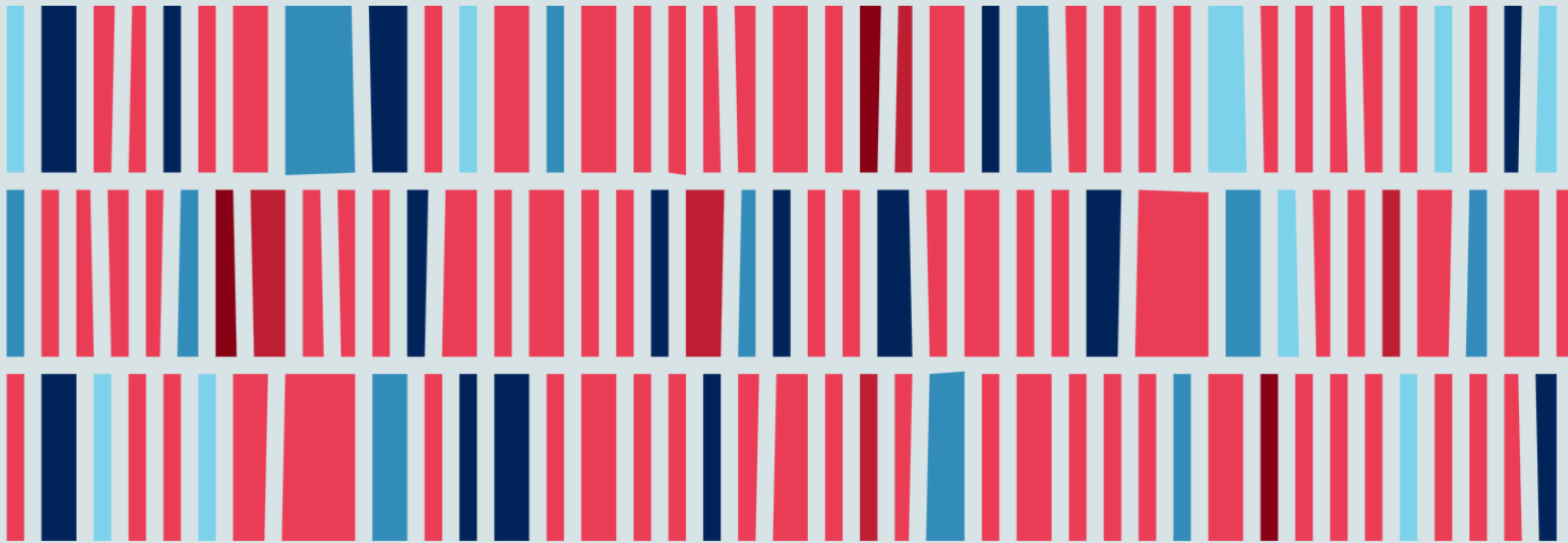THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Center for
Middle Eastern Studies

2025 Consortium of Middle East National Resource Centers Language Workshop

Artificial Intelligence and Online & Technology Tools in Middle East Language Pedagogy: Opportunities, Challenges, and Risks

SATURDAY, APRIL 19TH

Virtual Session

2025 Consortium of ME NRCs Language Workshop

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The Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Arizona in collaboration with UT-Austin's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Indiana's Center for the Study of the Middle East, Georgetown University's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, the University of Michigan's Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies, SUNY-Binghamton University's Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies, along with the Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language and Literacy welcome you to the 2025 Consortium of Middle East National Resource Centers Language Workshop - Artificial Intelligence and Online & Technology Tools in Middle East Language Pedagogy: Opportunities, Challenges, and Risks. We are excited to have such a distinguished group of presenters, panelists, and participants joining us for this workshop.

Over the course of our two in-person days, we have curated an engaging and thought-provoking program. These days will feature a keynote address, two expert panels, and a workshop, all designed to foster collaboration, ignite insightful discussions, and advance knowledge in our field. To conclude the in-person portion of the event, we will have a second keynote speaker, who will provide valuable insights as we reflect on the key learnings from the event.

In addition, we are excited to offer a third virtual day that will showcase three informative and diverse panels. This virtual day will allow broader participation and give us the opportunity to continue our conversations and deepen our connections.

We are grateful for your participation, your expertise, and your commitment to making this event a success. Whether you are presenting or attending, we hope that you find this experience both inspiring and rewarding.

