

PERCEPTION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF CHATGPT AS AN ENGLISH LEARNING ASSISTANT IN THE CONTEXT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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Abstract

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has brought new opportunities to the field of education, especially in language learning. One of the most widely discussed tools is ChatGPT, an AI-based platform capable of generating human-like responses through natural language processing. This study explores how vocational students perceive the use of ChatGPT as a learning companion and examines how effective it is in supporting their English writing skills. Using a descriptive quantitative method, data were collected from 40 students in the Computer Engineering program at Politeknik Unggulan Cipta Mandiri. The results show that most students view ChatGPT as easy to use and helpful, particularly in improving sentence structure, enriching vocabulary, and correcting grammar. While the tool was generally well-received, some students still faced difficulties in crafting prompts that lead to accurate responses. These findings suggest that, with proper guidance and ethical training, ChatGPT can be meaningfully integrated into vocational English learning to enhance student engagement and writing performance.

Keywords: ChatGPT, English Writing, Vocational Education, Artificial Intelligence, Student Perception.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology today has significantly influenced various aspects of life, including the field of education. One notable development is the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which is increasingly being utilized to support teaching and learning processes. Amidst this evolving landscape, English language learning—particularly in writing skills—continues to pose a unique challenge for vocational students. This is not necessarily due to a lack of motivation, but rather because writing in a foreign language demands consistent practice, confidence, and the right form of guidance.

Vocational students are generally more accustomed to practical learning approaches that are directly connected to industry demands. Unfortunately, writing skills in English—such as composing reports, correspondence, or technical documentation—are still often perceived as difficult. These difficulties typically stem from limited vocabulary, struggles with sentence structure, and uncertainty about proper grammar usage.

In response to these needs, the presence of ChatGPT, an AI-powered tool developed by OpenAI, offers a promising new avenue. ChatGPT allows users to engage in text-based interactions and provides quick, relevant, and context-aware responses. For many students, ChatGPT serves as a helpful “learning companion” that supports idea development, grammar checks, or even the rephrasing of unclear sentences.

However, not all students share the same experience. While some feel greatly assisted, others find themselves confused about how to formulate effective questions or prompts. Therefore, it becomes essential to explore students' perceptions of using ChatGPT and to examine whether this tool genuinely contributes to the improvement of their writing skills.

This study aims to explore vocational students' perceptions regarding the use of ChatGPT in English language learning, with a particular focus on writing skills. It also seeks to assess the extent to which this tool can support their learning process. The findings are expected to serve as a valuable consideration for vocational education institutions in designing learning strategies that blend technological tools with more contextual and personalized approaches for students.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a **quantitative descriptive approach** with the aim of objectively capturing students' perceptions and experiences in using ChatGPT as a learning aid, particularly in enhancing their English writing skills. This approach was selected to enable the collection of measurable data from respondents and to analyze trends in perceptions and the perceived effectiveness of ChatGPT use in academic settings.

The **participants** of this study were active students from the Computer Engineering Study Program at *Politeknik Unggulan Cipta Mandiri* who had experience using ChatGPT in their English learning process—either as support for assignments or for independent writing practice. A total of **40 students** were purposefully selected based on the following criteria: (1) they had been familiar with and had used ChatGPT for at least two months, and (2) they had utilized ChatGPT specifically to assist with writing in English.

The **main instrument** used was a **closed-ended questionnaire** based on a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire consisted of two main sections:

- The **first section** focused on students' perceptions, based on two core indicators from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM): *perceived usefulness* (how beneficial ChatGPT was perceived to be) and *perceived ease of use* (how easy it was to use ChatGPT).
- The **second section** measured the perceived **effectiveness** of using ChatGPT to support writing skills. This was assessed through indicators such as ease in structuring sentences, vocabulary improvement, grammar correction, and increased writing fluency.

To ensure the **validity and reliability** of the instrument, the questionnaire underwent a content validation process by two expert lecturers (in English education and educational technology). A limited pilot test was also conducted involving 10 students who were not part of the main respondent group. This step was carried out to ensure clarity and readability of the questions.

