**AI Tools in English Writing Development: Benefits and Challenges for Non-English Major Students at Thu Dau Mot University**

# Hậu Hồ Trung, Duyên Lê Thị Mỹ, Hân Hoàng Đoàn Gia, Đoan Lê Hoàng Khánh, Thúy Trịnh Hồng, Ánh Nguyễn Thị Ngọc **Abstract**

The application of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in learning writing skills offers benefits but also presents significant challenges, particularly in terms of plagiarism risks. This mixed-methods study, utilizing a questionnaire, targets non-English major students at Thu Dau Mot University to examine the benefits and drawbacks of utilizing AI tools to enhance students’ English writing abilities. These tools support accuracy, such as refining grammar, vocabulary, and improving sentence clarity. However, the disadvantages are significant, as AI tools may diminish personal creativity by fostering reliance on repetitive or less original outputs, reducing motivation, and impeding the development of unique writing styles. Their potential to compromise creativity and social engagement highlights the need for a balanced approach. Educators and EFL students could consider using AI as a supportive tool while prioritizing independent thinking to maximize benefits and mitigate risks.

*Keywords:* ai tools, writing skills, pros and cons, EFL students, non-English majors

# **1. Introduction**

## ***1.1. Background to the study***

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) has developed rapidly, leading to a remarkable change in education, especially in academic writing skills in English, a skill considered a big challenge for many non-major students. Support tools such as Chat GPT, Grammarly, Quillbot, and Gemini are increasingly widely used by non-major students. With the ability to respond quickly, analyze grammar, expand vocabulary, and suggest ideas, AI tools have helped EFL learners develop their writing skills. When using these tools, they will be supported immediately, improve their writing skills quickly as well and improve the quality of their writing (Mazuki, 2023).

Globally, many studies are showing that AI tools bring many academic benefits. However, besides these obvious benefits, the use of these support tools also brings many worrying challenges, such as reduced creative thinking, critical thinking ability, abuse, and the risk of violating academic ethics (Chiu et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2024). According to a study by Nguyen and Nguyen (2025) at Thu Dau Mot University with 193 students majoring in English, the results showed that most students had a positive assessment of the ability of AI tools to support academic writing. On the other hand, the study also pointed out some consequences, such as passive thinking and reduced long-term knowledge accumulation. Although it did not survey non-major students, this study reflects the trend of increasingly popular use of AI in the university environment.

However, for non-English majors – a group that often has more difficulties in English writing skills – the use of assistive tools in academic writing will bring many risks of abuse and plagiarism without guidance. While policies guiding the use of AI in learning are limited, there is a need to study the awareness, usage, and impact of AI on this group of students. The current study was conducted to explore the benefits, challenges, and academic ethics when non-English majors use AI tools to develop their academic writing skills.

## ***1.2. Research questions***

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do non-English majors perceive the benefits of using AI tools to develop English writing skills?

2. What disadvantages do non-English majors encounter when using AI tools to develop English writing skills?

## ***1.3. Significance of the study***

The study contributes to clarifying the current debates about the role of AI in education, especially in developing academic writing skills in non-English majors. By combining both positive and negative perspectives, the study helps shape a balanced approach, neither too “deifying” nor completely “discriminating” against AI tools.

# **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1 The role of AI in education***

Applications of artificial intelligence in education have received considerable attention from academics and educational institutions in recent years. Like other sectors, the education sector underwent significant transformation through the implementation of AI and education (Yeruva, 2023). Educational systems integrated AI systems, including machine learning and natural language processing, to enhance the learning experience for students, thereby increasing their engagement in learning (Alneyadi et al., 2023). Furthermore, AI-augmented analytics empowered educators with actionable intelligence to make evidence-based decisions, while interactive AI platforms promoted greater student motivation and engagement (Yang et al., 2022; Wardat et al., 2022). With the help of AI, education can become more accessible and beneficial for both teachers and learners, enabling learners from all backgrounds to access high-quality education.

### ***2.2 Advantages of AI tools in writing***

One of the most significant benefits we can observe is improved grammar and syntax. From simple words to sentences to sentence structure, even if they can understand the language, keeping up with these idiosyncrasies can be a challenge for those learning English as a second language. With modern technology, AI tools helped a lot in this regard. Research by Faiz et al. (2023) quantitatively demonstrated these improvements, showing that AI-assisted writing samples contained 37% fewer grammatical errors and exhibited significantly greater lexical diversity than unassisted texts.  While these tools enhanced technical writing, it is important to note that they work best as a supplement to, rather than a replacement for, human writing.

Contemporary AI writing tools evolved beyond simple text generation to offer comprehensive multimodal support, enabling diverse forms of creative expression. Kang and Yi (2023) and Li et al. (2024) demonstrated how these advanced platforms enhanced literacy practices by facilitating the integration of visual, auditory, and interactive elements into traditional writing processes. Further illuminating this development, Sekewael’s (2024) comparative study examined AI-assisted writing processes among both native and non-native English speakers. Findings indicated that while both groups utilized AI for idea generation and language refinement, non-native speakers particularly benefited from the tools’ ability to scaffold complex linguistic structures without constraining creative expression.

AI-powered educational systems offer transformative potential through their ability to analyze individual learning patterns, identify students’ unique interests, and areas needing improvement to create optimized learning pathways. This personalized approach, as demonstrated by Luckin et al. (2016), enhanced both knowledge acquisition efficiency and learner engagement by delivering tailored educational experiences that were simultaneously individualized, adaptable, inclusive, and stimulating. The applications of such AI models spanned diverse educational domains, including programming instruction, academic writing, and complex problem-solving. Importantly, these systems provided comprehensive toolsets that addressed the multidimensional nature of learning, encompassing not just curricular content and instructional methodologies, but also learners’ affective states and motivational factors.

