

THE ANALYSIS OF USING CHATGPT IN ENGLISH WRITING ACTIVITY : STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS

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Abstrak

Perkembangan pesat *Artificial Intelligence (AI)* berpengaruh besar pada pendidikan, khususnya keterampilan menulis bahasa Inggris. *ChatGPT* sebagai aplikasi *AI* populer membantu mahasiswa menghasilkan ide, mengorganisasi teks, memperbaiki tata bahasa, dan memberi umpan balik. Meski demikian, penggunaannya menimbulkan kekhawatiran terkait ketergantungan, risiko plagiarisme, dan penurunan berpikir kritis. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis persepsi mahasiswa terhadap penggunaan *ChatGPT* dalam menulis bahasa Inggris, mencakup manfaat dan tantangan yang dihadapi. Metode penelitian menggunakan desain deskriptif kualitatif dengan analisis tematik. Subjek penelitian adalah 13 mahasiswa semester enam Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Muhammadiyah Muara Bungo, dipilih melalui purposive sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan pedoman berdasarkan *Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (Mayer)* dan *Writing Process Theory (Flower & Hayes)*. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan *NVivo 12*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan mayoritas mahasiswa memiliki persepsi positif, karena *ChatGPT* membantu menghasilkan ide, memperkaya kosakata, memperbaiki struktur, serta meningkatkan motivasi dan kepercayaan diri. Namun, terdapat pula persepsi negatif berupa ketergantungan, berkurangnya berpikir kritis, risiko plagiarisme, dan ketidakakuratan jawaban. Secara umum, *ChatGPT* dinilai bermanfaat, tetapi penggunaannya harus hati-hati agar tidak menggantikan kemandirian dan kreativitas mahasiswa.

Kata Kunci : ChatGPT, Persepsi, Menulis Bahasa Inggris

Abstract

The rapid growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has greatly influenced education, especially in English writing. ChatGPT, as a widely used AI tool, assists students in generating ideas, organizing texts, correcting grammar, and providing feedback. However, its use also raises concerns about dependence, plagiarism, and reduced critical thinking. This study aims to explore students' perceptions of using ChatGPT in English writing, focusing on both benefits and challenges. A qualitative

descriptive design with thematic analysis was applied. The participants were 13 sixth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Muara Bungo, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews using a protocol based on Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning and Flower & Hayes' Writing Process Theory. Data analysis was conducted with NVivo 12. Findings revealed that most students expressed positive perceptions, noting that ChatGPT supported idea generation, enriched vocabulary, improved organization, and enhanced motivation and confidence. Meanwhile, some students raised negative perceptions, including overreliance on AI, decreased critical thinking, plagiarism risks, and occasional inaccuracies. Overall, ChatGPT was perceived as a helpful tool in the writing process, but its use requires caution to ensure it complements rather than replaces students' independence and creativity.

Keywords : *ChatGPT, Perceptions, English Writing*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has transformed nearly every aspect of modern life, from communication to healthcare, business, and especially education. In higher education, technology is no longer a supplementary tool but an integral part of the learning process. Students and educators increasingly rely on digital platforms, online resources, and interactive applications to support teaching and learning. According to Holmes, et al (2019), stated that among the emerging innovations, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become one of the most influential technologies due to its ability to simulate human-like reasoning, generate content, and provide adaptive support. Its integration into language learning, particularly in the development of writing skills, has sparked both enthusiasm and debate.

Writing in English as a foreign language (EFL) is widely acknowledged as a demanding skill for learners (Brown, 2015). Unlike listening or speaking, writing requires not only the mastery of vocabulary and grammar but also the ability to generate, organize, and refine ideas into coherent texts. For many students, this process can be overwhelming, especially when faced with limited vocabulary, weak grammatical control, and a lack of confidence. Consequently, EFL writing has been identified as one of the most challenging aspects of language learning. The availability of AI-based writing assistants such as ChatGPT has provided a promising avenue to support learners in overcoming these obstacles.

ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI, is a conversational AI tool designed to interact with users in natural language (Hongxia & Razali, 2025). Its unique

capability lies in generating human-like responses based on prompts, enabling students to use it as a brainstorming partner, grammar corrector, and idea generator. For instance, students who struggle with organizing their essays may rely on ChatGPT to create outlines or suggest paragraph structures. Similarly, those who find it difficult to vary their vocabulary can use ChatGPT to receive alternative word choices and synonyms. These practical functions make ChatGPT an attractive option for students seeking immediate assistance during the writing process (Nguyen, 2024).

