

Anxiety to Fluency: Examining ChatGPT's Potential in Reducing Language Anxiety Among University Students in Malaysia

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Abstract: *Language anxiety has become an issue affecting the communication skills of a lot of Malaysian university students. This study aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: Quality Education, which promotes comprehensive and fair learning opportunities and highlights the persistent issue of language anxiety despite the educators having already used several instructional techniques to solve this problem. With ChatGPT being so popular, there is new interest in how technology can help people acquire language. However, most of the research only looks at how AI enhances language proficiency but not how it impacts students' emotional reaction as well as their psychological barriers. Moreover, the limited studies that have been done on whether the use of AI-based learning, particularly in Malaysia, will help to build students' confidence and proficiency in the long term is also suggested for further study. Hence, this gap highlights the need to explore how ChatGPT can reduce language anxiety and improve students' ability to communicate in English. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of ChatGPT in helping university students overcome language anxiety through a quantitative approach. Relatively, a survey will be conducted to measure the student's level of anxiety before and after using ChatGPT, and statistical analysis will be used to determine the effects of ChatGPT on their confidence and fluency. This can serve as empirical evidence on whether AI can create a secure and stress-free learning environment that can enhance students' confidence to speak English effectively. So, the results of this study will contribute to improving English learning for educators, policymakers, and technology developers. As AI plays a bigger role in education, it is crucial to be aware of how AI can facilitate students' learning of language better than just that and will help students feel more confident in using the English language. Overall, this study adds to an attempt to make language learning more effective and accessible to university students in Malaysia.*

Keywords: language anxiety, ChatGPT in education, AI-assisted language learning, technology in higher education

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Language anxiety is a common problem among Malaysian university students in the bilingual higher education system. This is particularly so because, when forced to converse in English (which is often their second or third language), they fear and get overwhelmed. Besides undermining their academic success, this worry smothers them from being a part of a globalised

society where the knowledge of English is becoming more and more important. No matter how many teaching tactics teachers use, this persists, indicating that new approaches are needed.

However, recent technological developments have made solving this problem a task in the context of artificial intelligence (AI) techniques. It was the language model ChatGPT based on AI, which has spread his fame by creating a friendly and cognitively engaging environment for language practice. It helps students to communicate in English at their own pace, receive an immediate answer, and have less worry about being negatively scored. Despite the capability of AI tools to boost language proficiency, little study has been done on the subject of how AI tools influence the emotional and psychological hurdles of students in Malaysian higher education, with language anxiety being of particular interest. Furthermore, this reduction is also aligned with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, where there is a main emphasis on universal access to high-quality education.

1.2 Problem Statement

In Malaysia's Multilingual higher education system, language anxiety remains a significant challenge for university students as it inadvertently highlights the prevalence of language anxiety among university students. The anxiety not only hinders effective communication in non-native languages but also affects their academic performance and broader participation in a globalised world. Many students report feeling overwhelmed and apprehensive when required to use a second or third language, specifically English, leading to avoidance and lack of engagement. The growing emphasis on multilingual proficiency for academic and professional success makes it vital to address this issue. Thus, AI-enabled solutions such as ChatGPT offer promising ways to reduce this anxiety by providing a safe and supportive setting for language practice.

Recent research has also indicated that such AI-based language models as ChatGPT may help in decreasing language anxiety since it provides a low-risk environment and if a supportive option for practicing the language (Xiao, 2023; Nugroho, 2023). Enabling instant feedback and conversational practice at the learner's pace while reducing anxiety related to perceptions of peer or instructor judgment (Al-Obaydi, 2023; Shaikh, 2023; Zhang, 2024). Nonetheless, these potential benefits must be weighed against challenges relating to the accuracy of AI-generated answers, over-reliance on technology by students, and ethical issues in AI-mediated learning contexts (Puri, 2023; Tlili et al., 2023). In addition, Angelou & Keridi (2024) highlighted how students' attitudes and openness towards AI tools play a crucial role in their effective incorporation into language learning programs.

Various discussions had been done in previous studies on the influence of AI on language education, but there is a lack of literature investigating how AI impacts language anxiety, especially in the Malaysian higher education background. Most previous research has examined more general relationships between students and AI in relation to collective benefits for students in terms of language lessons, leaving out the very specific scientific implications of AI tools such as ChatGPT on students' emotional and psychological barriers to language acquisition. Moreover, there are very few studies exploring the impact of AI-based language learning on developing long-term fluency and confidence among university students. Hence, there is a need to explore ChatGPT's effectiveness in reducing language anxiety and improving English language fluency among Malaysian university students.

