AI and Plagiarism: Opinion from Teachers, Administrators and Policymakers

Nguyen Quynh Hoa[1*]

[1] University of Languages and International Studies, Vietnam National University, Hanoi, Vietnam
[*]Corresponding author's email: quynhhoa84@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3354-8550
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ABSTRACT

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The emergence of AI applications like ChatGPT is becoming a big concern in recent times. In the field of education, AI promises to bring important breakthroughs to improve teaching and learning efficiency, but it also raises great concerns. Teachers fear that learners may turn to ChatGPT or other AI applications to generate ideas, correct mistakes, or even write complete essays. The educational forums have also revolved around how to accurately assess learners' competence when they currently have too many support tools from AI applications. Teachers, administrators, and policymakers themselves have divergent views on whether the use of AI applications in academic writing is plagiarism. This study focuses on understanding the views of teachers, administrators, and policymakers on the issue of AI and plagiarism. The research instrument is a questionnaire designed to clarify their acceptance or disapproval of learners' use of AI applications in academic writing and the extent of acceptable use. The research results show that AI applications have become increasingly popular in teaching and learning practices, and participants are quite open to this trend. Meanwhile, most participants are aware of the negative impacts that such applications may bring about. The research data also reveal that surveyed teachers and administrators/ policymakers have varied or even opposing perceptions of the use of AI applications in academic writing. These research findings should be considered for developing or adjusting legal documents in the field of education to keep these documents updated with the actual situation.

Introduction

In the present research, Artificial intelligence (AI) attracts much attention and is claimed to bring great support to English teaching and learning (Gawate, 2019; Fitria, 2021). However, researchers, educators, and teachers also mentioned possible threats that AI may cause, including negatively affecting the role of teachers (Aljohani, 2021) while making learners less creative and dependent and even proliferating plagiarism (Francke & Alexander, 2019). Such fear results from the invention of powerful AI tools, including chatbots like ChatGPT, which can generate ideas, correct mistakes, and even compose full essays based on users' demands. Accordingly, people working in the education field have varied viewpoints on the application

of AI tools, especially in academic writing. This research was conducted with the purpose of collecting teachers', administrators', and policymakers' opinions concerning their acceptance or disapproval of learners' use of AI applications in academic writing and the extent of acceptable use. The ultimate purpose is to propose how legal documents like regulations on plagiarism should be developed or adjusted appropriately.

Literature review

Key terminologies – AI and AI applications

An early definition of AI was mentioned by Rich and Knight (1991), who defined AI as the analysis of how computers do tasks that people currently do better. More recently, AI was defined as a device that makes intelligent decisions autonomously (Ginsberg, 2012). This terminology is also commonly referred to as Machine Intelligence. In this sense, AI is about adding human intelligence to the machine for task execution (Mehrotra, 2019). In the field of education in general and the teaching and learning of English in particular, AI is actually the application of AI systems or tools to support teaching and learning practices (Pettela, 2020; Mukhallafi, 2020).

Numerous AI applications have been created to help English teachers and learners overcome their difficulties, such as machine translation, automatic speech recognition, information retrieval techniques, text-to-speech techniques, writing evaluation techniques, etc. Fitria (2021) named the most common AI applications for the time being, including Google Translate, Text to speech, Elsa (English learning speech assistant), Chatbot, and Duolingo. Among the mentioned applications, chatbots have gained increasing popularity and using them has become a trend in teaching and learning English.

Benefits of AI applications

There has been not a small number of research conducted on the benefits that applications of AI tools may bring to learners and teachers.

Pettela (2020) carried out research on the use of AI applications to teach and learn English to secondary-level students. The author claimed that employing AI applications, including programmed learning and other open sources of high technology, is a current trend in the field of experimental research. The benefits of AI applications are the ability to tailor support to suit individual learners' specific needs and abilities. Moreover, AI tools may be superior to teachers in the way that they provide immediate feedback and unlimited guidance whenever learners need it. One of the areas that AI can be used to help learners overcome their difficulties in learning English is the field of paragraph and essay writing. Besides, AI can be used to develop students' reading comprehension, translation skills, and speaking skills – especially pronunciation and enrich their vocabulary. In short, it seems that AI has revolutionized traditional education into an automated education.

