

MOBILE-ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING (MALL) FOR GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY ACQUISITION: STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON CHATGPT

Aufilea Anak Paulus

Faculty of Education and Sports Studies, Universiti Malaysia Sabah

Aufileapuya@gmail.com,

Received: 12.9.2025

Accepted: 15.10.2025

Revised: 29.10.2025

Published: 27.11.2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51200/ijelp.v8i1.6827>

ABSTRACT

This research explores the perspectives of students regarding the use of ChatGPT as Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) to develop grammar and vocabulary. Based on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), this study targeted 42 Form 4 students (age 16) of SMK Kolombong, Sabah. The objective was to find out their opinions on the usefulness, ease of use, social impact, and facilitation conditions of using ChatGPT, as well as their challenges. The data were obtained through a questionnaire adopted from Venkatesh et al. (2003), Chao (2019) and Almaiah et al. (2019). Findings revealed that students have high positive perceptions for all four constructs: Performance Expectancy (4.12), Effort Expectancy (4.22), Social Influence (4.55) and Facilitating Conditions (4.27). Based on qualitative findings, students praised ChatGPT for providing fast answers and fixing grammar, while also helping them learn new words and build better sentences. They found it an easy-to-use tool that made learning English more fun and supported independent practice. These findings indicate that students are open to the potential of using ChatGPT to learn English, but it requires structural support in the form of a stable internet connection and instructor supervision to best utilize the resources. The research adds to the existing research on AI-aided language learning in Malaysian secondary schools and provides some insight into the effective incorporation of ChatGPT in the low-to-intermediate proficiency level ESL classrooms.

Keyword(s): *ChatGPT, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), Grammar, Vocabulary, ESL, Secondary Students, UTAUT*

INTRODUCTION

The use of technology in education has greatly changed the approach that the students of learning results, particularly in the language learning category of studies. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one of the technological innovations, and as a result, it is emerging as a potent technology that facilitates learning in a new and innovative manner. A language model developed by OpenAI, ChatGPT, is one of such tools, although its usage is controversial due to a few reasons, namely, using instant feedback to assist in language acquisition, as well as producing examples and enabling a student to practice the language through interaction. ChatGPT has a very good potential in Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in English Second Language (ESL)

learning due to the potential problems that ESL students in Malaysia face, where students struggle to master grammar and vocabulary learning.

Although ChatGPT has become a popular tool, there is little research on how effective and how well it is received by students when we use it as a MALL tool in secondary schools in Malaysia. A significant number of students continue working with the use of traditional classroom approaches, and the process of transitioning to AI-driven tools needs comprehension of the readiness, the acceptance, and the issues that may arise. In addition, student feedback plays an important role in whether such a technology is viable in real-life classrooms, specifically schools with low and intermediate levels of English competency.

According to the existing literature, ChatGPT and its ability to improve grammar and vocabulary learning are promising, but the knowledge about the secondary school students' perception of its usefulness, usability, social and technological concerns, and issues in its application is limited. Additionally, the literature on the issues students encounter during the use of ChatGPT is extremely scarce, including the accuracy of the answers, the compatibility with the language level, and access to stable internet or devices.

Thus, the current paper will explore the perspectives of Form 4 students towards the potential of ChatGPT in the context of the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary in the English language. To achieve these objectives, the research questions must be answered as follows:

1. How do the students of ESL classes view learning grammar and vocabulary with the help of ChatGPT?
2. What advantages and difficulties can be seen by students using ChatGPT to learn English?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The research was based on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), which was proposed by Venkatesh et al. (2003) to pinpoint the four reasons that affect the adoption of technology, which are performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social force, and facilitating circumstance. UTAUT is a predominant model extensively employed in understanding technology adoption in the educational context, especially in Malaysia, to understand how users accept and utilise new technologies. The relevance to the present study is that it is an effective way to explain how English as a second language learners use and visualize ChatGPT to learn grammar and vocabulary in a Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) environment.

The theoretical framework on which the study was based on is the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). The framework describes the process by which users develop an attitude towards and adopt a new technology based on four main constructs that include performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. Performance expectancy implies the expectation that ChatGPT can assist students in mastering their grammar and vocabulary, whereas effort expectancy specifies how convenient and comfortable the usage can be. Social influence is relative to the extent to which students believe that people with whom they have relationships, including peers and teachers, feel they should use the technology. Facilitating conditions refer to access to resources, support systems and infrastructure that allows effective application of ChatGPT to the learning process.

