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RESEARCH ARTICLE

SILENCE IN AI TEXTS: INVESTIGATING THE LOSS OF INTERPERSONAL MEANING IN GENAI-PRODUCED ACADEMIC PASSAGES

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Abstract

The growing use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teaching has profoundly changed the way teachers and students write and read academic texts. Nevertheless, behind the fluency and accuracy of the passages generated by AI-machines, lies a subtle silence viz. the disappearance of the human voice that gives writing its warmth, stance, and dialogue. The present study examines how GenAI-produces academic passages, expresses, or fails to express, interpersonal meaning. Grounded in the appraisal theory of the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework, the study compares AI-produced and human-written texts on two distinct EAP topics. It uses a combination of corpus analysis and qualitative discourse examination to scrutinize how these texts express attitude, hedge claims, or invite reader alignment, and authorial presence. The findings revealed that GenAI texts underrepresent the subtle interpersonal cues that give writing its persuasive, dialogic, and ethical texture, though they excel in both grammatical accuracy, and lexical variety. Moreover,they sound too neutral, use fewer engagement signals, and lack guiding phrases that connect ideas. Such loss of interpersonal nuance in GenAI texts causes them to sound correct but detached from the intellectual dialogue that academic literacy requires. The paper therefore calls for renewed attention to the relational dimension of academic writing and suggests guidelines for integrating GenAI into EAP material design without erasing the writer's human presence and voice.

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Introduction:-

Over the past few years, generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has moved from the fringe of innovation to the heart of academic life. As evidence, it is no longer unusual for teachers to use AI tools to create learning materials or for students to consult them when writing essays in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classrooms. In fact, GenAI now performs tasks with impressive fluency and instant adaptability that once demanded human expertise. These include drafting abstracts, summarizing readings, and simplifying complex academic texts to name but a few. However, beneath this efficiency lies a quiet unease. The very fluency that makes AI so convenient also makes it strangely hollow. Although its words flow smoothly, they rarely speak. Moreover, GenAI-produced texts inform, but seldom engage.

This linguistic precision versus interpersonal absence paradox is what motivates the present study. The paper seeks to explore how GenAI-generated academic texts handle the subtle dimensions of interpersonal meaning that shape authentic communication in EAP contexts. More specifically, the study examines how GenAI-produced academic texts construct or reduce interpersonal meaning, focusing on four key concepts, namely interpersonal meaning (the negotiation of social relations through language), authorial voice (the writer's self-positioning in text), stance (the expression of opinion or judgment), and dialogic presence (the engagement of the reader in meaning-making). Actually, these relational signals are the means whereby writers position themselves toward knowledge and readers.

Through the examinations of these notions, the scholarship aims to uncover the subtle patterns through which AI texts may appear fluent yet remain socially voiceless. To this end, the study attempts to answer the following questions: first, how do GenAI-generated academic texts express interpersonal meaning compared to human-authored texts? Second, which interpersonal resources are most frequently weakened or absent in AI-generated discourse? Third, what pedagogical implications arise from the interpersonal gaps observed in GenAI-produced EAP materials?

Drawing on the above research questions, the study hypothesizes that GenAI-produced academic texts exhibit a significantly lower density of interpersonal meaning markers than human-authored texts. It further posits that AI-generated texts underrepresent stance and engagement features essential for constructing authorial presence despite their grammatical accuracy and lexical richness.

The paper is structured into eight sections including the introduction and the conclusion. The next section reviews existing literature on GenAI in EAP pedagogy and the theory of interpersonal meaning; the third section presents the theoretical and methodological framework; the fourth reports and interprets the findings; the fifth discusses their pedagogical and ethical implications; and the final section offers recommendations for integrating GenAI into EAP material design without silencing the writer's human voice.

