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THE ROLE OF AI IN COMPLETING WRITING TASKS
BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

In the era of advancing technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a powerful tool, revolutionizing various facets of education, thus the role of AI in education is highly debated and discussed by many scholars. While AI aids in solving problems, serves as a time-saving tool, and helps to generate ideas, its role in completing writing tasks among students of higher educational institutions remains a topic of debate. This study explores the expediency of assigning writing tasks to students in online education settings and as homework or test components, while also examining the reasons and results of copying AI-generated texts. The paper presents a critical literature review of similar studies and evaluates the perspectives of students and educators on the integration of AI into writing tasks. A questionnaire survey was conducted among students of technical specialities at Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, focusing on their usage of AI for writing tasks and their perceptions of its impact on language learning. Results indicate a significant reliance on AI tools for completing writing tasks, with ChatGPT 4.0 emerging as the preferred platform among students. While most students read and edit AI-generated compositions before submission, concerns regarding plagiarism, academic integrity and the loss of independent research skills were voiced. Furthermore, students cited lack of time and desire to complete writing tasks as primary reasons for using AI, highlighting the need for engaging and interactive writing activities in educational settings. The present paper suggests some practical activities, which can complement writing tasks to make them more interesting and engaging, in order to avoid boredom and total plagiarism, increase students' motivation to upgrade their writing skills, moreover, the study underscores the importance of fostering critical thinking and highlights the need to do self-reflection among students to discern appropriate usage of AI in education. Overall, the findings suggest a nuanced approach towards integrating AI into writing tasks, emphasizing the importance of maintaining academic integrity and promoting meaningful learning experiences.

Key words: *AI in education, practical writing tasks, academic integrity, language learning efficiency.*

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РОЛЬ ШІ У ВИКОНАННІ ЗАВДАНЬ НА ПИСЬМО СТУДЕНТАМИ ВНЗ

В епоху розвитку технологій Штучний Інтелект (ШІ) виступає як потужний інструмент, що значною мірою впливає на різні аспекти освіти, тому його роль наразі є питанням для обговорень та дискусій серед освітян та дослідників. Хоча ШІ допомагає у вирішенні проблем, служить як засіб економії часу, допомагає генерувати ідеї, його роль у виконанні саме писемних завдань серед студентів закладів вищої освіти залишається предметом дебатів. У цьому дослідженні обговорюється доцільність виконання завдань на письмо студентами ЗВО в умовах онлайн-освіти, в якості домашніх завдань або як компонентів тестування, а також причини та наслідки копіювання текстів, згенерованих ШІ. В статті представлений критичний аналіз літератури, та результати опитування, які висвітлюють погляди студентів на інтеграцію ШІ в писемні завдання. Було проведено анкетування серед студентів технічних спеціальностей в Київському політехнічному інституті імені Ігоря Сікорського, яке фокусувалося на їх використанні ШІ для виконання писемних завдань та їх сприйнятті впливу ШІ на вивчення іноземної мови. Результати показують значну залежність студентів від інструментів ШІ для виконання писемних завдань, причому ChatGPT 4.0 виявляється найбільш популярною платформою серед студентів. Хоча більшість студентів читають та редагують створені ШІ тексти перед тим, як здати роботу, все ж існує певне занепокоєння щодо питань пов'язаних з плагіатом, академічною доброчесністю та можливістю втрати незалежних дослідницьких навичок. Крім того, студенти називають відсутність часу та бажання завершити писемні завдання як основні причини використання ШІ, підкреслюючи потребу в цікавих та інтерактивних писемних завданнях в освітніх закладах. У цій статті запропоновано практичні завдання, які можуть доповнити писемні, та зробити їх цікавішими, привабливішими, уникнути повний плагіат, а також підвищити мотивацію студентів покращити свої навички з письма. Крім того, у дослідженні підкреслюється важливість розвитку критичного мислення та необхідність саморефлексії серед студентів для розрізнення належного використання ШІ в освіті. У цілому результати вказують на необхідність дотримання виваженого підходу до інтеграції ШІ в писемні завдання, підкреслюючи важливість збереження академічної доброчесності та доцільності виконання того чи іншого завдання.

Ключові слова: ШІ в освіті, практичні письмові завдання, академічна доброчесність, ефективність вивчення іноземної мови.

Problem statement. With the development of information technologies, neural networks in particular, Artificial intelligence (AI) emerged as a powerful problem-solving and time-saving method, which is now widely used to complete various educational tasks. Students of technical specialities stated that AI tools cannot be reliable ways of completing tasks on such subjects as Physics, Higher Mathematics, Engineering, etc., but still, they can serve to write articles, essays, compositions and other types of writing tasks. Taking into consideration this fact, there arises a question of expediency of suggesting students perform writing tasks as homework or tests when studying online. Also, the ways of getting any use from copying AI-generated texts should be analysed.

