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AI AS SUPPORTING TOOL FOR THE L2 LANGUAGE TEACHING



AI and Language Education



AI has had a **disruptive impact** on education and glottodidactics.



Applications range from:

- ☐ Chatbots and virtual tutors
- ☐ Support to human tutor for material creation



Calls for **critical reflection** on both potential and limitations.



POTENTIAL AND LIMITATIONS

Strengths	Limitations
☐ Rapid material generation	☐ Limited adaptation to learners' age, level, emotion
☐ Instant feedback	☐ Lack of authentic social understanding
☐ Personalization potential	☐ Artificial, less complex language
☐ Support for teachers	☐ No gestures, tone, or paralinguistic cues



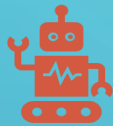
- ☐ Godwin-Jones (2023): chatbots lack real understanding of human social relationships and that their language remains artificial and inauthentic, less complex and articulated than human language
- ☐ Huang, J., & Mizumoto, A. (2024), Qiao, H., & Zhao, A. (2023), and Wei, L. (2023): learners have better results with AI tutor than human tutor
- ☐ Tasdelen, O., & Bodemer, D. (2025), and Fabiano, A. (2025), Ma, Y., & Chen, M. (2025) compared results among students learning with a human tutor, with an AI tutor, and with a human tutor using AI. The best-performing group was the one taught by a human tutor supported by AI



HUMAN-AI SYNERGY



*Yi Ma & Mingyang
Cheng (2024):*



Three groups
tested:

- AI-only
- Human-only
- Human + AI



Best performance:
Human + AI (with
human scaffolding)



“AI’s potential in
language learning
is maximized when
strategically
integrated with
human pedagogical
expertise.”



AI AT CENTRO MACHIAVELLI

- *Centro Machiavelli's learners are highly heterogeneous*
→ Age, background, motivation, linguistic & cultural origins vary widely.
- Same level ≠ same needs
- **Benefits of AI Integration: advantages for teachers**
 - ☐ ☐ **Time efficiency:** less workload in lesson prep
 - ☐ **Tailored materials:** customized texts & tasks for each class
 - ☐ **Rapid generation** of high-quality didactic resources



AI AT CENTRO MACHIAVELLI

- **Benefits of AI Integration: advantages for learners**
 - ☐ **Personalized content:** aligned with interests & proficiency
 - ☐ **Learner-centered approach:** supports autonomy & engagement
 - ☒ **Higher motivation and satisfaction:** lessons feel more relevant and useful



APPLICATIONS OF AI IN CREATING TEACHING MATERIALS

1. Comprehension

1.1. Creation and Use of Texts

1.2. Audio Implementation

1.3. Text Manipulation

Activities

INNOVATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING 2025

1.4. Visual Content Creation

2. Production and Dialogue

2.1. Interactive Role Plays

2.2. Image-Based Activities

2.3. Debates with AI



1. COMPREHENSION

- **Creation and Use of Texts:**
 - **Tailored text generation by specifying:**
 - ☐ *Theme / topic*
 - ☐ *Audience type*
 - ☐ ☐ *Proficiency level*
 - ☐ *Age and educational background*



1. COMPREHENSION

1.1 Creation and Use of Texts:

- **Tailored text generation by specifying:**

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INNOVATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING 2025

- **Added activities**

- ☐ ☐ *Elicitation tasks*
- ☐ *Comprehension questions*
(open / closed / multiple-choice)
- ☐ *Comprehension grids (Excel export)*
- ☐ ☐ *Grammar & vocabulary exercises*

Chatbots are capable of producing entire teaching units, in our practice teachers tend to request specific activities in response to learners' needs rather than relying on full AI-generated units.



1. COMPREHENSION

1.2 Audio Implementation

- From written to spoken text
- AI enables **conversion of written texts into audio form**.
- Two main options:
 - ☐ ☐ *ChatGPT reading aloud* (simple and direct)
 - ☐ ☐ *Text-to-Speech tools* (e.g. [luvvoice.com](https://www.luvvoice.com)) to create **.mp3 files**
- Useful for **listening comprehension and phonetic practice**.
- **Pedagogical Considerations**
- **Authenticity and level**
- AI voices can **deviate slightly** from standard Italian pronunciation.
- **Free versions** lack multi-voice interaction (no real dialogues).
- AI-generated that may sound **less authentic**.

