

LIMBAJELE SPECIALIZATE ÎN ERA INTELIGENȚEI ARTIFICIALE

Interferențe, evoluții, inovații

Editori
Camelia Teglaș & Diana Cotrău



Presa Universitară Clujeană

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CAMELIA TEGLAȘ & DIANA COTRĂU

**PRESA UNIVERSITARĂ CLUJEANĂ
2025**

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Cuvânt-înainte

Aflată la ediția cu numărul XV, Conferința internațională „Dinamica Limbajelor Specializate. Tehnici și Strategii Inovatoare” a reunit, ca în fiecare an, universitari, cercetători și doctoranzi din sfera științelor umaniste, cu afilieri naționale și internaționale la universități prestigioase din țară și din Europa, dornici să exploreze intersecția dintre Inteligența Artificială și predarea și învățarea limbilor străine pentru scopuri academice și specifice, specialiști interesați de dezbateri centrate pe oportunitățile și provocările generate de diversificarea abordărilor pedagogice.

Tematica abordată în cadrul secțiunilor conferinței s-a raportat cu precădere la integrarea Inteligenței Artificiale în practica academică și pedagogia limbajelor specializate, vizând atât aspectele generale, cât și considerentele de ordin etic. Și la această ediție am beneficiat de numeroase alocuțiuni și dezbateri asupra bunelor practici, a unor aspecte teoretice și aplicate, a atitudinilor și poziționărilor față de cele susmenționate, dar și asupra traductologiei, domeniu de interes științific asumat de către departamentul organizator al evenimentului, toate decurgând din impactul integrării tehnologiei educaționale asupra domeniului vizat.

Volumul de față reunește o selecție de lucrări prezentate în cadrul conferinței, cu perspective valoroase asupra predării, învățării și evaluării limbajelor specializate (în limbile engleză, spaniolă și română). La prima vedere o invitație la reflecție asupra noilor direcții de analiză care se impun, determinate de dinamismul incitant al evoluției AI și al aplicațiilor posibile în domeniul limbilor străine specializate, colecția de față îndeamnă în egală măsură la a valorifica șansa de a revigora cercetarea teoretică și aplicată în sfera de interes științific și pedagogic al comunității noastre. Suntem încredințați că articolele cuprinse în volum răspund la numeroase dintre întrebările pe care ni le punem constant, dascăli și cercetători prinși în iureșul unor schimbări cu impact asupra tuturor aspectelor vieții. Imperativul nostru devine, astfel, nu doar să ne adaptăm reactiv, ci mai ales, într-o primă etapă, să forțăm un echilibru, fie el și firav, între conștientizarea riscului de a deveni redundanți, contemplarea variabil sceptică sau validantă a salturilor evolutive ale Inteligenței Artificiale Generative și, mai ales, poziționarea optimistă în prima linie a pregătirii tinerilor pentru o lume a viitorului care, iată, pare a fi furat startul.

Editorii

Vocabulary in ESP. Exploring Pedagogically-Oriented, AI-Assisted Research

Abstract: The current paper presents a case study of how some AI-powered tools can be utilised in pedagogically-oriented research. After a brief discussion on subject-specific vocabulary (viewed as more or less ‘technical’), the methodological aspects of the research conducted are described. The method adopted consisted of three main steps, which involved the assistance of AI technology at certain points: generating a word list of semantically-related words from the field of Geography, clarifying some definitory semantical aspects and developing some explanatory and practical language activities. The results are discussed in terms of appropriateness or practicality and other strategies and potential implications are also outlined.

Keywords: *English for Specific (Academic) Purposes (ES(A)P), specialised vocabulary, technical words, semi-technical words, AI-powered tools*

INTRODUCTION

“Does the Mediterranean Sea *lie* or *sit* between Africa and Europe?”, “Does the Church *stand* or *sit* in the middle of Central Square?” These questions were raised during some of my ESAP courses addressed to first-year undergraduates majoring in Geology and Geography. Apparently, these verbs do not raise problems since their main meaning should be familiar to students from their general vocabulary knowledge (i.e. the general meaning of the verbs is situated at a basic user’s level² and the proficiency level of the students in question ranges from B1-C2). However, these verbs also carry additional domain-specific meaning(s). A rapid dictionary search proves to be more or less useful, as it points out that they can all be used with the meaning of *to be located in a particular place/position*³, which shows that, without some kind of ‘awareness raising’, ES(A)P learners may not be able to easily retrieve the appropriate term to be used in a specific context. Starting from this, I have decided on undertaking the task of identifying a set of useful, closely-related verbs describing spatial positions of various landforms or landmarks⁴ along with some meaning and usage aspects. First, I discuss words in terms of their technicality with a view to understanding what in their nature may create a challenge. Then, I resort to AI-assisted research

¹ Junior Lecturer, Babeş-Bolyai University, Faculty of Letters, Dept. of Specialized Languages.

² i.e. A1/A2; see first entries, for example in [https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/\(CD\)](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/(CD)) or [https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/\(OLD\)](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/(OLD)).

³ See the following dictionary entries: *stand*, *sit*, *lie*.

⁴ These are specific topics of interest to both Geography and Geology university students.

to help me identify a practical list of verbs and also clarify some problematic aspects linked to their meaning. Finally, some explanatory/applicative language activities are presented.

TECHNICAL, SEMI-TECHNICAL, ACADEMIC VOCABULARY. AN ANALYTICAL OVERVIEW

Though in the early stages of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) research, teaching technical vocabulary was believed not to fall under the jurisdiction of the ESP practitioner (Hutchinson & Waters, 1991, p. 163), more and more studies have subsequently turned their attention to refining this category and closely-related ones. For instance, Dudley-Evans and St John (2012, p. 81) nuance the previous position by stating that teachers must check the understanding of technical words. Other researchers also advocate for the need to integrate technical vocabulary into ESP courses (Nation, 2013; Lyu, 2024) in spite of the linguistic teacher's limitations (Nation, 2013, p. 293).

The term *specialised vocabulary* will be utilised as an encompassing term containing the set of vocabulary strands useful for the teaching-learning of a topic for specific purposes. Additionally, it can be defined as the opposite of *general vocabulary*. The latter contains both content and function words commonly used across various fields or professions, irrespective of the context. Ever since the advent of corpus-based studies, it has been equated to high-frequency words (Hyland & Tse, 2007)⁵, or to both high and mid-frequency⁶ words, which, in their turn, are viewed as “[...] largely general-purpose vocabulary.” (Nation, 2013, p. 18). Here, specialised vocabulary is posited to include *academic*, *technical* and *semi-technical* vocabulary, as they will be discussed in what follows next.

The *academic*⁷ vocabulary strand is made up of a set of words more or less common to a variety of academic texts from different fields of study (Nation, 2013, p. 19; Coxhead, 2000; 2013). It actually serves as the supporting, non-salient structure of an academic text, e.g., *substitute*, *underlie* (Coxhead, 2000, p. 214). Attention has been given to the identification of academic words and to teaching methods related to them because they are not likely to be acquired strictly through incidental learning (Worthington & Nation, 1996, p. 4). Moreover, this category is oftentimes considered to be the central core of E(S)AP language courses, if not the most challenging vocabulary strand (Hyland & Tse, 2007; Dudley-Evans and St John, 2012; Coxhead, 2000; 2013).

Technical vocabulary consists of words for specific purposes. What exactly can fall into this category tends to be loosely defined, since its usage is not exactly

⁵ They provide about 95% text coverage and are situated somewhere between 2,000-3,000 words (Nation, 2013, p. 18; cf. also Hyland & Tse, 2007, p. 236).

⁶ They provide about 98% text coverage and are said to be the equivalent of knowing around 6,000 to 7,000 words so as to be an independent speaker (Nation, 2013).

⁷ Sometimes it is equated with *semi/sub-technical* vocabulary (cf. Hyland & Tse, 2007, p. 235), which is a term discussed later as a subset of technical vocabulary.

“dichotomous” (Le & Miller, 2023, p. 253), i.e. splitting words into two categories (*technical* versus *non-technical*) is not possible in a straightforward manner. Nation (2013) and Coxhead (2013) argue that terms such as *special purpose*, *semi-technical*, *sub-technical* or *technical*, irrespective of their frequency, share in common the fact that they commonly denote the specific terms or expressions associated with a particular academic or professional domain.

After differentiating words from an Ecology/Geography-related excerpt in terms of frequency, Nation (2013, p. 14-20) goes on to exemplify some “technical” words, which are shown to belong to all frequency categories (e.g. *forest* – high; *timber*, *beech*, *degradation* – mid-; *podocarp*, *overgrazing* – low-frequency words), though the mid- and low-frequency ones are more prevalent in this category. In order to better grasp how such words are currently integrated into online dictionaries which account for both general and more specific vocabulary, a brief analysis was conducted at the preliminary stage of our research. The dictionaries consulted were *Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries* (OLD) (Oxford University Press, 2025), Cambridge University Press’ online dictionary (CD) (Cambridge University Press & Assessment, 2025) and Collins’ online dictionary (COD) (Collins, 2025) with a purpose of observing how Nation’s technical words are treated in terms of their language level (according to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020)) and of their specificity:

1. *Language level:*

a. high-frequency: *forest* – A2 (in all three dictionaries)ⁱ,

b. mid-frequency: *timber* – C1 (OLD)ⁱⁱ / C2 (CD)ⁱⁱⁱ / - (COD)^{iv}, *beech* – C2 (OLD)^v / - (CD^{vi}/COD^{vii}), *degradation* – level unspecified in all three dictionaries,

c. low-frequency words: *podocarp* – level and meaning unspecified in OLD and CD, meaning explained in COD,^{viii} but level unspecified; *overgrazing* – level unspecified in all three dictionaries.

2. *Specificity:*

Table 1. General online dictionaries – Specificity*

“Specialist”/ “Specialized”/ “Technical interpretation”	OLD	CD	COD
forest	✓ ^{ix}	NG ^x	NG ^{xi}
timber	✓ ^{xii}	NG ^{xiii}	NG ^{xiv}
beech	✓ ^{xv}	NG ^{xvi}	NG ^{xvii}
degradation	✓ ^{xviii}	NG ^{xix}	✓ ^{xx}
podocarp	–	–	NG ^{xxi}
overgrazing	NG ^{xxii}	✓ ^{xxiii}	✓ ^{xxiv}

* – general/specialised meaning: not included in the dictionary; ✓ specialised meaning: stated as such; NG: specialised meaning: not given as such

In the case of *overgrazing*, the meaning was provided in all three dictionaries, but the word is stated to be “specialized” in CD and “technical” in COD, entry 3. By comparison, OLD’s second meaning for *degradation* (“2.

(*specialist*) the process of something being damaged or made worse: *environmental degradation*") overlaps meaning 3 in COD and is similar to the general meaning found in CD. *Degradation* can be interpreted as being "technical" along the same lines as *arm*, but *forest*, *timber* and *beech* may not fit the same explanation. *Forest* is too much part of the general vocabulary and does not seem to have an additional specialised meaning used on its own (i.e. it seems to be(come) specialised when used in connection with other words, e.g. in expressions such as *deciduous forest*), while *timber* and *beech* seemingly have only specialised usages, which is probably why they are ranked at a higher level of language proficiency. *Podocarp* and *overgrazing* are not unitarily treated in the online dictionaries consulted, which may be attributed to their low frequency.

What can be concluded at this point is that, where available, the CEFR levels assigned in the general dictionaries are almost the same. Nevertheless, there is not a unitary interpretation regarding the "specialist" / "technical" category. Moreover, sometimes the general explanation in a dictionary overlaps the specialist definition in another one. Therefore, tagging a word "technical" can be subject to discussion, as is also reflected in the relevant literature, which deals with the matter in terms of degrees of technicality. Chung & Nation (2003), for example, devised a four-step scale to differentiate between the ways in which words are used. Step 3 includes words which function as technical terms in certain disciplines, but can also appear in other fields where they are employed with the same meaning, though they are not considered technical there (e.g. *cage*, *chest*). At step 4, on the other hand, words that can be understood only in that specific field are included (e.g. *fascia*).

A similar type of interpretation occurs in translation-oriented research, as well. Firstly, Dima (2012) remarks on the fact that lexical items pertaining to specialised domains occur in general dictionaries and vice versa, an idea which is supported by my own findings mentioned previously. Her proposal is to use the word *technical* to describe terms which are known by an expert circle belonging to the "hard sciences" and which "are exemplars of total equivalence in translation" (p. 96). In its turn, *semi-technical* would be reserved for words from the general vocabulary which become polysemous when used in a specialised context, through *analogical* operations.

Following this line of thought, *podocarp* and *overgrazing* would be found at step 4, which I would postulate to be the equivalent of my usage of the term *technical*. But the question arises whether lack of familiarity with a term or its semantic opacity is something that should be taken into account. For instance, these days, as a result of the continuous focus on environmental aspects, the meaning of *overgrazing* is familiar to a large part of the public. A better exemplification might be *photosynthesis*. It is normally considered technical/specialised⁸, but its meaning has

⁸ See COD, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/photosynthesis>, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/photosynthesis>, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/photosynthesis?q=photosynthesis>. Accessed on 02.05.2025.

become known on a large scale, therefore it can no longer be regarded as being obscure, though it is a specialised word. In its turn, level 3 in Chung & Nation (2003, p. 105) could be equated with the *semi-technical* category (in line with Dima, 2012), which appears to be a prolific category, albeit one that is still difficult to delineate. However, I would reserve the word *technical* for those words one meaning of which refers to something precise in the field of science considered, *photosynthesis* included (and not only for the *hard sciences*).

Next, two specialised online dictionaries were consulted. The first one is Oxford's *A Dictionary of Geography* (DG) (Mayhew, 2009), devised by a geographer, who included aspects of both human and physical geography, among which Ecology. The second one is Oxford's *A Dictionary of Environment and Conservation* (DEC) (Park & Allby, 2017). As can be seen from Table 2, most terms occur in the second dictionary, with the exception of the specific tree names. Interestingly, in DG, *forest* is not included as a specialised term by itself, it only appears in expressions such as *deciduous forest*^{xxv}, which seems to fit our previous interpretation. However, DEC defines the word *forest* as "a type of ecosystem", which means that in this sense the word is actually to be interpreted as specialised; therefore, it might be concluded that *forest* is also a *semi-technical* term.

Table 2. Specialised online dictionaries – Specificity*

<i>Specialised interpretation</i>	DG	DEC
forest	-	✓ ^{xxvi}
timber	-	✓ ^{xxvii}
beech	-	-
degradation	✓ ^{xxviii}	✓ ^{xxix}
podocarp	-	-
overgrazing	-	✓ ^{xxx}

* – specialised meaning: not included in the dictionary; ✓ specialised meaning: stated as such

When outlining six categories⁹ related to the *Medical Word List*, Hsu (2013, p. 467-468) discusses them in terms of a continuum along the semi-technical¹⁰ spectrum. The first category (1) is similar to the *academic* one (e.g. (*differentiate*, *entity*), while the last (6) can probably be associated with the *technical* category (i.e. words encountered only in the specific field). The second type (2) is related to general-use words which reveal their concealed technical meaning when employed with other words in the specific purpose context (e.g. *cerebrospinal fluid*). Then, (3) there are words "used *equally*"¹¹ with general and specialized meanings [...] 'gold vein' (in geology), 'vein' as 'a blood vessel' (in medicine), 'vein in a leaf' (in botany), 'vein in the wing of an insect' (in zoology)" (p. 467), (4) words which experience a shift in meaning when used in general language (e.g. *morbid*,

⁹ Hsu (2013)'s examples are used in this paragraph.

¹⁰ In Hsu (2013) these terms are called *sub-technical* and *lay-technical*.

¹¹ My emphasis.

trauma), and (5) words covering a larger palette of fields, but which are easily cognoscible by the “layperson” (e.g. *hormone*).

To conclude, my proposal is to name *technical* those words which have a direct, unique reference/meaning in the specific domain(s) considered and which do not otherwise contain general senses (type (3) in Baker (1988, p. 92); types (5) and (6) in Hsu (2013)). Their meaning may be somewhat obscure, in the sense of understandable only in the field of reference (e.g. *podocarp*, *beech*, *overgrazing*), but also, as shown, relatively transparent (e.g. *photosynthesis*¹²). *Semi-technical* (e.g. *degradation*¹³, *arm*) would refer to those words which can have both a general meaning and a specialised meaning in one or more disciplines (types (2)-(4) in Hsu (2013); types (2), (4), (5) in Baker (1988)). The type of meaning activated is going to depend on the context in which it is used (Le & Miller, 2023). I consider the *academic* category to contain general, oftentimes formal and/or organisational vocabulary rendering concepts common to all specialised disciplines (Dudley-Evans and St John, 2012), but also general vocabulary with a higher frequency and various particularities in a specific field (Hyland & Tse, 2007¹⁴). Here the *academic* category (type (1) in Hsu (2013); type (1)¹⁵ and (6)¹⁶ in Baker (1988)) is kept separate from the *semi-technical* one, though there may be situations when the two overlap. Further investigations into this matter may be necessary.

AI-ASSISTED RESEARCH. METHOD AND RESULTS

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is “any type of AI that uses deep learning models to generate or create new content” (Bowen & Watson, 2024, p. 22). The emphasis is put on the idea that *novel* material is produced, in contrast to the mere processing of existing data, specific to the more ‘traditional’ AI versions. GenAI tools have been considered for a variety of tasks related to the educational or research context: communication, vocabulary acquisition (terminology definitions, providing contexts for practicing vocabulary), writing skill improvement (writing assistance; generating tasks or rubrics), language translation, grammar and spelling checkers, creating quizzes or tests, designing course descriptions or learning objectives, generating reports and even critical thinking (Atlas, 2023; Skrabut, 2023; Bretan, 2024; Zaphir et al., 2024).

GenAI *inquiry* may range in complexity from variants in which a question is asked directly as you would address a human partner (e.g. using open-ended questions: *What ...*), to *minimally adapted questions* in which a cognitive verb is inserted (e.g. *Describe what ...*), to *prompt-engineered* versions, which include particular criteria according to common norms focusing on prompt refinement.

¹² Term specific to Biology, but also Ecology-related. The term is included in DEC (Park & Allby, 2017).

¹³ *Degradation* –see CD, entries 3 (meaning in Environmental studies) and 4 (sense in Science).

¹⁴ For example, Hyland & Tse (2007, p. 244) explain that the verb “to analyze” refers to working out the components of a substance in engineering, while in social science it means to “consider carefully”.

¹⁵ i.e. words common to all disciplines

¹⁶ i.e. items with a rhetorical function, showing the writer’s organisation, intentions, attitudes etc.

In general, better results are yielded when providing the tool with better-engineered inputs; however, an approach made up of a series of smaller prompts can also generate an effective outcome (Zaphir et al., 2024, p.4-5).

Similarly, according to Bowen & Watson (2024, p. 50), AI tools are “contextual processors”, the results of which depend to a large extent on how the prompting process is conducted. They suggest to develop prompts starting from a set of four main features: TASK (what we ask the AI to perform¹⁷), FORMAT (output requested), VOICE (or style) and CONTEXT (other details or examples). To these, other recommendations can be added, such as using natural language, being systematic, iterating, using clear causal language and fine-tuning the prompts if the results are not exactly what is needed (Gemini for Google Workspace (October, 2024); Microsoft, 2023; Bowen & Watson, 2024; Zaphir et al., 2024).

The prompts developed here were constructed starting from the following generalised pattern¹⁸: PERSONA (Who are you acting as?), INSTRUCTION WORDS (What is the AI asked to *do*: e.g. *summarise, identify, analyse, explain* etc.)¹⁹, TOPIC (e.g. *a piece of writing, a speech*), RECIPIENTS (i.e. the intended audience), LIMITATIONS (e.g. contextual limitations, such as space or time; number), THEME (or style) and FORMAT (output). Three Gen-AIs, specifically GPT-4-turbo (OpenAI, 2025), Gemini 2.5 Flash (Google, 2025), Microsoft Copilot (Microsoft, 2025), free versions, were inquired using the same initial prompts. They were taken into account starting from the idea that the models were trained differently, thus the results obtained will be diverse (Bowen & Watson, 2024, p. 19-26).

The first two prompts were similar, with a change only in the instruction word used, which was *Identify* in Prompt 1 and *Develop* in Prompt 2. The purpose was to check whether this change would lead to notable variations in response. Among the constraints used, two question examples were included in order to elicit the models to include the verbs of interest: *lie, sit* and *stand*. In a preliminary test which did not contain examples, Microsoft Copilot, for instance, generated a list without any of the verbs mentioned. The last sentence in the prompt was introduced in the hopes that it would trigger better results, in the preferred format (Bowen & Watson, p. 52). Samples of the initial responses are presented below:

PROMPT

I am an English for Specific Purposes Educator. Identify a 10-word vocabulary list for my Geography students which contains verbs describing positions in space in connection to topics such as <Describing a City>, <Describing a Country>, <Describing Locations on a Map>. The purpose of this list is to enable my students to answer questions such as <Does the Mediterranean Sea *lie* or *sit* between Africa and Europe?> or <Does the Church *stand* or *sit* in the middle of Central Square?>. Be thorough, but only list the ten best answers in a table format.

¹⁷ I associate these with the instruction words in academic writing.

¹⁸ In the sense that not all aspects need to be included when prompting, depending on your purpose.

¹⁹ Cognitive verbs included.

RESPONSES

 Top 10 Spatial Verbs for Geography Students

Verb	Typical Usage & Function in Geography	
lie	Used for extended natural or geographic features (e.g., "The Sahara Desert lies in the north of Africa.")	

(Abridged from OpenAI, 2025, June, 4)

Verb	Example Sentence
Lie	The Mediterranean Sea lies between Africa and Europe.

(Abridged from Google, 2025, June, 4)

Verb	Definition & Usage
Lie	To be situated in a horizontal or resting position (e.g., "The Mediterranean Sea lies between Africa and Europe.")

(Abridged from Microsoft, 2025, June, 4)

The third prompt asked the AI tools to explain the difference between using *Identify* or *Develop* in prompting. All three pointed out that a distinction ought to be noticeable in the resulting outputs, since the second verb usage in this context implies the usage of creativity and a more instructional-focused approach. However, in all three LLM cases, there was a complete overlap between the verbs in their two corresponding lists. The explanation came from Gemini (without being prompted):

In essence:

- Identify = Find and state.
- Develop = Create or elaborate.

In the context of your two prompts, the word lists ended up being very similar because the core task (providing 10 verbs for a specific context) was quite constrained. However, if the prompt had been something like "Identify the main challenges of teaching ESP" versus "Develop a strategy for teaching ESP to geography students," the difference in output would be far more pronounced. "Identify" would lead to a list of existing problems, while "develop" would require a structured plan with steps, justifications, and perhaps even example activities. The verbs "identify" and "develop" have distinct meanings, and using one over the other in a prompt signals a different kind of task or expected output.

(Abridged from Google, 2025, June, 4)

The fourth prompt requested the AI tools to merge the two lists, pointing out the overlapping verbs. The “step-by-step” specification allows the user to understand how the AI is processing his/her request and can be useful in understanding whether some additional fine-tuning is necessary. The next step required the merging of the combined lists from all three AI tools. The prompt is rendered below, along with some summary insights each AI tool provided:

PROMPT

Take the verbs from the three lists below²⁰ and draw up a complete list with all the verbs. Format your answer in a table with the following headings: Verb In First List? In Second List? In Third List? Overlap? Work step-by-step.

1. ChatGPT – Verbs

lie, sit, stand, stretch, run, border, face, rise, overlook, occupy

2. Gemini – Verbs

lie, sit, stand, extend, border, surround, locate, span, adjoin, encompass

3. Copilot – Verbs

lie, sit, stand, stretch, border, rise, run, occupy, extend, face

RESPONSES

✓ Summary Insights

- Most common verbs (appear in all 3 lists):

lie, sit, stand, border

- Verbs in 2 of 3 lists:

extend, face, occupy, rise, run, stretch

- Verbs in only 1 list (more advanced or less frequent):

adjoin, encompass, locate, overlook, span, surround

(Abridged from OpenAI, 2025, June, 4)

²⁰ The lists are normalized here (e.g. all with lowercase letters), which did not occur in the initial prompt. It was something that the AIs did when performing the task.

The exercise of comparing the vocabulary lists from different AI models (GPT, Gemini, and Copilot) for verbs describing spatial positions in geography reveals a clear trend:

Strong Core Overlap, but Divergence in Specificity and Scope:

All three AI models consistently identified a core set of verbs fundamental to describing geographical positions: **lie, sit, stand, border, stretch, run, occupy, extend, and face**. These verbs represent the most common and essential ways to express basic spatial relationships in a geographical context. This strong overlap suggests a shared understanding of foundational spatial vocabulary across different language models.

However, beyond this core, each model introduced verbs that, while relevant, were not universally present.

(Abridged from Google, 2025, June, 4)

Final Conclusion:

- **6 verbs** appear in all three lists (**Lie, Sit, Stand, Border**).
- **6 verbs** overlap in two lists (**Stretch, Run, Face, Rise, Occupy, Extend**).
- **6 verbs** appear only in one list (**Overlook, Surround, Locate, Span, Adjoin, Encompass**).

(Abridged from Microsoft, 2025, June, 4)²¹

After obtaining a list of 10 core verbs describing geographical positions (incorporating those which appeared in at least 2 of the 3 lists), the next prompts aimed at generating contrastive examples, thus capturing verb pairs with closely related meanings. Two prompts were first addressed to ChatGPT to this purpose (Open AI, 2025, June, 4): “Generate a contrastive vocabulary list starting from the 10 common geographical verbs (*lie, sit, stand, border, extend, face, occupy, rise, run, stretch*) in a table format. Provide explanations and examples for each verb. Think step-by-step.” and “Refine the table constructed at step 3²² above by adding a clarifying example for the contrasting verbs.” The final results are provided in *Table 3* below, which was generated in a Word Document by ChatGPT and edited²³ by the researcher. *Table 4* was created by MicrosoftCopilot; it had to be copied, pasted and then edited in Word. Gemini somehow failed to provide a coherent table (see its response immediately below *Table 4*).

²¹ What can be noticed in this response is that the AI generated an incorrect number (“6 verbs appear in all three lists”, though it lists only 4 in the first case. Typically, the “work step-by-step” specification is expected to enhance the performance of mathematical/logical operations (Bowen & Watson, 2024).

²² At step 3 ChatGPT (OpenAI, 2025, June, 4) provided a list which exemplified only the core verbs.

²³ Some emphasis (underlining, formatting in bold etc.) was operated by the researcher.

Table 3. Refined Contrastive Vocabulary Table for Geography Students

[Main] Verb	Contrastive verb ²⁴	[Main verb -] Definition / Function	Contrast / Common Confusion	Main Example (Geographic Context)	Contrast Example
lie	sit stand	describes position of <u>large</u> or <u>natural features</u> on the surface .	often confused with <i>sit</i> or <i>stand</i> (used more for man-made objects).	<i>The Mediterranean Sea lies between Europe and Africa.</i>	<i>The town sits near the sea, but the sea itself lies between two continents.</i>
sit	lie	indicates a <u>place</u> or <u>structure</u> resting or located on a surface .	less formal than <i>lie</i> , [<i>sit</i> is] often used for towns or buildings .	<i>The village sits on a hill overlooking the coast.</i>	<i>The valley lies below, while the church sits above on the ridge.</i>
stand	sit lie	refers to upright or vertical structures in <u>fixed locations</u>	contrasted with <i>sit</i> (horizontal) or <i>lie</i> (natural position).	<i>The cathedral stands in the center of the old city.</i>	<i>The marketplace sits beside the cathedral, which stands tall.</i>
border	surround	indicates one <u>region</u> or <u>country</u> is adjacent to another .	can be confused with <i>surround</i> (which implies full enclosure).	<i>Germany borders Poland to the east.</i>	<i>The mountains surround the city, but only one side borders the river.</i>
extend	stretch	describes something reaching over a specific area or direction.	often overlaps with <i>stretch</i> , but <i>extend</i> can imply direction .	<i>The railway line extends from London to Edinburgh.</i>	<i>The wall stretches for miles, but the road extends northward.</i>
face	overlook	describes orientation or direction <u>something points toward</u> .	confused with <i>overlook</i> (which implies elevation).	<i>The parliament building faces the river.</i>	<i>The castle overlooks the valley, while the gate faces east.</i>
occupy	lie stretch	refers to space taken up by a <u>feature</u> or <u>entity</u> .	may be confused with <i>lie</i> or <i>stretch</i> , but emphasizes coverage .	<i>The Sahara occupies much of northern Africa.</i>	<i>The desert occupies the region, but the sand dunes stretch along its edge.</i>
rise	stand	used for features that elevate from the ground or increase in height .	can overlap with <i>stand</i> , but <i>rise</i> often refers to natural height .	<i>The Andes rise along the western edge of South America.</i>	<i>The mountains rise in the distance, while towers stand in the city.</i>
run	stretch run	describes linear movement or flow over a surface (<u>roads</u> , <u>rivers</u> , <u>borders</u>).	often contrasted with <i>stretch</i> (static), <i>run</i> implies motion or path .	<i>The Amazon River runs through Brazil.</i>	<i>The road runs through the valley; the pipeline stretches across the plain.</i>

²⁴ Column introduced by the researcher.

[Main] Verb	Contrastive verb ²⁴	[Main verb -] Definition / Function	Contrast / Common Confusion	Main Example (Geographic Context)	Contrast Example
stretch	extend	indicates something long and continuous <u>covering distance</u> or <u>area</u> .	closely related to <i>extend</i> , but [<i>stretch</i>] often emphasizes length .	<i>The coastline stretches for hundreds of kilometers.</i>	<i>The bridge stretches across the river, while the border extends eastward.</i>

Source: OpenAI (2025, June, 4), edited

Table 4. List of Contrastive Geographical Position Verbs with Examples

Geographical Verb	Contrastive Verb	Explanation	Example
Lie	Sit	"Lie" describes a horizontal position, while "sit" implies a settled or fixed position.	"The Mediterranean Sea lies between Africa and Europe." vs. "The town sits at the foot of the mountain."
Stand	Rise	"Stand" indicates a stable upright position, while "rise" suggests an elevation or a higher placement .	"The tower stands in the middle of the square." vs. "The hills rise above the plains."
Border	Surround	"Border" refers to touching or marking a boundary , while "surround" implies encircling an area completely.	"France borders Germany and Spain." vs. "Mountains surround the valley."
Extend	Stretch	"Extend" refers to spanning a certain distance, while "stretch" suggests a continuous lengthening over a vast space.	"The highway extends from the north to the south." vs. "The desert stretches for miles."
Face	Overlook	"Face" describes direct orientation , while "overlook" suggests a higher position offering a view .	"The building faces the ocean." vs. "The cliff overlooks the river."
Occupy	Cover	"Occupy" implies taking up space , while "cover" suggests spreading across a surface.	"Forests occupy much of the region." vs. "Snow covers the mountain peaks."

Rise	Fall	"Rise" refers to a movement upward , while "fall" refers to a downward movement or decline.	"The hills rise gently beyond the valley." vs. "The terrain falls steeply towards the river."
Run	Flow	"Run" describes a linear extension , while "flow" refers to movement , usually of water.	"The river runs through the countryside." vs. "The stream flows towards the lake."
Stretch	Shrink	"Stretch" conveys expansion over distance, while "shrink" suggests contraction or reduction in size.	"The coastline stretches for hundreds of kilometers." vs. "The ice caps are shrinking due to climate change."
Sit	Hover	"Sit" indicates grounded stability , while "hover" suggests suspended movement above a surface.	"The city sits along the riverbank." vs. "The mist hovers above the valley."

Source: Microsoft (2025, June, 4)

GEMINI'S CONTRASTIVE LIST RESPONSE

Understanding Geographical Verbs: A Contrastive List

Verb (Usage) Contrast	Geographical Explanation Contrastive Verb / Situation	Example Sentence Explanation of
Extend Describes something that gradually spreads out over a large area or along a long distance. The low hills extend to the north, gradually becoming mountains. Border (for distinct definite lines) 'Extend' implies growth or development outwards, often covering a gradual area. 'Border' defines a distinct dividing line between two separate entities.		

(Abridged from Google, 2025, June, 4)

As a final step for this part of the research, the LLMs were required to develop a *multiple choice*, then a *fill-in-the blanks* activity starting from Table 3²⁵ here and also to suggest another activity based on the same table, designed at facilitating Geography students' correct use of spatial verbs. Some samples for the *multiple choice* are provided in what follows next.

²⁵ Table 3 was chosen because most explanations seemed clearer.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE PROMPT²⁶

Use the < Refined Contrastive Vocabulary Table for Geography Students> table to develop a multiple-choice, compare/contrast exercise which focuses on the contrastive pairs of verbs generated. Provide the answer between brackets. Specify all the verbs from the table that can be used. The exercise uses advanced English language and is addressed to Geography students.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE RESPONSES

■ Multiple-Choice Exercise: Distinguishing Contrastive Spatial Verbs

1. Which sentence correctly uses the verb typically reserved for **natural features located between regions**?

- A) The museum sits between two canals.
- B) The Alps lie between Switzerland and Italy.
- C) The monument stands between two metro stations.
- D) The resort lies atop the cliff.

[B]

(Abridged from OpenAI, 2025, June, 7)

Multiple-Choice Exercise: Nuances in Geographical Verbs

Instructions: For each question, carefully read the geographical context and choose the verb that most accurately and precisely describes the spatial relationship or feature.

1. The vast, flat expanse of the Siberian Tundra **lies / sits** across the northern reaches of Eurasia, characterized by its permafrost and low-growing vegetation, presenting a horizontal dominance over the landscape. Which verb best captures this extensive, relatively flat presence?
 - a) sits
 - b) stands
 - c) lies
 - d) rests

[c] lies]
2. Though many smaller settlements might **lie / sit** inconspicuously within the rolling hills, the historic fortress, a prominent defensive structure, truly **lies / sits** strategically atop the highest peak, dominating the surrounding terrain. Which option correctly fills the blanks to differentiate between general location and a specific, often elevated, placement for a built structure?
 - a) sits / lies
 - b) lies / sits
 - c) stands / lies
 - d) lies / stands

[b] lies / sits]

(Abridged from Google, 2025, June, 7)

²⁶ A similar prompt was used for the *Fill-in-the-blanks* activity request, with the actual list attached in the case of Copilot, and copied in the prompt in the case of Gemini.

Multiple-Choice Exercise: Contrastive Verb Pairs in Geography

Instructions:

Select the best verb that correctly completes the sentence based on its spatial meaning in Geography.

1. Which verb best describes the positioning of the Mediterranean Sea between Europe and Africa?

A) Sits B) Lies C) Stands D) Occupies **[Correct answer: B]**

(Abridged from Microsoft, 2025, June, 7)

The second type of activities produced adequate results relative to what was expected (*fill-in-the-blanks* type of activity) in the case of ChatGPT; it offered to export them in a Word/Pdf document or in an Interactive Quiz, *html* format, which is a way of providing students with immediate feedback on condition that the quiz is correctly generated. If it is not, which partially happened in this case, it cannot be modified by the teacher unless he/she has basic knowledge of HTML/JavaScript to modify (OpenAI, 2025, June, 7, Prompt “What is an HTML quiz?”). The latter case was the preferred one; the quiz was generated, but, out of the 13 statements, 3 of them were corrupted (two gaps were created for 1 verb, which led to the right answers being evaluated as incorrect):

FILL IN THE BLANKS RESPONSES:

Fill-in-the-Blanks: Geography Spatial Verbs

Fill in each blank with the correct verb describing geographical position or movement. Click "Check Answers" when you're done.

1. The Andes Mountains along the western edge of South America, forming a continuous barrier between coastal and inland regions.
10. The Sahara Desert much of Northern Africa, spanning multiple countries.
11. The valley below the cliffs, while the village at their edge.
12. The monument above the old city, while the church simply on the same hill.

Question 10: Correct

Question 11: Incorrect

Question 12: Incorrect

(Abridged from OpenAI, 2025, June, 7)

Copilot and Gemini provided a 2-word multiple-choice variant instead of a more typical *Fill-in-the-blanks* with no options given/a list of verbs provided.

Fill-in-the-Blanks Exercise: Contrastive Verb Pairs in Geography

Instructions:

Complete each sentence with the most appropriate verb from the pair provided in parentheses. Use the context of the sentence to guide your choice.

1. The Alps _____ above the plains of northern Italy, creating a dramatic natural boundary. (rise/stand)

[Correct answer: rise]

(Abridged from Microsoft, 2025, June, 7)

Fill-in-the-Blanks Exercise: Precision in Geographical Description

Instructions: For each sentence, choose the most appropriate verb from the given pair in parentheses to accurately describe the geographical feature or relationship. Justify your choice based on the subtle differences in meaning.

10. The colossal Great Barrier Reef _____ (extends / stretches) for over 2,300 kilometers along the coast of Queensland, Australia, representing the world's largest coral reef system.
[stretches]

(Abridged from Google, 2025, June, 8)

Next, some aspects related to the free-choice, more creative task (*production-type*) are presented. ChatGPT (OpenAI, 2025, June, 7) proposed a *Describe it on the Map* activity, which it was able to generate as an interactive document. The activity description included aspects such as the *learning objective*, *skills practiced*, *materials needed*, *instructions*, *assessment criteria* (*Oral Rubric Option*) and *example prompts*. It tried including a map in the document generated, but the map failed to open. Additionally, it suggested embedding the activity in an LMS (Learning Management System) (such as, Moodle or Google Classroom).

Gemini generated *Geographical Scene Description & Justification* (Google, 2025, June, 07), designed as a descriptive writing activity starting from a set of diverse geographical photographs. All the necessary steps were illustrated. It contextualised it within the lesson as a production activity following the multiple-choice one. Moreover, it linked it to a useful set of images found online. Copilot suggested *Interactive Map Labeling & Description* (Microsoft, 2025, June, 08), in which landmark descriptions based on a (digital/physical) map were the focus. The *objective*, *instructions* and *example sentences* were also generated.

PROMPT

Suggest another activity based on the *Refined Contrastive Vocabulary Table for Geography Students* above aimed at enabling Geography students to use spatial verbs correctly.

RESPONSES

Instructions:

- Click the button to get a new speaking prompt.
- Describe a location or feature on the map using the verb suggested.
- Use correct geographical language and refer to the map as you speak.
- Partners or classmates can provide feedback.

Speaking Prompt

Describe a location on the map where something might "overlook" in relation to a central square.

Get New Prompt

(Abridged, OpenAI, 2025, June, 07)

2. Scene Selection (5 minutes):

- Divide the class into small groups (3-4 students).
- Present 3-5 different geographical photographs or map excerpts. Each group chooses one scene to work with. (Alternatively, assign a different scene to each group).

(Abridged from Google, 2025, June, 8)

Objective:

Students will analyze a **regional or world map** and use the contrastive spatial verbs appropriately to describe locations, boundaries, and physical features.

Instructions:

1. **Provide a Map:** Choose a geographical map of a **city, country, or continent** (physical, political, or topographical).
2. **Identify Key Features:** Have students label major landmarks, bodies of water, borders, mountain ranges, cities, and other geographical elements.
3. **Write Descriptions Using the Vocabulary:**

(Abridged from Microsoft, 2025, June, 7)

AI-ASSISTED RESEARCH. DISCUSSION

When comparing tables 3 and 4, it can be noticed that the large majority of the contrastive verbs are the same, with Copilot introducing 5 verbs (*cover, fall, flow, shrink, hover*) which do not appear in ChatGPT's response. Additionally, the explanations produced by the two LLMs seem similar to some extent: e.g. *occupy* – implies *space taken up*. The similarity might result from the fact that a version of GPT was included in the development of Bing/Copilot chat (Bowen & Watson, 2024, p. 24), while the richer results in number that Copilot listed might stem from the fact that it is an LLM connected to the Internet, favouring new resources. However, from a linguistic-oriented, educational point of view, ChatGPT's explanations seem more appropriate since they provide more subtle aspects of meaning, in the sense that the meaning of a verb is further defined in terms of the semantic relations which it can have (e.g. the type of items it can collocate with) or additional meanings: e.g. *occupy* stresses *coverage*, *lie* appears to mainly refer to *large or natural features*, while *sit* is mainly used when referring to *towns or buildings*.

Looking at example (2) generated by Gemini in the multiple-choice activity, it can be observed that the word *settlements* is related to the verb *lie*²⁷. Upon checking an online dictionary, the explanations for the verb *to sit* do not exceed the basic meanings of “to be in a particular position”^{xxxix}, while for the verb *to lie* the explanation is “If something lies in a particular place, position, or direction, it is in that place, position, or direction”^{xxxix}, but in the examples provided there both *town* and *river* are used. Starting from the prompt-engineering suggestions of asking the LLM to *think again*, Gemini was prompted again and it provided a thorough, logical explanation:

PROMPT

<Though many smaller settlements might *lie / sit* inconspicuously within the rolling hills, the historic fortress, a prominent defensive structure, truly *lies / sits* strategically atop the highest peak, dominating the surrounding terrain. Which option correctly fills the blanks to differentiate between general location and a specific, often elevated, placement for a built structure?> Which verb is correct and why?

RESPONSE

Let's break down why "lie" and "sit" are the correct verbs in that context, differentiating between the two applications.

The correct option to fill the blanks is: b) *lies / sits*

Here's the detailed explanation:

²⁷ Ignoring, now, the grammatical error

1. "Though many smaller settlements might lie inconspicuously within the rolling hills..."

