

**Exploring Final-Year English Major Students' Perceptions and
Experiences of Using ChatGPT in Their Academic Writing at a
Private University.**



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ChatGPT in Their Academic Writing at a Private University.**

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.



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DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate my work to my cherished life partner, Kashfia Kashem (Chewce), whose unwavering support has been pivotal during my most challenging days. I also extend my gratitude to my Dada Bhai, Asaduzzaman Asad, whose encouragement has shaped me into the confident and ambitious person I am today. Additionally, I wish to acknowledge my younger sibling, Sanjana Kashem Simran, whose motivation has been a driving force throughout this journey.

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Abstract

This qualitative research explores final-year English Major students' perceptions and experiences using ChatGPT in their academic writing at a private university in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The emergence of generative AI presents a complex new landscape as many students in this context face challenges in developing advanced writing skills. This study addresses a gap in the literature by providing a human-centred perspective that moves beyond statistical data to understand the nuanced realities of student engagement. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by using a qualitative research design with ten final-year English Major students. The interview data were analysed thematically and interpreted through the lens of Social Constructivism to understand how students actively build their knowledge and meaning of this technology. The findings reveal a dual perspective where students see significant benefits, particularly in time efficiency, idea generation, and language refinement, that help them with grammar and vocabulary. Conversely, these advantages are balanced by serious concerns about the tool's accuracy and originality, as well as the risk of over-reliance and its potential to undermine their critical thinking. In response, students have developed adaptive strategies, primarily using ChatGPT for pre-writing and editing, while diligently cross-checking information. The study concludes that students' understanding of ChatGPT is not static but dynamically built through their connection with the tool, their peers, and the academic environment. These findings underscore a clear need for educational institutions to proactively develop clear policies by offering workshops and training to help students become ethical and critical communicators in an AI-integrated world.

Keywords: ChatGPT, Generative AI, Academic Writing, Social Constructivism, Student Perceptions, Student Experiences, EFL Context, Qualitative Research, Academic Integrity.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Bangladesh presents a distinctive combination of challenges and opportunities that mirrors the experiences of numerous developing countries in the educational landscape. One significant issue is the persistent struggle to establish strong academic writing skills, particularly among those students who are advancing to higher education levels (Khan et al., 2024). This troubling reality often stems from a variety of factors, including fundamental educational practices, limited exposure to different types of content, and an emphasis on rote memorisation rather than fostering critical thinking and analytical skills (Hasan et al., 2025). Mastering writing in an academic context is essential for students in fields that demand high proficiency in written communication because it not only serves as a crucial skill but also as a foundation for intellectual growth, critical analysis, and future career opportunities (Muniruzzaman & Afrin, 2024).

At the same time, the global education landscape is undergoing significant changes due to rapid advancements led by Artificial Intelligence (AI). Generative AI technologies, such as Large Language Models (LLMs) like OpenAI's ChatGPT, have transitioned from mere fictional concepts to integral parts of our everyday lives (Wang et al., 2024). These advanced models are capable of generating text that is similar to human writing, and their role within educational settings has become increasingly important. AI is transforming the way students learn and educators deliver instruction, aiding in everything from information retrieval to the creation of intricate narratives. The emergence of such powerful technology, particularly in a context where academic writing skills need improvement, creates a unique and complex situation. While these

technologies offer promising avenues for enhancing writing and providing support, they also bring forth pressing questions regarding originality, academic integrity, and authorship in environments where AI plays a significant role (Fazil et al., 2024). This study explores the relationship between ChatGPT and scholarly writing, focusing on the perceptions and experiences of final-year English Major students at a private university that aims to gain a deeper understanding of how students interact with this emerging tool and its implications for their academic pursuits.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the increasing availability and widespread use of ChatGPT among university students globally, a critical research gap remains in the qualitative context, specifically in examining the nuanced perceptions and concrete experiences of final-year English Major students within private universities regarding its application in their academic writing. The existing literary discussions on AI in education frequently address its broader implications on ethical dilemmas from an institutional perspective. They rely more on quantitative data, as it is valuable for identifying trends of quantitative approaches, which usually fall short of capturing the intricate subjective realities of student engagement with these emerging tools (Al-Mamary et al., 2024). The lack of detailed qualitative insights suggests a significant gap in understanding the perceptions and experiences of final-year students, as they often find themselves at a pivotal point in their academic journey, where their writing practices are genuinely evolving in anticipation of graduation and entry into professional life.

Without a thorough understanding of their lived experiences, educators and academic administrators face significant challenges in formulating effective pedagogical strategies,

developing practical curriculum guidelines, or implementing fair and supportive policies for AI integration that genuinely cater to the needs of these graduating students. This lack of attention could lead to a predominantly reactive stance toward AI in education, which may hinder genuine learning outcomes and leave students inadequately equipped for a future where AI tools are becoming increasingly common (Anik & Rahman, 2025). Therefore, there is an urgent qualitative need to explore these subjective perceptions and lived experiences to inform more proactive, pedagogically sound, and contextually relevant approaches to AI in academic writing within private university settings.

