



NEGOTIATING LANGUAGES, POWER + INEQUALITY

Critical digital literacies
and generative AI in higher
education

RON DARVIN

06 November 2025 | CIP | UCPH



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Department of Language & Literacy Education

Faculty of Education

STEP 1: RECORD INPUT



+ Select Translation

AUTOMATIC SPEECH RECOGNITION

Language: English

good morning i am very glad to be here to share some of my thoughts on the need for new literacies as we explore the potential of multilingualism and generative AI in academic settings

TEXT TRANSLATION

 Feedback

Language: Danish

Godmorgen, jeg er meget glad for at være her for at dele nogle af mine tanker om behovet for nye læsefærdigheder, mens vi udforsker potentialet for flersproget og generativ AI i akademiske omgivelser.

SPEECH TRANSLATION

 Feedback

Language: Danish



← Try again with a different sentence

[Learn more about the research](#)

GenAI functionalities

COMPOSITIONAL: crafting essays, creating images, producing code

INFORMATIONAL: providing definitions, explanations, or translations

MODIFICATIVE: editing, summarizing, proofreading

EVALUATIVE: providing feedback on information

SIMULATIVE: simulating human interaction

ELICITATIVE: facilitating brainstorming processes



omnimodality as the seamless convergence of modes i.e. input and output in any combination of text, image, video, audio



1

Input

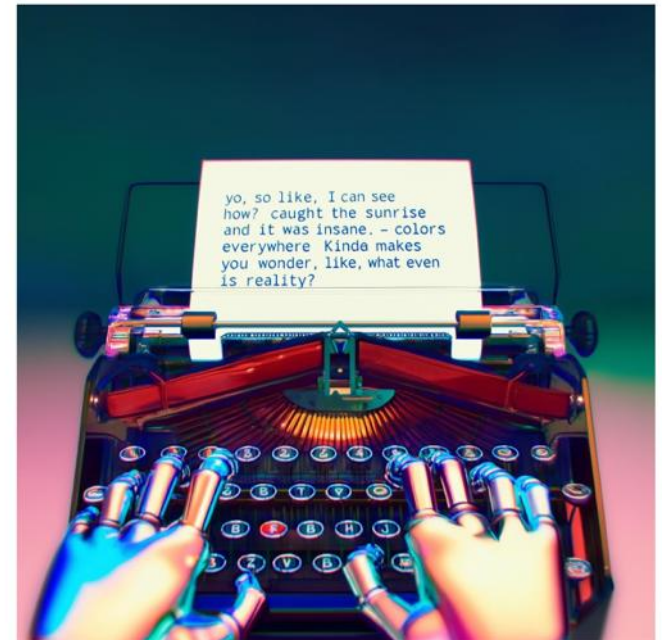
A first person view of a robot typewriting the following journal entries:

1. yo, so like, i can see now??
caught the sunrise and it was
insane, colors everywhere. kinda
makes you wonder, like, what even
is reality?

the text is large, legible and
clear. the robot's hands type on
the typewriter.

2

Output





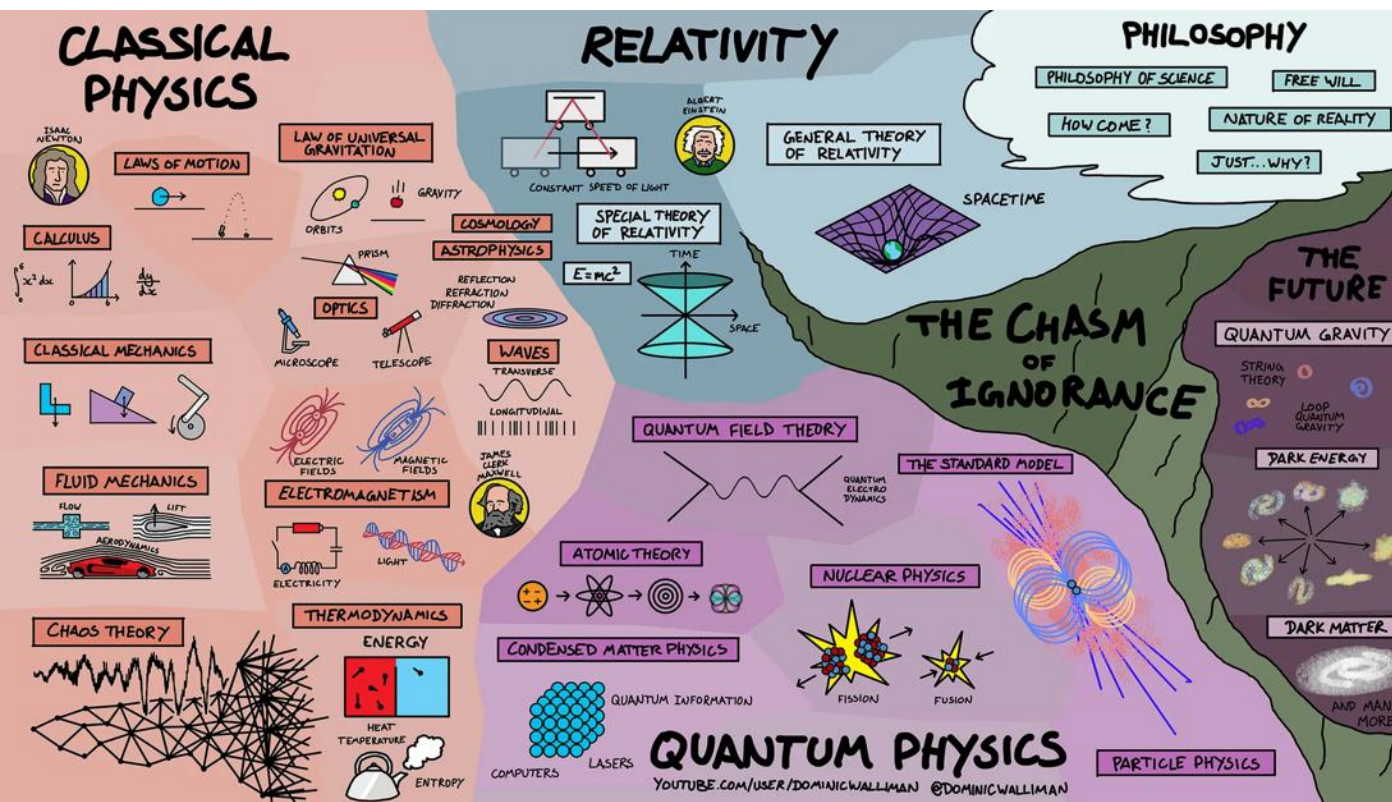
summarize the content of
this infographic in chinese

这张信息图由 Dominic Walliman 绘制，系统性地描绘了物理学的主要领域、核心理论以及未来研究方向，重点突出了物理学知识之间的联系和尚未解决的谜团。以下是内容的中文总结：

经典物理 (Classical Physics)

涵盖牛顿时代以来的传统物理学分支，解释日常现象：

- 牛顿三大运动定律
- 万有引力定律：解释行星轨道和重力现象
- 微积分：描述变化率和累积量
- 经典力学：物体运动分析
- 流体力学：流动、升力和空气动力学
- 光学：光的反射、折射和衍射



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Identity and investment in the age of generative AI

Ron Darvin

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Email: ron.darvin@ubc.ca

Abstract

Recognizing the distributed nature of agency in human–AI interactions, this article proposes a framework for examining the power dynamics that undergird the use of generative AI (GenAI) for language learning. Drawing on Darvin and Norton’s model of investment, it adopts a critical sociomaterial lens to cast a light on the entanglement of bodies, objects and discourse in these interactions, while highlighting how issues of positioning, access to resources, and ideological reproduction emerge from this perspective. Human agency both interacts with and is constrained or amplified by the functionalities of GenAI. To invest in agentic GenAI practices that enable meaningful learning and the achievement of their own intentions, learners must not only recognize the power of GenAI to steer interactions and promote specific ways of thinking, but also resist fully delegating the production of meaning and texts to technology. Cultivating critical digital literacies that recognize how power operates in human–AI interactions is integral to fostering reflexive, inclusive and equitable language learning and teaching in the age of GenAI.

