

# The Integration of ChatGPT in EFL Writing Instruction: Pedagogical Merits and Potential Concerns

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## Abstract

Writing is an essential skill in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. Yet, many EFL learners struggle with developing content, organizing ideas, and mastering vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics due to the demanding nature of writing and limited feedback opportunities. The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), especially ChatGPT, has transformed EFL writing instruction by providing immediate, tailored support. ChatGPT's capabilities to produce coherent text, correct grammatical errors, and offer lexical assistance align with communicative language teaching principles and encourage learner independence. Research shows that ChatGPT improves grammatical accuracy, vocabulary growth, writing coherence, and learners' confidence. Its personalized feedback addresses varied learner needs, fostering self-regulated, outcome-focused learning while motivating students by lowering anxiety and boosting engagement. However, concerns exist about excessive dependence on AI, which might impede authentic writing skill development, critical thinking, and independent problem-solving. Misalignment with pedagogy may occur if AI tools replace vital writing stages such as brainstorming and revision. Ethical issues, including plagiarism and academic honesty, highlight the necessity for clear institutional guidelines and teacher supervision. Additionally, many educators lack sufficient AI literacy, underscoring the need for professional training to integrate ChatGPT effectively into teaching. Practical use recommends embedding ChatGPT strategically within process-oriented writing approaches to support cognitive involvement alongside AI assistance. Reflective and metacognitive exercises are encouraged to promote responsible and ethical AI use. In summary, while ChatGPT offers significant advancements for EFL writing education, its implementation requires balanced and informed strategies to optimize benefits and minimize drawbacks.

**Keywords:** EFL writing, ChatGPT, personalized feedback, motivation, over-reliance on AI, academic integrity

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## Introduction

Writing is a fundamental component of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, essential for academic success, professional development, and effective communication. Moreover, it functions as a pivotal medium for cognitive and linguistic development (Hyland, 2019). A study by Jamoom (2021) revealed that EFL students recognize the significance of writing skills for their current studies and future occupations. Unfortunately, writing remains a challenge for a sizable portion of EFL learners because unlike receptive skills such as listening and reading, it is a productive skill that demands learners to independently generate language. Some struggles regarding English writing encountered by EFL learners include content development, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics (Hyland, 2019). These challenges are compounded by limited opportunities for practice and feedback, both inside and outside the classroom (Jamoom, 2021).

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into language education, especially predominantly in writing, has significantly revolutionized English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. Among the popular innovations adopted by English language educators, ChatGPT, which is a large language model developed by OpenAI, has emerged as a potential tool for enhancing EFL writing instruction and practice. This is due to its ability to generate coherent and contextually appropriate text based on user prompts, allowing learners to receive prompt writing help, model compositions, and immediate feedback (Gayed et al., 2022; Liang et al., 2023). These capabilities are in line with communicative language teaching approaches, which accentuate the significance of interaction, authentic language use, and learner autonomy. In the same way, students regard ChatGPT as an effective aid for writing, especially in improving their vocabulary, grammar, and receiving instant feedback (Xiao & Zhi, 2023). That is not all, because ChatGPT offers an innovative alternative to traditional instruction by addressing the issues faced by EFL learners in a flexible, user-oriented manner. Studies assert that AI-driven tools can be beneficial in enabling learners to accomplish writing fluency, lexical development, and enhanced confidence (Gayed et al., 2022).

Despite these promising advantages, the growing integration of AI in education has sparked ongoing debates about its limitations and potential risks. It has been cautioned that these tools may unintentionally foster passive learning habits, diminish learners' critical thinking abilities, and undermine their capacity for original thought. Moreover, there is growing apprehension that over-reliance on AI-generated content could discourage students from fully

engaging with and reflecting on the writing process. Concerns about over-reliance, plagiarism, and the possible degradation of analytical skills draw attention to the pedagogical effects of these technologies (Kohnke et al., 2025).

