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Linguistic knowledge, AI writing assistant use, and AI feedback evaluation as predictors of independent editing proficiency among preservice English teachers

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Abstract

Aim: This study investigated whether linguistic knowledge, artificial intelligence (AI)-powered writing assistant usage, and evaluation of AI feedback significantly predicted the independent editing proficiency of preservice English teachers.

Methodology: The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design involving 169 fourth-year Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) English majors from a private higher education institution in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines. Researcher-made instruments included a proctored editing task completed without AI assistance, a linguistic knowledge test, and self-report scales on AI-powered writing assistant usage and evaluation of AI feedback. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson and canonical correlation, and multiple regression.

Results: Participants obtained very low independent editing proficiency (M = 14.01/90) and low linguistic knowledge (M = 23.27/40), while reporting high AI-powered writing assistant usage (M = 4.32/5) and very high self-reported evaluation of AI feedback (M = 4.55/5). The combined regression model was significant (R^2 = .302, p < .001); linguistic knowledge was the only significant individual predictor (β = .553, p < .001), whereas AI-powered writing assistant usage and evaluation of AI feedback were not significant individual predictors.

Conclusion: In this sample, linguistic knowledge was the only variable significantly associated with the independent editing proficiency of preservice English teachers; no statistically significant relationship was detected for their reported AI-powered writing assistant usage or self-reported evaluation of AI feedback, although this does not establish that these variables are unrelated. Teacher education programs may strengthen explicit instruction in grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary and position AI-powered writing tools as supplementary resources.

Keywords: *linguistic knowledge, AI-powered writing assistant usage, evaluation of AI feedback, independent editing proficiency, preservice English teachers*

INTRODUCTION

The preparation of competent, confident and professionally ready teachers remains a priority in teacher education. For preservice teachers specializing in English, this preparation requires language mastery and the ability to guide students in writing and communication. Linguistic competence and independent editing ability are therefore essential for teachers who must produce accurate writing and identify, explain, and correct errors in students' work (Mabuan, 2024).

Internationally, research on automated writing evaluation (AWE) and AI-generated feedback has shown both benefits and limitations. A meta-analysis by Ngo et al. (2024) found that AWE improved the writing performance of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) students, although it was more effective for vocabulary than for grammar, while Steiss et al. (2024) found that trained human evaluators provided higher-quality feedback than ChatGPT in most dimensions, including accuracy. Other studies have noted that learners may treat automated feedback as proofreading rather than as an opportunity to learn (Ranalli, 2021) and may accept AI recommendations without question (Zhai et al., 2024).

However, independent editing proficiency develops in a writing environment increasingly shaped by digital technologies. Artificial intelligence (AI) has gained a prominent role in academic writing with the integration of AI writing tools like Grammarly, QuillBot, ChatGPT, and Gemini. These tools can identify grammatical errors, suggest

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vocabulary improvements, revise sentence structures, and provide automated feedback on written texts, and students frequently use them for grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure corrections (Tahir et al., 2025). Jose et al. (2025) argued that AI can foster cognitive offloading, which reduces learners' opportunities for active recall and problem-solving. Lekamge and Smith (2025) also discovered that learners who tend to heavily depend on the automated corrections are likely to have difficulties completing the writing and editing tasks without the help of technology.

The use of AI in education is also gaining traction in the Philippines. Espino (2025) highlighted that Filipino preservice teachers are already utilizing AI tools for academic purposes, but their training in responsible and critical AI use is inconsistent. David and Maroma (2025) found that preservice teachers understand the positive possibilities of AI in assisting learning tasks, while also having concerns about the implications of using AI for creativity, independence, and critical thinking. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED, 2017), through CHED Memorandum Order No. 75, series of 2017, requires all Bachelor of Secondary Education programs to build the future teachers' language competence, pedagogical knowledge and skill of using technology in the teaching process. Similarly, the Department of Education (DepEd, 2026), through DepEd Order No. 003, series of 2026, reiterated that human judgment, critical thinking and responsibility are irreplaceable in learning, and should be supported by AI.

Locally, studies conducted in Cagayan de Oro City show that AI tools are already part of students' academic work. Among junior high school students in a private school in the city, Esparrago-Kalidas et al. (2025) found moderate use of AI for writing task assistance, including grammar correction and feedback on answers, and reported that although the school had an AI policy, its specific guidelines were not clearly identified and tolerance for AI use depended largely on individual teachers and subject areas. Among teacher education students in the city, Zosa and Chavez (2025) found high levels of algorithmic knowledge and prompt framing among fourth-year Bachelor of Elementary Education students and recommended integrating data and AI literacy into teacher education programs. Because BSEd English programs prepare teachers for secondary schools, these local findings suggest that the preservice teachers in the research setting may soon guide learners who already use AI for grammar checking and feedback. However, these local studies examined AI use, AI-related knowledge, and critical thinking rather than editing performance, and none of the reviewed local studies measured whether preservice English teachers could identify and correct errors without AI assistance. Within the research setting itself, there was no explicit institutional policy on students' use of AI at the time of the study, and students' written outputs were not screened for AI-generated content; thus, students' use of AI in their written work was not formally regulated or monitored. At the time of the present study, the participants had completed the core grammar, language, and writing-related courses of their BSEd English program and were enrolled in its field study courses, a stage at which their independent editing proficiency could be examined before their teaching internship.

