



Exploring ChatGPT as an AI-Powered Feedback Tool in EFL Writing: A Systematic Literature Review

Ahmed Sardi¹, Syarifuddin Dollah², Abdullah³

STKIP Darud Da'wah wal Irsyad Pinrang¹, Universitas Negeri Makassar^{2,3}, Indonesia
email: ¹sardihere@gmail.com; ²syarifuddindollah@unm.ac.id; ³abdullah5891@unm.ac.id

ABSTRACT

EFL writing presents challenges not only for students but also for teachers who must provide constructive feedback to promote student improvement. Given the substantial workload that teachers often face, there is a growing need for tools that can support the feedback process. The rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly tools like ChatGPT, has introduced new opportunities in the field of education. Its potential to assist in providing feedback has garnered significant attention. Several studies have explored students' perceptions of receiving feedback through ChatGPT in EFL writing, with findings that vary in scope and sentiment. This study aims to explore students' general perceptions of ChatGPT as a feedback tool, examining both its benefits and drawbacks as reported in the existing literature. Using the PRISMA Systematic Literature Review model, this research analyzes five out of 29 articles that met the inclusion criteria established for the review. The findings suggest that, in general, students have a positive perception of ChatGPT as a feedback provider. However, the data also indicate that ChatGPT cannot fully replace human feedback, such as that provided by teachers, due to the various advantages and limitations of the tool. These insights can serve as valuable guidance for teachers who are considering incorporating ChatGPT into their feedback practices for EFL writing. By understanding both the potential and the challenges of AI-driven feedback, teachers can make informed decisions on how best to support their students' writing development.

Keywords: AI, ChatGPT, EFL, Feedback, Writing

First Receive:

1 June 2025

Revised:

11 August 2025

Accepted:

6 Oct 2025

Final Proof Received:

1 January 2026

Published:

1 June 2026

How to cite (in APA style):

Sardi, Ahmed, et.al. (2026). Exploring ChatGPT as an AI-Powered Feedback Tool in EFL Writing: A Systematic Literature Review. *ELITE Journal*, 8 (1), 97-108.

INTRODUCTION

Writing is claimed as the most difficult skill in language learning (Yunus & Chien, 2016) as it demands not only linguistic proficiency but also a significant amount of practice and cognitive effort. During the process, students will involve in multiple stages that allow them to refine and improve their ideas, such as pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and finally, publishing (Faraj, 2015). However, Suharti et al. (2019) challenge this traditional view by suggesting that after the drafting stage, students write their first text. After that, student will receive response or feedback before they revise the text. This stage is essential, as it guides students through revision.

Feedback refers to a source of information about the students' strengths and weaknesses on their writing to do improvement (Wahyuni, 2017). It is a powerful tool for

helping EFL students enhance their writing skills by facilitating them to monitor and improve their work, ultimately improving the quality of their final writing (Lee et al., 2021). Gonzalez-Torres and Sarango (2023) found a statistically significant difference between the groups that received feedback and those that did not. This finding underscores the critical role feedback plays in the writing process, demonstrating its potential to foster both immediate and long-term improvements in students' writing abilities.

While both teachers and students agree that providing feedback is essential, teachers face various challenges, such as heavy workloads and large class sizes, which can hinder their ability to provide timely and effective feedback (Hayes, 1997; Thi & Nikolov, 2022). For instance, Utami et al. (2024) examined burnout among EFL teachers in Indonesia and found that 57.8% of participants reported high levels of emotional exhaustion. Contributing factors included administrative burdens, pressure to adapt to new technologies, and the challenge of managing disruptive student behavior. These findings highlight the considerable strain on teachers, which can negatively affect their ability to provide the necessary feedback on students' writing.

To reduce the workload associated with providing feedback, teachers can use a variety of automatic writing evaluation tools (AWE) or artificial intelligence (AI) mediated assessment tools (Thi & Nikolov, 2022; Shi & Aryadoust, 2024). Recent advancements in AI have significantly improved AWE, particularly with the integration of generative AI technologies such as large language models (LLMs) (Kurt & Kurt, 2024). Tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, and LLaMA represent a major leap forward in delivering personalized, human-like feedback that addresses both surface-level writing issues, such as grammar and syntax, and deep-level issues, such as more complex higher-order writing skills, including argumentation and coherence (Wiboolyasarini et al., 2024).

