

Integrating AI in Teaching Writing through Social Issues: A Motivational Approach in ELT for L2 Learners

Nor Syahiza Shahabani¹, Siti Nurshafezan Ahmad², Mazura Anuar^{3*}

Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi Mara, Shah Alam, Selangor

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ABSTRACT

This concept paper addresses some challenges in L2 writing practices, hence, proposing a conceptual model that integrates Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) concept, social issues and AI-assisted learning tools. The model emphasizes how familiar, authentic content can stimulate idea generation, and how AI technologies provide additional support and feedback to sustain learner engagement. Grounded in CLIL's concept, the paper outlines a pedagogical strategy - "Present issues, guide discussion, highlight language, apply AI, and produce writing" - designed to foster attention, relevance, and confidence in writing classrooms. Potential challenges such as over-reliance on technology and sensitivity of selected topics are acknowledged, however, the proposed integration demonstrates teaching potential in improving learners' motivation and competence. Consequently, this framework contributes to innovative and creative teaching practices to enhance L2 writing.

Keywords: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), AI-Assisted Writing Instruction, Social Issues Integration, Writing Motivation

INTRODUCTION

English language instruction is essential in developing L2 learners' proficiency (Rashid, Ye, Hui, Li & Wang, 2021). The four language skills, that is, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, are the common skills that need to be instilled in these learners. Among others, El-Soussi (2021) mentioned that writing is one skill that can be challenging to teach because the teaching depends on the instructors' competency and experience as well as the learners' acceptance and enjoyment of learning, readiness, and motivation (Yu, Zhou & Jiang, 2024). Hence, the teaching of writing not only requires instructors' pedagogical skills but also requires their passion and creativity so that the teaching session becomes more interesting, meaningful, and successful (El-Soussi, 2021; Giovanoglou, 2025). In the learning institutions, Siddiqui, Ahamed, Chowdhury, Mishu and Monira (2023) add that, at the school level or in tertiary education, writing is truly an essential skill for the learners. This is because most assignments and assessments are graded through written forms. Herz (2025) emphasized the concerns that those who lack proficiency in writing skills may struggle to articulate their ideas effectively and demonstrate critical thinking, which can result in weak performance and low academic achievement by the end of the program (Shahabani & Anuar, 2026). Therefore, Herz (2025) added that learners are required to develop strong writing skills in order to attain academic success throughout their studies. Writing proficiency, hence, involves the ability to integrate social, conceptual, and linguistic aspects of the writing process, offering a comprehensive perspective on skilled written communication (Rosas & Escandallo, 2024). In addition, since the teaching of writing skills needs more than instructors' competency and learners' readiness, Cahyono, Irawati, Amalia and Hidayat (2024) affirmed that it has to be delivered by incorporating some exciting content and thought-provoking elements. For instance, issues that become the current national news or any social issues can be the content for open discussion amongst the learners. Cahyono et al. (2024) added that learners should be familiar with the selected issues in order to ease the discussion. They are expected to be able to think of ideas to

share with others. This approach can help learners make use of English words and try to string all the words together to make sentences, as they are prepared with some points to talk about. It improves critical thinking too. With issues that allow learners to lead a discussion, language instructors can provoke them with questions and then craft several impactful and compelling writing activities, such as writing argumentative or persuasive essays based on the issues discussed (Lv, Ren & Xie, 2021). Furthermore, after the discussion, Sunra, Abduh, Amaliah, Syamsuddin and Mansyur (2026) suggested that learners can also be encouraged to write reflective journals that build their metacognitive and emotional engagement. Instead of essay-type writing activities, learners can be trained at the sentence level (Sunra et al., 2026). For instance, the teaching of compound-complex sentences, subject-verb agreement, parallel structure, transitions, modifiers, punctuation control, active-passive voice, and syntax elements are amongst the lessons that can be integrated into the writing activities (Al-Othman, 2024). As a result, when learners have engaged in their earlier discussion, they are cognitively prepared to process this instructional content, namely writing skills (Sunra et al., 2026). Thus, adding to the use of technology for example, Alharbi (2023) mentioned that artificial intelligence (AI) learning tools can be introduced to implement this writing instruction effectively (Li & Wilson, 2025). Writcream's AI Instruction Generator, AI for Teachers-Writing Tools, and SchoolAI Writing Suite are examples of AI writing tools that can assist both instructors and learners (Alharbi, 2023). With these AI-powered tools, learners will benefit from interactive designs that assist them with the exposure to sentence-level skills, varied writing genres, and even the information for content search. On the other hand, Alharbi (2023) added that the instructors will gain benefit through automated lesson plans and feedback generation, customised instructional templates, and much more. The instructors can save time, reduce cognitive load, and improve their instructions that can cater to learners' preferences and abilities with this AI technology. This dual-focused instruction is relevant in current educational contexts worldwide, as both learners and instructors can experience a meaningful teaching and learning atmosphere supported by AI integration. Learners will be more active with this kind of instruction when AI-generated tools offer engaging activities with authentic writing contexts (Rashid, Malik & Ghauri, 2025). Moreover, the integration of current or social issue themes into writing instruction can boost learners' motivation when these themes cultivate their critical thinking naturally. The writing skills instruction becomes less stressful as learners are introduced to the topics that they are familiar with at the beginning of the lesson.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