While a growing number of studies have examined the adoption, perceived usefulness, and feedback quality of AI writing tools (Diloy et al., 2024; Steiss et al., 2024), comparatively less attention has been given to learners' ability to edit written texts independently when technological assistance is removed. Moreover, research still needs to examine how linguistic knowledge, AI-powered writing assistant use, and evaluation of AI feedback work together to predict independent editing proficiency, particularly among Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) English preservice teachers in the Philippine teacher education context, including the local setting of Cagayan de Oro City. This study addressed this gap. By measuring editing performance without AI assistance, the study contributes performance-based evidence of unaided editing to research on AI writing tools in English language teacher education, which has focused largely on adoption and perceived benefits. The findings may help teacher education institutions design learning experiences that balance technological innovation with the preservation of essential linguistic competence and responsible technology use. Beyond the Philippine context, the findings may also inform international discussions on the relationship between technological assistance and independent language competence in English teacher preparation. The study is thus aligned with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 (Quality Education), namely Target 4.c, which stresses the need to substantially increase the number of qualified teachers, including through the development of teacher training (United Nations, 2015).

Review of Related Literature and Studies

Independent Editing Proficiency of Preservice Teachers

Preservice teachers' responsibility to guide students in improving their writing is closely linked to their ability to provide written corrective feedback, which plays an important role in helping learners improve the accuracy of their writing (Mao et al., 2024). Teachers' capacity to assess written texts and identify suitable revisions is closely related to independent editing proficiency, or preservice teachers' ability to assess and revise written texts based on their own knowledge and judgment. Providing written corrective feedback requires the same abilities that independent editing

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involves: locating an error, supplying an acceptable correction, and recognizing the type of error. These include identifying grammatical inaccuracies, correcting mechanical errors such as spelling and punctuation, revising sentence structures to improve clarity, and suggesting appropriate word choices when necessary. Internationally, Sari et al. (2025) found that grammar knowledge was significantly related to the writing performance of EFL university students preparing to become English teachers. In the Philippines, Caber (2023) found that the preservice teachers lacked language skills in terms of grammatical accuracy, particularly in sentence construction and language use. In the same way, Cocjin (2021) conducted an error analysis of preservice teachers' written texts and identified some common grammatical errors, such as omitting, adding, and misforming linguistic structures. However, these studies examined errors in preservice teachers' own writing rather than their ability to edit texts written by others.

Linguistic Knowledge in Writing and Editing

In the context of writing and language teaching, linguistic knowledge refers to an individual's understanding of the rules and structures that govern language use, including grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary, which are the areas that independent editing draws upon. Pan (2023) found that several aspects of vocabulary knowledge, including productive and receptive vocabulary knowledge as well as vocabulary depth, significantly predicted students' reading-to-write performance. Similarly, Sanosi (2022) reported a moderate correlation between the metalinguistic knowledge and grammatical accuracy of EFL undergraduates. As Singh et al. (2025) note, preservice teachers must have a solid understanding of grammar in order to analyze the language that learners use and to pinpoint salient grammatical issues that can be used to facilitate language learning.

AI-Powered Writing Assistant Usage

Students now commonly use various AI-powered writing assistants to support their writing tasks. Applications such as ChatGPT, QuillBot, Grammarly, Jenni AI, and StoryAI are frequently used for checking grammar, coming up with ideas, and getting preliminary feedback (Syarifah & Fakhruddin, 2024). Research on AI tool use among university students found that AI-powered writing assistants are among the most commonly used digital tools in student learning environments (Diloy et al., 2024). While AI writing tools can enhance writing efficiency, accuracy, and learner confidence, excessive AI writing suggestions may reduce opportunities for students to cultivate their own writing and editing skills (Tan, 2025). Overreliance on AI tools can negatively affect students' critical thinking skills, creativity, and independence (Budiyono et al., 2025) and might be linked to shifts in students' autonomous writing habits (Ou, 2025; Solano et al., 2025). It is therefore important to distinguish how often learners use AI tools and how useful they perceive them to be from whether their writing actually improves and whether they can edit without the tools.

Evaluation of AI Feedback

The feedback of AI writing assistants is not always correct or helpful in regard to the intent of the text. Studies have shown some inconsistencies or inaccuracies in AI-generated feedback, emphasizing the importance of human evaluation to enhance written work (Alghannam, 2025; Zhang & Pu, 2025). Liu and Yu (2022) found that inaccurate automated feedback led some learners to make inaccurate amendments to their writing. Research shows that learners may accept automated suggestions passively without carefully evaluating their accuracy or relevance to the context of their writing (Triwibowo & Polim, 2025). Effective use of AI-powered writing tools requires users to analyze the feedback provided, determine whether the suggested revisions are connected to both linguistic and contextual suitability, and apply corrections selectively (Batingal & Bauyot, 2026). For preservice teachers in particular, this ability is essential because they are expected to analyze students' written outputs and provide accurate feedback to support writing development. Evaluating AI feedback, however, differs from correcting errors independently: the former involves judging a correction that has already been proposed, while the latter requires learners to detect and correct errors on their own.

