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Students' Perspectives on Integrating Collaborative Learning Supported by ChatGPT in Writing

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Abstract: The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed language learning practices, particularly in English writing instruction. Among various AI tools, ChatGPT has gained considerable attention due to its ability to provide immediate feedback, generate ideas, and support collaborative learning activities. This study explored students' perspective on integrating collaborative learning supported by ChatGPT in writing classes. The research employed a qualitative design involving 53 eighth grade students. Twenty-seven students learned through conventional writing instruction. Data were collected through classroom observations, reflective journals, semi-structured interviews, and open-ended questionnaires. The findings revealed that students who used ChatGPT perceived significant benefits in idea generation, vocabulary development, grammatical accuracy, and collaborative engagement. The participants reported that ChatGPT encouraged active discussion and reduced anxiety during writing tasks. However, concern related to overreliance on AI-generated content and limited critical thinking were also identified. Students in the conventional group demonstrated positive attitude toward collaborative learning but experienced greater difficulty in organizing ideas and revising drafts. The study suggests that integrating ChatGPT into collaborative writing activities can enhance students' learning experiences when accompanied by appropriate teacher guidance. The findings contribute to the growing discussion regarding the pedagogical use of AI in English language teaching.

Keywords: ChatGPT; collaborative learning; writing instruction; student perspectives; EFL learners

Introduction

The integration of technology into language education has significantly transformed teaching and learning practices in the twenty-first century. Current educational research heavily focuses on how AI technologies disrupt traditional pedagogy, altering how students draft, revise, and conceptualize written text (UNESCO, 2023). Furthermore, recent studies have highlighted both the opportunities and challenges of integrating large language models such as ChatGPT into educational settings. These technologies can support personalized learning, writing development, and student engagement, but they also require learners to develop critical evaluation skills and responsible AI literacy (Kasneci et al., 2023). English writing instruction has experienced substantial changes as digital tools increasingly support learners throughout the writing process. Writing is widely recognized as one of the most challenging language skills because it requires learners to generate ideas, organize information, apply grammatical rules, and communicate meaning effectively (Hyland & Richards, 2010). English as a

Foreign Language (EFL) learners, difficulties in vocabulary use, grammar, coherence, and content development often hinder successful writing performance (Fareed et al., 2016).

Recent advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) have introduced new possibilities for supporting language learning. One of the most notable developments is ChatGPT, an AI-powered conversational tool capable of generating human-like responses, providing feedback, and assisting users in various academic tasks (Rahaman, 2023; Zhang, 2023). In addition, the educational potential of ChatGPT extends beyond simple text generation, as it can facilitate personalized learning experiences, enhance student engagement, and support writing development when integrated appropriately into instructional practices (Kasneci et al., 2023). Since its introduction, ChatGPT has attracted considerable attention among educators and researchers due to its potential to facilitate learning, encourage learner autonomy, and enhance writing development. Recent studies have shown that ChatGPT can support learners during the writing process by assisting with idea generation, drafting, language accuracy, and revision activities, particularly in second language writing contexts (Yan, 2023).

In English language education, collaborative learning has long been recognized as an effective instructional approach. Collaborative learning promotes interaction among students, enabling them to share ideas, negotiate meaning, and construct knowledge collectively (Qureshi et al., 2023; Storch, 2005). The integration of digital technologies into collaborative learning environments can further facilitate knowledge construction by supporting communication, information sharing, and collective problem-solving among learners (Stahl et al., 2005). Through peer interaction, students can develop higher-order thinking skills, improve communication abilities, and increase motivation to learn. These benefits are consistent with Social Interdependence Theory, which suggests that positive interdependence among learners enhances achievement, reasoning ability, and social relationships (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). The integration of ChatGPT into collaborative learning environments offers new opportunities for supporting writing instruction by providing immediate assistance and stimulating discussion among learners.