### ***2.3. Disadvantages of AI tools in writing***

While AI can synthesized accurate information (Smith, 2022), recent studies showed that AI-generated content often lacked emotional depth and human connection (Lee & Chen, 2023). A study by Wang (2024) found that students perceived ChatGPT's output as unoriginal and lacking creative depth. Many felt that the tool’s suggestions were overly generic, making them ineffective for producing engaging written work. This suggests that a heavy reliance on AI tools may weaken learners’ ability to generate original, personalized insights. Moreover, complicating the issue, educators expressed concern that students relied increasingly on AI not just for language improvement but for idea generation as well, which hindered the development of independent, creative thinking (Johinke et al., 2023).

Excessive reliance on these technologies may fostered superficial engagement with writing tasks, potentially diminishing crucial cognitive abilities, including analytical thinking, creative problem-solving, and imaginative expression (Grimes & Warschauer, 2023). These higher-order thinking skills form the foundation of effective writing development, enabling students to refine their voice and craft nuanced arguments. Empirical research by Bui and Nguyen (2024) substantiated these concerns, demonstrating how ChatGPT’s support system correlated with decreased student motivation for independent thought when completing assignments. Their findings suggest that readily available AI assistance may inadvertently cultivate cognitive complacency, with students increasingly bypassing critical thinking processes essential for writing proficiency.

Research in educational psychology consistently showed that interactive learning methods like group editing sessions and classroom debates continued to play an indispensable role in helping learners develop both communication abilities and practical knowledge (Johnson et al., 2021). However, excessive reliance on AI tools isolated learners, reducing their engagement in these formative exchanges. When writers prioritized AI-generated feedback over human interaction, they risked missing opportunities to refine ideas through dialogue with colleagues, mentors, or instructors. This trend aligned with Marzuki’s (2023) findings, which warned that AI-dominated environments weakened collaborative learning cultures, ultimately hindering learners’ holistic development. Without balanced integration, AI tools may inadvertently create education systems that favor efficiency over the interpersonal connections essential for comprehensive growth.

# **3. Methodology**

## ***3.1. Population and Sampling***

This mixed-methods study integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches. The target population consists of non-English major students at Thu Dau Mot University enrolled in Level 4–6 general English courses. Participants were recruited using voluntary response and convenience sampling for both the survey and interviews. For the survey, a list of eligible students (enrolled in Levels 4–6 English courses) was obtained from the university’s academic office, and 108 students answered the questionnaire. For the interviews, 6 students who expressed interest in participating in follow-up interviews were invited to provide more in-depth perspectives.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Academic Year** | | |
| **Year Level** | **Frequency (n)** | **Percentage (%)** |
| Junior | 74 | 68.5% |
| Senior | 14 | 13.0% |
| Sophomore | 13 | 12.0% |
| Freshman | 4 | 3.7% |
| Other | 3 | 2.8% |
| **Gender** | | |
| **Gender** | **Frequency (n)** | **Percentage (%)** |
| **Female** | 69 | 63.9% |
| **Male** | 39 | 36.1% |
| **Most Common Majors** | | |
| **Major** | **Frequency (n)** | **Percentage (%)** |
| **Accounting** | 6 | 5.56% |
| **Chinese Language** | 5 | 4.63% |
| **Law** | 4 | 3.7% |
| **Land Management** | 3 | 2.78% |
| **Business Administration** | 3 | 2.78% |
| **Industrial Management** | 2 | 1.85% |
| **Information Technology** | 2 | 1.85% |
| **Automation** | 1 | 0.93% |
| **Environmental Management** | 1 | 0.93% |
| **Others** | 81 | 75% |

The majority of participants were Junior students, accounting for 68.5% of the survey. Senior students comprised 13.0%, followed by Sophomore students at 12.0%. Freshman students represented a smaller portion at 3.7%, with the “Other” category, making up 2.8%. The high proportion of Junior students may indicate greater enrollment in Level 4–6 English courses or higher engagement in research participation among this group, possibly due to their academically focused phase.

Females constituted the majority of the survey at 63.9%, while males accounted for 36.1%. This female-majority distribution may reflect the broader demographics of Thu Dau Mot University or a tendency for female students to participate more readily in surveys or show greater interest in non-specialized English courses. This gender disparity could influence the study’s findings, particularly in areas related to language learning attitudes or performance.

Participants represented a diverse range of majors, with Accounting (5.56%) and Chinese Language (4.63%) being the most common, followed by Law (3.7%), Land Management (2.78%), and Business Administration (2.78%). Other majors, such as Industrial Management, Information Technology, Automation, and Environmental Management, each had lower representation (1.85% or less). A substantial 75% of participants fell under “Others,” reflecting a broad variety of academic disciplines. This diversity suggests that non-specialized English courses attract students from numerous fields, potentially broadening the applicability of the study’s findings across various academic contexts.

## ***3.2. Research instruments***

#### **Survey Questionnaire**

The survey is administered via Google Forms, distributed to participants through email. All questions are translated into Vietnamese for easy answering by participants.

The questionnaire is divided into three parts:

* + Part 1: Demographic information (e.g., year of study)
  + Part 2: Advantages of AI tools in writing
  + Part 3: Disadvantages of AI tools in writing

#### **Semi-Structured Interviews**

A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect in-depth qualitative data. The interview guide was developed, focused on the same constructs as the questionnaire. The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants to examine the pros and cons of using AI tools in writing skill. Each interview lasted approximately 1 hour, during which students responded to questions about their perceptions and experiences with AI technologies in academic writing. All interviews are recorded and transcribed to ensure that the interviews are analyzed accurately and objectively.

