

Gains and hurdles of English language instructors in developing writing skills of criminology students in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the perspectives of English language instructors on the gains and challenges of developing the writing skills of criminology students in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI), as well as the strategies they employed to address these challenges. A qualitative research design was employed using semi-structured interviews with 6 English language instructors teaching writing in criminology programs at a criminology school in the Philippines. The interview data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and shared experiences. The findings revealed that instructors perceived AI as beneficial in facilitating writing instruction, improving the quality of students' written outputs, and supporting the writing process through planning, modeling, feedback, and increased learner confidence. However, instructors also identified challenges associated with AI-assisted writing, including students' overdependence on AI-generated outputs, concerns regarding comprehension and authenticity, and reduced critical engagement in writing tasks. To address these issues, instructors implemented strategies such as guided AI use, independent and contextualized writing activities, and controlled AI-assisted writing tasks to promote ethical and critical writing practices. The study concludes that while AI offers valuable support in writing instruction, its effective integration depends on instructors' pedagogical guidance to ensure the development of students' authorship, critical thinking, and responsible use of AI.



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1. Introduction

In recent years, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in education has expanded rapidly because of their potential to support teaching and learning. Johnston et al. (2024), in a survey of 2,555 university students, found that the majority of respondents had used or considered using generative AI technologies, with academic purposes being the most common reported use. AI-powered tools provide immediate feedback, suggestions, and corrections that assist learners in improving their written work. As AI technologies continue to evolve, they are becoming increasingly integrated into educational practices, transforming how students learn and how instructors facilitate writing instruction.

Within this broader educational context, writing plays a vital role in the field of criminology, where effective written communication is essential for documentation, report writing, and professional communication within the criminal justice system (Pujante, 2021; Segovia, 2024). Writing proficiency is

likewise regarded as a fundamental competency for criminal justice professionals because police reports, investigative documents, and legal records require clarity, precision, and accuracy (Stewart, 2020; Segovia, 2024). Criminology students, as non-English majors, often experience difficulties in producing coherent and well-organized written texts because of limited exposure to effective writing strategies and differences between their first language and English rhetorical patterns (Xu, 2024). Similarly, Emperador (2019) documented discourse writing deficiencies among criminology students, further demonstrating the writing challenges encountered by learners in the discipline. These challenges underscore the need for appropriate instructional support to help them develop their writing skills.

One potential source of such support is the growing use of AI-powered writing tools. From the students' perspective, AI tools offer numerous benefits in developing writing proficiency. Studies have shown that AI-based writing tools improve coherence, cohesion, and grammatical accuracy in students' written work (Tran, 2024), resulting in enhanced overall writing performance (Song & Song, 2022). Moreover, AI tools provide suggestions for improving vocabulary, sentence structure, and organization, contributing to higher-quality writing outputs (Gasaymeh et al., 2024). These technologies also adapt to learners' needs, promote writing confidence, and encourage greater engagement in writing activities (Sumakul et al., 2022). From the perspective of Cognitive Load Theory (CLT), these improvements suggest that AI tools reduce extraneous cognitive load by automating lower-level linguistic processes, thereby allowing students to devote more cognitive resources to higher-order writing tasks such as idea development, organization, and revision.

However, the effective use of AI in writing instruction does not depend solely on students' access to these technologies. Understanding instructors' perspectives is equally important because English language instructors play a critical role in guiding students' writing development, particularly among non-English majors such as criminology students. In a study of faculty and students at a large public university, Kim et al. (2025) found that approximately 70% of faculty used generative AI tools less than once per week, while only 9% reported using them daily. AI tools are commonly utilized for grammar checking, plagiarism detection, and writing support. AI tools are commonly utilized for grammar checking, plagiarism detection, and writing support (Mediyawati et al., 2021), allowing instructors to devote more time to teaching, mentoring, and classroom interaction (Barot, 2023). In the Philippine context, instructors also use AI for spelling correction, content generation, improving coherence and cohesion, AI detection, and citation formatting. Recent evidence also indicates that criminology students have begun using ChatGPT to assist with criminal justice coursework, highlighting the growing relevance of AI-assisted learning within criminology education (Chinanglas et al., 2024). Giray et al. (2024) argued that AI has become an important instructional tool that enhances teaching practices, streamlines administrative tasks, and improves research productivity. These instructional practices reflect the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, which emphasizes instructors' ability to integrate technological knowledge with pedagogical and content expertise to achieve meaningful learning outcomes.