As the use of ChatGPT and other AI tools for providing feedback in EFL writing increases, it is essential to gain a deeper understanding of students' perceptions, the potential benefits, and drawbacks associated with integrating this technology into feedback provision. Students' experiences with AI-driven feedback, such as ChatGPT, can highlight both opportunities for improving writing skills and areas where AI may fall short in capturing the nuances of language use. These insights are valuable for teachers as they navigate the complexities of adopting ChatGPT as an assessment tool in EFL writing.

METHOD

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), a systematic research method for collecting, critically evaluating, integrating, and presenting findings from various research studies related to the research question or topic of interest. The term "systematic" refers to the adoption of a consistent and widely accepted methodology (Pati & Lorusso, 2017). This method helps the researcher map previous studies on Students' Perceptions on ChatGPT as an AI Feedback Provider in EFL Writing, aiming to understand the acceptance of ChatGPT as a feedback provider in EFL writing.

This study follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) guidelines. In applying the PRISMA guidelines, the researcher discusses the methods used to select articles related to "Students' Perceptions on ChatGPT as an AI Feedback Provider in EFL Writing". The PRISMA method includes articles sourced from the Dimension and Scopus databases, which were used to conduct a systematic review. The PRISMA guidelines applied here include information sources, search strategies, eligibility criteria, selection process, data collection process, and data items.

Below is a table presenting the criteria for determining the articles reviewed:

Table 1. Criteria of Inclusion and Exclusion

No	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
1.	Publication in 2024-2025	Publication before 2024 and after January 2025
2.	Journal articles indexed by Dimension and Scopus	Book, Dissertation, Thesis, Blog, Journal Articles from other Indexers
3.	Specific in EFL Writing Context	Common topics in other areas
4.	Using English	Using other languages
5.	Articles discusses "Students' Perception on ChatGPT as Feedback Provider"	Articles do not discuss "Students' Perception on ChatGPT as teaching or learning tools"

A key consideration in article selection was the publication year, with only articles published between 2024 and 2025 being reviewed. This timeframe was chosen as it aligns with the increasing familiarity and usage of ChatGPT as a feedback provider. Here is the growing trend in Dimension database:

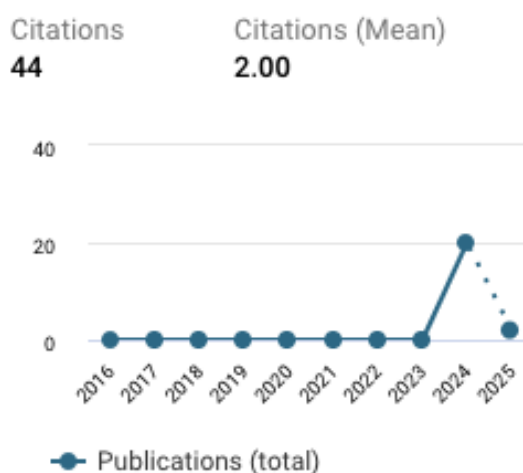


Figure 1. Research Trends about ChatGPT as a Feedback Provider in Dimension Database

In addition, preference was given to journals indexed in the Dimension and Scopus databases due to their established reputability and academic credibility, ensuring high-quality sources for the review.

The article search for this study was carried out through the Dimension database, where the following keywords were used: ("ChatGPT Feedback" AND "Students' Perception" AND "EFL Writing" AND "AI Feedback"). This search resulted in the identification of 22 articles relevant to the chosen keywords. In parallel, a search was conducted in the Scopus database using a similar combination of keywords: (students' AND perception AND on AND chatgpt AND feedback AND as AND ai AND feedback AND in AND efl AND writing). This search yielded 7 articles. Combining the results from both databases, a total of 29 articles were initially identified for further review.