Synthesis of Related Literature and Studies

The reviewed studies indicate that linguistic knowledge is closely associated with writing accuracy (Pan, 2023; Sanosi, 2022), while AI-powered writing assistants can support writing but may provide inaccurate feedback and encourage passive or proofreading-oriented use (Alghannam, 2025; Ranalli, 2021; Triwibowo & Polim, 2025). Most of these studies, however, examined learners' perceptions or revisions made with AI assistance rather than their editing performance without it. Philippine studies on preservice teachers have documented errors in their own writing (Caber, 2023; Cocjin, 2021), but the reviewed studies did not examine how linguistic knowledge, AI-powered writing assistant usage, and evaluation of AI feedback together predict independent editing proficiency. The present study addressed this gap and may contribute to international discussions on AI integration in English language teaching and on the preparation of English teachers who can edit written language independently.

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Theoretical Framework

This study drew on three theoretical lenses: Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), and Metacognition Theory. The first theoretical foundation is Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis. Learned language knowledge serves as a monitor to review, edit, and correct language output when time, attention to form, and knowledge of the rules are available to the learner (Krashen, 1982). Written editing allows time and attention to form, so the editor's knowledge of the relevant rules becomes especially important. In this study, the Monitor Hypothesis helped explain the role of linguistic knowledge in independent editing proficiency. Because the hypothesis originated in second language acquisition and the participants' language-learning backgrounds may differ, it was used only to explain the role of consciously learned knowledge in monitoring written output. Accordingly, the study did not test or validate the hypothesis.

The second theoretical basis is the TAM originally developed by Davis (1989), which explains how users come to accept and utilize new technologies based on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. In this study, the TAM helped explain preservice teachers' use of AI-powered writing assistants, particularly their perceived usefulness and frequency of use, the latter reflecting how often participants actually used these tools. Because the study examined participants' existing use of AI-powered writing assistants in relation to their independent editing proficiency, rather than the process of adopting a new technology, perceived ease of use was not measured. Perceived usefulness was retained because Davis (1989) found it to be more strongly related to usage than perceived ease of use. Accordingly, the TAM was applied selectively, and the complete model was not tested. Findings on perceived usefulness and frequency of use were therefore interpreted in relation to the TAM but were not treated as a test or validation of the model.

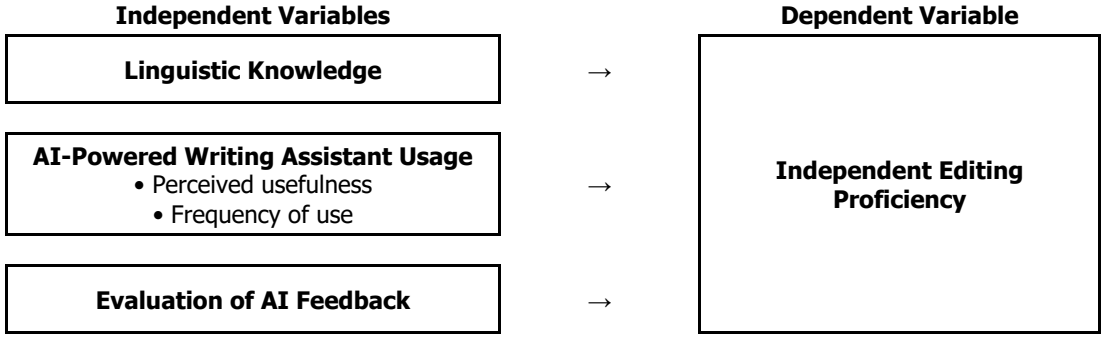
The study also drew on Metacognition Theory (Flavell, 1979), which emphasizes learners' ability to monitor, regulate, and evaluate their own learning processes. Metacognitive skills are especially significant in the era of AI writing assistance, as students need to evaluate the accuracy, appropriateness, and relevance of the suggestions provided by AI tools and decide whether to accept them. In this study, Metacognition Theory supported the variable Evaluation of AI Feedback, which refers to the extent to which preservice teachers evaluate AI-generated suggestions rather than accepting them unquestioningly. Because this variable was measured through self-report, it captured participants' reported evaluative practices rather than their demonstrated skill. Together, the three theories served as interpretive lenses for the variables measured in this study (AI-powered writing assistant usage, self-reported evaluation of AI feedback, and linguistic knowledge) rather than as models tested by the study.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptually, the variables in the present study are interconnected: the use of AI writing assistants is the writing support technology that preservice English teachers engage with, the evaluation of AI feedback is the process in which they critically assess the technology to make decisions about accepting or rejecting it, and linguistic knowledge serves as the basis of the knowledge they need to make decisions in the process of using writing support technology (Krashen, 1982; Singh et al., 2025). Linguistic knowledge, AI-powered writing assistant usage, and evaluation of AI feedback served as the independent variables, and independent editing proficiency served as the dependent variable. The framework shows the predictive relationships examined through multiple regression and does not imply causal, mediating, or moderating effects. Figure 1 presents the schematic presentation of the study.