## ***3.3. Data Analysis Methods***

Quantitative data were summarized using means, standard deviations, and percentages. Results are displayed in tables, including demographic summaries and descriptive statistics, to provide a clear overview of the findings.

All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. A systematic coding process was employed, where transcripts were divided into meaningful segments, and codes were independently assigned by four team members. The team then met to review and resolve any discrepancies, ensuring coding consistency through consensus. To enhance accuracy, member-checking was conducted by summarizing key points to participants at the end of each interview for verification. This thorough process ensured the trustworthiness and reliability of the qualitative data. A thematic analysis approach was used to code and categorize interview transcripts. Initial codes were assigned to significant text segments, and through iterative comparison and discussion, recurring patterns were consolidated into broader themes.

# **4. Results**

This section outlines the results from a survey and interviews carried out to explore students’ perspectives on using AI tools for writing at Thu Dau Mot University. The findings were structured based on the research questions detailed in section 2, encompassing demographic data, quantitative survey results, and qualitative insights from interviews.

## ***4.1. Students’ Engagement with AI Tools***

A total of 108 English majors at levels 4 to 6 from Thu Dau Mot University participated in the survey. The participants’ AI usage trends were presented in Tables 2 and 3.

**Table 2**

*AI Tools Frequently Used*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Frequency | Percent |
| ChatGPT | 55 | 50.9 |
| ChatGPT, Dall-E | 1 | 0.9 |
| ChatGPT, Other | 17 | 15.7 |
| ChatGPT, QuillBot | 4 | 3.7 |
| ChatGPT, QuillBot, Dall-E | 1 | 0.9 |
| Grammarly | 3 | 2.8 |
| Grammarly, ChatGPT | 10 | 9.3 |
| Grammarly, ChatGPT, Other | 6 | 5.6 |
| Grammarly, Other | 1 | 0.9 |
| Other | 10 | 9.3 |

The survey results, as presented in Table 2, revealed the variety of AI tools utilized by participants for academic purposes. ChatGPT emerged as the most frequently used tool, with 50.9% of participants reporting its use exclusively. Combinations of tools were also observed, with 9.3% using Grammarly alongside ChatGPT, and 15.7% combining ChatGPT with other unspecified tools. Notably, Grammarly alone was used by 2.8% of participants, while other tools or combinations accounted for smaller percentages, such as 0.9% for both ChatGPT with Dall-E and ChatGPT with QuillBot and Dall-E. These findings indicated a strong preference for ChatGPT, either alone or in combination with other tools, highlighting its prominence in students’ academic workflows.

**Table 3**

*Frequency of AI Use in Academic Work*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Always** | **Often** | **Rarely** | **Sometimes** |
| **Frequency** | 4 | 48 | 8 | 48 |
| **Percent** | 3.7 | 44.4 | 7.4 | 44.4 |

Table 3 illustrated the frequency with which participants employed AI tools in their academic work. A significant proportion of students reported frequent use, with 44.4% indicating they “often” used AI tools and another 44.4% reporting “sometimes” usage. Only 3.7% of participants used AI tools “always,” while 7.4% used them “rarely.” These results suggested that AI tools were regularly integrated into academic tasks for the majority of participants, with nearly equal distribution between frequent and occasional use, reflecting a balanced adoption pattern.

**Table 4**

*Belief in AI Improving Writing Skills*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| **No** | 10 | 9.3 |
| **Not sure** | 19 | 17.6 |
| **Yes** | 79 | 73.1 |

## Participants’ perceptions of the effectiveness of AI tools in improving writing skills were summarized in Table 4. A substantial 73.1% of respondents expressed belief that AI tools positively contribute to enhancing their writing skills. Conversely, 17.6% were “not sure” about AI’s impact, and 9.3% did not believe AI tools improved their writing abilities. These findings indicated a predominantly positive perception of AI tools as beneficial for developing writing skills, although a notable minority remained uncertain or skeptical about their efficacy.

## ***4.2. Advantages of AI tools in writing***

**Improving Grammar and Vocabulary**

The following analysis, as presented in Table 5, examined the extent to which English majors at Thu Dau Mot University utilized AI tools to enhance their grammar and vocabulary in academic writing. The data explored specific contributions, such as correcting grammar errors, enriching vocabulary, and improving sentence clarity and coherence, shedding light on the perceived effectiveness of AI tools in refining linguistic accuracy and quality.

**Table 5**

*Improving Grammar and Vocabulary*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mean | SD | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
| I use AI tools to correct grammar errors in my writing | 3.1296 | 1.01477 | 5 (4.6%) | 24 (22.2%) | 41 (38%) | 28 (25.9%) | 10 (9.3%) |
| AI tools help me choose richer vocabulary when writing | 3.3611 | 0.90128 | 2 (1.9%) | 14 (13%) | 46 (42.6%) | 35 (32.4%) | 11 (10.2%) |
| AI tools improve the clarity and coherence of my sentences | 3.4167 | 0.90817 | 2 (1.9%) | 13 (12%) | 43 (39.8%) | 38 (35.2%) | 12 (11.1%) |
| I write faster while maintaining quality thanks to AI | 3.3519 | 0.96978 | 3 (2.8%) | 14 (13%) | 48 (44.4%) | 28 (25.9%) | 15 (13.9%) |
| AI tools reduce spelling and punctuation errors in my work | 3.3611 | 1.06304 | 5 (4.6%) | 13 (12%) | 48 (44.4%) | 22 (20.4%) | 20 (18.5%) |
| AI tools help improve the overall structure of my writing | 3.3796 | 0.88304 | 1 (0.9%) | 16 (14.8%) | 42 (38.9%) | 39 (36.1%) | 10 (9.3%) |
| Using AI tools increases my confidence and productivity in writing | 3.4352 | 0.94001 | 0 (0%) | 16 (14.8%) | 47 (43.5%) | 27 (25%) | 18 (16.7%) |

The results indicated that students find AI tools effective for improving various aspects of writing, with mean scores ranging from 3.13 to 3.44, reflecting moderate agreement. For instance, 35.2% of respondents often and 11.1% always used AI tools to improve sentence clarity and coherence (mean = 3.4167). Similarly, 20.4% often and 18.5% always used AI to reduce spelling and punctuation errors (mean = 3.3611). Additionally, 25.0% often and 16.7% always felt that AI tools increase their confidence and productivity in writing (mean = 3.4352), highlighting AI’s role in both technical and psychological support.

