MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH INSTITUTE INDIA

Multidisciplinary Journal of Research in Engineering and Technology

ISSN: 2348-6953

Volume 13 Issue 2s (2026) | 349-355

SHIELD: A Self-Healing AI Engine for Intelligent Log Diagnosis and Autonomous Remediation in CI/CD Pipelines

Minakshi Ghodella[1], Sujata Jadhav[2], Janvi Patil[3], Sneha Patki[4], Deepali Narwade[5]

[1,2,3,4,5]Department of AI & DS, Dr. D. Y. Patil College of Engineering and Innovation, Varale, Talegaon, Pune, India.
[1]minakshikumawat08@gmail.com, [2]sujataj266@gmail.com, [3]Patiljan1029@gmail.com, [4]patkisneha98@gmail.com, [5]deepali.narwade@dypatilef.com

Peer Review Information

***Type**: Article*
***Received**: 18 April 2026*
***Revised**: 06 May 2026*
***Accepted**: 15 June 2026*
***Published**: 11 July 2026*

Abstract

Continuous Integration / Continuous Delivery (CI/CD) pipelines are at the heart of modern soft-ware delivery. However, CI/CD pipelines regu-larly fail due to various reasons, such as resource or library dependencies clashing, configuration errors, or flaky tests. Unfortunately, these pipe-lines often need to be manually fixed and re-started. While there are tools that help detect pipeline failures, there are limited solutions for automatically recovering failed pipelines, which has resulted in DevOps teams constantly blocking on failed pipelines. In this paper, we introduce SHIELD: Self-Healing AI Engine for Intelligent Log Diagnosis and Autonomous Remediation. SHIELD automatically detects, diagnoses, and remedies failures in CI/CD pipelines without any human intervention. SHIELD consists of a Natural Language Processing-powered intelligent log parser, a supervised machine learning-based failure classifier, and an autonomous remediation module that instantaneously implements the best solution to remedy the failure. Furthermore, we introduce a reinforcement learning loop as feed-back to improve our failure classifier continuously. We evaluate SHIELD and show that it drastically reduces Mean Time to Recovery (MTTR) with limited human debugging intervention.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; CI/CD Pipelines; Self-Healing Systems; Log Analysis; DevOps Automation; Automated Failure Recovery

How to Cite This Article

Ghodella, M., Jadhav, S., Patil, J., Patki, S., & Narwade, D. (2026). SHIELD: A self-healing AI engine for intelligent log diagnosis and autonomous remediation in CI/CD pipelines. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Research in Engineering and Technology,* 13(2s), 349–355.

Introduction

The speed of software is changing the way all en-gineering teams build and deliver applications in the digital era. Across industries, organisations now work according to continuous delivery mod-els where code change needs to get from develop-ment into production quickly, dependably and at scale. CI/CD pipelines are the technical implementation of this model and act like automated workflows that compile source code, run test suites, validate that builds work properly after each change push and trigger a deployment with minimal manual input. Indeed, the proliferation of platforms like Jenkins, GitHub Actions and GitLab CI shows just how ingrained these pipe-lines are in present-day engineering culture –from early-stage startups to large distributed enterprises deploying thousands of times a day.

CI/CD pipelines are not merely Infrastructure as Code; there's an operational benefit to that automation. They maintain standards of quality, cut down on integration conflicts, enable quick roll-back and provide development teams with immediate feedback on the condition of their code ba-ses. A healthy pipeline in fast- moving environments is no longer a feature of ease, but a competitive must-have. Pipeline failure causes delayed releases and loses feature implementations, both of which decrease team productivity. In an ever-increasing scale of software systems, sustained pipeline running has become one of the most important issues in the current DevOps.

Research Gap

Although there are mature CI/CD tooling availa-ble, several core limitations remain unaddressed in both industry practice and academic studies:

No autonomous recovery mechanism- Current platforms like Jenkins and GitHub Actions iden-tify and report failures, but are fully dependent on human engineers to triage & fix failures, provid-ing for a fully manual recovery process.

