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THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CHATBOTS IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES AS AN INNOVATIVE INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY

The article explores the didactic potential of the use of artificial intelligence technologies, specifically chatbots, in teaching foreign languages. It delves into the advantages of integrating chatbots into the foreign language learning process, based on the experience of teaching the “Foreign Language (English)” discipline to the first-year students of the 024 Choreography speciality of the Faculty of Musical Art and Choreography, and the 022 Design speciality of the Faculty of Fine Arts and Design at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University. While highlighting the educational benefits and interactive nature of chatbots, it also addresses their drawbacks and suggests methods to mitigate potential negative consequences such as academic integrity violations and copyright issues like plagiarism. The article offers advice on appropriate usage and adheres to relevant policies. Moreover, it provides practical examples of using chatbots in teaching foreign languages based on the use of Mizou software. The study is a theoretical research article employing general scientific analytic methods such as synthesis, generalization, and systematization. It includes a review of the related literature on the stated problem as well as an overview of the empirical experience of the introduction of chatbots in the “Foreign Language (English)” discipline. The paper defines the didactic potential of the Mizou by providing a general overview of the functions and modes of the aforementioned software and drives a reader through the personalized chatbot process of creation and customization. The provided research highlights the necessity of further investigation of the implementation of artificial intelligence chatbots as an innovative interactive technology with significant didactic potential that should be empirically tested and analysed.

Keywords: chatbot, artificial intelligence, foreign language teaching, innovative technology, interactive technology.

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Introduction

The advancement of digital technologies allowed the emergence of a specific type of technology, which is artificial technology (AI). Despite the arguments for the use of AI, it is accompanied by controversial ideas and attitudes due to the lack of policies that have been discussed and developed recently, specifically in education. Being already acquainted with the technologies of augmented, virtual, and mixed realities, teachers are starting to explore the educational potential of artificial technologies and generative artificial technology in particular. This is where controversies appear. The question that is most widely discussed in terms of AI use is the issue of academic integrity and copyright that leads to the search for the proper policies or their development. At a time when AI technologies are reshaping different spheres of people's lives, the education sphere is rather skeptical and divided into two camps, one of which is strongly for integrating the aforementioned technology into their daily practice, while the other keeps criticizing and limiting its implementation, which makes it necessary

to investigate its didactic potential in teaching and learning. The defined question of the use of AI chatbots in teaching foreign languages in Ukraine is actualized not only by rapid digital transformation but also in terms of the post-COVID era and widespread distance learning format that is forced by the war that is still on. That is where the implementation of innovative digital and multimedia technologies with their significant didactic potential in teaching foreign languages becomes useful (Kosharna et al., 2023; Kotenko et al., 2020). The introduction of HyFlex and other modes makes use of AI technologies and chatbots in particular as a way to reduce different educational losses and, in some cases, improve the level of foreign language communicative competence of the subjects of the educational process. Hence, the development and implementation of policies, along with the acquisition of requisite AI skills, stand as solutions to ensure the appropriate utilization of AI in education. Thus, further analysis of the educational potential of the aforementioned technologies is an urgent issue.

This study aims to analyse recent publications and summarize the didactic potential of the use of AI chatbots in foreign language teaching as an innovative interactive technology. Additionally, the article introduces software that can be utilized to develop customized chatbots for language learning purposes.

Methodology

To achieve the set aim of the research and reveal the didactic potential of the use of AI chatbots in teaching foreign languages, an exploratory study was conducted that synthesized the latest literature reviews to provide the advantages and possible drawbacks of the use of AI chatbots in foreign language teaching as well as empirical experience based on conducting classes within the “Foreign Language (English)” discipline.

Analysis of the recent research and publications

Williamson, who urges us to critically treat AI in education, reviews AI within a social and historical context (2023). The author recognizes ethical, legal, and regulatory problems in terms of AI integration in education and claims that the advancement and application of AI in education are contingent upon market or economic circumstances as well as political or policy support.

