



# **Generative Artificial Intelligence and the Development of English Writing Skills**

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## **ABSTRACT :**

Generative artificial intelligence can provide English learners with immediate explanations, alternative expressions, and feedback during composition. Its educational value depends on whether this assistance strengthens independent writing rather than merely improving a submitted text. This narrative review examines 40 journal articles, including 20 contributions from Indian scholars or Indian research contexts, to analyse relationships among AI assistance, writing processes, feedback engagement, and learner agency. The synthesis distinguishes empirical classroom findings from conceptual proposals and separates generative systems from earlier automated writing tools. Evidence supports carefully guided feedback and revision activities, while claims about sustained learning require stronger longitudinal verification. Indian multilingual settings introduce questions about language identity, unequal access, and the transfer of ideas across languages. A teacher-guided sequence of independent drafting, focused AI consultation, reasoned revision, and unaided transfer assessment is proposed. The review concludes that generative AI can support English writing development when learners retain responsibility for meaning, evidence, and linguistic decisions.

**Keywords:** generative artificial intelligence, English writing, feedback literacy, learner agency, Indian ESL education

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## **Introduction**

English writing involves constructing meaning for an audience, organising ideas, selecting evidence, and revising language. A grammatically polished paragraph can still contain weak reasoning or obscure a learner's actual competence. Generative AI makes this distinction especially consequential because it can produce fluent prose before a student has developed the knowledge needed to evaluate it. Barrot (2023) and Kohnke et al. (2023) identify useful language-learning affordances alongside challenges concerning accuracy and responsible use. The central educational question is therefore how AI participation changes what learners practise, understand, and eventually perform independently.

The Indian context deserves particular attention. English competence carries social and economic significance, as demonstrated by research on its labour-market returns (Azam et al., 2013). Kachru (1986) explains how the spread of English intersects with power and ideology. These studies contextualise the stakes of writing instruction; they do not establish an effect of AI on employability. For multilingual learners, writing support should increase communicative opportunity while preserving locally meaningful expression. The review asks which writing processes AI can support, how confidently existing evidence establishes learning gains, and what instructional safeguards are appropriate for Indian classrooms.

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## **Methodology**

This paper adopts a critical narrative review rather than a systematic review or a primary intervention study. Targeted web searches used combinations of generative AI, ChatGPT, English writing, ESL, feedback, learner agency, and India. Publisher and journal pages, institutional repositories, and available article texts were consulted to identify relevant publications and check bibliographic information. Abstracts informed limited descriptions where full texts were unavailable. No original student data, statistical estimates, or participant responses were collected. The review does not report a comprehensive database search, a reproducible screening flow, or a pooled effect size.

The final bibliography contains 40 journal articles selected for relevance to writing processes, feedback, generative AI, assessment, and multilingual education. Twenty belong to an Indian contribution group defined by an Indian study setting, Indian institutional affiliation, or established Indian scholarly authorship, including diaspora language scholars. This group includes conceptual articles and contextual studies as well as classroom investigations. The remaining articles provide international evidence and theoretical perspectives. Books, policy reports, conference papers, and preprints are excluded. The geographical balance is purposive and should not be interpreted as the distribution of the entire research field.

The synthesis compares sources by technology type, instructional purpose, outcome measured, and strength of inference. Particular attention is paid to whether a study evaluates an assisted text, immediate test performance, learner perceptions, or subsequent unaided writing. Conceptual arguments help explain instructional possibilities but are not treated as experimental evidence. Differences in samples, genres, intervention duration, and assessment

procedures preclude direct comparison of effect magnitudes. Earlier feedback and language-education research is used to interpret recent findings, with no suggestion that pre-2022 publications investigated contemporary generative AI.

