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Mimoun Akhiat
Utah State University

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**Second Language Acquisition in the Era of Technology and Artificial Intelligence:
Exploring New Frontiers**

by

Mimoun Akhiat

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

Approved:

Dr. Joshua J. Thoms
Major Professor

Dr. Abdulkafi Albirini
Committee Member

Dr. Sarah O'Neill
Committee Member

Dr. Crescencio López
Department Head

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

Logan, Utah

2024

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ABSTRACT

Second Language Acquisition in the Era of Technology and Artificial Intelligence: Exploring
New Frontiers

by

Mimoun Akhiat: Master of Second Language Teaching
Utah State University, 2024

Major Professor: Dr. Joshua J. Thoms

Department: World Languages & Cultures

This portfolio is the capstone project of the Master of Second Language Teaching program. It offers perspectives and insights into major themes of importance to the writer. It begins with a general introduction pertaining to the writer's education and teaching background, his goals for joining the program and an overall reflection of this experience. Following this is the writer's teaching philosophy comprised of a description of professional environment and a teaching philosophy statement centered on the principles of multimodality, authenticity, and collaboration. The second section of this portfolio is entitled hands-on teaching experience where the writer presents and reflects on a project he carried out with his students on the issue of intercultural competence via virtual exchange. The third section is dedicated to the writer's position paper about artificial intelligence in second language acquisition, focusing specifically on Chat-GPT in the context of Arabic as a foreign language. The portfolio concludes with a statement of future goals and plans.

(86 pages)

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I would have never been able to get to this stage without the support of many people. Chief among these is Dr. Thoms whose guidance and assistance were unfailing not only in class, but also beyond that. His knowledge and expertise in the field of second language acquisition have been valuable and could not be more practical, to say the least. I am fortunate to have had him as my professor for three consecutive semesters and then as my committee chair during my fourth semester in the program. Thanks to him, I was able to hone both my teaching practices and research skills.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AALIM: The Arab American Language Institute in Morocco

ACTFL: The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

AI: Artificial Intelligence

C2: Second Culture

CALL: Computer Assisted Language Learning

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference

COIL: Collaborative Online International Learning

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FLL: Foreign Language Learning

GAI: Generative Artificial Intelligence

IC: Intercultural Competence

L2: Second Language

LLMs: Large Language Models

MSLT: Master of Second Language Teaching

SA: Standard Arabic

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

SLT: Second Language Teaching

TAM: Technology Acceptance Model

TL: Target Language

USU: Utah State University

VE: Virtual Exchange

INTRODUCTION TO THE PORTFOLIO

Growing up in the Rif mountains of Morocco, I learned how to navigate across at least three languages before hitting the age of ten. Whether the navigation was smooth, that would have depended on the way I was taught these languages and the input/output opportunities that were available. In fact, I did not have as many resources as I did later on when I started learning English as my fourth language or Spanish as my fifth. With these latter languages, the ubiquity of technology, for example, made the process of learning easier. Even when I felt anxious or shy to practice them in person, I had the chance to do so more comfortably while behind the screen with many virtual native speakers and learners. Technological and social tools not only provided words to read, but also photos to see, audio to hear, and video to do all three (read, hear, and see). It merits mentioning that I am not suggesting technology should take over classrooms and teachers. In fact, I enjoy face-to-face interactions more. Therefore, technology should only enrich and expand real-life/classroom interaction opportunities.

My story with languages does not cease with learning them, but it extends to teaching them and sharing them with others. After graduating with a degree in English Studies in Morocco, I embarked on teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in high school for several years. In 2020, I was fortunate to get a Fulbright foreign language teaching assistantship to teach Arabic language and culture in the US. As the Covid-19 pandemic was at its peak, my first semester had to be conducted online, a grim reality I was faced with for the first time. However, this reality again proved to me how flexible and resilient I can be after my Fall semester online from Morocco was a success. In the Spring of 2021, I could finally meet my students in person and it was one of the best moments in my life. Thus, my Fulbright experience ended up offering me the best of both worlds: an online teaching experience and an in-person one.

Upon returning to Morocco with my American experience, I felt that there was much more I needed to learn and explore. I did not want to be a mediocre teacher anymore. No sooner had I started searching for some relevant programs than I found the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program. With the opportunity to not only explore the most current issues related to second language teaching and research, but also put all the acquired knowledge and skills immediately into practice in my Arabic class that I have been teaching for the last two years, this program offered me everything I could ask for. Without any exaggeration, I could say that the program succeeded in helping me meet all my goals in terms of honing my learning, teaching, and research skills.

I have to admit that the MSLT program altered who I am as a person and as a teacher. I felt that after every class that I have taken, my confidence increased. I also became more responsible and resilient. The perfect class size characteristic of this program meant that I obtained all the feedback and help I needed and whenever I needed it. My classroom interactions with the professors and classmates have always been beyond enriching and eye-opening. I would have never had such a multitude of perspectives in my country or perhaps in any other one for that matter. With the unique background of each one of my professors and classmates, my intercultural competence has improved drastically. Additionally, the extracurricular events that I took part in (e.g., language fairs), the teaching observations that I had to conduct, and the research opportunities I was granted will all leave their imprints on my personal and professional identities.

My Arabic class made me love and enjoy teaching more than I ever did before. I felt prouder and prouder every moment I could see my students learn a new vocabulary item, grammar point, or use their general Arabic skills—be it in or outside of the classroom and whether

in writing, or via producing it orally. Likewise, I cherished every cultural discussion/exchange we had. Indeed, their motivation and interest in learning the language further inspired me to learn a new word or expression in other languages such as German, Japanese, or Chinese every time I met one of my colleagues who taught these languages. This, again, taught me that when teachers try to learn a new language themselves, they can understand and relate to their students better.

Briefly, the MSLT program has proven to be the best choice in my life. I wish I joined it earlier, but as the saying goes “better late than never.” Over the course of this program, I have been privileged to forge countless friendships and connections. To say the least, the MSLT program has been a life-changing and transformative experience, be it at the personal, academic, or professional level.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

This section consists of two parts. I first provide an overview of my prospective professional environment that describes where I will most likely teach after my graduation. The second part provides an overview of my key principles of second language teaching based on what I have learned over the course of my studies in the MSLT program and experienced as a graduate instructor of Arabic in the Department of World Languages and Cultures at Utah State University.

1. Professional Environment

As mentioned in the introduction to this portfolio, I have been fortunate to have a myriad of experiences with various languages both as a teacher and as a learner. Therefore, I believe it would be wise to expand my potential professional environments as a language teacher instead of confining myself to a single one. In fact, doing so will allow me to grow even further. To start with, I want to continue teaching Arabic as foreign language in an American university setting. My experiences of teaching Arabic in such an environment for a year in Texas as a Fulbright foreign language teaching assistant and at USU as a graduate assistant for two years have made me realize that a higher education context is where I feel the most confident. In addition, teaching in this environment is unique in the sense that even when the curriculum focuses on Standard Arabic (SA) only, most students are still curious to learn how to communicate in colloquial/spoken Arabic. In these cases, the excitement of teaching is double as I feel like I am teaching them two languages at the same time. Another reason I enjoy teaching Arabic learners at the university level is that most of them are motivated and responsible. They are not taking the class merely because they need it to graduate. A lot of the students who belong to majors like International Studies, Political Science, History, and Religious Studies are aware that Arabic is a

strategic and instrumental language. I have even met professors who are specialized in philosophy, history, and religion and they told me that they regretted not having studied Arabic.

Additionally, I believe that teaching Arabic at American universities will allow me to grow not only as a teacher but also as a researcher. This is because unlike commonly taught languages (e.g., Spanish and Chinese), there is scant research on Arabic. When it comes to textbooks, the only widely used one has now become outdated, to say the least. Most of the texts, media material, and examples used may not purely reflect Arab cultures as they are now, nor do they stimulate students' interest. In fact, I have had to find alternative texts on many occasions to present something relevant to my students' needs. For example, my colleagues and I were told many times by our students that the content of the multimedia material is always gloomy. Students were wondering if it is something cultural and shared across all the Arab world. In fact, we usually see the same people in these videos, at least for the first- and second-year textbooks which I used before.

Therefore, I feel it is the responsibility of students like myself graduating from programs like the MSLT program to bridge the gap in terms of research and teaching materials that would help all those who are interested in teaching and/or learning Arabic. I think it is important that these videos be updated and they should include different people from different backgrounds. In terms of settings, the videos would be more engaging if they revolved around real people in real situations, instead of the same characters who are usually indoors. Listening to and/or watching the same people does not even give students some exposure as to know about Arabic names for example. Likewise, there should be more joyful times so that students do not think that people in the Arab world are always sad and complaining.

Another sub-area in which I trust my background and expertise would be an added value is Moroccan Arabic. Based on the search I did regarding Arabic programs in the United States (US), it seems that there are many programs with a capstone project in Morocco. I believe this will give me an advantage as a Moroccan, because I would be able to share a lot about the Moroccan culture and dialect. In fact, I was reflecting on this point, and I felt nostalgic since my very first step into the world of teaching was when I applied for an internship at the Arab American Language Institute in Morocco (AALIM) in 2012. Even back then, it was my dream to teach American university students coming to Morocco for their study abroad programs. Less than ten years later, the dream started to materialize and I even came to the US to teach American students learning Arabic.

Another context I may also want to teach in is that of EFL. If I happen to move somewhere else where English is not the dominant language, I think I can still apply what I learned in the MSLT program to teach English. In Morocco, for instance, there are a lot of business professionals who are studying English so they can have more opportunities abroad. There is some anecdotal evidence on social media showing that taxi drivers in Morocco are starting to learn English in preparation for the 2030 World Cup which will be organized jointly by Morocco along with Spain and Portugal. Prior to starting my MSLT program, I had the chance to teach English in high school in Morocco for a few years. However, now with the skills I have accumulated, my aim is to teach English at the university level as an alternative to teaching Arabic in the US.

2. Teaching Philosophy Statement

I want to start this statement with Van Doren's famous quote, because it reflects the gist of my teaching philosophy as "the art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery to take place"

(1943, p.173). While this is true for education in general, in the field of language teaching, it is even more important to take into account the fact that we cannot teach our students all the bits and pieces of a given language and culture. Instead, what we should strive for is to help our learners become autonomous and equip them with the necessary tools to continue discovering the workings and nuances of the target language/culture (L2/C2). For me, this can be achieved through the following principles: multimodality, authenticity and collaboration. I label these principles together MAC.

The first principle that needs to be present to optimize the learning/teaching process is multimodality. In simple terms, the latter refers to the use of multiple modes and channels in the processing and creation of meaning. In Kessler's terms, these modes "can consist of those that are linguistic, visual, aural, gestural, or spatial in nature" (2022, p. 551). The principle of multimodality is grounded in Paivio's (1986) Dual Coding Theory and Mayer's (2001) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning. These theories postulate that learners make connections between verbal and non-verbal information and they learn better when words are aided with visuals than they do from words alone. While gestures and body language are semiotic resources teachers and students can use to communicate better and clearer, current technological tools allow for more effective visual aids such as video, pictures, graphs, captions/subtitles along with audio. In fact, multimodality can be very useful even when it comes to giving feedback as well.

For example, giving my students feedback on the learning management tool Canvas allows me to record it when I wish to focus on pronunciation. I can also include links to things I want to draw their attention to without having to explain it again myself. In addition to optimizing learning, using multimodal input and, for that matter, output as well, can make tasks and classroom environments more authentic since multimodal information is characteristic of

everyday life. People watch TV, use social media, and see billboards every day and everywhere. Thus, the main rationale for multimodal input is its pervasiveness and accessibility. Furthermore, the Douglas Fir Group (2016) assert that language learning is semiotic learning and that there are various semiotic resources that people can draw upon for meaning making. This implies that we need to teach our students, both implicitly and explicitly, how to use all of these resources and modes (written, spoken, visual, auditory, graphic, etc.). From a student-centered perspective, multimodal input has the potential of catering to different learners' preferences and needs. For example, there may be a learner who can understand a text only if it is accompanied with visuals. Another argument for multimodality is that it can boost learner autonomy. When input is enhanced through different modes, learners will need less assistance from "experts" or teachers, because multimodality is scaffolding in a sense. The benefits of multimodal input and output are not limited to a certain level of proficiency. All learners, regardless of their age or skill level, can find it more authentic and useful when multimodality is integrated in L2 classrooms. For instance, Pellicer-Sánchez et al. (2020) found that using images and other modes can support young learners' comprehension. In fact, I have been told many times that even native speakers resort to some sort of multimodality to make input more comprehensible as in activating captions when watching movies. Sometimes, learners are able to understand the language, but the pace and manner in which a given person is speaking may make it hard for learners to process. Finally, when it comes to output itself, learners and even professionals rely on different modes to convey their messages. Today, it is hard to imagine a presentation or speech that relies solely on words. Instead, various digital tools and software (i.e., Google Slides, Prezi, and PowerPoint Presentations) have become second nature.

In addition to multimodality, I deem authenticity to be helpful for language acquisition to take place effectively. I am specifically concerned here with authenticity of teaching materials and tasks. As Jones (2022) indicates, unfortunately textbooks do not always reflect real language use. He goes on to define authentic teaching material as that which is “produced for a real purpose, by a real speaker/writer with a real receiver, and not made specifically for language learning purposes” (p. 67). It should be noted that this definition does not refer to texts only, but it can be extended to any other materials/artifacts such as commercials, movie clips, songs, paintings, recipes, magazines, and menus to mention but a few. I feel fortunate because I had the opportunity in my teaching methods class to try out some of these materials. For example, I used an authentic story and song to teach grammar following the PACE model (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2016), which I had learned about in my SLA methods class. According to this model, the teacher presents the target structure through a story (presentation stage), then invites students to attend to meaning and form (attention stage) which is usually facilitated by the use of visuals. In the third stage, the teacher and the students work together to explain the grammar structure and its use (co-construction). Finally, the students use the target structure to complete a task that is related to the theme of the lesson in a communicative manner (extension stage).

When I followed this approach, I could instantly see the various benefits of these authentic materials as opposed to dry/explicit teaching of grammar rules and discrete vocabulary items. One reason why authentic materials are beneficial is that they represent real-world language use and real content that stimulate learners’ interests. Authentic materials such as the aforementioned often revolve around updated topics and they are culturally rich.

It is also worth noting here that language learning/teaching cannot be effective without knowledge of the target culture which authentic materials often provide. In addition, authentic

materials have the potential to cater to all student levels. With beginners, we do not necessarily need to use a lengthy story. It can be just a menu or a commercial. Unlike educational materials, authentic texts are produced to be consumed by everyone and, therefore, help students acquire grammar and vocabulary in meaningful ways along with gaining cultural understanding (Albiladi, 2019; Mestari, 2017). I have learned also in my MSLT coursework that there are some issues to consider when selecting authentic materials to use in the classroom. For instance, as a teacher, I should know if the material is appropriate for the students' level, age, culture, etc. I should also know the kinds of topics and themes that my students are interested in. The latter point implies an important fact and responsibility of the teacher which is to know their students and build a good rapport with them. Without being attentive listeners and showing our genuine care, students may not feel secure to share their interests with us. Most importantly, I need to determine what language aspect (e.g., grammar or vocabulary) or skill I want to teach through the use of a certain material and how I want students to use the language to practice that language aspect. By the same token, as teachers we need to render our tasks as authentic as possible. When tasks are authentic, learners can transform what they are learning into the workplace and wider community. Thus, students should feel they are using the language to get something done (e.g., to contribute to a real project, to voice their opinions on current issues, and connect with other people); not just to repeat some language chunks they have learned. Thanks to technology, teachers can easily access authentic materials from all around the world. For example, by using applications such as Radio Garden (<https://radio.garden/listen/ktokradio/55E7G1g0>), they are able to teach L2 listening and/or speaking based on the latest news and current trends from around the world. Teachers can now even take their students on all kinds of virtual field trips in a matter of seconds; whether the aim

is to learn about geography, arts or anything else

(<https://artsandculture.google.com/project/expeditions>). Similarly, learners can capitalize on their digital skills to create interactive and authentic output. Storymap platforms (e.g., <http://orangeline.knightlab.com/templates/pages/storymap.html>) can be a great alternative to traditional pen and paper to tell almost all kinds of stories. Storymaps are digital tools used to create interactive and engaging stories. Their power lies in the fact that they combine text and geographical information with multimedia such as photos, audio, and video.