1.3 Research Objectives

This qualitative study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify and describe final-year English Major students' perceptions of the advantages and challenges related to using ChatGPT in their academic writing.
2. To explore and elaborate on final-year English Major students' lived experiences of integrating and adapting to ChatGPT in their academic writing practices.

1.4 Research Questions

In pursuance of the objectives stated above, this study seeks to investigate the following specific research questions:

1. **RQ1:** What are Private University final-year English Major students' perceptions regarding the advantages and challenges of using ChatGPT in their academic writing?
2. **RQ2:** How do Private University final-year English Major students describe their lived experiences of integrating and adapting to ChatGPT in their academic writing practices?

1.5 Significance of the Study

At first, this study will contribute valuable qualitative insights to the rapidly expanding academic discourse on AI in education by aiming to offer a nuanced human-centred perspective that complements existing quantitative studies. This detailed understanding can shed light on the complex psychological, ethical, and practical dimensions of tools like ChatGPT's use in an academic context, as well as enrich the collective body of knowledge beyond mere statistical observations, providing a deeper understanding of student realities (Baidoo-Anu & Leticia, 2023). This research also carries direct implications by articulating the diverse range of perceptions and experiences among students about the practical, ethical, and critical engagement with AI tools. It can encourage self-reflection on their writing processes and motivate them to leverage technology as a learning enhancement rather than a simplistic shortcut, ultimately promoting greater autonomy.

Furthermore, this study specifically focuses on a private university in Bangladesh that offers a unique contextual contribution. While a significant portion of current research originates from Western academic settings, it will provide localised insights into the realities faced by students within a distinct regional context. This contextual relevance yields findings that are particularly valuable for local policymakers and educational stakeholders seeking to adapt global trends within the national educational framework.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The literature review chapter highlights the literature on the use of ChatGPT by final-year English Major students in their academic writing. It examines the importance of academic writing and the rise of generative AI, identifying key themes in student perceptions and experiences. The theoretical framework guides the study's qualitative investigation by highlighting research gaps and the study's unique contribution.

2.1 The Essence of Academic Writing in Higher Education

Academic writing stands as a cornerstone of intellectual development and a fundamental skill across all disciplines in higher education (Bailey et al., 2020). It often serves as the primary aspect for demonstrating critical thinking and analytical prowess, which enables students to synthesise complex ideas. They engage deeply with course material by articulating their understanding and contribute meaningfully to scholarly discourse through the act of writing (Swales & Feak, 2012). This foundational skill is particularly significant for English Major students in academic writing because it acts not merely as a utilitarian tool but as a core competency closely linked to the very essence of their discipline.

However, as highlighted in Chapter One, students in contexts like Bangladesh often face significant challenges in acquiring and refining advanced academic writing skills (Tamanna & Sinha, 2024). This struggle can profoundly impede their ability to engage fully with complex academic tasks that articulate their knowledge effectively, ultimately hindering their holistic development and academic progression (Zahra, 2012). As a result, the emergence of assistive technologies like ChatGPT is particularly relevant, as they could serve as scaffolds or deterrents to the genuine development of essential writing competencies.

2.2 The Evolution of AI in Education

The evolution of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has launched a new era of technological capabilities with generative AI tools, like OpenAI's ChatGPT, at the forefront (Wang et al., 2024). These large language models are trained on vast datasets of text, possessing the unprecedented ability to generate coherent, contextually relevant, and human-like prose in response to diverse prompts. Their emergence has had a profound impact on various sectors, and the field of education is no exception (Batta, 2024).

Initially, the academic community's reaction to generative AI was often divided, oscillating between excitement over its potential as an innovative learning tool and profound apprehension regarding its implications for the authenticity and academic integrity of students' work (Davis, 2018). Proponents argue that tools like ChatGPT can provide access to information that assists in brainstorming and offer feedback on writing structure, which may help non-native speakers overcome language barriers (Al-Mamary et al., 2024). Conversely, critics raise legitimate concerns that potential overdependence could lead to a decline in critical thinking, which decreases original thought and challenges in differentiating human-generated work from AI-generated content (Baidoo-Anu & Leticia, 2023). This debate underscores the need for empirical research that transcends mere speculation to understand the actual integration and impact of these tools from the direct users' perspective.

2.3 Perceptions of Using AI in Academic Writing

Existing literature on student perceptions of AI in academic writing reveals a complex and often contradictory landscape. Based on numerous quantitative surveys, students widely

perceive AI tools as advantageous for different stages of their writing. These perceived benefits frequently include idea generation and brainstorming, such as providing starting points or outlines for essays, as well as assistance with grammar and spelling correction, rephrasing, and paraphrasing, and even reducing writing anxiety (Dewi, 2021). Some students view these tools as a form of personalised tutor, capable of providing instant feedback and aiding in the clarification of complex concepts (Batta, 2024).

