

Alignment or Tension? A Comparative Study of Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of AI Tools in Academic Writing

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ABSTRACT

This study examines alignment and tension between EFL students' and teachers' perceptions of AI writing tools, specifically ChatGPT and Grammarly, in academic writing. Using a comparative mixed-methods design, the study integrates previously published student perception data ($N = 500$) with new teacher survey data ($n = 50$) and interview data ($n = 10$) from an EFL higher-education context. Findings show partial alignment: both groups recognize AI tools as useful for grammar support, idea organization, drafting efficiency, and faster feedback. However, important tensions emerge in how usefulness is interpreted. Students tend to emphasize speed, convenience, and task completion, whereas teachers evaluate AI more cautiously through the lenses of critical thinking, originality, academic integrity, and assessment fairness. Teachers strongly support regulated integration, including clear institutional guidelines, AI-use disclosure, and faculty training, rather than unrestricted use or total bans. The study concludes that AI in academic writing requires guided, transparent, and pedagogically grounded integration to preserve authorship, fairness, and meaningful learning.

Keywords: AI writing tools; ChatGPT; Grammarly; EFL academic writing; teacher perceptions; student perceptions; academic integrity; assessment fairness

INTRODUCTION

The swift evolution of artificial intelligence (AI) has started to influence academic writing in higher education institutions, a phenomenon that was hard to imagine a few years ago. For example, the release of AI tools such as ChatGPT has enabled students to generate structured and appropriate texts in a matter of seconds, a phenomenon that has necessitated a rethinking of the traditional approaches to teaching academic writing (Dobrin, 2023). At the same time, AI tools such as Grammarly have become very popular, especially among English for Foreign Language (EFL) students, where written feedback tools have become very useful for grammar, vocabulary, and even the structure of texts (Sanosi, 2022).

According to emerging studies, students have a positive attitude towards using AI tools, perceiving them to be helpful, efficient, and supportive in the generation of ideas and linguistic accuracy (Nelson et al., 2025). For EFL students, the tools have been found to be convenient and quick, although some have expressed concerns over over-reliance and cheating. In another study, Sumakul et al. (2022) found that students appreciate the learning experience made possible by AI tools but still need guidance to fully benefit from them.

In contrast, research on teachers offers a more measured approach. Although teachers recognize the benefits of AI for the development and motivation of writing (Mohammed et al., 2025), they are also concerned about issues such as originality, dependence, and equity (Do, 2025; Arguello et al., 2024). In addition, teachers are more likely to focus on the use of AI, rather than its unbridled use (Nguyen, 2023). Finally, some research has also pointed to the issue of ethics and governance, such as integrity, transparency, and regulation (Holmes & Tuomi, 2022; Miao & Holmes, 2021).

Whereas student and teacher perspectives have been studied, fewer studies have compared both perspectives in the same setting. It is critical to understand whether student enthusiasm corresponds to teacher judgment, or if there is a disconnect between the two. This study aims to carry out a comparative study of EFL students' and teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT and Grammarly in academic writing, helping to better understand the new reality that AI is creating in the world of higher education.

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent do EFL students and EFL teachers differ in their perceptions of the usefulness and pedagogical value of AI tools (ChatGPT and Grammarly) for academic writing?
2. How do students' and teachers' perceived benefits and risks of AI tools in academic writing align or diverge, particularly regarding academic integrity and assessment fairness?

LITERATURE REVIEW

AI technologies have been reported to offer emerging opportunities and capabilities that may, in some contexts, enhance specific aspects of teaching and learning for both educators and students. The following studies showcase positive feedback on the use of AI in learning and writing. The study conducted by Sirta (2025) investigates the teachers' and students' perceptions about the use of AI in academic writing in the Department of English at the University of Biskra, Algeria. The results of the study show that AI has shown improvement for both teachers and students in coherence, vocabulary, and organization. Sanny et al.'s (2025) study investigates the perceptions of TESL pre-service teachers regarding the use of ChatGPT for the senior-year writing project. Also, exploring the usefulness, ease of use, and ethical concerns associated with this matter. The findings reveal the effectiveness of ChatGPT for teachers in this matter, and it revealed that perceived benefits include idea generation, usefulness, and positive attitudes. Mohammed et al. (2025) demonstrate the importance of understanding EFL teachers' perceptions of the use of AI tools such as ChatGPT in writing classrooms. The study explores teachers' perceptions of using ChatGPT in writing classes and examines the potential consequences for learning and teaching. The results show that teachers see ChatGPT as a tool that helps students with motivation, sentence formation, and reduced anxiety.

Sumakul et al.'s (2022) study aims to solve the dispute of whether AI is helpful to students or not; it is necessary to know the opinions and perspectives of the students. The results of Sumakul et al. (2022) showed that the students perceived AI tools positively, and they enjoyed the AI learning process. Shofiah and Putera's (2024) study hopes to investigate lecturers' outlook regarding their interest in AI technology to be used in academia. It hopes to grasp the perception of lecturers who are depending on AI tools to enhance the quality of their teaching and evaluate the overall impact AI has on learning. It revealed that AI helps lecturers with structure, grammar, and teaching support. Nadhifah et al.'s (2024) study aims to find how pre-service teachers perceive AI applications in students' writing assignments, as well as students' concerns, and how they use these tools. The findings of the study reveal an overall improvement in performance in students' writing. Aljuaid's (2024) study examined whether AI tools are replacing traditional writing courses and whether they truly help students or pose risks. Through reviewing various existing literature, it was revealed that it supports grammar and style.

