

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research background, problem identification, limitation of the study, statements of research questions, research objectives, and research significance.

1.1 Background of the Study

In the modern era, technology has become a significant tool in education, especially for language learning in revolutionizing traditional teaching and learning methodologies. The incorporation of digital technologies in English language learning has been reported to enhance both accessibility and flexibility in students' learning processes. For instance, research examining mobile-assisted language learning tools demonstrated that technology allows learners to learn at any time and various locations, enabling them to revisit and practice language structures beyond the limits of the classroom environment (Dewi et al., 2020). One of the emerging technology advancements in education is the integration of AI with its rapid progress has led to the emergence of natural language processing (NLP) models, which can engage in interactive conversations, provide feedback, and assist with a variety of language-related tasks. One notable innovation is ChatGPT, an AI system developed by OpenAI which has received significant attention for its capability to assist learning processes and for its potential to foster individualized learning while enhancing students' engagement in language learning (Nazeer et al., 2024; Cha et al., 2024).

Beyond technological readiness, the presence of innovative approaches is another key factor that determines how effectively technology can be implemented in the educational process. Innovation in this context refers not only to the introduction of new digital tools but also to how learners' prior experiences with technology influence their willingness and ability to adopt new learning approaches (Mahendrayana & Dewi, 2021). Consequently, the success of implementing ChatGPT tools is largely determined by the extent to which they are innovatively embedded within current instructional practices to support students' learning needs.

In English language education, writing is often regarded as one of the most difficult skills for students to develop. Hyland (2003) explains that writing involves not only language proficiency but also cognitive abilities, including the organization of ideas, coherence, and clear expression. In many cases of EFL learners encounter challenges in writing because they struggle to structure their ideas effectively, choose appropriate vocabulary, and follow correct grammatical rules. On the other hand, teachers face significant challenges that overwhelm them by the volume of writing assignments they must grade and leaving limited time for individualized feedback. This limitation results in delayed feedback, reducing opportunities for students to engage in meaningful revisions and iterative learning (Kormos, 2012).

Similarly, previous studies have found that Indonesian students experience difficulties in comprehending English grammatical structures and producing accurate sentences because English is not their everyday language (Kusuma et al., 2024). These challenges often lead to feelings of pressure and discomfort when writing in English. Although many teachers have attempted to make grammar

instruction more engaging by integrating technological tools such as e-books, online platforms, and game-based learning to maintain student's motivation and help them internalize grammar rules, it remains difficult. This indicates that technology, while beneficial, needs to be implemented through more interactive and personalized approaches that directly address students' individual learning needs particularly in writing activities.

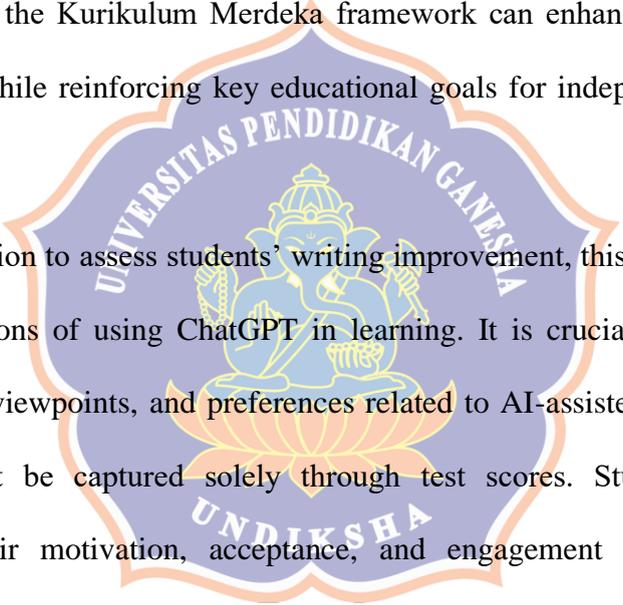
This problem also appears in SMP Negeri 1 Kubutambahan based on the preliminary observation result that shows low students' writing mastery. It can be seen from the English scores that 56% of students did not reach the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKTP) of 70. Further consultation with the English teacher confirmed that this issue arises due to students' low motivation, time-consuming feedback within the large class size, and the use of technology is still not optimal. Interestingly, students in this school environment have already accessed AI tools like ChatGPT, but their usage has been limited to finding instant answers rather than assisting with writing tasks. This condition highlights a considerable disparity between the presence of AI technologies and their actual application in supporting the improvement of students' writing skills. Therefore, instead of merely introducing ChatGPT as a new technology, this study seeks to redirect its existing use from only answering to functioning as an interactive writing assistant. By doing so, students can participate in more meaningful writing activities, obtain instant correction, and gradually improve their writing skills over time.