Educators and researchers alike face the objective challenge of balancing AI capabilities with the necessity of fostering deep cognitive processing, critical analysis, and authentic authorial voice. Concurrently, collaborative learning remains a cornerstone of constructivist pedagogy, valued for its ability to promote peer-to-peer knowledge construction and collaborative problem-solving (Menezes et al., 2022). The convergence of these two distinct educational forces—the technological autonomy of generative AI and the social interdependence of collaborative learning—presents a complex landscape that contemporary universities are urgently trying to navigate. In English language education, collaborative learning has long been recognized as an effective instructional approach. Collaborative learning promotes interaction among students, enabling them to share ideas, negotiate meaning

Previous scholarly investigations have sought to address the challenges of AI integration by analysing its direct impact on individual student performance and writing efficiency. Early empirical studies report that ChatGPT significantly enhances the mechanical aspects of writing, such as grammatical precision, structural coherence, and vocabulary diversity (Grassini, 2023). To mitigate academic dishonesty and passive learning, researchers have proposed framing ChatGPT as an automated dialogue partner or formative feedback tool, which helps scaffold individual brainstorming and outlining stages (Su & Yang, 2023). However, these prior studies primarily evaluate AI as an isolated, teacher-to-student or student-to-technology interaction. They frequently overlook how generative AI functions within peer-led, social learning environments, leading to an incomplete understanding of whether AI assists or undermines collective critical thinking. Furthermore, existing literature heavily relies on instructor-centric evaluations, quantitative test scores, or policy-driven frameworks, which offer limited insights into the actual lived experiences and cognitive adjustments of the learners themselves.

What has escaped the attention of previous researchers is the nuanced interaction between collaborative peer dynamics and AI-assisted writing processes from a student-centric perspective. While existing methodologies effectively measure the output quality of AI-generated text, they fail to critique how reliance on ChatGPT alters the collaborative negotiation of meaning, peer feedback loops, and the shared execution of higher-order thinking tasks like synthesizing conflicting arguments or evaluating evidence. By treating AI utilization as a solitary activity, previous models ignore the social dimension of modern learning environments where students co-construct knowledge. To address this gap, this study examines the synergy between human collaboration and machine intelligence. It explores how students conceptualize their cognitive agency when ChatGPT is introduced into collaborative writing tasks, offering a critical lens on whether the technology serves as an intellectual scaffold or a cognitive crutch that dilutes peer accountability and critical debate.

The objective of this research is to investigate undergraduate student perspectives on integrating collaborative learning and ChatGPT during the writing process, with a specific focus on its perceived impact on their higher-order thinking skills (Zimmerman, 2002). To achieve this goal, this study employs a qualitative case study methodology to capture the depth and complexity of student experiences within a blended junior high school student writing course. Data collection involves semi-structured focus group interviews and student reflective journals, which are subsequently analysed using thematic analysis to identify patterns in how learners negotiate authority, critique AI-generated inputs, and maintain collaborative cognitive engagement.

Literature Review

Conceptualizing Collaborative Learning and Vygotskian Constructivism

The theoretical architecture of collaborative learning is deeply anchored in social constructivist theory, which posits that cognitive development is inherently a social process rather than an isolated psychological phenomenon. Central to this perspective is (Vygotskii et al., 1978) formulation of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), defined as the distance between a learner's independent problem-solving capacity and the potential development level achieved through adult guidance or peer collaboration. In higher education writing contexts, this framework shifts the instructional focus from individual text production to the socio-cognitive negotiations that occur among peers. When students collaborate, they are forced to articulate their thoughts, defend their rhetorical choices, and actively reconcile cognitive conflicts. This collaborative negotiation allows advanced peers to provide instructional scaffolding, which helps their group members internalize sophisticated writing mechanics and analytical strategies that they could not master alone (Yule, 2014).

Furthermore, collaborative learning transforms the writing process from a static assignment into a dynamic environment for collective knowledge construction. In this study, the collaborative learning variable is bounded by structural peer interactions, specifically peer feedback loops, shared brainstorming, and co-authoring. Within these structures, student interactions are not merely cooperative splits of labour, but are instead characterized by what (Mercer, 2004) terms exploratory talk. As students engage in exploratory talk, they critique ideas constructively, offer alternative interpretations, and challenge assumptions transparently. This social interdependence ensures that the resulting text reflects a shared, deeper comprehension of the subject matter. Consequently, this study utilizes social constructivism to evaluate how student-to-student dynamics build writing competencies, providing a theoretical benchmark to analyse what happens when a generative artificial intelligence tool alters this human social ecosystem.

The Role of Generative AI and ChatGPT in Scaffolding Writing Skills

The emergence of generative artificial intelligence, particularly large language models like ChatGPT, introduces a non-human agency into the traditional constructivist writing environment. In

educational research, ChatGPT is increasingly conceptualized as an automated cognitive scaffold capable of providing instant, personalized formative feedback, structural suggestions, and linguistic refinements (Firat, 2023). Unlike traditional spell-checkers or static grammar software, generative AI can engage in iterative, conversational dialogues, allowing students to refine their prompts and receive highly contextualized writing assistance. This technology alters the conventional writing workflow by dramatically accelerating the initial stages of composition, such as ideation, outlining, and drafting. By automating mechanical demands like syntactic variety and grammatical accuracy, ChatGPT theoretically frees up cognitive space for learners, allowing them to focus more intensely on higher-level rhetorical demands and arguments (Su & Yang, 2023).