The final principle that makes up my teaching philosophy, which is collaboration, instantiates our human condition as *homo socius* (social humans). As such, this principle is also related to the theoretical second language acquisition concepts of interaction and negotiation of meaning. In fact, now even those introverted learners who tend to shun human interactions can still have their conversational partners such as ChatGPT. Collaboration is also one of the six values of ACTFL as adopted in early 2023 (Annual Report, 2022). Collaborative learning involves people working in pairs or groups to jointly solve a problem or complete a task. By definition, this process will increase interaction and negotiation. When learners work collaboratively in L2 classrooms, they function as socializing agents to each other. Thus, their presence in such settings becomes more authentic and justifiable.

Collaboration can make language learning centered on the learner rather than the teacher. Seen from a Vygotskian sociocultural (SCT) theoretical perspective, students will be able to expand their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) when they have opportunities to interact and collaborate with both equal and more knowledgeable peers. They will be able to achieve greater together when compared to what they can ever do individually. In Vygotskian terms, ZPD is “the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving

and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under guidance or collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). This reminds me of the Moroccan version of the proverb “It takes two to tango.”; similarly, in Morocco, we say “One hand does not clap.” The implication here is that I need to use as much pair and group work as possible in my classroom.

From my experience, I have noticed that students produce more language when they work with partners. Thus, instances of form and meaning negotiation are higher. Learners may not be prompted to pay as much attention to certain language features that they produce themselves. However, they are more likely to notice what structures are correct or incorrect as they interact with others; this applies to meaning as well. For example, one cannot say something for instance and then start debating it (agreeing or disagreeing) with oneself. They can only do so if they are interacting and collaborating with others. It should be noted that collaboration does not require a large group of learners. Rather, it can be between two learners or a learner and a teacher. It is an effective way for developing and practicing language skills, constructing new linguistic/cultural knowledge, and building new relationships and good rapport with others. Today, no doubt technology allows for collaboration beyond classroom walls. Learners can use digital annotation tools to read a text together via the use of tools like eComma (<https://ecomma.coerll.utexas.edu/social-reading-tools/>) or tools like Google Docs to write an essay.

Needless to say, learners can be more motivated and creative when they see that everyone is participating and expressing their opinions. They will be forced, in a way, to make their utmost effort (i.e., forced output). Coupled with immediate language learning gains, learning to work collaboratively is a skill in itself that every learner will need in their prospective workplace.

There is not a single industry that does not value teamwork. Having said all the above, I see collaboration not only as an enhancer for learning but also as the end goal. When working collaboratively, students can develop important values such as a sense of responsibility, openness to differences, and respecting others' opinions and perspectives, etc.

In summary, MAC can be understood as a call to capitalize on the affordances of technology to: a) “multimodalize” both input and output, b) render authentic teaching materials, tasks, and environments, and c) collaborate beyond classroom walls; whether between learners and other learners or learners and native speakers. Eventually, this may help lead to learner autonomy. While not necessary, technology can help teachers add other modes to texts, find different authentic material, and also allow for more collaboration opportunities outside classroom.

HANDS-ON TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Innovative Language Teaching Practice:

Using Video-conferencing Tools to Bring Target Culture to the L2 Classroom: Zooming across Four Arab Countries

Introduction

In our globalized and hyper-digitalized world, there is a necessity for students to develop not only their bi/multilingual competence, but also bi/multicultural understanding to navigate the prospective workplace healthily. Scally et al. (2022) note that after their graduation, students embark on different careers in places that are culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse. The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) concerned with the teaching and assessment of foreign languages, underlines the need for helping learners to develop “an enriched, more complex personality and an enhanced capacity for further language learning and greater openness to new cultural experiences” (Council of Europe 2001, p. 43). In relation to CERF, Guth and Helm (2019) note that culture is placed at the heart of second language (L2) teaching and learning and revolves around learners’ knowledge of the second culture (C2) and the associated sociocultural norms of its people that help them become interculturally well-informed. Therefore, I believe that efforts should be made to help our learners become interculturally competent and be able to function as global citizens and diplomats. Language learning classrooms should be the foundational grounds for fostering students’ understanding of different cultures and the world around them. Perhaps the best route for L2 learners to get there is by means of immersion in the target culture(s) as in study abroad programs. However, what if not all students can afford that traditional immersive experience?

According to Open Doors 2023 report on international exchange, only 170,000 of the 2.87 million of students enrolled in college studied abroad in the 2021/2022 academic year. This is less than 6% of all American students (<https://opendoorsdata.org/data/us-study-abroad/>). On the contrary, statistics indicate that roughly 98% of American college students use social media. Of these students, 57% use social media for a minimum of 5 hours weekly (GitNux, 2023). The implication here seems to be as follows: teachers should exploit social tools and technological applications to facilitate second language acquisition (SLA) in general and intercultural learning in particular. Students and teachers can be engaged in what is referred to in the literature as 'telecollaboration', 'virtual exchange', or 'online intercultural exchange', which is becoming an increasingly important and meaningful alternative to increasing interaction among language learners and 'experts'. Again, since today's world is increasingly digitalized, language teachers and learners can still bring intercultural experiences to classrooms through various technological tools. Video-conferencing tools such as Zoom can be a great resource

Literature Review

In the last few years, especially as a result of Covid-19, the amount of interest in computer assisted language learning (CALL) and SLA work has increased drastically. In this section, I will focus on research pertaining to CALL and culture/intercultural communicative competence. For instance, Machwate et al. (2021) consider virtual exchange (VE) to be a great alternative for those who cannot afford to study abroad. In their study, they wanted to evaluate a telecollaborative course which was part of the Erasmus+ program. It was conducted over a period of six weeks (January to February in 2019). The course involved six students from the University of Cadi Ayyad in Morocco and four students from Humboldt University of Berlin. The aim was to help students develop their knowledge of intercultural communication, interact

with foreign students using English and foster some telecollaborative digital skills. Participants had to work both individually and in teams. They had weekly activities that included synchronous and asynchronous discussions, readings, and writings. These were posted on Moodle or in Padlet. On the Moodle platform, participants were given instructions prior to the beginning of their course so as to complete their profiles and resolve any technical issues. Zoom meetings were scheduled every Tuesday at 8:00 p.m. Students' work was assessed at the end of each week and badges were awarded to those who participated effectively. The evaluation was based on three key characteristics of VE which are: the development of foreign language competence, intercultural skills and digital literacy skills. Concerning the linguistic aspect, it was found that some students had difficulties expressing themselves in English. However, they all admitted towards the end that the course helped them to ameliorate their language skills. As for digital competencies, the course allowed participants to use a number of information and communication tools (e.g., Moodle, Padlet, Email, and Zoom) which they can continue using in future collaborations and trainings. By the end of the course, all student were able to use these tools to create, interact, and share content with each other. Finally, students reported that they learned a lot about others' cultures as well as about their own and they became more open-minded and were able to discard certain stereotypes.

In another study by Freiermuth and Huang (2021), students' collaborative discourse was examined to demonstrate how intercultural competence can be developed through VE using Zoom. Six university female students from Japan and five Taiwanese students participated in the study. One Taiwanese student was paired up with two Japanese students. After contacting each other by email and setting up their Zoom meetings, students were asked to bring three images that represent some cultural norm(s) and be ready to discuss them. Each pair had to complete at

least one Zoom meeting. They were then given a Likert-scale questionnaire to fill out. In addition, recorded videos were analyzed. Among the findings of this project is the sense of interest and motivation among the participants to interact with each other created by the visual aspect of Zoom. Another source of motivation was the fact that students chose their pictures themselves. The researchers also argued that such projects make it possible for learners to meet other learners, make language learning more real, and give them the opportunity for sharing something meaningful. Learners are also inspired as they realize that they are able to communicate and do things with their L2. In brief, the participants enjoyed the exchanges, increased their intercultural awareness and knowledge, and forged new connections and relationships.

Alghasab and Alvarez-Ayure (2023) argue that telecollaboration fosters both L2 development and intercultural communicative competence. They also recognize potential limitations such as misunderstanding, tension, and reticence among some students. Thus, they emphasize the importance of pedagogical planning and training to equip students with necessary negotiation and collaboration skills. In their study, 18 undergraduate students from Colombia and 20 Kuwaiti pre-service teachers were mentored prior to starting their eight-week exchange program spanning February to May in 2019. The authors relied on students' online discussions as well as a post-questionnaire to collect data which was analyzed using a content analysis framework. The tasks used were adapted from the Erasmus Mundus intercultural competence toolkit. The findings revealed that participants engaged in two main types of interactional behavior: socio-affective and cognitive. In other words, their interactions were characterized by openness, interest, and curiosity. Thanks to this, the participants were able to build rapport and solicit and share cultural knowledge in respectful manners. Finally, the researchers admit that

there might be some limitations like the gender aspect (i.e., Kuwaiti students were all female) and the fact that the multimodal analysis was lacking (i.e., its focus was on text-based interaction only).

Crum and Basoglu (2022) explored the self-perceived effectiveness of participation in virtual exchange. A total of 31 American and Turkish university students from different majors participated in the study. The exchanges were carried out synchronously using Zoom during the 2021 and 2022 spring semesters. The exchanges occurred once a month and students were asked to respond to an open-ended online survey following each meeting to reflect on their interactions and the overall benefits of their participation in the exchanges. The collected data was analyzed thematically. The researchers found that their results corroborated those of previous studies on the basis that VE increases students' cultural awareness. In addition, students expand their factual knowledge about various different topics depending on their interests. In terms of linguistic gains, students reported more self-confidence in speaking, improved pronunciation and grammatical knowledge, among others. Researchers recommended that future telecollaboration projects be prolonged.

Lenkaitis et al. (2019) investigated computer-based telecollaboration and its impact on intercultural competence. In their study, they focused on two students who were part of a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) exchange. One was an intermediate Spanish L2 learner from an American university and the other was an L2 English learner at a private university in Mexico. Over a period of 5 weeks, they were instructed to interact with each other via Zoom for at least 40 minutes per session split equally between the two target languages. Their weekly topics included: work and labor, the educational system, language and culture, and gender roles. Researchers recorded and transcribed the conversations which were then analyzed

qualitatively. They concluded that telecollaboration is indeed a useful tool to achieve different aspects of IC. However, researchers and instructors need to set specific criteria to properly assess students' intercultural competence development. They should also select topics that are of interest to students.

In the context of non-native speakers, Bailey and Gruber (2020) believe that telecollaboration is perhaps more important as students get to focus more on intelligibility and intercultural comprehension rather than language forms. Their mixed-method case study design involved 31 German and Colombian intermediate English learners with the aim of finding out how virtual exchanges enhanced students' perceived plurilingual and pluricultural competence as well as their overall communicative competence. Participants were given detailed instructions at the beginning of the project, such as how to work collaboratively. They used Zoom for their synchronous meetings which were recorded for analysis. In addition, six questionnaires were completed; three at the beginning and three at the end. When participants were asked about the impact of collaborating with international partners on their learning, they reported that it was a better way of learning. The results also demonstrated that online collaboration with international students rather than native speakers led to a sense of increased confidence. In other words, students feel less anxious when their partners are also learners of the language and it is not their L1. Researchers recommend including partners from more than two countries and using problem-based tasks to solve collaboratively for future studies.

In sum, the common thread among all these studies is that VE is a valuable practice that can help optimize teaching and learning regardless of students' age group, proficiency and target language. Based on this brief review of the literature, I decided to incorporate elements of VE from the aforementioned studies to experiment with technology to facilitate learners' intercultural

communicative competence. Below I describe this innovative language teaching practice in more detail.

My Project

As alluded to in the introduction above, the main focus of my project is culture. By providing my students with opportunities to construct new cultural knowledge, develop certain skills such as viewing the world from different perspectives, and adopting positive attitudes to other people and their cultures, I believe they will eventually be able to successfully navigate varying physical and online intercultural contexts. Since there are many different cultures associated with the language that I teach (Arabic), and since my students are interested in different Arab countries, I opted for online intercultural exchange to meet their needs. In the classroom, I can usually answer my students' questions about Moroccan culture, but there are other Arab cultures that I do not have enough knowledge about. Thus, I decided to use one of the most common video-conferencing tools—Zoom—to bring target culture to my classroom from four Arab countries: Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, and Lebanon.

1. Technological tool of choice: Zoom

I chose to incorporate Zoom in this project because it is used by the USU and it is integrated in its learning management system, which means there are fewer security and privacy concerns. A number of studies showed that participants felt as if they were not communicating with real people when using text-based platforms. In other words, these platforms were seen as depersonalized (e.g., Baroni et al., 2019). On the other hand, the emergence and proliferation of tools that allow for visual and auditory communication motivated people to engage more in online/virtual exchanges. In this regard, Helm (2015) pointed out that Zoom is the most popular

video-conferencing tool. I personally think that it has become indispensable during and after the Covid-19 crisis. To quote from its official website, Zoom is:

an all-in-one intelligent collaboration platform that makes connecting easier, more immersive, and more dynamic for businesses and individuals. Zoom technology puts people at the center, enabling meaningful connections, facilitating modern collaboration, and driving human innovation through solutions like team chat, phone, meetings, omnichannel cloud contact center, smart recordings, whiteboard, and more, in one offering. Founded in 2011, Zoom is publicly traded (NASDAQ:ZM) and headquartered in San Jose, California (<https://www.zoom.com/en/about/>).

Interestingly, this description highlights some aspects that I deem crucial in the context of language teaching and learning like collaboration and immersion. One could argue that Zoom renders online interactions closer to face-to-face ones in terms of quality. Quantitatively speaking, Zoom makes it possible to connect with infinite numbers of people (although not all at the same time), which cannot be done in physical interactions. Suffice it to say that post-pandemic, most—if not all—university students have had some experience with Zoom.

2. Culture and Intercultural Competence

The term intercultural competence (IC) is broadly related to culture, which cannot be separated from language. Culture can be understood as a way of life (of a particular group of people) and it can include an infinite number of things such as beliefs, customs, values, attitudes, and different kinds of practices and products, etc. It is also worth mentioning that culture is one of the 5 Cs in the standards of Foreign Language Learning (FLL) as developed by ACTFL (World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages, 2023). The benefits of exposing language learners to the target culture are twofold: they learn about others' cultures and they also start

reflecting on their own instead of taking it for granted. The ultimate aim of this exposure to the target culture is to help learners develop their IC. Deardorff (2006) defines IC as “the ability to develop targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to visible behavior and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions” (pp. 247-248). This definition is interesting in the sense that it highlights the need to move beyond being merely knowledgeable about others’ cultures to actually being able to communicate and behave accordingly in relation to culturally different people. This implies that IC is practice-oriented.

Class Details

- **Language Class:** Arabic
- **Level Taught:** Intermediate I (third semester)
- **Class Size:** This is a small class of four female students.
- **Class Time:** Monday and Friday (10:30-11:20); Wednesday (10:30-12:30)
- **Virtual Exchange Date/Time:** This was done in October 2023 at students' and their partners’ convenience given the different time zones.
- **Majors:** Each one of my students belongs to a different major (international studies, political science, religious studies, and animal studies). However, they all share interest in Arabic language and culture. For instance, one of them has travelled to Morocco. Others plan to visit different Arab countries in the future. Some of them aspire for careers where they could use their Arabic skills as specialists in Middle Eastern studies and politics, for example.

Project/ Lesson Objectives

This project was carried out to help students meet the following objectives:

- Know about the target culture(s) from native speakers instead of being confined to the outdated pictures and videos provided in the textbook
- Practice some Arabic language skills and be aware of the linguistic differences between the dialects of different countries
- Compare and contrast the native and target cultures
- Help connect and network with native speakers
- Practice reporting and sharing data both in written and spoken forms.