1. Literature Review:-

Pioneers of the appraisal framework, Martin and White (2005) elaborated and divided it into Attitude (feelings, judgements, appreciations), Engagement (how sources of attitudes are dialogically managed), and Graduation (force and focus). This division of the appraisal strand of the Systemic Functional Linguistics framework offers a fine-grained toolkit for detecting interpersonal coloring in text. Indeed, the appraisal model maps how writers express evaluation, take a stance, and engage readers. This framework has been elaborated and applied across registers precisely because it links lexico-grammatical choices to social positioning. Following the above-mentioned scholars' perspective, the appraisal framework draws directly on Halliday's interpersonal metafunction but pushes further into how writers enact identity and reader relations. In fact, appraisal choices do not simply decorate sentences, but they also stage a writer's relation to knowledge and to an imagined audience.

In registered linguistic fields, several empirical applications of appraisal theory have been carried out. For example, Read, Hope, and Carroll (2007) applied appraisal annotation to diverse genres and highlighted how evaluation and stance are functional in negotiation of meaning. Likewise, in EAP and academic writing research, appraisal approaches have illuminated how students build authorial voice, hedge claims, and calibrate evaluated stance (Al-Busafi, 2023). Thus, the appraisal framework remains a powerful analytic route for isolating the interpersonal metafunction in written academic discourse.

Parallel to the SFL literature, a rapidly expanding body of research addresses the educational affordances and pitfalls of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in writing. As evidence, Chanpradit (2025) conducted a systematic

review of GenAI in academic writing, reporting that GenAI improves fluency, clarity, and lexical cohesion. Nevertheless, she highlighted thatGenAI raises concerns about diminished authenticity and dependence. More directly, Woo, Yu & Guo (2025) tracked EFL secondary students' editing of AI-generated text and found complex cognitive patterns of reuse and revision rather than simple insertion.

These studies arrive at the common conclusion that AI-generated texts provide high surface-level fluency that embedsstrong grammar, coherence, and lexical variety. However, they appear to underperform on subtler rhetorical tasks requiring authorial judgment and reader engagement. As an illustration, Zhou, Li, and Wang (2025) found that AI-generated texts outperform human texts in certain processes but still raise integrity (ethical soundness) and dialogic concerns.

Despite these advances in this area of investigation, a clear gap remains. In fact, much of the GenAI-in-education literature concentrates on accuracy, efficiency, and accessbasically exploring whether AI produces grammatically correct texts, assists revision, or scales material production. Curiously, less attention has been paid to relational voice, that is, the suite of linguistic moves through which authors invite, challenge, align with, or distance readers. Alternatively put, to align with Xu (2025) to some extent, while many studies ask whether AI can write, far fewer ask whether AI can stage a human interlocutor in text.

This paper positions itself at the intersection of two lines of investigation namely the rich appraisal-based interpersonal analysis, and the emergent empirical work on GenAI's role in academic writing. Its originality comes from naming and probing what we term "discursive silence" or "textual voicelessness" that is, the patterned attenuation of interpersonal cues in GenAI-produced passages. While previous studies catalogue errors of fact, bias or prompt-sensitivity, this research examines how AI tends to de-personalize academic discourse in reducing hedges, standardizing engagement markers, and smoothing evaluative intensity. By foregrounding the relational texture of texts rather than only their surface correctness, the study offers a fresh analytical lens with direct pedagogical implications for EAP material design and instruction.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study is theoretically grounded in Martin and White's (2005) appraisal framework. Also referred to as the stance analysis model, the appraisal theory is an extension of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) model of the interpersonal metafunction. In his original conception, Halliday (1994) views language not only as a means of representing the world but also of enacting relationships and attitudes. Building upon this insight, Martin and White (2025) proposed the appraisal framework to describe the linguistic resources that allow writers and speakers to evaluate, position themselves, and align or disalign with potential readers or interlocutors.

The appraisal framework is structured around three major systems at its essence. These include attitude, engagement, and graduation. In fact, from Martin and White's (2025) perspective, attitude encompasses expressions of affect (emotions), judgment (ethical or moral evaluation of behavior), and appreciation (aesthetic or quality assessments). According to them, engagement captures how writers open or close dialogue with other voices presenting their claims as certain, inviting alternative views, or acknowledging competing perspectives. As for graduation, it refers to the scaling of intensity or focus, marking how strongly or mildly a feeling or judgment is expressed.

