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STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF GENERATIVE AI IN ACADEMIC WRITING

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Abstract

The rapid advancement of generative artificial intelligence (AI) technologies has significantly transformed educational practices, particularly in the field of academic writing. This study explores students' perceptions of generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, Gemini, and other AI-powered writing assistants, in academic writing contexts. The research examines students' attitudes, perceived benefits, challenges, and concerns regarding the integration of AI technologies into academic writing processes. The findings indicate that students generally perceive generative AI as a valuable educational resource that enhances writing quality, supports idea generation, improves language accuracy, and increases learning efficiency. However, concerns related to academic integrity, overreliance on AI, critical thinking development, and ethical use remain significant. The study highlights the importance of developing AI literacy alongside academic writing skills to ensure the effective and responsible use of generative AI technologies in higher education.

Keywords: Generative AI, ChatGPT, academic writing, student perceptions, artificial intelligence in education, AI literacy, higher education, digital learning.

Introduction

The emergence of generative artificial intelligence has become one of the most influential technological developments in contemporary education. Recent advancements in natural language processing and machine learning have enabled AI-powered systems to generate human-like texts, provide instant feedback, and assist learners in various academic tasks. Among these technologies, ChatGPT and similar generative AI tools have attracted considerable attention due to their potential to transform teaching and learning processes across educational settings.

Academic writing is one of the areas most profoundly affected by the introduction of generative AI technologies. Traditionally, academic writing has been regarded as a complex cognitive process requiring critical thinking, information synthesis, argument development, and language proficiency. The availability of AI-powered writing assistants has introduced new opportunities for supporting students throughout the writing process. These tools can generate ideas, suggest organizational structures, improve grammatical accuracy, and provide immediate feedback, thereby facilitating academic writing development. Despite the growing popularity of generative AI tools, their integration into higher education remains a subject of ongoing debate. Proponents argue

that AI technologies can enhance learning efficiency, promote learner autonomy, and provide personalized support. Critics, however, express concerns regarding academic dishonesty, dependency on AI-generated content, reduced critical thinking skills, and challenges related to originality and authorship. Consequently, understanding students' perceptions of generative AI has become increasingly important for educators, researchers, and policymakers.

Students' attitudes toward AI technologies play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of their implementation in educational environments. Positive perceptions may encourage productive and responsible use, whereas negative perceptions may limit the educational potential of these technologies. Therefore, investigating how students perceive generative AI in academic writing can provide valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges associated with AI integration in higher education. The purpose of this article is to explore students' perceptions of generative AI in academic writing and to analyze both the benefits and challenges associated with its use. The study aims to contribute to the growing body of research on artificial intelligence in education by examining the pedagogical implications of AI-assisted academic writing and identifying factors that influence students' acceptance and utilization of generative AI tools. Generative artificial intelligence has rapidly become one of the most discussed technological innovations in contemporary higher education. Its ability to generate coherent texts, reformulate ideas, provide linguistic corrections, and support content organization has created new possibilities for academic writing instruction. Unlike traditional digital writing tools, generative AI systems are not limited to grammar correction or spelling support; they are capable of assisting learners in brainstorming, outlining, paraphrasing, summarizing, translating, and revising academic texts. As a result, these tools have begun to reshape the way students understand and approach the academic writing process.

Academic writing is widely recognized as a cognitively demanding activity that requires the integration of linguistic competence, critical thinking, disciplinary knowledge, argumentation skills, and rhetorical awareness. For many students, especially those learning English as a foreign language, academic writing presents considerable challenges. These challenges include limited vocabulary, grammatical inaccuracies, difficulties in organizing ideas, weak argument development, and insufficient familiarity with academic conventions. In this context, generative AI tools may function as supportive learning resources that help students overcome linguistic and structural difficulties. One of the most significant advantages of generative AI in academic writing is its ability to provide immediate feedback. In traditional writing instruction, students often depend on teachers' comments, which may take considerable time due to classroom size and workload. AI-powered writing assistants, by contrast, can provide instant suggestions related to grammar, vocabulary, coherence, cohesion, and style. This immediate feedback allows students to revise their texts more frequently and become more aware of their writing weaknesses. Consequently, generative AI may contribute to the development of self-regulated learning and learner autonomy. Another important aspect of generative AI is its role in idea generation and text organization. Many students experience difficulties at the initial stages of writing, particularly when formulating a thesis statement, developing arguments, or structuring paragraphs. Tools such as ChatGPT can assist students by suggesting possible outlines, generating topic-related ideas, and offering examples of academic expressions. However, such support should not be understood as a replacement for students' own thinking. Rather, AI-generated suggestions should be critically evaluated, modified, and integrated into the writing process in accordance with academic standards.

