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Integrating AI into L2 writing instruction while maintaining writer's voice

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Second language (L2) instructors face a challenge when incorporating artificial intelligence (AI) tools into their writing lessons concerning the preservation of the writer's voice. This article briefly explains the meaning and development of voice before covering two contrasting scenarios that potentially play out in L2 writing classrooms. In the first, L2 writers may become over reliant on AI-generated assistance, leading to a dilution of their personal style and expression. In this instance, algorithms and templates provided by AI may homogenize writing, with authentic language being replaced by standardized, computationally optimized phrases, resulting in a loss of individuality and originality. In the second scenario, responsible use of AI can assist grammar correction and offer stylistic suggestions while allowing writers to retain control over their narratives and individuality as L2 writers. Teachers can play a central role in helping students preserve their authenticity, individuality, and voice by providing guidance on the responsible use of AI tools, along with directed instruction and constructive feedback.

Keywords: writer's voice, AI writing tools, second language writers

Introduction

A writer's voice is the distinct style, tone, and personality that emerges through one's writing. It is what makes a piece of writing not just correct or effective but uniquely belonging to the writer (DiTiberio & Jensen, 2018; Hyland & Guinda, 2012; Matsuda,

2001). For L2 writers, developing this voice is an essential part of their learning journey; a way to express their identity and creativity through the medium of a new language (Matsuda, 2015; Zhao, 2019). However, the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) into this process raises important questions regarding the development of voice and whether students can maintain their individuality and originality when AI tools offer the convenience of standardized text generation with optimized phrases and suggestions (Hutson et al., 2024).

This essay explores critical issues relating to the maintenance of voice in L2 writing by examining both the potential benefits and drawbacks of AI. Through this exploration, we highlight the vital role educators play in guiding students to use AI responsibly, ensuring that technology serves as a writer's aid rather than a replacement. By guiding students in the responsible and balanced use of these tools, we can help students leverage AI without becoming overdependent and ensure they assist the development of writing skills and individual writing styles.

Cognitive offloading, attention, and the risk of voice homogenization

In L2 contexts, AI may enhance the learning experience by automating repetitive tasks, providing immediate feedback, and offering personalized learning pathways (Lo et al., 2024). For L2 writers, it can be particularly beneficial in addressing grammatical errors, vocabulary selection, sentence structure, and style. These tools can reduce cognitive load, allowing students to focus on the creative and conceptual aspects of their writing while assisting with more technical details. This process of cognitive offloading, where the brain delegates certain tasks to external tools, can improve efficiency by reducing cognitive load, thus making learning more accessible and manageable (Iqbal et al., 2025).

However, the benefits of cognitive offloading must be considered against the potential drawbacks, particularly when it shifts from supporting writing processes to substituting authorial decision-making (Kosmyna et al., 2025). Overreliance on AI tools can lead to a decrease in the development of critical thinking skills, such as the ability to generate original ideas, engage deeply with content, and reflect upon one's learning (Gerlich, 2025). Furthermore, the use of AI in writing may fragment attention, as students may shift between multiple tasks and tools, disrupting the flow of original and creative thought. In the case of AI writing tools, students may develop a dependency for writing tasks, leading to a homogenization of their output as they unconsciously adopt the stylistic and linguistic preferences of the AI algorithms, raising concerns about the long-term effects on students' ability to write independently and maintain individuality.

Contrasting scenarios of AI use

To better understand the impact of AI on L2 writer voice, it is helpful to consider two contrasting scenarios: one where students over-rely on AI tools, and another where these tools are used judiciously with the guidance of educators. In the first scenario, excessive dependence on AI leads to a dilution of the writer's voice. As students repeatedly use AI-generated suggestions for not only proofreading, but also

content ideas and text generation, their writing becomes increasingly standardized and formulaic. The creative nuances that distinguish one writer from another may be lost as AI recommendations prioritize efficiency and correctness over individuality and originality, increasing the risk of homogenization, where diverse voices are overshadowed by the uniformity of algorithms.

