FORUM DE L'ENSEIGNANT Journal
e-ISSN: 2437-0576 ISSN: 1112-5101
Volume: 22, Special Issue: 1 / October 2026 pp. 100-117

From Assistance to Authorship: Negotiating Voice, Agency and Academic Integrity in AI-Mediated EFL Writing among Algerian University Students

Received: 19/07/2026; Accepted: 27/10/2026; Published: 31/10/2026

Chergui Amira [1], * Sia Selma [2],

1 Larbi Ben Mhidi, Oum El Bouaghi University (Algeria), amira.chergui@univ-oeb.dz,
ORCID: (https://orcid.org/0009-0001-4501-6837)

2 University of frères Mentouri, Constantine 1(Algeria), sia.selma@umc.edu.dz,
ORCID: (https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6377-8555)

Abstract:
This study explores 16 Algerian EFL Masters students' perceptions about the impact of generative AI on their writing practices, particularly in relation to voice, authorship, agency, and academic integrity. Adopting a qualitative, descriptive design, the study draws on semi-structured interviews to examine these students' experiences of AI-assisted writing. Findings reveal a gradual shift from using AI as a linguistic support tool to increasing dependence on AI-generated content, often accompanied by diminished voice, reduced agency, and uncertainty regarding authorship. Participants also reported difficulties navigating academic integrity due to the absence of clear institutional guidelines. The study recommends a reconceptualization of academic integrity that acknowledges AI as a legitimate but critically mediated participant in the writing process and highlights the need for pedagogical approaches that promote critical AI literacy and authentic student authorship.

Keywords:
AI-mediated writing;
Agency;
Authorship;
Academic integrity;
Voice.

* *Corresponding author: Chergui Amira*
Doi:

1. Introduction

The widespread adoption of generative AI writing tools since 2022 has brought substantial changes in academic writing practices worldwide, with particularly significant implications for EFL education. For Algerian university students, AI-powered applications provide valuable support for language accuracy, text organization, and academic writing tasks. Yet, the increasing reliance on AI-generated content raises critical concerns about maintaining student voice, authorship, and academic integrity, prompting renewed debate about the role of AI in higher education EFL writing practices.

Within the Algerian higher education, writing pedagogy has been traditionally product-oriented, emphasizing grammatical accuracy, linguistic correctness, and adherence to prescribed academic formats (Baghzou, 2021). The widespread availability of AI tools challenges this paradigm by enabling students to generate polished, coherent, and grammatically sophisticated texts with minimal effort. The appeal of these technologies is understandable: AI offers immediate assistance with idea generation, language correction, organization, and content development, often producing outputs that surpass students' independent writing abilities (Godwin-Jones, 2022). However, beneath this apparent enhancement of productivity and linguistic quality lies a significant pedagogical concern. What initially begins as a legitimate support can gradually evolve into a deeper reliance on AI, whereby learners increasingly delegate the cognitive demands of writing to the machine.

The transition from AI as a supportive tool to a more central role in writing may be gradual, influenced by convenience, time constraints, and the ability of these technologies to perform complex writing tasks (Chan & Tsi, 2024). When students increasingly rely on AI to organise ideas, develop arguments, or generate text, their control over the writing process and opportunities to express their own voice and intellectual contributions may be reduced. In such cases, AI-mediated writing may not fully reflect learners' reasoning, perspectives, or linguistic identities, raising questions about authorship and ownership. These possibilities also raise concerns about academic integrity, particularly where the boundaries between legitimate assistance and the delegation of intellectual work remain unclear.

Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to explore how AI-mediated writing influences students' sense of voice, agency, and ownership over their written work, while also investigating how they understand and negotiate issues of academic integrity in the context of AI use. In doing so, the research addresses

the following questions: How do Algerian EFL students describe their progression from AI-mediated to AI-dependent writing? How does AI mediation affect their perceptions of voice, agency, and authorship? How do they define and negotiate academic integrity when using AI for EFL writing tasks? And what pedagogical strategies do they believe can help preserve authentic student voice and agency while enabling the ethical and productive use of AI tools? Through addressing these questions, the study aims to contribute to a reconceptualization of academic integrity that acknowledges AI as a legitimate yet critically mediated participant in the writing process.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Voice, Agency, and Authorship in EFL Writing

Voice, agency, and authorship are central constructs in second and foreign language writing because they shape how learners engage intellectually with the writing process. Although often examined separately, these concepts are closely interconnected and collectively contribute to writers' sense of responsibility for their texts.

