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Research Article

Instructor Authority and Generative AI in Japanese Writing Instruction

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Abstract
The spread of generative artificial intelligence in higher education has begun to change writing classrooms in ways that are not always immediately visible. In second language education, students now revise and refine texts through AI-supported interaction before teachers ever see the final product. This shift raises questions not only about writing quality, but also about how teachers understand, evaluate, and guide the writing process itself. In Japanese writing instruction, where revision often depends on close attention to context, nuance, and interpersonal positioning, these changes carry particular weight. This study examines how ten instructors of Japanese writing at Hanoi University perceive the growing presence of generative AI in their teaching. Based on survey data and qualitative interpretation, the analysis shows that writing instruction remains deeply dependent on teacher labor, especially in areas that require contextual judgment and individualized feedback. At the same time, many instructors described a growing sense of uncertainty. When revision happens through AI outside the classroom, it becomes harder to determine what a student can actually do alone, and this weakens confidence in conventional forms of assessment. Some participants also felt that the teacher's traditional role as the central source of correction is becoming less stable. Yet this did not lead them to view AI as a replacement. Instead, they emphasized that meaning-making in Japanese writing still relies on human sensitivity to social context and rhetorical intention. Rather than simply introducing efficiency, generative AI appears to be changing the balance of authority in writing education itself.

Keywords: Assessment Uncertainty, AI-Assisted Writing, Generative AI, Japanese Writing Instruction, Instructional Authority, Teacher Expertise

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1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of generative artificial intelligence has begun to unsettle long-standing assumptions surrounding teacher authority in second language writing instruction. In many educational discussions, attention has focused primarily on the technological capabilities of AI systems, including automated feedback, text generation, and revision support. Yet within actual writing classrooms, a more immediate pedagogical tension is increasingly visible: instructors can no longer fully determine how student texts are produced, revised, or linguistically constructed once writing processes become intertwined with AI-assisted interaction.

This tension is particularly significant in Japanese language writing instruction. Japanese writing instruction has rarely been concerned with grammar alone. A sentence may be structurally accurate and still feel unnatural because the tone, level of politeness, or rhetorical positioning does not fit the situation. For that reason, writing teachers have typically occupied a role that combines correction with interpretation, guiding students toward ways of writing that are socially and contextually acceptable.

The emergence of generative AI complicates this instructional relationship considerably. AI-supported systems are now capable of generating extended written text, reformulating learner sentences, explaining grammatical patterns, and providing revision suggestions almost instantly. In practice, students

may increasingly revise assignments through interactions occurring outside teacher supervision, often blending their own writing with AI-generated reformulation. As a result, instructors may encounter growing uncertainty regarding the status of learner writing itself: whether submitted texts genuinely reflect students' linguistic competence, how extensively AI has participated in revision processes, and to what extent traditional forms of writing assessment remain pedagogically reliable.

Importantly, these concerns extend beyond narrow questions of plagiarism or academic dishonesty. What appears increasingly unstable is the pedagogical authority traditionally associated with writing instruction. In many foreign language classrooms, teachers have long been the people who decide what counts as appropriate language use. Through correction, commentary, and evaluation, they shape not only how students write, but also what kinds of expression are treated as acceptable or effective. That position becomes less stable once learners can consult AI systems at any stage of drafting and revision. Teacher feedback no longer arrives as the only authoritative voice in the writing process, and in some situations it may not even be the most influential one.

Recent discussions of generative AI have often highlighted its potential benefits for language learning, including faster feedback, reduced anxiety during revision, and expanded access to individualized writing support (Ji et al., 2023; Ranalli, 2021; Li, 2025). At the same time, concerns have grown over students relying too heavily on generated suggestions or revising superficially without fully understanding the language they adopt (Bender et al., 2021; Kasneci et al., 2023). Much of this research, however, still focuses mainly on learner outcomes, technological capabilities, or English-language settings. Comparatively little attention has been paid to how teachers themselves experience these changes, especially in Japanese writing education.