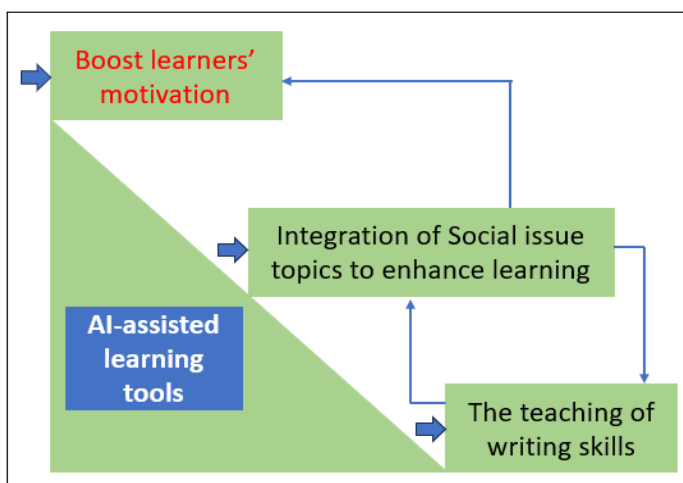


Figure 1 Conceptual framework illustrating the relationship between social issues and AI-assisted tools in fostering learner motivation and enhancing writing skills

This study adapts David Marsh's (1994) Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) theory (Marsh, 2013). Marsh coined this CLIL while working in Finland (Marsh, 2013). It emphasizes that learners can engage

with their learning and are able to develop linguistic skills when the lessons taught are integrated with content that is familiar to them (Sudarso, Globalisasi & Dibdyaningsih, 2024). In addition, this relationship between content and language skills can be better enhanced with the integration of AI assisted learning tools (Lai, 2025). Hence, this study is to demonstrate a dynamic relationship of AI tools that facilitate writing instruction and social issues as the content that helps boost learners' confidence. The integration of the supporting instructional tools—AI tools and selected social issues—can help improve learners' strength to voice out opinions and motivate them to write more effectively. Hence, the focus of this study is to explore AI-assisted learning tools as a support system in developing learners' writing skills, and to explore how social issues content can help promote learners' awareness of the real-world concerns, which at the same time, use the content to generate ideas for their writing. Learners' motivation and additional attention put forth during writing class, then, could possibly be enhanced through the combination of relevant content and technology tools (Sudarso et al., 2024).

Problem Statement

Language instructions differ by their language skills. It was also mentioned that the teaching can be tailored based on the four language skills that suit the learners' level of competency and willingness. Hence, Goyibova, Muslimov, Sabirova, Kadirova and Samatova (2025) supported this statement by highlighting that the classroom writing instruction, for instance, requires some modification to accommodate learners' backgrounds and to reflect their interests. This situation seems common in the standard classroom setting. Language instructors have their teaching plans and objectives—provided by the institution—in order to assist their learners to achieve the ultimate learning goals (Goyibova et al., 2025). Activities, hence, are designed carefully based on the stipulated skills and curriculum alignment. Ideally, the teaching of writing is planned systematically to match learners' cognitive level and motivational requirements to ensure successful learning progress. Moreover, language instructors make decisions based on what learners can do (Goyibova et al., 2025). When learners are observed to find the lesson difficult, Goyibova et al. (2025) suggested that the adjustments to the lesson plan and activities should be done to cater for their needs. This practice is to help learners develop and stay engaged throughout their learning process.