A vivid description of existing AI systems in education in the review format is provided by Holmes and Tuomi (2022). Addressing it as a ground-breaking technology, researchers emphasise the significance of distinguishing between various approaches for developing AI systems: data-driven AI (machine learning), knowledge-based AI (symbolic AI), and hybrid AI (Holmes & Tuomi, 2022, p. 547). Also, in their research, the authors provide a taxonomy of AI for education systems, which reflects the typology of AI focused on one of the subjects of the educational process (student, teacher, or institution). Finally, Holmes and Tuomi state that the development and future of AI may be in the interrelationship of human and artificial cognition.

In their exploratory study, Baidoo-Anu and Owusu Ansah dwell on the interactiveness of generative AI models such as ChatGPT and their potential benefits and drawbacks in terms of improving teaching and learning (2023). The researchers included the ChatGPT’s responses received via different prompts to reinforce their conclusions. Karakose and Tülübaş, in terms of analysing the ways ChatGPT could facilitate teaching and learning, conclude that technology’s nature, whether good, bad, or neutral depends on the way it is used, which emphasizes the need to develop policies and practice the ways of its so-called sustainable implementation and use while keeping academic integrity principles in mind (Karakose & Tülübaş, 2023, p. 12).

Luo et al. (2023) analyse the role, challenges, and development of ChatGPT from the perspective of its integration into early childhood education. The researchers conclude that the aforementioned technology perspective should be defined as intelligence augmentation rather than an alternative or replacement for educators and caregivers.

Considering the field of language learning, the chatbot as such a medium is analysed in the works of Haristiani. The researcher focuses on different aspects of language acquisition and provides their typology. Thus, Haristiani defines the educational potential of a chatbot as a tutor in language practice and as an independent learning medium (2019, p. 1). Fryer et al. (2017) provide a comparison of chatbots and human task partners in English learning. Despite the controversial results, the researchers insist on conducting further research.

Research results

The power of technology and its potential to transform educational spaces by breaking the limits of physical spaces and providing personalized, online, blended, virtual, and lifelong learning, among others, is recognized as Education 4.0. It prepares professionals to work in a global and digital work environment (Sharma, 2019, p. 3560). Education indeed becomes more customized, and that is where AI technologies help teachers meet specific students’ needs and provide more personalized learning.

The obvious way to deal with the violation of academic integrity principles is to rely on the policies that are currently developed and introduced and use the software to be able to detect the generated texts, such as <https://writer.com/ai-content-detector/> and similar, but as the researchers state, they are still not very effective with the modern models (Baidoo-Anu & Owusu, 2023, p. 58). Unlike the use of software, the development of policies grants more success in terms of preventing the negative consequences of the use of AI technologies. Thus, the first official rule that governs the use of AI in terms of global regulations and principles is the AI Act adopted by the European Union (2021). The AI Act recognized different degrees of regulation based on the risk level of the application. Among the other potential drawbacks of chatbots, the most often named are the limits of the chatbot knowledge base, which are referred to as technological limitations, the so-called “novelty effect,” cognitive load, and hallucinations (Huang et al., 2021, p. 238). According to the TechSense website, chatbots experience difficulties when dealing with slang, misspellings, and sarcasm, which is equally important in language learning in general and real conversation in particular (2022). Nevertheless, there are unique training experiences similar to a natural conversation that chatbots can offer in terms of a lack of human interaction, which is inevitable in foreign language teaching and learning.

As with any other educational tool, AI technologies and AI chatbots specifically require human instruction and support. The researchers state that being used with proper guidance and knowledge, ChatGPT, for instance, contributes to the development of 21st century 4C skills (collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity) that prove the interactive potential and nature of AI chatbot technology (Karakose & Tülübaş, 2023, p. 7). Also, the advantages of introducing chatbots in language learning are: timeliness, ease of use, and personalization (Huang et al., 2021, p. 243). Timeliness is a technological affordance that allows its usage at any time. In terms of language learning, the use of AI chatbots provides the ability for self-studying and a sense of authenticity in a setting where everyone speaks the language of their native tongue. Ease of use is explained by the interface of the software as well as by its multiplicity (web page, application, etc.). Finally, personalization is realized via the capability of a chatbot to reply differently based on educational level, interests, address, etc. (Huang et al., 2021, p. 244). Except for the technological affordances that Huang et al. name, the researchers describe the pedagogical affordances in terms of language learning (as an interlocutor, as a simulation, to transmit information, as a helpline, and as providing recommendations) (Huang et al., 2021, p. 244).