Figure 1

Schematic Presentation of the Study



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Statement of the Problem

Despite the widespread use of AI-powered writing assistants, limited evidence exists on whether preservice English teachers can independently identify and correct grammatical, mechanical, and lexical errors without technological support, and on how this ability relates to their linguistic knowledge, AI-powered writing assistant usage, and evaluation of AI feedback. Although AI-powered writing assistants provide automated corrections and suggestions, their frequent use does not necessarily ensure that learners develop the linguistic knowledge and editing skills needed to correct errors on their own. This concern is particularly relevant to preservice English teachers, who will be expected to identify and correct errors in their future students' writing. The present study therefore examined these variables to provide evidence that may inform English language teacher education.

Research Objectives

The general objective of this study was to determine if linguistic knowledge, AI-powered writing assistant usage, and the evaluation of AI feedback can significantly predict the independent editing proficiency of BSEd English preservice teachers. Specifically, it aimed:

1. To determine the participants' levels of independent editing proficiency, linguistic knowledge, AI-powered writing assistant usage, and evaluation of AI feedback;
2. To determine whether there is a significant relationship between independent editing proficiency and the three variables; and
3. To determine whether the three variables, taken singly or in combination, significantly predict independent editing proficiency.

Research Questions

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What were the participants' levels of independent editing proficiency, linguistic knowledge, AI-powered writing assistant usage, and evaluation of AI feedback?
2. Was there a significant relationship between the participants' independent editing proficiency and their (a) linguistic knowledge, (b) AI-powered writing assistant usage, and (c) evaluation of AI feedback?
3. Did linguistic knowledge, AI-powered writing assistant usage, and evaluation of AI feedback, taken singly or in combination, significantly predict the independent editing proficiency of preservice teachers?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance:

H_o1: There is no significant relationship between preservice teachers' independent editing proficiency and their linguistic knowledge.

H_o2: Preservice teachers' independent editing proficiency is not significantly associated with their use of AI-powered writing assistants.

H_o3: Preservice teachers' independent editing proficiency is not significantly associated with their evaluation of AI feedback.

H_o4: Linguistic knowledge, AI-powered writing assistant usage, and evaluation of AI feedback, taken in combination, do not significantly predict the independent editing proficiency of preservice teachers.

H_o5: Linguistic knowledge does not significantly predict preservice teachers' independent editing proficiency.

H_o6: AI-powered writing assistant usage does not significantly predict preservice teachers' independent editing proficiency.

H_o7: Evaluation of AI feedback does not significantly predict preservice teachers' independent editing proficiency.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to describe existing conditions and determine relationships among variables without manipulating them. Gay et al. (2012) explained that descriptive-correlational studies are used to find out if there is a relationship between variables and how strong that relationship is. This research design was considered suitable because the variables were measured as they are and there was no manipulation of experiments. The design addressed the descriptive, correlational, and predictive objectives of the study; however, statistical prediction in a correlational design does not establish causation.

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Research Participants and Sampling Procedure

The participants of this study were the fourth-year preservice teachers taking Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English at a private higher education institution in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines, for Academic Year 2026–2027. They were enrolled in EDU 600/601: Field Study 1 and Field Study 2, the program's field study courses, and had completed their core grammar, language, and writing-related courses. Total enumeration was used as the sampling procedure: all 180 preservice teachers who met the inclusion criteria (official enrollment in the program, fourth-year standing, enrollment in EDU 600/601, completion of the core language courses, and informed consent) were invited, and 169 participated, while two were absent during data collection and nine declined to participate. Because nonparticipants could not be compared with participants, nonparticipation bias cannot be ruled out, although the participation rate was high (93.89%).

Research Instruments

The study used four researcher-made instruments. The first instrument was the Independent Editing Proficiency Task, which was a performance-based, proctored editing task designed to measure the participants' ability to identify and correct errors without AI or other technological assistance. The task consisted of a flawed passage containing 30 predetermined errors, with 10 grammatical errors, 10 mechanical errors, and 10 lexical errors. The second instrument was the Linguistic Knowledge Assessment, a 40-item multiple-choice test that elicited the participants' knowledge of English grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary. It contained 14 items on grammatical rules, 14 items on mechanics rules, and 12 items on lexical knowledge, developed according to the study's Table of Specifications.

The third instrument was the AI-Powered Writing Assistant Usage Instrument, which consisted of 27 items rated on a five-point Likert scale. Twelve items measured perceived usefulness, particularly the extent to which participants believed that AI-powered writing assistants enhanced their writing and editing. Fifteen items assessed frequency of use, specifically the frequency with which participants used AI-powered writing assistants for grammar checking, mechanics, vocabulary, and other editing tasks. The fourth instrument was the Evaluation of AI Feedback Instrument, a 15-item five-point Likert-scale instrument that elicited information about how participants examined and judged AI-generated suggestions. The perceived usefulness component was anchored in the TAM (Davis, 1989), while the Evaluation of AI Feedback Instrument was based on Flavell's (1979) idea of metacognition.

