Essay

Reconceptualizing the Role of the University Language Teacher in Light of Generative AI

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Abstract: This paper reconceptualizes the role of the teacher in the university foreign language classroom in an age of generative AI chatbots and automatic translation tools. We call for a reconceptualization of this role based on two factors: the unique social interactivity of the university language classroom and the need for effective instruction on how to use Intelligent Computer-Assisted Language Learning (ICALL) tools outside of the classroom. We argue that the teacher must master and integrate these two different modes of teaching and learning. Interpersonal exchanges in class respond to the need for real-time human interaction and relatedness in language learning and so cannot, and should not, be wholly replaced by chatbots. Rather, these sorts of exchanges must form a cornerstone of on-campus foreign language pedagogy. In contrast, teachers must also be able to leverage the benefits of learner-facing AI tools, especially for use outside of the classroom, given the learning gains associated with them. We provide detailed examples of how this dual approach can be realized and propose a five-step approach for incorporating AI into university language pedagogy.

Keywords: foreign language classroom; pedagogy; teacher; AI; automatic translation tools

1. Introduction

The rapidly expanding capabilities of generative AI in the process of language learning necessitate a serious reconceptualization of the role of the university language teacher. These tools—and especially large language models, such as ChatGPT—are already transforming how students approach learning in formal educational settings (Al Zaidy, 2024), often without adequate guidance on their effective use. In this paper, we specifically refer to ChatGPT-4o, which is freely available at the time of publication, when discussing its features and classroom applications. However, as specific model versions are not consistently reported in existing literature, we refer to ChatGPT in a more general sense when reviewing prior studies. The Digital Education Council's (2024) Global AI Student Survey offers a striking recent example of how these tools are being used. Although not focused specifically on language learners, the survey gathered insights from a diverse group of over 3800 students across 16 countries at various levels of university study, encompassing a wide range of disciplines. Notably, 86% of respondents reported using AI tools in their academic work, with 54% using them at least weekly and 24% daily. Importantly, 72% of students expressed a desire for more courses on AI literacy, underscoring the urgent need for educators to actively guide students in using these technologies. This need is particularly crucial in the context of language learning, as AI tools like chatbots and automatic translators are likely to be particularly disruptive to traditional pedagogical practices.

This disruption stems from the capabilities of LLMs (large languages models) to challenge the expertise traditionally offered by teachers—such as linguistic explanation, sustained dialogic interaction in the foreign language, high-quality translations, and real-time error correction—which can now be partially or fully outsourced to AI tools.

This paper seeks to support teachers of foreign languages by providing clear recommendations for integrating AI technologies into university-level language pedagogy. It argues for a dual approach that leverages AI to enhance personalized learning off-campus while preserving the authentic, interpersonal dynamics of language acquisition in the classroom. We provide numerous practical examples to illustrate how this can be achieved. By articulating this dual approach, we aim to equip educators with a practical framework to develop a future-proof pedagogy that combines the strengths of technology with the irreplaceable value of human connection in the classroom. No matter how advanced, AI will never be a fellow learner in the room: it cannot share the vulnerabilities, frustrations, or triumphs that develop common ground between students. Recognizing this fundamental distinction allows educators to embrace AI as a powerful tool while preserving the centrality of human relationships in fostering a collaborative and supportive classroom environment.

In what follows, we will understand AI as "computer systems that have been designed to interact with the world through capabilities (for example, visual perception and speech recognition) and intelligent behaviors (for example, assessing the available information and then taking the most sensible action to achieve a stated goal) that we would think of as essentially human" (Luckin et al., 2016, p. 14). AI tools that can be used to support language learning fall within the domain of Intelligent Computer-Assisted Language Learning (ICALL) and allow students to shape their learning journey in novel and powerful ways. In this paper, we focus on two types of AI-powered tools: automatic translation programs (e.g., Google Translate) and AI chatbots, the latter of which are also referred to as 'conversational AI' or 'conversational agents' (Belda-Medina & Calvo-Ferrer, 2022). A chatbot is "a dialogue software program that can interact with users and process their inputs using natural language" (Huang et al., 2022, p. 237). Examples of freely available chatbots that can be recruited to assist students in foreign language learning include large language models such as ChatGPT (GPT standing for 'generative, pre-trained transformer'; chatgpt.com) or more specialized chatbots like the companion-creating Replika (replika.com) or the in-built AI-tutor in the Flashcard system 'Quizlet' (quizlet.com). Chatbots are also a feature in some online language-learning apps like DuoLingo, which has just debuted a new AI chat feature with a character called Lily (for DuoLingo Max subscribers on iOS). In this paper, we examine the advantages and limitations of AI-powered chatbots and online automatic translation tools. We do so in the knowledge that such tools are freely available to students and have the potential to greatly assist the process of L2 (second language) acquisition. However, we will focus our attention disproportionally on chatbots given the strong potential for certain chatbots to subsume the work of automatic translators. For example, ChatGPT has the ability to translate entire documents into a wide range of languages to a very high standard. In addition, and in contrast to current iterations of automatic translators, it also offers users the advantage of being able to request clarification about linguistic choices made by the AI as well as explanations of linguistic phenomena.

In Section 2 below, we review the literature on the use of chatbots and automatic translation tools in foreign language learning. In light of this investigation, we explain why the role of the university language teacher should be reconceptualized and we articulate our vision for this revised role, which takes into account the three core psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness, as articulated by Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2017). We propose several activities that demonstrate how this new pedagogical approach, which involves the use of ChatGPT and the automatic translation

tools Google Translate and DeepL, can be enacted. We focus on these three AI-powered tools because they are useful, well known, and available free of charge to students worldwide. It is our belief that large language models (like ChatGPT) and automatic translation tools are here to stay, and so they must be integrated into L2 pedagogy. Finally, we suggest a five-step approach for integrating AI-technologies in university language programs.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Chatbots and Foreign Language Learning

A large number of studies have been undertaken on the use of AI in foreign language learning, including several systematic reviews of the literature. We will use two of these systematic reviews as the starting point for our investigation of the domain. Huang et al. (2022) conducted a review of the literature for empirical studies published in English that focused on the use of chatbots to assist language learning in educational settings. The publications were journal articles or conference proceedings focused on first-language or foreign language learning. The authors identified 25 such publications. Chatbots were divided into two categories: those with a web-based interface (e.g., Cleverbot), or those with a mobile messenger interface (e.g., Replika). Most chatbots were used by students individually (as opposed to in group settings) and as interlocutors in conversations. The authors noted the following affordances of chatbots.

