

Exploring the Role of Generative AI in Second Language Education: Insights for Instruction, Learning, and Assessment

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Artificial Intelligence (AI), broadly speaking, refers to the efforts to program computers in order to mimic human understandings and problem-solving abilities (Voss, 2024). Recent developments in Generative AI utilize large volumes of available training data that allow users to prompt AI-powered tools to automatically produce specific content (e.g., text or images) (Vajjala, 2024). As an innovative technology, Generative AI is reshaping many fields, including second language education (Ji et al., 2023; Zou et al., 2023). At the same time, it has sparked discussions about its seemingly obvious advantages and potential pitfalls (Voss et al., 2023). Many students, educators, and researchers have embraced Generative AI in their everyday practices. There are numerous Generative AI-powered language learning chatbots, tutors, programs, and tools freely available and widely used in language learning contexts around the world.

While the capabilities of Generative AI present unprecedented opportunities and challenges for second language education, research into the role of technology in learning, teaching, and assessment is hardly new to the field (e.g., Chapelle, 2001). As this new area and its implications for second language education are explored and evaluated, there is need for further research that delves deeper into both the theoretical and practical considerations involved in the use of Generative AI in language education and assessment (Han, 2024; Xi, 2023). As such, this forum explores the role of Generative AI as a novel technology in second language education with respect to considerations for theory and practice.

First, Yiwen Li reviews the literature on the usability of ChatGPT in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). The paper examines ChatGPT's capabilities, effectiveness, and potential for transforming language education practices. Li discusses how ChatGPT can enhance learner autonomy and motivation and improve language proficiency. Li also addresses challenges such as maintaining academic integrity and creating effective prompts. The paper advocates for improved AI literacy among learners to fully leverage ChatGPT's benefits. By synthesizing insights from various studies, Li calls for ongoing research to optimize GenAI's role in language learning and teaching.

Next, Shamini Shetye focuses on one specific Generative AI, ChatGPT-powered application, *Khanmigo*, and evaluates its effectiveness as a French language learning tool using Chapelle's (2001) Evaluation Framework for Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

tools. The findings reveal that while Khanmigo demonstrates some potential in language instruction, it falls short in several evaluation criteria such as Learner Fit and Positive Impact. The paper emphasizes the need for a balanced integration of AI tools within language learning paradigms, highlighting that effective educational technology should guide and support the learning process through awareness-raising dialogue, rather than simply providing answers to questions.

Lastly, Soo Joo examines the role of generative AI as a partner in writing and speaking for second language learning and assessment, framed within the Learning-Oriented Assessment (LOA) approach (Purpura, 2024; Turner & Purpura, 2016). The paper reviews various studies and discusses how AI can be integrated as a dynamic component in the language learning and assessment process. Joo's analysis underscores the potential of AI to provide personalized feedback and aid in the development of language skills, while also highlighting challenges related to the authenticity of AI interactions and the efficacy of these interactions for language learning and assessment protocols. The paper calls for a systematic approach to embedding AI in language assessment to enhance learning outcomes.

In conclusion, the synthesis of these three papers sheds light on the multifaceted nature of Generative AI in second language education. The examination of ChatGPT's useability underscores its potential to enhance learner experience in general, while the evaluation of Khanmigo highlights the importance of balanced integration of technology use and research-based language learning theoretical frameworks. Furthermore, the evaluation of Generative AI as a writing and speaking partner in different learning and assessment contexts emphasizes the significance of personalized feedback, effective instruction, and collaborative learning while also highlighting the limitations in terms of the authenticity of human-AI interactions. As educators, researchers, and policy makers continue to navigate the complexities of integrating Generative AI in second language education, these papers provide valuable insights for understanding the opportunities and challenges presented by this innovative technology. Moving forward, further research is essential to fully understand and incorporate the potentials of Generative AI technology in facilitating second language learning, instruction, and assessment.

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