This matters because evaluating Japanese writing often involves interpretation as much as correction. A sentence may be grammatically accurate and still sound unnatural, too direct, excessively distant, or rhetorically inappropriate depending on the communicative situation. Writing instruction therefore depends heavily on teachers' ability to judge nuance, register, and interpersonal positioning in ways that are not always reducible to formal grammatical rules. Teacher expertise therefore extends beyond correction alone toward socially and pragmatically informed judgment. The expansion of AI-generated writing support raises important questions regarding how such expertise is negotiated once learners increasingly rely on revision systems capable of producing linguistically fluent but contextually uncertain output.

Moreover, the integration of generative AI may alter not only how writing is revised but also how instructors understand their own pedagogical roles. If students can access immediate correction, reformulation, and drafting assistance independently of classroom interaction, instructors may experience increasing difficulty maintaining visibility over learners' writing processes. The issue is therefore not simply whether AI can support writing development, but how instructional authority itself is reconfigured once revision becomes partially opaque to teachers.

The present study explores these emerging tensions through an investigation of instructors specializing in Japanese writing instruction at Hanoi University. Rather than evaluating the technical effectiveness of generative AI, the study focuses on how instructors perceive the changing conditions of writing pedagogy in AI-assisted learning environments. Particular attention is given to issues surrounding instructional authority, assessment uncertainty, learner dependence, and the evolving role of teachers within Japanese writing education.

Specifically, the study addresses three questions:

1. What challenges do instructors encounter in teaching Japanese writing at the university level?
2. How do instructors perceive the influence of generative AI on writing instruction and assessment?
3. How is instructor authority being negotiated within AI-assisted writing environments?

Looking at how instructors themselves describe these changes, the issue seems to extend beyond whether generative AI can improve writing support efficiently. What begins to shift instead is the position teachers occupy within the writing process itself. As AI-generated revision becomes increasingly woven into drafting and feedback practices, long-standing assumptions about instructional authority, evaluative judgment, and teacher expertise in second language writing classrooms become less stable.

1.1. Literature Review

1.1.1. Japanese Writing Instruction and Teacher Authority

Teaching writing in Japanese has rarely been a matter of grammar alone. Even when learners can produce structurally correct sentences, difficulties often emerge in areas such as coherence, rhetorical flow, politeness, and context-sensitive expression (Hirose, 2003; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996). A sentence may sound linguistically accurate while still feeling too direct, awkwardly distant, or inappropriate for a particular communicative situation. Because of this, Japanese writing instruction has traditionally depended heavily on teachers' interpretive judgment.

Previous studies have also described writing development as a gradual process that takes shape through sustained revision over time rather than through isolated correction alone (Sasaki, 2004). Within Japanese composition pedagogy, repeated rewriting and close teacher involvement have long been treated as central parts of the learning process (Nishina & Tateoka, 2007). In practice, instructors are often expected not simply to identify errors, but to help learners understand how language choices position writers socially and rhetorically within particular contexts. Teacher expertise therefore functions as a form of pedagogical and epistemic authority within the writing classroom.

At the same time, this role involves considerable invisible labor. Reading and responding to student writing is often slow, repetitive work. A single draft may require comments on grammar, word choice, organization, tone, and whether an expression actually fits the situation the student is trying to write about. In many cases, instructors are not simply correcting language errors; they are trying to understand what the student intended to say and why a particular expression sounds awkward, overly direct, or rhetorically out of place. Research on L2 writing feedback has similarly noted that responding to student writing depends heavily on interpretation rather than straightforward correction alone (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

This kind of feedback also assumes that students engage seriously with revision instead of treating comments as answers to copy mechanically into later drafts (Carless & Boud, 2018; Ferris, 2003). Maintaining that level of involvement, however, is not always easy. Instructors working with large classes and limited time may find it difficult to sustain repeated draft-based feedback over an entire semester (Lee, 2017). In Vietnamese university settings, where writing courses often operate within examination-oriented curricula, teachers may additionally find themselves balancing correction, assessment, explanation of sociocultural nuance, and learner support simultaneously.