Procedure

Since my project was in the form of virtual exchange, it was divided into four phases. It was also a combination of classroom time and students' independent arrangements. In fact, by doing it this way, students could understand that learning can take place anywhere and anytime. They do not need to be confined to classroom time only.

- **Phase One:** This phase was dedicated to preparing my students for the project. Thus, prior to having my students meet with their language/culture partners, we discussed a number of things as a class. First, it was emphasized that Arabic is to be used as much as possible during the virtual interactions. However, I knew that it would be hard for my students to use even 50% of Arabic, especially during those moments that require thinking on the spot. I did insist on them to introduce themselves in Arabic and think about how to ask some questions about the cultural aspects we agreed on in the L2. Second, we agreed on four cultural aspects (expressions of greetings, how weddings are celebrated, popular dishes/food, and traditional clothes). I wanted my students to choose what they are interested in instead of assigning them topics myself. Third, I emailed a number of teachers I knew during my Fulbright foreign language teaching assistant

program. I explained to them the project and what they would need to prepare. After enough participants confirmed, I asked if I could share their emails with my students and then agree on the schedule for Zoom meetings. In class, I let the students choose what partner they were interested in connecting with. I wanted my students to choose themselves based on their country of interest. Each one of my students had to then send the first email to their partners and include me in the email.

- **Phase Two:** This phase constitutes the first Zoom meeting between my students and their partners. I encouraged my students to just connect with their partners. I explained to them that this was the most suitable time to use as much Arabic as possible by introducing themselves in the target language, which is something they had done on multiple occasions. Likewise, I did ask my colleagues to introduce themselves in Arabic as that would provide some authentic input for my students. As Godwin-Jones (2019) notes, it is crucial that participants in virtual exchanges get to know some basic information about each other to establish some needed degree of trust before starting to discuss culturally sensitive topics.
- **Phase Three:** During this phase, students had the chance to meet with their partners for the second time via Zoom and learn about the four cultural aspects/topics chosen. This meeting had to be at least one hour. One of my students said it lasted more than two and a half hours, because it was interesting to talk about a myriad of other things that were not originally planned, such as music and films. Others talked about the four topics only. My colleagues kindly prepared slides and they also showed some real cultural artifacts; they prepared dishes and wore traditional clothes for the sake of demonstration. Although I assume that English was dominant during this phase, my students still learned a lot of

vocabulary items that after all are not translated into English (e.g., names of dishes and clothes, forms of greetings).

- **Phase Four:** This is the final phase of the project. Once all of the students finished their VE, they were asked to share what they learned in the class. First, I asked them to make a PowerPoint presentation including some background information about their partners and share what they learned about each of the four cultural aspects. After the presentations, we discussed as a class the similarities and differences between all of the four countries' cultures and the students' culture. Second, students had to submit a report (see a sample in Appendix 1 in Arabic and Appendix 2 for the English translation). In this report, they were asked again to write about what they learned about each aspect, what they learned from the project in general, and their recommendations for future implementation of this project. For me to evaluate students' learning from this project, I relied on their presentations in class and their written reports. Both of these had to be done in the target language (Arabic).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this project was an example of how we as teachers can harness the power of different technological tools, especially those which are more familiar to our students and those which provide room for collaboration, multimodal input/output, and interaction between learners and/or learners and native speakers. Zoom has indeed proved to be of great value given its audiovisual nature, along with other engaging features. As a teacher, I believe that for students to potentially develop their language and intercultural communicative skills, they need to go beyond classroom walls and curricula. While not all students can afford to study abroad, teachers and schools are responsible for providing that intercultural experience virtually. This is

particularly important if we want our students to become interculturally competent and function as global citizens. I do realize though that this is not an easy task. It takes a great deal of planning and perhaps training as well in some cases. In addition, intercultural competence, like linguistic competence for that matter, is a lifelong process. Therefore, the implication is to integrate culture into foreign language teaching as often as possible.

My students reported that they enjoyed talking with their partners and they plan to continue communicating with them. This indeed should be our major aim: to help learners become autonomous and curious to forge new relationships with people from different cultures. Finally, my students stated that not only did they learn a lot about the cultures of their respective partners, but there were also significant linguistic gains in terms of vocabulary and grammar. Seeing my students do presentations in the L2 in my classroom at the end of the project was definitely rewarding. Having said this, I must also admit that there may be certain aspects of this project that could be done differently. If I am to do this same project again in the future, I would want to have a clearer idea as to what my students talk about exactly and how. Thus, I may plan to join their meetings and take notes instead of relying on student-reported data, especially when it comes to the percentage of TL use. Ideally, I would want the percentage to increase after each meeting. I also think it would be more effective to cover only one cultural topic per meeting. Finally, brainstorming an exhaustive list of questions to be asked about that topic prior to each Zoom meeting would maximize L1 use, especially for those students with lower linguistic proficiency.

MAIN PAPER

Position Paper

Second Language Acquisition and Artificial Intelligence: How Can Chat-GPT Aid Arabic Teachers and Learners?

Introduction

Will Artificial Intelligence (henceforth AI) take over the field of second language teaching (SLT) soon? Will it replace teachers? Will it end up completing all students' assignments and render the students indolent in the process? Such are examples of concerns that may be raised among one camp of language educators and related parties. For others, the questions are somehow reversed: How can AI advance the field of SLA? How can teachers and learners best use AI as a useful tool? Finally, will AI enhance students' critical thinking skills and intercultural competence, among other things? It merits noting that questions like these may have been around for several years. However, it seems that it is the launch of Chat-GPT recently that is making these questions more relevant and urgent than ever before. For example, some (Kartal & Yeşilyurt, 2024) have found that one of the most noticeable trends in L2 learning and teaching contexts with respect to AI is the increase of chatbots, conversational agents, and new approaches to dynamic assessment, particularly during the period spanning from 2020 to 2022.

Given the current focus on AI across a myriad of fields and by L2 researchers and practitioners alike, the present position paper explores how Chat-GPT can be used as a catalyst agent in the context of L2 teaching and learning. Specifically, it seeks to illustrate how Chat-GPT can be leveraged to facilitate L2 teaching and learning, notwithstanding some challenges and shortcomings associated with the tool. After some brief definitions of AI and Chat-GPT, I will

provide an overview of key theoretical perspectives/ frameworks that underpin my position on the use of Chat-GPT in L2 Arabic classrooms. Following that is a literature review of the most pertinent studies. In the penultimate section, I will put forward a set of illustrations of how Chat-GPT can be used by Arabic teachers and learners. Then, I conclude with some major takeaways/recommendations.

About AI and ChatGPT

The concept of AI is not as nascent as some may think. For example, Haenlein and Kaplan (2019) in their article entitled “A Brief History of Artificial Intelligence: On the Past, Present, and Future of Artificial Intelligence” trace its roots to the 1940s when the American science fiction writer Isaac Asimov published his short story *Runaround* which revolved around a robot. In 1950, another cornerstone of AI was laid by the publication of “Computing Machinery and Intelligence” by the English mathematician Alan Turing. In fact, Turing’s Test is still used as a benchmark to identify/ assess the intelligence of a system. The basic rule of intelligence here is encapsulated by the following formula: when a person is interacting with a machine and a human and they cannot distinguish between the two, then the machine is considered to be intelligent (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2019). Thus, we can infer that AI as a discipline dates back to the era immediately following the second world war, with the advent of the first digital computers. Ever since then, the progress has been overall slow. However, in the 21st Century things started to change, especially with the advent of machine learning around 2005 (Wooldridge, 2021). Now we have arrived at a point where we take a great portion of AI for granted (e.g., the omnipresence of GPS in various devices, Amazon’s Alexa, self-driving car technologies, among other areas). UNESCO (2021) defines AI approaches as “systems which have the capacity to process data and information in a way that resembles intelligent behavior,

and typically includes aspects of reasoning, learning, perception, prediction, planning or control” (p. 3).

One notable technological innovation nowadays is AI-powered chatbots and Large Language Models (LLMs) such as Chat-GPT, which has recently taken the world by storm. Chat-GPT is a Large Language Model authored and launched by OpenAI on November 30, 2022. It has developed from its predecessor models GPT-1, GPT-2 and GPT-3; as of this writing, the current model is GPT-4. GPT stands for Generative Pre-trained Transformer. It is trained in such a way as to “interact in a conversational way. The dialogue format makes it possible for ChatGPT to answer follow-up questions, admit mistakes, challenge incorrect premises, and reject inappropriate requests” (<https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt>). Precisely because of its versatile abilities, everyone is tempted to experiment with it whether they are beginning language learners or professional writers. Indeed, there is a wide array of language-based applications of Chat-GPT ranging from summarization (Zhang et al., 2023) and business writing and composition (AlAfnan et al., 2023) to machine translation (Gu, 2023; Hendy et al., 2023; Lee, 2023) and humor (Gorenz & Schwarz, 2024). The list of applications/uses of Chat-GPT can only be said to continue growing. This is because these chatbots seem to be promising when it comes to brainstorming, providing individualized feedback, generating dialogues that are based on the user’s language proficiency, problem-solving, and affording learners with language skills practice, among other benefits.

Theoretical Perspectives

My position in this paper rests on a set of perspectives and theories that have revolutionized the way we think about education and learning. Chief among these is constructivism, both in its cognitive dimension as theorized by Piaget (1964) and its social

aspect(s) as laid out by Vygotsky (1978). Seen from these perspectives, learners are not merely regurgitators of knowledge. Rather, they actively contribute to its construction through interactions with their environment. Given that technology continues to constantly evolve, learners do not have to be confined to acquire knowledge strictly via a physical environment. The simulations of different realities and virtual environments mean that experiences and opportunities whereby learners can construct new knowledge are optimized. In fact, since technology is part and parcel of learners' lives, it would be counter-productive to separate them from technology-based learning. Building further on two key concepts of Vygostkian theory, technology may be the best scaffolder to lead learners through their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Scaffolding can be defined as "support provided by a teacher/parent, peer, or a computer- or a paper-based tool that allows students to meaningfully participate in and gain skill at a task that they would be unable to complete unaided" (Belland, 2014). In other words, by capitalizing on the affordances of technology, learners will have more aid to develop their skills and complete their tasks even when the teacher is not available; that is, outside of classroom time/walls. In fact, technology-based scaffolding may be more effective and beneficial considering that it is often multimodal in nature (i.e., it comes in the form of audio, video, pictures, graphs, etc.). ZPD, which is somehow related to the idea of scaffolding, may be understood as the gap existing between the learner's "actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving" and their other stage of development "as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Another equally significant perspective that can help us understand why technology in general and AI in particular should be welcomed in language instruction is multiliteracies.

Developed originally by the New London Group (1996), multiliteracies pedagogy was a call to redefine what it means to be literate in a world that relies on a myriad of ways in which people communicate and make use of technologies in various facets of their lives to make meaning. Thus, literacy as solely language-based (reading and writing) became obsolete. People needed more complicated and multifaced skills to navigate the linguistically and culturally diverse world by developing their analytical and critical thinking skills. Likewise, making and sharing meaning is no longer restricted to printed/written texts. Instead, there are a wide array of semiotic resources for meaning-making and various channels/modes for its dissemination. In this sense, literacy has become multimodal and situated/contextualized. Out of all the available resources, learners need to select what ideally suits a particular situation. Furthermore, Warner and Dupuy (2018) support the view of integrating more academic genres with vernacular language use as in the contexts of digital gaming and digital social media. They argue that these spaces tend to bring participants from different language communities. Thus, foreign language educators need to take into account this multilingual reality. According to Paesani, Allen, and Dupuy (2016), literacy has now become a social practice rather than an individual skill. For them, literacy practices cannot be understood outside of the historical, political, economic and cultural contexts. This suggests that we need to consider the AI developments taking place today as we attempt to come to terms with what it means for our learners to be literate. In other words, literacy now includes developing AI-skills as well.

In addition, since literacy also has a social purpose, learners need to redesign and transform what they learn in accordance with the purposes they wish to achieve. To my mind, this has major implications when it comes to using AI in language instruction. In lieu of banning its use, teachers need to think about how learners can actually transform the gained knowledge to

a new context and use it to solve real-life problems. For example, after doing some research on a given topic, say the challenges of immigration which is the topic of one of the readings in our textbook, learners may be asked to interview immigrants in their community to learn about their own challenges. Then, they could compare what they learned from Chat-GPT about this topic and how it actually manifests itself in the real world. By the same token, they could try out some suggested solutions and see if they would work out to help immigrants in their community. In this way, learners can more easily exercise their agency and autonomy; they do not have to be mere passive consumers of information/knowledge. Having said this, we should be aware as teachers that overt/explicit instruction is needed to help learners develop their multiliteracies. Even when it comes to technology use, it would be naïve at best, and counter-productive from a pedagogical perspective at worst, to assume that learners have all the skills needed to use a given technological tool just because they are learners in the AI-saturated era. In fact, this is another justification that teachers should integrate such technologies in the classroom environment and model how they should be used: responsibly and effectively. Put briefly, learners will achieve multiliteracies goals only when teachers themselves are adhering to the principles of this pedagogy.

In summary, I deem the relationship between constructivism and multiliteracies approaches to be symbiotic. Learners construct new knowledge as they are encouraged to capitalize on the affordances of all the available resources and modes of meaning making and meaning sharing. Simultaneously, students have the potential to boost their multiliteracies (e.g., critical thinking, information literacy, and technology literacy) as a result of the newly constructed/learned knowledge. It's now necessary to turn to the research literature to better

understand what has been investigated to date with respect to the use and impact of a specific AI tool (i.e., ChatGPT) in L2 education.

Literature Review

While there are numerous AI-based tools that have been developed and continue to be developing (e.g., Dall-E2, Sora, and Midjourney), all of the studies reviewed in this paper are specifically related to Chat-GPT. Specifically, I only focus on research carried out in L2 contexts, although there is a growing body of research on the use of Chat-GPT in different disciplines. However, it is important to draw the reader's attention that the majority of these studies may have some shortcoming in the sense that they do not delineate how teachers and students have used Chat-GPT. I will try to fill this gap in the practical part devoted to using Chat-GPT in the Arabic language classroom context, although I do not claim to be comprehensive myself.

ChatGPT is a tool that continues to be developing in terms of functions and features. Therefore, it is difficult to list every possible use within the scope of this portfolio. Having said this, the following review is divided into two parts: studies conducted from teachers' perspectives and studies conducted from students' perspectives.

1. Teachers' Perspectives

Teachers' roles are indispensable to the process of instruction. Therefore, their perspectives should be sought and explored whenever there is an attempt to understand any teaching practice, material, or tool. For example, Ulla et al. (2023) interviewed 17 teachers at a University in Thailand to explore the pedagogical benefits and drawbacks of using Chat-GPT in English language teaching. Participants were purposefully selected and among the criteria used for selection was teachers' experience with Chat-GPT, whether for research or lesson design, for three to four months. These participants had teaching experiences ranging from 6 to 20 years and

their ages ranged from 29 to 44. Following the analysis of data, researchers found that, in general, teachers had a positive perception regarding the use of Chat-GPT in teaching. Although this tool cannot give teachers everything they need, it still helps significantly, for instance, with producing initial ideas for lesson templates and activities. Chat-GPT also helps teachers with teaching the intricacies of English grammar and sentence construction. Participants were also aware of some concerning issues like inaccuracy and unreliability of information generated. They mentioned that Chat-GPT could be harmful for students if they do not have human guidance and monitoring to use it responsibly. They still needed to rely on other online resources and books to verify and gauge the credibility of information.