Based on these gaps, this study aims to investigate how ChatGPT can serve as a valuable resource in English language learning that can revolutionise the experiences of anxious

students and help cultivate greater confidence in their speaking abilities, not limited to the language itself. The findings will also provide insights for policymakers and educators interested in the integration of AI in language instruction within higher education while simultaneously addressing concerns regarding student dependency, ethical issues, and the effectiveness of AI-driven methods of learning.

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the problem statement, this study has three main objectives:

- 1) To identify the main factors contributing to English language anxiety among Malaysian university students.
- 2) To examine the influence of ChatGPT on English language anxiety among Malaysian university students.
- 3) To explore Malaysian university students' perceptions of ChatGPT as a tool for reducing English language anxiety and improving fluency.

1.4 Research Questions

The corresponding research questions are as follows:

- 1) What are the main factors contributing to English language anxiety among Malaysian university students?
- 2) How does the use of ChatGPT influence students' English language anxiety?
- 3) What are Malaysian university students' perceptions of ChatGPT as a tool for reducing English language anxiety and improving fluency?

1.5 Significance of Study

The emergence of AI is said to be able to decrease language anxiety and provide a safe space for second language speakers to learn the language without fear of judgment. This study focuses on understanding the impact and influence AI-powered tools such as ChatGPT has on its users in terms of language anxiety and as a tool to manage it. This study can be highly beneficial for the following:

1.5.1 Malaysian University Students with Language Anxiety

Malaysian University students can be pressured with anxiety when it comes to speaking English and we don't have to look beyond our own Malaysian students to see this. Since Malaysia is multicultural, different languages are spoken here, and some may even use it as their first language. The lack of English language proficiency will discourage students and increase communication avoidance. With the existence of this study, we are able to have a broader understanding of the importance of ChatGPT to students with language anxiety and whether it is a tool that will be beneficial to them.

1.5.2 Second Language Malaysian University Students

When an international student enters a Malaysian University, there is bound to be a language barrier if English is not their first language. For example, a student from China will struggle with English as it is not commonly used back in their homeland and this can create anxiety for them. When students are forced to adapt, speak, read and write in a language that is foreign to them, they may start to feel heightened self-consciousness and be more critical of themselves. This study will help understand how ChatGPT and AI-powered tools can be beneficial in decreasing language anxiety and improving fluency.

1.5.3 Educators and Policymakers

The study concludes that its results will inform educators and policymakers of how AI can provide a more thorough knowledge of how it might reduce language anxiety. By using ChatGPT and other AI tools, teachers can include them in their lesson plans to make them more interesting and self-assured language exercises. This gives the policymakers an insight to the rules they have to create for the use of AI-based language learning and at the same time, the educational institutions are expected to adopt fair and effective techniques for student assistance.

1.5.4 Technology Developers

This research will also be valuable to developers of language tools based on AI. Developers can work to improve ChatGPT (and other similar programs), by determining the psychological and emotional needs of students and ensuring they can give more specialized help. One of the improvements could be that it enhances feedback accuracy, customizes learning opportunities, or resolves some privacy or ethical issues. By focusing on language anxiety and AI-driven solutions, this study will help to develop more inclusive and successful ways to language learning in Malaysian higher education.

1.6 Definition of Terms

1.6.1 Language Anxiety

Language anxiety refers to the anxiety and uneasiness that students experience while speaking a second or a third language, and often as a result, they start avoiding or disengaging speaking, and this is referred to as language anxiety.

1.6.2 ChatGPT

The ChatGPT is an AI-based language model that enables an interactive platform for language practice where it would produce a text response similar to a human.

1.6.3 AI-Based Language Learning

AI-Based Language Learning is the usage of artificial intelligence techniques for support and improvement of the acquisition of spoken Language, written language, and comprehension of language.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Acceptance and Usefulness of AI Tools

AI-powered tools like ChatGPT are transforming education, particularly in language learning. Muniandy and Selvanathan (2024) explored its effectiveness in enhancing ESL learners' speaking skills in a Malaysian university. Their study highlights both the benefits and challenges of AI in education. This review discusses AI acceptance and usefulness in ESL learning. Students and educators generally have a positive attitude toward AI in learning, especially when it is easy to use and enhances outcomes (Davis, 1989; Ali et al., 2023; Zhang, 2023). ChatGPT helps ESL learners by providing interactive conversations, instant feedback, and vocabulary support (Aue & Thadphoothon, 2023; Liu & Ma, 2023). However, some educators worry about over-reliance on AI, academic integrity, and inaccuracies in AI-generated content (Rudolph et al., 2023; Hong, 2023). Addressing these concerns is crucial for wider acceptance.