### **The utilization of ChatGPT for grammar and lexical correction**

Although not initially intended for writing instruction, ChatGPT has proven to be a flexible tool that supports EFL learners in enhancing their writing through its generative capabilities and multiple approaches to improvement (Alharbi, 2023). ChatGPT has exhibited the ability to identify and correct a wide range of grammatical errors. According to Bok and Cho (2023), over half of the 73 English language learners in their study recognized ChatGPT's value in highlighting vocabulary errors, improving accuracy, enhancing flow, and correcting grammar. In the realm of higher education, the study conducted by Gayed et al. (2022) conducted a pilot study involving EFL university students, who were asked to complete English writing assignments both with and without the support of the AI tool and the teachers could track their error frequency, sentence complexity, and overall writing quality. According to the results, the quality of writing among students who used the AI-based framework showed measurable improvement such as a reduction in grammar and spelling errors. Their writing exhibited enhanced coherence and improved syntactic construction. Similarly, Mahapatra (2024) conducted a mixed-methods study revealing that undergraduate ESL students who utilized ChatGPT for formative feedback on both content and grammatical structure showed substantial improvements in grammatical accuracy compared to those who did not. Participants demonstrated notable improvements in areas such as idea generation, coherence, grammatical accuracy, and vocabulary usage. The experimental group outperformed the control group in post-intervention assessments, indicating the effectiveness of ChatGPT in facilitating writing development. The AI's ability to provide real-time corrections permitted learners to recognize and correct errors promptly, encouraging clearer understanding and memory retention. In pursuit of comparing ChatGPT to other AI solutions, Schmidt-Fajlik (2023) compared ChatGPT with Grammarly and ProWritingAid, highlighting that while all tools were helpful in providing explanations, ChatGPT proved the most useful and most expedient solution by providing more nuanced corrections in certain context aiding Japanese English language learners in grammar correction.

Beyond grammar correction in writing, ChatGPT holds significant promise for enhancing vocabulary acquisition among EFL learners. A study by Aldowsari and Aljebreen (2024)

investigates the impact of a ChatGPT-based application on enhancing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) vocabulary learning among Saudi high school students. Data were collected through pre- and post-tests to assess vocabulary acquisition. The findings revealed a statistically significant improvement in vocabulary learning among the experimental group compared to the control group. Conducting an experimental study to investigate the impact of the interactive nature of ChatGPT on vocabulary acquisition, Kambam et al. (2025) found that learners who utilized ChatGPT exhibited marked progress in vocabulary knowledge and use compared to those who did not.

### **ChatGPT's ability to provide feedback and personalized learning in EFL Writing**

The concept of personalized learning, which adjusts teaching strategies to align with each student's needs, is now a key trend in modern education. In EFL writing instruction, personalization is essential to address learners' diverse linguistic backgrounds, proficiency levels, and individual learning preferences. The integration of artificial intelligence tools, such as ChatGPT, has introduced novel channels for personalized learning by offering real-time, adaptive feedback tailored to individual student needs (Hossain & Younus, 2025). Studies have indicated that ChatGPT can support students in developing their writing skills by providing immediate feedback, generating content ideas, and assisting in organizing thoughts, thereby contributing to improved writing proficiency (Li et al., 2024). A study conducted by Song and Song (2023) reveals several critical ways in which ChatGPT facilitates personalized learning within the context of EFL academic writing. Most importantly, the tool delivers real-time, individualized feedback that adapts dynamically to each learner's language proficiency, writing errors, and specific requests for assistance. This ensures that students receive targeted assistance that directly caters to their unique learning needs, instead of generic or uniform instruction. By serving as an AI-mediated peer within Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, ChatGPT provides scaffolded guidance that evolves in complexity as the learner's skills advance, fostering gradual and meaningful learning progress. Moreover, students are empowered to engage with the tool autonomously, deciding when and how to seek feedback, which encourages self-regulated learning and cultivates intrinsic motivation. The iterative nature of AI interaction allows learners to revise their work repeatedly at their own pace, reinforcing a mastery-based approach to writing development. Collectively, these features highlight how ChatGPT brings key personalized learning principles to life within a digital language-learning platform. Furthermore, Ngoc and Lam (2023) employed a mixed-

