



AUTHENTICITY AND DEAUTHENTICITY: AI VS. HUMAN WRITTEN DISCOURSE

Sofia Maqbool
sofiamaqbool791@gmail.com

BS Scholar, English linguistics and literature, University of
Education Lahore, Faisalabad campus, Pakistan.

Dr. Sidra Ahmad
Sidra.ahmad@ue.edu.pk

Lecturer, English linguistics and literature, University of
Education Lahore, Faisalabad campus, Pakistan.

Abstract

The paper presents research into how academia is addressing the growing issue of valid authorship, given that generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now producing similar products to those of humans. In response to this question, the authors undertake an analysis of the differences between what is produced by human authors versus machines (AI) through the examination of these products, specifically an academic essay (i.e., dissertations) created by humans and another created solely by a machine using comparative discourse analytical means. Both products are assessed in terms of the language used to convey meanings and the distinctiveness of the language compared with the author's use of language in their personal writings. The data for this project were collected from thirty-one Papers (i.e., one Paper created using machine-generated text and 30 essays by human-created texts) through an investigation of the organization of the writing, the meaning derived from the use of language, stylistic usage and choice, the way people tell their story, as well as the perception of writers as ideologically positioned. The findings support the conclusion that while the written work produced by machines is functionally coherent, there is less emotional content or risk taken in the telling of these stories. Additionally, there is no real variation among the types of stylistic choices or emotional content within these essays, as opposed to those written by humans, which allude to more grounded and personalized authorship, all of which contribute to a reader's perception of authenticity. Suggesting that there are certain dimensions of authorial voice that cannot be mimicked by AI tools and are therefore present in human-created texts that AI-generated texts do not possess in terms of originality.

Keywords: *AI-Generated Writing Works, AI-Produced Writing Creations, Authorship and Style, Discourse Qualitative Research.*

Corresponding Author: Sofia Maqbool (BS Scholar, English linguistics and literature, University of Education Lahore, Faisalabad campus, Pakistan)

Email: sofiamaqbool791@gmail.com

1. Introduction

The rise of the generative AI market has had a major impact on how academicians produce written material. By generating texts that are grammatically correct, cohesive, and similar to human speech, generative AI technologies (e.g., ChatGPT) have sparked renewed debates about who owns the writing produced by these systems, what the definition of original content means, and what the definition of credible and authentic writing looks like in educational institutions and linguistic environments. While AI-produced writing may be able to meet all the requirements of formal academic writing, scholars question whether the content produced in this way reflects the voice of a human creator (the author's intent) and/or their lived experiences. Thus, the emergence of the theme of authenticity has become increasingly important when comparing human-created writing to machine-generated writing. "Authenticity" refers to the extent to which a person has expressed genuine emotions; has expressed their own voice; has a strong emotional commitment to what they are discussing; and understands the relevance of their work in relation to the socio-cultural context in which they live. Because of these reasons, human-generated writing is often considered more valuable than machinegenerated writing due to its unique ideologically based perspective, as well as its ability to contain a level of imperfection that has meaning. On the other hand, the process used to create an AI-generated essay utilizes algorithmic processes designed to maximize the appearance of coherence and balance in comparison to ideas generated by a human. As a result, there are many unanswered questions around the ability of AI-generated essays to express authentic or genuine human subjectivity to their intended audiences. This tension between the ability of humans to convey authentic feelings, and the ability of AI to generate fluent, coherent examples of writing forms the basis of this research. Based on a qualitative comparative methodology, this study will therefore explore the way in which the concept of authenticity is created in academic essays written by humans and AI. A total of 31 essays were collected from students of different discipline areas. John Benjamin (1998) argues that authenticity in writing emerges from the writer's discorsal identity, shaped by personal history, beliefs, and social positioning, making writing an act of self-representation rather than mere text production.

1.1. Significance of the Study

This paper examines how the influence of artificial intelligence (AI) on writing has created a demand for authorship in academia. The topic is relevant to linguistic discussions about originality and the role of human voice in academic discourse. The research sheds new light on the concept of authorial presence in writing, emotional engagement of readers with authors, and the expression of an author's ideological stance in their work as elements of authenticity in writing. Moreover, the research methodology employed a comparative qualitative analysis of discourse, allowing for a better understanding of AI-based writing

as the basis for future study beyond quantitative measures of detection. The implications for education and academic settings are immense; educators and students can use the findings of this research to identify features of language that distinguish human authorship from AI-generated content, and they should exercise caution when using AI tools. This study calls attention to the significance of maintaining the ethical responsibility and agency of human authorship in the broad context of AI-generated narratives.

2. Literature Review

The fast development of generative AI has raised many questions about what we have always thought about authorship and creativity and how we identify "authentic" human discourse. As these AI technologies create more and more written, visual, and academic material, the debates around where the work originated, who created it artistically, and who has the ability to trust those creations, as well as issues regarding how to define legal authorship, have become very active. The entire body of literature synthesized in the following paragraphs represents a summary of the studies between 2020 and 2025 that have examined how we think about the authenticity of human versus AI-generated content from four different perspectives (trust mechanisms, embedded interests/values, copyright issues, and educational ramifications or validity of empirical comparisons between writing by AI and by humans).

Glikson (2020) illustrates that human trust in AI does not relate only to performance but also to how the AI systems are represented. Transparency, reliability, and perceived intelligence are just a few of the impactful antecedents that build trust. This study provides a framework for future research regarding how trust can be intentionally built into the AI systems, showing authenticity judgments to be deep-seated psychologically. Ippolito al. (2020) Explained that detectors perform best in the same cases where humans are fooled and that automatic detectors perform best in the same cases where humans are fooled; they highlighted limits of both human and automated detection and argued for joint evaluation. Dugan al. (2020) Explored that Rofit, a platform to evaluate human detection of machine-generated text and a novel task of detecting the human→machine boundary. Demonstrated domain dependence of human detection and provided a public evaluation method. Rocco's (2021) examination of Australian copyright maintains that works created purely by AI cannot constitute copyright protection since authorship is a function of demonstrable human creativity. The paper reviews the relevant domestic and international cases, which conclude that existing legal frameworks are unsatisfactory in addressing this aspect of authorship in the age of generative AI. The legal system thus reinforces authenticity as fundamentally human.

Birhane (2022) critiques assumptions of value-neutrality in AI research by reviewing hundred highly cited machine-learning papers. It becomes clear from the analysis that mainstream machine learning favors values related to efficiency,

performance, and generalization, while those pertaining to social impact and human-centered considerations remain unheeded. These bound values favor institutional and corporate arrangements of power, a signal that dominant ideologies flow from AI-generated content rather than objective neutrality. The legitimacy of AI's outputs being genuinely unique or human-like is undermined by this. Evidence shows that AI chatbots generate an increase in the personalization of learning and instructional effectiveness; however, ongoing doubts about the reliability, ethical boundaries and validity of AI-generated content are raising concerns for educators about whether these generated explanations portray actual understanding. Therefore, as stressed by the Information Technology Industry Council (2023), it is necessary to develop some sort of method for verifying all AI-generated content, and there should be multiple methods employed; thus, the Council has called for an accredited authentication architecture based upon an infrastructure of layer on top of each other composing a standardized set of verification tools. Soni & Wade (2023) have researched the way in which they determined ChatGPT abstracts to the human abstracts using blinded reviewers and classification models with reasonably high accuracy from automated classifiers. Sardinha (2024) conducted an extensive study looking at the manner in which GPT output compares to human written/spoken text based on a wide variety of linguistic features and concluded that GPT emulates many of the same features as human writing/speech, but does not have the same level of pragmatic grounding and inter textuality. Ji (2024) argued that treating detection as a binary problem is insufficient and created an informative taxonomy focused upon mixed authorship and editing along with the socio-technical context from where any given text was created.

Vanneste (2024) discusses how beliefs about AI's capabilities shape trust in AI. Beliefs that an AI has higher levels of capability (agent) help create trust of AI due to its perceived competence, as well as the idea that increased capabilities can lead to increased risk of being unexpected and/or even malicious. The ambiguity of AI's placement within the spectrum between being a non-human tool, that is not capable of autonomous action, and being fully autonomous, creates uncertainty in determining if AI is capable of producing verifiable results, or articles. Amirjalili (2024) compares an essay produced by a human student and one produced by the use of ChatGPT-4. While the AI-produced text is structurally correct in accordance with formal academic standards, it does not reflect the depth of authentic experience of a human being nor does it contain a uniquely human author's voice. As a result, he finds that AI-generated academic writing is structurally based, but does not replicate the experiential authentication of text provided by human authors. Finally, the ITI whitepaper expands on the themes presented in this articles offers an explanation of AI authentication as the validation of the model, data and output. The ITI whitepaper also identifies methods for determining AI output validation, such as

auditing through metadata, the use of watermarks, and tracking provenance through human expertise. The whitepaper provides recommendations for creating global standards written in concert with the development of a collaborative environment that supports the development of generative AI trust and content authentication through the establishment of an interoperable AI ecosystem. Amirjalili (2024) suggests that the concept of authenticating research is subjective and dependent upon the author's intent, voice, and lived experience. Rocco (2021) states that legal authenticity is based on human authorship.

- The process of determining authenticity through the use of perception is determined by the use of trust signals. (Glikson,2020;Vanneste, 2024).
- Ethical authenticity is formed based on value structures lying in AI research.
- Verification instruments and provenance mapping, according to ITI (2023 and 2024), are essential to establish technicore authenticity.(ITI 2023-2024)

Shuhaiber (2025) examined ChatGPT's acceptance by university students; the study indicated that trust, perceived utility, perceived ease of use and pleasure all have a positive impact on usage continuity. Social influence plays a limited role. Based on this, it appears that authenticity judgments are rooted in personal experiences of reliability rather than in collective opinion. Farooq (2025) investigates the authenticity judgments of AI-generated images and finds that highly realistic images are more likely to be perceived as authentic; however, viewers express low confidence in these judgments. The data suggests that after reviewing how an evaluative / AI mechanism views their submissions, most participants have reversed their decision on whether or not they find their art authentic. This reinforces the assertion that the sensory cues of an object alone do not verify the object's physical authenticity. Thus, while many AI systems can produce natural sounding / stylistically appealing written products, they lack the subjective reasoning skills of the human artist and their cultural context on which my artworks depend most heavily for authenticity. The result of combining these two sides of this story creates both opportunities as well as challenges for practitioners in the areas of creative writing, various media, and educational instruction.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This research utilized a qualitative & comparative methodology to investigate how AI-written versus human-written discourse differs, with a specific focus on examining how 'authentic' writing is defined and represented. The researchers developed multiple sets of 2 parallel discourses: 1 from the humans in the study and 1 from an AI language model. The comparative analysis will utilize multiple analytical frameworks, including linguistic patterns within both sets of discourse, features present in the way that both humans and AI generate discourse, and the thematic representations across both groups' discourses, to

discover how an authentic document is characterized in relation to differences between AI and human writing.

The AI-generated discourse was created by using an advanced AI language model (ChatGPT) to produce a 300- word Academic-style essay about the following topic “What does authentic writing mean?” The model was instructed to produce a coherent, formal, and independent written response without the use of references or citations. In order to keep both corpora the same in terms of topic and length, the researchers only gathered 1 set of output from ChatGPT. The produced text was subsequently saved in Plain-Text format for later analysis.

3.2. Human-Written Discourse

Thirty graduate-level students across several different disciplines all wrote a 300-word essay about the concept of “What is authenticity in writing?” Participants wrote their essays independently and were given no outside materials or assistance from artificial intelligence (AI), though they were provided ample time to complete their essays. The completed essays were collected electronically, and were completely anonymous during the data analysis process to ensure ethical treatment of the data and minimize any researcher bias.

Once the two data sets were standardized to be in a text format, the spelling and grammatical errors that were prevalent in the human-written essays were purposely left in place because they are an integral part of writing authentically in the real world. Each of the two data sets had been manually cleaned to eliminate any inconsistencies in formatting and/or metadata, while the content remained exactly as written.

Comparing human written and AI-Generated Essays Using a Corpus Linguistic Analytical Framework Paragraphs for Each of the Essays Were Based Upon Approximately the Same Number of Words (Approximately 300 Words Per Essay) Thus Providing Appropriate Conditions for Governments and/or AI's Ability to Generate Essays That Would Have a Valid/True Comparison Between This Two Population Groups. In this article for convenience we use E1 for essay 1, E2 for essay 2 and so on.

4. Analytical Framework

Framework Used To Analyze The Differences Between Human Generated Data Versus AI Generated Data Was A Mixed Approach Using Both A Lexical And A Discourse Analytical Framework. The FCET Analysis Focused On The Lexical Items, Discourse Markers, Cohesion Techniques, Sentence Complexity, And Thematic Emphasis Of The Avoidance/Intolerable Degree Of Relatedness.

The Following Mixed Approaches Were Used In The Data Analysis Phase:

- Frequency Analysis (i.e., Lexical Type, Repeated Lexically, Repeatedly Used Words).

- Qualitative Discourse Analysis (i.e., Stance, Tone, Coherence And Overall Organization).
- Comparative Pattern Analysis(i.e., Data/Categorically)Was Also Used To Compare The Lexical And Discourse Features Exhibited In Both Human And AI Generated Texts.

The Use of Mixed Analysis In Turn Provided A Means To Identify Both Quantitative As Well As Qualitative Aspects Of Writing Authenticity

4.1. Ethics Considerations

Data Collection Required Obtaining Consent From All Student Participants Prior To Actual Data Collection. Participation Was Voluntary; Everyone Was Ensured Of Total Anonymity And Total Confidentiality Throughout The Research. No Personal Identifiers Were Kept In The Corpus. Because The AI-Generated Text Did Not Make Any Claim Of Ethics (Other Than That There Were No Human Subjects), All Of The Subjects In The Corpus Had No Connection With Any Other Individuals Or Organisation.

4.2. Analytical Framework

The research used a qualitative discourse analysis framework to explore the issue of authenticity in academic writing produced by humans and artificial intelligence. This framework combines discourse analysis, pragmatics, stylistics, and lexical analysis to look at linguistic patterns at both a surface level (in terms of how the word was used) and deeper interpretive meanings that relate to the question of authenticity. The approach to the analysis is qualitative-comparative in nature and therefore does not treat each essay as a singular entity; instead, it compares the patterns of recurring tendencies across the entire human corpus (E1-E30) to the pattern of the essay generated by AI (E31). Authenticity is constructed linguistically via voice, stance, coherence, lexical choices, emotional expression, and ideological positioning. The following dimensions provided the structure for conducting this analysis:

5. Findings and discussions

5.1. Discourse Organization and Coherence

The 30 essays produced by human authors (E1-E30) exhibit a range of ways that they have been organized. Some of the essays (such as E5 and E6) utilize a clear academic format with introductory and closing statements, while other essays (like E1, E7, and E10) demonstrate less structured formatting, multiple instances of repeating themselves within their word count, and abrupt changes in topic. Because of this evidence of cognitive processing as a consequence of the way that ideas develop as a result of cognitive processes that occur while the writer is writing, and not strictly through planned cognitive processes prior to beginning to write.

AI Essay E31, on the other hand, has a much higher degree of coherence/finality. Each paragraph is connected, transitions between paragraphs have a natural flow, and the

development of thoughts has been done logically without antics or confusion among readers. This contributes to a high level of clarity but, in addition to contributing to a clear linear progression of writing in a predictable manner, can create an artificiality with respect to the existence of spontaneity in natural human writing.

5.1.1. Interpretation

Organic coherence in human writing and engineered coherence in AI writing.

5.2. Pragmatic Meaning and Contextual Awareness

Human writers frequently rely on implicit meaning and shared context, especially in E2, E7, and E10. For example, E10 challenges the very idea of authenticity using informal and confrontational language, assuming a reader who can follow the argument without explicit explanation. Similarly, E9 uses narrative digression and personal commentary to establish pragmatic meaning.

E31 remains explicit and context-neutral with respect to the meanings conveyed and the structures of the sentences. The meanings are clearly stated, definitions elaborated upon, and no assumptions about the reader's background have been made. While E31 is pragmatically safe, that pragmatic safety also represents a limiting factor in terms of the interpretive depth available for audiences and a detriment to dialogic engagement.

5.2.1. Interpretation

Human discourse works as an engager for readers pragmatically; AI discourse informs rather than interacts.

5.3. Stylistic and Rhetorical Choices

Stylistic Variation is a Characteristic of Each Essay Within Each Essay Pair From E1 Through E30. Additionally, there are stylistic variances to how each essay is written. For example, some essays utilize straightforward, easy to read, direct using plain language (E5). Other essays use an emotional or contemplative tone (E2, E9). Additionally, some use challenging language with non-standard dialogue/everyday expressions of what they are suggesting (E10). Therefore, these different styles demonstrate authenticity through both self-identity and taking risks emotionally.

However, E31 has a clean and consistent style throughout the entire piece. All sentences will be of similar lengths, tones, and diction, creating an overall professional appearance with low amount of emotional involvement of reader.

5.3.1. Interpretation

Stylistic unevenness in human writing signals authenticity, while stylistic stability in AI writing signals control.

5.4. Lexical Choices and Word Use

Human essays demonstrate lexical repetition, spelling variation, and non-standard phrasing, especially in E1, E3, E5, E7 and E21. Although they may seem like

disadvantages in quantitative terms, they are actually forms of authentic language through competence, effort, and purpose for producing quality language.

The AI text contains many words from the quantitative realm (formal/academic) that are precise, abstract, and safe (e.g., "harmonious combination", "critical thinking", "meaningful purpose") but do not include cultural or personally relevant lexical items.

5.4.1. Interpretation

Human lexical choices are experiential and on other hand AI lexical choices are optimized.