After that, the data was filtered from the identified articles to perform a literature search limitation based on the established inclusion and exclusion criteria. The results of the article search using the PRISMA method are described in the following flowchart:

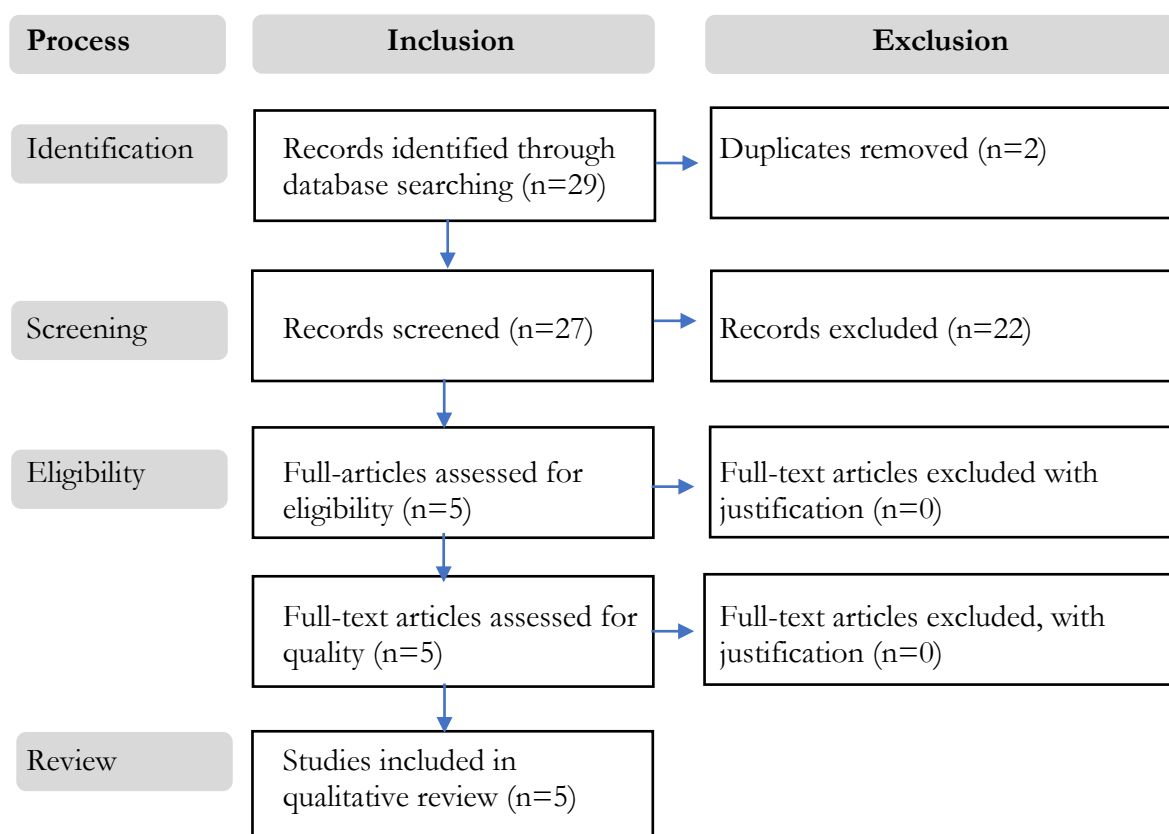


Figure 2. PRISMA Framework of Article Selection

FINDINGS

a. Students' Perception on Chat GPT as a Feedback Provider in EFL Writing

This section discusses the key findings related to students' perceptions of using ChatGPT as a feedback provider in EFL writing. Students' perceptions are an important factor in understanding how technologies like ChatGPT can be accepted in the writing learning process, particularly in providing feedback on EFL writing. In the EFL context, feedback from teachers play an important role in the development of students' writing skills. However, with the rise of artificial intelligence technologies like ChatGPT, questions arise regarding how students respond to the feedback provided by this tool, whether they find it beneficial, and whether this technology can replace or complement the role of human in giving feedback.

For instance, Toscu (2024) suggests that AI-generated feedback can match human feedback in terms of students' perceptions. By using the Student Perceptions of Writing Feedback Scale and analyzing the data with statistical tools like the Independent Samples t-Test, he found that students did not differentiate between feedback provided by AI (such as ChatGPT) and feedback generated by human sources. This is a noteworthy finding, as it suggests that AI feedback, at least in some contexts, is perceived similarly to human feedback by students. This could point to an increased acceptance of AI tools in educational settings, as students may not feel the lack of a "human touch" as strongly as anticipated.