Thank you for being part of this exciting event. We look forward to a wonderful few days of learning, sharing, and building connections.

2025 Consortium of ME NRCs Language Workshop

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
Center for Middle Eastern Studies

The University of Texas at Austin
Middle Eastern Studies
College of Liberal Arts

HAMILTON LUGAR
SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
Center for the Study of the Middle East

The Center for Contemporary Arab Studies
مركز الدراسات العربية المعاصرة
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
School of Foreign Service

LSA CENTER FOR **MIDDLE EASTERN & NORTH AFRICAN STUDIES** UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
CERCLL
Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language and Literacy

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8:45–9:00

Opening Remarks
Mahmoud Azaz, PhD
Director of Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Arizona

9:00–10:50

Panel I

Artificial Intelligence Tools in Writing Instruction in Arabic: Assessment, Feedback, and Proficiency

Amani S Hassan, MA
Clinical Professor of Arabic, New York University
Opening Remarks & Moderator

Ghada Badawi, MA
Clinical Associate Professor, New York University
Using AI to Assess Writing and Provide Effective Feedback: Elementary Level as Example

Omima El Araby, MA
Senior Lecturer of Arabic, NYU Abu Dhabi
Guiding Students in the Effective Use of AI Tools to Enhance Writing Skills

Attia Youseif, PhD
Senior Lecturer of Arabic, Indiana University – Bloomington
Evaluating Writing Proficiency with AI Tools According to ACTFL Guidelines

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10:20–10:50	Q&A and Discussion with Panelists Facilitated by the Moderator
10:50–11:00	Break
11:00–12:30	**Panel II**

Artificial Intelligence and Linguistic and Culture Gains in Middle East Language Pedagogy

May George, PhD
Lecturer of Arabic, Smith College
Artificial Intelligence and Project Design

Rolla Elsaiary, PhD
Assistant Principal, Arabic Immersion Magnet School
A Storybook Approach to AI-Enhanced Task-Based Learning

Bilel El-Motri, PhD
Assistant Professor of English, Northern Border University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Enhancing Arabic Language Fluency and Cultural Understanding Through Arabic-Specific AI Tools

12:00–12:30	Q&A and Discussion with Panelists

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12:30–1:00	Break
1:00–2:30	**Panel III**

Perspectives on Artificial Intelligence in Middle East Language Pedagogy

Sarab Al Ani, PhD
Senior Lector II of Arabic, Yale University
One Year of AI: Lessons Learned and Future Directions

Hossam Elsherbiny, PhD
Lecturer of Arabic, Rice University
Dean Toumajian, Political Science Student, Rice University
AI Integration Disparities in Language Education and Their Implications for Middle Eastern Language Pedagogy

Naima Bary, MA
Instructor & Study Abroad Co-Director at the University of Alabama, Doctoral Candidate in Educational Leadership and Instructional Technologies
Generative AI in Higher Education: Analyzing Educators' Views on its Impact on Teaching and Learning Practices

2:00–2:30	Q&A and Discussion with Panelists
2:30–2:45	Closing Remarks

Mahmoud Azaz, PhD
Director of Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Arizona

ABSTRACTS & BIOS   *Virtual*

AMANI S HASSAN, MA

Clinical Professor of Arabic, New York University

Moderator Panel I – Artificial Intelligence Tools in Writing Instruction in Arabic: Assessment, Feedback, and Proficiency

Bio: After finishing my undergraduate studies in Cairo, Ain Shams University, I came to NYU to complete my Masters in Comparative Literature. My work experience include teaching, copywriting, news reporting and translation in Arabic. I received my training as T.A. at NYU, Department of Middle East &Islamic Studies and the American Language Institute at NYU. My teaching experience has been mainly at NYU , Sarah Lawrence College, Language Immersion Institute, SUNY, and United Nations International school. My focus is on teaching, preparing and delivering interactive language classes every semester.

Abstract: The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education has transformed how writing skills are taught, assessed, and improved. This panel explores the use of AI tools in enhancing writing instruction, with a focus on assessment, feedback, guiding students' practice, and evaluating proficiency levels in alignment with the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. Instructors from Indiana University, New York University –New York, and New York University – Abu Dhabi will share insights and practical approaches for effectively incorporating AI tools into writing pedagogy.
Overall, the panel provides educators with practical strategies for incorporating AI into writing instruction, while maintaining pedagogical effectiveness and adherence to established proficiency standards. The discussion emphasizes the importance of balancing technological innovation with sound pedagogical practices in writing education.