Despite these advantages, the growing use of AI has also raised significant concerns among educators. One major challenge is students' increasing dependence on AI-generated outputs, which may reduce opportunities to develop independent writing abilities, critical thinking, and creativity (Basic et al., 2023; Jacob et al., 2023; Malik et al., 2023). Ya'u (2025) further argued that excessive reliance on AI may hinder students' writing proficiency by limiting active engagement in the writing process. In addition, instructors face concerns regarding the authenticity of students' written work and the ethical implications of AI-assisted writing. Studies have emphasized the need for responsible and ethical integration of generative AI in higher education, particularly in relation to academic integrity, plagiarism, and appropriate use of AI in academic work (Kim et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2024; Chan, 2024).

Although research on AI-assisted writing has grown considerably, empirical studies focusing on English language instructors' perspectives in developing the writing skills of criminology students remain limited, particularly in the Philippine context. Existing studies have largely examined students' experiences or AI implementation in general higher education settings, leaving insufficient evidence regarding instructors' perceived gains, encountered challenges, and instructional strategies in discipline-specific writing courses. Addressing this gap is essential for understanding how AI can be effectively and ethically integrated into writing instruction for criminology students.

To provide a theoretical basis for examining these issues, Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) and the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework offer complementary theoretical

foundations for understanding AI-assisted writing instruction. CLT, developed by Sweller (1988), explains how learning can be enhanced by managing learners' cognitive load, particularly by reducing unnecessary mental effort associated with lower-level writing tasks such as grammar, vocabulary, and sentence construction, thereby allowing students to focus on higher-order processes such as idea development and critical thinking. In contrast, the TPACK framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) emphasizes teachers' ability to integrate technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge to facilitate meaningful learning experiences. In the present study, CLT serves as a lens for interpreting how AI influences students' writing development, whereas TPACK explains how English language instructors strategically integrate AI into writing instruction. Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive perspective by examining both students' cognitive engagement and instructors' pedagogical practices in the effective and ethical use of AI for developing the writing skills of criminology students.

Guided by Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) and the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, this study explored the gains and challenges encountered by English language instructors in utilizing AI tools to develop the writing skills of criminology students, as well as the strategies they employed to address these challenges. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the gains that English language instructors perceive in using AI tools to develop the writing skills of criminology students?
2. What challenges do English language instructors face in developing the writing skills of criminology students in the age of artificial intelligence (AI)?
3. What strategies do English language instructors employ to address the challenges of developing the writing skills of criminology students in the context of AI integration?

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore English language instructors' perspectives on the gains and challenges of developing the writing skills of criminology students in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI), as well as the strategies they employ to address these challenges. A qualitative approach was appropriate because it allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions, and practices within their natural contexts. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, which provided flexibility to probe participants' responses while ensuring that all key topics relevant to the study were addressed. Specifically, this study adopted a basic qualitative design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), which focuses on understanding how individuals make sense of their experiences and construct meaning from them.

2.2. Participants

The participants of this study were six English language instructors teaching the Purposive Communication course to first-year criminology students at a criminology school in Manila, Philippines. The institution is recognized as the pioneer school of criminology specializing in scientific crime detection and police science education in the Philippines and Southeast Asia.

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who possessed firsthand experience relevant to the objectives of the study. According to Obilor (2023), purposive sampling enables researchers to deliberately select information-rich participants who can provide meaningful insights into the phenomenon being investigated. To be included in the study, participants had to: (1) be full-time or part-time English language instructors teaching first-year criminology students; (2) handle the Purposive Communication course; (3) have attended seminars or workshops on the educational use of Artificial Intelligence (AI); and (4) actively use AI applications such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, QuillBot, or similar tools in their teaching.

Data collection continued until thematic saturation was achieved. Saturation was reached after the sixth interview, as no new codes or themes emerged from the final interviews, indicating that sufficient information had been gathered to address the research objectives (Guest et al., 2006).

To protect participants' identities and encourage honest responses, numerical pseudonyms (Participant 1–Participant 6) were assigned throughout the study. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the

participants, including their employment status, teaching experience, attendance in AI-related professional development activities, and AI tools used in instruction.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Participant / key Informant	Employment Status	Handling Purposive Communication Subject/ Course	Number of Attended Seminars Relative to AI	AI Tools Used in Teaching
Participant 1	Full-Time	Yes	1	ChatGPT
Participant 2	Part-Time	Yes	4	ChatGPT
Participant 3	Full-Time	Yes	1	ChatGPT QuillBot
Participant 4	Full-Time	Yes	1	ChatGPT
Participant 5	Full-Time	Yes	1	ChatGPT QuillBot
Participant 6	Full-Time	Yes	1	Grammarly ChatGPT

2.3. Data Collection Technique

The primary data collection instrument was a researcher-developed semi-structured interview protocol that underwent expert validation prior to data collection. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to explore instructors' perceptions of the gains and challenges of using AI in developing the writing skills of criminology students, as well as the instructional strategies they employ to address these challenges.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted either face-to-face or online, depending on each participant's availability and preference. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' informed consent. Follow-up questions were asked whenever necessary to obtain richer descriptions and clarify participants' responses. Field notes were also recorded to capture contextual observations and nonverbal cues that complemented the interview data.

