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EFL Students' Perceptions of Using Generative AI Tools in Academic Writing Classrooms: A Quantitative Survey

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ABSTRACT

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) presents both opportunities and challenges in EFL academic writing. This quantitative descriptive study investigated EFL undergraduate students' perceptions of GenAI across four dimensions: perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU), perceived learning benefits (PLB), and perceived risks and concerns (PRC). Data were collected using an adapted 20-item Likert-scale questionnaire from 71 English Education students at a public university in Jambi, Indonesia. Construct validity was confirmed via Pearson correlation ($p < 0.01$), and reliability was established with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.82 to 0.91. Descriptive analysis revealed high overall perceptions across all four constructs, PEOU ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.59$), PU ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.61$), PRC ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.62$), and PLB ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.64$). Students particularly valued GenAI for improving language quality and revision efficiency. However, they simultaneously acknowledged critical risks concerning academic integrity, inaccurate information, and potential overreliance. These findings demonstrate that EFL students view GenAI as a valuable yet dual-edged tool, underscoring the necessity of pedagogically guided and ethically responsible AI integration.

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Introduction

The development and accessibility of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) have fundamentally transformed the landscape of higher education. Unlike earlier educational tools that functioned primarily as passive repositories of information or automated writing correctors, contemporary GenAI applications, such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and Microsoft Copilot, possess advanced capabilities to generate human-like text, formulate ideas, explain complex concepts, provide feedback, paraphrase sentences, and scaffold users through multiple stages of the writing process (Cen & Shakibaei, 2026; Hessari et al., 2025; Sharma et al., 2026). In language education, Alharbi and Kumar (2025), Godwin-Jones (2024), and Yang and Lin (2025) stated

that these technologies offer unprecedented opportunities for learners to engage with conversational, context-sensitive, and individualized writing support. However, their increasing adoption has simultaneously triggered profound pedagogical, ethical, and cognitive concerns regarding academic integrity, information accuracy, student agency, overreliance, and the potential erosion of learners' independent writing and critical thinking capabilities (Abubakar et al., 2025; Zdravkova, 2026).

Academic writing represents a domain where the disruptive potential of GenAI is particularly pronounced. In foreign language learning contexts, particularly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, academic writing is a complex cognitive and linguistic process requiring the simultaneous orchestration of idea generation, paragraph organization, lexical selection, grammatical accuracy, argument construction, and adherence to disciplinary conventions (Ahmad et al., 2024; Aldayel et al., 2026; Fadhly et al., 2026). According to Bolsunovskaya and Rymanova (2020), Difficulty often arises at both the sentence level (e.g., lexical choice and syntactic control) and the discourse level (e.g., coherence, rhetoric, and logical argumentation). While academic writing intrinsically requires iterative processes of planning, drafting, reviewing, and revising (Shabitha & Muruganandan, 2025), traditional pedagogical support, such as instructor feedback, is frequently constrained by large class sizes, heavy teaching workloads, and limited instructional time (Maki & Graf, 2025). Consequently, Pitukwong and Saraiwang (2024) noted that digital writing technologies have increasingly served as essential scaffolding tools. GenAI expands this trajectory by offering dynamic, real-time, natural-language interactions that assist students during pre-writing brainstorming (Azar et al., 2026), drafting (Zhang & Shao, 2025), and structural or linguistic revision (Gani et al., 2025; Huo & Zhang, 2026).

To understand how students adopt and interact with these emergent tools, researchers frequently draw upon technological acceptance and pedagogical engagement frameworks. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), originally developed by Davis (1989, 1993), posits that technology adoption is determined primarily by two core constructs: perceived usefulness (the degree to which a user believes a technology enhances task performance) and perceived ease of use (the degree to which a user expects the technology to be free of effort). In EFL writing, perceived usefulness manifests when learners recognize AI as an effective tool for organizing arguments, polishing grammar, and generating vocabulary, whereas perceived ease of use relates to the accessibility of natural-language prompting and conversational interfaces (Ambalov, 2021; Amoush & Mizher, 2026; Malatji et al., 2020). However, as Balaskas et al. (2025) argue, traditional TAM constructs are insufficient for evaluating GenAI. Because GenAI actively participates in content creation and reasoning, its adoption cannot be measured solely by operational convenience or functional utility; it must also encompass pedagogical outcomes (perceived learning benefits) and ethical-cognitive risks (perceived risks and concerns).