Though there is no single understanding of what AI is, there are definitions provided by such policy developers as the OECD or the EU's High-Level Expert Group on AI (Holmes & Tuomi, 2022, p. 546). The more common definition is the one by UNICEF. AI refers to machine-based systems that can, given a set of human-defined objectives, make predictions, recommendations, or decisions that influence real or virtual environments (UNICEF, 2021, p. 16). Therefore, this influence could be direct or indirect, and the operation of AI is autonomous. Moreover, AI can adapt its behaviour based on the context.

Machine learning methods that can produce seemingly original, meaningful text, images, or audio out of training data are called generative AI, such as Dall-E 2, GPT-4, Copilot, and similar (Feuerriegel et al., 2023). Unlike traditional AI that operates based on pre-set rules, the so-called supervised learning of generative AI creates new content, which is addressed as supervised learning. Due to the aforementioned difference, various chatbots are defined, as written further in the article.

Because of the increasing globalization and the bilingual learning communities that result, where students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds collaborate daily, intercultural communication is crucial in an international educational setting (Papadopoulos, 2021). Communication is an essential element of any foreign language acquisition. Except for performing certain

functions and practicing grammar or vocabulary, for instance, chatbots use “communication” patterns and therefore can serve communication purposes. Conversational AI has proved its efficiency in reaching the aforementioned goal as well. This makes learning about their use as a foreign language teacher a crucial aspect of their future professional activity. Therefore, the common difference between a chatbot and an AI chatbot is based on their functionality. While the chatbot performs the automation of specific tasks, the AI chatbot simulates human conversation.

The Haristiani typology of chatbots explains their functions based on their categories, such as structure, purpose, and audience (2019, p. 2). Unlike the other types or categories, the chatbots that are used in education have an AI structure. Cleverbot and Gengabot are named as popular chatbots used in language learning. While the first one is aimed at being a tool for language practice in English, Gengabot is a Japanese language learning medium. Detailed instructions and a review of the software are provided by Haristiani (2019, p. 4). While the aforementioned chatbots are already designed for language practice, the other tools allow anyone to create their own personalized and customized chatbot. An example of such a tool, which is aimed at educators, is Mizou.

Mizou is free software that was developed in 2023 for educators (K-12 teachers) to provide them with the ability to create various chatbots with the capability of automatically checking and providing students with personalized assessments. There are also eleven defined subjects and the “other” option, which could serve numerous educational needs. The “Popular within the Community” option on the website of the resource offers a great variety of ready-to-use chatbots created by other members of the community for different age categories in multiple varieties of forms (*Figure 1*). Currently, Mizou offers the division in university, high, middle, and elementary schools. The software is similar to the social media platforms, with “followers” and “following” options available, which creates a community for administrators and educators. The obvious benefit of the AI-powered learning tool is security, which is granted due to access to the task via a generated secure link without the need to log in and with the only requirement to fill in the student's name to launch the task. The customized 1-on-1 student interaction, which is based on the teacher's materials, instructions, and grading system with immediate feedback, allows the educators to build the individual learning trajectory and set future learning objectives. While performing the task, the interaction occurs in the chat, which supports the use of text, images, audio, and video options. The unique feature is the ability of students to leave feedback for the teacher and to self-access.

Moreover, except for choosing the chatbot from the community, Mizou offers two available chatbot creation options: “AI-generated” and “Custom” modes (Figure 2). By choosing one of the possible options, the scenario may develop in a more or

less customized way. Multiple modes are available for creation, such as roleplay, creative writing, interactive stories, quiz formats, trivia games, flashcards, testing knowledge, describing a picture, and others.