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

The instruments were checked by three experts who hold doctoral degrees in English, English Language Teaching, Applied Linguistics, or related areas and have experience in language teaching, assessment, or educational research, who reviewed the instruments for clarity, relevance, and appropriateness and provided written comments on items to revise or remove; their recommendations were taken into account in the final versions, including the reduction of the Perceived Usefulness scale from 15 to 12 items. All the research instruments were pilot tested with 30 preservice English teachers who were similar to, but not part of, the study's participants. Internal consistency was checked using McDonald's omega (McDonald, 1999), and a value of 0.70 or more was deemed acceptable (Hair et al., 2019). The omega coefficients for the grammar error correction, mechanical error correction, and lexical revision components of the editing task were 0.707, 0.733, and 0.709, respectively. Based on the reliability analysis, five of the 45 pilot items (Items 5, 22, 28, 30, and 32) of the Linguistic Knowledge Assessment were removed to improve internal consistency, and the final 40-item version obtained an omega coefficient of 0.734. The coefficients for the self-report scales were 0.939 for Perceived Usefulness, 0.954 for Frequency of Usage, and 0.927 for Evaluation of AI Feedback. Omega was computed separately for each component of the editing task and for each self-report scale; the dimensional structure of the instruments was not examined through factor analysis.

Scoring and Interpretation

In the Independent Editing Proficiency Task, one (1) point was given for correctly identifying the error, one (1) point for the correct revision, and one (1) point for correctly labeling the error type, for a maximum raw score of 90. The answer key included acceptable alternative corrections, and other corrections were accepted when grammatically and contextually accurate. The researcher and a second rater with expertise in English language teaching independently scored all 169 tasks; inter-rater reliability was excellent, intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) = .993 (Koo & Li, 2016), and the average of the two raters' scores was used. For the Linguistic Knowledge Assessment, one (1) point was awarded for each correct answer, for a maximum raw score of 40. The self-report items were rated from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1), or from Always (5) to Never (1) for Frequency of Usage, and weighted means were interpreted as very high (4.51–5.00), high (3.51–4.50), moderate (2.51–3.50), low (1.51–2.50), or very

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low (1.00–1.50); for Frequency of Usage, the corresponding interpretations were very frequent, frequent, moderate, rare, and very rare.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher secured the written consent of the Dean of the College of Education and the Program Head of the BSEd major in English program. A brief orientation was done before the informed consent was obtained. Data were collected on September 3, 2026, in the participants' classrooms using printed instruments, with the participants' Field Study supervisors serving only as proctors to ensure that no AI tools or other aids were used. The Independent Editing Proficiency Task was administered first, followed by the Linguistic Knowledge Assessment and the two self-report questionnaires, to minimize the possibility that exposure to specific linguistic rules in the objective test would influence performance on the editing task. All participants were given the same instructions, sequence, time allotment, and testing conditions, in a single session with 75 minutes allotted.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Research Question 1 was analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. For Research Question 2, since Linguistic Knowledge and Evaluation of AI Feedback are each represented by a single composite score, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine their relationship with Independent Editing Proficiency. For AI-powered writing assistant usage, canonical correlation analysis was used to test the joint relationship between the set of its two dimensions, perceived usefulness and frequency of usage (first set), and independent editing proficiency (second set). This allowed the relationship to be tested in a single analysis while retaining both dimensions as measured, rather than reducing them to a composite or testing them separately; because the second set contained one variable, one canonical function was obtained and evaluated using Wilks' lambda at the .05 level. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to answer Research Question 3, with overall AI-powered writing assistant usage entered as one predictor alongside linguistic knowledge and evaluation of AI feedback. This composite was computed at the participant level in two steps. First, each participant's perceived usefulness score was obtained as the mean of the participant's ratings on the 12 perceived usefulness items, and the frequency of usage score as the mean of the participant's ratings on the 15 frequency of usage items. Second, the two subscale means were averaged for each participant, that is, (perceived usefulness mean + frequency of usage mean) / 2, so that both dimensions contributed equally regardless of their number of items. The resulting participant-level scores, with a possible range of 1 to 5, were entered as the AI usage predictor in the regression and are summarized as the overall score in Table 2. Multicollinearity was evaluated by tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF), and the normality of residuals was evaluated with the Shapiro–Wilk test and a quantile–quantile plot. Because the Shapiro–Wilk test indicated a departure from normality, bootstrapping with 5,000 samples was performed to obtain more robust estimates of the standard errors and 95% confidence intervals of the regression coefficients. Tolerance (.712–.986) and VIF values (1.01–1.40) indicated no multicollinearity, and the Durbin–Watson statistic (1.89, $p = .502$) and the plot of residuals against fitted values supported independence of errors and linearity. The Breusch–Pagan test indicated unequal variance in the residuals, $\chi^2(3) = 15.22$, $p = .002$; therefore, the regression was rechecked using robust standard errors (Hayes & Cai, 2007), which produced the same conclusions.