Even though AI tools have many benefits, they also raise many risks and ethical concerns for both students and teachers. A study was conducted in Ecuador, and they collected data from 56 undergraduate university students to determine their views on the use of generated AI in academic writing for English as a second language. The results inform staff and institutions of how Ecuadorian university students see the effect of generated AI inside the field of academic writing, and it raises concerns about Academic dishonesty since students use it as a shortcut to avoid effort (Nelson et al., 2025). Another study explores the differences and similarities between the perceptions of teachers and students regarding academic integrity and seeks the possibility of implementing AI technologies to teach and learn language. The results of the study revealed mixed opinions between teachers and students about using AI correction tools, with most of both parties not considering the use of AI as breaching academic integrity (Putra, 2023). Arguello et al. (2024) examined the perceptions of teachers on the use and effect that ChatGPT has in modern educational settings. This study explores how teachers perceive and adapt to ChatGPT in education using Davis technology adoption theory (TAM). It revealed that new policies and ethics should be implemented that would allow the efficient use of these tools in higher education institutions. Mohammed et al. (2025) also give some risks and concerns, such as students might rely on AI completely, and it may reduce their creativity.

Do (2025) study investigates the ways French teachers in high schools and universities in Vietnam use ChatGPT for writing courses, as well as the benefits and risks it poses. This study also sheds light on French writing instructions, since several studies investigated the perception of teachers on the use of ChatGPT in EFL classrooms. The results show some concerns regarding academic dishonesty and errors in ChatGPT feedback. There are still speculations about its impact on critical thinking and creativity. There are no signs that AI is going to replace academic writing courses. As these courses teach students research, citations, critical thinking, argumentation, originality, creativity, and ethics, which AI is inadequate at (Aljuaid, 2024). There have been wrong assumptions about AI that are due to the misinterpretation of modern technical possibilities, a lack of knowledge of modern AI tools in education, and a limited outlook on the purpose of education in society. This research gives an analysis of AI systems used in education and their assumptions. A typology has been developed of AIED, and a description of various ways of implementing AI in education and learning to show if these explanations are based on different definitions of what AI is and education, while also examining the possible barriers of AIED (Holmes & Tuomi, 2022). A document by Miao and Holmes (2021) gives guidance and policy advice for governments and leaders to help their country get a grip on how to use AI in education properly. The risks of AI revealed in this document of this document include privacy, governance, and ethical concerns.

According to previous studies on the risks of AI tools, students' complete dependence on AI may decrease their ability to write independently, since they put no effort into improving their writing skills. Students may use AI to generate ideas and brainstorm instead of putting effort into thinking and researching. The ease of use of AI tools made students avoid effort and use them as an easy way out. Students' use of AI tools stems from a need to get things done rather than putting in effort and enduring the boredom that comes with learning.

Teachers play a key role in this matter, and there are pedagogical strategies that should be implemented. A study related to the EFL context addresses the issue of how AI can be practically utilized to assist with academic writing and provides various techniques for academic writing instructors to safeguard academic integrity when using AI tools. The findings urge attention to how important it is for educators to advise students on how to use AI ethically, while also creating an environment that encourages critical thinking and originality (Demirel, 2024). Do (2025) discusses that teachers should take control over AI use by discouraging students from excessively using ChatGPT and avoiding using it for grading students' work. In Mohammed et al.'s (2025) study, the teachers propose AI integration, teacher-supervised usage, and prompt training for the most effective EFL writing instructions. The teachers welcome the use of AI tools to aid

and assist in teaching. However, if students rely on it completely, it may affect their abilities and critical thinking (Shofiah & Putera, 2024).

The study conducted by Al-Saadi et al. (2025) highlights the significance of institutional support in implementing AI ethics in education and building an environment that aids in building critical thinking skills. Tseng and Warschauer's (2023) research provided a five-part pedagogical framework that was pursued to aid second language learners through admitting the current and long-term conditions that must be taught to students about AI tools. The framework steps are understanding, accessing, corroborating, and incorporating. Arguello et al. (2024) gives a view of how teachers perceive the use of ChatGPT, and this could impact policies and training programs. It would also give digital literacy to teachers and students, which would permit them to permanently evaluate information and technology in the educational environment. Dobrin (2023) provides recommendations to students and teachers on how they can incorporate AI in education. It provides rules on how to use AI platforms for academic, civic, personal, and professional writing tasks, but it does not give instructions on the technical side. AI technology is always evolving, and because of that, Dobrin's recommendations cannot establish strict rules on AI use.

Grammarly and ChatGPT are the most common AI tools used by students that aid them in various ways. Both these tools are different, with multiple features and capabilities. Due to their ability to analyze written drafts, Automated Written Corrective Feedback (AWCF) tools have become widely used in writing guidelines for English as a foreign language (EFL). The teachers became involved in this field because it can reduce their tasks and small concerns, such as grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. However, there is no clear data on EFL teachers' perceptions of high-level tasks, such as content and organization. The result of the study has shown that the majority of the participants reacted positively to AWCF and Grammarly. However, Grammarly is ineffective for low concerns because of incorrect vocabulary suggestions and the pattern of emphasizing the same grammatical mistake many times. Grammarly requires human intervention because it is still useful in low concerns compared to high concerns, and it failed to give proper feedback for cohesion (Ayan & Erdemir, 2023).