Among these constructs, voice has received considerable scholarly attention despite remaining one of the most contested concepts in writing studies. It has been associated with style, persona, stance, ethos, authorial presence, and the representation of self in text (Bowden, 1999; Sperling & Appleman, 2011). Early perspectives viewed voice primarily as an expression of individual identity and rhetorical presence (Elbow, 1994), whereas later approaches emphasized its social and contextual nature. Ivanič (1998), for example, conceptualized voice as a multidimensional process of identity construction through which writers position themselves within academic and social communities. Similarly, Kinloch (2010) and Brooke (2012) argue that voice is shaped by the cultural, institutional, and social contexts in which writing occurs. For EFL learners, developing a voice involves not only mastering linguistic conventions but also expressing personal perspectives and establishing authority within unfamiliar academic discourses (Riyanti, 2015). As such, voice serves as an important indicator of a writer's presence, identity, and engagement with the text.

Closely related to voice is agency, which is defined as learners' capacity to make purposeful choices and act upon them during the writing process (Gao, 2010). Agency is seen from a sociocultural standpoint as a situated capacity where

writers can act intentionally, but always within social, institutional, and discursive constraints. Agency emerges from the interaction between the writer's goals, knowledge, and identities and the demands of the context (Lee, 2008). Bhowmik (2016) further demonstrated that agency interacts dynamically with identity and ideology, influencing how learners approach writing tasks and respond to academic challenges. Therefore, agency can be explained as the capacity of writers to act intentionally and strategically in textual production, making meaningful choices about content, form, and stance, while negotiating and sometimes transforming the constraints imposed in the process. Agency therefore enables writers to actively shape both the process and outcome of their writing.

The concept of authorship builds upon both voice and agency by emphasizing intellectual responsibility and accountability for a text. Authorship extends beyond the production of words to encompass the generation of ideas, the development of arguments, and the responsibility for the final written product (Committee on Publication Ethics, 2019). A writer can be considered the legitimate author of a text when they exercise substantial control over its content and accept responsibility for its meaning and quality. In this sense, voice reflects the writer's presence within the text (Hyland, 2002), while agency reflects the writer's capacity to make meaningful decisions throughout the composing process (Cooper, 2011). Together, these dimensions form the foundation of authorship, which represents not only ownership of ideas but also intellectual engagement and accountability.

The emergence of generative artificial intelligence has complicated these traditional understandings of writing. Recent research suggests that AI-assisted writing may simultaneously challenge voice, agency, and authorship. Sandstead and Kibler (2025), for instance, found that multilingual writers' sense of voice can be diminished when AI-generated language replaces personal expression and reasoning. As students increasingly delegate idea generation, language production, and organizational decisions to AI systems, questions arise regarding the extent to which they remain active authors of their texts. Consequently, concerns about voice intersect with broader concerns about agency, authorship, and academic integrity, placing these concepts at the centre of contemporary debates on AI-mediated writing.

2.2 Academic Integrity in the Age of AI

The rapid adoption of AI writing tools has also generated significant challenges for traditional conceptions of academic integrity. Conventional integrity frameworks are built upon principles of originality, authorship,

transparency, and proper attribution (International Centre for Academic Integrity, 2021). However, these frameworks were developed in contexts where authorship was assumed to be exclusively human. AI-generated writing complicates this assumption. Although AI-produced text is often technically original in that it does not directly copy existing sources, it may not represent the student's own intellectual effort. As Eaton (2023) argues, higher education institutions currently face a "definitional vacuum" in which existing policies are poorly equipped to address the complexities of AI-mediated authorship. Institutional responses have varied considerably, ranging from outright bans to largely unrestricted acceptance of AI tools. Both approaches have limitations. Complete prohibition is difficult to enforce, while unrestricted use risks encouraging dependence and academic misconduct.

Consequently, many scholars advocate for a more nuanced understanding of academic integrity in the AI era. Perkins et al. (2024) propose distinguishing between acceptable forms of AI assistance, such as brainstorming, outlining, and language support, and unacceptable forms of AI authorship, where substantial portions of student work are generated by AI and presented without meaningful intellectual contribution. This perspective shifts the focus from AI use itself to the degree of student agency, transparency, and engagement involved in the writing process.

