

The Use of ChatGPT to Assist Students in Writing Creative English Argumentative Paragraphs

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe how ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence-based writing assistant, can assist students in writing English argumentative paragraphs creatively. The research employed a descriptive qualitative design involving 20 third-semester students of the English Education Department at STIT Misbahudin Ahmad Blitar during the 2024/2025 academic year. The study was conducted in three meetings in October 2025, during which students used ChatGPT to help generate ideas, organize arguments, and refine sentences. Data were collected through a perception questionnaire and classroom observations. The findings revealed that most students had positive perceptions of ChatGPT, with 90% reporting that it helped them generate ideas, 85% noting improvements in vocabulary use, and 80% stating better grammatical accuracy. Furthermore, 75% of the participants felt that ChatGPT encouraged their creativity in writing, although 25% expressed concern about reduced originality when overused. The study concludes that ChatGPT can serve as an effective supplementary tool in teaching writing, particularly in developing creativity and linguistic competence. However, its use must be guided by teachers to ensure reflective learning, authenticity, and critical engagement.

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1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology over the last two decades has transformed the landscape of language education. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer limited to administrative automation but has emerged as an intelligent partner in the teaching and learning process. One of the most prominent AI applications in education is ChatGPT, a large language model developed by OpenAI, designed to understand and generate human-like text based on user prompts. Its ability to provide coherent sentences, suggest vocabulary choices, and correct grammatical errors makes ChatGPT a promising pedagogical tool for enhancing students' writing skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts.

In Indonesian higher education, writing in English remains one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners. Writing is not merely about grammar and vocabulary; it also involves critical thinking, organization, and creativity. According to Harmer (2004), writing is a complex productive skill that engages cognitive, linguistic, and social processes simultaneously. Many students struggle to develop ideas, organize arguments, and express them effectively in written form. Consequently, it becomes essential for educators to explore new pedagogical innovations that can support students in overcoming these challenges through interactive and adaptive learning technologies.

Among various writing genres, argumentative paragraph writing is considered one of the most demanding tasks for university students. It requires students to formulate opinions, support them with logical reasoning, and provide evidence cohesively. As stated by Oshima and Hogue (2007), argumentative writing involves constructing a main claim, presenting supporting details, and concluding with a persuasive statement. However, for EFL learners, developing well-structured arguments in a foreign language often poses difficulties. ChatGPT, in this regard, offers scaffolding opportunities by assisting students in generating ideas, creating outlines, and organizing their arguments more coherently.

In modern writing instruction, technology-enhanced learning tools have gained increasing attention due to their potential to provide real-time feedback and promote learner autonomy. AI-based writing assistants such as Grammarly, QuillBot, and ChatGPT have been shown to enhance writing fluency, expand lexical range, and increase students' motivation to write (Holmes et al., 2019; Fitria, 2024). Unlike traditional grammar checkers, ChatGPT can engage students in an interactive dialogue, allowing them to inquire about grammar choices, paragraph coherence, and stylistic improvements. This dialogic process aligns with constructivist learning principles that emphasize reflection, active engagement, and personalized learning.

However, the integration of ChatGPT in writing instruction is not without challenges. Overreliance on AI-generated suggestions can lead to a decline in students' originality and critical thinking. Some students tend to copy or paraphrase the model's output without reflection, resulting in superficial learning (Kasneci et al., 2023). Educators must therefore play a crucial role in guiding students on how to use ChatGPT ethically and critically — as a tool for learning, not as a substitute for human creativity. Proper pedagogical strategies are needed to balance technological assistance with the development of independent writing competence.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to investigate students' perceptions of using ChatGPT to assist them in writing English argumentative paragraphs creatively. Specifically, the research explores how ChatGPT supports idea generation, vocabulary enrichment, grammatical accuracy, and writing creativity among university students. The findings of this study are expected to provide insights for teachers and curriculum developers in integrating AI-assisted tools effectively in EFL writing classrooms while maintaining authenticity, creativity, and critical engagement.

2. Literature Review

2.1 ChatGPT in Language Learning

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an increasingly important component of language education, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. AI applications such as Grammarly, QuillBot, and ChatGPT have been widely adopted for their ability to provide immediate feedback, grammatical correction, and contextual suggestions. According to Holmes, Bialik, and Fadel (2019), AI in education offers the potential to personalize instruction and enhance learning efficiency by adapting to individual learners' needs.

ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI, differs from earlier AI tools because of its conversational capacity — it can simulate dialogue, clarify linguistic concepts, and guide learners through iterative writing processes. This interactive nature allows students to ask for clarification, request model sentences, or even seek stylistic feedback. Studies such as Fitria (2024) and Zou & Xie (2023) highlight ChatGPT's pedagogical potential, noting that it fosters learner autonomy and promotes self-directed learning. However, while ChatGPT offers instant feedback and authentic language exposure, its pedagogical success depends heavily on how teachers scaffold and monitor its use in classroom settings.

