Forum: Language Assessment with Artificial Intelligence

Forum Topic 1: Metaverse-enhanced English Language Learning – Voices from Hong Kong School English Teachers

Prof. Yanjie SONG
The Education University of Hong Kong

Professional Biography:

Dr. Yanjie SONG is Associate Professor at Department of Mathematics and Information Technology, The Education University of Hong Kong. She has strong expertise in app development with her research team, including the vocabulary learning app – 'VocabGo' with augmented reality and virtual reality which won two 'Golden Medals' in two international innovation competitions in 2020 (Taiwan) and 2021 (Canada), and another app- 'Vocab+' with self-regulated learning scheme. Her research team also developed the metaverse platform – 'Learningverse' which won 'Bronze medal' in 'Geneva Inventions' 2023 (Switzerland). Dr Song was the International Programme Chair and organizer of the 1st International Conference on Future Language Learning (ICFULL). She has over 100 journal papers, book chapters and conference papers, and was among the top 2% in the Stanford list of the world's most-cited scientists in 2020.

Research interests:

Her major research interests are design, development and implementation of applications with metaverse, augmented reality, virtual reality technologies, and other artificial intelligence (AI) and educational technology (EdTech) in education; innovative pedagogy design and implementation with AI and EdTech regarding productive failure-based flipped classroom, inquiry/project-based learning in science and mathematics, mobile learning, seamless learning, technology-enhanced language learning; technology affordances; teacher orchestration with technology; multimodal learning analytics; design-based research and qualitative research methodology.

Abstract:

In this sharing, background of the metaverse in education will be introduced briefly. Then, the pedagogical design and practices in in-service school English language teacher professional development program using the three metaverse platforms – 'Gather.Town', 'Spatial' and 'Learninverse' will be shared. The last platform - 'Learningverse' is a new metaverse platform developed by the speaker's research team at The Education University of Hong Kong. Advantages and limitations of the three platforms are observed and summarized from the experiences. Finally, future work is explored.

Forum Topic 2: Exploring Students' Acceptance of an Artificial Intelligence Speech Evaluation Program for EFL Speaking Practice

Prof. Bin ZOU
Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

Professional biography:

Dr. Bin ZOU received his PhD degree in TESOL and Computer Technology from the University of Bristol, UK. He is an Associate Professor and PhD supervisor at the Department of Applied Linguistics, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU). His research interests include Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), AI, EAP and ELT. He is the Founding Editor and Co-Editor-in-Chief of two international journals: the International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching (indexed in ESCI and Scopus) and the International Journal of EAP: Research and Practice. He has published more than 50 papers including 10 SSCI journal papers. He has also written and co-edited eight books including with Professors David Nunan, Hayo Reinders, Michael Thomas and Michael Hoey. He has recently developed an AI speech evaluation platform: EAP Talk (https://www.eaptalk.com) for EFL learners to practice speaking skills.

Research interests:

His research interests include Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), AI, EAP and ELT.

Abstract:

Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) has become increasingly prevalent, with applications such as online learning, mobile learning, and learning management systems. The Integrated Model of Technology Acceptance (IMTA), adapted from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), has been used to examine perceptions and acceptance of CALL. However, whether IMTA can be applied to empirical research on AI-assisted language learning remains unexplored. Therefore, this presentation intends to analyze the use of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) speech evaluation system-EAP Talk for English speaking practice, in the context of higher education through the IMTA. Research instruments encompassed questionnaires (n = 218) and semi-structured interviews (n =21). The participants were English as a foreign language (EFL) learners who used EAP Talk to practice speaking skills. The results suggested that (1) most participants found the AI program useful, pleasant and easy to use. They also had a strong intention to continue using it; (2) perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived enjoyment (PE) are significant predictors of behavioral intention to use (BI). Meanwhile, problems related to user interface design, the accuracy of automatic feedback and especially the lack of face-to-face interaction were reported. This study demonstrates how IMTA could be applied to examine users' acceptance of AI programs for EFL speaking practice. The findings also offer insights into further research and development in AI tools for EFL speaking practice.

Forum Topic 3: AI Landscape in Language Learning and the BUPT Approach to Innovation in CALL

Prof. Chunping ZHENG
Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications

Professional Biography:

Dr. Chunping ZHENG currently serves as the Professor at Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, China. She is Associate Dean of the Department of Foreign Languages at School of Humanities and Director of Centre for Research on Technology-Enhanced Language Learning. She is the awardee of "National Ten Thousand Talent Plan", the "Outstanding University Teacher in Beijing Municipal" and "the Beijing Higher Education Young Elite Teacher Project". She is now the PI（principal investigator）of both National Science and National Social Science Foundation in China. She has published one monograph, three textbooks and over 80 journal articles and served as the guest editor for *Educational Technology & Society*.

Research interests:

Her research interests are intelligent CALL, CALL pedagogies and learner characteristics, and cross-cultural communication.

Abstract:

Based on a review study on the empirical research concerning the application of artificial intelligence in language education in the past three decades, this talk first summarizes the historical development and research trends of language education empowered by intelligent technologies. Then, it provides specific cases related to the incorporation of virtual reality, machine translation and multimodal learning analysis in language education at Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, a pioneering institute in CALL research and practice. It finally reflects on the difficulties and challenges in the integration of emerging technologies and foreign language education and investigates the prospects of CALL.