

# *The Impact of Generative Artificial Intelligence on FFL Writing Instruction: Evidence from EFL Writing Research*

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**Abstract.** Generative artificial intelligence has developed very fast in recent years. It has brought big changes to second language learning. Lots of studies have talked about how it works in English as a Foreign Language writing teaching. But we still do not have enough studies about its use in French as a Foreign Language teaching. This study makes a comparison between two kinds of teaching. It tries to use useful findings from EFL writing research to make FFL writing teaching better. The study looks at the similar points and teaching ways of the two languages. It takes key ideas from EFL studies and puts them into FFL teaching situations. The results show that GenAI has two different kinds of effects. For students, GenAI is a smart helper that supports their learning. It helps students learn by themselves and finish tasks more quickly with personal feedback. But these good points also come with some big problems. Students may depend too much on technology, their thinking may become the same, and they may face risks of cheating in school work. For teachers, GenAI makes them change their teaching ways completely. They need to turn from giving final scores to paying attention to the whole learning process. What's more, teachers should no longer be only people who pass knowledge to students. They need to help students develop high-level thinking skills and understand different cultures better. At last, this paper says that we need clear school rules, new assessment systems and special teacher training to use GenAI well in FFL teaching. By connecting the experiences of EFL and FFL research, this study gives useful and easy-to-follow advice. It helps us make the most of GenAI's good points and lower its bad risks in language learning environments.

**Keywords:** writing instruction, GenAI, ESL, FFL

## **1. Introduction**

At the end of 2022, ChatGPT came out as a new and great AI chatbot. After that, generative artificial intelligence got wide attention and developed very fast. It has brought deep and big changes to language learning and teaching [1]. GenAI shows great potential and good effects in many ways. It helps students learn by themselves and improve learning efficiency. It can also provide personal teaching services for every student. For teachers, it offers useful materials for lesson preparation and works as a smart teaching helper. At the same time, French education gets more and more attention in China. The new college entrance examination policy is being carried out in more provinces and cities. Some less popular foreign languages like French have become exam subjects in the college

entrance examination. So more and more people in the education field pay attention to French teaching. More students start to learn French from middle school. As we need better FFL teaching, GenAI has great potential to be used in FFL classrooms. But we still do not know clearly how GenAI can make FFL teaching more effective and efficient. Besides, we need to solve the problems of students' technology dependence and cheating in school work right now.

Most existing studies about GenAI in second language writing focus on EFL teaching. In these studies, GenAI plays a more and more important role in language teaching. It gives strong support to second language writers in many aspects. These aspects include language accuracy, article structure and writing feedback [2, 3]. It helps students learn by themselves, gives quick feedback to stop repeated mistakes, and makes teachers' teaching materials more rich [4]. It works as a quiet helper in the classroom. But the development of technology also brings a series of problems. For example, students may depend on AI tools too much and their own abilities may become worse. There are also problems of academic honesty. We also need to make rules for teacher training and teaching practices [5]. So this paper wants to explore how to use rich research results of GenAI in EFL writing teaching. It aims to make GenAI work better in FFL writing teaching. This paper analyzes GenAI's effects from both students' and teachers' views. It tries to give practical advice for using GenAI in French language teaching. Specifically, this paper tries to answer two research questions.

The first question is how studies of GenAI in EFL can help learners improve their FFL writing. The second question is how studies of GenAI in EFL can help teachers teach FFL writing better.

## 2. Research design

This study uses a comparative way to explore how GenAI influences FFL writing teaching. It sums up and uses existing research findings and experiences of GenAI in EFL writing. It also combines the language features of English and French, and common teaching methods used in Chinese classrooms. The study wants to find out how to mix GenAI into FFL writing teaching more effectively. More and more studies about GenAI in EFL writing provide an important base for this study. Based on these studies, the researcher uses key findings of GenAI-assisted EFL writing teaching. But before we use these findings in FFL writing teaching, we need to think about the similarities and differences between the two languages. We also need to know the situation of French language education in China. Under this background, this study wants to find out which findings from EFL writing research can be used in FFL writing teaching. It also wants to find out the common challenges of the two language situations. It also looks for special points when we mix GenAI into FFL writing teaching.

### 2.1. Cross-linguistic relationships between English and French

English and French have some language similarities. Both of them belong to the Indo-European language family. But French is a part of the Romance language group, and English belongs to the Germanic language group. Besides, the grammar structures of the two languages are very different. French grammar follows the traditions of Romance languages, while English keeps the main features of the Germanic language family. At the same time, the two languages have communicated for a long time in history. So they share a lot of same words. It is believed that about 30% to 45% of modern English words come from French directly or indirectly. This shows that the two languages have many same words. These language similarities and differences are very important. We need to think about them when we check whether findings from GenAI-assisted EFL writing teaching can be used in FFL writing situations.