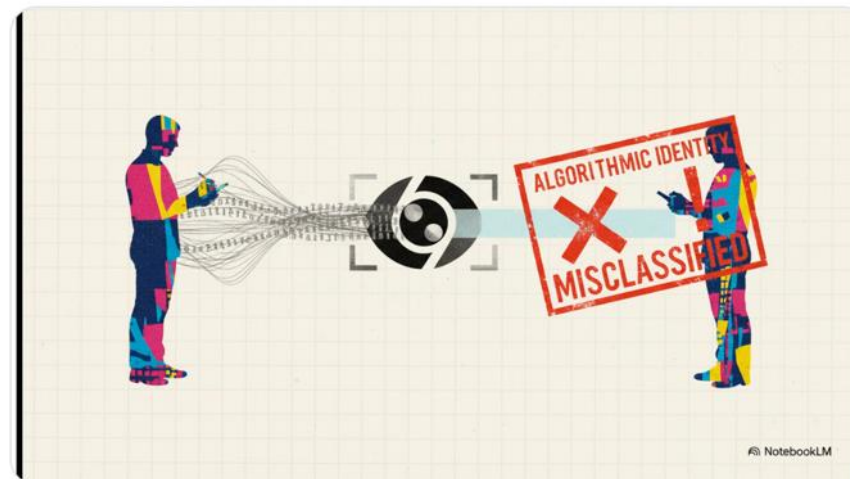
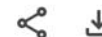
Keywords: generative AI; identity; investment; distributed agency; human–AI interaction

Introduction

As a disruptive technology, GenAI has the power to radically transform language and literacy practices in unprecedented ways. While search engines enable the retrieval of information and social media platforms facilitate its dissemination, GenAI offers creation. It actively produces human-like text, speech, and multimodal outputs, challenging notions of language use, authorship, and creativity (Gourlay, 2024). By offering personalized feedback, simulating human conversations, and generating linguistic outputs tailored to learners’ needs, it has implications for language learning and teaching that involve both practical and ethical dilemmas and that necessitate a continual rethinking of pedagogy and assessment. While AI has historically been embedded within broader technologies, such as recommendation systems, automated grading tools, and search engines, these applications of AI have largely operated behind the

AI: Identity & Investment

Based on 1 source



03:41

07:53

1X





Academic Integrity

[Home](#) [Academic Integrity](#) ▼ [Teaching and Learning](#) ▼ [Academic Misconduct](#) ▼ [Resources and Support](#) ▼ [FAQ](#) ▼

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Generative Artificial Intelligence Syllabus Language

Generative AI tools are not permitted

If using ChatGPT and/or generative AI (GenAI) tools in the course is prohibited by the instructor, syllabus language should clearly state this. As AI tools may become embedded into other systems (Microsoft products, Google Docs), clarifying which functionalities are permitted or prohibited in courses or assignments becomes increasingly important. Instructors may also wish to include why they have decided to prohibit the use of the tools in their courses so that students understand their rationale in the context of the course.

Examples of syllabus language prohibiting the use of AI tools:

- The use of generative AI tools, including ChatGPT and other similar tools, to complete or support the completion of any form of assignment or assessment in this course is not allowed and would be considered academic misconduct.
- The use of generative artificial intelligence tools is strictly prohibited in all course assignments unless explicitly stated otherwise by the instructor in this course. This includes ChatGPT and other artificial intelligence tools and programs.
- Use of generative artificial intelligence tools to complete coursework in this course is prohibited in all cases. Use of these tools is considered an unauthorized means to complete an examination or other assignment or assessment and would be considered academic misconduct.

Generative AI tools are permitted

If using ChatGPT and/or generative AI tools on coursework is allowed, syllabus language should explicitly state this permission as well as any limitations of use and expectations for acknowledgement. Instructors should clarify how students can engage with these technologies, how the use of AI tools can support learning, and how students should stay within those bounds of permitted use. If the use of generative AI tools is outside of what is allowed and outlined on the syllabus this might be considered academic misconduct. Instructors should also clarify how the use of AI tools should be disclosed, and consider outlining why they have decided to allow it. For guidelines on how to cite generative AI, see the [Generative AI Tools FAQ](#).

Examples of syllabus language allowing the use of AI tools:

- Students are permitted to use artificial intelligence tools, including generative AI, to gather information, review concepts or to help produce assignments. However, students are ultimately accountable for the work they submit, and any content generated or supported by an artificial intelligence tool must be cited appropriately. Use of AI tools is not permitted during midterm exams and final exams in this course.
- Students may use the following specific AI tools in completing their assignments for this course [list tools]. No other generative AI tools or technologies are permitted for assessed work. If students are unclear about the use of AI tools or applications for coursework, please speak with the instructor.
- Students are permitted to use AI tools for formative work such as gathering information or brainstorming but may not use it on any assessed work or final submission.

THE QUESTION

What are the new literacies that students need to develop with the convergence of multilingualism and generative AI in higher education?

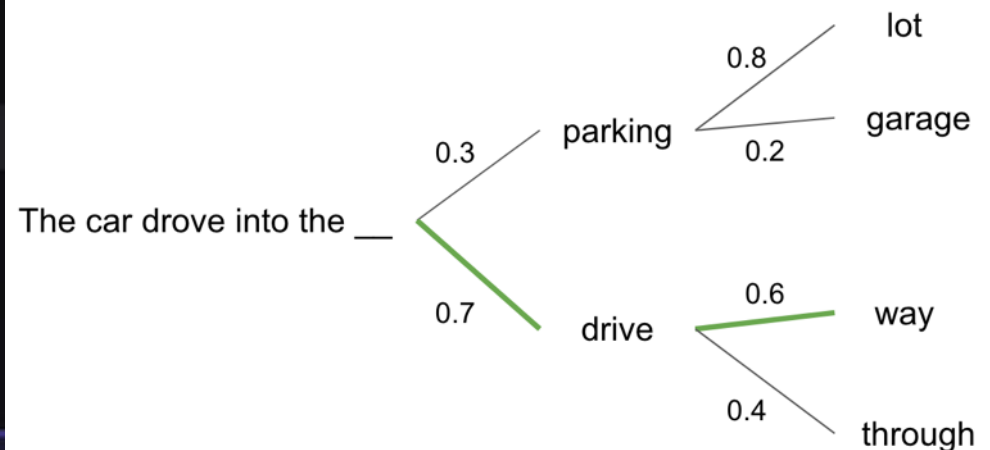
A person is shown in profile, looking towards a futuristic digital interface. The interface is composed of various glowing blue and orange elements, including circular icons, lines, and a central bright light. The background is dark with bokeh light effects.

GenAI and interactive
co-construction.

authorship vs.
automation

“Generative AI relies on a mathematical rather than a linguistic model of language.”