However, these perceived benefits are often balanced by significant concerns when students are apprehensive about the ethical implications of using AI, fearing its impact on academic integrity, plagiarism, and their ability to develop writing proficiency (Baidoo-Anu & Leticia, 2023). There were also inquiries raised about the reliability and accuracy of AI-generated content, as students recognised that these advanced tools can still create generic and uninspired responses (Davis, 2018). Existing research broadly covers student perceptions of AI but still lacks in-depth qualitative analysis, especially for specific fields like English academic writing and in unique settings such as private universities in non-Western countries like Bangladesh.

2.4 Experiences with AI in Academic Writing

Beyond mere perceptions, understanding students' lived experiences of integrating and adapting to AI tools in their academic writing is crucial. Emerging qualitative studies, albeit limited, suggest diverse patterns of engagement. Some students report using ChatGPT as a preliminary research tool, which can summarise complex articles or identify key arguments before embarking on their analysis (Ou, 2024). Others use it to draft initial sentences or paragraphs when facing writer's block, subsequently editing and refining the AI's output to align

with their voice and argument (Khan et al., 2024). A notable experience reported is the use of AI for language refinement, particularly by non-native English speakers, as they find it helpful for improving syntax, vocabulary, and overall fluency (Dewi, 2021).

Conversely, students also describe experiences of frustration when AI-generated content fails to meet academic standards or lacks critical depth that deviates from the specific requirements of an assignment (Fazil et al., 2024). The process of editing and critically evaluating AI output itself can be a learning experience that forces students to engage more deeply with the nuances of language and argumentation. However, the exact nature of these adaptive processes, by which students consciously or unconsciously adjust their writing habits, learning strategies, and critical thinking skills in response to AI integration, remains an area requiring deeper qualitative exploration (Batta, 2024). The specific experiences of final-year English Major students, who are expected to produce a high level of original academic work, are remarkably underexplored in terms of navigating the assistance offered by AI while maintaining intellectual integrity and developing their academic voice.

2.5 Theoretical Framework: Social Constructivism

The theoretical framework of Social Constructivism underpins this study, a perspective primarily developed from the works of Vygotsky (1978) and later refined by theorists like Berger and Luckmann (1966). Social Constructivism posits that individuals construct knowledge and meaning through their interactions with the world and with others. It emphasises that reality is not passively received but actively built through social processes, language, and cultural tools (Gergen, 1999). In an educational context, learning is viewed as a social activity where meaning-making is a collaborative process, and understanding is negotiated through interaction

and dialogue.

Applying Social Constructivism to this research is not seen as an objective or fixed truth but rather as subjective realities constructed through the students' interactions with the AI tool, their peers, and instructors in the broader academic environment. This framework enables a thorough examination of individual meaning-making by exploring how each final-year English Major student interprets the utility, challenges, and ethical implications of ChatGPT based on their unique background, prior experiences with technology, and academic objectives. Furthermore, ChatGPT can be considered a cultural tool in this framework, where Social Constructivism helps to understand how this tool mediates students' academic writing activities by influencing their thought processes of writing strategy in the final written product (Cole & Engeström, 1993). This framework investigates how students collectively negotiate their understanding of the use of ChatGPT, which is rooted in social constructivism that moves beyond a simple list of pros and cons and explores the "why" and "how" of their adaptation to the technology within their academic community.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The methodology chapter covers the qualitative research design, detailing the participants, methods of data collection, and procedures of data analysis. The framework is informed by social constructivism and is designed to explore the perceptions and experiences of final-year English majors using ChatGPT for academic writing.

3.1 Research Design

A qualitative design was applied for this research, specifically adopting an interpretivist strategy to explore the complex and subjective realities of students' engagement with ChatGPT. This qualitative method is considered the best fit, as the research seeks to understand the underlying "how" and "why" of students' perceptions and experiences, rather than simply measuring their usage or attitudes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This design facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the complex processes involved in meaning-making by adaptation and negotiation that occur as students incorporate AI tools into their writing practices.

By focusing on rich and descriptive data gathered through direct interaction with participants, this methodology facilitates the exploration of nuanced perspectives that quantitative methods might overlook. This approach fits perfectly with Social Constructivism, a theory that says people build their understanding of the world through their interactions with others and their environment. This enables the study to explore the participants' socially constructed perceptions as well as their experiences.