Despite its benefits, the use of ChatGPT in academic settings has generated controversy. Scholars and educators have raised concerns that students might become overly dependent on AI-generated suggestions, leading to reduced critical thinking and creativity. According to Gerlich (2025), there is also the risk of plagiarism, as students may submit AI-produced texts without adequate modification or citation. Furthermore, ChatGPT's outputs are not always accurate or contextually appropriate, which may cause students to unknowingly incorporate misleading information into their assignments. These challenges highlight the importance of balancing the advantages of ChatGPT with the risks associated

with its misuse (Budiyono et al, 2024).

Several studies have demonstrated the positive influence of ChatGPT in writing contexts. For instance, Yunarzat (2024) found that ChatGPT increased students' motivation in writing tasks, while Sonyati (2024) highlighted its usefulness in thesis completion among undergraduates. Similar findings were reported by Apriani et al. (2024), who noted improvements in self-regulation and writing quality among students. These findings suggest that ChatGPT is perceived as a supportive learning partner that can facilitate writing tasks more efficiently.

On the other hand, several studies have also documented the limitations and risks of ChatGPT in academic contexts. Pitts et al. (2025) discovered that students who relied heavily on ChatGPT often demonstrated weaker problem-solving skills and lacked originality in their written work. Likewise, Ju (2023) revealed that students who fully depended on AI assistance in reading-writing tasks showed a decline of 25.1% in task accuracy compared to those who engaged in independent writing. These findings reinforce the notion that while ChatGPT can provide valuable support, it should not replace students' own cognitive engagement in the writing process.

In Indonesia, the integration of ChatGPT into higher education has become increasingly visible. At Universitas Muhammadiyah Muara Bungo, preliminary observations revealed that many students frequently use ChatGPT for their writing assignments. While some admitted that the tool helped them complete tasks more efficiently, others expressed concern that they had become too dependent on it. Such findings reflect a broader trend among university students who navigate between maximizing the benefits of AI and avoiding its potential drawbacks.

Understanding students' perceptions of ChatGPT is crucial because perception shapes behavior. If students perceive ChatGPT as a reliable and helpful learning partner, they may integrate it constructively into their writing practice. Conversely, if they perceive it as a shortcut to complete assignments without effort, it may hinder their long-term academic development. Therefore, exploring perceptions provides valuable insights into how students balance technology use with independent learning responsibilities. As Ozan and Azap (2025) argue, perception directly influences the adoption of ChatGPT as a feedback tool in writing.

Perceptions also matter because they reflect students' lived experiences in

interacting with technology. Student perceptions often reflect lived experiences. Some students report that ChatGPT helps them overcome writer's block and enrich their vocabulary, thereby boosting confidence (Merizawati et al., 2024). Positive perceptions might include seeing ChatGPT as a motivating tool that encourages exploration and experimentation with language. Negative perceptions, on the other hand, may stem from experiences of receiving inaccurate or overly generic responses, or from the fear that reliance on AI undermines authenticity. Capturing both perspectives is essential to provide a nuanced understanding of how ChatGPT influences learning outcomes in EFL writing.

Internasional literature further strengthens the argument that ChatGPT can serve as both a facilitator and a disruptor in the writing classroom. Apriani et al. (2024) demonstrated that ChatGPT use enhanced students' writing performance, motivation, and self-regulation strategies. Their study highlighted that AI tools can promote autonomous learning if integrated wisely into classroom instruction. However, such potential benefits must be contextualized within the limitations of AI-generated feedback and the need for teacher mediation.

Yoon et al. (2023) highlighted a critical limitation of ChatGPT, noting that its feedback is often too general, lacking depth and specificity. In some cases, the tool even produced misleading or factually incorrect suggestions, which could negatively affect students' academic writing. These limitations underscore the importance of critical evaluation and verification when using ChatGPT as an academic tool. Without proper guidance, students may fail to distinguish between accurate and inaccurate information, which could compromise the quality of their work.

Given these opportunities and challenges, this study seeks to explore English Education students' perceptions of ChatGPT in writing activities. Unlike earlier studies that primarily focused on performance outcomes, this research emphasizes the subjective experiences of students. By investigating both positive and negative perceptions, the study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of ChatGPT's role in EFL writing instruction.

To achieve this, the study employed a qualitative descriptive design with thematic analysis. Semi-structured interviews allowed students to share their personal experiences, reflections, and concerns about using ChatGPT. A qualitative descriptive design was adopted to capture

authentic perspectives. Semi-structured interviews provided space for students to articulate their positive and negative experiences, which were then analyzed thematically using NVivo 12. This methodological approach has been recommended in prior research on AI use in education (Creswell, 2012). This approach made it possible to capture the complexities of students' perspectives, going beyond surface-level opinions to uncover underlying themes such as confidence, dependency, creativity, and ethical concerns.

