



A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF COMMA USAGE IN ENGLISH AND BAHASA INDONESIA: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Anissa<sup>1</sup>, Imelda Kurniati Siregar<sup>2</sup>, Reinasya Br Surbakti<sup>3</sup>,  
Tiara Adelia<sup>4</sup>, Siti Ismahani<sup>5</sup>

Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

e-mail: [anniisa0108@gmail.com](mailto:anniisa0108@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [imelda0304233098@uinsu.ac.id](mailto:imelda0304233098@uinsu.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>, [renasyasurbakti670@gmail.com](mailto:renasyasurbakti670@gmail.com)<sup>3</sup>,  
[tadelia238@gmail.com](mailto:tadelia238@gmail.com)<sup>4</sup>, [sitiismahani@uinsu.ac.id](mailto:sitiismahani@uinsu.ac.id)<sup>5</sup>

Diterima: 8/6/2026; Direvisi: 25/6/2026; Diterbitkan: 2/6/2026

ABSTRAK

Tanda baca berperan penting dalam menciptakan kejelasan dan keterbacaan tulisan akademik. Koma merupakan salah satu tanda baca yang paling sering digunakan, tetapi juga sering menimbulkan kesalahan pada pembelajar bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL). Perbedaan aturan penggunaan koma antara bahasa Indonesia dan bahasa Inggris menjadi salah satu penyebab utama kesalahan tersebut. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi persamaan dan perbedaan penggunaan koma dalam kedua bahasa serta menganalisis implikasinya terhadap penulisan akademik pembelajar EFL di Indonesia. Penelitian menggunakan metode kajian literatur kualitatif dengan menganalisis buku, artikel jurnal, dan penelitian terdahulu yang relevan. Analisis dilakukan melalui identifikasi, klasifikasi, perbandingan, dan sintesis temuan berdasarkan pendekatan analisis kontrastif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kedua bahasa memiliki kesamaan dalam penggunaan koma untuk memisahkan unsur-unsur daftar dan setelah klausa pengantar. Namun, perbedaan ditemukan pada penggunaan koma sebelum konjungsi koordinatif, dalam klausa nonrestriktif, dan pada kalimat kompleks. Perbedaan tersebut berkontribusi terhadap kesalahan penggunaan koma dalam tulisan akademik pembelajar EFL. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa perbedaan sistem tanda baca antara bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia memengaruhi akurasi penggunaan koma. Oleh karena itu, pengajaran tanda baca berbasis analisis kontrastif perlu diterapkan untuk meningkatkan kualitas penulisan akademik pembelajar EFL.

**Kata Kunci:** Analisis Kontrastif, Penggunaan Koma, Tanda Baca, Bahasa Indonesia, Pembelajar EFL.

ABSTRACT

Punctuation plays a crucial role in ensuring clarity and readability in academic writing. Among various punctuation marks, the comma is one of the most frequently used and most challenging for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Differences in comma usage rules between Indonesian and English often lead to writing errors among Indonesian EFL learners. Although numerous studies have examined writing errors in EFL contexts, research specifically comparing comma usage in the two languages through a contrastive analysis perspective remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to identify the similarities and differences in comma usage between English and Indonesian and to examine their implications for the academic writing of Indonesian EFL learners. This study employed a qualitative literature review method by analyzing relevant books, journal articles, and previous studies. The data were analyzed through identification, classification, comparison, and synthesis based on the principles of contrastive analysis. The findings reveal that both languages share similarities in the use of commas to separate items in a



series and after introductory clauses. However, notable differences were found in the use of commas before coordinating conjunctions, in nonrestrictive clauses, and in complex sentence structures. These differences contribute to comma usage errors in the academic writing of Indonesian EFL learners. The study concludes that differences in punctuation systems between English and Indonesian significantly affect the accuracy of comma usage. Therefore, explicit punctuation instruction based on contrastive analysis should be integrated into academic writing courses to improve EFL learners' writing quality and accuracy.

**Keywords:** *Contrastive Analysis, Comma Usage, Punctuation, Indonesian Language, EFL Learners.*

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is widely recognized as a fundamental skill in academic settings because it enables learners to express ideas, information, and arguments in a clear and organized manner. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, writing proficiency is often considered a key indicator of overall language competence. Effective academic writing requires not only linguistic knowledge such as vocabulary and grammar but also mastery of writing mechanics, including spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. These elements contribute significantly to text clarity, coherence, and readability, which are essential characteristics of successful academic communication (Hyland, 2022; Nation, 2023). Recent scholarship further highlights that academic writing involves complex cognitive and literacy practices that require learners to develop awareness of conventions, audience expectations, and textual accuracy (Boncori, 2022). Moreover, research on vocabulary development indicates that lexical knowledge and writing accuracy are closely interconnected in supporting effective written communication (Feng Teng & Reynolds, 2024).