These subsystems taken together provide a sensitive instrument for tracing the social dimension of discourse revealing how language constructs emotion, evaluation, and stance (Martin & White, 2005; Hood, 2010). Moreover, they allow the analyst to see not only what is said, but also how it is positioned in relation to others.

The appraisal theory is particularly appropriate for examining GenAI-generated texts because it directly addresses the dimension where AI output appears most deficient: the human relational aspect of language. Recent evaluations of AI-generated academic prose reveal that while such texts are grammatically impeccable and lexically varied, they often neutralize interpersonal cues, producing statements that sound "polished but passionless" (Zhou, Li, & Wang, 2025; Chanpradit, 2025).

The appraisal lens provides an excellent means to identify this phenomenon by mapping the frequency, variety, and subtlety of evaluative language. For instance, by quantifying differences in engagement markers such as hedges (may, seems, perhaps) or boosters (clearly, indeed), one can trace how AI tends to avoid the nuanced dialogic

negotiation typical of human writers. Likewise, analyzing attitude and graduation in AI texts allows to uncover whether they exhibit affective flatness or exaggerated uniformity in intensity.

To enrich interpretation, the study also draws on discourse ethics and academic identity theory. Indeed, the communicative rationality principle developed by Habermas (1990) posits that ethical discourse depends on sincerity, reciprocity, and mutual understanding. In academic writing context, these principles translate into textual signals of honesty, respect for alternative viewpoints, and dialogic openness. When GenAI produces texts devoid of these interpersonal features, it raises ethical concerns not of plagiarism or bias alone, but of discursive insincerity.

Similarly, scholarship on academic identity (Hyland, 2012; Ivanič, 1998) highlights writing as a site of identity construction, where authors perform both expertise and humility. Through voice, stance, and engagement, writers claim membership in a disciplinary community. If GenAI erases these identity cues, the resulting discourse risks flattening individuality, rendering the "writer" a ghostly presence behind technically sound prose. Thus, integrating discourse ethics and identity theory with appraisal analysis allows this study to question not only how interpersonal meaning disappears, but also why its disappearancematters for academic communication and pedagogy.

In light of all the foregoing, the appraisal framework offers a linguistically grounded and ethically informed lens for examining the discursive silence of GenAI-generated texts. In addition, it bridges linguistic description and moral responsibility, inviting educators and researchers to look beyond fluency toward the subtler question of whether AI can truly participate in the human dialogue of knowledge.

3. Methodology:-

This study uses a comparative mixed-methods design to examine how interpersonal meaning is realized in GenAI-produced and human-authored academic texts. The approach combines corpus-based quantitative techniques with close qualitative reading. This combination offers a clearer picture of not only what linguistic patterns occur, but also how they function socially within texts.

3.1. Data Sources

The analysis draws on two parallel datasets namely AI-generated texts and human-authored texts. To get down to specifics, as far as AI-generated texts are concerned, an aggregate of sixteen (16) academic passages were produced using prompt-based generation. To ensure comparability with the student-written corpus, these prompts mirrored exactly the two topics assigned to the student participants, so that both datasets responded to the same academic tasks.

Eight (08) passages were generated on the following applied linguistics topic: Evaluating Interpersonal meaning in GenAI-Generated EAP Materials: An Appraisal-Based Analysis.These texts were generated using eight different GenAI systems namely ChatGPT-5.1, Claude 3.5, Gemini Advanced, Copilot Pro, Meta Llama 3.1, Perplexity Write, DeepSeek R1, and WriteSonic Academic.

The remaining eight (08) AI-generated passages responded to the didactics topic entitled: Teacher and Student Perceptions of Authorial Voice Loss in GenAI-Assisted EAP writing Tasks. They were produced using another set of widely used GenAI tools such as ChatGPT-o1, Claude 3.7 Sonnet, Gemini Flash, Copilot Studio, Llama Edge, QuillBot Write, Jasper Research, and Zeta Alpha Academic Writer.

