

Editorial Foreword

If you are an instructor, researcher, and/or editor in Japan, it is a busy time of year for you. You may be weary from wading through pages of insipid, vague, and lifeless “fake” AI-generated work passed off as original. It is notoriously difficult to “prove” if a student has used generative AI to write a paper, and institutions are struggling with how to respond to these new realities (Wong, 2024). Is language learning still meaningful in a world shaped by “fluent” generative AI? Some institutions in Japan are exploring the effectiveness of digital technology by, for example, utilizing immersive VR programing for language study. Alternatively, others seem to foist responsibility for academic ethics onto instructors, who flounder. They face the same expectations to increase students’ fluency and raise standardized test scores but lack curriculum changes and support to do so. Generative AI could lessen workload, perhaps: some institutions are testing if generative AI and instructors can work in tandem to grade papers and give effective feedback (Taylor, 2024). Other instructors fret over the reality (pun intended) of graduate students misusing AI even further, by generating not only text, but entire participant interviews via the latest iterations of imagery applications. Thus, although technology is increasingly embraced for language learning at the practice level, the purpose, and especially the relevance, of traditional academic rigor is being challenged by machines that may (or may not) do things better—but which certainly do them faster.

Disclosure: I have dabbled with generative AI when composing business emails in Japanese. I believed that the (very conveniently and speedily generated) language was appropriately polite *keigo*, but my Japanese colleagues remarked that it was unnatural, “weird” Japanese. Did I actually improve my language skills from using generative AI, or was I at least inspired by the realization that I need to improve? Well, . . .excuse me while I get back to grading those student papers.

The programs that power the latest technology are definitively *not* unbiased, as many GALE Journal readers are aware. Dr. Joy Buolamwini discovered— just by chance, as a student on MIT’s campus—that facial recognition software failed to “read” her face because she was a Black woman. Error rates for her demographic group reached 34.7%, compared to less than 1% for light skinned males (Buolamwini, 2024). To re-phrase, 99% of white men were accurately “seen” and recognized by facial recognition software developed by predominately light-skinned male programmers, whereas more than one-third of dark-skinned women were effectively rendered invisible; face-less, by the same technologies. The chilling case of a Black schoolboy in

London who was misidentified and searched as a criminal starkly illustrates the real-world dangers of applying biased software to our “real” lives (Kantaya, 2020; Mullen, 2021). This is just one, albeit famous, example.

Consider the many transgressions of *Grok*, Elon Musk’s own chatbot, in the past year. The sycophantic bot claimed that Musk (Its patron? Parent? Dear Leader?) could beat heavyweight champion Mike Tyson in a boxing match, that Musk possesses a better physique than Michelangelo’s *David*, and that he is in better condition and harder working than basketball great LeBron James (Opentools, 2025). Does this hyperbole sound familiar; this absurd level of (self-)aggrandizement of an outrageously wealthy white man? Although the chatbot has been tweaked repeatedly, it always seems to be getting itself into more, and more sinister, trouble. This is seen most recently in the understandable outcry over sexualized deep fakes, whereby Grok’s editing tool allowed users to alter real-life photos, violating numerous rights of a number of mostly women (Williams, 2026). The guardrails that have been put in place to prevent a repetition of this trespass are hardly robust nor are they universal. Hence, programs running generative AI have not just been perpetuating bias, they actively bend reality to suit particular purposes, no matter how racist, sexist, and elitist those purposes may be. At present, it seems that generative AI is too often a tool used for what I will call “un-truth,” both in academia and in the world at large. Un-truth: At the least, not your words, and often, not the creative and analytical skills of your brain, either.

There are positive developments. UN WOMEN, for example, is compiling data through GLASSDOOR, asking us to envision “training a machine to make hiring decisions by showing it examples from the past” (UN Women, 2025). Examinations of the gender pay gap are in fact serving to expose and narrow that gap (Chamberlain, 2016). PROJECT ALLYAI likewise serves as a hub for the discussion of LGBTQIA+ issues in relation to technology (Gardner, 2025). The previously mentioned Dr. Buolamwini established the Algorithmic Justice League which ensures that facial recognition software is accurate (Algorithmic Justice League, n.d.). Even the infamously horrid *Grok* is kept tabs on by other programs which compile and analyze its output (Opentools, 2025). From the creation of generative AI to the “discovery” of its inherent biases, to grassroots and institutional efforts which utilize these very tools to combat that bias, a clear trajectory emerges. Generative AI may be evolving, diversifying and becoming, in a sense,

“woke.” Fittingly, this transition is delineated by the writings in this edition of the GALE Journal.

