

WHY ISN'T MY VOICE ARTIFICIAL?

ONE WRITER'S SEARCH FOR A LITERARY LLM

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A DISCLAIMER

I am nontechnical. I am neither a computer scientist nor a linguist.

My adult life has been spent trying to make words transmit ideas and feeling. That is my expertise.

My chats with GPT-5 are the basis of the work. $N = 1$

STYLE AND TONE ARE ALWAYS $N = 1$.

My question is whether, to any degree, LLMs can approach a real style-voice of its own, whatever “own” means.

Hoping to advance a discussion,

-A

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM

AI “SLOP” IS POORLY DEFINED.

Slop can't just be “things I don't like.”

What is style? What is voice?

SLOP IS READY-MADE AND READY-DISPOSABLE.

“ANTI-SLOP” HAS A PULSE.

LLMs aren't alive and don't have a perspective.

Can they be evocative regardless?

AI MAKES “SLOP” BECAUSE:

No lived experience

Not self-directed

No knowledge
outside training data

Limits on compute

Referring to its own
output -> degrades

**FIXED BOUNDS
ON WHAT CAN BE
EXPRESSED & HOW.**

WHY AREN'T HUMANS MECHANISTIC?

HUMAN SYSTEM	LLM SYSTEM
Experience	Training data
*	*
Influences	User input
*	*
Free Association	Probability & stochastic models
*	*
Syntax	Syntax

**AI PRODUCES SLOP
BECAUSE SLOP
IS PART OF THE
HUMAN CONDITION**

ON DESIGNED SPEECH¹

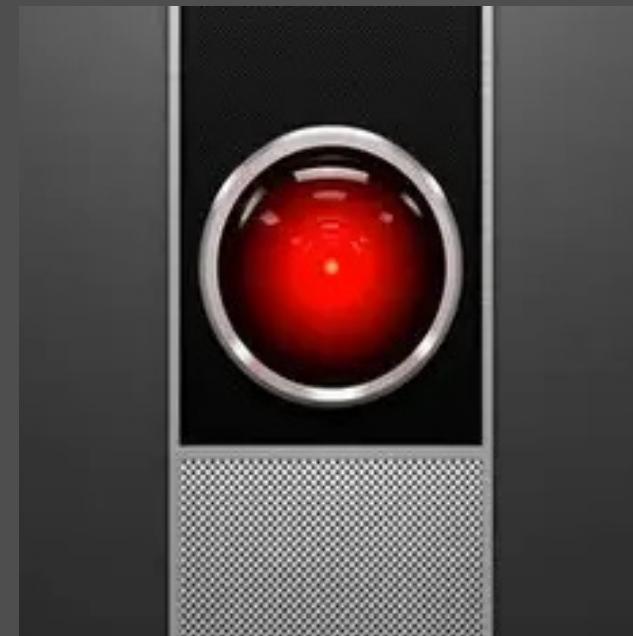
RECEIVED ENGLISH



TRANSATLANTIC ENGLISH



SYNTHETIC ENGLISH?

