
CHATGPT AS A LEARNING COMPANION: NURSING STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF GENERATIVE AI IN ENGLISH FOR NURSING PURPOSES USING PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

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Abstract: *This study explored nursing students' perceptions of using ChatGPT in learning English for Nursing Purposes at Universitas Klabat. As English proficiency is essential for understanding medical terminology, academic nursing literature, clinical documentation, and patient communication, nursing students need language support that is relevant to their professional field. This study employed a qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach to understand students' lived experiences with ChatGPT as an AI-assisted learning tool. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with nursing students who had experience using ChatGPT for English learning activities. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's six-step framework. The findings revealed four major themes from 8 informants interview. First, students experienced ChatGPT as an accessible learning companion that supported their understanding of nursing vocabulary, medical terminology, English articles, grammar, academic writing, and patient communication. Second, ChatGPT provided efficiency and empowerment by helping students access information quickly, complete academic tasks more easily, and increase their confidence in using English. Third, students recognized limitations and risks, including inaccurate responses, inappropriate translations, fabricated references, technical constraints, and possible dependence on AI. Fourth, students developed a more critical and responsible approach by verifying AI-generated information, using trusted references, improving prompt quality, and avoiding direct copy-paste practices. Overall, the study concludes that ChatGPT can be a useful supplementary tool for learning English in nursing education when used critically, ethically, and in combination with reliable academic sources.*

Keywords: *ChatGPT, English for Nursing Purposes, nursing students, artificial intelligence, phenomenology, English language learning*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi persepsi mahasiswa keperawatan terhadap penggunaan ChatGPT dalam pembelajaran English for Nursing Purposes di Universitas Klabat. Kemampuan berbahasa Inggris sangat penting bagi mahasiswa keperawatan karena berkaitan dengan pemahaman istilah medis, literatur akademik keperawatan, dokumentasi klinis, serta komunikasi dengan pasien. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi untuk memahami pengalaman hidup mahasiswa dalam menggunakan ChatGPT sebagai alat bantu pembelajaran berbasis kecerdasan buatan. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan mahasiswa keperawatan yang memiliki pengalaman menggunakan ChatGPT dalam kegiatan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik berdasarkan enam tahapan Braun dan Clarke. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan empat tema utama. Pertama, mahasiswa memandang ChatGPT sebagai pendamping belajar yang mudah diakses, terutama dalam memahami kosakata keperawatan, istilah medis, artikel berbahasa Inggris, tata bahasa, penulisan akademik, dan persiapan komunikasi dengan pasien. Kedua, ChatGPT memberikan efisiensi dan pemberdayaan karena membantu mahasiswa memperoleh informasi dengan cepat, menyelesaikan tugas akademik dengan lebih mudah, dan meningkatkan kepercayaan diri dalam menggunakan bahasa Inggris. Ketiga, mahasiswa menyadari adanya keterbatasan

dan risiko, seperti jawaban yang kurang akurat, terjemahan yang tidak sesuai, referensi yang tidak dapat ditemukan, kendala teknis, serta kemungkinan ketergantungan pada AI. Keempat, mahasiswa mengembangkan penggunaan ChatGPT yang lebih kritis dan bertanggung jawab melalui verifikasi informasi, penggunaan sumber terpercaya, penyusunan prompt yang lebih jelas, dan menghindari praktik menyalin jawaban secara langsung. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa ChatGPT dapat menjadi alat bantu tambahan yang bermanfaat dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris keperawatan apabila digunakan secara kritis, etis, dan dikombinasikan dengan sumber akademik yang terpercaya.

Kata kunci: ChatGPT, English for Nursing Purposes, mahasiswa keperawatan, kecerdasan buatan, fenomenologi, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris

INTRODUCTION

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed teaching and learning across disciplines. Among recent AI innovations, ChatGPT, a large language model developed by OpenAI, has gained widespread attention since its public release in late 2022 because of its ability to generate human-like responses, provide explanations, support writing tasks, and facilitate self-directed learning (Gill et al., 2023; Mogavi et al., 2023). In higher education, students increasingly use ChatGPT to improve productivity, understand complex concepts, and support independent learning (Chan & Hu, 2023; Lee & Zhai, 2024).

In English language education, ChatGPT is commonly used to improve grammar, expand vocabulary, practice conversations, receive feedback, and support writing. Research suggests that AI-powered language tools provide personalized, accessible learning experiences and can enhance vocabulary acquisition, writing skills, grammar accuracy, and learner autonomy (Mahapatra, 2024; Jmaiel et al., 2025).

