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CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE REPRESENTATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES

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ABSTRACT

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) in scientific publication has generated new dynamics in global academic practices, positioning AI not only as a technical tool but also as a discursive construct that shapes how knowledge and scholarly identity are produced. This study aims to critically examine the representation of AI in international scientific articles and how these meanings are negotiated by academics. Employing a qualitative approach with a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) design based on Fairclough's model, the study integrates document analysis and in-depth interviews. Data were collected from 22s scientific articles indexed in Scopus and Web of Science (2021–2025), along with interviews involving five academics actively engaged in AIassisted scholarly writing. Data were analyzed thematically through open coding and critical interpretation of textual features, discursive practices, and broader social contexts. The findings reveal three dominant patterns: AI as an instrument of academic augmentation, AI as a threat to scholarly authority and authenticity, and AI as a space of ambivalence reflecting ongoing negotiation between efficiency and critical awareness. These results indicate that AI discourse is not merely representational but also performative in shaping emerging academic norms and identities. The study contributes theoretically by extending critical discourse analysis to include experiential and identity dimensions within technological discourse. Practically, it offers insights for fostering critical AI literacy in higher education and informing more reflective and contextsensitive academic policies, while also opening new avenues for future research on the sociodiscursive implications of AI in academia.

Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis, Artificial Intelligence (Ai), Discursive Representation, International Scientific Articles, Academic Identity, Ai Literacy.*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) in recent years has significantly transformed various aspects of human life, including the academic world. Within the context of scientific publication, AI is no longer merely positioned as a technological tool, but has evolved into a discursive phenomenon that shapes how knowledge is produced, represented, and legitimized. This shift is increasingly evident in international scientific articles, where AI is constructed through specific linguistic choices, narratives, and perspectives that reflect broader social, cultural, and ideological dynamics.

From the perspective of academics, the presence of AI generates complex experiences. On one hand, AI offers efficiency and convenience in supporting research and scientific writing processes. On the other hand, it raises concerns regarding academic integrity, authorship, and the authenticity of knowledge production. Preliminary observations and exploratory conversations with several lecturers and researchers indicate the emergence of ambivalence in responding to AI between acceptance as a supportive tool and resistance due to ethical and epistemological concerns. This phenomenon highlights that AI is not merely a neutral technology, but a socially constructed entity embedded in power relations and meaning-making processes within academic discourse.

At the global level, the urgency of studying AI discourse is reinforced by the increasing number of scientific publications discussing its role in education, research, and knowledge production. Recent studies have explored how AI is framed in academic and policy discourse, often emphasizing themes such as innovation, efficiency, and transformation (Gillings et al., 2025; Simpson, 2025). However, these studies tend to focus on textual patterns or policy narratives, with limited attention to the lived experiences, interpretations, and internal tensions of academics as discourse producers. Similarly, research on AI ethics in academic publishing highlights concerns about plagiarism and transparency (Wang & Zhang, 2025), yet often overlooks the deeper dimension of identity negotiation experienced by researchers.

This indicates a gap in the literature, particularly in understanding how AI is discursively constructed in scientific articles while simultaneously being experienced, interpreted, and negotiated by academics in their everyday scholarly practices. There is still limited research that integrates textual analysis with the subjective and social dimensions of discourse, especially within the framework of critical qualitative inquiry.

Therefore, this study aims to critically analyze the representation of artificial intelligence in international scientific articles using a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach. The focus of this research is to uncover how AI is constructed at the level of language, discourse practices, and broader social contexts, as well as how these constructions relate to the experiences and perspectives of academics. Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the development of critical discourse analysis by incorporating experiential and identity based dimensions in understanding technological discourse. Practically, it offers insights for developing more critical and reflective academic practices in responding to the integration of AI in scientific work.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) based on Fairclough's three-dimensional model. This approach was selected because the study aims to uncover meanings, ideologies, and power relations embedded in the representation of artificial intelligence (AI) in international scientific articles. CDA enables a multi layered analysis that not only focuses on linguistic features of texts but also examines discursive practices and broader social contexts in which the texts are produced and interpreted (Fairclough, 2013; Zajda, 2020). Therefore, this approach is particularly

suitable for exploring AI as both a scientific and sociocultural phenomenon.