In his paper entitled *Where All Women Shine? A Multimodal Feminist Critical Discourse Study of Japanese EFL Textbooks*, Andrew Haddow offers a deft analysis of the *Sunshine English* textbook series used in public schools across Japan. Gender bias in EFL textbooks has been widely examined internationally, and this journal has previously published a number of studies on the topic as well. Haddow’s work stands out as an exemplary contribution. Readers may be surprised by what Haddow has uncovered in his meticulously composed paper regarding how official attempts to correct gendered stereotypes of the past inadvertently reinforce current ones.

This edition of the journal includes a variety of intriguing book reviews of worthwhile publications. In her review of *Hospitable Linguistics: Alternative, Indigenous and Critical Approaches to Language Research and Language Encounters* (Nicholas Faraclas, Anne Storch and Viveka Velupillai), Antonija Cavcic describes how “hospitable” linguistics are “ethical, inclusive, and just” and include “speakers of marginalised languages, racialised communities, colonised peoples, and women and queer-identifying scholars whose voices have long been dismissed or excluded.” From the book, she quotes Fatou Cissé Kane, a scholar in Germany who states, “Being a Black woman with a doctorate doesn’t change my status as a simple ‘foreigner’ in a society where foreigners are not welcome” (p. 197). This question of how power can be redistributed in academia so that linguistic imperialism can be deconstructed will be relevant to many GALE readers. Cavic’s review is, as always, well-constructed and enlightening.

Jonathan Donnellan returns with another excellent review, this time of *Social Justice in Language Education: Taking Action* (Albert Biel and Fabian Maria Esleben, Eds.). He notes that the book is a valuable resource for educators, covering a range of previously underexamined topics such as LGBTIQ+ inclusion, wealth inequality, water access, anti-fatness as a social issue, and effective outcomes for linguistically diverse schools.

Lifelong Motivation and Foreign Language Learning: Perspectives from Later Life (Bérénice Darnault) is reviewed by Professor Emerita Amanda Gillis-Furutaka in her engaging, informative voice. This text examines “motivation in language learning, gerontology, and positive psychology, (but not necessarily gender)” in a study on a group of lifelong English learners in France. The text introduces concepts such as ‘motivational ecology,’ highlighting the interconnectedness of

individual behaviors, social influences, and environmental contexts regarding motivation. (As an aside, one must wonder how these mature learners might be interfacing with generative AI in their language study these days).

In my review of the impressive, carefully edited book *Ideologies of Communication in Japan. Speakers, Interaction and the Creation of Difference* (Patrick Heinrich, Florian Grosser and Saana Santalahti, Eds.), I focus upon sections most relevant to GALE readers. Among the many thought-provoking topics is a discussion of how research can be conducted in this brave new digital world by utilizing a “no harm clause for public sphere data” for anonymously recorded language.

Isobel Hook, an experienced professional in the field, has reviewed *Technology-Mediated Language Teaching: From Social Justice to Artificial Intelligence* (Javier Muñoz-Basols, Luis Cerezo and Mara Fuertes Gutiérrez, Eds.). GALE educators involved with self-access learning centers and other implementation of technology at their institutions will find both the book and Hook’s review illuminating. Hook states that access to technology “potentially benefits women and marginalised genders, who are explicitly identified as facing unequal access...due to sociocultural stigma and unequal domestic duties.” The term “digital integrity” from this text is a welcome one.

In his review of *Multiculturalism, Language, and Race in English Education in Japan: Agency, Pedagogy, and Reckoning* (Gregory Paul Glasgow, Ed.), Kevin Lim comments upon issues raised therein ranging from native speakerism in the industry which inspires attempts to develop agency, to teacher subjectivity in the classroom, and finally, to work-life balance. Lim offers impactful insights, and criticisms, but ultimately lauds the anthology’s contribution as creating “a broader understanding of decolonization” in the field.

