

The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Learning Writing of the Indonesian and Philippine Students

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Abstract:

The integration of technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), has transformed foreign and second language learning, including the teaching and learning of writing. AI-based tools can help students find references quickly, paraphrase sentences, translate texts, and check grammar and sentence structure. This study investigated the kinds of AI tools used by Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students and Philippine English as a Second Language (ESL) students in learning writing, how they used these tools across the stages of the writing process, and the weaknesses and ethical issues they perceived. A descriptive qualitative design was employed. The participants were students of the English Education Department of Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sultan Aji Muhammad Idris Samarinda, Indonesia, and seven students enrolled in English-related programs at Central Mindanao University, the Philippines. The data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation, analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, and validated through triangulation. The findings showed that the Indonesian students used a wide range of tools, namely QuillBot, Grammarly, ChatGPT, DeepL, Perplexity AI, and Essay Writer, whereas the Philippine students relied mainly on ChatGPT, followed by Grammarly and Gemini. In both contexts, AI was used throughout the writing process, most intensively at the drafting stage and, among the Philippine students, also at the editing stage. The students acknowledged that AI sometimes produced inaccurate or overly general information and expressed concerns about dependency, while most Philippine students did not disclose their use of AI to their lecturers. These findings suggest that the students used AI selectively, according to their needs and abilities, and that clear institutional guidance on the responsible use of AI in writing is needed.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, EFL writing, ESL writing, writing process

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the most complex skills that students need to master in learning English; therefore, teaching writing occupies a crucial place in the English classroom. Harmer (2004) proposes four reasons for teaching writing. First, writing serves as reinforcement, as students often find it useful to write sentences in a new language soon after learning it. Second, writing promotes language development because the mental activity required to construct appropriate written texts is part of an ongoing learning process. Third, writing accommodates different learning styles, as some students need more time to think before producing language and benefit from writing as a quiet, reflective activity. Fourth, writing is a basic language skill in its own right, comparable to speaking, listening, and reading; students need to know how to compose letters and reports and to master writing conventions such as punctuation and paragraph construction (Ghufron, 2016). Teachers are therefore responsible for developing these abilities, while the demands placed on students' literacy continue to rise along with the development of the times (Fauzan et al., 2023). In Indonesian Islamic higher education, students' productive skills have long been reported as a challenge (Hadijah, 2014), which makes the use of technology to support the learning process increasingly necessary.

The application of information technology in language education can enhance learners' experiences during the learning process (Lin et al., 2023). Technology has created virtual language learning environments that make learning resources accessible to anyone who needs them, and devices such as laptops, computers, and mobile phones are now part of everyday learning. Technology that provides rapid access to information and supports complex analysis also contributes to improved education. In this landscape, artificial intelligence (AI) has come to play a key role.

As a learning tool, AI also influences students' motivation. This influence stems from interactive learning processes, as AI systems often provide dynamic and immediate feedback that fosters deeper engagement (Seo et al., 2021). The benefits of AI are felt by both teachers and students: teachers are assisted in the teaching process, while students are supported in understanding learning materials. AI tools commonly used in language learning include QuillBot, Google Translate, DeepL, U-Dictionary, ChatGPT, Copy.ai, Bard (now Gemini), Perplexity AI, and ChitChop.

Technology has become increasingly prevalent in schools and educational systems, and its application in teaching reading, writing, listening, and speaking has been found to be largely positive. Technology allows students to engage with the target language on a familiar platform, making them feel more connected to the content and goals set by their teachers (Kawinkoonlasate, 2019). In the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, EFL pre-service teachers also perceive the value of digital multimodal composing, such as designing digital storytelling books, as teaching material in real classrooms (Navila et al., 2023). AI technology, in particular, provides personalized and adaptive learning experiences that help learners improve their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills; nevertheless, ethical issues must be addressed and further research is needed to ensure that AI is used responsibly and equitably (Rusmiyanto et al., 2023). With such guidance, educators and policymakers can use AI efficiently and responsibly to improve language learning outcomes and equip learners with the communication skills required in today's interconnected society.