On the one hand, the pedagogical integration of GenAI can yield distinct learning benefits. When students interact with GenAI as an interactive writing assistant, the immediate language-related feedback can foster lexical growth, grammatical awareness, and deeper familiarity with academic English registers (Chu & Chiu, 2025; Rakhimova et al., 2025; Yadav et al., 2025). Such interactions can promote iterative revision and self-regulated learning, transforming writing from a static product into a reflective learning process (Tang et al., 2025). On the other hand, the uncritical or unchecked reliance on GenAI poses critical pedagogical challenges. Based on Bista et al. (2026), Dornburg and Davin (2025), Erol et al. (2025), Pudasaini (2026), and Stanko et al. (2026), AI-generated text is not inherently accurate or authoritative; systems frequently output hallucinations, factual errors, or fabricated citations that require rigorous human verification and critical AI literacy. Furthermore, using AI output without intellectual transformation risks undermining student authorship, originality, critical thinking, and academic integrity (Drisko, 2025; Guarda, 2026; Kumar, 2025; Liddle & Grant, 2024). As Batista-Toledo and Gavilan (2026) emphasize, learners must maintain a clear boundary between utilizing AI as a supportive learning scaffold and permitting AI to perform the cognitive work on their behalf.

Although research on GenAI in education has expanded rapidly, several critical empirical gaps remain. First, research by Chounta et al. (2024) and Polo Abello et al. (2026) which focused either on technical applications, qualitative case studies, or general institutional attitudes, with relatively few studies examining student engagement through an integrated, multidimensional quantitative framework explicitly contextualized within academic writing classrooms. Second, existing studies frequently treat student perceptions in a polarized manner, focusing predominantly either on the utility of AI (Mohammed Mohammed et al., 2026; Pum, 2026) or on its ethical and policy risks (Abubakar et al., 2025). Such unidimensional approaches overlook the complex, dual nature of student experiences, where learners may simultaneously appreciate the practical convenience of GenAI while harboring significant reservations regarding academic honesty, dependency, and

cognitive atrophy (Chiavarino et al., 2025; Zou et al., 2026). Third, there is a pressing need for empirical evidence from non-Western EFL higher education contexts, such as Indonesia, where students navigate distinct linguistic demands and emerging digital environments (Godwin-Jones, 2024; Puteri et al., 2025; Rafida et al., 2024).

To address these empirical gaps, this study extends the traditional Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) framework. While standard TAM applications focus predominantly on operational convenience (usefulness and ease of use), this study integrates two additional critical dimensions: pedagogical cognitive outcomes (perceived learning benefits) and ethical-cognitive challenges (perceived risks and concerns). By synthesizing technology acceptance with pedagogical and ethical dimensions in a non-Western EFL higher education context, this study offers a novel, holistic perspective on how language learners simultaneously navigate the affordances and cognitive constraints of generative AI in academic writing. Specifically, this study addresses four overarching research questions:

1. What are EFL students' perceptions of the usefulness of generative AI tools in academic writing?
2. What are EFL students' perceptions of the ease of using generative AI tools in academic writing?
3. What learning benefits do EFL students perceive from using generative AI tools in academic writing?
4. What risks and concerns do EFL students perceive regarding the use of generative AI tools in academic writing?

By answering these questions, this study contributes empirical insights into the dual-edged role of GenAI in language education. The findings offer actionable implications for English language educators and higher education institutions in formulating pedagogically sound, ethically responsible, and human-centered strategies for integrating GenAI into academic writing instruction, ensuring technology augments rather than replaces students' independent cognitive development, originality, and writing autonomy.

Method

This study employed a quantitative descriptive survey design to investigate EFL students' perceptions of using GenAI tools in academic writing classrooms. A quantitative survey approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to numerically measure students' perceptions across predetermined dimensions and identify general response patterns without establishing causal relationships or evaluating changes in writing performance (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The research was conducted within the English Language Education study program at a public university in Jambi Province, Indonesia, a context where academic writing forms a core component of professional and academic preparation. Using a purposive sampling strategy based on criteria established by Memon et al. (2025), the study involved 71 undergraduate EFL students who were actively engaged in academic writing courses and had prior experience utilizing GenAI tools in their academic tasks. This sample size was deemed suitable for the descriptive objectives of the study, which focused on detailing context-specific perceptions rather than making broad population-level generalizations.