However, the integration of ChatGPT into higher education writing also introduces significant cognitive risks that challenge traditional assumptions of learner autonomy and skill acquisition. Academic critics voice serious concerns that over-reliance on AI-generated text may inadvertently trigger cognitive offloading, where students passively accept algorithmic outputs without verifying their accuracy or depth (Grassini, 2023). This passive consumption directly threatens the development of individual authorial voice and structural mastery. If a machine consistently resolves stylistic and structural problems for the student, the learner may circumvent the productive struggle necessary to internalize complex writing conventions. Therefore, this study defines the ChatGPT integration variable not merely as the physical use of the software, but as the user's critical evaluation and strategic adaptation of AI outputs during the writing process. This precise perspective allows the researcher to analyse whether the tool functions as an empowering intellectual scaffold or a crutch that induces cognitive passivity.

Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and Cognitive Agency in AI-Assisted Environments

Higher-order thinking skills (HOTS)—specifically analysis, evaluation, and creation within Bloom's revised taxonomy—represent the peak of academic achievement in university-level writing. Developing these skills requires students to do more than recall information; they must synthesize disparate viewpoints, critique evidence, construct logical arguments, and make nuanced rhetorical choices (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). In a traditional writing classroom, HOTS are manifested when a student evaluates the credibility of a source or analyses the logical flow of an essay. Cognitive agency—the conscious, deliberate execution of control over one's own thinking and learning processes—is the essential catalyst for these skills. For a student to develop authentic higher-order capabilities, they must remain the primary director of their cognitive tasks, taking full responsibility for the intellectual integrity and analytical depth of their written work.

The introduction of ChatGPT into this cognitive equation fundamentally complicates how students execute higher-order thinking skills. When an AI tool can instantly generate complex outlines, synthesize extensive literature, or construct structured arguments, the traditional boundaries of student cognitive agency become blurred. Prior researchers have warned that this technological capability can disrupt deep learning. Regarding this cognitive challenge, (Bandura, 2001) explained that:

The deployment of generative AI tools in academic writing risks decoupling the student from the intellectual labour of critical analysis. When algorithms instantly synthesize arguments, learners are frequently bypassed, transforming active intellectual engagement into passive editing. This shift can easily lead to a superficial veneer of academic sophistication that lacks underlying critical thought.

This reality demonstrates that while ChatGPT can mimic the structural outputs of higher-order thinking, it cannot replicate the internal cognitive development that occurs when a student wrestles with complex concepts.

Consequently, this study establishes a specialized conceptual framework that intersects Vygotskian social constructivism with cognitive agency to analyse the gathered data. This framework positions the student as a critical evaluator who must actively manage both peer inputs and AI

suggestions. By viewing the writing process through this integrated lens, the study challenges the traditional assumption that higher-order thinking is a solitary, purely human endeavour. Instead, it examines how cognitive agency is distributed, maintained, or compromised when students use ChatGPT within a collaborative group. The framework focuses specifically on analysing how students evaluate the validity of AI-generated claims, how groups negotiate revisions when AI inputs clash with peer opinions, and how learners protect their intellectual ownership. Ultimately, this framework provides the exact analytical viewpoint needed to determine if combining collaborative peer dynamics with generative AI strengthens or weakens students' higher-order thinking capacities.

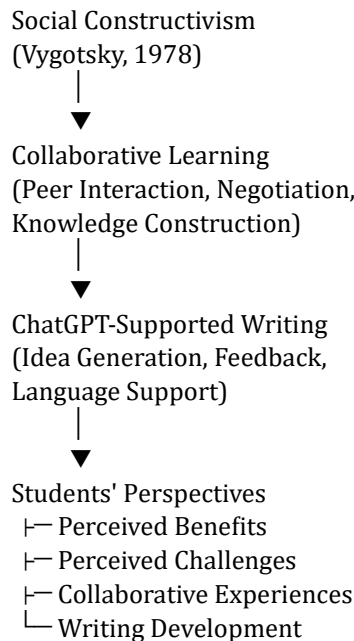


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 2.1 illustrates the conceptual framework of the study. Grounded in social constructivist theory, collaborative learning serves as the primary learning environment in which students interact, negotiate meaning, and construct knowledge collectively. Within this environment, ChatGPT functions as a supportive technological tool that facilitates idea generation, language assistance, and writing development. The framework ultimately focuses on exploring students' perspectives regarding the benefits, challenges, collaborative experiences, and perceived impact of ChatGPT-supported collaborative learning on writing activities.