Technological affordances:
Timeliness (interaction in real-time at any time);
Ease of use (could be accessed via a range of mediums—computer, mobile phone, etc.);
Personalization (topics of conversation adapted to a student's individual profile).

Pedagogical affordances:
As interlocutors (e.g., discussion of a particular topic);
As simulations (e.g., role plays);
For transmission (delivery of information pre-prepared by teacher);
As helplines (asking chatbot for help with online activities);
For recommendations (e.g., of books to read).

Social affordances:
Chatbots as affective, open, and coherent communicators.

Unfortunately, the authors do not provide a breakdown of these studies into two groups: those that focused on first-language learning or those that targeted foreign language learning. Nevertheless, given that all the examples provided in the article refer to the study of foreign languages, we assume that the latter group represents the context of the majority of the studies analyzed. Haristiani (2019) also conducted a meta-analysis of the literature on chatbots and foreign language learning alongside research on a chatbot she, herself, developed. In her conclusion, she reiterates the following six reasons for using chatbots in L2 learning that were first articulated in L. Fryer and Carpenter (2006).

1. Students are more relaxed talking to a computer than they are a person;
2. Chatbots can repeat material as many times as a student wishes them to;
3. Many chatbots provide text and synthesized speech, which allows for both listening and reading skills to be developed;
4. Chatbots are novel and thus interesting to students;
5. Students can use vocabulary and structures that they might otherwise not have the chance to use;
6. Chatbots can potentially provide quick, effective feedback on speech and grammar use.

We will develop these six advantages by branching out to other relevant published studies on the same or similar topics.

It is notable that the first advantage was observed by Fryer and Carpenter in 2006, a time when AI chatbot technology was far less advanced than today's sophisticated tools like ChatGPT. In their study, Fryer and Carpenter noted that chatbots seemed better suited to more advanced students because the majority of chatbots at the time were designed for native speaker use. This restriction has been mitigated nowadays thanks to tools like ChatGPT, which can be instructed to simplify output to suit the level of the user. The idea that students feel more relaxed when interacting with a chatbot also connects directly to the issue of speaking anxiety, which remains a significant barrier in language learning (Tutton & Cohen, 2024; von Wörde, 2003). In a study of the use of four chatbot learning platforms (Eggbun, Memrise, DuoLingo, and Mondly) by language learners, Alm and Nkomo (2020) note that language learners can respond to the chatbot at their own pace, thus helping to alleviate language speaking anxiety. Yet 'talking' to a computer may conceivably encompass the written modality as well as the spoken one: that is, users often have typed interactions with chatbots. Given that short, typed exchanges are a feature of modern communication in general (Dale, 2016), the availability of such textual interaction may help to explain the ease users feel when talking to a computer. Furthermore, in Alm and Nkomo's (2020) study of students' opinions of chatbots, the authors focus on learners' reactions to chatbots in general, whether they be grammar bots or chatbots used as speaking partners. Even when reference is made to the latter, the analysis does not focus on the students' experience of speaking anxiety. As such, we cannot reliably measure how effective such chatbots are in reducing this sort of language anxiety, nor do we have any idea of whether they fully prepare students for the real-world demands of oral language use.

As far as the third advantage is concerned, a degree of nuance is required. Listening and speaking skills (and, indeed, reading skills) can only be developed if the chatbot produces linguistically correct, logical output. This sort of concern is less important nowadays with more recent, sophisticated AI-tools like ChatGPT, which produce syntactically complex sentences that mimic authentic conversation (Kohnke et al., 2023). Nevertheless, a degree of caution is required. Kohnke et al. (ibid) note that ChatGPT relies more on written-text input than spoken input, the limitations of which are evident in an example they provide in their paper. In this example, the authors demonstrate that ChatGPT can modify a dialogue to suit the level of the student. However, the text produced for the advanced learner includes lexical choices that are highly unnatural and stilted (a feature that was not explicitly commented on by the authors.) The questionable text is provided below.

Amy: I heard that the electricity company implemented a rate hike.

Jane: That's vexing. Paying all of our bills is already challenging, and now we have to pay more for electricity.

A native English speaker is unlikely to use the verb 'implement' in this sort of informal exchange, nor would the adjective 'vexing' be considered natural here. The complex sentence 'paying all of our bills is already challenging' features the syntactically heavy subject 'paying all of our bills', which would typically be shifted to the end of the sentence in accordance with the syntactic principle of end-weight (i.e., 'it's already a challenge to pay all of our bills.') This compromised linguistic result seemingly stems from the bot's failure to account for differences in register between formal written text and informal spoken dialogue. In fairness, however, it seems likely that the authors were using ChatGPT 3.5 instead of ChatGPT 4.0, which is the current, freely available flagship model that is capable of generating more authentically human text. Belda-Medina and Calvo-Ferrer (2022), in a study on how pre-service teachers view the conversational AI chatbots Replika, Kuki, and Wysa, report that their participants noted Replika's effective use of different registers and

knowledge of colloquial expressions. As such, the degree of authenticity of dialogue is a variable that can shift when using different chatbots.

As far as the fourth reason is concerned, this is perhaps the least compelling of the list because novelty by its very nature wears off quickly and with it, potentially, the user's interest in the chatbot. In a study comparing students' level of interest in speaking tasks undertaken with chatbots and human partners, L. K. Fryer et al. (2017) found that level of interest in the task being undertaken decreased over time when students interacted with a chatbot ('Cleverbot') as opposed to a human conversational partner. One reason the authors advanced to explain this phenomenon was the novel nature of the chatbot; another was the oral nature of the tasks, and thus the less authentic replication of an inherently human experience. However, in subsequent research, L. K. Fryer et al. (2019) found that interest in undertaking a task with a chatbot recorded a small but significant rebound after five months. They also found that student interest in chatbots was predicted by an interest in human conversation. This is an important finding because it suggests that educators cannot blithely advocate for the use of chatbots when it comes to students who show little interest in conversing with others. In addition, their results suggested that interaction with chatbots should not be seen as a replica of human–human interaction. Participants in their study noted possibilities afforded by the chatbots that were not offered by human partners: for example, the use of a wide range of expressions, vocabulary and questions, and the possibility for repetition and continued talking. These affordances are noted as reasons 2 and 5 in the list above.