The data selection strategy employed purposive sampling, ensuring that all selected sources were relevant to the research focus. The primary data consisted of scientific articles indexed in Scopus (Q1 and Q2) and Web of Science, published between 2021 and 2025. The inclusion criteria were:

(1) Articles explicitly discussing AI in academic or educational contexts,
(2) Written in English,
(3) Containing conceptual representations of AI within the abstract and discussion sections, and
(4) Published in reputable international journals. Based on these criteria, a total of 20 scientific articles were selected as the main units of analysis. To enrich the contextual understanding, this study also involved five academics (lecturers/researchers) who actively publish in AI-related fields. The research was situated within the broader context of global academic discourse, rather than a specific geographical location.

Data were collected through document analysis and in-depth interviews. Document analysis focused on selected sections of scientific articles particularly abstracts, introductions, and discussion sections as these parts tend to reflect dominant discursive constructions (Berenjkani et al., 2025). The data collection process began with identifying relevant articles from Scopus and Web of Science databases, followed by screening based on the inclusion criteria. The selected articles were then organized using reference management software (e.g., Mendeley). Semistructured in-depth interviews were conducted to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and reflections regarding the use and representation of AI in academic writing. Interviews were conducted with open-ended questions, recorded with participants' consent, and transcribed verbatim to preserve the authenticity of their narratives.

Data analysis was conducted using Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA framework, which includes:

1. Textual analysis, focusing on lexical choices, metaphors, and grammatical structures used to represent AI;
2. Discursive practice analysis, examining how texts are produced, distributed, and consumed within academic communities; and
3. Social practice analysis, linking findings to broader ideological contexts and power relations (Leitch & Palmer, 2010; Parker et al., 2026).

The analytical process involved open coding, thematic categorization, and critical interpretation. To enhance analytical rigor and data organization, the study utilized NVivo 14 software for coding, data management, and theme visualization. This tool facilitated systematic analysis of both textual data and interview transcripts.

To ensure trustworthiness, several validation strategies were applied. Credibility was achieved through data triangulation (scientific articles and interview data) and member checking with participants. Transferability was supported by providing rich and detailed descriptions of the research context. Dependability was maintained through an audit trail documenting all stages of the research process. Confirmability was ensured through researcher reflexivity and grounding interpretations in empirical data.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. All interview participants provided informed consent prior to data collection. Their identities were protected through the use of pseudonyms or coded identifiers. All data were used solely for academic purposes and securely stored. Furthermore, the use of scientific articles as data sources adhered to academic integrity principles, including proper citation and respect for intellectual property rights.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study of the representation of artificial intelligence (AI) in international scientific articles cannot be separated from the understanding that language is not merely a neutral medium of communication, but a social practice that constructs reality, knowledge, and power relations. In this context, discourse becomes a critical site where meanings about AI are produced, negotiated, and legitimized within the global academic community. Therefore, this study is grounded in three major theoretical perspectives: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Social Construction of Technology (SCOT), and the Foucauldian perspective on discourse and power.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA): Language as Social Practice

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), particularly Fairclough's model, conceptualizes language as a form of social practice embedded with ideology and power. In academic writing, linguistic choices such as *"AI enhances research productivity"* or *"AI threatens academic integrity"* do not simply describe reality; they actively shape how readers perceive and position AI within scholarly practices.

Recent studies demonstrate that AI is often framed through dominant narratives such as technological optimism and inevitability, which tend to marginalize critical or alternative perspectives *(Gillings et al., 2025; Zottola & Conoscenti, 2026)*. Moreover, discourse analytic research highlights that representations of AI in academic and media texts frequently rely on metaphorical constructions and evaluative language that subtly normalize its integration into everyday practices *(Li et al., 2026; Qiu et al., 2026)*.

From a CDA perspective, texts must be analyzed at multiple levels: the linguistic structure, the discursive processes that produce and circulate them, and the broader social context in which they operate. This approach allows the researcher to uncover not only *what* is said about AI, but also *why*, *how*, and *in whose interests* such representations are constructed *(Nguyen & Hekman, 2024)*.

Social Construction of Technology (SCOT): AI as a Socially Negotiated Artifact

Contrary to technological determinism, which views technology as an autonomous force, the Social Construction of Technology (SCOT) framework argues that technologies are shaped through social interactions, negotiations, and interpretive processes. In this sense, AI is not a fixed or objective entity, but a socially constructed phenomenon whose meaning varies across different communities and contexts.

