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Literature Review

A Literature Review of EFL Students' Perspectives on Using ChatGPT to Learn Reading: Benefits and Challenges

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Abstract

One essential ability that requires development is reading. Thus, it is crucial to learn the positive and negative consequences of incorporating platforms like ChatGPT into reading in English as a foreign language (EFL) and practice, and to address learning difficulties that may arise in understanding information. Hence, the research examines the benefits and challenges of using ChatGPT to learn reading skills. However, the author reviews 20 empirical studies published in peer-reviewed journals between 2023 and 2025, using Google Scholar, to achieve that goal. The analysis results were categorized into five themes summarizing each ChatGPT's benefits and challenges related to EFL students' reading experiences. The first three themes were associated with the potential benefits of integrating ChatGPT to learn reading skills. Those themes were: (1) ChatGPT provides EFL learners with fast replies, (2) ChatGPT helps EFL learners to understand unfamiliar words, and (3) ChatGPT supports EFL learners in improving their reading skills. The other themes concerned the challenges of using ChatGPT to develop reading skills. Those themes were: (4) ChatGPT prevents EFL learners from thinking critically, and (5) ChatGPT provides EFL learners with unclear information. The researcher discusses themes in light of the relevant literature and presents recommendations for future research.

Keywords: Benefits, Challenges, ChatGPT, EFL Students, Reading Skills.

1. Introduction

AI is growing rapidly in today's world. Technologies powered by AI, such as ChatGPT, make it easier for individuals to find information quickly (Silva et al., 2024). ChatGPT provides much information that can improve the learning process, including help with subject matter, summarizing text, clarifying ideas, simplifying sentences, and providing explanations (Vo & Nguyen, 2024; Huang et al., 2025). Therefore, students use ChatGPT to become better readers and understand material more easily (Das & Madhusudan, 2024). Students are aware that using ChatGPT can help them read better, and they also noted that reading skills are important for their success in the educational setting (Huang et al., 2025; Sarwanti et al., 2024). ChatGPT can answer questions that students might be afraid to ask, share examples, and communicate concepts clearly in school settings (Prima & Hartono, 2024).

This educational tool can provide personalized support, encourage self-directed learning outside the classroom, and help students gradually improve their learning (Aljohani, 2024; Abd Rahim et al., 2023). Not only that, but teachers who use ChatGPT can meet their teaching objectives, track students' development, and receive suggestions on how to improve (Rajabi et al., 2024; Prima & Hartono, 2024). Furthermore, ChatGPT can help students work

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with and understand challenging topics. It can give quick responses (Xu et al., 2024; Çelik et al., 2024).

Even though many people find it helpful to interact with educational material, ChatGPT may also pose particular challenges for students (Sambar et al., 2024). Besides, developing an understanding of the context is a challenging skill that requires a mix of language and thinking skills; simply reading the materials will not automatically make students better understand the text (Chea & Xiao, 2024). Because of this growth, the researcher is inspired to study the potential good points and bad points of learning to read with ChatGPT. More specifically, the researcher aims to explore the benefits that EFL learners perceive in using ChatGPT to learn reading, as well as the challenges they encounter when using this technology for the same purpose.

While existing research has started to list the general educational uses of AI, there is still a major gap in understanding the detailed, real-life experiences of EFL learners when it comes to developing their reading skills. Additionally, few studies look at both the perceived advantages and the actual difficulties within this specific area at the same time, which is important for creating well-rounded and practical teaching guidance.

Understanding these perceptions will provide valuable insights for both EFL students and teachers. By examining the answers to these questions, EFL students can develop a deeper understanding of ChatGPT's potential and features to support their reading practices in English as a foreign language. At the same time, this study can offer EFL teachers meaningful insights that will enable them to guide their students in maximizing ChatGPT's capabilities for developing reading skills and achieving better learning outcomes.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Definition of ChatGPT

ChatGPT is a website that helps people communicate. It is such language model applications that imitate human language, enabling users to exchange information in a conversational style. This tool is the virtual English teacher in English reading classes, helping students at the front of the Internet with their reading assignments in real time (Kim, 2024). ChatGPT can make reading texts more engaging, enabling students to learn better and derive greater enjoyment from their studies.

