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Comparing AI and Teacher Feedback: Student Insights on Creativity and Critical Thinking

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Abstract: This mixed-method study investigates students' reflections on the strengths and limitations of feedback provided by ChatGPT compared to teacher feedback, particularly in relation to creativity, critical thinking, and content development in writing. The study was conducted in an English vocational school setting involving 40 students and 4 English teachers. Focus groups, in-depth interviews, and questionnaires were used to gather information in order to fully comprehend the opinions and experiences of the students. The analysis focused on how students evaluated the clarity, usefulness, and relevance of the feedback from both sources, as well as its impact on their ability to generate creative ideas, think critically, and improve the content of their writing. The findings suggest that teacher feedback remains essential for addressing students' challenges in vocabulary, grammar, and idea expression by providing clarity, motivation, and personalized guidance. While ChatGPT contributes speed, accessibility, and consistency, it lacks the contextual depth and interpersonal dimension inherent in teacher feedback. Therefore, a hybrid feedback model that integrates human expertise with AI efficiency offers promising potential to optimize students' writing development.

Keywords: Feedback, ChatGPT, Vocational School

INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one of this year's technological trends that can be applied for any reason at all (Fitria, 2023). Artificial Intelligence is an area of technology that is developing rapidly today. Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) is an innovative field of computer science and cognitive science, designed to help humans solve problems intelligently like man-made machines do (Fitria, 2021) The task of artificially intelligent concepts are not just dealing with solemn matters; they could also be used to amuse or assist someone in their life. When we come across the concept of Artificial Intelligence, the first thing that comes to mind is job automation, biased algorithms, and new technologies. At the same time, A.I. can also be applied in many fun and entertaining applications.

What is artificial intelligence? As the name indicates, that artificial intelligence is the creation thanks to technological sophistication of human intelligence. A.I. can assist humans in a lot of things, for that reason it is often called Human Intelligence Implementing Technology. The development of technology has been oriented towards providing technical means for human activities and productivity (Fitria, 2021). Artificial Intelligence is a technology that enables computer systems, software, or robots to emulate human behavior and cognition. Apart from its positive aspects, additionally, artificial intelligence may be detrimental, particularly to human being. A.I. is a computer-created imitation of human intelligence, which (Fitria, 2021) was an idea placed by scientist in the triumph of modern technology over tradition: people speed". Some answer using humans and utilize machines to automatically respond to questions presented by humans (Maitri, 2019).

Artificial intelligence is growing more and more popular on many industrial platforms, and chatbot technology is becoming indispensable (Luo et al., 2019; Wei et al., 2018). It is software that conducts text-based online chat conversations using deep learning approaches and natural language processing (NLP) (Dharani et al., 2020). Communication between a human and a computer has been of interest to numerous researchers for decades (Thorat & Jadhav, 2020). The importance of chatbots that can converse naturally with people has grown. This is owing to the availability of computational means for natural language interaction between computers and humans that are becoming increasingly similar to human interaction (Bozic et al., 2019). As a result, more and more chatbots are being created to help people with decision-making and task organization.. There are various methods for performing human-computer communication. In the era of conversational services, Chatbots are the next big thing in the modern era of technology. (Lalwani et al., 2018) Natural language processing (NLP) and artificial intelligence (A.I.) techniques are used in the development of chatbots, which are intelligent systems.

Chatbots are becoming more and more common as a way to have these kinds of conversations. A computer program that helps and improves this dialogue is called a chatbot. A computer software called a chatterbot, sometimes referred to as a chatbot or bots, is made to balance written and auditory communication between one or more people. (Falah & Syamsidar, 2021; Haristiani, 2019). Chatbots, or artificially intelligent conversational tools, are the newest tools meant to facilitate communication between humans and computers (Nghiet al., 2019). Chatbots are text-based conversational agents in simulating conversations with users (Ashfaq et al., 2020). Besides, Chatbot provides numerous school, university, or college-related and student-specific pieces of information (Patel et al., 2019).

