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A qualitative exploration of teacher mediation in ChatGPT-Assisted EFL writing feedback in Islamic higher education

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Generative AI is changing the face of feedback in EFL writing, although the impact on the interventionist roles that EFL tutors play within the context of an ethical learning function has yet to be conceptualized. This qualitative research study investigates the way EFL tutors incorporate ChatGPT comments within the feedback session offered at the international learning environment within the context of an Islamic university. Findings are informed through the collection of data conducted among seven EFL lecturers L1-L7, along with ten student participants purposely recruited S1-S10. The findings indicate that the teachers do not use the ChatGPT independently as a quality judge. Rather, the teachers use it as a dynamic language assistant. Using the theory of mediation, the theory of self-regulated learning (SRL), the theory of cognitive load, and the ethics of Islamic education, the study describes how five related mediational mechanisms emerge in the provision of AI-assisted feedback regarding surface language features. These mechanisms include pedagogical mediation, instructional scaffolding, linguistic collaboration, affect regulation, and ethical boundary drawing. The revision loops for the students involve multiple steps that focus on interpretation and not mere copying, and these lead to the development of metacognitive awareness, emotional confidence, and authorial voice. The reflective activities and the ethics guidelines aid in countering dependency and sustaining academic honesty. The study presents a human-oriented and teacher-monitored approach to AI-based feedback and asserts that the integration of generative AI tools in EFL writing classes is a matter of pedagogy and not predestinated by the technological given.

Keywords: Generative AI in education, Teacher-mediated feedback, EFL writing, Islamic higher education

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INTRODUCTION

The feedback of the teacher has long been considered the cornerstone of pedagogy in teaching writing, especially in EFL contexts, guiding learners toward enhanced linguistic accuracy, textual coherence, and argumentative clarity (Lee, 2020; Weidlich, Gotsch, et al., 2025). Effective feedback works not only as an evaluative tool but also as a formative mechanism for the learner to realize the gap between expected and actual performance, which fosters deeper engagement with the linguistic and rhetorical features of writing (Scherer et al., 2024). This view is supported by (Tran, 2025; Wilcoxen & Lemke, 2021), who found that ChatGPT-

supported teacher feedback addressed diverse linguistic and rhetorical issues and made students engage more deeply with the feedback content during revisions. Feedback significantly shapes learners' emotions, performances, and self-concepts by influencing how they interpret, respond to, and value their learning experiences, ultimately guiding motivation, critical thinking, engagement, and academics in development (Banihashem et al., 2024).

Even negative feedback can be formative when given constructively, with clear guidance on how to improve, through a responsive teacher-student relationship (Fong et al., 2018). As observed by (Van der Beek et al., 2025), the outcomes of feedback are based mostly on individual learner characteristics and context, which makes continuous and individualized feedback a persistent challenge, especially in classes with limited instructional resources. To these challenges, several alternative approaches have recently been proposed by scholars and practitioners that are designed to support the students' writing processes and lighten the cognitive and temporal load on the teachers (Wang et al., 2025). More recent evidence underlines that pre-service teachers' perceptions of feedback serve as a complete mediator between feedback content and the development of their teaching self-efficacy, stressing that what matters more is not the superficial form or structure of feedback but how it is perceived and interpreted (Escalante et al., 2023).

Integrating ChatGPT into teacher feedback practices has emerged as a promising pedagogical innovation that can mitigate the challenges of delivering individualized feedback in large EFL writing classes while capitalizing on the affordances of AI in enhancing efficiency and interactivity in feedback (Han & Mimi Li, 2024). Drawing upon this development, recent progress with large language models allows teachers to give large quantities of individualized and immediate feedback, thus greatly scaling up the possibility of formative assessment in higher education (Teng, 2024; Tran, 2025). Despite increasing interest in comparing the feedback generated by teachers, peers, and AI, there is still very little empirical research into how individual learner differences influence the relative effectiveness of these sources of feedback (Weidlich, Fink, et al., 2025). The rapid progress within NLP and AI has led to the great use of generative language models in many different fields. As Liu et al. note, this growth will only continue to happen (Liu et al., 2025).

Among several AI-powered tools, there has emerged a generative language model, the ChatGPT, capable of emulating human-like responses and providing adaptive, immediate, and rich contextual feedback (Urzúa et al., 2025). Unlike early generations of AWE, which focused often on grammar and mechanics, the dialogic affordances of ChatGPT enable teachers and students to have interactive discussions of meaning, structure, and argumentation (Yeung, 2025; Zhang, 2025). This shift is representative of a broader transformation in writing pedagogy, where the focus has moved from mechanical error correction to AI-supported reflective learning environments (Wiboolyasarin et al., 2025). However, integrating AI into the feedback practices of instructors also raises significant pedagogical and ethical questions. Studies show that uncritical reliance on ChatGPT is associated with superficial learning, cognitive dependence, and reduced critical awareness in students (Nasr et al., 2025). While AI-generated feedback is rapid and consistent, it often misses sensitivity to the dimensions of discourse context, learner intent, and cultural nuance that are so crucial for meaningful writing development (Escalante et al., 2023; Noroozi et al., 2025). However, ChatGPT as a pedagogically mediated partner can facilitate writing motivation, self-efficacy, and engagement (Teng, 2024; Zhang, 2025). In that respect, the teacher becomes central in terms of mediating, contextualizing, and humanizing AI feedback to ensure that technology complements rather than supplants pedagogical judgment (Weidlich, et al., 2025).As pointed out by (Alrashidi & Abdulmajid, 2025), ChatGPT needs to be considered a pedagogical ally and not an adversary, since instructional impact from such a tool is dependent on the teachers' ability to frame, scaffold, and mediate its classroom use in ways that align with pedagogical intent. foster cycles of feedback that are dialogic in nature, which in turn evoke metacognitive awareness, reflective revision, and autonomous learning qualities often constrained within traditional feedback models (Ortega-Ochoa et al., 2024). It could also relieve teacher workload while maintaining individualized attention and iterative improvement (Xin & Lo, 2025). Otherwise, AI feedback risks being formalistic and decontextualized, which could hamper students' creativity and authentic engagement (Escalante et al., 2023). The teaching of English in Islamic universities is not limited to promoting linguistic development but is also intended to foster ethical awareness, moral responsibility, and reflective thinking that corresponds to the Islamic philosophy of education (Marzuki et al., 2023). Here, teachers at such institutions play a dual role: they are linguistic facilitators and ethical mediators who ensure that technology serves both intellectual and moral growth (Yan & Zhang, 2024).