UTAUT constructs informed the questionnaire design and contributed to interpreting research results, so using this model was reasonable to explore the attitude of students towards

using ChatGPT in Mobile-Assisted Language Learning in the ESL classroom. Previous studies have found that the motivation of students, their perceived usefulness, and support associated with institutions have a significant influence on the inclusion of mobile and AI tools (Vo, 2020; Maharani et al., 2024). ChatGPT and other technologies fit this model as they enable performance enhancement and a high expectancy of effort through their conversational and responsive nature and their immediate availability (Alif & Ngui, 2024; Aydin & Karaarslan, 2024; Nguyen & Ha, 2021). Moreover, AI ethical concerns in education, which include academic cheating and misinformation, emphasize the need to have practical and open digital policies and responsible AI education among students in high schools (Selvanathan & Narayanan, 2024; Mokhtar et al., 2024).

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is the use of handheld communications equipment in a language-learning context carried out outside of a conventional classroom. MALL supports learner autonomy because it allows students to study the content at their own pace and comfort, and thus exposes them to even more language material and interaction with the content (Vo, 2020). In Malaysia, where the use of smartphones is already prevalent, MALL will be in accordance with the national education policy and can be used to fill learning gaps in underdeveloped or remote areas and schools (Mohamad & Woppard, n.d.). Furthermore, AI-powered tools such as ChatGPT add immense quality to MALL because they provide immediate, personalized feedback, especially to develop grammar and vocabulary (Shohor & Hashim, 2024). ChatGPT has a more open, student-centred format compared to apps that teach structured language, and this aspect makes the latter highly applicable to one-on-one ESL instruction. This is in line with the developing trend of learner control and microlearning in mobile learning.

One of the best examples of generative artificial intelligence in education is ChatGPT, which is a product of OpenAI. It does so as a natural language processing software where students can pose questions, have grammatical explanations, and study vocabulary in real time (Uddin et al., 2023). The responsiveness of the tool allows the learners more control over how they want to study at their own pace, revisit the concepts they have trouble understanding, and get immediate responses. However, according to Aydin and Karaarslan (2024), ChatGPT claims its advantages in delivering a friendly interface, solid answers, which are similar to human dialogue, and that it does not always demonstrate a high accuracy level. Although ChatGPT has several advantages in ESL education, its application should be moderated by an educator to avoid excessive use to foster self-reliance and the ability of the learners to think critically and be digitally literate (Selvanathan & Narayanan, 2024; Mokhtar et al., 2024). These considerations are particularly relevant to the secondary school students who might not have adequate skills to judge the quality or reliability of AI-created material on their own.

Student perceptions of ChatGPT are one of the determining factors that define its efficacy in language learning. The attitude and perceived usefulness of mobile tools, according to Vo (2020), are great determinants of whether the student will use mobile tools. ChatGPT, being a personalized and interactive tool, facilitates greater learner motivation and offers immediate feedback in the grammar and vocabulary drills (Shohor & Hashim, 2024). Alif and Ngui (2024) mentioned that students are most likely to use the tool if it is useful for them. Maharani et al. (2024) have discovered that the use of AI-integrated tools led to greater autonomy and self-direction during learning than the use of traditional classroom resources. Likewise, Nguyen and Ha (2021) observed that students are more involved and active when they can control the process and time of the learning process, especially in mobile-integrated applications. This study confirms the possible value of ChatGPT as an effective tool in learning under the conditions that students view it as a helpful tool, convenient, and have a personal advantage in using it.

The application of the UTAUT model is further confirmed by empirical research in Malaysia and other countries. According to Raman and Rathakrishnan (2018), the performance expectancy and having technical support were the two major factors that influenced the implementation of the FROG Virtual Learning Environment among teachers. According to Jalil et al. (2022), the most influential variables leading to technology adoption among the primary school teachers were social influence and facilitating conditions in comparison with ease of technology or perceived usefulness as its driving factors. These findings indicate that environmental and social support tend to supersede the technical features of a tool in determining a user's behavior. Agyei and Razi (2022) performed a student-centered study and extended UTAUT by including self-efficacy and discovered that performance and effort expectancy were significant predictors of willingness to use web-based instruction among high school students. These studies reaffirm the usefulness of UTAUT in investigating the interaction that ESL students have with ChatGPT to understand how their perceptions, experiences, and social contexts determine their readiness to employ AI in learning grammar and vocabulary.

Overall, the literature helps to confirm the value of integrating ChatGPT into MALL as a potentially effective means of promoting ESL grammar and vocabulary learning. The UTAUT model is effective in offering a very good theoretical background in the aspects that affect the student acceptance and usage of ChatGPT. It has been empirically demonstrated that ChatGPT can be used to promote personalized and autonomous learning, timely feedback, which are all good characteristics of mobile learning. Nonetheless, to be implemented successfully, ethical concerns have to be taken into consideration, in addition to being ready in the digitized world and properly guided by teachers. The insights can form a great basis for the proposed research, which studies the perceptions and experiences of Malaysian secondary students in terms of using ChatGPT as a mobile-aided language-learning technique.

