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**Literary Theories**

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### From Tool Use to Partnership: Human-Centred Design Principles for Generative-AI-Supported Formative Feedback in EAP Writing

**Dr. S. Henry Kishore**, Associate Professor, Department of English, Sri Krishna Arts and Science College, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.

**Dr. J. Jacintha Maria Florence**, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore.

**Abstract:** Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has reshaped the landscape of English language teaching (ELT), particularly within English for Academic Purposes (EAP) writing, where learners increasingly seek immediate drafting support and iterative feedback. The pedagogical question has shifted from whether GenAI can assist writing to how language classrooms can move beyond the paradigm of “AI as a shortcut” toward a human-centred partnership that strengthens learners’ evaluative judgement, cognitive agency, and ethical participation. This article offers a structured state-of-the-art synthesis of recent peer-reviewed research on GenAI-mediated support in language learning and writing feedback. Building on that synthesis, it proposes the Human–AI Partnership for Formative Feedback (HAP-FF) framework for EAP instruction. Drawing on human-centred AI principles, feedback-literacy scholarship, and emerging frameworks for GenAI governance in education, the review identifies five recurring pedagogical tensions: feedback speed versus quality, convenience versus cognitive engagement, personalisation versus privacy, fluency gains versus academic integrity, and teacher support versus professional risk. To navigate these tensions, HAP-FF delineates four actionable design phases—Task Framing, Prompting as Inquiry, Feedback Triangulation, and Reflective Audit—accompanied by classroom-ready practices, assessment adaptations, and ethical safeguards. The article concludes by charting a research agenda focused on measuring the quality of the human–AI partnership, assessing the development of learner feedback literacy, and addressing equity implications across diverse multilingual settings.

**Keywords:** Generative AI; Formative Feedback; EAP Writing; Feedback Literacy; Human-Centred AI

## Introduction

The proliferation of GenAI tools capable of producing and refining complex text has introduced unprecedented affordances—and commensurate risks—into ELT. In contemporary writing classrooms, learners can summon instantaneous suggestions concerning grammar, structural organisation, academic tone, and lexical precision. At the same time, educators are grappling with urgent concerns about output reliability, the preservation of academic integrity, and the potential erosion of fundamental cognitive learning processes. Early research syntheses indicate that, although publications on GenAI in education surged after 2022, the literature remains fragmented; much of the discourse has focused disproportionately on the technological affordances of specific tools rather than on the pedagogical design required to foster sustainable learner development (Li et al.).

This article argues that a productive, sustainable response to this paradigm shift requires treating GenAI neither as a forbidden, illicit substitute nor as a neutral, frictionless efficiency tool. Rather, it should be conceptualised as a partnered resource—one fundamentally shaped by human goals, pedagogical constraints, and ethical accountability. This stance aligns with emerging global educational directives advocating a human-centred approach to GenAI that prioritises data privacy, transparent usage, and capacity building for educators and learners alike (UNESCO).

Accordingly, this paper contributes to the intersecting domains of educational technology, language education, and EAP by:

synthesising key thematic patterns in recent research on GenAI-supported language learning and automated feedback;

proposing a practical, theoretically grounded pedagogical framework (HAP-FF) for integrating GenAI into formative EAP writing feedback; and

outlining assessment adaptations and research priorities for evaluating “partnership quality” in AI-integrated classrooms.

## Conceptual Foundations

### ➤ **Human-Centred AI in Education**

Human-centred AI (HCAI) perspectives argue that artificial-intelligence systems should be designed and implemented to amplify human self-efficacy, responsibility, and safety (Shneiderman). In high-consequence environments such as higher education, this entails a shift away from the mere automation of tasks toward the facilitation of human control, transparency, and accountability. In the EAP context, an HCAI approach ensures that the learner remains the primary driver of the writing process, using AI as a collaborative sounding board rather than a proxy author.

### ➤ **Feedback Literacy and Evaluative Judgement**

The efficacy of formative feedback depends on a learner's capacity to interpret, interrogate, and act upon it. Feedback literacy encompasses the understandings, capacities, and dispositions learners need to make sense of feedback information, engage in productive dialogue, and exercise evaluative judgement about academic quality (Carless and Boud). In GenAI-mediated environments this literacy becomes acutely central: learners must judge whether machine-generated feedback is factually correct, whether it adheres to disciplinary genre expectations, and whether incorporating it aligns with institutional academic-integrity policies.

### ➤ **Teacher Learning and Professional Preparation**

Integrating GenAI demands a recalibration of curriculum design, instructional methods, and assessment practice. Language teacher educators report that GenAI exerts significant pressure on existing assessment paradigms and that explicit preparation for teacher candidates is preferable to ad-hoc, reactive adoption (Moorhouse and Kohnke; Prilop et al.). Educators must develop an "AI-pedagogical knowledge" that allows them to scaffold AI use critically rather than prohibit or uncritically endorse it.

### ➤ **Ethics, Governance, and Responsible Use**

Education-facing guidelines increasingly stress the imperatives of privacy protection, algorithmic transparency, and capacity building for responsible GenAI integration. These directives mirror broader AI-governance principles formulated by international bodies, which advocate trustworthy, human-rights-respecting AI deployment that does not exacerbate existing digital divides (OECD; UNESCO).

