2025 Chicago Language Symposium Presentation Abstracts

April 12, 2025

DePaul University

1. *How to Use an AI-Assisted Chatbot as a Conversation Practice Tool: Case Study of Intermediate Learners of Chinese and Korean*

Presenters: Eun Hee Kim, Chin-Hung Chang, Sergei Kalugin, & Matthew W. Taylor, Northwestern University

There has been growing interest in integrating AI-assisted chatbots into World Language learning due to their effectiveness in facilitating language acquisition (Fryer & Carpenter, 2006; Fryer et al., 2020; Kim, 2019) and their versatility for off-class language practice (Alm & Nkomo, 2020). Despite these obvious advantages, AI-assisted chatbots are not widely implemented in language classrooms. It may be due to concerns such as ethical issues, occasional linguistic accuracy (De la Vall & Aray, 2023), and a lack of established practices for their effective use in educational settings. To address these challenges, we have developed an AI-based conversational chatbot equipped with target users' language knowledge and ability to respond at the target level. The chatbot is designed to support learners outside the classroom by providing scaffolded practice with newly learned vocabulary, grammar and expressions. Our target users are second-year Korean and Chinese language students at a Midwestern university in the US.

The chatbot is integrated into the curriculum starting in early 2025. Its primary function is to enable students to practice their language skills through texting, using the knowledge they have acquired. During these practice sessions, students will receive feedback from the chatbot on mistakes they make. We plan to collect comprehensive feedback through post-completion surveys, focusing on various aspects such as learners' perception of the chatbot and its usability and impact on language learning. The data will provide insights into students' learning experiences to shape future improvements to the tool and extend its application. The expected outcomes include enhanced student engagement outside the classroom, improved vocabulary retention, and promotion of practical application of language expressions.

2. *Bridging AI and Human Interaction: Enhancing Oral Proficiency in Online French Course*

Presenters: Sandrine Pell & Vera Klekovkina, University of Wisconsin

In fully online language courses, fostering oral proficiency and confidence presents a unique challenge. This case study examines student perceptions of AI-assisted speaking practice through Speakology AI and its impact on real-world, interpersonal communication in a flipped-model novice French course. Students engage in weekly AI-driven speaking practice with Speakology and participate in weekly cross-cultural conversations with Moroccan conversation partners. This study highlights how AI tutors introduce new affordances in online language learning by providing on-demand, low-stakes speaking practice, immediate feedback, and a personalized, adaptive environment for students to practice their spontaneous speaking skills.

The study explores whether AI practice serves as an effective bridge to spontaneous, human interaction. Through self-reflection tickets, students provide insights on: 1) Their comfort level using an AI tutor for speaking practice. 2) The impact on their confidence when speaking in French. 3)Whether they feel AI practice prepares them for real-world conversations with their Moroccan partners. Preliminary findings suggest that while students appreciate the low-pressure environment Speakology offers, their views on its effectiveness for real-life communication vary. Some report increased confidence and ease in conversation, while others highlight a disconnect between AI-driven responses and authentic human dialogue. The study will discuss the benefits and limitations of integrating AI as a preparatory tool for interpersonal communication, and explore strategies to balance technology and human interaction in online language learning.

The findings from this case study offer valuable insights into the potential of AI tools like Speakology in supporting language proficiency and fostering meaningful interpersonal communication skills. This presentation highlights the practical implications of integrating AI in language education and provides recommendations for educators looking to enhance their teaching practices through technology. Ultimately, the goal is to contribute to the ongoing discourse on the role of AI in education and its impact on student confidence and proficiency development.

3. *Enhancing Language Learning with Generative AI: Practical Applications for Writing, Reading, and Speaking Across Proficiency Levels*

Presenter: Shiva Rahmani, The University of Chicago

As AI-powered tools like ChatGPT and other generative AI models continue to transform language education, educators are increasingly exploring their potential to enhance student engagement and proficiency. This presentation explores the practical applications of generative AI in developing writing, reading, and speaking skills at various proficiency levels, from novice to advanced, by demonstrating concrete activities that foster interactive, student-centered learning. Through interactive exercises and real-time feedback, these tools can help students improve their language skills in a personalized and engaging manner. Additionally, AI-powered platforms can adapt to individual learning styles, making language education more accessible and effective for all students.

Drawing from firsthand classroom experience, I will demonstrate various ways ChatGPT can support writing development, reading comprehension, and speaking practice across novice, intermediate, and advanced proficiency levels. Depending on the session's focus, this may include structured prompts, iterative feedback, adaptive text modification, scaffolded comprehension questions, vocabulary expansion, interactive dialogue simulations, and pronunciation guidance. The presentation will highlight adaptable strategies that educators can modify based on their specific teaching contexts and student needs. As AI continues to evolve, it is crucial to examine both its opportunities and limitations within language instruction. Educators must consider how to integrate AI tools thoughtfully, balancing technological advantages with sound pedagogical principles. Addressing concerns such as over-reliance on AI, fostering critical thinking, and maintaining authentic human interaction in language learning will be essential in shaping best practices.

