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Generative AI as a Tool for Teaching Discourse Competence in EFL

Sunday 18 May 2025 13:05 (25 minutes)

TITLE

Generative AI as a Tool for Teaching Discourse Competence in EFL

RELEVANT SIG

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

FORMAT

Practice-oriented Oral Face-to-face presentation (25 minutes, including Q&A)

Short English description

KEYWORDS

Generative AI
Prompt Engineering
Discourse Competence
Communicative Competence

First-time presenter?

ABSTRACT

The ability to produce coherent and cohesive utterances during a conversation, commonly referred to as discourse competence (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995) is one of the many challenges of developing "natural" conversational skills in EFL (Bachman, 1991). In the Japan context, there is a number of difficulties Japanese learners face in this regard, e.g. structural discrepancies between Japanese and English in terms of how thoughts tend to be chained during speech as well as the inherent "unnaturalness" of the conversations that appear in some English textbooks (Ellis, 1991; Haugh, 2019). In this practice-oriented presentation, a Generative AI-based strategy for overcoming some of these challenges will be presented. Specifically, a chatbot was

prompt-engineered for conversing with students; whilst coaching them on how to organize sentences coherently and use linking words and transitional phrases to create cohesive discourse. The classroom application of this tool will be demonstrated through student outputs and testimonials. Finally, the limitations of using this tool and the general transferability of skills learned through chatbot-based conversations to non-AI mediated, real-world interactions will be discussed.

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