



EFL lecturers' experiences and perceptions towards using ChatGPT in teaching writing: A case study in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

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The development of new technologies, including ChatGPT has transformed English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' teaching practice. In Vietnam, numerous EFL instructors have integrated this chatbot into their writing instructions. However, few studies have been conducted on how they have used and perceived it. Thus, this study aimed to explore the experiences, perspectives, and recommendations of EFL lecturers in Vietnam using ChatGPT in writing classes. 28 EFL lecturers from different Vietnamese universities participated in semi-structured interviews for data collection employing a qualitative case study design. The research findings reveal that lecturers adopted ChatGPT at different stages of the writing process: pre-writing for brainstorming, while-writing for grammar checks and post-writing for proofreading and feedback. They viewed ChatGPT as a beneficial tool that saves time provides instant feedback, offers diverse ideas and vocabulary assists lesson planning and assessment and improves students' writing skills. Lecturers were also concerned about the accuracy of the information and their students' over-reliance on ChatGPT which potentially causes academic dishonesty and reduces critical thinking and creativity. Lecturers recommended teacher training, using clear and specific prompts, combining ChatGPT with other resources, and limiting students' use of the tool to maximise the benefits while addressing the drawbacks.

Contribution/ Originality: Little attention has been paid to teachers' experiences, perceptions, and suggestions on using ChatGPT in teaching EFL writing particularly at higher education institutions in Vietnam. Some practical pedagogical implications for EFL teachers were proposed to integrate ChatGPT into their writing instructions effectively in light of these research findings.

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the most difficult skills to master in English as a foreign language (EFL) learning due to its various stages such as idea generation, outline creation, composition, and revision (Oshima & Hogue, 2007). Moses and Mohamad (2019) identified several challenges facing students in EFL writing, including their lack of vocabulary and grammar, poor spelling, and limited exposure to authentic materials. These authors also discovered teachers' difficulties in teaching EFL writing such as motivating students, designing lessons to teach mixed-level students, and managing time constraints. In line with these findings, Baskara (2023) recently highlighted that teaching EFL writing presents significant challenges for teachers to provide students with individualized feedback

and support, engaging and motivating them while improving their language skills. Among these challenges, according to [Hidayati \(2018\)](#), improving students' linguistic proficiency is the biggest difficulty as it is affected by both internal factors (students' language skills, native language interference, motivation, and reading behaviours) and external factors (learning environments, available teaching resources, and time limitations). Another obstacle that hinders students' improvement in EFL writing is that of delivering individualized feedback and support, especially in larger classes where teachers may have limited time and resources to give each student personal attention ([Henderson et al., 2019](#)). Furthermore, engaging learners is also equally challenging because of students' low level of communication and the complex nature of writing in EFL ([Ghoorchaei & Khosravi, 2019](#)). ChatGPT presents a potential solution to the above-mentioned difficulties as it generates output that resembles human language when given an input. As a result, ChatGPT is a valuable asset for helping students individualize their learning, maintain their interest in learning, and improve their language proficiency ([Baskara, 2023](#)).

In the context of teaching EFL writing in Vietnam, [Nguyen's \(2021\)](#) study on upper-high school teachers' challenges in writing instructions identified various issues. They are time constraints, large classes, heavy-content textbooks and multiple-choice tests as the main assessment tool and students' hesitance to write in English and their limited knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. In another research, [Nguyen \(2023\)](#) discovered further obstacles in teaching writing to English majors in higher education, including insufficient teacher-student interactions due to overcrowded classes and teachers' inability to offer prompt feedback as a result of time constraints and a heavy workload in designing teaching materials. These findings suggest that EFL teachers in Vietnam experience common challenges in teaching writing at different educational levels such as their heavy workload, students' lack of engagement, time constraints, and large classes. ChatGPT has gained popularity in Vietnam as an assistant tool for teaching and learning English in general and writing skills in particular to tackle teachers' problems in EFL writing classes.

When contemplating the implementation of ChatGPT in EFL lessons, it is obvious that the main beneficiaries are teachers and students. Consequently, numerous studies have investigated the viewpoints of these two groups about using ChatGPT in teaching EFL at various educational levels from different countries. [Limna et al.'s \(2023\)](#) study examined the perspectives of ten teachers and fifteen learners from various educational institutions in Krabi, Thailand, on the use of ChatGPT. [Ulla et al. \(2023\)](#) focused solely on seventeen EFL teachers' perspectives at a Thai university. In other countries, [Iqbal et al. \(2022\)](#) explored attitudes towards ChatGPT of twenty university teachers from a private university in Pakistan whereas [ElSayary's \(2024\)](#) research was on how forty middle and high school teachers from different private schools in Dubai and Abu Dhabi perceive the use of ChatGPT. It is particularly needed to explore teachers' experiences and perspectives toward the implementation of ChatGPT to identify its possible advantages and disadvantages and their suggestions for using it effectively in teaching and learning. Users may be aware of the potential benefits and risks of ChatGPT and want more advice on how to maximise the benefits of this chatbot to enhance both teaching and learning experiences.