The data were analyzed using **descriptive statistical methods**, focusing on mean scores, percentages, and response distributions for each item. The resulting patterns were

then **interpreted qualitatively**, allowing the findings to be meaningfully contextualized, particularly in light of the current learning characteristics and challenges faced by vocational students.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to understand vocational students' perceptions of using ChatGPT and assess its effectiveness in supporting English writing skills. After distributing questionnaires to 40 students from the Computer Engineering Program, various findings emerged that reflect how students interpret ChatGPT's role in their learning activities.

1. Students' Perceptions of Using ChatGPT

In general, students expressed strong enthusiasm and a positive acceptance toward the use of ChatGPT. Their feedback highlights the platform's perceived usefulness and ease of use—two main indicators in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Below is a summary of student perceptions based on these two core indicators:

Tabel 1. Summary of Student Perceptions Toward ChatGPT

No	Statement	Percentage Agreeing (%)
1	ChatGPT is easy to use for learning	85%
2	ChatGPT helps me understand writing structure	82%
3	I feel more confident when writing after using ChatGPT	72%
4	I feel comfortable using ChatGPT as a learning companion	80%
5	I find it difficult to create effective prompts	35%

The data in Table 1 shows a predominantly positive response from students regarding their experience using ChatGPT. A significant majority (85%) agreed that ChatGPT is easy to use, while 82% reported that it helped them understand the structure of writing better. Furthermore, 72% of students stated that they felt more confident in writing after using the tool. Interestingly, although 80% felt comfortable using ChatGPT as a learning partner, a smaller portion (35%) still faced challenges in creating effective prompts—highlighting an area for future guidance or training.

These findings reflect that the majority of students experience ease and comfort when using ChatGPT. One student shared:

"I'm no longer afraid to write in English. I used to get confused about how to start, but with ChatGPT, I can ask questions or request example sentences. That really helps." (Respondent 12, 4th-semester student)

Beyond the technical ease, students also strongly perceived the usefulness of ChatGPT. They felt that the technology helped them become more confident and independent in completing writing assignments.

This aligns with Davis (1989), who emphasized that *perceived ease of use* and *perceived usefulness* are key foundations in technology acceptance. Similarly, Shahzad et

al. (2024) found that students are more open to using AI when they feel it delivers tangible and directly beneficial results.

2. The Effectiveness of ChatGPT in Enhancing Writing Skills

In addition to the positive perceptions, ChatGPT is also considered quite effective in helping students improve their English writing skills. The table below summarizes their responses based on key effectiveness indicators:

Tabel 2. The Effectiveness of ChatGPT in Enhancing Writing Skills

No	Effectiveness Indicator	Agree (%)
1	Helps in constructing sentence structures	82%
2	Assists in correcting grammar	70%
3	Enriches vocabulary	76%
4	Speeds up the writing process	68%
5	Serves as a reference for independent writing practice	79%

These results suggest that ChatGPT plays a supportive role in various aspects of writing. From helping students build correct sentence structures to enhancing their vocabulary and improving their writing fluency, the tool is perceived as a practical companion. Most importantly, it encourages learners to practice writing more independently and confidently.

Several students even expressed that ChatGPT helped them write more fluently and confidently. One particularly insightful comment came from a sixth-semester student:

“I used to rely on Google Translate, dictionaries, and browsing for examples online. But now I just ask ChatGPT, study the structure, and modify it to fit my own style.” (Respondent 27)

This finding aligns with Shaikh et al. (2023), who noted that AI-assisted writing tools can accelerate the thinking process and help students recognize their own mistakes in real-time. Moreover, in the context of vocational education, the ability to learn independently and efficiently is highly relevant to workplace demands.

However, some challenges still persist. Around 35% of students admitted they struggled with crafting effective prompts to get more relevant responses from ChatGPT. This highlights a gap in digital literacy, particularly in terms of communicating effectively with AI tools.

According to Mutammimah et al. (2024), the effectiveness of AI in education heavily relies on proper guidance from instructors and training for students to use the technology in an ethical and productive manner. Therefore, integrating ChatGPT into the learning process should not be done without adequate support and supervision.