2.3 A Conceptual Framework

The current study thus conceptualises AI-mediated EFL writing through these interconnected constructs of voice, agency, authorship, and academic integrity. Voice concerns the perceived representation of writers' ideas and identity in a text, while agency refers to their capacity to make decisions and exercise judgement during writing. Authorship involves intellectual contribution and responsibility for the final text, whereas academic integrity concerns ethical expectations surrounding AI use, including transparency and accountability.

Although related, these constructs are not interchangeable. Students may use AI to improve linguistic accuracy while retaining control over their ideas and decisions. Conversely, a perceived mismatch between personal voice and textual expression does not necessarily indicate diminished agency or authorship. The framework also considers perceived dependency, understood as reliance on AI rather than frequency of use alone, and textual alienation, referring to a perceived

distance between writers and AI-mediated texts that they feel insufficiently represent their ideas or contributions.

These constructs guide the interpretation of the data from the semi-structured interviews while remaining open to participants' experiences and alternative interpretations. The data can illuminate students' perceptions of their writing practices, control, authorship, and ethical responsibilities; however, they cannot independently establish actual changes in writing proficiency, causal effects of AI use, or the existence or absence of institutional policies.

2.4 AI in EFL Writing: Opportunities, Challenges within the Algerian higher education Context

The rapid emergence of generative AI tools, including ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, and QuillBot, has profoundly influenced academic writing practices across the globe, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings. Research suggests that these tools can support language learning by providing immediate feedback, generating ideas, enhancing vocabulary development, and reducing the cognitive demands associated with writing in a second language (Kohnke et al., 2023; Barrot, 2023). By assisting learners with linguistic accuracy and text organization, AI can enable students to focus more effectively on higher-order writing concerns. Nevertheless, growing dependence on AI has raised pedagogical concerns. Scholars warn that excessive reliance on AI may hinder the development of essential writing competencies, including critical thinking, idea generation, argument construction, and revision skills (Godwin-Jones, 2022). Moreover, because AI-generated texts are based on statistical language patterns rather than personal experiences or intentions, they may contribute to the homogenization of student writing and the erosion of individual voice and authentic expression (Shah, 2023).

These concerns require an additional consideration within the Algerian higher education context. Algerian EFL students navigate a multilingual environment shaped by the coexistence of Arabic, Algerian Darja, French, and English, often facing linguistic and rhetorical challenges in academic writing. Previous research has documented challenges associated with English-language education in Algeria and its multilingual context (Miliani, 2001; Belmihoub, 2018). Against this background, generative AI may offer students accessible support for overcoming linguistic difficulties and meeting academic writing demands. Research on AI-assisted second-language writing has begun to examine its pedagogical potential and limitations (Barrot, 2023; Kohnke et al., 2023). However, the question is not simply whether students find these tools useful, but

how they understand and negotiate their role in producing academic texts. In particular, greater attention is needed to investigate students' perceptions of the boundary between linguistic assistance and the delegation of intellectual work, and how this boundary relates to their sense of writer voice, agency, authorship, and academic integrity. These dimensions are closely connected, yet they represent distinct aspects of students' experiences: a text may be linguistically improved without necessarily reflecting the writer's voice, while the use of AI-generated language does not in itself mean that the writer has relinquished intellectual control or responsibility.

Moreover, students' understandings of acceptable AI use need to be considered in relation to their perceptions of institutional expectations and guidance. The present study addresses these concerns by exploring the experiences and interpretations of Algerian Master's EFL students who use generative AI in academic writing. Rather than treating AI use as inherently empowering or detrimental, the study examines how students describe its role in their writing practices, how they perceive their control over ideas and textual expression, and how they negotiate authorship and academic integrity. Its contribution lies in bringing these dimensions together to examine the perceived boundary between AI assistance and intellectual delegation in a specific multilingual higher education context.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design within an interpretivist paradigm to explore how Algerian EFL Masters' students perceive and experience the use of AI writing tools in academic writing. Given that the study investigates subjective constructs such as voice, agency, authorship, and academic integrity, the novelty of AI writing tools and the limited prior research in the Algerian context, a qualitative approach is deemed appropriate for capturing the richness and complexity of student experiences. In this regard, semi-structured interviews allow participants to articulate their practices, dilemmas, and reflections in their own words while ensuring systematic coverage of key topics.

