



Artificial Intelligence in the Service of Language Teaching

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Abstract

The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its infiltration into the educational field—whether informally through its (often intensive) use by students as an assistant, exercise-solver, or assignment-generator, or “officially” through the training of educators in utilizing AI tools for producing educational material and enhancing the learning process—raises significant concerns but also inspires great expectations. This presentation aims to propose ways in which AI can function beneficially in the teaching of the mother tongue. How can it be utilized in such a way that it does not suppress the creative and critical thinking of adolescent students or weaken their language skills? How can it be integrated into language teaching in a way that it does not serve as a crutch or a substitute for the student, but rather as a tool for self-improvement, comprehension, and practice of linguistic competencies? The presentation introduces tested proposals from the Greek high school context for the use of AI tools (primarily ChatGPT and Gemini) in language lesson activities (in the mother tongue), aiming at the mastery of condensation mechanisms, practice in word formation activities, familiarization with peer correction as a means of linguistic self-improvement, vocabulary enrichment, and more. In short, the proposal outlines targeted activities so that AI can function in the language classroom as a writing assistant, personalized tutor, and catalyst for motivation—even for students with learning difficulties—while minimizing potential side effects that may arise from the unplanned use of AI.

Keywords: AI, language teaching, mother tongue, Greek high school

1. Theoretical Framework

1.1 Emergence of New Data

The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its infiltration into the educational field –whether informally through its (often intensive) use by students as an assistant, exercise-solver, or assignment-generator, or “officially” through the training of educators in utilizing AI tools for producing educational material and enhancing the learning process– raises significant concerns but also inspires great expectations. This presentation aims to propose ways in which AI can function beneficially in the teaching of the mother tongue. How can it be utilized in such a way that it does not suppress the creative and critical thinking of adolescent students or weaken their language skills? How can it be integrated into language teaching in a way that it does not serve as a crutch or a substitute for the student, but rather as a tool for self-improvement, comprehension, and practice of linguistic competencies? The presentation introduces tested proposals from the Greek high school context for the use of AI tools (primarily ChatGPT and Gemini) in language lesson activities (in the mother tongue), aiming at the mastery of condensation mechanisms, practice in word formation activities, familiarization with peer correction as a means of linguistic self-improvement, vocabulary enrichment, and more. In short, the proposal outlines targeted activities so that AI can function in the language classroom as a writing assistant, personalized tutor, and catalyst for motivation –even for students with learning difficulties– while minimizing potential side effects that may arise from the unplanned use of AI.

1.2 AI and Teaching

AI can serve as an antidote to “spoon-feeding” teaching (Raelin, 2009) and to the superficial learning strategies in which students seem to have acquired a misplaced sense of adequacy (Ramsden, 1992). Such approaches are marked by shallow knowledge, uncritical connections between facts,



inability to identify key ideas, and short-term memorization (“knowledge doomed to rapid forgetting”). Spoon-feeding is described as the provision of information to a captive and passive student body (“spoon-feeding information to a captive and passive student body,” Raelin, 2009: 407) in an attempt to impose order on an inherently messy activity (“tries to make neat an activity that is normally messy,” Raelin, 2009: 406). Memorization does not constitute learning (Sotto, 1994); learning requires reframing into something that shapes students’ abilities and leads to action or application (Raelin, 2009: 402).

Research highlights the complementary role of teachers and ChatGPT (Zhu et al., 2023; Hong, 2023; Jeon & Lee, 2023). ChatGPT may act as interlocutor, content provider, teaching assistant, and evaluator, while the teacher orchestrates these roles through sound pedagogical decisions, transforming students into active investigators and raising ethical awareness of AI use (Jeon & Lee, 2023). AI can foster *agentic learning* and initiate the process of self-regulated learning (Markauskaite et al., 2022).

The extent to which AI supports motivation for learning is generally perceived more positively than negatively (Ali et al., 2023; Munoz et al., 2023). On the other hand, AI is also perceived as threatening, with “side effects” that may outweigh its benefits (Yan, 2023). Concerns include the risk of undermining critical and creative thinking (Mohamed, 2023; Marzuki et al., 2023; Mohammadkarimi, 2023), its potentially addictive nature leading to dependency, and issues of ethics and academic integrity (plagiarism, cheating, and student passivity) (Yan, 2023). Inequalities in access (Yan, 2023) and risks to data protection (Mohamed, 2023) also remain pressing concerns.

A study on university students regarding AI’s impact on creativity revealed that AI may facilitate fluency in idea generation during brainstorming but simultaneously reduces creative confidence and divergent thinking. This suggests a discouraging effect, particularly for students developing their creative identity, while also posing risks of dependency and reduced self-efficacy (Habib et al., 2024). In relation to creativity, AI may negatively affect *mini-c* and *little-c* creativity, which are central to students’ sense of achievement (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009).

