



The Use of ChatGPT as an English Learning Tool in an Expository and Analytical Writing Class

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Abstract

This study explores the use of ChatGPT as an English learning tool in an Expository and Analytical Writing class, focusing on students' usage patterns and the challenges they encountered. A qualitative research design was employed, incorporating classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with 12 English Education students selected through stratified random sampling. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Results indicate that students engaged with ChatGPT during all stages of the writing process except publishing, with particular emphasis on revising, editing, and proofreading. They used ChatGPT to request examples tailored to their writing needs and incorporated selected content into their drafts. While ChatGPT provided valuable support in specific areas of writing, students faced difficulties in crafting effective prompts. The findings suggest that ChatGPT can enhance writing development, but its effectiveness relies on students' critical engagement and AI literacy to maintain originality and uphold academic integrity.

Keywords: *ChatGPT, Writing tool, English learning, Academic writing, Expository and Analytical Writing Class.*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a fundamental skill in education that serves as a primary medium for communication, critical thinking, and knowledge expression (Fatimah, 2019). Writing enables individuals to organize ideas clearly, argue persuasively, and share information effectively across diverse fields (Simmons, 2022). In academic contexts, writing is crucial for demonstrating understanding, constructing logical arguments, and contributing to scholarly discourse (Tusting et al., 2019). Strong writing skills also foster independent learning and creativity, providing students with the ability to reflect deeply and articulate complex ideas (Kent & Wanzek, 2016). Thus, mastering writing is essential not only for academic success but also for professional development and lifelong learning.

Despite its importance, writing remains a challenging task for many students, particularly in academic settings. Several factors contribute to these difficulties, including limited vocabulary, insufficient mastery of grammar, lack of organization skills, and anxiety related to performance (Lin & Morrison, 2021). These challenges can result in unclear writing, reduced academic performance, and diminished confidence in their abilities (Maleki, 2025). In the long term, persistent struggles with writing may hinder students' academic progress and limit their opportunities for professional advancement (Prasantham, 2023). Addressing these difficulties is therefore essential to support students' overall writing learning development (Graham et al., 2021). To overcome these writing difficulties, the use of technology has increasingly been explored as a supportive tool in language learning environments.

The use of modern technology helps the teachers to awake joy in teaching and learning activities among their students (Duwila, 2019; Setyowati, 2019; Aldebarant et al., 2023; Astutik, 2023; Senthil & Periakaruppan, 2023; Setyowati, 2024). The use of technology in education opens up new wide opportunities for convenient teaching and learning by reducing students' limitations when studying with technology (Strecker et al., 2018). A previous study from Chauhan (2017) aimed at investigating the effect sizes of technologies in education, revealed the use of technology has a wide impact on the teaching and learning process that is divided into three categories that are highly effective for learning general subjects and science, moderately effective for learning language, mathematics, and science and technology, and poorly effective for learning social studies. With various possibilities of technology that help the teaching and learning process, it is crucial to explore its specific impact on language learning classes.

The use of technology in language learning classes should be objective. In addition, it should also be put to a good use by its wielder. Shadiev and Yang (2020) stated that technology is used to promote learning and teaching, objectives rather than technical means should be the priority. Technology needs good implementation to reach its peak contribution to language learning classes and add reflections to the language learning classes. The use of technology to engage in critical reflection in language learning classes appears when teachers and learners use technology meaningfully (Chun et al., 2016). It was also mentioned by Chun et al., that today's communication technologies provide a means for language learners to become aware of and actively reflect on their own and others' communicative practices. It means that the role of the teachers in using technologies in language learning is critical. Ahmadi (2018) states that teachers should be aware of the usefulness and advantages of technology in improving learners' learning. Ahmadi also states that this means that teachers need support and training to integrate technology into language teaching. Teachers and students also have a huge number of options to choose from among the kinds of technology to help them in language learning classes.

Language learning classes have experienced a significant transformation through the integration of various kinds of technological advancements such as multimedia, online language learning platforms, virtual reality, and artificial

intelligence. First, with multimedia resources like audio and video materials, both teachers and students in creative ways can be involved to integrate diverse video materials into various classroom activities to improve learning outcomes and positive classroom atmosphere for language learning (Bajrami & Ismaili, 2016). Second, online language learning platforms and mobile applications like Duolingo is recommended to be adopted at schools due to the enjoyable learning way offered to students (Bahjet & Ahmed 2016). Third, virtual reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR), as stated by Huang et al., (2021), proved effective in fostering learning, boosting motivation, and eliciting positive progress among students toward utilizing these innovative technologies. Lastly, regarding artificial intelligence (AI), Shrivastava et al., (2023) stated that education offers personalized learning, a major advantage that can contribute to students' outcomes improvement. Shrivastava also found that this approach allows students to learn at their individual pace and in alignment with their unique learning styles. These advancements from the kinds of technologies mentioned collectively contribute to a dynamic and effective language learning environment offering vast opportunities in the language learning process ways.

