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LINGUOCULTURAL AND METADISCURSIVE TRANSFORMATION IN AI-ASSISTED ACADEMIC WRITING: A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK EFL WRITERS

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A B S T R A C T

This article investigates how generative artificial intelligence may transform linguocultural meaning and metadiscursive choices in academic writing by English-language learners with Uzbek linguistic backgrounds. Drawing on contrastive rhetoric, intercultural pragmatics, and interactional models of metadiscourse, the study develops an analytical framework for comparing independently written English texts, AI-revised English texts, and culturally situated Uzbek academic-writing conventions. A qualitative, literature-informed contrastive design is adopted; illustrative textual pairs are used to demonstrate coding procedures rather than to represent empirical participant outcomes. Five dimensions are examined: stance and hedging, reader engagement, authorial visibility, cultural framing, and rhetorical organization. The analysis suggests that AI-assisted revision can improve surface coherence and conventional academic phrasing while potentially neutralizing culturally significant expressions, shifting epistemic commitment, and homogenizing writer voice. A human-in-the-loop protocol is proposed to help EFL writers evaluate AI suggestions without losing rhetorical agency. The article contributes a replicable framework for future English-Uzbek corpus studies and pedagogical research.

K E Y W O R D S

Generative artificial intelligence, linguocultural transformation, metadiscourse, EFL academic writing, English-Uzbek contrastive analysis, intercultural rhetoric, writer identity, hedging, stance, AI literacy.

INTRODUCTION

Academic writing is not merely the production of grammatically acceptable sentences. It is a culturally and institutionally situated practice through which writers position claims, acknowledge alternative interpretations, address readers, and construct scholarly identities. In multilingual educational settings, English as a foreign language (EFL) writers negotiate conventions acquired in their first language alongside expectations associated with English-medium academic communities. Generative AI introduces a further participant into this negotiation: a system that can rapidly recast vocabulary, argumentation, tone, and discourse structure. The resulting changes may be linguistically fluent without being culturally or pragmatically equivalent to the writer's intended meaning. The relevance

of this issue is particularly evident in English-Uzbek academic-writing contexts. Uzbek speaking learners may draw upon local expectations of respect, indirectness, collective positioning, or conventional rhetorical sequencing; however, such tendencies vary by genre, institution, individual writer, and audience. They should not be treated as fixed national traits. AI revision may make an essay appear more aligned with a generalized English academic register while reducing contextual nuance or changing the strength of the author's claims. Accordingly, writing quality must be evaluated together with cultural appropriateness and writer agency. The study addresses three research questions:

❖ Which linguocultural and metadiscursive features are most susceptible to alteration during AI-assisted academic revision?

❖ How can changes in stance, engagement, authorial presence, and cultural framing be compared across English and Uzbek writing practices?

❖ What procedures can help EFL writers retain intended meanings while benefiting from AI-generated feedback?

The objective is to propose an operational analytical model, not to claim experimentally measured effects.

Literature Review

The study of contrastive rhetoric originated in efforts to explain variation in second-language composition. Kaplan (1966) brought attention to culturally patterned textual organization, although later intercultural-rhetoric scholarship cautions against reducing individual writing to national stereotypes. Connor (1996) emphasizes that rhetorical preferences are shaped by discourse communities, education, genre, and communicative purpose. Hyland (2003) likewise conceptualizes second-language writing as a socially situated practice in which textual choices reflect relationships among writer, reader, and disciplinary knowledge. Metadiscourse provides a productive lens for observing these relationships. Hyland (2005) distinguishes interactive resources that guide readers through texts such as transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, and code glosses from interactional resources through which writers negotiate a position, including hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers. The functional interpretation of an item is crucial: for example, "may" can express uncertainty, permission, or possibility depending on context. Frequency counts alone cannot establish pragmatic equivalence. Academic stance is also linked to linguistic and cultural identity. A writer who changes "we believe" to "the findings demonstrate" has not simply improved formality: the revision redistributes responsibility for the claim and may overstate the evidence. Likewise, replacing culturally situated examples with generic ones may broaden international accessibility but weaken the writer's contextual contribution. These transformations are best examined through aligned drafts, explicit author intentions, and contextual interpretation rather than through isolated word lists. Research on large language models identifies substantial opportunities for feedback and personalized support but also risks of bias, factual error, and uncritical dependence (Kasneci et al., 2023). UNESCO guidance advocates a human-centred approach to generative AI, including critical evaluation, transparency, and protection of learners' agency (Miao & Holmes, 2023). These concerns suggest that AI-assisted writing should be understood as a process of negotiated revision rather than automatic linguistic correction.

Methodology

This article employs a conceptual, qualitative contrastive-analysis design grounded in published scholarship on metadiscourse, intercultural rhetoric, and generative AI. No original participant corpus, classroom intervention, or statistical experiment is reported. Instead, the study specifies a research protocol that can be implemented in a subsequent empirical investigation involving Uzbek-background EFL writers. The proposed unit of analysis is an aligned text segment across three conditions:

(A) an independently composed English draft by an Uzbek-background EFL writer;

(B) the same draft after documented AI-assisted revision;

(C) a corresponding Uzbek-language explanation of the author's intended meaning or an appropriately matched Uzbek academic text. Condition C functions as a contextual reference, not as a presumed literal translation of A or B. Future data collection should include genre-matched essays, research abstracts, or literature-review passages, with writing proficiency, discipline, prompt, and revision instructions recorded. A coding scheme is proposed across five dimensions. First, epistemic stance captures hedges, boosters, evidential qualifications, and degrees of certainty. Second, reader engagement includes directives, questions, inclusive pronouns, and explicit orientation to audience. Third, authorial visibility records first-person self-mentions and impersonal constructions. Fourth, linguocultural framing identifies culturally grounded references, value-laden formulations, culturally specific examples, and pragmatic politeness choices. Fifth, rhetorical organization records moves such as problem identification, claim development, counterargument, and conclusion. Each observed revision is coded as retained, clarified, intensified, attenuated, generalized, omitted, or newly introduced. The analytical procedure consists of six steps: collecting consented original drafts; preserving AI prompts and outputs; segmenting and aligning text versions; independently coding changes by at least two trained analysts; discussing disagreements with reference to discourse context and writer-intention interviews; and reporting representative extracts with transparent audit trails. An empirical extension could calculate intercoder agreement and compare change frequencies, but no such statistics are asserted here. Ethical safeguards should include anonymization, voluntary participation, and avoidance of uploading identifiable student work to external systems without appropriate permission.

Results and Discussion

The following findings are analytical propositions illustrated by constructed examples. They demonstrate what the framework can detect and must not be interpreted as observations from a collected English-Uzbek corpus. First, AI revision may recalibrate epistemic commitment. Consider an illustrative draft: "These examples may indicate that local traditions influence students' writing choices." Second, AI can modify reader relationships. The draft "In our educational context, we can observe a different pattern" may become "A different pattern is observed in educational settings." The revision creates a more impersonal register but removes the contextual index "our" and the reader-inclusive construction "we can observe." Third, culturally specific references may be generalized. For example, a writer's discussion of mahalla-based community support may be paraphrased as "neighborhood cooperation." The English expression is accessible but may not fully convey the institutional, social, and historical connotations of mahalla. A stronger revision would retain the term, supply a concise explanatory gloss, and connect it to the scholarly claim. This illustrates how cultural

specificity and international readability can be reconciled without treating either as expendable. Fourth, the apparent fluency of AI-generated prose can obscure changes in rhetorical organization. AI may insert predictable transitions, balanced counterarguments, and formulaic concluding statements. Fifth, the interaction between AI suggestions and student decision-making is itself analytically significant. When a learner accepts, modifies, or rejects an AI suggestion, the decision provides evidence of metadiscursive awareness. Reflection logs can capture the reason: preserving caution, protecting a cultural reference, improving accessibility, or maintaining a distinctive authorial voice.

Challenges and Limitations. A major challenge is separating AI-induced transformation from ordinary revision. Writers often change stance and structure without technological assistance; therefore, causal claims require controlled comparisons with unassisted revision. Another difficulty concerns the diversity of English and Uzbek academic practices. Neither language represents a single rhetorical tradition, and differences may reflect discipline, institutional training, genre, proficiency, or individual preference rather than culture alone. The framework also faces interpretive limitations. AI tools are not stable instruments: outputs can vary with model version, prompt wording, language, and sampling conditions.

Implications for Practice. For writing instructors, a productive classroom sequence begins with an independent draft and a short statement of intended meaning. Students then request AI feedback on a narrowly specified feature for example, "identify hedges and explain how each affects certainty; do not rewrite the paragraph." Next, they compare the suggested alternatives with their own rhetorical purpose, annotate changes to stance and cultural references, and submit a final revision with a decision log. Such tasks shift attention from the polished product to accountable linguistic choices. For researchers, the proposed framework supports a future corpus -based study combining aligned text analysis, writer interviews, and revision histories. A particularly valuable design would compare independent revision, unrestricted AI revision, and critically guided AI revision across matched tasks. This would permit investigation of whether instruction reduces unintended stance shifts and cultural flattening while retaining gains in clarity.

Conclusion

The integration of generative AI into English-Uzbek EFL academic writing creates both a linguistic resource and a new site of cultural negotiation. AI may improve clarity, grammatical accuracy, and familiarity with academic conventions, yet it can also alter epistemic commitment, authorial visibility, reader engagement, and the representation of culturally situated meanings. This article has developed a five-dimensional contrastive framework and a transparent protocol for investigating such changes. Its central argument is that linguocultural sensitivity and metadiscursive awareness should guide AI-assisted revision. Future studies should test its reliability, examine discipline-specific patterns, and assess whether explicit instruction helps EFL writers use AI strategically while retaining scholarly responsibility and cultural voice.

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