2.2. Systematic Literature Review

A systematic literature review planned on gathering, evaluating, and summarizing all information about students' perspectives on using ChatGPTs in improving reading ability (Albadarin et al., 2024; Wang & Fan, 2025). With this feedback approach, the author expects to include fundamental answers to the specific questions surrounding the subject. This technique also involves selecting research subjects, developing inclusion and exclusion criteria, and methodically collecting and assessing empirical data.

3. Methods

This study investigated the students' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of using ChatGPT to learn to read. It employed a systematic literature review strategy, similar to earlier studies by Albadarin et al. (2024), Lo et al. (2024) and Wang and Fan (2025), to examine 20 papers related to the study's aim. To select the twenty articles, the researcher searched Google Scholar for related articles using the following keywords: ChatGPT in reading, students'

perspectives on using. ChatGPT to learn reading, and the benefits and challenges of using ChatGPT to learn reading. The author presented the twenty articles in Table 1.

Table 1. The List of Articles Reviewed in This Article

Author & Year	Article Title	Research Goal	Research Method	Context and Participant
Ali (2023)	Benefits and Challenges of Using ChatGPT: An Exploratory Study on the English Language Program	Investigate how faculty view the advantages and difficulties associated with teaching English as a Foreign Language.	Both quantitative and qualitative data	58 faculty members at the University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia
Aljohani (2024)	ChatGPT for EFL: Usage and Perceptions among BA and MA Students	Assess how female BA and MA students perceive the utility of ChatGPT as a language learning tool, contributing to a wider examination of its applications in EFL contexts.	Mixed-methods/both quantitative and qualitative	35 members,26 BA and nine MA students at the University of Jeddah, Jeddah, KSA in Saudi Arabia
Althobaiti (2025)	Saudi Female EFL University Students' Perceptions of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools to Improve Reading Fluency and Digital Literacy: ChatGPT as an example	Examine students' perceptions of ChatGPT's effectiveness in enhancing key components of reading fluency	Quantitative Method	61 participants were involved at Taif University in Saudi Arabia
Anderson (2003)	Scrolling, Clicking, and Reading: Online Reading Strategies in a Second/Fore ign Language	Identify and analyse the metacognitive reading strategies L2 readers employ when reading online, and highlight their implications for L2 teaching and learning	Qualitative method	247 participants participated in Brigham Young University (BYU) in Provo, Utah, USA
Chea and Xiao (2024)	Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education: The Power and Damage of AI-assisted Tools on Academic English Reading Skills	Examines the influence of AI-assisted educational tools on advancing university students' academic English reading outcomes and tailored learning paths. Emphasis is placed on their contribution to comprehension, lexical growth, and analytical skills, along with an analysis of possible limitations.	Mixed Methods/ Qualitative or quantitative	24 students at Dali University in China

Author & Year	Article Title	Research Goal	Research Method	Context and Participant
Çelik et al. (2024)	Does AI Simplification of Authentic Blog Texts Improve Reading Comprehension, Inferencing, and Anxiety? A One-Shot Intervention in Turkish EFL Context	Assessing the impact of AI-simplified texts (via ChatGPT) on the reading outcomes (comprehension, inference, and anxiety) of Turkish university students learning English as a Foreign Language.	Qualitative method	105 participants were recruited at Ondokuz Mayıs University in Samsun, Turkey
Das and Madhusudan (2024)	Perceptions of Higher Education Students towards ChatGPT Usage	Provides a holistic analysis of higher education students' perceptions of ChatGPT, encompassing its acceptance drivers, educational value, inherent limitations, and the ethical dimensions of its academic use.	Quantitative	162 students enrolled in Ph.D., master's, and bachelor's programs at various Indian higher education institutions
Vo and Nguyen (2024)	Generative Artificial Intelligence and ChatGPT in Language Learning: EFL Students' Perceptions of Technology Acceptance	Examine how students majoring in English perceive the effectiveness and role of ChatGPT in advancing their English language skills.	Quantitative	369 English-major students who have previously used ChatGPT in language acquisition for their studies in Vietnam
Huang et al. (2025)	Enhancing student reading performance through a personalized two-tier problem- based learning approach with generative artificial intelligence	Proposing a GenAI-enhanced Personalized Two-Tier PBL (PT-PBL) model, this study evaluates its impact on two key educational metrics: reading performance and student motivation.	Mixed	62 college students from a university in China
Kim (2024)	Effects of ChatGPT on Korean EFL Learners' Main-Idea Reading Comprehension via Top- Down Processing	Examining the impact of ChatGPT-integrated instruction on the enhancement of top-down processing abilities within the English reading comprehension of Korean EFL learners.	Quantitative method	40 participants were involved at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul, South Korea.
Singh et al. (2023)	Maintaining the Integrity of the South African University: The Impact of ChatGPT on Plagiarism and Scholarly Writing	Investigate the dual impact of ChatGPT on scholarly writing and plagiarism in higher education, analyzing its potential as a tool for learning and its risks for academic integrity.	Qualitative	3 established professors from universities in South Africa
Prima and Hartono (2024)	University Students' Perception of Using ChatGPT	Analyze both student attitudes regarding ChatGPT and the	Qualitative	16 undergraduate students enrolled