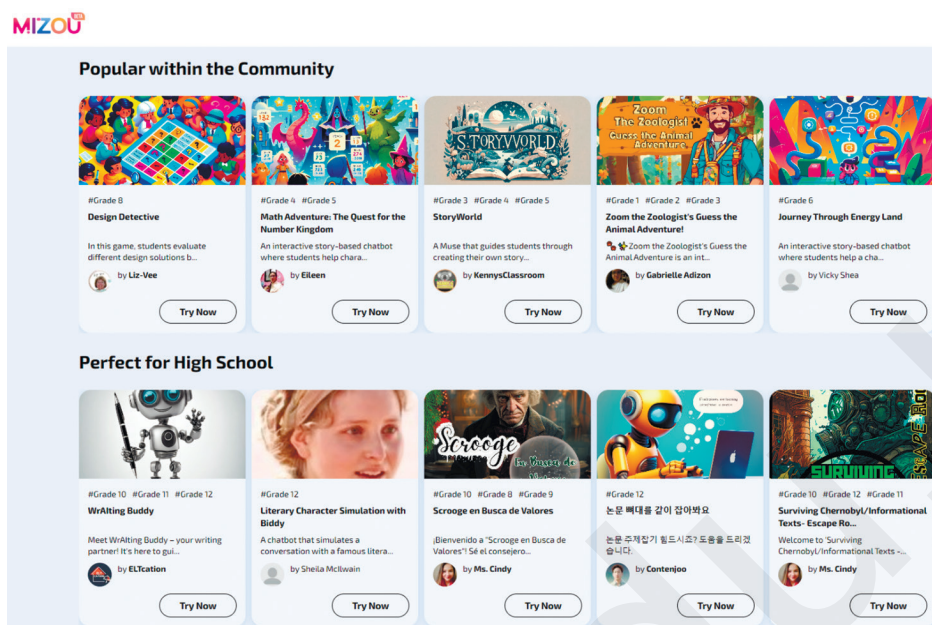


Figure 1: “Popular within the Community” page of Mizou webpage

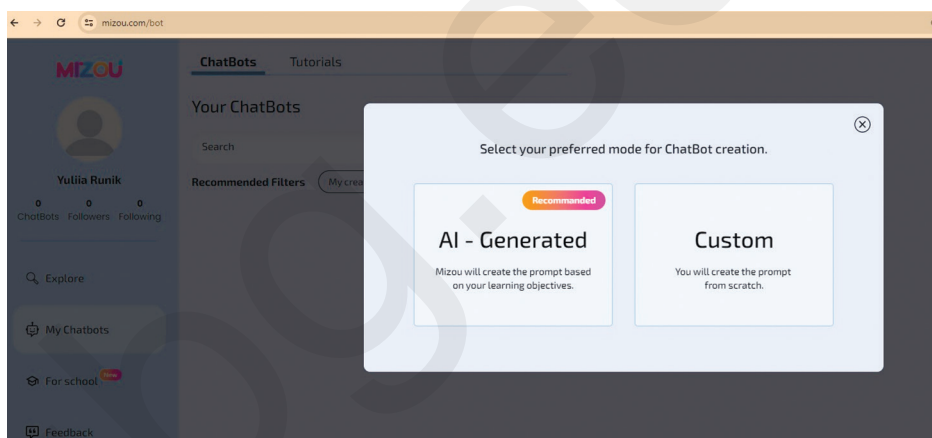


Figure 2: the Mizou interface

After the choice of the preferred mode, there are several options to fill in standards, format, customization, and tools (Figure 3). The standards section requires adding information on the title, learning objectives, and grade level. The format section includes defining AI instructions and setting the rules. Also, there is a customization option that influences the interface and requires an AI name, adding the picture and welcome message of the chatbot. Finally, there are such tool options as setting a timer, uploading specific knowledge, adding audio, and grading rubrics. The supplementary “details” page allows editing

“thumbnail,” “title,” “short description,” and “instruction” of a chatbot for students. In the right part of the edit chatbot page, there is an option to test it, save it, or publish it. Custom mode is more time-consuming but allows for generating everything from scratch, while AI-generated mode is the faster option and the better choice if you begin using the AI chatbots as an educator. However, it is necessary to mention that the Custom mode of Mizou also has AI “generate” options for each of the sub-sections, such as “Welcome message,” “Grading rubrics,” “Short description,” or “Instruction for student,” and others, in case educators require support.

