



METHODOLOGICAL STEPS FOR USING AI TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILLS IN IELTS PREPARATION

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Abstract. *This article examines the impact of using ChatGPT on the development of academic writing skills in third-year translation students preparing for IELTS Writing Task 2. It demonstrates that AI improves introductions, expands academic vocabulary, enhanced clarity of positional expression, and supports the development of metacognitive skills. Analysis of the result revealed increases in mean bands and decreases in coefficient of variation (CV), as well as the need for conscious use of AI to minimize traces of generation. Recommendations for educators and future research are presented.*

Keywords: *ChatGPT, academic writing, IELTS Writing Task 2, translation students, artificial intelligence.*

INTRODUCTION.

The application of artificial intelligence in the field of academic writing is gaining prominence in contemporary linguistic research, particularly in the context of international exams such as the IELTS Academic Writing Test [1]. This test evaluates the ability to construct arguments, rephrase statements, and express a viewpoint in accordance with established standards [2].

In the study, third-year translation students wrote an essay introduction and enhances it using ChatGPT, an AI-powered tool. The goal was to refine the wording and strengthen the argument without resorting to direct copying. Each essay was evaluated according to the IELTS criteria. After that the changes in skill level, instances of AI-generated text, and the students' level of independence were analyzed.

The findings demonstrated a rise in average bands from 5.67 to 7.28, accompanied by a more than three-fold reduction in the coefficient of variation. This confirms the efficacy of AI as a tool. Additionally, some students exhibited similar patterns, underscoring the importance of establishing guidelines for the ethical and productive use of AI. The purpose of this paper is to examine the experimental outcomes, decipher common mistakes, and propose practical advice for instructors of academic writing.

Recent studies have shown that incorporating artificial intelligence into the process of teaching academic writing can substantially enhance the quality of students' written work, including those in the third year of their translation studies. Despite their advanced language skills, students still need to improve their writing abilities, such as development of argumentation, text organization, and source management [3].

In Kazakhstan, universities are actively integrating AI into their teaching practices to assist students in their academic writing to improve the quality of their written works. However, there is a danger of overusing generative models, which can lead to overly perfect formulations that are not suitable for the students' level. This necessitates the development of skills for the responsible use of AI [4].

The following researchers Stock A., Schlögl S., Groth A. highlight the significance of identifying AI-generated content in texts and proposes methods for stylistic analysis to ensure academic integrity [5]. The concept of “human-AI collaboration” proves to be effective when acts as an editor or advisor, while the student



maintains control over the style and content of the text, which is defiantly beneficial for students studying translation [6].

The study of Tojiboyeva M. presents that artificial intelligence can elevate text organization, broaden vocabulary, and enhance academic and translation abilities. Although, the successful application of AI requires pedagogical support, adherence to ethical standards, and the cultivation of critical skills abilities to provide that tool serves as a complement to, rather than a substitute for, students' independent writing [7].

A quasi-experimental study aimed to assess the impact of integrating AI tool – ChatGPT – on the quality of essay IELTS Writing Task 2 format for third-year students majoring in Translation Studies. A total of third-year students ($n = 9$) of theory and practice of translation department participated in the experiment. They should write an introduction (2-3 sentences) on a given IELTS topic: “Some people think that learning a foreign language is most effective when living in the country where it is spoken. To what extent do you agree or disagree?” Each student then, in sequence: (1) completed the task independently, (2) interacted with ChatGPT using a single instructional prompt in order to improve their introductory paragraph, and (3) revised the introduction based on the suggestions provided, using their own language. The instructions strictly prohibited copying: students were not allowed to paste ChatGPT-generated fragments into their work without revising them.

The IELTS scale (0-9), used in professional exam preparation practice, was used for quantitative assessment. Each paper (before and after) was assessed by the experts from the department of translation theory and practice. They assigned an integrated assessment of the introduction, reflecting the overall level of the key descriptors: Task Response, Coherence & Cohesion, Lexical Resource, Grammatical Range & Accuracy [8]. In case of discrepancies in bands, a consensus procedure was used to obtain a single final assessment. This approach minimizes the subjective component and ensures comparability of results.