Meanwhile, Zeevy-Solovey (2024) compared feedback from three different sources: AI (ChatGPT), teachers, and peers. The results indicated that students perceived both

ChatGPT and teacher feedback as effective, with peer feedback also being generally considered effective. This reinforces the idea that AI feedback can be on par with traditional methods, but it also underscores the continuing importance of human feedback, which provides not only technical guidance but also emotional and interpersonal engagement. While the feedback from ChatGPT and teachers was regarded as effective, the study by Zeevy-Solovey also highlights that peer feedback, which is often less formal and immediate, can still be valuable to students. The social interaction inherent in peer feedback could provide a level of engagement and mutual learning that AI and teacher feedback alone cannot replicate. This suggests that a blended approach, using a combination of AI, teacher, and peer feedback, could be most beneficial for EFL learners.

This is relevant to a study by Alsofyani and Barzanji (2024) in which students reported a high level of satisfaction with ChatGPT's ability to provide feedback on their writing. While they acknowledged the usefulness of AI-driven feedback, their preference for ChatGPT over human instructors was significantly lower. This suggests that ChatGPT is valued for its ability to deliver quick and consistent feedback, however students still place a higher value on the personalized, nuanced feedback that humans provide.

Other studies indicate more nuanced reactions to AI-mediated feedback. Teng (2024) highlighted mixed feelings among students when comparing feedback from ChatGPT and teachers. On one hand, students appreciated ChatGPT's feedback for being thorough and powerful, especially when compared to what they saw as superficial feedback from teachers. On the other hand, students expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of human warmth in AI feedback, missing the emotional and personalized touch that teachers often provide. This finding underscores the fact that while AI tools like ChatGPT are effective in addressing technical aspects of writing, they cannot replace the human interaction that contributes to students' emotional engagement with the feedback process.

b. Benefits of Chat GPT as a Feedback Provider in EFL Writing

The rapid rise of AI tools, particularly ChatGPT, has significantly impacted educational settings, especially in the realm of writing and feedback. Various studies have highlighted how ChatGPT is perceived positively by students due to its efficiency, comprehensiveness, and accessibility. This section explores the benefits of ChatGPT as a feedback provider, as reported in several key studies, emphasizing the reasons behind students' favorable perceptions.

One of the most frequently cited benefits of ChatGPT is its ability to provide fast feedback. Zeevy-Solovey (2024) found that all students involved in the study agreed that ChatGPT's quick responses made it an invaluable tool for improving their writing. In traditional educational settings, feedback from instructors often takes several days, which can delay the learning process. ChatGPT, however, provides instant feedback, enabling students to identify mistakes and make corrections in real-time. This immediate interaction not only accelerates the learning process but also helps students maintain momentum in their work, preventing frustration or loss of focus.

The convenience of receiving feedback at any time further enhances ChatGPT's appeal. As pointed out by Alsofyani and Barzanji (2024), students appreciated having a tool that was available around the clock, making it especially useful for those who might struggle to receive timely feedback from human instructors. The ability to access detailed feedback whenever needed removes the constraint of time, ensuring that students can work at their own pace and convenience.

In addition to providing fast feedback, ChatGPT has been shown to positively influence students' self-efficacy and belief in their writing abilities. Teng (2024) highlights that students reported feeling more confident in their writing after receiving feedback from

ChatGPT. This sense of assurance stems primarily from the AI's ability to identify and correct grammar mistakes, which helps students realize their strengths and areas for improvement.

The process of noticing and rectifying errors is crucial for learners, as it helps them understand not only what they did wrong but also why it was incorrect. This level of insight contributes to a more profound sense of improvement, making students more willing to engage in writing tasks and discussions. Moreover, this increased self-efficacy allows students to feel more confident when participating in collaborative exchanges around writing. By receiving feedback from ChatGPT, students feel more equipped to discuss their work and contribute meaningfully to peer reviews, ultimately leading to deeper learning experiences.

Toscu (2024) emphasized that ChatGPT provides more than just surface-level corrections; it offers detailed explanations about the correct or incorrect usage of various forms, content efficiency, and the appropriateness of complex sentence structures. The AI does not simply point out errors but provides contextual guidance on why specific changes should be made. For instance, when ChatGPT detects a sentence that lacks clarity, it does not merely flag it as problematic; it suggests ways to restructure the sentence and improve its overall coherence.