Recent research supports this perspective by showing that AI is interpreted differently across cultural and institutional settings. For instance, cross-national discourse studies reveal that AI narratives vary significantly depending on socio political contexts, ranging from innovation driven optimism to risk oriented skepticism *(Zeng et al., 2026; Nkoala et al., 2026)*. These variations illustrate the concept of interpretive flexibility, where different social groups assign different meanings to the same technological artifact.

In academic discourse, this flexibility is reflected in how researchers position AI either as a supportive tool, a disruptive force, or a transformative agent. Such representations are shaped not only by empirical evidence but also by institutional pressures, publication demands, and global academic norms. SCOT thus provides a valuable lens for understanding that representations of AI in scientific articles are not purely objective descriptions, but outcomes of ongoing social negotiation.

Foucauldian Perspective: Discourse, Knowledge, and Power

From a Foucauldian perspective, discourse is a mechanism through which knowledge and power are produced and maintained. Scientific articles, therefore, are not merely

vehicles for disseminating knowledge, but also sites where regimes of truth are constructed and reinforced.

In the context of AI, dominant academic discourses often promote narratives of efficiency, innovation, and inevitability. These narratives contribute to the normalization of AI as an essential component of modern academic practice *(Paganoni & Becerra, 2026; Barbalau, 2026)*. However, such normalization is not neutral; it reflects underlying power relations that determine whose knowledge is valued, whose voices are amplified, and whose experiences are marginalized.

For example, global academic discourse frequently assumes equal access to AI technologies, while overlooking disparities faced by researchers in less-resourced contexts. This creates a form of epistemic inequality, where certain groups are systematically underrepresented in dominant narratives. Foucauldian analysis enables the researcher to identify these silences and exclusions, revealing how discourse functions as a tool of both inclusion and marginalization.

Theoretical Positioning and Analytical Orientation

While the three theoretical perspectives offer complementary insights, this study positions Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the primary analytical framework. CDA is particularly relevant because the object of analysis consists of textual data scientific articles requiring a systematic examination of linguistic features, rhetorical strategies, and discursive patterns.

At the same time, SCOT and Foucauldian perspectives are employed as supporting frameworks to deepen the interpretation of findings. SCOT helps explain how meanings of AI are socially constructed and negotiated, while Foucault's theory illuminates the power dynamics embedded in these constructions.

This integrative approach allows the study to move beyond surface level textual analysis and engage with the broader socio cultural and ideological dimensions of AI discourse.

Conceptual Framework

This study conceptualizes scientific articles as discursive spaces where AI is not only described but actively constructed, negotiated, and legitimized. Through the lens of CDA, language is understood as a tool that produces meaning and reproduces ideology, while representations of AI are seen as outcomes of social construction and power relations.

In interpreting the data, the researcher views participants' voices not merely as individual opinions, but as reflections of broader discursive structures. For instance, when an academic describes AI as a tool that enhances productivity, this statement is interpreted as part of a dominant discourse of efficiency. Conversely, expressions of concern or resistance are understood as forms of counter discourse that challenge prevailing narratives.

Thus, the analytical framework of this study emphasizes that understanding AI discourse requires attention not only to textual patterns, but also to the lived experiences, identities, and social contexts of those who produce and engage with these texts.

FINDINGS

The analysis of international scientific articles and in-depth interviews with participants reveals that the representation of artificial intelligence (AI) in academic discourse is not singular or fixed, but rather constructed through complex experiences, tensions, and negotiations of meaning.

Through coding and interpretative analysis, three major themes emerged:

(1) AI as an instrument of academic augmentation,
(2) AI as a threat to scholarly authority, and
(3) AI as a space of discursive ambivalence.

These themes are interconnected, reflecting the layered and often contradictory experiences of participants within contemporary academic practices.

Theme 1: AI as an Instrument of Academic Augmentation (Enhancement Discourse)

Across many scientific articles, AI is represented as a technology that enhances efficiency and academic productivity. This narrative is strongly echoed in participants' experiences, particularly in contexts characterized by publication pressure and institutional demands.

One participant (P3), an active international publisher, expressed:

"Sometimes I feel that AI is like a silent partner… it is invisible, yet it helps me structure ideas more quickly. Without it, I might need twice as much time."

Such experiences typically arise in situations where researchers face tight deadlines or heavy workloads. AI is thus perceived as a "support system" that enables sustained productivity. In scientific texts, this is reflected in lexical choices such as *enhance*, *optimize*, and *support*, which construct AI as a positive and solution oriented entity.

