



People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Chadli Bendjedid El-Tarf
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English



**Investigating the Impact of Overreliance on AI Tools on Language Learning and Learners'
Autonomy: A Case Study of EFL Students at the Department of English, Chadli Bendjedid
University, EL Tarf**

Dissertation submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Master Degree of English Didactics

Submitted by:

Ammar Mahdjoub & Moussa Selmi

Supervised by:

Dr. Sana Bouras

Board of Examiners

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Academic Year
2025 \ 2026



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Declaration

We hereby declare that the work presented in this dissertation, **Investigating the Impact of Overreliance on AI Tools on Language Learning and Learners' Autonomy: A Case Study of EFL Students at the Department of English, Chadli Bendjedid University, EL Tarf**, is our own to the best of our knowledge. It has not been submitted previously to any other institution or university for any degree, and all sources used and quoted have been appropriately cited and acknowledged.

Students' names : Ammar Mahdjoub and Moussa Selmi.

Dedication

We dedicate this work to our families, the biggest source of love and support in our lives. They were always there to encourage us and we wish to state how much we appreciate all they have done for us. We are grateful to have you in our live. Thank you for everything.

MOUSSA & AMMAR

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Lastly, we would also like to extend our thanks to all students and teachers who participated in our research. We are grateful to you; without your contribution, we wouldn't have been able to finish this research.

Abstract

The introduction of AI technology into education has resulted in the appearance of countless AI tools to facilitate integration, and while its benefits have shown themselves across educational settings, it also created an issue of overreliance among a multitude of students. Therefore, this dissertation aims to explore students' and teachers' perspectives regarding AI tools overreliance in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at Chadli Bendjedid University El-Tarf. This study in particular seeks to examine to what extent do EFL students depend on AI tools and how does this affect their language learning and learner autonomy. Then, what type of AI tools do they overrely on the most, and, also, it investigates the difference in AI overreliance between beginner and advanced EFL learners, and whether beginners are at more risk than the advanced ones. This exploratory study followed a mixed approach design. Research data was collected through two questionnaires administered to EFL students and teachers via online Google Forms and paper format. The results of this study showed that teachers' observations of students and learners' beliefs did not match. While teachers' results appeared consistent and logical, students' results were unreliable in multiple points in the study as well as contradicting themselves sometimes. The findings generally confirmed the second hypothesis, while only partially proving the first and third hypotheses. The research concluded with the limitations encountered, suggestions for students and teachers to mitigate AI overreliance, and recommendations for future studies.

Keywords: AI over-reliance, EFL Learners, Learner Autonomy, Language Learning.

ملخص

أدى إدخال تكنولوجيا الذكاء الاصطناعي في مجال التعليم إلى ظهور عدد هائل من الأدوات التي تهدف إلى تسهيل دمج هذه التكنولوجيا في الممارسات التعليمية. وبالرغم من أن فوائد هذه الأدوات باتت جلية عبر سياقات تعليمية متعددة، فإنها خلقت في المقابل إشكالية فرط الاعتماد عليها لدى شريحة واسعة من المتعلمين. وعليه، تهدف هذه الأطروحة إلى استقصاء وجهات نظر الطلبة والأساتذة تجاه ظاهرة فرط الاعتماد على أدوات الذكاء الاصطناعي في سياق تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بجامعة الشاذلي بن جديد بالطارف. وتسعى هذه الدراسة، على وجه الخصوص، إلى بحث المدى الذي يعتمد فيه طلبة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية على أدوات الذكاء الاصطناعي، ومدى تأثير هذا الاعتماد على تعلمهم للغة واستقلاليتهم كمتعلمين، ثم تحديد أنواع الأدوات التي يفرطون في الاعتماد عليها أكثر من غيرها. كما تبحث الدراسة في الفرق في درجة فرط الاعتماد بين المبتدئين والمتقدمين من متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية، وفيما إذا كان المبتدئون أكثر عرضة لهذا الخطر من نظرائهم المتقدمين. وقد اتبعت هذه الدراسة الاستكشافية تصميماً قائماً على المنهج المختلط، حيث جمعت بيانات البحث عن طريق استبيانين وجهتا إلى طلبة وأساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، ووزعا بصيغتين: إلكترونية عبر نماذج غوغل وورقية. وأظهرت نتائج الدراسة وجود تضارب بين ملاحظات الأساتذة ومعتقدات الطلبة؛ ففي حين بدت نتائج الأساتذة متسقة ومنطقية، جاءت نتائج الطلبة غير موثوقة في عديد من النقاط، بل بدت متناقضة أحياناً. وقد أكدت النتائج، بصفة عامة، صحة الفرضية الثانية، بينما لم تثبت سوى جزء من الفرضيتين الأولى والثالثة. واختتم البحث بذكر القيود التي اعترضته، وتقديم مقترحات للطلبة والأساتذة للتخفيف من فرط الاعتماد على الذكاء الاصطناعي، إلى جانب توصيات للدراسات المستقبلية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: فرط الاعتماد على أدوات الذكاء الاصطناعي، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، استقلالية المتعلم، التعليم

الجامعي، تصوّرات الأساتذة والطلبة.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviation

AI: Artificial Intelligence

AWE: Automated Writing Evaluation

CALL: Computer-Assisted Language Learning

ChatGPT: Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer

DeepL: Deep Learning

et al: et alia (and others)

etc: et cetera

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FLA: First Language Acquisition (or Foreign Language Acquisition)

GPUs: Graphics Processing Units

H: Hypothesis

ICALL: Intelligent Computer-Assisted Language Learning

IWE: Intelligent Writing Evaluation / Intelligent Writing Assistant

ITS: Intelligent Tutoring System

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

LLM: Large Language Model

MLA: Modern Language Association

MKO: More Knowledgeable Other

MALL: Mobile-Assisted Language Learning

ML: Machine Learning

NLP: Natural Language Processing

Q: Question

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

TELL: Technology-Enhanced Language Learning

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

Chapter One

Introductory Chapter

Introduction

With the introduction and rapid advancement of artificial intelligence AI, the field of Education was left forever changed. AI tools such as Grammarly, ChatGPT, or DeepL became widespread and transformed how students access information and receive feedback. These AI tools provide many options for students such as grammar correction, vocabulary enhancement, translation, and full text generation, all of which work to enhance how attractive these tools are for learners.

(EFL) learners in general are often faced with challenges such as Limited authentic language input exposure and practice opportunities. The introduction of AI Technologies became a crucial factor for EFL students to deal with such challenges, with AI tools such as chatbots becoming the go-to for EFL students to practice their language and receive both immediate feedback and correction. However, as convenient as these AI tools may seem, they conceal a dangerous problem: depending on the person using them, they might induce a serious form of overreliance.

Moreover, modern learners are part of the digital native generation. They grew up in technology rich environments, where digital tools are seemingly integrated with everyday life, and that brings with it the risk of AI being perceived as the norm rather than a tool of assistance when used in the educational process.

Statement of the Problem

While AI technology provided many benefits to language learners since its appearance, it also created one major growing overreliance problem for the educational system. In this study, overreliance refers to learners' habitual and excessive dependency on AI tools to solve language tasks that typically require students to complete independently, stripping students of opportunities for active cognitive engagement with language. Some examples include students submitting AI generated assignments without personal revision, using AI assistance at the first sign of difficulty rather than using problem solving strategies, and using grammar checkers without understanding the corrections.

The biggest concern situations such as this are that AI generated outputs appear to be linguistically competent, leading to this AI-assisted competence working as a kind of mask for a profound lack of genuine language proficiency. Reckless use of these AI tools may lead to many negative effects for learners such as failing to develop vocabulary range, grammatical accuracy, and critical thinking abilities, all of which were supposed to be cultivated through assignments that students solve with AI tools. Moreover, such dependency will definitely impact learner autonomy, and might cause long term problems following learners to their professional careers, leaving them both unequipped to function without such support, and unable to defend their claimed proficiency among peers.

Beginner EFL learners might be the group most at risk of this dependency challenge due to not yet having developed fundamental English skills to an appropriate level. This makes them more susceptible to trusting AI's seemingly fluent content without the ability to judge its accuracy, and developing a tendency for cognitive offloading much easier than an advanced learner.

Advanced EFL learners are not outside the scope of danger. The risk that accompanies overreliance for this category usually manifest in the form of skill atrophy, where dependent individuals may lose the skills they have learned over time, also because of cognitive offloading.

Aims of the Study

After four years or so since its release AI tools have become an essential part of everyday life and have been particularly widespread among students. This study aims to investigate the nature and extent of overreliance on AI by EFL students, and the kind of effects this might have on students critical thinking skills and autonomy. To achieve this, the study will examine aspects such as types of AI tools and the frequency of usage among EFL students and the difference in usage between beginner and advanced learners. This examination is done across all levels from L1 to master 02 students beside teachers of English Department to capture their perspective on AI overreliance as well.

Research Questions

- Q1.** To what extent do EFL students overrely on AI-generated tools, and how does this affect their language learning and learner autonomy ?
- Q2.** Which type of AI tools do EFL learners overrely on the most ?
- Q3.** Is the impact of overreliance on AI different between beginner learners and advanced learners, does that mean beginners are in more danger due to overreliance on AI than advanced learners ?

Research Hypotheses

R-H 1. EFL students overrely on AI-generated tools significantly, Such overreliance negatively affects language proficiency and learner autonomy.

R-H 2. The AI tools EFL learners are most overreliant on are chatbots (e.g., ChatGPT, DeepSeek, Gemini,..).

R-H 3. The impact of AI overreliance differs between beginner and advanced EFL learners, it poses more danger to beginners than advanced learners.

Significance of the Study

AI tools are overly accessible and are becoming very sophisticated, leaving educators scrambling to adapt pedagogical practices to this new technology, and the new learning environment it created. This study provides empirical evidence on students use of these tools and the consequences of such usage, in hopes that this evidence will be used for the development of educational Frameworks designed to harness the full benefits of AI technology while limiting harmful student habits that might put their learning autonomy at risk.

Universities and language departments currently work with no policies that guides decision making in regards to AI tools usage. This situation has left students with free rein to use such tools disregarding the risks in exchange for effortless generated content, meanwhile, teachers have been left to face this Challenge on their own, struggling to distinguish between acceptable assistance and academic dishonesty. By documenting the nature of over reliance on AI tools, this study can assist in the building of institutional policies that are both pedagogically appropriate and adaptive to students' behavior.

Although the literature on AI in language education is rapidly accumulating, studies addressing overreliance on such technology remain very limited. Despite the global reach of AI, research conducted on this topic in non-Western contexts, such as Algeria, is very rare. This study aims to add both geographical and cultural diversity to the scope of AI-in-education research,

examining the effects of overreliance on students' learning autonomy in particular, and providing insights, data, and analysis that may be relevant across North Africa.

Structure of the Dissertation

This study consisted of five chapters, with the introductory chapter deals with background information on AI technology, and the issue of dependency that faces EFL students, as well as, statement of the problem, research questions, research hypotheses, aims of the study, significance of the study, and structure of the study.

The second chapter illustrates the literature review addressing the issues of overreliance on AI tools and learner autonomy in EFL contexts. The focus at first is the on theoretical frameworks such as the Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL), and learner autonomy, then to empirical literature on AI technology in language learning.

The third chapter focuses on the methodology used in the study, the research design, sampling, and data collection tools utilized.

The fourth chapter is centered on presenting research results. The final chapter is reserved for discussing and interpreting research findings, addressing research questions, as well as, proving or disproving the hypotheses.

Conclusion

Through this introductory chapter, we addressed relevant background information of the research topic, after which we discussed the problem this study intend to explore, and supported that with the research questions and hypotheses. The chapter further considers the aims and significance of the study, and finally, it concludes with a section for the structure of the research paper. The next chapter will examine academic literature on language learning and AI technology.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

In the five years since Open AI's ChatGPT came online, AI technology has become one of the hottest topics discussed worldwide. These discussions were particularly heated among the academic community, as an interesting research topic at the beginning, however, it did later develop into a debate between those calling for AI's integration into education, and others who raise concerns regarding its ethical and dependency-related challenges. These concerns, however, are not unfounded and research is continuously being conducted on the impact AI tools have on learners which validates the aforementioned concerns, especially in EFL educational contexts. Hence, this chapter is divided into six sections, each representing information related to AI in EFL settings. The first section deals with theoretical frameworks representing the core of language learning, while the second section revolves around AI technology in language learning, its types and benefits. The third section addresses AI overreliance in language learning, exploring what led to dependency on AI, the negative consequences of such dependence in EFL, and other contributing factors to overreliance. The fourth section focuses on the impact of AI overdependency on language acquisition, particularly on the effects it might have on productive and receptive language skills. The fifth section discusses the different perspectives of students and teachers regarding artificial intelligence technology. The last section is dedicated to covering AI overreliance in the Algerian EFL context as well as the gap this study will be researching.

Theoretical Framework

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theories

Second language acquisition (SLA) theories are the cornerstone of how learners acquire and build their proficiency in new languages. These theories are in fact a foundation to any attempt to understand the benefits and disadvantages that AI brings to language learning.

Language learning according to Krashen's monitor model, more specifically in the input hypothesis, is realized when learners are exposed to a comprehensible input just above their current competence level, referred to by Krashen as $(i+1)$ (Krashen, 1985). Krashen (1985) argues that we acquire language only by understanding messages or receiving comprehensible input (p. 2). Although AI tools such as ChatGPT or DeepL do provide appropriate input, excessive use of such tools can reduce learners' interaction with authentic language. Merrill Swain (1985), on the other hand, in her output hypothesis, emphasizes more on how language production is what allows learners to notice gaps in their linguistic knowledge: "producing the target language may be the trigger that forces the learner to pay attention to the means of expression needed in order to successfully convey his or her own intended meaning" (Swain, 1985, p. 249). This hypothesis has great implications when it comes to AI-tools usage by EFL students, considering most AI tools are text-based, and so any excessive use of these tools limits language production opportunities that learners require.

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) by Lev Vygotsky is a sociocultural theory that emphasizes the importance of guidance for learners' development. The theory suggests that there's a gap between what learners can achieve independently and what they can accomplish with the guidance of what Vygotsky calls a More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) (teacher, peer, or adult): "The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem

solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). One of the key aspects of (ZPD) is scaffolding, and true scaffolding (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976) involves gradual removal of support after the learner gains competence. More often than not, AI is misused as a crutch, not a scaffold, and removing its influence becomes extremely difficult.

Interactionist theories see language learning from another perspective, rejecting the cognitive aspect as the way to developing language alone, emphasizing the importance of social interaction. Long (1996) in his interaction hypothesis suggests that negotiating meaning through engaging in conversations will lead learners to identify the gaps in their linguistic knowledge. Gass and Mackey (2015) reaffirm the notion that interaction promotes linguistic development “the interaction approach attempts to account for learning through the learner’s exposure to language, production of language and feedback on that production” (p. 181).

Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL)

The term (TELL), referring to Technology-Enhanced Language Learning, was first introduced in the 1990s due to learning technology leaving the scope of just Computer-Assisted Language Learning CALL. It encompasses all technological applications in language education, with AI technology being the newest addition to it.

Warschauer and Healey (1998) stated that “this 30+ year history of CALL can be divided into three main stages: behavioristic CALL, communicative CALL, and integrative CALL” (p. 57). Each type represents a period of time and reflects the level of technology and pedagogical systems in each time period. Behavioristic CALL (1960s-1970s) where computers worked as strict tutors that provided right or wrong answers, mostly to repeated vocabulary and grammar drills, Communicative CALL (1970s-1980s) used computers more as tools and shifted from that explicit

rigidness to a more implicit approach, focusing on fluency and meaning through problem solving, language games, and writing activities, Integrative CALL (1990s onwards) is the newest form of CALL featuring the integration of multimedia and the Internet that provided a medium for real world interactions and extended learning beyond the classroom.

Following CALL, and with the widespread use of smartphone technology, Mobile Assisted Language Learning MALL extended what CALL represented by breaking down the obstacle of stationary computers, allowing learners to move their learning away from desktops and laptops to the palm of their hands. Stockwell (2022) observes that “MALL can provide a rewarding learning experience that brings language learning opportunities closer to the learners whether in class or as they go about their everyday business” (p. 149). Research also did not shy away from addressing the limitations that face the efficacy of mobile learning, citing difficulty of tracking learner engagement in unsupervised settings, the tendency for learners to complete activities without meaningful cognitive engagement, and the issue of inflexible pedagogical development consistently lagging behind technological advancement (Stockwell, 2022). The appearance of AI was an unexpected development in MALL; considering that the main medium of using AI is portable devices, it basically had a rejuvenating effect on mobile learning. The caveat here is that it also revealed a huge problem from a pedagogical perspective, that is the acute dependency on AI tools, that for several reasons, started spreading amongst the learner population.

During the early and late 2000s, there were several intelligent systems integrated into language learning. These systems such as Intelligent Computer-Assisted Language Learning (ICALL), Natural Language Processing (NLP), or Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS) worked on principles of parsing algorithms and natural language processing pushing past static drill exercises towards adaptive feedback. However, these systems remained constrained by rule-based structures

and technological limitations at the time. It was not until the year 2017 that AI began to experience a resurgence, as Morris et al (2017) notes “What triggered this remarkable resurgence of AI? All evidence points to an interesting convergence of recent advances in machine learning (ML), big data, and graphics processing units (GPUs)” (p. 408). This period saw language learning systems that were bound by rigid rules and algorithms upgraded, becoming more adaptive, and personalized. According to Godwin-Jones (2025):

Through generative AI, language learning is likely to see new opportunities in both instructional settings and autonomous learning. Since the arrival of ChatGPT we have seen a steady stream of blog posts, media reports, conference presentations, and workshops on ways to integrate generative AI into language learning (p. 17).

Learner Autonomy and Self-Regulation

It is common to use the word ‘autonomy’ when referring to independence and freedom from any form of control or influence of others. The idea of learner autonomy suggests a learner with a high degree of freedom (Little, 1991). Holec (1981) defines autonomy in the context of language learning as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (p. 3). Little (1991) further emphasizes that autonomy is “a capacity – for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action” (p. 4). Reinders (2011), on the other hand, criticizes the definitions put forth by Little (1991) and Holec (1981) stating that “these definitions seem to be incomplete. To have an ability to do something but not do it would hardly be useful. For example, a student can have the ability to take charge of his or her learning but still decide to be highly teacher-dependent and take no initiative whatsoever” (p. 45). According to him, “autonomous language learning is an act of learning whereby motivated learners consciously make informed decisions about that learning” (Reinders, 2011, p. 48).

Another prominent researcher, Benson (1997), implemented a different approach, conceptualizing autonomy into three perspectives: technical autonomy, referring to learners' ability to learn without needing teacher supervision; psychological, involving conscious internal motivation and confidence to take responsibility; and political autonomy emphasizing the learner's freedom and control over the content and processes of learning (p. 19). If we go by Benson's model we can see how overreliance on AI-tools might cause irreparable damage especially if the dependency affects all three aspects, starting with the loss of essential abilities and learning strategies that qualify learners to be autonomous (e.g., self-correcting, vocabulary selection, drafting, and revising); then by providing a shortcut they will leave them feeling less responsible, while at the same time eroding their sense of confidence by giving the illusion that the learner will not be able to outperform AI generated content in quality; and finally the learner will find themselves having surrendered control and freedom to AI tools.

Closely related to autonomy is Self Regulated Learning (SRL), a term coined by Zimmerman (1989), describes learners who are "metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants in their own learning process" (p. 329). What SRL provides is a framework for understanding how learners self regulate; additionally, the definition offers insights on how self regulation is not just a cognitive process, but also related to learners' enacted behaviors and what motivation pushes them along the way. Zimmerman (2002) further expands on SRL with his cyclical model that until today remains the most influential framework in SRL research. The model contains three phases: first, forethought, involving task analysis and self-motivation, alongside setting goals, planning, and choosing strategies for the task; second, performance, centering on the use of those strategies while applying self-control and self-observation during

task execution; finally, self-reflection, focusing on self-evaluating performance, strategies applied, and difficulties encountered after the task.

Another important notion to discuss in relation to autonomous language learning is arguably, metacognitive strategies. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) explain that metacognitive strategies involve “thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring of comprehension or production while it is taking place, and self-evaluation after the learning activity has been completed” (p. 8). This definition reveals several crucial insights establishing metacognition as a form of thinking about thinking. It divides metacognitive activity into three phases: planning before the task, monitoring during task performance, and evaluating upon conclusion. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) further argue that “students without metacognitive approaches are essentially learners without direction or opportunity to plan their learning, monitor their progress, or review their accomplishments and future learning directions” (p. 8).

AI Technologies in Language Learning

Types of AI Tools Used by EFL Learners

The extensive use of AI technology in EFL learning has led to the emergence of numerous AI tools of many varieties. The most widely used types consist of writing assistants, word translators, and conversational chatbots.

