measures of English proficiency could provide stronger evidence regarding the educational role and effectiveness of ChatGPT in EFL contexts.

6. References

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