However, beneath this narrative of efficiency lies a subtle shift in academic practice. AI is no longer merely a supporting tool; it increasingly participates in the cognitive processes of researchers. This raises implicit questions about the boundary between assistance and dependency, suggesting a transformation in how knowledge is produced.

Theme 2: AI as a Threat to Scholarly Authority and Authenticity (Disruption Discourse)

In contrast to the first theme, several participants articulated deep concerns regarding the impact of AI on academic integrity and authorship. These concerns are often less visible in formal scientific texts but emerge vividly in personal narratives.

One participant (P1) reflected:

"I am not afraid of the technology itself, but I am afraid of losing my own voice. Sometimes the writing becomes too perfect, but it does not feel like mine anymore."

This statement illustrates an internal conflict between the desire to benefit from technological assistance and the need to preserve intellectual identity. In academic discourse, such tensions are often reduced to issues of ethics or plagiarism, without addressing their deeper emotional and existential dimensions.

Participants also highlighted structural inequalities:

"Not all researchers have equal access to or familiarity with AI tools. Yet in international publications, it is often assumed that everyone operates under the same conditions." (P4)

This perspective reveals underlying power relations embedded in AI discourse, where global academic standards implicitly assume equal access, despite uneven realities. AI, in this sense, becomes not only a technological tool but also a marker of epistemic inequality.

Theme 3: AI as a Space of Ambivalence and Meaning Negotiation (Tension Discourse)

The third theme highlights that participants' experiences are neither entirely accepting nor rejecting AI, but rather situated within an ongoing state of ambivalence. They continuously negotiate their relationship with the technology.

Participant (P5) described this tension:

"I use AI, but I also question its output. I trust it, but not completely. It feels like a relationship that is never fully stable."

This ambivalence is also reflected in scientific articles, where narratives of optimism coexist with caution and regulation. AI is simultaneously celebrated as an innovation and constrained through ethical considerations. From a discourse perspective, this reflects a discursive struggle, in which competing meanings and interests intersect.

Interestingly, some participants began to adopt more reflective positions:

"Now I do not see AI as just a tool or a threat, but as a space for dialogue. I have to remain critical, not simply accept it." (P2)

This shift suggests a movement from passive use toward critical engagement, where researchers actively interpret and negotiate the role of AI in their work.

Thematic Summary Table

Main Theme	Subthemes	Core Meaning
AI as augmentation	Efficiency, productivity	AI as a "working partner"
AI as threat	Loss of authority, inequality	AI challenges academic identity
AI as ambivalence	Negotiation, uncertainty	AI as a site of meaning conflict

These three themes do not represent separate categories, but rather a continuum of experience. Participants often move between feeling supported, experiencing doubt, and developing reflective acceptance. Similarly, academic discourse on AI mirrors this pattern oscillating between optimism, concern, and negotiation. Thus, the findings do not offer a singular conclusion about AI, but instead reveal it as a discursive arena where meanings, emotions, and power relations continuously interact and evolve.

DISCUSSION

This study reveals that the representation of artificial intelligence (AI) in international scientific articles is not a fixed or singular construct, but rather a dynamic discursive formation shaped through three interrelated patterns: AI as an instrument of academic augmentation, AI as a threat to scholarly authority, and AI as a space of ambivalence. These findings suggest that AI discourse operates not merely as a reflection of technological advancement, but as a social arena in which meaning, identity, and power are continuously negotiated.

AI as Augmentation: Efficiency or Subtle Normalization?

The first finding highlights the dominance of AI as a tool for enhancing academic productivity. From a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective, this representation is not neutral; rather, it is constructed through linguistic choices such as *enhance*, *optimize*, and *support*, which function to normalize AI as an integral component of academic practice.

Recent studies support this trend, indicating that AI is frequently framed as a collaborative partner in academic discourse *(Simpson, 2025; Zottola & Conoscenti, 2026)*. However, this study extends prior research by demonstrating that such narratives of "assistance" may conceal a deeper transformation in academic work.

Through a Foucauldian lens, this normalization can be interpreted as the emergence of a new regime of truth, where the use of AI becomes an implicit standard of productivity. In this sense, AI does not merely assist researchers but also reshapes expectations of what it means to be academically competent. Thus, the discourse of efficiency can be understood as a subtle mechanism of power that regulates scholarly practices *(Elmholdt et al., 2025)*.