GHADA BADAWI, MA

Clinical Associate Professor, New York University

Using AI to Assess Writing and Provide Effective Feedback: Elementary Level as Example

Bio: Ghada Badawi is a lecturer of Arabic language in the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (MEIS) at New York University. Badawi's first M.A. is in Written

Translation (from and into Arabic/English), from Faculty of Languages at Ain Shams University in Egypt. Her second M.A. is in Applied Linguistics, from Teachers College at Columbia University in the City of New York. She has been teaching foreign languages for twenty years at various prestigious universities inside and outside the United States of America. She started her career with teaching English as a foreign language at the American University in Cairo (AUC). In addition, Badawi taught courses in Phonetics and Phonology, Translation (from and into Arabic/ English) and TOEFL. Badawi has been teaching different levels of Arabic (Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced), in addition to Egyptian Colloquial Arabic, since 2005. Badawi's research interests are Foreign Language Assessment, Foreign Language Testing and Using Technology in Teaching Languages. She participated in different conferences (such as ACTFL, TexFlec, MESA and NJTESOL-NJBE) and presented in both TexFlec and NJTESOL-NJBE). Her main focus is on assessing/testing her students' grammatical knowledge at different levels to inform her instruction.
Prior to being appointed at NYU in Fall 2015, Badawi taught Arabic language at Tufts University, Harvard University and Columbia University in the City of New York.

Abstract: Instructors from NYU NY investigate how to use AI in writing assessment and delivering feedback. They explore how AI tools can provide immediate, personalized feedback, while maintaining a balance between automated and teacher-driven assessment approaches. The discussion includes ethical considerations and best practices for integrating AI-powered feedback systems.

OMIMA EL ARABY, MA

Senior Lecturer of Arabic, NYU Abu Dhabi

Guiding Students in the Effective Use of AI Tools to Enhance Writing Skills

Bio: Omima El Araby, a Senior Lecturer at the Arabic Studies Program in New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD). She has extensive experience teaching Arabic as a foreign language and designing rigorous foreign language programs. She has been teaching Arabic Language since 1981. She has served as a Course Developer, Test Writer and co-

authored digital instructional material and proficiency-based tests. She held the position of the Program Assistant Director from the fall semester of 2015, then Program Head of the Arabic Studies Program at NYUAD from 2019 till 2022. Her main interest is in foreign language pedagogy and technology integration in language teaching and learning.

Abstract: Instructors from NYU Abu Dhabi focus on guiding students for effective use of AI tools to improve their writing. The emphasis is on establishing clear learning objectives and developing students' ability to critically evaluate AI-generated suggestions, while maintaining their creative and independent writing abilities.

ATTIA YOUSEIF, PHD

Senior Lecturer of Arabic, Indiana University – Bloomington

Evaluating Writing Proficiency with AI Tools According to ACTFL Guidelines

Bio: Dr. Attia Youseif is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures at Indiana University and Director of the Tutoring in Arabic Flagship Program. He holds a Ph.D. in Linguistics from Alexandria University, and has published research papers and books in the field. His research focuses on various aspects of linguistics, including, sociolinguistics, semantics, dialectology, discourse analysis, phonetics applied linguistics, and second language acquisition. Dr. Youseif is dedicated to promoting modern pedagogical methods that focus on the relationship between language, culture, and identity. With over two decades of experience in education, he is an esteemed academic in the field of linguistics.

Abstract: Instructors from Indiana University examine how AI tools can assess writing proficiency according to ACTFL Guidelines. This includes analyzing AI platforms' capabilities in evaluating writing samples, determining proficiency levels, and complementing human assessment. The discussion covers practical applications and potential challenges in implementing AI for proficiency assessment.

MAY GEORGE, PHD

Lecturer of Arabic, Smith College

Artificial Intelligence and Project Design

Bio: May George holds a doctoral degree in education from the University of Arizona with a focus on bilingual education. After receiving her doctorate, she held two prestigious postdoctoral fellowships, an Andrew Mellon Fellowship and a Fredrick Douglas Fellow, to support her continued research on bilingual education. George has more than 20 years of teaching experience in higher education nationally and internationally. George's research interests center on classroom pedagogy, new trends in foreign language teaching in relation to area studies, and communicative approach in relation to technology use. Her research in bilingual education is related to the pedagogy of acquiring a second language, focusing on intentions, culture and profession. She also examines how the process of teaching happens in actual classroom settings and explores the role of inference in students' learning as well as the cognitive processes involved.