• Verb: Lie

- Reasoning: In a geographical context, "lie" is used for large, often natural, and typically flat or widespread features, or for general, relatively flat positions of objects.

"Settlements" here are being described as part of the broader landscape, blending in *inconspicuously* within the general expanse of the "rolling hills." It emphasizes their presence on the surface of the land, rather than as distinct, individually placed structures. Think of how a plain or a desert "lies" across a region.

2. "...the historic fortress, a prominent defensive structure, truly sits strategically atop the highest peak, dominating the surrounding terrain."

• Verb: Sit

- Reasoning: "Sit" is typically used for specific, often man-made structures, towns, or smaller features that are *placed* or *rest* in a particular spot. The fortress is a defined, built entity that is intentionally "placed strategically" on a specific point (the highest peak). It conveys a sense of a distinct object resting on a surface. While it's on a "peak" and dominating, the emphasis is on its established, fixed position *on* that peak.

(Abridged from Google, 2025, June, 8)

Since the LLMs failed at this point to fully explain the combination of *lie* with a settlement, an additional tool to recur to could be a search engine, such as *SkELL* (Lexical Computing CZ s.r.o. 2014–2021), which can show the frequency of certain word combinations. When checking *village sits* versus *village lies*, the frequency results are 0.02 hits per million and 0.09 hits per million, respectively. This actually means that the second word combination is more frequent than the first one, which appears rather counterintuitive to what might be first expected related to the explanation provided in Table 3. A similar test reveals that in the case of *town sits* versus *town lies*, the frequency results are 0.04 hits per million and 0.17 hits per million, respectively. The first variants could be interpreted as being rather domain-specific word combinations (geography-specific, less frequent), whereas the second ones are more readily used in general, descriptive contexts, focusing on the extension of a human settlement. If we conduct the same search on *SkELL* for the word combinations *sea sits* or *sea lies*, the results are 0 and 0.04 hits per million, respectively. It then follows that in this case the first combination is incorrect, whereas the second one is semi-technical, hence the low frequency. Thus, these final results appear to support the LLMs conclusions.

Coming back to the second of our initial questions, "Does the Church *stand* or *sit* in the middle of Central Square?" all three LLMs, when prompted again, answered that both variants are possible, though the first verb is preferable when wanting to emphasize height. When comparing two landmarks, the verb *stand* will be selected for the taller one, as in Chat GPTs example: "The marketplace sits beside the cathedral, which stands tall." (see Table 3). *SkELL* results appear to

concur with this interpretation: *church stands* - 0.12 hits per million vs. *church sits* - 0.02 hits per million. Nevertheless, when including the combination *church lies*, we also obtain 0.02 hits per million. Again, according to the LLMs, this variant should be incorrect: e.g. “**Lie:** This verb is primarily used for things that are positioned horizontally, flat, or spread out over an area. For example, “The book lies on the table,” or geographically, “[...] The plains lie to the west.” It is almost never used for upright structures like a church.” (Google, 2025, June, 08, Prompt “Does the Church stand or sit or lie in the middle of Central Square? Which is more appropriate?”). Online search also shows how the verb *lie* is actually used to mean *is situated* even with prominent landmarks, probably referring to geographical placements: “The building lies on a residential street in South Kensington, an upmarket area of south-west London.” (The Economist, 2015, para 10).

In what concerns the pedagogical implications, it can be concluded that the LLMs explanations are useful and can be used in class. The complexity or appropriateness of the activities generated varied, with possibly a better response in the case of the *multiple-choice* exercise created by Gemini for an advanced language class, as prompted. Care should be taken for possible overgeneralizations or false positive results. Whenever possible, it would be advisable to also include authentic examples when practicing targeted vocabulary items. For instance, some sentences extracted from *SkELL* could be used, setting the task for students to select the most appropriate variant in the given context (see example below).

e.g. *Select the most appropriate word:*

- a. The town ... above a harbour with cliffs on either side. (lies/sits)
- b. The town ... in a transitional zone between temperate oceanic climate and continental climate. (lies/sits)
- c. The town ... on a ridge with deep canyons to either side. (lies/sits)
- d. The town ... on a ridge with deep canyons to either side. (sits/stands)
- e. The Northern Baltic Sea ... between the Stockholm area, southwestern Finland and Estonia. (lies/sits)

(Initial examples retrieved from *Skell*, 2025, June, 08. Researcher-created activity)

When analysing the generated activities in the case of the *multiple-choice* activities, each AI tool provided a different variant as compared to the others, allowing teachers to select the most appropriate variant for their class and learning objective. ChatGPT focused on recycling the differences in meaning as displayed in *Table 3*, while Gemini and Copilot provided typical exercises for such vocabulary tasks (with a more verbose variant in Gemini’s case, probably as an answer to the “advanced English” specification). Still, as can be seen in the example 2 generated by Gemini, errors may occur.

In what concerns the *Fill-in-the-blanks* activities, similar patterns to those each LLM applied in the multiple-choice can be observed. A case of ‘showing off’ skills must be noted in Gemini’s sentence 10, when a picture of *An aerial view of the*

Great Reef was included unprompted. Since Gemini is connected to the Internet, it may use licensed images when responding (Google, 2025, June, 8, Prompts “Are you connected to the internet?”, “Do you differentiate between licensed and non-licensed images?”), which is why some precautionary measures must be taken if you want to use pictures generated by it. Additionally, the more ample sentences generated by Gemini makes it potentially more adept at generating language samples for insightful input vocabulary (related to this topic, at least). Finally, the *production*-type activities generated were all devised in a creative manner, but care should still be taken when asking ChatGPT to transform a given information into a html/interactive quiz, or a PowerPoint slide, since the data may be partially corrupted in the process.

CONCLUSIONS

The LLMs evaluated in the current paper can be regarded as useful instruments for identifying sets of semi-technical verbs. According to what was observed in the present study, there was a notable degree of overlap between the fundamental verbs generated initially, in a prompting context with specific limitations given, but also, sufficient variance to cater for the needs of an advanced language course. Therefore, educators would be able to choose among them to tailor various language activities.

The LLMs were able to point out the core meanings and distinctive characteristics of the majority of verbs identified. For instance, the most common difference between *lie* and *sit* was specified, the former being defined in connection with flat, extensive natural features, e.g. with *seas* and the latter related to human settlements, e.g. with *towns*. Additionally, contextual shades of meaning, such as those between *sit* and *stand* utilised in relation with human settlements or between *extend* and *stretch*, were captured and clearly explained. However, as shown, the explanation for situations where *lie* can be employed with upright structures was ignored at first by the LLMs, which shows a limitation in the LLMs’ metalinguistic competence.

The oversimplifications that the LLMs might operate can be explained by the fact that they start from statistical operations based on the training data they were exposed to. This may lead to the necessity of either overly checking results by recurring to other tools (e.g. general, specific dictionaries, search engines, Internet search etc.) or accepting partially correct answers as the whole truth on a matter. Then, it can be concluded that, if a cautionary, result-checking approach is undertaken, economy of time may not necessarily apply. It is also worth mentioning that at this stage LLMs may rather be English-centric (Xu et al., 2024, p. 13), so these conclusions may not apply in the case of other languages.

Appealing to several LLMs to produce vocabulary activities proves beneficial in terms of variety, the educators’ job then being to discern the more appropriate

variants for their target learners. LLMs may be regarded as potentially more adept at generating language samples for insightful input vocabulary (related to English-oriented language courses, at least), the reason being that, sometimes, real-life sentences do not openly illustrate differences in meaning useful for teaching purposes. Nevertheless, exposing learners to authentic language²⁸ to the greatest degree possible should still remain one of the basic principles of ES(A)P.

In order to achieve relevant results for a particular pedagogically-oriented, advanced vocabulary research, prompt-engineered inquiry must be conducted, in the sense that being as specific as possible related to your purpose yields better results. The accuracy of the responses depends on the specificity of the prompts, the step-by-step or *think again* strategies. Additionally, research needs to be doubled by employing metacognitive skills (reflecting on the results, questioning and checking the reliability and comprehensiveness of the data obtained or adjusting strategies²⁹). To conclude, AI tools prove useful in pedagogically-oriented vocabulary research, but human involvement remains of paramount importance.

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- ^{ix} Entry as a general term and also included in the “Geography” vocabulary list. OLD, available at <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/topic/geography?level=a2>. Accessed on 26.05.2025.

²⁸ On a lighter note, I would add, hopefully, there will still be some ‘authentic’ pieces written by humans-only in the future.

²⁹ Cf. Singh et al., 2025, June 12, v.2.

- ^x Entry as a general term. CD, available at <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/forest>. Accessed on 27.05.2025.
- ^{xi} Entry as a general term. COD, available <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/forest>. Accessed on 27.05.2025.
- ^{xii} Entry as a general term and also included in the “Plants and trees” vocabulary list. OLD, available at <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/topic/plants-and-trees?level=c1>. Accessed on 27.05.2025.
- ^{xiii} Entry as a general term. CD, available at <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/timber>. Accessed on 27.05.2025.
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- ^{xvi} Entry as a general term. CD, available at <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/beechn>. Accessed on 27.05.2025.
- ^{xvii} Entry as a general term. COD, available at <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/beechn>. Accessed on 27.05.2025.
- ^{xviii} Entry 1 as a general term and entry 2 is given as “Specialist”. OLD, available at <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/degradation?q=dgradation>. Accessed on 27.05.2025.
- ^{xix} Entry as a general term. CD, available at <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/degradation>. Accessed on 27.05.2025.
- ^{xx} Entry as a general term. COD, available at <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/degradation>. Accessed on 27.05.2025.
- ^{xxi} An entry mentioning a specialised, “Botany” meaning, and another referring to the tree from the genus *Podocarpus*, as in Nation’s study (2013, p. 17), but which is not explicitly categorised as specialist.
- ^{xxii} Entry explaining the Ecology/Environmental Science meaning, but not posited as “specialist”. OLD, available at <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/overgrazing?q=overgrazing>. Accessed on 27.05.2025.
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Student Usage and Attitudes towards AI in Academic and Creative Writing

Abstract: *Student Usage and Attitudes towards AI in Academic and Creative Writing.* The present study endeavours to determine the attitudes and practices of students with respect to the use of AI platforms when writing either academic essays or engaging in creative writing. The data used was collected by applying two questionnaires. The first was given to first year students from the Faculty of Political Science and Communication, Babeş-Bolyai University, who took a course in Creative Writing, while the second was given to BA-level students from the Faculty of Letters, Babeş-Bolyai University, being interested in students who had to write at least one academic paper. The study mainly aims to determine how, why and the extent to which students have used AI platforms when writing these two distinct forms of texts.

Keywords: *artificial intelligence, academic writing, creative writing, attitudes, ethics, ChatGPT*

INTRODUCTION

The sudden appearance and meteoric rise of artificial intelligence technology and its rapid integration into higher education has led to the urgent need for a re-evaluation of pedagogical practices, including (though certainly not limited to) those that have been traditionally thought of as being reliant on human creativity, as in the case of Academic Writing and Creative Writing. With access to large-language-model artificial intelligence systems (LLMs) such as OpenAI's ChatGPT being so readily available, questions have arisen relating to the ways in which students do, will and should (or shouldn't) use them and, to that end, their attitudes towards this technology becomes especially relevant.

Student perceptions in regards to the use of AI is often shaped by a complex combination of factors such as their understanding of digital technology in general, what they know about such systems, what is allowed in the educational institutions that they belong to or their individual beliefs about learning in general. Thus, while some students might view the implementation of AI in higher education as something positive, assisting them when searching for information, checking grammar and so on, others may see this development from a more critical standpoint, perceiving LLMs as a threat to authenticity or to educational standards. Such perspectives play a significant role not only on how students use AI, but also how this technology might evolve in the future. The present study

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endeavors to determine the attitudes and practices of students with respect to the use of AI platforms when writing either academic essays or engaging in creative writing and the results of our study show a more nuanced set of opinions that go beyond the question of whether this technology is good or bad. The answers collected come from two separate sources. The first involved a questionnaire that focuses on academic writing, which was sent out to all students enrolled at the Faculty of Letters, BBU in the school year 2024-2025 and studying English as either a primary or secondary language. The second source of data involved a similar questionnaire, but focusing on creative writing, which was sent out to students enrolled at the Faculty of Political, Administration and Communication Sciences school year 2024-2025 and studying Journalism in English. We chose to look at both sets of students because they engage in two very different forms of writing that one may encounter in today's academic world and where students might look to utilize AI tools. Following a brief literary review, the present paper presents the structures and analyzes the results of each questionnaire in two sections – 'Methodology' and 'Results and discussions' – followed by a comparison of the two within a third section 'Final remarks'.

LITERARY REVIEW

Although LLMs have only been available to the public at large for three years, it is difficult to imagine that anyone reading this text is not at least familiar with one or more of them, the most famous of which is, for now, OpenAI's ChatGPT. Other types of AI systems – particularly those having to do with methods of evaluation – have been around for even longer and, whether we are talking about these or LLMs, research into their applicability, the advantages, and disadvantages of their use is both vast and wide-ranging. Therefore, an extensive overview of the literature is well beyond the scope of the present study. Instead, we have chosen, in what follows, to highlight a few studies relating particularly to the usage of AI technologies in relation to writing in academia, so as to pinpoint the specific niche that our study contributes to.

The possible uses of AI technologies in the process of academic writing have been highlighted by various researchers (Khalifa & Albadawy 2024; Rabbianty et al. 2023; Johan et al. 2025 to name just a few). Khalifa & Albadawy (2024), for example, highlight the possible uses of AI technologies in the process of academic writing. They begin their paper by emphasizing the fact that, while essential to educational development, academic writing has some drawbacks, such as the "handling [of] vast amounts of information and complex ideas" (Khalifa & Albadawy, 2024, p. 1). This is nothing new for anyone who has engaged in the practice. Indeed, it's become somewhat of a quip that a researcher of any caliber often finds themselves spending a lot of time reading numerous lengthy texts just to be able to extract one bit of information that properly fills in a single sentence

in a paper. As a means of streamlining this arduous process, the authors state that AI tools can aid with respect to some of the aspects that are considered peripheral components to the process of writing, such as grammar correction, citation, or even making sure that proper standards are maintained (Khalifa & Albadawy, 2024, p. 2). They also highlight the fact that “AI algorithms significantly enrich brainstorming processes by providing insights derived from current trends, historical data, and cross-disciplinary studies” (Khalifa & Albadawy, 2024, p. 6), thus helping to identify gaps in the researching of various phenomena and giving scholars a clear notion of where to turn their attention next. Thus, in terms of conducting research, whether by scholars or, indeed, by students, there is compelling evidence that AI platforms can be very handy, at least with respect to all the elements of writing other than the writing itself. Still, the authors aren’t wholly biased towards the advantages of using such programs, emphasizing that “careful monitoring is essential to maintain academic integrity and rigor” (Khalifa & Albadawy, 2024, p. 8).

With respect to some general feedback surrounding the emergence and meteoric rise of the use of AI technology in academic writing, Rabbianty et al. (2023) offer some insights by conducting research on “faculty members’ perceptions on their current usage of AI in academic writing and explore its future implications” (Rabbianty et al. 2023, p. 1). They do so by means of a mixture of quantitative data obtained via survey from over sixty participants, as well as follow-up interviews with a selection of them. From the survey, the results show a very stark contrast in opinions, with “high levels of agreement...[that] underscore the potential benefits and changes AI brings, [while] the dissenting opinions...highlight the need for comprehensive ethical guidelines and best practices” (Rabbianty et al. 2023, p. 8). In other words, scholars seem to be quite excited by the benefits of integrating AI technologies into teaching academic writing, while at the same time being greatly concerned by the potential pitfalls.

It is within the sphere of discourse pertaining to the pitfalls of using AI technology that Johan et al. (2025) tackle the potential ways in which students may be deterred altogether from using such tools. They set out from the premise that the existence of AI programs “raises concerns about its implications for education and learning” (Johan et al. 2025, p. 1), since their easy-to-access systems make it far too tempting for students to misuse them, leading to long-lasting negative consequences, in terms of their writing skills and critical thinking. In order to achieve their aims, the authors had students use ChatGPT to generate an essay, which was analyzed in order to determine the limitations of the text that this LLM AI program could create. Both a pre- and a post-analysis survey was conducted in order to ascertain whether student perception has altered at the end of the experiment. Unsurprisingly, “a comparison between the pre-and post-intervention survey questions...indicates a change in student perception” (Johan et al. 2025, p. 6) and that the overall consensus was that AI does not live up to initial

expectations or hopes. We see, thus, a study that specifically concerns student attitudes towards the use of AI technologies in academic writing. The difference between this study and the one that we are conducting here is that Johan et al. 2025 presupposes a positive view of these platforms and then decides unilaterally that this is a problem which must be combatted, whereas we seek to provide insight into student perceptions while doing our best to avoid such definitive standpoints.

Finally, Kim et al. (2025) offers specific insights into the perspectives of Chinese students on the use of AI tools in academic writing. Starting from the point that EFL students face specific challenges when it comes to practicing academic writing in English, the authors claim that “generative artificial intelligence (GenAI)-powered writing tools have emerged to support students in their academic writing process and enhance ESL learners’ writing skills” (Kim et al. 2025, p. 1266). The authors looked at what students considered to be the advantages, disadvantages and general place in academic writing of AI programs. In order to do this, they had twenty students write an essay with the help of a generative artificial intelligence system (GenAI) such as OpenAI’s ChatGPT and then held an interview with the participants to ascertain their opinion on the activity. By analyzing their responses, the study found that a distinct role that students identified emerged from an expectation that the GenAI writing system should act as a *search engine* [as well as] a *thought-provoker*” (Kim et al. 2025, p. 1274). In other words, they expected that the program would help them identify key information but also foster their ability to view data from alternative perspectives in order to achieve a higher level of understanding of the topics they’re dealing with. In addition, the study also found that students perceive the GenAI writing system as an entity that conducts research on the writing topic and utilizes technical writing expertise to generate, at the very least, an initial draft which serves as a starting point for the student” (Kim et al. 2025, p. 1275). In other words, while aware of the limitations of an AI LLM system, they nevertheless see the benefits of having to adjust a generated text rather than go through the initial steps of writing a first draft that then needs to be edited. Overall, what we see in the study conducted by Kim et al. is an illustration of student perspectives on the use of GenAI in academic writing, without much in the way of moral commentary as to whether they are right or wrong and whether they should be encouraged to use such technology or not. It is this corner of academic research where the present paper seeks to contribute in particular, by adding in what follows the perspectives of Romanian students studying at Babeș-Bolyai University.

Before moving on to the outline of how we collected data for this paper, it is necessary to point out that, in order to add an additional angle to our study, we have also chosen to look at perspectives relating to the use of AI tools in Creative Writing classes, as these have to do with a specific type of academic writing. For anyone looking into the field of Creative Writing Studies it will come as no surprise that the amount of past research conducted is far more limited. Doshi & Hauser

(2024) begin from the premise that “little is known about generative AI’s potential impact on a fundamental human behavior: the ability of humans to be creative” (2024, p. 1) in order to analyze the consequences – both positive and negative – of using AI tools with writing fiction. In order to do so, the researchers conducted an experiment, where they had three groups of participants write a piece of short fiction. The first group were told to create their texts without any help from AI. The second group was asked to use ChatGPT to generate one starting idea for a short story, while the third group was told to use five starting ideas generated by AI. In the second half of their study, the “stories were evaluated by multiple evaluators on novelty, usefulness, and several emotional characteristics” (Doshi & Hauser 2024, p. 2), without these evaluators knowing which group the texts they were reading belonged to. The results of their study were, at an individual level, quite positive. Not only does access to AI tools seem to make a writer more creative, but “while having access to one generative AI idea leads to somewhat greater creativity, the most gains (and statistically significant differences in our preregistered indices) come from writers who have access to five generative AI ideas” (ibid). In other words, the more a writer uses AI tools, the better their own writing appears to be. However, when comparing the texts written with the help of ChatGPT, the researchers discovered that “having access to generative AI ideas makes a story more similar to the average of other stories within the same condition” (Doshi & Hauser 2024, p. 4). The researchers conclude that, while AI tools can help the individual writer produce texts with better structure, collectively the literary community would stand to lose in terms of originality, as a mass adoption of ChatGPT by practicing writers would lead to less variation.

While Doshi & Hauser (2024) looked at the matter from both a positive and negative perspective, Behrens et. al. (2024) were far more unidirectional. In this case, the researchers conducted a study where they assigned a group of genetics students to complete a creative writing assignment with the help of ChatGPT in order to highlight the shortcomings of the respective program. Although it may seem strange that this occurred in a STEM environment, as the authors point out, creativity is paramount to the advancement of science and here “[c]reative writing offers students an opportunity to process knowledge in a non-traditional manner, such as connecting topics in a way that they might not have done with traditional teaching methods” (Behrens et. al. 2024, p. 2). In the case of the students participating in the study, they were enrolled in a genetics course that already had a creative writing assignment in its syllabus prior to the rise of LLM AI. However, perhaps anticipating the fact that this technology cannot simply be ignored, the authors carried out this experiment where “students were asked to participate in a pre-survey at the beginning of the semester [and] were then asked to generate a first draft of their creative writing assignment using ChatGPT” (Behrens et al. 2024, p. 4). Afterwards, they had to reflect on what the AI platform produced and, with the additional help of feedback from a peer, they had to write and submit a

rewritten draft. Finally, the students were given a post-survey to determine their opinions on the advantages and limitations of using AI. The results were rather mixed and, given the fact that our present study follows along similar lines, it would be interesting perhaps for a comparison.

METHODOLOGY

In order to collect data with respect to student usage and attitudes towards AI in academic writing, we created a survey using Google Forms which we sent out in the Spring of 2025 to students from the Faculty of Letters, BBU. The survey was made available in both English and Romanian in order to make it easier for participants to answer, especially since not all of them study the former language. While the first section deals with background information on the participants, the second section, representing the survey itself, consists of 9 questions in total – 2 closed-ended questions and 7 open-ended questions. In total we have collected 22 questionnaires of which 17 were answered in English and 5 in Romanian. In terms of background information, the participants are equally divided between first-, second- and third-year students, with ages ranging from 19-21 (17 participants) to 22-25 (4 participants). According to the first 2 closed-ended questions, 20 of the participants had to write an academic paper and 18 of the participants were advised on the use of AI in academic writing, while 3 were not. Moreover, when it comes to AI platforms most participants have used ChatGPT (14 participants), while 4 stated that they haven't used any for academic writing. Other platforms mentioned are Google Translate, Microsoft Copilot, x.writefull.com, QuillBot, and Aria AI. In the analysis we will discuss the remaining 6 open-ended questions, which cover aspects such as recommendations received when it comes to the use of AI in academic writing, purposes for using such platforms and their usefulness, opinions regarding AI platforms, whether they should be integrated in academic courses and whether there are ethical aspects to consider when it comes to their use in academic writing.

With respect to the use of AI technology in Creative Writing classes, a similar survey written in English was sent out specifically to first year students from the Journalism in English specialization belonging to the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, BBU, as they are the only ones in the university that have a mandatory creative writing course in their curriculum. Of the 44 students enrolled in the course, 12 answered the questionnaire. Throughout the course, students were given the task of writing an outline to a personal short story, together with a three-page sample of what would eventually become a complete piece of fiction. Recognizing that one of the hardest parts of writing a story for beginner writers is coming up with an idea, students were given the opportunity to use ChatGPT as a tool for coming up with an outline, which they would then have to adapt when writing their samples. In order to ensure that they

properly understand how they can use this AI platform and what the advantages and disadvantages are, one class was reserved exclusively for discussing aspects regarding several texts generated by ChatGPT. With respect to the questionnaire that was sent out, it was meant to cover both aspects regarding the general progress of the course as well as the use of AI technology when creating their initial outlines and drafts. It is these latter aspects that the present study has focused on. Therefore, the specific questions from the survey that are of interest here are #2 *For your mid-term assignment, you were given the choice to either use ChatGPT to provide you with an idea and an outline for a short story or to come up with your own. Which option did you choose and why?*, #3 *Did you use any other AI platform when working on your short story? If so, which one?* and #4 *What is your opinion on the use of ChatGPT or any other AI program when writing literary texts such as short stories?* Twelve participants responded to these questions and their answers will be discussed in what follows.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

ACADEMIC WRITING

As mentioned in the methodology, the majority of the participants (18) were advised in terms of using AI in academic writing and the first open-ended question focused on finding out what these recommendations were. Some of the answers simply mentioned that they were advised against the use of AI platforms from the get-go, while some had more nuanced recommendations such as:

“we shouldn’t use AI, as the sole purpose of being in this institution is to expand our knowledge and ability to write and create, using AI automatically diminishes our way to true academic progress”

“don’t copy and paste exactly what the AI gives you, but reformulate and make sure to read before using the information provided to you as sometimes the engine gives inaccurate answers”

“to use them only for brainstorming, ideas, but not to have them write my paper”
(our translation)

“For primary texts in Korean ChatGPT offers an impressive accuracy in translations (by comparison to other translation applications such as Google Translate, Papago – created and used by Koreans etc.). The recommendations were strictly related to the translation of journals/articles/scientific papers considering that were (sic) are not yet fluent [in Korean]” (our translation)

“Usually the recommendations were NOT to use AI, although i believe I remember a situation in which we were advised to use AI in an intelligent way, and by that i mean that we were told to actually use it to guide us through different bibliographical sources to search for specific topics we need more quickly. Using

this method, we wouldn't have to search through the internet for an article on a certain topic, but we would use AI and make it search the internet for us. After receiving the titles of numerous books/articles, we can simply decide if they are suited or not for our research" (sic)

As it can be noticed from these responses, students have overall been advised not to use AI platforms for academic writing per se but there were recommendations to use such platforms as helpers in the writing process (for ideas, translations, or bibliographical sources). Only two of the answers bring into question certain ethical aspects of when AI platforms are used. In the first case, the recommendation received was to use the platforms to generate text that the student then reformulates and this could lead to a case of plagiarism, especially if the source (the AI platform in question) is not mentioned. In the second case, the translation of articles and scientific papers can also lead to gray ethical areas if the translations are subsequently used in academic writing without mentioning the source.

When it comes to what they have used AI platforms for, 4 participants state that they have not used such platforms for academic writing at all, while the rest have used them especially for grammar, vocabulary, generating ideas, bibliography, or to find explanations for certain concepts. This shows a use for improving academic writing rather than replacing individual writing. However, there were some more elaborate answers as well, as it can be noticed below:

"summarizing a long body of text, extracting important ideas from a paragraph, generating ideas and writing prompts"

"writing whole texts in order to understand better ideas" (sic)

"I used them to generate ideas that would have a personal and creative note, as well as to make me better understand a text I have read: for instance, I attach a document that contains a full text and I ask it to generate explanations for certain paragraphs" (our translations)

"I have used it to paraphrase or reformulate certain sentences in a more academic language" (our translation)

"Sometimes I get stuck on certain ideas, so I need to figure it out. I also used it for learning in the exam session, some of the course supports are very chaotic."

"Asked it to explain in a simpler manner philosophical concepts that were hard for me to understand. Used it for generating charts or asking for a specific chapter in a lengthy book to help me more faster through it." (sic)

Most of the participants use AI platforms as aids to improve their writing process. However, there could be some ethical issues when asking AI to paraphrase texts since the text might not be appropriately paraphrased. Furthermore, if the use of AI is not disclosed this could be considered academic dishonesty, if not plagiarism. However, these answers also raise interesting uses

for AI that could lead to the platforms becoming a friend rather than a foe. For instance, it being used to better understand concepts or ideas when preparing for an exam could be useful in students' individual study process. This, in some sense, is similar to the uses of Wikipedia over the years. At the same time, it should be kept in mind that, although the online library has become more reliable in recent years, this could not be said during Wikipedia's beginnings, nor is it considered a proper academic source today (though it can be used as a starting point). Thus, users should be cautious when using AI platforms and keep in mind that the information might not be entirely accurate, especially when considering that platforms such as ChatGPT do not give sources for the provided information unless specifically asked, which can lead to the information being less reliable.

When it comes to stating whether they found using AI useful, each participant answered the open question differently, though most of them had positive experiences. One student, for example, mentioned that the platforms helped in making "interesting essays", another said it reduced time spent in search of specific topics, and still another claimed it helped with generating ideas when stuck. However, a few participants pointed to some downsides as well, with them mentioning that they "did found (sic) them useful but some of the ideas were wrong and overwhelming", or that they "noticed it makes a lot of mistakes so it's not a reliable source". Furthermore, other participants mentioned that they didn't necessarily find it useful because they "would often return to classic phrasebanks, since AI would often uselessly spruce my idea and thus diminished the level of comprehensibility" (our translation) or because "[y]ou can produce a much more qualitative writing on your own than with an AI (which in my opinion is a very cheap, superficial and sometimes random writing)". As it can be noticed from the answers, while useful, AI still has some downsides, one of them being that, when improving language use it recommends limited options which can lead to confusion or to changes to the language that might not fit with the writer's overall style. Furthermore, when it comes to the quality of writing, the participant emphasizes one of the current issues with AI platforms, namely that it is still not at the point where it can create an academic paper that could be passed as having been written by an actual human being. Certainly, this implies practice and experience from an individual as well, but, in principle, this does come with being a student. This question had one more comprehensive response as well, which encompasses several aspects when it comes to AI platforms being used in academic writing:

"I tried to write essays for fun, in order to see how advanced ChatGPT was, but i was disappointed. The first essay was a terrible one, even without the knowledge on a certain topic, one could write a better essay. However, i learned from a friend who is a PhD student at the Faculty of Biology that you can "train" ChatGPT by always telling it to change certain things in the essay to make it better. For example, you want a short summary for a book, but at first it summarises it for you poorly,

without mentioning any characters, and the plot is, again, described horribly. If you constantly put it to work and always tell it what to change in order to make the text better, you will realise that at some point you just don't need to do that anymore, because you will get a complex answer from the start. Apparently AI is like a muscle. If you train "your" ChatGPT, it will give you better answers. Are they even close to what a human would write? Definitely not." (sic)

This answer brings forth the reality of AI, namely that it is learning and it can be taught, which, in time, might make it increasingly difficult to differentiate between an academic paper written by an individual and one written by AI. However, it should be noted that this will take time and constant training to happen. Most likely, just like with Wikipedia, the use of AI will become increasingly reliable as time passes, making it more difficult for teachers and academics to both distance themselves from it and be able to identify the text writers.

As it has been shown so far, most participants have used AI platforms in academic writing in various forms. However, when it comes to their general opinion on AI, virtually all of them have a more cautious and even critical view of these platforms. For instance, 10 mentioned that, while they are useful, users have to be careful with the information provided and check for errors because they can often make mistakes. There were also 3 participants who had a more neutral position, stating that:

"it can be useful if one is smart and uses it properly and ethically. It's a tool, not inherently bad or good"

"we should get adapted to it (just a component, not the replacement of the writer)."

"If it is used in a way that doesn't influence writing that much: meaning to simply copy a text and introduce it in your paper. In this case, it doesn't have a good influence at all, but I find it useful when there are certain things that you don't understand or that you would like to understand better and you ask an AI platform to generate some content ideas for you or to give you some better ways to express something" (our translation)

However, there are 9 more critical views as well, as noticeable below:

"I don't agree with AI regarding any spectrum of life, let alone writing an academic paper, as students we should discover by ourselves what is wrong and right with our writing, through the grades and mistakes that we do overtime, and though consulting our colleagues and professors." (sic)

"It takes away students' opportunities to be creative and express themselves, and I think that if you use such a platform you won't learn anything. Also, it's cheating."

"I'm mostly neutral because I try not to use them unless necessary. The major problem is that people tend to use what text is generated by AI without checking, which leaves them with a poor text (it's almost always difficult to follow and incoherent) that's hard to navigate."

“It can make many mistakes, so it is not very useful.”

“I don’t agree with the use of it. It is ok to use it for correcting vocabulary mistakes, but further use is not ok. An academic paper reflects your thoughts and your performance in academics”

“I think it shows lack of interest on the part of the student, laziness or otherwise insufficiently developed skills.”

While these participants view AI platforms as positive for certain uses, relying too much on them or using them to replace one’s writing is not supported. There is also truth in the fact that (academic) writing improves through practice and trial and error. Considering this, the use of AI platforms could slow down this progress, especially if students do not ask follow-up questions that can help them better understand the changes (e.g. ask for explanations for grammatical corrections). Thus, in order for AI platforms to be used as a means of improving writing rather than replacing it, teaching students how to use them would be preferable and desirable.

The next open-ended question focused more specifically on this, namely on whether the participants think that AI platforms should be introduced in academic courses that have a writing component. The answers varied, with some students supporting the introduction of such discussion (9), others being against it because AI platforms would negatively influence progress in developing writing skills (8), while the remainder were largely uncertain. When it comes to support towards the introduction of AI platforms in academic courses, some of the participants stated that it should be introduced “because sometimes, unfortunately, AI explains better or stronger than a teacher”, because “[s]ince everyone has acces (sic) to them, there at least should be guidelines about their use”, or to use them “as a counterexample [since] [i]t’s usually easy to notice when an essay has been written with the help of AI”. Moreover, there were also two more nuanced positions, as it can be observed below:

“I think we should have at least a course on how to properly use an AI for writing because it is becoming a major part of our lives, even if not all of us like this fact. Having a course on it would make setting some boundaries on what’s acceptable to use from an AI would be easier. This is mostly because there are no clear regulations on the use of the engine. Moreover, learning how to make prompts and have it correct texts for us is not easy for some people, so learning that could make the writing act more efficient.”

“I don t know about AI platforms, but I think we should have at least one AI course in order to learn to use AI in a smart way. If our mind is like a muscle, it the same with AI. If we start and train only the muscle of AI, who will train our minds? But if we learn to use AI in a way in which it acts as our simple assistant, and not our own mind, that would be far better. Education of every sort is important, and so is the one of AI.” (sic)

As it can be noticed, some of the participants showed a need either for an entire course or a segment in a course to be dedicated to discussing the use of AI in academic writing. Since everyone has access to AI platforms, we agree that some guidelines should be introduced in academic writing courses, so that the students better understand the advantages and drawbacks of such platforms, while also helping students use AI appropriately and ethically. However, this would also mean that the teaching staff will have to receive some training in terms of AI use.

One of the important aspects when using AI platforms is related to using such platforms ethically and this is what the last question in this questionnaire tackles. Here, some of the participant-mentioned issues related to plagiarism, authorship and getting the same credit as someone who put in the work themselves. These are all valid points, especially since OpenAI (the owner of ChatGPT) has even more recently stated that copyright restrictions will lead to the US losing the AI race ('AI is over for us if...'). Ethically-speaking, pushing for the removal of copyright regulation will lead to a gray, problematic area. Furthermore, two participants also brought into discussion environmental issues related to AI since every question asked consumes energy and the systems used need high amounts of water to be cooled. Thus, the issue of ethics when it comes to using AI platforms is complex and this is further shown in the answers below:

"I don't want to be negative or anti-technology/technological advancement, but I don't consider the use of AI platforms necessarily ethical when it comes to creative domains such as writing (academic or not). Considering that AI often doesn't give the sources for the provided information or, more recently, invents sources, I don't think it is really ethical. I had such an experience when I asked an AI where it took the information from and it answered something like: "we cannot offer the source for the information provided because we only compile information from different sources". I consider that ethics in academic writing is widely based on the correct citation of sources. As long as AI is not capable of accurately offering the sources of the provided information, I don't think that it should be used when we write an academic paper."

"I think AI ethics is a very complicated and broad subject. It has both advantages and disadvantages (mostly the latter in my opinion). As the technology will evolve and AI will get smarter, I think that more issues will arise. Even now ethical aspects such as regulations. I think it's deep AI is serious problem, such as creating pictures, videos and voices. It has already become problematic in the use of creating pornographic materials with a certain individual, which violates rights and can cause psychological damage. This is not ethical and should be strictly regulated." (sic)

These answers bring into discussion several ethical aspects when it comes to AI platforms, even beyond the scope of academic writing (as is the case of deep fakes), and all of them should be taken into account when using AI but also when regulating it. Of course, it would have been recommended for such ethical questions to be answered before making such platforms open to the public. Now

that the wider public already uses these technologies on a regular basis, the task is made all the more difficult, and until such time that appropriate regulations and guidelines are set, critical thinking and guidelines from academic staff remain important.

CREATIVE WRITING

As mentioned above, with respect to the Creative Writing course at the Faculty of Political, Administration and Communication Sciences, students had the opportunity to have the OpenAI's ChatGPT provide them with an outline for a short story, which they would then have to adapt into three pages of personally written text. For this reason, the first question of interest from the survey – #2 *For your mid-term assignment, you were given the choice to either use ChatGPT to provide you with an idea and an outline for a short story or to come up with your own. Which option did you choose and why?* – seeks to determine simply to what extent the participants chose this technological option. To this, students nearly unilaterally answered that they created their own outlines. Five of the respondents stated that they already had a clear idea of what they wanted to write about, therefore they saw no reason to use AI technology. Two participants made it clear that, in their opinion, when ChatGPT was asked to write a piece of fiction “those stories weren't as good as a human can write” or that, quite simply, “Chat GPT is not ready to write yet”. With some overlap with other justifications, some students explained that they rejected using AI because the assignment itself “was a rather challenging assignment which is important in [their] development” or that “it helped [them] more to use [their] creativity and do more with it”. This means that, even when given the option to take a shortcut and use ChatGPT, several students considered that honing their creative skills was preferable. Of the remaining participants who filled out the survey, two stated clearly that they did not use AI, without providing any reason. Only one student in fact wrote here that they “wanted to use ChatGPT and asked it vaguely to give me an idea for a story” that would focus on a specific type of character that the participant wanted as their protagonist. However, in the end “the story given didn't match that”, and so they only used a few elements in a synopsis that was ultimately of their own making. In other words, the participant attempted to use the AI platform to generate a plot, but the resulting text simply didn't meet their expectations, leaving the student with the only viable option of coming up with their own idea, while using what ChatGPT provided only to the smallest degree.

With respect to the next question – #3 *Did you use any other AI platform when working on your short story? If so, which one?* – ten of the participants answered that they used none. This is in keeping with the responses for the previous question and suggest an overall negative view on the role that AI might have in the act of creative writing. One student mentioned that they “did use chat gpt to help [them]

write some emotions”, while another admitted that they “used chat gpt once to find some historical information [they were] a little unsure about”. These responses suggest two interesting points. The first is that, at least in so far as the latter two respondents are concerned, they didn’t seem to properly understand the question, since they were asked whether they used any AI technology *other* than ChatGPT. Then, if we gloss over this shortcoming, the second observation is that, in both cases, students still found some interesting uses for OpenAI’s platform. One used ChatGPT as a search engine, in keeping to one of the main uses of AI mentioned by Kim et al. The other participant’s choice – that of using it to help write emotions – is both particular and interesting. Exactly what difficulty was the respondent dealing with? Was it truly helpful? How good is ChatGPT at writing emotion? A series of follow-up interviews could have provided some valuable insight here. Unfortunately, the questionnaire being anonymous, it is not possible to find answers to these questions, but they certainly invite further exploration. We should also point out that there is an argument to be made for lopping in these last two participants together with the rest, since the question was whether they used any *other* AI tools, which is not the case.

Finally, there is the fourth question - #4 *What is your opinion on the use of ChatGPT or any other AI program when writing literary texts such as short stories?* – which is where we looked specifically at the participants’ viewpoints. Here, the responses varied to a much greater degree, suggesting both that there is significant divide when it comes to people’s positions on the matter and that many students are aware of the complexities of the situation. For the sake of clarity in our approach, we separated the answers into two distinct categories, in terms of whether the respondents were conditionally fine with the use of AI in Creative Writing or firmly against it. No students were universally comfortable with the practice.

By grouping them up like this, we can notice that the first group – containing eight out of the twelve opinions – is the largest, but only by a margin. Here, one student remarked that “these pieces of art should be a form of self-expression, not something created by a bot just for the sake of existing [yet, at the same time, AI] can be used for inspiration”. Another participant wrote that it’s ok “as long as it’s verified information and it’s only used as a source of information [however] AI cannot replace the style and nuances of a human written story”. A third was of the opinion that “[i]t might be helpful with the direction you’re going in or give some inspiration”, but that it is overall not worth the time. The fourth participant was fine overall with the use of AI in writing, provided that you do not “let it take over the whole story” and the fifth also seemed reasonably ok with it, while at the same time specifying that AI “works only with offering ideas”. The sixth and seventh respondents also saw only a narrow range of uses for AI in Creative Writing, namely “to check your grammar mistakes or to get inspiration” and “for feedback”. Finally, the eighth member of this group is perhaps the most open, stating that they are “fine with use of any AI for such texts, but only to get an idea” and that “if

people will keep on using AI for writing such texts, they should mark it as AI or even create another field for this". Thus, each of these respondents can see some uses of AI in Creative Writing, but also some major caveats. A platform such as ChatGPT can be used for generating ideas, fact-checking and searching for information, but not for the actual act of creating fiction. That artistic endeavour, in the opinions of this group, remains in human hands.

The second group is significantly smaller than the first, with only four respondents. Thus, the first said that they "have a lot of ethical concerns about generative AI [as it] feels like copyright infringement". The second and third respondents claimed that using AI tools "makes stories less organic" and that "it takes out the whole charm of writing creatively", while the fourth simply stated that such tools "are not good at" writing. The consensus therefore seems to be that GenAI technology such as ChatGPT cannot write fiction and that using it in any way is both problematic and detrimental to the whole experience of creative writing.