As for reason number 6, we interpret 'effective' feedback as feedback that is clear and comprehensible, enabling students to progress in their understanding and use of the L2. This is supported by the results of a recent meta-analysis of effectiveness studies on chatbot systems that involved a total of 803 students (Bibauw et al., 2022). The authors reported that statistically significant improvements were noted for vocabulary and grammar in knowledge tests and for proficiency and accuracy in production. Furthermore, in a meta-analytical review of papers on AI and second language learning in peer-reviewed journals between 2017 and 2020, Woo and Choi (2021) found that students demonstrated gains in areas such as mastery of English articles, knowledge of English phrasal verbs, and lexical and grammatical accuracy in written tasks after using various AI tools. Affective responses to the L2 language use were also impacted, with students reporting greater confidence and less anxiety about speaking in English. Finally, in a meta-analysis of the literature on the effects of chatbots on language learning performance, Wang et al. (2024) looked at studies comparing groups of students who used chatbots with control groups of students who did not. Their meta-analysis found an overall positive effect of chatbots on language learning performance (g = 0.484). They attributed this to particular features of chatbots, including interactivity and a learning context that felt authentically native, the provision of immediate feedback and user-friendliness.

Despite the potential of chatbots to facilitate student progression in the L2, certain caveats are warranted. The first of these concerns explanations of lexis and grammar provided by ChatGPT. While such explanations can be correct, thorough, and potentially help students, this is not always the case. Andrews (2023), for instance, points out that ChatGPT makes significant errors in explanations of Russian grammar and word etymology—an obvious concern if such information is trusted by learners. Teachers need to be aware of this and test ChatGPT to evaluate the quality of the linguistic explanations it provides for lexis and grammar relevant to their course. Weaknesses in the understanding of lexis and grammar carry over to the domain of translation, where ChatGPT tends to produce better translations into English from high-resource languages like French and Chinese compared to low-resource languages like Javanese or Sudanese (Bang et al., 2023). The

same authors also note that ChatGPT performs better when creating sentences in Latin script languages. This means that the variable of script type should also be considered when assessing whether or not to recruit ChatGPT to facilitate language learning.

On the basis of the literature review above, we have organized the benefits associated with the use of chatbots for language learning in the following manner.

1. Linguistic advantages:

   1a Adaptability of level: chatbots like ChatGPT can adapt to the level of the language learner and provide native-like interaction;

   1b Breadth of topic: chatbots like ChatGPT can discuss any topic, which allows for personalization of learning;

   1c Breadth of linguistic resources: learners can use and practice linguistic items and expressions that they would otherwise not have had the chance to in a human conversation;

   1d Unlimited practice: learners can repeat material as much as they wish to;

   1e Progression: learners can make progress in the acquisition of lexical and grammatical knowledge;

   1f Personalized feedback and error correction: chatbots like ChatGPT can provide immediate, personalized feedback on language use, including grammar, vocabulary, and syntax, helping learners to correct mistakes in real-time and reinforce correct usage;

2. Availability of the chatbot:

   2a Unlimited access: the chatbot can be accessed anytime, anywhere, provided that the user has an internet-connected device;

3. Ease of interaction:

   3a Easing anxiety: learners feel more relaxed chatting with chatbots than they do with human interlocutors;

   3b Flexible role play: chatbots like ChatGPT can act as any type of interlocutor, depending on the instructions given by the user;

   3c Time is unlimited: learners are not under time pressure to respond, thereby potentially reducing language anxiety;

   3d Textual interaction: short, typed exchanges are typical of modern communication and are a key feature of human–chatbot interactions;

   3e Coherence of responses: the responses of chatbots like ChatGPT are logical and fluid.

We can also observe the following shortcomings in the use of chatbots to assist language learning.

1. Inauthenticity of language: chatbots do not always produce authentic human dialogue to match a specified scenario;

2. Only appealing to some: student interest in using chatbots is predicted by their interest in human conversation. Hence, students who are not really interested in human conversation are unlikely to take an interest in chatbots as conversation partners;

3. Inaccuracies and irrelevant responses: chatbot responses are not always accurate or relevant;

4. Language variability: the reliability of ChatGPT for translation and sentence creation in a target language can depend on script type and the high- or low-resource status of a language.

2.2. Automatic Translators and Foreign Language Learning

This section provides an overview of the literature on the use of automatic translation tools in foreign language learning, with a particular focus on Google Translate (GT). We examine studies from 2017 onward, as they reflect the significant improvements in GT following its 2016 shift to a more accurate, neural network-based system (Lee, 2023). The use of neural machine translation (NMT) in GT has led to an error reduction rate of over 60% for several major language pairs and a reported accuracy rate of up to 94% (Harby, 2024). The effect has been revolutionary. Billions of people consult Google Translate daily to enjoy previously inaccessible material and to partake in conversations with others that would have been impossible otherwise (Klimova et al., 2023). However, this new world of revolutionized online translation (OT) still presents certain challenges. Klimova et al. (ibid) identify context as an issue, stating that "no distinction is made between technical and lay language when it comes to the selection of terminology" (p. 666). This is echoed by Ducar and Schocket (2018), who also highlight shortcomings at the level of pragmatics. A simple example of the importance of context is translating 'hello' into French using Google Translate or DeepL. Both tools correctly offer 'bonjour', but in real-life use, this translation only applies until 5pm or so, after which French speakers switch to 'bonsoir'. The variable of register is also a concern (Ducar & Schocket, 2018). For example, romance languages like French use morphologically different verb forms in the imperative mood depending on the degree of politeness needed for one's addressee. While DeepL tends to provide both forms as options, Google Translate does not, proposing one or the other instead.

These shortcomings have not deterred students from turning to online translators for help with assignments. O'Neill (2019a) carried out a study of 310 intermediate students of French and Spanish at an American university. His results showed that 87.7% of students reported using an online translation tool always, often, or sometimes when undertaking graded work—even though the institution prohibited the use of such tools. A slightly lower proportion of students (82.3%) reported using online translation technology for ungraded work. These results suggest that students draw on OT tools regardless of whether it is allowed or not—a significant finding for teachers who assign unsupervised writing tasks as part of summative assessment.

The popularity of OT amongst students was corroborated in a study by Vinall et al. (2024). The authors found that students use OT tools more frequently than other online resources (e.g., dictionaries) and typically look up words as opposed to longer linguistic segments for a variety of reasons: for example, to respect rules set by the teacher or to avoid the feeling of cheating if they input more than a word segment. However, this focus on word-level translation is problematic as accuracy improves with longer input segments (Poibeau in Vinall et al., 2024). As such, the variable of input length needs to be taken into account when teaching students how to effectively use OT (Vinall et al., 2024).

