

## *Original Paper*

# English Majors' Affective Attitudes Toward AI-Assisted Writing and Their Determinants

Xinyue Zhang<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Yanbian University Yanji, Jilin, China

Received: January 29, 2026

Accepted: April 19, 2026

Online Published: April 30, 2026

doi:10.22158/eltls.v8n2p279

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/eltls.v8n2p279>

### ***Abstract***

*Against the backdrop of rapid advancements in artificial intelligence technology, generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has gradually been integrated into English writing instruction and plays a significant role in the writing feedback process; however, learners' emotional experiences during its use remain to be explored in depth. This study focuses on undergraduate students majoring in English. Based on the ABC Attitude Model and employing semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis, it explores their emotional attitudes toward GenAI writing feedback and the factors underlying these attitudes. The results indicate that English majors generally exhibit a dual characteristic of positivity and caution toward GenAI writing feedback, which can be categorized into four types: positive affirmation, negative skepticism, conflicted ambivalence, and rational caution, with the rational caution type being the most central. While acknowledging its advantages, students also maintain a degree of vigilance regarding its shortcomings. The primary factors influencing the formation of their emotional attitudes include technology and feedback quality, individual differences, as well as disciplinary and situational requirements, with feedback quality being the key influencing variable. Furthermore, students' emotional attitudes exhibit distinct situational and dynamic characteristics, adjusting according to different task types and writing stages. The study indicates that while GenAI optimizes writing support, it also elicits complex emotional experiences characterized by a coexistence of trust and dependence.*

### ***Keywords***

*Generative AI, English writing, writing feedback, emotional attitudes, English majors*

## **1. Introduction**

With the rapid development of artificial intelligence technology, generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has gradually entered the field of education and teaching and played an increasingly

prominent role in the field of language learning (Li & Yang, 2025). Especially in English writing teaching, GenAI can provide functions such as grammar error correction, expression optimization and content generation, which breaks the lag of traditional teachers' feedback and improves the efficiency and targeting of writing feedback (Yao, 2025). Existing empirical studies have shown that the writing feedback generated by generative artificial intelligence can provide learners with revision suggestions, support multiple rounds of text revision, and effectively improve learners' writing level (Wang, 2024). However, learners will have diverse and complex psychological reactions in the process of receiving artificial intelligence feedback. While recognizing its advantages of convenience and immediacy, students also have concerns about technical dependence, expression homogeneity and academic integrity risks (Chu, 2025; Zhang, R., & Liu, 2025). Although the existing research has been discussed around students' attitude towards artificial intelligence-assisted writing feedback, the research perspective is mostly limited to the cognitive and behavioral levels, and the research on the emotional experience of learners under specific feedback scenarios is still relatively scarce (Qin, Dong, & Zhang, 2025).

In addition, at this stage, there are few studies that take English majors as specific research subjects. This group has heavy writing tasks and higher language ability requirements, and has a unique attitude towards GenAI writing feedback. Therefore, this study aims to explore the emotional attitude of English majors towards the feedback of generative artificial intelligence writing, and analyze the triggers for the formation of their emotional attitudes.

Based on the above research background, this article establishes two core research issues: First, what types of emotional attitudes do English majors have towards GenAI writing feedback? Second, what are the core influencing factors that lead to the formation of various emotional attitudes?

At the theoretical level, this study focuses on the emotional experience of learners and makes up for the shortcomings of the current content of relevant research. At the practical level, the research conclusion can provide empirical reference for teachers to adjust teaching plans and guide students to use artificial intelligence tools rationally.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Research on Generative AI in English Writing*

In recent years, the application of GenAI in English writing has not only enriched the teaching methods, but also fundamentally innovated the traditional writing output mode. GenAI can provide support in the whole writing process from conception, first draft writing to text modification, effectively improving writing efficiency, and allowing students to focus more on the creative expression of writing (Wang, 2024). At the same time, the intervention of artificial intelligence has transformed foreign language writing from a traditional one-way output mode to a collaborative process of human-computer high-frequency interaction (Liu et al., 2025).

