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EFL Students' Attitudes Towards AI Ethics in Classes and Their Impact on Their Academic Achievement: Case of First-Year Masters in the Department of English at the University of Tlemcen

Dissertation submitted to the Department of English as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for Master's degree in Didactics of Foreign Languages

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution. I also certify that the present work contains no plagiarism and is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Chadli Chaima

Date: 13/06/2024

Signature:

Dedications

To my thoughtful parents whose endless support, love and encouragement always give me strength and inspiration.

To my only sister Malak and my brothers Aymen and Youcef for bringing joy to my life

To all the members of my family

To my best friends with whom I shared grateful moments at university

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Abstract

This research aimed to explore students' attitudes regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) writing generators in writing their assignments, and how they influenced their academic achievement. It also aimed to find out about their awareness of ethical issues. This study was conducted with first-year Master students in the Department of English at the University of Tlemcen. The data were collected from students' surveys and teachers' interviews. A mixed-method approach was used to analyse the data. The survey was distributed to 81 students, and two interviews were conducted with teachers from the same department. The findings showed that the majority of students had positive attitudes towards the use of AI writing generators. Results also highlighted that AI technology had an impact on students' achievements in positive and negative ways. The results related to teachers' responses shed light on the importance of ethics in using AI writing generators. This study concluded that AI generators had a positive impact on students' writing and attainment; however, the use of AI writing generators needed careful consideration of ethics.

Keywords: AI writing generators, ethics.

Table of content

Declaration.....	I
Dedication.....	II
Acknowledgment.....	III
Abstract.....	IV
Table of Content.....	V
List of Tables.....	VII
List of Figures.....	VIII
List of Acronyms.....	IX
General Introduction.....	1
CHAPTER ONE: Literature Review	3
1.1. Introduction.....	4
1.2. Writing in EFL/ESL Context.....	4
1.2.1. Academic Writing.....	4
1.3. Ethics.....	6
1.3.1. Academic Integrity.....	7
1.3.2. Plagiarism.....	7
1.4. AI-Powered Technologies and Language Learning.....	9
1.5. Perception of AI Writing Generators.....	11
1.6. The Impact of AI on EFL Classroom	11
1.7. AI and Ethics in Higher Education.....	12
1.8. AI and Plagiarism.....	14
1.9. Conclusion.....	15
CHAPTER TWO: Research methodology and Data Analyses	16

2.1. Introduction.....	17
2.2. Research Objectives.....	17
2.3. Participants’ Profile.....	17
2.4. Research Instruments	18
2.4.1. Survey.....	18
2.4.2. Interview.....	19
2.6. Data Analyses	20
2.5.1. Students’ Survey Analysis.....	20
2.5.2. Teachers’ Interview Analysis.....	31
2.6. Discussion of the Main Results.....	33
2.7. Recommendation.....	35
2.8. Limitation.....	35
2.9. Conclusion.....	35
General Conclusion.....	37
Bibliography.....	38
Appendices.....	49
Appendix I Students’ Survey.....	49
Appendix II Teachers’ interview.....	53

List of Tables

Table 2.1. Students' Extent of Agreement on Ethics Using AI Generators **27**

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Students' Familiarity with AI Writing Generators.....	20
Figure 2.2: Students' Use of AI Writing Generators.....	21
Figure 2.3: The Types of AI Writing Generators Used by Student.....	21
Figure 2.4: Students' Frequency Using AI Technology.....	22
Figure 2.5: Students Use of AI Writing Generators in Academic Works.....	23
Figure 2.6: Activities in AI Writing Generators.....	24
Figure 2.7: Students Attitudes Towards AI Writing Generators.....	24
Figure 2.8: The Benefits of AI Writing Generators According to Students.....	25
Figure 2.9: The Disadvantages of Using AI Writing Generators.....	26
Figure 2.10: Students' Concerns about Plagiarism Regarding The Use of AI Generators.....	26
Figure 2.11: The Impact of AI Writing Generators on the Academic Performance of Students.....	29

List of Abbreviations

AI: Artificial Intelligence

AIED: Artificial intelligence in Education

AI-giarism: Artificial Intelligence plagiarism

APA: American Psychological Association

DL: Deep Learning

EFL: English as a foreign language

ESL: English as a second language

GPT: Generated pre-trained Transformer

ML: Machine learning

MLA: Modern Language Association

NLP: Natural Language Processing

**General
Introduction**

General Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) writing generators have brought about a fundamental change in higher education, particularly in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL), where academic written works are essential for fulfilling requirements. The dominant presence of AI writing generators has emerged as a facilitator that provides assistance to students in creating well-crafted texts that meet their specific requirements. By utilising specific prompts, these tools assist students in overcoming the challenges they encounter in their academic assignments. However, the ease of using AI writing generators to create content raises concerns about their potential to facilitate unethical practices, such as plagiarism. In this regard, ethical considerations should be implemented when using AI writing generators.

The use of AI writing generators is a double-edged sword. The sophisticated programs are trained to assist Masters students of English to write their assignments. However, their use remains a threat to their academic achievements with regard to their ethical use.

The present research focuses on first-year Masters students' attitudes towards AI writing generators and their impact on their academic performance. There is a growing body of literature on the use of AI ethics in writing, however, there is a lack of knowledge related to students' awareness and attitudes of these guidelines. This study examines students' awareness of the ethical use of AI generators such as plagiarism in writing.

The objectives of this study are to identify the positive aspects of AI tools, and their negative impacts on the students' academic achievement. This major aim of the current research is to investigate students' awareness of the ethical implications of misusing AI writing generators, reporting on the importance of ethics in the use of AI.

To discuss the aforementioned aims and objectives, the researcher raised the following research questions:

General Introduction

- How do students use AI writing generators in their writing?
- What impact do AI writing generators have on first-year Masters students' academic achievement?
- How do teachers perceive the usefulness of ethics with regards to AI writing generators?

The researcher adopted an exploratory research design to investigate Masters One students using a mixed-method approach. The data was collected through two research methods: students' survey and teachers' interviews. A descriptive approach of analysis has been used to discuss and to interpret the main findings of this research work. The data was presented mainly in texts and figures.

This work is divided into two chapters. The first chapter tackled the literature review related to AI use in English as a Foreign Language context. The second chapter presented the methodology and methods used to collect data. It also presented the analyses of the main findings. It concludes by providing recommendations and discussing the limitations encountered during the research process.

CHAPTER ONE:
Literature Review

CHAPTER ONE: Literature Review

1.1. Introduction.....	4
1.2. Writing in EFL/ESL Context.....	4
1.2.1. Academic Writing	5
1.3. Ethics.....	6
1.3.1. Academic Integrity.....	7
1.3.2. Plagiarism.....	7
1.4. AI-Powered Technologies and Language Learning.....	9
1.5. The Perception of AI Writing Generators.....	11
1.6. The Impact of AI on EFL Classroom	11
1.7. AI and Ethics in Higher Education.....	12
1.8. AI and Plagiarism.....	14
1.9. Conclusion.....	15

1.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of writing skills and academic writing in the EFL context. In the following sections, the researcher tackles the definition of ethics, academic integrity, and discusses the concept of dishonesty and plagiarism in academic institutions. The researcher, then, proceeds to provide an explanation about how AI technology interferes in language learning. This chapter discusses perceptions of AI writing generators and their impact on students. Lastly, a reflection on AI ethics in academic institutions is presented with a variety of perspectives to pinpoint the issue of plagiarism

1.2. Writing in ESL/EFL Context

Writing skill is essential for learners in higher education to develop accuracy. In the context where English is seen as a second or a foreign language, writing is considered as a fundamental skill for language learners (Laiche & Nemouchi, 2023). Nuan (2003) argues that writing is a process that involves both the writers' physical and mental efforts to generate ideas and present them in an organised and a comprehensible manner. Brook (1960) points out that writing is more than transmitting a message in transcribed letters. It also should consider linguistic rules in the intentional selection of sentences. The linguistic rules that govern sentence construction include grammar, structure, and word formation (Laiche & Nemouchi, 2023).

Writing is a form of textual communication that requires cognitive processes and manual handwriting. Researchers mentioned that writing is a multifaceted process that integrates various cognitive abilities, including planning, collecting, editing, and reviewing (Benjamin, 2005; Canady, 2008).

All these steps can lead writers to writing the final draft, starting with formulating words, combining them into sentences, and then structuring them into paragraphs and essays (Parupalli, 2019).

1.2.1. Academic Writing

Academic writing is a significant approach that enables all language learners to attain their degrees. Mutinami (2016) pointed out that through academic writing, students will fulfill their requirements in universities or colleges. It is an important task for foreign language learners (Abdulkareem, 2013). Individuals who are studying at English-speaking colleges and universities practise a huge number of essays writing and assignments (Bailey, 2003). Their academic training potentially focuses on their development of their academic writing (Altakhaineh, 2010; Moore & Murray, 2006; Nampala, 2010).

It requires well-developed features, such as a strong sentence structure, effective paraphrasing, and appropriate connectors for organisation of paragraphs (Abdulkareem, 2013). According to Morley Warner (2009), academic writing is the formal method of creating a coherent and well-organised paper, using clear language and rich vocabulary (Abdulwahed, 2010). Furthermore, it employs citations from scholarly sources to support the writers' ideas (Mutimani, 2016). In accordance with Al Fadda (2012), identifying and assessing relevant sources will enable learners to integrate various ideas and opinions to develop their own style.