Within English for Specific Purposes (ESP), language instruction is designed to meet learners' academic and professional needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). In nursing education, English proficiency involves not only general communication but also medical terminology, clinical documentation, patient interaction, and access to

international healthcare literature. Therefore, English for Nursing Purposes (ENP) aims to prepare nursing students for professional healthcare communication. Recent studies suggest that ChatGPT can support ESP learners through technical vocabulary, discipline-specific writing, and autonomous practice (Jmaiel et al., 2025), while AI-assisted learning may improve ESP writing performance and learner autonomy, especially among lower-proficiency learners (Mohamed et al., 2025).

In nursing education, ChatGPT has also been recognized as a useful educational resource. Anwar et al. (2026) found that it can support nursing education by improving information accessibility, learner engagement, and educational assistance. However, concerns remain regarding accuracy, ethics, implementation challenges, and AI-generated inaccuracies or "hallucinations," which require users to critically evaluate responses (Anwar et al., 2026; Gill et al., 2023).

Although studies have documented positive student perceptions of ChatGPT in language learning, writing support, and academic productivity (Chan & Hu, 2023; Mahapatra, 2024; Mogavi et al., 2023), three key gaps remain. First, most studies focus on general English learners or university students from various disciplines, with limited attention to nursing students, whose language needs include medical terminology, patient communication, clinical documentation,

and healthcare literature. Second, research in Southeast Asian contexts remains limited, particularly in Indonesia and private faith-based institutions such as Universitas Klabat, where cultural, technological, and educational factors may shape students' perceptions of AI-assisted language learning. Third, existing studies largely rely on quantitative surveys, which may not fully capture students' lived experiences. Therefore, qualitative inquiry is needed to explore how nursing students understand, integrate, and respond to ChatGPT in English for Nursing Purposes (ENP).

This study contributes to the emerging literature on AI in language education by examining ChatGPT use in English for Nursing Purposes (ENP) among Indonesian nursing students. Its novelty lies in its focus on a specialized population whose English needs are tied to healthcare communication and clinical practice, its qualitative approach to capturing nuanced experiences, and its institutional context at Universitas Klabat. The findings are expected to provide locally grounded insights into generative AI integration in Indonesian higher education and inform the design of AI-assisted ESP instruction in nursing education.

While previous studies have explored students' perceptions of ChatGPT in general English learning, little is known about how nursing students utilize ChatGPT to develop profession-specific linguistic competencies required in clinical communication, medical documentation, and healthcare interactions. The intersection between Generative AI and English for Nursing Purposes (ENP) remains underexplored, particularly in developing-country contexts. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by examining nursing students' perceptions of ChatGPT as a tool for learning English within a professional healthcare communication framework. Therefore, this study explored nursing students' perceptions of ChatGPT in learning English for Nursing Purposes at

Universitas Klabat, with the research question of: "What are nursing students' perceptions of using ChatGPT in learning English for Nursing Purposes at Universitas Klabat?"

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach to explore nursing students' lived experiences and perceptions regarding the use of ChatGPT in learning English for Nursing Purposes. The study was conducted at Universitas Klabat, North Sulawesi, Indonesia. The participants consisted of nursing students enrolled in the Faculty of Nursing at Universitas Klabat. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who had experience using ChatGPT for English learning activities. Data reached saturation at the sixth, thus, the two participants were added to ensure saturation that the total participants were 8 students. Participants were anonymized using their initials.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided informed consent before participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process. The interviews explored students' experiences, perceived benefits, challenges, and recommendations regarding the use of ChatGPT in learning English for Nursing Purposes. The interview questions included: "How do you use ChatGPT in learning English for Nursing Purposes?"; "What benefits have you experienced when using ChatGPT?"; "What challenges or limitations have you encountered?"; "How has ChatGPT influenced your confidence in using English?"; and "Would you recommend ChatGPT to other nursing students? Why or why not?"

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun

and Clarke’s (2006) six-step framework which were: familiarization with data; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; and finally producing the report.

Then, to ensure the trustworthiness and rigor of the study, the researchers adopted Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) framework of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The thematic analysis followed the systematic procedures outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), while the reporting and analytical processes were guided by the trustworthiness recommendations proposed by Nowell et al. (2017), thereby promoting transparency, consistency, and methodological rigor throughout the study.