3.2 Research Context and Participants.

The study was conducted within the scope of two Algerian public universities (Larbi Ben Mhidi, Oum El Bouaghi University and Freres Mentouri

Constantine1 university) offering English language programs. The final sample is comprised of 16 Master's EFL students. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling based on three inclusion criteria: (a) enrolment in a Master's EFL programme, (b) prior experience using generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT or Gemini) for academic writing, and (c) voluntary informed consent. Participants were selected because of their experience using generative AI tools for academic writing, making them suitable for exploring students' perceptions of AI-mediated writing, voice, agency, authorship, and academic integrity Following the interviews, participants were grouped into high-, moderate-, and low-AI users (Table 1) according to the frequency and nature of their reported AI use. Participants were grouped as high, moderate, or low AI users to facilitate the exploration of differences in their reported experiences. These categories were used as descriptive categories rather than validated measures of AI dependence or writing ability. The 16 participants provided accounts of their experiences with AI-mediated academic writing across different patterns of AI use. The analysis sought to develop meaningful interpretations of these experiences rather than establish that no new codes or themes could emerge. The findings are interpreted within the boundaries of this sample and are not intended to be statistically generalizable to all Algerian EFL students.

Table n° 01: Participants Profiles

AI Use Category	Participant IDs	N /16	Typical AI Writing Practices
High AI Users	S01, S04, S08, S11, S16	5	Frequently used AI throughout the writing process, including brainstorming, drafting, and paraphrasing, editing, and full-text generation.
Moderate AI Users	S02, S05, S07, S10, S13, S15	6	Used AI selectively for language refinement, outlining, vocabulary enhancement, organization of ideas, and revision.
Low AI Users	S03, S06, S09, S12, S14	5	Used AI minimally or only for limited editing (e.g., grammar or coherence checking),

3.3 Developing the Semi-Structured Interview Guide

The interviews were conducted in English; the guide (Appendix A) was developed based on the study's theoretical framework and research questions. 14 questions progressed from descriptive accounts of AI use to reflective explorations of voice, ownership, and integrity. The guide was piloted first with two non-participant students. The piloting ensured that the interview process and questions were appropriate enough to reach the depth of meanings. It assessed the coherence, sequencing, prompting, and probing techniques used. The questions were slightly refined for clarity and then used for the current study.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

Interviews were conducted in May 2026; they lasted between 25 and 35 minutes and were conducted online via Zoom or Google Meet. English served as the primary interview language, although participants were permitted to use Arabic or French when necessary to clarify their views. Interviews were audio-recorded with consent. Recordings were transcribed verbatim before the coding process and securely stored.

3.5 Data Analysis

The interview data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) following Braun and Clarke's approach (2021). This method was selected because it supports the interpretation of participants' experiences and the meanings they attribute to AI-mediated academic writing. The analysis involved familiarisation with the transcripts, initial coding, developing candidate themes, reviewing and refining themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final analytical report.

Coding combined inductive and deductive orientations. Inductively, attention was given to patterns emerging from participants' accounts; deductively, the analysis was informed by the study's focus on voice, agency, authorship, and academic integrity. These concepts guided interpretation without restricting the analysis to predefined categories. Initial codes were examined for relationships and grouped into broader patterns of meaning, from which candidate themes were developed and subsequently reviewed and refined.

The researchers engaged in discussion throughout the analytical process, using their interpretations to examine and refine the developing themes. For example, S04 stated: "At the beginning, AI was mainly helping me polish my writing. Gradually, it became involved in organizing ideas and suggesting how arguments should be developed." The researchers interpreted this extract as indicating a shift from linguistic support towards AI involvement in higher-level writing decisions. Through discussion, they considered how this pattern related to other accounts of increasing reliance on AI and developed the candidate theme of emerging dependency. The theme was subsequently reviewed in relation to the interview data to assess its relevance to participants' experiences.

This collaboration was intended to deepen reflexive engagement with the data rather than establish a single objectively correct coding. The final themes were selected according to their relevance to the research questions and their

capacity to capture meaningful patterns across participants' accounts. The analysis remained attentive to similarities, differences, and divergent experiences within the dataset and the recursive process contributed to a nuanced and theoretically informed understanding of the data.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

All participants provided written informed consent. Participants were assured that non-participation or withdrawal would not affect their academic standing. Given the sensitive nature of academic integrity discussions, participants were explicitly told that no disciplinary action would result from any disclosure. Data were anonymized immediately following transcription and the transcripts were stored carefully.