Translation tools are one of the most commonly used AI tools out there, with DeepL and Google Translate being the go-to applications for EFL learners seeking translations of unknown or ambiguous words. While used for the same function, research comparing AI translation tools performance highlights some differences between these platforms. According to Suhardiman et al. (2025), DeepL demonstrates “strong grasp of academic language”, offers “slightly more varied vocabulary”, and provides “natural flow in target language” (p. 230). Google Translate on the other

hand exhibited “less variety in vocabulary choices”, provides “accurate but sometimes literal translations”, and sometimes “lacks nuance in academic language” (p. 230). These differences matter greatly for EFL learners. Learners using Google Translate may receive limited vocabulary and literal, rigid translations, while using DeepL by contrast provides a richer more sophisticated translation of the target language.

Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) such as ProWritingAid, Ginger, or the famous Grammarly are writing assistants used widely by EFL learners. Dewi (2022) explains that Grammarly allows for the detection of errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. It also assists in vocabulary selection and minimizes errors in written outputs (p. 159). Similarly, Phan (2025) argues that “Grammarly appears most effective in addressing treatable errors that follow clear grammatical rules, such as articles, verb forms” (p. 11). Recently because of the continuous advancements in AI, another form of AWE, known as Intelligent Writing Evaluation (IWE), appeared. One such AI tool is Trinko, which was specifically developed for scientific and academic writing. While general use AWEs do employ AI and Natural Language Processing (NLP) technology for surface-level grammar correction and structure adjustment, Barrot (2025) notes that IWEs like Trinko use a more advanced form of these technologies that specifically provides more nuanced, context-sensitive feedback aligned with the needs of academic writers.

Conversational AIs appeared not long ago on the educational field, supported by Large Language Models (LLMs) technology. These AI tools quickly dominated most educational discussions. In the EFL educational landscape, Conversational AI that are utilized can be categorized into two types: general-purpose ones like the well-known ChatGPT, Grok, Claude, Gemini, and the newly introduced DeepSeek that provide general contextual, open-ended

dialogues on any topic but are not designed for education or any other specific field. Taghipour and Alibakhshi (2026) observe that,

It is of paramount importance to note that these apps are not specifically designed for language learning. However, they target practically any discipline because they provide audiences with a wide range of opportunities to achieve their goals, and additional language learning is one such area that could be leveraged by such chatbots.

In contrast, Language Learning Bots, which are built specifically for pedagogical language acquisition purposes, such as Praktika, Duolingo, Babbel, and Talkpal, feature simulations of real-world communicative tasks, adaptive learning calibrated to proficiency levels, and real time corrective feedback. Praktika for example is one AI-based language learning app that uses practical methods for language teaching. This app employs an animation that responds accordingly to various topic choices meant to ease the user into practicing English without the pressure of speaking to a real person (Fatmawati & Aras, 2025). According to Van (2025) “Duolingo and Babbel focus on enhancing vocabulary and grammar. Most of the studies are short-term experiments, and long-term studies are needed to make sure the results of these AI tools are in learning languages” (p. 11).

Benefits of AI Tools in EFL Contexts

AI’s integration in EFL brought with it many unquestionable cognitive and practical benefits for EFL learners, most notably personalized learning, immediate feedback and error correction, availability and accessibility, and reduced anxiety and increased confidence.

According to du Plooy, Casteleijn, and Franzsen (2024), Adaptive language learning has significantly reshaped higher education, as it combined traditional personalized learning principles with adaptive learning technologies, which led to more effective and engaging educational

outcomes tailored for individual learners. The introduction of AI technology pushed this even further by integrating advanced adaptive learning systems that leveraged artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms to predict learners' performance, analyze their behavior, as well as provide tailored interventions based on that analysis (p. 2). Immediate Feedback and Error Correction are another benefit that promotes effective learning among EFL students. Automated corrective feedback tools including Grammarly, Criterion, and Quillbot enable learners to receive ongoing, corrective, and formative suggestions for revision and improvement (Alshammari & Alhamazany, 2026).

Beyond the quality of feedback itself, a significant advantage of AI tools shows itself in its widespread availability and accessibility. Human instructors, bound by presence and time constraints, cannot be available for their students all the time. AI systems however are available for learners whenever or wherever they may be, provided they have access to the internet. "These technologies have the potential to enhance linguistic competence, promote personalized learning, and expand equitable access to language resources, thereby democratizing education on a global scale" (Vo, 2025, p. 2).

The final advantage of AI tools on EFL students that we wish to address, is none other than its positive effect on learners' anxiety and self-confidence. This directly answers to the challenge of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986), which faces many EFL learners. FLA in general is a sense of apprehension, anxiety, or unease that some learners develop when learning a second language, be it during speaking, listening, or general learning (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Multiple studies conducted on this issue proved the use of AI to be beneficial to learners with this problem. Yan & Singh (2026) states that "ANCOVA analyses, controlling for pre-test scores, confirmed AI-mediated instruction significantly outperformed traditional methods

in enhancing speaking skills, increasing FLE, reducing anxiety, and boosting emotional engagement” (p. 2). They further comment on the no-judgment and low-pressure environment AI tools provide, stating that it “has been shown to boost Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) and Willingness to Communicate (WTC) while reducing anxiety” (Yan & Singh, 2026, p. 5).

Overreliance on Technology in Education

Conceptualizing Overreliance

Overreliance on AI in educational contexts mainly occurs due to two concepts: cognitive offloading and automation bias. Cognitive offloading happens when mental tasks are relinquished to external tools, thus reducing the mental struggle of processing or remembering information. This cognitive outsourcing is a key risk for learners as it leads to the development of ‘passive knowledge’ that contains no analysis or reflection, only ready-made answers (Yavich, 2025, p. 3). Due to this type of offloading the learner may enter a dangerous state of cognitive laziness or as Oakley et al. (2025) state, “In essence, an offloaded mind may become an under-exercised mind—one that increasingly lacks awareness of its own knowledge gaps” (p. 38). It is already established that for learners of any kind to develop and retain skills, they must pass through germane load (i.e., the mental struggle that builds skills), and without it, in the case of cognitive offloading, robust learning and long-term skill retention will not take place.

Similar to cognitive offloading, automation bias is another cognitive phenomenon in which people tend to give automated systems or AI-powered systems more trust than they should, thus they start delegating decision-making to these systems, resulting in many cases of either omission errors, in which the system neglects to warn about a defect or problem that has occurred, or commission errors which occur when a user follows flawed automated instructions and in some cases even when contradictory factual evidence is available (Goddard et al., 2012).

In EFL contexts this translates to learners accepting generated AI content as correct most of the time even if said content is inaccurate or incomplete, due to learners being deluded by AI's seemingly perfect responses, as Çela et al. (2024) state, “well-explained AI responses may appear more credible to students, causing them to neglect their ideas, resulting in reduced critical thinking and increased laziness” (p. 4).

On their own, these are dangerous cognitive phenomena, but often times they interconnect, thus creating a pedagogical nightmare in the form of a metacognitive erosion loop that occurs when the trust in the validity of AI content pushes learners to outsource thinking to AI, which leads to them never developing appropriate skills that allow them to challenge the presumed accuracy of AI content. It is critical for learners to distinguish the role AI should play in their lives, as it should not be treated as a cognitive replacement but rather an augmentative tool. Researchers in the field of AI-human interaction reaffirm this, and warn about students falling into what is called “epistemic dependency” —a condition in which the illusion of AI-generated content masks foundational gaps in learners' genuine linguistic competence (Chiriatti et al., 2025, p. 2).

Outside EFL learning contexts there have been other technologies that posed the same problem of providing cognitive shortcuts for tasks that people used to actively process on their own. One such technology is the calculator, a tool we are very familiar with and no doubt believe it to be the norm. Research on the effects this tool represented has showed a divide of sorts, with one side concluding that the use of calculators reduces the cognitive load of students allowing them to focus on more complex problem-solving leading to better learning performance. “Students using calculators possessed better attitudes toward mathematics than their non-calculator counterparts” (Ellington, 2000, p. 7). The other side on this matter warns of the consequences of overrelying on this tool. Loveless (2004) argues on how this can be even more dangerous for

children, “the risk is that calculators will become a crutch for students. Worse yet, children may never acquire a deep understanding of how numbers work if, on first exposure to mathematical operations, they merely push buttons to arrive at answers” (p. 5).

The Negative Consequences of AI Overreliance in EFL

The application of LLMs and other AI tools in EFL contexts since their emergence has seemingly spurred a number of risks. These tools have always promised correctness and efficiency, but the widespread overdependency on AI among EFL learners has changed that into a promise of significant negative consequences.

A recurring theme that is observed in AI related literature, is the apparent discrepancy between AI-generated fluency and its contextual or factual accuracy. While AI in most cases seems to produce accurate content linguistically, it fails miserably if it's tested for semantic precision or cultural and pragmatic accuracy, and such output always requires manual revision. Another AI phenomenon that poses a great risk within this premise is what is described as ‘artificial hallucination’ referring to when AI produces fabricated responses and presents them as facts, only to be proven false when checked against common knowledge in the field (Alkaissi & McFarlane, 2023). Research expands on this hallucination, warning that AI will go further than just providing false facts. Alkaissi and McFarlane (2023) stated that, when asked to explain some findings it presented and provide references, “it provided five reference dating to the early 2000s. None of the provided paper titles existed” (p. 2). This suggests that AI should not be carelessly trusted, especially in academic writing, and its output should always be checked against sources.

Similar to the accuracy problem, AI's easy generated and convincing text has caused quite the issue when addressing academic integrity. Many institutions viewed this as a threat and decided to treat all AI content as a form of plagiarism and misconduct. “The rise of Large Language Models

(LLMs) such as ChatGPT and Gemini has led to a surge in academic misconduct” (Pudasaini et al., 2025, p. 1). However, because of growing AI use among the student body, such policies have proven to be difficult to keep enforcing, especially that human-written and AI-generated works are almost identical.

Furthermore, according to some studies there seems to be a great shift in the relationship between students and teachers. This shift stems from how the growing use of AI is slowly eroding that relationship and, in some ways, transform it to something new. One such study found one student who no longer wanted to ‘bother’ his teacher with simple grammatical correction or writing help if using Grammarly or ChatGPT can simply solve it instantly, while another one remarked on how teachers have limits and can get busy or frustrated, but ChatGPT is always available and never gets annoyed (Almashour et al., 2025, p. 7). This is just one example of many that demonstrate this transformation in relation to seeking feedback. It also makes apparent how AI use is slowly undermining the trust relationship between learners and their instructors. However, Almashour et al. (2025) also found some students arguing that AI cannot replace the support, emotional encouragement, humor, and cultural understanding that human teachers provide, with one student even stating that “sometimes just the way a teacher looks at you, you feel encouraged. AI does not have a face” (p. 9).

The last significant negative consequence of overreliance on AI technology is related directly to cognitive offloading and appears in the form of skill atrophy and delayed proficiency development. In a language learning context this repeated circumvention of germane load by delegating developmental cognitive tasks will lead to learners failing to internalize rules and build genuine linguistic competence, and beyond that it also affects skills that learners already acquired through what is called skill erosion. Yiğit (2025) explained this as the “gradual loss of previously

acquired cognitive or practical skills due to insufficient use or excessive reliance on external tools” (p. 38).

Factors Contributing to Overreliance

The rise to overreliance on AI tools in educational settings was not coincidental, as it had clear factors that contributed to it. These factors seem to show that what motivates learners to use this technology can range from simply the platform’s user-friendly features to students’ heavy workload and academic pressure.

As is the case with other online platforms or applications, LLMs such as ChatGPT or DeepSeek and other AI tools are built with attractive features and an easy-to-use design allowing effortless interaction. This design supports immediate generated content and summaries with simplified language that can be copied and pasted instantly (Pachava et al., 2026). These tools have positioned themselves into the same category as online shopping, mobile banking, and even theft, landing in a place of convenience that greatly influences students’ frequent use of AI, thus impeding their learning processes without them realizing (Chavez et al., 2024).

Academic environments have always placed considerable amounts of pressure on students through heavy workload and time constraints. Research findings support this claim, referencing dense curricula, tight academic schedules, and frequent looming deadlines as the prime reason for students’ use of AI tools (Pachava et al., 2026).

Another significant driver of dependency on AI tools in educational contexts is learners’ lack of AI literacy which explains their inability to distinguish between correct output that they can rely on and hallucinated outputs that require factual and contextual checking. What this means for learners is that developing critical digital literacy is the threshold they have to pass before becoming actively engaged inquirers rather than passive consumers (Rapanta et al., 2025). While

AI-generated content often appears to be fluent and polished on the surface, it is not to be mistaken for ready-to-use output, but rather it should always be critically analyzed and fact-checked before applying it, and even more it should be rejected if it is found to be inconsistent with the required objectives (Rapanta et al., 2025).

Alongside these factors we must address the underlying problem of lack of institutional frameworks and policies on AI usage. This pattern of disregard when it comes to the integration of new technology into educational settings is well established already, with institutions not providing any guidance, common standards, or sufficient training for faculty (Watson & Rainie, 2026, p. 2). This usually leads to teachers using their own discretion when it comes to AI usage by learners, while leaving learners in the dark on what appropriate usage vs. misuse looks like. It is crucial for learners to be instructed on how to use AI tools appropriately, as well as critically evaluate what the AI offers instead of being passive consumers (Watson & Rainie, 2026, p. 18).

Impact on Language

Effects on Receptive Skill

Receptive language skills, which include reading and listening, form the foundation of language comprehension and processing. The overdependence on AI tools when engaging with either of them can lead EFL learners to short term benefits but in the long run it might cause irreparable damage to their language foundation.

AI assistance in reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition is widely available through many functions of AI technology. It provides summarization, word translation, vocabulary explanations, all instantaneous and with the click of a button. While beginner learners do benefit from this assistance in developing their language, that can only occur if these functions are used appropriately. What often occurs instead is that learners get used to this type of help and start

disregarding crucial strategies that lead to true vocabulary retention and language development. Research on vocabulary processing explores what is referred to as lexical inference, which occurs when learners, faced with unfamiliar words, start to look for clues from context to infer the meaning of said words. This usually results in correct translations and added words to the existing vocabulary (Dessenberger et al., 2023, p. 2). What AI on the other hand does is provide a shortcut that deprives learners of that cognitive struggle of trying to understand the word independently. Without deep processing strategies like critical reading or inference, learners will risk surface-level comprehension that diminishes their ability to internalize new linguistic items.

Similar to reading skills, listening is another receptive skill under threat by AI overreliance. To a beginner who struggles to comprehend oral input, the variety of features that AI offers will appear enticing and convenient. Features such as speech-to-text transcription, real-time subtitles, and simplified audio input will without doubt support such learners. However, overreliance as seen in reading can transform these supportive qualities into a hindrance for developing robust listening skills. The function of transcribing audio input into a written text or captions will cause beginner learners to skip developing appropriate listening strategies and transform listening tasks into reading tasks. It is also important to add as well that real world scenarios don't include this kind of written support, therefore learners must learn to infer meaning through context and acoustic signals (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012). Even more concerning for language learners is the issue of AI hallucinations, referring to the "undesirable generated text "that is nonsensical, or unfaithful to the provided source input"" (Koencke et al., 2024, p. 1672). This problem in particular is more concerning because it exposes learners and especially beginners to incorrect linguistic input, and that may lead to internalizing errors and in the long term even fossilization.

Effects on Productive Skills

The consequences of AI overuse on productive language skills are perhaps even more acute than with the receptive skills. In writing for instance AI dependency can blur the line between human-generated and machine-generated content, raising concerns about authorship and cognitive engagement; while for speaking the concern shifts to the impact such dependency may have on the processes of real-time formulation and learners' interactive competence.

In second language (L2) writing, the act of writing itself comes after the cognitive process the learner has to navigate through, and while AI can enhance efficiency and assist in producing grammatically accurate texts, these benefits pale in comparison to the damage it may cause learners who use it often in writing. Instead of brainstorming, choosing vocabulary, and planning writing structures independently, all of which help them experiment with language and develop their writing style, they depend on AI's pre-structured, predictable content. This results in a possible weakening of learners' proficiency in editing their own writing, generating original content, and writing fluently, as well as undermining their confidence in writing without AI support (Budiyono et al., 2025).

Speaking, on the other hand, differs from writing. Instead of the long process to reach the final product in writing, speaking happens in real time and the speaker is forced to conceptualize, articulate, then formulate their thoughts into spoken language in milliseconds. Relying on AI-based mastery that is usually attained through polished and prompted practice can give learners a false sense of confidence and leave them unprepared for spontaneous real life conversation (Elzerman, 2025). Real conversations lack the safety net AI practice provides; therefore, it should not be prepared for in a rehearsed and risk-free environment. While AI can help in creating an anxiety free environment for beginners who lack confidence to practice in the classroom, it creates

a problem of dependency even after learners grow to become linguistically self-sufficient. Elzerman (2025) illustrates this further, noting that “a student excels in app-based exercises and feels confident in the classroom, but when prompted to engage in an open-ended conversation or a free-form writing task, the student struggles to proceed without guidance” (pp. 775-776). More than just fluency, speaking as a skill requires pragmatic competency to interpret humor, sarcasm, and tone; discourse skills like turn taking and facial expressions reading; as well as cultural competence for when one is faced with cultural expectations and norms.

Teacher and Student Perspectives

Research into classroom interactions shows significant differences between teacher and student viewpoints on Artificial Intelligence. Students often perceive AI technology as a supportive tool that effectively provides what they ask for; teachers on the other hand experience a moral dilemma and pedagogical tensions, for they may value the efficiency of instant responses, and the different generated content of the Artificial Intelligence, however, tension begins when teachers start to fear students entering a brain rot state due to overdependency that could cause them to stop critically thinking, or perform cognitive skills that develop their language level. Kohnke et al. (2023) argues that:

Teachers and students must develop the specific digital competencies needed to use such tools in ways that are pedagogically beneficial and ethical. This will involve learning how to interact with ChatGPT . . . It also requires a critical awareness of the drawbacks and risks of ChatGPT (p. 10).

Although the researchers refer to ChatGPT their reasoning can be extended to other types of AI tools in respect to the need of training and acknowledgement of the consequences

accompanying what overuse of AI may create, including a gap where learners produce a high-quality work without acquiring and developing the skills teachers intended.

In EFL classrooms teachers regularly provide their learners with writing activities and tasks to practice writing skills, these activities aim to help students master grammar, syntax and vocabulary as it forces the brain to retrieve and organize language structures. This strategic struggle is crucial for learners to develop linguistic competence. The spread of generative AI tools, however, may cause learners to often overrely on chatbots to write essays and complete tasks, and in this case the AI is a surrogate author that generates linguistic artifacts considered AI-generated plagiarism. On this topic Leaton Gray et al. (2025) argues that “if universities cannot reliably distinguish between machine-generated and human-authored assessments, the credibility of academic credentials, and the trust underpinning them, is placed in jeopardy” (p. 1).

Gap in Current Research

Review of AI Studies in Non-Western Educational Settings

Recent research on AI technology integration into EFL education has witnessed a notable growth globally, and Algeria has not been exempted from this development. This new but accelerated type of research within the EFL contexts of Algeria at the moment seems to be dealing with a contrasting duality of celebrating the benefits of AI tools on language learning; and the ethical and dependency problems this technology has exhibited amongst students.

According to research findings regarding AI in Algeria it is already established that Algerian students have long since integrated AI tools into their learning environment (Boukhelkal, 2025), and it is also concluded that the most favored AI tool used by learners is ChatGPT (Sebbah, 2025). And while some learners report a number of benefits accompanying the use of these tools and skills such as writing, grammar, and vocabulary enhancement; others however, honestly report

a concern of negative effects of overdependence on these tools in regards to critical thinking, as well as the risk of inaccurate information and plagiarism associated with them (Boukhelkal, 2025, pp. 9-10).

Research on teachers' perspectives also sheds some light on this, and with the same contrast, teachers praise AI for its usefulness in lesson planning, preparation, and delivery, as well as fostering personalized, enjoyable, and interactive learning experience for students; while at the same time stating concerns that overreliance on AI tools may decrease teacher and learner creativity, and that the robotic nature of AI may contribute in the loss of human touch and interaction (Benaicha & Semmoud, 2024).

The Missing Variable: The Intersection of Overreliance, Autonomy, and Proficiency Level

Although literature analysis in Algerian EFL context has revealed an acknowledged dual view on AI use: one recognizing its benefits, while the other regards it as a risk to learners' independence and critical thinking (Merdassi & Belmekki, 2024); it, however, tends to portray learners as a uniform group. On the issue of overreliance on AI tools among Algerian EFL students, these studies identify it as a concern and a challenge, but the findings often disregard other variables that might play a role in this dependency.

The missing variables this study Identified are: EFL learners' AI overreliance differences across language proficiency levels, and the consequent impact on learner autonomy. According to research there is a credible unease on the AI overreliance challenge that may result in making learners who delegate fundamental mental processes required for language learning (Sebbah, 2025). Beginner learners, for example, who use AI tools for basic word translation may manifest a dependency that differs from what an advanced learner who uses AI to edit or polish an essay

might manifest. This study wishes to address this gap, and investigate whether such proficiency-dependent patterns do exist and how the impact on learner autonomy varies across these levels.

Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the literature review of the topic of AI tools overreliance among EFL students. It has done so through six comprehensive and organized sections that encompassed information on multiple subjects and issues related to AI overdependency that was supplemented by numerous extractions from credible academic research. The next chapter will include the design and methodology of this study.

