



# AI-POWERED ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES: EMPOWERING LEARNERS THROUGH PERSONALISED RESUME WRITING INSTRUCTION

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**Abstract** This study investigates the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to revolutionise English for Specific Purposes (ESP) education by personalising learning experiences for Malaysian students. Focusing on resume writing, the research employs a mixed-methods approach to examine students' perceptions of AI-driven, personalised feedback in tailoring instruction to individual student needs and career goals. The study involved 60 ESP students who received simulated AI-powered feedback on their resume drafts, analysing grammar, vocabulary use, and the effectiveness of industry-specific keywords. Data were collected through resume draft analysis and focus group discussions to explore students' perceptions of engagement, learning outcomes, and job-market preparedness. Findings reveal that 88.3% of students perceived increased engagement and improved learning outcomes when using AI personalisation tools, with 80% expressing strong interest in AI analysis of industry-specific resume elements. Qualitative analysis of focus group discussions identified three main themes: appreciation for personalised feedback, challenges with technical vocabulary, and perceived improvement in job-market readiness. These findings suggest that AI-powered personalised feedback represents a promising pedagogical approach for ESP instruction, though further research is needed to assess actual learning outcomes and long-term effectiveness. The study provides foundational insights into student acceptance of AI in ESP contexts and identifies areas for improving AI tool design and implementation.

**Keywords:** Teaching and learning, English as a Second Language, Innovations, Technology, Artificial Intelligence, English for Specific Purposes, Resume Writing

## INTRODUCTION

The rapidly evolving demands of the global job market require educational institutions to equip students with specialised English language skills tailored to their professional fields. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has emerged as a critical component of tertiary education, addressing the need for discipline-specific language competencies that generic English instruction cannot adequately provide (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). However, traditional ESP instruction often employs a "one-size-fits-all" approach, delivering



standardised materials that may not fully address the diverse needs of learners pursuing different career paths within the same classroom.

Recent advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) present unprecedented opportunities to personalise learning experiences, particularly in language education. AI-powered tools can analyse individual student writing, identify specific areas for improvement, and provide targeted feedback that adapts to each learner's proficiency level and professional context (Xing & Wu, 2019; Chang, 2021). Despite this potential, research examining how students perceive and engage with AI-powered personalised feedback in ESP contexts remains limited, particularly in Southeast Asian educational settings where English functions as a second language.

Resume writing represents a particularly critical ESP skill, serving as students' primary tool for communicating their qualifications to potential employers. Effective resumes require not only grammatical accuracy but also strategic use of industry-specific terminology, appropriate tone, and professional formatting conventions that vary across fields (Spence & Liu, 2013). Traditional ESP instruction struggles to provide the individualised attention needed to help each student craft resumes tailored to their specific career goals, especially in the large classroom settings that are standard in Malaysian universities.

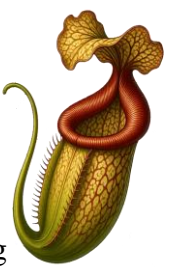
This study addresses a research gap by investigating students' perceptions of AI-powered personalised feedback in ESP resume-writing instruction within a Malaysian university context. Understanding how students perceive and engage with AI tools is essential for effective implementation, as student acceptance and engagement significantly influence the adoption and effectiveness of educational technologies (Venkatesh & Bala, 2008). By focusing on resume writing—a high-stakes, career-oriented ESP skill—this research examines whether AI personalisation can enhance student engagement and perceived learning outcomes in ways that traditional instruction cannot.

Therefore, this study explores students' perceptions of AI-powered personalised feedback in ESP resume-writing classes, investigating how this technology influences perceived engagement, learning outcomes, and job-market preparedness. The findings contribute to our understanding of AI's role in ESP education and offer practical insights for educators considering the integration of AI in their teaching practices.

### **Research Objectives**

This study aims to investigate students' perceptions of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in personalising the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learning experience, specifically focusing on resume-writing skills. The objectives are:

1. To explore students' perceptions of how AI-powered personalised feedback addresses individual learning needs in ESP resume-writing classes.
2. To examine student perceptions of AI-powered personalisation's impact on engagement and learning outcomes in resume writing.
3. To investigate students' perceptions of how AI-powered resume-writing instruction enhances job-market preparedness.