AI tools improve learning experiences by boosting confidence, providing corrections, and engaging students (Muniandy & Selvanathan, 2024). They also encourage independent

learning (Ali et al., 2023) and offer personalized feedback (Li, 2023). Despite these benefits, AI can sometimes provide outdated or inaccurate information (Zhou et al., 2023). Educators should use AI alongside traditional methods for a balanced approach. AI tools face technical challenges, such as server capacity and accuracy issues (Muniandy & Selvanathan, 2024). Some students struggle to use the right prompts to get useful responses. Future research should improve AI reliability and train educators to integrate AI effectively (Michalon & Camacho-Zuñiga, 2023).

Another study by Vo and Nguyen (2024) explores English-majored students' perceptions of using ChatGPT for language learning in Vietnam based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Using a quantitative approach with 369 participants, the research found that students generally found ChatGPT easy to use and recognized its usefulness in language learning, particularly for reading and writing skills. However, their opinions on its overall effectiveness were neutral. Positive attitudes toward ChatGPT were high, while negative attitudes were low, suggesting a general acceptance of AI-assisted learning. The study also revealed that gender had no significant impact on students' perceptions, whereas class level did influence their acceptance of ChatGPT. Concerns were raised about over-reliance on AI, potential academic dishonesty, and the need for careful monitoring by educators. The authors recommend integrating ChatGPT with human instruction to optimize its benefits and ensure balanced AI usage in education. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on AI's role in language learning and emphasizes the need for structured implementation strategies to enhance its effectiveness.

2.2 Impact of ChatGPT on Language Anxiety

To some people, the existence of ChatGPT changed their lives 360 degrees as they used it to cater to their daily lives and made everything so easy. To some people, the existence of ChatGPT ruined their whole lives since it took over jobs that they used to service other people. So, in this case, the impact of ChatGPT differs for everyone. It will always have a positive impact, and also a negative impact on language anxiety. Language anxiety is a fear that some people cannot stand to face since it is a fear of an individual who has had hard times when they have to speak, interact with other people, or even write in any language. Based on the study of Wagdi Rashad Ali Bin-Hady (2024), Jamal Kaid Mohammed Ali (2024), and Mustafa Ahmed Al-Humari (2024), titled "The Effect of ChatGPT on EFL Students' Social and Emotional Learning," it has been figured out that students have a more positive reaction towards the use of ChatGPT to be compared to those who aren't. But at the same time, the findings also concluded that ChatGPT reduces the students' creativity, and they face issues with limitations in their own growth.

Other studies have also highlighted the two-sided role of ChatGPT on language anxiety. Studies show ChatGPT can significantly reduce second language (L2) anxiety because it creates a safe, non-judgmental space for students to practice (Gordon & Gordon, 2024; Hayashi & Sato, 2024; Yildiz, 2024). Yunus et al. (2017) found that through individual feedback and timely adjustments, students' confidence in their speaking and writing skills lead to their increased self-efficacy (Yildiz, 2024). Moreover, ChatGPT encourages social and emotional learning (SEL), allowing students to enhance their emotional regulation in language learning environments while also working on conversational skills (Yildiz, 2024).

However, there are still problems with ChatGPT's limitations. While it can help alleviate anxiety (Liu, 2024; Yildiz, 2024), according to some studies, an overreliance on the tool may also curtail moments of real conversation, which are critical to language growth over time.

Moreover, students' perceptions of the usefulness of ChatGPT as an automated writing assistant have been associated with writing anxiety, meaning that its benefits are not universal (Liu, 2024). This concern is compounded by the realization, as discussed by Bin-Hady, Ali, and Al-Humari (2024), that reliance upon ChatGPT may stifle the creativity of students and limit their personal growth.

Ultimately, everyone has a unique experience with language anxiety, thanks to ChatGPT. While one can work on grammar and vocabulary through social media, this needs to be done with precaution as too much at once will have the opposite effect as just about anything else, so social media cannot take the role of human interaction.

