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EFL Students' Perceptions of ChatGPT Use in Homework: Benefits, Risks, and Ethical Concerns among First-Year Students at ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates first-year EFL students' perceptions of using ChatGPT in English homework tasks, focusing on perceived benefits, perceived risks, and ethical concerns. The researchers used a descriptive questionnaire-based design, supplemented by three open-ended questions. Data were collected onsite from 119 first-year EFL students, including 61 students from ENS Djelfa and 58 students from ENS Laghouat. The quantitative data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alpha, an independent-samples t-test, and Cohen's d, while the open-ended responses were analysed using thematic analysis. Students generally perceived ChatGPT as useful for improving vocabulary and grammar, generating ideas, saving time, understanding homework instructions, and organizing tasks. However, they demonstrated concerns about a lack of independent thinking, overdependence, inaccurate information, plagiarism, and copying answers without understanding. The comparison between students of ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat revealed no statistically significant differences in perceived benefits, perceived risks, or ethical perceptions and effect sizes were small. The findings indicated a very positive view about ChatGPT's role as a support tool, but there was less consensus about plagiarism and disclosure, suggesting a need for more explicit guidance on academic integrity policies.

Keywords: ChatGPT; EFL homework; perceived benefits; perceived risks; ethical concerns; ENS students

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1. INTRODUCTION

Homework has been an important part of language learning. It provides EFL learners with opportunities to practise grammar, vocabulary, writing, and translation tasks beyond classroom time. Cooper (2007) defined homework as " tasks assigned to students by school teachers that are intended to be carried out during non-school hours " (p. 4). Such activities are not merely additional work; rather, they are designed to enhance classroom learning and enable students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Although homework is considered an extension of classroom learning, its educational value remains a subject of debate. While it may be used as a tool for practice, reinforcement, self-discipline, and formative assessment, research indicates that it works best when the task is well-designed, purposeful, carefully done, appropriate to students' level, and accompanied by feedback (Cooper et al., 2006). Too much or poorly-designed homework can even decrease learners' motivation and learning attitudes (Cooper, 2007; Vatterott, 2010). In the Algerian tertiary EFL context, Zidani (2021) found that homework can facilitate learning when it is meaningful, properly assessed, and effectively followed up by the teacher.

In the age of AI, success in achieving the objectives of homework can be more challenging. Being one of the most popular AI tools, ChatGPT can offer students feedback on instructions, ideas, error correction, translation, and structuring writing. These functions could help EFL students, particularly for vocabulary, as well as grammar correction and writing improvement. Yet, it can encourage plagiarism, superficial learning, limited independent thinking, and dependence. The main concern is that ChatGPT can negatively affect the idea of homework being a test of students' own thinking and target language skills. A homework assignment may be completed independently, with the help of AI, or almost entirely written by AI, making it difficult for the teacher to determine if it is the students' own work. In this concern, Oflaz (2025) reported that EFL teachers expressed concerns that using AI to answer homework questions could lead to a loss of authentic learning, a mismatch between homework outcomes and classroom performance, lead to inaccurate assessment, and reduce students' critical thinking. Similarly, Ibrahim et al. (2023) demonstrated that ChatGPT can perform high-level tasks in certain introductory university courses, particularly writing-related assignments, raising concerns regarding plagiarism and the validity of academic assessments.

Homework is typically done independently of the teacher. Students may use other AI applications, translation software, internet resources, fellow students, family, teacher, and tutors. A questionnaire is not effective enough in controlling these forms of external support, and homework submitted may not be a complete indicator of students' independent competence. Thus, the results of the present study are not meant to validate

the way each homework task was actually performed, but are based on the students' reported practices and perceptions.

Despite the increased focus on the use of AI in education and its effect on different learning practices, research on the students' perceptions of ChatGPT use in homework is still limited, especially in the Algerian context within teacher-training institutions. This study will therefore examine the perceptions of using ChatGPT for homework tasks among the first-year students of English as a foreign language at ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat. It focuses on perceived benefits, perceived risks, and ethical concerns. Understanding the thinking of ENS students is important because they are not only current students but also future teachers who could be tasked with creating homework, evaluating students' independent work, and leading students to use AI appropriately. The study contributes to the literature by highlighting the connection between general responsible-use awareness and students' understanding of academic-integrity practices within an Algerian teacher-education context.

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do first-year EFL students at ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat use ChatGPT for English homework in terms of frequency and types of tasks ?

2. What benefits, risks, and ethical concerns do first-year EFL students perceive regarding the use of ChatGPT in English homework ?

3. To what extent do first-year EFL students' perceptions of ChatGPT use in homework differ between ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat ?

2. Literature Review

This section covers homework used as an out-of-class language learning experience, ChatGPT in homework, and its perceived benefits, risks, and ethical aspects.