Chapter Three

Method

Introduction

In this chapter we present the research design and methodology that we implemented in our study, highlighting both students' and teachers' perspectives on the issue of overreliance on AI tools among EFL students. To facilitate this, we distributed two questionnaires through online Google Forms as well as physical copies, one intended for students and the other for teachers. This chapter also discusses the population of the research as well as the sampling that was conducted. At the end, research instruments, data analysis procedure, a section for ethical consideration, and finally the limitations of the study were presented.

Research Design

The purpose of the current study is to answer the research questions posed on AI overreliance's threat on EFL learners' autonomy and the proficiency level question. To facilitate this, we employed the embedded mixed methods research design, which focuses primarily on quantitative data collected through structured close-ended questions as well as supplementary qualitative data gathered through open-ended questions. This approach uses measurement and numerical analysis to examine patterns and draw conclusions on the phenomenon under investigation, as well as collecting a more in-depth data on the perspectives of both students and teachers.

Population and Sampling

The target population of this study consists of EFL students and teachers at the Department of English, Chadli Bendjedid University El-Tarf . The population includes all levels from the first

year L1 to Master 2 students, and this is for the purpose of generalizing the findings on a wider scale, while at the same time exploring the differences of AI dependency across language proficiency levels. The inclusion of EFL teachers of the English Department is done primarily to collect their perspectives as credible outside observers on AI behavioral usage patterns among their students.

From the total population of (n= 382) student and (n= 30) teachers, a sample was selected through a non-probability convenience sampling method, with a total number of student participants of (n= 113) and a (n= 16) participating teachers. Among the students, participants from each academic year are numbered as follows: first year L1 (n=21), second year L2 (n=16), third year L3 (n=14), Master 1 (n=34), and Master 2 (n=28), while the sampled teachers totaled (n= 16).

Data Collection Instruments

For the purpose of gathering data, the current study employed two questionnaires: one for EFL students and one for EFL teachers; due to their efficient and systematic data collection capability. Both questionnaires were distributed through written copies, however, the majority were distributed via online Google Form links with the aim of reaching a wide number of participants within the population. This online distribution approach was also crucial for gathering data from hard-to-reach or unavailable participants, namely the Master 2 students due to their absence from the university and the teachers because of their busy schedules and unavailability.

Both questionnaires consist of close-ended questions designed for easier collection of statistical data. Added to that are a few open-ended questions formulated to catch students and teachers' personal perspectives, that might provide deeper insight, complementing the gathered quantitative data.

Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire we fielded consists of fourteen questions. thirteen of them are close-ended items designed for collecting quantitative data on various aspects of AI overreliance among EFL students of Chadli Bendjedid University El-Tarf, and are divided to multiple sections that investigate different relevant variables to the current research. The following table summarizes that division:

Table 01

Structure and Content of Students' Questionnaire's Close-ended Questions.

Sections	Description
Section 01	Deals with students' academic level as well as their self-rated language proficiency. This information is crucial in building a foundation for exploring patterns later on.
Section 02	Consists of questions that examine the students' AI tool usage, from the type of tools they prefer, to the specific ones they employ in their language learning; as well as how regular they use them.
Section 03	Covers EFL students' purpose and motivation when it comes to using AI tools. This includes what language tasks they often depend on AI for without trying on their own first such as: word translation, ideas generation, or writing; in addition to what drives them to use these tools like: saving time, avoiding mistakes, or lacking confidence in their English level.
Section 04	Consisting of one question, explores the impact of AI tools usage on students' language proficiency development, and in particular if they perceived an improvement, stability, or decline in this regard over time.
Section 05	Investigates the difference in AI usage across proficiency levels to examine the different purposes Learners of different stages use AI for.

Section 06	Focuses on learner autonomy, specifically whether they endeavor to solve activities and tasks on their own before using AI, in addition to their perceptions on whether learning with AI had led to better results than without it.
Section 07	Addresses learners’ perception in regards to teachers’ role. It inquires whether teachers encouraged, discouraged, or did not discuss AI use within the classroom.

Finally, the questionnaire poses an open-ended question which was designed to extract qualitative data, inviting the participants to express what they believe is the biggest negative effect of AI overuse on EFL students.

Teachers’ Questionnaire

Similar to the students’ version, the teachers’ questionnaire is composed primarily of fifteen close-ended questions, supplemented by two open-ended ones. The former are divided, similar to the previous questionnaire, by thematic sections, each capturing an angle from teachers’ perspectives on EFL students’ AI usage. Said division is displayed in the following table:

Table 02

Structure and Content of Teachers’ Questionnaire's Close-ended Questions.

Sections	Description
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Section 01	Revolves around extracting background information, including teaching experience and teachers’ level of exposure to AI tools. This type of information will later put the teachers’ answers to other questions into a better perspective.
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- Section 02 Deals with gathering teachers' perceptions on students' AI use, both the frequency of such usage for learning tasks and what degree of overreliance they believe their students display.
- Section 03 The impact of AI overreliance on EFL students' language skill areas (e.g., writing, critical thinking, grammar, vocabulary), specifically the area negatively affected the most.
- Section 04 Highlights what teachers believe are the reasons behind EFL learners' over-dependency on AI tools, including elements such as time pressure, lack of confidence, avoidance of effort, or the lack of ethical training in AI use.
- Section 05 Examines teachers' view on AI tools usage among EFL learners, namely the impact it has on learner autonomy. It also investigates different use of AI across proficiency levels and whether advanced learners use it more responsibly as opposed to beginners.
- Section 06 Addresses opinions on the matter of AI integration in EFL learning, focusing on the degree of support or opposition teachers indicate.
- Section 07 Explores how teachers faced this surge in AI use in the classroom, in particular the countermeasures they utilized against excessive AI use which include designing AI-resistant tasks, using AI detectors, or teaching appropriate AI usage.
- Section 08 Asks teachers for their perspective on what consequences of AI overuse is more apparent within the classroom (e.g., copy paste AI output, inability to explain

submitted work, same phrasing across different assignments). It also investigates teachers' response to suspected AI use among students.

Section 09 Centers on how students' skills changed over time, specifically the difference in their language abilities before and after the widespread use of AI.

Section 10 Investigates teachers' awareness of institutional policy on AI use, whether Chadli Bendjedid University El-Tarf has implemented official AI regulations and guidelines or not.

Finally, the questionnaire concludes with two open-ended questions designed for extracting teachers' opinions on what they think is the biggest risk of AI overuse for EFL learners, as well as the best strategies that they believe can reduce the harmful effects of overreliance. Similar to the students' questionnaire, the responses from these two questions will gather qualitative data which will be analyzed thematically to explore recurring patterns in teachers' perspectives.

Data Analysis Methods

The current study uses mixed-methods research design, therefore, data analysis was conducted through both the quantitative and qualitative analysis methods.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data gathered through the close-ended questions was analyzed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The respondents' answers were summarized and interpreted through the use of descriptive statistical analysis, as well as the calculation of

percentages and frequencies for the purpose of identifying patterns and tendencies in EFL learners' AI usage from both Students' and teachers' perspectives.

This quantitative analysis seeks to provide a comprehensible overview on respondents' stances regarding level of AI usage, and their perceptions on the extent of potential harm linked to AI overreliance in EFL learning settings. The results were presented through tables, charts, and summarized through descriptive explanations allowing for better interpretation.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data gathered through the open-ended questions was analyzed using thematic analysis. This approach was chosen due to several factors. It is flexible in many ways (e.g., doesn't support just a single theoretical framework, it is applicable to many types of data, works for small and large volumes of data). Adding to that, it is very accessible due to its clear steps like Braun and Clarke's (2006) widely recognized six-phase process including familiarizing yourself with your data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Moreover, and third, it helps in organization, provides a richly detailed description of your data, as well as facilitate identifying patterns in participants' responses.

Ethical Considerations

Participants' Consent and Right to Withdraw

Participating in this study was completely voluntary. All participants were informed about what the study's purpose and objectives were. Completing the questionnaire was taken as an indication of informed consent being granted by participants. All participants had the right to decline to fill out the questionnaire as well as discontinue answering at any moment they wished, and in this study the right to withdraw was further reinforced through the use of online

questionnaires, allowing participants to freely choose to answer or not whenever and wherever they wished.

Anonymity, Confidentiality, and Data Protection

Throughout the study all participants' responses were kept anonymous and confidential. No participant was required to provide any traceable personal information. All data collected were firmly secured and accessed only by the researchers. The information gathered was not shared with any unauthorized individuals or institutions, and was only ever used for academic research purposes.

Limitations of the Research Methodology

Any research study is subject to methodological limitations, and the current study is the same. This research study faces some limiting factors that may hinder the interpretation and generalizability of the findings.

Sampling Limitations

Considering that this study uses non-probability convenience sampling method, which is based on voluntary participation, the sample may not represent the broader EFL students and teachers' population. As a result, the generalization of the findings cannot be carried out with complete confidence.

Instrument Limitations

The current study utilized mainly self-reported questionnaire data, which may not always provide the participants' genuine AI usage behavior and habits. Furthermore, the questionnaire is built primarily on close-ended questions, thus limiting more in-depth qualitative data.

Possible Bias

The sensitive nature of AI overreliance plays a crucial role in what bias we may find among the participants of this study. Students may not wish to disclose or self-report their excessive use of AI tools. Social desirability bias is another instance where participants might provide what they believe to be more acceptable and favorable rather than their true opinions.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated a comprehensive overview of the research methodology and design of this study, exploring and explaining this study's population and sampling, data collection tools, data analysis methods, ethical guidelines, and the limitations. After this in the results chapter we will address and analyze the data collected via both questionnaires thoroughly.

Chapter Four

Results

Introduction

The results chapter includes a thorough analysis of data collected from all (n= 113) students of different academic levels and (n= 16) teachers of the department of English at Chadli Bendjedid University El-Tarf who responded to the questionnaires implemented in this study. Considering the mixed nature the study we shall use both quantitative and qualitative data analysis strategies, including SPSS's descriptive statistical analysis approach (percentages, frequencies, means, and standard deviations) and the thematic approach.

Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

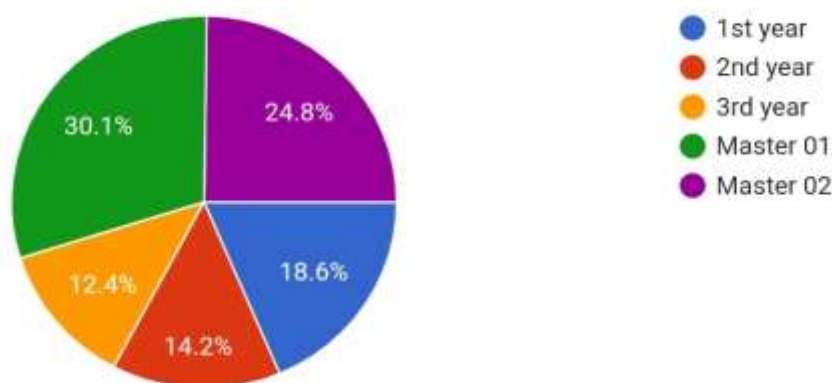
Section 01: Students' Academic Level and Self-Rated Language Proficiency

Question 01. What is your current academic year ?

☐ 1st year. ☐ 2nd year. ☐ 3rd year. ☐ Master 01. ☐ Master 02.

Figure 01:

Distribution of Students' According to Academic Year



The pie chart shown in figure 01 shows participants' academic year, illustrating their distribution. The largest group of responders were the Master 01 students representing (30.1%), followed by the Master 02 students with (24.8%). First year L1 were indicated as (18.6%). This left the second year L2 with (14.2%), and finally third year L3 with just (12.4%).

Question 02: How would you rate your current English proficiency Level ? (self-assessment)

☐ Beginner. ☐ Intermediate. ☐ Advanced.

Figure 02:

Students' Self-Reported English Proficiency Level

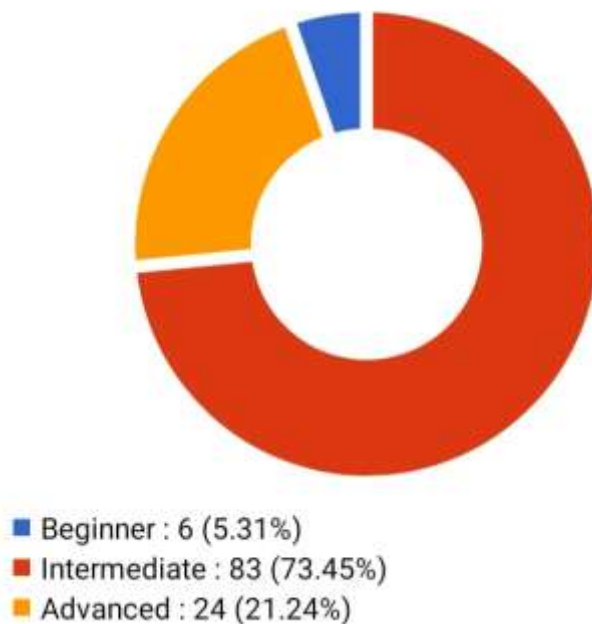


Figure 02 displays a pie chart that shows the students' self-rated English proficiency level. In the responses we notice that the majority of learners choosing their level as intermediate,

equaling (73.45%) of the total number of participants, while those who chose advanced counted to (21.24%). Finally, the least picked choice and that was beginner with only (5.31%).

Section 02: Types, Frequency, and Patterns of AI Tool Usage in EFL Learning

Question 03: Which AI-powered tools have you used for English learning in the past 3 months ? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Machine translation (e.g., Google Translate, DeepL).
- ☐ AI writing assistants (e.g., Grammarly, ProWritingAid).
- ☐ AI paraphrasing tools (e.g., QuillBot, Spinbot).
- ☐ Chatbots / conversational AI (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, DeepSeek).
- ☐ AI-powered grammar checkers (e.g., LanguageTool).
- ☐ AI summarizers (e.g., SummarizeBot, QuillBot Summarizer).

Other:

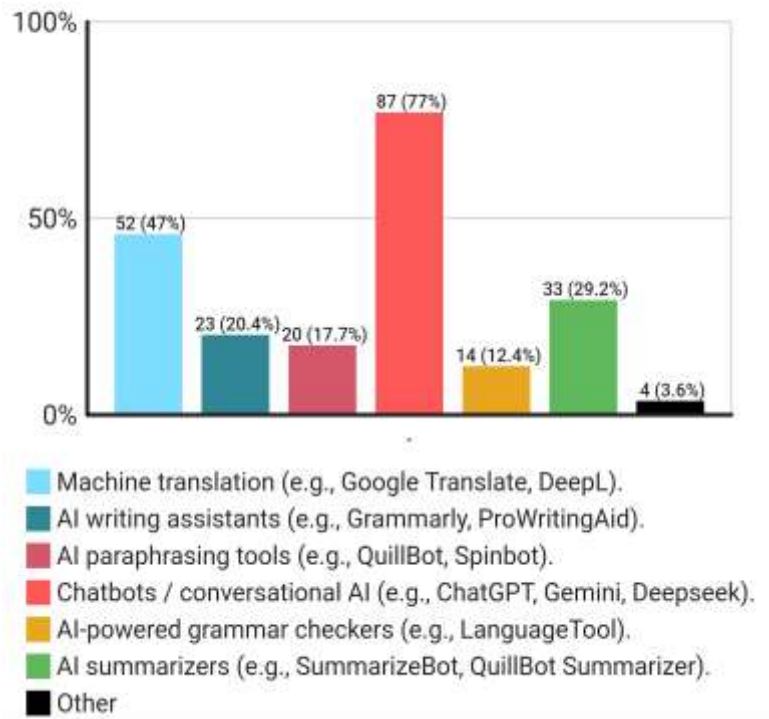
Figure 03:*Most Frequent AI Tools Students Used*

Figure 03 illustrates the types of AI tools usually used for language learning. What this chart's results indicate is that (77%) of respondents claim to use Chatbots (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, DeepSeek, Claude,...) for language learning, the largest by far, and behind it with (47%) of responses, was machine translation (e.g., Google Translate, DeepL). Then, we have AI summarizers (e.g., SummarizeBot, QuillBot Summarizer) showing a (29.2%), followed by AI writing assistants (e.g., Grammarly) with a reported (20.4%) and AI paraphrasing tools (e.g., QuillBot, Spinbot) which received (17.7%). The smallest results went to AI-powered grammar checkers (e.g., LanguageTool) which only garnered (12.4%), leaving the option Other with (3.6%) without the responders stating an alternative.

Question 04: Which one AI tool do you use most frequently for English learning ?

- ☐ Google Translate / DeepL. ☐ ChatGPT. ☐ Grammarly. ☐ QuillBot. ☐ Gemini.
- ☐ Claude.

Other:

Figure 04:

Students' Most Frequently Used AI Tool for English Learning

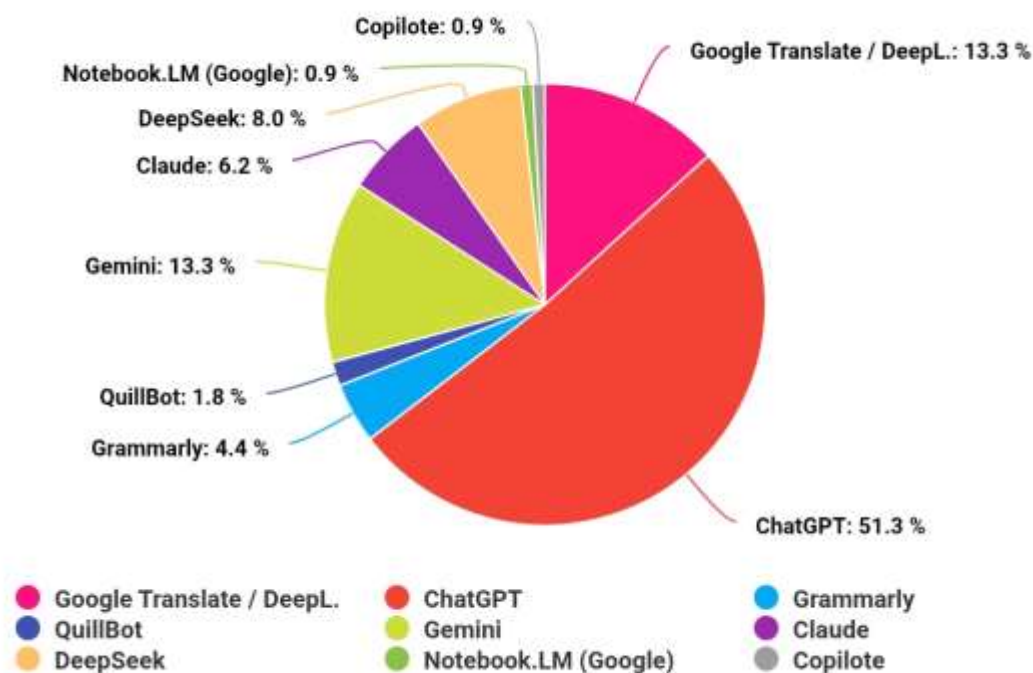


Figure 04 narrows students' AI usage, by displaying the specific tools each learner uses frequently. As is presented in the pie chart it is clear that ChatGPT is the most widely used AI tool among the participants with a (51.3%) of them using it. This left the remaining (48.7%) to be divided between the rest of the tools. The next choices of students were Gemini and Google

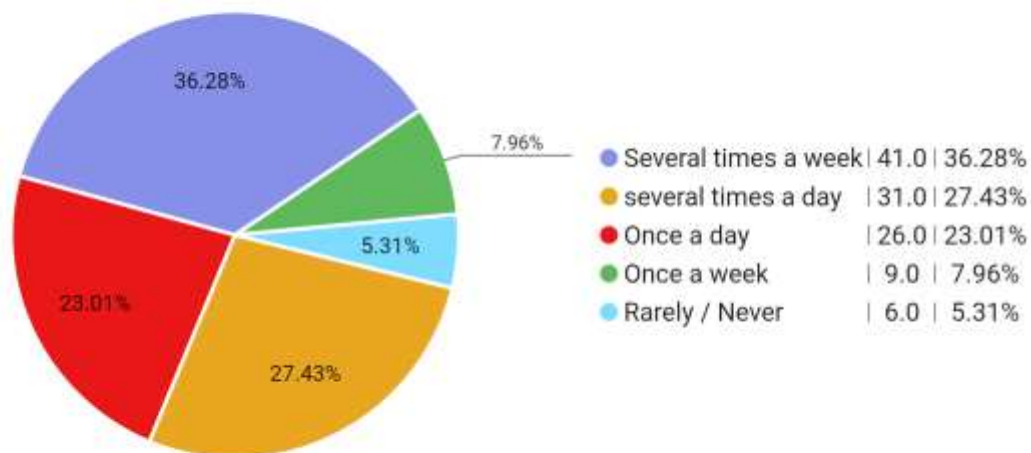
Translate / DeepL with (13.3%) each. DeepSeek garnered an (8%), Claude a (6%), and Grammarly a (5%) of responses. The least chosen AI tools were QuillBot (1.8%), Notebook.LM (Google) (0.9%), and Copilot (0.9%).

Question 05: On average, how often do you use AI tools for English learning tasks ?