In this new development model, students need to actively screen, evaluate and integrate the modification suggestions of intelligent tools, from passively receiving feedback to actively participating in text evaluation and modification. This change not only changes the way of writing is completed, but also enriches the cognitive input and emotional experience dimensions in the writing process [9]. For English majors, writing pays more attention to style adaptation, logical expression and language accuracy, which also provides a practical research basis for in-depth exploration of the emotional experience of this group in specific scenarios of writing feedback (Wang, Y. L., & Wang, C. H., 2026).

### *2.2 Research on AI Writing Feedback*

With the gradual integration of generative artificial intelligence into writing teaching, the academic community is paying more and more attention to the role and practical application value of AI writing feedback. Compared with traditional teacher feedback, GenAI feedback has the characteristics of instant and high frequency, and can respond to students' writing questions at any time (Teng, Yang, & Yang, 2025). This fast and continuous auxiliary advantage can significantly improve the efficiency of writing, especially suitable for teachers' personalized feedback time and limited resources in large class teaching.

However, at the same time, GenAI feedback has obvious limitations at the high-order cognitive level, and it is difficult to complete in-depth logical combing, discourse structure optimization and highly personalized guidance, which is the core advantage of manual teaching. Limited by this, GenAI cannot completely replace teachers' feedback, especially in writing tasks with high requirements for context interpretation, complex argumentation and professional specifications (Saricaoglu & Bilki, 2025). Such limitations will make learners doubt the credibility and accuracy of AI feedback. In addition, long-term use can easily cause overdependence, weaken the ability to think independently, and limit the development of diversity of language expression (Wei & Li, 2023).

It can be seen that AI feedback should be positioned as an important supplement to teachers' feedback rather than an alternative tool. Relying on instant and high-frequency suggestions to improve writing efficiency, and combining teachers' personalized and situational professional guidance, we can take into account the high efficiency of intelligent tools and the depth of manual teaching, and help students' writing ability develop in an all-round and balanced way.

### *2.3 Research on Learners' Emotional Attitudes*

To study the psychological experience of learners using artificial intelligence tools, we first need to clarify the conceptual connotation of emotional attitudes. In the field of education and psychology, attitude refers to the stable evaluation tendency formed by individuals towards specific objects, reflecting their own support or rejection orientation. The classical attitude theory points out that attitude includes three related dimensions: emotion, cognition and behavior (Zhu & Qiu, 2024). Taking the emotional dimension as the core, this study focuses on the instant emotional response and subjective psychological feelings of learners when receiving GenAI writing feedback.

In artificial intelligence-assisted learning scenarios, the emotional experience of learners has become an important research direction. Existing research confirms that students will have strong and diverse emotional changes when using intelligent learning tools (Teng, 2026). It is generally found in the academic community that students recognize the convenient value of AI tools, but also worry about potential risks such as feedback errors and technology dependence (Li, Liu, & Dong, 2025; Liu, 2024). On the whole, learners' emotional attitude towards GenAI is both positive and cautious, not a single solidified identification or resistance. Students generally recognize their practical value in learning tasks, and at the same time, they will be alert to tool defects and application risks. However, at present, there is still a lack of emotional research specifically focusing on writing feedback scenarios for English majors, and there is a lack of in-depth exploration of the delicate emotional characteristics and attitude formation mechanism of this group.

#### *2.4 Research Hotspots and Trends*

In recent years, the focus of relevant research has gradually shifted from the functional evaluation of AI tools to the subjective experience of learners (Liu, X., & Zhong, 2025). Early research mostly focuses on basic functions such as grammar error correction, vocabulary expansion, score improvement, etc., focusing on verifying the superficial optimization effect of intelligent tools on text quality (Ren, Liu, & Xie, 2024).

Focusing only on the improvement of text quality, it is impossible to fully explain the complex psychological and emotional mechanism behind human-computer interaction, which is especially obvious in real teaching scenarios. Although instant feedback can alleviate writing anxiety and improve completion efficiency, low-quality feedback with general, superficial or logical contradictions will give rise to learners' ambivalences. Students are constantly swaying between trust and questioning, dependence and reflection, forming a complex and unstable emotional state, which cannot fully reflect this characteristic by relying on the evaluation of learning outcomes alone (Qin, L. L., & Derakhshan, 2025).