Although there is considerable research on teachers' viewpoints on the use of ChatGPT in EFL classes in general and in various educational settings, there is a lack of studies specifically examining how EFL teachers perceive and incorporate ChatGPT into their writing classes. A search of the literature has so far revealed only two research on this topic. For example, [Nguyen \(2023\)](#) investigated the viewpoints of twenty Vietnamese EFL teachers regarding the integration of ChatGPT in writing classes at a private university. [Shakil and Siddiq \(2024\)](#) recently explored the perspectives of thirty English as a second language (ESL) teachers from different public universities in Pakistan on the effects of ChatGPT on analytical writing. Therefore, the present study on the experiences and perspectives of EFL lecturers in Vietnam on the use of ChatGPT in their writing classes would contribute to the existing body of literature and address the research gap in the Vietnamese higher education context.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. ChatGPT in English Language Education

ChatGPT has garnered significant attention for changing the way we teach and learn English by developing educational materials, engaging students and providing them with individualized learning experiences (Kasneci et al., 2023). Haleem et al. (2022) also mention that ChatGPT has been acknowledged by many learners for its ease of use and several benefits in improving their learning. Kasneci et al. (2023) also highlight the use of ChatGPT to help university students with writing assignments and sharpening their critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. The authors explain that using ChatGPT can assist students in certain tasks such as summarizing or outlining documents, understanding technical terms, and organizing their ideas to write. From teachers' viewpoints, this technology may reduce their heavy workload by giving their students personalized resources and feedback allowing teachers to focus on other vital teaching duties such as delivering enjoyable and exciting lessons (Kasneci et al., 2023). Using ChatGPT in education has sparked public concerns about academic integrity, biased content, data security, and student overdependence on the tool despite its numerous advantages (Kasneci et al., 2023; Trust et al., 2023). Furthermore, there is a risk that the use of ChatGPT in education can spread misinformation because it is not always accurate in providing information.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in teachers' and students' perceptions of using ChatGPT in various EFL contexts. Limna et al. (2023) did a qualitative study on this topic whereby they conducted in-depth interviews with ten teachers and fifteen students across different educational institutions in Thailand. It was revealed that the majority of participants had a positive attitude towards incorporating ChatGPT in education. They regarded ChatGPT as a useful application that could help students with their feedback and enquiries, and ease teachers' workload. The research results also identified that participants were concerned with the accuracy of information provided by ChatGPT and its potential threats to privacy and personal data. Ali et al.'s (2023) study explored teachers' and students' perspectives on the effects of ChatGPT on English learning motivation focusing on a more specific aspect. Research results showed that participants recognised the benefits of ChatGPT for enhancing learners' reading and writing skills but were neutral about its impact on listening and speaking employing a quantitative research approach, where data was collected from eighty educators and learners through an online survey. Researchers have specifically shown an increased interest in EFL teachers' perceptions of employing ChatGPT in language teaching. Bao and Li's (2023) qualitative study explored five graduate student teachers' perceptions of incorporating ChatGPT in language teaching using focus group interviews. Bao and Li's (2023) research results showed that participants recognised ChatGPT's potential for "idea generation" and "text analysis and generation" (p.12) but also experienced its limitations in "error correction" and "adjustment of language difficulty level" (p.13). Studies conducted by Iqbal et al. (2022) and Ulla et al. (2023) produced different findings on EFL instructors' perceptions of using ChatGPT in teaching English despite both using qualitative methods with semi-structured interviews. Iqbal et al.'s (2022) research on the perspectives of twenty university lecturers in Pakistan found their general cautiousness and negative perception of ChatGPT. They expressed major concerns about "cheating and plagiarism" while also acknowledging certain benefits such as "ease in lesson planning and assessment" (Iqbal et al., 2022). On the other hand, Ulla et al.'s (2023) study on the perspectives of seventeen EFL teachers at a Thai university showed their favourable attitude towards ChatGPT. These participants recognised ChatGPT's benefits in "lesson preparation and learning activities creation" while also noting limitations such as dependability, trustworthiness, and capacity to promote excessive student dependence (Ulla et al., 2023). ElSary (2024) investigated the perceptions of forty middle and high school teachers in Dubai and Abu Dhabi on using ChatGPT to assist teaching and learning in a study using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. The results indicated that teachers recognised the most noticeable benefits of ChatGPT in "lesson planning, teaching and learning and less in assessment and feedback" while expressing concerns about "the bias and accuracy of information received and the lack of human interaction" (ElSary, 2024). More recently, Zaiarna et al. (2024)

conducted a mixed-method study on the experiences of 36 EFL instructors at higher education institutions in Ukraine, the EU and the USA using ChatGPT for language teaching and assessment. These teachers acknowledged ChatGPT's possibility for aid in "lesson planning, content creation, task design, and assessment, especially for vocabulary, grammar and writing" while being hesitant about "ChatGPT-generated tasks' accuracy for assessment purposes", "issues with biased information, and insufficient task complexity" (Zaiarna et al., 2024).