Analysis of research and publications. The role of AI in education in general is discussed by many scholars nowadays since it is a highly contradictable question. Some express arguments in favour of

utilizing AI tools to study, for instance, K.G. Srinivasa, et al. regard new technologies as opportunities to expand educational settings for learning both inside and outside of the traditional classroom but state that it also requires financial investment in all educational levels (Srinivasa et al., 2022: 311). In their work they focus on the benefits AI can bring to educators, which are undoubted, since using different platforms and tools significantly simplifies ways of developing tasks for students, checking students' assignments, providing feedback, etc. Based on their study conducted involving English language learners, Kunyang Qu and Xuande Wu revealed positive aspects of using AI, Chat GPT in particular. The scholars highlighted the increase in students' enthusiasm and engagement and, the positive impact on developing written and oral skills (Qu, Wu, 2024). Alex Guilherme also supports "technological inclusion" as a factor that can benefit education but requires changing the educational context (Guilherme, 2019). Joel C. Meniado supports the idea of using AI to enhance the quality simplify teaching and assessment, and increase students' productivity but at the same time expresses concerns connected with academic integrity, information accuracy and security (Meniado, 2023).

Paweł Cabała et al. consider also focused their study on the utilization of ChatGPT, and conducted a questionnaire survey aimed at finding out the opinion of students about the possibility of using the ChatGPT platform in solving specific decision-making problems. The result of their study demonstrated that the majority of surveyed students have a positive attitude toward using the ChatGPT system in classes (Cabała et al, 2023). However, there were different opinions on the answers to the open question. On the one hand, the benefits of using it as a learning support tool were noted, for example, facilitating information retrieval, paraphrasing text or creating work plans. On the other hand, there were concerns about the possibility of plagiarism, as well as the risk of students losing the ability to search for information reliably and efficiently. Kunyang Qu and Xuande Wu, also regard AI platforms as valuable tools for computer-assisted language learning (CALL), but they also express concern that there remains limited understanding regarding the adoption of AI chatbots, specifically within the context of the English language (Qu, Wu, 2024).

The objective of the present paper is to identify the expediency of giving students of higher educational institutions writing tasks within the frames of online education and as home assignments, parts of tests, etc., and based on the questionnaire results suggest complementing the writing tasks with activities aimed

at developing writing and overall students' language proficiency skills.

The present research was completed using the methods of observation, critical analysis of literature and conducting a questionnaire among students of Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, who study Math, Physics and Engineering.

Results and discussion. As was already mentioned, AI nowadays is an integral part of completing writing tasks, providing us with a variety of ideas on its use, starting from simple tasks such as proofreading, text polishing, highlighting keywords, and finishing with getting the work done without any human participation.

To identify the number of students who prefer using AI to complete writing tasks without any participation, we surveyed the students of two faculties: Physics and Math and Mechanical Engineering at Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute. In total, 66 students took part in the questionnaire, aged 18–27. Most of them are 20 years old – 36 people (54.5%), 3 students aged 18 (4.5%), 12 students – 19 yr. (12.2%), 12 – 21 yr. (12.2%) and 3 students aged 27 (4.5%), 39 (59.1%) of them are male and 27 (40.9%) are female. The focus group was suggested to give answers to the following questions:

1. Do you use AI tools to complete English writing tasks? (Suggested answer options: yes, no, sometimes).

2. In case you use AI tools to complete writing tasks, which ones? (They had to fill in their short answer).

3. Do you read the composition/essay/paragraph the AI-generated for you? (Suggested answer options: yes, no, not always).

4. Do you edit the composition/essay/paragraph the AI-generated for you? (Suggested answer options: yes, no, not always).

5. Do you translate the new words (if there are any) from an AI-generated writing piece? (Suggested answer options: yes, no, sometimes).

6. What do you think is the main reason for students to use AI tools for completing writing tasks? (Suggested answer options: lack of knowledge, desire to boost academic performance, lack of time, lack of desire to write something, the desire to complete the task with higher quality and other, where students were free to write their replies.

7. Do you think it is a good trend that more and more students use AI to complete writing tasks? (Suggested answer options yes, no, not sure, other).

8. Do you think AI positively influences the language learning process? (Suggested answer options yes, no, not sure, other).

The results of the mentioned questionnaire are the following:

1) 59.1% of students stated that they sometimes use AI to complete writing tasks, 27.3% deny using AI, and 13.6% confessed using AI to complete writing tasks. This result doesn't fully correlate with teachers' observations, which indicate a bigger percentage of students who just copy and paste ready-generated texts.

