Students’ Experiences with Generative AI: Motivation, Confidence, and Attitudes in English Writing

Thị Hiền Phan [[1]](#footnote-1), Thị Thu Hiền Dương [[2]](#footnote-2)

Abstract

In recent years, Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) seems to be a powerful tool in education, offering unprecedented support to students in their language learning journey, including writing. This paper aims at exploring students’ experiences with Generative AI regarding their motivation, confidence, and attitudes in English writing. With a mixed methods approach, data were gathered from 162 English-majors through a questionnaire, followed by in-depth interviews with 11 selected individuals at a university in Ho Chi Minh City. The findings reveal that GenAI tools positively influence students’ motivation and willingness to complete English writing tasks. Many students confirmed that they feel more confident and less anxious thanks to GenAI’s support. However, most students held the view that the use of these tools does not necessarily lead to significant improvement in their writing skill development or deeper engagement with the writing process. The result from the interviews also suggests that those who have great initiative in their learning by actively revising their work, seeking explanations or requesting more examples, find GenAI tools very effective in enhancing their English writing skills. The paper recommends that while educators should embed GenAI tools in their writing teaching, students should actively learn from AI outputs rather than passively relying on them.

***Keywords*:** Gen AI, motivation, confidence, attitudes, English writing

1. Introduction

Since the introduction of generative AI (GenAI) —particularly ChatGPT and similar tools like Gemini, CoPilot, Bard, and DeepSeek— this technological advancement has evolved from being unfamiliar and uncertain to becoming a useful tool in language education. In second language writing, GenAI can support students in various tasks, including text editing, paraphrasing, grammar and punctuation correction, idea generation, and text suggestions. In short, these tools can ease the way for students to produce an English text.

However, despite the interest of researchers in the use of AI-assisted tools in second language learning, few studies have particularly focused on investigating what GenAI can do with English writing in terms of students’ motivation or confidence, especially in the Vietnamese contexts. Nor have they explored students’ attitudes toward these tools in their own learning.

This study aims to gain deeper insights into whether GenAI tools can motivate students or boost their confidence in completing their writing tasks. It also seeks to learn more about students’ concerns about taking advantage of these AI tools in their language learning. Finally, the paper offers recommendations on how instructors can help students use these tools effectively in their writing.

2. Literature Review

2.1. GenAI and Writing

According to Russell & Norvig (2021), Artificial Intelligence (AI) is defined as the computerized systems that can carry out tasks typically requiring human involvement. Since the first time it was introduced, GenAI has significantly transformed the educational system (Belkina et al., 2025). According to Lim et al. (2023), GenAI possesses the ability to process various types of prompts from users and create human-like texts. Besides, GenAI can provide students with feedback in full sentences or paragraphs thanks to large language models (Barrett & Pack, 2023), and offer grammatically correct alternatives (Teng, 2024a).

Some recent studies have focused on the advantages of students using GenAI in L2 educational settings. With GenAI, students can find their learning much easier and more effective in dealing with many tasks including finding answers to questions, summarizing texts for better understanding, checking for grammatical mistakes, editing texts, or helping those who are not very confident with their language skills (Michel-Villarreal et al., 2023). In terms of writing, GenAI can help improve both micro-level aspects of writing including grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure (Strobl et al., 2019) and macro-level aspects of writing (e.g. content development, organization, and tone) (Smith et al., 2025).

It can be said that the use of OpenAI’s ChatGPT is pivotal in helping users detect grammar mistakes and generate texts from their own ideas (Khalifa and Albadawy, 2024). Moreover, students can get explanations for their queries related to any linguistic matters, leading to a gradual development in their language proficiency (Tan, 2023). Since students can easily and freely use these AI-powered tools, various writing tasks—such as summarizing texts or translating—can be completed (Adeshola & Adepoju, 2023).

According to Derakhshan (2025), learners are more engaged in the task when using AI-assisted tools in their own learning. A study conducted by Allen and Mizumoto (2024) showed that 33 Japanese students prefer to use ChatGPT - a GenAI tool - to edit their texts. Thanks to effective feedback provided by ChatGPT, these students were able to correct their mistakes, maintain clarity in their writing and improve their cohesion.

Even though GenAI tools have been used by many English learners, their attitudes are varied, ranging from perceived usefulness, ease of use (Tiwari et al., 2023) to skepticism and anxiety (Kohnke et al., 2023). However, due to the novelty of GenAI, more studies need to be done to provide a broader perspective on the use of AI-powered tools in language education (Michel-Villarreal et al., 2023; McGrath et al., 2024). Despite many advantages of GenAI, users often raise concerns about issues like misleading information, and outdated content (Tlili et al., 2023); cheating and plagiarism (Anders 2023), overreliance (Chan & Lee, 2023); academic integrity (Alkamel & Alwagieh, 2024; Teng, 2024a); fostering laziness (Teng, 2024b).