2.1 Homework in EFL Learning as Out-of-Class Practice

Homework is generally defined as tasks set by teachers to be completed outside of school hours. In the EFL context, homework provides students with opportunities to deepen their understanding of lessons and to practise grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, and translation skills, which may not be sufficiently developed during classroom instruction. Epstein and Van Voorhis (2001) state that homework is more beneficial when it is planned for specific learning objectives, and Cooper (2007) sees it as an extension of school learning. Wallinger (2000) also found that foreign language teachers generally considered homework important for language instruction, especially for practice and reinforcement. In certain contexts, such as during the COVID-19

pandemic, such assignments played a crucial role in supporting learning and in assessing the work carried out in class.

However, homework is not necessarily effective. Cooper, Robinson, and Patall (2006) demonstrate that homework's impact on achievement is dependent on the level of education, the quality of the homework task, and the learning context. Zidani (2021) found that homework is a controversial issue in the Algerian EFL context at the tertiary level; some teachers consider it to be beneficial for practice and responsibility, while others doubt its value if it goes without effective correction, evaluation, and connection to the objectives of the class. Homework, therefore, should not become a routine task, but should be meaningful, manageable, linked to the classroom learning goals, and accompanied by feedback.

Unlike classroom tasks, homework is completed without direct supervision. Consequently, teachers are not able to closely monitor learners' effort, emotional state, or the form of support, they receive while performing tasks. Tsang, Lam and Moorhouse (2025) reported that young EFL learners' attitudes towards homework are influenced by factors such as task difficulty, quantity, timing, and various psychological variables. Similarly, Tsang and Moorhouse (2026) found that both the type of homework and the school context can significantly affect learners' enjoyment of homework. This is particularly relevant to the present study, as ChatGPT may assist students outside the classroom while also potentially obscuring their actual learning difficulties and level of independence from teachers.

2.2 ChatGPT and AI-Assisted Homework

AI, especially ChatGPT, is changing the way students learn languages, search for information, get feedback, and complete assignments. In the EFL context, this tool can explain instructions, provide word suggestions, fix grammatical errors, translate sentences, and organize thoughts. These functions can simplify the English homework for the learners. Kohnke, Moorhouse, and Zou (2023) point out that ChatGPT has multiple potential uses in language learning, and instruction, such as providing feedback, practice opportunities and explanations, but emphasize that teachers and learners must be digitally competent to utilize it ethically and effectively.

In education, large language models can be used by teachers for generating course materials and providing instant feedback to support students' learning. However, it should be used cautiously since it may produce incorrect or fake information (Lo, 2023). In the EFL context, this implies that ChatGPT could assist students in completing their tasks independently, but it could also lead to deviating from the objective of the homework if students rely on ChatGPT to generate answers without investing any effort.

The use of AI for homework is, thus, a pedagogical concern. According to Oflaz (2025), many students use AI to produce, modify or finish assignments, requiring little or even no personal effort. This goes against the rationale of homework as an opportunity for students to practise producing their own language. It can also lead to a difference between the work students present in class, and the polished assignments that they submit. Similarly, Ibrahim et al. (2023) found that ChatGPT excelled in some introductory university assignments. This can lead to AI-written assignments that might be considered as excellent pieces of work, but they do not accurately reflect the student's actual work.

2.3 Benefits of ChatGPT for EFL Students

When used as a support tool for learning, ChatGPT can be useful. It can help EFL students comprehend the requirements of an assignment, think of ideas, practice grammar and vocabulary, and plan, edit and revise writing. Such uses might be particularly relevant for first-year students who are still learning to write in academic English and are adjusting to the expectations of college-level writing.

The key is using ChatGPT appropriately to have immediate feedback out of class, identify incorrect expressions and build confidence in doing homework activities. In this regard, it can serve the classical homework function of reinforcement, revision, practice, and independent learning. According to Polakova and Ivenz (2024), ChatGPT feedback enhanced EFL learners' writing by enhancing grammar, conciseness, key information and passive voice usage .

Research has indicated that this tool can also improve students' motivation and confidence in writing-based EFL homework. Teng (2024) studied EFL learners' perceptions and experiences of using ChatGPT to provide writing feedback and concluded that learners saw ChatGPT as helpful in the writing process. In English homework, there are many situations where the student is expected to write, revise, translate and organise ideas without direct teacher intervention. However, these benefits are conditioned by the appropriate use of the tool. While the use of ChatGPT to comprehend, edit, or enhance work may be helpful in learning, using it to write entire answers without comprehension or effort, reduces the learning value of homework. Thus, this AI tool should not replace students' thinking ability and practice, but offer support for them.

2.4 Risks and Ethical Concerns

Despite being beneficial, using ChatGPT for homework tasks is not without concerns. It may lead to inaccurate information, dependence, less independent thinking, and weaknesses in the long-term development of language skills. For example, over-

dependence on ChatGPT for writing, translating, or generating ideas can erode students' confidence in their own writing and intellectual abilities. This is particularly problematic in EFL learning, in which progress is contingent on practice, making errors, and correcting them, as well as gradual improvement.