Despite the significant strides made in AI-mediated learning, most prior research has remained focused on the independent use of AI tools by students rather than the roles that teachers play in mediating the feedback provided by AI (Noroozi et al., 2025; Zhai et al., 2024). This has created an imbalance, with a dearth of research on how teachers can utilize ChatGPT to generate contextually sensitive, ethically founded, and pedagogically consequential feedback. In addressing this'll research gap, the present study therefore seeks to develop a model of ChatGPT-supported teacher feedback for EFL writing development within Islamic higher education. This model conceptualizes how teachers integrate, adapt, and mediate AI feedback within culturally informed pedagogical frameworks that foster critical engagement, linguistic accuracy, and reflective learning.

This study thus contributes to AI-assisted language education by reconceptualizing research emphasis from student-centered AI use to teacher-mediated AI feedback practices. It seeks to develop and validate a contextually grounded model that harmonizes affordances of technology with pedagogical innovation and teacher empowerment. The expected outcomes are the increased teacher agency, refined writing instruction practices, and more ethically responsive use of AI in EFL classrooms. Conversely, the failure to engage in such inquiry will lead to a persistence of pedagogical unbalance, ethical ambiguity, and overreliance

on AI technologies without human oversight.

RQ: How do EFL lecturers in Islamic higher education integrate ChatGPT Feedback for EFL Writing?

Theoretical Framework: Mediation, Self-Regulated Learning, Cognitive Load, and Islamic Educational Ethics

Mediation Theory

Mediation theory provides the primary conceptual perspective for understanding how EFL lecturers integrate ChatGPT-generated feedback into writing instruction. From a sociocultural perspective, learning is mediated through cultural tools, social interaction, and guidance from more knowledgeable others (Vygotsky, 1978). Applied to AI-assisted writing, this perspective suggests that the educational value of ChatGPT does not depend solely on the feedback it generates but also on how lecturers interpret, evaluate, and contextualize its suggestions within instructional objectives. Recent research on generative AI in language education similarly highlights the importance of pedagogical guidance and human involvement in making AI-supported learning meaningful (Kohnke et al., 2025; Zhang & Wang, 2025).

In this study, mediation is understood as the process through which EFL lecturers evaluate ChatGPT's suggestions for linguistic accuracy, task relevance, rhetorical appropriateness, and alignment with students' proficiency levels before incorporating them into feedback practices. Students subsequently interpret these suggestions and decide which revisions to adopt, modify, or reject. The lecturer therefore serves as an intermediary between AI-generated information and students' developing writing competence rather than merely transmitting automated corrections. This perspective provides a basis for examining pedagogical mediation and instructional scaffolding as processes through which lecturers regulate AI use while preserving students' responsibility for composing and revising their own texts.

Self-Regulated Learning Theory

Self-regulated learning (SRL) theory explains how learners actively manage their learning through goal setting, strategic action, monitoring, and reflection. Zimmerman (2000) conceptualizes self-regulation as a cyclical process involving forethought, performance and volitional control, and self-reflection. These processes are particularly relevant to EFL writing because students must evaluate their own texts, identify areas for improvement, consider alternative expressions, and assess the consequences of their revision decisions.

Within ChatGPT-assisted feedback, SRL provides a framework for distinguishing reflective engagement from the uncritical acceptance of AI-generated suggestions. Students may use ChatGPT to identify linguistic problems and explore possible revisions, but meaningful engagement requires them to compare suggestions with their intended meanings, evaluate their suitability, and justify their final choices. Research on feedback and technology-supported learning has likewise examined the relationship between guided feedback, metacognitive engagement, and self-regulatory processes (Ortega-Ochoa et al., 2024; Fan et al., 2024; Tan, 2025).

Accordingly, this study uses SRL to interpret how students participate in iterative revision and how lecturers structure opportunities for reflection. Relevant evidence includes students' explanations of their revision decisions, comparisons between successive drafts, and reflections on changes made following AI-assisted feedback. The theory also helps explain why lecturers may require students to produce an initial draft independently before using ChatGPT. Such sequencing is intended to preserve students' engagement in planning and composing rather than allowing automated suggestions to replace their own decision-making.

Cognitive Load Theory

Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) provides a complementary perspective on the distribution of cognitive effort during AI-assisted writing. Sweller (1988) explains that learning is constrained by limited cognitive processing capacity and that instructional arrangements can influence how much mental effort is available for acquiring and organizing knowledge. In EFL writing, learners must coordinate linguistic accuracy, vocabulary selection, sentence construction, textual coherence, and the development of meaningful arguments. Managing these demands simultaneously may be challenging, particularly for learners who are still developing their proficiency in English.

ChatGPT may assist with selected language-level tasks, such as identifying grammatical problems, suggesting vocabulary alternatives, and reformulating unclear sentences. When its suggestions are accurate and appropriately targeted, this assistance may reduce the effort required to identify certain surface-level problems and allow lecturers and students to devote greater attention to meaning, coherence, and argumentation. However, AI-generated feedback does not automatically reduce cognitive demands. Learners and lecturers must still assess whether a suggestion is accurate, relevant, and consistent with the intended meaning of the text. Uncritical dependence on automated corrections may also reduce opportunities for learners to engage in the reasoning required for independent writing.

Within this study, CLT therefore informs the analysis of how lecturers distribute writing-related tasks between ChatGPT, themselves, and students. Linguistic collaboration is understood as a selective allocation of cognitive work rather than the wholesale transfer of writing responsibilities to AI. Lecturer evaluation, staged access to ChatGPT, and continued student involvement in planning and argument construction are important because they seek to make technological assistance useful without displacing the cognitive processes that writing instruction is intended to develop. This interpretation is consistent with the concerns about critical engagement and over-reliance discussed in research on generative AI in higher education (Holmes et al., 2023; Nasr et al., 2025).

Islamic Educational Ethics as a Contextual Framework

Islamic educational ethics provides the contextual and normative perspective for examining how AI-assisted feedback is understood and regulated within Islamic higher education. Islamic conceptions of education encompass individual development, social and moral formation, and the acquisition of knowledge (Halstead, 2004). In this study, these dimensions inform consideration of the responsibilities accompanying the use of ChatGPT in academic writing,

particularly intellectual honesty, fairness, responsible authorship, and the integrity of learning.