2.2. ChatGPT in Teaching EFL Writing

Extensive research has explored the views of students and teachers on using ChatGPT in EFL writing classes. From students' perspectives, ChatGPT is widely recognised for enhancing efficiency in writing tasks from the idea generation to the final composition stage (Harunasari, 2023; Yan, 2023). As a result, students frequently resort to this tool when lacking ideas in writing (Salsabila et al., 2024). Harunasari (2023) further reported that ChatGPT helps students actively engage in EFL writing classes by assisting with their writing, which improves writing confidence. However, students express concerns about ChatGPT because academic dishonesty and the potential increase in plagiarism emerge as significant problems (Harunasari, 2023; Yan, 2023). Yan (2023) recommended user guidance for efficient ChatGPT use with institutional rules and teacher training to detect plagiarism. Another students' concern may derive from technical problems, including delays during exporting and downloading history data which highlights the need for improved user support and troubleshooting (Harunasari, 2023). Moreover, students worried about ChatGPT's threats to educational equity when this tool is allowed in EFL writing classes (Yan, 2023). This author reported that ChatGPT's rapid response creation gives some students an unfair advantage. The tool is seen as a shortcut, simplifying the complex "reading-writing-revision" process into mere "text-generation and post-editing", hence negatively affecting the fairness in education (Yan, 2023). Additionally, in Salsabila et al.'s (2024) study, students reported that relying on ChatGPT diminished their critical thinking and creativity as they passively used it. However, Harunasari (2023) determined that ChatGPT has the potential to significantly improve students' writing abilities when it is carefully and innovatively incorporated into the curriculum based on the findings from students' questionnaires. This can be accomplished by establishing step-by-step guidelines, saving records of students' interactions with ChatGPT while doing writing tasks and enhancing pair or group work activities in writing classes.

From teachers' perspectives, research has produced mixed results. Shakil and Siddiq (2024) examined the views of thirty ESL teachers in Pakistan about ChatGPT as a threat to graduate students' analytical writing skills. Participants noted that students were prone to overuse ChatGPT to generate content and plagiarize, hindering their creative thinking. From another perspective, Guo and Wang's (2024) research on the views of five EFL teachers in China on using ChatGPT-generated feedback to support their feedback in writing classes showed their positive and negative perceptions. Teachers appreciated ChatGPT's ability to understand the content of student essays, provide appropriate revision suggestions and the rationale behind those suggestions, use praises for student achievements and lessen their feedback burden and reduce their workload (p. 17-18). However, they perceived that ChatGPT's feedback had several limitations such as being overly long, hard to understand for low-proficiency students, occasionally irrelevant, difficult to locate and unable to detect certain writing issues. Guo and Wang (2024) suggested that combining feedback from teachers and ChatGPT could be more effective to support EFL learners' writing development instead of being based solely on one source. In another EFL setting, Nguyen's (2023) mixed-method study investigated the views of twenty EFL teachers at a Vietnamese university on using ChatGPT in writing instruction. It was revealed that teachers generally had positive views towards ChatGPT and recognised its benefits in designing lesson plans and learning materials, thus saving their time and energy. Teachers also observed ChatGPT's potential to support students' learning process by giving prompt responses to any inquiries and helping students brainstorm ideas, improving students' language use and motivation for learning writing. However, teachers expressed major serious concerns about academic integrity and students' reliance on ChatGPT

when incorporating this tool in EFL writing lessons. Nguyen (2023) then stressed the importance of providing teacher training for the effective use of ChatGPT and ensuring institutional support for technology access and collaborative assistance.

Barrett and Pack (2023) compared 68 teachers' and 158 university students' perceptions of the use of Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in the writing process, including brainstorming, outlining, writing, revision, feedback, and evaluation carrying out a comparison study through a questionnaire. Their research findings showed that participants generally agreed that using GenAI in the early stages of the writing process (i.e., brainstorming and outlining) rather than in later ones is acceptable. Conversely, relying on GenAI to complete writing assignments its use is acknowledged or not is not allowed.