3.7 Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of this study was established using Lincoln and Guba's (1994) four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was enhanced by piloting the semi-structured interview guide with two Master's EFL students to refine the clarity and sequencing of the questions. During the interviews, probing and follow-up questions allowed participants to elaborate on their experiences, while data collection continued until thematic saturation was achieved. Transferability was supported through detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, data collection procedures, and analytical process, enabling readers to assess the applicability of the findings to similar contexts. Dependability was ensured by maintaining a systematic audit trail documenting the interview protocol, participant recruitment, interview transcripts, coding procedures, and theme development. Finally, confirmability was strengthened by grounding all interpretations in participants' accounts, using representative quotations to support the themes, and engaging in continuous researcher reflexivity to minimize potential bias. Collectively, these strategies enhanced the credibility, transparency, and overall rigor of the study.

4. Findings and Discussion

The following section will discuss the five emerging themes according to the data from the participants' responses in the semi structured interviews. These themes are first summarised in (Table 2).

Table n° 02: Summary of Emerging Themes

Theme	**Core Finding**	**Representative Extract**
1. Gradual shift to dependency	Unconscious progression from assistance to reliance	S04: "Progression from grammar help to full co-writing within one semester."
2. Erosion of voice	AI outputs feel polished but alien; personal voice diluted or lost	S16: "Has almost no sense of personal voice in his writing."
3. Contested agency	Wide variation from full control to passive acceptance; high users feel trapped	S16: "AI writes, I submit."
4. Integrity in a policy vacuum	No consistent line; fear of disclosure; reliance on un-detectability	S11: "Follows what is undetected."
5. Benefits vs. long-term risks	Speed and language support vs. skill atrophy and meaningless grades	S08: "Losing writing as a skill."

4.1 From Strategic Assistance to Emerging Dependency

A dominant pattern across the interviews was the gradual shift of AI from a supplementary writing aid into an increasingly central component of students' writing processes. Participants rarely described this transition as a deliberate choice. Instead, dependency appeared to emerge progressively as AI was repeatedly used to address immediate linguistic and academic challenges.

In this regard, several participants were asked about their engagement with AI and how the process evolved over time. Among the five high users of AI, S01 explained: "When I first started using ChatGPT, I only used it to check grammar and improve vocabulary. Now, especially when I have several assignments due at the same time, I sometimes ask it to generate complete sections because it saves a lot of time." Similarly, S04 noted: "At the beginning, AI was mainly helping me polish my writing. Gradually, it became involved in organizing ideas and suggesting how arguments should be developed". Even the six moderate users reported comparable experiences. One of them (S02) explained: "I started using AI for translation and language support, but later I found myself depending on it to help structure my arguments and connect ideas". In contrast, the five

participants who reported low AI use described consciously resisting this progression. S03 stated: “After discussing some AI-generated sections with my supervisor, I realised that they did not really reflect my thinking, so I became much more careful about how I use it.”

These students’ views suggest that AI dependency should be understood as a state of progression. Students do not move directly from independent writing to complete reliance on AI; rather, dependency develops through a gradual process of delegating increasingly complex cognitive tasks to the technology. This finding supports recent research indicating that generative AI use often expands beyond its original purpose as students become accustomed to its efficiency and convenience (Chan & Tsi, 2024; Perkins et al., 2024). Within the Algerian EFL context, where students often face linguistic difficulties, limited writing support, and heavy academic demands, this progression appears particularly pronounced. The findings further suggest that problematic AI use cannot be explained solely in terms of academic misconduct. Rather, students frequently viewed AI as a practical solution to genuine educational challenges. Consequently, interventions that focus exclusively on prohibition are unlikely to succeed. Instead, institutions may need to develop pedagogical approaches that help students recognize when assistance begins to transform into dependency.

4.2 Voice, Authorship, and the Experience of Textual Alienation

A second major theme discussed the impact of AI on students’ sense of voice and authorship. Although most participants consistently acknowledged the linguistic benefits of AI-generated writing, some expressed discomfort with the extent to which AI-mediated texts no longer reflected their personal styles, perspectives or identities. S01 illustrated: “Sometimes the final version sounds much more professional than anything I could write myself, but it also feels like I am reading someone else’s work.” Perhaps most strikingly, S16 admitted: “The language is impressive, but I often struggle to see myself in the final text.” The six moderate users described a more nuanced experience. S07 explained: “The arguments are mine, but the way they are expressed is often influenced by AI. I feel present in the text, but not completely.” By contrast, the five low-use participants actively revised or rejected AI-generated content to preserve what they considered their authentic voice. S06 stated: “I would rather submit imperfect writing that sounds like me than a perfect text that feels artificial.”