METHODOLOGY

This research methodology was designed to study the opinions of high school ESL students concerning using ChatGPT as a Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) tool to improve grammar and vocabulary learning using a survey instrument adapted from Venkatesh et al. (2003), Chao (2019) and Almaiah et al. (2019). The research design was quantitative descriptive with embedded qualitative components, thus allowing the mixed-method design to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. This practice was deemed sufficient because it enabled a thorough comprehension of the perspectives of students and difficulties when they used ChatGPT.

The respondents were Form 4 ESL students in SMK Kolombong in Sabah. In this research, there were a total of 42 students who participated; 13 were male students and 29 were female students. The sample was identified with the help of purposive sampling, as the students had access to digital devices and could use AI-based language tools, such as ChatGPT. The subjects have been chosen according to the accessibility to digital tools at school and exposure to English as a second language. The level of their English language was low to intermediate, which was enough to assess the effectiveness and ease of use of ChatGPT when learning a language.

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) was used to guide the research, and it was the theoretical framework reflective of the development of the research instrument. It also served as the guiding framework for the analysis of the students' responses. The questionnaire was designed in a way that corresponded to the key constructs of UTAUT: Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, Social Influence, and Facilitating Conditions. The

survey was based on 10 questions on a Likert-scale and three open-ended questions to add a qualitative dimension to the survey since students could provide their own experience, perceived benefits, and difficulties with using ChatGPT to learn grammar and vocabulary.

The instruments were adapted to the setting of the secondary school ESL students and aimed precisely at their activities with ChatGPT in terms of learning grammar and vocabulary. It was made simpler, with examples concerning ChatGPT being added with the aim of making it clearer. 5 Likert scale was used: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree to make the questionnaire simpler and more relevant for the students. The following table shows the items according to the 4 constructs of UTAUT, and the changes made to accommodate the students after receiving input from expert validation:

Table 1: Instrument Used for the Study According to Constructs and Changes Made

Construct	Original Items	Revised Items
Performance Expectancy (PE)	ChatGPT boosted my knowledge of the English language in grammar.	ChatGPT helps me understand grammar better.
	ChatGPT boosted my knowledge of the English language in vocabulary.	ChatGPT helps me understand vocabulary better.
	I enjoy practicing English with ChatGPT.	I enjoy using ChatGPT to learn English.
	ChatGPT makes learning the English language more interesting.	Using ChatGPT makes learning English more interesting.
Effort Expectancy	ChatGPT is a user-friendly tool.	ChatGPT is easy to use.
	I'm comfortable using ChatGPT for academic stuff.	I feel confident when using ChatGPT to study.
Social Influence	My peers see ChatGPT as a helpful study tool.	My friends/classmates think using ChatGPT is helpful.
	My teacher encourages the integration and usage of ChatGPT in language learning.	My teacher supports the use of ChatGPT to study.
Facilitating Conditions	Access to ChatGPT is now conveniently available through the right digital devices for me.	I can access ChatGPT easily using my device.
	I plan to keep using ChatGPT to advance my language learning in English.	I plan to continue using ChatGPT for English learning in the future.
Open-Ended Questions	Which features of ChatGPT can be the most helpful to you in learning English?	What do you like the most about using ChatGPT to learn?
	Which of the problems have you faced in the process of using ChatGPT as a learning resource?	What challenges or difficulties did you face when using ChatGPT?

After validity through expert validation and reliability checks (Cronbach's alpha: 0.72) were conducted, the research instrument was administered online through Google Forms. Data collection took place in the ICT room of the school, where the survey was given to the students by the researcher during school hours. Before doing so, the students were informed about the

aim and methods of the study and were guaranteed informed consent, anonymity, and the voluntary character of the study. The school administration was also consulted to approve to make it ethically compliant.

Analysis of the data was done in line with a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods using the data received from the questionnaire, as shown in Table 2. In the case of the closed-ended Likert-scale questions, basic descriptive statistics were used. The purpose of this analysis was to find out trends and patterns in students' perceptions about using ChatGPT to learn grammar and vocabulary.

Table 2. Data Analysis Procedure

Research Questions	Instruments	Data Analysis Method
RQ1: <i>How do students of ESL classes in secondary school view learning grammar and vocabulary with the help of ChatGPT?</i>	Close-ended questionnaire (adapted from Venkatesh (2003), Chao (2019) and Almaiah et al. (2019))	Descriptive statistics (frequency and means)
RQ2: <i>What advantages and difficulties can be seen by students using ChatGPT to learn English?</i>	Open-ended questionnaire items	Thematic analysis

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

The results of the research conducted with 42 Form 4 students (29 female, 13 male) of SMK Kolombong were intended to examine their perspectives towards the application of ChatGPT to learn grammar and vocabulary and discover the obstacles to this practice.