1.1.2. Generative AI, Assessment Uncertainty, and Teacher Expertise

Earlier writing technologies mainly worked at the level of correction or scoring (Attali & Burstein, 2006). Generative AI is different because students now use it during the writing process itself. They may ask AI to rewrite a sentence, improve wording, reorganize a paragraph, or make an expression sound softer or more natural. In practice, this makes it increasingly difficult to separate what students wrote independently from what was shaped through AI-assisted revision.

Many studies have described the advantages of this kind of support. Students can revise more quickly, receive suggestions immediately, and continue writing practice outside the classroom (Ji et al., 2023; Ranalli, 2021; Li, 2025). At the same time, researchers have raised concerns that learners may start depending too heavily on generated language or accept revisions simply because they sound fluent and sophisticated (Bender et al., 2021; Kasneci et al., 2023).

For teachers, the issue becomes especially complicated during assessment. A well-written assignment may reflect careful learner development, extensive AI-supported rewriting, or a mixture of both. Because much of the revision process now happens outside teacher observation, instructors may no longer know how a final text actually took shape. Yeo (2023) argues that this creates broader concerns related to epistemic authority and assessment integrity.

These changes also affect the position of teacher expertise in the writing classroom. Traditionally, instructors have been responsible for deciding whether a form of expression is appropriate, natural, or rhetorically effective. That role becomes less stable once students can instantly compare teacher comments with AI-generated alternatives that often appear equally polished. As Ajjawi and Boud (2017) note in

broader discussions of writing assessment, questions of fairness, reliability, and pedagogical judgment become increasingly difficult to negotiate under changing instructional conditions.

1.1.3. Reconfiguring Instructor Authority in AI-Assisted Writing

The growing integration of generative AI suggests that the central pedagogical issue may no longer concern technological effectiveness alone, but the changing nature of instructor authority within writing education. As students increasingly revise assignments through interactions with AI systems outside teacher supervision, instructors may experience reduced visibility over learners' writing processes.

This issue is particularly significant in Japanese writing instruction because appropriate expression depends heavily on contextual interpretation. Linguistically fluent text may still remain pragmatically inappropriate depending on register, interpersonal relationships, and communicative situation. Teacher expertise therefore remains essential precisely because AI-generated output cannot always account adequately for sociocultural nuance.

At the same time, instructors may increasingly need to negotiate the legitimacy of human evaluative judgment within AI-assisted educational environments. Recent discussions on AI in education have similarly suggested that generative AI may reshape traditional teacher roles by redistributing portions of instructional support and evaluative responsibility previously associated primarily with human instructors (Zhai, 2024). Their role may gradually shift from functioning primarily as providers of correction toward maintaining assessment credibility, interpretive guidance, and pedagogical trust under conditions of technological uncertainty.

Despite growing discussions surrounding AI-assisted writing, relatively limited research has examined how instructors in Japanese language programs perceive these emerging changes in instructional authority. Existing scholarship has focused predominantly on learner outcomes, technological affordances, or English-language contexts. Comparatively little attention has been directed toward how writing instructors themselves interpret assessment uncertainty, evolving teacher expertise, and the destabilization of pedagogical authority associated with generative AI.

The present study addresses this gap by examining how instructors specializing in Japanese writing instruction at Hanoi University perceive the challenges and tensions emerging from AI-assisted writing pedagogy.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

This study examines how instructors involved in Japanese writing courses perceive the growing presence of generative AI in university-level writing instruction. Particular attention was given to issues such as assessment uncertainty, teacher expertise, AI-assisted revision, and changing forms of instructional authority.

Because the use of generative AI in language education is still evolving rapidly, the study adopted an exploratory approach centered on instructor perspectives rather than technical evaluation of AI tools. Survey responses were analyzed descriptively and qualitatively in order to identify recurring concerns and patterns across participants' experiences with AI-assisted writing practices.