3.2 Research Setting

The study will be conducted at a private university in Dhaka, Bangladesh. This location

was chosen because private universities in the country often have a diverse student population and the necessary digital infrastructure, like reliable internet, to support students' use of tools such as ChatGPT. The university's Department of English and Humanities offers a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in English program, making it an ideal source for recruiting final-year English Major students needed for this study. The context of a private university in Bangladesh also provides a unique cultural and educational backdrop by offering insights that contribute to the under-researched area of AI integration in non-Western academic settings, which is highlighted in the literature review.

3.3 Participants and Sampling

This study's target population comprises final-year English Major students enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts (BA) program at the selected private university. The study will use criterion sampling to select participants, which is a form of purposive sampling that ensures the chosen persons are information-rich and directly relevant to the study's focus (Patton, 2015). The inclusion criteria for participants are: (a) currently enrolled as a final-year English Major student in the specified private university, and (b) having demonstrable experience with using ChatGPT for academic writing tasks. Students who do not meet both of these criteria will be excluded from the study.

A sample size of 8-15 participants is targeted, which is a standard range for qualitative interview studies. This number is expected to be sufficient to reach data saturation, which is a point where further interviews yield no new themes, thereby ensuring the depth and richness of the data (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). The recruitment process will involve initial contact through the university's English Department, followed by direct invitations to eligible students

who express interest in participating.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

The primary method for gathering data in this qualitative research will be through semi-structured interviews. This method is effective for examining perceptions and experiences, as it combines a structured set of questions with the flexibility to explore emerging themes and individual stories (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The interviews will follow a guide based on the research questions. This guide ensures consistency while using open-ended questions and follow-up prompts to get detailed responses. The interview guide will contain questions aimed at understanding students' initial thoughts on ChatGPT and their experiences of using it for various academic writing tasks. This includes perceived advantages and challenges, ethical considerations, and how their writing habits have evolved as a result. To ensure precision in transcription and analysis, all interviews will be audio-recorded with the participants' explicit approval.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

After receiving approval from the private university, potential participants will be recruited through announcements within the department or with the help of departmental faculty, ensuring that the process is free from any coercion. Interested students will be given an informed consent form that clearly outlines their rights, including the ability to participate voluntarily, withdraw at any point without penalty, and have their information kept confidential. The form will also provide details on how study data will be handled. Interviews will be scheduled only after receiving a signed consent form at a time and place that is convenient for participants. Each

interview will be audio-recorded and is expected to last between 15-25 minutes. The researcher will maintain a neutral and empathetic stance to encourage open sharing, and the recordings will be transcribed rigorously and stored safely for further analysis.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedures

By using thematic analysis, the qualitative data from the interviews will be analysed following the methodology of Braun and Clarke (2006). This structured method is ideal for identifying and documenting recurring patterns or themes, which aligns with the study's goal of exploring perceptions and experiences. The analysis will proceed in iterative phases, such as initial familiarisation with the data, systematic coding to identify significant features, and then organising these codes into overarching themes.

The subsequent steps involve reviewing the themes against the entire dataset to ensure their accuracy and refining their definitions. The final themes will be named and defined, with explicit connections made to both the research questions and the Social Constructivism theoretical framework. A comprehensive analytical report will be created by using verbatim participant quotes to present the findings concerning the research questions. To improve the analysis's rigour and transparency, qualitative data analysis software like Transcriber may be used to help organise and code the extensive textual data.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

This research will strictly follow ethical guidelines to safeguard the rights and welfare of all participants. A crucial ethical step is to obtain informed consent from every participant, who

will be thoroughly briefed on the study's goals, precise methods, potential risks, and benefits. By using pseudonyms and eliminating all identifying details, the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants will be protected. To ensure security, all data will be kept on password-protected devices with access restricted to the researcher alone. All individuals will be notified of their right to withdraw from the study at any given time, for any reason, with no penalties, with every precaution taken to minimise harm and prevent psychological or other forms of distress. The interview questions will be carefully crafted to be non-intrusive and respectful. The audio recordings and transcripts will be securely stored, kept for the period required by university policy, and then permanently destroyed.

Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

The findings and analysis chapter presents a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with ten final-year English Major students from a private university in Dhaka. The findings are interpreted through the lens of Social Constructivism, which explores the perceptions and experiences of using ChatGPT in their academic writing and reveals the nuanced relationship between AI technology in writing practices.

4.1 Perceived Advantages of Using ChatGPT (RQ1)

The interviewed students broadly acknowledged several key benefits of integrating ChatGPT into their academic writing processes, primarily revolving around efficiency and initial ideation.

4.1.1 Time Efficiency and Idea Generation

A prominent advantage highlighted by almost all participants was ChatGPT's ability to save time. Mikayel, for instance, explicitly stated, "It actually saves time, mainly saves time," explaining how it drastically cut down hours previously spent on manual summaries and structuring assignments. Sabbir echoed this, noting that before ChatGPT, a big assignment might have taken a week to "figure everything out and find out all the information and sort of come up with a template," but after using it, "It saves you time. And it became significantly shorter." This sentiment suggests a shift in their preparation strategies, where the tool serves as a rapid information processor.

