

EFL Teachers' Experiences with Students' Generative AI Use in Writing: Evidence from Thailand and Indonesia

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Received: August 5, 2025

Accepted: December 18, 2025

Online Published: April 10, 2026

doi:10.5430/wjel.v16n4p333

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v16n4p333>

Abstract

This explanatory sequential mixed-methods study explores EFL teachers' experiences with students' use of generative AI tools in writing instruction, based on a small, purposively selected sample of higher education teachers from Thailand and Indonesia. Quantitative data were collected from 41 participants (24 females and 17 males) through a brief survey consisting of five multiple-choice items, complemented by qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews with 18 teachers (13 females and 5 males). The findings indicate that teachers experienced several perceived instructional benefits of AI use in EFL writing, including support for sentence-level accuracy, faster feedback, and assistance for learners with lower English proficiency. At the same time, teachers reported substantial concerns related to ethical issues, plagiarism, overreliance on AI, and potential reductions in students' independent engagement with writing tasks. In response to these concerns, participants described various management strategies, such as establishing transparent guidelines, limiting AI use to specific functions, and adapting assessment practices to maintain authenticity. Overall, this study offers context-specific, experience-based insights into how EFL teachers navigate the opportunities and challenges of integrating generative AI into writing instruction.

Keywords: EFL, Generative AI, Higher Education, Teachers' Perceptions, Writing

1. Introduction

As Generative AI (GenAI) rapidly evolves, research on this tool is widely conducted in various fields, including in English as foreign language (EFL) education. Studies have reported the GenAI's potential for EFL instruction enhancement. In higher education, where class sizes are typically large, this tool can foster students' self-regulated learning, allowing students to be active learners (Anggoro & Pratiwi, 2023). Research has also highlighted GenAI's positive effects on students' learning satisfaction, motivation, and achievement. GenAI tools have supported the learning of receptive skills such as listening and reading, particularly through AI-assisted comprehension and language exposure features. In addition, different types of GenAI tools serve distinct instructional functions, including grammar and language checkers, generative drafting tools for writing and speaking practice, and AI-based feedback and explainability tools that provide examples, revisions, and justifications. These tools offer information, models, and feedback, which are considered crucial for supporting EFL learners' language development.

Despite the reported advantages, concerns on GenAI in EFL learning have been underexplored. Studies from other fields have reported the risk of overreliance, affecting students' creativity and critical thinking. The tool also puts academic integrity in a pressing place, where students might find submitting AI-generated content as their own work acceptable. Most importantly, studies have highlighted that the tool might impact learning. With overreliance, the tool might replace students' cognitive process and makes them dependent thinkers. These disadvantages require careful attention from all fields, including EFL education.

In EFL education, it takes years of exposure for a person to master the target language's core skills. Among the four core skills of English, writing is reported to be among the most challenging to acquire (Tsiritakis et al., 2020). Learning writing is often associated with boredom, accentuating that the lessons are not usually engaging learners due to its difficulty (El Deen, 2023). When studying this skill, EFL learners have reported struggles with the linguistics competence, such as writing mechanics, language functions, and cohesion. Affective factors such as lack of motivation and confidence have also worsened the writing learning. GenAI might have become a solution to some, expediting the writing process. This might be the reason for overreliance on AI in EFL writing. It is worth noting that despite its complex nature, it is substantial for EFL learners to acquire the writing skills and to write without AI support.

Instructors stand at the forefront of this challenge. As AI use becomes increasingly common in EFL classrooms, teachers are among the first to observe how students integrate these tools into their writing processes. However, there remains limited empirical research on how

EFL teachers themselves experience and interpret students' use of GenAI tools, particularly with regard to instructional decision making, assessment practices, ethical reasoning, and institutional guidance or training in developing contexts such as Thailand and Indonesia. This study therefore addresses this gap by investigating EFL teachers' experiences and perceptions of students' AI-assisted writing through a mixed-methods design, allowing for both breadth and depth of understanding. Given the rapid global adoption of GenAI and the lack of region-specific evidence, this research offers timely insights into how technology is shaping EFL writing instruction in Southeast Asian higher education.

2. Literature Review

2.1 EFL Writing & Technology

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners to master (Mah et al., 2021; Zhao, 2022). Unlike receptive skills such as reading and listening, which can often be assessed through straightforward multiple-choice tests, writing is far more complex to evaluate (Preiss et al., 2013). This complexity arises because learners must simultaneously manage vocabulary, grammar, text organization, and audience awareness (Kim et al., 2024). As Kroll (2001) explains, writing requires navigating multiple language systems at once, while Brown and Lee (2015) emphasize that it also demands mastery of rhetorical structures, appropriate discourse markers, and an iterative revision process. Together, these accounts converge on the view that writing difficulty stems not from a single linguistic challenge, but from the need to coordinate multiple cognitive, linguistic, and affective processes, illustrating that writing is not only linguistically demanding but also cognitively and affectively challenging, requiring sustained engagement and critical thinking.

With technological advancements, writing has become more accessible for EFL learners. Digital writing tools, such as online editors and feedback systems, have been shown to improve writing quality and engagement (Nobles & Paganucci, 2015; Anggoro & Maretha, 2025). In classroom contexts, technology integration has enhanced EFL writing learning, particularly for students with lower English proficiency (Anggoro & Khasanah, 2025). These tools are often reported to reduce affective barriers, such as low motivation and high anxiety, which frequently hinder sustained writing practice (Anggoro & Nguyen, 2021). Across these studies, technology is consistently framed as a supportive aid that supplements instruction rather than replaces learners' cognitive effort. However, while earlier research largely agrees on the benefits of technology-enhanced writing, it has primarily focused on conventional digital tools rather than AI-driven systems, leaving limited understanding of how more autonomous technologies may reconfigure learners' writing behaviors and teachers' instructional roles.

