

THE IMPACT OF AI TOOLS (E.G., CHATGPT) ON DEVELOPING STUDENTS' WRITING SKILLS IN ESL CLASSROOMS IN UZBEKISTAN

Xudayberganova Ro'za Rasul qizi
O'zDJTU Lingvistika

ABSTRACT

This article investigates the influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, specifically ChatGPT, on the development of writing skills among ESL (English as a Second Language) students in Uzbekistan. The study analyzes how AI tools affect grammatical accuracy, vocabulary acquisition, and structural organization of texts. The findings indicate that while the strategic integration of AI can enhance academic performance and student confidence, it simultaneously poses challenges related to academic integrity and the potential decline of critical thinking. The research provides pedagogical recommendations for EFL/ESL instructors in the local context.

Keywords: AI in education, ESL, ChatGPT, writing skills, Uzbekistan education system, digital literacy, pedagogical integration, academic integrity.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the rapid evolution of Artificial Intelligence has catalyzed a paradigm shift in global educational practices. In Uzbekistan, within the framework of the national strategy for digital transformation, the integration of modern technologies into ESL classrooms has become a priority. Writing, often considered the most challenging skill for ESL learners, requires the simultaneous management of grammar, lexis, and coherent thought organization.

AI tools like ChatGPT offer real-time feedback, error correction, and brainstorming support. However, their role in the Uzbek classroom remains a subject of debate. The objective of this study is to evaluate both the benefits and the risks associated with AI usage among university-level ESL students in Uzbekistan and to determine how these tools can be used effectively without compromising the learning process.

METHODS

To achieve a comprehensive analysis, the following research methods were employed:

1. **Surveys and Interviews:** A quantitative survey was conducted among 100 ESL students and 15 instructors at major universities in Tashkent and Samarkand to determine the frequency and purpose of AI usage.

2. **Comparative Text Analysis:** Researchers analyzed two sets of student essays—one written without AI assistance and one edited using AI—to evaluate improvements in grammar, vocabulary range, and coherence.

3. **Experimental Grouping:** An experimental group of students was taught "Prompt Engineering" (how to interact effectively with AI), while a control group continued with traditional writing instruction.

RESULTS

The study yielded the following key data:

- **Grammatical Accuracy:** Students using AI tools showed a 40% reduction in common syntax and morphological errors in their final drafts.

- **Vocabulary Expansion:** 65% of students reported learning new academic collocations and synonyms through AI-generated suggestions.

- **Efficiency:** AI tools reduced the time spent on the "pre-writing" (outlining and brainstorming) phase by approximately 50%.

- **Academic Integrity Concerns:** 70% of surveyed instructors expressed concern regarding "over-reliance," noting that some students submitted AI-generated content without sufficient personal modification or understanding.

DISCUSSION

The results suggest that ChatGPT acts as a powerful "personal tutor" in the Uzbek ESL context. However, two primary issues emerged during the discussion:

1. **Cognitive Passivity:** There is a risk that students may accept AI corrections blindly without understanding the underlying linguistic rules, leading to superficial learning.

2. **Changing Teacher Roles:** In Uzbekistan, where the teacher is traditionally the sole authority, AI shifts the instructor's role from a "corrector" to a "facilitator." Educators must now focus on teaching students how to use AI as a scaffold rather than a substitute.

For Uzbek learners, AI bridges the gap between limited local language exposure and the demands of global academic standards, provided it is used as a tool for "formative" rather than "summative" assessment.

CONCLUSION

AI tools have the potential to significantly elevate the quality of English writing among students in Uzbekistan. They provide immediate, personalized feedback that is often unavailable in large, traditional classrooms. To maximize benefits, the following is recommended:

- **Digital Literacy:** Integrate modules on the ethical use of AI and academic honesty into the ESL curriculum.

- **Process-Oriented Writing:** Grade the writing process (drafts, outlines, and revisions) rather than just the final product.

• **Critical Analysis:** Encourage students to justify or reject AI-suggested changes to foster deep linguistic processing.

Ultimately, ChatGPT should be viewed as a sophisticated dictionary or thesaurus—a tool that enhances the writer's capability but does not replace the writer's voice.

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