No intelligent parsing of logs - Pipeline logs can be massive and are largely unstructured; any tools that exist surface raw outputs without applying the necessary semantic understanding needed to identify fault patterns or likely causes.

Lack of common view of data in pipeline work-flows – While AI has been applied to discrete tasks like anomaly detection or code repair, there is no existing solution that integrates intelligent decision-making inside the CI/CD execution lifecycle.

Lack of a comprehensive remediation framework. All research works are done considering the mu-tually exclusive phases in contrast detection, clas-sification or repair independently, thus there is no consolidated system that unifies these into a con-tinuous and automated recovery pipeline.

Using Static systems with zero learning – Exist-ing tools use static and configuration rules and thresholds that do not evolve in alignment with the pipeline environment, leading to a lack of res-olution for similar recurring failures due to a lack of manual pattern detection. Fragmented tooling landscape – Organisations to-day need to piece together various isolated tools for monitoring, alerting and debugging, which leads to operational complexity and slower re-sponse times during failures.

Objectives

In response to the identified gaps, this work establishes the following research objectives:

- To develop an NLP-based log analysis engine that interprets unstructured pipeline output and extracts meaningful fault signatures for downstream processing.
- To build a machine learning classifier that accurately categorises pipeline failures into defined fault types, including dependency errors, environment misconfigurations, and test regressions.
- To empirically validate the proposed system by measuring the system's impact on the Mean Time to Recovery, reduction of manual debugging and pipeline uptime.

Literature Review

As CI/CD pipelines become more complex, so have areas of research such as automated failure detection, log analysis and self-healing systems.

Rausch et al. [1] performed a significant amount of empirical research to analyse the root cause of failure in the CI pipeline, using Travis CI build logs. The authors studied thousands of build runs and revealed the most frequent causes of CI pipe-line failures. Their conclusions proved that con-flicts in dependencies, setup mistakes and test failures are the typical causes of build breakups in the CI environment. Furthermore, authors high-lighted that troubleshooting the causes of such failures is costly and requires detailed manual in-tervention from developers due to the complexity of build environments and the absence of auto-mated troubleshooting tools. Although this re-search provides some useful knowledge about failure root causes, it is primarily failure analysis and does not prescribe fail-safe solutions for au-tomatic CI pipeline failure detection, diagnosis, and recovery procedures.

Du et al. [2] proposed DeepLog, a deep, learning-based methodology, for anomaly detection in sys-tem logs. The model uses a Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) network to learn to characterise normal log event sequences that are generated by software systems during normal operation. When the model is trained, it recognises abnormal be-haviour by the divergence of a new observed log sequence from the learned characteristic behav-iour. DeepLog showed that it can dramatically im-prove the accuracy of the abnormal system behav-iour detection in a large-scale distributed environ-ment. However, while the framework is very ef-fective in the detection of anomalies within logs, it largely emphasises failure detection in logs, but does not mention log semantics interpretation or automatic removal of faults in CI/CD pipelines.

He et al. [3] proposed Drain, an effective online log parsing algorithm for converting unstructured log messages into a structured log template, which is an efficient solution to the big unstruc-tured log data analysis problem. Large amounts of unstructured log text leave problems for automa-tion-based analysis. Drain solves this problem by aggregating source log messages and structuring them into a source log template via a fixed-depth parse tree. The structured log template allows fu-ture use by the machine learning algorithms for anomaly detection. Although the efficacy of their log clustering framework is proven, the approach only focuses on structuring logs without applying it to failure classification and repair.