1.3 AI and Language Teaching

AI use in language education has attracted research attention, especially in foreign language learning (primarily English) rather than mother-tongue instruction (Law, 2024). Studies show both benefits and drawbacks. Properly employed, AI enhances writing skills, offers support and immediate feedback, broadens vocabulary, and strengthens grammatical accuracy (Agustini, 2023; Schmidt-Fajlik, 2023; Yan, 2023). AI can also propose real-time rephrasing and stylistic variations (Roe et al., 2023). For teachers, AI can save time in lesson planning, idea generation (Koraishi, 2023), and even student work evaluation (Mohamed, 2023). Additionally, it may increase student engagement and autonomy through human-like interaction (Agustini, 2023; Zhai et al., 2021).

Large Language Models (LLMs) allow teachers to create student-centered, pedagogically targeted material—summaries, adapted texts, grammar corrections, exercises, notes, presentations, or new activity ideas (Bonner et al., 2023). AI tools also support authentic language practice and function as personal language tutors (Hong, 2023). Chatbots have been used in training argumentation, showing benefits in reasoning and motivation (Yu & Guo, 2023; Mizumoto et al., 2023).

2. Applications of AI in Greek Language and Literature Teaching

The use of AI in mother-tongue language teaching was implemented in a Greek private school, in the Modern Greek Language and Literature course of the third (final) grade of high school (students aged 17–18). Instruction in this subject is influenced by the content of the final examination taken at the end of the school year for entry into public Greek universities. Thus, in the Modern Greek Language and Literature exam, students are assessed, among other tasks:

- a. in summarizing a non-literary text: a passage or specific ideas, within a word limit: 50–60 or 70–80 words;
- b. in transformation exercises: change of style, change from active to passive voice, etc.;
- c. in writing an interpretive commentary based on a short literary text: prose or poem: students must identify the central theme/issue of the text and support their answer with at least 3 textual markers, as well as articulate their personal response/stance toward the theme or issue raised. This task has a word limit: 100–200 words;



d. in essay writing: analyzing a topic related to reference texts included in the exam, in a communicative context, with a word limit (300 - 400 words) evaluated on completeness and justification of ideas, creative use of reference texts, clarity and accuracy of expression, spelling correctness, alignment with the communicative context, text structure and conventions, and respect for the word limit.

Within this framework, specific AI tools were used both for students' practice and improvement in the above exam tasks –focused summarization, style transformation exercises, interpretive commentary, essay writing– and for the teacher's lesson planning of targeted activities.

3. AI tools as supporters in students' cognitive mastery, practice, and in teachers' preparation and instructional strategy

3.1 Text Summarization

ChatGPT (free version) and Gemini were used for practicing summarization. This demanding exercise requires strong abstracting and critical skills, as well as rephrasing abilities to condense core ideas into a few words. Specific examples of AI use include: the teacher designed exercises with targeted prompts to the AI systems and presented the results to students –without live prompting– so they could practice, evaluate, discuss, and draw conclusions on aspects of summarization.

The teacher asked the models to:

1. **(for identifying main ideas):** underline (in bold within the text) and list the key ideas of the passage concisely (using nominalizations or sentences), so students could compare AI results with their own, critique, evaluate, and learn from them.
2. **(for rephrasing practice):** create a comparative table showing the text's key phrases (that students would identify during pre-writing) and their rephrased versions. Class discussion (on an interactive whiteboard) then analyzed how concise rephrasing was achieved.
3. **(for summarization practice):** produce different summary versions of a given text under clear guidelines, as required in national exams: rephrasing main ideas, using verbs that reflect the author's stance, and incorporating cohesive devices. Exposure to AI-produced summaries helped students: a. realize variations in summaries, b. observe rephrasing techniques, c. note the variety of reporting verbs.
4. **(for error awareness):** generate summaries containing mistakes (based on instructions: copying text, including secondary ideas, exceeding word limits, spelling/grammar errors, omitting author mention, skipping introductory phrases, etc.). Students then corrected and graded these summaries in class, using the interactive whiteboard. AI could also log its own errors for comparison with student identification.

The aim of this intervention was: a. to demystify the summarization process by revealing its mechanisms, comparing versions, decoding rephrasing strategies, and identifying mistakes; b. to train students in aspects often overlooked in traditional teaching, where focus is on the final product. Students responded positively, stating they found it helpful.

3.2 Style Transformation Exercises

In national exams, students must transform excerpts from reference texts to alter style (from formal to simple, or vice versa; from scientific to popularized; or, more difficult, from neutral to ironic/critical, etc.). Such "style games" were supported by AI tools like ChatGPT (free version), Hemingway Editor (free version), and Gemini.

Specifically, the teacher (who handled the prompting, while students engaged only with the AI outputs presented on the interactive board) asked the systems to:

- a. change the style of a text toward a given orientation (e.g., simple to high-register or vice versa) through targeted changes: simplifying or enriching vocabulary, simplifying or complicating syntax (nominalization, successive subordination, passive constructions). Students observed the changes and their aesthetic impact.
- b. generate stylistic variations adding tonal nuances (ironic, humorous, enthusiastic, critical, etc.). Students examined how these effects were achieved across several examples.

According to student feedback, this activity helped them realize –through concrete examples– how style is altered using both simple and advanced techniques, which are often hard to teach without tangible demonstrations.