Abstract: Second language learning has always emphasized the development of language skills through various tools, including technology, to make learning more engaging. Although teachers have used technology as a pedagogical tool, there are concerns about how AI tools can be effectively implemented in teaching. To utilize AI tools effectively, teachers need to experiment and develop new AI-based language learning activities to assist students. This study focuses on two projects that used AI tools in the classroom. The first project involved converting text to voice to demonstrate learners' gains in language abilities and knowledge. The AI tool used was "Micmonster", a free and easily accessible tool. The main goal was to help students use their own words to summarize a text in Arabic and elaborate on it. The second project involved using AutoCAD software to design a project. The AI tools used were "Revisely" for drawing sketches related to vocabulary, Quizlet for asking questions, and Storyboard for writing step-by-step instructions. These tools were used to creatively utilize language functions. This study will present pedagogical implications and emerging themes in future research on AI-based

ABSTRACTS & BIOS   *Virtual*

language learning methodology, focusing on the 3Ps framework in cultural theory stands for products, practices, and perspectives. The procedure included giving authentic readings in Arabic to summarize. These readings were based on historical places, games, and other influential topics. Students created artwork similar to the selected readings. The main goals were to have students use the language in real-world situations, work on a project as a team, and link their experiences to real-world contexts. These projects can help students remember what they have learned in class because they will create and design. Teachers will learn from this experience and use it in their classes as a new approach to teaching language that involves different facets of knowledge.

ROLLA ELSAIARY, PHD

Assistant Principal, Arabic Immersion Magnet School

A Storybook Approach to AI-Enhanced Task-Based Learning

Bio: Dr. Rolla Elsaiary is an educator, researcher, and instructional leader specializing in Arabic language instruction, science education, and educational leadership. She holds a doctorate in Education from the University of South Carolina and has extensive experience as an assistant principal, instructional leadership and an independent researcher.

Abstract: Imagine a classroom where language learning is not only engaging but also personalized, creative, and future-focused. This innovative project transforms the traditional approach by weaving together the power of AI, captivating storytelling, and task-based learning.

At its core, this approach uses AI tools to craft personalized learning experiences tailored to each student's needs and style. High-frequency vocabulary is seamlessly embedded into short, compelling stories, creating a natural foundation for language acquisition. From here, students embark on interactive tasks like summarizing, dialogue creation, and multimedia presentations. AI becomes their learning companion by offering suggestions, correcting errors, and sparking fresh ideas.

Rooted in Bloom's Taxonomy, these activities push students beyond memorization to

analyze, evaluate, and create, fostering higher-order thinking skills. Inspired by Edgar Dale's Cone of Experience, the tasks are hands-on, maximizing engagement and retention. The benefits of this approach extend beyond the classroom:

– Personalized Learning: AI adapts to each student, ensuring lessons meet them where they are.

– Enhanced Engagement: Stories and meaningful tasks capture attention and sustain motivation.

– Stronger Outcomes: Activities build deep understanding and long-term retention.

– Future-Ready Skills: Students develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and digital literacy to thrive in an AI-driven world.

– Teacher Efficiency: AI supports educators by streamlining repetitive tasks, allowing for focused, personalized instruction.

This project is more than a method, it's a movement toward preparing students for the world ahead. By combining storytelling, AI, and task-based learning, it cultivates creativity, independence, and critical thinking. Together, students and teachers step into a learning experience designed not just for today, but for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow.

BILEL EL-MOTRI, PHD

Assistant Professor of English, Northern Border University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Enhancing Arabic Language Fluency and Cultural Understanding Through Arabic-Specific AI Tools

Bio: Dr. Bilel Elmotri is an accomplished academic with a Ph.D. in English Linguistics from the University of Sfax. Currently a faculty member at the Department of Languages and Translation, College of Applied Studies, Northern Border University, his research centers on the role of technology in enhancing language learning, particularly through Automated Writing Evaluation and Corrective Feedback tools. He has also done research on English medium Instruction in EFL contexts, mainly in North Africa and the Middle East. He has published articles, edited journals, and books, presented papers, moderated panels, and

conducted workshops at many national and international conferences on these research areas. With significant experience teaching courses such as Introduction to Linguistics and Language Acquisition, Dr. Elmotri also has a strong background in applied linguistics, curriculum development, and academic counseling. He is proficient in several languages and brings a global perspective to his work, contributing to academic and professional training environments.