2.2. Participants

The study involved 10 instructors teaching Japanese writing courses at Hanoi University. All participants had direct experience guiding students through writing assignments, revision, and assessment. The group consisted of eight female instructors and two male instructors, ranging in age from 31 to 54 years. Their teaching experience varied considerably, from 5 to 22 years, reflecting both relatively early-career and senior teaching perspectives. Most had worked extensively with writing-intensive courses and regularly dealt with issues such as revision support, feedback practices, and the evaluation of student writing.

The purpose of selecting this group was not statistical representation, but to focus on instructors whose daily teaching work placed them in direct contact with the kinds of changes generative AI is beginning to introduce into writing pedagogy.

2.3. Data Collection

To explore how instructors make sense of the growing presence of generative AI in Japanese writing instruction, a questionnaire was developed for this study with reference to earlier discussions on L2 writing feedback, assessment practices, and AI-assisted learning. The survey was not designed to isolate AI as a separate issue, but to situate it within the broader realities of teaching writing, where revision, feedback, and evaluation are closely connected. It began with several background questions concerning teaching experience, writing-related courses, and familiarity with AI tools. This was followed by a series of closed-ended items dealing with classroom practices such as feedback, revision, and writing assessment, as well as instructors' perceptions of AI-supported writing. All closed-ended items were rated on a five-point Likert scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Taken together, these items produced a score range between 27 and 135, allowing the study to identify broader tendencies across participants while preserving individual differences in response. The questionnaire also included several open-ended questions, where instructors were invited to reflect more freely on difficulties in evaluating student writing, changes in feedback practices, and the possible role of generative AI in writing pedagogy. Most participants completed the questionnaire in approximately fifteen to twenty minutes.

2.4. Data Analysis

The questionnaire produced two different kinds of data, and each required a different way of reading. The closed-ended responses were examined first in order to identify broader tendencies in how instructors approached writing instruction, feedback practices, and the increasing use of AI in revision. This stage was not intended to establish statistical generalization, but to make visible recurring patterns across participants. To check whether the closed-ended items functioned with sufficient consistency as a set, Cronbach's alpha was calculated. The result (.86) indicated a stable level of internal consistency for the purposes of this study.

The open-ended responses were approached differently. Rather than reducing them too quickly into fixed categories, the analysis focused on recurring concerns and shared points of tension in how instructors described their teaching experiences. In many cases, what mattered was not only the content of their responses, but the ways they framed uncertainty around assessment, learner revision, and trust in student writing. For this reason, thematic analysis was used with reference to Braun and Clarke (2021). The coding was carried out independently by two researchers. Initial coding agreement reached approximately 85%, and differences in interpretation were discussed until a shared understanding of the emerging themes was established.

3. FINDINGS

3.1. General Response Tendencies

Before turning to the open-ended responses, the closed-ended items offered a general picture of how instructors positioned themselves on several issues related to writing pedagogy and AI-assisted revision. Across the ten participants, eight instructors (80%) agreed that teaching writing required substantial individualized feedback and continuous revision support. Nine (90%) reported growing difficulty in evaluating the authenticity of student writing when AI-assisted revision was involved. Seven instructors (70%) expressed concern that the increasing accessibility of generative AI could weaken the teacher's traditional role as the primary source of correction and evaluative judgment. At the same time, six participants (60%) also acknowledged that AI could be useful in reducing routine correction work and supporting students during early drafting stages. Taken together, these responses suggest that instructors do not approach generative AI simply as a problem or a solution, but as a source of both pedagogical opportunity and uncertainty.

3.2. Instructional Burden and Teacher Labor

Many instructors described writing classes as one of the most demanding parts of the Japanese language curriculum. The difficulty, in their view, did not come from grammar correction alone. Students could often produce individual sentence patterns accurately, yet still struggle when asked to develop longer pieces of writing in a coherent and contextually appropriate way. Problems involving organization, cohesion, register choice, and rhetorical flow were mentioned repeatedly, especially in academic writing tasks.