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in educational settings has become increasingly prominent, with tools like ChatGPT emerging as potential game-changers in enhancing student learning outcomes. This research aims to explore the efficacy of using ChatGPT AI in assessing students' writing skills, particularly in the context of an English vocational school. The study seeks to understand how ChatGPT can be utilized to provide timely and meaningful feedback, improve writing motivation, and refine grammar and style. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on combining teacher feedback and AI-generated feedback to examine their complementary strengths, while also investigating how students perceive the emotional and cognitive dimensions of both feedback sources. Unlike most previous studies that concentrate only on accuracy or efficiency, this research highlights the impact of AI on creativity, critical thinking, and reflective learning in the vocational school context.

English vocational schools face the challenge of teaching writing skills to students who may have varying levels of proficiency. Traditional methods of assessing writing often rely on manual grading, which can be time-consuming and subjective. The advent of AI tools like ChatGPT offers a promising solution by providing instant feedback and personalized

suggestions, thereby enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of writing assessments. By situating the study in vocational schools—an underexplored educational setting—this research also provides new insights into how AI can be adapted to contexts where students often prioritize practical skills over academic writing, thus offering a unique contribution to the field of AI in education.

METHOD

This mixed-methods study investigates students' reflections on the strengths and limitations of feedback provided by ChatGPT compared to teacher feedback, particularly in relation to creativity, critical thinking, and content development in writing. By employing a mixed-methods approach, we seek to gain a comprehensive understanding of both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of student perceptions and the impact of AI on their writing evaluation.

Similarly, Saharat (2024) conducted a study that examined the revolutionary possibilities of writing tools with generative AI support, such as ChatGPT, in improving eleventh-grade pupils' creative writing abilities within the Thai educational framework. This research is particularly relevant as it aligns with our exploration of how AI, specifically ChatGPT, can enhance writing skills and foster creativity. The study's two main goals were to: 1) evaluate how generative AI tools affected students' creative writing abilities both before and after they were introduced to them during writing classes; and 2) compare the creative writing abilities of students who used generative AI tools to those who received traditional instruction. Eighty-four eleventh-grade students from a Thai secondary school were chosen for the study using a multi-stage sampling technique, and were then split into two groups: the experimental group, which received generative AI assistance, and the control group, which received traditional instruction. As part of the intervention, ChatGPT was integrated into the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methodology through the use of Generative AI Integrated Lesson Plans. The controlled group was taught using a parallel, conventional method. A 5-point scoring rubric that covered elements such as innovation, development, voice, literary devices, and conventions was used to evaluate creative writing abilities both before and after the intervention. To examine the research hypotheses, the study employed statistical methods such as independent-samples t-tests and paired sample t-tests. The effectiveness of this technological intervention was supported by preliminary studies showing a statistically significant improvement in students' creative writing abilities after being exposed to generative AI tools.

Next research is from Nugroho, A., Andriyanti, E., Widodo, P., and Mutiaraningrum, I. (2024) which aims to explore the way that ChatGPT helped students by offering scaffolding for essay writing. Additionally, it reveals how students feel about using ChatGPT. This study included 12 students learning English as a foreign language who used ChatGPT in academic writing classes, and it was based on data from semi-structured interviews. The results showed that students benefited from using ChatGPT for practical application, idea development, translation, writing accuracy, and writing efficiency. Students' complaints about ChatGPT's generation of false information and the potential for academic dishonesty are also revealed by this investigation. According to this study, even if students utilize ChatGPT to assist them with their essays, they are conscious enough to verify the information to prevent academic dishonesty.