Mohamed (2023) sought to explore the potential of Chat-GPT in enhancing the teaching of English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia. The authors conducted in-depth interviews with ten faculty members (6 female and 4 male) at Northern Border University. As to the first research question relating to the advantages, the results indicated that Chat-GPT is useful in certain aspects like the provision of immediate feedback, customized teaching activities, and individualized instruction to students to cater to their different needs. With respect to feedback, the author believes that with Chat-GPT, teachers can offer more tailored feedback and guidance to each student, which can address individual learning needs and promote better language acquisition. In addition, it gives access to a massive amount of knowledge, generates answers to all types of question and increases students' motivation and engagement. However, it was noted that teachers need training in order to take full advantage of these affordances. Effective use of ChatGPT also implies teachers should not over rely on this tool and they should recognize that their role in the classroom should not be made less important. Limitations identified included depersonalization of the teaching/learning process along with accuracy and privacy concerns. As

for its future, it was perceived that Chat-GPT would eventually become a more incorporated and sophisticated tool for language instruction and assessment.

Allehyani and Algamdi (2023) conducted an in-depth investigation aimed at understanding EFL teachers' beliefs and perceptions of using Chat-GPT to teach English as a second language in Saudi Arabia to first, second, and third graders whose age ranged between seven and nine. Questionnaires were distributed to 543 teachers, the majority of which had between 5-10 years of teaching experience. The questionnaire contained different sections to solicit teachers' technological proficiency, pedagogical compatibility (e.g., whether they use Chat-GPT to improve and transform language teaching), social awareness (included things like guiding learners on how to use the tool and informing them about its ethical issues and drawbacks), and finally teachers' perceptions towards Chat-GPT as a teaching pedagogy in teaching ESL. With regard to the last section, I find that the authors may have misconstrued Chat-GPT. This is not a pedagogy. It is just a tool. Participants mainly had positive attitudes towards the implementation of ChatGPT. However, they insisted that young learners need more training and supervision to ensure they can use it safely. By the same token, they reported that they as teachers also need to improve their digital competencies so they can use it in a principled and appropriate manner that is suitable to the learners' age.

Nguyen (2023) investigated EFL teachers' perspectives as to the implementation of Chat-GPT in their teaching at Van Lang University in Vietnam. Using a mixed-methods approach, the researchers collected data from twenty instructors through an online questionnaire. Structured interviews were also conducted with ten of these participants. Results showed that seven teachers used the tool to teach writing, five teachers used it to teach methodology classes, and another five used it in translation courses. Not only that, but it was also found that fifteen of these

teachers used it frequently as it helped them greatly with creating their learning resources, designing tests, and planning lessons. The majority of participants (80%) also reported that Chat-GPT helped them tailor lessons to their students' needs and levels. Based on their experience, the participants displayed positive attitudes towards the use of Chat-GPT in their classes. However, they still did not hide their concerns about students' overreliance on Chat-GPT. The issue of academic integrity was also raised in the sense that turning in sections of writing that are AI-generated will lead to unfair evaluation. In the end, teachers recommended that teachers should have rigorous professional training to be able to integrate AI efficiently and be aware of its limitations as well.

Govindarajan and Christuraj (2023) probed into the opportunities and challenges of Chat-GPT in the Omani context. In addition for data to be obtained from the literature, the researcher also conducted semi-structured interviews with 8 male and 2 female EFL teachers at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Nizwa, Oman. All of the participants had some experience using Chat-GPT for personal or professional purposes. The researchers found that the role of Chat-GPT to support English teaching and learning is promising. Among other things, the tool provides customized and contextualized feedback for learners. Red flags, however, were also raised concerning the possibilities of misuse and overuse of the tool. The participants expressed concern over the loss of creativity and lack of learners' engagement in actual learning. The latter is often used in contrast to feeling of learning (usually self-reported). That is to say, sometimes there is a gap between what teachers and learners think was learned and what was actually learned/acquired as can be proven through some kind of assessment (e.g., tests and exams). In the end, the researchers admitted the limitation of not including the

perspectives of other important stakeholders such as policy makers, curriculum designers, test developers, and students.

Looking at the potential of Chat-GPT from an assessment perspective, Nguyen and Tran (2023) randomly selected 10 essays written by advanced English for Specific Purposes (ESP) students at a university in Vietnam to be evaluated by Chat-GPT based on a set of criteria (fulfillment of the number of words, organization, grammar, and vocabulary). Afterwards, a university lecturer with more than 10 years of language teaching and assessment experience was interviewed to offer her perspective as to the assessment potential of Chat-GPT for writing skills. The essays were argumentative in nature. That is, students had to express their opinion about the topics. Chat-GPT was prompted to score the participants' essays and then generate improved versions of these compositions. Upon checking the assessment and editing carried out by Chat-GPT, the interviewee was reported to be in full agreement and she was even impressed by all the meticulous comments and explanations provided by Chat-GPT. In addition, the edited versions were found to be effectively done given the range and accuracy of vocabulary and grammar structures, which students would learn from. The participants also found this to be very helpful for teachers as providing detailed feedback would demand significant time and effort.

Based on a study conducted with 34 teachers at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Oman, Al-Mughairi and Bhaskar (2024) identified four factors that motivate teachers to adopt Chat-GPT in their classrooms and five inhibiting factors. After analyzing the data collected through semi-structured interviews, the authors classified the motivating factors as follows: 1) teachers considered the exploration and adoption of new digital tools such as Chat-GPT to be important for innovative teaching; 2) Chat-GPT allows for customized teaching practices and assessment and renders these processes more effective and engaging; 3) thanks to

Chat-GPT, teachers can save time with certain mundane tasks and use it instead to support student learning; and 4) Chat-GPT helps teachers develop professionally as they get to acquire new technical skills. On the other hand, Chat-GPT can be concerning when it comes to issues of reliability and accuracy and thus teachers need to verify any information generated by this tool prior to incorporating it for educational purposes. In addition, it was reported that Chat-GPT can potentially minimize social/ human interaction (i.e., teachers could resort less to peer support/recommendations). Then, just like any type of user, teachers also worry about their privacy and data security. Another inhibiting factor was associated with lack of institutional support as some teachers may not have access to such tools or simply find it challenging when there are not effective guidelines or policies of use. Finally, some teachers may overuse Chat-GPT when, in fact, it should only be used as a support when necessary.

Nguyen (2024) also investigated the perceived usefulness and challenges of Chat-GPT in teaching and assessment among university English teachers in Vietnam. The researcher used an online survey questionnaire containing both close- and open-ended questions to collect data from 43 English teachers belonging to different universities. What was particularly unique in this study was the fact that some teachers believed that Chat-GPT remains up-to-date and some also saw it as a search engine. In addition, only half of the participants expressed their willingness for self-training to be able to integrate this tool into their teaching and assessment practices. This has a key implication which is that we should not take it for granted that teachers know the tool and are ready to use it. Regardless of the possibilities and challenges, teachers need rigorous and sound training on new and emerging tools. Having said that, about half of the participants acknowledged that there are some merits when it comes to assessment, especially for such aspects like the creation of multiple-choice questions, cloze texts, open-ended questions, and

checking students' mistakes. Overall, participants were reported to be more concerned about Chat-GPT's challenges, like possible misuse by the students.

Gao et al. (2024) investigated 95 EFL university teachers' beliefs in Chinese universities with regard to the integration of Chat-GPT into English language teaching. The researchers also aimed to identify the relationship between their beliefs and a number of factors. Using an online survey, both quantitative and qualitative data was collected and then analyzed using SPSS and NVivo. The majority of respondents reported that LLMs such as Chat-GPT can be powerful teaching/learning tools. For example, they can boost students' academic achievement, motivate them, and help them gain better understanding of critical and key concepts, and change teachers' role from providers of information to facilitators of learning. However, teachers should not dispense with other traditional learning resources altogether. As to the factor of previous experience, it was found that the years of teaching had no significant influence on teachers' beliefs, while previous experience with other LLMs and technology integration in teaching played a pivotal role in mediating teachers' beliefs. Regarding the last factor, no significant correlation between teachers' beliefs and the availability of IT support at the universities was found. In other words, the integration of LLMs such as Chat-GPT does not necessarily require IT personnel, but it rather depends on teachers' motivation and initiative to try any innovative/emerging tools.

Moorhouse (2024) focused on beginning and first-year English language teachers' readiness and perceptions of using generative AI such as Chat-GPT. Data for this exploratory study was collected using interviews with twenty-seven teachers (seven males and twenty females) in Hong Kong. During the analysis stage, data was categorized into two sets: beginning and first-year teachers. It should be noted here that the author did not explain the difference between these two

groups. So, we are not sure if first-year refers to those with one year teaching experience as opposed to those who are just beginning their teaching. The researcher found a greater sense of readiness among the latter group who had some experience using Chat-GPT, which was actually integrated into the eClass learning management system used in Hong Kong. This is because access to Chat-GPT needed a third-party platform in the country and was not available directly through OpenAI. First-year teachers used generative artificial intelligence (GAI) tools for creating teaching and assessment material especially when it was hard to find that online. It was also stated that students who use Chat-GPT tend to improve the quality of their work. On the other hand, beginning teachers generally revealed a lack of familiarity and readiness to use GAI. It was concluded that although a lot of teachers show readiness to use tools such as Chat-GPT, this may not be enough to use them professionally and competently. Thus, professional development is always needed.

While some studies focused on the role of Chat-GPT in writing in general, Shakil and Siddiq (2024) focused on specific aspects by studying how ESL teachers perceive the use of Chat-GPT by learners for writing, their beliefs about the influence of the tool on students' analytical writing abilities, originality, and creativity. They distributed a questionnaire to 30 participants from different public universities in Pakistan. It was surprising that the overall majority of participants strongly agreed that Chat-GPT is contributing to the demise of students' argumentative capabilities and creativity. Worse still, most of these teachers reported that they had witnessed instances where students misused Chat-GPT to just copy and paste the content as it was generated. The teachers were still convinced that this tool can be helpful and should be integrated in language teaching and learning. However, they did indicate that there is a dire need to guide students on how to use it positively; it should not be used as a shortcut or as a tool to copy and

paste. It was also recommended that teachers incorporate assessment practices that tap into students' critical thinking skills and originality.

Nernere and Kastuhandani (2024) studied the lived experiences of eight in-service Indonesian teachers of English as they used Chat-GPT for preparing their lessons. Open-ended questions were used to gain deeper insights as to the teachers' feelings, attitudes, beliefs, intentions, and actions. The participants perceived Chat-GPT as a useful tool providing teachers with a wider collection of educational resources and engaging educational materials. As such, it was found that Chat-GPT is a time-saving tool. On the other hand, they acknowledged that there can be some limitations as Chat-GPT's output may lack human emotions at times. Things that human teachers are good at while Chat-GPT could not do according to participants include empathy, relating to others, and giving emotional support. Therefore, the authors conclude that human teachers cannot and should not be fully replaced no matter how useful AI tools are. As it was predicted that Chat-GPT would still be used more and more in the future, it was also recommended that teachers personalize and modify all content generated by Chat-GPT, because only teachers know precisely their students' needs.

Mabuan (2024) used a mixed methods approach to explore teachers' perspectives on the integration of Chat-GPT in English language teaching in Manila, Philippines. Unlike most other studies that focused on teachers teaching at a specific level, the researcher collected data from 115 participants from diverse educational settings including elementary schools, high schools, and colleges from both the public and private sectors. An online survey questionnaire and focus group discussions were employed. Data analysis yielded two major themes with respect to the affordances of Chat-GPT in ELT: a) allowing for vocabulary expansion and writing practice, and b) enhancing language proficiency and communication. As for the potential benefits for learners

with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, it was found that Chat-GPT could address language comprehension difficulties, offer conversational practice, and provide access to a great amount of information. In fact, the overwhelming majority of participants believed that Chat-GPT has the potential to erode some geographical and socioeconomic barriers that tend to put some learners at a disadvantage. Notwithstanding its overall usefulness, it was also reported that Chat-GPT can hinder critical thinking when/if it is not used in a balanced way. That is to say, its use should be coupled with other activities and resources if learners are to develop their skills comprehensively and effectively.

To conclude this section, the common thread among all the studies is that Chat-GPT can and should be viewed as a valuable tool that can complement teaching. Despite risks and concerns such as privacy and hallucinations, Chat-GPT can help teachers reboot their teaching practices and reduce their workload. The tool is not perfect and does not offer everything that teachers need and exactly how they need it. Fortunately, this is what makes it only a support and not a replacement tool. Now let's explore the other side of the coin: students' perspectives.

2. Students' Perspectives

In addition to teachers' perspectives, examining students' perspectives is a requisite for gaining a better understanding of how AI-based tools can transform second language instruction. In this regard, Xiao and Zhi (2023) explored EFL learners' use of ChatGPT-3.5 in an international university context in China. The researchers specifically wanted to find out how students perceive the role of Chat-GPT in English language learning. It merits noting that the university prohibited the use of Chat-GPT for completing assignments that count towards the final grade. However, it was observed that most students had experience with the tool regardless. This proves that prohibiting such tools is not an effective solution. Using semi-structured

interviews for collecting data from five undergraduate students from different majors, the researchers reported that students identified three key benefits of using Chat-GPT: 1) It could be a personal tutor and learning partner who provides feedback and personalized content; 2) it helps to generate and brainstorm ideas; and 3) it can develop students' critical skills when they are selective about the tool's output or when they seek to continually modify their prompts and train the model. Although this study has some limitations (i.e., small N of participants and the reliance on students' self-reported data), it still suggests that teachers and policy makers should work together to devise effective guidelines of how students should use the tool instead of attempting to ban it altogether.

Although the majority of studies until now have focused on writing, Lestari and Wicaksono (2023) explored how first-year English major students in Indonesia use Chat-GPT for carrying out their grammar tasks which included multiple-choice, gap-filling, and a picture series story. The researchers collected data from twenty-eight participants using interviews and students' reflections. Three methods emerged upon following data analysis. They identified the first one as *Copy-paste*. Students acknowledged there were moments they did not need to change anything, but just copied and pasted the questions and the answers generated. Two participants used an *L1-L2 Translation* method for the picture series story task. They first wrote the sentences in Bahasa and then asked Chat-GPT for an English translation. The last method was *Detail Directed Instruction* and it seemed students had some mixed perspectives using this method for the picture series story task. Half of the participants thought it was complicated, time-consuming, and the results were unfavorable. Therefore, they preferred to complete the task without resorting to Chat-GPT. The other half provided detailed instructions so that Chat-GPT could help with the task effectively. Overall, students were excited about the help they could get from this tool.

Researchers concluded that the use of AI in today's world is inevitable and that tools such as Chat-GPT have promising potentials, especially when learners are trained in AI literacy skills.

Bok and Cho (2023) examined Korean college students' experiences and perceptions regarding the use of Chat-GPT for a specific writing subskill which is revision. Seventy-one students from different majors participated in this study. They all had to take a general English course. Data was collected through a survey questionnaire and was then analyzed thematically. High levels of satisfaction emerged concerning the usefulness of Chat-GPT for editing and revising students' paragraphs. Students also found the feedback to be reliable and accurate, and appreciated the convenience of use (i.e., there were no time or space restrictions). Main areas where students received corrections included grammar, vocabulary, and paragraph flow. Therefore, they wanted to continue using it in the future. Among the challenges students faced was the fact that Chat-GPT did not provide explanations for error corrections unless it was explicitly asked about that. Additionally, Chat-GPT sometimes would suggest too advanced and difficult vocabulary. Some students found that their original text was totally altered and that made them not have a sense of authorship anymore. When asked about the role of instructors, students emphasized that they still valued human feedback more and wanted their teachers to verify any information or feedback provided by Chat-GPT. Finally, connections with teachers for emotional support such as motivation and encouragement were highlighted.

Ahmed (2023) interviewed 64 EFL freshman students from two classes at two colleges in the Eastern region of Saudi Arabia about their perceptions with regards to teacher-facilitated versus Chat-GPT-assisted writing opportunities. The interview aimed to measure students' satisfaction in four areas: learning content; learning progress; ease of use; and interactive opportunities. Participants were not satisfied with the learning content provided by Chat-GPT and preferred the

immediate feedback they would get from teachers. Likewise, they reported that Chat-GPT does not support students' progress. As for the third factor, participants agreed that Chat-GPT is characterized by ease of use. However, the implication is such that easiness does not equate positiveness. Concerning the last factor, participants found teacher instruction to be more interactive and satisfactory. The major takeaway from this study seems to be that Chat-GPT will not be able to substitute human teachers. It can and should only be used as a supplement/tool as learners need and value human interactions with peers and teachers.