### **3. Research Methodology**

This study adopts a qualitative research method to explore the emotional attitude of English majors in the feedback situation of generative artificial intelligence writing and the reasons for its formation. Compared with quantitative research, qualitative methods are more conducive to revealing the subjective experience and meaning construction of learners in specific situations, thus presenting the complexity and dynamic changes of emotional attitudes (Chen, 2008). In terms of analysis framework, this study refers to the ABC model of attitude and combines research related to emotional experience as a reference for interview outline design and subsequent thematic analysis (Qin, L., & Wei, 2021).

The research subjects were undergraduates majoring in English in a university. Eight respondents were selected by purposeful sampling, all of whom had experience in using GenAI for English writing

feedback. Respondents cover different grades and can express their usage experience more completely, as shown in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 Basic Information of Interview Participants**

ID	Participant	Year	Major Orientation	Frequently Used AI Tools
1	S1	Sophomore	English Major	Doubao, DeepSeek, Tencent Yuanbao
2	S2	Junior	English Major	Doubao, DeepSeek, Wenxin Yiyan
3	S3	Junior	English Education	Doubao, Wenxin Yiyan, Kimi AI
4	S4	Junior	English Major	ChatGPT, Wenxin Yiyan
5	S5	Junior	English Major	DeepSeek, ChatGPT, Kimi, Doubao
6	S6	Junior	English Major	ChatGPT, DeepSeek, Doubao, Wenxin Yiyan
7	S7	Junior	English Education	Doubao

The research is carried out based on the practical situation of students' real writing. When the interviewees complete the English writing task, they independently use artificial intelligence tools to obtain feedback and modify the text, focusing on the real experience in their natural use.

This study mainly collects data through semi-structured interviews. The interview outline refers to the attitude ABC model and is designed in combination with relevant research. The content mainly focuses on the emotional attitude of English majors to the feedback of GenAI writing and the reasons for its formation. The interview is conducted online, with a single duration of about 20 minutes. The whole process is recorded after obtaining the consent of the interviewee, and it is transcribed into text materials after the interview.

Data analysis adopts thematic analysis method and is carried out with the support of NVivo software: first, the interview text is sorted out and read repeatedly, and on this basis, open coding is carried out to extract key expressions related to emotional experience; then the concepts are classified and integrated through axis coding; and finally, the core is formed by selecting coding. Theme, and summarize the types of emotional attitudes and their influencing factors. In order to improve the credibility of the research results, the verification is carried out through repeated comparison of materials and peer discussions during the analysis process.

In terms of research ethics, this study explains the purpose of the research to the respondents and obtains informed consent before data collection. All data is processed anonymously, only for academic research, and strictly protects the privacy and data security of the respondents.

#### 4. Results

Based on the analysis of semi-structured interview data from eight English majors (see Table 4.1), participants' attitudes toward GenAI writing feedback are not simply supportive or oppositional.

Instead, they are characterized by a coexistence of positive and cautious orientations. These attitudes are influenced by factors such as technological performance, individual differences, and disciplinary context.

**Table 4.1 Thematic Analysis Results**

Theme ID	Theme Name	Included Categories	Dimension
T1	Positive-Affirmative Attitude	AA1 Efficiency and Convenience Satisfaction; AA2 Sense of Safety and Low Pressure; AA3 Cognitive Stimulation and Surprise	Attitude Types
T2	Negative-Skeptical Attitude	AA4 Anxiety and Skepticism	Attitude Types
T3	Conflicted-Ambivalent Attitude	AA5 Ambivalent Emotional Experience	Attitude Types
T4	Rational-Prudent Attitude	AA6 Rational and Cautious Orientation	Attitude Types
T5	AI Tool Characteristics	AA7 Quality and Features of AI Feedback	Influencing Factors
T6	Individual Factors	Internal AA8 English Proficiency; AA9 Time Pressure; AA10 Concerns about Dependence; AA14 Strategic Behaviors	Influencing Factors
T7	External Factors	Environmental AA11 Teacher Attitudes and Academic Norms; AA12 Disciplinary Requirements; AA13 Peer Influence	Influencing Factors

#### *4.1 Emotional Attitudes of English Majors Toward GenAI Writing Feedback*

##### *4.1.1 Overall Emotional Experience*

In general, the respondents generally recognize the auxiliary value of GenAI in English writing, especially in terms of feedback speed, ease of use and psychological stress reduction. Compared with traditional teacher feedback, AI can respond to students' needs instantly without time constraints, which makes most students have a strong positive experience.