These findings resonate strongly with Ivanič's (1998) conceptualization of writer identity, which emphasizes the role of discourse in constructing and

expressing selfhood. Participants' experiences suggest that AI-generated language may weaken the relationship between the writer and the text by replacing individual linguistic choices with standardized formulations. Recent studies also report that multilingual writers often perceive AI-generated writing as distancing them from their own ideas and experiences (Sandstedt & Kibler, 2025; Li, 2025). Moreover, the findings point to what may be termed *textual alienation,* which was developed as an interpretive label during the analysis rather than imposed as a predefined coding category, it is defined as a sense of psychological distance between the writer and the final product (Beighton, 2018).While the text may satisfy academic expectations, it no longer feels entirely representative of the writer's intellectual contribution as indicated by participants' statements (S06 and S07) above. This issue is particularly significant in the Algerian context, where students negotiate multiple linguistic and cultural identities across Arabic, French, and English. Consequently, concerns about voice extend beyond stylistic preferences to encompass broader questions of authenticity, identity, and authorship.

4.3 Agency Erosion

Closely connected to voice was the issue of agency. Participants differed considerably in the extent to which they perceived themselves as directing the writing process. While some described AI as a supportive tool that remained under their control, others acknowledged that it increasingly shaped their writing decisions. For 5 high-frequency users, AI often assumed a central role in organizing and generating content. S08 explained: "Sometimes AI determines the flow of the essay before I do. I usually start with its suggestions and then build from there." The most extreme case was represented by S16, who admitted: "In some assignments, AI does most of the writing and I mainly review it before submitting." By contrast, six moderate users maintained greater control. S05 described herself as "the editor rather than the writer," while S13 explained that she regularly challenged and rewrote AI-generated suggestions that did not align with her intended argument.

A particularly concerning finding was the emergence of perceived deskilling. Several participants reported feeling less confident about writing independently after prolonged AI use. S04 confessed: "Writing an essay without AI feels much harder now than it used to." Such comments reflect broader

concerns regarding cognitive outsourcing, whereby mental tasks traditionally performed by learners are delegated to technological systems (Risko & Gilbert, 2016). While AI undoubtedly reduces the burden associated with writing in a second language, excessive reliance may simultaneously reduce opportunities for developing essential writing competencies. The issue, therefore, is not whether AI assists students but whether it does so in ways that preserve or diminish their capacity for independent thought and expression. Notably, agency erosion should not be viewed solely as an individual problem. Participants frequently linked their dependence on AI to structural factors such as heavy workloads, limited feedback opportunities, and assessment systems that prioritize final products over writing processes. These findings are supported by related studies (Van Lier, 2004) which view agency as emerging from interactions between learners and their educational environments.

4.4 Academic Integrity in an Era of Generative AI

The interviews revealed substantial uncertainty regarding the ethical boundaries of AI use. Although most participants recognized that some forms of AI assistance were acceptable while others were problematic, few could clearly articulate where that distinction should be drawn. S04 explained: "I know there should be a limit, but I honestly do not know where that limit is." Correspondingly, S08 claimed the following: "The more I use AI, the more difficult it becomes to decide what is acceptable and what is not." Despite this uncertainty, a broad consensus emerged around a distinction between linguistic assistance and intellectual substitution. S02 argued: "Using AI to improve language is different from asking it to think for you". These responses highlight a significant limitation of traditional academic integrity frameworks. Historically, integrity has been associated with originality and the avoidance of plagiarism. However, AI-generated texts complicate these assumptions because they are often technically original while raising legitimate questions about authorship and intellectual contribution (Eaton, 2023). Participants appeared less concerned with originality itself than with the extent to which they remained actively involved in producing and understanding the content they submitted.