2.2 Argumentative Writing in EFL Contexts

Argumentative writing is considered a high-order cognitive skill that challenges EFL learners to articulate logical reasoning, organize evidence, and express opinions persuasively. As Oshima and Hogue (2007) explain, an argumentative paragraph consists of a clear topic sentence, supporting arguments, and a concluding statement that reinforces the main idea. Developing such writing requires not only grammatical competence but also critical thinking and rhetorical awareness.

For many EFL learners, generating ideas and structuring arguments remain significant difficulties (Harmer, 2004). Limited exposure to academic writing conventions and inadequate vocabulary often lead to repetitive or underdeveloped paragraphs. Therefore, integrating tools like ChatGPT into writing activities may help students brainstorm ideas, organize arguments more coherently, and learn from model texts. However, this integration must ensure that students still engage in independent thought rather than relying passively on AI-generated structures.

2.3 Creativity and AI-Assisted Writing

Creativity is an essential aspect of language learning that involves generating original ideas, expressing individuality, and experimenting with language forms (Maley, 2012). In the context of writing instruction, creativity is not merely about imagination but about producing meaningful and contextually appropriate expressions. ChatGPT, with its ability to provide linguistic alternatives and stylistic variation, can stimulate creative thinking among students. By exposing learners to diverse sentence patterns and stylistic expressions, it encourages them to explore multiple ways of conveying meaning.

Nevertheless, researchers caution that excessive dependence on AI-generated suggestions may reduce learners' originality and critical engagement (Kasneci et al., 2023). Thus, the role of the instructor is crucial in framing ChatGPT as a *collaborative partner* rather than a *creative replacement*. When used reflectively, AI tools can support a blended learning environment that combines technological assistance with human creativity and teacher guidance — an approach consistent with constructivist and socio-cultural learning theories (Vygotsky, 1978).

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design aimed at exploring students' perceptions of using ChatGPT to assist them in writing English argumentative paragraphs creatively. The qualitative approach was chosen to capture detailed descriptions of students' experiences and opinions regarding the integration of AI tools in their writing process. Descriptive data were collected through questionnaires and classroom observations conducted during writing activities. Quantitative elements in the form of percentage responses were used to strengthen the descriptive findings.

3.2 Participants

The participants of this study were 20 third-semester students enrolled in the English Education Department at STIT Misbahudin Ahmad Blitar in the academic year 2024/2025. The students were selected purposively because they had already taken basic writing courses and were familiar with digital learning tools. All participants provided informed consent and were willing to use ChatGPT as part of their writing exercises under supervision.

3.3 Research Procedures

The research was carried out in three meetings during October 2025 as part of the Writing Course. In each meeting, students were asked to write one argumentative paragraph on different social or educational topics. During the sessions, they used ChatGPT to help generate ideas, organize arguments, and refine sentences. After completing their paragraphs, students filled out a perception questionnaire containing statements related to four main indicators: (1) idea generation, (2) vocabulary enrichment, (3) grammatical improvement, and (4) writing creativity. Each indicator consisted of five items measured on a Likert scale from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected using a student perception questionnaire and classroom observation sheets. The questionnaire contained 20 items measuring students' perceptions of ChatGPT's usefulness, clarity, and impact on their writing motivation. Observation sheets were used to record students' behavior, engagement, and level of independence during writing sessions. The use of multiple instruments ensured data triangulation and strengthened the validity of the findings.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive model, which involves three steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, all responses were categorized according to key indicators. The quantitative data from the questionnaire were calculated into percentages to determine dominant tendencies, while qualitative notes from observation were interpreted to describe students' writing experiences. The findings were then integrated and interpreted to explain how ChatGPT supported students' writing creativity and what challenges emerged during its use.

4. Findings

4.1 Students' Perceptions toward ChatGPT in Writing Activities

The results of the questionnaire revealed that students generally had positive perceptions of using ChatGPT to support their argumentative writing activities. Most students reported that ChatGPT helped them generate ideas more efficiently, improve their vocabulary use, and construct sentences more accurately. The percentage of positive responses across the four indicators is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Students' Perceptions of ChatGPT Use in Argumentative Writing

No	Indicator	Percentage of Positive Responses	Interpretation
1	ChatGPT helps in generating ideas	90%	Very Positive
2	ChatGPT enriches vocabulary variety	85%	Positive
3	ChatGPT improves grammatical accuracy	80%	Positive
4	ChatGPT enhances creativity in writing	75%	Fairly Positive
5	ChatGPT reduces originality when overused	25%	Needs Guidance

As seen in the table, the highest percentage (90%) indicates that ChatGPT was most effective in assisting students during the idea generation stage. Students mentioned that interacting with ChatGPT allowed them to quickly brainstorm arguments, find supporting reasons, and obtain examples for their paragraphs. Meanwhile, 85% of students agreed that ChatGPT broadened their vocabulary repertoire, exposing them to various lexical choices they would not usually use in their writing. The grammatical feedback provided by ChatGPT also helped 80% of students identify sentence-level errors and refine their syntax. However, 25% of students expressed concern that excessive reliance on ChatGPT might reduce the originality of their work. This finding highlights the importance of teacher guidance in balancing AI assistance and independent thinking.