This perspective is not treated as an independent variable or as a claim that all Islamic higher education institutions apply identical ethical practices. Rather, it provides a contextual framework for interpreting how lecturers understand appropriate technology use in relation to institutional expectations and educational purposes. From this standpoint, AI-generated feedback should support students' learning without obscuring their responsibility for the ideas, revisions, and final texts they submit. Lecturers' decisions about when ChatGPT may be used, which suggestions require modification, and which writing tasks should remain independent can therefore be examined as expressions of pedagogical judgment informed by ethical considerations.

For the present study, the ethical dimension is investigated through participants' accounts and available instructional evidence concerning academic integrity, independent writing, appropriate AI use, and the preservation of students' authorship. This approach connects Islamic educational ethics to the mechanism of ethical boundary drawing while recognizing that ethical expectations must be examined in actual instructional practices rather than inferred solely from the institutional setting. It also complements research highlighting the challenges of responsible AI use and the need for human oversight in educational contexts (Alsaedi, 2024; Holmes et al., 2023).

Integration of the Four Perspectives

The four perspectives perform distinct but complementary analytical functions. Mediation theory explains how lecturers evaluate and contextualize AI-generated feedback; SRL theory explains how students monitor, interpret, and reflect on their revision decisions; CLT explains how cognitive work is distributed across the writing and feedback process; and Islamic educational ethics provides a contextual basis for examining responsibility, authorship, and academic integrity. Together, they frame ChatGPT-assisted feedback as a pedagogical process shaped by human judgment, learner engagement, cognitive demands, and ethical considerations.

These perspectives inform the interpretation of evidence from interviews, classroom observations, lesson plans, feedback logs, and student drafts. They also provide conceptual resources for examining the relationships among the five mediational mechanisms identified in this study: pedagogical mediation, instructional scaffolding, linguistic collaboration, affect regulation, and ethical boundary drawing. The mechanisms are treated as analytically related patterns emerging from the qualitative analysis, rather than as interchangeable concepts or predetermined outcomes of the four theories. This integrated framework therefore supports an examination of not only how EFL lecturers use ChatGPT but also how their instructional decisions shape students' engagement with feedback within the context of Islamic higher education.

Human–AI Feedback Integration

In this study, human–AI feedback integration refers to the pedagogical process through which ChatGPT-generated writing suggestions are evaluated, adapted, and selectively incorporated into lecturer-mediated feedback before students use them to revise their texts. It is not understood as the uncritical combination of human and automated feedback. Rather, it involves a sequence of AI-generated suggestions, lecturer evaluation and modification, and student interpretation during revision. This distinction is important because the availability of automated feedback does not guarantee its linguistic accuracy, contextual relevance, or pedagogical suitability.

ChatGPT can generate several types of feedback relevant to EFL writing, including grammatical corrections, vocabulary alternatives, sentence reformulations, suggestions for improving clarity and cohesion, and recommendations concerning sentence or paragraph flow. These suggestions primarily support linguistic refinement, although their usefulness varies according to the writing task and the nature of the problem being addressed. Previous research has similarly identified the potential of AI-generated feedback to improve surface-level accuracy while highlighting limitations in addressing discourse-level meaning, rhetorical purpose, and contextual nuance (Banihashem et al., 2024; Lin & Crosthwaite, 2024). Thus, feedback that appears linguistically polished may not necessarily preserve the writer's intended meaning or strengthen the underlying argument.

Within human–AI feedback integration, lecturers evaluate the suggestions before incorporating them into instructional feedback. Their decisions concern several related criteria: linguistic accuracy, relevance to the assignment, consistency with the writer's intended meaning, appropriateness for students' proficiency levels, rhetorical and contextual suitability, and alignment with instructional objectives. A suggestion may be retained when it is accurate and appropriate, modified when it requires adjustment to the task or learner, or rejected when it is inaccurate, irrelevant, excessively advanced, or inconsistent with the intended meaning. These decisions position lecturers as pedagogical evaluators rather than passive transmitters of ChatGPT output.

The process also affects students' engagement with feedback. After receiving lecturer-mediated suggestions, students need to interpret the proposed changes and decide whether they improve their writing rather than simply copying the revised language. This step connects human–AI feedback integration with self-regulated learning because students are expected to compare suggestions with their intentions, evaluate alternatives, and take responsibility for their final revisions. It also creates an ethical dimension: preserving student authorship and academic integrity requires lecturers to distinguish assistance with linguistic expression from the replacement of students' own thinking and composition.

Accordingly, human–AI feedback integration provides the conceptual link between ChatGPT's capacity to generate linguistic suggestions and the lecturer's responsibility to make those suggestions educationally appropriate. In the present study, this process is examined through lecturers' accounts of their feedback decisions, observations of instructional interactions, and documentary evidence from lesson plans, feedback logs, and student drafts. This framing supports an analysis of how lecturers evaluate, modify, or reject AI suggestions and how their decisions shape students' engagement with feedback in Islamic higher education.

Research Gap and Conceptual Direction

Previous research on AI-assisted feedback in EFL writing has identified both its pedagogical potential and its limitations. AI-generated feedback can support linguistic accuracy and provide suggestions for improving written expression; however, its effectiveness is less consistent when feedback requires sensitivity to discourse-level meaning, rhetorical purpose, and contextual appropriateness (Banihashem et al., 2024; Lin & Crosthwaite, 2024). Research has also highlighted the importance of students' engagement with feedback. Learners' ability to interpret, evaluate, and respond critically to ChatGPT-generated suggestions influences how they use feedback during writing revision (Yan & Zhang, 2024; Zhan & Yan, 2025). These findings suggest that the educational value of AI-assisted feedback depends not only on the suggestions generated but also on the processes through which those suggestions are evaluated and used.

Although emerging studies have examined ChatGPT-supported teacher feedback in EFL contexts (Han & Mimi Li, 2024), further investigation is needed into how lecturers make decisions about accepting, modifying, or rejecting AI-generated suggestions and how these decisions relate to students' subsequent revision practices. In particular, the relationship between lecturers' pedagogical judgments and students' interpretation of feedback requires closer examination. Understanding this relationship can clarify whether teacher mediation supports students' active engagement with revision or primarily directs their attention toward surface-level linguistic corrections.