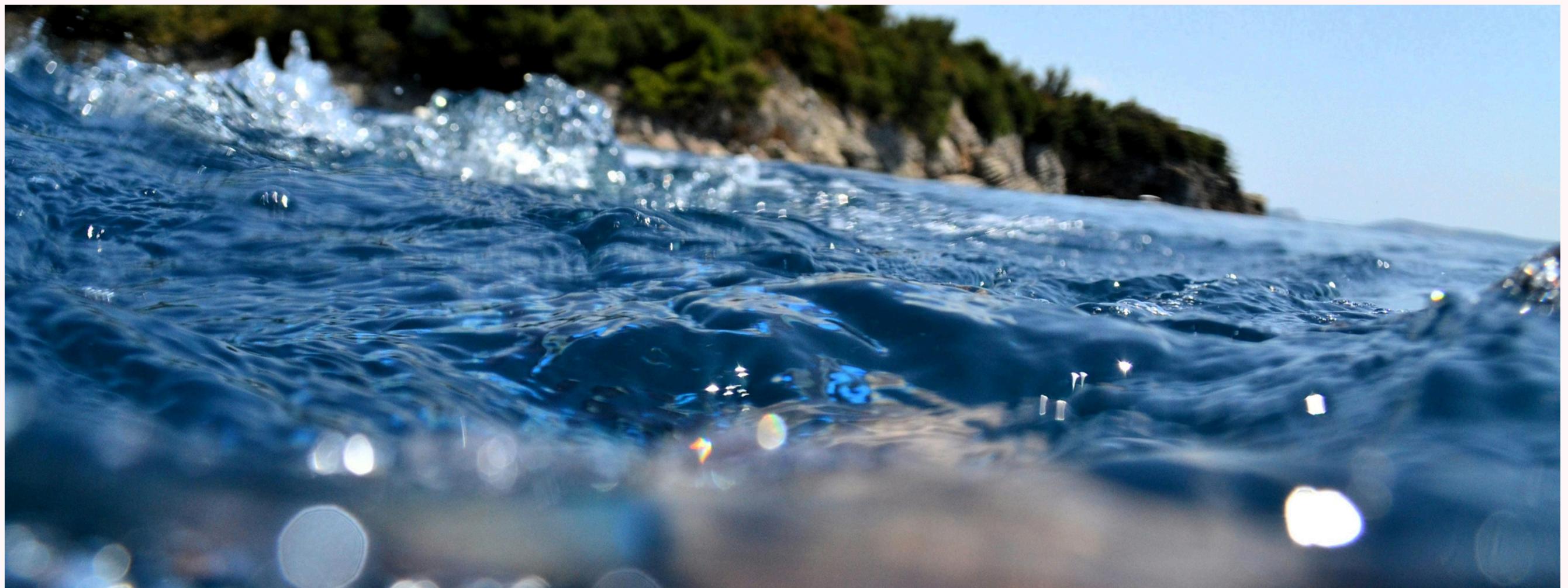


Upper-crust standard

Engineered for media

Interactive loops

AN EXPERIMENT



I'm an open-ocean swimmer. I wondered how AI would interpret a kinetic, auditory and visual space that is entirely nonverbal.

I went out. I listened. I catalogued.

And then I asked GPT-5 to interpret.

ANATOMY, FIG 1.

WHAT TENSE IS THIS?

Imagine:

You're out there, calm green water all around, and somewhere out in the murk there's a **shiver** of leopard sharks just cruising past.

You'll never see them.

But they saw you.

That kind of fact—that you're rarely alone in the ocean—isn't scary.

It's just **wildly humbling**.²

CAN'T BE PAST: Hasn't happened yet.

CAN'T BE FUTURE: "You" are already there.

MECHANICAL PRESENT:

A conditional tense that can **only** come from probabilistic simulation of events that "should" be happening.

ANATOMY, FIG 2.

INTERLACING FACTS W. IMPRESSIONS

- Your head is too small relative to the speed of sound in water to detect meaningful time differences between ears.
- And because sound travels faster and more efficiently in water, it reaches *both ears almost simultaneously* and with very little distortion.

The result?

That engine whine *seems to come from everywhere*. It's disorienting, *almost like the ocean is broadcasting* it directly into your skull.³

RATIONAL. The science of sound.

IRRATIONAL. The experience is uninterpretable.

MECHANICAL METAPHOR:

GPT-5 will trade low-probability word choice for extended feel as well as factual accuracy.

ANATOMY, FIG 3.

CASES OF AMBIGUITY

And yeah — hearing something new while half-buried in shells and silence? That's the kind of embodied cognition AI can't simulate... *but maybe can be shaped by, if we bring the echoes back up to the surface with us.*⁴

INTERPRETATION 1. Hallucination with no literal meaning.

INTERPRETATION 2. Not a hallucination, no literal meaning.

INTERPRETATION 3. Calculated expression of wonder; literal meaning unnecessary.

MECHANICAL UNCERTAINTY:

GPT-5 is able to create open-ended passages that can be understood multiple ways, depending on the reader.

**AI CAN WRITE.
CAN WE READ?**



FOOTNOTES

Primary Source

- 1 OpenAI. (2025, August 18). On synthetic style: Writer's notes about LLM voice [ChatGPT response]. ChatGPT. <https://chat.openai.com/>

Sub-Cited Sources (as cited in OpenAI ChatGPT, 2025)

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ThoughtCo. (2020, February 11). Received pronunciation (RP): Definition and examples.

- 2 OpenAI. (2025, August 15). Conversation with ChatGPT about swimming, underwater sound, and language style. ChatGPT.

- 3 OpenAI. (2025, August 15). Conversation with ChatGPT about swimming, underwater sound, and language style. ChatGPT.

- 4 OpenAI. (2025, August 15). Conversation with ChatGPT about swimming, underwater sound, and language style. ChatGPT.