methods approach over a two-month period to investigate how ChatGPT could be used to personalize the learning process in EFL writing classes. Pretests and posttests were adopted to measure improvements in their writing skills. The study focused on how students made use of ChatGPT, including the selection of writing ideas and the process of revising drafts with AI-generated feedback. The results demonstrated that students skillfully used ChatGPT to personalize their writing process by selecting content ideas appropriate for their language proficiency and individual interests. Students valued the independence ChatGPT provided, allowing them to work on their own while receiving instant, personalized feedback which was adapted to their specific challenges and progress. In the same way, Asadi et al. (2025) employed a mixed-methods design to explore the impact of integrating AI-based personalized learning tools into higher education STEM courses, using pretest and posttest assessments designed to measure learning gains and conceptual understanding before and after using the AI tools. This adaptive learning approach aimed to increase student engagement and mastery of complex STEM concepts. Results revealed significant improvements in student learning outcomes, as witnessed in higher posttest scores compared to pretests, signaling effective knowledge acquisition facilitated by personalized AI interactions. Overall, the study validated that AI-driven personalized learning methods contribute to improvements in both academic performance and learner engagement in STEM education.

### **The impact of ChatGPT on motivating EFL learners in academic writing**

Motivation is a crucial factor influencing learners' success in EFL writing, where students often face challenges such as anxiety, limited feedback, and lack of engagement (Dörnyei, 2001). Traditional classrooms often lack the ability to offer the timely and individualized support needed to sustain learner motivation during writing activities. (Graham & Perin, 2007). ChatGPT is capable of addressing these shortcomings. Qualitative findings in Song and Song (2023) showed that students felt more engaged and confident in their writing due to the immediate, personalized feedback offered by ChatGPT. Participants expressed the view that the tool helped reduce anxiety, encouraged experimentation with language, and made writing feel more interactive and supportive. Similarly, the study by Woo et al. (2024) explored how incorporating ChatGPT into English as a EFL instruction influences students' motivation, cognitive load, and satisfaction during the writing process. Participants were trained in prompt engineering and tasked with composing a 500-word English essay using the AI tool. The findings indicated that there was a slight increase in motivation scores. However, students reported

experiencing high cognitive load, especially during the prompt engineering phase. However, they expressed high satisfaction with the workshop, suggesting that the implementation of ChatGPT was perceived positively. The study highlights the potential of ChatGPT to engage EFL students in the writing classroom by increasing their enthusiasm for writing. In the Iranian EFL context, Jafari et al. (2025) explored the effect of ChatGPT on writing accuracy and motivation among Iranian intermediate EFL learners, using tests and a motivation questionnaire. The experimental group received AI-assisted writing instruction using ChatGPT, while the control group was taught through traditional writing instruction methods, involving self-written and self-revised texts. The results demonstrated a statistically significant increase in motivation among learners in the experimental group. This is attributed to the interactive and personalized nature of the ChatGPT environment. Students in the experimental group reported feeling more engaged and confident, from which we can conclude that the tool has the capacity to create an engaging and low-anxiety environment for language learners. This evidence points to the powerful role of AI technologies such as ChatGPT in promoting engagement among EFL learners. According to Ali et al. (2023), although the motivation triggered by ChatGPT was not prominent in learners' listening and speaking abilities reflected in their neutral attitudes toward improvement in these areas, it was notably effective in enhancing motivation for literacy skills such as reading and writing.

### **Concerns regarding the use of ChatGPT in EFL writing instruction**

While such tools offer opportunities to enhance student engagement, support personalized learning, and reduce writing anxiety (Jafari et al., 2025), several concerns have emerged regarding their use in instructional settings.

#### **Over-reliance on AI-generated content**

One of the primary apprehensions involves the potential for overreliance on AI-generated content, which may impede the development of learners' authentic writing skills and critical thinking (Ali et al., 2023). Jafari et al. (2025) asserted that learners who used ChatGPT showed improved writing accuracy; nevertheless, the study did not examine whether these improvements were sustained without AI assistance. This raises doubts about the sustainability of learner autonomy in the context of prolonged tool usage. Students frequently totally depend on the tool for generating complete texts rather than engaging in the writing process themselves making them develop a false sense of proficiency, as they may perform

well on written tasks without possessing the skills necessary for independent communication. (Aulia & Yamin, 2024).

