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ChatGPT Generated Versus Teacher Mediated Feedback: A Comparative Study on First -Year EFL Students' Paragraph Writing at Skikda University

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Abstract:

This study aims to compare teacher-feedback to ChatGPT-generated feedback in reviewing English as a foreign language (EFL) paragraph writing. A descriptive analytical method falling under a qualitative research design is opted in which two main research tools were employed. First, a document analysis is used to compare the two feedback modes provided on students' productions across paragraph structure, coherence and unity, grammar and mechanics criteria. A sample consists of 43 paragraphs written by 43 students enrolled in EFL first-year grade at Skikda university, Algeria for the academic year 2024-2025 has been analysed. Second, a semi-structured interview was conducted with six voluntarily students from those whose paragraphs were analysed. Research findings revealed that teachers follow explicit adherence to paragraph writing conventions. In contrast, ChatGPT feedback tends to be summative yet lacks the ability to diagnose context-specific errors. Students' interview confirmed a reliance on ChatGPT, primarily during the pre-submission proofreading phase, driven by its speed and capacity to deliver rule-based explanations for mechanical errors. This suggests that the future of writing pedagogy requires an integrated feedback model where the teacher mediates the mechanical efficiency offered by AI in-depth rhetorical corrections.

Keywords: ChatGPT feedback; EFL students' perceptions; paragraph writing; teacher's feedback

INTRODUCTION

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in EFL instruction has garnered significant attention due to their potential to support both teachers and learners in various classroom roles, including the assessment of learners'

writing. Because of the increasing use of AI tools naming, ChatGPT in educational settings, students and teachers are likely to consider this tool inevitable in their academic and professional tasks respectively. As far as the Algerian context is concerned, there is limited body of research comparing the effectiveness of traditional teacher feedback versus ChatGPT generated feedback in assessing learners' writings. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by comparing both feedback modes on first-year EFL students' written paragraphs at the university of Skikda, with particular focus on key aspects of organization, content quality, mechanics and grammar. Accordingly, this study is guided by the following two research questions:

- Does EFL teacher provided-feedback differ from ChatGPT generated feedback?
- At which level does the difference occur in the assessment of students' written assignments?
- What are EFL students' insights towards teacher provided-feedback ChatGPT generated feedback?

The study is highly motivated by the rapid and inevitable integration of AI tools like ChatGPT into global educational practices, particularly within EFL instruction, where automated writing assessment is drawing considerable attention. While AI offers a promising alternative to traditional teacher feedback, the critical need for evidence comparing the efficacy and nature of these two feedback modes remains largely missing. Given the limited research available in the Algerian context, where AI's impact on EFL writing skills has not been investigated in the Algerian university. Therefore, the importance of the study lies in comparing traditional teacher feedback with ChatGPT-generated feedback on first-year EFL students' writing across key criteria (Structure, content, mechanics, and grammar) at the university of Skikda. As this research provides contextually grounded insights, its findings will be crucial for informing educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers on how to strategically and effectively integrate AI-driven assessment into the Algerian university system, understanding the level and nature of differences between human and machine assessment.

1. Literature review

1.1. Feedback in foreign language writing

In foreign language writing, feedback is used to assess various linguistic features including grammar, mechanics and content quality upon which corrections are constructed (Ellis, 2009). It is widely regarded as an effective method for enhancing learners' written products. Teacher feedback is a key component of the writing process, serving as a guide for students to follow throughout their writing phases (Hyland, 2003).

Therefore, feedback is an essential part of effective learning. It helps students understand writing conventions which give them a clear guidance on how to come out with a piece of writing that is academically respected

(Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Additionally, Hyland and Hyland (2019) mentioned that feedback is significant as it works to remediate specific aspects in the piece of writing such as coherence, cohesion and grammar structure, helping writers refine and develop their writing.

1.2. Types of feedback in foreign language writing

According to Hyland and Hyland (2019), feedback can be categorized into three main types: first, Teacher feedback and this type may be provided in written and/or oral form. The second type is concerned with peer feedback that helps learners improve their writing. This type is used in academic settings where feedback is exchanged anonymously between peers, benefiting both feedback givers and receivers from draft to final submission. However, with the rapid advancements in technology which has been influenced feedback mediation, Computer-Mediated Feedback is introduced as a third innovative type where researchers such as Lu (2017) and Huisman (2018) observed remarkable improvements in students' accuracy after receiving such kind of feedback.