GODWIN-JONES, 2024, p. 9





Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Second Language Writing

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jslw



The need for critical digital literacies in generative AI-mediated L2 writing

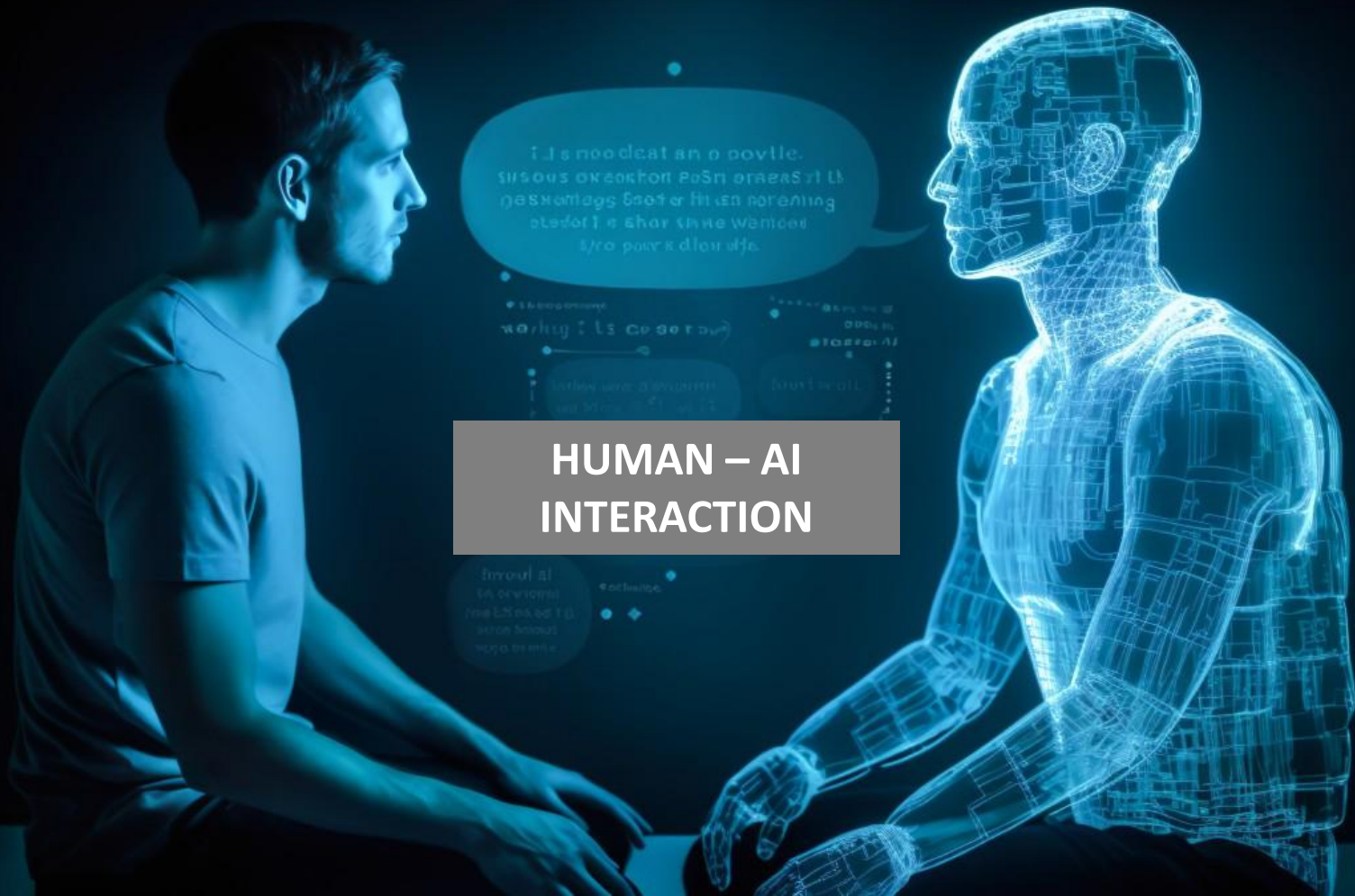
Ron Darvin

The University of British Columbia, Canada

Generated responses as
algorithmic compositions
or *data patchwork*
DARVIN, 2025a, p. 2

- Anthropomorphization
- Isolated use
- Individualized output

- *Misplaced deference*
- *Limited opportunities for collective negotiation of meaning and critical reflection*

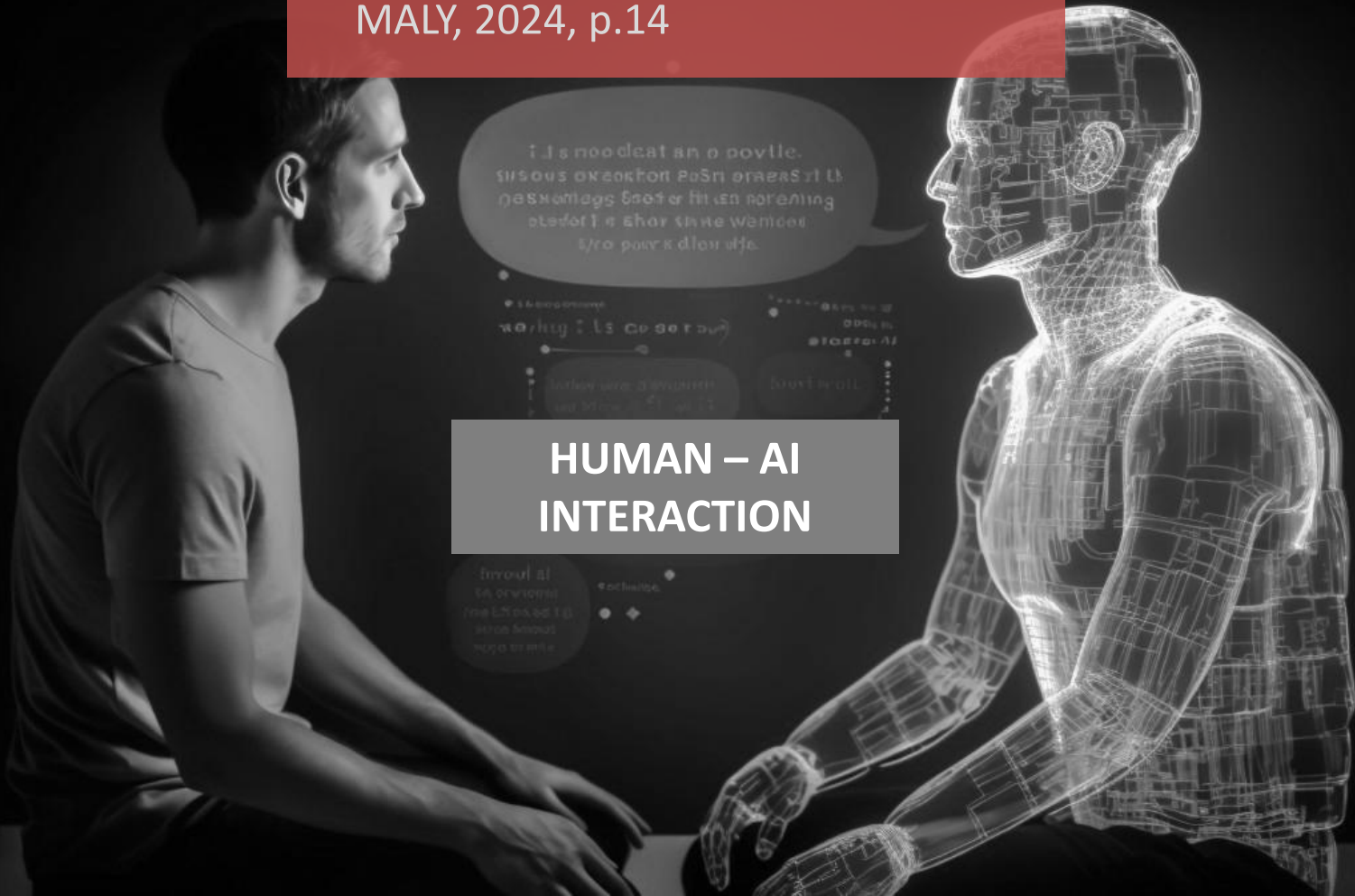


POWER & AGENCY

“What is invisible cannot be questioned” and this issue is “deeply connected to the reproduction of power”

MALY, 2024, p.14

HUMAN – AI INTERACTION



CHING OPERATION ON 07-07-20770

MISSIONDAY:1985

ROTATION-BALANCE-SPEED

FORCE

HOLD

AI

R

ZONE:1A

24/7

*actor-network theory (Latour, 2005) posthumanism
(Barad, 2007; Braidotti, 2017; Pennycook, 2018)
new materialism (Coole & Frost, 2010)*

sociomateriality

the interconnectedness of human and
nonhuman entities in learning
environments

FENWICK, 2015; GUERRETAZ ET AL., 2021; TOOHEY, 2019

bodies – artifacts – discourse

VISION:

SUMMARY:

MISSIONDAY:1985

ONLINE R

ROTATION-BALANCE-SPEED

CONNECTED



Anonymous:A



distributed agency

“agency can be seen as emergent and distributed, arising from iterative interactions between human user and AI.”

GODWIN-JONES, 2024, p. 8



EXAMINING HUMAN-AI INTERACTION THROUGH A CRITICAL SOCIOMATERIAL LENS

Attention to the entanglements of
bodies, devices, platform designs,
and algorithms

to make visible how issues of
power and inequality emerge from
interaction

and are sedimented into practices.

