Incorporating Generative AI in EFL Writing:

An Investigation into Students' and Teachers' Perceptions

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The advancement of generative AI has reshaped EFL education, particularly in EFL writing. This qualitative case study investigates the perceptions of Chinese college students and EFL teachers towards the integration of Gen AI in EFL writing. The research involved semi-structured interviews with 13 students and 10 EFL teachers. Thematic analysis, guided by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), was employed to analyze the qualitative data. The findings reveal the perceptions of students and teachers regarding the role of generative AI in EFL writing. Regarding usefulness, students appreciate Gen AI for reducing writing difficulty and enhancing efficiency, though some note that it may produce logical flaws and misinformation. Teachers share similar perceptions, but stress effectiveness depends on students' language level. Some teachers also advocate traditional writing initially to build foundational skills. On the ease of use, most students find it easy interacting with Gen AI but mention dialogical understanding challenges. Both students and teachers stress clear prompts are crucial, indicating "AI interaction literacy" should be part of teaching. Moreover, teachers worry that Gen AI's ease of use may lead to over-reliance. These results reveal contradicting goals of using Gen AI: students value efficiency, while teachers focus on ability cultivation. These insights guide more effective integration of Gen AI in EFL writing education.

Keywords: Generative AI, EFL writing, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), AI integration in education, Perception

Introduction

The advancement of the generative AI (Gen AI), such as OpenAI's ChatGPT and DeepSeek, has greatly transformed how people learn and work. Among all spheres of learning, English language education lies at the forefront of teaching evolution. That is because traditional teaching methodologies may fail to meet the diverse and evolving needs of learners (Dong, Pan, & Kim, 2024). For one thing, students are facing the dilemma of whether or not to integrate AI applications into English learning and boost efficiency; for another, teachers have to adapt their methods to address this challenge.

As AI-powered educational technologies and contemporary instructional methodologies gain popularity, the potential of AI as a personal assistant has emerged (Darvishi et al., 2024). Previous research has revealed that students can use generative AI to accomplish many academic tasks on their behalf. In this case, one particularly

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vulnerable academic activity is academic EFL writing (Van Niekerk, Delport, & Sutherland, 2025). In EFL writing, students can ask AI to provide personalized writing aids through auto-checking, generating text, drafting writing outlines, etc. Previous studies have revealed various ways AI can be integrated into EFL writing (Atlas, 2023). Researchers have verified that the implementation of ChatGPT in the writing process improves participants' writing skills, motivation, and engagement (Song & Song, 2023). Besides, in general, students hold a positive attitude towards the application of AI chatbots in their learning (Ngo, 2023).

As AI is further integrated into EFL writing, researchers have perceived several limitations of using AI in writing. AI may be limited in its capabilities when checking for potentially plagiarized texts and adapting texts to specific audiences. Researchers also observe its template rigidity of writing to a certain extent (Barrot, 2023). Worse still, with AI assistance, students might produce essays without investing adequate effort and research required for original article writing. This practice, however, is extremely unethical and could have severe consequences if discovered, including failing grades and academic penalties (King & chatGPT, 2023). Since students can easily accomplish EFL writing tasks with the integration of AI, the over-reliance on AI can inhibit students' development of writing skills (Stojanov, Liu, & Koh, 2024).

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a theoretical framework that measures users' perception of technology. In the TAM framework, users' perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness influence their actual system use. In the context of applying Gen AI in EFL writing, students' perceptions will affect their use of Gen AI. This article aims to explore the perceptions of students and teachers regarding the incorporation of Gen AI in EFL writing and propose a win-win solution.

In the following parts, we review the literature on the employment of Gen AI in EFL writing, the modeling of TAM, and previous research pertinent to this study. We then investigate students' and teachers' perceptions of the incorporation of Gen AI in EFL writing through interviews and provide several qualitative analyses based on the TAM model. Through this research, we inspect the views of Chinese college students from different majors on the application of Gen AI in EFL writing as well as the perspectives of EFL teachers on students' use. In the end, we close with the findings of the research and offer the implications for students' EFL writing and teachers' EFL teaching in the era of AI.