### Research Questions

1. What is student' perceptions of AI-powered personalised feedback in improving resume quality for their chosen profession?
2. How do students perceive the impact of AI personalisation tools on their engagement in ESP resume writing classes?
3. How do students perceive the impact of AI personalisation tools on their learning outcomes in resume writing skills?
4. What are students' perceptions of AI-powered resume writing instruction in enhancing job market preparedness?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Artificial Intelligence in Education

Artificial intelligence has transformed educational practices across multiple disciplines. Chassignol et al. (2018) provide a comprehensive analysis of AI's evolution in education, tracing the shift from computer-based instruction to intelligent, adaptive systems. Their research demonstrates that AI implementation has progressed from basic computer-assisted learning to sophisticated systems capable of analysing student performance and adapting instruction accordingly. This technological evolution has created opportunities for personalised learning experiences that were previously impossible in traditional classroom settings.

The integration of AI technology has had a particularly significant impact on STEM education, although its potential extends across all disciplines. Fitria (2021) notes that AI enables educators to understand students' needs with greater depth and precision, enabling more targeted instructional interventions. This capability is especially relevant for language education, where individual students often require different types of support based on their proficiency levels, learning styles, and professional goals. The ability of AI systems to process and respond to individual student data represents a significant advancement over traditional one-size-fits-all pedagogical approaches.

### AI-Powered Personalisation and Feedback

Chang (2021) examines AI's capacity to individualise learning experiences by analysing student writing styles and preferred pedagogical approaches. Envisioning language acquisition applications that employ AI to scrutinise student writing, Chang describes systems that could customise content and activities to align with individual proficiency levels and areas for improvement. This personalisation enhances both engagement and learning effectiveness. For ESP resume writing instruction, such AI systems could analyse initial resume drafts and suggest specialised industry-specific terminology or identify sections where students might better showcase their qualifications, providing guidance tailored to each student's career trajectory.

Xing and Wu (2019) specifically examine machine learning applications for generating personalised feedback in educational contexts. Their research demonstrates that AI systems can analyse student essays and provide precise feedback on grammar, vocabulary usage, and writing clarity. This individualised feedback proves particularly valuable for second language learners who require specific guidance to improve their writing. For resume writing instruction, AI feedback systems can examine student drafts and offer targeted recommendations to improve sentence structure, incorporate more impactful terminology,



and maintain a professional tone appropriate to their target industries. Such specificity surpasses what instructors can feasibly provide to each student in large ESP classes.

Liu (2020) explores adaptive learning systems powered by AI, emphasising how these systems can continuously adjust to student progress and changing needs. Adaptive AI systems monitor student performance over time, identify patterns in errors and areas of struggle, and then modify instruction to address these specific challenges. For ESP resume writing, this means AI systems could track how students respond to feedback, noting which suggestions they successfully implement and which areas continue to challenge them, then adjusting subsequent feedback accordingly.

### **Design Principles for AI-Powered Learning Platforms**

Chen and Liu (2020) explore design principles and instructional affordances of AI-powered personalised learning, emphasising user-friendliness and clear explanations within AI functionalities. Their research highlights that overly complex or confusing AI platforms can hinder rather than help the learning process. This principle is crucial for ESP resume writing platforms, where the AI interface must be intuitive and accessible, with transparent explanations for feedback and suggestions. Students should understand not only what to change but also why changes would improve their resumes, fostering genuine learning rather than mere compliance with AI recommendations.

### **Student Perceptions and Technology Acceptance**

Understanding student perceptions of AI tools is essential for successful implementation. Venkatesh and Bala (2008) demonstrate through their Technology Acceptance Model that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use significantly influence technology adoption and sustained engagement. Students who perceive AI tools as genuinely helpful for their learning goals and user-friendly are more likely to engage meaningfully with these technologies. This theoretical framework justifies examining student perceptions as a critical first step in understanding the potential of AI in ESP instruction.

Huang, Saleh, and Liu (2021) review the implementation of AI in education, noting that student attitudes toward AI tools significantly impact learning outcomes. Their research suggests that students who perceive AI feedback as credible and relevant exhibit higher engagement and a greater willingness to revise their work in response to AI suggestions. For ESP resume writing, a student's acceptance of AI feedback as legitimate and industry-relevant may determine whether they invest effort in implementing suggestions or dismiss them as generic computer-generated responses.