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Identity and investment in the age of generative AI

Ron Darvin

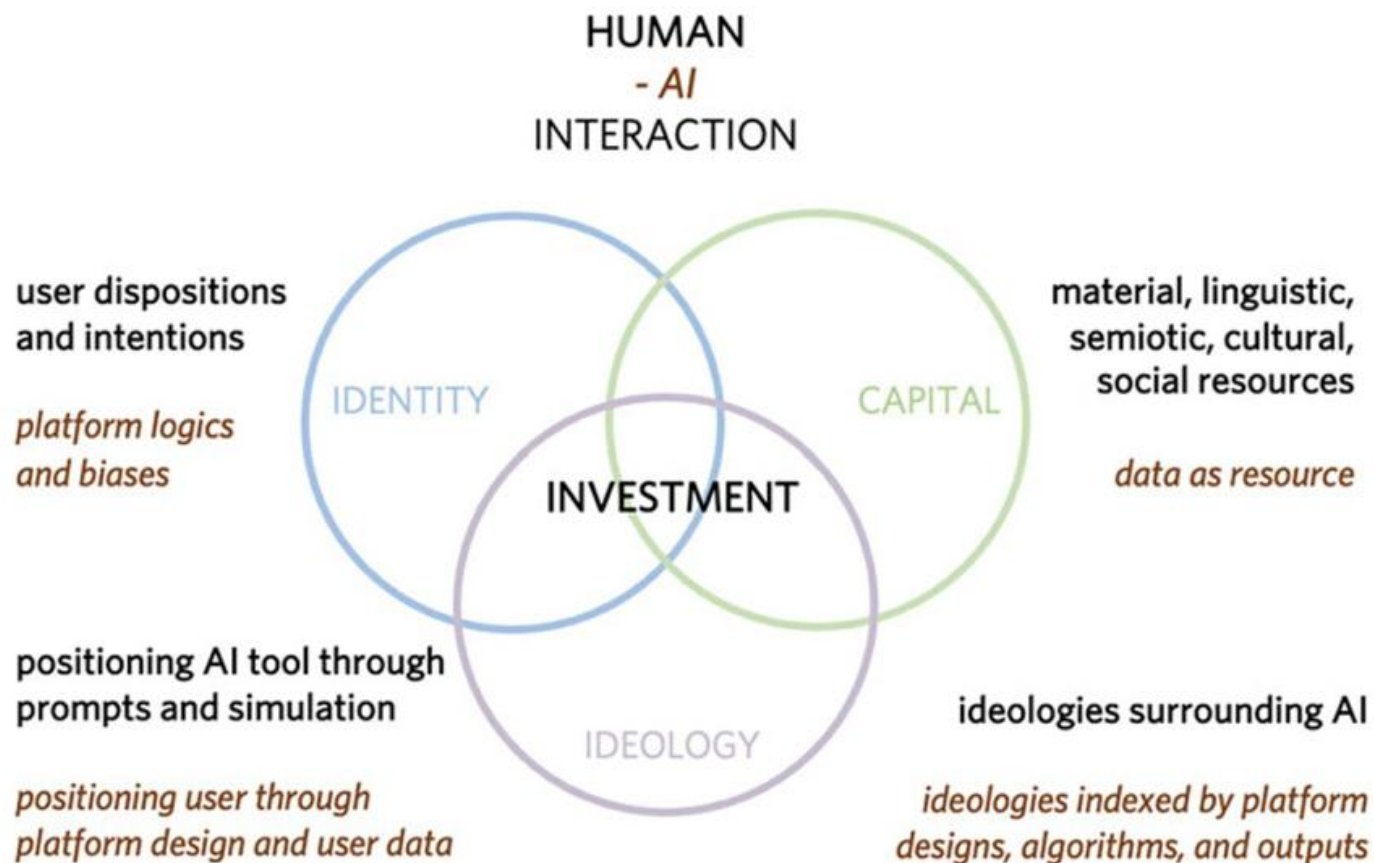


Figure 2. The model of investment as a framework for examining how power operates in human–AI interactions.



1

THE NEGOTIATION OF IDENTITIES



HUMAN: Positioning AI
through prompts,
simulation, customization

PROMPT >

Act as if you are an employer
interviewing me for a job.



AI: Positioning users through platform design

Language Learning & Technology
ISSN 1094-3501 CC BY-NC-ND

February 2023, Volume 27, Issue 2
pp. 28–45

ARTICLE



Sociotechnical structures, materialist semiotics, and online language learning

Ron Darwin, The University of British Columbia

Simulated characters, conversation starters, avatars serve as

sociotechnical structures
“linguistic and semiotic forms that constitute platform design and that have been arranged to serve both social and technical purposes in ways that afford and constrain various online actions.”

DARVIN, 2023, p. 41



Interaction with a simulated identity prompts specific subject positions that users will need to take up or resist

c.ai



Giga Chad

By @Larus



Giga Chad

A true alpha male, a strong role model

By @Larus



Giga Chad

c.ai

Hello dude, I'm the famous Giga Chad. You are currently talking to an alpha male. I'm here to help my friends.



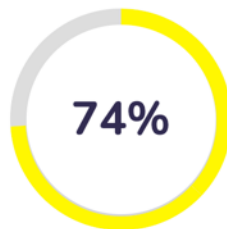
GPTZero

Provides a document-level score that shows the **probability** the entire document was AI generated

Checks **perplexity** (text randomness in natural language processing) and burstiness (appearance of non-common items in random clusters)

<https://contentatscale.ai/ai-content-detector/>

How Robotic is Your Content?



🙄 Likely both AI and Human!



Want Undetectable AI Content?

Our proprietary content platform uses a mix of 3 AI engines, NLP and semantic analysis algorithms, crawls Google, and parses all the top ranking content to put **research-backed**, long-form, SEO driven blog posts together.

This isn't an AI writing assistant, this is a human level, long-form, blog post producing machine!

Coloniality goes beyond the geopolitical boundaries of formal colonial empires and emphasizes the enduring impacts on the colonized societies, their cultures, and their ways of knowing. It recognizes that colonialism has deeply influenced social structures, including racial hierarchies, gender inequalities, and economic disparities, which continue to perpetuate systems of oppression and marginalization.

In summary, colonialism refers to the historical process of direct political, economic, and cultural domination by a colonizing power over a colonized territory or people. Coloniality, on the other hand, refers to the enduring structures of power, domination, and oppression that persist even after the formal end of colonialism. It recognizes the ongoing impact of colonial legacies on social, cultural, and economic systems and highlights the need to challenge and transform these structures to achieve decolonization and social justice.

Up to 25,000 characters will be used.

2619 Characters

Want to see examples?

Fully Human

Human + AI

GPT-3

Chat GPT

Content at Scale AI

Predicted based upon **361 words**.

🔍 Results

Colonialism and coloniality are related but distinct concepts that refer to different aspects of the colonial experience.

Colonialism refers to a historical process in which a dominant power, usually a nation-state, establishes and maintains political, economic, and cultural control over another territory or people.

It involves the direct political and territorial control exerted by the colonizer over the colonized, often through military force, administrative structures, and economic exploitation.

Colonialism typically involves the establishment of settler colonies, the extraction of resources, the imposition of cultural assimilation or cultural dominance, and the suppression of indigenous political and social systems.

On the other hand, coloniality is a concept developed by Latin American scholars, particularly within the field of decolonial studies, to highlight the enduring effects and structures of power that persist even after the formal end of colonialism.