In the same line of thought, Hyland and Hyland's (2019) work on second language and foreign writing feedback stressed the importance of shifting focus from retrospective correction (feedback) to prospective guidance (feedforward). This feedforward approach emphasized on providing comments that equip students with the skills and strategies necessary for future assignments, moving beyond mere language errors marking. Furthermore, quality feedback is defined not just by accuracy, but rather by its interpersonal and contextual dimensions. In other words, teachers must balance linguistic objectives with affective factors to mitigate criticism which is a nuanced element that is absent in the automated systems of assessment. (Bouafia, 2024)

1.3. ChatGPT generated feedback in foreign language writing

The emergence of Computer-based Feedback (CBF) has revolutionized the way feedback is delivered in education. It offers learners time, accessibility, and efficient guidance to enhance their skills. Many studies highlighted the benefits of CBF, particularly its ability to reduce instructor workload and provide immediate and effective feedback. Within this broad category of technology-assisted feedback, AI has introduced even more sophisticated tools that further refine the feedback process. AI-powered chatbots, such as ChatGPT is among those tools. The latter is a language-based model which can generate products based on materials that the AI-model has trained on. Since its launch in November 2022 by the United States-based startup Open AI, it is a chatbot that has gained a global sensation, attracting 100 million users. It can understand and produce human-like responses across a wide range of topics by using logarithms and large amount of information to connect ideas (Solovey,2024).

In teaching-learning L2 writing, Barrot (2023) argued that ChatGPT can help reduce teachers' workload through its capacity to provide students with

immediate personalized feedback whenever they need it. Importantly, these intelligent systems help reduce social anxieties and fear of being judged, making learners more comfortable seeking and receiving feedback. Moreover, Hwang et al. (2024) asserted, ChatGPT can identify the strengths and weaknesses of texts and offer recommendations for improvement. It can also evaluate the clarity, focus and structure of a text. Despite the huge emphasis on ChatGPT's ability to provide personalized and timely feedback, it is pointed out that the chatbot has limitations, specifically regarding topics that require deep understanding and higher-order thinking skills (Tai & Chen, 2024).

1.4. AI-generated Feedback related studies in EFL writing

The integration of ChatGPT into EFL writing instruction addresses the time constraints of traditional teacher feedback. Three recent empirical studies delineate the effectiveness of AI-generated feedback and its comparative nuances with human instruction. First, a study conducted by Zhang, Li, and Chen (2024) demonstrated the quantitative impact of ChatGPT-based reflective feedback on EFL graduate students' academic writing. They reported significant improvements in language-based features (grammar, vocabulary, coherence) and essay organization (Zhang et al., 2024). Crucially, the study concluded that while ChatGPT excels in structural and linguistic correction, its effectiveness in developing higher-order skills like argumentation and critical analysis remains modest.

Second, a comparative analysis by Shi, Huang, and Wang (2025) examined student perceptions of ChatGPT versus teacher writing feedback. While students generally favoured the personalized nature of teacher feedback, they acknowledged ChatGPT's ability to deliver comprehensive and immediate suggestions, particularly concerning structure and organization (Shi et al., 2025). This positioning suggests that ChatGPT is best utilized as a complementary tool rather than a replacement.

Last but not least, Steiss et al. (2024) conducted an exploratory study comparing AI and human feedback on compare and contrast essays, focusing on accuracy. ChatGPT delivered accurate and high-volume feedback on content and organization (Steiss et al., 2024). However, limitations included generalized assessments, and the absence of the teacher's capacity for contextually informed, empathetic guidance.

These studies collectively affirm ChatGPT's strength in improving writing mechanics and structural organization. A shared conclusion is the need for collaboration. The AI's speed and detailed output complement the teacher's contextual and emotional intelligence. Differences primarily focus on feedback quality and student perception. The three studies mentioned above noted the AI's limited effect on deep critical analysis. It is, then, observed that students still prefer human guidance over the AI's technical efficiency. Therefore, ChatGPT functions as an effective structural and

linguistic editor, but human oversight is essential for complex rhetorical development.