Students' Views on Learning Grammar and Vocabulary with ChatGPT

According to the results obtained in Table 3, most students shared positive attitudes to the usefulness of ChatGPT in terms of learning grammar and vocabulary. In the case of Q1, the responses are that the students agreed (85.7%) that ChatGPT has increased their understanding of grammar. For Q2, 76.2% of students gave a highly positive answer to the question of whether ChatGPT influences their knowledge of vocabulary. The user engagement on ChatGPT used to learn the English language was high in Q3, with 78.6% of the students remarking that they enjoy using ChatGPT. Similarly, Q4 indicates that 81% of the students believe that ChatGPT makes the English language more interesting to learn. The findings show that the students tend to view ChatGPT as a practical and dynamic system of enhancing their English language skills in terms of grammar and vocabulary.

Effort Expectancy results reveal that most of the students find ChatGPT simple to use and no longer experience a feeling of insecurity whenever using it in their studies. For the statement "ChatGPT is easy to use" (Q3), 40.5% of students agreed and 35.7% strongly agreed, amounting to a total of 76.2% who responded positively. Similarly, for the statement "I feel confident when using ChatGPT to study" (Q6) yielded 88.1% positive responses. All of these findings indicate that students perceive and respond to ChatGPT as user-friendly and think they can successfully use it to navigate among it with great amounts of ease and confidence. Most of them said that they did

not need a lot of guidance in order to use the platform. Its interface was open and simple enough even to those who had low proficiency in English. The students also had an opportunity to work with the tool on their own, which may indicate a very high degree of its usability. This accessibility minimizes thoughtfulness, which is the feature of using new technology, thus rendering the learning process less daunting and more inspiring to young ESL students.

Table 3. Findings from the Questionnaire

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean / SD
ChatGPT helps me understand Grammar better	0 (0%)	2 (4.8%)	4 (9.5%)	27 (64.3%)	9 (21.4%)	4.12 (0.78)
ChatGPT helps me understand Vocabulary better	0 (0%)	2 (4.8%)	8 (19%)	14 (33.3%)	18 (42.9%)	
I enjoy using ChatGPT to learn English	0 (0%)	3 (7.1%)	6 (14.3%)	21 (50%)	15 (28.6%)	
Using ChatGPT makes learning English more interesting	0 (0%)	1 (2.4%)	7 (16.7%)	17 (40.5%)	17 (40.5%)	
ChatGPT is easy to use	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (23.8%)	17 (40.5%)	15 (35.7%)	4.22 (0.81)
I feel confident when using ChatGPT to study	1 (2.4%)	2 (4.8%)	3 (7.1%)	18 (42.9%)	19 (45.2%)	
My friends/ classmates think Using ChatGPT is helpful	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (4.8%)	18 (42.9%)	22 (52.4%)	4.55 (0.54)
My teacher supports the use of ChatGPT to study	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.4%)	15 (35.7%)	26 (61.9%)	
I can access ChatGPT easily using my device	2 (4.8%)	1 (2.4%)	3 (7.1%)	17 (40.5%)	19 (45.2%)	4.27 (0.84)
I plan to continue using ChatGPT for English learning in the future	0 (0%)	3 (7.1%)	3 (7.1%)	18 (42.9%)	18 (42.9%)	

Results under the Social Influence category indicate that external people, like friends and educators, contribute to an extent in promoting the usage of ChatGPT. For the statement "My friends/classmates think using ChatGPT is helpful" (Q7) obtained 95.3% positive responses. Similarly, for the statement "My teacher supports the use of ChatGPT to study" (Q8), a total of 97.6% of students felt supported by their teachers. These findings imply that the levels of acceptance and usage of ChatGPT as a learning tool are heavily dependent on peer and teacher support.

Regarding the findings on Facilitating Conditions, most students would have the technological availability as well as the motivation to further use ChatGPT. For Q9, "I can access ChatGPT easily using my device," 85.7% of students find ChatGPT easily accessible on their devices. Similarly, for Q10, "I plan to continue using ChatGPT for English learning in the future," 85.8% positive responses were obtained. The obtained results suggest that students found sufficient support in the needed resources and the stimulus to further use ChatGPT as a means of learning English.

Applying the UTAUT framework, the study reveals that all four constructs. Performance expectancy is high, as students agreed that ChatGPT is useful for enhancing grammar and vocabulary, driven by its rapid feedback and visualization aids. Social influence also positively affects adoption, as peers and teachers often introduce the tool. However, the full integration of ChatGPT is slightly limited by facilitating conditions, specifically, inconsistent internet access and device availability for all students

Students' opinions on the advantages and difficulties of using ChatGPT to learn English.