## 2.2. Pedagogical convergences and contextual difference in EFL and FFL instruction

In China's foreign language teaching, both French and English teaching methods come from second language acquisition theories. Common teaching methods are widely used in both FFL and EFL teaching. These methods include the grammar-translation method, the audio-lingual approach, the communicative approach and learner-centered ways. But there are cultural differences between the two kinds of teaching. For example, French teaching pays more attention to spreading French culture. This culture includes literature, art and philosophy. English teaching focuses more on globalization and practical use. In China's second language teaching environment, students learn English not only for important exams. They also learn it to improve international communication skills. Students learn French often to develop the ability to appreciate culture and understand different cultures better. These teaching similarities and situation differences are very important. They help us study how findings from GenAI-assisted EFL writing teaching can be used in FFL writing teaching.

In short, this part sets up a comparative frame. It is used to study how findings from GenAI-assisted EFL writing research can help FFL writing teaching. Based on this frame, the next part will show the results of the analysis.

## 3. Results & discussion

English and French have close family connections and share similar teaching frames. So existing studies of GenAI in EFL writing provide a strong base for FFL situations. We only need to make changes for different cultural details and grammar rules. This paper mixes rich EFL uses with new studies about FFL. Through this way, we can see that GenAI influences FFL writing teaching mainly in two aspects. The two aspects are learning to write and teaching writing. In the learning part, it greatly improves students' learning independence and efficiency. But it also brings clear technology limits and risks to academic honesty. In the teaching part, teachers have to change their roles. They can also improve teaching efficiency with the help of GenAI. But the development of GenAI also puts higher requirements and brings more challenges to teaching resources.

### 3.1. The impact of genai on FFL writing learning

#### 3.1.1. Enhancing students' learning autonomy and efficiency

GenAI works as a teaching assistant. It makes up for the shortcoming of traditional teaching. In traditional teaching, teachers cannot meet the needs of every student well and equally. Research results from Barrot show that GenAI gives great support to EFL learners in language forms and article structure [5]. Based on this learning support, Huang et al. find that chatbots improve language learning. They create a low-stress environment and make students take part in interactive learning. This lowers students' worry about learning a new language [6]. When we mix new studies about FFL writing teaching, this supporting role is still very important. For example, Zhang shows that GenAI works as a continuous personal helper. It can correct grammar and improve writing for students. This greatly improves students' learning efficiency and makes them more interested in learning. It also makes their writing learning better and of higher quality [4]. So GenAI helps students use their thinking energy on writing goals and thinking about content. They do not need to struggle only with basic writing skills.

Traditional teaching ways have a big problem. The feedback is always given late. Teachers cannot find students' mistakes and missing points in time. This easily makes mistakes pile up over time. What's more, GenAI also works as a study partner. It creates a continuous learning environment for students after class. For thinking and organization in EFL writing, De Smet et al. say that electronic outlining tools improve text organization and logic a lot. They give clear structure guidance to students [7]. Besides, Rudolph et al. say that quick feedback from AI helps students change. They turn from passive learners to active reviewers of their own work [8]. This quick feedback way completely solves the problem above. Similarly, Langseth, Nykvist and Jacobsen did an exploratory study. They studied Norwegian high school students who learn French. The study shows that students think GenAI is a useful tool to improve learning efficiency. It is especially helpful in writing help and finding information [3]. So when students control their own learning feedback, they get great progress in learning independence and self-confidence.

### **3.1.2. Navigating technological limitations and risks to academic integrity and competence**

GenAI has strong supporting abilities, but it still has technology limits. These limits are hard to overcome now. When we use GenAI in FFL writing teaching, these limits may bring problems that affect learning results. In the EFL field, Thorp warns that GenAI often gives wrong facts. It should not be regarded as the real writer because it may make misleading content [9]. At the same time, van Dis et al. say that people must check AI content carefully. This is to lower the serious risks of false information made by AI in academic research [10]. In French teaching situations, Kang found in university classes that AI often cannot understand deep French culture. These include historical stories and special literary backgrounds. Sometimes it makes wrong content [11]. Besides, Zhu notes that AI cannot catch small feelings like irony or humor. The learning rules of AI may also have cultural biases [12]. This can easily mislead students when they write about complex cross-cultural ideas.

