

Does Grammar Still Matter in the Age of Artificial Intelligence? Exploring Generation Z's Attitudes Toward AI-Assisted English Communication

Lito M. Mag-ampo¹, Analiza D. Maglaya², Imelda N. Binay-an³, Maureen T. Sta. Ana⁴

¹ College of Education, Northwest Samar State University, Calbayog City 6710, Samar, Philippines.
Email: lito.mag-ampo@nwssu.edu.ph

² Department of Education, Naguilian National High School, Naguilian, La Union 2511, Philippines.

³ College of Teacher Education, Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College, Tagudin, Ilocos Sur 2714, Philippines.

⁴ Graduate School, Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College, Sta. Cruz, Ilocos Sur 2713, Philippines.

Corresponding Author:

Lito M. Mag-ampo

Email: lito.mag-ampo@nwssu.edu.ph

Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed English communication by providing intelligent writing assistance and real-time grammar support, influencing how Generation Z constructs and evaluates language. Despite the widespread use of AI-powered applications, limited qualitative studies have explored how AI shapes Generation Z's attitudes toward grammar in English communication. This study explored Generation Z's attitudes toward grammar in AI-assisted English communication. Guided by Communicative Competence Theory, Language Attitude Theory, and Sociolinguistic Variation Theory, the study employed a descriptive qualitative research design. Twenty-five (25) purposively selected Generation Z undergraduate students from selected higher education institutions in the Ilocos Region and Eastern Visayas, Philippines, participated in semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that AI enhances participants' grammar awareness by providing immediate feedback and serving as a reliable support tool during English communication. Participants also demonstrated positive attitudes toward AI, citing increased confidence and improved communication while emphasizing that AI should complement rather than replace grammar learning. Furthermore, the study found that although AI has transformed the way Generation Z applies grammar, participants continue to recognize grammar as an essential communication skill for ensuring clarity, credibility, and effective interaction. The findings suggest that Artificial Intelligence functions as a complementary resource that strengthens, rather than diminishes, grammatical competence in English communication. The study highlights the importance of integrating AI-assisted language technologies into English language education while fostering learners' grammatical competence and responsible AI use.

Keywords Artificial Intelligence, AI-assisted English communication, Generation Z, grammar

INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has rapidly transformed the landscape of English communication by introducing intelligent writing assistants, grammar correction applications, and generative AI systems that support language production in academic, professional, and everyday contexts. AI-powered technologies such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and other intelligent language models are increasingly integrated into daily communication, enabling users to generate, revise, and improve written and spoken English with unprecedented speed and accuracy. As digital natives, Generation Z has embraced these technologies as part of their communication practices, making AI an influential factor in shaping how they perceive and use grammar in English communication (Alruthaya et al., 2021). Rather than relying solely on their grammatical competence, many young users now interact with AI systems that provide instant feedback and language corrections, raising important questions regarding the continuing relevance of grammar in the age of artificial intelligence.

The growing adoption of AI-assisted communication has significantly influenced language learning and communicative practices. Recent studies suggest that Generation Z increasingly utilizes AI-powered applications not only for correcting grammatical errors but also for enhancing vocabulary, improving sentence construction,

and refining overall communication quality. This growing reliance on AI reflects a shift from traditional language learning toward technology-supported communication, where grammatical decisions are increasingly influenced by intelligent systems. Moreover, contemporary communication platforms encourage rapid, interactive, and multimodal exchanges that emphasize communicative efficiency while allowing AI technologies to support linguistic accuracy (Lutfiana & Permatasari, 2025). Consequently, grammar is no longer viewed solely as an individual linguistic competence but as a communicative resource increasingly mediated by artificial intelligence. Despite the widespread use of AI, grammar continues to play a fundamental role in effective communication. Previous studies indicate that grammatical competence remains an important indicator of credibility, professionalism, and communicative clarity, particularly in academic and workplace settings (Demir, 2021). Likewise, Hyland and Jiang (2021) emphasized that grammatical accuracy remains essential in formal communication because it contributes to the clarity, coherence, and credibility of written and spoken discourse. At the same time, studies have shown that Generation Z demonstrates flexibility in applying grammatical rules, adapting their language according to context, audience, and communicative purpose (Suyitno, 2025). These findings suggest that while AI facilitates language production, it does not necessarily diminish the social and communicative value of grammar.