Among the various punctuation marks used in English writing, the comma is one of the most frequently employed and functionally important. Commas are used to separate items in a series, introduce clauses or phrases, and connect independent clauses through coordinating conjunctions. Appropriate comma usage helps readers understand relationships among ideas and prevents ambiguity in meaning. Conversely, incorrect comma placement may interrupt the flow of information and negatively affect text comprehension. Recent studies on writing development suggest that attention to writing strategies and textual conventions contributes significantly to learners' ability to produce more accurate and comprehensible texts, including the proper use of punctuation marks (Chen, 2022; Khan et al., 2025).

For Indonesian EFL learners, mastering English comma usage can be particularly challenging because the punctuation systems of English and Indonesian differ in several respects. While Indonesian punctuation practices are primarily guided by the Pedoman Umum Ejaan Bahasa Indonesia (PUEBI), English comma usage is more strongly associated with syntactic structures and academic discourse conventions. Such differences often encourage learners to transfer punctuation habits from their first language into English writing. Contemporary second language acquisition research consistently identifies cross-linguistic influence as an important factor affecting learners' written performance, especially when the conventions of two languages are not fully aligned (Ellis, 2021; Ortega, 2023). Similarly, Bergman and Engström (2023) emphasize that multilingual learners frequently draw upon previously acquired linguistic systems when producing written texts, which may result in both facilitative and negative transfer. Therefore, a contrastive analysis approach can provide valuable insights into how differences between English and Indonesian punctuation systems influence learners' comma usage.

Previous studies have shown that punctuation errors remain common in EFL writing across



various educational contexts. Research conducted by Darus and Ching (2009), Alhaisoni et al. (2015), Wati (2021), Mubarak and Budiono (2022), Pasaribu et al. (2024), and Dewi et al. (2025) revealed that punctuation-related mistakes frequently occur in students' essays and academic texts, often reducing readability and overall writing quality. Similar findings were reported by Lelakova and Toman (2023), who found persistent difficulties in comma placement among intermediate and advanced EFL learners, particularly in complex and subordinate clause constructions. Studies focusing on error analysis and writing performance also demonstrate that mechanical errors continue to occur despite writing instruction and practice activities (Khan, 2022; Efendi & Adani, 2026). These findings indicate that punctuation accuracy remains an unresolved issue in EFL writing pedagogy.

Despite the growing body of research on writing errors, several gaps remain evident. First, most studies concentrate on categorizing punctuation errors rather than examining the linguistic factors that contribute to their occurrence. Second, punctuation marks are often investigated collectively, resulting in limited discussion of comma usage as a distinct area of inquiry. Third, research involving Indonesian EFL learners rarely adopts a systematic contrastive analysis framework to compare English and Indonesian punctuation conventions. Furthermore, studies on writing instruction have largely focused on corrective feedback, teaching methods, and writing improvement strategies without specifically addressing how cross-linguistic differences affect punctuation use (Fitriyah et al., 2024; Kim & Li, 2025; Brown et al., 2026). While these studies provide important pedagogical insights, they offer limited explanations regarding the linguistic sources of comma-related difficulties.

The present study seeks to address these limitations by integrating contrastive analysis and literature review approaches to examine comma usage in English and Indonesian comprehensively. Unlike previous studies that primarily document writing errors, this study aims to explain how differences between the two punctuation systems may contribute to recurring comma-related problems among Indonesian EFL learners. In addition, the study responds to recent calls for more comprehensive and theory-informed reviews in second language research (Vuogan & Li, 2024) and acknowledges the growing importance of developing accurate writing skills in increasingly technology-supported learning environments (Khan et al., 2025; Ambarwati et al., 2026). Therefore, this study aims to identify similarities and differences in comma usage across the two languages, explore common challenges experienced by Indonesian EFL learners, and propose pedagogical implications that may support more effective academic writing instruction and punctuation teaching practices.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study employed a qualitative literature review design with a contrastive analysis approach to examine similarities and differences in comma usage between English and Bahasa Indonesia. The study focused on analyzing and synthesizing findings from existing literature rather than collecting primary data. Literature sources were obtained from Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and university digital libraries. An initial search identified 87 publications related to punctuation, comma usage, contrastive analysis, language transfer, academic writing, and EFL learning. After applying inclusion and exclusion criteria, 35 sources were selected for analysis. The inclusion criteria comprised peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, official language guidelines, and studies published between 2015 and 2025, while seminal works relevant to contrastive analysis and language transfer were retained as supporting references. Sources lacking direct relevance to comma usage, punctuation, or EFL writing were excluded from the review. The selected literature



was then organized according to its relevance to the objectives of the study.