FINAL REMARKS

Although they've only been available to the wider public for a small number of years, it is undeniable that AI technologies are here to stay. How they will develop in the coming months and years will depend a lot on both the interests of the companies that develop them, but also on the ways in which people generally view and use them. There is also an argument to be made that the opinions of the younger generations is at least as important (or more so) than that of the more experienced segments of the population, since it is these individuals who will influence the development in question for a longer period of time. This makes it all the more important to ascertain what they believe now, rather than later, which, in our opinion, makes the present study wholly relevant.

From the analyses conducted above on student usage of and attitudes towards AI in both academic writing – which entails an ability to extract and analyze information – and creative writing – which, in this case, requires one to invent a story and render it within a comprehensible text – we can draw two major conclusions. The first is that students seem to view the use of AI tools with a significant level of caution and even criticism. Many of the respondents expressed their disappointment in the quality of text that artificial intelligence platforms can produce, pointing out that, at best, an LLM system like ChatGPT could be trained to produce adequate writing, but only with considerable effort on the part of the user. In addition, students also expressed some serious ethical concerns regarding how AI platforms can be used, as well as how the technology functions, with the issues more commonly cited as being those pertaining to copyright violations, plagiarism and environmental problems. This is not to say that the viewpoints of the participants were wholly negative. On the contrary, quite a few

students seem able to envision various uses for AI technology when it comes to proofreading texts, fact-checking, or inspiration. At the same time, we should also point out that between the two groups of respondents, the students from the creative writing course were significantly more critical and even dismissive of such platforms than those who took academic writing. It is difficult at this time to determine whether this is because the nature of the course encourages self-expression, which would make AI tools less useful, or whether the students were influenced by the fact that one of the course meetings specifically highlights the limits of this technology.

The other major conclusion is that students *are* using AI tools, at least for the most part, regardless of their particular or overall opinions, or whether or not they were instructed against this practice. The results of our study thus reaffirm a notion that has been circulating through academia, at least at an intuitive level, ever since OpenAI launched its first version of ChatGPT, namely that there is no realistic way of preventing this phenomenon, regardless of what opinions we as professors have about the matter. As a result, the most sensible course of action at this time seems to be to heed the opinion of one of our respondents mentioned above and try to get ahead of things by studying these tools ourselves and providing students with clear guidelines on how they could use this technology, rather than discussing whether or not they should.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

While we consider that these results are relevant and that they can add important information to aid in helping to understand how students choose to use AI technology, we should also point out some of the ways in which our study could have been improved. For one thing, a follow-up interview would have been useful in order to clarify some of the answers, especially when they raise more questions that could potentially yield interesting information. But perhaps more importantly, it would have been preferable if the respondent pool had been both larger, containing answers from more students belonging to several faculties within BBU. This would have resulted in a more comprehensive image and should therefore be viewed, in our opinion, as a worthy pursuit in a future broader study.

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ONLINE SOURCES

- 'AI race is over for us if...': Why Sam Altman-led OpenAI warned US could fall behind China without copyright reform (2025) <https://www.businesstoday.in/technology/news/story/ai-race-is-over-for-us-if-why-sam-altman-led-openai-warned-us-could-fall-behind-china-without-copyright-reform-467995-2025-03-14>. Retrieved June, 2025.

Mediation Language Activities for Improving Military English

Abstract: The article is aimed at presenting some of the mediation language activities employed in the newly designed ESP Military English hybrid course called Hybridisation of Specialised English Learning for Security Professionals (HELPSec), which include explaining data in speech, note-taking, managing military interaction, and breaking down complicated information, among others. Examples of mediation activities from the HELPSec course are provided to prove the usefulness and appropriateness of these types of activities for the target group for which they have been designed and beyond. The learning content of the HELPSec course is freely accessible on a specially designed learning platform (<https://helpsec.eu>) to everyone who wishes to expand their specialised military vocabulary, communicative, and mediation skills. Various interactive activities have been designed based on real-world military contexts for learners of intermediate (B1) to upper-intermediate (B2) levels. Military contexts include delivering different types of briefings, terrain operations, tactical communication, military reports, combating terrorism, and peacekeeping operations.

Keywords: *language mediation, CEFR, ESP, Military English, hybrid course*

INTRODUCTION

The period covering September 2020 to February 2023, English language teachers from three partner EU military HEIs – Rakovski National Defence College, Military Academy of Portugal, and Swedish Defence University, joined efforts and produced learning content organised in an ESP Military English hybrid course called ***Hybridisation of Specialised English Learning for Security Professionals (HELPSec)***. The learning content is organised in six modules, each focusing on one important military topic or activity: Module 1- Peacekeeping, Module 2 - Counter-terrorism, Module 3 - Leadership in Military Environment, Module 4 - Gender Integration in Missions and Operations, Module 5 - Military Writing in Military Operations, and Module 6 - Military Briefings in Different Operational Contexts.

The content is uploaded on a specially designed learning platform <https://helpsec.eu> that is freely accessible to everyone who wishes to expand their specialised military vocabulary, communicative and mediation skills. Various interactive activities have been designed based on real-world military contexts for learners of intermediate (B1) to upper-intermediate (B2) levels, which is

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approximately equivalent to levels 2 and 3 of the language proficiency of the military personnel from NATO countries in accordance with STANAG 6001.²

In April 2020, the Council of Europe updated the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2001) with a Companion volume (CEFR, 2020), which categorises language activities in the following four ways: reception, production, interaction and mediation. In mediation,

The focus is on the role of language in processes like creating the space and conditions for communicating and/or learning, collaborating to construct new meaning, encouraging others to construct or understand new meaning, and passing on new information in an appropriate form. The context can be social, pedagogic, cultural, linguistic or professional (CEFR, 2020, p. 90).

The CEFR Companion volume also uses the term “*linguaging*” and its derivatives, *translinguaging* and *polylinguaging*, when explaining the significance of mediation (Cf. CEFR, 2020, pp. 30, 31, 35). It specifies that

when we use language, it is not just to communicate a message, but rather to develop an idea through what is often called “*linguaging*” (talking the idea through and hence articulating the thoughts) or to facilitate understanding and communication (CEFR, 2020, p. 35).

Thus, this term, coined by Swain (Swain, 1985), relates to the cognitive process of negotiating and producing meaningful, comprehensible output as part of language learning. Unlike merely speaking or writing, *linguaging* emphasises the strategic, dynamic process of language use to shape interaction.

Mediation, on the other hand, as defined in the CEFR Companion Volume, involves the process of translating, interpreting, or transforming information to make it accessible to different audiences. It includes activities such as paraphrasing, summarising, or reformulating content to facilitate understanding across linguistic or cultural boundaries, promoting coherence and mutual comprehension.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The traditional understanding of language teaching and assessment of the language proficiency of language learners is based on the receptive (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing) dichotomy (Cf. Masduqi et al., 2023). This contrast is rooted in the functional view of language use, where communication is described as an exchange involving receiving and producing information. Learners are first expected to comprehend (hear or read certain

² NATO STANAG 6001, Ed. 5 Overview of Language Proficiency Levels. Bureau For International Language Coordination. Retrieved May 30, 2025 from <https://natobilc.org/documents/TrainingResources/STANAG%206001%20Overview%20Feb%202019.pdf>.

information) before they can produce (spoken or written) language (Figure 1). Language curricula and classroom activities typically mirror this division: at the beginning of a language course or a lesson, the focus is on receptive skills (especially listening), assuming learners need to understand before they can respond. The listening and reading tasks, which introduce the new vocabulary or grammar, are then followed by the productive skills. Textbooks are often organised around this distinction, with units divided into listening/reading sections and speaking/writing sections.

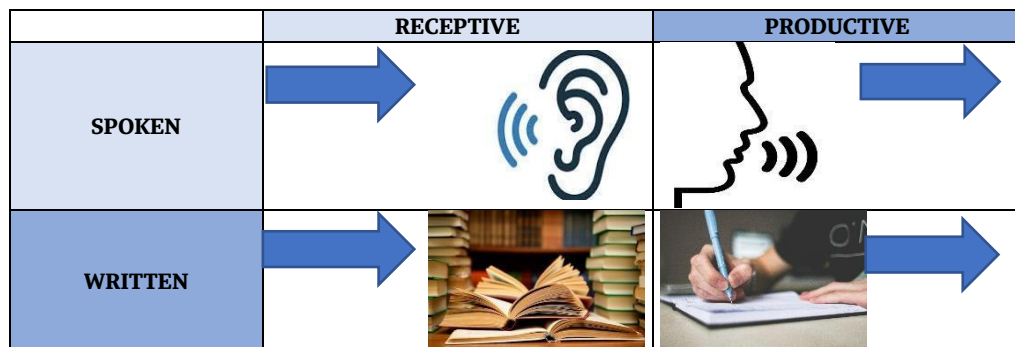


Figure 1. The traditional four language skills

Source: Author's elaboration

The traditional receptive/productive dichotomy has served as a foundational framework in language teaching and assessment, offering a clear and manageable structure. However, given the significance of developing language skills not as an isolated objective but as a means of effective real-life communication, the role of these skills in facilitating communication has been examined and integrated into the four core language skills (Worth, 1998; Mohan Das & Gopakumar, 2015). Real-life communication often requires learners to combine skills, for example, listening to a speaker and taking notes, or reading an order and explaining it orally. For this reason, in recent years, this traditional model has been challenged, and newer models promote multimodal, interactive, and task-based approaches to better capture the complex, interactive nature of real-world language use. To address this complexity, the CEFR introduced Descriptive Scales in 2001 to reflect not just reception and production, but also *interaction* – a mode that reflects the dynamic, co-constructed nature of communication, such as conversation or negotiation (Cf. CUP, 2022, pp. 8-12).

The most recent methodological enhancement to language learning activities was introduced in 2020 with the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment – Companion Volume*, which incorporated *mediation* as the fourth mode of communication (Figure 2).

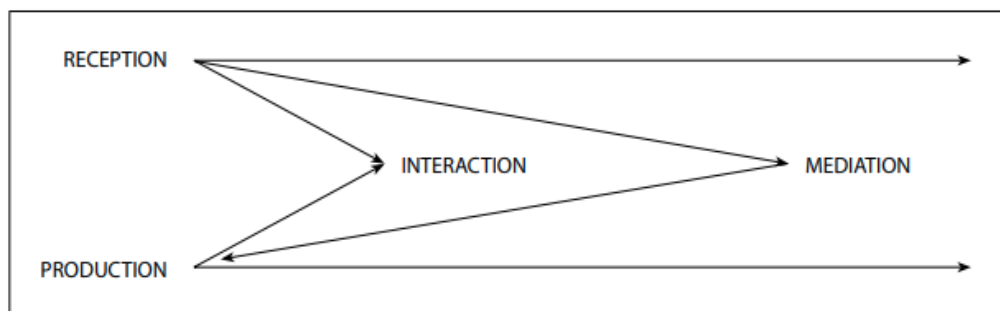


Figure 2. *The relationship between reception, production, interaction and mediation*

Source: CEFR, 2020, p. 34

However, there remains a scarcity of research and practical guidance on the practical implementation of mediation tasks in the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classroom, where learners study English tailored to professional or academic needs (e.g. Business English, English for tourism, Maritime English). This is a critical area because mediation is particularly relevant in ESP contexts. For example, a business student might need to summarise a report for international colleagues; a student majoring in Tourism will need to lead or moderate multilingual group tours; a future captain of a ship will need to accurately convey navigation data, weather reports, or safety instructions to crew members or officers with varying levels of English proficiency.

This article aims to illustrate such applications.

RESEARCH FOCUS

The article explores some of the mediation language activities employed in the recently designed ESP Military English hybrid course HELPSec. The mediation activities include explaining data in speech, note-taking, managing military interaction, and breaking down complicated information, among others. Examples from the HELPSec course are provided to prove the usefulness and appropriateness of these types of activities for the target group for which they have been designed. Military contexts include delivering different types of briefings, terrain operations, tactical communication, military reports, combating terrorism, peacekeeping operations, and more.

Developing students' mediation strategies and skills is achieved in the professional (military) mediation domain as a result of not only practicing the four language skills in an e-learning environment but also through the application of an action-oriented approach. Thus, the language work in the Military English hybrid course activities improves the four modes of communication: reception, production, interaction, and mediation of newly acquired professional military concepts and knowledge.

RESEARCH AIM

The paper analyses the appropriateness and the effectiveness of mediation language activities in enhancing the communicative competence of learners engaged in Military English on the HELPSec project's platform, with a focus on their ability to translate complex military concepts and information across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) How do the HELPSec activities conform to the different types of mediation activities in CEFR?
- 2) What specific language skills (e.g. paraphrasing, summarising, note-taking, translating) are most improved through mediation activities?
- 3) How do mediation activities impact learners' confidence and willingness to communicate in military contexts?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research has been exploring the concept of mediation and its relevance to language learning for the past couple of decades, and recent scholarship has increasingly acknowledged the significance of mediation as a distinct and essential communicative competence in language education, particularly since its formal inclusion in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Companion Volume* (CEFR, 2020). Mediation is now conceptualised as a dynamic process that facilitates understanding between individuals through the reformulation, simplification, or contextualisation of information, often across linguistic or cultural boundaries (North & Piccardo, 2016; Coste & Cavalli, 2015). Some studies present a historical overview of the development of the concept (Günaydın & Demir, 2023), while several other studies have focused on the importance of mediation activities for teachers (Davin, et al., 2016; Nurhasanah, 2014). Research also indicates that mediation fosters plurilingual and pluricultural competence, especially in multilingual settings where learners serve as intermediaries between different linguistic communities (Piccardo et al., 2019) or analyses the role of mediation in learning a host country's language (Pundziuvienė et al., 2023). Empirical findings show that integrating mediation tasks into language curricula can significantly improve learners' cognitive engagement, strategic language use, and collaboration skills (Dendrinos, 2006). However, much of the current literature focuses on general or academic language contexts, with limited attention to mediation in professional or high-stakes environments such as the military. It is worth mentioning the research of Chovancova, who reveals the role of mediation in the legal context (Chovancova,

2018). Still, the gap in the research of mediation in ESP contexts underscores the need for targeted studies on how mediation skills are developed and operationalised in specialised English for Specific Purposes courses, where clarity, accuracy, and intercultural sensitivity are paramount.

SPECIFICS OF MILITARY ENGLISH

Military English (ME) has been attributed three key features:

it (a) contains a specialised lexicon, (b) is communicated via discernible spoken and written channels such as briefings and messages, and (c) reflects the interpersonal relationship between its hierarchical military community users (Smith, Kim, 2017, p. 323).

Since at the core of ME is its “specialised lexicon”, i.e. military terminology, my definition is that it includes terms denoting military organisations, structures and personnel, military equipment, weapons and systems, types of military activities and tasks defined in military doctrines, strategies, guidelines, manuals, orders, and specialised international and national documents. As an integral part of the language of science, it includes terms (terms-nouns, compound terms, and terminological units) and terminological lexis: verbs, nomenclature, and terminoids, all of which can be divided into two main subgroups – 1. military-political terminology, and 2. military terminological subsystems, which refer to different types of specific concepts, e.g. types of the armed forces, armed forces personnel, etc. The HELPSec course introduces and practices numerous terms from both subgroups.

The second characteristic feature of ME stresses the fact that it is delivered or expressed in clear and recognisable ways, which can be either spoken (e.g. during briefings, orders given out loud, or radio communications) or written (e.g. in messages, reports, manuals, or formal documents). ME uses specific, well-defined methods and formats (e.g. requests for medical evacuation) to ensure clarity and efficiency. Thus, ME is related to mediation since “In mediation, the user/learner acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning, sometimes within the same language [...] and sometimes from one language to another.” (CEFR, 2020, p. 90). Some of the features and capabilities of the HELPSec platform and its advantages include:

- facilitated communication – due to the incorporated option for sharing files;
- joint exploration of a problem from multiple perspectives;
- group work of common interest, even when a face-to-face meeting is not possible;
- collaboration and group problem solving;
- interactive applications to facilitate greater student engagement and student peer interactions.

The third characteristic of ME – it reveals how people in the military interact based on their ranks and roles – can be related to the description found in CEFR, 2001: “In both the receptive and productive modes, the written and/or oral activities of mediation make communication possible between persons who are unable, for whatever reason, to communicate with each other directly” (CEFR, 2001, p. 14).

The adherence to the strict rules of communication within the military hierarchy imposes some specifics of mediation activities. Thus, the superior in rank relays specific information in the form of orders, commands, and briefings to the subordinates. When communication happens in an international military context in which servicemen come from different educational, cultural, and religious backgrounds, difficulties in communication

may result from, among other factors, language - or terminological differences; lack of proficiency in the other language or register (for example, between speakers of different languages, or between experts in a given field and non-experts); cognitive gaps, i.e. unfamiliarity with certain concepts or processes, [...] lack of relevant information; cultural differences [...] (Council of Europe, 2025).

Although the citation above points out the reasons for mediation when dealing with linguistic integration of adult migrants, the same reasons are applicable in an international military context because the interlocutors in the act of communication may lack sufficient general English language proficiency or the proper terminology to comprehend the information (e.g. order or command given). In such situations, we need the term “mediation” which, according to the CEFR, (2020, p. 91), “is also used to describe a social and cultural process of creating conditions for communication and co-operation, facing and hopefully defusing any delicate situations and tensions that may arise”.

MEDIATION ACTIVITIES

The CEFR stresses that “Mediating language activities – (re)processing an existing text – occupy an important place in the normal linguistic functioning of our societies” (CEFR, 2001, p. 4). If mediation is about “(re)processing an existing text”, within the military context it means the conduct of different types of military activities, (e.g. map reading, tactical communication, patrol reports, etc.) and execution of military duties (e.g. search and rescue operation, countering terrorism, acting on intelligence reports, etc.).

CEFR 2020 provides a detailed description of the mediation activities and strategies (Figure 3). Each of the elements of Mediation activities in Figure 3 is exemplified with different types of mediation activities from the HELPSec course, thus answering Research Question 1.

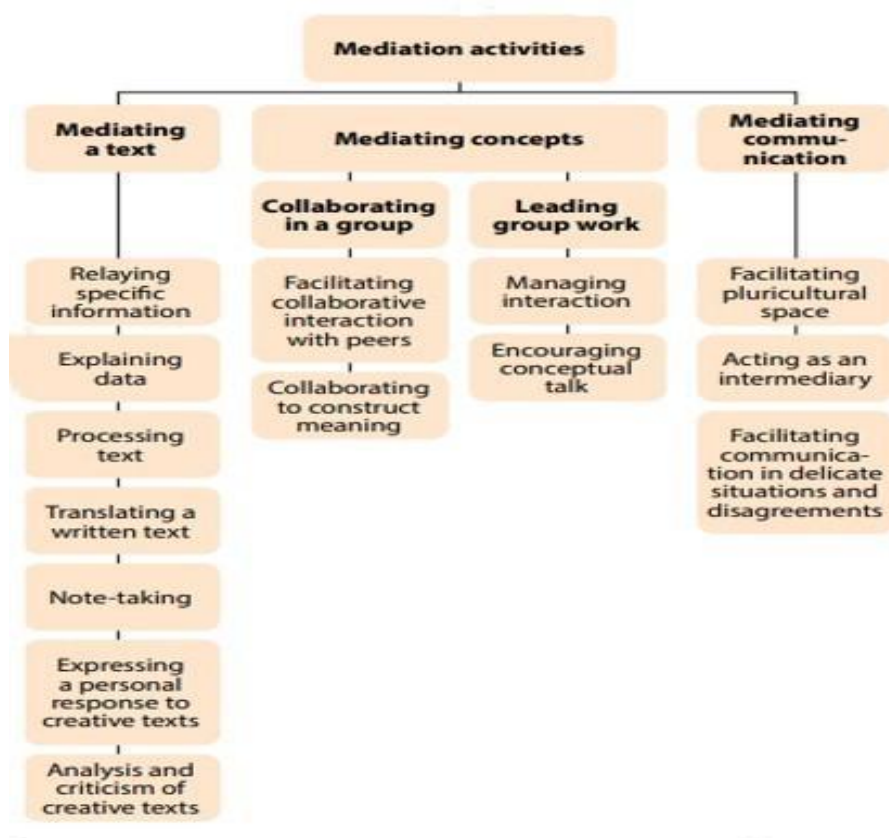


Figure 3. Mediation activities

Source: CEFR Companion Volume, 2020, p. 90

MEDIATING A TEXT

The mediation of a text is defined as conveying the content of a text to someone who cannot access it, often due to linguistic, cultural, semantic, or technical obstacles (CEFR, 2020, p. 90).

● Relaying specific information

Relaying specific information refers to the way some particular piece of information of immediate relevance is extracted from the target text and relayed to someone else (CEFR, 2020, p. 93-95); in other words, it is about accurately passing on key information – whether written or spoken – in a clear, concise, and audience-appropriate way. In a military context, this competence is crucial for translating or summarising briefings, reports, or orders in ways that do not negatively affect their accuracy and intent. For instance, during a joint planning exercise, a Bulgarian officer makes a presentation in English. Meanwhile, a Polish

officer takes notes and later relays key action points to their unit in Polish, ensuring terminology is appropriate to local doctrine and rank structure.

To exemplify this type of mediation activity, we can refer to Module 6 of the HELPSec course, which is dedicated to presenting the four basic types of military briefings. Task 6.5.5 is about Briefings in Aircraft operations and comprises a reading task for familiarising students with the different kinds of pre-flight briefings, followed by listening and writing activities to practice the information, and the final task: to brief the commander on what students have seen and heard. Similarly, Task 6.2.6 asks the student to brief his/her commander on the situation in the Idlib region (Syria) using the information provided on a platform or links to current news/updates on the situation. These activities meet the descriptors for levels B1/B2, “Can relay in writing specific info points contained in texts on familiar subjects (e.g. calls, announcements and instructions)”. Thus, the key aspects of this mediation are focusing on factual content, not opinions or interpretations; adapting language to the audience’s level of understanding; accurately summarising key points without distortion; selecting and relaying only relevant information.

- Explaining data

This activity refers to the conversion of information from figures into written text or an oral description of information from diagrams, graphs, or charts. In a military context, this means making numerical or technical information understandable and relevant, especially to diverse audiences. It requires not just stating facts, but interpreting what they mean, identifying trends or risks, and helping others to act accordingly. An example is a pilot debrief after an air support mission: he explains the accuracy rates, the number of confirmed hits, and reasons behind any discrepancies, using radar and target data, thus helping planners assess mission effectiveness. Module 2 of the HELPSec course includes tasks aimed at practicing and developing this mediation skill. In the specialised context of types of terrorism, students are familiarised with the language of graphs and structure of graph description, followed by two tasks: 1/ to describe orally what they see in the line graph about the terrorist incidents around the world from 1970 to 2017 in their own words; and 2/ to write a description of a pie-chart representing the types of terror attacks around the world.

- Processing text

This involves comprehending the information and/or arguments in the source text and then conveying them in another text (orally or in writing), typically in a more concise form, while ensuring relevance to the context. The key word for this activity in the CEFR Illustrative Descriptor Scales for levels A1-C2 is “summarising”:

can summarise clearly in well-structured language the information and arguments contained in complex texts; can summarise the main points of complex discussions; can summarise in writing the main content of well-structured text; can compare, contrast and synthesise in writing the information and viewpoints contained in academic and professional publications (CEFR, 2020, p. 98-101).

There are numerous tasks in each of the six modules of the HELPSec course that deal with processing the text, since the skill of summarising is related to reading (listening) for detail, which is necessary for successful professional communication. For example, Task 1.3.7 in Module 1 asks students to write a paragraph of 200-300 words to summarise key information from a PowerPoint Presentation about the Global Peace Index in 2021, which includes statistical information and measures the level of Societal Safety and Security. Similarly, Task 2.3.2.1 in Module 2 asks students to read the article called Instruments of Counterterrorism and then fill in a table in their own words.

- Translating a written text

As pointed out in the CEFR, 2020, p. 102 this is “a largely informal activity that is uncommon in everyday personal and professional life.” Since the HELPSec course is designed for security professionals from different countries, this type of activity is not included.

- Note-taking

The definitions of this activity refer to the importance of recording key points of information, ideas, and insights from various sources, such as lectures, readings, discussions, or presentations, for professional purposes. In a military context, note-taking can be conducted during briefings, instructions, or important events, as After Action Reviews (AAR). AAR is introduced and practiced in Module 5, because of its importance as an instrument after exercises, battles, and events, in order to reflect upon what has happened and learn what may need to be improved. Task 5.3.3 gradually prepares students to take notes while watching an AAR video, in order to conduct an AAR themselves. Task 2.5.5 asks students to take notes while watching a documentary on cybercrime, followed by writing a review of the documentary.

- Expressing a personal response to creative texts and analysis and criticism of creative texts are related to literary and cultural awareness and literary texts interpretation. These skills are more suited to academic or literary settings and are not at the core of the mediation activities for the military context.

MEDIATING CONCEPTS

CEFR, 2020 defines mediating concepts as the process of facilitating understanding by collaboratively processing and reformulating complex

information, particularly in cognitively or culturally demanding situations. In the military domain, this communicative mode is important due to the interoperable nature of multinational operations, where effective coordination relies not only on language proficiency but also on the ability to mediate knowledge and facilitate conceptual understanding. In a multinational environment, clarity, accuracy, and cultural sensitivity are essential. For example, a military officer may need to explain tactical doctrines, standard operating procedures, or strategic assessments to counterparts from allied forces who may not share the same doctrinal frameworks or terminology. The officer is not simply translating words but reframing abstract concepts in a way that ensures mutual understanding and operational coordination. Effective mediation of concepts in such settings supports interoperability, enhances coalition coordination, and reduces the risk of miscommunication during high-stakes operations. Thus, the application of mediating concepts in a military ESP environment plays a critical role in preparing personnel for real-world communicative demands. The four key subskills form pairs and are presented in Figure 4.

	Establishing conditions	Developing ideas
Collaborating in a group	Facilitating collaborative interaction with peers	Collaborating to construct meaning
Leading group work	Managing interaction	Encouraging conceptual talk

Figure 4. Mediating concepts: descriptor scales

Source: CEFR, 2020, p. 108

- **Facilitating collaborative interaction with peers**

This mediation skill involves promoting inclusive discussion and enabling all participants to contribute, which is essential in joint mission planning. For instance, a NATO officer may chair a multinational briefing and encourage junior officers from different national backgrounds to state concerns or propose tactical alternatives, thus ensuring a shared operational picture. This is practiced in Module 6, Task 6.4.3, where learners are familiarised with the specifics of a mission briefing and mission analysis, which are aimed at securing a coordinated and/or unified effort toward accomplishing a certain mission. When practicing mission analysis, trainees are engaged in discussions and collaboration, since mission analysis is the principal decision-making tool that guides the planning process.

- **Managing interaction**

This skill refers to guiding and regulating the flow of communication during thematic discussions. For example, during a rules of engagement (ROE) seminar, a facilitator may steer the conversation to ensure clarity around legal definitions,

ensuring participants remain focused and on task. In order to prepare young officers to become leaders and excellent communication managers, Task 3.2.7 in Module 3 presents a chart with the characteristic features of the next generation of leaders and asks the trainees to build up a project to be presented orally, individually, or in pairs, discussing how the military should be creating next generation leaders.

- **Collaborating to construct meaning**

This skill entails jointly interpreting complex or uncertain information. In a multinational intelligence cell, for instance, personnel from various services may analyse conflicting data from field reports and satellite images. Here, an officer might paraphrase or reframe certain findings to help the team collectively make sense of the intelligence data and arrive at a shared assessment. Unit 5.5 of Module 5 introduces and elaborates on various aspects of the Intelligence Cycle. As an example, one of the tasks is focused on developing the skills and awareness of the role of Human Intelligence (HUMINT) Operators (Intelligence Officers), who routinely collect and report information from friendly forces, civilians, refugees, and local inhabitants and work in liaison roles with other agencies or foreign militaries (Task 5.5.1), and HUMINT collection methods (Task 5.5.2).

- **Encouraging conceptual talk**

It involves prompting others to explore, question, or articulate abstract ideas. This is particularly relevant in military ethics training. One of the hot military topics is gender integration. Module 4 addresses controversial issues – from understanding gender bias in the US military integration, through discussions on gender equality in the army, to debates on the key role of women in peacekeeping operations. As such, it guides trainees to reflect on scenarios and real stories of military women and to express their views clearly and respectfully while connecting them to operational realities.

Altogether, the four subskills of mediating concepts enable military personnel to act not merely as transmitters of information, but as mediators, who ensure common understanding amongst the team, and leaders in challenging situations, who are capable of fostering cooperation and shared knowledge across professional and cultural boundaries. Their development in a military environment ensures that learners are equipped to handle the conceptual and communicative complexity of modern military operations.

MEDIATING COMMUNICATION

According to the CEFR Companion Volume (CEFR, 2020), mediating communication is essential for anyone aiming to enhance their understanding and skills in this field, as it leads to more effective interactions in one or more languages, especially when intercultural aspects are present. This form of mediation is particularly relevant in military environments, where personnel often work under pressure and commonly face linguistic, cultural, or

interpersonal challenges in situations that require negotiating or reframing meaning.

- **Facilitating pluricultural space**

This mediation skill involves creating an inclusive environment in which diverse perspectives are acknowledged and valued. It is a result of the ability to create and support environments where multiple cultural identities and viewpoints can interact constructively. It involves recognising, respecting, and enabling interaction and cooperation between people from different cultural backgrounds. This is particularly relevant in a military context because multinational operations bring together personnel from various countries and cultures, and military personnel frequently interact with local populations, NGOs, allied forces, and other stakeholders with different cultural norms and values. In a multinational peacekeeping force, for example, an officer may need to mediate between local civilian stakeholders and foreign military representatives, ensuring that cultural norms are respected while maintaining operational coherence. Another example is when a peacekeeper needs to mediate between a local tribal leader and humanitarian workers from several countries. In this situation, the peacekeeper needs to explain the differing expectations regarding subordination, time, and decision-making, thus ensuring both parties can collaborate effectively. The required skill is bridging cultural gaps and reframing perspectives to build trust. Task 1.4.7 from Module 1 introduces case studies of community support initiatives (e.g. infrastructure projects, rehabilitation of buildings, socio-cultural activities) organised by UN peacekeeping forces and discussions on the success or failure of these initiatives resulting from cultural differences and (un)successful dialogues with the locals. With the help of these activities, learners raise awareness of the importance of overcoming cultural differences and adjusting how people see things, in order to create a pluricultural space and mutual trust.

- **Acting as an intermediary**

This skill entails bridging communication gaps between parties who may not share a common language or frame of reference. In a military environment, this skill goes beyond language – it is about mediating meaning, adjusting communication, and ensuring effective understanding between people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This is often seen in liaison roles, where military personnel interpret mission directives for local partners or explain civilian concerns back to the command structure, adapting tone and content to suit both audiences. Another example is the process of liaising with NGOs and military units, where an officer serves as a liaison between an NGO and military command. While the NGO representative uses humanitarian terminology, the military uses operational military language. The officer translates concepts between the two parties, explaining military issues to the NGO and humanitarian concerns to the military command. The required essential skill is the ability to navigate smoothly the organisational and linguistic cultures. Trainees who learn with the HELPSec platform develop this skill in Unit 4 of Module 1, which focuses

on Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) in Peace Operations. Through role-play (Task 1.4.7), videos (Tasks 1.4.1, 1.4.2, 1.4.4), and reading tasks (Tasks 1.4.1, 1.4.3), students gradually develop awareness of the aim of CIMIC to support the mission objectives by establishing and maintaining cooperation with non-military actors within the area of operations, by managing communication and ensuring cultural appropriateness.

- **Facilitating communication in delicate situations and disagreements**

This subskill requires sensitivity, emotional intelligence, and diplomatic language. In situations such as de-escalating conflict between coalition units with different rules of engagement, or between coalition forces and local forces or authorities, a mediator must tactfully manage contradicting viewpoints and steer dialogue toward constructive resolution. Together, these subskills equip military personnel to navigate complexity and support operational effectiveness by ensuring that communication remains clear, respectful, and purposeful, even under challenging circumstances. Module 5, Task 5.4.5 deals with the issue of peer review and giving feedback. In the process of reviewing a peer's writing, each student has the task to comment on the peer's strengths and on the politeness of the tone, and also to make specific suggestions to improve the peer's work, thus building on their skill of communicating in delicate situations and practicing how to defend, explain, or change personal opinion.

Figure 5 illustrates the three main types of mediation activities and the application of their subskills in the HELPSec hybrid course with some examples.

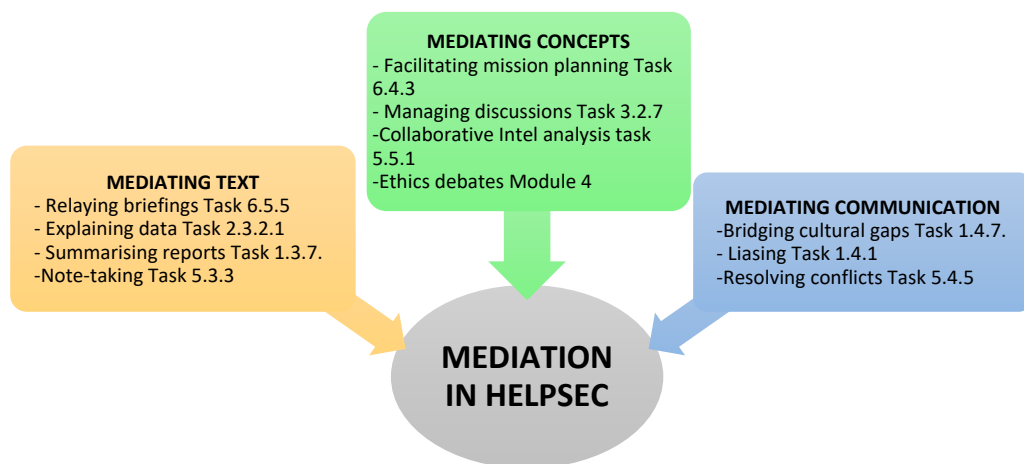


Figure 5. *Mediation in HELPSec course with examples*
Source: Author's elaboration

RESULTS

The analysis of the mediation activities in Military English training, as exemplified in the HELPSec course, proves the hypothesis that mediation is

particularly relevant in ESP contexts, as the learners engaged in Military English most significantly enhance the following language skills (Research Question 2):

- Summarising: Learners practice condensing complex information from briefings, presentations, and articles into concise, relevant summaries, both orally and in writing (e.g. Tasks 1.3.7, 2.3.2.1).
- Note-taking: Practiced in activities such as After Action Reviews and watching videos (e.g. Tasks 5.3.3, 2.5.5), learners develop the ability to record and organise key points for later use.
- Paraphrasing: Particularly relevant in collaborative interpretation and reframing of information for clarity (e.g. Task 5.5.1 on HUMINT).
- Relaying information: Learners gain experience in identifying, extracting, and communicating relevant information from a source text to a specific audience without distorting meaning (e.g. Tasks 6.2.6, 6.5.5).
- Explaining data: Students develop the skill of interpreting and describing visual data (graphs, charts) clearly, which is important for mission reporting and analysis (e.g. Module 2 graph and pie-chart description tasks).
- Managing interaction and facilitating communication: Activities improve learners' ability to guide discussions, express feedback diplomatically, and build shared understanding in multilingual/multicultural teams (e.g. Tasks 3.2.7, 5.4.5).
- Cultural mediation and reframing concepts: Learners practice adapting abstract military or operational ideas to different cultural and professional audiences to ensure shared understanding (e.g. gender integration discussions, CIMIC exercises).

The 3rd Research Question – regarding the impact of mediation activities on learners' confidence and willingness to communicate in military contexts – can be answered positively. Evidence indicates that mediation activities have a positive impact on learners' confidence and willingness to communicate, especially in multinational and operational military contexts, by:

- Providing structured opportunities to practice in realistic, scenario-based tasks that mirror real military duties (e.g. briefings, AARs, mission planning).
- Developing critical interpersonal and leadership communication skills, such as encouraging contributions, managing conflict, and building mutual understanding (e.g. Tasks 6.4.3, 1.4.7).
- Fostering intercultural competence and trust, which are crucial in joint operations: by bridging cultural and linguistic gaps, learners become more capable and self-assured communicators (e.g. facilitating pluricultural space, acting as intermediaries).
- Building familiarity with military-specific discourse and procedures, which reduces anxiety and increases readiness to participate in formal communication settings such as briefings or negotiations.

- Encouraging autonomy and reflection, such as in peer reviews and conceptual discussions, which promote self-confidence and the ability to navigate delicate or complex conversations diplomatically.

CONCLUSIONS

The integration of mediation as a distinct and essential language skill reflects a more comprehensive understanding of language use in the 21st century. It acknowledges that communication often involves interpersonal negotiation, cultural sensitivity, and context adaptation – skills increasingly critical in globalised and multilingual contexts.

The range of mediation activities described in the CEFR Companion Volume and exemplified through tasks in the HELPSec course clearly illustrates the integral role of mediation in language learning for professional contexts. Mediation is an active process requiring comprehension, transformation, and communication of meaning across linguistic, cultural, and cognitive boundaries.

The HELPSec course effectively aligns with CEFR descriptors by embedding real-world mediation tasks, such as briefing commanders, describing data, summarising key documents, and taking notes for professional communication, into its curriculum. These tasks are highly relevant for learners operating in multinational military environments, where precise, clear, and context-sensitive communication is essential.

In conclusion, mediation tasks, when thoughtfully implemented, can foster deeper engagement with both content and language, supporting learners not just as language users, but as informed, adaptable professionals capable of navigating complex, multilingual communication environments.

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Harmonizing Language Instruction with Content Delivery within the ICLHE Framework

Abstract: The acronym ICLHE stands for Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education. It describes a pedagogical approach according to which a foreign language is both a medium of instruction and an instructional objective. In other words, courses designed in accordance with ICLHE combine teaching subject content in a foreign language with developing language skills. *Organization Development and Change Management*, which is the focus of the present article, is a course of this kind. It is taught in English to MA students at the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport of Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj Napoca, within the *Management of Sports Organizations and Activities* master's programme. This paper investigates methods of integrating content delivery with language instruction in the aforementioned course. The literature review presents the educational benefits of CLIL and theoretical frameworks for this pedagogical approach. The practical application section draws on the author's experience as a course tutor and explores various methods of seamlessly integrating language instruction into teacher-delivered lectures with the double purpose of increasing linguistic proficiency and facilitating subject knowledge understanding and acquisition.

Keywords: *Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education, Content and Language Integrated Learning, content delivery, language instruction, higher education*

INTRODUCTION

The title of this article is built around two key elements: language instruction and content delivery which are blended together by the verb to “harmonize” in an integrative and synergetic relationship. According to the online Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.) the verb to “harmonize” means to “bring ideas, feelings, or actions into agreement” or to “make different people, plans, situations, etc. suitable for each other”. These two meanings align with the aim of this article, which is to explore methods of seamlessly interweaving subject matter teaching and language instruction in a mutually beneficial relationship as part of a pedagogical approach devised for a course taught in English to MA students specializing in management.

The inclusion of the acronym ICLHE in the title serves to highlight the article's focus on tertiary education. The terms ICLHE (Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education) and CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) are closely related in that the first embodies the fundamental principles of the latter in the context of higher education. As a tertiary level equivalent of CLIL

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(Schmidt-Unterberger, 2018, p. 529; Costa and Coleman, 2013, p. 5), ICLHE is concerned with methods of approaching, designing and implementing programmes and courses that combine content and language learning (Wilkinson & Zegers, 2008, p. 3). In other words, an ICLHE course has a double objective: content knowledge acquisition and improved language proficiency and it, therefore, comprises explicit instruction in both content and language (Schmidt-Unterberger, 2018, p 534). Now that the equivalence between ICLHE and CLIL has been established, CLIL will henceforth serve as an umbrella term encompassing both concepts.

The article is divided into three sections, with the first and the second drawing on the literature and the third being grounded on the author's teaching experience. Firstly, a rationale for using CLIL is presented by outlining its educational benefits. Secondly, two theoretical frameworks are presented as models of effective CLIL pedagogical principles. Thirdly, the author's personal approach to integrating language instruction with content delivery is explored.

EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGES OF CLIL

CLIL has been described in multiple ways, with different definitions emphasizing distinct aspects. Among these, two characteristics stand out as being integral to CLIL. One of them is the use of a foreign language to teach non-language content (Rieder-Bünemann et al., 2022, p. 3184) or curricular content (Dalton-Puffer, 2011, p. 183) in primary, secondary and higher education settings. A further essential attribute of CLIL highlighted by researchers and policy makers is its dual-focus on developing proficiency in the subject matter taught as well as in the language of instruction (Banegas & Arellano, 2024, p. 708; European Commission, 2006, p. 7). In this context, neither content nor language is given exclusive attention in the instructional process. Instead, the two elements are interwoven in a pedagogical approach that innovatively blends language and content instruction (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 1). It is this very convergence between gaining disciplinary knowledge and developing linguistic proficiency that makes CLIL unique because it brings together different subjects that would otherwise be perceived as disparate curricular elements (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 4).

There are several benefits deriving from the fusion between subject matter delivery and foreign language teaching within the CLIL framework. Extending the amount of time allocated in timetables to the study of a foreign language beyond the standard language classes is one such positive effect. Since CLIL lessons are mostly regarded as content subjects in the curriculum (Dalton-Puffer, 2011, p. 184), they represent additional opportunities to expose students to a foreign language – the vehicular CLIL language – without overburdening the school timetable (European Commission, 2006, p. 8).