2. Research methodology and design

This study is, basically, descriptive-analytical. It employes, qualitatively, a document analysis of a data consists of first-year EFL students' paragraphs. This data is meant for comparing two distinct modes of feedback provided to students' written paragraphs: one generated by ChatGPT and the other provided by their course instructor. Specifically, the two sources of feedback were analyzed across four key criteria, *structure, coherence and unity, grammar and mechanics*, to evaluate which type of feedback offers more comprehensive and in-depth insights for improving students' writing. To ensure objectivity, it is essential to note that a standardized rubric outlining explicit instructions was taught to students addressing the criteria of paragraph writing. This same rubric serves as the input framework for ChatGPT-4, enabling the AI tool to generate feedback aligned with the predefined aspects.

To foster document analysis results, students' perceptions regarding their preferences of the two feedback modes in improving their writing skill were also gathered and analysed using a semi-structured interview. The latter consisted of 06 questions addressing students' experiences and opinions on feedback received from both teachers and ChatGPT regarding the same criteria mentioned earlier. The questions concern investigating students' attitudes toward writing skills, exploring their experiences in receiving feedback on their writing assignments, and researching their opinions on the effectiveness of both teacher and ChatGPT-mediated feedback, concluding with insights into students' preferred source of feedback (teacher or ChatGPT).

2.1. Sampling

As far as document analysis is concerned, the target sample is composed of forty-three (43) paragraphs written by 43 first-year EFL students who are enrolled in English language first-year grade at Skikda university for the academic year 2024-2025. The target sample was chosen randomly and is considered representative of the population composed of 450 students of the same academic year to give useful and trustworthy results (Dörnyei, 2007). For the interview, six (06) interviewees voluntarily accepted to participate in the study.

2.2. Data collection and analysis process

First, the target sample was instructed by their teacher of Writing to write a well-formed paragraph without specifying a certain topic. The latter was not specified to ensure variety in levels and content creativity. Students' productions were scanned before the teacher starts correcting them to maintain the data as raw.

In parallel with teacher's review of the data, the same crafted paragraphs were uploaded in ChatGPT-4 AI program for review following a designed

rubric which aligns with their Comprehension of English Expression (CEE) module curriculum. Thereafter, data obtained from both sources were analyzed and compared highlighting the different aspects considered in each feedback mode provided. Using document analysis approach, an interpretation of the effectiveness of both feedback modes was synthesized.

For the interview protocol, it was conducted face-to-face with the students' participants at the level of the university and each interview lasted between 10 to 15 minutes. The interview was audio-recorded, then later coded and thematically analyzed to ensure accurate capture of the data.

After the analysis of both tools' results, a triangulation of findings was approached for the validity of research findings. This step does not only enrich interpretation but also addresses the study's objectives with greater precision (Dörnyei, 2007).

3. Research findings

The results obtained from both research tools used were presented and analysed as the following:

3.1. Document analysis and interpretation (students' paragraphs)

3.1.1. Comparison of teacher feedback and ChatGPT feedback

The tables bellow present and show the difference between ChatGPT generated feedback and teacher-provided feedback in reviewing First year EFL students' paragraphs at Skikda University. This comparison illustrates the impact of such a difference on students' writing skill improvement.

- **Paragraph structure**

Table 1. Paragraph structure criteria

Indicator	Teacher Feedback	ChatGPT Feedback
Topic sentence **Supporting Sentences Relevance** **Concluding sentence**	**1-**In most of the papers, the teacher highlights comments related to form. For instance, **Form=block (work on the form)* **It does not conform to the standards of writing a paragraph* ** Write a paragraph not an essay (rejected)* **This is more like a report not a paragraph (rejected)* **2-**The teacher provides feedback on the three Criteria in most of the productions except the rejected ones which were written in other different forms. For example: **No topic sentence* **No concluding sentence* **No clear topic sentence* **Clear topic sentence* **3-**Teacher 's comments tone varies	**1.** ChatGPT does not mention comments related to form. **2-**It mentions comments related to the components of a paragraph as follows: **The paragraph has clear topic sentence;* **Supporting details are relevant but could be connected more smoothly;* **A clear conclusion that wraps up the main ideas well;* **3-** ChatGPT does not reject any paragraph, and it gives empathetic feedbacks. For instance: **The essay has structured introduction, body paragraphs that address different points and partial conclusion.* **4-**ChatGPT mentions some odd

	based on the productions 'qualities, so they have objective and strict tone. **4-**All comments are detailed and related to the specific paragraph topic.	comment which is not related to the structure in many feedbacks as follows: *-Paragraph transitions can be further refined.*

Based on the comparison of the two modes of feedback in assessing and correcting the first aspect of paragraph structure (form), it is clearly noticed that teacher-mediated feedback places heavy emphasis on paragraph formality and adherence to academic conventions. The comments often address whether the text is qualified as a paragraph or not with a focus on the three components, topic sentence, supports and concluding sentence; while rejecting students' works that resembled essays, reports or freewriting.