More recently, the rise of AI has opened new possibilities for EFL writing instruction. AI-powered platforms can provide immediate feedback, model correct usage, and support self-regulated learning (Wu et al., 2025). Explainable AI, in particular, allows learners not only to correct errors but also to understand the rationale behind them, deepening their metalinguistic awareness (Afzaal et al., 2023). However, the literature does not present a unified position on these developments. While some studies emphasize AI's potential to foster learner autonomy and reflective practice (Mohebbi, 2024), others caution that excessive reliance on AI may constrain creativity and diminish original thought (Anggoro, 2025). This contrast reveals an unresolved tension in the literature between AI as a pedagogical scaffold and AI as a possible substitute for authentic writing engagement.

2.2 AI-Powered Tools, GenAI and EFL Writing

Recent studies highlight the growing potential of AI-powered tools to support English writing processes (Barrot, 2020). These tools not only enhance EFL/ESL learners' writing skills but also foster greater autonomy and self-regulation (Pokrivčáková, 2019; Nazari et al., 2021; Anggoro & Pratiwi, 2023). By offering revision suggestions and generating similarity reports, AI-based applications allow learners to write and learn simultaneously (Winans, 2021). Across these studies, AI is generally positioned as a facilitative support that complements learners' cognitive engagement rather than replacing it, framing technology as an enabler of independent writing development.

It is important to note, however, that not all AI tools fall under the category of generative AI (GenAI). While AI encompasses a broad range of technologies designed for analytical or assistive functions, GenAI refers specifically to systems—such as large language models—that can generate original text or images in response to prompts (Giannakos et al., 2024). This distinction is pedagogically significant, as GenAI's generative capacity introduces a qualitatively different form of support compared to rule-based or corrective tools. In EFL writing contexts, GenAI may function simultaneously as a writing assistant, virtual tutor, and digital peer, supporting linguistic development as well as emotional engagement (Kim et al., 2024). At the same time, this expanded role raises questions about authorship, agency, and the boundaries between assistance and substitution.

Empirical evidence largely paints a positive picture of GenAI's pedagogical potential. Cheung and Shi (2025) observed that GenAI tools help students critically engage with AI-generated content, fostering linguistic and cultural awareness. Similarly, Cummings et al. (2024) reported that students use GenAI to brainstorm ideas, refine arguments, and edit drafts, while Doshi and Hauser (2024) found that it can stimulate creativity, resulting in more engaging and well-written texts. Learners also tend to perceive GenAI as beneficial for improving grammar, vocabulary, and overall writing proficiency (Liu et al., 2024). Taken together, these studies portray GenAI as a resource that supports higher-order writing processes rather than merely surface-level correction.

Beyond student outcomes, GenAI may also transform teachers' professional practices. Studies have shown that AI can automate time-consuming tasks such as grading and lesson planning, thereby reducing workload and enabling more individualized instruction

(Santos, 2024; Hashem et al., 2023; Anggoro, 2025). Platforms like ChatGPT can assist teachers in generating contextually appropriate materials, while other AI systems help manage student progress and administrative duties (Goldman et al., 2024). Collectively, these findings suggest that GenAI holds promise not only for enhancing student learning but also for reshaping instructional efficiency. From this perspective, GenAI is often framed as enhancing instructional efficiency and freeing teachers to focus on pedagogical decision making and learner support

Nevertheless, research also highlights contradictions. While many educators view GenAI as a tool that supports differentiation and engagement (Rachmadtullah et al., 2024; Alomair, 2024), others express concern that excessive reliance may erode teacher-student interaction and critical thinking (Han et al., 2023). Moreover, insufficient professional development often limits teachers' ability to integrate GenAI effectively (Alenezi, 2024). These contrasting findings suggest that the effectiveness of GenAI might not be inherent to the technology itself, but is possibly contingent on teachers' pedagogical competence, familiarity with AI, and institutional support structures.

Taken together, prior research highlights GenAI's transformative potential but also reveals unresolved tensions between empowerment and dependency, efficiency and authenticity, and optimism and caution. Despite increasing global interest, little is known about how EFL teachers in Southeast Asian contexts, particularly Thailand and Indonesia, experience and interpret students' use of GenAI in writing classes. Addressing this gap can shed light on how contextual, ethical, and pedagogical considerations intersect in real classroom practice.

2.3 Concerns on Strategies Coping with GenAI in EFL Writing

In addition to the many affordances of GenAI in writing instruction, a number of concerns have also become increasingly pressing. Doshi and Hauser (2024) noted that while GenAI can lead to more creative and polished writing, it may also limit the diversity of content produced. Moreover, frequent use of these tools could negatively impact students' cognitive processes. For example, Kim et al. (2024) found that students expressed worries about their own writing development and confidence, fearing that overreliance on AI might undermine their independent critical thinking and analytical skills—abilities essential for effective writing. Similarly, Xiao et al. (2025) reported that students were hesitant to disclose their use of AI to teachers out of concern that it might lead to negative evaluations. This apprehension could reflect a deeper lack of confidence in their own unaided writing abilities.