Using a range of systems was not aimed at evaluating a specific tool. It rather allowed the dataset to capture broader interpersonal tendencies in contemporary Large Language Model (LLM) generated academic texts instead of the stylistic biases of a single tool.

As for the Human-authored texts, the comparison corpus includes sixteen (16) anonymised student essays collected from undergraduate students between September 22 and October 24, 2025 at the Faculty of Letters, Arts and Humanities (FLASH-Adjarra) of the University of Abomey-Calavi. Eight essays were produced by third-year students specializing in applied linguistics, each responding to the applied linguistics topic mentioned above.The student participants majoring in applied linguistics were anonymized and labeled Student 1, Student 2, Student 3, Student 4, Student 5, Student 6, Student 7, and Student 8. The remaining eight essays were written by students specializing in English didactics and addressed the didactic topic mentioned earlier. They were also anonymized and labeled Student 9, Student 10, Student 11, Student 12, Student 13, Student 14, Student 15, and Student 16. These

texts were selected to reflect authentic academic engagement with GenAI's role in EAP writing and to provide a realistic comparative basis without relying on refined textbook models.

3.2. Analytical Procedures

The analysis proceeds in two complementary stages, namely quantitative analysis and qualitative analysisapplied across the full dataset of thirty-two (32) texts. As far as the quantitative analysis is concerned, both corpora (32 texts overall) were systematically tagged for stance and engagement markers including modal verbs (may, might, could, should, would), hedges (perhaps, possibly, seems, appears, generally, tends to), boosters (clearly, definitely, certainly, undoubtedly, in fact), reporting verbs (argues, suggests, claims, contends, maintains), and dialogic signals (however, although, nevertheless, on the other hand, while some argue). These markers were counted and compared across the two text types, and across the two assigned topics in order to identify emerging patterns of interpersonal density. The quantitative procedures followed the appraisal-oriented corpus methods used in academic writing (Hood, 2010).

Concerning the qualitative analysis,all the collected thirty-two (32) texts were examined in detail. Indeed, the qualitative analysis allowed for a more precise comparison of how interpersonal meaning was realized in each topic area. To specify it further, the analysis focused on how writers (student participants or GenAI) constructed authorial presence, expressed stance, acknowledged or suppressed alternative viewpoints, and shaped dialogic space in response to the two academic prompts. The texts addressing the Applied Linguistics topic were examined for how they articulated evaluative claims about GenAI-generated EAP materials, while those addressing the Didactics topic were analyzed for how they represented teacher and student perceptions of authorial voice loss.

The combined quantitative and qualitative procedures ensured a comprehensive evaluation of the interpersonal features of GenAI-generated academic discourse, capturing not only the frequency of interpersonal markers but also the relational dynamics embedded in how meaning was negotiated across both tasks.

3.3. Ethical Considerations

Prior to analysis, the student participants' essays were fully anonymized, and informed consent was obtained according to institutional guidelines. Moreover, the use of GenAI tools was explicitly disclosed in alignment with recent calls for greater transparency in AI-assisted research and pedagogy (Habermas, 1990; Xu, 2025). Actually, no text, whether AI-generated or student written) was altered beyond necessary formatting. The focus remains strictly on interpersonal meaning patterns.

4. Data Analysis

The data collected is analyzed quantitatively and consistently with the methodology adopted. The results are statistically presented below in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Frequency of Stance and Engagement Markers in AI-Generated vs. Student-Written Texts (N = 32 texts)

Feature	AI-Generated Texts (16 texts)	% of Total AI Markers	Student-Written Texts (16 texts)	% of Total Student Markers
Modal verbs (may, might, can, could, should, would)	62	27.7%	118	26.4%
Hedges (perhaps, possibly, seems, appears, generally, tends to)	48	21.4%	96	21.5%
Boosters (clearly, definitely, certainly, in fact, undoubtedly)	26	11.6%	61	13.6%
Reporting verbs (argues, suggests, claims, contends, maintains)	54	24.1%	132	29.6%
Dialogic signals (however, although, on the other hand, while some argue, nevertheless)	34	15.2%	60	13.5%
Total	224	100%	467	100%