Beyond time, participants frequently mentioned its utility for brainstorming and generating ideas. Nazifa noted, "I use ChatGPT for brainstorming, for giving me some ideas about a particular situation, even for academic terms." Robi found it particularly helpful for

"brainstorming ideas" and "developing an idea for an assignment or questions," especially in complex linguistic contexts. This indicates that ChatGPT acts as a cognitive aid, helping students overcome initial blocks and explore potential directions for their writing. Mikayel also mentioned using it to "get keynotes and key ideas about my thesis, and how I'm going to write an essay."

4.1.2 Language Refinement and Comprehension Aid

For English Major students, the tool also proved beneficial for aspects related to language mechanics and comprehension. Mikayel found it helpful in paraphrasing "different types of content," including paragraphs or novel summaries. Kamini stated, "Sometimes it also helps with grammar and rephrasing sentences," and that it provides "better words or sentence structures," leading to improved quality. Maimuna used it to "make a paragraph in simple sentences so that I can understand," implying its role as a comprehension aid, particularly for complex academic texts. Jahangir also highlighted its utility for "correction and grammatical errors," seeing it as a way to achieve "proper structure." This suggests that for students, especially in a non-native English-speaking context, ChatGPT serves as an accessible language assistant, helping them refine their expression and grasp complex concepts more easily.

4.2 Perceived Challenges and Concerns (RQ1)

Despite the acknowledged benefits, students also articulated significant challenges and concerns associated with ChatGPT, reflecting a critical awareness of its limitations and ethical implications.

4.2.1 Accuracy and Originality Issues

A recurring concern among participants was the accuracy of the information generated. Maimuna shared an intense apprehension, stating, "I really do believe it doesn't always give you accurate answers. For example, I have read in a book, right? And then I am searching it in ChatGPT, they sometimes provide me with some false information." She even described intentionally feeding it wrong information to test its reliability, to which it would "say yes" even when her input was incorrect. Sabbir recounted a specific instance where ChatGPT provided "considerably wrong information" about a short story and ancient Indian literature. Kamini also reported, "Once it gave me a quote that didn't exist in the original book, and that was risky." This highlights a critical awareness of the potential for misinformation, leading students to exercise caution.

Regarding originality, participants often noted that AI-generated content can sound "machine-like" or lack depth. Sabbir observed that for students who try to make ChatGPT "do their entire work... the language... it's obviously machine language; people don't talk like that." Kamini similarly felt, "It doesn't always sound original, especially if I copy long parts." Nazifa, despite using 20% of ChatGPT's ideas, stated, "I did not like any of them, like at all," indicating a preference for their own, more original thoughts. This concern about stylistic originality influences how they choose to integrate the tool.

4.2.2 Risk of Over-Reliance and Hindered Critical Thinking

A profound and frequently expressed concern was the risk of over-reliance on ChatGPT and its potential to hinder critical thinking and creativity. Mikayel warned, "I would never suggest someone to copy from ChatGPT directly... your academic standard would be down..."

your thinking process and everything is going to be stopped." Nazifa strongly felt it "is actually harming your critical thinking" and observed peers who "don't brainstorm anymore."

Sabbir called it a "crutch" that "can slow down your creativity," emphasising, "it will be difficult for you to do anything without it." Asha and Kobita both echoed worries about over-dependency, stating it "hinders the generation's thinking ability." This collective apprehension indicates that students are aware of the potential long-term negative impacts on their intellectual development if AI tools are used indiscriminately.

4.2.3 Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

A pervasive worry was that over-reliance on AI would lead to serious issues with academic integrity and plagiarism. Mikayel explicitly stated, "for university and academic purposes, I think ChatGPT is not a good solution because of plagiarism, and it's a type of cheating you're doing to yourself." Sabbir unequivocally declared, "There is obviously 100% plagiarism" if the tool is used to generate entire essays. Mir Tanvir termed it a "violation of academic integrity" and "very hazardous to students' academic careers." Maimuna described peer tutors identifying AI-generated assignments because they were "so well-written" that "you can tell this cannot be written by a student." These strong statements reflect a clear understanding among participants of the ethical boundaries and the serious consequences of misusing AI for academic purposes.

4.3 Lived Experiences and Adaptive Strategies (RQ2)

Participants described varied yet often convergent strategies for integrating ChatGPT into their academic writing by revealing how they adapt to its presence while attempting to mitigate its challenges.

4.3.1 Strategic Integration into the Writing Process

Most participants reported using ChatGPT primarily in the pre-writing or early research phases rather than for complete drafting or final composition. Sabbir explained, "I don't actually use ChatGPT or other AI tools for drafting or other purposes like those. I feel like those things should come from your own head." He mainly used it to "summarise the key points of the primary text" to save time on reading. Mikayel used it to "get keynotes and key ideas about my thesis" or to suggest "prompts and everything" on "how I'm going to write an essay." Kamini shared a similar process: "First, I think about the topic. Then I ask ChatGPT to give me an outline or some ideas."