Research Method

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore students' perspectives on the integration of collaborative learning supported by ChatGPT in writing instruction. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because it allows researchers to gain a rich and in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, attitudes, and interpretations regarding a particular educational phenomenon. Rather than focusing on measurable outcomes or statistical relationships, qualitative research emphasizes how individuals make sense of their experiences within specific social and educational contexts.

In the context of this study, the integration of ChatGPT into collaborative writing activities represents an emerging instructional practice that may influence the way students interact, exchange ideas, negotiate meaning, and construct written texts. Since students are the primary participants in the learning process, their perspectives are essential for understanding how this technology-supported

collaborative environment affects their engagement, learning experiences, and writing development. Through a qualitative approach, the researcher was able to explore participants' views regarding the benefits, challenges, and implications of using ChatGPT as a supportive tool during collaborative writing tasks.

Furthermore, this study adopted a qualitative case study design to investigate students' experiences within a specific educational setting where collaborative learning and ChatGPT were integrated into writing instruction. The case study approach enabled the researcher to examine the phenomenon in its real-life context and to capture the complexity of students' interactions with both their peers and AI-assisted technology. By focusing on participants' narratives and reflections, this research sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of how students perceive the role of ChatGPT in supporting collaboration, idea generation, feedback exchange, and the development of writing skills.

Participants and Context

The participants of this study consisted of 53 students from SMPN 2 Tawangharjo who were enrolled in English writing classes during the academic year of the study. The participants were selected using purposive sampling because they had direct experience with collaborative writing activities supported by ChatGPT, which was the central phenomenon being investigated. As qualitative research aims to obtain rich and detailed information from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon under study, purposive sampling was considered the most appropriate technique for participant selection.

All participants were at the same grade level and had relatively similar backgrounds in English language learning. They had previously engaged in various writing activities as part of their English curriculum and possessed basic knowledge of English writing. During the implementation of the study, students participated in collaborative writing tasks in which they worked together to generate ideas, discuss content, revise drafts, and complete writing assignments while utilizing ChatGPT as a supporting learning tool. Their involvement in these activities provided valuable insights into how collaborative learning supported by artificial intelligence influences their writing experiences.

The participants were expected to contribute diverse perspectives regarding the benefits, challenges, and overall impact of integrating ChatGPT into collaborative writing activities. By involving students who had firsthand experience with both peer collaboration and AI-assisted writing, the study sought to gain a comprehensive understanding of how learners perceive the role of ChatGPT in supporting idea generation, feedback exchange, critical thinking, and writing development within a collaborative learning environment.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was carried out through two primary qualitative methods over the course of the study to ensure data richness, credibility, and triangulation. The use of multiple sources of data enabled the researcher to obtain a comprehensive understanding of students' perspectives on integrating collaborative learning supported by ChatGPT in writing activities. By combining reflective journals and focus group interviews, the study captured both individual experiences and collective reflections regarding the use of artificial intelligence within collaborative writing environments.

The first method involved the use of individual reflective journals. Throughout the implementation of collaborative writing activities, students were asked to maintain reflective journals and submit entries on a bi-weekly basis. These journals served as a valuable source of personal reflection, allowing participants to document their experiences, thoughts, and feelings regarding the use of ChatGPT during collaborative writing tasks. Students were encouraged to describe how they interacted with ChatGPT, how they collaborated with their peers, the strategies they used to generate and develop ideas, and the challenges they encountered during the writing process. Furthermore, the

reflective journals provided insights into students' perceptions of how ChatGPT influenced their writing performance, critical thinking, decision-making processes, and overall learning experiences. The journals also enabled the researcher to examine changes in students' perceptions over time as they became increasingly familiar with integrating AI-assisted tools into collaborative learning activities.

The second method consisted of semi-structured focus group interviews conducted after students completed the final collaborative writing project. A total of six focus group interview sessions were organized, with each session involving a small group of participants and lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The focus group format was selected because it encourages interaction among participants, allowing students to exchange ideas, compare experiences, and collectively reflect on their learning processes. This interactive environment generated rich discussions and provided deeper insights into students shared and contrasting perspectives regarding the integration of ChatGPT into collaborative writing instruction.