Fitria (2021) also shared similar research results when emphasizing that AI can be considered a tutor for language learning. Specifically, AI tools offer tireless and individualized training and provide learners with a large volume of feedback. As for chatbots, a recently popular AI tool, they can be used as an English conversation partner. Conversations can be carried out in either oral or written form, through which learners can practice and improve their productive skills. Besides, learners can also get corrections and assessments of their practice, receive comments regarding the location of errors, and suggestions for replacing words. Consequently, AI is expected to shorten the time learners need to develop their language competence. The two most

mentioned language components that AI applications boost in learners are oral language skills (Ahmed-Ali, 2020) and grammar skills (Kim, 2019).

For such impressive benefits, some even think that AI may replace teachers in English classrooms (Shin, 2018), though many other researchers disapprove of this prediction. Instead, teachers in Education 4.0 should collaborate with AI in their teaching process. Teachers' language literacy is now in a neat combination with digital literacy to create global competence (Srivani et al., 2022).

Perceptions of AI applications

Perceptions of stakeholders in the field of education on the effects of AI applications are also a topic of great concern.

Research shows that most teachers and learners have a positive attitude towards the use of AI in teaching and learning English (Aljohani, 2021). However, in the research conducted by Francke and Alexander (2019), the issue of the potential influence of AI on plagiarism in higher education was raised. The research results show that all respondents believe that AI could proliferate plagiarism in higher-education institutions' assessments. Besides, respondents all do believe that there is a need for universities to respond to the threat of AI on plagiarism. Proposed suggestions include changing assessment methods, developing rules around the applications of AI tools, and conducting more research on the issue. In reality, the use of AI applications, especially chatbots, has elevated the worries of plagiarism in academic work as they can massively generate full essays and other high-quality texts. As a result, many educational institutions have restricted or even prohibited the use of chatbots (Khalil & Er, 2023).

This study was carried out to clarify how university teachers, administrators, and policymakers in Vietnam perceive the application of AI tools. Within the limited scope of this research, the focus is just their acceptance or disapproval of learners' use of AI applications in academic writing and the extent of acceptable use.

Research Questions

The study aims to answer three research questions:

1. What are common AI tools that are used in teaching and learning academic writing?

2. What are teachers, administrators, and policymakers' perceptions of the applications of AI tools in academic writing? Do they accept or disapprove of learners' use of AI tools?

3. What is the extent of acceptable use of AI tools in these stakeholders' opinions?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

As academic writing is mostly taught at higher education levels, the study focused on exploring the stakeholders' perceptions at this level. The total sample involves 68 lecturers at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The participants come from eighteen different colleges, academies, and universities in the northern, central, and southern areas of Vietnam. Of those participants, more than 85 are female lecturers. The most typical degree is a master's (61.76%), while those with a doctoral degree account for 22.06%, and the number of participants with a bachelor's degree is 16.18%. The majority of participants teach English (80.88%), and those who teach other foreign languages account for 19.12%. Most of them are experienced teachers – 30.88% have more than 15 years of experience, 42.65% have taught English from 10 to less

than 15 years, 17.65% have from 5 to 10 years of experience, and just 7.35% have been English lecturers for less than 5 years. In terms of the level that they are working at, 88.24% work with undergraduate learners, while 26.74 of them work with graduate learners (some of the participants work at both levels). The participants (82.35%) mainly work in public or state educational institutions. Among 68 participants, 22 of them (32.35%) are also in certain leading positions – they are considered administrators and policymakers in this study.

