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Do generative Artificial Intelligence tools assist or prevent learners' development in English as a second learning environment?

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Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools, such as ChatGPT, are increasingly pervasive in society and helpful aid for education, but they also have problems. Although AI tools may help students gather information and generate ideas, there is a concern about whether GenAI may deprive them of opportunities to research widely and think critically independently. This study discusses the students' perception of using GenAI tools in assignments based on the questionnaire results from the academic English course at an online university. Twelve participants, three females and nine males from different regions, participated in the online questionnaire. The results show that about half of them answered that they should not use ChatGPT in writing assignments, but the rest answered that they could use it when necessary. About 75 percent responded that writing with the ChatGPT is equally unfavorable as plagiarism, and the teacher should detect the students' wrong use of ChatGPT. The free comment section reveals that many are concerned that repeated use of ChatGPT may lead them to its habitual use and failure in the course. Prominently, while teachers often view the issue of AI misuse as an academic ethics problem, we found that many students were concerned that the regular use of such tools would prevent them from acquiring knowledge, improving their writing skills, and achieving the results of their efforts. As the number of subjects was small and the questionnaire was open-ended, relatively diligent students may have answered the questionnaire, and those who wanted to misuse GenAI may have not. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized. However, this case study has given us some hints on solving the disadvantageous aspects of AI in education, not only from a technical but also a cognitive point of view.

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Keywords

AI, ChatGPT, learner development, L2 writing,

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