The open-ended questions offered qualitative points of view on the obstacles that students faced. Internet unreliability, problems reading and comprehending sophisticated vocabulary created by ChatGPT, or instructions that were not as clear and typical were the frequent themes. Some students said that ChatGPT offered excessively complex or even robot-like explanations sometimes and it puzzled them instead of being helpful. These answers validate that although the students in general perceived ChatGPT positively, there are practical and pedagogical issues to deal with.

Based on the responses of the students in the open-ended questions, there are 6 themes identified in Figure 1:

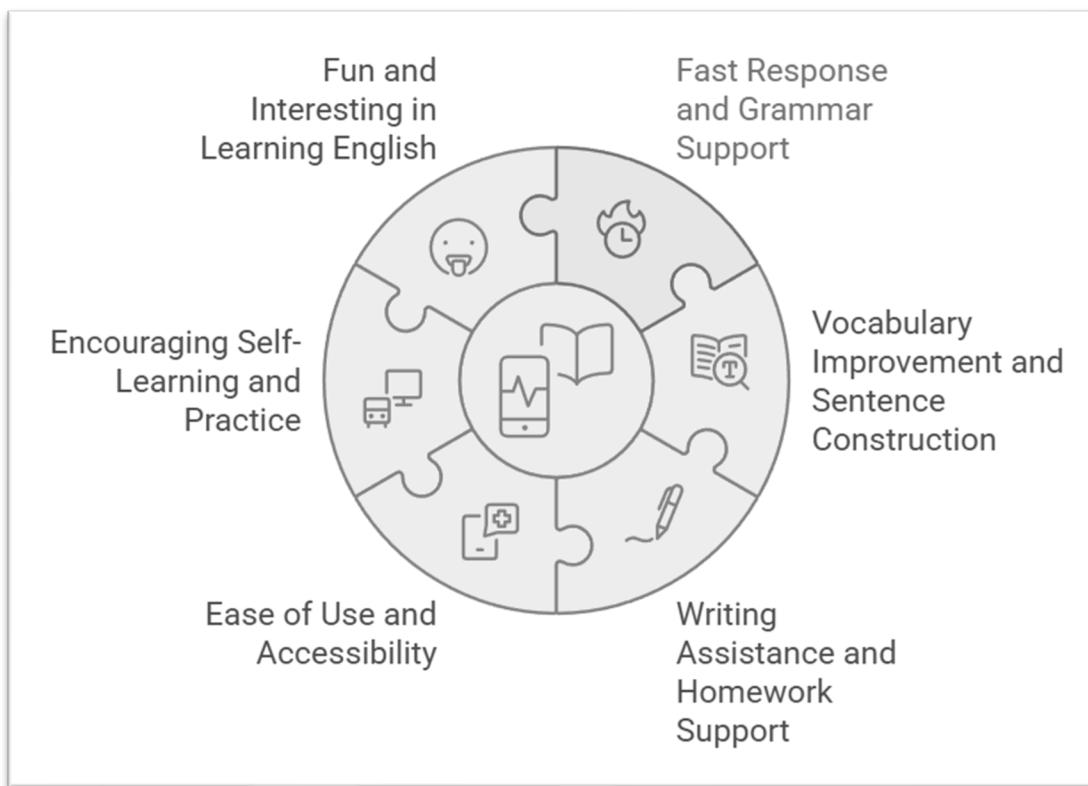


Figure 1: 6 themes on Advantages and Difficulties in Using ChatGPT

Theme 1: Fast Response and Grammar Support

Many students emphasized the importance of ChatGPT as a source of responses within a short time and an improved knowledge of grammar. They considered the tool to be effective and useful in forming grammatically correct sentences. As mentioned by Lo et al. (2024), performance expectancy can be seen in the positive reviews of the speed and grammar correction provided by ChatGPT, as students decide to use the tool in line with its ability to enhance the level of their performance. When the learners claim the answers to be fast, good, or help correct grammar, they mean that ChatGPT could save time and precision when performing English assignments. This is quite in line with recent research (Lo et al., 2024) that demonstrates that generative AI tools are of great benefit in terms of grammar accuracy and time saved during language tasks. Huy (2025) also mentioned that ChatGPT is very useful toward EFL students when it comes to writing because it gives immediate feedback, helps with ideas and grammar correction as well as vocabulary.

These results support the assumption that the motivations linked to the use of AI tools by students in ESL remain useful and performance gains. As an example, R3 claimed it assists her in English, she can ask and receive a quick response, and R6 confirmed that it aids her in grammar, the answer is good. In the same way, R7 liked to have explanations on grammar then said, "*I like ChatGPT because grammar is easy to understand*" and R9 followed up by saying, "*It is easy to get the correct grammar*." The instant of the answer impressed some of the students. R11 reported, "*The grammar and answers are fast, no need to wait*", and R18 stated, "*Fast answer and help me correct sentences*". R22 also said that the tool is good at grammar and quick responding, which means that the tool has a dual purpose. R25 contributed, saying that ChatGPT provided quick response and proper grammar, and R27 added, "*Helpful in grammar correction*".

