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ETHICAL AND LINGUISTIC IMPLICATIONS OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE AND CULTURAL STUDIES CLASSES: A BLENDED-LEARNING EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a comprehensive look at the linguistic quality of AI-generated content in blended instruction of English literature and cultural studies, together with the ethical questions this content raises. The study draws on surveys and semi-structured interviews with 145 students and 18 instructors at higher-education institutions in Uzbekistan, complemented by a comparative linguistic analysis of texts students wrote with and without AI assistance. The findings show that while AI helps students produce grammatically accurate work quickly, it falls noticeably short when it comes to deep literary interpretation, original thought, and the preservation of cultural authenticity.

Keywords

generative artificial intelligence, English literature, cultural studies, blended learning, ethical issues, linguistic analysis, student creativity, authorship.

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INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence today is no longer just a technology sitting alongside education - it has become part of education itself. This is especially visible in English philology programs, where literature and culture courses now see students actively turning to ChatGPT, Gemini, and other generative models to write essays, analyze literary works, and even complete creative assignments. The blended-learning model - the fusion of online work with traditional classroom sessions - makes this even easier, since a student can consult an AI tool, check a text's structure, or expand on an idea at almost any hour of the day. Yet, like any new technology, AI raises a set of genuinely difficult questions. Can a piece of writing generated by AI really be called literary analysis, or is it merely something that looks correct on the surface while remaining shallow underneath? What happens to a student's independent creativity and critical thinking once an AI assistant is always within reach? Do the cultural nuances embedded in literary texts survive being filtered through a machine? This paper sets out to address exactly these questions. Its central aim is to give an objective assessment of the actual place AI-generated content occupies in philological education, to identify where it is strong and where it is weak, and to translate those findings into practical guidance for instructors. The topic is timely because Uzbekistan's higher-education system has not yet settled on a unified institutional policy for generative AI. In practice, most instructors are left to decide on their own how closely to monitor these tools, when to allow their use, and when to restrict it. The present study is therefore meant to be useful in two ways: theoretically, by adding empirical evidence from an under-studied context, and practically, by offering data that can inform future policy decisions. Research on AI in education has grown rapidly in recent years. Akgun and Greenhow examined the ethical

challenges AI raises in educational settings, drawing particular attention to data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the erosion of learner autonomy[1]. In a related vein, Shi and colleagues studied how AI models affect the effectiveness of blended English instruction at the college level, reporting genuine gains alongside a real risk that students become overly dependent on the tool[3]. From a linguistic angle, Terčon's recent survey looked closely at the stylistic fingerprints of AI-generated text, identifying a formal register, repetitive syntax, and comparatively low lexical density as recurring traits [4]. Taken together, this body of work suggests that AI can bring real benefit to the learning process but that benefit is not automatic. It only materializes when the tool is used purposefully, under supervision, and on solid pedagogical grounds. The present study tries to fill a specific gap in this picture: an empirical account of how AI actually plays out in English-philology education within the Uzbek context.

Methodologically, the study followed a mixed-methods design. Part of what makes this topic difficult is that "using AI" can mean very different things in practice — anything from a quick grammar check to generating an entire essay from scratch. For that reason, the notion of AI "use" had to be defined carefully rather than treated as a single, uniform behavior. Data were gathered in three stages: an online survey administered to 145 students, semi-structured interviews with 18 experienced instructors, and a linguistic corpus analysis in which each participating student wrote two essays on the same topic - one without AI assistance and one with it. The resulting texts were coded for the number of grammatical errors, a measure of lexical diversity, the number of genuinely original interpretive points, and the presence of culturally specific commentary; two independent coders carried out this work and reached a satisfactory level of agreement. A misuse of AI in the classroom can also quietly erode students' critical-thinking skills. Ndabeni and Matiso found that students who lean too heavily on AI struggle to produce independent, original ideas, simply because they have grown accustomed to receiving a ready-made answer[9]. This is a particularly worrying trend over the long run, since the whole point of literary study is to build the capacity for independent interpretation. A further ethical concern is the risk of cultural appropriation. When AI analyzes texts, customs, or literary traditions belonging to other cultures, it sometimes presents them without sufficient context, in an oversimplified way, or even inaccurately. This is especially likely to mislead students working with postcolonial literature or writing from minority cultures, since AI analysis of such texts tends to default to a Western-centric perspective. As Wiese points out, teaching AI ethics is no longer optional - it has become a necessary part of contemporary philological education[10].