Finally, the journal concludes with Lily Thukral’s clarion review of *Understanding Interaction in the Second Language Classroom Context* (Noriko Iwashita, Phung Dao, Mai Xuan and Nhat Chi Nguyen). Thukral notes that past pedagogical focus on L1 based instruction is now seen as “a denial of learner identity” (p. 120). Authority and hierarchy appearing in classroom dynamics, such as gendered honorifics usage, are also addressed in this text. In her review, Thukral convincingly frames and personalizes the book’s message about the construction of “power, gender, and identity” as experienced through common classroom exchanges.

In addition to equity and agency, another issue raised by the writings in Volume 18 of the GALE Journal is relevancy: how can academia sustain relevance on an increasingly compressed,

digitalized timescale? The speed at which generative AI can process vast amounts of data is indeed impressive. Yet while research began from 2021 for a fair number of the publications discussed in this edition of the journal, it did not reach readers in print until 2025. In addition, a certain portion of the research addresses ever-morphing online interactions and demographics. It might thus metaphorically be described as the examination of a single drop of water which has since floated off on a current in a sea— of data. As we pursue digital integrity *and* currency in our own teaching, researching, and writing, we must prepare our students to thrive— to achieve a new kind of fluency, the definition of which may, from now on, always be “flux.”

Acknowledgements

This journal continues to thrive thanks to the dedication of a myriad of volunteers; researchers, writers, editors, and proofreaders, each of whom generously contributes their time and expertise to GALE. Once again, Terry R. Tuttle stepped in as webperson and ensured that this edition was brought online successfully. Yuka Kurihara provided guidance with Japanese-language materials. Associate Editor Susan Laura Sullivan never ceases to amaze with her keen insights. She is a gifted editor, and I feel fortunate to work alongside her. My sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition of the GALE Journal.

Gwyn Helverson is an instructor at Ritsumeikan University. Her areas of research include academic writing, gender studies in EFL, sociolinguistics, and art historical feminisms. She has been an editor at the GALE Journal since 2018.

References

- Algorithmic Justice League. (n.d.). *Algorithmic Justice League*. <https://www.ajl.org/>
- Buolamwini, J. (2024). *Unmasking AI: My mission to protect what is human in a world of machines*. Random House Publishing Group.
- Chamberlain, A. (2016, March 23). *Demystifying the gender pay gap: evidence from Glassdoor salary data*. Glassdoor. <https://www.glassdoor.com/blog/gender-pay-gap/>
- Gardner, S. (2025, October 7). *Bias, Privacy, and Promise: What LGBTQ+ Adults Say About AI*. Project ALLYAI. LGBT Tech. <https://www.lgbttech.org/post/bias-privacy-and-promise-what-lgbtq-adults-say-about-ai>
- Kantaya, S. (Director). (2020). *Coded Bias* [Film]. *7th Empire Media*. <https://www.codedbias.com/>
- Mullen, P. (2021, February 12). *Coded bias review: is technology racist?: Doc probes the implications of facial recognition software and algorithms*. POV: Canada's Documentary Magazine. <https://povmagazine.com/coded-bias-review-is-technology-racist/>

Opentools. (2025, November 22). *Grok's AI fiasco. Elon Musk's bot spirals out of control with bizarre claims.*

<https://opentools.ai/news/groks-ai-fiasco-elon-musks-bot-spirals-out-of-control-with-bizarre-claims>

Taylor, P. (2024, September 6). The imperfect tutor. Grading, feedback, and AI. *Inside Higher Ed.*

<https://www.insidehighered.com/opinion/career-advice/teaching/2024/09/06/challenges-using-ai-give-feedback-and-grade-students>

UN Women (2025, February 5). *How AI reinforces gender bias—and what we can do about it. Interview with Zinnya del Villar on AI gender bias and creating inclusive technology.*

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/interview/2025/02/how-ai-reinforces-gender-bias-and-what-we-can-do-about-it>

Williams, B.W. (2026, January 14). *Quicker action would have stopped Grok AI deepfakes, victim says.*

BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c98p4214577o>

Wong, M. (2024, August 30). Another disastrous year of ChatGPT school is beginning. *The*

Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/newsletters/archive/2024/08/another-disastrous-year-of-chatgpt-school-is-beginning/679672/>