

Chapter I

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher provides information about the background of the study, research questions, the purpose of the study, the scope of the study, and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Writing proficiency is crucial for EFL students to effectively communicate academic ideas in written form (Song and Song, 2023). Students should understand various areas of writing learning, such as writing organization, coherence, grammar, and vocabulary, to communicate their thoughts and achieve excellence in academic fields clearly (Campbell, 2019; Yoon, 2011). Therefore, the influence of feedback on EFL students' writing can't be considered trivial for their writing skill development because English has many language rules that are quite different from their native language, and feedback from an expert is required to refine their writing (Wulandari, 2022). Hattie (2009) suggested including feedback in students' learning activities as it is powerful enough to influence students' performance. Feedback helps EFL students recognize their strengths and weaknesses, leading to improvements in their writing (Kerr, 2020).

Shadiev and Yang (2020) define feedback as evaluating students' errors and mistakes in language production, such as in writing activities. Hyland (2003) suggested emphasizing feedback on the important points in their writing process for revision. Park (2006) specifies that the feedback process can be divided into form-focused feedback, which concerns the mechanics of writing, such as grammar and spelling, and content-based feedback, which focuses on clarity and ideas. However, providing insightful feedback on students' writing has limitations such as time constraints, more effort, and subjectivity (Lim & Phua, 2019; Yu & Lee, 2014). Also, EFL students' different understandings,

motivations, and writing production will cause additional allocation of time and effort, which is an obstacle for teachers to further improve their students' writing (Lee, 2017).

The presence of advanced artificial intelligence (AI) technologies such as ChatGPT has been integrated to overcome difficulties in students' writing improvement, including enhancing the feedback process (Hawanti & Zubayduloevna, 2023; Knox, 2020). Students have more opportunities to improve their writing skills by practicing, receiving feedback, and revising at any time, which is facilitated by ChatGPT (Yan, 2023). In addition, 21st-century students who are considered digital natives, born after 1980, can effectively use technological tools such as ChatGPT in their writing learning activities due to their readiness to integrate technology in learning (Elnadeef, 2023; Kivunja, 2014). This combination will effectively provide unlimited personalized learning to match students' writing level feedback for their writing development (Song and Song, 2023).

ChatGPT (referring to 3.5 and 4.0 for the free version) was established to generate human-like conversations and responses, such as answering students' questions about their writing and making suggestions (Deng et al., 2022). Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019) define artificial intelligence tools, such as ChatGPT, that were designed to remember, understand, perceive, and manipulate as humans do. As the most promising AI product, ChatGPT can improve the quality of students' writing performance by providing feedback according to user input on various aspects of writing, whether form-focused, such as grammar and sentence correction, or content-based, such as idea expansion (Song and Song, 2023). Moreover, the advent of ChatGPT can help teachers save time and effort in providing feedback on student writing, especially in large classes (Imran and Almusharraf, 2023; Holmes et al., 2022).

Sakai (2023) found that ChatGPT offers grammatical corrections, explanations, and revision suggestions with writing style adjustments for

academic purposes. It also advises on writing organization and argument expansion to improve writing production. Harunasari (2023) found that ChatGPT helps EFL students at all stages of the writing process, from formulating ideas to getting quick feedback. Yan (2023) examined the positive effect of ChatGPT on the development of EFL students' writing skills in terms of academic writing scores as opposed to before the tool intervention. Similar to Liu et al. (2021), who found significant improvements in students' writing scores as their engagement increased compared to students who did not interact with ChatGPT. Furthermore, Hawanti & Zubaydullovna (2023) conducted observations and found that the ChatGPT feedback intervention reduced students' anxiety levels and increased their willingness to write in their study.

Since the release of ChatGPT in November 2022 (Kohnke et al., 2022), many researchers have been interested and triggered to explore in depth the features that support learning activities, including writing activities and feedback provision. Most of the existing systematic review studies focus on ChatGPT features in general for EFL, such as the advantages and cautions of using the tool in language learning classrooms (Balci, 2024; Irzawati et al., 2024), the strengths and opportunities as well as the weaknesses and threats of using ChatGPT in students' learning (Mai et al., 2024; Zhang & Tur, 2024), and ChatGPT benefits and challenges in EFL students' writing (Alsaedi, 2024; Feng Teng, 2024). Therefore, this study attempts to further explore the existing study by systematically reviewing the published research on the role of ChatGPT feedback in EFL students' writing.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the description of the background of the study, the following research questions were addressed for this study:

1. What is the impact of ChatGPT feedback on EFL students' form-focused writing as reported in the existing research?
2. What is the impact of ChatGPT feedback on EFL students' content-based writing as reported in the existing research?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the above research questions, this study aims to systematically analyze the role of ChatGPT feedback on the writing of EFL students. Specifically, it focuses on two main aspects of feedback: form-focused feedback, which relates to grammar, vocabulary, and sentence mechanics, and content-based feedback, which includes idea development, organization, and writing coherence. Through this systematic review, the study aims to provide a profile of current empirical findings and identify research trends and implications for writing instruction using AI-assisted feedback tools.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study reviews the findings of empirical research on the role of ChatGPT feedback on EFL students' writing from the past 10 years. Although the scope includes research papers from the last 10 years to specify the time frame, the primary focus is on studies conducted after the release of ChatGPT in 2022 to ensure relevance with current technology. The researcher collects the relevant research papers from comprehensive and credible academic publication sources such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, SpringerOpen, JSTOR, and ERIC, as these sources provide high-impact national and international and open access journals to ensure accessibility and transparency of the research findings (Ahmar et al., 2018). The researcher focuses only on

ChatGPT feedback for the writing activity. This study excludes AI tools other than ChatGPT due to the popularity of this tool and other language learning activities, such as speaking.

1.5 Significance of the Study

- **Theoretically**

This study aims to systematically review the role of ChatGPT feedback on EFL students' form-focused and content-based aspects of their writing. The findings are expected to provide insights into improving students' personalized writing learning for better outcomes in the areas of writing mechanics with better grammar and vocabulary use, as well as smooth flow and readable complexity in the organization of each paragraph through the use of ChatGPT feedback. Thus, the researcher also hoped to present a clear understanding of the practical integration of AI-based feedback, especially ChatGPT, systems into EFL students' writing activities.

- **Practically**

As for the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP), the results of this study are expected to provide a clear overview for ELESP students in developing academic writing proficiency in form and content independently using the ChatGPT feedback, as well as provide ideas for further empirical research for students at different levels of education within AI technology integration in language learning on writing activity, particularly ChatGPT.