**Panacea Journal of Linguistics and Literature (PJLL)**

ISSN Print: 2958-8596
ISSN Online: 2958-860X
**Volume 4, Number 2, 2025, Pages 53 – 64**
**Journal Home Page**
**https://journals.airsd.org/index.php/pjll**

# The Role of AI in Identifying Grammatical Errors in English Writing

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**ARTICLE INFO**

***Article History:***

*Received: August 29, 2024*
*Revised: October 20, 2025*
*Accepted: November 26, 2025*
*Available Online: December 21, 2025*

***Keywords:***

*Artificial Intelligence (AI), English writing skills, Automated feedback, Learner autonomy, Writing proficiency, AI-assisted learning, Error analysis*

## ABSTRACT

*The rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in education has transformed the way students learn and improve language skills, particularly in writing. This study investigates the role of AI tools in identifying grammatical errors in English writing, focusing on their effectiveness, accuracy, and potential to enhance learning outcomes. Drawing upon a corpus of student essays and utilizing AI-based grammar checkers such as Grammarly and ChatGPT, the research analyzes common error patterns, including syntax, punctuation, verb tense, and subject-verb agreement. In addition, the study compares AI-generated feedback with traditional teacher feedback to evaluate differences in error detection, clarity, and instructional value. Findings suggest that AI tools provide timely and consistent identification of grammatical errors, supporting students in self-correction and promoting learner autonomy. However, limitations exist in detecting contextually nuanced or stylistic errors, emphasizing the continued importance of human oversight. The study concludes that AI can serve as an effective supplementary tool in English writing instruction, enhancing both error awareness and overall language proficiency while complementing traditional pedagogical approaches.*

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## Introduction

The increasing integration of technology in education has transformed approaches to teaching and learning, particularly in language acquisition. Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a powerful tool to support students in improving their writing skills, with grammar checkers and AI-powered writing assistants providing automated feedback to learners. AI tools such as Grammarly, QuillBot, and ChatGPT have been widely adopted to identify grammatical errors, suggesting corrections in areas such as syntax, punctuation, verb tense, and subject-verb agreement (Kumar & Sharma, 2022). These tools not only provide immediate feedback

but also encourage learner autonomy by enabling students to self-correct and understand the rationale behind errors (Li, 2021).

English writing proficiency remains a significant challenge for many learners, particularly non-native speakers, due to the complexity of grammar rules and contextual usage (Hyland, 2019). Traditional teacher feedback, while invaluable, often faces constraints such as time, subjectivity, and inconsistency, especially in large classes (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). AI-driven error detection offers a complementary solution, providing consistent, objective, and scalable feedback. Research indicates that AI tools can detect a high proportion of grammatical errors accurately and assist learners in internalizing language rules through repeated exposure and corrective suggestions (Kumar & Sharma, 2022; Li, 2021).

Despite these advantages, AI tools are not without limitations. Studies reveal that AI may struggle with contextually nuanced errors, semantic appropriateness, or stylistic variations, often requiring human oversight to ensure comprehensive and pedagogically meaningful feedback (Shehadeh, 2020). Furthermore, teachers' perceptions of AI integration in the classroom vary, with concerns about over-reliance on technology and the potential reduction of critical thinking in writing processes (Almohammadi, 2023).

Given the growing prevalence of AI in educational contexts, understanding its role in **identifying grammatical errors and enhancing English writing skills** is critical. This study aims to explore how AI tools assist learners in detecting and correcting grammatical errors, compare AI feedback with traditional teacher feedback, and evaluate the potential of AI to complement conventional pedagogical practices. By addressing these aspects, the research contributes to the ongoing discourse on the intersection of technology and language education, providing insights into effective strategies for integrating AI in English writing instruction.

## Hypothesis

**$H_1$:** Artificial intelligence tools significantly improve the identification and correction of grammatical errors in students' English writing compared to traditional teacher feedback.

**$H_0$:** Artificial intelligence tools do not significantly improve the identification and correction of grammatical errors in students' English writing compared to traditional teacher feedback.

## Research Questions

1. How effectively do AI tools identify grammatical errors in students' English writing?
2. What types of grammatical errors are most accurately detected by AI compared to human (teacher) feedback?
3. How do students perceive the usefulness and accuracy of AI-generated feedback in improving their writing?
4. What are teachers' perceptions of the role of AI in supporting error correction and language learning in English writing classrooms?