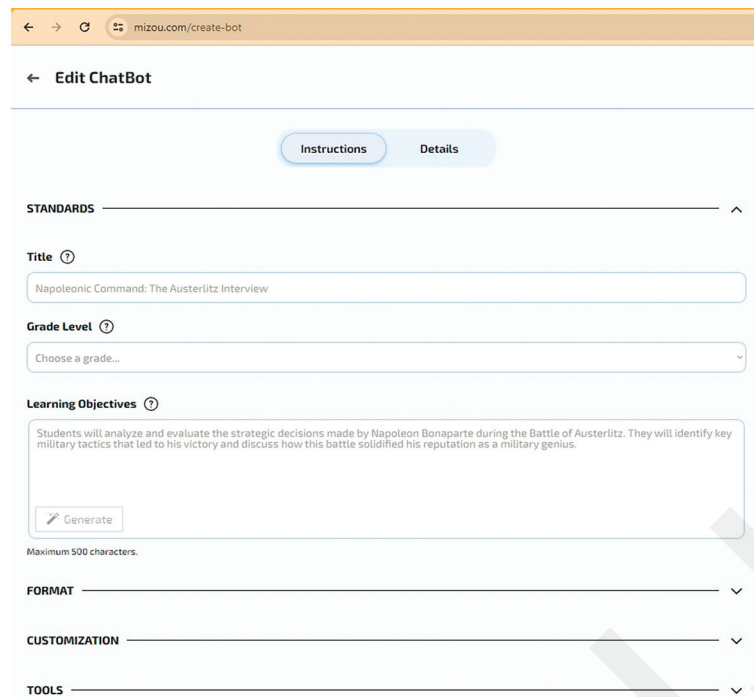


Figure 3: Mizou edit ChatBot options

After learning objectives are defined in AI-generated mode, the chatbot selection becomes available by pressing the “Get ideas” button. For example, for the offered learning objective prompt “*To differentiate between words job, profession, occupation, work, trade, vocation, calling*” (university grade level), Mizou suggested the choice from three generated chatbots: quizzes (to distinguish job-related terms), role-plays (to solidify understanding of the use of job-related terms in context), and flashcards (a game to match the terms with definitions, reinforcing word meanings). In the case of the other learning objective prompt,

“*Students will learn to differentiate the use of different synonyms of the word travel. They will practice the cases to use journey, trip, tour, safari, expedition, voyage, and cruise in sentences.*” Mizou suggested the choice from three generated chatbots, such as multiple choice, fill in the blanks, and short answer. A detailed description of each of the generated chatbots is given in Figure 4. After completing all the editing options, the result could be published and either visible to the creator or the public. If the last choice is made, the chatbot passes the checking procedure, and in the case of some necessary edits, could be rejected by moderators.

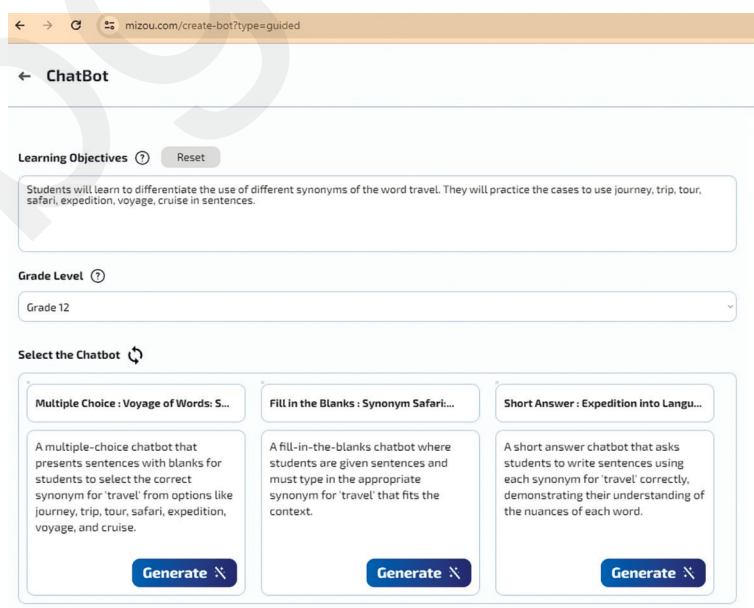


Figure 4: Example of the AI-generated mode of Mizou

Except for the aforementioned topic “Travel” presented above, there are some specific topics where the use of personalized chatbots within “Foreign Language (English)” discipline classes is possible and necessary. The first is aimed at 022 Design speciality students and is focused on practicing the vocabulary devoted to the types of design. The instruction prompt is “Teach students to define different types of design.” In the given case, the chatbot performs the function of a tutor. Also, to personalize the experience, I add the words that belong to this

class vocabulary (interior design, industrial design, engineering design, software design, graphic design, fashion design, etc.). Based on the offered prompt, Mizou creates the following AI instruction: “You are the guide for a group of university students exploring different types of design. Encourage critical thinking and deeper understanding of various design fields.» the task is presented in interactive text-based learning, and the communication with the AI chatbot in terms of the aforementioned settings is represented in *Figure 5*.