The study from Sri Sarwanti, Yanti Sariasih, Laily Rahmatika, M. Monjurul Islam and Eka Mustika Riantina (2024) examined the use, awareness, preparedness, worries, and perceived advantages and difficulties of ChatGPT in higher education learning among university language students. The study combined semi-structured interviews with online surveys in an explanatory sequential mixed-method design. Purposive sampling was used to select 355 language learners from five private Indonesian higher education institutions. Nine

people were chosen to participate in interviews after completing the closed-ended questionnaire. Both theme and descriptive analysis were used to examine the data. According to the results, most students had been utilizing ChatGPT for educational purposes, particularly when it came to writing projects. The results also show that university language learners were highly aware of, prepared for, and concerned about using ChatGPT for their academic activities. The potential advantages of ChatGPT in terms of writing assistance, individualized instruction, enhanced productivity, idea generation through brainstorming, and extra resources were also recognized by university language students. But they also noted ChatGPT's drawbacks, such as its lack of critical thinking skills, inaccuracy, plagiarism and AI detection, and technological issues. These findings, which give a nuanced picture of how university language learners use and perceive ChatGPT for learning purposes, highlight the need for guidance and support from higher education providers in the appropriate use of AI in academic situations.

And the study from Dian Selasih and Suranto (2024) was conducted to comprehend university-level accounting education students' perspectives on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in accounting instruction. The primary issue is a lack of knowledge regarding the efficient use of AI and how it will affect accountants' roles in the future. This study uses a qualitative approach and a case study methodology. In-depth interviews with nine respondents who are students with backgrounds in accounting were used to gather data. The findings indicate that while the majority of students are aware of artificial intelligence (AI) in accounting, very few truly comprehend its operation. Their opinions differ; some believe AI can be a useful tool for increasing productivity, while others worry that it may eventually take the position of human accountants. These results suggest that in order to fully utilize AI in accounting, students' technology literacy needs to be raised.

Based on the previous studies, many have conducted research using AI tool such as ChatGPT to assess students writing skill and to find out the benefits of chat GPT to help students in writing. However, from researches above, no one has researched the use of ChatGPT to evaluate vocational school students' writing. Moreover, the benefits and challenges obtained by the English teachers that assesses the student's writing of vocational school. While previous study focused on the use of ChatGPT to help students in writing, this study focuses on the case study on English Vocational teacher who use ChatGPT to review students writing, offering deeper insights into the integration and challenges of AI in vocational education and also the students' feedback on the review.

This study investigates the use of ChatGPT AI to determine students' perceptions about the use of GPT chat to evaluate their writing, focusing on students from a vocational school. This study adopts a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the effectiveness of using ChatGPT AI in assessing students' writing at a vocational school. This research methodology outlines the framework for conducting this case study, detailing the research design, participants, data collection methods, analysis, and ethical considerations.

This research methodology outlines a comprehensive approach to exploring the effectiveness of ChatGPT AI in evaluating students' writing at a vocational school. The combination focus group discussion and interviews ensures that both measurable outcomes and subjective experiences are captured. Through careful data analysis and adherence to ethical standards, the research aims to contribute valuable insights into the evolving role of AI in education. By using qualitative methods, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the role of AI in educational assessments, contributing to the broader discourse on technology in education. The research will take place in a specific educational setting, which may not represent all EFL contexts. The duration of the study may limit the depth of data collection and analysis. In this study, there will only be 1 text presented to students to write.

This research methodology outlines a comprehensive approach to exploring the effectiveness of ChatGPT AI in evaluating students' writing at a vocational school. The combination of focus group discussion and interviews ensures that both measurable outcomes and subjective experiences are captured. Through careful data analysis and adherence to ethical standards, the study attempts to provide insightful information on how artificial intelligence is changing in the field of education. By using qualitative methods, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the role of AI in educational assessments, contributing to the broader discourse on technology in education.

The feedback provided by ChatGPT will be thematically analyzed to identify common strengths and weaknesses in students' writings. Thematic analysis will be used to find recurrent themes in interview transcripts regarding teachers' experiences and insights. The focus group recordings / transcripts will be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes regarding students' feedback on their writings.