Academic writing can be a stressful task, particularly for language learners pursuing their degrees. According to Grami (2010), academic writing is an advanced intellectual activity that requires careful consideration, self-discipline, and concentration. For EFL learners specialising in English education, excelling in academic writing is a difficult task (Bulqiyah et al., 2021). Budjalemba and Listyani (2020) found that EFL learners are more concerned when they are given an academic writing task because they have to adjust their writing style to meet English academic writing requirements. Scholars report that students' engagement with academic writing exposes them to various challenges with grammar, which is often considered as a writing issue (Akhtar, 2020; Lin & Morrison, 2021; Sajjad et al., 2021; Thao & Quyen, 2020).

Language learners encounter many challenges related to linguistic choices, as Mutiman (2016) noted that the extensive teaching of grammar rules has driven learners to make different writing issues, such as technical issues (text structure,

punctuation, word class/order, sentence structure, verb conjugation, and spelling). Pineteh (2012) added that students struggle with grammar, particularly in missing subject-verb agreement, and using connectors and transition words.

Vocabulary knowledge is highlighted as the core of academic writing, in similar way to grammar, it needs to build a well-structured text. In this regard, Thornbury (2002) states that “Without grammar, very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed”. The lack of vocabulary can hinder the students’ wish of expressing ideas, which would negatively affect communication in their writing (Nhu et al., 2023). Other challenges that students may face in developing their academic writing is their limited research skills which enable them to find relevant sources that help them write their assignments (Saman & Fereshteh, 2019). Moreover, Mutiman (2016) pointed out that students often rely on their prior knowledge when writing without reading from original resources. As a result, academic writing can be challenging due to a lack of grammar knowledge, insufficient vocabulary, a lack of reading and research skills.

1.3. Ethics

Ethics is a crucial aspect in all areas of life (Prasad, 2019). Landauer and Rowlands (2001) stated that ethics deals with appropriate actions for humans . According to Akarsu (1998), ethics is the study of principles which each society should adhere to. This controls the actions and engagements of individuals in social life (Conaway & Fernandez, 2000). Moreover, ethics play a crucial role in education. According to Ryan (2013), ethical education is a means of helping students discern what is morally right and wrong. Students can enhance their perception and ethical awareness, which can assist them in making rational decisions during the learning process (Rest, 1983). Specifically, in the higher education context, graduate students are significantly influenced and committed to the values and ethical guidelines (Robie, Jennings et al., 2010). Thus, students are expected to uphold rigorous ethical excellence (Taha & Obeidat, 2021).

1.3.1 Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is one of the essential principles in academic institutions. According to the Center of Academic Integrity (1999), “academic integrity is a commitment to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility.” Academic integrity necessitates the appearance of honesty, moral conduct, and strict adherence to all the established guidelines and procedures of various academic activities (Saadi & Hamane, 2020; Gilman, 2005). Furthermore, academic integrity is a code of ethics that holds individuals accountable for their actions in the absence of dedication (Edwards, 2008).

The violation of academic integrity refers to academic dishonesty or research misconduct (Abdaoui, 2018). Academic dishonesty has always been an obstacle in higher education, and it is widely observed among students at all academic levels (Sariasih & Tisnawijaya, 2019). In addition, academic dishonesty is considered as a range of actions that lead to the deception of academic work (Nwoye et al., 2019; Rusdi et al., 2019; International Center for Academic Integrity, 2015). Bricault (2007) also pointed out that dishonesty leads to unfair advantages which constitute inappropriate behaviour. Accordingly, it undermines the ethical standards of the next generation (Sabli et al., 2018). The eagerness of students to achieve high academic performance in their academic endeavours can lead some learners to take learning shortcuts, which might cause an academic dishonesty, and undermine academic integrity (Sariasih & Tisnawijaya, 2019). Jones (2011) in this line states that Academic dishonesty is concerned with ‘cheating’, ‘fraud’, and ‘plagiarism’, which harm the property of ideas and other forms of intellectual property—whether they are published or not. To sum up, Bricault (2007) stated that academic dishonesty is deemed with a range of unfair behaviors that students commit to pass their tests and gain good marks in assignments.

1.3.2. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a violation of academic work. Learners who engage in plagiarism commit academic dishonesty, which is considered as an offense against

the ethical guidelines of specific academic institutions. According to Roig (2005, p. 3), plagiarism means “Taking over the ideas, methods, or written words of another, without acknowledgement and with the intention that they are taken as the work of the deceiver”. Plagiarism is considered as the taking advantage of others’ thoughts without acknowledging their names. Students from English as a Foreign Language contexts in higher education are more likely to engage in research through the writing skill, which is considered as a complex skill to master. Its complexity might lead to unintended plagiarism (Arab, 2022). In addition, academic writing by EFL/ESL students requires them to use their own words to meet their writing requirements (Farhang, 2014; Zigunovas, 2017). In this regard, students’ last option is to “take a bit here and there in order to make coherent statements”. (Hayes & Introna, 2005, p. 221). Along with the technology era, plagiarism has become easier due to the rapid access to resources and data on the internet (Saadi & Hamane, 2022).

Research shows that plagiarism appears in different forms. According to Parfit (2012), plagiarism is either done intentionally, or unintentionally.

Turnitin (2012) identifies ten types of plagiarism done by students:

- a. **Clone:** an act of submitting another’s work, word for word, one’s own.
- b. **CTRL-C:** a written piece that contains significant portions of text from a single source without alteration.
- c. **Find-replace:** the act of changing keywords and phrases but retaining the essential content of source in a paper.
- d. **Remix:** an act of paraphrasing from other sources and making the content fit together seamlessly.
- e. **Recycle:** the act of borrowing generously from one’s own previous work without citation; to self-plagiarise.
- f. **Hybrid:** the act of combining correctly cited sources with copied passages, without citation, in one paper.

- g. **Mashu**: a paper that represents a mix of copied material from several different sources without proper citation.
- h. **404 error**: a written piece that includes citation to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources.
- i. **Aggregator**: the “aggregator” includes proper citation, but the paper contains no original work
- j. **Re-tweet**: this paper includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text’s original wording and/or structure

Students engage in plagiarism for several reasons. According to Anney and Mosha (2015), factors such as limited sources, lack of citation skills, laziness, and easy access to the internet contribute to students’ plagiarism. Furthermore, they have poor paraphrasing skills and incorrect citations (Greenberger et al., 2016). In accordance with Harris (2007), the lack of knowledge about rules and forms of citation will easily lead to committing plagiarism.

1.4. AI-powered Technologies and Language Learning

Technology has always been an overwhelming aspect of human life, especially with the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology. According to Delello et al. (2023), AI represents evolution and advancement of computer systems. AI is known for its mechanisation, which is related to the mental cognition of human perception (Bellman, 1978). The modern age has witnessed a revolutionary shift in the educational system (Kushmar et al., 2022). Through the remarkable progress of AI (Aashish, 2024). Especially in language learning, AI has garnered substantial attention due to its rapid growth (Jusak, 2024).

The application of AI in language learning follows a set of principles that goes under computational linguistics without constant human intervention through the utilisation of mathematical algorithms and data analysis (Jusak, 2024). First, Natural language processing (NLP) is a field that combines linguistics with artificial intelligence (AI) and involves the algorithmic processing of human language (Torben & Thomas, 2022). NLP fosters computer comprehension and the

production of the natural language humans use in ordinary interaction (Jusak, 2024). In addition, NLP focuses on various aspects of language, including syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, to enhance overall language comprehension (Jusak, 2024).

Second, Machine Learning (ML) is a subset of artificial intelligence that entails systems extracting information or acquiring knowledge through experience (Torben & Thomas, 2022). Furthermore, machine learning evolves through the examination of both training data and real-world usage datasets, with the ongoing advancement of innovative learning algorithms, theoretical development, and the widespread availability of online data and affordable computing resources (Jordan & Mitchell, 2015). Third, deep learning (DL) is a branch of computational systems that mimic neural networks found in the human brain to extract knowledge from various datasets (Schmidhuber, 2015, p. 86). In addition, Deep Learning (DL) signifies an innovative method that permits the simulation of human language processing by comprehending sophisticated patterns in various forms of data, including images, text, and sound (Jusak, 2024).

Finally, Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) is a branch of AI that is responsible for creating innovative content (Delello et al., 2023). Gen AI encompasses a set of machine learning algorithms designed to generate new data that mimic the data on which it was trained (Yuk & Wenjie, 2023). Text generators are language models that may require multiple attempts to achieve the desired outcome of generated text (Morrison, 2022). Chat Generative Pretrained Transformer (ChatGPT) is a well-known example of AI generation. It is a popular Gen AI tool among users due to its rapid growth (Hu, 2023). ChatGPT and other generative AI tools are utilised to produce sophisticated pieces of writing based on precise and excellent prompts (Setiawan & Lutfiyani, 2023).

Notably, the integration of AI in language education helps students achieve personalised learning through individualised instruction, and receive feedback

tailored to their needs, which facilitate the development of their personalised learning rates (Lee, 2021).

1.5 Perception on AI Writing Generators

There is debate in the literature about the acceptance of the adoption of technological innovations in education (Davis, 1989). In the realm of technology integration for language learning, students' perception plays a significant role in the success of a specific technology implementation (Dian, Sumakul, Fuad, & Didi, 2021). Concerning AI generators, students' perceptions depend on their attitudes and engagement with these tools (Hu & Chan, 2023). Aljohani's (2021) research revealed that most teachers and learners have a positive attitude towards the use of AI. AI generators can assist students in their writing, especially EFL learners (Chan & Lee, 2023). Gen AI is considered as a valuable tool for brainstorming and summarising a large amount of written content to help users interpret information (Berg, 2023; Chan & Zhou, 2023). In addition, it saves time (Putra, 2023).