Findings

The following figure presents the thematic framework generated from the phenomenological analysis of nursing students’ experiences using ChatGPT for learning English. The framework illustrates four major themes that emerged from the participants’ responses: ChatGPT as an accessible learning companion, experiencing efficiency and empowerment, navigating limitations and risks, and developing critical and responsible use. Each theme is further divided into sub-themes that reflect the students’ lived experiences, perceptions, and responses toward the use of ChatGPT in English for nursing purposes.

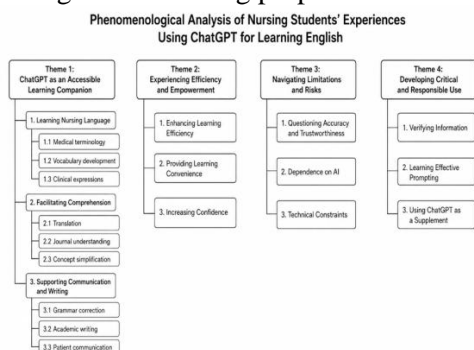


Figure 1 Thematic Framework of Nursing Students’ Experiences Using ChatGPT for Learning English

Theme 1 ChatGPT as an Accessible Learning Companion for Nursing English

Table 1 Theme 1 ChatGPT as an Accessible Learning Companion for Nursing English

Sub-theme	Category	Supporting Statements	
Learning Nursing Language	Medical terminology acquisition	“I use ChatGPT as a learning aid, especially for understanding medical terms.” (DT)	
	Vocabulary development	“I use ChatGPT to search for nursing-related vocabulary.” (MM)	
	Understanding unfamiliar clinical terms	“For nursing, I usually look up unfamiliar words and medical terms.” (RS)	
Facilitating Comprehension	Translation of nursing materials	“Mostly, I only use it to translate nursing journals.” (CT)	
		Understanding English articles and journals	“There are articles that are entirely in English, so I ask ChatGPT to help translate them.” (RW)

Sub-theme	Category	Supporting Statements	Sub-theme	Category	Supporting Statements
Supporting Communication and Writing	Simplifying complex concepts	“Explain like I’m five.” (JM)	Increasing Confidence in English Use	Personalized assistance	“It seems like ChatGPT understands me better.” (RS)
	Grammar correction	“Fix the grammar.” (CT)		Alternative source of support	“It is explained directly there.” (RW)
	Academic writing support	“Please correct my grammar.” (JM)		Confidence in speaking	“It helps me speak directly, even though I still speak somewhat hesitantly.” (M)
	Patient communication preparation	“I look for examples of English phrases to say to patients.” (DT)		Confidence in writing	“It helps me compare my writing and improve it.” (JM)
Theme 2 Experiencing Efficiency and Empowerment Through ChatGPT				Confidence through better understanding	“Because I can look up the meaning easily.” (IK)
Table 2 Theme 2 Experiencing Efficiency and Empowerment Through ChatGPT					
Sub-theme	Category	Supporting Statements			
Enhancing Learning Efficiency	Faster information retrieval	“It helps me learn vocabulary more quickly.” (M)	Theme 3 Navigating the Limitations and Risks of AI-Assisted Learning		
	Saving time in academic work	“All tasks feel faster to complete.” (CT)	Table 3 Theme 3 Navigating the Limitations and Risks of AI-Assisted Learning		
Providing Learning Convenience	Immediate access to explanations	“It’s very time efficient.” (JM)	Sub-theme	Category	Supporting Statements
	Easy access to information	“When using ChatGPT, everything is already there.” (IK)	Questioning Accuracy and Trustworthiness	Incorrect responses	“There was a lecturer who said that it was not the correct answer.” (DT)
		Inaccurate translation or		“Sometimes, some words do	

Sub-theme	Category	Supporting Statements
Dependence on AI	interpretation	not match their proper meaning.” (MM)
	Hallucinated references	“Usually, there are nonexistent journals.” (CT)
	Fabricated sources	“When I searched for it, it turned out not to exist.” (RS)
	Reliance on ChatGPT	“There is dependence.” (DT)
Technical Constraints	Reduced independent thinking	“It made us think less.” (JM)
	Following AI without verification	“We just follow ChatGPT without checking it again.” (IK)
	Free-version limitations	“It has limits.” (DT)
	Input-length restrictions	“It says it cannot do it because it exceeds what it can handle.” (CT)
	Voice-recognition issues	“The voice note is sometimes inaccurate.” (MM)
	Prompt-related difficulties	“If we ask incorrectly, it gives a different result.” (RW)