Since generating texts is one of the mostly common capabilities of Chat-GPT, Kim and Park (2023) investigate students' perceptions of English role-playing scripts generated by GPT-3.5 versus those found in textbooks. A total of 27 elementary students enrolled in an EFL classroom in the Gyeonggi province of South Korea participated in the study. During six sessions via a total of twelve scripts, participants performed role-playing scripts from both sources. Then they were interviewed to elicit their reflection on their practice experience. The researchers wanted to know students' perceptions regarding various aspects including the natural flow of storyline, level of interest, and the appropriateness of language. Findings suggested that there was no significant difference in the text flow and the attractiveness of the stories. In terms of language, Chat-GPT scripts were perceived to be more difficult. Building on the latter finding, important education implications for the integration of AI in English classrooms were put forward. Mainly, human teachers' expertise is always needed to fine-tune any type of texts generated by AI tools like Chat-GPT to make sure the language is appropriate and not far beyond students' level. Related to this was also the implication that teachers who plan on using Chat-GPT should continuously improve their prompts to get results that perfectly match their expectations.

Adopting descriptive correlational design, Aljabr (2023) gauged Saudi EFL learners' awareness towards using Chat-GPT, the correlation between their awareness level and attitudes, and finally their perceived advantages and disadvantages of the tool. The researcher surveyed 30 students from Ha'il University. The results concerning learners' awareness suggested that they recognize the value of this tool in language learning. Some areas like vocabulary received the highest rating. It was also indicated that the learners' awareness positively correlated with their attitudes towards using Chat-GPT. That is, the higher their awareness was, the more positive their attitudes were. Finally, while students reported that Chat-GPT is a powerful language learning tool, they were equally aware of its drawbacks. They were critical of over-relying on it and did not want it to replace human interaction. The researcher concluded that educators and curriculum designers should incorporate the tool in areas in which it proved to be more capable, such as vocabulary building. It was also recommended that future studies investigate the gap between the significantly high level of awareness and actual utilization.

In a quasi-experimental study, Yildiz (2023) studied the impact of Chat-GPT on language learners' motivation in Turkey. A total of 35 male and 25 female second year university students participated in the study. The students belonged to different departments and their English level was identified as intermediate. The experimental group used Chat-GPT as support for language input, practice, and feedback for 15 minutes after each class session for a total of 10 sessions. A Likert-scale questionnaire was used to measure students' motivation. Pre- and post-tests were also used to gauge the relationship between motivation level and academic achievement. Key findings included that the experimental group displayed a higher level of motivation, self-efficacy, and academic achievement after the integration of Chat-GPT in post-lesson activities as

opposed to the control group which was restricted to the assignments provided by the curriculum. The researcher concluded that Chat-GPT is effective for vocabulary learning.

A useful and common method to measure users' attitudes and incorporation of certain technological tools is drawing on the technology acceptance model (TAM) as developed by Davis (1989). In a study by Liu and Ma (2023), 405 EFL learners in China were administered a revised TAM questionnaire which included the elements of Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Attitude, Behavioral Intention, and Actual Use. The study particularly aimed to examine participants' perceptions and acceptance of Chat-GPT in informal and digital English language learning contexts. Upon analyzing the data, the researchers confirmed that Chat-GPT has the potential to assist English learners to improve their reading and writing abilities as well as provide them with culture-related knowledge outside of classroom. Related to that, it was also found that Perceived Ease of Use may not directly lead to positive attitudes towards Chat-GPT. However, finding the tool to be useful will gradually foster positive attitudes. Likewise, it was reported that those students who held positive attitudes towards Chat-GPT are most likely to end up actually using it for their informal English learning. Finally, researchers recommended that teachers encourage learners to use the tool for personalized learning outside the classroom.

Related to individualized learning and autonomy, Agustini (2023) studied the case of Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar (KMB) program in Indonesia. This program was launched by the ministry of education and culture in 2020 and aimed to improve education and prepare learners for the globalized competitive job market. Autonomous learning and optimization of learning content were key aspects of this program. Six high school English language learners participated in the study. It was found that learners felt more motivated using ChatGPT to learn independently as they felt they were not going to be judged. Chat-GPT supports students self-

directed learning in different ways. For instance, it offers learners language learning opportunities and practice that are relevant to their needs and levels. In turn, this increases their motivation.

Liu (2023) believes that it is critical to understand students' attitudes in order for any technological tool to be integrated into a language classroom successfully. Therefore, the researcher looked at the attitudes of 109 undergraduate Chinese students towards using Chat-GPT for learning English. Since the participants were at different locations/regions (e.g., Mainland China, Hong Kong, and others studying overseas), it was found that there is some correlation between their current location and their acceptance of using Chat-GPT. For instance, Chinese students studying abroad had more positive attitudes and were more likely to use it for improving their English reading and writing skills as well as learning about English cultures than those who are based in Mainland China. Moreover, most students felt that Chat-GPT increased their motivation to continue learning English independently outside the classroom. Therefore, they were willing to invest time and energy to learn how to use this tool more effectively.

Monika and Suganthan (2024) analyzed the role of Chat-GPT among engineering students who are learning English in Vellore district, India. The researchers used an online questionnaire to collect data from a total of 526 participants. The sample was varied in terms of gender, age, skill level, and prior experience with technology-assisted language learning. The authors, based on the participants' perceptions and use of Chat-GPT, aimed to assess the impact of this tool on students' overall English language proficiency and its impact on vocabulary acquisition in particular. Among the main findings in this study is that half of the participants considered Chat-GPT to be a time-efficient way for practicing their different skills. About a quarter of the participants felt they could express themselves better thanks to the tool's support. They even

considered the input they got to be authentic. A substantial number of participants affirmed that their vocabulary improved. As such, Chat-GPT helped a lot of students overcome some challenges they face in the classroom and recommend that other English learners use it.

Chat-GPT is often associated with writing assistance. Bibi and Atta (2024) studied Pakistani students' perceptions, experiences, and levels of satisfaction with regard to Chat-GPT as a writing assistant for their English writing assignments. A total of 150 undergraduate students were surveyed using a questionnaire. Not only did the participants display positive attitudes, but they also considered Chat-GPT to be a credible and trustworthy tool which could help them write quickly, effectively, and even artistically. Confidence was also another thing students could gain from using the tool. However, most of the participants were aware that there were certain drawbacks as well. For instance, the content sometimes may not make much sense. At other times, it may need cross-checking. It was emphasized that if Chat-GPT is not used responsibly and effectively, it would rather end up being counter-productive and negatively affect students' writing abilities.

Muniandy and Selanathan (2024) investigated the potential of Chat-GPT as a partnering tool in developing speaking skills among ESL university students in Malaysia. Forty students completed an online survey questionnaire and 20 of them were also randomly selected to participate in focus group interviews. Both quantitative and qualitative data revealed that ChatGPT played a crucial role in boosting students' confidence to speak. The participants reported that the responses they often get were clear, straightforward, and comprehensive, and hence allowed them to enhance their speaking skills. It should be noted that the current versions of Chat-GPT do not support voice conversations. However, students can indirectly develop their speaking skills even by interacting with Chat-GPT using text only, which is what the authors

mean here by Chat-GPT's potential to help learners develop speaking skills. When learners have chunks of language generated by Chat-GPT, they could transfer them into real life situations. Concerning the drawbacks, students cited the issues of validity and reliability of input. It was concluded that the benefits outweigh the negative impact of Chat-GPT.

Omar et al. (2024) studied the impact of using Chat-GPT as an English learning facilitator among Jordanian university students. 150 students aged between 19 and 22 participated in this quasi-experimental study in which the intervention of using Chat-GPT for one hour a day lasted for four weeks. Pre- and post-test results indicated that Chat-GPT had a notable and positive impact on learners' language competence in the experimental group. This was attributed to characteristics like Chat-GPT's real-time feedback and customized learning exercises. More importantly, it was noted that learners who used Chat-GPT became more enthusiastic to learn and developed positive attitudes towards English language learning. Given the importance of English internationally, it was recommended that AI tools such as Chat-GPT be integrated into English courses in Jordan.

To summarize the aforementioned section, Chat-GPT has the potential to help learners develop all the different language skills such as writing, reading, and speaking. It can be especially useful for vocabulary learning. In addition to linguistic affordances, Chat-GPT can contribute to learners' cultural competence. However, critical thinking and verification of content and language accuracy must always be present. Interestingly, increasing learners' confidence and preparing them to express themselves in the target language (English) were highlighted in most of the studies. It should be noted that all the findings in both the teachers' and students' perspectives sections are based strictly on research carried out in English as a second or foreign language contexts. Research on other languages such as Spanish, Chinese and Arabic is lacking

or non-existent. Therefore, the focus on Arabic in the practical part of this paper is intended to steer future research into filling this gap and contributing to research on AI and SLA.

Chat-GPT: Arabic L2 Applications

This section is by no means intended to be an exhaustive and comprehensive explanation of how Chat-GPT can be used to support L2 teaching and learning. It only aims to demonstrate that there are indeed promising potentials and affordances we should not deny ourselves of as teachers and students just because this tool comes with certain challenges and pitfalls. I believe that the principle of eclecticism has always served teachers well even when it comes to approaches and methods of teaching. We know, for example, that the audiolingual method could not help prepare students who are communicatively competent. However, we may still find some of its aspects useful even nowadays (e.g., repetition is still key for learners to recall and retain new vocabulary). I argue that AI tools such as Chat-GPT be viewed and treated in the same way. In other words, we as teachers should be eclectics and not rejectionists. Having said that, one should not be blind to the challenges that these tools come with. This section will be divided into two parts: applications from teachers' perspectives and applications from students' perspectives. Figures are used in Arabic on purpose, as I believe learners should be taught to interact with the tool in the target language. However, full English translation, by Chat-GPT except where I indicate otherwise, of these figures is provided. Again, this is done for the purpose of demonstrating Chat-GPT's abilities in the area of translation.

1. Teachers' Applications

A. Lesson Planning and Creating Teaching Material Based on ChatGPT-4

Recently, I was tasked with teaching a lesson about prepositions in Arabic. I spent some time thinking about the best way to present the most common prepositions such as *to*, *in*, *with*, *on* and

from. Given that the textbook does not start with any text or examples that model the use of these prepositions before students could do a gap-filling activity, I decided to seek Chat-GPT's help. As a teacher, I could definitely compose a text that employs these prepositions, yet I wanted to see if Chat-GPT was able to save me some preparation time. In fact, I even decided to upgrade the experiment to have Chat-GPT include not only a text for the presentation stage, but the whole lesson plan and activities I would need. The lesson plan was designed based on Chat-GPT's suggested activities. Only minor modifications were carried out to demonstrate how Chat-GPT can save teachers a lot of time and effort in their planning. For instance, although I rewrote the learning objectives in my own words, I still kept the meaning as suggested by Chat-GPT. I also added the visuals in the beginning to activate students' prior knowledge as to the theme of the story and at the end where students were asked to work in pairs and compose a story using the learned prepositions. Visualized below is the Arabic version of my lesson plan. For the English version of the lesson plan, please visit Appendix 3.

خطة الدرس Lesson Plan

المستوى: متوسط

الوقت: 11:20-10:30

القواعد: حروف الجر

أهداف الدرس: Lesson objectives:

1. التعرف على حروف الجر وأهميتها في الجملة العربية
2. استخدام حروف الجر بشكل صحيح

التقديم والملاحظة: (15) Presentation and attention

يتكلم الطلبة عن الصورة التالية: Students talk about this visual to activate their prior knowledge:



يقوم الأستاذ بتوزيع نص قصير على الطلبة يحوي حروف جر مختلفة. النص مأخوذ من "شات جي بي تي" و تم تدقيقه من طرف الأستاذ. The teacher hands out the story in the table below as generated by Chat-GPT (mistakes are highlighted in red and corrections in red)

كان يحيى يجلس في الحديقة، يقرأ كتابا عن التاريخ القديم. جاء صديقه محمد من المكتبة وجلس بجانبه. نظر محمد إلى الكتاب وقال: " أنا مهتم أيضا بهذا الموضوع ". شارك يحيى الكتاب مع صديقه وبدأ (بدءا) يناقشان المعلومات الشيقة فيه. بعد قليل ، تحدثا عن رحلة محتملة إلى متحف الفن الإسلامي ، حيث يمكنهما رؤية بعض القطع الأثرية التي قرأ (قراء) عنها. (قال) يحيى قال: " سأخطط لهذه الرحلة على الإنترنت ". (أجاب) محمد ، متحمسا ، أجاب : يجب أن نأخذ كاميرا خاصة بنا لنوثق هذه الزيارة".

في اليوم التالي ، استعدا للرحلة. يحيى كان يحمل الخريطة ومحمد كان يحمل الكاميرا. لقد كانا متحمسين لهذه الرحلة التي سنزدهما معرفة وتجربة جديدة. قبل أن يغادرا ، أخذ يحيى مفتاح السيارة من على الطاولة ونظر إلى محمد قائلا: " هذا اليوم سيكون مغامرة لن ننساها".

يطلب الأستاذ من الطلاب أن يقرأوا النص و يجيبوا عل أسئلة الفهم و يستخرجوا كل حروف الجر الموجودة في النص.

Read the story and extract all the prepositions

البناء والتطبيق: يشتغل الطلاب أزواجا (15) Co-construction

النشاط الأول (Activity one): اختاروا حرف الجر المناسب من الحروف التالية (من - في - إلى - على - ب - ل - مع) لتعبئة الفراغات .

1. ذهبت المدرسة مشياً.
2. الكتاب الطاولة.
3. تحدثت الأستاذ حول درجاتي.
4. الأطفال يلعبون الحديقة.

5. كنت صديقي. I wasmy friend.
 6. ترسم رسوما جميلة..... القلم. She draws beautiful drawings.....the pen.
 7. سأعطي هذه الهدية..... أُمي. I will give this giftmy mother.

النشاط الثاني (Activity two): هناك أخطاء في استعمال حروف الجر في الجمل التالية. صححوها!

1. الصورة تعلق بالجدار. (على)
2. نحن نسير إلى الشارع. (في)
3. الكتاب موجود من الحقيقية. (في)
4. يتحدثون عن الفيلم مع اهتمام. (باهتمام)

الإنتاج الحر والتوسع: يشتغل الطلاب بشكل فردي في النشاط الأول وأزواجا في النشاط الثاني (15) **Extension**

النشاط الأول: Activity one:

ضعوا كل حرف من حروف الجر التالية في جملة مناسبة:
 مع - عن - ل - ب

النشاط الثاني: Activity two:

يقدم الأستاذ مجموعة من الصور ويقوم الطلاب بتأليف قصة بسيطة بناء عليها مستعملين أكبر عدد ممكن من حروف الجر التي تعلموها.



My first prompt in the process was “I am an Arabic teacher. I will be teaching prepositions to intermediate students. I want some help with my lesson planning and I want you to identify two lesson objectives”. In response, Chat-GPT suggested that students would be able to: 1) know prepositions in Arabic, and 2) use these prepositions correctly. In addition, Chat-GPT suggested a lesson plan that generally aligns with the conventional PPP model. First, the presentation stage is where the teacher presents the target prepositions through examples. Second, the practice stage is where students are given some gap-filling activities. Finally, the production stage allows for more free practice. Since no activities were given, I had to give Chat-GPT prompts to suggest activities for each part of my lesson instead of just listing the stages of the lesson plan.

Being aware that Chat-GPT or any other AI tool cannot be a pedagogy, it is important for me to make sure that it is pedagogy that drives this tool and not the opposite. Thus, I thought of planning my lesson in consonance with the PACE model (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2016) which I had learned about in my SLA methods class. According to this model, the teacher presents the target structure through a story (presentation stage), then invites students to attend to meaning and form (attention stage) which is usually facilitated by the use of visuals. In the third stage, the teacher and the students work together to explain the grammar structure and its use (co-construction). Finally, the students use the target structure to complete a task that is related to the theme of the lesson in a communicative manner (extension stage).

