

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Writing is one of the most complex skills in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Compared to receptive skills such as listening and reading, writing demands higher-level productive abilities as it involves idea planning, vocabulary selection, sentence structuring, and the organization of a coherent text et al., 2025; Kurt & Kurt, 2024). For EFL students, writing is often one of the most challenging skills due to limited linguistic competence and the lack of sufficient exposure to quality writing models (Afkarin & Asmara, 2024; Bok & Cho, 2023; Mun, 2024). These challenges are particularly evident in narrative writing, which requires students to develop creative elements such as plot, characters, and conflict while maintaining language accuracy and coherence (Novitri & Riau, 2021; Seo, 2024).

Feedback plays a crucial role in helping students address these challenges. It is defined as information provided to writers regarding their performance or output, with the aim of improving the quality of their writing (Banihashem et al., 2024; Huang & Teng, 2025). Effective feedback is formative in nature: it does not merely correct errors but also provides clear guidance to help students improve weaknesses while maintaining strengths in their writing (Mahapatra, 2024; Polakova & Ivenz, 2024). In the EFL context, feedback typically addresses grammatical accuracy, vocabulary choice, sentence-to-sentence coherence, paragraph organization, and clarity of ideas 025; ZHU Yutong et al., 2024). Hwang et al., (2025) found that formative feedback focusing on grammatical accuracy and lexical complexity significantly improves the writing quality of EFL learners. Similarly, Fan, (2023) discovered that automated written corrective feedback (AWCF) tools such as Grammarly encourage students to revise their writing more actively, although their impact tends to be limited to surface-level features such as grammar.

Traditional feedback delivery, however, faces several challenges. Teachers often lack sufficient time to provide individualized feedback, particularly in large classes with many students (Mahapatra, 2024; Sitompul & Anditasari, 2022; Winarti & Cahyono, 2020). Moreover, some students remain passive, reluctant to ask questions or request clarification due to feelings of shyness or fear of being judged as less competent (Bok & Cho, 2023; Gozali et al., 2024; Long, 2024). As a result, students' need for consistent feedback is often unmet, despite evidence that continuous feedback enhances writing quality, particularly in terms of accuracy and coherence in narrative texts (Elkatmiş, 2024). Sitompul and Anditasari (2022) reported that issues such as unequal task distribution in collaborative writing can lower student motivation, whereas Winarti and Cahyono k improved scores in content, organization, and grammar but was constrained by teachers' limited time.

In recent years, the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed various aspects of human life, particularly in education and language learning. AI-based applications are increasingly adopted due to their ability to provide instant feedback, personalized learning support, and adaptive assistance for learners (Elkatmış, 2024; Grassini, 2023). Among generative AI tools, ChatGPT has gained exceptional global attention. In 2025, ChatGPT reached approximately 800 million weekly active users worldwide and processed over 2 billion prompts per day, indicating its widespread use across sectors, including education (Shubham Singh, 2025). This rapid adoption highlights ChatGPT's growing influence on writing-related activities, such as idea generation, content organization, and language accuracy.

This global trend is also evident in Indonesia. Alongside the growth of digital literacy and internet penetration, Indonesia has been reported as one of the countries with a high level of ChatGPT usage in 2025 (GoodStats, 2025). Indonesian students increasingly use ChatGPT to assist academic writing tasks, including drafting texts, revising grammar, organizing ideas, and generating creative content. The high engagement with ChatGPT in the Indonesian educational context indicates that this technology is not only globally popular but also locally relevant. Therefore, examining students' perceptions of ChatGPT as a learning support tool becomes essential to understand its pedagogical value, acceptance, and potential impact on writing development in Indonesian schools.

Advances in artificial intelligence (AI) technology offer potential solutions to these challenges through the use of automated feedback tools (Elkatmış, 2024; Grassini, 2023). One prominent tool is ChatGPT, a large language model developed by OpenAI to generate natural language responses that resemble human interaction (Abduljawad, 2024; Afkarin & Asmara, 2024; Kurt & Kurt, 2024). In writing, ChatGPT can provide rapid corrections, suggestions for content organization, and creative ideas, including for narrative texts (Athanassopoulos et al., 2023; Hwang et al., 2025; Y. Wang, 2025). In addition, ChatGPT can increase student motivation through personalized and interactive learning experiences (Banihashem et al., 2024; Huang & Teng, 2025; Khzouz et al., 2024). Afkarin and Asmara (2024) found that students using ChatGPT had higher motivation (mean = 44.88) and better academic performance (GPA = 3.63) than non-users. Similarly, Khzouz et al. (2024) reported that 78.5% of students felt that ChatGPT personalized learning and effectively corrected errors, while Hidayatullah and Untari (2023) observed an improvement in writing scores (pre-test 65.2 → post-test 69.4) with ChatGPT use.