To establish the credibility of the findings, the researchers conducted prolonged engagement with the data through repeated reading of the interview transcripts during the coding and theme development processes. The researchers independently reviewed the transcripts, compared the emerging codes and themes, and resolved differences through discussion until consensus was achieved. The themes were developed based on the participants' verbatim responses to ensure that the interpretations accurately reflected their perspectives rather than the researchers' assumptions.

2.4. Data analysis

The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The researchers first familiarized themselves with the data through repeated reading of the transcripts. Initial codes were then generated to identify meaningful units relevant to the research questions. Related codes were grouped into preliminary themes, which were reviewed, refined, and defined through an iterative process. Finally, the themes were organized into coherent narratives that represented the participants' shared experiences regarding the gains, challenges, and instructional strategies associated with AI-assisted writing instruction.

3. Findings And Discussion

3.1. Findings

This part of the study presents the results and discussion derived from the exploration of English language instructors' perspectives and observations on the gains and hurdles of teaching writing skills in the context of artificial intelligence (AI). The study focuses on the experiences of English language instructors teaching criminology students and the pedagogical shifts introduced by AI-powered writing tools.

RQ1: 1. What are the gains that English language instructors perceive in using AI tools to develop the writing skills of criminology students?

a) Theme 1: Pedagogical Facilitation

This theme captures the instructors' perception of AI as a pedagogical support tool that streamlines lesson preparation, enhances instructional delivery, and enables the customization of learning activities. Rather than replacing their role as educators, participants viewed AI as a resource that strengthens their instructional practices. The theme emerged from the codes Pedagogical Planning Aid, Instructional Modeling Tool, Content Substantiation, and Personalizing Instruction.

Participants consistently described AI as a valuable tool for simplifying the time-consuming tasks associated with lesson preparation. AI assisted them in generating instructional materials, designing writing activities, and modifying learning tasks according to students' abilities. Participant 1 explained: *"AI tools have been invaluable, especially when it comes to planning and designing writing activities, as in my part, uh, these tools have widened my ideas. I have found myself exploring creative ways to approach writing tasks... they also allow me to diversify the activities... adjust the complexity of the instructions. Uh, tailor activities to my students' level."* This account illustrates how AI expanded instructional options and enabled differentiated instruction based on learners' needs.

Beyond lesson preparation, participants also described AI as an effective instructional modeling tool during classroom instruction. Participant 2 shared: *"I've used different tools, okay, like Co-Pilot. We also have ChatGPT to demonstrate how to structure our research papers, how to summarize the case, especially in the program of criminology."* Similarly, Participant 6 explained: *"I model writing structures, particularly when teaching essays or position papers in criminology. For instance, I input a thesis statement and show how an AI can expand it into a structured outline."* Participant 4 likewise emphasized AI's role in providing relevant supporting information: *"A powerful learning assistant that magically provides ideas or information that substantiate my topic."*

b) Theme 2: Enhancement of Textual Quality

This theme refers to the observable improvements in the quality of students' written outputs following the use of AI tools. The theme is supported by the codes Improved Grammatical Accuracy, Enhanced Organization of Ideas, Improved Logical Flow, Improved Coherence and Cohesion, and Refined Word Choice.

A primary gain identified by nearly all participants was the reduction of grammatical and mechanical errors. Participant 1 observed that students' *"sentence construction has become more accurate"*, while Participant 2 noted that outputs contained *"fewer grammatical errors"*. Participant 4 described student essays as *"grammatically perfect with well-articulated discussion"*.

Beyond sentence-level accuracy, instructors also reported improvements in higher-order composition and logical development. Participant 6 explained: *"grammar, mechanics, and flow of ideas"* and *"improved transitions between paragraphs, and less awkward phrasing"*. Participant 5 likewise stated: *"I've seen clear improvements in how students structure their paragraphs and present their arguments more logically... their writing flows better—they've become more mindful of transitions and how each idea connects to the next"*

These accounts demonstrate that instructors perceived improvements in both lower-level writing skills, such as grammar and mechanics, and higher-level writing features, including organization, coherence, and logical development of ideas.

c) Theme 3: Scaffolding the Writing Process and Affect

This theme describes instructors' perceptions of AI as a tool that supports students throughout the writing process while simultaneously improving their confidence and willingness to write. The theme emerged from the codes Building Student Confidence, Facilitating Idea Generation, Providing Immediate Feedback, and Increasing Desire to Write.