Another notable finding was the discrepancy between participants' support for transparency and their reluctance to disclose their own AI use. Many feared academic penalties or uncertainty regarding institutional expectations. Participants' accounts revealed uncertainty about the boundaries of acceptable AI use in academic writing, particularly regarding the extent of assistance permitted

and whether AI use should be disclosed. These accounts suggest that students did not always have a clear understanding of the expectations governing AI-mediated writing. However, the findings reflect participants' perceptions and do not establish whether formal institutional policies were absent, inconsistently communicated, or insufficiently understood. This distinction highlights the importance of providing students with accessible, explicit guidance on acceptable AI assistance, disclosure requirements, and responsibility for submitted work. Consequently, institutions must move beyond simplistic policies of prohibition and instead develop explicit guidelines that emphasize transparency, accountability, and responsible engagement with AI.

4.5 Toward Critical AI Mediation in EFL Writing

Despite concerns about dependency, voice erosion, and reduced agency, the findings also revealed examples of constructive AI use. Several participants engaged critically with AI-generated content, using it as a tool for reflection, revision, and linguistic support while maintaining control over their ideas and arguments. This finding supports recent calls for the development of AI literacy rather than the avoidance of AI technologies (Miao & Holmes, 2023; Ng et al., 2024). The results suggest that the key educational challenge is not preventing AI use but fostering responsible and critical engagement with it through pedagogical practices such as process-oriented assessment, AI-use disclosure, and reflective writing activities. Overall, AI appears to reshape students' writing experiences in both beneficial and problematic ways, highlighting the need to reconceptualise academic integrity around transparency, critical engagement, and authentic authorship rather than textual originality alone.

5. Conclusion

This study examined how Algerian EFL Master's students perceive the integration of generative AI into their academic writing practices, focusing on voice, agency, authorship, and academic integrity. The findings revealed that students' use of AI exists along a continuum from strategic assistance to substantial dependence, with many participants describing a gradual shift toward increased reliance driven by convenience and academic pressures. While AI was perceived as beneficial for linguistic support and writing efficiency, extensive use

was often associated with diminished voice, reduced agency, and uncertainty regarding authorship and ethical responsibility. At the same time, some students demonstrated critical and reflective engagement with AI, suggesting that dependency is not an inevitable outcome when appropriate strategies are employed.

The study also highlighted the limitations of existing academic integrity frameworks in addressing AI-mediated writing and underscored the need for pedagogical approaches that promote critical AI literacy, transparency, and process-oriented writing practices. However, the findings should be interpreted in light of the study's limited sample size and reliance on self-reported perceptions. Future research could employ longitudinal and text-based analyses, include diverse educational contexts, and examine both student and instructor perspectives on AI use. Ultimately, the challenge is not whether AI should be used in EFL writing, but how it can be integrated in ways that preserve human agency, authentic authorship, and meaningful intellectual engagement.

References

Baghzou, S. (2021). Approaches to teaching writing in EFL context. *Journal of Arabic Language Sciences and Literature*, *13*(1), 2802–2823. https://dspace.univ-eloued.dz/handle/123456789/20433

Barrot, J. S. (2023). Using ChatGPT for second language writing: Pitfalls and potentials. *Assessing writing*, *57*, Article 100745. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2023.100745

Beighton, C. (2018). Beyond alienation: Spatial implications of teaching and learning academic writing. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *25*(2), 205–222. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2018.1554642

Belmihoub, K. (2018). English in a multilingual Algeria. *World Englishes*, *37*(2), 207-227. https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12294

Bhowmik, S. K. (2016). Agency, identity and ideology in L2 writing. *Writing & Pedagogy*, *8*(2), 275-308. https://doi.org/10.1558/wap.26864

Bowden, D. (1999). *The mythology of voice*. Boynton/Cook.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. SAGE Publications

Brooke, C. G. (2009). *Lingua fracta: Toward a rhetoric of new media*. Hampton Press.

Chan, C. K. Y., & Tsi, L. H. Y. (2024). Will generative AI replace teachers in higher education? A study of teacher and student perceptions. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, *83*, Article 101395. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2024.101395

Committee on Publication Ethics Council. (2019, September). *COPE discussion document: Authorship*. https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.3.3

Cooper, M. M. (2011). Rhetorical agency as emergent and enacted. *College Composition and Communication*, *62*(3), 420–449. https://doi.org/10.58680/ccc201113455

Eaton, S. E. (2023). Postplagiarism: Transdisciplinary ethics and integrity in the age of artificial intelligence and neurotechnology. *International Journal for Educational Integrity, 19*, Article 23. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40979-023-00144-1

Elbow, P. (1994). What do we mean when we talk about voice in texts? In K. B. Yancey (Ed.), *Voices on voice: Perspectives, definitions, inquiry* (pp. 1–35). National Council of Teachers of English.