3. Visualisation of Results (Descriptive Graph Illustrations)

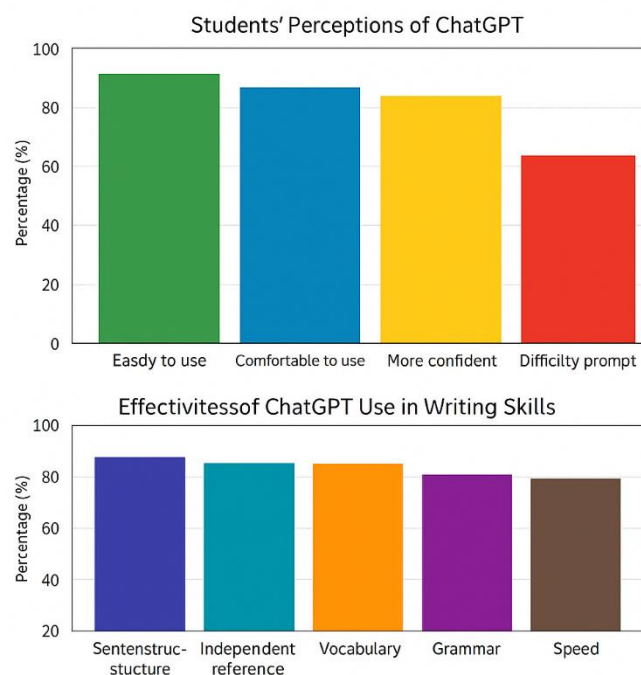


Figure 1. Chart of Student Perspective and Effectiveness of GPT

The chart above illustrates the results of a study investigating students' perceptions and the effectiveness of using ChatGPT as a learning assistant in English language classes at a vocational education institution. The chart is divided into two main parts: students' *perception* and *effectiveness* ratings, measured across several key aspects. On the left side, under **Perception**, students were asked to rate their agreement with statements related to ChatGPT's role in helping them understand materials, improve motivation, and provide learning flexibility. The majority of students responded positively. Notably, the highest rating was given to ChatGPT's **flexibility in learning**, indicating that students appreciated being able to access support anytime and anywhere. On the right side, under **Effectiveness**, students evaluated how well ChatGPT actually helped improve their English language skills. The highest ratings were observed in categories such as **vocabulary enhancement** and **writing assistance**, suggesting that ChatGPT played a significant role in strengthening their practical English abilities. Overall, the chart shows that students not only *perceived* ChatGPT positively but also *experienced real benefits* from using it. These findings support the potential of AI tools like ChatGPT as valuable supplements in vocational English language learning, especially when traditional methods may not always be accessible or personalized

4. Reflection in the Context of Vocational Education

The findings of this study highlight the significant potential of ChatGPT in enhancing English language learning within vocational education settings. By offering a more flexible and interactive approach, ChatGPT enables students to practice writing in a more engaging and less rigid way—breaking away from reliance on traditional learning materials.

However, the role of instructors remains crucial. Lecturers must act as active facilitators, guiding students to use ChatGPT not merely as an answer generator, but as a tool to explore ideas and develop independent writing skills. A **blended learning** strategy—combining technology with face-to-face engagement—is highly recommended to strike the right balance between innovation and personal interaction.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the integration of ChatGPT, an AI-powered language model, has introduced a new and enriching experience in learning English, particularly in improving writing skills among vocational students. The majority of respondents reported that ChatGPT is easy to use and has been especially helpful in constructing sentences, correcting grammar, and expanding their vocabulary.

More than just a technical aid, ChatGPT also contributes to building students' confidence in writing. Many students felt more independent, as they were able to receive immediate feedback and revise their work without always having to wait for corrections from their instructors. This experience aligns with the **Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)**, which emphasizes that users are more likely to embrace technology when they perceive it as both easy to use and genuinely useful.

Despite its many benefits, some challenges remain. A notable portion of students admitted that they still struggle with crafting effective prompts to generate relevant responses from ChatGPT. This indicates a gap in digital literacy that must be addressed to optimize the tool's use in educational settings.

In conclusion, ChatGPT can serve as a valuable learning partner in vocational English education—as long as its usage is well-guided, supported by digital literacy efforts, and grounded in ethical and reflective teaching practices.

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