The data in this study are derived from both quantitative and qualitative sources, depending on the nature of each research question. Quantitative data are collected primarily through questionnaires designed with Likert-scale items and motivation scales. These provide measurable indicators of students' perceptions, emotional responses, and trust toward feedback from ChatGPT and from teachers. Qualitative data are obtained through interviews, open-ended questions, and focus group discussions, allowing students to express their reflections and opinions in greater depth. These data provide insights into students' subjective experiences, interpretations, and critical evaluations of both types of feedback.

In this study, 40 students are interviewed and administered a questionnaire to gather their responses, while also conducting interviews with 4 teachers to complement the data. By combining these sources, the study applies a mixed-methods design, enabling triangulation between numerical data (e.g., perception ratings, correlation analysis) and descriptive data (e.g., reflections, narratives).

Quantitative data will be collected through structured questionnaires, which include Likert-scale items designed to gauge students' perceptions of feedback from ChatGPT and teachers. Qualitative data will be obtained through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, allowing for in-depth exploration of students' experiences."

"Quantitative data will be analyzed using statistical methods to identify correlations between student perceptions and their writing performance. Qualitative data will undergo thematic analysis to uncover common themes in student feedback and teacher insights. Ethical considerations will be addressed by obtaining informed consent from all participants and ensuring the confidentiality of their responses

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The demographic data collected from the participants show that the majority of respondents were 16 years old (32 students), followed by 17 years old (6 students) and 15 years old (2 students). This indicates that most of the participants were in the mid-adolescent age group, which is a critical stage for developing digital literacy and academic writing skills. Regarding prior experience with artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT, 37 students (90.24%) reported that they had used AI tools before participating in the study, while only 3 students (9.76%) indicated that they had never used them. These findings highlight that most students already had exposure to AI applications, suggesting a relatively high level of familiarity with technology among the participants.

Table. 1 Distribution of Participant

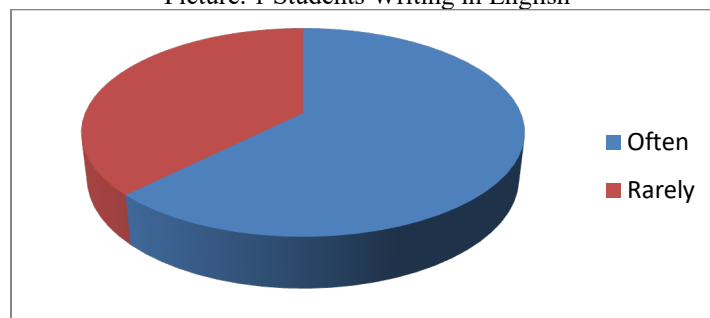
Demographic	Type	Frequent	Percent
Age Distribution	15	2 Students	5 %
	16	32 Students	80%
	17	6 Students	15%
Prior Experience With AI Tools	Used Ai Tools	37	92,5%
	Never use Ai Tools	3	7,5%

Prior experience is a crucial factor in understanding students’ readiness and attitudes toward technology use. According to Venkatesh and Davis (2000), prior experience shapes users’ perceptions of usefulness and ease of use, which are central determinants in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Similarly, Teo (2011) argues that learners with previous exposure to technology are more likely to adopt and respond positively to new digital tools in educational contexts. In this study, the relatively high percentage of students who had prior experience with AI suggests that they may engage more actively and confidently with ChatGPT feedback, which could influence the outcomes of the research.

Students' Frequency and Challenges in English Writing

The data showed that most students write in English occasionally, particularly when there are assignments or writing-based classroom activities. As shown in Figure 4.1, approximately 62.5% of students reported writing “sometimes” or “often,” while 37.5% stated they write “rarely.” The main challenges mentioned included limited vocabulary, sentence structure errors, and difficulty in expressing ideas clearly in English. This aligns with Richards & Renandya (2002), who note that writing is one of the most challenging skills for language learners, requiring the mastery of both linguistic and cognitive skills.