The interviews were guided by a set of open-ended questions designed to explore participants' experiences in greater depth. Particular attention was given to how students perceived the benefits and limitations of ChatGPT, how they evaluated AI-generated suggestions, how they negotiated disagreements between peer feedback and AI recommendations, and how they maintained their own critical thinking and authorship during collaborative writing activities. Additional questions explored students' perceptions of the impact of ChatGPT on idea generation, writing confidence, collaboration quality, and engagement in the writing process.

To ensure the trustworthiness and accuracy of the collected data, all focus group interviews were digitally recorded with participants' permission and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants, and ethical considerations regarding confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation were carefully observed throughout the research process. The combination of reflective journals and focus group interviews provided a rich and detailed dataset that enabled the researcher to gain a nuanced understanding of students' perspectives on the integration of collaborative learning supported by ChatGPT in writing instruction.

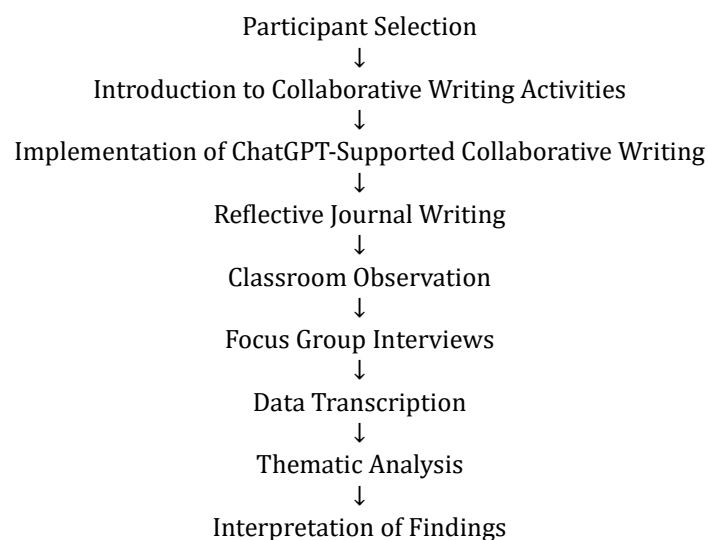


Figure 3.1 Research Procedure

Figure 3.1 illustrates the overall procedure of the study. The research began with participant selection and the implementation of collaborative writing activities supported by ChatGPT. Data were subsequently collected through reflective journals, classroom observations, and focus group interviews. The collected data were then transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis to identify themes related to students' perspectives on the integration of collaborative learning supported by ChatGPT in writing activities.

Data Analysis Procedures

The qualitative data gathered from students' reflective journals and focus group interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis, following the six-phase framework proposed by (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was selected because it provides a systematic yet flexible approach for identifying, organizing, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data. The use of thematic analysis also supports the establishment of trustworthiness in qualitative research through systematic coding, theme development, and transparent interpretation procedures (Nowell et al., 2017). This method was considered particularly appropriate for the present study because it enabled the researcher to explore and understand students' perspectives on the integration of collaborative learning supported by ChatGPT in writing activities. Through thematic analysis, the researcher was able to uncover recurring ideas, experiences, perceptions, and attitudes expressed by participants regarding the use of artificial intelligence within collaborative writing environments.

The analysis process began with the familiarization phase, during which the researcher repeatedly read and reviewed all interview transcripts and reflective journal entries to achieve a deep understanding of the dataset. During this stage, preliminary notes and observations were recorded to capture initial impressions, emerging patterns, and potentially significant issues related to students' experiences with collaborative learning and ChatGPT-assisted writing. This process of data immersion allowed the researcher to become thoroughly acquainted with the content before moving to more detailed analytical procedures.

Following familiarization, the researcher conducted initial coding by applying an open-coding process to the entire dataset. Each transcript and journal entry was examined line by line to identify meaningful units of data relevant to the research objectives. Codes were assigned to segments of text that reflected students' perceptions, experiences, feelings, attitudes, challenges, and learning strategies during collaborative writing activities. Particular attention was given to statements related to idea generation, peer interaction, feedback exchange, writing improvement, critical thinking, learner autonomy, and the perceived role of ChatGPT in supporting the writing process. The coding process remained data-driven, allowing themes to emerge naturally from participants' responses rather than being imposed by predetermined categories.