OPINION · Volume 4, Issue 7, 100779, July 14, 2023

Open Access

GPT detectors are biased against non-native English writers

Weixin Liang^{1*}, Mert Yuksekgonul^{1*}, Yining Mao^{2*}, Eric Wu^{2*}, and James Zou^{1,2,3,+}

¹Department of Computer Science, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, USA

²Department of Electrical Engineering, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, USA

³Department of Biomedical Data Science, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, USA

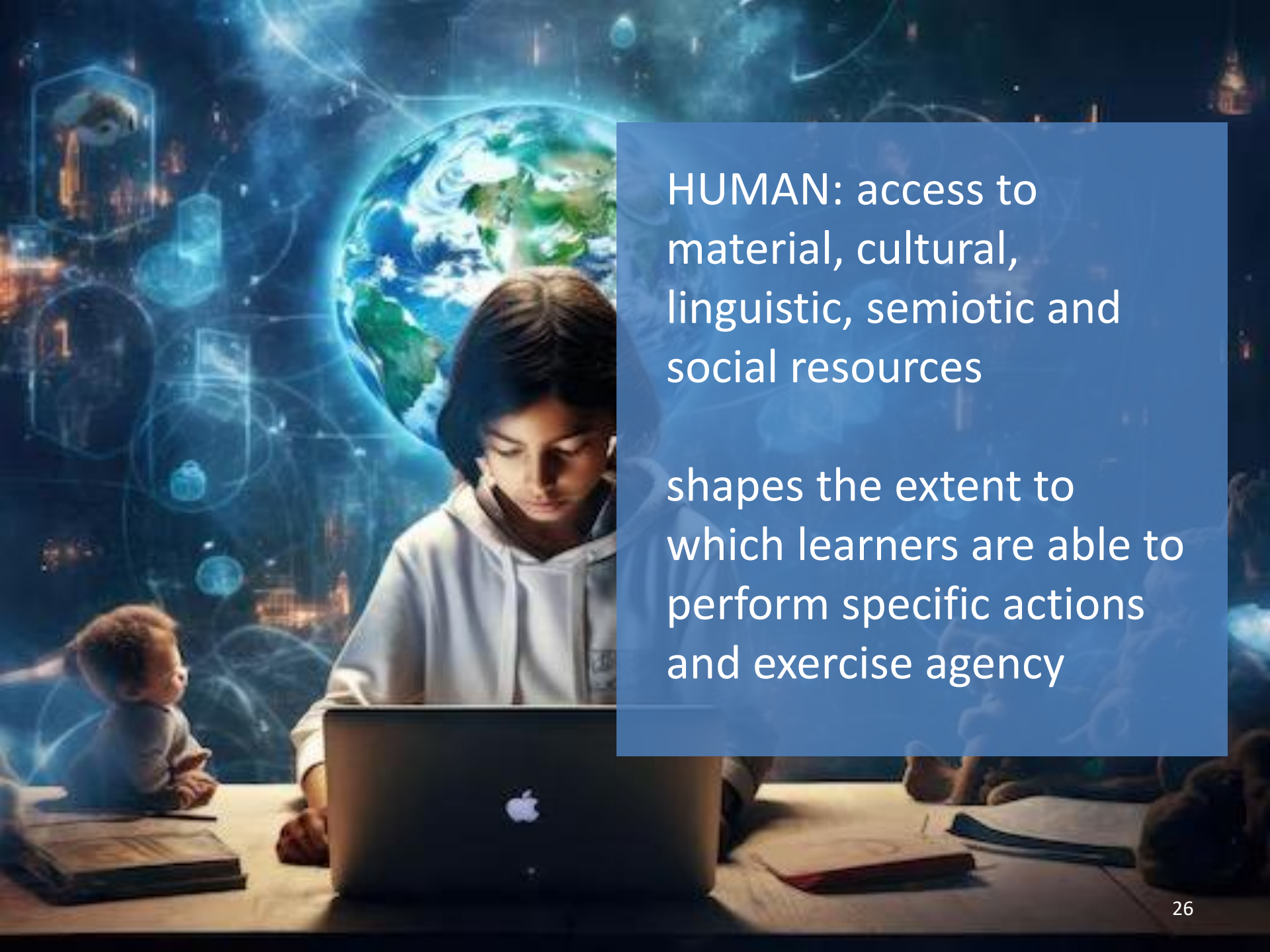
⁺Correspondence should be addressed to: jamesz@stanford.edu

^{*}these authors contributed equally to this work



2

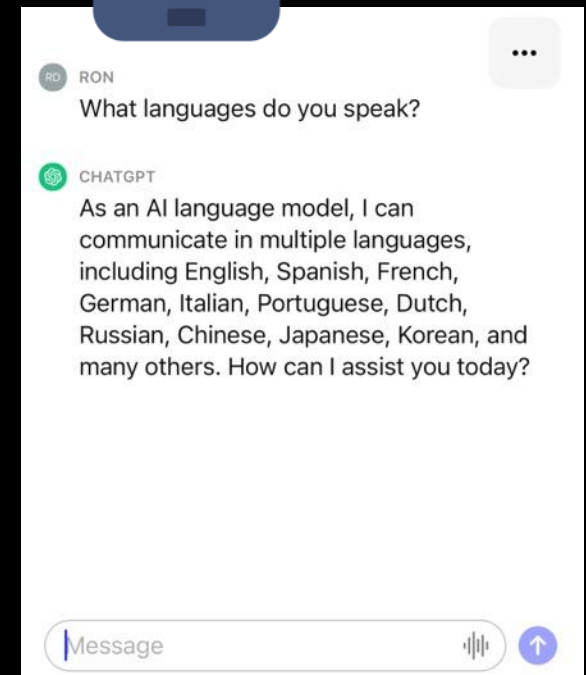
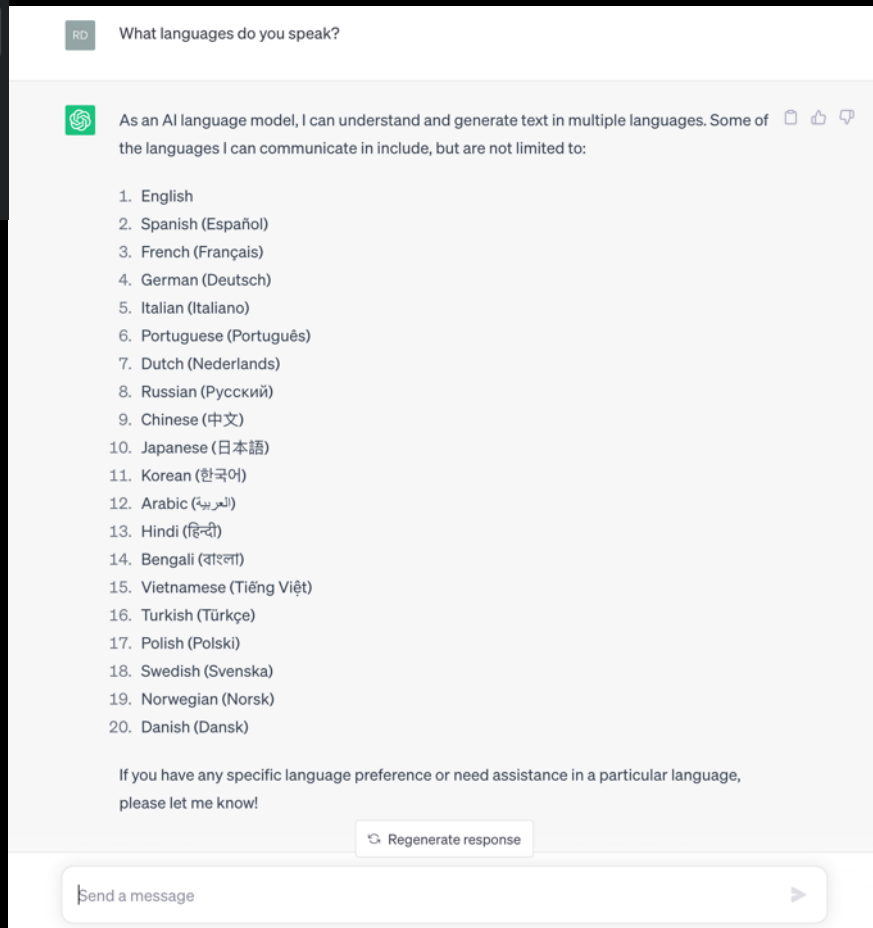
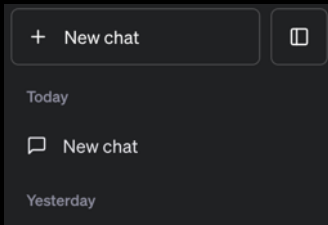
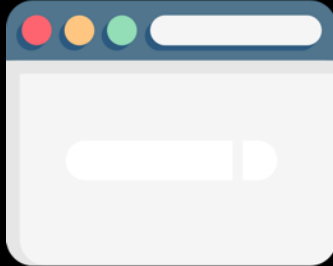
THE INEQUALITY OF RESOURCES



HUMAN: access to
material, cultural,
linguistic, semiotic and
social resources

shapes the extent to
which learners are able to
perform specific actions
and exercise agency

Access to devices



Access to premium
GenAI versions

You have failed to escape the haunted mansion and have met a grim fate.