Participants repeatedly associated AI use with increased confidence among students. Participant 2 observed a *"marked improvement in the students' confidence, and even in their fluency whenever they write."* Likewise, Participant 1 noted that *"students are now able to construct their ideas more clearly and confidently."*

Participants explained that AI assists students from the initial stages of writing by helping them generate ideas and organize their thoughts. Participant 2 shared: *"I encourage them to draft their ideas using AI. They brainstorm ideas, generate outlines, and rephrase their sentences."* Similarly, Participant 5 stated: *"Students use ChatGPT to help them brainstorm ideas or outline their essays."*

Instructors also emphasized the value of AI-generated feedback during drafting and revision. Participant 5 explained: *"They use tools like grammar checkers to revise drafts and get real-time feedback, which builds their confidence."* Participant 6 similarly remarked: *"I think the feedback that AI offers helps them see corrections immediately."*

The immediate availability of feedback appeared to reduce students' writing apprehension and encourage greater participation in writing activities. As Participant 6 explained: *"One noticeable change is their confidence. Students who were previously hesitant to express themselves in English now write more fluently and more willingly."*

RQ2: What challenges do English language instructors face in developing the writing skills of criminology students in the age of artificial intelligence (AI)?

d) Theme 4: Overdependence on AI Tools

This theme communicates an overall concern among instructors about the consequences of AI on prompting students increasingly to rely on more automated assistance for writing with less individual agency and cognitive involvement in actual writing process. Codes such as Passive Writing, Reliance on AI-generated Content, and Omission of Essential Writing Steps illustrate the shift from active composition to mechanical reproduction.

Participant 1 remarked, *"Some students are becoming too dependent on AI... they do not even try to write their own ideas anymore,"* encapsulating the sense of diminished student agency. Similarly, Participant 2 noted, *"One major challenge is the tendency of the learners... to rely too much on AI-generated content instead of developing their own writing and critical thinking skills."* These narratives coalesce around a belief that the AI tools designed to be the assistants have turned into crutches, preventing real development of skill.

Participant 6 further described how *"students forget important steps like prewriting or drafting and jump straight into asking AI to write everything."* The absence of early writing stages highlights a more serious problem, that the dependence on AI not only influences task completion but also interferes with the cognitive process of skill acquisition. Taken together, these reports indicate that excessive reliance on AI decreases the level of students' initiative-taking, creativity, and an understanding of writing as a recursive activity which entails periods of reflection.

The results underscore the instructors' collective concerns about students' increasing use of AI applications, which seems to diminish students' mental involvement and their capacity to write independently. Participant 1's worrying claim that students *"do not even try to write their own ideas anymore"* and Participant 6's observation that students *"forget important steps like prewriting or even drafting"* reflect how learning systems do more replacing than reinforcing.

e) Theme 5: Output Comprehension and Authenticity Issues

While AI can improve surface-level quality, instructors repeatedly expressed concern about students' limited understanding of the texts they produced with AI assistance. The codes Difficulty Explaining Written Works, Copying Without Understanding, and Lack of Genuine Understanding point to a gap between AI-enhanced texts and students' actual understanding of the ideas and meanings conveyed in those texts.

Participant 3 articulated this gap: *"When you ask them to explain their written works, they cannot explain any single word from it."* Similarly, Participant 5 observed that students *"tend to copy suggestions or even full responses without really understanding the content."* The phenomenon of students submitting grammatically refined but intellectually hollow texts suggests that AI usage has weakened genuine engagement with content creation.

Participant 2 emphasized a similar concern: *"There is a clear understanding of criminological concepts... but they cannot express it using their own ideas."* This suggests that, when AI is used to support the organization and refinement of ideas, it can often conceal superficiality in conceptualization of real-life experiences. AI is not viewed by educators as augmenting authorship but as generating textual simulations of knowledge that can mislead educators in their judgments about students' actual competence for writing.

f) Theme 6: Critical Thinking Deficiency

The third emergent challenge concerns the weakening of students' analytical and evaluative skills associated with heavy reliance on AI. Codes such as Inability to Distinguish Reliable Sources, Lack of Verification, Absence of Critical Engagement, and Shallow Writing collectively point to limitations in students' ability to independently question, evaluate, and synthesize information.