Concerns are not limited to students. Even experienced EFL instructors may develop an overdependence on GenAI, which could erode their confidence in performing writing and other professional tasks due to habitual reliance on these tools (Anggoro, 2025). Such dependence risks stalling the development of independent self-regulation skills. Additionally, unequal access to advanced AI technologies continues to pose challenges, potentially exacerbating educational disparities (Mohebbi, 2024).

Academic integrity also remains a significant issue. The ease of generating content with AI raises questions about true authorship and whether students might bypass genuine learning processes (Yeo, 2023). Teachers have voiced concerns that heavy reliance on AI could dilute students' individual writing voices and critical thinking capacities (Bedington et al., 2024; Wang, 2024). Furthermore, ethical considerations around data privacy and equitable access complicate the adoption of AI tools in educational settings (Kohnke, 2024).

To address these challenges, several studies have suggested various strategies to prepare students for an AI-integrated future. These, however, are not specifically tailored to the EFL writing context. Approaches such as anti-dependency teaching aim to encourage learners to be active creators with technology, fostering critical thinking and creativity rather than passive consumption (Calzada, 2024). Collaborative, project-based, and interdisciplinary learning environments help build teamwork and problem-solving skills, which are increasingly vital in AI contexts (Calzada, 2024). Ethical frameworks that address data privacy and algorithmic bias protect student information and promote fairness in educational outcomes (Boumediene & Bouakkaz, 2024; Moore & Tsay, 2024). Meanwhile, curriculum adjustments and the development of structured resources are supporting the integration of AI education in schools (Zhao, 2022). Personalized learning driven by AI also enhances student engagement and helps identify those who may need additional support early on (Moore & Tsay, 2024). Together, these strategies—from innovative curricula to immersive, emotionally engaging learning—represent a comprehensive response to both the opportunities and ethical challenges posed by AI in education (Seufert & Spirgi, 2024).

Taken together, the literature largely clusters around three interrelated dimensions of GenAI use in writing instruction: perceived pedagogical benefits, perceived risks and concerns, and the need for guiding policies or instructional strategies. Prior studies predominantly examine how GenAI relates to writing quality, learner autonomy, and instructional efficiency, while simultaneously raising ethical, cognitive, and academic integrity concerns. In response to these tensions, scholars have increasingly highlighted the role of institutional guidance, assessment practices, and classroom-level policies in mediating AI use. Although other dimensions such as teacher efficacy, institutional constraints, and assessment literacy are also relevant, these issues are typically embedded within broader discussions of benefits, concerns, and policy responses rather than examined as standalone constructs. Accordingly, the present study adopts these three categories as an analytically coherent framework for exploring teachers' experiences with students' use of GenAI in EFL writing contexts. The following is the research question of this study.

1. How do EFL teachers experience students' use of generative AI tools in EFL writing instruction, and what benefits, challenges, impacts, and coping strategies do they identify?

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. In the first phase, quantitative data were collected using a structured survey to examine teachers’ experiences with generative AI (GenAI) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing instruction. The purpose of this phase was to identify descriptive trends and preliminary patterns in teacher responses rather than to establish statistically stable subgroup differences.

These survey findings directly informed the second, qualitative phase. Specifically, recurring response patterns, such as the high frequency of reported concerns related to plagiarism and overreliance on AI, as well as exploratory indications of variation by gender and familiarity with AI, were used to develop targeted interview questions (see Table 2). For example, survey responses indicating that plagiarism and ethical concerns were among the most frequently selected issues informed interview questions 4 and 5 on academic integrity and management strategies. Preliminary survey patterns related to gender and familiarity with AI guided follow-up probes in questions 2 and 10, while responses concerning AI’s perceived impact on writing proficiency informed questions 1, 2, and 3. This linkage ensured that the qualitative phase elaborated on and contextualized patterns emerging from the quantitative data rather than treating them as definitive findings.

While quantitative data provided a general overview of teachers’ experiences with GenAI in EFL writing, such data alone were insufficient to capture the nuanced perspectives, contextual factors, and instructional strategies that shape AI integration in real classrooms. Closed-ended survey items could identify trends, frequency of concerns, and demographic patterns, but they could not explain the reasoning behind teachers’ perceptions, uncover subtle ethical dilemmas, or explore how instructors adapt their pedagogy in response to AI use. The qualitative follow-up was therefore necessary to provide rich, detailed insights, allowing participants to elaborate on survey trends, give examples, and reflect on complex phenomena such as overreliance, academic integrity, and long-term instructional planning. Accordingly, the quantitative phase served a scoping and orienting function, while the qualitative phase provided depth and explanatory insight within the overall design.

The study followed institutional ethical procedures. Approval was obtained from the university’s research ethics committee before data collection began. Informed consent was secured from all participants. All data were anonymized, and appropriate measures were taken to ensure secure storage and handling of participant information.

3.2 Participants & Data Collection

As previously stated, this study included two phases. The first phase aimed to generally investigate EFL writing instructors’ experiences with GenAI in their classes. The survey questions included closed-ended questions concerning their overall perceptions, benefits, concerns, and policies. Though this phase might not have examined experiences of these instructors with the technology comprehensively, it provided directions for the second phase that is more explorative.