In the twenty-first century, education, like other aspects of life, has undergone substantial change. In Indonesia, where English is learned as a foreign language, AI is frequently used in English learning because many students doubt their own abilities and turn to AI to improve the four language skills. Although research on AI in English language teaching in Indonesia has grown (e.g., Fitria, 2021; Kurniati & Fithriani, 2022; Marzuki et al., 2023), most studies have examined either students' general perceptions of AI or the effects of a single tool. Few studies have mapped how students use AI across the specific stages of the writing process, and even fewer have done so in state Islamic universities in Indonesia.

Writing deserves particular attention because it involves multiple dimensions, including content, organization, grammar, and mechanics. Unlike previous studies that discussed the use of AI in education as a whole, the present study focuses specifically on the use of AI in learning writing.

Furthermore, the status of English differs between Indonesia, where it is learned as a foreign language, and the Philippines, where it functions as a second language (Gunantar, 2016; Kachru, 1985). To enrich the data and to examine whether the use of AI in writing is shaped by this context, the study also involved students of Central Mindanao University, the Philippines. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions:

- (1) What kinds of AI tools do Indonesian EFL students use in learning writing, and how do they use them?
- (2) What kinds of AI tools do Philippine ESL students use, and how do they use them in learning writing?
- (3) What weaknesses and ethical issues do the students perceive in using AI for writing?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Artificial Intelligence in Education and Language Learning

Artificial intelligence refers to computing systems that are able to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as recognizing patterns, processing natural language, and making decisions based on data (Popenici & Kerr, 2017). In higher education, AI applications have been used for profiling and prediction, assessment and evaluation, adaptive systems and personalization, and intelligent tutoring systems (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). Zhang and Aslan (2021) show that AI technologies for education have expanded rapidly, ranging from chatbots and intelligent tutors to automated assessment and learning analytics, and Lin et al. (2023) highlight the potential of intelligent tutoring systems to support sustainable education. At the same time, Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019) caution that much of this research pays little attention to pedagogical perspectives and to the ethical risks of AI, and Popenici and Kerr (2017) argue that AI should complement rather than replace the role of teachers.

In English language teaching, AI has been used to support all four language skills. Fitria (2021) describes how AI-based technologies, such as chatbots, machine translation, speech recognition, and automated writing assistants, are increasingly used in English teaching and learning in Indonesia. AI can also change the nature of interaction in online learning by providing timely responses to learners (Seo et al., 2021), and it offers personalized and adaptive learning experiences that can develop learners' communication skills (Rusmiyanto et al., 2023). The arrival of generative AI, particularly ChatGPT, has accelerated these developments. ChatGPT is

a large language model that produces human-like responses in a conversational manner (J. Su & Yang, 2023), which enables learners to request explanations, examples, feedback, and texts on demand. Kohnke et al. (2023) argue that ChatGPT can serve language learners as a conversation partner, a source of explanations of vocabulary and grammar, and a writing assistant, but that both teachers and students need new digital competencies to use it effectively.

2.2 The Use of Artificial Intelligence in EFL Writing

In EFL contexts, writing is the skill for which AI tools are most widely used. Early AI writing support took the form of automated written corrective feedback and grammar checkers. Dizon and Gayed (2021) found that Japanese EFL students who used Grammarly when writing on mobile devices produced texts with fewer grammatical errors and greater lexical variation than those who did not. Paraphrasing tools have also become popular: Kurniati and Fithriani (2022) reported that Indonesian postgraduate students perceived QuillBot as helpful for paraphrasing and for enriching vocabulary in academic writing, although they recognized that its output still had to be checked. Similarly, Shafiee Rad et al. (2024) showed that the AI-based tool Wordtune enhanced EFL students' writing outcomes, engagement, and writing feedback literacy. Machine translation constitutes another category of AI support; Lee (2020) found that Korean EFL students who used machine translation during revision reduced their lexico-grammatical errors and viewed the tool positively, although the author stressed the need for guidance on how to use it.