Source: The Authors (2025)

4.1. Quantitative Analysis of the Collected Data

As can be observed, the above presented statistical table displays the features analyzed in the gathered data. It further indicates the recorded numbersof the studied features as well as their respective percentagesper category in both text types. In fact, the quantitative analysis compares the frequency of stance and engagement markers across the thirty-two texts produced for the two assigned topics. The statistical patterns remain consistent across the applied linguistics and didactics tasks: in both cases, human writers relied on a much richer set of interpersonal resources than the AI system.

The student-written texts use significantly far more stance and engagement markers than AI-generated texts across every category. Indeed, while AI-generated texts contains224 interpersonal markers globally, Student-written texts record a bit more than twice that number, with a total of 467 markers. This difference held steady when the two topics were examined separately. In the applied linguistics set, student writers were markedly more prolific in their use of modal verbs, hedges, and reporting verbs, mirroring the tendencies observed in the didactics essays. AI texts, regardless of topic, favored flat declarative constructions and showed minimal variation in interpersonal density.

Looking into the recorded feature-by-feature patterns, one notices that student essays use nearly double the modal verbs of AI texts. To be specific, student-written texts contain 118 modal verbs, whereas AI-generated texts count just 62, indicating greater nuance and tentativeness, which are key markers of academic stance. Moreover, the statistics show more hedges in student-written texts than in AI texts. While the latter ones record only 48 hedges, student-written texts embed 96 hedges. The largely fewer number of hedges recorded in the AI-generated text explain why they sound certain and flat, omitting expressions of doubt or alternative possibility. Their large presence in the student-written texts indicates a more deliberate use of tentativeness and reflective caution.

Boosters (strong commitment terms) are also higher in human texts than in AI-generated texts. They appear 26 times in AI-generated texts but rise to 61 in the student-written texts, showing that students strengthen claims more actively, displaying stronger authorial commitment. The largest gap appears at the level of the reporting verbs. While the student-written texts contain 132 reporting verbs, the AI-generated texts record only 54 of them. This shows that the student participants embedded their arguments more consistently in the academic conversation, citing sources and attributing viewpoints, a practice that AI mimics mechanically but less frequently. As for the dialogic signals, they count 60 in student-written textbut only 34 in the AI-generated texts. In fact, the trend remains the same. The student texts engage more actively than the AI-generated texts with competing viewpoints, signaling negotiation and dialogic openness.

The numerical patterns displayed in the statistical table above suggest that the topic area itself did not influence the overall interpersonal density; instead, the divide lay between machine-generated and human-written discourse. Both groups of students demonstrated a clearer orientation toward stance-taking, argument positioning, and dialogic negotiation. AI reproduced these features far more mechanically, regardless of prompt.

Taken together, it can be concluded from the statistical analysis carried out above that AI discourse is lexically fluent but interpersonally poor. More explicitly, while AI tools deliver grammatically refined texts, they rely far less on the interpersonal cues that academic writing typically uses to negotiate claims, anticipate objections, or manage alignment with readers.

4.2. Qualitative Analysis of the Collected Data

The qualitative analysis is organized around three focal patterns: the flattening of authorial engagement in AI-generated texts, their recurrent over-neutralization and absence of dialogic negotiation, and the distinct ways metadiscourse and hedging unfold across the two topics.

4.2.1.Flattened Authorial Engagement

A close textual analysis of the sixteen pairs of texts (one AI and one student essay per topic) revealed consistent patterns of flattened authorial engagement in the AI-generated passages. Whether responding to the applied linguistics topic on evaluating interpersonal meaning in GenAI-generated EAP materials or the didactics topic on perceptions of authorial voice loss, AI texts tended to present claims as self-evident facts.