For example, the interviewee S1 said that AI can help him to save time and effort and quickly get suggestions for revision after completing the first draft. The interviewee S2 mentioned that there was “no pressure” when communicating with it. Even if the expression was not accurate enough, he would not worry about being evaluated negatively.

But at the same time, students do not fully trust GenAI's feedback. Some respondents believe that its suggestions are sometimes inaccurate or even contradictory, so they always maintain a certain reservation during use. It can be seen that the feedback of English majors to GenAI writing as a whole shows the characteristics of "recognition and prudence".

#### 4.1.2 Specific Types of Emotional Attitudes

Combined with the content of the interview, students' emotional attitudes are mainly manifested in the following four types.

First, a positive-affirmative attitude. Some respondents recognized the high efficiency and convenience of their feedback, believing that it could quickly point out grammatical errors, provide suggestions for expression, and give inspiration at the conception stage. Respondent S8 pointed out: "No matter what time I finish writing, it can give me feedback at any time as long as I need him."

Second, a negative-skeptical attitude. Some students expressed concern about the quality of their feedback, believing that its content was relatively general and insufficient in word meaning discrimination, literary expression and complex context analysis. Respondent S6 mentioned that AI "does not really understand the context", indicating that it still has limitations in deep language understanding.

Third, a conflicted-ambivalent attitude. At the same time, it expresses the psychology of dependence and worry coexisting. On the one hand, they admit that GenAI can help complete the task; on the other hand, they are worried that long-term use will weaken their thinking and writing ability, so they have a "love and hate" attitude towards it. This contradictory and tangled attitude is particularly obvious in the narration of the respondent S1. As he said, "My attitude towards him is an emotional attitude of hate and love."

Fourth, a rational-prudent attitude. Many students can view AI tools more rationally and regard them as auxiliary resources rather than substitutes. They usually do not accept all suggestions directly, but screen, modify or cross-verify according to their own judgment, reflecting a strong sense of subjectivity.

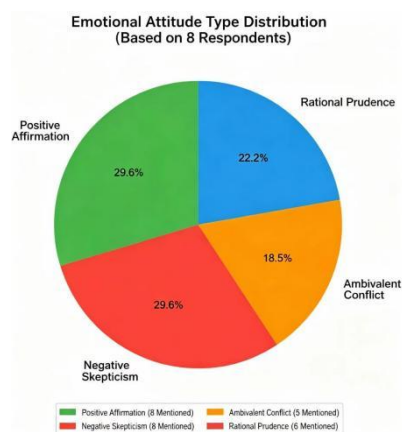
#### 4.1.3 Complexity of Emotional Attitudes

The interview results show that students' emotional attitudes are not fixed, but will change with the task situation and the purpose of use.

When faced with homework deadlines, time constraints, etc., students value efficiency more, so they have a high tolerance for shortcomings in AI feedback and are more likely to make positive comments. In thesis writing, professional examinations or demanding tasks, students pay more attention to the accuracy and professionalism of feedback, and show more obvious skepticism and caution towards it. As classmate S5 suggested, "We can't accept it completely. We have to accept it critically."

In addition, the same student's mood at different stages of writing may also be different. In the conception stage, students are more likely to feel the inspiration and help brought by the tool; in the revision stage, they are more concerned about whether their suggestions are really reasonable. It can be

seen that the emotional attitude of English majors towards GenAI writing feedback is obviously dynamic and situational. The specific distribution of emotional attitude types is shown in Figure 4.1.



**Figure 4.1 Distribution of Affective Attitude Types**

## 4.2 Main Factors Influencing the Formation of English Majors' Affective Attitudes

### 4.2.1 Technological and Feedback-Related Factors

The performance of AI tools themselves is the most direct factor affecting students' attitudes. If the feedback is timely, the suggestions are specific and the language is natural, students are more likely to form a positive experience; if the feedback is repeated, inconsistent or wrong information appears, it is easy to reduce the sense of trust. "The data given by AI is not completely accurate, and it may also be some fabricated content or some illusions." (S8) At the same time, English majors have high requirements for language quality, so it is easier to notice the shortcomings of the tool in terms of literary expression, discourse logic and cultural understanding, which is also an important reason for its negative emotions.