In the first phase of this research, quantitative data were collected. Approximately 50 EFL lecturers were purposively selected and personally approached. These individuals were purposively chosen based on a set of criteria: minimum 2 years in teaching EFL writing in higher education and some familiarity and exposure in using GenAI. Participants were purposively selected based on the following criteria: a minimum of two years of experience teaching EFL writing in higher education and prior familiarity or exposure to generative AI tools. The minimum teaching experience of two years was set to ensure that participants had sufficient instructional exposure to observe student writing development and the integration of AI tools over time. Prior familiarity was required to ensure that participants could provide informed and meaningful reflections on the use of GenAI in EFL writing instruction, rather than purely speculative opinions. Out of these individuals, 41 (24 females and 17 males) volunteered and gave their consent for data collection. They come from Thailand and Indonesia. Participants were affiliated with universities in Thailand and Indonesia. All taught undergraduate-level general English courses that involved writing components, such as English communication skills, English writing skills, academic writing, and integrated reading–writing courses. Typical class sizes ranged from approximately 30 to 50 students.

A survey, whose details are shown in Table 1, consisting of 5 closed-ended multiple-choice questions were sent to these participants via email and/or social media of their convenience. The questions varied from single to multiple responses. They were given one week to complete it. Participants were also given rights to skip questions they found irrelevant. At the end of the survey, participants selected their availability for further data collection.

Table 1. Sample Closed-Ended Questions

Demographics	Questions
Teaching experience levels taught	How do you perceive the impact of AI tools on students' writing proficiency?
age	In your opinion, what are the advantages of using AI tools in EFL writing instruction? (Select all that apply)
gender	What are your main concerns about students using AI tools in their writing assignments? (Select all that apply)
familiarity with AI tool	What guidelines or policies would you recommend for students using AI tools in writing assignments? (Select all that apply)
	Do you believe AI tools should be integrated into the EFL writing curriculum?

In the second phase, qualitative, individuals who gave consent for follow-up data gathering were contacted. 18 participants (13 females and 5 males) were personally contacted and interviewed at their own convenience. 10 participants are Thai and 8 are Indonesians. The interviews were online via Zoom and lasted between 30 to 75 minutes. The interviews were semi-structured and were conducted in English. Thus, some questions, as shown in Table 2, were prepared, but further questions were also asked on the spot for more in-depth. The prepared questions were developed following the results of the survey. Participants were also informed that they could skip questions they found irrelevant. All participants, however, answered all the questions. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim.

Table 2. Sampe Open-Ended Questions

No.	Questions
1	Can you describe your experiences with generative AI tools like ChatGPT in the context of your students' writing assignments?
2	How do you perceive the impact of AI tools on students' writing skills? Do you think these tools are helpful or harmful overall?
3	Have you observed any changes in student behavior or writing quality since the introduction of AI tools in the classroom?
4	What concerns do you have about students using AI tools, especially in terms of plagiarism and academic integrity?
5	How do you currently manage or address the use of AI tools in your writing instruction?
6	In your opinion, how should AI tools be integrated (or not) into EFL writing instruction? Should there be guidelines or restrictions?
7	What challenges do you face as a teacher in assessing writing when students are using AI tools?
8	Do you believe that AI-assisted writing should be a permanent part of the EFL curriculum? Why or why not?
9	How do you plan to adapt your teaching methods in light of the increasing use of AI tools in education?
10	In your opinion, what are the potential long-term effects of AI tools on students' language learning and writing skills?

Prior to implementation of the survey and semi-structured interview, each was sent to a panel of three experts in educational technology and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) for their assessment using the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC). All items in both instruments scored above the threshold, .67, ensuring validity. A pilot study was also applied prior to the real data collection, where 10 EFL instructors volunteered.

3.3 Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the first survey were analyzed using SPSS. Given that the instrument consisted of five multiple-choice items, the analysis focused primarily on descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages. Some items allowed multiple selections (select-all-that-apply). The quantitative analysis was conducted prior to the collection of qualitative data, and the results, including observed trends, were used to inform the design and focus of the qualitative interviews.

Interview data were analyzed using an thematic content analysis. The analytic process involved data familiarization, initial code generation, identification of emerging themes, and iterative refinement of these themes. Two researchers independently coded the data and subsequently compared their coding. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion to reach consensus, rather than through statistical reliability coefficients. Data collection and analysis proceeded iteratively, and no substantively new themes emerged in the later interviews, indicating thematic saturation. Throughout the process, analytic notes and coding revisions were maintained to support transparency and reflexivity.

4. Results

4.1 The first phase: Quantitative

As mentioned in the Method, the first survey consisted of five multiple-choice items. While it did not comprehensively capture instructors' experiences, it served as a springboard for the second, qualitative phase. Regarding the impact of AI tools on students' writing proficiency, a majority of participants expressed positive views: 41.5% reported significant improvement, 36.5% slight improvement, 9.8% were unsure, 9.8% believed the tools had a negative impact, and 2.4% perceived no effect.

Concerning advantages, the most frequently cited benefit was improved sentence-level accuracy (84.4%), followed by faster feedback on grammar and structure (80.0%). Over half noted that AI tools reduce teacher workload for basic corrections (62.2%) and encourage student self-correction (55.6%). Fewer respondents mentioned benefits such as helping students generate ideas (4.4%) or supporting automatic writing (2.2%). The most commonly cited concern was plagiarism and academic dishonesty (88.1%), followed by reduced creativity and critical thinking (73.8%). Other concerns included over-reliance on AI for simple corrections (66.7%), difficulty evaluating authentic student work (64.3%), and loss of personal writing voice (57.1%). A few participants also raised issues like false information generated by AI and increased student dependence on tools.