## Theoretical Perspectives

Process theories portray writing as recursive planning, text production, and reviewing, rather than a sequence completed once (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hayes, 2012). From this perspective, the location of AI assistance matters: a question that helps a learner clarify a claim supports planning, whereas an automatically generated essay can displace planning altogether. Schmidt's (1990) account of noticing suggests that explanations may direct attention to differences between an original sentence and a proposed revision. Such attention offers a plausible learning mechanism, not a guarantee that every correction will be retained. Sweller's (1988) cognitive-load theory also suggests that support may reduce unnecessary difficulty, although removing the reasoning required by the task could undermine learning. These applications to AI writing are theoretical interpretations.

Feedback research locates improvement in the learner's response to information. Hattie and Timperley (2007) distinguish feedback directed towards tasks, processes, and self-regulation. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) connect formative assessment with learners' capacity to monitor performance. Carless and Boud (2018) explain why recognising quality, judging suggestions, and acting on them are essential. In writing, this means that the number of AI comments is a weak indicator of educational value. A smaller set of comments that learners understand and use may be more productive than a comprehensive rewrite accepted without reflection.

A contextual perspective further limits claims that one application can serve every class. Prabhu (1990) foregrounds teachers' pedagogical judgement, while Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2001, 2003) develops context-sensitive postmethod perspectives. Together, these contributions support adapting AI activities to students' language histories, purposes, and institutional resources. This is an extension of established pedagogical arguments, not a claim that these scholars evaluated current chatbots. The resulting framework links AI assistance to learner noticing, feedback judgement, contextual appropriateness, and independent transfer.

## Evidence and Discussion

Among the directly relevant Indian studies, Mahapatra (2024) investigated ChatGPT as a formative-feedback tool for undergraduate ESL writers. The mixed-methods intervention reported improvements in writing performance and positive learner perceptions. Its delayed testing adds value, but the short intervention, selected genres, and relatively strong starting proficiency limit broader generalisation. The study supports guided use within its setting; it does not show that unrestricted chatbot use improves all writing skills. Mahapatra (2021), addressing online formative assessment across India, Bangladesh, and Nepal, supplies earlier contextual evidence about feedback practice rather than evidence about generative AI.

Jamshed et al. (2024) compared mobile ChatGPT feedback with teacher feedback in an Indian senior-secondary setting over eight weeks. The reported reduction in targeted grammatical errors suggests a useful role for timely corrective assistance. Picture-based story writing and selected error categories define the reach of that finding. It should not be expanded into a claim that AI necessarily improves evidence-based argument or source evaluation. Yan (2023) provides exploratory international evidence about L2 writing activities and learner reflections. Its contribution is to understanding possible classroom use; exploratory evidence warrants cautious conclusions about causality and transfer.

The distinction between learning and productivity is especially clear in Noy and Zhang's (2023) experiment with professional writing tasks. Their findings establish productivity benefits under the tested conditions, not development of ESL competence. A student who finishes an assignment more quickly may have gained time, learned a new strategy, or delegated the central intellectual work. These outcomes require different evidence. Research and teaching should therefore examine the writing process as well as the quality of its final product.

Indian research also demonstrates why technology categories must remain separate. Makwana (2025) examined feedback from Cambridge Write & Improve in comparison with teacher-led feedback; this is relevant automated-feedback evidence, not a direct ChatGPT trial. Priyadharshini and Bavva (2025) investigated Grammarly and ProWritingAid with 20 postgraduate female students and reported improvement and greater confidence. Their small action-research design supports local pedagogical exploration. It cannot isolate a generative-AI effect or establish equivalent benefits across institutions. Devasena (2024) discusses AI-based English instruction more broadly, contributing pedagogical possibilities rather than a definitive estimate of writing improvement.

In vocabulary development, Moulieswaran (2025) proposes strategies tailored to Indian ESL learners. Generating contextual examples and comparing word choices can help students examine register and meaning, provided they subsequently use the vocabulary themselves. In argumentative writing, Su et al. (2023) propose collaboration with ChatGPT across planning and revision. Such proposals clarify useful instructional designs but should not be cited as proof of measured gains. A credible synthesis distinguishes these conceptual contributions from controlled classroom studies.