Generative AI has broadened the range of writing support available to EFL students. Barrot (2023) explains that ChatGPT can help second language writers generate ideas, provide feedback, model texts, and improve language accuracy, but that its use carries pitfalls, including inaccurate or fabricated content, superficial argumentation, and threats to academic integrity. Y. Su et al. (2023) explored ChatGPT in argumentative writing classrooms and proposed that it can assist students in outlining, revising content, proofreading, and reflecting on their writing, provided that the collaboration between the student and the AI is carefully structured. Song and Song (2023) found that Chinese EFL students who received ChatGPT-assisted instruction improved their academic writing skills and motivation more than those who did not. Yan (2023) reported that students in an L2 writing practicum appreciated the efficiency of ChatGPT but were concerned about academic honesty and educational equity.

In the Indonesian context, Marzuki et al. (2023) found that EFL teachers at three universities reported their students using tools such as QuillBot, Wordtune, Jenni, ChatGPT, Paperpal, Copy.ai, and Essay Writer, and that these tools improved the content and organization of students' writing. Malik et al. (2023) reported that Indonesian university students valued AI tools for grammar checking, translation, and outlining in essay writing, but they were also concerned about academic integrity, over-reliance, and reduced creativity. These studies indicate that AI has become part of EFL students' writing practices; however, most of them focus on either teachers' perspectives or students' general perceptions. They pay less attention to how students use different tools at different stages of the writing process, and they rarely compare EFL and ESL contexts.

2.3 Students' Perceptions, Risks, and Academic Integrity

Students' attitudes toward AI are generally positive but ambivalent. Chan and Hu (2023) found that university students in Hong Kong appreciated generative AI for personalized learning

support, writing and brainstorming assistance, and research, but they were concerned about its accuracy, privacy, ethical issues, and effects on their personal development. Kasneci et al. (2023) argue that large language models offer opportunities for personalized learning but also pose risks, including over-reliance, biased output, and a decline in critical thinking, and they call for clear strategies and competencies among teachers and learners. Regarding academic integrity, Cotton et al. (2024) warn that ChatGPT makes it difficult to distinguish students' own work from AI-generated text and recommend that institutions develop clear policies, redesign assessments, and educate students about the appropriate use of AI. These studies indicate that the benefits of AI in writing cannot be separated from questions of dependency and honesty, which are examined in the present study.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study draws on four theoretical perspectives. First, the cognitive process theory of writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981) views writing as a set of recursive processes, namely planning (generating and organizing ideas and setting goals), translating ideas into written language, and reviewing (evaluating and revising), all of which are coordinated by a monitor. This theory underlies the process approach to teaching writing, which divides writing into stages such as topic selection, brainstorming, drafting, revision, editing, and evaluation before submission (Ghufron, 2016; Harmer, 2004). These stages are used in this study to map students' use of AI. Second, sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) holds that learners can accomplish tasks within their zone of proximal development with the assistance of a more knowledgeable other. AI tools can be regarded as a form of scaffolding, which, to be effective, should gradually be withdrawn as learners become more independent. Third, the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) explains that users' adoption of technology is determined by its perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, which helps explain why students choose some AI tools and abandon others. Fourth, the concept of cognitive offloading (Risko & Gilbert, 2016) describes the use of external tools to reduce the cognitive demands of a task; while offloading can improve performance, excessive offloading may reduce the internal effort that learning requires. Finally, Kachru's (1985) model of World Englishes, which places the Philippines in the Outer Circle (ESL) and Indonesia in the Expanding Circle (EFL), provides a lens for comparing the two contexts.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Based on the object of the study and its objectives, this study employed a descriptive qualitative design. According to Sugiyono (2019), qualitative research is grounded in the post-positivist or interpretive paradigm and is used to examine objects in their natural conditions, with the researcher serving as the key instrument. Data are collected through triangulation, that is, a combination of observation, interviews, and documentation; the data analysis is inductive; and the results emphasize meaning rather than generalization. This design was considered appropriate because the study aimed to describe how students use AI in learning writing in their natural learning contexts.

3.2 Participants

The study was conducted at Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sultan Aji Muhammad Idris Samarinda, Indonesia. The participants were students of the English Education Department who used AI in their writing activities. There were 10 students in this study, selected through purposive sampling.