To enhance analytical rigor and transparency, a thematic coding matrix was employed as the primary analytical instrument. The literature was classified into four themes: (1) comma usage in English, (2) comma usage in Bahasa Indonesia, (3) similarities and differences between the two languages, and (4) punctuation difficulties encountered by EFL learners. Data analysis followed three stages: identification, comparison, and synthesis. First, comma usage rules and functions in both languages were identified and coded. Second, similarities and differences were systematically compared using a contrastive analysis framework. Third, findings from previous studies were synthesized through thematic synthesis and qualitative content analysis to identify recurring patterns and potential sources of learner difficulties. The results of this process were interpreted to explain how differences in punctuation systems may contribute to comma-related errors and to provide implications for academic writing instruction among Indonesian EFL learners.

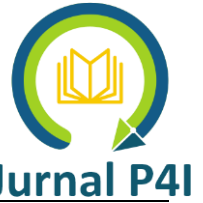
## RESULT DAN DISCUSSION

### RESULT

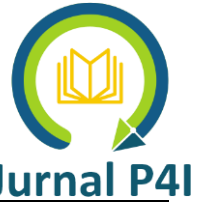
The growing body of research on second language (L2) writing demonstrates that writing accuracy is influenced by multiple linguistic, cognitive, pedagogical, and technological factors. Recent studies have increasingly examined the roles of language transfer, corrective feedback, writing strategies, technology-assisted learning, and artificial intelligence in supporting learners' writing development. These studies provide important theoretical and empirical foundations for understanding how EFL learners acquire writing mechanics, including punctuation accuracy. Furthermore, contemporary scholarship highlights that punctuation should not be viewed merely as a technical aspect of writing but as an essential component of effective written communication that contributes to clarity, coherence, and reader comprehension. To provide a comprehensive overview of the literature relevant to the present study, Table 1 summarizes recent studies related to language transfer, writing accuracy, corrective feedback, and punctuation acquisition in EFL contexts.

**Table 1. Literature Review on Language Transfer, Writing Accuracy, and Punctuation in EFL Writing**

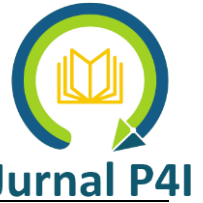
No.	Author(s) & Year	Focus of Study	Method	Main Findings	Relevance to Present Study
1	Alhusaiyan (2025)	AI in foreign language learning	Systematic Review	AI supports personalized language learning and writing development	Supports technology-enhanced punctuation instruction
2	Ambarwati et al. (2026)	Storybird and EFL writing	Classroom Action Research	Improved narrative writing and creativity	Demonstrates benefits of digital writing tools
3	Annazah et al. (2025)	Quality of Indonesian EFL essays	Descriptive Study	Writing weaknesses found in grammar and mechanics	Highlights need for punctuation research



No.	Author(s) & Year	Focus of Study	Method	Main Findings	Relevance to Present Study
4	Bannò et al. (2024)	Automated grammatical error feedback	Computational Study	AI-based feedback improves error identification	Relevant to punctuation correction technologies
5	Bao (2025)	Cross-linguistic transfer	Contrastive Analysis	Transfer influenced by structural similarity between languages	Supports language transfer framework
6	Bergman & Engström (2023)	Cross-linguistic influence	Literature Review	L1 influence remains significant in L2 learning	Supports theoretical discussion of transfer learning
7	Boncori (2022)	Academic writing practices	Conceptual Study	Writing is a reflective and socially situated process	Provides theoretical perspective on writing process
8	Brown et al. (2026)	Written corrective feedback (WCF)	Bayesian Meta-analysis	WCF significantly improves L2 accuracy	Supports pedagogical recommendations
9	Chen (2022)	Writing strategy instruction	Experimental Study	Writing strategies enhance writing performance	Supports explicit punctuation instruction
10	Chen & Lee (2022)	Collaborative writing interaction	Case Study	Peer interaction influences writing quality	Explains social dimension of writing development
11	Efendi & Adani (2026)	Linguistic errors in EFL writing	Descriptive Study	Language errors affect writing proficiency	Relevant to punctuation error analysis
12	Teng & Reynolds (2024)	Second language learning processes	Edited Volume	Cognitive and linguistic factors shape L2 learning	Supports SLA perspective
13	Fitriyah et al. (2024)	Written corrective feedback practices	Survey Study	Students value detailed feedback in writing assessment	Supports feedback-based punctuation teaching
14	Gebremariam (2024)	Types of corrective feedback	Quasi-Experimental Study	WCF improves grammatical accuracy	Supports targeted punctuation feedback
15	Jamilah (2024)	Problem-Based Learning and	Experimental	PBL improves students' writing	Supports innovative