However, the practices and activities prepared may not always cater to every learner in the classroom (in terms of their ability and expectation). The perfect plans for learners in each classroom sometimes may not match their realities—this is due to their differences in socioeconomic status, cultural background, educational level, and even their personal realities such as health, attention and motivation level (Khoo & Kang, 2022). With such situations, Wang, Zhu and Dai (2025) mentioned that some learners may not be motivated to learn and the drive to engage in L2 writing seems very low. Wang et al. (2025) added that the impact of this condition can lead to learners' poor writing performance when they tend to minimize their participation in writing activities. Learners, indeed, need more than 'pen-paper' effort—drawing attention to their surroundings could provide a better learning environment (Khoo & Kang, 2022). This is because the gap between the planned instructions and learners' expectations and needs may often result in withdrawal when learners may see writing tasks as irrelevant and insignificant. Hence, exposing content that is closest to the learners' experiences could assist in developing their confidence to feel connected (Banegas & Lowe, 2021; Sutrisno, Abbas & Annury, 2024). In addition, with the standard writing materials, lessons and its syllabus (as guidelines), learners were observed slow to gear up as they had to experience the usual but challenging technical rules and skills. For instance, Esperanzate (2025) highlighted that searching for vocabularies, getting familiar with grammar rules and sentence structures, and searching for information can be taxing and boring. While writing tasks apparently require learners' active exploration of the content to write, learners may regard the writing task as demanding and tiring because they lack enthusiasm and interest about the resources and topics; and, it can be an emotional burden as well thinking of unfamiliar content (Esperanzate, 2025).

The writing activities, on the other hand, as mentioned by Al-Jarf (2026) can certainly be engaging and joyful with the presence of learners' readiness to the tasks; and also how convenient they could actually retrieve for related content. With reference to how learners retrieve the content, it can either be very challenging or

interesting (challenging—when learners encounter limitations, and interesting—when learners have the alternative for materials search) (Azzahra & Purnawan, 2025). It all depends on the learning opportunities provided to every learner. Given diverse learners' backgrounds, Akintayo, Eden, Ayeni and Onyebuchi (2024); and Azzahra and Purnawan (2025) agreed that not all learners are equal, having a wide experience, broad knowledge about the world and own access to learning gadgets. There must be limitations to some learners to develop and elaborate their paragraphs. As a result, due to the difficulty of sourcing content, writing tasks become learners' obstacles along their pursuit of knowledge. Hence, with the issues mentioned, learners often face challenges to proceed with their writing tasks and even to attend a writing class. When learners are discouraged and afraid of their writing activities and the assessments, over time, it prevents them from exploring knowledge because writing in fact can assist individuals to explore the world (Sabti, Rashid, Nimehchisalem & Darmi, 2019; Wardiah & Kristiawan, 2025). Wardiah and Kristiawan (2025) added that through writing, individuals or learners are exposed to searching for information. This can help them connect with global issues and explore the world's cultural awareness, while also improving critical thinking (Wardiah & Kristiawan, 2025). Past researches, in fact, have investigated the factors that contribute to writing challenges, cognitive and linguistics barriers to writing, learners' emotional state and also the impact due to lack of grammar proficiency and poor learning facilities, and nevertheless researchers have also suggested to investigate learners' writing motivation and achievement using different cultural contexts and other writing variables (Wang, Zhang and Zhang, 2026); and examine how AI supported writing can foster critical thinking, cultural awareness, and motivation across diverse contexts (Peng, Awang & Yacob, 2026). Hence, in response to these recommendations, this current study examines the contribution and the relationship of AI tools, learner-centred practice and social issues awareness in fostering L2 writing motivation.

Based on the issues outlined above, this study is guided by the following objectives and questions;

This study is conducted to investigate strategies for integrating social issue topics into English writing instruction (**RO1**), examine the impact of AI supported writing instruction (RO2) and analyze the relationship between learners' self-perception of their writing ability and their improvement in writing competence when social issue topics are integrated into AI-supported writing instruction (RO3).

Following the research objectives, this study embarks on answering the following research questions;

RQ1: What are the (preferred) effective strategies for integrating social issue topics into English writing instruction to enhance learners' writing competence?