With the model above in mind, the second prompt in my attempt to get some relevant story was “I need a short story that uses the following prepositions: *in, to, on, with, from, for* and *by*”. Overall, the text generated was appropriate in terms of language. My students could easily get the gist of it and, as a result, that allowed them to pay attention more to the target structure instead of being confused and distracted by a myriad of unknown words. It is worth mentioning

here that the PACE model shifts attention to form only after meaning is constructed. Likewise, it should also be noted that there were very few mistakes and I corrected them prior to handing out the text to my students. As shown in the lesson plan above, the mistakes are highlighted in red and the corrections in blue. For example, the dual forms of the verbs *started* and *read* respectively are *بدءا* and *قراءا* instead of *بدأ* and *قرأ*. The other ones are more syntactic in nature as in *Yahya said* and *Mohamed replied* where the verbs should precede the subjects: Thus, they should be written: *قال يحيى* and *أجاب محمد* instead of *يحيى قال* and *أجاب محمد*.

After the story, I asked Chat-GPT to provide me with three practice activities as follows: “I need three practice activities”. The first one was a gap-filling activity with four sentences (the first activity is the one under the co-construction phase as indicated in the lesson plan above. Since I was not specific enough in terms of the number of sentences and the prepositions, I decided to just add three more on my own (sentences 5, 6 and 7 as highlighted in green).

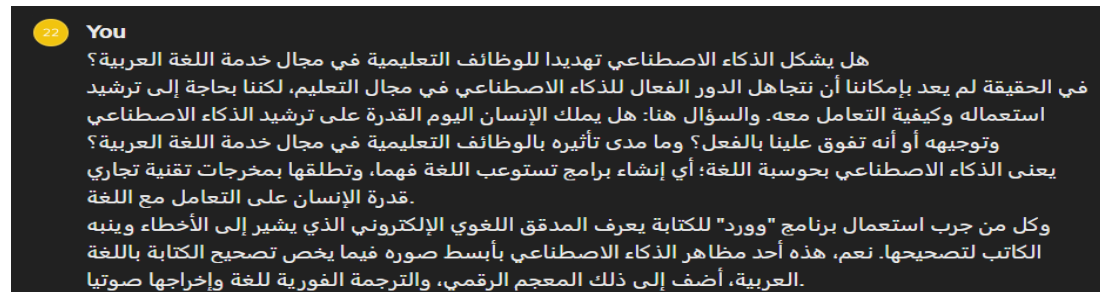
The second activity had incorrect uses of some prepositions and students were asked to correct them. I did not make any modifications to this one (activity two under the co-construction phase in the lesson plan above). In the third activity suggested by Chat-GPT (activity one under the extension phase in the lesson plan above), students were asked to come up with their own sentences using the prepositions given. This was supposed to be a free practice/production activity. However, since it is too conventional an activity, I prompted Chat-GPT for another production activity. My prompt for this one was “I need an activity that allows for free production of prepositions”. Then I liked the idea of cuing students to produce a short story using the learned prepositions based on pictures. This created some variety in my lesson and helped students to talk more.

When students are not given any cues and are just asked to produce sentences or a short story, they may end up spending a substantial amount of time in silence trying to figure out what to talk about. When they have pictures, they just need to put those pictures into words and try to use as many prepositions as possible. So, I used Google images to find some pictures that revolved around previously seen themes (e.g., going on a trip to the beach and going shopping as shown in the end of the lesson plan). In brief, I felt the lesson went well and I saved a good amount of time thanks to my new teaching assistant, Chat-GPT.

B. Other Teacher Applications

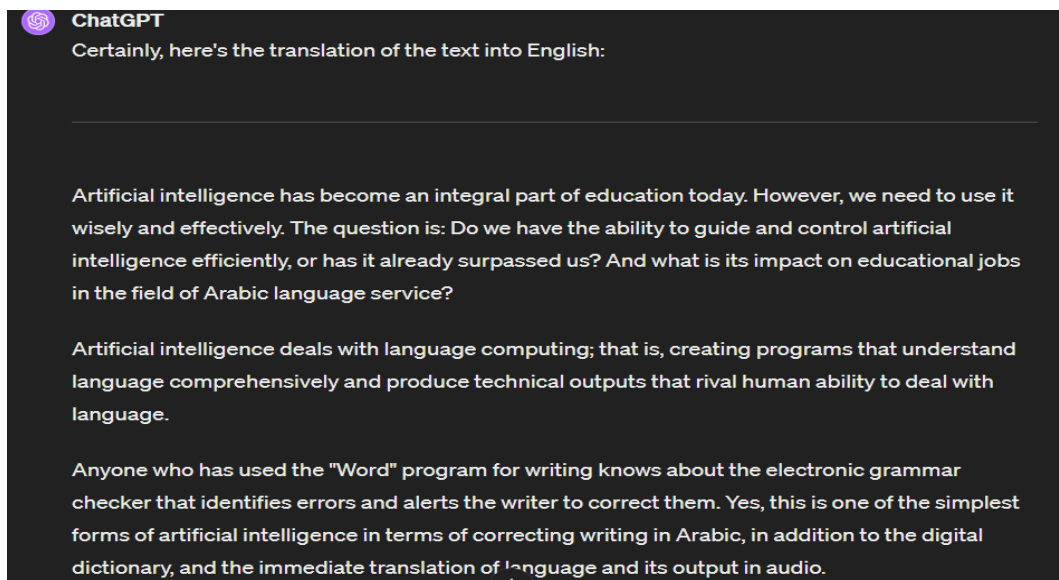
There are various other ways that Arabic teachers can use ChatGPT-4 as an assistant. It is often the case that the reading passages in our textbook are too long and/or too difficult for students to understand. Sometimes, they simply may not be as relevant to the students' real life. While it may be easy again to find a better text on the Internet, teachers would be still faced with the time-consuming task of creating comprehension questions. That's where Chat-GPT comes in. In the forthcoming figures 1, 3 and 4, I demonstrate how teachers can simply copy and paste their text and prompt Chat-GPT to generate any type or number of comprehension questions depending on the objectives of the lesson.

Figure 1. *Sample reading comprehension text.*



In fact, not only can ChatGPT design comprehension questions for teachers, but it can also translate it into English if teachers or students need that. When I asked “can you translate this text into English?”, the result was:

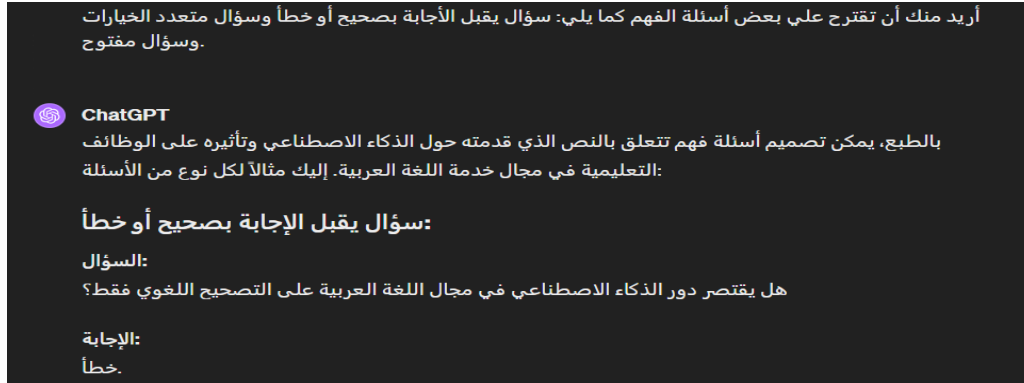
Figure 2. *English version of the sample comprehension text as translated by Chat-GPT.*



As evidenced in the figure above, Chat-GPT’s translation abilities, at least for non-literary texts, can be surprising. One major implication here is that future research focusing particularly on translation is needed (e.g., Chat-GPT use among professional translators or students majoring in translation).

As far as my prompt for comprehension questions based on the text above are concerned, I asked Chat-GPT to “give me three questions: one true/false question, one multiple-choice question, and one open-ended question”. I asked for one question only for the sake of demonstrations, but teachers can ask for as many as they need. Likewise, if the questions are not satisfactory and they do not seem to tap into what teachers want to measure, these questions can either be adapted by the teacher or the teachers can prompt Chat-GPT again in accordance with the exact types of questions needed.

Figure 3. Prompt for designing comprehension questions.



The figure above contains my prompt in Arabic and the first question (T/F). As can be seen, Chat-GPT gives the answer key as well after each question. The figure below shows the other two questions along with the right answers.

Figure 4. Suggested comprehension questions along with their answers.



The sample of reading comprehension text I used was taken from Aljazeera (<https://www.aljazeera.net/culture/2023/9/11/اللغة-العربية-الذكاء-الصناعي>). The suggestions were relevant and appropriate. Even when they are not, teachers are always encouraged to make changes as they see fit. Furthermore, if the original text is deemed to be difficult for students, Chat-GPT can help scaffold it. I was generally satisfied with the result when I prompted Chat-

GPT to do so as the key ideas were not taken out and the text was made simpler and easier as in figure 5 below. My prompt was “can you help me paraphrase this text in simpler words that Arabic beginning learners can understand?”.

Figure 5. *Sample comprehension text paraphrased by Chat-GPT.*



This paraphrased text, if compared to figure 2 above, is made simpler and more precise. It can be translated as:

Artificial intelligence has become an important part in education today. We need to use it wisely and usefully. The question is: are we able to control artificial intelligence and use it effectively or has it become more powerful than us? And how does it affect people who are learning Arabic? Artificial intelligence helps with learning languages and it can pinpoint mistakes when we write. The example of Word that corrects our writing. Artificial intelligence can also help us in translating words and sentences.

Another fascinating method through which ChatGPT-4 can help teachers make texts more accessible and comprehensible is by creating related visuals. While I did not ask Chat-GPT for a picture related to artificial intelligence, I did say that “I want a picture of a group of people wearing different clothes with different colors.” Although ChatGPT-4’s abilities in this area need even more improvement, sometimes teachers can get useful pictures. This can also be done for teaching vocabulary, not just to add visuals to a reading passage. The picture below, for instance, can be used to teach vocabulary related to clothing and colors (a lesson that intermediate Arabic students have, for instance).

Figure 6. Image generated by ChatGPT-4 following my prompt.



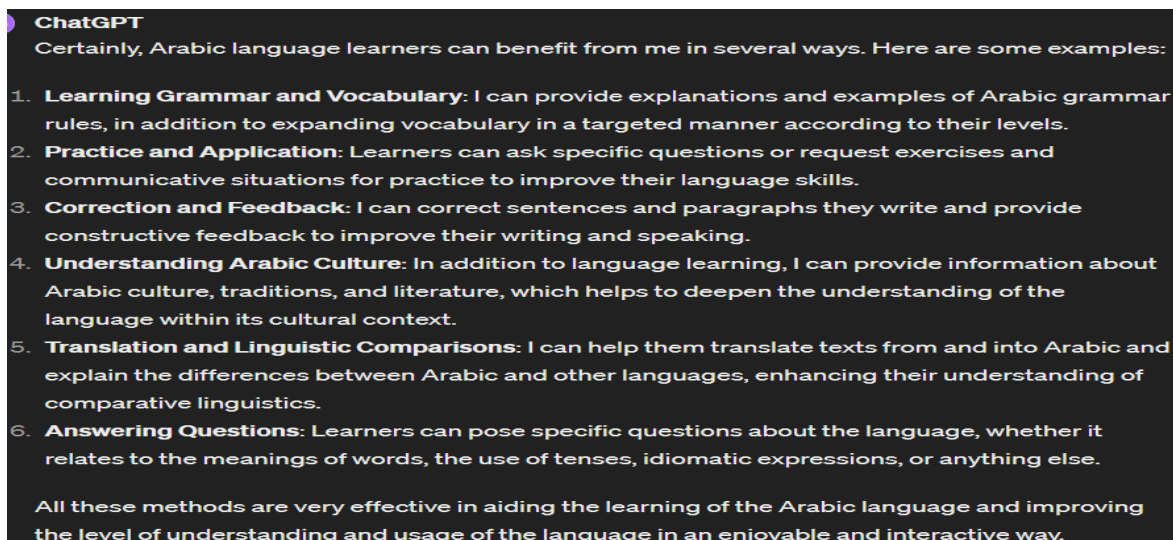
As can be seen in figure 6 above, the picture's effectiveness does not only lie in the fact that it meets the criteria specified in the prompt (i.e., variety of clothing items and their colors), but also in the recognition of the importance of diversity and inclusion as highlighted in the caption under the picture.

2. Possible Student Uses

As there are different ways that teachers can use Chat-GPT for brainstorming lesson plans and activities, students can also benefit from this tool in various ways. When I asked Chat-GPT whether it thought (although it has not yet developed that skill yet), that Arabic learners can benefit from it and how, the answer was as visualized below:

Figure 7. Chat-GPT's response as to how Arabic learners can benefit from it.





Just as many studies in the literature reviewed in this paper indicate, Arabic language learners can also practice different language skills with the use of Chat-GPT. As one of my students reported, Chat-GPT can correct their writing assignments by providing better word choice and structures. However, it should be noted that while correcting most of the mistakes, Chat-GPT is likely to create some new ones in the process (something my students and I noticed in class). This supports the view that human teachers will still be needed. Chat-GPT can also help learners translate texts and new vocabulary. While it says it cannot engage in audio conversations, Chat-GPT can still function as a conversational partner through writing. In addition, students can practice their reading comprehension as they are provided with different texts and summaries and analyses of literary works. However, it must be noted that students need to be more responsible and critical than before with regard to the reliability and validity of information obtained. Since culture is part and parcel of learning a language, students can get insights about different aspects of the Arab culture such as art and customs.

What is more is that Chat-GPT is a flexible tool that can be adapted to cater to different levels and needs of learners. When I asked what category of Arabic learners would benefit more from using Chat-GPT, the answer was as follows:

Figure 8. Chat-GPT's response as to what category of learners can benefit from it the most.

أي فئة من المتعلمين يمكنهم أن يستفيدوا منك أكثر: المبتدئين أم المتوسطين أم المتقدمين

ChatGPT
يمكن لجميع فئات المتعلمين الاستفادة من التفاعل معي، لكن الطريقة والمستوى الذي يمكنهم الاستفادة به يختلف بناءً على خبرتهم اللغوية:

المبتدئين: يمكنهم الاستفادة كثيرًا من خلال تعلم المفردات الأساسية، القواعد البسيطة، والجمل القصيرة التي تساعد في بناء أساس متين للغة. يمكنني أيضًا تقديم تمارين تفاعلية وأساسيات النطق، مما يسهل عليهم بدء رحلتهم في تعلم اللغة.

المتوسطين: يمكن للمتعلمين ذوي المستوى المتوسط الاستفادة بشكل كبير من الممارسة المستهدفة وتعميق فهمهم للقواعد الأكثر تعقيدًا والمفردات المتخصصة. يمكنني تقديم تمارين تركز على تحسين مهارات القراءة والكتابة، وتعزيز القدرة على التواصل بوضوح باللغة.

المتقدمين: يمكن للمتعلمين المتقدمين تعزيز مهاراتهم وتوسيع معرفتهم من خلال التعمق في الأدب، المقالات المعقدة، والمناقشات التي تتطلب فهمًا عميقًا للنواحي الثقافية واللغوية. يمكنني أيضًا مساعدتهم في صقل مهارات الكتابة والتحدث للوصول إلى مستوى أكاديمي أو مهني.

بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يمكنني تقديم مساعدة مخصصة بناءً على احتياجاتهم الفردية، سواء كانت تركز على تحسين مهارة معينة أو فهم جانب معين من اللغة أو الثقافة. بذلك، أعتقد أن الفائدة التي يمكن الحصول عليها من التفاعل معي تعتمد بشكل كبير على أهداف المتعلم وكيفية استخدامهم للموارد المتاحة.

