



## Students' perceptions of collaborative GenAI policymaking in a Japanese university EFL classroom

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### ABSTRACT

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The rapid adoption of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in education has led to concerns about appropriate student use, academic integrity, and the development of critical thinking skills, including in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. While many measures addressing these concerns emphasize enforcement-oriented policies, relatively little research has examined participatory approaches in which students help shape course-specific expectations for GenAI use. This classroom action research (CAR) study explores students' perceptions of a collaborative GenAI policymaking activity in a university EFL writing course in Japan. Data were collected through an anonymous post-activity survey with Likert-scale items and open-ended questions ( $n = 7$ ). Qualitative analysis identified two primary themes: exposure to diverse peer perspectives on GenAI use and a desire for greater structure or guidance, along with a contextual theme related to perceived psychological safety in discussion. Findings suggest that collaborative policymaking functioned not only as a means of formulating course guidelines but also as a reflective, deliberative learning activity. At the same time, students' responses highlight the importance of light scaffolding to support participation and decision-making. This study contributes EFL-specific evidence to discussions of pedagogically grounded approaches to GenAI use by illustrating how collaborative policymaking can function as a reflective classroom activity. It also offers practical insights into how light scaffolding may support student participation while preserving learner autonomy.

**Contribution/Originality:** This study provides empirical insights into collaborative GenAI policymaking within the EFL classroom context, an area that has received limited attention. It shows how participatory policy design can function as a reflective classroom activity and identifies the role of light scaffolding in supporting student participation and autonomy.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has demonstrated clear benefits in fields such as healthcare, business, economics, and education (Fui-Hoon Nah, Zheng, Cai, Siau, & Chen, 2023; Nazir & Wang, 2023; Ooi et al., 2025) including within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Fang & Han, 2025; Lo, Yu, Xu, Ng, & Jong, 2024). Research investigating GenAI in EFL has disproportionately focused on its relevance to writing instruction, with reported benefits including improved performance, enhanced motivation and confidence, and support for idea generation, revision, and feedback (Alsaedi, 2024; Balci, 2024; Fang & Han, 2025; Lo et al., 2024; Mali, 2025; Teng, 2024).

At the same time, GenAI use presents clear pedagogical challenges. Both researchers and learners have expressed concern regarding over-reliance on these tools (Fang & Han, 2025; Lo et al., 2024; Mali, 2025; Sarica & Gençoğlu,

2025), the potential for cognitive offloading (Fang & Han, 2025), and ambiguity surrounding plagiarism and acceptable use (Fang & Han, 2025; Mali, 2025).

Educational institutions and instructors have often responded to these issues with compliance- and enforcement-oriented strategies for GenAI, such as banning tools (Moorhouse, Yeo, & Wan, 2023), requiring documentation of use (Halaweh, 2023; Moorhouse et al., 2023), or relying on detection technologies (Birks & Clare, 2023; Cordero, Torres-Zambrano, & Cordero-Castillo, 2025). In contrast, some scholars argue for more participatory approaches where teachers and students collaboratively establish course-specific expectations for GenAI use (Mali, 2025; Moorhouse et al., 2023; Teng, 2024).

Despite the intuitive appeal of collaborative policymaking, empirical research examining this approach remains limited, particularly in EFL contexts. This classroom action research (CAR) study addresses this gap by examining students' perceptions of a collaborative GenAI policymaking activity implemented in a university EFL writing course in Japan.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Benefits of GenAI in EFL Writing

Research on GenAI use in EFL contexts has consistently documented its potential benefits for writing instruction. Much of this work has focused on how GenAI can support learners across the stages of the writing process (Alsaedi, 2024; Fujiono, Hartono, & Wahyuni, 2025; Launonen, Talalakina, & Dubova, 2024; Mali, 2025; Teng, 2024; Teng, 2024). Reported benefits include improvements in writing performance, increased motivation and confidence, enhanced support for idea generation and revision, and the immediate provision of feedback (Alsaedi, 2024; Balci, 2024; Fang & Han, 2025; Lo et al., 2024; Mali, 2025; Teng, 2024; Teng, 2024).