ChatGPT and generative AI tools have also shown some different features compared to Grammarly. Sirta's (2025) participating students have shown positive feedback regarding the usage of these tools. These perceptions were reinforced by the interviewed teachers about the use of AI tools in improving the skills of students in academic writing. Sanny et al. (2025) study shows positive feedback about ChatGPT's effectiveness in students' writing. The students use ChatGPT to spark ideas and collect information. Mohammed et al. (2025) demonstrate that teachers see ChatGPT as a tool that helps students in sentence formation, emotional intelligence, and writing paragraphs. The participants also noticed its ability to motivate students' involvement and reduce writing anxiety. Some of the perceived benefits of ChatGPT identified by teachers were giving instant responses, saving time, and giving students access to reading materials (Do, 2025). Nelson et al. (2025) results inform staff and institutions of how Ecuadorian university students view the effect of generated AI on academic writing. The results also show why students rely on these tools and their opinions on the discovery of AI work. An assignment generated by AI chatbots was regarded as academic dishonesty, and only a few participants thought that submitting a text translated from Spanish to English was not dishonest.

According to the previous studies, Grammarly is a tool that is beneficial for editing support, which includes low-order concerns that include grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. ChatGPT is a tool used for content generation that involves high-order concerns, such as sparking ideas, writing assignments, and summarizing content.

While the previous studies investigated the perception of teachers in various universities from different regions in the world, few studies investigated the perception of teachers in the Arabian Gulf, who are

teaching in private institutions. There is limited research that focuses on both students' and teachers' perceptions regarding the use of ChatGPT and Grammarly in Omani private institutions. Syahrin and Akmal (2024) examined the perceptions of students, educators, and administrators regarding ChatGPT in the educational setting in Oman. Al Salmi et al. (2024) investigated the use of AI for the purpose of education and the adoption of smart transport technology in Oman. The study aims to understand this occurrence and the effect it has on society. This will aid the selection of smart transportation, as well as in understanding the perceptions and attitudes of AI use. Al-Saadi et al. (2025) analyze the perception of Omani pre-service EFL teachers on encouraging critical thinking by using AI ethically. The main reason for this study is to understand the strengths and training requirements of pre-service EFL teachers in using AI that would help enhance educational policies and practices. The results of the study showcase the strong awareness of AI ethics among the teachers, with a focus on academic integrity, data protection, and balancing the use of AI to improve critical thinking. However, there were some challenges, such as a lack of resources, limited expertise, and the implementation of AI ethics into the curriculum. This study highlights the significance of institutional support in implementing AI ethics in education and building an environment that aids in building critical thinking skills.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a comparative mixed-methods research design, exploring the alignment and tension between the perceptions of AI tools, namely ChatGPT and Grammarly, among students and teachers with regard to academic writing. The study employed secondary quantitative research among students, along with primary quantitative and qualitative research among teachers, and combined the findings through a convergent comparative analysis.

Data Sources and Participants

The study employed two sets of data from the broader EFL higher education setting:

1. Students' dataset (Secondary Data): The study employed the findings on the perception of AI tools among EFL students, based on a study that had been previously published by the researchers and employed here as a basis of comparison.
2. Teachers' dataset (Primary Data): A survey study among 50 EFL teachers, followed by a semi-structured study among 10 teachers, served as the basis of the study.

Instruments

(a) Student Questionnaire (Secondary Source)

The data on the students was based on the study that the authors had earlier published, which focused on exploring the perception of AI writing tools among students with regard to academic writing, their usefulness, the benefits and risks, and policy-related issues.

(b) Teacher Questionnaire (Primary Quantitative Methodology)

A teacher survey with 15 questions was constructed, covering: perceptions of usefulness and value of AI writing tools (Q1-Q8); perceptions of the benefits and risks associated with AI writing tools (Q9-Q10,

multiple response questions); perceptions of how frequently their students use AI writing tools (Q11-Q12); policy issues related to AI writing tools (Q13-Q15)

Most questions employed a Likert scale, and a few questions employed a multiple response question format.

(c) Teacher Interview Protocol (Primary Qualitative Methodology)

A teacher interview protocol was employed with 10 teachers, covering: positive impacts that teachers perceived with regard to Grammarly/ChatGPT use among their students; concerns and negative impacts with regard to academic writing; general views about AI writing tool; views on how AI writing tools could be made use of fairly and responsibly within the academic environment; how teachers could spot AI writing tools use among their students

The student dataset comes from our previously published study using the same 15-item instrument; the teacher survey used the same instrument to enable direct comparison. The teacher questionnaire was adapted directly from the previously published student questionnaire, maintaining identical constructs, item wording, and response scales wherever applicable. This allowed for direct comparison across stakeholder groups on key dimensions, including perceived usefulness, benefits, risks, frequency of AI use, and policy preferences.

By employing parallel items and consistent Likert-scale structures, the study ensured measurement alignment and strengthened the internal validity of the comparative analysis.

Reliability and Quality of Measures

The reliability of the student questionnaire used, as measured by Cronbach’s Alpha, was reported in the previously published research and referenced here as a point of comparison. For this research, descriptive statistical methods were used to analyze teacher questionnaire results, and thematic analysis was used with teacher interview results.

Data Collection and Procedure

For this research, teacher questionnaire and interview results were collected as a new data set. The previously published student results were then matched with these new teacher results, enabling direct comparison.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using different methods. For teacher questionnaire results, descriptive statistical methods were used, resulting in tables and figures. For teacher interview results, thematic analysis was used. The teacher results were then integrated with the previously published student results, enabling comparison and addressing the research questions.