The incorporation of AI into education has significantly influenced language learning and writing instruction which offer more innovative solutions to enhance students' writing proficiency. For instance, ChatGPT, has gained attention for its

potential to provide personalized feedback, facilitate error correction, and improve overall writing skill. It is supported by a study that demonstrates the connection between self-efficacy and writing success in which the students with higher self-efficacy achieved significantly better writing outcomes compared to those taught conventionally (Dewi, 2016). It indicates that learners who believe in their ability to improve perform better when given autonomy and meaningful learning experiences. Likewise, by providing continuous personalized feedback, ChatGPT can function as a confidence-building tool to foster students' self-efficacy in writing through repeated practice and instant correction. Several recent studies have investigated AI-assisted approaches to writing, especially highlighting the role of ChatGPT in enhancing the process of writing instruction. Bai and Wei (2024) and Masoudi (2024) found that ChatGPT-assisted writing revisions help students identify and correct errors, refine word choices, and enhance textual coherence. Additionally, studies indicate that AI-based feedback can strengthen students' confidence in writing, increase their motivation, and encourage greater engagement throughout the writing process (Teng, 2024; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2025). By engaging with AI-based feedback, students develop greater autonomy in their learning, as they can self-assess their writing and make informed revisions based on the suggestions provided by the model.

This aspect of self-autonomy in learning aligns with the principles of Kurikulum Merdeka, Indonesia's curriculum framework, which emphasizes student-centered learning, critical thinking, and self-directed study (Kemendikbud, 2024). The Kurikulum Merdeka emphasizes learner autonomy by encouraging students to actively manage their learning process through inquiry-driven and

project-oriented learning strategies. By integrating ChatGPT into writing instruction, students can independently explore linguistic patterns, experiment with different writing styles, and refine their compositions through continuous feedback. It fosters their responsibility and ability to regulate their own learning. Studies have shown that when students are given the flexibility to progress at their preferred pace supported by AI technologies, they can enhance more critical problem-solving skills and a greater engagement with the subject being studied (Ellikkal & Rajamohan, 2024). Therefore, the synergy between ChatGPT's personalized feedback and the Kurikulum Merdeka framework can enhance students' writing proficiency while reinforcing key educational goals for independent and lifelong learning.



In addition to assess students' writing improvement, this study also explores their perceptions of using ChatGPT in learning. It is crucial as it reveals their experiences, viewpoints, and preferences related to AI-assisted writing activities, which cannot be captured solely through test scores. Students' perceptions influence their motivation, acceptance, and engagement with new learning technologies (Teng, 2024). Understanding how students perceive the effectiveness of ChatGPT can help educators refine its instructional implementation and ensure that it meets both pedagogical goals and learner needs. Therefore, the perception data will complement the quantitative writing results, allowing for a more thorough assessment of the practical and pedagogical impact of ChatGPT in classroom settings.

Given the potential of ChatGPT in supporting personalized learning, most earlier studies have mostly examined its application in higher education or general

EFL writing instruction (Imran & Almusharraf, 2023; Naznin et al., 2025). However, research on its direct implementation in secondary school settings, particularly for ninth-grade students, remains limited. This gap necessitates further exploration into how ChatGPT can be effectively used within structured instructional frameworks to enhance writing skill in younger learners specifically at secondary school level. Therefore, this research attempts to fill this gap by exploring the use of ChatGPT's personalized correction tool through a classroom action research approach at SMP Negeri 1 Kubutambahan. By examining its impact on students' writing skills and exploring effective approaches for its implementation, this study aims to offer practical reference for teachers on maximizing AI-driven feedback in secondary school writing instruction.

To integrate ChatGPT meaningfully into classroom writing instruction and address students' writing challenges, this study applies the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method. CAR offers a practical, reflective framework that enables problem identification, implements targeted interventions, and evaluates their outcomes in iterative cycles (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). This approach is especially suitable for this context it enables researcher to address instructional challenges while simultaneously contributing to educational research. The implementation of this study is also supported by the school's management, which has agreed to provide technical assistance and access to facilitate the use of ChatGPT during English writing lessons. Furthermore, the research is conducted during the school's remedial period which provides an appropriate academic context where students requiring additional writing support can benefit from the AI-assisted feedback while allowing the research to be ethically and practically