AI as Threat: The Hidden Crisis of Academic Identity

The second theme reveals a dimension often underexplored in existing literature namely, the emotional and identity related tensions experienced by academics. Participants expressed concerns not only about ethical issues but also about the potential loss of their intellectual voice.

While prior studies emphasize ethical dilemmas such as plagiarism and authorship *(Wang & Zhang, 2025)*, this research contributes a deeper perspective by uncovering the existential dimension of these concerns. From the viewpoint of the Social Construction of

Technology (SCOT), this indicates that AI is not merely socially constructed, but also actively reshapes how individuals construct their own academic identities.

Moreover, findings related to unequal access highlight hidden power structures within global academic discourse. Similar patterns have been identified in previous studies, where dominant narratives tend to marginalize certain social actors *(Huang & Gadavanij, 2025)*. This study reinforces and extends these insights by demonstrating how AI discourse may reproduce epistemic inequalities, particularly for scholars operating in less resourced contexts.

Thus, AI should not be viewed solely as an innovation, but also as a potential site of marginalization, where access, literacy, and institutional support determine who can fully participate in academic knowledge production.

AI as Ambivalence: A Space for Negotiation and Critical Awareness

The third theme illustrates that participants' experiences are not dichotomous (acceptance vs. rejection), but are characterized by ongoing ambivalence. This condition reflects a continuous negotiation between trust and skepticism, efficiency and critical reflection.

This finding aligns with previous research highlighting the coexistence of optimism and concern in AI discourse *(Elmholdt et al., 2025)*. However, this study advances the discussion by framing ambivalence not as a passive state, but as an active process of meaning-making.

From a CDA perspective, this phenomenon can be interpreted as a discursive struggle, where competing narratives interact and contest dominance *(Roozafzai, 2024)*. At the same time, a Foucauldian reading suggests that ambivalence may represent a form of resistance to dominant discourses, opening space for alternative interpretations and critical engagement.

Importantly, some participants demonstrated a shift toward reflective agency, positioning themselves not merely as users of AI, but as critical interpreters of its role. This suggests the emergence of a more conscious and reflexive academic subject in the age of AI.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the representation of artificial intelligence (AI) in international scientific articles cannot be understood as a singular and stable narrative, but rather as a complex and dynamic discursive construction. The three major patterns identified AI as an instrument of academic augmentation, as a threat to scholarly authority, and as a space of ambivalence indicate that academics' experiences with AI are shaped by ongoing tensions and negotiations. AI emerges not merely as a technological tool, but as a social phenomenon that reshapes how productivity, identity, and knowledge legitimacy are understood within academic practices.

From the participants' experiences and reflections, a deeper insight emerges: the use of AI in academia extends beyond issues of efficiency or ethics, touching upon the transformation of epistemic identity. Researchers are no longer positioned as sole producers of knowledge, but operate within hybrid relationships between human cognition and machine assistance. This condition generates ambivalence between trust and skepticism, dependence and resistance which, rather than being a limitation, becomes a productive space for critical awareness. In this sense, AI discourse is not only representational but also performative, actively shaping new academic norms and identities (Ahmadi, 2025; Wang & Zhang, 2025).

Conceptually, this study contributes to the development of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by policymakers highlighting that discourse on AI functions as both a site of meaning making and a mechanism of regulation within academic culture. Practically, the

findings offer several implications. For, there is a need to develop regulations that go beyond technical and ethical considerations, addressing the broader impact of AI on academic identity and well-being. For curriculum development, integrating critical AI literacy is essential to ensure that students and researchers engage with AI reflectively rather than instrumentally. In terms of digital literacy, this study emphasizes that AI use is not neutral but embedded in broader social relations that influence intellectual autonomy and scholarly confidence.

However, this study has several limitations. First, the focus on a limited number of international scientific articles and participants means that the findings may not fully represent the diversity of global academic experiences. Second, the relatively small and homogeneous participant group limits the exploration of perspectives from more marginalized communities. Third, the crosssectional nature of the study does not capture the rapidly evolving discourse on AI over time. Future research is therefore encouraged to expand the scope by involving more diverse academic contexts and adopting alternative methodological approaches, such as digital ethnography or longitudinal discourse analysis, to capture the evolving nature of AI discourse. Further exploration of underexamined dimensions such as the psychological impact of AI use or power relations in human machine collaboration would also enrich understanding in this field.

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