Fostering authentic communication by enabling the use of the target language in a natural way is yet another advantage offered by the CLIL approach. Widely perceived as veritable “language baths”, CLIL classrooms promote implicit language learning and boost the communicative competence (Dalton-Puffer, 2007, p. 3). Moreover, such educational environments motivate students’ active engagement with the contents studied, which enables them to continually work on their ability to frame topic-relevant ideas according to disciplinary norms (Rieder-Bünemann et al., 2022, p. 3195).

A positive result of participating in authentic communication is improved spontaneous oral production. By providing a broader array of genuine communication opportunities, CLIL contributes to the development of oral communication skills (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 17). Enhanced fluency, elevated speaking confidence, increased adaptability, improved listener awareness and boosted self-assurance when communicating meaning in L2 are some of the benefits that students gain from CLIL lessons (Dalton-Puffer, 2011, p. 187).

Furthermore, participating spontaneously in oral communication in the CLIL environment has a beneficial impact on lexical acquisition. It has been discovered that certain students exhibit a wide-ranging command of productive subject-specific vocabulary knowledge when engaged in spontaneous spoken communication in the CLIL classroom (Rieder-Bünemann et al., 2022, p. 3195). What is more, it has been shown that receptive vocabulary knowledge is greater in CLIL learners than in non-CLIL learners (Jiménez Catalán & Ruiz de Zarobe, 2009, p. 88-89).

CLIL has been found to improve writing skills as well. In comparison to mainstream students, learners enrolled in CLIL programmes have been shown to possess a broader lexical and morphosyntactic repertoire, which allows them to produce structures of higher complexity. Spelling, tense use and inflectional affixation are areas in which greater levels of accuracy are attained. In addition, CLIL students’ enhanced pragmatic awareness enables a more effective realisation of the communicative goals of writing tasks (Dalton-Puffer, 2011, p. 186-187).

In addition to linguistic gains, CLIL promotes cognitive flexibility. The understanding of concepts and conceptual mapping resources are broadened and enriched within the CLIL framework due to the combination of subject-specific pedagogy and language instruction. This alternative didactic approach helps students to associate various concepts more effectively and supports the development of a more complex learning system (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 10-11).

What is more, combining content delivery with language instruction boosts motivation. The deliberate use of a vehicular additional language to learn subject matter may increase students’ interest in a particular discipline. This supplementary motivational boost favours enhanced content learning (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 11).

Finally, the challenge of learning through a foreign language has been shown to produce positive cognitive outcomes. There is evidence to argue that CLIL students demonstrate greater persistence when tackling tasks and thus cope well with frustrating situations. Furthermore, it has been suggested that, instead of hindering learning, studying in an L2 improves acquisition of disciplinary content. Rather than inducing student disengagement, dealing with linguistic difficulties stimulates cognitive processing, which results in enhanced comprehension of curriculum concepts (Dalton-Puffer, 2011, p. 188).

EFFECTIVE CLIL PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

Achieving the aforementioned educational benefits depends on the use of appropriate teaching methods. Studies have shown that there are gaps between what is considered effective CLIL pedagogy in theory and the approaches teachers opt for when integrating content delivery and language instruction into their lessons (van Kampen et al., 2018). Furthermore, research indicates that the pedagogical practices adopted are significantly determined by teachers' views on the function of language in CLIL, their instructional background and teaching experience (Villabona & Cenoz, 2022). Notwithstanding the variety of methodologies utilized by various educators to implement the integration of content with language learning, CLIL courses must follow certain good practices guidelines. The ensuing section presents two theoretical frameworks that exemplify effective teaching practices within the CLIL framework.

The observation tool for effective CLIL teaching developed by de Graaff et al. (2007) – grounded on Westhoff's principles of second language acquisition (Westhoff, 2004) – provides essential information on appropriate CLIL pedagogical practices. The first principle stipulates that students should be exposed to minimally challenging input. In terms of instructional material design, this implies that the educational resources used as input should be sufficiently challenging to be stimulating, yet clear enough to facilitate understanding. The second principle holds that students should be stimulated to process the input material in order to derive meaning from the contents. CLIL lessons should, therefore, include tasks designed to facilitate this kind of processing. Furthermore, the teacher must ensure that the meaning has been adequately understood. The third principle maintains that activities utilized in the CLIL classroom should draw learners' attention to particular language characteristics. In other words, students should be assisted in identifying challenging and appropriate language forms. What is more, when providing remedial feedback teachers should use implicit or explicit form-focusing techniques. The fourth principle posits that learners should be stimulated to use the target language to produce meaningful output. Various interactive activities should be employed to foster meaningful communication in the vehicular language. The fifth principle

asserts that strategies should be developed for helping learners to cope with challenges related to understanding language and content and to surmount communication difficulties. To be more specific, teachers should be capable of providing students with techniques of solving the problems encountered in the process of language and content learning (de Graaff et al., 2007, p. 607-610).

The 4Cs theoretical framework elaborated by Coyle et al. (2010) broadens the description of good practices and provides a holistic view of CLIL pedagogy which incorporates the following components: content (disciplinary knowledge), communication (language study and practice), cognition (cognitive and educational processes), and culture (fostering intercultural awareness) (p. 41). According to Coyle et al., in CLIL, developing language proficiency and utilizing language to support successful learning are closely connected and occur concomitantly. This didactic philosophy is underpinned by a set of principles one of which is built upon the concept of personalised learning. From this perspective, learning is a process of constructing knowledge and understanding and developing skills, which each learner experiences in their own unique way. According to the second principle, the linguistic demands of the content must be identified in order to be able to support learners in interpreting and understanding the subject matter presented to them. Furthermore, the linguistic demands of cognition should also be analysed in order to equip students with the language tools necessary to express thinking processes. What is more, taking into account that the language is the medium of learning – which involves the reconstruction of content by the learner –, teachers must make sure that it (the language) is clear and intelligible to all the students. In addition, educators must be aware of the fact that interaction is a *sine qua non* of learning especially when the instruction happens in a foreign language. Moreover, given that culture and language are closely intertwined, promoting intercultural awareness among CLIL students is essential. Finally, CLIL operates within a larger instructional framework and must therefore consider contextual factors to ensure its effective implementation (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 42).

A PERSONAL APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTING THE CLIL PEDAGOGY

After exploring the advantages of CLIL along with relevant best practices, the article shifts focus to presenting the author's personal approach to seamlessly embedding linguistic instruction and language practice into a subject matter-rich course. This section begins with the institutional integration of the course, proceeds with an outline of its objectives, and then continues with a detailed account of the exercises and pedagogical sequences employed by the author.

The language policy of Babeş-Bolyai University (Babeş-Bolyai University, 2021) mandates that every master's programme must incorporate at least two courses taught in an international language, aligned with the CLIL methodology.

Dezvoltarea organizațională și managementul schimbării hereafter referred to as *Organization Development and Change Management (ODCM)* is such an English-taught course included in the curriculum of the master's programme called *Management of Sports Organizations and Activities* provided by the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport at B.B.U. Spanning 12 weeks, the course includes a weekly schedule of a two-hour lecture and a one-hour seminar. It is designed specifically for non-native English speakers pursuing specialization in sports management. The subject content of the course includes topics such as organizational change, organizational structure, organizational culture, Organization Development, adjusting to organizational change and innovation in organizations.

The author of this paper, who also serves as the course tutor, holds responsibility for developing the syllabus, selecting the essential readings, compiling the course packet, planning the lessons, delivering lectures, determining assessment criteria and administering assessment. The pedagogical approach that underlies the aforementioned responsibilities involves: diversifying and enhancing students' engagement with the subject matter by means of language-focused activities, encouraging the authentic and meaningful use of all four language skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking) throughout the entire teaching-learning process, and expanding opportunities for language use beyond the physical classroom through homework assignments, flipped classroom pedagogy, and preparation of oral presentations.

The major objectives of the strategy for harmonizing the subject matter teaching with language instruction reflect this twofold focus. They are as follows: facilitating understanding of subject content knowledge, fostering content knowledge acquisition and enhancing students' oral and written ability to communicate in English in management contexts.

This dual concern is embodied in the objectives formulated for each lecture of the course as well. The content objectives are described as a combination of subject matter and cognitive actions pertaining to the processing of the knowledge to be assimilated. The following verbs were used to name such actions: "understand", "identify", "define", "explain", and "characterise". "Defining organizational change" and "Identifying factors that lead to organizational change" are examples of lecture objectives.

Two language objectives are formulated for each lecture. One of them concerns the acquisition of terminology related to the content of the lecture, while the other focuses on a functional aspect of the language (rhetorical functions such as expressing cause and effect, comparing and contrasting, describing processes or certain grammatical constructions like Active and Passive Voice, or asking question-word questions). Table 1 presents the content and language objectives for 9 lectures.

Table 1. Content and language objectives of Organization Development and Change Management

LECTURE TOPIC	CONTENT OBJECTIVES	LANGUAGE OBJECTIVES
1. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE	1. Defining organizational change 2. Understanding the types of organizational changes 3. Identifying factors that lead to organizational change	1. Expressing cause and effect 2. Acquiring terminology related to change
2. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	1. Defining organizational structure 2. Identifying the dimensions of organizational structure 3. Explaining the advantages and disadvantages of different forms of organizational structure	1. Expressing advantages and disadvantages 2. Acquiring terminology related to organizational structure
3. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE	1. Defining organizational culture 2. Identifying the levels of organizational culture 3. Characterising organizational culture according to the Competing Values Framework and the Organizational Culture Profile	1. Comparing and contrasting 2. Acquiring terminology related to organizational culture
4. MODELS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE	1. Understanding Lewin's 3-step change model 2. Understanding Schein's elaboration of Lewin's model 3. Understanding Kotter's 8-step change model	1. Describing processes/ procedures 2. Acquiring social psychology-specific terminology related to change models
5. ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS	1. Defining Organization Development. 2. Identifying the characteristics of effective Organization Development interventions 3. Describing the basic types of Organization Development interventions	1. Classifying (classes of Organization Development interventions) 2. Acquiring terminology related to Organization Development interventions
6. ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE	1. Identifying the elements of Organization Development practice 2. Understanding the phases of Organization Development practice 3. Explaining why the consultation presented in the lesson does not qualify as Organization Development	1. Asking question-word questions 2. Acquiring terminology necessary to describe an Organization Development intervention
7. DIAGNOSING ORGANIZATIONS	1. Defining organizational diagnosis 2. Understanding the steps of the process of diagnosing organizations 3. Describing techniques of data gathering and analysis	1. Active Voice and Passive Voice 2. Acquiring terminology related to organizational diagnosis
8. ADJUSTING TO ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE	1. Explaining the main causes for resistance to organizational change 2. Understanding stages of psychological reaction to change	1. Expressing manner 2. Acquiring psychology-specific terminology related to supporting organizational members to adjust to change

LECTURE TOPIC	CONTENT OBJECTIVES	LANGUAGE OBJECTIVES
	3. Identifying methods for facilitating adjustment to organizational change	
9. INNOVATION IN ORGANIZATIONS	1. Defining the notions of “creativity” and “innovation.” 2. Understanding the role of innovation in the process of creativity. 3. Identifying means of stimulating innovation in organizations.	1. Writing formal definitions 2. Acquiring terminology related to innovation

Source: My own creation

The strategy employed to blend subject matter instruction with language development in ODCM relies on both standalone exercises and elaborate sequences of activities. Gap fill and matching exercises can be used individually or as part of a succession of tasks. For example, at the end of a lesson they can be used to reinforce content acquisition by focusing students’ attention on key terminology. Furthermore, unjumbling exercises are suitable for introducing definitions. Students who must arrange words in the right order to form a definition engage with the subject matter, develop logical thinking, and practise syntax and grammar rules. Moreover, writing sentences based on prompts is a good homework exercise. For instance, after the lecture dedicated to organizational culture, students are assigned as homework the task of writing sentences to compare and contrast four types of cultures (CLAN, HIERARCHY, ADHOCRACY and MARKET) starting from a diagram synthesising the Competing Values Framework (Cameron & Quinn, 2006, p. 46). To solve this exercise students work with the content of the lesson while practising language structures that express similarities and differences.

An effective method of fostering authentic and meaningful use of language and stimulating engagement with content is to transform students from passive recipients of instruction imparted ex cathedra into active participants in the construction of knowledge through a dialogic interaction with the teacher. Scaffolding is an appropriate technique to build such a collaborative dialogue. Research shows that scaffolding is employed in CLIL for diverse purposes. Teachers use it to facilitate comprehension by linking prior knowledge to new concepts and to introduce and clarify subject specific vocabulary. They do so by using instructional aids and by extending and developing student contributions to facilitate task completion (Mahan, 2022, p. 85).

In ODCM lectures, scaffolding largely relies on PowerPoint slideshows prepared by the teacher. The information is presented progressively, which gives students the opportunity to make various inferences before obtaining the right answer. This enables them to use English meaningfully and to process the content more deeply. Another feature of PowerPoint which makes it an appropriate tool

for scaffolding is its ability to support a multimodal teaching approach. The integration of text, images, charts, audio, and video files in the slides enriches the scaffolding process.

The following pedagogical sequence is an example of how content and language can support each other in a scaffolding approach. The ensuing succession of activities is aimed at teaching the Passive Voice and it implies gradually shifting the focus from content to language. It takes place at the beginning of the lecture dedicated to diagnosing organizations. Since Diagnosis is a phase of the Organization Development practice studied a week before, in order to bridge familiar knowledge with new content, it is natural to start the lecture by revising the seven steps of the process: *Entry, Contracting, Diagnosis, Feedback, Planning, Intervention* and *Evaluation*.

The revision is done by means of a matching exercise which involves connecting the beginning of sentences defining the seven stages of OD practice with their endings. The two halves of sentences are organized in a two-column table. The cells in the left column contain parts of sentences such as “DIAGNOSIS is the phase ...” while the cells in the right column are filled with the rest of the statements: “... in which the OD consultant collects and analyzes information about an organization’s operations”. Similarly divided sentences are provided for the rest of the six stages of OD practice. Having the students solve this matching exercise promotes cognitive engagement with the content.

The next step of the sequence involves solving another matching exercise. A second table composed of two columns is used, one of which is dedicated to the definitions of the seven stages of OD practice in the Active Voice, while the other one contains the Passive Voice variants of these definitions. After solving the exercise, students are asked to compare the two variants and they discover that the sentences are similar in meaning but different in form.

During the final step of the sequence students compare the active and passive variants of a definition and, under the guidance of the teacher, they discover the differences between the Active Voice and Passive Voice in terms of subject, verb form and doer of action. At the end of this succession of activities, the students will benefit twofold: by improving their grammatical competence and by expanding their content knowledge.

In certain ODCM lessons the scaffolding process is planned to start prior to the lecture in accordance with the principles of the flipped classroom approach. This pedagogical choice is motivated by the desire to encourage students to engage with the content and language independently at their own pace before participating in collaborative, in-class activities.

This strategy is exemplified in the preparation of students for the lesson on organizational change. One week before the lesson, an assignment is created in Microsoft Teams – the LMS of the course – which requires students to watch a YouTube video (Carey Nieuwhof, 2021) containing a discussion on how to deal

with rapid change in organizations between Harvard Business School professor John Kotter, expert in change management and leadership, and Carey Nieuwhof, best-selling leadership author, speaker, podcaster and former attorney. Students are asked to answer questions on the following topics: the difficult nature of organizational and individual change, different reactions of organizational members in relation to change, methods of dealing with the tension between those who are ready to embrace change and those who are resistant to change, strategies for companies and individuals to adopt to rise to the challenges posed by the rapidly intensifying rate of change, the qualities of the leaders who prospered during the changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the principles underpinning John Kotter's eightfold organizational change model.

This activity has multiple benefits. Firstly, students have the opportunity to see and listen to John Kotter, a leading authority in the field of organizational change management whose theoretical framework is comprised in the ODCM syllabus. Watching a video featuring the author of the theories included in the course packet adds a personal and emotional dimension to the learning experience. Secondly, this activity broadens the range of media through which students are exposed to knowledge. In terms of language learning, this has the advantage of practising listening comprehension in combination with writing (the assignment instructions stipulate that the answers must be written in a Microsoft Word file). Furthermore, students become acquainted with terminology related to change management (e.g. "early adopters", "laggards", "embracing change", "resisting change", "a sense of urgency", "empowering people", "achieving short-term wins", etc.). What is more, the non-linear, spontaneous discourse characteristic of podcasts elicits a different kind of cognitive engagement than linear, well-structured academic prose.

Another occasion on which flipped classroom pedagogy is employed as a preliminary step for scaffolding is the assignment that prepares students for the lesson on Organization Development practice. This activity is based on a case study that describes an intervention conducted by an Organization Development consultant in a company. The client organization was a division of a U.S. manufacturing corporation, operating two plants that produced heavy electrical equipment. It faced significant issues with quality, control, and delayed deliveries, which caused clients to complain. A senior vice president from headquarters delivered an ultimatum to the division's management: resolve these issues within six months or face closure. The case in question is presented in one of the books included in the bibliography of ODCM (Burke & Noumair, 2015, p. 2-8).

In order to facilitate students' access to content and to diversify the input, two teaching material design operations were performed. To begin with, the 2155-word original text was summarised in 1000 words. Then, the text-to-speech function of the ReadEra application was used to transfer the written information to audio format. The resulting audio file is uploaded in the assignment and it

serves as a starting point for completing two tasks. The first one is designed for content processing and requires students to decide whether the intervention carried out by the consultant qualifies as Organization Development. As part of the second task, which is language-focused, students are asked to form 10 “wh-questions” based on the audio file.

CONCLUSIONS

As shown in this article, CLIL is a highly beneficial educational framework. Improved oral and written communication skills, enhanced lexical acquisition, cognitive flexibility, active engagement with the subject matter, boosted motivation and heightened resilience in task completion are some of the benefits of CLIL. However, it is apparent that harmonizing language instruction with content delivery in a course taught in a foreign language is a complex and delicate endeavour.

Using challenging but understandable input, stimulating input processing, pointing out specific language features, providing remedial feedback, fostering the production of meaningful output in the vehicular language, equipping students with problem-solving techniques related to language learning are considered appropriate CLIL practices. Furthermore, paying attention to disciplinary knowledge, language learning, cognitive and educational processes and intercultural awareness is deemed necessary in the CLIL approach.

Nonetheless, it is the author’s strong belief that a teacher’s training in foreign language instruction is the cornerstone of strategies devised to integrate content with language learning. The author’s in-class experience as an ESAP (English for Specific Academic Purposes) teacher and instructional material designer was instrumental in shaping his personal implementation of CLIL pedagogy. It was this theoretical and practical professional knowledge that enabled him to identify opportunities to blend content delivery with language instruction in a mutually beneficial relationship.

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Translating Literature and the Role of the Translator in the Age of Multiculturalism and AI

Abstract: With the rise of artificial intelligence, albeit in its early stages, the modern world seems to be on the brink of a multitude of changes, impacting areas in technology, communication, and human interaction. While artificial intelligence opens new realms of possibility in terms of reinventing translation techniques and perhaps even the translating industry itself, especially when it comes to technical terminology, literary translations represent a category of their own. The present study aims to analyze, first and foremost, whether and how machine learning technologies have influenced the translation of literature, exploring potential areas of innovation, limitations, and future possibilities. Literature, as a means of human expression, reveals intricate ways of representing culture, identity, personal views, creativity, and elements that are much more difficult to grasp and mimic by computer-powered bots. Thus, the role of the translator is still crucial in the process of translating literary works; however, the new factors brought into the discussion by more recent technological developments need to be taken into account.

Keywords: *translation studies, translation and artificial intelligence, literary translations, machine translation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The surge in use of technologies powered by artificial intelligence has been revolutionizing the world as we know it, or perhaps it would be more fitting to say “as we knew it”. According to Abdelhalim et al (2025), the translation industry has experienced significant transformations itself, as a result of incorporating AI technologies, machine translation, and, more importantly, LLM tools. Their impact is evident in the improvement of essential translation processes, particularly in terms of speed and accuracy. Hasemi (2025) indicates that translation work is still widely perceived as a technical endeavor of conversion from one language to another. To a certain extent, parts of the translation process can appear mechanical, following an input-output pattern (see situations where perfect equivalents exist in the target language, specialized terms with established equivalents, standardized meanings, etc.). However, this perspective offers a limited understanding of translation, providing insufficient information on its more nuanced propensities which pertain to literary translations in particular (see cultural context, literary styles, narrative voice, necessary adaptations, etc.). Such components are much more difficult, if not impossible, to conquer by

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machine-assisted translation tools and still require much-needed human intervention. Taking these aspects into account, several issues need to be addressed, the discussion of which may provide valuable insights into the importance of literary translations in the modern world, the role of the translator, and how artificial intelligence can revolutionize the complex sector of literary translation.

2. LITERARY TRANSLATION AND ITS ENDURING RELEVANCE TODAY

The relevance of literary translation remains enduring in the fast-paced environment, characterized by technological progress and constant social and cultural shifts of the modern era. Several arguments can be raised to support the idea of endurance of literary translation, as well as its importance in the global cultural exchange and as a form of artistic expression.

To begin with, and as Eco (2001) already noted, literary translation is not merely a shift between languages, as it serves a purpose beyond simple communication and extends beyond a word-for-word rendition of the source text. This enriches literary translation with a cultural mission, enabling seamless communication across cultures while preserving the uniqueness of the source text in all its aspects and forms. Integrating the cultural paradigm of the source text, as proposed by Urian (2020), and rendering the same degree of meaning to the multicultural dimension as possible in the target language, as suggested by Urian (2024), are critical aspects that underscore the cultural dimension of literary translation.

These elements are also connected with the essential role literary translation plays in intercultural communication as indicated by Alwazna (2014), and also in facilitating cultural shifts from one culture to another as shown by Faiq (2004). A change of this nature invites an in-depth understanding of what culture represents in this context. On the one hand, it can refer to the way of life, particularly the general customs and beliefs of a specific group of people at a particular time (see Cambridge Dictionary). On the other hand, it can also encompass the attitudes, behaviors, and opinions of a specific group of people within society (also according to the Cambridge Dictionary). All in all, culture can be envisioned as a comprehensive set of background information, attitudes, conceptions, misconceptions, and biases that shape individuals and, to a broader extent, societies and identities.

An interesting fact Faiq (2004, p. 1) notices about culture is that cultures are “large prisoners of their respective pasts”, presenting a higher resistance to change. The role of literary translation from this perspective is to reconcile synchronously through language, diachronic elements, facts, notions, attitudes, and behaviors, among others. A possible example to consider here is the translation of mythology, which is generally suffused with asynchronous beliefs

(religious or secular), traditions, cultural stereotypes, and even superstition, in newer literary genres, such as the graphic novel or a more complex series of comics. While not referring to the same context, Faiq (2004, p. 2) formulates an idea which is applicable here as well, namely that “old formulations and modes of mediation appear on the surface and their realization is made possible by language”. To clarify, through language, which evolves and shifts much faster than culture, translation can reconcile the old with the new, and provide meaning, modern understanding across cultures and languages, to elements which quintessentially only belong to a particular culture, such as is the case with mythological information, but also with terminology which bears a substantial cultural value for the source text.

Another example, which refers to the translation into Romanian of Morten Strøknæs’s non-fiction work, *Cartea mării* (original title: *Havboka*), provides further clarification of the same argument to be found in Urian (2020). Here, several references are made to notions which depict fish, fishing tools, fishing establishments, and the life of fishermen, all of which are strong bearers of cultural meaning strictly related to lifestyles and activities specific only to Norwegian or Scandinavian regions. Two of the most notable concepts referenced in the study, which also highlight the essential cultural mission of literary translations relevant for the present paper, are *trandamperi* and *pik*. In broader terms, the former refers to a factory that processes and produces cod-liver oil, while the latter refers to “a smaller type of harpoon used to sting wolffish” (2020, p. 5).

Neither notion has an equivalent in the Romanian language. The Romanian translation of *trandamperi* “fabrică mică de procesare a uleiului din ficat de cod” (Urian & Polirom, 2020) opts for including a descriptive passage to clarify the establishment’s purpose, as the closest Romanian equivalent “fabrică de pește” would have been an insufficiently precise choice, both from a technical perspective (it would have been too general and would not include processes strictly related to cod, cod-liver, or cod-liver oil production) and from the standpoint of cultural transfer. In addition to the factual information of a *trandamperi* being a cod-liver oil factory and all the technical processes implied, the concept is rich in cultural meaning (lifestyle, certain specific processes, the various occupations of people working there, etc.), which wouldn’t have been reflected in the Romanian quasi-equivalent “fabrică de pește”.

The case of the second word, *pik*, is similar from a theoretical viewpoint. The Romanian “harpon” would have provided insufficient information, especially on a cultural level. Urian 2020 highlights that it was customary for Scandinavian peoples to engage in hunts for larger fish species, such as whales. In simple terms, the hunting tools needed to be adapted to the size of the fish, so different kinds of harpoons (in size and form) would be taken along on such hunting expeditions. The source text is also helpful in this situation, providing a brief description of the

tool to ascertain its purpose and use. To remain faithful to the source text, the Romanian translation opts to keep the original notion *pik* unaltered and use the description provided in the source text in order to clarify its meaning and use: “Hugo și prietenii lui stăteau în larg toată noaptea ca să pescuiască lupi de Atlantic cu pik-ul – un harpon cu vârf întărit care se aruncă din barcă pentru a străpunge lupii de Atlantic (...) (Polirom, p. 33).

These examples highlight the crucial role literary translation plays not only in conveying cultural meaning, but also in promoting cultural diversity and multiculturalism. Literary translation strategies and techniques need to present a heightened sensitivity to nuance, tone, style, flexibility, inventiveness, and knowledge of the source language (Landers, 2001). These features are embedded in the cultural exchange mediated through literary translation, an exchange which would otherwise be impossible, and in the absence of which the cultural dialogue spanning across literatures, genres, and nations would cease to exist. Literary translation represents a valid form of intercultural communication, fostering understanding of diversity, acceptance of alterity, and free artistic expression.

Expanding on the idea of literary translation as a form of communication, intercultural or otherwise, according to Abdelhalim et al. (2025), the translation of texts involves different forms of human communication (language, time, culture, personality, information technology), as such a combination of cognitive disciplines. Sun (2022) also notes that literary translation facilitates cross-cultural communication, or a dialogue that extends beyond a mere semantic rendition from the source text to the target language. It is not just two languages communicating; it is also two different audiences: the general public, or the audience in the source language and culture, to whom the original text is directly addressed, and also, through translation, the general public, or the audience in the target language or languages. In this sense, literary translation functions as a mediator in the act of communication between languages and audiences.

Taking into account its invaluable cross-cultural mission which facilitates a cultural dialogue, bridging diversity and promoting multiculturalism, literary translation still holds an essential place in today's modern world, not only on a developmental or artistic level, but also on a global level, elevating our understanding of the world and reinforcing its role as a dynamic force in enhancing cultural capital.

3. THE EVOLVING ROLE OF THE LITERARY TRANSLATOR IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The role of the translator in today's time and age is undergoing several, possibly fundamental changes. The rapid rise of various tools powered by artificial intelligence tends to minimize the importance of a translator's skills, both

technical and creative. Trends in service automation consistently indicate that lines of work across various economic sectors are undergoing significant transformation, and that automation and new technology are expected to replace an increasing number of middle-class jobs. But is this the case?

Autor (2015) points out that the threat of automation replacing human labor and skill has been a concept that has circulated numerous times throughout the history of industrial and technological development over the past century. He cites an article in *The Times* magazine, published in 1961, titled “The Automation Jobless,” which discussed the fact that emerging industries at that time had fewer jobs for lower-skilled workers, and it was precisely this category that was eliminated by machines. The phenomenon, therefore, is not new. The threat of technology replacing human agency has been experienced before. The same essay further demonstrates that while technological progress changes the types of jobs available, it also creates new jobs, leading to increased demand in the labor market. Thus, the kind of transformation brought on by technology is not necessarily concerned with an elimination of human skill and intervention, but rather with a conversion of the latter to complement the demands on the labor market and across industries.

In this context, what will the future technological developments hold for the translation industry? A few essential aspects to consider in this regard are the roles a literary translator still plays in this era, infused with technology and tools that seemingly threaten to replace certain parts of a translator’s workflow. As such, the primary roles of the translator in the age of artificial intelligence maintain a good level of consistency with the roles translators have had so far. Translators operate as cultural mediators, creative artists, quality gatekeepers, and, increasingly, collaborators with technology. There are various strategies and dimensions associated with these roles of the translator; the most important dimension, however, is that of the translator as a cultural mediator, which will be considered in what follows.

Closely interconnected with the discussion in the previous section regarding the strong cross-cultural mission of literary translation, one of the most prominent roles of a literary translator is that of a cultural mediator. Asadova (2024, p. 6) defines the cultural competence of a translator as “the ability to understand and respect the cultural contexts from which and into which they translate” and considers it an imperative skill in the translation endeavor. Earlier, Bedeker & Feinauer (2009) emphasized the need for bi-cultural expertise among translators, combined with practical strategies, to ensure successful cultural transfer from source to target culture. Bedeker & Feinauer (2009) and Nord (1997) suggest translators can make use of several strategies in support of achieving this functional goal, such as: “interpreting the source text in relation to its situation in the target culture, interpreting the function of the target text in the target culture and finally assessing the compatibility of the target text with this function”

(Bedecker & Feinauer 2009, p. 3). Thus, in addition to preserving the equivalence in meaning with the source text, the translator needs to be able to operate with valid interpretations of the author's intentions, the source text's adaptability to the target situation (Bedecker & Feinauer, 2009) and also consider the target culture's receivers and how they can understand and correlate the source text information with their realities. Translations are, to a certain extent, also reinterpretations (Urian, 2024).

An example in this direction is highlighted in Urian (2024), who discusses the translation of the culturally complex concept "rotnisser" from Norwegian into Romanian in Book Four of the comics series *Northern Lights*. The target culture's receivers are young adults, which illustrates perfectly the necessity for the translator to operate with relevant interpretations of the source text, as well as consider the translation's adaptability to the readership's comprehension level, cultural background, and even expectations of the source culture. What makes this particular element in the translation so interesting is, first and foremost, the fact that there is no equivalent for it in Romanian. The strategies employed in translation, taking into account that naturalization was also not possible in this case, were to recreate a similarity in meaning by interpretation and to preserve equivalence based on context and the graphic information provided, since it is a series of graphic novels. Thus, the Romanian translation of "rotnisser-spiriduși rozători" employs interpretation techniques in both the source culture (in the quest to preserve equivalence) and the target culture, identifying the closest mystical creature with relatable significance for Romanian readers (Urian, 2024).

Nord (1997), as referenced in Bedecker & Feinauer (2009) identifies four communicative functions of a target text. These are: the referential function (referring to objects and phenomena in real or fictional worlds), the expressive function (including sender's attitudes towards objects and phenomena), the appellative function (comprising the receiver's sensitivity), and the phatic function (responsible for creating, maintaining or ending contact between sender and receiver). The functions present an interest when analyzing the translator's role as a cultural mediator, because the translator needs to understand and operate with the functions that the source and target languages employ, in order to render the same functional meaning in the target text. For Malin Falch's *Northern Lights* series, also visible in the example provided above, the referential function was taken into account in the translation of *rotnisser*. Certain inconsistencies regarding this function can also be mentioned, regarding the translation of the same series, in the form of specific proper names of places and characters, which have either been preserved when no equivalent translation was possible in Romanian or translated according to interpretations performed in translation justified by observing the highest degree of equivalence possible, preserving the expressive function (as the source text intended it), while also engaging the younger readership (see the appellative and phatic functions).

As illustrated in the examples presented in this subchapter, the role of the translator as a cultural mediator is a complex one. Researchers like Bedeker and Feinauer (2009) even consider it necessary for translators to be experts in intercultural communication, in addition to mastering the finest complexities of the source language. Of course, in today's age of technology, when AI-powered tools are starting to assert their dominance, automating processes and altogether altering human labor and intervention across essential industries, it is worth wondering whether LLMs would be able to replace human translators, taking over every aspect of their complex, multicultural role.

4. HUMAN TRANSLATION, MACHINE TRANSLATION AND THEIR IMPACT ON LITERARY TRANSLATION

Machine translation, understood as the process of using computational techniques to translate written or spoken text from one language to another, is a concept that has been long developed. Abdelhalim et al. (2025) trace it back to the 1940s. Mercan et al. (2024, p. 108) record eight different stages in the evolution of the process of developing machine-assisted translation tools. The stages will be mentioned in what follows. To begin with, *rule-based machine translation* was a phase that began in the 1950s and continued until the 1980s. It was followed by *transfer-based machine translation* of the 1980s and 1990s. Further on, in the 1990s and into the early 2000s, several stages of development were covered, comprising *interlingual machine translation*, *corpus-based machine translation*, and *example-based machine translation*. The 2000s and 2010s marked the emergence of *statistical machine translation*, and from the 2010s to the present, research has documented the final developmental stages, namely *neural machine translation* and *hybrid machine translation*.

Currently, the most advanced AI tools, which offer the highest performance levels in translation, utilize neural network technology. Liu (2022, p. 2) describes how this technology functions based on similarities that simulate the structure of human brain nerve cells:

Artificial neural networks use physically realizable systems to simulate the structure and function of human brain nerve cells. Artificial neurons use activation functions to simulate different states of human neurons. The interconnection of neurons forms a neural network structure. The learning process is a process of constantly adjusting the network connection weights. The main learning method is called error correction learning; that is, the deviation between the expected output and the actual output of the neural network is used as the reference for the adjustment of the connection weight.

Due to such developments, there has been an increased interest and a far greater sense of optimism regarding the possibility of having literary texts

translated by machine translators in recent years. Taivalkoski-Shilov (2019, p. 690) points out that:

Neural MT is considered promising because unlike in previous MT solutions neural networks incorporate context from the training data, source text and unfolding target text and usually produce words in the right context. However, these systems are still unpredictable and require human review.

Still, despite the enthusiastic momentum regarding the changes and improvements machine translation has already brought and may bring to the translation industry, most research in this area indicates a certain amount of skepticism that fully-automated translation systems will be able to replace translators fully (see Taivalkoski-Shilov, 2019; Liu, 2022; Asscher, 2023), not to mention being able to replace translators in the literary field completely.

Undeniably, there are advancements and already visible improvements in the industry when it comes to efficiency. For instance, CAT tools assist translators by providing an essential set of tools that enhance speed, consistency, and accuracy in translation. A few of the most important categories of tools of this nature are: translation memory (stores previously translated segments to be used in future similar translation contexts), terminology management (allows for creating and managing glossaries), quality proofing (includes the now standard spell checks, but also ensures terminology consistency, offers assistance in signaling or even correcting possible errors). In addition, CAT tools now also integrate machine translation technology, enabling translators to create machine-translated drafts and then process them more efficiently using fine-tuning tools offered by the software.

While CAT tools can, as of late, facilitate integration with machine translation engines, it is essential to recognize that there are significant differences between the two. On the one hand, CAT tools only assist human translation, offering tools for tracking similarities in terminology, context, and repetitive instances, as well as fine-tuning. Thus, CAT tools rely on memory and the translator's expertise. At the same time, machine translation can offer a translated version (albeit of questionable quality) of a source text that has been submitted for translation. It is this particular feature, of offering a direct translation, which motivates the general and outgrowing concern that the future of translation lies with these machine-powered tools, promising instant (and in the future, some might debate that even better) results, bypassing complex and often time-consuming stages in the translation process. Han (2020) also suggests that MT is intended to automate the translation process and simplify it to a certain degree; however, the most significant issue with MT is its failure to offer the right degree of equivalence in translation. This happens because MT uses algorithms meant to identify repetitive, similar patterns or even possible equivalences across languages. However, this type of input is still limited and does not yet encompass

specific nuances in various languages, abstract meanings, metaphors, humor, irony, and narrative perspectives. The latter are essential for translating literature.

With the current available technology, it is easier to predict that MT will be able to provide reasonably good translations of standardized, even technical documents, in the initial stages, still requiring human intervention. Taking into account how MT tools are designed at the moment, it is more legitimate to assume that their impact on the translation industry will be greater in the area of standardized, technical, to a certain extent even legal documents, which present highly standardized features, easy to predict, identify and finally translate by machine tools. Literary works, on the other hand, differ significantly from this pattern.

The literary genre presents greater levels of complexity, as previously indicated in this paper. Whether machine translation tools can acquire such complexities in a not-so-distant future remains to be seen. For the moment, machine translation can serve as a valuable complementary tool in translation work, and most software applications designed for translation purposes now integrate machine translation functions. This represents a significant step forward in the industry. Another aspect to consider is that MT tools may not function as accurately in all languages. Cullen (2020) points out that MT:

(...) particularly struggles with morphologically rich languages where there is lots of inflection, such as the Slavic languages. This is particularly noticeable when translating from a less complex language into a more complex one – meaning that NMT cannot be utilized as a global translation tool just yet.

This situation applies to a certain extent also to literary translations from Norwegian to Romanian, since Romanian is also a morphologically rich language (though not as morphologically complex as Slavic languages). To provide a practical understanding, the paper will offer a brief overview of how the most mainstream NMT tools, such as Google Translate, DeepL, and ChatGPT, function currently in translating literary samples from Norwegian to Romanian.

4.1. GOOGLE TRANSLATE

Google Translate was launched in 2006. As previously indicated, the early 2000s marked the emergence of statistical machine translation in the development of machine translation models. As such, when launched, Google Translate was a statistical machine translation tool. The significant shift in its development occurred in 2016 with the launch of Google Neural Machine Translation (GNMT) and a year later, in 2017, when Google introduced the Transformer Architecture. After 2020, the NMT was further enhanced with transformer-based models, which increased its resource support for languages

with fewer resources and improved translation by introducing context-awareness.

Despite the more recent developments in the technologies powering Google Translate, the fact that a 60% reduction in translation errors was reported after the introduction of the GNMT and the fact that Google Translate can now produce a satisfactory rough copy of a text in translation, Google's translation engine still lacks capacity in finetuning, perceiving abstract meanings, register and other external, contextual features that need to be considered for a full quality translation.

Let us take, for example, the following paragraph in Norwegian from Morten Strøknes's *Havboka* (2015) (referenced from here on Passage (a)) and assess the quality of the translation produced by Google Translate.

ORIGINAL: Fargesprakende fisk som går på bunnen med armer, Yeti-krabber iført hvit pels. Djevelfisken (*Caulophryne polynema*) med fiskestang på hodet, stangen vaier fram og tilbake som pendelen på en metronom, med et lokkende lys i enden. Ingen fisk lyser kraftigere enn «den opplyste nettdjevelen» (*Linophryne arborifera*), som har en lang antenne stikkende opp fra snuten, og en slags busk, like lang som fisken selv, hengende fra underkjeven. Nå snakker vi om hunnen, for hannen er bare en liten parasitt som tidlig i livet bet seg fast i hunnens buk. Slik lever den resten av livet. Den får næring fra hunnens blod, og til gjengjeld donerer den sæd med jevne mellomrom. (52)

GT (RO): Pești colorați care umblă pe fund cu brațe, crabi Yeti purtând blană albă. Peștele-diavol (*Caulophryne polynema*) cu o undiță pe cap, undița legănându-se înainte și înapoi ca pendulul unui metronom, cu o lumină ademenitoare la capăt. Niciun pește nu strălucește mai tare decât „diavolul cu plasă luminat” (*Linophryne arborifera*), care are o antenă lungă care iese din bot și un fel de tufiș, lung cât peștele însuși, care îi atârnă de maxilarul inferior. Acum vorbim despre femelă, pentru că masculul este doar un mic parazit care a mușcat abdomenul femelei la o vârstă fragedă. Așa își trăiește restul vieții. Se hrănește din sângele femelei și, în schimb, donează spermă la intervale regulate.

RO: Pești viu colorați cu brațe, care merg pe fundul apei, crabi Yeti cu blană albă, pești undițari păroși (*Caulophryne polynema*) cu “undițe” pe cap care se balansează înainte și înapoi ca un pendul de metronom și au o lumină ademenitoare în capăt. Niciun pește nu luminează însă mai puternic decât linofrina arboriferă (*Linophryne arborifera*), așa-numitul “diavol luminat”, care are o antenă lungă pe bot și un apendice ramificat ca un pământuf sub bărbie. Dar vorbim numai despre femelă, pentru că masculul e un parazit mic ce se prinde de burta ei de când vine pe lume aproape. Și așa trăiește toată viața. Își ia substanțele nutritive din sângele ei, în schimbul cărora donează lapți la intervale regulate de timp (Polirom, 55).

The passage is interesting to analyze because it includes a few technical terms that describe species of fish, as well as a brief, almost scientific description of their behavior. Google Translate succeeds only partially in offering the correct (and complete) translation for the technical names of fish and fish species. It handles well the first species mentioned, *Yeti-krabber/crabi Yeti*, but fails with the

more complex technical notions. The original text is also quite helpful in this respect, as it provides the complete scientific name in Latin, offering further clarification for the translation engine and thus making its task more manageable. Still, despite the extra information present in the original text, GT offers the more general denomination “peștele diavol” for the species *Caulophryne polynema*, leaving out two important features that distinguish this particular species from other similar devil fish: the presence of hair and its angler-fish characteristics. The official translation published by Polirom (2020) offers the complete *pești undițari păroși* as opposed to the generic variant suggested by GT. The situation becomes even more dire with the last species mentioned, “den opplyste nettdjevelen” (*Linophryne arborifera*), which GT translates as “diavolul cu plasă luminat” (*Linophryne arborifera*), while the officially published translation offers *linofrina arboriferă* (*Linophryne arborifera*), accurate to the Latin taxonomy provided in the original text.

