

Chapter 13

ESL Academic Writing in Higher Education: The Impact of Artificial Intelligence

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ABSTRACT

The application of artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education could offer benefits for research and learning but also raises ethical concerns about authorship and academic dishonesty. This pilot study explores the impact of AI on ESL academic writing, particularly their potential to enhance students' reading and writing skills while mitigating unethical practices. 15 sophomores completed two writing tasks—one at the beginning and one at the end of the semester—after receiving training on the responsible use of AI tools. The findings indicate a notable decrease in cases of plagiarism and academic fraud, alongside improvements in the global scores, organization, content quality, grammar and orthography. Additionally, students reported a general positive perception of AI tools, particularly in the drafting and revision stages and recognized their role as supportive rather than substitutive. These results suggest proper AI integration can promote academic integrity and enhance ESL students' writing proficiency in higher education.

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