

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the study's background, research problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Writing is one of the most essential productive skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. As a fundamental component of language proficiency, writing plays an important role not only in academic settings but also in various professional contexts. The ability to communicate ideas clearly and accurately through written text becomes increasingly significant as digital communication and global interaction continue to expand. Consequently, EFL learners are expected to develop writing skills for various purposes, such as completing academic assignments, participating in online communication, and preparing for future professional demands. However, despite its importance, writing remains one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners to master (Feng et al., 2024).

The complexity of writing arises from several linguistic, cognitive, and psychological factors. Many EFL learners encounter difficulties related to grammatical accuracy, vocabulary selection, sentence organization, idea development, and the construction of coherent and cohesive texts. These challenges often result in written products that do not meet expected academic standards. Moreover, writing requires not only linguistic competence but also higher-order thinking skills, including planning, organizing, evaluating, and revising written work. As a consequence, learners frequently experience anxiety, uncertainty, or low motivation when they do not receive sufficient support during the writing process (Mun, 2024).

Feedback plays a crucial role in supporting learners' writing development. Through constructive feedback, students are able to recognize their strengths and weaknesses, identify errors, and improve the quality of their written work. However, in many educational contexts, teachers face various constraints such as large class sizes, limited instructional time, and heavy workloads. These challenges often restrict teachers' ability to provide detailed, individualized, and timely feedback on students' writing. As a result, learners may not receive adequate guidance to improve their writing proficiency, which may slow down their progress and reduce their motivation to write (Nguyen et al., 2024).

Recent developments in educational technology, particularly the emergence of generative artificial intelligence (Generative AI), have created new opportunities to address these challenges. Generative AI refers to artificial intelligence systems capable of producing human-like text responses through advanced natural language processing models. In language learning contexts, generative AI can function as a feedback tool that analyzes learners' writing and provides suggestions related to grammar, vocabulary use, sentence structure, clarity, and organization. Through generative AI-assisted feedback, learners are able to receive immediate guidance that can support the revision process more efficiently. Compared with traditional teacher feedback alone, generative AI-assisted feedback offers advantages such as speed, accessibility, consistency, and convenience (Rizqy & Farida, 2023).

The availability of generative AI-assisted feedback also allows learners to revise their writing independently. Learners can repeatedly review and refine their work without waiting for delayed teacher responses, which makes the revision process more flexible and efficient. Furthermore, AI-supported writing tools may encourage learner autonomy, promote self-regulated learning, and increase motivation during writing activities. This is particularly beneficial in situations where teacher feedback is limited or when learners require continuous guidance throughout the writing process (Song & Song, 2023).

Although generative AI-assisted feedback has become increasingly accessible and widely used by students, the effectiveness of these technologies largely depends on learners' perceptions. Learners' views regarding whether generative AI is helpful, easy to use, motivating, or reliable can influence their willingness to adopt such technologies in writing activities. Previous studies have frequently focused on the quantitative outcomes of automated writing evaluation, such as immediate improvements in writing accuracy or final text performance through computerized error corrections. However, relatively limited research has explored how learners perceive the formative value and quality of generative AI-assisted feedback itself, particularly regarding how they interpret, evaluate, and engage with these automated suggestions within broader EFL learning contexts.

Understanding learners' perceptions is therefore essential in determining whether generative AI-assisted feedback can effectively support writing development. Positive perceptions may encourage consistent use and greater engagement with AI-based tools, while negative perceptions may reduce learners' willingness to utilize such technologies. In addition, learners' perceptions may vary depending on factors such as technological familiarity, prior learning experiences, writing proficiency, and individual expectations.

Considering these issues, this study aims to investigate EFL learners' perceptions towards generative AI-assisted feedback in writing activities. By focusing on learners' viewpoints, this research seeks to provide insights into the perceived benefits, challenges, and overall impact of generative AI-assisted feedback in writing. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to a better understanding of how generative AI can be integrated effectively into EFL writing practices.

However, despite the growing implementation of generative AI-assisted feedback in EFL writing instruction, many previous studies have primarily emphasized writing performance and accuracy outcomes. Only a limited number of studies have examined learners' perceptions of generative AI-assisted feedback as the central focus, particularly in relation to perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and motivational impact in writing activities. Since learners' perceptions play an important role in determining the acceptance and effective use of educational technologies, investigating these perceptions becomes essential in understanding how generative AI can support writing development. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by exploring learners' perceptions toward generative AI-assisted feedback in EFL writing contexts.

B. Research Problem

Based on the background of the study, the research questions of this study are formulated as follows:

1. How do EFL learners perceive the usefulness and ease of use of generative AI-assisted feedback in writing activities?
2. What are EFL learners' perceptions of the impact of generative AI-assisted feedback on their motivation to write in English?

C. Objectives of the Study

Considering the research problems above, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To describe EFL learners' perceptions of the usefulness and ease of use of generative AI-assisted feedback in writing activities.
2. To examine EFL learners' perceptions of the impact of generative AI-assisted feedback on their motivation to write in English.