Ethical Considerations

The data collection process commenced after the Lourdes College Research Ethics Committee (LCREC) granted an ethical clearance to the researcher's research protocol, instruments, and informed consent forms (LCREC Code 20262027282-MDA; approved August 22, 2026). Participants were given sufficient time to read the informed consent form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate, and data collection included only those who voluntarily signed the informed consent form. The researcher clarified that participation or nonparticipation would not affect participants' grades, academic standing, or access to institutional services, and participants could withdraw at any time without academic penalty. The researcher was not the instructor of any participant, and the Field Study supervisors had no access to the answer sheets. Every participant was given a research code, and names and signatures were only written on informed consent forms, which were stored separately from the research instruments and encoded data. Only the researchers, the adviser, and the statistician, who received only coded data, had access to the data, which will be retained for two years and then securely destroyed. The study adhered to the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173, 2012), and the results were only presented in aggregate form.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Independent Editing Proficiency and Linguistic Knowledge

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the participants' independent editing proficiency and linguistic knowledge.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Independent Editing Proficiency and Linguistic Knowledge

Interpretation	Editing Range	*f*	%	Knowledge Range	*f*	%
Very High	72.00–90.00	0	0.00	32.00–40.00	4	2.37
High	63.00–71.99	0	0.00	28.00–31.99	30	17.75
Moderate	54.00–62.99	0	0.00	24.00–27.99	55	32.54
Low	36.00–53.99	2	1.18	16.00–23.99	71	42.01
Very Low	0.00–35.99	167	98.82	0.00–15.99	9	5.33
M (*SD*)	14.01 (8.37)		Very Low	23.27 (4.78)		Low

Note. $N = 169$.

The participants' overall mean raw score in independent editing proficiency was 14.01 out of 90 possible points, which clearly fell within the very low category. Out of 169 participants, 167 (98.82%) scored in the very low category and 2 (1.18%) scored in the low category. No participant was classified as moderate, high, or very high. In linguistic knowledge, the participants obtained an overall mean raw score of 23.27 out of 40, which was in the low range (16.00–23.99).

The results showed that under unaided testing conditions, participants had substantial difficulty independently identifying, correcting, and classifying grammatical, mechanical, and lexical errors. This result is in line with Cocjin (2021), who reported that there were different linguistic errors in the written text of BSEd English preservice teachers. The very low result should be interpreted specifically in relation to the unaided conditions of the editing task. In Krashen's (1982) Monitor Hypothesis, the monitor works when the learner has enough time, attends to form, and knows the rule. The editing task afforded the first two conditions, so knowledge of the grammatical, mechanical, and lexical rules involved may have played an important part in successful editing; however, the findings do not, by themselves, confirm the theory.

The result also revealed that a substantial proportion of the participants had not yet fully mastered the grammatical, mechanical, and lexical aspects of the study. This finding was generally consistent with earlier studies in the Philippines: Nagaño et al. (2025) determined that there were differences in the grammatical competence of fourth-year preservice teachers across language areas, and language-related errors were also found in preservice teachers' written outputs (Caber, 2023). The present study extended this context in that it included grammar along with mechanics and lexical knowledge. These results reflect performance on the specific instruments used rather than overall English proficiency.

Level of AI-Powered Writing Assistant Usage

Table 2 summarizes the participants' perceived usefulness and frequency of using AI-powered writing assistants.

Table 2

Summary of the Participants' Level of AI-Powered Writing Assistant Usage

Dimension	*M*	*SD*	Interpretation
Perceived Usefulness	4.37	0.56	High
Frequency of Usage	4.26	0.61	Frequent
Overall	**4.32**	**0.53**	**High**

Note. The overall score is the mean of the participants' composite scores, each computed as the average of the participant's perceived usefulness and frequency of usage mean scores.

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The participants obtained a mean of 4.37 (*SD* = 0.56) on perceived usefulness, which is considered high, and a mean of 4.26 (*SD* = 0.61) on frequency of use, which is considered frequent. When the two dimension means were averaged for each participant, the resulting composite scores had an overall mean of 4.32 (*SD* = 0.53), which was classified as high. On the frequency of usage dimension, 152 of the 169 participants (89.94%) fell into the frequent and very frequent categories.

The high perceived usefulness is compatible with the TAM, which identifies perceived usefulness as a significant factor related to technology use (Davis, 1989). However, because perceived ease of use was not measured and the relationship between perceived usefulness and usage was not tested, this finding does not test the TAM. The present finding should also be interpreted as evidence of participants' perceived usefulness of AI-powered writing assistants rather than evidence that AI-powered writing assistants improved participants' writing.

Level of Evaluation of AI Feedback

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for the participants' evaluation of AI feedback.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for Evaluation of AI Feedback

Range	Description	Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
4.51–5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High	105	62.13
3.51–4.50	Agree	High	57	33.73
2.51–3.50	Neutral	Moderate	6	3.55
1.51–2.50	Disagree	Low	1	0.59
1.00–1.50	Strongly Disagree	Very Low	0	0.00
M (*SD*)	4.55 (0.51)	Very High	169	100.00

Note. $N = 169$.