2.3 Effectiveness on Interactive Tools

With the rapid advancement of technology, the usage of technological tools has become a norm in any setting of education nowadays. Almost all elementary schools up to tertiary education are incorporating technology into their learning practices. ICT is a now common word that has been used in education classrooms and Information and communication technology (ICT) means a platform that is used for creating, displaying, storing, manipulating, and exchanging information by UNESCO (Zam, n.d.). Numerous studies have been conducted to test whether interactive tools like AI-assisted learning is really effective for learners to reduce their language anxiety in general. These studies have been conducted using different methods with different types of participants as well. This kind of research has also been conducted in countries like Indonesia, China, Macau, and many others countries. Despite all the differences, the primary objectives of the study were the same. They were all aimed at investigating the effectiveness of interactive tools or technologies to students in learning. This is mainly because there is quite a huge debate among educators, parents, and learners themselves about whether interactive tools are helping students with language anxiety, as automation has tremendously changed language practices.

Based on a study conducted by Kotaro Hayashi and Takeshi Sato (2024), titled The Effectiveness of ChatGPT in Enhancing English Language Proficiency and Reducing Second Language Anxiety (L2) addressed that AI-based language models like ChatGPT3.5 is effectively reduced L2 interaction anxiety and significantly improved the students' English communication skills. The main objective of this study is the possibility of incorporating ChatGPT to the L2 speakers to primarily enhance their listening and speaking skills. As for the results, the students managed to show positive results as intended by the researchers. AI can let students perform well in language learning as well as introduce new ideas to traditional classroom settings.

Another similar study headed by Minhui Bao (2019) also intended to investigate the effectiveness of exposing a group of East Asians to Artificial Intelligence chatbots. The main objective of this research is to determine whether an artificial intelligence chatbot will be able to reduce language anxiety among the participants. As a consequence, the results were cautiously encouraging. It was quite evident that interactive tools like Artificial Intelligence chatbots are not a threat but a boost for East Asians to increase their confidence and reduce speech-related anxiety. The participants' language scores were concurrent with the IELTS score level. Michail St. Fountoulakis (2024) conducted a comparable study to test the effectiveness of using Duolingo, Rosetta Stone, and ChatGPT in an intercultural education setting. After the investigation, it was confirmed that the participants were reacting positively in terms of improved language skills and better cultural awareness. The interactive AI tools

were incorporated within the traditional classroom settings, and students showed better linguistic proficiency.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between ChatGPT use and language anxiety among university students in Malaysia. A survey-based approach was used to collect numerical data on students' anxiety levels before and after using ChatGPT.

3.2 Participants

The study involved 100 university students from various institutions in Malaysia, selected through convenience sampling to facilitate the efficient collection of data. Participants consisted of students who use English as a second language and have varying levels of language anxiety.

3.3 Research Instrument

The researchers used three components of the instrument created by Charaboty et al. (2021) to carry out this investigation. To aid in the objectives of the study, this tool, which is similar to a Likert scale, was used to provide targeted responses to each of the three research questions. Responses of 5 mean "strongly agree," 4: "agree," 3: "neutral," 2: "disagree," and 1: "strongly disagree."

The primary research instrument was a Google Form survey consisting of:

- a. Demographic Questions: Age, gender, university, and English proficiency level.
- b. Second Language Classroom Anxiety Scale: A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire to measure language anxiety before and after using ChatGPT.
- c. Self-Perceived Fluency and Confidence Scale: Questions assessing students' confidence and fluency in using English after interacting with ChatGPT.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected electronically via the online survey platform Google Forms. A consent form and a brief introduction preceded the survey to inform participants about the study's purpose and ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The survey assessed their current language anxiety, self-perceived confidence, and experiences using ChatGPT, including the duration and frequency of use. The survey also gathered data on any perceived changes in language anxiety and fluency based on their ongoing use of ChatGPT over the past few months. The data collection process took approximately two weeks.

3.5 Data Analysis

This study employed descriptive analysis to ascertain the role of ChatGPT in reducing language anxiety among Malaysian University students. Descriptive analysis is the process of summarising and interpreting data to reveal patterns and trends without inferring causality or relationships. This method is ideal for analysing questionnaire-based data, particularly when using a Likert scale, as it provides a straightforward and comprehensive view of respondents' opinions.

The researchers used a descriptive statistical method facilitated by SPSS software. These methods include:

- Descriptive Statistics: Mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution will be used to analyse participants' anxiety levels before and after the intervention.
- Correlation Analysis: Examines the relationship between ChatGPT usage frequency and changes in anxiety levels.