Other respondents observed that ChatGPT was better than other search tools. R31 said, "*Improve grammar and faster than searching Google*" and R32 said, "*Quick reply and good grammar*". The level of grammatical skills was also seen in the answer that R34 gave as he stated, to improve grammar because of ChatGPT and R37 as he said, "*Fast answer with grammar example*". As R38 pointed out, it helps fix my grammar as fast as it can. R14 and R19 also have a positive correlation of ChatGPT to grammar assistance and state, respectively, that it helps the grammar a lot and helps get better in grammar. Overall, 16 students said that ChatGPT was very helpful to get a quick helping hand and fix their grammar, and it could be said that it is a practical and time-saving language learning tool.

Theme 2: Vocabulary Improvement and Sentence Construction

Students who use ChatGPT to learn new words, create sentences or use words better are displaying a performance expectancy since they can perceive the obvious benefits of learning. They understand ChatGPT as something that does not only provide answers but also gives them more linguistic material and do express ideas more effectively. The recent research by Trinh (2024) in AI in-ESL proves that chatbots are becoming popular as vocabulary instructors, facilitating word meaning, collocations, and sentence structure. This indicates that students have found the tool to be helpful in enhancing lexical as well as structural elements of writing. Some of the students employed ChatGPT in acquiring new vocabulary and developing sentence building skills. R1 said, "*Help me know more words*", and R10 wrote, "*Good for new words and meaning*".

And at the same time, R12 indicated, "*I use it to write an essay*" and R20 said, "*Make sentences using the word I don't know*".

R24 noted that the expression was better with higher sets of correct words to be used in a sentence, saying, *help me use correct words in sentence*, and R28 said that "*Help me when doing homework in English*". R29 has also used the tool and commented, "*Help when I am stuck writing*". These answers indicate that students understand ChatGPT as more than a language tool as they see it as a way to enlarge their vocabulary and the structure of their sentences. 7 out of the total number of students had this opinion.

Theme 3: Writing Assistance and Homework Support

There were those who articulated that ChatGPT was beneficial especially in doing homework and schoolwork. The students who use ChatGPT as a source of homework assistance, generating ideas and checking sentences have a high level of performance expectancy since they consider that it enhances the quality and accuracy of their English tasks. Moreover, social influence can be traced in some of the statements, particularly when the classmates or teachers motivate the use of ChatGPT in schoolwork.

Previous studies by Xue et al. (2024) indicate that PE is the most significant predictor of technology acceptance in students, and teacher support tends to enhance the intentions to use digital tools. According to this theme, ChatGPT is regarded not only as an assistive tool, but as a valid academic aid tool in accordance with the classroom demands. As an example, R2 said that it helps him to verify his answers whether they are right or wrong, and R8 reported and shared that it helps him in doing his homework. As R13 said, "*Help to make sentences using new words*". Other students were more precise regarding the tasks. R21 said, "*Give ideas for homework*" and R23 added, "*It can create any paragraph if it's my homework*". This was also reiterated by R33 when they stated, "*I ask ChatGPT for meaning and how to use words*". These answers indicate the importance of ChatGPT as a legitimate academic aid that is useful to six students when they are doing their homeworks, particularly when assigned English topics.

Theme 4: Ease of Use and Accessibility

Other students pointed out that ChatGPT was very convenient to use. The words students most commonly used to describe ChatGPT were easy, simple, can use anytime, which is also an indicator of effort expectancy, or the perception that the technology should not demand a lot of effort to learn and use. Remarks regarding the opportunity to use ChatGPT whenever they want or on individual devices also emphasize the facilitating conditions as the availability of resources allows using it.

These notions correspond to the UTAUT findings in which EE and FC play a major role in influencing the confidence and frequency of use of learners. Students are more inclined to develop a tool into the everyday routine of studying when they find it not only easy but also available (Adel et al., 2024). R5 mentioned in a short phrase, "*Easy to use and helpful*" and R15 mentioned, "*Simple to use and answer fast*." R26 also loved the fact that it was user-friendly and remarked, "*Easy and can ask anything*." Moreover, R30 referred to the fact that there were no restrictions, she stated that, "*You can use it anytime for any question*", and R35 explained that, "*I just ask*

and it gives me an answer, no need to search long." All these five answers indicate that students consider the tool intuitive and easy to access and this aspect helps students maintain its usage during learning the English language.