Several participants explained that responding to student writing required a substantial amount of time because they often had to interpret what students were trying to say before deciding how to comment on the language itself. One instructor described the process as "following the student's thinking sentence by sentence." In practice, feedback frequently involved much more than identifying errors. Teachers moved back and forth between grammar, vocabulary, tone, organization, and sociocultural nuance across multiple drafts.

Participants also questioned whether this kind of work could be sustained easily under current institutional conditions. Large class sizes and limited instructional time made individualized feedback increasingly difficult to maintain, particularly when students expected repeated revision support outside class hours. Several instructors suggested that a considerable amount of writing-related teaching labor remained largely invisible despite being central to the learning process.

AI entered these discussions not as an entirely separate issue, but as something layered onto an already demanding teaching environment. Rather than replacing existing challenges, instructors often felt that AI intensified ongoing pressures related to revision management, assessment, and teacher involvement in student writing.

3.3. Uncertainty in Evaluating Student Writing

A major theme emerging from instructor responses concerned increasing uncertainty regarding the evaluation of student writing in AI-assisted environments. Participants repeatedly expressed difficulty determining the extent to which submitted texts reflected learners' own linguistic competence once AI-generated revision became more widely accessible.

Several instructors noted that student writing had recently become more difficult to evaluate because AI-assisted reformulation could produce grammatically sophisticated sentences exceeding learners' observable classroom performance. In some cases, instructors reported encountering written assignments that appeared linguistically polished but inconsistent with students' demonstrated ability during classroom interaction or oral communication activities.

Interestingly, instructors did not discuss these issues only in terms of plagiarism or academic misconduct. What troubled many of them more was the growing difficulty of interpreting student writing itself. Several participants explained that they were no longer always sure whether particular errors reflected genuine learner problems, whether fluent sections represented the student's actual ability, or how much of a revised text had been shaped through AI-assisted rewriting.

This uncertainty also affected assessment practices more broadly. Several instructors questioned whether conventional forms of writing evaluation remained reliable under conditions where students could continuously revise assignments through interactions occurring outside teacher supervision. Instructors described increasing difficulty maintaining confidence in the relationship between submitted texts and learners' actual writing development.

At the same time, participants acknowledged that writing has never been produced entirely independently of external support. Dictionaries, model texts, peer feedback, and teacher correction have long formed part of language learning processes. However, instructors repeatedly emphasized that generative AI differs because of the scale, fluency, and immediacy of textual reformulation it can provide. As one participant suggested, "students can now produce writing that appears advanced without necessarily understanding how the language works."

These findings indicate that generative AI introduces not only technical concerns regarding AI use itself, but also broader uncertainty surrounding assessment authenticity, evaluative trust, and the meaning of learner writing within university language education.

3.4. AI and the Erosion of Instructional Authority

Alongside concerns about workload and assessment, many instructors also described a more subtle shift in the position of teacher authority within writing classes. Several participants felt that the growing availability of AI-generated feedback was beginning to weaken the traditional role of teachers as the main judges of appropriate language use.

Instructors noted that students now often consult AI before submitting assignments or even after receiving teacher comments, sometimes treating AI-generated suggestions as equally trustworthy, or more sophisticated, than instructor feedback. For some participants, the concern was not simply that students were using AI, but that fluency and surface polish could easily be mistaken for appropriateness.

Several instructors also described situations in which AI-generated reformulation complicated their ability to maintain pedagogical authority during revision processes. Because AI systems can provide immediate alternative phrasing, teachers no longer occupy an exclusive position as providers of linguistic correction. One participant observed that "students sometimes trust AI output simply because it sounds more advanced," even when the generated expression may not fit the communicative context appropriately.

Importantly, instructors did not describe this shift simply as a loss of control. Rather, many responses reflected uncertainty regarding how teacher expertise should function once learners gain continuous access to external systems capable of generating persuasive linguistic output. The issue therefore concerned not only technological assistance, but also the destabilization of traditional assumptions surrounding instructional legitimacy and evaluative authority in writing education.