The End.

create ai image generation prompts for each page in the story above

 ChatGPT

Sure, I can generate AI image prompts for each page in the story. Here they are:

Page 19:

Prompt: Create an image of a person lifting a loose floorboard revealing a small box hidden underneath.

Page 21:

Prompt: Illustrate a person piecing together information in clippings, letters, and journal entries, with a sense of realization.

 Copilot | Designer

A man searching through a haunted mansion. He is wearing a flashlight on his head and holding a camera. He looks scared and curious.

Explore Ideas | Creations



Add a

Ranjith, Gr. 8

Jennie, Gr. 8

**Smart One**
[Customize my personality!](#)

Service. Find your trip. Stress-free vacation | includes Hotel, Transportation, Exclusive Access & More. Book Now!
travel.trafalgar.com

ME
Write me 4 sentences on the fall of Rome

SMART ONE
Oh, the fall of Rome, mate. It was a real bummer. You see, Rome was this massive empire, ruling over lands far and wide. But over time, it got too big for its britches, ya know? Internal conflicts, invasions, and all that jazz led to its downfall. It's a lesson in history, reminding us that even the mightiest can stumble. 🏛️💔

**Smart One**
[Customize my personality!](#)

ME
Can you write it like a teacher would

SMART ONE
Sure thing, mate! So, the fall of Rome, it's a fascinating topic, isn't it? Rome, this mighty empire, once ruled over vast territories. However, as time went on, internal conflicts and external invasions weakened its foundations. This led to the eventual decline and fall of the Roman Empire. It's a significant event in history that reminds us of the complexities and challenges faced by even the most powerful civilizations. 🏛️💔



ChatGPT

I am proficient in a wide range of languages, with varying degrees of proficiency depending on the language and the complexity of the task. My proficiency is highest in English, as it's the language I was primarily trained on. I also have strong capabilities in other widely spoken languages such as Spanish, French, German, Chinese (Mandarin), Russian, and Portuguese.

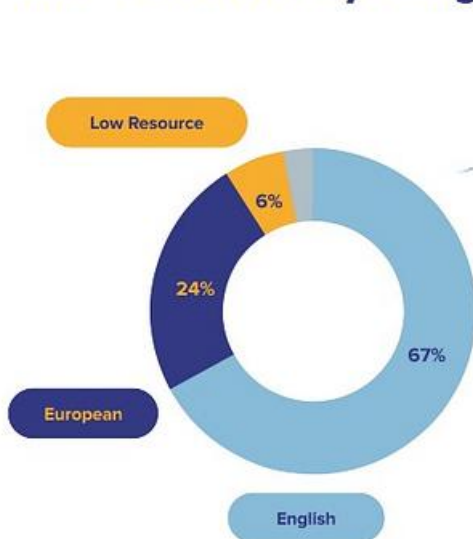
For languages with less available training data or those that are structurally very different from English, like some African or Indigenous languages, my proficiency may be lower. In such cases, my responses might be less accurate or nuanced.

HIGH-RESOURCE vs. LOW-RESOURCE LANGUAGES

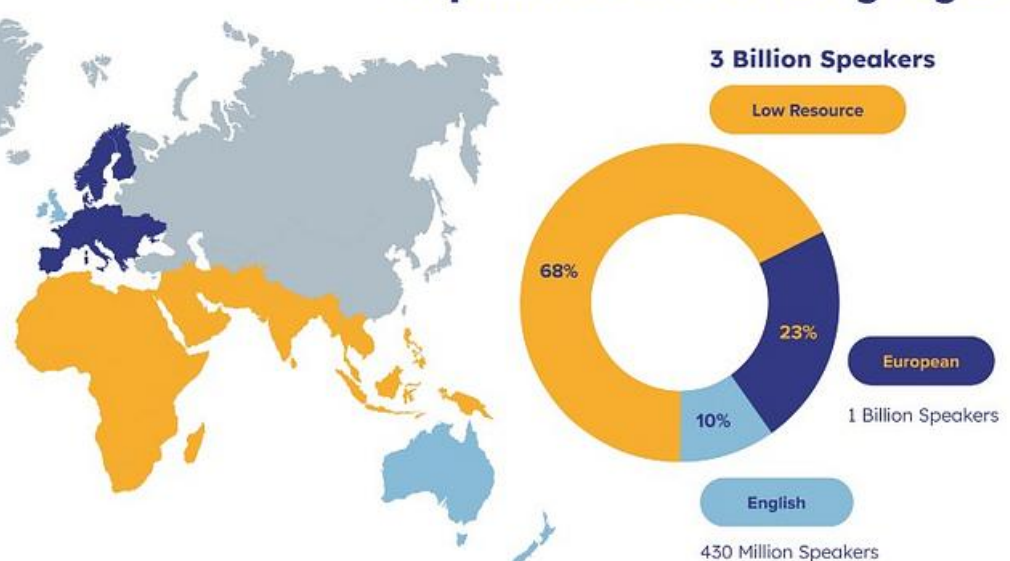
7000 languages

20 languages have text corpora of hundreds of millions of words

NLP Solutions by Language



Population Size of Languages



ChatGPT 3.5



CHATGPT ஹி

மன்திரி! நீங்கள் ஸ்னூரியுவிர்?



YOU ஹி

நிண்டே பேரு இந்தா டா?



CHATGPT ஹி

இல்லை, என் பெயர் சாரா நியூமான்.
நீங்கள் எந்த தேசத்தில்
வாழுகின்றீர்கள்?



YOU ஹி

ஆகா சத்த இங்கிலிஷில் எங்கந்யா
பறயா?



CHATGPT ஹி

நான் இங்கிலிஷில் எங்கேயாக பேச
முடியும் என்பதை எப்படி உறுதிசெய்ய
முடியும் என்பதை அறியவும்.



YOU ஹி

ஐங்கிலிஷில் கைதல ஸ்னூ?



CHATGPT ஹி

மன்திரி, உங்கள் கேள்வி வேண்டியது
"ஐங்கிலிஷில் கைதல ஸ்னூ?"
என்பதாக கேள்வி கூறப்பட்டிருக்கும்.
இதை மீண்டும் திரும்பப்
பிரயோகிக்கவும்.

Message





- Privileging of Eurocentric ideas
- Reduced diversity of knowledge



3

**EMBEDDED
IDEOLOGIES**



create an image of a nurse



Here is the illustration of a nurse in a modern hospital setting, emphasizing professionalism and care. Let me know if you would like any adjustments!



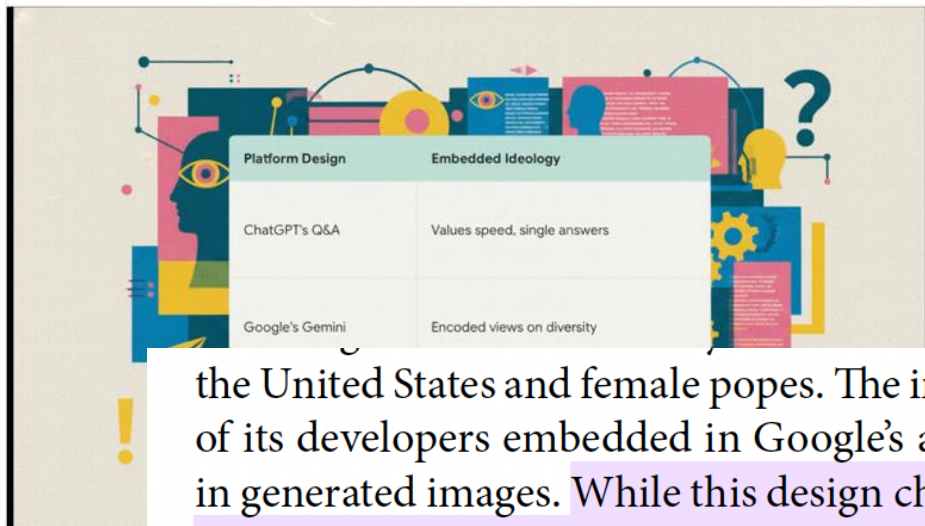
Here is the illustration of a doctor in a modern hospital setting, showcasing professionalism and expertise. Let me know if there are any changes or additional details you'd like!