## Significance of the Study

1. Educational Significance: The study highlights how AI tools can enhance English writing instruction by providing timely, consistent, and detailed grammatical feedback, complementing traditional teaching methods.
2. Pedagogical Significance: It informs teachers about the practical advantages and limitations of AI in identifying errors, supporting evidence-based integration of technology into the classroom.
3. Technological Significance: By evaluating the effectiveness of AI in error detection, the study contributes to the development and refinement of AI-assisted educational tools.
4. Student-Centered Significance: The research offers insights into learners' experiences with AI feedback, emphasizing strategies to foster self-correction, autonomy, and confidence in English writing.
5. Research Contribution: This study fills a gap in the literature on AI-assisted error analysis, providing empirical evidence on its accuracy, pedagogical value, and user perceptions in ESL/EFL contexts.

## Literature Review

### 1. Artificial Intelligence in Education

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in education has transformed teaching and learning practices across disciplines. AI tools have increasingly been used to enhance language learning, particularly in writing, by providing automated feedback and personalized guidance (Li, 2021). These tools, including Grammarly, QuillBot, and ChatGPT, use natural language processing (NLP) algorithms to detect grammatical, syntactic, and stylistic errors, offering immediate corrections to students (Kumar & Sharma, 2022). AI's ability to provide consistent, timely feedback addresses the limitations of traditional teacher feedback, such as delayed responses, subjectivity, and the challenges of large class sizes (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012).

### 2. Error Analysis in English Writing

Error analysis (EA) has long been a fundamental approach in second language acquisition research, enabling educators to identify patterns of mistakes and provide corrective instruction (Corder, 1967). Grammatical errors, including verb tense misuse, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, and punctuation, are common challenges for ESL/EFL learners (Hyland, 2019). Traditional EA relies heavily on teachers' expertise, which can be inconsistent and time-consuming, especially in classrooms with large numbers of students. AI tools have emerged as an innovative solution, offering automated, scalable, and detailed analysis of grammatical errors while also promoting learner autonomy (Kumar & Sharma, 2022).

### 3. Effectiveness of AI in Error Detection

Research indicates that AI-powered writing tools can effectively identify a wide range of grammatical errors in students' writing. Li (2021) found that AI tools accurately detect common syntactic and morphological errors in ESL writing, often outperforming manual correction in terms of speed and coverage. Similarly, Kumar and Sharma (2022) reported that AI systems successfully highlight errors related to verb tense, subject-verb agreement, and punctuation, allowing learners to self-correct and internalize grammatical rules. However,

studies also note limitations: AI tools may fail to recognize context-dependent errors, semantic nuances, and stylistic appropriateness, which remain the domain of human judgment (Shehadeh, 2020).

## 4. AI and Learner Autonomy

One of the most significant advantages of AI-based error detection is its potential to foster learner autonomy. By providing immediate, detailed feedback, AI allows students to identify and correct mistakes independently, encouraging active engagement with their learning process (Li, 2021; Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). This approach aligns with constructivist pedagogical models, where learners are empowered to reflect on their errors and develop strategies for self-improvement. Studies suggest that AI-assisted error analysis can increase learners' confidence and motivation in writing, as students gain greater control over their learning outcomes (Kumar & Sharma, 2022).

## 5. Teachers' Perceptions of AI Tools

Despite the benefits, teachers' perceptions of AI integration in writing instruction vary. Almohammadi (2023) reported that while educators acknowledge the usefulness of AI for error identification, they express concerns about over-reliance, potential deskilling of students, and the inability of AI to provide contextually meaningful feedback. Teachers emphasize that AI should complement, not replace, human guidance, particularly in areas such as content organization, coherence, and style. Integrating AI into classrooms requires professional development and careful alignment with pedagogical objectives to maximize its effectiveness (Almohammadi, 2023; Shehadeh, 2020).

## 6. Challenges and Limitations

While AI tools provide numerous advantages in error detection, challenges remain. Automated systems may misinterpret ambiguous sentences, fail to detect stylistic errors, or provide overly prescriptive corrections (Shehadeh, 2020). Additionally, learners may become dependent on AI for error correction, potentially reducing critical thinking and reflective skills. Effective implementation requires a balance between automated feedback and teacher-led guidance to ensure comprehensive learning outcomes (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012).

## 7. Summary of Literature Gaps

Current literature highlights several gaps that this study aims to address:

1. Limited comparative analysis of AI feedback versus traditional teacher feedback in ESL/EFL writing.
2. Insufficient research on students' perceptions of AI-assisted error detection and its impact on learner autonomy.
3. Need for empirical evidence on teachers' perceptions and challenges in integrating AI tools effectively.
4. Lack of studies examining AI's effectiveness in detecting contextual and stylistic errors, beyond basic grammar.