2.2. Previous Studies

Using an online questionnaire, Morell-Mengual et al. (2025) collected information from 974 university students to find out how often they use chatbots, what drives them in doing so and what they think about their experiences in academic settings. The results revealed that more than 60% of the participants used chatbots for understanding complicated concepts, time management, academic performance development. The participants also raised concerns about overreliance on chatbots and the possibility of weakening their critical thinking.

Huang and Mizumoto (2024) conducted an experimental study with a control group and a treatment group involving 327 students in Japan. The study aimed to explore the effects of GenAI on student motivation and writing efficacy in EFL contexts. The results indicated that GenAI can help boost students’ intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy in writing.

A study involving 144 English-major students in Yemen, conducted by Alkamel and Alwagieh (2024), aimed to explore learners’ experiences using ChatGPT in academic writing. The results demonstrated that students had positive attitudes towards ChatGPT. They confirmed their improvements in fluency, accuracy and quality of their writing. However, they also expressed concerns about academic integrity and plagiarism.

A study by Ghafouri et al. (2024) examined the use of ChatGPT in language teaching and learning from both teachers’ and learners’ perspectives. Its results demonstrated an increase in teachers’ self-efficacy and learners’ writing skills.

The process-writing approach isn’t the only way to support students. Barrot (2023) found that tools like ChatGPT can help L2 learners improve their word choice, structure, and grammar. Teachers can provide their students with proper guidance to help them know and use this tool effectively in improving their writing. However, according to Barrot (2023), students can be negatively affected when they use this tool too much instead of developing their own critical thinking skills.

Lo, Wong, and Chan (2025) observed mixed emotional responses in their Hong Kong study: while most students became more engaged with the help of AI feedback, a few felt frustration or discomfort, highlighting that individual differences play a role in how AI influences engagement.

Overall, numerous studies have been conducted to explore the use of GenAI in language teaching and learning. However, there is still not much work focusing on how GenAI is used in Vietnam, highlighting the need for more research to gain better understanding on how Vietnamese students take advantage of this novel AI-powered tool to improve their language writing skills.

3. Methodology

This study was designed to explore students’ experiences with the use of GenAI tools in English writing. Three key questions guiding the research were addressed as follows:

1. How does GenAI usage impact students’ motivation for English writing?

2. How does GenAI support affect students’ confidence in their English writing?

3. What are students’ attitudes towards and concerns about the use of GenAI in their writing practices?

To collect relevant data, a mixed-methods approach with a questionnaire and follow-up interviews was employed. Convenience sampling was utilized to select the subjects for the questionnaire, and then participants for the interviews were chosen based on their survey responses. The subjects for the survey were second and third-year English language majors who have completed a substantial number of writing courses at the university.

After the target group was identified, an online questionnaire (see Appendix A) via Google Forms was delivered to students in classes taught by the researchers and their colleagues. The questionnaire was written in Vietnamese to ensure a thorough understanding among the students and was divided into two sections. The first section with 6 items was about personal information. The second section consisting of 9 questions was designed to obtain information on students’ experiences with GenAI usage. Questions 1 – 4 focused on how GenAI usage influenced students’ motivation for English writing. Questions 5 – 8 aimed to discover the levels of students’ confidence in English writing with GenAI support. Question 9 was designed to delve into students’ attitudes towards the employment of GenAI in their writing practices. The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale for all items in section 2 together with a question about frequency of GenAI use in section 1. Within a week, 162 students (72 sophomores and 90 juniors) filled out the questionnaire. The survey data was processed and analyzed using Excel tables.

After the survey data were collected, synthesized and analyzed, a follow-up interview including 4 open-ended questions (see Appendix B) was carried out to gain deeper insights about factors influencing students’ confidence in and attitudes towards GenAI usage in English writing. The sample selected for the interview was 11 students who had previously responded to the questionnaire. These participants were chosen according to their survey responses including their GenAI usage frequency and levels of agreement on motivation for, confidence in and attitude towards using these tools for English writing. The interviews were virtually conducted through Microsoft Teams, which allows for easy recording and transcription. After the completion of 11 interviews, the auto-generated transcripts from Microsoft Teams were reviewed and refined to remove irrelevant content. Subsequently, the two researchers independently examined, summarized and noted down key expressions before reaching an agreement on brief descriptions from interview responses. In the next step, the responses were analyzed and categorized into themes for reporting in the results section.

No numerical coding was applied to the interview data because the aim was to explore qualitative patterns rather than measure or quantify responses.

 4. Results

This section highlights the main trends in students’ feedback about their experiences with GenAI in English writing.

***4.1. Questionnaire Results***

In general, the majority of survey participants responded positively to most of the questionnaire items. They reported that GenAI helps increase their motivation, decrease their anxiety, and enhance their confidence when dealing with English writing tasks; but they also felt unsure about their ability to complete writing tasks without GenAI support and afraid of potential risks that the use of GenAI may bring to their learning.