Besides, a very significant concern in the era of AI is related to ethics. Students can submit fully AI-generated answers without acknowledgment, or they can hand in answers that they don't even understand. Using ChatGPT inappropriately poses plagiarism concerns, as noted by Ibrahim et al. (2023), and can sometimes be difficult to detect. Oflaz (2025) also demonstrates that EFL teachers are concerned about the mismatch between classroom ability and homework performance, fairness in assessment, and authentic learning. The concerns are directly relevant to the present study as the questionnaire focuses on how students perceive plagiarism, submitting answers without understanding, responsible use and disclosure.

Therefore, the question isn't whether ChatGPT should be banned or allowed. The real question is: "How should students use it?" In the field of education, while ChatGPT offers educational benefits, it also presents challenges regarding accuracy, plagiarism, and assessment, as highlighted by Lo (2023). In EFL homework, responsible use can be related to brainstorming, grammar checking, clarifying instructions, or revising drafts. Irresponsible use includes copying out full answers, ignoring and failing to understand the material, and hiding the fact that AI is being used when independent work is required. The current study thus focuses on students' perceptions of ChatGPT as a tool that can assist them in their English homework but also as a source of risks and ethical concerns.

The reviewed literature is analysed in light of the three main dimensions of perceived benefits, perceived risks, and ethical perceptions of the use of ChatGPT in students' English homework. Perceived benefits included students' perceptions of ChatGPT supporting their vocabulary and grammar, as well as generating new ideas, structuring tasks, and finishing homework. Perceived risk factors can be related to lack of accuracy in information, dependence, the absence of independent thinking and the potential for long-term language shortcomings. Ethical perceptions involve responsible use, particularly plagiarism, disclosure and the use of ChatGPT as an aid not a replacement for student effort. These dimensions informed the development of the questionnaire and allowed the study to explore not just whether students are aware of the benefits and risks of using ChatGPT, but whether their general support for responsible use is reflected in more specific views about practices like plagiarism and disclosure.

3. Methodology

In this section, the methodological framework of the study is presented. It outlines the research design, the participants, the data collection instrument, the validation and piloting of the questionnaire, the research procedure, the analytical strategies, and the ethical considerations of examining the perceptions of first-year EFL students regarding the use of ChatGPT in English homework tasks at ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive questionnaire-based research design. It was mainly quantitative because the questionnaire included 15 closed-ended items measured using the 5-point Likert Scale. Besides, three open-ended questions were used to provide qualitative supplementation by enabling students to communicate their opinions in their own words. Since it was conducted in two teacher training institutions, ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat, the study had also a comparative aspect in order to find out if there was any difference between students' perceptions in the two institutions.

3.2 Participants

The sample consists of 119 first-year EFL students from ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat. Fifty-eight students are currently studying at ENS Laghouat, while the other sixty-one are studying at ENS Djelfa. They were chosen because they were at the early stage of their academic and professional training as future English teachers. Investigating EFL students' perceptions of ChatGPT use in homework is particularly significant, as these learners are not only current students but also future EFL teachers who may be expected to guide the pedagogically appropriate use of AI tools in future language classrooms. Non-probability convenience sampling was used in the study because the researchers could access the two institutions. The final sample consisted of students who voluntarily answered the questionnaire.

3.3 Instrument

To collect data, the researchers used a questionnaire about students' perceptions of using ChatGPT in English homework tasks, focusing on perceived benefits, perceived risks and ethical concerns of using ChatGPT for homework. The instrument was developed based on the research questions and was informed by previous studies on ChatGPT in EFL learning and AI-assisted homework (Kohnke et al., 2023; Ibrahim et al., 2023; Teng, 2024; Alsofyani & Barzanji, 2025; and Oflaz, 2025). It started with a brief introduction that explained the aim of the study and that answers would be used for academic research purposes. There were 5 sections. Section A was used to gather information on gender, institution, level of English, frequency of using ChatGPT to

assist with English homework, and the types of homework in which students use ChatGPT. In Section B, students discussed their perceived benefits of employing ChatGPT when doing English homework. Section C was devoted to perceived risks and limitations of using the tool. Ethical perceptions and responsible use were reflected in section D. The last Section E presented three open-ended questions to give space for students to express their views about advantages, risks and responsible use of ChatGPT for English homework. The closed-ended items were answered using a five-point Likert Scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Each of the three perception scales contained five items. The open-ended questions were included to gain deeper understanding of students' perceptions that help explain and contextualize the quantitative findings.