Dang et al. [4] proposed a broad-based survey on Microsoft's adoption of AI for IT Operations (AI-Ops). Their research illustrated how the usage of machine learning algorithms could be incorporated in large-scale operations infrastructure to automatically carry out tasks like anomaly detec-tion, event auto-identification, auto-remediation, and anomaly response. The study of the application of AI to automating system operations demonstrated the potential to minimise the manual operation override and promote the dependability of the complex cloud infrastructure. How-ever, the existing AIOps solutions are primarily utilised for infrastructure operation rather than CI/CD pipeline flows, thus their application to CI/CD pipeline automation is still to be investigated

Gulenko et al. [5] proposed a self-healing frame-work based on reinforcement learning algorithms in a microservices architecture. The authors' abstract system states and leverages reinforcement learning algorithms to master recovery proce-dures for microservice faults. Based on the trial-and-error learning process, their approach learns the best recovery policy through interactions with the system environment and improves the system's resilience. The results proved that reinforcement learning is an effective means to automate the system recovery processes in a distributed environment. Nevertheless, their algorithms are only applied to microservice architecture rather than CI/CD pipelines, and issues like build and test failures and dependency conflicts are not ad-dressed by this approach.

Proposed Methodology

This work takes a design- and implementation-based research approach. Rather than only study-ing the problem theoretically, SHIELD is built as a working system you can test and measure. The research pulls together three areas- Natural Lan-guage Processing, Machine Learning, and Rein-forcement Learning - and drops them straight into a live CI/CD environment. The goal is to move from a reactive system where humans fix errors to a proactive system where the pipeline fixes itself automatically.

What Was Studied

When building SHIELD, we looked at a few main areas to get it right. Like, the whole CI/CD pipe-line setup, you know, how those things actually run and what steps they take. They go through building code, testing it, and deploying, maybe, but stuff breaks down in common spots.

Failures can be all over the place. Dependency er-rors happen when one part doesn't connect to an-other properly. Configuration faults mess up the settings. Test failures pop up if the code doesn't pass checks. And environment issues, those are tricky because the setup might not match what you expect.

Specifically for logs, it is especially helpful be-cause logs are unstructured text. So, any AI mod-els that are reading logs can make an inference on how to interpret the chaotic output, and it can tell you what's wrong. On the ML side, supervised learning looks useful for FC fault classification.

Next RL, reinforcement learning. The thing that learns over time with rewards. The pipeline gets smarter, gets better as it learns.

Then, through the APIs of services such as Git Hub Actions, Jenkins, etc., SHIELD can have access to the data it wants, as that is how it ac-cesses the pipeline data.

Data Collection

SHIELD uses two types of data:

1. Real-time Pipeline Log Data
Automatically collected from GitHub Actions and Jenkins automatically once a pipeline breaks. Presents error messages, exit codes, stack

traces, and build output. Logins and accounts – captured through the official platform, via the device APIs. No manual collection is required.

2. Historical Failure and Fix Data

Historical failure logs, detailing the nature of the failure, how it was fixed, and the success of the fix. For training the ML classifier and filling the knowledge base. Increases automatically each time a new failure is solved by SHIELD.

System Architecture

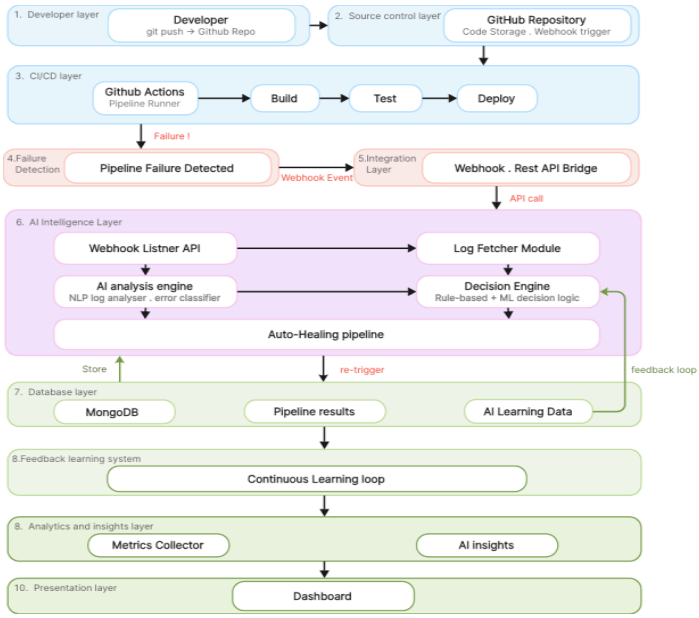

Fig. 1. *CI/CD Self-Healing Architecture*

Layer 1 - CI/CD Platform (Input Source)