Ethical Considerations

The research process was approved as ethical, with teacher questionnaire and interview results reported anonymously (e.g., Teacher 1, Teacher 2, etc.). The student results used here were previously published research, referenced and used as a point of scholarly comparison.

RESULTS

This section will show the combined results of the unified mixed methods approach, divided into six sections. Sections 4.1-4.4 will show the quantitative teacher survey study's results, based on 50 teacher participants, while Sections 4.5-4.6 will show the teacher interview study's themes, based on 10 teacher participants, and then combine those with the previously presented student-side findings to discuss alignment and tension with regard to AI use in academic writing.

Teachers' perceived usefulness of AI tools in academic writing (Q1–Q8)

In summary, the teacher survey reveals a high level of positive perception with regard to the functional value of AI tools (such as Grammarly and ChatGPT) with regard to their utility in academic writing, as well as more nuanced perceptions with regard to dependency and adaptation pressure.

The teachers demonstrated a unanimous level of positive endorsement with regard to AI's utility in grammatical accuracy and idea organization. For Q1, "AI tools such as Grammarly help students improve the grammatical accuracy of their writing," as well as Q2, "ChatGPT can help students develop and organize ideas in academic writing," all teachers (100%) chose Agree (80%) and Strongly Agree (20%), without any Neutral or Negative responses. This is an exceptionally high level of agreement, indicating teachers perceive AI tools as pedagogically useful with regard to basic writing functions.

Teachers perceive AI as useful with regard to improving efficiency, but with less agreement. For Q3, "AI tools make the writing process more efficient for students," 60% agreed/strongly agreed (40% Agree, 20% Strongly Agree), with 30% Neutral and 10% Disagree. This indicates teachers perceive AI as improving efficiency but with some uncertainty with regard to consistency.

Similarly, with regard to Q4, "I find AI tools easy to understand and evaluate when reviewing students' work," 70% agreed/strongly agreed (50% Agree, 20% Strongly Agree), with 30% Neutral.

Teachers' perceptions of benefits and risks of AI tools (Q9–Q10)

To further examine teachers' views, respondents were asked to identify perceived benefits and risks of AI tools in academic writing (multiple-response format).

Perceived Benefits

The most frequently mentioned idea organization was also rated as the strongest perceived benefit of AI use. Specifically, 80% of teachers rated the idea that AI helps students organize their ideas, which is the highest rating among the perceived benefits. This is consistent with the high ratings of Q2, reinforcing the interpretation that teachers view AI, especially ChatGPT, as a tool that helps with planning and organizing.

Among the other frequently rated perceived benefits were:

- Supports weaker language learners (70%)
- Improves grammar and vocabulary (60%)
- Increases students' confidence in writing (50%)
- Saves time in drafting or revising work (50%)

The overall ratings indicate that teachers view AI use in academic writing as having educational value mainly with regard to scaffolding, especially with regard to weaker language learners.

Perceived Risks

On the other hand, teachers also rated the perceived risks of AI use in academic writing quite high. The highest rated perceived risk of AI use is that it decreases students' critical thinking, rated 90% by the teachers. This is followed by:

- Encourages overreliance on technology (70%)
- Increases risk of plagiarism/academic dishonesty (70%)
- Makes it difficult to assess students' real abilities (70%)
- Provides inaccurate or misleading information (60%)

The overall ratings of the perceived risks indicate that teachers' concerns about AI use go beyond the risks of plagiarism. Specifically, teachers also worry about cognitive dependence, epistemological validity, and validity of assessment, that is, whether AI-assisted work reflects students' actual learning and writing abilities.

Teachers' perceptions of students' frequency of AI-tool use (Q11–Q12)

Teachers perceive AI use as a routine component of students' academic writing practices. For Q11 (use of Grammarly and ChatGPT), 80% of respondents selected *Often* and 10% selected *Always*, indicating that 80% perceive frequent AI use. Only 10% selected *Rarely*, and none selected *Never*.

For Q12 (use of ChatGPT or similar generative AI tools), responses were concentrated entirely at higher frequency levels, with 60% selecting *Often* and 40% selecting *Always*. No respondents selected *Rarely*, *Sometimes*, or *Never*.

These findings suggest that teachers view generative AI not as occasional support but as a consistently utilized element of students' writing processes. The higher proportion of *Always* responses for ChatGPT further indicates that generative AI is perceived as particularly embedded in current academic writing practices.

Teachers' policy preferences: regulation, declaration, and training (Q13–Q15)

As can be noted, teachers' responses on policy and governance questions reflect strong support for a structured and transparent integration, rather than either unregulated use or complete prohibition.

For Q13, "AI tools in academic writing should be...", the most common responses were:

- Allowed with clear guidelines: 80%
- Restricted in certain assignments: 20%
- Allowed without restrictions: 0%

- Not allowed: 0%

This is particularly interesting because it rejects both the “unrestricted use” and “total prohibition” options, instead overwhelmingly supporting structured permission with clear boundaries.

This is also supported by responses to Q14 and Q15:

- Q14, “Students should be required to declare AI use in assignments”: 90% Agree, 10% Disagree
- Q15, “Teachers should receive training on how to manage AI tools use in academic writing”: 100% Agree, 0% Disagree

As can be noted, teachers' responses overall, particularly on Q13, Q14, and Q15, clearly reflect a policy orientation that is based on transparency, instructional guidance, and professional preparedness.