No.	Author(s) & Year	Focus of Study	Method	Main Findings	Relevance to Present Study
		writing	Study	ability	writing instruction
16	Khan (2022)	Writing exercises and error reduction	Error Analysis	Writing practice reduces language errors	Supports punctuation-focused exercises
17	Khan et al. (2025)	Generative AI in English education	Review Study	AI enhances writing support and critical literacy	Relevant to AI-assisted writing development
18	Kim & Li (2025)	Task repetition and feedback	Experimental Study	Repeated feedback improves writing development	Supports revision-based instruction
19	Lee (2022)	Classroom-based L2 writing research	Research Review	Highlights recent developments in writing pedagogy	Provides theoretical foundation for writing instruction
20	Lelakova & Toman (2023)	Comma use in EFL writing	Corpus-Based Study	Learners struggle with comma placement in complex structures	Directly relevant to comma acquisition
21	Li & Zhang (2026)	Technology-assisted writing instruction	Meta-analysis	Technology improves academic writing outcomes	Supports digital approaches to punctuation teaching
22	Lorenz et al. (2021)	Multilingual lexical transfer	Multilingual Study	Transfer occurs across multiple linguistic levels	Supports transfer theory
23	Mao et al. (2024)	Written corrective feedback	Research Synthesis	WCF effective in authentic classroom contexts	Supports sustained feedback practices
24	Nguyen & Chu (2024)	WCF in L2 writing	Literature Review	Feedback contributes to writing accuracy	Supports pedagogical implications
25	Owusu et al. (2025)	Corrective feedback techniques	Review Study	Various feedback strategies improve writing quality	Supports instructional interventions
26	Pasaribu et al. (2024)	Academic writing challenges among Indonesian EFL	Descriptive Study	Students struggle with grammar and mechanics	Supports need for punctuation-focused instruction



No.	Author(s) & Year	Focus of Study	Method	Main Findings	Relevance to Present Study
		students			
27	Ramzan et al. (2023)	Difficulties in academic writing	Descriptive Study	Linguistic and cognitive factors affect writing performance	Supports writing accuracy discussion
28	Vuogan & Li (2024)	Meta-analyses in SLA research	Systematic Review	Identifies methodological trends in L2 research	Supports methodological framework
29	Wu et al. (2025)	Intelligent personal assistants in L2 learning	Experimental Study	Technology enhances language acquisition processes	Supports AI-assisted learning
30	Zeng et al. (2024)	Prompting strategies for grammatical error correction	Computational Study	Prompt design affects correction quality	Relevant to automated punctuation feedback
31	Zhang et al. (2024)	Coherence improvement in L2 writing	NLP-Based Study	Automated systems improve writing coherence	Supports technology-enhanced revision practices

The reviewed literature reveals several important trends that inform the present study. First, a substantial body of research confirms that writing accuracy is closely associated with linguistic knowledge, corrective feedback, and learners’ awareness of language structures. Second, studies on cross-linguistic influence consistently demonstrate that learners frequently rely on their first-language knowledge when producing written texts in a second language, making language transfer an important factor in explaining punctuation errors. Third, recent research increasingly emphasizes the role of technology, artificial intelligence, and automated feedback systems in supporting writing development and error correction. Nevertheless, despite extensive research on writing instruction and error analysis, relatively few studies specifically investigate comma usage from a contrastive perspective between English and Bahasa Indonesia. Therefore, the present study addresses this gap by examining comma usage through the combined lenses of language transfer, contrastive analysis, and contemporary L2 writing research, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of punctuation acquisition among Indonesian EFL learners.

### Similarities and Differences of Comma Usage in English and Bahasa Indonesia

To understand the challenges faced by Indonesian EFL learners in using English punctuation accurately, it is necessary to examine the relationship between the comma systems of English and Bahasa Indonesia. A contrastive comparison allows researchers to identify areas where the two languages share similar conventions as well as areas where their underlying



principles differ. Such an analysis is particularly important because punctuation acquisition is often influenced by learners’ prior linguistic knowledge and writing habits developed in their first language. By comparing the two systems systematically, it becomes possible to predict which aspects of comma usage are likely to facilitate learning and which aspects may contribute to recurring writing difficulties among Indonesian learners.