To provide data from the Philippine context, seven students of Central Mindanao University, the Philippines, were also involved and are referred to as S1 to S7. Six of them were second-year students, and one was a first-year student. They were enrolled in English-related programs (BSEd English, BSE English, and English), and two of them reported Literary Criticism as their current course. Four participants used AI daily, while three used it occasionally. The profile of the Philippine participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Profile of the Philippine participants

Participant	Year level	Program / course	Frequency of AI use
S1	2nd year	English	Daily
S2	2nd year	Literary Criticism	Daily
S3	2nd year	BSEd English	Daily
S4	2nd year	BSEd English	Occasionally
S5	1st year	BSE English	Occasionally
S6	2nd year	BSEd English	Occasionally
S7	2nd year	Literary Criticism	Daily

3.3 Instruments

Because the quality of research results depends on the quality of the instruments and of the data collection, both were carefully considered. The data were obtained from primary sources, namely the students themselves, and from secondary sources, namely documents related to their writing. Three instruments were used, as described below.

3.3.1 Interview Guide

Interviews were used to explore students' experiences in depth. A semi-structured interview guide containing written questions was prepared, while follow-up questions were asked freely to clarify or elaborate on the participants' responses.

For the Philippine context, the interview guide was developed from the findings obtained in the Indonesian context so that the data from both contexts could be compared. The guide consisted of 26 open-ended questions grouped into five parts: participant profile (items 1-3), kinds of AI used (items 4-8), AI in the writing process (items 9-17), weaknesses and ethics (items 18-23), and the Philippine context (items 24-26). The participants' responses were compiled into a data matrix for analysis.

3.3.2 Observation Sheet

Observation is a complex process composed of various biological and psychological processes, the most important of which are perception and memory (Hadi, as cited in Sugiyono, 2019). Observation is used when research concerns human behavior and work processes and when the number of respondents is not too large. In terms of the observer's role, observation can be

participant or non-participant, and in terms of instrumentation, it can be structured or unstructured. In this study, non-participant observation was conducted to observe how students used AI when completing writing tasks.

3.3.3 Documentation

Documents may take the form of written texts, pictures, or works produced by a person. In qualitative research, document analysis complements observation and interviews, and findings become more credible when they are supported by such documents (Sugiyono, 2019). In this study, documentation consisted of students' written drafts and records of their use of AI, including the errors that appeared in their writing.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted to understand the relationships and concepts in the data. Spradley (as cited in Sugiyono, 2019) states that analysis of any kind involves a way of thinking: it refers to the systematic examination of something to determine its parts, the relationships among the parts, and their relationship to the whole; in short, analysis is a search for patterns. Accordingly, data analysis in this study was the process of systematically searching and organizing the data obtained from interviews, field notes, and documentation by organizing them into categories, breaking them into units, synthesizing them into patterns, selecting what was important, and drawing conclusions that could be easily understood.

The analysis followed the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014), in which analysis takes place continuously until the data are saturated. It consisted of three concurrent activities. In data condensation, the interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were selected, coded, and simplified according to the research questions. In data display, the condensed data were organized into matrices and tables showing the kinds of AI used, the purposes of their use, the stages of writing, and the perceived weaknesses. In conclusion drawing and verification, patterns were interpreted and repeatedly checked against the data.

The data from the Philippine context were analyzed through the same stages. In addition, the number of participants giving similar responses was tallied to support the comparison between the Indonesian and Philippine contexts.

3.5 Triangulation

According to Wiersma (as cited in Sugiyono, 2019), triangulation is qualitative cross-validation that assesses the sufficiency of the data according to the convergence of multiple data sources or multiple data collection procedures. There are three types of triangulation: source triangulation, technique triangulation, and time triangulation. Source triangulation tests the credibility of data by checking the data obtained from several sources. Technique triangulation tests the credibility of data by checking data from the same source using different techniques. Time triangulation considers the time of data collection, as data collected when participants are not fatigued, for example in the morning, tend to be more valid.

In this study, technique triangulation was employed in the Indonesian context: non-participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation were used for the same data sources. In the Philippine context, the responses were compared across the seven participants (source triangulation) and with the findings from the Indonesian context. These procedures were carried out to understand the data comprehensively and to ensure their accuracy.

4. RESULTS

This section presents the findings obtained through interviews, observation, and documentation regarding the use of AI in learning writing by the students of the English Education Department of UIN Sultan Aji Muhammad Idris Samarinda, followed by the findings from the students of Central Mindanao University.

