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GENERATIVE AI IN EFL ACADEMIC WRITING COURSES: A POLICY AND TASK-DESIGN FRAMEWORK FOR UZBEK UNIVERSITIES

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https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24275791

Abstract. Generative AI tools can produce a fluent English essay in seconds, which undermines the take-home essay as evidence of learning. Responses in Uzbek universities range from silent tolerance to outright bans, and neither helps students learn to write. This thesis proposes a course-level framework with two parts: a three-level AI-use scale assigned to every writing task, with a short disclosure statement, and task-design principles that keep learning visible, including process portfolios, in-class drafting, local topics, critique of AI texts and brief oral defences. It also argues against using detection software as evidence of misconduct.

Keywords: generative AI, academic writing, academic integrity, EFL, assessment, task design.

Introduction.

Writing courses for English majors in Uzbekistan, such as Reading and Writing Practice (O‘qish va yozuv amaliyoti), have traditionally assessed students through essays written at home. Since late 2022, freely available generative AI tools have made this model fragile: a student can hand in a flawless essay on any topic without developing any of the abilities the course is meant to build.

Teachers have reacted in different ways. Some ban AI and rely on detectors, some suspect AI use but have no policy to point to, and some encourage it without guidance. Each response has a cost: bans push use underground, detectors produce false accusations, and unguided use can replace learning altogether. UNESCO (2023) has urged institutions to develop clear, human-centred guidance, but local publications still discuss AI mostly in terms of general benefits and risks.

Aim and methods.

The aim of the thesis is to propose a practical AI policy for EFL writing courses. International guidance and research on AI in education, academic integrity, detection and second language writing were reviewed to derive principles, which were then applied to the typical structure of local writing courses (weekly tasks, mid-term and final essays, point-based grading) and checked for feasibility in large groups without paid software.

Main part.

Two research findings shape the framework. First, detection is not reliable for learners. Liang et al. (2023) tested seven widely used detectors and found that they labelled more than half of a set of TOEFL essays by non-native writers as AI-generated, while classifying essays by US eighth-graders almost perfectly; simpler, more predictable learner English looks “machine-like” to the software. Second, not all borrowing is cheating. Pecorari (2008) showed that much apparent plagiarism by L2 writers reflects incomplete mastery of academic conventions rather than intent to

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deceive, and the same distinction applies to AI: checking grammar with a tool is not the same as submitting a generated essay.

The framework labels every task in the syllabus with one of three levels. At Level 0 (no AI), used for in-class timed writing and examinations, no tools are allowed. At Level 1 (AI for support), students may use AI to brainstorm, explain grammar or comment on their own draft, but not to write text, and they submit a short disclosure statement: which tool, for what, and which suggestions they accepted or rejected. At Level 2 (AI integrated), used for advanced tasks, AI may be used at any stage as long as prompts, drafts and a short reflection are submitted and the student can defend every claim.

The scale works only with tasks that make substitution hard. Essays are submitted as process portfolios with an outline, a first draft, a response to feedback and a final version, and marks are spread across these stages. First drafts of major essays are written in class. Topics draw on things AI does not know, such as an interview with a relative about a local tradition or a problem in the student's own neighbourhood. In critique tasks, students receive an AI-generated essay, find its vague claims, missing evidence and invented references, and rewrite one paragraph. For selected assignments, a three-to-five-minute oral defence checks that students can explain their own argument. Suspected misuse is handled through evidence of process and a conversation, not a detector score, and a first case in the first year leads to a guided rewrite rather than a penalty.

Conclusion.

When a machine can produce the product, evidence of learning has to come from the process and from the student's ability to explain the work. A three-level AI-use scale with disclosure, combined with process-based tasks, gives Uzbek writing courses a fair and workable alternative to both bans and silence. Its effect on students' writing development compared with product-based assessment still needs to be studied.

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