Although Gen-AI has benefits, it still has limitations related to ethics, plagiarism, and academic integrity (Chan & Hu, 2023). The new content generated by AI tools, for example, includes unrelated citations and lacks personal insights, which AI tools are unable to produce (Kumar, 2023). In addition, AI writing generators are difficult to detect using detection tools, known as plagiarism, and they cannot determine the originality of a specific written text (Peres et al., 2023). Moreover, AI writing generators can hinder students' efforts to enhance their writing skills if they over-depend on them (Warschauer et al., 2023). Furthermore, Chan and Tsi (2023) argued that there are challenges in developing creativity and critical thinking skills.

1.6. The Impact of AI writing Generators in EFL Classroom

In English as a foreign language context, learners have witnessed a significant change in their learning process, particularly in writing. EFL students' utilisation of AI generators can have both positive or a negative impact on them. On the one hand, several studies conducted by researchers show that AI writing tools can be

helpful in improving writing skills. AI writing tools can identify grammar mistakes, rephrase sentences, and offer guidance to enhance performance (MarzukI et al., 2023). In this regard, Chong (2021) noted that scholars usually think that artificial intelligence computer-assisted language systems can enhance students' ability to use grammar and sentence patterns effectively, as well as their writing skills. Moreover, Mhalanga (2023) found that GPT-3 can be helpful in enhancing critical thinking and creativity. EFL learners are likely to experience fewer cognitive limitations in their writing process (Gayed et al., 2022). In addition, Chang et al. (2021) argued that AI writing tools can provide support by offering feedback and guidance on restructuring statements to enhance writing structure. Other researchers have stated that these tools enrich students' vocabulary (Gayed et al., 2022). Kim et al. (2021) explored the impact of AI-generated tools on the writing skills of EFL learners in their research. They revealed that these generators are effective, especially in generating ideas, edits, and revisions.

On the other hand, further studies have addressed the negative aspects of AI writing tools. Iskender (2023) claims that students' over-reliance on AI writing tools hinders their critical thinking. Johinek et al. (2023) are concerned with students using AI to generate ideas, as it may restrict their creativity and originality. In addition, Haleem et al. (2022) stated that these AI tools can have difficulty understanding the emotions and tones of human language, which can result in providing irrelevant input. Moreover, students who rely on AI writing generators and do not take their work responsibly, they fall into direct plagiarism (Salido, 2023).

1.7. AI and Ethics in Higher Education

The risks that artificial intelligence poses in various aspects of human life have led researchers to debate the implications of ethical principles of AI. Munn (2022, p.869) maintained that “AI ethical principles are largely useless.” In this respect, many other opinions agree that AI ethical principles are ineffective (Lauer, 2021; Morley, Elhalal, Garcia, Kinsey, Mökander, &Floridi, 2021; Rességuier &

Rodrigues, 2020; Vakkuri, Kemell, Jantunen, & Abrahamsson, 2020). According to Munn (2022), these guidelines are more theoretical, not clearly defined, and fail to be coherent in practice. Furthermore, AI cannot be considered unethical because the development of AI focused more on the algorithms and trained on data. Therefore, the lack of ethical consideration in an educational context devoid of moral instruction is akin to place them in an “ethically empty milieu” as stated by Munn (2022, p 871).

The threat posed by AI tools in academic institutions raises ethical concerns. Holmes, Porayka-Pomsta, Holstein, Sutherland, Shum, Santos, Rodrigo, Cukurova, Bittencourt, and Koedinger (2021) distinguished between “doing ethical things” and “doing things ethically” to make ethical educational decisions consider all possible outcomes that may occur accidentally. In this context, ethics are unremarkable because “no framework has been devised, no guidelines have been agreed upon, no policies have been developed, and no regulations have been enacted to address the specific ethical issues raised by the use of AI in education”. (Holmes, Bektik, Whitelock, Woolf, 2018, p. 552).

AI has garnered significant attention from researchers who generally focus on issues related to data privacy, bias, and analysis (Holmes et al., 2018). According to Ferguson, Brasher, Clow, Cooper, Hillaire, Mittelmeier, Rienties, Ullmann, and Vuorikari (2016), the ethical and privacy factors of learning analytics are varied as the use of data reveals knowledge that was previously unreachable. Moreover, Holmes et. al, (2019) research showed that the respondents of their study believe that ethics are useful and important when performing their work. The desire to usefully engage ethics in AI in Education (AIED) is a difficult enduring task (Holmes et.al, 2021).

The acceptance of ethics in AIED suggests the authorisation to integrate adaptable new knowledge, new comprehension, and modern courses to assist the learning and teaching process (Porayska-Pomsta & Rajendran, 2019). In order to integrate the content generated by AI writing generators, users should use them in a

good and ethical way (Tseng & Warschauer, 2023). A study conducted by Creely (2023) focused on the transparency and responsibility to use of AI tools because they undermine real authorship.

1.8. AI and plagiarism

Plagiarism, as a violation of scholarly ethics, has always existed even before the digital age. Nowadays, with the interference of technology, students do not write their academic works with sincerity. They fail to acknowledge the data gathered from the web, thinking that it is not a misconduct. Some students believe they will not be discovered (Aiken and Epstein, 2000). AI generators pose a threat to academic integrity because they can produce texts that closely resemble human writing or even surpass it. Their ability to generate original work makes it challenging for traditional plagiarism detection methods to identify copied content (Duong, 2024).

Overreliance on AI-generated materials may increase the risk of unintentional plagiarism, particularly if students attribute the work to themselves (Salido, 2023). The utilisation of AI writing tools in academic writing can lead to academic dishonesty and plagiarism. Francke and Alexander (2019) conducted research showing that respondents believe that AI could increase concerns about plagiarism in academic institutions. In addition, the content generated and the excellent pieces of papers by AI chatbots raised concerns about plagiarism in academic works (Hoa, 2023). In this regard, Chan (2023) come up with the term AI-giarism instead of AI plagiarism, it refers to the unethical use of AI writing generators which plagiarised from other original sources without proper attribution.

Salvango et al. (2022) noted that plagiarism can occur when users of AI tools fail to credit the original source and properly modify the content generated from them to produce something innovative. Since AI generators can gather data from various sources and refine it to generate new content (Chang, 2023).

American Psychological Association (APA) and Modern Language Association (MLA) citation rules are taken into consideration when writing academic papers to ensure accuracy and credibility. Chang (2023) noted that both APA and MLA provide guidelines for acknowledging AI content generators in reference lists and in-text citations. According to Chang, when citing AI content generators in reference lists, it is important to include the name and version number of the generator, the training input, the organisation responsible for its development, the Uniform Resource Locator, and the organisation name for the textual citation. Moreover, the complete text generated should be included in the appendix in APA format, as recommended by McAdoo (2023).

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter aims to present previous frameworks related to the context of the study, starting with a brief theoretical framework of writing and academic writing for non-native speakers of English. It, then defined ethics in academia, academic integrity, and the act of plagiarism. Then, the researcher focused on the impact of AI on language learning. In addition, the research provided information about AI writing generators in the context of writing skills, and discussed previous literature on the perception and impact of AI-generated materials on students.

CHAPTER TWO:
Research
Methodology
and Data Analyses

CHAPTER TWO: Research methodology and Data Analysis

2.1. Introduction.....	17
2.2. Research Objectives.....	17
2.3. Participants' Profile.....	17
2.4. Research Instruments	18
2.4.1. Survey.....	18
2.4.2. Interview.....	19
2.5. Data Analysis	20
2.5.1. Students' Survey Analysis.....	20
2.5.2. Teachers' Interview Analysis	31
2.6. Discussion of The Main results	33
2.7. Recommendation.....	35
2.8. Limitation.....	35
2.9. Conclusion.....	35

2.1. Introduction

After exploring the theoretical framework in the previous chapter, this chapter will focus on the practical phase of this research. The researcher aims to gain a thorough understanding of the objectives of this study. This study will be conducted as an exploratory investigation to examine the perspectives of students and teachers on AI writing generators and their influence on the academic achievement of EFL students at the level of Abou Bekr Belkaid University in Tlemcen. In addition, the study aims to explore students' awareness of the ethical issues related to using AI writing generators and the significance of ethics in their utilisation. The researcher adopted a mixed-method approach to analyse the data both quantitatively and qualitatively by using two instruments: a survey and a semi-structured interview. The results of this research are analysed through trends and texts to address the research questions.

2.2. Research Objectives

- Identify students' usage of AI writing generators.
- Identify the impact of AI writing generators on the students.
- Identify teachers views on the importance of implementing ethics when using AI writing generators.

2.3. Participants' Profile

EFL first-year Master students at Tlemcen University were invited to answer an online survey. The total number of participants is 81. The researcher had several reasons for choosing this sample. Initially, Master One students transition from their undergraduate phase to the graduate phase. These students are expected to explore and engage in research and write their dissertations. The researcher aims to investigate students' attitudes towards the use of AI writing generators and their impact on their academic achievement (exam essays, dissertations). Furthermore, students' views on the importance of ethical implications are investigated to address issues related to plagiarism. This research aims to interpret the complex phenomena of using AI writing

generators and their impact on Master One students' academic achievement, providing recommendations to tackle this issue (see appendix I). Additionally, two EFL teachers have been invited for a semi-structured interview. Both teachers had a face-to-face interview. The teachers were interviewed to shed light on the importance of ethics in relation to the use of AI writing generators (see appendix II).

2.4. Research Instruments

An insightful interpretation of the research questions will be presented based on the results collected through two research instruments: a student survey and a semi-structured interview. Hence, the findings will be analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

2.4.1. Survey

A survey is a tool for gathering data. Closky (1969) stated that a survey is a method of collecting data systematically. In addition, surveys are a valuable method for gaining insights into the opinions of a large group of individuals (Pinsonneault & Kraemer, 1993).