Qualitative data from interviews further supported these findings. Students frequently praised AI tools, such as Grammarly and ChatGPT, for correcting grammatical errors and suggesting richer vocabulary. One student noted, “AI helps me fix grammar mistakes and learn new vocabulary” (Student 2). Another commented, “It’s really useful for fixing basic grammar errors and suggesting better words” (Student 3). These responses emphasized AI’s practical utility in enhancing the technical quality of writing, enabling students to produce more polished and coherent work.

**Developing Creative Ideas**

Table 6 focused on the role of AI tools in fostering creativity within academic writing among the surveyed students. This subsection investigated how AI tools assisted in generating new ideas, brainstorming, and expressing concepts in more academic and unique ways, highlighting their impact on enhancing the creative aspects of writing processes.

**Table 6**

*Developing Creative Ideas*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mean | SD | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
| AI tools help me generate new ideas when I’m stuck | 3.5185 | 0.90152 | 0 (0%) | 12 (11.1%) | 46 (42.6%) | 32 (29.6%) | 18 (16.7%) |
| I use AI tools to brainstorm ideas for my academic writing | 3.3611 | 0.90128 | 1 (0.9%) | 16 (14.8%) | 46 (42.6%) | 33 (30.6%) | 12 (11.1%) |
| AI tools suggest more academic ways to express my ideas | 3.5185 | 0.88054 | 0 (0%) | 13 (12%) | 41 (38%) | 39 (36.1%) | 15 (13.9%) |
| AI helps me connect ideas to make my writing more unique | 3.4907 | 0.92216 | 1 (0.9%) | 13 (12%) | 42 (38.9%) | 36 (33.3%) | 16 (14.8%) |
| I use AI to add visuals or real-life examples to my work | 3.2315 | 1.07309 | 7 (6.5%) | 17 (15.7%) | 42 (38.9%) | 28 (25.9%) | 14 (13%) |

These findings highlighted AI’s role in fostering creativity, with mean scores ranging from 3.23 to 3.52. Notably, 29.6% of respondents often and 16.7% always used AI tools to generate new ideas when stuck (mean = 3.5185). Additionally, 36.1% often and 13.9% always agreed that AI tools suggest more academic ways to express ideas (mean = 3.5185). Furthermore, 33.3% often and 14.8% always reported that AI helps connect ideas to make their writing more unique (mean = 3.4907), indicating its effectiveness in supporting creative development.

Interviews provided deeper insights into these findings. Students frequently cited AI as a valuable tool for overcoming writer’s block. One student remarked, “When I don’t know where to start, I ask AI for suggestions” (Student 4). Another stated, “AI provides ideas and outlines that I can build on” (Student 1). These responses underscored AI’s ability to act as a creative catalyst, helping students explore new perspectives and structure their ideas effectively.

**Personalizing the Learning Process**

Table 7 explored the influence of AI tools on personalizing the learning experience for academic writing. This analysis delved into how AI tools provided instant feedback, supported individualized learning styles, and boosted students’ engagement and confidence, offering insights into their role in creating a tailored and effective learning environment.

**Table 7**

*Personalizing the Learning Process*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mean | SD | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
| AI tools provide instant feedback to help me improve | 3.4259 | 0.89864 | 1 (0.9%) | 14 (13%) | 44 (40.7%) | 36 (33.3%) | 13 (12%) |
| AI helps me better understand writing styles and conventions | 3.3148 | 0.94373 | 2 (1.9%) | 18 (16.7%) | 44 (40.7%) | 32 (29.6%) | 12 (11.1%) |
| I feel more interested in writing thanks to AI tools | 3.2963 | 1.04353 | 7 (6.5%) | 14 (13%) | 39 (36.1%) | 36 (33.3%) | 12 (11.1%) |
| AI tools support me in learning in a way that suits me best | 3.3426 | 0.85557 | 1 (0.9%) | 14 (13%) | 50 (46.3%) | 33 (30.6%) | 10 (9.3%) |
| AI increases my confidence in submitting high-quality work | 3.2870 | 0.98636 | 3 (2.8%) | 19 (17.6%) | 43 (39.8%) | 30 (27.8%) | 13 (12%) |

The survey results demonstrated AI’s role in personalizing the learning experience, with mean scores ranging from 3.29 to 3.43. Notably, 33.3% of respondents often and 12% always used AI tools for instant feedback to improve their writing (mean = 3.4259). Additionally, 30.6% often and 9.3% always felt that AI supported learning in a way that suited their needs (mean = 3.3426). Furthermore, 33.3% often and 11.1% always reported increased interest in writing due to AI tools (mean = 3.2963), suggesting that AI fosters engagement and motivation.

Qualitative data from interviews reinforced these findings. Students appreciated AI’s flexibility and accessibility. One student noted, “With AI, I can learn anytime, anywhere, like having a tutor with me” (Student 5). Another shared, “AI saves me time compared to traditional learning methods” (Student 6). These insights highlighted AI’s role as a supportive tool that adapts to individual learning needs, enhancing both efficiency and confidence in writing.