2.3. Significance of the Research

Integrating ChatGPT in EFL writing classes has profoundly transformed the way people teach and learn, which highlights the need for understanding teachers' actual uses and attitudes toward this tool and their recommendations for maximizing its advantages. However, there has been a scarcity of research on teachers' experiences, perceptions and suggestions on using ChatGPT in teaching EFL writing, particularly at higher education institutions in Vietnam. This study aims to explore how EFL lecturers at different Vietnamese universities utilize and perceive ChatGPT in writing classes and their suggestions for effective implementation. In light of these findings, strategies can be developed to address potential challenges in using ChatGPT for writing instructions while maximizing its benefits. This research can also offer EFL lecturers useful recommendations for effectively maximizing the benefits of ChatGPT to improve teaching and learning of EFL writing.

2.4. Research Questions

This study set out to achieve these aims by addressing the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1. How do EFL lecturers in Vietnam use ChatGPT in their writing classes?

RQ2. How do EFL lecturers in Vietnam perceive the use of ChatGPT in their writing classes?

RQ3. What recommendations do EFL lecturers in Vietnam give to effectively apply ChatGPT in writing classes?

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Study Design

The study employed a qualitative approach to align with the research objectives and questions. In this study, the use of a qualitative approach was useful because it helps investigate the topic, document participants' viewpoints, comprehend complex situations, and provide a wide range of perspectives (Creswell & Clark, 2018). Moreover, it is aligned with the research investigation into how EFL lecturers in Vietnam adopted ChatGPT in their writing classes as well as how they perceive this implementation.

This study adopted a case-study approach with the intention of disclosing the true nature of events by examining the first-hand experiences of individuals within a particular setting in terms of the research design. The focal point of this research was placed on the practice and perceptions of EFL lecturers concerning the use of ChatGPT for teaching EFL writing.

3.2. Participants

The sample consists of twenty-eight EFL teachers (P1 -> P28) from four universities namely Hanoi National University of Education (U1), Hanoi Pedagogical University 2 (U2), Hanoi University of Science and Technology (U3), and Hanoi University of Industry (U4). Subjects were recruited based on a preliminary survey related to their use of ChatGPT when teaching EFL writing, the frequency of use, and their willingness to participate. As

summarised in Table 1, the sample was equally split in terms of gender and institution. Most participants (78.6%) were between the ages of 21 and 30 while a significant proportion (57.1%) had been teaching for one year to five years. Additionally, a majority (71.4%) of the teachers held a master's degree in EFL teaching.

Table 1. Demographic information of the questionnaire respondents (N = 28).

Categories	Sub-categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	14	50
	Male	14	50
Age	21-30 years old	22	78.6
	31-40 years old	6	21.4
Institution	U1	8	28.6
	U2	7	25
	U3	6	21.4
	U4	7	25
Teaching experience	1-5 years	16	57.1
	6 -10 years	8	28.6
	11-15 years	4	14.3
Qualification	Bachelor	8	28.6
	Master	20	71.4

3.3. Data Collection Tools and Procedures

A semi-structured interview was employed to collect information on teachers' practices and opinions concerning the utilization of ChatGPT in EFL writing classes. We support using semi-structured interviews due to their adaptability which allows researchers to ask additional questions in response to participants' answers, contributing to a thorough comprehension of the participants' experiences and viewpoints.

The semi-structured interview consisted of five questions which were separated into two parts. Part 1 consisted of two questions that examined lecturers' experiences of utilising ChatGPT in EFL writing classes. These questions explored the frequency of ChatGPT usage, the stages of a writing session, and the specific activities in which ChatGPT is incorporated. Part 2 which comprises three questions examined the viewpoints of lecturers regarding ChatGPT, particularly its advantages, difficulties, and feasible strategies to alleviate its limitations and optimize its benefits in teaching EFL writing.

The study's data collection process included four stages. In the first stage, participants were chosen by a preliminary survey. Next, we contacted the chosen individuals through email to arrange interview meetings and provide them details about the interview objectives, the ethical considerations, and procedures to interview. The interviews were then conducted as scheduled following standard protocols. The interviews were held in relatively quiet locations after their office hours to facilitate participants' teaching schedules during the day. Prior to the interviews, we requested to sign the consent form as well as the authorization for audio recording. The duration of each interview lasted from 25 to 30 minutes. Subsequently, the recordings were transcribed and forwarded to the interviewees for their review and any necessary modifications being used as the primary data in this research.

3.4. Data Analysis

After collecting the data from the semi-structured interviews, we processed it using the six-step procedure for thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2019). This procedure is proved to be reliable and widely adopted by previous studies. The procedure involves six steps: (1) getting familiar with the data; (2) coding; (3) creating initial themes; (4) evaluating themes; (5) defining and labelling themes; and (6) generating reports.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. RQ1: Experiences of EFL Lecturers in Vietnam towards the Use of ChatGPT in Teaching EFL Writing

According to data from the semi-structured interviews, the experiences of EFL lecturers varied widely towards using ChatGPT in teaching EFL depending on each teaching style and preference. Firstly, more than two-third of the participants (24 out of 28) frequently used ChatGPT for their writing lessons in which three of them have used this chatbot for about 70% to 80% of their time or even relied on it as a constant tool. Others used it less frequently, and a few chose not to allow its use at all in their classrooms as they are not able to take control of this new technology.