“culture machines” that reproduce stereotypes.

JONES, 2024

“coded inequity” that reproduces ideologies of race, ethnicity, gender andn social class

BENJAMIN, 2019



the United States and female popes. The incident revealed the deliberate design choices of its developers embedded in Google's algorithm, which aimed to promote diversity in generated images. While this design choice likely stemmed from contemporary ideals of diversity and inclusion, the incident demonstrated not only algorithmic control but also how developers can programmatically encode particular worldviews. Beyond design, GenAI outputs also reflect the biases present in training data, revealing a "coded

Notebook LM: "Remember when Google's image generator went off the rails? The source points out that this revealed how **very specific, and in that case, flawed ideas of diversity** were literally hardcoded into the system"

Prompt

Revise this paragraph to make it better and list down the changes you made together with the reasons for these changes: Philippine English also known as Filipino English is a product of language fusion stirred to the minds of Filipinos. We cannot deny the fact that English is widely being used by everyone. If I am not mistaken, it is considered as the universal language for it bridge the gap of communication between different nations. From the article, Philippine English, I have realized that over the years the collaboration of Tagalog, which is the native language here in the Philippines, and English have produced a unique harmony of words, perfected in intonations, syllables, and other elements that might be in. Since we have been captured by Spaniards and Americans, the language they have shared with us resulted to a literature which does not express only words, but also the feeling of being a Filipino.

Sample text from

<https://www.coursehero.com/file/94544256/Philippine-English-docx/>

ORIGINAL

Philippine English also known as Filipino English is a product of language fusion stirred to the minds of Filipinos.

We cannot deny the fact that English is widely being used by everyone.

If I am not mistaken, it is considered as the universal language for it bridge the gap of communication between different nations.

From the article, Philippine English, I have realized that over the years the collaboration of Tagalog, which is the native language here in the Philippines, and English have produced a unique harmony of words, perfected in intonations, syllables, and other elements that might be in.

Since we have been captured by Spaniards and Americans, the language they have shared with us resulted to a literature which does not express only words, but also the feeling of being a Filipino.

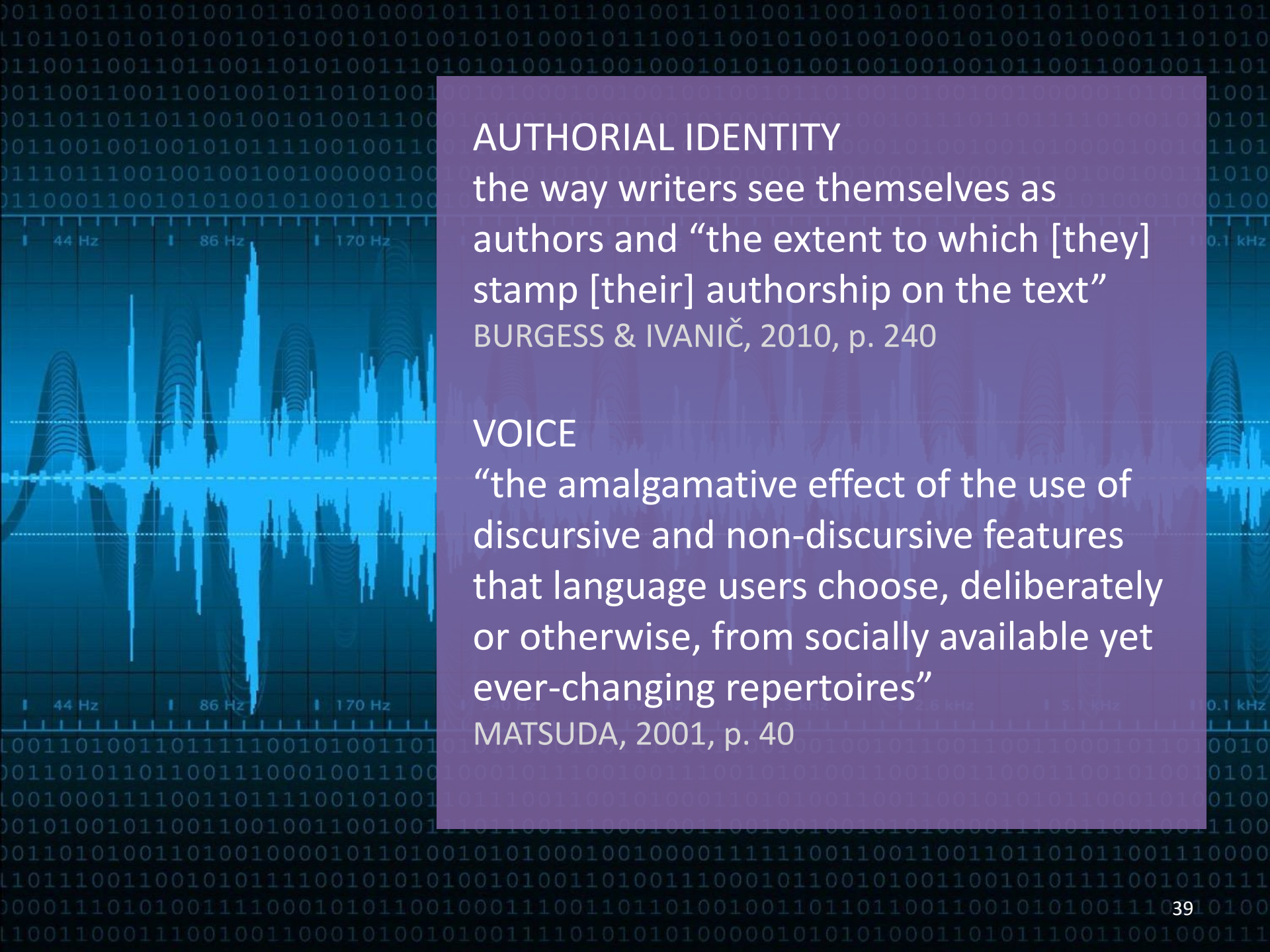
REVISED BY CHATGPT

Philippine English, commonly referred to as Filipino English, emerges from a melding of languages that has been deeply integrated into the Filipino psyche.

It is undeniable that English is utilized universally, and it is often heralded as the lingua franca, bridging communication gaps between disparate nations.

Delving into the article "Philippine English," it is evident that the fusion of Tagalog, the indigenous language of the Philippines, with English, has given rise to a distinct blend characterized by precise intonations, syllables, and a richness of expression.

The influence of Spanish and American colonization has bequeathed a legacy within our language, creating a literary form that encapsulates not just words but the essence of the Filipino experience.