These pedagogical benefits are reflected in generally positive student attitudes toward GenAI use in EFL writing classes (Fujii & Hook, 2024; Fujiono et al., 2025; Kashiwagi & Kang, 2025; Mali, 2025; Sarica & Gençoğlu, 2025; Yamaoka, 2024). Taken as a whole, this research suggests that GenAI can serve as a useful pedagogical resource in EFL writing instruction, provided its use supports learning objectives rather than replacing student effort.

### 2.2. Challenges of GenAI in EFL Writing

At the same time, GenAI usage also presents clear challenges. Both researchers (Alsaedi, 2024; Balci, 2024; Fang & Han, 2025; Liu, Sihes, & Lu, 2025; Lo et al., 2024; Mali, 2025; Teng, 2024) and learners themselves (Nelson, Santamaría, Javens, & Ricaurte, 2025; Richards & Jones, 2024; Sarica & Gençoğlu, 2025) have expressed particular concern regarding over-reliance on these tools. Such over-reliance may lead to increased *cognitive offloading*, that is, “the use of physical action to alter the information processing requirements of a task so as to reduce cognitive demand” (Risko & Gilbert, 2016) with potential consequences for critical thinking and creativity (Gerlich, 2025; Kosmyrna et al., 2025). *Critical thinking*, understood as “reasonable reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do” (Ennis, 1987) is a central goal of higher education, and English learners themselves have expressed concern that excessive dependence on GenAI may lead to the loss of creativity, personal voice, or both (Esmaeil, Dzulkifli, Maakip, Matanluk, & Marshall, 2023; Launonen et al., 2024; Richards & Jones, 2024).

These concerns intersect directly with widespread anxiety—again among both researchers (Alsaedi, 2024; Balci, 2024; Fang & Han, 2025; Lo et al., 2024; Mali, 2025; Teng, 2024) and students (Chan, 2025; Fujii & Hook, 2024; Fujiono et al., 2025; Launonen et al., 2024; Mali, 2025; Sarica & Gençoğlu, 2025), over plagiarism. In addition to compromising academic integrity, plagiarism may deprive students of opportunities to develop critical thinking skills. Complicating this issue is the considerable variation in students' conceptions of what constitutes plagiarism. While learners frequently identify the direct copying of GenAI-generated text as plagiarism (Chan, 2025; Esmaeil et al., 2023; Launonen et al., 2024), they often express greater acceptance of GenAI use for supportive functions such as idea generation (Nelson et al., 2025), language checking (Chan, 2025; Launonen et al., 2024; Nelson et al., 2025), and

information searching (Chan, 2025; Launonen et al., 2024). An additional complication for EFL learners is their tendency to imitate inner-circle English, which may lead to accusations of plagiarism if they copy GenAI output verbatim (Warschauer et al., 2023).

### *2.3. Policy Responses to GenAI in Education*

Numerous recommendations have been made to address the inappropriate use of GenAI. A common suggestion is the establishment of clear GenAI-usage policies (Alsaedi, 2024; Chan, 2025; Cordero et al., 2025; Mali, 2025), although this approach alone appears to have limited influence on students' actual practices (Lund et al., 2025). Other frequently proposed measures include compliance- and enforcement-oriented strategies, such as requiring students to document GenAI use (Halaweh, 2023; Moorhouse et al., 2023), implementing GenAI-resistant assessments (Cong-Lem, Tran, & Nguyen, 2024; Cordero et al., 2025; Lund et al., 2025; Mali, 2025; Moorhouse et al., 2023), and penalizing inappropriate use (Lynch, Salamonson, Glew, & Ramjan, 2021). Collectively, these approaches call on teachers to lay down the law and enforce it, a stance that (Birks & Clare, 2023) explicitly frames within a crime-prevention paradigm.