D. Significance of the Study

1. Theoretical Significance

The findings of this study are expected to make several theoretical contributions, particularly to the fields of language learning, educational technology, and computer-assisted language learning (CALL). First, this study may enrich existing literature by providing updated insights regarding the integration of generative AI-assisted feedback in EFL writing development. As generative artificial intelligence continues to evolve rapidly, new studies are needed to document how learners respond to emerging technological tools. This research adds to that growing body of knowledge by exploring how EFL learners perceive generative AI-assisted feedback in contemporary writing practices.

Second, this research may contribute to theoretical discussions concerning learner perceptions, especially within technology-enhanced learning frameworks. Understanding learners' beliefs, attitudes, and experiences is crucial in determining the effectiveness of any pedagogical innovation. By examining students' perceptions of generative AI-assisted feedback, this study may support or refine existing theories regarding technology acceptance, self-regulated learning, and learner autonomy. The findings can also offer insights into motivational theory, particularly how external digital feedback influences students' willingness and confidence to engage in writing tasks.

Third, this study may help expand theoretical perspectives within the area of feedback in second language (L2) writing. Traditional writing feedback models have focused primarily on teacher-provided comments. However, the emergence of generative AI introduces a new dimension to feedback theory, namely automated, instant, and interactive feedback. This research may contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how different types of feedback function and how learners interpret them, thereby supporting further conceptualizations of hybrid feedback models that combine teacher feedback and AI-generated feedback.

Finally, by focusing on EFL learners in general rather than specific institutions, this study provides theoretical implications that may be applied across diverse learning contexts. The findings may guide future researchers in examining the broader role of generative AI in EFL education, encouraging further studies on different language skills, learner groups, or AI-based technologies. Therefore, this study contributes not only to current academic discussions but also to the ongoing development of theoretical perspectives related to AI-supported instruction and digital literacy in language education.

2. Practical Significance

i. For Students

The findings of this study may help learners gain a clearer and deeper understanding of the practical benefits offered by generative AI-assisted feedback in writing activities. When students recognize how generative AI tools can assist them in identifying grammatical errors, improving sentence structure, and enhancing the clarity of their ideas, they may become more confident and motivated to engage in the writing process. Furthermore, this study may encourage learners to make better use of available technological tools, promoting independent learning and helping them develop greater autonomy in revising and refining their written work. In the long run, students may develop improved writing habits and a more positive attitude toward English writing activities.

ii. For Teachers and Educators

This study may provide valuable insights for teachers and educators regarding how generative AI tools can be integrated effectively into writing instruction. The findings can illuminate how generative AI-assisted feedback complements traditional teacher feedback by offering immediate and consistent support, which may help reduce teachers' workload, particularly in large classes. Additionally, educators may gain a better understanding of

students' expectations, preferences, and concerns when interacting with generative AI tools. Such insights can assist teachers in designing writing activities that maximize the benefits of generative AI while maintaining pedagogical balance and ensuring that technology supports rather than replaces human guidance and interaction.

iii. For Institution

The results of this study may serve as a useful reference for educational institutions that aim to develop or enhance technology-based learning environments. As generative AI tools become increasingly integrated into academic practices, institutions require research-based evidence to guide decisions regarding digital literacy programs, curriculum development, and the adoption of technological innovations. The findings may help institutions evaluate whether generative AI-assisted feedback tools align with their learning objectives and technological infrastructure. Moreover, the study may provide guidance on how institutions can train both students and teachers to use generative AI tools effectively, ensuring that technology contributes meaningfully to improved learning outcomes.

iv. For Future Researchers

This study may serve as an important reference point for future scholars who wish to explore topics related to generative artificial intelligence, EFL writing development, or learners' perceptions. By providing empirical data on students' attitudes toward generative AI-assisted feedback, this research may help identify gaps that future studies can address, such as examining different generative AI tools, investigating other language skills, or conducting comparative studies between human feedback and AI-generated feedback. Furthermore, the study may contribute to methodological discussions in educational research by offering insights into how learners' perceptions can be measured and

analyzed in technology-enhanced learning contexts. Future researchers may use this study as a foundation for developing more comprehensive investigations or for conducting mixed-method or longitudinal studies.

E. Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focuses specifically on examining EFL learners' perceptions toward generative AI-assisted feedback in the context of English writing activities. The primary scope of this research is limited to understanding how learners perceive the usefulness, ease of use, and motivational impact of AI-generated feedback. Therefore, this study does not measure or analyze learners' actual improvements in writing performance, nor does it compare the effectiveness of different types of generative AI tools. Instead, the emphasis is placed on exploring learners' subjective experiences, personal judgments, and attitudes that shape their perceptions while engaging with AI-supported feedback during the writing process.

Furthermore, this research does not investigate the technical accuracy, algorithmic mechanisms, or linguistic validity of any specific generative AI application. It also does not aim to evaluate AI tools from a technological or computational perspective. The focus remains on the users namely, EFL learners and how they interpret and respond to generative AI-assisted feedback within their learning context. Because perceptions are inherently personal and influenced by individual differences, the results of this study are shaped by the characteristics, background knowledge, and technological familiarity of the respondents.