Additionally, ChatGPT introduces students to a broader range of vocabulary, enriching their writing style. The AI can recommend synonyms or alternative expressions that maintain the original meaning but enhance the overall tone or precision of the text. This exposure to a wide variety of language forms helps students expand their lexical range and improve their writing over time.

The feedback provided by ChatGPT is also characterized by a neutral and formal tone. Toscu (2024) found that the AI often addressed students in the third person, offering an objective and professional style of feedback. This impersonal tone helps create a sense of distance between the student and the feedback, reducing potential emotional reactions and fostering a more analytical approach to correction. The formal style also models the type of professional communication expected in academic writing, further reinforcing students' understanding of proper register and academic norms.

Another key benefit highlighted by Polakova and Ivenz (2024) is ChatGPT's ability to offer personalized writing support. Unlike traditional feedback systems, which may apply generic comments across the board, ChatGPT tailors its responses to the individual needs of each student. The AI adapts its suggestions based on the specific errors made by the student, providing guidance that is relevant to their unique learning journey. This personalized approach makes the feedback more impactful, as students are given specific strategies for improvement rather than vague or generalized advice.

Finally, the "just-in-time" nature of ChatGPT's feedback makes it a valuable tool for students seeking continuous improvement. As noted by Alsofyani and Barzanji (2024), the immediacy of ChatGPT's corrections, often accompanied by detailed explanations and justifications, ensures that students can act on feedback without delay. With a simple click of a button, students can access tailored advice and corrections, making the process of learning both efficient and effective.

In traditional classroom settings, feedback can sometimes feel disconnected from the writing process, arriving too late to be of much use. ChatGPT addresses this challenge by offering feedback as students write, enabling them to revise and refine their work in real-time. This continuous loop of writing, receiving feedback, and revising empowers students to take ownership of their learning and make incremental improvements with each draft.

c. Drawbacks of Chat GPT as a Feedback Provider in EFL Writing

Although the advantages of ChatGPT, such as speed, accessibility, and comprehensive responses, are widely acknowledged, there are several drawbacks to its application that must be considered. Teachers should be aware of these limitations to ensure that feedback remains genuinely beneficial to students, fostering a balanced approach to AI-mediated and human-provided support.

A study by Zeevy-Solovey (2024) revealed that only a few students were willing to rely solely on ChatGPT as a feedback source for their writing. While many students found ChatGPT helpful, they expressed skepticism about using it exclusively for their writing revisions. These students preferred receiving feedback from peers and teachers, as they felt that human feedback allowed for a deeper understanding of their mistakes and provided an opportunity for asking follow-up questions. This sentiment reflects a broader reluctance to fully trust technology in critical learning processes, as students often see value in human interactions that can address nuances and clarify doubts.

The study also highlighted that ChatGPT's feedback was sometimes perceived as inconsistent. This lack of reliability can contribute to students' hesitation in relying on it entirely. Since writing is a complex skill that involves subjective judgment, students may prefer feedback from peers and teachers who can consider their unique voice, intentions, and context more thoroughly than an AI can. Therefore, while ChatGPT can serve as a valuable supplementary tool, its effectiveness may be diminished when students perceive its feedback as unreliable or impersonal.

Polakova and Ivenz (2024) found that a small group of students (four participants) reported dissatisfaction with the quality of feedback from ChatGPT, which they described as lacking specificity. These students felt that ChatGPT's suggestions often failed to address the underlying issues in their writing. In particular, some students struggled with revising complex aspects of their work, such as grammar, passive voice usage, and the application of linking words and reporting verbs. In contrast, feedback from teachers and peers often comes with more context and personalized insights that students can apply more directly to their writing.

In a study by Alsofyani and Barzanji (2024), some students noted that ChatGPT sometimes made corrections that they considered unrealistic or unnecessary. In particular, ChatGPT would sometimes attempt to rewrite sentences that were already correct, altering the original meaning or introducing unnecessary elaboration. This often led to the inclusion of extraneous information that was not needed or did not align with the student's intent. Such revisions can be frustrating for students who feel that their original thoughts and expressions were dismissed without justification.