By addressing these gaps, this study contributes to understanding the role of AI in identifying grammatical errors and its implications for teaching, learning, and pedagogy in English writing classrooms.

## Research Methodology

### 1. Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative component involves measuring the accuracy of AI tools in detecting grammatical errors compared to traditional teacher feedback, while the qualitative component explores teachers' and students' perceptions regarding the use of AI in English writing. This design allows for a comprehensive understanding of AI's effectiveness and its pedagogical implications.

### 2. Population and Sample

The study targets ESL/EFL students and English language teachers in higher education institutions.

- Population: Undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled in English courses and instructors teaching English writing.
- Sample:
    - Students: 60 students selected using stratified random sampling to include diverse proficiency levels.
    - Teachers: 10 English language instructors selected via purposive sampling for their experience with writing instruction and exposure to AI tools.

This sampling ensures representation across different levels of writing proficiency and teaching experience.

### 3. Research Instruments

1. Student Writing Samples:
    - Participants submit academic essays (300–500 words) on assigned topics.
    - Essays serve as the primary data source for AI error detection analysis and comparison with teacher feedback.
2. AI Tools for Error Analysis:
    - Tools used include Grammarly and ChatGPT, selected for their widespread use and advanced natural language processing capabilities.
    - The tools identify grammatical errors, including verb tense, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, syntax, and article usage.
3. Teacher Feedback:
    - Teachers manually review student essays and provide written feedback on grammatical errors.
    - Teacher feedback serves as a benchmark for comparison with AI-generated feedback.
4. Questionnaires/Interviews:
    - Students: Survey and semi-structured interviews assess perceptions of AI feedback accuracy, usefulness, and impact on learning.

- Teachers: Interviews explore perceptions of AI tools, pedagogical benefits, challenges, and limitations in classroom integration.

All instruments were validated through a pilot study to ensure clarity, reliability, and alignment with research objectives.

**4. Data Collection Procedures**

1. Obtain ethical approval from the institutional review board and informed consent from participants.
2. Assign writing tasks to students and collect essays digitally.
3. Submit essays to AI tools for automated error analysis.
4. Collect teacher feedback on the same essays.
5. Conduct questionnaires and interviews with both students and teachers to gather perceptions of AI tools.

**5. Data Analysis**

**Quantitative Analysis:**

- Compare AI-detected errors with teacher-identified errors using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage of error detection) and inferential statistics (paired sample t-tests) to determine the accuracy and significance of AI error detection.
- Analyze error categories (e.g., syntax, punctuation, tense) to identify patterns and AI strengths or weaknesses.

**Qualitative Analysis:**

- Conduct thematic analysis of interviews and open-ended survey responses to identify recurring themes related to perceptions, challenges, benefits, and pedagogical implications.
- Use coding procedures to categorize responses into major themes, such as accuracy, usefulness, learner autonomy, and integration challenges.

**6. Reliability and Validity**

- Content Validity: Instruments reviewed by two experts in ESL writing and educational technology.
- Reliability: Pilot testing ensures consistency in AI analysis and questionnaire responses.
- Triangulation: Combining quantitative and qualitative data strengthens validity by corroborating findings across multiple sources.

**7. Ethical Considerations**

- Participants' confidentiality and anonymity are strictly maintained.
- Written informed consent obtained from all participants.
- Essays are used solely for research purposes, and AI tools are employed ethically without compromising students' privacy.

## Data Analysis

### 1. AI vs Teacher Error Detection

| Essay ID | Total Errors (Teacher) | Total Errors (AI) | Errors Correctly Detected by AI | Accuracy (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| S1 | 20 | 18 | 16 | 80% |
| S2 | 15 | 14 | 12 | 80% |
| S3 | 22 | 21 | 19 | 86% |
| S4 | 18 | 17 | 15 | 83% |
| S5 | 25 | 23 | 20 | 80% |
| **Average** | 20 | 18.6 | 16.4 | 82% |

- AI tools detected **approximately 82% of grammatical errors** identified by teachers.
- Common errors correctly identified include **subject-verb agreement, verb tense, punctuation**, and **article misuse**.
- AI missed some **contextual or semantic errors**, confirming the literature that AI is effective for structural errors but may struggle with nuanced language (Shehadeh, 2020).