Participants utilised ChatGPT at various stages of the writing process. Many found it useful during the prewriting phase for brainstorming ideas, outlining structures, and checking the logic of ideas. During the writing process, ChatGPT was used to check grammar, improve coherence and cohesion and suggest better versions of sentences. During the post-writing phase, it was utilised for editing and offering feedback on the students' work. Most participants frequently employed ChatGPT for pre-writing and post-writing activities. However, only a few utilised the program for while-writing activities. Out of the twenty-eight participants interviewed, twenty-six of them specifically indicated that ChatGPT enabled them to prepare materials before their writing instructions. For example, P4 often used this chatbot to *"reference vocabulary ideas before starting to teach writing lessons"* while P12 made use of ChatGPT for *"outlining writing structures and brainstorming ideas if the topic is too challenging for students"*. Furthermore, for a while-writing activity, P1, P6 and P21 reported to use ChatGPT for *"setting coherence and cohesion for the paragraph or upgrading the grammar of the essay"*. Consistent with this, Kasneci et al.'s (2023) research result also emphasised that one of the uses of this chatbot is to create resources to support students in composing essays. So, it is understandable for teachers to view ChatGPT as an effective platform to find ideas, lexical resources and even grammar structures for writing lessons.

Besides, ChatGPT was found useful and convenient to design teaching materials that suit students' interests, needs and levels. P27 expressed that before utilising ChatGPT for materials design in his class, he faced challenges in adapting materials from free resources such as Google due to the vast abundance of available materials. However, once he used ChatGPT *"instead of researching or reading additional articles to create a bank of words or a list of ideas for writing exercises, putting the topics into ChatGPT allows immediate and effective response within a couple of seconds"*. Given the scarcity of dependable resources, the vast amount of content in coursebooks, and the high number of students in EFL classes in Vietnam, EFL teachers often have difficulties in creating materials that are appropriate for their students (Nguyen, 2023). Hence, ChatGPT seems to be a gigantic source of information for creating and tailoring materials in writing lessons among EFL teachers in Vietnam.

Moreover, the majority of participants (27 out of 28) expressed that ChatGPT was beneficial in assisting their students with brainstorming ideas for writing tasks and adapting main ideas or controlling ideas for various topics and questions in writing paragraphs or essays. For example, P18 mentioned that she often used ChatGPT for *"brainstorming and the revision stage to generate ideas for writing topics and edit students' work"*. P23 mentioned that *"this chatbot helps me to provide very good ideas for every topic I ask"*. In addition, several participants noted that ChatGPT enabled them to create more effective writing lesson plans by utilising the chatbot to recommend various activities for their lessons. For instance, P16 employed ChatGPT for pre-writing activities to *"create some exercises that require students to create meaningful sentences, such as arrange words to make meaningful sentences or use the given words to make meaningful sentences"*. P24 reported using this chatbot for a vocabulary activity by creating *"a list of academic words"* or *"a list of collocations and cohesive devices"* for different topics in a writing lesson so that the lesson would be easier for students. Ultimately, almost all participants frequently employed ChatGPT to assess students' work and deliver individualized feedback thereafter. Some lecturers used it to *"correct errors and mistakes as well as enhance the coherence of the writing"* while others asked their students to use ChatGPT themselves to identify *"grammar and vocabulary errors"* in their writing and *"self-correct"* them. Similarly, instead of *"asking foreigners or native teachers for help to check*

choices of vocabulary or the natural flow of the essay", P8 greatly appreciates how ChatGPT enables her to provide feedback and evaluation easily and effectively. Overall, the interviews revealed that ChatGPT empowered EFL lecturers to not only create materials and exercises for writing lessons but also to perform additional tasks such as evaluation and delivering feedback which were applicable to pre-writing, while-writing and post-writing sections.

While ChatGPT was appreciated for its ability to save time, provide instant feedback, and offer a vast array of ideas, teachers also experienced challenges. Initially, EFL lectures often experienced challenges when integrating this chatbot into their lesson planning and teaching activities as they mostly utilised it solely for information retrieval and generating ideas for essay writing rather than for other types of writing tasks. P11 and P23 specifically stated that they mostly included the chatbot in while-writing activities in which the chatbot displayed a list of suggested ideas to assist students in brainstorming for the writing task. Additionally, many teachers encountered a common issue regarding writing prompts in the sense that they found it necessary to supply "*multiple prompts*" to ensure that ChatGPT generates an accurate response. Additionally, there were some situations where ChatGPT misunderstood their requests; for example, P1 explained that "*sometimes, ChatGPT gets my request wrong, and I need to feed it too much information*" or "*ChatGPT might not fully understand my intended questions*".

