

## **Exploring the Impact of ChatGPT on the English Writing Skills of a Group of International EFL Uzbek Students: A Qualitative Case Study Conducted at a Private University College in Malaysia**

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**Abstract :** ChatGPT, as one of the well-known artificial intelligence (AI) tools, has recently been integrated into English language education and has had several impacts on learners. Accordingly, concerns regarding the overuse of this tool among EFL/ESL learners are rising, which could lead to several disadvantages in their writing skills development. The use of ChatGPT in facilitating writing skills is a novel concept that demands further studies in different contexts and learners. In this study, a qualitative case study is applied to investigate the impact of ChatGPT on the writing skills of a group of EFL bachelor's students from Uzbekistan studying Teaching English as the Second Language (TESL) at a private university in Malaysia. The data was collected through the triangulation of document analysis, semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and focus group discussions. Subsequently, the data was analyzed by using thematic analysis. Some of the emerging themes indicated that ChatGPT is helpful in engaging students by reducing their anxiety in class and providing them with constructive feedback and support. Conversely, certain emerging themes revealed excessive reliance on ChatGPT, resulting in a decrease in students' creativity and critical thinking skills, memory span, and tolerance for ambiguity. The study suggests a number of strategies to alleviate its negative impacts, such as peer review activities, workshops for familiarizing students with AI, and gradual withdrawal of AI support activities. This study emphasizes the need for cautious AI integration into English language education to cultivate independent learners with higher-order thinking skills.

**Keywords :** ChatGPT, EFL/ESL learners, English writing skills, artificial intelligence tools, critical thinking skills

**Conference Title :** ICLLL 2025 : International Conference on Languages, Literature and Linguistics

**Conference Location :** Vancouver, Canada

**Conference Dates :** January 09-10, 2025