Typical AI formulations in the one page length development of the applied linguistics topic included “The findings show that…”as produced by Claude 3.5 and “ The evidence clearly demonstrate…” as generated by DeepSeek R1.Another example of Typical AI formulations while developing the English didactics topic is : “AI provides

several benefits…"a phrase found in Gemini Flash and ChatGPT-01 outputs. Neither in the first examples, nor in the second, does AI acknowledge competing interpretations or scholarly debate. However, the student participants in both specializations frequently employed stance-taking moves like"This suggests that…"(Student 2), "It may be argued that…"(Student 11), or "One could question whether…"(Student 7). As used by the student participants, these expressions reveal a stronger sense of intellectual agency, consistent with the engagement dimension of the appraisal model. Even in essays where some of the investigated students participants struggled with grammatical accuracy - for example, Student 14's inconsistent verb agreement - their interpersonal presence was unmistakably stronger than that of the AI system.

4.2.2. Over-Neutralization and the Absence of Dialogic Negotiation

The examined AI passages produced for both topics showed recurring signs of over-neutralization, where the text's commitment to neutrality flattened the dialogic landscape. For example, in the applied linguistics essays, AI-generated texts consistently avoided acknowledging disciplinary debates around GenAI's linguistic limitations. Instead, they offered straightforward declarative statements such as "GenAI effectively supports material development". This assertion figured out in the outputs of Meta Llama 3.1. and Perplexity Write. By contrast, the student participants' essays made room for alternative perspectives, using concessive structures. For instance, Student 5 wrote: "Although GenAI can support material design, it often fails to convey stance…" This, on the part of the student participant, demonstrates awareness of contested interpretations.

A similar pattern appeared in the didactics texts. AI passages made sweeping claims about teachers' or students' perceptions without hedging or referencing possible variation. For example, ChatGPT-01 and Jasper Research produced statements such as "Teachers view GenAI as a reliable tool for all classroom tasks." This lack of negotiation of voices proves that AI output lacks dialogic depth. In contrast, the student participants, typically framed these perceptions as situated and diverse. Student 12 for instance wrote: "Teachers may view GenAI differently depending on their training and familiarity with digital tools", and Student 15 added "Some students tend to believeGenAI simplifies writing while others remain skeptical". These examples indicate dialogic depth.

4.2.3. Metadiscourse and Hedging across Topics

The two topics revealed clear differences in metadiscourse. The applied linguistics essays written by the studentparticipants displayed more reflective metadiscursive comments such as "as this analysis shows,"used by Student 1, and "in the following section,"used by Student 6, as they framed their discussion within academic inquiry. Didactics essays by the student participants showed more pedagogical metadiscourse. Examples used by the students in their essays include "from a teaching perspective,"(Student 13) and "for classroom practice,"(Student 10) signaling attention to instructional implications.

On the contrary, AI-generated texts, irrespective of topic, rarely used such metadiscourse. Instead, they relied on fixed sequencing devices such as first… next… finallyas seen in the outputs from WriteSonic Academic, Gemini Flash, and Capilotstudioand rarely commented on their own argumentative path.

Human writers also hedged more frequently across both topics (96 hedges vs. 48 in AI discourse). Even when students were not fully confident in English, such as Student 9 who wrote "GenAI might influence classroom practices'', hedging allowed them to position themselves cautiously and appropriately within academic discourse. Here is an interpersonal nuance that AI frequently misses.

5. Discussion of the Findings:-

A coherent pattern emerges across both sets of collected texts which is that AI-generated academic writing displays grammatical control and surface fluency but is interpersonally impoverished. Indeed, the GenAI-produced passages fulfilled the basic textual expectations of EAP assignments. However, they consistently failed in the areas that make academic writing truly human such as expressing stance, acknowledging alternatives, and engaging the reader in shared reasoning. This gap, which is noticeable across both examined applied linguistics and didactics essays,raises questions about how GenAI should be positioned in the development, adaptation, and evaluation of EAP materials. Far from being a purely linguistic limitation, the loss of interpersonal richness observed in the collected GenAI-produced texts reveals a broader pedagogical and ethical challenge.