4.1.1. Impact of GenAI usage on students’ motivation for English writing

Out of 162 respondents, nearly 65% agreed or strongly agreed that they feel more motivated when writing in English with the support from GenAI (Item 1). More than 72% of the students revealed that GenAI boosts their willingness to complete writing assignments (Item 2). Interestingly, the degree of agreement with Item 3 was even higher with about 90% of the survey respondents selecting “agree” or “strongly agree”, indicating that GenAI gives them considerable support when they face writing challenges. Although there was a small decrease in agreement, the number of students responding positively to Item 4 was still high, accounting for over 76% participants agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoy writing more when getting support from GenAI.

**Table 1**

*Impact of GenAI Usage on Students’ Motivation for English Writing (N = 162)*

| Item | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. GenAI makes me more motivated to write. | 1.9% | 4.9% | 28.4% | **49.4%** | **15.4%** |
| 2. I feel more willing to complete writing assignments when I can use GenAI tools.  | 1.2% | 6.8% | 19.8% | **55.6%** | **16.7%** |
| 3. GenAI helps me overcome writing challenges. | 0.6% | 3.1% | 6.8% | **40.1%** | **49.4%** |
| 4. I enjoy writing more with GenAI support. | 1.9% | 1.2% | 20.4% | **51.2%** | **25.3%** |

4.1.2. Influence of GenAI support on students’ confidence in their English writing

In response to Item 5, 50% agreed and 23.5% strongly agreed that they feel more confident about their writing quality when being supported by GenAI. Moreover, with a slight increase in the level of agreement, almost three quarters of students (43.2% showing agreement and 31.5% strong agreement) admitted that the use of GenAI helps reduce their anxiety about mistakes. However, there was a dramatical decrease in the level of agreement for Items 7 and 8 when only one third (30.9%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that GenAI usage helps them improve their overall writing skills and merely 25.3 % showed their self-confidence in completing a writing task without GenAI assistance.

**Table 2**

*Influence of GenAI Support on Students’ Confidence in their English Writing (N = 162)*

| Item | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 5. I feel more confident in my writing quality using GenAI. | 0.0% | 2.5% | 24.1% | **50.0%** | **23.5%** |
| 6. GenAI reduces my anxiety about mistakes. | 1.2% | 3.7% | 20.4% | **43.2%** | **31.5%** |
| 7. I believe my writing skills have improved through using GenAI tools. | 3.7% | 40.7% | 24.7% | **25.3%** | **5.6%** |
| 8. I feel capable of writing without GenAI support. | 8.6% | 39.5% | 26.5% | **19.1%** | **6.2%** |

4.1.3. Students’ attitudes towards the use of GenAI in their writing practices

The data from Table 4 indicated that more than half of students feel worried about adverse effects of GenAI use on their learning process. While 31.5% of students held a neutral view, 32.7% showed agreement and 25.3% reported strong agreement with this concern.

**Table 3**

*Students’ Attitudes towards the Use of GenAI in their Writing Practices (N = 162)*

| Item | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 9. I worry that GenAI may harm my learning | 2.5% | 8.0% | 31.5% | **32.7%** | **25.3%** |

***4.2. Interview Results***

To gain a deeper insight into how students experienced and evaluated the use of GenAI in English writing, follow-up interviews with 11 students were carried out right after the survey findings were synthesized and analyzed. Based on the brief descriptions from interview responses (see Appendix C), the interview data were categorized into three main themes, including usage patterns of GenAI use, task completion without GenAI support, and students’ perceptions of GenAI’s role in writing improvement.

4.2.1. Patterns of GenAI use

Although the interviewees were selected to represent a diversity of GenAI usage frequency (according to the survey results), those students with higher levels of frequency were still prioritized because the study focuses on students’ experiences with GenAI use. Specifically, 4 students (S02, S04, S10, S11) use GenAI on a usual basis, 3 students (S03, S05, S09) always utilize GenAI, whereas the others either sometimes (S01, S07) or rarely (S06, S08) use GenAI in their English writing.

**Table 4**

*Frequency of GenAI Use*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Usually | Always |
| Student ID |  | S06 S08 | S01 S07 | S02 S04S10 S11 | S03 S05 S09 |

In terms of their revision habits with GenAI outputs and requests for more in-depth explanation, 8 out of 11 students reported making significant revisions and regular demands for more detailed explanations. Interestingly, those who extensively revise AI-generated drafts also tend to seek further clarification, while those who revise little or simply copy GenAI outputs rarely ask for more details (see **Table** 5 & 6).