Author & Year	Article Title	Research Goal	Research Method	Context and Participant
		specific methods by which they employ it for academic purposes.		at a private university in Jakarta, Indonesia
Putri et al. (2025)	ChatGPT in Learning English: Is it Possible?	Examining learner perceptions of ChatGPT's utility in the context of English language education.	Quantitative	63 students, who represented the total population of the study at the English Education Department of Mahaputra Muhammad Yamin University in Indonesia
Rajabi et al. (2024)	Unleashing ChatGPT's Impact in Higher Education: Student and Faculty Perspectives	Explore the views of students and faculty members at a Canadian research university on incorporating ChatGPT into post-secondary learning, as well as strategies for instructors to effectively engage with this technology.	Qualitative	Plagiarism issues at the Canadian institution were reported by 40 participants from the computer science and engineering departments.
Sarwanti et al. (2024)	Are They Literate on ChatGPT? University Language Students' Perceptions, Benefits, and Challenges in Higher Education Learning	Examine the multifaceted relationship between university language students and ChatGPT, focusing on how they use it, their understanding and preparedness for it, their worries about it, and their views on its educational value and limitations.	Mixed	A total of 355 students encompassing undergraduate and postgraduate levels from various fields of study at five universities in Indonesia—took part in the research.
Singh et al. (2024)	Exploring Computer Science Students' Perception of ChatGPT in Higher Education: A Descriptive and Correlation Study	Explore strategic uses of ChatGPT as an assistive technology to elevate the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning processes within academic institutions.	Quantitative	430 students of an MSc degree in computer science at the University of Hertfordshire, UK
Sambar et al. (2025)	A ChatGPT Assisted Reading Protocol for Undergraduate Research Students	Assesses the impact of a guided reading protocol which blends prereading strategies, structured note-taking, and ChatGPT on undergraduate students' comprehension of and engagement with scientific literature.	Quantitative	14 undergraduate students in the chemistry department at St. John's University, Queens, NY, USA
Silva et al. (2024)	ChatGPT: Challenges and Benefits of Software Programming for Higher Education	Examine the level of interest among students in using ChatGPT as a tool to confront and resolve	Quantitative	40 Brazilian students from March to April 2023 in Brazil

Author & Year	Article Title	Research Goal	Research Method	Context and Participant
		programming difficulties.		
Xu et al. (2024)	Understanding learners' perceptions of ChatGPT: A thematic analysis of peer interviews among undergraduates and postgraduate s in China	Investigates students' lived experiences and views on ChatGPT, delivering crucial insights that foreground an awareness of its constraints and ethical dilemmas.	Qualitative	187 students (106 undergraduates; 81 first-year postgraduates) drawn from diverse disciplines at a comprehensive university in East China.
Yang (2025)	EFL Student Engagement with ChatGPT in College Reading Classes via Prompts and Perceptions	Exploration of EFL students' ChatGPT interactions, prompting strategies, and user perceptions in an academic English context.	Mixed methods	36 participants enrolled in English Classes at the University in South Korea