Literature Review

Generative in EFL Writing

Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) refers to a specific set of machine learning algorithms aimed at generating novel, human-like data outputs that simulate existing datasets (Chan & Hu, 2023). With the support of deep learning neural networks, Gen AI models can learn from large language models (LLMs) to create new content, including text, video, and audio (Creely & Janssen, 2025). Up to the present, typical Gen AI tools like ChatGPT (OpenAI), DeepSeek (DeepSeek), Gemini (Google), and Ernie Bot (Baidu), can easily accomplish the above function. Unlike traditional AI, Gen AI learns from data patterns to generate content. Since Gen AI can easily handle repetitive tasks and boost efficiency, it has redefined possibilities.

Users can utilize Gen AI models to generate materials, particularly text, by directly inputting orders and demands to obtain well-organized answers without personal thinking. As quick learners, students have begun to use Gen AI to solve difficult tasks such as essay writing or code creation. With the development of Gen AI and

students' deeper exploration, its applications have expanded to include brainstorming, academic writing, professional communication, and individualized learning through platforms like ChatGPT (Atlas, 2023). Apart from these basic functions, Mizumoto and Eguchi (2023) found that Gen AI like ChatGPT has great reliability and accuracy as a tool for automated essay scoring. Such research indicates that the Gen AI tool has the potential to perform better than teachers since the process of manual grading may be influenced by external factors, like fatigue and subjectivity, thus contributing to unreliable results (Hussein, Hassan, & Nassef, 2019).

Generative AI is reshaping EFL education and heralding an unprecedented teaching method. The demonstrated benefits of artificial intelligence in establishing new learning dynamics and interactions indicate that adjusting and incorporating AI technologies into EFL education could significantly enhance teaching practices (Guan, Lee, Zhang, & Gu, 2025). In the field of EFL learning, a large proportion of students have considered English writing as a challenging part. Jacob et al. (2023) showcased how an international graduate student uses ChatGPT throughout the EFL writing process, from brainstorming and outlining to editing and drafting. In this case study, the participant emphasizes the balance between generative AI support and the necessary value of human skill in refining and enhancing writing, which enlightens the significance of EFL proficiency improvement.

However, despite its advantages, researchers and experts have raised several concerns about Gen AI's application in education, including privacy and ethical issues (Chan & Hu, 2023), learning loss, decrease in creativity and critical thinking (Barrot, 2023), and plagiarism (Yan, 2023). However, rather than boycotting the emerging technology, researchers and educators are exploring the potential approaches to integrate Gen AI in EFL writing since it is becoming ubiquitous and the possible affordances shouldn't be ignored (Tseng & Warschauer, 2023; Warschauer et al., 2023).

The Application of TAM Model in Gen AI

Adapted from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), the technology acceptance model (TAM) is a theoretical framework for illustrating users' IT acceptance. Among numerous variables influencing IT acceptance, previous research has identified two key determinants. The two key theoretical constructs are perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, and the TAM model also ascertains the relationships between external variables, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, attitudes, and behavioral intentions towards an actual system use (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989).

Perceived usefulness, following from the definition of the word "useful", is defined here as "the extent to which a person considers that using a particular system would boost job performance." Perceived ease of use, originating from the definition of "ease", refers to "the extent to which a person reckons that using a particular system would be effortless" (Davis, 1989). These factors are influenced by external variables such as privacy, security, social influence, and trust, which help investigate users' acceptance of new technology and their awareness levels (Albayati, 2024). Through understanding these external variables, the TAM can help propose strategies for better use and adoption of new IT.

In the era of Gen AI, researchers also use the TAM model to detect users' acceptance of Gen AI tools. Abdaljaleel et al. (2024) found that both socio-demographic variables and various TAM constructs as modeled in "TAME-ChatGPT" (Technology Acceptance Model Edited to Assess ChatGPT Adoption) (Sallam, et al.,

2023) will influence the employment of ChatGPT among university students. Based on the TAM model, identified Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Artificial Intelligence Literacy (AIL) as key factors affecting Behavioral Intention (BI) to use AI technologies (Ma & Lei, 2024). Xi et al. (2022) verified that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use have significant effects on learners' behavioral intentions for using computers to assist EFL learning. It has been proved that self-efficacy, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and attitude have significant predictive effects on the intention to use (Xu & Deng, 2024).

Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Applying Gen AI in EFL Writing

Previous studies have explored students' perceptions of Gen AI integration in EFL education. For instance, in a one-week practicum, undergraduate EFL majors were required to use ChatGPT's text generation feature in EFL writing. Students appreciated the tool for its speed, high-quality content, and compliance with academic writing standards (Yan, 2023). According to a study conducted at a top-tier international university in China, students view ChatGPT as a valuable learning partner and helps students in completing language-related tasks, like revising essays and providing personalized instructions on EFL writing. What's more, the participants' critical judgments help offset the possible threats to academic integrity posed by Gen AI (Xiao & Zhi, 2023).

Researchers also make investigations to unveil EFL teachers' perception of Gen AI's application in EFL education. A qualitative study revealed that Chinese EFL teachers experience seven positive emotions—enjoyment, excitement, motivation, satisfaction, accomplishment, interest, and confidence—when integrating AI into instruction. Apart from the positive side, the perceived nine negative emotions consist of anxiety, stress, worry, frustration, confusion, pressure, disappointment, dissatisfaction, and embarrassment (Shen & Guo, 2024). Regarding teachers' role transformation due to Gen AI, students suggest that teachers should enhance students' language learning willingness, be proactive in student-AI collaboration, and use AI only when it outperforms them in educational tasks (Guan, Lee, Zhang, & Gu, 2025).

Teachers' and students' perceptions of incorporating generative AI in EFL writing exhibit a nuanced circumstance. In general, teachers and students hold similar views on what is appropriate use of integrating Gen AI in writing. Despite the general accordance, there also remain some significant differences (Barrett & Pack, 2023). Consistent research has revealed that students and faculty differ in their perceptions of academic integrity. While the professors take academic integrity for granted, in the eyes of students, if professors fail to talk about academic integrity, students reckon that they do not consider it seriously or do not believe it is a serious offense (Tatum, 2022). Teachers' attitudes toward AI will affect students' use of AI, and in reverse, students' use of AI will also affect teachers' pedagogical methods.

In the domain of EFL writing, teachers figure out solutions to prevent students from using AI to complete the writing task, but students also come up with corresponding countermeasures to resort to AI's assistance. This circulation leads to negative effects of the interaction between EFL writing learning and teaching. With the goal of achieving common expectations, the purpose of this study is to investigate Chinese students' and teachers' perceptions of the incorporation of generative AI in the domain of EFL writing. Specifically, the study focuses on EFL undergraduates from Chinese universities and EFL teachers from the Department of Foreign Languages of a university in central China.

The specific research questions guiding the study are:

(1) What are EFL students' perception of using Gen AI tools in English writing?

(2) What are EFL teachers' perception of students using Gen AI tools in their English writing tasks?

Research Methodology

The theoretical foundation of this study is based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the influence factors identified in prior studies. This section outlines the methodological aspects of the research, including the integration of theoretical frameworks and the implementation of semi-structured interviews.

Research Design

This study employs qualitative analysis to evaluate the interview outcomes. Separate interviews were conducted with students and teachers to obtain valid information. The interview questionnaires for students and teachers were developed based on the TAM model (Figure 1) (Davis, 1989), with questions centered around the two core constructs of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. The research selected the TAM model for several reasons, such as: (1) as noted by Lee, Hsieh, & Hsu (Lee, Hsieh, & Hsu, 2011), it is the most authoritative and widely utilized theory for explaining individual acceptance of information technology; (2) it has been extensively applied in research and practice to assess the adoption and perception of new technologies, including information systems and mobile applications (Min, So, & Jeong, 2021). In the study, all interviewees' responses were analyzed using classifications based on the TAM. Drawing on these responses, the study synthesizes insights into students' and teachers' perspectives on Gen AI-assisted English writing.
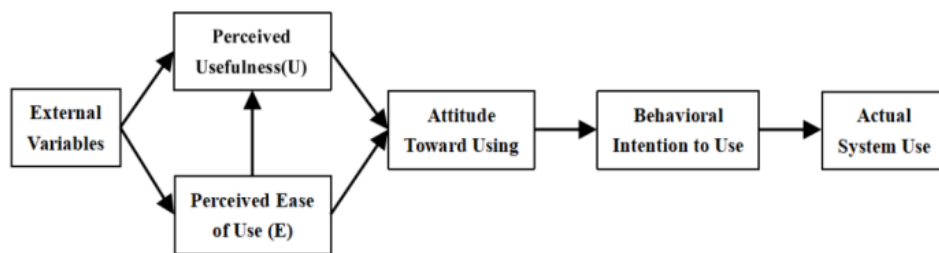