At the same time, many scholars caution against the outright prohibition of GenAI. One reason is its growing ubiquity (Halaweh, 2023; Moorhouse et al., 2023; Warschauer et al., 2023). Another is that the software tools designed to detect GenAI-produced text have been shown to generate problematically high false-positive rates (Grassini, 2023; Moorhouse et al., 2023), particularly when applied to non-native English writing (Liang, Yuksekgonul, Mao, Wu, & Zou, 2023). While some anticipate the development of more robust detection algorithms (Cordero et al., 2025), others warn against the futility of what amounts to an arms race between detection tools and GenAI systems (Grassini, 2023). Moreover, a complete ban on GenAI risks forgoing its documented pedagogical benefits as well as exacerbating the digital divide (Warschauer et al., 2023). Finally, many instructors view policing academic integrity as both onerous (Kier & Ives, 2022; Lynch et al., 2021) and pedagogically unsound, particularly regarding GenAI use (Giray, Sevnarayan, & Ranjbaran Madiseh, 2025).

### *2.4. Participatory and Collaborative Approaches*

Considering these issues, some scholars advocate a more humanistic and autonomy-enhancing approach in which teachers and students collaboratively formulate course-specific GenAI guidelines (Mali, 2025; Moorhouse et al., 2023; Teng, 2024). Viewed in this way, collaborative policymaking can be understood not only as a pedagogical management strategy for addressing GenAI use but also as a learning activity in its own right. Despite its intuitive appeal, relatively little empirical research has examined this approach. In one case study, Debelius et al. (2025) describe students and faculty co-creating GenAI guidelines for an undergraduate writing class at an American university. Students reported high engagement, an increased sense of responsibility, and appreciation for the opportunity to collaborate with individuals from diverse backgrounds, while also noting confusion and low confidence stemming from limited experience in guideline drafting. Similarly, Pu et al. (2025) report on a workshop in which 17 high school students collaboratively proposed GenAI guidelines, resulting in a deeper understanding of GenAI's benefits and heightened awareness of potential risks. Notably, neither study was conducted in an EFL context, underscoring the need for EFL-specific research. Related work by the author has examined Japanese EFL students' views on appropriate and inappropriate uses of GenAI in writing classes; this study differs by focusing on students' experiences of collaborative policymaking as a pedagogical intervention.

### *2.5. Purpose of the Present Study*

The present classroom action research (CAR) study examines a collaborative GenAI policymaking activity, focusing on interactional processes, perceived challenges, and outcomes. The researcher, also the course instructor,

implemented the activity as a pedagogical intervention and gathered student feedback to evaluate its perceived effectiveness and inform future iterations. The research questions are as follows:

*RQ1:* How did students perceive the effectiveness of collaborative GenAI policymaking?

*RQ2:* In what ways did this process influence students' attitudes toward GenAI use?

*RQ3:* How might insights from this classroom action research inform future participatory policymaking practices in EFL classrooms?

### 3. METHOD

#### 3.1. Research Design

This study adopted a classroom action research (CAR) design to explore students' perceptions of a collaborative, student-led activity in which they developed course-specific GenAI guidelines in an EFL writing course. Consistent with CAR, the aim was not statistical generalization but to better understand how the activity functioned in this particular class and how it might be improved in future iterations (Burns, 2010; Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014; Mertler, 2021). Students' reflections were treated as central evidence for evaluating whether the activity was effective in this instructional setting and for identifying practical improvements for future implementation.

#### 3.2. Context and Participants

The study was conducted in an elective university course at a small national university of education in Western Japan. Participants included 13 students (11 third-year and 2 fourth-year) majoring in teacher education programs with a focus on secondary English education.

#### 3.3. Course Structure and Regular Instruction

Throughout the semester, students completed a repeated academic writing cycle utilizing English-language research articles focusing on second language acquisition (SLA). Students were divided into groups of around four, with each group assigned a different article. In the class session following the article's assignment, groups worked together to identify the article's main points. Students were then given the written assignment, which required them to produce (1) an academic summary including the article's literature review context, purpose, methods, key findings, and pedagogical implications, along with an APA-style reference; (2) a one-paragraph personal response; and (3) comprehension and discussion questions to be used in group work. Students were to complete the assignment out of class, but given permission to consult group members as needed. In the subsequent class, students met again in their original groups to evaluate one another's work. They were then reorganized into mixed groups so that each article was represented, and each student shared their summary and led peers through comprehension and discussion questions. Each article cycle took approximately two weeks to complete.