4.1 The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Learning Writing by the Indonesian Students

The data showed that the Indonesian students used a wide range of AI tools in learning writing, namely QuillBot, Grammarly, ChatGPT, DeepL, Perplexity AI, and Essay Writer, as well as Copy.ai, Bing, and Publish or Perish. These tools were used throughout the writing process, from topic selection to evaluation before submission. The students reported that AI provided several benefits: it saved time and helped them find the references they needed, which made writing easier for them.

The observation revealed that many students used AI to make writing easier. The students assumed that although a vast number of AI tools were available, their basic function was the same, namely to provide what the students needed; therefore, the students selected tools according to their needs and abilities. In contrast, students who rarely used AI believed that they could manage on their own because the writing tasks were not difficult, and they often used only Google to search for relevant references.

The documentation showed that some students used the same AI tools at different stages of the writing process. This variation was related to differences in the students' abilities and needs, as evidenced by the errors found in their writing; the students used AI to address the problems they encountered in their own drafts.

Across the writing process, the students used AI most often at the drafting stage, because they struggled to construct sentences after generating ideas. At this stage, they used ChatGPT, Bing, Copy.ai, DeepL, and QuillBot; DeepL in particular was used for word selection and translation. At the brainstorming stage, some students used Perplexity AI and ChatGPT, while others did not use AI because they could determine their ideas directly. The students also noted that AI output was sometimes inaccurate or too general and that frequent use could lead to dependency.

4.2 The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Learning Writing by the Philippine Students

This section presents the findings from the seven students of Central Mindanao University. The findings are organized into the kinds of AI used, the use of AI in the writing process, and, in Section 4.3, the weaknesses, ethical issues, and contextual factors perceived by the students.

ChatGPT was the most dominant tool among the Philippine students. Six of the seven participants used ChatGPT, two used Grammarly, and one used Gemini (formerly Bard). ChatGPT was also named the most frequently used tool by six participants, while S5 mostly used Gemini "because it creates notes and summary of a lesson I need." The reasons for choosing ChatGPT varied: it "generates ideas where I can understand" (S4), "can be used for anything" (S7), is "good in academic writing" (S2), helps in "finding more information about a topic I find hard to comprehend" (S3), and is "accessible even when the signal is low" (S1).

The students used these tools mainly for grammar checking (five participants), word choice (four participants), and translation (three participants). Other purposes were paraphrasing (S2 and S3),

essay structure (S2), finding references (S3), and making practice quizzes (S7). Most participants learned about these tools from social media, including TikTok (four participants), while the others learned about them from friends (three participants). Several students had stopped using other tools: S2 tried Toolbox and QuillBot but stopped because "it's not as competent as ChatGPT," S1 abandoned Grammarly and Gemini because "it takes a while to answer," S7 stopped using Dola because "it gives me wrong information sometimes," and S3 mentioned that some tools require premium access. These findings are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Kinds and purposes of AI used by the Philippine students (n = 7)

Aspect	Response	Number of students
AI tools used	ChatGPT	6
	Grammarly	2
	Gemini (formerly Bard)	1
Purpose of use	Grammar checking	5
	Word choice	4
	Translating	3
	Paraphrasing	2
	Essay structure; finding references; practice quiz	1 each
Source of information	Social media (incl. TikTok)	4
	Friends	3

The Philippine students used AI at all stages of writing, but with different intensity (Table 3). All seven participants used AI in drafting and editing, either regularly or sometimes. In drafting, the students asked AI to turn their ideas into text: "I narrow my ideas and have AI turn it into a proper text" (S1), "I ask ChatGPT to construct my ideas" (S2, S3), and "create a paragraph about the topic" (S5). S4 used it "in order for me to understand the ideas that I am struggling," while S6 used prompts such as "Can you spot the error and why?" Five students used AI for topic selection, mostly ChatGPT and, in the case of S5, Gemini; S1 emphasized the importance of "giving it proper instructions." Five students also used AI for brainstorming, for instance "to simplify complex terms" (S7), "for structure" (S3), or only "after making my own search for much better version" (S6).