A further issue concerns the ethical context in which such decisions are made. Research on generative AI in education has raised concerns about academic integrity, responsible use, and students' dependence on automated assistance (Alsaedi, 2024; Lund et al., 2025). However, these broader concerns do not fully explain how lecturers interpret and manage such responsibilities in the specific institutional context of Islamic higher education. In this setting, questions of appropriate AI use, academic honesty, and student authorship need to be examined in relation to lecturers' actual instructional decisions rather than assumed from the institutional context alone.

To address these interconnected gaps, the present study investigates how EFL lecturers in Islamic higher education evaluate, adapt, and mediate ChatGPT-generated writing feedback. Drawing on interviews with lecturers and students, classroom observations, and document analysis, the study examines lecturers' decision-making processes, the relationship between feedback and student revision, and the ethical considerations reflected in feedback practices. Mediation theory, self-regulated learning theory, cognitive load theory, and Islamic educational ethics provide complementary perspectives for interpreting these processes. Rather than evaluating ChatGPT in isolation, the study seeks to explain how its feedback is incorporated into teacher-guided writing instruction and how pedagogical and ethical considerations shape that integration.

RQ: How do EFL lecturers in Islamic higher education evaluate and mediate ChatGPT-generated writing feedback in relation to students' revision practices and ethical considerations?

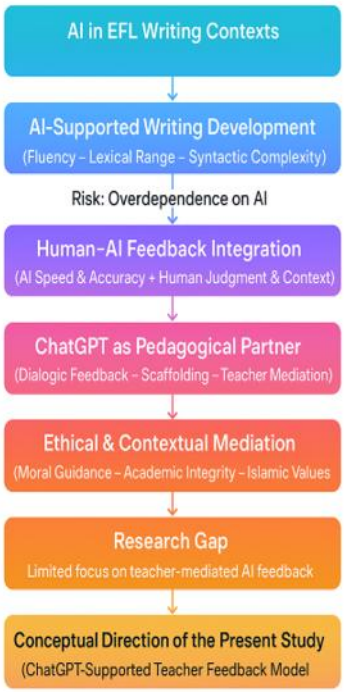


FIGURE 1 | Teacher-guided ChatGPT model for EFL writing

Overall, these reviewed studies confirm the logic presented in Figure 1 above, which shows how AI integration in EFL writing environments develops in a manner from AI-assisted writing development towards a teacher-mediated AI feedback model. Although AI systems such as ChatGPT have been proven to have a major positive impact on fluency, lexicogrammar, and syntactic variety, it is widely recognized in literature that there are dangers of overdependence and shallow revision if AI feedback is not meditated pedagogically (Wilcoxen & Lemke, 2021).

Hence, in this integrated realm, ChatGPT can be most appropriately considered not an autonomous tool but a teacher assistant in facilitating dialogic teacher feedback, scaffolding, and teacher-assisted reflection and revision. Moreover, figure 1 above not only highlights AI and educational (Wilcoxen & Lemke, 2021) ethics but also underlines the critical significance of teacher mediation in ensuring academic integrity and value education in higher education in an Islamic setting.

METHODS

Research Design and Participants

This study employed an explanatory qualitative research design to investigate how EFL lecturers integrate ChatGPT into their teacher feedback practices in Islamic higher education. An explanatory qualitative design was adopted to explore the pedagogical reasoning and contextual factors shaping EFL lecturers' integration of ChatGPT feedback. The study focused on understanding this phenomenon rather than comparing separate cases through in-depth interviews.

It involves seven EFL lecturers in writing and twenty-five undergraduate students from Islamic higher education institutions. The seven EFL lecturers can be considered the main participants because the nature of the qualitative

explanatory design involves investigating how and why EFL lecturers further integrate ChatGPT technology in writing feedback. EFL lecturer selection was based on purposive sampling because these lecturers are actively involved in EFL writing instruction, conduct regular written feedback, and have experience in using ChatGPT technology in written feedback. There are also twenty-five EFL undergraduate students who acted as supporting participants to aid in finding additional data regarding their exposure to ChatGPT-assisted EFL written feedback.

Instruments and Data Collection

Data were gathered through multiple qualitative techniques, including semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis (lesson plans, feedback logs, and student drafts). These data sources provided a triangulated understanding of how teachers conceptualize, mediate, and evaluate ChatGPT-based feedback in their instructional settings. To strengthen the trustworthiness of the qualitative analysis, the study employed cross-validation across multiple data sources and a review of selected interpretations. Following the initial thematic analysis, interview data were compared with classroom observation notes and documentary evidence, including lesson plans, lecturer feedback logs, and student writing drafts. This comparison examined whether the emerging interpretations were supported across sources and identified areas of convergence, complementarity, or divergence. Differences between participants' accounts and the documentary or observational evidence were considered during interpretation rather than automatically resolved in favour of one source.

In addition, selected preliminary interpretations were reviewed by lecturers to assess whether they adequately represented participants' experiences and instructional practices. Feedback from this review was considered when clarifying or refining the interpretations. Analytical memos were also used to document interpretive decisions and trace the development of themes. Together, these procedures strengthened the credibility and contextual grounding of the findings concerning lecturer mediation, student engagement with AI-generated feedback, and the ethical considerations shaping rather than automatically resolved in favor of one source. In addition, selected preliminary interpretations were reviewed by lecturers to assess whether they adequately represented participants' experiences and instructional practices. Feedback from this review was considered when clarifying or refining the interpretations. Analytical memos were also used to document interpretive decisions and trace the development of themes. Together, these procedures strengthened the credibility and contextual grounding of the findings concerning lecturer mediation, student engagement with AI-generated feedback, and the ethical considerations shaping ChatGPT-assisted EFL writing instruction.