### 4.2.2 Individual Factors

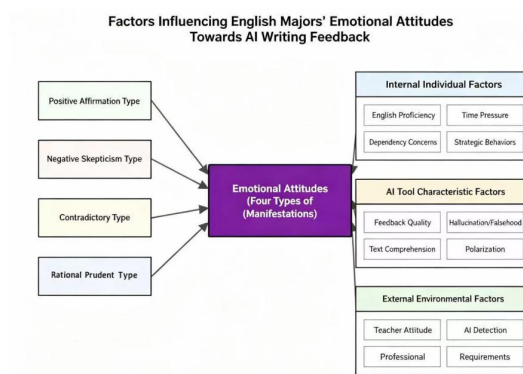
Students' own English level, learning habits and task pressure will also affect the formation of attitudes. Students with weak English foundation rely more on the use of GenAI for language modification, so their evaluation is relatively positive; students with strong ability place more emphasis on the depth and accuracy of feedback. In addition, under the pressure of time, students are more inclined to use AI to improve efficiency and have a higher tolerance for their shortcomings. As classmate S2 said: "When time is in a hurry, I will be more tolerant of him; when time is not in a hurry, I will be picky about him."

### 4.2.3 Disciplinary and Contextual Factors

English professional learning emphasizes language accuracy, logical expression and academic norms, which makes students have higher requirements for feedback on this tool. "English professional writing emphasizes the accuracy of language use." (S4) At the same time, external factors such as teachers' attitude, curriculum regulations and AIGC testing will also affect students' willingness to use and

emotional experience. Some students are worried that the rational use of AI is still considered a violation, resulting in anxiety. In summary, the emotional attitude of English students towards GenAI writing feedback is the result of the joint effect of technical performance, individual differences and professional environment.

In order to more clearly present the relationship between the four types of emotional attitudes and the three types of influencing factors, this paper further constructs a relationship model of the emotional attitude of English majors to the feedback of GenAI writing on the basis of the previous analysis, as shown in Figure 4.2.



**Figure 4.2 Model of Influencing Factors**

Figure 4.2 shows that the emotional attitudes of English majors towards GenAI writing feedback are mainly manifested in four types: positive, negative skeptic, contradictory and tangled, and rational and prudent. At the same time, the characteristic factors of AI tools, individual internal factors and external environmental factors work together in the process of forming students' emotional attitudes. Among them, the quality of AI feedback, individual English level and time pressure, as well as teachers' attitudes, academic norms and professional requirements, etc., will affect students' judgment and experience of GenAI writing feedback in different situations.

## 5. Conclusion

This study focuses on the emotional attitude of English major students towards the feedback of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) writing and its causes. The study found that English majors generally have a positive and cautious attitude towards GenAI writing feedback, not only recognizing its advantages such as instant feedback, convenience and efficiency and reducing writing pressure, but also being alert to feedback accuracy, language depth, technical dependence and academic norm risks. Students' emotional attitudes are mainly manifested in four types: positive affirmation, negative skepticism, conflicted ambivalence, and rational caution. Among the respondents in this study, the rational prudential type is more central. Most students tend to regard GenAI as an auxiliary tool rather

than a tool to replace their own thinking and writing. At the same time, the study shows that the factors affecting the formation of emotional attitudes mainly include technical and feedback factors, individual factors, and professional and situational factors. Among them, the quality of AI feedback is the most direct source of influence, and the high requirements of English majors for language accuracy and academic norms further strengthen students' judgment standards.

This study shows that the attitude of English majors towards GenAI is obviously dynamic and contextual. Teachers should guide students to correctly understand their tool attributes and cultivate their ability to screen, verify and modify independently; students should also maintain subject consciousness while taking advantage of its convenience to avoid over-reliance.

There are still certain limitations in this study. First of all, the sample size is relatively small and the sample structure is relatively concentrated, and the universality of the research conclusion needs to be further verified. Secondly, future research can expand the sample and combine multiple methods to further examine the differences and change processes of attitudes of different groups.

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