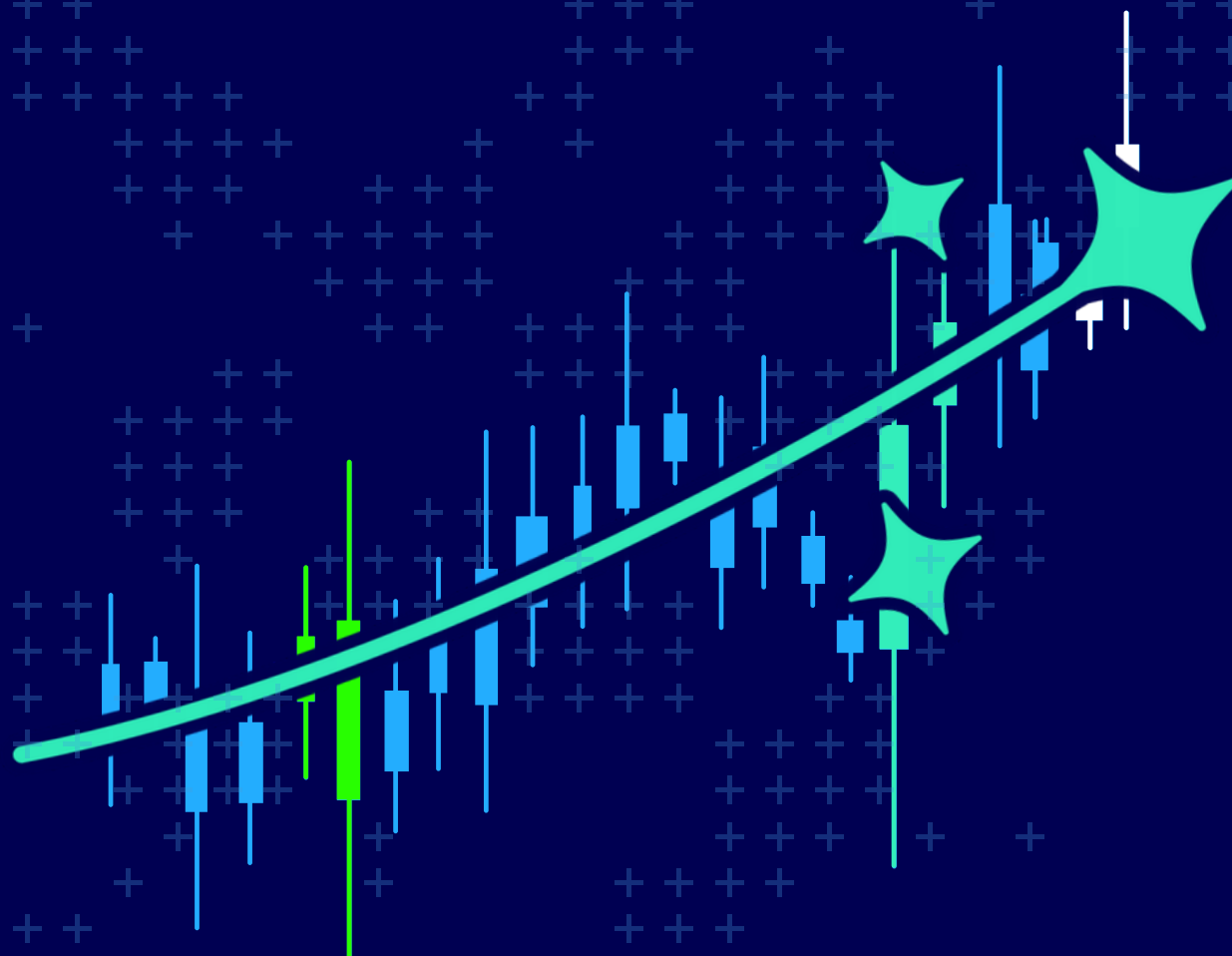




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ARTICLE · REVIEWED · DEC 2025 · VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

The Em Dash as a Site of Contest Between AI Determinism and Human Agency

Hawkinson, E.



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Registered with Crossref. Cite and link this work as <https://doi.org/10.62883/FILJ2955> – the address that outlives site redesigns.

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Abstract

This study examines the phenomenon of increased em dash usage in AI-generated text and its subsequent influence on human writing practices through the lens of technological determinism and social construction of technology (SCOT). The research reveals a complex dialectical relationship where computational factors, including training data composition, tokenization processes and reinforcement learning from human feedback, create distinctive punctuation patterns that subsequently influence human writing behaviour. The findings demonstrate that AI writing tools represent neither pure technological determinism nor complete social construction, but rather an ongoing co-evolutionary process reshaping the fundamental nature of written communication.

KEYWORDS

AI Education · Em Dash · AI Detection · AI Automated Feedback · Technological Determinism · Social Construction of Technology

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Eric is a learning futurist, tinkering with and designing technologies that may better inform the future of teaching and learning. Eric's projects have included augmented tourism rallies, AR community art exhibitions, mixed reality escape rooms, and other experiments in immersive technology.

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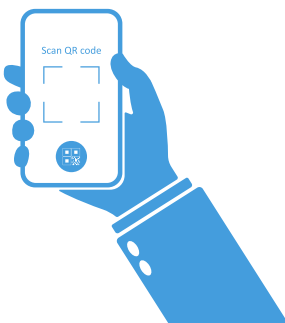
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