Some also utilised it for post-drafting refinement, particularly for grammar. Nazifa stated, "I correct my grammars. That's what I do the most." Jahangir also uses it for "correction and grammatical errors" and for paraphrasing when a "proper structure" is needed. This indicates a selective use of the tool by focusing on specific functions where they perceive it to be most effective without compromising their intellectual contribution.

4.3.2 Verification and Cross-Checking Practices

Given the concerns about accuracy, a common adaptive strategy was cross-checking and verification. Sabbir stated, "If the information might be wrong, I either use Google to verify the information I get, or I use another AI tool to see if the answers match." Asha and Kobita both emphasised "cross-check with reliable resources." Mikayel suggested, "you have to fact-check whatever you are doing, whether it's academic or non-academic purposes." Maimuna explicitly mentioned using Perplexity.ai, which provides sources, allowing her to "check if this is valid or not." This proactive approach highlights a conscious effort to overcome the tool's limitations and

ensure academic rigour.

4.3.3 Evolution of Writing Habits and Confidence

The integration of ChatGPT has led to varied impacts on students' overall writing habits and confidence. Mikayel noted a significant time-saving aspect by freeing up hours for assignments. Kamini found she now "plans better" and uses "clearer language because ChatGPT provides simple and clean sentence structures." Interestingly, both Nazifa and Kamini reported feeling more confident in their writing abilities due to having the tool as a support, provided they use it discerningly. Nazifa mentioned, "I feel really confident, but sometimes I get really nervous, and I get this bad feeling that I am... harming my own self." This dual sentiment suggests a complex and evolving relationship where confidence is gained from assistive features but balanced by an internal struggle against over-reliance. Sabbir, however, felt his approach hadn't changed drastically in terms of drafting, maintaining that those aspects "should come from your own head."

4.4 Analysis through the Lens of Social Constructivism

The findings from these interviews strongly resonate with the principles of Social Constructivism, which says that knowledge and meaning are actively constructed via individuals' interactions with their environment and social contexts (Vygotsky, 1978; Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Students' perceptions and experiences with ChatGPT are not uniform, as they are continually being shaped by their direct engagement with the tool in their academic environment and their interactions with peers and instructors.

Firstly, the students' process of understanding ChatGPT's utility and limitations is a clear

example of meaning-making through interaction. Initially, many might approach ChatGPT as a simple answer generator. However, their lived experiences of encountering misinformation (as recounted by Maimuna, Sabbir, and Kamini) lead them to actively construct a more nuanced understanding that ChatGPT is a tool requiring critical evaluation and cross-verification. This knowledge isn't passively received but constructed through their direct interaction with the tool and the resulting cognitive dissonance (e.g., getting a wrong answer).

Secondly, the emphasis on ethical concerns and strategies to avoid over-reliance demonstrates the social negotiation of norms. Students are aware of academic integrity expectations (influenced by instructors and institutional policies, even if not explicitly enforced at times) and are attempting to self-regulate their usage. Their discussions about plagiarism and the "crutch" effect highlight how the meaning of "appropriate assistance" versus "misconduct" is being collectively shaped within the student community, often through observation of peers' struggles or successful strategies. The call for workshops and clear guidelines further underscores this social negotiation, as students seek a shared, institutionally sanctioned understanding of how to integrate this new tool into their academic practices ethically. They are not merely learning about ChatGPT but learning how to learn with ChatGPT, influenced by their peers, their instructors' warnings, and their own evolving academic identities.

Finally, the varied experiences of confidence and critical thinking reflect the individual construction of their academic identity concerning technology. While some feel more confident (Nazifa, Kamini, Kobita), others express a strong concern about their critical thinking being hindered (Mikayel, Sabbir, Maimuna). This spectrum indicates that while the tool offers new ways to engage with academic tasks, the personal meaning derived from this engagement (e.g.,

whether it enhances or detracts from one's "own voice" and intellectual integrity) is a highly individual, yet socially influenced, process of knowledge construction.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion

This final chapter concludes the qualitative study by discussing the findings from the previous chapter concerning the research's overall goals, research questions, theoretical framework, and literature review. It synthesises the insights of ten final-year English Major students on their perceptions and experiences with ChatGPT in academic writing. The chapter also details the study's implications, addresses its limitations, and recommends topics for future research.