3.4 Questionnaire Validation and Pilot Study

Before administering the questionnaire to ENS students, the researchers sent it to two experts in the field to examine its relevance and the clarity of items. Their feedback helped to improve the wording of certain items and to make sure that the targeted aspects of students' perception of using ChatGPT in English homework were assessed. After experts' validation, the researchers tested the questionnaire with five first-year EFL students. The aim of the pilot study was to confirm that instructions and items are clear for participants. The pilot stage indicated that the questionnaire was mostly understandable with some minor modifications in the wording and to prevent misunderstanding. These changes led to the finalization of the questionnaire. Content was shown to be relevant and clear through expert review and pilot testing and the internal consistency of the three questionnaire scales was evaluated using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

3.5 Research Procedure

After validating and piloting the questionnaire, its final version was printed and administered onsite at ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat. 61 questionnaires were collected at ENS Djelfa and 58 ones at ENS Laghouat. Onsite administration was selected to improve participation, provide participants with the same instructions, clarify questions when necessary, and reduce incomplete responses. Participants were informed that data would be used only for academic purposes and that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential. The collected responses from 119 students were then checked, organized, and prepared for analysis. Because researchers were unable to verify how students had previously completed their homework at home, the frequencies and categories of tasks reported should be taken as self-reported by students.

3.6 Data Analysis

The researchers used SPSS (version 27.0.1) to analyse data. For the Likert-scale items, descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations were used to describe students' background information, their frequency of using ChatGPT for English homework, and the types of homework tasks. For the types of homework tasks, the researchers used a multiple-response analysis because students could select more than one type of homework. Besides, Cronbach's alpha was calculated to examine the internal consistency of the three major scales (perceived benefits, perceived risks, and ethical perceptions). Additionally, independent-samples t-test was used to compare the mean scores of ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat students and Cohen's d was used to determine the size of the difference between the two groups. Based on a sensitivity analysis, with n 1 = 61 and n 2 = 58, $\alpha = 0.05$ (two-tailed), and statistical power at .80, the analysis was sensitive to a standardized mean difference of about d = 0.52. The study was therefore sufficiently sensitive to approximately moderate institutional differences but may not have detected small differences.

For the qualitative data, the researchers thematically analysed the three open-ended questions. Students' answers were read many times and coded to identify patterns and recurring ideas. After that, codes were grouped into broader themes which are benefits, risks and responsible use. One response could be assigned to more than one theme when it had many ideas. Respresentative quotations were selected to illustrate recurring themes. The written responses were used to supplement and contextualise quantitative results.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

This study followed ethical research principles throughout its design and implementation. Participants were clearly informed about the aim of the study before their voluntary participation. They were also informed that not participating would not affet their studies or assessment. To protect their privacy, the researchers did not collect names or email addresses, and data were treated confidentially.

4. Results

This section presents the findings obtained from the students' questionnaire. First, students' background information and their use of ChatGPT for English homework are presented. Then, students' perceptions of the benefits, risks, and ethical concerns are reported. Next, the perceptions of ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat students are compared using an independent-samples t-test. Finally, the researchers thematically summarized the qualitative responses of the open-ended questions.

4.1 Students' Background Information and Frequency of ChatGPT Use

Table 1

Students' Background Information and Frequency of ChatGPT Use

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	10	8.4
	Female	109	91.6
Institution	ENS Djelfa	61	51.3
	ENS Laghouat	58	48.7
English level	Basic	23	19.3
	Intermediate	87	73.1
	Advanced	9	7.6
Frequency of using ChatGPT	Never	0	0
	Rarely	5	4.2
	Sometimes	54	45.4
	Often	50	42.0
	Very often	10	8.4

Note. N = 119.

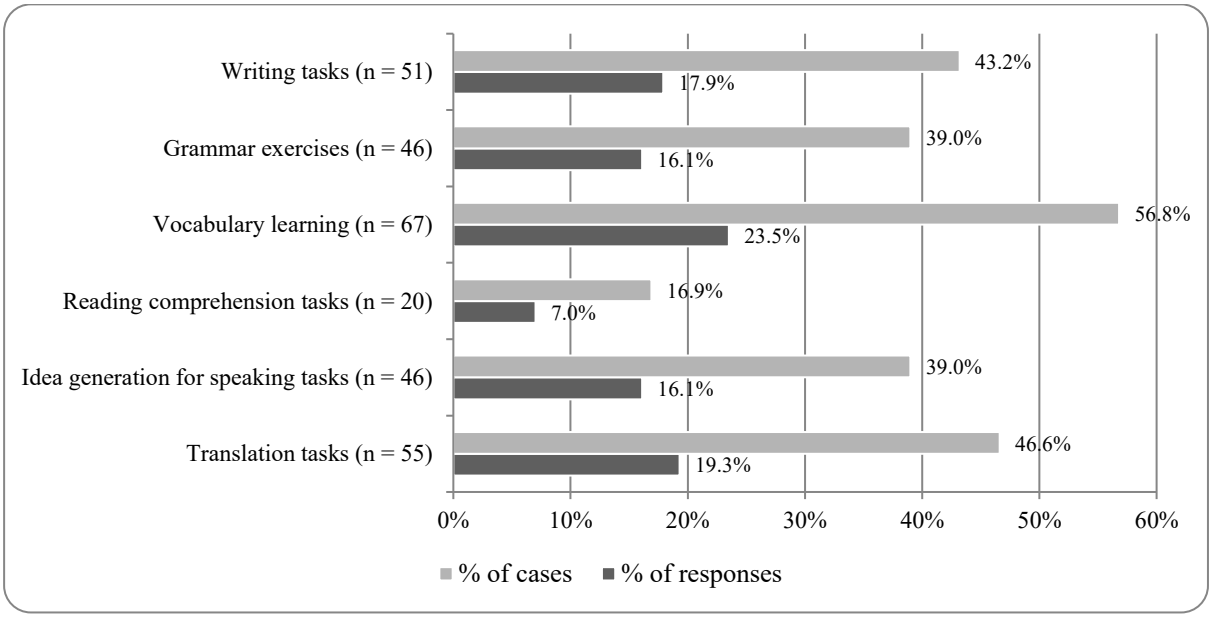
As shown in Table 1, participants were 119 first-year EFL students. The sample was almost balanced in terms of institution, by having 61 students from ENS Djelfa and 58 students from ENS Laghouat. 91.6% of the sample were females representing the majority. Regarding English level, most participants mentioned that their level is intermediate. Concerning ChatGPT use, most students reported using ChatGPT either sometimes or often for English homework.