Figure 1. TAM Technology acceptance model (Davis, 1989-Sep).

Participants

The study was conducted at a university in central China. Using convenience sampling, the study recruited 13 students and 10 teachers as participants. Before the interview, researchers gathered participants' demographic data, including age, gender, and field of study. The student group comprised 8 females and 5 males, representing five academic disciplines: natural sciences, medicine, engineering and technology, humanities, and social sciences. The teacher group included 6 females and 4 males, all from the school of foreign languages at a central China university. Specifically, three teachers were from the General English Department, five from the English Department within the School of Foreign Languages, and two from the Graduate Public English Department. Their research fields span applied linguistics, translation studies, second language acquisition, cross-cultural studies, and British and American literature. For pedagogy, these teachers instructed both undergraduate and graduate students across humanities, social sciences, engineering and technology.

Table 1
Demographic Information of Students

Student code	Pseudonyms	Age	Gender	Major
S1	Li	20	female	natural sciences
S2	Cha	21	male	medicine
S3	He	20	male	medicine
S4	Lian	20	female	engineering and technology
S5	Hu	21	male	engineering and technology
S6	Li	20	female	engineering and technology
S7	Wu	20	female	engineering and technology
S8	Dong	20	male	engineering and technology
S9	Hu	20	female	humanities
S10	Chen	20	male	humanities
S11	Jiang	20	female	humanities
S12	Shen	21	female	social sciences
S13	Wang	21	female	social sciences

Table 2
Demographic Information of Teachers

Teacher code	Pseudonyms	Gender	Research field
T1	Xiong	female	linguistics
T2	Wan	female	linguistics
T3	Li	female	linguistics
T4	Hu	female	translation
T5	Dai	male	interpreting
T6	Zhang	female	philosophy of language
T7	Xiao	male	linguistics
T8	Dan	male	cross-cultural communication
T9	Zheng	female	literature
T10	Xia	male	translation

Instruments: Semi-structured Interview

To investigate the interviewees' perceptions of Gen AI-assisted English writing, this study employed semi-structured interviews. This approach allowed interviewees to express their views in greater depth and detail while enabling researchers to seek clarifications and ask follow-up questions, ensuring their responses were accurately captured. To minimize misunderstandings, the interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese, the native language of both participants and researchers. The student interview was divided into five sections with a total of 17 questions, while the teacher interview comprised five sections and nine questions. Interviewees were allowed to share additional insights beyond the specific questions asked.

Data Collection and Analysis

The students' interviews were conducted both online and offline, with each interview lasting approximately 25 minutes. The 10 EFL teacher interviews were conducted in the English department on campus and averaged 20 minutes in duration. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed in Chinese before being translated into English. The semi-structured interview recordings served as the primary data source. Drawing on the TAM model, the study performed a thematic analysis of the interview data to

investigate students' perceptions of using generative AI for writing tasks and teachers' perceptions of integration of Gen AI into EFL writing.

In alignment with grounded theory, the qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis following three phases: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. During the open coding phase, two authors meticulously reviewed the data together to generate initial codes based on recurring patterns. In the axial coding phase, these initial codes were grouped into broader categories by discerning their underlying themes and main opinions. In the selective coding phase, a thematic analysis was conducted based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Drawing on the interview data, this analysis sought to explore students' perceptions of using generative AI for writing tasks.

Results

The results of the thematic analysis of the interview questions were used to answer this research question that figured out EFL students' perceptions of using the Gen AI tool in their English writing process and EFL teachers' perceptions of students using the Gen AI tool in their English writing tasks. Students' perceptions are illustrated in Table 3 and Table 4, while teachers' perceptions are demonstrated in Table 5 and Table 6.