Teachers’ qualitative perspectives on AI tools in academic writing (Interview data, n = 10)

In order to add depth to the interpretation of the results, the qualitative results from the interviews with the teachers have been analyzed thematically. The results from the qualitative research support the results from the survey, while adding depth to the results. The qualitative results have been divided into five different themes: AI as a support in language and organization, overuse and the loss of independent thinking, fairness in testing and authorship, teaching the responsible use of AI rather than a ban, and the difficulties in detecting AI usage and the need for teacher judgment.

AI as language support and idea-organization scaffolding

In line with these findings, teachers frequently reported Grammarly and ChatGPT as helpful with tasks such as proofreading, grammar correction, clarity, and idea organization. For example, one teacher stated, “It’s acting as an effective proofreading and editing tool, but at the same time, it’s helping students outline their ideas and organize their thoughts more clearly” (Teacher 1). Another teacher reported, “Improved writing quality through instant feedback, enhancing grammar, syntax, and coherence” (Teacher 4). Another teacher reported, “It’s improving grammar, clarity, and sentence structure” (Teacher 5).

Teachers also reported AI as helpful with structuring tasks related to writing. For example, Teacher 8 stated, “The students mostly use ChatGPT or Grammarly to organize their ideas, especially when they are going to write an essay. To organize their ideas, they need to think about an introduction, the main points, and the conclusion. The AI can provide an outline of the task, and that’s really useful.” Some teachers reported AI as helpful with tasks related to teaching weaker students. For example, Teacher 6 stated, “It’s really helpful with organizing ideas, correcting grammar, and generating initial drafts. It’s a great assistant for the teachers and a tutor for the students.”

Overreliance, reduced creativity, and weakened critical thinking

The strongest qualitative concern was the same as the most highly endorsed quantitative risk, namely, reduced critical thinking skills. All the teachers used the metaphor of dependence, lack of originality, and decreased cognitive engagement by the students when they discussed the risk of AI misuse. For instance, Teacher 1 said, “There’s this problem of the students' overdependence on the AI tools, and this might affect the development of critical thinking and interpretive skills.” Similarly, Teacher 2 said, “Students have become heavily dependent on AI, and they are using it almost entirely instead of producing original work.”

However, other teachers have also expressed the same risk, but in stronger terms. For instance, Teacher 3 said, “Creativity and the ability to brainstorm are dying in the students.” Similarly, Teacher 4 said, “Students have become too dependent on the AI tools, and this might compromise the students’ autonomy and agency in the writing process, potentially stifling the creative voice and critical thinking skills.” Similarly, Teacher 8 said, “Students blindly look at the screen and just copy whatever is there, and this might affect the development and use of cognitive skills.”

All the teachers have related this problem to the mismatch between learning and performance. For instance, Teacher 6 said, “A student comes up with a really well-organized essay, but they don’t know how to analyze it or even explain it.”

Fairness in assessment and authentic authorship

Another teacher concern, not so apparent in students’ reports, was related to the effect of AI on fair assessment and the capacity for evaluating students’ actual writing skills. Teacher 10 clearly stated: “It is hard for me as a teacher to assess the students according to the work they provide,” because “all the work looks the same” in the event of AI prevalence.

The concern goes beyond plagiarism detection and touches on the authenticity of students’ authorship and the construct validity of assessment. Teachers’ reports indicate that even in the absence of dishonesty in AI application, it might affect the interpretation of what the end product actually reflects in terms of students’ actual writing and other related skills.

Conditional acceptance: support, not replacement

However, despite the high level of concern, the majority of the teachers were not in favor of an anti-AI stance but, rather, a conditional acceptance stance, which is very similar to the preference for the guided use of the tool, as indicated by the responses in Q13-Q15.

Teacher 4 stated:

“Grammarly and ChatGPT are writing tools that can facilitate the writing process, but they are not replacements for human thought and creativity, and they should not be used to supplant human thought and creativity, but to assist, not supplant, human creativity and critical thinking.”

Teacher 5 stated:

“Grammarly and ChatGPT are valuable support tools for students, and they should be used as guides rather than replacements for students’ own thinking.”

Teacher 6 stated:

“Grammarly and ChatGPT are extremely helpful when integrated thoughtfully into learning, and the more students are guided step by step, monitored closely, and encouraged to critically engage with the suggestions rather than accept them blindly, the more the value of the tool is realized.”

Teacher 10 stated:

“We should teach students how to use AI tools properly instead of banning them.”

There was a strong convergence in the teachers' recommendations for institutional actions, such as the development of policies, seminars/workshops, academic integrity, monitoring, and faculty training.

Detection is imperfect: software support + teacher judgment + oral verification

For their part, teachers enumerated a number of ways to detect the presence of AI-assisted writing, such as the use of Turnitin, stylistic inconsistencies, comparing with previous work, and oral explanations. However, they also noted that there is a need for teachers to make their own judgments despite the use of detection tools.

Teacher 1 explained that “experienced teachers can tell the difference between AI writing and a student’s authentic voice, based on the structure and language being used, although AI detection tools such as Turnitin can assist.” For their part, Teacher 4 suggested that teachers can check “writing style and tone, inconsistencies, and also the overuse of AI-generated phrases or structures.”

Some teachers also suggested that teachers can ask their students to orally explain their work, which can also be compared with their previous writing samples. For instance, Teacher 5 suggested that “students can be asked to explain their work orally, and then the work can be compared with their previous work samples.” On the other hand, Teacher 6 suggested that “conducting an oral presentation is really helpful, and asking the students to explain their work step by step is often the most reliable way to ensure authenticity.”