4.2 Types of English Homework for Which Students Use ChatGPT

The first research question asked about the types of homework tasks students use ChatGPT for. Since students were allowed to select more than one answer, a multiple-response analysis was used.

Figure 1

Types of Homework Tasks for Which Students Used ChatGPT



Note. Total responses = 285. Percentages of responses were 100%; percentages of cases exceed 100% because students could select more than one homework type.

Figure 1 shows that vocabulary learning was the most frequently selected type of English homework for which students used ChatGPT, followed by translation tasks and writing tasks. Next, grammar exercises and idea generation for speaking tasks recorded the same percentage of cases. Concerning reading comprehension tasks, they were the least selected option.

4.3 Reliability of the Questionnaire Scales

Table 2

Reliability of Questionnaire Scales

Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's α	Interpretation
Perceived benefits	5	.767	Acceptable
Perceived risks	5	.781	Acceptable
Ethical perceptions	5	.781	Acceptable

Note. α = Cronbach's alpha.

Reliability values ranging from 0.60 to 0.70 are acceptable in exploratory research, whereas values are considered satisfactory if they are between 0.70 and 0.90

(Hair et al., 2021). As shown in Table 2, the reliability coefficients ranged from .767 to .781, indicating satisfactory internal consistency for the three questionnaire scales. However, this does not establish the validity of the questionnaire, and the findings should be interpreted as evidence from an exploratory study.

4.4 Students' Perceptions of ChatGPT Use in English Homework

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Students' Perceptions of ChatGPT Use in English Homework

Scale	Item	M	SD
Perceived benefits	PB1. ChatGPT can help me understand the requirements of the assignment more easily.	3.45	1.08
	PB2. ChatGPT can improve my vocabulary and grammar.	3.67	0.96
	PB3. ChatGPT can help me generate ideas for English writing or speaking tasks.	3.58	0.93
	PB4. ChatGPT can help me complete assignments more efficiently.	3.54	0.87
	PB5. ChatGPT can enhance my understanding of how to start and organize homework tasks.	3.41	1.07
	Overall perceived benefits	3.53	0.72
Perceived risks	PR1. ChatGPT sometimes provides inaccurate information.	3.87	0.98
	PR2. ChatGPT may provide unnatural or contextually inappropriate English.	3.18	1.07
	PR3. Frequent use of ChatGPT may reduce students' independent cognitive engagement.	4.03	1.07
	PR4. Overuse of ChatGPT may make students dependent on it instead of developing their language skills.	3.99	1.00
	PR5. The use of ChatGPT may hinder long-term English language development.	3.52	1.12
	Overall perceived risks	3.72	0.75
Ethical perceptions	EP1. Using ChatGPT for homework may encourage plagiarism.	3.29	0.95
	EP2. Some students may submit ChatGPT-generated answers without fully understanding them.	3.84	1.14
	EP3. ChatGPT should be used as a support tool, not as a replacement for students' own work.	4.24	1.07
	EP4. Students should use ChatGPT responsibly in English homework.	3.87	1.14
	EP5. Students should disclose when they use ChatGPT in completing assignments.	3.55	0.90
	Overall ethical perceptions	3.76	0.76

Note. N = 119. M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

The second research question focused on the perceived advantages, risks, and ethical issues of using ChatGPT for English homework by first-year EFL students. The descriptive statistics of the questionnaire items are shown in Table 3. The overall mean score for perceived benefits was 3.53 and the highest mean in this scale was recorded for PB2, which is related to improving vocabulary and grammar. For perceived risks, the overall mean was 3.72, with PR3 recording the highest mean (4.03). This item is associated with lower cognitive independence. The mean for ethical perceptions was 3.76. The highest mean in this scale, and in the whole questionnaire, was recorded for

EP3, which states that ChatGPT should be used as a support tool, not as a replacement for students' own work. However, the mean for the plagiarism item was 3.29, and more moderate for disclosure was 3.55.

