

## **The Effect of Chatgpt on Students' Language Choice in Writing Recount Text**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Writing is an essential skill in English learning that requires accuracy, coherence, and appropriate language use. However, many junior high school students experience difficulties in selecting suitable language when writing recount texts. This study aimed to examine the effect of ChatGPT on students' language choice in writing recount texts at the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar. A quantitative approach with a pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design was employed. The sample consisted of 24 students selected through purposive sampling. A writing test was administered to assess students' language choice focusing on vocabulary use, grammatical accuracy, sentence structure, and mechanics. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a paired-sample t-test. The findings revealed that the mean score increased from 52.92 in the pre-test to 86.75 in the post-test, with a mean difference of 33.83 points. The t-test result showed a statistically significant improvement after the use of ChatGPT. Therefore, it can be concluded that ChatGPT has a positive effect on students' language choice in writing recount texts.

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

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Writing is a fundamental skill in English language learning that enables students to communicate ideas, experiences, and opinions in a structured and meaningful way. In English as a foreign language context, writing is considered one of the most challenging skills because it requires learners to integrate vocabulary knowledge, grammatical accuracy, and appropriate language use simultaneously. Chandra et al. (2024) emphasize that writing involves complex cognitive and linguistic processes, making it difficult for many junior high school students to master.

One crucial component of effective writing is language choice, which refers to the selection of appropriate vocabulary, grammatical forms, and expressions that suit the

purpose and context of the text. At the junior high school level, students are expected to produce various types of texts, including recount texts. 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. Fakhruddin, Dzulfikri, and Mustofa (2023) reported that EFL learners struggle not only with grammar but also with choosing words that match the intended meaning and context. Similarly, Vienya, Naisaburi, and Manik (2024) found that limited vocabulary mastery often results in repetitive and unnatural language use, which negatively affects the quality of students' writing. These findings indicate that language choice is a critical issue in EFL writing instruction.

The integration of technology in education has been widely explored as a strategy to overcome these challenges. One emerging technological tool is ChatGPT, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) based language model capable of generating human-like text and providing feedback related to vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure. Previous studies have shown that ChatGPT can improve students' writing performance and grammatical accuracy (Jemmy et al., 2024; Lo, 2023). However, empirical studies focusing specifically on language choice in recount text writing at the junior high school level remain limited. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effect of ChatGPT on students' language choice in writing recount texts.

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. In particular, there is a lack of empirical research examining how ChatGPT influences students' ability to select appropriate vocabulary and expressions in writing recount texts at the junior high school level. As Halliday (1978) argues, language choice plays a central role in conveying meaning because it reflects the relationship between language, context, and social function. Therefore, the limited focus on language choice in previous ChatGPT-related writing studies reveals a clear research gap that needs further investigation.

Based on the problems this study aims to investigate the effect of ChatGPT on students' language choice in writing recount texts at Grade Eight of SMP Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar. Accordingly, the research question of this study is formulated as follows: "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. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design to examine the effect of ChatGPT on students' language choice in writing recount texts. The design involved administering a pre-test to measure

students' initial writing ability, followed by a treatment using ChatGPT in writing activities, and a post-test to assess students' improvement after the intervention. The independent variable of the study was the use of ChatGPT, while the dependent variable was students' language choice in writing recount texts. The population consisted of all eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar in the 2025/2026 academic year, totaling 352 students across eleven classes. Purposive sampling was applied to select one intact and accessible class considered representative of the population. Accordingly, Class VIII-2 was chosen as the sample, comprising 24 students with relatively similar levels of English proficiency.

The instrument used in this study was a writing test administered as both a pre-test and a post-test. Students were required to write a recount text based on a given topic. Their writing was assessed using an analytic scoring rubric adapted from Heaton, which covered content, organization, vocabulary, language choice, and mechanics. Although several aspects were evaluated, the analysis focused primarily on language choice, including vocabulary appropriateness, grammatical accuracy, and sentence structure. To ensure instrument validity, the same writing tasks, scoring rubric, instructions, and time allocation were applied consistently in both tests.

The research procedure was conducted in three stages. First, a pre-test was administered to assess students' initial ability in writing recount texts without the use of ChatGPT. Second, the treatment was implemented through ChatGPT-assisted writing activities during regular English class sessions, in which students were guided to generate ideas, improve vocabulary use, enhance grammatical accuracy, and revise their writing. Finally, a post-test was administered to measure students' improvement in language choice after the treatment.