Additionally, I will discuss key pedagogical considerations, such as AI bias, assessment challenges, and ethical considerations in AI-assisted learning. Through concrete examples and student feedback, this session will showcase how generative AI fosters engagement,

individualized learning pathways, and deeper linguistic proficiency. By the end of the presentation, attendees will have a set of ready-to-implement AI-based strategies for their classrooms, as well as a broader understanding of how generative AI can complement traditional language instruction while maintaining pedagogical integrity.

4. *Incorporating AI in the Urdu Language Classroom: Innovations, Opportunities, and Challenges*

Presenter: Romeena Kureishy, The University of Chicago

As artificial intelligence continues to reshape education, its integration into world language instruction brings both exciting possibilities and unique challenges. In this presentation, I will discuss how AI tools were effectively incorporated into my Urdu language classroom, enhancing student engagement, interpersonal communication, and proficiency development while addressing key challenges in assessment and content accuracy.

This session will showcase practical applications of AI in Urdu language instruction, demonstrating how these tools align with the TELL framework and best teaching practices. I will share classroom activities where Chat GPT was used to facilitate interpersonal literacy practice, generate AI-created visuals from student prompts to support pronunciation and proficiency building, and enhance learning across beginner, intermediate, and advanced Urdu classes.

The impact of these AI-driven activities was profound—students became more engaged, interactive, and invested in their learning. One of the most surprising yet valuable outcomes was their active role in correcting AI-generated errors, an exercise that deepened their grammatical understanding and analytical skills. This shift from passive learning to critical engagement allowed students to interact with the language in a more meaningful way while reinforcing their confidence in Urdu. Despite its benefits, AI integration also presented challenges, including grammatical inconsistencies, limitations in Urdu-language AI resources, and ethical concerns in AI-assisted assessments. This presentation will address these issues while highlighting AI's potential to support less commonly taught languages.

By sharing real-world classroom experiences, this session will contribute to the growing conversation on AI's role in world language education, offering insights and strategies for educators looking to incorporate AI into their own teaching of less commonly taught languages.

5. Integrating Mainstream AI for Real-Time Assessment in an Intermediate French Course

Presenter: Georgy Khabarovskiy, The University of Chicago

This presentation examines how widely available AI tools can address the challenge of providing timely, individualized feedback in an Intensive French Language and Culture course that bridges first-year and second-year learning objectives. Currently, the course employs a range of evaluative tasks - such as two-step at-home Rédactions [essays], recorded oral presentations, interviews with the instructor, and in-class grammar and vocabulary quizzes. Despite these varied measures, providing immediate and individualized feedback can be a challenge.

Drawing on formative assessment principles in SLA (Swain, 1995; Ellis, 2008) and dynamic assessment concepts (Lantolf & Poehner, 2014), my approach involves blending AI feedback into select written and oral assignments. Generative AI platforms (e.g., ChatGPT) provide immediate critiques of grammar, word choice, and style in short writing tasks. Similarly, speech recognition tools - such as free voice typing applications - help learners notice and correct issues with pronunciation and fluency during oral proficiency checks. After receiving the automated feedback, students complete brief self-reflection prompts tying the suggestions to specific course competencies. Instructors maintain a guiding role, refining AI outputs to ensure accuracy, cultural relevance, and consistency with course outcomes. Preliminary observations suggest that students quickly detect recurring error patterns, which heightens awareness of language form and use.

The presentation will detail a step-by-step process for incorporating these AI-based activities, from selecting user-friendly tools to scaffolding student reflection. I will also address practical considerations such as technology access and potential biases in AI recognition. Examples of anonymized student work from my class will illustrate the impact on motivation and self-

monitoring. Ultimately, my goal is to demonstrate how pairing mainstream AI feedback with teacher mediation can reinforce core course objectives, expand opportunities for dynamic assessment, and support the progression from intermediate to more advanced levels of communicative competence.

6. Spanish and Beyond: AI in Language Assessment from Major to Underrepresented Languages

Presenters: Abraham Harris, Troy Cox, and Matthew Wilcox, Brigham Young University

As artificial intelligence reshapes language education, its application in language assessment is a growing area of research. This study evaluates multiple AI models in predicting Oral Proficiency Interview—computer (OPIc) scores in Spanish and explores their adaptability to less commonly taught languages (LCTLs).

We have collected several thousand language student responses and implemented various modeling approaches. Some models rely solely on fluency-based features such as articulation rate, mean rate of utterance, pauses, etc., while others incorporate various automatic speech recognition (ASRs) for transcription-based analysis. Additionally, hybrid models combine fluency metrics with linguistic features derived from ASR transcriptions.