After generating the initial codes, the researcher systematically reviewed and organized them into broader categories and potential themes. Similar codes were grouped together to identify patterns of meaning that recurred across participants' accounts. These candidate themes represented shared experiences and perspectives regarding the integration of ChatGPT into collaborative learning activities. Examples of potential themes included perceived benefits of AI-assisted collaboration, challenges in evaluating AI-generated content, changes in writing confidence, peer negotiation processes, and students' perceptions of authorship and responsibility when using ChatGPT during writing tasks.

The candidate themes were then carefully reviewed and refined through an iterative process. At this stage, the researcher compared each theme against the coded extracts and the entire dataset to ensure coherence, consistency, and meaningful representation of participants' experiences. Themes that lacked sufficient supporting evidence were modified, merged, or removed, while overlapping themes were reorganized to improve conceptual clarity. This process ensured that each theme demonstrated internal consistency while remaining clearly distinguishable from other themes.

Once the thematic structure had been finalized, each theme was clearly defined and assigned a descriptive label that accurately reflected its underlying meaning. Detailed thematic descriptions were developed to explain how the themes addressed the research questions and contributed to understanding students' perspectives on collaborative learning supported by ChatGPT. The researcher then selected representative quotations from interview transcripts and reflective journals to illustrate the findings and provide evidence for each theme. The use of direct participant quotations enhanced the credibility and authenticity of the analysis by allowing students' voices to remain central to the interpretation of the data.

Finally, the themes were interpreted in relation to the study's conceptual framework, relevant literature, and research objectives. The thematic findings were used to examine how students perceived the benefits and challenges of integrating ChatGPT into collaborative writing activities, how they negotiated interactions with both peers and AI-generated suggestions, and how they understood the influence of ChatGPT on their writing development and higher-order thinking processes. Through this systematic analytical process, thematic analysis provided a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of students' experiences and perspectives regarding the integration of collaborative learning supported by ChatGPT in writing instruction.

Findings and Discussion

The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis. The analysis followed several stages, including data familiarization, coding, theme identification, theme categorization, and interpretation. Data from observation, interviews, questionnaires, and reflective journals were compared to identify recurring patterns and themes.

Table 4.1 Coding and Theme Development

Initial Codes	Categories	Themes
Generating ideas quickly	Writing Support	Enhanced Idea Generation and Writing Support
Vocabulary assistance	Writing Support	Enhanced Idea Generation and Writing Support
Organizing paragraphs	Writing Support	Enhanced Idea Generation and Writing Support
Sharing opinions	Collaborative Interaction	Improved Collaborative Learning Experiences
Discussing AI suggestions	Collaborative Interaction	Improved Collaborative Learning Experiences
Negotiating writing decisions	Collaborative Interaction	Improved Collaborative Learning Experiences
Verifying AI responses	Critical Evaluation	Development of Critical Thinking and Evaluation Skills
Comparing sources	Critical Evaluation	Development of Critical Thinking and Evaluation Skills
Evaluating information accuracy	Critical Evaluation	Development of Critical Thinking and Evaluation Skills
Dependence on AI	Learning Responsibility	Concerns Regarding Overreliance on ChatGPT
Reduced independent thinking	Learning Responsibility	Concerns Regarding Overreliance on ChatGPT
Excessive trust in AI	Learning Responsibility	Concerns Regarding Overreliance on ChatGPT

As shown in Table 4.1, four major themes emerged from the data analysis. These themes illustrate students' perspectives on how ChatGPT influenced collaborative writing activities and their overall writing experiences.

Theme 1: Enhanced Idea Generation and Writing Support

Most participants reported that ChatGPT helped them generate ideas more quickly during collaborative writing tasks. Students stated that they often experienced difficulty starting a writing assignment, particularly when developing content for descriptive and narrative texts. ChatGPT provided examples, vocabulary suggestions, and sentence structures that helped them initiate the writing process.

One participant explained:

"When our group did not know what to write first, ChatGPT gave us several ideas. It made brainstorming easier and faster."

Reflective journal entries also showed that students felt more confident when writing because they could use ChatGPT as a source of inspiration and language support.

Theme 2: Improved Collaborative Interaction

The second theme concerned the positive influence of ChatGPT on collaborative learning. Observation data indicated that students frequently discussed, compared, and evaluated the suggestions generated by ChatGPT before incorporating them into their writing.

Many participants reported that ChatGPT stimulated discussion among group members because they had to decide whether the AI-generated content was suitable for their writing objectives.

One student stated:

"We did not immediately copy the answers. We discussed them together and chose the ideas that matched our topic."

The findings suggest that ChatGPT functioned as a catalyst for peer interaction rather than replacing collaborative learning.