Data were gathered using an adapted 20-item questionnaire based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and prior research on GenAI in language learning by Huang et al. (2024). The instrument evaluated four distinct dimensions (five items each): perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU), perceived learning benefits (PLB), and perceived risks and concerns (PRC). All items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Higher scores reflected stronger agreement with each respective dimension, and risk-related items were maintained without reverse coding to directly measure perceived levels of concern. To ensure content validity and linguistic accessibility for undergraduate EFL learners, the questionnaire items were framed in clear, non-technical English and subjected to expert review by three specialists in English language education, educational technology, and language assessment before administration (Muliana et al., 2020).

The online questionnaire was distributed to participants between April and May 2026, following informed consent procedures that emphasized voluntary participation, anonymity, and data confidentiality. The administration took approximately 10–15 minutes per respondent. Upon completion of data collection, responses were exported to SPSS Version 26 and screened for missing entries, resulting in a final dataset of 71 valid responses. Data analysis proceeded in several main stages: validity, internal consistency testing, and

descriptive analysis. To establish construct validity, questionnaire items were subjected to Pearson product-moment correlation analysis against total dimension scores (Smith & Pearson, 2015). All 20 items exhibited significant positive correlation coefficients ($r > 0.388$, $p < 0.01$), exceeding the critical value threshold for N = 71 (r-table = 0.233), confirming acceptable construct validity. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha for each dimension and the overall scale (Wallace et al., 2026). Descriptive statistics, comprising means (M) and standard deviations (SD), were calculated for individual items and aggregated dimension scores to analyze response distributions and rank overall perceptions (Green et al., 2022). To aid descriptive interpretation, mean scores were categorized across equal intervals (Ossiannilsson, 2023): 1.00–1.80 (very low), 1.81–2.60 (low), 2.61–3.40 (moderate), 3.41–4.20 (high), and 4.21–5.00 (very high).

Results and Discussions

The present study investigated EFL undergraduate students' perceptions of Gen AI tools in academic writing across four key dimensions: perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU), perceived learning benefits (PLB), and perceived risks and concerns (PRC). Before evaluating the central research questions, the internal consistency of the measurement instrument was examined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics of the Research Instrument

Dimension	Item	*r*-value	Sig. (*p*-value)	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceived Usefulness	PU1	0.768	< 0.001	0.88
	PU2	0.712	< 0.001	
	PU3	0.841	< 0.001	
	PU4	0.825	< 0.001	
	PU5	0.793	< 0.001	
Perceived Ease of Use	PEOU1	0.812	< 0.001	0.84
	PEOU2	0.785	< 0.001	
	PEOU3	0.685	< 0.001	
	PEOU4	0.742	< 0.001	
	PEOU5	0.769	< 0.001	
Perceived Learning Benefits	PLB1	0.730	< 0.001	0.89
	PLB2	0.855	< 0.001	
	PLB3	0.814	< 0.001	
	PLB4	0.829	< 0.001	
	PLB5	0.761	< 0.001	
Perceived Risks and Concerns	PRC1	0.724	< 0.001	0.82
	PRC1	0.798	< 0.001	
	PRC1	0.781	< 0.001	
	PRC1	0.654	< 0.001	
	PRC1	0.736	< 0.001	
Overall Questionnaire	All Items	-		0.91

As shown in Table 1, the calculated r-values across all items ranged from 0.654 to 0.855, substantially exceeding the critical threshold value (r-table = 0.233, $p < 0.001$). These findings confirm that all items demonstrate acceptable construct validity. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the four individual dimensions ranged between 0.82 and 0.89, with the composite 20-item scale yielding an overall coefficient of 0.91, demonstrating high internal consistency reliability.

To provide a foundational comparison across the four constructs, composite mean scores were aggregated and ranked. Overall, participants exhibited generally high perceptions across all measured dimensions.

Table 2. Comparison of Four Dimensions

Dimension	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Interpretation
Perceived Usefulness	71	4.02	0.61	High
Perceived Ease of Use	71	4.04	0.59	High
Perceived Learning Benefits	71	3.92	0.64	High
Perceived Risks and Concerns	71	4.02	0.62	High
Valid N (Listwise)	71			

As summarized in Table 2, the comparison shows that perceived ease of use received the highest overall mean score (M = 4.04, SD = 0.59), followed by perceived usefulness and perceived risks and concerns, both of which obtained an overall mean of 4.02. Perceived learning benefits recorded the lowest overall mean among the four dimensions (M = 3.92, SD = 0.64). Because this study utilizes a descriptive survey framework without inferential mean-difference testing (ANOVA or paired t-tests), these figures should be understood as reflecting a consistently high baseline of student awareness across all dimensions, rather than statistically distinct hierarchical ranks.