This method ensures a clear, accurate and unbiased representation of data. The use of mean, standard deviation and frequency distribution enables the researchers to identify general trends and variations effectively.

4. Results

Chart 1 presents data from 136 survey participants of varying ages, with the majority aged 18-20 (52.2%), followed by 27 and above (21.3%), 24-26 (16.9%), and 21-23 (9.6%). Most participants are undergraduates (73.7%), while 26.3% are postgraduates, which may influence their responses. The participants represent various Malaysian universities and primarily use either English (46.3%) or Malay (44.1%). Others reported using Tamil, Mandarin, Iban, Dusun, both Malay and English, or Melanau Mukah. Regarding ChatGPT usage for language learning, 39.7% use it occasionally, 27.9% daily, 25% weekly, and 7.4% never. Additionally, 27.2% have used it for less than a month, 14.7% for 1-3 months, 17.6% for 3-6 months, while 40.4% have used it for over 6 months.

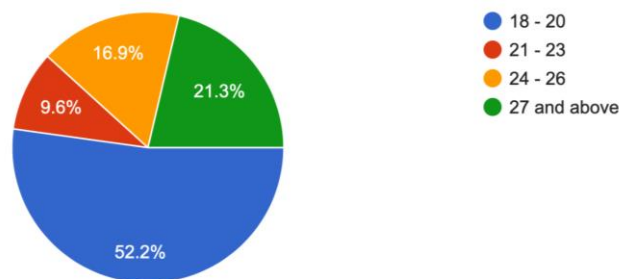


Chart 1: Participants' Age

4.1 General Language Anxiety (Pre ChatGPT Use)

The survey results indicated that 12.5% of participants often felt anxious when speaking in English, while 27.9% remained neutral. Additionally, 31.6% reported fearing making mistakes when speaking. However, despite this anxiety, 33.8% strongly disagreed with avoiding English in class or social settings, suggesting that fear of mistakes did not necessarily lead to avoidance. Regarding their ability to express thoughts clearly, 27.2% disagreed with finding it difficult, 25.7% strongly disagreed, 25% remained neutral, 14% agreed, and 8.1% strongly agreed. Responses concerning test-related anxiety were divided, with 22.8% strongly disagreeing and 23.5% agreeing. Furthermore, perceptions of language proficiency compared to others varied. While 22.8% strongly disagreed with feeling inadequate, 23.5% disagreed, and another 23.5% remained neutral. These findings suggested that although many students experienced anxiety or fear of making mistakes, this did not always result in avoidance of English in academic or social contexts.

I avoid speaking in English during class or social situations due to anxiety.
136 responses

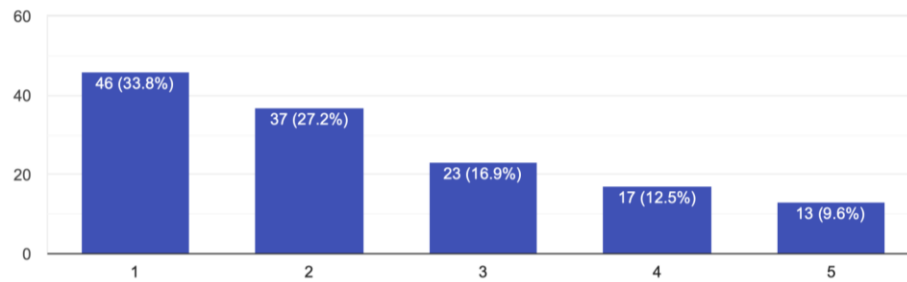


Figure 1: Avoidance of Speaking English in Class or Social Situations Due to Anxiety