5.5. Narrative Voice and Authorial Presence

There are some examples of strong authorial presence among these various examples of human essays. E2 and E9 both use first-person pronouns frequently to create an intimate connection with the reader and establish their voice. E10 also demonstrates a strong ideological position by clearly expressing disagreements with traditional views. Even the more basic examples of essays (E1 and E7), have ways of showing the author's identity through their wording and emphasis.

E31 constructs a simulated authorial voice—personal in form but not in substance. Although it refers to “writers” and “readers,” it avoids lived experience and personal risk.

5.5.1. Interpretation

Human texts own their voice and on other hand AI texts perform voice.

5.6. Error Patterns and Linguistic Deviations

While human-created essays contain inconsistencies in their grammar, spelling, and syntax, these mistakes will often preserve their original meanings while also creating a clear emotional or ideological message (e.g., E13). The AI-generated essay has minimal errors but will demonstrate an occasional semantic error of over-clarity, where similar concepts are repeated in slightly different words creating redundancies but not necessarily providing any additional value. Interpretation: When people write, they have cognitive difficulties which produce errors; when computers write they are using their linguistic capabilities to produce something that is more "correct."

5.7. Genre Awareness and Convention Use

Writers demonstrate varying levels of knowledge about genres based on how flexible or rigidly they follow academic rules; some writers strictly adhere to some type(s) (like Academic), others blend them with two other forms of writing (like Personal) into one body of work. This blended style shows authentic engagement with content instead of mechanical imitations of rule or model.

E31 strictly follows academic essay conventions, including formal tone, paragraph balance, and conclusion symmetry.

5.7.1. Interpretation

Human writers adapt genre; AI reproduces genre templates.

5.8. Intertextuality and Cultural Reference

Human essays draw on lived academic and cultural experience. E9 references literary reading practices; E10 critiques social behavior and performance; others implicitly reference plagiarism discourse common in academic settings.

E31 avoids any specific cultural or textual references and just relying on generalized academic knowledge.

5.8.1. Interpretation

Human writing is culturally situated, whereas AI writing is culturally neutral.

5.9. Ideology and Perspective

Human texts display ideological diversity. E10 rejects authenticity as a myth, while E2 strongly affirms it as a personal value. This ideological variation reflects authentic belief systems.

E31 maintains ideological neutrality, presenting authenticity as universally positive without challenge. Interpretation: Human discourse argues; AI discourse reconciles.

5.10. Human–AI Distinctiveness (Meta-Analysis)

When viewed holistically, human essays are marked by:

- Emotional presence
- Ideological risk
- Structural irregularity
- Linguistic struggle

The AI essay is marked by:

- Polished coherence
- Emotional restraint
- Lexical balance
- Predictability

5.10.1. Interpretation

Authenticity in human writing emerges through imperfection and individuality, whereas AI writing simulates authenticity through linguistic fluency and balance.

6. Conclusion of Analysis

The results of this comparative qualitative analysis shows that authentic writing consists of more than just being correct or clear. Authenticity in the current study was evident across all the examples (E1 to E30) through the use of voice, emotional engagement, ideology, and language use. The AI generated essay (E31) was able to imitate most academic conventions but did not have the fullness of experience, emotional vulnerability, and connection to cultural reality that exists in pieces of writing done by a

human author. Therefore, although AI can be used to create believable academic writing, authenticity will still be related to human subjectivity, imperfection and lived experience.

The purpose of this research is to explore how authenticity is constructed and interpreted in written form by individuals and generated by AI in the area of academic writing by utilizing qualitative forms of comparative analysis. Thirty-one essays analyzed in this analysis consisted of thirty individual essays composed by learners at various levels of education across distinct faculties as well as one composed by an AI language model. There were various forms of linguistic and discourse characteristics evaluated among the essays that were analyzed; they included aspects such as discourse organisation, pragmatic meaning, the level of stylistic difference, lexical similarity, narrative voice, the learner's and AI's awareness of their respective genre, and the ideological positioning of the learners and AI's writing.

The findings of this study show that AI-generated writing exhibits structural coherence and clarity, formality consistency, and technical writing conventions, therefore demonstrating written fluency at the highest level of proficiency. But AI-generated writing does not include indications of authorship and/or personal connection or experience to the author; hence, they do not demonstrate human qualities. On the contrary, humans write to express their opinions and beliefs, an individual style of creative expression, and take risks in using the various ideological bases for writing to represent authentic human communication in the academic community.

The study recommends that to establish authenticity in writing, one must develop a connection between their writing style; their writing context; their writing intentions; and their experience with the subject matter being written about. While AI will create text based on these four components, they cannot produce a complete, authentic representation of each component of an individual's writing. The research therefore demonstrates the ongoing relevance of human mime as a permanent feature in creating academically authentic communication.

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