Recent literature further demonstrates that AI-assisted communication influences not only language performance but also learners' attitudes toward grammar. AI-generated feedback enables users to identify grammatical errors instantly, increasing confidence and reducing communication anxiety while simultaneously encouraging independent language learning. Similarly, studies on digital English practices reveal that Generation Z strategically combines AI-generated suggestions with their own linguistic judgment to achieve effective communication (Lee, 2022; Lutfiana & Permatasari, 2025). From a sociolinguistic perspective, language use continues to be shaped by communicative context, audience expectations, and social interaction despite the growing presence of intelligent technologies (Wang et al., 2023; Childs, 2025). These developments indicate that AI functions as a supportive communication tool rather than a complete replacement for grammatical knowledge. However, a significant research gap remains. Existing studies have primarily examined Generation Z's grammar attitudes, language behaviors, and digital communication practices separately (Adalia et al., 2025; Minoza et al., 2024). Although recent research acknowledges the increasing use of AI in education and language learning, limited qualitative investigations have explored how Generation Z personally perceives the role of grammar within AI-assisted English communication. Most existing studies employ quantitative approaches or focus on AI as an instructional technology rather than examining how AI influences users' attitudes toward grammar in authentic communicative situations (Harmaini, 2026; Ivenz, 2024). Consequently, little is known about whether AI changes the perceived importance of grammar or merely serves as a technological aid that complements existing grammatical knowledge.

Understanding this phenomenon is increasingly important because AI technologies are expected to remain integral components of communication in higher education, professional environments, and everyday interactions. Investigating Generation Z's attitudes toward grammar within AI-assisted communication provides valuable insights into how emerging technologies reshape language practices while preserving the fundamental principles of effective communication. This study is anchored on Communicative Competence Theory (Hymes, 1972), which emphasizes that effective communication involves not only grammatical accuracy but also contextual appropriateness; Language Attitude Theory (Lambert, 1967), which explains how beliefs about language influence communicative behavior; and Sociolinguistic Variation Theory (Labov, 1972), which posits that language use varies according to social context and communicative purpose. Guided by these theoretical perspectives, the present study seeks to explore Generation Z's attitudes toward grammar in AI-assisted English communication.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore Generation Z's attitudes toward grammar in AI-assisted English communication. Descriptive qualitative research is appropriate because it enables researchers to obtain rich descriptions of participants' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes regarding contemporary phenomena without imposing highly interpretive theoretical explanations. Since the study sought

to understand how Artificial Intelligence influences participants' views of grammar during English communication, qualitative inquiry provided the flexibility to capture authentic experiences and meanings expressed by the participants. As emphasized by Sandelowski (2000), descriptive qualitative research is suitable when the objective is to present comprehensive descriptions of participants' experiences in their everyday language.

Population and Sampling

The participants consisted of twenty-five (25) Generation Z undergraduate students aged 18 to 22 years enrolled in selected higher education institutions in the Ilocos Region and Eastern Visayas, Philippines. Participants were selected through purposive sampling because they possessed characteristics relevant to the objectives of the study. To ensure that participants could provide rich and meaningful information, the following inclusion criteria were applied: (1) belong to Generation Z (18–22 years old); (2) are currently enrolled in a higher education institution; (3) regularly use English in academic or everyday communication; and (4) have experience using Artificial Intelligence tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, or similar AI-powered writing assistants for English communication.

Purposive sampling was employed because it enables researchers to identify information-rich participants who possess direct experiences related to the phenomenon being investigated (Palinkas et al., 2015). Selecting participants with actual experience using AI-assisted communication ensured that the data reflected authentic perspectives regarding the role of Artificial Intelligence in shaping attitudes toward grammar.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument was a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide designed to explore Generation Z's attitudes toward grammar in AI-assisted English communication. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions aligned with the study objective and allowed participants to freely describe their experiences, perceptions, and attitudes regarding the influence of Artificial Intelligence on grammar use during English communication.

Research Objective	Interview Guide Questions
1. To explore Generation Z's attitudes toward grammar in AI-assisted English communication.	1. How has the use of Artificial Intelligence (e.g., ChatGPT, Grammarly, or other AI writing assistants) influenced the way you use grammar when communicating in English? 2. What are your attitudes toward using Artificial Intelligence to assist your English communication, particularly in improving grammar? 3. Do you think grammar still matters when Artificial Intelligence can automatically correct grammatical mistakes? Why or why not?