FIGURE 2 | Teacher-guided ChatGPT feedback data framework

Figure 2 above illustrates a systematic framework for data collection which focuses squarely on researching a question related to EFL lecturers in Islamic higher education institutions incorporating ChatGPT feedback into writing instruction programs. Thematic analysis followed (Braun & Clarke, 2006), six-phase model: familiarization, coding, theme generation, review, definition, and interpretation. Themes were developed from the data and compared across participants and data sources to identify recurring patterns and differences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This qualitative explanatory approach was used in this study to explore how EFL instructors integrate ChatGPT into their feedback practices in Islamic higher education. This consisted of 32 participants, including 25 undergraduates and seven lecturers in higher education institutions classified as Islamic institutions. The sample included ten students, purposefully selected due to their sustained engagement with the ChatGPT-assisted writing activities. All seven lecturers participated in semi-structured interviews to identify pedagogical reasoning, ethical considerations, and context-driven decisions. The analysis drew on data from seven lecturer interviews (L1–L7) and ten student interviews (S1–S10) and was cross-validated with classroom observations and document analysis.

Teachers refine AI feedback for learning

The analysis of students' written recount texts revealed a gradual improvement in writing quality over the course of daily writing practice. Students demonstrated clearer idea development, more coherent text organization, and increased control over language features characteristic of recount texts, The role of lecturers in this context is not only confined to the transmission of AI suggestions but rather involves acting as educational mediators. This indicates that lecturers react in accordance with a professional orientation wherein AI's suggestions are critically evaluated and incorporated based upon instruction and normative standards in the realm of higher education in the context of Islam. The process of referring to AI's suggestions and preparing the ensuing feedback after mediating includes the following from the descriptions of the lecturers: getting suggestions from AI, assessing the linguistic correctness and rhetorical efficacy of the suggestions, detecting discrepancies in the suggestions and the context or instruction, and restructuring the ensuing feedback before imparting it to students. This process draws attention to the inherent limit in terms of what ChatGPT provides and what the lecturers finally decide upon in those instructions.

The pattern that keeps recurring here is the fact that the lecturers are more concerned with the use of ChatGPT in terms of clarity, cohesion, and linguistic accuracy in the conversation process while keeping more elevated matters like the quality of arguments or pertinence in mind when human judgment comes into play. This positioning of ChatGPT keeps this tool more of a linguistic aid and not the judge in allowing the lecturers to retain control over the process of meaning-making and epistemic values in academic writing. This mediational approach helps students avoid

blindly leaning on AI. By emphasizing that they should interpret AI ideas rather than imitate them, instructors encourage thoughtfulness in writing and protect the integrity of assessments. In this respect, mediation can be considered both a pedagogical safeguard and a moral stance embedded in Islamic academic culture, where fairness, authenticity, and intellectual honesty are highly valued.

"I never give the raw result from ChatGPT to students. I always screen it, modify it, and check if the language matches the level of my students." — L1

"ChatGPT is fast in fixing grammar, but I still decide which suggestions are relevant. Some expressions are too advanced or unrelated to the task." — L3

"I adjust ChatGPT's feedback, so it fits the academic context of Islamic higher education and avoids ambiguous interpretations." — L5

These accounts illustrate that human–AI feedback integration involved selective evaluation rather than the direct transfer of ChatGPT-generated suggestions to students. L1's emphasis on language level indicates that linguistic accessibility informed the lecturer's decision to modify AI output. L3's account demonstrates the importance of task relevance and proficiency appropriateness, while L5 highlights contextual suitability and the avoidance of ambiguity. Taken together, these examples suggest that lecturers evaluated AI suggestions against pedagogical and contextual criteria before incorporating them into feedback practices. The evidence therefore supports the interpretation of human–AI feedback integration as a process of professional judgment in which the linguistic affordances of ChatGPT remain subject to lecturer evaluation.

The results reveal that lecturers act as essential mediators of AI-generated feedback, actively selecting and refashioning the suggestions offered by ChatGPT to meet the linguistic, rhetorical, and contextual requirements. In doing so, their practice shows that AI is not treated as an authoritative assessor but rather as an ancillary linguistic tool whose outputs must be carefully interpreted pedagogically. This mediational position is in line with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of human intervention in AI-assisted instruction to avoid misalignment with task expectations (Nasr et al., 2025). However, the current study goes beyond the existing body of work by underlining how such mediation is further determined by Islamic higher education's ethical and epistemic conventions, in which authenticity, justice, and intellectual honesty lie at the core of scholarly practice.

These mediation effects have important implications for teaching: they enhance the (Nasr et al., 2025) value and quality of AI-assisted feedback while engaging students in high-order thinking processes: interpretation, evaluation, and justification of changes to text, rather than mere copying from the AI output. As demonstrated in Table 1, the AI output is never presented to students in its unmediated state; rather, it undergoes the teacher's pedagogical and ethical interpretation: from initial draft to raw AI suggestions, to teacher-mediated support and student modification incorporating an understanding of the ideas reflected upon through the revisions. Taken collectively, the results suggest that the practical use of AI in EFL writing involves not the trigger of technological advancements, alone, to construct meaningful, ethical, and developmental trajectories in the writing of the students, with the lecturers preferring control over it all.

TABLE 1 | Lecturer-Mediated ChatGPT Feedback in EFL Writing

Stage	Excerpt
Initial Student Draft	Technology is important in education because it helps students understand lesson more easily
ChatGPT Feedback (Raw)	You may strengthen this paragraph by elaborating on how technology supports learner autonomy and improves engagement in the learning process
Lecturer Pedagogical & Ethical Mediation	The lecturer evaluated the AI suggestion, simplified abstract terminology, ensured alignment with the course objective, and emphasized clarity while reinforcing academic integrity and student authorship
Student Reflective Revision	Technology supports learning by allowing students to practice independently and review lessons more clearly, based on the feedback provided
Instructor Follow-up Feedback	The lecturer prompted the student to justify the revision and reflect on how the changes improved clarity rather than merely adopting AI phrasing

Table 1 provides an empirical, data-driven example of the kind of mediation suggested here. It shows how AI-generated feedback is not consumed wholesale or wielded like an ultimate judgment standard. Instead, instructors exercise pedagogical judgment in carefully interpreting, summarizing, and re-framing ChatGPT's ideas to meet students' language capabilities, the purposes of instruction, and the epistemic and ethical conventions of higher education in an Islamic context. In this instance, the AI output becomes a provisional linguistic source, rather than a textbook of rules. The revisions written by the students carry a guided growth, where feedback is reshaped through human influence, as it allows student voices and responsibilities for authorship to be maintained. This example underpins the core claim of this study: teacher-mediated AI feedback is essentially a human-centered pedagogy, in which meaning, ethics, scholarly excellences are driven by educators, while AI plays a supporting role of non-authoritative assistance (Zhang & Wang, 2025).