- ☐ Several times a day. ☐ Once a day. ☐ Several times a week. ☐ Once a week.
- ☐ Rarely / Never.

Figure 05:

Frequency of AI Tools Usage for English Learning Tasks



On the frequency of AI tools used by students, the chart in figure 05 reveals that (36.28%) of participants use AI tools several times a week, and the next highest was the option of several

times a day with (27.43%). The third highest score was once a day which amounted to (23.01%). Conversely the choice of once a week and rarely / never got a mere (7.96%) and (5.31%) respectively.

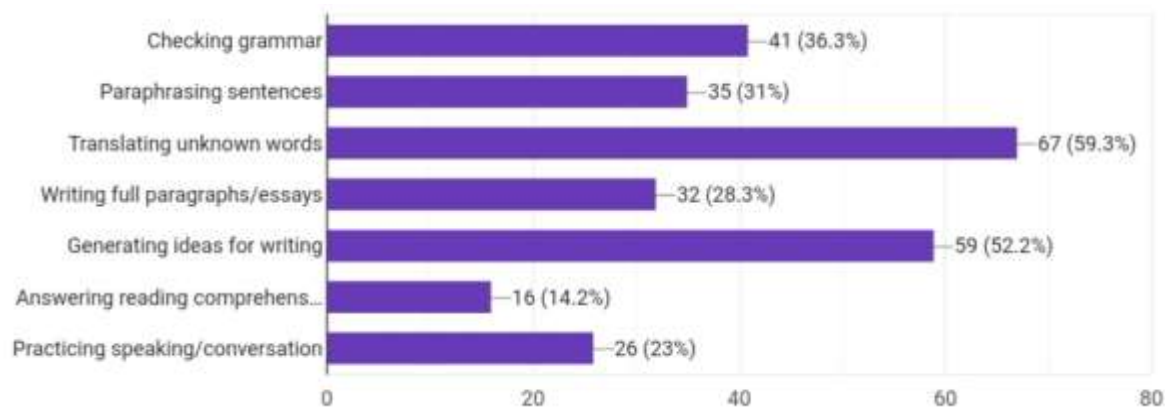
Section 03: Students' Purposes and Motivations for Using AI Tools in Language Learning

Question 06: For which of the following tasks do you always use an AI tool without trying first on your own ? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Checking grammar. ☐ Paraphrasing sentences.
- ☐ Translating unknown words. ☐ Writing full paragraphs/essays.
- ☐ Generating ideas for writing. ☐ Answering reading comprehension questions.
- ☐ Practicing speaking/conversation.

Figure 06:

Tasks That Students Use AI for Frequently Without Trying on Their Own First



As figure 06 illustrates the learning tasks the participants regularly use AI tools for without trying on their own first. The majority of them (n= 67) (59.3%) seem to prefer to use AI for translating unknown words, followed closely by (n= 59) (52.2%) who claim to use it to generate

ideas for writing. Answers also include a (n= 41) (36.3%) for checking grammar, then a (n= 35) (31%) responding with paraphrasing sentences. Writing full paragraphs/essays received (n= 32) (28.3%) of responses. (n= 26) (23%) of responders chose practicing speaking/conversation, and finally the least chosen one of the responses was answering reading comprehension questions which gained just (n= 16) (14.2%).

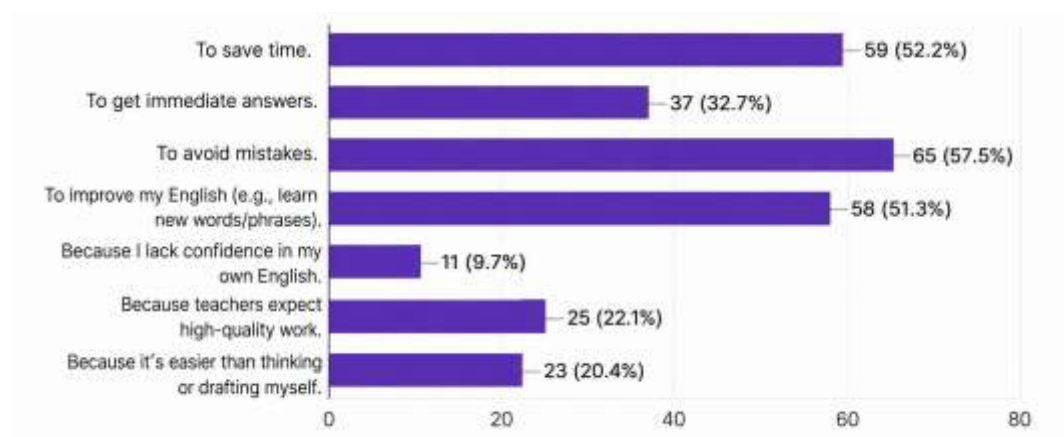
Note: Multiple responses were permitted; therefore, percentages exceed total 100%.

Question 07: Why do you use AI tools for English Learning ? (select all that apply)

- ☐ To save time.
- ☐ To get immediate answers.
- ☐ To avoid mistakes.
- ☐ To improve my English (e.g., learn new words/phrases).
- ☐ Because I lack confidence in my own English.
- ☐ Because teachers expect high-quality work.
- ☐ Because it's easier than thinking or drafting myself.

Figure 07:

Students' Motivation for AI Tools Usage in Language Learning



The bar chart portrays the notable reasons students use AI tools for in English learning. Based on the results, (57.5%) of the participants numbering (n= 65) stated that they use AI in this context simply to avoid mistakes. A total (n= 59) responders (52.2%) reported that it was to save time, and followed just after that group, (n= 58) responders equaling (51.3%) chose the option to improve their English. (n= 37) participants, (33.7%), opted for the option to get immediate answers; additionally, (n= 25) of them corresponding to (22.1%) selected because teachers expect high-quality work. The last option is because I lack confidence in my own English level which only received (9.7%) in the form of (n= 11) responders.

Note: Multiple responses were permitted; therefore, percentages exceed total 100%.

Section 04: Perceived Impact of AI Tools on Students' English Language Development

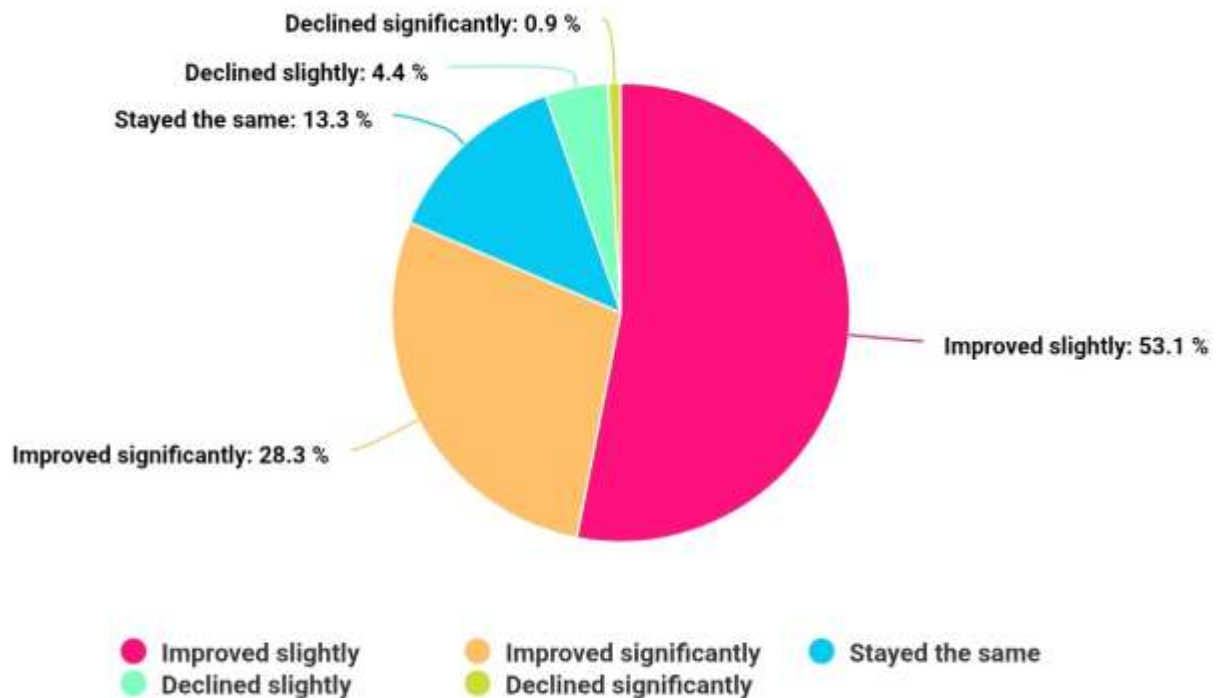
Question 08: Compared to when you started using ai tools, do you feel your independent English ability (without AI) has:

- ☐ Improved significantly. ☐ Improved slightly. ☐ Stayed the same.

☐ Declined slightly. ☐ Declined significantly.

Figure 08:

Students' Perception of the Impact That AI Tools Usage Has Their Independent Learning Ability



The pie chart above demonstrates the responders' claims in regards to what the effects of AI usage on their independent learning ability now compared to when they first started to use it. Most responders (53.1%) believe that they have improved slightly, and (28.3%) of them stated a significant improvement. Those who selected stayed the same numbered (13.3%), while the option of declined slightly received (4.4%) of the answers. However, just (0.9%) said declined significantly.

Section 05: Differences in AI Tool Usage Across English Proficiency Levels

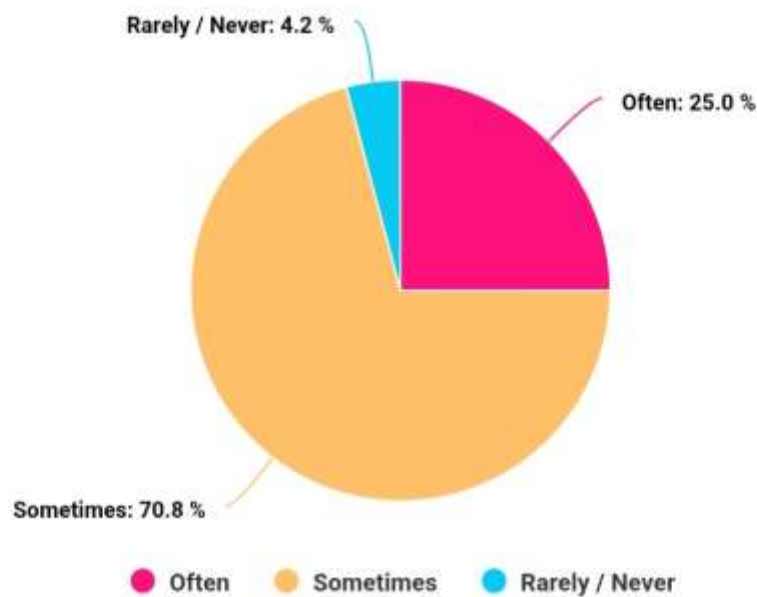
Question 09: (for beginner self-rated only) – if you are intermediate or advanced, skip to q10.

how often do you use AI tools for basic tasks like word translation ?

☐ Always / Often. ☐ Sometimes. ☐ Rarely / Never.

Figure 09:

Frequency of AI Tools Usage for Basic Language Tasks Such as Word Translation Among Beginner Students



On the question of the frequency of students' use of AI tools for basic language tasks, we noticed that the overwhelming majority of responders consists of (70.8%) who state that they use it only sometimes, and a (25.0%) who acknowledge that they use it often for these types of tasks. The option rarely/never by contrast received a mere (4.2%) of responses.

Note: several participants who self-rated as intermediate and advanced answered this question despite the instructions.

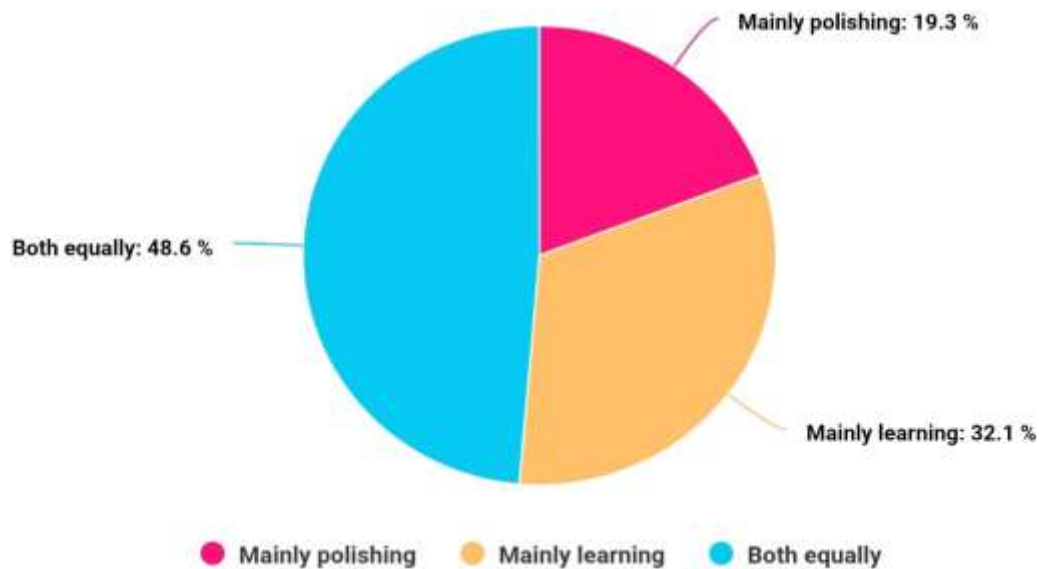
Question 10: (for intermediate or advanced self-rated only)

do you use AI tools mainly for polishing language or for learning new structures ?

☐ Mainly polishing. ☐ Mainly learning. ☐ Both equally.

Figure 10:

Intermediate and Advanced Learners' Main Purposes for Using AI Tools



As is demonstrated in chart 10, when responding to the question of whether the participants use AI tools for polishing language, learning new structures, or both equally, we note that, a (48.6%) of them chose both equally as their response, while mainly learning received (32.1%), leaving mainly polishing with (19.3%) of responses.

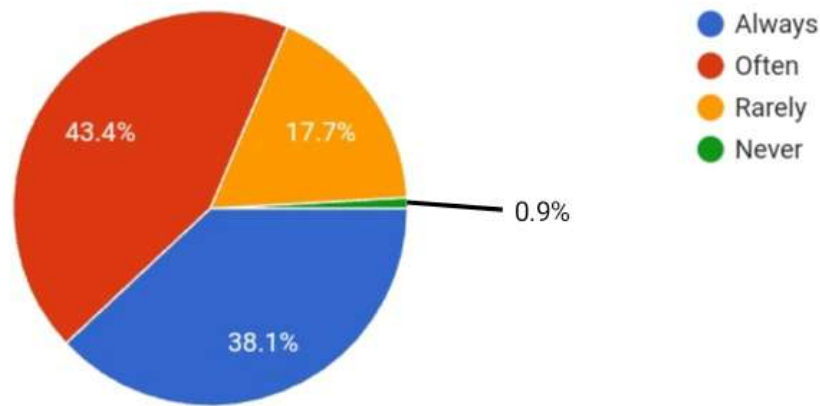
Section 06: Learner Autonomy and Perceptions of Learning with or without AI

Question 11: Before using an AI tool, how often do you try to complete the task yourself first ?

☐ Always. ☐ Often. ☐ Rarely. ☐ Never.

Figure 11:

Frequency of Students Completing Tasks Independently Before Using AI



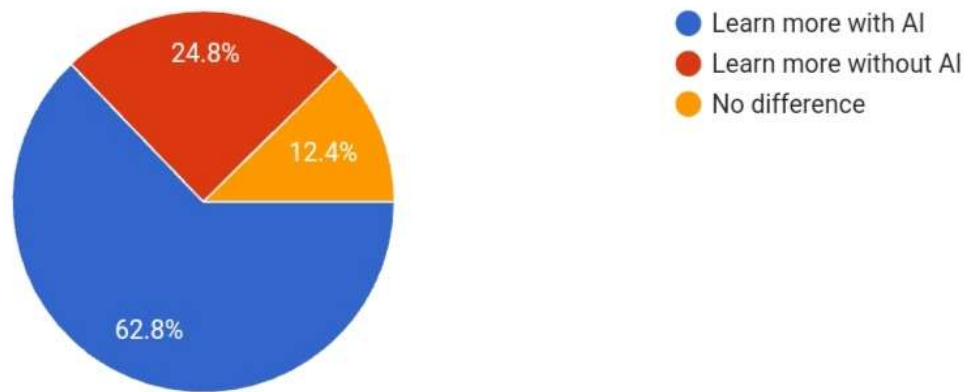
Based on the information gathered from figure 11, we note that a total (43.4%) of responders stated they often try answering tasks on their own before using AI. Right after that we have (38.1%) who indicated that they always try solving tasks themselves first before involving AI tools. Conversely a (17.7%) of participants expressed that they rarely complete such learning tasks on their own first, and the rest, a (0.9%), chose never as their answer to this question.

Question 12: do you feel you learn more when you use AI, or when you struggle without it ?

☐ Learn more with AI. ☐ Learn more without AI. ☐ No difference.

Figure 12:

Students' Perception on Learning with and without AI Assistance



When asked if the participants feel they learn more when using AI tools or when they struggle without it, a large number of participants, exactly (62.8%) claimed they actually learn more with AI, while a smaller number of them (24.8%) reported that they learn more without AI. The rest consisting of (12.4%) felt that there was no difference between the two approaches.

Section 07: Teachers' Role and Classroom Attitudes Toward AI Tool Use

Question 13: Does your English teacher encourage or discourage AI use ?

☐ Encourage. ☐ Discourage. ☐ Neutral. ☐ Not discussed in class.

Figure 13:

Teachers' Attitude Towards AI Use for English Learning

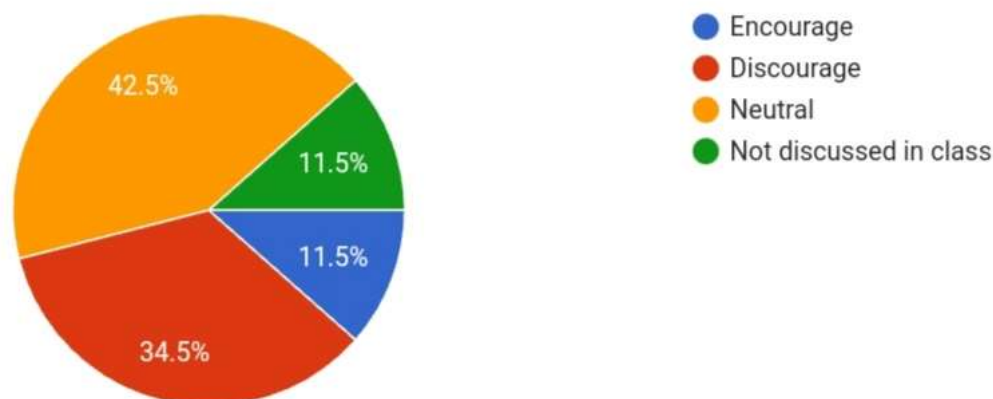


Chart thirteen represents participants' reports on their teachers' perspective on AI usage. From their answers we observe a large percentage, a (42.5%) of them, see that their teachers are neutral when it comes to this subject. The second biggest group however, representing (34.5%) report that their teachers discourage AI use. This leaves us with the last two options of them encouraging AI use and the topic not discussed in class, both garnering (11.5%) of responses each.