The researcher used a survey to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, incorporating open-ended and closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions are not limited to predetermined options, allowing researchers to delve into the participants' thoughts and perspectives (Salant & Dillman, 1994, p. 81). This means that the respondent is free to describe his thoughts, which will bring more enlightenment to the study. On the contrary, closed-ended questions have a predetermined range of answers, and the participant is expected to choose from them (Mcintyre, 1999, p. 75).

The survey is divided into three sections. The first section of the survey collects background information of The Master One students by asking them to select their area of study (didactics, linguistic sciences, translation, literature and civilization). The second section discusses the awareness and attitudes of students towards AI writing generators. The final section discusses the ethical considerations and academic achievements of the student regarding the utilisation of AI writing generators. This

section aims to provide valuable insights for the research by presenting results through trends and texts.

2.4.2 Interview

The interview is a research instrument where the researcher gathers textual information for their study. According to Lambert and Loiselle (2007), interviews are used as a research method to collect data about participants' opinions on a specific research question. Prabnat and Meenu (2015) maintained that the interview is a two-sided process that allows the exchange of ideas and information.

Babbie (2007) categorises three different forms of interviews, which are the standardised interview, the semi-standardised interview, and the unstandardised interview. The first category is the standardised or structured interview. The structured interviews are interviews that follows the same wording of the questions without adding information for all respondents (Corbetta, 2003). They mostly required yes and no answers, giving both the interviewer and the interviewee limited autonomy in responses (Berg, 2007). The second category is the semi-structured interviews. The choice of words in this type of interview is adaptable (Berg, 2009). The researchers who select semi-structured interviews instead of structured interviews have more freedom in their research approach (Kajornboon, 2004). In this type of interview, interviewers are not restricted to the interview guide. They can ask questions freely, add new ones as needed, and make changes or provide explanations if the questions are unclear (Monday, 2020). Finally, the unstructured interview type offers significant adaptability and freedom for both the interviewer and the interviewee (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). This type of interview is informal and does not have a specific plan to guide the interview (Monday, 2020). This study utilised semi-structured interviews with two university-level teachers. This interview aims to gain insights into teachers' perspectives on students' use of AI writing generators and highlights the importance of ethics in utilising AI-generated content.

2.5. Data Analysis

The data of this study are analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively, using descriptive analysis on students' survey and teachers' interview.

2.5.1 Students' Survey Analysis

Q1. Are you familiar with AI writing generators?

This question aims to figure students' familiarity with AI writing generators.

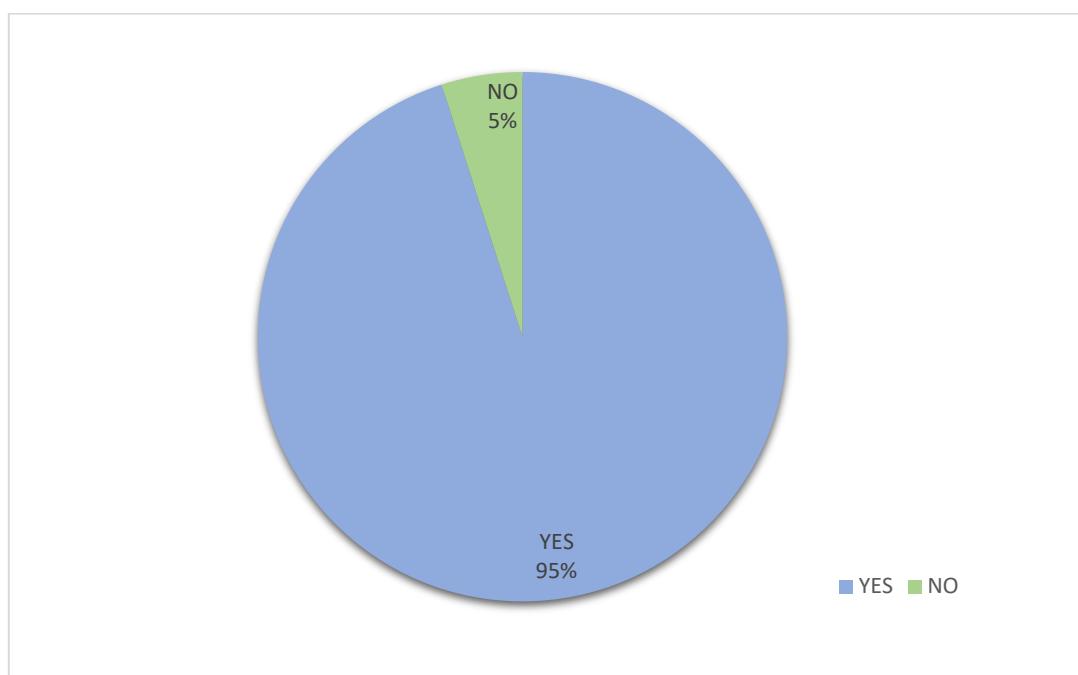


Figure2.1: Students' Familiarity with AI Writing Generators

The figure above revealed that the majority of the students know about AI writing generators.

Q2. Have you used AI writing generators?

This question aims to find out if students use AI writing generators

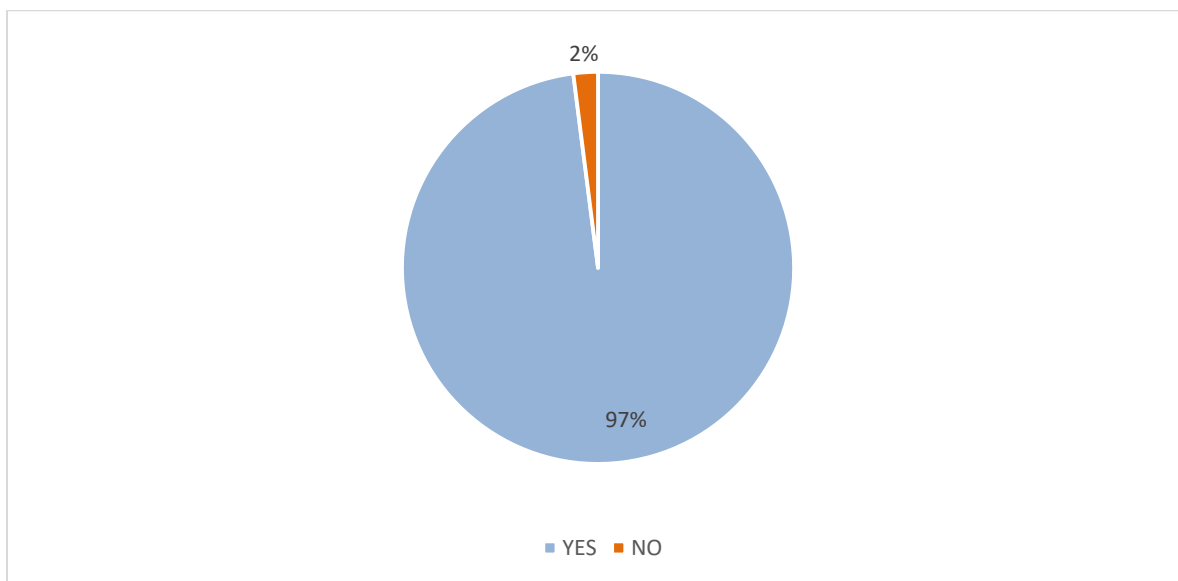


Figure 2.2: Students’ Use of AI Writing Generators.

The results in the figure showed that most of the students use them.

Q3. If yes, what are the types of AI writing generators that you have used?

The purpose of this question is to show what are the most used apps of AI that students use to generate content.

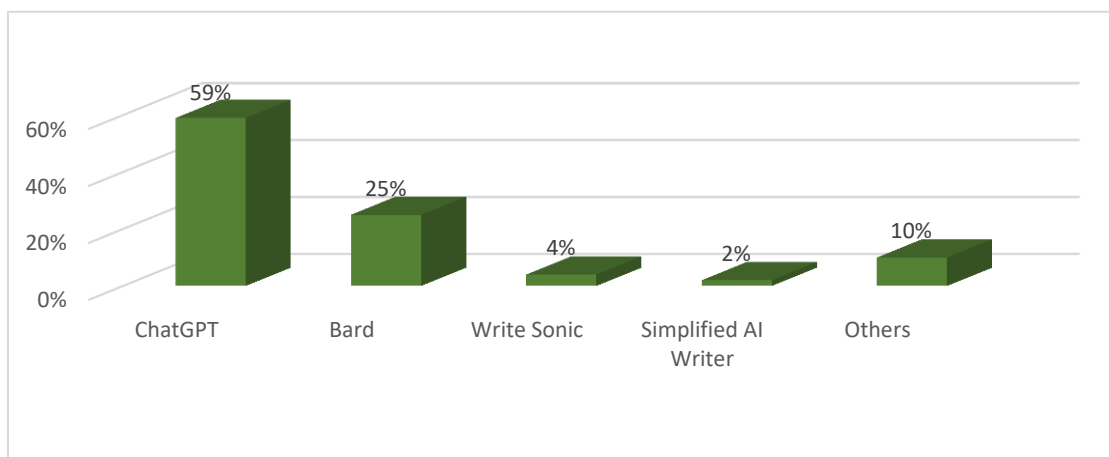


Figure 2.3: The Types of AI Writing Generators Used by Student

The graph above showed that the majority of the students (59%) use ChatGPT, followed by bard (25%), (16%) use other tools.

Q4: How often do you use these tools?

This question aims to show the frequency of using AI writing technology.