#### 3.4. Rationale for the GenAI Policymaking Activity

As the course progressed, it became apparent, though not certain, that a substantial portion of students was using GenAI tools to help with their summaries. This may have been precipitated by the considerable challenge of summarizing English-language academic articles. At the same time, clear, course-specific guidelines regarding GenAI use had not yet been established. This situation prompted the implementation of a collaborative policymaking activity aimed at aligning GenAI use with the educational objectives of the course.

#### 3.5. Procedure: Collaborative Policymaking Session

Roughly halfway through the semester, students were told to prepare to discuss the following questions in the next class: (1) What are the appropriate uses of AI in this course? (2) What are the inappropriate uses of AI in this course? and (3) What would be appropriate policies regarding the use of AI in this course?

The collaborative policymaking activity was conducted during the subsequent class session. Students were first reminded of the educational objectives of the course and were then instructed to work together to formulate GenAI policies that would help ensure those objectives could be achieved. Beyond this, instructions were intentionally left relatively open-ended to observe how students would manage the task with minimal teacher direction. The instructor intervened only when students requested clarification. At the end of the activity, students presented their agreed-upon policy recommendations to the instructor.

### 3.6. Data Collection

Two sources of data were collected. First, the instructor observed students' discussions during the policymaking activity, focusing on general patterns of participation and interaction. Observations were used to inform interpretation but were not subjected to formal analysis. Second, students were invited to complete an anonymous post-activity survey using Google Forms. The estimated completion time was approximately 10 minutes.

The survey included Likert-style items and four open-ended questions in Japanese. The five-point Likert scale ranged from 1 ("I don't agree at all") to 5 ("I strongly agree"). Items focused on students' perceptions of exposure to diverse perspectives on GenAI use, the atmosphere and respectfulness of discussion, perceived equity of participation, perceived change in views on GenAI use, overall satisfaction with the activity, and interest in incorporating similar discussion activities into future classes. The survey items used the term *AI*, reflecting students' common usage when referring to GenAI tools. All Likert items were presented bilingually in Japanese and English and were used descriptively to contextualize the qualitative findings.

The four open-ended questions in Japanese were as follows (English translations provided for reference; all responses were collected in Japanese).

1. What was the most positive aspect of the discussions regarding AI policy?
2. If there were any difficulties or challenges during the discussion, please describe them.
3. Did this activity change your views on using AI? If so, please explain why.
4. If you have any suggestions or ideas for improving this activity, please share them.

Students were informed in Japanese of the purpose of the study, that participation was voluntary, that they could withdraw at any time without penalty, and that survey responses were anonymous and contained no personally identifiable information. Students were also informed that data would be used solely for course improvement and research purposes and would be treated confidentially. Seven students submitted survey responses, which were included in the qualitative analysis.

### 3.7. Data Analysis

Open-ended survey responses were analyzed using a multi-stage qualitative coding process. First, values coding was used to identify participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs related to the collaborative policymaking activity (Saldaña, 2021). Next, an inductive coding approach allowed categories to emerge from the data without imposing predetermined frameworks (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These codes were then grouped into broader categories and refined into themes through reflexive thematic analysis, following (Braun & Clarke, 2006) guidelines.

Likert-style items were not analyzed quantitatively. Given the small number of respondents ( $n = 7$ ), they were summarized descriptively and used only to help contextualize and triangulate the qualitative findings.

