



## LSLP Micro-Paper 96: AI Literacies

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### Defining the Term

Artificial Intelligence (AI), a term that has circulated since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, refers to the presence and use of machines, tools, and devices capable of performing daily activities and tasks, showing a degree of reasoning and discernment. We can find AI in computers, smartphones, and other home devices. AI also helps guide decisions related to the use of social media and the Internet (via algorithms). Most recently, we have faced the rapid development of Generative AI (GenAI), a branch of AI specializing in creating content in more interactive ways. Texts, images, music, presentations, or websites are now within the realm of GenAI, with some salient examples such as the ChatGPT text creator or image generators such as DALL-E or Midjourney, to name two out of a growing amount of apps surfacing every day.

It is worth questioning how literacy studies can contribute to these conversations in this technological landscape. Out of these questions, the notion of AI literacies has appeared as a response and proposal to the more significant questions regarding textual creation in this digital age. AI literacies broadly cover three main areas: First, they explore the *use* of AI tools for textual creation and interpretation, as AI can bring together multiple linguistic and semiotic resources as part of this textual design process. Second, they describe how to *assess* the use of AI tools, thinking about which and how to use them. This assessment considers AI tool use not just for the sake of using them but as a form of awareness of the technical and design affordances that AI provides for meaning-making. Finally, they refer to the ability to *critically question* if, when, and why to incorporate AI tools into the textual creation endeavor as we attempt to balance the advances in AI technology with the ongoing ethical debates regarding such technologies.

Conceptually, AI literacies focus on different forms of AI, with a particular interest in GenAI, but it is not an idea isolated from other concepts in literacy studies. One can argue that other areas of literacy support and overlap with AI literacies. Ideas from [multimodality](#) (for meaning-making and design), [multiliteracies](#) (as the effect of knowledge processes), [critical digital literacies](#) (regarding questions about access and accessibility as social and societal issues), and [new literacies](#) (as the new scenarios that emerge as we use AI in and out of school) all provide valuable insights as we continue to address questions about AI evolution and its presence.

As AI continues to evolve and the questions about its use (and the dangers surrounding its misuse) continue to grow

in education, framing an idea such as AI literacies is vital. This concept can provide researchers, educators, and our [communities](#) with valuable hints as we try to balance technological advances with the care of the human and more-than-human in our spaces and the possibilities for [sustainable](#), equitable growth.

### Connecting it to LSLP

As we explored issues related to [gaming](#), digital literacies, and multimodality in our research at LSLP, exploring the possibilities of AI literacies seemed like a logical next step. Our teams are already beginning to inquire about using AI as an instructional tool for language learning, and the nexus between AI and [gamification](#) is also emerging as another avenue of our work on AI literacies. Our research on micro-writing provides another way to explore this topic, as GenAI will soon play a role in how we envision writing and [academic literacies](#).

### Expanding Second Language Research

Questions about AI have grown steadily in second-language research. As more people gravitate toward AI tools to support their language acquisition journeys, second language educators are raising questions about whether AI will replace them and how AI will help their teaching. As AI appears to support language learning, translation, and even translanguaging practices related to AI tools, AI literacies in second languages should interest researchers and educators. AI tools will be part of language learning. Finding ways to use them ethically and with a solid pedagogical dimension will be the challenge ahead of second language research studies.

### References

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#### Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

The author wrote the different drafts of this text without AI assistance. Before uploading the micro-paper, final edits were made using Grammarly. The author takes full responsibility for the publication's content.



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