Question 14: In your opinion, what is the biggest negative effect of overusing AI tools for EFL students ? (open-ended)

This final question was designed to explore students' view point on what they believe is the biggest negative impact of AI tools over usage on EFL learners. The dominant theme that keeps reoccurring in the results appears to be the reduction and killing of learner's creativity, which was voiced by a large number of participants,

"It kills creativity"

"It reduces our creativity and we start relaying on it more"

"The biggest negative effect of overusing AI can reduce creativity so students should avoid the over use in their studies"

"destroys his personal capacities for creativity"

Another prominent theme within the results was the threat of over dependency and reliance on AI. This notion was repeated by over thirty-five respondents in different manners with some stating the reason for their decision,

"In my opinion, the biggest negative effect of overusing AI tools for EFL students is becoming too dependent on them"

"Students may become too dependent on AI instead of practicing their own writing and problem-solving skills"

"Over-reliance on AI can lead to academic dependency, making students less likely to struggle with the language, which is a necessary part of the learning process"

Furthermore, many participants reported that overreliance on AI tools may weaken or destroy EFL learners' critical thinking ability,

"It Minimizes the critical thinking and the functional process of their brain"

"also they can't think critically anymore"

"weakening their critical thinking and language skills"

"the use of AI kills critical thinking skills"

According to the results, many respondents also seemed to agree that overusing AI tools may lead to spreading of laziness among learners,

"they became lazy"

"In my opinion, the biggest negative effect of overusing AI tools for EFL students is that students become very lazy and always rely on those tools , so he\she becomes unable to use their own minds"

"Depending too much on AI makes students lazy and turns off their brains, they do not put efforts to do tasks by themselves even the simplest ones"

A percentage of participants also highlighted the loss of learner autonomy as a prevalent concern for EFL students. They describe this problem in different manners,

"In my opinion, I think their overuse of AI tools for EFL students reduced independent thinking and language production"

"The use of AI excessively decrease your self-reliance whenever u want to use the language independently"

"EFL students depend more on AI tools in their learning rather than themselves"

The last theme the data identified is loss of confidence, which was expressed by multiple responders,

"Loss of confidence when writing or speaking spontaneously"

"Lack of confidence in answering themselves and cannot try alone without the AI"

"Lack of confidence in using own ideas"

Analysis Teachers' Questionnaire

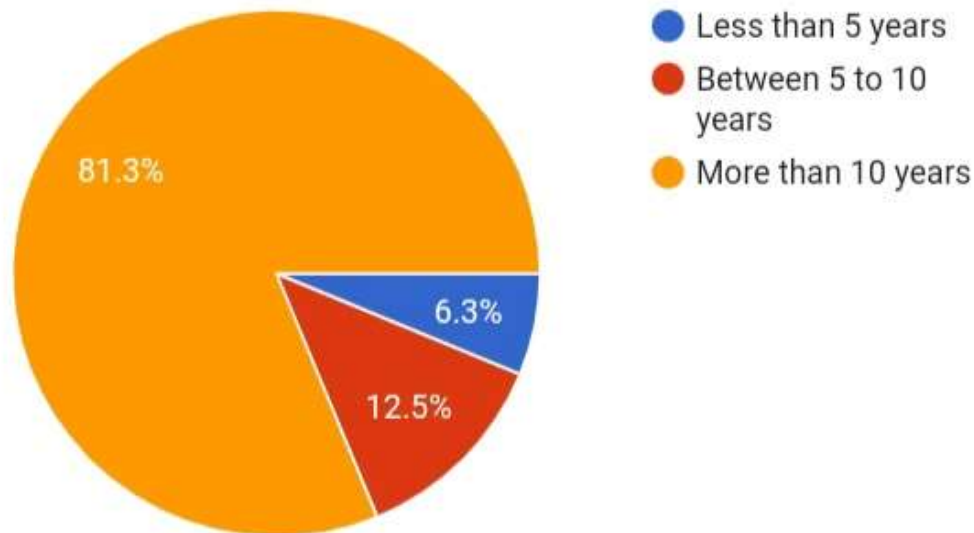
Section 01: Teacher Background & AI Exposure

Question 01: How many years have you been teaching EFL ?

☐ Less than 5 years. ☐ 5–10 years. ☐ More than 10 years.

Figure 14:

Teachers' Distribution According to Years of EFL Teaching Experience



The first question for the teachers is rather a demographic one. It examines how long the responders taught EFL classes. According to the apparent answers in the chart of figure 14, the majority of responders, an (81.3%), disclosed a 10-years-plus teaching career. The other two options of between 5 to 10 years and less than 5 years received (12.5%) and (6.3%) of responses respectively.

Question 02: Have you ever used AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Grammarly, Quillbot, DeepL) yourself for teaching or professional purposes ?

☐ Yes, frequently. ☐ Yes, occasionally. ☐ Rarely. ☐ Never.

Figure 15:

Frequency of AI Tools Use Among Teachers for Teaching and Professional Purposes

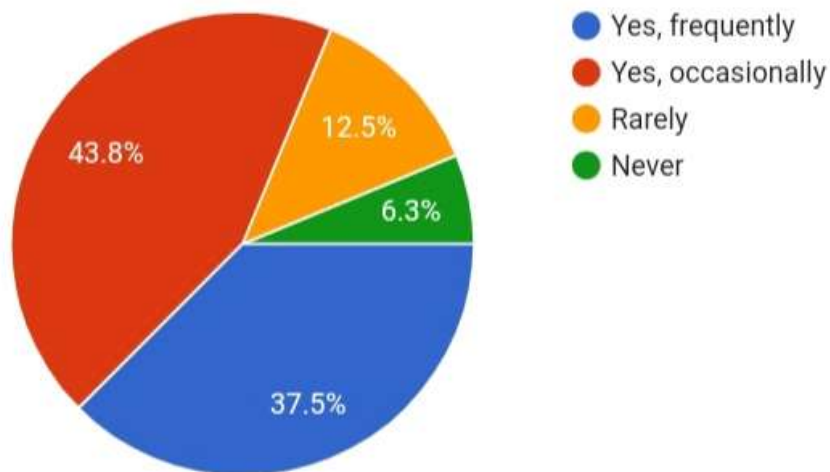


Figure fifteen demonstrates teachers' AI usage behavior pattern. The largest percentage of participants indicated a (43.8%) for yes, occasionally as their answer on using AI for teaching and professional purposes, while a (37.5%) of the teachers reported yes, frequently as their response. This left the choices least chosen, rarely (12.5%) and never with (6.3%).

Section 02: Perceived Frequency & Degree of Student AI Overreliance

Question 03: In your observation, how often do your students use AI tools for English learning tasks ?

- ☐ Very frequently. ☐ Frequently. ☐ Occasionally. ☐ Rarely.
- ☐ I cannot tell.

Figure 16:

Teachers' Observation of The Frequency of Students' AI Use for English Learning Tasks

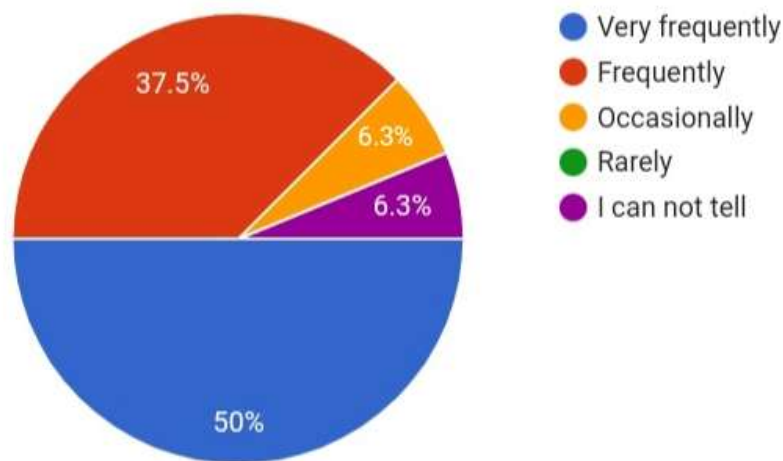


Figure sixteen showcases teachers' perspectives on the frequency of AI usage for learning tasks among their students. As per the results from the chart we note a (50%), half of the responders, stating that they observed students using AI very frequently. The second highest score went the choice of frequently with (37.5%) of responses, whereas, around (6.3%) was received by each of the options rarely and I cannot tell.

Question 04: Rate how much you agree with the following statements (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree):

First statement of Q4:

My students often submit work that appears AI-generated without significant personal input.

1 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 5 ☐

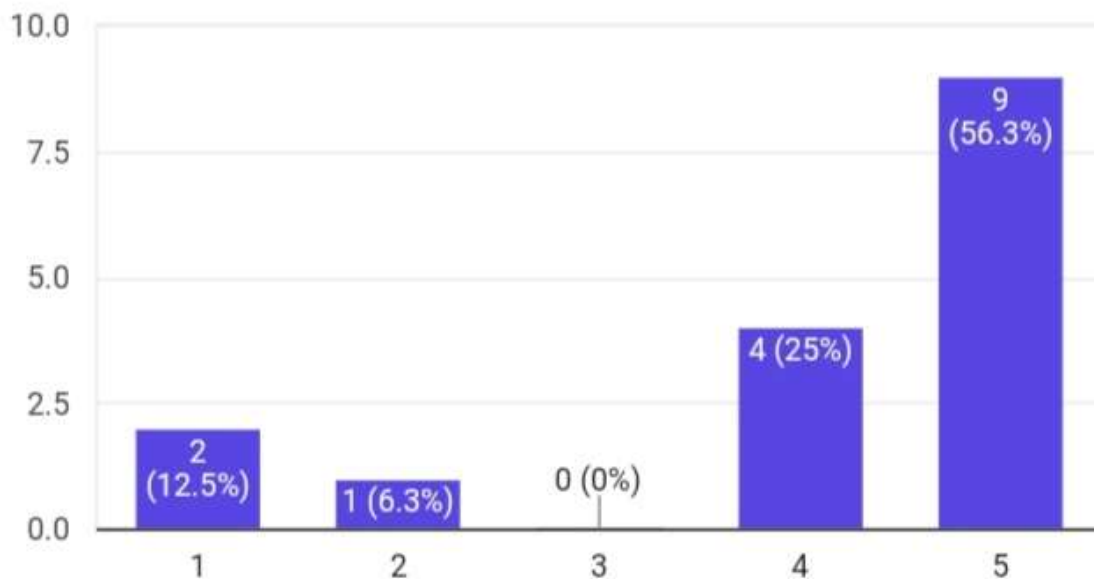
Table 03:

Teachers' Responses Regarding Students Submitting AI-Generated Work Without Significant Personal Input

Statement	Strongly disagree (%) n	Disagree (%) n	Neutral (%) n	Agree (%) n	Strongly agree (%) n	Mean	SD
My students often submit work that appears AI-generated without significant personal input.	2 (12.5%)	1 (6.3%)	0 (0%)	4 (25%)	9 (56.3%)	4.06	1.44

Figure 17:

Teachers' Perceptions of Students Submitting AI-generated Work Without Notable Personal Input



As is displayed in the chart and table 03 we observe that (56.3%) of responses equaling (n= 9) of the (n= 16) responders 'strongly agreed' on the notion of their students submitting what

seems to be AI-generated content without trying to change it with personal input. Similarly, (n= 4) other responders, an (25%), answered with 'agree'. Meanwhile, (n= 2) (12.5%) participants chose 'strongly disagree', and (n= 1) (6.3%) went with 'disagree'. The remaining choice of neutral didn't seem to be selected at all leaving it with a (0%). Additionally, the results amounted to a mean score of a 4.06, while standard deviation got a 1.44.

Second statement of Q4:

Students seem unable to complete certain tasks (e.g., writing, paraphrasing) without AI help.

1 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 5 ☐

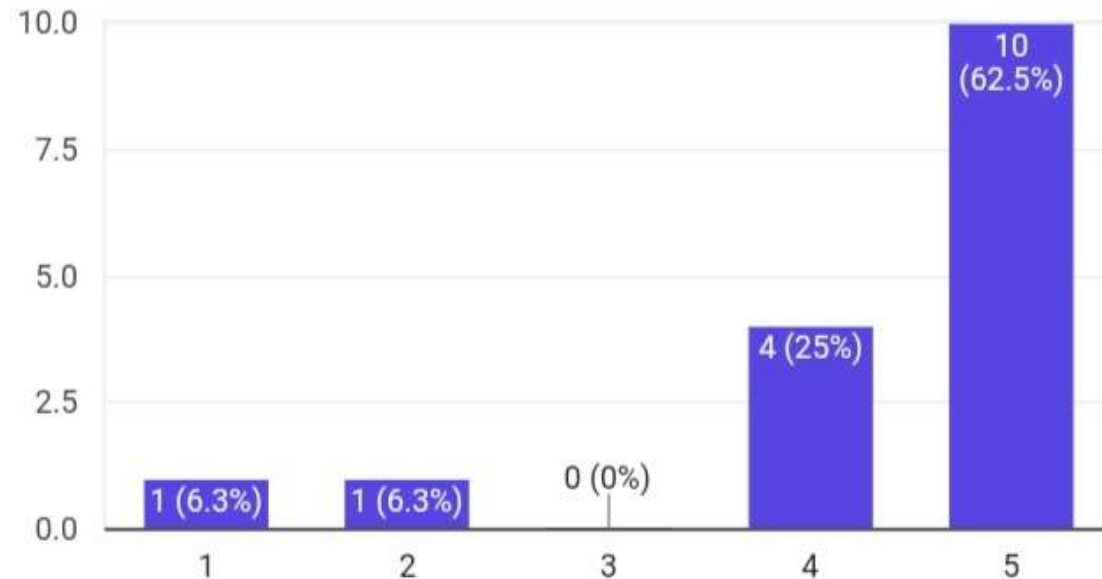
Table 04:

Distribution of Teachers’ Responses Regarding Students’ Dependence on AI Assistance

Statement	Strongly disagree (%) n	Disagree (%) n	Neutral (%) n	Agree (%) n	Strongly agree (%) n	Mean	SD
Students seem unable to complete certain tasks (e.g., writing, paraphrasing) without AI help.	1 (6.3%)	1 (6.3%)	0 (0%)	4 (25%)	10 (62.5%)	4.31	1.20

Figure 18:

Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Inability to Complete Tasks Without AI Assistance



Based on the results presented in the chart and table 04, it is revealed that a significant portion of the responders amounting to (62.5%) with a frequency of (n= 10) responses 'strongly agree' that they noticed their students unable to complete certain tasks without AI assistance, while 'agree' garnered (n= 4) (25.%) of selections. 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree', on the other hand, have each received (n= 1) (6.3%) of responses. As demonstrated on the table the mean achieved a score of 4.31, and the standard deviation a 1.20.

Third statement of Q4:

Overreliance on AI has reduced students' willingness to revise or edit their own work.

1 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 5 ☐

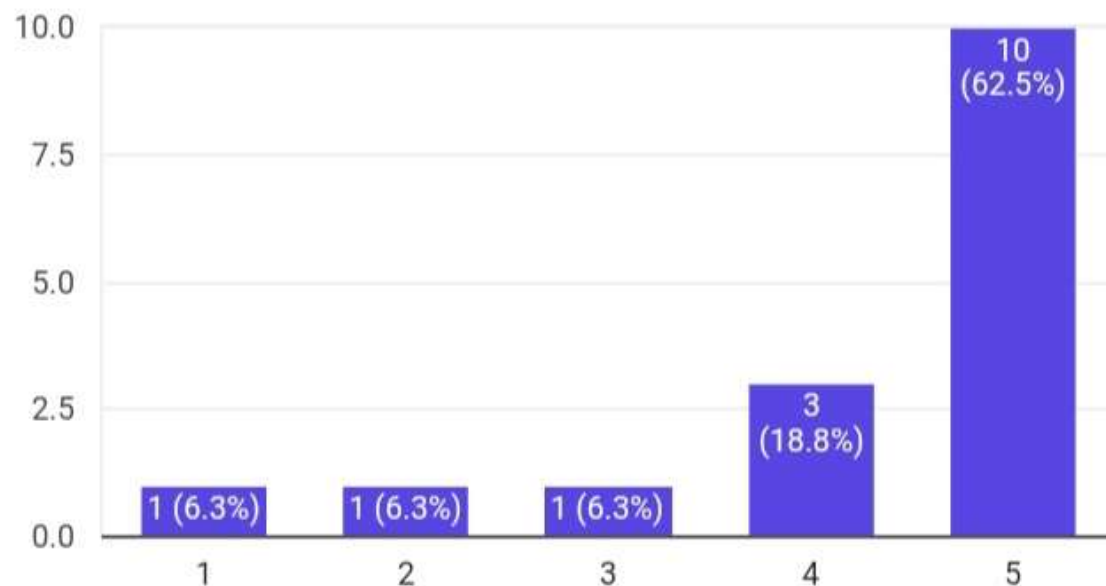
Table 05:

Teachers' Responses Regarding the Effect of AI Overreliance on Students' Willingness to Revise Their Own Work

Statement	Strongly disagree (%) n	Disagree (%) n	Neutral (%) n	Agree (%) n	Strongly agree (%) n	Mean	SD
Overreliance on AI has reduced students' willingness to revise or edit their own work.	1 (6.3%)	1 (6.3%)	1 (6.3%)	3 (18.8%)	10 (62.5%)	4.25	1.29

Figure 19:

Teachers' Perceptions of the Effect Of AI Overreliance on Students' Willingness to Revise Their Own Work



Both the figure and the table above illustrate what teachers think on the students' unwillingness to edit or revise their work due to overrelying on AI tools. We see from their answer

that the majority of (n= 10) responders, a (62.5%), 'strongly agree' that yes they noticed their students being unwilling to revise their work due overusing AI, while the option of agree received (n= 3) selections representing (18.8%). Contrasting choices on the other hand, namely neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree had an (n= 1) reply, which added up to (6.3%) for each. Mean and standard deviation according to the table above secured a value of 4.25 and 1.29 respectively.

Fourth statement of Q4:

AI tools have made it harder for me to assess students' real proficiency.

1 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 5 ☐

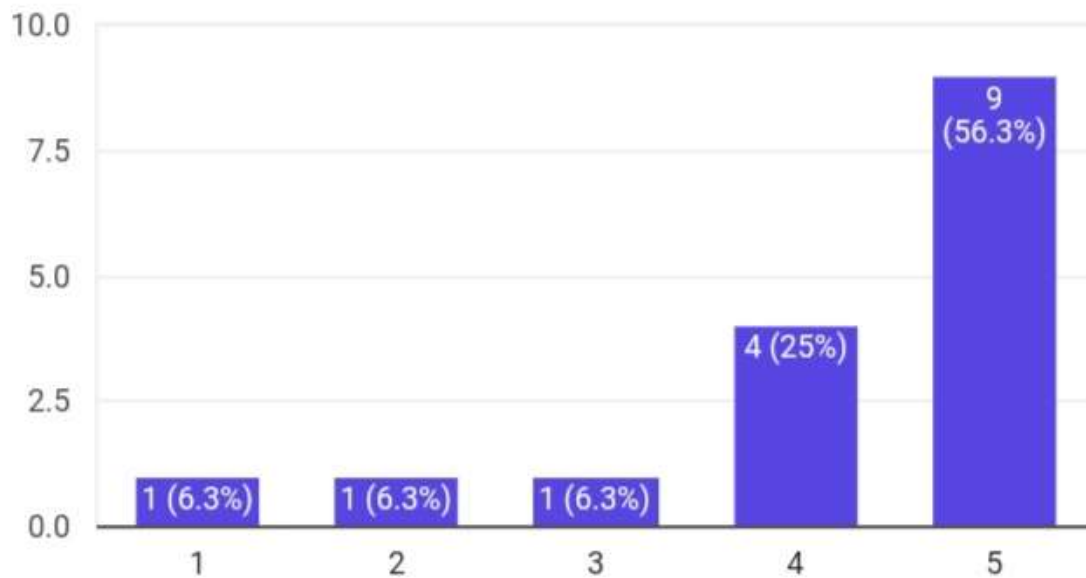
Table 06:

Distribution of Teachers' Responses Regarding the Difficulty of Assessing Students' Real Proficiency

Statement	Strongly disagree (%) n	Disagree (%) n	Neutral (%) n	Agree (%) n	Strongly agree (%) n	Mean	SD
AI tools have made it harder for me to assess students' real proficiency.	1 (6.3%)	1 (6.3%)	1 (6.3%)	4 (25%)	9 (56.3%)	4.19	1.33

Figure 20:

Teachers' perceptions of the difficulty AI tools create in assessing students' real proficiency



From the data, we observe that the majority of teachers believe that AI use has made assessing students' real proficiency an issue for educators. (n= 9) participants answered with 'strongly agree', a (56.3%) of total responses, with an (n= 4) (25%) reporting they 'agree' that AI has made it harder to assess learners' true proficiency. By contrast, 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', and 'neutral' only managed to secure (n= 1) vote, (6.3%), each. Table 06 further indicates a mean value of 4.19 and standard deviation score of 1.33.

Section 03: Negative Impact on Language Skill Areas

Question 05: In which skill areas do you observe the most negative impact of AI overuse ?

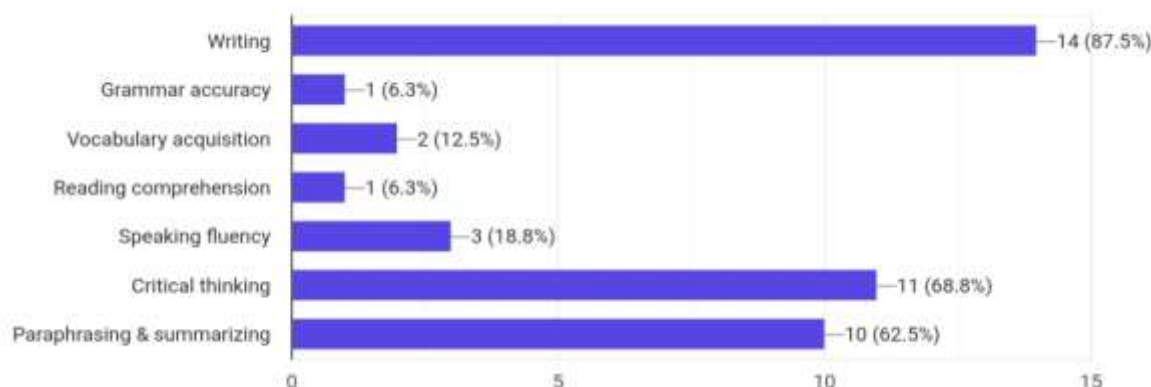
(select up to three)

- ☐ Writing.
 ☐ Grammar accuracy.
 ☐ Vocabulary acquisition.
- ☐ Reading comprehension.
 ☐ Speaking fluency.
 ☐ Critical thinking.

☐ Paraphrasing & summarizing.