Theme 5: Encouraging Self-Learning and Practice

Some of the students said that ChatGPT encourages them to study English independently. R4 knew that they can learn independently using ChatGPT by saying "*I can learn by myself with ChatGPT*" and R36 said, "*I try more English now because of it.*" R40 mentioned that the tool has a positive influence on effort when saying, "*Make me want to try to do English myself.*" By the same idea, R42 also wrote, "*I learn by asking questions and trying sentences.*" These four responses point out to the fact that ChatGPT has the potential to reinforce learner autonomy, as it promotes self-directed learning and language usage. As mentioned by Xue et al. (2024) students who report that ChatGPT encourages them to attempt to use English or learn independently exhibit not only PE but also behavioral intention, since they intend to continue using the tool in self-directed learning. Their remarks imply the transition of the teacher-dependent learning to the active and independent practice of the language. ChatGPT facilitates long-term learning behaviors and learner confidence in English application by encouraging independent study, and outside the formal lessons.

Theme 6: Fun and Interesting in Learning English

Some students said that ChatGPT had made learning more fun. R16 said, "*I like to use it because it's fun and makes me want to learn,*" and R17 agreed by saying, "*It makes English more interesting now.*" R41 merely wrote, "*Fun to use for English.*" These three students considered ChatGPT to be a potential determining factor for attracting momentum and interest that makes learning more enjoyable and attractive. A recent study by Du and Daniel (2024) mentioned that students who claim that ChatGPT has turned the learning process into fun or interesting are describing hedonic motivation, which is an element of UTAUT2 that includes the experience of pleasure in using technology.

Entertainment improves interest, as this in turn boosts the desire of students to keep on using the tool as a voluntary activity. The use of AI chatbots in education has also been studied, with enjoyment being reported as one of the main factors that make learners revisit their AI tools, since having fun makes them less anxious about it and more willing to practise a language. Hence, although the tool is educational, its entertaining quality turns out to be a significant motivator in long-term learning.

Altogether, the synthesis of both quantitative and qualitative results testifies to the fact that RQ1 can be answered positively which is why students consider ChatGPT to be a useful way to learn grammar and words. But it should be noted that the RQ2 is also supported since there were some difficulties, including access issues, comprehension problems, and a lack of a systematic approach. These results emphasize the necessity to ensure a supportive learning environment and personalised scaffolding when implementing AI tools such as ChatGPT in the context of ESL classes in secondary schools.

CONCLUSION

This paper discussed the insights of 42 form 4 ESL learners at SMK Kolombong on using ChatGPT as Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) tool to aid in learning grammar and vocabulary. The results of quantitative and qualitative data showed that students overall had positive experiences of ChatGPT as a tool to help them improve their language. Most of the respondents also responded positively by claiming that ChatGPT has made learning grammar and vocabulary fun and simpler, which supports the Performance Expectancy and Effort Expectancy variables of the UTAUT model. Also, social pressure and the presence of facilitating circumstances, including internet access and the availability of devices, were significant in determining student interaction with the tool.

Nevertheless, there were also some identified challenges. Students raised issues about the validity of the answers provided by ChatGPT, the possible dependency on the tool, and the inability to comprehend the output sometimes. Nonetheless, these concerns did not arise against the combination of ChatGPT as an additional learning aid in English classrooms, particularly among learners who may have low or intermediate proficiency levels.

The study implications allow the assumption that teachers will have an opportunity to address the inclusion of AI-based tools into teaching language, focusing on grammar and vocabulary learning, using AI-based tools such as ChatGPT. Guidance by teachers and digital literacy training are, however, important to guarantee effective and responsible use.

The limitations of this research are the small sample size, the limited school context in which it operates, and the use of self-reported data. Future studies can investigate the effects of the use of ChatGPT over extended periods, the comparative analysis of different levels of proficiency or types of schools, and how to develop AI-based lesson plans specific to the ESL students. The research on the nature of interactions and the usefulness of ChatGPT among learners with various backgrounds might be another opportunity to obtain a more in-depth understanding of its pedagogical potential in Malaysian classrooms. sample size and suggest conducting larger-scale randomized controlled trials to further validate the findings.

From a theoretical perspective, this research not only helps deepen the understanding of the UTAUT model's application in the unique context of higher education but also reveals potential areas for further study and development.

Co-Author Contribution

Author 1 designed the research, conducted fieldwork, collected and analyzed the data, and prepared the manuscript.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the students of SMK Kolombong for their active participation and valuable contributions to this study. Deep appreciation is extended to the school administration and teachers for their support and permission to conduct the research. The authors also wish to acknowledge the encouragement and guidance provided by colleagues and peers throughout the process. Finally, special thanks are given to Universiti Malaysia Sabah for the academic support and resources that made this research possible.

Ethics Statement

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical research guidelines. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and confidentiality was strictly maintained with the approval of the school administration.