Data collection & analysis

To collect data and answer three research questions, an online questionnaire was built on Google Forms – one of the most common data collection tools at present. The questionnaire was designed with three main parts. The first part focuses on gathering personal information about participants, as clarified in the previous part. The second part aims to explore the participants' and their learners' real experiences with AI tools in teaching and learning academic writing. The questions in this part focused on the kinds of AI tools that the participants and their learners use and the frequency level of each tool. The target of the last part of the questionnaire is to explore how the participants (teachers versus administrators/policymakers) perceive the use of AI tools in the field of academic writing and which tools are acceptable. Most of the questions are Likert-scale type. The scale is from 1 to 4 or 5, showing the degree of agreement (from strongly agree to strongly disagree), degree of mastery (from not knowing the application to mastering the application), or frequency (from very often to never). There are also some open-ended questions to collect more detailed information about the participants' opinions. Regarding the data analysis method, descriptive statistics were applied to present and interpret the collected data.

Findings

Common AI tools used in the teaching and learning of academic writing

As mentioned in the section Data Collection and Analysis, the second part of the questionnaire focuses on the teacher's and learners' experiences with AI tools in the field of academic writing.

In order to clarify the teachers' experiences, the questionnaire provides a list of AI applications with appropriate functions for teaching academic writing. The following table illustrates the listed applications and their outstanding functions as advertised by the applications' providers in their official websites:

Table 1. The listed applications and their outstanding functions

Name of applications	Outstanding functions
1. ChatGPT	- Generate content - Evaluate writing pieces - Make correction and provide suggestions
2. Textero AI	- Gather information - Find references - Generate content - Summarize text
3. Jasper Chat	- Generate ideas - Revise content
4. Writer X	- Provide templates - Generate content
5. CopySmith	- Generate high-quality content
6. QuillBot	- Paraphrase - Check grammar - Summarize text
7. Wordtune	- Rewrite sentences - Adjust tone and formality
8. Grammarly	- Check grammar and spelling - Provide suggestions

The collected data shows that ChatGPT, Grammarly, and QuillBot are the three most common AI applications. As for other applications, most participants either do not know about them or know but have not used them.

Table 2. Teachers' experiences with AI applications and their degree of mastery

Degree of mastery Application	Not know about the application (1)	Know but not use the application (2)	Use but not master the application (3)	Master the application (4)	Mean
ChatGPT	**1.47%**	**27.94%**	**41.18%**	**29.41%**	**3.0**
Textero AI	75.00%	20.59%	4.41%	0.00%	1.3
Jasper Chat	73.53%	20.59%	5.88%	0.00%	1.3
Writer X	73.53%	20.59%	5.88%	0.00%	1.3
CopySmith	67.65%	25.00%	7.35%	0.00%	1.4
QuillBot	**39.71%**	**27.94%**	**16.18%**	**16.18%**	**2.1**
Wordtune	69.12%	20.59%	4.41%	2.94%	1.4
Grammarly	**10.29%**	**32.35%**	**35.29%**	**22.06%**	**2.7**

It is noticeable that there is a slight difference between the participants who are teachers and those who are also administrators and policy makers.

Table 3. Teachers vs. administrators/policy makers' experiences with AI applications and their degree of mastery

Applications	Mean of teachers	Mean of administrators/policy makers
ChatGPT	2.9	3.1
Textero AI	1.2	1.4
Jasper Chat	1.3	1.4
Writer X	1.3	1.3
CopySmith	1.4	1.4
QuillBot	2.1	2.1
Wordtune	1.3	1.7
Grammarly	2.6	2.9

As can be seen from the data, the means of administrators or policymakers are either equal to or slightly higher than those of teachers, which indicates that participants as administrators/policymakers have more experience with AI applications. They seem to know more about and master these applications better than teachers with no leading positions.

As for learners' experiences with AI applications, 59 out of 68 participants claimed that their students do make use of AI applications in learning academic writing. For the question about whether the students frequently use AI tools in academic writing or not, 10 teachers said that they had no information. Among 58 other participants, 17 claimed that their students frequently use AI tools in academic writing.

The question about the kinds of AI tools that students use provides more detailed information. In reality, students use all three kinds of applications: applications that help them generate whole essays like ChatGPT and Textero AI; those provide paraphrasing functions and suggestions like QuillBot and Wordtune; and those that check their written essays for grammar and spelling errors like Grammarly.