Students' Perceived Usefulness

Table 3
Students' Perceived Usefulness on Gen-AI Assisted English Writing

Theme	Category
Perceived Usefulness	Gen AI boosts creativity and broadens mentality. (S1, S2, S8, S12)
	Gen AI provides rich vocabulary and expressions. (S1, S6, S7, S8, S11)
	Gen AI can correct grammatical errors. (S7, S9, S11, S12)
	Gen AI-assisted writing enhances efficiency. (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6,S7, S8,S10, S11, S13)
	Gen AI-assisted reduces writing difficulty. (All the students)
	Gen AI assistance has interfered with the user's writing. (S6, S9)
	The text generated by Gen AI lacks logic and depth. (S3, S10, S11)
	Gen AI sometimes provides incorrect or invalid answers. (All the students)

Table 3 presents students' diverse perspectives on using Gen AI in EFL writing regarding the perceived usefulness of Gen AI. Overall, students regard Gen AI tools as useful assistance in EFL writing. All the student interviewees appreciate Gen AI's assistance in reducing writing difficulty, as expressed by one student (S2): "*It can directly provide ideas and express them relatively accurately.*" They also approve that Gen AI-assisted writing enhances efficiency, with a student (S7) mentioning, "*Compared with traditional writing, with Gen AI-assisted technology support, I don't need to spend a lot of time checking out and correcting the errors in my writing, nor do I get stuck while seeking inspiration.*" However, two students out of thirteen pointed out that Gen AI lowers writing efficiency because its blurry writing outline disturbs the thinking process (S6, S9). The Gen AI also boosts creativity, broadens mentality (S1, S2, S8, S12), and provides rich vocabulary and expressions (S1, S6, S7, S8, S11), with one student (S11) sharing insightful opinion, "*Relying on Gen AI's powerful corpus, it can generate some peculiar passive words and some ingenious and idiomatic expressions. Its superiorities are personalization and immediacy.*" Additionally, a command that students most commonly use is grammar correction (S7, S9, S11, S12).

While students benefit from the advantages of Gen AI, they also identified that some incorrect or valid answers generated by Gen AI may interfere with its usefulness. This not only reveals the limitations of Gen AI but also reflects students' critical thinking and personal judgment while utilizing it for EFL writing. As noted by student (L12) indicated, "*Particularly in tasks involving specific data, Gen AI's answers are usually problematic.*" Another drawback identified is that Gen AI-generated text may lack logic and depth (S3, S10, S11). Student (S11) elaborated on this point in detail, "*Gen AI cannot avoid logical loopholes. If taking a closer look at the context of AI-generated text, it is easy to find that Gen AI is still relatively prone to causing some bugs within a large framework.*"

Students' Perceived Ease of Use

Table 4
Students' Perceived Ease of Use on Gen-AI Assisted English Writing

Theme	Category
Perceived Ease of Use	It is easy to interact with Gen AI. (S1, S2, S3, S5, S7, S8, S11, S13)
	Gen AI sometimes fails to comprehend user's command. (S4, S6, S9, S10, S12)
	The response generated by Gen AI is sometimes hard to understand. (S2, S3, S4, S6, S7, S11, S12, S13)

Table 4 exhibits students' perceived ease of use of Gen AI in EFL writing. Overall, eight out of thirteen students hold the opinion that Gen AI is easy to interact with (S1, S2, S3, S5, S7, S8, S11, S13), as student (S2) stated: "*It is quite easy to use. Gen AI can accurately understand what I want to express.*" One student (S7) also praised Gen AI's strong comprehension capability, explaining that "*As long as I express my thoughts clearly and explicitly, Gen AI can understand the meaning and provide good results. There is no need to be professional in consultation.*"

Nevertheless, five students found Gen AI challenging to use, primarily due to its occasional failure to comprehend user commands (S4, S6, S9, S10, S12). As student (S9) shared: "*The toughest aspect is providing inspiration. Gen AI often doesn't precisely understand my intent. For instance, when I asked about 'The harm of AI imaging technology to human ethics', it responded with general overviews of political, legal, and humanistic ethics, which were not directly applicable.*"