Revision and evaluation before submission were the stages with the least use. Five students used AI for revision, two of them only sometimes, while S1 preferred to ask "an instructor or more knowledgeable person." Four students checked their final drafts with AI before submission, while three did not. When asked at which stage they relied on AI the most, the students gave varied answers: S1 named brainstorming because "lots of ideas are swarming need it to be arranged," S4 named the stage "where I have so many things to read," and S5 named note-taking. Only one student described a piece of writing produced with the help of AI. Referring to the text "Huling Sayaw," S6 stated, "I only used AI for tips, correction, I changed its organization."

Table 3: Use of AI in the stages of writing by the Philippine students (n = 7)

Stage of writing	Yes	Sometimes	No	No answer
Topic selection	5	0	0	2
Brainstorming	5	0	1	1
Drafting	6	1	0	0
Revision	3	2	2	0
Editing	6	1	0	0
Evaluation before submission	3	1	3	0

4.3 Weaknesses, Ethical Issues, and Contextual Factors Perceived by the Students

All seven participants had received inaccurate information from AI, and all of them verified it, mostly through Google or other searches. Six students found the AI's answers too general for their assignments, and S1 responded by adding "my own idea." Five students admitted a feeling of dependency: S1 said "it makes my brain rot," S2 said "sometimes I doubt my own," and S3 said "I feel dependent and I don't like it." Only S6 and S7 did not feel dependent, as S6 used AI "only ... for corrections."

Regarding academic integrity, two students admitted using AI to paraphrase in order to avoid plagiarism detection, and one did so sometimes, while four did not. Most students did not inform their lecturers about their use of AI; S1 and S2 explained that their assignments would otherwise not be accepted. In contrast, S4 disclosed it "because honesty is the best policy." The students also drew a line between using AI as a tool and letting it write for them. S1 distinguished between asking AI "to improve your grammar" and asking AI "to create something for you," S3 stated that "letting AI write for you makes you heavily reliant on using it," and S7 warned that depending too much on it means "you can't elaborate your thoughts anymore."

When asked whether the status of English as a second language in the Philippines made them need AI less than students in countries where English is a foreign language, the students focused on competence and independence rather than on language status, for example, "we can live without AI" (S4) and "Filipino should show competence" (S1), while S3 added that "relying too much makes students lazy." Only two students wrote in Filipino first and then translated their writing with AI. Regarding institutional rules, S4 and S7 reported a rule of "no use of AI," S5 said that the rule applied to "some of the subject and lesson," and three students gave no answer, indicating that the policy on the use of AI was not uniformly known among the students.

5. DISCUSSION

This study investigated the kinds of AI tools that Indonesian EFL and Philippine ESL students used in learning writing, how they used these tools across the stages of the writing process, the weaknesses and ethical issues they perceived, and the similarities and differences between the two contexts. The findings are discussed below in relation to previous studies and relevant theories.

5.1 Kinds of AI Tools and Their Purposes

The first research question concerned the kinds of AI tools used by the students and the purposes of their use. ChatGPT emerged as a central tool in both contexts, which is consistent with the description of ChatGPT as a conversational model capable of producing human-like

responses for a wide variety of purposes (J. Su & Yang, 2023). The Indonesian students, however, used a considerably broader repertoire, including QuillBot, Grammarly, DeepL, Perplexity AI, Essay Writer, and Copy.ai. This repertoire closely matches the tools reported by Indonesian EFL teachers in Marzuki et al. (2023), which suggests that Indonesian university students share a common ecosystem of AI writing tools. The use of QuillBot for paraphrasing and Grammarly for grammar checking corroborates the findings of Kurniati and Fithriani (2022) and Dizon and Gayed (2021), respectively, who reported that these tools helped EFL students improve vocabulary, paraphrasing, and grammatical accuracy.