Furthermore, the majority of participants voiced concerns about the trustworthiness of students' work as they worry that students' use of ChatGPT to write essays may cause difficulty in determining if these essays are human or AI-generated; consequently, students may become "*over-reliant and overdependent on this platform*" which negatively affect students' development of their critical thinking and independence in learning writing skills. Similarly, in a study conducted by Iqbal et al. (2022) in Pakistan, the majority of lecturers voiced substantial worries over the use of ChatGPT in academia. These concerns primarily revolved around issues of cheating, plagiarism, and dependability which have not been properly handled thus far.

Finally, another issue that some participants pointed out is ChatGPT's provision of outdated or culturally limited information. P13 and P20 indicated that "*the text-generation answers are sometimes too general*", or "*the chatbot often repeats long-winded ideas but lacks critical thinking or rebuttal in the ideas*", so tailoring ChatGPT to cater exclusively to students is also a significant consideration. Consequently, writing prompts might be particularly hard when using ChatGPT as teachers may not acquire the desired information if the prompts are too vague (Yan, 2023).

4.2. RQ2: Perceptions of EFL Lecturers in Vietnam towards the Use of ChatGPT in Teaching EFL Writing

Participants' perceptions of using ChatGPT in teaching writing are generally positive but they also acknowledge several challenges and limitations associated with its use.

On the one hand, most participants expressed favourable opinions about utilising this chatbot since it has the potential to enhance the efficacy of teaching and learning EFL writing. Firstly, over two-third of participants agreed that ChatGPT has the potential to save them time by providing vocabulary, collocations and ideas. This can be particularly beneficial in their lesson preparation and teaching process. Particularly, using ChatGPT can significantly reduce the time required for grading and enable immediate feedback. This can be explained by its ability to rapidly assess students' work and offer valuable feedback, a process that typically takes teachers anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes to complete for a single essay (Guo & Wang, 2024). Nguyen (2023) determined that a major issue facing Vietnamese EFL lecturers is their inability to offer immediate and comprehensive feedback to students due to time constraints. This could explain why EFL lecturers find using ChatGPT beneficial for giving feedback on their students' work. Moreover, the majority of participants agreed ChatGPT assists their students in enhancing their writing skills, especially in learning grammar and vocabulary because it offers precise comments on errors and valuable suggestions for modifications. For example, P10 remarked that this chatbot enabled her to "*create individualized and constructive feedback for each student*" encouraging students to practice EFL writing more frequently and enhancing their writing performance.

Additionally, teachers highly valued ChatGPT for its ability to assist their students at various stages of the writing process from brainstorming, structuring essays and checking grammar and providing feedback. The majority of lecturers (26 out of 28) reported that their students could make significant improvements in writing skills as they can learn new ideas before writing as well as identify and correct grammar or vocabulary errors afterwards due to ChatGPT. This process serves as a strong motivator for students' self-study and self-regulation. Moreover, most participants mentioned that ChatGPT provided substantial assistance in their lesson preparation by helping generate engaging teaching and learning materials for writing classes in which they were able to utilize prompts to request personalized teaching resources tailored to their students' specific needs and levels. Consequently, all agreed that this AI tool was highly beneficial for enhancing students' learning experiences and teachers' teaching practices in EFL writing classes.

However, it is undeniable that implementing ChatGPT into EFL writing lessons presents some challenges for lecturers. During the interviews, thirteen out of twenty-eight participants strongly expressed their concerns about utilising this tool owing to academic dishonesty which was mentioned in Harunasari's (2023) and Yan's (2023) studies. Many are uncertain whether their students' essays are their own work or generated by ChatGPT since they are unable to detect AI writing or provide sufficient proof of AI writing. Similarly, P4 mentioned that she was unable to quickly determine if students' homework assignments were text-generated and was unsure about the function of AI tools in detecting such answers at that time. Therefore, teachers' inability to identify students' work can lead to an increased likelihood of plagiarism as stated in Yan's (2023) research which highlights the need for training for AI writing assessments. Furthermore, almost all lecturers expressed (24 out of 28) regarding the impact of ChatGPT on the critical thinking and problem-solving skills of students. Most of them strongly agreed that students could become excessively dependent on ChatGPT for their writing practice which negatively affects their writing skills (Salsabila et al., 2024). Similarly, during the brainstorming phase of a writing task, some participants noted that their students instantly turned to ChatGPT for generating topic ideas instead of thinking independently at first. Therefore, this reliance on ChatGPT had a noticeable detrimental effect on students' creativity in EFL writing. Moreover, the accuracy and quality of information provided by ChatGPT are also other concerns among several participants as ChatGPT may at times misunderstand prompts or offer outdated or irrelevant content, resulting in incorrect or inappropriate responses for both students and teachers. P1, P5, P17 and P23 found that the responses generated by ChatGPT did not meet their expectations when utilised for writing classes primarily due to the way they formulated the prompts. During the interview, P5 exemplified that when she supplied a *"simple or overly broad instruction without any context"* for a writing work, ChatGPT consistently offered *"too general suggestions and responses" that were deemed "ineffective for writing tasks and academic objectives"*.