Gao, X. (2010). *Strategic language learning: The roles of agency and context*. Multilingual Matters.

Godwin-Jones, R. (2022). Partnering with AI: Intelligent writing assistance and instructed language learning. *Language Learning & Technology, 26*(2), 5–24. https://doi.org/10.64152/10125/73474

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105–117). Sage.

Hyland, K. (2002). Authority and invisibility: Authorial identity in academic writing. *Journal of Pragmatics, 34*(8), 1091–1112. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(02)00035-8

International Center for Academic Integrity. (2021). The fundamental values of academic integrity (3rd ed.). https://www.academicintegrity.org/aws/ICAI/asset_manager/get_file/911282?ver=1

Ivanič, R. (1998). *Writing and identity: The discoursal construction of identity in academic writing.* John Benjamins Publishing Company. https://doi.org/10.1075/swll.5

Kinloch, V. (2010). *Harlem on our minds: Place, race, and the literacies of urban youth*. Teachers College Press.

Kohnke, L., Moorhouse, B. L., & Zou, D. (2023). ChatGPT for language teaching and learning. *RELC Journal, 54*(2), 537–550. https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882231162868

Lee, H. (2008). Learner agency and identity in second language writing. *ITL-International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 156*(1), 109-128.

Li, S.(2025).Generative AI and second language writing. *Digital Studies in Language and Literatur*e, *2*(1),122-152. https://doi.org/10.1515/dsll-2025-0007

Miao, F., & Holmes, W. (2023). *Guidance for generative AI in education and research*. UNESCO. https://doi.org/10.54675/UZZZ9106

Miliani, M. (2001). Teaching English in a multilingual context: The Algerian case. *Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies, 6*(1), 13–29.

Ng, D. T. K., Leung, J. K. L., Chu, S. K. W., & Qiao, M. S. (2021). Conceptualizing AI literacy: An exploratory review. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence, 2*, Article 100041. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2021.10004

Perkins, M., Furze, L., Roe, J., & MacVaugh, J. (2024). The Artificial Intelligence Assessment Scale (AIAS): A framework for ethical integration of generative AI in educational assessment. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice, 21*(6). https://doi.org/10.53761/q3azde36

Risko, E. F., & Gilbert, S. J. (2016). Cognitive offloading. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 20*(9), 676–688. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2016.07.002

Riyanti, D. (2015). An exploration of voice in second language writing: A review of the literature. *The Nebraska Educator, 2*, 28–48.

Sandstead, M., & Kibler, A. K. (2025). Voice in L2 writing in the age of AI. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 69*, Article 101212. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2025.101212

Shah, P. (2023). *AI and the Future of Education: Teaching in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*. Jossey-Bass.

Sperling, M., & Appleman, D. (2011). Voice in the context of literacy studies. *Reading Research Quarterly, 46*, 70–84. https://doi.org/10.1598/RRQ.46.1.4

Van Lier, L. (2004). *The ecology and semiotics of language learning: A sociocultural perspective.* Springer.

Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Section A: AI Use in Academic Writing

Q1. Can you describe how and why you use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) in your academic writing?

Q2. How has your use of AI changed since you first started using it?

Section B: Voice and Authorship

Q3. To what extent do AI-assisted texts reflect your own ideas, writing style, and personal voice?

Q4. How do you feel about claiming authorship of a text that has been partially generated by AI?

Q5. Have you ever felt that AI was writing for you rather than with you? Please explain.

Section C: Agency and the Writing Process

Q6. How does AI influence the decisions you make during the writing process?

Q7. Do you feel more in control of your writing when using AI, or more dependent on it? Why?

Q8. In what ways, if any, has AI changed how you think, plan, or develop ideas for writing tasks?

Section D: Academic Integrity

Q9. What does academic integrity mean to you in the context of AI-assisted writing?

Q10. Where do you draw the line between acceptable AI assistance and unacceptable AI authorship?

Q11. Do you think students should disclose their use of AI in academic assignments? Why /why not?

Section E: Future Perspectives

Q12. What benefits and risks do you associate with AI use in EFL writing?

Q13. How can teachers and universities help students use AI responsibly?

Q14. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with AI and academic writing?