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MITIGATING COGNITIVE OVER-RELIANCE IN TFL

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the growing challenge of cognitive over-reliance on artificial intelligence (AI) in Teaching Foreign Languages (TFL), with a particular focus on academic writing. Although AI tools such as translation systems, paraphrasing platforms, and text generators can support language development and reduce writing anxiety, several researchers argue that excessive dependence on automated output may weaken independent reasoning and cultural awareness. By synthesizing insights from Kolegova and Levina (2024), Crompton et al. (2024), and Dugošija (2024), the discussion highlights a tension between the advantages of AI-assisted learning and its potential risks for academic integrity and critical thinking. In response to these concerns, the article proposes five AI-resistant rubric criteria designed to help teachers evaluate deeper cognitive engagement in TFL writing. These criteria emphasize contextualized argumentation, authorial voice, source evaluation, cognitive flexibility, and original problem-framing. The framework encourages more responsible and reflective AI use, supporting the development of analytical skills in foreign language learners.

KEY WORDS: *cognitive over-reliance; AI-assisted writing; critical thinking; TFL assessment; rubric criteria; academic writing skills; responsible AI use; language learning autonomy*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has changed how students complete academic writing tasks in foreign language education. Many learners now use translation tools, paraphrasing platforms, and AI text generators to produce essays more quickly and confidently. These technologies can reduce stress, support vocabulary development, and help students understand academic writing conventions. Kolegova and Levina (2024) note that AI can increase learning efficiency and offer personalized assistance for language learners.

However, in Teaching Foreign Languages (TFL), the use of AI also raises concerns. Writing in a foreign language requires interpretation, reasoning, and cultural awareness, but over-reliance on AI may reduce these cognitive efforts. Dugošija (2024) warns that students may depend on automated text without fully understanding meaning or cultural nuance, which can affect academic integrity. In addition, Crompton et al. (2024) highlight that unequal access to digital tools and limited teacher training influence how responsibly AI can be used in classrooms. As AI becomes a normal part of academic writing, it becomes necessary to ensure that learners still develop independent thinking skills rather than rely completely on automated output.

Although many studies describe the benefits and risks of AI in education, current TFL assessment rubrics still focus on grammar and structure, areas that AI tools are already strong in. This creates a gap and shows the need for evaluation criteria that support deeper reasoning in foreign language writing.

Problem Statement:

Because TFL writing rubrics mainly reward structural accuracy and coherence, students can receive high scores even when their essays are largely shaped by AI-generated suggestions. This situation contributes to cognitive over-reliance and reduces students' independent academic thinking.

Thesis Statement:

This article proposes five AI-resistant rubric criteria designed to encourage contextualized argumentation, personal authorial voice, critical source evaluation, cognitive flexibility, and original problem-framing, in order to reduce over-reliance on AI and support independent thinking in TFL writing.

Research Questions

1. How does cognitive over-reliance on AI influence students' critical thinking in TFL academic writing?
2. Which assessment criteria can make TFL writing more resistant to uncritical AI dependence?

Literature Review & Synthesis

Artificial intelligence is often presented as a valuable support tool in TFL academic writing. Kolegova and Levina (2024) emphasize that AI can increase learning efficiency by helping students save time and receive instant language feedback. According to their findings, many learners appreciate AI because it reduces stress and supports personalized learning goals.

However, several authors warn that the benefits of AI are not always balanced with awareness of its risks. Dugošija (2024) explains that constant AI use may weaken cultural awareness and reduce sensitivity to meaning. When students depend on automated paraphrasing or copy AI-generated text, they may lose opportunities to engage deeply with language. Academic integrity becomes harder to protect because teachers cannot easily determine how much of the text reflects students' own thinking.

Crompton et al. (2024) add that teacher digital literacy, unequal access to resources, and technical limitations influence how responsibly AI can be used. These systemic issues can create a digital divide in TFL contexts.

Synthesis

Together, the authors show that AI offers significant benefits for efficiency (Kolegova & Levina), but also risks for independent reasoning and cultural awareness (Dugošija), shaped further by institutional conditions (Crompton et al.). This tension suggests that assessment must evolve to reward intellectual engagement, not only linguistic accuracy.

Original Analysis and Rubric Framework

Criterion 1: Contextualized Argumentation

The essay connects arguments to specific cultural or educational contexts.
This reduces generic, AI-like reasoning and requires genuine interpretation (Dugošija, 2024).

Criterion 2: Epistemic Position and Authorial Voice

The writer clearly states a personal position and justifies it.
This protects the role of human reasoning beyond AI suggestions (Kolegova & Levina, 2024).

Criterion 3: Source Evaluation and Reasoning Transparency

The student evaluates source credibility and explains how conclusions were formed.
This reduces uncritical acceptance of AI explanations (Crompton et al., 2024).

Criterion 4: Cognitive Flexibility and Counterargument Integration

The student acknowledges alternative perspectives and responds logically.
This encourages deeper thinking rather than copying a single AI-generated view.

Criterion 5: Problem-Framing Originality

The student defines or interprets the issue in a unique way.
This challenges AI's tendency to reproduce common patterns (Dugošija, 2024).

Conclusion

This article examined cognitive over-reliance on AI in TFL academic writing. AI can support language learning through increased efficiency and reduced anxiety, yet it also threatens critical thinking and academic integrity. The literature indicates that cultural, ethical, and institutional factors shape AI use among language learners. To address these concerns, five AI-resistant rubric criteria were proposed, emphasizing contextualized reasoning, authorial voice, source evaluation, cognitive flexibility, and creative problem-framing. The framework does not aim to eliminate AI

from TFL writing, but to promote responsible, transparent use that supports the development of independent thinking. Future research may explore how these criteria function across diverse educational contexts and how student perceptions of AI evolve when critical thinking is prioritized in assessment.

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