4.5 Comparison Between ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat

The third research question explored whether the students' perceptions of the use of ChatGPT in homework differed between the students of ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat. An independent-samples t-test was used to answer this question.

Table 4

T-Test Results from Independent Samples Comparing ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat Students' Perceptions of ChatGPT Use in English Homework

Scale	Group	n	M	SD	Levene's p	t	df	p	Cohen's d
Perceived benefits	ENS Djelfa	61	3.54	0.73	.811	0.13	117	.898	0.02
	ENS Laghouat	58	3.52	0.72					
Perceived risks	ENS Djelfa	61	3.81	0.79	.389	1.42	117	.157	0.26
	ENS Laghouat	58	3.62	0.71					
Ethical perceptions	ENS Djelfa	61	3.82	0.76	.620	0.83	117	.409	0.15
	ENS Laghouat	58	3.70	0.77					

Note. $p < .05$ indicates statistical significance. Equal variances were assumed because Levene's test was non-significant for the three scales. Cohen's d values indicate the size of the difference between ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat.

The independent-samples t-test results for differences in ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat students' perceptions of the use of ChatGPT in English homework assignments are shown in Table 4. The results indicated no statistically significant differences between the two groups in perceived benefits, $t(117) = 0.13$, $p = .898$, $d = 0.02$, perceived risks, $t(117) = 1.42$, $p = .157$, $d = 0.26$, or ethical perceptions, $t(117) = 0.83$, $p = .409$, $d = 0.15$. These findings show that ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat students had broadly similar perceptions of ChatGPT use in English homework. The effect sizes were very small for perceived benefits and ethical perceptions and small for perceived risks.

4.6 Qualitative Findings from Open-Ended Questions

Table 5

Summary of Qualitative Themes and Sample Responses

Category	Theme	Sample responses
Benefits	Understanding instructions and lessons	"ChatGPT helps me understand lessons better"; "ChatGPT helps us explain and simplify the homework."
	Grammar, vocabulary, and writing support	"It helps me correct my grammatical mistakes and improve my writing"; "learning new vocabulary."
	Idea generation and organization	"It helps me generate ideas and organize my thoughts"; "a clear plan to work on your homework."
	Time saving	"It saves time"; "complete assignments faster."
	Availability and immediate feedback	"It is available 24/7"; "provides instant feedback on grammar and vocabulary."
Risks	Inaccurate information	"Sometimes it gave me wrong information"; "ChatGPT can sometimes make mistakes."
	Dependence and overreliance	"Over dependency on ChatGPT"; "I started to rely on it too much."
	Reduced thinking and learning	"It can reduce my ability to think independently"; "reduce the ability of critical thinking."
	Copying without understanding	"Some students copy answers without understanding"; "copy answers without understanding."
	Privacy, bias, and misunderstanding	"Privacy"; "algorithmic bias"; "it gives words out of context."
Responsible use	Support tool, not replacement	"ChatGPT should be used as a support tool, not a replacement for learning."
	Try first, then check or improve	"Students should try to do the work themselves first, then use it to check or improve."
	Avoid copying and understand answers	"Focus on understanding, not just copying."
	Verify information	"Always check information"; "review the AI's suggestions."
	Use for practice and correction	"Use it to practice vocabulary, grammar, and writing"; "correcting grammatical and spelling mistakes."

Note. The themes were derived from students' responses to the three open-ended questions.

The three open-ended questions were analysed thematically in order to support the quantitative findings.

Table 5 presents the responses to the open-ended questions which were divided into three main categories: perceived benefits, perceived risks, and responsible use. The themes that are linked to the benefits were understanding instructions, grammar, vocabulary and writing support, idea generation, time saving, and immediate feedback. The risk themes were inaccurate information, dependence, reduced thinking, copying without understanding, and privacy and bias concerns. At last, the use of ChatGPT as a

support tool, trying first before using the tool, avoiding copying, checking information and using ChatGPT for practice and correction were all considered practices of responsible use according to participants.