Structuring Writing Instruction Through Guided AI Use

Educators outline a step-by-step teaching model where ChatGPT provides support at different parts of the writing process. Students are encouraged to brainstorm with the tool but keep all first drafts in their own words, for true skill

development. It isn't until the revision stage that they may refer to ChatGPT for perfecting grammar, elevating word choice, and constructing better sentence structures. That is a conscious architecture for reducing reliance on artificial intelligence and emphasizing the core elements of writing. These teaching sequences reveal purposeful scaffolding: AI assistance increases incrementally as students' progress from brainstorming to polishing. Instructors strike a balance between independence and support, making sure AI doesn't take over key mental tasks like planning, structuring, and building an argument. Setting clear limits also signals awareness of the bigger risks of AI becoming too normalized-where too much ease could dull the growth of writing fluency. The instructors' approach reflects a nuanced understanding of how students develop over time. They understand AI may accelerate little, incremental gains, but real growth in the art of analysis writing happens through steady student work combined with ongoing, dialogue-driven guidance from teachers. The final approach blends traditional teaching with AI-enabled revision loops in a hybrid pedagogy that is consistently grounded in human mentorship.

"Students must write their first draft on their own. Only after that can they use ChatGPT to polish grammar and vocabulary." — L4

"I allow ChatGPT during brainstorming and revising, but not during exams or tasks meant to assess their actual writing competence." — L2

"Using ChatGPT too early makes students dependent, so I regulate when it can be used." — L6

Interview data indicate that lecturers deliberately regulate the timing and scope of ChatGPT use across different stages of the writing process to preserve students' cognitive ownership of composition. As articulated by L4, L2, and L6, students are required to generate initial drafts independently, while AI support is selectively permitted during brainstorming and revision phases and explicitly restricted in assessment-oriented tasks. This staged orchestration reflects a pedagogical strategy designed to safeguard core cognitive processes of ideation, planning, and argument construction, while preventing premature dependence on automated assistance. Such practices are grounded in lecturers' dual concerns regarding assessment integrity and deep learning.

This approach aligns with research demonstrating that controlled AI integration sustains learner autonomy and mitigates overreliance (Holmes et al., 2023; Leelavathi & Surendhranatha Reddy, 2024), while challenging claims that liberal AI use inevitably erodes writing competence (Syafei & Nuraeningsih, 2025). Pedagogically, positioning ChatGPT as a supplementary revision tool rather than a generative engine reconceptualizes feedback as a metacognitive practice. By sequencing AI use after autonomous drafting, lecturers maintain students' responsibility for knowledge construction and reinforce epistemic values central to academic writing. From a self-regulated learning perspective, this purposeful ordering represents a strategic redistribution of cognitive control, whereby regulation is gradually transferred while learners retain authority over fundamental compositional decisions.

Enhancing Clarity and Accuracy: AI-Lecturer Collaboration

This partnership of seasoned lecturers and AI-made language refinements creates a two-layered feedback process where ChatGPT sharpens surface-level accuracy, while instructors push deeper conceptual growth. Such a dual approach will inherently help the student in building both small-scale skills and bigger, overarching understanding at the same time. According to the instructors, AI is especially useful in large class settings where there is limited time for one-on-one guidance and giving detailed feedback is hard to achieve. By simplifying the mechanical side of reviews, AI frees educators to focus on genuine conversations with students about coherence, how arguments are built, and whether ideas fit the context. It fundamentally changes what educators prioritize in teaching: not correcting mistakes but creating intellectual engagement.

"ChatGPT helps me detect awkward sentences quickly, so I can spend more time guiding students on ideas and argumentation." — L3

"I use ChatGPT to test whether a paragraph flows logically before I comment on students' content." — L1

"Grammar checks are faster now, so I focus more on conceptual clarity." — L7

Results indicate that lecturers employ the use of ChatGPT primarily for assistive functions related to the language parsing grammar issues, improving clarity on the language issues, and enhancing the flow of sentences leaving the critical and higher-order reflections for themselves. This approach has the advantage of delegating lesser functions to the AI. It will take care of the minor language adjustments for the lecturer to attend to ideas and logical structures and ascertain the relevance of the context. Results also indicate an appreciation by the lecturers of the capabilities and limitations of the AI technology to understand the nuances and context. ChatGPT's role assumes the position of the non-authoritative actor interactor of the context-related processes. Consistent with prior research highlighting AI's affordances for micro-level linguistic refinement (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Holmes et al., 2023), the present study extends the literature by demonstrating how such affordances become educationally productive only when embedded within teacher-led mediation. As a result, feedback shifts from error correction toward conceptual dialogue, supporting self-regulated learning, sustaining academic integrity, and reinforcing human agency in AI-assisted writing instruction.

Students' Affective Engagement and Emotional Regulation Through AI

The students reported a sensed improvement in their attitude towards writing when using ChatGPT. They were less anxious, more confident, and receptive to revising. This is because the tool allows students to receive feedback that is non-threatening. This is a significant component that reduces fear and inhibition for L2 writers. The students, however, were concerned about whether their voice would be overpowered by highly refined suggestions from the tool, indicating a developing concern about authorship and identity within AI-enabled writing. The reported nuances of comfort and concern indicate a lack of critical adoption of AI

technology by students. Students' accounts revealed contrasting emotional responses to ChatGPT-assisted writing feedback. While S1 reported feeling calmer because the tool provided clear, non-judgmental explanations, S5 expressed concern that highly polished suggestions might undermine the authenticity of their writing. These accounts suggest that students' emotional engagement with AI-assisted feedback involved both reassurance and uncertainty about maintaining their authorial voice. This interpretation is consistent with Teng (2024), who reported positive effects of ChatGPT-assisted writing on learners' motivation, self-efficacy, and engagement while also identifying some concerns about its use. Similarly, Espartinez (2024) documented diverse perspectives on ChatGPT integration in higher education, including concerns about ethical and pedagogical implications. Taken together, these findings suggest that lecturers need to balance emotional support with opportunities for students to exercise independent judgment and preserve their authorship.