The mean score for the participants was 4.55 (*SD* = 0.51), which falls in the very high range. Of the participants, 162 (95.86%) were classified as high or very high.

The highest-rated statement was "I decide whether to accept, revise, or reject AI-generated feedback based on my judgment," while the lowest-rated was "I consider whether AI feedback reflects the intended meaning of my writing." This suggests that the participants were comparatively less inclined to examine whether AI suggestions preserved the intended meaning of their writing than to make accept-or-reject decisions. The findings can be interpreted within the framework of Flavell's (1979) concept of metacognition, or the monitoring and regulation of cognitive processes, and may be interpreted in relation to feedback literacy, which is related to students' ability to comprehend, assess, and act on feedback (Teng & Ma, 2024). The very high result was therefore interpreted as evidence of strong self-reported evaluative engagement with AI feedback; because the measure relied on self-reports, it did not establish that these behaviors were consistently demonstrated during actual AI-assisted writing.

Relationship Between Independent Editing Proficiency and the Independent Variables

Table 4 presents the correlation and canonical correlation analyses.

Table 4
Correlation and Canonical Correlation Analyses with Independent Editing Proficiency

Variable	Coefficient	*p*	Decision
Linguistic Knowledge	$r(167) = .55$	< .001	Reject $H_0 1$
AI-Powered Writing Assistant Usage	$Rc = .18$, $F(2, 166) = 2.85$	.060	Failed to reject $H_0 2$
Evaluation of AI Feedback	$r(167) = -.01$	.928	Failed to reject $H_0 3$

Note. Canonical cross-loadings: perceived usefulness = −.06, frequency of usage = .09, independent editing proficiency = −.18.

Table 4 shows a statistically significant, positive, moderate correlation between linguistic knowledge and independent editing proficiency, $r(167) = .548$, $p < .001$; thus, $H_0 1$ was rejected. It also shows an essentially zero,

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non-significant correlation between evaluation of AI feedback and independent editing proficiency, $r(167) = -.007$, $p = .928$, and a non-significant canonical correlation (Rc) between AI-powered writing assistant usage and independent editing proficiency, $F(2, 166) = 2.853$, $p = .060$; thus, the researchers failed to reject $H_0 2$ and $H_0 3$. Canonical correlation was used for AI-powered writing assistant usage because the variable was measured through two dimensions, whereas Pearson correlation was used for the other two variables, each represented by a single score.

Participants with higher linguistic knowledge tended to obtain higher independent editing proficiency scores. The finding is consistent with Sari et al. (2025), who reported a significant positive relationship between grammar knowledge and writing performance among EFL university students preparing to become English teachers. It is also theoretically compatible with Krashen's (1982) Monitor Hypothesis, which conceptualizes consciously learned language knowledge as a resource for monitoring and editing language production. However, a correlation of this kind does not test the hypothesis or establish that linguistic knowledge caused higher editing proficiency.

The near-zero correlation for evaluation of AI feedback is notable because participants reported a high level of evaluation towards assessing, checking, and deciding on AI recommendations, yet no statistically significant correlation was detected between this evaluation and the ability to edit without AI support. For AI-powered writing assistant usage, the small canonical correlation ($Rc = .18$, $Rc^2 = .03$) was not statistically significant; this does not prove that the variables are unrelated, but it suggests that, for teacher education programs and within the limits of this sample, familiarity with and positive attitudes toward AI-powered writing assistants should not be taken as indicators of editing competence, and that independent editing skills may still need to be developed and assessed directly.

Predictors of Independent Editing Proficiency

Table 5 presents the multiple regression analysis.

Table 5

Regression Analysis of Linguistic Knowledge, AI-Powered Writing Assistant Usage, and Evaluation of AI Feedback on Independent Editing Proficiency

Predictor	*B*	*SE*	β	*t*	*p*	Bootstrap 95% CI
(Constant)	−8.88	5.92		−1.47	.143	[−21.06, 2.45]
Linguistic Knowledge	0.97	0.13	.55	8.45	< .001	[0.73, 1.22]
AI-Powered Writing Assistant Usage	0.82	1.09	.05	0.68	.497	[−1.41, 2.87]
Evaluation of AI Feedback	−0.71	1.08	−.04	−0.57	.572	[−2.71, 1.58]
Model summary: $R = .55$, $R^2 = .30$, Adj. $R^2 = .29$, $F(3, 165) = 23.84$, $p < .001$						

Note. *B* = unstandardized coefficient; *SE* = bootstrap standard error; t and p values are from the ordinary least squares regression; β = standardized coefficient. Confidence intervals are bootstrap percentile intervals based on 5,000 samples.