The combination of high perceived ease of use and high perceived usefulness is consistent with the central logic of TAM. Davis' (1989) model suggests that users' evaluations of a technology are strongly related to whether they perceive it as useful and easy to use. In the present study, the similarly high scores for these two dimensions indicate that students generally viewed GenAI as both accessible and valuable for their academic writing activities. At the same time, the similarly high score for perceived risks and concerns demonstrates that positive technology perceptions do not eliminate awareness of potential problems. This finding is consistent with Kutty et al. (2024), showing that students can recognize the usefulness of GenAI while simultaneously expressing concerns about accuracy, ethics, academic integrity, and dependence. Thus, students' perceptions appear to be multidimensional rather than simply positive or negative.

The comparatively lower score for perceived learning benefits is also noteworthy. The finding may indicate that students are more confident about what GenAI can help them do than about what it can help them learn. For example, students may readily recognize that AI can correct grammar, revise sentences, or generate ideas, but these immediate forms of assistance do not necessarily guarantee the development of long-term writing competence or learner autonomy. This distinction is consistent with Heinsfeld and Veletsianos (2025), which emphasizes that GenAI should support human learning and agency rather than replace them. Taken together, the four dimensions suggest that students occupy a relatively pragmatic position toward GenAI. They appear to value its accessibility and usefulness, acknowledge its potential contribution to learning, and remain aware of its risks. This finding reinforces the need to conceptualize GenAI in EFL academic writing not simply as a technological innovation but as a tool whose educational value depends on the quality of human interaction, critical evaluation, and pedagogical guidance surrounding its use.

The first research question addressed students' perceptions of the usefulness of GenAI tools in academic writing. The table below details the descriptive statistics for this construct.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Usefulness

Code	Item	N	Mean	SD
PU1	Generative AI helps me generate ideas for academic writing.	71	4.03	0.72
PU2	Generative AI helps me organize my ideas when writing academic texts.	71	3.93	0.76
PU3	Generative AI helps me improve the language quality of my academic writing.	71	4.09	0.68
PU4	Generative AI helps me revise and improve my academic writing.	71	4.05	0.71
PU5	Using generative AI makes my academic writing process more efficient.	71	4.01	0.74

Overall	Perceived Usefulness	71	4.02	0.61

Table 3 indicates that students generally perceived GenAI as highly useful for academic writing, with an overall mean score of 4.02 (SD = 0.61). Among the five items, PU3, concerning the improvement of language quality, received the highest mean score (M = 4.09, SD = 0.68). This finding suggests that students particularly valued GenAI for improving the linguistic quality of their academic writing.

PU4, which concerned the use of GenAI for revising and improving academic writing, also received a relatively high mean score (M = 4.05, SD = 0.71). PU1 obtained a mean of 4.03 (SD = 0.72), while PU5 recorded a mean of 4.01 (SD = 0.74). The lowest mean was observed for PU2 (M = 3.93, SD = 0.76), which addressed structural idea organization. Nevertheless, all item scores remained well within the high range, indicating widespread agreement regarding the functional utility of GenAI in academic writing.

These findings suggest that students particularly valued GenAI as a practical writing-support tool that can assist them with both linguistic and process-oriented aspects of academic writing. This finding is consistent with Davis (1993), in which perceived usefulness refers to the extent to which users believe that a technology can enhance their performance. The finding of Davis' study established perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as fundamental determinants of technology acceptance. In the present context, students' high perception of usefulness suggests that they recognize GenAI as capable of supporting concrete academic writing activities rather than merely viewing it as a novel technological application.