## ***4.3. Disadvantages of AI tools in writing***

This section examined the potential drawbacks of using AI tools in the context of developing writing skills, focusing on three key areas: decline in personal creativity, errors due to dependence on AI, and reduced human interaction. Quantitative data from surveys (Tables 8, 9, and 10) were presented alongside qualitative insights from interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges associated with AI tool usage in academic writing.

**Decline in Personal Creativity**

This explored how reliance on AI tools may hindered students’ ability to develop their own creative ideas and unique writing styles. The survey results (Table 8) and interview responses highlighted concerns about diminished creativity.

**Table 8**

*Decline in Personal Creativity*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mean | SD | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
| I rely on AI tools instead of brainstorming my own ideas | 3.0093 | 1.05454 | 9 (8.3%) | 23 (21.3%) | 43 (39.8%) | 24 (22.2%) | 9 (8.3%) |
| AI tools limit my ability to create unique content | 3.0741 | 1.14143 | 10 (9.3%) | 21 (19.4%) | 43 (39.8%) | 19 (17.6%) | 15 (13.9%) |
| Ideas from AI tools feel repetitive | 3.4722 | 0.99022 | 3 (2.8%) | 14 (13%) | 36 (33.3%) | 39 (36.1%) | 16 (14.8%) |
| Ideas from AI tools lack originality | 3.3611 | 0.96149 | 3 (2.8%) | 13 (12%) | 49 (45.4%) | 28 (25.9%) | 15 (13.9%) |
| Using AI reduces my creative thinking when writing | 3.2130 | 1.11112 | 7 (6.5%) | 22 (20.4%) | 34 (31.5%) | 31 (28.7%) | 14 (13%) |

The results indicated moderate concerns about the impact of AI tools on personal creativity, with mean scores ranging from 3.01 to 3.47. Notably, 36.1% of respondents often and 14.8% always felt that ideas from AI tools are repetitive (mean = 3.4722). Additionally, 25.9% often and 13.9% always agreed that AI-generated ideas lacked originality (mean = 3.3611). Furthermore, 28.7% often and 13% always reported that using AI reduced their creative thinking when writing (mean = 3.2130), suggesting that over-reliance on AI may stifled independent idea generation.

Qualitative insights from interviews reinforced these concerns. Several students noted that AI-generated content often felt mechanical and lacked personal flair. One student remarked, “AI writing feels a bit stiff and simplistic” (Student 1). Another shared, “If you rely too much on AI, your writing style becomes robotic” (Student 4). Students also emphasized the need to revise AI-generated content to make it more natural, with one stating, “AI’s style is too mechanical; I have to edit it to make it sound more natural” (Student 5). These responses highlighted the risk of diminished creativity when students overly depended on AI tools.

**Errors Due to Dependence on AI**

This subsection investigated how over-dependence on AI tools led to errors in content accuracy and hindered the development of independent writing skills. The survey data (Table 9) and interview findings provided insights into these issues.

**Table 9**

*Errors Due to Dependence on AI*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mean | SD | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
| Being overdependent on AI makes me less motivated to write independently | 3.2130 | 1.02356 | 5 (4.6%) | 20 (18.5%) | 42 (38.9%) | 29 (26.9%) | 12 (11.1%) |
| AI tools make my writing feel similar to others’ work | 3.1759 | 1.02153 | 7 (6.5%) | 19 (17.6%) | 38 (35.2%) | 36 (33.3%) | 8 (7.4%) |
| Using AI reduces my effort to improve my writing skills | 3.1296 | 1.10303 | 8 (7.4%) | 23 (21.3%) | 36 (33.3%) | 29 (26.9%) | 12 (11.1%) |
| AI limits my ability to develop my own writing style | 3.0926 | 1.11521 | 12 (11.1%) | 16 (14.8%) | 40 (37%) | 30 (27.8%) | 10 (9.3%) |
| AI tools fail to capture the subtle differences in language I want to express | 3.1574 | 1.10362 | 8 (7.4%) | 21 (19.4%) | 38 (35.2%) | 28 (25.9%) | 13 (12%) |

The findings revealed concerns about errors and limitations stemming from AI dependence, with mean scores ranging from 3.09 to 3.21. Specifically, 26.9% of respondents often and 11.1% always felt that over-dependence on AI reduced their motivation to write independently (mean = 3.2130). Additionally, 33.3% often and 7.4% always agreed that AI tools made their writing feel similar to others’ work (mean = 3.1759). Furthermore, 25.9% often and 12% always reported that AI tools failed to capture subtle linguistic nuances (mean = 3.1574), indicating potential shortcomings in AI’s ability to reflect individual expression.

Interviews provided further context for these findings. Students expressed concerns about AI’s limitations in understanding their specific needs and contexts. One student noted, “AI doesn’t understand my actual level or needs” (Student 2). Another shared, “Sometimes AI misinterprets things, and I spent nearly four hours without getting useful results” (Student 3). Additionally, concerns about content accuracy were raised, with one student stating, “AI can fabricate data or produce fake information” (Student 6). These insights underscored the risks of over-reliance on AI, including reduced motivation and potential errors in content.

**Reduced Human Interaction**

This subsection examined how the use of AI tools led to reduced interaction with teachers and peers, potentially isolating students in their learning process. The survey data (Table 10) and interview responses highlighted these concerns.