### **Challenges in AI Implementation**

Mohammad, Nasri, and Ibrahim (2020) identify potential challenges in implementing AI in education, including technical difficulties, student resistance, and concerns about AI accuracy. Understanding these challenges proves crucial for developing effective AI-powered ESP platforms. For instance, students may hesitate to trust AI-generated feedback on their resume writing, questioning whether algorithms can truly understand industry-specific requirements. Addressing this scepticism requires building transparent AI systems that explain their recommendations and demonstrate alignment with industry standards.

Pedro et al. (2019) discuss the challenges and opportunities of AI for sustainable development in education, emphasising the importance of ensuring equitable access and addressing digital literacy gaps. For ESP instruction in Malaysian universities, this means



considering whether all students have adequate technological skills to engage with AI platforms and whether these tools inadvertently disadvantage students with limited prior exposure to technology.

These literature reviews provide a comprehensive foundation for investigating students' perceptions of AI in ESP resume-writing instruction. The research gap this study addresses centres on understanding how students perceive AI-powered personalised feedback in ESP contexts, particularly in Southeast Asian settings where English serves as a second language and resume writing carries high stakes for career advancement. By examining student perceptions, this research provides essential groundwork for understanding whether and how AI personalisation can effectively enhance ESP instruction.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative survey data with qualitative focus group discussions to provide a comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions of AI-powered personalised feedback in ESP resume-writing instruction (Creswell, 2012). The mixed-methods approach enabled the triangulation of findings, utilising quantitative data to identify patterns across the student population. In contrast, qualitative data provided more profound insights into the reasons behind these patterns.

### Participants

This study involved 60 students enrolled in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course at a public university in Malaysia. The course focused specifically on developing professional communication skills, with resume writing as a core component. Participants were drawn from diverse academic programs, including business administration, engineering, information technology, and health sciences, reflecting the multidisciplinary nature of ESP instruction.

Participants ranged from second- to final-year undergraduate students (ages 19-24), with the majority ( $n = 52$ , 86.7%) being third-year students preparing for internships and job applications. The sample included 20 male (33.3%) and 40 female (66.7%) students. While gender was not a primary variable of interest, demographic information was collected to ensure balanced representation. All participants were Malaysian citizens, with Bahasa Malaysia as their first language and English as their second, having studied English throughout their primary and secondary education.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their enrolment in the ESP course, a required component of their degree programs. The course typically enrolled 60-65 students per semester, and all students enrolled during the Semester 2 Session 2024/2025 were invited to participate. The 60 participants represent 100% participation from eligible students who provided informed consent. A sample size of 60 is considered moderate for exploratory studies investigating new educational technologies (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018), providing sufficient diversity of perspectives while remaining manageable for in-depth qualitative analysis.

### Intervention: Simulated AI-Powered Feedback

Due to limited access to fully developed AI platforms explicitly designed for ESP resume writing, this study employed simulated AI feedback carefully crafted to replicate how AI





systems would operate. The simulation was developed based on existing AI writing assistant capabilities (e.g., Grammarly, ChatGPT) and ESP pedagogical principles.

Students submitted initial resume drafts tailored to their intended career fields. Research assistants trained in ESP and resume writing conventions analysed these drafts using a structured rubric focusing on: (1) grammatical accuracy, (2) vocabulary appropriateness and impact, (3) industry-specific keyword effectiveness, (4) professional tone, and (5) structural organisation. Based on this analysis, personalised feedback documents were created for each student, formatted to resemble AI-generated feedback with specific suggestions for improvement in each category.

Students were informed that they would receive "AI-powered feedback" on their resumes as part of an exploration of new educational technologies. While the feedback was human-generated, it was designed to be consistent with AI capabilities: specific, targeted, and focused on discrete elements (grammar, vocabulary, and keywords), as well as industry-aligned. This approach allowed examination of student perceptions of AI feedback while maintaining pedagogical rigour and individualisation.

## Data Collection

### *Quantitative Data Collection*

Quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered after students had received and reviewed their personalised feedback. The questionnaire was developed based on the Technology Acceptance Model (Venkatesh & Bala, 2008) and adapted for the context of AI-powered ESP instruction. The instrument contained 18 items organised into four sections:

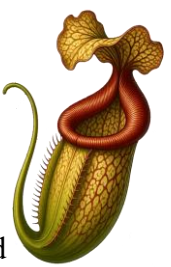
- Perceptions of AI feedback quality and relevance (5 items)
- Perceived impact on engagement (4 items)
- Perceived impact on learning outcomes (5 items)
- Perceived impact on job market preparedness (4 items)

Items were evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree), with additional open-ended questions for elaboration. The questionnaire was piloted with 10 students not included in the final sample to ensure clarity and relevance. All 60 participants completed and returned the questionnaire, achieving a 100% response rate. Questionnaires were administered in English with Bahasa Malaysia translations available for clarification.