While online translation tools may be popular for sourcing individual lexical items, the use of these tools does not appear to lead to long-term gains in lexical knowledge. O'Neill (2019b) compared the effects of online translation tools and online dictionaries on the written composition scores of students of Spanish and French at an American university. Students who were allowed to use Google Translate achieved a significantly higher mean than those who did not use the tool. However, this advantage disappeared in immediate and delayed post-tests in which these students were no longer able to use Google Translate. This suggests that the higher scores achieved when students used Google Translate were attributable to the use of the translation tool rather than to a true improvement in the students' lexical knowledge or language proficiency as a function of the use of the tool. Nevertheless, the author notes that GT allows students to communicate more clearly and does not lead to significantly decreased writing scores on post-tests compared to a control

group. Fredholm (2019) undertook a longitudinal study of lexical diversity in essays written by Swedish learners of Spanish over the course of a year in a high school. The goal of the study was to compare essays written by students who used GT and those who used a printed dictionary. The researcher sought to determine whether the use of GT influenced lexical diversity compared to the use of a printed dictionary and whether there was any lasting impact on lexical diversity as measured by a post-test. The results showed that students who used GT had a significantly higher rate of lexical variation in their essays than students who used a paper dictionary. However, in line with the results reported by O'Neill (2019b), this effect disappeared in the post-test, suggesting that the use of GT "does not facilitate the development of a greater productive vocabulary, compared to the use of printed dictionaries (nor, indeed, the other way around)" (Fredholm, 2019, p. 106).

Turning to research on English as a foreign language, Kol et al. (2018) compared texts written by advanced learners of English at Tel Aviv University. Participants completed two tasks. In task 1, students were not allowed to use GT, while in task 2, they were. The results showed that the passages did not differ significantly in terms of grammatical accuracy. However, the texts written when students could access GT were significantly longer, achieved a significantly higher readability score, and contained a significantly greater range of vocabulary that was categorized as lower frequency or more academic in nature. The finding that the use of GT leads to a higher quality of text than could be produced by students alone has also been reported in studies by Tsai (2019, 2020). In the first of these studies, 124 students majoring in English at a Taiwanese university wrote a text in Chinese (Step 1) before writing the same text in English (Step 2) and translating the original Chinese text into English using GT (step 3). An online computational assessment device was then used to evaluate the English texts for lexical features and grammar. The results showed that the texts translated by GT were of superior quality to those produced by the students. Tsai (2020), using a similar experimental paradigm, again found that the GT texts were of higher quality than student-produced ones, as were student texts that were subsequently revised after consulting the GT text.

Naturally, the successful revision of a machine-generated translation requires a student to have a good level of linguistic ability in the target language. This is reflected in Kol et al.'s (2018) study of intermediate (B1) and advanced (B2) students of English mentioned above. The authors found that intermediate users successfully identified 54% of errors in sentences translated from Hebrew to English using GT, with this percentage rising to 73% for advanced learners. The advanced group were able to correct 87% of errors; the intermediate group, on account of their lower rate of error identification, did not participate in this second phase of the study. These results, therefore, suggest that the use of OT is better suited to more advanced students. Indeed, advanced students can leverage OT as a tool not just to produce a basic translation, but they can also apply their own linguistic knowledge to elevate the quality of the text. This indicates that the effectiveness of OT is not solely dependent on the tool itself, but also on the user's ability to interact with and improve upon the translation.

Google Translate has also been found to help students when they first write a text in their L1, translate it *themselves* into their L2, and then compare their translation to the one proposed by GT. Lee (2019) reported that the students in her study were able to make improvements in lexis, grammar, and expression by considering the Google translation of their text, which they assessed critically before selectively incorporating changes into their own translation. In line with previous studies, she notes that judicious use of the automatic translation is easier for students with a higher language level. Finally, Chung and Ahn (2021) report a study of two groups of Korean learners of English: a high-proficiency group and a low-proficiency group. They report that the English produced by both groups of students

was significantly more accurate when they used Google Translate. The high-proficiency group also recorded a significantly higher score in lexical variation, but a significantly lower score in lexical sophistication; in contrast, the lower-proficiency group recorded a significantly higher score for coordination when GT was used, thereby showing a positive effect as far as syntax is concerned. Importantly, these findings suggest that while Google Translate enhances accuracy, its benefits may vary depending on a learner's proficiency level, potentially limiting more advanced linguistic development in high-proficiency users.

Overall, the research shows that Google Translate allows students to significantly widen their range of vocabulary when completing written tasks. However, this expansion of lexical range dissipates when students no longer have access to the tool. This suggests that while Google Translate can provide short-term improvements in writing quality, it does not lead to long-term linguistic gains. As noted by Fredholm (2019, p. 107), "using GT may help foreign language pupils to produce texts, but it seems unlikely that it can teach them how to produce texts without it". Results also suggest that GT produces grammatically more accurate text than work written by students without access to GT, and that more advanced learners are better able to judge the output of GT for accuracy. As far as negatives are concerned, the variables of context and register are not adequately addressed in current versions of Google Translate or DeepL, meaning that language learners must learn about the pragmatics of language in order to use these tools effectively.

We end this section by noting that one very important question has not been posed, let alone answered, by any of the studies reviewed above. If students' use of Google Translate leads to work of a noticeably higher linguistic quality, how can teachers reliably assess the language level of their students if such work is part of summative assessment? It may be argued that students have always been allowed to use dictionaries at home and that this has not been considered a problem when evaluating student work. Yet the use of dictionaries still requires students to form sentences themselves. In contrast, automatic translators can do this challenging work for the students, freeing them from any obligation to apply knowledge. Hence, how can teachers know that students have not simply copied and pasted text to be automatically translated, particularly if students are savvy enough to include some carefully selected errors? We take these concerns into consideration in our reconceptualization of the role of the language teacher below.

3. Our Position

The review of the literature above highlights the power of AI tools as possible aids for language learning and development. This poses many subsidiary questions, one of which is how these tools might impact the role of the university language teacher and the nature of on-campus language tutorials. University tutorials may focus on different aspects of a language and culture, but in many universities, particularly in the anglophone world, foreign language tutorials focus on language acquisition as opposed to more specialized subjects (e.g., 19th-century French literature.) Our recommendations in what follows should be taken to refer to this context of the 'general' language/culture class where time is at a premium. These recommendations link to our five-step approach for language teachers in the age of AI, presented in Section 3.4. This approach articulates the need for teachers to be aware of new AI tools and to identify their potential uses in terms of specific skill development. It positions the teacher as a participant, alongside the student, in the use of these tools, and emphasizes the need for collaboration between both parties for the successful incorporation of AI in the language-learning process. Finally, it argues that the on-campus classroom has a distinctive identity that cannot be replicated by AI tools, and, therefore, that teachers should focus on its unique attributes in their classroom practice.