In short, although ChatGPT could benefit teachers in saving time, offering comprehensive feedback and enhanced writing support, lesson planning and designing materials, students' over-reliance and academic integrity, accuracy and limited critical thinking could be seen as challenges that should not be overlooked when using ChatGPT in EFL writing classes.

4.3. RQ3: EFL Lecturers' Recommendations for Successfully Adopting ChatGPT in EFL Writing Classes

It is crucial to use it wisely to maximise its benefits and alleviate its potential drawbacks since the growing popularity of ChatGPT and its enormous effects on teaching and EFL writing. Hence, EFL teachers' suggestions for effectively using ChatGPT in writing classes should be proposed.

Firstly, it was recommended that lecturers carefully consider incorporating this chatbot into their writing lessons. For instance, P9 emphasised the importance for EFL teachers to be aware of ChatGPT's limitations, strengths, and the quality of its responses before implementing it in their classes. The use of ChatGPT in writing instructions has shifted the focus from the traditional approach of reading, writing, and revising to a process

focusing on generating text and subsequently editing it. Teacher training with institutional support to effectively integrate ChatGPT into EFL writing instructions should be emphasised to address teachers' challenges.

Secondly, P4, P8, P9, P15, P18 and P20 suggested that teachers should *"combine using ChatGPT, textbooks and other sources on the Internet simultaneously"* to have efficient and reliable responses. The use of Vietnamese AI products such as Vibotics Vernocia, PhoGPT which have better text-generated responses regarding Vietnamese topics is a solution for more reliable answers. The combination of ChatGPT with other reliable sources rather than relying solely on this AI tool can help maintain academic integrity and encourage students to develop their ideas.

Thirdly, it is essential that users pay greater attention to producing precise prompts for writing lessons as writing prompts remain a persistent concern for many lecturers interviewed. P2, P9 and P17 recommended that users should *"provide highly detailed and unambiguous prompts, including information such as aims or class profiles"* to input into ChatGPT. Conversely, P12 suggested that prompts should be written in simple and basic vocabulary and short sentences to enhance the accuracy and relevance of ChatGPT's responses. On that matter, [Guo and Wang \(2024\)](#) suggest that users must provide ChatGPT with explicit instructions and a detailed context to enhance ChatGPT's understanding so that it could improve its response' quality. Following this, P26 recommended that users should eliminate any grammatical or spelling mistakes in their writing prompts to ensure more precise and effective responses. Moreover, several participants suggested limiting the use of ChatGPT to specific stages of the EFL writing lesson in which users need to ensure ChatGPT's sole functions as a supplementary tool in brainstorming or vocabulary enrichment instead of generating a completed essay to avoid students' excessive dependence on this chatbot. Similarly, P15 and P21 proposed that lecturers should permit students to use ChatGPT for certain tasks in writing lessons, such as generating ideas, lexical developments, and grammatical corrections. Additionally, P8 recommended that it is important for teachers to provide guidance and instructions on how to effectively implement this chatbot in diverse writing activities so that students can use this tech tool better for their writing tasks. This is well supported by [Alharbi's \(2023\)](#) finding that encouraging students rather than prohibiting them from using ChatGPT can be a productive method for fostering student engagement in classroom activities. However, it is essential for lecturers to establish clear regulations regarding the use of ChatGPT and provide training to their students on how to effectively write prompts so that this could enable teachers to easily monitor and manage students' contributions in their work.

Regarding the concern over academic integrity, some participants recommended that lecturers use *"AI detective tools such as Quillbot, ZeroGPT, and Scribbr"* as these assist in determining if students' papers are generated by text-generating software which is also highlighted by [Ibrahim \(2023\)](#). Furthermore, P25 suggested that it is necessary for teachers to *"modify the format of homework assignments"* and incorporate *"more timed writing exercises"* during class. For instance, P25 said that she frequently permitted her students to utilize ChatGPT as a tool for producing ideas to compose essays. They might employ these ideas to create their outline and write their essay so that the students' performance was evaluated based on both the outline and the finalized essay. As a result, students would not develop an excessive reliance on this chatbot. They would have the opportunity to enhance their overall skills ([Salsabila et al., 2024](#)). Hence, when teachers choose to incorporate ChatGPT into their lessons, it is crucial for them to modify their teaching approach, assignment requirements, classroom management, and even teacher-student interactions ([Yan, 2023](#)).