Despite of this rigorous evaluation approach, still some limitations existed like the use of shorthand labels "No T.S.", "Form?", or "N.C" and the unclear handwriting in some cases because of the large number of papers the teacher had to evaluate within in a short time. This can lead to confusion and misunderstanding of comments.

Furthermore, teacher comments vary based on the performance level of each student. In well-developed paragraphs, teachers acknowledge structural success using precise indicators (*clear topic sentence*, *sufficient support*). Yet, some productions were rejected by the instructor and received limited scaffolding, primarily criticism without remedial direction like commenting: (*This is an essay not a paragraph*). This kind of feedback might hinder their writing skill development.

In contrast to the teacher feedback, the same productions have been reviewed by ChatGPT. The latter offers opposite comments to the teacher ones. It generated them in a very empathetic way without a focus on form correctness but rather on the clarity of paragraph components as saying "*the paragraph has a general idea but lacks a strong topic sentence*" or "*the concluding idea is present but feels slightly abrupt*". Essentially, it assesses each paragraph within its own framing, sometimes mistakenly praising essays or reports as if they were effective paragraphs. This reveals ChatGPT's form-recognition limitations and its inability to distinguish between writing genres reliably. Nonetheless, ChatGPT's descriptions might offer positive reinforcement for writers to revise their products rather than trigger defensiveness.

Moreover, ChatGPT's repeats of the same stock phrases when entering some papers with divergent topics to be evaluated at the same time (e.g., "*The paragraph opens with a clear topic sentence like 'Reading books…*'"), even when structurally inadequate, suggests a lack of individualized and contextualized diagnostic precision. This shows that ChatGPT has more a generation power rather than a nuanced context critique. It can often be ineffective in providing fully accurate and contextually appropriate feedback

on students' written content.

In short, teacher feedback is more effective than ChatGPT feedback in this context as it indicates clearly and correctly the mistakes of most paragraphs. Yet, ChatGPT can be helpful giving more detailed readable and empathetic comments with a large scale of products. This can make this process a less time-consuming for teachers.

- **Coherence and unity**

Table 2. Ideas development criteria

Indicator	Teacher Feedback	Chat GPT Feedback
Logical flow of ideas **Unity of Idea**	**1-**The teacher points out that most students' paragraphs lack coherence, unity and no clear topic sentence. Examples: *****It does not conform to the standards of university unity paragraph* *****No coherence and unity: A lot of ideas in one paragraph* *****No clear topic sentence* **2-**Teacher gives positive feedback concerning coherence and unity including: *****Clear topic sentence* *****Sufficient supports effective concluding sentence, coherent and unified* *****Logical flow of ideas.* **3-** The teacher comments were difficult to interpret due to the teacher handwriting.	**1-**Chat GPT gives the same indication in all comments related to Coherence and unity aspect, regardless of their written products' variation and diversity in topics and level of writing proficiency. For example: *****Logical flow of ideas,* *****All sentences relate to the main idea (unity)* *****Complete development of topic*. **2-**It focuses mostly on giving positive feedback on all productions like: *****Excellent coherence,* *****Use of transition,* *****Good flow* *****Excellent use of transitional phrases* **3-**It highlights the use of transitions in some paragraphs for example: *"moreover" ", first, second, third" and "finally"*

As it is clearly presented in the table above, ChatGPT and teacher feedback differ significantly in evaluating paragraphs' coherence and unity aspects. While ChatGPT consistently offers positive remarks (e.g. "*excellent coherence*", "*logical flow*", "*effective transitions*") it often overlooks coherence weaknesses. In contrast, the teacher provides more critical assessments, noting issues such as "*no clear topic sentence"*, "*disjointed ideas"*, and "*lack of unity*", while also acknowledging strengths like "*clear topic sentence*" and "*coherent and unified"*. However, the teacher's unclear handwriting sometimes made his feedback difficult to interpret.

