

THE EFFECT OF CHATGPT ON STUDENTS' LANGUAGE CHOICE IN WRITING RECOUNT TEXT AT SMP NEGERI 1 PEMATANGSIANTAR

PENGARUH CHATGPT TERHADAP PILIHAN BAHASA SISWA DALAM MENULIS TEKS RECOUNT DI SMP NEGERI 1 PEMATANGSIANTAR

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ABSTRACT

Writing is a crucial English language acquisition skill that calls for precision, coherence, and acceptable language use. However, choosing appropriate language for recount writings is a challenge for many students. The purpose of this study was to investigate how ChatGPT affected the language choices made by eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar when they were composing recount texts. A pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design was used in this quantitative study. Purposive sampling was used to choose 24 students for the sample. Language choice in vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, and mechanics was evaluated through a writing test. Descriptive statistics and a paired-sample t-test were used to assess the data. The results revealed a mean difference of 33.83 points, with the mean score rising from 52.92 in the pre-test to 86.75 in the post-test. After utilizing ChatGPT, the t-test result showed a statistically significant improvement. As a result, ChatGPT influences students' writing language choices in a good way.

Keywords : ChatGPT, Language Choice, Recount Text, Writing Text

ABSTRAK

Menulis merupakan keterampilan penting dalam pemerolehan bahasa Inggris yang menuntut ketepatan, koherensi, dan penggunaan bahasa yang tepat. Namun, pemilihan bahasa yang sesuai dalam penulisan teks recount masih menjadi tantangan bagi banyak siswa. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui pengaruh ChatGPT terhadap pilihan bahasa siswa kelas delapan di SMP Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar dalam menulis teks recount. Penelitian kuantitatif ini menggunakan desain pra-eksperimental dengan model one-group pre-test dan post-test. Teknik purposive sampling digunakan untuk memilih 24 siswa sebagai sampel. Pilihan bahasa yang meliputi kosakata, tata bahasa, struktur kalimat, dan mekanik penulisan dievaluasi melalui tes menulis. Data dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan uji t sampel berpasangan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya perbedaan rata-rata sebesar 33,83 poin, dengan nilai rata-rata meningkat dari 52,92 pada pre-test menjadi 86,75 pada post-test. Hasil uji t menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan secara statistik setelah penggunaan ChatGPT. Dengan demikian, ChatGPT memberikan pengaruh positif terhadap pilihan bahasa siswa dalam menulis.

Kata Kunci: ChatGPT, Pilihan Bahasa, Teks Recount, Menulis Teks

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is an essential English language learning ability that allows pupils to express thoughts, feelings, and experiences in an organized and significant way. Writing is regarded as one of the most difficult abilities in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts because it necessitates simultaneous integration of vocabulary knowledge, grammatical accuracy, and acceptable language use. Writing requires sophisticated cognitive and linguistic skills, which many junior high school students find challenging to master, according to Chandra et al. (2024). Language choice, or the selection of suitable vocabulary, grammatical forms, and expressions that fit the goal and context of the work, is an essential part of good writing. Recount text

focuses on retelling past events chronologically and is characterized by specific linguistic features such as the use of past tense verbs, time connectives, and appropriate vocabulary (Novitri, 2021). Through recount writing activities, students are encouraged to express personal experiences clearly and coherently. However, successful recount writing requires not only grammatical accuracy but also the ability to make appropriate language choices to convey meaning effectively.

Several studies have highlighted that students still face significant difficulties in writing, particularly in selecting suitable vocabulary and expressions. According to Fakhrudin, Dzulfikri, and Mustofa (2023), EFL students have trouble with both grammar and selecting words that fit the context and intended meaning. In a similar vein, Vienya, Naisaburi, and Manik (2024) discovered that poor vocabulary mastering frequently leads to repetitious and artificial language use, which has a detrimental effect on students' writing quality. These results show that language selection is a crucial component of teaching EFL writing. The use of technology in the classroom has been extensively investigated in recent years as a way to aid students' writing growth. ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence (AI)-based language model created by OpenAI, is one new technological tool that can produce text that resembles that of a human and offer feedback on vocabulary, syntax, and sentence structure. ChatGPT can enhance students' overall writing performance, coherence, and grammatical accuracy, according to earlier research (Jemmy et al., 2024; Pratiwi, 2023; Lo, 2023).