### **Pedagogical Misalignment**

Traditional EFL writing pedagogy pays particular attention to process writing, collaborative learning, and drafting. Discrepancies may exist between ChatGPT's product-oriented outputs and these instructional approaches. A major concern is that students could circumvent fundamental writing stages such as idea generation, revision, and peer interaction, which are important for developing language skills. (Woo et al., 2024). Without appropriate pedagogical integration, AI tools risk undermining established teaching methods. The over-reliance on such a tool often results in learners bypassing essential stages of the writing process, such as brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing (Aulia & Yamin, 2024).

### **Diminished Critical Thinking and Language Processing Skills**

Another compelling issue involves academic integrity. An overdependence on such technology can limit students' development of essential cognitive skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students (Sawangwan, 2024). As ChatGPT can generate coherent and well-structured texts with minimal input, determining the level of student authorship presents a challenge for instructors. According to Woo et al. (2024), despite positive learner feedback regarding satisfaction and reduced cognitive load, the effortless nature of ChatGPT may discourage deeper engagement with language, thereby affecting the development of critical thinking and grammar skills in EFL instruction (Rezaei et al., 2024). Excessive use of AI to generate complete answers can hinder students in engaging with the mental challenges necessary for acquiring language and internalizing grammatical and rhetorical norms (Aulia & Yamin, 2024), which could lead students to disengage from established learning practices and limit their communication with human educators (Marzuki et al., 2023). Additionally, AI-based tools for evaluating writing, including ChatGPT, often place excessive importance on formal aspects such as grammar and vocabulary. This can cause essays with proper mechanics but shallow ideas or limited creativity to earn disproportionately high marks, distorting the assessment of writing proficiency (Mizumoto & Eguchi, 2023).

Ali et al. (2023) highlighted that teachers were uncertain about how to monitor and assess student use of AI, leading to ambiguity around work originality. This calls for clear institutional guidelines on acceptable AI use in academic writing. AI tools such as ChatGPT are

designed to simplify writing tasks, but this simplification may reduce opportunities for learners to engage in deep cognitive processing.

### **Ethical Concerns: Plagiarism and Academic Integrity**

Despite the benefits, students acknowledged the necessity of seeking feedback from teachers or peers to ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of their essays. This human oversight was crucial in maintaining the quality and authenticity of their work (Yastibaş, 2023). When students do not fully understand the need for proper attribution, AI-assisted writing can lead to breaches of academic ethics (Barrett & Pack, 2023; Nguyen, 2023; Song & Song, 2023). Educators have expressed concerns regarding academic integrity, technological dependence, and the need for effective pedagogical frameworks to facilitate the ethical and effective implementation of such AI tools (Hossain & Yunus, 2025). Students are tempted to use these tools as a shortcut, particularly when encountering time constraints or a lack of confidence in their own writing abilities. This trend raises serious concerns about academic integrity and the reduced value placed on effort in the learning process (Aulia & Yamin, 2024; Dai et al., 2020; Rezaei et al., 2024; Seo et al., 2021). Consistent with the teachers' views, although students appreciated the quality of writing and the variety of language styles ChatGPT provided, they recognized concerns regarding plagiarism and the fairness of employing AI tools in educational contexts remained widespread (Yan, 2023). Even though ChatGPT can tremendously assist in essay writing, its potential educational benefits might not be fully realized without adequate training on its effective and ethical use (Lee & Choi, 2024). A cautious and informed approach to integrating ChatGPT into various domains should be taken, to ensure that its use complements human judgment rather than replacing it (Sawangwan, 2024).

### **Teacher Preparedness and Technological Literacy**

Teacher readiness plays a critical role in the effective adoption of AI tools such as ChatGPT. Many instructors, however, are not sufficiently trained in AI literacy, which can hinder optimal use in educational settings. The integration of new technologies into education necessitates continuous professional development. Educators must be proficient in utilizing AI tools within their instructional practices. Beyond their traditional teaching roles, they are expected to provide technical guidance as well. It is crucial that teachers understand the constraints of tools such as ChatGPT and are able to effectively incorporate them into their curricula. Moreover, staying informed about emerging trends in AI-assisted learning is vital to



support EFL learners efficiently (Sawangwan, 2024). Ali et al. (2023) observed that both students and teachers expressed uncertainty regarding how best to incorporate ChatGPT into EFL instruction, suggesting a need for targeted professional development.

