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Addressing Machine Translation and AI Tool Use in the English Language Learning Classroom

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Recently, machine translation (MT) services such as Google Translate and DeepL, and generative AI tools like ChatGPT and Google Bard have become a topic of interest for many language teachers. Some teachers are concerned about threats to academic integrity, while others are interested in the educational potential of such tools and how best to effectively harness them for learning. In this presentation, we explore how teachers are addressing the use of MT and generative AI in the classroom in Japan and how they believe these tools will affect the language teaching profession.

A pilot survey was initially conducted regarding how teachers address the use of MT and generative AI in their classrooms (N = 32). Out of the university English instructors in Japan who responded to the initial pilot survey, 9 instructors were interviewed. Interviewees shared their: teaching context; approaches to addressing MT & generative AI use in their courses, and; thoughts on the future of MT/AI and the language teaching profession.

The interviewees' instructional approaches included: increasing monitoring of student coursework, "re-walling the classroom" with group work, paper and pencil assessments, interviewing students about the content of their writing assignments, impromptu assessments, and strengthening the process writing approach. Other teachers fully embraced the technologies in their courses- teaching students about effective and ineffective uses of MT/AI, or encouraging their critical use in certain steps in the writing process. Others avoided the use of them altogether.

The presenters will explain the various interviewees' approaches towards MT and generative AI in the language classroom. Some thoughts about the future of these technologies in the language teaching profession will also be shared.

Is this a sponsored session?

Keywords

Machine Translation, Artificial Intelligence, Pedagogy, Language Learning

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