RQ2: What is the impact of AI supported writing instruction using social issue topics on learners' motivation to engage in writing tasks, as reflected in writing gain scores and ARCS survey results?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between learners' perception of their writing ability and their improvement in writing competence when social issue topics are integrated into AI-supported writing instruction?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as Pedagogical Foundation

As aforementioned in the introduction of this study, social issues are utilized as the content that helps boost

learners' confidence, and that motivation comes from familiar topics to write about. CLIL pedagogy reflects a motivational approach to teach writing, and in the case of this study, it is through AI integration. This further suits CLIL to frame this current study involving the current generations in the rapid evolution of AI-based or digital learning.

Therefore, Marsh's (2013) description and compilation of CLIL approach in teaching and learning of a language outlines this study as a framework to support motivation—particularly in acquiring writing skills by creating interest in language learning—through related content or subject matter. Hussain (2022) in his paper addressing CLIL in ELT, describes CLIL as a precious wide-ranging, across the board pedagogical instrument. The basic principle of CLIL is that language is utilised as a learning tool that assists content learning and language acquisition simultaneously. On the other hand, Marsh's (2013) "language awareness" was brought in Goris's paper to indicate the view that language is broadly applied in diversity of contexts, instead of language as just another subject. Additionally, Marsh and Frigols (2012) mentioned that CLIL experts viewed CLIL approach as a type of "futuristic education"; discovered in a substantial historical development of educational approach when it started in the 90s. Additionally, it is demonstrated that CLIL directs language and content to "play equal roles" (Sylvén & Tsuchiya, 2023). The founding principle of CLIL, in fact, is based on the acquisition of the first language (L1) with the understanding that being encompassed by a target language will ultimately lead to a particular learning attainment. Contextually, the CLIL approach recognizes that learners' first language can facilitate the understanding, helping them learn non-language subjects such as biology and history (Sylvén & Tsuchiya, 2023). Based on Marsh's (2013) thesis, the main hypothesis of CLIL involves the use of general terms to describe appropriate application of dual language instruction and learning atmosphere. This would gain acceptance as an "emergent innovation" connected to areas of educational advanced knowledge and skills. Definition-wise, Marsh and Frigols (2012) termed CLIL as "a teaching and learning approach that integrates English into the learners' life, to generate effective communication tools and criteria that allow interaction with another person whose native language is English". They further described the approach as directed towards second (third and fourth language) language learning, which enables growing learners' knowledge of technical terms and vocabulary.

CLIL in Tertiary Education

University education reflects the suitability of approaching teaching in a CLIL manner since extensive content on subject matter in related fields are being taught. At the varsity level, most content is being taught in English—in the way that it is a vehicle to disseminate knowledge and skills of subject matters. Oh (2026) places CLIL in higher education by assessing it against content-led instructional models including English-Medium Instruction (EMI) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). CLIL in the field of tertiary education symbolises a more even, teaching-based option. This is seen in its clear incorporation of linguistic and content or field-based objectives that drive active learning, critical thinking and intercultural communication. This content and language approach is managed by language instructors who adjust subject-matter content to assist the understanding of theoretical understanding and language acquisition (Oh, 2026).

CLIL and Learner Motivation in Writing Development

The pedagogical approach to CLIL could create learners to be interested in expressing their content knowledge confidently through writing. This approach is described as a "tool for expressing content knowledge" (Lopriore, 2023). Luprichova (2023) emphasized that developing writing skills through one of the fundamental elements of CLIL's 4C framework developed by Coyle, which is "communication" includes the development of productive skills. In relation to communicating content via writing, she further added that language acts as a "vehicle" to transport (communicate) knowledge across subject matters and fields. Shaik (2024) asserted CLIL as "a dynamic educational approach" that connects content teaching with language mastery, with a specific focus on building writing skills. CLIL creates a distinctive chance for learners to apply writing skills in a real and meaningful form. Learners are motivated to share their thoughts, ideas and analysis through writing when connecting content with rich topics of different subjects (Shaik, 2024).