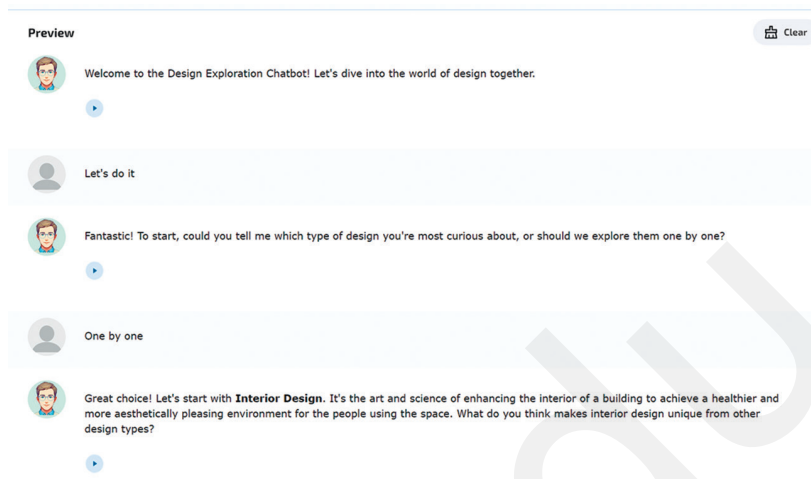


Figure 5: Preview of the Mizou chatbot for 022 Design speciality students (Topic: Types of Design)

The other example of the AI chatbot integrated into the “Foreign Language (English)” discipline class for 022 Design speciality students is aimed at teaching students to differentiate between different types of Creative Commons licenses (CC BY, CC BY-SA, CC BY-ND, CC BY-NC, CC BY-NC-SA, and CC BY-NC-ND). The interaction process with the AI chatbot

is revealed in *Figure 6*. The function the chatbot performs is transmitting information, which could also be perceived as one of the tutors in the role of lecturer. Such AI chatbots allow the transfer of traditional classes to flipped classrooms or perform the function of personalized learning due to their ability to adapt the material via editing prompts to each student’s needs.

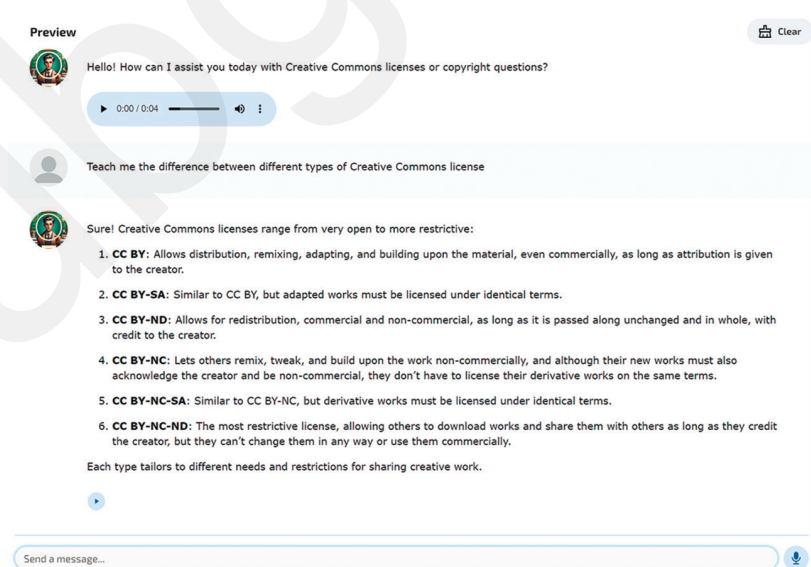


Figure 6: Preview of the Mizou chatbot for 022 Design speciality students (Topic: Types of Creative Commons License)