To enhance trustworthiness, peer debriefing and investigator triangulation were employed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). A colleague reviewed the coding scheme and independently applied it to the dataset, after which discrepancies in interpretation were discussed until agreement was reached. No inter-coder reliability coefficient was calculated, in line with the emphasis in reflexive thematic analysis on transparency and interpretive depth rather than numerical agreement (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. Overview of Themes

The results are presented through a theme-driven qualitative analysis of students' survey responses, drawing primarily on open-ended items and supported, where appropriate, by Likert-scale data. Two primary themes emerged from the qualitative responses, along with one contextual theme that was triangulated mainly through quantitative measures. Together, these themes capture students' perceptions of the collaborative GenAI policymaking activity, including both its interactional processes and perceived outcomes. Given the small number of respondents ( $n=7$ ), counts reported below are provided for transparency only and should not be interpreted as indicators of prevalence or generalizability.

In addition to survey responses, the instructor recorded informal observations of the discussion process during the activity, consistent with the data sources described above. From the instructor's perspective, the initial whole-group discussion was difficult to sustain, with participation appearing uneven. During the discussion, one student informally assumed a coordinating role, while another occasionally provided clarification or summarization. At one point, a suggestion was made to shift into a smaller group discussion before later regrouping. These classroom observations are reported for contextual transparency only and were not subjected to formal analysis.

The themes are presented below, beginning with the contextual theme related to psychological safety, followed by two primary themes derived from students' open-ended responses. While two themes emerged as primary focuses of students' reflections, psychological safety functioned as a contextual theme, shaping the discussion environment in which the activity took place rather than being articulated as a central outcome.

### 4.2. Theme 1: Perceived Psychological Safety in Discussion

(2 of 7 respondents; contextual theme)

This theme captures students' perceptions of the discussion as a psychologically safe space in which they felt able to express their views freely. Two open-ended responses explicitly articulated this perception. One respondent wrote, "Being able to discuss among ourselves without teacher intervention allowed us to express our opinions more freely." Another student wrote, "Rather than relying on AI for everything, sharing a common understanding as a group helped me feel that I was not acting alone."

Although this perception was explicitly articulated by only two respondents in the open-ended data, students' responses to the Likert-scale items related to discussion atmosphere and equity of participation were generally positive.

### 4.3. Theme 2: Exposure to Diverse Perspectives on GenAI Use

(7 of 7 respondents)

This theme refers to students' experiences of listening to, considering, and reflecting on a range of viewpoints about GenAI use through interaction with their peers. Across the open-ended responses, students described gaining access to different viewpoints on GenAI use and reflecting on their own stance. Several respondents framed the primary benefit of the activity as learning about others' perspectives, as exemplified by this comment: "I was able to learn about many different perspectives on AI."

Some students also described changes in how they thought about GenAI use. One respondent wrote, "I realized I do not need to be overly negative about AI," while another stated, "I became more cautious about using AI. I now stop and think about whether I really should use it before doing so."

Students' responses to the Likert-scale items related to exposure to diverse perspectives and changes in views on GenAI use were also positive, showing a similar pattern to the open-ended data.

#### 4.4. Theme 3: *Desire for Greater Structure or Guidance*

(6 of 7 respondents)

This theme encompasses students' expressions of difficulty and uncertainty, as well as their suggestions for additional structure or facilitation to support discussion and decision-making. While students generally evaluated the activity positively, most respondents indicated a desire for clearer structure or scaffolding to support discussion and participation. Several students described difficulties in reaching agreement, with one respondent noting, "It was difficult to decide on rules for completing assignments."

Other students proposed concrete procedural changes intended to reduce hesitation and support participation. For example, one suggested that, "Instead of starting the discussion suddenly, collecting anonymous opinions in advance would make it easier to speak." Another said, "At the beginning of the discussion, it was difficult to speak up, so starting in smaller groups would make it easier to talk."

One student referred to the presence of a facilitator during the discussion: "It worked because someone facilitated the discussion, but I think it would have been difficult if I had to do it myself."

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1. *Overview and Interpretive Framing*

Interpretation of the findings focuses on how students experienced the collaborative GenAI policymaking activity, what they gained from engaging with peers' perspectives, and where they perceived a need for additional structure or guidance. Given the small number of respondents ( $n = 7$ ) and the exploratory nature of this CAR study, the interpretations offered here are intended to be illustrative rather than generalizable.