Several studies have examined students' perceptions of ChatGPT. Artiana and Fakhurrriana (2024) reported that students appreciated the speed of ChatGPT's feedback but still needed teacher guidance to interpret and apply the suggestions effectively. Mun (2024) found that some students doubted the accuracy of AI-generated feedback and preferred feedback validated by teachers. Nguyen et al. (2024) noted that ChatGPT supports not only grammatical correction but also idea generation, although concerns about over-reliance persist. Bok and Cho (2023) reported high satisfaction levels (M = 4.13) regarding ChatGPT for paragraph revision, but students emphasized the need for

additional teacher explanations. Gozali (2024) found that Indonesian students viewed ChatGPT as a “learning buddy” that supported idea generation and correction, but they expressed concerns about losing originality. These perceptions influence students’ acceptance and sustained use of ChatGPT in writing (Dewi, 2024; Ngo, 2023).

While numerous studies have examined university students’ perceptions of ChatGPT feedback (Artiana & Fakhurriana, 2024; Bok & Cho, 2023; Gozali et al., 2024; Mun, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2024), there is still a lack of research exploring how vocational high school students perceive this technology in developing their writing. Student perceptions are critical in determining the sustainable use of this technology, particularly in narrative writing, which demands both creativity and accuracy (Hidayatullah & Untari, 2023). In Indonesia, Afkarin and Asmara (2024) emphasized that ChatGPT improves motivation and academic performance at the university level, but its potential in vocational high schools, particularly for narrative writing, remains underexplored. Studies by Artiana and Fakhurriana (2024) have largely focused on university contexts and argumentative essays rather than narrative texts. Traditional narrative writing research, such as that by Novitri & Riau, n.d.(2021), demonstrated the effectiveness of interactive methods but did not incorporate AI feedback.

This study focuses on narrative writing, a key genre in the EFL curriculum that emphasizes the structure of orientation, complication, resolution, and re-orientation (Anderson, 1997). Narrative writing plays an essential role in developing students’ ability to express ideas creatively and coherently, while also strengthening their understanding of linguistic forms and text organization. Previous studies have confirmed that narrative writing is one of the most challenging genres for EFL students as it requires creativity, logical plot development, and linguistic accuracy (Novitri & Riau, 2021; Seo, 2024). Furthermore, **Seo (2024)** specifically highlights that these challenges are even more evident among vocational high school students, who often struggle to generate creative ideas, maintain plot coherence, and apply correct grammar in their writing

ChatGPT has the potential to serve as a form of digital scaffolding that supports both linguistic aspects (grammar, vocabulary, coherence) and narrative elements such as character development and conflict (Abduljawad, 2024; Athanassopoulos et al., 2023; Michel-Villarreal et al., 2023). However, most research on ChatGPT has focused on non-narrative genres such as academic writing (Mahapatra, 2024; Tseng & Lin, 2024; Zhang, 2023), argumentative writing (Kurt & Kurt, 2024; Polakova & Ivenz, 2024), and descriptive writing (Benali, 2021; Lam & Le, 2024). Furthermore, studies on students’ perceptions of ChatGPT have mostly targeted higher education contexts (Mun, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2024), leaving a research gap in the SMK context, particularly for narrative writing.

This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing SMK students’ perceptions in Gresik regarding the benefits, challenges, and experiences of using ChatGPT as a feedback tool to improve narrative writing accuracy. The findings are expected to provide practical insights for teachers, curriculum developers, and future researchers.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are vocational high school students' perceptions toward the use of ChatGPT in supporting narrative development?
2. Is there a correlation among the dimensions of Intrinsic Motivation, Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, and Behavioral Intention, and which dimension has the strongest influence on students' overall perception of ChatGPT?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To describe vocational high school students' perceptions toward the use of ChatGPT in supporting their narrative writing development.
2. To examine the correlation among the dimensions of Intrinsic Motivation, Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, and Behavioral Intention, and identify which dimension most strongly influences students' overall perception of ChatGPT.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on students' perceptions of using ChatGPT feedback in narrative text writing at vocational high schools (SMK) in Gresik. In other words, this research does not directly analyze the quality of students' written texts but rather highlights how they perceive the clarity, usefulness, and effectiveness of the feedback provided by ChatGPT. The scope of this study is limited to narrative texts and does not extend to other genres such as descriptive, argumentative, or expository writing.

