

## **Writing a Review with Chat GPT and the Scribbr AI Detection Tool**

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### **Introduction**

**IT IS WIDELY RECOGNISED THAT THE USE OF CHATGPT AND SIMILAR** artificial intelligence (AI) tools is a double-edged sword in that they can greatly increase student productivity but can also compromise originality and creativity in the writing process (Sudrajat, et al., 2024). This paper will avoid joining this debate, accept that students will surely need to learn how to use ChatGPT as part of communication in the future and, instead, look at some practical suggestions for teachers to include AI (in this case ChatGPT, specifically) in English writing classes. In doing so, it is hoped to show what extra value AI can provide to the writing process and also underline some current shortcomings when using such tools for teaching writing in English.

This short paper will start by looking at the writing process and how it relates to the advent of AI. There will be a quick look at the potential weaknesses in content produced by AI tools. Finally, there will be a case-study style introduction of an AI-based writing task.

This case study was carried out in a Japanese undergraduate setting but, as we will see later, the activities discussed can be easily transferred to other learning scenarios.

### **Background**

#### **Writing and Writing in an AI Age**

##### **Teaching the Writing Process**

A logical starting point for this research is to look at the writing process as it has existed in the traditional EFL classroom. The ‘standard’ writing textbook will usually outline a process that involves learning the ‘nuts and bolts’ of writing (grammar, punctuation etc), putting together language on a sentence level and then going on to produce content on a paragraph or essay/longer-text level. The process of putting together longer sections of text often involves some brainstorming/listing activities to ascertain and refine the text’s content. This is followed by some kind of planning step. Finally, it is common to have learners create and perfect their writing through a number of drafts that they will self or have peer checked and then re-write until they reach their final draft.

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Speaking anecdotally, Japanese learners of English are often reluctant to engage in this step-by-step process. There is often a feeling that writing it once is enough, and it should then be checked by the teacher. There are also issues of saving or preserving face when peer-checking activities are introduced.

### Using Translation Tools

It is important to note that the introduction of widely available generative AI tools such as ChatGPT around 2022 is really only a continuation of an issue that already existed; that is, the advent of advanced translation tools. Japan, particularly, with its high levels of smartphone ownership, dependence on translation in language ‘learning’ and students that typically are not accustomed to creating their own writing, has been affected by an increased use in tools such as DeepL.

This increase has led to many students being quite happy to create their writing in their mother tongue, use a translation tool to change it to English and then call it their own work. Avoiding the ethical arguments about whether this really is their own work, there are some very practical issues here. Students can become over-reliant on these tools and do not check the final content. This means, though the translations are often very high quality, there may be some unnatural expressions, some semantic issues, and perhaps most importantly, the students are not engaging in English at all.

In short, the main issues that arise with using generative AI in the language classroom have probably already occurred with the advent with advanced AI-based translation tools.

### Generative AI: an Opportunity to Teach the ‘Process’ and Move Away from Translation?

For teachers, such as myself, who see the main goal of a ‘native speaker’ teacher as encouraging learners to use the L2 in the classroom and move away from translation, translation tools are a particular ‘thorn in the side’. There is a constant battle to find a balance between allowing the learners to use their smartphones to research and check unknown lexicon and allowing them to translate big chunks of text from the L1 to the L2.

It is possible that utilising generative AI may actually allow students to work purely in the L2 and use these new AI tools to provide scaffolding in their learning.

### Does Using AI Completely Transform the Writing Process?

The obvious answer to this would appear to be ‘yes’, but as it currently stands, the role of the language writing classroom is to improve the competency of the learners. This means that AI should be inserted into the current process, rather than being allowed to completely dominate or usurp it. Whether this means moving the action of writing into class time rather than for homework (as it often was traditionally) to allow the teacher to

supervise learners more closely, or implementing similar tweaks to the process, then that is what needs to be done. As it currently stands, the writing process should be altered but not destroyed by the advent of AI.

### **Using AI-detection Tools - What's 'Wrong' with AI Text?**

As with any new technology (bitcoin, electric vehicles etc.), there is a range of reactions to AI. From seeing it as being completely world changing (for better or worse) to viewing it as merely overblown marketing. No doubt, reality lies somewhere in between these two extremes.