Participant 2 highlighted this issue: *"Some students struggle to distinguish between a reliable academic source and AI-generated information."* This statement exemplifies a growing confusion between credible research and machine-generated text, undermining the core academic skill of discernment. Similarly, Participant 6 observed that *"outputs are shallow... I often have to reteach how to properly evaluate AI-generated material,"* revealing that students often accept AI output at face value without verification or critique. Participant 3 reinforced this theme, stating, *"They don't utilize AI as a supplementary tool but solely rely on it,"* indicating an absence of metacognitive reflection that weakens intellectual autonomy. Participant 4 also expanded the discussion beyond cognition to ethics, noting that *"AI tools do not guarantee emotional understanding and ethical decisions which are pivotal in dealing with students."*

RQ3: What strategies do English language instructors employ to address the challenges of developing the writing skills of criminology students in the context of AI integration?

g) Theme 7: Guided Utilization of AI

This theme shows instructors' efforts to make sure students act responsibly and appropriately with AI. Under the code Guided Utilization of AI, the participants agreed that AI is beneficial for writing; however, its use should be moderated to prevent overdependence.

Participants underscored the importance of teaching students to use AI as a tool to enhance, not create, their written work. Participant 1 stated, *"I teach them how to review their drafts with AI tools, not to write the whole thing for them. Polish what they have already written."* Similarly, participant 2 specified the allowed specific uses of AI in their class with her statement, *"They are allowed to use AI for specific steps such as grammar checking, organizing ideas, and correcting writing mechanics, okay, but not always."*

Other instructors also adopted strategies that promote analytical and original thinking, alleviating students' dependence on AI. Participant 3 explained, *"I give writing instructions (activities) that require subjective answers to foster critical thinking skills and a little effort not to depend on AI tools."* These responses show that the instructors see AI as a scaffold for improvement, not a replacement for human reasoning.

h) Theme 8: Independent and Contextualized Writing

This theme highlights instructors' techniques for maintaining students' authorship and contextual comprehension through codes of AI-Free or Contextualized Writing Tasks. The AI-unassisted writing task requiring subjective answers, and the case-based/scenario-based writing tasks, were pivotal in developing this theme.

Participants designed activities that encourage learners to disengage from AI, which helps them analyze and integrate criminological concepts into practical situations. Participant 1 shared, *"I hold activities or written tasks wherein they are not allowed to use their phones or AI tools first."* In the same vein, participant 2 commented, *"Sometimes, I require writing instructions (activities) that require subjective answers."*

Contextualized, scenario-based writing tasks were also noted as effective instruments for improving the quality of analytical and reflective writing. As Participant 3 reported, *"I used to assign them a case-based writing task, wherein the learners must analyze real-life situations, or how they are going to connect the lesson with our real-life situation"*. The use of scenario-based writing tasks was also supported by Participant 6 in the following statement: *"I use scenario-based writing tasks. Example, students respond to hypothetical cases involving ethical dilemmas in law enforcement."*

i) Theme 9: Encouraging AI-Assisted Writing

This theme illustrates participants' willingness to embrace AI technology as an adjunct to the learning process. This openness to AI technology is supported by the codes Encouraging the use of AI, Guided Use of AI, AI-Enhanced Writing, and Embracing AI Integration.

AI is a tool that some educators consider an educational opportunity. Participant 1 explained, *"I let them use the AI just to enhance their written works already."* Similarly, participant 2 stated, *"I also encourage them to use the AI, especially if it is too difficult for them to draft their ideas, because we cannot deny it that that generation... is different from our generation."*

Other participants verbalized that interaction with the AI should be guided engagement rather than unfettered dependence. Participant 2 observed the following: *"We cannot control them (students). They will use AI, so what we can do is we need to guide them."* Participant 4 elaborated on integration within the structure: *"I ask the students to write their original piece, and then I ask AI to enhance."*

Participant 6 further illustrated this pedagogical balance through a two-stage method: *"I've introduced a two-part writing activity: Part 1 is a 'no-AI' draft written during class. Part 2 is an AI-enhanced revision done at home."* On a more general level, Participant 3 captured this outlook, stating, *"My outlook, in this perpetually changing technological landscape, is for our students to adapt to AI as an educational partner."*

Instructors take on the role of mediators, demonstrating the constrained and purposeful use of AI to polish, organize, and refine the work—ensuring that the intellectual and contextual labor remains the students' charge.