Table 4. Students' experiences with AI applications and their degree of frequency

Degree of frequency Application	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very often (5)
Applications that help create the whole essays	1.47%	7.35%	**33.82%**	**25.00%**	4.41%
Applications that help paraphrase	7.35%	7.35%	**29.41%**	**27.94%**	5.88%
Applications that check grammar and spelling	5.88%	1.47%	**29.41%**	**29.41%**	**14.71%**

The research results show that students either sometimes or often use various AI applications to support their learning of academic writing. Among the three kinds of AI applications, those that help them check grammar and spelling are popular the most.

The participants also named some other AI applications that they have used. Among the listed names are Bing Chat and Bard, which are similar to ChatGPT or Jasper Chat, or Zoho Writer, which shares some functions with Textero AI or Writer X in the given list. Besides, participants

added Google Translate – the one listed in the literature review section, and Turnitin – an application that helps check plagiarism.

Teachers, administrators and policy makers' perceptions on the applications of AI tools in academic writing

The third part of the questionnaire provides information concerning stakeholders' perceptions of AI tools – those identified in the previous part - in academic writing. A number of statements revealing both possible advantages and disadvantages of AI applications are given for the participants to give their personal opinions.

5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree

Table 5. Participants' perceptions of AI applications in academic writing

Statements	5	4	3	2	1	Mean
1. Applying AI tools is a form of plagiarism.	4.41%	19.12%	**45.59%**	**27.94%**	2.94%	2.9
2. AI applications may reduce learners' creativeness.	16.18%	**32.35%**	**27.94%**	22.06%	1.47%	3.4
3. AI applications may lead to wrong evaluation.	**27.94%**	**47.06%**	17.65%	4.41%	2.94%	3.9
4. AI applications help reduce learners' pressure in academic writing.	**11.76%**	**63.24%**	11.76%	10.29%	2.94%	3.7
5. Making use of AI applications is also a way of learning academic writing.	10.29%	**47.06%**	**22.06%**	16.18%	4.41%	3.4

The data show that participants are quite neutral and even tend to disagree that using AI applications is a form of plagiarism. As for the two statements claiming that AI applications may reduce learners' creativeness and that making use of AI applications is also a way of learning academic writing, they both lead to opposing views among participants; however, it seems that more participants agree with these statements. As for the statements that AI applications may lead to wrong evaluation and that they help reduce learners' pressure in academic writing, more consensus opinions were received among participants.

Not only having different experiences, but the two groups of participants – teachers vs. administrators/policy makers – show differences in their perceptions.

Table 6. Teachers vs. administrators/policy makers' perceptions of AI applications in academic writing

Statements	Mean of teachers	Mean of administrators/ policy makers
1. Applying AI tools is a form of plagiarism.	3.0	2.7
2. AI applications may reduce learners' creativeness.	3.4	3.3
3. AI applications may lead to wrong evaluation.	4.0	3.7
4. AI applications help reduce learners' pressure in academic writing.	3.7	3.7
5. Making use of AI applications is also a way of learning academic writing.	3.5	3.4

4 out of 5 means of teachers are higher than those of administrators/policymakers, which means teachers have a higher degree of agreement on most of the given statements. Administrators and policymakers seem to be more cautious about the nature of AI applications (whether it is a form of plagiarism) as well as their benefits and drawbacks.

The extent of acceptable use of AI tools in these stakeholders' opinion

In response to the questions about whether or not AI applications are acceptable in academic writing, only 3 in 68 participants thought that AI applications must be banned in the field of academic writing. Among the rest, half of them (32 participants) selected the option that AI applications can be used but only in learning academic writing, not in testing and assessment. The other half (33 participants) thought that AI applications could be used selectively in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

In case some AI applications can be used in academic writing, up to 27 participants thought that AI applications that help learners generate whole essays are acceptable – which may be opposite to the predicted research result. 32 participants accepted AI applications that help learners paraphrase and edit their essays, while 49 participants agreed with the learners' use of AI applications to check grammar and spelling.

Discussion

The collected data show that AI applications have become quite popular in teaching and learning practices at higher education levels in Vietnam. About half of the surveyed participants have at least known or actually used some common AI tools like ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Google Translate. As for other applications with similar functions, like Textero AI and Jasper Chat, they are still new names to most English teachers in Vietnam.