Our recasting of the role of the university language teacher, along with the development of this five-step approach, is informed by Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2017). SDT posits that human well-being and flourishing is determined by the satisfaction of three basic human psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Adequately responding to each of these three needs is necessary not only for general well-being, but also for "internalizing motivation" (McEown & Oga-Baldwin, 2019): that is, developing high-quality, autonomous motivation as opposed to lower-quality, controlled motivation (ibid). The importance of satisfying these demands to support autonomous student motivation in educational settings has been repeatedly observed (see Niemiec & Ryan, 2009 for an overview of earlier research). As far as second language learning is concerned, the significance of SDT for L2 motivation has been demonstrated in many studies spanning a range of languages and cultural contexts. Results have shown, for example, that students experience increased intrinsic motivation and less amotivation when they believe themselves to have greater autonomy and competence (Noels, 2001), and that satisfying basic psychological needs influences students' perseverance of effort (PE), one of the two key components of L2 grit (Shirvan & Alamer, 2022). In what follows, we outline a new approach to university language pedagogy that leverages key aspects of AI tools and the on-campus language classroom to respond to students' need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, thereby favoring autonomous motivation and an internalized interest in language study. Central to this approach is the language teacher, who harmonizes off-campus, AI-driven language learning with a distinctly human on-campus experience. Specifically, we argue that teachers should limit the use of technology in class and instead privilege authentic, interpersonal interaction during tutorials. This responds to the inability of human–AI interaction to satisfy the need for authentic, human relatedness.

3.1. In-Class Interaction as a Key Social Practice

A key feature of the human condition is our need for social interaction with other human beings (Felix, 2020). This reflects a drive for relatedness, which in SDT concerns (amongst other things) "belonging and feeling significant among others" (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 11). When students choose to attend on-campus university classes, they do so with the expectation that they will be making connections with other students, as opposed to having an experience that is predominantly mediated by a computer screen. The social nature of the on-campus experience is even more salient for foreign language learning, the primary goal of which is usually to communicate with other speakers of the language being studied. Connections are key to social well-being, whether they be long-lasting (e.g., enduring friendships) or fleeting (e.g., sharing an exchange at a shop). De la Vall and Araya (2023), in an article looking at the benefits and shortcomings of using AI for language learning, point out "the need for more human interaction and the difficulty of replicating cultural and contextual nuances" (p. 7569). This is understandable, given that human beings have evolved to communicate in physical co-presence and as a function of the societal norms that underlie such interactions: speaking a language is a social, interactive process (Kasper & Wagner, 2011). This provides a compelling argument for the university language teacher to maximize interaction, whether this is between students, between students and the teacher, or between students and the class as a whole.

How should these interactions be arranged? As far as the between-students context is concerned, carefully designed pair or small group work allows students to communicate in the L2 and experience the varying rhythm of *authentic human conversation*, complete with false starts, filled pauses, hesitations, interruptions, non-verbal cues, co-construction of utterances, and the negotiation of conversation topics. The tone of such interactions should be relaxed and supportive, favoring a positive response to the need for competence.

In contrast, conversation with current versions of ChatGPT is much more streamlined. The user is free to determine the topic of conversation without any pushback from the GPT—a feature which responds to the learner's need for autonomy and has potentially positive effects on motivation, given the possibility of selecting a topic that the user finds intrinsically motivating (provided they have the linguistic resources to speak about it). Yet the turns at talk are clearly delimited, and co-construction of utterances, natural hesitations, or false starts by the GPT are all absent. That said, the introduction of ChatGPT's Advanced Voice Mode (AVM) in late September 2024 (available to Plus and Enterprise subscribers) represents a significant leap forward in language learning technology. AVM offers reduced response latency, delivering nearly instantaneous replies while continuously listening to the user. Moreover, its ability to detect human emotions enables more empathetic and tailored interactions. This advanced feature is able to provide feedback on pronunciation and allows users to interrupt or switch topics fluidly, creating a conversational experience that more closely mimics natural, human-like interaction. While this may be expedient for practicing pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical structures, it is still not an authentic representation of conversation, the natural flow of which is punctuated by the effects of emotional responses (surprise, embarrassment, etc.) or shifts in cognitive state (such as moments of inattention).

Even if AI develops to a point where such things are possible (and we consider this to be a near certainty), such interactions will always be missing one element: true authenticity. That is, AI is not and can never be a real human being, and the learner engaging with the AI, however impressive it may be, will have knowledge of this at some level. Its non-human status means that it cannot share a common human experience with the learner, which leads to further psychosocial questions such as the following: just how relatable will learners find AI? To what extent is relatability important in human–AI interaction, and is this relatability significantly impacted by the variable of authenticity? Obviously, future research is needed to address these questions. In the meantime, teachers should focus classroom practice on accentuating the authentically human nature of interpersonal interaction and explain how this contrasts to what is offered by AI tools. We strongly advocate that teachers explicitly discuss ChatGPT with their students, explaining the advantages of this platform for developing linguistic ability as well as its limitations. Following this, they should provide a demonstration of how to develop prompts that are suitable for the student's level of language acquisition and that direct the GPT to provide clear, useful feedback at an appropriate time during or after the interaction. We provide examples of how this may be accomplished in Section 3.2 below.

As far as pair and small group work in the tutorial is concerned, careful consideration is required. Pairings in which both students are dominant or in which one student is dominant and the other passive are undesirable (Storch, 2002). In addition, peer interaction in the L2 classroom has limitations in the extent to which it helps L2 development (Philp et al., 2014). Specifically, students are reluctant to correct their peers when they detect non-target-like expressions for multiple reasons, such as not having sufficient confidence in their own language abilities and not wanting to appear arrogant (Philp et al., 2010). When they do suggest corrections, they generally concern vocabulary (Philp et al., 2014, p. 44). As such, the benefits of pair and small group work for linguistic development are questionable. Nevertheless, there are other non-negligible advantages to maintaining these sorts of activities in the classroom. Firstly, they offer students the benefit of experiencing face-to-face interaction in the L2. Next, pair and small group work may respond to the need for relatedness in the L2 classroom through the development of rapport between students and a sense of classroom community. In line with this observation, it is important to note that collaborative learning can benefit individual student motivation (Murphey et al., 2022). In

terms of activities, students might, for example, practice culturally appropriate interactions and discuss areas of difficulty, thereby allowing common ground and connection to develop.