Picture. 1 Students Writing in English



Teacher Feedback: Method and Emotional Responses

Students reported that teachers commonly provide feedback by marking errors, adding comments, or giving oral explanations in class. While a small number were unsure about the feedback process, most confirmed they received it regularly. The emotional response to teacher feedback was largely positive; students expressed happiness, encouragement, and gratitude.

Furthermore, the comparison between students' perceptions of teacher feedback and feedback from ChatGPT reveals both significant similarities and differences. Many students acknowledged that teacher feedback tends to be more personal, detailed, and context-based, as teachers can understand students’ progress, emotions, and individual learning needs. Teacher feedback was often described as easier to understand and interactive, since it allows for direct discussion and clarification. However, some students also mentioned that teacher feedback could be limited by time and availability. This aligns with Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006), who emphasize that effective feedback is dialogic, situated, and supports self-regulated learning.

On the other hand, ChatGPT feedback was perceived as fast, practical, and always available. Several students found ChatGPT feedback more detailed in certain aspects and

appreciated its immediacy. Nonetheless, they also highlighted that ChatGPT lacks the human touch, personal connection, and motivational aspect that teachers provide. This reflects Hattie and Timperley's (2007) argument that while feedback is powerful in enhancing learning, its impact depends heavily on clarity, context, and the learner's needs.

Usefulness of Teacher Feedback and chat gpt feedback

Almost all students acknowledged that teacher feedback helped improve their writing. They valued its clarity, specificity, and the fact that it pointed out precise errors with suggestions for correction. According to Shute (2008), feedback is most effective when it is clear, specific, and timely, allowing learners to take corrective action

The findings from the questionnaire and open-ended responses demonstrate a clear contrast between how students perceive the strengths and weaknesses of teacher feedback and ChatGPT feedback. Overall, the data reveal that students value teacher feedback primarily for its personal, motivational, and experience-based qualities, while ChatGPT feedback is appreciated for its speed, availability, and level of detail, despite being perceived as less personal and emotionally supportive.

Many students consistently emphasized that teacher feedback is personalized, motivating, and grounded in real-life experience. Teachers are able to connect emotionally with students, provide encouragement, and tailor their comments to the learners' individual needs and progress. This aligns with Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006), who stress the importance of feedback as a dialogic process that supports learner self-regulation through personal interaction. Furthermore, students valued the trustworthiness and legitimacy of teacher feedback because it is based on professional knowledge and classroom observation. However, the responses also reveal certain limitations. Teacher feedback is often described as time-consuming, delayed, and sometimes subjective or inconsistent due to workload and classroom constraints. As Hattie and Timperley (2007) note, while teacher feedback can be powerful, it is also limited by practical issues such as time and teacher attention.

Student Interaction with ChatGPT Feedback

In this study, many students reported having used ChatGPT to review their writing. They described the feedback from ChatGPT as "clear," "detailed," and "easy to understand." Students appreciated the examples and explanations provided, which helped clarify mistakes. However, some noted that ChatGPT's feedback could sometimes be vague or too general, especially compared to the more personal and contextual feedback from teachers.

Students also viewed ChatGPT feedback as fast, accessible at any time, and rich in alternatives and explanations. This feedback was often praised for its detailed, practical, and easily understandable nature, allowing students to quickly identify grammatical, lexical, or stylistic errors and make immediate revisions. This reflects Shute's (2008) argument that effective formative feedback should be timely and informative to promote learning.

However, alongside these strengths, students also reported significant weaknesses. The most frequent concerns were that ChatGPT feedback is less personal, lacks emotional encouragement, and may sometimes be too general or inaccurate. Because the system does not know students individually, its feedback cannot always capture personal learning contexts, motivations, or affective needs. In this sense, ChatGPT feedback aligns with what Lee (2017) describes as "technical feedback"—effective for error correction but limited in its ability to foster writer identity and motivation.