But there is a more worrying problem. Students may depend on AI too much and cheat in school work. Barrot's study shows that it is hard to find whether students copy AI content. AI-generated content may pass traditional honesty checks [5]. To solve these new academic honesty problems in EFL situations, King says we need to redefine traditional writing assessments. He asks teachers to pay more attention to the writing process instead of the final work [13]. If students only use GenAI to finish homework, they do not think and check AI content carefully. They will face the big risk of losing learning abilities in the long run. At last, their overall second language skills will become worse. According to situation studies in FFL teaching, Zhang further points out that over-reliance on AI brings two problems. It makes students' thinking the same and brings big ethical risks. These risks include privacy and safety problems of chat records [4]. In other words, using GenAI in wrong or too much ways will lower students' creativity and critical thinking. It will hurt their independent learning abilities and moral honesty.

## **3.2. The impact of GenAI on FFL writing instruction**

### **3.2.1. Revolutionizing writing assessment**

The biggest good point of GenAI is that it can give quick feedback. This greatly changes writing assessment. It pushes teaching from traditional grading to smart assessment and continuous process evaluation. When we study advanced EFL writing teaching, Yanning supports a mixed way. In this way, strict assessment of critical thinking is mixed into the whole writing process. AI tools can track

and check students' writing drafts over time. They make this teaching method easy to carry out [14]. To show the urgent need for new assessment rules, Rudolph et al. say that the appearance of strong GenAI means the end of traditional final assessments. These assessments include take-home essays. We need to use formative evaluation frames. These frames value the repeated process of students' interaction and communication with technology [8]. In practical studies of FFL writing teaching, Zhu emphasizes that new assessment models driven by GenAI give personal feedback. The feedback is based on different students' learning performances [12]. This continuous process evaluation system helps French teachers check each student's learning progress in real time. They can change their teaching ways actively. What's more, it makes the assessment of real second language learning results more complete, fair and accurate.

### 3.2.2. Transforming teachers' role

The development of GenAI completely redefines teachers' roles and functions. Teachers need to turn from traditional knowledge passers to active learning helpers. In EFL teaching, King notes that the appearance of AI makes teachers change their teaching focus deeply. He asks teachers not to only assess final written works. They need to guide students' thinking process in writing [13]. So teachers should focus on helping students judge AI-generated information carefully. They should not be only the single source of standard content. Kohnke also supports this view. He says that teachers can give daily language input tasks to teaching chatbots on purpose. This way helps teachers use class time only for important tasks. These tasks include developing students' high-level thinking skills, solving complex problems and communicating with classmates [15]. We can also find the same views in FFL writing teaching. Zhu studied university French teaching situations. He finds that GenAI helps rebuild modern teaching frames. It pushes teaching from only passing language knowledge to a mixed frame. This frame includes language, culture and technology [12]. Teachers are encouraged to use AI's ability. AI can solve the problem of missing cultural background in traditional teaching. Teachers can guide students to find cultural biases in AI-generated content. At last, this teaching method develops students' cultural critical awareness and digital humanities skills. It also helps them understand small cultural differences better.

## 4. Conclusion and implications

This paper uses many research cases and experiences from EFL writing teaching. It explores the different effects of GenAI on FFL writing teaching. For researchers, this study shows the great value of cross-subject cooperation. Based on understanding the similarities and differences of different language teachings, scholars in second language fields should learn from each other. These scholars mainly include EFL and FFL researchers. They should learn each other's GenAI research findings. By sharing teaching ideas and solving common problems, researchers can work together. They can push the development of second language learning and writing research in both theory and practice.

For students, GenAI is a powerful tool. It improves learning independence and writing efficiency. It gives quick and personal feedback to students. But we need to make sure AI really helps improve students' core writing skills. We cannot ignore the problems of technology dependence and cheating. We need structured guidance instead of free use without rules. So we need to make complete policies and rules. These rules should be made at classroom, school and higher education levels. These guidelines will guide students correctly. They will use AI as a learning helper instead of only a tool to finish homework. What's more, this guidance will make students more interested in

learning and think more critically. It will protect their independent learning abilities and critical thinking skills.

Finally, the appearance of GenAI completely redefines teachers' roles. Teachers focus more on helping students with complex thinking and cross-cultural understanding. These are the parts that AI is not good at. This change also includes guiding students to use GenAI tools correctly and properly. To support this teaching change, education institutions must first improve teacher training systems. They need to add AI knowledge and practical uses into basic teaching courses. At the same time, teachers need targeted and continuous training. This training will help current teachers get digital skills. They need these skills to judge AI information and design formative assessments. At last, this will help GenAI bring the most teaching benefits in language classrooms.

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