Contribution ID: **95**   Type: **not specified**

Defining Integrity in the AI Era: Perceptions and Policy Gaps in Academic AI Use in English Language Studies

As generative AI tools like ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Quillbot become increasingly embedded in English language learning, questions surrounding academic integrity have gained new urgency. This study investigates how English-major students at the Vietnam Aviation Academy (VAA) perceive the ethical boundaries of AI use in academic contexts and assesses the extent to which current institutional policies address these emerging challenges. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research collected data through an online student survey, semi-structured interviews, and content analysis of academic regulations and course documents. Findings reveal that while students frequently use AI to support writing and learning, they lack a consistent understanding of what constitutes ethical AI use in academic work. Institutional policies, however, remain vague or silent on AI-related issues, contributing to uncertainty and inconsistent practices in managing AI tools within the academic environment. The study identifies key gaps between student perceptions and institutional expectations and argues for the urgent need to update academic integrity frameworks to accommodate AI technologies. It concludes by offering context-specific recommendations for AI policy development, enhancing student AI literacy training, and ensuring the ethical integration of AI in English Language Studies.

Keywords: AI in education, academic integrity, ethical AI use, generative AI, TESOL curriculum

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Track Classification: Teaching English in the Age of AI: Perspectives and Practices