To populate Table 1, articles were chosen that met three key conditions: they were published in English in peer-reviewed journals and constituted empirical research on integrating ChatGPT into reading classes in tertiary-level EFL/ESL settings. Fourth, the articles were published between 2023 and 2025. Fifth, the article has been cited at least ten times. Lastly, the selected articles are open-access. The inclusion and exclusion criteria for the literature selection are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Document	Journal Articles	Non-Journal Articles
Article Types	Peer-reviewed articles	Non-peer review
Content	Discussing the students' perspective on using ChatGPT in an English reading class	Not discussing the students' perspectives on using ChatGPT in an English reading class
Context of Study	EFL/ESL context in higher education settings	Non-EFL/ESL contexts, non-higher education settings

Table 2 highlights the specific requirements for participants in a research project that explores how students view the use of ChatGPT in English literature courses at the college level for EFL/ESL students. It specifies that only English-language, peer-reviewed journal articles discussing this topic are included, while non-English, non-journal, non-peer-reviewed material or those not addressing the specified context or student perspectives are excluded.

3.1. Inductive Analysis

Figure 1 shows how the inductive technique involves open coding across the entire data set, including articles from diverse sources. The author used this analytical approach to detect patterns and similarities and to classify students' perspectives on the benefits and challenges of ChatGPT for learning to read instruction. The author developed final themes under each category to address the research question. In light of the existing literature, those themes were presented in the findings section to explore whether the results confirm or challenge previous studies. The geographical distribution of the studies included in this review is presented in Figure 1.

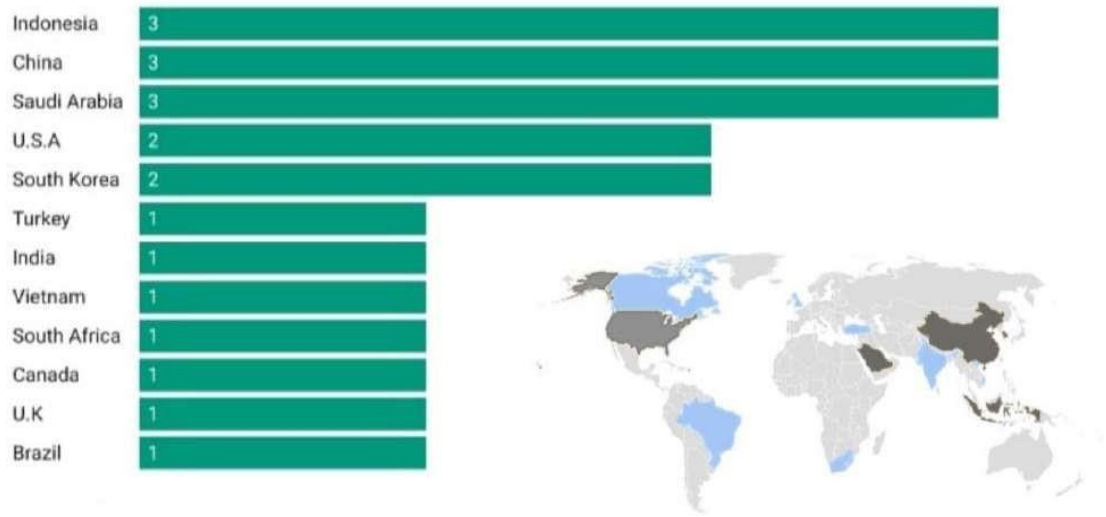

Figure 1. The Geographical Contexts of the Selected Articles

Figure 1 illustrates the regional distributions of publications on a research subject. The bars indicate the proportion of articles from each country. However, the map provides a global perspective, showing the diverse settings in which studies were conducted. Note: This figure was created on the Data wrapper website (https: www.datawrapper.de/).

3.2. The Generative AI Statement

The researcher did not use any AI tools, such as ChatGPT or other generative AI, when writing the Gen AI statement. Thus, after completing the first draft, the author checked the grammar using Grammarly Premium. Writers use this tool to find and correct grammatical errors in every phrase, thereby improving the accuracy of the work (Kaebnick et al., 2023; Teng, 2024). The author turned to Grammarly for suggestions on how to make the language of academia more readable. The researcher attentively analyzed each recommendation to confirm the correctness and quality of the phrases used in this research.