Among the wide pool of technologies that help in teaching and learning, artificial intelligence (AI) is the focus of this study. Artificial intelligence (AI) in education refers to the use of artificial intelligence technologies, such as machine learning and natural language processing, to enhance the learning experience (Alneyadi et al., 2023). Song et al., (2021) found that chat-based artificial intelligence like ChatGPT and Perplexity is mainly separated into two kinds and those are Data Mining artificial intelligence and Multivariate Analysis. Using artificial intelligence in class has its advantages like personalized learning, one of the most significant advantages of artificial intelligence in education that can lead to better student outcomes, as students can learn at their own pace and in a way that suits their learning style (Shrivastava et al., 2023). However, the challenge with artificial intelligence is the collection and analysis of large amounts of personal data from students, which could pose a risk if it falls into the wrong hands; therefore, it is crucial to handle such information with utmost care and implement robust security measures (Harry, 2023). Building awareness of these advantages and disadvantages of artificial intelligence is essential to put it to good use to improve language learning classes.

Among the various kinds and brands of artificial intelligence, ChatGPT is an artificial intelligence-based tool that helps students generate texts in a very short amount of time, making it easier and more efficient to search for and find summarized information and ideas related to the subject of interest, and improves students' writing (Halaweh, 2023). ChatGPT's importance in language learning is its ability to provide personalized and interactive assistance as it can adjust its responses based on user input and offer tailored recommendations (Biswas, 2023). The potential of ChatGPT to impact language learning in higher education is vast, making it a worthwhile subject of research and exploration (Mukarto, 2023). For teachers, artificial intelligence can automate repetitive tasks such as grading, data analysis, administrative tasks, and freeing up time; and for

students it can help them focus on more meaningful tasks (Harry, 2023). Learners can expedite their writing development as artificial intelligence tools help them identify and rectify grammatical and lexical errors, suggesting alternative sentence structures to enhance the overall writing quality and structure (Zhai et al., 2021). Ali et al., (2023) found out that ChatGPT generally motivates learners to develop reading and writing skills. It was also mentioned by Ali et al., that the respondents had neutral attitudes toward the effect of ChatGPT on developing listening and speaking skills. In coherence, Firat (2023) found that integrating artificial intelligence in education offers numerous opportunities to enhance learning experiences, personalize instruction, and transform the role of educators. Firat also mentioned that however, this shift brings about challenges in assessment, digital literacy, and ethical considerations. This led to one of the ChatGPT problems where artificial intelligence systems can be biased, particularly if they are trained on biased data. This can result in unfair treatment of certain students and perpetuate existing inequalities. Institutions must ensure that their artificial intelligence systems are unbiased and do not perpetuate existing inequalities (Harry, 2023). Unlike reading and listening, writing seems to be the basis of utilizing ChatGPT.

The integration of ChatGPT in teaching writing, especially in Expository and Analytical Writing classes, presents both strengths and drawbacks. One notable strength lies in the model's ability to provide customized feedback on students' progress and offer suggestions for improvement, leading to a more individualized and effective learning experience (Harry, 2023). Students can receive real-time suggestions, corrections, and guidance, promoting iterative improvements in their writing skills with the fact that ChatGPT has access to vast information, making identifying and eliminating errors easier (Parker et al., 2023).

This lead to the implementation of ChatGPT in writing as one of the language skills (Nur, 2017). As digital tools reshape education, ChatGPT offers personalized support in generating, refining, and editing written content (Alafnan et al., 2023). Its ability to provide instant feedback and foster creativity helps students improve writing fluency, overcome writer's block, and engage more interactively in the learning process (Harry, 2023). However, Alafnan et al., (2023) found that the drawback is the students might find it tempting to use ChatGPT to generate assignment submissions, which would neither help them learn nor develop academically and professionally. Imran & Almusharraf (2023) also add that academia should revisit and update students' and teachers' training, policy, and assessment ways in writing courses for academic integrity and originality, like plagiarism issues, AI-generated assignments, online/home-based exams, and auto-correction challenges. Additionally, ChatGPT can proofread and edit students' writing by suggesting corrections for grammar, syntax, and spelling errors (Imran & Almusharraf, 2023). By balancing the benefits and challenges of AI in education, teacher can create a more personalized, efficient, and effective learning experience for all students for writing (Harry, 2023).

Based on the elaboration above, ChatGPT indeed has the potential to be a learning tool in students' Expository and Analytical Writing classes. Previous study have explored ChatGPT's role in enhancing writing skills, particularly for junior highschool EFL learner's descriptive texts. Susanti and Azizan (2025) found that ChatGPT supports idea development, reduces anxiety, and improves grammar and vocabulary, creating a more interactive and engaging learning environment. While their review highlights its benefits for descriptive writing, it also calls for further research, especially involving college students and broader writing genres such as Expository and Analytical Writing.

Building on these gaps, this study aims to investigate how college students utilize ChatGPT as a learning tool in their Expository and Analytical Writing classes. By conducting this research, it is expected to provide new insights into effective learning strategies using ChatGPT and contribute to the development of more innovative writing instruction practices.