In contrast, the Philippine students concentrated on a narrower set of tools, dominated by ChatGPT, and several of them had abandoned other tools because they were less competent, slower, or required premium access. This pattern can be explained by the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989): the students retained the tools they perceived as useful ("it can be used for anything") and easy to use ("accessible even when the signal is low"), and they dropped those that failed on either criterion. The convergence on a single general-purpose tool also resonates with Chan and Hu (2023), whose participants valued generative AI for its versatility in writing, brainstorming, and research. Furthermore, most Philippine students learned about AI from social media and friends rather than from lecturers. This finding is in line with Muftah (2022), who showed that social media has become an influential informal channel for learning English, but it also implies that students' knowledge of AI is shaped outside formal instruction, which echoes the call by Kohnke et al. (2023) to develop students' digital competencies explicitly.

5.2 The Use of AI across the Stages of Writing

The second research question addressed how the students used AI across the stages of the writing process. In both contexts, AI was used at all stages, but drafting was the stage at which it played the greatest role. The Indonesian students relied on AI because they struggled to construct sentences after generating ideas, and the Philippine students likewise asked AI to "construct" their ideas or "turn [them] into a proper text." From the perspective of the cognitive process theory of writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981), this finding indicates that AI was used most heavily to support the translating process, in which ideas are converted into written language. For L2 writers, this process places heavy demands on limited linguistic resources, which explains why students turned to AI precisely at this point. The finding also supports Barrot (2023) and Song and Song (2023), who note that ChatGPT can model texts and improve the organization and language of L2 students' writing.

At the same time, the students used AI less during revision and evaluation before submission, and S1 preferred to consult "an instructor or more knowledgeable person." This finding contrasts with the model proposed by Y. Su et al. (2023), in which ChatGPT is used extensively in revising, proofreading, and post-writing reflection. It suggests that the reviewing process (Flower & Hayes, 1981) remained largely under the students' or teachers' control, or that the students had not been trained to use AI as a reviewing partner. The use of AI in editing, however, was very high among the Philippine students, which is consistent with Lee (2020) and Dizon and Gayed (2021), who found that machine translation and automated feedback mainly help students correct lexico-grammatical errors. From the perspective of feedback research (Hyland & Hyland, 2006), the students treated AI primarily as a source of corrective feedback on form rather than as a source of feedback on content and argumentation.

S1's reference to a "more knowledgeable person" also reflects sociocultural theory. In Vygotsky's (1978) terms, AI functioned as a form of scaffolding that enabled students to perform writing tasks within their zone of proximal development. The documentation in the Indonesian context, which showed that students used the same tools at different stages according to the errors in their drafts, supports this interpretation: the scaffolding was adjusted to individual needs and abilities. However, scaffolding is meant to be withdrawn gradually as learners gain independence; when it is not withdrawn, it may become a substitute for learning rather than a support for it, as discussed in the next section.

5.3 Weaknesses, Dependency, and Ethical Issues

The third research question concerned the weaknesses and ethical issues perceived by the students. The Philippine students had all received inaccurate information from AI, and most of them found its answers too general; similar weaknesses were noted in the Indonesian context. These findings confirm the pitfalls identified by Barrot (2023), namely inaccurate or fabricated content and superficial argumentation, as well as the concerns about accuracy raised by the students in Chan and Hu (2023). Encouragingly, all Philippine students verified the information they received, which suggests a degree of critical evaluation that Kasneci et al. (2023) regard as a necessary competence for using large language models.

Despite this critical awareness, five of the seven Philippine students reported feeling dependent on AI, describing it as something that "makes my brain rot" or makes them "doubt [their] own" ideas. This finding can be explained by the concept of cognitive offloading (Risko & Gilbert, 2016): by delegating the demanding translating process to AI, the students reduced their cognitive load but also reduced the practice that develops their writing ability. S7's remark that over-reliance means "you can't elaborate your thoughts anymore" illustrates this risk. The finding echoes Malik et al. (2023), whose Indonesian participants feared over-reliance and reduced creativity, and Kasneci et al. (2023), who warn that over-reliance may weaken critical thinking. It differs, however, from the more optimistic results of Song and Song (2023), who found that ChatGPT-assisted instruction increased students' motivation; the difference may lie in the fact that their students used ChatGPT within a structured instructional design, whereas the students in this study used AI independently.

