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THE USE OF AI IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ACADEMIC LIFE

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Abstract. The aim of this research is to identify how students are using AI in their study process and to examine how much this technology actually helps them in gaining knowledge. Using a quantitative survey of 10 students from the English Language Department at Fergana State University, the study explores the balance between AI assistance and independent critical thinking. The findings reveal that while 70% of students rely heavily on AI for daily assignments, they do not use these tools blindly; instead, they primarily use them as supportive assistants to check for mistakes and improve grammar. The research concludes that students maintain critical oversight by double-checking AI outputs, suggesting that AI can be a partner in learning rather than a replacement for cognitive development.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, technology, study process, gaining knowledge, chat GPT, quantitative method, critical thinking, double-checking.

Introduction. Today, technology has become an inseparable part of our daily life. Especially for universities, Artificial intelligence (AI) – such as Chat GPT and other smart tools – has become a top assistant for studying. In the past, students spent hours searching for information, but now, with the help of AI, the necessary answers can be found in just a few seconds. However, using these technologies has both good and bad sides. On the one hand, AI helps us understand complex topics and saves a lot of time. On the other hand, students might get used to ready-made answers and stop thinking critically for themselves. Therefore, learning how to use AI correctly is a very important topic today. The main aim of this research is to identify how university students use AI in their studies and to examine how these tools affect their learning. To achieve this, the study has two objectives: first, to categorize the specific AI tools students use—such as those for summarizing text, solving problems, and drafting essays; and second, to evaluate the relationship between relying on AI and the development of independent critical thinking skills among students.

Recent research explores how Artificial Intelligence is transforming the educational landscape for both teachers and students. Firstly, (Gocen and Aydemir 2020) discuss how AI is redefining the role of educators in modern schools. According to their research, AI can handle repetitive administrative tasks, such as grading and attendance, which allows teachers to focus more on students' emotional and social needs. They argue that teachers will not be replaced, but will instead become 'learning mentors'. However, the authors also emphasize the importance of maintaining human connection to prevent students from feeling isolated in digital environments.

In addition to the teacher's role, (Klimova and Pikhart 2025) investigate the psychological impact of AI on student well-being in higher education. Their findings suggest that AI provides valuable 24/7 tutoring support, which can significantly reduce academic stress. On the other hand, the researches identify new challenges such as

“techno stress” and digital fatigue. They argue that over-reliance on AI might lead to social isolation and decreased human interaction.

Similarly, (Vieriu and Petrea 2025) focus on the academic side of this technology. They show that AI-driven platforms help university students process information faster and improve their research skills. However, whereas AI increases efficiency, the authors express serious concerns about academic integrity and critical thinking. They believe that if students become too dependent on automated solutions, their ability to think independently might decrease. Ultimately, they recommend using AI as a supportive assistant that enhances, rather than replaces, a student’s own cognitive development.

Methods. This study took place at Fergana State University and involved 10 students from the English Language Department. The participants were young adults between 18 and 22 years old, as this age group uses smartphones and AI tools most often for their daily academic work. Students were found in common areas like the university library and cafeteria, but the survey was shared digitally through Telegram and student email groups to make it easy to complete on a phone or laptop.

The survey was a quantitative online survey that took about 5 minutes to finish. To make sure students felt safe and gave honest answers without fear of any punishment, the process was completely anonymous. No names or ID numbers were collected. Participation was voluntary, and the questions were closed-ended, using "Yes/No," multiple-choice, and a 1 to 5 rating scale to see how much students really rely on AI for their homework.

Results. The survey conducted among 10 students at Fergana State University revealed two distinct patterns of AI usage. Usage and Dependency: 70% of the participants (7 students) use AI most of the time for their university studies. These students primarily access AI tools via their smartphones. Academic Impact: These 7 students believe that their academic grades would drop if they were banned from using AI tools today. On the dependency scale, they rated their reliance as a 4 (Often). Trust and Accuracy: Interestingly, even the frequent users do not trust AI 100%. They use AI mostly in the middle or end of their work to check for mistakes or refine sentences. They always double-check the information provided by the technology.

Non-Users/Skeptics: 30% of the students (3 students) rarely use AI because they believe the technology makes too many mistakes. However, they occasionally use it for specific tasks like grammar correction or essay checking. On the dependency scale, they rated their reliance as a 3 (Sometimes).

Discussion. The findings of this study demonstrate a high level of artificial intelligence integration among English department students and reveal the growing influence of AI tools on academic performance and learning habits. The fact that 7 out of 10 students believe their grades depend on AI supports the concerns raised by Vieriu and Petrea (2025) regarding the development of academic dependency. This suggests that AI technologies are becoming deeply embedded in students’ educational experiences, particularly in tasks such as writing, grammar correction, idea generation, translation, and research support. Such dependence may gradually reduce students’ confidence in their own abilities and weaken independent learning skills if AI is overused without proper guidance.



At the same time, the results indicate that students are not using AI completely passively or irresponsibly. Most participants reported that they mainly use AI as a supportive assistant to improve and review their work rather than relying on it to create complete assignments from the beginning. Students often use AI to check grammar, organize ideas, expand vocabulary, and receive feedback on their writing. This finding aligns with the perspective of Gocen and Aydemir (2020), who argue that technology should function as a facilitator and helper within the learning process instead of replacing human thinking and creativity.

Furthermore, the lack of complete trust in AI among both groups demonstrates that students still recognize the limitations of artificial intelligence. Many students understand that AI-generated information may sometimes contain inaccuracies, unclear explanations, or ideas lacking originality. As a result, they continue to evaluate and compare AI responses with their own knowledge, classroom materials, and teacher feedback. This reflects the importance of maintaining critical thinking skills, as emphasized by Vieriu and Petrea (2025). Students appear to be balancing the convenience of AI tools with their awareness that genuine learning requires personal understanding, analysis, and active engagement. In addition, the findings suggest that AI has both positive and negative implications for language learning. On the positive side, AI tools increase accessibility to information, save time, reduce anxiety during writing tasks, and provide immediate feedback, which can improve students' motivation and confidence. However, excessive reliance on AI may limit creativity, reduce problem-solving ability, and encourage surface-level learning if students become too dependent on automated assistance. Therefore, educational institutions should focus on teaching students how to use AI ethically, critically, and effectively.

Overall, the study highlights that AI has become an important educational resource for English department students. While concerns about dependency are valid, students are still attempting to use AI in a balanced way that supports rather than completely replaces their own learning efforts. The results emphasize the need for educators to guide students in developing responsible AI usage habits while continuing to strengthen independent thinking, creativity, and academic integrity.

Conclusion. In conclusion, this research examined how university students use AI in their studies and its impact on their learning process. The findings show that while AI tools like Chat GPT have become a "top assistant" for studying, there is a clear trend toward high dependency, with 70% of students relying on technology for their daily homework. However, the study also discovered that students do not use these tools blindly; they primarily use AI in the middle or at the end of their assignments to check for mistakes or improve grammar.

While researchers like (Vieriu and Petrea 2025) warn about the loss of independent thinking, the students in the English Language Department at Fergana State University maintain a level of critical oversight by double-checking AI outputs. Ultimately, AI is serving as a supportive assistant that help students process complex information faster. To protect the mental health and academic integrity of the community, universities should continue to implement AI mindfully. Technology is helpful but must be used carefully. I believe that students should not be afraid of AI, but they must learn to use it

as a partner, not a master. For future studies, it would be interesting to ask teachers what they think about students using Chat GPT in class.

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