Past Studies on Motivation Enhancement via AI Integration in Language Learning

Previous studies portray enhanced learning experience as a result of applying AI-supported tools to motivate

language learning. Teaching content through digital platforms—supported by AI—increases drive and interest in language learning. A pre-test and post-test quantitative study by Wei (2023) found that the experimental group who were given AI-mediated instructions obtained considerably higher English language results compared to those who received traditional teaching methods. Similarly, Hong and Guo (2025), in their study on the effect of AI-enhanced multi display language teaching systems on learning motivation, cognitive load management, and learner autonomy, revealed that substantial improvement in cognitive load management, motivation and learner autonomy in the learners who were involved in AI-rich interventions. Moybeka et al. (2023) study, using a mixed method approach, reported positive implications of EFL learner motivation in the AI-driven learning educational environment. Learners are found motivated to keep on learning—enhancing their confidence and motivation when they recognize their mistakes through AI instant feedback. This helps motivate them to spend more effort and time in learning, while accommodating different learning styles and needs that fosters their sense of belonging and commitment.

In a literature review on the use of AI-driven technology and chatbot in language learning by Abusahyon, Alzyoud, Alshorman and Al-Absi (2023), the review's summary included AI-driven technology and chatbots in enhancing learners' motivation, improving learners' active participation and promoting self-directed learning. Another literature review on the impact of AI learning tools on ESL learners' motivation and success mentioned that recent information abilities, real-time feedback and gamified characteristics boost learners' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Ahmed, Ghafoor, Liliuara & Akyuningrum, 2025).

Notably, these latest studies on AI integration best reflect the CLIL pedagogical framework to motivate learners. Hsu and Wang (2026) implemented a network meta-analysis on 16 evidenced-based studies on the effectiveness of three AI interventions, including Generative AI Chatbots, AI Writing Assistants, and AI Language Learning Applications, on the learning motivation of K-12 and university EFL learners in English instruction contexts. They found that the use of AI tools substantially outdoes traditional teaching. Bringing to their conclusion that AI tools foster motivation when learners' basic needs of autonomy and capability are satisfied. Another recent study by Liu and Wang (2026) highlights the utilisation of OpenAI-based AI chatbot teaching systems that integrate the CLIL concept in increasing the effectiveness of terminology teaching and mastering the centre AI contextual terms. The final results revealed that blending AI chatbot teaching systems can enhance the efficiency of teaching. It also minimised cognitive load as well as improved learners' learning engagement via mechanisms that guided tasks and instant feedback. In addition, Oh's (2026) research on AI-Assisted CLIL for global citizenship and competence in EFL higher education showed increase in self-efficacy and motivation and also engagement in learners who enrolled in integrated generative AI tool course through its 15-week longitudinal study. The learners took a general educational course that involved producing personal response essays, and this is the evidence of learning motivation via content expression.

A specific study on AI-assisted feedback in CLIL courses by Campos (2025), concerning the acquisition of writing skills, showed that the learners discovered that their writing skills improved from AI feedback and they valued its immediate and specific nature. The study also noted important improvements in the accuracy of content and proficiency in linguistics. Preksha and Kaur (2024) reported positive quantitative findings in the learners' cognitive skills, metacognitive awareness and language proficiency in both receptive and productive skills. Meanwhile, its qualitative analysis from interviewing learners and teachers indicated that technology powered CLIL elevated motivation and engagement where learners enjoyed personalised feedback as well as engaging learning experiences. Moreover, Suleiman (2022) in his study on the impact of grammatical cohesion instruction through CLIL on written composition, using a mixed method approach involving pre and post-test between CLIL and non-CLIL group, concluded that structured and teacher led teaching is the most favourable method in teaching content through foreign language—in this context, CLIL was found to create positive effect on the learning process. Besides, grammatical cohesion teaching through CLIL, indeed, is deemed important and useful.

Integration of AI in Second Language Learning

Subsequently, in the sense of this study, CLIL's pedagogical framework can also take off through the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI platforms can be the contextual support to motivate second language (L2) learners to acquire the target language. Massive digital social contexts available presents contents that could drive L2 learners to be more interested in applying the second language. AI integration is referred to as the combination of artificial intelligence technologies and tools into the methods of language teaching and learning (Ozdere, 2023). Ozdere (2023) further described that the integration occurs in the use of mobile applications and digital platforms which provide adaptive and collaborative learning experiences. AI platforms apply AI algorithms to provide specialised language instruction, offer customised feedback and analyse learners' performance. These AI platforms may consist of language practice, vocabulary exercises, grammar descriptions and participatory simulations to connect learners to practice the target language. These are the AI features that could boost learners' motivation to learn the language. Ozdere (2023) mentioned another feature of AI integration in the classroom, which is the use of AI chatbots. They imitate humanoid conversations and supply opportunities for learners to practise language. Learners are able to utilise their language skills in a communicative context including dialogues, answer questions, and feedback. Subsequently, learners could be motivated to learn target language when AI allows learners to do this digitally, especially when the digital learning context fits the characteristics of current generations.