- ☐ Best suited for **beginner and intermediate** learners.
- ☐ ☐ At **advanced levels**, preference goes to **authentic audio materials** (real dialogues, spontaneous speech).



1. COMPREHENSION

1.3 Text Manipulation Activities

- **AI for traditional activities**
- AI supports **classic text-based exercises**, such as:
 - ☐ **Cloze tests** (fill-in-the-blanks)
 - ☐ **Sequencing tasks** (sentences, paragraphs, dialogue lines)
- These activities foster:
 - **Comprehension**
 - **Expectancy grammar**

- **Advantages:** AI significantly reduces preparation time
- **Disadvantages:** when asking AI to provide missing words separately at the end of a cloze passage, transcription errors sometimes occur.



1. COMPREHENSION

1.4 Visual Content Creation

- AI platforms (e.g. ChatGPT, Gemini) can now **generate realistic or stylized images**.
- This opens **new possibilities** for language teaching and learning.
- ☐ Teachers can create **original and tailored visuals**, without relying on:
 - Textbooks
 - Online materials

INNOVATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING 2025

How It Works: from text to image

-  ☐ Teacher provides a **simple description** (prompt).
- ☐ AI generates an **image** — realistic or stylized.
- Image can be used for:
 - Flashcards
 - Matching or sequencing exercises
 - Elicitation



2. PRODUCTION AND DIALOGUE

□ While engaging and effective, chatbot responses may sound stereotyped and less natural compared to those of native speakers

2.1 Interactive Role Plays

- AI for dialogue-based learning
- AI supports **oral production** activities.
- A key innovation: **interactive role play simulations**.
- □ ChatGPT can engage in **real-time dialogues**, adapting to context and level.

INNOVATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING 2025

• How It Works: from prompt to simulation

- □ □ Teacher or learner provides a **situation prompt** (e.g., “At the restaurant”).
- □ Chatbot responds in character, guiding the dialogue.
- □ □ Level can be adjusted:
 - Structured (guided prompts)
 - Semi-structured
 - Free conversation



2. PRODUCTION AND DIALOGUE

2.2 Image-Based Activities

- Visual prompts for production
- AI allows teachers to **generate custom images** aligned with class needs.
- These visuals can be used as **stimuli for oral or written tasks**.
- ☐ Aim: to foster **language production, imagination**, and interaction.
- How It Works: from AI-generated images to class activities
- ☐ Teacher provides a short **text prompt** (e.g., “a busy Italian market”).
- ☐ AI creates the image instantly.
- ☐ Image becomes input for:
 - ☐ *Picture description*
 - ☐ *Role-play or dialogue creation*
 - ☐ *Written narrative or essay*



2. PRODUCTION AND DIALOGUE

2.3 Debates with AI

- Another innovative practice: **class debates against an AI interlocutor.**
 - The class acts as **one debating team**, while AI plays the opposing side.
 - Stimulates **argumentation, collaboration, and spontaneity.**
- **How It Works: AI as a debate partner**
 - ☐ ☐ Teacher sets a **debate topic** (e.g., “Technology improves communication”).
 - ☐ AI defends one position; the **students defend the opposite.**
 - ☐ Students interact with the chatbot, responding collectively or in turns.



CONCLUSIONS

- The experience at **Centro Machiavelli** shows that AI can **enhance teaching and learning** when used as **support**, not replacement.
- Integration has led to:
 - ☐ ☐ **Reduced teacher workload**
 - ☐ **Personalized materials** for diverse learners
 - ☐ **Greater learner motivation and engagement**
 - ☐ ☐ **Professional growth** among
- **Recognizing Limitations**
 - ☐ Chatbot speech can sound **unnatural** or **stereotyped**.
 - ☐ Difficulty in **complex role plays**.
 - ☐ Occasional **errors** in AI-generated or manipulated texts. Text sometimes are stereotyped
 - ☐ Importance of **teacher mediation** and **quality control**.