5.1 Discussion

The central aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions and experiences of final-year English Major students at a private university in Dhaka, Bangladesh, as they relate to using ChatGPT for academic writing. The findings consistently highlighted ChatGPT's role in enhancing efficiency and facilitating ideation. Participants frequently reported significant time-saving benefits, particularly in tasks like summarising content and generating initial outlines (Mikayel, Sabbir, Kamini). This efficiency aligns with broader discussions in educational technology that emphasise AI's potential to streamline routine academic tasks by freeing up cognitive resources for critical thinking (Kasneci et al., 2023). Furthermore, its utility in brainstorming and generating ideas was highly valued, acting as a crucial aid in overcoming initial writing blocks and exploring diverse perspectives for assignments (Nazifa, Robi, and Mikayel). The utility of ChatGPT in language refinement for English Major students in an EFL context, including grammar correction and rephrasing, was a notable advantage, as it offers accessible support for improving the linguistic quality of their academic output (Nazifa, Jahangir,

Kamini). This suggests that ChatGPT functions as a readily available language assistant that could be particularly impactful for students navigating the complexities of academic English.

However, these perceived advantages were consistently tempered by significant challenges and concerns, underscoring a critical awareness among students regarding the tool's limitations and ethical implications. Participants like Maimuna and Sabbir provided compelling anecdotes of misinformation, which leads to a palpable distrust in ChatGPT's factual reliability, aligning with documented issues of "hallucinations" in large language models that reinforce the need for critical evaluation (Cotrell, 2023; Zhang & Wang, 2023). The concern about content sounding "machine-like" and lacking genuine originality also emerged, indicating that students still prioritise and recognise the value of an authentic academic voice despite using the tool. More profoundly, students expressed deep worry about the potential for over-reliance on ChatGPT and its detrimental effect on their critical thinking and creativity. Mikayel's concern about an "academic standard downfall" and Nazifa's observation of peers "not brainstorming anymore" directly echo pedagogical anxieties found in the literature regarding over-dependence on AI (Eaton & Christensen, 2020).

In response to these challenges, students have developed various adaptive strategies for integrating ChatGPT into their academic writing practices. A key finding is the strategic and selective integration of ChatGPT into specific stages of the writing process rather than using it for complete drafting. Most participants (e.g., Sabbir, Mikayel, Kamini) preferred leveraging it for pre-writing activities like outlining, brainstorming, and generating initial ideas. This pragmatic approach suggests that students are learning to leverage AI's strengths while retaining control over the core intellectual contribution of their work. The consistent practice of

verification and cross-checking AI-generated information with traditional, trusted resources (Asha, Kobita, Mikayel, Maimuna) further highlights their critical engagement and active efforts to mitigate accuracy concerns. This proactive and self-regulated critical evaluation is a vital skill being developed in response to the availability of AI.

From a Social Constructivist perspective, these findings illuminate how students' knowledge and meaning-making surrounding ChatGPT are dynamically constructed through their interactions. Their perceptions of advantages (e.g., time-saving) are not inherent properties of the tool but emerge from their interaction with it and the perceived efficiencies in their specific academic context. Similarly, their understanding of challenges like misinformation is built through their direct experiences of receiving inaccurate data and subsequently negotiating their trust in the tool. The students' adaptive strategies are prime examples of active construction of knowledge as they learn to cross-check information from ChatGPT, because they are not merely following instructions but building a new schema for information validation in the digital age. This schema is influenced by their prior experiences with academic integrity, their instructors' warnings, and peer discussions.

5.2 Conclusion

This qualitative study has provided a detailed exploration of how final-year English Major students at a private university in Dhaka, Bangladesh, perceive and experience the use of ChatGPT in their academic writing. The findings reveal a dual perspective of students, acknowledging significant benefits in terms of efficiency, ideation, and language refinement, which directly address some of the writing challenges prevalent in the Bangladeshi context. However, these advantages are critically balanced by profound concerns regarding the accuracy

and originality of AI-generated content. The inherent risk of over-reliance can lead to a crucial issue of academic integrity.

The lived experiences of these students demonstrate a proactive and adaptive approach that is characterised by strategic and selective usage of ChatGPT primarily for pre-writing and editing, coupled with diligent cross-checking of information. Their narratives highlight a complex interplay of increased confidence due to assistive features and a persistent apprehension about the potential erosion of their own critical thinking and authentic voice. Grounded in Social Constructivism, the study illustrates that students' understanding and usage of ChatGPT are not static but are dynamically constructed through their ongoing interactions with the tool, their peers, and the academic environment. Ultimately, the study underscores an urgent and clear call from the students themselves for educational institutions to adopt proactive strategies, such as developing clear policies and, most importantly, providing pedagogical guidance through workshops and training to foster ethical AI literacy. As AI tools continue to advance, the challenge for higher education, particularly in regions like Bangladesh, is not to resist them but to integrate them thoughtfully by ensuring that human creativity and independent thought remain the central focus of academic work.