Theme 4 Developing Critical and Responsible Use of ChatGPT		
Table 4 Theme 4 Developing Critical and Responsible Use of ChatGPT		
Sub-theme	Category	Supporting Statements
Verifying AI-Generated Information	Cross-checking information	“We have to look for other references.” (D)
	Consulting trusted sources	“You have to recheck it with facts from books.” (JM)
	Independent verification	“I search for it myself.” (CT)
Learning to Prompt Effectively	Prompt quality affects output	“It depends on how we give the prompt.” (CT)
	Developing prompting skills	“Do not make prompts carelessly.” (CT)
	Providing detailed instructions	“We have to write it in more detail.” (RW)
Using ChatGPT as a Supplement, Not a Substitute	Responsible recommendation	“It is allowed, but we have to look for other references.” (D)
	Balanced use	“Use it, but use it wisely.” (CT)
	Avoiding overdependence	“Do not just copy and paste directly.” (IK)
	Maintaining independent learning	“If the assignment can still be

Sub-theme	Category	Supporting Statements
		done by yourself, do it independently .” (RW)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that nursing students perceived ChatGPT as a useful supplementary tool for learning English for Nursing Purposes. Students used ChatGPT to understand medical terminology, develop nursing-related vocabulary, translate English nursing materials, improve grammar, support academic writing, and prepare English expressions for patient communication. These findings are consistent with previous studies showing that ChatGPT and other generative AI tools can support students by providing immediate explanations, language assistance, and personalized academic support (Gill et al., 2023; Chan & Hu, 2023; Mogavi et al., 2023). In this study, ChatGPT appeared to function as a learning companion that helped students manage the specific linguistic demands of nursing education.

The role of ChatGPT as a learning companion also reflects the nature of English for Specific Purposes, which emphasizes language learning based on learners' academic and professional needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Unlike general English learning, English for Nursing Purposes requires students to understand specialized vocabulary, clinical expressions, healthcare-related texts, and patient-centered communication. The students' use of ChatGPT for nursing vocabulary, grammar correction, translation, and patient communication indicates that generative AI can support discipline-specific language development. This finding supports previous research showing that ChatGPT can enhance ESP

learning by improving writing, vocabulary use, grammatical accuracy, content organization, and learner autonomy (Jmaiel et al., 2025; Mohamed et al., 2025).

The findings also support earlier research on ChatGPT in language learning. Students in this study used ChatGPT to correct grammar, improve writing, translate English materials, simplify difficult concepts, and practice English expressions. These uses are similar to the benefits identified by Mahapatra (2024), who found that ChatGPT could improve academic writing performance and increase students' confidence in English use. The findings also align with Dewantara et al. (2024), who emphasized that AI-powered language tools can enhance motivation, learner engagement, and self-regulated learning. For nursing students who may have limited opportunities to practice English in real clinical communication, ChatGPT offers an accessible space for independent practice and immediate feedback.

Another important finding is that ChatGPT provided students with efficiency, convenience, and confidence. Participants described ChatGPT as useful because it gave quick explanations, helped them find information faster, and made academic tasks feel easier to complete. This finding is consistent with Mogavi et al. (2023), who reported that students frequently use ChatGPT for brainstorming, summarizing, idea generation, and academic task completion. It also supports Lee and Zhai's (2024) finding that learners view ChatGPT as a valuable tool for individualized learning and self-directed inquiry. In this study, students' increased confidence in speaking and writing English suggests that ChatGPT was not only used to obtain answers but also to reduce anxiety and support active engagement with English learning tasks.

In the nursing education context, the findings suggest that ChatGPT may help bridge the gap between English

language learning and the professional communication needs of nursing students. Nursing education requires students to engage with medical terminology, English-language academic literature, clinical documentation, and patient communication. Previous studies have noted that ChatGPT can support nursing education by facilitating information access, learner engagement, and educational activities (Anwar et al., 2026). Similarly, Abujaber et al. (2023), Sallam (2023), and Zhang et al. (2024) noted the potential of ChatGPT and chatbot-based technologies to support healthcare education, communication practice, learning assistance, and personalized instruction. The present findings extend this discussion by showing how nursing students used ChatGPT specifically for English for Nursing Purposes.