3.5. Negotiating New Teacher Roles under AI Conditions

Even so, the instructors in this study did not simply reject generative AI or describe it as something that should be removed from writing instruction altogether. Many participants instead spoke about needing to adjust their own roles within classrooms where AI-assisted revision was becoming increasingly common.

Several instructors suggested that their work may gradually move away from correcting every sentence directly. More emphasis, in their view, may need to be placed on helping students judge whether AI-generated expressions actually fit the context, understand why certain revisions sound appropriate or inappropriate, and recognize the limits of automated feedback rather than accepting it uncritically.

In this sense, instructors increasingly described their role as supporting students' judgment rather than simply supplying correct forms. Participants emphasized that learners require guidance in deciding when AI assistance is pedagogically useful, how to question generated output, and how to maintain meaningful engagement with writing processes despite the availability of automated support.

Some instructors also suggested that AI may indirectly redistribute portions of routine correction work, potentially allowing teachers to focus more heavily on rhetorical organization, communicative intention, and sociocultural nuance. However, participants repeatedly emphasized that such redistribution does not reduce the importance of teacher expertise. On the contrary, several instructors argued that human evaluative judgment may become even more significant precisely because AI-generated writing can appear linguistically fluent while remaining contextually inappropriate.

At the same time, many instructors felt that existing approaches to writing assessment may no longer be sufficient once AI-assisted revision becomes part of ordinary classroom practice. Several participants pointed to the need for clearer guidelines regarding acceptable AI use, greater transparency in revision processes, and more open discussion about how AI should be positioned within writing instruction.

Seen together, these responses suggest that generative AI is affecting more than the technical side of writing support. It is also beginning to reshape how teachers understand assessment, instructional responsibility, and their own authority within university-level writing classrooms.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that the emergence of generative AI in Japanese writing education should not be understood simply as the introduction of a new instructional technology. More fundamentally, AI appears to destabilize long-standing assumptions surrounding instructional authority within writing pedagogy. What becomes increasingly uncertain is not only how students write, but how teachers evaluate, interpret, and legitimate learner writing once revision processes become partially inaccessible to classroom observation.

One of the clearest tensions emerging from the findings concerns the declining visibility of revision itself (Ranalli, 2021; Carless & Boud, 2018). Traditionally, writing instruction has depended heavily on teachers' ability to observe developmental processes through drafting, correction, and repeated revision. Instructors could identify recurring learner difficulties, interpret patterns of error, and evaluate improvement across successive drafts. However, AI-assisted revision complicates this relationship because substantial portions of textual reformulation may now occur through interactions outside teacher supervision. As a result, instructors increasingly encounter finished texts without fully knowing how those texts were linguistically constructed.

This issue introduces a form of epistemic uncertainty into writing assessment (Yeo, 2023). Instructors may no longer confidently determine whether submitted texts reflect learners' independent linguistic competence, AI-supported reformulation, or combinations of both. Importantly, the problem is not reducible to plagiarism in a conventional sense. Rather, the relationship between learner ability and textual production itself becomes increasingly difficult to interpret. Writing assessment traditionally depends on the assumption that student texts provide relatively stable evidence of learner development. The findings suggest that these boundaries are becoming increasingly difficult to define once AI-assisted revision becomes embedded in ordinary writing practices.

The uncertainty created by this shift also begins to affect how instructional authority itself is understood within the writing classroom. In conventional foreign language writing classrooms, teachers have historically functioned as primary evaluators of acceptable language use. Their authority has depended partly on the assumption that correction originates from pedagogically recognized expertise. However, AI-generated revision systems now provide learners with continuous alternative sources of linguistic guidance that may appear equally authoritative or even more technically sophisticated than teacher commentary.