In contrast, the second scenario presents a more balanced approach, in which AI is integrated into the writing process in ways that enhance rather than diminish the writer's voice. AI functions as a supportive tool for technical aspects such as grammar and structure, while writers retain control over content and identity. Emerging work suggests that AI-supported feedback may, in some cases, enhance authorial voice by increasing rhetorical awareness and control (Singh et al., 2025). Educators play a key role in guiding students to use AI thoughtfully and critically, particularly given that L2 writer voice develops gradually and is better understood in terms of emerging agency and idea ownership than a fully established personal style. When framed as a complement rather than a substitute, AI may amplify rather than replace the writer's voice. Recent studies further suggest that lexical diversity, stance marking, and stylistic patterns may offer ways to examine voice preservation in AI-assisted writing, though consensus remains limited in L2 contexts (Nañola et al., 2025).

Strategies for integrating AI in L2 writing

These two scenarios illustrate the challenge for educators and students to find a balance, ensuring that AI tools are used in ways that support the development of an authentic, distinctive voice in writing. Strategies for integrating AI in the L2 writing process are as follows:

1. Pedagogical considerations

- ▶ Employing a flipped classroom methodology can allow more time for in-class writing (with or without AI tools) supervised by the instructor (Turan & Akdag-Cimen, 2020).
- ▶ Incorporating communication and presentations with written outputs (e.g., preparing and presenting infographics based on essays) can assist further engagement with the written text and offer time for students to more deeply interact with peers and understand their compositions.
- ▶ Balancing technology and traditional writing methods by incorporating activities that require handwriting, peer review, and in-class writing exercises without AI assistance.

2. Emphasis on the writing process

- ▶ Highlight the importance of traditional writing processes, including brainstorming, drafting, and revising, and integrate AI during specific stages, such as grammar checking and proofreading. While students should generate and structure ideas independently, AI can also be used selectively during early stages such as brainstorming to support idea exploration, provided that learners retain control over content decisions and rhetorical direction (Wang, 2025).
- ▶ Include prompt writing as part of the writing class (Kim et al., 2025).



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3. Awareness, critical engagement and reflection
 - ▶ Critically evaluate how AI tools influence the writing process and AI-generated suggestions through assignments requiring students to consider AI suggestions and decide whether to incorporate them based on their writing goals and personal style.
 - ▶ Use activities that contrast AI-generated content with human-generated content, allowing students to see the differences in tone, creativity, and expression. For example, students can first write a thesis statement using their own ideas, then they can prompt AI to do the same and compare them.
4. Ethical considerations and responsibility
 - ▶ Explain the ethical implications of using AI, including plagiarism, accuracy, intellectual property, and the responsible use of AI-generated content can help students better understand challenges posed by AI (Cotton et al., 2024).
 - ▶ Provide guidelines on AI tool use in assignments, ensuring that students understand the importance of originality and request inclusion of written disclosures of AI use.

Conclusion

While AI can enhance the quality of writing by providing feedback on grammar, structure, and style, it also poses a risk to the development and/or preservation of the writer's unique voice. The potential homogenization of writing styles and erosion of personal voice are concerns, particularly when these tools are used without careful consideration and guidance. Ultimately, our goal should be to integrate AI in a way that complements the natural development of writing skills, ensuring it serves as a tool to enhance, not replace, the personal and creative aspects of writing. Our role as educators is key in directing students through this rapidly evolving landscape. By incorporating thoughtful activities, promoting critical thinking and reflection, and guiding students in the responsible use of AI, we can help them leverage the benefits of writing technologies and embrace the challenges, while still maintaining their distinctive writing styles. Ongoing research and discussion are essential to understanding and focusing on the positive aspects of AI on the writing process, ensuring that L2 writers' voices are preserved and appreciated. Future research could examine these scenarios empirically through classroom-based studies that track revision histories, learner reflections, and textual features over time. Mixed-methods designs may be particularly useful for capturing both measurable linguistic changes and learners' perceptions of voice development.

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Declaration of AI use

OpenAI's ChatGPT was used in the preparation of this manuscript for proofreading and suggestions regarding style. The authors checked and revised the content of the article and take responsibility for the text within.

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