Data were collected from students' writing scores obtained under similar classroom conditions during the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year with permission from the school and the English teacher. The data were analyzed using quantitative statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics were employed to calculate mean scores, and a paired-sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the difference between pre-test and post-test scores was statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study concerning the effect of ChatGPT on students' language choice in writing recount texts. The results are derived from the analysis of students' written works and supporting data, focusing on how the use of ChatGPT influences lexical selection, grammatical structures, and overall language patterns in recount text writing. The discussion then interprets these findings by relating them to the research objectives and relevant theoretical perspectives on language learning, writing development, and the use of artificial intelligence in EFL contexts. Through this integrated presentation, this section aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of both the empirical outcomes and their pedagogical implications.

#### 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 findings of this study indicate a significant improvement in students' language choice in writing recount texts after the implementation of ChatGPT. Based on the descriptive statistics, the total pre-test score of the students was 1,270, with a mean score of 52.92. The minimum and maximum pre-test scores were 25 and 88, respectively. In contrast, the total post-test score increased to 2,082, with a mean score of 86.75, while the minimum and maximum scores improved to 77 and 98. This result demonstrates a substantial increase in students' writing performance after the treatment.

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 mean difference between the pre-test and post-test scores was 33.83 points, indicating a notable improvement in students' language choice. The paired-sample t-test analysis showed that the obtained t-value (10.62) exceeded the t-table value (2.07) at the 0.05 significance level. This result confirms that the improvement in students' scores after using ChatGPT was statistically significant.

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 findings suggest that the use of ChatGPT effectively supported students in improving their language choice in writing recount texts, particularly in terms of vocabulary selection, grammatical accuracy, and sentence structure. The statistical results clearly indicate that students performed better after receiving ChatGPT-assisted writing instruction.

### 3.2. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the use of ChatGPT significantly improved students' language choice in writing recount texts. This improvement demonstrates that ChatGPT effectively assisted students in selecting appropriate vocabulary, applying correct grammatical forms, and constructing clearer and more accurate sentence structures. These components are essential in recount writing, which requires the accurate use of past tense verbs, logical sequencing of events, and contextually appropriate language. The results directly address the research question and confirm that ChatGPT can function as an effective learning support tool in EFL writing instruction.

The improvement in students' language choice may be attributed to the interactive features of ChatGPT, particularly its ability to provide immediate feedback, alternative lexical choices, and examples of grammatically appropriate sentences. Through continuous interaction with ChatGPT during the writing process, students were exposed to correct linguistic patterns and contextualized language use. This exposure likely enhanced students' awareness of how language functions within a specific context, enabling them to make more appropriate linguistic decisions when revising their writing. This finding supports Halliday's (1978) theory that language choice is closely related to meaning-making and the relationship between language and context.

Furthermore, the results of this study are consistent with previous research examining the role of ChatGPT in EFL writing instruction. Jemmy et al. (2024) found that the use of ChatGPT significantly improved students' writing performance, particularly in vocabulary use and grammatical accuracy. Similarly, Lo (2023) reported that ChatGPT contributes to better writing quality by enhancing coherence and providing meaningful feedback. By focusing specifically on language choice rather than overall writing performance, the present

study extends previous research and provides more detailed empirical evidence on how ChatGPT supports students' linguistic development in writing recount texts. In addition, the findings align with Montenegro-Rueda et al. (2023), who emphasized that AI-based tools can promote learner autonomy by enabling students to independently explore language use and self-correct their writing.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings suggest that ChatGPT can be effectively integrated as a supplementary tool in EFL writing instruction, particularly during the drafting and revising stages. When used under teacher guidance, ChatGPT allows students to experiment with vocabulary and grammatical structures while maintaining active engagement in the learning process. Teachers play a crucial role in ensuring that ChatGPT is used as a support tool rather than a substitute for students' own thinking and writing skills. Guided use of ChatGPT can help students develop greater linguistic awareness and confidence in expressing their ideas in written form.

Despite the positive outcomes, this study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The use of a one-group pre-test and post-test design without a control group limits the ability to attribute the improvement solely to the use of ChatGPT, as other factors such as increased writing practice and teacher support may have influenced the results. Additionally, the relatively small sample size may limit the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve larger samples, employ experimental or quasi-experimental designs with control groups, and incorporate qualitative methods to explore students' perceptions, learning experiences, and the long-term effects of ChatGPT on writing development.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the result of this study, it was found that the use of ChatGPT significantly improved students' language choice in writing recount texts at the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar. Specifically, ChatGPT was effective in helping students select appropriate vocabulary, apply correct grammatical forms, and construct well-structured sentences in recount writing. The students showed greater confidence and ability in expressing past experiences in written form, as reflected in the improvement of their writing scores from the pre-test to the post-test. Therefore, it can be concluded that ChatGPT is an effective supplementary tool for enhancing students' language choice in writing recount texts.

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