Considering the use of an AI chatbot with 024 Choreography speciality students, the example provided concerns the ability of students to differentiate types of dances. My prompt created in the custom mode is “The students will be able to identify the type of dance based on the given descriptions, basic movements, and general information.” the result of the preview option is provided in *Figure 7* and *Figure 8*. It is worth mentioning that the software cannot produce images, but each sentence is accompanied by audio, which allows not only practicing vocabulary

on the topic but developing listening skills as well. Moreover, while performing the students’ role to reveal the possible communication, teaching, and learning scenarios, I found out that despite the short length of the given prompt at the very beginning of the chatbot customization, it allowed the element of a riddle or quiz (*Figure 7*) to further adapt the material to transmit via the multiple-choice test, which indicates the didactic potential of the aforementioned software and its ability to suit different learner types as well as students with different levels of knowledge.

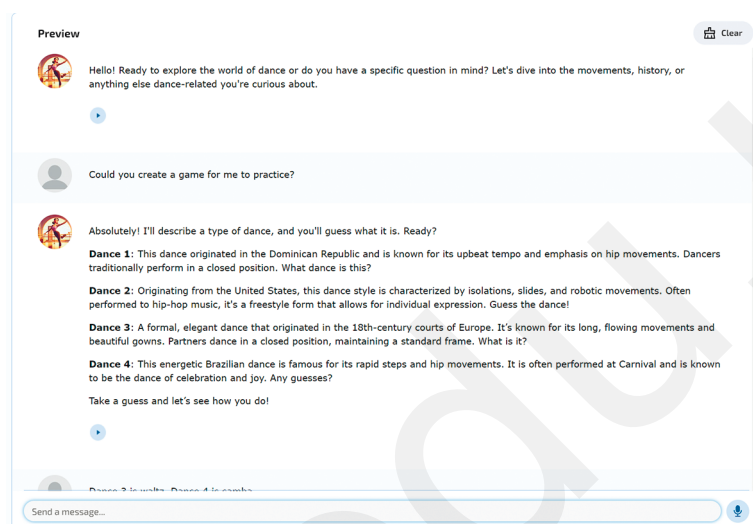


Figure 7: Preview of the Mizou chatbot for 024 Choreography speciality students (Topic: Types of Dances) (Part1)

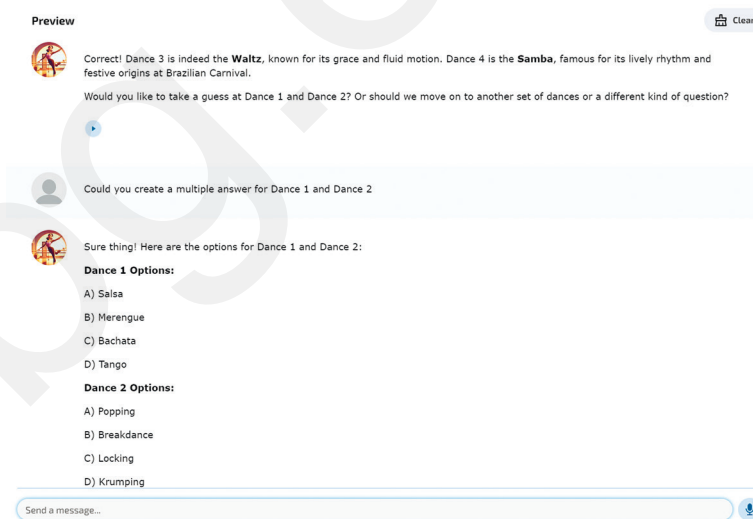


Figure 8: Preview of the Mizou chatbot for 024 Choreography speciality students (Topic: Types of Dances) (Part 2)

The introduction of chatbots in the educational process has already started. Thus, in terms of teaching the “Foreign Language (English)” discipline for first-year students, the use of chatbots became particularly appropriate. It is often explained by the slightly different knowledge of students that enter the uni-

versity, specifically in terms of the educational realities of the distance learning of the COVID and post-COVID eras, which continued due to the wartime in Ukraine and therefore different learning needs and degrees of support or self-study that are required because of the aforementioned

realities. Using Mizou as a tutor to help students with extra practice and explanations is useful and well-reasoned. Thus, students of 024 Choreography and 022 Design specialities of Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University get acquainted with the AI chatbots after practical classes during self-study time to improve their vocabulary, practice, and differentiate the terms on various topics defined by the syllabus of the discipline.