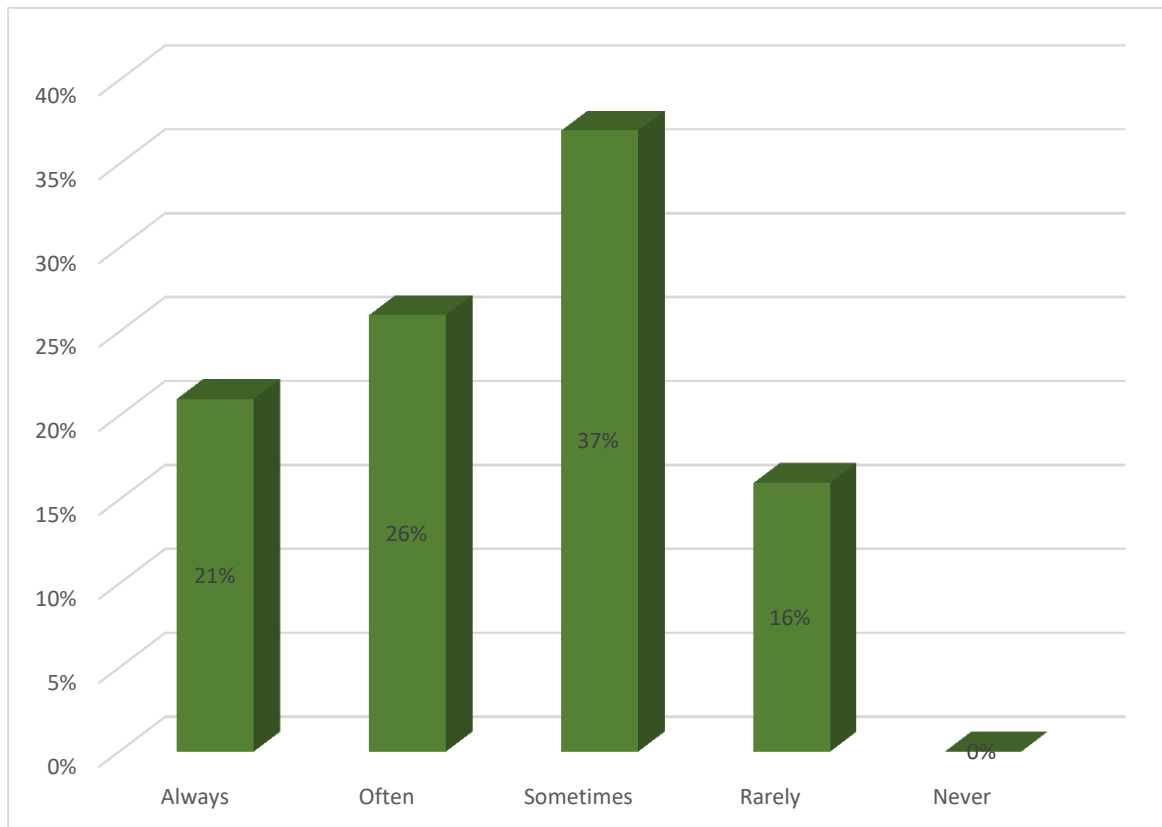


Figure 2.4: Students' Frequency Using AI Technology

The results showed that 37% said they use AI writing technology “sometimes”, 26% said they use it “often”, 21% said they use them “always”, and 16% said they use them “rarely”.

Q5: What are the types of academic works you have used AI writing generators for?

This question aims to provide insights into the academic works that the students use AI writing generators for

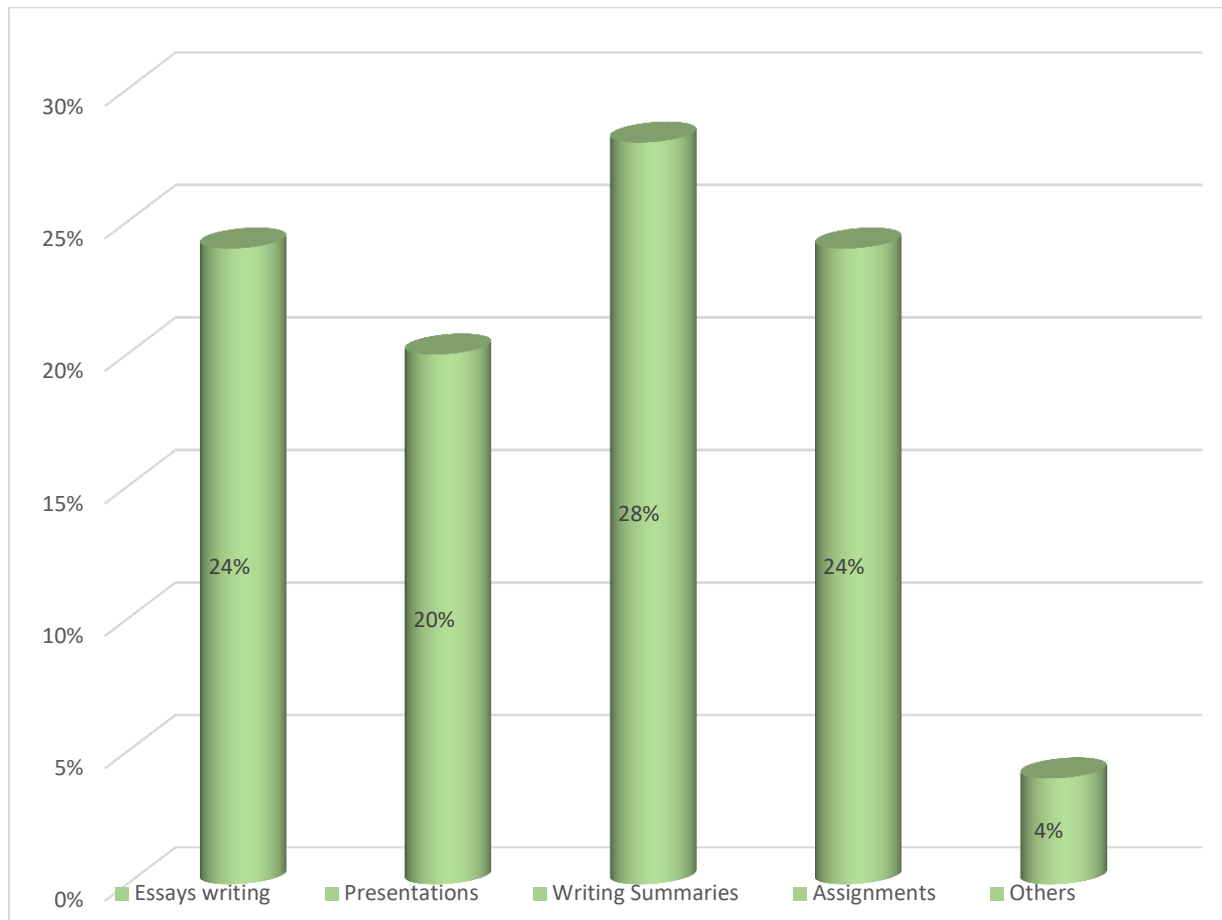


Figure2.5: Students Use of AI Writing Generators in Academic Works

The results in the graph above show that 28% of students use AI generators for Writing summaries, 24% use them for essay writing, 24% use them for assignments, 20% use them for presentations, and 4% use them for other purposes.

Q6: Why do you use AI writing generators?

This question aims to figure out types of activities used in AI writing generators

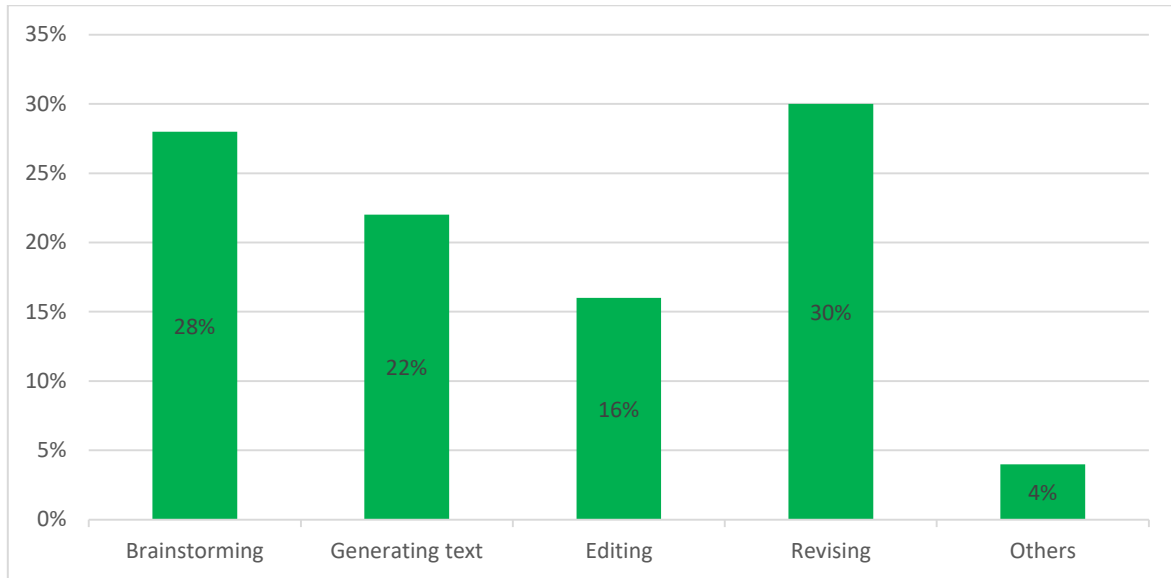


Figure 2.6: Activities in AI Writing Generators

The results reveal that 30% of the students use AI writing generators for revising, 28% for brainstorming, 22% for generating text, 16% for editing, and 4% for other purposes.

Q7: Could you rate your attitudes towards AI writing generators

The question aims to collect insights into students’ attitudes of the students towards AI writing generators.