The discussion is organized around the study's research questions, with inductively derived themes used as interpretive lenses. First, students' experiences of the policymaking activity are examined, with particular attention to an emergent contextual theme of psychological safety. Second, engagement with peers' perspectives on GenAI use is explored, drawing primarily on themes related to exposure to diverse viewpoints. Finally, students' reported challenges and suggestions are discussed, with attention to themes concerning structure, guidance, and facilitation, as indicative of a practical tension between maintaining student-led deliberation and providing sufficient scaffolding to support equitable participation and decision-making.

Throughout the section, findings from open-ended survey responses are interpreted alongside related Likert-scale patterns and classroom context, while remaining mindful of the methodological constraints of the study. These interpretations aim to clarify the pedagogical merits and limitations of collaborative GenAI policymaking as an instructional approach in a university EFL classroom.

### 5.2. *Discussion in Relation to the Research Questions*

#### 5.2.1. *RQ1. How Did Students Perceive the Effectiveness of Collaborative GenAI Policymaking?*

In relation to RQ1, students' experiences of the collaborative policymaking activity were shaped in part by an emergent contextual theme of psychological safety. Although only two respondents explicitly articulated feelings associated with psychological safety in their open-ended comments, responses to Likert-scale items related to discussion atmosphere and equity of participation were generally positive. Taken together, these data suggest that while psychological safety was not a salient outcome for most students, the discussion environment was nonetheless perceived as psychologically safe. In this sense, psychological safety may be better understood as an enabling condition for participation rather than as an experience students explicitly noticed or labeled, helping to contextualize students' generally positive evaluations of the activity.

Although addressed here in relation to RQ1, this contextual condition also appears relevant to students' engagement with peers' perspectives, taken up in the following section. A discussion environment perceived as

psychologically safe may have made it easier for students to listen to, consider, and respond to viewpoints different from their own.

### *5.2.2. RQ2. In What Ways Did This Process Influence Students' Attitudes Toward GenAI Use?*

In relation to RQ2, students' engagement with peers' perspectives on GenAI use was most clearly reflected in an emergent primary theme of exposure to diverse viewpoints. All respondents reported encountering perspectives different from their own during the discussion, and several identified this exposure as a central feature of the activity. Engagement with peers' perspectives thus appeared to be a common experience across participants, rather than one limited to a subset of students.

Students' comments further suggest that this engagement primarily served as an opportunity for reflection rather than persuasion. Several respondents described reconsidering their initial positions on GenAI use after hearing others' views, including becoming less categorically negative or adopting a more cautious and deliberate stance. Taken together, these responses indicate a shift away from a dichotomous framing of either accepting or rejecting GenAI use and toward considering appropriate conditions or degrees of use.

This pattern suggests that the policymaking activity functioned not only as a process of rule construction but also as a form of reflective, deliberative discussion. Alignment between open-ended responses and Likert-scale items related to exposure to diverse perspectives and perceived changes in views further supports this interpretation. In this respect, the present findings parallel those reported in prior non-EFL studies of collaborative GenAI policymaking (Debelius et al., 2025; Pu et al., 2025) suggesting that similar forms of reflective engagement may also emerge in EFL classroom contexts. Engagement with peers' perspectives thus appears to have shaped how students experienced the activity overall, reinforcing its value beyond the immediate goal of producing a shared policy.

Although addressed here in relation to RQ2, engagement with peers' perspectives also appears relevant to how students experienced the policymaking activity more broadly, shaping their evaluations of the discussion as meaningful and worthwhile.

### *5.2.3. RQ3. How Might Insights from This Classroom Action Research Inform Future Participatory Policymaking Practices in EFL Classrooms?*

With respect to RQ3, students' reflections highlighted an emergent primary theme related to the desire for greater structure or guidance during the policymaking process. Although students generally evaluated the activity positively, many reported difficulties managing open-ended discussions and collective decision-making, particularly in the early stages of the activity.