3.2. Discussion

The findings of this study provide insights into how English language instructors perceive the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in enhancing the writing skills of first-year criminology students. The experiences shared by the participants reveal both the pedagogical advantages and the challenges associated with integrating AI technologies in writing instruction. The results demonstrate that while AI tools can support the development of students' writing skills, they also present concerns related to dependency, comprehension, and critical thinking. These findings are consistent with existing literature highlighting both the potential benefits and challenges of integrating artificial intelligence into writing pedagogy.

a) Pedagogical Advantages of AI-Assisted Writing

The findings of the present study demonstrate that English language instructors perceived AI as a valuable pedagogical tool that enhances students' writing performance while simultaneously supporting instructional practices. Participants reported that AI-assisted writing tools improved students' grammatical accuracy, coherence, organization of ideas, and logical flow. Instructors also observed that AI enabled students to produce clearer and more structured written outputs while providing teachers with additional support in lesson preparation, instructional modeling, and writing instruction. These findings suggest that AI serves not only as a writing aid for students but also as a pedagogical resource that enhances the teaching and learning of writing.

The instructors' observations regarding the improvement of students' written outputs are consistent with previous studies on AI-assisted writing. Similar to the present findings, Tran (2024) reported that AI writing tools improved students' grammatical accuracy, coherence, and overall writing performance. Likewise, Song and Song (2023) found that ChatGPT enhanced students' academic writing by improving the organization, fluency, and quality of their written texts. Gasaymeh et al. (2024) similarly reported that students perceived AI writing tools as effective in improving vocabulary choice, sentence structure, and text organization. The consistency between the present study and previous research suggests that AI has become an effective instructional support for improving the linguistic and organizational aspects of students' academic writing.

Another important finding of the present study is that instructors perceived AI-generated feedback as an effective means of supporting students during the revision process. Participants observed that students were able to identify grammatical errors, refine sentence structures, and improve the coherence of their written work through the immediate feedback provided by AI tools. This finding corroborates Wei et al. (2023), who found that automated writing evaluation significantly improved learners' writing accuracy and revision quality. Similarly, Karatay and Karatay (2024) reported that AI-assisted feedback contributes to the development of students' linguistic competence, while Zhang (2024) demonstrated that ChatGPT functions as an effective automated written corrective feedback tool that enhances both the structure and style of students' writing. Rahimi et al. (2024) likewise found that AI-assisted feedback improves grammatical accuracy, expands learners' lexical repertoire, and reduces writing anxiety. Taken

together, these studies reinforce the instructors' observations that timely AI-generated feedback facilitates writing improvement by allowing students to revise and refine their work more effectively.

The present findings further revealed that AI contributes to students' confidence and engagement throughout the writing process. Instructors observed that AI-assisted brainstorming, outlining, and real-time feedback encouraged students to participate more actively in writing activities and increased their willingness to express their ideas. These observations are consistent with Sajja et al. (2024), who found that AI-supported personalized learning increases learner engagement and motivation. Likewise, Sumakul et al. (2022) reported that students perceived AI positively because it reduced writing anxiety and encouraged greater participation during writing tasks. Malon et al. (2024) similarly found that AI-assisted paraphrasing tools improved students' ability to express their ideas more clearly, thereby increasing their confidence in academic writing. The convergence of these findings suggests that AI supports not only the cognitive aspects of writing but also the affective dimensions of learning by fostering confidence, motivation, and sustained engagement.

The study also highlights the pedagogical benefits of AI from the instructors' perspective. Participants described AI as a valuable instructional assistant that simplified lesson preparation, generated instructional materials, and provided models that could be adapted to the writing needs of criminology students. These findings are consistent with Mediyawati et al. (2021), who reported that AI technologies reduce the time teachers spend on routine writing-related tasks, allowing them to devote greater attention to instruction. Similarly, Barrot (2023) argued that AI can support writing instruction when used as a complementary pedagogical tool rather than a replacement for teacher expertise. Gasaymeh et al. (2024) likewise emphasized that AI provides instructors with insights into students' writing performance, enabling more targeted instructional support. Within the Philippine context, Fabro et al. (2024) and Santos and Cruz (2024) likewise reported that AI assists students in organizing ideas, proofreading written work, and improving academic writing quality, thereby supporting teachers' instructional objectives.