### *Qualitative Data Collection*

Qualitative data were collected through four focus group discussions, each comprising 15 participants randomly assigned to ensure diverse representation across academic disciplines. Focus groups lasted 60-75 minutes each and were conducted in English, with code-switching to Bahasa Malaysia permitted for clarity. A semi-structured protocol guided discussions, with questions exploring:

- Initial reactions to receiving AI-powered feedback
- Specific aspects of feedback found most/least helpful
- Challenges or difficulties encountered
- Perceptions of how AI feedback influenced their resume revision process
- Confidence in job market preparedness after using AI feedback



All focus groups were audio-recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were checked against recordings for accuracy. Participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect anonymity.

### **Resume Draft Analysis**

Students submitted initial resume drafts at the beginning of the intervention and revised drafts after receiving feedback. Both versions were analysed using a standardised rubric assessing five key elements: (1) grammatical accuracy, (2) vocabulary appropriateness, (3) industry-specific keyword usage, (4) professional tone, and (5) structural organisation. Each element was scored on a 4-point scale (1=Needs Significant Improvement, 4=Excellent), yielding a maximum possible score of 20 points per resume.

Two independent raters (both experienced ESP instructors) scored all resumes, achieving an inter-rater reliability of 0.89 (Cohen's kappa). Discrepancies were resolved through discussion. The percentage of students showing improvement in each element was calculated by comparing initial and revised draft scores. The reported 75% improvement figure represents the proportion of students who demonstrated score increases in three or more of the five elements, indicating substantial overall improvement rather than improvement in a single element.

### **Data Analysis**

#### *Quantitative Analysis*

Questionnaire data were analysed using SPSS 26.0. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were calculated for all items. To categorise student responses for presentation in tables, responses were grouped into broader categories based on their questionnaire responses and thematic patterns:

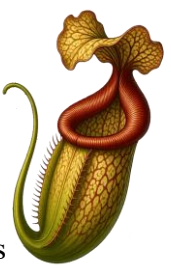
- Strong Interest/Positive Perception: Students with mean scores  $\geq 4.0$  across relevant items
- Moderate/Neutral: Students with mean scores 3.0-3.9
- Challenges/Difficulties: Students with mean scores  $< 3.0$  or who identified specific challenges in open-ended responses

This categorisation provided a more interpretable presentation of findings while maintaining the underlying granularity of Likert-scale responses.

#### *Qualitative Analysis*

Focus group transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach: familiarisation with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and producing the report. Two researchers independently coded the transcripts and then met to compare their codes and develop a unified coding scheme. Analysis was conducted using NVivo 12 software to manage data and track code frequency.

The coding process identified three major themes, each with several sub-themes, which informed the interpretation of quantitative findings and added contextual depth to student perceptions. Direct quotations from participants were selected to illustrate key themes, maintaining participants' voices while protecting anonymity.



### Ethical Considerations

This study received approval from the university's research ethics committee. All participants provided informed consent after receiving detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Participation was voluntary and did not affect course grades. Data were stored securely with access limited to the research team. Following data collection, participants were debriefed about the simulated nature of the AI feedback and provided with information about actual AI tools they might explore independently.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Student' Perceptions of AI-Powered Personalised Feedback in Improving Resume Quality for Their Chosen Profession

Table 1 presents student perceptions of AI-powered feedback mechanisms, categorised by overall perception patterns, based on questionnaire responses. The categories reflect students' aggregated responses to items assessing the quality, relevance, and usefulness of feedback.

**Table 1**  
Student Perceptions of AI-Powered Feedback Mechanisms

| Perception Category                                        | Number of Participants | Percentage  |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Strong Interest in Industry-Specific Feedback              | 48                     | 80.0%       |
| Found Vocabulary Suggestions Too Technical                 | 7                      | 11.7%       |
| Found Vocabulary Somewhat Helpful, But Required Adaptation | 5                      | 8.3%        |
| <b>Total</b>                                               | <b>60</b>              | <b>100%</b> |

The majority of students (80.0%,  $n = 48$ ) expressed a strong interest in AI-powered analysis that provides industry-specific resume feedback. This suggests students perceive significant value in personalised feedback that addresses discipline-specific language requirements. As one business student explained in focus groups: "The AI feedback helped me understand what kind of language recruiters in finance are actually looking for. It wasn't just fixing my grammar—it was about using the right business terms."