These findings suggest that ChatGPT prioritizes encouragement, whereas the teacher balances praise and criticize some works. This contrast

highlights the limitations of AI in giving feedback in academic writing, as it may fail stuck the improvement of students' writing. Hence, ChatGPT prioritizes summative, general commentary, whereas teacher feedback offers formative, detailed correction, enabling learners to visualize and internalize the mechanics of writing. Besides, ChatGPT may raise awareness of issues, teacher feedback provides the concrete and detailed comments necessary for correction and improvement.

➢ **Grammar**

Table 3. Subject-verb agreement and wordiness

Indicator	Teacher Feedback	Chat GPT Feedback
Sentence fragments	**1.** Teacher points out all the grammar and structural mistakes in the writing products using lines, crosses, and circles. For example: "*an increase is their self-confidence*," the teacher crossed out "is," indicating that it is incorrect. "*In the modern world*." is underlined as a fragment.	**1.** ChatGPT gives a description of the students' use of grammar and sentence structure in their writing products. For instance: "*Several grammar mistakes occur*," "*tense usage, and article misuse*," "*Sentence structure affects clarity in places*,"
Subject-verb agreement	**2.** Teacher only points out the mistakes in some cases, while in others they provide the correct form. For example: "*and this advantages…*", the teacher underlined "*this*" as a mistake and gave the correction "*these*"; "*in the modern world*" is underlined as a fragment without providing a correction;	**2.** ChatGPT does not point out every grammar and sentence structure mistake in the paragraphs; For example: "*…including subject-verb agreement errors*" "*Minor grammatical inconsistencies are present*," "*Frequent grammatical mistakes*: "*Subject-verb*," "*Multiple run-ons and unclear phrasing*." "'*every they' should be 'every day*,'"
Wordiness		

From the comparative data, it can be deduced that ChatGPT-generated feedback tends to offer a holistic assessment of students' grammatical and syntactic competence form all the papers. Rather than identifying every individual error, it highlights a general overview of common issues, providing illustrative examples (e.g., subject-verb agreement errors, awkward phrasing and several grammatical mistakes). However, this mode of feedback is inconsistent; in a number of cases, ChatGPT fails to provide any grammar-related feedback, even when errors are present in the student's writing.

In contrast, teacher-mediated feedback follows an error-by-error approach in most of the papers except the rejected ones. Thus, teachers mark nearly all grammatical and structural mistakes using visual cues (circles, underlines and symbols); in many instances, he gives a direct correction to

the mistakes while only hinting at the existence of other ones. This model represents a form-focused, corrective strategy, emphasizing explicit and implicit attention to form (Ellis, 2009), which is essential for beginner to intermediate EFL learners.

- **Mechanics**

Table 4. Spelling, capitalization and punctuation criteria

Indicator	Teacher Feedback	Chat GPT Feedback
- **Spelling** - **Capitalization** - **Punctuation**	**1.** The teacher does not give comments on the students' writing mechanical performance and consistency of mistakes. The teacher points out the misspellings and punctuation mistakes using crosses, lines, and circles. **2.** The teacher gives the correct spelling next to the misspellings and fixes the punctuation by crossing the incorrect punctuation and adding the missing punctuation. For example: *"……ans transfer to other mind, according to a systematic plane*", the teacher crossed the comma; "*for example when the*……." the teacher rewrote the "*f*" in "*form*" in capital letter, indicating that the student made a mistake, and also added a comma between "*example*" and "*when,*" indicating that the student made a mistake by not placing it there.	**1.** ChatGPT describes the consistency of the misspellings and punctuation mistakes in students' writing products, Examples include: * *Frequent spelling issues* **Minor mechanical errors* **Overall, punctuation is consistent*. **2.**ChatGPT does not point out every mistake in the writing products. It gives a varying number of examples of the mistakes from one feedback to another. For example: "*errors* such as "*assumtion"* and "*save space*" instead of "*safe space,*"

Regarding the aspect of mechanics: spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, the pattern of differentiation remains consistent. ChatGPT provides an overall evaluation of the mechanical aspects of writing products, often using broad descriptors like "*frequent spelling issues*" or "*minor punctuation errors*". It points out specific examples (e.g., "*assumtion*" instead of "*assumption*"), but it does not consistently identify or correct all mechanical errors.

Conversely, teacher feedback is highly localized and explicit. Teachers do not only identify every mechanical error but also correct them directly, modeling the appropriate form. For instance, incorrect punctuation is crossed out, missing commas are inserted and spelling mistakes are rewritten correctly beside the original error. This hands-on correction method is crucial for developing students' editing and proofreading skills.