4. Results and Discussion

In the findings section, the researcher presented five themes for answering research questions: (1) What benefits do EFL students perceive in using ChatGPT to learn reading? (2) What challenges do EFL students perceive in using ChatGPT to learn reading? Discussed each theme in light of the literature. Themes 1-3 answered the first research question. Meanwhile, themes 4-5 answered the second question.

4.1. Theme 1: ChatGPT Provides EFL Learners With Replies

ChatGPT involves training and creative thinking with fast responding to EFL learners' questions (Silva et al., 2024). In fact, learners reported that ChatGPT increased their enthusiasm for debating scientific topics, leading to more frequent reading and better memory (Sambar & 2024). On the other hand, students also use ChatGPT for grammar, vocabulary building, writing, reading comprehension, and conversational practice (Aljohani, 2024). In addition, ChatGPT-generated personalized reading problems matched students' cognitive levels, helping them comprehend materials more deeply and perform better, especially in implicit higher-order thinking (Huang et al., 2025). Additionally, after reading ChatGPT (simplified texts, students' inferential skills, the capacity to read between the lines and infer meaning from context) increased notably (Chea & Xiao, 2024).

4.2. Theme 2: ChatGPT Helps EFL Learners to Understand Unfamiliar Words

Platforms such as ChatGPT allow all learners to ask questions, clarify meaning, and reflect on their understanding to improve their understanding of the reading progress (Anderson, 2003). This tool helps learners retrieve texts more quickly by simplifying complex language, clarifying meaning, and providing context, thereby improving reading scores. Above all, a significant proportion of respondents agreed that ChatGPT improves writing by suggesting structures, vocabulary, and revisions (Das & Madhusudan, 2024).

4.3. Theme 3: ChatGPT Supports EFL Learners in Improving Their Reading Skills

Enhancing reading skills is essential for everyone (Satang, 2024). As a result, ChatGPT encourages students to understand the information, achieve academic goals, and solve problems by offering relevant examples (Xu et al., 2024). However, Students are using ChatGPTs to enhance their vocabulary and overall reading skills (Kim, 2024; Yang,2025). Additionally, students might use ChatGPT to individually create reduced versions of texts, giving them control over their learning speed and reading process (Çelik et al., 2024).

4.4. Theme 4: ChatGPT Makes EFL Learners Not Think Critically

Some people are concerned that using ChatGPT would limit students' capacity to recall answers from the tool rather than engage deeply with the topic; these text matches will impair the development of critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (Singh et al., 2024). Similarly, some teachers feel ChatGPT reduces students' writing and critical thinking abilities (Singh et al., 2023). In particular, faculty members also claim that students may be dishonest if they use ChatGPT to produce assignments that are unoriginal and poorly understood (Ali, 2023).

4.5. Theme 5: ChatGPT Provides EFL Learners With Unclear Information

One thing that makes Students worried about using ChatGPT in academia is that it could lead to plagiarism, as it could generate unoriginal writing (Vo & Nguyen, 2024). In addition, ChatGPT responses are sometimes ambiguous, raising concerns that the information is incorrect (Prima & Hartono, 2024). Furthermore, students stated they failed to understand complicated English ideas due to insufficient resources (Putri et al., 2025).

5. Conclusion

In summary, the authors reviewed previous research showing that EFL students were experiencing both benefits and challenges when using ChatGPT to learn reading. The findings indicate that ChatGPT benefits EFL learners by enabling quick responses, helping them understand unfamiliar words, and improving their reading skills. However, there are some challenges, such as the fact that EFL learners were unable to think critically when using ChatGPT, and that ChatGPT provided students with unclear information. Nevertheless, the researcher needs to acknowledge certain limitations in the research. This study only reviewed 15/20 articles. Future studies might consider reviewing more articles to gain a broader range of insights into using ChatGPT to learn to read. For the same purpose, future studies can also review a wider range of sources beyond journal articles, including books, conference proceedings, book chapters, and theses. Future studies can also confirm the review results by interviewing teachers, students, or university lecturers and asking them to comment on the

themes. The researcher hopes this study will help understand both the benefits and challenges of using ChatGPT to learn to read.

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