Learner agency is the ability to make and explain decisions about meaning and expression. Makwana (2026) examines overreliance and writing agency among ESL undergraduates in Gujarat, raising concerns about delegating higher-order composing decisions. Mohanraj (2024) presents a critical perspective on possible harms to learning. These contributions challenge uncomplicated accounts of AI benefit. Their interpretations should be assessed against study design, and a critical opinion should not be treated as equivalent to experimental evidence. Verma and Arora (2025) extend the discussion to authorship and originality, showing why acceptable language assistance must be distinguished from misrepresentation of intellectual contribution.

Multilingualism introduces another dimension. Agnihotri (2007) argues for pedagogy rooted in multilinguality, and Hornberger and Vaish (2009) examine relationships between language policy and classroom practice across multilingual settings including India. Vogelzang et al. (2025) investigate Indian children's reading and mother-tongue education. Their findings contextualise linguistic diversity but do not test AI writing or justify a direct causal inference about it. An instructional implication proposed here is to allow initial idea development in familiar languages while asking learners to justify how they express those ideas in English.

International research identifies risks that matter for assessment. Liang et al. (2023) document bias against non-native English writing in GPT detectors. Cotton et al. (2024) discuss academic integrity, while Rudolph et al. (2023) question conventional assessment in the presence of automated text generation. Detection scores should consequently be treated as uncertain signals, alongside drafts and discussion. Chan and Hu (2023) report students' perceived benefits and concerns; perceived usefulness does not establish independent learning. Lo's (2023) early rapid review and Zawacki-Richter et al.'s (2019) pre-generative-AI review provide broader context, while underscoring the importance of educators' participation.

## Pedagogical Implications

The synthesis supports a teacher-guided sequence consisting of independent drafting, focused consultation, reasoned revision, and unaided transfer. This is a proposed instructional arrangement requiring empirical validation. First, students draft a short text before receiving AI assistance. The teacher specifies its purpose, audience, and learning target. A task might ask learners to argue whether a college should reduce single-use plastics, using an assigned source. The initial draft reveals the student's ideas and current language resources and provides a basis for distinguishing subsequent assistance from original contribution. Figure 1 illustrates this proposed sequence and the evidence it is intended to produce.

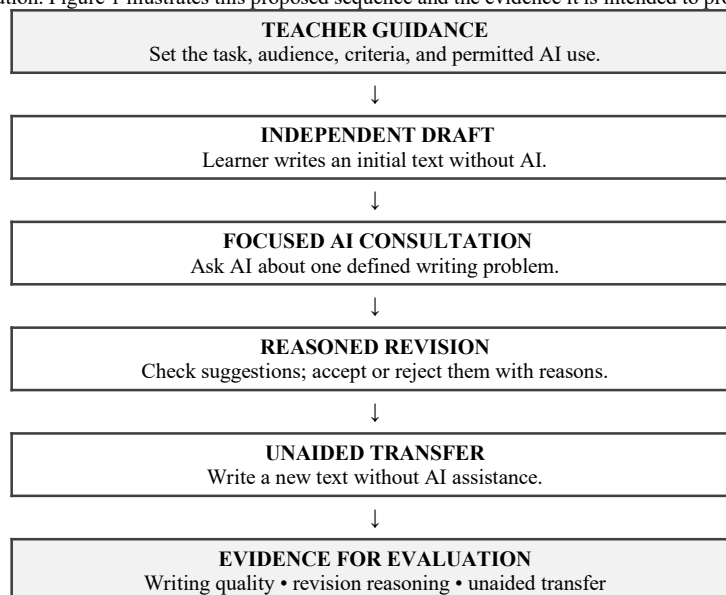


**Fig. 1 - Learner-led model for generative AI-supported English writing practice. The model is proposed for classroom use and requires empirical evaluation.**

Second, AI consultation is restricted to a defined problem. Instead of requesting a complete essay, a learner might ask the system to identify two unclear sentences, explain the ambiguity, and ask questions without rewriting the passage. Another prompt could request a counterargument that the learner must evaluate against the assigned source. The teacher reviews representative outputs and explains that confident language does not ensure factual accuracy. Claims, quotations, and bibliographic details are checked against the actual reading. Students remain responsible for selecting evidence and deciding what their argument means.