In addition to the scientific names of fish and fish species, the passage does not challenge the automatic translation engine to the highest degree. When examining content and coherence, the version provided by GT is quite good. When compared to the official translation, it is easy to notice the detailing or finetuning, meant to create a more natural and seamless read for the Romanian audience, in several examples such as: *Pești viu colorați cu brațe, care merg pe fundul apei* vs. *Pești colorați care umblă pe fund cu brațe, crabi Yeti cu blană albă* vs. *crabi Yeti purtând blană albă, așa-numitul diavol luminat*, *care are o antenă lungă pe bot* vs. „*diavolul cu plasă luminat*” (*Linophryne arborifera*), *care are o antenă lungă care iese din bot* etc.

4.2. DEEPL

In contrast to Google’s automatic translation engine, DeepL was launched much later, in 2017, by a company that originated from Linguee, a translation search engine that had amassed an extensive database of translations. It is based on the company’s proprietary algorithm, known as a convolutional neural network, which was developed between 2016 and 2017, prior to the engine’s official launch. Specific research studies: Kamaluddin, Rasyid, Abqoriyyah, Saehu (2024), citing Cotelli Kureth et al. (2023), O’Brien et al. (2018), and Hidalgo-Ternero (2020) support the idea that DeepL offers a higher precision rate in translation, a precision rate which is superior to Google’s translation engine and other similar machine translators. In addition, Kamaluddin, Rasyid, Abqoriyyah, and Saehu (2024) assert that DeepL has a significantly better capacity to provide more accurate translations for less-resourced languages or languages that are less commonly paired. However, these studies are not focused on literary translation, nor was DeepL intended as an MT for literary translation. None of the MT tools were explicitly created to translate literature. However, as literature is considered just a different register of any translation, it is generally assumed that, at one point or a

later stage of development, artificial intelligence-powered tools will eventually be able to provide direct, more refined, and curated translations of literary texts. Whether they will achieve this on their own or still require human intervention to varying degrees, it remains to be seen.

For the practical application the present paper intends to offer, the translation of the same passage (see subchapter 4.1) will be illustrated as performed by DeepL, in close comparison to Google Translate.

Table 1. Translation of literary passage (a) DeepL vs. GT

DEEPL	GOOGLE TRANSLATE	POLROM (2020)
Pești colorați care merg pe fund cu brațele, crabi Yeti purtând blană albă. Peștele diavol (Caulophryne polynema) cu o undiță pe cap, undița se leagănă înainte și înapoi ca pendulul unui metronom, cu o lumină atrăgătoare la capăt. Niciun pește nu strălucește mai mult decât „diavolul de plasă luminat” (Linophryne arborifera), care are o antenă lungă ieșită din bot și un fel de tufiș, la fel de lung ca peștele însuși, atârnat de maxilarul inferior. Acum vorbim despre femelă, deoarece masculul este doar un mic parazit care mușcă din abdomenul femeii la începutul vieții. Așa trăiește pentru tot restul vieții sale. Se hrănește cu sângele femeii, iar în schimb donează spermă la intervale regulate.	Pești colorați care umblă pe fund cu brațe, crabi Yeti purtând blană albă. Peștele-diavol (Caulophryne polynema) cu o undiță pe cap, undița legănându-se înainte și înapoi ca pendulul unui metronom, cu o lumină ademenitoare la capăt. Niciun pește nu strălucește mai tare decât „diavolul cu plasă luminat” (Linophryne arborifera), care are o antenă lungă care iese din bot și un fel de tufiș, lung cât peștele însuși, care îi atârna de maxilarul inferior. Acum vorbim despre femelă, pentru că masculul este doar un mic parazit care a mușcat abdomenul femeii la o vârstă fragedă. Așa își trăiește restul vieții. Se hrănește din sângele femeii și, în schimb, donează spermă la intervale regulate.	Pești viu colorați cu brațe, care merg pe fundul apei, crabi Yeti cu blană albă, pești undițari păroși (Caulophryne polynema) cu “undițe” pe cap care se balansează înainte și înapoi ca un pendul de metronom și au o lumină ademenitoare în capăt. Niciun pește nu luminează însă mai puternic decât linofrina arboriferă (Linophryne arborifera), așa-numitul “diavol luminat”, care are o antenă lungă pe bot și un apendice ramificat ca un pământ sub bărbie. Dar vorbim numai despre femelă, pentru că masculul e un parazit mic ce se prinde de burta ei de când vine pe lume aproape. Și așa trăiește toată viața. Își ia substanțele nutritive din sângele ei, în schimbul cărora donează lapți la intervale regulate de timp

(Source: personal archive)

As evidenced in the table above, the differences between the two MT's are minimal. To begin with, the technical names depicting fish species present almost identical translations, the differences being: *diavolul de plasă* (DeepL) vs. *diavolul cu plasă* (GT). In this particular situation, the translation offered in GT classifies as more accurate, as *diavolul de plasă* has no coherent meaning for the Romanian speaker, while *diavolul cu plasă* could still refer to a species of fish which might present such a feature.

In terms of content, the differences between DeepL and GT are statistically irrelevant, and the coherence of the text is similarly preserved by DeepL's algorithm. Since the sample paragraph is not as challenging as other, more

complex literary texts may be, it would be helpful to examine a different sample text (referenced from here on *Passage (b)*), from the same novel. The difference the new sample brings is that it also includes a passage of Arthur Rimbaud's *Bateau Ivre* (Drunken Boat).

Table 2. Translation of literary passage (b) DeepL vs. GT

ORIGINAL	DEEPL	GOOGLE TRANSLATE	Cartea mării (2020)
Det var havet som forløste Arthur Rimbauds poesi. Havet ble en nøkkel til et utvidet språk som førte ham selv og poesien inn i det moderne, med «Le Bateau ivre» («Det berusede skip», 1871). Jeg i diktet, altså skipet selv, er en gammel frakteskute som vil oppleve havets frihet og lar seg drive uten styring ned en stor elv, til den når kysten og kommer ut i åpent farvann. Skuta havner i en forrykende storm og synker til bunns for der å bli en del av havet: Fra da av «badet jeg i havets poesi/gjennomstrålet av stjerner, som skummet melk/gjennomtrengt av den grønne azur, hvor vrakgods og en druknet drømmer,/blek-ekstatisk, stundom driver forbi, ned dit”.	Marea a fost cea care a eliberat poezia lui Arthur Rimbaud. Marea a devenit o cheie pentru un limbaj extins care l-a condus pe el și poezia în epoca modernă cu „Le Bateau ivre” („Corabia beată”, 1871). Vorbitorul poeziei, adică nava însăși, este un cargobot vechi care dorește să experimenteze libertatea mării și își permite să plutească în derivă, fără ghid, pe un râu mare, până când ajunge pe coastă și intră în ape deschise. Nava sfârșește într-o furtună furibundă pe și se scufundă până la fund, devenind parte din mare: De la “m-am scăldat în poezia mării / presărată cu stele, ca laptele degresat / pătruns de azurul verde, unde epavele și un visător înecat, / palid-ecstatic, plutesc ocazional în derivă, acolo jos.”	Marea a fost cea care a mântuit poezia lui Arthur Rimbaud. Marea a devenit o cheie către un limbaj extins care l-a condus și poezie în modern, cu „Le Bateau ivre” („Det „corabii beate”, 1871). Sinele din poem, adică nava însăși, este un vechiul cargou care vrea să experimenteze libertatea mării și se lasă plutind fără direcție pe un râu mare până ajunge la țărm și iese în ape deschise. Nava sfârșește într-o situație teribilă furtună și se scufundă la fund pentru a deveni parte a mării: De la “apoi m-am scăldat în poezia mării/radiată de stele, ca laptele degresat/pătruns de azurul verde, unde epava și un visător înecat,/palid-extaziat, uneori plutind pe lângă mine, acolo jos.”	Tot marea zămislit poezia lui Arthur Rimbaud. Marea a devenit cheia unui limbaj complex, care avea să-i ducă în modernitate, și pe el, și opera sa, cu “Corabia beată” (“Le Bateau Ivre”, 1871). Eul liric, corabia, e o navă veche de transport care tânjește după libertatea mării și se lasă purtată de un fluviu până pe coastă. Ajunsă apoi în larg, corabia este cuprinsă de furtună și se scufundă în adâncuri devenind una cu marea: “Mă scald, de-atunci, în mare ca-ntr-o poemă gravă- /Licoare lactescentă cu irizări de sorii - /Și sorb azurul verde, în care – pală navă - /Vreun înecat coboară, pe gânduri, uneori.”

(Source: personal archive)

Passage (b) presents more challenges for the MT engines, as it exhibits features characteristic of literary texts. One such feature is the metaphoric nature of the text, where the sea is not only referred to as the creator of Rimbaud's poem, but also as a key element in helping the author develop modernism. Passage (b)

also offers a lyrical fragment, in the form of a brief quotation from the aforementioned poem. The translation of the latter renders the most unsatisfactory results, with none of the MT engines being able to offer an acceptable translation of the poetic piece. The most poignant example is undoubtedly the passage in the poem that describes the foam of the waves and compares it to a milky substance. Both GT and DeepL translate the Norwegian “*skummet melk*” as “*lapte degresat*”, providing a word-for-word translation of the expression without considering its context or the abstract, metaphorical meaning.

This shows that, even though the technology behind the two machine translators has made progress and incorporated features enabling translations based on context and surrounding words, the two artificial intelligence-powered engines are, at least at present, not sufficiently advanced to produce satisfactory results when translating literary texts.

4.3. CHATGPT

The latest and, as of yet, one of the most controversial AI tools at present, ChatGPT, takes its name from the Generative Pre-Trained Transformer, representing the architecture on which it is built. In an article published online in May 2023, Forbes declares that Chat GPT, which is mainly a chatbot performing various NLP tasks (language translation, writing, storytelling), “has redefined the standards of artificial intelligence, proving that machines can indeed 'learn' the complexities of human language and interaction”.

In the field of literary translations, several articles have also focused on how Chat GPT translates literary works (see Karabayeva & Kalizhanova 2024, Zhang, Zhao, Eger, 2024; Jiaxin, 2024), but also on ethical issues regarding the translation of machine-assisted literary texts (see Taivalkoski-Shilov, 2018). The consensus is that literary texts pose the greatest challenge for NMTs, with Chat GPT not being an exception.

To further demonstrate how Chat GPT can handle literary texts, the table below presents translations of both *Passage (a)* and *Passage (b)*.

Table 3. Translation of literary passage (a) and (b) Chat GPT

PASSAGE (A)	PASSAGE (B)	POLIROM (2020) PASSAGE (A)	POLIROM (2020) PASSAGE (B)
Pești strălucitori care se deplasează pe fundul mării folosindu-și brațele, crabi Yeti îmbrăcați într-o blană albă. Peștele-diavol (Caulophryne polynema) are o undiță pe cap, care se	A fost marea cea care a dezlegat poezia lui Arthur Rimbaud. Marea a devenit o cheie către un limbaj extins, care l-a purtat pe el — și poezia — înspre modernitate, prin „Le Bateau ivre” („Corabia beată”, 1871).	Pești viu colorați cu brațe, care merg pe fundul apei, crabi Yeti cu blană albă, pești undițari păroși (Caulophryne polynema) cu “undițe” pe cap care se balansează înainte și înapoi ca un pendul de	Tot marea zămislit poezia lui Arthur Rimbaud. Marea a devenit cheia unui limbaj complex, care avea să-i ducă în modernitate, și pe el, și opera sa, cu “Corabia beată” (“Le Bateau Ivre”, 1871). Eul liric,

PASSAGE (A)	PASSAGE (B)	POLIROM (2020) PASSAGE (A)	POLIROM (2020) PASSAGE (B)
leagănă înainte și înapoi ca pendulul unui metronom, cu o lumină atrăgătoare la capăt. Niciun alt pește nu strălucește mai puternic decât „diavolul de mare luminat” (Linophryne arborifera), care are o antenă lungă ce pornește din bot și un fel de tufă, la fel de lungă cât peștele, atârând de mandibula inferioară. Aici vorbim despre femelă, pentru că masculul este doar un mic parazit care, devreme în viață, se prinde de burta femelei și rămâne acolo tot restul vieții. Se hrănește din sângele femelei, iar în schimb îi oferă spermă la intervale regulate.	Eul liric al poemului, adică însăși corabia, este o veche navă de marfă care tânjește după libertatea mării și se lasă purtată în voia curentului, fără cârmă, pe un fluviu larg, până când ajunge la țărm și pătrunde în apele deschise ale largului. Corabia este prinsă într-o furtună năprasnică și se scufundă în adâncuri, devenind parte din mare: „De-atunci m-am scaldat în poezia mării, străbătută de stele, ca de o spumă lăptoasă, pătrunsă de azurul verde, unde epavele și un visător înecat, palid-extatic, trec uneori plutind spre adânc.”	metronom și au o lumină ademenitoare în capăt. Niciun pește nu luminează însă mai puternic decât linofrina arborifera (Linophryne arborifera), așa-numitul “diavol luminat”, care are o antenă lungă pe bot și un apendice ramificat ca un pământ sub bărbie. Dar vorbim numai despre femelă, pentru că masculul e un parazit mic ce se prinde de burta ei de când vine pe lume aproape. Și așa trăiește toată viața. Își ia substanțele nutritive din sângele ei, în schimbul cărora donează lapți la intervale regulate de timp	corabia, e o navă veche de transport care tânjește după libertatea mării și se lasă purtată de un fluviu până pe coastă. Ajunsă apoi în larg, corabia este cuprinsă de furtună și se scufundă în adâncuri devenind una cu marea: “Mă scald, de-atunci, în mare ca-ntr-o poemă gravă- /Licoare lactescentă cu irizări de sorii - /Și sorb azurul verde, în care – pală navă - /Vreun înecat coboară, pe gânduri, uneori.”

(Source: personal archive)

The overall performance of Chat GPT when translating both samples is similar to the previously analyzed translation engines, Google Translate and DeepL, especially in the case of Passage (a). Still, there are a few distinctions that need to be highlighted. Chat GPT offers an improved translation of the poetic fragment in Passage (b). It is the only direct translator that does not offer a word-for-word translation for ‘*skummet melk*’ (see GT and DeepL both translating it as ‘lapte degresat’). Chat GPT suggests a more literary-tuned translation, *spumă lăptoasă*. Of course, none of the MTs match the official translation’s *licoare lactescentă*, which remains superior in creativity and stylistics. In addition, the translation offered by Chat GPT utilizes the concept *eul liric*, which is also preferred in the official translation, whereas both GT and DeepL provided unacceptable options, such as “sinele din poem” (GT) or “vorbitorul poeziei” (DeepL).

Chat GPT offers additional features. It can adjust the translated output based on prompts provided by the user, a feature that is not available in GT or

DeepL. The table below displays the differences between passages with additional prompting suggestions from the user, asking Chat GPT to render a literary or, respectively, a more poetic translation for the sample provided.

Table 4. Refined translations of passage (a) and (b) Chat GPT

PASSAGE (A)	PASSAGE (A) REFINED	PASSAGE (B)	PASSAGE (B) REFINED
Pești strălucitori care se deplasează pe fundul mării folosindu-și brațele, crabii Yeti îmbrăcați într-o blană albă. Peștele-diavol (Caulophryne polynema) are o undiță pe cap, care se leagănă înainte și înapoi ca pendulul unui metronom, cu o lumină atrăgătoare la capăt. Niciun alt pește nu strălucește mai puternic decât „diavolul de mare luminat” (Linophryne arborifera), care are o antenă lungă ce pornește din bot și un fel de tufă, la fel de lungă cât peștele, atârănând de mandibula inferioară. Aici vorbim despre femelă, pentru că masculul este doar un mic parazit care, devreme în viață, se prinde de burta femeii și rămâne acolo tot restul vieții. Se hrănește din sângele femeii, iar în schimb îi oferă spermă la intervale regulate.	Pești înveșmântați în culori aprinse, care se târăsc pe fundul oceanului folosindu-și brațele, crabii Yeti îmbrăcați în blană albă ca zăpada. Peștele-diavol (Caulophryne polynema) poartă o undiță chiar în vârful capului, care se leagănă înainte și înapoi precum pendulul unui metronom, cu o lumină ademenitoare la capăt. Niciun pește nu strălucește mai intens decât „diavolul iluminat din adâncuri” (Linophryne arborifera), ce are o antenă lungă ieșind din bot și un fel de tufă, la fel de lungă cât corpul său, atârănând din maxilarul inferior. Dar aici vorbim despre femelă — căci masculul nu este decât un mic parazit care, devreme în viață, se înfige în abdomenul ei și rămâne acolo pentru tot restul existenței. Se hrănește din sângele femeii și, în schimb, îi oferă din când în când spermă.	A fost marea cea care a dezlegat poezia lui Arthur Rimbaud. Marea a devenit o cheie către un limbaj extins, care l-a purtat pe el — și poezia — înspre modernitate, prin „Le Bateau ivre” („Corabia beată”, 1871). Eul liric al poemului, adică însăși corabia, este o veche navă de marfă care tânjește după libertatea mării și se lasă purtată în voia curentului, fără cârmă, pe un fluviu larg, până când ajunge la țarm și pătrunde în apele deschise ale largului. Corabia este prinsă într-o furtună năprasnică și se scufundă în adâncuri, devenind parte din mare: „De-atunci m-am scăldat în poezia mării, străbătută de stele, ca de o spumă lăptoasă, pătrunsă de azurul verde, unde epavele și un visător înecat, palid-extatic, trec uneori plutind spre adânc.”	Ea a devenit o cheie către un limbaj extins, care l-a condus atât pe el, cât și poezia, înspre modernitate — odată cu „Le Bateau ivre” („Corabia beată”, 1871). Eul liric al poemului — corabia însăși — este o veche navă de marfă, dornică să cunoască libertatea mărilor. Se lasă purtată în derivă, fără cârmă, pe cursul unui fluviu larg, până ajunge la țarm și pătrunde în apele deschise ale oceanului. Corabia este prinsă într-o furtună violentă și se scufundă în adâncuri, devenind parte a mării. De atunci: „M-am scăldat în poezia mării, strălucind sub stele ca spuma laptelui, pătruns de azurul verde, unde epavele și un visător înecat, palid – extatic – trec uneori plutind, în jos, spre abis.”

When prompted to offer a translation in Romanian for both passages, suited for a literary translation, Chat GPT alters specific constructions in the samples

offered, attempting to enrich their meaning in order to meet the requirement. This shows that the algorithm has learned literary texts have certain artistic propensities regarding language and style. For instance, in the refined version, Chat GPT attempts to improve *pești strălucitori* and changes it to *pești înveșmântați în culori aprinse, deplasează* becomes *se târăsc*. What is even more interesting is that when describing the appearance of the Yeti crabs, the refined version adds new content that is not offered in the original text. Thus, we have *crabi Yeti îmbrăcați în blană albă ca zăpada* as opposed to the unrefined version *crabi Yeti îmbrăcați într-o blană albă* and to the official translation *crabi Yeti cu blană albă*. In the endeavor to respond to the prompt of providing a literary translation, the algorithm made the apparent decision to add what it considered to be additional meaningful information for a Romanian reader. This demonstrates that Chat GPT utilizes a superior set of reasoning algorithms, enabling it to make informed “judgment calls” based on user-provided requests. It also constitutes a minimal piece of evidence that future developments in the technology of its algorithms might make it a suitable tool to assist translators in literary translations as well, by providing improved draft versions that require less human intervention.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Literary translation continues to raise significant issues today. It is a multifaceted practice that extends far beyond the mere substitution of words from one language to another. It involves the complex task of transferring not only meaning but also cultural nuance, while preserving the integrity of the original work. In doing so, literary translation plays a vital role in fostering cultural diversity and enabling unique forms of expression across linguistic boundaries.

Consequently, the translator's role remains essential and profoundly multifaceted, functioning not only as a linguistic expert but also as a creative artist, cultural mediator, and quality gatekeeper. Looking forward, AI may increasingly assist translators by offering suggestions and automating routine tasks, but the core interpretive labor of literary translation continues to depend on human insight and cultural intuition.

Recent developments in translation studies highlight the increasing sophistication of NMT-powered AI tools, as evidenced in the present paper, which are now capable of context-sensitive translations and can generate drafts for repetitive segments of text. However, despite notable advancements, these technologies remain limited in their capacity to handle the nuanced demands of literary translation. AI tools, while useful as supportive instruments, still fail to meet acceptable standards in literary translation, often requiring substantial human intervention to achieve accuracy, coherence, and stylistic fidelity.

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AI-based Communication in Foreign Language Learning: An Overview of Oral Competence Development

Abstract: This paper investigates the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in foreign language learning, focusing on the oral competence. Speaking is often perceived as one of the most difficult skills to develop, and practicing for the oral competence could be challenging due to factors such as (i) communication anxiety, (ii) lack of proper structured responses, (iii) limited vocabulary, (iv) pronunciation errors, etc. However, there are several techniques to be integrated in current teaching practice that can change the way in which the speaking competence is perceived by students. A non-exhaustive list could include the use of different immersive learning tools, such as virtual assistants in practicing speaking following a linguistic pattern, the use of various mobile applications that can detect errors in pronunciation, or even websites that can help students connect with people worldwide for conversational purposes. This paper follows a theoretical approach and it does not include any empirical data collected from students. However, I chose to investigate the speaking competence because there is a recurring reluctance towards it during classes. Given this limitation, the study aims to further the already existing literature on foreign language learning and shape a clearer picture of AI's role in overcoming linguistic barriers.

Keywords: *artificial intelligence, speaking, English as a Foreign Language, immersive learning, virtual assistants, applications*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. AIM

The aim of this paper is to explore the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in developing linguistic skills, especially speaking. Recently, AI has become an important tool not only in teaching for general purposes but also in communication within specialised fields, such as computer science, business, healthcare and many others. At the same time, it is extremely relevant for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes that focus on using the specialized terms in various fields, such as the ones mentioned above. As speaking is a skill that goes beyond pedagogy and linguistics, we must facilitate the way in which its importance is perceived by students of all levels, irrespective of their field of study. On the other hand, there is a recurring reluctance towards oral communication,

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especially in public speaking contexts as observed during some of the classes I teach as an ESP teacher in higher education, thus, the main focus of the paper is to identify the reasons why students would be against it and present a few ways of overcoming these problems. At the same time, the study tries to integrate a series of immersive teaching techniques that could help language educators manage the contexts in which students present a certain reluctance towards speaking, facilitating both in-class teaching and individual practice.

1.2. METHODOLOGY

As the paper focuses on a theoretical approach, I would limit myself to just presenting the pedagogical implications of AI in teaching and addressing speaking in particular. I do not collect any empirical data from my students to whom I teach ESP classes in higher education, in fields such as Computer Science, Physical Education, Physical Therapy, and Business. The proposal for a detailed practical approach would be discussed later, in the *Further research* section. However, I would like to mention the ethical considerations regarding the use of AI in teaching, tackling the privacy concerns, ideological influences, propaganda, misinformation, and credibility.

1.3. CONCEPTUALIZATION

The use of AI in education has become a recurring topic in many fields, including teaching foreign languages. Even though the use of computers in education emerged back in the 1970s, preceded by the emergence of AI in general back in 1950 (Coughlin, 1990, p. 561), it is only recently that AI (in the conceptual realisation of a tool) has gained popularity outside technical fields as well. As one of the main reasons to include AI in our lives is to complement human work (Alfredo et al., 2024), it is widely accepted that computer-assisted technologies have managed to mostly improve the way in which we perceive and analyze information. Over the years, people have moved from studying and learning in order to produce artificial intelligence, to learning about its main functions and implications, and, recently, to studying and learning with the use of this immersive tool (Son et al., 2023 *apud* Kukulska-Hulme et al., 2020). More than that, it is important to consider AI integration in education and teaching in general, with a special focus on language learning, addressing the potential benefits and drawbacks. The concept has emerged in recent years to be widely known as *AIED*, which stands for Artificial Intelligence in Education (Kaplan-Rakowski et al., 2023, p. 314 *apud* Celik et al., 2022; Kabudi et al., 2021; Zafari et al., 2022).

When trying to define the concept of artificial intelligence in education, it is important to clearly distinguish between the technical term (used in computer science and technological fields) and the pedagogical meaning (used as a tool in non-technical fields), the latter interpretation being considered in this paper.

Generally, it incorporates all main tools that facilitate teaching and learning, used responsibly by both teacher and students. At the same time, it is essential to make the distinction between any automatization process and any artificial intelligence, because the former is not necessarily based on human intelligence but rather on some repetitive tasks. Even if AI has the advantage of taking over repetitive tasks in technical fields, it is worth mentioning that, at least not at this point in its evolution, we cannot fully rely on it for grading papers, checking homework or providing unsupervised feedback. Even though artificial intelligence has its roots in human intelligence, the limitations can be observed in many interactions. Irrespective of its quality, two key aspects could certainly be improved, namely its creativity and adaptability.

As humans are creative and can easily adapt to new contexts, it is vital to make sure that, in teaching, these two abilities are not being suppressed by barriers, such as communication anxiety, lack of knowledge or limitations of any kind (materials access, encouragement and empathy, etc.). One major issue that I have observed, during many classes, was the reluctance towards speaking, even though some students possess the necessary skills without prior specific preparation. Unfortunately, this lack of self-confidence could easily lead to larger problems, such as not giving credits for someone's idea, losing abilities/skills over time if not used regularly, or even plagiarism (Alm and Watanabe, 2003). In an attempt at identifying the root cause in such cases and overcoming the issues, it is extremely important to consider students' needs, skills, knowledge, and purposes in the process of language learning.

2. LINGUISTIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIES IN SPEAKING

When it comes to speaking, students' general tendency would be to avoid engaging oneself into contexts that imply public speaking or in-class debates. The root problems seem to be recurrent and they usually imply a set of learner-related limitations. Even though not all of them refer to language usage, I believe solving these main issues related to linguistics barriers could further improve the way in which learners perceive the oral competence. In addition to encouraging students to talk, teachers should also make sure that they provide appropriate structures regarding pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and semantics, all of which would bolster their confidence in becoming fluent speakers of a foreign language.

2.1. COMMUNICATION ANXIETY

It is widely accepted that anxiety plays an important role in inhibiting speaking, especially in larger contexts of public speaking, such as conferences, course presentations, exams, etc. This phenomenon has been debated in recent years in different studies, all leading to the conclusion that lowering learners' anxiety would provide better results regarding their performance in terms of

linguistic competences (El Shazly, 2021; Gregory et al., 2022; Son et al., 2023; Chen, 2024; Du and Daniel, 2024; Chen et al., 2025). Despite its theoretical approach, this study tries to point out a few reasons that might trigger anxiety in foreign language learning classes, based on Chen (2024 *apud* Griffin, 2009; Luo, 2014; Genard, 2015): (i) fear of failure or embarrassment, (ii) lack of proper preparation or (iii) (large) human audience, leading to an environment that is, as Wiboolyasarín et al. (2025) mention, non-judgmental, ensuring learners do not feel any pressure from an examiner or any other peer colleague.

2.2. STRUCTURE

Another impediment could be considered the lack of a structured response/speech in any spoken interaction. This is particularly relevant for the competence exam that learners might take at the end of their language training as they must focus on a specific structure at a time (persuasive response, opinion response, argumentative of the *for and against* type, etc.). Even though they might have an overall structure in mind, it is essential to confidently make a distinction between an objective approach for the argumentative type and a subjective one for the opinion questions, including all the needed details (verbal realisation of specific structures). At the same time, the internal structure could be a further problematic aspect. Without a clear, logical sequencing of stages, many learners might feel discouraged to even engage in any spoken interaction, not to mention free, fluent speech without a physical support of any kind.

2.3. VOCABULARY

Similarly, vocabulary plays a crucial role in developing the oral competence as it represents the basis of any verbal interaction together with semantic meaning. Depending on learners' purposes, vocabulary should be strictly adapted to different registers and domains, especially within the competence examination, always considering the specific instructions of the examination, whether or not it is an integrated part of a larger component (a productive skill). In the contexts of ESP, vocabulary is extremely relevant for what we know as 'specialist knowledge', thus, it is crucial to assess vocabulary independently from grammar or coherence at this point. As many learners lack the use of collocations, phrasal structures or specific idiomatic expressions, it is important to emphasize them during classes in order to help learners build strong vocabulary in various domains through idiomatic language.

2.4. GRAMMAR

Grammar has always been a pivoting concept when it comes to learning a foreign language, yet not crucial in making one's meaning clear. Considering prescriptive grammar approaches, grammatical rules should be considered

strictly in order to complete the puzzle between syntax and semantics. On the other hand, generativists appreciate linguistic creativity and recommend adopting a more flexible approach towards syntactic rules. Even so, it is safe to consider that being aware of basic grammatical notions would be beneficial to learners and totally improve the way in which they perceive speaking. It gives them more confidence and ensures clarity in their utterances. At the same time, lack of grammaticality could lead to inconsistencies in utterances, making it harder for examiners to follow argumentation, example integration or the overall purpose of the text.

2.5. PRONUNCIATION

Depending on mother tongues and linguistic influences, pronunciation could become a hindrance to learning a foreign language or enhancing the speaking skills one already possesses. Pronunciation should be primarily distinguished from accents or geolinguistics influences and, at the same time, educators should emphasize more its importance in order to overcome anxiety, correctness in language, accuracy and clarity in perceiving an oral verbal message. It is also worth mentioning that having a clear pronunciation and, perhaps, a definite accent could give learners a feeling of confidence, allowing them to engage in further events, such as conferences or debates in a foreign language.

3. REMEDIAL PEDAGOGICAL SUGGESTIONS

One doesn't easily overcome all these drawbacks, especially beginners or intermediate learners, but it is educators' role to guide all learners, irrespective of their challenges. The first important step would be to identify the type of problem a learner is facing, making sure to assess it from a range of perspectives (phonological, syntactic, semantic, morphosyntactic, affective, etc.). Next, it would be most beneficial to present an overview of the issue by providing constructive and supportive feedback to the student. In addition, a few suggestions would be needed so that the student could adopt a series of techniques and strategies for further individual study. Last but not least, a reassessment should be scheduled for fixed time intervals (for example, one week, three weeks, one month and a half, etc.) so that the progress could be tracked in an organized manner (keeping a journal of progress, for example). Furthermore, overcoming such a complex issue is never only a student's job or an educator's job. Both sides should recall that it is impossible to start without guidance and to progress without implication.

4. APPLICATIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Even though this paper has a theoretical approach, it is a must to have an insight into some applications and pedagogical implications AI could have in

teaching and language learning, especially for the oral competence. As challenges of various nature could arise, I would like to mention the main areas of interest that actually match the major types of barriers we have encountered above, namely: (i) overcoming anxiety, (ii) planning structured responses, (iii) enriching vocabulary, (iv) improving grammar, and (v) practicing pronunciation. For all these areas, some immersive learning tools could be integrated for both in-class learning (and implicitly teaching) and individual study.

It is also worth mentioning that most applications have different criteria to which they can be adapted, depending on learners' requirements, needs, and background knowledge. It is essential to guide our students into realistic expectations, slow progress, but deep understanding.

4.1. OVERCOMING ANXIETY

Experiencing anxiety is out of our control and we cannot expect our students to be rid of it within seconds. In this area, adopting an emphatic way of thinking towards students' fears could be most beneficial for creating a safe environment in which they could find courage to practice. Speaking can be developed through practice and exposure, so having the right atmosphere should be a first important step for the students.

4.1.1. OpenAI

As human presence could be problematic to most students (i.e. having a large audience), an emerging method could be that of being exposed to an 'artificial' audience through the use of AI or any other online platforms that do not imply onsite communication (such as MS Teams, Google Meet, Moodle, etc.). In this context, using chatbots or virtual assistants/tutors could be of great help. For example, OpenAI, founded in 2015, proposes at least two well-known applications, namely ChatGPT and Speak. Engaging with these two forms of practicing, students can benefit from an 'artificial' audience that allows them to try various linguistic behaviours and patterns, providing feedback based on students' requirements.

The use of ChatGPT has become commonplace these days. It is widely used in a variety of fields for a multitude of purposes. Education is certainly not restrained from using it as an immersive tool. Its main functions are to provide written interaction, but the Voice Mode is extremely helpful for insightful conversations on a variety of topics that the learners choose. Moreover, students can use the right prompt to simulate real-life conversations by just mentioning the main theme of discussion, its register and difficulty level. In real time, it could even provide feedback based on a speech held on a chosen topic.

4.1.2. ELSA Speak and Mondly

Furthermore, involvement in contexts that simulate real-life situations can be facilitated via ELSA Speak and Mondly, so that students would be able to

identify the same key aspects in further conversational contexts. The latter application has a VR (virtual reality) element, which makes it even more engaging. Of course, VR is not affordable to everyone, so this could be a financial limitation. However, the AI-based communication within these two applications could transform the way in which students perceive speaking, as they can get familiar with always having an audience and, thus, make the transition to human audience naturally.

4.2. STRUCTURED RESPONSES

A key factor in improving speaking can be represented by the structure students should follow within a linguistic bias. Even though structured responses are not the most felicitous ways to develop an oral competence simply by encouraging learning them by heart, it can be helpful for those learners who struggle with grammar and writing, especially those displaying lower proficiency levels. It could lead to patterns that can actually become standards, especially for pre-established structures (such as the argumentative pattern, opinion pattern, persuasive pattern, descriptive pattern, etc.). Nevertheless, a few applications indirectly facilitate structuring responses for further spoken interactions, such as Grammarly, QuillBot, TalkPal, Otter.ai, or Speechnotes.

4.2.1. PRE-SPEAKING

When it comes to pre-speaking preparation, Grammarly and QuillBot offer refining services. Generally speaking, if students lack a proper structure, which also implies lack of grammatical notions, they can insert words spelt accordingly, even if they lack inflections, and the AI-based tools will arrange information in a grammatically correct order. In contrast, that could be malignant, too, decreasing students' cognitive involvement. However, it is essential to adopt such practices in a guided interaction, so that teachers can control the amount of AI usage, finding a balance between students' work and AI work. In this respect, a relevant teaching activity for the issue can be an in-class practice for speaking or pre-speaking using an AI tool as a demonstration. The teacher can use an AI language model or a mobile application in front of the class, presenting a proper prompting strategy for each tool mentioned. Similarly, another teaching activity can be that of allowing students to formulate their own prompting strategies in order to check their efficiency. Afterwards, students can compare their prompts in order to check for similarities and differences, continuing with a collaborative activity in order to improve the prompting system. At the end of this activity, the teacher can assess the prompts and their validity, allowing students to further use them for exam preparation (individual study) or in-class practice.

4.2.2. Refinement

As some students might already possess strong grammatical skills, they might only need refinement when it comes to their structures and sentences. If the purpose is to prepare a speech for a forthcoming exam, presentation or debate, Otter.ai and Speechnotes are helpful in transcribing it into words, analysing grammar and structures, and refining it into having a more natural word order, collocation usage, and even vocabulary choices. A useful teaching activity using these applications can be employed for analysing discourse. Students can record a speech at home on a given topic, save the recording(s) and bring it into class for discussions. As some of the applications have a transcribing feature, it is useful to also include the written version of the speech in order to fully analyse it with concrete examples. It can also be a group activity, where students work together to improve the structure of the speech.

4.3. ENRICHED VOCABULARY

Vocabulary could be easily enriched through exposure and constant practice. Sometimes, students might find these techniques redundant and need a new perspective on learning. Irrespective of their level, learners can take advantage of all the opportunities AI has to offer when it comes to enriching vocabulary. An open list of applications/tools/instruments can include the following: Duolingo, HelloTalk, Memrise, Quizlet, Anki, FluentU, and BBC Learning English App. In addition to vocabulary-focused affordances, these applications include components aimed at improving areas such as pronunciation, fluency, or spelling. On the other hand, it is worth recalling that the Natural Language Processing elements of these applications allows them to adapt algorithms to each individual, making it easier to provide personalized feedback on different stages of progress, elicit information based on needs and interests, as well as provide guided feedback on particular areas. An effective teaching activity using vocabulary AI tools can be performed for both in-class and individual study. Students can use the applications on their smart devices in order to practice various vocabulary words, based on a certain criterion, such as theme or difficulty.

4.4. IMPROVED GRAMMAR

Grammaticality can be easily overlooked by many learners, especially in spoken interactions. Its importance stands out, however, in academic contexts and examinations, where special attention is required to word order, agreement, tenses, even collocations, phrasal structures, and overall syntactic accuracy. Learners can use a few applications that would identify errors, suggest corrections, and adjust to a more natural speech. Such tools could overlap with

those applied earlier to vocabulary and structured responses sections, for example, Duolingo, Grammarly, Speechnotes but also Busuu, which focuses on an interactive approach, making sure all contexts are much closer to real-life interaction than those provided in textbooks. For this section, a helpful teaching activity can include in-class grammar practice. Students can resort to their smartphones or smart devices for applications to solve the grammatical tasks based on the given topic of the class.

4.5. PRACTICING PRONUNCIATION

Another key aspect in ensuring a successful learning process is focusing on pronunciation through some immersive practices. It is known that pronunciation can be refined by constant exposure to different linguistic patterns, but it is not always enough just to listen and repeat. For this reason, a few modern methods that can be applied rely on a series of applications capable of identifying errors alongside repeating patterns. For instance, Speechling and YouGlish provide contexts close to real-life interactions, focusing on particular words and phrases that are used in a given limited utterance. It is incumbent upon learners to deepen meanings and make connections. Furthermore, Forvo provides native speakers recordings which students can listen to and then analyse from a phonological perspective, whereas Google (with Google's Pronunciation Tool) gives insightful refinements for individual structures in terms of phonemes and their linguistic realisation. Integrating these applications into teaching and learning can help students have quick access to the correct pronunciation of some words, especially when they are focusing on individual learning.

5. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is true that one drawback of AI usage in everyday life could have serious ethical considerations, the most important ones referring to concerns related to privacy, ideological influences, propaganda, misinformation, and credibility.

When it comes to privacy concerns, AI platforms owners could access personal information (IP, e-mail address, location or other linked information), which could trigger reluctance in using such tools. More than that, constant exposure to ChatGPT interactions based on given prompts could easily leak personal behaviours, preferences, and patterns that could help owners identify further private information that people might not want to expose online.

At the same time, all kinds of influences could result from online exposure. Despite learners' best intentions to use these online tools for educational purposes only, it can easily transform into a tool that gets out of control, leading to other unwanted influences. Unfortunately, ideological influences are spread vigorously in any online environment, and this could be harmful especially to learners that might use these tools unsupervised. For example, depending on the

topic, various political influences, persuasive marketing trends, or invalid comparisons can easily slip in. The advice teachers should give to their students is to always be objective when interacting with an AI and to use it as a tool, not a confidant.

In recent years, propaganda and misinformation have been blooming over the internet, and AI is not immune to such influences. It is known that artificial intelligence algorithms are constantly improving and adapting to new standards, making fewer errors and providing more accuracy. However, it is not always possible to predict what kind of misleading information or concepts could be interfering with some neutrally intended practice questions.

Lastly, these methods might not be credible to the large public. This could be a reason why more research should be carried out and extensive exposure to the use of immersive teaching methods based on AI-powered tools should be provided, with clear examples and practical applications. Thus, AI-based teaching could even earn its place as a research field, aligning to modern standards in teaching a foreign language.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Concluding these conceptual discussions, it is worth mentioning that AI has gradually become an important tool in today's teaching and learning. Even though each learner has an individual path, the interesting fact about integrating AI tools in learning is especially its capacity to adapt, yet not to the degree a human educator would. At the same time, learners should not neglect the fact that AI is evolving daily, making these tools more credible, engaging, and even accurate than ever before.

As mentioned above, the main areas of improvement through an AI-powered/based tool could be (i) overcoming the communication anxiety, (ii) structuring responses for a pre-established speech, specific to presentations, exams or debates, (iii) grammar and vocabulary improvement, through various patterns that can be reassessed by both students and educators, and (iv) pronunciation, with a special focus on phonological implications, real-time feedback and strengthened self-esteem.

7. FURTHER RESEARCH

As this study is mostly theoretical, I would like to propose a series of further applications that this topic could provide. Being extremely relevant for the current trends in pedagogy, its implications in education have a huge potential, making sure that both teacher and students would benefit from its constant improvements. Therefore, two possible research questions could be detailed and not limited to these implications only.

On the one hand, it is essential to extend the length of this topic, in a contrastive manner, following Choukaier's model (2024). Firstly, a certain number of subjects is needed, for example, 100 students, to which an assessment in terms of speaking should be applied to establish the starting level. Next, lecturers should choose a certain number of hours, for example, 10 hours, in which two groups of students would practice speaking in two separate ways – 50 students would practice exclusively with a human tutor, focusing on traditional methods of eliciting information through flashcards, reiterations, pronunciation corrections etc., whereas the other 50 students would exclusively practice speaking with an 'artificial' tutor, i.e. AI tool, focusing on immersive techniques of virtual assistants and mobile applications. After this stage, students would be evaluated again to reassess their level of proficiency, in terms of accuracy, fluency, grammar and vocabulary usage, and pronunciation. The purpose of this experiment would be to compare human tutoring to artificial intelligence-powered educational tools with respect to teaching efficiency.