The bands for each student before and after the intervention were recorded in tabular form. For quantitative interpretation, classical descriptive statistics were used: the arithmetic mean and the coefficient of variation ($CV = \frac{s}{\bar{x}} \times 100\%$), which allowed us to assess both the central tendency and the dispersion of the results in the sample (see Table 1).

Table 1. Individual students' bands and calculated mean bands as well as CV, before and after the AI intervention.

Student	Before	After
1	4.0	7.5
2	5.5	7.5
3	6.0	7.5
4	5.5	7.5
5	6.0	7.0
6	6.0	7.0
7	6.0	7.0
8	6.0	7.5
9	6.0	7.0
Mean band (μ)	5.67	7.28
CV	11.00%	3.41%

The mean band before AI use was 5.67, with a coefficient of variation of 11.00%. After the intervention, the mean band rose to 7.28, with a coefficient of variation of 3.41%. The difference in means is 1.61 points. Considering that this is only a part of the essay, specifically the introduction, the results indicate a substantial enhancement in the writing abilities of students.

The analysis of the quantitative data reveals two main trends. Firstly, the significant increase in mean values indicates that the use of ChatGPT is directly related to improvements in the visible characteristics of the introductions – primarily those that are easily amenable to algorithmic correction: paraphrase accuracy, use of



academic vocabulary, and clarity of positional expression. Secondly, the significant reduction in the coefficient of variation indicates a leveling of performance: after using ChatGPT, introductions have become more consistent in quality and style, suggesting the standardizing effect of the model.

Content analysis of the changes in the texts focused on specific improvements: an increase in the proportion of correct paraphrases, an expansion of the lexical and phraseological repertoire, a clearer position statement, and a reduction in colloquialisms. At the same time, a qualitative analysis of students' reflections also revealed potentially problematic effects. First, several participants noted that the formulations proposed by ChatGPT were “overly idealized” and did not always correspond to their own linguistic level, as evidenced by the emergence of clichéd and repetitive constructions in post-tests. Second, some students reported difficulty transforming the AI's sentences into an authentic personal style; in a small portion of the sample, experts identified signs of direct or minimally reworked copying of fragments, which requires attention from an academic integrity perspective. Finally, some students noted that the model's proposed outline sometimes conflicted with their own internal argumentation scheme, causing cognitive strain when processing the text.

The results obtained allow us to draw several reasonable conclusions. Firstly, ChatGPT is an effective means of improving the formal quality of short written forms (introduction) in preparation for IELTS. The model accelerates access to academic vocabulary and demonstrated successful paraphrasing strategies, thereby increasing objective indicators for exam descriptors. Secondly, the standardizing effect of AI (CV reduction) demonstrates that the model serves as a kind of “anchor” for the development of generally accepted academic style, which is useful for formative verification but, at the same time, reduces the variability of the author's individual style. In a practical context, this means that the teacher should balance the use of AI between the training of standardizing skills and the development of individual writing

In addition, the observed traces of generation in some students emphasize the need for pedagogical measures to preserve academic integrity. It is recommended to implement the following mandatory steps: (a) the requirement to rework and justify each amendment proposed by AI; (b) conducting reflective reports in which elements of the AI proposal they accepted and why; (c) using stylistic introspection and comparing the initial and final versions as mandatory assessment stage. Such measures will preserve the student's cognitive responsibility and reduce the risk of copy-pasting.

The research exhibited that AI tools are able to assist translation students in writing the introduction successfully. Nevertheless, they should provide their input as well. There are both improvements and risks, such as losing a student's unique style of writing and overreliance on AI suggestions.

Furthermore, our analysis was limited to a single piece of writing and a single iteration of AI interaction, so the findings cannot be considered conclusive. In the future, it is essential to investigate how AI impacts writing development over time and to explore strategies that will enable students to leverage AI to enhance their skills rather than replace them.

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