For the purposes of this study, it is important to outline what type of AI tool we are referring to. In this case, due to issues of practicality, ChatGPT jumps out as the tool that students would most likely use in the classroom. This is due to it (at the time of writing) having a fully working free version. It is also possible to use it without creating an account, so issues of privacy are not so pertinent.

So, is ChatGPT able to produce perfect human-like language? If not, what issues does the current version (version 4-o at the time of writing this paper) present for students looking to use it? As with any new method of study, it is important that users are aware of its shortcomings, as well as its benefits. Here is a list of some drawbacks to using this kind of tool to produce language:

- unusually formal tone in text that is meant to be friendly
- very difficult sentences
- unusual or incorrect wording
- text that's unnecessarily long and wordy
- the information is not factually correct
- words or phrases are repeated too many times
- redundant sentences
- the writing sounds like a robot not a human (very consistent sentence length)
- sentences that do not provide much information

(Davis, 2023)

It is therefore essential for the teacher to incorporate instruction on looking out for and circumventing these issues.

### **AI Has the Same Issues as Some (a Lot?) of My Students**

It was reading the list above that struck me as interesting as it showed that the content produced by AI tools shared a lot of the same issues that affect my students (especially those with higher levels of competence) when they write in English:

1. AI is strong on grammar/formatting/punctuation.
2. Addressing an audience/creating concise and interesting English/choosing correct words are more of a problem.
3. Editing and improving AI-produced text can help students with improving their own written work. They can pinpoint what needs improving.
4. AI detector tools may be a 'fun' way of gamifying the writing and editing process.

Particularly with students with higher competence of English, the forming of 'correct' sentences with solid grammar and punctuation, is not so challenging; however, effectively using the correct tone, register and general word selection for communicating with a specific audience are common issues.

In light of this, with the plethora of tools now available to a writer to help with achieving good grammar and punctuation, greater focus on how to communicate effectively through written language becomes possible and essential. Introducing ChatGPT can actually fit well into the writing process, with students needing further instruction on how to self-edit and proofread their writing. The only difference being that the traditional writing process had the learners putting together their own first draft, whereas the new method involves using ChatGPT to create the first draft. The end product should be a text that can be called the student's own work.

### **Methodology**

This task was introduced to a number of classes in undergraduate courses in two Japanese universities. There were a variety of levels in terms of English competency. The students were given a handout to explain the step-by-step process. They were allowed to use their laptops or smartphones. They were asked to download the latest version of ChatGPT and told that they did not need to create an account if they did not want to, and that they only needed the free version.

### **The Task**

Here is an overview of the task. The students were to do the following:

- write a review
- use AI (ChatGPT 3.5) to create the first draft
- edit and improve the draft to create their own final draft

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The hope was to achieve the following:

- introduce students to generative AI
- show them the possibilities
- show them the (at time of writing) limitations of this tool

In the following, the actual sections of the handout are included with some explanation of what is being achieved with each one (see the appendix for a full version).

### Warm up: Introduction to ChatGPT

This warm up activity was used as an introduction. All of the class groups had recently covered writing a review. This meant they were familiar with the basic structure and content of a ‘balanced’ review. This activity can easily be adapted to another writing task. It is important that they are familiar with that particular writing style to give them some context. The students went through the questions below in pairs.

1. Here is an example of a review using ChatGPT.
2. Can you see any mistakes here?
3. Which is better, your English or ChatGPT’s?
4. Which is better, AI or humans?

The students were given an example of what they would be doing in this task: a review. The aim here was to show the students what can be produced by AI tools currently available to them. It was hoped that they would see that the output from ChatGPT is generally very high-level in terms of grammar, spelling and punctuation. It was also hoped, however, that they may notice that AI English is sometimes ‘unnatural’, and that the ideal situation is leveraging the capabilities of the tool mixed with the skill and creativity of a human user.

It was pleasing that a significant number of learners quickly picked up on the fact that the AI-produced text was ‘robotic’ and ‘unnatural’.

In the following steps, the italics show the exact wording included in the handout the students used.