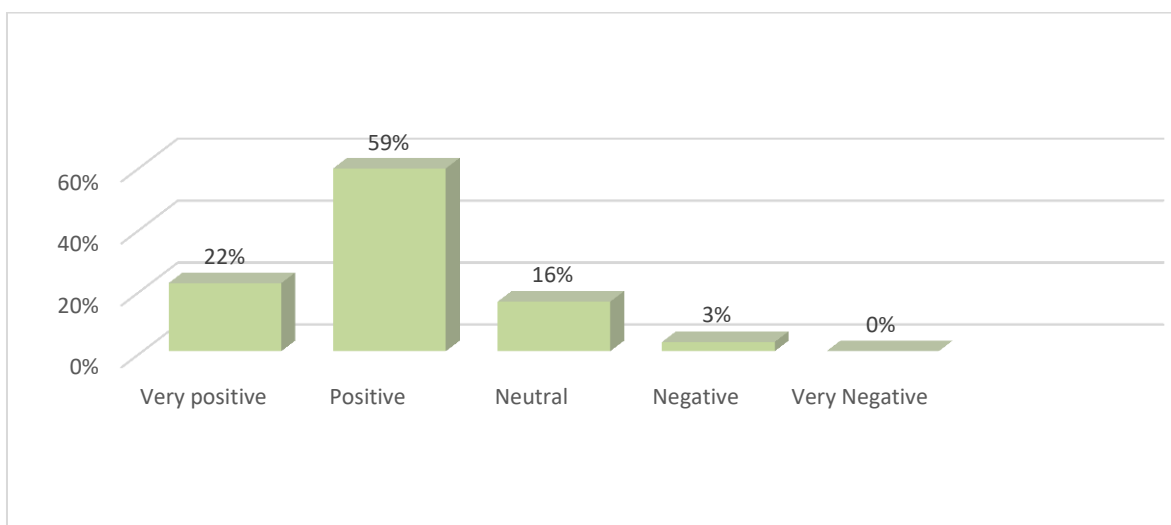


Figure 2.7: Students Attitudes Towards AI Writing Generators

The results in the graph showed that more than half (59%) of the students have a positive attitude of AI writing generators, (22%) have a very positive attitude, (16%) are neutral about them, and (3%) have negative attitude towards AI tools.

Q8: What are the main benefits of using AI writing generators?

This question aims to find how students benefit from AI writing generators

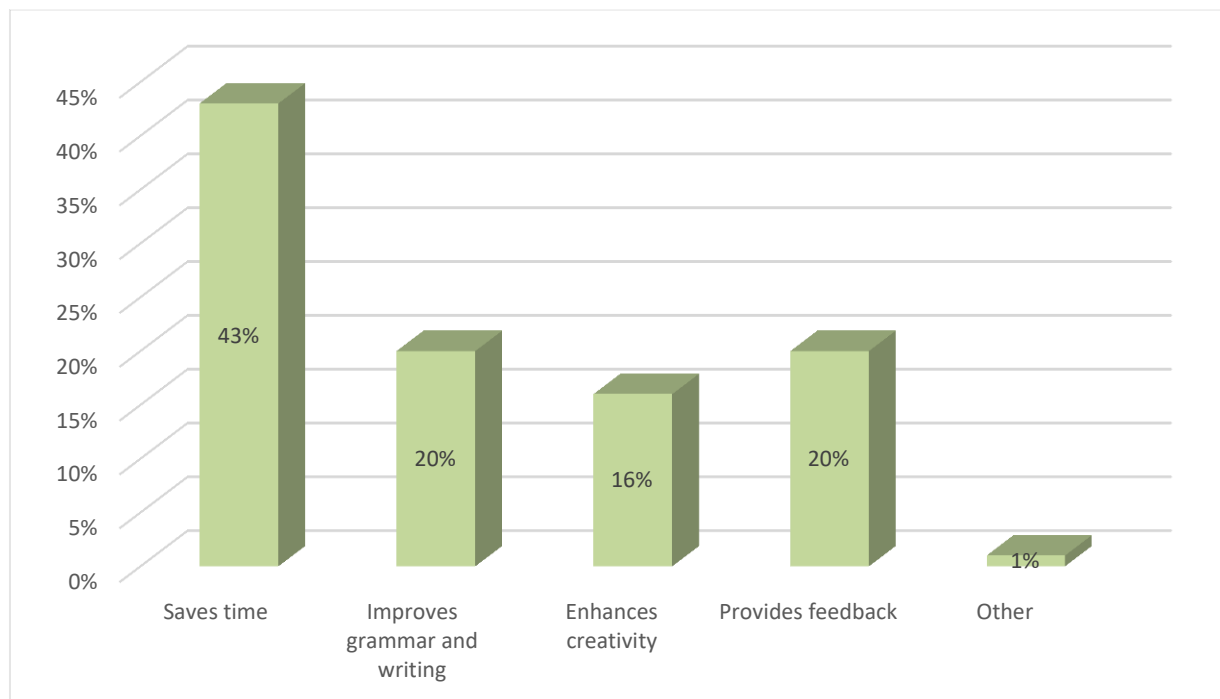


Figure2.8: The Benefits of AI Writing Generators According to Students

43% of students believe that AI saves their time, 20% said that it improves (grammar and writing), other 20% said that it provides (feedback), 16% said that it enhances (creativity), and the 1% said it help in learning new (vocabulary).

Q9: What do you think are the main disadvantages of using AI writing generators?

This question aims to identify the drawbacks of AI writing generators for students

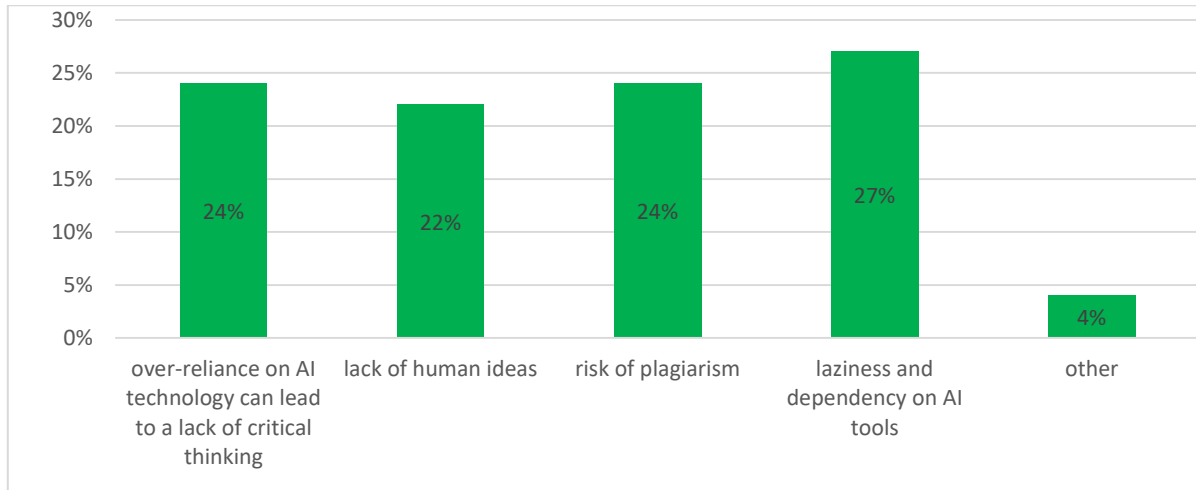


Figure 2.9: The Disadvantages of Using AI Writing Generators

The results in the graph above showed that 27% said AI can cause (laziness and dependency), 24% said the risk of (plagiarism), other 24% said (over-reliance) on AI technology can lead to a lack of (critical thinking), 22% said lack of human ideas, and 4% stated (other) reasons.

Q10: Are you worried that AI writing tools might be used for plagiarism?

This question revealed whether students fear of plagiarism using AI tools.

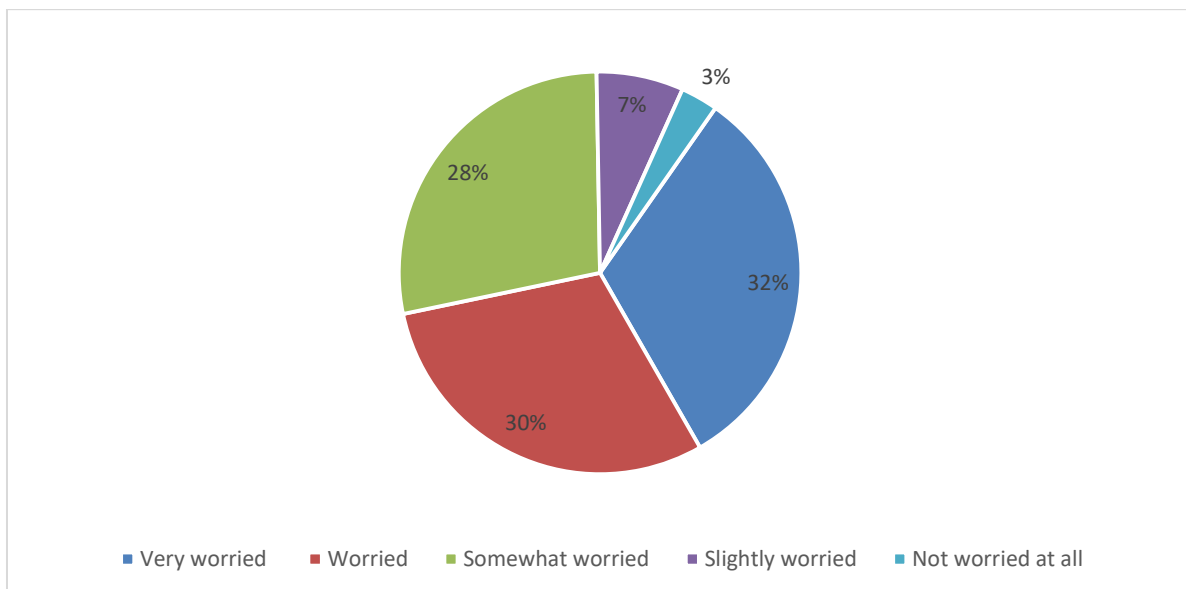


Figure 2.10: Students’ Concerns about Plagiarism Regarding The Use of AI Generators

The results in the chart above show that 32% are “very worried” about plagiarism when using AI generators. 30% are “worried”, 28% are “somewhat worried”, 7% are “slightly worried”, and 3% are “not worried at all”.