Figure 21:

Skill Areas With Most Negative Impact of AI Overreliance According to Teachers



When asked about their opinions on which skills they observed the most negative impact of AI overdependency in, the results were as follows: (n= 14) of teachers, a total (87.5%), reported that the writing skill the most impacted, followed by critical thinking with (n= 11) responses totaling (68.8%) responses. Situating in third place is paraphrasing and summarizing which was selected by (n= 10) participants and with a percentage of (62.5%). Speaking fluency accounted for (n= 3) (18.8%) and vocabulary acquisition had (n= 2) (12.5%). Lastly, the two choices with the least responses are grammar accuracy and reading comprehension, equally represented at (n= 1) (6.3%).

Note: Multiple responses were permitted; therefore, percentages exceed total 100%.

Section 04: Perceived Reasons for EFL Learners' AI Overdependence

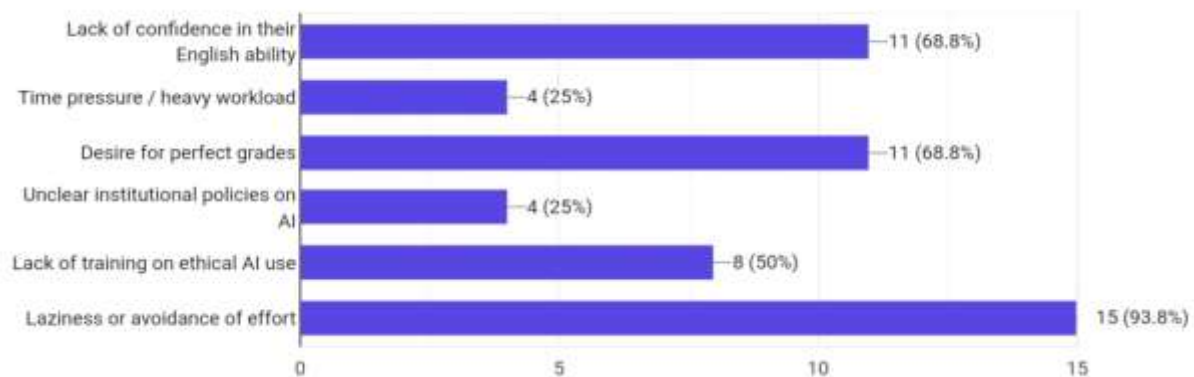
Question 06: In your opinion, what are the main reasons students overuse AI tools ? (select all that apply)

☐ Lack of confidence in their English ability.

- ☐ Time pressure / heavy workload.
- ☐ Desire for perfect grades.
- ☐ Unclear institutional policies on AI.
- ☐ Lack of training on ethical AI use.
- ☐ Laziness or avoidance of effort.

Figure 22:

Teachers' Views on the Main Reasons for Students' Overuse of AI Tools



This question seeks to explore what teachers think are the main reasons their students overuse AI. The most chosen with (n= 15) participants, a (93.8%) of them, agreeing on is the learners' laziness and avoidance of effort. The second most chosen with (n= 11) and (68.8%) responses each, were the options of 'lack of confidence in their English ability' and 'desire for perfect grades'. Meanwhile, 'lack of training on ethical AI use' received (n= 8) responders with a percentage of (50%). This leaves the two options of time pressure / heavy workload and unclear institutional policies on AI that received only (n= 4) (25%) responses each.

Note: Multiple responses were permitted; therefore, percentages exceed total 100%.

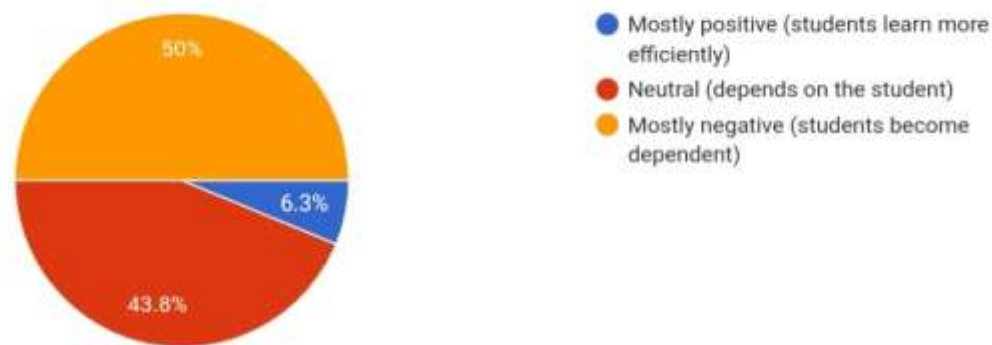
Section 05: AI Use, Learner Autonomy, & Proficiency-Level Differences

Question 07: Do you believe AI tool usage has a positive, neutral, or negative effect on student autonomy ?

- ☐ Mostly positive (students learn more efficiently).
- ☐ Neutral (depends on the student).
- ☐ Mostly negative (students become dependent).

Figure 23:

Teachers' Perspective on the Effects of AI Tools Usage on Learner Autonomy



Question 07 tests how teachers perceive their students' AI usage, especially what effects it may have on their autonomy. From the results in the pie chart of figure 23 we note that a (50%), exactly half the participants, believe that the effects are 'mostly negative', while (43.8%) of them responded with 'neutral', as in, it all depends on the student in question. Additionally, the response 'mostly positive' garnered only (6.3%).

Question 08: Compared to beginner students, do advanced students use AI tools more responsibly (e.g., for polishing rather than generating entire answers) ?

- ☐ Yes, significantly more responsibly.
- ☐ Slightly more responsibly.
- ☐ No difference.
- ☐ Advanced students overuse AI even more.

Figure 24:

Teachers' perception on the responsibility of beginner students versus advanced students when using AI.

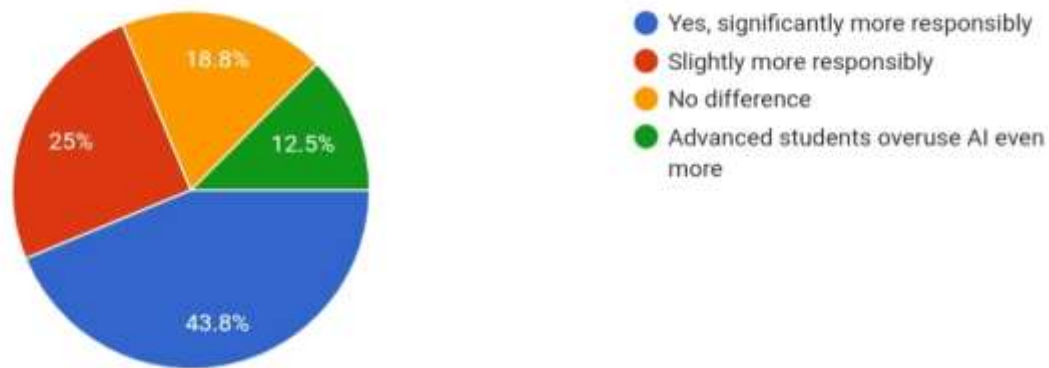


Figure 24 represents the difference in responsibility between beginners and advanced learners from teachers' perspective. The first thing that can be seen from the results is that the majority of responders indicate a (43.8%) for the option of yes, advanced learners use AI significantly more responsibly. we also notice that 'slightly more responsibly' received (25%) of responses. Meanwhile, the remaining choices of no difference between the two proficiency level

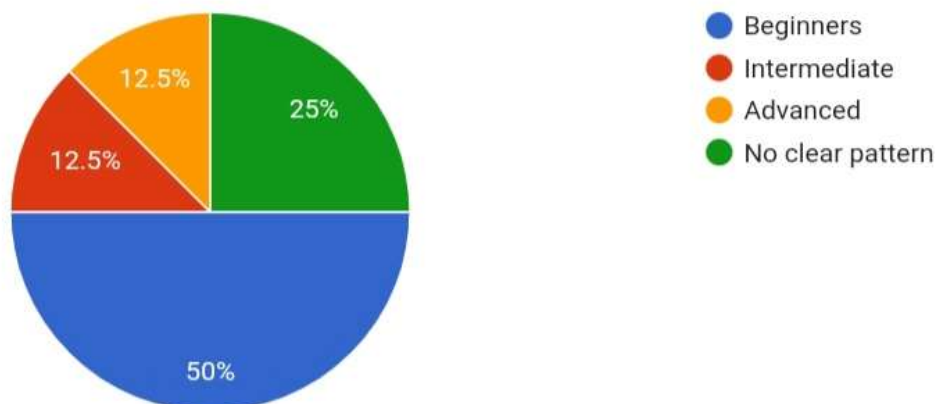
groups and advanced learners overuse AI even more received what amounted to (18.8%) and (12.5%) of the total participants' votes in that order.

Question 09: Which proficiency level shows the highest degree of harmful overreliance in your experience ?

☐ Beginners. ☐ Intermediate. ☐ Advanced. ☐ No clear pattern.

Figure 25:

Proficiency Levels Perceived as Showing the Highest Degree of Harmful AI Overreliance



As is displayed in the figure above, we observe that the highest percentage (50%) of responding teachers has viewed beginners as the category most affected negatively by AI overreliance, while the intermediate and advanced proficiency levels obtained (12.5%) responses each, from the participants. Meanwhile, a group of teachers totaling (25%) reported that they see no clear pattern in AI overdependency between the three levels.

Section 06: Overall Attitudes Toward AI Integration in EFL Learning

Question 10: What is your overall attitude toward students' use of AI tools in EFL learning ?

- ☐ Strongly supportive (if used ethically). ☐ Cautiously supportive. ☐ Neutral.
- ☐ Somewhat opposed. ☐ Strongly opposed

Figure 26:

Teachers' Overall Attitudes Toward Students' Use of AI Tools in EFL Learning

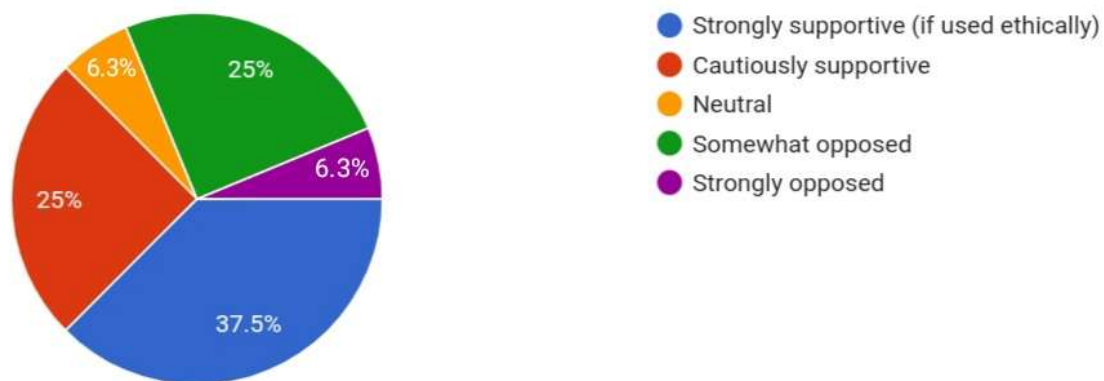


Figure 26 addresses teachers' attitudes on AI tools usage by learners in EFL learning. We note that (37.5%) of teachers indicated their strong support for AI use by students, however, only if used ethically. Then closely followed by a (25%) of responses each, for 'cautiously supportive' and 'somewhat opposed'. Less but similar to the two previous options, 'strongly opposed' and 'neutral' both gathered (6.3%) each.

Section 07: Classroom Countermeasures & Pedagogical Responses

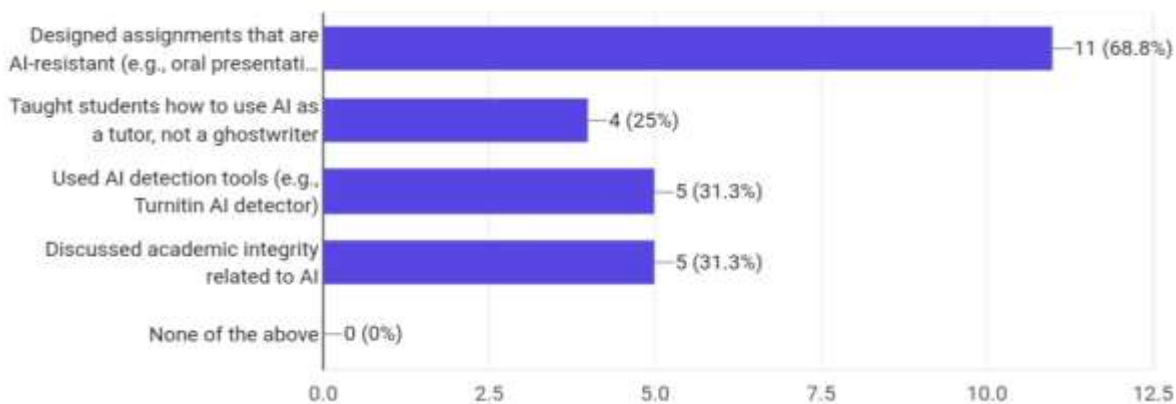
Question 11: Which of the following have you done ? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Designed assignments that are AI-resistant (e.g., oral presentations, in-class writing)

- ☐ Taught students how to use AI as a tutor, not a ghostwriter.
- ☐ Used AI detection tools (e.g., Turnitin AI detector).
- ☐ Discussed academic integrity related to AI.
- ☐ None of the above.

Figure 27:

Measures Taken by Teachers to Address AI Tool Use in Academic Contexts



The bar chart portrays the most common action performed by the teachers to tackle the harmful effects of AI in EFL classroom. The results show that designing assignments that are AI resistant have received the highest number of responses ($n = 11$) and a percentage of (68.8%), followed by the choices of 'discussing academic Integrity related to AI' and 'using AI detection tools', each yielding a frequency of ($n = 5$) selections and percentage of (31.3%). Additionally, the option of 'teaching students how to use AI as a tutor, not a Ghostwriter' has secured a score of ($n = 4$) (25%). Lastly, regarding the choice of 'none of the above', it obtained ($n = 0$) (0%) votes.

Note: Multiple responses were permitted; therefore, percentages exceed total 100%.

Section 08: Observable Classroom Consequences & Teacher Interventions

Question 12: How often do you see the following in your classroom ? (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = very often)

First statement of Q12:

Students copy-paste AI output without modification.

1 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 5 ☐

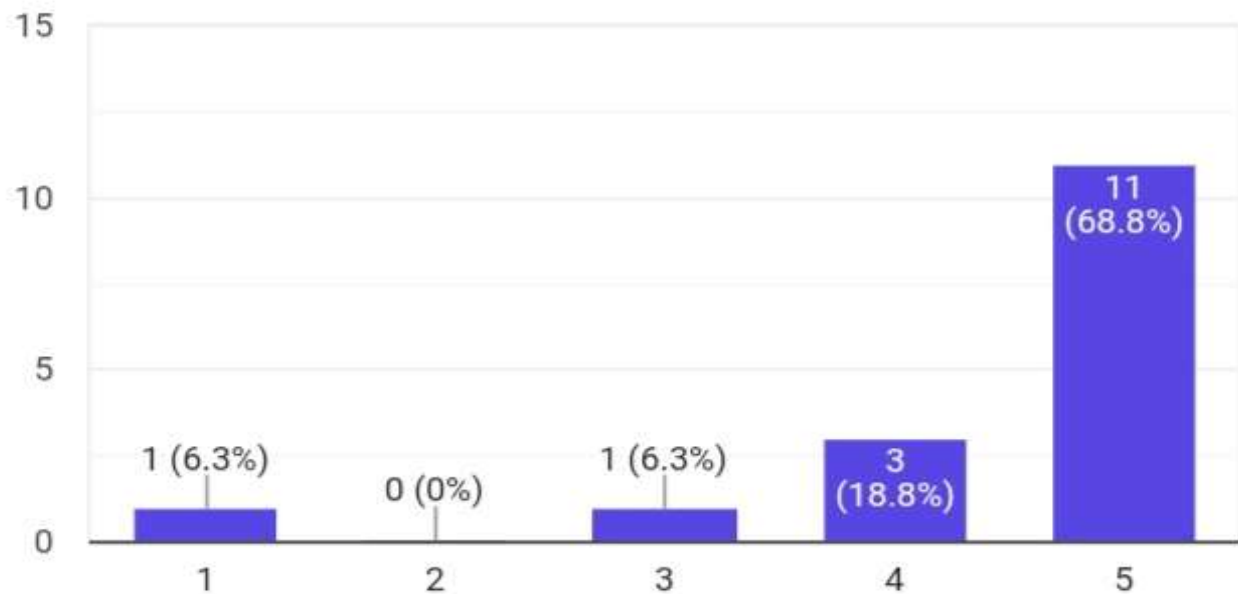
Table 07:

Distribution of Teachers' Responses Regarding Students Copying AI Output without modification

Statement	Never n (%)	Rarely n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Often n (%)	Very often n (%)	Mean	SD
Students copy-paste AI output without modification.	1 (6.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (6.3%)	3 (18.8%)	11 (68.8%)	4.44	1.15

Figure 28:

Frequency of Students Copying and Pasting AI Output Without Modification



As is shown in the above chart and table, we note that majority of participant teachers ($n = 11$) (68.8%) have 'very often' observed students copy paste AI content in the classroom, as well as, ($n = 3$) (18.8%) others answering with 'often' on this matter. The rest of the choices, including 'never', 'rarely', and 'sometimes', received a mere ($n = 1$) (6.3%) of selections each. The calculated mean and standard deviation is observed to be 4.44 and 1.15 respectively.

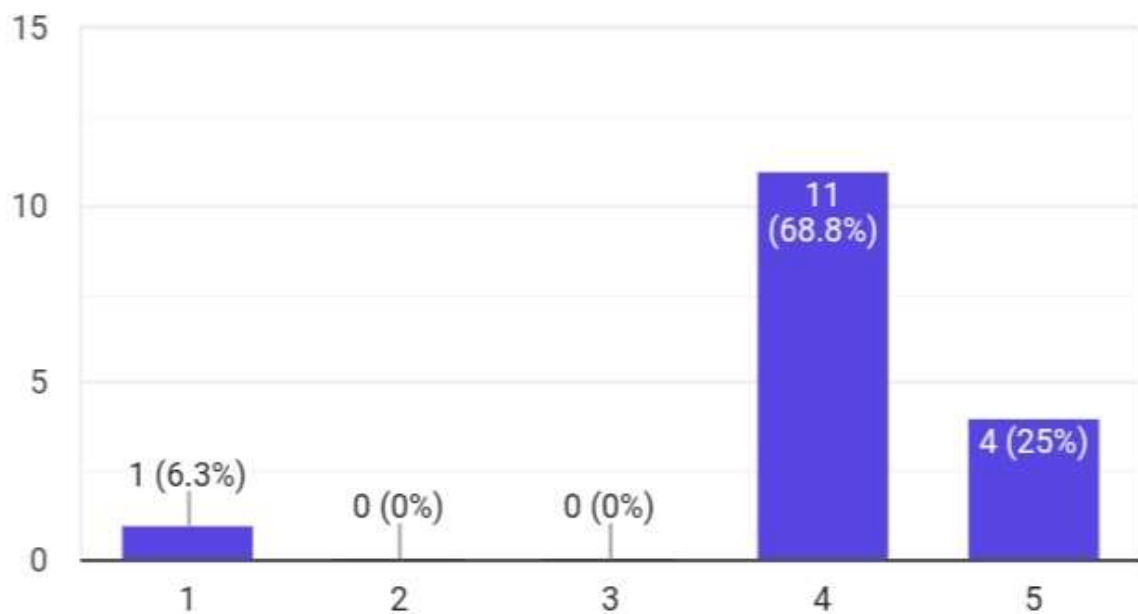
Second statement of Q12:

Students cannot explain their submitted work.

1 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 5 ☐

Table 08:*Distribution of Teachers' Responses Regarding Students' Inability to Explain Submitted Work*

Statement	Never n (%)	Rarely n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Often n (%)	Very often n (%)	Mean	SD
Students cannot explain their submitted work.	1 (6.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	11 (68.8%)	4 (25%)	4.06	0.93

Figure 29:*Frequency of students being unable to explain their submitted work*

On the statement concerning students not being able to explain their submitted work, teachers according to the results from figure 29 and table 08 signal that they observe this 'often'

among their students, with (n= 11) (68.8%) answering this way, while (n= 4) other participants, a (25%), believe that they see this 'very often'. One responder (n= 1) (6.3%), however, indicated that they have 'never' come across this issue. Meanwhile, the no response was awarded to the options 'sometimes' and 'rarely' (n= 0) (0%). From the table we note the mean score as 4.06 and standard deviation as 0.93.

Third statement of Q12:

Students use identical or near-identical phrasing across assignments.