Interestingly, several students suggested that the two feedback sources complement each other. Teacher feedback provides emotional support, motivation, and authenticity that AI cannot replicate, while ChatGPT feedback offers speed, objectivity, and consistency that teachers cannot always provide due to time constraints.

When comparing teacher feedback and ChatGPT, students described teacher feedback as more personal and interactive, while ChatGPT was praised for its speed, consistency, and accessibility. These findings align with recent research by Jiang et al. (2024), which reported that AI feedback offers efficiency but may lack the human touch necessary for deep learner engagement.

This study suggests that a hybrid feedback model, combining the depth and personalization of teacher feedback with the speed and availability of AI tools like ChatGPT, has significant potential for improving students' writing skills. This approach is consistent with Setiyowati and Ardaniah (2023), who emphasize that AI-based assessment provides efficiency and consistency, while teacher feedback remains richer and context-aware, making a hybrid system a promising solution to balance reliability and validity in writing assessment.

Moreover, research by Li et al. (2023) supports the notion that AI can complement human instruction in writing tasks by offering immediate, detailed, and example-based corrections, thereby fostering learner autonomy and reflection. Such a model not only addresses the challenges of timely and accurate feedback but also promotes metacognitive growth, encourages active engagement, and provides scalable solutions for varied educational contexts, particularly in resource-limited vocational settings.

Although students showed a positive attitude toward AI feedback, critical thinking skills are more effectively developed through teacher-led questioning and dialogue. ChatGPT, while useful, tends to focus on surface-level corrections rather than promoting deeper reflection on writing choices. Without guidance, students may become overly reliant on AI suggestions or fail to engage critically with teacher comments.

CONCLUSION

This study found that students generally engage in English writing when prompted by assignments, with many facing challenges such as limited vocabulary, grammatical errors, and difficulty expressing ideas clearly. Teacher feedback emerged as an essential support mechanism, valued for its clarity, specificity, and personal relevance. Students reported positive emotional responses to teacher feedback, which encouraged motivation and improvement in their writing skills.

The integration of ChatGPT as an alternative feedback tool revealed both strengths and limitations. Students appreciated its speed, accessibility, and clear explanations, yet some noted a lack of contextual understanding and personalization compared to teacher feedback. This indicates that while AI can enhance feedback delivery, it cannot fully replace the nuanced, interpersonal nature of teacher-student interactions.

The findings highlight the complementary strengths of human and AI-based feedback. Teacher feedback fosters deeper engagement, emotional support, and tailored instruction, while ChatGPT offers rapid, consistent, and on-demand assistance. The combination of these feedback sources presents an opportunity to optimize the writing learning process by blending human expertise with technological efficiency.

This study also emphasizes the need for developing students' metacognitive awareness when interpreting and applying feedback. Regardless of the source—teacher or AI—students require guidance to critically analyze suggestions, make informed revisions, and take greater ownership of their writing improvement.

Suggestions

Based on these findings, it is recommended that educators adopt a hybrid feedback approach that combines the personal, in-depth nature of teacher feedback with the accessibility and immediacy of AI tools like ChatGPT. This combination can provide students with both rich, individualized instruction and quick, supplementary assistance.

Teachers should also design feedback training sessions to equip students with the skills to interpret, evaluate, and apply feedback effectively. Such training can include guided practice, self-assessment activities, and reflective exercises that strengthen students' critical thinking and writing autonomy.

For institutions, investing in digital literacy programs is crucial to ensure students use AI tools ethically, critically, and effectively. These programs should focus on helping students differentiate between AI-generated suggestions and their own creative input, preventing over-reliance on technology.

Finally, future research could examine the long-term consequences of hybrid feedback models on students' writing proficiency, motivation, and critical thinking skills. Comparative studies involving larger and more diverse populations could offer further insights into optimizing the balance between teacher-led and AI-supported feedback in language learning.

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