*“After getting the drafts written by GenAI, I usually read it again, try to paraphrase it, develop the ideas, and add more examples. I frequently ask GenAI for further explanation so that I can use those words or structures in the future.”* – S01

 *“Honestly, I just copy the content written by GenAI because the language and ideas are excellent. But for graded assignments I’ll revise them a bit. My points would be deducted if my teachers found I used AI. I don’t usually ask for explanation because I think I can understand almost everything myself.”* – S02

**Table 5**

*Degree of Revision*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | No | Slight | Moderate | Marked | Great |
| Student ID |  | S02 S03 S10 |  | S11 | S01 S04 S05 S06 S07 S08S09 |

**Table 6**

*Frequency of Asking for an Explanation*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Usually | Always |
| Student ID | S10 | S02 S03 |  | S01 S04 S05 S06 S07 S08S09 S11 |  |

4.2.2. Task completion without GenAI support

Noticeably, most interview respondents revealed that they met no or little difficulty in completing writing tasks without GenAI assistance.

*“I don’t face any difficulty in completing writing tasks when I can’t get support from GenAI because ever since I started learning how to write essays, I stopped using AI. For me, GenAI is just a supporting tool – it’s nice to have but it’s not essential.”* – S06

*"If I were to rate the level of difficulty on a 5-point scale, I would place it at level 2. I mean I am still able to complete the writing task without GenAI, so the absence of such tools does not significantly impact my performance."* – S07

**Table 7**

*Degree of Difficulty in Completing Tasks without GenAI Support*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | No difficulty | Little difficulty | Great difficulty |
| Student ID | S06 S07 S08 | S01 S04 S05 S09 S11 | S02 S03 S10 |

Although just a minority, the fact that three students (S02, S03, S10) reported finding it very challenging to complete an English writing task without GenAI assistance is still worth considering.

*“Without AI support, it takes me longer to come up with ideas, and I find it hard to think of good vocabulary or structures.”* – S02

*“I use GenAI a lot when writing English. I think I’ve become too dependent on it, so to be honest, without GenAI I find writing in English really challenging.”* – S03

4.2.3. Students’ perceptions of GenAI’s role in writing improvement

In terms of students’ perceptions of GenAI’s role in writing improvement, it was surprising that more than half of the students admitted that they achieved no or little improvements thanks to GenAI support. Even one student (S10) felt unsure whether GenAI can help improve her writing ability or not. Although these students shared the view that GenAI did not help improve their writing skills, when looking back at what they said earlier, we discovered some differences in how frequently they used GenAI or asked it for deeper explanations. Specifically, while the former group usually asked GenAI for further clarification but only rarely (S06, S08) or sometimes (S01, S07) used it, students S02, S03, and S10 always or usually used GenAI but never or rarely requested more explanations.

**Table 8**

*Students’ Perceptions of GenAI’s Role in Writing Improvement*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | No improvement | Little improvement | Unsure | Great improvement |
| Student ID | S02 | S01 S03 S06 S07 S08 | S10 | S04 S05 S09S11 |

The four students (S04, S05, S09, S11) who reported that GenAI had greatly improved their writing skills all showed a high frequency of GenAI use and frequently asked the tool for in-depth explanations (see Table 4 & 6). They shared that thanks to GenAI, they had been able to overcome common errors, generate ideas more quickly, and learn a wide range of useful, advanced vocabulary and structures.

Although there was no question directly asking whether students were concerned about becoming dependent on GenAI, nearly half of them expressed such concerns during the interview. Most of these students (S01, S06, S07, S08) reported a low frequency of GenAI use. One student (S11), who stated that she usually used GenAI, shared that she was trying to reduce the use of GenAI because she was afraid of becoming overly reliant on it.

*“AI helps me spot and correct mistakes very effectively. It also helps me brainstorm ideas faster and learn useful vocabulary and structures. But I’m trying to reduce my reliance on it because I’m afraid that overusing it might make me dependent.”*

5. Discussion

This study investigated the influence of GenAI usage on students’ motivation and confidence in English writing as well as their attitudes towards and concerns about the use of GenAI. The results from the questionnaire and follow-up interviews offer profound insights into these aspects.

***5.1. Influence of GenAI Usage on Students’ English Writing Motivation and Confidence***

The questionnaire results show a significant positive influence of GenAI usage on students’ motivation for English writing. Most students agreed that they felt more motivated when writing with GenAI assistance. Over 72% of survey participants said that they became more willing to complete a writing task when supported by GenAI, nearly 90% revealed that GenAI greatly help them overcome writing challenges, and more than 76% reported enjoying English writing more with GenAI support. These findings evidently show that GenAI can be considered as a useful assistive tool which helps reduce obstacles and stimulate students’ interest in English writing.

Likewise, GenAI also contributed to increasing students’ confidence in English writing. More than 73% of students indicated that GenAI enhances their confidence about their writing quality. Nearly three quarters of students agreed that they felt less anxious about writing mistakes when assisted by GenAI. It is a decrease in anxiety that can encourage students to try different ways of writing and spend more time practicing, leading to an improvement in their writing skills.