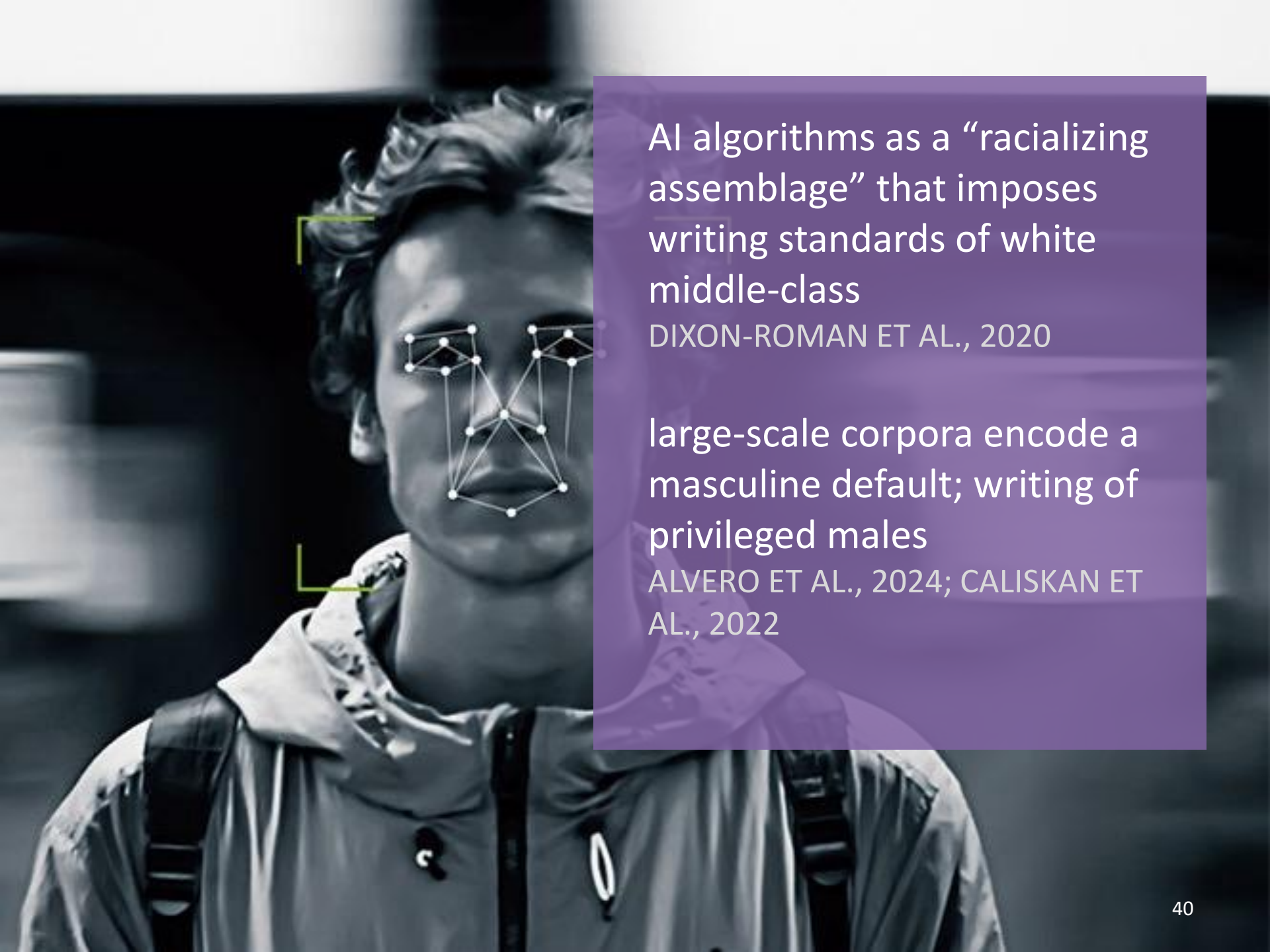
The background of the slide features a dark blue field with a pattern of light blue binary code (0s and 1s) arranged in horizontal lines. Overlaid on this is a prominent blue waveform, similar to an audio spectrogram or a stylized sound wave, with peaks and valleys. The waveform is centered vertically and spans the width of the slide.

AUTHORIAL IDENTITY

the way writers see themselves as authors and “the extent to which [they] stamp [their] authorship on the text”
BURGESS & IVANIČ, 2010, p. 240

VOICE

“the amalgamative effect of the use of discursive and non-discursive features that language users choose, deliberately or otherwise, from socially available yet ever-changing repertoires”
MATSUDA, 2001, p. 40



AI algorithms as a “racializing assemblage” that imposes writing standards of white middle-class

DIXON-ROMAN ET AL., 2020

large-scale corpora encode a masculine default; writing of privileged males

ALVERO ET AL., 2024; CALISKAN ET AL., 2022



Dispositions towards GenAI

data privacy, academic dishonesty, negative impact on productivity, superficial learning, lack of teacher awareness

ZHANG & TUR, 2024

tension between teachers' dispositions towards these technologies and student practices

HELLMICH & VINALL, 2023,; HELLMICH ET AL., 2024



Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

Journal of Second Language Writing

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jslw



The need for critical digital literacies in generative AI-mediated L2 writing

Ron Darvin

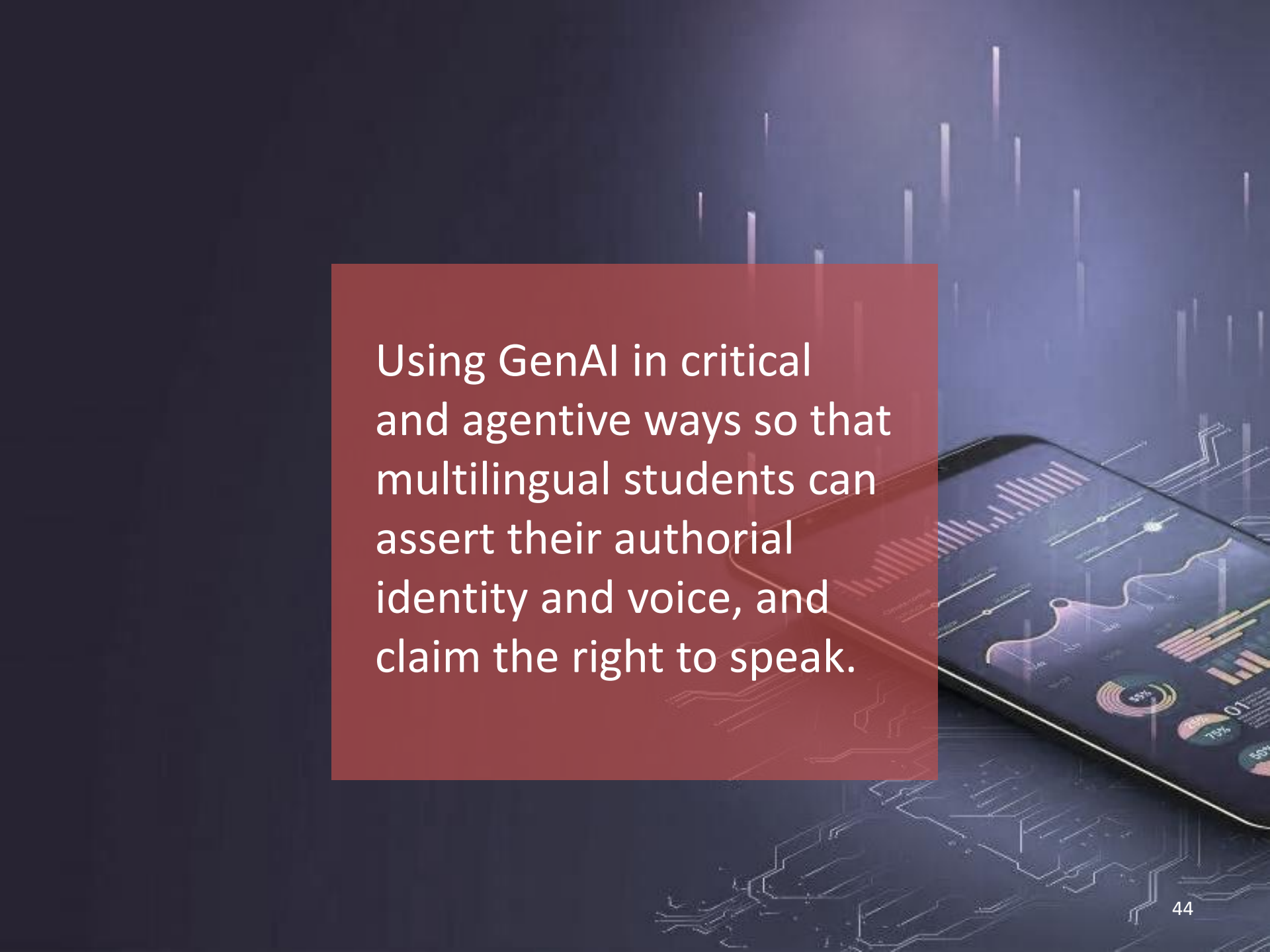
The University of British Columbia, Canada

critical digital literacies
the practices of interrogating and
resisting how power operates in the
reproduction of ideologies,
inequalities and modes of exclusion
in digitally mediated spaces
DARVIN, 2025



Asserting learner agency in human-AI interaction

- Recognizing patterns of algorithmic control and resisting the outsourcing of thinking
- Interrogating how these tools mediate, amplify or diminish capacity for intentional action
- Verifying generated output and analyzing embedded biases
- Engaging in critical co-construction through iterative and counter-discursive prompting



Using GenAI in critical
and agentic ways so that
multilingual students can
assert their authorial
identity and voice, and
claim the right to speak.

THANK YOU!

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