On the other hand, as technology is evolving rapidly, some other AI implications transcend the pedagogical reasons, intersecting other linguistic fields, such as translation and interpretation. One such example is the use of real-time interpretation proposed by Google and integrated in Google Meet. It allows users to benefit from real-time interpretations (and translations) of a speech from one language to another. In such a context, an interesting question that could arise would refer to the need to learn a new language in the AI era other than personal preferences, and the extent to which we could completely rely on artificial intelligence.

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Genres in ESP: From Professional Communication to Prompt Engineering

Abstract: The integration of generative AI into professional communication has transformed traditional English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching paradigms in higher education. While ESP traditionally focused on adapting to evolving professional communication needs and genre proliferation (Bhatia, 2010), the emergence of tools like ChatGPT presents new challenges and opportunities. These AI systems, functioning as non-human communication partners, have become integral to professional discourse. Their presence in education has sparked debate, with some arguing that they negatively impact learning by fostering over-reliance and hindering language skill development. Rather than focusing solely on the downside of this technological shift, the present paper advocates for integrating AI tools and addressing new communicative needs of their users into ESP pedagogy. Through a genre-based approach, the study examines how ESP has tackled the evolution of emerging professional communication genres and how AI-mediated communication has given rise to new generic forms through prompt engineering. The paper contributes to a reflection framework on developing dual competency in both human-to-human and human-to-machine communication, essential skills for the next generation of professionals. This approach could position ESP instruction at the intersection of traditional genre pedagogy and emerging prompt engineering methodologies.

Keywords: *genre theory, ESP, digital genres, prompt engineering, GenAI for language learning*

INTRODUCTION

Genre theory has been central to English for Specific Purposes (ESP), both for research and pedagogy, with early conceptualisations of professional genres grounded in Bhatia's (1993) and Swales' (1990) works. The genres used in professional communication define the scope of ESP and their dynamic evolution impacts how ESP caters to the needs of learners as participants to the discourse of their professional communities as well as the theoretical approaches to analyzing them (Flowerdew, 2024 for a comprehensive review). Online communication and the use of digital tools and media have reshaped professional communication in unprecedented ways. Traditional genres have been transformed by the new affordances, in the way they are produced and disseminated (Hafner et al., 2023). At the same time, digital media and tools have brought together a wide range of audiences with an interest in specialized knowledge but various degrees of expertise. Audiences have become partners in conversation, agents of change and collaborators in creating new, hybrid and often fluid new genres, challenging the

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traditional notion of discourse community (Kuteeva & Mauranen, 2018) and proposing an expanded construct to include a wide range, from interested amateurs to experts (Hafner et al., 2023).

At the intersection of specialists communicating knowledge to a wider and wider range of audiences, their use of digital tools and multimedia for producing and disseminating messages and an accelerated diversification of communicative purposes (Bhatia, 2024) professional genres multiply and evolve with a speed hardly matched by the ability of ESP or genre theory to map the full picture in real time.

The advent of Generative AI tools added a new partner in the creation and dissemination of specialized knowledge. A large language model (LLM) is an advanced AI system (a subset of Generative AI) trained on massive datasets of text which can perform a wide range of language tasks – including writing, translation, summarization, and answering questions – by recognizing complex patterns and context within language (Hadi et al., 2024). Large Language Models such as ChatGPT can assist in the production of specialized texts from information gathering, to organisation and structure of text, to audience-specific adaptation of messages. Their unparalleled performance calls for a deep understanding of their affordances, limitations and overall role in communication and production of knowledge. The present paper explores this role in connection to ESP and genre theory from a theoretical as well as a pedagogically-oriented perspective. I focus here on how the interaction with LLMs in the context of ESP teaching and learning creates forms of communication that have already become conventionalized in ways that may align with the definition of genre-texts and, at the same time, raise the question of whether these forms should become part of the scope of teaching and research in ESP. My analysis is driven by two questions:

Q1: Can prompts (as communicative events in the interaction with LLMs) become digital genres as understood by current ESP genre theory and scholarship?

Q2: Can prompts be then targets for L2 pedagogy within the scope of ESP?

ESP AND GENRE THEORY: FROM TRADITIONAL TO DIGITAL GENRES

Genre theory claims a three-folded tradition: the Swalesian theory of genres as communicative events focused on textual analysis (Swales, 1990), the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach led by Martin (1985) and the New Rhetoric tradition from Miller (1984). Both the Swalesian and the SFL approaches apply functional models of grammar and discourse to unveil the rhetorical realization of the communicative purposes embodied in a genre and, consequently, have been fundamental in the context of ESP teaching and learning. The analysis of generic lexical, grammatical, and rhetorical features were motivated by the desire to understand specialized communication and communicative practices, and the need to develop materials and approaches to teach genres within the scope of ESP.

In recent years, the affordances of digital media and composition tools allowed the emergence of a new class of genres, digital genres. Their prominence in professional communication (Hafner & Pun, 2020) has brought a compelling reason for increased attention from both theoretical genre analysis and ESP practice. Although lacking widespread consensus on what exactly may be considered a digital genre and what does not fall inside this understanding, a recent, rather generous, definition of digital genres has gained some agreement: “recurrent, goal-directed, communicative events, mediated...by digital tools...along with the constellation of activities that surround such events” (Hafner & Pun, 2020, p. 4).

Digitally mediated genres in specialized communication share a number of features afforded by the digital tools used in their production and dissemination: *multimodality, hybridity and intertextuality*. *Multimodality* ‘refers to an individual’s use of different *modes* (i.e. channels of communication) for the purpose of conveying meaning. Such modes can consist of those that are linguistic, visual, aural, gestural, or spatial in nature’ (Kessler, 2022, p. 1). In second language learning, multimodality has been examined extensively in the context of writing or composition. Digital multimodal composition is the use of multiple semiotic resources for meaning making (Lim & Kessler, 2024; Tardy, 2005) and specialized genre production. Digital genres often combine forms of representation to reach a diversity of audiences and to ensure effective accomplishment of communicative purposes. They enable hypertextuality and interactive features which render these texts fluid and open up endless opportunities for genre innovation. The complex web of relationships and references of texts in digital environments remix, repurpose and transform digital and traditional texts. This intertextuality is a defining feature of digital communication, fostering a dynamic, participatory, and ever-evolving textual landscape where meaning is co-constructed across multiple platforms and media forms.

Jaworska (2023), for instance, showed how corporate image repair videos followed the canonical narrative structure observed in other image-repair genres (corporate image-repair letters, for example) but, making use of all affordances of digital tools, flexibly appropriating it to serve the corporate communicative goals of their online target audience. Combining features and adapting canonical structures to new communicative intentions, addressing wider and diverse audiences, gives rise to *hybrid* genres whose yet unsettled ‘profile’ may be challenging to understand and teach as part of any ESP curriculum (Belcher, 2023). Some researchers (Bhatia in Xia, 2020) warned that definitions and attempts to define such innovative genres may be premature as digital genres are not yet ‘sufficiently conventionalized and standardized’, even if they are used in practice (p.195).

Apart from multimodality, hybridity and intertextuality, digitally-mediated genres reflect communicative practices that challenge ESP scholarship to expand

the range of genre descriptions to a much wider set of generic features and genres, and, accordingly, adapt pedagogical foci. A case in point is the development of teamwork and collaborative construction of genres in online environments. Hafner et al. (2023) describe two types of communicative practices: implicit and more explicit forms of co-construction of genres. A more implicit collaboration would be the kind described in Luzon (2013) where an author of an academic blog shaped and reshaped the subsequent scholarly publications as a result of interactions with readers, a mixed audience of experts and novices. Explicit forms are evident in the collaborative production of knowledge that can extend over time and space due to affordances of digital tools (Garcia Mayo, 2021).

PROMPTS AS EMERGING GENRES IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Specialized communication and its communication practices have evolved in the context of human-to-human communication. However, the recent developments in LLMs and the widespread use of generative AI tools in professional contexts have drawn attention of ESP scholarship to human-to-computer communication.

Prompts serve as translational bridges between human communication and the computational abilities of LLMs. They are natural language instructions that act as an intermediary language, translating human requests into machine-executable tasks (Fagbohun et al., 2024). From a language and communication perspective, *prompts* are conventionalized forms of communication with computers that are becoming a frequent feature in most professional fields. They are used to optimize work, to assist in specialized communication and to contribute to the creation and dissemination of specialized knowledge. The high performance of recent models of LLMs such as *ChatGPT*, *Claude* or *Perplexity*, to mention just a few, has made them reliable collaborators for work and research. Ngwenya (2025) developed and evaluated a framework for integrating generative AI tools into collaborative problem-solving in entrepreneurship education. He found that generative AI can enhance creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration when purposefully integrated, enabling students and AI tools to act as co-constructors of knowledge and solutions to real-world problems.

The evident widespread use of AI tools for co-construction of knowledge raises the demand of enhanced abilities to communicate effectively in the emerging and fascinating realm of human-to-AI communication. Prompt engineering is the process of designing and refining inputs—called *prompts*—for generative AI models, such as large language models, to elicit useful, accurate, and relevant responses. Prompts are thus emerging as a new professional genre in the interaction with a non-human audience that is, at the same time, co-creator of knowledge and target audience of carefully crafted, conventionalized, and specific inputs.

In professional settings, the ability to craft precise prompts is becoming increasingly valuable as organizations incorporate AI tools into their workflows. Students proficient in prompt engineering gain a competitive advantage in the job market. ESP curricula, which traditionally focus on developing field-specific language skills, can expand to include prompt writing as a specialized genre with its own conventions, structures, and purposes, in line with one of its fundamental tenets, supporting the development of language skills tailored to technological advancements. ESP programs are uniquely positioned to prepare students for this aspect of professional communication since they already focus on specialized language instruction aligned with specific professional objectives. These prompting techniques have been categorized into distinct frameworks that can be adapted for specific professional domains, providing ESP educators with structured approaches to teaching this emergent communication form (Fagbohun et al., 2024).

PROMPT ENGINEERING AND LANGUAGE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Prompt engineering improves the accuracy of AI responses by crafting clear, specific, and well-structured prompts that guide the AI model to better understand the user's intent and the requirements of the task. When prompts are precise, they reduce ambiguity, making it less likely for the AI to generate irrelevant or erroneous answers. Effective prompt engineering helps the AI focus on the most important information, streamlines the interaction, and often leads to more context-aware and high-quality outputs with fewer iterations needed. Additionally, advanced techniques—such as providing examples, breaking down complex tasks, or specifying the desired format—further enhance the relevance and reliability of AI-generated responses (Schulhoff et al., 2024).

Prompt engineering requires advanced language and communication skills because it involves translating complex ideas and requirements into clear, precise instructions that AI models can effectively interpret and execute. Well-structured language also facilitates the use of advanced prompting techniques—such as providing examples, specifying formats, or breaking down complex tasks—which further enhances the quality and reliability of AI-generated results. But LLMs have been trained to work effectively on structured interaction therefore design of prompts becomes crucial. Fagbohun et al. (2024) state that 'beyond simple instruction, prompts establish a contextual framework for interactions, conveying the significance of information and defining the desired format and content of the model's output' (p.2). To do so, prompt engineering uses a strategic process of designing inputs that guide the AI tool to generate contextually relevant and specific output. Fagbohun et al. (2024) propose a six-step process of effective prompt design which may become genre conventions in this new forms of communication:

1. Write Clear Instructions
 - include details in your query
 - define desired persona/voice
 - use delimiters for distinct parts
 - specify desired output format
2. Provide Relevant Context
 - use a reference text
 - supply background information
 - describe the problem
 - provide auxiliary examples
3. Split Complex Tasks
 - use intent classification
 - summarize/filter long dialogues
 - summarize documents piecewise
 - give steps for the model to follow
4. Give the Model Time to “Think”
 - require explanations for responses
 - use inner monologues or queries
 - request self-evaluation of output
 - ask follow-up questions
5. Use External Tools
 - provide access to external files
 - utilize web browsing capabilities
 - request code execution via APIs
 - give access to relevant plugins
6. Test Changes Systematically
 - adjust prompts incrementally
 - evaluate intermediate outputs
 - start with simplified queries
 - ask related questions

(adapted from Fagbohun et al. 2024, p.2).

In selecting lexical, grammatical and rhetorical features to create structured texts in communication with LLMs, human agents contribute to the emergence of genre-like communication forms. Adaptation to this new audience which needs to translate natural language into one that they can understand and interpret is not entirely unlike adaptation to communicative needs of human audiences. Additionally, collaboration as described by prompt-design processes for generating knowledge parallels human collaboration. These are compelling reasons for considering prompts and prompt design under the scope of ESP for supporting students to develop their language and communication skills in tune with new technological developments and workplace requirements.

PEDAGOGICAL MODELS AND CHALLENGES FOR LLM PROMPT INTEGRATION

As with all emerging trends in social and professional development, the implementation of LLM prompts in ESP curriculum requires thoughtful pedagogical approaches. Effective ESP instruction should be deeply rooted in communicative and learner-centered approaches that actively engage students in collaborative activities. This aligns perfectly with teaching prompt engineering, which likewise requires hands-on practice and iterative refinement.

One promising framework involves using “iterative prompting” to mitigate the risk of students becoming overly dependent on LLMs while still benefiting from these tools. It addresses the increasing concern that students take LLMs outputs uncritically, relying entirely on first responses and failing to contribute meaningfully to the co-creation of knowledge. This approach leverages the concept of the “Illusion of Explanatory Depth” (IoED) to encourage students to move beyond surface-level interactions with LLMs toward deeper knowledge construction (Mehta & Mehta, 2025). IoED is a cognitive bias where humans believe that they understand complex phenomena in more detail and depth than they truly do (Rozenblit & Keil, 2002). Students must be aware that their communication partners, the LLMs, though apt in understanding prompts and excellent at language (formal linguistic competence), lack true reasoning and understanding of context. Integration of prompts into curriculum should approach teaching from the perspective of these limited abilities of LLMs, urging students to critically engage with their non-human partner and to ‘not accept the LLMs’ response at face value [and] they should iteratively prompt the LLMs to get to deeper levels of understanding’ (Mehta & Mehta, 2025, p.2). When properly structured, iterative prompting can promote active learning while simultaneously developing students' prompt engineering skills and awareness of prompt design steps as genre conventions.

Additionally, activities to develop critical thinking skills could include comparative analysis activities where students examine multiple LLM responses to the same prompt, identify limitations or biases in the generated content, and develop strategies for verifying information. Such activities align with ESP's goal of preparing students for authentic professional communication challenges. Effective ESP curricula would need to explicitly teach critical evaluation of LLM outputs alongside prompt engineering skills.

Another challenge that currently renders integration of prompts into ESP curricula as hazardous is lack of systematic research on the generic linguistic and communication features of prompts. Bhatia's (Xia, 2020) warning that some digital forms of communication are prematurely labelled as genres is hard to ignore in this case. Lack of extensive research into prompt engineering and human-to-AI communication from a language teaching and learning perspective

still constitute solid ground for waiting a little longer before expanding the scope of ESP to include them. This does not dismiss the responsibility ESP scholarship has towards continuously mapping the evolving and emerging communicative forms and practices of various professional communities.

DEVELOPING ESP TEACHER EXPERTISE AND RESOURCES

A significant challenge to implementing LLM prompt instruction in ESP curricula is the limited expertise among language instructors. Research indicates that university ESP instructors often lack specialized knowledge in emerging technologies and require additional professional training (Boeru, 2024; Resolution of 10th Congress, 2024). This challenge parallels the general difficulties in ESP implementation, which include shortages of up-to-date educational materials and pedagogical approaches. Institutions would need to invest in professional development for ESP instructors specifically focused on LLM technologies and prompt engineering principles. Collaborative development of teaching materials with subject matter experts could address the resource gap while ensuring content relevance.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper set out to investigate two fundamental questions regarding the integration of LLM prompts into ESP pedagogy: whether prompts can be considered digital genres within the framework of ESP genre theory, and whether they should become targets for L2 pedagogy within ESP curricula.

Regarding the first question, the analysis suggests that prompts do indeed exhibit characteristics that align with our understanding of digital genres. They represent recurrent, goal-directed communicative events mediated by digital tools, fulfilling Hafner and Pun's (2020) definition of digital genres. Like other specialized digital genres, prompts display conventionalized structural elements, serve specific communicative purposes, and require adaptation to their unique audience – in this case, LLMs. The emergence of systematic frameworks for prompt design, as outlined by Fagbohun et al. (2024), further supports the view that prompts are becoming standardized forms of communication with recognizable generic features. However, scarcity of systematic research on prompts from a language teaching and learning perspective may raise doubts about the premature inclusion of prompts among emerging genres to be taught in ESP.

As for the second question, our current understanding of the state-of-the-art indicates that prompts could be incorporated into ESP curricula only after addressing pressing challenges related to (a) students' critical thinking skills and (b) the need for professional development of ESP instructors.

The proposed iterative prompting framework offers a promising pedagogical approach that encourages deeper engagement with LLMs while

mitigating risks of over-reliance. For successful implementation, institutions must address the challenge of limited expertise among ESP instructors through targeted professional development and collaborative resource creation.

There are, nevertheless, substantiated reasons to expect an extension of ESP scope to include human-to-AI communication forms such as prompts. The widespread adoption of generative AI tools across professional domains positions prompt engineering as an essential workplace skill. ESP's foundational principle of addressing learners' specific communication needs in professional contexts necessitates the inclusion of human-to-AI communication as a legitimate area of instruction. Furthermore, the skills required for effective prompt engineering – precision in language use, audience awareness, strategic organization of information, and critical evaluation of responses – align perfectly with traditional ESP learning objectives.

As digital technologies continue to transform professional communication landscapes, ESP scholarship and pedagogy must evolve accordingly. By recognizing prompts as legitimate genres and incorporating them into ESP curricula, educators can prepare students for the hybrid human-AI communication environments they will encounter in their professional futures. This approach positions ESP at the cutting edge of language education, maintaining its relevance in a rapidly changing technological landscape while staying true to its core mission of equipping learners with the specific communicative competencies required in their professional domains.

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Navigating Change: The Human Touch in ELT

Abstract: There have been tremendous technological advances in the latest years, with significant transformations taking place in all fields. Technology functions on a large scale nowadays, with thousands of programs being created: from weight-loss guides or travel companions to apps teaching cooking, mathematics or writing. Accessible and easy to use, digitalisation eases reaching learning goals faster and changes the quality of life. Language learning has also experienced substantial changes. Not only solo apps that offer individualized learning, but also “teacherless” classrooms driven by adaptive AI may become the norm. Comfortable, attractive, interactive – technology is now creating new and exciting learning experiences.

In the light of these developments, does the role of the human teacher still stay the same? Is the traditional educator still needed in a world where a language learning app is a click away? Why bother attending conventional classroom settings and struggling with endless pages of homework when one can reach the same content using a fun app that turns the learning experience into a faster, more rewarding one?

Let's explore together the challenges faced in ELT in a constantly changing and increasingly technologized world. Does the future still look bright for educators? I will bring to the table my ELT experience gained in 20 years of diverse formal and non-formal learning contexts, backing it up with research, classroom observations, and teacher-student interactions, to highlight insights into what it means to balance technology with emotional intelligence in order to create human-centred learning environments that help both students and teachers thrive in the digital age.

Keywords: *technology, artificial intelligence, anxiety, wellbeing, human connection*

INTRODUCTION

If we just close our eyes and, for a moment only, imagine what the society of tomorrow may look like: dozens and dozens of people, young and old, dressed alike in white, tight overalls, lying next to each other on neat rows of modern, electronic lounges. The surroundings are sterile in their cleanliness, and overhead neon lights make the landscape white and dizzying. In front of every individual lies a screen projecting individualized contents, and people watch dully neither left nor right, but straight ahead into their devices. No conversation or laughter pierces the air, and the only movements visible are the ones belonging to the service robots doing their chores.

This is how, back in 2008, director Andrew Stanton imagined the future in the animated science-fiction movie called *Wall-E*, produced by Pixar Animation Studios for Walt Disney pictures (on the *Wall-E* science fiction animated movie, Wikipedia). In the light of the latest technological developments, this image is not

¹ Independent scholar.

very far from our current reality. Machines have taken over much of our everyday life and activities: starting with our morning coffee that gets prepared at the push of a button, continuing with our daily household chores where funny little devices do the vacuuming, mow the lawn, or help with cooking, and last but not least, our entertainment that is marked by the overall use of technology in terms of televisions we watch, electronic devices we actively play with or read from, or endless sites we access on the internet for never-ending purposes. Digitalization and social media platforms have taken communication to a totally new level, making us live in a world where conversations, news, and most types of content are exchanged and broadcast in the blink of an eye. An age of speed, of quick transfer of increasingly appealing information – we get to find it all out from the safety of our bedrooms, with incredible ease and comfort. Top it up with the latest developments of Artificial Intelligence in all fields of our lives, and we can truly say that we may experience an over-technologized society, where all things are becoming hyper-automated, screen saturation is the norm, and face-to-face interaction is slowly getting eroded.

How has learning in general, and language learning in particular, been influenced by the technological developments of the latest years? More importantly, though, with the more and more noticeable and increasing relevance of AI in all fields of life and learning, how is the role of the educator being affected, and what are the future scenarios of a teacher's job in this whole dynamic? Is the role of the teacher in today's society slowly becoming extinct?

TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Technology has been used in education and language learning for decades. After the middle of the twentieth century, audio cassettes and video recorders and players were used in order to implement visual and audio-lingual exercises, characterized by repetitive listening and pronunciation drilling. The nineteen-eighties brought along the *computer-assisted language learning* (CALL) methodology, where interactive worksheets and multimedia content gave space to self-paced study and perhaps more dynamic and motivational learner engagement. The rise of the internet produced a major shift in language learning, where *mobile-assisted language learning* (MALL) provided access to a variety of multimedia platforms, video conferencing and diverse materials. The appearance of smarter and smarter telephones has made learning a foreign language remarkably easy and accessible, with gamified components making the learner stay hooked and engaged. Detailed reviews of the field, such as Tan's 2023 study of two decades of MALL research, confirm that technology has been playing an important role in the acquisition of foreign languages, each decade bringing it closer to the accessibility and flexibility that we are experiencing today (Tan, 2023, p. 143).

More recently, the introduction of the artificial intelligence factor has turned language learning into a thoroughly personalised and efficient process, in which adaptive feedback, chatbot conversations, and even virtual reality are taking the learning experience to new extremes. In these new and rapidly changing contexts, it is only fair to inquire about the future developments and impact that these technological advancements are bringing to the table of education and language learning. As the learning landscape is being remodelled, learning styles are also naturally changing, transforming and adapting to the new tendencies and trends. Such a future perspective is a world in which teachers may no longer play an active role in learners' education but may be on the verge of becoming gradually unimportant, as artificially intelligent learning contexts are becoming smarter and more reliable.

ADVANCEMENTS: “TEACHERLESS” CLASSROOMS

Such learning contexts are starting to be tested in order to prove their effectiveness and success. The *Sabrewing Programme* at David Game College in London is a one- or two-year GSCE and A-level pathway combining AI-powered adaptive learning in the morning, with a holistic and robust life-skills programme in the afternoons. Students learn subjects such as English Language, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geography and Computer Science in a self-paced manner, with teachers acting as learning coaches or guides throughout the learning process. The course boasts accelerated, mastery-based learning in a friendly and comfortable learning environment, being suited to learners who thrive outside the traditional learning environment. At the end of the programme, besides accelerated learning, students are supposed to have gained improved subject knowledge, confidence and independence. Started in September 2024, this programme seems not to have any public results published yet, although outcome reports are surely being expected by the world of education (the Sabrewing learning project website).

TECHNOLOGY VS AI IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

With specificity to second language acquisition, technology and AI provide a large array of tools in order to develop language learning skills in the best possible ways. So as to develop each language skill – reading, listening, writing, speaking and grammar – more traditional technology uses eBooks, various videos, voice recorders and video calls, as well as online interactive exercises. As artificial intelligence is slowly being integrated into more modern applications and programmes, it boosts learning with smart readers with word tracking, auto-captioning, real-time corrections and feedback, as well as chatbots for conversation practice. Technology seems to provide the foundation of our

nowadays teacher-centred learning, while AI gives it a push, striving for personalization and efficiency.

Table 1: Technology Tools versus Artificial Intelligence in Language Learning Skills

Skill	Technology tools - examples	AI enhancements - examples
Reading	eBooks, PDFs, websites	Smart readers with word tracking
Listening	Podcasts, YouTube and others	Auto-captioning, text-to-speech programmes
Writing	MS Word, Google docs, etc.	Real time feedback, ChatGPT, Grammarly
Speaking	Voice recorders, video calls	AI Chatbots for conversation practice
Grammar	Worksheets, rule explanations	Instant feedback engines

Source: Author's elaboration

It is important to note that when using the technology tools, the teacher is still at the core of nowadays learning, orchestrating the whole process. In the course of a language class, the teacher introduces the topic and uses the tools creatively, in order to round up a consistent and rewarding lesson. Reading may receive the attention of a PDF or the class projection or, in more flexible environments, even direct reading of a website on a smartphone screen. Listening is easier to be done as a group project, with everybody listening to the same podcast or any other audio source, while any type of handouts or worksheets may be the foundation for building writing skills and solving grammar exercises. Speaking, of all skills, has the tremendous advantage of face-to-face interaction, whether or not facilitated through technology: interaction takes place mainly when there is an interlocutor, be they in the same room or across the ocean in a video call.

LANGUAGE LEARNING PLATFORMS

What the MALL applications are bringing in, though, is learner independence. Even before the hype of AI, these apps were a popular topic, as they completely changed the landscape of learning: they removed the immediate and essential need of the educator from the learning context and turned learning into a more relaxed and accessible experience. Compared to the teacher-centred learning environment, which requires careful planning and timing, learning on a device (a smartphone or a tablet) is much more convenient and approachable.

There are a high number of language-learning applications available on the market nowadays. In a short internet search, as well as in the list of a smartphone's available applications, quite a high number of learning apps are easily accessible: *DuoLingo*, *Busuu*, *Memrise*, *ChatGPT*, *Mondly*, *ELSA Speak*, *Rosetta Stone*, and *Babbel* being just a few. Most of them have paid subscription models but still offer a number of limited features in subscription-free classes. They provide gamified experiences with interactive lessons, each focusing on various types of learning

and skill development. The following descriptions and observations on MALL are based on the findings of Loewen et al. (2019), Tan, J. (2023) and Kessler, M., Loewen, S., & Gönülal, T. (2023), as well as on the author's personal notes.

The experience of learning a foreign language through a language learning app greatly varies, depending on learner individuality, natural language learning ability, language learning background, and intrinsic motivation. At first contact, learners experience excitement and curiosity, mixed with an ease of utilising well-designed, user-friendly tools. Interfaces are funny and creative, and there is a mix of joy and pride as lessons are completed one after the other. Lessons are adapted to a learner's pace, repeating tricky items and allowing access to past lessons for reviewing purposes. Learners practice through a series of listening, reading, writing, and speaking tasks, creating a diverse and stimulating learning environment. Vocabulary is enforced with spaced repetition and consistent reviews. Feedback is instant and precise, mistakes are corrected with visual cues (e.g. red highlights, green ticks). Mini-games provide proficiency progress tests, reviewing vocabulary and grammar items. At first, overall, there is a sense of joyful involvement and playful exploration.

When the learning curve flattens and progress stalls, learners experience a decrease in motivation, complemented by the lack of cultural nuance in most apps. If intrinsic motivation fails and the gamified approach of these apps is no longer a strong enough motivating component, engagement suffers and learners tend to stop learning. There have been additional limitations highlighted, such as the repetitive speaking drilling, the lack of real-life interaction for speaking practice, and generally the lack of structured grammar rules straightforwardly explained (Loewen et al., 2019, p. 12; Kessler et al., 2023, p. 5).

It is important to note that such studies and observations as these may quickly become obsolete due to the rapid changes in the technical environment and the continuous additions to the functionalities of these applications. Findings of studies made back 10 or even 5 years ago may have become irrelevant in the very recent years, given the rapid progress in technological capabilities. The progress that machine learning is bringing in personalises the content and the learning experience even more. Tan closes his study written in 2023 by saying that:

As artificial intelligence technologies such as text recognition, speech recognition, natural language processing, and data annotation evolved, language learning supported by artificial intelligence technology will be a new research field waiting to be explored. Language learners' linguistic and non-linguistic skills will change dramatically in form and content with the help of intelligent applications (Tan, 2023, p. 147).

Taking a look at the MALL landscape now, things have evolved visibly even in the last two years. To mention just a few, *DuoLingo* has recently incorporated AI-created grammar learning content and chatbot conversations in its latest version,

DuoLingo Max, with their two new features, “Explain My Answer” and “Roleplay” (The Duolingo website). *Memrise* has built *MemBot*, an AI chatbot, a language partner that helps learners start conversing in a new language sooner than they otherwise would (the *Memrise* and *Membot* website). The *Rosetta Stone* method uses speech recognition technology to perfect learners’ accents (the *Rosetta Stone* website), while *ELSA Speak* teaches through real-world conversations with an AI-chatbot, claiming to adapt to learners’ goals, interests, and skill level (the *Elsa Speak* website).

Although encouragingly treated by academic literature, the future that researchers envision for language learning doesn’t exclude the human educator just yet. The common takeaway of the research on MALL quoted in this paper supports the fact that the language apps should be incorporated into teacher-led environments, where the two should integrate and create a well-rounded and enriching learning experience.

Researchers need to keep up with the change of technologies, learn to understand emerging science and technology, and effectively combine it with language learning to promote the vigorous study of language learning (Tan, 2023, p. 147).

HOW WE LEARN

One important factor in the effectiveness of learning in general and SLA in particular is the very process of knowledge acquisition and long-term retention. The measure of language learning effectiveness lies in the speaker’s ability to use the acquired language appropriately and fluently in context. Efficiency in language learning is a multifactorial phenomenon, combining cognitive, affective, and social dimensions. Based on research in applied linguistics, cognitive psychology, and motivation studies, learning in general and language learning are most efficient when some particular conditions are met. Learning doesn’t happen when an individual is simply fed with information of all kinds; it is a complex phenomenon that involves the acquisition, processing, and consolidation of information, resulting in permanent changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviour.

Neuroscience studies have shown that the learning process involves both working memory (WM) and long-term memory (LTM) and associated control processes in the prefrontal cortex (PFC) that select and manipulate goal-relevant information. As these PFC regions appear to play a crucial role in controlling learning processes, reference has been made specifically to both the dorsal and ventral lateral prefrontal cortices (DLPFC and VLPFC) and the anterior prefrontal cortex (APFC) (Guy, 2013, p 40).

This whole process of metacognition is made up of smaller elements that involve exposure to information, attention to perceive the new information, encoding and breaking it down to smaller chunks of information, practice and

consolidation into the long-term memory, retrieval of the information when needed, and the application of the information in new contexts.

Motivation and emotion are two of the major factors of this whole process, as they greatly influence the process of acquisition. Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000) discuss the importance of motivation in the process of learning, linking it directly to enhanced performance and well-being.

Knowledge concerning the nutriments essential for positive motivation and experience and, in turn, for enhanced performance and well-being has broad significance. It is relevant to parents and educators concerned with cognitive and personality development because it speaks to the conditions that promote the assimilation of both information and behavioral regulations (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 76).

Oakley, B., Sejnowski, T., & McConville, A. (2018) also debate the essential role of well-being for balanced and effective learning. In their book, *Learning how to learn: How to succeed in school without spending all your time studying*, they argue the importance of rest, the importance of physical activity, as well as the need for breaks and downtime in order to be efficient in learning and avoid mental blocks (Oakley et al, 2018).

During the learning process many disruptive or unexpected situations may occur, influencing the learner's wellbeing states. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) provide a comprehensive review of the literature on language anxiety and its impact on second language acquisition. They examine the relationship between anxiety, motivation, and performance. Their review classifies different scales of anxiety and finds that Language Anxiety has a negative effect on L2 achievement, particularly in listening and speaking tasks, where learners often feel the most vulnerable. They note that language anxiety is not a general trait, but a task-specific one, arising in certain contexts (testing, classroom settings, or public speaking), not universally. Both comprehension and production are affected by language anxiety: "Comprehension would suffer among anxious students because of short-term memory loss attributable to anxiety. Production would suffer as well because anxiety can intrude upon the longer-term memory retrieval process" (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p. 530).

THE ROLE OF THE HUMAN EDUCATOR

It is therefore relevant that the learning process should create supportive, low-stress environments to reduce anxiety and foster confidence, to eliminate mental blocks and lay the foundation of a well-balanced context for successful and effective learning. There are many important components that make learning human-centred and essential for learners to thrive – briefly but effectively detailed below.

Trust and **support** are invaluable, non-disputable components of any thriving relationship. In the learning process, this is what an educator can give

without asking anything in return. When a teacher trusts a learner's ability to achieve the expected outcome in the learning process, only then are they there to support the learner, to be there for them. And support brings the wings – the courage to do more.

Respect is generally mirrored and co-constructed as a space of curiosity, empathy, and growth. When a teacher listens without interrupting, when they value the learner, irrespective of their background, and give meaningful feedback, that's when a space of psychological safety is born. When students feel respected, they engage with openness, trust the teacher's guidance, and show up, both physically and mentally. They become part of the learning process.

Motivation, as we have seen, is a much-debated topic, as it is the drive to get involved in any learning activity. When intrinsic motivation fails to engage learners in having results, a teacher may attempt to bring a learner to a more motivated and committed state of mind and eventually get the sense of being in it together. As Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000) argue, it may be possible for educators "to provide the appropriate developmental lattice upon which an active, assimilative, and integrated nature can ascend" through creating favourable contexts for learning and thriving:

Contexts supportive of autonomy, competence, and relatedness were found to foster greater internalization and integration than contexts that thwart satisfaction of these needs. This latter finding, we argue, is of great significance for individuals who wish to motivate others in a way that engenders commitment, effort, and high-quality performance (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 76).

Culture and context: Teachers bring valuable cultural and contextual insights to the classroom that generally MALL lacks. Understanding cultural nuances is crucial for effective language teaching and helps learners connect language learning to their real-life experiences.

Wellbeing is the foundation of any individual's life projects. It creates a buffer against stress and anxiety and allows risk-taking, experimentation, and active participation in learning. According to Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000)'s findings, "basic psychological needs are determinative with regard to optimal experience and well-being in daily life". Only a human being can notice and attend to another person's immediate needs, as well as create contexts that nourish physical and mental wellbeing. To further quote Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000), educators, parents, and therapists have the possibility to do that:

[...] by attending to the relative presence or deprivation of support for basic psychological needs, practitioners are better able to diagnose sources of alienation versus engagement, and facilitate both enhanced human achievements and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 76).

Human connection is the relationship that is needed for the educational act to really be the change. Speaking a new language involves the courage to make

mistakes, to be exposed, and a learner can only do this when feeling seen, safe, and supported. A connected teacher makes this possible by creating a non-judgmental space, and by being a warm, encouraging, and caring presence. Just as Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000) explain that “relatedness, the need to feel belongingness and connectedness with others, is centrally important for internalization” and “the children who had more fully internalized the regulation for positive school-related behaviours were those who felt securely connected to, and cared for by, their parents and teachers” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 73).

With or without the AI component, a language learning application is designed to provide content, to engage learners in an interactive way, to provide listening practice and grammar reviews, to test the learning progress with various revision tests, and even to drill pronunciation or engage in conversations with chatbot agents. Learning goes smoothly from one day to the next, and sometimes it is stimulated by the competitive component of the application.

How about when the learner loses pace? How about when they become discouraged and demotivated due to a momentary setback or a difficult period? How about when, after a long struggle, they finally manage to find the good term or utter the perfect phrase in a sentence? Where is the hand someone can give them in order to keep going?

There are times when human connection is essential. A learning app will never be able to be there as consistently and thoroughly as a dedicated teacher. A human educator is there to see, feel, and engage the learner in a way in which a learning application will never be able to do. The educational act is a shared journey. Human connection is the bridge that makes the journey possible. Without connection, education is information. With connection, it becomes transformation.

WHAT STUDENTS SAY²

Discussing the topic of technology and foreign language learning through a digital app with a number of adult English language learners, I was not surprised to find out that there are students who prefer human connectedness to individual learning on a learning app. These kinds of students thrive in social learning contexts and reach the best results when being seen, understood, and nudged by a human educator who can be there for them along the way.

Diana, 20 years old: “I have learnt German and have also done some other courses on learning apps, but the level one can reach on these apps is limited. I learn well with online courses, but with language, I don’t know, it’s more difficult. Learning a language is more boring on your own, compared to other subjects at school; moreover, you don’t have your pronunciation corrected. And, of course, when you prepare for a language exam, forget language apps, as you need more focused and

² All quotations in this section have been translated from Romanian by the author.

intense practice. Oh, and the feedback: a teacher knows when to praise you and when to challenge you, bringing out the best in you.”

Gabriela, 30+ years old: “I have never been able to learn with any online course or learning app. Language, or knowledge, simply won’t stick in these contexts. A teacher can understand my immediate needs and adapt to me. She will see me when I am full of energy and able to go with a new, complicated concept, or tired and overwhelmed, unable to utter a word. And she will adapt, in order to give me the best learning experience on that day, to reach the best results.”

Georgiana, 30+ years old: “The process of learning is not only about knowledge transfer. It’s also the emotion that goes with it, and I think that a language app, with or without AI, doesn’t know how to deal with it yet. And I’m not sure it ever will. Take, for instance, our post-pandemic generations of students of all ages, who still tend to feel shy in social contexts and have become so technologized that they always seek immediate gratification in all their activities. How could learning on your own teach you soft skills, responsibility, patience, and emotional connection?”

Claudia, 40+ years old: “With a language app there are so many things you will miss when learning a foreign language: being spontaneous in speaking, experiencing a real-life conversation while you reach the limits of your comfort zone, and very often crossing them. A teacher can provide you with all this and more: you will get your personal cheerleader to support you along the way.”

CONCLUSIONS

The time came for the technologized people of the Wall-E movie to come back to Earth after a lot of adventures through space. They disembarked and, along with the human-like featured tiny robots, the captain of the ship is planting the future into the soil – the green plant symbolising life. People are taking small steps off the ship and one cannot but wonder: what is this human society going to look like in ten- or twenty-years’ time? And the movie ends with the hopeful smile of humankind envisioning a better future.



Image 1: Coming back to Earth in Wall-E

Source: @www.youtube.com

The two sections of this paper discussed the continuing need for human educators in today's society, where technology is starting to play a more and more important role. The first section showed that, despite the emergence of AI in the last years, specialists still see technology as part of the educational process, along with human educators in the role of teachers, coaches, and mentors, rather than as functioning solely on its own.

The second section tackled the learning process and the psychological needs of a learner in general and a language learner in particular. Besides the learning content per se, a learner must also have other needs fulfilled in order to thrive in any educational environment, among them being the need for support, trust, respect, motivation, culture and context, and wellbeing. Along with them, there is human connection – together, they enrich the educational process. Teamed up with technology, AI and human connection, learning not only transmits information, but through caring and continuous guidance, it creates truly effective and meaningful learning experiences.

So most likely AI is not going to replace humans in the next ten years, but we must beware that humans who use AI may replace humans who don't (Lakhani, 2023, end of article on website).

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La canción de autor en el currículum universitario: experiencia con estudiantes de literatura española en Rumanía³

Resumen: Esta investigación explora la integración de la canción de autor en el currículum de literatura española a partir de la experiencia con estudiantes de la Universidad Babeș-Bolyai de Cluj-Napoca (Rumanía). Tras analizar los programas académicos y diseñar una secuencia didáctica basada en el diálogo con los estudiantes y en actividades de análisis de letras y musicalizaciones de poemas, se recabaron sus impresiones mediante una encuesta. Los resultados revelan un apoyo unánime a considerar la canción de autor como forma literaria, su utilidad para comprender contextos históricos y literarios, como elemento motivador del alumnado y como puente cultural con la cultura y literatura españolas. Se concluye que la percepción de los estudiantes es que la inclusión de la canción de autor en las asignaturas de literatura española del siglo XX y contemporánea enriquecería el canon y favorecería el aprendizaje de los otros contenidos explicados.

Palabras clave: *canción de autor, literatura y música, literatura española del siglo XX, literatura española contemporánea, currículum académico.*

INTRODUCCIÓN

Aunque nacieron unidas y después se separaron, la relación de la literatura con la música ha existido desde siempre, y son numerosas las perspectivas críticas que se han adoptado para analizar esa relación y sus formas. Además de estudios orientados, por ejemplo, al comparatismo y la semiología —es razonablemente conocido en español el volumen compilado por Silvia Alonso (2012)—, una deriva notable ha sido la de aquellos que han observado la utilidad de la canción para la enseñanza de la literatura (Spaliviero, 2015; Sebastian, 2020; García Candeira, 2022), incluido cuando se trata de estudiantes no nativos (Cristóbal Hornillos & Villanueva Roa, 2018; Spann, 2024).