Data Gathering Procedure

After securing permission from the selected higher education institutions, participants who met the inclusion criteria were identified through purposive sampling. They were informed about the purpose of the study, and written informed consent was obtained prior to data collection.

Data were gathered through individual semi-structured interviews, conducted either face-to-face or online, with each interview lasting approximately 20–30 minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Participant identities were kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms, and all collected data were securely stored and used solely for the purposes of this study.

Data Analysis

The collected interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis following the framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method was selected because it provides a systematic approach for identifying, organizing, analyzing, and interpreting recurring patterns of meaning across qualitative data.

The analysis followed six stages: (1) familiarization with the interview transcripts through repeated reading; (2) generation of initial codes relevant to participants' experiences with AI-assisted English communication; (3)

organization of similar codes into preliminary themes; (4) review and refinement of themes to ensure coherence and consistency with the research objective; (5) definition and naming of final themes; and (6) interpretation of findings in relation to existing literature and the theoretical framework.

This analytical process enabled the researcher to identify meaningful themes that explain how Artificial Intelligence influences Generation Z's attitudes toward grammar in English communication.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study. Prior to participation, respondents received a clear explanation regarding the purpose of the research, interview procedures, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants before the interviews commenced.

To protect participants' identities, pseudonyms or participant codes were used during transcription, analysis, and reporting of findings. Audio recordings and interview transcripts were securely stored and were accessible only to the researchers. All information gathered during the study was used solely for academic research purposes and handled in accordance with established ethical standards for qualitative research (Orb et al., 2001). These procedures ensured the protection of participants' privacy, dignity, and overall well-being throughout the research process.

RESULTS

Research Objective. To explore Generation Z's attitudes toward grammar in AI-assisted English communication.

Interview Question 1. How has the use of Artificial Intelligence (e.g., ChatGPT, Grammarly, or other AI writing assistants) influenced the way you use grammar when communicating in English?

Theme 1. Artificial Intelligence Enhances Grammar Awareness

Most participants shared that Artificial Intelligence has made them more conscious of their grammar when communicating in English. They explained that AI-powered applications help identify grammatical errors, sentence structure problems, and inappropriate word choices that they may not have noticed on their own. Participants described AI as a useful learning resource that allows them to recognize recurring mistakes and improve their grammar before communicating. They also mentioned that receiving immediate feedback encourages them to become more attentive to grammatical accuracy in both academic and everyday communication.

"Whenever I use ChatGPT or Grammarly, I immediately notice my grammar mistakes and learn how to correct them."

"AI helps me become more aware of my grammar because it explains what needs to be corrected."

Theme 2. Artificial Intelligence Serves as a Grammar Support Tool

Participants also described Artificial Intelligence as a reliable support tool whenever they experience difficulty constructing grammatically correct English sentences. Rather than depending solely on their own knowledge, they use AI applications to verify sentence accuracy, improve clarity, and organize their ideas more effectively. Although they appreciated the assistance provided by AI, participants emphasized that they still make the final decision regarding whether to accept or revise the suggested corrections.

"I use AI whenever I'm unsure if my sentence is grammatically correct."

"AI is like a grammar assistant that helps me improve my writing before I submit or send it."

Interview Question 2. What are your attitudes toward using Artificial Intelligence to assist your English communication, particularly in improving grammar?

Theme 1. Artificial Intelligence Increases Confidence in English Communication

Many participants expressed positive attitudes toward using Artificial Intelligence because it increases their confidence when communicating in English. They explained that AI reduces their fear of making grammatical mistakes by allowing them to review and improve their sentences before communicating. Participants noted that this support makes them feel more comfortable participating in academic discussions, completing written tasks, and communicating with others in English.

"I feel more confident because AI helps me check my grammar before I communicate."

"Knowing that AI can review my grammar makes me less worried about making mistakes."

Theme 2. Artificial Intelligence Should Be Used Responsibly

While participants recognized the benefits of Artificial Intelligence, many believed that it should be used responsibly and not replace personal learning. They emphasized that AI should serve as a guide for improving grammar rather than becoming something users depend on completely. Participants explained that understanding grammar remains important because users should be able to evaluate AI-generated suggestions and communicate effectively even without technological assistance.

"AI is helpful, but people should still learn grammar instead of depending on it all the time."