One noticeable research result is that participants who are also administrators or policymakers tend to have more experience with AI applications. It may be a part of their leading position, which requires them to explore new things and consider them for possible and wider application in the future. This is the nature of any change in society in general and in education in particular; some pioneers explore a new field and share knowledge and experience with their partners or

followers. AI is still a new trend that is expected to have more positive effects on education in the future. Groups of pioneers, including researchers, teachers, and administrators/ policymakers, should be formed to figure out effective and practical ways to apply AI in the teaching and learning of English to maximize its potential while minimizing possible risks or downsides.

As for students, they often make use of AI applications in their learning. The exact degree of frequency may be higher or lower as the information is taken indirectly from teachers, not students themselves. However, teachers have witnessed their students' usage of different AI tools that support the learning of academic writing – from checking grammar and spelling to paraphrasing and even composing full essays.

In terms of stakeholders' perceptions of AI applications, participants are either neutral or have opposing views. It is also understandable as AI applications are still new in the field of education, administrators/ policymakers and teachers should be cautious about them. The data analysis does reveal such caution among participants who are administrators/ policymakers. It is a good sign as these participants are the ones who compose educational policies affecting their entire educational institutions or even a larger scope. It is crucial that they pay due consideration to both the benefits and risks of AI applications and propose appropriate regulations.

Specifically, participants have not made up their minds about whether using AI is a form of plagiarism. There is even a slight bias towards the "Disagree" option. They tend to be neutral about the claim that AI reduces learner's creativity or the confirmation that using AI is a way to learn academic writing. Meanwhile, they seem to be more agreeable to the possibility that AI applications lead to wrong evaluation but reduce learners' pressure in learning. In short, participants tend to avoid being too assertive while being aware of existing problems that AI applications may bring to the field of academic writing.

However, both groups of participants, i.e., teachers vs. administrators/ policymakers, are all open to AI applications, as only a few strongly disapprove of learners' use of AI tools. The surveyed participants mostly accept that learners can use AI tools in academic writing with certain conditions – either only in the learning process, not in assessment, or with careful selection of allowable applications. This finding proves that AI tools will undoubtedly be applied more widely in the future.

Conclusion

From the above-mentioned research results, it is advisable that more research should be conducted concerning both effects, especially the adverse effects of AI applications, and stakeholders' perceptions before adding AI applications to legal documents on plagiarism. Direct information from students should be collected so that the research findings can be more precise and thorough.

Besides, there should be adjustments in both teaching and assessing academic writing for the proper and effective use of AI applications as follows:

➢ Teachers are advised to give assignments or tasks that go beyond the basics or common topics – those that AI can replace or even do faster and better than human learners. Instead, the given assignments or tasks should require more personal engagement and

critical thinking to ensure that learners may use AI tools to support them without losing their creativity or becoming dependent on these applications.

➢ Teachers should inform their students of the possible limitations of AI applications and the potential consequences of relying on them. They should also provide clear guidelines and expectations about each writing assignment and the whole course for the students so that students know clearly their expectations and requirements.

➢ Students should take advantage of AI applications, considering them their language tutors who help them improve their language competence, including writing skills. However, they should not see them as a substitute for real effort and original thinking while composing their pieces of writing.

➢ Educational institutions should conduct more research to create clear and appropriate guidelines and policies for the use of AI applications.

In short, research results seem to be in line with what has been concluded in previous studies. AI applications are a rising trend and have raised great concern, even disagreement among stakeholders in the educational field. Whether using AI is plagiarism is one of the currently debated issues. Teachers and administrators/ policymakers are cautious about deciding the relationship between using AI tools and the act of plagiarism. Meanwhile, they are aware of both the positive and negative sides of AI applications and suggest AI applications should be used with careful consideration.

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Biodata

Nguyen Quynh Hoa (also known as Hoa Nguyen) is the Deputy director of Academic Affairs Department, University of Languages and International Studies, Vietnam National University – Hanoi (ULIS-VNU). She holds an MA in Teaching English as a Second Language. Her research interests include professional development, curriculum development, and language assessment.