Theme 3: Challenges in Evaluating AI-Generated Content

Although students acknowledged the benefits of ChatGPT, they also reported difficulties in determining the accuracy and relevance of AI-generated information. Several participants stated that some suggestions were too general or did not fully align with the writing topic.

A participant commented:

"Sometimes ChatGPT gave information that sounded good, but after discussing it, we realized it was not really relevant to our topic."

Interview and observation data revealed that students needed to engage in critical evaluation when deciding whether to accept, modify, or reject AI-generated suggestions.

Theme 4: Concerns about Dependence on ChatGPT

The final theme reflected students' concerns about becoming overly dependent on AI assistance. Several participants expressed worry that excessive use of ChatGPT might reduce their creativity and independent thinking.

One student reflected:

"If we use ChatGPT too much, maybe we will become lazy to think and create ideas by ourselves."

Similarly, reflective journals indicated that some students deliberately limited their use of ChatGPT to maintain their own learning responsibility and writing skills.

To enhance trustworthiness, data triangulation was employed by comparing findings across multiple data sources. Member checking was also conducted by confirming selected interpretations with participations to ensure accuracy and credibility.

Table 4.2 Sources Supporting Each Theme

Theme	Interview	Journal	Observation	Questionnaire
Enhanced Idea Generation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Collaborative Learning	✓	✓	✓	✓
Critical Thinking	✓	✓	✓	✓
Overreliance	✓	✓	✓	✓

Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into students' perspectives on integrating collaborative learning supported by ChatGPT in writing activities. The analysis revealed four major themes, namely enhanced idea generation and writing support, improved collaborative learning experiences, development of critical thinking and evaluation skills, and concerns regarding overreliance on ChatGPT. These findings demonstrate that students generally perceived ChatGPT as a beneficial educational tool while simultaneously recognizing the importance of maintaining their own cognitive engagement throughout the writing process.

Enhanced Idea Generation and Writing Support

The first theme indicates that ChatGPT served as an effective support tool for idea generation and writing development. Participants reported that the technology assisted them in brainstorming, generating content ideas, improving vocabulary use, and organizing written texts. These findings suggest that ChatGPT can reduce students' anxiety during the initial stages of writing by providing immediate linguistic and conceptual support.

This finding is consistent with the work of Bingbing Zhang (2023), who argued that ChatGPT provides learners with opportunities to access language resources and receive instant assistance during academic tasks. Similarly, Stefano Grassini (2023) emphasized that artificial intelligence technologies have the potential to enhance learning experiences by supporting students in content development and language production. The present study extends these findings by demonstrating that ChatGPT not only supports individual writing but also facilitates idea generation within collaborative learning environments.

From a social constructivist perspective, the use of ChatGPT can be interpreted as a supplementary scaffold that assists learners in performing tasks beyond their current level of competence. According to Lev Vygotsky (1978), learning occurs most effectively when learners receive appropriate support within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In this study, ChatGPT functioned as an additional source of scaffolding that complemented peer support during collaborative writing activities.

Improved Collaborative Learning Experiences

The second theme revealed that ChatGPT positively influenced collaborative learning processes by stimulating discussion, encouraging idea exchange, and increasing student participation. Rather than replacing peer interaction, participants reported that ChatGPT often became a focal point for group discussion as students evaluated and negotiated AI-generated suggestions before incorporating them into their writing.

This finding supports the principles of collaborative learning proposed by Muhammad Ali Qureshi et al. (2023), who emphasized that collaborative learning enhances student engagement through interaction, communication, and shared knowledge construction. The findings also align with the concept of exploratory talk introduced by Neil Mercer (2004), which suggests that meaningful learning occurs when students critically discuss ideas, challenge assumptions, and collaboratively negotiate understanding.

The discussions observed during collaborative writing activities demonstrated that students actively evaluated AI-generated responses rather than accepting them uncritically. Consequently,

ChatGPT appeared to function as a catalyst for collaborative dialogue, creating opportunities for students to articulate opinions, justify decisions, and negotiate meaning collectively. These interactions contributed to a richer learning experience and reinforced the social nature of writing development.

Development of Critical Thinking and Evaluation Skills

Another important finding was that students recognized the need to critically evaluate the information generated by ChatGPT. Participants reported comparing AI-generated content with other sources, verifying information accuracy, and discussing the appropriateness of suggestions before incorporating them into their writing.