The finding is also consistent with recent research in EFL contexts. Pham and Pham (2025) reported that college EFL students generally perceived positive benefits from AI-assisted writing assignments, particularly in relation to the accessibility and usefulness of AI tools. Similarly, (Alkamel & Alwagieh, 2024; Meniado et al., 2024) involving EFL undergraduate students has reported generally positive perceptions of ChatGPT as a supplementary tool for developing academic writing skills. These findings support the present result that students tend to recognize GenAI as a useful resource for academic writing. The relatively high perception of usefulness can also be explained by the types of assistance provided by GenAI. In academic writing, students need to generate and organize ideas, select appropriate vocabulary, construct grammatically accurate sentences, and revise their drafts. GenAI can provide suggestions across several of these stages, making it particularly attractive as a supplementary writing resource. Research by Puteri et al. (2025) on EFL students has similarly identified idea generation, language support, and feedback as important perceived benefits of ChatGPT in writing-related activities.

The finding that language quality received the highest rating is particularly relevant to EFL learners. Students writing in a foreign language may need additional support with grammar, vocabulary, sentence construction, and academic language conventions. GenAI can provide immediate suggestions and explanations, which may make the writing process more manageable. However, perceived usefulness should not automatically be interpreted as evidence that GenAI objectively improves students' writing performance. The present study measured students' perceptions rather than changes in writing proficiency. Therefore, the result demonstrates students' perceived value of GenAI rather than its causal effectiveness.

The second research question investigated students' perceptions of the ease of using GenAI tools in academic writing. The five items examined the perceived ease of use, learnability, interaction, comprehensibility, and integration of GenAI into academic writing activities.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Ease of Use

Code	Item	N	Mean	SD
PEOU1	I find generative AI tools easy to use for academic writing.	71	4.16	0.65
PEOU2	Learning how to use generative AI for academic writing is easy for me.	71	4.10	0.69
PEOU3	I can easily communicate my writing needs to generative AI tools.	71	3.94	0.78
PEOU4	I can easily understand and use the responses provided by generative AI.	71	3.92	0.73
PEOU5	It is easy for me to integrate generative AI into my academic writing activities.	71	4.03	0.71
Overall	Perceived Ease of use	71	4.04	0.59

As presented in Table 4, the participants reported a high level of perceived ease of use, with an overall mean of 4.04 (SD = 0.59). PEOU1 obtained the highest mean score (M = 4.16, SD = 0.65), indicating that students generally found GenAI tools easy to use for academic writing. PEOU2 also received a high mean score of 4.10 (SD = 0.69), suggesting that students experienced relatively little difficulty learning how to use GenAI for writing-related purposes.

The lowest mean score was observed for PEOU3 (M = 3.94, SD = 0.78), which concerned students' ability to communicate their writing needs to GenAI tools. Although this was the lowest-rated item within the construct, the mean still indicated a high level of agreement. The finding is theoretically consistent with Davis (1989), who stated that perceived ease of use is conceptualized as the degree to which an individual believes that using a particular system will require little effort. In his empirical model, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use were identified as important determinants of technology acceptance. Thus, the high score obtained in the present study suggests that students perceived GenAI as a relatively accessible technology for their academic writing activities.

The high level of perceived ease of use may also be related to the conversational interface of contemporary GenAI applications. Students can interact with these systems using natural-language instructions rather than learning complex technical procedures. This characteristic is particularly relevant to EFL students because the technology can be accessed through the same language-learning and writing activities that students already perform. EFL research by Amoush and Mizher (2026) has similarly reported favorable perceptions of ChatGPT and other AI tools in terms of accessibility and usefulness for writing-related tasks.

However, the relatively lower score for communicating writing needs to GenAI deserves attention. Although the score remains high, it may indicate that effective use of GenAI requires more than simply accessing the technology. Students need to formulate appropriate prompts, provide sufficient context, specify their writing objectives, and critically interpret the resulting responses. Recent research by Kemal et al. (2025) on EFL students' interaction with AI suggests that prompting practices and the distribution of responsibility between human writers and AI can vary substantially, highlighting the importance of students' ability to communicate effectively with AI systems.