Focus group analysis revealed three primary reasons students valued industry-specific feedback: (1) increased confidence that their resumes aligned with employer expectations, (2) learning industry terminology they were previously unaware of, and (3) understanding how to position their experiences using professional language. Students frequently mentioned that traditional resume instruction provided general principles but lacked the specificity needed for their particular fields.

However, 20.0% of students encountered challenges with vocabulary suggestions. Specifically, 11.7% ( $n = 7$ ) found the suggested vocabulary too technical for their current level or context, while 8.3% ( $n = 5$ ) found the suggestions somewhat helpful but requiring significant adaptation. An engineering student noted, "Some of the technical terms suggested were too advanced for an entry-level position. I had to research them and find simpler alternatives." This highlights the need for AI systems to calibrate feedback to students' experience levels and target positions, not just their academic disciplines.





These findings align with Chen and Liu's (2020) emphasis on user-appropriate feedback. AI systems must consider not only the student's field but also their career stage and specific job targets. Future AI platforms should allow students to specify their experience level and receive feedback calibrated accordingly. Additionally, AI systems should provide context and usage examples alongside vocabulary suggestions, helping students understand how to incorporate terms naturally rather than resorting to inappropriate technical jargon.

### Students Perceive the Impact of AI Personalisation Tools on Their Engagement and Learning Outcomes in ESP Resume Writing Classes and Writing Skills

Table 2 presented that student perceptions of the impact of AI personalisation on engagement and learning outcomes were closely interrelated in both questionnaire responses and focus group discussions.

**Table 2**  
Student Perceptions of AI Personalisation Impact on Engagement and Learning Outcomes

| Perception Category                                           | Number of Participants | Percentage  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Perceived Increased Engagement and Improved Learning Outcomes | 53                     | 88.3%       |
| Perceived Moderate Improvement                                | 4                      | 6.7%        |
| Found AI Interface Challenging                                | 3                      | 5.0%        |
| <b>Total</b>                                                  | <b>60</b>              | <b>100%</b> |

A substantial majority (88.3%,  $n = 53$ ) of students reported that AI personalisation increased their engagement with resume-writing tasks and improved their learning outcomes. Focus group discussions revealed that this perception stemmed from three key factors: (1) the personalised nature of feedback made students feel their individual needs were addressed, (2) specific, actionable suggestions motivated revision efforts, and (3) industry relevance made the learning feel immediately applicable to their career goals.

Regarding engagement, students described feeling more motivated to revise their resumes when feedback addressed their specific situations rather than providing generic advice. One IT student explained: "When the feedback showed me exactly which parts of my resume needed work and why, I actually wanted to fix it. It wasn't just someone saying 'improve your resume'—it was targeted help." This specificity contrasts with traditional one-size-fits-all instruction and aligns with personalised learning theories, suggesting that targeted, relevant instruction increases student motivation (Chang, 2021).

Regarding perceived learning outcomes, students reported a better understanding of resume conventions after receiving personalised feedback. Focus group analysis identified that students appreciated learning through their own work rather than through generic examples. A health sciences student noted: "I learned more from seeing feedback on my actual resume than from looking at sample resumes. It was about my experience and my field."

Analysis of resume drafts corroborated students' perceptions to some extent: 75% of students ( $n=45$ ) demonstrated measurable improvement in three or more of the five assessed elements (grammar, vocabulary, keywords, tone, organisation) between the initial and revised drafts. While this does not establish direct causation between AI feedback and improvement—students may have improved due to general instruction, peer discussions, or



other factors—it suggests that students' perceptions of improvement were grounded in actual performance gains.

However, 6.7% ( $n = 4$ ) of students perceived only moderate improvement, and 5.0% ( $n = 3$ ) found the AI interface or feedback format to be challenging. Focus groups revealed that these students struggled primarily with understanding how to implement feedback, rather than with the quality of the input itself. As one student explained: "The suggestions were good, but I didn't always know how actually to fix what was pointed out." This highlights the need for AI systems to provide not only problem identification but also concrete solutions, consistent with Chen and Liu's (2020) design principles, which emphasise clarity and scaffolding.