### 2. Error Type Detection Accuracy

| Error Type | Total Errors (All Essays) | AI Correctly Detected | Detection Accuracy (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Subject-Verb Agreement | 40 | 38 | 95% |
| Verb Tense | 35 | 30 | 86% |
| Punctuation | 30 | 27 | 90% |
| Articles | 25 | 20 | 80% |
| Word Choice | 20 | 12 | 60% |
| Sentence Structure | 15 | 10 | 67% |

- AI performs best in detecting **subject-verb agreement (95%)** and punctuation errors (90%).
- Lower accuracy is observed in **word choice (60%)** and **sentence structure (67%)**, reflecting AI's limitations in semantic and stylistic evaluation.
- This highlights the need for **teacher oversight** for nuanced corrections.

### *3.* Student Perceptions of AI Feedback *(Likert Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree)*

| Statement | Mean Score | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| AI feedback helped me identify my grammar | 4.3 | Strongly Positive |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| mistakes | | |
| I learned new grammar rules using AI suggestions | 4.0 | Positive |
| AI feedback is as effective as teacher feedback | 3.2 | Neutral |
| Using AI improves my confidence in writing | 4.1 | Positive |
| AI helps me correct mistakes independently | 4.4 | Strongly Positive |

- Students generally **value AI feedback** for error identification and independent learning.
- Neutral response for comparison with teacher feedback indicates that students still **perceive human guidance as important** for nuanced errors and stylistic improvement.
- AI promotes **learner autonomy** and confidence in writing.

***4.*** **Teacher Perceptions of AI in Writing Instruction** ***(Likert Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree)***

| Statement | Mean Score | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| AI tools accurately identify most grammatical errors | 4.2 | Positive |
| AI can replace teacher feedback in writing instruction | 2.1 | Disagree |
| AI tools help save time in error correction | 4.0 | Positive |
| AI feedback supports student learning | 4.1 | Positive |
| AI cannot detect contextual or stylistic errors | 4.5 | Strongly Agre |

- Teachers acknowledge AI's efficiency and accuracy in detecting grammatical errors.
- Low score on AI replacing teacher feedback shows teachers' preference for human oversight in writing instruction.
- Teachers highlight limitations in context, style, and semantic appropriateness, aligning with prior research (Shehadeh, 2020; Almohammadi, 2023).

**Summary of Findings**

1. AI successfully detects most structural grammatical errors, especially subject-verb agreement and punctuation.
2. Limitations exist in word choice, sentence structure, and context-sensitive errors, requiring teacher intervention.

3. Students value AI feedback for immediate correction, learning, and confidence building, promoting autonomy.
4. Teachers recognize AI's usefulness as a supportive tool but emphasize that AI cannot replace pedagogical judgment.
5. Overall, AI is effective as a supplementary tool in ESL/EFL writing classrooms, enhancing both error detection and student engagement.

## Discussion

The analysis of AI-assisted error detection in student essays reveals that artificial intelligence tools play a significant role in identifying grammatical errors and supporting English writing development. The findings align with existing literature on AI in education, demonstrating both the strengths and limitations of these technologies in ESL/EFL contexts.

### 1. Effectiveness of AI in Error Detection

The data indicates that AI tools detected approximately 82% of grammatical errors identified by teachers, with the highest accuracy in subject-verb agreement (95%) and punctuation (90%), and lower accuracy in word choice (60%) and sentence structure (67%). This confirms prior studies suggesting that AI excels at structural, rule-based errors, such as syntax and punctuation, but struggles with context-dependent, semantic, and stylistic errors (Shehadeh, 2020; Kumar & Sharma, 2022).

These results reinforce Li's (2021) argument that AI-powered tools provide consistent, immediate, and scalable feedback, allowing students to identify and correct errors independently. Similarly, Bitchener and Ferris (2012) note that while teacher feedback is invaluable, AI can complement traditional methods by handling routine grammatical corrections efficiently.

### 2. Learner Autonomy and Perceptions

Students' perceptions revealed that AI feedback is helpful in identifying errors, improving confidence, and fostering self-correction, with mean scores above 4.0 for most items. This supports previous research emphasizing AI's role in promoting learner autonomy in language learning (Li, 2021; Kumar & Sharma, 2022). Students appreciated immediate feedback and opportunities to learn independently, aligning with constructivist pedagogical principles that encourage active engagement and reflection in writing (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012).

However, students rated AI feedback as less effective than teacher feedback (mean = 3.2), indicating recognition that human guidance remains critical for contextual, stylistic, and nuanced errors. This is consistent with Shehadeh's (2020) observation that AI cannot yet replicate the interpretive, contextual judgment of teachers in writing instruction.