One major implication concerns the design of EAP materials that incorporate or rely on GenAI output. If AI-generated passages are used as reading models, writing exemplars, or prompts in classroom materials, they risk normalizing a version of academic discourse that is devoid of stance and dialogic nuance. As Hyland (2012) reminds

us, academic writing is not only about presenting information but also about taking up a position toward it that is constructing an identity and signaling a relationship with readers. When the interpersonal dimension is muted, as our findings show, learners are deprived of rich models of how authors express judgment, align with scholarly communities, or negotiate multiple perspectives.

These concerns align with recent critiques that warn against the uncritical integration of GenAI into educational contexts. Xu (2025) argues that large language models reproduce textual patterns without understanding the epistemic values or dialogic obligations of academic writing. In a similar vein, Zhou, Li, and Wang (2025) report that GenAI texts often "simulate" disciplinary discourse while lacking the rhetorical reliability that human communication requires. The findings of the present study reinforce these observations. In fact, AI-produced texts may look polished, but their reduced interpersonal depth limits their usefulness as models for developing writerly voice.

At the same time, the findings do not suggest that GenAI should be discarded completely. On the contrary, the technology holds promise as a tool for drafting, brainstorming, and generating adaptable material templates. However, its limitations highlight the need for pedagogical mediation. In light of the study findings, teachers must help students recognize the difference between informational correctness and rhetorical effectiveness, guiding them to reinsert interpersonal meaning when working with AI-generated drafts. This aligns with emerging recommendations for critical digital literacy, which emphasize the importance of teaching learners not only how to use AI tools, but how to evaluate the texts they produce (Chanpradit, 2025).

Furthermore, the observed loss of interpersonal meaning in the examined AI outputs, invites a reconsideration of how evaluative frameworks, such as appraisal theory, can be used to assess and adapt GenAI-produced materials. This would guide teachers and material developers in identifying where an AI-produced text needs human enrichment (Martin & White, (2005). It would also position GenAI not as a replacement for academic skill, but as a partner requiring human judgment to refine its contributions.

Finally, the parallel patterns observed across the student participants essays suggest that the issue is not tied to disciplinary content but to the generative mechanism of AI itself. Whether discussing interpersonal meaning or perceptions of voice loss, AI texts remained consistently neutral and monologic. This consistency underscores the systemic nature of discursive silence or textual voicelessness in current GenAI systems. As Habermas (1990) notes, communication grounded in mutual understanding requires openness to alternative viewpoints. Paradoxically, current AI systems do not naturally adopt this dialogic posture.

In summary, the findings call for a more reflective and cautious approach to leveraging GenAI in EAP materials development. The challenge is not simply to incorporate AI tools, but to do so in ways that preserve the relational and rhetorical dimensions of academic writing. GenAI can assist with tasks of generation and adaptation, but it cannot substitute the human work of constructing voice, negotiating meaning, and building disciplinary identity. As EAP practitioners engage with GenAI in increasingly diverse ways, the insights from this study provide a foundation for designing materials and pedagogies that acknowledge both the strengths and silences of machine-generated academic text.

6. Implications for EAP Materials Development

The findings of this study carry several implications for the design, adaptation, and evaluation of EAP materials especially as GenAI tools are becoming increasingly integrated in academic writing pedagogy. The key implications brought to light by the study that call for particular attention are presented as follows:

First, the consistent loss of interpersonal richness observed in the examined AI-generated texts regardless of the explored topicssuggests that material developers cannot just take AI-generated texts and usethem in teaching without critical examination. Instead, they should treat GenAI as a drafting assistant, not an authoritative model, especially where interpersonal meaning is essential.

Second, in terms of evaluatingGenAI-produced materials, the muted stance, limited hedging, and minimal engagement with alternative viewpoints observed in the studied GenAI corpus highlight the need for systematic frameworks such as appraisal theory to help teachers identify where AI-generated content requires interpersonal meaning improvement. Indeed, by foregrounding how texts position authors and readers, the framework provides a clear lens for diagnosing the relational weaknesses of GenAI outputs.