Motivation and Engagement in L2 Writing

Motivation in learning the second language (L2) has been known as a core structure in the second language acquisition (SLA) (Azar & Tanggaraju, 2020). Manipol, Nasrullah and Jumariat (2024) asserted that motivation in learning is termed as "desire to learn" and described as "neglected heart of language teaching". The purpose of motivation here is to obtain high-performance levels and overcome obstacles to change. They added that motivation is "the driving force" in guiding human behaviour, determination and control. It also creates better behaviour. Motivation occurs when language learners are willing to learn the language. Motivation is a main influence in language learning: it is found that learners will face less challenges in language learning when they are more motivated to learn (Arcipe & Balones, 2023), resulting in a stronger feel of achievement and higher confidence level, as well as more devotion to learning and increased interest (Arcipe & Balones, 2023). In essence, CLIL's approach could be seen to create engagement in language learning through its motivational approach to teaching language using content of interest that boost learners' interest.

Keller's ARCS Model: Enhancing Engagement in L2 Writing

Against the backdrop of interest in CLIL's approach in fostering learners' motivation in language learning, which also mentioned in the previous research, it is then pertinent to obtain more insights of learners' motivation in acquiring language through their content of interest. This is even more pertinent in the strong emergence of AI in teaching and learning. To measure learners' motivation to further delve into the development of a CLIL learning environment, Keller's ARCS motivational model steps in as a clear and fitting application to specifically obtain empirical data on motivation in learning. According to Keller (2010), this model operates on four key dimensions: Attention, Relevance, Confidence and Satisfaction. These dimensions contribute to learner engagement by cultivating attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction within the learning experience. The aim also includes ensuring the use of relevant content related to their interest and experiences, and instilling confidence through gradual learning challenges guided by positive feedback. Additionally, ARCS motivation survey, which is called Instructional Materials Motivation Survey (IMMS) is designed to gauge the effectiveness of a specific course or learning materials pertaining to the four motivational dimensions mentioned earlier. This also means the ARCS model could act as a practical application to delve more into actual data on how much motivation could be reflected in the learners' learning activities.

Conceptual Nature of the Proposed Model

This study proposes a conceptual framework that integrates three key elements: social issues as CLIL content, AI-assisted learning tools, and writing skills instruction to enhance L2 learners' motivation. While existing literature provides support for each component individually - the use of CLIL pedagogy (Marsh & Frigols, 2012), the integration of social issues to promote engagement (Cahyono et al., 2024), and the role of AI in scaffolding writing - there is limited empirical evidence examining their combined integration in a single instructional model. Therefore, this paper serves as a proposal to explore the potential outcomes of combining these three components. Future empirical research is needed to test the effectiveness of this integrated approach in real L2 classroom settings (Alharbi, 2023).

DISCUSSION

It is important to reiterate that this paper presents a conceptual model rather than an empirical study. The proposed integration of social issues, AI tools, and writing instruction is intended to address a gap in current ELT practices. Further studies are recommended to implement and evaluate this framework to determine its impact on learners' motivation and writing competence.

AI as a Pedagogical Tool in CLIL-Based Writing Instruction

While social issues can provide meaningful content and stimulate idea generation, L2 learners may still experience difficulties transforming those ideas into accurate and coherent English texts. This is where AI-assisted learning tools may provide additional pedagogical support within a CLIL framework. In CLIL, content and language are addressed together, with learners developing language through engagement with meaningful content. In the proposed model, social issues serve as the content dimension, while English writing constitutes the language-learning dimension. AI functions as scaffolding within this relationship to support learners as they move from discussion to written production. The role of AI is understood as scaffolding rather than substitution. Li and Wilson (2025), in their systematic review of AI-integrated scaffolding, identify cognitive, creative, and language-related forms of support that AI can provide to English language learners. Their findings suggest that AI can support learners' engagement with writing while also creating opportunities for agency and creativity. This supports the position that AI should supplement rather than replace learners' own thinking and writing.

