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JALTCALL Trends Special Issue: 2024 Conference Papers



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Messages from JALTCALL 2024 conference grant awardees

Name: Tosh Tachino

Affiliation: University of Electro-Communications

Presentation title: What ChatGPT threatens and enables: A pragmatic analysis

I wanted to come to the JALT CALL 2024 conference because I wanted to be part of the disciplinary conversation on AI: I wanted to know what everybody was doing with AI, what questions people were asking, and what they were doing to shape the future of our profession and society at large. So I am grateful for the grant that allowed me to attend the conference.

I learned what other people are doing: incorporating VR into their teaching (Yang, Pang, Wang; Figueroa; Aikawa), investigating AI's capability to tutor and grade writing (Wang & Gayed; Dizon & Gayed; Cvitkovic & Massoud), and using AI as a conversation partner (Schwartz & Sowter; Nishimura). I also learned some practical skills, such as how to incorporate Concordance in our teaching (Nitta) and how to use AI to create spreadsheets (Warner). I particularly appreciated Gallagher's effort to investigate AI policies in Japanese universities and initiate discussions on how we should move forward amidst all the changes.

My contribution to the disciplinary conversation was a pragmatic analysis of a writing assignment to elucidate what exactly is affected by the introduction of AI. I argued that the fundamental issue is a dispute over the speech act of a writing assignment (learning vs. grading) that has always existed, and AI exacerbates this tension by making it easy for students to undermine both motives. Furthermore, the growing capability of AI challenges the assumption that the ability to write competent academic prose on one's own is a skill that is worth learning and teaching, thus threatening our livelihood as language or writing teachers. I appreciated the lively discussion with the audience to explore how we can start and maintain open conversations with students and university administrators, as well as what we can do to adapt and stay relevant.

Name: Jeng-yih Tim Hsu

Affiliation: National Kaohsiung University of Science and Technology (Taiwan)

Presentation title: Making ChatGPT your best friend? A study on a business writing course for Taiwanese college English majors

It has been an honor to receive a grant to attend and present at my first JALTCALL conference. I was overwhelmed by the many talks and pedagogical ideas focusing on AI and cross-border projects. The most valuable experience for me came from the audience who attended my session. As a novice with ChatGPT, I received invaluable

guidance from two experienced teachers on possible directions for implementing additional AI-enhanced software in the classroom and suggestions for further developing the study I presented. I also met with colleagues from Ritsumeikan University and we have drafted potential collaborations to undertake this fall between our two universities, inspired by JALTCALL 2024. Although my attendance was brief, it was incredibly fruitful. The session that resonated with me the most was Dr. Robert Remmerswaal's presentation from the Prefectural University of Kumamoto, discussing his COIL project involving Spain, Turkey, and his home university in Japan. I am currently working on a similar project and hope to have the opportunity to share my work again at JALTCALL 2025.

Name: Miguel Mision

Affiliation: University of Nagano

Presentation Title: Creating and utilizing an extensive reading library using Chat GPT

It was an incredible experience to be a fortunate grant recipient at the 2024 JALTCALL Conference. Although I have presented at other conferences before, this has been my first conference with such an intimate and close learning experience with other prominent researchers and educators. I am especially grateful for all the attendees who gave me feedback for my presentation – especially Mark Brierly and Paul Goldberg, the very two people who inspired my research in the first place. As language educators it is easy to fall victim to the sentiment of dread and uncertainty the industry faces with AI and machine translation. However the CALL Conference reaffirmed the steps many educators are taking to 'right the ship' to a future alongside AI. Attending the conference was an inspiring experience and I can not thank enough all the great work the conference team did in making this such a successful conference.

Name: Yi-ju Chen

Affiliation: National Kaohsiung University of Science and Technology (Taiwan)

Presentation Title: Enhancing group discussions in college English courses with Chatbots

Attending JALTCALL was an enriching experience that expanded my knowledge and provided valuable insights into the integration of AI in English teaching. I am sincerely grateful to JALTCALL for the travel grant that made my participation possible. Although I encountered a challenge regarding the equipment, as I mistakenly assumed the rooms would be equipped with computers, I deeply appreciate the swift assistance provided by the conference site chair, Anthony Brian Gallagher, and the



supportive audience who helped set up the necessary devices for my presentation within the allocated timeframe. The modern facilities and graceful infrastructure of the conference site created a conducive environment for learning and networking. The academic atmosphere was warm and cheerful, complemented by an informative and inspiring keynote speech. Throughout the event, I gained numerous ideas on employing AI in English teaching and discovered new dimensions of research. My experience at JALTCALL has been immensely rewarding, and I look forward to implementing the knowledge and insights gained into my professional endeavors.