The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(3, 165) = 23.836$, $p < .001$, with $R = .550$, $R^2 = .302$, and adjusted $R^2 = .290$. This means that the three predictors collectively explained 30.2% of the variance in the independent editing ability of the participants; thus, $H_0 4$ was rejected. Among the three predictors, linguistic knowledge was the only statistically significant unique predictor ($B = 0.97$, β = .553, $t = 8.450$, $p < .001$); therefore, $H_0 5$ was rejected. AI-powered writing assistant usage ($B = 0.822$, β = .052, $t = 0.680$, $p = .497$) and evaluation of AI feedback ($B = -0.708$, β = −.043, $t = -0.567$, $p = .572$) were not significant unique predictors; thus, the researchers failed to reject $H_0 6$ and $H_0 7$.

This finding is consistent with the nature of the editing task given to the participants, which involved the identification, correction, and classification of grammatical, mechanical, and lexical errors without the use of technology. One possible explanation for the non-significant AI usage coefficient, drawn from the literature rather than measured in this study, is that frequent use of AI-powered writing assistants does not necessarily require users to internalize the linguistic principles underlying the corrections they receive (Yang et al., 2024).

The most striking pattern was the difference between how much participants reported using AI-assisted writing tools and how well they performed when such assistance was removed. The participants rated AI tools as useful, reported frequent use, and evaluated AI feedback very highly, but only linguistic knowledge had a statistically

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significant unique contribution to their independent editing proficiency. The study established statistical prediction within the sample, but it did not establish that linguistic knowledge caused higher editing proficiency.

Conclusion

The participants demonstrated very low independent editing proficiency and low linguistic knowledge while reporting high AI usage and very high self-reported evaluation of AI feedback, and linguistic knowledge was the only significant individual predictor. Linguistic knowledge was also significantly related to independent editing proficiency, whereas no statistically significant relationship was detected for AI-powered writing assistant usage or evaluation of AI feedback. The findings indicate that no statistically significant relationship was detected between reported AI-powered writing assistant usage and independent editing proficiency in the present sample. This result should not be interpreted as evidence that no relationship exists. Likewise, no statistically significant relationship was detected between self-reported evaluation of AI feedback and independent editing proficiency, and this result does not establish that the two variables are unrelated. The results suggest that reported AI-supported writing practices should not be taken as indicators of independent editing performance. Therefore, teacher education programs might need to make sure that the use of AI is complementary to the acquisition of grammatical, mechanical, and lexical knowledge.

These results may be interpreted in relation to the theoretical lenses of the study, but they do not validate or establish these theories. The high perceived usefulness and frequent reported use of AI-powered writing assistants are compatible with the emphasis of the TAM on perceived usefulness (Davis, 1989); however, the complete TAM was not tested because perceived ease of use was not measured. Likewise, the very high evaluation of AI feedback reflects participants' self-reported evaluative practices, which may be described in relation to Metacognition Theory (Flavell, 1979) but were not observed directly. The finding that linguistic knowledge was the only significant individual predictor of independent editing proficiency is compatible with Krashen's (1982) Monitor Hypothesis, which views consciously learned language knowledge as a resource for monitoring written output; however, the descriptive-correlational design does not establish that linguistic knowledge caused higher editing proficiency. The findings therefore suggest the need to balance technological competence and foundational language competence in teacher preparation.

Recommendations

Taking into consideration the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Teacher education institutions and the BSEd English program may strengthen coursework and enhance the grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary content, as well as remedial support, because linguistic knowledge, which was found to be low, was the only significant individual predictor of independent editing proficiency. Diagnostic assessments of grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary may also be used to identify students who require extra support prior to their field study and internship.
2. Teacher educators and mentors may assign regular unassisted, proctored editing and error-analysis activities and adopt error identification, correction, and classification tasks completed without AI assistance as a regular form of assessment in quizzes, examinations, and performance tasks, so that independent editing proficiency is assessed directly rather than inferred from AI-assisted outputs. Where AI tools are allowed, students may be asked to compare AI suggestions to their own corrections and explain why they accept, modify, or reject them.
3. Preservice English teachers may keep developing their language knowledge, practice editing independently before using AI tools, and critically evaluate each AI suggestion by checking its accuracy against the rules they have learned. Because reported AI usage and self-reported evaluation of AI feedback were not significantly associated with independent editing proficiency in this study, preservice teachers may avoid treating frequent AI use or confidence in evaluating AI feedback as evidence of their own editing competence.
4. Administrators may use the results to develop guidelines on the responsible use of AI in alignment with CHED Memorandum Order No. 75, series of 2017; DepEd Order No. 003, series of 2026; and SDG 4, Target 4.c, and may assess AI literacy outcomes together with unassisted language and editing competencies. Because the study did not examine the effects of AI use on editing proficiency, such guidelines may position AI-powered writing assistants as supplementary resources rather than as substitutes for the development of linguistic knowledge.
5. Future researchers may replicate this study in other institutions and settings with larger and more diverse samples; compare observed measures of AI use and feedback evaluation, such as usage logs, think-aloud protocols, and performance-based tasks, with self-report measures; investigate whether the score distribution is influenced by the difficulty of the editing task; and use longitudinal, experimental, qualitative, and mixed-

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methods designs to examine whether AI use is causally related to independent editing proficiency. Future studies may also include perceived ease of use to examine the complete Technology Acceptance Model.

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