Abstract: This study investigates the current landscape of AI integration in second language learning through a comprehensive survey of 105 participants (89 students and 16 instructors) across multiple U.S. universities. The findings reveal a striking disparity between instructor and student adoption rates of AI tools, with 62% of instructors avoiding AI integration while 55% of students actively employ these technologies in their language learning. Particularly relevant to Middle Eastern language pedagogy, the study identifies critical limitations in AI tools' handling of non-Roman script languages and highlights specific challenges in addressing grammatical inquiries for these languages. The survey reveals that while AI tools are predominantly used for grammar checking (80%), direct translation (67%), and vocabulary practice (64%), they show significant limitations in supporting speaking practice (11%) and listening comprehension (18%) – skills that are particularly crucial in Middle Eastern language acquisition.
Instructors report concerns about AI's linguistic limitations, including difficulties with gendered language structures and cultural biases stemming from English-centric training data, issues that are especially pertinent for Arabic, Persian, and Hebrew instruction. Despite these challenges, 82% of surveyed students express willingness to incorporate AI tools in their future language learning, suggesting a need for thoughtful integration of these technologies in Middle Eastern language classrooms. The study concludes that while AI tools present promising opportunities for language learning, their current limitations in handling non-Roman scripts and cultural nuances necessitate careful consideration in Middle Eastern language pedagogy. These findings contribute to the ongoing discourse on developing effective AI integration strategies for less commonly taught languages while maintaining pedagogical integrity and cultural authenticity.

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SARAB AL ANI

Senior Lector II of Arabic, Yale University

One Year of AI: Lessons Learned and Future Directions

Bio: Sarab Al Ani is the Arabic Language Program director at Yale University where she started teaching in 2009. She is an author of reading materials for learners of Arabic as a foreign language. She is a writer and blogger on issues of foreign language pedagogy, theory, and practice. In addition to teacher training, her current professional interests focus on, using technology for language teaching, and overcoming challenges that face students of Arabic in the U.S. She has also offered courses on Second Language Teaching and Learning at Yale and in ViaX. Sarab is an active fully certified tester and rater in Arabic with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) for both the OPI, ILR as well as AAPLL tests.

Abstract: This workshop explores the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in language teaching. Drawing from a year of intensive professional development, the presentation will offer practical insights, concrete examples, and hands-on activities to equip educators with the tools and knowledge needed to effectively integrate AI into their classrooms. Participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of AI's foundational concepts, its applications in language education, and best practices for implementation. The workshop will explore a range of AI-powered tools, including language learning apps, virtual tutors, and intelligent content generators. Through engaging discussions and interactive demonstrations, attendees will learn how to:

- Identify appropriate AI tools: Discover the most effective AI solutions for specific language teaching objectives and learner needs.
- Create personalized learning experiences: Utilize AI to tailor instruction to individual learners' strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles.
- Enhance language acquisition: Explore AI-driven techniques for improving vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency.
- Foster critical thinking and problem-solving: Integrate AI-based activities that encourage higher-order thinking skills.

- Address ethical considerations: Discuss the potential challenges and ethical implications of using AI in education.

By the end of this workshop, participants will be equipped with the confidence and skills to experiment with AI in their own classrooms, transforming language learning into a more engaging, effective, and personalized experience.

HOSSAM ELSHERBINY, PHD

Lecturer of Arabic, Rice University

AI Integration Disparities in Language Education and Their Implications for Middle Eastern Language Pedagogy

Bio: Dr. Hossam Elsherbiny holds a Ph.D. in Linguistics with a subfocus in Contrastive Linguistics. His scholarly work focuses on Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Sociolinguistics, Arabic Political Discourse, Translanguaging, and Media Arabic. Currently serving as the Associate Director of the Center for Languages and Intercultural Communication (CLIC), Dr. Elsherbiny works closely with faculty to ensure academic excellence across language programs and develop innovative course offerings.