## Method: A Structured State-of-the-Art Synthesis

Given the rapid velocity of publication in this domain, the article employs a structured narrative synthesis. This methodology is well suited to fast-moving technological fields in which conventional systematic reviews risk obsolescence before publication; recent rapid and systematic reviews of ChatGPT in education and language learning adopt comparable rationales (Lo; Li et al.). To preserve transparency and minimise selection bias, the synthesis followed an explicit, replicable protocol rather than informal reading.

Sources and time frame. Searches were conducted across Scopus, Web of Science, and ERIC, complemented by leading applied-linguistics publishers and reference chaining from recent systematic and rapid reviews. The window spanned November 2022—the public release of ChatGPT—to early 2026, capturing the first three years of peer-reviewed scholarship.

Search terms. Boolean combinations of “generative AI,” “ChatGPT,” “EFL/ESL,” “EAP writing,” “feedback,” “automated feedback,” “teacher education,” and “academic integrity” were used and iteratively refined.

Screening and inclusion. Screening was informed by PRISMA principles of transparent identification, screening, and eligibility. Inclusion was limited to peer-reviewed studies and high-quality reviews explicitly situated in English-language learning or teaching contexts and addressing writing support, feedback mechanisms, assessment redesign, teacher learning, or educational policy. Purely technical reports lacking a pedagogical dimension were excluded.

Analytical coding. Selected studies were thematically coded across four dimensions: (1) learning claims and writing outcomes, (2) pedagogical design models, (3) identified risks and constraints, and (4) ethical and assessment implications. Coding categories were refined iteratively, and ambiguous cases were re-examined against source texts to enhance interpretive consistency. The synthesis deliberately emphasises converging pedagogical patterns rather than tool-specific interfaces, which are subject to rapid obsolescence.

Limitations. As an interpretive synthesis conducted by a single analyst, the review does not claim the exhaustive coverage or formal inter-rater reliability of a full systematic review, and its emphasis on English-medium, higher-education sources may under-represent K–12 and lower-resource multilingual settings. These boundaries are revisited in the research agenda below.

## What the Literature Suggests: Five Recurring Tensions

The synthesis reveals five tensions that characterise the current landscape of GenAI in EAP writing instruction.

### ➤ **Speed versus Quality of Feedback**

Although GenAI can generate instantaneous feedback and complex revision suggestions, underlying reliability problems—notably authoritative but factually incorrect claims, or “hallucinations”—create a significant pedagogical hazard. Foundational analyses warn that, without rigorous triangulation and teacher-led guidance, “fast feedback” readily devolves into fast misinformation, undermining the epistemic trust that language acquisition requires (Kasneci et al.).

### ➤ **Convenience versus Cognitive Engagement**

The frictionless nature of GenAI invites learners to outsource essential cognitive tasks such as idea generation and lexical selection. While the final product may show superficial improvement, the foundational work of planning, argumentation, and editing can be diminished. Empirical work on ChatGPT feedback in EFL writing accordingly couples documented gains with calls for heavily scaffolded integration that keeps revision an active, cognitively demanding learning process (Polakova and Ivenz).

### ➤ **Personalisation versus Privacy**

GenAI shows a remarkable capacity to personalise grammatical explanations and supply tailored linguistic examples. Yet classroom deployment raises profound privacy concerns regarding data collection, output ownership, and the longevity of learner-interaction data. Educational guidance underscores the necessity of robust privacy safeguards and explicit institutional data policies (UNESCO).

### ➤ **Fluency Gains versus Academic Integrity**

GenAI can artificially elevate linguistic fluency and stylistic sophistication, obscuring a learner’s true proficiency and complicating attributions of authorship. Reviews of ChatGPT’s educational impact note that integrity challenges cannot be resolved through AI-detection software, which is prone to false positives—particularly for second-language writers (Lo). Resolution instead requires redesigning assessment tasks and establishing transparent, process-oriented acceptable-use norms.

### ➤ Teacher Support versus Professional Risk

Educators inhabit a paradox: they face intense workload pressure to provide rapid feedback—pressure GenAI can alleviate—yet they retain ultimate professional responsibility for grading fairness, construct validity, and genuine learning. The literature indicates a pressing need for institutional support and explicit professional development to help teachers navigate these high-stakes, GenAI-rich environments (Moorhouse and Kohnke).

### The HAP-FF Framework: Human–AI Partnership for Formative Feedback

To bridge HCAI principles and classroom practice, this paper proposes the Human–AI Partnership for Formative Feedback (HAP-FF) framework. HAP-FF operationalises “partnership” by establishing clear boundaries: the AI system generates possibilities—alternative phrasings, structural explanations, counter-arguments—while the human learner retains responsibility for goals, evaluative judgement, evidence integration, and ethical compliance. Table 1 summarises its four phases.