Another question now arises: how should other portions of class time be used to develop students' linguistic skills? In an increasingly difficult context of course closures and fewer contact hours, we advocate for an approach that prioritizes class-time for language practice and interaction. This does not mean a 'flipped' classroom in which students are introduced to all key concepts at home before coming to tutorials. It does, however, recognize the advantage of introducing students to certain key concepts (decided on by teachers) before attending tutorials, thereby prioritizing class time for questions, clarifications, and application. One example of this approach is students watching a short video about a target grammatical concept, such as the French passé composé, that has been posted to the class's digital learning environment (e.g., Canvas). These videos might address questions to the student, inviting them to detect patterns and to identify rules through analysis. One example of this would be teaching the French future tense by providing several examples of verbs conjugated in this tense and asking students to discern the rule. The video would then explain the rule to ensure that students have the correct information. To continue the active involvement of students in this process, students would then be asked to conjugate a series of verbs in the future tense, with answers provided immediately afterwards for self-assessment. This approach helps to maximize students' active role in the learning process. Following this pre-tutorial work, students come to class ready to build on their new knowledge. Class time can then be spent troubleshooting specific issues, engaging in further practice, and clarifying misunderstandings. In contrast to the use of technology at home, students can complete worksheets in class with pen and paper, answer questions and receive immediate feedback, and participate in teacher-led drills for intense practice. The teacher's supervision not only fosters accountability and reduces the chance of cheating but also encourages students to engage with pre-sessional materials, knowing they will need to apply their knowledge in a structured, monitored setting. Under this model, the teacher assumes the role of a linguistic personal trainer, guiding the learner through a series of carefully curated exercises and making sure that each student is involved in applying what they have learned. The level of difficulty is carefully monitored in order to facilitate the student's need for competence and sense of progression. Whole-class activities, such as collectively reading a passage, further reinforce this structured, interactive approach to learning. In such a scenario, the teacher selects a written text to help build students' reading skills. Each student reads one sentence aloud, and the teacher provides real-time feedback on pronunciation, while also asking students questions about the content of the material. This provides the teacher with the opportunity to share techniques to develop written comprehension skills while also allowing students to benefit from the correction of errors made by classmates.

3.2. Using ChatGPT for Linguistic Development

In order for students to harness the benefits of ChatGPT, teachers should spend class time at the beginning of the semester demonstrating to students how to best use this technology for their L2 development. As mentioned earlier, current iterations of AI lack sensitivity to context, whether this be distinguishing between the distinct features of written or oral communication or recognizing pragmatic variables that trigger shifts in language use (e.g., the status of one's interlocutor and the choice of *tu/vous* and corresponding verb forms in French.) Teachers should point out these limitations to students, using them as an entry point into a discussion of register and pragmatics that is appropriate to the students' level. Nevertheless, despite current limitations as far as certain aspects of pragmatics are concerned, Kohnke et al. (2023) show how ChatGPT can help students to understand the

meaning of words in context in texts written in the L2. For example, a learner of English may not understand the use of the work 'aspects' in our previous sentence. By pasting the paragraph into ChatGPT and typing an appropriate prompt, they would be able to receive an explanation. As Kohnke et al. (2023) also point out, the student can ask for a definition of this word in their first language and request (potentially unlimited) additional sentences to help clarify its use.

ChatGPT also offers great opportunities for practicing writing skills in the L2. To help leverage these benefits, teachers should demonstrate a clear prompt for language practice. The prompt below has been developed for a written exchange with ChatGPT. It is aimed at French learners at the A2 level according to the Common European Frame of Reference (CEFR). (Teachers may wish to familiarize students with the basics of the CEFR framework, clearly outlining where the class currently stands within it. They would then demonstrate how to create prompts that align with this specific level of language proficiency, ensuring the GPT reflects the students' current expertise).

Prompt 1a: Let's have a conversation in French. I have a basic level, so use common, easy vocabulary and structures. We will talk about family, hobbies, the weather, and daily routine. Let's talk about these topics one at a time.

When the student wishes to stop the exchange and receive feedback, they can enter the following prompt:

Prompt 1b: Let's stop here. Correct the French in the responses I gave. Provide an explanation for each correction in English.

Following this, in order to have a 'clean' transcript of the corrected interaction, the following prompt can be entered.

Prompt 1c: Reproduce our conversation with the corrections included in it.

Students should then take an active, critical evaluation of this interaction, attending to new words and expressions by looking them up in an online dictionary like www.wordreference.com (URL accessed on 20 December 2024) and googling them to access examples in context. Alternatively, they may wish to ask ChatGPT for five examples of each new vocabulary item/expression in context (e.g., a two–three sentence paragraph). If they feel that these new linguistic items will be useful for their own spoken or written production, they should practice applying them in original sentences so that they become part of their productive vocabulary. Students can then ask their teacher to check their work to make sure that they have correctly understood the meaning and use of these items. Teachers may wish to dedicate part of a class each week to this sort of exchange, thus providing a link between the use of AI outside of the classroom and in-class interaction. Students should also enter the new items into a list on a spaced repetition app (e.g., Quizlet) and commit to practicing lists regularly in order to facilitate the entry of these items into long-term memory. This sort of clear scaffolding of the language-learning process aims to maximize the chances of a powerful response to the student's need for competence.

As far as oral skills are concerned, students can also download the ChatGPT app for their phone. In most language courses, students are assessed on their oral skills. In the following example, we imagine that A2-level learners of French have an upcoming speaking assessment that consists of a one-on-one discussion with their teacher. They have been given a .pdf file of the assessment brief, complete with some sample questions.

Prompt 2a: I want to practice for my French speaking test. Ask the follow questions (the student then states the questions), but after my response to each one, ask an easy question in French that builds on to my answers. Make sure your questions are short and simple. Ask questions one at a time. Leave corrections until the end of the conversation.

Additionally, it is worth noting that with the latest advanced voice mode in the ChatGPT mobile app (released late September 2024), students can ask the AI to slow

down its speech rate and receive real-time feedback on their pronunciation, which further enhances their speaking practice.

At higher levels, students might be required to study novels and engage in an-depth conversation about characters and themes. In such cases, prompts like the following can be used.

Prompt 3: Let's speak in French about the book *Kiffe kiffe demain*. Ask me questions about the characters and the plot. Ask me one question at a time. Leave corrections until the end of the conversation.

An innovative application of ChatGPT's advanced voice mode is its ability to facilitate role-playing scenarios that simulate a wide range of real-life interactions. By providing oral prompts such as, "We are going to perform a role-play. You will play the role of a [shop-keeper, hotel receptionist, restaurant server, hairdresser, etc.] and I will be the client", or "Let's act out a scenario where you're a travel agent and I'm planning a vacation", students can engage in dynamic conversations that mirror authentic social situations. This method allows learners to practice language across various scenarios that would have been difficult to simulate without AI due to logistical challenges, the need for diverse conversational partners, or the difficulty of creating spontaneous, natural dialogue without the support of a teacher or native speaker. After the conversation, students can examine the transcript to review their performance in detail. The AI can provide corrections on grammatical errors (along with explanations of the errors) and offer feedback on pronunciation, helping learners identify specific areas for improvement.