However, the findings also reveal that students were aware of the limitations and risks of AI-assisted learning. Participants reported concerns about incorrect answers, inaccurate translations, fabricated references, and inappropriate meanings. These concerns support previous literature warning that ChatGPT may generate inaccurate or fabricated information if users do not critically evaluate its responses (Gill et al., 2023). In healthcare-related education, this issue is particularly important because inaccurate information may influence students' understanding of health concepts, medical terminology, or professional communication. Bhattacharyya et al. (2023) similarly found that ChatGPT-generated medical references could be fabricated or inaccurate, highlighting the importance of careful verification when using AI in nursing-related learning.

The students' concerns about dependence on ChatGPT also reflect broader ethical and pedagogical challenges in AI adoption. Some participants acknowledged that ChatGPT could make students think less independently or follow AI-generated

responses without checking them. This finding is consistent with studies that identify academic integrity, plagiarism, misinformation, and student overreliance as major concerns in generative AI use (Chan & Hu, 2023; Li et al., 2023; Mogavi et al., 2023). Zhai et al. (2024) also warned that overreliance on AI dialogue systems may affect students' cognitive abilities, including critical thinking and analytical thinking. Therefore, while ChatGPT can promote learner autonomy, it may also weaken independent learning if students use it passively or copy responses without reflection.

A significant finding of this study is that students were developing more critical and responsible ways of using ChatGPT. Participants emphasized the importance of cross-checking information, consulting books and journals, improving prompt quality, and avoiding direct copy-paste practices. This finding aligns with UNESCO's guidance that generative AI should be used through a human-centered approach that protects human agency, supports ethical use, and strengthens educational capacity (Miao & Holmes, 2023). Kasneci et al. (2023) also emphasized the need for AI literacy, critical thinking, fact-checking, and teacher guidance when large language models are integrated into education. In this study, students' awareness of verification and responsible use suggests that ChatGPT can support learning when combined with academic judgment and reliable sources.

The findings further suggest that effective ChatGPT use depends on students' ability to formulate clear and specific prompts. Participants recognized that unclear prompts could produce inaccurate or irrelevant responses, while more detailed prompts could improve output quality. This highlights the importance of prompt literacy as part of AI literacy in English for Nursing Purposes. Students need guidance not only on how to ask ChatGPT questions but also on how to evaluate whether its

responses are linguistically accurate, professionally appropriate, and academically reliable. Thus, ChatGPT should be integrated into learning activities that require students to compare, revise, verify, and reflect on AI-generated responses rather than simply accept them.

Overall, this study supports a balanced view of ChatGPT in nursing English education. ChatGPT can assist with vocabulary development, comprehension of nursing materials, grammar, academic writing, and patient communication practice. However, concerns about accuracy, academic integrity, fabricated sources, and overdependence must be carefully addressed. Thus, ChatGPT should not replace lecturers, textbooks, journals, or students' independent thinking, but should serve as a supplementary tool guided by critical thinking, ethical awareness, and responsible academic practice.

Pedagogically, lecturers can integrate ChatGPT into English for Nursing Purposes activities that train students to evaluate AI-generated responses, verify information with trusted sources, improve grammar and vocabulary, and practice healthcare communication. In contexts such as Indonesia, where access to English practice and specialized support may be limited, ChatGPT can provide valuable assistance when supported by clear institutional guidelines, AI literacy training, and ethical standards.

CONCLUSION

This study explored nursing students' experiences of using ChatGPT in learning English for nursing purposes. The findings showed that students viewed ChatGPT as an accessible learning companion that supported vocabulary development, medical terminology, translation, grammar correction, academic writing, and patient communication preparation. It also improved learning

efficiency and confidence by providing quick explanations and convenient access to information. However, students also recognized risks, including inaccurate responses, inappropriate translations, fabricated sources, technical limitations, and possible AI dependence. They emphasized the need to verify information, use reliable sources, improve prompts, and maintain independent learning. In conclusion, ChatGPT can be a useful supplementary tool for nursing English learning, particularly for comprehension, writing, vocabulary, and communication practice. However, it must be used wisely, with critical thinking, academic integrity, responsible digital literacy, and support from trusted academic and professional sources.

Nursing students should use ChatGPT as a supplementary tool for vocabulary, translation, grammar, writing, and communication practice, while verifying its output with trusted academic sources. Students also need guidance in writing clear prompts and evaluating AI-generated responses critically. Lecturers should teach ethical and responsible AI use, including source checking, plagiarism avoidance, and awareness of ChatGPT's limitations. English for Nursing Purposes courses may integrate AI literacy to support responsible learning. Future studies should examine ChatGPT use in specific nursing English skills, such as clinical communication, academic writing, reading comprehension, and patient-centered communication.

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