For prediction, we employ gradient boosting models and Bayesian decision trees, both for categorical classification and regression-based scoring. Key evaluation metrics include the models' ability to predict exact agreement and agreement within one sublevel of students' official OPIc ratings on the ACTFL proficiency scale.

This study provides insights into the AI-driven language assessment models. We investigate whether models trained on high-resource languages like Spanish can be adapted to LCTLs using transfer learning and data augmentation to overcome data scarcity.

The presentation will discuss the impact and implications of these models for language assessment, highlighting both opportunities and limitations. We will review potential biases, data constraints, and challenges in model generalization for less commonly taught languages. The session will conclude with future directions for refining AI-based assessment tools and their potential for scalable, automated language proficiency evaluation. This study aligns with symposium themes on AI and Language Assessment, AI and Less Commonly Taught Languages, and AI and the Future of Language Education.

7. *Implementing Artificial Intelligence in World Language Programs: Training, Resources, and Ethical Considerations*

Presenter: William Justin Morgan, University of Wisconsin-Madison

As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to transform language education, programmatic-level integration requires a structured approach that balances innovation with pedagogical integrity. This presentation will explore the implementation of AI tools across the Spanish language program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, detailing strategies for training instructors, encouraging faculty engagement with AI for language learning, and providing concrete resources to facilitate AI adoption in curriculum design.

A key component of this initiative is professional development, where educators receive training on both the affordances and limitations of AI in language instruction. Faculty are guided through best practices for leveraging AI in areas such as material development, assessment, and personalized learning pathways, while also establishing ethical boundaries for responsible AI use. Additionally, I will introduce the undergraduate course Artificial Intelligence and Language Learning, which serves as a model for integrating AI literacy into the language curriculum.

This session will provide audience members with a framework for AI incorporation at the programmatic level, including practical steps for faculty training, resource allocation, and ethical considerations. By outlining specific strategies and sharing lessons learned, this presentation

aims to equip language educators with actionable insights for AI adoption in large-scale language programs while maintaining a pedagogically sound and human-centered approach to instruction.

8. AI and Inclusive Teaching: Creating Personalized Learning Pathways for All Students

Presenter: Kate Grovergrys, Madison Area Technical College

As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to shape education, it presents new opportunities to create personalized and adaptable learning experiences in world language instruction. I am currently conducting a research project exploring how AI can support student engagement, flexible learning pathways, and instructional adaptability to better meet the needs of diverse learners. This project examines how AI tools can enhance learning without increasing instructor workload, making courses more accessible and responsive to individual student progress.

This session will share findings from my research, focusing on how AI-driven tools can:

- Increase student engagement by providing interactive and adaptive language learning experiences.
- Support flexible learning pathways by allowing students to engage with content in ways that align with their individual needs and strengths.
- Provide individualized scaffolding for students with different learning needs, enabling self-paced progression.
- Enhance instructional adaptability, allowing educators to adjust content dynamically based on student performance and feedback.

Through case studies and real-world applications, I will demonstrate how AI can be leveraged in language courses to offer customized support and differentiation without adding to faculty workload. Rather than replacing human instruction, AI serves as an instructional partner, helping educators build flexible, student-centered learning environments.

This session will provide practical strategies for integrating AI ethically and effectively, ensuring that students benefit from more responsive, engaging, and personalized learning experiences. Attendees will leave with concrete ideas on how to implement AI to enhance engagement and accessibility in their own classrooms.

9. *Divergent Paradigms in AI Integration: A Multi-institutional Analysis of Instructor-Student Perspectives in Second Language Acquisition*

Presenter: Hossam Elsherbiny, Rice University

Recent developments in artificial intelligence have sparked both enthusiasm and concern in language education. While AI tools are increasingly available, their adoption and perception vary significantly between instructors and learners.

This presentation examines this divergence through a multi-institutional study of over 100 participants across major U.S. universities, revealing critical insights for the future integration of AI in language instruction.

Our research found a striking disparity: while 62% of instructors avoid AI tools entirely, 55% of students actively incorporate them into their language learning process. This gap reflects deeper tensions in how these tools are perceived and utilized. Students predominantly use AI for grammar checking (80%), translation (67%), and vocabulary practice (64%), viewing it as a supplementary tool rather than a replacement for traditional learning methods. In contrast, instructors express concerns about academic integrity, output quality, and lack of proper training in AI implementation.

The study reveals several critical challenges that need addressing: the cultural bias inherent in AI systems trained primarily on English corpora, limitations in handling gendered languages, and the increased workload for instructors in verifying assignment authenticity. However, it also highlights opportunities for thoughtful AI integration, particularly in areas where students report positive learning outcomes.