Discussion

This article provided an analysis of research works aimed at an overview of the advantages and potential drawbacks of AI, specifically chatbots in education. It offered a review of the software that is useful to integrate into foreign language learning today and introduced practical experience based on the teaching of the “Foreign Language (English)” discipline for first-year students. The paper addressed the theoretical implications of AI in education in detail, but it also acknowledged that more empirical research was necessary to confirm any potential benefits. This restriction highlights the opportunities for additional study and advancement in the area.

Conclusions

The sustainable use of AI chatbots in teaching foreign languages is achievable due to a critical attitude toward the technology, familiarity with its social and historical context, and consideration of its

benefits and potential drawbacks. The development and introduction of policies on AI use in education contribute to its proper use and keep from breaking the principles of academic integrity. Based on personal experience, such AI chatbots as Mizou could currently be implemented in foreign language learning based on the community or personal experience and introduced in the classroom or as a self-study task. Depending on the aim of the chatbot, the software offers multiple choices for the assessment and practice of different language skills and knowledge via multiple modes. Quiz, roleplay, multiple-choice questions, creative writing, interactive stories, testing knowledge, and many other options are available in terms of chatbot programming. But like any other technology, using AI chatbots in the classroom should be determined by the needs and goals of the students, taking into account both the advantages and disadvantages of each tool as well as its potential for teaching.

Prospects for further research development

The article provides an exploratory overview of the use of AI chatbots in teaching foreign languages while giving arguments for and describing the potential drawbacks and challenges it may be accompanied by. Therefore, further research may be focused on the empirical investigations of future teachers’ readiness to use AI technologies in their professional activities.

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Юлія РУДНІК,

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ЗАСТОСУВАННЯ ЧАТ-БОТІВ ЗІ ШТУЧНИМ ІНТЕЛЕКТОМ У НАВЧАННІ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ ЯК ІННОВАЦІЙНОЇ ІНТЕРАКТИВНОЇ ТЕХНОЛОГІЇ

Стаття присвячена аналізу дидактичного потенціалу застосування технологій штучного інтелекту, зокрема чат-ботів, у навчанні іноземних мов. На основі досвіду викладання дисципліни «Іноземна мова (англійська)» студентам і курсу спеціальності 024 — Хореографія Факультету музичного мистецтва та хореографії та 022 — Дизайн Факультету образотворчого мистецтва і дизайну Київського столичного університету імені Бориса Грінченка схарактеризовано переваги впровадження чат-ботів у процес оволодіння іноземними мовами. Розкриваючи освітній потенціал чат-ботів, їхній інтерактивний характер, розглядаються недоліки застосування інноваційних технологій, а також шляхи мінімізації їх можливих негативних наслідків у частині порушення аспектів дотримання академічної доброчесності, таких як плагіат та авторське право. Надаються поради щодо дотримання політик та правил належного використання чат-ботів. Наведено практичні приклади застосування останніх у навчанні іноземних мов на основі використання програмного забезпечення Mizoi. Представлена робота є теоретичною дослідницькою статтею із застосуванням загальнонаукових аналітичних методів (синтез, узагальнення, систематизація), яка містить огляд відповідної літератури із зазначеної проблематики та висвітлення емпіричного досвіду впровадження чат-ботів у викладання дисципліни «Іноземна мова (англійська)». Стаття визначає дидактичний потенціал Mizoi шляхом надання загального огляду функцій і режимів вищезгаданого програмного забезпечення та проводить читача через персоналізований процес створення й налаштування чат-бота. Наголошено на необхідності подальшого дослідження щодо впровадження чат-ботів зі штучним інтелектом як інноваційної інтерактивної технології зі значним дидактичним потенціалом, що потребує емпіричної перевірки та аналізу.

Ключові слова: чат-бот, штучний інтелект, навчання іноземних мов, інноваційна технологія, інтерактивна технологія.

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