4.2 Observation of the Writing Process

Classroom observations during the three meetings confirmed the positive tendencies found in the questionnaire data. During the first session, many students showed hesitation in using ChatGPT; they tended to copy outputs directly without modification. In the second session, students began to edit and paraphrase ChatGPT's suggestions, showing increasing awareness of their linguistic choices. By the third session, most students demonstrated a better ability to integrate AI-generated ideas with their own expressions, producing paragraphs that were more coherent and stylistically varied.

Students were particularly enthusiastic about ChatGPT's role as a source of linguistic input and creative stimulus. One participant remarked, "ChatGPT helps me when I get stuck; it gives me new ideas to continue my paragraph." Another commented that the tool motivated them to experiment with different expressions, such as transitions or synonyms, which enriched their writing. Despite these advantages, a few students admitted to relying too much on AI-generated text, which led to less authentic expressions.

4.3 Summary of Findings

Overall, the findings suggest that ChatGPT effectively supports students' creative engagement in argumentative paragraph writing. The tool not only helps them overcome writer's block but also exposes them to a wider linguistic repertoire. Students' improved fluency and motivation to write were observed throughout the writing sessions. Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that teacher scaffolding remains essential to ensure students use ChatGPT as a learning partner rather than a shortcut to complete assignments.

The combination of quantitative (percentage data) and qualitative (observational notes) results reveals that ChatGPT serves as both a cognitive support tool, by providing ideas and feedback, and a creative stimulus, encouraging students to take more risks in their writing. However, sustainable learning outcomes depend on reflective use and continuous pedagogical guidance.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study show that ChatGPT provides significant pedagogical benefits for students learning to write English argumentative paragraphs. Most students perceived ChatGPT as a supportive tool that enhanced their ability to generate ideas, organize thoughts, and refine language use. This aligns with Fitria (2024), who emphasized that artificial intelligence tools can promote learner autonomy and improve linguistic confidence. By offering immediate feedback and varied linguistic examples, ChatGPT encourages students to think critically about language and structure while composing their paragraphs.

From the perspective of writing pedagogy, ChatGPT functions as a form of cognitive scaffolding. It assists learners in the stages of prewriting, drafting, and revising, helping them move from idea generation to coherent expression. This finding is consistent with the principles of constructivist learning, as proposed by Vygotsky (1978), which suggest that learners develop understanding through social interaction and mediated tools. In this case,

ChatGPT acts as a digital mediator that supports the zone of proximal development by providing linguistic input that students can build upon.

The increase in students' creativity observed during the sessions also indicates that ChatGPT can stimulate divergent thinking in writing tasks. According to Maley (2012), creative writing involves experimentation with language and the ability to express ideas uniquely. ChatGPT, by suggesting multiple expressions and styles, provides linguistic stimuli that help students explore alternative ways of expressing meaning. This process of experimentation is important for fostering linguistic flexibility and self-expression in EFL learners.

However, the study also revealed a potential risk of overreliance on AI-generated outputs. About a quarter of the participants admitted that they sometimes copied ChatGPT's suggestions without modification, which may reduce the originality of their writing. This concern echoes Kasneci et al. (2023), who warn that uncritical use of large language models may lead to intellectual passivity. Therefore, teacher guidance plays a crucial role in framing ChatGPT as a collaborative assistant rather than an authoritative source. Instructors should encourage students to evaluate, revise, and adapt AI-generated texts to maintain authenticity and critical engagement.

Pedagogically, the integration of ChatGPT offers opportunities to design hybrid learning environments where technology complements human instruction. Teachers can incorporate ChatGPT into writing tasks to provide individualized support, while also conducting reflective discussions that develop students' AI literacy and ethical awareness. Such practices ensure that students not only improve their writing performance but also understand the implications of using AI responsibly in academic contexts.

In summary, ChatGPT can be a valuable pedagogical tool in EFL writing classrooms when used thoughtfully and under supervision. Its potential to enhance creativity, accuracy, and learner autonomy should be balanced with strategies that sustain independent thinking and originality. With appropriate instructional design, ChatGPT can contribute to a more engaging, reflective, and technologically enriched writing pedagogy.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that ChatGPT serves as an effective supplementary tool for assisting students in writing English argumentative paragraphs creatively. The use of ChatGPT helped students generate ideas, enrich their vocabulary, and improve grammatical accuracy, while also enhancing their overall motivation and engagement in the writing process. The findings demonstrate that ChatGPT supports both cognitive and creative aspects of writing by offering linguistic input, examples, and feedback that stimulate students' independent thinking.

However, the study also emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balance between technological assistance and human creativity. While ChatGPT provides valuable support, overreliance on AI-generated content may reduce originality and critical awareness. Therefore, teachers must play an active role in guiding students to use ChatGPT reflectively,

encouraging them to analyze, adapt, and evaluate AI suggestions rather than copying them directly.

Pedagogically, integrating ChatGPT into writing instruction aligns with the principles of constructivist learning, where technology acts as a scaffold for deeper understanding and creative exploration. Educators should design writing tasks that promote collaboration between human and artificial intelligence, ensuring that students develop not only linguistic competence but also digital and ethical literacy. In this way, ChatGPT can become a productive medium for fostering creativity, autonomy, and reflective thinking in English language learning.

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