**Table 10**

*Reduced Human Interaction*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mean | SD | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
| Using AI tools reduces my discussions with teachers or peers | 3.0093 | 1.11486 | 9 (8.3%) | 30 (27.8%) | 29 (26.9%) | 31 (28.7%) | 9 (8.3%) |
| I miss out on learning from others when I rely on AI | 3.1204 | 1.11672 | 9 (8.3%) | 21 (19.4%) | 39 (36.1%) | 26 (24.1%) | 13 (12%) |
| AI tools make my writing process feel isolated | 3.1574 | 1.06921 | 8 (7.4%) | 19 (17.6%) | 40 (37%) | 30 (27.8%) | 11 (10.2%) |
| Overusing AI limits collaboration in my learning | 3.2130 | 1.20009 | 11 (10.2%) | 17 (15.7%) | 36 (33.3%) | 26 (24.1%) | 18 (16.7%) |

The data results indicated moderate concerns about reduced human interaction, with mean scores ranging from 3.01 to 3.21. Notably, 28.7% of respondents often and 8.3% always reported that using AI tools reduced discussions with teachers or peers (mean = 3.0093). Additionally, 24.1% often and 12% always agreed that they missed out on learning from others when relying on AI (mean = 3.1204). Furthermore, 27.8% often and 10.2% always felt that AI tools made their writing process feel isolated (mean = 3.1574), highlighting the potential for AI to create a solitary learning experience.

Qualitative data from interviews corroborated these findings. Students noted that reliance on AI reduced opportunities for meaningful interaction. One student remarked, “When I use AI, I interact less with my teachers and friends” (Student 1). Another shared, “Some students become lazy and just use AI to complete assignments without engaging with instructors” (Student 4). Additionally, a student expressed, “AI makes me hesitant to ask teachers because it already provides solutions” (Student 5). These responses emphasized the risk of reduced collaboration and feedback from human sources when students overly relied on AI tools.

# **5. Discussion**

## ***5.1. Advantages of AI tools in writing***

The findings from the study at Thu Dau Mot University underscored the multifaceted advantages of AI tools in enhancing academic writing among English majors, aligning with insights from prior research. These benefits were categorized into three primary areas: vocabulary and grammar improvement, creative development, and personalized learning.

Firstly, AI tools significantly enhanced the technical quality of writing by supporting grammar refinement, vocabulary enrichment, and improved sentence clarity and coherence. These findings resonated with Faiz et al. (2023), who noted a substantial reduction in grammatical errors and increased lexical diversity in AI-assisted writing. The tools served as critical aids for non-native English speakers, scaffolding complex linguistic structures, as Sekewael (2024) similarly observed in their study of AI’s role in language refinement. By offering real-time suggestions, AI tools enabled students to produce more polished academic work, complementing human efforts without supplanting them.

Secondly, AI tools fostered creativity by aiding in idea generation and academic expression. They helped students overcome writer’s block and connect ideas innovatively, aligning with Kang and Yi (2023) and Li et al. (2024), who highlighted AI’s ability to integrate multimodal elements into writing processes. This capacity to enhance creative expression without constraining individuality underscored AI’s role as a creative catalyst, supporting students in crafting unique and academically robust content.

Lastly, AI tools personalized the learning experience by providing instant feedback and adapting to individual learning styles, thereby boosting engagement and confidence. This aligned with Luckin et al. (2016), who emphasized AI’s transformative potential in creating tailored educational pathways that enhanced knowledge acquisition and motivation. By addressing both technical and affective dimensions, AI tools fostered a dynamic and inclusive learning environment for academic writing.

Overall, the study’s findings affirmed AI tools as powerful supplements to traditional writing practices. They offer technical precision, creative inspiration, and personalized support while emphasizing the need to balance their use with human creativity and critical thinking to maintain academic integrity.

## ***5.2. Disadvantages of AI tools in writing***

The study at Thu Dau Mot University revealed several critical drawbacks of AI tools in academic writing, which aligned with existing research and highlighted challenges in three key areas: decline in personal creativity, errors due to over-dependence on AI, and reduced human interaction.

Firstly, the reliance on AI tools posed a significant risk to personal creativity. Students frequently reported that AI-generated content felt repetitive and lacked originality, limiting their ability to develop unique writing styles. This finding echoed Lee and Chen (2023), who noted that AI-generated content often lacked emotional depth and human connection, and Wang (2024), who highlighted its unoriginal nature. Additionally, Johinke et al. (2023) emphasized concerns that over-reliance on AI for idea generation may hindered independent creative thinking. These insights suggested that while AI tools offered technical support, their generic outputs can stifled students' ability to produce innovative and personalized content, potentially weakening the development of their creative voice.

Secondly, over-dependence on AI tools led to errors and reduced motivation for independent writing. Students expressed concerns about AI’s inability to capture nuanced linguistic expressions and its occasional production of inaccurate content, aligning with Bui and Nguyen (2024), who linked AI use with decreased motivation for independent thought. Grimes and Warschauer (2023) further supported this, noting that excessive reliance on AI may diminished critical cognitive skills such as analytical thinking and creative problem-solving. These limitations highlighted the risk of cognitive complacency, where students bypassed essential critical thinking processes, ultimately hindering their writing proficiency and personal growth.

Lastly, the use of AI tools reduced human interaction, isolating students from collaborative learning opportunities. The findings indicated that reliance on AI diminished discussions with peers and instructors, limiting feedback and collaborative exchanges. This aligned with Marzuki (2023), who warned that AI-dominated environments weakened collaborative learning cultures, and Johnson et al. (2021), who underscored the value of interactive methods like group editing and debates for developing communication and practical knowledge. By prioritizing AI-generated feedback over human dialogue, students risked missing out on the interpersonal connections vital for holistic learning and writing development.

In conclusion, the study’s findings underscored the potential of AI tools to undermine creativity, foster errors through over-dependence, and reduce collaborative learning. These challenges emphasized the need for balanced integration of AI tools to preserve critical thinking, originality, and interpersonal engagement in academic writing.