**Table 2. Comparison of Comma Usage in English and Bahasa Indonesia**

Comma Function	English	Bahasa Indonesia	Transfer Potential
Separating items in a series	Required	Required	Positive transfer
Introductory clauses or phrases	Commonly required	Commonly required	Positive transfer
Transitional expressions	Commonly required	Commonly required	Positive transfer
Coordinating conjunctions linking independent clauses	Required before FANBOYS conjunctions	Generally not required	Negative transfer
Nonrestrictive relative clauses	Commas required	No equivalent punctuation distinction	Negative transfer
Appositive phrases	Commas required for nonessential information	Less explicitly regulated	Negative transfer
Complex syntactic structures	Grammar-based punctuation	Orthography-based punctuation	Negative transfer

The comparison indicates that the likelihood of successful punctuation acquisition is closely associated with the extent to which learners can rely on existing linguistic knowledge when writing in English. Similar conventions may reduce the cognitive burden of learning because learners can apply familiar patterns with relatively little adjustment. In contrast, conventions that require new grammatical interpretations and syntactic awareness demand additional learning processes and are therefore more susceptible to errors. These findings suggest that differences between the two punctuation systems should receive greater attention in writing instruction, as they represent potential sources of persistent difficulties and may explain many of the comma-related errors reported in previous EFL writing studies.

### **Common Difficulties Experienced by Indonesian EFL Learners**

The reviewed studies consistently indicate that punctuation remains one of the most challenging aspects of EFL writing, particularly among Indonesian learners. Research conducted by Wati (2021), Mubarok and Budiono (2022), Pasaribu et al. (2024), Dewi et al. (2025), and Efendi and Adani (2026) demonstrates that punctuation errors continue to occur frequently in students’ academic texts despite noticeable improvements in grammar and vocabulary knowledge. The findings suggest that learners often experience difficulties when punctuation usage is closely associated with grammatical structure rather than simple writing conventions. As a result, punctuation inaccuracies remain a persistent issue that may negatively affect the clarity, coherence, and overall quality of academic writing.



A synthesis of the reviewed studies reveals several recurring patterns of comma-related errors among Indonesian EFL learners. The most commonly reported difficulties include the omission of commas before coordinating conjunctions that connect independent clauses, the failure to distinguish and punctuate nonrestrictive relative clauses correctly, and inaccurate punctuation of appositive structures. Learners also frequently demonstrate inconsistent comma placement in complex and compound sentences, particularly when multiple clauses are involved. In addition, many students tend to transfer punctuation habits from Bahasa Indonesia into English writing, resulting in the overgeneralization of first-language conventions that do not always align with English grammatical requirements.

The literature further suggests that these errors are not random but reflect systematic challenges associated with cross-linguistic influence and syntactic awareness. Studies by Lelakova and Toman (2023), Pasaribu et al. (2024), and Dewi et al. (2025) indicate that learners generally perform more successfully in punctuation contexts that share similar conventions across languages. However, greater difficulty emerges when comma usage depends on grammatical relationships, clause boundaries, or distinctions that are not explicitly represented in Bahasa Indonesia punctuation rules. This pattern indicates that learners must develop additional grammatical sensitivity to apply English comma conventions accurately. Consequently, punctuation acquisition involves not only learning writing mechanics but also understanding the underlying syntactic structures that govern punctuation choices.

These findings highlight the importance of addressing punctuation as a meaningful component of academic writing instruction rather than treating it as a minor mechanical skill. The recurring nature of comma-related errors suggests that exposure to English texts alone may not be sufficient to develop accurate punctuation habits. Instead, learners may benefit from instructional approaches that explicitly explain the relationship between punctuation and sentence structure while drawing attention to differences between English and Bahasa Indonesia conventions. Such an approach may help reduce negative language transfer and support the development of greater accuracy in academic writing.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings suggest that language transfer plays an important role in shaping Indonesian learners' comma usage patterns. Recent studies on cross-linguistic influence indicate that second-language learners frequently draw upon previously acquired linguistic knowledge when processing and producing written language, particularly when encountering unfamiliar grammatical conventions (Ortega, 2023; Bergman & Engström, 2023; Bao, 2025). This tendency may facilitate learning when punctuation conventions are similar across languages but may also contribute to persistent errors when substantial structural differences exist. Evidence from multilingual learning research further demonstrates that transfer operates not only at lexical and grammatical levels but also at discourse and orthographic levels, including punctuation usage (Lorenz et al., 2021). In the Indonesian EFL context, these findings suggest that learners' punctuation decisions are influenced by both English writing conventions and prior knowledge of Bahasa Indonesia punctuation practices.