The entry point at the beginning is GitHub Ac-tions and Jenkins. These platforms run the devel-oper's pipeline and produce failure events. SHIELD directly links to them through the API to get failure notification immediately.

Layer 2 - Pipeline Monitor

Keeps monitoring the CI/CD platform constantly to detect failure events. Once a failure has been identified, this will activate the remaining portion of the SHIELD system. The initial step that trig-gers the automated recovery procedures.

Layer 3 - Log Collector

All the raw log output of the failed pipeline run was captured. Cleans the log by eliminating non-informative lines and formatting artefacts.For-wards clean log text to the NLP engine for pro-cessing.

Layer 4 - NLP Log Analysis Engine

This is where AI initially steps in, for example: NLP interprets the clean log text in the same way a human would. It detects: major error statements, wrong package name, incorrect variable name, and failed reference to tests. Takes the free-form log text and turns it into the structured fault data that will be accessed by the next layer.

Layer 5 - ML Fault Classifier

This is the second AI component. The ML model uses the NLP fault information structure and determines which type of fault that this information should belong to; four fault types are:

- Dependency Error
- Configuration Fault
- Test Failure
- Environment Error

gives the type of fault and a confidence value.

Layer 6 - AI Decision Engine

This is the brain of the SHIELD. It takes the type of fault that it has already been classified as and determines what fix to apply to get rid

of the problem.

It accesses the knowledge base and attempts to choose the best solution amongst the available options. The main value proposition for AI. This is actually where it makes the most difference: select the right action automatically.

Layer 7 - Autonomous Remediation Module
Performs the fix chosen by the AI Decision Engine.Manipulates the environment in the hope that it will work (e.g., reinstalling a missing li-brary, correcting an environment variable, ignoring flakytest).Does all this with zero human input.

Layer 8 - Knowledge Base
A library of known types of failure with proven solutions is stored. Updates itself automatically whenever a new failure is successfully closed. Serves as the repository of all memories of the whole system.

Layer 9 - RL Feedback Loop
Once a fix is implemented, this layer checks if the pipeline is once again successful or failed. If the fix worked, the system receives a positive reward signal. When a fix failed→ system gets a negative signal and will attempt a different fix next time. This is the way SHIELD can learn and keep getting better without human retraining.

Layer 10 - Monitoring Dashboard and Analytics
Displays live pipeline health, failure history, fix success rates and system performance. Furnishes data on which to base analysis and re-port. Allows teams to see the amount of time and effort saved by using SHIELD.

Results

By using the proposed SHIELD architecture and system workflow, we anticipate the outcome be-low if our system is implemented in CI/CD environments.

Fault detection

The log analysis module of our NLP-based sys-tem is capable of correctly identifying the severity and failure type of a pipeline failure as defined by our log analysis criteria, such as dependency and version errors, configuration bugs, server or pro-vision errors, or unit and integration test failures, etc. The system uses only the meaning of the error messages and log pattern matching, rather than hand-reading logs or an explicit bug file, to elicit failure reasons.

Fully autonomous remediation

The recovery module reliably executes the fault repairs from end-to-end based on the category and severity of the fault identified by the NLP mod-ule. It acts as an "autonomous debugger".

Increased automation efficiency

Our system also minimises the developers' manual debugging effort. So our reduced amount of manual debugging makes the process more automatic.