**Table 1. The four design phases of the HAP-FF framework.**

Phase	Core Goal	Locus of Control	Key Classroom Practices
<b>1. Task Framing</b>	Prevent generic output by anchoring tasks in situated knowledge.	Teacher-led; learner-visible	Design prompts requiring local data or course readings; require an evidence trail (outline → draft → memo).
<b>2. Prompting as Inquiry</b>	Shift from declarative commands to interrogative exploration.	Learner-led; teacher-scaffolded	Use genre, critical, and language prompts (e.g., “Suggest IMRaD moves”; “Identify argument weaknesses”).
<b>3. Feedback Triangulation</b>	Counter AI reliability limits and build evaluative judgement.	Shared (learner + AI + peer)	Compare AI feedback on targeted dimensions against peer feedback using a standardised rubric.
<b>4. Reflective Audit</b>	Make learning visible, protect integrity, and build metacognition.	Learner-led; teacher-assessed	Produce a revision memo justifying accepted/rejected feedback; complete an AI-use disclosure statement.

## **Elaboration of phases.**

**Phase 1:** Task framing. Teachers architect writing tasks that resist simple automation. By requiring the integration of specific, recent course readings or personal observation logs, the task compels human contextualisation. Demarcating acceptable GenAI uses (e.g., querying grammar, testing counter-arguments) from unacceptable ones (e.g., generating primary arguments or fabricating citations) establishes a safe operational baseline.

**Phase 2:** Prompting as inquiry. Learners move beyond reductive commands (“fix my grammar,” “write my essay”) toward prompting the AI as an analytical partner—for example, critical prompts (“Play a demanding academic reviewer and list weaknesses in my methodology section”) or language prompts (“Provide three hedging strategies appropriate for a social-science literature review”).

**Phase 3:** Feedback triangulation. To cultivate feedback literacy, learners do not accept AI output passively. A learner receives targeted AI feedback on specific dimensions (e.g., paragraph cohesion) alongside peer feedback guided by an instructor rubric, then triangulates the sources, deciding what to accept, modify, or reject on the basis of their own evaluative judgement.

**Phase 4:** Reflective audit. Assessment shifts from product to metacognitive process. Learners submit a concise revision memo detailing how the draft evolved and which source—peer, AI, or instructor—shaped each revision. An accuracy check requires learners to flag any AI-supported claims and document how they verified that information against primary sources.

## **Assessment and Classroom-Policy Adaptations**

### **➤ Assessment Redesign**

To mitigate misuse and preserve construct validity, EAP assessment must pivot decisively toward process-based evaluation—weighting preliminary drafts, reflective memos, and instructor conferences. Incorporating in-class, unplugged writing checkpoints establishes a verifiable baseline of learner capability and shifts the evaluative focus toward reasoning and source synthesis rather than surface-level correctness. This pivot echoes broader calls to rethink assessment policy so that it cultivates self-regulated learning, responsible use, and integrity in GenAI-rich classrooms (Chiu).

➤ **Feedback Validity and Fairness**

Educators must align GenAI use with the specific purpose of each assessment. Where a task is designed to assess independent argumentation, the prompt should require original reasoning tied to specific course materials and backed by documented process evidence. Where the goal is linguistic refinement, limited and disclosed GenAI editing support may be permissible.

➤ **Ethical and Inclusive Practice**

A genuinely human-centred stance demands critical attention to digital equity. Unequal access to premium GenAI models or stable internet infrastructure can exacerbate educational inequalities. Privacy-aware practices—prohibiting the entry of sensitive personal data into large language models—and explicit instruction in algorithmic bias and hallucination risk are non-negotiable components of an inclusive EAP classroom.

**A Research Agenda for TESOL and Applied Linguistics**

Future empirical work must move beyond superficial writing outcomes (e.g., holistic-score improvements) to investigate the mechanisms of human–AI partnership. Priorities include:

**Feedback-literacy development:** the quality of learner uptake, the sophistication of revision rationales, and the longitudinal growth of evaluative judgement under sustained exposure to AI feedback.

**Teacher-learning trajectories:** how EAP instructors develop, refine, and deploy AI-informed pedagogical knowledge, particularly in task redesign and process-based assessment.

**Atrophy versus enhancement:** whether prolonged reliance on GenAI scaffolding strengthens independent drafting over time or leads to cognitive atrophy.

**Equity across multilingual contexts:** the differential impacts of GenAI mediated by proficiency level, socio-economic access to technology, and diverse first-language backgrounds.

**Validity frameworks:** robust validity arguments for language assessment in GenAI-enabled environments, addressing what constitutes reliable evidence of learning when a machine assists production.

## Conclusion

Generative AI is undeniably reshaping the EAP writing classroom. The pedagogical response, however, need not collapse into the binary extremes of total prohibition or uncritical celebration of efficiency. A human-centred partnership approach conceptualises GenAI feedback as one input among many—an input that must be filtered through the learner’s own evaluative judgement, disciplinary knowledge, and ethical awareness. The proposed HAP-FF framework translates this philosophical stance into teachable classroom routines: rigorous task framing, prompting as inquiry, feedback triangulation, and reflective auditing. By centring feedback literacy, proactive assessment redesign, and responsible use, ELT professionals can harness GenAI to amplify and strengthen—rather than replace—human critical thinking and language development.

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