Con todo, la consideración de las letras de la canción popular contemporánea como literatura es todavía bastante reciente, y no es una postura sobre la que exista absoluta unanimidad, aunque sí una amplia aceptación. La cuestión resulta menos polarizadora cuando lo que se consideran son las letras de

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³ Este trabajo es resultado de una estancia de investigación del Dr. Javier Soto Zaragoza en la Universidad Babeș-Bolyai de Cluj-Napoca, Rumanía, y de M+PoeMAS, “Mucho más que poemas. Poesía para más gente y poéticas de la canción”, proyecto de investigación financiado por el Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación de España (PID2024-158927NB-I00).

la canción de autor, que en los últimos años está ingresando ya notablemente en el sistema literario (Soto Zaragoza, 2023), en buena medida gracias al impulso recibido por la concesión del Premio Nobel de Literatura de 2016 a Bob Dylan. Entre las razones para la relación de la canción de autor con la literatura, nos interesan especialmente dos de los rasgos señalados por Romano (1991, 2002) en sus estudios sobre este objeto artístico: en primer lugar, la musicalización de poemas que practica y que supone el traslado al medio musical de un texto literario casi siempre consagrado (vid. Martínez Cantón, 2022), en segundo lugar, la búsqueda por parte de la canción de autor de un estatuto poético propio —que significa un retorno a la poesía oral (Romano, 1994)—; en otras palabras,

la exploración y construcción de un lenguaje propio, que reconduzca la tarea de autores y receptores hacia el mismo proceso de producción textual, y no meramente hacia sus efectos. Canciones, en definitiva, para ser escuchadas, no sólo oídas. Canciones que requieren del receptor, además de la comunión “sentimental”, una decodificación atenta y vigilante, supervisada por la luz crítica de la inteligencia (Romano, 2002: 15).

En el caso de la canción de autor española, estos dos aspectos se ven, además, reforzados, puesto que, en su faceta inicial de canción protesta, se revela como heredera directa del contenido y la función de la poesía social, a la que también musicalizó (Prieto de Paula, 2010, 2021). A pesar de estos orígenes claramente vinculados a la palabra literaria y de su posterior evolución hacia una poética no necesariamente comprometida —pero sí literariamente elaborada— (Soto Zaragoza, 2025), y a pesar de que incluso se haya reclamado de forma directa su inclusión en el canon literario de finales del pasado siglo⁴ (García Rodríguez, 2017), la canción de autor rara vez está presente en los currículums de las asignaturas universitarias de literatura española o en los textos destinados a su aprendizaje, salvo alguna excepción reciente como la de Laín Corona (2023).

OBJETIVOS Y MÉTODO

La presencia de la canción de autor en los currículums de asignaturas universitarias de literatura española no debe observarse solo en los programas de las universidades de España, sino también en las muchas otras donde se enseña literatura española a estudiantes que no tienen el español como lengua materna —o incluso que, como en Hispanoamérica, tal vez no se han asomado previamente a estas literaturas—. De esta realidad nace la inquietud que motiva nuestra investigación, en la que hemos trabajado con 24 estudiantes, con un nivel de

⁴ Hace ya más de una década advertía Ericksen de que “any literary or cultural history that excludes lyrics from its scope presents a dramatically lopsided view of verbal art, and, by extension, modern culture” (2010: 14).

español entre B1 y C1, del tercer curso del Grado en Lengua y Literatura Españolas de la Facultad de Letras de la Universidad Babeș-Bolyai de Cluj-Napoca, Rumanía.

Tras analizar el contexto en el que estos estudiantes cursan los contenidos correspondientes a la literatura española del siglo XX y contemporánea —manuales de estudio, el programa de su asignatura y los de otras afines, etc.—, pudimos comprobar que, en efecto, todo lo relativo a la relación de la canción de autor con esta literatura queda en Rumanía⁵ fuera del currículum académico y, por tanto, de aquello que Fowler (1979: 98) llamó el canon oficial, aunque su evidente pertenencia al canon literario no académico (Lluch, 2023) la está empujando, como antes dijimos, a estar cada vez más dentro de ese primer canon. Las conversaciones que mantuvimos con los estudiantes sostienen, de hecho, que no les era extraña ni se les antojaba inadecuada la posibilidad de considerar literatura las letras de canción en general. Resolvimos, por tanto y una vez observada y valorada la situación, que podría resultar didáctica y académicamente interesante registrar las consideraciones de los propios estudiantes sobre la presencia de la canción de autor en el aula de literatura española. Para ello, diseñamos una secuencia didáctica que llevamos a cabo a modo de seminario una vez que ya habían cursado todos los contenidos de su asignatura sobre literatura española del siglo XX. Esa secuencia estuvo dividida en dos partes, relacionadas con los dos rasgos de la canción de autor indicados en la introducción.

Para la secuencia aplicamos lo que podríamos llamar el método socrático, es decir, el uso del diálogo con los alumnos y la formulación de preguntas para estimular la reflexión y el razonamiento deductivo buscando justamente elaborar en esa interacción con los estudiantes lo que en pedagogía se conoce como un puente cognitivo (Ausubel *et al.*, 1968). El inicio de la secuencia se reservó para determinar cuáles eran sus conocimientos previos sobre el fenómeno literario-musical de la canción de autor, lo cual hicimos a través de una lluvia de ideas en la herramienta *Mentimeter* (<https://www.mentimeter.com/>). Tras identificar qué entendían los estudiantes por *canción de autor* y cómo la relacionaban con la literatura, llevamos a cabo las dos partes principales en las que consistió la secuencia —la primera parte, de una hora de duración; la segunda, de dos—.

En la primera, introducimos la canción de autor como objeto artístico literario-musical. Comenzamos con una exposición resumida de los asuntos expuestos en la introducción, especialmente el hito que supuso la concesión del Nobel a Dylan. Ello nos permitió establecer un pequeño debate con el alumnado

⁵ Se puede comprobar que sucede en Rumanía lo mismo que en España, quizás a la espera de que esta segunda dé el primer paso en lo que se refiere a la plena integración de estos contenidos en los programas de sus asignaturas sobre literatura española. Ello sin duda supondría un importante punto de inflexión, dado el poder legitimador que la enseñanza de una literatura tiene en su canonización —tan relacionada con el diseño de los currículums académicos— (vid. Trout, 1994; Pozuelo Yvancos, 1996; Sullà, 1998; entre otros) y dada la lógica autoridad de la universidad española para proponer modificaciones en la enseñanza superior de su literatura.

acerca de la posibilidad de considerar las letras de canción como literatura. A partir de los argumentos expuestos en ese debate, trajimos a colación las letras de “Mediterráneo” (1971), de Joan Manuel Serrat, y “Sin tu latido” (1984), de Luis Eduardo Aute. Tras leer las letras al mismo tiempo que sonaban las canciones, pedimos a los estudiantes que trataran de identificar en ellas elementos literarios. Ese análisis cristalizó fundamentalmente en la identificación de variadas figuras retóricas y de algunos tópicos, así como de un tratamiento de los temas más depurado de lo habitual en el género canción⁶. La concreción textual de la general literariedad de la canción de autor permitió a los estudiantes reafirmarse en los argumentos que habían expuesto previamente acerca de su condición de literatura. Se les planteó entonces una nueva posibilidad: la de que las poéticas de los cantautores españoles pudieran estar alineadas con las generaciones o corrientes de su tiempo. Para ello usamos como ejemplo la poesía de la experiencia y, tras indicar cuáles eran sus rasgos más destacados, pedimos a los estudiantes que trataran de identificarlos en la letra de “Calle melancolía” (1980), de Joaquín Sabina, lo cual hicieron con relativa facilidad⁷. A la luz de estos planteamientos, el final de la primera parte de la secuencia consistió en debatir con los alumnos los argumentos a favor y en contra de la posibilidad y conveniencia de incluir a los cantautores en el canon literario español y en el currículum de quienes estudian literatura española contemporánea.

En la segunda parte de nuestra secuencia, y con el fin de repasar su otra vertiente de relación con la literatura española, fuimos a los orígenes de la canción de autor española. En diálogo con los alumnos, repasamos brevemente la evolución de la poesía española del siglo XX hasta la poesía social, de forma que pudieran apreciar más fácilmente la proximidad de esta última con la canción protesta, así como comparar los distintos grados de efectividad de ambas vías en lo que se refiere a la transmisión del mensaje comprometido⁸. La canción protesta, en suma, tenía por lo general un discurso menos alambicado, lo cual tratamos de hacer descubrir por sí mismos a los alumnos enfrentando algunas de sus letras

⁶ De hecho, este es uno de los rasgos que habitualmente se señalan para distinguir a la canción de autor de la canción de consumo —también llamada canción ligera, comercial, etc.—, que aborda los temas y tópicos mucho más superficial y banalmente (Romano, 1991: 135-136, 1994: 59; De Miguel Martínez, 2021: 31).

⁷ No es esta una idea peregrina, pues, por ejemplo, Núñez Díaz (2025) ha publicado un estudio en el que, precisamente, ubica las letras y los poemas de Joaquín Sabina en la línea temporal de la poesía de la que ha sido contemporáneo, entre ellas la poesía de la experiencia.

⁸ A grandes rasgos: “al corresponder la canción a un sistema de menor tradición culta, de características híbridas y más próximo a los orígenes orales y populares, no tuvo el prurito artístico de alambicar el discurso y oscurecer el mensaje, ni la censura pudo actuar con idéntica determinación ante la insurgencia no tanto vinculada a la obra artística cuanto a su recepción espectacular, más inopinada y menos previsible. Debido a ello, en fin, la canción preservó la llama del mayoritarismo a que en buena medida había renunciado la poesía” (Prieto de Paula, 2010: 402). A esto conviene añadir, además, que los receptores de la canción protesta “terminaban convertidos a su vez en propagadores o emisores activos” (2021: 35-36).

con la poesía social. En concreto, leímos y analizamos primero poemas de Blas de Otero en *Pido la paz y la palabra* (1955) y, después, una versión traducida al español de “Al vent” (1963), de Raimon, y la letra de “A cántaros” (1972), de Pablo Guerrero.

Esta segunda parte de la secuencia continuó introduciendo a los estudiantes en la musicalización de poemas, el otro gran signo característico de la canción de autor española del siglo XX. Presentamos el concepto y tratamos de que los alumnos inquiriesen cómo se musicaliza un poema⁹ y para qué sirve hacerlo¹⁰. Con el fin de que pusieran en práctica lo que se había comentado, vimos primero el ejemplo de “Para la libertad” (1972), canción en la que Serrat musicaliza la segunda sección de “El herido”, el poema de Miguel Hernández en *El hombre acecha* (1939). A través de este ejemplo pudieron comprobar cómo Serrat eliminó la mitad del poema original, escogiendo comenzar su canción —de claro mensaje comprometido y esperanzador, que “gana en validez universal” (Riva, 2021: 167) respecto al poema— con un verso más memorable y de fuerte significado — “para la libertad, sangro, lucho, pervivo” (Hernández, 1984: 138)— y cómo además el texto musical y la interpretación del catalán¹¹ pueden afectar al significado del texto y a su fuerza (vid. Pranger, 2022: 214-220). Tras este ejemplo, que los alumnos fueron analizando de manera guiada, realizaron en parejas, pero por sí mismos, un análisis similar a partir de dos textos: la letra de “Cantares” (1969), también de Serrat, y los fragmentos de *Campos de Castilla* (1912), de Antonio Machado, que se musicalizan en la canción¹². Los estudiantes destacaron cómo Serrat une varias estrofas, crea un estribillo con unos versos de Machado — “caminante, no hay camino, / se hace camino al andar” (1977: 146)— que pueden adquirir un significado político que no tenían originalmente, e incorpora unas estrofas de su autoría con un contenido también crítico —sobre el triste y postrero exilio del poeta sevillano—. Además, pudieron comprobar la notable difusión que alcanzaron los versos de Machado gracias a esta canción mediante el visionado de su interpretación en directo por Serrat acompañado por Sabina en su gira conjunta de 2007¹³ (vid. Serrat y Sabina VEVO, 2020).

⁹ Como ha explicado, entre otros, Romano (1994: 61-62), lo más frecuente es que el texto original no se preserve inalterado cuando se musicaliza: “pudo ser abreviado, sus versos estribillados, sus estrofas reubicadas, o combinadas con otras de otros poetas o de la autoría del cantautor, etc.”.

¹⁰ Puede decirse que, *grosso modo*, son tres las razones principales para musicalizar poesía: “recuperar a un determinado poeta, reivindicar una lengua relegada al olvido o la llamada a la lucha por la libertad y la igualdad” (Gómez Sobrino, 2013: 61).

¹¹ Recuérdese que una canción es un pluritexto formado por la conjunción de letra, música e interpretación (Romano, 1991: 139-142).

¹² Sobre esta musicalización pueden verse los trabajos de Romano (1997: 106-109) e Iravedra (2021: 70-73).

¹³ Romano (2021: 29) ha reflexionado críticamente sobre esta presentación en directo, afirmando que Serrat y Sabina “nos invitan (como en otros espectáculos) a hacerlo [cantar] con ellos, cantores también nosotros desde nuestras butacas de un texto que sabemos de memoria, convertido ya en un himno”.

La secuencia didáctica terminó con la recogida de datos. Con el fin de disponer de un *feedback* registrado para poder completar nuestra investigación, pedimos a los estudiantes que participaron en la secuencia que respondiesen a una serie de preguntas de selección múltiple y de respuesta libre a través de *Microsoft Forms*. A continuación, se recogen las preguntas y sus respuestas, que analizamos más adelante, en un epígrafe específico.

RESULTADOS

Como indicábamos antes, los primeros resultados que obtuvimos fueron los de la lluvia de ideas a través de *Mentimeter*, donde los estudiantes encuestados debían responder a la pregunta “¿qué es la canción de autor?”. El resumen de las respuestas queda visualmente sintetizado en la nube de palabras generada por la propia herramienta (Fig. 1). La dirección de la mayoría de ellas apuntaba a la relación de la canción de autor con la literatura y subrayaba de algún modo la importancia de su mensaje —ya fuera para indicar que podía ser especialmente sensible o inclinarse hacia temas como el amor o vincularse a un contexto político y social—.



Figura 1. ¿Qué es la canción de autor? (Nube de palabras basadas en las respuestas)

Fuente: <https://www.mentimeter.com/app/presentation/aldw3cndn1cwz1c64i7f8qm9nw3yh6gd/edit?question=e24kd9oao4yz>, el 08.05.2025

Una vez realizada la secuencia didáctica, la fase de encuesta comenzó con cinco preguntas de selección múltiple. La primera de ellas les preguntaba si les había gustado la secuencia, y la totalidad de los encuestados respondió afirmativamente. La segunda, si las letras de canción pueden considerarse literatura; y, de nuevo, el 100% de las respuestas fueron afirmativas. Mientras que estas dos preguntas planteaban solo la opción binaria del “sí” y el “no”, las tres restantes estaban configuradas siguiendo la escala de Likert. Esas preguntas encuestaban a los estudiantes sobre la utilidad de la canción de autor para comprender la otra literatura: si los poemas musicalizados ayudan a entender el poema original (Fig. 2), si la canción de autor contribuye a la comprensión del

contexto histórico y literario en el que se enmarcan sus letristas (Fig. 3), y si específicamente la canción protesta resulta de utilidad para entender mejor la literatura del Franquismo y la Transición (Fig. 4) —ambos, períodos históricos-literarios que se habían explicado en la asignatura durante el mismo cuatrimestre y cuyos conocimientos se reforzaron mediante esta secuencia—.

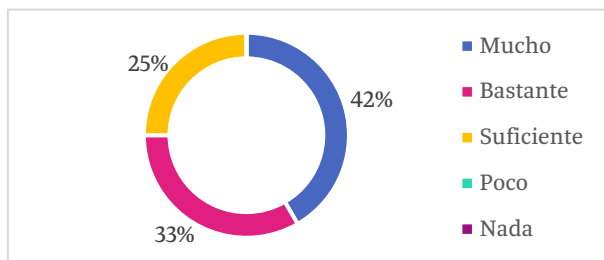


Figura 2. ¿Crees que escuchar la musicalización (adaptación) de un poema te ayuda a entenderlo?

Fuente: archivo personal

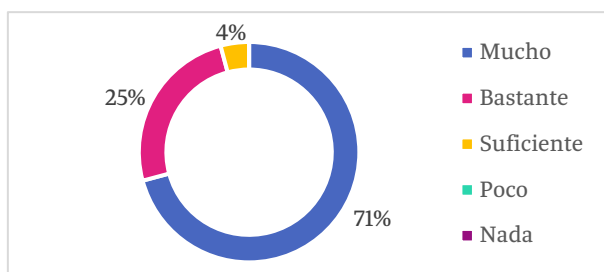


Figura 3. ¿Crees que conocer y estudiar la canción de autor en su contexto histórico y literario ayuda a comprender ese contexto?

Fuente: archivo personal

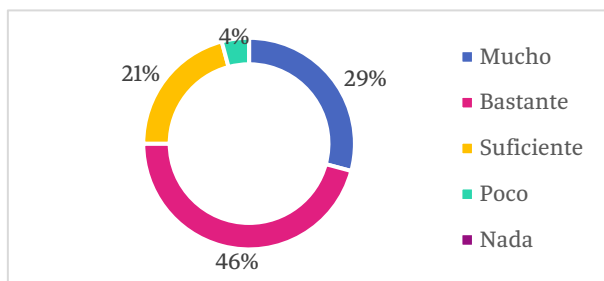


Figura 4. Ahora que sabes un poco sobre la canción protesta, ¿entiendes mejor el contexto literario del Franquismo y la Transición?

Fuente: archivo personal

Como se puede comprobar en las figuras correspondientes, la práctica totalidad de las respuestas están ubicadas en los niveles positivos de la escala

propuesta, y la mayoría de ellas se inclina además por las dos opciones más positivas.

Tras estas preguntas de selección múltiple, las cinco restantes permitían a los estudiantes encuestados responder con un breve texto a las cuestiones que se les planteaban. Dado que recoger la totalidad de las respuestas —que, además, a menudo repiten argumentos— nos forzaría a exceder más de la cuenta la extensión recomendada para este trabajo, optamos por consignar a continuación un resumen de las ideas recibidas, en el que hemos procurado reproducir entrecomillados la mayor cantidad de fragmentos posible.

La sexta pregunta, y primera de este grupo de las de respuesta libre, rezaba “¿estarías a favor o en contra de la inclusión de la canción de autor en el canon literario?”, y pedía también que se argumentase la opinión dada. En primer lugar, conviene apuntar que la totalidad de las respuestas recibidas fue favorable. Entre los argumentos esgrimidos destaca la puesta en valor de su valor estético y literario, pues se dice por ejemplo que “las letras de las canciones poseen calidad poética y también transmiten mensajes profundos” o, sencillamente, que “reúnen todas las características propias de una obra literaria”. La otra dirección interesante en la que se encaminan muchas de las respuestas es hacia la necesidad de actualizar el canon para reflejar las formas vigentes de literatura. Se argumenta por ejemplo que la canción de autor podría integrar el canon literario “porque representa un estilo innovador que puede hacer una importante aportación a la literatura española” o porque “enriquece y diversifica el canon literario”. En este sentido, destaca cómo a menudo se apunta que esa ampliación del canon sería para dar entrada a un modelo más popular de literatura —en alguna respuesta se puede encontrar incluso la mención de la poesía oral—; por ejemplo: “[porque] es una forma innovadora de literatura” que se caracteriza por ser “actual y probablemente percibida de una manera más accesible”, o porque la canción de autor “conecta con un público amplio y diverso, acercando la literatura a contextos cotidianos y populares”. Una de las respuestas recibidas podría, de hecho, citarse como resumen del sentir general de la mayoría de las demás, pues sostiene que incluir la canción de autor en el canon literario “ampliaría la visión de la literatura y reflejaría mejor la diversidad expresiva de los siglos XX y XXI”.

La séptima pregunta era doble: “¿cuál dirías que es la importancia de la musicalización (adaptación) de poemas para la historia de la literatura española?” y “¿crees que debería explicarse en las asignaturas de literatura española?”. En lo que respecta a esta segunda, las respuestas fueron de nuevo por completo positivas —eso sí, algunas más dubitativas que otras—. Además de que en numerosos casos se indicaba que los poemas musicalizados se perciben como herramientas didácticas activas e interesantes, en lo que respecta a nuestros intereses, el conjunto de respuestas a ambas cuestiones discurre fundamentalmente por una vía argumentativa concreta. Se extrae del argumentario de los estudiantes que, a su parecer, la musicalización de un poema

no solo facilita su comprensión — “hace un efecto de entender de un modo más fácil la historia [de la literatura española]”—, sino que también “tiene un papel fundamental” en su difusión, puesto que “más personas pueden acceder al contenido de la poesía”. Los estudiantes, en general, valoraron cómo la musicalización de poesía “conecta lo tradicional con la contemporaneidad” y sirve para “mantener viva la tradición”.

La octava pregunta era “¿crees que, tras el Nobel de Literatura concedido a Bob Dylan y en el contexto cultural actual, en los programas de las asignaturas de literatura se acabará incluyendo la canción de autor?, ¿por qué?”. Una vez más, el 100% de las respuestas fueron afirmativas. En lo que respecta al galardón otorgado a Dylan, un amplio sector de los estudiantes encuestados interpreta que tuvo un claro papel legitimador, en resumen, que “marcó un reconocimiento oficial” de la literariedad de la canción de autor, siendo causa y a la vez consecuencia el hecho de que “la relación entre música y literatura es cada vez más conocida”. En lo que se refiere a su inclusión en los programas de las asignaturas sobre literatura, las opiniones, aunque positivas, son más diversas. Algunos apuntan que “sería interesante si existiera una asignatura así” y que “cuando una obra de arte es apreciada por la crítica, es muy posible que acabe siendo incorporada [al canon y al currículum]”. Otros, sin embargo, se muestran más prudentes con respecto a la facilidad de este proceso, y sostienen que es posible que la canción de autor se incorpore a los programas de las citadas asignaturas “pero de forma gradual y no sin debate”.

En la línea con lo anterior, pero ya en el caso específico de la literatura española, la novena pregunta que se planteó a los estudiantes fue “¿crees que las universidades deberían comenzar a incluir las letras de los cantautores en sus enseñanzas de literatura española contemporánea?”, y, por supuesto, se les pidió que explicaran también el porqué. También en este caso la respuesta fue unánimemente afirmativa —aunque en algún caso podía interpretarse cierta duda—. En general, los estudiantes valoraron que la canción de autor facilita el acceso a la literatura española contemporánea y su comprensión, además de que supondría una forma de estudiar la interacción de la literatura con la música: “los alumnos van a estudiar y entender fácilmente cómo es la literatura contemporánea”, “ayudaría a los estudiantes a interpretar un tipo de literatura diferente al que están acostumbrados”. En esa línea, también destacaron que serviría para “captar mejor la atención de los estudiantes”. Además, la canción de autor no solo fue interpretada como un apoyo útil para el estudio de la literatura en la que se puede enmarcar, sino también como un objeto artístico-literario digno de estudiarse en ese contexto por su estatuto poético propio: “es una parte importante de la literatura y cultura contemporánea, igual de importante que lo que se ha escrito en épocas anteriores”, “representa una forma legítima de expresión literaria”. Por tanto, puede decirse que, *grosso modo*, los estudiantes argumentaron que la canción de autor debería formar parte de las asignaturas de

literatura española contemporánea porque es una forma de literatura con un valor legítimo, igual que el de otras manifestaciones literarias con mayor tradición de pertenencia al canon.

Finalmente, y partiendo de la anterior, la décima y última pregunta fue “¿crees que la canción de autor debe estar presente en los programas de literatura española contemporánea solo en España o también en universidades de países no hispanohablantes en las que se enseñe literatura española?, ¿por qué?”. Aunque uno de los alumnos encuestados señaló que en estas universidades la enseñanza debería centrarse “sobre todo en los grandes escritores”, todas las demás respuestas son, de nuevo, afirmativas —algunos estudiantes, eso sí, puntualizan que quizás debería ser un contenido optativo— y se basan fundamentalmente en tres argumentos. En primer lugar, señalaron con frecuencia la potencial utilidad de la canción de autor como puente cultural, como una vía para conocer más y mejor la cultura española. Por ejemplo, uno de ellos apuntaba que la canción de autor española “es una forma auténtica de enseñar literatura viva y actual”, y otro argumentaba que permite “descubrir el lado más auténtico de la cultura hispánica”, así como que “es un tema interesante y relevante que despierta el interés de las personas apasionadas por la literatura española, independientemente de qué país sean”. En segundo lugar, fueron comunes también los apuntes acerca de su idoneidad para “practicar y aprender la lengua [española]”. Y, en tercer lugar, también se subrayó con cierta amplitud que permitiría a los alumnos conectar más con los contenidos que se les imparten; por ejemplo: “los estudiantes aprenderían la asignatura con más gusto, al ser [la canción de autor] considerada una forma [de literatura] más moderna y atractiva para ellos”.

ANÁLISIS DE RESULTADOS

La fase inicial de la secuencia didáctica (Fig. 1) revela que los conocimientos previos de los estudiantes acerca de la canción de autor eran en su mayoría tentativos pero que estaban bien encaminados. La dirección del grueso de las respuestas apunta a la relación de la canción de autor con la literatura y subraya de algún modo la importancia de su mensaje —ya sea para indicar que puede ser especialmente sensible o inclinarse hacia temas como el amor o vincularse a un contexto político y social—. Por tanto, resulta evidente que la mayor parte de los estudiantes encuestados no tenía una idea clara de a qué podía corresponder el sintagma *canción de autor*, aunque sí podía intuirlo.

En lo que se refiere a los datos más importantes obtenidos en esta investigación, la respuesta unánimemente positiva a las dos primeras preguntas resulta tan reveladora como resumitiva. Por un lado, que todos los alumnos encuestados valoraran positivamente la secuencia legítima el procedimiento seguido con vistas a una posible repetición de esta secuencia o al planteamiento

de una similar. Por otro lado, que la totalidad de los estudiantes considerase, una vez terminada la secuencia, que la canción de autor es literatura supone un punto de partida necesario de gran valor de cara a su potencial inclusión en el currículum académico, así como una premisa fundamental para comprender la información que se extrae de las preguntas más complejas de la encuesta.

Por su parte, de los resultados de las preguntas formuladas mediante la escala Likert (Figs. 2, 3 y 4) se deduce que los estudiantes encuestados perciben la canción de autor como un apoyo útil para comprender mejor otros tipos de literatura y/o períodos o contextos histórico-literarios, algo que queda también claramente reforzado en las respuestas ofrecidas a las preguntas de respuesta abierta —de la seis a la diez—.

En esas respuestas emergen cuatro ejes argumentales a través de los cuales los estudiantes sustentan la inclusión de la canción de autor en el currículum académico:

1. Calidad estética y legitimación como literatura. Los estudiantes equiparan las letras de los cantautores con la literatura tradicional y destacan tanto su tratamiento artístico del lenguaje como la elaboración de sus temas, lo que justifica su estudio como obra literaria genuina, como parte del canon y del currículum.
2. Accesibilidad y difusión. La relación de la canción de autor con las poéticas de su tiempo y, especialmente, su faceta musicalizadora de poemas facilitan al alumnado comprender la historia de la literatura española, por lo que resultan un apoyo de valor para la enseñanza de otros contenidos curriculares.
3. Respaldo institucional. El Nobel de Literatura obtenido por Bob Dylan es entendido como un aval que podría acelerar la incorporación curricular de la canción de autor, aunque ese cambio se perciba a menudo como gradual y debatido.
4. Motivación estudiantil. Incluir la canción de autor en el currículum contribuiría, según los propios estudiantes, a captar mejor su atención debido a la mayor proximidad con su realidad y sus gustos estéticos.
5. Puente cultural y enseñanza de la lengua. Consideran la canción de autor un recurso a través del cual conectar más y comprender mejor la cultura española, así como una herramienta valiosa y amena para el aprendizaje de su lengua.

CONCLUSIONES

Los resultados obtenidos tras la aplicación de nuestra secuencia didáctica, una vez ordenados y analizados, demuestran que los estudiantes valoran de modo notablemente positivo la incorporación de la canción de autor en el currículum de las asignaturas universitarias de literatura española del siglo XX y contemporánea, tanto por su potencial didáctico —en términos de comprensión,

contextualización y motivación— como por sus características estéticas y culturales, que permiten reconocerla y estudiarla como una forma legítima de literatura.

Con todo, hemos de ser conscientes de las limitaciones que tiene este estudio, lo que sin embargo demuestra a un mismo tiempo también su potencial. Nuestros datos revelan el interés por la canción de autor española generado por una representación de estudiantes de Rumanía, pero deberán ser estudios posteriores los que amplíen la muestra tanto entre los propios estudiantes rumanos como entre otros no hispanohablantes o incluso hispanohablantes pero no españoles. Y, sin duda, sería beneficioso de cara a sumar argumentos para la inclusión de la canción de autor en los currículums de literatura española que se llevaran a cabo investigaciones similares con estudiantes de universidades de España. Además, las conclusiones de este estudio deberían compararse con las de otros, de similar orientación, que se llevasen a cabo en diferentes contextos culturales o lingüísticos. Aunque, como decimos, todo eso ya es materia para trabajos futuros.

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Instrumentele multimedia în dezvoltarea competenței cultural-pragmatice

Rezumat: Având în vedere avansul tehnologic al ultimului deceniu, instrumentele multimedia se dovedesc a avea un rol important în cadrul orelor de limba română ca limbă străină (RLS) în special în dezvoltarea competențelor ce depășesc barierele gramaticii convenționale. Printre acestea se numără și competența cultural-pragmatică, împletirea dintre două competențe-cheie. Competența pragmatică este cea care îi permite vorbitorului să comunice în situații concrete, iar cea culturală ține de modul în care acesta percepe și asimilează cultura țării a cărei limbi o studiază. Astfel, competența cultural-pragmatică reprezintă abilitatea de a comunica, ținând cont de normele culturale ale țării. Acest aspect este deosebit de important, în special în cazul imigranților sau al studenților străini care trebuie să se adapteze și să îmbrățișeze noua cultură. În sprijinul adaptării, ne vin instrumentele multimedia, diferitele platforme de streaming și IA, prin multitudinea de informații pe care le pun la dispoziție. În acest sens, articolul de față se va concentra asupra utilizării instrumentelor multimedia în scopul dezvoltării competenței cultural-pragmatice în RLS. Plecând de la acestea, voi pune accent pe predarea multimodală, vitală pentru competența vizată.

Cuvinte-cheie: *competența interculturală, cultural-pragmatic, limba română ca limbă străină, competența pragmatică, comunicare.*

INTRODUCERE

Învățarea unei limbi străine nu presupune doar aspectele lingvistice, de comprehensiune și comunicare, ci și elemente culturale și pragmatice. Acestea transformă comunicarea într-una adecvată situației și asigură respectarea normelor și convențiilor sociale. Totodată, duc către integrarea mai ușoară și acceptarea noii culturi, eliminând barierele create de șocul cultural. În acest demers, rolul profesorului trebuie să devină acela de a dezvolta și alte serii de competențe, dincolo de exercițiile clasice de limbă. Trebuie să avem în vedere și că majoritatea manualelor de limbă nu este, încă, concepută să formeze competența interculturală, oferind sarcini de lucru mai degrabă pentru competențele lingvistico-pragmatice. Astfel, profesorii vor avea în vedere integrarea și dezvoltarea competenței interculturale prin diferite alte activități, care să-i provoace pe studenți și să le stârnească curiozitatea de a citi și de a căuta cât mai multe informații în diferite surse.

Cu toate acestea, instrumentele AI și platformele de streaming se dezvoltă din ce în ce mai mult, oferind infinite resurse utilizabile în scop didactic. Acestea

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reprezintă un real sprijin pentru profesori, furnizând conținut adaptabil nevoilor studenților. Menționez, însă, că nu am omis dezavantajele AI-ului în materie de drepturi de autor, în special în cazul textelor scrise, un subiect lung dezbătut, însă consider că folosirea acestuia pentru a crea un număr mare de imagini, spre exemplu, este utilă și benefică procesului didactic.

Articolul prezent va fi structurat în trei părți, după cum urmează: prima parte va prezenta câteva considerații asupra conceptului de competență interculturală, a doua va aborda succint competența pragmatică, iar ultima va defini conceptul de competență cultural-pragmatică, așa cum îl înțelegem, propunând și câteva activități realizabile cu ajutorul instrumentelor multimedia.

Important de amintit este faptul că în acest moment literatura de specialitate nu oferă o definiție omogenă a acestui concept, astfel că am optat pentru utilizarea termenului de competență cultural-pragmatică.

COMPETENȚA INTERCULTURALĂ

Prima competență pe care o abordăm în paginile următoare este cea referitoare la cultură și la adaptare. După cum știm, conceptul de șoc cultural a fost dezbătut de nenumărate ori în literatura de specialitate, insistându-se asupra importanței lui în achiziția limbilor străine. Șocul cultural reprezintă o experiență care se manifestă atunci când o persoană își schimbă domiciliul, mutându-se în altă țară. Unul dintre cercetătorii care a studiat acest fenomen este Kalervo Oberg. Potrivit acestuia, șocul cultural dezvoltă patru etape: *luna de miere*, în care diferențele dintre cultura proprie și cea nouă sunt privite cu admirație, *negocierea*, apare după aproximativ trei luni, transformând exaltarea în anxietate. Una dintre cauzele care poate provoca aceste stări este bariera lingvistică, ce poate cauza probleme de comunicare, iar individul ajunge să se simtă singur, lucru care poate duce la frustrare. A treia etapă, *ajustarea*, se instaurează între 6 și 12 luni. Atunci, individul reușește să se acomodeze cu noua cultură, dezvoltă rutine pe care le urmează, asigurându-i un minimum de confort. Bariera lingvistică începe să se estompeze și, odată cu ea, dispare și sentimentul de singurătate. Obișnuința cu rutinele zilnice și acceptarea contrastelor culturale duc la eliminarea frustrării, ceea ce face ca individul să comunice mai mult cu ceilalți și să relaționeze cu alte persoane. Ultima etapă, *adaptarea*, reprezintă momentul în care individul se simte parte din noua cultură și o acceptă. În acest caz, se poate vorbi și despre stadiul bicultural.

O a doua definiție reiterată în acest articol este furnizată de Cucoș (2000) și enunță că „o cultură este mare nu numai prin ea însăși, prin propriile mecanisme autoreproductive și autocontemplative, ci prin metabolismul creșterii și transformării ei, prin felul în care permite deschideri spre reverberații din exterior” (Cucoș, 2000, p. 14). Viziunea oferită de Cucoș prezintă mecanisme de reflecție a culturii, nu doar memorarea unor informații, în scopul de a asigura înțelegerea acesteia.

În 2013, Wilson, Ward și Fischer, în articolul „Beyond culture learning theory: What can personality tell us about cultural competence?”, problematizează competența culturală, oferind o nouă definiție. Potrivit autorilor, aceasta „poate fi definită ca dobândirea și menținerea abilităților specifice culturii necesare pentru a (a) funcționa eficient într-un context cultural nou și/sau (b) interacționa eficient cu persoane din medii culturale diferite”². Cu alte cuvinte, competența culturală presupune cunoașterea propriei culturi, în primul rând, și a altor culturi, în al doilea rând. Astfel, individul va fi capabil să conviețuiască atât cu persoane aparținând culturii proprii, cât și cu cei dintr-o altă cultură.

În urma apariției studiilor asupra competenței culturale, s-a dezvoltat, în didactica limbilor străine, conceptul de competență interculturală, ce vizează, potrivit lui Cucoș (2000), capacitatea relațională de a intra în raport cu persoane aparținând altor culturi, demonstrând permisivitate, respect și înțelegerea semnificațiilor culturale diverse. Cele două competențe sunt interdependente, astfel că nu putem avea o bună competență interculturală fără ca, mai întâi, să fi dezvoltat o competență culturală. Competența culturală stă la baza creării unui set de abilități de percepție și înțelegere mai largă a pluralității, excluzând izolaționismul, o înțelegere și acceptare a multiculturalității.

Cadrul Comun European de Referință pentru Limbi notează că „cunoașterea, conștiința și înțelegerea relațiilor (similitudinilor și deosebirilor distinctive) între „lumea din care vii” și „lumea comunității-țintă” se află la originea unei conștientizări interculturale” (CECRL, 2003, p. 88). În plus, predarea L2 ar trebui să înglobeze și elemente culturale care să-l ajute pe elev/student în acceptarea și înțelegerea țării a cărei limbă o studiază. O bună competență interculturală poate ajuta la dobândirea corectă a limbii-țintă, apelând la factorul emoțional, în sensul că, dacă elevul sau studentul reușește să cunoască mici elemente culturale și să înțeleagă comportamentele umane specifice încă de la început, va putea accepta mai ușor diferențele lingvistice inevitabile între limba limba sa maternă și L2, fapt ce va duce la un proces de învățare mai lin.

Cercetătorul Martyn Barrett (2011) propune o clasificare a componentelor care formează competențele interculturale:

- Atitudini: modul în care privim alte culturi, respectul față de ele și curiozitatea de a le cunoaște;
- Abilități: de bun ascultător, de comunicare și de mediere cu diferite persoane;
- Cunoștințe: legate atât de propria cultură, cât și de alte culturi;
- Comportamente: flexibilitatea în comunicarea cu ceilalți.

În același articol din 2011, cercetătorul oferă și modele ale competenței interculturale, utile în dezvoltarea acesteia. Trebuie să avem în vedere faptul că

² „Cultural competence can be defined as the acquisition and maintenance of culture-specific skills required to (a) function effectively within a new cultural context and/or (b) interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds” (Traducerea noastră).

aceste modele se dezvoltă în paralel, fiind dependente unele de celelalte. Astfel, există cinci modele:

- Modele compoziționale – identifică diferitele componente ale competenței interculturale fără a încerca să specifice relațiile dintre acestea. Aici sunt cuprinse atitudinile, abilitățile și comportamentele relevante ce alcătuiesc competența interculturală.
- Modele coorientaționale – concentrate pe modul în care se realizează comunicarea în timpul interacțiunilor interculturale și pe felul în care percepțiile, semnificațiile și înțelegerile interculturale sunt construite pe parcursul acestor interacțiuni.
- Modele de dezvoltare – descriu etapele de dezvoltare prin care este dobândită competența interculturală.
- Modele de adaptare – se concentrează pe modul în care indivizii își adaptează comportamentele și atitudinile față de alte persoane ce aparțin unor culturi diferite.
- Modele de traiectorie cauzală³ – preconizează relațiile cauzale între diferitele componente ale competenței interculturale.

Dezvoltarea competenței interculturale trebuie să se realizeze gradual, odată cu învățarea limbii străine, întrucât cultura și limba propriu-zisă sunt două elemente ce nu pot fi separate. Potrivit cercetărilor realizate de Ming-Mu Kuo și Cheng-Chieh Lai (2006), nu este posibilă o cunoaștere completă a limbii fără dezvoltarea competenței interculturale. În acest demers, este important ca studenții să fie încurajați constant să adreseze întrebări cu privire la cultură, în timp ce stereotipurile trebuie evitate și, dacă sunt cunoscute, demontate.

Unul dintre avantajele dezvoltării competenței de comunicare îl reprezintă gestionarea șocului cultural. Este bine cunoscut faptul că, odată cu schimbarea domiciliului, apar și dificultățile de adaptare, unele dintre ele cauzate de lipsa de înțelegere a celeilalte culturi. Astfel, prin expunere și explicare, studenții pot depăși mai ușor barierele culturale, se pot integra mai repede în noua comunitate și pot construi relații de prietenie care să faciliteze și procesul de învățare a noii limbi.

Pentru dezvoltarea acesteia, sunt necesare activități integrate în timpul orelor de limbă care să dezvolte și competențele lingvistice. Spre exemplu, o activitate ar fi lectura unor texte cu subiect cultural, și rezolvarea activităților de comprehensiune pe baza textului. Un alt exemplu ar putea consta în dobândirea unor expresii idiomatice alături de originile acestora. De asemenea, recomandate sunt și paralelele realizate între diferitele culturi. De pildă, un exercițiu de tipul identificării asemănărilor dintre limbile materne și culturile proprii și limba și cultura română. Prin acest exercițiu, se creează punți ce conduc la acceptare, adaptare și asimilare a noii culturi.

³ „Attitudes, skills, knowledge, behaviour, compositional models, co-orientational models, development models, adaptational models, Causal path-models” (Traducerea noastră).

COMPETENȚA PRAGMATICĂ

Competența pragmatică este unul dintre aspectele cheie ale comunicării într-o limbă străină. În primul rând, ea face parte din competența comunicativă, mai punctual, capacitatea de a utiliza vocabularul în contexte diferite. În al doilea rând, se referă la adecvarea acestuia la situația specifică de comunicare. În ceea ce îi privește pe studenții care învață limba română ca limbă străină, competența pragmatică este deosebit de importantă, întrucât aceștia au nevoie să comunice, inclusiv în activitățile de rutină zilnică, cum ar fi mersul la cumpărături.

Dezvoltarea competenței pragmatice trebuie să se realizeze începând cu nivelul A1, deoarece, așa cum este definit în didactica de specialitate, acesta reprezintă baza învățării limbilor străine. Deși se caracterizează printr-un vocabular minim, este bine să găsim diferite activități care să se adapteze la bagajul lexical al elevilor și să îi încurajăm să ia parte la mici jocuri de rol sau discuții care imită situații reale de comunicare.

Fiind un concept foarte abordat în literatura de specialitate, există mulți cercetători care îl dezbate îndelung, însă, pentru acest articol, voi reitiera teoriile enunțate de doi dintre ei, și anume Lyle F. Bachman și Dell Hymes. Am ales utilizarea acestor articole ca referințe, întrucât ele reprezintă fundamentele pe care se bazează literatura de specialitate ulterioară.