Generative AI also has considerable potential for supporting English as a Foreign Language learners. For EFL students, academic writing involves not only the expression of ideas but also the

mastery of linguistic accuracy and academic style. AI tools can help learners improve sentence structure, vocabulary choice, and formal academic tone. For example, Grammarly can identify grammatical errors and stylistic inconsistencies, while ChatGPT can help reformulate informal sentences into more academic expressions. Such support may increase students' confidence and reduce anxiety associated with writing in a foreign language. Despite these advantages, the use of generative AI in academic writing raises serious ethical and pedagogical concerns. One of the most frequently discussed issues is academic integrity. Since AI tools can generate complete essays, paragraphs, or research summaries, students may be tempted to submit AI-generated content as their own work. This creates challenges for educators in distinguishing between legitimate assistance and academic misconduct. Therefore, higher education institutions need clear policies and guidelines regarding acceptable and unacceptable uses of AI in academic writing. Overreliance on generative AI is another important concern. If students depend excessively on AI-generated texts, they may fail to develop essential writing skills, critical thinking abilities, and independent academic judgment. Academic writing is not merely a mechanical process of producing grammatically correct sentences; it is a process of constructing knowledge, evaluating evidence, and developing original arguments. Therefore, the pedagogical value of AI depends on how students use it. When used critically and responsibly, AI can support learning; when used passively, it may weaken students' intellectual engagement.

The issue of authorship is also central to discussions of AI-assisted academic writing. Traditional academic writing is based on the assumption that the author is responsible for the ideas, structure, argumentation, and language of the text. However, when AI contributes to generating or reformulating content, the boundaries of authorship become less clear. This raises important questions: To what extent can AI assistance be considered acceptable? Should students disclose their use of AI tools? How can originality be maintained in AI-supported writing? These questions remain highly relevant in contemporary academic discourse. Students' perceptions of generative AI are shaped by several factors, including their digital literacy, previous experience with technology, language proficiency, institutional policies, and teachers' attitudes. Students with higher levels of digital literacy may be more capable of using AI tools effectively and responsibly. Conversely, students with limited digital competence may either misuse AI tools or avoid them due to uncertainty. Therefore, AI literacy should be developed as an essential component of academic writing instruction. AI literacy involves understanding how generative AI works, recognizing its limitations, evaluating AI-generated content critically, and using AI ethically. In addition, teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' perceptions of generative AI. If instructors present AI only as a threat to academic integrity, students may develop negative or secretive attitudes toward its use. However, if AI is introduced as a pedagogical tool with clear ethical boundaries, students are more likely to use it responsibly. Therefore, educational institutions should not simply prohibit AI tools but should develop pedagogically informed frameworks for their integration into writing instruction. The existing literature suggests that generative AI has both transformative potential and significant risks in academic writing. It can enhance writing quality, support learner autonomy, reduce language-related difficulties, and provide individualized feedback. At the same time, it may create challenges related to academic honesty, originality, critical thinking, and authorship. For this reason, students' perceptions of generative AI should be examined carefully, as their attitudes and practices directly influence the effectiveness of AI integration in academic writing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, generative artificial intelligence has become an influential tool in academic writing, offering significant benefits for students in terms of idea generation, language

improvement, writing organization, and immediate feedback. The findings suggest that students generally perceive AI-powered tools as useful resources that enhance writing efficiency and support learning processes. However, concerns related to academic integrity, overreliance on AI, authorship, and critical thinking remain important challenges. Therefore, the effective use of generative AI in academic writing requires the development of AI literacy, ethical awareness, and responsible academic practices. When used appropriately, generative AI can serve as a valuable educational tool that complements, rather than replaces, students' intellectual and creative engagement in academic writing.

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