2) Among the tools mentioned ChatGPT 4.0 (59 responses), Bard (2 responses), Gemini (2 responses), and Grammarly (1 response). That is, we can conclude that so far ChatGPT remains to be one of the most popular among students, the possible reasons for it to be highly used are its affordability, accessibility, and simplicity of usage.

3) 77.3% of the students admitted that they read the generated piece of writing before submitting it, 18.2% stated that they do not always read it, and 4.5% confessed that they never read ready-generated texts. As we can see, the majority at least read their completed assignments before submitting them, and this indicates that even if they do not complete writing as they are supposed to, they still can upgrade their reading skills.

4. 72.7% of the respondents claimed that they edited the composition/essay/paragraph the AI-generated, 22.7% stated that they do not always do that and only 4.5% responded that they never edit. This also can indicate a good trend, since editing requires reading comprehension skills and critical thinking skills as minimum.

5. 68.2% responded that they translate the new words (if there are any) from AI-generated writing pieces, 18.2% said they did not and 13.3% chose the option sometimes. Since the majority translates, this indicates they are interested in the new vocabulary items and might mean their motivation to comprehend their writing pieces.

6. Regarding the reasons for using AI tools for completing writing tasks, the majority choose 2 options: lack of desire to write something (28.6% of respondents) and lack of time, the same amount (28.6%). The second largest reason was the desire to complete the task with a higher quality. The other options were chosen by one student each, that is: lack of knowledge (4.8%), desire to boost academic performance (4.8%), and other options were as follows: a set of different factors, using AI as a translator, proofreading, checking if the composed sentence is clear and makes sense, to avoid boredom when completing writing task, to complete the task if it seems higher then particular student's level of language proficiency. Based on these results, we can conclude that writing tasks are not students' favourite activity and to make them more engaging and enjoyable there should be suggested interesting activities. For instance, students can be provided with intriguing story starters, or writing prompts to provoke their imagination and train creativity. The other option is to suggest students problem-solving tasks, for example, a game "Consequences", where each student writes a sentence or paragraph of a story, and the rest of the group should suggest a story ending. This can be complemented with competition for the best story. Also, it would be valuable to connect writing tasks to real-world issues, events, or experiences relevant to students' lives, which might encourage them to explore topics they are passionate about, such as social justice, environmental sustainability, or personal reflections. Moreover, students should understand, that teachers can instantly identify if the text was generated by AI since AI-generated works have certain structures, sophisticated sentence-building techniques and very extensive vocabulary. Thus the good idea is to organise peer review sessions where students can share their work, receive feedback, and collaborate with peers, having the chance to observe themselves from the teachers' view. This activity can also encourage constructive criticism, peer editing, and supportive feedback.

7. 59.1% of the students are not sure if it is a good trend that more and more students are using AI to complete writing tasks, 13.6% are pro, and the same amount are against it. There were also several replies in the category of "other", one student stated that it strongly depends on the student's intentions if AI is used to check yourself and help to understand mistakes, but if the work is completed purely by AI. If a student does not even bother checking, then it is a negative trend. Another student admitted that educators should teach the students to use AI appropriately, setting clear goals for some particular tasks to avoid breaking academic integrity and plagiarism. One more student commented that if students analyse the AI text, try to improve it, learn new words and speech patterns, and use the AI in conjunction with a translator and dictionary, this is a good thing because the student will learn new words and visually see an example of their use. Otherwise, it is a bad trend. To summarise this section, it should be stated that we can agree that students need to self-reflect and understand their goals if they just need to complete the task because it is required or they want to upgrade their writing skills. And depending on this analysis they should choose their strategies of using AI in education in general.

8. Regarding AI's positive versus negative influence on the language learning process, 40.9% expressed a positive attitude, 40.9% were not sure and only 13.6% were strongly against it. Also, one student answered that it depends on a person.

Conclusion. The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into writing tasks among students of higher educational institutions presents both opportunities and challenges. While AI tools offer efficiency and convenience, they also raise concerns regarding academic integrity, plagiarism, and the erosion of critical thinking skills. The findings of this study highlight the prevalent use of AI among students for completing writing tasks, driven primarily by factors such as lack of time and motivation. However, educators must recognize the need for balanced and ethical utilization of AI in education. Engaging and interactive writing activities can play a vital role in addressing students' reliance on AI tools and fostering a deeper understanding of language proficiency. By providing students with opportunities for creative expression, critical analysis, and peer collaboration, educators can promote meaningful learning experiences and empower students to develop essential writing skills.

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