ChatGPT
All learning categories can benefit from interacting with me, but the way and the level they can benefit vary based on their linguistic experience:

- 1. Beginners:** They can benefit significantly by learning basic vocabulary, simple grammar, and short sentences that help build a solid foundation for the language. I can also offer interactive exercises and pronunciation basics, making it easier for them to start their language learning journey.
- 2. Intermediate Learners:** Those at an intermediate level can greatly benefit from targeted practice and deepening their understanding of more complex grammar and specialized vocabulary. I can offer exercises focused on improving reading and writing skills and enhancing the ability to communicate clearly in the language.
- 3. Advanced Learners:** Advanced learners can enhance their skills and broaden their knowledge by delving into literature, complex articles, and discussions that require a deep understanding of cultural and linguistic aspects. I can also help them refine their writing and speaking skills to reach an academic or professional level.

Additionally, I can provide customized assistance based on their individual needs, whether focusing on improving a specific skill or understanding a particular aspect of the language or culture. Therefore, I believe the benefit one can get from interacting with me largely depends on the learner's goals and how they use the available resources.

Beginners can use it to learn the basics such as the alphabet, common expressions, and/or vocabulary. Intermediate learners can interact with it to practice reading and writing, understand texts that are a little difficult, and improve their grammar. As for advanced-level learners, they can discuss topics related to literature, poetry, cultural history, and scholarly articles.

In fact, even by having students share what they learned with the help of AI tools such as Chat-GPT, learning will be reinforced. As Seneca says, "he who teaches learns" (qui docet

discit). When learners know that they will need to teach others, they will make more effort and their noticing level of both meaning and form will likely increase. Therefore, I would venture to say that sometimes it does not matter if students complete their entire assignment using Chat-GPT given that they will still likely have some linguistic gains. For example, they can pick up expressions generated by Chat-GPT and they may be able to pay attention to grammatical structures (form). In addition, as they explain what they learned to others in the classroom, there will be more discussions and questions raised on their classmates' part. In other words, Chat-GPT's product can function as a springboard for students' actual output in the classroom.

My intermediate Arabic students find Chat-GPT particularly useful with regard to thematic vocabulary. Our textbook does not provide a list of vocabulary related to the themes of the units. Instead, the lists include miscellaneous vocabulary. Now with Chat-GPT, they can easily have access to lists as preferred. The figure below is an illustration of 20 words related to shopping.

Figure 9. *A list of vocabulary items related to shopping as suggested by Chat-GPT.*



As a teacher, I feel that indeed learners would miss on a lot of related vocabulary without such lists. Despite the frequency and importance of some of these vocabulary items, they may not appear in the reading and listening passages which often focus on something else not even related to the theme of the unit. Chat-GPT's lists can fill this gap. I felt that Chat-GPT often generates a good selection of vocabulary in terms of frequency.

With regard to writing, I would encourage students to use Chat-GPT for models, especially when they will be required to talk about their experience/perspective. In this case, the models will provide them with the basic structures and vocabulary needed, but they will still be obliged to transform and personalize the content. And as they do, a lot of learning will inevitably take place. In the following illustration, Chat-GPT provides a writing sample about an American student's experience in Iraq.

Figure 10. *A writing sample about an American student in Iraq as suggested by Chat-GPT.*



This story can be translated as follows:

A twenty-two years old American student called Emma had a unique and inspiring experience in Iraq. Majoring in Middle Eastern Studies, Emma chose Iraq for her carrying out her field research about “The Influence of Music on Iraqi Society After the War”. Emma was fascinated by Iraqi culture and excited to dive deeply in it. She aimed to understand how music can function as a tool for healing and communication among people.

Among the things that she admired in Iraq were the locals’ immeasurable generosity and hospitality. They were always ready to help her, whether to guide her to where she needs to be or by inviting her for eating dates and drinking tea. She was mesmerized by with the popular Souqs and their colors, smell, and hustle. In these Souqs she could find everything, from handcraft souvenirs to flavorsome local dishes.

Given her major, Emma spent a lot of time attending local music festivals and talking with musicians. This helped her gather rich data for her research. She was fascinated by the in which Iraqi music reflect the emotions and experiences of the Iraqi people.

Despite these positive things, Emma also faced various challenges. Chief among these was language. Although she had studied Arabic at the university, Emma found it difficult to adapt to the local Iraqi dialect. Other challenges were related to transportation and safety, especially in areas which are still recovering from the aftermath of conflicts. However, Emma’s determination and flexibility along with the support of locals and her sponsoring organization helped her overcome these challenges.

Emma’s journey was not only about research, but it was also a profound personal journey. She learned a lot about human strength, flexibility and how art can be used to overcome life’s challenges (my translation).

Of course, none of my students will have the exact same information (name, major, age, origin, what they learned, and what challenges they faced, etc.) All of this will need to be adapted to the students’ real information and experience. However, there are cases when it is hard, if not impossible, for the teacher to determine if the product is completely AI-generated. Here again, teachers should simply find different ways to have students actually reflect on the content and use their critical thinking skills. They may be asked to make presentations using different modes to reinforce learning instead of having them merely submit their writing assignments.

As far as cultural content is concerned, I was marveled at the response generated when one of my students wanted to know about famous dishes in Morocco. In the figure below, Chat-GPT identifies 6 main dishes. However, users can specify any top number of dishes they would like to know about as well as any other specific details. For instance, they may want to know

only those dishes related to a certain region within Morocco, or only those which are common on a given occasion (e.g., weddings).

Figure 11. *A list of famous Moroccan dishes as suggested by Chat-GPT.*

أنا متعلم اللغة العربية. احتاج أن أعرف الأكلات المغربية المشهورة

ChatGPT

المطبخ المغربي غني بالنكهات والأطباق المتنوعة التي تعكس التأثيرات الثقافية المختلفة، بما في ذلك الأمازيغية، العربية، الأندلسية، والمتوسطية. إليك بعض الأكلات المغربية المشهورة:

1. الطاجين: واحد من أشهر الأطباق في المغرب، وهو يأتي بأشكال عديدة. يطهى الطاجين ببطء في إناء فخاري مميز يحمل نفس الاسم، وقد يشتمل على اللحم (كالدجاج، اللحم البقري، أو الضأن)، الخضروات، الزيتون، والتوابل.
2. الكسكس: يعتبر الكسكس وجبة أساسية في المغرب ويقدم تقليدياً يوم الجمعة. يتكون من حبيبات السميد الصغيرة التي تُطهى على البخار وتُقدم مع الخضروات واللحم.
3. الحريزة: شوربة مغذية تحتوي على الطماطم، العدس، الحمص، واللحم. تُقدم عادة كجزء من وجبة الإفطار في رمضان.
4. البسطيلة: فطيرة مغربية فريدة تجمع بين النكهات الحلوة والمالحة، محشوة بالدجاج أو السمك، اللوز، ومغطاة بالسكر البودرة والقرفة.
5. المخمر (البغريز): يُعرف ببطائر الألف ثقب، وهو نوع من الخبز الخفيف والإسفننجي يُقدم عادةً مع العسل والزبدة.
6. الزعلوك: سلطة مغربية تُصنع من الباذنجان المشوي والطماطم، متبلّة بالأعشاب والتوابل.

ChatGPT

Moroccan cuisine is rich in flavors and diverse dishes that reflect various cultural influences, including Amazigh, Arab, Andalusian, and Mediterranean. Here are some famous Moroccan dishes:

1. **Tagine:** One of the most famous dishes in Morocco, it comes in many forms. Tagine is slowly cooked in a distinctive clay pot of the same name and may include meat (such as chicken, beef, or lamb), vegetables, olives, and spices.
2. **Couscous:** Considered a staple in Morocco and traditionally served on Fridays. It consists of small semolina grains steamed and served with vegetables and meat.
3. **Harira:** A nutritious soup that contains tomatoes, lentils, chickpeas, and meat. It is usually served as part of the meal to break the fast during Ramadan.
4. **Pastilla (Bastilla):** A unique Moroccan pie that combines sweet and savory flavors, filled with chicken or fish, almonds, and topped with powdered sugar and cinnamon.
5. **Msemen (Baghrir):** Known as the thousand-hole pancake, it's a type of light, spongy bread usually served with honey and butter.
6. **Zaalouk:** A Moroccan salad made from grilled eggplant and tomatoes, seasoned with herbs and spices.

As we can see in this example, not only did Chat-GPT correctly identify famous Moroccan dishes, but it also provided a succinct description of each one of these dishes. In the case of couscous (2), and Moroccan soup (3) Chat-GPT interestingly highlighted the temporal

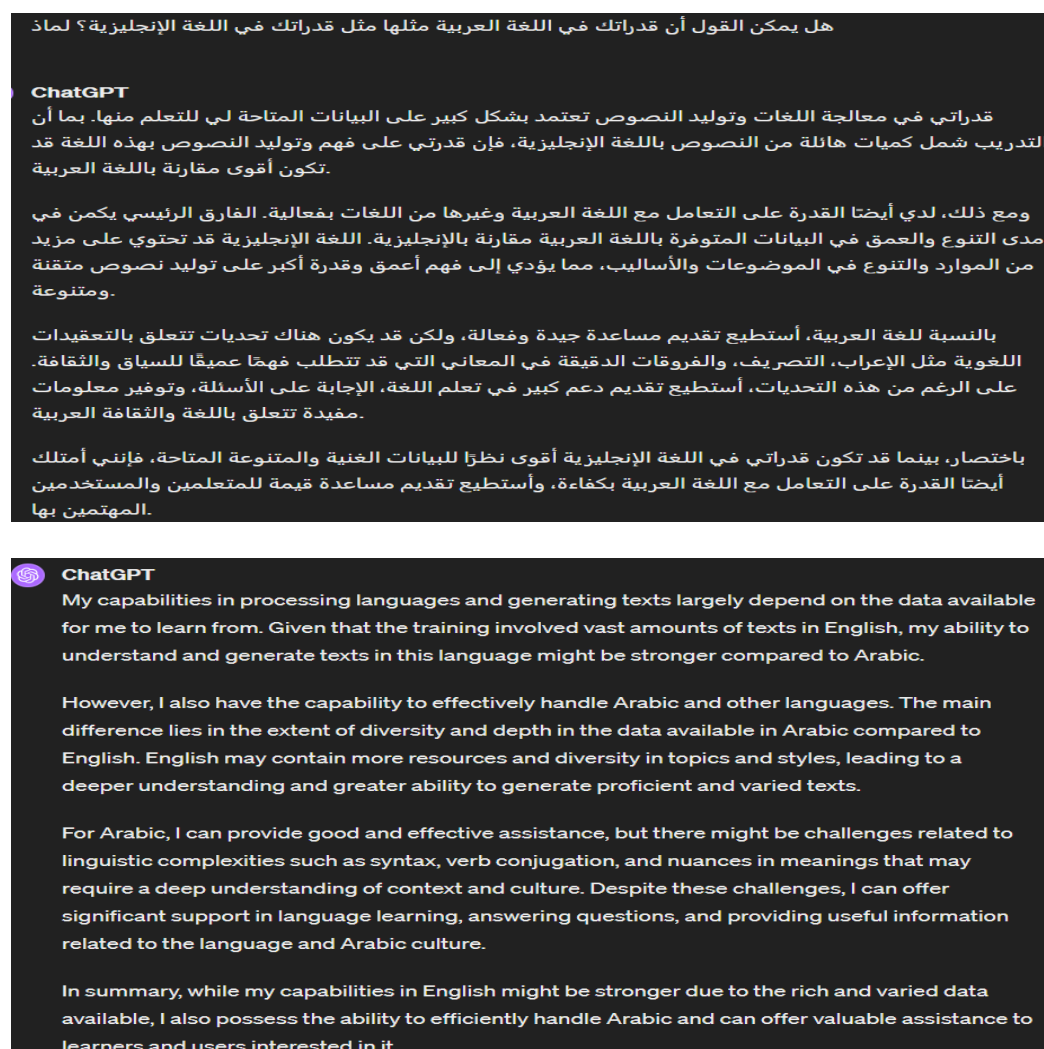
context of these dishes: the former being associated particularly with Fridays and the latter with Ramadan (the month of fasting). Other dishes mentioned are tajine, pastilla, and zaalouk (see figure 11 in Appendix 2 for English translation).

3. Chat-GPT Across Languages

So far, the overwhelming majority of studies conducted on AI and language instruction is done in the context of English. Thus, even if the tool proved to have more advantages than challenges, we cannot assume that it is equally useful for all other language teachers/learners.

Even Chat-GPT knows this very well as we can see in its response to my question in this regard:

Figure 12. *Chat-GPT's response as to whether its abilities in Arabic are the same as in English.*



To summarize the above, I asked if we could consider Chat-GPT's abilities in Arabic to be tantamount to its abilities in English. The answer was that its abilities differ significantly depending on the quality and the quantity of the training data available. Arabic, according to the tool, is also characterized by its complex structure and great dialectal variation. Based on this, my next natural question was how to improve its performance and abilities.

Figure 13. Chat-GPT's response as to how its abilities in Arabic can be improved.

كيف يمكن تطوير قدراتك وأدائك في اللغة العربية

ChatGPT
تطوير قدراتي وأدائي في اللغة العربية يمكن أن يتم عبر عدة طرق، معظمها يتعلق بكيفية تحديث وتدريب النماذج اللغوية التي أستخدمها. إليك بعض الأساليب الممكنة:

1. توسيع قاعدة البيانات التدريبية: إضافة المزيد من النصوص العربية المتنوعة وعالية الجودة إلى قاعدة البيانات التي يتم تدريبي عليها يمكن أن يحسن فهمي للغة ويزيد من قدرتي على توليد نصوص طبيعية ودقيقة.
2. التعلم من التفاعلات: التفاعل مع مستخدمين يتحدثون العربية والتعلم من الأسئلة المطروحة والردود المقدمة يساعد في تحسين قدرتي على فهم الاستفسارات وتقديم إجابات مفيدة.
3. التحسين المستمر من خلال التغذية الراجعة: الحصول على تغذية راجعة من المستخدمين بشأن دقة وجودة الردود يمكن أن يساعد في تحديد المجالات التي تحتاج إلى تحسين وتعديل التدريبات وفقًا لذلك.
4. استخدام تقنيات التعلم العميق المتقدمة: تطبيق أحدث التقنيات في مجال التعلم الآلي والتعلم العميق يمكن أن يساهم في تحسين قدرتي على التعامل مع التعقيدات اللغوية والثقافية للغة العربية.
5. التركيز على اللهجات والاستخدامات الإقليمية: توسيع نطاق التدريب ليشمل اللهجات العربية المختلفة والاستخدامات الإقليمية يمكن أن يزيد من فعاليتي في التواصل مع متحدثي العربية من مناطق متنوعة.
6. التعاون مع خبراء لغويين: العمل مع لغويين ومتخصصين في اللغة العربية يمكن أن يوفر رؤى قيمة لتحسين التدريب وتعزيز دقة التعامل مع اللغة.

من خلال هذه الاستراتيجيات والتحسينات المستمرة، يمكن تعزيز قدراتي في اللغة العربية بما يتماشى مع التطورات في مجال الذكاء الاصطناعي واحتياجات المستخدمين.

ChatGPT
Improving my capabilities and performance in Arabic can be achieved through several methods, most of which relate to how the language models I use are updated and trained. Here are some possible approaches:

1. **Expanding the Training Data Base:** Adding more diverse and high-quality Arabic texts to the database I'm trained on can improve my understanding of the language and increase my ability to generate natural and accurate texts.
2. **Learning from Interactions:** Interacting with Arabic-speaking users and learning from the questions posed and responses provided helps improve my ability to comprehend inquiries and offer useful answers.
3. **Continuous Improvement through Feedback:** Receiving feedback from users regarding the accuracy and quality of responses can help identify areas that need improvement and adjust the training accordingly.
4. **Using Advanced Deep Learning Techniques:** Applying the latest techniques in machine learning and deep learning can contribute to improving my ability to handle the linguistic and cultural complexities of Arabic.
5. **Focusing on Dialects and Regional Uses:** Expanding the training to include different Arabic dialects and regional uses can increase my effectiveness in communicating with Arabic speakers from various regions.
6. **Collaboration with Linguistic Experts:** Working with linguists and specialists in Arabic can provide valuable insights for improving training and enhancing the accuracy of language handling.