However, most existing studies tend to focus on overall writing achievement or grammatical improvement, with limited attention given to students' language choice as a specific writing component. Specifically, no empirical study has been done on how ChatGPT affects junior high school students' capacity to choose suitable words and expressions when composing recount texts. Because language choice represents the relationship between language, context, and social function, it is crucial in communicating meaning, according to Halliday (1978). Consequently, there is a glaring research gap that requires more study due to the prior ChatGPT-related writing studies' scant attention on language choice.

The current study intends to close this gap by examining how ChatGPT affects the language choices made by eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar when producing recount texts. The purpose of this study is to determine whether using ChatGPT as a learning aid may greatly enhance students' capacity to use suitable language, grammatical constructions, and phrases when composing recount narratives. As a result, the following is the research question for this study: "Is there any significant effect of using ChatGPT on students' language choice in writing recount texts at Grade Eight of SMP Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar?"

2. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design. By comparing students' performance before and after the treatment, this approach was chosen to investigate how ChatGPT affects students' linguistic choices when producing recount stories. In this design, a single group of students was given a pre-test to gauge their baseline writing proficiency, a treatment that included ChatGPT in writing exercises, and a post-test to gauge the students' progress following the intervention. The use of ChatGPT was the study's independent variable, and the language that students used to recount texts was the study's dependent variable. All 352 eighth-grade students from eleven classrooms at SMP Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar during the academic year 2025–2026 made up the study's population. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, as the

research focused on one intact class that was accessible and considered representative of the population. Based on this technique, Class VIII-2 was chosen as the sample of the study. The total number of participants was 24 students, consisting of male and female students with relatively similar levels of English proficiency. This class was considered suitable for the implementation of ChatGPT-assisted writing activities.

The instrument used in this study was a writing test administered as both a pre-test and a post-test. Students were required to produce a recount text on a specific subject. An analytical scoring rubric that was modified from Heaton was used to evaluate their writing. It comprised five areas: mechanics, vocabulary, organization, content, and language choice. The analysis in this study concentrated mostly on language choice, including acceptable vocabulary use, grammatical precision, and sentence structure, even though a number of factors were evaluated. The pre-test and post-test were administered using the identical writing test format and scoring rubric to guarantee the validity of the instrument. There were multiple phases to the research process. To gauge the students' initial proficiency in composing recount texts without the assistance of ChatGPT, a pre-test was first given. Second, the students received the treatment, which involved the use of ChatGPT as a learning support tool during writing activities. During this stage, students were guided on how to use ChatGPT to generate ideas, check vocabulary usage, improve grammatical accuracy, and revise their writing. The treatment was conducted during regular English class sessions. Finally, a post-test was administered after the treatment to assess students' improvement in language choice in writing recount texts.

The validity of the instrument was ensured by designing the writing test based on established criteria for assessing students' writing ability. In writing evaluation, the Heaton-adapted grading rubric is frequently utilized. All students received the same instructions, time allotment, scoring rubric, and treatment methods for both the pre-test and the post-test in order to preserve the validity of the data. Students' writing scores from the pre-test and post-test, which were administered in a classroom under comparable circumstances, were used to gather the data. For both assessments, the identical guidelines, time allotment, and writing themes were given to every student. With approval from the school and the English teacher, the data gathering procedure was completed during the first semester of the 2025–2026 academic year. The data collected from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using quantitative statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the mean scores of students' writing performance before and after the treatment. To determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, a paired-sample *t*-test was applied. The level of significance used in this study was 0.05.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. RESULTS

This section presents the research findings. In the 2025–2026 academic year, 24 eighth-grade students of Class VIII–2 at SMP Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar participated in this study. Pre-tests and post-tests were administered before and after the implementation of ChatGPT-assisted writing activities to measure students' language choice in writing recount texts. The research findings indicate a significant improvement in students' writing performance after the use of ChatGPT. As shown in Table 1, the total score of the pre-test was 1,270, while the total score of the post-test increased to 2,082. Based on descriptive statistical analysis, the mean score increased from 52.92 in the pre-test to 86.75 in the post-test.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Test Type	N	Total Score	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Pre-Test	24	1,270	52.92	25	88
Post-Test	24	2,082	86.75	77	98

The pre-test and post-test results differed by an average of 33.83 points. To ascertain if the improvement was statistically significant, a paired-sample t-test was used. There was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, as shown in Table 2, where the t-observed value (10.62) was greater than the t-table value (2.07) at the 0.05 significance level.

Table 2. Paired-Sample t-Test Result

N	Mean Difference	t-value	t-table (0.05)	Sig.
24	33.83	10.62	2.07	$p < 0.05$

These results indicate that the use of ChatGPT had a significant effect on students' language choice in writing recount texts.

3.2. DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that students' language choice when composing recount texts was greatly enhanced by using ChatGPT. This outcome clearly answers the research question by showing how ChatGPT may help students choose suitable terminology, grammatical forms, and sentence structures. The aspects of ChatGPT that offer instant feedback, substitute expressions, and examples of proper language use during the writing process may be responsible for the improvement in students' language choice. Students were exposed to proper linguistic patterns and contextualized instances through ChatGPT interaction, which probably improved their knowledge of appropriate language selection. This result validates Halliday's (1978) theory that meaning and context have a significant influence on language choice.

The findings of this study are in line with earlier studies on the application of ChatGPT in teaching EFL writing. According to Jemmy et al. (2024), ChatGPT enhanced students' writing abilities, especially in terms of word usage and grammatical correctness. In a similar vein, Lo (2023) discovered that ChatGPT improves writing quality by providing better coherence and feedback. The current study builds on earlier findings and emphasizes ChatGPT's contribution to learners' language development by concentrating on language choice rather than overall writing ability. These results are consistent with those of Montenegro-Rueda et al. (2023), who highlighted how AI-based tools encourage learner autonomy. The results indicate that ChatGPT can be utilized as an additional tool in EFL writing teaching from a pedagogical standpoint, especially while drafting and revising. While guaranteeing active student participation, teachers can assist students in using ChatGPT to investigate suitable vocabulary and grammatical structures. The use of a one-group pre-test and post-test design without a control group and the comparatively small sample size are two of the study's weaknesses, though. Larger sample sizes, experimental or quasi-experimental designs including control groups, and qualitative methods to investigate students' experiences and ChatGPT's long-term effects on writing abilities are suggested for future research.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study examined junior high school students' difficulties in making appropriate language choices when writing narrative texts and tested the effectiveness of ChatGPT as a supplementary learning tool. The findings showed a statistically significant improvement in students' post-test scores compared to their pre-test results, indicating that the use of ChatGPT positively influenced students' language choices in writing. This improvement was evident in vocabulary selection, grammatical accuracy, and sentence structure, which are essential components of effective narrative writing. The findings show that ChatGPT enhances EFL writing instruction by helping students become more conscious of acceptable language use and supporting them during the writing process. If carefully incorporated into classroom activities, ChatGPT can function as a pedagogical tool that effectively supplements traditional instruction. To guarantee that students stay actively involved in the learning process and do not become too dependent on the technology, it should be used in conjunction with continuous teacher supervision. Notwithstanding these encouraging findings, the study has a number of drawbacks, most notably the small sample size and its concentration on a single text type. Therefore, further research is recommended to involve larger samples, explore different writing genres, and examine the long-term impact of ChatGPT on students' independent writing skills and overall language development.

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