Q11: could you rate your agreement on the following statements?

The statements aim to see the extent of agreement by students on ethics using AI writing generators.

Table 2.1. Students Extent of Agreement on Ethics Using AI Generators

Statements	Options%				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am aware of the ethical issues surrounding the use of AI-generated content in academic writing	32%	54%	12%	1%	0%
I believe using AI writing tools without proper citation is dishonest and constitutes plagiarism	31%	47%	16%	5%	1%
I think universities should provide clear guidelines on the ethical use of AI tools in academic work	42%	40%	15%	4%	0%

The first sentence on the table shows 54% agree on the ethical issue concerning AI writing generators, 32% strongly agree, 12% are neutral , and 3% disagree. Then, moving to the nest sentence where 47% agree on it, 31% strongly agree, 16% are neutral about it, 5% disagree, and only 1% strongly disagree. The last sentence reveals

that 42% strongly agree on that universities should provide clear guidelines on the use of AI, 40% agree, 15% are neutral, 4% disagree.

Q12. In your opinion, does the pressure to achieve high academic performance play a role in tempting students to misuse AI writing generators?

This question aims to show whether pressure plays a role in making students misuse AI writing generators.

Students mentioned that pressure is one of the reasons that led them to misuse AI writing generators because each student aims to excel in their work. They added that they get blinded by the goal of achieving high academic performance and grades, which makes them seek shortcuts by misusing these tools since they consider their efforts are not enough, not well-written, and not very creative. The students also mentioned other issues in addition to the pressure. The factors identified by the students are laziness and procrastination, which are the underlying reasons that lead students to misuse AI tools. They also claimed that teachers never corrected their work or provided them with feedback, which resulted in a low quality of their work. This led them to use AI as a quick tool for their assignments. They also stated that tight deadlines, fear of failure, teacher judgment, lack of knowledge, and strict evaluation are the main reasons that negatively influence the adoption of AI technology. They also stated that the lack of sincerity and morals is reflected when AI tools are misused.

Q13: Do you believe using AI writing generators has an impact on your academic performance? (Explain)

This question investigates if using AI writing generators has an impact on students' academic performance.

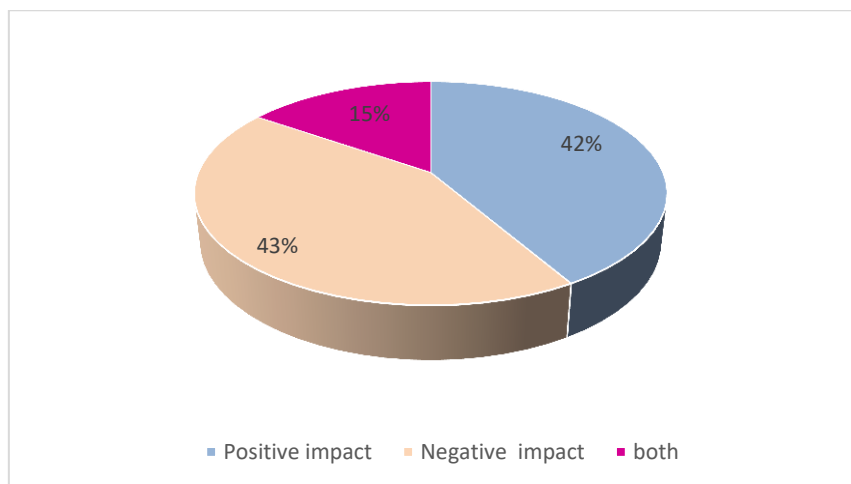


Figure 2.11: The Impact of AI Writing Generators on the Academic Performance of Students.

The results reveal that 43% of students said it harms their academic performance, 42% said that it has positively affected their academic performance, and 15% said it has affected them both positively and negatively.

Students who stated that AI writing generators affect their academic performance negatively argued that even though those tools are beneficial they are still harmful. They clarified that it made them have a lazy mindset without learning anything. They added that they are just like a curse because they lose their touch and confidence, and without them, they cannot finish the simple tasks given by the teachers. They also stated that it made them always complacent about the ready-made information that AI generates, which made them lose their originality because it is other people's work. In addition, they said that AI writing generators hinder their critical thinking and analytical abilities, limit their creativity, and influence their research and reading skills, which are important for their academic success. They also claimed that they affect directly their attainment for looking for valuable sources from books, and articles, and use AI content instead.

Students who stated that AI writing generators have a positive impact on them explained that they enhance their writing style. They also stated that they are efficient because they find inspiration from others, which makes their writing, thinking, and

works unique. They also mentioned that they improve their vocabulary and make their language more academic.

Students who were influenced both negatively and positively stated that even if they improve their productivity, vocabulary, and grammar, and achieve good grades, it can still impede their critical thinking and originality. They also added that it makes them lazy.

Q14: What is your awareness regarding plagiarism using AI technology?

This question aims to have insights into students' awareness regarding plagiarism using AI writing generators.

Students stated that plagiarism is a growing concern affecting the world. They stated that it is a serious unethical violation in academic work that puts researchers in difficult situations. They clarified that plagiarism occurs when someone steals others' ideas and presents them as their own without proper attribution. They argued that plagiarism has always existed. Students used to copy from their classmates, the internet, and academic works without mentioning the source. They added that in the era of AI, plagiarism becomes even easier and more accessible. They stated that AI writing generators compile information from various existing sources, and the data generated by AI already exists somewhere on the web. They stated that using AI-generated content without proper attribution and referencing the source leads to plagiarism. In addition, students suggested some solutions to avoid the dishonesty of plagiarism. They suggested that universities should implement AI plagiarism detection tools to assess the extent of plagiarism in students' work. They also noted that they should only grasp the general idea and elaborate on it in their own words, paraphrasing it using their own style. They added that the content generated by AI should give credit to the original source and mention the real owner. They also stated that they should adhere to the ethical guidelines of the universities. They also suggested that teachers should provide warnings about the use of AI tools and identify what motivates students to enhance their creativity and productivity.

2.5.2 Teachers' Interview Analysis

Q1: What do you think of AI writing generators?

Teacher 1 said: “They are helpful for both students and teachers, help in generating ideas, help proofread a piece of writing, they have tons of advantages, they should not only be negatively considered.”

Teacher 2 said: “They are helpful, quick tools that provide details on several topics. It provides ideas, directions, saves time, and requires minimal effort.”

Q2: How do you as a teacher perceive it? Why?

Teacher 1 said: “We are experiencing problems because it encourages agency, laziness, and students do not pay attention to ethics.”

Teacher 2 said: “I do not recommend it because students, when given a specific assignment, tend to simply copy and paste, taking everything for granted. This hinders their human capacities and makes them less creative. I recommend it only for certain directions and guidelines on how to complete specific work.”

Q3: How do you perceive your students' use of AI writing generators? Why?

Teacher 1 stated: “Students are merely consumers, and they tend to use AI in a negative manner. Instead of composing their own work, they often resort to copying and pasting, demonstrating a lack of effort in the writing they produce.”

Teacher 2 said: “Students are not using it the right way. The only thing they think about is getting the right answer to perform well, which is neither ethical nor correct. As a result, they will lack productivity, creativity, and originality.”

Q4: Do you use it for teaching and research purposes? Why?

Teacher 1 said: “I do in some cases. I generate ideas for content when my mind is blank and I strive to be more innovative. I use it for brainstorming, but I do not depend on it entirely as I do not consider it a valid and reliable source of information.”

Teacher 2 stated: “I do not use it because we do not have the updated version of AI. It will not assist me in my research as a researcher and as a teacher. There are already handouts and course designs to follow, so we do not need it.”

Q5: What are the main benefits of AI writing generators for you?

Teacher 1 said: “They save time, they help to be original and innovative. Students proofread texts, paragraphs, or essays, and they generate ideas.”

Teacher 2 said: “They are effortless. They save time. They do not consume a lot of energy in the thinking process.”

Q6: Do you think that ethics in AI are practically useful?

Teacher 1 said: “Yes, of course. The teacher and students who use this machine should consider ethics because it generates content without references or attributions, potentially leading to plagiarism and unethical practices like disregarding copyright and authorship.”

Teacher 2 said: “It is completely fine to use AI to support oneself, only if the work is accredited and it is disclosed that AI was used to generate something. In cases where students only copy and paste and present the work as their own, it is considered unethical and cannot be accepted. Ethical standards dictate that referencing the source is a must.”

Q7: What do you suggest as an alternative solution for a better use of AI?

Teacher 1 said: “Students should avoid overreliance on tools. They should paraphrase the information they gather and add their own insights. When conducting research or seeking a theory, they should refrain from relying solely on these tools. Instead, they should write their own content, proofread it, and correct any mistakes.”

Teacher 2 said: “Teachers should include in their syllabus a statement prohibiting the use of AI-generated content without proper attribution to the original source. Additionally, they should establish classroom policies promoting ethical and responsible use of AI.”

2.6. Discussion of the Main Results

The research questions are examined and address with the following research discussion.

Research Question 1: How do students use AI generators in their writing?