### Step 1

*Use this:*

<https://chat.openai.com/>

*Input “Please write me a balanced review about .....”*

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*“About 200 words long.”*

*“Give it a personal tone.”*

*“Include some facts.”*

Seeing as the majority of students had no experience of using ChatGPT, the first step gave them the exact phrases they should input into ChatGPT and an introduction to how the tool is used. The students were told that they could use their L1 in this step of the process but that for this particular activity, they should use the L2 English. This was mainly to give them further practice in using the L2.

I then gave them some time to do step 1 and checked their output.

### Step 2

*Is the language too difficult?*

*If yes, say “please make the English easier.”*

In step one, the students were purposely not instructed to make the output language easy to understand. This was to introduce them to the importance of ensuring that they, as the creator of this text, understand the text that is being outputted. As mentioned previously, a worrying trend from the use of translation tools is learners being ‘happy’ to present texts as their own even though some of the lexicon contained within is beyond their own understanding.

The learners were asked to read through the output from ChatGPT, and if the text was beyond their understanding, they should request the tool to reproduce the text but with ‘easier’ language.

This step can be repeated depending on the competence of the learners.

### Step 3a

*Now use this:*

<https://www.scribbr.com/ai-detector/>

*Copy and paste the ChatGPT text into the detector. What score does it give? .....%*

The challenge when teaching writing skills is that grammar, spelling and punctuation can be graded as ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, but more abstract concepts such as register, tone and natural-sounding expressions are far more difficult to grasp.

To this end, the use of AI-detection tools can be beneficial. Though they were developed to help catch writers using AI tools when they are not supposed to be, these detection tools are used for a more positive purpose in this activity. Detection tools

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work on the basis that text produced by AI software is far less erratic than that produced by humans. They basically check for trends in writing as listed in the introduction of this paper. They can therefore show students, in concrete terms, how ‘unnatural’ a piece of writing is.

The Scribbr tool was chosen for this task because it is easy to use and free. It also gives a nice easy-to-understand percentage score of how ‘AI’ a text is.

In this step, the students copy-and-pasted the text they produced on ChatGPT into the detection tool. It is important to note that in all the classes that went through this task, the first drafts all scored 100% on this tool.

### Step 3b

*100% means the detector feels the text is created by an AI tool.*

*How does it know that it is AI and not human? Give three reasons.*

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

This next part of the process was to have students think about how the output from the AI tool differs from human-produced text. Some classes were better than others at pinpointing the faults in the writing. The key point here is that the overuse of some words and the repetition of certain grammar structures that can be found in AI-produced text are elements that students should look out for in their own writing.

### Step 4

*Paste the text into Word.*

- *Change any phrases that look too formal (Word may make a suggestion).*
- *Make any really long, complex sentences simpler.*
- *Is there any strange wording?*

*Copy and paste the new text into <https://www.scribbr.com/ai-detector/>. What is the new score? .....%*

In these next steps, we go through the list of weaknesses inherent in AI writing and have the students look for examples of them in the text they have produced. It was decided to use Microsoft Word to edit their texts, but any similar software would work here.

Step four focused on looking for language that was too formal or sentences that were too complex. Exactly how you go through these steps will depend on the level of your group of students.

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For most of my students, the scores did not decrease significantly after this first step.

### Step 5

- *Are there any facts in the review? Check them on the internet.*
- *If there are any repeated words, change them.*
- *Are there any words that do not need to be there? Remove them.*

Copy and paste the new text into <https://www.scribbr.com/ai-detector/>. What is the new score? .....%

Step five moved on to some other aspects of AI-produced text. The propensity of ChatGPT to sometimes make up or imagine facts and statistics is well publicised. It is therefore crucial that students are aware of this and fact-check any information that is included by ChatGPT or that they find on the internet in general. You could also add a specific command into ChatGPT requesting facts to be included in the text to help highlight this issue. They were also asked to look for words that were repeated too often and for any redundant words. They then made any changes to the text they felt were needed. Finally, the edited texts were run through the detection tool again.

It is worth noting that for this task where students had chosen quite famous and well-known items like iPhone, Toyota or McDonald's, the facts were correct. There were also some significant reductions in the scores in the detection tool in this step, which motivated the students to do further editing. Interestingly, a few students actually had the score increase after they had made changes to the text. In these cases, the student had actually added repetitive phrases or redundant words. By pointing this out, they were able to gain further understanding of achieving successful text creation.