Third, rather than presenting AI-produced materials as polished texts, instructors need to treat it as a base layer that requires human revision. This includes inserting hedges, signalling alternative positions, strengthening authorial voice, and adding metadiscourse that guides readers through the argument. Such an approach helps prevent the normalization of the discursive silence largely discussed in this study. It also reinforces the value of human judgment and rhetorical sensitivity in shaping academic texts.

Fourth, the interpersonal gaps identified in the examined GenAI outputs create opportunities for designing activities that explicitly teach students how to re-voice AI drafts. Tasks may include: rewriting AI-generated paragraphs to add stance; annotating passages to highlight missing dialogic cues; or comparing human and AI versions of the same prompt to evaluate rhetorical choices. Such activities would help learners distinguish linguistic accuracy from rhetorical effectiveness.

Finally, the findings carry implications for ethical and pedagogical transparency. As GenAI tools become increasingly accessible, students may rely on them without recognizing how these systems shape the interpersonal texture of their writing. Embedding explicit discussion of GenAI's strengths and limitations into EAP materials promotes informed use, encourages responsible integration of AI tools, and helps protect students' emerging academic identities.

Overall, the study suggests that GenAI can support EAP materials development, but only when its outputs are critically evaluated, pedagogically mediated, and incorporated into learning designs that protect and cultivate the interpersonal dimension of academic discourse. In this sense, the value of GenAI in EAP lies not in replacing human insight, but in prompting new forms of collaborative authorship between teachers, students, and digital tools.

Conclusion:-

This research work investigated how generative AI handles interpersonal meaning, one of the most human dimensions of academic writing. Focusing on stance, engagement, and authorial presence, the research examined whether GenAI-produced passages can communicate a writer's position as effectively as human-authored texts. Grounded in the appraisal framework within systemic functional linguistics, the study aimed to determine where GenAI succeeds, where it falls short, and what these patterns imply for EAP materials development and evaluation.

Using a comparative mixed-methods approach, the investigation analyzed thirty-two texts: sixteen produced by the student participants to the study and sixteen generated by a range of contemporary GenAI tools. The quantitative analysis helped measure such interpersonal markers as hedges, boosters, modal verbs, and dialogic signals, while the qualitative reading provided insight into the tone, stance, and rhetorical positioning of each text.

The findings were consistent across both the texts written on the applied linguistics topic and those written on the didactics one. The student participants demonstrated a richer use of evaluative language, clearer signaling of uncertainty, and a stronger tendency to acknowledge alternative perspectives. In contrast, despite their grammatical correctness, GenAI texts showed a recurring weakening of interpersonal presence. Claims were presented as static facts, hedging was limited, and dialogic negotiation was minimal. These patterns confirmed the study's hypothesis that current language models privilege surface fluency over relational meaning-making.

The significance of these results extends beyond textual comparison. As GenAI tools become increasingly integrated into EAP settings, there is a risk that materials created or adapted with AI will reproduce this interpersonal flatness. The findings thus highlight the crucial role of teacher mediation that is learners must be guided to distinguish linguistic accuracy from communicative depth, and AI outputs should be evaluated, not adopted uncritically.

This study's scope is limited by its sample size and its focus on a single academic context. Future research could explore larger datasets, additional genres, or longitudinal shifts in student writing as AI use becomes more embedded. Studies examining multimodal materials or collaborative writing platforms would also enrich the understanding of GenAI's impact.

All things considered, the study reaffirms the simple truth that academic writing is not just information on a page. It is rather a conversation. GenAI can assist with producing text, but only humans can supply the voice that turns writing into dialogue.

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Dr. Daniel TchorkpaYokossi: Conceptualization, Investigation, writing original manuscript, review & editing, Project Administrator, Methodology, Formal Analysis, supervision, Validation, resources.
Dr. Servais Dieu-Donné Yédia Dadjo: Investigation, Writing – review & editing, Data curation, Formal Analysis, Project Administrator, supervision, Validation, resources.
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Ethics Approval Statement
This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards set forth by the University of Abomey-Calavi Ethics Committee.

Declaration of competing interest
All authors declare no conflict of interest.

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