5. Discussion

The results of this research demonstrate that ChatGPT now plays an important role in how many first-year EFL students at ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat carry out their English homework. Many of the participants indicated that they use it sometimes, or often, and none of them indicated "never". Therefore, ChatGPT is no longer foreign to these students; instead, it has taken its place as a tool they use to do homework, especially when they are trying to find ideas for what to write, have trouble translating something into English, are unsure about vocabulary usage, or need help with grammar. A large number of the student's responses indicated that vocabulary learning was the most common use of ChatGPT, followed by translation and writing, suggesting that students are primarily using this tool because they need some assistance with language. In the same vein, many of the open-ended responses indicate that students have used ChatGPT to learn new words, to get their grammar corrected, to translate difficult expressions into easier ones, to clarify what their teacher wants them to do for their homework and to organize their thoughts. These uses of ChatGPT support the research findings of Kohnke, Moorhouse and Zou (2023) that states that ChatGPT has several potential roles in supporting language learning including providing students with feedback, explaining concepts or processes, and giving them opportunities to practice. Therefore, it appears that students view this AI tool as an additional source of support outside of class when their teacher is generally unavailable.

The data concerning perceived advantages of ChatGPT indicate that students' responses were generally favourable at a moderate level. Improving vocabulary and grammar skills had the highest mean, followed by idea generation and assignment completion efficiently. This shows that students value ChatGPT mainly for its practical help. They don't just use it as a quick source of answers, they use it as a tool they can use to understand, fix, and improve their answers. The outcome aligns with the study by Polakova and Ivenz (2024) that revealed that ChatGPT feedback can enhance various aspects of EFL writing, including grammar and conciseness. It also aligns with Teng (2024), who noted that EFL learners found ChatGPT useful in the writing process. The open-ended responses provided by the students in the present study supported the quantitative findings since many participants mentioned that ChatGPT assists them with correcting errors, enhancing their writing, structuring their ideas, and saving time.

According to the results of the study, students are aware of the risks associated with using ChatGPT. The items of reducing independent cognitive engagement and

dependence had the highest means in the perceived risks section. This implies that students understand that intensive use of ChatGPT may reduce their own thinking and engagement with their work, or more dangerously they may just copy and paste from the tool without any cognitive effort. The results are consistent with Oflaz (2025) who reported that the EFL teachers were worried about the loss of authenticity in learning, the decrease of critical thinking, and mismatch between the tasks set in homework and those completed in class. In open-ended answers, they clearly stated their concerns about laziness, overdependence, decreased thinking, and writing difficulties without the help of AI.

Students reported another important risk, namely incorrect information. The quantitative results supported by qualitative results revealed that ChatGPT may give wrong information, fabricated sources, and hallucinations. This means that students are not fully convinced of the accuracy of the AI-generated answers. Moreover, the lowest mean in perceived risks was for unnatural or contextually inappropriate English. This does not necessarily mean that students viewed the issue as less important. However, they might have limited awareness of the challenges related to language or they find it difficult to identify subtle linguistic or contextual inaccuracies.

Moving to the ethical part, the item with the highest mean score across all respondents was the use of ChatGPT as a support tool for students, not a substitute for their own work, indicating a general acceptance of its responsible use. Many students stated that ChatGPT should be used to check the work after they tried to do the task by themselves, to explain something they don't understand, to improve their answer, and to practise English, but not to copy answers. At the same time, the moderate mean for plagiarism and disclosure indicates a difference between supporting a broad ethical principle and its application to specific practices. Students could say that ChatGPT should not be used to replace their personal effort when doing homework, but they are not sure whether grammar correction, word suggestions, idea generation, or undisclosed AI use constitute cheating. This gap provides a more specific insight into the existing research. Previous studies often has revealed that students and teachers have identified both the potential advantages and disadvantages of ChatGPT. As the present study demonstrates, being informed about responsible uses does not guarantee clear academic-integrity judgments. In ENS institutions, this is especially critical as the participants are future teachers and could potentially be expected to clarify acceptable uses for AI, evaluate AI-supported homework assignments, and exemplify disclosure strategies for their own students.

No statistically significant differences were observed between the ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat for perceived benefits, perceived risks and ethical perceptions. The effect sizes were also small or very small. Thus, there is no clear statistical evidence of

any differences between institutions within the sample being analyzed. This means that the concerns related to ChatGPT use, particularly for homework, might not exist in a single institution, but seems to be a common problem for first-year EFL students in EFL teacher-training institutions. However, without further evidence, it would be speculative to say that the wider population holds identical views due to common culture, experience or exposure to technology.

By and large, the contribution of this study is thus not only that Algerian students recognized benefits and risks that have been mentioned in other studies internationally. It demonstrates that the general concept of responsible AI support was supported by future teachers in both of the ENS institutions in Algeria, whereas they did not have a clear view on the academic-integrity practices required to implement the principle. This result has implications to training on AI use. Institutions should not limit this training to technical instructions on using ChatGPT. Instead, evaluating generated content, knowing the difference between assistance and substitution, what constitutes plagiarism and authorship, when to disclose the work, and taking responsibility for submitted work, should all be covered within the scope of AI literacy.

The findings suggest that homework assessment should focus on the steps students follow, not just the final product. Teachers can ask for outlines, drafts, short statements on how AI was applied, oral follow-up questions or tasks for the classroom. These practices do not prevent external help at home, but may help make students' thinking and learning more transparent and less dependent on the final product being the only measure of achievement.

6. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the perceptions of first-year EFL students regarding the use of ChatGPT in English homework tasks at the ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat. Generally, the findings suggest that ChatGPT has become a familiar tool for students in doing their homework, especially for vocabulary learning, translation, writing assistance, grammar checking, and idea generation. The students' responses indicate that they view ChatGPT as a beneficial tool that supports homework completion, enhances time efficiency, and provides perceived language support. At the same time, students' responses about potential dangers such as overreliance, dependency, limited independent thinking, and misinformation suggest that they recognize the potential negative impacts of using ChatGPT without any supervision or guidance. In addition, students' ethical awareness is relatively high, since the majority agreed that ChatGPT should help them rather than replace their effort in completing assignments. Despite being moderately positive, their responses on the topics of plagiarism and disclosure suggest that the responsible use of AI is generally understood,

but students remain uncertain about how it should be used in certain homework situations. Another important finding is that there were no statistically significant differences between students at ENS Djelfa and ENS Laghouat in terms of their perceived benefits, perceived risks and ethical perceptions of ChatGPT use. This finding shows a convergence of views among students from both institutions. By examining the use of ChatGPT for homework in the context of EFL education in Algeria, the study seeks to add to the current debate concerning the use of generative AI in EFL education, specifically for homework which is still relatively under-researched in the Algerian context. The results indicate that teacher training institutions need to set clear rules for the use of ChatGPT in homework assignments. These rules should include what forms of help are acceptable, what forms are not, when students are required to let others know if they use AI, and the rules for being responsible for the accuracy and originality of the work they submit. Like any study, this research has several limitations. It was limited to first-year students from two ENS institutions and relied on questionnaire data. The sample was mostly female, and none of the participants reported that they had never used ChatGPT. In addition, the open-ended responses were brief and did not provide the depth that could be obtained through interviews or focus groups. Future research could include a larger number of students and teachers from other ENS institutions and universities to enhance the generalisability of the findings. It could also compare teachers' and students' perceptions of ChatGPT use and explore how ChatGPT is used in practice through interviews and the analysis of students' homework. There is also a need to focus on how students differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable uses of AI, especially regarding disclosure procedures and their actual homework practices.

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8. Appendix(ces)

Appendix I

A Questionnaire for Students

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire aims to explore the perceptions of EFL students towards the use of ChatGPT for homework. Data gathered will be used for academic research purposes only. Your answers will be confidential and anonymous.

Section A: Background Information

1. Gender:

☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Which institution do you belong to?

☐ ENS Djelfa

☐ ENS Laghouat

3. How would you rate your English level?

☐ Basic ☐ Intermediate ☐ Advanced

4. How often do you use ChatGPT for English homework?

☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Very often

5. For which types of English homework do you mainly use ChatGPT? (You may select more than one). If you answered "Never" in Question 4, please skip this question.

☐ Writing tasks

☐ Grammar exercises

☐ Vocabulary learning

☐ Reading comprehension tasks

☐ Idea generation for speaking tasks

☐ Translation tasks

☐ Other: _____

Section B: Perceived benefits

Using ChatGPT for English homework can…

Code	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
PB1.	help me understand the requirements of the assignment more easily.					
PB2.	improve my vocabulary and grammar.					
PB3.	help me generate ideas for English writing or speaking tasks.					
PB4.	help me complete assignments more efficiently.					
PB5.	enhance my understanding of how to start and organize English homework tasks.					

Section C: Perceived Risks

My perceptions of the risks or limitations of using ChatGPT for homework are reflected in the following:

Code	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
PR1.	ChatGPT sometimes provides inaccurate information.					
PR2.	ChatGPT may provide unnatural or contextually inappropriate English.					
PR3.	Frequent use of ChatGPT may reduce students' independent cognitive engagement (own thinking)					
PR4.	Overuse of ChatGPT may make students dependent on it instead of developing their language skills.					
PR5.	The use of ChatGPT may hinder long-term English language development					

Section D: Ethical Perceptions and Responsible Use

My views about ethical use of ChatGPT in homework are reflected in the following statements.

Code	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
EP1.	Using ChatGPT for homework may encourage plagiarism.					
EP2.	Some students may submit ChatGPT-generated answers without fully understanding them.					
EP3.	ChatGPT should be used as a support tool, not as a replacement for students' own work.					
EP4.	Students should use ChatGPT responsibly in English homework.					
EP5.	Students should disclose when they use ChatGPT in completing assignments.					

Section E: Open-ended reflection

1- What do you consider the main benefits of using ChatGPT for English homework?

……
……..…
……

2- What challenges or risks have you experienced or observed?

……
……..…
……

3- In your opinion, how should ChatGPT be used responsibly in English learning?

……
……..…
……

Thank you for your cooperation.