The ethical dimension was most visible in the Philippine data. Most students did not disclose their use of AI because they feared that their assignments would not be accepted, and some courses applied a rule of "no use of AI." This finding mirrors the concerns about academic honesty reported by Yan (2023) and supports the argument of Cotton et al. (2024) that prohibition alone is insufficient; institutions need clear policies, redesigned assessments, and education on appropriate use. A strict prohibition may lead students to conceal their use of AI rather than use it responsibly. On the other hand, the students were able to distinguish between using AI as a tool ("to improve your grammar") and letting it write for them ("to create something for you"). This distinction is in line with Rusmiyanto et al. (2023), who emphasize that ethical issues must be addressed so that AI can be used responsibly in language learning, and it responds to the concern of Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019) that the ethical and pedagogical dimensions of AI are often neglected in research.

5.4 Comparison between the Indonesian and Philippine Contexts

The fourth research question concerned the similarities and differences between the two contexts. The similarities are evident: in both contexts, ChatGPT was a central tool, drafting was the stage at which AI played the greatest role, and the students recognized inaccuracy, overly general answers, and dependency as the main weaknesses of AI. These similarities suggest that the role of AI in supporting the translation of ideas into text is shared by L2 writers regardless of the status of English in their countries.

The differences, however, reflect the contexts. The Indonesian students used a wider range of tools, and DeepL was used for word selection and translation, whereas only two Philippine students wrote in Filipino first and then translated their writing with AI. This difference may be related to the status of English as a second language in the Philippines, an Outer Circle country, as opposed to a foreign language in Indonesia, an Expanding Circle country (Gunantar, 2016; Kachru, 1985). EFL learners may rely more on translation to bridge the gap between their first language and English, as Lee (2020) observed among Korean EFL students. Nevertheless, the Philippine students still used AI extensively for grammar checking and editing, which indicates that ESL status does not eliminate the need for language support. Interestingly, when asked about the role of English in their country, the Philippine students framed their answers in terms of competence and independence ("Filipino should show competence") rather than language status, which suggests that their attitudes toward AI were also shaped by their identity as competent English users.

5.5 Pedagogical Implications

The findings have several pedagogical implications. First, because the students used AI most heavily at the drafting stage, lecturers should design writing tasks that require students to produce and document their own drafts before consulting AI, so that AI functions as scaffolding rather than as a substitute for the translating process. Second, because the students rarely used AI for revision and evaluation, they could be trained to use AI as a reviewing partner, for example by asking it for feedback on content and organization rather than requesting complete texts (Y. Su et al., 2023). Third, because the students learned about AI mainly from social media and peers, explicit instruction on AI literacy, including prompting, verification, and acknowledgment of AI use, should be integrated into writing courses (Kohnke et al., 2023). Finally, institutions in both countries should replace blanket prohibitions with clear guidance on the stages of writing at which AI may be used and on how its use should be acknowledged (Cotton et al., 2024).

6. CONCLUSION

This study examined the use of AI in learning writing by Indonesian EFL and Philippine ESL students. Regarding the first research question, the Indonesian students used a wide range of AI tools, particularly ChatGPT, QuillBot, Grammarly, and DeepL, whereas the Philippine students relied mainly on ChatGPT, followed by Grammarly and Gemini, and used them chiefly for grammar checking, word choice, and translation. Regarding the second research question, the students in both contexts used AI throughout the writing process, namely topic selection, brainstorming, drafting, revision, editing, and evaluation before submission, but most intensively at the drafting stage; the Philippine students also used AI intensively for editing. The students used AI selectively, according to their abilities and needs. Regarding the third research question, the students recognized that AI could produce inaccurate or overly general information and

could lead to dependency; most Philippine students did not disclose their use of AI to their lecturers, partly because of rules prohibiting it, although they distinguished between using AI as a tool and letting it write for them. Regarding the fourth research question, the two contexts shared the central role of ChatGPT, the dominance of AI use in drafting, and the perceived weaknesses of AI, while they differed in the range of tools used and in the reliance on translation, which may reflect the different status of English in the two countries.

This study has several limitations. The number of Philippine participants was small, the Philippine data were collected mainly through interviews, and the perspectives of lecturers were not included. Future research may involve more participants and lecturers from both countries, use mixed methods to examine the relationship between AI use and writing performance, and investigate how institutional policies shape students' use of AI in learning writing.

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