I feel nervous or anxious during language tests or assessments.
136 responses

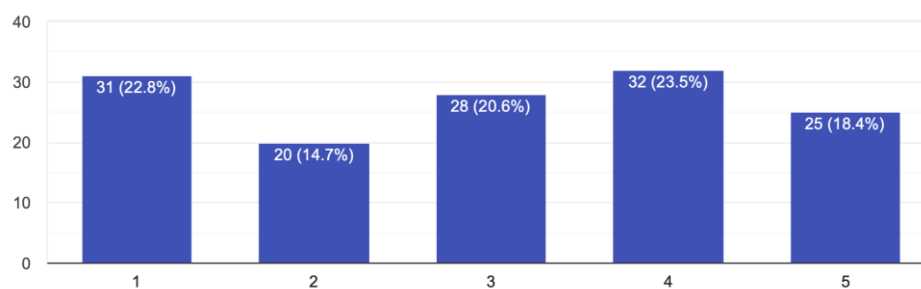


Figure 2: Anxiety Levels During Language Tests or Assessments

4.2 ChatGPT's Role in Language Learning

The survey findings indicated that 35.3% of participants strongly agreed that using ChatGPT helped them practice English without fear of judgment. Additionally, 40.4% agreed that they felt more comfortable experimenting with new vocabulary and grammar, while only 3.7% strongly disagreed. Regarding feedback, 36% strongly agreed that ChatGPT provided immediate responses that improved their language skills, whereas only 2.9% disagreed. Similarly, 37.5% agreed that ChatGPT reduced their anxiety when speaking or writing in English. Furthermore, 32.4% strongly agreed that learning at their own pace through ChatGPT reduced pressure, while a similar percentage found it provided a relaxed, no-pressure environment for language practice. Additionally, 29.4% strongly agreed that using ChatGPT increased their confidence in speaking and writing, while 30.1% believed it provided more opportunities for language practice compared to traditional methods. The data showed consistent trends in participants' responses, particularly in the neutral, agree, and strongly agree categories, as illustrated in Figures 3, 4, and 5.

ChatGPT helps me feel less anxious when speaking or writing in English.
136 responses

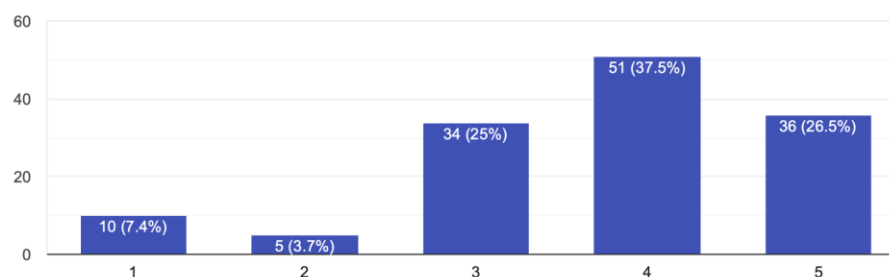


Figure 3: ChatGPT's Role in Reducing Anxiety in Speaking and Writing

I can learn at my own pace using ChatGPT, which reduces the pressure I feel when learning a new language.

136 responses

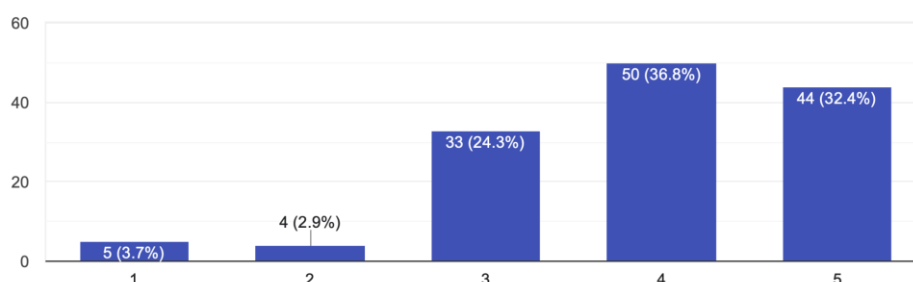


Figure 4: Learning at Student's Own Pace with ChatGPT to Reduce Language Learning Pressure

I have been able to practice language skills in a relaxed, no-pressure environment using ChatGPT.

136 responses

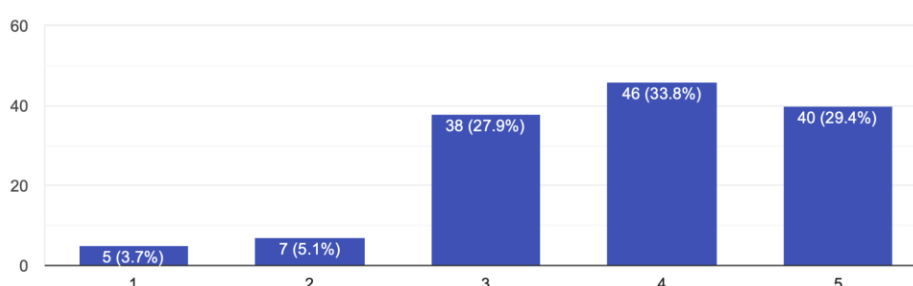


Figure 5: Practicing Language Skills in a Relaxed, No-Pressure Environment Using ChatGPT