The growing integration of AI into writing instruction observed in the present study also reflects broader educational trends. Johnston (2024) reported that a substantial proportion of students already use AI tools to receive feedback, generate ideas, and improve their written work. Similarly, Kim et al. (2025) found that many faculty members have incorporated AI into their teaching practices. These reports indicate that the experiences of the instructors in the present study mirror the increasing acceptance of AI as a pedagogical resource in higher education.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings may be interpreted through the lens of Cognitive Load Theory (CLT). The instructors consistently described AI as reducing students' difficulties with grammar, sentence construction, organization, and revision while enabling them to concentrate on developing ideas and constructing logical arguments. This pattern supports the central proposition of CLT that reducing extraneous cognitive load allows learners to allocate greater cognitive resources to higher-order cognitive processes. Rather than expending substantial mental effort on lower-level linguistic mechanics, students are able to devote more attention to idea development, organization, and coherence. Consequently, the present findings provide empirical support for the application of Cognitive Load Theory in AI-assisted writing instruction by demonstrating how AI can facilitate higher-order writing processes through the reduction of unnecessary cognitive demands.

b) Challenges in AI-Assisted Writing Instruction

Despite the pedagogical benefits of AI-assisted writing, the findings of the present study also revealed several challenges that may hinder students' writing development when AI tools are used without appropriate guidance. The instructors consistently expressed concerns regarding students' increasing reliance on AI-generated content, limited critical engagement with AI outputs, insufficient verification of generated information, and reduced participation in the writing process. These challenges suggest that although AI can support writing instruction, its inappropriate use may undermine the development of independent writing skills and critical thinking.

One of the most prominent concerns raised by the participants was students' increasing dependence on AI-generated content. Instructors observed that some students relied on AI not only to generate ideas but also to produce substantial portions of their written work, thereby reducing their active engagement in the writing process. This finding is consistent with Basic et al. (2023) and Jacob et al. (2023), who reported that excessive dependence on generative AI may limit learners' creativity, independent thinking, and authentic writing practices. Similarly, Candilas et al. (2024) found that although AI tools improved

students' writing performance, such improvements sometimes concealed an unhealthy dependence on automated assistance. Pitts et al. (2025) likewise emphasized that students may accept AI-generated responses without critically examining their accuracy, appropriateness, or relevance. The convergence of these findings suggests that while AI enhances writing performance, excessive reliance on its outputs may weaken students' capacity to generate and develop their own ideas independently.

The present study also found that instructors were concerned about students' limited verification of AI-generated information. Participants observed that some learners copied AI-generated content directly into their written outputs without evaluating its accuracy, credibility, or relevance to the assigned task. This finding is consistent with Fajardo (2023), who reported that many students possess only emerging competencies in evaluating the credibility and reliability of digital information. The similarity between the present findings and previous research highlights the importance of strengthening students' digital literacy and information evaluation skills, particularly when using generative AI in academic writing.

Another challenge identified by the participants was students' declining engagement in the traditional writing process. Instructors observed that some learners bypassed essential writing stages, such as prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing, because AI tools could quickly generate complete responses. This finding supports Teng and Ma (2024), who argued that writing development depends on learners' active engagement with planning, drafting, reflection, and revision rather than the passive acceptance of generated feedback. The present findings therefore suggest that although AI can accelerate writing production, overreliance on automated generation may reduce students' opportunities to develop the recursive writing processes necessary for long-term writing proficiency.

The instructors also expressed concern that students sometimes produced grammatically accurate texts without demonstrating a genuine understanding of the ideas presented in their written outputs. Participants noted that although AI-generated responses appeared linguistically sophisticated, some students struggled to explain or defend the content using their own words, particularly in criminology-related writing tasks that require analysis, reasoning, and evidence-based argumentation. This observation is consistent with Holmes (2022), who argued that while AI can effectively support cognitive tasks, it cannot replace human judgment, contextual understanding, ethical reasoning, or critical analysis. The present findings therefore underscore the importance of ensuring that students use AI as a learning support rather than as a substitute for genuine intellectual engagement.

The challenges identified in this study also point to broader ethical and pedagogical concerns regarding the integration of AI into writing instruction. The instructors' observations regarding students' dependence on AI-generated outputs and limited verification of information reflect continuing concerns about academic integrity and responsible AI use. These findings are consistent with Furze (2023) and the Midwest Political Science Association (2023), who emphasized that generative AI raises important questions concerning authorship, originality, and academic honesty. Likewise, Marcelo (2023) argued that the growing use of AI in education necessitates the development of students' digital literacy, ethical awareness, and responsible technology practices. Collectively, these findings indicate that the successful integration of AI into writing instruction requires not only technological competence but also explicit guidance on ethical AI use, critical evaluation of AI-generated content, and the preservation of students' independent thinking and authorship.

c) Instructor Strategies and Responsible Integration of AI

The findings of the present study revealed that instructors adopted various strategies to promote the responsible use of AI in writing instruction. Participants emphasized that AI should serve as a supplementary learning tool rather than a substitute for independent writing. They encouraged students to generate their own ideas before using AI for revision, grammar checking, or stylistic refinement. In addition, instructors designed contextualized and case-based writing tasks that required students to analyze criminology-related situations and construct evidence-based arguments, thereby reducing students' reliance on AI-generated responses and promoting deeper engagement in the writing process.