Despite their confidence in the use of Turnitin, however, teachers also noted that there are still issues with the accuracy of detection, which can also affect fairness. For instance, Teacher 7 and Teacher 10 noted that “we do not have enough tools,” and that “Turnitin has so many issues and shortcomings.”

Integrated mixed-methods interpretation: alignment and tension between student and teacher perspectives

Combining the findings from the teacher survey and interview, and comparing them with the previously discussed student-side data, it’s clear that there’s a clear trend of convergence when it comes to the perceived level of usefulness, and a degree of tension when it comes to pedagogical and testing-related issues.

Areas of Alignment

There are some clear points of alignment between the students’ and teachers’ perceptions of the role and value of AI tools, including:

- Support for grammar and language accuracy,
- Support for idea organization and structuring,
- Support for improving the efficiency of writing,
- Frequent usage of the tools in academic contexts,
- The potential for the tools to be useful if used properly.

This can be seen in the very strong level of agreement from the teachers in the survey regarding the importance of supporting grammar and accuracy (Q1) and idea organization (Q2), and the interview data

where the teachers described the role of AI tools in “proofreading and editing” (Teacher 1), providing “instant feedback” (Teacher 4), and supporting the organization and structuring of writing tasks (Teacher 8).

Areas of Tension

The major divergence concerns what matters most in evaluating AI use:

- Students (in the earlier findings) tend to foreground utility, speed, confidence, and immediate writing support.
- Teachers foreground risks to critical thinking, authorship authenticity, and fair assessment.

This tension is particularly evident in teachers’ high levels of agreement with risks like critical thinking being impaired (90%) and understanding students’ true abilities being compromised (70%), as well as in their interview-based concerns, like students turning in well-written work but being unable to explain it (Teacher 6) or AI-generated assignments being problematic because “all the work looks the same” (Teacher 10). Therefore, whereas both groups acknowledge AI’s utility, teachers are also assessing AI’s effects on writing’s integrity, not just its convenience.

Shared preference for regulated integration rather than extremes

Significantly, there is no indication of a “pro-AI” and “anti-AI” divide. Instead, both studies indicate a desire for “regulated, transparent, and pedagogically guided integration” of AI. For one, teachers overwhelmingly wanted AI “allowed with clear guidelines” (Q13), supported AI use statements (Q14), and unanimously supported teacher training (Q15). This is also echoed through teacher interviews, with statements such as “support, not supplant” (Teacher 4), “guides rather than replacements” (Teacher 5), and “teach students how to use AI tools properly instead of banning” (Teacher 10).

In summary, the findings of the mixed-methods study show that there is a sense of alignment and tension between teachers and students, with teachers and students both acknowledging the value and inevitability of AI tools in academic writing, yet also demonstrating a sense of tension, with teachers expressing greater concerns about issues of fairness, authenticity, and critical thinking in EFL writing education.

DISCUSSION

Overview of the Comparative Findings and Response to the Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to determine whether the perceptions of EFL students’ and EFL teachers’ use of AI tools in academic writing (ChatGPT, Grammarly) could be characterized as aligned or tense. The overall pattern in the results, whether quantitative or qualitative, suggests that the best characterization is partial alignment with significant pedagogical tension.

With regard to RQ1 (To what extent do EFL students and EFL teachers differ in their perceptions of the usefulness and pedagogical value of AI tools in academic writing?), the findings suggest that both EFL students and EFL teachers hold a positive perception of AI tools; however, the concept and measurement of the term ‘usefulness’ differ between the two. It is not a matter of one group holding a negative perception and the other a positive one; rather, the difference lies in the way each group assigns value to the concept. While EFL students’ perceptions appear to be more pragmatic and performance-driven, focusing on the ‘here and now’ benefits of AI tools such as ‘efficiency,’ ‘speed,’ ‘convenience,’ and ‘getting the job done,’

EFL teachers' perceptions appear to be more instructional and ethics-driven, conditionally evaluating the usefulness of AI tools on the basis of 'learning quality,' 'originality,' 'critical thinking,' 'academic integrity,' and 'assessment fairness.'

As to RQ2 (How do the perceived benefits and risks converge or diverge for students and teachers, especially in regard to academic integrity and fairness in testing?), the results show that there is a certain degree of both similarity and dissimilarity in the views held by students and teachers. Indeed, although students and teachers agree on the overall benefits associated with AI tools, their understanding of "usefulness" differs in certain aspects. While students seem to focus on the more pragmatic aspects of usefulness (efficiency, speed, convenience, etc.), teachers appear to consider these aspects in a more conditional manner, also taking into account issues associated with academic integrity and fairness in testing. While students' views on AI tools are centered on their usefulness in terms of performance ("this helps me now"), teachers' views on the matter are centered on the usefulness in terms of pedagogy and integrity ("this helps, but only in certain contexts").

Alignment in Perceived Usefulness: Efficiency, Language Support, and Idea Development

One significant area of agreement between the students and the teachers was the perceived benefits offered by the AI tools for academic writing. For instance, the students' responses to the survey and interview questions demonstrated a high level of endorsement for the use of AI for grammar correction, idea generation, organization, and increased feedback rates. On the other hand, the teachers' interview responses emphasized the benefits of Grammarly and ChatGPT for proofreading, idea generation, polishing, and writing.