REFERENCES

Adel, A., Ahsan, A., & Davison, C. (2024). ChatGPT promises and challenges in education: Computational and ethical perspectives. *Education Sciences*, 14(8), 814. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14080814>

Alif, A., & Ngu, H. (2024). Using ChatGPT to reinforce English grammar learning among Malaysian ESL learners. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 12(1), 55–67. <https://doi.org/10.51200/ijelp.v7i1.5399>

Almaiah, M., Alamri, M. M., & Al-Rahmi, M. W. (2019). Applying the UTAUT model to explain students' acceptance of mobile learning systems in higher education. *IEEE Access*. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ACCESS.2019.2957206>

Agaye, C., & Razi, Ö. (2022). The effect of the extended UTAUT model on EFL learners' adaptation to flipped classrooms. *Education and Information Technologies*, 27, 1865–1882. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10657-2>

Aydin, O., & Karaarslan, I. A. (2024). Is ChatGPT leading generative AI? What is beyond expectations? *Education and Information Technologies*, 29(1), 1–20. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/apjess/issue/80086/1293702>

Chao, M. C. (2019). Factors determining the behavioral intention to use mobile learning: An application and extension of the UTAUT model. *Frontiers in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01652>

Du, J., & Daniel, K. B. (2024). Transforming language education: A systematic review of AI-powered chatbots for English as a foreign language speaking practice. *Computers & Artificial Intelligence*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caai.2024.100230>

Huy, N. N. P. (2025). The use of ChatGPT in EFL students as a learning assistant in their writing skills: A literature review. *International Journal of Advanced Innovations in Learning and Education*. <https://doi.org/10.54855/ijaile.25213>

Lo, C. K., Yu, P. L. H., & Xu, S. (2024). Exploring the application of ChatGPT in ESL/EFL education and related research issues: A systematic review of empirical studies. *Smart Learning Environments*. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-024-00342-5>

Maharani, N. H., Fatimah, A., & Kurniawan, D. A. (2024). Mobile language learning applications: Enhancing vocabulary and grammar acquisition in EFL classrooms. *Journal of English Language Studies*, 9(1), 34–45. <https://ejournal.undikma.ac.id/index.php/jollt/article/view/11041>

Mohamad, M., & Woollard, J. (n.d.). Mobile learning in English language learning: An implementation strategy for secondary schools in Malaysia. *Asian Journal of English Language and Pedagogy*, 12(1), 45–59. https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/300062/1/Mobile_learning_in_English_Language_Learning_A_n_implementation_strategy_for_secondary_schools_in_Malaysia.pdf

Mokhtar, W. N. A. W., Anas, N., & Ibrahim, A. (2024). Ethical risks of using ChatGPT in higher education institutions in Malaysia. *ResearchGate*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/387766204_Ethical_risks_of_using_ChatGPT_in_higher_education_institutions_in_Malaysia

Raman, A., & Rathakrishnan, M. (2018). Teachers' awareness and acceptance of FROG VLE in Malaysian schools: Applying and extending the UTAUT model. *International Journal of Mechanical Engineering and Technology (IJMET)*, 9(3), 529–537. <http://www.iaeme.com/IJMET/issues.asp?JType=IJMET&VType=9&IType=3>

Selvanathan, B., & Narayanan, S. (2024). ChatGPT in higher education Malaysia: An opportunity or threat to the education system? *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 13(3), 55–71. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i3/21455>

Shohor, S. A., & Hashim, H. (2024). The application of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) in ESL classrooms: A systematic literature review (2020–2024). *Asian Journal of English Language and Education*, 10(1), 15–29. <https://doi.org/10.12345/ajele.v10i1.1024>

Trinh, K. N. (2024). The use of ChatGPT for vocabulary acquisition: A literature review. *International Journal of Advanced Innovations in Learning and Education*. <https://doi.org/10.54855/ijaile.24121>

Uddin, I., Fayyaz, N., Bilal, N., Shahid, N., & Ali, I. (2023). Getting to know ChatGPT: An introduction to implementation and working. *ResearchGate*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372890276_Getting_to_Know_ChatGPT_An_Introduction_to_Implementation_and_Working

Vo, H. N. (2020). Understanding higher education learners' acceptance and use of mobile devices for language learning: A Rasch-based path modeling approach. *Computers & Education*. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0360131519303148?via%3Dihub>

Venkatesh, V., Morris, M. G., Davis, G. B., & Davis, F. D. (2003). User acceptance of information technology: Toward a unified view. *MIS Quarterly*, 27(3), 425–478. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/220259897_User_Acceptance_of_Information_Technology_Toward_a_Unified_View

Xue, L., Rashid, A. M., & Ouyang, S. (2024). The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) in higher education: A systematic review. *SAGE Open*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241229570>