Another major advantage of using AI for these role-plays is that students can replay the scenarios over and over again, with the AI generating similar but not identical dialogues each time. This variation allows students to encounter new vocabulary, sentence structures, and conversational pathways while reinforcing their understanding of common phrases and core expressions associated with a given scenario. Repetition with slight variation also prepares students particularly well for real-life scenarios, where conversations are neither fully predictable nor entirely novel. By simulating real-world situations, students become better prepared for actual interactions in the target language, making this a valuable addition to their language learning strategies.

Even for learners at lower levels, ChatGPT can serve as a 'low-risk' practice partner, providing a space where they can test their ability to 'get the ball over the net'—that is, determine whether their communication is sufficiently clear to be understood by the AI. This requires the learner to take stock of what they already know and think about how to build on this knowledge base to facilitate skill acquisition, a process in keeping with a constructivist approach to education (Taber, 2024). For higher-level students, ChatGPT's ability to adapt instantaneously and provide tailored corrections supports a cycle of active experimentation and reflective learning, again reinforcing key constructionist principles. By embedding AI in ways that align with constructionist learning—emphasizing creation, reflection, and iteration—educators can ensure that these technologies serve to enhance, rather than undermine, the social and collaborative nature of language learning.

An additional key benefit of using ChatGPT is its ability to generate personalized textual content tailored to each learner's interests, creating a more engaging and relevant learning experience. While textbooks are thoughtfully sequenced to scaffold learners' journeys and include activities designed to engage them emotionally and personally (Ariyan & Pavlova, 2019), there is a limit to what a one-size-fits-all approach can offer. ChatGPT can be used to supplement textbook learning by allowing students to create content that aligns with their own interests while ensuring that it remains comprehensible to their language level. There are multiple justifications for this approach. Firstly, it applies Krashen's (1985) emphasis on language input that is both understandable and interesting. Secondly, from a

psychological standpoint, personalized learning increases engagement, improves retention, and enhances intrinsic motivation (Li & Wong, 2023), while also enabling satisfaction of the needs for autonomy and competence (Alamri et al., 2020). Thirdly, using ChatGPT to generate texts that respond to areas of personal interest pulls focus on the development of reading skills and vocabulary knowledge, two of the linguistic areas that are most likely to motivate students to use ChatGPT for L2 learning (Ali et al., 2023). We would suggest using a prompt like the following: "Create a text of 400 words in [insert language] on [insert topic of interest]. The level of language should be suitable for a [insert level, e.g., 'beginner'] learner of [insert language]". For example, a sports fan could prompt ChatGPT to write a passage about Manchester United's recent match, while a student with an interest in music could request information about Taylor Swift's latest album.

This additional material does not need to be incorporated into the classroom and could instead be used as homework or an assessment task. After all, managing a variety of personalized texts on diverse topics for every student could quickly become unwieldy in the classroom. Language instructors should encourage students to move beyond passive reading of these texts by assigning targeted tasks that foster deeper engagement. For instance, students could fact-check AI-generated content based on their knowledge of specific topics (e.g., Manchester United's performance over the last season), helping to address inaccuracies and develop AI literacy. Students could then be instructed to analyze the text linguistically, pinpointing words, expressions, or grammatical constructions that they find interesting, challenging, or notably different (or similar) to English. They could then undertake further investigation of these linguistic units (e.g., by seeking explanations online, consulting dictionaries, etc.) and write a paragraph in the target language that incorporates the use of a certain number of them. Such an approach responds to the need for autonomy whilst also building competence through a scaffolded process of identification, analysis, and application.

3.3. Using Automatic Translators for Formative Assessment

As far as the acquisition of the L2 is concerned, we also advocate for the astute use of automatic translators in university language programs. As noted in the literature review, students tend to use Google Translate to look up individual words, despite the lack of context potentially compromising the validity of the translation proposed. In contrast, we propose a different way of using Google Translate and/or DeepL to scaffold student's L2 acquisition. This involves the creation, by the teacher, of sentences that students are asked to translate from their L1 into their L2 for homework—a method used by the first author in his own teaching of French. These sentences incorporate key vocabulary items and grammatical structures that have been studied in class. There is a subsequent focus on metalinguistic awareness of lexis and grammar through students' descriptions of errors and a subsequent paragraph in the target language in which the student applies what they have learned. This technique, which is based on conscious learning and its application in new work, is also used by the first author in his French classes. We will demonstrate how this works with reference to the A2 French language class mentioned earlier. Imagine that students have just covered the topic of city life and country life and learned the imperfect tense. The teacher will want to reinforce the acquisition of key vocabulary items and the imperfect tense (and perhaps contrast the use of the imperfect and the previously acquired *passé composé* tense), as well as other key grammatical structures the teacher wishes to emphasize. They might assign either a set of sentences or a paragraph for the students to translate from English to French. Before doing so, they will need to check that the automatic translator proposes an accurate translation of the sentences/paragraph. An example of this task is given below.

1. Translate the following paragraph into French. Use a dictionary (e.g., www.wordreference.com) (URL accessed on 20 December 2024) to look up any words you do not know. Do *not* use an automatic translator (i.e., Google Translate or DeepL) at this point.

    When I was young, I used to visit my aunt during the holidays. She lived in the country. I liked seeing her because we would go bike riding and swimming. When the weather wasn't good, we'd stay inside and play board games. Life in the country is peaceful but after a week at her place, I wanted to go home;

2. Once you have written out your translation, copy the English paragraph into Google Translate or DeepL. Look at the translation and correct your work. Then, select five errors of your choice and write an explanation for each one to demonstrate your understanding. Follow the example given below.

    Example: I went to the station yesterday.

    J'ai allé à la gare hier.

    Error: I should have written je 'suis' allé, because the auxiliary verb *être* is required to form the passé composé of the verb *aller*;

3. Now, use the speaker button in Google Translate or DeepL to listen to the corrected paragraph in French. Play each sentence one at a time, listening carefully to the pronunciation, and then say the sentence aloud. Do this as many times as you feel is necessary;

4. Write a short paragraph in French (on any topic) in which you apply each of the corrections you identified in part 2. For example, if you chose the incorrect auxiliary for the verb *aller* in the *passé composé*, you should use this verb in the passé composé in your paragraph;

5. Submit parts 1, 2, and 4 (i.e., your translation, corrections, and paragraph) to your teacher in the next class.

These sorts of structured translation tasks make use of AI to scaffold acquisition of target lexical and grammatical content. They aim to satisfy the need for competence in several ways. Firstly, the translation is set at a level that is challenging but fair. Then, after completing step 1, students take control of their learning by demonstrating a conscious understanding of lexical and grammatical rules in step 2, which helps to make visible their growing knowledge of the language. Autonomy is favored by allowing students to select errors of their choice (step 2) and to write their paragraph on a topic of their choice (step 4). As far as the acquisition of linguistic skills is concerned, these tasks do not just focus on lexis and grammar. Rather, they also allow students to work on listening and pronunciation by having the automatic translator read out the correct French.