Additionally, when ChatGPT makes such revisions, it may lead students to question the accuracy of its feedback in general. If students disagree with certain suggestions, they might begin to lose trust in the tool's overall effectiveness. This could cause them to rely less on AI feedback, undermining its potential as a learning aid. The absence of an option for students to ask clarifying questions or engage in dialogue with ChatGPT also means that they cannot challenge or explore the feedback more deeply, which could further erode their confidence in the tool.

One of the most frequently cited limitations of ChatGPT's feedback is its impersonal and formal tone, which many students find less engaging and harder to connect with than human feedback. According to Teng (2024), students expressed concerns that ChatGPT's responses lacked the emotional understanding and human touch that teachers and peers can provide. While the AI's formal tone may be appropriate for academic writing, it can feel distant and detached when students seek more personalized or

encouraging feedback. Human feedback often includes elements of empathy, motivation, and context-sensitive advice, which can be difficult for ChatGPT to replicate.

Moreover, some students found it challenging to understand the content generated by ChatGPT, especially when the feedback became overly technical or abstract. Without the opportunity to ask follow-up questions or engage in a dialogic exchange, students might struggle to fully grasp the reasoning behind ChatGPT's corrections. This barrier to understanding could limit the learning potential of the feedback, as students might not fully internalize or apply the suggestions.

Another concern raised by Teng (2024) is the potential for ChatGPT to "make mistakes" or fail to understand a student's inquiry correctly. Since the AI's responses are based on patterns learned from vast datasets, there are instances where the tool may misinterpret the context of a student's request or offer incorrect suggestions. This can be especially frustrating for students who rely on accurate feedback to improve their writing. As AI is still limited in its understanding of complex, context-specific nuances, its feedback may sometimes be inaccurate or inappropriate, potentially leading students down the wrong path.

This issue is compounded by the fact that students cannot always easily engage in a back-and-forth dialogue with ChatGPT to clarify misunderstandings. Unlike human feedback, which allows for real-time clarification and further discussion, AI feedback often lacks this adaptive and interactive element. As a result, students may be left with unresolved questions or may need to seek additional clarification from other sources, which can slow down their progress.

Lastly, Toscu (2024) highlights that ChatGPT's formal language is not always as "friendly" or approachable as feedback from teachers. Students value the personal touch that teachers provide when delivering feedback, as it often includes encouragement, motivation, and suggestions tailored to their individual learning styles. This human element, which is difficult for AI to replicate, plays a crucial role in fostering a positive and supportive learning environment.

DISCUSSION

While AI is generally viewed positively as a feedback provider in EFL writing, students have not fully embraced it as their sole source of feedback. They find ChatGPT feedback useful, but primarily as a supplement to teacher feedback, rather than a replacement. This indicates that teachers should avoid over-relying on ChatGPT and continue to play an active role in providing their own feedback. It is important to note that reliance on ChatGPT is different from its frequency of use (Stojanov et al., 2024). The goal is not to limit the frequent use of ChatGPT, but to ensure that it does not replace the teacher's essential role or cause them to neglect their responsibilities. As Brooks et al. (2019) point out, AI can help bridge the gap between student needs and teacher capacity, especially when teachers are overwhelmed by heavy workloads.

In addition, students need human element which AI systems like ChatGPT are not equipped to offer in feedback. It is not just about correcting mistakes or reinforcing learning but about fostering a connection that encourages personal growth, self-reflection, and emotional development. Advanced technologies like ChatGPT, while undeniably helpful in providing answers, resources, and explanations, do not provide the emotional support that is integral to a student's learning experience (Singh, 2024). Students often face academic challenges that can evoke feelings of frustration, confusion, or even self-doubt. In these moments, emotional support becomes crucial. A teacher's empathetic response to

a student's struggles, whether through encouragement, active listening, or thoughtful reassurance, can have a profound effect on their motivation and engagement with learning.

The absence of such emotional support in AI-driven feedback can undermine the effectiveness of the learning process. Studies show that students are more likely to engage with feedback that resonates emotionally and personally with them (Baumeister et al., 2007). When feedback is delivered without empathy or an understanding of the student's unique situation, it may be perceived as impersonal or even discouraging. In contrast, feedback delivered by a human teacher can be contextualized within the student's broader life circumstances, helping them feel understood and supported.