METHODS

This research adopted a qualitative approach to explore how students utilized ChatGPT as an English learning tool in an Expository and Analytical Writing class, as well as to examine the challenges they encountered. Qualitative research enables an in-depth understanding of how individuals interpret and respond to specific experiences in natural settings (Nassaji, 2020; Bradway et al., 2017). The subjects of this research were 12 English Education students from a university in Surabaya, selected using a stratified random sampling method to ensure variation in student performance and writing proficiency (Garg, 2016). The students were assigned to use ChatGPT in their writing tasks, with six working on expository texts and six on analytical texts.

Data collection was conducted through two primary techniques: classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. During observation, the researcher employed a checklist, field notes, and a recording device to document students' use of ChatGPT in different writing stages. Observation allowed for authentic, real-time data collection in the classroom environment (Fry et al., 2017). The checklist focused on ChatGPT usage patterns, writing stages, and student responses to writing challenges (Chacón et al., 2019). Descriptive and reflective field notes were taken to capture observable behaviors and researcher insights (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006), while an audio recorder was used to ensure verbal interactions were accurately preserved (Mehl, 2017).

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather more detailed insights into the students' experiences. The interview questions focused on students' knowledge of ChatGPT, how they used it, the challenges they encountered at each writing stage, and the strategies they employed. The interviews were transcribed using the denaturalized method, which emphasizes verbal content over non-verbal cues (Oliver et al., 2005; Davidson, 2009). All instruments were validated through expert judgment prior to data collection.

The analysis of data followed the principles of thematic analysis. The researcher organized the transcripts and observation data, coded recurring elements, grouped them into categories, and interpreted emerging patterns (Bogdan, 2006; Bradway et al., 2017). This analysis was used to draw conclusions aligned with the research objectives, while also ensuring the trustworthiness of findings through triangulation and consistent researcher presence.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study revealed two main findings: (1) how students used ChatGPT as an English learning tool in their Expository and Analytical Writing class, and (2) the challenges they faced while using ChatGPT in developing their writing.

The first finding indicates that students actively utilized ChatGPT across various stages of the writing process: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading. Although ChatGPT was initially restricted to the later stages in the first classroom observation, students demonstrated increased autonomy and strategic prompting when allowed full access in the second session. Most students used ChatGPT for revising and editing, especially to improve grammar, structure, and clarity. In line with Parker et al. (2023), students found ChatGPT useful for overcoming common barriers like grammatical errors and writer's block. However, students also employed the tool critically, often revising the AI's output to maintain their own voice, confirming Biswas's (2023) argument that AI can support personalized learning when used thoughtfully.

Interestingly, students showed metacognitive awareness in assessing when and how to use ChatGPT effectively. For instance, they often re-prompted the AI when results were too vague or generic. This suggests that digital literacy and prompt formulation skills play a vital role in maximizing the educational benefits of AI, as noted by Imran and Almusharraf (2023). The students' adaptive use of ChatGPT points toward a shift in writing pedagogy where AI tools are integrated not as shortcuts but as cognitive partners in learning.

The second finding highlights several challenges students faced in using ChatGPT. These include generating precise prompts, receiving generic or misaligned outputs, and difficulty maintaining coherence and personal voice in the AI-assisted drafts. Students also reported that ChatGPT occasionally offered overly polished or overly formal language that did not reflect their own academic level or intentions. These observations are consistent with findings by Alafnan et al. (2023), who warned that reliance on AI may distance students from authentic learning if not critically monitored. Moreover, the issue of prompt specificity aligns with Asad et al. (2024), who emphasize the importance of teaching students how to interact with AI through clear, detailed input.

The findings further contribute to the theoretical discussion on AI literacy in education. While previous research emphasized the tool's benefits for grammar and style (Zhai et al., 2021), this study extends the conversation by highlighting the importance of student agency in the writing process. The students' strategic and selective use of ChatGPT along with their willingness to

edit and adapt the AI's result suggests that effective AI integration must go linear with instruction in critical thinking and writing ethics.

it shows that, ChatGPT has significant potential to support writing development in higher education, especially in EFL contexts. However, its effectiveness is deeply tied to students' digital competence, writing awareness, and guided classroom integration. This study contributes to a growing body of research that views AI not just as a tool but as a dynamic learning partner – one that must be thoughtfully implemented to preserve academic integrity and foster meaningful learning.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the use of ChatGPT as an English learning tool in Expository and Analytical Writing classes. The findings indicate that students primarily used ChatGPT as an Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the revising, editing, and proofreading stages rather than in pre-writing and drafting, positioning ChatGPT more as a refinement tool than an idea generator. While students benefited from AI-generated feedback to enhance clarity, coherence, and grammatical accuracy, they also faced challenges such as vague responses, AI bias, and inconsistencies.

Despite these challenges, students developed strategies to maximize ChatGPT's effectiveness, such as refining prompts and critically evaluating AI-generated content. Over time, they transitioned from passive users to critical evaluators, emphasizing the importance of structured AI integration into academic writing. This study highlights the potential of ChatGPT as a valuable writing aid when it is used strategically, wisely, and critically.

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