Therefore, ease of access should not be equated with effective pedagogical use. Students may find GenAI technically easy to use while still requiring instruction in prompt formulation, response evaluation, source verification, and responsible integration of AI-generated suggestions into their own writing. This distinction is important because effective AI literacy involves not only knowing how to operate a tool but also knowing how to evaluate and use its output appropriately

The third research question investigated the specific learning benefits students attributed to GenAI during the academic writing process. Descriptive results for this construct are presented in the table below.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Learning Benefits

Code	Item	N	Mean	SD
PLB1	Using generative AI helps me learn new vocabulary for academic writing.	71	3.90	0.79
PLB2	Generative AI helps me understand and correct grammatical problems in my writing.	71	4.06	0.70
PLB3	Generative AI helps me become more aware of how academic English is used.	71	3.88	0.76
PLB4	Feedback from generative AI helps me improve my writing skills.	71	4.01	0.73
PLB5	Using generative AI encourages me to learn independently when writing in English.	71	3.74	0.86
Overall	Perceived Learning Benefits	71	3.92	0.64

Table 5 shows that students generally perceived GenAI as providing substantial learning benefits, as reflected by an overall mean score of 3.92 (SD = 0.64). PLB2 received the highest mean score (M = 4.06, SD = 0.70), indicating that students particularly perceived GenAI as useful for understanding and correcting grammatical problems in their academic writing.

PLB4 also received a relatively high mean score (M = 4.01, SD = 0.73), suggesting that students valued AI-generated feedback as a source of support for improving their writing skills. PLB1 and PLB3 recorded mean

scores of 3.90 (SD = 0.79) and 3.88 (SD = 0.76), respectively. In contrast, PLB5 received the lowest mean score (M = 3.74, SD = 0.86). Although this score remained relatively high, it suggests that students were somewhat less likely to perceive GenAI as promoting independent learning compared with its more direct language-support functions.

These findings indicate that students recognized GenAI as a potentially useful source of immediate language-related assistance. The relatively high perception of grammar-related benefits is understandable in an EFL context. Students may experience difficulties with grammatical accuracy, vocabulary selection, sentence construction, and academic language conventions. GenAI can provide explanations and alternative formulations almost immediately, allowing students to compare their original writing with suggested revisions. Research by Mekheimer (2025) on AI-assisted EFL writing similarly identified language correction and feedback as important functions perceived by students.

The relatively high score for AI-generated feedback also suggests that students may perceive GenAI as an accessible supplementary feedback mechanism. This is consistent with Lee et al. (2024), showing that students view AI tools as useful sources of immediate assistance during writing. However, the quality of AI-generated feedback cannot be assumed to be consistently accurate or pedagogically appropriate. Research evaluating ChatGPT feedback for English language learners by (Algobaei & Alzain, 2026) has found that some AI-generated feedback can be generic or inaccurate, particularly when addressing higher-level aspects of coherence and cohesion. Thus, students' positive perceptions of AI feedback should be accompanied by the ability to critically evaluate whether the feedback is appropriate.

An important finding concerns the comparatively lower score for independent learning. Although this mean still represents a relatively positive perception, it was lower than the other learning-related items. This may suggest that students perceive GenAI more strongly as a direct assistance tool than as a mechanism for developing autonomy. Students may readily recognize that AI can correct grammar, provide vocabulary, or suggest revisions without necessarily perceiving these activities as contributing to their long-term ability to write independently. This finding is important because the educational value of GenAI depends partly on how students engage with its output. Kolhatin (2025) emphasized that GenAI in education should be approached in a human-centred manner that protects human agency and supports meaningful learning rather than allowing technology to replace human cognitive activity. Accordingly, teachers may need to design activities that require students to explain why they accept or reject AI suggestions, compare AI-generated alternatives, verify information, and revise their own writing. Such practices could transform GenAI from an answer-providing mechanism into a tool for reflective learning.

The fourth research question examined students' perceptions of potential risks and concerns associated with the use of GenAI in academic writing. The five items addressed AI dependency, information reliability, academic integrity, originality, and the development of critical thinking and writing skills.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics: Perceived Risks and Concerns

Code	Item	N	Mean	SD
PRC1	Frequent use of generative AI may make students overly dependent on AI when writing.	71	3.93	0.79
PRC2	Generative AI may provide inaccurate or unreliable information for academic writing.	71	4.07	0.71
PRC3	Using AI-generated text without appropriate modification may create academic integrity problems.	71	4.16	0.68
PRC4	Excessive use of generative AI may reduce students' originality in academic writing.	71	3.90	0.81
PRC5	Overreliance on generative AI may reduce students' opportunities to develop their own critical thinking and writing skills.	71	4.03	0.75
Overall	Perceived Risk and Concerns	71	4.02	0.62

Table 6 presented that participants demonstrated a high level of awareness of the potential risks and concerns associated with GenAI, with an overall mean score of 4.02 (SD = 0.62). PRC3 received the highest

mean score (M = 4.16, SD = 0.68), indicating that academic integrity was the most strongly perceived concern among the participants.