"I feel calm using ChatGPT because it explains mistakes clearly and doesn't judge me." — S1
"Sometimes the suggestions sound too perfect, and I wonder if the writing still represents me." — S5
"I feel more confident when drafting because I know I can check my ideas before submitting them." — S2

The findings indicate that, in their interactions with ChatGPT, students had strong affective benefits in the form of reduced anxiety, heightened confidence, and increased willingness to revise. The tool's non-judgmental tone and clear explanations led to emotional safety that allowed learners to experiment more freely with their ideas and persevere through the revision challenges. At the same time, however, some students showed subtle discomfort with authorship and authenticity, observing that highly polished suggestions often felt out of step with their personal voice. The combination of comfort and ambivalence here demonstrates that students' affective engagement with AI is complex, involving reassurance and reflective caution at once.

These results align with previous research demonstrating that AI-assisted writing can reduce anxiety and increase confidence in the writing process (Kim et al., 2025. Similarly, studies have documented how ChatGPT provides emotional scaffolding that enables students to take intellectual risks and continue motivation (Dwivedi et al., 2023). However, the current results differ from those studies which observe that students tend to adopt an uncritical reliance on AI and become oblivious to concerns about authenticity (Lund et al., 2025). Participants in this study showed much greater awareness that AI phrasing may dominate their style and thus demonstrated a more reflective and self-regulated use of the tool.

Educators can engage learners in reflective practices that focus on the justification of change, understanding stylistic choice, and performing critical comparisons of AI results and the student intent. In considering this, the role of emotional intelligence in teaching AI-based writing support offers educators the chance to engage learners in a way that utilizes the motivational potential of ChatGPT without leading to overdependence and loss of personal expression and authority in writing (Chen, 2025).

Iterative Revision Cycles as Evidence of Self-Regulated Learning

Teachers and students alike perceive ChatGPT as a source to be integrated, not as a "quick fix," but as a partner to be cycled through on a constant loop of editing and refinement. Students are continually engaging with drafts, juxtaposing ideas surfaced through AI activity, as per instructions by teachers, all pointing to students exercising a higher level of self-control and cognitive regulation over their work. The immediate, low-stakes feedback provided by ChatGPT encourages students to take chances without fearing the wait that comes between turning it in, turning it around, as if all by itself, through ChatGPT, students are placed on a journey that sees the practice of writing as an ongoing, as opposed to a fait accompli, proposition. Teachers, however, expertly supervise all these processes by encouraging students to annotate changes made through ChatGPT, providing a rationalization that AI use by students promotes interpretive thought as opposed to editing as an activity reduced to mere mechanism.

"I revise my draft, paste it back into ChatGPT, and check again until it sounds clearer." — S4
"Students must highlight what changed based on ChatGPT suggestions and write a short reflection." — L4
"I compare earlier drafts to final versions to see how students interpret AI feedback." — L5

The data indicates that the students are engaged in sustained revision processes involving multiple steps, having ChatGPT integrated as a supporting revision collaborator rather than as the quick remedy. The students cycle back through their compositions, comparing and integrating suggestions from the AI and their instructor in their work. Interestingly, the cyclic movement through the work seems to indicate that there might be a gradual movement towards the metacognition model of writing that considers the process more deliberately.

These findings are consistent with more recent findings indicating that AI-supported writing environments can enhance students' engagement with the process of revising and enable the development of self-regulated learning through the cycle of feedback interactivity (Banihashem et al., 2024). Within this study, students did not take AI feedback as it came. Instead, they engaged with it reflectively, carefully marking up revisions, considering one draft against another, and reflecting on decisions to incorporate or reject suggestions. Such a level of metacognition and purposeful use appears to offer a level of sophisticated use over and above that which has been previously observed in studies of AI use, and illustrates the ability to use a reflective, teacher-designed implementation to leverage AI editing to drive informed, independent development as a writer. ChatGPT enabled immediate, low-cost feedback to lower the cognitive threshold to revising and to maintain cognitive momentum when writing, but teacher-designed scaffolds, using teacher-crafted revisions and justification exercises, supported informed, deliberative behavior when revising (Mizumoto et al., 2024).

Overreliance, Ethical Considerations, and AI Limitations

Educators keenly realize the risks in coming to be overly dependent on AI, most especially in areas where integrity and real-life skill-building come to the fore. In response, they set firm lines: some tasks ban AI entirely, they require citations for any AI-assisted edits, and they introduce reflective logs to track the process. Students themselves admitted feeling dependent at times especially when time is tight or they doubt their language skills. This underlines the importance of ethical literacy as much as technical knowhow. In Islamic higher education, moral responsibility is a key focus and lecturers stressed that using AI should align with fairness, honesty, and responsible authorship.

"Some students want everything corrected by ChatGPT, so I set boundaries on when it can be used." — L2

"ChatGPT sometimes gives examples unrelated to accounting, so I must correct or contextualize them." — L3

"AI is helpful, but I worry I depend too much on when I'm stressed." — S7

The results show both educators and students are more aware of the dangers of over-reliance on AI, in a setting that upholds academic integrity, independent skill development, and ethical responsibility. The students also showed awareness of their moments of dependency, particularly when experiencing stress or doubt over their own linguistic capability. The interplay between regulation and self-awareness reflects a nascent culture of ethical digital literacy, where responsible engagement with AI is considered integral to academic growth.

These results are in concert with previous research that has cautioned that unregulated use of AI can erode students' acquisition of basic writing skills and confuse notions of authorship (Wilcoxen & Lemke, 2021). Other related studies have also identified that students, especially under stress, tend to rely heavily on AI and consequently make shortcuts without much cognitive investment (Han & Mimi Li, 2024).

TABLE 2 | Five Mechanisms of Teacher-Mediated ChatGPT Feedback in EFL Writing

Mechanism	Lecturer Practice	Student Response	Theoretical Link
Pedagogical mediation	Filtering and reframing AI-generated feedback based on instructional goals	Interpretive revision rather than verbatim adoption	Mediation Theory
Instructional scaffolding	Regulating AI use across writing stages (drafting–revision)	Maintained authorial autonomy during drafting	Self-Regulated Learning (SRL)
Linguistic collaboration	Delegating surface-level accuracy to AI	Greater focus on higher-order meaning and argumentation	Cognitive Load Theory
Affective regulation	Combining non-judgmental AI feedback with teacher guidance	Reduced anxiety and increased willingness to revise	Affective SRL
Ethical boundary-setting	Enforcing AI disclosure and task-based restrictions	Heightened authorship awareness and ethical judgment	Islamic Educational Ethics

However, the current results diverge from other research that indicates most learners are either unaware of ethical risks or seldom contemplate the moral issues associated with AI use (Lund et al., 2025). This structured approach is consistent with evidence that regulated AI interaction maintains learner autonomy and prevents its detrimentally premature use (Holmes et al., 2023; Leelavathi & Surendhranatha Reddy, 2024), contrary to those contentions proposing AI unregulated use risks degrading underlying writing competencies (Lee, 2020).