1 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 5 ☐

Table 09:

Teachers' Responses Regarding Students Using Identical or Near-Identical AI-Generated Phrasing Across Assignments

Statement	Never n (%)	Rarely n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Often n (%)	Very often n (%)	Mean	SD
Students use identical or near-identical phrasing across assignments.	0 (0%)	2 (12.5%)	1 (6.3%)	10 (62.5%)	3 (18.8%)	3.88	0.89

Figure 30:

Frequency of Students Using Identical or Near-identical Phrasing Across Assignments

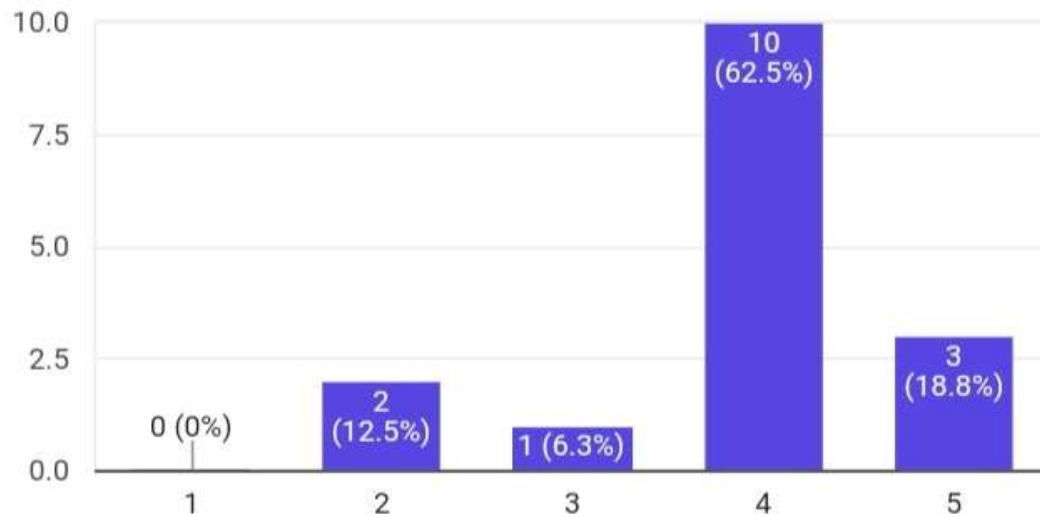


Table 09 and the chart of figure 30 illustrates teachers' perception on the frequency of students submitting assignments with clear identical or near-identical phrasing. The majority the responders ($n = 10$) (62.5%) believe they encounter this 'often' with their students, and the choice 'very often' received ($n = 3$) (18.8%) of the responses. Next, we see that the option 'rarely' received two selections ($n = 2$) (12.5%). Only one participant selected 'sometimes' ($n = 1$) (6.3%), and never was not indicated by any of the participants ($n = 0$) (0%). The calculation of mean and standard deviation revealed values of 3.88 and 0.89 respectively.

Question 13: When you suspect AI overuse, what do you typically do ? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Confront the student.
 ☐ Deduct points.
 ☐ Require a rewrite in class.
- ☐ Report to administration.
 ☐ Ignore it.

Other:

Figure 31:

Teachers' Typical Responses When Suspecting AI Overuse

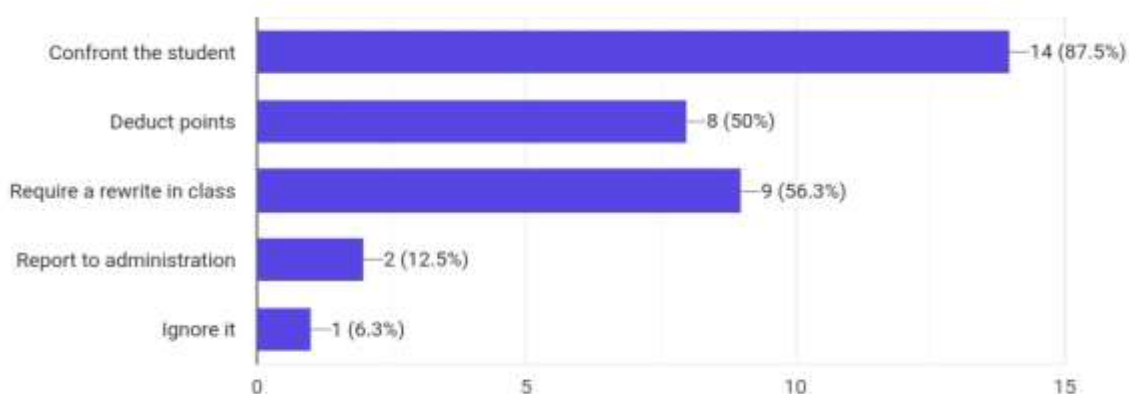
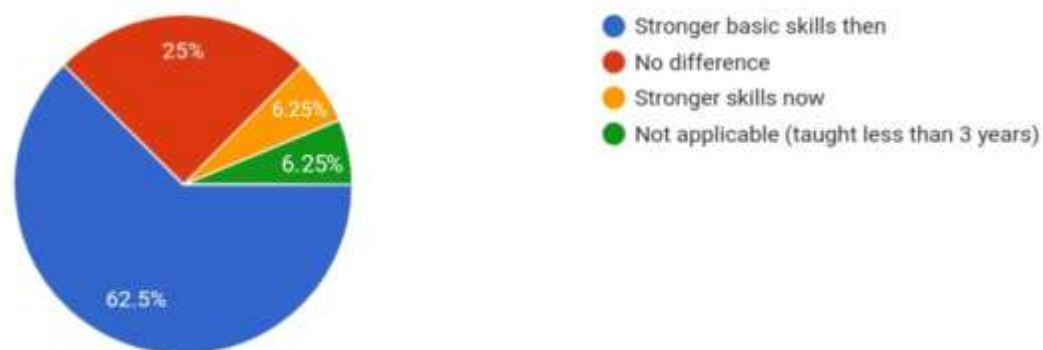


Figure 31 demonstrates teachers' reactions to suspected AI overuse by students. Most of the participants seem to believe direct intervention is the best course of action in this situation with (n = 14) responders, which amount to (87.5%), selecting confront the student as their answer, followed by requiring a rewrite in class, which garnered a selection frequency of (n = 9) and a percentage of (56.3%). The third most chosen option was observed to be the measure of deducting points, and it obtained (n = 8) responses, equaling (50%). The least chosen reaction among the items were reporting to the administration and ignoring it, both receiving scores of (n = 2) (12.5%) and (n = 1) (6.3%) respectively.

Note: Multiple responses were permitted; therefore, percentages exceed total 100%.

Section 09: Perceived Skill Changes Before vs. After Widespread AI Use**Question 14: Compared to 3–5 years ago (before widespread AI use), do you observe:**

- ☐ Stronger basic skills then.
- ☐ No difference.
- ☐ Stronger skills now.
- ☐ Not applicable (taught less than 3 years).

Figure 32:*Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Language Skills Now Compared to the Pre-AI Period*

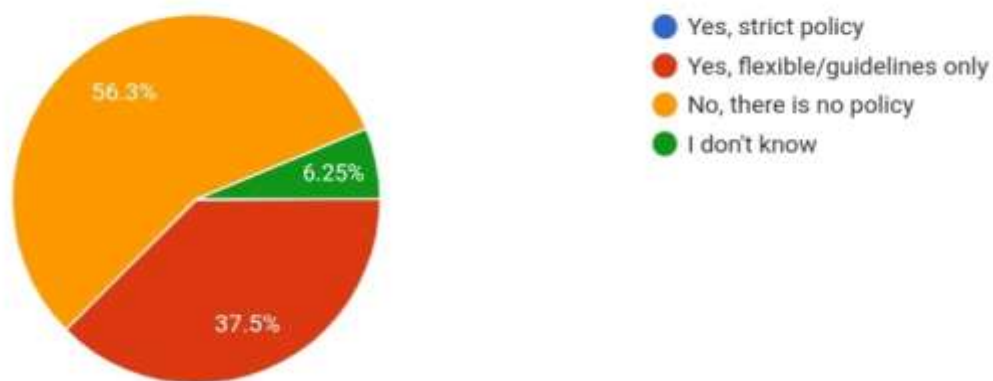
Regarding the question of the difference between basic language skills now (after widespread AI use) and 3–5 years ago, it can be seen in the results from figure 32 that (62.5%) of the teachers expressed that they believe basic skills were stronger back then compared to now. (25%) of them on the other hand voted for no difference as their choice. Those who thought basic language skills were stronger now accounted for (6.25%). The same percentage of (6.25%) was signaled in regards to the option of not applicable due to teaching for less than 3 years.

Section 10: Institutional Policy Awareness**Question 15: Does your university have a clear policy on student use of AI ?**

- ☐ Yes, strict policy. ☐ Yes, flexible/guidelines only. ☐ No policy.
- ☐ I don't know.

Figure 33:

Teachers' Awareness of Institutional Policies Regarding Student Use of AI Tools



As the chart from figure 33 shows the teachers were asked if their university has a clear policy regarding student AI usage and their answers were as follows: a large number of responders (56.3%) indicated that no, there is no policy in place, while (37%) chose the answer of yes, flexible/guidelines only. The remaining (6.25%) selected I don't know, and the option of yes, strict policy has not been endorsed by any participant.

Question 16: In your opinion, what is the single biggest risk of EFL students overusing AI tools for language learning ?

The findings revealed a variety of perspectives among the teachers. Some were of the opinion that the biggest risk for EFL students who overuse AI tools is the loss of genuine language production ability which leads to skill atrophy. They describe it a subtle and gradual but incredibly dangerous,

"The erosion of genuine language production ability. When EFL learners rely too heavily on AI tools, they often shift from producing language to selecting or editing AI-generated output. That sounds subtle, but it changes the whole learning process. Language acquisition depends on struggle—searching for words, making mistakes, restructuring sentences. AI can bypass that struggle"

"I think that students get fluent-sounding output without developing the underlying cognitive processing that makes real language acquisition stick. They outsource the productive struggle that builds neural pathways for grammar, vocabulary, and expression"

"The biggest risk is cognitive atrophy, where students lose the ability to think and communicate on their own. By allowing AI to skip the "productive struggle" of forming sentences, students develop a false sense of fluency while not building the long-term mental skills needed for real-world conversations"

Another respondent identified the gap between EFL learners' spoken and written language as a serious problem,

"AI kills students' creativity and results in a huge gap between their oral performance and their written one. When you read their written production, you feel like they write better than you and when you listen to them you notice how poor their language is"

Among the results we also note that the loss of critical thinking is also addressed, As well as the risk of students not learning anything and forgetting their written work easily,

"due to their over-dependency on ready-made AI output which may lead them eventually to losing critical thinking abilities"

"They risk not learning anything. It was proven by some research done on students relaying on AI to write different essays, that after a short period of time they forget what they wrote"

Teachers also warn of the loss of responsibility among students,

"Unreliable students with no personal responsibility & no efficiency of decision making"

Finally, they conclude with the mention of several significant risks for learners who overuse AI tool in the form of laziness, dependency/overreliance, loss of motivation, and plagiarism,

"Students will be less productive and lazy to conduct appropriate research"

"overreliance, laziness, plagiarism"

"They use until they lose it"

"Loose motivation"

Question 17: What one strategy have you found effective to reduce harmful overreliance while still allowing beneficial AI use ?

The results of this question illustrated different opinions among teachers on the best strategies to reduce harmful AI usage. Some respondents agreed that AI should be used for after work assistance, referring to completing the task then using AI to review the work, getting feedback, and corrections,

"From my experience as a teacher specialized in writing The most effective strategy is "AI as checker, not generator" — students must produce their own draft first, then use AI solely to review it, and finally write a reflection explaining which suggestions they accepted or rejected and why"

"“AI-last production" Students must first complete a task independently (write, speak, or respond). Only after that can they use AI for feedback, correction, or expansion. This keeps the essential learning step (struggling to produce language) while still benefiting from AI support"

Another theme among the answers was restricting AI use with supervision. This involved strategies of using AI for vocabulary exploration, and reading AI content to take ideas and reformulate them,

"I only allow them to use it for the development of their vocabulary by searching new sophisticated vocabulary not for generating whole structures"

"Giving advice to students to read the content that they find in AI apps and then take the ideas for further research and reformulate them"

A number of respondents stated that they implement a strategy of pure classroom activity to counter AI overuse, as well as testing strategy to confirm independent language skill,

"Immediate classroom activities and raising group discussion"

"Classroom work"

"F2F tests needed"

"My strategy was to relay on oral presentation of any assignment or work requested from my students"

The last apparent strategy discussed by participants was falls under the umbrella of teaching and guiding students on proper AI usage,

"teaching students how to use AI tools"

"Implementing solemn ethical rules for using AI tools might reduce the harmful overreliance on AI tools and lessen their effects on students' EFL acquisition"

Conclusion

This chapter illustrated the findings gathered in this study, which were collected via two questionnaires designed to extract both students' and teachers' perceptions on the topic of AI overreliance among EFL students and the consequence impact on learner autonomy. Findings from both questionnaires shows what appears to be a noticeable overreliance on AI tools indicated from both perspectives. Further details on these results will be discussed within the next chapter.

Chapter Five

Discussion

Introduction

In this chapter we, shall interpret the results we obtained in the previous chapter. Learners' self-reports from the students' questionnaire with teachers' observations from the teachers' questionnaire are integrated for the purpose of validating or challenging patterns. Each research question will be discussed using relevant data to support or refute this study's hypotheses. Subsequently, implications derived from the results, and the limitations we faced while interpreting results follow. Finally, some recommendations for students and teachers of Chadli Bendjedid University were proposed based on the findings, as well as, a section for suggestions for future research related to the topic of AI overreliance.

Discussion of Research Questions and Hypotheses

Question One

The first research question aims to investigate if EFL learners do in fact overuse AI tools and what effects such dependency has on their learning autonomy.

Based on the answers to students' questionnaire's Q5 we notice high frequency of AI tools usage in language learning. The responses indicate a 27.4% of total participating students use AI multiple times a day and 23% of them use it once a day, that's 50.4% of participants using AI at least once a day, every day. Even more so if we add the 36.2% who responded with several times a week, we can combine students' AI tool usage to 86.6% of the 113 participating learners using it at least several times a week, just for language learning (see figure 05). These conclusions are even corroborated by teachers in the results of Q3 of their questionnaire. When asked about their

observations regarding the frequency of their students' AI usage, 50% of them reported that they use AI very frequently, and 37.5% answered with frequently, collectively that's 87.5% of the total number of responding teachers (see figure 16). Interpreting these results as anything other than evidence of overuse would be illogical.

Students' questionnaire's Q6 asks students to choose which language tasks that they always use AI for without trying themselves first. The majority of respondents chose 'translating unknown words' and 'generating ideas for writing' with a frequency of 67 and 59 selections respectively, while a lesser frequency of selections went to the options of checking grammar which received 41 responses. Paraphrasing sentences was chosen 35 times, practicing speaking/conversation 26, and 35 also admitted to using AI tools to write full paragraphs/essays without trying on their own first. Only 16 seemed to report the use of AI in answering reading comprehension questions. These results reveal how many students replace their own effort with AI generated content.

Teachers contributed in testing students' classroom behaviors in using AI. In teachers' questionnaire's Q12 when asked how often they observed students copy-pasting AI output without modifications, the results showed a mean score of 4.44 indicating strong agreement, with the actual percentages being 68.8% for 'very often' and 18.8% for 'often' (see table 07 & figure 28). The next statement 'students cannot explain their submitted work' received 68.8% 'often' responses and 25% for 'very often' corresponding to a mean score of 4.06 (see table 08 & figure 29). The last statement of the question which tests teachers' observations in regards to students using identical or near-identical phrasing across assignments garnered 3.88 in mean, due to high agreement in the form of 62.5% and 18.8% of responses by the teachers for 'often' and 'very often' respectively (see table 09 & figure 30). All this add to the evidence of AI overreliance among the learners, and suggests a pattern of cognitive offloading and automation bias.

The agreement between the two groups seemed to end here. When analyzing responses to students' questionnaire's Q8, we noted a majority of responders claiming that their English ability 'improved slightly' 53.1% or 'improved significantly' 28.3% when using AI compared to without it (see figure 08). This implies confidence from students that they are developing better under AI assistance compared to the traditional approach. Though we have to note that the majority chose improved slightly. We highlight this because EFL learners are not purely using AI for learning, they spend considerable time in the classroom, and so we have to ask if they gave AI more acknowledgement than it deserves. The students answer similarly in Q12 of their questionnaire, with the majority of 62.8% stating they 'learn more with AI', while 25.8% chose 'learn more without AI', leaving those who felt there was 'no difference' with 12.4% of responses (see figure 12).

In the students' questionnaire's Q11 participants answer a question related to Q6 that we dealt with earlier. When asked how often they try on their own first before using AI, the majority went with 'always', followed by 'often'. This clearly contradicts their previous answers, where they picked concrete language tasks that they acknowledged they use AI tools for without trying themselves first.

Teachers, in contrast, disagree with their students, and their observations in the results appear to stay consistent. On the statement of 'students seem unable to complete certain tasks (e.g., writing, paraphrasing) without AI help', findings of teachers' questionnaire's Q4 show that teachers replied with 62.5% for strongly agree and 25% agree securing a mean value of 4.31 (see table 04 & figure 18). This represents classroom realities teachers see when AI is not available for the students to hide behind. On teachers' questionnaire's Q14, teachers report clearly based on their observations of students over the years that compared to 3-5 years ago, when AI tools were not

used or were not used extensively by EFL students, the level of basic English skills seemed to have declined. They specifically indicated 62.5% for ‘stronger basic skills then’, 25% for ‘no difference’, and 6.25% for ‘stronger skills now’ (see figure 32). It is apparent from these results that teachers don’t believe that AI has improved students’ language learning but the opposite in fact.

Considering we intentionally included teachers’ perspectives in our research for unbiased observations, this research may interpret this divergent as an instance of illusion of competence by participating EFL learners, where they mistake AI assisted performance as their growing skills. Teachers observe this gap in the classroom where learners do not readily have access to AI tools.

The results of Question 7 (teachers) appear to show this unbiasedness of teachers, as 43.8% of the total responders chose neutral (depend on the student) when they were presented with the question of whether they believe AI tools usage has a positive, neutral, or negative effect on learners’ autonomy (see figure 23). This demonstrates that almost half the teachers participating don’t condemn AI usage, they just wish to see ethical and productive use rather than cognitive offloading and automation bias among EFL learners in regards to AI. The results of teachers’ questionnaire’s Q10 also reaffirm such unbiased judgment. The question asks what is their overall attitudes is towards students’ usage of AI in EFL learning, and they answer as follow: The option strongly supportive (if used ethically) got 37.5%, while cautiously supportive received 25%. That is more than half of the teachers who support AI use in EFL learning on the condition that it should be used ethically. Even on the opposing side ‘strongly opposed’ only garnered 6.3% of responses. Somewhat opposed gained 25%, which does not appear as a sign of complete opposition. We might interpret this as them witnessing too many instances of misconduct by learners through AI, rather than them opposing AI use itself (see figure 26).

Nevertheless, the results from teachers' questionnaire's Q7 also show a considerable percentage of teachers who believe AI tools usage to be a threat to learners' autonomy. The option mostly negative gathered 50% of responses, in contrast to the 6.3% for mostly positive, meanwhile, as we mentioned before, close to half took a neutral conditional stance on this subject. When teachers were asked for their opinions on the biggest risks of EFL learners overusing AI tools for language learning in teacher Q16, one teacher said:

“The erosion of genuine language production ability. When EFL learners rely too heavily on AI tools, they often shift from producing language to selecting or editing AI-generated output”

Another teacher states:

“AI kills students' creativity and results in a huge gap between their oral performance and their written one. When you read their written production, you feel like they write better than you and when you listen to them you notice how poor their language is”,

We cannot forget critical thinking “due to their over-dependency on ready-made AI output which may lead them eventually to losing critical thinking abilities” One also warned about students losing their sense of responsibility, as well as mentions of other risks such as: laziness, dependency/overreliance, loss of motivation, and plagiarism. These responses indicate that teachers see EFL students' overreliance on AI as especially damaging for their independent learning ability as well as a risk to their behavior, ethics, and motivation.

On the subject of skill areas that teachers see the most harm among students because of AI overreliance, the results of Q5 of teachers' questionnaire point to a clear problem in the skill of writing, as 87.5% of participants picked this option, while closely following this were ‘critical

thinking’ and ‘paraphrasing/summarizing’ with 68.8% and 62.5% of the responders’ selections respectively. The skill of ‘speaking fluency’ conversely accounted for 18.8% of the response frequency while ‘vocabulary acquisition’ received 12.5%, and a 6.3% went to grammar accuracy and reading comprehension each (see figure 21). These numbers do not paint a random picture, they in fact show that the skills teachers observe the most decline in are the ones that require the most struggle and self-correction, the same cognitive processes AI tools create shortcuts for.

What adds an even greater layer of complexity to these results are the students’ answers to Q14 of their questionnaire. The question seeks to extract students’ in-depth opinions on the biggest risk they believe AI overreliance causes for EFL learners. Their responses to this open-ended question were as follow: the majority of learners cited the destruction of learner creativity and losing critical thinking saying it “*destroys his personal capacities for creativity*” and “*It Minimizes the critical thinking and the functional process of their brain*”. A student who was part of a group that chose laziness as a great risk to EFL students stated that, “*Depending too much on ai makes students lazy and turns off their brains*”. Learner autonomy is also mentioned continuously by responders, like this student’s testimony: “*The use of Ai excessively decreases your self-reliance*” and in another’s, “*In my opinion, I think their overuse of AI tools for EFL students reduced independent thinking*”.