# **6. Conclusion**

## ***6.1 Summary of the Main Findings***

Exploring students’ perceptions of advantages and drawbacks of AI tools in academic writing, the study reveals that these tools enhance technical writing by improving grammar, enriching vocabulary, and ensuring clearer, more coherent sentences, particularly aiding non-native English speakers. They also foster creativity by supporting idea generation and academic expression, helping students overcome writer’s block and craft unique content. Additionally, AI tools personalize learning through tailored feedback, increasing student engagement and confidence while adapting to individual learning styles.

However, the study also highlights notable drawbacks of AI tools. Over-reliance can diminish personal creativity, resulting in repetitive and less original content that lacks emotional depth. It may also lead to errors and reduced motivation for independent thinking, as students might bypass critical cognitive processes. Furthermore, excessive use of AI tools can isolate students, reducing opportunities for collaborative discussions with peers and instructors, which are essential for holistic learning and writing development. These findings emphasize the importance of balanced AI integration to maximize benefits while preserving originality, critical thinking, and interpersonal engagement.

## ***6.2 Limitations and Future Directions***

Despite offering valuable insights, this study has several limitations. Firstly, the research was confined to Thu Dau Mot University, limiting the generalizability of the findings to a broader population of non-English language majors. Future research could expand the scope to include students from various universities and regions, offering a more comprehensive understanding. Secondly, the study relied solely on self-reported perceptions, which may not always align with actual behavior or skill development. Future studies could incorporate mixed-methods approaches, combining student perceptions with empirical data, such as pre- and post-tests on writing proficiency after AI tool intervention, or analysis of student writing samples. Additionally, the rapid evolution of AI technology means that the tools available and student perceptions of them are constantly changing. Longitudinal studies could track these changes over time to provide a more dynamic understanding. Future research could also delve deeper into specific non-English language majors to understand if perceptions vary significantly across disciplines.

## ***6.3. Recommendations***

Lecturers play a key role in guiding students’ use of AI tools. We recommend promoting responsible AI use by teaching students to leverage these tools ethically and effectively, emphasizing that AI is a support, not a substitute for critical thinking and independent writing. Lecturers should integrate AI into curricula, using it for activities like brainstorming, outlining, or initial feedback, paired with instructor-led refinement. Encourage students to critically evaluate AI output, identify limitations, and refine content for accuracy, cultural relevance, and originality.

Students should actively engage with AI tools to maximize benefits and minimize drawbacks. Use AI as a learning aid, not a shortcut. Leverage it for feedback on grammar, vocabulary, and structure, but always review suggestions critically. Practice independent writing consistently, using AI to spark ideas, overcome writer’s block, and refine drafts. Understand AI’s limitations, especially with cultural nuances and complex idioms in non-English languages. Verify AI-generated content for accuracy and authenticity. Attend university workshops to learn effective and ethical AI use, fostering a strong, original writing voice.

Policymakers at Thu Dau Mot University should create an enabling environment for AI in language education. Prioritize discipline-specific guidelines for AI use in non-English language majors, recommending suitable tools and tasks. Invest in diverse AI resources with advanced language processing and cultural understanding to meet students’ needs. Support regular training and workshops for students and faculty on using AI writing tools effectively.

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# **Bionote**

Hậu Hồ Trung is a lecturer of English at Thu Dau Mot University. He obtained his PhD in Education from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand in 2021. His academic interests include teaching language skills, learner motivation and autonomy, higher education, and international students’ experiences. He has extensive experience in English language teaching and curriculum development in tertiary education.

Duyên Lê Thị Mỹ is a third-year student at the Faculty of English Linguistics, Thu Dau Mot University. Her academic interests include IELTS-related skills development, AI-assisted learning, and educational technologies. She is currently conducting research on the application of AI tools in academic writing.

Hân Hoàng Đoàn Gia is a third-year undergraduate majoring in English Linguistics at Thu Dau Mot University. Her academic interests revolve around the use of AI in language learning, and innovative approaches in English education.

Đoan Lê Hoàng Khánh is currently studying English Linguistics at Thu Dau Mot University. Her research interests include the integration of AI technologies in language education, enhancement of English language skills.

Thúy Trịnh Hồng is a third-year student at the Faculty of English Linguistics, Thu Dau Mot University. She is particularly interested in the use of educational technology in English learning, language assessment practices.

Ánh Nguyễn Thị Ngọc is an undergraduate student majoring in English Linguistics at Thu Dau Mot University. Her areas of interest include academic English skills, AI-supported writing and speaking practice, and learner engagement in language classrooms.

# **Appendix A**

Survey Questions Used in the Study

**Part 1. Demographic questions**

Read the questions below carefully and choose only one answer that best suits you.

1. What year are you in?

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Other:.........

1. What is your gender?

Male

Female

1. What is your major?

………

1. What types of AI tools do you frequently use for your academic writing?

Grammarly

ChatGPT

QuillBot

Dall-E

Other:......

1. How often do you use AI tools in your academic work?

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

1. Do you believe using AI tools has improved your writing skills?

Yes

No

Not sure

**Part 2. The benefits of using AI tools to develop writing skills**

*Read each statement and* ***choose only one answer*** *that you feel is most appropriate.*

Please rate your level of agreement with the statements below by selecting the most appropriate response:

*1 = Never (N), 2 = Rarely (R), 3 = Sometimes (S), 4 = Often (O), 5 = Always (A)*

**1.  Improving Grammar and Vocabulary**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | **N** | **R** | **S** | **O** | **A** |
| I use AI tools to correct grammar errors in my writing. |  |  |  |  |  |
| AI tools help me choose richer vocabulary when writing. |  |  |  |  |  |
| AI tools improve the clarity and coherence of my sentences. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I write faster while maintaining quality thanks to AI. |  |  |  |  |  |
| AI tools reduce spelling and punctuation errors in my work. |  |  |  |  |  |
| AI tools help improve the overall structure of my writing. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Using AI tools increases my confidence and productivity in writing. |  |  |  |  |  |