### Step 6

- *Is it personal? Probably not. Make it more personal. Add your opinions or experience in the text.*
- *Are there any vague sentences that do not have a clear meaning? Delete them or change them.*

Copy and paste the new text into <https://www.scribbr.com/ai-detector/>. What is the new score? .....%

This was the final step. In this part of the process, it was possible for the students to give the writing a personal touch. It was important to outline that the AI-tool can only 'think' in general terms, that even if we ask it to include some 'personal' experiences, these are likely to sound impersonal. The students were asked to look at the final two points and then edit the text again.



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There were some really impressive results. Many students were able to get very low scores on the AI detection tool.

Finally, the students were asked to send their final pieces to me along with the final score on the detection tool. They were also asked to answer a short questionnaire on how they felt about using AI (see the appendix for the questions).

### Conclusion

The first point that needs to be made is that despite the general claims that AI will soon replace humans in most jobs, clearly AI-produced text needs human input to achieve good levels of tone and register. It is therefore necessary for teachers to introduce AI tools into the current learning processes in the classroom.

Secondly, the challenges and required skills involved in editing text are fundamentally the same whether using original human-produced text or AI-produced writing. Therefore, by introducing ChatGPT into the writing process, we can actually maintain the process and tenets of 'good' writing that will assist students in creating written content in any situation regardless of whether they have AI assistance or not. The fundamentals of creating clear, simple, interesting and audience driven content is down to the human creator and cannot be completely handed over to AI-tools (yet).

It was clear from the questionnaire that some students do not enjoy using AI in creating their writing. It is therefore important, at this juncture, that students are given a rounded experience in the writing classroom and do not have AI forced on them.

### References

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### Appendix

1. One version of the activity used in this study.

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Using AI

Name: .....

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1. Look at an example of a review from Chat GPT.
2. Can you see any grammar, spelling, or punctuation mistakes here?
3. Which is better, your English or Chat GPT's?
4. Which is better, AI or humans?

### Use this:

<https://chat.openai.com/>

Input "Please write a 150-word balanced review of ..... in elementary English"

"Please include some facts and figures."

### Now use this:

<https://www.scribbr.com/ai-detector/>

Copy and paste the ChatGPT text into the detector. What score does it give? .....%

100% means the detector feels the text is created by an AI tool.

How does it know that this writing is by AI and not a human? Give three reasons.

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

### *Using AI to produce good writing*

Common problems with AI produced text:

- Unusually formal tone in text that's meant to be friendly
- Very difficult sentences
- Unusual or incorrect wording
- Text that's unnecessarily long and wordy
- The information isn't correct
- Words or phrases are repeated too many times
- Redundant sentences (sentences that you don't need)
- The writing sounds like a robot not a human
- Sentences that don't provide much information

<https://www.wearedevelopers.com/magazine/how-to-detect-chat-gpt-writing>

*Let's change the text*

Paste the text into Word.

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- Change any phrases that look too formal (Word may make a suggestion).
- Make any really long, complex sentences simpler.
- Is there any strange wording?

Copy and paste the new text into <https://www.scribbr.com/ai-detector/>. What is the new score? .....%

- Are there any facts in the review? Check them on the internet.
- If there are any repeated words, change them.
- Are there any words that do not need to be there? Remove them.

Copy and paste the new text into <https://www.scribbr.com/ai-detector/>. What is the new score? .....%

- Is it personal? Make it more personal. Add your opinions or experience to the text.
- Are there any vague sentences that do not have a clear meaning? Delete them or change them.

Copy and paste the new text into <https://www.scribbr.com/ai-detector/>. What is the new score? .....%

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## 2. Questionnaire questions.

1. Is this the first time you have used AI/ChatGPT? Y/N
2. Did you enjoy using AI in your English writing? Y/N
3. Did AI make writing in English easier? Y/N

**About the Author**

**Luke Blower** is an English teacher at AGU University. He was born in England and came to Japan in 2003. He received his BA (in Politics and Modern History) from Brunel University in London. Luke has over 20 years of experience in English language teaching, and throughout his career, he has been very keen to apply new and practical methods to English language teaching. The project introduced in this article is one example of such practice.

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