The limitations of this study include three main aspects. First, in terms of **variables**, this research is restricted to students' perceptions of ChatGPT feedback, without comparing it to teacher or peer feedback and without directly measuring the improvement in students' writing quality. Second, in terms of **location**, the participants are limited to vocational high schools in Gresik, so the findings may not be fully generalizable to other educational contexts in Indonesia. Third, in terms of **time**, the study was carried out during the 2025 academic year, making the results contextual to the period when ChatGPT was actively integrated into students' writing practice.

Thus, this research is contextual and descriptive in nature, focusing only on students' experiences and perceptions of using ChatGPT as a provider of automated feedback in narrative writing.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of literature on artificial intelligence-assisted writing, particularly with a focus on narrative writing in the context of EFL in Indonesia. This study expands our understanding of how technology, such as ChatGPT, can support the development of students' writing skills in accordance with the characteristics of specific genres.

Practically, this study has several benefits. For teachers, this study can provide insights into how ChatGPT can be used to complement traditional feedback methods, so that teachers can utilize technology to improve the effectiveness of writing. For students, this study provides opportunities to obtain instant and interactive feedback, so that they can improve the quality of their narrative writing more independently and efficiently. For

future researchers, this study can serve as a basis for further studies comparing the effectiveness of feedback from ChatGPT with feedback from teachers and peers, or examining its application to different text genres.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1. EFL (English as a Foreign Language)

The use and learning of English in contexts where it is not the primary language of the community. In Indonesia, EFL is part of the school curriculum, including vocational schools, where writing skills are one of the core competencies that students must master (J. Anderson, 2018).

2. Writing Skills

Productive language skills involving idea planning, vocabulary selection, sentence structure, and coherent text organization. In the context of EFL, writing skills require high-level cognitive skills and are often challenging for students due to their limited linguistic proficiency (Knapp & Watkins, 2005).

3. Narrative Writing

Narrative writing is a genre of text that recounts real or imaginary experiences with the aim of entertaining readers while conveying a moral message. The structure of this text includes orientation (introduction of characters, time, and place), complication (the emergence of problems or conflicts), resolution (problem solving), and sometimes re-orientation (reflection or moral message). In EFL classes, narrative writing requires students not only to focus on grammar and vocabulary, but also on creativity, plot coherence, character development, and a logical sequence of events (A. Anderson, 1997).

4. Feedback

Feedback is information given to learners about the performance of their writing with the aim of improving the quality of the text. In the context of EFL, feedback covers aspects of grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, sentence structure, coherence, paragraph organization, and clarity of ideas (Banihashem et al., 2024).

5. ChatGPT Feedback

ChatGPT feedback refers to the automated responses, suggestions, and evaluations generated by ChatGPT, a large language model developed by OpenAI, on students' writing. This feedback includes grammar and vocabulary corrections, punctuation checks, sentence and paragraph organization improvements, and text coherence enhancements. In narrative writing, ChatGPT can also support advanced elements such as idea development, character development, plot development, and conflict development, thus functioning as digital scaffolding. However, its accuracy and contextual appropriateness still require teacher guidance (Abduljawad, 2024).

6. Digital Scaffolding

Digital scaffolding is technology-based support that helps students gradually develop their writing skills, both in terms of linguistics and content. ChatGPT can serve as digital scaffolding by providing suggestions for language improvements, ideas, and

storylines, enabling students to write more independently and confidently (Banihashem et al., 2024).

7. Motivation in Writing

Motivation in writing is internal and external encouragement that influences students' readiness and desire to write in English. The use of ChatGPT has been shown to increase students' motivation to write because it provides instant feedback, supports self-confidence, and strengthens engagement in the writing process (Banihashem et al., 2024).

8. Students' Perceptions

Students' perceptions refer to students' attitudes, opinions, and personal experiences regarding the use of ChatGPT feedback in writing. This includes students' views on the usefulness, clarity, accuracy, and impact of feedback on their motivation, confidence, and independence in writing. Studies show that most students consider ChatGPT to be a helpful, easy-to-use, and motivating tool, although they still emphasize the importance of the teacher's role (Hwang et al., 2025).