Additionally, students noted that Gen AI's responses were sometimes difficult to understand (S2, S3, S4, S6, S7, S11, S12, S13). A student (S7) mentioned: "*When encountering unclear content from Gen AI, I usually discard the invalid responses or make secondary modifications. Meanwhile, I also resend the instructions to have Gen AI generate new texts.*" In addition, a student (S11) also reported the solutions to this situation, "*Gen AI-generated texts often have complex and obscure sentence structures. I address this by adding prompt words like 'idiomatic,' 'fluent,' and 'intelligible,' and by supplementing the writing context.*"

Teacher's Perceived Usefulness

Table 5
Teachers' Perceptions of the Usefulness of AI in Students' English Writing

Theme	Category
Perceived Usefulness	Gen AI enhances students' writing efficiency. (T1, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T10)
	Gen AI can help students reduce the difficulty of writing tasks. (T1, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T10)

	Gen AI helps students improve writing quality. (T4, T5, T7)
	Students with high language proficiency can utilize Gen AI tools more effectively. (T2, T6, T8)
	Students with low language proficiency fail to use Gen AI tools effectively. (T2, T6, T8)

Table 5 demonstrates teachers' perceptions of the usefulness of Gen AI in students' EFL Writing. In general, teachers regard Gen AI as a useful tool for enhancing EFL students' writing efficiency and simplifying writing tasks (T1, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T10). One teacher (T3) noted, "*Students should leverage technological means to enhance their learning efficiency and writing ability.*" Another teacher (T4) expressed a positive attitude towards students' use of Gen AI in EFL writing as it provides convenience for students, enabling them to complete tasks more efficiently and produce higher-quality work. However, they emphasized that students must continuously improve their language proficiency to effectively use Gen AI as a writing aid. In addition, three teachers highlighted that Gen AI helps students improve writing quality (T4, T5, T7). A senior teacher remarked, "*The quality of students' translations has been improving annually, indicating Gen AI tools are helpful and useful for enhancing writing quality.*" From a positive psychological perspective, a teacher (T3) explained, "*Gen AI helps students overcome writing anxiety, improve writing quality, and revise writing works actively.*"

Other common insights raised by teachers are that students with high language proficiency can utilize Gen AI tools more effectively, while those with lower proficiency may struggle to do so (T2, T6, T8). According to a teacher's (T6) teaching experience, "*Students with good language proficiency can improve their writing skills, while those with poor language proficiency may find it difficult to absorb the AI-generated content effectively.*" Besides, another teacher (T8) also raised concerns regarding the exposure to Gen AI from students of different language proficiency, adding that, "*The different language levels of students using Gen AI may have different extent of positive and negative effects.*" In addition to the positive support of Gen AI, a teacher (T10) drew from experience that "*it is better to write in a traditional way at the primary stage in EFL writing.*" Moreover, a teacher (T3) shared the personal usage and perception, explaining that "*Given its usefulness, I use Gen AI to search and gather information and materials instead of the search engine that I used previously.*"

Teacher's Perceived Ease of Use

Table 6
Teachers' Perceptions of the Ease of Use of Gen AI in Students' English Writing

Theme	Category
Perceived Ease of Use	Gen AI poses risks of misuse and dependence in EFL students' writing. (All the teachers)
	Gen AI-assisted EFL writing has operational difficulties. (T5, T6, T9, T10)

Table 6 shows teachers' perceptions of Gen AI regarding the ease of use in the domain of students' EFL writing. Due to the perceived ease of use and facile access to the technology, all the teachers showed their worries about the misuse of Gen AI and students' technology dependence in writing. Since it is effortless for students to use Gen AI in accomplishing EFL writing tasks, the students are likely to foster reliance on Gen AI and resort to it for assistance each time they have a writing assignment. However, there still exist traditional writing exams where technologies are strictly forbidden to use. On this occasion, the trend of Gen AI dependence is dangerous and should be solved. A teacher (T1) critiqued that "*long-term reliance on Gen AI*"

may lead to a decline in students' critical thinking and independent thinking abilities, and what's worse, it will also affect students' academic integrity."