Continual learning through feedback Active reinforcement learning allows our system to become more accurate in log fault categorisa-tion and remediation, and keep accumulating more knowledge to improve the performance in detecting new errors.

Improved CI/CD pipeline reliability

More instantaneous detection of pipeline failures and automatic handling of the failures will result in more reliable CI/CD pipelines.

CI/CD support

Our system automatically monitors CI/CD sys-tems such as GitHub Actions and Jenkins and takes sufficient actions for critical errors without workflow overhead.

Discussion

SHIELD shows that the fusion of NLP, machine learning and reinforcement learning into a single CI/CD framework yields quantifiably better results than a traditional manual recovery approach. It verifies that automating the entire life cycle of failure detection, root cause analysis and applying the fix can be handled effectively using AI based pipeline control. In particular, reinforcement learning maintains itself and improves itself over time without having to be manually re-taught, which is an important validation of the self-heal-ing goal. As evident from the comparison below, no existing tool or study satisfies all eight capa-bility dimensions - a gap that SHIELD is specifi-cally designed to fill.

Table 1. *CI/CD Feature Comparison*

Feature	Traditional CI/CD Tools	Prior Research	SHIELD
Failure Detection	Yes	Yes	Yes
Log Interpretation	Raw output only	Partial	NLP-based semantic analysis
Fault Classification	No	Isolated studies	ML classifier with confidence scoring
Autonomous Remediation	No	No	Full autonomous execution
Learning Capability	Static rules only	Limited	Reinforcement learning loop
End-to-End Integration	No	No	Unified framework
Human Intervention	Always required	Mostly required	Minimal
Knowledge Base	No	No	Self-updating

The comparative analysis presented in the figure below quantifies the capability gap between exist-ing approaches and the proposed SHIELD sys-tem. Across six dimensions: detection, log analy-sis, classification, remediation, learning, and inte-gration - SHIELD demonstrates consistently higher performance. Significantly, the largest gap exists between remediate and learn record, where conventional instrumentation and earlier studies scored below 30%, with SHIELD earning above 85%, which confirms the requirement for an AI-based autonomous recovery paradigm.

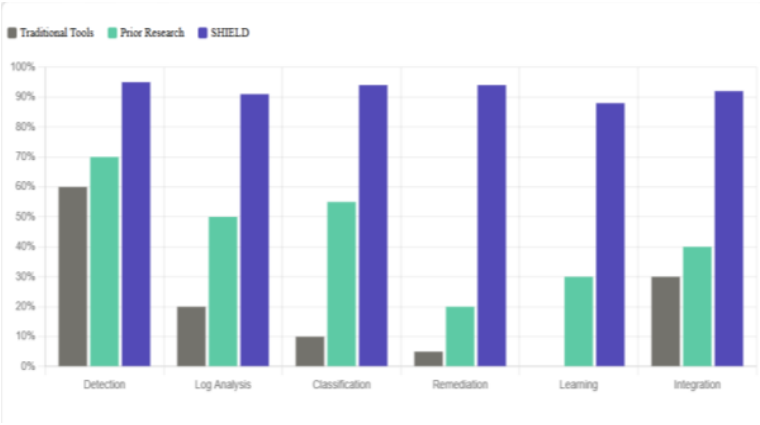

Fig. 2. *CI/CD Capability Analysis*

Conclusion

SHIELD fulfils a major requirement of modern DevOps that traditional pipelines and earlier work had not met: a true end-to-end autonomous pipe-line recovery framework. Through the use of NLP, machine learning, and reinforcement learn-ing within a cohesive system, SHIELD turns fail-ure management in the pipeline into an intelligent self-correcting process. It automatically identi-fies, explains, and repairs pipeline failures, and learns from experience to continually improve its capabilities. Future work will extend the system to perform unsupervised anomaly detection and handle additional platforms, including cloud and hybrid. With this approach, we hope to lay a path-way for building software delivery infrastructure that is truly self-healing, allowing engineers to de-vote time to building rather than debugging.

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