The reviewed literature indicates that Indonesian learners tend to demonstrate greater accuracy in comma functions that have direct equivalents in Bahasa Indonesia, such as separating items in a list or marking introductory expressions. Conversely, higher error rates appear in structures that require grammatical distinctions unique to English, including nonrestrictive clauses,



appositives, and compound sentences connected by coordinating conjunctions. Similar patterns were reported by Lelakova and Toman (2023), whose corpus-based analysis revealed that EFL learners frequently experience difficulties in comma placement when punctuation rules are closely tied to syntactic relationships rather than surface-level writing conventions. Studies conducted in Indonesian higher education settings also reveal that academic writing quality remains affected by grammatical and mechanical inaccuracies, including punctuation errors that often emerge in complex sentence structures (Pasaribu et al., 2024; Annazah et al., 2025). Collectively, these findings indicate that cross-linguistic influence may contribute to learners' punctuation choices during academic writing.

A critical synthesis of the reviewed studies suggests that transferability is influenced by the degree of structural similarity between the first and second languages. Comma functions associated with universal organizational purposes, such as separating items in a series, are generally easier to acquire because learners can directly map existing L1 knowledge onto L2 usage. However, punctuation rules that depend on grammatical distinctions require learners to develop a deeper understanding of sentence structure and syntactic relationships. For example, English differentiates restrictive and nonrestrictive relative clauses through punctuation, whereas Bahasa Indonesia does not encode this distinction in the same manner. Consequently, learners must acquire not only a new punctuation rule but also a new way of interpreting sentence meaning and clause relationships. These findings support the argument that the degree of similarity between linguistic systems significantly influences the ease or difficulty of punctuation transfer (Bao, 2025; Bergman & Engström, 2023).

This interpretation aligns with contemporary perspectives on second-language writing, which emphasize that writing accuracy results from the interaction of linguistic knowledge, cognitive processing, metalinguistic awareness, and writing experience (Chen, 2022; Ramzan et al., 2023; Lee, 2022). During academic writing tasks, learners often allocate substantial cognitive resources to idea generation, organization, and grammatical formulation, leaving fewer resources available for monitoring punctuation accuracy. Research on collaborative writing further indicates that learners frequently encounter difficulties negotiating language forms and conventions when constructing texts, particularly when they lack explicit awareness of specific linguistic rules (Chen & Lee, 2022). Therefore, punctuation errors may not simply reflect insufficient knowledge but may also arise from cognitive overload and limited attention during the writing process. This explanation helps clarify why learners often revert to familiar L1 punctuation patterns when producing complex English texts.

The findings highlight the need for explicit instruction in English comma usage within Indonesian EFL contexts. Rather than assuming that punctuation competence develops naturally through writing practice, instructors should provide systematic explanations of comma functions that differ from Bahasa Indonesia conventions. A contrastive instructional approach may be particularly beneficial because it enables learners to compare punctuation systems directly and identify areas where negative transfer is likely to occur. Such instructional practices can foster metalinguistic awareness and help learners monitor their punctuation choices more effectively during academic writing activities. Moreover, advances in technology-assisted writing instruction suggest that digital tools and AI-supported feedback systems may provide additional opportunities for learners to receive individualized guidance on punctuation accuracy and writing mechanics (Alhusaiyan, 2025; Li & Zhang, 2026).

Recent studies also emphasize the effectiveness of written corrective feedback, targeted editing activities, and strategy-based writing instruction in improving writing accuracy (Fitriyah



et al., 2024; Kim & Li, 2025; Brown et al., 2026). Research syntheses indicate that consistent feedback enables learners to recognize recurring linguistic errors and gradually develop more accurate writing habits (Mao et al., 2024; Nguyen & Chu, 2024). Similarly, studies examining corrective feedback practices demonstrate that focused feedback on specific language features contributes significantly to grammatical and mechanical accuracy in L2 writing (Gebremariam, 2024; Owusu et al., 2025). Emerging technologies also offer promising support for punctuation instruction through automated error detection and revision assistance systems that encourage self-editing and reflective learning (Zhang et al., 2024; Bannò et al., 2024; Zeng et al., 2024). Therefore, punctuation instruction should be integrated into writing courses through continuous practice, feedback, revision, and technology-enhanced learning activities rather than treated as an isolated topic.