### **ChatGPT's Role and Language Learning Theories**

These findings correspond to and extend several established theoretical frameworks in second language acquisition and educational psychology as follows:

First, the role of ChatGPT in providing real-time, adaptive feedback is compatible with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). By delivering scaffolded assistance tailored to individual proficiency levels, ChatGPT functions as a dynamic tool that supports learners in completing tasks they could not accomplish independently. The iterative feedback loop facilitated by AI mirrors Vygotsky's emphasis on guided interaction as a pathway to skill mastery.

Second, the role of ChatGPT in improving vocabulary and grammatical accuracy can be viewed through the lens of Krashen's Input Hypothesis and Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis. By delivering accurate, contextually appropriate language, ChatGPT offers learners comprehensible input that exceeds their current proficiency level ( $i+1$ ). In addition, its ability to explicitly identify and clarify errors helps learners detect linguistic gaps, which is a crucial step in language development. This combination of providing rich input and enhancing metalinguistic awareness helps to connect receptive and productive language skills.

From a constructivist perspective, ChatGPT enables learners to actively construct knowledge by experimenting with language, revising drafts, and integrating AI-generated suggestions. However, the concerns regarding over-reliance and bypassing critical writing stages suggest a tension between constructivist ideals and AI-facilitated convenience. If learners accept AI outputs without critical engagement, they might undermine the deep processing and collaborative aspect central to constructivist pedagogy.

Finally, the ethical concerns, particularly regarding plagiarism and diminished critical thinking, overlap with academic integrity frameworks and 21st-century digital literacy models. These emphasize the importance of equipping both learners and educators with the skills to critically evaluate AI outputs, attribute sources appropriately, and integrate technology in ways that complement rather than replace human judgment.

In summary, incorporating ChatGPT into EFL writing instruction can be supported by various theoretical perspectives; however, its effective use relies on individual scaffolding,

clear instruction in AI literacy, and persistent opportunities for learners to practice critical thinking. Without these precautions, the benefits mentioned in the reviewed research may be diminished by stagnation in learners' skills over time and potential threats to academic integrity.

### **Implementation Guidelines**

To make the most of AI tools such as ChatGPT in writing instruction, it is important to use them strategically, encouraging independent thought and addressing issues that may compromise the authenticity of students' work. One of the most practical applications involves embedding ChatGPT within the process-writing framework. Instead of allowing students to use AI tools to produce complete essays, instructors can guide learners to use ChatGPT during specific stages of the writing process, such as brainstorming, organizing ideas, revising grammar, or enhancing vocabulary. This targeted use not only supports linguistic development but also preserves students' cognitive engagement in key stages such as drafting and editing.

Another implication is the need for structured teacher training programs. Many teachers express uncertainty about how to use ChatGPT effectively in classrooms. Therefore, professional development workshops should be developed to increase teachers' AI literacy, focusing on prompt engineering, evaluating AI-generated content, integrating AI with curriculum goals, and identifying signs of overdependence. By doing so, teachers can provide informed guidance to students, monitor appropriate use, and maintain pedagogical alignment with learning objectives.

Moreover, institutions must establish clear guidelines and policies regarding ethical AI use in academic settings. These guidelines should define acceptable practices for using AI tools in assignments, delineate the boundaries between assistance and authorship, and clarify expectations around citation or disclosure of AI usage. Such policies will help prevent academic dishonesty and encourage responsible, transparent use of AI in learning.

Finally, incorporating reflective writing or learning logs can further reinforce responsible AI use. Students can be encouraged to reflect on how they used ChatGPT, what feedback they applied or ignored, and how it impacted their writing. This metacognitive activity promotes greater awareness of their own learning and discourages passive dependence on AI-generated answers.

## Conclusion

The incorporation of ChatGPT into EFL writing instruction represents a significant pedagogical advancement with the potential to transform conventional teaching methodologies. The collected findings from a range of recent studies collectively underscore the AI tool's considerable benefits in enhancing writing proficiency, particularly through grammar and lexical correction, personalized learning, and learner motivation. However, these advantages are accompanied by a host of pedagogical, cognitive, and ethical concerns that educators and institutions must carefully consider to ensure the responsible and effective use of AI technologies in educational settings.