Across the four criteria discussed above, the comparison of ChatGPT-generated feedback versus teacher-provided feedback highlights clear differences in focus, precision and academic formality adherence. Indeed, teacher feedback is typically form-focused and corrective, offering explicit (with correction) and detailed comments about students' mistakes. It is very significant for scaffolding and improving academic writing. Whereas ChatGPT feedback tends to be holistic, supportive and semantically oriented lacking contextual awareness. It is rather neglecting form issues with minimal correction of grammatical and mechanical errors (except in some cases). In addition, while the teacher effectively diagnoses genre and mechanical errors with individualized feedback, ChatGPT often misclassifies text genres and repeats generic phrases, limiting its ability to provide context-based guidance.

3.2. Interview analysis and interpretation

As it has been mentioned earlier, six questions were addressed to six students from the 43 students whose paragraphs have been the data of document analysis. The questions seek to confirm students' paragraphs analysis and results by expressing their opinions and views towards the effectiveness of different types of feedback provided to them with a particular reference to ChatGPT feedback. The interview responses reveal a complex, multi-faceted relationship between students' use of ChatGPT, and traditional teacher feedback mechanisms. While all students acknowledge the utility of ChatGPT, their level of reliance and use vary significantly, fundamentally shaping their learning experiences.

The interviewee's responses picture the efficiency and immediate utility of Artificial Intelligence when improving their writing skill. The reliance on ChatGPT, specifically for feedback and rewriting, is rooted in the practical limitations of the traditional feedback provided by teachers. As for the question: Do you rely on Artificial Intelligence resources to get feedback on your written products and hence in rewriting your assignments? And why?
A student explicitly stated, "*I rely on it heavily... Because it's fast"* contrasting the nature of AI with teacher feedback that "*usually comes after the assignment is graded.*" This temporal disconnect considers AI as the primary tool for improvement before submission, thereby making it a critical factor in the student's grading strategy. Consequently, the student grants high effectiveness to ChatGPT for its role in polishing work and boosting grades on mechanical issues. This result could be clearly noticed in participants answers of the second interview question: Have you used ChatGPT to get feedback on your writing before? If yes, in which phase of your writing process?

All the interviewees agreed that ChatGPT is highly targeted. Based on their answers, they use it at different phases of the writing process but they focused almost entirely on the editing and proofreading phase. A student confirms Chat GPT use to ensure "*clarity, flow, and minimise grammatical*

errors after the main content is drafted". This suggests the students view ChatGPT as a powerful, specialized tool for addressing errors, which frees them from the time-consuming process of self-editing. However, a critical gap in the learning process is revealed in the student's comprehension of ChatGPT feedback. This reflects interviewees' answers to the third question: Do you understand all the comments provided by ChatGPT?

The majority of interviewees commented that while they understand general suggestions like varying sentence structure, technical terms such as "*faulty predication*" are simply bypassed. Therefore, one of the students chooses to "*just ask ChatGPT to rephrase the sentence and I don't worry about the technical term*," indicating a preference for correction over comprehension. This preference for immediate correction over deep learning is further emphasized when comparing AI and teacher feedback.

Regarding the fourth and the fifth questions about comparing the effectiveness of both feedback modes on writing improvement: to what extent your teachers' feedback effective in improving your writing? and to what extent ChatGPT feedback effective in improving your writing? the student rates teacher feedback at a modest acknowledging its effectiveness for content-related loss of points but criticizing its inadequacy for fixing sentences due to issues like brevity or illegibility. A student argued: "*I'm here to learn from my teacher. I appreciate when they leave long comments explaining why a paragraph isn't working but, most of the time teachers do not suggest how to rephrase my thesis to be stronger. That's the most difficult thing*". Conversely, another interviewee rated ChatGPT as more effective because they believe the ChatGPT provides the more detailed explanation when prompted "*For polishing, it's unbeatable. My grades on mechanical errors have gone way up since I started using it."*

The last question of the interview dealt with the type of feedback that gives students detailed explanations about their language structure and content deficiencies. According to their answers, students preferred the AI tool because by asking the ChatGPT to "*Explain the reason for every grammatical change*" they receive a "*rulebook answer*." This finding highlights a fundamental challenge: students are finding that ChatGPT can deliver the specific, rule-based detail they need for language mechanics with a clarity and scale that individual teacher margin notes often cannot match, thus optimizing their performance on the quantifiable elements of the assignment.