Some claim losing confidence as the biggest risk to EFL learners “*Lack of confidence in using own ideas*”. All these responses demonstrate clear awareness among the students of the dangers of AI overreliance. However, from answers to the previous questions they do not seem to associate any of these harmful effects to themselves even though they themselves confirmed AI tools overuse in student Q5. After analyzing the data we have from both perspectives, we find that the most probable conclusion is that alongside the aforementioned illusion of competence, learners’

answers seem to be consistent with optimistic bias, a type of cognitive bias where individuals think they are in less risk than others despite clear signs that says otherwise. Hypothesis 1 which states that EFL students overuse AI tools significantly, and that such overreliance negatively effects language proficiency and learner autonomy is confirmed.

The evidence of overreliance comes from both students and teachers. Both agree on high frequency of usage in students' Question 5 and teachers' Question 3. Students also admit to replacing effort with AI assistance in multiple language tasks in Q6 of their questionnaire. More behaviors attributed to overreliance are observed by teachers in Q12, such as students copy-pasting AI output, and the inability to explain submitted work. Specific areas of decline are also identified by teachers in Q5, they reveal writing, critical thinking, and paraphrasing as the most affected. These same language skills are also addressed in Q4, where the majority of participating teachers strongly agreed that they observed students seemingly unable to perform these skills without AI help. Teachers in Q14 reveal a worrying decline in students' basic skills now compared to 3-5 or so years ago when AI either wasn't used or was used minimally. Teachers also report AI tools usage as a strong negative factor for learner autonomy in Q7 of their questionnaire, and they give even more detailed perspective on the dangers of overreliance on AI for EFL students in Q16. Meanwhile, students in their questionnaire's Q12 see AI as enhancing their learning ability.

After analyzing both perspectives, we decided to prioritize teachers' perceptions on actual skill change and learning autonomy over the students', due the numerous inconsistencies in the learners' responses compared to teachers' consistent results. Q1 of teachers' questionnaire also sheds some light on the credibility of the participating educators. The results revealed the 81.3% of them have served as EFL teachers for more than 10 years (see figure 15), indicating experience, learner assessments across years, and awareness of both before and post AI EFL settings. Students,

conversely, look at AI as a tool that made tasks easier to solve. They might believe that to be learning, while denying the harm of AI overreliance as illustrated by professional observations of teachers. Thus, we conclude that the first hypothesis is partially supported. Confirm completely by teachers' observations, however, both supported and denied by students' contradictory statements.

Question Two

The results from student Q3 shows that students' most used type of AI tools is chatbots (e.g., ChatGPT, DeepSeek, Gemini,...) with 77% selection frequency, while the next closest pick among the other types with 47% frequency is translation tools (e.g., Google Translate, DeepL). The rest of the types (Paraphrasing tools, AI summarizers, AI grammar checkers, AI writing assistants) garnered only minority of selections (see figure 03). Though these findings indicate diverse use across AI types by learners, it noticeably points out AI chatbots as the main preferred type of AI tools used in English learning by the students. Student Q4 is more specific, as it asks students to choose what AI tool they frequently use for English learning. The results reaffirmed the responses to Q3 as more than half of the participants chose chat GPT as the most frequent AI tool they used, and not only this, they also chose other chatbots such as DeepSeek, Gemini, Claude, giving them a minority of votes, which brought the percentage of those who picked a chatbot as their choice to 87.8% of total responses, while only 13.3% picked the option Google Translate / DeepL (see figure 04).

Although students give some task-to-tool specificity and student Q6, such as generating ideas for writing, translating unknown words, paraphrasing sentences, and checking grammar, the majority of responders, according to the previous findings seem to take advantage of chatbots' Broad multifunctional nature for these tasks instead of using specific AI tools for their corresponding tasks with word translation being the only minor exception.

Teachers also provide indirect evidence through teacher Q4's results. They affirm that students seem to be unable to perform certain tasks such as writing, paraphrasing without AI assistance (see table 04). Teacher Q5 corroborates such results, with the findings clearly establishing paraphrasing & summarizing, and writing as teachers' pick when it comes to the most negatively impacted skill areas by students' AI overreliance. Both questions results converge around writing and paraphrasing, which are usually associated with chatbots, as the most negativity impacted skills and the tasks students cannot complete without AI assistance.

Based on this evidence, the second hypothesis stating that AI tools EFL learners are most overreliant on are chatbots, is confirmed.

Question Three

The findings from the students' questionnaire paint a confusing picture. Student Q2, the one that asks learners to self-rate themselves, shows only 7 of the participants, a 5.3%, rating as beginners, while the big majority, a 73.5%, chose intermediate as their proficiency level, and some picking the advanced option (see figure 02). These results do not appear compatible with usual proficiency distribution in EFL classrooms especially since according to the results of student Q1, the participants are a 113 student from all academic levels, first year L1 to Master 02 (see figure 01). This leaves us with the conclusion that something is making learners inflate their self-ratings.

Possible cognitive bias may be responsible for such irregularity, such as, social desirability bias, or the Dunning-Kruger effect (Kruger & Dunning, 1999), which applies when individuals of low proficiency overestimate their level due to lack of metacognitive awareness needed to recognize their own deficits.

Student Q9 appears to validate this interpretation. The question had clear instructions for only beginners to answer and for respondents who self-rated as intermediate or advanced to skip

to student Q10. The results to this question, however, showed a 42.5% of the total participants equaling 48 of them, including ones who identified as intermediate and advanced, replying instead skipping to Q10. Critically, 12 of them selected always/often to using AI tools for basic language tasks such as word translation or grammar checking, 5 more than the 7 self-rated beginners (see figure 09).

Based on such results there are two possible interpretations, and both are worth consideration. The first is that students' attention was low as they answered the questionnaire. They may have rushed through the question without noticing the instructions. The questionnaire design is a limitation in itself in this instant, as paper and non-branching formats cannot force skipping. The second interpretation is that they read the instructions and decided to ignore them. This is not necessarily admitting to a beginner dependency status. Due to the number of respondents who chose the option 'sometimes' using AI for basic tasks, it may indicate that intermediate EFL learners use AI occasionally for vocabulary or grammar checking.

These findings suggests that results to students' Q2 may be too biased for it to be a viable variable for testing H3. Possible reasons for students' overestimations of proficiency level may be due to social desirability bias, or the Dunning-Kruger effect. Therefore, this study moves to examine teachers' observations as the primary evidence for RQ3.

Teacher Q8 asks for teachers' observations on beginner versus advanced learners' behavioral AI usage, specifically if advanced learners use AI tools more responsibly than beginners, in a manner of usage such as editing and polishing rather than generating entire texts. The results show a clear majority agreement on the responsibility of advanced learners, with 43.8% responding 'yes, significantly more responsible', and another 25% selecting 'slightly more responsible'. These results amount to 68.8% of responses pointing towards advanced learners'

responsibility when using AI, while the option of ‘no difference’ got 18.8% of responses. Conversely, the choice of ‘advanced students overuse AI even more’ was picked only by 12.5% of participants (see figure 24). Such findings lead us to conclude that teachers do, in fact, observe a more responsible use of AI among advanced EFL learners.

Teacher Q9’s results corroborate Q8’s findings, as it asks teachers directly to identify, based on their experience, the proficiency level that shows the most harmful effects of overreliance on AI. The majority of teachers in the results, a 50%, selected beginners as the level they believe demonstrates the highest harmful effects, meanwhile, advanced and intermediate both received 12.5% each (see figure 25). This is consistent with Q8’s conclusion.

While not a direct evidence, teacher Q5, which we discussed earlier, also sheds some light on this matter. Its results indicate that writing, critical thinking, and paraphrasing as the most negatively affected skills from AI overuse (see figure 21). These skills are exactly the ones beginners are still developing, and if AI replaces the process of learning fundamental skills like writing, learners may never develop essential language competencies. We find more evidence on why beginner learners may be harmed worse than advanced learners among the answers to teachers Q16. The teachers here give their opinions on what they believe is the biggest risk of EFL students overusing AI tools for language learning, and some of these statements, such as: “They risk not learning anything. It was proven by some research done on students relaying on AI to write different essays, that after a short period of time they forget what they wrote” and “They outsource the productive struggle that builds neural pathways for grammar, vocabulary, and expression. The result is a learner who appears to progress while actually becoming more dependent and less capable over time” clearly refers to beginner language learners and indicates some particularly

severe consequences including not learning anything and a dependency on AI tools so serious that they outsource all the cognitive tasks to them.

Drawing on the evidence from both perspectives, the third hypothesis, which claims that, yes, the impact of AI overreliance differs between beginner and advanced EFL learners, it poses more danger to beginners than advanced learners, is partially proven. It is supported by the more reliable and consistent teachers' observations, but cannot be confirmed using students' self-rating due to suspected bias.

Implications of the Study

Our findings imply that overreliance on AI is not a minor issue. The results demonstrate a widespread behavioral pattern of overreliance among EFL learners of Chadli Bendjedid University. The use of AI tools with a frequency of at least once a day, just for language learning, was reported by the majority of responding students, and this is without counting a considerable portion that reported a frequency of several times a week. Students also admit to using AI for several specific language tasks before trying on their own first. Teachers confirm such behaviors independently, observing high frequency of AI usage among the students, as well as, noticing students copy-pasting AI output, inability to explain their own submitted work, and identical phrasing across assignments. Based on this AI overreliance appears to be observable and recognized by both groups.

Another implication derived from the results is the perception gap between students and teachers on AI use consequences. While students indicate Improvement in their English due to AI use, teachers disagree and report observable skill decline, particularly in writing, critical thinking and paraphrasing. Those with more than five years of teaching experience report that basic language skills were stronger before the widespread adoption of AI. We find that such results may point us

towards students experiencing an illusion of competence, because they mistake AI-assisted performance for genuine personal ability development. Experienced teachers detecting these deficits in a classroom environment where students' true level is shown is a more logical conclusion.

Furthermore, the results show that the teachers are not uniformly opposed to AI. The majority acknowledged using AI for teaching and professional purposes, while close to half of them took a neutral stance on AI's effect on autonomy, stating that it depends on the student. Other results show the majority of them supporting AI tools ethical usage in EFL learning. Teachers who indicated negative effects did so because of repeated observations of dependency and misconduct, not due to a biased position against AI or technology in general.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations that we encounter and have to address. First, despite teachers' results suggesting a considerable proportion of beginner learners, the students' self-rating acknowledges only 7 students as such. Several cognitive biases might have played a role in these results, including social desirability, the illusion of competence and the Dunning-Kruger effect. This left us with no choice but to regard these self-ratings as unreliable for us to use in comparing students' proficiency levels.

Moreover, we were faced with a significant portion of participants disregarding instructions on Q9 of the student questionnaire. Exactly 48 students, a 42.5% of the respondents, answered the question directed at self-rated beginners despite instructions to skip. The straightforward explanation would be students completing the questionnaire with low attention. This puts into question the reliability of their responses. It also indicates that non-branching survey formats are ill-suited for conditional questions.

In addition, Only 16 of the 30 teachers managed to respond to our questionnaire. Although we tried to reach them all, several factors impeded several of them from completing the questionnaire, including the exams and heavy work schedules. Adding to that, we were not able to meet a number of them and had to resort to sending emails with the questionnaire attached.

Finally, this study is cross-sectional and captures perceptions and behaviors at a single point in time, meaning it will not be able to examine changes that may occur in the future; therefore, longitudinal research is required as AI use continues.

Recommendations for the Research Findings

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations are offered to EFL students and teachers:

Having discovered widespread overreliance on AI among students, as well as, skill decline observed by the teachers, EFL teachers endeavor to design AI-resistant assessments, including in-class tasks without devices and oral explanations of submitted assignments to make students' deficits more visible to themselves and their teachers.

Teaching technical skills alone might not be enough. Teachers should teach students metacognitive strategies, allowing them to ask themselves questions such as: can I do this Without AI ? Do I understand why AI produced this output ? Am I learning when I use AI ?

Different approaches should be implemented for different proficiency levels. Beginners may require much stricter limitations on AI use with heavy teacher oversight, while advanced learners may only need guidance in how to use AI as an editing or polishing tool.

Teachers need to raise students' awareness of the illusion of competence. Being able to solve tasks with AI should not make them believe they have developed the appropriate skills. Unassisted assessments should be essential for that.

Using AI as the only medium of learning is flawed approach. Students should always use AI as a supplementary tool. They should attempt solving tasks themselves first, and to verify the accuracy of AI content before trusting it.

Suggestions for Future Studies

The negative effects of AI are still a new topic of research in Algerian EFL settings, further studies should be conducted to uncover more truth on this, thus, we suggest the following:

We suggest conducting the same study in other Algerian universities to gain more insights on the effects of overreliance on EFL students, as well as to uncover whether the perception gap between teachers and students documented in this study is consistent across different contexts.

Longitudinal research is recommended to track the same students over time to assess whether such patterns of overreliance are reversible or continue to accumulate into a much more problematic issue.

Future research should implement objective proficiency measures, including placement tests, vocabulary size tests, or written samples produced without AI for a better proficiency levels classifications, as self-rating has proven ineffective in this study.

To avoid instruction disregard, future research should use online surveys with forced-response branching when dealing with conditional questions.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined and discussed the findings for the purpose of answering the research questions and testing the validity of the hypothesis. In addition, the chapter concludes with multiple sections illustrating the implications of the study, limitations, suggestions for students and teachers of Chadli Bendjedid University in regards to how best to tackle AI

overreliance based on the results, and ending with some recommendations for further investigations.

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Appendices

Exploring EFL Students' Use of AI Tools in Language Learning.

This questionnaire explores how EFL students use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Google Translate, Grammarly, QuillBot, DeepL) and their impact on language learning and autonomy. Responses are anonymous and for academic use only.

Q1. What is your current academic year?

☐ 1st year. ☐ 2nd year. ☐ 3rd year. ☐ Master 01. ☐ Master 02.

Q2. How would you rate your current English proficiency level? (self-assessment)

☐ Beginner. ☐ Intermediate. ☐ Advanced.

Q3. Which AI-powered tools have you used for English learning in the past 3 months? (Select all that apply)

☐ Machine translation (e.g., Google Translate, DeepL).

☐ AI writing assistants (e.g., Grammarly, ProWritingAid).

☐ AI paraphrasing tools (e.g., QuillBot, Spinbot).

☐ Chatbots / conversational AI (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Deepseek).

☐ AI-powered grammar checkers (e.g., LanguageTool).

☐ AI summarizers (e.g., SummarizeBot, QuillBot Summarizer).

Other:

Q4. Which one AI tool do you use most frequently for English learning?

☐ Google Translate / DeepL. ☐ ChatGPT. ☐ Grammarly. ☐ QuillBot. ☐ Gemini.

☐ Claude.

· Other:

Q5. On average, how often do you use AI tools for English learning tasks?

☐ Several times a day. ☐ Once a day. ☐ Several times a week. ☐ Once a week.

☐ Rarely / Never.

Q6. For which of the following tasks do you always use an AI tool without trying first on your own? (Select all that apply)

☐ Checking grammar.

☐ Paraphrasing sentences.

☐ Translating unknown words.

☐ Writing full paragraphs/essays.

☐ Generating ideas for writing.

☐ Answering reading comprehension questions.

☐ Practicing speaking/conversation.

Q7. Why do you use AI tools for English learning? (Select all that apply)

☐ To save time.

- ☐ To get immediate answers.
- ☐ To avoid mistakes.
- ☐ To improve my English (e.g., learn new words/phrases).
- ☐ Because I lack confidence in my own English.
- ☐ Because teachers expect high-quality work.
- ☐ Because it's easier than thinking or drafting myself.

Q8. Compared to when you started using AI tools, do you feel your independent English ability (without AI) has:

- ☐ Improved significantly. ☐ Improved slightly. ☐ Stayed the same.
- ☐ Declined slightly. ☐ Declined significantly

Q9. (For Beginner self-rated only) – If you are Intermediate or Advanced, skip to Q10.

How often do you use AI tools for basic tasks like word translation ?

- ☐ Always / Often. ☐ Sometimes. ☐ Rarely / Never.

Q10. (For Intermediate or Advanced self-rated only)

Do you use AI tools mainly for polishing language or for learning new structures ?

- ☐ Mainly polishing. ☐ Mainly learning. ☐ Both equally.

Q11. Before using an AI tool, how often do you try to complete the task yourself first ?

☐ Always. ☐ Often. ☐ Rarely. ☐ Never.

Q12. Do you feel you learn more when you use AI, or when you struggle without it ?

☐ Learn more with AI. ☐ Learn more without AI. ☐ No difference.

Q13. Does your English teacher encourage or discourage AI use ?

☐ Encourage. ☐ Discourage. ☐ Neutral. ☐ Not discussed in class.

Q14. In your opinion, what is the biggest negative effect of overusing AI tools for EFL students ?

(Open-ended)

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Thank you for your participation !

Teachers' Perspectives on EFL Students' Overreliance on AI Tools.

This questionnaire is part of a research study investigating the impact of overreliance on AI-generated tools on language learning and learner autonomy among EFL students. Your responses as a teacher are invaluable. All data will be anonymized and used solely for academic purposes.

Q1. How many years have you been teaching EFL ?

- ☐ Less than 5 years.
- ☐ 5–10 years.
- ☐ More than 10 years.

Q2. Have you ever used AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Grammarly, QuillBot, DeepL) yourself for teaching or professional purposes ?

- ☐ Yes, frequently.
- ☐ Yes, occasionally.
- ☐ Rarely.
- ☐ Never.

Q3. In your observation, how often do your students use AI tools for English learning tasks ?

- ☐ Very frequently.
- ☐ Frequently.
- ☐ Occasionally.
- ☐ Rarely.
- ☐ I cannot tell.

Q4. Rate how much you agree with the following statements (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree):

My students often submit work that appears AI-generated without significant personal input.

1 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 5 ☐

Students seem unable to complete certain tasks (e.g., writing, paraphrasing) without AI help.

1 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 5 ☐

Overreliance on AI has reduced students' willingness to revise or edit their own work.

1 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 5 ☐

AI tools have made it harder for me to assess students' real proficiency.

1 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 5 ☐

Q5. In which skill areas do you observe the most negative impact of AI overuse ? (Select up to three)

☐ Writing. ☐ Grammar accuracy. ☐ Vocabulary acquisition.

☐ Reading comprehension. ☐ Speaking fluency. ☐ Critical thinking.

☐ Paraphrasing & summarizing.

Q6. In your opinion, what are the main reasons students overuse AI tools ? (Select all that apply)

☐ Lack of confidence in their English ability.

☐ Time pressure / heavy workload.

☐ Desire for perfect grades.

☐ Unclear institutional policies on AI.

☐ Lack of training on ethical AI use.

☐ Laziness or avoidance of effort.

Q7. Do you believe AI tool usage has a positive, neutral, or negative effect on student autonomy ?

☐ Mostly positive (students learn more efficiently).

☐ Neutral (depends on the student).

☐ Mostly negative (students become dependent).

Q8. Compared to beginner students, do advanced students use AI tools more responsibly (e.g., for polishing rather than generating entire answers) ?

☐ Yes, significantly more responsibly.

☐ Slightly more responsibly.

☐ No difference.

☐ Advanced students overuse AI even more.

Q9. Which proficiency level shows the highest degree of harmful overreliance in your experience ?

☐ Beginners. ☐ Intermediate. ☐ Advanced. ☐ No clear pattern.

Q10. What is your overall attitude toward student use of AI tools in EFL learning ?

- ☐ Strongly supportive (if used ethically). ☐ Cautiously supportive. ☐ Neutral.
- ☐ Somewhat opposed. ☐ Strongly opposed.

Q11. Which of the following have you done ? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Designed assignments that are AI-resistant (e.g., oral presentations, in-class writing)
- ☐ Taught students how to use AI as a tutor, not a ghostwriter.
- ☐ Used AI detection tools (e.g., Turnitin AI detector).
- ☐ Discussed academic integrity related to AI.
- ☐ None of the above.

Q12. How often do you see the following in your classroom ? (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Very often)

Students copy-paste AI output without modification.

1 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 5 ☐

Students cannot explain their submitted work.

1 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 5 ☐

Students use identical or near-identical phrasing across assignments.

1 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 5 ☐

Q13. When you suspect AI overuse, what do you typically do ? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Confront the student. ☐ Deduct points. ☐ Require a rewrite in class.
- ☐ Report to administration. ☐ Ignore it.

Other:

Q14. Compared to 3–5 years ago (before widespread AI use), do you observe:

- ☐ Stronger basic skills then.
- ☐ No difference.
- ☐ Stronger skills now.
- ☐ Not applicable (taught less than 3 years).

Q15. Does your University have a clear policy on student use of AI ?

- ☐ Yes, strict policy. ☐ Yes, flexible/guidelines only. ☐ No policy.
- ☐ I don't know.

Q16. In your opinion, what is the single biggest risk of EFL students overusing AI tools for language learning ?

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Q17. What one strategy have you found effective to reduce harmful overreliance while still allowing beneficial AI use ?

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Thank you for your valuable contribution to this research.