These findings are particularly significant when viewed through the lens of higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). According to Lorin Anderson and David Krathwohl (2001), analysis and evaluation are essential components of higher-order cognitive processes. The students in this study demonstrated these skills when assessing the relevance, credibility, and usefulness of AI-generated information.

Furthermore, the findings support the concept of cognitive agency proposed by Albert Bandura (2001), which emphasizes learners' capacity to regulate and direct their own thinking and actions. Although ChatGPT provided suggestions and information, students remained responsible for deciding whether the generated content should be accepted, modified, or rejected. This indicates that AI integration does not necessarily diminish critical thinking; rather, it may create additional opportunities for evaluation and decision-making when students are encouraged to use the technology responsibly.

Concerns Regarding Overreliance on ChatGPT

Despite the perceived benefits, participants also expressed concerns regarding excessive dependence on ChatGPT. Several students believed that overreliance on AI could reduce creativity, weaken independent thinking, and decrease personal effort during writing activities. These concerns reflect students' awareness of the potential risks associated with generative artificial intelligence in educational settings.

This finding is consistent with the concerns raised by Connie K. Y. Chan (2024), who argued that excessive reliance on generative AI may reduce learners' direct engagement in cognitive processes. Similarly, Stefano Grassini (2023) warned that while AI technologies offer educational benefits, they may also create challenges related to learner autonomy and critical engagement if used without appropriate guidance.

The concerns expressed by participants suggest that educators should carefully balance technological assistance with opportunities for independent learning. ChatGPT should therefore be viewed as a supportive educational tool rather than a substitute for students' own thinking, creativity, and collaborative engagement. Effective instructional design should encourage students to critically evaluate AI-generated outputs and maintain active participation in all stages of the writing process.

Overall Interpretation

Overall, the findings suggest that students hold predominantly positive perspectives toward integrating collaborative learning supported by ChatGPT in writing instruction. The technology was perceived as beneficial for idea generation, collaborative interaction, and writing support, while simultaneously promoting opportunities for critical evaluation and decision-making. However, students also recognized the importance of maintaining cognitive agency and avoiding excessive dependence on AI-generated content.

Viewed through the combined lenses of social constructivism, collaborative learning theory, and cognitive agency, the findings indicate that ChatGPT can enhance collaborative writing experiences when used as a scaffold that supports rather than replaces human interaction and intellectual effort. Therefore, the successful integration of ChatGPT in writing instruction depends not only on the capabilities of the technology itself but also on how learners and educators employ it to promote meaningful collaboration, critical thinking, and active engagement in the writing process.

Conclusion

This study explored students' perspectives on integrating collaborative learning supported by ChatGPT in writing activities. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through reflective journals, focus group interviews, classroom observations, and questionnaires. The findings revealed that students generally perceived ChatGPT as a valuable educational tool that supported various aspects of the writing process while also enhancing collaborative learning experiences.

The study identified four major themes emerging from students' experiences. First, ChatGPT was perceived as an effective tool for idea generation and writing support. Students reported that the technology helped them brainstorm ideas, expand vocabulary, organize content, and overcome difficulties encountered during the writing process. Second, the integration of ChatGPT contributed positively to collaborative learning by encouraging discussion, idea sharing, and collective decision-making among group members. Rather than replacing peer interaction, ChatGPT often served as a stimulus for meaningful discussion and collaborative negotiation.

Third, the findings indicated that students developed critical thinking and evaluation skills when interacting with AI-generated content. Participants recognized the importance of verifying information, comparing different perspectives, and critically assessing the relevance and accuracy of ChatGPT's suggestions before incorporating them into their writing. This finding suggests that the responsible use of generative artificial intelligence can support higher-order thinking processes when students remain actively engaged in evaluating and interpreting information.

Finally, despite recognizing the benefits of ChatGPT, students also expressed concerns regarding potential overreliance on artificial intelligence. Participants acknowledged that excessive dependence on AI-generated content could reduce creativity, independent thinking, and personal responsibility in the learning process. Consequently, students emphasized the importance of maintaining a balance between technological assistance and human cognitive effort.

Overall, the findings suggest that ChatGPT can serve as a beneficial support tool within collaborative writing environments when used appropriately and critically. The integration of collaborative learning and ChatGPT has the potential to enhance students' writing experiences, promote interaction, and stimulate critical reflection. However, the educational value of ChatGPT depends largely on how learners and educators utilize the technology to support meaningful learning rather than replace active thinking and collaboration. Therefore, educators are encouraged to implement ChatGPT as a complementary instructional tool that fosters student engagement, collaboration, and cognitive development in writing instruction.

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