Name: Aya Owada

Affiliation: University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Presentation title: Showcasing ChatGPT, DeepL/Google Translate, and Google Docs for Speech Practice: Insights from the US University Pilot Study

I am honored to have been awarded the JALTCALL grant. Fortunately, it alleviated my worries about travel expenses from Kochi, a beautiful but remote area in Shikoku. Having just graduated from a US university a week earlier, this was my first time presenting at a conference in Japan. Although it was intimidating to step into a new environment where I didn't know anyone, it was an excellent opportunity to connect with other educators facing similar challenges in teaching languages in Japan and trying to use technology to address those challenges. My only regret was that I was too shy to proactively ask those I met for their contact information. (If you know who I am, please contact me!) Finally, I would like to thank the organizers for providing this wonderful opportunity to connect with a variety of educators and learn about their research – it was an incredibly rewarding experience. Mahalo nui loa!



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Editor's preface

2024 marked the 20th anniversary of the *JALT CALL Journal*. Our flagship publication has been published continuously since 2005 and over this period, has steadily gained a reputation as one of the world's leading journals in computer-assisted language learning. Its prominence in the field and in particular the fact that it is recognised in the Scopus database as a highly-cited Q1 journal has meant, however, that over recent years the journal has attracted a far greater number of high-quality submissions than it has been able to publish. In fact, the *JALT CALL Journal*'s current acceptance rate stands at only 7%.

While we are very proud of these accomplishments, we realised that the success of the *JALT CALL Journal* meant that many of our members, including those who attend the annual JALTCALL Conference, have come to see the review process as a daunting experience and have thus been discouraged from considering the journal as an outlet for their writing. Furthermore, with its exclusive focus only on full-length research articles, we realised that we were not adequately providing the CALL community in Japan with a space to create and share other forms of valuable scholarly content. Thus, the idea for a new journal, *JALTCALL Trends*, was born.

The aim of this publication is to expand opportunities for all JALTCALL members and also those of the broader CALL community to share their research and ideas, but especially to give those in the earlier stages of their academic journey the chance to get involved and to get their work published. Initially, this will involve the expansion of our annual post-conference publication to a larger collection of shorter papers. Going forward, we plan to give authors the opportunity to start submitting other kinds of short contributions that we will then publish on a rolling basis. These may include theoretical discussion papers, work-in-progress research reports, descriptions of CALL-based teaching and learning approaches, software reviews, interviews with leading figures in our field, or other writings relevant to CALL.

This first special issue includes thirty conference papers based on presentations given at JALTCALL 2024 at Meijo University in Nagoya. The chosen conference theme was the topic that everyone in the field was talking about at the time, and indeed is still talking about today: the impact of AI in language education. The papers in this issue explore from a wide range of different perspectives the potential of new technologies, and in particular generative AI, for language education, as well as the implications of these technologies on different spheres of language learning and teaching. The use of AI chatbots to practice speaking skills, working with generative AI as an academic and creative writing partner, the potential and threats that AI may hold for the development of critical thinking skills, students' and teachers' perceptions of AI, the integration of innovative new technologies into classroom practice, and the potential of AI to enhance virtual exchange interactions are only a few of the fascinating topics covered in this inaugural issue.



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I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all of the authors, reviewers, other members of the editorial team, and the staff at Castledown for their time-consuming and dedicated efforts over the past year in bringing this first special issue to publication. We received a much higher number of submissions than we had originally expected and are very pleased with the final result, which is without doubt one of the largest and highest-quality collections of JALTCALL conference papers that we have published so far. We look forward to continuing this journey with you as we explore the latest trends in CALL!

Michael Hofmeyr
Tokyo University of Science
Editor