3.3. Interpretive Commentary

This demanding activity requires students, based on a literary prose or poetic text, to write in 100-200 words two types of responses (in the same or separate paragraphs): one identifying the central theme/issue (or exploring a character's emotions, thoughts, or state, with reference to three textual markers and brief justification), and one articulating their personal stance toward the theme/issue. Common student errors include misidentifying the theme, choosing irrelevant textual markers, insufficient justification, and unclear expression. To practice and raise awareness of these pitfalls, the teacher used free AI tools (ChatGPT and Gemini), projecting their outputs on the interactive board for whole-class discussion.

The teacher specifically asked AI to:

1. **(for technique understanding):** provide three correct variations of an interpretive commentary, each with different wording, markers, or organization. Students compared and analyzed these differences. AI was carefully guided to match national exam criteria.
2. **(for marker selection):** display all textual markers of a literary text (with guidance on what qualifies as a marker: elements of form, narrative technique, etc.). Students first realized the abundance of markers, then practiced selecting the relevant ones for the given task.
3. **(for error awareness):** generate three incorrect commentaries with different types of errors (theme misidentification, irrelevant markers, word limit overrun, poor cohesion, language errors, etc.). Students identified and corrected these.

Students reported that this activity helped them recognize key mistakes in this exercise and avoid them in future attempts.

3.4 Essay Writing

This highly demanding task evaluates students on: content (completeness, use of reference texts, sufficient argumentation, focus on topic), structure (introduction – body – conclusion, paragraph structure with topic sentence, details, concluding sentence, cohesive devices, observance of communicative conventions such as article, letter, speech, etc.), language (spelling and expression), style (appropriate stylistic choices), text quality (overuse of formulaic expressions), and word limit.

Students' difficulties and errors centered on these aspects. To address them, the teacher asked free AI tools (ChatGPT and Gemini) to perform targeted actions:

1. **(for structural, linguistic, content, and stylistic errors):** generate sample student-like texts with identified errors, initially homogeneous (only in content, only in language, etc.), then mixed. Students detected and corrected these errors to raise awareness and avoid them in their own writing.
2. **(for use of reference texts):** produce examples with correct or incorrect integration of reference texts. Students analyzed these to understand proper techniques and avoid omissions, copying, or clumsy incorporation.
3. **(for richness, prioritization, and selection of ideas):** present a list of unsubstantiated ideas, then the same with brief justification, and finally with detailed reasoning. Students noted differences and practiced prioritizing the most important ideas due to word limits.
4. **(for introductions and conclusions):** provide alternative openings and closings depending on topic, reference texts, and communicative context. Students compared and judged these, realizing the flexibility and creativity possible. Incorrect examples were also generated for correction. Because students often struggle with titles, AI was asked to suggest various options, which were then analyzed for technique (wordplay, metaphor, punctuation, style, etc.).

Students reported significant benefits: they became more aware of their mistakes, understood different techniques for introductions, conclusions, and main body writing, and felt more confident during essay production.

It should be noted that AI tools were not used for automated grading of student essays, although this is explored in the literature (e.g., Mizumoto & Eguchi, 2023). The teacher believes that, especially in Greek, free AI tools are not yet capable of reliably assessing student texts. She also considers personal correction essential, as it allows her to fully understand students' weaknesses and design targeted activities to address them and improve the quality of their writing.



4. Conclusion

The literature on the use of AI in language teaching stresses that creative AI should be gradually and carefully introduced into education, with guidance provided to teachers through specialized programs that help them both harness its potential and address emerging challenges (Kohnke et al., 2023). More specifically, in highlighting the role AI plays and will continue to play in language education, it is proposed that practice with AI tools in language teaching be encouraged, that AI be integrated into curricula, that self-training and collaboration among educators be supported, that ethical issues related to AI use be emphasized (Law, 2023; Kohnke et al., 2023), and that well-founded proposals, responses, and guidelines be developed for its responsible use (Mohammadkarimi, 2023). At the same time, in the world of emerging AI and its entry into education, the need for co-design of learning experiences between teachers and learners is emphasized (Carvalho et al., 2022).

In this presentation, specific ways of using AI tools (free models) in the teaching of the mother tongue in a particular Greek class (final year of high school) with clear demands and orientation toward the national entrance exams for Greek public universities were demonstrated. The use of these tools was particularly facilitative for the teacher. In fact, the suggestions generated by AI tools at the end of each assigned “task” functioned as creative fuel for the teacher to think of and design new activities. The teacher thus orchestrated the process of generating teaching material, while the AI executed it and simultaneously proposed extensions. This creative dialogue proved especially fruitful for the teacher.

Students stated that the use of AI helped them significantly: they gained a better understanding of techniques useful for exam activities in Modern Greek Language and Literature, they felt more motivated both to learn and to write (especially those with writing difficulties or learning challenges), and they felt more confident and better prepared for their final exams.

In any case, the field of AI integration in mother-tongue teaching remains open to further and deeper exploration. This particular study did not examine AI’s role in fostering linguistic creativity through creative writing.

Finally, while the positive side of using large language models (LLMs) in language teaching is acknowledged, their influence-related anxieties are reduced but not eliminated (Hutson & Schnellmann, 2023).

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