integrated into the school's academic program. Ultimately, the findings of this research will contribute to the ongoing discourse on AI in education which offer more valuable recommendations for the effective implementation of AI-assisted writing tools in classroom instruction settings.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Although writing is a core component of English language learning, many students encounter challenges in producing texts with accurate grammar, clear organization and coherent ideas. The preliminary observation at SMP Negeri 1 Kubutambahan showed a problem related to the lack of writing competency that 56% of students did not reach the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKTP) of 70. The teacher mentioned that this happened due to low students' motivation and time-consuming feedback within the large class size. Even though it is found that traditional feedback methods are still effective, it often lacks immediacy and individualized support because teachers often face limited time and must manage large numbers of students in the classroom. On the other hand, the students are already utilized and familiar with AI technology like ChatGPT but the usage in learning is still not optimal. Its integration into structured classroom-based learning, particularly for ninth-grade students, remains underexplored. Therefore, the need to examine how ChatGPT can enhance writing skill through personalized correction in a structured classroom setting forms the basis of this study.

1.3 Limitation of the Study

Based on the problem stated, in order to make the research more focused in-depth, this study is limited to ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kubutambahan

specifically, in 9A class, focusing on their English writing skills. This study specifically investigated the application of ChatGPT as a tool for providing personalized writing correction employing CAR framework. The study does not assess ChatGPT's effectiveness in other language skills, including reading, speaking, or listening, nor examine long-term effects beyond the intervention period.

The intervention is conducted over two weeks, during the post-final exam aligned with remedial period before report card distribution as it offers a unique special timing (uninterrupted time) for focused writing improvement activities without disrupting the other skill in regular classroom setting. This is good timing as supported by Shtayeh (2023) who found that a short-term remedial period showed a significant improvement in writing proficiency which underscores the value of focused and time-bound sessions on writing outcomes.

1.4 Statements of Research Questions

Based on the study's background and identified research problems, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Can the integration of ChatGPT improve students' writing skill of ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kubutambahan?
2. What are students' perceptions of ChatGPT as a personalized correction tool in improving writing skill of ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kubutambahan?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

Based on research question, this study aims to:

1. To improve students' writing skill through the integration of ChatGPT's personalized correction for ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kubutambahan.
2. To explore students' perceptions of ChatGPT as a personalized correction tool in improving writing skill of ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kubutambahan.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study gives benefit theoretically and practically. These significances are discussed in the following section below:

1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this research acts as a reference for integrating ChatGPT on maximizing AI-driven feedback in secondary school particularly for writing instruction enhancement.

2. Practical Significance

Practically, the results of this study give beneficial contributions to students, teachers, institutions, and other researchers.

a) For students

It provides an opportunity to receive instant, personalized feedback, and potentially improve writing proficiency.

b) For teachers

It offers insights into how AI tools like ChatGPT can be integrated into classroom instruction to enhance writing feedback and students' writing competency.

c) For educational institutions

The study contributes to discussions on AI in language learning as a model to be integrated into secondary school curriculum.

d) For readers

This study provides information about the integration of ChatGPT in improving students' writing skill and is expected as a reference in English language teaching strategy.

e) For researchers

It fills a gap in existing literature by exploring the practical application of ChatGPT in a structured classroom setting for younger learners and inspires other researchers to conduct similar research in enhancing writing skill incorporating ChatGPT.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, the following sections offer theoretical and operational definitions of the key terms utilized throughout this study.

1. ChatGPT

ChatGPT is an AI-powered natural language processing (NLP) model developed by OpenAI, designed to generate human-like text and assist users in various text-based tasks, including writing, conversation, and content

creation (Brown et al., 2020). Operationally, ChatGPT is used as a writing assistance tool that provides personalized feedback on students' texts, helping them improve their writing through corrections and suggestions.

2. Personalized Correction

Personalized correction refers to an instructional approach in which feedback is tailored to individual learners based on their unique errors, strengths, and areas for improvement. According to Ferris (2004), personalized feedback in writing instruction is more effective than general feedback, as it helps learners focus on their specific weaknesses, facilitating targeted learning and improvement. In this study, personalized correction refers to the customized feedback provided to students via ChatGPT intervention, which identifies specific grammatical, structural, and coherence-related errors in their writing and offers tailored suggestions for improvement.

3. Writing Skill

Writing skill is defined as the learner's capacity to create written texts that convey ideas clearly, logically, and coherently through well-organized expressions. It encompasses several sub-skills, including grammatical accuracy, appropriate vocabulary use, logical organization, coherence, and idea development (Weigle, 2002). The development and assessment of writing skill are typically guided by standardized rubrics that evaluate those aspects.