4.3 Impact on Language Anxiety (Post-ChatGPT Use)

The responses under Post-ChatGPT Use showed similar trends, with participants generally aligning in agreement and disagreement. When asked if they felt less anxious speaking English, 27.2% strongly disagreed, 29.4% agreed, and 31.6% remained neutral. In comparison, responses in the Pre-ChatGPT Use section showed a shift. When asked if they found it easier to express thoughts in English after using ChatGPT, 36.8% agreed and 19.9% strongly agreed. Additionally, 33.1% agreed that they felt more comfortable participating in discussions and presentations. Furthermore, 37.5% agreed that their anxiety about making mistakes had decreased since using ChatGPT. As their confidence improves, they also become more willing to use English in everyday conversations.

4.4 Overall Experience with ChatGPT

The survey findings indicated that 39.7% of participants agreed that they were satisfied with their experience using ChatGPT for language learning. Additionally, 44.1% believed that ChatGPT was an effective tool for reducing language anxiety. Many participants also expressed willingness to recommend ChatGPT to other students experiencing anxiety about learning English and planned to continue using it as a language learning tool. Furthermore, 44.1% (60 participants) reported that ChatGPT had helped them become better language learners overall.

I am satisfied with my experience using ChatGPT for language learning.
138 responses

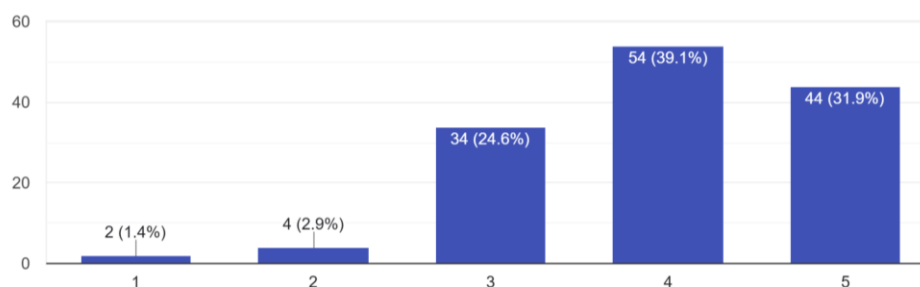


Figure 6: Students' Overall Experience using ChatGOT for Language Learning

I feel that using ChatGPT has made me a better language learner overall.
138 responses

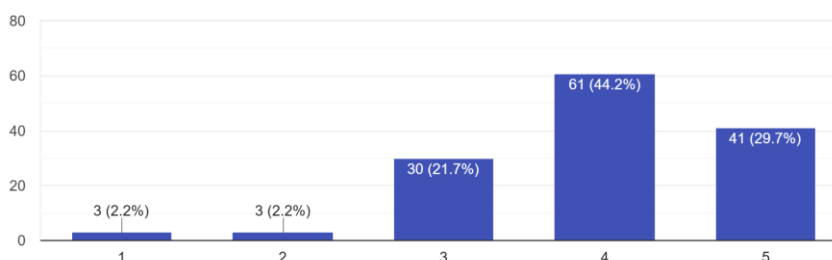


Figure 7: Impact of ChatGPT on Perceived Language Learning Improvement

5. Discussion

This study aimed to explore the effectiveness of ChatGPT in reducing language anxiety among Malaysian university students learning English as a second language. The results indicate that ChatGPT is a valuable resource for assisting students in managing and reducing their language anxiety, especially by offering a non-judgmental space for practice. The outcomes of this research carry important implications for language education, particularly in the realm of second language acquisition (SLA), where anxiety frequently obstructs students' ability to participate in meaningful communication.

The findings indicate that a significant number of students suffer from considerable language anxiety, with a common experience of fear regarding mistakes and a lack of self-confidence. Before using ChatGPT, many participants voiced their anxieties about speaking English, especially in both academic and social contexts. Nevertheless, after utilizing ChatGPT, students indicated an increase in confidence and a decrease in anxiety during language-related tasks, such as discussions and presentations. This supports earlier research emphasizing how technology can offer learners opportunities to practice language skills within a more comfortable and encouraging setting (Sotiriou et al., 2019). The capacity of ChatGPT to deliver immediate feedback, alongside providing a secure environment to explore new vocabulary and grammar, seems to have had a beneficial effect on the student's language acquisition.

