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THE ROLE OF GENERATIVE AI IN DEVELOPING ENGLISH LEARNERS' WRITING SKILLS

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Abstract: The rapid development of generative artificial intelligence (AI) has introduced new opportunities for foreign language education. Among its various applications, AI-powered tools such as ChatGPT have attracted particular attention for their potential to support English learners in developing writing skills. This paper examines the role of generative AI in English writing development, focusing on its potential to provide immediate feedback, support vocabulary and grammar development, assist in generating and organizing ideas, and facilitate the revision process. At the same time, the paper considers challenges associated with the use of generative AI, including overreliance on AI-generated content, academic integrity, and the possible reduction of learners' independent thinking. Previous empirical studies indicate that ChatGPT-supported feedback can contribute to improvements in different aspects of EFL learners' writing, including grammar, conciseness, organization, and content. Therefore, generative AI can be considered a useful supplementary tool in English writing instruction when it is used critically and under appropriate guidance. The paper argues that AI should support rather than replace learners' own writing processes and active engagement with language learning.

Keywords: generative artificial intelligence, English language learning, writing skills, ChatGPT, EFL learners, AI-assisted writing, language education.

Introduction

The rapid development of digital technologies has significantly influenced the ways in which foreign languages are taught and learned. In recent years, generative artificial intelligence (AI) has become increasingly relevant to education, particularly following the emergence of tools capable of producing and analyzing human-like text. Among these tools, ChatGPT has gained considerable attention in language education because of its ability to interact with learners, provide explanations, suggest revisions, and generate language-related content. Its growing use has created new possibilities for supporting English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in developing their language skills.

Writing is one of the most demanding skills for learners of English because it requires the simultaneous use of grammar, vocabulary, organization, coherence, and appropriate communication of ideas. Unlike spoken communication, effective academic and professional writing usually requires repeated drafting, revision, and feedback. Traditional teacher feedback remains important, but providing detailed individual feedback to every learner can be challenging, particularly in classes with large numbers of students. Generative AI tools may provide additional support by offering immediate feedback and suggestions during different stages of the writing process.



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Recent empirical research has provided evidence of the potential of ChatGPT in this area. Mahapatra (2024), for example, investigated the use of ChatGPT as a formative feedback tool among undergraduate ESL students and found a significant positive impact on their academic writing skills. The study suggested that interaction with ChatGPT during the writing process could help students engage with feedback and make improvements to their writing. Similarly, Polakova and Ivenz (2024) examined 110 university EFL students and reported improvements in several aspects of writing following ChatGPT feedback, including grammar, conciseness, inclusion of key information, and use of passive voice.

Generative AI can therefore offer learners support at several stages of the writing process. During the planning stage, it can help learners generate and organize ideas. During drafting and revision, it can provide suggestions related to grammar, vocabulary, clarity, and structure. However, the use of AI in writing education also raises important concerns. Learners may become overly dependent on AI-generated responses, accept suggestions without critically evaluating them, or use AI to produce work instead of developing their own writing abilities. Concerns related to academic integrity and plagiarism are also important considerations in the educational use of AI.

Consequently, the purpose of this paper is to examine the role of generative AI in developing English learners' writing skills, with particular attention to its potential benefits and limitations. The paper argues that generative AI can serve as a valuable supplementary tool for English writing development when learners use it critically and maintain active control over their own writing process.

1. Generative AI in English Writing

Generative artificial intelligence has become an increasingly visible tool in foreign language education. Unlike traditional digital language-learning resources, generative AI systems can interact with learners and produce individualized responses to their questions and written work. In the context of English writing, tools such as ChatGPT can assist learners at different stages of the writing process, including brainstorming, planning, drafting, editing, and revising.

One of the most important applications of generative AI in writing education is the provision of immediate feedback. English learners often require feedback on grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, coherence, and organization. Research conducted by Mahapatra (2024) demonstrated that ChatGPT can function as a formative feedback tool and reported a significant positive effect on undergraduate ESL students' academic writing skills. The study also emphasized that interaction with AI during the writing process can influence how learners seek and respond to feedback.

Generative AI can also support learners during the planning stage of writing. Students may use AI tools to brainstorm possible ideas, organize information, develop outlines, and clarify concepts before producing their own texts. A study of EFL learners in Thailand and Vietnam found that students commonly used ChatGPT for brainstorming, organizing ideas, refining outlines, clarifying concepts, and editing drafts. Such applications suggest that generative AI can be incorporated into the writing process without necessarily replacing the learner's role as the author.



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Another potential application is language accuracy. EFL learners may use AI tools to identify grammatical errors, improve word choice, and make sentences clearer and more appropriate for a particular context. Polakova and Ivenz (2024), in a study involving 110 university EFL students, reported improvements in several aspects of writing following the use of ChatGPT feedback, including conciseness, grammar, inclusion of key information, and the use of passive voice.

Therefore, generative AI can be viewed as a supplementary resource that supports several stages of English writing development. Its value is particularly evident in its ability to provide immediate feedback and assistance with planning, language accuracy, and revision. However, the educational effectiveness of these tools depends largely on how learners use them. AI-generated suggestions should be critically evaluated rather than accepted automatically, and learners should remain responsible for the ideas, language, and final content of their written work.

2. Benefits of Generative AI for Developing English Writing Skills

Generative AI can provide English learners with support throughout different stages of the writing process. Its potential benefits are particularly evident in language accuracy, vocabulary development, idea generation, feedback, and revision. When used appropriately, these functions can make the writing process more interactive and allow learners to receive assistance outside the traditional classroom environment.

Grammar and vocabulary are fundamental components of effective English writing. EFL learners frequently experience difficulties with verb forms, sentence structure, articles, prepositions, word choice, and the appropriate use of academic vocabulary. Generative AI tools can help learners identify such problems and provide explanations or alternative expressions. For example, a learner can submit a sentence to an AI tool and ask for an explanation of a grammatical error rather than simply requesting a corrected version. This may encourage learners to understand their mistakes and apply the relevant language rules in future writing.

Research also provides evidence of improvements in language-related aspects of writing following AI-assisted feedback. Polakova and Ivenz (2024), in their study of 110 university EFL students, reported improvements in grammar, conciseness, and other aspects of students' writing after receiving ChatGPT feedback.

Another important benefit of generative AI is its ability to assist learners during the planning stage. Students may experience difficulty deciding what ideas to include or how to organize them into a coherent text. AI tools can suggest possible topics, questions, examples, or outlines that learners can use as starting points for their own work.

This function can be particularly useful for learners who have sufficient knowledge of a topic but struggle to transform their ideas into an organized English text. However, AI-generated suggestions should be treated as starting points rather than final answers. The learner should select, evaluate, modify, and develop the ideas independently.

Traditional teacher feedback is an essential part of writing instruction, but teachers may face practical difficulties in providing detailed individualized feedback to every



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student. Generative AI can provide immediate responses to learners' drafts and identify possible problems related to grammar, vocabulary, clarity, and organization.

Mahapatra (2024) found a significant positive effect of ChatGPT-supported formative feedback on undergraduate ESL students' academic writing skills. The study suggests that, with appropriate training, ChatGPT can function as a useful feedback tool, particularly in larger writing classes.

More recent research has similarly found positive effects of AI-assisted feedback. A 2025 study comparing AI-assisted and traditional feedback among postgraduate EFL students reported significantly higher post-test writing scores for students who received AI-enhanced feedback and examined improvements in content, organization, and language use.

Writing development depends not only on producing a first draft but also on the ability to review and improve one's own work. Generative AI can support this process by drawing learners' attention to areas that may require revision. Students can compare their original texts with AI suggestions and decide which changes are appropriate.

This process can contribute to learner autonomy when students actively evaluate the feedback instead of accepting every suggestion automatically. Research on ChatGPT-supported teacher feedback has shown that combining AI capabilities with teacher guidance can encourage students to engage more deeply with feedback during revision.

Therefore, the greatest educational value of generative AI may not lie in producing a finished text for the learner. Rather, it lies in providing support that encourages learners to plan, write, evaluate, revise, and improve their own work. In this way, AI can become a supplementary resource within the writing process while the learner remains responsible for the final product.

3. Challenges and Limitations of Generative AI in English Writing

Despite its potential benefits, the use of generative AI in English writing also presents several challenges. The effectiveness of AI-assisted writing depends not only on the capabilities of the technology but also on learners' ability to use it critically and responsibly. Therefore, the integration of generative AI into English language education should take into account issues related to learner autonomy, academic integrity, accuracy, and independent thinking.

One of the main concerns is learners' potential overreliance on AI-generated suggestions. If students regularly ask AI tools to generate complete texts instead of using them to support their own writing process, they may have fewer opportunities to develop independent writing skills. Recent research on EFL writing has found that some learners demonstrate over-reliance on AI-generated text, despite experiencing benefits in areas such as vocabulary, organization, and writing performance.

For this reason, students should use generative AI primarily as a supportive resource. For example, asking an AI tool to explain a grammatical error or suggest ways to improve an existing paragraph can provide a learning opportunity, whereas asking it to write an entire assignment may reduce the student's active involvement in the writing process.



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The use of generative AI also raises questions concerning academic integrity and authorship. When students submit AI-generated text as their own work, it becomes difficult to determine whether the submitted writing accurately represents their language abilities and ideas. Recent research shows that teachers can experience difficulties identifying AI-assisted writing, creating challenges for traditional assessment practices.

Therefore, students should be encouraged to understand institutional rules concerning AI use and to be transparent about the role of AI in their academic work when required. The purpose of AI-assisted writing should be to support learning and revision rather than to replace the learner's contribution.

Another limitation is that generative AI does not guarantee that every response or suggestion is accurate or appropriate. AI-generated text can contain factual inaccuracies, unsuitable vocabulary, or suggestions that do not fit the intended context. Recent research on AI literacy in EFL writing emphasizes that generative AI can produce authoritative-sounding language without guaranteeing accuracy or pedagogical appropriateness.

Consequently, English learners need to develop the ability to evaluate AI-generated feedback critically. They should compare suggestions with reliable sources, consult teachers when necessary, and consider whether a proposed correction actually improves the meaning and quality of their writing.

Although generative AI can support learner autonomy by providing assistance outside the classroom, excessive dependence may have the opposite effect. If learners allow AI to make most decisions about vocabulary, organization, ideas, and sentence construction, they may gradually become less involved in the cognitive processes required for effective writing.

Recent research suggests that the educational value of generative AI depends strongly on learners' AI literacy and ethical awareness. Students need to understand not only how to use AI tools but also when and why to use them.

Therefore, teachers should establish clear boundaries for AI use and encourage students to maintain responsibility for their ideas and final texts. AI literacy should be treated as part of modern language education, allowing learners to benefit from technological tools without losing their independence as writers.

Overall, these challenges do not mean that generative AI should be excluded from English writing education. Instead, they demonstrate the need for a balanced approach in which AI provides support while learners remain active participants in planning, writing, evaluating, and revising their own work.

Conclusion

Generative artificial intelligence is becoming an increasingly important tool in English language education and has significant potential to support the development of learners' writing skills. As discussed in this paper, AI-powered tools such as ChatGPT can assist learners at different stages of the writing process, including planning, drafting, receiving feedback, and revising. Research has demonstrated potential improvements in areas such as grammar, conciseness, organization, and the inclusion of relevant information following AI-assisted feedback.



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At the same time, generative AI should not be considered a replacement for teachers or for learners' independent efforts. The use of AI may create problems related to overreliance, academic integrity, accuracy, and the development of independent writing abilities. Research comparing human and AI-generated feedback also suggests that human feedback may be superior in some aspects of quality, although AI can provide useful and efficient support, particularly during early stages of the writing process.

Therefore, the most productive approach is to integrate generative AI as a supplementary tool within a learner-centered writing process. Students should use AI to identify possible weaknesses, generate ideas, receive explanations, and revise their drafts while maintaining responsibility for their own ideas and final texts. Teachers, in turn, should provide guidance concerning appropriate and ethical AI use. Research on ChatGPT-supported teacher feedback suggests that combining AI's analytical capabilities with teacher expertise can encourage deeper student engagement with feedback and revision.

In conclusion, generative AI can contribute meaningfully to English learners' writing development when it is used critically, responsibly, and with appropriate educational guidance. Its greatest value lies not in producing finished assignments for learners, but in supporting them as they learn to become more effective, independent, and reflective writers.

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