5.3 Limitations and Future Directions

The study offers valuable insights, but its inherent limitations must be recognised, as they create opportunities for further research. Firstly, as a qualitative study, the findings are specific to the experiences of ten final-year English Major students at a single private university in Dhaka, Bangladesh. That means the insights are rich and context-specific but are not intended for statistical generalisation to all students or institutions. Secondly, the data relies solely on

self-reported information from phone call interviews, and it may be subject to biases such as recall bias and social desirability bias. This method also limits the study's ability to capture participants' authentic engagement with the technology.

Finally, the rapidly evolving nature of AI tools means that students' perceptions and experiences are constantly changing, making this study a snapshot in time. Building upon these limitations, future research could employ quantitative methods (e.g., large-scale surveys) to assess the prevalence of ChatGPT usage across broader populations or conduct comparative studies across different disciplines or educational systems (e.g., public vs. private universities, or other countries) to provide broader statistical overviews and cross-contextual insights. Longitudinal studies would also be valuable to track how students' perceptions, adaptive strategies, and academic outcomes change over time as AI tools advance and institutional policies evolve.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Invitation letter

Dear Participants,

I am writing to formally invite you to participate in a semi-structured interview for my dissertation research. My study is titled, **"Exploring Final-Year English Major Students' Perceptions and Experiences of Using ChatGPT in Their Academic Writing at a Private University."** As a final-year English Major student myself at ULAB, I am investigating how students like us are engaging with and adapting to AI tools like ChatGPT in our academic work. Your unique experiences and insights are invaluable to this research and will provide a crucial human-centered perspective on this vital topic.

The interview will be conducted conveniently via phone call at a time that works best for you. It is expected to last between 15-25 minutes. The interview will be audio-recorded with your permission to ensure the accuracy of the transcription and analysis. Your involvement in this study is entirely voluntary, and your information and identity will be kept confidential. You may withdraw at any point in time if feeling uncomfortable.

I would appreciate your participation. Please let me know if you have any time this week and feel free to ask any queries at ruhinul.islam.deh@ulab.edu.bd

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Md. Ruhinul Islam Sarker,

Department of English and Humanities,

University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh.

Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Questions:

Thank you for participating in this study. Before we begin, please briefly tell me about your academic journey as an English Major student here at ULAB. What are some of the key academic writing tasks you typically engage with in your final year?

1. How familiar are you with Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, particularly Large Language Models like ChatGPT?
2. Have you used ChatGPT or other similar AI tools for any of your academic writing tasks? If so, for how long have you been using it/them?

Perceptions of Benefits

From your perspective, what do you see as the main benefits or advantages of using ChatGPT for your academic writing assignments as an English Major student?

- a. Probe: Can you give me specific examples of how it has helped you? (e.g., brainstorming, outlining, drafting, grammar, vocabulary, rephrasing, reducing writing anxiety).
- b. Probe: Do you think it helps you save time or improve the quality of your writing? In what ways?
4. How do these perceived benefits compare to traditional methods or resources you used for academic writing before ChatGPT became widely available?

Perceptions of Challenges

6. On the other hand, what are some of the challenges or difficulties you have encountered when using ChatGPT for your academic writing?
 - a. Probe: Have you faced issues with the accuracy or originality of the content generated? Can you describe a situation?
 - b. Probe: What are your concerns, if any, regarding academic integrity or potential plagiarism when using ChatGPT?
 - c. Probe: Do you worry about over-reliance on the tool affecting your own writing skills or critical thinking abilities? Please elaborate.

7. How do you navigate these challenges? What strategies do you employ to mitigate them?

Lived Experiences and Adaptation

Could you describe your typical process when you decide to use ChatGPT for an academic writing task? Walk me through the steps you take from thinking about using it to submitting your final work.

- a. Probe: At what stage of the writing process do you find yourself using it most often (e.g., pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing)?
 - b. Probe: How do you formulate your prompts to ChatGPT to get the desired output for academic purposes? Can you share an example of a prompt you've used and the outcome?
8. How has your approach to academic writing changed since you started using ChatGPT? Have you adapted your writing habits, research strategies, or revision processes?
 - a. Probe: Do you feel more confident or less confident in your own writing abilities now? Why?
 - b. Probe: How do you ensure that the final output still reflects your own voice and critical thinking, even if you've used ChatGPT?
9. Have there been instances where using ChatGPT led to unexpected outcomes, either positive or negative, in your academic writing? Please share those experiences.

Ethical Considerations and Future Outlook

11. What are your thoughts on the ethical use of AI in academic writing? Where do you draw the line between appropriate assistance and academic misconduct?
12. How should universities and educators respond to the increasing use of ChatGPT by students? What policies or guidelines would be most helpful from a student's perspective?
13. Looking ahead, how do you envision AI tools like ChatGPT impacting the future of academic writing and learning, particularly for English Major students?
14. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding your perceptions or experiences with ChatGPT and academic writing that we haven't covered?
15. Thank you again for your time and valuable insights.