For responsible integration of AI, participants recommended several key guidelines. Most emphasized transparency with instructors (90%), limiting AI use to grammar and spelling corrections (75%), and prohibiting AI-generated content for originality purposes (60%). A minority suggested allowing unrestricted use, and some proposed nuanced policies such as limiting AI-generated content percentages or controlling output quality. Concerning integration into curriculum, most respondents (81%) favored AI integration with restrictions, while 19% supported full integration without restrictions, indicating broad agreement on incorporating AI in EFL writing curricula with safeguards.

4.2 The Second Phase: Qualitative

This section presents an in-depth thematic analysis of interview responses from 18 EFL instructors (13 females and 5 males; 10 very

familiar and 8 somewhat familiar). The focus is on their experiences with, and reflections on, the integration of generative AI tools in EFL writing instruction. The analysis followed a hybrid (deductive and inductive) approach and revealed seven major themes. These themes illustrate both the perceived benefits and challenges of AI-assisted writing, particularly in relation to student learning, academic integrity, instructional adaptation, and educational values. Representative quotes are provided to substantiate the themes and reflect the diversity of teacher voices.

4.2.1 Mixed Perception of Helpfulness

Interview data indicate that teachers held divergent but overlapping views regarding the helpfulness of generative AI tools in EFL writing instruction. Fourteen of the 18 interviewed teachers reported at least one way in which AI tools were helpful for students' writing. These perceived benefits primarily related to idea generation, text organization, and surface-level language support such as grammar and vocabulary. Several teachers described AI as particularly useful when students struggled to begin writing or lacked linguistic resources. For example, eight teachers (Resp03, Resp05, Resp07, Resp09, Resp11, Resp14, Resp18, Resp15) stated that AI helped students brainstorm ideas, expand content, or gain confidence during writing tasks. In these accounts, AI functioned as a practical support rather than a replacement for student effort.

At the same time, twelve teachers explicitly articulated concerns alongside these benefits, indicating that positive effects were often conditional. Nine teachers (Resp01, Resp02, Resp04, Resp05, Resp06, Resp12, Resp15, Resp16, Resp17) reported that students tended to over-rely on AI, frequently using outputs without adequate evaluation, revision, or understanding. These teachers observed that AI-assisted texts often appeared linguistically accurate but did not reflect students' independent writing abilities. Several participants contrasted AI-supported assignments with in-class writing tasks, noting clear discrepancies. Six teachers (Resp01, Resp03, Resp06, Resp08, Resp12, Resp18) reported that students' writing quality declined noticeably when AI tools were unavailable, suggesting that improved output did not consistently translate into transferable writing skills.

Overall, teachers' experiences suggest that AI was perceived as helpful for addressing immediate writing challenges, particularly at the level of language form and task initiation. However, these benefits were frequently accompanied by concerns about limited cognitive engagement and dependency, leading teachers to view AI usefulness as context-dependent and highly sensitive to how students use the tools.

Example Quotes:

- "ChatGPT helps my students brainstorm and organize their ideas when they feel stuck." (Resp05)
- "It enhances grammar, vocabulary, and sentence flow—it gives them confidence." (Resp07)
- "Students cannot think critically and independently. They rely too much on AI and don't even check if it's right." (Resp01)
- "Using AI tools doesn't really help them, but instead spoils them." (Resp01)

4.2.2 Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Concerns

Concerns related to academic integrity and plagiarism were raised by 15 of the 18 interviewed teachers, making this one of the most consistently reported issues across the dataset. These concerns focused not only on deliberate misconduct but also on students' limited awareness of ethical boundaries when using generative AI tools. Twelve teachers (Resp01, Resp02, Resp04, Resp05, Resp06, Resp08, Resp10, Resp12, Resp15, Resp16, Resp17, Resp18) reported that students frequently submitted AI-generated text with little or no modification. In several cases, teachers emphasized that students did not critically evaluate the accuracy, relevance, or originality of AI outputs before submission. This practice blurred the distinction between acceptable assistance and inappropriate substitution of student work.

A related concern involved students' limited understanding of plagiarism and authorship in the context of AI. Nine teachers (Resp01, Resp02, Resp04, Resp06, Resp08, Resp10, Resp15, Resp16, Resp17) explicitly stated that students appeared unaware that submitting AI-generated text without attribution or reflection could constitute academic misconduct. Some teachers described this as a conceptual gap rather than intentional cheating, particularly among lower-proficiency learners. Detection difficulties further intensified integrity concerns. Ten teachers (Resp01, Resp04, Resp06, Resp08, Resp10, Resp15, Resp16, Resp18, Resp12, Resp05) reported that existing plagiarism detection tools were unreliable for identifying AI-generated content. As a result, several relied on indirect strategies such as oral questioning, comparing in-class and take-home writing, or intuitive judgment based on language mismatch.

Beyond plagiarism, six teachers (Resp01, Resp06, Resp12, Resp15, Resp16, Resp17) expressed concern that AI use undermined the development of ethical academic habits. They noted that routine reliance on AI-generated text risked normalizing shortcuts and reducing students' engagement with the writing process, which they viewed as central to learning in EFL writing courses.

Overall, teachers' experiences suggest that academic integrity concerns were not limited to rule violations but extended to broader issues of authorship, responsibility, and ethical literacy. These concerns shaped teachers' cautious attitudes toward AI use and informed their preference for restricted, guided, or monitored integration rather than unrestricted adoption.