By applying theoretical lenses of self-regulated learning theories, it is obvious that lecturers are strategically allotting cognitive control by maintaining control of processes involving idea-meaning and allowing AI use at micro-linguistic levels of writing process analysis and revision, hence maintaining strategic cognitive control by using AI as an auxiliary tool that exclusively supports and supplements fundamental cognitive processes of writing and reflection necessary at long-term levels of academic writing proficiency.

Table 2 summarizes five mechanisms of teacher-mediated ChatGPT feedback: pedagogical mediation, instructional scaffolding, linguistic collaboration, affect regulation, and ethical boundary drawing. ` Contrary to viewing AI implementation in a fragmented way a series of distinct practices are undertaken, table 2 breaks down lecturer moves, student responses, and their theoretical basis in a way in which mediation, self-regulation, affective investment, and ethical positioning operate in a unified learning system.

Table 2 summarizes the major underlying mechanisms of the application of teacher-mediated ChatGPT feedback in EFL writing as part of the Islamic higher education context. Contrary to becoming the dominant source of autonomous feedback, ChatGPT is part of the pedagogically mediated feedback framework, where lecturers fully mediate, filter, and contextualize the output of ChatGPT. Such an application of ChatGPT is consistent with new developments within the field of socio-cultural mediation theory, where experts emphasize continuous human mediation during meaning-making, particularly in the application of digital technological developments (Kohnke et al., 2025; Lund et al., 2025; Zhang & Wang, 2025).

Scaffolding appears in the synthesis because it is identified as one of the five mechanisms. However, retain it as a separate mechanism only if your empirical data distinguish it from broader pedagogical mediation, otherwise, integrate it into that category. Scaffolding appears in the synthesis because it is identified as one of the five

mechanisms. This is consistent with recent developments in SRL approaches of utilizing technological writing assistance (Fan et al., 2024; Tan, 2025).

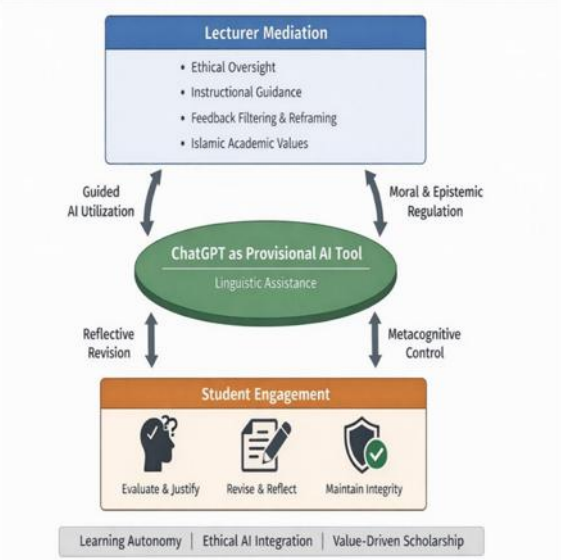


FIGURE 3 | Conceptual Model of Teacher-Mediated AI Feedback in EFL Writing

Linguistic collaboration between lecturers and AI offloads cognitive tasks to distribute the cognitive load between surface understanding accomplished by ChatGPT and deep judgment and argumentation left to the teacher, supported by the latest findings in cognitive load theory on generative AI systems (Holmes et al., 2023; Nasr et al., 2025). Affective regulation is achieved through the complementarity between non-judgmental feedback from the AI system and teacher feedback to alleviate writing anxiety while preserving reflective distance between the writer and the autosuggestions, supported by the latest findings on affective self-regulation in AI-supported learning environments (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Han & Mimi Li, 2024). Moreover, recent scholarship verifies that this imperative to ethical mediation must occur to maintain boundaries against dependence and protect intellectual ownership within generative AI-supported education (Alsaedi, 2024).

Taken together, these approaches place ChatGPT within a contingent linguistic tool, where its educational utility instead appears within expert teacher-mediated pedagogies to support a human-centered and ethical framework for integrating AI rather than technology-centric approaches.

Conceptual Synthesis: A Teacher-Mediated Model of Ethical AI Feedback in EFL Writing

To integrate the analytic strands, we have formulated and to render the relationships between the mechanisms we've isolated explicit, this study proposes a conceptual model. The figure schematically packages the ways in which ChatGPT feedback is pedagogically woven into the teaching of EFL writing in an Islamic high education setting. The figure is not simply ornamental; it takes an integrative role.

The illustration shows that ChatGPT mainly helps with surface-level linguistic refinements, while deeper meaning-making, argumentation, and justification of knowledge remain under human control. These mediated transactions foster iterative cycles of revision impelled by interpretation rather than imitation, thereby enhancing self-regulated learning, authorial agency, and reflective awareness. Informed by mediation theory, SRL, cognitive load theory, and Islamic educational ethics, the model posits that meaningful AI integration is not entirely driven by technology but pedagogically guided-which presupposes human judgement, ethical framing, and contextual sensitivity for authenticity and integrity in AI-supported EFL writing.

CONCLUSION

The implications of this research prove the integration of ChatGPT in EFL writing in Islamic higher education not to be about the takeover of tech functions by machines, but about human-focused, teacher-mediated, ethical teaching practice. The implications of this study reveal the reality of the emotionally remarked gains of using AI-enhanced feedback in the writing class, including the mitigation of anxiety, the increase of confidence, and the sustenance of the motivation to revise, in combination with the ignition of thought-provoking inquiries about authorship, voice, and authenticity. Most importantly, this experience with the emotions and thoughts about the use of AI-enhanced tools not only takes place independently, which it does not, but also takes place due to teacher-mediated control of when, how, and for what purpose the use of ChatGPT takes place in the writing class. In this configuration, students are not merely passive recipients of the AI results.

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