Nevertheless, despite the positive impacts on writing motivation and confidence, the questionnaire results also revealed that only one third of students admitted that GenAI assisted in improving their writing skills. More noticeably, just about 25% reported having sufficient confidence in completing a writing assignment without GenAI assistance. These findings indicate that while GenAI can be seen as a powerful support tool, overreliance may lead to a reduction in students’ creative and independent thinking.

***5.2. Students’ Attitudes towards and Concerns about GenAI Use***

In terms of attitudes, the majority of students took a positive view about using GenAI in their English writing. However, there was a considerable concern about excessive reliance on GenAI use among the participants. More than 50% of students showed their worry about the negative impacts of GenAI overuse on their study. A similar anxiety emerged in the interviews, where approximately half of the respondents interviewed felt worried about relying too much on GenAI use. Notably, among the students expressing this concern, four rarely or just sometimes employed GenAI in their writing, one student who used GenAI frequently stated that she was trying to reduce this use due to fear of overreliance. These findings suggest that even those who use GenAI infrequently are still aware of the potential risks of being overly dependent, whereas more frequent users may begin to recognize the reliance and attempt to change their habits.

***5.3. Correlation between GenAI Use and Writing Skill Improvement***

The data from 11 interviews showed interesting correlations between student’s GenAI usage patterns and their perceived writing skill improvement.

It was found that students who made minimal revisions to GenAI-written drafts and rarely requested further clarifications, despite their heavy GenAI use, were commonly those who struggled to complete English writing tasks with the absence of GenAI assistance (S02, S03, S10). This same group of students also claimed that they achieved no, little or unclear writing improvement from GenAI use. This finding suggests that true skill transfer requires more than just high frequent use of GenAI and passively accepting AI-generated content without thorough revision or understanding may result in an increase in reliance and a sense of incompetence when there is no access to an AI tool.

Students who infrequently used GenAI (S01, S07: sometimes; S06, S08: rarely), but thoroughly reviewed AI-generated drafts to match their voice and constantly requested further explanations, reported no obstacles writing their own tasks without GenAI support. However, they also noted that GenAI hardly helped enhance their writing skills. This finding suggests that while their active learning habits might help them avoid dependence and maintain their independent writing ability, their limited engagement with GenAI might have hindered them fully experiencing the tool’s benefits for their writing skill development. They may not encounter writing difficulties without GenAI, but they also cannot feel the true value GenAI might provide.

The most positive outcomes emerge from students (S04, S05, S09, S11) who not only had a high level of GenAI use frequency but also maintained a significant critical engagement. With considerable revision and constant requests for more in-depth explanation, these students reported experiencing little or no difficulty dealing with English writing assignments when GenAI is absent. This group of students also perceived that GenAI made significant contributions to their writing skill improvement. The findings indicate that in order for GenAI to be an effective learning tool, students should avoid passive acceptance; instead, they must actively process, question and refine AI-generated outputs. It is this critical, reflective interaction that appears to help students achieve true skill improvement.

***5.4. Practical Implications***

The questionnaire and interview findings indicate that in order to truly make GenAI a powerful learning tool, students should learn how to use it critically. To achieve this, the practical implications of this research are comprised of two main aspects including strategies for students and educators’ instructional roles.

*5.4.1. Strategies for students*

In order to gain an optimum use of GenAI, students should view this tool as an effective learning aid rather than a replacement for their own efforts. When getting an idea or draft from GenAI, students should not consider it as a final product. Instead of copying and pasting, students should review GenAI’s suggestions to check for their appropriateness. Even when AI-generated contents match their learning expectations, students should also try to rewrite or paraphrase these contents to ensure that they reflect their unique voice and style. Additionally, students can improve their skill by regularly asking GenAI for further clarifications or alternative expressions of a piece of writing so that they can learn useful structures and vocabulary. Another way for students to exploit this learning tool is that they can prepare their own writing and then have GenAI check for accuracy or suggest improvements for clarity. In summary, by critically interacting with AI-written outputs, constantly seeking more in-depth explanations or various paraphrases and employing AI-suggested feedback for writing improvement, students will not only become more proficient writers but also substantially boost their motivation and confidence in English writing.

*5.4.2. Educators’ instructional roles*

For students to leverage GenAI as a powerful learning aid, educators’ role is absolutely crucial. It is insufficient for students to simply have access to GenAI, they need active guidance on how to proactively employ this tool for their academic journey.

To begin with, it is necessary for students to be taught how to ask GenAI smart questions. In other words, teachers should guide students on how to write prompts so that they can make GenAI brainstorm ideas, create outlines, and suggest different paraphrases for a sentence rather than just generate a full paragraph or essay. Moreover, teachers should also highlight the need to review AI-suggested contents and regularly seek more in-depth explanations so that students can create their own products without relying on this tool.