Third, students record a few substantial revisions and explain their decisions. A short revision account states the original problem, the AI suggestion, the accepted or rejected change, and the reason. This makes feedback engagement visible without collecting every private interaction. Hyland and Hyland (2006) establish the importance of feedback context, and Luhach (2025) examines feedback literacy in technology-mediated peer tasks. Their work supports including peer discussion alongside AI consultation. A classmate may recognise an unclear local example or a loss of intended meaning that a generic automated response overlooks.

Fourth, students write a new response without AI assistance. Transfer tasks should resemble the learning target while changing the topic or evidence. For example, a learner who revised causal explanations about plastic waste might write an unaided paragraph about another campus problem. Improvement is evaluated separately for organisation, evidence, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary, and revision reasoning. Confidence questionnaires may complement these measures but should not replace performance evidence. Zimmerman (2002) connects self-regulation with goal setting, monitoring, and reflection; its application here supports gradually reducing assistance as learners demonstrate greater control.

Teachers can implement this sequence through brief weekly assignments rather than large automated essays. Early activities may emphasise one feature, such as topic-sentence clarity, before moving to paragraph relationships and argument development. AI comments should be limited enough for students to discuss and test. Learners who struggle to interpret English explanations may receive teacher-supported clarification in a familiar language. The same learning target should guide all students, while the form of support varies according to proficiency and available resources. The aim is to build increasingly independent judgement rather than habitual acceptance of corrections.

Access and assessment conditions must be considered together. Shared-device activities, supervised consultation, and teacher-prepared examples can make the instructional approach usable where personal connectivity is limited. Students should not be disadvantaged for completing an equivalent non-AI revision task. Clear classroom instructions identify permitted assistance, the required disclosure, and the evidence of independent work. Personal details and identifiable peer drafts should be removed before text is entered into an external system. These are proposed practices for responsible instruction, not claims about the privacy guarantees of any particular product.

Evaluation should examine learning across time and settings. A future Indian classroom study could compare teacher feedback, unguided AI feedback, and AI feedback combined with revision explanations, while providing comparable practice time. Baseline proficiency, language background, device access, and prior AI experience should be recorded. Trained raters blinded to group assignment should assess texts against a common rubric, with agreement reported. An immediate assisted assignment, an unaided post-test, and a delayed transfer task would separate product improvement from retained competence. Interviews and revision records could explain why similar feedback benefits some learners more than others.

The present review has material limitations. Its purposive selection and Indian reference balance may overrepresent locally accessible publications and omit contradictory work. Several sources concern automated correction, general language education, or reading rather than generative-AI writing. They are retained for contextual and theoretical relevance, with their indirect role stated. Some article descriptions rely on abstracts, limiting independent appraisal of methods. The evidence spans different genres and populations, so neither a pooled effect nor a universal recommendation follows. The main contribution is a critical synthesis and a testable instructional proposal, rather than a validated intervention or a new dataset.

## Conclusion

Generative AI can support English writing through explanations, opportunities to compare expressions, and feedback during revision. Its value is strongest when these affordances increase learners' attention to meaning and strengthen their ability to justify choices. Indian classroom studies offer encouraging results within specified settings, while research on overreliance, authorship, and multilingual education exposes important boundaries. Evidence from conventional automated writing tools should not be presented as direct evidence about generative systems, and improvements in assisted prose should not be equated with durable competence.

A defensible approach keeps students responsible for ideas and evidence, combines AI consultation with teacher and peer feedback, and assesses later writing without assistance. The proposed draft–consult–revise–transfer sequence operationalises these principles for classroom investigation. Research should now test its effects over longer periods, across genres and proficiency levels, and in institutions with different resource conditions. The educational objective remains the development of capable English writers who can use feedback critically and communicate independently.

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