Four teachers (T5, T6, T9, T10) have come up with a common issue that Gen AI-assisted EFL writing has operational difficulties, with a teacher (T6) indicating that "*Some students are not capable of handling AI-generated writing works and their writing style and quality fluctuate unstably, leading to inconformity in a writing work.*" Another teacher (T9) discussed this issue from students' standpoint, pointing out that "*One major problem for students using Gen AI is that the prompt words are not accurate enough, resulting in the inability to obtain the required output results.*" Besides, a teacher (T10) also raised a concern related to the convergence of AI-generated content, which will significantly damage students' creativity. It is reasonable to have such a scruple because if we delve deeply into the generation mechanism of Gen AI, we will find that it generates extremely similar content for some specific topics and requirements.

Discussion

EFL Students' Perception of Using Gen AI in EFL Writing

The results indicate that the majority of students view Gen AI as a useful assistant in EFL writing, particularly for enhancing creativity, supplying useful expressions, correcting grammatical errors, improving writing efficiency, and reducing writing difficulty. Previous studies on Gen AI-assisted EFL writing have identified similar reasons for students' willingness to use Gen AI technologies, as most students perceive Gen AI as a beneficial tool with various benefits (Chan & Hu, 2023). This study also mentions additional benefits that motivate students to utilize Gen AI, such as research and analysis support, and brainstorming support. In the study of *Song and Song* (*Song & Song*, 2023), participants conveyed positive perceptions of AI-assisted writing instruction, and the implementation of Gen AI functions as enhancements in writing skills, motivation, and engagement. The qualitative analysis results also align with the study by Barrot (2023), which emphasizes how immediate feedback can significantly improve writing proficiency.

Furthermore, a significant advantage of Gen AI that students benefit a lot from is its ability to provide creative inspiration and broaden students' cognitive and mental horizons. In reverse, it is vital to reach a balance between utilizing Gen AI's feedback and cultivating independent critical thinking and creativity (Utami & Winarni, 2023). Overreliance on Gen AI without personal thinking may lead to a decline in students' creative abilities over time. In the study, some students comment that the text generated by Gen AI lacks logic and depth, which contradicts previous research findings. Kung et al. (2023) stated that texts generated by ChatGPT were highly concordant, such that a human learner could easily follow the internal language, and logic presented within the explanation text. Another potential pitfall is that almost all the students have discovered incorrect or invalid answers provided by Gen AI. The finding is accordant with research indicating that noting that the output of Gen AI tools may be flawed from time to time while critical thinking stimulates students to have a wider range of ideas. When applied to Gen AI-generated text, critical thinking skills enable individuals to assess the quality, credibility, and reliability of the information provided through critical thinking (Shanto, Ahmed, & Jony, 2024). Therefore, cultivating critical thinking in students when engaging with Gen AI content is imperative.

When refer to the ease of use, the majority of students agree that Gen AI is easy to interact with. As Hayder Albayati (2024) noted, students are prone to accept and engage with Gen AI when they find it easy to use. While

several students pointed out communication challenges with Gen AI, such as misunderstandings from unclear instructions or overly vague outputs. To overcome these issues, students are encouraged to learn to formulate clear and effective questions and directives.

EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Students Using Gen AI in EFL Writing

The analysis of data from teacher interviews demonstrates that most teachers hold positive attitudes toward students' use of Gen AI, while some expressed concern over students' improper use of the technology. This aligns with prior research indicating that Chinese EFL teachers experienced different degrees of positive and negative emotional feelings during their AI-mediated instruction (Shen & Guo, 2024). The reasons behind teachers' support lie in the fact that those who make good use of Gen AI enhance their writing efficiency and improve text quality. Previous surveys also indicate that both students and teachers recognize AI's usefulness, though teachers are more optimistic about its application in teaching.