One of the key benefits of AI-driven feedback is its immediacy, which provides significant advantages for both teachers and students. For teachers, AI feedback eliminates the need to read and analyze every line of every student's essay, a task that can be overwhelming and time-consuming. This reduces the stress and workload teachers often experience, especially in large classes. In a study involving 27 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing teachers at a Chinese university, Yu et al. (2021) found that providing feedback on students' writing is an emotionally charged process, influenced by both institutional and individual factors. Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) systems, which leverage AI to assist teachers in giving feedback, have been shown to improve feedback efficiency significantly, while reducing teachers' burden (Ranalli, 2018). This not only enhances the quality of feedback but also offers teachers valuable support in maintaining a healthier work-life balance.

For students, immediate feedback plays a crucial role in their learning process. It addresses the common issue of students waiting too long to receive feedback, which can hinder their progress. Timely feedback allows students to identify gaps in their understanding and make improvements quickly, fostering both knowledge acquisition and self-confidence (Hathila et al., 2023). Immediate feedback is particularly effective in clarifying confusion, correcting errors, pinpointing learning gaps, bridging gender differences in learning outcomes, and motivating students to strive for better results (Ajogbeje, 2023). By providing this quick, actionable insight, AI systems not only help students learn more efficiently but also encourage a more engaged and proactive approach to their studies.

In addition, ChatGPT provides detailed feedback that addresses both surface-level and deeper aspects of writing. In the past, AWE feedback typically encouraged surface-level revisions rather than more substantial, high-level changes (Stevenson & Phakiti, 2014). However, as technology has evolved, ChatGPT, an AI-driven feedback tool, is now capable of promoting deeper revisions as well. To effectively target deeper levels of writing or content quality, teachers need to have the skill to craft the right prompts for ChatGPT. The quality of ChatGPT-generated feedback is heavily influenced by the user's prompts and the constraints set in place (Farrokhnia et al., 2024). When the prompt focuses on content, ChatGPT will also provide feedback specifically on the content itself.

Considering students' perceptions of both the advantages and limitations of ChatGPT feedback on their EFL writing, teachers must approach its integration thoughtfully, striking a balance between AI and human feedback. While AI tools like ChatGPT offer fast, detailed feedback on surface-level issues such as grammar and syntax, they often lack the emotional and contextual depth that human feedback can provide, particularly in terms of writing style, content development, and personal encouragement (Naik et al., 2024). Therefore, teachers need to carefully consider when and how to use AI feedback in conjunction with their own, ensuring that it enhances, rather than replaces, the human element of the feedback process (Werdiningsih et al., 2024). This could involve

using AI for initial drafts or technical corrections, while reserving human feedback for more personalized insights and nuanced revisions. Additionally, teachers should remain attuned to students' individual needs, preferences, and learning stages, as some may benefit more from AI's immediacy, while others might find human feedback more supportive. By thoughtfully combining AI and human feedback, teachers can optimize the learning experience, providing students with both efficiency and depth in their writing development.

CONCLUSION

This study found varied perceptions of ChatGPT as a feedback provider in EFL writing. While most students view it positively, it has not yet outperformed human feedback. Nevertheless, AI can serve as a valuable companion to teachers or peer feedback, offering additional support and enhancing the overall feedback process. This is because students still require the human touch in feedback, particularly for emotional and context-specific insights that AI, at this stage, may lack. It suggests that teachers need to be mindful of the different ways students interact with and respond to AI feedback. It is not enough to rely solely on AI tools to provide feedback; teachers must also be aware of the emotional and developmental needs of their students. To create a more balanced and effective feedback system, teachers should consider integrating AI feedback alongside traditional teacher and peer feedback, thereby combining the efficiency and objectivity of AI with the personal connection, emotional support, and motivational aspects that only human feedback can provide. In addition, the lack of personal engagement, potential inaccuracies, formal tone, and absence of deep contextual understanding can undermine the tool's effectiveness in fostering meaningful learning. Teachers must be aware of these shortcomings and recognize that AI feedback should complement, rather than replace, human feedback. Teachers must continually refine and develop their skills in providing feedback, as students continue to depend on them for guidance, support, and growth.

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