Specific pedagogical functions include support for idea development, vocabulary exploration, sentence construction, feedback, and revision. Automated feedback represents one valuable application. Al-Othman (2024) found that automated feedback could support cognitive and metacognitive self-regulated writing strategies among EFL learners. Similarly, Lv et al. (2021), through a meta-analysis of online feedback research, found positive effects of online feedback on ESL/EFL writing quality. These findings indicate that feedback technologies can provide learners with opportunities to identify problems, reconsider their language choices, and revise their texts.

The potential value of AI is also evident in research examining writing self-efficacy. Lai (2025) reported positive effects of AI-assisted blended learning on aspects of writing efficacy and resilience, while also drawing attention to concerns associated with excessive dependence on AI. This reinforces the need to position AI within a structured CLIL instructional framework. Learners should remain responsible for generating ideas, making decisions about content, evaluating AI suggestions, and producing their own final texts. If AI is used to support brainstorming, vocabulary exploration, sentence-level practice, feedback, and revision, it may provide learners with additional opportunities to engage actively with the writing process. Thus, the pedagogical value of AI depends substantially on the purpose and manner of its integration within CLIL-based writing instruction.

Boosting Motivation with Social Issues Topics

Writing is a complex skill that requires learners to coordinate linguistic knowledge with the ability to generate, organise, and communicate ideas. For L2 learners, these demands can make writing particularly challenging, especially when they are required to write about unfamiliar or abstract topics. Existing research has identified difficulties involving idea generation, organisation of content, linguistic accuracy, and confidence in writing (Rosas & Escandallo, 2024). Therefore, writing instruction needs to provide learners not only with opportunities to practise linguistic forms but also with meaningful content from which ideas can be developed.

The use of social issues provides one response to this challenge. Social issues offer learners familiar and relevant contexts through which they can express opinions, exchange perspectives, and develop ideas before converting them into written texts. This familiarity can improve learners' confidence to think and to voice out their opinion/thoughts, which then helps them to write. Al-Jarf (2021) argues for incorporating local and global social and civic issues into college writing activities, particularly because such topics can provide learners with opportunities to generate ideas and participate meaningfully in writing tasks. Similarly, Nguyen et al. (2024) reported that awareness of social issues could contribute to broader perspectives in argumentative writing through increased background knowledge, lexical enrichment, and critical-thinking processes. The relevance of social issues is particularly important when motivation is considered. Motivation represents an important dimension of L2 writing because learners may perceive writing as demanding, stressful, or difficult. El-Soussi (2021) identified motivational challenges in university L2 writing classes related to factors such as writing cost, task value, self-efficacy, and expectancy. Teachers in the study attempted to address these challenges through supportive classroom environments, enjoyable writing activities, learner autonomy, and constructive feedback.

When learners perceive writing activities as meaningful and relevant, they may be more willing to invest effort in the task. This is particularly relevant to the use of social issues because such topics connect classroom writing with learners' experiences and the world beyond the classroom. Instead of writing solely to complete an academic exercise, learners can be invited to formulate and communicate their views about issues that have social relevance. This argument is consistent with Abdel Latif, Alghizzi and Alshahrani (2025), who examined writing demotivation among university EFL learners and highlighted the importance of instructional practices and learning materials that are appropriate, interesting, and responsive to learners' needs. Similarly, Yu et al. (2024) found associations between teachers' instructional approaches, feedback practices, and learners' L2 writing motivation and engagement. Recent work also indicates that socially meaningful content can contribute to learner engagement and higher-order thinking. Setyowati, Sukmawan and El-Sulukiyyah (2025) reported positive learner experiences in a writing project incorporating gender and social inclusion issues, with participants perceiving development in areas such as critical thinking, creativity, empathy, and engagement. Herz (2025) likewise demonstrates the potential of structured English writing assignments to develop critical-thinking skills. However, social issues should not automatically be assumed to improve writing proficiency or motivation. The selection and presentation of topics remain important. Issues should be sufficiently familiar or accessible to enable learners to contribute ideas while also providing opportunities for deeper thinking. Goyibova et al. (2025) emphasise the importance of adapting writing instruction to learners' backgrounds, interests, abilities, and learning needs. Therefore, their potential motivational value depends on how the issues are selected, discussed, and connected to writing objectives.

Teaching Practice and Future Directions

The proposed approach integrates social issues and AI within a CLIL framework to address complementary aspects of L2 writing instruction. Social issues provide meaningful content and a reason to communicate, CLIL provides the pedagogical orientation for integrating content and language, and AI provides linguistic and procedural support for communicating that content in English.