### Students' Perceptions of AI-Powered Resume Writing Instruction in Enhancing Job Market Preparedness

Table 3 presents students' perceptions of how AI-powered resume-writing instruction affected their sense of job-market preparedness.

**Table 3**  
Student Perceptions of Job Market Preparedness

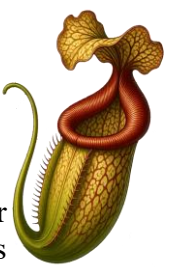
| Perception Category                             | Number of Participants | Percentage  |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Perceived Enhanced Job Market Preparedness      | 42                     | 70.0%       |
| Uncertain About Impact on Employability         | 10                     | 16.7%       |
| Remained Concerned About Resume Competitiveness | 5                      | 8.3%        |
| Found Feedback Implementation Difficult         | 3                      | 5.0%        |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>60</b>              | <b>100%</b> |

The majority of students (70.0%,  $n = 42$ ) perceived that AI-powered resume instruction enhanced their job market preparedness. Focus groups revealed that this perception centred primarily on increased confidence in the professional quality and appropriateness of their resumes for their target industries. Students felt better equipped to present themselves effectively to potential employers.

An important caveat emerged in focus group discussions: students distinguished between having a stronger resume and being comprehensively prepared for the job market. As one business student astutely noted: "The AI helped me write a much better resume, and I feel more confident applying for jobs. But I know that job market readiness is about more than just the resume—it's about my actual skills and experience too." This distinction is crucial. While AI-enhanced resumes may help students better communicate their qualifications, actual job market preparedness requires substantive skills, knowledge, and professional competencies (Spence & Liu, 2013).

Therefore, the 70% finding should be interpreted as students perceiving an improvement in confidence and competence in resume writing—a communication tool for job market entry—rather than comprehensive employability. This distinction aligns with ESP's fundamental purpose: providing discipline-specific language skills that complement, rather than replace, professional competencies.

Among students who did not perceive enhanced preparedness, 16.7% ( $n = 10$ ) remained uncertain about whether improved resumes would actually impact their employability. In comparison, 8.3% ( $n = 5$ ) still felt concerned about their resume



competitiveness despite the improvements. These students often cited doubts about whether AI suggestions truly reflected current employer expectations or worried that many students using similar AI tools would create uniformly formatted resumes, diminishing individual distinctiveness.

Additionally, 5.0% ( $n = 3$ ) continued to struggle with implementing feedback effectively, which undermined their confidence. One engineering student explained: "I know the feedback says to use stronger action verbs, but I don't know which verbs work best for engineering positions. I need examples, not just instructions." This reinforces earlier findings about the need for AI systems to provide contextual examples and implementation guidance alongside diagnostic feedback.

Overall, the findings suggest generally positive student perceptions of AI-powered personalised feedback in ESP resume-writing instruction. Students particularly valued industry-specific guidance and felt more confident about the quality of their resumes. However, challenges with vocabulary technicality, implementation difficulties, and the need for more comprehensive scaffolding indicate areas requiring refinement in AI tool design. Importantly, while students perceived enhanced job market preparedness, this should be explicitly understood as improved confidence in resume communication skills rather than comprehensive employability.

### **Qualitative Themes from Focus Group Analysis**

Thematic analysis of focus group transcripts identified three major themes that provide deeper context for quantitative findings:

#### *Theme 1: Appreciation for Personalised, Industry-Relevant Feedback*

Students consistently emphasised the importance of feedback tailored to their specific fields and career goals. Representative quotes included: "It was nice to get feedback that understood I'm in IT, not just general writing advice", and "The industry terms suggested actually matched job postings I've seen." This theme aligns with personalised learning theories, which emphasise relevance and contextualisation.

#### *Theme 2: Challenges with Technical Vocabulary and Implementation*

While appreciating vocabulary suggestions, students often struggled to judge the appropriateness of terms and to use them naturally. Comments included: "Some words seemed too advanced for someone just graduating" and "I had to Google several terms to understand if they fit my situation." Students desired examples showing vocabulary in context and guidance on when specific terms were appropriate for their level of experience.

#### *Theme 3: Perceived Enhancement of Professional Presentation*

Students felt their revised resumes appeared more professional and competitive. Typical comments included: "My resume looks more polished and professional now", and "I feel like my resume could actually compete with others." However, students also acknowledged that resume quality represents only one aspect of job market readiness, recognising the continued importance of developing substantive professional skills and competencies.