4. Discussion

The research findings from both the comparative evaluation of teacher and Chat GPT utility, and the qualitative insights from student interviews, reveal a critical shift in the use of writing feedback. Both of research tools employed in this study confirm that teacher and ChatGPT contributions are complementary yet distinct. The document analysis comparison established

teacher feedback as form-focused, corrective, and diagnosing genre errors. This feedback quality often missed by ChatGPT's holistic, semantically-oriented feedback. This divergence would let students rely heavily on ChatGPT, as confirmed by interview responses, primarily in the proofreading phase for its speed and ability to deliver *"rulebook answers"* and detailed, fast corrections, effectively turning it into an optimization tool for gaining grades on language form. However, this strategic reliance carries a pedagogical risk: while students appreciate the immediate utility and detail of ChatGPT, they may underscore the teacher's vital role in fostering the deeper comprehension of context, content, and rhetorical principles that are marginalised for the sake of mechanical efficiency.

Through a triangulation of research tolls results, it is synthesized that ChatGPT can be more effective for rule-based feedback and for short and basic written drafts. It can be helpful for correcting beginner writers' structural and grammatical errors and building their confidence through using empathetic tone which might encourage them for sustainable engagement with writing development. Yet, it still falls short in giving concise feedback in critical thinking in academic writing where formality and writing proficiency are of great importance. Thus, teacher feedback with its detailed and rigorous approach is the best choice for such contexts.

CONCLUSION

This research presented a comparative study between ChatGPT generated and teacher provided feedback on EFL first year students' paragraphs at Skikda University. The research aimed to examine the differences between ChatGPT generated feedback and teacher feedback on students' written paragraphs, regarding the following criteria: *structure, coherence and unity, grammar and mechanics*. Additionally, it aimed to evaluate students' insights concerning the effectiveness of each type of feedback on improving their writing skills. To achieve these aims, the study employed two qualitative research tools. First, a document analysis of students' paragraphs which were reviewed using two different types of feedback based on a rubric which has been designed on the criteria mentioned above. Besides, a semi-structured interview was conducted with a sample of students in order to compare the two modes of feedback effectiveness improving their writing based on their views.

Essentially, this study has shown that there are noticeable differences between ChatGPT and teacher mediated feedback in reviewing and improving the paragraphs of first year EFL students across multiple language proficiency aspects. In other words, the teacher mediated feedback often tends to be explicit, focused, strict to academic formality adherence, showing a high degree of diagnostic depth. However, ChatGPT feedback tends to be emphatic, holistic and more effective in reviewing rule-based mistakes rather than content quality-based issues. This makes it more appropriate for beginner level learners, as it may encourage them for sustainable

involvement in writing activities. Thus, and based on students' perceptions, teacher is still considered as the optimal reliable source for providing feedback in the writing skill. Moreover, the ability of ChatGPT to provide in-depth feedback on both form and content depends on whether these generative artificial intelligence tools are free or upgraded versions.

In sum, the future of academic writing pedagogy is not the replacement of the teacher but the strategic integration of AI, transforming the teacher's role into a sophisticated mediator of machine-generated information to ensure that feedback is translated into genuine learning.

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Appendix. Rubric of document analysis

This rubric is designed to assess the quality of a corrected paragraph based on four key criteria: Paragraph Structure, Coherence & Unity, Grammar & Sentence Structure, and Mechanics. Each criterion is rated on a scale of 1 to 4.

Criteria	Indicators	Scale (1–4)	Feedback/ Comments
1. Paragraph Structure	- Clear topic sentence - Relevant supporting sentences - Effective concluding sentence		
2. Coherence & Unity	- Logical flow of ideas - All sentences relate to the main (unity) - Complete development of topic		
3. Grammar & Sentence Structure	- No sentence fragments/run-ons - Correct subject-verb agreement - Avoids wordiness/faulty parallelism		
4. Mechanics	- Proper capitalization - Correct punctuation (commas, periods)		

Scoring Guide

1: Unsatisfactory (significant errors, unclear focus)
2: Needs improvement (multiple errors, weak structure)
3: Good (minor errors, mostly effective)
4: Excellent (no errors, meets all criteria)