These findings are consistent with Casal-Otero et al. (2023), who emphasized the importance of developing AI literacy among both educators and students to ensure that AI tools are used responsibly and effectively. Similarly, the strategies employed by the participants support Talili's (2024) recommendation that students should be guided in using AI ethically while maintaining originality and critical thinking. The emphasis on responsible AI use also aligns with recommendations of Estrellado and Miranda (2023), who advocated for institutional policies regulating AI integration in education, and

with recent research highlighting the need for systematic AI policies and governance mechanisms in Philippine higher education to ensure ethical and responsible use of AI (Toquero, 2026).

The participants' strategies further suggest that responsible AI integration extends beyond classroom practices and requires institutional support. This observation corroborates Sevillano (2024), who argued that effective AI implementation depends on collaboration among educators, policymakers, and technology developers to establish appropriate policies, resources, and professional development opportunities. Such collaborative efforts can help ensure that AI enhances learning while preserving academic integrity and students' independent thinking.

The present findings demonstrate that the successful integration of AI in writing instruction depends on purposeful pedagogical guidance. While AI offers valuable support in improving students' writing, instructors recognized that its educational benefits can only be maximized when students are taught to use the technology critically, ethically, and responsibly. These findings also support the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, as the participants demonstrated the integration of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge by aligning AI tools with instructional objectives, contextualized writing activities, and responsible teaching practices.

3.3. Limitations

The study is limited by its focus on a small number of English instructors from a single institution, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Its qualitative design relies on subjective, self-reported data, which may introduce bias. Time constraints and participant willingness may have also affected the depth of the data collected. Additionally, the study focuses only on criminology students and lacks quantitative measures, limiting its ability to assess the full impact of AI on writing skills.

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that artificial intelligence (AI) has become an influential resource in the teaching and learning of writing among criminology students. From the perspectives of English language instructors, AI offers meaningful pedagogical benefits by enhancing instructional preparation, improving the quality of students' written outputs, and supporting learners throughout the writing process. At the same time, the findings reveal that the educational value of AI is accompanied by important challenges, including students' overreliance on AI-generated content, limited critical engagement with AI outputs, concerns regarding originality and comprehension, and the potential erosion of independent writing skills. These findings suggest that while AI can enrich writing instruction, its effectiveness depends largely on how it is integrated into classroom practice.

The study further highlights that instructors address these challenges by implementing purposeful pedagogical strategies that encourage responsible AI use. Rather than prohibiting AI, participants emphasized guided and ethical integration by encouraging students to generate original ideas, engage in contextualized writing tasks, and use AI primarily for revision, feedback, and refinement. These approaches position AI as a learning support that complements, rather than replaces, students' cognitive engagement and writing development. Consequently, the findings underscore the indispensable role of teachers in mediating AI use to ensure that technological innovation supports, rather than diminishes, critical thinking, creativity, and academic integrity.

The study contributes to the growing body of literature on AI-assisted language learning by providing qualitative evidence from English language instructors teaching criminology students in a Philippine higher education context. The findings reinforce the view that effective AI integration requires a balanced approach in which technological tools are aligned with sound pedagogical practices, disciplinary learning objectives, and ethical considerations. This study is not without limitations. The findings are based on the experiences of a relatively small group of English language instructors from a single higher education institution; therefore, they should not be interpreted as representative of all educational contexts. Furthermore, the study focused solely on instructors' perspectives and did not include the experiences of students or objective measures of writing performance.

In light of these limitations, future studies may examine students' perceptions of AI-assisted writing, investigate the long-term effects of AI use on writing proficiency and critical thinking, or compare AI integration across different academic disciplines and educational settings. Future researchers may also employ mixed-methods or experimental designs to determine how specific AI-supported instructional strategies influence writing outcomes. The integration of artificial intelligence into writing instruction

should therefore be viewed as an opportunity to strengthen, rather than replace, the teaching and learning of writing. The findings suggest that AI achieves its greatest educational value when it is implemented through sound pedagogical practices that promote independent thinking, ethical decision-making, and meaningful engagement throughout the writing process. By positioning AI as a complementary instructional resource, English language instructors can cultivate students' writing competence while preserving the human judgment, creativity, and critical thinking that remain fundamental to academic and professional success

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- Ethical declaration** : As the author, I confirm that this work has been written based on ethical research principles in compliance with my university's regulations and that the necessary permission was obtained from the relevant institution during data collection. I fully support ELTEJ's commitment to upholding high standards of professional conduct and practicing honesty in all academic and professional activities.
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