Lingvistul Dell Hymes (1974), problematizând actele de vorbire specifice, a adăugat competența lingvistică la dimensiunea pragmatică. Teoriile sale au dus la conturarea competenței comunicative, care constă în utilizarea adecvată a limbii în diferite contexte. Dell Hymes consideră competența comunicativă ca fiind legată de nivelul de învățare a limbii și că aceasta permite ca mesajele să fie produse, transmise și înțelese în contexte specifice. În opinia sa, aspectele competenței comunicative se referă nu numai la potențialul sistemic al limbii, ci și la contextul de comunicare și la gradul de adecvare contextuală. Prin urmare, competența comunicativă implică capacitatea de adaptare la interacțiunea socială și la experiența acumulată.

Al doilea lingvist amintit anterior care abordează problema competenței pragmatice este Lyle F. Bachman, câțiva ani mai târziu, în 1990, când redactează studiul „Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing”. Potrivit acestuia, competența pragmatică reprezintă liantul dintre unitățile de discurs și funcțiile pe care utilizatorii limbii le îndeplinesc prin intermediul acestor unități de discurs. La rândul său, competența pragmatică implică două componente, competența locutorie și competența sociolingvistică.

În accepțiunea lui Bachman, competența pragmatică cuprinde două aspecte: utilizarea limbajului cu forță ilocuționară și interpretarea forței ilocuționare a limbajului interlocutorului care emite mesajul în limba partenerului de comunicare. În consecință, cercetătorul menționează că utilizatorii limbii îndeplinesc un set de patru funcții:

1. funcția ideatică, prin care fiecare persoană se exprimă în funcție de propria sa experiență a lumii reale;

2. funcția manipulativă, care asigură funcția instrumentală, adică executarea de acțiuni concomitent cu enunțarea, funcția reglatoare, care urmărește să controleze comportamentul partenerilor de comunicare, și funcția interacțională, care prevede utilizarea limbajului pentru a forma, menține sau modifica relațiile interpersonale;

3. funcția euristică, legată de utilizarea limbajului pentru a extinde cunoștințele prin predare, învățare, rezolvare de probleme sau memorare conștientă;

4. funcția imaginativă, care cuprinde extinderea propriului mediu productiv.

CECRL prezintă, la rândul său, o definiție: „competența pragmatică trimite la utilizarea funcțională a resurselor lingvistice (realizarea funcțiilor comunicative, a actelor de vorbire), bazându-se pe schemele sau descriptorii schimburilor interacționale. La nivele mai mari ea ține, de asemenea, de măiestria discursului, coeziunea și coerența lui, de identificarea tipurilor și genurilor de texte, a efectelor de ironie și de parodie” (CECRL:19).

Cu alte cuvinte, competența pragmatică înglobează toate actele de comunicare ce utilizează toate formele limbii, în diferite contexte. Astfel, studenții vor învăța și limbajul colocvial pentru a-l utiliza cu prietenii, dar și formule oficiale pentru a se adresa profesorilor lor. De asemenea, ei vor învăța diferite expresii idiomatice, des utilizate de vorbitorii nativi, precum „a avea chef de”.

Dezvoltarea competenței pragmatice se realizează prin activități centrate pe comunicare. Un atare exemplu ar fi dialogurile cu tematici ce vizează comunicarea reală, ca de pildă dialogul la magazin/restaurant, închirierea unui apartament, în cazul nivelurilor inferioare, atingând, ulterior, tematici precum interviul pentru un loc de muncă, accentul căzând pe un limbaj formal. De asemenea, o altă posibilă activitate sunt dialogurile referitoare la planuri de vacanță sau pentru o zi liberă. În cadrul fiecăreia dintre activități, cei doi studenți își asumă câte un rol și construiesc o conversație cât mai aproape de realitate care simulează contextul din viața de zi cu zi.

În ceea ce privește exprimarea scrisă, dezvoltarea competenței pragmatice va începe tot cu nivelul A1, pornind de la mesaje informale, unde se utilizează formulele de incipit și final „Dragă.../Cu drag”, ajungând la emailuri formale, unde este necesară utilizarea „Stimate/Stimată”, spre exemplu, pentru începutul mesajului, și „Cu respect”, de pildă, pentru a încheia textul. Toate aceste exerciții sunt extrem de importante pentru studenți, întrucât e necesar să fie capabili să redacteze mesaje în diferitele registre ale limbii, pentru a se adecva la situația de comunicare.

COMPETENȚA CULTURAL PRAGMATICĂ ȘI INSTRUMENTELE MULTIMEDIA

COMPETENȚA CULTURAL-PRAGMATICĂ

Competența cultural-pragmatică este încă nedefinită ca atare de către literatura de specialitate. Cu toate acestea, putem spune că este o competență ce reprezintă împletirea dintre competențele interculturală și pragmatică, definind

comunicarea. Aceasta se bazează pe dezvoltarea vocabularului, adecvarea mesajului în funcție de interlocutor, înțelegerea și utilizarea tuturor mecanismelor lingvistice pentru transmiterea mesajului și stăpânirea limbajului colocvial. Motivarea combinării celor două concepte într-unul singur este dată de faptul că, de cele mai multe ori, profesorii aleg să dezvolte competențele interculturală și pragmatică separat, creând activități diferite. Consider că cele două nu trebuie dezvoltate separat, ci ca un întreg, fiindcă, în cazul integrării studenților străini în noua cultură, comunicarea se bazează pe ambele.

Competențele interculturală și pragmatică au o zonă de intersecție naturală în comunicarea de zi cu zi, astfel că prin unirea acestora sub același concept sau prin predarea lor integrată formăm o competență comunicativă globală, care reflectă mai fidel realitatea interacțiunilor dintre persoane din culturi diferite. În plus, a fi pragmatic competent într-o limbă nu înseamnă doar să cunoști structurile corecte, ci să le adaptezi la normele culturale. De aceea, competența pragmatică *fără componenta interculturală* poate fi incompletă – sau chiar riscantă, ducând la neînțelegeri.

Normele culturale sunt fundamentale în comunicarea dintre indivizii care aparțin sau nu aceleiași culturi. Astfel, acestea dictează ceea ce este considerat acceptabil, respectuos, sau adecvat în diverse situații sociale. De exemplu, în unele limbi și culturi, printre care se numără și limba română, se realizează distincțiile ierarhice sau de vârstă prin utilizarea pronumelui de politețe, care se predă încă din primele lecții de la nivelul A1. La polul opus, se află, de pildă, limba engleză care nu conceptualizează prin limbaj această dihotomie între formal și informal. Pentru vorbitorii de limba engleză, este imperativ să se realizeze, încă de la începutul parcursului de învățare, aceste distincții pentru buna achiziție a limbii române, evitându-se apariția unor automatisme greșite. După același sistem, limba franceză impune utilizarea apelativelor „domn” și „doamnă” în conversațiile formale.

Pe lângă aceste rigori în comunicare, intervine și factorul adaptare și integrare în comunități de studenți, respectiv în colectivul de la serviciu, în funcție de situație. Cu alte cuvinte, competența (inter)cultural-pragmatică are o dublă relevanță, mai exact de adaptare, pe de o parte, și de comunicare, pe de alta. În cadre informale, de pildă, se utilizează, de foarte multe ori, elemente lexicale din sfera argourilor și, desigur, a expresiilor colocviale. Toate aceste aspecte trebuie luate în considerare atunci când predăm o limbă străină, întrucât ele fac parte din comunicarea de zi cu zi. În didactica limbilor, numeroși autori (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1998; Celce-Murcia, 2007) subliniază caracterul inseparabil al limbii și culturii, argumentând că predarea unei limbi străine implică, în mod necesar, transmiterea dimensiunii culturale asociate. Unirea celor două concepte ajută la formarea unor vorbitori capabili de *interacțiuni autentice, eficiente și sensibile cultural*.

INSTRUMENTELE MULTIMEDIA

Instrumentele multimedia reprezintă ansamblul resurselor tehnologice care integrează diferite forme de exprimare (text, imagine statică sau în mișcare, sunet, animație și interactivitate) pentru a facilita comunicarea, învățarea sau transmiterea informației într-o manieră complexă și atractivă. Aceste instrumente permit prezentarea conținutului prin mai multe canale senzoriale simultan, ceea ce contribuie la creșterea gradului de implicare cognitivă și emoțională a utilizatorului. În context educațional și comunicativ, multimedia devine un mijloc eficient de stimulare a gândirii critice, de dezvoltare a competențelor digitale și de susținere a procesului de învățare activă, centrată pe utilizator. În plus, în contextul predării limbii române ca limbă străină suportul vizual devine vital în situațiile în care se apelează la metoda directă sau nu există o limbă de contact între studenți și profesor.

Pentru dezvoltarea competenței (inter)cultural-pragmatice, putem apela la o serie variată de activități și metode interactive, printre care se numără și utilizarea instrumentelor multimedia. Este deja foarte bine cunoscut faptul că integrarea și utilizarea tehnologiei în clasele de limbă aduce nenumărate beneficii, studenții fiind familiarizați și utilizând des aplicații ale rețelelor de socializare. Pentru ei, aceste rețele reprezintă atât un mijloc de divertisment, cât și unul de informare.

Utilizarea acestora vine cu avantaje, atât pentru profesor, cât și pentru studenți. Studenții, potrivit feedbackului oferit de ei, consideră că materialele preluate de pe internet au un limbaj mai apropiat de ceea ce aud ei „pe stradă” și îi ajută să se familiarizeze mai bine cu limba autentică. Menționez că în cadrul cursurilor, de foarte multe ori apelez la microlimbă, întrucât evit folosirea unei limbi de contact. Astfel, videourile le prezintă o frântură de limbaj autentic. Printre avantajele pentru profesor se numără faptul că:

- sunt o resursă nelimitată de texte – putem găsi o multitudine de texte din toate domeniile, adaptabile la nivelul și interesele studenților noștri;
- preiau texte autentice – un factor important, întrucât e necesară pregătirea studenților pentru comunicarea reală, dincolo de pereții clasei;
- dezvoltă și receptarea orală – cu cât expunem studenții la mai multe exerciții de ascultare, cu atât le dezvoltăm mai repede competențele de receptare;
- se pretează la exerciții dinamice – prin utilizarea unui video care cuprinde sunet, imagine și text, studenții devin mai receptivi și mai atenți la detalii, datorită stimulării vizuale mai mari;
- permit înlănțuirea exercițiilor pornind de la același text-input – spre exemplu, după realizarea unui exercițiu de receptare a mesajului oral, se poate realiza unui de comunicare, orală sau scrisă, pornind de la tema care apare în video.

Pe de altă parte, există și câteva dezavantaje, cum ar fi:

- selectarea textului potrivit poate fi cronofagă – profesorii trebuie să fie atenți la tematica textelor, la gradul de dificultate și corectitudine, adecvarea textului la tematica și structura cursului, dar și la accentul celui care a realizat clipul;
- la nivelurile A1-A2 numărul de texte e limitat – fapt ce presupune, de cele mai multe ori, fie adaptarea informațiilor și realizarea unui alt material, fie crearea unor exerciții de preascultare care să asigure comprehensiunea textului, fie ajustarea ritmului cu care vorbește realizatorul clipului;
- lungimea unor texte – unele texte sunt prea ample, astfel că este necesară ajustarea dimensiunii acestora, pentru a nu plictisi studenții, pe de-o parte, și pentru a nu îi suprasolicita. Dacă textele sunt prea lungi, studenții tind să se simtă copleșiți și să își piardă atenția pe parcursul ascultării.

Luând în considerare aceste elemente, în continuare vom discuta despre resursele pe care le putem utiliza, propunând și câteva activități, pentru a servi ca exemplu, deja folosite în cadrul cursurilor de limba română ca limbă străină.

ACTIVITĂȚI ȘI RESURSE

Așa cum menționam, selectarea textelor poate reprezenta o ușoară provocare în elaborarea cursurilor, însă, mulțumită nenumăraților creatori de conținut digital, putem găsi numeroase resurse. Printre cele pe care le putem folosi se numără filmele, show-urile de stand-up comedy, videoclipurile și muzica. Totuși, în ceea ce privește show-urile de stand-up comedy, selectarea textelor este mai dificilă, din cauza limbajului licențios des utilizat, însă, pe de altă parte, acestea oferă o gamă largă de umor cultural, fiind abordate subiecte stereotipice, precum relația dintre soacră și noră/ginere. Fiecare dintre aceste resurse este accesibilă pe platforme de streaming precum YouTube.

În ceea ce privește activitățile pe care le propun în următoarea secțiune, obiectivul lor este, în primul rând, dezvoltarea competenței cultural-pragmatice, astfel accentul va fi pus pe comunicare care are la baza teme culturale. În plus, învățarea va fi centrată pe student, utilizând tehnologii și multimedia. De asemenea, una dintre activități presupune și învățare prin proiect, cu scopul de a le oferi studenților independența de a-și dezvolta gândirea critică prin selectarea textelor potrivite. Mai mult, activitățile pot fi realizate și în perechi sau echipe, lucru care duce la consolidarea grupe și la dezvoltarea competențelor interpersonale.

Activitățile care se bazează pe texte input audio vor debuta ca exerciții de receptare a textului oral, presupunând ascultarea și vizionarea unor clipuri pe YouTube. În ceea ce privește cadrul legal, utilizarea acestor clipuri este permisă cu specificarea sursei, însă nu e posibilă tăierea/editarea/ combinarea conținutului video în alt produs. De asemenea, nu e permisă publicarea materialului în scopuri comerciale. Totuși, atâta timp cât videourile se utilizează numai la clasă, fără să fie monetizate, specificându-se clar sursa și linkul unde pot fi

găsite, se pot construi exerciții pe marginea lor. Prima activitate propusă se poate construi pornind de la clipul intitulat „Expresii românești cu origini surprinzătoare” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nm2XdxvA360>), preluat de pe canalul Top 8, în care realizatorul prezintă opt expresii românești, des utilizate, explicând originea acestora. Videoclipul este relativ lung, având durata de șapte minute și șaisprezece secunde, însă se pot prezenta doar primele patru expresii, de pildă. Avantajul acestuia este faptul că e realizat într-o manieră dinamică, creatorul utilizând imagini și animații care se succed în tandem cu explicațiile sale. Astfel, se va porni de la cerința: *Urmărește următorul clip și descoperă câteva expresii interesante în limba română - Expresii Romanesti cu Origini Surprinzatoare - YouTube. Răspunde apoi la următoarele întrebări:*

- a) Ce înseamnă „a fi prins cu mâța-n sac”?
- b) Ce înseamnă „colac peste pupăză”?
- c) Ce înseamnă „a scoate pe cineva din pepeni”?
- d) Care expresie ți se pare cea mai interesantă?

În derularea exercițiului, studenții vor viziona de două ori clipul integral sau un fragment din acesta, în scopul de a răspunde la întrebările de mai sus. Fiind un videoclip destul de grafic, exercițiile de preascultare nu sunt neapărat necesare, însă ar fi utilă, poate, explicarea unor cuvinte în funcție de nivelul de limbă al cursanților. Punctul forte al acestui exercițiu este că îmbină o activitate centrată pe receptare cu una de comunicare, prin itemul d, în care cursanții trebuie să-și formuleze opinia personală. Sunt recomandate și alte exerciții de postascultare, de exemplu explicarea unor cuvinte, pentru a asigura comprehensiunea textului. Exercițiul poate fi integrat într-un curs dedicat expresiilor idiomatice și poate fi realizat și prin paralele între expresii din limbile materne ale studenților și limba română.

2. Al doilea exercițiu propus este unul conectat mai degrabă la componenta culturală, și se construiește în jurul videoclipului preluat de pe același canal utilizat și pentru exercițiul anterior, Top 8 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qNRvASzdjF8>) având ca temă personalități române și curiozități din România, spre exemplu informații cu privire la cea mai înaltă biserică de lemn din lume. Cerința exercițiului poate fi următoarea:

Ascultă și vizionează următorul clip și răspunde la întrebări:

- a) Ce lucru ți se pare cel mai interesant? De ce?
- b) Care este primul lucru amintit în clip?
- c) Ce poate să facă sistemul dezvoltat de Ionuț Budișteanu?
- d) Ce s-a descoperit pe malul Dunării?
- e) Cine a fost Traian Popovici?

La fel ca în cazul videoclipului anterior, în cadrul unui curs se poate utiliza doar o secvență din acesta, iar textul se va audia de două ori. Mai mult decât atât, în cazul în care unele informații sunt prea dificil de înțeles, acestea se pot omite,

sau se pot explica înainte de audierea textului, printr-un exercițiu lexical de asociere a cuvintelor cu definiții. De asemenea, sunt recomandate exercițiile de preascultare, cum ar fi asocierea cuvintelor cu explicațiile lor sau cu imagini, întrucât acest text are o dificultate mai ridicată, fiind potrivit, mai degrabă, pentru nivelurile B1-C2, decât pentru nivelurile A1-A2.

După audierea textelor și rezolvarea itemilor, care pot avea forme diferite de cele propuse mai sus, se pot realiza exerciții care, fie să vizeze și alte competențe, fie să fie bazate pe comunicare. Printre acestea amintim:

- Exerciții gramaticale ce vizează diferite aspecte din texte, cum ar fi recapitularea imperfectului, a diatezei pasive sau a pronumelui relativ în cazurile genitiv și dativ.
- Exerciții de comunicare orală bazate pe exprimarea opiniei sau pe expunerea unor curiozități din propria țară.
- Exerciții de redactare, cum ar fi un text despre o persoană faimoasă din țara de origine.
- Exerciții cultural-lexicale, de pildă găsirea expresiilor corespondente în L1.

O altă activitate realizabilă, utilizând platforma Canva, se poate desfășura în perechi, și poate avea tema generală: Tradiții și obiceiuri românești. În cadrul acesteia, studenții, împărțiți în grupuri de 3–4 persoane, primesc sarcina de a realiza o prezentare digitală despre un obicei românesc specific (ex.: Mărțișorul, Paștele, Crăciunul, nunta tradițională, sărbătorile de iarnă). La final, fiecare grup trebuie să prezinte un text explicativ redactat în limba română (descrierea obiceiului, semnificația sa culturală), imagini și/sau videoclipuri autentice (preluate din surse sigure), elemente audio, cum ar fi o scurtă înregistrare cu cântece tradiționale sau cu pronunția unor expresii uzuale legate de sărbătoare. În sprijinul studenților, profesorul poate oferi exemple de surse și de texte care pot fi preluate și utilizate. Obiectivele secvenței sunt: dezvoltarea competențelor lingvistice (lexicale, gramaticale și discursive), consolidarea competenței interculturale prin explorarea tradițiilor românești, formarea competențelor digitale și a abilității de a utiliza mijloace multimedia în scop comunicativ și educativ. La final, se pot adresa și întrebări fiecărui grup, pentru a verifica înțelegerea corectă a informațiilor.

Exemplele propuse în acest articol reprezintă doar câteva posibilități de integrare a conținutului disponibil online. De asemenea, se pot crea videoclipuri utilizând platforme de editare video, cum ar fi CapCut⁴ sau Movavi⁵. Pentru platformele care nu oferă conținut deja realizat, se pot prelua, de pe internet, sau se pot redacta știri sau articole pe teme culturale și se vor înregistra. După înregistrare, se vor realiza videoclipul și itemii. Pe lângă acestea, există și instrumente IA care transformă un text în material audio.

⁴ <https://www.capcut.com/ro-ro/tools/online-video-editor>

⁵ <https://veo.movavi.com/video-maker>

CONCLUZII

Articolul de față a propus, pe scurt, dezvoltarea competenței cultural-pragmatice, în perspectiva predării limbii române ca limbă străină, prin utilizarea instrumentelor multimedia în cadrul cursurilor de limbă. În acest demers, am prezentat și trei exemple de activități utilizabile, două dintre acestea bazându-se pe texte input preluate de pe platforma YouTube, iar a treia realizată pe platforma Canva. Motivul pentru care am optat pentru această platformă este autenticitatea textelor, întrucât este un factor important în predare. Expunerea la un limbaj cât mai natural și autentic este extrem de benefic pentru studenți/cursanți.

În concluzie, argumentele pentru care susținem cu tărie beneficiile utilizării videoclipurilor ce prezintă limbaj autentic sunt următoarele: diversitate textuală, dinamism și stimularea atenției și capacității de retenție a informației. Instrumentele multimedia nu fac decât să contribuie la diversificarea activităților din cadrul cursului, dezvoltând mai multe competențe simultan (comprehensiune, comunicare și competență cultural-pragmatică). În plus, oferind o gamă largă de texte, pot atinge interesele unui public țintă mai divers și mai numeros, fiind, în același timp, suport audio-vizual.

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Credința – noțiune fundamentală a lingvisticii

Abstract: This paper deals with a typology of communication based on two main criteria. The first criterion is the degree of seriousness involved in communication and the second is the set of expectations (or the horizon of expectation) which each speaker has concerning his/her own discourse as well as that of his/her interlocutor. Therefore, we have four situations of communication: three reflecting normal communication based on the rule of seriousness, and a fourth one which suspends this rule and leads to what Romanians call “bășcălie”, a situation in which neither the speaker nor the receiver takes the content of communication seriously.

Keywords: *linguistic communication, situations of communication, horizon of expectation, seriousness, pretence.*

Rezumat: Această lucrare tratează o tipologie a comunicării bazată pe două criterii principale. Primul criteriu este gradul de seriozitate implicat în comunicare, iar al doilea este setul de așteptări (sau orizontul de așteptare) pe care fiecare vorbitor îl are cu privire la propriul discurs, precum și la cel al interlocutorului său. Prin urmare, avem patru situații de comunicare: trei care reflectă o comunicare normală bazată pe regula seriozității, iar o a patra care suspendă această regulă și duce la ceea ce românii numesc „bășcălie”, o situație în care nici vorbitorul, nici receptorul nu iau în serios conținutul comunicării.

Cuvinte-cheie: *comunicare lingvistică, situații de comunicare, orizont de așteptare, seriozitate, presupunere.*

O. În general o noțiune ignorată în studiile lingvistice, credința este, totuși, o noțiune absolut necesară în lingvistica generală. În sensul în care o folosim noi, de asumare a unui conținut, noțiunea își află antecedenti într-o anumită direcție filosofică, aceea a empirismului britanic, opusă prin rezultatele ei raționalismului de sursă carteziană.

Direcția filosofică a empirismului britanic nu e unitară; ba, din contră, ea se poate spune că urmează un traseu progresiv de radicalizare la cei trei reprezentanți importanți ai ei: John Locke, George Berkeley și David Hume. Dacă Locke era încă un substanțialist pentru care, în spirit cartezian, se păstra distincția între întindere și gândire (Locke, 1912), existând astfel o substanță în spatele senzațiilor noastre, la care accesul era încă problematic (vezi metafora „ariciului”, care apare în scrierile sale), Berkeley în schimb își face un titlu de glorie tocmai din suprimarea acestei substanțe care pune probleme spiritualismului creștin, pe care el îl reprezenta. În spiritul celui mai radical antimaterialism, el suprimă substanța, înlocuind-o, pur și simplu, cu complexe de senzații; dacă înlăturăm

¹ Asist. univ. dr., Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai, Facultatea de Litere, Departamentul de Limbi Străine Specializate.

aceste senzații, din așa-zisa „substanță” nu mai rămâne nimic. Singurul care poate garanta atunci veridicitatea cunoașterii omenești este însuși Dumnezeu. Nu există în univers decât sufletul cunoscător și divinitatea. Dar, totuși, Berkeley admite și un criteriu suplimentar al veridicității (Berkeley, 1910) acestor complexe de senzații, anume coerența lor, ceea ce ne face să departajăm între, de pildă, vis și trezie, chiar dacă, în cele din urmă, cunoașterea omenească este garantată de divinitatea însăși.

Din contră, David Hume, cel mai radical sceptic dintre empiriștii britanici, desființează acest criteriu al coerenței. Pentru el – și aici ajungem la punctul care ne interesează – doar credința noastră în realitatea unui obiect îl face pe acesta real – credința (*feeling*) face diferența, doar ea, între real și ireal. Acesta este, de fapt, și fundamentul teoriei lui Hume asupra cauzalității, văzută pur și simplu ca o asociere constantă pusă în mișcare de credința, *feeling*-ul, subiectului (Hume, 1987). Credința devine în acest sens pur și simplu o asumare a unor conținuturi.

Chiar și fără a împărtăși scepticismul radical al filosofului scoțian, putem prelua și adapta această noțiune a lui la studiul lingvisticii. „Credința” va fi, în acest caz, credința subiectului în veridicitatea enunțurilor rostite de el.

1. Credința în enunțurile proprii fie există – și atunci avem o asumare a enunțurilor produse de locutor –, fie nu există – și atunci nu avem nicio asemenea asumare².

Dar, cu excepția cazului (extrem și problematic) al monologului (chiar și acolo putând exista anumite îndoieli), comunicarea include măcar și o a doua persoană, iar atunci primul locutor va trebui să facă presupuneri privitoare la credința în discurs a celuilalt sau celorlalți. Totalitatea acestor presupuneri va constitui orizontul său de așteptare (Căpușan, 2018). În ceea ce îl privește pe al doilea locutor, acesta va avea și el, în mod necesar, un asemenea orizont de așteptare în privința primului. Desigur, această noțiune de orizont de așteptare este mai largă decât numai așteptările în privința credinței în discurs, al său propriu sau al altuia. Deocamdată ne interesează numai această componentă a orizontului de așteptare, noțiune care se referă în mod special la faptul că nicio comunicare nu vine pe un teren gol – ea este întotdeauna precedată de o așteptare, fie că e vorba de discursul propriu sau de cel al celuilalt.

Pe de altă parte, pentru a asigura succesul comunicării sale, orice locutor va vrea să modifice orizontul de așteptare al colocutorului său. Elementul comun al tuturor comunicărilor va fi, deci, voința de a modifica în sens pozitiv orizontul de așteptare al colocutorului.

² Desigur, o asemenea dicotomie lasă deschisă problema existenței unor grade intermediare între aceste două extreme. De altfel, chiar în cursul acestei expuneri vom vedea asemenea exemple de cazuri intermediare.

2. Putem schița, prin urmare, următorul tabel al diverselor situații de comunicare din punctul de vedere al orizontului de așteptare, punctul comun fiind dorința de schimbare ce subîntinde toate aceste situații, subiectele comunicării fiind notate cu A1 și A2.

1. A1 își asumă comunicarea și se așteaptă ca și A2 să facă același lucru (luând la fel de în serios comunicarea sa).	3. A1 își asumă comunicarea, dar nu se așteaptă ca A2 să facă la fel.
2. A1 nu își asumă comunicarea, dar speră ca A2 să o facă.	4. A1 nu își asumă comunicarea și dorește ca nici A2 să nu o facă.

2.1. Situația întâi, **A1 își asumă comunicarea și se așteaptă ca și A2 să facă același lucru.**

Aceasta este situația ideală. În această situație, între orizonturile de așteptare ale celor doi colocutori există o coincidență completă – A1 nu trebuie să facă niciun fel de efort special pentru a-l influența pe A2 și nici A2 nu trebuie să facă nimic special pentru a se conform așteptărilor lui A1. Este un gen de comunicare fără subterfugii și blocaje.

Acest gen de comunicare mai este ideal și din alt punct de vedere, și anume pentru că, de fiecare dată, orice locutor va lua această situație ca fiind de la sine înțeleasă: presupunem în mod natural că interlocutorul nostru are același orizont de așteptare ca și noi. Din acest punct de vedere, se poate spune, parafrazând un titlu al lui Roland Barthes, că suntem într-o situație „de grad zero” a comunicării (Barthes, 2006), ce poate fi luată ca reper.

Acest caracter de grad zero al comunicării nu trebuie să ne ascundă faptul că avem aici în vedere, totuși, doar o situație ideală, o idealizare a unor situații din practică. În plan practic, însă, în comunicarea reală probabil că nu se va întâlni niciodată o coincidență perfectă a orizonturilor de așteptare, aceasta fie și numai pentru că oamenii pot fi foarte diferiți între ei. Mai mult, aceasta nu înseamnă că această situație, dorită totuși de toată lumea, nu este o situație extrem de fragilă. Ajunge ca să intervină o cât de mică apreciere greșită a orizontului de așteptare al unuia sau al celuilalt dintre locutori pentru a ne regăsi în una dintre situațiile care vor fi descrise în continuare. Precaritatea acestei „situații de comunicare reper” este, în fond, sursa tuturor neînțelegerilor care grevează comunicarea noastră din toate timpurile. Fiecare locutor va presupune în mod natural că interlocutorul său va avea același orizont de așteptare cu al său – dar aceasta nu înseamnă că presupunerea se va și adevăra³.

³ În filmul lui Werner Herzog din 1972, *Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes* (*Aguirre, mânia lui Dumnezeu*), există o ilustrare tragică a modului în care această presupunere poate duce la rezultatele cele mai nefericite. Un spaniol îi prezintă unui amerindian o Biblie, spunându-i „Acesta este cuvântul lui Dumnezeu”, la care amerindianul își lipește urechea de Biblie și, foarte uimit, întreabă „Dacă e cuvântul lui Dumnezeu, de ce nu se aude?”. Spaniolul a luat replica drept o blasfemie și l-a omorât pe amerindian.

2.2. Situația a doua, **A1 nu își asumă comunicarea, dar se așteaptă ca A2 să o facă.**

În cazul acesta avem de a face cu un program conștient al lui A1 pentru a ascunde față de A2 indiciile care ar putea trăda neasumarea lui – A1 vrea să îl facă pe A2 să creadă că el își asumă propria comunicare. O asemenea situație poate fi calificată ca fiind minciună sau manipulare.

Pentru a izbuti în această întreprindere, A1 trebuie să poată să ascundă cât mai bine urmele propriei sale minciuni. Această operațiune poate să reușească mai mult sau mai puțin bine (în definitiv, minciuna perfectă, ca și crima perfectă, probabil nu există). Se întâmplă deseori ca două discursuri (cel care simulează asumarea și cel care arată neasumarea) să fie co-prezente în același enunț, ceea ce declanșează un efect comic. Oferim, mai jos, două exemple:

„Da’ noi n-am beut nimică,
Da’ noi n-am beut nimică,
Numa’ un litru de horincă,
Numa’ un litru de horincă” (cântec popular maramureșean interpretat de Florentina și Petre Giurgi).
„L’autre moitié fut apportée par les entremetteuses lancées à sa recherche. Ces sorcières vinrent m’assurer, l’une plus convaincue que l’autre, que Kyra se trouvait dans dix harems à la fois” (Istrati, 1924, p. 168).⁴

În alte cazuri, o secvență a unui context lingvistic poate contribui la demascarea alteia:

„O tânără scrie o pasionată scrisoare de dragoste, apoi lipește plicul și spune:
– Și acumă cui să-i trimit scrisoarea: lui Gigi sau lui Costel?” (*Mari actori de comedie*, Coca Andronescu, Radio România Cultural, 24 ianuarie 2023)
„Juanito entra en una tienda y ve algunas tarjetas con el texto «A ti sola, mi único amor» y dice: Dáme por favor doce de estas”⁵ (citad de prezentatorul Gregorio Ibáñez în *España en la distancia*, 26 octombrie 1988, emisiune prezentată pe site-ul *Radio Exterior de España*, accesat la 16 martie 2025).

Pe de altă parte, un asemenea discurs auto-contradictoriu poate fi produs în mod absolut conștient, tot în scop ironic:

„Doar că la noi n-a existat niciun război civil și nicio purificare etnică și nicio gherilă secuiască, în rest totul e identic.” (discurs al autorului către un prieten maghiar care îi spunea că unii maghiari sunt tentați să facă o paralelă între cazul Ținutului Secuiesc și cel al Kosovo-ului).

⁴ Cealaltă jumătate fu introdusă de mijlocitoarele puse în urmărire ei. Dihăniile acestea – una mai convinsă ca cealaltă – veneau să mă încredințeze că Chira se găsea în câte zece haremurii deodată. (Istrati, 1982, p. 98)

⁵ Juanito intră într-o prăvălie și vede niște ilustrate pe care scrie >> Ție singură, marea mea iubire<< și spune: Dați-mi, vă rog, douăsprezece dintr-astea (traducerea autorului)

„Din când în când le mai cade în cap câte o rachetă, în rest totul e ok.” (discurs al autorului către un interlocutor care spunea că în Ucraina ultimilor ani viața a mers înainte relativ normal).

Acest gen de discurs auto-contradictoriu cunoaște numeroase subvariante: paradoxul mincinosului, unde un subiect se denunță pe sine ca mincinos, ficțiunea (literatură, teatru sau cinema) care se denunță pe sine ca ficțiune, paradoxul lui Gödel, care spune că orice sistem demonstrabil trebuie să se bazeze în ultimă instanță pe postulatele nedemonstrabile (Dumitriu, 1969; Marcus, 1984).

2.3. Situația a treia, *A1 își asumă discursul, dar nu se așteaptă ca A2 să facă la fel.*

... dar tocmai această discrepanță face întreg farmecul situației căci, în cazul acesta, A2 trebuie convins. În practică puțini oameni se vor înclina în fața acestui decalaj al orizontului de așteptare, lăsându-l pe A2 în plata Domnului, cum s-ar zice, și sub stăpânirea propriilor sale preconcepții. Nu, ei, în practică, vor încerca să apropie orizontul de așteptare al lui A2 de cel al lor.

Spre deosebire de situația întâi, unde comunicarea decurge oarecum automat, aici comunicarea e marcată de dificultăți – dar nu avem ce face. O conversație între persoane cu orizonturi de așteptare total diferite ar duce la discuții ca acelea care se întâlnesc atât de frecvent în opera unor autori precum Cehov, Ionescu, Beckett, Pinter sau Vișniec; un fals dialog între inși care sunt, în realitate, blocați inexorabil în propriul orizont de așteptare și în propriul discurs (o montare a piesei lui E. Ionescu, *Rinocerii*, văzută de autor (Théâtre National du Luxembourg, regia Tompa Gábor) dramatiza până la extrem această fragmentare a dialogului, căci nu numai că personajele țineau, practic, monologuri paralele, dar și vorbeau la un moment dat limbi diferite, aceeași persoană trecând chiar de la o limbă la alta – personajele vorbeau succesiv franceza, germana literară, dialectul german din Luxembourg și olandeza).

Tot efortul uman de convingere și transmitere a cunoștințelor, toată tradiția omenirii se revendică de la această situație – intrăm aici în domeniul tradițiilor și, simultan, în al retoricii, în sensul antic de artă a convingerii.

2.4. Situația a patra, *A1 nu își asumă comunicarea și dorește ca nici A2 să nu o facă.*

Precedentele situații au descris, toate, o structură a comunicării unde, chiar și atunci când A1 nu își asumă discursul (situația a doua), acesta pornea de la premisa că interlocutorul lui va putea, totuși, să o facă. Situația de aici este diferită, în sensul că ea nici măcar nu îi solicită interlocutorului să aibă o atitudine de asumare a discursului. Am putea spune că, din acest punct de vedere, un prag al asumării a fost trecut.

În general, se poate socoti că acest prag al seriozității nu este depășit dacă, fie și în mod ipocrit, A1 pretinde o asumare a discursului său din partea celuilalt. Dar această condiție poate să nu fie întrunită – și atunci intrăm în alt domeniu, pe care îl putem denumi (cu un termen cu etimologie incertă în română) *bășcălie*⁶.

Dacă în orizontul discursului să zicem „serios”, „asumat”, principala miză (mai ales în situațiile a doua sau a treia) consta în a-l convinge pe A2 să își asume și el discursul, aici, din contră, el trebuie să fie convins să nu o facă; A1 trebuie să îi dea celuilalt indicii clare că discursul său nu trebuie luat în serios:

„(...) pe lângă asta, Vlase (Gabriel Vlase, fost șef al SIE – nota autorului) l-a împrumutat pe Tudose (Mihai Tudose, fost prim-ministru al României – nota autorului) cu 15.000 de euro, ceea ce nu era mită, ci ajutor pentru un om sărman, că porcii zboară” (Valeriu Nicolae, *Starea impostorilor*, emisiune din 23 septembrie 2024, accesată online la 25 ianuarie 2025).

„(...) că io-s Zamolxe și Câtea (deputat PSD de Iași – nota autorului) e un om onest” (*ibidem*, 16 mai 2024).

Dar această strategie a comunicării indiciilor nu este necesar să reușească. Astfel, un internaut israelian, identificat drept XYZ (posibil un actor de stand-up comedy), a publicat un text, evident parodic, în care atribuia prăbușirea elicopterului în care se afla defunctul președinte iranian Ebrahim Raisi unui agent al Mossad-ului, botezat Eli Copter. Dar „știrea” a fost luată în serios de un site pro-Hamas și tratată ca atare (G4Media, 31 martie 2025). Tot astfel în filmul *A Hologram for the King* (2016, regia Tom Tykwer) personajul principal este întrebat de un saudit dacă face atât de multe fotografii pentru că este agent CIA și, crezând că este o întrebare în glumă, acesta îi răspunde că e doar o ocupație part-time, nimic serios. Dar interlocutorul său luase foarte în serios întrebarea și, de aceea, se plânge zgomotos gazdelor.

Totuși, în situațiile cele mai fericite, interlocutorii își dau seama pe ce teren se situează și decid să reacționeze în consecință:

„T.M.: Și o televiziune vorbea deunăzi de mii de manifestanți. De unde, Doamne iartă-mă, să fie mii de manifestanți la Botoșani? Numai dacă nu s-au întors românii noștri.

⁶ Este semnificativ că, deși *bășcălia* a fost considerată de unii ca o constantă a etosului românesc, totuși, termenul în sine a suscitât puțin interes din partea lingviștilor și lexicografilor. Dicționarele mai vechi (ca acela al lui Laurian și Massim) nici măcar nu-l menționează. În *Dicționarul Academiei* al lui Pușcariu figurează doar verbul *a bășcăli*, fără etimologie și cu sensul „a certa, a muștra pe cineva”, „a-l face de râs și de bătaie de joc”, la Ciorănescu îl găsesc cu sensul „muștruluiială”, iar dicționarele mai noi (*Dicționarul limbii române moderne* din 1958, *Dicționarul limbii române literare contemporane*, 1955-1957, DEX 2009) îl dau cu etimologie neclară. Conform *Dicționarului etimologic al limbii române*, etimologia cuvântului este nesigură, probabil țigănescul **baștali**. Totuși e de remarcat că un dicționar român-neogrec (Mardare 2003) găsește un echivalent pentru expresia românească „a lua în bășcălie”.

R.Z.: Exisă și milionul de manifestanți de la Țândărei, despre care nicio televiziune nu vorbește!

T.M.: Sunt interese mari la mijloc!” (B1 TV, 20 noiembrie 2021, emisiunea *Bună, România*)

Aici, R.Z. se preface că aduce o obiecție la discursul lui T.M., iar T.M. se preface că îl aprobă – dar amândoi știu că se prefac, pentru că obiecția lui R.Z. este și mai aberantă decât afirmația citată de T.M.. Se prefac – acesta e cuvântul care stă la baza lumii bășcăliei.

2.5. Dacă facem acum o recapitulare, chiar și rapidă, a celor patru situații de comunicare prezentate, nu se poate să nu ne frapeze un lucru – situația a patra apare ca o utilizare aberantă a limbajului în raport cu celelalte. Primele situații (chiar și a doua, care se referă la minciună și manipulare) trimit la același cadru fundamental, unul în care cel care vorbește se așteaptă să fie crezut și luat în serios. Ultima situație inversează această regulă: niciun interlocutor nu își asumă conținuturile propuse, deși se preface că o face. Prin această „prefacere” (în ambele sensuri ale termenului) situația de comunicare numită „bășcălie” seamănă cu lumea sărbătorii, așa cum e definită de Roger Caillois (1966) – o lume în care regulile cotidianului sunt suspendate temporar. Numai o asemenea suspendare poate explica enunțuri evident aberante, după regula seriozității și asumării, precum următoarele:

„Chiar, ați văzut vreodată un elefant într-un cireș? Vedeți ce bine se ascund?” (vorbește un clown în filmul *Marocco*, 2021, regizor Emanuel Pârvu)

„– Nu știu ce a avut astăzi, că tot timpul s-a agitat.

– Dă-i un anti-depresiv.” (conversație despre o vacă, din filmul *Ținutul*, regia Grímur Hákonarson).

„Madame, est-ce que vous pourriez ne pas bouger pendant vingt secondes ?”⁷ (conversație despre o căpriță, din filmul *Raoul Taburin*, regia Pierre Godeau)

„Uitați, acesta este agentul cu care lucrez: Thomas de la Miau 6” (jurnalistul Mălin Bot, răspunzând acuzelor potrivit cărora ar fi un „om al serviciilor” – replică preluată de pe TikTok, 1 martie 2025).

Se mai poate face o paralelă și între lumea bășcăliei și cea a cinismului (așa cum au fost acestea descrise în Căpușan, 2018). Și cinismul presupune suspendarea temporară a regulilor lingvistice (respectiv a regulii că trebuie cruțat orizontul de așteptare al celuilalt – aceasta, la rândul său, consecință a regulii etice fundamentale ce sacralizează viața umană). De altfel, punctele de convergență între bășcălie și cinism sunt numeroase. Diferența ar fi totuși că bășcălia nu e în mod necesar cinică. Ea suspendă doar o situație lingvistică și nu o regulă etică – și, cel puțin dacă nu e combinată cu o doză de cinism, nu e periculoasă.

⁷ Doamnă, puteți să nu vă mișcați vreo douăzeci de secunde ? (traducerea autorului)

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