In terms of language anxiety, after using ChatGPT, it was revealed a significant change in students' attitudes. Participants who initially experienced nervousness or anxiety when speaking in English started to feel more at ease voicing their ideas and engaging in language activities. The supportive nature of ChatGPT was identified as a crucial element in alleviating

anxiety, as students felt free to practice without the fear of being embarrassed or corrected. These results align with earlier research on the beneficial effects of AI-based language tools, which enable learners to obtain immediate, tailored feedback (Lee & Chen, 2020).

Although the study presents encouraging results, it also highlights worries about the possible excessive dependence on AI tools like ChatGPT. While this tool provides numerous advantages in alleviating anxiety and enhancing fluency, there is a concern that students might lean too heavily on the AI for language practice, thereby diminishing their chances for genuine communication and engagement.

This issue is especially pertinent since language learning tends to be most effective through significant, in-person interactions with native speakers or peers in real-life situations (Thorne, 2020). Thus, while ChatGPT can serve as a useful supplementary resource, it should not take the place of traditional language learning approaches that promote human interaction and immersion in real-life contexts.

An important element of the findings is the difference in responses among various demographic groups, including age, academic standing, and language background. These characteristics may affect how students engage with ChatGPT and how effective they believe it is in alleviating language anxiety. For instance, students who had been utilizing ChatGPT for an extended duration (beyond six months) tended to report more notable enhancements in their language abilities and reduced anxiety levels compared to those who had used the tool for a shorter time. Future research should delve deeper into how personal differences—such as skill level, personality traits, and previous exposure to AI technologies—impact the effectiveness of ChatGPT in language acquisition.

In general, the results of this study highlight the potential of AI-based tools like ChatGPT to improve language learning by reducing anxiety, boosting confidence, and offering more chances for practice. Nonetheless, the long-term effectiveness and influence of ChatGPT on language acquisition need to be investigated further. Future studies might concentrate on longitudinal research to evaluate the enduring impacts of ChatGPT on students' language skills and anxiety levels and examine how ChatGPT can enhance communication abilities beyond the online setting.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that universities integrate ChatGPT as a supplementary tool in language learning curricula to provide students with a judgment-free environment for practising English, thereby reducing language anxiety. Structured guidance and training should be provided to ensure students use ChatGPT effectively, minimizing over-reliance while maximizing its potential for improving fluency and confidence. Additionally, educators should encourage self-paced learning through AI-driven exercises, as many students reported feeling more comfortable practising without the pressure of traditional classroom settings. Nonetheless, given that some participants remained neutral or disagreed about ChatGPT's impact on their anxiety, further research is needed to explore individual differences in response to AI-assisted learning and identify strategies to enhance its effectiveness for diverse learners. Further studies should also investigate the long-term effects of ChatGPT on language proficiency, compare its efficacy with other AI-based tools, and assess its impact across different proficiency levels and learning styles. By implementing these recommendations, institutions can better leverage AI technology to create a supportive and

effective language learning environment that fosters confidence and fluency among university students in Malaysia.

7. Conclusion

The findings of this research provide a significant value on how effective AI-driven tools are in eliminating the language barrier stress and improving fluency. ChatGPT turned out to be a real game changer in the case of second language acquisition, especially for students who face high levels of anxiety in a structured or more commonly known as the traditional classroom setting. One of the prominent issues is that language anxiety exists among Malaysian students, which leads to their inability to converse well in the English Language. This study confirms that students are somehow afraid of speaking in English, mainly because of the fear of making errors and lack of confidence.

However, many participants from this research have positively reacted that ChatGPT reduces their anxiety when it comes to their communication skills in English. They feel that the AI-driven tool actually provides support, eliminates their psychological barriers, and boosts their confidence. AI's feedback was fast and with its non-judgmental fact, learners felt comfortable getting information on a language's vocabulary and grammar.

However, this study also highlighted the concern of over-reliance on ChatGPT. Students may depend on AI more, and this will eventually lead them to lack the possibility of communicating with the real world. They will start relying more on this tool to get all the information and make it the primary source of learning. Despite this challenge, this study proved that ChatGPT can act as a complementary tool for learners. There should be a balance between the tool and human interaction. Future research should focus on the long-term impacts and individual differences as well.

In conclusion, the research contributed to the importance of AI-assisted learning and providing awareness to the educators, policymakers, and learners themselves. By integrating ChatGPT, language learning can be more significant and foster better confidence to engage with real communication.

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