As a natural progression from this sort of task, teachers will want students to produce French without pre-prepared sentences to translate as learning scaffolds. This might come in the form of a written task that students complete at home. Naturally, teachers cannot control whether students use automatic translators or ChatGPT for this sort of work. However, they can explain that students should write their own tasks, using a good dictionary and an automatic translator if necessary. As far as using GT or DeepL is concerned, teachers should explicitly train students in how to use these tools effectively. This entails fostering a sensitivity to how meaning is created in language through the use of clear examples. Hence, a sentence like 'he missed me' could have an interpretation that is either physical (e.g., he lunged forward and missed me) or affective (i.e., he regretted that I was not with him) in nature. As far as the former interpretation is concerned, linguistic context beyond the basic clause 'he missed me' is required to generate a translation in both GT and DeepL that reflects the physical meaning of the verb. As such, a sentence like 'he lunged forward but missed me' should be entered, as opposed to just 'he missed me'.

A discussion centered on the differences between literal and figurative language is also required if students are to be able to use translation tools effectively. For example, there is a clear use of metaphor in the sentence 'I draw the line at disrespect'. While DeepL captures this metaphorical conceptualization in its French translation, GT does not. The same result is found with translations of 'let's park that idea for a minute', DeepL understanding the use of metaphor but GT proposing a literal translation instead. This, therefore, represents an opportunity to educate students about the widespread use of conceptual metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2015) in language and the importance of considering this variable when evaluating translation output.

Finally, teachers should encourage students to be honest about whether they have used GT or DeepL in their work and show them how to use these tools to scaffold their learning. One idea is to ask students to highlight in their work any new vocabulary or grammatical structures that they have learned while doing this task. If students feel that these new structures will be beneficial in their future use of the L2, they should commit to learning them through repeated practice. Creating careful lists in a spaced repetition flashcard system like Quizlet is one easy way to do this. In doing so, teachers can work to mitigate the risk of students becoming dependent on the translations suggested by GT and DeepL instead of using them to develop their own writing skills (Schmidt & Strasser, 2022). This process can be further reinforced by mandating that the majority of assessed writing tasks take place on campus. Proceeding in this way also signals to the student that they need to take their learning seriously, commit language to memory, and apply themselves to understanding how to use vocabulary and grammar appropriately. It also allows teachers to access a more accurate impression of what students are capable of writing without the potentially unrestrained assistance of AI tools.

3.4. A Five-Step Approach for Language Teachers in the Age of AI

In light of the arguments presented above, we have devised a five-step approach to assist university language teachers as they come to grips with the impact of new AI technologies on language pedagogy and acquisition. We intend these principles to be 'future-proof', applicable to new AI technologies as they emerge. AI tools are now an inescapable feature of the language-learning landscape and so language educators need to stay up to date with the latest developments in this space. We acknowledge the significant constraints on teachers' time and the frustration of an increasing workload. As such, we have designed our approach to be as simple and clear as possible, with minimal time investment required.

1. Stay informed.

Try to stay informed about emerging AI technologies relevant to language learning. If your university has a teaching and learning center or access to any form of instructional assistance, establish contact and explain that you are interested in the potential benefits of AI tools for foreign language learning. They may be able to save you time by monitoring the emerging landscape for you and your colleagues. Other options include joining online educator communities where teachers can share recommendations or following key educational technology blogs;

2. Select tools and try them out.

Select potentially relevant AI tools on the basis of information obtained in step 1. Try the tool out for yourself and check for the following variables (as relevant): accuracy of language, authenticity of interaction, and user-friendliness. Identify the particular aspect(s) of acquisition that will benefit from each particular use of a tool, such as vocabulary acquisition, grammar, pronunciation, interactive skills, and oral or written comprehension;

3. Present tools to students with clear instructions.

Explain to students why the tools and uses you have identified are beneficial for their language learning. Teach any prior knowledge and skills necessary for the successful use of the tools: for example, the need to provide sufficient linguistic context when using automatic translators. Explain any risks regarding data privacy and storage and how this might affect the sorts of information students share with the LLM. Provide students with clear, step-by-step instructions on how to use the tools (for example, by using prompts), supported by examples and exercises. This should develop a context that favors a positive response to students' need for competence. Share any shortcoming(s) you have identified;

4. Evaluate with students.

Spend time reflecting with students on their experiences using the AI tools identified in step 3 above. Respond to students' need for autonomy by encouraging them to experiment with these tools and talk to them to assess their engagement and address any challenges they have encountered. Collaboratively refine how these tools are used to enhance learning;

5. Use the classroom to do what AI cannot.

Identify the key features of language learning and language use that *cannot* be replicated by AI. For example: authentic face-to-face communication with other students and in-class discussions of shared experiences (e.g., how students have found the class so far, their opinions on topics that have relevance to their lives, etc.). Some of these features will concern interpersonal connection and respond to students' need for relatedness. Prioritize these for inclusion in face-to-face teaching.

4. Conclusions

The presence of AI-powered technology in our lives is ever increasing. In response, university language programs must adapt to incorporate the advantages of tools like ChatGPT and automatic translators for language acquisition. This means positioning the language teacher as an expert voice in this domain, capable of instructing students on the strategic use of these tools outside the classroom. This requires teachers to draw students' attention to key features of language use that differ between human–human and human–chatbot interactions and to demonstrate and integrate effective use of LLMs and automatic translation software to support language acquisition. This can be achieved by following the five-step approach we outlined in Section 3.4. We, therefore, espouse an approach that emphasizes the considered use of AI technology outside the classroom and that encourages students to use AI to engage in personalized learning experiences. Complementary to this is the suggestion that teachers leverage the use of online learning platforms such as Canvas to post pre-recorded videos of core grammatical concepts, which are then watched by students before coming to class. This paves the way for an on-campus experience that is defined by aspects of language pedagogy that cannot be replicated by AI, notably interpersonal interaction and the formation of relationships. Ultimately, we believe that a focus on the need for relatedness should be the key factor that distinguishes on-campus from off-campus language learning.

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