### **Limitations**

Several limitations warrant consideration when interpreting these findings. First, this study employed simulated AI feedback rather than fully automated AI systems. While this approach provided pedagogically sound, individualised feedback, students' perceptions may



differ when engaging with actual AI platforms that may have different capabilities, interfaces, and response patterns.

Second, the study examined student perceptions rather than objectively measured learning outcomes or actual employability. While the resume analysis showed improvements, the study cannot establish that AI feedback caused them, as students received traditional instruction alongside the AI feedback. Future research should employ experimental designs with control groups to isolate the effects of AI feedback.

Third, the sample size of 60 students from a single Malaysian university limits the generalizability of the findings. Student perceptions may vary across different institutions, cultural contexts, and levels of English proficiency. Additionally, the study focused specifically on resume writing, and its findings may not apply to other ESP genres or communication skills.

Fourth, the study's short timeframe (one semester) precludes assessment of long-term impacts on student learning or career outcomes. Longitudinal research tracking students' actual job-search experiences and employment outcomes would provide more definitive evidence of the effectiveness of AI feedback.

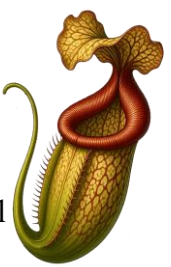
Finally, the study did not examine potential negative consequences of AI dependency, such as whether students might become overly reliant on AI feedback at the expense of developing independent revision skills. Future research should investigate how to balance AI support with fostering student autonomy in professional writing.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated students' perceptions of AI-powered personalised feedback in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) resume-writing instruction within a Malaysian university context. Findings indicate generally positive student perceptions: 88.3% report increased engagement and improved learning outcomes, 80% express a strong interest in industry-specific AI analysis, and 70% perceive enhanced job market preparedness. Qualitative analysis revealed that students particularly valued personalised, industry-relevant feedback but encountered challenges with vocabulary, technicality, and guidance on implementation.

These findings contribute to understanding AI's potential role in ESP education by demonstrating student acceptance and perceived value of AI-powered personalised feedback. While traditional ESP instruction remains fundamental, AI tools offer promising opportunities to provide individualised, industry-specific guidance that may be difficult to deliver in large classroom settings. The personalisation capabilities of AI align well with ESP's core purpose: tailoring language instruction to specific professional contexts and individual learner needs.

However, essential caveats temper these optimistic findings. Student perceptions, while valuable, do not necessarily reflect actual learning outcomes or long-term effectiveness. The study's use of simulated AI feedback means findings may not fully translate to actual AI platforms. Additionally, students' perceived enhancement of job-market preparedness should be understood explicitly as improved confidence in resume



communication skills rather than comprehensive employability, as substantive professional competencies extend beyond resume-writing abilities.

For educational practice, these findings suggest that AI-powered personalised feedback is a viable pedagogical approach worth exploring in ESP contexts, particularly for high-stakes professional writing tasks such as resume development. However, successful implementation requires careful attention to design principles that emphasise user-friendliness, the appropriate calibration of feedback to student experience levels, the provision of contextual examples and implementation guidance, and scaffolding to support student autonomy rather than creating AI dependency.

As Ahmed et al. (2023) emphasise, AI tools such as ChatGPT hold significant potential to enhance ESP teaching and learning by simulating real-world communication scenarios, providing context-specific language practice, and generating personalised feedback. The continued advancement of AI technologies promises to revolutionise ESP instruction, enabling learners to thrive in increasingly globalised and competitive labour markets. However, realising this potential requires ongoing research examining not only student perceptions but also actual learning outcomes, careful tool design based on pedagogical principles, and thoughtful integration that complements rather than replaces effective teaching practices.

In conclusion, AI-powered personalised feedback in ESP resume writing shows promise as a pedagogical innovation. Still, this promise must be tempered with recognition of current limitations and the need for continued research and development. By harnessing AI's potential thoughtfully and rigorously, educators can equip students with the precise professional communication skills required for success in their chosen careers, ultimately contributing to both their academic development and professional advancement.

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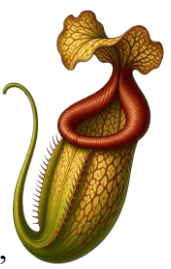
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