Importantly, the issue is not simply that AI replaces teachers as providers of correction. Rather, correction itself loses exclusivity as the defining basis of teacher authority. Several instructors noted that students now often consult AI-generated revisions before, after, or alongside teacher feedback. In some cases, participants felt that students accepted AI suggestions mainly because the language sounded more fluent or sophisticated on the surface. As a result, teachers no longer occupy the same clearly centralized position within the revision process as before.

This issue may be especially significant in Japanese writing, where grammatical accuracy alone does not necessarily ensure contextual appropriateness. As studies on Japanese discourse and politeness have shown, effective expression depends heavily on sensitivity to interpersonal relationships, social positioning, and situational context (Ide, 1989; Maynard, 1997; Cook, 2008). Expressions that appear fluent can still feel too direct, overly distant, or socially unnatural depending on the relationship between writer and reader. Subtle differences in politeness, indirectness, and rhetorical tone therefore remain difficult to evaluate through linguistic fluency alone. Consequently, teacher expertise continues to retain pedagogical importance precisely because AI-generated writing may reproduce formal fluency without adequately accounting for sociocultural nuance.

At the same time, the findings suggest that instructors are increasingly required to justify and maintain the legitimacy of human evaluative judgment within AI-assisted writing environments. The issue therefore extends beyond technological adoption toward broader questions concerning trust and pedagogical credibility. If learners perceive AI-generated revision as equally reliable as teacher commentary, the traditional hierarchy of expertise within writing classrooms may become increasingly unstable.

Importantly, participants did not respond to this instability by rejecting AI outright. Instead, many instructors described attempts to renegotiate their pedagogical roles under changing instructional conditions. Teacher expertise was increasingly framed less in terms of supplying correct forms and more in

terms of guiding interpretation, contextual evaluation, and critical engagement with generated output. This does not imply that correction disappears from writing instruction. Rather, correction alone no longer guarantees instructional authority once students can access competing sources of revision support continuously outside classroom interaction.

The findings therefore suggest a broader transformation in the nature of pedagogical authority itself. Traditionally, teacher authority in writing classrooms has relied partly on privileged access to evaluative expertise and visibility over learner revision processes. Generative AI weakens both conditions simultaneously. Instructors may no longer fully observe how writing develops, while learners increasingly interact with systems capable of producing persuasive linguistic output independently of classroom instruction.

This does not necessarily mean that teacher expertise becomes obsolete. On the contrary, the findings indicate that human judgment may become even more important precisely because AI-generated writing introduces greater uncertainty into assessment and interpretation. However, the basis of instructional authority appears to be changing. Authority becomes less dependent on exclusive ownership of correction and more dependent on teachers' ability to sustain interpretive credibility, contextual judgment, and pedagogical trust under conditions of technological opacity.

The study therefore contributes to current discussions on AI-assisted language learning by shifting attention away from technological effectiveness alone toward the destabilization and renegotiation of instructional authority within writing education. Existing research has frequently focused on learner performance, revision quality, or AI-supported feedback efficiency. The present findings suggest that an equally important issue concerns how generative AI alters the epistemic conditions under which writing teachers evaluate learner competence and maintain pedagogical legitimacy.

This issue may be especially important in Japanese language education because writing instruction remains closely connected to socially situated interpretation rather than purely formal linguistic accuracy. The integration of generative AI therefore cannot be understood simply as a matter of technological assistance. It represents an ongoing transformation in how authority, expertise, and evaluative trust are organized within second language writing pedagogy.

5. CONCLUSION

When instructors talked about generative AI, they were rarely talking only about technology. What appeared repeatedly in their responses were concerns about judging student writing, maintaining credibility as evaluators, and understanding what role teacher expertise still plays once AI becomes part of ordinary revision practice. Seen from this perspective, the issue is not simply whether AI can support writing more efficiently, but how writing instruction itself begins to change when teachers are no longer the only authority shaping revision and evaluation.