This review contributes to punctuation studies by shifting the focus from merely identifying punctuation errors to explaining the linguistic mechanisms that may underlie those errors. While previous studies generally discuss punctuation as one component of broader writing mechanics, the present review specifically examines comma usage through the lens of cross-linguistic influence and contrastive analysis. Furthermore, this study provides a systematic comparison of English and Bahasa Indonesia comma conventions, an area that remains relatively underexplored in Indonesian EFL research. By integrating findings from language transfer theory, second-language writing research, corrective feedback studies, and contemporary technology-assisted learning literature, the review offers a more comprehensive explanation of why particular comma errors continue to occur among Indonesian learners. The resulting framework may serve as a foundation for future investigations into punctuation acquisition, academic writing development, and instructional interventions designed to improve writing accuracy in Indonesian EFL contexts.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrates that comma usage in English and Bahasa Indonesia is characterized by both similarities and differences that significantly influence the academic writing performance of Indonesian EFL learners. Similar punctuation conventions, such as the use of commas in lists, introductory clauses, and transitional expressions, provide opportunities for positive language transfer. In contrast, differences involving coordinating conjunctions, nonrestrictive clauses, appositive structures, and complex sentence patterns often become sources of recurring learner errors. These findings indicate that punctuation acquisition is not merely a mechanical aspect of writing but a process closely connected to learners' ability to negotiate differences between linguistic systems.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the development of Contrastive Analysis and Language Transfer research by highlighting punctuation as an important yet often overlooked dimension of cross-linguistic influence. While previous studies have largely focused on grammatical, lexical, and syntactic transfer, the present review shows that differences in punctuation systems can also shape writing accuracy and error patterns. The novelty of this study lies in its integrated explanation of how specific contrasts between English and Bahasa Indonesia comma systems contribute to systematic punctuation errors among Indonesian EFL learners. This perspective expands current understanding of second-language writing by positioning punctuation as a meaningful component of interlanguage development rather than merely a technical writing feature.

The findings also have important implications for future research and educational practice. In academic writing instruction, punctuation should be taught explicitly through a contrastive



approach that helps learners recognize areas where transfer may facilitate or hinder learning. Furthermore, the results of this study may serve as a foundation for developing writing curricula, instructional materials, and assessment frameworks that place greater emphasis on punctuation accuracy. Future studies are encouraged to investigate comma usage through empirical classroom-based research, larger learner corpora, and intervention studies to evaluate the effectiveness of contrastive-analysis-based instructional models. Ultimately, a deeper understanding of the relationship between punctuation systems and language transfer can contribute to more effective EFL writing pedagogy and support learners in producing clearer, more accurate, and academically appropriate texts.

## REFERENCES

- Alhusaiyan, E. (2025). A systematic review of current trends in artificial intelligence in foreign language learning. *Saudi Journal of Language Studies*, 5(1), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SJLS-07-2024-0039>
- Ambarwati, R. D., Sukarni, S., Sudar, S., & Jah, N. J. A. (2026). Improving EFL Students' Narrative Writing and Creativity Using Storybird: A Classroom Action Research Study. *Journal of Education and Teaching (JET)*, 7(1), 299-313. <https://doi.org/10.51454/jet.v7i1.793>
- Annazah, S., Saumi, R. I., Wulandari, W., & Syahid, A. (2025). Investigating the Quality of Indonesian EFL Essay Writing at the University Level. *Channing: Journal of English Language Education and Literature*, 10(1), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.30599/dbg7q216>
- Bannò, S., Knill, K., & Gales, M. J. (2024). Grammatical error feedback: An implicit evaluation approach. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2408.09565*. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2408.09565>
- Bao, P. (2025). Deciphering crosslinguistic transfer dynamics in L2 acquisition: A multidimensional contrastive analysis approach. *Journal of Second and Multiple Language Acquisition-JSMULA*, 884-905. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18818187>
- Bergman, M., & Engström, A. (2023). A Literature Review of Trends, Attitudes and Multilingual Learning in Research on Cross-Linguistic Influence. <https://hdl.handle.net/2077/79204>
- Boncori, I. (2022). Researching and writing differently. In *Researching and writing differently* (pp. 49-65). Policy Press. <https://doi.org/10.51952/9781447368151.ch003>
- Brown, D., Liu, Q., & Norouzian, R. (2026). Effectiveness of written corrective feedback in developing L2 accuracy: A Bayesian meta-analysis. *Language Teaching Research*, 30(3), 1357-1389. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688221147374>
- Chen, A. H. (2022). The Effects of Writing Strategy Instruction on EFL Learners' Writing Development. *English Language Teaching*, 15(3), 29-37. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1334542>
- Chen, X. W., & Lee, I. (2022). Conflicts in peer interaction of collaborative writing—a case study in an EFL context. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 58, 100910. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2022.100910>
- Efendi, Z., & Adani, S. (2026). Linguistic Errors and Descriptive Writing Proficiency in Indonesian EFL Secondary Students. *Journal Informatic, Education and Management (JIEM)*, 8(1), 261-270. <https://doi.org/10.61992/jiem.v8i1.213>
- Feng Teng, M., & Reynolds, B.L. (Eds.). (2024). *Researching Incidental Vocabulary Learning in a Second Language* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003270782>
- Fitriyah, I., Ningrum, A. S. B., & Gozali, I. (2024). An Investigation of Written Corrective