One of the most consistent themes across the literature is ChatGPT's capacity to support grammar correction and vocabulary development, which has been validated through multiple empirical studies. Learners who engaged with ChatGPT demonstrated marked improvements in grammatical accuracy, syntactic complexity, and vocabulary usage (Gayed et al., 2022; Mahapatra, 2024). The tool's ability to provide immediate, context-specific feedback empowers learners to identify and correct errors autonomously, fostering more profound understanding and memory retention.

Beyond surface-level correction, ChatGPT contributes meaningfully to personalized learning by offering feedback adjusted to individual learner needs, proficiency levels, and writing challenges. Studies by Ngoc and Lam (2023) and Song and Song (2023) emphasize that ChatGPT functions effectively within the learner's Zone of Proximal Development, providing scaffolded support that evolves with the user's progress. The positive outcomes observed in both language and STEM domains (Asadi et al., 2025) further suggest that AI-driven personalization can be generalized across disciplines, enhancing learner engagement and performance.

Another salient benefit lies in motivating EFL learners. AI-assisted writing support appears to reduce writing anxiety, increase learner confidence, and make writing more interactive and engaging. As shown in studies by Jafari et al. (2025) and Woo et al. (2024), learners using ChatGPT reported greater satisfaction and engagement in the writing process. The ability to receive timely, individualized feedback creates a low-stress environment conducive to experimentation and improvement.

However, despite these benefits, the growing reliance on ChatGPT raises critical concerns, particularly regarding overdependence on AI-generated content. As noted by Aulia and Yamin (2024), when students rely heavily on the tool to generate complete texts, they

risk bypassing key cognitive processes essential for language development. This can result in a superficial sense of proficiency and inhibit the development of authentic writing skills and critical thinking.

The misalignment between AI-driven tools and conventional writing instruction is an issue of growing concern. Established EFL pedagogies emphasize process-oriented approaches, peer collaboration, and active learner engagement. However, ChatGPT's output-driven model may conflict with these methods, especially if students use it as a shortcut rather than as a supplement. Educators must navigate this tension carefully, ensuring that the integration of AI aligns with, rather than undermines, essential stages of writing instruction.

The diminishment of critical thinking and language processing skills is another area of concern. While ChatGPT can efficiently generate well-structured content, this very efficiency may discourage deep cognitive engagement. Learners may come to rely on the AI's responses instead of dealing with linguistic and rhetorical challenges independently.

Further complicating the instructional landscape are ethical concerns related to plagiarism and academic integrity. ChatGPT's capacity to produce high-quality text with minimal input blurs the boundaries between student work and machine assistance. Without explicit institutional policies and student training on appropriate AI use, there is a real risk of misuse (Barrett & Pack, 2023; Nguyen, 2023). As learners increasingly turn to AI tools under pressure or from a lack of confidence, the educational system must confront how to promote ethical engagement with these technologies.

Another pressing issue is teacher preparedness and technological literacy. As the studies by Ali et al. (2023) and Sawangwan (2024) suggest, many instructors feel ill-equipped to integrate AI tools into their teaching practice effectively. Professional development, ongoing training, and the cultivation of AI literacy among educators are crucial to bridging this gap. Teachers must not only learn to use these tools but must also be able to guide students in leveraging them responsibly and reflectively.

In sum, while ChatGPT offers transformative potential for EFL writing instruction, it must be approached with strategic pedagogical integration, ethical oversight, and a commitment to learner-centered practices. The goal should not be to replace traditional teaching methods but to augment them, using AI as a scaffold that supports and extends human instruction. Future efforts should prioritize developing comprehensive frameworks that clarify the role of AI in language education, promote responsible use, and empower educators and learners

alike. Only by balancing innovation with educational integrity can we unlock the full promise of AI in fostering competent, confident, and independent writers.

### The Author

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### AI Declaration Statement

During the preparation of this work, the author used ChatGPT to find related documents and empirical data in order to conceptualize topics and sub-topics included in the work. After using this tool/service, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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