Prior to joining Rice University, Dr. Elsherbiny taught Arabic language, Translation Studies, and Sociolinguistics at the University of Minnesota and the University of Ain Shams. His research has been published in peer-reviewed journals, including L2 Journal (University of California Berkeley Press) and the Journal of The National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL).

Dr. Elsherbiny's scholarly work has been supported by numerous grants and awards, including grants from the Brown Teaching Fund, the Humanities Research Center, and awards from the Center for Engaged Research and Collaborative Learning and the Creative Ventures Fund. A Certified Oral Proficiency Tester by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), Dr. Elsherbiny's work investigates the integration of the ACTFL proficiency guidelines into the language curriculum, particularly as it pertains to Arabic multiglossia.

Dr. Elsherbiny is the recipient of The Best International Translation Award from the Italian

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and The Certificate of Teaching Excellence from the University of Minnesota.

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NAIMA BARY

Lecturer, Doctoral Candidate in Educational Leadership and Instructional Technologies, University of Alabama

Generative AI in Higher Education: Analyzing Educators' Views on its Impact on Teaching and Learning Practices

Bio: Naima Bary is an expert in international education, digital pedagogy, and applied linguistics, with over 20 years of experience in higher education, academic coaching, and executive consulting. Currently serving as a Lecturer at the University of Alabama, she specializes in Applied Linguistics and innovative teaching methodologies, with a focus on fostering inclusive and transformative learning environments. Naima holds a Master's in Applied Linguistics and is pursuing a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Instructional Technology at the University of Alabama, in addition to a Master's in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from Indiana University.

Naima has consulted extensively for academic institutions and NGOs across the MENA region, providing advisory services to organizations including the Royal Family and the Ministry of Education in Morocco. Her work as a linguist and instructional designer spans research centers, higher education institutions, foundations, and media companies. She is also the president of MACDE, a Moroccan NGO committed to empowering the next generation of girls in Morocco through access to education.

Her research interests lie at the intersection of online teaching methods, instructional design, and cognitive learning, with a particular focus on integrating these tools into foreign language education and intercultural communication. Naima has presented at numerous international conferences on curriculum design, e-learning, and digital pedagogy, and is an active member of the Center for Applied Linguistics and the Fulbright Alumni Association.

Abstract: The integration of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in higher education has sparked significant changes in teaching and learning practices. This study explores the perspectives of educators on the impact of AI on higher education (HE) learning and teaching. A survey of 30 teaching staff and follow-up interviews with eight participants from the university of Alabama revealed diverse views on the use of AI, particularly tools like ChatGPT, in educational contexts. The findings highlight a lack of consensus regarding AI's role in HE, with concerns primarily focused on academic integrity. However, these concerns may not be as pressing as initially perceived. The majority of participants acknowledged using AI, with ChatGPT being the most commonly adopted tool for modifying assessments. The study indicates that while AI is seen as a transformative tool, it raises questions about

ethical use, the evolution of teaching practices, and the need for continued institutional support to navigate its integration effectively. Educators remain optimistic about AI's future development, emphasizing the need for ongoing research to identify best practices for its application in education.

DEAN TOUMAJIAN

Political Science and Sociology Student, Rice University

AI Integration Disparities in Language Education and Their Implications for Middle Eastern Language Pedagogy

Bio: Dean Toumajian is a fourth-year student at Rice University studying Political Science and Sociology. He is currently conducting a Political Science thesis focusing on political behavior. During his time at Rice he has been studying Arabic and through that he started, in the past year, working closely with Professor Elsherbiny on a wide array of linguistics research. This past semester he co-authored an article about A.I. in Language Classrooms, and he is currently co-authoring an article focused on integrated Arabic teaching.

Abstract: This study investigates the current landscape of AI integration in second language learning through a comprehensive survey of 105 participants (89 students and 16 instructors) across multiple U.S. universities. The findings reveal a striking disparity between instructor and student adoption rates of AI tools, with 62% of instructors avoiding AI integration while 55% of students actively employ these technologies in their language learning. Particularly relevant to Middle Eastern language pedagogy, the study identifies critical limitations in AI tools' handling of non-Roman script languages and highlights specific challenges in addressing grammatical inquiries for these languages. The survey reveals that while AI tools are predominantly used for grammar checking (80%), direct translation (67%), and vocabulary practice (64%), they show significant limitations in supporting speaking practice (11%) and listening comprehension (18%) – skills that are particularly crucial in Middle Eastern language acquisition.
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