In conclusion, the present study addresses an urgent issue in contemporary education: how students perceive the role of AI in developing one of the most critical academic skills—writing. By examining perceptions, the research contributes to a broader discussion on balancing technological innovation with the cultivation of independent thinking. The findings are expected to inform educators, policymakers, and institutions about how to integrate AI tools like ChatGPT into writing pedagogy responsibly, ensuring that they complement rather than replace students' creativity and critical engagement.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design with a thematic

analysis approach. A qualitative design was considered appropriate because the aim of the research was to explore students' perceptions of using ChatGPT in English writing, which required in-depth understanding of subjective experiences rather than numerical measurement (Creswell, 2012). The descriptive approach allowed the researcher to present students' perspectives in detail, while thematic analysis helped in identifying recurring patterns and categories within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The research was conducted at Universitas Muhammadiyah Muara Bungo, specifically in the English Education Study Program. This institution was selected because of its relevance to the study's objectives and accessibility to participants actively engaged in English writing courses. The research took place during the Academic Year 2024/2025, ensuring that the data collected reflected current practices and students' authentic experiences with ChatGPT during their ongoing learning process.

The population of this study consisted of sixth-semester students enrolled in the English Education Study Program at UMMUBA. From this population, a sample of 13 students was selected using purposive sampling. This technique was chosen to ensure that the participants had direct and

relevant experience with the use of ChatGPT in writing activities. As suggested by Sugiyono (2017), purposive sampling is effective in qualitative research when researchers need to focus on participants who can provide rich information to address the research objectives.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed for flexibility in exploring students' perceptions while still maintaining focus on predetermined themes. The main research instrument was an interview protocol developed based on Mayer's *Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning* and Flower & Hayes' *Writing Process Theory*. These frameworks ensured that the questions addressed both cognitive and process-oriented aspects of writing with ChatGPT. Semi-structured interviews are widely recommended in qualitative studies as they provide depth and allow participants to elaborate on their experiences (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis with the aid of NVivo 12 software. The researcher systematically coded, categorized, and identified emerging themes from students' responses. NVivo was chosen because it provides efficient tools for organizing qualitative data and supports rigorous analysis by enabling researchers to track patterns

across interviews (Woolf & Silver, 2018). Six-step framework, the analysis involved familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. This process ensured validity, transparency, and reliability in interpreting the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Findings

The data analysis from semi-structured interviews with 13 sixth-semester English Education students revealed a variety of perceptions regarding the use of ChatGPT in English writing. Using NVivo 12 software, the researcher identified two broad categories: positive perceptions highlighting benefits in the writing process, and negative perceptions emphasizing potential drawbacks. Within these categories, several subthemes emerged, namely idea generation, text organization, vocabulary enrichment, motivation and confidence, overreliance, plagiarism risks, inaccuracies, and reduced critical thinking.

The first major finding concerned idea generation. Ten out of thirteen students reported that ChatGPT was especially useful in helping them begin their writing tasks. They explained that the prompts

provided by ChatGPT gave them inspiration and direction when they struggled with writer's block. One participant stated, *"I often don't know how to start writing, but ChatGPT gives me examples that make it easier to develop my own ideas."*

The second subtheme was text organization. Nine students emphasized that ChatGPT supported them in structuring their essays more coherently. They found the suggested outlines for introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions particularly helpful.

According to their responses, this assistance not only made their writing more systematic but also provided a clearer framework for argument development. Vocabulary enrichment emerged as another strong positive perception. Eight students highlighted that ChatGPT offered alternative word choices, synonyms, and sentence variations that they would not normally consider. They felt that this feature improved the quality of their essays by making the language more varied and sophisticated.

Closely related to these benefits, the theme of motivation and confidence was evident. Seven students mentioned that ChatGPT

reduced their fear of making mistakes and encouraged them to write more frequently. They valued the immediate feedback and grammar corrections, which they felt boosted their self-confidence in writing. One participant described, *“When ChatGPT corrects my grammar, I feel more motivated because I know I’m improving.”*

Despite these positive experiences, some students expressed negative perceptions. The first was **overreliance**. Five students admitted that frequent use of ChatGPT made them depend too heavily on the tool. They sometimes felt less inclined to generate original ideas independently, which they realized could hinder their long-term development as writers.

Another negative theme was plagiarism risk. Four students acknowledged that copying text directly from ChatGPT without proper modification was tempting. They admitted this could jeopardize academic integrity if not carefully paraphrased or cited. As one student noted, *“It’s easy to just copy the sentences, but I know it can be dangerous because it’s not my own words.”*

The theme of inaccuracies was also highlighted. Three participants reported that ChatGPT occasionally produced sentences with minor grammatical errors or suggestions that were contextually irrelevant. This made them cautious and reminded them to verify ChatGPT’s outputs rather than accept them blindly.