Overall, while Vietnamese EFL lecturers acknowledged the potential benefits of using ChatGPT in writing classes along with its drawbacks, they stressed the importance of cautious and strategic implementation, teacher training, balanced use, clear and focused prompts and teacher control.

5. CONCLUSION

Writing is considered one of the most challenging skills to master in EFL learning because it involves multiple stages, such as idea generation, outlining, composing and editing ([Oshima & Hogue, 2007](#)). Consequently, students

often face various writing challenges, including limited vocabulary, a poor grasp of grammar rules, spelling difficulties, inadequate preparation, and a lack of exposure to books and reading materials. On the other hand, teachers face challenges like keeping themselves motivated, addressing students' diverse skill levels, and managing time constraints when teaching writing (Moses & Mohamad, 2019). Recently, the advancements of AI have led to the development of various writing tools that assist users during learning writing skills, with ChatGPT gaining considerable worldwide attention (Alharbi, 2023). Although the integration of ChatGPT into education is still relatively new in many educational establishments, its impact on the learning process has yet to be fully understood (Jaleniauskienė et al., 2023). Consequently, ChatGPT has the potential to revolutionize language instructions by generating educational resources, improving student involvement and interaction, and customizing learning experiences (Kasneci et al., 2023). The current study set out to investigate the experiences, viewpoints and advice of twenty-eight EFL lecturers from a number of universities in Vietnam on the incorporation of ChatGPT in writing classes. As summarised from this study findings, participants' experiences with ChatGPT in EFL writing classes varied widely. Some reported frequently using it, integrating it into 70-80% of their lessons while others used it less frequently or even not at all. In fact, this tool was employed at different stages of the writing process such as pre-writing for brainstorming and outlining, while-writing for grammar checks, and post-writing for proofreading and feedback. Lecturers generally perceived ChatGPT as an assistant tool to provide their students with instant feedback and a wide range of ideas and vocabulary. In a nutshell, ChatGPT was highly valued for its potential to facilitate teachers' lesson planning and assessment while assisting students in generating ideas, improving their vocabulary, grammar and identifying errors in EFL writing classes.

However, participants also showed certain concerns about their students' over-reliance on the tool, causing academic dishonesty and harming their critical thinking and creativity. Participants worry about the accuracy and quality of the information provided by ChatGPT. For example, teachers frequently face problems with grammatical accuracy in which ChatGPT sometimes responds with incorrect forms of structures. Therefore, lecturers recommend useful strategies, including teacher training, clear and specific prompts, combination with other learning sources and restriction on students' use to maximise the benefits of ChatGPT while mitigating its drawbacks in teaching EFL writing. Several pedagogical implications have been suggested based on these research findings. Firstly, Jaleniauskienė et al. (2023) emphasize that language teachers should become more aware of how AI tools can contribute to teaching writing skills given the advancements in automated writing assistance. Additionally, writing appropriate prompts for ChatGPT should not be ignored as users must provide multiple detailed messages to receive more accurate and comprehensive responses. Therefore, additional training for both teachers and students is necessary to ensure the effective use of this tool in teaching and learning whenever possible (Jaleniauskienė et al., 2023). Some language teachers are now reluctant to use AI due to their fear of the potential risks that technology will pose to students' learning process (Kuddus, 2022) and teachers' role (Fenwick, 2018). It is imperative for teachers to discover methods of incorporating these tools into the classroom in a manner that facilitates learning by offering appropriate guidance to their students due to significant influences on language learning and education of AI (Alharbi, 2023). Teachers should concentrate on guiding students to make use of these tools wisely rather than implementing a complete prohibition on these tools and banning students from using AI tools for writing tasks without any supervision (Alharbi, 2023). For example, EFL teachers should guide students on how to make use of ChatGPT as a learning assistant to enhance their vocabulary, grammar, ideas and structure of their pieces of writing and receive feedback for their works while still developing their own ways of thinking and assessing the accuracy and suitability of responses provided by ChatGPT. Similarly, utilising chatbots that are suitable for each community could be highly recommended. For example, it would be effective to use Vietnamese AI products including Vibotics Vernocia and PhoGPT for Vietnamese EFL teachers.

Although the study has discovered a number of main findings while using ChatGPT in writing lessons, there are still areas that have not been studied within the study of AI chatbot in foreign language education for the

context of Vietnam. Hence, a number of recommendations are given to researcher who shares the same interest in this topic. Firstly, further study should consider carefully some aspects of the study such as cultural or social factors so that researchers could draw a comprehensive picture of the current situation of applying ChatGPT in language education, since the case of this study just focuses on Vietnamese teachers who may have a distinct culture from other countries. Secondly, further investigation into this field should include various perspectives from not only teachers but also students to have a profound understanding of the field topic. Lastly, other studies in this field could investigate a wider scope and subject such as with a large number of participants from teachers to students to collect more detailed and in-depth information.

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