Suggested Teaching Practices

A logical instructional sequence can be implemented:

1. Content Introduction: Introduce a social issue through a short reading or multimedia text to build background knowledge.
2. Discussion and Idea Generation: Guide learners in discussing the issue to identify ideas, encounter relevant vocabulary, and consider different perspectives. This oral stage helps learners develop opinions and confidence before writing.
3. Language Focus: Highlight relevant vocabulary and grammatical structures needed to discuss the issue.
4. AI-Supported Writing: Use AI tools to support brainstorming, vocabulary exploration, sentence-level practice, feedback, and revision. Learners should be taught to evaluate AI suggestions critically rather than accept them uncritically.
5. Written Production: Ask learners to produce a written response in argumentative, persuasive, reflective, or other forms.

Although AI can provide additional support, the instructor remains central. Effective writing instruction requires teachers to determine learning objectives, select appropriate content, design tasks, monitor learners' progress, and provide pedagogical guidance. Alharbi (2023) discusses several potential applications of AI writing tools, including automated feedback and instructional resources. However, the use of these tools requires teachers to determine whether AI-generated feedback and materials are appropriate for the learners and learning objectives. Similarly, Rashid et al. (2025) emphasise the importance of integrating generative AI within active learning and ethical pedagogical structures. Teacher mediation is particularly important when social issues are involved. Social topics may involve differing opinions, sensitive perspectives, or complex social realities. Teachers therefore need to establish an environment in which learners can express opinions respectfully and critically. They must also guide learners in distinguishing between personal opinion, evidence, and unsupported claims.

Practical Considerations and Challenges

While the proposed integration offers pedagogical potential, two main challenges must be anticipated and addressed to ensure effective implementation. First, the use of sensitive social issues. The selection of social topics must be carefully guided to avoid controversy or emotional distress. To curb this challenge, teachers should provide clear guidelines and narrow down the scope of acceptable topics. For example, teachers can pre-select themes such as digital literacy, environmental sustainability, or student well-being, rather than allowing open-ended topics like politics or religion. In addition, students can be required to submit their chosen topic and content to the teacher first for approval before proceeding with writing. This ensures the issues remain age-appropriate, relevant, and conducive to classroom discussion. Second, learners' over-reliance on AI tools. There is a risk that students may use AI to generate full essays instead of using it as a learning aid. To address this, teachers should limit and define the permitted functions of AI. For instance, students may be instructed to use AI only for brainstorming ideas, searching for content, and checking grammar and vocabulary, but not to write the entire essay for them. A possible classroom protocol is a 3-stage approach: 1) Pre-writing: use AI to generate ideas, 2) Drafting: write independently without AI, 3) Post-writing: use AI only to check language. Through this, AI acts as a scaffold rather than a replacement, thus preserving learners' agency and critical thinking. Overall, the proposed framework positions content, language, technology, and motivation as interconnected dimensions of L2 writing instruction. The value of the approach lies not in any single component but in the way these components are deliberately integrated into a coherent instructional process.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this concept paper highlights the framework of CLIL in which the teaching and learning of writing amongst the L2 learners is enhanced by the social issues as discussion content and AI-assisted learning materials as the search support. Since writing is known as a demanding skill, language instructors need to take

on additional roles in their classroom by fostering and improving learners' confidence to discuss and to initiate writing, as well as preparing creative and contextual writing materials that assist learners to improve on their oral discussion and thinking ability. With authentic and relevant social issues chosen - which are familiar to learners - becoming the center of the discussion, learners are expected to improve on their idea expression, while simultaneously, AI-assisted learning tools become their support in searching for relevant materials, appropriate vocabularies and correct language rules. This CLIL framework applied and the learning support from AI technologies do demonstrate the salient gap between the conventional and the current pedagogical practices. This concept paper also emphasizes the needs for the appropriate teaching plans and strategies which can improve motivational engagement amongst the learners in this challenging era. Though this paper appears constructive for L2 writing instruction, there are still limitations that we need to resolve. For instance, the potential exploitation of AI tools, the use of irrelevant and sensitive social issues content, or poor instructors' guidance. In essence, this study maintains its relevancy in the current educational paradigm as learners will experience effective technological facilitation in their learning journey while having concerns and awareness over social issues surround them.

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