The analysis of the students' survey revealed that most students had a positive attitude towards the use of AI writing generators. Students were familiar with AI generators and they knew how to use them (See Section 2.2 and 2.3). The study results also indicated the various AI-generated materials students used (See Section 2.4). Students' answers showed that they used these tools for various purposes, such as brainstorming, generating text, editing, and revising, For further details, read Section 2.7. Students used AI writing generators to assist them with various academic tasks, such as essays writing, presentation, writing sumamries,and assignments (See Section 2.6). The results of the teachers' interviews indicated that students tended to use AI writing generators detrimentally for their own benefit.

Research Question 2: What impact do AI writing generators have on Master One students' academic work?

The results from the two research methods showed that AI writing generators had both positive and negative impacts on students' academic achievement. The students' survey revealed that AI writing generators positively influenced them to improve their writing style; it enhanced their vocabulary; it made their language academic; and it increased productivity, refined vocabulary and grammar. The results revealed that students could achieve good grades in their exams. This result aligns with previous studies (Chong, 2021; Chang et al. 2021), which found that AI could enhance the students' writing skills, improve their use of grammar, and enrich their vocabulary. However, other research such as Warschauer et al. (2023) findings contradict the mentioned results.

Even though these tools had a lot of opportunities for students, for example, it saves their time, it improves their grammar and writing, it enhances their creativity, and it provides them with feedback (See Section 2.9), they still have disadvantages which negatively impacted the students. Such disadvantages lied on students' development of a lazy study routine, and they lose control of their confidence in writing. In relation to learning output, students would ignore reading from authentic texts, which would slower critical thinking, limit their creativity, and influence their research skills. These findings are in line with Johinek et al. (2023) and Haleem et al. (2022) whom highlighted that AI limited the creativity and originality of the students, and hindered critical thinking. Results from the interviews juxtapose with the survey results, as they showed that the negative use of AI has made students lazy, dependent, and less productive. It had also hindered their originality, creativity, and ethical considerations.

Research question 3: How do teachers perceive the usefulness of ethics with regards to AI writing generators?

The results of the survey revealed that students had concerns with the use of AI writing generators, and there is a high risk that they could fall into plagiarism (See Section 2.11), this result is in line with Francikle and Alexander's (2019) research that showed there was a great concern of plagiarism using AI. Students believed that AI writing generators facilitated plagiarism because the content they produced is often sourced from existing materials. This finding agrees with Salido (2023) who stated that the data generated by AI already existed. As a result, failing to attribute this content properly can result in plagiarism. The teachers' interview revealed that students copying and pasting from artificial intelligence (AI) without crediting the owner of the content is unethical. This is because they are utilising information that belongs to other resources. Hence, the majority of the students in the survey agree on implementing ethics in using AI generators (See Section 2.1). Teachers' interviews explained that ethical considerations are essential for using AI writing generators, especially when citing sources. These findings with regards to teachers' perceptions

could not be found in the existing literature, and the researcher thinks that this is a potential contribution of this study.

2.7. Recommendations

Considering the achieved results, I propose the following recommendations:

1. Teachers should make students aware of the potentials and drawbacks of AI writing generators.
2. Teachers should inform students when they are allowed to use AI writing generators and when they should not.
3. Universities should implement ethical principles and put them into practice.
4. AI detection tools should be implemented to prevent plagiarism.
5. The researcher suggests providing guidance on how to effectively utilize AI in the learning process in the future, as there is currently no specific ethical framework demonstrating the proper use of AI in our institution.

2.8. Limitations

The research encountered a challenge in collecting the survey, as students were unwilling to complete the form. The data were eventually collected after multiple sending attempts of the form. Teachers were busy with large classes and did not have time to participate in the interview.

2.9. Conclusion

The second chapter deals with data analysis. The first part of the study described the participants of the research and the research methods used to gather data. The second part provides an analysis of the results, both qualitatively and quantitatively. The third part discusses the main findings of the research. Lastly, the researcher suggests some recommendations for EFL teachers to help their students avoid

engaging in unethical behavior. Limitations that researchers face during the research process.

**General
Conclusion**

General Conclusion

AI writing generators have emerged as helpful tools for students, facilitating the writing process, especially in academic works. However, they are still considered as a threat to ethical values, as they can lead students to engage in plagiarism. This is because these tools provide pre-made, innovative generated texts that may already exist in previous research.

This study is divided into two chapters. The first chapter dealt with previous literary works. It presents the skill of writing in EFL, focusing on text, ethics, academic integrity, and plagiarism. In addition, it discussed the emergence of AI in language learning, transitioning to a discussion on AI writing generators and their implications, as well as AI ethics and AI-related plagiarism. The second chapter highlighted the research methods used to collect data, analyse the results, and discuss the main findings. It ended with some recommendations to prevent the misuse of AI writing generators and discussing the limitations faced by researchers.

This research is an exploratory case study. The data were collected using a mixed-method approach, utilising surveys for first-year Masters students and interviews for teachers. After collecting data both quantitatively and qualitatively, the results showed that most of the students have positive attitudes. These tools provide various benefits for students in their writing process and have a positive impact on their performance. However, they still have advantages that are accompanied by significant drawbacks, such as the risk of over-reliance on AI writing tools, which can hinder originality and critical thinking capacities. Ethical threats such as plagiarism can pose concerns regarding academic integrity. Consequently, there is an agreement among students and teachers regarding the necessity of implementing ethics when using AI writing generators.

The researcher suggests some considerations for teachers to prevent the act of plagiarism among students. AI writing generators attract the attention of students, especially those who face challenges in their academic writing. However, even if they use these tools, they still need to do so with a certain amount of ethical consideration to protect their integrity and morals simultaneously.

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Appendices

Appendix I

Students' Survey:

Greetings participants. This survey aims to explore the awareness and attitudes of first-year Master's students regarding AI writing generators. This survey investigates students' experiences using these tools and their impacts on their academic achievements. It also explores students' consideration of ethical issues in their use of AI writing generators. Your truthful responses will provide valuable insights into this complex topic. All information you share will be kept anonymous and confidential.

Section 01: Awareness and attitudes

1. Are you familiar with AI writing generators?

Yes

No

2. Have you utilized AI writing generators?

Yes

No

3. If yes, what are the types of AI writing generators that you have used?

ChatGPT

Bard

Write Sonic

Simplifies AI writer

Others

4. How often do you use these tools?

Always

Often

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

Appendices

5. What are the types of academic works you have used AI writing generators for?

Essays writing

Presentations

Writing summaries

Assignments

Others

6. Why do you use AI writing generators?

Brainstorming

Generating text

Editing

Revising

Others

7. Could you rate your attitudes towards AI writing generators?

Very Positive

Positive

Neutral

Negative

Very Negative

8. What are the main benefits of using AI writing generators?

Saves time

Improves grammar and writing

Enhances creativity

Provides feedback

Others

Appendices

9. What do you think are the main disadvantages of using AI writing generators?

Over-reliance on AI technology can lead to a lack of critical thinking

Lack of human ideas

Risk of plagiarism

Laziness and dependency on AI tools

Others

Section 02: Ethical consideration and academic achievement

10. Are you worried that AI writing tools might be used for plagiarism?

Very worried

Worried

Somewhat worried

Slightly worried

Not worried at all

11. Could you rate your agreement on the following statements?

a- I am aware of the ethical issues surrounding the use of AI-generated content in academic writing.

Strongly agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly disagree

b- I believe using AI writing tools without proper citation is dishonest and constitutes plagiarism

Strongly agree

Agree

Neutral

Appendices

Disagree

Strongly disagree

c- I think universities should provide clear guidelines on the ethical use of AI tools in academic work

Strongly agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly disagree

12. In your opinion, does the pressure to achieve high academic performance play a role in tempting students to misuse AI writing generators?

.....
.....
.....

13. Do you believe using AI writing generators has an impact on your academic performance? (Explain)

.....
.....
.....
.....

14. What is your awareness regarding plagiarism using AI technology?

.....
.....
.....

Appendix II

Teachers' interview:

This interview aims to gather insights about the importance of ethics in using AI writing generators. This study focuses on Master's students at Tlemcen University in the Department of English. You are kindly invited to respond to some questions. Much appreciation for your willingness to share your thoughts and perspectives.

- 1- What do you think of AI writing generators?
- 2- How do you as a teacher perceive it? Why?
- 3- How do you perceive you students' use of AI writing generators? Why?
- 4- Do you use it for teaching and research purposes? Why?
- 5- What are the main benefits of AI writing generators for you?
- 6- Do you think that ethics in AI are practically useful?
- 7- What do you suggest as an alternative solution for a better use of AI?

Summary in English:

This research explores the impact of AI writing generators on first-year Master's students, focusing on their usage patterns, academic outcomes, and ethical implications. It highlights that while AI tools aid in writing by providing structure and support, they also pose risks such as plagiarism due to their pre-generated content. The study emphasizes the importance of ethical considerations in using AI writing tools to maintain academic integrity.

ملخص باللغة العربية:

تتناول هذه الدراسة تأثير مولدات كتابة الذكاء الاصطناعي على طلاب الماجستير في السنة الأولى، مركزة على أنماط استخدامهم، والنتائج الأكاديمية، والمسائل الأخلاقية. تسلط الدراسة الضوء على دور أدوات الذكاء الاصطناعي في المساعدة على الكتابة من خلال توفير الهيكل والدعم، مع التأكيد على المخاطر مثل الانتحال الأدبي بسبب المحتوى المولد مسبقاً. وتبرز هذه الدراسة أهمية النظر في الأخلاقيات عند استخدام أدوات كتابة الذكاء الاصطناعي للحفاظ على النزاهة الأكاديمية.