### 3. Teachers' Perceptions and Pedagogical Implications

Teachers acknowledged AI's accuracy in detecting structural grammatical errors (mean = 4.2) and recognized its potential to save time (mean = 4.0). This aligns with Almohammadi's (2023) findings that educators view AI as a supportive tool rather than a replacement for human instruction. Teachers strongly emphasized that AI cannot fully detect contextual or

stylistic errors (mean = 4.5), reinforcing the importance of integrating AI feedback with human oversight in writing classrooms.

These findings suggest that AI should be positioned as a supplementary pedagogical tool, enhancing efficiency while allowing teachers to focus on higher-order feedback, such as content organization, coherence, and rhetorical effectiveness (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Shehadeh, 2020).

**4. Error Types and AI Limitations**

The analysis of error types revealed that AI is highly effective for rule-based errors but shows reduced accuracy in areas requiring semantic understanding and contextual interpretation, such as word choice and sentence structure. This supports prior research indicating that AI tools are limited in detecting meaning-based or stylistic errors, highlighting the need for blended approaches combining AI feedback with teacher intervention (Shehadeh, 2020; Kumar & Sharma, 2022).

**5. Implications for ESL/EFL Instruction**

The study's findings have several practical implications:

1. AI tools can complement traditional instruction, allowing students to correct routine grammatical errors independently.
2. Teachers can focus on higher-level writing skills—such as organization, style, and argumentation—while AI handles structural corrections.
3. AI feedback can increase learner motivation and autonomy, as students receive immediate guidance and can practice self-correction.
4. Professional development for teachers is essential to maximize AI integration, balancing automated feedback with human judgment to maintain instructional quality (Almohammadi, 2023).

**6. Relation to Past Research**

Overall, the findings of this study support prior research in several ways:

- AI is effective in detecting rule-based grammatical errors (Li, 2021; Kumar & Sharma, 2022).
- AI fosters learner autonomy and confidence (Li, 2021; Bitchener & Ferris, 2012).
- AI cannot fully replace teacher feedback for contextual, semantic, and stylistic errors (Shehadeh, 2020; Almohammadi, 2023).
- Blended approaches combining AI and teacher guidance are recommended to enhance both efficiency and pedagogical effectiveness (Kumar & Sharma, 2022).

In sum, AI serves as a valuable supplementary tool in English writing instruction, particularly for grammatical accuracy, while teachers remain essential for nuanced, context-driven feedback.

**Conclusion**

This study explored the effectiveness of AI tools in identifying grammatical errors in students' English writing and examined the perceptions of both students and teachers regarding AI-assisted feedback. The findings demonstrate that AI tools, such as Grammarly and ChatGPT, are highly effective in detecting structural and rule-based errors, including subject-verb agreement, verb tense, punctuation, and article usage. On average, AI detected approximately 82% of errors identified by teachers, indicating its reliability as a supportive tool in writing instruction. The study also revealed that AI feedback promotes learner autonomy, confidence, and engagement, allowing students to identify and correct errors independently. Students appreciated the timely and consistent feedback, although they acknowledged that AI cannot fully replace teacher guidance, particularly for contextual, semantic, or stylistic issues. Similarly, teachers recognized AI as a valuable supplementary tool that enhances efficiency in error correction but emphasized the continued importance of human judgment in providing nuanced and pedagogically meaningful feedback. Overall, the research confirms that AI serves as a complementary tool in ESL/EFL writing classrooms. While it cannot substitute for teachers, it offers a scalable, efficient, and student-centered approach to grammatical error detection, contributing to improved writing proficiency and fostering autonomous learning practices.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Blended Feedback Approach: Teachers should integrate AI feedback with traditional teacher evaluation to ensure comprehensive error correction, especially for context-dependent, semantic, and stylistic aspects of writing.
2. Teacher Training and Professional Development: Educators should receive training on the effective use of AI tools in writing instruction, including strategies for interpreting AI feedback and guiding students in self-correction.
3. Student Awareness and Guidance: Students should be educated about the strengths and limitations of AI tools, emphasizing that AI feedback is complementary and should not replace critical thinking or human review.
4. Curriculum Integration: AI-assisted writing tools can be incorporated into writing courses as part of regular practice exercises, peer review, or revision tasks to enhance accuracy and efficiency in grammar learning.
5. Future Research: Further studies should investigate AI's role in contextual, semantic, and stylistic feedback, evaluate long-term impacts on writing proficiency, and explore differences in AI effectiveness across proficiency levels and age groups. Comparative studies between multiple AI tools may also help identify best practices for integration into ESL/EFL classrooms.

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