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ICLE SIG - (Can) (Will) AI be used for teaching Intercultural Communicative Skills in Foreign Language Education?

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JALT Intercultural Communication in Language Education (ICLE) SIG Presentation

The advent of widely accessible generative AI tools such as ChatGPT has taken foreign language education by storm; fueling a raging debate regarding the possibilities, limitations and even the adequacy of using AI for language learning. Under this context, it could be said that there is one particular area that epitomizes AI's inherent inadequacies: the intercultural experience of learning a language. Due to the fact that language and culture are part of an indivisible unit (the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis), becoming proficient in a foreign language requires much more than just learning grammar, spelling, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc; it also requires a deep understanding of the cultural underpinnings of it. Hence, common sense dictates that AI is hardly an adequate tool for this purpose ... or is it? In this presentation, I will argue that the answer to the question of whether AI can be used for teaching cross-cultural communicative skills largely depends on the position a given language teacher assumes regarding defining (a) what is intercultural communication (IC) in the first place, and (b) what is the role of IC in foreign language education in the second. In this sense, the presentation will be structured in two major parts. Firstly, leading theoretical approaches on IC (in particular, Bennett's DMIS, Byram's MICC, Moran's Cultural Knowings Framework, Van Dyne's Four Factor CQ Model, and Shaule's DMLL) will be analyzed in terms of how they could potentially allocate (or even preclude) a role for AI in language learning. Secondly, existing examples of contemporary AI tool usage in IC education settings will be expounded as a means to exemplify the present possibilities and limitations of AI in IC. Last but not least, the presentation will turn its eye to the possible future developments in AI technology that could upend our current answers to the question that guides this presentation.

Is this a sponsored session?

No

Keywords

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