Example Quotes:

- "They use ChatGPT not as an assistant but as the brain, which is wrong." (Resp01)

- “Students don't even check if the references provided by AI are real.” (Resp01)
- “The writing is often flawless, but the ideas aren't theirs. They don't even understand what's written.” (Resp16)
- “AI-generated writing often fails to convey original student thought. It's polished but soulless.” (Resp17)

4.2.3 Changes in Student Behavior and Writing Quality

Changes in student behavior and writing quality were frequently noted by the interviewed teachers following the introduction of generative AI tools in EFL writing instruction. Fourteen out of 18 teachers described observable changes in students' writing output, while eleven teachers also commented on shifts in students' learning behaviors. Regarding writing quality, twelve teachers reported that student texts became more linguistically accurate after the use of AI tools. These improvements were primarily associated with grammar, vocabulary choice, sentence structure, and overall textual organization. Teachers noted that assignments appeared more formal and aligned with academic writing conventions, particularly in take-home tasks. However, these surface level improvements did not always correspond to students' actual writing proficiency.

At the same time, ten teachers expressed concern that improvements in writing quality were often accompanied by a reduction in originality and personal voice. They observed that AI assisted texts tended to sound generic and less reflective of individual students' linguistic identities. Several teachers reported inconsistencies between students' polished submitted work and their in-class writing performance, suggesting limited internalization of language knowledge.

In terms of student behavior, nine teachers observed increased initial engagement and curiosity when students were first introduced to generative AI tools. Students appeared more motivated to begin writing tasks, particularly those who previously struggled with idea generation. However, eight teachers noted that this engagement was sometimes short lived, as students increasingly relied on AI to complete tasks with minimal cognitive effort. Additionally, seven teachers highlighted a decline in critical thinking and reflective writing practices. They reported that some students accepted AI generated content without questioning its accuracy, relevance, or appropriateness. This passive use of AI raised concerns about students' ability to evaluate sources, explain their own arguments, and take ownership of their writing.

Overall, the findings suggest that generative AI use was associated with noticeable changes in both student behavior and writing quality. While AI tools appeared to support surface level linguistic improvement and initial engagement, teachers raised concerns about dependency, reduced originality, and mismatches between displayed and actual writing ability. These observations point to the need for pedagogical strategies that emphasize process, reflection, and accountability in AI assisted writing.

Example Quotes:

- “They were amazed when they first tried ChatGPT. They became more enthusiastic about writing.” (Resp18)
- “Yes, the writing is more academic—but it doesn't sound like them anymore.” (Resp18)
- “They use AI-generated vocabulary and phrasing, but when writing in class, their skill level is much lower.” (Resp03)
- “Some students submit very perfect English, but they cannot explain what they wrote.” (Resp06)

4.2.4 Managing AI Use in Instruction

Teachers described a range of instructional strategies to manage students' use of generative AI in EFL writing, reflecting efforts to balance pedagogical benefits with concerns about dependency and academic integrity. Fifteen out of 18 teachers reported that they had already adjusted, or were in the process of adjusting, their instructional practices in response to students' AI use.

A commonly reported strategy involved setting clear boundaries for acceptable AI use. Eleven teachers indicated that they explicitly permitted AI for limited purposes, such as grammar checking, vocabulary enhancement, or idea generation, while discouraging or prohibiting full text generation. These boundaries were communicated verbally in class, through written instructions, or embedded in assignment guidelines. Teachers viewed such restrictions as a way to preserve student agency while acknowledging the inevitability of AI use. Another prominent strategy concerned task and assessment redesign. Nine teachers reported shifting writing activities to in-class settings to reduce excessive reliance on AI in take-home assignments. Others introduced staged writing processes, such as outlines, drafts, or planning notes, to make students' thinking more visible. These approaches were intended to emphasize the writing process rather than the final product.

Several teachers also described monitoring and accountability mechanisms. Seven teachers asked students to explain how AI was used during the writing process, either through brief reflections, usage logs, or oral follow-up questions. These practices aimed to promote transparency and discourage uncritical copying of AI generated content. Teachers noted, however, that such measures increased their workload and were not always feasible in large classes. In addition, six teachers emphasized the importance of explicit instruction on ethical and effective AI use. Rather than banning AI, these teachers focused on teaching students how to prompt responsibly, evaluate AI outputs, and revise generated text critically. They viewed AI literacy as an emerging component of academic writing instruction, particularly in higher education contexts. Despite these efforts, teachers acknowledged ongoing challenges. Eight teachers expressed uncertainty about whether their management strategies were sufficient, particularly given the rapid development of AI tools and students' evolving practices. Some described their approaches as provisional, indicating a need for clearer institutional guidance and shared pedagogical frameworks.

Overall, the findings indicate that teachers actively sought to manage AI use through boundary setting, instructional redesign, and transparency measures. These strategies reflect attempts to integrate AI pragmatically while maintaining instructional control and educational values, rather than a unified or standardized approach.

Example Quotes:

- “I design writing tasks to take place during class. Take-home work is too easily dominated by AI.” (Resp01)
- “I ask students to use AI for outlines or grammar only—not for full writing.” (Resp10)
- “They can use it, but only 10% AI-generated content is allowed.” (Resp10)
- “We cannot avoid AI. We just need to train them how to prompt wisely and use it ethically.” (Resp16)

4.2.5 Need for Guidelines and Ethical Integration

Teachers consistently highlighted the absence of clear institutional and pedagogical guidelines for the ethical integration of generative AI in EFL writing instruction. Sixteen out of 18 teachers explicitly stated that existing policies were either unclear, insufficient, or entirely absent, leaving individual instructors to make ad hoc decisions about AI use in their classrooms.

A central concern involved the lack of shared standards regarding what constitutes acceptable versus unacceptable AI use. Twelve teachers noted that without formal guidelines, expectations varied widely across courses and instructors, which they believed contributed to student confusion and inconsistent practices. Teachers expressed concern that students received mixed messages when AI was permitted in one class but discouraged or penalized in another. Several teachers emphasized that ethical instruction should be integrated into the curriculum rather than addressed only through enforcement. Ten teachers argued that students need explicit guidance on responsible AI use, including attribution, critical evaluation of AI outputs, and understanding the limitations of AI generated content. These teachers viewed ethical AI use as a teachable skill closely tied to academic literacy, rather than merely a compliance issue.

Teachers also discussed developmental considerations in AI integration. Eight teachers suggested that AI use should be introduced gradually, with stricter limitations for lower level or early year students and more flexible applications for advanced learners. This approach was framed as a way to protect foundational writing skill development while preparing students for real world academic and professional contexts where AI tools are increasingly common. In addition, nine teachers expressed the need for institutional support and collaboration, including professional development, shared policy documents, and cross department dialogue. Teachers indicated that individual efforts to manage AI use were constrained without broader institutional alignment. Some emphasized that policies should be flexible and regularly updated to reflect rapid technological changes. Despite broad agreement on the need for guidelines, teachers differed in how prescriptive such policies should be. Five teachers favored strict regulations with clearly defined penalties, while seven teachers advocated for principle based guidelines that prioritize transparency and ethical reasoning over punishment. This variation underscores the complexity of translating ethical concerns into actionable policy.

Overall, the findings suggest that teachers view ethical integration of generative AI as a collective responsibility requiring curricular integration, institutional coordination, and ongoing dialogue, rather than isolated classroom level decisions.

Example Quotes:

- “We need to keep reminding students that AI is the helper, not the writer.” (Resp01)
- “Students should be taught how to use AI as a support—not a shortcut.” (Resp07)
- “It should be integrated into the curriculum with clear rules, especially for senior students.” (Resp02)
- “We should not avoid AI but teach students to be wise users of it.” (Resp15)

4.2.6 Assessment Challenges

Assessment emerged as one of the most challenging areas affected by students’ use of generative AI in EFL writing instruction. Fifteen out of 18 teachers reported uncertainty about whether submitted writing accurately reflected students’ own abilities, particularly for out of class assignments. A recurring concern involved the difficulty of distinguishing student authored writing from AI generated text, as thirteen teachers noted that AI produced texts were often linguistically accurate and well structured, making authorship difficult to judge using conventional criteria. Several teachers also stated that existing plagiarism detection tools were inadequate for identifying AI generated writing, increasing reliance on intuition or follow up questioning.

Teachers further highlighted a mismatch between traditional assessment rubrics and AI assisted writing practices. Ten teachers indicated that current rubrics prioritize surface level features such as grammar, coherence, and organization, areas easily enhanced by AI, while offering limited insight into students’ reasoning, learning processes, or engagement. To compensate, eleven teachers reported using in class writing, oral explanations, or interviews to verify authorship, while eight teachers required drafts, reflections, or process documentation. Although these strategies were viewed as helpful, teachers emphasized that they increased workload and were difficult to sustain, particularly in large classes.

Concerns about fairness and consistency were also evident. Seven teachers expressed discomfort that students who relied heavily on AI might receive higher grades than peers who did not, especially in the absence of clear or consistent AI use policies. At the same time, six teachers suggested that assessment practices could be adapted to account for AI use by incorporating reflective components, revision

histories, or oral justification alongside written products. However, these teachers emphasized that such changes would require institutional alignment and shared agreement among instructors.

Overall, teachers experienced assessment in AI mediated writing contexts as uncertain, labor intensive, and pedagogically complex. Rather than viewing these challenges as purely technical, they framed them as systemic issues requiring reconsideration of how writing ability, originality, and learning are evaluated in the presence of generative AI.

Example Quotes:

- “I don’t know if I’m assessing the student or the AI.” (Resp01)
- “It’s getting harder to assess originality. We rely on intuition now.” (Resp06)
- “Sometimes I conduct oral interviews to test whether students really wrote the text.” (Resp04)
- “I feel I need to redesign my rubrics to consider AI use.” (Resp08)

5. Discussion

Writing is a particularly challenging skill for EFL learners to master, and the emergence of GenAI has prompted growing interest in its potential role in writing instruction. Rather than evaluating learning outcomes directly, this study examined EFL teachers’ experiences and interpretations of students’ use of GenAI in writing classes. Both the quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that teachers perceive several pedagogical affordances, particularly improvements in sentence-level accuracy and faster feedback on grammar and structure. These perceptions resonate with previous studies suggesting that digital writing tools can support aspects of writing development (Nobles & Paganucci, 2015; Kim et al., 2024; Anggoro & Khasanah, 2025). Importantly, these findings should be understood as teachers’ professional judgments based on classroom observation, rather than as evidence of measured gains in writing performance.

Qualitative findings further suggest that teachers viewed GenAI as particularly supportive for students with lower English proficiency, as these learners were perceived to benefit from immediate linguistic support and reduced anxiety when composing texts. This interpretation aligns with earlier arguments that technology may help novice learners sustain engagement and motivation in EFL contexts (Anggoro & Nguyen, 2021; Anggoro & Khasanah, 2025). At the same time, teachers emphasized that such benefits were highly conditional, depending on how GenAI was framed, monitored, and integrated into instruction. This highlights that perceived effectiveness may reflect not only the tool itself, but also teachers’ pedagogical beliefs and classroom management strategies.