Finally, two students discussed reduced critical thinking. They reflected that relying on ChatGPT sometimes discouraged them from questioning ideas or developing independent arguments. One participant admitted, *“I just follow what ChatGPT gives me, and I don’t think too much about whether it’s right or wrong.”* This indicated a risk of diminished analytical engagement.

In conclusion, the findings showed that most students perceived ChatGPT as a supportive and motivating tool that helped with idea generation, text organization, vocabulary, and confidence. However, a smaller but significant group highlighted concerns such as overreliance, plagiarism, inaccuracies, and reduced critical thinking. These contrasting

perceptions illustrate both the usefulness and the limitations of ChatGPT in EFL writing, reflecting the complex role of AI in higher education learning contexts.

B. Discussion

The findings indicate that ChatGPT was largely perceived as beneficial in supporting English writing, particularly in idea generation. This aligns with previous studies showing that AI-based tools help students overcome writer's block and improve productivity (Apriani et al., 2024). The ability to generate prompts provided students with starting points, reducing the initial difficulty of composing texts.

The role of ChatGPT in text organization reflects its potential as a scaffolding tool. By offering models of structured essays, ChatGPT enables students to recognize patterns in academic writing. This resonates with Flower and Hayes' Writing Process Theory, which emphasizes planning and organizing as essential components of effective writing (Apriani et al, 2024). Vocabulary enrichment as reported by students also confirms earlier research by Hongxia & Razali (2025), who found that ChatGPT

exposure broadened learners' lexical resources. In the present study, students appreciated the variety of expressions offered, which contributed to greater fluency and sophistication in writing.

Motivation and confidence emerged as significant outcomes. These findings support Yunarzat's (2024) claim that AI integration fosters greater enthusiasm for learning. The immediate feedback and error correction offered by ChatGPT reduced writing anxiety, suggesting that AI can act as an affective support tool in language learning.

However, the negative perceptions also highlight important pedagogical concerns. The theme of overreliance suggests that students may gradually lose the ability to generate and refine ideas independently. This finding echoes George & Wooden (2023), who cautioned that AI-assisted writing could diminish problem-solving and critical reasoning. Plagiarism concerns were consistent with global debates about academic integrity in the era of generative AI. Students' acknowledgment of this risk demonstrates awareness, but it also signals the need for explicit

guidance from educators on ethical AI use. Without such intervention, academic dishonesty may become an unintended consequence of technology adoption.

The issue of inaccurate outputs also requires attention. While students generally benefited from ChatGPT, occasional errors or irrelevant suggestions undermined their trust. This finding is consistent with Yoon et al. (2023), who noted that ChatGPT feedback tends to be generic and sometimes misleading. It underscores the importance of critical evaluation skills when engaging with AI-generated texts.

The reduction in critical thinking, as mentioned by some participants, further illustrates the double-edged nature of AI integration. While ChatGPT can enhance efficiency, it may inadvertently discourage analytical engagement if students rely on it uncritically. This tension highlights the necessity of balancing technological assistance with active cognitive involvement.

Taken together, these results suggest that ChatGPT functions effectively as a supplementary tool but not as a substitute for human creativity and judgment.

Its strengths lie in providing scaffolding, feedback, and linguistic support, while its weaknesses point to the risks of dependency and diminished autonomy.

The uniqueness of this study is that capturing student perceptions within an Indonesian EFL context. Unlike studies focused solely on performance, this research highlights how learners negotiate both benefits and drawbacks of ChatGPT, reflecting the complexity of integrating AI into education.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings emphasize the need for educators to design learning activities that encourage responsible AI use. Teachers can position ChatGPT as a brainstorming partner while requiring students to critically evaluate and refine its outputs. This strategy ensures that AI complements rather than replaces human agency in writing.

In conclusion, the discussion illustrates that while ChatGPT is valued for enhancing idea generation, organization, and vocabulary, its risks cannot be ignored. The challenge for educators and institutions is to integrate AI tools responsibly, fostering a balance between technological support and the

cultivation of independent, critical, and ethical writing practices among students.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that only a small proportion of participants expressed negative perceptions toward the use of ChatGPT in English writing activities. These perceptions were primarily associated with ChatGPT's limitations, such as providing excessive or irrelevant suggestions and a lack of deep contextual understanding. However, the number of students who held such views was relatively minor compared to those who reported positive experiences. Notably, even participants who acknowledged these weaknesses still recognized the advantages of ChatGPT in facilitating their writing process. This suggests that the identified shortcomings did not substantially diminish its overall effectiveness. Therefore, it can be concluded that negative perceptions represent only a minority perspective, while the majority of students consistently regarded ChatGPT as a valuable and effective tool for improving both the quality and efficiency of their writing.

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