After giving students general guidance on how to utilize GenAI effectively, educators should consider integrating the use of this tool into designing their writing assignments. For example, teachers can deliver a writing task where students have to go through various steps. Firstly, students are encouraged to use GenAI to brainstorm ideas for a given topic so that they can explore different angles on the same theme. The next step is they are required to work in pairs or small groups to organize AI-suggested ideas into an outline. Then they can have GenAI check their outline for a logical structure. After students have finished writing their own drafts, they have to get GenAI to check for accuracy or suggest possible improvements for their writing. At the end of the process, students are required to submit their final paper along with evidence of their AI use such as AI prompts, AI outputs and their own revisions. This allows teachers to provide timely support if students are not effectively using the tool.

Furthermore, to make the most of GenAI usage, teachers can create an environment where students have the opportunity to openly share their experiences of GenAI use, talk about benefits and drawbacks of using this tool and reflect on whether GenAI truly helped them improve their writing skills.

Through these above steps, educators can guide their students towards becoming independent, adaptable learners by enabling them to leverage GenAI as an indispensable learning tool.

***5.5. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research***

The current research investigated students’ experiences with GenAI relating to motivation, confidence and attitudes in English writing. However, for a valid interpretation of its results, it is essential to have a look at the study’s limitations. Firstly, the sample size for the interview with 11 students was relatively small, which may reduce the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, the information collected was mainly based on students’ subjective perceptions, which might potentially lead to bias. Therefore, to gain a broader understanding of this subject, future research could enlarge the sample size so as to obtain a wider diversity of viewpoints and experiences. In order to enhance the data’s reliability and validity, it is also important to consider employing a quasi-experiment design examining how GenAI truly impacts English writing.

6. Conclusion

This study has provided valuable insights into students’ experiences with GenAI in terms of motivation, confidence and attitudes in English writing. Although students initially expressed high motivation and confidence in utilizing GenAI for English writing, they simultaneously showed serious concerns about overreliance and a decrease in their creative and critical thinking ability. This highlights an apparent contradiction: a significant supportive learning tool like GenAI can at the same time be a source of motivation and a constraint if it is improperly used.

Results from the follow-up interviews further demonstrated the above complexity. Students who passively used GenAI with minimal revision and infrequent requests for clarification tended to heavily rely on GenAI use and reported no or very small improvement in their writing skills. On the contrary, those who have limited interaction with GenAI, though could maintain their independent writing ability, seemed to miss out on the potential benefits that GenAI could provide. The most desirable outcomes were seen in the group of students who frequently and proactively utilized this tool – they regularly interacted, asked for in-depth explanations, and greatly revised AI-generated drafts, which resulted in their considerable perceived skill improvement and confidence in independent writing ability.

These findings emphasize that the patterns of GenAI use are more important than its frequency. To maximize benefits and minimize potential risks, it is necessary for students and educators to adjust their strategies. Students should be equipped with the skills of effective GenAI use, treating this tool as a facilitating technology rather than a substitute for their own writing efforts. As for educators, they play a critical role in shaping students’ perceptions and behaviors of GenAI use. By embedding GenAI into their writing assignments with specific objectives, educators will create a proactive learning environment to help their students become independent and skilled writers. Crucially, instead of placing a limit on GenAI usage, teachers should teach students how to wisely utilize GenAI, enabling it to become a true powerful learning aid.

References

Anders, B. A. (2023). Is using ChatGPT cheating, plagiarism, both, neither, or forward thinking? *Patterns (New York, N.Y.), 4*(3), Article 100694. https://doi.org/
10.1016/j.patter.2023.100694

Adeshola, I., & Adepoju, A. P. (2023). The opportunities and challenges of chatgpt in education. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.
2023.2253858

Alkamel, M. a. A., & Alwagieh, N. a. S. (2024). Utilizing an adaptable artificial intelligence writing tool (ChatGPT) to enhance academic writing skills among Yemeni university EFL students. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open, 10*, 01095; https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.101095

Allen, T. J., & Mizumoto, A. (2024). ChatGPT Over My Friends: Japanese English-as-a-Foreign-Language Learners’ Preferences for Editing and Proofreading Strategies. RELC Journal, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882241262533>

Barrett, A., & Pack, A. (2023). Not quite eye to A.I.: student and teacher perspectives on the use of generative artificial intelligence in the writing process. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, *20*(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-023-00427-0>

Barrot, J. S. (2023). Using ChatGPT for second language writing: Pitfalls and potentials.
*Assessing Writing, 57*, 100745. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2023.100745>

Belkina, M., Daniel, S., Nikolic, S., Haque, R., Lyden, S., Neal, P., Grundy, S., & Hassan, G. M. (2025). Implementing Generative AI (GeNAI) in Higher Education: A Systematic review of case studies. *Computers and Education Artificial Intelligence*, 100407. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2025.100407>