Regarding instructional practices, several participants reported that AI tools reduced their workload by handling routine surface-level corrections and encouraged students to engage in self-correction. These perceptions echo prior research suggesting that AI may redistribute instructional labor rather than replace pedagogical judgment (Santos, 2024; Hashem et al., 2023; Goldman et al., 2024). Teachers also interpreted students’ engagement with AI-generated feedback as indicative of increased self-regulatory behavior. However, it is important to note that self-regulation was not measured as a learner outcome in this study; instead, teachers inferred such behaviors from observable revision practices and classroom interactions. From a theoretical standpoint, these interpretations are consistent with scaffolding perspectives, where external supports may temporarily assist learners in monitoring and revising their work.

Nevertheless, participants repeatedly emphasized that these perceived benefits were fragile. Teachers expressed concern that without explicit instructional boundaries, AI use could shift from scaffolding to substitution, reducing students’ cognitive engagement with the writing process. Rather than developing independent strategies, students were perceived to rely on automated solutions, a concern echoed in previous research on technology overdependence (Kim et al., 2024; Anggoro, 2025). These concerns may also reflect broader anxieties about assessment validity and institutional expectations, particularly in contexts where formal AI policies remain unclear or absent.

Concerns surrounding critical thinking, creativity, and personal writing voice were also prominent. Teachers reported that some students used GenAI to generate ideas or entire drafts, which they perceived as limiting deeper engagement with content and expression. While prior studies suggest that AI-assisted brainstorming can foster evaluative and creative processes (Cheung & Shi, 2025; Cummings et al., 2024; Doshi & Hauser, 2024), participants in this study often struggled to reconcile these possibilities with the realities of classroom assessment and time constraints. In EFL contexts, where exposure to English is limited (Anggoro & Nguyen, 2021), teachers feared that extensive reliance on AI-generated language might obscure learners’ authentic development of linguistic control and voice.

Plagiarism and academic integrity emerged as central concerns across both data strands. Teachers reported increasing difficulty in distinguishing student-generated texts from AI-assisted work, particularly during in-class activities. These experiences align with earlier findings that students may conceal AI use due to uncertainty about acceptable practices (Yeo, 2023; Xiao et al., 2025). Notably, teachers’ concerns were shaped not only by ethical considerations, but also by practical constraints such as large class sizes, limited assessment time, and the absence of reliable institutional guidance, reinforcing the need to interpret these perceptions within their broader instructional context.

In response to these challenges, participants proposed a range of management strategies. Many advocated for transparency requirements, such as AI usage declarations, while others emphasized clearly defining permissible and impermissible uses of AI in course syllabi. Although a minority favored banning AI altogether, most participants supported a regulated integration approach, allowing AI for specific purposes such as grammar checking or idea generation while discouraging full-text production. These views align with scholarship emphasizing policy clarity and pedagogical alignment over prohibition (Zhao, 2022; Moore & Tsay, 2024; Seufert & Spirgi, 2024).

Teachers also described adapting assessment practices by emphasizing in-class writing, reflective tasks, oral validation, and process-based evaluation to maintain student accountability.

Taken together, the integration of quantitative trends and qualitative accounts offers insights that neither strand alone could provide. While survey data revealed common areas of concern and perceived benefit, interviews illuminated why teachers held these views, highlighting the roles of assessment design, institutional ambiguity, and professional responsibility in shaping classroom responses to GenAI. These meta-inferences suggest that teachers' experiences with GenAI are less about technological capability per se, and more about negotiating pedagogical control, ethical responsibility, and instructional feasibility in evolving educational environments.

6. Conclusion

This study examined EFL teachers' experiences with students' use of generative AI in writing instruction in higher education contexts in Thailand and Indonesia. Overall, teachers described GenAI as both a practical instructional support and a source of pedagogical concern. While they experienced benefits related to grammar support and feedback efficiency, they also expressed persistent worries about overreliance, academic integrity, and the authenticity of student writing. These experiences suggest that GenAI is not inherently beneficial or detrimental, but highly dependent on how it is managed in classroom practice.

This study revealed that teachers' experiences were shaped not only by the technology itself but also by assessment practices and the lack of clear institutional guidance. Survey results identified common trends in perceived benefits and concerns, while interviews clarified how these issues influenced instructional decisions, such as restricting full-text generation, redesigning assessments, and requiring transparency in AI use. Together, the two data strands indicate that effective GenAI integration in EFL writing relies on clear boundaries and pedagogical purpose rather than unrestricted adoption. This study is limited by its small, purposively sampled population, brief survey instrument, and exploratory quantitative analysis, which restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future research should employ larger samples, more robust instruments, and classroom-based designs to further investigate how teachers navigate GenAI use in EFL writing instruction and how institutional policies shape these experiences.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the Center for International Affairs and the School of Education at Walailak University for their support. Appreciation is also extended to Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta and Universitas Jember for their valuable assistance in this study.

Authors' Contribution

Kiki Juli Anggoro led the conception and design of the study and was responsible for data collection, data analysis, manuscript preparation, and final approval of the submitted version. Lusi Nurhayati and Rusdhianti Wuryaningrum contributed to the development of the research ideas and to the review and validation of the data. All authors critically reviewed the manuscript and approved the final version.

Funding

This work was supported by Center for International Affairs at Walailak University (Grant Contract No. WU-CIA-03404/2025).

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Sciedu Press.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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