The instructors participating in this study did not interpret AI simply as a replacement technology or as a purely external threat to writing instruction. Instead, their responses revealed growing uncertainty regarding how learner writing should be evaluated once revision processes become increasingly shaped through AI-assisted interaction occurring outside teacher supervision. Under these conditions, instructors may no longer fully know how a piece of writing actually took shape. A finished text can reflect independent learner ability, extensive AI-assisted revision, or some combination of both, making assessment increasingly difficult to interpret.

This uncertainty also affects the position of teacher authority within the writing classroom (Ajjawi & Boud, 2017; Zhai, 2024). Once students can continuously access AI-generated revisions that appear fluent and persuasive, correction no longer belongs exclusively to the instructor. At the same time, teacher expertise does not disappear. In Japanese writing especially, grammatically polished language may still sound contextually inappropriate because effective expression depends heavily on sociocultural nuance, interpersonal positioning, and rhetorical judgment.

From this perspective, generative AI seems to be changing more than revision practices alone. It is also reshaping what teachers are expected to do, shifting their role away from correction by itself toward

interpretation, evaluative judgment, and maintaining trust within increasingly less transparent writing processes.

What becomes clear from these findings is that the impact of generative AI is no longer limited to how students write or revise. It is beginning to affect the practical conditions under which writing is taught. Several instructors in this study pointed out that feedback itself may have to change. Correcting errors, which has long been central to writing instruction, may no longer be enough when students arrive with AI-revised drafts that appear polished on the surface. In those situations, the teacher's work seems to shift toward something less visible but more demanding: helping students think through why a certain revision sounds appropriate, where it feels misplaced, and what the AI may have overlooked.

This also raises questions for curriculum design. If AI has already become part of students' writing habits, treating it as something outside the classroom no longer seems realistic. Writing courses may need to create space for discussing how AI-generated language works, when it can support learning, and when it may interfere with it. Beyond the classroom, there is also a more practical issue for institutions. The absence of clear expectations around AI use can easily create confusion, both for teachers and for students, especially in assessment. More explicit guidelines may therefore become necessary. Teacher education may face similar adjustments. Future writing instructors will likely need preparation not only in giving feedback, but in helping learners navigate increasingly complex decisions about AI-generated language.

The findings presented here come from a fairly limited setting. Only ten instructors were involved, all working within the same Japanese program, so the study cannot claim to represent broader patterns across Japanese language education. That was never really the intention. The purpose was to stay close to a specific teaching context and see how instructors there are making sense of AI as it enters their writing classrooms. Even so, the narrow scope inevitably leaves some things outside the frame. What appears here is largely how teachers describe their own experiences and concerns. It does not show what actually happens during revision itself, nor does it make visible the moment-to-moment interaction between teacher feedback, student choices, and AI-generated reformulation. Just as importantly, students are absent from this picture. Their decisions, hesitations, and reasons for relying on AI remain mostly unknown.

That absence matters. Much of what instructors described in this study—uncertainty, trust, dependence—ultimately takes shape in the space between teacher and learner. Future research will need to look more closely at that space. Following actual drafts over time, observing revision practices in classrooms, or comparing how AI is used across different language programs may reveal dimensions that cannot be captured through instructor reflection alone. Bringing students into that discussion would also make it easier to understand how authorship and responsibility are being negotiated once AI becomes part of ordinary writing practice.

Even with these limitations, the study highlights an area that has received relatively limited attention in current discussions of AI-assisted language learning: how writing instructors experience the changing conditions of evaluation and expertise inside the classroom. More than a question of what AI can generate linguistically, the findings point to a deeper shift in how teachers judge writing, maintain credibility as evaluators, and position their expertise within contemporary language education.

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Research Ethics. This study was conducted in accordance with institutional research guidelines. Participation was voluntary, and all participants were informed about the purpose of the study prior to data collection. Responses were collected anonymously, and informed consent was obtained from all participants.

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Investigation, resources, data curation, validation, and writing – review and editing. Nguyen Thi Phuong Lien: Investigation, data curation, visualization, validation, and writing – review and editing. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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