Chan, C. K. Y., & Lee, K. K. W. (2023). The AI generation gap: Are Gen Z students more interested in adopting generative AI such as ChatGPT in teaching and learning than their Gen X and millennial generation teachers? Smart Learn. *Environ., 10*(1). https:// doi.org/10.1186/s40561-023-00269-3

Derakhshan, A. (2025). EFL students’ perceptions about the role of generative artificial
intelligence (GAI)-mediated instruction in their emotional engagement and goal
orientation: A motivational climate theory (MCT) perspective in focus. *Learning and
Motivation, 90*, Article 102114. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lmot.2025.102114>

Ghafouri, M., Hassaskhah, J., & Mahdavi-Zafarghandi, A. (2024). From virtual assistant
to writing mentor: Exploring the impact of a ChatGPT-based writing instruction
protocol on EFL teachers’ self-efficacy and learners’ writing skill. *Language Teaching
Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168824123976>

Huang, J., & Mizumoto, A. (2024). Examining the effect of generative AI on students’ motivation and writing self-efficacy. *Digital Applied Linguistics*, *1*, 102324. https://doi.org/10.29140/dal.v1.102324

Khalifa, M., & Albadawy, M. (2024). Using artificial intelligence in academic writing and research: An essential productivity tool. *Computer Methods and Programs in Biomedicine Update*, *5*, 100145. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cmpbup.2024.100145

Kohnke, L., Moorhouse, B. L., & Zou, D. (2023). ChatGPT for language teaching and
learning. *RELC Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882231162868>

Lim, W. M., Gunasekara, A., Pallant, J. L., Pallant, J. I., & Pechenkina, E. (2023). Generative AI and the future of education: Ragnar¨ok or reformation? A paradoxical perspective from management educators. *International Journal of Management in Education, 21*(2), Article 100790. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2023.100790>

Lo, N., Wong, A., & Chan, S. (2025). The impact of generative AI on essay revisions and student engagement. *Computers and Education Open*, 100249. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeo.2025.100249

McGrath, C., Farazouli, A., & Cerratto-Pargman, T. (2024). Generative AI chatbots in higher education: A review of an emerging research area. *Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-024-01288-w>

Michel-Villarreal, R., Vilalta-Perdomo, E., Salinas-Navarro, D. E., Thierry-Aguilera, R., & Gerardou, F. S. (2023b). Challenges and opportunities of Generative AI for higher Education as explained by ChatGPT. *Education Sciences, 13*(9), 856. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13090856

Morell-Mengual, V., Fernández-García, O., Berenguer, C., Ortega-Barón, J., Gil-Llario, M. D., & Estruch-García, V. (2025b). Characteristics, motivations and attitudes of students using ChatGPT and other language model-based chatbots in higher education. *Education and Information Technologies*.
https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-025-13650-1

Russell, S. & Norvig, P. (2021). *Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach.* Hoboken: Pearson.

Strobl, C., Ailhaud, E., Benetos, K., Devitt, A., Kruse, O., Proske, A., & Rapp, C. (2019). Digital support for academic writing: A review of technologies and pedagogies.
*Computers & Education, 131*, 33–48. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.12.005

Smith, B. E., Shimizu, A. Y., Burriss, S. K., Hundley, M., & Pendergrass, E. (2024). Multimodal composing with generative AI: Examining preservice teachers’ processes and perspectives. *Computers & Composition/Computers and Composition*, *75*, 102896. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2024.102896>

Tan, X. (2023). Stories behind the scenes: L2 students’ cognitive processes of multimodal
composing and traditional writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 59*(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2022.100958>

Teng, M. F. (2024a). A Systematic Review of CHATGPT for English as a Foreign Language Writing: Opportunities, Challenges, and recommendations. (2024). *International Journal of TESOL Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.58304/ijts.20240304>

Teng, M. F. (2024b). “ChatGPT is the companion, not enemies”: EFL learners’ perceptions and experiences in using ChatGPT for feedback in writing. *Computers and Education Artificial Intelligence*, *7*, 100270. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2024.100270

Tlili, A., Shehata, B., Adarkwah, M. A., Bozkurt, A., Hickey, D. T., Huang, R., et al. (2023). What if the devil is my guardian angel: ChatGPT as a case study of using chatbots in education. *Smart Learn. Environ., 10*(1), 15. https://doi.org/10.1186/ s40561-023-00237-x

Tiwari, C. K., Bhat, M. A., Khan, S. T., Subramaniam, R., & Khan, M. a. I. (2023b). What drives students toward ChatGPT? An investigation of the factors influencing adoption and usage of ChatGPT. *Interactive Technology and Smart Education*, *21*(3), 333–355. https://doi.org/10.1108/itse-04-2023-0061

**Bionote**

Phan Thi Hien completed her Master of Arts (TESOL) at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Ho Chi Minh City in 2007. She is currently a lecturer of English at the University of Finance - Marketing. She has been teaching English for over 15 years to different types of learners including young, adult, English majored and non-English majored students. Her areas of teaching are grammar, English skills and Business English. Her major areas of interest include CALL, TESOL methodology, project-based learning, language education, English teaching and learning approach, and English linguistics.