"I use AI as a guide, but I still want to understand why my grammar is wrong."

Interview Question 3. Do you think grammar still matters when Artificial Intelligence can automatically correct grammatical mistakes? Why or why not?

Theme 1. Grammar Remains an Essential Communication Skill

The majority of participants believed that grammar continues to be an essential part of English communication despite the availability of Artificial Intelligence. They explained that grammar contributes to clarity, professionalism, credibility, and effective communication. Participants noted that although AI can correct grammatical errors, individuals should still possess sufficient grammatical knowledge to communicate appropriately in situations where AI assistance may not be available.

"Grammar still matters because AI cannot always communicate exactly what I want to say."

"Even if AI corrects mistakes, people still need grammar to express themselves properly."

Theme 2. Artificial Intelligence Changes the Way Grammar Is Applied

Several participants explained that Artificial Intelligence has changed how they apply grammar during communication. Instead of memorizing grammar rules, they now use AI to review, refine, and improve their language before communicating. Participants viewed AI as a practical tool that makes grammar application more efficient while allowing them to focus on expressing their ideas clearly and effectively.

"AI helps me apply grammar correctly without spending too much time thinking about every rule."

"Grammar is still important, but AI has made using it much easier during communication."

DISCUSSION

Artificial Intelligence Enhances Grammar Awareness

The findings demonstrate that Artificial Intelligence has become an important resource in enhancing Generation Z's awareness of grammar during English communication. Participants explained that AI-powered writing assistants allow them to identify grammatical mistakes, understand language structures, and become more attentive to grammatical accuracy before communicating. Rather than functioning merely as correction tools, AI applications were perceived as learning resources that facilitate continuous improvement in grammar use through immediate and personalized feedback.

This finding supports the work of Alruthaya et al. (2021), who reported that Generation Z's learning behaviors are increasingly influenced by digital technologies that promote independent and technology-assisted learning. Likewise, Demir (2021) found that technology-supported language learning enhances learners' grammatical awareness and language proficiency by providing immediate corrective feedback. The present study extends these findings by demonstrating that AI not only improves grammatical accuracy but also encourages users to become more conscious of their language use during actual communication.

The findings also support Communicative Competence Theory (Hymes, 1972), which emphasizes that effective communication involves more than grammatical correctness; it also requires the ability to communicate appropriately according to context. AI appears to strengthen this competence by helping learners recognize grammatical errors while maintaining meaningful communication.

Artificial Intelligence Serves as a Grammar Support Tool

Participants viewed Artificial Intelligence as a dependable support tool that assists them in constructing grammatically appropriate English sentences. Rather than replacing their grammatical knowledge, AI was perceived as a complementary resource that helps verify sentence accuracy, improve clarity, and organize ideas

more effectively. Participants likewise emphasized the importance of critically evaluating AI-generated suggestions instead of accepting them automatically.

This finding is consistent with Lee (2022), who observed that digital technologies increasingly influence university students' grammatical practices by providing accessible language support during communication. Similarly, Lutfiana and Permatasari (2025) explained that contemporary digital communication encourages learners to integrate technological assistance into their language production while maintaining active engagement in the communication process.

From the perspective of Language Attitude Theory (Lambert, 1967), participants' willingness to utilize AI reflects positive attitudes toward technological innovations that facilitate language learning. However, their recognition that AI should function as assistance rather than replacement indicates that grammatical competence remains an essential human responsibility despite technological advancement.

Artificial Intelligence Increases Confidence in English Communication

Participants generally perceived Artificial Intelligence as a valuable tool that increases confidence when communicating in English. The opportunity to review grammatical accuracy before communicating reduced their fear of making mistakes and encouraged greater participation in academic and interpersonal communication. AI-assisted grammar support therefore contributes not only to linguistic improvement but also to positive communication experiences.

These findings corroborate those of Dewaele and Li (2020), who emphasized that confidence and reduced language anxiety significantly influence second-language communication. Likewise, Demir (2021) reported that technology-supported learning environments foster greater learner confidence by minimizing uncertainty during language production. The present study further demonstrates that AI-assisted communication provides emotional support by reducing grammar-related anxiety while encouraging more active English language use.

This finding aligns with Language Attitude Theory (Lambert, 1967), which proposes that positive attitudes toward language-related resources influence communicative behavior. Participants' favorable perceptions of AI appear to motivate greater willingness to communicate while maintaining awareness of grammatical quality.