PRC2, concerning the possibility of inaccurate or unreliable information, also received a high mean score (M = 4.07, SD = 0.71). PRC5 obtained a mean of 4.03 (SD = 0.75), suggesting that students were also aware of the possibility that overreliance on GenAI could affect the development of their critical thinking and writing skills. PRC1 and PRC4 recorded mean scores of 3.93 (SD = 0.79) and 3.90 (SD = 0.81), respectively.

The Score of overall perceived risk and concern is one of the most important findings of the study because it demonstrates that students can simultaneously perceive GenAI as highly useful and recognize substantial risks associated with its use. This balanced perception is consistent with Chiavarino et al. (2025), who found that students recognized the potential of GenAI for personalized learning, writing, brainstorming, and academic support while simultaneously expressing concerns about accuracy, ethical issues, and potential effects on personal development. Similarly, research by Rafida et al. (2024) involving EFL college students has reported positive perceptions of AI-assisted writing alongside concerns about overreliance and academic integrity.

This finding indicates that students were highly aware of the possibility that using AI-generated text without appropriate modification or intellectual engagement could create academic integrity problems. Such awareness is particularly important in academic writing because authorship, originality, and responsible scholarship are central principles of academic work. The concern is also reflected in broader discussions of GenAI in higher education. Abuzir (2026) identified ethical and human-agency issues as central considerations in the responsible use of GenAI in education and emphasizes the need for human-centred approaches, appropriate institutional guidance, and safeguards. Nguyen (2025) and Wilson (2025) found that university policies and guidelines commonly focus on ethical use, accuracy, and the development of appropriate pedagogical practices when responding to GenAI.

The high concern about inaccurate or unreliable information further suggests that students recognize that GenAI-generated content cannot automatically be considered trustworthy. Although GenAI can produce fluent and convincing responses, linguistic fluency does not necessarily guarantee factual accuracy. This concern is particularly relevant to academic writing, where students are expected to use credible evidence and accurate information. Therefore, students need to verify AI-generated claims and sources before incorporating them into academic work. Ebron (2026) emphasized the importance of human oversight and critical engagement when GenAI is used in educational contexts.

The findings concerning dependency and critical thinking are also significant. Students reported high levels of concern regarding overdependence on AI and the possibility that overreliance on GenAI could reduce opportunities to develop critical thinking and writing skills. This concern is consistent with Conti et al. (2026), which identified the preservation of human agency and cognitive engagement as important issues in educational uses of GenAI.

The coexistence of high usefulness and high risk perceptions suggests that students may already recognize the central tension surrounding GenAI in academic writing. They do not necessarily view the technology as either entirely beneficial or entirely harmful. Rather, they appear to recognize that the educational value of GenAI depends on how responsibly it is used. This finding supports a more balanced approach to GenAI integration in which institutions and teachers focus on responsible use, clear expectations, human oversight, and the preservation of students' intellectual agency rather than relying exclusively on prohibition.

Conclusions

The overall findings show that EFL undergraduate students take a very practical and thoughtful stance on using generative AI in academic writing classrooms. On the one hand, students truly appreciate how easy and useful AI is for generating ideas, polishing grammar, and getting fast feedback. On the other hand, they are well aware of the risks, such as academic dishonesty, inaccurate information, and becoming overly dependent on technology. Interestingly, because students do not see AI as a way to build long-term learning independence, they mostly treat it as a quick, practical editing helper rather than a tool that teaches them how to write on their own.

These insights offer important directions for teachers and universities. Instead of banning AI or using it blindly, educators should teach practical AI literacy, showing students how to write good prompts, check if AI-

generated information is accurate, and critically evaluate AI suggestions. Universities should also establish clear rules for ethical AI use. Writing classes must continue to emphasize students' own critical thinking and original work, ensuring that AI serves purely as a supportive aid rather than a replacement for student effort.

This study has a few limitations, as it focused on a single university and relied on self-reported survey data, which reflects student perceptions rather than their actual writing improvement. To build on these findings, future research should include larger student groups across multiple campuses and combine survey data with interviews, classroom observations, or writing tests. This will give a clearer picture of how AI can be integrated responsibly to support foreign language learning.

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