This agreement is not surprising, considering the existing research evidence demonstrating students' perceptions of the benefits, ease of use, and time-saving benefits offered by the AI writing tools for EFL writing (Nelson et al., 2025; Sumakul et al., 2022). For instance, the students in this research perceived the benefits offered by the AI for reducing the time and effort associated with writing and research-related tasks, while the teachers perceived the benefits for the students in terms of spelling, grammar, sentence structure, and organization. This is not different from the existing research evidence demonstrating positive attitudes towards the use of the AI writing tools for writing-related support by the students and the pre-service teachers (Sanny et al., 2025; Nadhifah et al., 2024).

At the same time, the present comparative findings add to this body of research by revealing differences in the aspects of usefulness emphasized by students and teachers. Specifically, the use value emphasized by the students was associated with the performance efficiency of the tool (i.e., "faster," "easier," "less effort"), while the pedagogical value emphasized by the teachers was associated with the tool providing support for the writing process (i.e., outlining, proofreading, etc., but not the replacement of thinking). This is an important finding, as it suggests that the concept of "usefulness" might not be a single construct for different stakeholders.

Tension in Pedagogical Value: Cognitive Offloading, Critical Thinking, and Originality

While they agree on the positive effects, the study results show a clear contrast in terms of students' and teachers' perceptions of AI's effects on learning itself. Students perceive AI as a tool that can be "another mind," make thinking "hard," and make research and composition less effortful. Meanwhile, teachers perceive AI use as overdependence, less creativity, less brainstorming, and less critical thinking. This convergence in perceptions across two different groups shows that, indeed, it is not just teacher perceptions, but students themselves who perceive AI use in writing as having these effects on their thinking.

The results of this study strongly support previous research that warns of AI use in writing leading to negative effects on independent thinking, originality, and creativity in writing, particularly when overused or misused (Nelson et al., 2025; Aljuaid, 2024). These results also extend previous research results of Sumakul et al. (2022) on student perceptions of AI use in writing, which, while positive, emphasized the need for pedagogical guidance. In this study, however, it is not just a need, but an evident phenomenon in student and teacher perceptions that AI improves writing quality, but at the possible expense of the learning process that develops writing competence.

Pedagogically, this tension can thus be understood in terms of the students' movement from writing as a cognitive process to writing as an output management process. The students seem to benefit from the assistance of the AI technology in fluency and organization, but the teachers are concerned that the students might avoid the generative aspects of writing, such as planning, selecting, evaluating, and synthesizing ideas. This mirrors the point made by Tseng and Warschauer (2023) that learners must be taught to effectively work with the technology using various processes, including understanding, corroborating, and incorporating the technology, rather than simply relying on the technology's outputs.

Thus, the comparative findings suggest that the pedagogical issue at stake is not the students' or teachers' access to the technology, but the students' cognitive engagement with it. The technology can facilitate the development of students' writing when used as a scaffold, but it might impede students' learning when used as a substitute for thinking. This, in turn, helps us understand the "tension" in the title of this study, not in the sense of students and teachers, but in the sense of the technology and the students' learning.

Academic Integrity and Assessment Fairness: Shared Concerns, Stronger Teacher Emphasis

The second research question concerned perceived benefits and risks, particularly with regards to academic integrity and fairness in evaluation. Results revealed considerable consistency in student and teacher perceptions of academic integrity issues, with teachers having a more advanced understanding of fairness issues.

Plagiarism, dependency, and loss of originality were identified as significant risks, with several student interview answers indicating instances of copy-pasting, over-reliance on AI-generated answers, and difficulties in defending AI-assisted answers orally. These student answers were echoed by teacher perceptions, with several teacher answers describing student misuse, shortcut usage, and ownership of student writing. These results are consistent with previous research on academic dishonesty and dependency in EFL academic writing contexts, with academic dishonesty and dependency being common issues in EFL academic writing contexts (Nelson et al., 2025; Putra, 2023).

Teachers, however, took it a step further in their answers, particularly with regards to fairness in evaluation. Some teacher answers noted that AI-assisted answers may be equally well-written, making it equally difficult to assess student answers in terms of better or worse student ability. This result extends previous research in that it foregrounds the validity of evaluation in AI-mediated writing, not merely in terms of detecting plagiarism. In other words, it is not merely a question of detecting AI usage, it is also a question of detecting student competence in writing.

Teachers' attitudes towards detection tools, particularly Turnitin, were also nuanced, with several teachers reporting their use, though with some reservation about their reliability or fairness, while others emphasized teacher judgment, oral follow-up, and comparison with previous writing samples. This resonates with broader concerns in the literature that AI detection tools are not entirely reliable or should not be seen as a sole determinant in academic decisions (Nelson et al., 2025). This also resonates with a more cautious

governance approach, as outlined in Holmes and Tuomi (2022), where systemic issues in AI adoption are emphasized over technological fixes.

In short, what this study suggests is that academic integrity in AI-supported writing should be conceptualized not in terms of detection, but in terms of a pedagogical-authorship model.

Implications for Policy and Pedagogy: From Restriction Debates to Guided Integration

One of the most obvious findings that is common between the data of students and teachers is that of support for institutional guidance. The students were supportive of AI use declarations and teacher training, while teachers advocated and expressed their demand for policies, monitoring, and classroom-level teaching of appropriate use of AI. The finding of support for guidance rather than prohibition is one of the more important findings of this study and is consistent with policy-oriented and pedagogical literature on AI use in general.

The findings of this study support the UNESCO-oriented governance perspective that focuses on ethics, institutional guidance, and transparency and responsible use of AI in education (Miao & Holmes, 2021). The findings of this study also support Holmes and Tuomi (2022), who argued that AI use in education has to be understood within broader systemic, pedagogical, and governance realities and not within simplistic understandings of “innovation” or “threat.” In this study, teachers and students alike seem to be asking for a more nuanced and systemic response to AI use in education.

In terms of classroom level, these results also support Tseng and Warschauer’s (2023) argument that students should be taught how to effectively collaborate with AI tools. The teachers’ suggestions, as found in this study, are all directly applicable and aligned with this framework. The applicable suggestions include asking students to explain their process, asking students to make an oral presentation, asking students to provide process transparency, using AI as a brainstorming/proofreading tool, and encouraging critical evaluation.

The results of this study indicate that the best approach at an institutional level is not necessarily a binary choice between prohibiting and permitting AI, but rather an integration approach, such as teaching AI literacy as part of teaching academic writing. The integration approach should include, but not be limited to, elements such as ‘Permitted Use’ (such as brainstorming, outlining, grammar checking, etc.), ‘Disclosure’ (such as how and when AI should be declared), ‘Verification’ (such as checking facts, sources, references, etc.), ‘Process-based Assessment’ (such as drafts, reflections, oral explanations, etc.), ‘Teacher Professional Development’ (such as ethical considerations, assessment design, limitations of detection tools, etc.). This is especially important in private higher education institutions, where, although there is high adoption of these tools, there is still a lag in terms of policy development.

Contribution of the Study, Contextual Significance, and Future Directions

This research adds to the existing body of knowledge by comparing the perceptions of students and teachers regarding ChatGPT and Grammarly, both in the context of EFL in the same higher education setting. Although there are some studies concerning the perceptions of either students or teachers, the present research design allows for the identification of common ground and tensions, unique to each stakeholder group. The results revealed that the perceptions of students and teachers are not necessarily divergent but, rather, unique in terms of the context in which they are expressed.

This research adds to the existing body of knowledge contextually by expanding the field of AI in writing in an Omani private context, a setting not sufficiently researched despite the growing interest in the

integration of AI in the region (for instance, Syahrin & Akmal, 2024; Al Salmi et al., 2024). The present research revealed that the global debate surrounding the integration of AI in writing, such as the tension between efficiency and integrity, support and substitution, innovation and regulation, is definitely present in the local context, but it is expressed through local realities such as the way grades are assigned, the institutional policy, and the teacher-monitoring approach.

Meanwhile, the study's findings also indicate a need for future research directions. Firstly, perception-based findings can be complemented with performance-based evidence, such as writing quality rated using a rubric, traces of revision, and critical thinking, among others, to check if there is a correspondence between perceived benefits and risks and actual performance outcomes. Second, a study can also be conducted comparing sub-groups, such as year level, discipline, proficiency level, and frequent vs. infrequent AI use, among others, to check for patterns of differential impact. Third, another study can also be conducted, specifically an intervention-based study, that checks if AI literacy instruction and process-based assessment can reduce the risks of over-reliance while still obtaining the benefits of AI assistance.

CONCLUSION

The present study aims to examine the match and mismatch between the perceptions of EFL students and EFL teachers regarding the usefulness and usefulness of AI tools in academic writing. According to the results obtained in this study, it can be stated that EFL students and EFL teachers generally recognize and acknowledge the usefulness of AI tools in academic writing in general. However, this general recognition of the usefulness of AI tools in academic writing is associated with certain concerns that EFL teachers and EFL students have.

The results obtained in this study suggest that the perceptions of EFL teachers and EFL students regarding the usefulness and usefulness of AI tools in academic writing are not mutually exclusive; instead, their perceptions diverge and converge in certain areas. EFL teachers and EFL students generally consider the usefulness and usefulness of AI tools in academic writing from different standpoints and perspectives. While EFL teachers consider the usefulness and usefulness of AI tools in academic writing in EFL more in terms of learning quality, originality, and grading, EFL students consider the usefulness and usefulness of AI tools in academic writing in EFL more in terms of efficiency, practicality, and task completion. In this regard, we could argue that the core issue is not AI tool use per se; rather, it is related to the conditions of use.

What is significant and important in this study is that, unlike previous studies, this study compares and contrasts EFL teachers and EFL students and finds that both groups support and favor a guided integration approach rather than an outright ban of AI tool use in EFL writing tasks. The findings of this study indicate that EFL teachers and EFL students strongly support and favor institutional policies, ethical use, teacher/student training, AI tool use disclosure, and assessment of understanding (oral explanation, process-based writing tasks, and drafting). In relation to EFL writing and its teaching in higher educational settings, particularly in private college settings, we could argue that EFL teachers and EFL students must create an educational environment wherein AI tools function as supportive scaffolding tools rather than replacements for EFL students' cognitive processes and skills development. Indeed, when EFL students use AI tools in an appropriate manner, they could benefit from AI tool use; however, when EFL students use AI tools in an inappropriate manner, they could lose the very skills that EFL teachers and EFL writing instruction aim to develop in EFL students.

The limitation of this study is that it is based on perception, which may not reflect actual classroom behavior or writing performance. Moreover, the comparative analysis is based on perception and narrative rather than actual writing performance, quality, critical thinking, or authenticity of the writing samples submitted.

Future studies should also explore: AI use and its association with writing performance based on a rubric and critical thinking measures; Discipline- or level-based differences in AI use and perception; The effects of AI literacy interventions and process-based assessment models; Comparative studies across institutions, considering the policy environment and its effects on AI use and perception.

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