The limitations of this research include the fact that the findings may not be fully generalizable to all EFL learners due to variations in learning environments, levels of digital literacy, and access to technology. The perceptions collected in this study are based solely on participants who voluntarily responded to the questionnaire; therefore, the results may represent a particular group rather than the entire EFL learner population. Moreover, the study relies on self-reported data, which may be influenced by participants' emotions, expectations, or

personal biases at the time they completed the questionnaire.

Additionally, the scope of this research focuses only on writing activities and does not extend to other language skills such as speaking, reading, or listening. The study also does not examine long-term usage patterns or the sustainability of generative AI-assisted feedback over time. Therefore, the interpretations drawn from this research should be understood within the limited context of learners' immediate perceptions rather than long-term behavioral changes.

Despite these limitations, the study aims to provide meaningful insights into how generative AI-assisted feedback contributes to learners' writing development from a perceptual standpoint. The findings are expected to offer valuable contributions to educators, students, and future researchers who seek to understand the role of generative AI technology in supporting language-learning practices.

F. Definitions of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstandings of the terms used in this study, several key terms are defined as follows:

1. Generative Artificial Intelligence (Generative AI)

Generative Artificial Intelligence (Generative AI) refers to computer-based systems designed to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as understanding language, recognizing patterns, generating text, and producing contextually appropriate responses. In the context of language education, generative AI operates through technologies such as Natural Language Processing (NLP) and machine learning, which enable systems to analyze written texts, identify linguistic patterns, interpret meaning, and generate relevant suggestions for language improvement (Zhang & Zou, 2024).

Generative AI systems are capable of processing large amounts of language data and learning from linguistic patterns to produce human-like responses. In this study, generative AI is understood as a category of intelligent digital technologies used to support writing activities, without referring to a specific brand or application. The term represents AI-based tools that can generate feedback or suggestions to assist learners in improving their written English.

2. Feedback

Feedback in language learning refers to any information, commentary, or evaluation provided to learners regarding their linguistic performance or written output to help them identify errors, understand areas for improvement, and bridge the gap between their current proficiency and the desired learning goals (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). In writing instruction, feedback serves as an essential pedagogical tool that guides learners through the recursive process of drafting and editing, thereby facilitating language acquisition and skill development (Ur, 2012). In this study, feedback encompasses the core corrective and suggestive information that learners receive to refine their writing.

3. Generative AI-Assisted Feedback

Generative AI-assisted feedback refers to automated responses or suggestions generated by generative AI systems to help learners improve the quality of their writing. This type of feedback may include the identification and correction of grammatical errors, improvement of word choice and vocabulary appropriateness, refinement of sentence structure, detection of punctuation and spelling mistakes, and suggestions related to clarity, coherence, and organization of ideas (Feng et al., 2024).

Generative AI-assisted feedback is characterized by its speed, consistency, and accessibility. Through these features, learners can revise their work independently, receive immediate guidance, and continuously improve their writing. In this study, generative AI-assisted feedback is viewed as a complementary form of feedback that supports the writing revision process. It does not replace teacher feedback but serves as an additional learning resource that provides instant suggestions and guidance for learners during writing activities.

4. Perception

Perception in this study refers to learners' interpretations, evaluations, and attitudes toward the use of generative AI-assisted feedback in writing activities. Perception includes cognitive beliefs regarding usefulness and relevance, affective responses such as comfort or confidence, and behavioral tendencies related to the willingness to use technology (Dörnyei, 2001).

Learners' perceptions are shaped by their prior experiences, technological familiarity, expectations, and individual learning needs.

Because perception is subjective, different learners may interpret the same AI feedback differently depending on their background and experiences. In this research, perception represents the central variable used to understand how learners evaluate the role of generative AI-assisted feedback in supporting their writing activities.

5. Writing Activities

Writing activities refer to the processes involved in producing written English texts. These processes include generating ideas, organizing thoughts, drafting paragraphs or essays, revising content for clarity and organization, editing grammar and vocabulary, and finalizing the written product. Writing is widely viewed as a recursive process, meaning that learners frequently move between drafting, revising, and editing stages during writing development (Hyland, 2019).

In this study, writing activities primarily refer to the stages in which learners interact with generative AI-assisted feedback, particularly during the revising and editing phases. The writing activities involved in this research include academic writing tasks such as assignments, essays, and practice exercises.

6. EFL Learners

EFL learners refer to individuals who study English as a Foreign Language in contexts where English is not the primary language used in daily communication. These learners typically rely on formal instruction, structured classroom activities, and supplementary learning tools to develop their English proficiency (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). In this study, EFL learners refer to individuals who learn English in non-English-speaking environments, engage in writing activities as part of their language learning process, and have experience using generative AI tools to support their writing. The perceptions of these learners form the basis of this research, as the study aims to understand how their experiences influence their views toward generative AI-assisted feedback in writing activities.