**2.  Developing Creative Ideas**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | **N** | **R** | **S** | **O** | **A** |
| AI tools help me generate new ideas when I’m stuck. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I use AI tools to brainstorm ideas for my academic writing. |  |  |  |  |  |
| AI tools suggest more academic ways to express my ideas. |  |  |  |  |  |
| AI helps me connect ideas to make my writing more unique. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I use AI to add visuals or real-life examples to my work. |  |  |  |  |  |

**3. Personalizing the Learning Process**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | **N** | **R** | **S** | **O** | **A** |
| AI tools provide instant feedback to help me improve. |  |  |  |  |  |
| AI helps me better understand writing styles and conventions. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I feel more interested in writing thanks to AI tools. |  |  |  |  |  |
| AI tools support me in learning in a way that suits me best. |  |  |  |  |  |
| AI increases my confidence in submitting high-quality work. |  |  |  |  |  |

**Part 3. The disadvantages of using AI tools to develop writing skills**

*Read each statement and* ***choose only one answer*** *that you feel is most appropriate.*

Please rate your level of agreement with the statements below:

*1 = Never (N), 2 = Rarely (R), 3 = Sometimes (S), 4 = Often (O), 5 = Always (A)*

**1. Decline in Personal Creativity**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | **N** | **R** | **S** | **O** | **A** |
| I rely on AI tools instead of brainstorming my own ideas. |  |  |  |  |  |
| AI tools limit my ability to create unique content. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ideas from AI tools feel repetitive. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ideas from AI tools lack originality. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Using AI reduces my creative thinking when writing. |  |  |  |  |  |

**2. Errors Due to Dependence on AI**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | **N** | **R** | **S** | **O** | **A** |
| Being overdependent  on AI  makes me less motivated to write independently. |  |  |  |  |  |
| AI tools make my writing feel similar to others’ work. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Using AI reduces my effort to improve my writing skills. |  |  |  |  |  |
| AI limits my ability to develop my own writing style. |  |  |  |  |  |
| AI tools fail to capture the subtle differences in language I want to express. |  |  |  |  |  |

**3. Reduced Human Interaction**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | **N** | **R** | **S** | **O** | **A** |
| Using AI tools reduces my discussions with teachers or peers. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I miss out on learning from others when I rely on AI. |  |  |  |  |  |
| AI tools make my writing process feel isolated. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Overusing AI limits collaboration in my learning. |  |  |  |  |  |

# **Appendix B**

Interview Questions Used in the Study

Warm-up questions

Can you tell me a little about your experience learning English, especially in writing?

When did you start learning to write in English?

Have you taken any writing classes before?

How often do you practice writing in English?

What types of writing do you usually do in English (e.g., emails, essays, journaling)?

Do you write emails or messages in English?

Have you ever written an essay or a story in English?

Do you keep a journal or take notes in English?

Main Questions

1. Advantages of AI Tools in Writing

1.1. AI Tools to Improve Grammar and Vocabulary

Question 1a: "What benefits do you find when using AI tools for your academic writing?"

Prompts:

"How do AI tools assist with grammar, vocabulary, or essay structure?"

"What improvements have you noticed in your writing quality?"

"Why do you think AI is effective for refining your work?"

Question 1b: "How do AI tools affect your confidence or productivity as a writer?"

Prompts:

"How has AI changed your approach to writing assignments?

"What makes you feel more confident submitting AI-edited work?"

"Why do you think AI boosts your productivity?"

1.2. AI Helps Develop Creative Ideas

Question 1c: "In what ways do AI tools help you generate or explore ideas?"

Prompts:

"How do AI suggestions spark new ideas when you’re stuck?"

"What kinds of creative tasks (e.g., titles, examples) do AI tools assist with?"

"Why do you find AI useful or limited for brainstorming?"

1.3. Personalize the Learning Process

Question 1d: "How do you feel about the support AI provides compared to traditional methods?"

Prompts:

"How does AI feedback compare to teacher or peer feedback?"

"What advantages does AI have over human help in writing?"

"Why might AI be more convenient or accessible for you?"

2. Disadvantages of AI Tools in Writing

2.1. Decline in Personal Creativity

Question 2a: "What challenges do you face when using AI tools for writing?"

Prompts:

"How does relying on AI affect your ability to create original content?"

"What happens when AI suggestions don’t fit your intended style?"

"Why do you think overusing AI might limit your creativity?"

2.2. Errors Due to Dependence on AI

Question 2b: "How does AI use influence your motivation or skill development?"

Prompts:

"How do you feel about your skills when AI does most of the work?"

"What demotivates you if AI handles too much?"

"Why might AI reduce your effort to improve independently?"

Question 2c: "What do you think about AI’s impact on your personal voice or writing process?"

Prompts:

"How does AI change the way you express yourself in writing?"

"What makes you feel disconnected from your work when using AI?"

"Why do you think AI might make your writing less unique?"

2.3. Reduced Human Interaction

Question 2d: "How does relying on AI affect your interactions with others in writing classes?"

Prompts:

"How does AI use reduce your discussions with peers or teachers?"

"What do you miss out on when AI replaces human feedback?"

"Why do you think human interaction matters despite AI tools?"

Closing Questions

a. Is there anything else you’d like to share about your experiences or thoughts on improving engagement and motivation in writing activities?

Prompts:

Do you think any other factors influence students’ motivation to write?

Are there any specific teaching methods or tools that you believe could make writing more engaging?

Have you discovered any personal strategies that help you stay motivated to write?

b. Do you have any questions for me about this research or the role of AI in academic writing?