Email: pt.hien@ufm.edu.vn

Duong Thi Thu Hien completed her Master of Arts (TESOL) at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Ho Chi Minh City and she is currently a lecturer at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Finance - Marketing. She has been teaching English for more than 10 years to a variety of learners ranging from young learners to non- English majored and English majored students. Her areas of teaching are English skills, pronunciation and Business English. Her research areas of interest are mainly in second language acquisition, TESOL methodology, CALL, pronunciation, language education, English for specific purposes and applied linguistics.

Email: dtt.hien@ufm.edu.vn.

Appendix A - Questionnaire

**Section A: Background Information**

* What’s your name?
* How old are you?
* What is your gender?
* What class are you in?
* How often do you use GenAI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Grammarly) in English writing?
	+ Never
	+ Rarely
	+ Sometimes
	+ Usually
	+ Always

**Section B: Students’ experiences with Generative AI**

For each of the following statements, please select the number that best reflects your agreement.

*1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5.Strongly disagree*

**Motivation**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. Using GenAI makes me more motivated to write. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. I feel more willing to complete writing assignments when I can use GenAI tools. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. GenAI helps me overcome writing challenges (e.g., getting started, writer’s block). |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. I enjoy writing more when using GenAI support. |  |  |  |  |  |

**Confidence**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I feel more confident about the quality of my writing when I use GenAI. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. GenAI helps me feel less anxious about making grammar or vocabulary mistakes. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. I believe my writing skills have improved through using GenAI tools. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8. I feel capable of completing writing tasks without GenAI support. |  |  |  |  |  |

**Attitudes and Perceptions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 9. I worry that using GenAI too much might harm my learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Appendix B - Follow-up Interview

*Note: Before asking the students, the researcher briefly summarized their survey responses to confirm their answers.*

1. What do you do with a GenAI final draft?

2. Do you ask GenAI for an explanation?

3. How well can you complete writing tasks without GenAI support?

4. Does GenAI use improve your writing skills?

Appendix C - Brief descriptions from interview responses

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Student ID** | **Brief descriptions from interview responses** |
| S01 | Sometimes use, thoroughly revise, greatly paraphrase, usually ask for explanation, little difficulty in completing writing tasks without GenAI support, little improvement with AI use, cautious with GenAI use, extreme concern about overreliance  |
| S02 | Usually use, hardly revise, rarely ask for explanation, considerable difficulty in completing writing tasks without GenAI support, no improvement with AI use |
| S03 | Always use, hardly revise, rarely ask for explanation, considerable difficulty in writing tasks without GenAI support, little improvement with AI use  |
| S04 | Usually use, thoroughly revise, just keep interesting and appropriate ideas, usually ask for explanation, note down useful vocabulary and structures, little difficulty in completing writing tasks without GenAI support, huge improvement with AI use, especially in less commonly used vocabulary, feel easier to brainstorm ideas  |
| S05 | Always use, thoroughly revise, usually write my own draft then have it reviewed by GenAI, usually ask for explanation and more examples to deepen understanding, little difficulty in completing writing tasks without GenAI support, huge improvement with AI use  |
| S06 | Rarely use, thoroughly revise, usually ask for explanation, cautious with GenAI use, concern about overreliance, no difficulty in completing writing tasks without GenAI support, don’t think GenAI helps improve writing skills, high concern about overreliance  |
| S07 | Sometimes use, thoroughly revise, usually ask for explanation, cautious with GenAI use, concern about overreliance, only use GenAI to evaluate my writing when there’s no human assistance, no difficulty in completing writing tasks without GenAI support, don’t think GenAI helps improve writing skills, high concern about overreliance  |
| S08 | Rarely use, thoroughly revise, usually ask for explanation, cautious with GenAI use, concern about overreliance, no difficulty in completing writing tasks without GenAI support, don’t think GenAI helps improve writing skills, high concern about overreliance |
| S09 | Always use, thoroughly revise to make it suitable with my voice, ask for explanation when necessary, note down useful vocabulary and structures, little difficulty in completing writing tasks without GenAI support though that process takes more time, quite huge improvement with AI use, especially in less commonly used vocabulary and structures, feel easier to brainstorm ideas  |
| S10 | Usually use, occasionally revise, never ask for explanation, considerable difficulty in writing tasks without GenAI support, unsure about improvement with AI use |
| S11 | Usually use, often revise, usually ask for explanation, cautious with GenAI use, high concern about overreliance, little difficulty in completing writing tasks without GenAI support, some considerable progress with AI use |

1. Corresponding author, Lecturer, Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Finance - Marketing, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; *Email: pt.hien@ufm.edu.vn* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Lecturer, Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Finance - Marketing, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; *Email: dtt.hien@ufm.edu.vn* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)