In the study, teachers also considered operational difficulties students face when using Gen AI, particularly in formulating prompt words. Previous research analyses difficulty from a different perspective, referring to the difficulty in evaluating the quality of responses (Farrokhnia, et al., 2023). It also resonates with the study's results that some teachers reckon that students with higher language proficiency benefit more from Gen AI tools. The ability to evaluate the quality of Gen AI-generated content is closely connected with the student's language level. In the study, teachers also agree that Gen AI reduces the difficulty of writing tasks, which is in accordance with students' perceptions. The consistency of the results further confirms this advantage.

As for the perceived ease of use of Gen AI, the interviewed teachers assume that Gen AI is readily accessible to students. In agreement with previous studies, Stephen Atlas (2023) discussed the myth of ChatGPT, clarifying that non-technical users can easily get access to Gen AI tools through the use of user-friendly interfaces and with the aid of unambiguous and accessible tutorials. Additionally, a large proportion of teachers expressed the concerns about the risks of misuse and dependence on Gen AI in EFL writing. Previous research indicates that the frequency of AI use indirectly enhances AI technological dependence. The process is explained in two ways: by enhancing efficiency perception or by strengthening students' trust and confidence in AI (Zhang & Xu, 2025). To mitigate the dependence, both teachers and students should maintain a certain distance from the technology and engage with it critically rather than passively accepting its outputs.

Pedagogical Implications of Integrating Gen AI in EFL Writing

The study's findings explore teachers' views on students' use of generative AI and its role in teaching, offering valuable insights into the pedagogical applications of generative AI in EFL writing instruction. Firstly, teachers recognize generative AI as a useful tool for identifying, proofreading, and correcting errors in student writing, which not only aids in assessing writing quality but also alleviates the burden of repetitive tasks. By encouraging students to use AI as a writing aid, teachers can facilitate learning through AI feedback. Secondly, integrating AI tools with traditional teaching methods can create more engaging and relaxed classroom environments (Elsayed et al., 2024). AI's capacity to gather information and integrate resources provides teachers with diverse teaching materials, thereby increasing student interest while maintaining professionalism.

Despite its potential as a teaching aid, incorporating Gen AI into education raises ethical issues. As the technology continues to evolve, its outputs may not always be reliable. Given concerns about dependency, teachers should exercise caution and guide students in using AI tools responsibly, emphasizing their role as a learning support rather than merely a task-completion tool. Moreover, the widespread use of AI tools makes misuse inevitable. Teachers must stress the importance of academic integrity, heighten students' awareness of ethical considerations, and monitor AI use to prevent misuse. Given the growing similarity between AI-generated and human-created content, teachers need to employ critical thinking to evaluate student work, to check for AI-related academic integrity issues like content fabrication and plagiarism, and to ensure that AI tools are used appropriately in educational settings. (Yusuf et al., 2024).

Conclusion

This study explores EFL students' and teachers' perceptions of using the Gen AI tool in the EFL writing process. The results indicate that their perceptions possess common points but also some nuanced differences. While both groups view Gen AI as a useful and easy-to-use tool, their perspectives on its drawbacks differ, offering valuable insights for enhancing Gen AI's application in EFL writing. Compared to existing research, this study offers a comprehensive view by examining the perspectives of both students and teachers, providing a new perspective on the role of Gen AI in EFL writing education.

Though the study's results reveal teachers' and students' perceptions of Gen AI use, there are still some limitations that should be acknowledged. First, Gen AI has not yet been widely adopted in EFL writing, and there is insufficient evidence to confirm its benefits for learners at all language levels. To further investigate the validity of using Gen AI in EFL writing, future research should explore the effectiveness of Gen AI across different language proficiencies to address these knowledge gaps.

Secondly, the study involved a relatively small sample size of 23 participants (13 students and 10 teachers), all of teachers interviewed were from the School of Foreign Languages, which may have implications for the generalizability of the findings. A larger sample size across multiple disciplines would likely provide more precise results and enhance the study's persuasiveness. Future research should aim to recruit a more extensive and diverse participant pool.

Thirdly, the study lacks longitudinal data as the data collection occurred between July and October 2024, capturing only the participants' perceptions during that period. Given the rapid advancements in AI technology in subsequent months, the study does not account for how perceptions might change as Gen AI becomes more integrated into education. Future studies should take longitudinal research to track changes in perceptions and the long-term effects of Gen AI on EFL writing.

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