Students' suggestions for improvement point to specific moments of hesitation or uncertainty during discussion. Proposed adjustments included collecting anonymous opinions in advance and beginning with smaller group discussions, both of which were framed as ways to lower the threshold for participation. These responses suggest a practical tension between maintaining a student-led, open-ended format and providing sufficient structure to support equitable participation and efficient decision-making. Notably, during the activity itself, a student informally proposed shifting from whole-group discussion to smaller groups before reconvening, a move that temporarily eased participation and mirrors several students' post-activity suggestions.

Comments related to facilitation further illuminate this tension. While one respondent noted that the presence of a facilitator supported discussion flow, the same comment also expressed reluctance to assume such a role independently. These reported challenges are consistent with difficulties noted in earlier studies of collaborative GenAI policymaking (Debelius et al., 2025), suggesting that uncertainty and requests for guidance may be characteristic of participatory policy-design activities rather than limitations unique to the present study. Rather than indicating a preference for increased teacher control, these reflections point to the potential value of light scaffolding

that supports student-led deliberation without undermining learner autonomy. Providing optional procedural supports may help balance openness with guidance in future implementations of participatory policymaking activities.

Although addressed here in relation to RQ3, students' reported challenges and requests for greater structure also inform how the collaborative discussion was experienced overall, highlighting conditions that may shape participation and engagement.

### *5.3. Pedagogical Implications*

Overall, the findings suggest that collaborative GenAI policymaking can serve as a meaningful pedagogical activity that supports reflection, perspective-taking, and student agency. When positioned within a discussion environment perceived as psychologically safe, such activities may encourage students to express and refine their views while engaging constructively with peers.

At the same time, the results highlight the importance of balancing student autonomy with appropriate structural support. Rather than adopting a fully unstructured format, instructors may want to consider incorporating light scaffolding to support participation and deliberation. Importantly, psychological safety appears to function as a background condition rather than as an explicit instructional objective, suggesting that attention to interactional norms and task design may be more productive than direct intervention.

### *5.4. Limitations and Directions for Future Research*

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The small number of respondents and reliance on self-reported survey data limit the extent to which the findings can be generalized. Additionally, classroom observations were used solely for contextual interpretation and were not subjected to formal analysis.

Future research could examine collaborative GenAI policymaking activities across different instructional contexts, class sizes, or learner populations. Longitudinal or comparative designs may also help clarify how students' views on GenAI evolve over time and how different forms of scaffolding influence participation and deliberation. Follow-up interviews could also complement written data by offering a more nuanced understanding of students' perspectives and decision-making processes during the policymaking activity.

### *5.5. Conclusion*

This classroom action research study examined students' perceptions of a collaborative GenAI policymaking activity implemented in a university EFL writing course, focusing on interactional processes, perceived outcomes, and perceived challenges. Overall, the findings suggest that participatory policymaking can serve as a feasible and educationally meaningful approach to addressing GenAI use in EFL settings, especially when it is viewed not only as a policy exercise but also as a learning activity that encourages reflection and peer-to-peer deliberation.

Across the three research questions, students' responses indicated that the activity was generally experienced positively, with psychological safety operating as a contextual condition that supported participation rather than as an explicitly articulated outcome. Students also reported that exposure to diverse peer perspectives contributed to more nuanced thinking about acceptable GenAI use, suggesting that collaborative policymaking may foster reflective engagement rather than simply producing a set of rules. At the same time, many students expressed a desire for greater structure or guidance, highlighting an ongoing pedagogical tension between maintaining student-led deliberation and providing sufficient scaffolding to support equitable participation and efficient decision-making.

Overall, these findings point to a practical implication for instructors considering similar activities: collaborative GenAI policymaking appears most promising when it is designed as a lightly scaffolded deliberative task. Future iterations may benefit from procedural supports such as staged discussion formats, opportunities for anonymous input, and clear yet flexible facilitation roles, while preserving students' agency in shaping course-specific expectations. Although the present study is limited by its small sample size and reliance on self-report data, it

contributes EFL-specific evidence to a growing conversation about how teachers and students can negotiate GenAI use in ways that are pedagogically sound, manageable in practice, and responsive to learners' perspectives.

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