Artificial Intelligence Should Be Used Responsibly

Although participants expressed positive attitudes toward Artificial Intelligence, they consistently emphasized that AI should complement rather than replace grammar learning. Participants believed that users should continue developing grammatical competence to evaluate AI-generated corrections critically and communicate independently when technological assistance is unavailable.

This finding is similar to the observations of Adalia et al. (2025), who noted that grammar remains a fundamental component of English language competence despite technological developments in language learning. Likewise, Hyland and Jiang (2021) argued that grammatical knowledge continues to contribute to effective communication and academic credibility even as digital writing technologies become increasingly available.

The present findings further suggest that Generation Z recognizes both the advantages and limitations of Artificial Intelligence. Rather than viewing AI as a substitute for learning, participants perceived it as a supportive educational resource that enhances—but does not replace—human grammatical competence.

Grammar Remains an Essential Communication Skill

The findings indicate that Generation Z continues to recognize grammar as an essential component of effective English communication despite the widespread availability of Artificial Intelligence. Participants associated grammar with clarity, professionalism, credibility, and meaningful communication, emphasizing that AI cannot completely replace users' understanding of grammatical rules.

These findings are consistent with Hyland and Jiang (2021), who emphasized that grammatical competence remains an important indicator of credibility and professionalism in academic and professional communication. Similarly, Nguyen and Hamid (2022) reported that grammatical knowledge enables individuals to adapt their language appropriately according to audience and communicative purpose. The present study reinforces these perspectives by demonstrating that participants continue to value grammar even while utilizing AI-assisted communication tools.

This finding supports Communicative Competence Theory (Hymes, 1972), which recognizes grammatical competence as one of the essential components of successful communication. AI may facilitate language

production, but communicative effectiveness still depends on users' ability to understand and apply grammatical knowledge appropriately.

Artificial Intelligence Changes the Way Grammar Is Applied

Participants explained that Artificial Intelligence has transformed the way they apply grammar during communication by shifting learning from memorizing grammatical rules toward reviewing, refining, and improving language through AI-generated feedback. Instead of viewing grammar as a purely rule-based system, participants described AI-assisted communication as a more efficient and practical approach to developing grammatical competence.

This finding agrees with Lutfiana and Permatasari (2025), who observed that Generation Z increasingly adapts its language practices to technology-mediated communication environments. Similarly, Wang et al. (2023) explained that contemporary language use is becoming increasingly dynamic and influenced by digital innovations that reshape communication practices. The present study extends these findings by showing that Artificial Intelligence not only facilitates communication but also changes how users engage with grammar during the communication process.

The findings likewise reflect Sociolinguistic Variation Theory (Labov, 1972), which posits that language use evolves in response to changing social contexts. In the present study, AI emerges as a contemporary communicative context that influences how Generation Z applies grammar while maintaining the primary goal of achieving effective communication. Rather than diminishing the importance of grammar, Artificial Intelligence appears to reshape its application by making grammatical support more accessible, immediate, and integrated into everyday English communication.

CONCLUSION

This study explored Generation Z's attitudes toward grammar in AI-assisted English communication. The findings revealed that Artificial Intelligence has become an influential tool in supporting grammar use by increasing learners' grammatical awareness, improving communication confidence, and providing immediate language assistance during English communication. Participants viewed AI as a valuable resource that facilitates grammar checking and language refinement while promoting more effective and efficient communication.

Despite the increasing reliance on Artificial Intelligence, the findings further revealed that Generation Z continues to recognize the importance of grammar as a fundamental component of effective communication. Participants emphasized that grammar remains essential for achieving clarity, credibility, professionalism, and meaningful interaction. While AI offers immediate corrections and language support, participants believed that it should complement rather than replace grammatical knowledge, as users must still exercise critical judgment in evaluating AI-generated suggestions and communicating appropriately across different contexts.

Overall, the study demonstrates that Artificial Intelligence has transformed how Generation Z practices grammar without diminishing its value. Instead of replacing grammatical competence, AI has become a supportive communication partner that enhances language use while reinforcing the continuing importance of grammar in English communication. These findings suggest that educators should integrate AI-assisted language technologies into English instruction while simultaneously strengthening learners' grammatical competence and critical AI literacy to ensure responsible, effective, and contextually appropriate communication in the age of Artificial Intelligence.

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