- Feedback in EFL Writing Assessment: How Teachers' Feedback Practices Meet Students' Expectations. *International Journal of Language Testing*, 14(1), 166-184. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1419388>
- Gebremariam, H. T. (2024). Exploring the effects of written corrective feedback types on grammatical accuracy in L2 writing: Evidence from Ethiopian high school students. *Sage Open*, 14(3), 21582440241274331. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241274331>
- Jamilah, R. (2024). *The effect of problem based learning method to exposition text writing ability at the Grade XI Students of MAS KH Ahmad Dahlan Sapirok* (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan). <http://etd.uinsyahada.ac.id/id/eprint/10747>
- Khan, A. (2022). The effect of writing exercises in classroom on the production of written sentences at undergraduate level by Saudi EFL learners: A case study of error analysis. *Cogent Education*, 9(1), 2122259. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2122259>
- Khan, I. A., Malook, B., Khan, F. A., & Khan, K. A. (2025). Generative Artificial Intelligence In English Language Education: From Writing Support To Critical Literacy. *Journal Of Applied Linguistics And Tesol (Jalt)*, 8(4), 783-793. <https://doi.org/10.63878/jalt1582>
- Kim, J., & Li, S. (2025). The effects of task repetition and corrective feedback on L2 writing development. *The Language Learning Journal*, 53(6), 729-744. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2024.2390555>
- Lee, I. (2022). Developments in classroom-based research on L2 writing. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 12(4), 551-574. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2022.12.4.2>
- Lelakova , E., & Toman , M. (2023). A Corpus Based Study of Commas Use in EFL Written Performance. *International Journal of Instruction*, 16(1), 1–20. Retrieved from <https://e-iji.net/ats/index.php/pub/article/view/170>
- Li, F., & Zhang, Y. (2026). A meta-analysis of the effectiveness of technology-assisted academic writing instruction in higher education. *Language Teaching Research*, 13621688251406901. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688251406901>
- Lorenz, E., Hasai, Y. & Siemund, P. (2021). Multilingual lexical transfer challenges monolingual educational norms: not quite!. *Multilingua*, 40(6), 791-813. <https://doi.org/10.1515/multi-2021-0014>
- Mao, Z., Lee, I., & Li, S. (2024). Written corrective feedback in second language writing: A synthesis of naturalistic classroom studies. *Language Teaching*, 1-29. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444823000393>
- Nguyen, H. M., & Chu, T. A. (2024). Written Corrective Feedback in Second Language Writing: A Review of Research. *rEFLECTIONS*, 31(2), 858–870. <https://doi.org/10.61508/refl.v31i2.275269>
- Owusu, E., Abunya, N. L., Agyekum, K., Adu, N. A. F. V., Triumph, U. C., & Agor, T. J. (2025). Examining Written Corrective Feedback Techniques in Second Language Learning Contexts. *African Journal of Applied Research*, 11(5), 596-616. <https://doi.org/10.26437/akvcya09>
- Pasaribu, A. N., Pasaribu, T. K., Siahaan, R. B., & Sitompul, D. S. (2024). Challenges For Indonesian Efl Students In English Academic Writing. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 12(2), 527-536. <https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v12i2.9780>
- Ramzan, M., Mushtaq, A., & Ashraf, Z. (2023). Evacuation of difficulties and challenges for



- academic writing in ESL learning. *University of Chitral Journal of Linguistics and Literature*, 7(I), 42-49. <https://doi.org/10.33195/maxskq26>
- Vuogan, A. & Li, S. (2024). A systematic review of meta-analyses in second language research: current practices, issues, and recommendations. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 15(4), 1621-1644. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2022-0192>
- Wu, J., Li, Y., Zhou, J., & Chen, S. (2025). The impact of intelligent personal assistants on Mandarin second language learners: interaction process, acquisition of listening and speaking ability. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 38(8), 1769-1794. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2024.2317849>
- Zeng, M., Kuang, J., Qiu, M., Song, J., & Park, J. (2024, May). Evaluating prompting strategies for grammatical error correction based on language proficiency. In *Proceedings of the 2024 joint international conference on computational linguistics, language resources and evaluation (lrec-coling 2024)* (pp. 6426-6430). <https://aclanthology.org/2024.lrec-main.569/>
- Zhang, X., Diaz, A., Chen, Z., Wu, Q., Qian, K., Voss, E., & Yu, Z. (2024, November). DECOR: Improving coherence in L2 English writing with a novel benchmark for incoherence detection, reasoning, and rewriting. In *Proceedings of the 2024 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing* (pp. 11436-11458). <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2406.19650>