Through these strategies and continuous improvements, my capabilities in Arabic can be enhanced in line with developments in artificial intelligence and user needs.

Again, according to Chat-GPT it is important to increase the amount of training data in Arabic and diversify the sources/genres of texts. In addition, algorithms need to be improved so that better understanding can take place based on context. What I liked the most is the fact that it also says that linguistics experts are needed to evaluate its performance and provide feedback for improvement. This all boils down to the fact that Chat-GPT should be used as a supplement or tool and not as a replacement for a human teacher.

Concluding Remarks and Takeaways

It is worthwhile reiterating a key point that was stated in Gao et al. (2024) in the literature review which was that the integration of LLMs such as Chat-GPT does not necessarily require IT personnel, but it rather depends on teachers' motivation and initiative to try any innovative/emerging tools. In other words, teachers should not deny themselves and their students the affordances of a given tool on the grounds that there is no technology staff to help train them. It is true that such training, if existent, will be helpful and optimize the gains. However, teachers can still take small steps and experiment with new tools. Perhaps when they do, they will find out that they are not as complicated and that they do serve as a support in many different ways. Even when it comes to pedagogies and teaching approaches, teachers are not taught everything. They continue to learn and understand the merits and drawbacks of each approach as they apply it. Then they keep what works well for them and adapt or change what does not. Again, not knowing everything about AI tools may be a positive thing in the sense that it will maintain the idea of collaboration among teachers. We should not let AI make us think that we do not need collaboration with other human teachers anymore. It should rather lead to more collaboration.

From learners' perspectives, I believe that compared to learners of some languages like English and Spanish, learners of Arabic as a foreign language oftentimes do not have access to as many resources to practice the language and learn more about Arab cultures. Additionally, since nobody speaks standard Arabic as a native language, it is even harder for students to practice it outside the classroom. Therefore, AI can contribute to bridging this gap despite its challenges. By calling for the use of AI tools such as Chat-GPT, I do not advocate for a 'blind' kind of implementation. The fact that these tools are not perfect and have pitfalls is actually a positive thing in two ways. First, it means AI is not going to relegate human teachers to an inferior position or get rid of them altogether. Second, it means that students will still have to be critical when and if they use AI. In my demonstrations throughout this paper, I purposefully posed my questions in Arabic as I wanted to suggest that just by the sheer fact of having students use ChatGPT in such a way, they will already be practicing their language. In other words, the process of writing different prompts in the target language is conducive to learning. Therefore, I believe students should be encouraged to interact with the tool using the target language.

Today, AI tools are increasingly penetrating every aspect of our lives. Therefore, the implications of AI extend beyond classroom walls. When they graduate, our learners will most likely join industries and workplaces that are AI-centric. Therefore, if foreign language instruction does not take that into account, it may well be the case that we are not adequately preparing learners for life. I hope to have shown that integrating new AI tools is a must if we are to keep preparing our students for real life where AI literacy skills are pivotal. However, we have to do so appropriately. That is, we need to make it clear that these tools are here to be used critically, responsibly, and in such ways that do not take the human aspect out of the teaching/learning process. After all, we do not want everyone to become machines. As

emphasized in all the studies reviewed in this paper, Chat-GPT should be merely used as a supplement for L2 teachers and learners.

In closing, AI tools may also reinforce the notion of flipped learning. That is, students will practice less demanding/lower-order skills (e.g., remembering and comprehending information) on their own using AI tools. On the other hand, classroom time will be reserved for more demanding/higher-order skills (e.g., discussion, application, and evaluation of information). However, this may not be achieved intuitively. It will require more principled and informed use of AI tool involving all education parties and stakeholders. In turn, this may result in a new understanding of the notion of learning as a whole. Thus, questions like what learning is/means in the age of AI may be timely for future research.

STATEMENT OF FUTURE GOALS AND PLANS

Now that I have had the great privilege and honor of officially being an “Aggie” (a term used to designate a student or alumnus of USU) with a master’s degree in second language teaching, it is my responsibility to make my future shine brighter. First and foremost, it is my priority to keep in contact with all the professors I knew by virtue of being a student in the MSLT program, especially those who have been helping me and guiding me throughout every step in the program and making sure I succeed. I will never forget their encouragements.

Second, I will seek different professional development opportunities to ensure my growth as a teacher. I will attend conferences related to the field, for instance. I will also take part in every possible language and culture fair/event to both learn about other languages and cultures and also share mine. These opportunities are also a great venue to network and expand my community of practice and exchange teaching practices.

Third, I want to continue practicing and improving all my “second” languages (e.g., French, English, and Spanish). In addition, it is my goal to learn at least one more new language. Having friends and colleagues who speak those languages will definitely help me achieve this goal. Therefore, I plan to maintain my contact with all the graduate instructors and adjuncts I got to know in my program.

Fourth, it is among my major goals to boost my academic and professional skills. Thus, I look forward to joining some doctoral program in the future and teach both language- and content-oriented courses at university level. By the same token, I aim to contribute to research in the field of SLA focusing particularly on technology and AI. Given that most of the Arabic textbooks in use now are susceptible to becoming obsolete, I aspire to be part of designing a new one that is more geared to today’s needs.

Finally, it is my dream to contribute to making our world a peaceful place for everyone. As a language teacher, I believe I have the potential to make some great change in this regard merely by inspiring students to learn other languages and the cultures associated with them. This will lead to a better understanding of those who are different, yet equal. May AI also help us in achieving this great endeavor!

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Appendix 1: A student's sample written report about the virtual exchange project.

لهذا مشروع، تكلمت امرأة من مصر عن الثقافة المصرية. اسمها علي الجوهري و هي كانت لطيفة جداً و مساعد كثيراً. قابلنا في زوم في نونبر سبعة و تكلمنا معاً ساعتين و نصف! استمتع بموعداً كثيراً لكن انا مشغولة عن قابل مرة اخرى. تكلمنا اول عن تعلم اللغة العربية و تجاربي بها. على شجعتني على المشاهدة الافلام في اللغة العربية. بعض افلام المصرية احسن، في رأيها، صدروا بين الفين و ألفين و عشرة. تحب الفيلم ميروك الف و الفيلم طير انت. سكتنت ان اشاهدهم في العطلة كريسما، ان شاء الله. على قالت افلام كثيرة صدروا في العطلة رمضان لان عائلات معاً في بيوتهم. غالباً، عائلات يشاهدون الافلام معاً لاحتفل رمضان. رمضان العطلة الاكبر في مصر. الشوارع عندها فوانيس كثيراً و كل الناس يأكلون الإفطار مع عائلاتهم و أصدقائهم. الفوانيس عندهم الصورة شخصيات التلفزيون مشهورات مثلاً بكار و بوجي و طمطم. ليلة القدر ليلة الكبير في رمضان لان هي ليلة عندما جبريل زار محمد و المسلمين في مصر يصلون كل هذه ليلة.

بعد أن تكلمنا عن رمضان، ثم تكلمنا عن طعام و قضيينا ساعة به! في الصباح، المصريين يأكلون عيش بلدي (و خبز) دائماً. اخرى طعام الإفطار فول مدمس او طعمية (اسمها فلافل في بلاد عربية اخرى). الإفطار ليس حلو مثل في أمريكا. ايضاً يشربون شاي اسود بالنعناع و سكر و قهوة بحليب. لهوم في مصري يجب حلال. لعشاء، المصريين يأكلون الفتة و الكشري. الفتة هو الطعام المطبوخ في عيد الأضحى لكن ناس يأكلونه كل السنة. الكشري عشاء شهرة أكثر في مصر. تكلمنا عن طعام كثيراً لكن ليس عندي وقت من كلهم!

ايضاً تكلمنا عن طقس و طبيعة في مصر. الطقس حار جداً و مدينتا حار اكثر لان ليس عندها أشجار لكن في مدينتا جديدة غالبية جداً هناك الأشجار. بسبب الحار، كثير الناس في مصر يبقون في بيوتهم أو بنايات أو مول لان عندهم ايسي (AC). في طقس ليس حار، بعض ناس يمشون الجبال سيناء. تحيات مصرية أهلا و سهلا، السلام عليكم، و صباح الخير. على تكلمنا "قابا" تحية ايضاً لكن لا اعرف ماذا هذا تهيبة معنى.

الافراح المصرية جميلة و عادةً تزداد في الشتاء و الربيع. في الحقيقة، كثيراً اصداق على يتزوجون اللن! شاهدت صور من افراح الاصدقاء العلى. في مصر، رجل و أسرته يذهبون الى بيت الاسرة المرأة يطلب التزوجها. هذا حدث اسمه الفاتحة. عندما الرجا و الامراء مخطوبة، هو يعطيها مال او مجوهرات اسمه المحر. الخطيب يجب يعطي الخطيبة مال كثيراً لان يحبها. ثم حزب الاحتفال الفاتحة. هو يمكن أن يكون في كافي او في بيت. بعد أن زوجين يشترون بيت و شئ بالبيت. ثم عندهم الافراح. زوج يلبس بدل اسود و زوجة تلبس فستان ابيض مثل في أمريكا. عادةً في حديقة أو في مسجد. هناك الرقص و طعام كثيراً. دائماً المازن يساعد في الافراح. يوم الجمعة و يوم السبت أيام افراح كثيرة. الافراح مسيحية تقليدي جداً و الرجل و الامراة يلبسون ملابس تقليدية.

مع الأسف، على و انا لا تكلمنا في اللغة العربية. في حقيقي، لا احب ان اتكلم في عربية لأن لست جيدة بها. اعرف اذا اتكلم في عربية سأتعلم كثيراً لكن ليس عندي شجاعة. لكن تعلمت كثيراً من هذه مشروع و احببت ان اتكلم في على. اكتب المقالة سبعة جداً و قضييت وقت طويل فيها لكن هو مساعد بالمفردات و القواعد. اظن ان المشروع سيكون جيد مع طلاب في المستقبل.

Appendix 2: Translated version of a student's sample written report.

For this project, I spoke with a woman from Egypt about Egyptian culture. Her name is Alaa El-Gohary, and she was very kind and extremely helpful. However, I was busy to meet with her often. We met on Zoom on November seventh and talked together for two hours and a half! I really enjoyed our conversation.

First, we talked about learning Arabic language and my experience with it. She encouraged me to watch Arabic films. According to her, some of the best films were released between 2010 and 2020. She likes the films "Congratulations" and "You're a Fly." She suggested I watch them during the Christmas holiday, if possible. She said many films are released during the occasion of Ramadan, and families gather to watch them together to celebrate Ramadan. Ramadan is the biggest occasion in Egypt. The streets are filled with lanterns, and everyone eats "fava beans" and "tamatem" (tomatoes). They have a big meal with their families and friends at night for the iftar (breaking fast). Their lanterns feature famous TV characters. The biggest night in Ramadan is the night when Gabriel visited Muhammad, and Muslims in Egypt pray all night on this occasion.

After talking about Ramadan, we discussed food and spent an hour on it! In the morning, Egyptians always eat "baladi bread" (local bread). Another breakfast food is "ful medames" or "taamiya" (known as falafel in some other Arab countries). Breakfast is not as sweet as in America. They drink black tea with mint and sugar, and coffee with milk. For them, breakfast must be light. For dinner, Egyptians eat "fatta" and also "koshari." Fatta is a dish cooked on Eid al-Adha, but some people eat it all year round. Koshari is a more famous dinner in Egypt. We talked about food a lot, but I don't have time to talk about it all here!

We also talked about the weather and nature in Egypt. The weather is very hot, and cities are even hotter because they lack trees, but in newer cities, there are also many trees. Due to the heat, many people in Egypt stay in their homes, buildings, or malls, where they have air conditioning (AC). When the weather is not hot, some people hike in the mountains of Sinai. Egyptian greetings are warm and easy, like "Salam alaikum" (peace be upon you) and "Sabah al-khayr" (good morning). She talked also mentioned "fava" but I don't know what this greeting means exactly.

Egyptian weddings are beautiful and usually increase in winter and spring. In fact, many friends of her friends are getting married now! I saw pictures of her friends' weddings. In Egypt, a man and his family go to the woman's family to ask for her hand in marriage. This event is called "al-fatihah." When the man and the woman are engaged, he gives her money or jewelry called "mahar." The groom must give the bride a lot of money because he loves her. Then they have the "fatihah" celebration. It can be in a cafe or at home. After they are married, they buy a house and things for the house. Then they have the wedding celebration. The groom wears a black suit, and the bride wears a white dress like in America. Usually, it's in a garden or a mosque. There's dancing and a lot of food. Caterers always help with weddings. Fridays and Saturdays are the days for many weddings. Traditional Egyptian weddings are very festive, and the men and women wear traditional clothes.

Unfortunately, although her and I talked in Arabic, I do not like to speak in Arabic because I am not good at it. I know if I speak more in Arabic I will learn more, but I don't have the courage. But I learned a lot from this project and I wanted to talk in Arabic. I wrote the article in Arabic. I learned a lot.

It was a very difficult and long journey, but it helped with vocabulary and grammar. I think the project will be good for students in the future.

Appendix 3: English version of the lesson plan.

Lesson Plan

Level: Intermediate

Time: 10:30 – 11:20

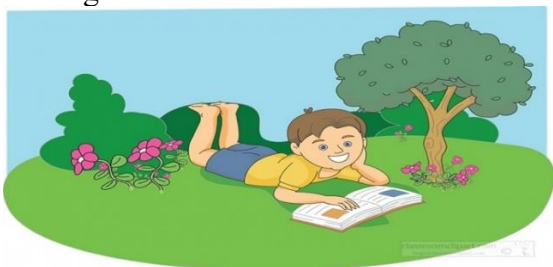
Grammar: Prepositions

Objectives:

- 1). Students will get to know prepositions and their importance in Arabic sentences
- 2). Students will learn how to use these prepositions correctly

Presentation: 5 mnts

1. The teacher shows a picture related to the theme of the text and asks students to describe it and guess what the book is about.



2. The teacher then hands out the text blow. The text was produced by ChatGPT and corrected by the teacher. This English version is translated by ChatGPT.

ChatGPT

Yahya was sitting in the garden, reading a book about ancient history. His friend, Mohammad, came from the library and sat beside him. Mohammad looked at the book and said, "I'm also interested in this subject." Yahya shared the book with his friend, and they began to discuss the fascinating information in it.

After a while, they talked about a possible trip to the Islamic Art Museum, where they could see some of the artifacts they had read about. Yahya said, "I will plan this trip online." Excitedly, Mohammad replied, "We should take our own camera to document this visit."

The next day, they prepared for the trip. Yahya carried the map, and Mohammad carried the camera. They were both excited for this journey, which would increase their knowledge and provide them with a new experience. Before they left, Yahya took the car key from the table and looked at Mohammad, saying, "This day will be an adventure we won't forget."

(The story is translated from Arabic by ChatGPT)

Attention: 10 mnts

1. Students read the text and answer these comprehension questions:
 - What was Yahya doing?
 - Where did Yahya and Mohamed want to go?
2. Students extract all the prepositions from the text.
- 3.

Co-construction: 15 mnts

1. The teacher asks students to look at the words/letters that follow these prepositions and form a hypothesis.
2. Students do the following practice exercises:
 - Choose the correct preposition to fill in the gap: *from, in, to, on, by, for, and with*.
 - a. He walkedschool.
 - b. The book is.....the table.
 - c. I talkedthe teacher about my grades.
 - d. The kids are playing....the park.
 - e. I was....my friend.
 - f. She draws beautiful drawingspen.
 - g. I will give this giftmy mother.
 - Correct the prepositions in the following sentences
 - a. The picture is hung by the wall.
 - b. We are walking to the street.
 - c. The book is from the schoolbag.
 - d. They are talking about the movie in interest.

Extension: 15

1. Students use the following prepositions to form their own sentences: *with, about, for, and by*.
2. Students work in pairs and compose a story based on the following pictures:

