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Lecturers' Practices in Using AI-Powered Tools to Support Academic Writing in EFL Classrooms

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) has increasingly influenced academic writing instruction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. This study aims to explore lecturers' practices in using AI-powered tools to support academic writing, with attention to their pedagogical use, stages of integration, instructional roles, and perceived challenges. This study employed a qualitative design involving ten lecturers from two Indonesian universities. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis and were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings show that AI-powered tools, including Grammarly, QuillBot, and ChatGPT, are mainly used for grammar correction, paraphrasing, vocabulary improvement, and idea generation. The use of these tools is mostly directed toward the revision stage, while planning and drafting remain largely student-driven. Lecturers play an important role in controlling and guiding AI use to maintain students' authorship and academic integrity. However, AI integration is still limited by lecturers' digital competence, lack of institutional training, unclear guidelines, and concerns about student dependency on automated outputs. The study implies that responsible AI integration in EFL academic writing requires clear institutional guidelines, lecturer training, and ethical writing policies.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; AI-Powered Tools; Academic Writing; EFL Classrooms; Lecturer Practices

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has influenced many aspects of education, including the teaching and learning of academic writing in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. AI-powered tools such as Grammarly, QuillBot, and ChatGPT are increasingly used by students and lecturers to support writing activities. These tools can help users correct grammar, improve vocabulary, paraphrase sentences, generate ideas, and revise written texts. In academic writing

instruction, AI has the potential to support students who struggle with language accuracy, idea development, and writing confidence.

Despite these benefits, the use of AI-powered tools in academic writing also raises important pedagogical and ethical concerns. Academic writing is not only a matter of producing grammatically correct sentences but also involves critical thinking, argument development, organization, originality, and academic integrity. When students use AI tools without clear guidance, they may become overly dependent on automated feedback or generated content. This can reduce their active engagement in the writing process and weaken their ability to develop independent academic writing skills. Therefore, the role of lecturers is important in ensuring that AI is used as a learning support rather than as a replacement for students' own thinking and writing.

In EFL classrooms, lecturers are expected to guide students in using AI responsibly. However, this is not always easy. Some lecturers may be familiar with AI-powered tools, but their use in teaching may not be fully aligned with pedagogical goals. The absence of clear institutional guidelines, limited professional training, and concerns about academic dishonesty can make lecturers uncertain about how AI should be integrated into writing instruction. As a result, AI may be used only for surface-level correction, such as grammar checking and paraphrasing, rather than for deeper writing development, such as improving argument quality, coherence, and academic voice.

Previous studies have discussed the role of AI and digital tools in writing instruction, including their benefits for feedback, grammar improvement, and students' writing performance. Many studies have also examined students' perceptions of AI tools and the effectiveness of particular applications in language learning. However, less attention has been given to lecturers' actual classroom practices in using AI-powered tools to support academic writing, especially in Indonesian EFL higher education contexts. This gap is important because lecturers are not only users of technology but also decision-makers who regulate how, when, and why AI tools are used in the classroom.

Based on this gap, this study focuses on lecturers' practices in using AI-powered tools to support academic writing in EFL classrooms. The novelty of this study lies in its emphasis on lecturers' real teaching practices rather than only students' perceptions or the effectiveness of AI tools. By exploring how lecturers integrate AI into academic writing instruction, this study provides a contextual understanding of the relationship between technology use, pedagogical decision-making, lecturer readiness, and academic integrity in Indonesian EFL classrooms.

This study aims to explore how lecturers use AI-powered tools to support academic writing in EFL classrooms, the stages of writing in which these tools are integrated, the roles lecturers play in regulating AI use, and the challenges they encounter. The study is guided by the following research questions: (1) How do lecturers use AI-

powered tools to support academic writing in EFL classrooms? (2) At what stages of the writing process are AI-powered tools integrated? (3) How do lecturers guide and regulate students' use of AI-powered tools? and (4) What challenges do lecturers face in integrating AI-powered tools into academic writing instruction?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In Indonesia, the integration of digital technology in English language teaching has been widely studied, although research specifically focusing on AI is still emerging. Several studies show that digital tools play an important role in improving students' writing skills. For example, (Tjahjadi et al., 2020) found that the use of technology in EFL classrooms can enhance students' engagement and support writing development, particularly when combined with appropriate instructional strategies. Similarly, (Andika et al., 2025) reported that Indonesian EFL students often face difficulties in academic writing, especially in organizing ideas and developing arguments, which indicates the need for supportive tools and effective teaching approaches.

Further studies highlight how lecturers in Indonesia use digital tools in their teaching practices. (Suryani et al., 2024) found that although lecturers have positive attitudes toward technology integration, their actual use of digital tools is still limited due to lack of training and institutional support. This is supported by (Anwar et al., 2025), who reported that lecturers often use technology only for basic purposes, such as accessing materials or checking grammar, rather than integrating it into a comprehensive pedagogical strategy. These findings suggest that there is still a gap between awareness and implementation of digital technology in Indonesian higher education.

In relation to writing instruction, several Indonesian studies emphasize the importance of feedback in improving students' writing. (Suci et al., 2021) Found that feedback, whether from teachers or digital tools, plays a significant role in helping students revise their work. However, the study also indicates that students need clear guidance to understand and apply the feedback effectively. This is particularly relevant in the context of AI-powered tools, where feedback is automated and may require additional explanation from lecturers.

The emergence of AI in education introduces new opportunities as well as challenges. Although studies specifically focusing on AI in Indonesia are still limited, some recent research has begun to explore its use. (Alhatemi et al., 2026) found that students perceive AI tools as helpful for improving grammar and generating ideas, but they also tend to rely heavily on these tools. This finding raises concerns about students' independence and critical thinking in writing. Similarly, (Afidawati, Arrasyid, 2024) reported that the use of AI in academic writing requires clear guidelines to avoid misuse and maintain academic integrity.

From a theoretical perspective, the integration of AI in EFL writing classrooms can be explained through the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework proposed by (Quecán-sánchez et al., 2026). This framework emphasizes that effective teaching with technology requires the integration of technological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and content knowledge. In the Indonesian context, this means that lecturers need not only technical skills but also the ability to design learning activities that integrate AI tools meaningfully into writing instruction.

In addition, the concept of digital literacy is essential in understanding the use of AI. (Pötzsch, 2019) defines digital literacy as the ability to use digital technologies critically and responsibly. This is relevant in the context of AI, where users must be able to evaluate the accuracy and appropriateness of AI-generated content. In Indonesia, digital literacy remains a challenge, particularly among educators who have limited access to training and resources. In terms of writing theory, academic writing is a complex skill that involves linguistic competence, critical thinking, and organization. (Rustam & Priyanto, 2022) explains that writing requires students to construct arguments, present ideas clearly, and follow academic conventions. Indonesian students often struggle with these aspects, as shown in studies by (Fajar & Gintings, 2020), which found that students face difficulties in coherence, cohesion, and argument development. While AI tools can assist with language-related aspects, they cannot fully support higher-order thinking skills required in academic writing.

Moreover, the role of lecturers is crucial in ensuring the effective use of AI in the classroom. (Arabia et al., 2023) argue that teachers' beliefs and knowledge influence how technology is implemented. In Indonesia, lecturers play a key role in guiding students to use AI tools appropriately, ensuring that these tools support learning rather than replace it. Without proper guidance, there is a risk that students will become overly dependent on AI, which may hinder their writing development. The literature in the Indonesian context shows that digital and AI-based tools have the potential to support academic writing in EFL classrooms. However, their implementation is still limited by factors such as lecturers' digital competence, lack of training, and absence of clear guidelines. While previous studies have explored technology use and writing challenges, there is still limited research focusing specifically on lecturers' practices in using AI-powered tools. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining how lecturers in Indonesian higher education use AI tools to support academic writing in EFL classrooms.

Previous Related Study

Previous studies have shown that artificial intelligence (AI), particularly in the form of Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE), plays an important role in supporting students' writing development. (Shifflet & Weilbacher, 2015) found that AWE systems provide immediate feedback that helps students revise their writing more effectively. Similarly, (Alifah & Hidayat, 2025) explain that AI in higher education

can enhance learning efficiency and provide personalized support for learners. Furthermore, (Marzuki et al., 2023) report that AI-based tools have a positive effect on students' writing performance, especially in terms of vocabulary and organization. (Soori et al., 2025) also confirm that AI-supported instruction improves writing quality when combined with teacher feedback. These studies indicate that AI has the potential to support writing instruction; however, its effectiveness depends on how it is used in the classroom.

From a theoretical perspective, the use of AI in EFL writing can be explained through the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework developed by Koehler and Mishra. This framework emphasizes that effective integration of technology in teaching requires a balance between technological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and content knowledge. In addition, the concept of digital literacy is essential in understanding how AI should be used in education. AI-powered tools have strong potential to support academic writing in EFL classrooms. However, their effectiveness depends on lecturers' ability to integrate them into teaching practices and guide students in using them critically and responsibly. While many studies have focused on students or the effectiveness of AI tools, there is still limited research on how lecturers actually use these tools in their teaching. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by focusing on lecturers' practices in using AI-powered tools to support academic writing in EFL classrooms

METHOD

Design and Samples

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore lecturers' practices in using AI-powered tools to support academic writing in EFL classrooms. The design is chosen to allow an in-depth understanding of how lecturers implement AI in their teaching, how they perceive its use, and what challenges they encounter in real classroom contexts. Qualitative approaches are considered appropriate for examining educational practices because they enable the researcher to capture participants' experiences, perspectives, and instructional strategies in a natural setting (Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, 2017).

The participants of this study consist of ten lecturers who teach academic writing courses in EFL programs at Indonesian higher education institutions, specifically from Universitas Muhammadiyah Bima (UMB) and Universitas Sembilanbelas November Kolaka (USN Kolaka). A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who have experience using AI-powered tools, such as grammar checkers, automated writing evaluation systems, or generative AI applications, in their teaching practices. This sampling technique enables the researcher to focus on information-rich participants who are directly relevant to the research objectives. The total number of participants, which is ten lecturers, is considered appropriate for qualitative research as it allows for in-depth exploration and detailed analysis of participants' experiences. This is consistent with qualitative research practices that

prioritize depth over quantity (Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, 2017). The participants were selected proportionally from both institutions to represent different teaching contexts while maintaining relevance to the study.

Instruments and Procedures

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis using clear technical procedures. The interviews were conducted with selected lecturers using an interview guide consisting of open-ended questions focusing on their use of AI-powered tools in teaching academic writing. Each interview lasted approximately 30-60 minutes and was conducted either face-to-face and via online platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet. With participants' consent, all interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy. The recordings were then transcribed verbatim for analysis. During the interviews, follow-up questions were asked to clarify responses and to obtain more detailed information about lecturers' strategies, experiences, and challenges.

For document analysis, the researcher collected relevant teaching documents, including course syllabi (RPS), lesson plans, teaching materials, students' assignments, and written instructions related to the use of AI tools. These documents were selected based on their relevance to academic writing courses and the integration of AI. The analysis was conducted by reviewing the documents systematically to identify evidence of how AI tools were incorporated into teaching practices, such as task design, feedback processes, and assessment methods. To ensure data credibility, triangulation was applied by comparing the data obtained from interviews and documents. Information from lecturers' statements was cross-checked with the actual teaching documents to confirm consistency between what lecturers reported and what was implemented in practice. This procedure helps to strengthen the validity and reliability of the findings, as suggested by (Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, 2017).

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was conducted using a qualitative thematic analysis approach to examine lecturers' practices in using AI-powered tools in academic writing instruction. The process was carried out systematically to ensure that all data from semi-structured interviews and document analysis were accurately interpreted and meaningfully organized.

1. The analysis began with data preparation, where all interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and reviewed repeatedly to ensure accuracy and familiarity with the content. At the same time, supporting documents such as syllabi, lesson plans, teaching materials, and student assignments were examined to provide contextual understanding of how AI tools were planned and implemented in academic writing courses.
2. After data familiarization, initial coding was conducted manually by identifying meaningful units of information from both interview transcripts and documents.

These codes represented key aspects such as types of AI tools used, instructional purposes, feedback practices, classroom integration strategies, and challenges faced by lecturers. The codes were then compared across participants to identify similarities and differences.

3. The codes were grouped into broader categories. Similar codes were clustered, for example AI tools (grammar checkers, paraphrasing tools, generative AI), pedagogical use (feedback and instruction), and implementation issues (technical, ethical, and pedagogical challenges). These categories were then refined into main themes that represent the core findings of the study, including lecturers' pedagogical integration of AI, classroom implementation practices, challenges in using AI tools, and perceptions of student dependency and learning impact.
4. Triangulation was applied by comparing interview data with document analysis. This helped to confirm consistency between lecturers' reported practices and actual instructional documents, reducing bias and strengthening trustworthiness.
5. The findings were interpreted by linking the themes to relevant theoretical frameworks.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study show that lecturers' use of AI-powered tools in academic writing instruction varies in terms of frequency, purpose, and pedagogical integration.

Types and Purposes of AI-Powered Tools Used in Writing Instruction

The first sub-theme reveals that lecturers mainly utilize AI-powered tools such as Grammarly, QuillBot, and ChatGPT in academic writing instruction. These tools are primarily used for grammar correction, paraphrasing, vocabulary enhancement, and idea generation. The findings show that AI is positioned more as a linguistic support system rather than a comprehensive instructional tool for developing academic writing competence.

Based on the interview data, lecturers consistently emphasized the use of AI for surface-level writing improvement. For instance, one lecturer (L3) stated, "*I usually ask students to use Grammarly to check grammar mistakes after they finish writing their draft."* This indicates that Grammarly is mainly used as a post-writing correction tool rather than an integrated part of the writing process. Similarly, another participant (L7) explained*, "QuillBot helps students to paraphrase sentences, especially when they struggle with academic vocabulary."* This shows that QuillBot is mainly employed to assist students in rephrasing ideas rather than developing original writing skills.

In addition, generative AI such as ChatGPT is used for idea development and initial brainstorming. One lecturer (L5) mentioned, *"Some students use ChatGPT to*

generate ideas before they start writing, but I remind them to develop it further in their own words." This highlights that ChatGPT is used at the pre-writing stage, but lecturers still emphasize the importance of student originality and modification of AI-generated content.

AI tools are not evenly distributed across all components of writing instruction. Instead, they are concentrated on language accuracy and surface-level improvements. None of the participants reported using AI tools for deeper pedagogical purposes such as developing argument structure, critical analysis, or academic discourse awareness. AI functions primarily as a supportive technological aid rather than a full pedagogical system in academic writing instruction. The contribution of this finding is significant because it shows that although AI tools are widely adopted, their pedagogical role remains limited. In other words, AI is integrated at a functional level rather than a transformative level in teaching practice.

AI Integration in the Writing Process

The second sub-theme shows that AI-powered tools are mainly integrated in the drafting and revising stages of academic writing, while their use in the planning stage remains minimal. Lecturers consistently reported that students are required to generate their own ideas and complete initial drafts independently before being allowed to use AI tools for correction, paraphrasing, or refinement. This pattern indicates that AI is positioned as a post-production support tool rather than as an integral part of the entire writing process.

Evidence from the interviews supports this finding. One lecturer (L2) stated, *"I always tell students to write their first draft without AI. After that, they can use Grammarly or QuillBot to check grammar and improve sentences."* This highlights a clear instructional rule that separates human-generated drafting from AI-assisted revision. Similarly, another participant (L6) explained, *"AI is only allowed after students finish their writing. I want them to think first before using any tool."* This reflects a pedagogical concern that overuse of AI at early stages may reduce students' independent thinking in writing.

In relation to idea generation, only a few lecturers reported limited use of AI tools such as ChatGPT, and even then, it was carefully controlled. For example, L4 mentioned, *"Sometimes students use ChatGPT to get ideas, but I ask them to modify and develop it, not copy directly."* This indicates that AI use at the planning stage is not fully encouraged and is treated cautiously due to concerns about originality and academic integrity. During the revising stage, however, AI tools are more actively used. Lecturers reported that students rely on AI to check grammar accuracy, improve sentence structure, and refine vocabulary choices. One lecturer (L8) stated, *"Grammarly is very helpful for students when they revise their writing. It helps them see their mistakes more clearly."* This shows that AI is considered effective in supporting error correction and language polishing.

The findings indicate that AI integration is concentrated in the later stages of the writing process, particularly revision, while planning and drafting remain largely human-centered. This limited integration suggests that AI has not yet been embedded across the full writing cycle, which includes brainstorming, organizing ideas, drafting, revising, and editing. The contribution of this finding is significant because it highlights a partial rather than holistic integration of AI in academic writing instruction. It suggests that while AI is useful for improving final outputs, its potential for supporting earlier cognitive stages of writing development such as idea generation, planning, and structuring arguments remains underutilized.

Lecturers' Role as Controllers and Facilitators

Lecturers play a central and dominant role in regulating the use of AI-powered tools in academic writing instruction. Rather than allowing unrestricted access, lecturers establish clear boundaries regarding when, how, and to what extent AI tools can be used by students. This shows that AI integration in the classroom is highly mediated by lecturer authority, reflecting a controlled pedagogical approach.

Interview data strongly support this finding. One lecturer (L1) stated, *"I allow students to use AI, but only after they finish their draft. They must show their original writing first."* This indicates that lecturers prioritize students' independent writing before AI intervention is permitted. Similarly, L5 explained, *"I always check their work and ask them to explain which parts were improved by AI. They cannot just submit AI results without explanation."* This practice demonstrates that lecturers not only regulate usage but also require students to demonstrate awareness of AI involvement in their writing process. In addition, another participant (L9) emphasized strict monitoring, stating, *"If students rely too much on AI, I ask them to rewrite it manually. AI is only a helper, not the main writer."* This reflects a clear pedagogical stance that AI should function as a supportive tool rather than a replacement for student effort. L7 also added, *"I guide them step by step because many students still do not know how to use AI properly in academic writing."* This shows that lecturers also act as facilitators who provide technical and pedagogical guidance in using AI effectively.

The findings indicate that lecturers function as gatekeepers of AI integration in academic writing classrooms. Their role is not limited to instruction but extends to monitoring, controlling, and evaluating how AI is used by students. This mediation ensures that AI use remains aligned with learning objectives and does not undermine students' writing development. The contribution of this finding is important because it emphasizes that the effectiveness of AI in education is not determined solely by the technology itself, but by how lecturers regulate and structure its use in the classroom. It highlights that teacher intervention is essential in maintaining a balance between technological assistance and students' independent writing development.

Challenges in Implementing AI in Academic Writing

The sixth sub-theme identifies several interconnected challenges in the implementation of AI-powered tools in academic writing instruction, particularly related to limited digital competence among lecturers, insufficient institutional training, and uncertainty in classroom practice. These challenges significantly affect how AI is adopted and sustained in EFL writing instruction. Interview data reveal that some lecturers feel they lack adequate training to fully integrate AI into their teaching practices. One participant (L3) stated, *"I use AI tools like Grammarly, but I actually learned it by myself. There is no formal training from the institution."* This indicates that AI adoption is largely self-directed rather than institutionally supported. Similarly, L6 explained, *"Sometimes I am not confident whether I use AI correctly in teaching writing because we never had specific workshops about it."* This reflects a gap in professional development related to emerging technologies.

Another challenge relates to limited digital competence among lecturers. L8 mentioned, *"Some lecturers still struggle with how to guide students in using AI properly. Not everyone is familiar with these tools."* This suggests uneven levels of technological readiness among teaching staff, which affects consistency in AI implementation across classes. In addition, lecturers expressed concerns about academic integrity and students' dependence on AI-generated outputs. L2 noted, *"I am worried that students may not really write their own ideas if they rely too much on AI."* This concern shows that AI use introduces uncertainty regarding the authenticity of student writing, which influences how lecturers regulate its use in assessment. The contribution of this finding lies in identifying structural and pedagogical barriers that prevent effective AI integration. It highlights that the challenge is not only technical but also institutional and pedagogical in nature.

The findings of this study indicate that the integration of AI-powered tools in academic writing instruction is still at an emerging stage and is strongly shaped by lecturers' pedagogical control, digital competence, institutional conditions, and ethical considerations. Across the four sub-themes, AI consistently functions as a supportive tool rather than a transformative pedagogical element in EFL academic writing classrooms. This confirms that AI adoption in higher education is still in a phase of assisted integration, where human judgment remains central in instructional decision-making.

The first finding shows that AI tools such as Grammarly, QuillBot, and ChatGPT are primarily used for grammar correction, paraphrasing, vocabulary enhancement, and idea generation. This reflects the concept of Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIED) as a human-centered augmentation system rather than an autonomous teaching mechanism (Butarbutar, 2024). (Budiyanto et al., 2025) argue that AI in education is most effective when it enhances, rather than replaces, human pedagogical decision-making. In this study, lecturers maintain full authority over

instructional processes, indicating that AI is positioned at the augmentation level rather than transformation level.

This finding is also consistent with (Tran et al., 2025), who found that AI applications in higher education are still largely concentrated in low-level instructional support such as automated feedback, grammar correction, and administrative tasks. In the same line, (Shabir, 2025) emphasize that current AI tools in education tend to focus on language accuracy and efficiency rather than fostering deeper cognitive skills such as argument construction, critical thinking, and rhetorical development. This explains why AI in this study is primarily used to improve linguistic accuracy rather than academic discourse competence.

The second finding reveals that AI integration is mainly concentrated in the drafting and revising stages, while the planning stage remains largely human-driven. This can be interpreted through the lens of process writing theory, which conceptualizes writing as a recursive activity involving planning, drafting, revising, and editing. However, the limited involvement of AI in the planning stage suggests that its pedagogical role is not yet aligned with the full cognitive writing process. This finding is supported by recent empirical studies in EFL contexts. (Davies & West, 2014) highlight that although tools like ChatGPT have potential for brainstorming and ideation, educators often restrict their use due to concerns about plagiarism, overreliance, and loss of student authorship. As a result, AI remains excluded from the early cognitive stages of writing development, particularly idea generation and content planning.

The third finding highlights lecturers' dominant role as controllers and facilitators in AI integration. This reflects the importance of teacher agency in technology-enhanced learning environments. Within the extended framework of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), (Bui, 2022) emphasize that effective technology integration depends on teachers' ability to make informed pedagogical decisions about when and how technologies are used. In this study, lecturers function as gatekeepers who regulate AI usage to ensure alignment with learning objectives. This is further supported by (Caena & Redecker, 2019), who found that teachers' beliefs, confidence, and instructional control significantly influence how digital technologies are implemented in classrooms. The current findings show that lecturers require students to demonstrate original writing before using AI tools and often request explanations of AI-assisted revisions. This indicates that AI is not freely integrated but is instead mediated through strict pedagogical supervision. Such mediation ensures that technology does not replace cognitive engagement in writing but remains subordinated to instructional goals.

This is consistent with (Liu, 2025), who argues that teacher readiness is one of the most critical determinants of successful AI integration in higher education. Similarly, (Alekhina & Kozlova, 2024) found that insufficient training significantly reduces teachers' confidence and willingness to adopt AI-based instructional tools. In the present study, this lack of training contributes to cautious and limited use of

AI in academic writing instruction. The final concern relates to academic integrity and student dependency on AI-generated outputs. This finding is strongly supported by (Bozkurt, 2024), who argue that generative AI tools such as ChatGPT pose serious challenges to academic honesty, originality, and authorship transparency in educational settings.

From a pedagogical perspective, this issue is closely related to critical digital literacy theory. (Hinrichsen & Coombs, 2013) emphasize that digital literacy is not merely technical competence but also involves critical awareness, ethical judgment, and responsible engagement with digital technologies. In this study, lecturers' strict regulation of AI use reflects an attempt to maintain academic integrity while fostering responsible technology use among students. However, this also indicates that ethical concerns are currently shaping the boundaries of AI integration in academic writing pedagogy. The findings demonstrate that AI in academic writing instruction is still operating within a controlled, assistive, and cautious framework. Its integration has not yet reached a transformative stage due to limited digital competence, institutional constraints, pedagogical conservatism, and ethical concerns. This suggests that the effectiveness of AI in EFL writing classrooms depends not only on technological availability but also on teacher readiness, institutional support, and the development of critical digital literacy among educators and students.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the use of AI-powered tools in EFL academic writing classes is still in an early and controlled stage. Tools such as Grammarly, QuillBot, and ChatGPT are mainly used to support grammar correction, paraphrasing, vocabulary use, and idea generation, but their use is mostly limited to the revising stage of writing. Students are still required to produce initial drafts independently, which indicates that AI has not yet been integrated into the full writing process, especially in planning and idea development. The findings also highlight the strong role of lecturers in controlling AI use. Lecturers set clear boundaries, guide how AI is used, and ensure that students remain responsible for their own writing. This shows that AI is still highly dependent on teacher regulation rather than being fully embedded in classroom practice. Challenges such as limited digital competence, lack of training, and concerns about academic integrity remain significant barriers. These issues influence how confidently and effectively lecturers integrate AI into teaching. So, AI is useful for improving language accuracy, but its pedagogical role is still limited. Its effectiveness depends more on lecturers' guidance and institutional support than on the technology itself.

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