The table below compares AI-generated text with students' independently written text across the main criteria that emerged from these observations and from the corpus analysis.

Table 1.

Comparative analysis of AI-generated text and student text

Criterion	AI-generated text	Student (human) text	Observed difference / cause
Grammatical accuracy	High - almost no errors	Moderate - occasional random errors	AI is trained on a very large corpus
Lexical diversity	Low - the same word combinations repeat	High - individual word choice	AI relies on statistical probability
Reflection of cultural context	Shallow, generalized	Deeper, tied to personal experience	AI has limited knowledge of local cultural nuance
Emotional / original voice	Barely noticeable	The student's individual style is visible	AI tends toward an averaged style
Depth of critical interpretation	Surface-level, generic conclusions	More personal opinion and argument	AI favors "safe," low-risk answers

The qualitative data add useful nuance to these numbers. Instructors, on the whole, do not treat AI as a "dangerous adversary" but rather as a "partner that needs supervision." Most of the interviewees felt that banning AI outright would be the wrong response, and argued instead for its conscious, monitored use. Several instructors specifically noted that having students critique AI-generated answers worked well: students are given an AI-produced analysis and asked to find its weaknesses, its missing cultural nuance, or its overly generic conclusions, an exercise that, if anything, sharpens their

critical thinking rather than dulling it. None of this supports a one-sided verdict on AI, whether entirely positive or entirely negative. AI delivers a real, measurable benefit for grammatical accuracy and text structure, which matters a great deal for students who are not native English speakers. At the same time, over-reliance on it can chip away at a student's capacity for original thought, deep cultural understanding, and the development of a distinctive writing voice. This pattern lines up with what Park and colleagues found: that how effective AI turns out to be depends heavily on the instructor's pedagogical strategy [2]. Seen this way, the problem is not the technology itself but how it gets folded into the learning process. Used mainly as a shortcut to a finished product, AI gets in the way of a student's growth; used as a dialogic, closely supervised tool that invites critique, it can genuinely enrich how a student thinks. The data also suggest that AI's limitations show up even more clearly in cultural-studies courses than in literature courses proper, since cultural studies rests so heavily on nuance and personal standpoint which argues for particular caution in how AI is used there.

Based on these findings, several practical steps seem worth adopting in blended courses. AI is best confined to the early stages of work while the final analysis and conclusions should remain the student's own. Students might reasonably be asked to disclose, briefly, where and how they used AI in a given assignment, since this kind of transparency helps clear up the ambiguity around authorship. Assignments can also require personal experience, individual reader response, and original examples as a non-negotiable component precisely the part of a text that AI cannot easily imitate. Instructors, for their part, might make regular use of the “critique the AI” exercise described above, since interview participants found it particularly effective for building critical thinking. And at the institutional level, universities would benefit from a clear, well-communicated policy on AI use one that is adapted to the specific nature of each discipline, since creative writing and linguistics, for instance, call for different rules.

CONCLUSION

Generative artificial intelligence can be a genuinely useful assistant in English literature and cultural-studies classrooms, particularly for grammatical accuracy, text structure, and the early shaping of ideas. But without careful management, it can also do real harm to students' philological competence, creativity, and ethical responsibility. The findings presented here show both sides of that coin: AI use meaningfully reduces grammatical errors, yet it also carries a real risk of shallower literary interpretation, less original thought, and diminished cultural authenticity. Instructors and students alike would do well to treat AI not simply as a “helper” but as a “partner” whose output deserves ongoing scrutiny and critical engagement. That kind of approach makes it possible to draw on what AI does well while limiting the damage it can do to the learning process. Future work in this area should extend the inquiry to other disciplines and other proficiency levels, ideally through deeper, longer-running empirical studies.

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